

THE LONELY QUEST OF MARY KOSS

Her research sparked the first great campus-rape debate 30 years ago. Now she has a bold new idea to address the problem. Why can't she get policymakers to take it seriously?

BY AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX

On a January afternoon, in her office at the University of Arizona, Mary Koss is showing me the media clippings from her turn in the spotlight—a moment that is now more than two decades old. Watery winter light streams through the blinds as she combs through the bottom drawer of a file cabinet that stretches the length of the room, where she stores the hundreds of stories that have been written about her research, nearly all of them between 1985 and 1994. With French-manicured fingertips, she pulls out a creased copy of *People* magazine from December 1990. "Here's another one that looks like it could have come off a newsstand last month," she says, tossing it onto the disordered stack of photocopies on her desk. On the cover, a stoic young woman stares out from under the headline: "A Victim's Anguish: Raped on Campus."

As a young psychology professor at Kent State University, Koss made a groundbreaking discovery. In a 1985 survey of thousands of students, she found that as many as one-in-four college women had experienced some form of sexual assault, though many did not describe it as "rape." Koss's research showed that although women were frequently assaulted by men they knew, they were encouraged to see these experiences as normal—or even to blame themselves for wearing the wrong clothes or being too flirtatious. The findings provoked shock and disbelief. Koss fended off allegations that she deliberately forged and misinterpreted her data, expanding the definition of rape to artificially inflate the problem of sexual assault as part of a broader feminist crusade. But though subsequent surveys have come up with variations on Koss's original statistic—the consensus is now that it's one-in-five women, not one-in-four—her methodology would become the standard for studying the scope of the problem on campuses, and her findings were a central rallying point for feminists in a national debate about violence against women in the late '80s and early '90s.

Koss's research is again fiercely, painfully relevant. After lying dormant for more than 15 years, the issue of sexual assault on college campuses resurfaced in 2011, when student activists began to protest their universities' mishandling of rape cases. Versions of Koss's statistic are again appearing everywhere: scrawled on the backs of campus bathroom stalls; cited by President Obama in a public-service announcement during the Grammy Awards. In February,

a bipartisan group of senators led by Democrats Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Claire McCaskill of Missouri reintroduced a bill that would mandate surveys to determine the scope of sexual assault on individual campuses—surveys modeled after the one Koss pioneered. "The price of a college education," Gillibrand said, "should not include a one-in-five chance of being sexually assaulted."

Despite the greater awareness of the problem, the campus-rape debate feels stubbornly stuck in time. Last year's magazine covers from *Time* and *Rolling Stone* look remarkably like the ones Koss squirreled away in her drawer. Once again, Koss's study—and later ones based on it—is fueling back-and-forth squabbles between assault survivors' advocates and those who believe the issue is being overblown. And once again, a backlash has broken out among those who worry that men's due-process rights are being trampled in the rush to identify and punish perpetrators.

But while the trajectory of the debate is eerily similar, the 68-year-old Koss is playing a strikingly different role this time. Back then, she was a feminist trailblazer; now, she's proposing a response to the problem of sexual assault that unsettles her feminist allies as much as her adversaries. Instead of focusing solely on punishing rapists more harshly and removing them from campuses, as politicians and activists are encouraging universities to do, Koss is championing an alternative form of justice that focuses on rehabilitation. She says the research she has done since 1985 has convinced her that expelling and prosecuting more college sex offenders isn't the only way—or even the best way—to help assault survivors heal.

So far, Koss's latest idea has yet to get any real mainstream traction. Where once she felt overexposed, she now finds herself struggling to break back into a conversation that she began. Nevertheless, the notion that colleges should try to educate some offenders is a powerful one—not just for college administrators stymied by how to respond to rape, but for decision-makers in Congress and the Education Department as well. And as provocative as it may seem, it's a solution that has credibility precisely because Mary Koss came up with it.

BEFORE 1985, when Koss published the initial findings from her survey, there was a general consensus among scholars that the best way to measure rape was to ask about it directly, like any other illegal act: *Have you ever been raped?* But outside the ivory tower, feminists had begun to argue that rape was not analogous to a crime like, say, robbery; it was a crime of power, used by men to keep women in a state of fear. In her 1975 book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, the journalist Susan Brownmiller argued that women tended to blame themselves for instigating rape—and as a result, they often did not conceptualize what had happened to them as a crime.



