



**SANTA BARBARA RAPE CRISIS CENTER
CENTRO CONTRA LA VIOLACION SEXUAL**

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RAPE AND PRIVILEGE: THE DUKE RAPE CASE (from *Men Can Stop Rape*)

Working nationally to empower young men to be allies in ending men's violence against women, we are frequently asked about the Duke rape case. The case should by now be familiar – an African American exotic dancer has injuries consistent with having been raped and sodomized after working a party put on by white members of the elite Duke University Lacrosse Team. The intersections of race, class and gender oppression in our society have been discussed from the very beginning. The arrest of a 3rd suspect, David Evans, and his response to the arrest, has made these discussions even more visible. In a short statement on Monday, the headmaster of the \$25,000/year private high school that Evans attended in Bethesda, Md. said "The allegations coming from Durham today are inconsistent with the character of the young man who attended our school." This statement, not just in content but its place of origin as well, must have been chosen carefully by Evan's defense, and has been repeated ad nauseam by the mainstream press. By implication they are saying – "wealthy white men that get good grades, play sports, and dress and act respectfully don't commit such acts of violence." The opposite is in fact the norm in our society.

As an organization we don't believe it is important to make a statement about the guilt or innocence of the Duke Lacrosse Team players. It doesn't matter to our work – whether or not rape occurred at Duke, it frequently happens on campuses around the country. Almost all of us have survivors of sexual assault in our lives. We have certainly all witnessed the disrespect and dehumanization of women, and men that don't fit into gender stereotypes, on T.V., on the playing field, in the office and in our homes. It may be seemingly benine commentary, but it establishes a hierarchy that leads to physical violence.

So yes – this case is being dealt with drastically differently because of the Whiteness of the men accused and because the woman accusing is a woman of color. Yes - there is debate about the DNA results, and the lacrosse players claim innocence. But by focusing on this acute incident we should only hope to illuminate the chronic reality of rape and racism in our culture. From here we can talk about what all men can do, as allies, to end men's violence against women, and to work for equity and justice.

MEDIA PUT ACCUSER ON TRIAL IN DUKE RAPE CASE (excerpts From *National Organization for Women's Newsletter*)

The Duke University rape case has consumed much media ink and airtime, and the portrayal of the woman involved has alarmed many. So the story goes, on March 14, members of the Duke men's lacrosse team hired two exotic dancers for a private party. The two dancers—both women—who didn't know each other prior to that day, say they were subjected to racial and misogynist slurs. One of the women, who reports being attacked in a bathroom during a period when (both women say) the dancers were separated from one another, accused three men of raping and assaulting her. The three men, all members of the prestigious school's lacrosse team, have been indicted on charges of rape, sexual offense and kidnapping.

Analyzing or commenting on the legal strengths or merits of any case at this stage would be difficult, but what's not hard, and what merits close scrutiny is the media's portrayal of the victim. NOW's analysis of

the television and print media's portrayal (thus far) of the woman who reported being raped concluded disturbing results. The print media, for the most part, have been fairer than television in their portrayal of the woman. Certain television media, particularly cable news programs, have perpetuated blatantly negative views of the accuser. We observed three common themes in the TV coverage: promoting racist and sexist stereotypes; dismissing the seriousness of rape while belittling survivors; and treating the case merely as entertainment.

Both of the dancers are women of color, and all three of the defendants are white; this fact, combined with reports of racial slurs hurled at the women on the night of the incident, add a racial element to the case that the media find irresistible. The terminology used by the media to describe the accuser has reinforced the old stereotype of African American women as hypersexual—including the constant use of the word "stripper" to describe the woman (when she could have as easily been described as "student" or "mother") and even epithets like Rush Limbaugh's use of the word "ho." The decision to refer to the woman solely as a "stripper" and nothing else perpetuates the untruth that a black woman can be nothing but a sexual object. In this case, the woman is also a mother, a student at North Carolina Central University, and a former military member. Furthermore, despite the fact that one of the accused men had been arrested on assault charges just months before the Duke incident, his prior acts didn't seem to attach any stigma or implications as to his character or possible guilt.

The attitude of some television media toward the woman also has perpetuated stereotypes of exotic dancers. On Fox's *Hannity & Colmes* on April 20, 2006, this unsympathetic attitude was evident when Sean Hannity summarized guest Ann Coulter's article entitled "Lie Down with Strippers, Wake Up with Pleas." Hannity said, "If you're a woman who undresses before strangers, you're saying in this piece: Expect trouble in your life." This attitude places blame on the woman, implying that she must have known that violence would come with the territory, and therefore, was asking for it. The show appears to condone violence against her.

Perhaps even more disturbing is how this case has been turned into nothing more than a "movie of the week." On an April 20 episode of CNN's *Showbiz Tonight*, guest Lida Rodriguez-Taseff said of the case, "It's a little bit of *CSI: Miami* meets *Wild On* meets Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I have a Dream' speech playing in the background." By discussing the case in such a way, the woman becomes merely a character in a story. The inhumanity of rape is stripped away as the story becomes fictional. Another guest on the same show, Howard Kurtz, said, "Television loves a melodrama, and this is shaping up to be a first class one." By turning a rape case into a story, the reality of rape, and the threat it poses for women, is removed. Rape becomes an isolated incident in television movies that seems like it can't happen to any woman—a misleading and dangerous message to send an audience.

