

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

60 Masonic St. Northampton, MA 01060 | TEL 800.897.0089 | info@mediaed.org | www.mediaed.org

War Zone

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: For as long as I can remember, strange men and boys have said things to me on the streets. I can remember being very, very young and having a car load of boys drive past me and bark at me or yell some derogatory remark, and I believed it because I already felt those things—because everywhere I looked I was being told I was too fat, or my hair wasn't good enough, my skin wasn't good enough, I needed to get rid of my body hair, everything about me was wrong. And there it was being confirmed by these strange boys or men on the streets.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: I ain't do nothing, I ain't do it, I ain't do it (laughing).

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What did you just say to me?

Man: I ain't said nothing.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You didn't say 'hey, beautiful'?

Man: No.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Now why would you lie about something like that?

Man: What is this? A secret indictment?

[CONVERSATION]

Man: What are you doing? Are you a reporter?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I'm making a film about sexual harassment

Man: Sexual harassment! Ok, well I'll be the thug, I harass everybody.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Do you always treat women like that on the streets?

Man: Not always. I don't harass them, I just look at them. If I don't say nothing that ain't really bothering them. I got my own eyes, I can look at anything really. Freedom of sight.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: And what's the message you're trying to give to women when you check them out?

Man: The message? Hello, you either look good or you don't look good.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: And on a scale of 1 to 10 how am I doing?

Man: (laughs) Now, see...

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I'm asking you.

Man: Now, you're asking me for a direct answer?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Does that embarrass you? I am.

Man: Of course, you look nice. You're a 5.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What did you just say to me?

Man: I said wow!

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Why did you say 'wow'?

Man: Cause you look good, you look wonderful.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: (speaks in Spanish)

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What does that mean?

Man: You look good. You look strong, nice.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I look strong.

Man: Yeah.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I just noticed as you were walking by that you looked at my breasts.

Man: (laughs)

[CONVERSATION]

Man: (whistles)

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Why were you whistling at me?

Man: Just saying hi.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Oh, is that how you say hi? By whistling at a woman on the streets?

Man: Have a nice day. Excuse me, I'm working please.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Really?

Man: Yes

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Excuse me, I was walking please.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: Buzz off

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Excuse me?

Man: Buzz off

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Now that's not polite is it? Do you say things to women on the streets?

Or do you just look at our bodies? Sir, are you ashamed of yourself? Sir, do you think you did something wrong?

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: One summer a few years ago I bought this Super-8 camera at a yard sale with no idea what I was going to do with it. But I woke up one morning and I realized I actually had a weapon, a weapon I could use as a way of taking back the power that was being taken from me every time I walked out of the house, a weapon I could turn on men the same way they turn their aggression on me.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I look like I what?

Man 1: You lift mad weights.

Man 2: You look like you lift weights.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Why are you making comments about my body?

Man 1: Cause your body look good. We ain't trying to disrespect your body.

Both Men: You look like you lift weights.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Maybe I'm not interested in whether you all notice that I lift weights or I don't.

Man 1: So in other words you're telling me I can't voice my opinion.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: No I'm not trying to say that at all.

Man 2: When we say, 'hi, have a nice day' you look at us and suck your teeth. We're just only being polite. Ya'll make us feel uncomfortable when ya'll do that.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: So in other words, you're saying that women don't pay attention to you when you say things like that.

Man 2: They don't show us no love.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Do you think that there's a reason for that?

Man 2: I don't disrespect women.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: If you don't think you're disrespecting women, why do you think you're getting such a negative response?

Man 2: Cause they stuck up and conceited.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Oh, you think that's what it is? So it's about the women and not about your behavior.

Man 1: Hold on, you're saying that if I give you a compliment, nothing to disrespect you at all, if I just give you a compliment, I'm still being wrong?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Absolutely.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: Well what exactly is street abuse? This is street abuse, the way you're interviewing me in this position.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You're exactly right. That's why I'm doing it the way I'm doing it.

Man: Do you think that's rude?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I do. I'm trying to prove a point.

Man: You're trying to make me a victim of some silly question, which I care less about, frankly.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You don't like aggressive women?

