

Rape Culture in America

- I. Exordium
 - a. "I wish he had just killed me. Then I wouldn't have to feel anymore. Then people would believe me." This is what one rape victim said about her experience. (Raphael)
 - b. Raise your hand if you think rape is okay.
 - c. Obviously, when asked, people won't tell you they condone rape.
 - d. However, our culture says otherwise.

- II. Narratio
 - a. What is rape culture?
 - i. In a rape culture, sexual violence and rape are seen as normal or are tolerated.
 - ii. Rape isn't always what we picture it to be.
 1. A lot of people see rape as a stranger attacking you in the woods or in a back alley, but it's not usually that.
 2. Most cases of rape, about 2/3, are committed by someone the victim knows. ("The Offenders")
 - a. Other studies have found that only 11% of rapes are committed by strangers. (Raphael)
 3. Friends, boyfriends, or husbands can even commit rape.
 4. Rape is defined by consent: if the person says yes, then it's not rape. If the person says no, or doesn't say anything – this includes if they're unconscious – then it's rape.
 - b. Is there rape culture in America?
 - i. Yes.
 - ii. It's subtler than people see in other countries, particularly ones in war, but it's still there.
 - c. Rape is common in America
 - i. Many of the statistics here are undercounts because a lot of women don't know they've been raped or will classify it as something else. Many of the studies used were conducted by phone, and some victims also don't want to talk about it to a stranger on the phone. These surveys also didn't reach people who are at higher risk because they're in hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, mental institutions, prisons, or are homeless. They also often don't include people under 18. (84 Raphael, 8 Buchwald, et al.)
 - ii. In 2007, the Medical University of South Carolina did a study where they used phones and random-dialing technology and asked 3,000 women over 18 if they had been raped. 16.1% had been raped. (Raphael)
 - iii. The National Crime Victimization Survey reported 678 rapes each day of the year, or 28 rapes an hour in America. (6 Buchwald, et al.)
 - d. It's not taken as seriously as it should be.
 - i. The rape problem isn't adequately represented in the media.
 1. They cover big trials, but the amount of everyday rape often goes unmentioned.
 2. There were five major studies conducted on rape between 1992 and 2010, and they found between 10.6% and 16.1% of American women have been raped. News stories didn't mention these studies, which contributes to a lack of awareness. (Raphael)
 - ii. How it's treated by the law

1. It depends on what study you look at, but the percentage of rape victims who reported the crime to the police ranges from 5% to 27%. (Raphael)
 - a. The percentage was much less if the victim knew the rapist. (6 Buchwald, et al.)
 2. Sometimes they not only don't believe victims, but they punish them for reporting the crime.
 - a. An 18-year-old woman in Washington reported to the police that an armed man raped her for 4 hours, and then took pictures of her. Police not only didn't believe her, but they charged her with making a false report and fined her \$500. Soon after, they caught the rapist in the area with over a hundred pictures of the incident.
 - b. There are lots of cases like this. (Raphael)
 3. In 31 states, if a rape results in pregnancy, the rapist can sue the victim for custody and visitation of the child. (Chemaly)
 - a. 32,000 women a year are impregnated as a result of rape in America (Chemaly)
 4. Many politicians don't believe a woman shouldn't be able to get an abortion even if she's raped. (Eligon)
 5. Show picture from RAINN (3% of rapists are jailed)
- iii. It's not taken seriously enough.
1. If you asked someone if they thought rape was serious, they would probably say yes. However, we don't treat it like it should be.
 2. Rape jokes
 - a. A lot of us are guilty of this, and I'll admit that I used to do it, too.
 - b. If a rape victim hears the joke, it can be triggering.
 - c. It makes it seem like something minor that can be joked about.
 - i. There aren't child abuse jokes or cancer jokes, so why are there rape jokes?
 3. Some people use it in the context of video games, tests, etc.
 - a. "I raped that level," or, "I raped that test."
- iv. People blame the victim and sympathize with the rapist.
1. Women are told to take measures to prevent rape.
 - a. Don't wear revealing clothing, don't walk home alone at night, don't get too drunk, etc.
 2. The victim's clothes, their reputation, their connection with the rapist, their attitude, and if they were intoxicated are often brought up.
 - a. Sometimes there's an attitude that victims are "asking for it."
 - b. This isn't true, and this is putting some of the responsibility of the rape on the victims.
 3. Men are rarely told to just not rape.
 - a. Getting consent was never taught in our sex-ed classes.
 - b. An attitude of "don't get raped" as opposed to "don't rape."
- e. Example: Steubenville, Ohio
- i. Recent event that shows a lot of the problems with rape in America
 - ii. What happened
 1. Last summer, two high school football players raped a 16-year-old girl at a party. She was drunk, close to being unconscious, and unable to consent. They took pictures and posted it on social media websites.
 - iii. Their attitude toward it
 1. There were several teenagers in another room who saw the girl being carried out by her ankles and wrists, and who knew what was happening.

