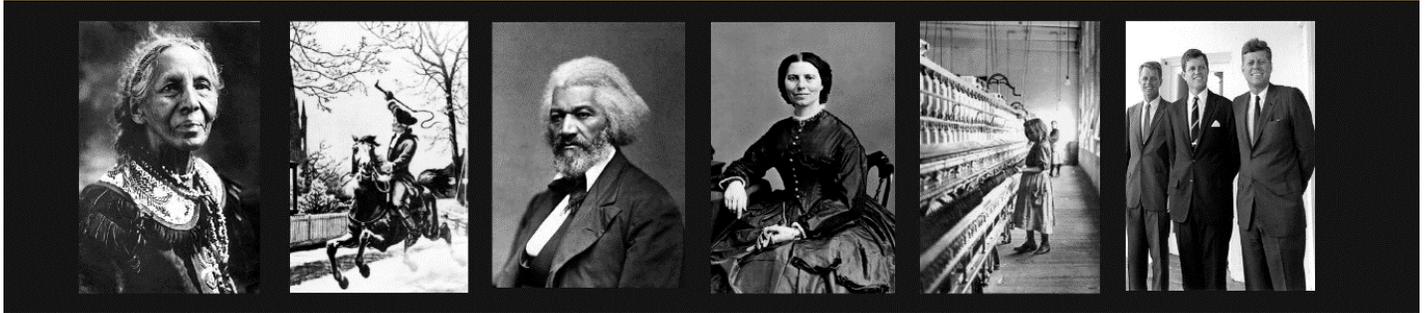


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“New Bedford’s Infamous 1983 Rape Case: Defending the Portuguese-American Community.”

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Big Dan's Tavern

Inside, a twenty-one-year-old Portuguese-American woman was gang-raped on March 6, 1983 by multiple Portuguese immigrants. Within three days of the crime, the pool table on which the woman was assaulted had been dismantled, the bar sawed in half, and the tavern voluntarily closed forever. (Photo source: *The Providence Journal*, March 13, 1983)

New Bedford's Infamous 1983 Rape Case: Defending the Portuguese-American Community

MIA MICHAEL



Abstract: *On the night of March 6, 1983, four male Portuguese immigrants gang-raped a twenty-one-year-old Portuguese-American woman at Big Dan's tavern, located in a Portuguese enclave of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Analyzing newspaper reporting, particularly within the local Portuguese-American community, of what became widely known as the 1983-1984 "Big Dan's rape case" reveals many things: the responses and evolving strategic choices of an ethnic group that had often been subjected to discrimination; the potency of media narratives; the nuances of a community that newspapers inaccurately portrayed as monolithic; and the manner in which local religious and community leaders' efforts to foster ethnic solidarity for popular consumption eclipsed a willingness to publicly denounce sexism and victim-blaming.*

Mia Michael is a Ph.D. candidate in History at Boston College. Her interests lie in United States history with particular emphasis on immigration and nativism. The author's research involved over 700 articles, letters to the editor, editorials, and unpublished correspondence from local and regional New England newspapers and national dailies.

* * * * *

Greetings from New Bedford, Mass., the Portuguese Gang-Rape Capital of America. —Hustler, August 1983

Her intention on the night of March 6, 1983 was to buy cigarettes at “Big Dan’s” tavern. The tavern itself was located in the predominantly Portuguese enclave of New Bedford, Massachusetts. She stayed for a few drinks, chatted with other patrons, and played the jukebox. But hours later, this twenty-one-year-old Portuguese-American woman fled from Big Dan’s wearing only a coat and single sock. Frantically, she waved down a passing truck. Its occupants later described her as the “naked girl in the street” who ran in front of their vehicle “like a deer in the headlights.” Crying and fearful, she threw her arms around passenger Daniel O’Neill’s neck: multiple men inside Big Dan’s had just raped her, she revealed.¹

The passers-by notified police who later arrived on the scene and entered the tavern to collect the victim’s clothing. Several of her assailants remained inside, two of whom the woman identified to police on the spot. In total, six male Portuguese immigrants were arrested over the course of the following ten days and charged for their involvement in the gang rape, either as attackers or accessories. What became widely known as the “Big Dan’s rape case” produced an array of consequences not only for the victim and the accused, but also for the Portuguese-American community of New Bedford and neighboring Fall River.²

Public discourse emanating from the local Portuguese-American community changed drastically over the course of the Big Dan’s case. Initially, the Portuguese press and ordinary individuals reacted with horror and sadness as news of the attack surfaced. They unequivocally condemned the rape. Significantly, many berated the accused men and characterized Big Dan’s tavern as an enduring blight on their neighborhood. More importantly, Portuguese-American individuals interviewed by reporters did not publicly question the character of the gang rape victim.

But when juries handed down guilty verdicts against four of the accused just a year later, many within the Portuguese-American community felt that their ethnic group had been targeted and victimized. Careful to restate their opposition to rape, Portuguese-American individuals and organizations openly advocated on behalf of the rapists. Some Portuguese-Americans even cast the gang rape victim as partly or wholly guilty for what happened that winter night in March 1983. Incessant media sensationalism surrounding the case and the outbreak of anti-Portuguese, anti-immigrant sentiment in the week following the crime caused much of this transformation.

Analyzing the attitudes and actions of the local Portuguese-American community throughout the case is revealing. This focus illuminates the strategic choices of an ethnic group that was itself often discriminated against as well as the potency of media narratives. It uncovers the nuances of a community that English-language newspapers inaccurately portrayed as monolithic and exposes how local religious and Portuguese-American leaders' efforts to foster ethnic solidarity for popular consumption eclipsed a willingness to publicly denounce sexism and victim-blaming.

The array of multidisciplinary work currently published about the case is perceptive. Scholars of feminism, ethnicity, and mass communications as well as sociologists, legal experts, and journalists have evaluated numerous angles of this story. The majority of their writings have explored the role of the media. Many authors note that news coverage was inaccurate and lurid, and some even argue that this coverage spawned the prejudice leveled against Portuguese immigrants and Portuguese-Americans in the wake of the event. Several other pertinent works explore how the local population reacted throughout the Big Dan's case.³

However, the responses of the New Bedford-Fall River Portuguese-American community require further analysis. A thorough inspection of local, regional, and national English-language newspapers for Portuguese-American voices more fully reveals the diverse attitudes and actions of this community throughout the ordeal. In addition, New Bedford's *Portuguese Times*, and Fall River's *O Jornal* offer significant perspectives derived from the community itself. These weekly Portuguese-language publications regularly reported on the case throughout 1983 and 1984. Editorials, cartoons, and letters published in both newspapers during this period offer a greater understanding of how members first reacted to the tragedy and then responded to the case's developments.

These rich primary sources have been under-investigated for the Portuguese-American perspective. Yet they are essential to understanding the organizations, press, and people that comprised the New Bedford-Fall River Portuguese-American community. They throw into sharp relief the community's strategic choices against the forces of xenophobia and tabloid journalism.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE FACTS OF THE CASE

The transformations that occurred within the New Bedford-Fall River Portuguese-American community over the course of the year are only fully apparent when contextualized. Essential to understand are components of

southeastern Massachusetts' history and the case's basic facts. The gang rape occurred in an economically depressed industrial city that had served as a magnet for waves of Portuguese emigrants since the nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1830s, men from the Portuguese-colonized territories of the Azores and Cape Verde settled in New Bedford; many obtained employment on whaling expeditions. Portuguese immigration to the region steadily increased so that by the first decades of the twentieth century, entire families of Azorean, Cape Verdean, Madeiran, and mainland Portuguese migrants populated New Bedford and nearby Fall River. Many were small landholders, laborers, and craftspeople who fulfilled a demand for unskilled labor in Massachusetts factories. Global economic depression in the 1930s combined with the subsequent downturn of the textile industry, however, limited opportunities. These realities compelled many to venture back across the Atlantic; restrictive federal immigration laws enacted by the United States in the 1920s prevented others from even making the initial journey west.⁴

This, however, was not the end of Portuguese immigration to southeastern Massachusetts. Between the 1960s and 1970s, another generation of Portuguese men, women, and children chose emigration when revolution, war, decolonization, and unemployment were transforming their homelands. By 1983, New Bedford boasted nearly 100,000 residents, 60% of whom were of Portuguese descent.⁵

Even so, prejudice was a reality that confronted Portuguese-Americans throughout their long history of settlement in the region. Viewed as nonwhite, they were subject to employment and housing discrimination and even segregated in movie theatres during the early twentieth century. Portuguese-Americans continued to experience social exclusion and discrimination in New Bedford and Fall River at the time of the rape. Their "status as working-class immigrants," some scholars argue, contributed to the "institutional discrimination and bigotry" that had permeated the area for years. Amidst this milieu, a young mother entered Big Dan's tavern to purchase cigarettes on March 6, 1983 after celebrating her daughter's birthday earlier that day. Her life would never be the same.⁶

Within two days of the gang rape, the news media broke the story and catapulted the local Portuguese-American community into the national spotlight. The March 8 issue of the *New Bedford Standard-Times* relied on witness and police reports to declare that at least four men, out of a "jeering" crowd of twelve to fifteen, "brutally" raped a young woman. The attack, the paper explained, occurred for "as long as two hours" while the victim "repeatedly called out for the others to help her." Significantly, the *Standard-Times* also identified Big Dan's as a tavern located "in a largely Portuguese-



National and Regional Press Join Local Papers in Reporting on the Case

Ostentatious headlines concerning the crime filled the pages of newspapers, and correspondents were quick to publish the more lurid details of the victim's police report and the case's developments. *The Boston Herald*, shown here, was particularly brash. (Image sources: *The Boston Herald*, March 9, 1983 and March 8, 1983)

American neighborhood” of the city and thereafter associated the crime with the Portuguese-American community.⁷

More local and regional English-language newspapers soon picked up the story. Journalists accentuated the fact that bystanders had witnessed the attack but did nothing to help; some even cheered on the rapists, the papers alleged. This scenario prompted comparisons to the 1964 rape and murder of twenty-eight-year-old Kitty Genovese in New York City while over thirty witnesses failed to intervene. Big Dan’s owners voluntarily closed the tavern on March 9 and dismantled the pool table where the rape occurred. The following week, over 2500 people marched through downtown New Bedford to protest violence against women. Although media coverage of the case tapered off in April of 1983, attention revived in February of 1984 when trial preparations commenced. Sensationalizing the story, local and national cable television stations broadcast the court proceedings live, making this criminal case the first ever to be televised countrywide. Reports of the trial actually

appeared in Japan. The case also raised issues about the publicizing of a rape victim's identity and the sordid details of sexual assault.⁸