Man: That's not why you stopped me. You didn't stop me to ask me if I liked aggressive women.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I'm asking you now.

Man: You didn't ask me if I like fast cars or fine paintings or good clothes or good food, did you? If I saw you walking down the street and I thought you were attractive, perhaps maybe I would check you out. But aren't you flattering yourself?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Exactly what do you mean by that?

Man: Well, you tell me.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: So you don't think I'm cute.

Man (shakes head): No, I don't think so.

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: When I was twenty-one, I was living in Louisiana and I was riding my bike home one night on a Sunday evening about 7 o'clock and a man stopped and

asked my directions to the university. And I stopped my bike and I was telling him how to get there and he got out of his car and he said, 'get off your bike, I have a gun in my pocket.' And in that moment I had this overwhelming feeling of inevitability, that all my life I'd known something like this would happen and I asked him if he was going to hurt me and he said that he would just as soon kill me. Then he told me I had to get into the driver's side of the car because the passenger's door was jammed. So I decided that I'd rather he shot in the back running away, because I knew I would never get out of his car once I got in because he was going to rape me, dismember me, torture me, whatever, and I was deciding which way to run when two cars pulled up and he turned and he smiled at them reassuringly and then he turned back to me and he said, 'haha, just kidding.' And he drove away. And I called a female relative and she came and she picked me up and almost the first thing she said was, 'this never would have happened if you were wearing a bra.'

[CONVERSATION]

Man: You don't mind us looking or you'd cover them.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I do mind you looking.

Man 1: Then wear a shirt that don't show 'em.

Man 2: I believe you're a goon.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Am I making you uncomfortable? Are you afraid of me?

Man 2: No, I think you're a goon, man. If you don't want to do something don't do it.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You mind if I interview you, sir? How am I dressed?

Man: You know...

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Can you describe how I'm dressed?

Man: You're dressed provocatively.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: Why do women wear revealing clothing, such as mini-skirts, skirts with slits up to the top showing their thighs and wear tight spandex like what you're wearing and not expect a man to respond? That's human nature. I think it's something beautiful and I think that when God made women he made her with those curvaceous curves and things like that to attract a man and I don't see nothing wrong with looking at a woman. (To another woman) Young lady, you have a nice day.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Women are seductive?

Man: They're showing flesh, I mean...not seductive but, you know, it's human nature. Did I harass that woman?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I think you did.

Man: How? I did not harass her, I said, 'good morning young lady, have a nice day.' That's harassment?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Was it necessary to say it to her ass?

Man: Let me tell you something. I have women...of course...

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Of course what?

Man: I mean I had women harass me. I mean I'm not talking about harassing but say something to me.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: So why is it necessary to speak to her ass?

Man: Well, I'm saying I'm a man! I mean, I was looking at her face first and I said, 'good morning young lady' and I'm not saying I was looking at her ass but I turned around to see the response.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Of her ass?

Man: No, I'm saying...excuse me it will never happen again. I'm gonna put on my Stevie Wonder glasses.

GINA: Thinking back when I was like 13 or 14 years old and I remember being with my grandmother and my mother walking down the street and having older men just smile at me or look at me behind my grandmother's back...it made me feel kind of belittled, kind of embarrassed because I wasn't sure what all the looks or the calls meant at that time. White men, I think they look at me like I'm some type of exotic mixed person. They've told me things like, 'hey you half-white bitch.' I don't feel capable at all about protecting myself physically against a man that's like 150 pounds or 200 pounds. There's no equality there whatsoever. I don't feel safe around some men that are family. I mean I remember cousins who've always looked at me in a sexual way and I never felt they were protecting me. I have to always inwardly protect myself from them. Mentally you can never get over the way that makes you feel.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: Miss, you look beautiful.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: How old are you?

Man: I'm 16.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: How long have you been checking women out?

Man: Since I was 12. I tell her 'how you doing beautiful?' If she stops by and we start talking and then it happens, that's a natural thing, women and men.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Did your father do it?

Man: No.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What do you mean?

Man: He doesn't do it.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Why doesn't your father check women out?

Man: Cause he has a wife.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: And what does that mean?

