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The Rape Epidemic

APOCALYPTIC LEVELS OF RAPE

It was the end of January 2010. Phantom sex traffickers and slave hunters stalked one million scared and lost children through the rubble-strewn streets of Port-au-Prince. The 10 Baptist missionaries from Idaho had just landed in prison, accused of scooping up earthquake victims and trying to smuggle them out of Haiti, ostensibly to be sold on the international sex-slave market. The world was watching. And then something just as grisly raised its ugly head. In the camps where huddled hungry and vulnerable widows and orphans, armed gangs of men sought them out and raped them. No female was safe. Pregnant mothers, the elderly, even toddlers and babies were targets. And no one was doing anything to protect them. Not the UN, not the Haitian police, not the people themselves. It was what would soon become known as the “rape epidemic,”

another massive delusion on the part of news outlets and humanitarian aid agencies in pursuit of readership and donations, one more phase of the Great Haiti Humanitarian Aid Swindle that helped keep the overseas public shoveling out donations.

QUESTIONABLE FOUNDATIONS

The press awareness of the post-earthquake rape epidemic can be traced to a single official statement, this one from Haiti Police Chief Mario Andresol. On January 28—the very day that the Baptists were being arrested for trying to smuggle children across the border—the Chief told the press:

With the blackout that's befallen the Haitian capital, bandits are taking advantage to harass and rape women and young girls under the tents.

Similar to the comment about orphanages being “fronts for criminal organizations” that Chief of Haiti’s National Judicial Police, Frantz Thermilus, was seen making at a press conference in the last chapter, Chief Andresol did not give specifics. He did not give a number of reported rapes, he did not say they had increased since the earthquake, and he did not provide a single example of a rape incident. In fact, in a press conference seven weeks later, Haiti National Police spokesman Gary Desrosiers would announce that in the two and a half months following the earthquake the police had received a record low of only 24 reports of rapes.¹ But just like the orphan crisis, none of that seemed to matter, not to the journalists whose job it was to gather the data, not to the editors whose job it was to sort through the data to make sure it was responsible and accurate, and certainly not to the NGOs and UN agencies that would use the information to bring in donations. Journalists let it rip. Headlines the next day read:

“Criminals in Haiti Raping Quake Survivors and Trafficking Children.”

The Times of London, January 29, 2010

“Police: Criminals in Haiti Raping Quake Survivors”

Fox News, January 29, 2010

“Haiti: criminals ‘raping women and girls in camps’ ”

The Telegraph, January 29, 2010

“Rape Stalks Haiti Quake Survivors”

IslamOnline, January 29, 2010

“Bandits raping Haiti quake survivors”

The Sydney Morning Herald January 29, 2010

“Chaos as women raped in Haiti earthquake camps”

The New York Post, January 29, 2010

The only anecdote that any of the journalists provided—and all used the same anecdote—was from Rachelle Dolce, one of some 40,000 people living in tents at the Petion-Ville Tennis and Golf Club where Sean Penn had set up his NGO (J/P HRO) and was distributing aid and managing the camp. Rachelle told reporters that, she “thought” a rape had occurred outside her tent the previous night. “I heard a fight outside, and I saw panties on the ground.” Then Rachelle, “started to shout a lot and they left.”ⁱⁱ

It’s almost inexplicable how Rachelle’s speculation became the foundation for the rape epidemic: an inferred account of something she didn’t see, both victim and rapist left when Rachelle started shouting, and a pair of panties on the ground—panties she had found the following morning. No victim, no perpetrator, no witness, and scant circumstantial evidence. Not much of a case.ⁱⁱⁱ

CONFIRMATION FROM SERIOUS JOURNALISTS

Finally, on March 16, two months and four days after the earthquake, an Associated Press journalist came up with what she presented as a plethora of rape cases. The journalist was Michelle Faul, seen earlier with the gangs and then on the trail of the death count, there seemingly could be no more credible professional than Faul. She was a senior correspondent, former Caribbean AP Bureau Chief with five years' experience living in and covering Haiti for the world's premier wire service. The AP had sent Faul back to earthquake ravaged Port-au-Prince with a team of some dozen other correspondents specifically to let the world know exactly what was going on. Having already helped ignite the doomsday panic in the weeks after the earthquake with reports of 'mobs of young men, faces covered with bandanas, wielding machetes in the streets' — seen in Chapter 3 — Faul now unleashed a new media frenzy. Faul entitled her article, "Rape in Haiti: Women, Girls Detail Violent Attacks in Aftermath of Haiti Earthquake."^{iv v}

After opening her article with the story of a 21-year-old mother of a 3-month-old infant who three men raped at a camp toilet, and the shame and infections and psychological pain she endured as a consequence, Faul dropped a bomb:

Women and children as young as 2, already traumatized by the loss of homes and loved ones in the Jan. 12 catastrophe, are now falling victim to rapists in the sprawling tent cities that have become home to hundreds of thousands of people.

With no lighting and no security, they are menacing places after sunset. Sexual assaults are daily occurrences in the biggest camps...

Not to miss out, the rest of the media followed with special broadcasts and articles such as:

"Haiti quake victims now face rape trauma — Haiti earthquake"

MSNBC, March 16, 2010 (AP)

“Girls as Young as Two Facing Rape in Tent Cities as UN Security Patrols Fail to Protect Women After Haiti Earthquake”

MailOnline, David Gardner, March 17, 2010

“Rape Rampant in Haiti’s Earthquake Camps”

CBS News, March 17, 2010

Still missing from the press accounts were solid details and numbers. But one week later, on March 24, Beverly Bell seemingly resolved that shortcoming with an article published in the *Huffington Post*. Once again, there could be no more credible expert. Thirty years working in Haiti, Creole speaker, part-time journalist, Bell had even written a book about Haitian women entitled *Walking on Fire* (Cornell University Press, 2001). Using word play regarding the violent shaking that came with the earthquake, Bell entitled her article:

“Our Bodies are Shaking Now: Rapes Follow Earthquake in Haiti”

Huffington Post, March 24, 2010

Bell began by admitting that, “there are no statistics on rape during the 10 weeks since the earthquake.” But, she then assured readers, “reports abound” and she went on to give seven stories of rape.

Her first ‘report’ was that of little Timafi, a four-year-old girl who a young man took by the hand, led to a cemetery and then raped. It’s horrific. No question about that. Little Timafi suffered vaginal bleeding and was put on antibiotics. But there was a little problem in using this particular rape as an example of fallout from the earthquake and lack of security in the camps. It did not happen in a refugee camp. It did not happen in Port-au-Prince. It did not even happen in the earthquake strike zone. It happened 150 miles away from Port-au-Prince, in a remote town called Jeremy. What’s more, it was hardly an example of a violent, pistol toting gang member taking advantage of post-earthquake chaos with impunity. Little Timafi was raped by her 17-year-old neighbor.

The person who stopped the rape was an elderly woman who intervened. Instead of accosting the elderly woman, the teenager fled.

The second case Bell presented was the rape of a 12-year-old girl. This one *did* occur in a camp and in Port-au-Prince. And, we are told, the girl had lost both parents in the earthquake. So she really was an earthquake victim. And there is no apparent reason not to believe she got raped. Her neighbors certainly believed it. They stoned the rapist to death. So much for the impunity of rapists in post-earthquake Haiti.

In almost all of Bell's other cases something is amiss, something that should make a discerning reader question whether this was evidence of a rape epidemic. In Bell's third example, a 2-year old girl was raped; neighbors and camp officials apprehended him and turned him over to the authorities. Once again, so much for impunity. In another case an 18-month old toddler was raped. The perpetrator was the boyfriend of the child's mother. Neighbors caught him too. They turned him over to the police.

In one of the remaining two cases where rapists did get away with the crime, another 2-year old was reportedly "gang raped" and then "tossed away by assailants." But Bell didn't get this information from the victim's family. She didn't get it from neighbors. She didn't get it from the police. And she didn't even get it from medical workers. It was, Bell admits, "a second-hand report." From whom? She didn't say.

Of the seven cases, there was one that fits the expected image of roving gangs of armed men raping girls and women with impunity. It is a single case of an 18-year old woman who four men raped "so violently that she could not walk the next day." But all totaled, that's one in seven cases. And in four of the cases the victim was in fact not a woman but a toddler. That in itself should send up a flag. Indeed, in all but two of the most horrific cases of rape that the *Huffington Post* and the *Associated Press* could cite as evidence of a massive post-earthquake rape epidemic—and both newspaper articles cited the exact same cases of rape—the victims were either defenseless toddlers, the

rapist got apprehended or killed, or the rape occurred 150 miles from Port-au-Prince. That's the worst they could come up with in a period of over 10 weeks, among a population of 3.4 million people and in time of total chaos and upheaval, when half the population had supposedly left their homes and was living in camps, and when supposedly more than 10 percent had been killed.

So there are some logical inconsistencies between the examples and the conclusion. But it is the one remaining case that both Bell and Faul recounted that is the most dramatic and the most revealing. Not least of all because it involved the daughters of none other than the directors who founded an organization called KOFAVIV. It was in fact KOFAVIV that had given all the stories of rape to both Faul and Bell.

Re-reading Bell's article I saw that prior to the earthquake KOFAVIV had 3,000 members. Of those, 300 members died in the earthquake. Both the organization and the remaining members had lost everything. The office came down. All their records were destroyed. And all the members lost their homes. Let me say that again so that there is no misunderstanding: all 2,700 surviving members of KOFAVIV lost their homes and sought refuge in camps. Every single one of them. And that's where they found themselves fighting a scourge of rape. The valiance with which the women of KOFAVIV came together to defend themselves and other victims is nothing short of epic. And that brings us to the one remaining case that both Bell and Faul cited as evidence of a rape epidemic.

According to former AP Caribbean Bureau Chief Michelle Faul, the co-director of KOFAVIV, Marie Eramithe Delva, recounted that a rapist "seized her daughter and was dragging her into an alley." But, "The assailant did not see the teen's three sisters, who had been walking behind her, and all four of them managed to beat him and run him off." That was Faul's account.

Beverly Bell's *Huffington Post* version of the same incident was significantly different and worse—or better, depending upon your perspective. According to Bell it was not the daughter of KOFAVIV co-director Delva who was attacked. In this version, three of Delva's daughters caught a man in the act of beating a woman whom they did not know. The girls intervened. The man then pulled a gun on the girls. The girls "fought him off."

If the story stopped there then it might be at least remotely comparable to Faul's version. But it didn't stop there. In Bell's version of the story the man came back for revenge. "Delva's daughter," Bell recounts, "very nearly became part of the group's statistics."

At 8:00 on March 2, a man came under the tarp which is home to Delva, [KOFAVIV] co-coordinator Malya Villard-Appolon, their 13 combined children and grandchildren, and other family members. The man threw Delva's 17-year-old daughter Merline on the ground, dragged her outside, and prepared to rape her. Merline beat him off. An hour or so later, the man returned with three other men and a pistol. They beat four of Delva and Appolon's daughters.

In Bell's account the girls and their mother tried to get help from the police but were insulted. "Go tell it to the President," the police told them.

Forgetting for the moment that major newspapers published two radically different versions of the same incident, and putting aside that the girls beat this rapist off not once but twice—even when he had a gun—there are some problems. Not least of all is the idea of a man trying to beat a woman in a yard where she lived with her mother and 12 other family members, then dragging her out in the pathway of a tent city where lived another 25,000 people, and trying to publicly rape her on the ground—all within a couple hundred yards of the main police station. It's tough to swallow. Forget about the police. Based on 26 years of working and living in Haiti and the

Dominican Republic—and looking at what happened to some of the other rapists mentioned above—I cannot think of a faster way to get yourself stoned to death. ^{vi vii viii}

So once again, what the hell was going on?

SEEING WHAT YOU BELIEVE—AGAIN

“I’ve lived in Brooklyn New York, Norfolk Virginia, and Jacksonville Florida. I always tell people, I don’t see violence in Haiti.” The guy who is saying this is Gilbert, a Haitian-American. The reason he’s saying this is because I just asked him, “Where do you think there is more violence, the U.S. or Haiti?” And the reason I asked him the question is because I am with an international journalist from Germany named Philipp Lichterbeck, who is standing next to us, baseball cap on his head, listening intently.

Philipp is part of the flood of journalists and activists who have come to address the rape epidemic. He’s asked me to accompany him on his investigation and at the moment I’m trying to demonstrate to Philipp that violence in Haiti isn’t as rampant as most outsiders think. It’s violent. Yes. But in my experience Haitians are emphatically far less inclined than my fellow Americans, or Philipp’s fellow Germans, to beat up on strangers or enemies, friends, neighbors or lovers. I have never met, for example, a young Haitian man who would go out on a Saturday night looking for a fight, as some of Philipp and my own young compatriots are prone to do.

This guy Gilbert is a good person to ask the question because Philipp doesn’t understand Creole. He understands and speaks perfect English, so he can hear the response for himself. And what’s more, Gilbert should know the answer. Gilbert’s an ex-street thug who got deported from the U.S. for selling crack. He’s got a couple gold teeth and a mug that makes you believe that he’s probably pretty tough. But now something strange happens: Philipp challenges Gilbert. He says, “What about the

rapes? I was talking to doctors, reputable Haitian doctors and they say there are a lot of rapes.”

Gilbert winces as if to say bullshit and then in a diplomatic tone says, “They do this because they are making their case, they belong to organizations...”

But Philipp doesn’t let Gilbert finish. He cuts him off and repeats, more emphatically now, “I was talking to doctors, reputable doctors!” Philipp has a light skinned, pasty white and freckled complexion and to my surprise he’s turning red.

“Yes, but...” Gilbert tries to cut back in and finish what he was saying.

Philipp is having none of it. He takes off his baseball cap and then facing Gilbert, almost as if he’s going to square off and fight, Philipp raises his voice and says, “No. No. I am telling you.” He’s half shouting and his pale skin has now turned bright blood red. “These are doctors, these are reputable Haitian doctors. They are paid by the State. They are not part of the State. But they get paid by the State. They do not get their money from NGOs!”

I try to cut in and get Philipp to allow Gilbert to finish what he was saying. After all, we’re supposed to be investigators not advocates. Philipp is a journalist. I’m an anthropologist. We are not supposed to be telling Haitians on the street what’s going on. We’re supposed to be asking them. But there’s no interrupting Philipp. He has his story and, to my astonishment, he is not going to let anyone change his mind about it.



“What about rapes?” I ask. I am at the Pétion-Ville Tennis and Golf Course, the same place where the first published rape incident occurred, that of Rachele Dolce who had heard an argument and later found panties on the ground. Philipp’s insistence on the rape epidemic despite us not finding any evidence of one has prompted me to

investigate for myself. So now I am talking to Marc, another deportee who speaks American slang better than I do. He was born in Haiti, grew up in Miami, got busted selling drugs when he was 27 years old — 10 years before the earthquake — and wound up getting deported to Haiti. Life in Haiti was tough and there is little question that Marc knows a lot about that. When I asked him about crime in Haiti, Marc had said, “you know, when you do something here, the cops don’t come after you like in the States.” The sincerity with which he made the comment left me with little doubt that Marc continued a life of crime after arriving in Haiti. I’m afraid to even imagine what kinds of crime, but with 80 percent formal unemployment and a minimum wage of \$2 per day, I know that I shouldn’t be surprised. But that’s another story. With the earthquake Marc got a big break. He and some 250 other deportees now have jobs working for the J/P HRO, the NGO that Sean Penn founded. Marc is on a first name basis with Sean. He works for him as a security guard at the gate between the camp on the golf course and Penn’s tent headquarters next to the Club House. Who could be better informed? Marc is literally in the middle of everything. And he’s been here at the camp since January 30, three weeks after the earthquake. “We haven’t had any problems lately.” Marc tells me, with a perfect Miami street accent, “But,” he qualifies, “when we first opened up we had about 10 women come in with complaints of rape.”

“Did the same people rape them, like a gang or something?”

“No, they were different people. Like there was one girl, 16, she was raped by her stepfather. And then we had a case, it was right over there.” Marc points to an empty field, “There used to be tents there. The girl was giving us her story when the guy came in and started saying it wasn’t like that. That they had been engaged. So it wasn’t what it seemed at first.”

CHAMPS-DE-MARS: HOTBED OF RAPE

I'm walking in the rain in camp Champ-de-Mars, the city park turned earthquake survivor camp. Both Faul of the AP and Beverly Bell of the *Huffington Post* had singled Champ-de-Mars out as a hotbed of rape. And so now I am here, wandering around the camp, in the drizzling rain, trying to get a handle on just what the hell is really going on.

Before it became a massive camp of what the humanitarian agencies have labeled IDP (internally displaced persons), Champ-de-Mars was a sprawling city park, the Haitian equivalent of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. I pass the *Neg Mawon* statue, the Haitian statue of liberty, the image of a slave who had run away before the revolution and lived free in remote mountain hideaways. His body is stretched in a long crouch, naked torso gleaming, head thrown back, and a conch shell to his lips as he bellows a call to arms and freedom. In the past this park has often been the site of demonstrations, sit-ins, riots. Now it's a squatter settlement. Dilapidated scraps of huts with narrow passages between them. Rows of lonely portable toilets line the edge of the street. Not a single person entering, coming out, or waiting to use one. I pass a woman scrubbing a pot in a doorway. Two little girls are bathing nearby. They are both naked and covered with soap. "*Blan,*" one of the girls shouts to me as I go by.

Every so often I stop and ask someone about violence and rape.

"You guys have a security problem around here?" I've introduced myself to two older men, Cheri Rafael and Vilboint Doris. Both are early sixties, confident, relaxed, and thoughtful. They are sitting playing dominoes up under the eaves of a tent where they will not get wet from the light, drizzling rain.

"Yeah, that's a big problem," says Vil, "you see right there," he points to an open tent. The sides of the tent are rolled up and we can see inside. It's someone's living

room. There's a sofa, bed, table, two lamps. "They cut the fabric the other night," Vil says, grim-faced and shaking his head, "stole her purse while she was sleeping."

"That's terrible." I agree, "But what about violence?"

Vil shakes his head, "Not easy to find violence around here." and then waving his hand in the direction the downtown Vil says, "If you go down there you can find some. But here, this is a place that's relaxed."

I'm perplexed. "What about rapes? I hear that's a big problem?"

"Yes, we heard that too." Vil says, "Some professionals came and talked to us about it. We formed a committee and we told the girls, 'don't bathe naked.' "



I'm wandering along again, walking through the camp, alone, in the drizzling rain. I pass two dogs scrounging through trash. Another long and lonely line of portable toilettes. No one coming out, no one going in, no one waiting to use one.

I pass a girl sitting beneath a blue tarp. In front of her she has neatly assembled small bags of charcoal for sale. "Bon swa *blan*" she greets me as I walk past.

A battered old truck with a huge water tank groans by. I see few people. I see no other *blans* or aid workers. No NGO base camps.

