



Rape and the Attack of the “Man-hating Media”

“History is a series of agreed-upon myths,” Napoleon Bonaparte observed cynically. Now some critics are saying that, today, current events are also a series of agreed-upon myths.

“No matter what Jackie said, we should automatically believe rape claims.” This was opined by a more contemporary figure, being the recent title of a *Washington Post* piece by one Zerlina Maxwell. “Jackie” refers to the alleged victim at the center of the *Rolling Stone* rape “story,” related in an [article](#) so deserving of those quotation marks that, two weeks after publication, an even bigger story was made when the magazine [issued](#) a complete and unequivocal retraction, accompanied by a mea culpa and an apology to those the story hurt (*The New American* [reported](#) on this Tuesday).



That is how thoroughly Jackie’s claim — which implicated the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity at the University of Virginia — fell apart. And until it was changed to “These mistakes are on *Rolling Stone*, not on Jackie,” the magazine’s retraction included the line “We have come to the conclusion that our trust in her was misplaced.” Yet aside from journalistic integrity, perhaps what was misplaced was the magazine’s trust in our time’s agreed-upon myths.

This is essentially the position of *Townhall*’s Erick Erickson in a piece entitled “The Man Hating Media.” He points out that Jackie’s unsubstantiated accusations made the fraternity subject to mob violence, faculty-member protests, verbal abuse, and a call by the UVA president for a police investigation; moreover, those who doubted the somewhat untenable “facts” of the case were, Erickson writes, “attacked ... accused of supporting rapists, denying the holocaust, and being ‘rape truthers.’” He [continues](#):

What is going unsaid, however, is how quickly the press was willing to believe all these things about young white men who were portrayed as conservative, privileged and in fraternities. The media, with the help of people like Sabrina Rubin Erdely [author of the *Rolling Stone* story], have bought into the idea of a phony “rape culture” complete with mostly fabricated statistics that 1 in 5 women on college campuses are victims of sexual assault.

... But the media believes that statistic, and it shapes the media’s reporting. They want it to be true because it confirms their biases against young white men, College Republicans, fraternities, etc. A media that denounces racial profiling and stereotyping routinely stereotypes others.

... It does not matter that the rape at the University of Virginia was not real. Because “rape culture” is supposedly real and fraternity boys are silver-spooned Satans, the story has power.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 12, 2014

In support of Erickson's thesis, observers might point to WOBC radio station manager Sophie Hess. While withholding information that could have helped to prove or disprove a sexual-assault claim, she actually [said](#) of rape accusers, "It's just not important if they are telling the truth."

The rape allegation at issue there was another high-profile but false one, that made by *Girls* creator Lena Dunham in her recently published memoir *Not That Kind of Girl*. Proving she certainly is the kind fitting Erickson's profile of the left-truth-behind Left, however, Dunham identified her alleged rapist using precisely the stereotypical terms Erickson laid out. She described him as a "campus Republican" and the "campus's resident conservative" when relating the alleged rape, which would have occurred in 2005, when she was a 19-year-old coed at Oberlin College. As Breitbart [wrote](#) December 4, "To be sure we get the point, on three occasions Dunham tells her readers that her attacker is a Republican or a conservative, and a prominent one at that."

But some are wondering if on any occasion she told the truth. And what really got Dunham in trouble was naming her alleged attacker as "Barry," which, it turned out, happened to be the actual name of a "campus Republican" — who actually happened to have attended Oberlin when Dunham did.

After Dunham's rape story "evaporated into pixie dust and blew away" under scrutiny, as a Breitbart [investigator](#) put it — and after weeks of callous indifference to Barry's pleas to clear his name — Dunham's publisher, Random House, had to start rolling the stone of deceit away.

It [admitted](#) "Barry" was just a pseudonym, decided to alter the memoir to reflect this fact, and offered to pay the real Barry's legal fees.

The real Barry has also now made a [statement](#). Pointing out that his "reputation has sustained irreparable harm," he wrote on Wednesday that the "last nine weeks, spent both wrongfully accused and ignored" were "baffling." He asks Dunham and Random House, "Why didn't you clear my name? Why did you wait? Why did I have to set up a legal fund and threaten to sue in order for action to be taken?"

Erickson and other critics might have an answer: Barry, a white, "privileged," conservative, Republican man, is a person more unequal than others. He doesn't get exoneration and an apology unless he can back his accusers against the wall with not only irrefutable evidence, but also greater power (e.g., a promising lawsuit). For he is guilty until proven innocent.

There is a principle, first articulated by 18th-century English jurist Sir William Blackstone, stating, "It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer." It is popular across the political spectrum, but especially so with the Left. Yet it is the Left that thoroughly casts it to the winds of pre-judgment when the matter is rape — or any other politically incorrect crime or politically favored group.

Of course, many would point out that there's no legally required presumption of innocence in the court of public opinion — or in that of academia or the media. Yet, as Dr. Thomas Sowell [opined](#) recently, we should have rejected the "idea that you can tell who is innocent and who is guilty by the color of their skin" (or by other superficial factors), as opposed to just placing the practice "under new management."

Moreover, this mentality has infected our jurisprudence as well. We've all heard of "hate crime" and anti-discrimination laws, which create "protected classes" such as non-whites and homosexuals and everyone else in the ever-expanding LGBTQ classification. What follows from this, however, is that there is also a category of *unprotected* classes — planned inequality under the law. And as Erickson and other social critics would point out, you can probably guess which category includes, "white," "male," "conservative," "heterosexual," and "Christian."



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