

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Background of the Study

Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey is a based-on-true-life story crime drama movie. This movie runs 1 hour and 27 minutes and is available on the Netflix streaming platform. Jim Donovan directed the movie *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey*. This movie is about a girl named Lisa Mc Vey (Lisa) lived in Tampa, who was kidnapped by Bobby Joe Long, a serial killer and rapist in 1984 when Lisa was 17-year-old. In 2018, Netflix released *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey* for the first time. Katie Douglas (Lisa McVey), David James Elliott (Larry Pinkerton), Rossif Sutherland (Bobby Joe Long), and Amanda Arcuri (Lorrie) feature in the movie. Bobby Joe Long, the murderer, sexually assaulted and tortured Lisa for 26 hours. The most important part of the movie is how it depicted about what is rape culture, the terrible effect of rape on the victim and how problematic our society overcome the rape culture such as, blaming the victim of rape, double moral standard for women and girls, the trauma effect of the victim experience, and unsupportive environment towards the victim. This movie also depicts how Lisa as a teenage girl victim bears the responsibility and be blamed of the assault rather than the attacker.

Rape Culture is a culture where rape is perceived as common and where sexual assault is “accepted” in daily life and justified in and perpetuated by the media and popular culture. Rape culture includes blaming the victim, tolerating sexual harassment, making fun of sexual assault, etc are some examples.

(Marshall.edu 2015). Through the use of misogynistic rhetoric, objectification of women's bodies, and glamorization of sexual violence in day to day lives, rape culture is sustained in the society. Society disregards the rights and the safety of women. Rape culture also tends to victimize the victims, taking their awful experience as a joke or a common thing to happen, hence normalizing sexual crime. The psychological effect and/or physical effects on the victims are very detrimental. Victims may experience severe psychological effect such as depression, post-traumatic disorder, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide, etc. Meanwhile, the physical effects are bruising, bleeding, pregnancy, difficulty walking, etc. (Foundation, Joyful Heart 2015).

Rape culture still can be found in modern society. The poll was conducted in January 2018 by Growth from Knowledge (GFK), a top surveying organization, and all data analysis were performed by the UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health showed that in their lifespan, 81% of women and 43% of males reported some type of sexual harassment and/or assault. More than 3 in 4 women (77%) and 1 in 3 men (34%), respectively, have experienced verbal sexual harassment. The study also found that 1 in 2 women (51%) and 1 in 6 men (17%) have been physically touched inappropriately. Meanwhile, one in every four women (41%) and one in every four men (22%) have suffered cybersexual harassment. More over one-third (34%) of women

Rape is an illegal crime in the United States. However, rape is one of the most underreported crimes in America, with relatively low prosecution and conviction rates when compared to other violent crimes, and the level of social disdain

associated with rape is rarely reflected in the official punishments implemented for its perpetration (Kernell 2013). The phrase "Rape Culture" has become popular in rape prevention education and advocacy; it refers to a society that comprises practices and attitudes that minimize the negative effects of victimization while encouraging and perpetuating sexual violence.

Rape myths are widely held attitudes and generally erroneous ideas about rape that seek to deny and justify male sexual aggression towards women. Beliefs regarding rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and other types of sexual violence wield considerable power in our culture, which is problematic because these beliefs cause significant harm (Kimberly A. Lonsway and Louise F. Fitzgerald 1994). They can make victims and survivors feel ashamed or blame themselves for what happened, making it difficult for them to discuss or seek help. These beliefs can also have an impact on how victims and survivors are handled by services and organizations that should be there to assist them, as well as by their own family and friends. Women who drink or use drugs deserve to be raped, women lie about being raped because they want attention or revenge or regret having sex with someone, if she didn't scream, try to run away, or fight back, it wasn't rape, if she didn't say 'no,' it wasn't rape, and so on.