At the same time, personal details and photographs of the accused were published throughout the ordeal. All six men, described at one point as "resident aliens of Portuguese descent," lacked American citizenship. Daniel Silva, twenty-six years old at the time of the assault and considered its instigator, was a part-time factory worker and agricultural laborer who "lived around the corner" from Big Dan's; originally from the Azores, he had resided in the United States for six years. Twenty-seven-year-old Joseph (Jose) Vieira was a husband and father of two who lived in Connecticut and worked on a dairy farm. A former Portuguese soldier, he had been in the country for less than five years. John Cordeiro, twenty-four and unemployed, lived in New Bedford and had immigrated to the United States twelve years prior. Also of New Bedford, Victor Raposo was twenty-two and the father of a toddler; unemployed at the time of the rape, he found work within the month as a handyman and painter. Raposo, who had come to New Bedford at the age of five, already had a significant criminal record: in 1979, he was convicted of assault with a dangerous weapon and in October of 1982 was found guilty of indecent exposure. Virgilio Medeiros, twenty-three, and Jose Medeiros (unrelated), twenty-two, lived in New Bedford as well. Virgilio Medeiros, reportedly out of work at the time of the crime, found employment within the year as a shipyard laborer; he had been brought to the U.S. at age nine. Jose Medeiros, a native of the Azores, was an unemployed landscaper. Each of the six men was tried for aggravated rape.⁹

Relief, resentment, and sorrow marked the final developments of the Big Dan's case. Although both of the Medeiros men were acquitted, defendants Silva, Vieira, Cordeiro, and Raposo were convicted of aggravated rape in March of 1984. Vieira was sentenced to serve between six and eight years in prison; Silva, Cordeiro, and Raposo were condemned to nine to twelve years behind bars.¹⁰

Although some observers were satisfied that justice had been served, others felt differently. Portuguese-Americans marched by the thousands through New Bedford and Fall River to protest the verdicts and what they characterized as *justiça crucificada* ("justice crucified"). Comparisons were made to the contentious criminal convictions and executions of Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti six decades prior. The Big Dan's case still attracted attention in April of 1984, when Vieira and Raposo managed to avoid deportation and thereby remain in proximity to their families in Massachusetts and Connecticut. (Under a 1917 federal law, immigrants who commit a "crime of moral turpitude" within five years of

their arrival in the U.S. or who have been convicted of “such a crime more than once” are eligible for deportation.) Ultimately, none of the convicted rapists spent more than six and a half years in prison.¹¹

Meanwhile, harassment and death threats forced the victim and her two young children to flee New Bedford immediately following the trial. Her family, however, failed to escape grief. In December of 1986, the car she was driving on a rain-slick Florida road spun out of control and slammed into a utility pole. Her life ended at the age of twenty-five.¹²

Three distinct phases characterized the involvement of the New Bedford-Fall River Portuguese-American community. During the first week, from March 8 through March 16, 1983, the local Portuguese-American press and residents reacted to the gang rape itself. From March 17, 1983 through March 17, 1984, the second period, the Portuguese-American press, community members, and organizations responded to media coverage of the crime as well as to the xenophobia and vitriol the case both uncovered and generated. A third period commenced on March 18, 1984 when the first guilty verdicts were handed down by the court and spawned another wave of response from the Portuguese-American community.

THE FIRST WEEK: MARCH 8-16, 1983

Residents of New Bedford's Portuguese North End shared an array of feelings with reporters as details unfolded in the week following the gang rape. Importantly, community members refrained from blaming the general media for their newfound publicity. In fact, Portuguese-American men and women appeared more than willing to offer their perspectives to the journalists who invaded their restaurants and social clubs searching for a good angle. Said one man to the *New Bedford Standard-Times*, “We are genuinely saddened [about the gang rape] . . . We are disappointed.” Anxiety surfaced over the possibility that outsiders would judge the neighborhood and the entire ethnic group because of the actions of a few. Resident Antonio Viveiros told a correspondent, “It’s such a shame that it happened and that this area has to be photographed by the newspapers and televisions. No one likes this type of thing.” The *Standard-Times* also reported that neighborhood women, such as restaurant owner Anna Gopsalves, were now afraid to be out after dark. “I’m a woman and it’s a little scary,” admitted Gopsalves.¹³

Fury, too, swelled among local Portuguese-Americans. People were outraged when the press reported that up to fifteen bystanders observed the crime and refused to intervene. In no uncertain terms, Leonard Dettera declared that Big Dan’s patrons “whether they did the act or just let it happen,”

Gang rape: A city's shame

Portuguese fear rape gives them a black eye

By John Impertiba
STANDARD-TIMES STAFF WRITER

NEW BEDFORD — Eduardo Borges was sipping a hot cup of coffee inside Cafe Mino, shaking his head and asking the same baffling question as most everyone else in this staunchly Catholic Portuguese community.

Borges, like so many others last week, was looking for answers. All were desperately reaching out, wanting to know if the gang rape reported to have taken place in their community would permanently scar their ethnic neighborhood in the North End.

"We are genuinely saddened," Borges said about a young woman who was reportedly gang raped inside Big Dan's, a blue-collar bar on Belleville Avenue last Sunday night. But, he added, "You can't judge this community for the actions of a few people. We are disappointed. It is a subject of conversation everywhere."

So it was.

Some feared the reported rape might cast a bitter reflection on the area. Others simply hoped things would return quickly to normal. Everyone had an opinion.

The incident has had more than an emotional impact on the area. The owners of bars and restaurants only blocks from Big Dan's said business had dropped off. Women, normally unafraid to walk the friendly streets at night, weren't so sure anymore.

"It makes you think twice about what you do," said Anna Gonsalves, the owner of Anna's, an all-night restaurant on North Front Street. "I think people are a little afraid right now. I'm a woman and it's a little scary."

What bothered many is that police reports said at least a dozen people stood by and cheered as the woman, *she being raped on the green felt pool table inside Big Dan's*. If it is a comment on society, some said. A woman was diagnosed that no one bothered to run for help.

Jim Sylvia has owned the J and J Lounge, one block from Big Dan's, for

nearly 15 years and never had heard of anything as brutal in the neighborhood. Sylvia, like other merchants, said city police do a good job patrolling the area, but he wants security beefed up — at least for awhile.

Already, Sylvia said some of Big Dan's regular crowd is spilling over to other local bars. "A few of them have been in here," said Sylvia, seated at his bar. "I don't want them in here and I'll tell them that. This is a decent neighborhood."

Residents of busy Belleville Avenue, bordering the old mill along the Acushnet River, are also concerned. Many looked at Big Dan's as a "nose spot" — a place that should have been closed long ago. One 23-year-old man said it was a place where only "the riff raff went."

Big Dan's, which closed voluntarily last week, was worse in the summer, residents said, when the weather was warm and the cold beer was flowing. Stories about men carousing outside the bar are heard frequently. Some say the noise and carrying on outside made it impossible to sleep even in the middle of the night.

"They'd be outside throwing bottles around, men would be drinking, there was urinating in the streets. You couldn't even look out your window," said Mestair Barbosa, in broken English from his modest yet well-kept apartment across the street from Big Dan's. "At 2 a.m., there would still be people out there."

Antonio Viveiros was tending to the rabbits he keeps in his backyard. The elderly man spoke in Portuguese about the crime and about the bar that he disliked for years under several owners.

"It got worse with each owner," Viveiros said through an interpreter. "It's such a shame that it happened and that this area has to be photographed by the newspapers and television. No one likes this type of thing. It's embarrassing, absolutely."

Longtime Portuguese residents such as Jose Cardoso, 56, remember



Children race up Belleville Avenue, past the locked door of Big Dan's tavern. Police say the bar was the site of a brutal gang rape one week ago.

Police find their fourth suspect

By Alan Levin
STANDARD-TIMES STAFF WRITER

NEW BEDFORD — All four suspects in the reported gang rape last Sunday in Big Dan's bar were behind bars last night.

Victor Raposo, 22, the last defendant still free after judges raised the other suspects' bail Friday, was arrested in his mother's home yesterday morning, said Sgt. Ronald R. Cabral.

Related stories:

Experts discuss the psychology of gang rape — Page 10

There are lots of people ready to help rape victims — Page 11

A portrait of a victim — Page 11

Raposo of 34 1/2 Second St. was being held by police in lieu of \$50,000 surety bail, Cabral said. He is charged with rape in connection with the reported attack on a 21-year-old New Bedford woman in the bar. At least 10 patrons witnessed the rape, some of them cheering, police said.

The attack, which lasted for up to two hours, has prompted a national uproar. Despite repeated cries for help and attempts to fight off the victim's attackers, nobody at the bar notified police, Cabral said.

Three suspects were picked up by police Friday when officials learned one had attempted to buy a plane ticket to Portugal. The suspects had been released early in the week after each posted \$1,000 cash bail.

Four detectives arrested Raposo, also known as Raposa, at 103 Jovette St. at about 10 a.m. He did not resist, Cabral said.

"I just went to the home. His mother let me in. He was there and I

(Please turn to Page 11)

Initial Responses to the Incident

With the national spotlight upon them, New Bedford citizens, including the city's Portuguese-American community, expressed embarrassment over the gang rape. In the week following the crime, Portuguese-Americans sought to distance themselves from both the suspects and Big Dan's tavern, which they vociferously condemned in press interviews. (Image source: *New Bedford Standard-Times*, March 13, 1983)

should be charged with rape. Second-generation Portuguese-American J. Rezendes characterized the assault as "sick." "They should take every one of those guys who were there cheering and fine them \$1,000 apiece," he concluded, saying the money should be used to help abused women.¹⁴

Angered and disgraced, members of the Portuguese-American community distanced themselves from Big Dan's and the implicated men. Their intention was to prove that Big Dan's was not a "neighborhood bar," but an anomaly; that the accused were not representative of their community or ethnic group,

but rather a blemish on it. Days after the attack, the news media interviewed several people who reiterated that Big Dan's was generally a "bad place" that served as the last resort for a "rough crowd" kicked out of other taverns. "That over there was the scum," asserted Seraphino Mendes, an area business owner. Perhaps the severest judgment captured by journalists was made by Armando Amarante: he labeled the accused as "barbarians" with "no way to justify" their actions. Amarante's sentiments were "clearly echoed in everyone's eyes," wrote *Standard-Times* reporter John Impemba on March 13.