Man: It means he has a wife and my father's faithful. That's what it means.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Would it be disrespectful of your father to check out women?

Man: Yes, of course. 'Cause he has a wife and it's my mom.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Is that the way you'd like men to look at your daughter or your wife sir?

Man: No.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Why not?

Man: I never thought about it.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You think there's a difference between me and your wife or daughter? What are you afraid of, sir?

[VOICE OVER, men's voices]

Voice 1: *I said, 'good morning, baby, I like your style.'*
 Voice 2: *I said, 'have a nice day. You're very attractive.'*
 Voice 3: *Mind if I walk with you?*
 Voice 4: *Hey, yo, baby!*
 Voice 5: *Happy Mother's Day.*
 Voice 6: *I said you're good, that's all.*
 Voice 7: *You're looking kind of old.*
 Voice 8: *You got big legs.*
 Voice 9: *She needs to get laid.*
 Voice 10: *You ain't got it like that.*
 Voice 11: *Forget it, forget it, bitch.*

[CONVERSATION]

Man: (blows kisses)
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Who did that? Did you do that?*
 Man: (laughing)
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Do you always do that?*
 Man: *Oh, I do it all the time. I do it to all the pretty girls on the street.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *So what are you trying to tell me when you make noises like that towards me?*
 Man: *That I'm checking you out.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Why?*
 Man: *Cause I like ya, I think you're good looking.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *And what do you think's going to happen?*
 Man: *I dunno, maybe you'd turn around and do it to me.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *You think I'm going to make the same kind of sound to you?*
 Man: *I dunno, maybe you will.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *I don't think so.*
 Man: *Well, then I struck out.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *So you think that women need to be with a man on the street in order to be protected?*
 Man: *Sure. I think that most of them look single when they walk by.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Most women look single when they walk by. What does a single woman look like?*
 Man: *I don't like this interviewing stuff (laughing). Excuse me but I'm on lunch right now. I'm kind of done with it.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Why am I making you uncomfortable?*
 Man: *It's not at all.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Obviously not.*
 Man: *Well I'm sorry but I'm at lunch, I don't need 2 cameras sitting on me.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Why don't you need to be interviewed?*
 Man: *Carry on.*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Do you think you did something wrong?*
 Man: *Get the fuck out of here (laughing).*
 Maggie Hadleigh-West: *You think you did something wrong?*
 Man: *You're bothering me, yes, you are. You are bothering me.*

[CONVERSATION]

Man: (hits the camera).

Maggie Hadleigh-West: *Isn't there something you'd like to say on this subject sir?*

Man: *Yeah, fuck yourself!*

NATASHA: My mom likes the comments they make to her. It really, really annoys me because I don't understand where it's coming from and I don't understand how a comment that someone that you don't know makes... it just seems very odd to me. I don't understand it; I don't understand why she enjoys it.

SHEILA: But it's a compliment; they say nice things so I think it's ok. A lot of times Natasha and I would walk down the street and men would pass and stare at me or keep looking and Natasha would say, 'what are you looking at?' Natasha would really get furious and I'd say, 'Tasha you can't get furious.'

NATASHA: Yes you can.

SHEILA: Men will look at you and you just do as though you don't see them or they're not around. You just ignore them.

NATASHA: The reason why I don't ignore it is because you give them that power by ignoring them and just letting them do as they please and when you tell them, 'you're really a jackass and you're really stupid and disgusting,' maybe it doesn't phase them when you say it but it definitely makes me feel better. You see a nice man walking down the street; do you make a comment at him?

SHEILA: No.

NATASH: Why not?

SHEILA: Because he's a stranger; I don't know him.

NATASHA: Okay. So why should a man, a strange man that you don't know, make a comment at you because of...it's a double standard. Why shouldn't you say to man, 'you know I think you're really handsome or I think you're really attractive.' Why don't you do that then?

SHEILA: Because it's not right for women to do that.

NATASHA: Why isn't that right?

SHEILA: Because I wasn't brought up that way.

