



## **I don't know whether this was rape and I want a verdict so I can stop asking myself and trying to remember.**

I really struggle to know whether what happened to me was rape or not and I find myself thinking and worrying about this a lot. I don't want to over-exaggerate or dramatize what happened, but at the same time I feel like I want some validation. He has faced no consequences for his actions.

I had been dating this guy for a little while and everything had been normal. There had been no fights or violence before this night. One night we went out drinking with his friends and all ended up back at his house. He said something really derogatory to me in front of his friends, which shocked both me and them. They left, and then he aggressively tried to make me do a specific sex act. He basically ordered me onto my knees, stuck himself in my face and told me what to do, in a very nasty and demeaning way. He had never been like this before and I was confused and scared.

I backed away from him, asked him why he was being like this and started crying. He then started shouting at me, telling me things like "how can you think you deserve any better after the way you behave with me....", accusing me of being untrustworthy, fickle, a liar. I had no idea where all of this was coming from, I was really scared and I started to panic. I tried to defend myself against his accusations but I was really crying quite hysterically by this point. And this is my big problem - I don't remember everything that happened after that point properly, and not because I was drunk, I wasn't drunk. I can just only remember things in snapshots almost, short bursts, and I can't remember the order of events properly.

I remember starting to have a panic attack (I am prone to panic/anxiety attacks). I was on the floor, rocking backwards and forwards and trying to breathe and he was still shouting at me. He pulled me up off the floor at some point and hugged me, which helped me calm down because I thought he had finished being angry. Then he whispered in my ear "you're an asshole" and dropped me back on the floor. I remember trying to leave - I had my hand on his front door handle and I just remember him being behind me saying "don't". I don't know why I didn't leave really, I think I just wanted it not to be real. I remember growling at him at some point, I just don't remember why. I also know I slapped him, which also confuses me because I know it's wrong to slap people - but I also feel like I was defending myself. I have never slapped anyone before.

At some point I remember having sex, but the only thing I remember about that was him looking at me and saying "we could have been doing this hours ago, if you hadn't argued". I can't remember if or how I consented, I can't remember if we had somehow made up, I can't remember if I had stopped crying or panicking or being hysterical etc. Which is what worries me because what if something in that space I can't remember makes it ok? Maybe I did calm down and consent? But I also know my face would have been puffy, I know it takes me a long time to calm down after a panic attack. I also know when he went to sleep later I fantasized about throwing myself off the bridge into the river, I planned out the routes I could take to get there from his house. Which is not a normal way of thinking for me.



The other reason I'm confused about this is - the next morning I wasn't angry or upset with him. I was relieved he wasn't angry anymore and I just felt numb. I really don't remember feeling anything except maybe shocked and relieved. And I kept dating him after that day (he continued to be verbally and emotionally abusive throughout the relationship - which I did manage to leave after 9 more months). So it's hard for me to put a word to what happened so long after, and for me to justify why I didn't run from him right away.

I just wish I knew what happened in the gaps in my memory. And I wish I could have someone judge him to say whether he's guilty or not - not even for karma or anything but just so that I know. I always ask myself these questions whenever sexual violence is back in the news. I feel like having some kind of verdict will help me put this in the past for good, which is where it belongs.

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