Significantly absent from the coverage offered by the *New Bedford Standard-Times*, *Fall River Herald News*, *O Jornal*, *Providence Journal*, *Boston Globe*, and *Boston Herald* in the week following the assault were remarks from Portuguese-Americans that questioned the victim's moral character. The press did report that anonymous individuals had called into a New Bedford radio station claiming the "woman deserved what she got"; but of the nearly two dozen North End residents interviewed by these newspapers, not one expressed hostility towards the victim or defended the accused. Instead, several spurned the suspects.¹⁵

North End locals were not the only contingent within the Portuguese-American population to take such a stance. Fall River's newspaper *O Jornal* also distanced the community from the gang rape in its first editorial following the attack. Branding it a "tragedy" that now "tarnished" their "entire community," *O Jornal* explicitly condemned the assault. Similar to Portuguese-American individuals and the general public, the paper expressed its embarrassment and castigated Big Dan's owner as well as bystanders who did nothing to intervene and perhaps even applauded the crime. "We believe they are, in every aspect, as guilty as those who took part in it," proclaimed publisher Raymond Castro and his wife, general manager Kathleen Castro. Moreover, questioning of the victim's character was absent from *O Jornal's* initial coverage.¹⁶

At the same time, the editorial hinted that responsibility for the assault lay with the city itself. Specifically, the Castros echoed the popular sentiment that Big Dan's was a known trouble spot. Was it not the duty of New Bedford's License Management, they asked, "to recommend the immediate revocation of [Big Dan's] license until the owners can maintain an adequate environment?" The editorial went further: was there no bilingual officer to answer the emergency phone call of a Portuguese-speaking patron on the night of the crime? It might have "ended sooner" or perhaps been prevented, argued the Castros, if city officials and law enforcement had taken such actions. The editorial concluded by emphasizing the many "good

contributions of the Portuguese community” and characterized the “incident at Big Dan’s” as an “aberration” that “should be responsively treated as one.”¹⁷

Despite Portuguese-American efforts to distance themselves from both the tavern and the accused, the English-language press continually linked the local Portuguese-American community with the gang rape. The *Providence Journal*, *Boston Globe*, and *New York Times* soon followed the *Standard-Times*’ lead in identifying the North End as the “largely Portuguese-American neighborhood” in which Big Dan’s was located. Reporters frequently wrote about the local Portuguese-American community, including the suspects, in terms of class, culture, and language proficiency. For example, correspondents repeatedly characterized New Bedford’s North End as a “traditional,” “blue-collar” community of “working-class families,” “ethnic” businesses, and “rows” of “tenements.” Correspondents emphasized the English-speaking abilities, or lack thereof, of the Portuguese-American individuals they interviewed. Both “broken English” and “halting English” were phrases repeatedly used to describe interviewees’ language proficiency. Non-Portuguese media also highlighted when those whom they interviewed required the use of an interpreter.¹⁸

Foreign birth, citizenship, employment status, and legal status were also issues woven throughout the general media’s initial coverage of the case. The failed attempt of one suspect to leave the United States ultimately served as the catalyst for journalists to disclose that the accused were not native-born Americans. Journalists asserted, too, that several were jobless. The press further revealed that Big Dan’s liquor licenses had been issued to a Deborah Blum. Blum, a U.S. citizen, was co-owner of the tavern along with her brother John Machado, who lacked citizenship and could not obtain the license himself. In insinuating prose, reporters described Machado as a “foreign national” and the “actual” or “true” owner of the infamous bar. The news media thus played up the scenario as deceptive and cast a disparaging light on what was, in fact, a completely legal arrangement. In these ways, inadvertently or not, English-language newspapers regularly cast the local Portuguese-American community as “other” in their initial, and subsequent, coverage of the Big Dan’s rape case.¹⁹

O Journal itself also drew attention to the accused’s foreign-born status in its early coverage. The paper’s March 15 article “The Case Goes to the Grand Jury” not only recounted the failed departure attempt, but divulged that suspects Daniel Silva and John Cordeiro were both immigrants. Publicizing such information was something that *O Journal* later, somewhat hypocritically, lambasted other media and an assistant district attorney for doing.²⁰

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PORTUGUESE TIMES

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- Impostos vão aumentar e a idade da reforma passa para 67 anos em 2027
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Ano VII - No. 364, 15 de Março de 1983 Redacção: 410 Second St., Fall River, Mass.

Editorial

The community pays

The tragedy of the incident at Bay Street... The community pays the price of the crime... The tragedy of the incident at Bay Street... The community pays the price of the crime... The tragedy of the incident at Bay Street... The community pays the price of the crime...

Caso vai a Grand Jury



... (caption) ...

Toda a comunidade paga

... (text) ...



... (caption) ...

Local Press Reaction to Coverage

O Jornal (Fall River) and *The Portuguese Times* (New Bedford) grew increasingly critical of how the English-language press reported on developments in the rape case. (Image sources: *O Jornal*, March 15, 1983; *The Portuguese Times*, March 31, 1983)

PORTUGUESE-AMERICANS RESPOND TO PREJUDICE AND MEDIA COVERAGE: MARCH 17, 1983-MARCH 17, 1984

Public discourse shifted just eleven days after the gang rape. Beginning on March 17, 1983, media coverage began to indicate that the everyday individuals, press, and organizations comprising the local Portuguese-American community were contesting what they perceived as the targeting of their ethnic group. Specifically, Portuguese-Americans decried the disproportionate media attention they believed the case and their community was receiving as well as the once “buried” xenophobic attitudes this attention resurrected.²¹

The targeting of the Portuguese-American community manifested itself in various ways. Animosity and general anti-immigrant prejudice erupted locally over radio broadcasts and cropped up in the opinion sections of newspapers. Meanwhile, English-language reporters continued to portray the Portuguese-American community as “other.” Anonymous callers, for example, saturated WBSM-AM’s airwaves with what observers described as “ugly” and “inflammatory” comments. Several suggested that “the Portuguese should be sent back to Portugal or the Azores.” James Ragsdale, editor of the *Standard-Times*, even admitted that his publication had received

phone calls, “letters and other comments . . . daily carrying messages of hate and bigotry” against the Portuguese-American community. Indeed, the dehumanization of the accused as well as hand-wringing over what should and should not occur in a “civilized society” were common themes among the general public’s initial reactions to the Big Dan’s gang rape.²²

Local Portuguese-American media were not immune from attacks either. New Bedford’s *Portuguese Times* received anonymous correspondence spewing animosity and suggesting that the accused were illustrative of their whole ethnic group. With expletives and vitriol, one author demeaned the defendants as “gross cockroaches” and “vermin” before ending her letter with, “if only words could kill.” Another anonymous writer proposed deportation for “anyone that does not want to obey [sic] the law”. The individual also dehumanized the accused after suggestively cautioning, “Just remember if a man rapes a women [sic] in your country, he would be dead by now.” It followed that Portuguese media were among the first to exhibit the shift of response within the community.²³

O Jornal and the *Portuguese Times* decried the scapegoating, prejudice, and publicity flooding New Bedford and Fall River. Both denounced other press outlets for exaggerated, sensationalistic coverage that led to the groundswell of anti-Portuguese bigotry. So, too, both publications repeated their condemnation of rape as a “heinous,” “dastardly act,” but insisted that the judicial process play out before the accused be judged guilty. The *Times*’ March 17 issue, for instance, blamed the “local press” for the emergence of a once-hidden “blistering xenophobia” among New Bedford’s residents. Similarly, *O Jornal*’s March 22 editorial proclaimed that the suspects had “already been tried in the media” and also chastised the women’s movement for using the case to advance their own objectives. In essence, these publications represented one change in demeanor spreading throughout the community: individuals began condemning those whom they believed were responsible for vilifying Portuguese-Americans.²⁴

Local Portuguese-American organizations, too, joined in challenging anti-foreign attitudes and media coverage. Ultimately, Portuguese Americans United (PAU) served as the primary group speaking out from mid-March through April of 1983. Formed in New Bedford by Antonio Cabral five years prior, PAU assisted with voter registration drives, addressed school drop-out rates among immigrant children, and promoted naturalization for Portuguese nationals.²⁵

But on March 17, the group turned its attention to the Big Dan’s case. PAU’s public statement issued that day faulted “excessive media coverage” for generating “inexcusable amounts of racial prejudice and discriminatory

Portuguese 'hurt' by Big Dan case

IN NEW BEDFORD

Alleged rape weighs heavily on city's Portuguese community

New Bedford Portuguese feel pressure

By DAVE CROMBIE
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. — As six men, all Portuguese immigrants, face trial in a bathroom rape that has gained national notoriety, many people in this heavily Portuguese community feel they too are being placed on trial.

among many of the city's non-Portuguese residents.

The paper, the weekly *Portuguese Times*, called it abominable to blame the entire community because of the actions of a few people. The paper said that the defendants must be considered innocent until proved guilty.

