



SAFVIC

Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigator Course

SAFVIC ON THE SCENE

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Cold Case Solved

By: Jennifer Wheatley-Wolf

On August 21, 1988 at approximately 3:30 a.m., I was sexually assaulted in my home. I did not see the face of the man who tried to strangle and suffocate me and who raped me that summer night; it would take 20 years for my attacker to be found and brought to justice.

Many elements had to go right in order to make it possible to solve my case. Fortunately for me, I was able to witness the puzzle as the pieces fell into place, and on January 19, 2010, I heard the words: *"Guilty of first and second degree rape. Guilty of first and second degree sexual offense. Guilty of burglary."* Even though I was lucky to have achieved some measure of justice in my case, it seemed from the start of the investigation that all odds were against ever finding a suspect.



WHO IS THE BEST INVESTIGATOR FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES?

It seems not everyone is cut out to be a sexual assault investigator. The very nature of the crime makes people uncomfortable. I met Detective Paul Leo of the Annapolis (Maryland) Police Department outside the emergency room just after my forensic examination. DNA samples in the form of a vaginal swab and a recovered tampon were collected as evidence by the doctor on duty and carefully bagged and sealed in the presence of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Division Detective Zora Lykken. Detective Lykken then labeled the sealed bags with my name and address. I assumed Detective Leo had been assigned to my case, although honestly, I am not entirely sure if this was true. Except for reporting stolen bicycles as a child, I had no knowledge of the world of crime and police. This was my first (and happily my only) involvement with a felony crime.

Detective Leo explained that I would have to go down to the station to give a report about what happened. I was exhausted, scared, and confused. What happened to the policeman who responded to my 911 call? I had answered hundreds of his questions. Why couldn't Detective Leo just find out from him what had happened and start his investigation from there? Better yet, why couldn't Detective Lykken take my statement? She had been kind. And, although I did not understand what possible good a used tampon would be in finding the man who raped me, I liked that she had talked to me and taken the time to explain to me what was happening during the examination.

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"Piecing together the tools needed to effectively investigate and prevent sexual assault, family violence, stalking, & human trafficking."



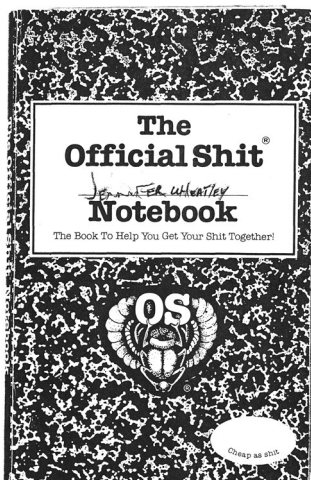
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The SAFVIC Staff
supporting Denim Day
from Seattle, WA.
2014 EVAWI Conference



Chief Investigator,
David H. Cordle, Sr.



Jennifer's Notebook

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She also suggested that I start a journal about the assault as soon as I was up to it:

You should write down everything you remember about the night. Everything, no matter how small. Every detail, because you never know what will be important. You never know how long it will take for us to catch the guy, and even though it doesn't seem like it now, you will begin to forget some of the details.

I was not happy with Detective Leo being in charge of my case. Call it a first impression or a hunch, but I sensed he was not at all enthusiastic about finding my attacker. I knew it would be difficult to solve my case. I could only offer a vague description of the man and there appeared to be little evidence. It is possible I felt uncomfortable with him because he was a man and a stranger; I had, after all, just been attacked by a man who was a stranger to me. Maybe it was because he seemed distracted and uninterested in hearing the details of events. Maybe it was just my exhaustion getting the best of me. Whatever the reason for my dislike, I did not want to have to repeat my account of the assault to him, and I had misgivings about him leading my investigation.

I provided a tape recorded statement to Detective Leo on August 21, 1988, and the next day, I started writing my account of what happened in a journal I referred to as my "Official Shit Notebook." And I waited and wondered how long it would take to figure out who my attacker was. After a couple of days, when I began to remember small details that I thought may or may not be important, I picked up the telephone to call Detective Leo.

