

15 Shocking Things We Learned From Lorena

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Lorena Bobbitt has been the punchline of jokes since 1993 when she cut off her husband's penis and threw it out the window of a moving car. In the '90s, she was painted as a hot blooded woman who attacked her husband because she wasn't satisfied sexually. Thanks to the new docuseries on Amazon Prime produced by Jordan Peele, *Lorena*, her story is being brought back into the spotlight to prove that that is not the case. Lorena was verbally, physically, and sexually abused by her husband.

The four hour-long episodes provide facts and interviews from both sides, allowing viewers to make their own judgments. Between John's treatment of Lorena and the media circus the case became, it can be a hard docuseries to watch. Here are some of the more shocking things about the Bobbitt story we learned from the show.

1. The media started using Lorena's name without her permission.

In sex crime cases, the names of the victims are supposed to be omitted in the media. However, someone caught a whiff that Lorena had been aligned with a media representative, Alan Hauge, and took that as implied consent to use her name. As far as she was aware, the media representative was there for her protection. Instead, the media used his presence to take advantage of her. All of a sudden, Lorena became the face of a national scandal rather than the anonymous victim of marital rape.

2. John's family encouraged his violent behavior.

One of the most painful moments in the first episode is John's brother, Todd Biro, threatening to kill Lorena on television. Throughout the series, we learn that John's brothers knew he was physically abusing Lorena and even encouraged the behavior. After the trial, while John's banking on his fame to carry him through life, he gets fired from a job at a club for drinking on the property and subsequently becoming verbally and physically abusive to everyone around him. John and his family then went to the home of Madam Suzette, the club's owner, and threatened her for firing him. She was so fearful of them that she ended up getting a restraining order against the family.

3. Locals in Manassas sold T-shirts capitalizing on the Bobbitt trials, and later, so did John.

Everyone wanted to capitalize on the Bobbitt trials, as news media from across the globe flocked to Manassas, VA. Locals created T-shirts that said "A cut above the rest" and boxers that said "Don't cut me short" to sell near the courthouse. During Lorena's trial, John even had T-shirts made with "Severed Part" on the front and "Love Hurts" on the back that he signed and sold. He was thirsting for money and fame from the onset.

4. Lorena was only allowed to testify about the 5 days prior to the incident at John's trial.

Lorena was suffering from battered woman syndrome and attacked John in what should be considered self-defense after years of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse that finally broke her. However, when John was on trial for marital rape, Lorena was not allowed to discuss the years of abuse she endured—only the five days leading up to the incident.

5. A juror criticized Lorena for wearing makeup some days of John's trial and not others.

Of course it was a man, Kenneth Hulse, who made the comment, claiming that Lorena changing her look on different days of the trial from simple housewife dresses to having her hair and makeup done made it "confusing" for him as to what she was trying to do. "It was crazy that she would kinda flip-flop back and forth. If you're gonna try to get your case won, you should stick to a theme and stay with it, because this way everybody's confused about what is she's really looking for here." Lorena was not on trial for whether or not she wore makeup or dresses. John was on trial for raping her. But for some reason, a man allowed Lorena's appearance to cloud his judgment during the trial.

6. Howard Stern raised \$190,000 for John and his penis before Lorena's trial.

John Wayne Bobbitt was a guest star on Howard Stern's New Year's Eve Pageant before Lorena's trial in January 1994. Stern turned the pageant into a telethon for John and his penis, complete with a giant penis meter onstage, and raised over \$190,000. So, before the trials were even over, John was soaking up all the money and fame he could, and celebrities were helping him do it.

7. Lorena was at risk of losing her American Dream.

Lorena moved to America from Venezuela after high school with the intention of becoming an American citizen. Despite John's verbal and physical abuse, Lorena was afraid to leave him as he threatened to have her deported if she did. On trial for maliciously wounding him, she had the chance to plead guilty and receive a shorter sentence, but pleading guilty to a felony would eliminate any chance she had at becoming an American citizen. Instead, she risked twenty years in prison.

8. "He liked to make girls squirm, liked to fuck 'em up the ass."

While many bits and pieces of the case surrounding the Bobbitts are shocking and disgusting, the details of the abuse Lorena endured are the worst.

Witnesses testified that Lorena was covered in bruises, a tearful testimony from Lorena described John raping her anally, and friends and neighbors confirmed John had said he "liked to make girls squirm, make 'em bleed, and liked to fuck 'em up the ass."

9. Camera crews filmed through the windows of Lorena's house.

As if having her name dragged through the mud internationally wasn't bad enough, the media physically would not leave Lorena alone. She couldn't escape them even in her own home. A scene in episode 3 shows her closing the curtains of all her windows, saying camera crews would film through them.

10. John forced Lorena to have an abortion.

Lorena loved John and wanted to start a family with him. She stopped taking birth control because she wanted to have his child. However, when she became pregnant, he forced her to have an abortion against her will.

11. Jurors doubted Lorena's medical assessment made by a female doctor.

Men involved in the trial refused to believe the female forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Susan Feister, who testified that Lorena had PTSD, panic disorder, and major depressive disorder. Dr. Feister did not believe that Lorena had control over her actions when she cut off John's penis, but male jurors and men giving their opinions on the case on television continued to assert that she acted out of anger and had no mental illnesses. It wasn't until the male state forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Miller Ryans, changed his medical assessment of Lorena to state that she showed symptoms of PTSD that the rest of the men involved in the case finally believed she could have been acting out of temporary insanity. Men took the word of another man at higher value than the word of a woman with the same credentials.

12. John capitalized on his fame by becoming a porn star.

While Lorena was reliving painful memories during her recovery in a mental hospital, John was loving everything about being in the spotlight. His penis had been the hot topic for so long that he decided to literally show it to the world and prove that it still worked by becoming a porn star. His first film was *John Wayne Bobbitt: Uncut*, and he later filmed his penis enlargement surgery for *Frankenpenis*. It seems like karma that the procedure was botched.

13. Misogyny in the media kept Lorena's abuse secondary to John's penis.

Female reporters wanted to cover the domestic violence angle of Lorena's case, but their male editors chose to portray her as crazy and violent instead, focusing on John and his penis because it was the more "exciting" angle. Essentially, men decided to keep Lorena's abuse hidden from the general public.

14. John faced many more domestic violence charges after Lorena.

While John was found not guilty of marital rape in his initial trial, other women have come forward since with domestic violence charges against him. Desiree, a woman from the club he worked at, talks in episode 4 about how after she ended their relationship, he beat her with anything he could find. He dangled her over a balcony by her legs, called her "his Lorena," and raped her for three days before she played dead and escaped him. He was found guilty of harassment in that case and finally spent some time in jail. His second wife, Joanna Ferrell, also filed charges against him numerous times, sending him in and out of jail for ten months, and prison for fifteen months.

15. John still writes letters to Lorena telling her he loves her.

"I cut off his penis. Leave me alone," Lorena said in episode 4 while reading the letters he's sent her. It's been 25 years since she cut off his penis and escaped his abuse, but after all this time he still claims he loves her and wants to be with her, and he's never stopped contacting her. Fortunately, Lorena is in a new happy and healthy marriage now, and has a young daughter. She's finally achieved her American Dream, and despite his persistent pleas, John Wayne Bobbitt will never be a part of it.

Lindsay Marshall

Lindsay's moved cross-country three times in the past five years, now a New Yorker but never sure if it's the last stop. She constantly chases stories to tell, whether she's following a band on tour, planning last-minute trips to Europe, or learning how to swing dance.



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