NATASHA: I don't like men, so its not something I look for or I kind of just let it go. If I'm with someone and we're holding hands, whether or not we're together or girlfriends, we've

gotten comments like, ‘can we watch?’ or, ‘can we be in the middle?’ I find it very amusing when they ask if they can watch; it’s like no, it’s not about you.

SHEILA: I was walking the street and I met the man I now date. He came up to me and he said to me, ‘you have beautiful eyes’ and I said, ‘thank you’ and he said, ‘can I see you?’ and I said, ‘no, I don’t know you.’ He said to me, ‘my name is Bill’ and I said, ‘my name is Sheila’ and he said, ‘well, can I see you later?’ So I said, ‘I don’t know you.’ So then he gave me his business card and he said, ‘I’ll see you later’ and he did come by and he met me and we’re still having a relationship for 16 years now. So I guess sometimes it does help on the streets saying, ‘hello, hi, how are you?’

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: Do you feel you’re safe with Bill then on the street?

NATASHA: No.

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: Why doesn’t he make you feel safe then?

NATASHA: He doesn’t make me feel safe because we have an interesting relationship, to say the least.

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: Is it anything you want to talk about?

NATASHA: No, it’s something I’d rather not talk about.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Are you with the New York Police Department?

Policeman: (undistinguishable)

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: When I was a little girl my mother used to always tell me to beware of strangers. Probably when I was around 10 or 11 I realized that she actually meant men.

[CONVERSATION, continued]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Aren’t you supposed to be to protecting women on the street?

Policeman: Go away.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: And not making them feel threatened?

Policeman: (walks away)

[CONVERSATION]

Man 1: Hello! Hello! Good morning! I said good morning...you don’t know how to say good morning?

Man 2: You ain’t nothing but a fat cunt anyway.

[CONVERSATION]

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You’re not aware of the fact that women are assaulted and raped, sir?

Man: Women are what?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Assaulted and raped?

Man: Oh, of course.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What about the fact that when a woman's on the street you're a stranger to her with a physical advantage?

Man: I'm not a stranger.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Certainly you are, sir. I don't know you. What makes you think you're not a stranger?

Man: I've been living here for 79 years, girl.

TRELLES: I'm still a virgin, I am still a virgin and I haven't been with anybody and I haven't been thinking about it. If you're going to have a boyfriend, you don't know if he's going to say things like that or if he's going to try to act aggressive with you and it turns me off, it's like, I don't wanna be bothered. If you are walking and looking shy, they'll mess with you just to see what you'll do and how you'll react. Just about all men act like that with women and some of them do think it makes women feel good about themselves, but it doesn't. Just now I was standing on the corner and two white men passed by me and one of them said, 'that's a fine looking bitch there' and I was shocked. And they kept walking and then they went and walking around the corner and then they passed back and started smiling. I do feel like I can fight back but it's like if somebody comes and touches you on your butt, you wanna punch them or kick them or do anything to try and make them feel some pain. I think I was in about sixth grade and I was walking and I noticed a man as I was walking next to a shopping center, going to my grandma's or something and I saw him out of the corner of my eye and as I was walking he started walking behind me and I was looking back and he was walking faster so I started walking faster, he started walking even faster and so I started running and when I started running he started running and he was getting closer and closer behind me and he was saying things like, 'come back bitch.' I was so scared, my heart was beating real fast and I ran to my grandmother's house and when he saw me knocking on her door he just kept going. One of my cousins, she was raped and a man broke into their house and raped her with everyone home and ever since then I've really been afraid. I'm always thinking, 'is someone going to try and harm me? Is someone going to follow me? Is someone going to say something? If it does happen how am I going to deal with it, what am I going to do?'

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: *I interviewed a little girl this morning who's fourteen years old and I'd never seen before and she said that she's been afraid of being raped since she was ten years old. Why do you think a ten-year-old girl would be afraid of being raped?*

Man: Well, one of the reasons could be due to threatening remarks, something experiential that she reacted to, or the other thing could have been that her imagination got carried away with her and she developed this phobia.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What kind of phobia?

Man: The fear of rape.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Have you ever known a woman that was raped?

Man: My sister was raped.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: You still wanna keep playing games? You wanna play games?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What, you got a problem?

