

JANUARY EDITION

BUZZING WITH...

CONTENT WARNING

Grieving A Lost Life:

Eleven Years Later

by Taylor Brown



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Around this time eleven years ago, I was raped for the first time. It took me five years after that night to tell my parents; it took me six years after that night to talk about it ever happening publicly; and eight years to talk about it here, which I'll re-share now. I'll start with the facts: I went to a party at the Wofford's Fraternity Row (and went to the SAE House), where I accepted a drink from someone. My next memory is waking up with my rapist on top of me, inside of me.

I pushed him off of me, and groggily grabbed what I could find, and said I had to go to the bathroom, and I'd, "be back real quick."

I ran out of his dorm and tried to figure out where I was. I called my sorority sister and told her what happened, and eventually made it back to my dorm room. I remember going back to my dorm where I took a shower for hours and scrubbed my skin till it was raw. I saw my face in the mirror and tried to scrub off the mascara that was around my eyes and my smeared lipstick from all of my crying. Holy shit, I realized, it's not my makeup! He'd given me a black eye and a busted lip. No amount of makeup can cover this, I realized. The following day in Spanish class, my professor asked me how I got beat up... So I started wearing a baseball cap 'til it healed.

I was told, by the guy I was seeing, that I was a slut and I shouldn't have left with my rapist. But that wasn't even the worst of all of the terrible things that people said to me. I had a sorority sister literally pull me aside and ask me why I'd make up such lies against this individual and that "[he] would never do that, Taylor. Stop lying." To make matters worse, another sorority sister was dating my rapist, so not only did I have to live with the knowledge that he raped me, but I was also fortunate enough to see him during every single sorority function.

I didn't remember leaving with him, I don't remember most of that night. And I hadn't even been drinking heavily. After that night, I started to drink more and more and more. I drank to forget.

I started drinking to just stop forming memories at all.

If I couldn't remember, I couldn't be hurt, I believed. I didn't want to remember what had happened. This is about the time that my depression started. My mom knew something was wrong, but I insisted that I was fine, and that there was "nothing wrong, God!"

Why don't Raped Women press charges? Don't Raped Women want their rapist to "suffer?"

OK, let me address this point blank.

The first time I was raped, I knew my attacker, and my college talked me out of pressing charges.

I didn't want to go through a trial and deal with the "he said she said" thing.

I showered as soon as I got back to my dorm, so all of the DNA was gone, and it was my word against his. A lot of women don't want to go through the ordeal of a trial and have their entire sex lives on display for anyone to hear. It's hard! Rape victims are already treated as second class citizens, and people treat us like we were asking for it.

It's incredibly difficult to have a jury hear that you slept with xyz number of people and maybe you just got too drunk and regretted your decision the following day. Also, a lot of old-fashioned beliefs still stand with regard to rape. Like were you dressed too provocatively? Did you lead him on? Etc. That's why marital rape wasn't even considered rape till very recently.

I hate to say "till it happens to you, you won't understand," but it's true. People can try to sympathize with a rape victim, but they don't GET what the woman feels. How they feel all of the differing ways. How they blame themselves (even if this isn't logical), and the way that their entire sense of the world has now shifted.

I didn't really understand the true weight of my sexual assaults till years later. I didn't understand until intensive therapy, that I didn't grieve everything I lost!

You might think it's stupid or ridiculous to grieve after being raped, but let's look at what I lost:

- **My sense of security,**
- **My sense of safety in the world,**
- **The way I view people,**
- **The way I view interactions (no matter how casual),**
- **The way I see sex,**
- **The way that my sexuality has forever changed,**
- **The way I constantly compare myself such as, "Before Being Raped Taylor" vs. "After Being Raped Taylor,"**
- **The way I look at any social gathering,**
- **The way I assume that I'm going to be taken advantage of, etc.**

It is hard. I won't lie.

A lot of women don't report because of all of these things that are going on in their heads, and because of the antiquated way we look at survivors. Because our society makes them LESSER.

I saw myself as "LESSER."

I remember, more than anything, just feeling so small.

I sat there, in the shower, and I just scrubbed my skin till the entirety of my body was pink.

I didn't leave any bit of old skin to the world.

My body, my vagina, and my mind were RAW.

I just wanted to be done with everything.

Even now, as I share this story with you, it hurts. My soul hurts like my skin did after I scrubbed.

Let's start opening the blinds to let the light in. Let's get honest and open.

I know that my story might not help anyone, but I do want to share it. I want to be honest about my experiences in the hope that others may find peace and learn from my past.

To those of you who are suffering, there's help.

There's hope. Talk to someone. Talk to me.

I will share my story with you all every year in hopes that it helps even one person.

I'm here for you.

I believe you.

You matter.