

NIWAP SA Conference Providence RI
Scenario
Justice is More Than Jail

Julia is an El Salvadoran farmworker woman who was brought to the U.S. by her parents when she was 10, she is now 20. She grew up traveling with her family, doing farm work and was able to finish high school. She works in Ohio picking cucumbers. She is a single mother of two. She works on a crew with about 50 other people, including her father and brother. She and her family members live in farmworker housing in a very isolated place. There is no indoor plumbing in her housing. She shares kitchen and bathroom facilities with the other residents of the camp.

Since her third day of employment, Julia began feeling increasingly uneasy about her job. Her supervisor began making inappropriate comments to her. He started telling her that she is pretty and that she does not have to be single while she works on his crew in Ohio. He also constantly asks her to go out to dinner with him and to visit a hotel with him. In addition, two weeks into the season, he started standing behind her as she was bent over picking cucumbers. He then began making comments to her about her body. As things became increasingly hostile for her, he started telling her that he would give her a raise if she agreed to have sex with him or that he would give her and her family members, better rows to pick if she would sleep with him. Julia rejected him. She told him that she did not appreciate his comments and she told him that he was being disrespectful. He laughed at her each time she rejected him and just walked away. Julia noticed that after she began rejecting him, he started instructing the other workers to send back her buckets of cucumbers. She was told that they were poor quality and, therefore, she did not get paid for them.

One day, while Julia was walking to the fields at 5am to start working. He drove up to her in a pick-up truck. He told her to get into the truck. She told him that she could just walk. He told her that he had a new group of rows he needed to show her because some workers left the night before and he needed to split up their rows. He told her that if she did not want to do the work, he would fire her and her family. She got in the truck afraid that she and her family would be fired.

Her crewleader drove her out to a field about 3 miles away from where she previously worked. It was completely isolated. Deep into the field, the crewleader stopped the truck. He locked the doors. He grabbed Julia. Despite her protests and her attempt to fight him off, Julia was raped. Afterward, he told her that he would drive her back to the camp. He told her that he would kill her and her family if she ever reported the rape to the police. He told her that no one would ever believe her and that since she is an immigrant she and her family would be deported if she complained. In addition, he told her that if she complained to anyone at the company, she and her family would be fired and blacklisted from ever working in agriculture again.