

editorial opinion

The circle of silence

Often we read a headline, sigh about the news and read on. The day begins and we remove ourselves from the news to get on with what we have to do.

But what do these headlines tell us? What subconscious thoughts or fears do they place in our hearts and minds?

"How a rape victim became a prisoner for her silence" was the top headline in the April 8 edition of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. It was followed by a detailed account of a woman who was raped by acquaintances, became terrified about testifying and was eventually jailed for a week because she refused to appear in court.

And while the story may seem like just one woman's horror story in dealing with the Philadelphia police, it shouldn't.

It brings forth a problem that is very near to Penn State — the problem of acquaintance rape and the trauma victims face in deciding whether to testify.

Imagine someone who you know or trust violently reducing you to an object for forcing sexual intercourse on you. Now imagine

being thrown in jail after being victimized like this.

Take away any of the police's technical rights to put the Philadelphia woman in jail and look at the situation as a rape victim would. She was afraid to testify and because of this fear she was put in jail.

Why would a rape victim fear testifying against someone he or she knew?

Loneliness, betrayal and terror could inhibit the reporting of any rape.

On a college campus, as anywhere else, acquaintance rapes, unfortunately, are likely to go unreported. Perhaps this is due to the victim's confusion, fear or misplaced guilt.

But the real root of the problem probably arises from the unfounded idea that a rape victim could somehow be responsible for a rape.

This attitude is magnified when the rape occurs between two people who know each other.

After all, maybe the rapist was invited into the room, was on a date with the victim, or casually met the victim in a bar or at a party.

Yes, the victim might have been in a compromising situation.

But because circumstances were such, victims have been made to feel as if they were responsible. Through this twisted logic, some victims have accepted the idea that they somehow "asked for" or initiated the attack when, in fact, they have not.

Rape starts where consent stops. Period.

Rape is an attack on a person's body. In acquaintance rape, it is also an attack on a person's trust in friendship and relationships.

The victim of an acquaintance rape is not to be blamed. Instead we must be especially sensitive to the fears and needs of this person.

Like any survivor of a rape, the acquaintance rape victim might suffer a period of stress, fear and paranoia. The victim might feel ashamed, dirty or very insecure.

At these times, it is essential for all who come in contact with the victim, whether it is the police or a concerned friend, to understand these emotional changes and offer accusation-free support.

We must be sensitive to the victim's needs and we must understand the implications of incidents similar to the one in Philadelphia.

When one victim is blamed for a rape, it discourages other victims from reporting and the silence and fear that surround acquaintance rape will only widen.

This circle of silence is what we must combat. As individuals, we can help by supporting and understanding victims. We must encourage them to report a rape experience and to seek help in dealing with the ordeal of being raped.

And as a society we must call for another hard look at rape laws and police sensitivity in dealing with the victim.

The fight against rape is not a hopeless struggle. In recent years, we have made progress in combating not only the rapist but the attitudes in society which allow for rape.

But the battle has not been won. As long as gross insensitivities occur like the one in Philadelphia, we must continue to work to break the silence surrounding acquaintance rape.

reader opinion

Solutions

Over Easter weekend we attended a film shown by the Palestinian Students Organization which presented the Palestinian viewpoint of the situation in Israel.

We were two of the five non-Arabic attendees; it is unfortunate that there is so little interest in this matter. Most would argue that the problem in the Middle East is that the Arabs will not let the Jews live in peace, therefore any consequences which negatively affect the Palestinians are well deserved.

Why should we worry about the Palestinians? If for no other reason, it is in our own best interest! As long as Palestinians are forced to live in squalor as second-class citizens, after having been driven from land that their parents and grandparents once owned, terrorist attacks against Jews and Americans will continue.

Why shouldn't the typical Palestinian believe that any other way will produce change? If the United States unconditionally sends massive amounts of aid to Israel in spite of Israeli violations of basic human rights in Palestine, Americans will continue to be hated by the Arab world.