Community Responses to Negative Reporting

Members of the Portuguese-American community of New Bedford-Fall River felt under attack from the widespread publicity and xenophobia spawned by the rape case. (Image sources: *The Boston Herald*, March 18, 1983; *Boston Globe*, March 18, 1983; *The Providence Journal*, March 18, 1983)

innuendoes" against local Portuguese-Americans. It also criticized reporting as "subjective" and polarizing and claimed that a "psychological state of siege" had consequently been created towards Portuguese-Americans. Like others, PAU and its members argued that the rape was an "isolated incident" and expressed faith in the judicial process. Significantly, the organization's call for bail reduction exemplified another transformation emerging in the community: overt advocacy on behalf of the accused.²⁶

Press accounts revealed that ordinary Portuguese-American men and women held similar attitudes in the wake of the first week's surge of prejudice and heavy media attention. Unlike previously, journalists now claimed that some people were publicly questioning the victim's character; other individuals, it was reported, established a defense fund for the suspects. One Azorean immigrant gathered outside the March 17 arraignment proceedings, for example, told a correspondent that "[i]n the Azores, a good woman does not go to a bar and that is all. They do not get involved in that kind of stuff."²⁷

Nevertheless, a segment of the community still vocally and explicitly condemned the crime as well as ostracized the suspects. Media coverage in late March and early April reflected these attitudes: some Portuguese-American individuals continued to characterize the gang rape and the failure of bystanders to intervene as a “shame” and “inhuman behavior” and questioned, “What man has a right to do what they did?” Joan Outlette embodied one division that emerged within the community: whether women’s concerns or ethnic prejudice was the more critical issue. A member of the New Bedford Women’s Center, Outlette commented on March 18, “I’m Portuguese. But this [the rape] has affected me much more as a woman.” Meanwhile, leaders of a local Portuguese-American social organization, the Whaling City Club, stopped raising funds for the accused in April. “This club has nothing to do with Big Dan’s,” declared its president, Edwin Perreira, apparently upset at being associated with the case.²⁸

Perhaps most apparent among Portuguese-American community members was contempt for the media and bigots. Letters to the editor and interviews illuminated this newfound antipathy. Only days before, men and women willingly spoke with reporters who descended on their neighborhood; but now, bitterness erupted as people connected the widespread attention surrounding the case to the fact that the accused were Portuguese-American immigrants. “If these guys were of another nationality,” argued one Azorean national to a journalist, “we would not be getting this publicity.” Some pointed out what they perceived as a long-standing prejudice in the area towards their ethnic group. Maria Vieira’s scathing letter to the *Standard-Times*, for instance, accused the paper of having a “history” of “emphasizing the negative within the immigrant community.” Such perspectives are revealing. Some Portuguese-Americans were not troubled simply by publicity; rather, they were incensed that their ethnic group received negative publicity.²⁹

It was during this period that local Portuguese-American clergy first took a public stance in the controversy. The Reverend Stephen Avila and a second pastor who desired to remain anonymous told *Standard-Times* reporters on March 20 that they, too, were concerned about what they perceived as the media’s choice to give bad publicity to the Portuguese-American community. Avila, an associate pastor of New Bedford’s Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, claimed to speak for “a lot of people.” Perplexed, he remarked, “you listen to Nightline and you hear ‘Portuguese community.’ I don’t really understand why they have to mention it. I don’t understand why it has any bearing on the case.” The second Portuguese-American pastor noted that “anger and resentment” among the community resulted from the arrests themselves as

well as from media publicity. Some of this anger, he explained, was aimed at “the defendants’ families.”

On April 1, *The Pilot*, a publication of the Boston Archdiocese, reprinted *O Journal*’s editorial from ten days prior which criticized media accounts and the women’s movement. Two weeks later, on April 15, a letter titled “No Room for Bigotry” appeared in *The Anchor*, Fall River’s diocesan newspaper. Signed by the “Fall River Community Standards Committee,” the letter expressed alarm over the “abhorrent incident alleged to have taken place recently in Dan’s café [emphasis added],” but also decried the exposure the case had generated. Moreover, the Committee was disturbed by the consequent “backlash” against Portuguese-Americans. Generally, then, the sporadic sentiments conveyed by religious authorities and publications in the month or so following the attack paralleled those of local Portuguese-American leaders and residents.³⁰

The agency of the Portuguese-American community continued to reveal itself throughout the summer of 1983. In addition to PAU, other Portuguese-American organizations formed, including the Portuguese-American Defense League (PADL), the Committee for Justice (CFJ), and the International Forum (IF). The PADL was among those who led the way in rebuking *Hustler* magazine when its August issue parodied the gang rape. *Hustler*, a pornographic medium infamous for its explicit material, featured a photograph of a smiling woman lying naked on a pool table;



Press Coverage of Rape Suspects

On several occasions throughout their coverage of the rape case, the English-language press published photographs of the suspects. At times, these snapshots also featured personal summaries about the accused. This information included details about the suspects’ status as immigrants, English-language proficiency, employment backgrounds, and criminal histories. *O Journal* emphatically pointed out that such details had become “more sordid, distorted, [and] exaggerated.” (Image source: *The Providence Journal*, February 5, 1984)

its caption jested: “Greetings from New Bedford, Mass., the Portuguese Gang-Rape Capital of America.” The following month, the CFJ and other Portuguese leaders, along with Father Edward Halloran, a chaplain of the Bristol County House of Corrections and New Bedford’s Our Lady’s Chapel, teamed with the IF to raise over \$170,000 in a radio appeal towards bail for two of the defendants. In varying measures, these grassroots efforts sought to combat anti-Portuguese sentiment and advocate on behalf of the gang rape suspects.³¹

The primary concern of the CFJ throughout court preparations and proceedings starting in February 1984 was to ensure a fair trial for the accused. Nevertheless, some members feared that extensive publicity had already influenced potential jurors. Besides monitoring proceedings daily, the CFJ reprimanded media for excessive coverage and stressed the positive contributions of Portuguese-Americans to the New Bedford-Fall River area. “I believe in women’s liberation,” CFJ leader Alda Melo told the *New York Times* in early February, “but what I’m doing is defending the right of an immigrant to live in this country without being judged guilty.” That month, the group sponsored a half-page advertisement in the *Standard-Times* bearing over 500 names, the majority from New Bedford and Fall River. Among the signatories were Father Halloran, four other pastors, and a nun, all of New Bedford. The advertisement called for everyone in the “community” to do their part “to safeguard the judicial process.” “We must be especially careful,” it warned, “not to prejudge anyone based on their national origin.”³²

As jury selection commenced, however, CFJ leaders questioned Judge William Young’s decision to ask jurors about their opinions of Portuguese-Americans as opposed to their perceptions of Portuguese immigrants. “It’s not the same,” argued leader Emily Sedgwick. Possible anti-immigrant bias among jurors, the group claimed, had not been eliminated.³³

Local Portuguese media held English-language press and “racists” accountable during the trials for what they perceived as the continued targeting of their community. *O Jornal* and the *Portuguese Times* published editorials and poems decrying reporters who failed to fulfill their journalistic “responsibility to search out the truth” and media that persisted as a platform for “feelings of animosity and intolerance” towards local Portuguese-Americans, “particularly immigrants.” The *Times’* March 8 editorial “Enough” accused WBSM-AM radio of still allowing callers to “debase” and “vilify” the community. And when trial testimony emerged contradicting the original police report on the crime, *O Jornal* blasted the *Standard-Times* for initially printing it as “the complete truth.” Poetry printed in the *Portuguese Times* similarly castigated the one-sided publicity the case had garnered and



Emotion Sweeps Over Two of the Accused after Their Conviction

(Image source: *The Boston Herald*, March 23, 1984)

claimed that jurors' "brains are already washed." And, unlike the accused, one poem lamented, "the victim is protected, Of her nobody knows anything."³⁴

Comparable attitudes simmered throughout this period among men and women within the New Bedford-Fall River Portuguese-American community. Letters to area newspapers and interviews revealed contempt for media coverage and bigotry in addition to a general reduction in sympathy for the victim as the trial wore on. Portuguese-Americans reiterated that they were a devout, industrious people who had contributed much to their neighborhoods and to the United States. Some continued to underscore their condemnation of rape, Big Dan's tavern, and the accused. At the same time, newspaper reports did not contain criticism leveled by members of the Portuguese community against the CFJ or other groups who advocated on behalf of the accused. There were also those like New Bedford teacher Alice Santos who questioned the victim's motives for entering Big Dan's as well as inconsistencies in her memory of that night's events. "The fact is," Santos told the *Standard-Times*, "a decent woman would not go into any bar to buy cigarettes." Indeed, as testimony continued, community members' disgust



The Portuguese Times' Reaction to the Big Dan's Verdict
(March 22, 1984)

for media and doubt of the victim's story strengthened while defense of their ethnic group remained constant. These attitudes only intensified when verdicts were handed down on March 17 and March 22, 1984.³⁵

THE VERDICTS AND THEIR AFTERMATH: MARCH 18, 1984-MAY 1984

The Portuguese-American community of New Bedford-Fall River splintered further in the aftermath of the Big Dan's verdicts. The juries' decisions to convict four of the original six men accused of aggravated rape initiated an eruption of various feelings. Portuguese-American groups led unprecedented demonstrations of protest and unity in New Bedford and Fall River within a week of the rulings. At the same time, leaders of Portuguese newspapers assertively used their platforms to chastise English-language media. All told, local Portuguese-Americans generally challenged what many identified as bigotry and excessive, sensationalistic media exposure. As sociologist Lynn Chancer notes, in some minds, the larger Portuguese-American community, not the raped Portuguese-American woman, was victimized.³⁶

Ordinary Portuguese-American individuals' initial responses to the verdicts brimmed with anger, sadness, and disbelief. What local, regional, and national reporters encountered in the North End businesses and social clubs they visited following the convictions were the raw emotions of a neighborhood subjected to intense public scrutiny and derision over the past year. Isabel Pudim, a Portuguese-American worker at the bakery that replaced Big Dan's tavern, avowed, "They [the jurors] were all prejudiced. I hope they get what they deserve." Speaking to a *Standard-Times* reporter the day the first verdicts were delivered, she vented further, "I hope the Portuguese people get together and do a number on this city." Pudim, like others, was incensed and believed the rulings resulted from ethnic prejudice and the case's publicity. That the first verdict was reached in five hours, argued some, was evidence that jury members had decided the fate of the accused long before. Others pointed out inconsistencies between the victim's testimony and her original statement to the police. Disbelief and resignation over the trials' outcomes and the entire ordeal also appeared in interviewees' conversations with journalists. Lamented one woman at a popular Portuguese-American social club, "What does it matter what we say?"³⁷

Local Portuguese-American media and organizational leaders advanced many of the same sentiments in the week following the verdicts. *O Jornal* and the *Portuguese Times* denounced the local and national press, particularly the

