

# **THE PREVALENCE OF RAPE AND SEXUALLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES**

A Preliminary Report by the Women and Media Committee of the National Organization for  
Women, New York City

## The Research

The Women and Girls in the Media made a short list of films which they knew from previous viewing to have rape scenes. The ratings were then checked on the official MPAA website. Most of the films in question did *not* have the terms “rape”, “sexual assault”, or “sexual violence” in the ratings description.

The committee then decided to do an extensive research project to analyze how often the ratings board failed to mention sexual violence in its ratings description. The committee compiled a list of R and NC-17 rated films that were released between January 1, 1996 and March 2006. The movies, which included domestic and foreign releases, all had the terms “sexuality”, “sex scene”, “sexual”, “sex-related”, and “nudity” in their ratings descriptions and grossed at least \$10,000 in the box office. None of the ratings descriptions of the films had the words “rape”, “sexual assault”, or “sexual violence” in the ratings description. No documentaries or television movies were included in our sample. Also, any films that had had their ratings changed upon appeal were eliminated.

The committee looked for two things in our content analysis—explicit depiction of rape and “sexually aggressive behaviors”. In order to qualify as an explicit depiction of rape, a movie had to depict unwanted or non-consensual sex with accompanying images and/or sounds. (A sexual assault that occurred off-camera but had accompanying sound counted as a rape; a sexual assault that was implied or discussed but not actually shown was not.) Also, attempted rapes were counted as rapes.

“Sexually aggressive behaviors” were defined rather broadly. The definition encompassed actions as “trivial” as street harassment to offenses as “serious” as sexual mutilation. All together, the committee looked for nineteen different types of behaviors. (See Appendix 1 for definition used.)

The volunteers watched a total of ninety-eight films between June and November of 2006. As of this writing, the total of films watched is 143. None of the volunteers received any type of monetary compensation for their work.

# Summary of Findings

## The Numbers

- There are 143 films in this sample.
- Thirty (30) movies in our sample had rape scenes in them.
- At least twenty-three (23) of the films with rape scenes also had characters who also engaged in sexually aggressive behaviors.
- At least fifty (50) movies in our sample (those without rape scenes) had characters who engaged in sexually aggressive behaviors.
- At least four (4) films showed incestuous/familial rapes (*Crime and Punishment in Suburbia*; *The Magdalene Sisters*; *The Shipping News*; *Woman Thou Art Loosed*). A girl in another film, *Freeway*, confided that her mother's boyfriend repeatedly raped and molested her during her childhood.
- At least three (3) of the films (*Hollow Man*; *Lila Says*; *Titus*) had rapes that were implied rather than depicted.
- Three (3) of the films showed marital/intimate partner rapes (*2 Days in the Valley*; *5 x 2*; *Wonderland (2003)*)
- Only six (6) of the films had male rape victims (*Beloved*; *Chuck and Buck*; *City of God*; *The Craft*; *Oscar and Lucinda*; *Sleepers*).
- Only three (3) films had a female rape/attempted rape perpetrators (*Beloved*; *The Craft*; *Oscar and Lucinda*). Two (2) of the films had the female perpetrators using magic or supernatural powers to subdue or deceive their victims. The third film, *Oscar and Lucinda*, showed the perpetrator "taking advantage" of a man severely affected by dehydration, hunger, and heat exhaustion.
- At least eleven of the films showed under-aged rape victims (*Angels and Insects*; *The Craft*; *Crime and Punishment in Suburbia*; *Disturbing Behavior*; *Freeway*; *The Magdalene Sisters*; *North Country*; *The Shipping News*; *Sleepers*; *A Time To Kill*; *Woman Thou Art Loosed*.)
- At least four (4) of the films, showed under-aged perpetrators (*The Craft*; *Disturbing Behavior*; *The Magdalene Sisters*; *The Shipping News*; *In The Cut*). Two of the films with implied rapes (*Lila Says* and *Titus*) had under-aged perpetrators.
- The highest grossing film with a rape scene was *Time To Kill* with a gross of more than \$108 million. The lowest grossing film was *5 x 2* with a gross of \$127, 692.

## Anecdotal Findings

During the course of our research, the committee noted other disturbing findings. Because we did not set out to keep track of these things when we began our research, they are not included in the official results.

Racism/Anti-Semitism-- At least fifteen of the films (*2 Days in the Valley*; *American Psycho*; *Ask the Dust*; *Beloved*; *Con-Air*; *The Craft*; *Flirting With Disaster*; *Freeway*; *Love Is All There Is*; *Office Space*; *Quiet Days in Hollywood*; *Time To Kill*; *Titus*; *Wonderland*; *Y Tu Mama Tambien*) in our sample had characters who used racist, ethnic, or anti-Semitic slurs and/or displayed racist/ ethnically prejudiced attitudes. The title character in *Igby Goes Down* warns his brother's love interest (a girl he has slept with himself) that their mother would never approve of her because she is Jewish. A white character in another movie, *Body Shots*, playfully addressed his white friend as "nigger".

