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**CHILD-RAPE RATES OF 300/MONTH IN SEVEN HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE
REFUGEE CAMPS ARE DROPPING TO ZERO**

Frandy Daniel, Ph.D. (UNEV, City, Haiti), Gilbert Kliman, M.D. (Children's Psychological Health Center, San Francisco), Jodie Kliman Ph.D. (MA School of Professional Psychology, Newton, MA)

Summary: The authors (FD and GK) have initiated a surprisingly effective means of child-rape prevention in the squalid tent cities created for people displaced by Haitian earthquake survivors, where the rape of girls and women had become endemic. It involves parents of rape victims initiating explicit requests for help in getting media attention for their daughters' ordeals. They do so in their expectation that public attention to the crime of rape would help their daughters' safety, in combination with other efforts to change the culture of the camps toward respect for the dignity of all its residents. The repeated requests by Haitian parents of rape victims for public attention stands in stark contrast to the expected request for privacy following child-rape. Public television as well as previously unresponsive police and court authorities are being contacted by our project when requested by rape survivors and their parents. This project is a joint intervention of two agencies – UNEV in Haiti and the Children's Psychological Health Center in the U.S.

Recent data indicate a remarkable downward shift of child-raping in seven dangerous refugee camps since this project began: a drop to zero from a previous 300 child-rapes per month rate. This drop occurred after two external social media events: 1) the first coverage in one of the camps, by a U.S. television station and 2) the first visit to Haiti by a U.S. team, who made resident-requested videos and Skype communications to the United States of meetings with rape survivors and their parents. The complaining families and the project team hoped these videos and skypes would be publicly shown to help their cause. This use of social media for protest and protection of children can be considered as a step toward a "girl's and women's spring" to stand up against rape, analogous to the use of social media to notify the world of human rights abuses in the Arab spring.

- 1) **Project origins:** Frandy Daniels Ph.D. of UNEV Haiti originated the project in January 2012 by taking a tent-by-tent census of six refugee camps populated by 300,000 residents, of whom almost 40% were minor children. He and ten assistants interviewed camp-dwelling parents and minors and found that 6,000 minor children living there had allegedly been raped in the camps. The census was conducted by 10 mental health care workers, all Haitian, working in pairs, between January, 2012 and September, 2012. This indicated a child-rape-rate of about 300 children a month or an average of 50 child-rapes a month in an average camp, among the six camps. Later, a seventh camp was visited and information on rapes gathered by Kliman. There had been no arrest warrants, prosecutions or jailings of alleged child rapists in the seven camps during the post-earthquake two year eight month period. (Report by Kofaviv, CNN, Dec 10, 2012).

- 2) International **Coordination:** Dr. Frandy Daniel had noted the reflective network therapy method introduced to Haiti in in January 2010 by The Children’s Psychological Health Center (CPHC) and the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP) in the form of a bilingual Haitian Creole and French-language guided activity workbook¹ for child and family earthquake survivors. This workbook was intended to harness small reflective networks, that is, small groups of caring adults and/or peers who could help children to understand and put language to their experience. He reached out to the senior authors of the workbook, Gilbert Kliman MD and Jodie Kliman, Ph.D. for advice, consultation and financial support. Financial support from CPHC was modest, totaling under \$20,000, but Dr. Gilbert Kliman, a forensic child psychiatrist, traveled to Haiti to offer advice and consultation about creating a large-scale reflective social network process with forensic components and to meet directly with victims and their families. To fortify the children’s forensic cases, CPHC sent written letters of notice of crimes against children and offered assistance to the Ministers of Justice, Haitian police, and courts -- none of whom had previously brought a single child rapist to justice for crimes in the earthquake refugee camps.

- 3) **Bearing Witness to the World:** Channel Two KTVU of San Francisco was informed of the project and anchorman John Fowler conducted an interview with two of the authors (FD and GK) and several permitting families with children complaining to Mr. Fowler of unprosecuted rapes. This interview aired October 9, 2012 6PM and was made available by online linkage through www.ktvu.com. During the next two days Dr. Frandy went with his laptop and wireless internet to show each of six camps and showed the internet version of the interview. There was a very positive response, with multiple requests for more such documentation and informing the world by television. This resident-initiated request at the seventh camp was contrary to Haitian cultural attitudes familiar to Dr. Frandy and others regarding rape in Haiti.