I was told, "He's on vacation for two weeks. Would you like to speak to another detective?" I was stunned. I had no idea how an investigation progressed. Where did one start to look; where did one begin a seemingly impossible task? I knew *Not* investigating, and going on vacation for two weeks was not the place to start. During the eight months that Detective Leo was in charge of my case, I was able to speak to him just a couple of times. When I asked about any progress or leads he might have, he always mumbled something about a pool party that took place on that night and how he was "going to look into it."

The Collection of Evidence

On the morning after the attack, Detective Leo had taken me back to my house before we went to the police station to tape record my statement. This decision turned out to be the one thing he got right. We arrived back at my bedroom to find a few crime scene investigators gathering bags of evidence. One of these investigators asked me if there was anything I knew the man had touched or come in contact with. I remembered that he had turned the light off when he came into the room. Then I looked across the room at my nightstand and saw the candle I had taken from the Chart House just a few nights before still sitting there. "That candle," I said. "He picked it up."

I have wondered a million times just how fleeting a moment this was and yet how important it became in solving this case. If we had spent a few minutes longer in the examining room, or gotten stuck in traffic on the way home, these crime scene investigators would have been gone. I doubt I would have mentioned the candle to anyone if they had not been there to prompt my memory. I might have assumed they had already dusted its surface for prints. Combined with the circumstances under which I obtained the candle in the first place, it remains one of the "Oh, wow!" elements of my story and the key to bringing all the pieces of the puzzle together to ultimately find a suspect.

I never realized that by reporting this crime to the police, there would be such an intrusion into my life. I had no idea my belongings would be packed up and carted out in the name of evidence. Although it was possible there could have been DNA evidence transferred to the top bedspread, it is unlikely all of the other items ever came in contact with my rapist. It may have been helpful to have had some input from me to determine what might have been useful to the investigation.

Had I been present when all the evidence was collected, I would have been able to assist the investigators by telling them the events as they took place while they looked around the room. The one crucial piece of evidence collected that morning was nearly overlooked. Without the candle, there would have been no fingerprint evidence. Without the fingerprints, my case would most likely still be unsolved.

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As Detective Leo drove me home a second time, after giving my recorded statement, I spied a tee-shirt of mine lying in the middle of a bridge we crossed to get to my neighborhood. I knew as soon as I saw it in the street that it was what my attacker had used to strangle and suffocate me. Detective Leo did not stop to pick it up when I first saw it; rather, he collected it and submitted it into evidence on his way back to the police station after dropping me off at home.

David Cordle, Sr. took over my case in the spring of 1989. By that time, both my tape recorded statement and the tee-shirt were lost or misplaced. Additionally, Investigator Cordle could not locate a written report from Detective Leo. He found only a few disconnected papers that he believed were Leo's supplemental reports.

Confidence Restored

Although the months following my rape were filled with anxiety and fear, as soon as David Cordle took over my case, I recognized a positive energy shift. Investigator Cordle was determined to find the man who had attacked me. He made a promise I thought would be impossible to keep: "I'll get him." Unfortunately, none of the investigative work we did together during 1989 and 1990 resulted in a identifying a suspect. As evidenced by Detective Leo's sloppy police work, not everyone is cut out to investigate a sexual assault crime. Thankfully, there are quite a few investigators like David Cordle, who cannot rest until a case is solved.

Reclaiming My Voice

I have always been forthcoming about what happened to me that night. Not being able to identify the man who raped me added an additional frightening element to my experience. It is not known if he had seen me in the restaurant where I worked or at one of the local bars, or if he had delivered something to my house. But it is clear he knew my comings and goings and had planned his attack. With this in mind, I believed talking about my experience could be beneficial in

helping to solve my case as well as protecting my friends and co-workers. However, I have learned through the years that I am an exception, not the rule.

