



**NOT
SOMEONE
LIKE ME**

**FIVE MONOLOGUES
ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

BY SUSAN RICE



**DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.**



NOT SOMEONE LIKE ME
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NOT SOMEONE LIKE ME is the stories of real women. The transcript is based on interviews, on the book *After Silence* by Nancy Raine, and on the film *Rape in a Small Town: The Florence Holway Story*, produced by Charlene Chapman and directed by Jeffrey Chapman.

CHARACTERS

FLORENCE, mid-70s–80s. Gray-haired. Lively. Plain-speaking. Very New England.

NANCY, late 50s–early 60s. Charismatic. Attractive. Graceful, somewhat poetic.

TRACEY, early 30s. Trim, energetic, pretty.

SHARISSE, mid-to-late 30s. African-American. Lithe, fiercely passionate. Emphatic.

PAM, early 60s. Dynamic, self-possessed. Straightforward.

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Scene One

Lights up on a living room. Simply but warmly decorated. A couch and two chairs on either side of it. Perhaps a Persian rug on the floor.

Five women enter, greet each other and seat themselves. They are cordial but not that familiar. It could be a support group, a community gathering, a group therapy session, an AA meeting.

Florence sits in the middle of the couch. On one side of Florence sits Tracey. Next to Tracey, on a chair, is Sharisse.

On the couch, on the other side of Florence, sits Nancy. And next to Nancy on a chair sits Pam.

They settle in. Florence calls for attention.

FLORENCE. Pam, would you like to start?

Pam shifts uncomfortably in her chair. Takes a deep breath. Starts to speak but can't. She inhales again deeply. Tries again, then slumps.

PAM. I can't do it.

FLORENCE. That's okay. No pressure. Tracey, what about you?

Scene Two

Tracey leans forward on the sofa. She begins her story.

TRACEY. There was the Labor Day Round-Up that I wanted to go to with my kids and my husband. A small-town affair. We live in

Michigan in a suburb of Detroit and we don't get many things like that, with face-painting and petting zoos and the parade of fire trucks and the one guy in town who has a tractor. I found myself wandering with my six-year-old daughter and my three-year-old son, their hands in my hands. It's instinctive now. I don't like crowds of people and this wasn't something I would ordinarily be doing—which is why I got married, as I understood it—so you could stop doing things you didn't want to do.

The other women laugh in recognition.

But this time anyway, I was scanning the crowd when all of a sudden I saw him—standing there, his head above everyone else's. I never realized how tall he was. I thought to myself, "I must be imagining you because you can't possibly be who I think you are—the man who was the boy who fifteen years ago held me down on his bedroom floor."

All of a sudden, my children's hands in mine felt like anchors, like something that grounded me and kept me standing—something I needed desperately to keep from floating away or sinking down or leaving myself altogether. I turned and watched as he laughed and laughed, as he ran his fingers through his hair. It was so thick and curly and...good.

Somehow I found my way back to my husband and I handed off the kids and I walked. I walked because I couldn't breathe. It took me two days before I could breathe again and I thought, "Why can't I breathe?" I realized I was back in the room when I was fifteen years old and that I liked him so much and he was my friend.

I was popular in high school. I studied hard and got good grades. I was on the football cheerleading squad. I was not a "mean girl." I was nice to everyone. I suppose the only thing that set me apart was that—because of the way things were for me at home—I was not used to telling people everything.

Anyway, my best friend and I were friends with all these older guys, which was kind of cool. And that's when we started drinking.

When I was fifteen, I would drink shots before I went out at night. No one was awake when I got home. My mom and my stepdad were

pretty unreachable. Every time I went out at night, the purpose was to get wasted. We were all academically involved; I mean we weren't wankers. We all went on to college. We just partied hard.

Sharisse high-fives Tracey.

I remember that night. It was winter. There were probably around fifteen kids at the party. I knew everyone. Most of us had started dating—which at that time basically meant that we made out at parties. That night we had been drinking for hours and somehow the two of us ended up in his room. Just him and me. He was eighteen but his room suggested someone much younger.

It was dark and the door was closed. I was drunk and spinning. As I lay there on the floor of his bedroom, all of a sudden I realized this was the first time I'd been naked with a boy. This was the thing that my friends and I talked about late into the night when you learn things from those more experienced than you...such as you don't actually blow during a blow job.

NANCY. You don't?

All laugh.

TRACEY. As I lay there, I felt his hand make its way up my leg. He was clumsy and big and probably twice my weight. His slid his finger into me and it hurt. I told him so. I told him to stop. But he didn't. He held me down and lifted up his arm—which was about the size of my leg—and he placed it over my chest, hard, and pushed me into the floor. All I heard was him telling me to “Just relax.”

