



"Patricia Francisco has done *the right thing*—wrote with honesty about an act of evil
and about her slowudge to health in its aftermath. Her story is important for
every woman to hear and every man to know. This book is impressive and very moving."
—Louise Erdrich

Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery

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Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery Patricia Weaver Francisco

She invites the reader into her life and into the questions raised by a crime with no obvious solutions or easy answers. We see the dimensions of a human struggle often kept hidden from view. While there are an estimated twelve million rape survivors in the United States, rape is still unspeakable, left out of our personal and cultural conversation. In *Telling*, Francisco has found a language for the secret grief carried by men and women who have survived rape.

Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery Details

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Ashley Bergman Carlin says

Beautiful book.

C.C. Yager says

Patricia Weaver Francisco edited my novel, *Perceval's Secret*. At the time, I bought her memoir but didn't get a chance to read it until the last two weeks. Wow. This is a powerful, powerful book.

Her descriptions of her PTSD captured the essential emotion, the disorientation at times, the dissociation. If you have ever wondered what PTSD is or how it affects people, Francisco shows what it is and how it affected her. I loved her description of time as being a circle, too. PTSD can be triggered again years later if an issue or memory has not been completely processed.

The description of her rape does not begin the memoir and I thought that was a wise decision. We first get to know her a little before she hits us with the life-changing event. I was struck by her memory of her dissociation and the accuracy of the description. The human mind has a wonderful collection of coping mechanisms that help us survive and dissociation is one of them. Her immediate post-rape reactions were wrenching to read making me think of how true to reality they were.

The long chapter toward the end, "Justice," is also wrenching at times, but gave me a lot of insight into Francisco's thought processes and what insights she gained from the experience of observing the trial of a serial rapist.

One point that comes up over and over in this book is how few books there are about women's experience with rape. It takes a lot of courage, of *fearlessness* to write about an experience that is both violent and intimate at the same time. Francisco shatters all the myths about rape, too.

I highly recommend this book, especially for men to read (especially older men still influenced by outdated beliefs about rape), and rape survivors who feel alone. You are not alone.

Meredith says

This book is a remarkable memoir that discusses a horrendous, all too common crime that we are taught to keep silent about. Ms. Francisco's story is one of hope and coming full circle.

courtney says

this is an amazing and heart-opening read. i may buy additional copies to pass around to everyone i know. i

certainly want loved ones to read it. the clarity of her voice and the perspective she takes on her rape -- and her insistence on using the word RAPE -- are enormous to me. she looks through the years back at her rape and its aftermath and says what so few of us want to hear, but i think we know is true: we are no longer the same. like reading alice sebold's book, lucky, i am aware that the author is a writer -- that sounds redundant, but i mean that the author of the book has a care for language and the language used around rape is always charged and coded: the book opens with a lexicon listing the words rape, rapacious, rapport, ravish, ravishing, rapt, rapture, report... the overlap between the words and their origins is startling. her consideration of language, especially the telling of stories, runs throughout this book, starting with the rape itself during which, like scheherezade, she told stories to keep her rapist aware of her humanity and prolong her life. she also intersperses the bedtime stories that she tells, years later, to her young son. i cried several times while reading this -- and more often felt that i was being offered something special hearing this story.

Rita Kovtun says

A brimming memoir that takes you through Weaver's rocky, but rewarding journey of self-healing.

Jessica says

To write this book required great strength and stamina, and there is never any question of the level of control needed and fulfilled. The weaving of Hans Christian Anderson's The Snow Queen is a nice little layer. Brings up good questions but doesn't necessarily answer them.

Elizabeth says

This is one of those books that's difficult to take, and that's what makes it extremely important. For everyone.

Ross H says

This is one of the most important books I've ever read. It will stick with me for a long time to come.

René says

Very good writing. I'd be interested in reading anything else by her--her novels or poetry for example. Though I wasn't as interested in the sections rehashing the Snow Queen story.

Leonard says

As Louise Erdrich wrote, this book is written "with honesty about an act of evil." This book is also written

with great literary skill making it more than a memoir of one woman's experience, but a meaningful statement about all people who have been victimized by evil. In an important paragraph the author quotes Judith Herman from her book "Trauma and Recovery:" "Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends, first, upon public acknowledgement of the traumatic event, and second, upon some form of community action" (Page 58). One aspect of being victimized is clarified by the author in that such a traumatic experience changes one forever. Recently I saw the movie "The Dry Land" about a Iraq War veteran suffering from PTSD. Like the soldier who was traumatized in war, the victim of rape and abuse is also permanently changed by the experience. No one can go back to the place they were at before being the target of abuse. The author makes that clear. We can be thankful that people like Ms. Francisco have the courage to write about the trauma they experienced. Without the courage to tell their story, healing is delayed and others are less likely to understand and have empathy. An excellent reading choice.

Sally Kenney says

Francisco was raped by a stranger in, I believe, 1981, so this account published in 1999 does not have the benefit of the "flowering" or rape memoirs and writing of late, yet, like Lara Naughton's beautiful Jaguar Man, is a deeply literary account of rape AND recovery. Like Irritable Hearts, Telling offers no sugar coating about the difficulties that lie ahead for survivors and love cannot conquer all. I wish I had read this book earlier on my journey, but perhaps reading it later enabled me to better appreciate its beauty and insight.

Cindy Dyson Eitelman says

The highly personal story of a woman who survived and even overcame--after a long, long time--a rape by a stranger who broke into her house when her husband was out of town. And by extension, the stories of many other women. I'm not saying their stories are alike, only that they all share certain elements that lingered long after the bruises and pain should have faded.

Feeling of powerlessness, worthlessness, irrational (and rational) fear. A marriage on the edge despite a strong, supportive husband. She quotes a certain statistic about marriage after rape that I won't write here, because that would deprive you of the impact it had on me when I read it in context. Nightmares, flashbacks, bad therapists.

Her rapist was never found, but ten years after the event she attended the trial of a serial rapist in a nearby neighborhood. He had a similar approach--watch the house or apartment, enter when he was fairly sure a woman was alone, cover her eyes, and steal whatever money or sell

able property was around. In the one case where there were two men in the apartment attacked, the difference between the men's reaction and hers was shocking. They all fought back--she had fought desperately and blindly, finally suffering a cut so deep that the attacker had to wrap it in a sheet. But the two men bided their time, caught their opportunity and fought with effectiveness. (And a hockey stick.)

That trial alone made the whole painful book worth enduring. Read it.

loafingcactus says

I think the author does a really great job of crafting the narrative of her experience with information about the topic until near the end. She seems to try three different "now for the hopeful if not happy ending" endings, none of which really work. I can see the difficulty in finding an end that suits, but still, that could have been done better. If I could have voted for one, I would have voted for putting all the eggs in basket #3.