My progression from rape victim to survivor was difficult. I became afraid of everything and did not feel safe anywhere. Although rape-crisis counselling was offered, I did not find my few sessions beneficial. Maybe it was because I had never been to therapy before or maybe it was because my counselor and I did not mesh. Her focus was down the road after I returned to work and my needs were for the here and now. I was in crisis and needed help getting from one minute to the next; I could not think about tomorrow or the next day. I was lost in the fear and humiliation of the experience.

For two years I drank myself to sleep every night. I decided passing out in my bed every night was better than waking to find someone lurking in the shadows. At first this alcoholic balm worked. But, it wasn't long before my drinking got out of control and was a full-fledged addiction.

With the help of a good friend, I realized that every fearful day I spent drinking my way through was another day lost to the man who raped me. I was empowering him by destroying me. I had to change. I chose to focus on the positive things in my life-my family, friends and my artistic talents to help me rediscover 'me'. I got a job in a frame shop and began to paint every night. Every minute focused on something creative and positive was another step closer to rediscovering myself and another step further from the fear I felt for so long.

Developments

My case went cold in 1990 and I began to believe it would never be solved. I had moved on from that night and had begun my life again on a stronger foundation. During the next 15 years, Investigator

Cordle revisited my case whenever he had a suspect in a similar case and thought there might be a connection. It was not until after funds were awarded to the Annapolis Police Department as part of grant money from the 2003 DNA initiative that there was a development. Working with his partner, William Johns, David Cordle was able to retrieve viable evidence from a number of cold cases and enter the DNA information from these cases into CODIS. My case was among these. I received a call from Dave Cordle in the June of 2005.

Unfortunately, the meeting did not have the result he was hoping for. I discovered a few years later that he had been investigating a serial rapist and was waiting for DNA results. He hoped my case and the other known victim linked through CODIS were related to his suspect; they were not. This was really difficult for me. Investigator Cordle called me into his office hoping to share the breaking news as he learned the results. When the phone call came saying the DNA did not match, I could see the disappointment in his face. This was one time when I would have preferred being out of the loop.

I was an emotional mess for several months after this aborted meeting. My hopes had been raised and dashed in a matter of a couple of days. After waiting 15 years for an answer, it was difficult for me to pack up all the emotions I was feeling and get back to living again. I was disappointed that my case was not solved, and I was not sure there was any hope that it ever would be. Had Investigator Cordle waited just a bit longer for the DNA results, I would have been spared this emotional upheaval. Having said this though, I was grateful he had not forgotten his promise "I'll get him."

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Not all victims of cold cases want to be involved with or have anything to do with reopening their cases. The other known victim at the time had, as she put it, “gone on with her life.” She was not interested in pursuing an investigation or prosecution. I was not one of those victims. I believed the man who raped me must be stopped. “He’s done this before and he will do it again.” I believed the man who raped me had continued with his life of sexual assault and criminal behavior for many years and I wanted justice for myself and his other victims. I wanted him stopped.

David Cordle called me again in August, 2008 to ask if he and Detective Tracy Morgan could meet with me to talk about my case. I suspected this time he had learned from our unfortunate meeting in 2005, and I hoped he had waited until he had some important information before meeting with me again.

The two showed up at my house in the early afternoon. We talked a bit about my flower and vegetable gardens, and quilting. I showed them into the kitchen, and as we sat down at the kitchen table, Investigator Cordle asked me, “Do you know someone by the name of William Joseph Trice?” “No,” I said. “Where would I know him from?” “I didn’t think you would know him. Maybe your mother knew him when she lived at Chesapeake Landing?” I shrugged my shoulders and said, “I don’t know for sure. I suppose it’s possible. How would she have known him?” “He was a courier in the area when you were living there. Maybe she had something delivered by him.” I didn’t know. Deliveries arrived at the house for Mom from time to time, but for the most part they were brought by UPS or the mailman. “Who is this What was his name?” I asked. “Trice,” David said. “Who is he? Why do you ask?” Was this the guy? I wondered.