No one can pretend that there is an easy solution to the Middle-East problem. However, by ignoring the Palestinian outlook, we are perpetuating that crisis.

Tina Rendiero, graduate-sport psychology
Charlotte Rendiero, junior-business April 7

Dangerous ramifications

We are writing in response to Angela Vietto's column in the April 3 edition of *The Daily Collegian*. The tragic story of the rape is certainly heart-rendering. However, even Vietto admits that the rape of her friend (or others) cannot be directly traced to pornography.

Vietto makes the astounding statement that even though "there is no conclusive evidence that pornography leads to sex crimes," it's the possibility that matters. And because of the "so-called" possibility pornography should be banned. Vietto's brand of censorship would have a chilling effect on freedom of expression.

Luckily, the First Amendment does not permit censorship of materials because of the mere possibility of danger. Many court decisions uphold this point of view. The implementation of Vietto's opinion would open a Pandora's Box of unreasonable censorship. Every detective show, horror movie and war movie would be banned because of the chance that they may encourage real life violations.

It is truly shocking that a journalist such as Vietto would fail to understand the dangerous ramifications of her viewpoint.

Joel Fishbein, senior-accounting
Lee Greenfield, senior-business logistics April 11

the Collegian

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opinions

Shock

It was with a sense of shock, but unfortunately not surprise that I read of the recent "Shantytown Party" at the Sigma Pi fraternity. I am sure that I possess as much of a sense of humor as most people, and certainly more than many of my students, but I fall to see the humor in making a mockery of the 24 million Black South Africans who must tolerate the daily abuse of living in real shantytowns and sub-human conditions.

Whatever the members of Sigma Pi may feel about the Penn State students who have erected the symbolic shantytown on campus, their use of a symbol which represents oppression to Blacks is yet more evidence of the callous insensitivity to follow inhabitants of this global village which is all too common at Penn State.

Those fraternity members who claim that the Shantytown Party was the act of a few who do not represent the opinion of the majority of the members of Sigma Pi are ignoring the fact that this party took place at the fraternity house; therefore under the aegis, the fraternity as a whole.

In cases of rape or of alcohol-related accidents, fraternities as a whole are responsible, even though individuals may be liable initially.

In this case, the fraternity as a whole is guilty at best of an outstanding lack of taste; at worst, of a none-too-latent racism which, as I have unfortunately come to realize, is another common feature of Penn State.

Gail Corrington
Assistant Professor
Classes and Religious Studies

Thanks

With the close of the Undergraduate Student Government presidential elections, we, as concerned and interested students of Penn State University, would like to congratulate all the candidates on their persistent efforts throughout the past few weeks.

We would also like to thank the students of Hastings, Stone, Snyder and Stuart halls for their help and cooperation in our attempts to have a polling place put in Findlay Dining Hall.

We felt that one-and-a-half miles was too far a distance and too much of a hassle to travel in order for the four residence halls in College Township to vote.

After consulting with Matt Baker and Sue Sturgis, we decided that the best solution would be to draw up a petition with the signatures of registered voters in these four dormitories, thus showing the significance of this problem.

We managed to collect 122 names, and in the process, we were even able to register 60 new student voters.

This was the first step in reaching our goal and we hope that in the near future more students will take an active part in such University-related activities, for we found it to be very satisfying and rewarding. We cannot stress enough the importance of student involvement and interaction.

Once again, we would like to thank those students who aided us and would like to thank all the candidates.

Kenneth Hong
freshman-engineering
Mark Green
freshman-liberal arts

The alien:

An excursion in The Land of a Bar on Every Corner where the residents can't agree to fight racism in a non-racist way

Day One.
I don't believe this. I was in the 16th second of transport home to X-14 (it's only a 94 second trip) when my transmission beam was broken. I am stranded here on this backwoods planet called Earth. I certainly hope Transmit Control finds me soon.

Day Two.
I have assumed the appearance of a male human, assuming from their generally larger size (and the strutting walk of some of them) that they are the dominant sex.