¹ Kliman, G., Kliman, J., Ferdinand, D., Hudicourt, C. & Ferdinand, A., Oklan, E. & Wolfe, H. (2010). *My Own Story about the Earthquake in Haiti (Histwa Pa M Sou Tranblemannte Ayiti)*. San Francisco and Boston: The Children’s Psychological Health Center and the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. [retrieved from <http://www.childrepspsychologicalhealthcenter.org/content/view/62/44/>].

- 4) **An unexpected family insistence on no privacy:** Haitian parents requested that the world be told of their daughters being raped. Instead of requiring privacy for what many Haitians, and people world-wide, would consider a shameful personal event, 200 residents of Camp Haiti Bloc (the seventh camp studied) insisted on having the opportunity to reach out to the outside world to bear witness to trauma. This proactive stance can be understood as both validating of their daughters' and their own traumatic experiences, and as offering outsiders, including Americans, the opportunity to serve as compassionate witnesses. These witnesses are expected to become aware of the violational nature of endemic rape and violence against impoverished girls and women. The witnesses are expected to be empowered to act in solidarity with those girls, women, and their families (Weingarten, 2008, 2004, 2000). In that spirit, one of the American authors (GK) flew to Haiti to the seventh camp to bear witness and another (JK) participated as a witness, via Skype.

The seventh camp: A group of 200 Haitian refugee camp residents, in the Haiti Bloc camp, which the senior author (FD) had never previously visited before the KTVU broadcast, directly asked Dr. Daniel if he could arrange for a visit from the United States child psychiatrist (GK). This happened because a resident of Haiti Bloc saw the KTVU online link while it was being shown to citizens at Camp Cité de Soleil. Thus he knew Kliman had been on U.S. TV about rapes in the camps. He brought this information verbally to Haiti Bloc. The Haiti Bloc Citizens Committee then contacted Dr. Daniels. They made it clear that they wanted the outside world to know how their children and they were helpless against rapists, who had impunity to rape young girls and to assault anyone who tried to protect them.

Upon short notice, two days of speaking events were arranged (October 20, 21 2012) for Dr. Kliman at Camp Haiti Bloc, which is near Port-au-Prince airport. KTVU was unable to coordinate its crew for the timing, so the clinicians FD and GK made videotapes and the CPHC Executive Director Skyped one meeting from San Francisco. Jodie Kliman, Ph.D. Skyped another meeting from Boston. When Dr. Jodie Kliman, Skyping into the second one of the two community meetings in the camp, told the families that she would tell her colleagues and students of the rapes and other violence they had experienced, the entire assembly applauded. They communicated their strong desire to have the violation of their human rights and dignity witnessed outside of Haiti and responded to with protective actions and a stance of solidarity that local and national authorities had failed to take.

It seemed as though these girls and their parents had taken in the lessons of the media's impact on the Arab Spring. The American authors also remember this strategy in the U.S. civil rights movement; when African Americans were being denied basic human rights and lynched with impunity. The media and the nation took no notice – until white northerners lost their lives to the struggle and *their* deaths were publicized. The parents, girls, and the citizen groups in the camps were taking an active, self-respecting stance in turning to the outside for witnessing and assistance; the alternative was no end to the rapes and retaliatory violence against rape victims family members who tried to protect loved ones. Thus we began to think of these families' request for social media use as aimed beyond personal psychological healing; rather it may have constituted an act of collective resistance against oppressive social systems which had ignored and therefore ratified raping of especially vulnerable displaced and impoverished girls and women.

Dr. Gilbert Kliman had complied with this surprising request for public exposure rather than privacy by flying to Haiti to visit Camp Haiti bloc with the hope that KTVU would cover the meeting. Although this hope was dashed by KTVU's logistic problems, he conducted and videotaped two large meetings, which could be understood as large-scale reflective network sessions (Kliman, 2011) in which caring adults help children to narrate and make meaning of painful experience; they can also be understood as compassionate witnessing sessions (Weingarten, 2000, 2004, 2008.) with the 200 residents witnessed by each other and by outsiders. The residents who came publicly shared their parenting agonies with him. They seemed to regard the authors as capable of informing the world about their children's unprotected status. They showed machete wounds fathers had suffered the day before, in an unsuccessful fighting off of raping bandits. Most importantly, they urged their raped children at the meeting to come forward and address Daniel, Kliman and the video cameras, as well as a Skype set up linked to Jodie Kliman, Ph.D., a Guided Activity Workbook coauthor. Another Skype was set up for CPHC's executive director, Jessie Rios, who was able to record part of the event. Two video cameras were used to tape the entirety of the events.

