

Attitudes about sex responsible for rape

Michael R. Cowen
Columnist

Studies have shown that at least one out of every four women is raped before they finish college. That's right, one in four. Odds are someone you know has been raped. In the majority of these rapes, the victim knows the rapist. This is known as acquaintance rape. The fact that rape is so common is sick, and something must be done to lower this horrifying statistic.

Before we can find a solution to this problem, we must discover the causes. Although I am not an expert, I will attempt to enumerate some of the factors I feel add to the rape problem in the United States.

The biggest problem is the importance college-age men place on getting laid. "After a date, the first thing a young man is asked by his friends is 'Did you get any?'"

Television and movies add to this problem by glamorizing men who

with him. Having to respond to mixed signals causes confusion and frustration in many men. They may think that she is "saying no when she really means yes" so that he won't think she is easy. Many will not care what she says and will add to the countless number of rapes committed each year.

A third problem is that the victims of rape are often made to feel ashamed. Many people say "she deserved it" or "she really wanted it." This is ludicrous. No one should be forced to have sex against her will, regardless of what she is wearing or how she had been talking. Because of the shame rape victims feel, most rapes are never reported, leaving the rapist free to rape again.

A solution to this problem will not be easy. Men have been raping women since the dawn of time. However, I have a suggestion that may help to diminish the problem. As a society, we need to stop making such a big deal about sex. If sex was accepted as a natural act between two people who love each other, instead of a sign of male prowess, men would not be under as much pressure to have sex, and date rapes might diminish.

We also need to stop putting women under a double standard, forcing them to be "sexy but not sexual." This would mean finally giving up the Victorian idea that a woman is either a virgin or a whore. We also need to see rape victims as the victims of a crime of violence and treat them with sympathy, not shame. This will allow them to prosecute their rapists, instead of letting them go free.

Finally, we need to treat women as thinking, sexual human beings, not as objects to be used and thrown away. Until women and men are treated as equals, there can be no solution to the date rape problem.

Michael Cowen is a senior psychology major.

