

The WCJ Editorial on Netflix's Luckiest Girl Alive

In the popular Netflix thriller, *Luckiest Girl Alive*, actress Mila Kunis plays 28-year-old magazine editor Ani Fanelli, living what may seem the ideal life. Engaged to a wealthy, attractive financier, she is choosing between moving to England and working at The New York Times.

Yet, throughout the film, Ani is haunted by a gang rape she endured in high school. When one of her rapists accuses Ani of participating in a school shooting that left him paralyzed, Ani agrees to appear in a documentary to defend herself. In doing so, she is forced to face the harrowing experience of her assault and loses her fiancé (who does not want her to speak publicly about the attack).

As Ani opens up about her assault, she reflects upon her trauma and starts the healing process. As so many television shows and movies tackle the topic of sexual assault, we have to ask, "When does healing begin?" For Marilyn Monroe in *Blonde*, who endured several rapes, healing never starts. Celeste in *Big Little Lies*, assaulted by her husband, starts healing when her husband dies. Coel in *I May Destroy You*, sexually assaulted by strangers, begins healing as she starts to process the myriad of ways the attack changes her life.

At the Women's Center of Jacksonville (WCJ), we support sexual assault survivors with a 24-hour rape crisis hotline at 904.721.7273, forensic exams and counseling. We understand every survivor of sexual assault heals differently. For some, healing begins as soon as the attack ends; for others, it takes years to start healing.

As sexual assaults are increasing in Duval, Baker and Nassau Counties (the hotline saw a 28% rise in calls to rape crisis hotline in 2021 - 2022 over the previous year, and an 8% increase in the number of forensic exams performed), we want to remind survivors we are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We are here for every survivor at every point of their journey. We help them heal, whenever and however they choose, because healing is unique to each survivor.

Sincerely,

Laura Van Zee
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