



Rape Culture in Action: A Response to a Comment

Normally, we simply hit the spam button when we receive similar comments to the one below. This one, however, manages to insert a number of rape myths into 3 short sentences. We have redacted the name of the woman from the post. We know it will be easy to guess who the post refers to but we ask that people respect her anonymity in relation to this particular comment:

X is a pathetic girl, he admitted cheating and will again, obviously X's immoral with no self respect. Rape is a despicable crime carried out by animals. As for the women that stick up for any rapists its a shame that you are not their victims rather than the poor innocent women that are.

1. X is not "pathetic". We believe she is wrong in her stance to defend her partner (Y) who is convicted of rape but "pathetic" is rude and unnecessary. It adds nothing to the discussion but rather blames X for her partner's rape.

2. X is "immoral" for defending her partner? In a culture which routinely shames women for failing to 'stand by their man' at all costs, X's behaviour is more of a survival tactic. We also notice that Y isn't classed as "immoral".

3. And, now with the "self-respect": there are a million reasons why a woman may remain in a relationship with a partner with a conviction for rape which include domestic violence and fear for their safety. Suggesting that X lacks "self-respect" is to fundamentally misunderstand patriarchy and rape culture.

4. Rapists are not "animals". Men who commit rape make a choice to commit rape. They do not have a history of mental illness. They are just like every other man you meet on the street, at your work, and in your home. Calling rapists "animals" is an othering technique which erases the reality of male violence within our society. It suggests that men who commit rape do so because they cannot control themselves. This is one of the most powerful and destructive rape myths. Men who rape make a choice. They are fully in control of their actions when they commit the crime.

5. The last sentence, well, we can't even begin to describe our anger at this. **NO ONE DESERVES TO BE RAPED. EVER.**

Even women who are defending a relative or partner who committed rape (and, realistically, if they didn't, the press would vilify them for that too). Interesting too that this refers only to women who defend rapists but not rapists themselves (although we do not support any suggestion that rapists deserve to be raped themselves - this is antithetical to a victim-centred justice system). This ignores the fact that many of those women who are "defending" a rapist do so because to recognise it as a rape would mean dealing with their own traumas. Some women will never be in a position to recognise that they have experienced forms of sexual violence in their life because of how the brain works to protect.



6. Where are the men in this rant? Where are the police officers? Lawyers? Judges? The media? Juries? Where is the recognition of systemic sexual violence which blames women for being victims of rape but excuses the behaviour of rapists?

This comment is one of many we receive each week which simply do not understand what we mean by victim blaming culture. We assume this commentator meant to help but actually their words make a mockery of everything our campaign stands for.