

Assault in the City

In the past six months, five women have reported being sexually assaulted by a stranger. The details of the incidents are similar. All the women live alone and were assaulted in their homes between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. The police are concerned the offender is a serial rapist. The chief feels more women may have been assaulted but are reluctant to come forward. However, he is concerned that if he publicizes his suspicions in the hope of finding other victims, he may lose his chances of catching the perpetrator.

The assaults occurred early in the morning, and four of the victims were awakened in the dark. So they could not provide a good visual description of the attacker. However, one victim was coming out of the shower when she was assaulted and possibly is the best eyewitness. Unfortunately, due to the trauma, she has apparently repressed her memory of the event.

The chief decides to ask Dr. Shayleigh Johnson for assistance. He asks her whether she can develop an offender profile. He remarks he has heard of criminal profiling and understands it has had some successes as well as failures. He wants to know how a criminal profile is conducted and the validity of any developed profiles. He warns Dr. Johnson that he does not want to waste precious time and human resources on a wild-goose chase when there is a serial rapist acting without the fear of reprisals. However, he does want some factual answers from Dr. Johnson.

The chief also confides they do not have any leads although they have deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samples that match and have checked all the sexual offenders. He confesses the investigation is at a loss. He suggests that if they could get a description of the offender, they may be able to use it in the media to seek assistance. However, only one victim had a clear view of her attacker, and she appears to have repressed the memory.

The chief wants to know whether Dr. Johnson can use hypnosis to help the victim recall her attacker's face. He wants to know whether hypnosis can help people remember repressed memories, how accurate the hypnotically refreshed memory is, and whether this witness's recollection can be used in court against the accused if he is apprehended.