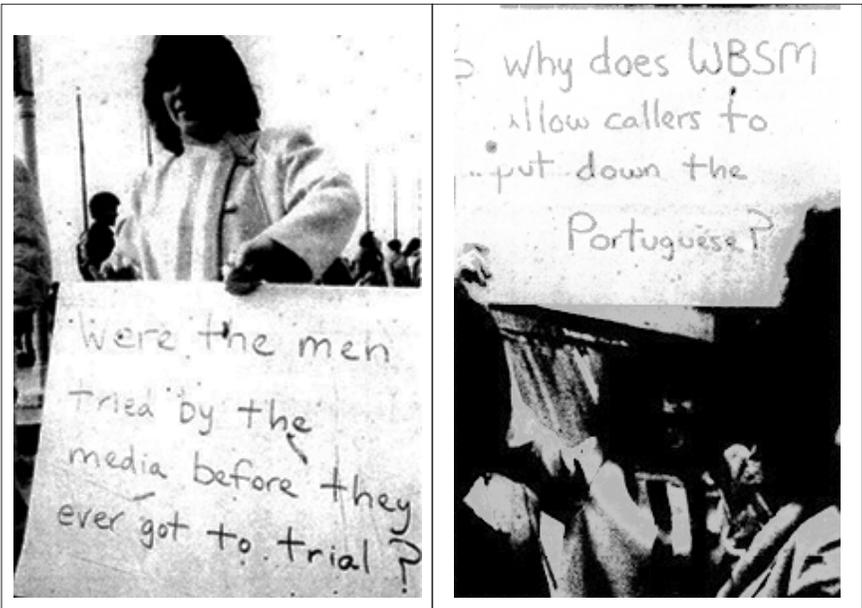


New Bedford and Fall River Demonstrations of March 22 and 23, 1984

(Photo source: *Fall River Herald News*, March 24, 1984)



(Photo source: *The Providence Journal*, March 24, 1984)



(Photo sources: left: *O Journal*, March 27, 1984; right: *The Providence Journal*, March 24, 1984)

New Bedford Standard-Times, for biased reporting and making the rape a “Portuguese crime.” Both papers suggested that the jurors had been influenced by pre-trial publicity and implied that anti-immigrant and anti-Portuguese bigotry led to the guilty verdicts rather than the factual evidence. Leaders of the CFJ agreed. “If they weren’t immigrants,” insisted Alda Melo, “they wouldn’t be convicted” and “people would have questioned the facts [of the gang rape] immediately.” She and Emily Sedgwick pointed to inconsistencies in witnesses’ testimony and maintained that Judge Young failed to adequately probe for prejudice among jurors. Ultimately, they argued, the first verdicts came quickly because jurors had already decided to convict the accused.³⁸

Both Portuguese publications stopped short of castigating Judge Young and the jurors personally. “We must respect” the American justice system, insisted *Portuguese Times*’ editor Manuel Ferreira. All the same, *O Jornal* suggested, “a bias [among jurors] can be so deep, so ingrained, that it might not be recognizable.”³⁹

However, divisions emerged among Portuguese-American organizations and media concerning mass demonstrations planned later that week by the CFJ and PAU. Pledging to do their best to ensure nonviolent gatherings, CFJ leaders predicted attendance for each to reach several thousand. Their intentions were many: to “show compassion” for the convicted; to persuade Judge Young to overturn the verdicts; to demonstrate the solidarity of Portuguese-Americans against discrimination and the “indictment” of their community; to march for their “dignity”; and to show that local Portuguese-Americans comprised a “respectable, humane community.” Yet Ferreira characterized the demonstrations as possibly “counterproductive” and a “losing situation” that would likely fail to sway the court. Fearing chaos, in his March 22 editorial titled “Calm!” he reminded readers that the Portuguese-American community was in the spotlight and urged that demonstrators remain peaceful. Death threats made against the victim, District Attorney, and jurors made Ferreira’s concerns all too valid.⁴⁰

Thousands of Portuguese-American men, women, and children peacefully gathered in solidarity and protest just over one year following the infamous gang rape. Under the leadership of PAU and the CFJ, approximately 8,000 demonstrators participated in a silent candlelight vigil on the evening of March 22, processing through the streets of New Bedford. Their primary message was clearly conveyed by the pins on their chests that read: “Justice Crucified.” Significantly, those interviewed at the evening procession did not argue that the convicted were innocent of wrongdoing at Big Dan’s. They did assert, however, that the men did not receive a fair trial free of bias and that the victim should share in the responsibility for the gang rape. They were “too

hard,” complained marcher Frank Garcia of the first verdicts. Added Delores Medeiros concerning the victim, “She should be punished just as much as they are.” Others angrily decried the scapegoating of their ethnic group for the crime. Speaking from the steps of City Hall, PAU leader Lucia Maiato reiterated a familiar sentiment among the Portuguese-American community prior to and during the court proceedings: “We have the highest respect for our system of justice. But . . . honorable juries have been wrong in the past.”⁴¹

An estimated crowd of 10,000 people paraded through downtown Fall River the following day with similar, yet more heightened, emotions. Marching with them were the two acquitted Medeiros men. CFJ and PAU leaders, as well as Raymond Castro, publisher of *O Jornal* and president of the PADL, heralded the march as a sign of unity, peace, and dignity within the Portuguese-American community as well as a protest against exaggerated news coverage, biased verdicts, and longstanding discrimination against Portuguese-Americans in the area. Organizers also expressed their desire for healing and their hope that Judge Young would be lenient in his sentencing. As local and national media covered the procession, many demonstrators waved Portuguese flags and carried homemade signs, some of which read: “Too Much Publicity Hurts Our Community,” “Be Proud to Be Portuguese,” “We Oppose Rape. We Also Oppose Convicting Men Because of Their National Origin,” “Railroading Portuguese Men Won’t Fight Rape,” “Was She Willing?” “We Are Here for Justice,” and “Overturn the Verdict.” Ferreira, who initially expressed wariness over the demonstrations, described the New Bedford gathering as “great.”⁴²

Despite the massive expression of solidarity during the New Bedford and Fall River marches, media interviews revealed that not all within the Portuguese-American community were unified. Indeed, significant divisions arose over the results of the trials. Some Portuguese-Americans either supported the guilty verdicts or at least felt that the convicted had committed some sort of wrongdoing at the tavern on the night in question. One woman who attended the court proceedings told the press that “justice was done.” Furthermore, she professed, “I’m a Portuguese-American myself, but . . . you have to abide by the rules” of the United States. Others divulged their suspicions that the convicted were responsible for misconduct and deserved punishment, but considered the charges too harsh. “I think they were guilty of a lot of things,” Maria Campos told the *Boston Globe*, “but not aggravated rape.”⁴³

Simultaneously, local Portuguese-American leaders were at odds not only in their opinions about the verdicts and the marches, but also in how they characterized the guilty men. For instance, the *Fall River Herald News*

Reaction—

(Continued from Page One)
taneous.

“They didn’t rape that woman,”
shouted Anna Laurendeau, certified
nurses’ aide. “We are strong people.

Herald News, Tuesday, March 27, 1984.

We have power. This isn’t the end
of this thing. We’re sick and tired
of discrimination. We are proud to
be Portuguese-Americans.”

“She’s a dead woman,” shouted
an angry female spectator. “She
asked for it and she got it.”

Some Reactions to the Sentencing of the Convicted on March 26, 1984

reported that Raymond Castro “said the Portuguese community is not as doubtful of the guilty finding” as it was troubled by the charges. In other words, the men likely committed misconduct but should not have been tried for the severe crime of aggravated rape. Manuel Ferreira was bolder when he dismissed the notion that the Portuguese-American community demonstrated for the convicted. “It is really incorrect to say that we marched in support of four rapists,” he told the *Providence Journal*. To the *Standard-Times* he maintained, “The feeling of the people” is that the men “should be found guilty, but of a lesser charge.”⁴⁴

While Ferreira’s language indicated his view that the convicted were in fact culpable of rape and that the demonstrations did not back them, leaders of PAU and the CFJ disagreed. Lucia Maiato of PAU alleged that jurors “rush[ed] to judgment,” and Alda Melo said they “were wrong in convicting” the men. Melo did reiterate the CFJ’s opposition to rape; yet, unlike Ferreira, she never referred to the convicted as rapists, but portrayed them as victims. She claimed that the New Bedford and Fall River gatherings occurred, in part, to support the men. Indeed, the CFJ organized an appeal fund and began a petition drive intended to pressure Judge Young to be lenient in his sentencing. In stark contrast, Mabel Pina, wife of the case’s lead prosecutor, Portuguese-American Ronald Pina, charged demonstrators with “cheering the convicted.” Marchers had even been duped and used as pawns by CFJ leaders and the media, she told area newspapers. Unmistakably, fractures within the Portuguese-American community were visible for all to see.⁴⁵

At the same time, a segment of New Bedford’s religious leadership eventually surfaced to comment publicly in the wake of the trials. Remarks to the *Standard-Times* on March 22 reverberated the wariness existent within the Portuguese-American community. Meeting as part of the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford, Reverend Roger Fritts of First Unitarian Church, Rabbi Bernard Glassman of Tifereth Israel Synagogue, Reverend Lawrence van Heerden, and Reverend Mark Bergeron denounced

the “growing swell of bigotry surrounding the case.” More specifically, Glassman stressed the “dangers of stereotyping an entire group” because of the actions of only a few, and Fritts offered encouragement, declaring, “We wish today to stand in support of Portuguese-Americans in our community.” They also appealed for “calm and reason.”⁴⁶

A New Bedford priest present at the Fall River demonstration was more pointed with his remarks. According to the *Boston Globe*, the unnamed priest asserted, “The girl is to blame. She led them into sin.” This voice may have belonged to Father Edward Halloran, who was reported as being the “Irish priest” who led marchers in prayer. (He was the same priest who had helped raise bail money for the accused the previous summer and attached his name to the CFJ petition in February.) In a letter published by *O Jornal* on May 8, Father Halloran cited “drunkenness” as the “one, single, overriding” factor on the night of the rape. There was, he claimed, “heavy boozing, particularly on the woman’s part.” Hence, both the men and the female victim shared in responsibility for what he described as an “isolated, abnormal incident.” Expressing affinity with the “Portuguese people” and New Bedford’s and Fall River’s demonstrators, Father Halloran proclaimed that the convictions and “harsh” sentences “must be overturned.” The letter, in fact, had also been submitted to the *Standard-Times* the previous month but was “never published,” according to *O Jornal*. The paper’s general manager, Kathleen Castro, accused the *Standard-Times* of giving Father Halloran the “run-around.”⁴⁷

It became obvious that gendered expectations for personal behavior existed within the Portuguese-American community. Press interviews betrayed this fact when a number of Portuguese-American women verbally pounced on the victim after the trials ended. They faulted the victim for violating what they perceived as a woman’s role in Portuguese-American culture; several actually placed responsibility on the victim for what had occurred. Alda Machado, a Fall River marcher, argued that the convicted “did nothing” to the victim; “Her rights are to be home with her two kids and be a good mother.” Nellie Vivieros agreed, “If she had been home with her children this would not have happened.” Demonstrator Virginia Faria quipped, “I am Portuguese and proud of it. I’m also a woman, but you don’t see me getting raped. . . . If you walk around naked, men are just going to go for you.” Anna Medeiros, too, was unequivocal as well as callous towards the victim: “I think she got what she deserved.” Such statements made by local Portuguese-American women are telling; the victim was one of their own in terms of sex and ethnicity. Regardless, their concerns about ethnic prejudice and the preservation of gender roles led some to downplay the reality that the woman was a victim of

sexual violence. In fact, the victim was metaphorically exiled from her ethnic group. Declared marcher Mary Jo Cardoza, “we are not here for her. We are here for the Portuguese.”⁴⁸

