

Written Testimony of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford
United States Senate Judiciary Committee
September 26, 2018

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, Members of the Committee. My name is Christine Blasey Ford. I am a Professor of Psychology at Palo Alto University and a Research Psychologist at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

I was an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina and earned my degree in Experimental Psychology in 1988. I received a Master's degree in 1991 in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University. In 1996, I received a PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California. I earned a Master's degree in Epidemiology from the Stanford University School of Medicine in 2009.

I have been married to Russell Ford since 2002 and we have two children.

I am here today not because I want to be. I am terrified. I am here because I believe it is my civic duty to tell you what happened to me while Brett Kavanaugh and I were in high school. I have described the events publicly before. I summarized them in my letter to Ranking Member Feinstein, and again in my letter to Chairman Grassley. I understand and appreciate the importance of your hearing from me directly about what happened to me and the impact it has had on my life and on my family.

I grew up in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. I attended the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland, from 1980 to 1984. Holton-Arms is an all-girls school that opened in 1901. During my time at the school, girls at Holton-Arms frequently met and became friendly with boys from all-boys schools in the area, including Landon School, Georgetown Prep, Gonzaga High

School, country clubs, and other places where kids and their families socialized. This is how I met Brett Kavanaugh, the boy who sexually assaulted me.

In my freshman and sophomore school years, when I was 14 and 15 years old, my group of friends intersected with Brett and his friends for a short period of time. I had been friendly with a classmate of Brett's for a short time during my freshman year, and it was through that connection that I attended a number of parties that Brett also attended. We did not know each other well, but I knew him and he knew me. In the summer of 1982, like most summers, I spent almost every day at the Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase, Maryland swimming and practicing diving.

One evening that summer, after a day of swimming at the club, I attended a small gathering at a house in the Chevy Chase/Bethesda area. There were four boys I remember being there: Brett Kavanaugh, Mark Judge, P.J. Smyth, and one other boy whose name I cannot recall. I remember my friend Leland Ingham attending. I do not remember all of the details of how that gathering came together, but like many that summer, it was almost surely a spur of the moment gathering. I truly wish I could provide detailed answers to all of the questions that have been and will be asked about how I got to the party, where it took place, and so forth. I don't have all the answers, and I don't remember as much as I would like to. But the details about that night that bring me here today are ones I will never forget. They have been seared into my memory and have haunted me episodically as an adult.

When I got to the small gathering, people were drinking beer in a small living room on the first floor of the house. I drank one beer that evening. Brett and Mark were visibly drunk. Early in the evening, I went up a narrow set of stairs leading from the living room to a second floor to use the bathroom. When I got to the top of the stairs, I was pushed from behind into a bedroom. I couldn't see who pushed me. Brett and Mark came into the bedroom and locked the door behind

them. There was music already playing in the bedroom. It was turned up louder by either Brett or Mark once we were in the room. I was pushed onto the bed and Brett got on top of me. He began running his hands over my body and grinding his hips into me. I yelled, hoping someone downstairs might hear me, and tried to get away from him, but his weight was heavy. Brett groped me and tried to take off my clothes. He had a hard time because he was so drunk, and because I was wearing a one-piece bathing suit under my clothes. I believed he was going to rape me. I tried to yell for help. When I did, Brett put his hand over my mouth to stop me from screaming. This was what terrified me the most, and has had the most lasting impact on my life. It was hard for me to breathe, and I thought that Brett was accidentally going to kill me. Both Brett and Mark were drunkenly laughing during the attack. They both seemed to be having a good time. Mark was urging Brett on, although at times he told Brett to stop. A couple of times I made eye contact with Mark and thought he might try to help me, but he did not.

During this assault, Mark came over and jumped on the bed twice while Brett was on top of me. The last time he did this, we toppled over and Brett was no longer on top of me. I was able to get up and run out of the room. Directly across from the bedroom was a small bathroom. I ran inside the bathroom and locked the door. I heard Brett and Mark leave the bedroom laughing and loudly walk down the narrow stairs, pin-balling off the walls on the way down. I waited and when I did not hear them come back up the stairs, I left the bathroom, ran down the stairs, through the living room, and left the house. I remember being on the street and feeling an enormous sense of relief that I had escaped from the house and that Brett and Mark were not coming after me.

Brett's assault on me drastically altered my life. For a very long time, I was too afraid and ashamed to tell anyone the details. I did not want to tell my parents that I, at age 15, was in a house without any parents present, drinking beer with boys. I tried to convince myself that because Brett

did not rape me, I should be able to move on and just pretend that it had never happened. Over the years, I told very few friends that I had this traumatic experience. I told my husband before we were married that I had experienced a sexual assault. I had never told the details to anyone until May 2012, during a couples counseling session. The reason this came up in counseling is that my husband and I had completed an extensive remodel of our home, and I insisted on a second front door, an idea that he and others disagreed with and could not understand. In explaining why I wanted to have a second front door, I described the assault in detail. I recall saying that the boy who assaulted me could someday be on the U.S. Supreme Court and spoke a bit about his background. My husband recalls that I named my attacker as Brett Kavanaugh.