Repeated inquiries were made to the adults as to whether they wished strangers to know of their children's sexual assault experiences. Their responses were to urge the authors to tell the world by television. Having been similarly cautioned that they might be publicly seen on television, 33 children came forward nonetheless, some reporting rapes at ages as young as 10 years. An eight-year-old girl reported she had witnessed her friends being raped. A 17 year old reported on feeling suicidal and worthless every morning since being raped and having been falsely reassured by an agency that her rapist would be prosecuted. She said she did not want her community to know she was suicidal, yet she talked directly to the two authors present (FD and GK), into two video cameras, and to the Skype image of the third author (JK). The former two authors interviewed several more children in private, gathering forensically-relevant information and bearing witness to the girls' violations and the effects of the traumas.

RESULTS:

- a) *Death threats:* Not unexpectedly, the project was dangerous to Dr. Daniel in particular from its beginnings, as he was there in person and had initiated the project. We had anticipated this risk and CPHC hired a bodyguard for him. Ten census-taking colleagues of his had already resigned under pressure of death threats received September 24 through October 4, 2012. He soon received 200 death threats in the weeks after October 21, after the videotaping sessions. On October 22, 2012, he survived a knife attack; Dr. Daniel's knife-wielding assailant was overpowered by a bodyguard and arrested. Seven girls were provided safe housing because of special threats by fire and tear gas, from which neighbors protected them. Within days, two judges tried to bribe Dr. Daniel to stop his project, unsurprising in a country known for its largely corrupt judiciary and police force. These two judges were dismissed following CPHC's written complaints to the Minister of Justice.

In all seven camps, the rate of warrants and jailings for sexual assault on children had been zero for the two and a half years preceding the UNEV project, according to the anti-rape group, Kofaviv (CNN interview, Dec. 10, 2012) Since the September 2012 onset of the UNEV-CPHC joint project, however,

175 arrest warrants have been issued concerning alleged rapists and 51 alleged rapists are in jail. The death threats have dropped to almost zero against Dr. Daniels but not against the complaining families in the past two weeks, as of this writing. Dr. Daniels has the opinion that the rapists' families, who were the explicitly identified sources of some of the threats, have spread the word that the project is proceeding with U.S. and U.N. support, rather than relying solely upon previously low priority given by Haitian resources to child-rape, and is going to persist in trying to gain justice for raped girls. Some rapists' families have suggested to others that his perseverance probably means Dr. Daniels is covertly employed by the U.S. Government. Many alleged rapist's families are trying to make substantial civil settlements, apparently regarded as a kind of reparation for the allegedly raped girls. While not criminal prosecutions, such settlements being costly may also provide deterrence against future rapes.

Public Health and Human Rights Triumph: Since the resident-initiated videotaped visit to Haiti Bloc, in October, 2012, the Citizens Committees of the six surveyed camps and the seventh visited camp continue to report to UNEV weekly. Remarkably, the seven camps' Citizens' Committees report that rate of reported child-rape has dropped from over 300 per month in the seven camps combined, down to zero. Although threats against complaining girls and their families persist, they are being reported to police. There has been no further retaliation against girls who register police complaints about rape. These remarkable child-rape prevention results have now persisted for six weekly reports. It is far beyond random possibility and represents a public health and human rights triumph.

DISCUSSION: Following the existence of this externally supported and collaborative project becoming evident to many Haitians in displaced persons tent-city camps who had heard of the KTVU broadcast, we began to realize the importance of Anderson Cooper's phrase: "the world is watching." We recognized this video-inclusive service, including publicity via commercial television, exposes criminals who are capable of stopping themselves. Their self-preservative and moral functions were enhanced by a world with watchful eyes and listening ears. Exposure and threats of punishment were events to which rapists were not accustomed in this particular nation. In addition, families and neighbors, no longer found themselves helpless to protect and support the girls and women in their lives. They found themselves empowered by their acts of bearing extremely public witness to the human rights violations to which they and their loved ones were subjected. They took ownership of their ability to act as a protective community. Having been witnessed by compassionate outsiders, they could better witness – and advocate – for themselves and their loved ones and neighbors.

It is noteworthy that rape was long used as a tool of political repression in Haiti during and after the Duvalier regime (Human Rights Watch, 1994). For hundreds of years until 2005, rape had not even been a crime in Haiti (Penal Code of Haiti, Legislative Decree, August 11, 2005). The delayed arrival of systematic and institutionalized morality and justice for women and girls in particular can be understood as a vestige first of colonialism and then of neocolonial dictatorship and continued exploitation of the poor. European and then Haitian systems of exploitation had placed the least possible value on slaves, and female slaves especially. As in the U.S., female slaves and servants, including children were raped with impunity and little or no twinge of conscience. Though self-liberated far sooner than any other nation in the world, Haitians have become only legally free of slavery, so long as mass incidence of raping, sexual and labor exploitation continues. We think Haitian large-scale psychological processes were still partly being modeled on exploitive colonial processes. The dominant discourse of the Haitian society promoted impunity for raping.