Lack of understanding of rape and sexual violence may be the key reason why these people continue to blame victims (Nova Riyanti, Desy Selawaty, Triwik Puji Rahayu 2019). The victim, of course, does not want this to happen. Because if there is a case of abuse, one should stop underestimating women and begin to think of them as more than just objects to satisfy men's sexual demands. Women have a

fundamental right to live free, independent lives free of rape and sexual harassment. Rape culture is not normal and will not become the norm. No, sexual harassment, whether verbal, nonverbal, or physical, should be prohibited. Blame victims, sexual objectification, criticizing rape, rape jokes, tolerance of acts of sexual harassment, and educating women to be accountable for preventing rape are all manifestations of the rape culture.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the most common mental health sequelae, and it is estimated that up to 50% of raped people may get it at some point in their lives (Elizabeth Hughes, Michael Lucock, and Charlie Brooker 2019). Depression, suicidality (13 times more likely), and substance abuse (26 times more likely) are other mental health disorders. Interpersonal troubles, low self-esteem, sexual problems, self-harm, and mental concerns such as anxiety, guilt, and humiliation can all occur as a result of sexual assault.

One example of how awful the rape culture is the case of a sixteen-year-old high school girl from Steubenville, Ohio, United States. She went to a party with her friends on August 11, 2012. She was drunk at this party, rendering her helpless and causing her to lose consciousness and incapable of self-defence or incapacity of freeing herself from her male classmates who attacked her sexually (Almasy 2013). Her friends had non-consensually taken pictures of their misdeeds and emailed them to their classmates and posted them on numerous social media platforms. Similar text messages were used to spread the records of the assault. The victim did not remember the incident when she awoke the following morning. Through her classmates' social media conversations and posts, she learned what had

been done to her and came across pictures of Mays and Richmond abusing her naked body. After she (the victim) and her family called the police, the offenders were charged with rape. The subsequent trial would serve as proof of victim blaming's the pervasiveness and its impact on rape cases in the criminal justice system (Almasy 2013).

Although the identity of the sixteen-year-old girl victim has remained a secret, there has been much conjecture regarding her upbringing, goals, and involvement in her own victimization. Due to her intoxication at the time of the assault, the defence attorneys for the perpetrators questioned her trustworthiness, despite photographic and video evidence clearly showing the defendants' crimes. A friend of the girl who testified against the victim stated that she did not believe the victim was assaulted because she "lies about things." The defense went even farther, seeking to ask the girl's close acquaintances about her previous sexual history in order to disprove her accusations, but was unable to do so since rape shield laws prohibit such queries. Despite these efforts, the criminals were found guilty and sentenced to at least two years in a juvenile detention facility, with a one-year term (Almasy 2013).

Rape culture stems from the thinking that women and men are thought to have different traits and roles in nature. In patriarchal culture and society, men are believed to be powerful, manly, rational, and determined. Meanwhile, women are believed to be delicate, fragile, and feminine. In the case of violence against women, society believes it is acceptable for men to act violently because they were born tough, strong, and aggressive. So, it was society's logic that if men commit violence

that is because they were born as such. In addition, they were born that way, it was expected that women should have understood and protect themselves from aggressive men to not become a victim. If women became victims of male perpetrators, hence it was women's own fault. That logic was perceived as a social prescription in society. Women are frequently held responsible by society for being the targets of rape because of their outfits, gestures and behaviour are considered "inviting".

According to Sandra Schwark's study on *Visual Representation of Sexual Violence* (2017), one of three women worldwide has experienced either physical or sexual violence. Stated that in the majority of rape cases, the victims knew the sexual assailant before the crime was committed (Schwark 2017). According to the data from the National Institutes of Health, one of three women and one of four men in America have suffered sexual violence (Psychologytoday 2015). The practice of "victim blaming" in which victims claim they were complicit in their own victimization, is particularly common according to The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (2009). Based on the data, including the media and the criminal justice system, the practice of victim blaming discriminates against women based on their gender. It is a part of a larger culture of rape that normalizes violence against women.

There is a series issuing the rape culture, entitled *Unbelievable* (2019) This series is an original series of Netflix that based on a true story, and shows how rape culture is impactful on the victims. It reveals the reality of rape on each episode and allowed viewers to witness it from multiple points of views. Throughout the series,

the story shows the audience about psychological state prior to, throughout, and especially after the incident, detectives' efforts and decision-making processes, the victims' immediate family members, and the painful reality of the inconsistent justice system that rape victims have had to deal with. This series has several feminist issues, including depictions of oppressed and disadvantaged women as well as powerful female characters who have been successful in assisting in the investigation of the rape case.