The deafening silence emanating from leaders of the Portuguese community towards such treatment of the victim is also striking. Signs such as “Was She Willing?” and the gatherings themselves were not subsequently decried by community leaders beyond the comments of Mabel Pina. An inspection of letters to the editor and of the interviews conducted by multiple English-language newspapers which covered the demonstrations and the days immediately following reveals that neither local clergy nor organizers of Portuguese-American groups publicly admonished marchers for suggesting that the rape victim was at fault for the violent assault she endured. Incredibly, they did not even publicly reprimand the sentiment that the victim deserved to be gang-raped. While these leaders and clergy apparently defaulted in their ethical and moral duties, others, including many who identified as Portuguese-American, flooded area newspapers with letters from as far away as Arizona, Hawaii, and Canada, questioning the marches, those who blamed the victim, and those who appeared to defend rapists.⁴⁹

SUMMATION

“We were the scapegoats of society,” reflected Maria Tomasia in a 2009 interview with New Bedford’s *South Coast Today*. Tomasia, the wife of CFJ co-founder John Tomasia, told the paper that she still had “vivid” recollections of the “hateful and hurtful remarks” people directed at the local Portuguese-American community during the ordeal of the Big Dan’s case. Neither she nor her husband were reported as having expressed second thoughts about the CFJ’s advocacy for the defendants in 1983 and 1984. Within that period, members of the general public used radio airwaves and newspapers to condemn the entire community for the reprehensible actions of several individuals. English-language press outlets such as the *New Bedford Standard-Times*, *Providence Journal*, *Boston Globe*, and *New York Times* routinely cast the Portuguese-American community as “other” from the area’s larger population. The news media also sensationalized their coverage of an already shocking crime and continued to print erroneous and exaggerated information concerning the night in question after certain realities had been fleshed out.⁵⁰

Examining how the local Portuguese-American community responded to these developments, and to the rape itself, reveals much. Over the course of the case, divisions surfaced within a community that had long endured anti-

immigrant prejudice and class discrimination. Local Portuguese-American individuals, media, and organizations became increasingly active and vocal against what they perceived as the targeting of their ethnic group by the larger forces of xenophobia and prejudice fostered by the non-Portuguese media. At the same time, however, the Portuguese-American press in New Bedford and Fall River initially ostracized the suspects and later engaged in slanted reporting of its own during the trial.

Ordinary Portuguese-American individuals wavered on who within their ethnic group they blamed. Initially, community members targeted the Portuguese-American immigrant suspects. However, as the case wore on, some came to condemn the Portuguese-American victim and joined local Portuguese-American organizations to advocate on behalf of the suspects, and later, convicted rapists.

It is important to remember that community members were not reacting simply against the media's attention on them; in fact, people questioned why their positive contributions to the region did not receive the same amount of exposure as the crime. In other words, the Portuguese-American community welcomed good publicity. What some were actually upset about, in the words of letter-writer Carlos Tome, was the "airing" of Portuguese-Americans' "dirty laundry."⁵¹

Meanwhile, area religious leaders seldom took a public stance on the case. When clergy did participate in journalists' interviews, it was usually to defend the larger Portuguese-American community against bigotry or negative publicity. And while some clergy openly petitioned in favor of fair trials for the accused Portuguese-American men, not one publicly advocated specifically on behalf of the Portuguese-American victim. Instead, a local chaplain dared to suggest that the victim take partial responsibility for the "alleged" violent crime she suffered. Tragically, a desire to promote harmony and quell ethnically-based discrimination in the face of outsiders' scrutiny won out over acknowledging, let alone respecting, the rape victim's acute suffering and courage.⁵²

"The story of Big Dan's...is a story without heroes," Assistant Bristol County District Attorney Raymond Veary told jurors in his opening trial remarks. Clearly, the case reflected a mixture of brazen violence, cowardice, profound tragedy, ethnic and anti-immigrant prejudice, tabloid journalism, hypocrisy, and much more. Based on an evaluation of the attitudes and actions of the Portuguese-American community, however, many visualized themselves as heroes for truth and justice.⁵³

Notes

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2. "Defense Cross-Examines Rape Case Witnesses," *FRHN*, February 25, 1984, 1, 6; "Woman Tells Court of Barroom Rape," *Boston Globe* (hereafter *BG*), February 25, 1984, 1, 53; "Six Indicted in Tavern Rape," *FRHN*, March 17, 1983, 1, 6; "Timetable of an Outrage," *The Boston Herald* (hereafter *BH*), March 17, 1983, 15.
3. Onesimo Teotonio Almeida, "Media-Made Events: Revisiting the Case of Big Dan's," in *Community, Culture and the Makings of Identity: Portuguese-Americans along the Eastern Seaboard* (hereafter *CCMI*), eds. Kimberly DaCosta Holton and Andrea Klimt (North Dartmouth, MA: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, 2009), 248-251, 254-255, 645; Helen Benedict, *Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 90, 143; Kristin Bumiller, "Fallen Angels: The Representation of Violence Against Women in Legal Culture," in *Criminology at the Crossroads: Feminist Readings in Crime and Justice*, ed. Kathleen Daly and Lisa Maher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 40, 51-52; Lisa M. Cuklanz, *Rape on Trial: How the Mass Media Construct Legal Reform and Social Change* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 69-70; Elisabeth Farstad, "The News Coverage of the New Bedford Rape Case" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1989), 112-114, 156-157; Steven Shapiro, "A Consideration of Privacy Violations Inherent in the Press Coverage of the Criminal Proceedings of Commonwealth v. John Cordeiro, et. al. and Commonwealth v. Joseph Vieira and Daniel Silvia" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1986); Lynn S. Chancer, "New Bedford, Massachusetts, March 6, 1983-March 22, 1984: The 'Before and After' of a Group Rape," *Gender and Society* 1(3) (Se, 1987): 239, 257; Tonya Horeck, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 73-77.
4. Bela Feldman-Bianco, "Multiple Layers of Time and Space: The Construction of Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism among Portuguese Immigrants," in *CCMI*, 58-59; Onesimo T. Almeida, "Azorean Dreams," in *Portuguese Spinner: An American Story*, eds. Marsha McCabe and Joseph D. Thomas (New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1998), 21-24.
5. Feldman-Bianco, 59-60; Almeida, "Azorean Dreams," 24; "In New Bedford: Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily on City's Portuguese Community," *BG*, March 18, 1983, 1, 10; "Portuguese Immigrants Fear Rape Case May Set Back Gains," *The New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), March 17, 1984, 6.
6. Feldman-Bianco, 58-60, 72; Almeida, "Azorean Dreams," 21-25; Almeida, "Media-Made Events," 247-262; Penn Reeve, "Portuguese Labor Activism in Southeastern

Massachusetts,” in CCMI, 337-338; Miguel Moniz, “The Shadow Minority: An Ethnohistory of Portuguese and Lusophone Racial and Ethnic Identity in New England,” in CCMI, 419; Jennette Barnes, Joao Ferreira, and Joseph R. LaPlante, *A Nossa Vida: The Portuguese Experience in America* (New Bedford, MA: Reynolds DeWalt, 2006), 34-35; “Witnesses Begin Rape Case Account.”

7. “Men Jeered as Woman was Gang Raped,” *New Bedford Standard-Times* (hereafter *NBST*), March 8, 1983, 1, 5.

8. *Ibid.*; “Neighborhood Erupts with Anger after Assault,” *NBST*, March 8, 1983, 5; “Storm of Outrage about Gang Rape Intensifies,” *NBST*, March 9, 1983, 5; “Rape Suspect Tries to Flee U.S.,” *NBST*, March 11, 1983, 1, 4; “Bar Crowd Cheers As Woman is Raped,” *BH*, March 9, 1983, 1, 2; “‘Nobody Tried to Help’ Woman Raped in Barroom; New Bedford Men Charged,” *The Providence Journal* (hereafter *PJ*), March 9, 1983, A1; “Four Deny Charges in Gang Rape in Bar,” *BG*, March 9, 1983, 24; “Barroom Rape,” *FRHN*, March 11, 1983, 10; “Woman’s Rape in a Bar Enrages New Bedford,” *NYT*, March 11, 1983, A14; “The Story at Big Dan’s: Why We Covered It as We Did,” *NBST*, March 27, 1983, 14; “A Vicious Crime Aided and Abetted,” *PJ*, March 16, 1983, A12; “Rape and Silence,” *BG*, March 16, 1983, 18; “Horror Show in a Tavern,” *BG*, March 17, 1983, 19; “Burning Anger,” *NBST*, March 15, 1983, 1, 6; “Cameras in the Court,” *NBST*, April 8, 1984, 11, 12; Cuklanz, 10; Benedict, 90; Chancer, 248; “Japan gets Big Dan’s TV Coverage,” *BG*, March 27, 1984 7.

9. “The Crime That Tarnished a Town: New Bedford’s Gang-Rape Case Goes to Trial,” *Time*, March 5, 1984; “Rape Suspect Tries to Flee U.S.”; “Bail Hike Sends Three Gang Rape Suspects to Jail; Fourth Sought,” *NBST*, March 12, 1983, 1, 5; “Four Sentenced in Gang Rape Case,” *FRHN*, March 26, 1984, 1, 8; “Big Dan’s Rape Case Puts Many Issues on Trial,” *PJ*, February 5, 1984, B1, 2; “The Case Goes to the Grand Jury,” *O Journal* (hereafter *OJ*), March 15, 1983, 1, 11, 13, 14, 20; “Frank Opposes Deporting Pair Convicted in Rape,” *FRHN*, April 21, 1984, 1, 6; Benedict, 117-118; “The Six Big Dan’s Defendants and Their Cases,” *NBST*, March 23, 1984, 3; “Big Dan’s Judge Recommends Pair Not Be Deported,” *NBST*, April 24, 1984, 4; “Judge Opposes Deportation,” *FRHN*, April 24, 1984, 1, 6; “Rape Suspect Falls Ill after Plea,” *NBST*, March 17, 1983, 1, 5; “The Defendants,” *NBST*, February 5, 1984, 9; “Timetable of an Outrage”; “The Six Defendants in Rape Case,” *BG*, March 23, 1984, 9; “Who Are Six Suspects in Rape?” *NBST*, March 20, 1983, 1, 10; “Bail of Two Rape Defendants Not Lowered,” *PJ*, April 2, 1983, A9.