After that May 2012 therapy session, I did my best to suppress memories of the assault because recounting the details caused me to relive the experience, and caused panic attacks and anxiety. Occasionally I would discuss the assault in individual therapy, but talking about it caused me to relive the trauma, so I tried not to think about it or discuss it. But over the years, I went through periods where I thought about Brett's attack. I confided in some close friends that I had an experience with sexual assault. Occasionally I stated that my assailant was a prominent lawyer or judge but I did not use his name. I do not recall each person I spoke to about Brett's assault, and some friends have reminded me of these conversations since the publication of *The Washington Post* story on September 16, 2018. But until July 2018, I had never named Mr. Kavanaugh as my attacker outside of therapy.

This all changed in early July 2018. I saw press reports stating that Brett Kavanaugh was on the "short list" of potential Supreme Court nominees. I thought it was my civic duty to relay the information I had about Mr. Kavanaugh's conduct so that those considering his potential nomination would know about the assault.

On July 6, 2018, I had a sense of urgency to relay the information to the Senate and the President as soon as possible before a nominee was selected. I called my congressional representative and let her receptionist know that someone on the President's shortlist had attacked me. I also sent a message to *The Washington Post's* confidential tip line. I did not use my name, but I provided the names of Brett Kavanaugh and Mark Judge. I stated that Mr. Kavanaugh had assaulted me in the 1980s in Maryland. This was an extremely hard thing for me to do, but I felt I couldn't NOT do it. Over the next two days, I told a couple of close friends on the beach in California that Mr. Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted me. I was conflicted about whether to speak out.

On July 9, 2018, I received a call from the office of Congresswoman Anna Eshoo after Mr. Kavanaugh had become the nominee. I met with her staff on July 11 and with her on July 13, describing the assault and discussing my fear about coming forward. Later, we discussed the possibility of sending a letter to Ranking Member Feinstein, who is one of my state's Senators, describing what occurred. My understanding is that Representative Eshoo's office delivered a copy of my letter to Senator Feinstein's office on July 30, 2018. The letter included my name, but requested that the letter be kept confidential.

My hope was that providing the information confidentially would be sufficient to allow the Senate to consider Mr. Kavanaugh's serious misconduct without having to make myself, my family, or anyone's family vulnerable to the personal attacks and invasions of privacy we have faced since my name became public. In a letter on August 31, 2018, Senator Feinstein wrote that she would not share the letter without my consent. I greatly appreciated this commitment. All sexual assault victims should be able to decide for themselves whether their private experience is made public.

As the hearing date got closer, I struggled with a terrible choice: Do I share the facts with the Senate and put myself and my family in the public spotlight? Or do I preserve our privacy and allow the Senate to make its decision on Mr. Kavanaugh's nomination without knowing the full truth about his past behavior?

I agonized daily with this decision throughout August and early September 2018. The sense of duty that motivated me to reach out confidentially to *The Washington Post*, Representative Eshoo's office, and Senator Feinstein's office was always there, but my fears of the consequences of speaking out started to increase.

During August 2018, the press reported that Mr. Kavanaugh's confirmation was virtually certain. His allies painted him as a champion of women's rights and empowerment. I believed that if I came forward, my voice would be drowned out by a chorus of powerful supporters. By the time of the confirmation hearings, I had resigned myself to remaining quiet and letting the Committee and the Senate make their decision without knowing what Mr. Kavanaugh had done to me.

Once the press started reporting on the existence of the letter I had sent to Senator Feinstein, I faced mounting pressure. Reporters appeared at my home and at my job demanding information about this letter, including in the presence of my graduate students. They called my boss and co-workers and left me many messages, making it clear that my name would inevitably be released to the media. I decided to speak out publicly to a journalist who had responded to the tip I had sent to *The Washington Post* and who had gained my trust. It was important to me to describe the details of the assault in my own words.

Since September 16, the date of *The Washington Post* story, I have experienced an outpouring of support from people in every state of this country. Thousands of people who have had their lives dramatically altered by sexual violence have reached out to share their own experiences with me and have thanked me for coming forward. We have received tremendous support from friends and our community.

At the same time, my greatest fears have been realized – and the reality has been far worse than what I expected. My family and I have been the target of constant harassment and death threats. I have been called the most vile and hateful names imaginable. These messages, while far fewer than the expressions of support, have been terrifying to receive and have rocked me to my core. People have posted my personal information on the internet. This has resulted in additional emails, calls, and threats. My family and I were forced to move out of our home. Since September 16, my family and I have been living in various secure locales, with guards. This past Tuesday evening, my work email account was hacked and messages were sent out supposedly recanting my description of the sexual assault.

Apart from the assault itself, these last couple of weeks have been the hardest of my life. I have had to relive my trauma in front of the entire world, and have seen my life picked apart by people on television, in the media, and in this body who have never met me or spoken with me. I have been accused of acting out of partisan political motives. Those who say that do not know me. I am a fiercely independent person and I am no one's pawn. My motivation in coming forward was to provide the facts about how Mr. Kavanaugh's actions have damaged my life, so that you can take that into serious consideration as you make your decision about how to proceed. It is not my responsibility to determine whether Mr. Kavanaugh deserves to sit on the Supreme Court. My responsibility is to tell the truth.

I understand that the Majority has hired a professional prosecutor to ask me some questions, and I am committed to doing my very best to answer them. At the same time, because the Committee Members will be judging my credibility, I hope to be able to engage directly with each of you.

At this point, I will do my best to answer your questions.