(Patric Sandri)

As a young scientist struggling to make her name in the male-dominated field of clinical psychology, Koss—who began her doctoral studies in 1969—became a feminist almost by default. But she didn't draw a connection between feminism and her work, which focused primarily on mental health, until funding for a survey to determine levels of sexual aggression and victimization on college campuses fell into her lap in 1978.

Koss had read Brownmiller's book, and as she was constructing the survey, she realized that women might be reluctant to label their unwanted sexual experiences as rape. So instead of straightforward questions about whether women had been raped, Koss developed a series of behavioral queries about specific acts, such as: "Have you been forced to have sex without saying yes?" Her initial survey, which came out in 1982, was small, conducted among students at Kent State, but the results suggested something big: The number of women who had experienced rape or attempted rape was more than ten times higher than previous estimates.

Koss knew she needed a bigger sample before she could draw any substantial conclusions about the prevalence of rape. She was immersed in grant applications when she got a call from New York City. "There was this woman on the line who said, 'We want you to come and have lunch with Gloria,'" she told me, chuckling as she remembered. "It wasn't until I had hung up the phone that I realized she was talking about Gloria Steinem."

Steinem had noticed Koss's research and wanted to apply for a joint grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to expand the Kent State survey and write about the findings in her magazine, *Ms.* It was an unorthodox proposal. Koss had received federal funding for her research before, but the grant monitor was skeptical about bankrolling a story in a feminist magazine. In the end, the NIMH agreed to support a survey of more than 6,000 students on 32 campuses, without funding the *Ms.* story. In 1985, Steinem's magazine published Koss's preliminary results anyway, which found that approximately one-quarter of college women had

experienced rape or attempted rape since the age of 14. Another number from the survey was eye-opening: Contrary to the widespread assumption that most rape was committed by violent strangers, 84 percent of the rapes in Koss's study were committed by someone the victim knew—a phenomenon Koss called "acquaintance rape."

As we walk through the University of Arizona's sprawling, sunbaked campus—Koss left Kent State for Tucson not long after her larger study was published—she describes the response to her research with a mix of self-deprecation and bravado. In her telling, she's both a country bumpkin who stumbled onto the national stage and a trailblazing feminist crusader. She laughs about meeting Steinem for lunch at a fancy New York City restaurant; in honor of her first trip to the East Coast, she'd worn what she thought was her most professional outfit, a baby-blue silk suit—only to run into Gloria, clad in jeans and impossibly cool. But she talks with larger-than-life flair about the time when she agreed to discuss her research on a national talk show and arrived to find Hugh Hefner and a crowd of Playboy bunnies in the greenroom. She sparred with Hefner on air for a few minutes, she recalls, before ripping off her microphone and stomping off set.

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The criticism of Koss's research began to grow louder when legislators and college administrators started making tangible attempts to crack down on campus rape. In 1990, shortly after then-Sen. Joe Biden introduced the Violence Against Women Act, Koss was invited to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee about the results of her survey. The law recognized crimes against women as civil rights violations and, perhaps most controversially, allowed women to sue for damages in federal court. One version of the bill included \$20 million to fight sexual assault at universities. When he was promoting the act, Biden made prominent use of Koss's one-in-four statistic to bolster his contention that women needed stronger legal protections against gender-based violence. That meant that, for critics, one easy way to undermine the bill was to contest Koss's findings and the methods she used to reach them. If Koss had exaggerated the extent of sexual assault, it would bolster the argument that spending federal dollars to combat the problem—not to mention giving special protections to female crime victims—was unnecessary.

Neil Gilbert, a professor of social policy at the University of California, Berkeley, became Koss's most high-profile skeptic. His first blast was a scathing critique of Koss's research, published in the right-leaning quarterly journal *The Public Interest* several months after Koss testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Gilbert argued that Koss had "trivialized" the definition of rape by expanding it to include women who did not identify what they experienced as sexual assault. It was the policy implications of her research that drew him into the fray, he says today—especially the proposed spending for universities (which did not end up as part of the law). "We were funneling all this money toward college campuses for what seemed to be

an exaggerated problem," Gilbert says.