The rain has stopped when I come across eight tough young men. Several stand in a group talking. Others are lounging. One of them is slumped against a small stone wall. Another is leaning back against a tree. I don't really want to stop. But I do. Suddenly I am encircled by the men. Braided hair, baseball caps on sideways. One of them has two large rhinestone earrings stuck through his earlobes. Standing closest and glaring at me is a man with drooping bloodshot eyes. I'm nervous. These are the bad asses, the ones the press must have in mind when they refer to armed young men

raping women. The one with the rhinestone earrings identifies the group as, "the leaders of the camp." While I am thinking that people in the camp would probably disagree, they show me a little house that was here before the earthquake. It was put there because of Carnival, a type of administrative shed. They are showing it to me, telling me that it now belongs to them. So now I have to ask them the important questions, the reason I'm doing this, "Do you guys think there is a security problem here in the camp?"

"Oh yeah, yeah, yeah," the guy with blood shot eyes is suddenly excited. "that's a big problem," he says, "The police keep coming by and harassing us."

"You can't even sleep around here," another one of the thugs interjects, "why, just a little while ago they came and woke Jonny up." He looks over at Jonny, the one slumped against the wall.

"You know how it is?" The guy with the bloodshot eyes is asking me rhetorically, "some other thief comes in here from somewhere else and slits a tent open with a blade and they blame us." Now everyone but Jonny is on their feet, they are all standing there looking at me in a can-you-believe that manner, as if I'm here to do something about their security problem with the Haitian police. So I get to the big question. "Rape? Is there a rape problem?"

"Yes" the guy with two earrings is sober and serious. "That's a problem too."

Blood-shot-eyes cuts in and sadly says, "You know what it is," his demeanor has changed now. He's not so frightening, "ever since the earthquake" he continues, "a lot of girls have let themselves go." He shakes his head.

The braided hair guy seems to defend the girls saying, "You know things are hard. They need money. They're hungry."



I'm wandering again. I stop at the police station. It's lower Port-au-Prince's main precinct, a sprawling grungy white and blue building located right at the edge of the camp. I visited here in the week after the earthquake when, at the request of a contact at the UN Special Envoy's office in New York, I was looking for aid workers who were already on the ground helping people. I found none. But now, in the walled-off compound behind the precinct are tents full of supplies. Foreign aid workers bustle about. When I ask a police officer if crime is worse before or after the earthquake he laughs and says, "they're a lot easier to control now that they are in tents." But then he tells me that he can't talk to me. To get an interview I have to go through official channels. So I'm wandering again, walking up one wide boulevard that separates this park-turned-IDP camp and then down the next boulevard. I walk past a line of tents. And then I come upon a large rectangular army-green tent. It has an A-frame top across which is printed in big bold black letters, UNICEF.

I stick my head in the flap. There is a table with a computer on it and two chairs on either side of the table. In one of the chairs is an older market woman. She wears a faded skirt and blouse and a handkerchief wrapped around her head. She is slumped in the chair, hand covering her brow. She seems thin and tired. On the other side of the desk is a well-dressed, plump woman. She is clearly a "professional." She wears an ironed skirt, fresh blouse and her hair is styled straight. Her name is Stephanie Beaubrun. She invites me in and explains that I am in the PESDEV tent. UNICEF gave PESDEV the tent and, she tells me, "PESDEV is an organization that works with victims of rape and gender based violence. We have tents in eight of the other big camps." Stephanie begins to name the camps, "Akra, Stad, Jean Marie Vincent..."

I cut her off and skip straight to the point, "Could you tell me how many people who come in here have been raped by people they don't know?"

I've asked this question because I'm sure there are problems. Based on my other interviews at the golf course, in this camp, and my own experiences living in Haiti, I have no doubt there are conflicts among people who know one another, and especially men and women who have children together or who are lovers. Women get abused. Sometimes men get abused. Children get abused. But what I just can't believe is that armed groups of men are roving the camps and raping women with impunity. So that's what I'm after: I want to know the context of the rapes. I want to know if it's true what they've been writing in the international press: "are armed men really raping women and children?"

Stephanie is hesitant and I'm feeling awkward, like perhaps I'm not handling this properly. "I mean," I try to clarify, "are women being violated by men they don't know?"

Stephanie is looking at me as if she doesn't understand.

"Okay, let me put it this way. Out of everyone who comes in here that has been violated, attacked or abused, how many of them report not knowing their assailant?"

Stephanie is not responding.

"Would you say that it's nine out of ten, five out of ten, one out of ten?" I've got my notebook out and pen in my hand, I'm poised to write.

"The latter she says."

"One out of ten?"

Stephanie nods her head.

"Okay," I'm jotting it down. "Can you give me an example of a case like that?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean an example of someone getting raped by people they don't know. Like a gang or some guy who drags a woman into a tent."

Now Stephanie is shaking her head, "I haven't gotten a case like that yet."

"You haven't had a case like that?"

"No."

"Okay, so it's not one out of 10." I'm scratching it out in my notebook.

"How long have you been here?" I ask.

"A little more than two weeks."

"And how many people have come in here with a complaint?" I've got pen to paper, poised to write again.

"One," Stephanie says.

"One per day?"

"No." She says. "One."

"Huh?" I look up. "You've only had one case in two weeks?"

"Oui," she says and nods towards the market woman.

I look at the woman. She's slumped in the chair, one hand across her brow. She does not look like what I would expect of a rape victim. She's mid-fifties, weathered.

"What's her problem?"

"Her son-in-law beat her daughter."

ACTIVISTS TO THE RESCUE

"So you're saying there are no rapes in Haiti?"

I'm looking up at the scowling white faces of more than half a dozen international journalists and several of the most active foreign activists in post-earthquake Haiti. They are literally surrounding me and the hostility is so thick I'm almost frightened. I'm a little pissed off too.

"No," I say, "I very clearly and specifically did not say that. What I said was that I found no indication that what is being reported in the newspapers is an accurate representation of what's really going on regarding rape in the camps."

What happened was that I unwittingly entered a rather famed journalist and activist guesthouse in Port-au-Prince. I didn't know that when I arrived. I had come to visit a young journalist acquaintance of mine, Ansel Herz, mentioned earlier in Chapter 3. But while Ansel was introducing me to his friends they began to bombard me with stories of camp evictions and abuse of the impoverished Haitians. One of them, a guy named Mark Snyder, brought up the rape epidemic, recounting how gang members were getting completely out of hand. "Now," he half shouted with indignation, "they are strapping razor blades to their penises and maiming women." When I asked for an example of a woman who had been maimed in this way he couldn't give me one. So I shared the experiences I just recounted above, about visiting camps and how I couldn't find any anecdotal evidence of a rape epidemic; not, at least, from Haitians in the camps. Before I was finished I found myself surrounded by these scowling faces. To make it worse, I'm sitting and they are all standing, glaring down at me. "Okay," one of them says, "so why are these women's organizations saying this?"

"I don't know." And then I said what I guess I had suspected all along, something that must have sounded insensitive and sexist, "I don't know what's in it for them."

"This is sick," a young woman says with disgust and walks out of the room. Several men follow her. Ansel is trying to defend me, "I'm not sure that Tim meant it

just like he said it.” But it’s clear that he is disappointed. A moment later and he too is gone.

Only three people are left in this large, open, porch-like room. They are all sitting on the other side of a long cafeteria table. I’m feeling rather dejected and mentally preparing to gather my book bag and motorcycle helmet and leave as graciously as possible. One of the three people who remain is a guy about my age, mid-forties, white, with dreadlocks. At some point earlier on, before I found myself feeling like a pariah, he had identified himself as an activist with decades of experience defending the voiceless and vulnerable in countries throughout the world. Now he begins explaining to me that, “People are not going to trust you.” He seems to be half lecturing me for my insensitivity and half consoling me for my apparent idiocy, “They are not going to tell you the truth.” And then he really lays it on, “You go down there with a translator, you don’t know the language, you don’t know the culture, you don’t know anyone. And you think they’re just going to come out and tell you about rape?”

I don’t tell him that I speak Creole, that I’ve been studying Haiti for 23 years, that I spent four years living and studying sexuality in rural areas, that I wrote a doctoral dissertation and published a book on gender in Haiti, that I lived in impoverished Haitian villages and neighborhoods for five years, I lived in a Haitian squatter settlement in the Dominican Republic for one year, I spent four months in general population prison with Haitians and Dominicans, I’ve had more intimate relationships with impoverished Haitian women than I should admit in a debate on gender—or a book—my two now grown adopted daughters are Haitian, I have two small children who are Haitian-Dominican, I have two more that are Haitian and at any given moment I have from five to 30 Haitian male and female surveyors working for me, all of whom live in popular neighborhoods and some of whom I had known for 15 years. And yes, if there was a rape epidemic they would most certainly be talking to me about it. I don’t

even bother to argue. I'm still reeling from the condemnation. He's still lecturing me, giving me some more expert advice and then I hear him say, "You should check with the organizations that specialize in this. You should hear what the women at KOFAVIV say."

THE FEMINISTS

"I've been wanting to tell you something about KOFAVIV," Nadege says.

Ever since the 'this-is-sick' experience and getting lectured by the globe-trotting activist, I have been trying to lay low on the rape issue, part of which has meant diligently avoiding the feminist activist crowd—Haitian and non-Haitian alike. But now, months later, it's night. I am at what was, at that time, Petion-Ville's only gym. The electricity has gone out. Guided by the dim red glow of an emergency light, I've retreated to an aerobics floor where I can sit alone in the obscurity and stretch my limbs. That is what I was doing when someone says, "Tim." and now I look over and, unseen until to this moment, is Nadege Pierre (not her real name), one of the most prominent Haitian gender-based violence activists in Haiti. *Shit, I'm thinking, I'm trapped.*

Nadege is right next to me. I don't know how I didn't see her. We're both stretching within 10 feet of one another. I'm cringing. But what can I do? We begin to chat and the next thing I know she is telling me about KOFAVIV.

"I never saw those people do any work before the earthquake," she says. "Look here," she continues, "they're saying they got 60 rapes per day in the camps. But they don't have any documentation. When a woman comes to me because she has been raped or assaulted, I document it. I take them to a doctor. KOFAVIV doesn't have documentation."

"They're reporting 60 rapes per day?"

“More! They have contact with MADRE (a prominent U.S. feminist organization), that’s who made them. And Amnesty International, they believe everything KOFAVIV says,” she sighs. “I’m telling you, KOFAVIV didn’t do anything before the earthquake.” Nadege is shaking her head with dismay. “Look, you want to know KOFAVIV. Go talk to the feminist organizations SOFA and Kay Fanm, they’re the most reputable organizations in Haiti. They’ll tell you who KOFAVIV is.”

And so I did.



Feminist Organization SOFA and Olga Benoit

Olga Benoit is the medium-light skinned, middle-class directress of SOFA. With 21 centers in seven of Haiti’s 10 departments and a total of 8,000 members, SOFA is the largest and most respected feminist organization in Haiti. “SOFA,” Madame Benoit tells me as she leads me through the wooden gingerbread house that is the organization’s headquarters, “began as a political action group after the fall of the Duvalier Dictatorship.” It was an organization created to make sure that, in the chaos that ensued, women’s interests were represented. “We are *not* an organization created to work with women,” Madam Benoit explains, “rather, we are an organization of women that has been created to make sure that women’s interests are politically represented.” We are walking through an office bustling with administrators. We arrive in a small conference room. We sit. I get right to the point. I am concerned about KOFAVIV and the data they are putting out about rapes in the camps. “It doesn’t make sense to me.”

Olga nods her head affirmatively and I detect a slight expression of recognition, a hint of a smirk, but controlled, not too much emotion. “When the earthquake struck,” Olga begins, “we anticipated problems. All those people outside of their homes. And we began to prepare.” She says this with a tone of regret, as if they missed an

opportunity. "But then it was like an invasion of NGOs. They went to the camps directly. This camp was for CRS, this camp for World Vision, this camp for Concern....We had a lot less support."

"Wait a minute." I stop writing, "you had less support."

"*Bien sur*, that's right, a lot less." She explains that after the earthquake the NGOs quit giving SOFA support and took the aid straight to the camps. "And not only were the agencies going to the camps, but," Olga explains, "after January the 12th, they heaped all the problems into the camps. It was as if problems in the neighborhoods and the rest of Haiti no longer existed."

"KOFIVIV", I ask, "and the rapes?"

"Yes, KOFIVIV," says Madam Benoit, "and the rapes." She pauses thoughtfully for a moment. "First," she begins, "you can't say that there has been an increase in rapes if you don't know how many rapes there were before the earthquake. KOFIVIV doesn't have that data." Still cautious, she continues, "We did *not* say rapes *did not* increase." She pauses, "But we have reservations. We have many *mannnyyy*" she sings the 'many' in classic creole expression of emphasis, *annnpiillllll*, "reservations."

"Such as?"

"Look," she retreats again, cautious, "Of course the situation makes people vulnerable. All those people crammed into small areas, no police, no lighting, away from home, you can expect an increase in incidences. You have increased economic desperation. Prostitution. And you have a lot less supervision with families splitting themselves between multiple tents in different camps so they can get more aid." Then the proverbial walls come down, "Look," Olga says, leaning forward, "we went into the camps. We did a study. We spent five months, from February to July after the

earthquake. We went into 89 camps and we only documented 29 rapes. KOFAVIV reported 30 rapes per day, in a single camp!

“Thirty in a single day?” I ask.

“And they never catch any perpetrators,” Olga explains, “this isn’t possible!”

She pauses again, as if to let the facts sink in. And indeed, even after all my doubts, I’m stunned. The directress of the major feminist organization in Haiti is as appalled as I am. I’m jotting everything down as fast as I can go.

“Then they started with that epidemic stuff,” Madam Olga Benoit scoffs. “I’m not sure how they arrive at their figures,” she says this as if trying to give KOFAVIV an excuse, an out, “They could be double counting.” Then she’s saying it again, “We have *mannnyyy* reservations, 30 rapes per day in a single camp and they never catch anyone,” she clucks her tongue.

“Why is it,” I ask, looking up from my notes, “that journalists don’t come to SOFA for data?”

“Hmm.” Olga says and I know I hit a nerve, “Despite all the respect that I have for journalists, it’s because of sensationalism.”

“Did they come to you after the earthquake?”

“After the earthquake we had *mannnyyy* journalists here.” She looks around as if visualizing the room full of them, journalists sitting around the table, in the lobby, hanging out in groups outside. “But they are more interested in the data that KOFAVIV gives them. KOFAVIV has a lot of big foreign supporters now.” She mentions MADRE, “and the more supporters the more journalists.”

“You know Beverly Bell?” I ask, referring to the woman who wrote the March 24 *Huffington Post* article, “‘Our Bodies are Shaking Now’: Rapes Follow Earthquake in Haiti.”

“We know Bev very well,” she says with a tone of appreciation, “from a long time ago. And she showed up after the earthquake. And I told her about our reservations.” Olga sighs. Now in a tone halfway between resignation and exasperation, she says, “And then Bev wrote that article.” She shakes her head. “After that we never heard from her again.” Then the walls are coming down again, “I find it strange,” Olga is saying, “how the same members of KOFIV are the ones who keep getting raped.” Referring to the article that Bev Bell wrote and the attempted rape of the co-director’s daughters, she says, “And it was her own daughters...” And then she’s talking about a lawsuit that KOFIV has launched against the Haitian government, “And now they are calling the Haitian government in front of the Inter American Commission.” She is shaking her head again, “Thirty rapes per day in a single camp. This doesn’t make Haiti look good.”

So there it was. I hadn’t discovered anything at all. The rapes were not a case of the *Emperor’s New Clothes* after all. It was yet another case of foreign journalists and aid workers blatantly uniting with those organizations most inclined to give wild exaggerations while virtually ignoring what the major, most respected and long established women’s organization in Haiti had to say. But it wasn’t just SOFA.

Feminist Organization Kay Fanm and Marie Yvette Andree Jeanty

“No!”, Marie Yvette Andree Jeanty is standing straight, looking directly at me. “No!” she repeats herself and it really does look like “no means no.”

Marie Yvette is the directress of Kay Fanm, House of Women, Haiti’s other most respected feminist organization. And Marie Yvette looks her part. She is middle age,

stately, handsome, full bodied. Her dreadlocks suggest that she is progressive; her blue business suit suggests she's serious about it.

"Just two seconds."

"No."

I arrived late, after five o'clock. Women were pouring out the front door. I passed them, and got inside, where I am now. The room is packed with empty chairs. Yolette stands at the far end of a conference table that takes up more than two thirds of all the space in the room. Next to her is Maile Alphonse, goddaughter of then Canadian Governor General Michaëlle Jean. Maile is a younger version of Yolette, serious, intelligent eyes, dreadlocks and business attire.

"No." Yolette repeats for the fourth time and I'm thinking that I might really get turned away.

"I swear, just two questions, you can answer them standing there. Just let me explain." A moment later I have my two questions. I get right to it. "KOFIV numbers don't add up."

"We know that." Yolette says and the atmosphere lightens a little. Maile, begins to speak. Yolette cuts her off, looks at me, "Get to the second question?"

"I just want a reaction. I want to know if you are in agreement." The women are looking at me. I feel my two seconds fading. "Why does the press listen to them?"

Yolette begins to speak, "They want to turn the gender issue into a type of spice," she says holding her hand up and rubbing her fingers together, "something sexy that sells fast and brings in money." And now, with the same professionalism that Olga Benoit at Sofa displayed, the walls begin to come down and this attractive, strong woman is saying, "It makes me really angry the way they portray Haitian men as if

they're standing on the corner waiting to pounce on me when I come by. I find that very disturbing."

"We went into the camps after the earthquake." Maile gets her chance to interject, "We spent six months in the camps. We could not verify the rapes they were reporting."

"We've been collecting data since 1984." Yolette adds. "Every rape that goes to the authorities comes to us too. We document them. We have data from 1984 to the present." She's coming around the end of the table toward me, "There were more rapes in 2009 than 2010."

She's standing in front of me now "I'm not saying there are no rapes," she says with the same air of defensiveness that I have come to find myself using when trying to explain the rape issue to people, "But you want to know what the big problem is?" Yolette pauses for a moment, "Conjugal problems," she says.

"Conjugal violence." Maile echoes, moving up behind Yolette, "Husband and wife. Jealousy."

"Acid in the face!" Yolette says with force. "Machete cuts!"

"You know what problems we have in the camps," Maile says, "Prostitution. A lot of prostitution."

Yolette settles back a little, pensive, "People are in greater need. The girls want something for themselves. But their families push them into it." I'm taking notes.

"Prostitution," Maile says again as if to punctuate the point.

"You know what other problems we have" Yolette is spelling it out, "Legal problems. No justice. It's not the stranger who rapes the girl. It's the big shot, a judge, or powerful well connected man. He's above the law. They won't prosecute him. He can have his way with a girl and there's nothing she or her family can do about it." I'm

scribbling away. This is the Haiti I know. “If a girl does make an accusation,” Maile says, “nothing happens, he’s still there, and then he persecutes her for it.”

“You know what else. We have women, their husband or a stepson rapes or seduces her daughter. The mother wants to do something about it. She comes to us. Then she realizes that she can’t do anything. She needs his support. She can’t get by without the money he makes. So she has to let it go. Those are the problems we’re having.”

