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April 6, 2015

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## NSVRC STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Analysis of Rolling Stone's 'A Rape on Campus'

The Columbia School of Journalism's **analysis** of *Rolling Stone's* "A Rape on Campus" comes at a critical time. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center is in the midst of **Sexual Assault Awareness Month** and this year's campaign focuses on preventing sexual assault on campuses.

First, we hope the fallout from the *Rolling Stone* article doesn't discourage victims from speaking out. **Research has shown** that, in the vast majority of cases, victims of sexual assault are telling the truth.<sup>1</sup> **Trauma impacts memory.** It is common for details to be delayed or blurry, but it does not signify that an entire story is inaccurate. In fact, lapses in recollection may indicate that something traumatic did happen.<sup>2</sup>

That is why it is important for journalists to connect the dots with thorough reporting and fact-checking. This can be done accurately while being sensitive to the needs of someone who has been affected by sexual violence.

NSVRC urges all media outlets to educate themselves about the complexities of reporting on sexual assault and train staff so they are equipped to accurately report on this issue. To aid reporters in their work, NSVRC teamed up with Poynter Institute's NewsU to create a free, **online course for journalists** reporting on sexual violence. NSVRC has additional resources available, including a **media packet** with facts and statistics on sexual violence.

The media plays a crucial role in telling these important stories. Through their work, journalists can provide factual information and contribute to building well-informed, safer communities.

*The National Sexual Violence Resource Center leads the U.S. in providing professional support to local and state anti-sexual violence organizations. NSVRC collaborates with partners nationwide to create research-based resources that focus on how to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The organization has the nation's largest library of resources on sexual violence and prevention. To learn more, go to [nsvrc.org](http://nsvrc.org).*

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<sup>1</sup> Heenan, M., & Murray, S. (2006). *Study of reported rapes in Victoria 2000-2003: Summary research report*. Retrieved from the State of Victoria (Australia), Department of Human Services: [http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/644152/StudyofReportedRapes.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/644152/StudyofReportedRapes.pdf)

Lonsway, K. A., Archambault, J., & Lisak, D. (2009). False reports: Moving beyond the issue to successfully investigate and prosecute non-stranger sexual assault. *The Voice*, 3(1), 1-11. Retrieved from the National District Attorneys Association: [http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/the\\_voice\\_vol\\_3\\_no\\_1\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/the_voice_vol_3_no_1_2009.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> D'Anniballe, J. (2010, February). *Understanding the neurobiology of trauma: The impact on children and adults*. Presentation at the Deepening Our Roots: Growing Meaningful & Sustainable Sexual Assault Services in Rural Communities conference, San Diego, CA.