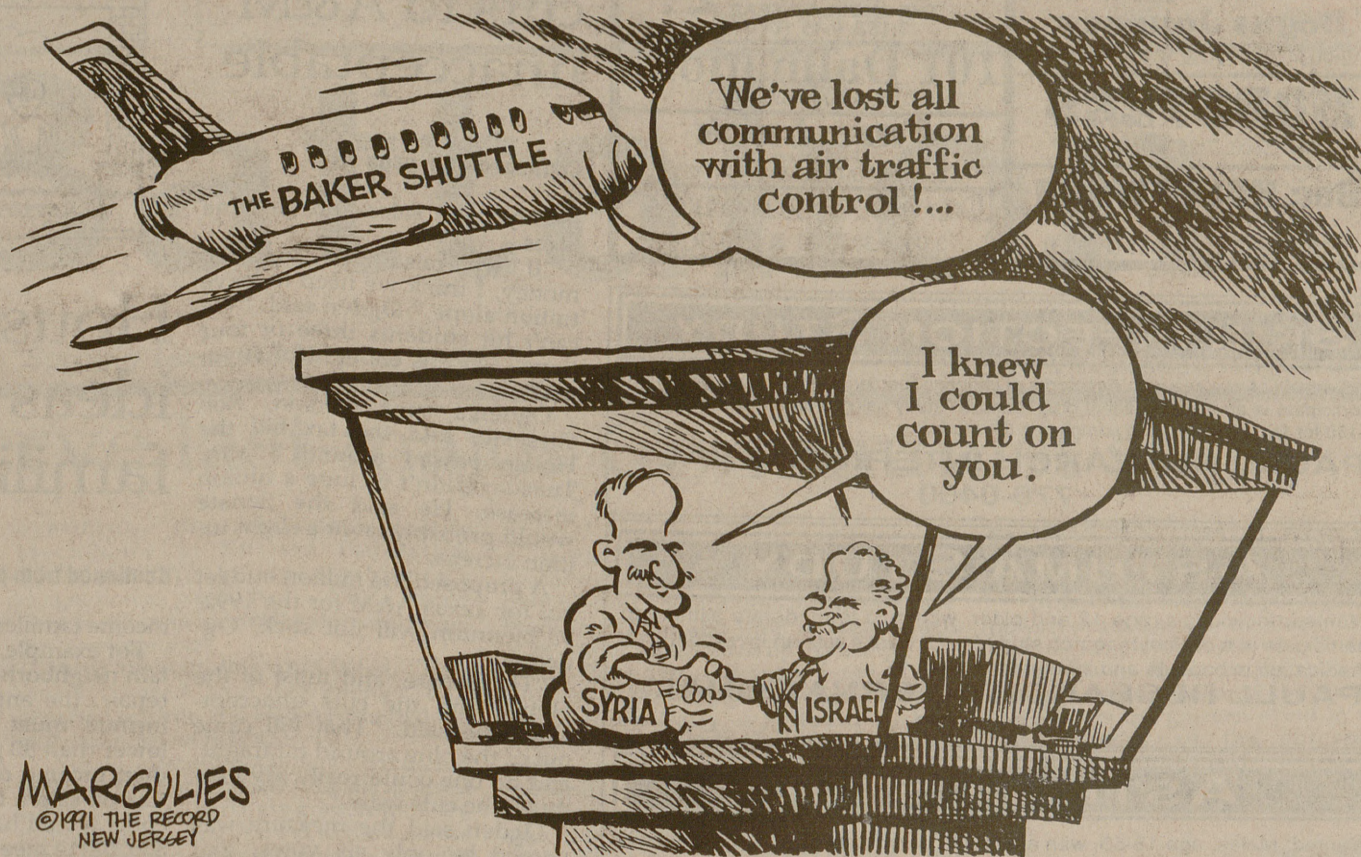
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reduce and sleep with many women. Instead of building a healthy attitude toward sex and dating, men see sleeping with a woman as a conquest, an achievement. This leads men to use any means at their disposal, including lying and force, to achieve their ends: cheap sex. As long as women are seen as objects to be used and disposed of, rape will continue to be common in our society.

Another problem is that our society tells women to be sexy but not sexual. Women are encouraged to wear the tightest, tightest dresses and to show off as much skin as possible. They are taught to use sex to lure men.

However, they are also told they cannot have sex. Besides creating sexual hangups in many women, this impossible ideal of sexiness without sex causes confusion in many men.

Almost every guy I know has had some girl talking dirty to him, hanging all over him and then refusing to sleep



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MAIL CALL

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Cable service hasn't improved

EDITOR:

Well, friends, the "TCA-MTV controversy" is over and what have we gained? According to Randy Rogers, quite a lot. After seeing his commercial and reading his letters in both The Battalion and the Eagle, I still fail to see what improvements the cable consumers of Bryan-College Station have won.

For those of us who want our MTV and have to stay in B-CS, we have a month-and-a-half hiatus from MTV. For those of us who did not want MTV, TCA can now tell us that we can have MTV blocked — as if they could not tell us before, or that we would not have asked — and TCA has juggled the order of stations to facilitate blocking MTV.

Elsewhere in the news I read that in a few years MTV (and other cable stations) will be available in multiple formats on multiple signals compressed into the space of a single channel — no thanks to TCA. In the meantime, while we await this miracle of cable programming, we can watch scantily-clad females gyrate in videos on BET and Univision; other lycra-restrained paeans to the human form — mostly female — may be observed aerobicizing, body-shaping, gladiating and just plain wrasslin' on various programs; and Brother John Ankerberg has exorcized the worst of ten years of music videos into a one-hour anthology he calls "Messages in Rock Music." The way I look at it, not much has been gained, just some inconvenience to add to modern life and hot air to add to the Greenhouse Effect.