In another movie, *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey* (2018), female detectives were not supportive of the female victims. However, what is unique in this movie is the active participation of the victim in collecting evidence and leaving traces to be used as evidence in the case. Meanwhile, in other movie that are highlighted a lot are the efforts of the investigators such as *Unbelievable* (2019) which shows that female detectives are very supportive and understand the psychological condition of female victims. The treatment of rape victims differs between the female detective and the male investigator. The male detective in *Unbelievable* (2019) specialized in victim response, had a tendency to be indifferent to the victim's emotional state by not offering safety or support and simply wanting to hunt for evidence. On the other hand, the female detective, Detective Duvall, is exceedingly perceptive and aware of the victim's mental state.

In the research by Retnovika, (2022) about the portrayal of rape culture in the *Promising Young Women* (2020) movie, using Martha R. Burt theory as an analytical tool found that there were 3 forms of rape culture in the movie such as to look down opposite gender, verbal sexual harassment and victim blaming. Also, the

successful college student who decided to speak up and exposed the professor who sexually attacked her was the subject of the new Netflix drama-thriller, *Citation (2020)*." By contrasting the two vastly dissimilar realities related by the seasoned scholar and his 21-year-old mentee, the movie highlighted the negative effects of the widespread trend of victim-blaming. Tubal Inal (2017) stated that in movie industries, sexual violence is a pervasive problem that continues to affect women's lives around the world. The cultural environment enables the continued perpetration of these crimes.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

According to the background of the issue, this study presents the following research question on *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey* (2018) as the primary emphasis of this study:

1. How does the main character challenge rape culture in movie?
2. What does the rape culture in the movie represent?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, this research purpose to answer the following statement of the problems stated above:

1. To describe the female rape victim challenging rape culture based on the representation shown in *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey* (2018).

1.4 Significance of the Study

First, this study will enrich the theory of rape culture from *Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVey* movie. This research use rape culture theory by Alexandra Rutherford. This research will also produce a novel discovery on how the victim in the film lives and escapes from the perpetrator victim by employing reverse psychology. Reverse psychology in films is still a fresh research topic for academic purposes as part of victim agency. What is meant by agency in this context is someone's active part in consciously deciding and acting (knowing what action to take, how to execute it, and the consequences of that action). Williams (2019) defines reverse psychology as a technique for influencing someone to do something while appearing to want something else. To encourage their child to finish their greens, a parent may challenge their child by informing them they will not be able to eat all of their vegetables.

Furthermore, this research will reveal how feminists believe that people in today's culture are uninformed of how rape and sexual assault can harm their victims. In actuality, rape and sexual violence can have both physical and psychological implications for victims. Rape and sexual harassment have both immediate and long-term effects on victims' minds, bodies, and souls. Many victims are compelled to endure one or more of these consequences. Some of them may be depressed, as evidenced by feelings of despair, inexplicable sobbing, changes in appetite with significant weight loss or gain, energy deficits, or loss of interest.

Second, this study will reveal that survivors' active participation in the criminal justice system can prevent their abusers from raping again, and that some

survivors feel particularly responsible for preventing further victimizations. That is why some rape victims may resort to such drastic steps in order to seek justice in their rape case. The urge to avoid future abuse was so powerful that many survivors continued to cooperate even after authorities abused them. It is crucial to stress that the victim's social support network had no influence or pressure on him to cease subsequent rapes.

Third, the researchers hope that this study will increase awareness about the lack of knowledge regarding rape and sexual assault, which is one of the primary reasons why these people continue to blame victims. Naturally, the victim does not want this to occur. Because, in the event of abuse, one should stop underestimating women and begin thinking of them as more than just sexual objects for guys. Women have the fundamental right to live lives free and independent of rape and sexual harassment. Rape is not and will never be normal. Sexual harassment, whether verbal, nonverbal, or physical, must be prohibited.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Rape Culture	Is a culture where rape is perceived as common and where sexual assault is accepted in daily life and justified in the media and popular culture (Rutterford 2011).
Patriarchal Norms	A collection of rules and practices in a culture that established women's subordination to men. It also enforces ultimate male control and mandates

feminine stereotypes toward women (Rawat 2014, 16).

Victim Blaming

Is the practice of discriminates against women based on their gender. It is part of a larger culture of rape that normalizes violence against women (Schwark 2017)

Reverse Psychology

A technique involving the assertion of a belief or behaviour that is opposite to the one desired with the expectation that this approach would encourage the subject of the persuasion to do what is actually desired (Williams 2019)