

The Problem with Evidence

So you go through it, step by step:

1. The bruises.

(The most important thing, you think; bruises make it violent, violence makes it mean something. At least to the detectives, to the DA?)

Right?

2. Your blackout.

(But what is memory anyway? What is freewill? And who has it? The drunk girl on the dirty couch or the two men surrounding her, holding their dicks like knives?)

3. The convoluted, confusing, frightened texts sent to your friends that night (they're not too incomprehensible though, the detective can make out some words, some stray numbers. That's an address, right? You tried to type it out four times, yes, but it becomes an address eventually, so you really couldn't have been *that* drunk)

4. The confusion afterwards; you don't know for sure what happened, how it began, how you met them; you can't remember getting into their van. Your friends called the police around 3 in the morning, but by the time they got there you apparently said that you weren't sure a crime had occurred. Everything felt wrong, but you weren't sure you should report (at *this* point your old friend tells you he thinks you're in shock, you're not seeing the situation clearly, it just happened after all). Even then, you knew enough to know that you were unlikely to be believed, but you didn't know just *how* unlikely (Wait it out though! Wait and see! This night's nothing; or, it's everything, but it's the aftermath that's *really* gonna sting.)

4a. the bruises, did I mention the bruises? I saw them the next day at noon when I reawakened to the nightmare, scattered across my breasts like purple Dalmatian spots. I let my mouth hang open for one sick second before wailing like a caged dog (And honestly, how dare these men ruin Dalmatians for me, on top of everything else?)

5. Does post-trauma evidence count as evidence?

(I know it does in California, why didn't my detective ask me about the aftermath?)

5a. What about the countless therapy appointments, psychiatry appointments, the hospital, the rape crisis center, the rape exam? The exam where even though the nurse was sweet and empathetic, you knew in that moment for certain that your body had gotten away from you, it'd gotten away from you at closing time the night before, and now you don't know how to get it back.

You can feel your rape kit rotting on a shelf somewhere deep in Los Angeles.

(The police took your dress and spandex shorts as evidence, because while your body and your voice are pieces of evidence that cannot be trusted, DNA *never* lies)

(The nurse's black light revealed semen around your ankles)

6. The SANE nurse took a look at your naked body and said, "It looks like they were really rough." This is a piece of evidence you'll cling to like a life raft for months.

Because of course your evidence ends up being insufficient (don't act so surprised). The DA needs a case she can win, after all. Your case leaves too much room for doubt.

"It's not that we don't believe you, but..."

But how can a living body be a crime scene?

I think of the body as crime scene and I think of murder (and murder is worse, murder is always worse, keep reminding yourself just how many people have it worse, keep it in perspective, girls get drunk and end up raped all the time, right? Maybe some of those girls end up dead later on, dead by their own hand (*dead because they were failed again & again & again*), because you know the risk of suicide increases significantly for rape victims, you do know that right?)

(Hence the psychiatry appointments)

So your body's a forgotten crime scene, but your body is also legion; enough living crime scenes walk this earth every day, concealing a collective pain so strong you're damn sure that, if pain could be weaponized as power, it would pierce a hole through the atmosphere and burn out the sun.