

THE CONSENT COMMITTEE

Cindy and Brian

Cindy sat in the room staring at the wall. She was nervous on the borderline of an anxiety attack. She had never gone this long without her phone. Her representative to the board told her she had to turn off her phone before any meeting or hearing. The door opened, and Sensation came into the room. Her representative was a woman named Sensation Sanders. She was dressed in a black turtle neck and baggie black jeans. She said, *“I just have a few questions then we will finish with the hearing.”* Sensation explained how the hearing would go. She would be brought into the room. She said, *“remain standing until they come in and sit. Someone will read the affirmation and the hearing will begin.”* Cindy asked, *“affirmation?”* Sensation seemed to grow a little cold and cross. She said, *“now don’t ask any questions in this hearing. You are there to answer not ask. The head of the committee likes to hear why we exist before every hearing. A reminder of the horrible past.”* She got up and said, *“don’t worry you aren’t the aggressor here.”*

Sensation left the room. Cindy thought, *“aggressor, that doesn’t sound good.”* Three weeks ago, she was in a Starbucks drinking her usual half-caf, non-fat, white mocha with mint when he walked in. His name was Brian. He was well built in a pair of blue jeans, a striped button-down shirt under an open jacket. He walked by her and she stared at his ass. He spoke with the barista who made him a cappuccino with an extra shot of espresso. He started to leave when she did something she hadn’t planned on. She kicked the chair out in front of her, so it blocked his exit. He looked at her and she said, *“why yes please have a seat.”* He sat down and soon the two were talking. Eventually they shared phone numbers. Over the next two days they texted each other until tired of waiting, Cindy asked him out. Brian was a member of the swim team. Cindy decided to come to the meets. There she saw him in his skin-tight suit that left nothing to the imagination. She was a junior and he was a freshman but none of that mattered to Cindy.

Their first date was almost a rehash of their meeting only with the benefit of it being planned. On the third date he kissed her. Dating was an issue for them. Both had exams and Cindy's roommate didn't seem to approve of having a boy in her room. On a date about three days before the hearing the two were in a quiet tucked away part of the common room in her dorm making out when someone interrupted them and handed her a paper and him a ticket of some kind. The ticket was a social demerit. The paper had a phone number for the consent committee on one side and number for a rape hotline on the other. The college had strict rules on contact between men and women. Any form of sexual contact had to be both approved of by a committee as well as agreed to in a written contract. This would spell out what was allowed and what wasn't. Cindy felt that the whole thing was silly and how can anyone have any say in who she sleeps with or how. Brian said how a classmate of his was expelled on rape allegations. Not from the woman he slept with but the roommate of the woman who felt raped after hearing about the sex. He said, "*we need consent, or we can't date anymore. I want to finish school.*"

Cindy and Sensation walked into what appeared to be a court room. It had all the usual attributes including a place for a jury. There were three tables in front of the large panel. In the center was a tall woman in what could be best described as a 1980's power suit shoulder pads and all. The table to the right as empty. They went to the left and stood waiting for the panel. A door opened. Four women came in wearing long black robes. They took their places behind the bench with the middle part open. Then she came in. Unlike the other four Christi came in with her robe open and a bright red dress showing a lot of cleavage. She took her spot in the middle. She raised her hands. As she did the lights dimmed in the room and the lights in the floor facing the bench came up.

With the stage lights up and on her Christi said, "*many years ago, there was a problem on this campus. Assault and fear gripped the women of the student body. Ten percent of the student body reported a rape or sexual assault with a nonreported rate of at least forty percent. Something had to be done. Today thanks to this committee and the consent laws we have*

virtually eliminated assault and rape. Only in the committee can true consent be found.” The other women in the room said, *“in fellowship we are free.”* Cindy felt the whole thing felt like a religion. The room lights came up and the stage lights went down. The committee looked toward Christi waiting for her to sit. She did and soon the rest of them sat. Cindy remained standing with Sensation. Christi pulled out a paper and a thick folder. She turned to Cindy and said, *“stand please.”* She was already standing but Christi said this without looking at her.

Christi handed the paper to the woman next to her on the bench. She read it and said, *“you seek to have a consensual sexual relationship with this man named Brian Reed. Is this true?”* Sensation poked her in the side. Cindy said, *“well yes, it is my.”* The woman interrupted her saying, *“just yes or no will do.”* Cindy said, *“yes.”* The chairwoman said, *“you may sit.”* She grabbed what looked like a glass in the shape of the head part of a gavel and knocked it on the table. The woman on the far left said, *“let the trial of Brian Reed commence.”* Cindy leaned in and whispered to Sensation, *“trial?”* She didn’t respond to the question. Cindy watched as all the members of the panel pulled out legal size notebook papers and started to write something. The women on the far right said, *“are you aware that he has.”* She looked down at the folder then counted the papers in the hands of the women and said, *“sixteen reports of sexual assault against him?”*

