

*“Jane Doe No More is the story of a true hero. Through her struggle for justice as the victim of one of the most personal and devastating kinds of violence, and her advocacy for improving the law in cases of sexual assault, Donna Palomba has given other survivors a voice of courage and hope.”*

- The Honorable M. Jodi Rell, Former Governor of Connecticut

In 2007 Donna Palomba revealed on national television that she had been a victim of a sexual assault, and then transformed her terrible experience into a national non-profit, Jane Doe No More Inc., dedicated to fighting the stigma of rape.

“It was my decision to come forward to break the social stigmas associated with this misunderstood crime and help other victims heal,” Palomba said. “My mission is to end the silence surrounding sexual violence, thereby improving the way society responds to all survivors of this horrific crime.”

Donna Palomba was raped by a masked intruder in her Waterbury, Connecticut home in 1993. She reported the incident to the Waterbury Police Department who botched the crime scene. A month later they accused her of fabricating the story, and threatened to arrest her.

Shattered by the rape, Palomba was further devastated by the shocking confrontation with a Waterbury detective. Instead of wilting, she fought back. As Jane Doe she sued the Waterbury PD for negligence in 2001 and won, but her rapist was still at large.

In 2004 a hunch from Waterbury Police Chief Neil O’Leary led to the arrest of Palomba’s rapist, John Regan, a family friend. Regan’s DNA was a perfect match with Palomba’s attacker. He was only arrested for kidnapping in Donna’s case because the statute of limitations on rape had run out 6 years earlier.

Palomba revealed her identity during a two-hour Dateline NBC special in 2007 and is now a nationally-recognized voice for survivors of sexual violence.

That year she launched Jane Doe No More Inc. and successfully advocated for a change in Connecticut law removing the statute of limitations on sexual assault cases involving DNA evidence. She was also instrumental in the creation of *Duty Trumps Doubt*, a training video used by law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. Through Jane Doe No More, Inc., she established Raising Awareness through Personal Experience (RAPE), a ground-breaking outreach program that empowers and trains sexual assault survivors to share their personal stories to educate the community and inspire those who have yet to come forward.

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 17.7 million American women have been victims of attempted or completed rape, an average of 293,066 victims are raped or sexually assaulted each year. One in four college women will be the victim of sexual assault during her academic career. As a result, Jane Doe No More is collaborating with colleges, universities and both campus and local law enforcement to heighten awareness about sexual violence on campuses nationwide.

Palomba’s efforts to destigmatize sexual violence has been a daunting task. According to national statistics, 68% of rapes are not reported to police, and only two out of one hundred attacks lead to a felony conviction. Led by Palomba, Jane Doe No More provides an online environment that



includes resources, expert views, current information on legislation, surveys and the ability for victims and others to communicate. Palomba is also a motivational speaker and travels around the country talking about her experience.

In 2009 Jane Doe No More partnered with East Coast Training Systems to provide self-defense classes to women and girls ages 12 and older. The Escape Alive™ Survival Skills program is designed to give women and girls a fighting chance in the face of an attack and is offered at no cost to participants.

Her book *Jane Doe No More: My 15-Year Fight to Reclaim My Identity – a True Story of Survival, Hope and Redemption*, co-authored by M. William Phelps and published by Globe Pequot Press in 2012, serves as an inspiration to anyone battling sexual assault and injustice.

Born Donna Cappella to Mary and Louis Cappella on November 9, 1956 in Waterbury, Connecticut, Palomba attended St. Lucy’s and graduated from Barnard Grammar School, Waterbury Catholic High School and Southern Connecticut State University where she received her degree in Graphic Design. She is married to John Palomba. They have two children, Sarah and Johnny.

What happened to Donna Palomba in 1993 was a nightmare, but she refused to allow her attacker to define her life as a victim. And by taking a public stand to fight sexual violence Donna Palomba has become Jane Doe No More.