- a. They joked about it. One in particular, Michael Nodianos, was filmed joking about it for 12 minutes.
 - b. He joked about how “dead” the girl was, saying she was “deader than J.F.K,” “deader than Caylee Anthony,” “deader than Trayvon Martin,” etc.
 - c. Show video clip of him making rape jokes.
 - d. When some of the other boys in the room try to say that it isn’t funny, he says, “It’s not funny; it’s hilarious.” The boy filming this says, “This is the funniest thing ever.”
 - e. After the incident, when the girl reported it to authorities, one of the rapists, Trent Mays, sent the victim a text saying, “This is the most pointless thing. I’m going to get in trouble for something I should be getting thanked for taking care of you.” (Oppel)
- iv. How the media portrayed it
1. Fox News ran the name of the victim, even though it’s standard to not tell the victim’s name in rape cases and she was a minor. She received threats from people, some of them death threats, on social media sites. (Strasser)
 2. CNN’s coverage sympathized with the rapists. (Shapiro)
 - a. “These two young men who had such promising futures -- star football players, very good students -- literally watched as they believed their life fell apart,” said reporter Poppy Harlow.
 - b. Candy Crowley asked a contributor, “What’s the lasting effect though on two young men being found guilty juvenile court of rape essentially?”
 - c. Didn’t talk about how it affected the victim.
- v. The public’s reaction to it.
1. Many people tweeted about how the victim was drunk, what she was wearing, and lamented the end of the rapists’ football careers. There also death threats sent to the victim.
 2. Show victim-blaming tweets about it.
- vi. Shows that how we deal with rape in America and our attitude toward it is a problem.

III. Refutation

- a. Some people don’t believe that rape is a serious problem.
 - i. Some say that rape isn’t that common, and statistics are inflated to get funds for organizations
 1. True, some statistics are inflated. For example, the commonly cited number of 1 in 3 women will be raped in her lifetime was found to be false.
 2. However, most of the statistics come from reputable sources.
 3. Even if numbers like the 1 in 3 aren’t real, the truth, like 1 in 6 women will be raped in their lifetime, is bad enough. Even if the statistic was 1 in 10, we should still be concerned.
 4. This also shows that we need better research and education on rape.
 - ii. There are groups, such as the Community of the Wrongly Accused, who deny rape statistics and say 50% of rape accusations are false.
 1. This statistic was based off a 1994 study done by Eugene J. Kanin. He studied 109 rape reports and found that 41% were false accusations.
 - a. It was based on police records where the victims were told that that the suspects might be given a polygraph test. This practice is widely rejected by law enforcement because many victims will withdraw their claims when they’re met with skepticism.

- b. Such a small amount of rapes are reported to the police. (Raphael 102)
 - c. There's no foolproof method to determine whether a rape really occurred. (Raphael 113)
 - d. He didn't do any independent research and only took the police's word for it.
 - 2. They ignore seven newer studies, conducted using better methodology, that say only 2% to 8% of rape claims are false. (102 Raphael)
- iii. Other people make excuses for the rape.
 - 1. Some say that rape is just "bad sex" that the victim regrets afterward. Rapists say that they didn't know it was rape. Especially in rapes committed by acquaintances, the rapists say they thought it was consensual.
 - a. There is no excuse for raping someone, and the blame needs to be put on the rapist, not the victim. The fact that people claim they didn't know they were raping shows that we need better education on what rape is and how important it is to get consent.