10. “Four Sentenced in Gang Rape Case.”

11. *Ibid.*; “Spectators Raise Chorus of Wails after Verdict,” *NBST*, March 18, 1984, 1, 2; “Big Dan’s Jurors Convict Defendants Raposo, Cordeiro,” *NBST*, March 23, 1984, 1, 3; “Families Took Part,” *FRHN*, March 24, 1983, 1, 6; “Thousands Stand up for Their Heritage,” *NBST*, March 23, 1984, 1, 2; “‘Peaceful Meeting’ Replaces Fury over Rape Convictions,” *NBST*, March 23, 1984, 3; “Thousands March Peacefully,” *FRHN*, March 24, 1984, 1, 6; “Marchers Issue a Call,” *FRHN*, March 24, 1984, 1, 6; “And Justice for All...” *OJ*, March 20, 1984, 2; “Portuguese Call the

Media Instigators in Ethnic Issue,” *NBST*, March 22, 1984, 1, 4; “Big Dan’s Judge Recommends Pair Not be Deported”; “Frank Opposes Deporting Pair Convicted in Rape”; “Judge Opposes Deportation”; Benedict, 117-118; “Crowd, Tension Overflow outside Superior Court,” *NBST*, March 18, 1984, 1, 2; Eric Ethier, *True Crime: Massachusetts: The State’s Most Notorious Criminal Cases* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2009), 91; “Frank O’Boy speaks out on Big Dan’s Rape Case,” *Taunton Daily Gazette*, May 28, 2009.

12. “Cheers Carry Big Dan’s Rapists Away to Prison,” *NBST*, March 27, 1984, 5; “Requiem for a Rape Victim.”

13. “Gang rape: A City’s Shame,” *NBST*, March 13, 1983, 1, 10.

14. “Storm of Outrage about Gang Rape Intensifies”; “In New Bedford, Shock Becomes a Public Outrage,” *PJ*, March 13, 1983, C1, 3, 4; “Barroom Rape.”

15. “Storm of Outrage about Gang Rape Intensifies”; “New Bedford Women Plan March to Protest Assault,” *BG*, March 11, 1983, 14; “Barroom Rape Shames Town of Proud Heritage,” *NYT*, March 17, 1983, A16; “Neighborhood Erupts with Anger after Assault”; “Gang Rape: A City’s Shame”; “In New Bedford, Shock Becomes a Public Outrage”; “The case goes to the Grand Jury”; “The Portuguese Community Comments on Events,” *OJ*, March 15, 1983, 2.

16. Editorial, “The Community Pays,” *OJ*, March 15, 1983, 1, 20; “The Case Goes to the Grand Jury.”

17. *Ibid.*; “The case goes to the Grand Jury”; “The Portuguese Community Comments on Events.”

18. “Men Jeered as Woman was Gang Raped”; “Storm of Outrage about Gang Rape Intensifies”; “Gang Rape: A City’s Shame”; “Rape in Barroom Provokes Plan for Candlelight March,” *PJ*, March 11, 1983, A3; “In New Bedford, Shock becomes a Public Outrage”; “Bar Shut after Rape Reported,” *BG*, March 10, 1983, 17; “Fourth Man Arrested in Barroom Rape; Bail Hearing Tomorrow,” *BG*, March 13, 1983, 37; “Barroom Rape Shames Town of Proud Heritage.”

19. “Big Dan’s Closes,” *NBST*, March 10, 1983, 1, 5; “Bar Shut after Rape Reported”; “Rape Suspect Tries to Flee U.S.”; “Rape in Barroom Provokes Plan for Candlelight March”; “Bail Hike Sends Three Gang Rape Suspects to Jail”; “Three Defendants Jailed,” *FRHN*, March 12, 1983, 1; “Bail Hiked for Four Rape Suspects,” *BG*, March 12, 1983, 1; “Arrests Made in Massachusetts Rape Case,” *NYT*, March 12, 1983, A6; “Bail in New Bedford Gang Rape Boosted; DA Says Suspect Tried to Flee Country,” *PJ*, March 12, 1983, A1, 16; “In New Bedford, Shock Becomes a Public Outrage”; “Fourth Man Arrested in Barroom Rape”; “Fourth Man Held in Rape on Barroom Pool Table,” *NYT*, March 13, 1983, 26; “‘We Won’t Stand for Sexist Violence,’” *NBST*, March 14, 1983, 1, 5; “‘Accountability’ Demanded in Rape Case,” *PJ*, March 14, 1983, A3; “Burning Anger”; “Thousands Join Protest,” *FRHN*, March 15, 1983, 1, 20; “Woman Sues for \$10 million,” *FRHN*, March 16, 1983, 8; “Rape Suspect Falls Ill after Plea”; “Unable to Eat or Sleep,” *FRHN*, March 19, 1983, 1, 8; “The Case Goes to the Grand Jury.”

20. "The Case Goes to the Grand Jury"; "Rape," OJ, March 22, 1983, 1, 20; "...And This is America," OJ, March 27, 1984, 2.
21. "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily," BG, March 18, 1983, 1; "Age of Innocence is Past," *FRHN*, March 21, 1983, 1, 6.
22. "In outrage and Curiosity, Spectators Jammed the Courtroom," NBST, March 18, 1983, 1, 5; "Portuguese-Americans Criticize News Coverage of Gang Rape," NBST, March 18, 1983, 5; "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily"; "Age of Innocence is Past"; "Some Are Angry at News Coverage of the Portuguese," NBST, March 20, 1983, 10; Diana D. Violeta, letter to the editor, NBST, March 23, 1983, 6; Dorothy Miller, letter to the editor, NBST, March 26, 1983, 6; "The Story at Big Dan's: Why We Covered It as We Did"; "Outrage in New Bedford Spurs Call for National Movement," NBST, March 27, 1983, 15; B. Eubank, letter to the editor, NBST, March 30, 1983, 6.
23. "Every Woman!" to Manuel Ferreira, "Portuguese Times Editor Correspondence," box 1, "Big Dan" folder 1, Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth Library Archives and Special Collections, Dartmouth, MA (hereafter FMPAA-UMDLASC); Anonymous to Portuguese Times, "Portuguese Times Editor Correspondence," box 1, "Big Dan" folder 1, FMPAA-UMDLASC, Dartmouth, MA.
24. Editorial, "Blistering and Xenophobia," Portuguese Times (hereafter PT), March 17, 1983, 1, 4; "Rape"; "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily." Only after the Portuguese Times' March 17, 1983 editorial did English-language media, including the New Bedford Standard-Times, the Providence Journal, and the Boston Globe, begin to report on mounting anti-Portuguese attitudes in the area. And yet, Times editor Manuel Ferreira, too, participated in dehumanizing the accused when he described the suspects' actions as a "barbarity."
25. "Groups That Have Taken on the 'Fight,'" OJ, May 1, 1984, 1, 6, 10.
26. "Portuguese-Americans Criticize News coverage of Gang Rape"; "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily"; "Some Are Angry at News Coverage"; Emily Sedgwick, letter to the editor, NBST, April 1, 1984, 6; "Up to 10,000 Expected; Organizers Urge Calm," NBST, March 21, 1984, 14; "Groups that Have Taken on the 'Fight.'" Within two weeks of Its first public statement, PAU issued another which suggested that court proceedings "may already have been tampered with due to all of the publicity" garnered by the case.
27. "Two Onlookers Applauded, DA Pina Says," BG, March 18, 1983, 1; "Donations Pile Up for Rape Victim, Suspects Defense," NBST, March 21, 1983, 4; "State Tells of Cheers at Rape," PJ, March 18, 1983, A1, 18.
28. "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily"; "State Tells of Cheers at Rape"; "In Outrage and Curiosity"; "Some Are Angry at News Coverage"; Luis Botelho Motta, letter to the editor, NBST, March 21, 1983, 6; Grace M. Ventura, letter to the editor, NBST, March 27, 1983; Maria Natalia Clemente Vieira, letter to the editor, NBST, April 7, 1983, 6; "Club Drops Ties with Rape Defense Fund," NBST, April 8, 1983, 4,

29. "In Outrage and Curiosity"; "State Tells of Cheers at Rape"; "Alleged Rape Weighs Heavily"; "Some Are Angry at News Coverage"; Motta; Onesimo T. Almeida, letter to the editor, NBST, March 25, 1983. 6 Ventura, letter to the editor, NBST, March 27, 1983; Jose Pedro Bio, letter to the editor, NBST, March 31, 1983, 6; Vieira.
30. "Some are Angry at News Coverage"; "A Guest Commentary..." The Pilot, April 1, 1983, 5; "No Room for Bigotry," The Anchor, April 15, 1983, 7.
31. Advertisement, Committee for Justice, NBST, February 5, 1984. 10; "Candlelight Vigil to Dramatize Immigrants' Inner Struggles," NBST, March 22, 1984, 5; "Flynt Apologizes for Rape Parody," BG, July 22, 1983, 22; "Dukakis Prompted Flynt to Apologize," BG, July 24, 1983; "Radio Bail Plea Planned in Rape Case," BG, August 29, 1983, 42; "Radio Appeal Raises Raposo Bail Money," BG, Sept. 5, 1983, 22; "Groups that Have Taken on the 'Fight'." The PADL organized in spring 1983 to combat what Castro described as "Portuguese jokes, 'greenhorn' calling in schools, problems with the [New Bedford] police department, [and] a general lack of sensitivity toward the immigrant community." The CFJ, a branch-off of the PAU, emerged in June 1983 and claimed that ensuring a fair trial for the defendants was its main priority. The CFJ later assisted the suspects' families while insisting that they did not condone rape. The IF, managed by local Portuguese-radio talk show host Ray Delgado, was less visible.
32. "Sometimes They Wait an Hour to Get a Seat," PJ, March 9, 1984, A3; "Rape Trial Is Monitored by a Women's Coalition," NYT, March 9, 1984. A10; "Portuguese Immigrants Fear Rape Case May Set Back Gains"; "Judge Praises Jury System," *FRHN*, February 20, 1984, 1, 6; "Trial of Six Starts Today in Pool Table Rape in Massachusetts," NYT, February 6, 1984, A14; "Group Monitors for Fairness, Warns against Ethnic Bias," NBST, February 21, 1984, 1, 4; Advertisement, Committee for Justice. The Standard-Times reported on February 23 that almost half of the Big Dan's jurors had "clearly recognizable Portuguese surnames." Also, the paper reported that Assistant DA Robert Kane believed that defense lawyers were "systematically excluding jurors of Portuguese background." DA Robert Pina, responsible for overseeing the state's prosecution of the case, was Portuguese-American.
33. "Juries Chosen Today," *FRHN*, February 21, 1984, 1, 6; "Juries in Big Dan's Rape Trial Due for Selection Today," PJ, February 21, 1984, A3.
34. "Enough," PT, March 8, 1984. 1; "Journalistic Responsibilities," OJ, February 28, 1984. 12; "Big Dan," PT, February 2, 1984, 30; Letter to the editor, PT, February 23, 1984, 24; "Media Coverage of Big Dan's Trial Questioned," OJ, March 13, 1984, 1, 6, 7. O Jornal placed additional blame on the women's movement for attracting national and international attention to the area. Importantly, the paper's February 7 editorial expressed its opinion that Judge Young was "sensitive to the impact of the pre-trial publicity and to the wave of anti-Portuguese sentiment which it brought out." At the same time, O Jornal exemplified bias in its coverage of the trial. Several of the paper's trial accounts began by emphasizing testimony and cross-examination that cast the victim in an unfavorable light. O Jornal's slanted coverage highlighted information on the victim's alcohol consumption the night of the rape,

