

Blood & Thunder ... continued

YAQZAN 4

Dear Editor:

Although usually not one to set pen to paper the disturbing content of Professor Yaqzan's November 5 article has prompted me to do so. The underlying theme of the article would appear to be that women exist on this earth for the sole convenience of men. Though never one to preach, in my opinion this is not the case.

Professor Yaqzan apparently feels that money is adequate compensation for rape. Women do not become prostitutes based on the frequency of their past sexual experiences. Rape is a crime. The reasoning that rape is a mere "inconvenience" to women is to me not only demented but frightening. Furthermore, to call the pill an added security which will subsequently relieve the "sense of guilt" associated with rape is offensive.

I find it extremely disturbing that he reports that all my associations with women are designed with one inevitable purpose in mind—to get them into bed at whatever the cost. He is mistaken. I sincerely object to having this assumption made about my nature. As is seen far too often this is yet another example of society viewing women as what it wants them to be, not for who they really are.

Mark Cherrington

YAQZAN 5

Dear Editor:

This is in regards to Matin Yaqzan's article on "Rape" Past and Present. Your article, sir, presented a very twisted version of history and it is time to take your blinders off and get some real facts. You are correct in saying that the term "rape" has now taken on a broader spectrum, however, you are wrong in saying that rape was rare before the creation of the pill, women were taught in those days that it was there (sic) fault. Women are now speaking out, knowing that they are the keepers of their bodies and the only ones with rightful control.

Your article tries to justify poor horny males who think with the wrong head and do not feel they are doing anything wrong. I am a firm believer in the freedom of speech, but not when it is offensive to others, and your article was offensive to both men and women. Unfortunately, it is a person like yourself who gives men a bad reputation. Your attitude is backwards and I was confused as to what century you thought we were in. My suggestion is that you do some reading or talk to victims and you will discover that it does not matter how many times a person has had sex, the pain is still there. Any women OR man who has been assaulted can tell you that.

A monetary compensation for a moment of her "inconvenience or discomfort" is preposterous. It is true that women must be made

aware of what can happen, but for that to work, communication between the sexes is vital.

You are stuck on the notion that women are just vessels for men to fuck. You also mention co-ed residences "may be helpful, but they do not provide an opportunity for sexual gratification for all male students, and therefore the reason and need for the so called "date rape". Maybe you should consider applying for Dean of Residence because Mary Lou Stirling certainly has not considered your profound theories

on the evolution of man and his infinite libido. However, I am sure not too many would go for it, I mean how many parents would send their daughters to a harem? I find your blunt attitude toward abortion as being just as relieving as taking a good shit and carrying on to be appalling. To quote Mark Twain, "get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please". In your case you were just the opposite.

Cheryl McLean

YAQZAN 6

Dear Editor:

In response to Matin Yaqzan's article, in the November 5th Brunswickan, I must say that I am glad that I read Karen Burgess' editorial before hand. The editor's article, entitled "Textual Correctness," set the tone for Yaqzan's article:

"Sometimes to offend is the only way one can rouse a lethargic campus into semi-consciousness." Well, Karen, I'm offended, but certainly not with you.

In Mr. Yaqzan's article, "Opinion: 'Rape' Past and Present," it is his opinion that "a young boy and a young girl were chaperoned in the past for the OBVIOUS REASON THAT A BOY COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE A MASTER OF HIS SEXUAL IMPULSES" [my capitalization]. What a cop-out. It is precisely this whiny atti-

OPINION: DATE RAPE IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE

BY ROBIN L. ARMSTRONG,
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Last week's opinion column by mathematics professor Matin Yaqzan expresses a personal view held by an individual. Neither I, personally, nor the University, institutionally, share Prof. Yaqzan's perspective on date rape.

Rape is not something to be measured by degree. It is reprehensible in any form. For the University of New Brunswick, "date rape," "acquaintance rape," "unwanted sexual experiences" are matters of serious concern and ongoing attention.

In its Mission Statement, the University explicitly commits itself to providing "an environment conducive to the development of the whole person." We would be doing a disservice not only to the women attending UNB but also the men if we were to accept date rape as an inevitable and necessary outcome of contemporary life. We would be betraying our humanitarian and philosophical roots if we did not act to change this offensive behaviour.

Date rape is a breach of trust, an act of aggression against the victim, and an affront to human dignity. Its consequences are lasting and sometimes irreversible. The perpetrator, usually male, is responsible for his behaviour because as a human being he has reason and intelligence. He can and must be expected "to be a master of his sexual impulses."

It is simply wrong that men's urges cannot be controlled, that women who accept an invitation to a man's room (or invite him to her room, for that matter) "must consider it an invitation for sexual intercourse," or that co-educational residences provide an "opportunity for sexual gratification." (In fact, there is statistically less incidence of anti-social behaviour in residences where both sexes interact co-operatively.)

As an educational institution, we have taken a number of steps—proactive and sometimes unprecedented steps—to address date rape and the issues of sexism and gender bias that underlie it.

UNB was among the first Canadian universities to implement a sexual harassment policy in 1983. This policy is designed to protect all faculty, staff and students from all objectionable and disrespectful conduct, including conduct that "creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment." This includes date rape.

UNB is one of only a handful of Canadian universities that have made the effort to survey its students to determine the incidence of unwanted sexual experiences. That study, conducted in 1991-92, showed—thankfully—that more than 70 per cent of those responding had not had any such experiences.

We cannot overlook, however, that there were 28.6 per cent who reported some kind of unwanted sexual activities in which they had been forced to participate. This finding is consistent with the record at other North American universities. Obviously there is a need—an urgent need—to deal with this situation. Through various educational and awareness programs, with the support and participation of the Orientation Committee and the Student Union, we are doing just that. In addition, Counselling Services and our network of sexual harassment advisors and facilitators stand ready to help on an individual basis. All of our official statements make it clear: date rape is never acceptable.

Prof. Yaqzan presented his personal views in professional guise. Writing as a professor in a university publication he implied an authority that was neither appropriate nor real. It is true that freedom of speech is inherent in a democratic society. But free speech does not equal irresponsible speech.

It is unfortunate that his ideas have captured headlines across the country and linked UNB's name with views that are both objectionable and misinformed. It behooves all of us in this University community who think differently to express our thoughts just as emphatically, and to let the rest of Canada know: date rape is never acceptable.

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