IV. Confirmation

- a. Rape is a serious problem.
 - i. It contributes to sexism.
 - ii. It has lasting effects on victims.
 - 1. Being raped is a painful, violent, and degrading experience for the victim. (31 Buchwald, et al.)
 - 2. Victims of sexual assault are three times more likely to suffer from depression, four times more likely to contemplate suicide, six times more likely to suffer from PTSD, thirteen times more likely to abuse alcohol, and twenty-six times more likely to abuse drugs. ("Who Are the Victims?")
- b. What should happen?
 - i. We need better rape research
 - 1. There's a lot of discrepancy in rape statistics, and knowing more about it will help us stop it.
 - ii. The media needs to portray rape more accurately.
 - 1. They shouldn't make excuses for the rapists or sympathize with them.
 - 2. There needs to be more focus on how it was detrimental to the life of the victim and not just the rapist.
 - 3. The prevalence of rape in everyday life (not just in big trials like Steubenville) also needs to be shown so people are aware of the problem.
 - iii. Reassess our attitude toward rape
 - 1. Treat it seriously
 - 2. Don't make rape jokes
 - 3. Don't sympathize with the rapist or blame the victim
 - 4. Make sure the people around you are doing the same, and if they aren't, educate them
 - iv. Change the way we teach about rape
 - 1. We never properly learned about rape, especially acquaintance rape. Consent was never taught in our sex education classes.
 - 2. Stop telling girls to be careful, to not go alone, to cover up their bodies, to watch out for their friends, etc.
 - 3. Instead, tell boys to make sure they have consent, to stop if they don't, and to make sure their friends do the same.
 - 4. Clothing, intoxication, reputation, etc. shouldn't determine whether a girl "deserves" to be raped

V. Peroration

- a. This isn't just a women's issue.
- b. It isn't funny, and it isn't something that should be taken lightly. Being raped changes someone's life forever, and we should do all we can to make sure it happens less.
- c. Nobody deserves to be raped.
- d. We should do this for all the women we know now, and the women of later generations.

Works Cited

Buchwald, Emilie, Pamela R. Fletcher, and Martha Roth. *Transforming a Rape Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2005. Print.

This gives an introduction on what rape culture is and the problem in America. Most of the book is essays from people who are proposing change. It had a lot of helpful statistics and more in-depth information on studies.

Chemaly, Soraya. "50 Actual Facts About Rape." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 26 Oct. 2012. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

This gave 50 short facts about rape in America. A few of them were interesting, and they had links to websites with more helpful information.

Eligon, John. "Senate Candidate Provokes Ire With 'Legitimate Rape' Comment." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 19 Aug. 2012. Web. 1 Apr. 2013.

This talked about the Representative's rape comment. I used it for the quote and the context it was in.

"How Often Does Sexual Assault Occur?" *RAINN*. Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, n.d. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

This gave a lot of useful statistics on how prevalent rape is. A lot of the information I found was different with each study, but this seemed to fall pretty much in the middle.

"The Offenders." *RAINN*. Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, n.d. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

Similar to the other page from RAINN, it gave helpful statistics, this one on what the rapists were like.

Oppel, Richard A. "Ohio Teenagers Guilty in Rape That Social Media Brought to Light." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 17 Mar. 2013. Web. 29 Mar. 2013.

This article was about the Steubenville trial. I used it to get a summary of the trial.

Shapiro, Rebecca. "Poppy Harlow, CNN Reporter, 'Outraged' Over Steubenville Rape Coverage Criticism: Report." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 20 Mar. 2013. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

This article criticized CNN's coverage of Steubenville. I got the quotes from Poppy Harlow and Candy Crowley from the video they had on here.

Raphael, Jody. *Rape Is Rape: How Denial, Distortion, and Victim Blaming Are Fueling a Hidden Acquaintance Rape Crisis*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill, 2013. Print.

This book had many helpful statistics and explanations of research. It focused mostly on acquaintance rape, which is the most prevalent type of rape, and what I mostly talked about.

Strasser, Annie-Rose. "How The Media Took Sides In The Steubenville Rape Case." *ThinkProgress*. Think Progress, n.d. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

This article talked about how the media portrayed the Steubenville rape trial. I used it for information on how Fox News revealed the victim's name.

"Who Are the Victims?" *RAINN*. Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, n.d. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

As with the other RAINN pages, this had statistics that I used. It was mostly about the demographics of victims.