

Editor:

The American correctional system is seriously problematic in several ways, not the least of which is the number of rapes that occur therein, committed by other inmates and, too often, by correctional staff. Lara Stemple,¹ Executive Director of Stop Prisoner Rape, in an Analysis and Commentary article entitled "Lifting the Curtain of Silence: Survivors Speak about Rape Behind Bars," addresses prisoner rape. In the article, four illustrating narratives are used, one of which, Narrative 2, is puzzling. The narrator states that in 1968 he or she was arrested for civil disobedience and "for the next 24 hours I was tortured and gang raped." A life of difficulties is subsequently described. "The only trauma I have had in my life was the rape in jail." "I received a disability pension from the Veterans Administration in 1987 for the mental health disability that resulted from my rape."

VA disability pensions are generally given for disability resulting from some event that occurred while the person was in the armed forces; was the person jailed for civil disobedience while in the Armed Forces? If so, what kind of civil disobedience did he or she take part in while in the Armed Forces? (These were, of course, the years of anti-Vietnam War protest.) Was she or he placed in a military jail? Clarification of these and related aspects of this narrative and why the person received a VA disability pension would be appreciated, especially since it is assumed that the author drew the four narratives from an extensive potential supply of rape experiences.

Roy B. Lacoursiere, MD
Topeka, KS

Reference

1. Stemple L: Lifting the curtain of silence: survivors speak about rape behind bars. *J Am Acad Psychiatry Law* 31:361-3, 2003