As yet, I am unsure of the name of this particular area. It might be Penn State, Happy Valley, State College, University Park, or The Land of a Bar on Every Corner. Since there seems to be several of these drinking establishments on every block and the inhabitants of the community frequent them day-in and day-out, I assume that this is the name of the area.

Day Three.
The customs of the natives here at The Land of a Bar on Every Corner are fascinating. Today I observed a group of scantily clad females protrating themselves on the ground. As I watched, I noticed their skin become slightly darker. The female who darkened the most was congratulated and envied by the others.

Apparently, dark skin is in some way a valuable asset here.

Day Four.
Today is Friday, the beginning of a weekly religious festival which the local inhabitants hold. I hope to find a temple to go to and observe the festivities.

Day Five.
I certainly hope Transmit Control finds me soon. This place is confusing and barbaric.



Angela Vietto

Last night, I located a temple. It was a large, ornate building with some kind of large lettering on the front. The sounds of primitive electronic music and joyous celebration emanated from it.

I observed a herd of females enter the temple and attempted to follow them. After a long altercation with a male at the door, I came to understand that females have free access to the temples and, although they are run by males, only males who help to run the temple or are "on the guest list" (whatever that means) are permitted to enter.

I realize now that I must have been in error; females must be the dominant sex. However, this religious system, based on a form of sexual discrimination, repulses me.

(Apparently these creatures use their mouths both for eating and excretion. I saw several of them spewing waste out of their mouths in front of the temple as I left. Barbaric.)

Day Seven.
I've been here a week too long now. Yesterday I decided to approach what I thought must be one of their elite — a female with very dark skin — hoping that, if she knew my situation, she might be able to help me. What a mistake that was!

After I convinced her I was an alien, I asked her how she had become so dark. She laughed and told me she was born that way. I said I supposed she must be a member of a

truly privileged group, but she said this was not true and began to talk to me about something she called the "races." Those born dark, like her, are called Blacks, and those born light are called Whites. She said that many Whites look down on Blacks.

This confused me greatly — my circuitry was all aflutter. I told her about the women I had seen trying to become darker. She said that that was a tan and not the same as being black.

Then she told me about something called racism. This is an insane practice these humans have in which the members of one race regard members of another race as inferior and attempt to exclude them from parts of society. Then she told me about a group called the Black Student Coalition Against Racism. I knew there was nothing wrong with my circuits — this just didn't make sense.

I tried to explain the contradiction to her — how could something exclude a race and yet fight against racism?

It took a while, but she finally saw my point. She asked me what I thought could be done and I gave her the benefit of my decidedly superior intelligence — just drop the word "black" and make it a Student Coalition Against Racism.

Unfortunately, it seems people have already made this suggestion, but it hasn't been taken. I didn't know what to say then, except that maybe the group had not heard the suggestion or that it did not understand that limiting a fight against racism to one race was contradictory.

These humans are truly pathetic. The whole idea of racism is so stupid to begin with, and those who have insight enough to fight it can't even agree to fight it in a non-racist way. Just thinking about it makes me tired.

I certainly hope Transmit Control finds me soon.

Angela Vietto is a freshman majoring in English and a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*. Her columns appear every other Monday.



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Thank goodness:

A collection of news stories and other items gathered in the spirit of near-graduation galas

I am at a very dangerous point in my quest for a college degree. Since I have no tests or papers due until final exam week, I am forced to resort to any means to keep myself from senility and self-consumption.

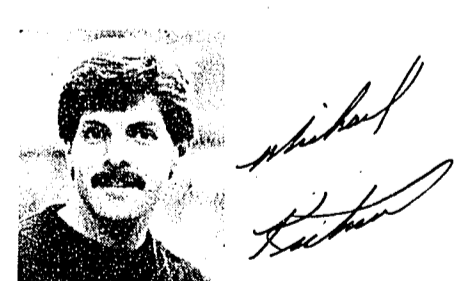
Thank goodness my responsibilities as a journalist will keep me from succumbing to good-spirited, springtime traditions. But let's not get too serious. In the spirit of near-graduation galas, I have gathered a collection of news stories and other items of interest from the past few months that seem appropriate for a semester almost over.