Cordle told me that President Bush had made money available to police

departments to retest evidence from cold cases, including fingerprints. He had, in fact, had the fingerprint on the candle compared to those in the national database.



“We got a hit from a fingerprint ...” Dave started. “From the candle,” I finished. Cordle was genuinely surprised that I knew where the latent print had come from. “What makes you say the print came from the candle?” he asked me. “Because it was the only mistake he had made,” I said. “When Detective Leo brought me home that day, there were a couple of crime scene investigators getting ready to leave with bags of my stuff. One of them asked me if there was anything they had missed. I was the one who told them to take the candle because I knew he had picked it up. I was going to ask you about the prints the last time I was in your office, but I figured either there weren’t any left behind or you had already checked them and didn’t get a match.”

“Actually, we got two prints from the candle. Did you mention him picking up the candle in your journal?” Dave asked. “I’m sure I did,” I answered. “I have a copy of your journal in my car.”

Investigator Cordle handed me a photocopy of my journal, “The Official Shit Notebook.” I flipped through it for a few minutes and then found the passage concerning the candle in my journal:

“After he was done, he asked me about coke again. I told him I didn’t have any and he could check if he wanted to. He asked me again as he picked up the candle—what I had been doing? ‘Reading.’ Now he’s convinced that I have no drugs and is asking for money. ‘I don’t have any.’ ‘Oh yes, you do. I saw you counting it.’ I handed him about \$20 that I left

in my purse. He asked me, ‘Is this all you have?’ I said ‘yes’ knowing I was lying and hoped he didn’t know that ...”

Cordle was ecstatic. “It’s a good thing I didn’t read that last night,” he said. “I wouldn’t have been able to sleep and I would have been here at sunrise!”

The next step in the process was to collect an item of Trice’s so his DNA could be compared to the DNA profile developed from my rape kit. Investigator Cordle could have waited until after the DNA evidence was collected and tested to tell me my case was moving forward, but I am glad he did not. When he took on my case, I was his only surviving victim. I believe he wanted to share as much as he could with me because it was a first for him to be able to share breaking news. He knew I had waited a long time to hear good news and that I would want to know. Although admittedly, the waiting from one step to the other was frustratingly long and distracting to me, I was glad to know progress was being made in finding the man who had raped me. A few months after our meeting about the fingerprint discovery, Dave Cordle told me that in fact the DNA from their suspect matched the DNA collected the night I was raped. “We got him, he’s going to jail.”

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William Joseph Trice



FEATURED AGENCY

Hope through Health Clinic with CommUnityCare

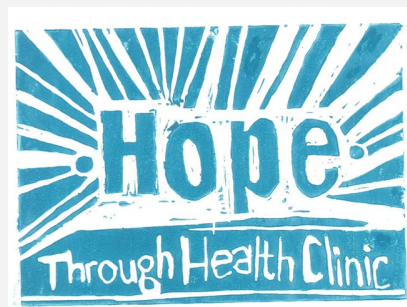
The HTH Clinic is a medical home for survivors of human trafficking and sexual trauma, and their families. The clinic aims to address the physical, mental, and social needs of survivors and their families through survivor-centered and trauma-informed service provision.

Clinics take place twice a month in the evening. Patients receive intensive medical care from medical providers, and can also access behavioral and mental health services and referrals to other community resources.

The HTH Clinic is a response to the gaps in and barriers to medical care that many survivors experience, including the lack of: funding, insurance, transportation, language, documentation, childcare, and familiarity with healthcare systems.

Since 2003, Austin's Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CTCAHT) has fostered collaboration between law enforcement and service providers to enable a continuum of services for survivors as they heal from trauma, integrate into the community, and develop autonomy and stability. The HTH Clinic began operations in August of 2013. The clinic is a collaborative effort between CommUnityCare Health Centers; The University of Texas Southwestern OB/GYN Residency Program,

School of Social Work, and School of Nursing; Refugee Services of Texas; and many other volunteer contributors in the Austin area.



