

# Show overcomes its shaky start

Previewed by **KARL VICK**  
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Never in memory has a worthwhile TV program started out as badly as "Take Back the Night" (9:30 tonight, Channel 2).

It opens with a quiz about common myths associated with rape. And a challenging little interrogation it is.

There are seven myths, labeled "Myth No. 1," "Myth No. 2," and so on. They are statements along the lines of: "It can't happen to me," "There's no difference between intercourse and rape" and "Rapists are abnormal perverts."

It's up to us, the audience, to guess whether these are those rarest of myths, "true" ones, or merely seven more of those garden-variety redundancies, false myths.

Sheesh! you say.

Sheesh! is right. But not for long. Soon enough, the program takes to the streets for a protest demonstration—a forum more appropriate for blunt instruction, and one where such instruction holds a prayer of being stirring.

The march, as you might guess, is the one the program takes its name from. "Take Back the Night" was a rally of 5,000 women who strode down Hennepin Avenue one night a year ago to underscore that a woman isn't safe alone on the streets after dark.

A grainy black and white record of the march makes up the second half of the TV special, and it's the main reason to-tune in.

The first 30 minutes aren't bad, either, except for that quiz. Host Sue Halloran elicits from experts nuggets of information we might not have remembered from the dozens of other media examinations of rape. One counselor, for instance, urges women to trust their instincts about strangers. "Most victims had a sense that the guy wasn't OK," she reports.

The half hour you fear might be strident and condescending—the documentary about the march—isn't. Instead, it's a straightforward record of the event and was almost never abrasive.

There is some sarcasm, but it's clever, and it probably will say more to ignorant viewers than any

classroom lesson in mythology. There is, for example, the woman who shouts, "There is no difference between being raped and being run over by a truck, except that afterward men ask if you enjoy it."

When the program excels, it's because of the courage of its individual subjects. The moving speeches are the ones that are the most personal. One woman's simple declarative sentences, in particular, got to the humiliating horror of the act, and her correctly righteous response to it.

"Two years ago, I was waiting for a bus in south Minneapolis. I was on my way to work. All of a sudden a strange man was grabbing me, choking me, strangling me.

"I was raped, robbed, beaten. I got gonorrhea. I went nuts.

"Well, I'm still alive. I wear this banner [she tugs a sash reading 'I Survived a Rape'] to say that. And I see a lot of women wearing these banners, saying they survived a rape.

"My rapist is in Stillwater [prison]. And I'm proud to have put him there."

The crowd rises to its feet, cheering the speaker.

"Take Back the Night" contains a few other moments like that. They turn this video transcription into a rewarding program. Credit for their inclusion goes to Iris Video, a women's collective video enterprise, and executive producer Sallie Fischer who produced the program in cooperation with KTCA-TV.

The advance screening of this program was made available free to The Star by KTCA-TV.

## Channel 17

Wednesday Evening

- 5:30—Villa Alegre
- 6:00—Dick Cavett
- 6:30—MacNeil/Lehrer Report
- 7:00—All-Star Soccer
- 8:00—MacNeil/Lehrer Report
- 8:30—Over Easy