Women Being Physically Assaulted—At least fourteen of the films in this sample (*2 Days in the Valley*; *All About My Mother*; *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*; *Beloved*; *Cold Mountain*; *The Craft*; *Disturbing Behavior*; *Fear*; *Freeway*; *Heaven*; *HurlyBurly*; *Mulholland Falls*; *North Country*; *Quiet Days in Hollywood*) showed female characters being purposely beaten, punched, slapped, or otherwise physically assaulted by men and women who were not intimate partners. At least four other films, *Laurel Canyon*, *Thirteen*, and *I (Heart) Huckabees*, and *Y Tu Mama Tambien* showed women being struck or pushed down accidentally during disputes that involved other people. The movie *Holy Smoke* featured a man throwing a woman into his trunk.

Incidences of Domestic Violence—There were at least eleven films (*Amores Perros*; *Baby Boy*; *The Craft*; *Fear*; *The Good Girl*; *L. A. Confidential*; *Open Your Eyes*; *Quills*; *The Salton Sea*; *Secretary*; *Sleepers*, and *Wonderland*) that featured male characters who struck or shoved their intimate partners. *Laurel Canyon* and *In The Cut* had female characters that pushed, poked, and/or slapped their intimate partners during arguments. *North Country*, *Quiet Days in Hollywood*, and *Keys To Tulsa* have scenes of implied domestic violence. In *HurlyBurly*, a man confesses to hitting his girlfriend. (This occurs off-camera.)

Prostitution/Sex Work—At least thirteen of the films in our sample (*2 Days in the Valley*; *All About My Mother*; *American Psycho*; *Cold Mountain*; *Freeway*; *HurlyBurly*; *Keys To Tulsa*; *L. A. Confidential*; *Mulholland Falls*; *Quiet Days In Hollywood*; *Transamerica*; *Woman Thou Art Loosed*; *Wonderland*) had characters who engaged in prostitution, stripping, or other types of sex work.

Sex Murders—At least four of the films in the sample showed men murdering their female sex partners during or shortly after the actual sex act (*8mm*; *American Psycho*; *Disturbing Behavior*; *Open Your Eyes*). The movie *Keys To Tulsa* showed a man beating a stripper/prostitute while a voice over from the woman's friend tells us that the man paid the woman for sex and became enraged shortly after the sex act. We later find out that he murdered the woman and burned her body to prevent identification of the body. *Quills* has an off-camera rape/murder. *2 Days in the Valley* showed a man kissing and fondling his girlfriend's breasts before preparing to kill her. (The girlfriend had a mortal bullet wound and he refused to take her to the hospital.)

Voluntary Incest/Sexual Relations with Family members—At least three of the films in this sample had characters who engaged in voluntary incest with siblings (*The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys*; *The House of Yes*; and *Angels and Insects*). Another film, *The Ballad of Jack and Rose*, showed an open mouthed kiss between a father and his daughter. The movie *8 Women* made references to incest.

## Works Cited

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

[www.the-numbers.com](http://www.the-numbers.com)

## Raw Data

	NAME OF MOVIE	RAPE/ ATTEMPTED RAPE	SEXUALLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS (SAB'S)
1.	2 DAYS IN THE VALLEY	Yes	yes
2.	5 X 2	yes	Yes
3.	8MM	no	Yes
4.	8 WOMEN	No	no
5.	11:14	no	no
6.	21 GRAMS	no	No
7.	2046	NO	no
8.	ABOUT SCHMIDT	no	yes
9.	ACTS OF WORSHIP	no	no
10.	AN AFFAIR OF LOVE	No	yes
11.	AFFAIR OF THE...	no	Yes
12.	ALFIE	no	no
13.	ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER	no	yes
14.	ALL OVER ME	no	no
15.	ALL THE REAL GIRLS	no	yes
16.	ALMOST FAMOUS	no	no
17.	AMERICAN PSYCHO	no	Yes
18.	AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS	No	no
19.	AMORES PERROS	no	Yes
20.	AMY'S O	no	yes
21.	ANGELA'S ASHES	no	Yes
22.	ANGELS AND INSECTS	yes	Yes
23.	APRIL'S SHOWER	No	no
24.	ARTWORKS	no	no
25.	ASK THE DUST	Yes	no
26.	AUTOFOCUS	no	Yes

27.	BABY BOY	yes	Yes
28.	BAD MOON	No	no
29.	THE BALLAD OF JACK...	no	yes
30.	THE BANGER SISTER	No	no
31.	THE BEACH	no	<u>no</u>
32.	BEING JULIA	no	no
33.	THE BELIEVER	no	no
34.	BELOVED	yes	No
35.	THE BEST MAN	No	yes
36.	BETTER LUCK TOMORROW	no	
37	BETTER THAN SEX	no	no
38.	BODY SHOTS	yes	yes
39.	BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS	No	no
40.	BRIDGET JONES DIARY	No	no
41.	BRIDGET JONES: EDGE OF REASON	No	no
42.	CECIL B. DEMENTED	no	Research error made*
43.	THE CELL	No	no
44.	CITIZEN RUTH	no	Research error made*
45.	CITY OF GOD	yes	Research error made*
46.	CITY OF INDUSTRY	no	Research error made*
47.	CHUCK AND BUCK	yes	Yes
48.	CLAY PIGEONS	no	Research error made*
49.	COLD MOUNTAIN	yes	Yes
50.	COME UNDONE	NO	NO
51.	CON AIR	yes	Yes
52.	THE COOLER	NO	NO
53.	COUSIN BETTE	no	Research error made*
54.	THE CRAFT	yes	yes
55.	CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN...	yes	Research error made*
57.	CRITICAL CARE	NO	YES

