

# Would you walk home in the dark???

"Hogwash" shouted the sheriff as he peered through his reflective sunglasses at the sweet young thing sent over by the student newspaper to interview him. "None of the fine upstanding young men on this here campus would even think of harming even a hair of your sweet little head."

"Surely" said the sweet young thing from the student newspaper. "the possibility of sexual assault exists when two thousand girls find it necessary to cross the campus (at least some time in their university careers) in dark hallways, late at night."

"Hogwash" shouted the sheriff at again. "Why there's no data to suggest that there are any attacks at all!" "If you want action, you need data." "What is needed," continued the sheriff "is the elimination of streetlights on campus, except, of course, where there was a danger of damage to university property by vandals." "If the situation is as bad as that," replied the editor of your paper, "the sheriff by this time would be quite red around the gills, then my boys could get a handle on this rape business by hearing the screams in the dark." "Then maybe we could do something."

No community is immune from the fears and prejudices of society in general. So it is with the university community on this campus. You would be hard pressed to find any woman who lives or studies on this campus who felt perfectly safe walking at night. Most admit to a fear, but temper it with reasonable care as to where they walk, when, and with whom. The fears and prejudices of our society, like it or not, allow the proving of sexual assault to be very difficult. The female is believed, commonly, to have incited it. The female is inured with the idea that to 'tell' is almost as bad as the assault.

The problem of assaults on campus, especially sexual assaults has been kicked around every year for some time. Most irrationally scream "more lights" or "security patrols". It is most often true that simple solutions

are the least effective. "More lights" is a rather vague call, and would involve assessing economic priorities. In a practical sense, it is necessary to ensure that there is an adequate amount of lighting for the accepted walkways on campus. It is equally important to ensure that these lights are kept fully operational.

An effective solution would involve a greater cooperation between campus security and the people affected. A change in attitude. This involves a change in the attitude of Chief Williamson and his trusty band. The security force on this campus should be trained, prepared, and willing to deal with reports of assaults, sexual and otherwise, on this campus. Prepared and trained to help people scared and hurt contact the authorities and counselling help. Prepared to

keep adequate records of such incidents to direct the way to a course of action which would reduce their number.

The most important 'change in attitude' required is from the women, and perhaps some men. If attacked or annoyed in any serious way, please take the time to call security. They will have to listen. Even if you don't want to give your name, tell them where the incident happened and any details that seem pertinent. If the incident is serious, seek the right help. A prosecution or two would make it quite clear that assault of any kind is not a prank here on this campus, and sexual assault will happen if there is no punishment. It is possible that the dark pathways of UNB are regarded as 'safe ground' by would be assaulters of women. Let us try and change that!