HTH services include:

Dinner, Art and developmental activities for children and families, Assistance with applying for and accessing health insurance, Medical appointments with OB/GYN and/or family medicine doctor, Lab testing, Referrals to specialists, dental, and vision care, Psychiatric medication monitoring, Psycho-educational groups, Individual med-education and wellness meetings, Community referrals to supportive resources, Beautician services, Body wellness activities, and Transportation assistance.

To make a referral to the clinic or to seek further information, please email hthcaustin@gmail.org

FEATURED BOOK

ONE VOICE RAISED: A TRIUMPH OVER RAPE

Written By: Jennifer Wheatley-Wolf

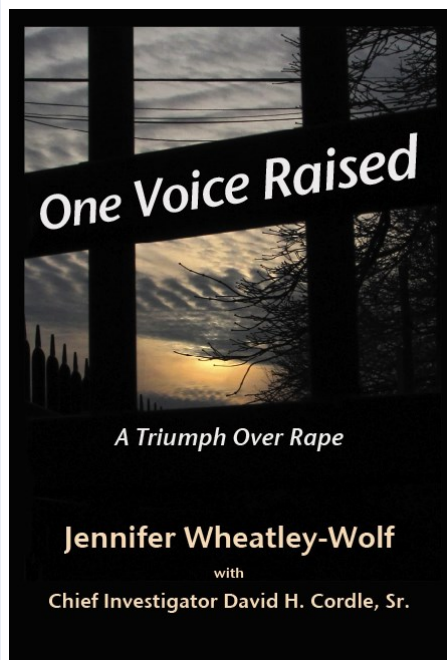
Co-authored By: Chief Investigator David H. Cordle, Sr.

Excerpts included in SAFVIC on the Scene's June cover story "Cold Case Solved" are from the book One Voice Raised: A Triumph Over Rape (available on [Amazon in paperback](#) for \$25.00 and Kindle for \$8.99.)

In their book, Jennifer relates her transformation from being a victim of rape in 1988 to an empowered survivor. David Cordle, Retired Chief Investigator for the States Attorney's Office of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, describes how he was finally able to solve Jennifer's case after 20 years, despite some misplaced evidence, a missing statement, and no visual identification from the victim.

Since the publication of One Voice Raised, 2 more victims have been linked through DNA to serial rapist, William Joseph Trice making 4 known victims.

*May 31, 1987 in Montgomery County, Maryland. *August, 1988 in Silver Springs, Maryland. The link to Trice was discovered when cold-case evidence was entered into CODIS.



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At the time of Trice's arrest I was told by Dave Cordle that I would be able to address him in court. However, Trice committed suicide just 6 days after the guilty verdicts were read. These are the words I had intended for Trice to hear:

JENNIFER'S VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

We are all responsible for our own actions. No matter what our environment growing up, no matter what our life's circumstances, there comes a time in our lives when we are considered adults and we begin to make choices and decisions for ourselves. These decisions and choices make us each unique. Through these decisions, we define ourselves. Through the repercussions and ramifications of our choices, we are remembered. Our lives are defined and we are remembered by the influence we have on others.

I am an Artist.

I recently said that I am who I am because of you and in spite of you.

I spent a few years after you raped me letting my fear of you rule my life. I was bent on self-destruction. I felt afraid and angry because of what you had done to me, and what you would do to other women if you were not stopped. Some simple words from a friend made me realize that my self-destruction was empowering you and destroying the very things that made me 'me'. I made the decision to change.

Eventually, I chose to try to take back what you stole from me. I chose to live without looking over my shoulder. Although it was difficult to work through and let go of my fear, I did it the best I could. I made the decision to surround myself with supportive friends and family, and I started to focus my attention on my talents. I used my talent to re-create worlds where my fear of you did not exist.

Over the past twenty-two years, I have created a world of light, color, and texture through watercolor painting, photography, and fabric art.

