

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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Date rape and stereotypes discussed

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Contributing Writer

Five panelists discussed date rape from a multicultural perspective last night in a panel discussion attended by about 50 students and sponsored by the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Race and Religious Relations Program.

The panel, co-sponsored by about 15 student organizations, was composed of Billie Lindsley, director of Healthwise at Columbia University Health Services; Malik Purley, co-director of the Liberty Program at Barnard College; Lori Sheffer, the AIDS prevention management coordinator of AIDS Related Community Services; Helen Shin, a rape crisis advocate at the New York Hospital emergency room; and Daniel Fictum, director of student development at New York City Technical College.

Discussion centered around a video played prior to the talk, called "Playing The Game," which por-

trayed a typical date rape scenario between a man and woman at a fraternity party in which the drunk couple returns to the man's room and the man assaults the woman, who says "no" to intercourse.

"It's good that the video shows the different perceptions of what is going on and that the viewpoints are not polarized between men and women," Lindsley said. "One person of each sex is saying 'you wanted it' while another is saying the woman was clearly violated."

The panelists agreed that miscommunication and misinterpretation are at the root of date rape, and that racial stereotypes add to miscommunication and misinterpretation.

According to Shin, traditional Asian women are taught to be submissive and that it is their duty to take care of men. Meanwhile, Asian men may believe that they have the right to have sex with women because of women's duties towards them.

Shin also said that the stereotype of Asian women as exotic makes them vulnerable to potential assaulters.

Date rape also occurs within the gay male population, Fictum said.

Fictum described a typical date rape scene as one when a man finds himself in a sexual situation with another man and tries to say “stop,” but is blackmailed into having sex with the other man by threats that the man will expose the fact that he is gay to his friends, according to Fictum.

When Lindsley noted that the majority of the forum audience was female, Fictum suggested that it would be better to target specific groups at such discussions, in order to make people feel they are in a safe atmosphere. This might make men, especially, more inclined to attend such meetings and learn about the issue.