

Lacey Walker  
Professor Christa Rampley  
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### Disappointment, Party of One

When my friend suggested I go to a party with her, I already had preconceived notions as to what a college party consisted of: red solo cups, sorority girls, and loud music. Upon arrival, the sketchy location and eerie silence settling over the inky parking lot completely disturbed me. The interior of the building was contrastingly pleasing on the eyes, but the appearance was the only pleasant thing about this party. The people attending were far from what I expected, creating a tense and uneasy environment. The actions being carried out by this event's attendees were nauseating, typically seen as socially unacceptable and all around tasteless. The men were very aggressive towards the women of the group, specifically by touching them inappropriately and obscenely phrasing their words, while the women allowed such behavior through indecent dancing and sexual behavior. The men would grab the women in places that are generally undesirable, but their hands only energized the women more. With the combination of the unnerving environment and insufferable actions of the people, this party gave off a disreputable vibe, causing me to feel distressed and bringing me back to my darkest time.

Unlit streetlights surrounded the compact building, and upon further inspection, I found that there were no signs labeling this anxiety-inducing structure. Makeshift parking spots were created on a large lot of rocks and dirt. I instantly felt unsafe, knowing that I would have no way of identifying my location should something happen to me. The inside created a more appealing environment, but still not one of comfort. The floors were freshly polished and perfectly reflected the bright lights beaming down on me. The entire interior looked newly renovated and completely contrasted the exterior. However, something still felt off to me. To my left, a

decently sized bar with neatly organized bottles of alcohol sat vacantly. A mixture of cheap and expensive liquor lined the wall. To my right, a staircase led to a balcony on the second floor, which is likely for special guests or otherwise classified personnel based on the soft and comfortable looking sofas surrounding an expensive looking glass and wood table. My feet ached for me to sit in the special seating. The lights on the second level were much dimmer and had a slightly pink tint to them. Both levels are themed around the Caribbean, with palm trees painted on the far wall and a small sitting area with sand and beach chairs on the first floor. My mind wandered to the beach themed paintings I had hanging on the wall in my dorm room many months ago.

As a few people arrived, I went to the bathroom before it became too crowded. The bathroom was brightly lit, allowing me to see the soft pink walls and orange shapes painted in a line as accents. A faint aroma of coconuts and cheap hand soap filled my nostrils. The pleasant scent made me feel at home. I looked around at the paper towels scattered across the brick colored tile flooring and counters, which were covered in cracks. The bathroom looked much older and more worn down than the rest of the building and did not match the other decorations. This was the only spot in the entire building that made me feel relatively at ease. Someone stared at me from a large mirror. I recognized the person as me, but I did not feel like myself. I had never gone to any parties before this, and now, I know why. I returned to the main room before I could get stuck in my thoughts.

Because my friend and I had arrived early, I got a good look at the place itself, as well as the people attending, as they shuffled through the door. As more people arrived, I began to feel completely out of my element. All the females were wearing tight clothing that showed more skin than was appropriate for the weather, while all the males wore baggy jeans and a variety of

different types of shirts. Instinctively, I fidgeted with my clothing, feeling insecure about the amount of skin I had covered. After about a hundred people had walked through the door, I noticed that not a single person at the party belonged to a race aside from African American. Immediately after I came to this realization, I knew this was not going to be my kind of party. Throughout my life, African American men have objectified me, and the woman have always rejected me because I am not "Black enough." I shifted uncomfortably in my seat in the back of the room as the lights dimmed and colorful strobe lights began to fill the space above our heads. A song that I did not recognize blasted obnoxiously loud from a hidden speaker behind me. Instantly, everyone migrated to the dance floor and vociferously belted out the lyrics. A migraine began to develop behind my eyes. I could not help but notice the number of people in this single room; it was definitely a fire hazard. The temperature began to rise drastically with the close proximity of all of the bodies, causing sweat to materialize on my forehead. Despite my objections, my friend dragged me to the middle, making me join in.

Making my way through the crowd, I could see red and sweaty faces inhaling smoke from the small cannabis filled joints in their hands. The air filled with smoke at a rapid pace, and the scent of marijuana clogged my lungs. I felt like I was suffocating. I could see surrounding couples dancing intimately together, while other pairs were more aggressive with their dancing. Some of the men were pushing the women's heads down, to which they would comply and start shaking their bottoms in the air. People were recording these strange events and cheering them on. As soon as my friend's hand lost mine, larger ones swept me away. Two hands were on my hips, forcing them to sway to the deafening beat in a matter of seconds. I attempted to struggle away, but the man would not loosen his grip. Eventually, I pried his hands away. In response, he grabbed my wrists, pulled me closer and began whispering profanities in my ear.

Desperately, I yanked my hands away. The breaths attempting to fill my lungs became shallower as the walls closed in around me. I glanced over at my friend, and a strange man was unzipping her shirt, exposing her breasts. Instead of pushing him away as I would expect her to, she merely giggled and kissed him. When I paid closer attention, I noticed the number of couples interlocked by each other's lips. I asked my friend to take me home, but she refused, telling me to relax.

I became overwhelmed by everything going on, so I pushed my way through the thick crowd. To my discomfort, hands belonging to more men than I could keep track of were placing themselves on my body, as I traveled towards the door. Most were on my backside and some were on my breasts, but one man had the audacity to grab my most intimate area. I instantly sprinted out of the building and began heaving into the grass as memories of August 2016 began to surface in my mind. The things that one man had said to me, and the way those hands had grabbed me brought me back to the worst event of my life. A few weeks after I arrived at college, I was raped, and the man that did the act had complete and utter disregard for my feelings and how his actions would affect my life. These men were no different. They believed that they had a right to my body for reasons unknown to me. The women at the party were almost as guilty for allowing this behavior to continue.

Many people don't realize the prevalence of sexual assaults in the United States, with a sexual assault occurring every ninety-eight seconds ([www.RAINN.org](http://www.RAINN.org)). The behavior that was openly shown and accepted at this party does nothing to counter this statistic. Sexually explicit and inappropriate behavior has become so common that it is now accepted to the point of almost being glorified. I felt unsafe and targeted at the party similarly to the way I had that night in August. The way no one helped me escape the clutches of those wretched hands reminded me of

the police officers when I went to the police station to file a report. They thought I was merely exaggerating. It has been reported that about 40% of all rapes get reported, and of that 40%, only about 10% of the perpetrators get convicted (United States Department of Justice). This is due to a large amount of victim-blaming. When I asked for help at the party, people told me to stop being so sensitive and have fun. Blaming a victim for the actions of their attacker or making them feel as if their feelings are invalid is almost as appalling as committing the heinous crime. Environments like the one at this party should not exist, and people should help victims rather than ignoring their issues.

#### Works Cited

"Statistics." *RAINN*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2017. <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>. United States Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. "National Crime Victimization Survey, 2015." *National Crime Victimization Survey, 2015*. 20 Oct. 2016. Web. 30 Jan. 2017.