OK. I got what I was after. I’m packing my notebook up. Zipping up the book bag. Yolette is back to the computer, calling on Maile, Maile is almost there, but then she turns, “you know what else is a big issue.” I’m unzipping my book bag, pulling the notebook back out. “These foreigners, they come here and they want to go into the camps and do therapy.” She looks stone-faced at me, “They don’t speak the language, they don’t know anything about the culture. They go in with a translator. You can’t do therapy with a translator. And they have their pet therapies. And they don’t want to work with the organizations and the people who have been doing this work, like us.” She is shaking her head. “They want numbers to justify their aid. And that’s why they go to KOFAVIV.”

And so there it was. The situation was indeed, “sick.” But it wasn’t me. I had the most credible feminist company one could hope for.^{ix}

HISTORY OF THE RAPE EPIDEMIC

Politically Motivated Rape: The 1991-1994 Military Junta, FRAPH, and the Right

As with orphans, in order to understand the post-earthquake “rape epidemic” you have to look back a few years, something that virtually no post-earthquake journalist did.

The world first became aware of *epidemic* levels of rape in Haiti in the early 1990s when UNICEF, Amnesty International and feminist scholars like Beverly Bell began to report alarming levels of violence against Haitian women. And there was indeed a very real escalation of violence in Haiti at the time, but not necessarily against women.

In 1991 the political right in Haiti seized power in a bloody military coup. A democratically elected president and former Catholic priest Jean Bertrand Aristide was overthrown and sent into exile, for the first time. Popular among the poor who comprise 80 percent of the Haitian population, slum dwellers took to the streets. The military reacted. They showered any crowd they saw with bullets. Human rights activists estimate as many as 3,000 people were killed. Three years of military junta and an international embargo followed. During this time, the elite created a paramilitary organization named FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti).

There's no question that FRAPH was part of a genuine attempt to provide a climate of security and peace in which economic development and prosperity could flourish in Haiti. But the beneficiaries of that peace and security were just as surely meant to be the elite, and not the poor and lower middle classes. There is also no question that for the poor and the political opposition FRAPH qualified as a paramilitary death squad. One of its three directors, Mireille Durocher Bertin, was spokeswoman and Chief of Staff for the junta's civilian president. She appears to have been the cleanest of the bunch. She would be murdered two years later, reputedly with strong evidence that behind her assassination were violent elements of the popular Aristide administration. But the two other directors say more about the agenda of FRAPH. They were: 1) Ex-special forces officer and reputed assassin Louis-Jodel Chamblain. Already renown as a death squad leader under the 1971-1986 Jean Claude Duvalier dictatorship, in the subsequent five years Chamblain would be implicated in at least five of Haiti's high-profile assassinations and massacres. And there was 2)

Emmanuel “Toto” Constant, another reputed assassin later to be convicted in absentia of a massacre in Haiti and who, with the protection of the CIA and the intervention of Bill Clinton, would get political asylum in the U.S. and then go on to be convicted by a New York Federal civil court of orchestrating the rape of three Haitian women. Toto is currently serving 12 to 37 years in a New York maximum security prison for masterminding a mortgage fraud scam. His most recent appearance in the media was as a featured profile in Jon Ronson’s 2012 bestseller, *The Psychopath Test*.

The inspiration for FRAPH reportedly came from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). After the international community returned Aristide to power in 1994, both organizations provided encouragement, funding and even protection to FRAPH members. But according to *The New York Times*’ Larry Rohter and leaked embassy cables, even as far back as 1991, when FRAPH was created, the U.S. Intelligence community had lamented their support, saying that FRAPH membership included a gang of “gun-carrying crazies” eager to “use violence against all who oppose it.” The U.S. military attaché in Port-au-Prince warned that: ^x

All over the country, FRAPH is evolving into a sort of Mafia... Its use of force to intimidate and coerce is sanctioned by the local military, which derives both political and especially material benefits from their relationship.^{xi}

FRAPH killed people. Its leaders were implicated in the murder of Justice Minister Guy Malary, Activist-Priest Jean Marie Vincent, and pro-Aristide advocate Antoine Izmery. FRAPH also reputedly used rape as mechanism of repression. One self-described FRAPH recruit who sought political asylum in the U.S. told immigration officials that, “When they kill and rape people, we (new members) are forced to sit and watch.... later in the initiation process you are forced to participate.”

And indeed, feminist activist Anne Fuller notes that in the first five months of 1994—while the junta still ruled Haiti—MICIVIH reported 66 instances of rape that were “of a political nature.” At about the same time Inter-American Commission on Human Rights documented 21 cases of rape “first-hand” (sic).^{xii} And Human Rights Watch/NCHR published a report called “Rape in Haiti: a Weapon of Terror,” concluding that there existed, “a campaign of systematic violations of human rights that clearly includes rape.” (HRW/NCHR 1994, 4).^{xiii}

Politically Motivated "Accusations" of Rape: Clinton, Aristide, and the Left

In 1994, then U.S. President Bill Clinton gave the accusations of politically motivated rape high priority when, on the eve of the U.S.-led invasion of Haiti, he described the Haitian Military Junta as, “The most violent regime in our hemisphere,” and referred to FRAPH’s, “campaign of rape, torture and mutilation.” He also referred to, “executing children, raping women, killing priests,” and he talked of the, “slaying of Haitian orphans” for no other reason than “harboring sympathy toward President Aristide” and because Aristide “had run an orphanage in his days as a parish priest.” Last, but by no means least, Clinton indicted “soldiers and policemen” for:

...raping the wives and daughters of suspected political dissidents—
young girls, 13, 16 years old—people slain and mutilated with body parts
left as warnings to terrify others; children forced to watch as their
mothers’ faces are slashed with machetes...^{xiv}

It was a grim portrait. But it’s not clear how much of it Bill Clinton really believed. In 1993 he froze the assets of elite Haitian business people financing the terror. But 15 years later, in 2009, those same individuals would become his business partners when he launched the Global Initiative in Haiti. Moreover, under his presidency the U.S. intelligence community would subsequently help FRAPH members get out of prisons, they would seize their records but refuse to give them to the Haitian tribunals who

sought to try FRAPH members, and according to some sources, the U.S. intelligence agencies would continue to keep FRAPH members on the payroll.

An idea of how questionable widespread politically motivated violence was, comes from the UN and the OAS themselves, precisely those international institutions lending credibility to the claims. In October 1993, the UN and OAS human rights mission—MICIVIH (International Civil Mission in Haiti-Mission Civil International Haiti)—hired 230 human rights specialists from 45 countries. They worked full time out of 13 offices located in all of Haiti's then nine departments (today there are ten departments) to scour the country for alleged victims and witnesses of politically motivated violence and rape.

Two years later, in August of 1995, one year after the return of Aristide and the re-establishment of his government, the mission still had 193 officers in 11 offices scattered throughout the country documenting abuse and seeking to legally redress political crimes committed during the junta years. Yet in all this time and with all those investigators, they were only able to come up with sufficient evidence to pass 142 of the cases on to court. After reviewing the evidence, the court accepted 73 of those cases. How many involved rape is not clear. But putting it into perspective, if all were rapes, it was less rape than during the three weeks of 2010 Spring Break at Daytona Beach, Florida—when 120 women were reportedly raped. This isn't to say a few atrocities are okay. But on the global scale of epidemic crime waves, it wasn't very alarming.^{xv xvi xvii}

As if all this wasn't enough to dim the image of massive systematic rape of the political opposition, within months of Aristide's return his administration created a Nuremberg-type trial called "National Commission for Truth and Justice (CNVJ)." Its goal was to "reveal the truths of what had occurred during the coup period." In other words, to verify if in fact there had been systematic beatings, rape, and killings. To help, they had four Haitian commissioners. And to give them international credibility, they

had three high profile foreign commissioners. They also hired six fulltime and eight part-time data analysts and 44 fulltime investigators, all with international credentials in human rights. They reviewed all the reports from human rights organizations, including the 142 cases from the UN/OAS plus more than 800 from Haitian activist attorney Camille Leblanc. They took cases from anyone else who was interested in filing them. When they got done they had 8,677 “viktim” who suffered 18,629 violations. It was a very serious undertaking.

But the “truth” of many of the claims was thrown into serious doubt three years later when the final report was, according to *Le Monde Diplomatique*, “kept hidden in the files of the minister of justice.” Hidden precisely by the Aristide government officials who were claiming that their supporters had been victimized. The report was never made public. Only the recommendations were released.^{xviii}

Why would leaders of a government whose members had been systematically raped and killed and that was now in power, that was under the protection of UN forces, that was hungry to discredit the right-wing *putschists* who had thrown them out of power and assassinated some their most prominent members, why would they refuse to publish the results of an intensive investigation into the atrocities committed against their supporters? The most plausible reason—and none other was ever given—is because too many of the claims were baseless. So the next question is: Why would citizens have bothered making up lies about being tortured and raped? Here’s why:

Rape Visas and Getting Out of Haiti

In the wake of the 1991 coup, there was widespread despair. The 70 percent of the population that had voted for Aristide and had seen in him hope for real change, had then watched that hope disappear behind a curtain of gunfire. Their savior-priest was sent into exile. And there was no denying that high ranking Aristide supporters were

subsequently targeted and persecuted. Some killed. Some raped. But at the same time the obvious political nature of what had happened presented a quite different and very realistic opportunity for the masses of poor: emigration.

Almost every one of the impoverished 80 percent of the Haitian population wanted then—as they do now—to emigrate to the United States. And for good reason. In Miami, an able-bodied man or woman could make \$50 to \$100 per day. In Haiti, school teachers were lucky to earn \$100 per month. And that's if they could find a job. There were only about three formal sector jobs for every 100 Haitian adults. This is to say nothing of the lack of medical care, welfare services, or quality education for their children. Thus, in a country where surveys prior to the coup revealed that 100 percent of respondents would like to have a visa to go to the U.S.—but most had no hope of getting one—and where in the previous 10 years some 30,000 had risked their lives at sea trying get there but had been arrested, imprisoned for years or sent back home, there was suddenly a massive opportunity to not just get a visa, but to get residency and financial aid along with it. They could seek political asylum. Haitians flocked to the seas.

In the six months following the coup 30,000 Haitians got on boats. That was as many as the prior 10 years combined. The vast majority fully aware that the U.S. Coast Guard would stop them, simply floated out into the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti and waited for the Coast Guard to come take them to the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Cuba, which at that time served as a detainment camp for Haitian refugees. Once there, they were interned until it was determined whether or not they qualified for political asylum. And there is the crux of the issue: 'if they qualified.'

In 1992, as a graduate student, I sat on a beach in Haiti for three weeks interviewing people getting on those boats. I tried to board one myself, but was prevented by a Haitian army sergeant. I then spent four days sitting in the Miami

Refugee Center with a room full of those who had gotten on the boats, made it to Guantanamo and then gotten shipped to Miami for an asylum interview. I sat at a table translating for a Notre Dame law professor and his three students. The Haitian asylum seeker would come over, sit down at the table and begin telling us his or her story. The process wasn't easy. An applicant had to prove that:

He or she fears persecution

He or she would be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, and/or social group, and

The government is either involved in the persecution, or unable to control the conduct of private actors.

In each case I reviewed, the story was convoluted. I'd translate. The Notre Dame attorney would shake his head. I'd tell the person they'd have to do better than that. The story would change. Those who could come up with a good story got through the asylum process. Those who could not, the majority, they got shipped back to Haiti.^{xix xx}

Of the some 64,000 Haitians the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted at sea between 1991 and 1994, about 17,000 got political asylum. It's unknown how many Haitians falsely— vs. legitimately—obtained visas with claims of political persecution, but we can't ignore the fact that violence—true or not—was the critical ingredient for success. For women the problem of demonstrating political persecution was especially problematic. Politics in Haiti is overwhelmingly a male endeavor, so a woman falsely seeking political asylum could not easily prove that she was involved in politics. The answer for some was a political activist husband on the run. Rape of his faithful wife was even better. Imagine a U.S. judge denying a Haitian woman who claimed to have been raped as retaliation for the democratic principles of her husband. For some it turned out to be a visa trump card. According to the U.S. Embassy's refugee coordinator at the time, Luis Moreno, 25 percent of asylum seekers were women and 5 percent of those claimed to

have been raped. That's not many. But the claims increased dramatically as the junta endured.^{xxi xxii xxiii}

Some readers are surely thinking, 'this is sick.' But bear with me. Politically motivated rapes were not just a trump card for those trying to get a visa. It was also a trump card for those sympathetic to the plight of Aristide and the persecuted political left in Haiti. Activists and journalists in the U.S., France and, not least of all, the Haitian politicians who were fighting their own onslaught of slander and accusations from the right wing *putschists* who had deposed them went on to use the rape of their partisans as ammunition in what became a war of propaganda to win the sympathy of U.S. lawmakers and discredit the opposition. As seen, even Bill Clinton, on the eve of the invasion of Haiti, would raise the specter of the military junta and their systematically "raping the wives and daughters of suspected political dissidents."^{xxiv}

And why not? For Clinton, he had to justify mobilizing the U.S. military. For Aristide and his partisans, in addition to having been forcefully thrown out of power, persecuted and a significant number of their ranks assassinated, they had been victims of an onslaught of propaganda from the educated Haitian elite and their allies in the U.S. intelligence community. Under the Bush administration the CIA falsely portrayed Aristide as mentally unbalanced flake who was dependent on psychotherapeutic drugs and had once been committed to a mental hospital, all of which a CIA analysis summed up in a closed door congressional session as the basis for labeling him a "Marxist maniac." And all of which was subsequently proven false.

Moreover, Aristide and the leadership almost certainly believed that there was widespread and systematic rape of their supporters. For them it made perfect sense. They had seen the paramilitary brutality first hand. And there were indeed substantiated rapes and assassinations. It may well be that Aristide and his administration were as surprised as anyone to find out from the Truth Commission that

there were not as many rapes as people were claiming, that many of the accusations lacked evidence of being politically motivated, or that others may not have occurred at all.

Not even U.S. government officials on the ground in Haiti seemed to believe it. In an April 12, 1994, leaked cable sent to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Ellen Cosgrove, human rights official at the U.S. embassy wrote:

The Haitian left, including President Aristide and his supporters in Washington and here, consistently manipulate or even fabricate human rights abuses as a propaganda tool. They see the truth as a flexible means to obtain a worthy political end. A case in point is the sudden epidemic of rapes reported both by pro-Aristide human rights activists and by the ICM [International Civilian Mission-MICIVIH]. For a range of cultural reasons (not pleasant to contemplate) [a reference to vigilante justice as seen in Bell's article], rape has never been considered or reported as a serious crime here. Hard-line, ideological Aristide supporters here regularly compare the human rights situation in Haiti to the carnage in Bosnia. We are, frankly, suspicious of the sudden, high number of reported rapes, particularly in this culture, occurring at the same time that Aristide activists seek to draw a comparison between Haiti and Bosnia.^{xxv}

And the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service didn't buy it either. Under the earlier Bush administration, the policy had changed from interning Haitians picked up at sea and giving them asylum interviews to taking them straight back to Haiti. When Bill Clinton was elected president a new surge of hope swept through Haiti. During the presidential campaign Clinton had criticized Bush for his "cruel" and "inhuman" practice of returning Haitian refugees. He made a campaign promise to "stop the forced repatriation of Haitian refugees." That promise had given enormous hope to Haitians who wanted to get into the U.S. But when Clinton came into office it did not take long for him to realize that most of Haiti was eagerly ready to emigrate to the United States. In the first year of Clinton's tenure, 25,302 Haitians were picked up at sea. Clinton had to try something else. Before long it was clear that he had to return

Aristide to Haiti. And so, as seen, to justify that return and the invasion of Haiti he too used the rapes, murders and alleged persecution from FRAPH. ^{xxvi}

With Aristide's return to power the hope of becoming a political refugee was extinguished. But for lower-income Haitian women a new opportunity soon appeared. Clinton had to atone for not having intervened earlier and stopping the "raping [of] the wives and daughters of suspected political dissidents." And that's when the seeds for the post-earthquake Haiti rape epidemic were first planted.

Rewards for Having Been Raped

After the Aristide administration was re-established in Haiti, the U.S. government began to give aid to victims of violent repression during the coup years. They gave monthly stipends, free medical care, free education, therapy and travel allowances. "Proof" was based on two witnesses who would attest that the woman had been assaulted. All totaled, 14,000 women would meet the conditions. Highest on the list were those victims of rape. The endeavor culminated in a massive Project: The Human Rights Fund (HRF). And it is here, with the HRF, that we can begin to understand how two semi-literate women from the slums—KOFAVIV founders Marie Eramithe Delva and Mayla Villard-Appolon—were a decade later able to orchestrate a massive anti-rape campaign built on what appears to have been mostly lies, and then convince activists, journalists and overseas donors that it was true.



A window into the evolution, inner workings, and corrupt origins of the Haitian Rape Epidemic was provided by Erica James who came to Haiti after the return of Aristide in 1994. Erica came to do research for her Harvard PhD in anthropology. She went to work with HRF, the Human Rights Fund that the Clinton administration

created to oversee aid to Haitian rape victims. She was interested in human rights abuses, rape, beatings, torture and helping victims recover from the trauma. She worked with the HRF for 27 months, between 1995 and 2000. When she arrived she was as credulous as Beverly Bell regarding those that Haitians called “viktim”.^{xxvii}

But as Erica began to perfect her Creole and to understand the culture and people she worked with, she uncovered disturbing truths. She documented the mechanics of aid. She deciphered patterns of corruption, manipulation and what she calls “viktim performance.” She took her analysis to penetrating depths, interweaving narrative and analysis and making logically supported conclusions with a degree of skill that makes the reader understand why today she is a professor at MIT. But to keep it simple—and the simplicity with which she described her discoveries is part of the intellectual beauty of her work—what Erica James found was that many of the woman had turned being a ‘viktim’ into a profession.

In an endeavor to maximize benefits, *viktim* in the HRF programs joined multiple victim groups in different neighborhoods. They forged prescriptions. They got meds and sold them. They falsified travel reports. And in one of those too common ironies of aid—like the big bad wolf dressed in Grandma’s clothing—*viktim* often turned out to be predators. Of the two *viktim* Erica was closest to, one turned out to be a violent, mafia type whose sons possessed automatic firearms and collaborated with their mother to collect fees from other *viktim* in exchange for access to child scholarship and feeding programs. The other woman was a reputed prostitute who used drugs with her sons. When James cut the latter from the clinic roles, the woman exploded in a violent outburst followed with calculated threats against Erica’s life, threats that were convincing enough that the project supervisor suspended Erica, forbidding her to come to work until the woman had moved out of the area.

Erica, who despite the revelations, was sympathetic to the women and their plight, confesses “an increasing difficulty to discern the difference between victim and aggressor.” She also began to discover contradictions. Some of the women who had come up with horrific tales of rape and beatings, had not been raped or beaten at all. They had fabricated the stories. In one case James recounted a woman who, faced with the possibility of losing support, fabricated a second story of being attacked. In other cases women who had been beaten by the police or neighbors for criminal acts they committed subsequently used the experience to validate their entry into the ‘viktim’ program.