her revelation of illegally receiving welfare payments, and the defense's allegation that she had reported being raped in 1981. Tellingly, when *O Jornal* conveyed the victim's testimony, the paper only published her statements about the rape when acknowledging defense witnesses' testimony. Like the *Fall River Herald News* and the *Providence Journal*, *O Jornal* unapologetically printed the victim's full name in its reports.

35. "In New Bedford, Some Changes in Year Since the Alleged Rape," *BG*, March 2, 1984, 14; "Big Dan's Bar is Gone, but Its Stigma Clings to North End," *NBST*, February 13, 1984, 1, 7; Jorge S. Medeiros, letter to the editor, *NBST*, March 7, 1984, 6; Carlos Tome, letter to the editor, *PT*, March 8, 1984, 24; Jorge S. Medeiros, letter to the editor, *NBST*, March 15, 1984; "For Many Spectators at the Big Dan's Trial, the Verdict's Already In," *BG*, March 1, 1984, 23; "Under the Shame Ripples an Anger," *BH*, February 24, 1984, 2.

36. "Pair Convicted; Two Acquitted," *FRHN*, March 23, 1984, 1, 6; "Four Sentenced in Gang Rape Case"; Chancer, 250. Interestingly, Judge Young, D.A. Pina, defense attorneys, and the victim's lawyer concluded that ethnic prejudice did not play a role in the jurors' decisions. In addition, they criticized the media's coverage of the case as excessive and sensational,

37. "Pent-up Anger Erupts in Bar's Neighborhood," *NBST*, March 18, 1984, 3; "First Verdict Decried by Portuguese Community," *PJ*, March 19, 1984, A1, 18; "Anguished Community Discusses the Verdict," *BG*, March 19, 1984, 1; "Two Found Guilty of Rape at Big Dan's; Fracas Erupts," *PJ*, March 18, 1984, A1, 12; "Verdict Angers Some Portuguese," *FRHN*, March 19, 1984, 1, 6; "March Set for Friday," *FRHN*, March 20, 1984, 1, 6; "Crowd Hurls Death Threat at DA Pina, Cheers Four Rapists," *NBST*, March 27, 1984, 1, 5.

38. "Indicted by the Media; Convicted by the Jury," *OJ*, March 20, 1984, 1, 2, 4, 7; "Portuguese Call the Media Instigators in Ethnic Issue"; "And Justice for All...?"; "Calm!" *PT*, March 22, 1984, 1; "Portuguese Plan Marches," *NBST*, March 20, 1984, 14; "Silva and Vieira Found Guilty," *FRHN*, March 19, 1984, 1, 6; "Two Found Guilty of Rape at Big Dan's"; "Group Hails Verdict; Some are Outraged," *NBST*, March 18, 1984, 3; "Marches Set for Friday," *FRHN*, March 20, 1984, 1, 6.

39. "Calm!"; "And Justice for All...?"

40. "Marches to Protest Rape Convictions, Jury's 'Prejudice,'" *PJ*, March 20, 1984, A3; "Two Portuguese Groups Get Go-ahead to Rally against Rape Verdict," *PJ*, March 22, 1984, A9; "Up to 10,000 Expected"; "3,000-5,000 May Demonstrate," *FRHN*, March 22, 1984, 16; "Portuguese Plan Marches"; "Calm!"; "Jury Security Tightened," *NBST*, March 19, 1984, 1, 4; "Big Dan's Defense Lawyers Support Prosecutor," *NBST*, March 28, 1984, 4; "Cheers Carry Big Dan's Rapists Away to Prison."

41. "'Tired of All the Prejudice,' They Turned Out to Show Unity, Gain Dignity," *NBST*, March 23, 1984, 2; "Thousands Stand Up for Their Heritage"; "Traffic Rerouted," *FRHN*, March 23, 1984, 84, 16; "Pair Convicted; Two Acquitted"; "Defendants' Backers Stage March," *BG*, March 23, 1984, 10; "'Peaceful Meeting'

- Replaces Fury over Rape Convictions”; “Many March Silently to Protest Verdicts,” PJ, March 23, 1984, A1, 22,
42. “Marchers Issue a Call”; “10,000 Fill the Streets,” NBST, March 24, 1984, 1, 3; “Thousands Stand Up for Their Heritage”; “Families Took Part”; “Traffic Rerouted”; “Big Dan’s Verdict,” NBST, March 25, 1984, 10; “8,000 March against ‘Bias’ They Say Big Dan’s Fueled,” PJ, March 24, 1984, A1, 20; “Women’s Rights, Justice, Bias Issues Cloud Rape Case,” NBST, March 24, 1984, 3; “Thousands Protest Guilty Verdicts,” BG, March 24, 1984, 1. Virgilio Medeiros and Jose Medeiros, the two men acquitted of all charges, participated in the Fall River gathering.
43. “Families Took Part”; “Anguished Community Discusses the Verdict”; “First Verdict Decried”; “Crowd Outside Court Supports Defendants,” *FRHN*, March 27, 1984, 1, 6; “Crowd Hurls Death Threat at DA Pina.”
44. “Verdict Angers Some Portuguese”; “They Marched to Defend Their Culture after Big Dan’s,” PJ, April 1, 1984, A1, 14; “Thousands Stand Up for Their Heritage”; “Marchers Issue a Call”; “8,000 March against ‘Bias’.”
45. “Verdict Angers Some Portuguese”; “They Marched to Defend Their Culture”; “Thousands Stand Up for Their Heritage”; “Marchers Issue a Call”; “8,000 March against ‘Bias’”; “Big Dan’s Rape Trial: Impact of the Media and the Marchers,” PJ, April 11, 1984, p A19; “Marchers, Media for Gang Rape Trial acted Irresponsibly,” NBST, April 15, 1984, 13.
46. “Four Clergymen Decry Prejudice,” NBST, March 22, 1984, 5.
47. “Thousands Protest Guilty Verdicts”; “Talkshow Host Henry Carreiro Talks of Cancerous Bigotry,” OJ, April 17, 1984, 1, 4; “The Letters to the Editor that the N.B. Standard Times Will Not Publish,” OJ, May 8, 1984, 1, 10, 12.
48. “First Verdict Decried”; “Many March Silently to Protest Verdicts”; “Women’s Rights, Justice, Bias Issues Cloud Rape Case”; “Crowd Outside Court Supports Defendants”; “Crowd Hurls Death Threat at DA Pina”; “They Marched to Defend Their Culture”; Chancer, “New Bedford, Massachusetts,” 253,
49. Patricia Alexa Foley, letter to the editor, *FRHN*, April 2, 1984, 4; Mary Grace Ferreira, letter to the editor, *FRHN*, April 3, 1984, 4; Laurianne J. Lavalley, letter to the editor, NBST, March 29, 1984, 6; Marcia J. Williams, letter to the editor, NBST, March 31, 1984, 6; Michele M. Dupey, letter to the editor, NBST, April 2, 1984, 6; Robert Cooper, letter to the editor, NBST, April 3, 1984, 6; Florence Grier, letter to the editor, NBST, April 6, 1984, 6; Geraldine T. Dimond, letter to the editor, NBST, April 9, 1984, 6; Norman Beecher, letter to the editor, April 11, 1984, 6; Mark C. Ouellet, letter to the editor, NBST, April 14, 1984, 6; Suzan Johnston-Mitchell, letter to the editor, NBST, April 16, 1984, 6; Jeanne M. Chadwick, letter to the editor, NBST, April 18, 1984, 6; B. Marshall, letter to the editor, NBST, April 24, 1984, 6; David S. Chmura and Katherine Rego Spiratos, letter to the editor, PJ, April 1, 1984, B15; Imozelle T. McVeigh, letter to the editor, PJ, April 3, 1984, A9; Dawn Morris, letter to the editor, PJ, April 3, 1984, A9; Carol Hoyle, letter to the editor, PJ, April 14, 1984, A19; Ellen Kellner, letter to the editor, PJ, April 14, 1984, A19;

Lisa Fernandes, letter to the editor, PJ, April 14, 1984, A19; Christopher S. Romano, letter to the editor, BG, April 7, 1984. 14.

50. "Memories of the Big Dan's Trial Remain Vivid," *South Coast Today*, May 8, 2009; "Widely Watched Mass. Trial Reshaped Society's Attitude Toward Rape Victims," BG, October 18, 1999, 1, 2; "Commentary: Media's Big Dan Coverage," OJ, April 3, 1984, 1, 6; "Blistering and Xenophobia."

51. Carlos Tome, letter to the editor, PT, February 23, 1984, 24.

52. "The Letters to the Editor that the N.B. Standard Times Will Not Publish."

53. "Alleged Rape is Detailed at Trial," PJ, February 24, 1984, A1, 14.