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Girls: 5 Tips to Stay Safe at College

Coeds don't know they face a 1 in 4 risk of sexual assault, 1 in 3 of dating abuse or other random violence but one nonprofit, Just Yell Fire, has released 5 Tips to Stay Safe at College and has a free stay-safe film online that has been lauded by schools and law enforcement nationwide.

Dallas Jessup, the founder of Just Yell Fire, herself a recent college graduate, launched the nonprofit when she was still in high school and has grown it into a 1.8 million girl revolution across 66 countries while winning multiple social impact awards for her stay-safe films.

Parties — A great social life is part of the college experience but remember, never put down your beverage and come back to it. Date rape drugs are prevalent on the college scene

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and are impossible to detect without a test kit. Go to parties as a group, watch out for each other and leave together. Alcohol is involved in the majority of university sexual assaults and a nice guy can quickly turn into a different and violent person when he is under the influence.

ATMs and Parking Lots — Cash machines and parking lots are frequent stops in college. Unfortunately the bad

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guys see ATMs in less-traveled areas as a hunting ground; ditto dark parking lots, the site of a high percentage of campus assaults. Make a very-public ATM your cash source and either avoid poorly lighted or deserted parking lots or go with a friend. For predator avoidance there's safety in numbers. Try to avoid parking next to vans, or if one has parked next to you, go back and ask a security guard to escort you to your car.

Hall Cruising — A big trend in on-campus violence comes from hall cruising, where innocent appearing predators gain access to dorms, sororities, or residence halls by trusting residents. They then cruise the halls looking for unlocked doors to find their victim. Put a stop to this type of violence by always locking your dorm room door and never giving strangers access to your building.

Campus Shuttle — Late night library or social visits are part of college life but coming home you are often alone and while campuses seem like islands

of safety, they are open to outsiders from every direction. Either walk with friends or take advantage of the campus shuttle when you are crossing campus at night.

The Just Yell Fire nonprofit, created by and for girls and young women, produced a film that anyone can watch online at www.justyellfire.org. It raises awareness of the many dangers girls face at college and offers some avoidance strategies. Also included is a Dating Bill of Rights to remind girls they have rights in relationships, e.g. to report violence against them, to have friends outside of a relationship — to help stop dating abuse. Finally, there are some street fighting get away tips from expert martial artists that any girl can use to get away from someone twice their size, e.g. eye gouge, whiplap an ear. ■