Koss gets a pained expression on her face whenever Gilbert's name is mentioned. In her file cabinet full of media clips, there's a special folder for his rejoinders to her survey, which continued for about three years. Gilbert took issue with Koss, as did others, for broadening the term "sexual assault" beyond the legal definition of penetrative rape, to include sexual contact like "fondling" or "petting." Under this broader definition, she found that more than one-half of college women had experienced some form of sexual victimization. (About half of those women had experienced rape or attempted rape, accounting for the famous one-in-four number.) She still maintains that sexual misconduct should be seen on a spectrum. "I have never believed that it was useful to restrict our research to rape," she says. "Universities still have to deal with acts that may not be crimes, but they're still violations. Our thinking about sexual assault shouldn't be one size fits all."

The apex of the backlash came on a Sunday morning in the summer of 1993, when Koss, still in her pajamas, unfolded her newspaper at the breakfast table and saw the headline "Rape Hype Betrays Feminism" emblazoned on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine*. The article, written by a 25-year-old Princeton graduate student named Katie Roiphe, opened with a version of Gilbert's attack: "In a 1985 survey ... 73 percent of the women categorized as rape victims did not initially define their experience as rape," Roiphe wrote. "It was Mary Koss, the psychologist conducting the study, who did." By expanding the definition of rape, Roiphe argued, feminists were encouraging women to see themselves as victims, promoting a tired stereotype in which men demanded sex and women resisted. By refusing to allow for the possibility of bad sex or sexual miscommunication, Roiphe said women were denied the opportunity to make their own mistakes.

Koss fired off a letter to the editor, contending that articles like Roiphe's would simply encourage women, once again, to think of forced sexual encounters as their own fault. "All published studies describe a magnitude of rape that commands social concern," she wrote. "But women will not feel free to report these incidents as long as articles like Roiphe's fuel their fear of disbelief." By the time it appeared, though, Koss's reply was submerged beneath the furor over Roiphe's article, which was followed by *The Morning After*, a book about the "hysteria" over campus rape that popularized the criticism of Koss's research.



l and sexual-assault survivors promoted her bill to curb campus rape, citing Koss's research: "The price of a college education should not include a one-in-five chance of being sexually assaulted." (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

In this decade's campus-rape debates, echoes of Roiphe and Gilbert can often be heard. Last year, *Slate* columnist Emily Yoffe took her own stab at the statistic, writing, "The one-in-four assertion would mean that young American college women are raped at a rate similar to women in Congo, where rape has been used as a weapon of war." Roiphe herself is still disturbed by the ubiquity of Koss's survey, which she says is far more subjective than it seems. "When you define rape so broadly, it loses all meaning," she told me. "The assumption that women can't communicate what they want is infantilizing."

But one thing has changed: The debate over who gets to define rape, and how, is now almost entirely confined to the popular media. Although a few researchers continue to push back against her methodology, Koss's approach is acknowledged nearly universally as the standard in sexual-assault research. "We're all drawing on Mary's work in some way or another," says sexual-assault researcher Chris Krebs, who conducted one of the most recent national surveys on campus rape. In 2000, Koss received the American Psychological Association's award for distinguished contributions to research in public policy for her work on violence against women. In 2006, she was named a University of Arizona Regents' Professor, an honor reserved for the top 3 percent of faculty who have made an outstanding contribution in their fields. By the time her survey was updated in 2007 to incorporate new questions about LGBT sexual violence, other scholars and researchers had used the survey hundreds of times in their own work. And if Sens. Gillibrand and McCaskill win passage of their legislation, nearly every university in the country will soon be using surveys like Koss's to determine the scope of sexual violence on their campuses.

"It's encouraging to see people collecting more data," Koss says. "That's progress." But she worries that the current debate over the prevalence of sexual assault is—just as in the '90s—drowning out talk of solutions for survivors. "As soon as people understand the political stakes,

the terrain changes completely," she says. "So we have to think carefully about what we really want to ask for, because we might walk away with nothing at all."

THE YEARS OF controversy surrounding her 1985 survey—the years of repeatedly hearing her work dismissed as "advocacy research"—were painful for Koss. Friends marvel at how little she let it show publicly, but despite the cool exterior she maintained, the allegations were deeply insulting for someone who sees herself as a scientist informed by feminism—not the other way around. "When she's criticized, Mary takes people on as a scientist," says Lisa Goodman, a professor of psychology at Boston College and a longtime friend. "But she's also fueled by compassion for the victims. You don't often get those two things together—the head and the heart—in scientific research. When you have that emotional investment, sometimes you get written off."

