

# BLOOD AND THUNDER

Letters to the editor reflect the views of our readers and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan. Letters may be sent to Rm. 35 in the Student Union Building. Deadline: 1 pm on Tuesday. Usual maximum length: 300 words. Please include name, student number and phone number

## Accept nothing less

Dear Editor,

In a letter to *the Brunswickan* on October 16, 1992 Melynda Jarratt states "I'd like to see the university...make it part of their collective agreement that they will accept nothing less than Zero Tolerance when it comes to their staff and wife assault." I agree with Ms. Jarratt, by accepting professors who assault their wives, the university seems to be accepting the assault itself. I feel that Ms. Jarratt's Zero Tolerance should be taken one step further, not just to deal with wife assault, but to deal with acts such as sexual harassment on campus.

Last year in an article in *the Bruns* there was an idea put forward that there was going to be a list of professors which had committed crimes against women. I, myself, was very disappointed when I was told that this list did not exist. Any professor who tries to coerce a young woman into compromising her morals should also receive Zero Tolerance. As students we have no real power when it comes to academics, as I have been told by a few professors and have learned for myself; therefore, when a MUCH MORE EXPERIENCED and MUCH OLDER man in a position of authority says that this is the way things are done at UNB, it is usually accepted at face value.

I know from personal experience that there are professors with questionable reputations right here at UNB. And the most horrible thing is that these professors keep on doing what they are doing and they are getting away with it everyday. But, if we had a list that had the names of professors to be wary of either because they have been found guilty of assaulting their wives, or of sexually harassing students, or of any other horrendous crime against humanity, we would be prepared and maybe some naive young woman living away from home for the first time may be spared a hell of a lot of grief if she is given in her frosh kit a simple list of professors who may want her to "give her all" for a course.

I don't believe that a list would be a perfect solution and it may not even be a real solution at all, but I do believe that a list may prevent a few young women from experiencing a painful and humiliating experience. If such a list had been in existence three years ago, then, maybe today, I would not fear walking down certain hallowed halls in this educational facility.

Name withheld by request

## Not a conviction

Dear Editor:

This letter responds to the *Wimmin's Room* column by Valerie Kilfoil, published in the November 6th issue of your paper, and the letter two weeks earlier by Melynda Jarratt. Spouse abuse and child abuse are

wrong. However, inaccurate reporting results in injustice to all parties.

In my opinion, Dr. Esam Hussein does not deserve the harassment to which he has been subjected in the pages of your paper. He is not a convicted wife beater. I was in court and heard the testimony. It is time the public learns the truth.

On March 25, 1992, Dr. Hussein was granted a conditional discharge, not a conviction. Evidence at the trial showed that the "assault" was a single, open hand slap on the cheek, a slap which left no bruise. It is important to put this slap in context. Dr. Hussein testified that just prior to this incident, he had removed his six year old son from an emotionally and physically abusive encounter with Mrs. Hussein, and taken him downstairs in their house. The boy's mother followed them downstairs, screaming profanities. Dr. Hussein slapped his wife in an attempt to stop the abuse. Mrs. Hussein did not deny this evidence in court.

In an earlier hearing, the Court of Queen's Bench awarded Dr. Hussein joint custody of the couple's two children, although the assault charge was pending at the time. The parents are now legally separated, and they share parenting responsibilities. I believe that Dr. Hussein is a devoted and loving father.

The initial report of this incident, as published in *The Brunswickan*, was misleading and inaccurate, and resulted in a law suit from Dr. Hussein. This action was subsequently settled out of court, and your published apology should have ended the matter. The ensuing negative publicity evidenced by the writings of Ms. Kilfoil and Ms. Jarrett appear to be harassment.

Those who have read incomplete, misleading, and biased accounts deserve to know the truth. Perhaps some of the silent majority will voice an opinion to others in this regard.

Sincerely,  
Dwight G. Scott

## Resolve a few questions

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter in the hopes that some member(s) of *the Brunswickan's* readership can resolve a few questions that have been plaguing me lately.

Two weeks ago, the engineering faculty invited Valerie Kilfoil to participate on a committee organizing the memorial service for the Montreal Massacre. In my mind, inviting a member of UNB's *Wimmin's Collective* to participate on such a committee was a given fact; and the choice of Ms. Kilfoil - a long time activist against violence against women and one of the principle organisers of last year's memorial service - delighted me immensely; I have worked with Ms. Kilfoil in the past and know that her dedication to this cause and standards of work are second to none.

It was for these very reasons that

I was astonished by Ms. Kilfoil's subsequent removal from this committee; due to her article for the *Wimmin's Room* in Issue #8 of *the Brunswickan*. The reason given was that she might offend another one of the committee members - a member who was found guilty of spousal assault in March 1992, and had been named in Ms. Kilfoil's article. This is what I do not understand. Why would the engineering faculty remove a pro-activist of women's issues from a committee whose purpose is to organise a vigil in memory of the most violent of actions against women in this country's history in favour of a man who is guilty of assaulting his wife? Why is the committee so concerned with being sensitive to Hussein; did they ever think that his presence might have been offensive to Ms. Kilfoil and the purpose of the memorial service in general? What is the logic of inviting a perpetrator of violence against women to participate in the organization of an event such as the Montreal Massacre Memorial Service? (I personally have difficulty with such people holding influential positions such as professorships, but the University obviously does not share my views of zero tolerance).

