

# Survivors share their stories

**“When you’re used in that way, you don’t matter. It makes you feel like a ragdoll that someone can abuse. It messes with you.” - Tate Jordan**



Photo by Brady Johnson

Freshman Tate Jordan tells the story of how filing a report on her assault when she was 15 helped the police catch her attacker three years later, doing the same to another girl.

## 1. What happened?

When I was 15, I went to a party with my best guy friends and I had met this person, Jimmy, at one of my best friend’s – Rocco’s – band shows. I didn’t think much of it. I knew he was a lot older. He was in his 20s when I was 15. I didn’t really have any precautions because he seemed like a normal, 20-year-old guy who liked to go see local bands.

Then he was messaging me and kind of flirting a bit, but I didn’t think much of it. I thought he was just lonely because he just broke up with his girlfriend. I brushed it off. Then we went to our other friend’s house to hang out. I didn’t know there was going to be booze there because I was 15. They said, “Let’s take some shots!” Then I noticed Jimmy was kind of feeding me shots. I had a bottle of Sprite with me because I was trying to pace myself to be somewhat sober, but when I took a drink of that, it had a lot more vodka in it. I didn’t put that vodka in it.

I was really messed up after that. I kept saying, “I want to go home” because I didn’t feel good. He was not drinking, so he said he would take me home. I left and got in the car, but David – whose house it was – looked him dead

and the eye and said, “You are taking her right home.” He said he would be back in 20.

We got in the car and he said, “So, do you want to do anything?” I said, “No, I just want to go home.” He said he would be spending the night there because he was going to drink more, so he needed to go home and get his belt. When we got to his house, when he started unbuckling his seatbelt, I said I wasn’t going in there. It was in January, so he said I needed to come in because it was too cold for me to stay in the car.

I went in with him and that’s when it happened. Nobody was home. I didn’t know that nobody was home. It was at 10 or 11 at night. I figured, mom, dad, brother – somebody would be home. Nobody was home, and that’s when that all happened.

The most [expletive] up part that still [expletive] pisses me off is when he took me home, he walked me to the door. My dad just happened to be walking upstairs, so he came in and shook my father’s [expletive] hand after knowing... after he did that to me. And he said, “Thank you for letting me take your daughter out tonight.”

The next morning, I was really

messed up and I thought that I had a [expletive] up dream or that I misinterpreted something. I was really in denial. It wasn’t until a couple weeks later when I hung out with him and we went to Starbucks. When we got in the car, he did the weirdest thing.

He threw a box of condoms at me. I was like, “No, this is not [expletive] happening” because I was 100 percent sober this time. He was taking me home at the time. Then – I liked this band, My Chemical Romance – I asked him if he could play their songs. He said, “Only if you take off your shirt.” Okay, I guess I’m not listening to them. He turned up the heat in his car to the max so that I would get hot and take off my shirt. But I sat there and sweated that out.

That’s when I realized, holy [expletive], that really happened. The first person I told was Rocco and David. They were obviously really pissed off. I didn’t tell my family until another 3 months just because... how the hell do you tell your dad that? You know that guy who dropped me off and shook your hand? He did this to me. He [expletive] raped me.

I didn’t know how to do that until finally, I went to another show and saw him there. That night, I said, “I need to tell somebody” because I noticed he was talking to two other girls and I didn’t want this to happen to them.

We went to the Wheaton Police Department in March, I told them my whole story, and they did not do a test because it had been 3 months. DNA was gone. He got off with a misdemeanor. A verbal warning and a misdemeanor for raping a 15-year-old girl because of a technicality within a 4-month age difference. I do not know that law. I think that law is [expletive]. And because in the beginning, I was drinking willingly. He got off with nothing.

While I was [at Augustana] three years later, I’m here and sitting in my dorm. All of a sudden, I get a call from my dad. He goes, “In about five minutes, you’re

going to get a call from a district attorney. Just listen to what she says.” Because I was 15 at the time, they had to go through DuPage County children’s services, so that’s how they had my information. It was on record that I was a minor. They didn’t realize I was 18, so that’s why they called my dad first.

She called me and said, “Did you have an incident with a man named Jimmy three years ago?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “You filed a police report with Wheaton County, right? My name is Jessica, I’m a district attorney representing a woman named Gwen. He did it again to this girl. I would just like to know if you could come and testify and get a trial to show that we can build a case against him to show that without punishment, they do it again. He will continue this behavior and continually assault women.”

Immediately, I said, “Yes.” When I went to file that report, my goal was to get him in some sort of trouble to learn and understand that [expletive] is not gonna fly. He did it again to Gwen, and I know her, so I messaged her, “I know you and I don’t really talk a lot, but I just got a call from your district attorney.”

I asked her what happened and I found out the reason they were asking me to testify was because he did it to her in the exact same manner the second time. After further thinking about it, Gwen and I are very similar in personality. I don’t know if that’s a coincidence, but personally, I don’t think it is. We’re the same age, too. It’s weird.

They want me to go in and say my story and what happened just to finally get some justice of any kind.

I was actually supposed to go to court in November. When I went online to confirm that I was going to court, the date had been cancelled. I waited, but it wasn’t until late December or early January of this year that we found out why: there have been four battery charges added on and a

DUI to this case. Not only is he being tried for sexual assault, he’s being tried for four accounts of battery and a DUI.

I’m going in March, and I can tell you right now that our main goal is to put this [expletive] away for what he did to Gwen and I and what he has done to these other victims that I don’t even know about. I don’t understand how you can do that to somebody, especially a 15 year old girl. I get that some people say, “Oh it’s college.” That’s still no excuse. When you do that to somebody – Gwen was a virgin. That was her first time, and that’s what she’s going to remember for the rest of her life.

I went to intensive therapy to deal with it, because honest to God, as a 15 year old, I turned to drugs and alcohol. I’m a kid, and that was my turn-to. That’s the path that Gwen’s going down, too, except that she’s doing much harsher drugs than I did. It just goes to show that you can’t do that to people because it really messes with their heads. There’s a sense of worthlessness, a sense that you were used without your permission or without any warning. You like to think of yourself as a human being, I’m independent, I matter. But when you’re used in that way, you don’t matter. It makes you feel like a ragdoll that someone can abuse. It messes with you. It’s really difficult to comprehend.

I don’t even know what that girl [Margaret] must be going through. I’m glad she’s raising hell. I followed the system. I went to the police, and he got a misdemeanor. I’m very happy that she’s raising hell, because it needs to be. This can’t keep happening. It’s difficult to understand. I don’t want to understand it.

## 2. What do you think it’s going to take to resolve this?

Awareness. I would like to live in a world where if people knew the effect on victims, that it would stop them. I just want it to be known that if you do this, we will come after you and will seek justice so that you learn.