By the time Roiphe's book came out in 1993, Koss was already retreating into what she calls "academic stealth mode," looking for projects that would keep her out of the spotlight. In 1995, she began tracking a group of rape victims over several years, trying to tease out why some women fared better or worse after being assaulted. As she talked with the women and began to parse the data, one theme came up again and again: self-blame. Women who felt responsible for their own rape had more distress in the immediate aftermath of an assault and took longer to recover.

So how, Koss wondered, could self-blame be mitigated? An answer dawned on her slowly. In the American court system—and in campus judicial systems, which operate similarly—the defense in a sexual-assault case usually hinges on destroying the victim's credibility. That means, in many cases, survivors of assault have to defend themselves and face more questions about what they might have done to "bring it on"—tantamount, in Koss's mind, to being traumatized all over again. All too often, it is for naught anyway, as few attackers ever see jail time; the Justice Department estimates that while 32 of every 100 rapes are reported to police, only seven of every 100 lead to an arrest. Only two rapists in 100 will receive a felony conviction.

"I think of it as a slow-motion car crash," Koss says, leaning forward across her desk and simulating an explosion with her hands. "The victim's needs are in total conflict with the criminal-justice system. A process where you're asked questions about your behavior around the time of the rape and what ways you resisted and whether you were drinking or not—of course it's going to make you question, 'What did I do to make this happen?'"

The campus-rape debate has long been rooted in the classic American notion that the best way to prevent crime and win justice for victims is to punish offenders by removing them from the community. Just as she had in the 1980s, Koss suspected that the conventional wisdom itself might be the problem. As she began searching for alternatives to the criminal-justice approach, she found a handful of studies by researchers outside the United States that evaluated a model called "restorative justice." Originally developed in the 1970s, restorative justice is, at its most basic, a form of mediation between a victim and an offender. It was used, on a mass scale, in South Africa's post-apartheid reconciliation and in Rwanda's recovery

process after the 1994 genocide. In practice, restorative justice can take many forms, but the "conference" is a key component: Victims and offenders have a series of meetings in which each person speaks about the crime and its effects. After months or sometimes years, the participants come to a consensus about how the offender can repair the damage he has done.

Koss saw the potential for sexual-assault survivors. "It gives victims a voice, and it centers the process around them," she says. "And it's also about saying to the offender, 'Look, you need to recognize why this thing you did is wrong.'" But she knew that it wouldn't be popular with a lot of feminists. Her allies were taken aback when Koss began, in 2002, to develop a pilot program for sex offenders through the District Attorney's office for Pima County, which includes Tucson and its suburbs. "Mary is a tremendously incisive thinker and a friend, but I disagreed with her about this from the start," says Lucy Berliner, the director of the University of Washington's Harborview Center for Sexual Assault. "I work with victims all day, and this is not something they're asking for. This is a movement among academics who don't like punishment or the criminal-justice system overall." But others, like Goodman, felt that if anyone could make restorative justice work in this form, it would be Koss. "It was like Nixon going to China," Goodman says. "The critique of restorative justice is that it fails to hold perpetrators accountable. Mary has an incredibly strong sense of justice, so that made it seem less risky. She was not going to let those guys get away with anything."

In 2003, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control, Koss launched RESTORE, the world's first restorative-justice program to include sex offenders. Over the course of the next two and a half years, Pima County prosecutors referred 66 felony and misdemeanor cases to Koss—some from local campuses, most from the community at large—that seemed appropriate for restorative justice. Cases involving excessive violence or force were weeded out, and the offenders were screened for empathy; those who seemed unable to understand another person's feelings were disqualified. At the beginning of the process, the offender would have to accept responsibility for having caused the harm. If the offender and the victim both consented to enter the program—which happened in 22 of the cases—they would begin to hold conferences that would culminate in a supervised redress plan. Families and friends would also attend conferences and discuss how they, too, had been affected by the crime.

The most tangible relics from RESTORE, which ran out of funding in 2007, are the intricate flow charts that Koss locates, after some searching, on a shelf above her desk. "We were meticulous about this," she says. "There were so many places it could have gone wrong." An essential element of the process was the victim telling her own story on her own terms, without interruption—and then helping to shape her attacker's rehabilitation. The offender, meanwhile, would undergo extensive therapy to make sure the lessons from the conferences were sinking in. Koss's research assistant on the project, Chad Sniffen, observed the conferences and says that survivors seemed especially grateful for the opportunity to set the record straight. There was a moment where the offender would have to repeat what he had heard the victim say—and if he got it wrong, the victim would correct him. "That's where a lot of victims said they got their voice back," Sniffen says. "They could say how they'd been hurt and know that the person who hurt them was actually listening."