Desperately poor women lying to get aid does not, in my opinion, make the women evil. This is the reality of poverty. It’s also the reality of holding out a life-preserver to someone drowning and then saying, “you can only have it if you fit our criteria: you must be a victim.” But, having had experiences similar to those of Erica, I can attest to it not being easy to face up to the ugly side of poverty and the twisted impact of many aid programs. It’s not easy to learn that some potential recipients will grovel, contort, lie, fabricate, threaten and even steal to get aid; that the most criminal among them will try to monopolize the aid altogether. And it’s certainly not easy to admit that you’ve been taken for a sucker. But not to admit that this can happen and to not come to terms with being duped and exploited is a form of burying our heads in the sand. That was Erica James’ dilemma.

It’s never clear which path she herself chose: recognize it or bury her head in the sand. For all her obvious brilliance and the honesty with which she documents her experiences and discoveries, one of the most startling aspects of Erica James’ analysis is the fortitude with which she clearly would rather not admit that many of the women were lying, not have had to stare that ugly side of poverty in the face. In her writing, James persistently excuses the women with explanations for what a more pessimistic

person would simply call lies. Despite revelations towards the end of the program of widespread incongruities in rape accounts—with some of the *viktim* outright changing their stories —James remained steadfast in defending the credibility of the women.

For example, as USAID cut back funds to the HRF program and HRF staff began to cut beneficiaries, an elderly woman who had claimed that her daughter had been raped and been collecting stipends on her behalf became desperate. She changed her story and claimed that she, and not her daughter, was the real victim of rape. James and other staff were incredulous at first. But instead of seeing this as a desperate attempt to hold onto travel allowances, free medical care, and food supplements, James attributes it to “shame that disappeared as the woman became more comfortable with the program.”

The exploitation of the humanitarian program was not confined to impoverished women. At a higher level, Haitian directors of the organization and *viktim* employees managed elaborate embezzlement schemes. Some of the Haitian doctors who treated *viktim* for ailments were running scams of their own. One doctor billed for 168 visits from a single patient. Another was caught multi-billing for the same patients and at 10 times the normal clinic rate. The foreigners and bureaucrats who ran the programs were entrenched in their own intrigue, busy politicking and spreading malicious gossip about one another in an effort to win and keep the U.S. government funding that paid their salaries. Politicians on both sides of the political spectrum—right and left—were using accounts from *viktim* and the aggregate numbers of rapes and beatings—many of which were, as seen, dubious—to bolster their own legitimacy and discredit the opposition.^{xxviii}

There were, indeed, very real rewards for the bureaucrats. Camille Leblanc, the human rights lawyer who had collected 800 victim cases (5 times what the UN came up with and very few of which made it to court) would become Minister of Justice in the Aristide Government. And once again, it was not just the Haitians. USAID/Haiti—

whose staff had to deal with this mess—was summing the whole program up as disaster, while USAID/Washington—trying to appease politicians in the U.S. who felt they should have acted against the military junta sooner—was presenting the program to congress as an example of success and a redemption of the suffering and repression inflicted during the coup years.

So it was, in sum, a type of massive aid and *viktim* feeding frenzy—another episode in the Great Haiti Humanitarian Aid Swindle—where people at every level were benefitting. But it was *viktim* and competition for donor money that catapulted the movement forward. In 1997, with the steam gone from the “Truth Commission,” Oxfam Canada and other Canadian NGOs funded the International Tribunal Against Violence Against Women. Another Nuremberg type trial, this one put on by NGOs, it was modeled on the genocide and ethnic cleansing tribunals in Rwanda and Yugoslavia. The Haitian and U.S. feminists who had the final say in designing and organizing the Tribunal used the motto, “We are taking the muzzle off.”

During the trial women gave their stories from behind black screens. And there was an Evangelical twist to the performances. During the trial the women used the popular church performance that U.S. Pentecostal missionaries introduced to Haiti in which the church sermon is periodically interrupted by “prophets” who stand up and announce they are having “visions” of people engaged in sinful acts. But, instead of prophets, the trial was periodically interrupted with live updates on women who were being raped or taken to the hospital. James, who was sympathetic, nevertheless found the performances disturbing. But she could not articulate exactly why.

“Viktim” vs. Aid Workers: Fighting for the Spoils

Back at the HRF program headquarters where Erica James worked, the program had been revitalized with a fresh injection of \$4 million in aid funds. An intense

competition between directors and *viktim* broke out. *Viktim* were aware of the corruption at the high levels of the Human Rights Fund administration. They were aware of the big salaries and the significantly greater sums of money embezzled before it got to them. They identified those funds as destined for them. They saw themselves as the rightful recipients. And they entered into a competition to get what was theirs. As the funds dried up, *viktim* united to create a forum and formally accuse the directors of trying to kill them with bad medications. There were death threats. Robberies occurred with inexplicably precise timing. And there were unsolved killings. In the highest profile killing, the Italian USAID consultant who together with a U.S. colleague had put the program into place was murdered.^{xxix} Days later, in a culminating episode, an armed mob of *viktim* marched on the program headquarters in search of the two administrators. They carried with them weapons and pairs of handcuffs. Fortunately for the administrators, they had foreseen the possibility of violence and moved out of the office.



Lest what James described with the HRF be understood as an isolated phenomenon, the same process was occurring across a wide spectrum of USAID funded *viktim* programs. *Viktim* had become a veritable social movement. Incensed by the suspension of their subsidies, members from 14 programs created a type of congress. They began picketing government offices and holding political sit-ins where they demanded their rights to aid. In May 1999, more than five years after its members were reportedly raped or tortured, the *viktim* movement culminated with a massive march on the national Palace, a sit-in, and a declaration published in the newspaper and distributed on fliers throughout Port-au-Prince that concluded, “Long live good living conditions for *viktim*! Long live justice and reparations for *viktim*!”



The point is so critically important that I again want to make it clear that while some, if not many, Haitians have disingenuously insinuated themselves into the aid pipeline, and while there is definitively something irksome about a movement veiled in exaggerations, untruths, and outright lies, there is a profound and defensible logic to what was happening. Whether we are talking about individuals who falsely claim to have been tortured or raped to get visas or we are talking about parents who present their own children as orphans or child slaves, there is, then as now, a logic underlying the emerging economies of deceit and falsehoods that exists across the entire spectrum of aid in Haiti. With the U.S. neo-liberal policies—discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10—many traditional economic opportunities for the poor in Haiti, such as most production of agricultural exports, had disappeared. Faced with a dwindling economy, declining living standards, and massive amounts of aid provided from abroad but channeled through NGOs that define specific criteria to qualify as a victim—such as orphan, *restavek*, or rape survivor—those impoverished women who were lying and exaggerating were trying to survive and adapt to the emerging aid economy. And the only way they could do that was meeting the criteria that NGOs set to be an aid recipient. It's not enough to be poor. It's not enough to have had your government undermined and your economic livelihoods destroyed. You want a piece of the new pie? You've gotta be a victim, of some kind.

But some have bigger visions and bigger appetites than others and it is precisely in the *viktim* movement described above that KOFAVIV co-founders Marie Eramithe Delva and Malya Villard-Appolon got their start. Both were from Martissant, where James had worked, the geographic and social fulcrum of the movement. Both claimed to have seen their husbands beaten to death for political activism. Both were raped because of it. Both later joined an organization called *Fanm Vayan de Martissant* where

both became active organizers during the *viktim* campaigns and recipients of aid to *viktim*. And both would soon put their skills to work founding KOFAVIV.

The Founding of KOFAVIV

By the second coup and ouster of Aristide, in 2004, the war of accusations and lies between the right and the left had taken an ironic twist. It became the right accusing the left of extreme repression.

The quintessential example of the former FRAPH supporters reincarnation into humanitarian activists was G184, a self-defined “union of Haiti’s civil societies” whose leaders were Reginald Boulos, Andy (André) Apaid, Charles Baker, and Olivier Nadal. All four were foreign passport holding factory tycoons who had spent much of their lives overseas. A decade earlier, all had been supporters of the military junta, all had been labeled Morally Repugnant Elite (MRE) by then U.S. president Bill Clinton, all had their overseas assets frozen. Now, ten years later, the G184 leaders managed to convince overseas advocacy groups such as *Alternatives* and *Rights & Democracy* that they were part of “a grassroots coalition and promising civil society movement.”

From their platform as persecuted and repressed lovers of liberty, the richest people in Haiti—indeed, among the richest in the world—complained bitterly about the human rights abuses of the Aristide government. Haiti’s radio stations and few newspapers—most of which were owned by the elite—would publish an article. U.S. newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* would quote the article. Then the same Haitian newspaper that published it in the first place would cite *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as having denounced Aristide as a “dictator” or of having sponsored some vicious act. They would typically report demonstrations against Aristide as vastly larger than they really were, feeding to the overseas press the image of massive opposition. At times the struggle became absurd.

In one instance a collection of the richest entrepreneurs in the country gathered in Haiti's poorest and most pro-Aristide ghetto to discuss his ouster. It was as if the Rockefellers, Bushes and Kennedy clans descended on Harlem to discuss the impeachment of Barrack Obama. They left under a shower of stones only to then write on a "We the Haitians" pro "civil sector" website, a piece entitled:

"Haiti; uncommonly vicious tyrant Jean-Bertrand Aristide uses his weapons of mass destruction against democracy and human rights advocates"

www.wehaitians.com, July 12, 2003

The Holy Grail in all this was winning the sympathy of the overseas public and governments. And the most effective propaganda turned out to be the same that Aristide leadership had used 10 years earlier: rape. Both the G184 and the Haiti's National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR), the best funded human rights organization in the country, were now "placing the blame for the rapes squarely on Aristide's Lavalas Family party." In a May 16, 2004 article in the *Miami Herald*:

Hundreds of women and girls—some younger than 6—were raped, often by police and pro-Aristide gunmen called *chimeres*, with impunity, according to human rights observers and local women's shelters.

They say the situation for the last two years had already rivaled the terror that the military regimes and death squads of the early 1990s inflicted on women.^{xxx}

In other words, instead of Aristide's partisans accusing the military and death squads of being rapists, the ultra-rich conservative right was now accusing Aristide and his impoverished partisans of being rapists.

For the *viktim*, it didn't really matter who was raping them. Or rather, I should say, it didn't matter who they were accusing of raping them. The objective was no longer political. It was economic. "Viktim" wanted reparations. In September of 2006, hundreds of *viktim* took to the streets again in a march called, "Standing up to Defend our Rights."

This time leading them was Marie Eramithe Delva and Malya Villard-Appolon—the latter who now claimed to have been raped a second time in 2003. As the leaders of KOFAVIV they declared: ^{xxx}

We, women victims, many of us from the poorest groups of the population, have decided today to say no to all forms of violence and discrimination to which we have been subjected during the last 200 years. We are victims of rape. Armed groups have forced their way into our homes, stolen everything we owned, raped us and our daughters, burned our houses, and threatened us. Many of us were forced to leave our homes and have been sleeping on the mountainside. We have lost our commercial goods, and we do not have the means to send our children to school. When we open our mouths to speak, we risk being threatened or killed. ^{xxxii}

Weak Data

Was it true? Surely some of it was. But how extensive were the exaggerations and propaganda in this second wave of rape?

One of the odd things about the earlier Haiti rape epidemics is that if we rely on the actual numbers being reported then even the figures that advocacy agencies and journalists were citing were not enough to substantiate claims of a rape crisis.

Back in the 1990s, in comparison to other countries, the UN numbers—those including all the accusations of political rape—placed Haiti as having one of the lowest rape rates on earth. Indeed, gender organizations were having a tough time getting numbers to support their outrage. In 1999, two years after the Rape Tribunal, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, came to Haiti to examine the rape issue. She reported back to Geneva that between November 1994 and June 1999, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Women’s Rights registered 1,500 cases of sexual abuse and aggression against girls between six and 15 years of age. Given that Haiti had about 8.5 million people during that period, 650,000 of them girls

in that age range, that translates to one in every 433 of them having been sexually abused, about 0.23 percent. If we can depend on the credibility of these numbers—and that’s precisely what journalists writing about the rape in Haiti were doing—that means that compared to their counterparts in the United States, Haitian girls were safer, far safer. In the U.S., one in 14 fifth to eighth grade school girls report having been sexually abused. Doing the appropriate math, that’s 17.5 times the Haitian figure. Even U.S. boys were at far greater risk of rape than Haitian girls. One in thirty-three U.S. boys report having been abused: 7.5 times the figure for Haitian girls.

Moving to the years 2004 to 2006, the epoch of the second great Haiti rape epidemic, we see the same things. These years were considered the most violent since the 1991-1994 military junta. Indeed, worse. Formally trained paramilitary troops had overthrown the government. They had decimated and demoralized the police force, some of whom were now kidnapping and robbing. Yet, the rightwing paramilitary troops themselves had never gotten the rewards and recognition they anticipated, leaving them armed, ambitious and just as disgruntled as the former police. Members of paramilitary groups on the other side, those that had worked with the ousted government, were embittered, demanding the return of their democratically elected president and expecting to be attacked at any moment. Both the right-wing government and the left-wing opposition provided firearms and financial support to gangs—or depending on your perception, ‘rebels’ and ‘community defense brigades.’ It was a mess. Most people in Port-au-Prince at the time and since consider it as a moment of near total breakdown in the society. Crime and organized violent conflicts were at an all-time high. There were impoverished sectors of the city that even United Nation tanks dared not enter. The number of kidnappings, murder, and rape reportedly soared.^{xxxiii}

So how bad was it?

At the end of this era, in 2006, Wayne State University graduate student Athena Kolbe and her professor Royce Hutson conducted what came to be known as the “Lancet Survey”: a 1,260 household survey of violence in Port-au-Prince, the results of which got published in the prestigious British medical journal, *The Lancet*. It was the only published attempt of a statistical sampling strategy used to estimate rape and violence in Haiti for the post-coup period. What did they find?

Kolbe and Hutson estimated that in the two years following the coup there had been 35,000 sexual assaults. It was horrific.

Over a two-year period prior to the survey 3.1 percent of all females had been sexually assaulted; one-half of these were girls 18 years old or younger. That’s bad. Horrible. Specifically, 35,000 rapes over a period of 22 months among a Port-au-Prince population of 1.5 million translated to 1,073 rapes per 100,000 people per year.^{xxxiv} Putting that in perspective, it’s 80 times the average 12.5 per 100,000 people per year documented by the UN in 2002 for 50 reporting countries; and it was 9 times the highest rate in the world, that of South Africa at 115 per 100,000.^{xxxv}

But there were some problems.

First off, Kolbe, it turned out, was an Aristide partisan and activist leftist journalist who the year before publishing the survey had changed her name from Lyn Duff to Athena Kolbe, all the while continuing to publish pro-Aristide news as Duff. And her findings were radically biased in favor of Aristide, suggesting that the new right government was using rape as a political weapon, an argument that flew in the face of what the mainstream press and even KOFIV had been saying.

There is no question that Kolbe/Duff was inclined to manipulate, exaggerate and even outright lie about her data. That would become clear in subsequent studies and academic business ventures. I devote considerable attention to the extraordinary and,

what some would call, criminal shenanigans of Kolbe/Duff in the following Chapter. She is a prime example of just how little importance the humanitarian organizations give to sound data and research and how eagerly they will adopt anything that supports their donor drives, no matter who comes up with the data and how they really go about getting it.

Moreover, even if one were to accept Kolbe and Hutson's data, there was a huge question hanging over it, one they and everyone else seemed to ignore. The question was this: if the survey had even been carried out then—after 10 years of *viktim* politics and campaigns; after all the free education, medical care, stipends, and travel allowances for *viktim*; and considering the fact that their survey had been conducted in precisely the same neighborhoods as the *viktim* benefit programs—how many of those interviewed were, with hope of gaining benefits, disposed to lie and say that they or someone in their family was raped? We don't know that answer. It's interesting that in a subsequent survey (The University of Michigan Survey), 20 percent of those respondents reporting they were raped in Kolbe and Hutson's 2010 study reported they were also victims of rape in 2004. And it's interesting that while other studies and anecdotal evidence suggests that the overwhelming number of sexual assaults were perpetrated by people known to the victim, more than 75 percent of Kolbe/Duff's and Hutson's respondents claimed to have been attacked by criminals they did not know. But in the end we do not know the answer to how many of Kolbe/Duff and Hutson's respondents lied in hopes of becoming recipients of aid for *viktim*. We can assume that in the poorest neighborhoods of the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, where USAID had engaged in a multi-million dollar *viktim* compensation program enduring six years, some respondents would be quick-thinking enough to tell a surveyor who arrived out of nowhere at their doorstep that, yes, there were *viktim* in the house. ^{xxxvi}

But more to the point here, data from elsewhere suggested far less rapes than what Kolbe and Hutson reported. In 2006, SOFA (Haitian Women’s Solidarity Movement/*Solidarity Fanm Ayisyen*)—the same organization where Olga Benoit had first explained to me that KOFAVIV data had “mannnyyy” problems—recorded 155 victims of rape seeking help at their 21 centers across Haiti; 77 were girls under 18 years of age. SOFA reported similar figures for 2007 and 2008. If journalists saw this data—and they certainly must have—they should have been commending Haiti for having one of the lowest incidences of rape on earth. We are talking about a population of nine million with half the number of rapes in one year as expected during three weeks of spring break at Daytona Beach, Florida (see page 31).^{xxxviii xxxix}

Indeed, one really has to wonder just what the hell was going on. Haiti was being made out to be among the worst places on the planet for women. The only evidence of true rape epidemic was highly questionable, produced by an activist journalist Aristide supporter who changed her name and was ensconced in local politics. Meanwhile, all the data coming from credible Haitian feminist organizations and the Haitian police suggested that the U.S. was, at best, about the same, and possibly far worse than Haiti.

The answer to what the hell was going on was the same as with orphans and child slaves: *viktim* was an aid opportunity, and for far more beneficiaries than only those claiming to have been raped.

KOFAVIV: Viktim Takes Control

In 2003, in the midst of the resurgence of rape and accusations, KOFAVIV’s Villard-Appolon, now 46 years old, was raped again. That is when she and Delva decided to found their own organization. The new organization was designed to eliminate the NGOs, foreigners and other middlemen and middlewomen from the aid chain. They called it by the acronym KOFAVIV, which in English stands for

“Commission of Women Victims for Victims” (*Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim*), in other words victims helping victims—not doctors or administrators or NGOs. And by corollary, victims controlling the money that donors were sending for victims. They were first and foremost an organization of rape victims. But not taking any chances, they also defined themselves on their website as, “an organization made up of former child slaves.”^{xl xli}



From the point in time when Delva and Appolon formed KOFIVIV and into the years leading up to the earthquake, NGOs, international advocacy groups, and UN organizations came up with rape figures more inflated than ever. As with the *restavek*, they found a voice in journalists who were eager for news about Haiti and its poverty, misery, and violence. In December 2007, Alex Renton and Caroline Irby of Britain’s daily newspaper *The Guardian* led the pack saying, “According to the UN, 50 per cent of young women in the violent shantytowns of Haiti have been raped or sexually assaulted.” That at a time when the UN had not even entered Haiti’s largest slum (Cité Soleil) in three years. They followed up with accounts of men with ball bearings embedded in their penis (something common in prisons around the world and probably originating in Australia), gangs dedicated exclusively to rape, even lesbian gangs dedicated exclusively to rape. An interesting aside to all this is that Renton and Irby’s trip to Haiti was “hosted” by the British NGO Oxfam and at the end of the article readers were invited to “go to find out more about the organisation’s work in Haiti and its worldwide programmes tackling violence against women, visit www.oxfam.org.uk.” where, of course, they could donate money to fight the Haiti rape scourge.