Man: No, but if you're going to film me I wanna be filmed if I wanna be.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You think it's cool to talk about someone's ass but it's not cool to do it on camera?

Man: (pushes microphone away)

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Keep your fucking hands off of me, asshole.

Man: Take your camera away from me asshole.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Let go. It's so nice to talk about someone's ass but you're Mr. Fucking Tough now, aren't you.

Man: (moon's camera)

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: Women in particular have to take their destinies into their own hands. We have to learn to control our own lives and part of the way that we do that is through the men that we love. Lorenzo gives me hope for all men because he always treats me with respect and I know he's not perfect but he tries very hard not to make other women feel uncomfortable in public and I believe every time he's respectful to a stranger he's helping to keep me safe as well.

[CONVERSATION]

Man: Why are you filming me?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I'm filming you because you're walking around chasing women. That's why.

Man: So? I'm not breaking any laws.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I've seen you chase at least seven women. What's your problem?

Man: I don't have a problem.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Clearly you have a problem.

Man: No I don't. (Hits camera) Why did you start filming me?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I started shooting you because you did the same thing to me uptown at Penn Station.

Man: I spoke to you for 10 seconds, what is your problem?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: And then I saw you again down here.

Man: Then you followed me, you followed me. What makes you think I can't get dates? What makes you think I'm even looking?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: If you could get dates you wouldn't be chasing women down the street.

Man: What makes you think I'm even looking?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You're clearly looking.

Man: What makes you think I even want somebody?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You're not only clearly looking but you've got some kind of a deep-seeded problem.

Man: And you don't?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: No, I don't.

Man: I have not broken the law.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I can tell you, Joe, I got your face.

Man: And I'm innocent.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Innocent of what?

Man: Anything. I haven't done anything wrong.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Then don't do anything. I got your face all over my camera.

Man: I haven't done anything, I was talking to somebody and I talked to a few people and I haven't done anything wrong.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Stay away from me.

Man: I want you to focus on my lips so you can see what I'm speaking.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Joe, why is it necessary for you to look at my breasts?

Man: You got nothing to look at, okay? Come on, don't you trust me?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You're starting to like the attention, aren't you, Joe?

Man: Yeah, I am.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: So, have you ever been convicted of any kind of a sex crime Joe?

Man: Never.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Is that because you've never been caught?

Man: No, it's because I don't hurt anybody. Just let me look.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Get your hands off my camera.

Man: My hands are not on your camera.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: What do you do for a living Joe?

Man: What do you think I do? Lets hear your educated guess of what I do.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: I think you don't have a job.

Man: Now what makes you think that?

Maggie Hadleigh-West: Because I think you have a big problem and so you're not employable.

Man: Yeah, well, whether I'm employable or not employable doesn't really matter. I came out for an interview today and that's what I did.

Maggie Hadleigh-West: You're sweating Joe.

Man: (waves at camera)

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: I want to believe that the majority of men are willing to understand that their mothers and daughters and lovers aren't safe in public. And maybe that's not the way it is right now but it can be different.

[PHONE CALL]

Operator: Police department

Karen: A man was trying to break in my door. I don't know who he is.

Operator: He did what?

Karen: He's trying to break in my door

Operator: I want you to stay on the telephone with me, ok?

Karen: Ok.

Operator: Where are you now?

Karen: I locked the front door and I'm upstairs in the bedroom.

Operator: Karen, are you still there?

Karen: He's in the house. He broke through the door. He's here! He's here!

Operator: Are you still with me?

Karen: Uh-huh. (To the attacker) I've got the police on the phone. Why are you here? Why are you here? (Screaming) Why? Why? (Crying) Please don't hurt me. Why? Why? No...

Operator: Karen?

Karen: (Screams; dial tone)

MAGGIE HADLEIGH-WEST: As a little girl, I grew up living with two ideas simultaneously. One was that men were big and strong, they'll protect me, they'll be my prince, they'll rescue me if something happens. And the other was that men were my enemies and that they were to be feared.

[SUBTITLES]

Karen survived her attack. Her rapist was jailed as a result of tracing this 911 call.

[END]