Several of the cases involved University of Arizona students. Koss fondly remembers one of the survivors asking if she could make a T-shirt to represent RESTORE at the school's annual Clothesline Project, a public-art exhibition by women who have experienced sexual violence. The young woman decorated her shirt with a sparkly pink heart, adorned in the middle with a Band-Aid. The caption read: "That was then, this is now—thanks, RESTORE!" Koss's voice rises in delight as she remembers it. "We were the Band-Aid over her heart!" she says.

Mostly, though, RESTORE was a disappointment. Koss had hoped that prosecutors would send her several hundred cases to tackle, but they remained wary of the whole idea. By the time the funding dried up, RESTORE had followed fewer than two dozen cases to completion. Koss tried with increasing desperation to find money from other sources to keep the program going, but most of her grant applications were returned immediately—a snub for a senior researcher. When she realized the money was running out for good, she broke down and cried. "It felt much more disastrous than any of the other attacks on my research," she says. "It was like a personal loss, because what I was doing was a good thing, a thing that was needed, and I couldn't get other people to see that."

Using the limited amount of data RESTORE had produced, Koss published several papers between 2011 and 2014 expressing cautious optimism about the program's potential—especially for colleges. Because they have to deal with a wide range of sexual misconduct, including acts that don't neatly map onto the criminal code, Koss believed universities could be ideal venues for restorative justice to flourish. The practice seemed especially promising for the very cases that are hardest to adjudicate—the ones in which alcohol interferes with students' memories and there are few witnesses. When a rape can't be legally proved, she argued, restorative justice can at least establish that a violation did occur, and then help both students move beyond it.

But as she tried to get the word out about restorative justice's potential, Koss found herself at an unfamiliar impasse. Her original sexual-assault studies had never suffered for attention, but now she was struggling to convince anyone that her new work was worthy of their time or support—or even of their criticism.

ON ONE LEVEL, the timing of Koss's restorative-justice project couldn't have been more fortuitous: Once again, just as in the 1990s, the whole country was talking about campus rape. But this time around, Koss was swimming against the prevailing tide of feminist activism: While she was calling for rehabilitating offenders and empowering women outside the traditional judicial system, activists were focused on finding how best to track down the perpetrators and punish them.

The researcher du jour was now David Lisak, a psychologist and retired professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. In 2002, Lisak published a survey of college men that found that of the 6 percent who admitted to some form of rape, nearly two-thirds had committed an average of six rapes each. These men, Lisak argued in a 2011 paper, were serial predators who were responsible for the vast majority of sexual assaults on college campuses.

Lisak's study has methodological limitations—it was conducted at a commuter university, for one thing, so the mean age for his sample is older than that of most college students—but it has become ubiquitous both among advocates for rape survivors and those who criticize recent efforts to make colleges take sexual assault more seriously. It's easy to understand why. If Lisak's findings are true, universities could address their sexual-assault problem by expelling just a handful of men. In response to this prevailing idea, several universities—including Duke and Dartmouth—have implemented policies where expulsion is the "preferred" sanction for sexual assault, meaning that it will be the first punishment to be considered.

But as terrifying as the notion of serial rapists prowling college campuses might sound, Koss worries that basing policies on Lisak's theory would actually let too many men off the hook. She has coauthored a new study, to be released in July, which shows that men who commit campus rape are a much larger—and more diverse—group of men than Lisak reported. "All rapists are not created equal," she says. "A broad definition of sexual assault means that you're dealing with a lot of different kinds of people."

Lisak says that recognizing the problem of repeat offenders is important—but he agrees that his research shouldn't lead to simplistic solutions. "Whatever the precise percentage of sexual assaults being committed by serial offenders, the fundamental math of this phenomenon dictates that serial offenders represent a very significant part of the problem," he told me by email. "No, all sexual assaults are not committed by serial offenders. But many are. So a university must have an array of responses that can address both serial and nonserial cases. And universities must also be responsive to the needs and wishes of survivors. Many survivors want complete privacy. Some survivors want help only for their wounds. Some survivors want a full adjudication of their complaints."

