

Dallas Jessup, Just Yell Fire founder interviewed on KPFT

DEAN BECKER: According to our next guest, Dallas Jessup...she's a student at Vanderbilt University and she founds and now leads Just Yell Fire – a 1.8 million girl revolution combating abuse and violence against young women.

Welcome Dallas.

DALLAS JESSUP: Thank you so much for having me.

DEAN BECKER: Dallas, inform the listeners more. What is Just Yell Fire about?

DALLAS JESSUP: Just Yell Fire is a non-profit that helps to teach girls how to fight back against sexual assault. We do that mainly through our online videos which are free at <http://justyellfire.org> teaching girls Filipino street fighting so that they can not become the 1 in 3 girls who will be victim of dating violence or the 1 in 4 that statistically will be date raped before graduating from college.

We really aim to let girls lead a powerful life. These statistics are so outrageous and so insane that we want to be able to help girls voice their own opinion and not live a life of fear.

DEAN BECKER: Yeah, you say 1 in 3 will become a victim of dating abuse and 1 in 4 will become a sexual

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— Dallas Jessup
*Founder,
Just Yell Fire*

assault victim. This is horrible.

DALLAS JESSUP: It is. I remember when I first started Just Yell Fire and I was researching what the statistics were against teenage girls – I was shocked. You see it occasionally on the news and you realize that it happens but you don't realize how big of an issue it is.

I went to an all-girls high school when I was going through Just Yell Fire and it meant that 150 of my friends at my high school would become a statistic. That is unacceptable when it is an easy solution.

You can properly learn how to eye gauge someone, ear slap, properly bite and get yourself out of there. The thing about Just Yell Fire is we're teaching girls how to get those 2 to 3 seconds to get yourself out of the situation. We're not saying stick around and put up a fight because often times your attacker will be 2 or 3 times your size and weight and that's not good odds in a fight but you can get those 2 or 3 seconds to get yourself out of the situation.

DEAN BECKER: Right and that's the point. With those 2 or 3 seconds you can extricate yourself from the situation and seek help, correct?

DALLAS JESSUP: Exactly. You can go home safely. You can go to the police and explain the situation and you can not become a statistic.

DEAN BECKER: You're just a youngster and you kind of indicative of the idea that one person can make a difference. Tell us how this effort has grown over the years.

DALLAS JESSUP: Originally it started as an idea...I saw the video footage of a young girl named Carly Grisham in Florida. A man came up to her and said something and she went away with him willingly. I watched that and thought that didn't have to happen to her. She could have gone home to her parents that night.

I have a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and a 2nd degree in Filipino Street Fighting and I thought, "OK this will be my community service. I'll make a home-made video and show it to the 650 girls at my high school so it doesn't have to happen to them."

My mother, being a mother, said, "Why don't you take a script writing class and see if this is something that interests you."

So as a freshman in high school I was kind of going, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, OK. Sure, what harm could come of that?"

I ended up taking a script writing class at a local community college and the professor loved what I was doing and said, "I have friends in the industry. Can we shoot this at them and see if they would be into helping you?"

I was a freshman going, "OK. Sure. What's the worst thing that could

happen? They say no."

I was expecting that but thought why not try. So it ended up from there meeting the director that directed both our first and second films and was able to get a professional crew of 30. The director said to make this film really successful we needed about 100 extras. We went to our friends in the community saying, "We're trying to do this. Can you come? Can you be an extra? Can you be an actor? Can you do this?"

We were able to create our first film, *Just Yell Fire*, online in 2006. We never expected it to grow in the way that it has. We put it online in free downloads and some girls at my high school said that they would love to watch it again or share it with my friends and asked how we could make that happen. It just kind of spread from there. The media in Washington and Oregon where I'm from really picked it up. People started emailing me and asking me to come in to do presentations to teach girls self-defense. It went from there to speeches and radio shows and all of these things that really helped the *Just Yell Fire* revolution begin.

That kind of launched a speaking tour which during my junior and senior year I was traveling about an average 10,000 miles per month speaking around the country. I even went to India for a couple weeks one summer to help girls realize that they have an inner voice and can say no to domestic abuse and violence.

That's really how it grew. As I was going off to college to Vanderbilt as a freshman I realized that *Just Yell Fire* was making a presence on

the college campus scene. I thought we really needed an updated, new version with more techniques to help girls because the first film was so successful. I think at one point 3 million girls had seen it in about 50 something countries. It really was something that we had a huge need for in the community and also college girls need something.

There's a lot of course out there that you can join for 8 weeks or you can join for 12 weeks and learn self-defense and I highly encourage people to go take those because you can never learn enough self-defense to help keep yourself safe but oftentimes girls want a quick and easy solution. The great thing about *Just Yell Fire* is we're able to condense years of martial arts into one hour and give you those core techniques that will really help you get out of a situation.

DEAN BECKER: Once again we're speaking with Dallas Jessup. She's a 21-year-old Vanderbilt University student who has founded *Just Yell Fire* to help millions of girls around the world to prevent abuse, sexual attacks with just a few seconds of martial arts.

You have also taken another step. You are offering a drink coaster that tests for 3 common date rape drugs as well. Tell us about that.

DALLAS JESSUP: We started working with this company and we have these *Just Yell Fire* coasters which are absolutely phenomenal. I love them. I always have them on me at all times because you never know...any drink can be drugged. I



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think that's a very common mistake with date rape drugs in drinks is that people tend to think either it has to be with alcohol but you really can drug water, you can drug soda. You can drug pretty much anything.

People let their guard down all the time. It's a small coaster. You can fold it up into this tiny little square and just put it in the back of your wallet so you always have one on you. It tests for Ruffies, GHB and Ketamines which are the three main date rape drugs. Some of them are hard to detect in drinks and others are not as hard.

You just dip your finger in your drink and wipe it on one of the testers on the coaster. You let it dry which typically takes about 2 minutes. If it tests positive the spots will turn a dark blue which will let you know that your drink has been drugged.

It's something that's really simple to keep yourself safe. It's something you can easily go into the bathroom and do. It's something where you don't have to say, "Look I'm just trying to see if you've drugged me." which is something that girls don't want to make an awkward situation by looking like they don't trust people.

It's a great thing to have because you never know. Anyone can drug anything. Typically punches can be Ruffied and most of them are very hard to detect. They have serious side effects which can also involve up to being put into a coma. Some mixes with alcohol can lead to your death. It only takes 20 to 25 minutes for the three I listed to take effect. It's something that you need to be aware of and these

coasters are a great thing. They are very inexpensive and they're a great resource to use in combating to keep yourself safe.

DEAN BECKER: Dallas, you give me hope for the future when we have intelligent folks like you willing to do something about a problem they see before their face. ■