It was in that moment that I realized I couldn't move if I wanted to. All of a sudden, I felt his fist rip through me, forcing its way in—deeply—and I must have screamed or kicked or something. I don't know because I wasn't there anymore. I had been sucked into the buzzing in my ears.

I felt him release me. He stood up quickly and mumbled something about me being a cock-tease.

Then he put on his clothes and opened the door, flooding the room with light that had only been coming from underneath the door moments ago.

I wondered why I was on the floor. I lay there, shaking, cold and numb and not sure where I was. When I found myself able to stand, I walked over to turn on his lamp, which was a boy's lamp. A baseball lamp. I pulled the cord and there was a bit of light in the room again. I saw my body, naked and exposed. There was a clear glass of water on the night table and I reached down to drink it. The moment it hit the back of my throat, I knew that it was the vodka I had been drinking earlier. It burned its way down me.

Then I felt the burn between my legs and I looked down to see what I thought was vodka, leaking out of me. But it was blood—the only color in the room—dripping down my leg. And I didn't know it was mine. I didn't understand where it was coming from until I touched it and traced it back to the source. Then I burned everywhere and nowhere at the same time. I thought to myself, "What happened here? What is happening here?"

Emotional, Tracey has to stop. She pauses, takes a drink of bottled water. Then resumes.

I walked into the bathroom. The room was spinning. I tried hard to focus my eyes and I thought, "How the fuck did you let this happen?"

I waited for an answer but there was no answer other than that there would be no telling of this night. No telling. Because I was a cock-tease and he was a popular senior. And everybody knew I was drunk. Everybody knew that I went into the bedroom with him and that I liked him.

I managed to get my clothing back on somehow and tried not to drip blood onto his lovely boy-blue carpet. I made my way out to the party. For some reason, on this night of all nights, my mother let me sleep over at his house because it was a party and there were lots of people there.

I slept in a room with some other girls and when I awoke in the morning, I cleaned up and dressed. Then I went into the kitchen. I stood there as his mother flipped pancakes for us. I looked at him. He couldn't, wouldn't meet my eyes. We never spoke again.

I knew in that moment that I would never feel again the way I had before his finger slid inside me. I had been taken from myself. He

ripped out a piece of me and took it with him in his bloody hand.

Florence, seated next to her, places a comforting hand on Tracey's hand.

I never spoke of this and never really did feel the need to confront him or to tell anybody else about it. I didn't want to give him any power. If I just pretended it didn't happen, he didn't have any. I wrote it off as "We were both drunk and it was stupid and so what?" After all, I was in high school with him and I had to keep seeing him every day and what was I gonna do?

I felt I had put it in the past but when I saw him on Labor Day—when I watched him flip his hair, watched him laugh—I thought, "I do remember." And I have to move through this, to really feel it again, to be able to get to the other side of it. Otherwise, it's just a shadow lurking.

For years, I wanted to believe that this didn't impact me at all. But I still don't like to be held down. I don't like to feel that I can't move. I don't like the weight on me. It scares me. Even goofing around, I don't like that feeling of not being able to get up. My husband will sometimes say to me, "Oh, just relax." And I hate that. For years I just said, "Don't say that to me! I don't like that!" Now I know why.

As it happened, the day after I saw him at the street fair, I had my annual appointment with the gynecologist. And it was weird. It was getting worse, the not being able to breathe. It wasn't 'til that day that I realized I had been feeling his weight on me. I almost couldn't leave my bathroom that day. I just couldn't. But I had this appointment and I thought, "Well, that's ironic. Of all days." I thought about rescheduling it, then I said, "You know what? Fuck him. This is my body, this is my health, this is my life. And I need to go do this."

So I got there and the exam began. My blood pressure, which is normally pretty low, was kind of high. As the doctor checked me out, she asked me how I was doing and what I was up to. So I told her. "I'm practicing clinical psychology. I've done my thesis on the psychological impact of sexual abuse on women in their adulthood." And she said, "What were your findings?"

And I—still reeling from seeing him the day before, not the clinician

NOT SOMEONE LIKE ME

by Susan Rice

5 women

NOT SOMEONE LIKE ME is a play about sexual assault based on five true stories. On television and in film, the experience of rape is often sensationalized, exploited, and distant. Hearing these stories told by living, breathing women, in real time, has a vastly different effect. With each woman's story, the play explores a common theme: speaking out turns victims into survivors, if not heroes. NOT SOMEONE LIKE ME aims to inspire audiences to tell their own stories—and put an end to the silence and the shame.

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