Campus briefs:

No kneeling, please.
Right-wing conservatives flocked to the HUB in March to see a four-foot high portrait of President Reagan's former National Security Advisor Robert McFarland hanging among other paintings.

To not know what semester you are in is to not care how long you are here for.
I met a student here at the University who knows his major but doesn't know what semester he is in.

Morality costs. Would you like a receipt?
Remember the University student who believes there to be some relationship between his stolen bikes and the night-time police protection afforded the shantytown dwellers.



Lessons in sensitivity training.

On Oct. 16, 1985, the Undergraduate Student Government Senate rules to recommend full divestiture.

On Oct. 17, 1985, 5,000 University students sign a petition favoring divestment.

On Jan. 28, 1986, the Black Student Coalition Against Racism decides to obstruct minority recruitment efforts.

On March 2, 1986, about 50 faculty and staff members stage a fast on the steps of Old Main protesting University investments.

On March 10, 1986, shantytowns are erected to protest University investments.

On March 26, 1986, for the second time in one week pro-divestment students stage a sit-in in the University administrative offices.

Since pro-divestment in front of Old Main

began in 1984, University investments in companies conducting business in South Africa have increased \$1.8 million.

In the "news you can't use" department: Who said music isn't art?

Remember when the U.S. Senate held hearings concerning warning labels on records with "indecent" lyrics? Here's a sample of some of the lyrics read aloud in the Senate chambers: "Bend up and smell my anal vapor, your face is my toilet paper."

Oh my God, No!

Once again stating its claim as the Sunday comics of journalism, the USA Today graced its Challenger disaster issue with this most eloquently expressed quotation by Nancy Reagan.

That would be . . . you, right?
A Piedmont Airlines pilot mistakenly flew into the wrong airport near Augusta, Georgia. "Needless to say, someone's embarrassed," said a spokesman.

Mild, my ass.
A "mild laxative" is on the market, appropriately named Evacuagen.

In the consumer abuse department: They don't make warnings like they used to.

New Surgeon General's warning: Quit-

ting smoking now greatly reduces serious health risks.

Thank goodness
We're seeing less and less of Mary Lou Retton these days.

It was scarier than Halloween II:

I found a package of cream cheese in the back of the refrigerator that was bought before Spring Break.

Don't women ever get them?

Why do men always do hemorrhoid commercials?

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Bill Lyon, a Philadelphia columnist on the difference between scientists and politicians: "Scientists practice on guinea pigs."

How many even remember what it was?

How many people have stuck to their New Year's resolution?

Sign seen recently:
Your resume is fine. It's your life that needs to be changed.

Will the real . . .
Time magazine: Gaddafi: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*; Khaddafi: *The New York Times*; Qaddafi.

"Tomorrow's garbage."
Cybil Shephard's accurate characterization of a newspaper on a recent episode of *Moonlighting*.

Next thing you know the Easter bunny will be pregnant.

My Christmas vacation yielded good news and bad news. The good news is that Santa Claus exists. The bad news is that he drives a 1980 Ford Falcon and works outside Gimbo's in Philadelphia.

In the "news to abuse" department:

Two of them were overheard arguing, "Tastes great. No, less tumors."

A study at the University of Illinois found beer-drinking rats developed fewer tumors than those drinking only tap water.

I hear it would have been very short.

After a record-breaking season of 104 losses, the Pittsburgh Pirates will not be releasing a 1985 highlights film.

I know just how you feel.

The owner of the Baltimore Orioles commenting on his guest for opening day, President Reagan: "I'm glad he came, but every time we lose we lose."

For an extra buck they'll also juggle donut holes.

A Florida businessman has opened a donut shop with a unique twist: topest waitresses.

Michael Kutner is a senior majoring in finance and a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*. His column appears every Monday.

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