Sadly, this case and the media's response are all too familiar. The insensitive portrayal of the women involved is another way to keep rape survivors and women silent. Since this case will continue to be covered in the media, NOW is concerned that the same three harmful themes will be reinforced again and again. NOW encourages all women's rights supporters to watch the media, both local and national and urges readers and viewers to write letters to the editors or call their news stations. By speaking out against reckless and insensitive rhetoric, activists can help create a less hostile environment for women and rape survivors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE HELP US MOVE!

As you may have heard, SBRCC is making the move to our new location: 433 E. Cañón Perdido. Our offices are closed for packing, cleaning and moving the week of July 3rd – July 7th. Of course the hotline continues to be operational.

We would love to see you at 111 N. Milpas before we move and could use some help packing up - especially Friday July 7th and Friday July 14th. On Friday July 14th, we will have a dumpster and will need volunteers to help throw out anything we are not taking to the new location - refreshments will be provided! Please call 963-6832 x 22 to RSVP to Ofelia and let us know you are coming to help out.

Please also save the date for a staff/volunteer housewarming on July 21st from 4:00 pm - 6:30 pm. See you there!

MONTHLY ADVOCATE MEETING – MONDAY, JULY 17TH AT 6 PM

The meeting will be held at our new location and it was rescheduled due to the move. The presenter for the meeting will be Marcelino from 211/Helpline. The meeting will be from 6-8 p.m. and Marcelino will be presenting during the first hour. I hope to see you there. Thank you for your patience during this time.

JULY OFFICE CLOSURE

SBRCC's office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4th, 2006 in observance of Independence Day. Of course, the 24-hour hotline will still be operational throughout the holiday.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES – MESSAGE FROM HEATHER

For the past several months, I have been actively searching for new job opportunities in the Santa Barbara area to give me a much-needed break from crisis work. At the beginning of June, the American Cancer Society offered me a position as the Patient Support and Training Manager for the Gold Coast, and I have accepted their offer. My last day at SBRCC was Friday, June 23, and my feelings about leaving such a dynamic, socially progressive organization are still bittersweet. It's great to work without a pager attached to my hip and not to have to combat so many victim-blaming myths on a daily basis. Keep in mind, however, that I miss all of you terribly. I miss the trainings; I miss lending a supportive ear so that you can process a tough crisis call; I miss being a part of an openly woman-friendly organization. I have learned so much about myself from interacting with, training, and getting to know all of you, and I truly believe that I am a better person because of you. Thank you for helping me to grow, challenging me to learn, and reassuring me that feminism is a positive and powerful movement that continues to grow bigger and stronger every day. You are my inspiration.

POSITION AVAILABLE AT SBRCC: ENGLISH TRAINING COORDINATOR

English Training Coordinator (Full-time position): Provide direct services and case management to clients, prepare and facilitate three 60-hour Crisis Intervention Trainings per year in English according to certification requirements, recruit and screen training applicants, and prepare and facilitate Human Relations Training and medical in-service trainings. **Bilingual English/Spanish required.** *If you or anyone you know may be interested in this position, please submit a resume, cover letter and three references to Alana at alana@sbrcc.net*

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

Save the Date! In recognition of Women's Equality Day, the Santa Barbara Pro-Choice Coalition proudly invites you to the 3rd annual "Great American Write-In" on Saturday, August 26th from 1-3 p.m. at the

Faulkner Gallery in the Santa Barbara Main Library. SBRCC is a member of the Pro-Choice Coalition and we'll be there to celebrate. Join the Santa Barbara pro-choice community in a large-scale statewide and federal lobbying effort through letter-writing, and get to know the member organizations of the Pro-Choice Coalition. Help us exceed the 1500 letters collected at last year's event. This year's event will feature an ongoing screening of *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*, a short film on choice, sprinkled with comic relief. Free admission.

Note: Before and after you sign letters, Stand Up for Choice! on State and Anapamu in front of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art from 1-2:30 p.m., and at the same time, help direct foot traffic to the Great American Write-In! Signs provided.

JOIN SBRCC'S TEAM FOR THE 15TH ANNUAL HEART & SOLE AIDS WALK/RUN '06! SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006 AT LEADBETTER BEACH, SANTA BARBARA

Be a part of SBRCC's team of volunteers and staff at the Annual Heart and Sole AIDS Walk on Saturday, October 7, 2006! The walk is a benefit for Pacific Pride Foundation's (PPF) HIV/AIDS programs and services. SBRCC will walk to show our support for PPF and the members of our community affected by HIV/AIDS. Together, we have a goal to raise \$500 for PPF's crucial community services. The Walk route is 10-kilometers (6.2 miles) and leads walkers along the beach on Cabrillo Boulevard. The Walk ends with a beachside celebration with complimentary snacks, live music, free massages, and an awards ceremony. For more information about the Walk, see the event website at www.aidswalksb.com. To join the SBRCC team, contact me at 963-6832 ext. 29 or alena@sbrcc.net. Thanks!



Happy Birthday to:



- Nicholas T. on July 1st
- Susan Y. on July 12th
- Paul S. on July 17th
- Paula H. on July 29th