58.	CRUSH	NO	NO
579.	DANCING AT THE BLUE IGUANA	no	No
60.	DANGEROUS LIVES OF ALTAR BOYS	no	No
61.	DARK CITY	no	No
62.	DAS EXPERIMENT	yes	No
63.	DIE MOMMIE DIE	NO	YES
64.	DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS	no	Yes
65.	DISTURBING BEHAVIOR	yes	Yes
66.	DOT AND I	no	
67.	DR. T AND THE WOMEN	No	no
68.	THE EDUKATORS	NO	NO
69.	ELIZABETH	No	Yes
70.	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	No	Yes
71.	EVE'S BAYOU	NO	NO
72.	EVERYBODY'S FAMOUS	NO	YES
73.	FEAR	no	yes
74.	FISH WITHOUT...	no	no
75.	FLIRTING WITH DISASTER	no	yes
76.	FLOWER OF MY SECRET	NO	NO
77.	FREEWAY	Yes	Yes
78.	FROGS FOR SNAKES	NO	NO
79.	GARDEN STATE	no	no
80.	GAUDI AFTERNOON	No	no
81.	GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN	No	no
82.	GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER	NO	NO
83.	GIGLI	NO	yes
84.	THE GOOD GIRL	yes	Yes

85.	THE GREEN MILE	NO	NO
86.	HEAVEN (2002)	no	no
87.	HIGH ART	no	no
88.	HIGH FIDELITY	no	yes
89.	HOLLOW MAN	no	Yes
90.	HOLY SMOKE	NO	YES
91.	HOUSEKEEPER	no	no
92.	HOUSE OF 1,000...	no	Yes
93.	HOUSE OF YES	no	yes
94.	HUMAN TRAFFIC	no	Yes
95.	HURLYBURLY	no	yes
96.	IGBY GOES DOWN	NO	YES
97.	I (HEART) HUCKABEES	no	Yes
98.	IN THE CUT	yes	Yes
99.	I SHOT ANDY WARHOL	NO	YES
100.	JARHEAD	NO	YES
101.	JAWBREAKER	NO	YES
102.	JUDE	no	no
103.	KEYS TO TULSA	NO	YES
104.	L. A. CONFIDENTIAL	no	YES
105.	LANTANA	NO	YES
106.	L'AUBERGE...	No	No
107.	LAUREL CANYON	no	Yes
108.	LILA SAYS	NO	YES
109.	LOSS OF SEXUAL INNOCENCE	NO	NO
110.	LOVE IS ALL ...	no	no
111.	MAGDALENE SISTERS	yes	Yes
112.	MAXIMUM RISK	no	no
113.	MULHOLLAND DRIVE	NO	
114.	METROLAND	no	No
115.	MULHOLLAND FALLS	no	Yes
116.	NICO AND DANI	yes	no

117.	THE NINTH GATE	No	no
118.	NORTH COUNTRY	yes	Yes
119.	OFFICE SPACE	no	Yes
120.	OLD SCHOOL	NO	NO
121.	OPEN YOUR EYES	no	yes
122.	OSCAR AND LUCINDA	YES	NO
123.	THE PIANO TEACHER	Yes	yes
124.	QUIET DAYS IN...	yes	yes
125.	QUILLS	yes	Yes
126.	SAFETY OF OBJECTS	no	Yes
127.	THE SALTON SEA	NO	YES
128.	SECRETARY	no	yes
129.	THE SHIPPING NEWS	yes	Yes
130.	SIMIAN LINE	NO	NO
131.	SLEEPERS	yes	Yes
132.	SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY	NO	NO
133.	THIRTEEN	no	Yes
134.	THE THOMAS CROWNE...	no	No
135.	TIME TO KILL	yes	Yes
136.	TITUS	no	Yes
137.	TRANSAMERICA	No	Yes
138.	VARSITY BLUES	NO	YES
139.	VELVET GOLDMINE	no	Yes
140.	WEDDING GRASHERS	YES	YES
141.	WOMAN THOU ART LOOSED	yes	Yes
142.	WOMEN ON TOP	NO	NO
143.	WONDERLAND	yes	Yes
144.	Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN	NO	YES

\*Due to a research error, there is no information available about sexually aggressive behaviors for these films. The rape scene info is correct. The movies in question will be reviewed again for sexually aggressive behaviors at a later date.