In retrospect, TCA handled this little affair poorly. As far as I can tell, the core of the matter was the contract negotiations between MTV and TCA. Instead of following their chosen strategy, TCA could have presented the situation as: "MTV, the big, mean, corporate cable channel in New York City, wants to raise the rates for MTV and Nickelodeon. But we said they couldn't take advantage of our customers, just because we're a small, regionally owned, locally operated cable system. We're not gonna pay a lot for MTV! We did it for you, our Customers." And we would say: "New York City! We're not gonna pay a lot for MTV!" Some of us might have even said: "Good riddance! I had the darndest time keeping the kids from watching Madonna doing whatever she's doing." If enough of us had said, "We want our MTV!" then TCA could go back to the negotiating

table, raise the rates and come off as the hero.

TCA was not without its defenders, even if Mr. Rogers is excluded. But most of the defenses were flimsy. When TCA opted to protect what it perceived as public morality, this decision was defended because of the number of complaints. First, it goes against an understanding of human nature — the type of understanding that TCA's marketing department should have had — to assume that the proportion of complaints to compliments in a collection of letters sent to a business will represent the true proportion of customer opinions. This could be addressed through a customer survey, a technique TCA has used in the past.

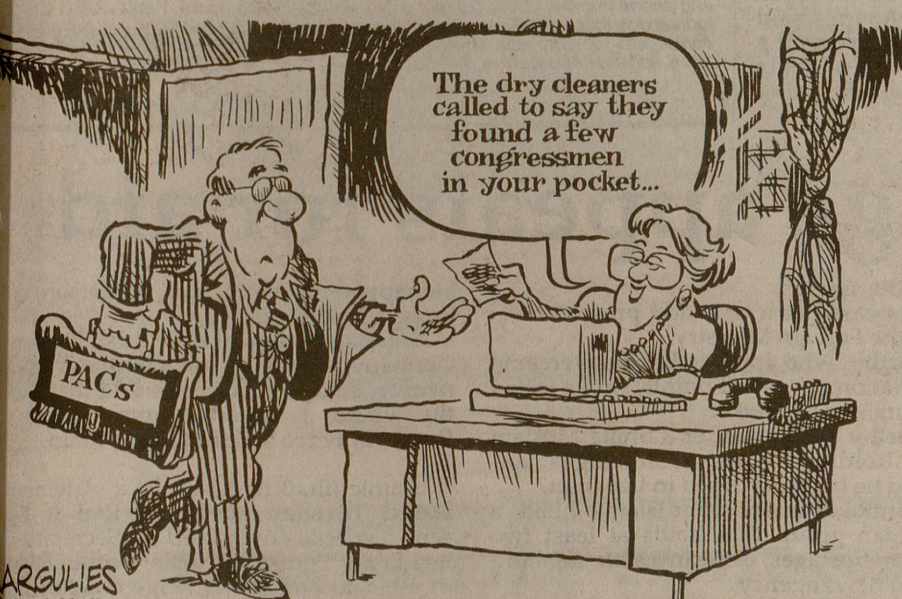
When asked how many complaints, TCA answered "hundreds." To my knowledge, none of these "hundreds" were produced. We do not know whether the "TCA-MTV controversy" was a real programming issue, the result of a petition started by a minister in Arkansas with a PC and too much time on his hands, a publicity stunt by TCA or a conspiracy which involved both TCA and MTV.

Some of us called TCA's actions censorship. Others said it was not. It certainly was not government censorship, but it was censorship just the same. We should all be wary of censorship, government or otherwise, lest we become complacent about our freedoms; nevertheless, there are times that censorship is necessary. One of these is when parents limit the television viewing of their children. Another is when an information business, such as Waldenbooks, TCA or MTV, decides which products are profitable to offer for sale.

In TCA's defense, it was offered that TCA is a business and can make such decisions. Yet now I question whether TCA is a business. Mr. Rogers' letters in The Batt and Eagle are essentially expanded scripts of his TV commercial. Because the letter appeared on the editorial page, I can only assume that Mr. Rogers, like me, only paid 29 cents for the stamp. Or has The Battalion started to allow advertisements deceptively presented as news? Because The Battalion's and the Eagle's editorial integrity is above reproach, I can only conclude that Mr. Rogers' letter is not an advertisement because TCA is not a business.

