

The voicemails you're about to hear contain intense and sometimes emotionally challenging material. Listeners are encouraged to attend to their own wellbeing in the service of engaging bravely and honestly with these stories. Voices have been pitched and identifiers removed in order to protect the speaker.

DAKOTA: Welcome to The Left Ear podcast. Before we begin, I wonder if you would be willing to listen from your heart. Can you take what you know and believe and represent and gently set it aside? Can you be a neutral and safe place for these voices to be heard? When you listen to a poem, you don't listen with logic. You listen with your entire being. You let it find its place in you. Here, I wonder if you can attempt poetic listening. To the listener. thank you for being here. To the speaker. we hear you. We witness you.

SPEAKER 1: Hi, my name is — . And I was on lunch at work. My coworker came in on his day off to shop. Um, we did have a sexual relationship but we cut it off. I have been avoiding him. And that day that he came in to shop, he followed me outside during my lunch and pulled me to a dumpster and raped me. And I reported it to the police and to my employer. My employer botched my investigation with the police. He shared my statement with the rapist, my rapist own statement against me to the police because of that, because of my warehouse manager's incompetence, the police case was closed, the rapist went free. I tried to get a restraining order to prevent the, to prevent the rapist from retaliating and harassing me and um. The judge rejected, restraining order, saying well, you had a sexual relationship and I don't believe you, just like the police and we think you're a jilted lover and I'm going to reject the restraining order. So now I live in my apartment, shut in. And I am seeing two different therapists. And the rapist already called the new warehouse that I'm supposed to work at. Um, so yes. So the rapist called the new warehouse that I'm supposed to transfer to and asked if I started yet. And I did report that, but I can't do anything. I don't have enough money to hire a lawyer. I'm looking into getting a lawyer, trying to work with one, but she's, you know, slow going, I mean, I live in fear every day. And I'm trying to heal myself so I don't live in fear since the case was closed. The case can't be reopened unless I have new proof. And the Kavanaugh case, along with my case and all the other cases of women raped and killed afterwards, I felt that I had to stand up and make my voice heard. I have a son and if I'm telling him to stand up for himself when wrongs are done to him, I felt I had to do the same. I couldn't be a hypocrite and not report what happened to me. So as of now, I filed a case with the EEOC to go after management at least. But the case against the rapist can't be reopened unless I reopened it, but like I said, I don't have a lawyer, but that's my story. That's what I'm going through right now. And every day is a struggle. And I pray for all of us out there that has to go through this. That at least survived and I pray for all the fallen ones. Thank you for listening.

SPEAKER 2: I was molested by my stepfather from age 11 to age 18 when I finally had the courage to confront him and to tell him my mother. Uh, there's not a day that

goes by that I don't think about what happened to me during those years. My life has been fairly successful, but I know that that experience has hampered me and held me back for many opportunities that I could have take new advantage of period. — has been dead for over 20 years, but yet there's not a day that goes by that I don't think about what happened and it hurts me sometimes to the point of uncontrollable tears period. I've been an author since 1996. I write romance novels and I make a damn sure that all of the women in my novels are treated with dignity and respect and that they are strong women pursuing their interests in life and that they're chosen male companion only helps and inspires and protects them when necessary. Thank you.

SPEAKER 3: Um, we are a bunch of girls from Uruguay and we were, um, sexually harassed by, uh, one of the assistants that used to work with us as a supervisor in, in our job. So it was pretty tough and it was a really long process to get him out of the job. Um, it was really hard for all of us, but we made it and it took a long time as I said, because of all the process, because people wouldn't believe us, but still we made it so I wanted to share our story. Thank you.

SPEAKER 4: My husband and I got married not long ago. We're still considered newlyweds and almost every night when I fall asleep or when he thinks my fall asleep, he will have sex with me. And even sometimes when I don't want to, when I'm awake, he, I'll push him off. I'll tell no, and then he continues to have sex with me. When he's angry, he'll shove me and I tried to defend myself, but ended up leaving him marks on him, but he leaves marks on me. So everybody's thinks I'm a terrible person. My parents, his parents, they always ask, what are the marks on him and if they're from me, but he never leaves marks on me, so they never asked if I'm okay. They never know what's actually going on.

SPEAKER 5: I used to live in New York for 15 years. When I was getting picked up by a cab, going from my work, four in the morning, my shift as a bartender, I was assaulted in the backseat. The guy was a very good looking guy who I was nice to in the car chatting with him, talking about that he had come to play baseball in the city. When he was dropping me off, he jumped in the back of the car and laid on top of me and assaulted me. I was Swedish. I was in the process of a green card application. I didn't dare to do anything. I didn't dare to call the police. I didn't dare to take any kind of, you know, any kind of, um, actions towards this because I was so afraid that this would jeopardize my green card application. I live with this and I'm not proud of the fact that I didn't dare to go to the police. That's my story. Thank you for doing this. This helps. Believe it or not, it helps. Thank you.

DAKOTA: Thank you for listening. Thank you for your time. And to the speaker, thank you for your bravery. We hear you. We see you. It's hard to not feel responsible for saving the world after hearing these stories, but just by listening with your heart, you saved someone even just a little bit.

Thank you for listening. We'll be back each Monday with more stories. If you or someone you know has a story similar to these, you can find help at the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-675-HOPE. That's 1-800-675-4673. Or visit theleftear.com, or the link in this episode's show notes for resources. The Left Ear was created by Dakota Johnson and produced by Spoke Media.

This is our final episode of season one, but we'll be back with more stories in 2020. We're not finished listening and the phone line is still open. You can still call and share your story at (212) 653-8806. Special thanks this season to Global Citizen, Lighthouse Management, Zack Morgan, Roth Forrest to Vickery Elliot, Janielle Kasner, Carson McCain, Caroline Hamilton, Jenna Hannam, Evan Arnett Will Short, Keith Reynolds and Maggie Taylor.