Matters only became worse when Dr. Hussein launched legal actions against *the Brunswickan* and Ms. Kilfoil for the accusations of her aforementioned article based on the difference, in legal terms, of the words guilty and convicted. Dr. Hussein was found guilty of the charge of assault, but was given a conditional discharge - in *legalese* this is not the same as a conviction. However, the Oxford dictionary, the standard for journalism, defines convicted as *to be found guilty*; this is also the connotative use of the word - making the strength of Dr. Hussein's case feeble at best. The question immediately raised by the above explanation is: *Why are the courts awarding conditional discharges for spousal abuse?* After a few more inquiries, it seems that this is not uncommon in New Brunswick; appalling when you consider that stronger punishments are given out for pet abuse. How is this crisis of violence against women to be overcome if society - and universities, the supposed intellectual frontier of society - continue to condone such attitudes?

Consciously,  
Roy Nicholl

*Note: It was brought to my attention, after completing this letter, that Dr. Hussein has recently resigned from the committee organizing the memorial service for the Montreal Massacre. Although I am relieved somewhat by this welcomed resignation, as are many others I am sure, it still does not forego the need to question the initial appointment to that body.*

## Women's anger

Dear editor,  
"Women's anger, why is it so threatening?" This is the question I have

so often asked myself, especially after reading the various forms of responses to Valerie Kilfoil's article "Excuse Me Your Honor" in the November 13th *Brunswickan*. For myself, and others who are confronted with effects of rape, beating, sexual abuse, harassment and torture of women and children on a daily basis, either through our work or in our lives, we understand and applaud women's anger.

Why shouldn't we be angry when at least one in ten women is beaten by her husband or male partner (*Battered But Not Beaten*, 1987), when one in four women is sexually assaulted at some time in their lives (*Incidence of Rape and Sexual Assault in an Urban Canadian Population*, 1984), and when an average of 100 women are murdered by their partners every year (*Statistics Canada Juristat Bulletin*, 1991). These types of statistics are endless. We as members of a society try to deny this violence directed at women and children by attempting to silence women's anger - through direct violence, through threats of legal action, by cutting funding to women's groups, by publicly supporting convicted abusers because "he's always been nice to me", by calling those who have the courage to speak out "man haters", "militant", "hysterical" and so on.

Why should women remain silent about the abuses they suffer? Why shouldn't women name their abusers publicly? Why shouldn't rapists, wife abusers, abusers of children experience just a small portion of the humiliation and degradation that their victims suffer, sometimes all their lives? When will we as a society honor and respect those who refuse to perpetuate the cloak of silence which serves only to protect the abusers? Breaking the silence, expressing our anger at this abuse and the conspiracy of silence that surrounds it, is the important and necessary first step in eradicating this violence. It is also an important step in the healing process for victims.

Discounting, ignoring, ridiculing, and threatening will not quell women's anger. This anger is a cry for change, positive change - a world without violence against women and children. As the song goes: "We are gentle, angry people, and we are singing, singing for our lives".

Lorraine Whalley  
Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre

## Fuel to the fire

Dear Editor,

A concerned reader, I am appalled at the sensationalism behind some of the articles printed in recent publications may give *the Brunswickan* a larger following but the quality of the publication is right up there on the news stand with *The Enquirer* in my opinion.

Ifelt as though it would add "fuel to the fire" by writing a letter in support of Dr. Esam Hussein but I cannot stand by and listen to any more defaming remarks against this man. He is a kind and conscientious person. I worked as one of the

secretarial staff in three different offices where he was a professor and a secretary could not ask to have a kinder, more considerate person to work for. I know both he and his estranged wife, and they have both been a very charming couple at any social function I attended. This matter is now and should always be a domestic one and handled between themselves and their respective lawyers. No outside assistance is needed unless solicited by one or the other of them. If Mrs. Hussein wants to shout and scream injustice, let her be the one to do so. I don't believe either of them (as they are both very well educated people) needs a spokesperson. Let this matter rest, please.

My suggestion to these writers is that they concentrate more of their energy on the more positive areas of this subject, such as helping people who need their support, and lending strength to those who need it, not adding fuel to a fire which should be allowed to burn out.

Ann MacNeil

## Response to Kilfoil

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to "The *Wimmin's Room*" (6 November 1992) written by Valerie Kilfoil.

Dear Ms. Kilfoil,

As a Catholic woman who likes and respects Tom Fish, and one who is deeply committed to my faith, I consider your malicious attacks on both Tom and Catholicism offensive. Your column is ostensibly concerned with the notion of justice, but might I suggest that your definition of that ideal is at best limited, at worst, destructive.

What precisely would you and your women's collective consider "just" punishment for Tom? Perhaps you would enjoy publicly stoning him? Maybe you think that we as a university should attach him to the cross atop Martin Hall and burn him? Perchance you'd like him stuffed and mounted, displayed in a glass case in your meeting room?

Despite the simplistic and increasingly stale feminist dismissal of Catholicism and Catholic institutions as bastions of oppression, and of all people associated with either as mindless supporters of injustice, we are quite other. Unlike your collective, Catholicism maintains the essential dignity of every person - male and female. We are a people who recognize, as well, the limitations of persons and institutions. But we do not conclude, as you seem to, that those limitations alone define either.

Tom Fish's major fault seems to be that he is human. We, like Tom, all lose control on occasion. But it is certainly unjust to conclude that a single incident represents all that there is in the person who is Tom Fish. Do you wish to be known only for the worst thing that you have ever done in your lifetime? Do any of us either wish or expect that?

It is equally absurd to suggest that Catholicism, first and foremost,

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