**Case #3: The Lorena Bobbitt Story**

An ex-marine who works as a bouncer in a bar wakes up in his bed and discovers to his horror that his wife has sliced off his penis with a kitchen knife. Arrested for “malicious wounding,” she tells the police that she mutilated him because earlier that evening in a drunken stupor he forced himself upon her. He is put on trial for marital sexual abuse but is acquitted by a jury that does not believe her testimony about a history of beatings, involuntary rough sex, and other humiliations.

When she is indicted on felony charges (ironically, by the same prosecutor) for the bloody bedroom assault, many people rally to her side. To her supporters, she has undercut the debilitating stereotype of female passivity; she literally disarmed him with a single stroke and threw the symbol of male sexual dominance out the window. To her detractors, she is a master at manipulation, publicly playing the role of sobbing, sympathetic victim to divert attention from her act of rage against a sleeping husband who had lost his sexual interest in her.

Facing up to 20 years in prison, she declines to plead guilty to a lesser charge and demands her day in court. The jury accepts her defense – that she was a traumatized battered wife, deeply depressed, beset by flashbacks, and susceptible to “irresistible impulses” because of years of cruelty and abuse – and finds her not guilty by reason of temporary insanity.

After 45 days under observation in a mental hospital, she is released. Soon afterwards, the couple divorces, and then they each take financial advantage of all the international media coverage, sensationalism, titillation, voyeurism, and sexual politics surrounding their deeply troubled relationship.

(Margolick, 1994; Sachs, 1994)

**Resources:**

***Print:***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/30/arts/television/lorena-bobbitt-documentary-jordan-peele.html>

***Video: https://youtu.be/p1DFqbZiGME***