Cindy quickly ran through her mind. Brian started this year and has been in school for about a month. In this time, he has somehow assaulted either physically or verbally sixteen women without being arrested. She wanted to ask a question, but she knew that the committee wouldn’t take any questions. The woman asked, *“well are you aware of this?”* She said it with a bit of force and anger. Cindy said, *“no I was not aware of this.”* She hesitated then did something she was told not to do. She asked, *“what are the allegations?”* The chairwoman said in an angry tone to Sensation, *“tell your plaintive to keep her mouth shut unless she is asked a question.”* Sensation leaned in and said, *“please don’t ask questions. Any charges will be read when the aggressor is brought in.”* The word struck Cindy like a hammer. Aggressor. All she wanted to do was have sex with her boyfriend but now he was facing nearly criminal charges with the fear that he could be expelled from school.

The doors in the back opened and Brian came in between two security guards. He seemed frightened and maybe just a little angry. His desk on the far right had no chairs. The woman on the far left stood and said, *“Brian Foster Reed you are here to answer for the charge of unlawful contact with a female member of the student body as well as sixteen counts of sexual aggression. How do you Plead?”* Brian didn’t say a word. The chairwoman said to the woman on the far left, *“read the charges.”* The woman on the far left stood and said, *“charge one, the unregulated sexual aggression on a female student including kissing, fondling and pre-intercourse activities.”* Cindy thought about three days ago when they kissed in the common room. He had his hand on her breast over the shirt. She had looked around and seeing no one put his hand under her shirt and on the breast. What she didn’t see was another student see his hand up her shirt.

“Charge two you have been seen in public without proper attire including such articles that exposed your genitals.” Two weeks ago, he was on the line in the one-hundred-meter freestyle. He felt good and did everything he had to do to compete on the college level. Cindy replayed the meet and realized there was someone in the crowd that was writing something. *“Charge three, seven counts of suspicious behavior and gender inequality.”* Sensation whispered, *“he was seen opening and holding doors for female students.”* The chairwoman glared at Sensation. The woman on the far left went on, *“on August thirteenth you willfully verbally propositioned a fellow student.”* He told her later that he had asked another girl out on his third day on the campus. He said, *“instead of answering me she got up and then sprinted away. All I asked was that the school was having an open reception and if she wanted to come with me?”* She read the final charge, *“the final charges are five counts of willful sexual imposition of a student in the public.”* It would turn out that all the women on the board filled out a complaint because he was there trying to get permission to have sex with Cindy.

Brian looked back and saw there was no seat. He said, *“how can I defend myself in a place I can’t even speak?”* The chairwoman said, *“you think you can defend your actions? Why*

do so many of you think you can do whatever you want and leave it to the women to clean it up?" She stood up and leaned over the table. As she did her cleavage spread open a little more revealing even more of her chest. Brian tried not to stare at her chest as she went on saying, *"you disgust me you vial nasty white male. You think that after years of oppression and degradation you have any rights here. I would strip you of all your rights to protect mine and my sisters."* She grabbed the glass gavel head and slammed it down screaming, *"guilty, guilty."* Brian looked over at Cindy. The chairwoman said, *"don't get comfortable here in this school. I think you are on the way out."*

The next day their findings were posted on the school website and two days after that Brian was asked to leave the campus. He went to the college administration who escorted him out of their offices. He called the company that owned the school, but they said it was up to the customers to regulate their satisfaction. Brian was sure they meant students, but did it really matter. The day after the findings were released Cindy was given a notice on inappropriate behavior and a pamphlet on being a victim of sexual assault. She felt that this whole nonsensical response to a private matter was a power trip that actually made a joke of a real problem. Someone gave too much control to people who just wanted to see things went the way they wanted and not help people. making legal behavior illegal. She thought about gun control. How they tried to make guns illegal for the law abiding while doing nothing for the criminals. They made political incorrectness a punishable offence.

Brian was in a hotel room off campus. He was forced off the campus by the committee by the security department. He was listed as a threat to the student body. There was a knock at the door. He let Cindy in. She said, *"I had no idea that they would be like this."* He held up his hands and said, *"it doesn't matter now. All I wanted was to go to school and become a teacher. Now here I am being held accountable for crimes someone else committed and doing what I was told to do by my mother."* He sat down on the bed. She came up to him. He said, *"why is it wrong to open a door for people?"* She opened her coat to reveal she was naked underneath. He looked up at her. She held her finger to his mouth then she pushed him back further on the bed. She pulled his pants off along with the underwear. Brian stared up at the ceiling trying to not act in any way.

He asked, “*but what if they find out?*” She pointed to the small camera she had on a table and said, “*oh they are going to know all about it then when they act I sew.*” She got on top and put him inside of her. The sex was quick and awkward for both being virgins.

To be continued..... Eventually