Though still in its earliest stages of intervention processes, our rape-prevention project may have been a catalyst for change that was getting ready to happen in Haiti. Perhaps it provided just the right amount of community self-monitoring and self-empowerment, and collective superego reinforcement by way of external witnessing to produce a strikingly measurable impact. It improved the treatment by

both impoverished and economically privileged men and older boys of impoverished, homeless girls in an extremely vulnerable situation. Camp life, in which people live in unprotected tents, and must leave

the camps to access water and latrines, creates a physical situation in which girls are easy prey. Now, girls and women, as well as men, are changing; girls are feeling more empowered as arrests mount, and men are realizing they can no longer rape with impunity.

In contexts and societies in which most people can exercise little control over their lives, those with power can freely dominate those without, who often feel unable to resist the practices of domination. Such practices of domination as rape and violence world-wide – whether by sectarian militias, colonialist slave holders, representatives of postcolonial repressive regimes or failed democracies, violent paramilitary groups like the Duvaliers' Tonton Macoutes², or by renegade individuals – are often rationalized and even seen as justified by religious, and political discourses of individual helplessness. This arrangement allows and even gives implicit permission to the powerful (whether dictators and their friends, landowners, or individual men) to rape, kill, and otherwise exploit, unabated. It pressures victims and those who witness violation into silent submission, in ways that have a ring familiar to the decades-long cover-ups priests' sexual abuse of child victims in the U.S. and elsewhere.

This hope-deadening situation was somewhat reversed by the social media techniques and related activation of the potential power of community used in this project. Essentially, a collective commitment to protect children rather than to prey upon them, which many individuals shared, but which had been stymied by the corruption of judicial and police practices that left tent cities completely vulnerable to violent and rapacious forces, was facilitated by establishing witnesses in the outside world, as transmitted by the video-including process. This new development was strengthened greatly with its threats of naming and exposing the rapists, along with unprecedented numbers of actual arrests and prosecutions. These new events required the protection of an international public eye. In the Arab Spring, social media brought the plight of millions of people to the attention of the world. In Haiti, the values of freedom from violence and human rights violations held by so many Haitian citizens, even in the face of massive violation of those values, have begun to burst forth. This could happen in part because those values, and their large-scale violation (White, 2005) were finally publicly and compassionately witnessed (Weingarten, 2000, 2008) by distant people who could not be endangered by their witnessing and who could lend some degree of safety and validation to the people of Haiti's tent cities.

The causes, generalizability, sustainability and permanence of these good effects remain central questions in our continuing and expanding protective and therapeutic endeavors. We are seeking and have been promised United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) support over a period of three years for those purposes.

Acknowledgements: We thank the Haitian Minister of Justice, Jean Renel Sanon for his support of our endeavors while he was burdened by many other important tasks; The Haitian Director of Police, who provided additional patrols at difficult times; KTVU Channel Two of San Francisco for its timely intervention on behalf of Haitian minor girls; and the office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi for its

² The Tonton Macoutes were a fearsome group organized during the Duvalier dictatorship, originally named for a Haitian "bogeyman" who stole away children, and then renamed as the Milice de Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale (Volunteers for National Security).

support in obtaining an expedited visa to the U.S. for Dr. Frandy Daniel. We are grateful to Dr. Ronald Jean-Jacques, president of the Haitian Psychological Association, for his verbal endorsement and offers

of help with hiring future mental health staff in Haiti. We thank the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology and its president, Nicholas Covino, Psy.D., for their invaluable assistance in creating and printing a Creole and French workbook for child survivors of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, which brought Dr. Daniel's attention to CPHC and facilitated this joint effort. We are particularly grateful to Dorothie Ferdinand, Psy.D., a Haitian-born then-MSPD doctoral student, Ms. Caroline Hudicourt, M.A., the principal of Ekòl Akasya in Petionville, Haiti, and Ms. Antonine Ferdinand, whose coauthorship, knowledge of Haitian culture and language, and translation were all invaluable. The Board of CPHC contributed financial support. The American Red Cross contributed a vital large tent for interviewing victims.

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Sincerely,

Gilbert Kliman,
Medical Director