And then came the earthquake.^{xlii xliii xliv}

THE RAPE EPIDEMIC: POST-EARTHQUAKE

The post-earthquake rape epidemic came after the excitement of the rescues passed, right as the radically inflated orphan numbers became unsustainable. It was then that the rape epidemic and the onslaught of articles seen earlier exploded onto the scene. The suggestion being that the crises came in sequence, the press wearing out one horrifically sensationalist theme and then pouncing on another. And for anyone who came to see for themselves if the rape epidemic really existed, KOFIV was there to prove it.

In March, San Francisco lawyer Jayne Fleming came to Haiti to interview rape victims. KOFIV introduced her to “plenty of them,” Fleming told the press, “I’ve been here five days and have spoken to 30 (rape) survivors including a dozen under 18. Their stories are horrific. I would be catatonic.” And why exactly was Fleming interviewing rape victims? She was with a team of volunteer lawyers from the U.S. who had come to “identify Haitians who may qualify for humanitarian parole to live in the United States.” Once again, the opportunity for visas was being dangled before a desperate population.

I have to interject here. Once again, I’m not against poor people getting visas or even lying to get them. If I were impoverished, stuck in Haiti and facing the high odds that at any moment one of my children might be stricken with typhoid, malaria, or cholera, I would lie myself stupid trying to get them to safer shores. I’m only trying to understand and explain how the rape epidemic was a creation of NGOs and the media and why so many impoverished women were willing to go along with lying. Nor do I think that there was a deliberate conspiracy at the administrative levels of NGOs to create a rape epidemic. I believe it was simply one more case of lies and exaggeration being in the immediate interest of everyone concerned with garnering sympathy and donations. And what’s so fascinating is how these interests can, despite little to no

substantial evidence, unite with almost scientific precision. By the end of 2013, with the help of international lawyers such as Flemming, Haitian grass-roots organizations—mostly KOFAVIV- and NGOs such as CARE and the many others scrambling to associate themselves with KOFAVIV—had prevailed on The Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to get 40 “victim” humanitarian paroles to the U.S. and Canada. It wasn’t an enormous number of people, not when you consider the thousands of victims that Kolbe and Hutson had estimated existed and that KOFAVIV was documenting at that very moment. But when one considers the impact on those people who got the visas and, more importantly, the impact on the hopes of those who had not, it must have had the effect of a mega-million National lottery. Those who got the visas were allowed to take family with them. The 40 who went brought 105 sons, mothers, fathers and siblings with them; full visas for the whole family, a total of 145 of them. And when they got there they got money, housing, and free education stipends.

Once again, I’m not against helping rape victims. And I’m certainly not calling into question the motives or sincerity of lawyers such as Flemming. The objective is to understand what was driving all those *viktin* who were not really victims. And in this case the answer seems fairly clear: News of KOFAVIV collaborators winning visas must have rocketed through the camps, “Free visas for the whole family!” “Free plane fares!” “Free housing when you get there!” “An allowance!” “Free education!” The KOFAVIV ladies must have been heroes alright. And a great many families must have been sitting around the camps wondering, ‘should one of us try our luck as *‘viktin’?*’^{xlv}

Validation from the Experts and Scholars

Just as it was seen in earlier chapters when the threat of child slavery and sex traffickers fueled UNICEF and Save the Children donations, graphic newspaper articles and human rights reports from gullible but articulate journalists and aid workers who

had just stepped off the plane helped keep the aid for rape victims pouring in. The principal source of misinformation: KOFAVIV. Giving them credibility were the prestigious U.S. feminist organization MADRE, the impressive sounding Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti or IJDH), the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), and law schools at the University of Virginia and the University of Minnesota.

KOFAVIV followed up on Beverly Bell's soon famous March 25 article, "'Our Bodies are Shaking Now': Rape Follow Earthquake in Haiti" with an expanded July 12 encore "Our Bodies are Still Trembling: Haitian Women's Fight Against Rape."



Kolbe/Duff was also back on the scene. With her came Robert Muggah of the Small Arms Survey and six other University professors, none of whom had any prior experience studying or researching Haiti. Indeed, Kolbe herself, after 12 years working in Haiti and living with orphans, did not speak Creole or French. But backed with financing from the United Nations and the University of Michigan, Kolbe/Duff and her followers jumped on the rape band wagon. Significantly outdoing her 2006 study, Kolbe and the professors concluded that in the six weeks following the earthquake women, girls, toddlers and babies living in Port-au-Prince were being raped at an annual rate of seven percent of all females. The Democratic Republic of the Congo—where Muggah also worked and where 12 percent of women have been raped at least once in their lifetimes—pales in comparison. But for anyone who knew Haiti and was paying attention, the findings were exceeded in absurdity only by Kolbe and the professors' claim they had actually conducted the survey. Here's what they say they did.

Two months before the earthquake Kolbe and Muggah had carried out a survey of 1,800 randomly selected Port-au-Prince households. They now claimed to have revisited the exact same households, found the occupants and interviewed them. Let me make this clear: six weeks after the earthquake they sent the same interviewers to visit the same respondents to evaluate post-earthquake conditions and incidence of crime, and they found 93 percent of them, and all in the space of two weeks. This, was a moment in time when 30 percent to 40 percent of the Port-au-Prince population was living in camps, another 25 percent had fled the capital for the countryside, and 10 percent had left for Miami and the Dominican Republic. No one questioned their claim. I'll get back to Kolbe, et al., and their suspicious survey findings in the next chapter. For now, let's finish with the rape epidemic. ^{xlvi} ^{xlvii} ^{xlviii} ^{xliv} ^{li}

Humanitarian and Journalistic Pay Dirt

The rape epidemic had been a bonanza on par with the orphan issue. Literally every major NGO and several UN agencies collected money to combat gender-based violence. But by summer and fall of 2010, Haiti was fading in the news. Rape in the camps was only game for journalist stragglers who couldn't afford to get to Iraq. But then, in 2011, with the approaching anniversary of the earthquake and renewed media interest in Haiti, it began all over again. With KOFAVIV directors Delva and Appolon acting as sources of information and guides, Amnesty International investigators duly wrote a shocking report that began with the graphic quote from a rape survivor:

In our camp we cannot live in peace; at night we cannot go out. There is gunfire all the time and things are set alight... Where I live, I am afraid. We are afraid. We can be raped at any moment... We are forced to live in misery.

Amnesty found that most assailants were "armed men and youth gangs roaming the camps after dark." The report described women who had been raped on two and

three different occasions, families where grandmother, daughter and granddaughter had all been raped. It was journalistic pay dirt again.

“Report: Rape Cases in Haiti Quake Camps on the Rise”

FoxNews.com, Jan 6, 2011

“Women in Haiti’s squalid refugee camps face rampant rape”

Yahoo News, January 6, 2011

“Rape at ‘crisis’ level in Haiti earthquake camps”

BBC, January 13, 2011

“Rape runs rampant in wake of Haiti’s 2010 earthquake
that devastated country, report finds”

New York Daily News, January 23, 2011

“Rape flourishes in rubble of Haitian earthquake”

Los Angeles Times, February 4, 2011

Narrative Shifts and Journalists’ Awards

By 2012 KOFVIV directors were no longer lamenting to journalists that co-director Delva’s daughter had “almost been raped” after the earthquake. Instead a new horror had come to light. In the months after the earthquake, the daughter of the other KOFVIV co-director, Malya Villard-Appolon, *had* been raped. Although she apparently did not learn about it until two years after it happened, for Villard-Appolon it was a devastating blow. Twice raped herself, her husband, the father of her daughter, had died from injuries inflicted defending her from a rapist, which was another story that had changed. Instead of Villard-Appolon having been raped in 1993 because of her husband’s politics, now, with the emphasis on rape for the sake of rape, the story played up in the press was that her husband had been killed *so that she could be raped*. With the belated 2-year revelation that her daughter had been raped after the earthquake, Villard-Appolon lamented to CNN journalists, “I can’t describe to you how I felt when I heard about that, because I was a victim,” she said. “I started asking myself what kind of generation I came from. Am I cursed?” And not unlike the case of co-

director Delva's daughters who when they complained to the police about having been raped after the earthquake were told, "go tell it to the president," when Villard-Appolon took her daughter to the police one of the police in Villard-Appolon's daughter's case said, "girls are so promiscuous." ^{lii}

Appolon's courage and stamina in the face of all this abuse were the subject of great international fanfare. Already named Hero of 2010 by RH Reality Check—an organization "that exists as a resource for evidence-based news"—CNN now named her one of 2012's top 10 heroes and gave her \$50,000. Throughout the year, CNN continued to laud her and KOFAVIV in articles with titles such as "Portrait of a Hero," while painting Haiti to be what journalists have always painted it to be, hell on earth with titles such as, "Culture of Rape in Haiti."

Other personal stories had changed as well. By year two after the earthquake the story of Timafi, the 4-year old who had been raped, had changed. In her original *Huffington Post* version Bell—who speaks fluent Creole and has been working in Haiti for 30 years—had left no room for ambiguity, saying specifically that, "The following one was relayed by Helia Lajeunesse, a child rights trainer with KOFAVIV," and then going on to recount:

Lajeunesse's granddaughter, four-year-old Timafi Youyoute (not her real name), lives outside the town of Jeremie with her mother, her mother's boyfriend, and her newborn baby sister. On March 14, Timafi's mother sent her to the neighbor's house to buy a jar of rice. As she was leaving the neighbor's yard, 17-year-old Dekatrel Jacqué offered to take her back home. Instead, he took her to the cemetery. There, he covered the little girl's mouth with his hand and proceeded to rape her.

Bell herself was adamant about the accuracy of this story. She wrote me an e-mail message assuring me that she knows the child and the family "quite well and thus followed her attack and its aftermath closely." So there's no reason to expect Bell got it wrong. But a year and a half later, on November 21, 2011, grandmother Helia

Lajeunesse would revise the story. In an interview with Angela Robson of the U.K.'s *The Guardian*, she recounted:

“The conditions were very bad,” says Helia (Lajeunesse). “We were drinking out of puddles and sleeping outdoors. At night, armed gangs came into the courtyard, terrorising everyone.”

Helia was so alarmed that she sent her granddaughter to stay with a relative in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp on the edge of Port-au-Prince. The same week, the unthinkable happened. The five-year-old child was raped. “I have come to terms with what happened to me,” Helia cries out. “But how can we ever come to terms with this? He tore her little body apart.”

A tip that Helia might be prone to wild exaggeration is that no one can drink out of a puddle in Haiti and expect to survive. Nor do sane Haitians ever try. But never mind that. And never mind that Timafi had been retro-transported from Jeremie, 150 miles away, where she was raped in the first account, and into a Port-au-Prince IDP camp, where she was raped in the second account, it was horrible. And it gets worse. In the new version of the story we learn that Timafi herself was conceived through rape. Grandmother Helia Lajeunesse had been raped in 2004; like Villard-Appolon, during the rape her husband had been killed; and her 17-year old daughter had also been raped. It was from that encounter, the rape of the 17-year old daughter, that the child Timafi, was born. The journalist, Angela Robson, would win an award for the new story. As for KOFIV, it was one more unimaginably painful story that helped maintain what had become massive donor windfalls.

The Financial Side of Epidemic Rape

No one will ever know how much money came in because of the rape epidemic—KOFIV is not saying (I asked). But we do know that by 2011 KOFIV had become a veritable fund raising juggernaut. People like designer Rachel Roy, Macy's CEO Terry

Lundgren, and Martha Stewart visited their office.^{liii} Hillary Clinton honored them in a speech.^{liv} Organizations that partnered with them, showcased them on their webpages and pled for money on KOFAVIV's behalf included the USA for the UNHCR (United Nations agency that assists refugees in war-torn countries UNHCR),^{lv} Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights^{lvi}, International Rescue Committee^{lvii}, Michael Moore^{lviii}, Global Giving^{lix}, Global Fund for Women^{lx}, Partner's in Health^{lxi}, Digital Democracy^{lxii}, Frontline^{lxiii}, and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.^{lxiv}

The income for their U.S. partner MADRE went from \$795,674 in 2009 to \$2.9 million in 2010. In 2011 the Avon Foundation gave KOFAVIV and MADRE \$286,613.^{lxv} The World Bank gave them \$500,000 through their "Rapid Social Response" Multi-Donor Trust Fund—money that was never accounted for. United States Institutes for Peace (USIP) would give them \$150,000.^{lxvi} USAID gave them an unknown sum of money.^{lxvii} As seen, in 2012 Villard-Appolon personally received \$50,000 as her CNN hero award.^{lxviii lxix}

And indeed, from the perspective of NGOs and journalists, Marie Eramithe Delva and Malya Villard-Appolon were heroes. KOFAVIV had done as much or more than any other single organization to crank out an avalanche of lies and keep all the aid organizations afloat in a river of donations from good hearted and horrified citizens overseas who wanted to help Haiti's rape victims. KOFAVIV contributions were a golden centerpiece of the Great Haiti Humanitarian Aid Swindle.



Am I a dirtball for suggesting that rape victims could be lying to get aid dollars? Perhaps. But I'm not the only one to notice inconsistencies. Indeed, I've been investigating this issue long enough not to *think*, but to *know* they're lying. And as the

years have gone by more and more people have given me more and more reason to believe so.

Once in 2012, I had dinner with a well-known female reporter for a major Canadian paper. I was sharing with her my insights about the rape epidemic, explaining my findings about KOFATIV, growing more uneasy as I went. When I was finished, she said that she did not agree with me. But she then confessed that she had decided not to use KOFATIV as a resource because, “The woman who was my informant was clearly lying about what had happened to her.” When I asked her if I could use the story and her name she said no.

Just as with the death count, there has been at least some redemption. Journalist Ansel Herz, who had once been embarrassed for me because of my questioning the rape epidemic in front of his activist-journalist colleagues and for whom I had a lot of respect because of his intrepid coverage of Port-au-Prince in the week after the earthquake, would write me on January 8, 2013, and say:

Had an interesting conversation a few nights ago that’s probably of interest to you. A Haitian friend of mine works with a small, serious NGO on providing safe houses and support to victims of sexual violence in Port-au-Prince. Real victims. He says one of the biggest problems they’re encountering now is that KOFATIV, and to a lesser extent FAVILEK, keep referring them to people with made-up stories—women and girls who’ve been told to say they were raped, in order to get “ed” [aid]. He’s worked with these groups a long time and was once very supportive, but has become increasingly skeptical, even questioning the KOFATIV founders’ claims that they were raped. ^{lxx}

So-What, If It’s True or Not?

Should we keep silent about such lies?

To challenge a woman who claims that she has been raped is a delicate and difficult task. Researchers in developed countries generally estimate that 2 to 8 percent

of rape accusations are false. But challenging those who lie is fraught with political consequences. To persecute a woman for making a false rape accusation opens the door for abuse in genuine cases. We open the door for the rapist to persecute women who really have been raped. And we frighten those already frightened and traumatized victims who really were raped. But what if 80 to 90 percent or more of rape claims are false?

Although I'm not sure what the difference in traumatic impact between male and female rape is, I can imagine how I would feel if my wife or one of my daughters were raped and I couldn't get the police to listen because there were hundreds of 50-year-olds with 10 children each disingenuously shouting that they and their daughters had been raped too.

And what about women who exploit those women who make the claims?

In March of 2012 I was in Kenya on a UN consultant job. We were visiting Masai bead makers. Sitting in a fake Masai hut, candle lights flickering as we awaited an exquisite not-very-Masai dinner, I found myself deep into an explanation about how corrupt I thought KOFIVIV was. Forgetting who I was talking to—famous designers and a famous feminist, herself a rape victim, and who does not want me to mention her name—I rambled on, even using KOFIVIV's name. At a certain moment I realized that the famous feminist might well work with KOFIVIV. And indeed, when I was done, to my horror, she began to speak. I was sure I was about to get slammed. But instead, she said, "I think you're probably right about them. We gave them bead work for their rape victims. They never paid them." When she asked Delva and Appolon to justify taking the money they said, "it was therapy."

Oh Those Silly Journalists: Getting Raped to Feel Better

On June 29, 2011, just as with the high death count numbers and the orphan calamity, it seemed the dam was breaking around the rape epidemic. Journalist Mac McClelland, her mind swimming with dramatic interpretations of the sexual violence she thought had been going on around her in Haiti, fell into a panic. And she wrote about it. Her recollections of the rape and lascivious, leering-eyed men everywhere was a nightmare appropriate for a zombie horror movie script. Upon returning home, the memories so haunted McClelland that she eventually had to resolve them through violent sex with a male friend. She had her friend rape her. Then she wrote it up and published it in the online magazine, *The Daily Good*.^{lxxi} The reaction was swift and explosive. After 18 months of unbridled tabloid quality journalism run amuck, thirty-six female journalists who had worked in Haiti—with the names of Michelle Faul and Beverly Bell noticeably absent—suddenly seemed to realize that something was amiss. They wrote a letter to the editors of the *Daily Good*:

To the Editors:

As female journalists and researchers who have lived and worked in Haiti, we write to you today to express our concern with Ms. McClelland's portrayal of Haiti... we believe the way she uses Haiti as a backdrop for this narrative is sensationalist and irresponsible.

Between the 36 of us, we have lived or worked in Haiti for many years, reporting on and researching the country both long before and after the earthquake. We each have spent countless hours in the camps and neighborhoods speaking with ordinary Haitians about their experiences coping with the disaster and its aftermath. We feel compelled to intervene collectively in this instance because...In writing about a country filled with guns, "ugly chaos" and "gang-raping monsters who prowl the flimsy encampments," she paints Haiti as a heart-of-darkness dystopia, which serves only to highlight her own personal bravery for having gone there in the first place. She makes use of stereotypes about Haiti that would be better left in an earlier century: the savage men consumed by their own

lust, the omnipresent violence and chaos, the danger encoded in a black republic's DNA.^{lxxii}

Sadly, these damaging stereotypes about the country are not uncommon...

Ms. McClelland's Haiti is not the Haiti we know. Indeed, we have all lived in relative peace and safety there...As women who know and love Haiti, we are deeply troubled by Ms. McClelland's approach.