I made the decision in spite of you — in spite of what you did to me — and because of you — because of what you did to me — to focus on things in life that brought light to the dark and frightening memories.

My obsession with painting, quilting, and photography is my way of keeping my life in the light, despite the fact that you made me afraid of the dark. It is through my artwork that I have been able to dispel many of the fears you had instilled in me. And, although I painted beautiful gardens, I have been told that many of my paintings give the impression that something unexpected is about to happen or has just happened. Some have gone so far as to say they are unsettling. This was not intentional, but I was not surprised to hear these remarks. I looked at my paint-

ing as a kind of therapy, a way to displace my fears. No doubt the very fear I was working through made its way into my paintings. But, little by little, they were less about you and more about me.

In spite of any good you may have done in your life, it is by the horrible choices that you will be remembered.

Because it is true that we are responsible for our actions, it is also true that we are responsible for the repercussions of our actions. It is impossible to know how many people have been affected by what you have done. The ramifications of your behavior are still echoing, and this time they have begun to rip through your family and friends. You are now making them painfully aware of the evil and dark side of your life. Everyone here today and previous days, has been affected by your actions, and who knows when or if the rippling effects will stop.

Some have taken from this an awareness that their safety may be more vulnerable than they imagined. Others have been moved to tears and angry frustration. But, none has been more affected than me. You made me brutally aware of the evil in this world and of the darkness that dwells within you and others like you. And, even though I have spent the past two decades re-creating my world through my artwork, I was given a daily reminder of you. I surmise it was a Higher Power's way of letting me know that the strength of my creative power is equal to the terror I felt that night. It won't be too long now before the rest of my hair turns completely gray and I will no longer be reminded of you every time I pass a mirror.

Somehow, that night, I knew that I would be a key player in stopping you. Unfortunately, I was unable to do this before you raped again. I told the events of that night in this courtroom in front of family, friends, counsel, judge, and jury in honor of those who were not in the courtroom with me. And I relived the nightmare for those who walked with me every step of the way so that they, too, could heal from the hurt you have caused.

It is because of me that you are here today. You probably hate me, and I wouldn't be surprised if you blamed me for your fate. But you are responsible for that. One word at a time, I gave back the evil you left with me that night and filled that space with the combined strength, love, and empowering courage given by my friends and family.

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Remember, it was you who chose to stalk me and spy on me. It was your decision to climb onto my car and onto the balcony, and make your way into my home. It was your decision to hide on the stairs until you could sneak into my bedroom and attack from the shadows. It was you who decided to try and suffocate me. And it was your decision to rape me. It was also your choice to continue to terrorize other women and children. You are responsible for the choices you made. You are responsible for your actions. At any given time you could have made different choices. You could have chosen not to do any of this. In spite of any good you may have done in your life, it is by these horrible choices you have made that you will be remembered.

I use to have nightmares of a faceless monster that pursued me in the dark.

You.

But not anymore. Although I like to have doors wide open so I know no one is hiding behind them, and I continue to turn on lights when I walk into a room and keep nightlights on around the house — that is all you get. You are no longer a larger than life faceless monster who springs unaware from shadows. You are small, sad, and pathetic. You are a monster to be sure, but you are no longer able to terrorize.

I am an artist who will continue to invent worlds full of color and light. My life as an artist has been rewarding to myself and influential to others. I hope to continue to inspire others. I suppose, in some way, I have you to thank, because my success as an artist and the strength of my creative power are equal to the terror you made me feel that night.

I am an Artist.

That is my legacy.

You are a rapist. That is how the world will remember you.

Jennifer Wheatley-Wolf is a well-known watercolor painter, fabric artist, and photographer. She lives in Virginia with her husband. To see her award-winning art quilts, visit her website at www.ArtGiftsEtc.com. Jennifer can be reached at CurrentTomePublishing@yahoo.com.



Pieces of Jennifer's
Artwork.



"Piecing together the tools needed to effectively investigate and prevent sexual assault, family violence, stalking, & human trafficking."

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