We can be thankful that Linda Ellerbee is neither an MTV veejay, or an employee of TCA!

John N. Miller
graduate student



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We must focus more attention on soaring Texas crime rate

Sharon Gilmore
Columnist

The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just.

— Proverbs 21:7

Whoosh! Violence today starting to resemble horror movies more than we would like. The media is reporting new homicides every day, creating fear among many people but not solving the problems. More innocent people are getting burglarized, kidnapped, raped, shot, stabbed or "sacrificed" than ever before. We need serious action to get the crime rate down.

Data from the U.S. Public Health Service, in Dissent magazine, said that a young American male, aged 15-24 is 16 times more likely to die of deliberate homicide than his counterpart in Austria, 44 times more likely than a Japanese youth and about 20 times more likely than an Englishman or Dane. These statistics are frightening and will hopefully change.

As our society deteriorates before us,

our government continues to focus more attention on foreign affairs than the real issues that affect our daily lives. When are we going to really take a bite out of crime?

The Houston Chronicle reported Texas as No. 1 in homicides in the nation. That is definitely something to worry about. The article predicted that Texas would pass New York's murder rate.

"A Senate Judiciary Committee study projects 2,690 killings in Texas this year, 12 percent more than last year's 2,389," said the Chronicle. California, with the largest population, is No. 1 in homicides, but we may creep up there soon. We need to increase the police force in order to handle the growing criminal activity.

Of course, police officers would still be expected to do a good job even though there would be more of them. I don't know how someone like Jeffrey Dahmer was able to get away with so many brutal killings without being suspected. Who knows how many more Dahmers are out there brutally sacrificing human lives? We wish the evil killings today are just a bad

nightmare, but the scary thing is you're awake, and you know it.

Last month, a University of Houston theater professor stabbed an actress and a former student during an argument. The professor ended the women's lives as dramatically as a tragedy and even shouted to people to let them die in peace. It is sad that there are so many demented and troubled people in the world.

Our society is becoming more complex at all levels, especially criminal activity. The sick people of our society need help or they will just continue the violence. Violent crime already seems to be an epidemic in cities like Dallas and Houston. We may see movies like "Deadly Dallas" and "Homicidal Houston" in a few years at the rate violent crime is soaring. Why is homicide such a booming

business in Texas and everywhere else? Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., Judiciary Committee chairman, in the Houston Chronicle, blamed the increase on "drug addicts and dealers; deadly weapons, particularly the easily available military-style assault weapons and demographics." If these are the main reasons for the increase in violent crimes, then why don't we increase police forces and start cleaning up the streets? Easily purchased military-style weapons just encourage violence.

The State Legislature is taking action to reform non-violent offenders by placing them in alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs. This may help decrease the crime rate, but the drug dealers and abusers on the streets need rounding up too. The state needs to keep violent offenders from being released before serving their full prison terms. Jail doesn't cure these evil doers, it just postpones their killing sprees.

Evil doesn't just lurk in the major cities of Texas. It's everywhere, and at

Texas A&M we should take the same safety precautions as we would in any other city. Crime can be random and unpredictable, so you can't take any chances.

Your personal safety is your responsibility, so take care in preserving it. Use the escort services offered by the Corps of Cadets and campus dorms when walking across campus at night. Avoid convenience stores at late night hours, anywhere, and watch for suspicious people when using ATM machines at night. Those are places where criminal activity has increased recently in the cities.

Life is fragile, and great care must be taken in preserving it at all times. We need to decrease the high violent crime rate and restore life as a focus. Wouldn't it be nice to read a newspaper or watch a news show that wasn't about victims of hellacious crimes, but people celebrating life?

Sharon Gilmore is a junior journalism major.