...While we are glad that Ms. McClelland has achieved a sort of peace within, we would encourage her, next time, not to make Haiti a casualty of the process.^{lxxiii lxxiv lxxv}

It was a quintessential metaphor for the whole press corps treatment of Haiti, indeed, the humanitarian aid community as well. Every female journalist in Haiti worth her salt got together to complain about misrepresentation of the 'rape epidemic.' Yet, no one pointed out or seemed to pick up on the punch line: that the rape epidemic had been a fabrication of the journalists and aid agencies themselves.

Getting It Straight from the Source: Visiting KOFAVIV

It's 19 months after the earthquake. I am sitting in the rather comfortable office of KOFAVIV co-director Marie Eramithe Delva. With me is a delegation of union representatives from Canada led by Roger Annis, founder and chairman of CHAN, the Canadian Haiti Action Network. USAID's Office of Food for Peace has kicked me off the rolls of consultants. The death count fiasco has left me too politically hot. I can't find work—at least for the time being. And so once again hungry for a job, I've hired myself out as translator and driver—what some would call a "fixer." Delva, seated behind a large Mahogany desk, is explaining that, "KOFAVIV has been very successful. There are no more rapes."

"So the rapes have diminished?" I ask, forgetting my role.

"No, they've increased."

“They’ve increased?”

“That’s just our figures for where we work. That doesn’t include figures from other organizations in other camps.”

So her point, I’m inferring, is that KOFAVIV has eliminated rape where they work, but the epidemic is growing elsewhere. For me that’s tough to swallow.

“Do you have those figures?”

“No”, she says, “but rapes have definitely increased,” and Delva goes on to talk about something else. As she’s talking, I’m thinking back to Bell’s article. Bell reported that of 3,000 KOFAVIV members, 300 were killed in the earthquake and virtually all of them lost their homes. I had found that tough to swallow as well: 300 members—10 percent—and virtually every one of the surviving 2,700 members had lost their home. With 0 to 1.5 percent of NGO staff in Haiti at the time killed and 20 percent of homes in Port-au-Prince qualifying as either destroyed or unsafe to enter, these were some suspiciously high figures. Out of curiosity—and now with the death count controversy looming over my recent past—I wonder if they still claim that 300 of their 2,700 members were killed. So, politely interrupting the people I’m translating for, I ask her, “how many people in your organization died in the earthquake?”

“According to a survey of our 3,000 members,” says Delva, “1,950 of them were killed.” ^{lxxvi} ^{lxxvii}



When we come out of our meeting with Delva, a woman is standing by the door. She directs the delegation to a woman and a baby who are seated in the lobby. I go out into the hall and begin plotting how I’m going to get a cigarette. While I’m standing there contemplating the street below and trying to spy a cigarette vendor, one of the

women in our 'delegation' comes up to me and sidling up close, she asks me in a low voice, "do you have any money on you?"

"Why?"

"For the mother and baby."

"What's wrong with them?"

"The baby was raped last night."

"How old is the baby?"

"One year?"

"I don't want to sound mean or suspicious, but what's a raped baby doing here at the office? This isn't a clinic."

"It seems strange doesn't it."

"Look, I don't know how you challenge someone when they tell you they're holding a baby who was raped, but if it was my baby I wouldn't be sitting around in the local club house with it. I'd be at a clinic."

"There's something real fishy about this eh. Like it's here for us."

"Yeah."

And then I reached in my pocket, fished out my wallet and gave her a \$100 bill. And she gave the \$100 bill to the woman and the baby. How can you not help a baby who's been raped?

The Unthinkable

On the evening of August 22, 2013, as the rape epidemic seemed to fade into journalistic and donor memory, the unthinkable happened. At the home of Mayla Villard-Appolon, dogs were poisoned. Gunmen attacked her home. Armed men would

come to the center and brandish their guns. Both she and co-director Delva would receive dozens of threatening phone calls and text messages. Reminiscent of 2010, men stalked their daughters, clearly seeking retribution for their mothers' activism and their own boldness and assertion of *viktim* rights. It was time to go. By mid-2014 both KOFAVIV founders had humanitarian visas to the U.S. for themselves and their families. They went to live in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania.

I would learn later from an activist who had worked with Villard-Appolon and Delva that the threats, intimidation and violence came not from mysterious men defending their right to rape women, but from associates disgruntled that the women had not shared the spoils. ^{lxxviii}



Afterword: An Unintrusive Survey

In November of 2012, almost three years after the earthquake, I finally got a chance to design a survey that would estimate rapes in Haiti. CARE International hired me to do a survey of the impact of their post-earthquake gender programs in Leogane—ground zero for the earthquake—and nearby Carrefour—with a population of 500 thousand, one of metropolitan Port-au-Prince's most heavily urbanized and reputedly violent slums.

In an effort to avoid signaling to respondents they may have a chance to capture aid—and to avoid intruding on their personal lives—we employed a technique different than that used in the University of Michigan and Geneva Small Arms Survey study cited earlier. Instead of asking specifically about the respondent or people in the household, we asked, 'if, since the earthquake, the respondent knew anyone at all who

had been raped.’ We operationalized the definition “know” so that we could use it in a more elaborate statistical inference of “network analysis” (how many people does a person actually know). Specifically, we explained to respondents that, what “to know someone” meant was:

- You recognize the person and the person recognizes you
- You know their name and they know yours
- You have talked to them at least once since the earthquake
- You could contact them now if you needed to.

What we found was that of 1,643 respondents, only six percent even knew anyone who had been raped since the earthquake. That was over a period of three years. In other words, about 1/3rd of the men and women knew a person who had been raped in the three years since the earthquake than Kolbe et al. would have anticipated *had* been raped, i.e. based on the rate they claimed they found six weeks after the earthquake. When we applied network analysis to the responses we estimated that, if accounts from survey respondents reflected the real incidence of rape, then in the three years after the earthquake the rate of rape for Carrefour and Leogane, two of the hardest hit areas of the earthquake and Carrefour one of the most heavily urbanized and crime infested areas of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, was 6.32 rapes per 100,000 people. In comparison, the rape rate for the U.S. in 2010 was 27.3 per 100,000: four times our estimate for Leogane and Carrefour.^{lxxix lxxx}

ⁱ Andresol also had inexplicably upped the number of escaped prisoners from the 4,000—the figure that he had been telling reporters for the 17 days since the earthquake—to 7,000.

ⁱⁱ Journalists had actually coined the term “rape epidemic” two years earlier in referring to rape in Haiti. The term was about to be reborn.

ⁱⁱⁱ A couple of other notable headlines that would come out in the ensuing week:

“Rape Blights Lives of Haiti’s Quake Survivors” *Reuters* (April 1, 2010 Katherine Baldwin)

“Rape on the rise in Haiti’s Camps” *The Independent*, February 7, 2010

^{iv} But whether there was an inordinate number of rapes or not, the gender experts working for the UN and aid organizations certainly believed there was. And journalists began transmitting their message with frightening eloquence: “referring to sexual violence,” Liesl Gernholtz wrote in *The Daily Beast* on March 9, “you can just feel it when you walk into these camps.”

^v The story, like all the rest, comes from KOFAVIV. And it has varying versions. Here’ Bell’s version:

“The following one was relayed by Helia Lajeunesse, a child rights trainer with KOFAVIV. Lajeunesse’s granddaughter, four-year-old Timafi Youyoute (not her real name), lives outside the town of Jeremie with her mother, her mother’s boyfriend, and her newborn baby sister. On March 14, Timafi’s mother sent her to the neighbor’s house to buy a jar of rice. As she was leaving the neighbor’s yard, 17-year-old Dekatrel Jacqué offered to take her back home. Instead, he took her to the cemetery. There, he covered the little girl’s mouth with his hand and proceeded to rape her.”

As can be seen, in Bell’s version the child lived and was raped in Jeremie, a town far away from Port-au-Prince. Bell assured me that she knows the child and the family “quite well and thus followed her attack and its aftermath closely.” So there’s no reason to expect Bell got it wrong. On the 21st of November 2011, Angela Robson of the UK’s *The Guardian* would write,

“The conditions were very bad,” says Helia (Lajeunesse). “We were drinking out of puddles and sleeping outdoors. At night, armed gangs came into the courtyard, terrorising everyone.”

Helia was so alarmed that she sent her granddaughter to stay with a relative in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp on the edge of Port-au-Prince. The same week, the unthinkable happened. The five-year-old child was raped. “I have come to terms with what happened to me,” Helia cries out. “But how can we ever come to terms with this? He tore her little body apart.”

I’m not saying that the Grandmother is lying but it is difficult to reconcile when the world’s major newspapers report radically different versions of the same story regarding a topic that is so sensitive

and important. And it does not help the credibility of the people who are claiming to be victims. Indeed, Helia Lajeunesse was a victim of rape in 2004. During that rape her 17 year-old daughter was also violated and from the encounter the child, Tamafi, was born. So we have three generations of rape victims here. And Lajeunesse is also one of the outspoken directors of KOFVIV. Is there some reason the stories have to change?

^{vi} I've lived on and off in Haiti for 20 years and yes, Haitian men can be sexually aggressive; are encouraged to be sexually aggressive. It's like a cultural institution. I've written academic articles about it and have a chapter in a book devoted to these themes. And I have no doubt that women get raped in Haiti. But all these inconsistencies don't jibe. And bringing a Haitian woman down. Beating her. Gang raping her. It surely happens, but that's something neither common nor culturally "Haitian."

^{vii} The one similarity in the two stories is that in both Faul and Bell's accounts the KOFVIV directors' daughters had gone to the police. In Bells account they got insulted. The police told them to "go tell it to the President." In the Faul account the police said they had so much work to do with other rapists that they didn't have time for them.

^{viii} "Are there rapes in your camp?" I am talking to 22-year-old Johanne Louis. A young woman who spent two weeks working with me trying to help coordinate NGOs in Leogane, a story I'll get to shortly. We became close, have a good rapport, and she is candid in telling me about the gang violence in the area. She once told me about how a gang took over the neighborhood she lived in five years before and evicted her family from their home. She now lives in a camp in Cite Simone, which is part of City Soley, what the UN considered at one time the most dangerous neighborhood in Port-au-Prince. It's rife with gang activity, so dangerous in the wake of the 2004 Aristide coup that for three years neither the Haitian National Police nor the United Nations Peace keepers could enter the area. When they finally did enter, 350 UN soldiers shot 22,000 rounds of ammunition in 7 hours. No one knows how many people they killed. It has also long been considered part of the rape capital of Port-au-Prince.

"No, there are certain places where they wait. Like by the U.S. embassy where you first met me. Everyone knows that's a bad place. They wait at night."

"They have guns?"

"I suppose."

"But you're talking about something that was going on before the earthquake?"

"Yes."

"Is it worse now?"

"People say that it is."

"Have you ever had any problems?"

"No."

"Do you know anyone who has been raped?"

“No. But I’ve seen girls crying.”

“How do you know they’d been raped?”

“That’s what people said.”

“But you and none of your friends have been raped?”

“No.”

^{ix} Before I left Yolette said that, “I don’t like that you just showed up. But” she says with a hint of a smile, “you know why I said yes to your ‘two seconds’?... Because, one, you speak creole and that’s very rare with all these foreigners coming here: that makes me very happy. And, two I see that you’re interested in hearing the truth.”

^x For U.S. Embassy cables calling FRAPH ‘gun toting crazies’ see, Rohter, Larry. 1996. “Cables Show U.S. Deception on Haitian Violence.” *New York Times*. February 06.
http://www.haitiaction.net/News/nyt2_6_96.html

^{xi} For FRAPH and Constant, see:

Nairn, Allan. 1995. “Our Payroll, Haitian Hit.” *The Nation* magazine, October 9. Find it on *The Third World Traveler*: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Foreign_Policy/HaitiOct95_Nairn.html

In October 2006, a Federal Court in New York ordered Constant to pay three women raped by FRAPH a total of \$19 million in damages, in a case brought by the Center for Justice & Accountability. The court declared that “Constant’s conduct was clearly malicious. As commander of FRAPH, Constant founded and oversaw an organization that was dedicated principally towards terrorizing and torturing political opponents of the military regime. His direction – or at a minimum, approval – of FRAPH’s state-backed campaign of violence constitutes an inexcusable violation of international law and merits a stiff punishment.”

See: The Center for Justice & Accountability, Case Summary, Doe v. Constant.

In 2008, Constant was convicted of mortgage fraud and sentenced to 12–37 years in prison. According to NYC Department of Correctional Services Inmate Information, as of February 3, 2011, Constant was in custody at the Coxsackie Correctional Facility.

For the Psychopath test, see: “The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry” A 2011 book by Jon Ronson in which he explores the concept of psychopathy, along with the broader mental health “industry” including mental health professionals and the mass media. It spent the whole of 2012 on United Kingdom bestseller lists and ten weeks on the *New York Times* Best Seller list.

^{xii} Fuller, Anne. 1999. “Challenging Violence: Haitian Women Unite Women’s Rights and Human Rights.” *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars*. Special Bulletin on Women and War. Spring/Summer. ACAS website: <http://acas.prairienet.org>

^{xiii} Human Rights Watch, Rape in Haiti: A Weapon of Terror, 1 July 1994, p. 4. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a7e18.html>.

^{xiv} For Clinton's speech on the restoration of Aristide, see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/09/16/text-of-president-clintons-address-on-haiti/1bd152b0-10e9-48aa-a995-c688c19f4583/>

^{xv} I want to make it clear that I am not denying there were atrocities. In the interest of those people who really were victims of the aggression and/or whose family members were killed, who had to watch, this is not a repudiation of those incidences. Such incidences certainly occurred. FRAPH did launch a campaign of terror. The issue is the extent of that campaign of terror and the exaggeration from the opposition and uses to which the opposition put the exaggerations. And one point that should be underscored is that for those who care about the real victims, lumping thousands and even tens-of- thousands of charlatans in with them denies those individuals justice. Rather than simply turning the perpetrators into victims, it multiplies, not just the number of victims but, by corollary, the number of plausible perpetrators. Put another way, because they are claiming so many victims, the assumption is that there are a many criminals, far more than exist. The sum impact is that it makes those real victims relatively insignificant, just one more number in a sea of suffering and abuse.

And when one gets to the actual numbers of substantiated cases of government violence, it's astonishingly low compared to the U.S.

For example, in the years, 1993 to 1996, citizens of the Big Apple made 16,767 complaints against police officers. The complaints ranged from illegal search, to home invasion, beating, rape, and killing; 690 came with enough evidence to be substantiated. Discipline was almost non-existent. With 264 substantiated complaints in 1995 alone, none of the police were tried for a crime, only 52 were disciplined, four of these suspended, and a single one, just one, was fired; seventy percent were merely scolded or lost one day of vacation. Two years later, 1997, is when the world was treated to the famous incident of two New York City police sodomizing Haitian immigrant Abner Louis with the handle of a toilet plunger and afterward forcing it down his throat, something that police department spokespeople tried to cover up telling the press that his injuries were the result of, "abnormal homosexual activities." (In the end, that one was difficult to cover up. Abner spent several months in the hospital getting his intestines sewed back together). How often this kind of behavior occurs in the heart of the world's greatest democracy is not clear. In a study that included 12,000 randomly sampled citizens from throughout U.S. cities, victims of police abuse or brutality reported filing complaints in only 30 percent of cases. Dateline News found that half of those in New York City who did complain met systematic resistance, rudeness, and non-compliance from the police officers who were supposed to receive their complaints; a small number of them were subsequently harassed, beaten, and even falsely arrested for invented crimes.

So getting back to Haiti, several hundred human rights workers collecting data of abuse and systematic repression over a period of three years and coming up with 73 qualified cases is not very alarming.

Moreover, if one were a defender of the military junta—and make no mistake, I am not—they might point out that in the U.S. the blame for police brutality is usually not placed on the mayor, or governor or president. It's usually seen as a fault in the system that permits such behavior. Moreover, in view of U.S. rates of police brutality, one might argue that the 1991-1994 Haitian military Junta deserved lavish praise for having kept abuse to rates far, far below that of developed New York City.

See: Revolutionary Worker #982. 1998. "If You Dare Complain About Police Abuse...: The record of New York's Civilian Complaint Review Board." November 15. <http://revcom.us/a/v20/980-89/982/ccrb.htm>

See also: *Complaint Review Board (CCRB)*. 1993. This is the twenty-sixth status report on the general operations of the New York City Civilian as reorganized pursuant to Local Law No. 1 of 1993, effective July 5, 1993. Pages 196 to 205.

^{xvi} For Spring Break data, see: Disalvo, David. 2010. "Why the Spring Break Rape Total in Daytona Beach will Keep Rising." March 19. <http://trueslant.com/daviddisalvo/2010/03/19/why-the-spring-break-rape-total-in-daytona-beach-will-keep-rising/>

Daytona Beach Post. 2010. "Daytona Beach: Florida's Rape Capital." March 22. <http://www.daytonapost.com/2010/03/daytona-beach-floridas-rape-capital.html>

^{xvii} When Aristide returned to power, his government urged people in the popular neighborhoods to form defense groups, called *brigad vigilan*. They were essentially different political ends of the same phenomenon. And according to U.S. memo entitled *MO Overlapping Membership*, whether right wing like FRAPH of the 1991 to 1994 era, or supposedly left-wing Aristide supporters, they were often the same men. Brigad had become like "development" organizations, similar to CARE, or CRS, or UNICEF. Neighborhood toughs and thugs turned the opportunity into a profession. [for the Memo, see: James, Erica. 2010. "Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti." *California Series in Public Anthropology*, p. 267]

^{xviii} The International Civilian Mission reported 66 instances of rape "of a political nature" between January and May 1994. (MICIVIH, June 17, 1994.) The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in a May visit documented 21 cases first-hand. Human Rights Watch/NCHR published "Rape in Haiti: a Weapon of Terror," based on a February 1994 investigation, reporting "a campaign of systematic violations of human rights that clearly includes rape." (HRW/NCHR 1994, 4)

A report published by the MICIVIH after Aristide's return shed light on the identity of the rape victims. Most (52 percent) of the women rape victims received by the MICIVIH's Medical Unit during one sample period were close relatives of activists, while only 18 percent were activists themselves (defined as members of organizations or political parties). In another sample of men and women

victims of different types of abuse, 64 percent of men were activists and 20 percent sympathizers, while corresponding figures for women were 30 percent and 40 percent. (MICIVIH, 1997, 34-38).

See: Fuller, Anne. 1999. "Challenging Violence: Haitian Women Unite Women's Rights and Human Rights." *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars*. Spring/Summer. Special Bulletin on Women and War. ACAS website: <http://acas.prairienet.org>.

^{xix} But try as I might have, none of those hopeful U.S. immigrants got through at the time. I do, however, know two "refugees" who made it through the process. Both were men. One had killed a crazy woman in the streets of Port-de-Paix. She had smashed the windshield of his taxi-pickup truck. He got out and smashed her head in with a crowbar. She died. He was arrested and imprisoned. When he finished paying his way out of prison, he took his documentation papers, got on a refugee boat and then used those papers to support the lie that he was being politically persecuted back in Haiti. The other story was similar. It involved my first friend in Haiti. We met in 1990 in the remote town of Mole St Nicolas where he was a Captain in the Haitian military. During the second year of the junta he had a conflict with another officer. Both were sharing kickbacks from boat loads of immigrants leaving Haiti (i.e. to leave they had to pay the military.) In a fight over the money my friend pulled a pistol on his fellow officer. He soon found himself locked up, once again providing the paper work he would subsequently use to support the story that he was being politically persecuted back in Haiti.