If universities see their primary responsibility as finding a small number of dangerous men and removing them, Koss believes they won't be addressing the real enabler of sexual assault: a pervasive culture of sexism. She also believes that although some cases shouldn't be considered for a restorative-justice approach, many of the men who commit sexual assault have the capacity to change. To Koss, it is a university's job, as an educational institution, to help them try. "The difference between an everyday misogynist and Lisak's predator," she says, "is that the first guy can learn that what he did is wrong. Are we really saying there's a whole category of men we can't educate?"

To some feminists and survivor advocates, there's a clear answer to Koss's question: yes. "Every year, Stanford turns down thousands of people who have perfect records," says Michele Dauber, a law professor at Stanford University. "Why would we want someone who commits rape?"

Despite that popular sentiment, some university administrators have expressed an interest in using restorative justice, especially in instances where women are reluctant to pursue charges—or where the evidence is likely too murky for expulsions or convictions to result. "There are so many cases that a prosecutor wouldn't touch," Koss says, "where it's just one person's word against another's. That doesn't mean there wasn't a violation, but the criminal-justice system

can't offer meaningful resolution. Is that person just out of luck?" A task force at Penn State University recently recommended that administrators look at recent cases to determine whether a restorative-justice process might have worked better. Some campus educators are also discussing the formation of a network of support groups for men returning to school after being suspended for sexual-assault violations, drawing on restorative-justice strategies.

Schools that turn to restorative justice will face pragmatic hurdles and, potentially, legal ones as well. The Education Department sets guidelines for how universities handle sexual-assault accusations, and activists in recent years have successfully pressed for standards designed to make it tougher to get away with rape on campus. In 2011, new guidelines required universities to lower the standard of proof needed to hold perpetrators responsible, for instance. But many of the federal guidelines are murky—including a provision that forbids universities from using mediation to resolve sexual-assault cases. Would that rule out restorative justice? The ban was a response to some universities' tendency to slide sexual-assault cases under the rug by saying they had been mediated—when in fact there was no real accountability for the offender—but it places an inadvertent barrier in the way of restorative justice, which Koss argues is far more rigorous.

David Karp, a dean at Skidmore College who has been a national leader in bringing other forms of restorative justice (like racial-reconciliation programs) to campuses, says that campus administrators are clearly interested in the approach—the workshops he facilitates on the topic routinely sell out. But they are wary of investing in a sexual-assault program that the government might shut down. There are pragmatic hurdles, too, Karp says: A program like Koss's would require intensive training for university staffers. (Koss insists that though every institution would have to customize its process, there is a way to streamline and replicate the practice.)

Universities that embrace Koss's vision wouldn't just be running up against federal rules or practical problems, though: They'd surely also face criticism from sexual-assault activists. Alexandra Brodsky, a Yale Law student who cofounded a national group that educates campus-rape survivors about their rights, says she initially saw promise in restorative justice. But Brodsky's activist work has left her deeply skeptical of universities' willingness to pursue justice for sexual-assault survivors, and she thinks restorative justice would give them another way to cop out. "It's a convenient option for schools that don't want to take aggressive action against perpetrators," Brodsky says. "And it denies sexual-assault survivors their chance to be angry, to demand the same kind of justice that we give to victims of every other crime."

Koss says she admires the work that students like Brodsky have done to bring public attention back to sexual assault on campuses. But she disagrees that restorative justice would replace "aggressive action" against perpetrators—instead, she says, it would give survivors a choice about what action to take. Being able to make that choice, she believes, is itself empowering. "People say, we can't use restorative justice because rape victims are fragile and might get abused," she says. "Well, in my experience, that's just not true. I feel we're obligated to give them options and trust them to make the right choice. Not all women will want an adversarial system, and we owe them a way to heal, too."

But there isn't much room for Koss's arguments in the current debate. And it's hard to get political purchase for a bold new idea when even your allies think you're misguided. "I'm always willing to be proven wrong," Koss says. "What truly frustrates me is the fear of trying something new."

One day in Tucson, as Koss and I were driving to lunch, nosing our way along a broad boulevard at the edge of the University of Arizona's campus, I asked how she responds to her critics. She answered by telling one of her favorite stories from the RESTORE project, about a young undergraduate male who had assaulted a fellow student. "It's the type of thing that I'm sure the activists would scream about if they heard it," she said, pointing for me to turn. "Because it was what the survivor-victim wanted, we gave that young man what was basically a school project. He had to spend one year researching a presentation on date rape for his fraternity. But we supervised him, so he took it seriously, and after the process was over, he ended up participating in the campus rape-education group. Maybe that would sound hokey or naïve to some people, but I really saw it as a success."

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