^{xx} For those who think it's terrible that people would lie about persecution for a visa, why not lie? What kind of father, brother, son, sister, mother, or daughter would you be if you didn't do everything you could to get through the immigration process and start helping you're impoverished family back in Haiti? And while I did not see the greater implications of what was unfolding in front of me at the time, what kind of person would I have been if I didn't try to help them try to figure out how to do it?

^{xxi} Some sources for the asylum issue:

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. 1992. "Impact of the September 1991 Coup." Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada. June 1.

Gerard, Phillipe. 2004. *Clinton in Haiti. The 1993 US Invasion of Haiti*. Palgrave MacMillan: New York.

Migration News. 1994. "Clinton Changes US Policy on Haitian Refugees" June. Volume 1, Number 5

New York Times. 1992. "UN Has Asylum Plan For Haiti Boat People." December 3.

Wasem, Ruth Ellen. 2011. "U.S. Immigration Policy on Haitian Migrants Specialist in Immigration Policy." *Congressional Research Service*, May 17.

^{xxii} The Bush administration and the U.S. immigration service were not fooled. Most of the refugees were returned. On May 24th 1992, eight months after the coup, on the heels of 3,546 Haitian boat people picked up at sea in the space of two weeks, the Bush administration decided to start taking

the refugees directly back to Haiti. They simply steamed straight to Port-au-Prince and put them off on the wharf. But with all the political pressure in the U.S., the policy soon changed and many got a chance to prove if they were among those persecuted. They got “screened” to determine if they had been politically persecuted. But with all the political pressure in the U.S., the policy soon changed and many got a chance to prove if they were among those persecuted. Many had no idea what that meant. But some did. Of the 10,490 of those pre-screened got temporarily “paroled” into the U.S.

Even in 1992 and 1993 years of the military junta, the vast bulk of “boat people” were not direct victims of police or military brutality. Nor were most the poorest of the poor. They were working class citizens who could scrape up enough money to pay board on a boat and take their chances at getting granted asylum when the U.S. Coast Guard picked them up.

See: Frelick, Bill. 1992. “Haitians At Sea: Asylum Denied,” <https://nacla.org/article/haitians-sea-asylum-denied>

Frelick, Bill. 1993. “Haitian Boat Interdiction and Return: First Asylum and First Principles of Refugee Protection.” *Cornell International Law Journal*, Volume 26, Issue 3. Symposium. Article 6. <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1324&context=cilj>

^{xxiii} Other than the one brief and not very specific reference in the main text, I could find no numbers on how many female asylum seekers claimed specifically to have been raped.

^{xxiv} See: “Congressional Record Selective Leaks Of Classified Information On Haiti (Senate -November 05, 1993),” a series of articles regarding CIA’s propaganda campaign against Aristide. (Accessed 1/17/15)

Smith, Ashley. 2004. “The New Occupation of Haiti Aristide’s Rise and Fall” *International Socialist Review*, Issue 35, May–June 2004. <http://www.isreview.org/issues/35/aristide.shtml> (Accessed 1/17/15)

^{xxv} Sciolino, Elaine. 1994. “Embassy in Haiti Doubts Aristide’s Rights Reports.” *New York Times*, May 9.

^{xxvi} *Baltimore Sun*. 1994. “The Haiti Zig-Zag,” July 8.

^{xxvii} See Chapter 5: “Beurocraft, Accusation and the Social Life of Aid.” in *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*, by Erica James. 2010. Berkeley: University of California Press.

^{xxviii} *The Miami Herald Sun*, May. 16, 2004 “In Haiti’s chaos, unpunished rape was norm”

^{xxix} For Erica James, the names of many of these people should be kept secret and she used pseudonyms. So I too will avoid names here. But I was good friends for a time with the head of the

HRF who was best friends with the murdered consultant. The HRF director swears that the death of the consultant had nothing to do with the HRF. Consultant had started a nightclub, what became at the time the most popular night club in Petion Ville (where today is located Barak's). The consultant returned home one Friday night with his wife. His own security guard and local young man killed him and tried to rob what they expected to be a large payroll. The man who actually did the shooting was, according to the HRF director, only 16 years old. The HRF director dismisses him as an Aristide supporter who had been armed by a pro-Aristide neighborhood brigade.

^{xxx} For the Miami Herald excerpt about rape in 2004 rivaling that of the early 1990s but being carried out by Aristide sympathizers and militants, see: Mazingo, Joe. 2004. "In Haiti's chaos, unpunished rape was norm." *The Miami Herald*, May. 16. <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/haiti/rape.htm>

For a summary of articles critical of the Haitian media monopoly and techniques used by the so-called "Civil sector" See: <http://www.forumhaiti.com/t6057-the-canadian-media-in-haiti>

Also see, Hallward, Peter (2007). *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment*. London: Verso Books, ISBN 1-84467-106-2

^{xxxi} For Villard-Appolon's testimony regarding being raped, see: "Text: Testimony on Gender-Based Violence in Haiti" by Malya Villard-Appolon Before the UN Human Rights Council (English and French)

Oral Intervention of Malya Villard-Appolon June 7, 2010:

<http://www.ijdh.org/2010/06/topics/womens-issues/text-testimony-on-gender-based-violence-in-haiti-by-malya-villard-appolon-before-the-un-human-rights-council-english-and-french/> (Accessed 1/18/2015)

^{xxxii} "Standing up to Defend our Rights" In *The Haiti Support Group Briefing*, No. 59, November 2006. http://www.haitisupportgroup.org/index.php?option=com_rsfiles&view=files&layout=view&tmpl=component&path=haiti_briefing_59.pdf
Accessed 1/18/2015

^{xxxiii} Journalists were also often perplexed to find that some gang leaders had 'sweet smiles' and 'look more like a high school students than Al Capone,' that neighbors saw them as defenders of the poor who distributed money to those most in need. They also negotiated with the government for services. In one neighborhood a thirty-foot high monument was built in memory of Dred Wilme, one of the most notorious gang leaders. I'm not saying they were all sweet and innocent men. But the more penetrating journalist accounts depict something different.

For example, see: Tayler, Letta. 2006. "Haiti No Law, No Order." *Newsday.com*, January 1. <http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.culture.haiti/2006-01/msg00008.html>

^{xxxiv} Obviously, how many rapes occur in any particular country and over any particular period of time will depend on how rape is defined. The definitions vary widely. In some countries penetration is necessary. In other countries any forcible sex is considered rape. It is not clear how Kolbe and Hutson defined rape. They did not say.

^{xxxv} For the U.S. rape statistics: In a 1996-1997 nationwide study, the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice (2000) found that year 3.1 percent of undergraduate women reported surviving rape or attempted rape.

See, Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of intimate partner violence against women: "Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey." Report prepared for the *National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

In a 2004 nationwide study of 25,000 college women Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss & Weschler (2004) found that 4.7 percent experienced rape or attempted rape during a single academic year.

See: Mohler-Kuo, Meichun Sc.D., George W. Dowdall, Ph.D., Mary P. Koss, Ph.D., and Henry Wechsler, Ph.D. 2004. "Correlates of Rape While Intoxicated in a National Sample of College Women." *Journal of Studies On Alcohol*, January

In a 2007 nationwide study of 2,000 college women Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley found that 5.2 percent experienced rape over the course of a year.

See: Kilpatrick, D.G., Acierno, R., Resnick, H.S., Saunders, B.E. And Best, C.L. 1997. "A 2-year longitudinal analysis of the relationships between violent assault and substance use in women." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65: 834-847.

^{xxxvi} Perhaps more interesting than anything, and more revealing is the data human rights agencies were citing when calling attention to the new Haitian rape crisis. I am not drawing from only a single report. The same agencies cited similar and more sober findings for subsequent years. As mentioned in the main text, in 2006, SOFA (Haitian Women's Solidarity Movement/ Solidarity Fanm Ayisyen) recorded 155 victims of rape seeking help at one of their 21 centers across Haiti; 77 were girls under the 18 years of age. For 2007 SOFA reported 238 documented rapes; 140 of which were girls under 18; in 2008 they recorded 105 rapes, 58 of which girls under 18 years of age. While any rape is too many, compared to developed countries these are minor percentages. For example, 238 rapes would be 1/20 of 1% of the females in Port-au-Prince at the time. And making the figures more extreme, they were talking about the entire country.

SOFA. 2008. "Human rights abuse and other criminal violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti : a random survey of households."

SOFA. 2007. "Femmes-Filles Victimes De Violence Accueillies Et Accom-pagnées Dans Les Centres Douvanjou De La Sofa De Janvier À Juin." (a summary can be found at: <http://radiokiskeya.com/spip.php?article4095>)

SOFA. "Cas de violence accueillis et accompagnés dans les centres d'urgence de la SOFA de juillet à décembre 2006, janvier 2007."

See: SOFA. 2006. "Violence envers les femmes et les jeunes filles, Rapport Bilan. Rapport Bilan I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII."

OAS. 2009. "Le Droit Des Femmes De Vivre Libres De Violence Et De Discrimination En Haïti" OEA/Ser.L/V/II. doc. 64 10 mars 2009 Original: anglais.
<http://www.cidh.oas.org/pdf%20files/HAITI%20WOMEN%20REPORT%20FRE-FINAL.pdf>

^{xxxvii} The name of the Kolbe/Hutson post-earthquake report was "Assessing needs after the quake: Sexual violence, property crime and property damage." The full citation is, Kolbe, A.R., Shannon, H., Levitz, N, Muggah, R., Hutson, R.A., James, L., Puccio, M., Trzcinski, E., Noel, J.R., Miles, B. (2010). "Assessing Needs After the Quake: Sexual Violence, Property Crime and Property Damage." *Geneva: Small Arms Survey.*

http://new-research.socialwork.wayne.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1712:assessing-needs-after-the-quake-sexual-violence-property-crime-and-property-damage&catid=295:publications&Itemid=58A Study by the University of Michigan and the Small Arms Survey

But elsewhere they published it as:

Kolbe, A.R., Hutson, R. A., Shannon, H.A., Trzcinski, E, Miles, B., Levitz, N., Puccio, M., James, L., Noel, J.R., Muggah, R. (2010). "Mortality, crime and access to basic needs before and after the Haiti earthquake: a random survey of Port-au-Prince households." *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 26 (4): 281-297.

^{xxxviii} Another source of data comes from a 2006 Haitian Ministry of women study in which 10,757 women aged between 15 and 49 were surveyed. I couldn't get the survey. But Amnesty International reports that 10.8 per cent of girls between 16 to 19 years had been "victims of sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner." That's bad. But it too is no cause for alarm. In the United States 9.5 percent of girls have "survived a completed or attempted rape." Moreover, the study was carried out at the end of what was widely seen as one of the most violent upheavals in recent Haitian history.

See: "Ministère à la Condition Féminine et aux Droits des Femmes, 2007. Étude "Une réponse à la violence faite aux femmes en Haïti. Étude sur la violence domestique et sexuelle en Haïti."

Amnesty International Facts And Figures And Case Studies Based on the November 2008 report, "Don't Turn Your Back on Girls: Sexual violence against girls in Haiti."

<https://archive.amnesty.ie/sites/default/files/report/2010/04/Combined%20facts%20and%20case%20studies%20for%20report.pdf>

^{xxxix} So the best evidence from the worst era in recent Haitian history suggests that rape of and violent acts against Haitian women and girls living in Port-au-Prince are on par with the U.S. average and, by the way, significantly better off than the impoverished U.S. population among which two-thirds of all reported rapes occur.

^{xi} The journalists, many of whom had never visited Haiti and who knew little to nothing about what was really going on here, depended on the advocacy groups like KOFIV for information. They thus were using the aid activist “experts” to garner information to write articles that revealed the shocking details of the Haiti rape epidemic, thereby misunderstanding and then misrepresenting what was going on to the world outside of Haiti. The aid organizations were then turning around and citing the journalists articles they had informed as evidence that the problem was epidemic. The extremity of this misrepresentation of pre-quake aid articles and how far into the mainstream press the trend flowed is exemplified by Alex Renton and Caroline Irby, who as seen in the main text were hosted by Oxfam who then led them from one aid-activist expert to another, all of whom were fishing for support and more than happy to get a stamp of international credibility from one of Britain’s main daily newspapers. These two journalists published their first article December 2, 2007 in Britain’s *The Guardian*. The article is pitched as, “Alex Renton reports from a Caribbean hell crippled by poverty and torn by gang violence, and talks to the women who live in daily fear of sexual abuse.” In the article Renton tells us that, “According to the UN, 50 per cent of young women in the violent shantytowns of Haiti have been raped or sexually assaulted. Of the handful of victims who seek justice, a third are under 13.” It’s not clear where he got the data since the UN estimate were not even that high.

See: Renton, Alex and Caroline Irby. 2007. “The rape epidemic.” *The Guardian*. December 2. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/dec/02/women.features3>

^{xii} KOFIV website accessed on September 15 2011.

^{xiii} Renton and Irby says that rape has only recently become a crime, which is true, and it’s a point that activists often cite with regard to gender based violence in Haiti. But the most logical reason that rape was historically omitted from legal sanction was not because Haitian men tolerate rape, but because they do not. Indeed, the gist of these types of arguments are so utterly absurd that it’s difficult to understand how they make it into print. Haitian fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, and lovers don’t want men raping the women they love. They don’t want it to happen any more than men in the U.S. want it to happen to the women they love. It’s through attacks on the sanctity of the women that paramilitary organizations sometimes sought to wound and demoralize their spouses and fathers. But in Haiti this is a recent political phenomenon. In cases of criminal rape, as seen in the camps, men are willing if not eager to join in and kill the assailant. In other words, the reason rape was not illegal until recently is arguably because it didn’t need to be. Friends, family, and neighbors killed the rapist. Moreover, most individuals living in Haiti are embedded in strongly linked and large familial networks, the members of which defend one another against criminals or

would be assailants and censor the behavior of their own members through criticism and in the case of anti-social aggression—as with of rape—withdrawal of protection. Part of the problem of the cross cultural failure in understanding here is that large families and vigilante justice is something alien to most readers of the New York Times. In developed countries the State effectively eliminates it. Indeed, the entire concept of rape with impunity is arguably a projection of western social pathology where rapists are often able to seek protection behind the legal system, burden of proof, and complex legal arguments.

^{xliii} And returning to the most recent Renton article, readers get to meet a familiar character, a woman who, although impoverished, has taken on as her self-sacrificial mission helping “vikitm.” Upon encountering Renton, she tells him that she just happens to have a house full of battered and abused women that she would like Renton to help her get money for. Renton takes her on as an expert.

Renton, Alex. 2007. “The rape epidemic.” *The Guardian*. December 2.
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/dec/02/women.features3>

^{xliiv} Also struggling to get a piece of the action was FAVILEK (Fanm Viktim Leve Kanpe—another organization with roots going back to 1991).

^{xliiv} For visas via humanitarian parole to the U.S. and Canada, see: Armstrong, Lisa. 2014. “Haitian rape survivors begin new lives in Canada and the U.S. Resettlement programs offer an escape from violence and time to heal.” *Aljazeera*, July 1,
<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/7/2/haitian-rape-victimsbeginnewlivesincanadaandtheus.html>

^{xlivi} According to Kolbe et al. 2011, .3 per cent of a general population sample reported being a victim of sexual violence in the six weeks after the earthquake. With all but one case involving a female victims, this mean that it could be extrapolated to infer that if it continued it would be an annual rate of 7% of all women. (See: Kolbe, Athena R., Royce A. Hutson , Harry Shannon , Eileen Trzcinski, Bart Miles, Naomi Levitz, Marie Puccio , Leah James , Jean Roger Noel and Robert Muggah. 2010. “Mortality, crime and access to basic needs before and after the Haiti earthquake: a random survey of Port-au-Prince households.” In *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*).

^{xliiii} In the original draft of their study Muggah, Kolbe and the other 6 University professors who co-authored the report put the number of people raped at 3 percent of those sampled, 6% of females. The error was corrected in the published version.

Here’s what they did: They sampled 1,800 households. They asked about all the people in the household. They came up with 29 cases of sexual assault. Yes, “29.” That’s 29 cases in 1,800 households. They used that data to conclude that 3 percent of all people in their sample were raped. But it’s not 3 percent of all people. It’s not even 3 percent of all households. It’s 1.6 percent of all

households (29/1,800). Furthermore, there are 5.2 people per household. With 1,800 households in their sample, that's a total population of 9,360 people (5.2 x 1,800). So what they really found was that in the six weeks between the earthquake and the time they claim to have done a survey 0.3 percent (29/9,360), or 3 in every 1,000 people had been assaulted. Only one of the victims in the sample was male, so if we only consider females then it's 6 in every 1,000, about one tenth 1/5th to 1/10th the number of U.S. college women who report raped or attempted rape in a single academic year and about the rape victimization rate for the U.S. in 1980.

Comparing findings from Kolbe et al. to the U.S. general population: The age 12 and above U.S. 1980 adjusted per-capita victimization rate was 2.4 per 1000 people; considering that 37 in 1,000 U.S. girls under 12 are raped and 30 percent of those in the Kolbe sample were under 12, the makes rates about equal.

Moreover, what no one was talking about or would want to talk about is that Kolbe and Muggah's study still had that same grey question looming over their survey: how many people reported rape in hope of a visa or getting some of the aid that was being dangled in front of them? One clue comes from the past: of the 29 households where people reported some family member had been assaulted, 5 of them reported the same thing in the survey four years earlier.

But then, as discussed at length in Chapter 9, there is good reason to believe the survey never occurred.

See: Kolbe, Athena R., Royce A. Hutson , Harry Shannon , Eileen Trzcinski, Bart Miles, Naomi Levitz, Marie Puccio , Leah James , Jean Roger Noel and Robert Muggah. 2010. "Mortality, crime and access to basic needs before and after the Haiti earthquake: a random survey of Port-au-Prince households." In *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*.

^{xlviii} Even with regard to KOFIVs "official" reports, they arguably did not, at that point in time, comprise a rape epidemic. During the two months after the January 12 quake KOFIV monitored sexual assaults in 15 of Port-au-Princes largest camps, that's a population, according to the official figures, of about 800,000 people. They came up with 230 cases of rape. Or at least that is what they report. Translating that to the standard rape index (rapes per 100,000 people per year), that's about 29 rapes per 100,000 people per year: a rape accusation rate lower than that of the continental United States and considerably less than Canada's at 73 rapes per year

See Bell, Beverly. 2010. "Our Bodies Are Shaking Now: Rapes Follow Earthquake in Haiti" *Huffington Post*, March 24. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beverly-bell/our-bodies-are-shaking-no_b_511397.html

^{xlix} Here is another example of the bizarre journalism:

"Four men raped her. She is 13 years old," Guerline told Amnesty International researchers, who compiled the report after interviewing more than 50 women and girls in Haiti's post-quake camps.

"They told me that if I talked about it, they would kill me. They said that if I went to the police, they would shoot me dead.

“I’m scared. There is nowhere safe where I can live, so I had to keep quiet,” said Guerline, who, like all the women interviewed for the report, was given a false name to protect her from reprisals.

Note that Guerline is the mother of the 13-year-old. But in the middle of the article and almost as an aside, we learn that Guerline herself was raped the same night,

Guerline was raped on the same night as her daughter by hooded men in the tent city. She can’t get the events of that terrible night out of her head.

[Guerline’s rape was an afterthought? The Amnesty researchers suddenly remembered it or the respondents suddenly remembered it? Or did they just add it?]

See: Agencies. 2011. “In Haiti Camps, Rape Stalks Women: Amnesty: Human Degenerates Indulge In Mass Rape Even After As Horrific An Incident As An Earthquake.” Published in *Indian Express*, January 6, 2011. <http://indianexpress.com/article/news-archive/print/in-haiti-camps-rape-stalks-women-amnesty/>

Also see:

Amnesty International (Press Release). 2011. “HAITI: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INCREASING.” January 6. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2011/01/haiti-sexual-violence-against-women-increasing/>

ⁱ For the DRC statistics, see: Hirsch, Michele Lent and Lauren Wolfe. 2012. “Women Under Siege.” *American Journal of Public Health*, February 8. <http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/conflicts/profile/democratic-republic-of-congo>

ⁱⁱ Summing up the sensationalism and gullibility of journalists, Amie Newman, January 14, 2011, RH Reality Check blog, an online community and publication serving individuals and organizations committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights.

One year after the devastating earthquake in Haiti that killed close to 250,000 people, women and girls living in the displacement camps remain as vulnerable to sexual violence as they did immediately following the disaster. There are still more than 1,000,000 Haitians living in appalling conditions in the 1,000 tent cities and camps

It means, simply, that the sexual violence is not only continuing for women and girls, it’s worsening.

In a report released last week, by Amnesty International, entitled “Aftershocks: Women Speak Out About Sexual Violence,” (PDF) data shows that incidences of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in the camps are widespread. Armed men “roam the camps after dark” and rape survivors visit the offices of a local women’s support group daily. In other words, nothing has changed.

Newman, Amie. 2011. *RH Reality Check* blog. January 14

ⁱⁱⁱ Torgan, Allie, 2012. “Seeking justice for Haiti’s rape victims.” *CNN*, April 26.

^{liii} For Roy, Lundgren and Stewart, see:

<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/gossip/haiti-helping-hands-fashion-designer-rachel-roy-mogul-martha-stewart-reach-protect-women-article-1.949430> (last accessed 1/17/15).

^{liv} See: <http://www.digital-democracy.org/blog/2013-year-end-review/> (last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lv} http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.8073653/k.D495/UNHCR_and_KOFAVIV_Care_for_Rape_Victims_in_Haiti.htm (last accessed 3/15/12)

^{lvi} <http://rfkcenter.org/foto/le-tre-signore-del-kofaviv-2?lang=en>
(last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lvii} <http://www.rescue.org/blog/women-helping-women-haiti> (last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lviii} <http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/mike-friends-blog/our-bodies-are-shaking-now-rape-follows-earthquake-haiti?print=1> (last accessed 3/15/12)

^{lix} <http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-provide-relief-to-earthquake-victims-in-haiti/updates/?subid=10219> (last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lx} <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/articles-on-confronting-militarism/> 1750

^{lxi} http://desliz.tumblr.com/post/10512147302#_=_ (last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lxii} <http://digital-democracy.org/2011/09/21/announcing-572-the-first-emergency-response-system-for-sexual-violence-in-haiti/>
(last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lxiii} <http://www.frontlinesms.com/tag/kofaviv/> (last accessed 1/17/15)

<http://www.frontlinesms.com/2012/10/26/frontlinesmsat7-kofaviv-supporting-haitian-women/>
(last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lxiv} http://www.uusc.org/blog/entry/3243/help_recognize_a_true_hero_in_haiti (last accessed 1/17/15)

^{lxv} The World Bank's "Addressing and Preventing Gender Based Violence" Project, 2011 -2012 (US\$500,000 grant from the Bank's Rapid Social Response Trust Fund)

Here is the relevant text suggesting that they allowed KOFAVIV directors do whatever they wanted with the money and not account for it.

The World Bank's "Addressing and Preventing Gender Based Violence Project" supports community-based interventions that address Haiti's increase in GBV since the earthquake. Implemented through a partnership between two non-governmental organizations, MADRE (US) and Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim (KOFAVIV; Haiti), the project targets five of Port-au-Prince's 22 IDP camps. The project is funded through the Bank's "Rapid Social Response" Multi-Donor Trust Fund, which "promot[es] social protection measures such as social safety nets and maintaining access to basic health, education, and other vital services for communities."

According to a December 31, 2011 progress report, which Gender Action obtained from a World Bank employee and is not publicly available, the project's "public education" component supported "capacity building and technical assistance to KOFAVIV in the launch of the violence prevention public education campaign" in late 2011 (World Bank, 2011b). Another component supported an increased number of KOFAVIV visits to GBV survivors as well as the purchase and distribution of "first response kits." The World Bank and MADRE also aim to enhance women's grassroots leadership in combating GBV by organizing capacity building workshops for KOFAVIV staff during 2012. The World Bank is responsible for all project coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

Although the World Bank is obligated as a tax-payer funded institution to disclose all project documents to the public on its website, it has not released any documentation on this project. It is therefore impossible to determine if women and men were equally involved in project consultations and if they will have equal access to project outreach and education activities. In fact, the progress report does not mention the role of men and boys in GBV prevention at all. The report also does not indicate if sex-disaggregated data will be collected in order to determine the project's differential outputs and impacts on women and girls, men and boys.

^{lxvi} <http://peacemedia.usip.org/resource/using-technology-report-gender-based-violence-haiti-digital-democracy>

^{lxvii} <http://www.usaid.gov/haiti/gender-equity-and-womens-empowerment>

^{lxviii} When the money slowed down scholar-activists such as Michelle Chen would publish articles like, Chen, Michelle. 2014, "Haiti's Women Need More Than a Trickle of Aid Money." *The Nation*. January 9.

^{lxi} There must be many, many more. And so I'm not the only one to notice. I am, however, the only one who has felt inclined to speak out. All those mentioned above refused to allow me to name them. Not one of them came out against KOFVIV.

^{lxx} Personal correspondence via e-mail.

^{lxxi} See: McClelland, Mac. 2011. "I'm Gonna Need You to Fight Me On This: How Violent Sex Helped Ease My PTSD." *Good*, June 29th 2011. <https://www.good.is/articles/how-violent-sex-helped-ease-my-ptsd>

^{lxxii} Despite all this, it never seemed to dawn on the 36 journalists that maybe rape really wasn't that rampant. In the midst of their onslaught of Ms. McClelland—arguably a victim of the journalists who for 18 months had been depicting Haiti as a rape hell—they managed to commend her for calling, "much needed attention to the complexity of rape" and in a comment that should have negated the entire reason for attacking her in the first place—McClelland never claimed that she had been raped or even felt personally threatened—they reiterated that, "For the thousands of displaced women around Port-au-Prince, the threat of rape is tragically high."

^{lxxiii} On one level the entire letter seems to be a large contradiction of itself. The journalists are scolding McClelland for making post-earthquake Haiti appear to be a rape nightmare for women and then they go on to claim that it's true. The reason is precisely because most if not all the female journalists who participated in writing it have—like their male counterparts—accepted the image of the camps as bastions of rape while noting, to their credit, that they do not seem to be targets of the violence. As we can see from the data discussed above, most women are not targets. And it is even bizarre, if they indeed believe this about Haiti, why they would have gone after McClelland with such vehemence. McClelland never claimed to have been raped. She was describing her vicarious suffering with respect to a Haitian woman who had been raped. For those interested, here is the fuller part of commentary that accepts the high incidence of rape is likely:

"We respect the heart of Ms. McClelland's story, which is her experience of trauma and how she found sexuality a profound means of dealing with it. Her article calls much needed attention to the complexity of rape....

But we were disturbed to find them articulated in Ms. McClelland's piece without larger context, especially considering her reputation for socially conscious reporting.

... We can identify with the difficulty of unwanted sexual advances that women of all colors may face in Haiti. And in the United States. And everywhere.

Unfortunately, most Haitian women are not offered escapes from the possibility of violence in the camps in the form of passports and tickets home to another country. For the thousands of displaced women around Port-au-Prince, the threat of rape is tragically high....

The full letter can be found in the following endnote.

^{lxxiv} Here is the full letter:

To the Editors:

As female journalists and researchers who have lived and worked in Haiti, we write to you today to express our concern with Mac McClelland's portrayal of Haiti in "I'm Gonna Need You to Fight Me On This: How Violent Sex Helped Ease my PTSD."

We respect the heart of Ms. McClelland's story, which is her experience of trauma and how she found sexuality a profound means of dealing with it. Her article calls much needed attention to the complexity of rape. But we believe the way she uses Haiti as a backdrop for this narrative is sensationalist and irresponsible.

Between the 36 of us, we have lived or worked in Haiti for many years, reporting on and researching the country both long before and after the earthquake. We each have spent countless hours in the camps and neighborhoods speaking with ordinary Haitians about their experiences coping with the disaster and its aftermath. We feel compelled to intervene collectively in this instance because, while speaking of her own personal experience, Ms. McClelland also implies that she is speaking up for female "journalists who put themselves in threatening situations all the time," women who have "chosen to be around trauma for a living," who she says "rarely talk about the impact."

In writing about a country filled with guns, "ugly chaos" and "gang-raping monsters who prowl the flimsy encampments," she paints Haiti as a heart-of-darkness dystopia, which serves only to highlight her own personal bravery for having gone there in the first place. She makes use of stereotypes about Haiti that would be better left in an earlier century: the savage men consumed by their own lust, the omnipresent violence and chaos, the danger encoded in a black republic's DNA.

Sadly, these damaging stereotypes about the country are not uncommon. But we were disturbed to find them articulated in Ms. McClelland's piece without larger context, especially considering her reputation for socially conscious reporting.

Ms. McClelland's Haiti is not the Haiti we know. Indeed, we have all lived in relative peace and safety there. This does not mean that we are strangers to rape and sexual violence. We can identify with the difficulty of unwanted sexual advances that women of all colors may face in Haiti. And in the United States. And everywhere.

Unfortunately, most Haitian women are not offered escapes from the possibility of violence in the camps in the form of passports and tickets home to another country. For the thousands of displaced women around Port-au-Prince, the threat of rape is tragically high. But the image of Haiti that Ms. McClelland paints only contributes to their continued marginalization. While we are glad that Ms. McClelland has

achieved a sort of peace within, we would encourage her, next time, not to make Haiti a casualty of the process.

In our own writings, we have gone to great lengths to try to understand and address the issue of trauma, as well as sexual violence, with sensitivity. As women who know and love Haiti, we are deeply troubled by Ms. McClelland's approach.

Sincerely,

Lisa Armstrong, freelance reporter, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting grantee

Amelie Baron, freelance reporter, RFI and Radio France

Pooja Bhatia, journalist and lawyer

Edna Bonhomme, Ph.D. Candidate, Princeton University

Carla Bluntschli, Haiti activist

Natalie Carney, multimedia journalist, Feature Story News

Edwidge Danticat, writer

Alexis Erkert Depp, Haiti activist

Natasha Del Toro, video journalist, TIME

Isabeau Doucet, freelance journalist and producer, Al Jazeera, The Guardian,
CSMonitor

Susana Ferreira, freelance journalist

Allyn Gaestel, freelance reporter, CNN, Los Angeles Times

Leah Gordon, artist and photographer

Michelle Karshan, Haiti activist and researcher

Kathie Klarreich, Knight International Journalism Fellow and author of Madame
Dread: A Tale of Love, Vodou and Civil Strife in Haiti

Sasha Kramer, SOIL

Nicole Lee, Esq., President, TransAfrica Forum Inc.

Carmen Lopez, filmmaker and journalist

Melinda Miles, Founder and Director, Let Haiti Live

Eleanor Miller, freelance journalist

Ariakia Millkan, Community Manager of Haiti Rewired

Carla Murphy, founding editor, Develop Haiti

Maura R. O'Connor, freelance foreign correspondent

Leah Nevada Page, economic development consultant

Claire Payton, Ph.D. Candidate, NYU, Haiti Memory Project

Nathalie Pierre, Ph.D. Candidate, NYU

Andrea Schmidt, Producer, Al Jazeera English

Jeena Shah, LERN Fellow, Attorney at Bureau Des Avocats Internationaux, Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti

Alice Smeets, photojournalist

Alice Speri, freelance journalist

Damien Cave, photographer, educator, curator, author of *Dancing on Fire*

Chelsea Stieber, Ph.D. Candidate, NYU

Ginger Thompson

Emily Troutman, freelance writer and photographer, AOL, AFP

Amy Wilentz

Marjorie Valbrun, contributing writer at the Root.com and blogger at Slate.com

Note: The views expressed in this letter represent those of individual authors and signatories and do not necessarily represent the opinions of their organizations.

The letter can be found here: *Atlantic Monthly*. 2011. "Female Journalists & Researchers Respond To Haiti PTSD Article." Jessica Coen. July 1 Filed to: OPEN LETTER H.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/07/how-to-talk-about-haitis-rape-epidemic/241379/>

and

<http://jezebel.com/5817381/female-journalists—researchers-respond-to-haiti-ptsd-article>

^{lxxv} The first—and, putting the 36 women journalists aside, the only—voice of skepticism that came out in print was in a blog by Brendan O’Neill’s of the UK’s Telegraph entitled, “Packs of rapists haunt Haiti, reports the American press. So where is the evidence?” O’Neill lamented that:

If the earthquake wasn’t bad enough, with its destruction of entire cities and towns and its claiming of 250,000 lives, now Haiti reportedly faces another trauma: rampant rape. Reports have appeared everywhere in recent days, from mainstream newspapers to outraged blogs, telling of the “armed men who roam the earthquake-ravaged city of Port-au-Prince” and who have their “pick of victims.” In the post-quake tent-towns that Haitians have built, women and girls are “stalked by gang rapists.” Across Haiti, “women are being subjected to horrific sexual violence” by “packs of men”.

It sounds dreadful, the last thing Haitians need after everything they have suffered. But was it true? Did the earthquake really “generate new shockwaves of sexual violence”, as the Los Angeles Times reports, causing “predatory” men (that p-word has appeared everywhere) to go out hunting for victims?

It seems unlikely. These feverishly imperious reports about groups of local men raping women spring from a new Amnesty International report titled Aftershock: Women Speak Out Against Sexual Violence in Haiti's Camps. However, scour the report for statistical information about the new "shockwaves" of sexual violence and you will find precious little.. Amnesty's report consists largely of the individual testimonies of women who have been raped in Haiti since the earthquake, all of which make for distressing reading but which do not add up to evidence of a post-quake surge in predatory sexual violence. In those tent-towns, Haitian people have built homes, schools, community areas and something like a society – yet in the name of boosting its own political fortunes Amnesty has helped to spread an impression of these places as hotbeds of fear and depravity.

Brendan O'Neill, 2011. 'Packs of rapists haunt Haiti, reports the American press. So where is the evidence?' *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 February. http://powerbase.info/index.php/Brendan_O'Neill

^{lxxvi} In a February 2013 interview in which I was the translator for a CHAN delegation from Canada (<http://canadahaitiaction.ca/>), Delva would up the number of members to 3,500 and the number killed in the earthquake to 2,150, something she claimed was determined within weeks of the earthquake despite published accounts to the contrary.

^{lxxvii} Fiacome. 2013. "Battling sexual violence in post-earthquake Haiti: Interview with Marie Eramithe Delva, co-founder of KOFIV (Commission of Women Victims for Victims)." February 5. <http://wozoayitproject.com/stories/> (accessed March 5 2013)

^{lxxviii} In desperation the women would appeal to foreign journalists and the United Nations Human Rights Committee (they wanted visas), see: United Nations Human Rights Committee, 112th Session, Geneva Switzerland. October 2014. "Report On Inadequate Efforts To Investigate And Prevent Threats And Violence Against The Women Human Rights Defenders At KOFIV In Response To The Second Periodic Report Of Haiti" Submitted by: International Women's Human Rights Clinic at the City University of New York (CUNY) Law School KOFIV MADRE. **However, the story from sources close to the women was that it was in fact members of KOFIV who were angry that Delva and Appolon had not shared the spoils.**

Aug-27-2013 23:42 "Haiti: Malya Villard Appolon's Home Attacked by Group of Armed Men." Letter by William Gomes. *Salem-News.com*

^{lxxix} For the CARE International survey where we used Russ Bernard's 'Scaling-up Technique' estimated the incidence of rape see,

See Schwartz, Timothy. 2013. "Report: Gender Survey CARE HAITI HEALTH SECTOR Life Saving Interventions for Women and Girl in Haiti Conducted in Communes of Leogane and Carrefour, Haiti." August 22.

See also: <http://timotuck.com/wp/index.php/category/haiti-reports/>

<http://timotuck.com/wp/index.php/2015/08/25/gender-in-haiti-review-of-the-literature/>

^{lxxx} I want to make it clear that I am not against the aid that came. If we add up that many of the women had children, and if we add hunger, disease, the lack of economic opportunity, something intensified by the U.S. led international embargo; and then on the other side of the issue, if we note that with a visa came job, medical care, getting a visas for all your children and your spouse, how could anyone blame any woman who did lie? I certainly wouldn't. Indeed, when considering the costs—the families future and wellbeing—and not least of all the role the U.S. has played, a compassionate human being may insist she should lie.

And I am certainly not saying that all the NGOs staff and the Haitian government representatives and UN and USAID representatives are liars and cheaters. Although I have often been accused of being against aid, I'm for aid. And most of the UN, USAID, and NGO workers I know are good people. Most are people who really want to help and who are as shocked by the waste and corruption as I am. And that's a big part of the problem here. It's good they want to help. But it's hard to understand how intelligent and educated people become party to outright deception. For me it's a type of dishonesty to the donors when we don't give them solid facts and it's a type of violence they do to Haitian society when they portray Haitian men as rapists, or decent men and women, as keeping child slaves (i.e. *restavek*). It's a type of violence when they create a society of predators and victims. And there are long-term dividends to pay for doing that. Dividends like fear we saw in the earlier chapters that inhibited the aid when it was most needed. That was a direct result of the type of misrepresentation of Haiti, where they take a disaster and so far blow it out of proportion that no can help. Why do they feel they have to add rape to the equation? The first reason that comes to mind is, of course, money. And not necessarily in a bad way. If aid organizations are going to help, they need money. In the wake of the Haiti earthquake money they got, 2.7 billion dollars of it. The problem comes with what happened to most of that money. Most of it got squandered or embezzled.