



The Wright Stuff & Amanda Lamb

Victim blaming is a problem – but one that seems to go unchallenged so frequently that I wonder why. Maybe part of the reason is that it can be done in a way that leaves me second guessing myself. Victim blaming can be blatant: “she deserved to get raped because of X”. Sometimes it is much more.....covert. When people victim blame, they may not realise that they are doing it, given how normalised it is within our culture. I am grateful that a new campaign has been set up to change the culture of victim blaming: Everyday Victim Blaming (EVB). Find them on the web: everydayvictimblaming.com or on Twitter: [@EVB_Now](https://twitter.com/EVB_Now)

I decided to watch the 5 Wright Stuff on 21/6/13, as there was a call-in feature regarding the [Jeremy Forrest](#) case. In case you are interested in watching it, you can do so here: [The Wright Stuff](#). If you do, you will find the following text on the website:

“Part 2/3- JEREMY FORREST MORE EVIL THAN PAEDO PAINTER?”

Teacher Jeremy Forrest is to be convicted of abducting a 15-year-old girl and faces jail, is he a worse man than pedophile painter Graham Ovenden, who sexually abused girls as young as six? Yes Forrest abused his position of trust, yes he had sex with an underage girl and yes he deserves jail. But Ovenden got a suspended sentence for fiddling six kids after the judge said his tarnished reputation was punishment enough. Who is the biggest sicko?”

There are so many things wrong with the above, I cannot be bothered to dissect it. The only note to make is for the amount of energy Matthew Wright spends on sneering The Jeremy Kyle show, his show seems to emulate the language of it...Anyway.

The language of victim blaming was not only being expressed by callers regarding the victim of this case, but also by guest panellist Amanda Lamb. EVB also noticed this and tweeted out their thoughts. Amanda tweeted this:

“@EVB_Now @cosyring @5wrightstuff @tillyjean_ I hope you recorded the show as I never once blamed the girl and I never would blame a victim!!”

I thought: fair enough. Maybe we misunderstood exactly what Amanda said: maybe I mixed up the caller’s views with hers? I certainly couldn’t quote her verbatim at this point, I just felt nauseous and hurt by ‘something’ she said. I decided to watch the show again just to check it was indeed victim-blaming that I heard and that EVB heard.

Below is Amanda’s response on the story from The Wright Stuff. I have recorded the time that the comments were made for ease of viewing. I have underscored any victim blaming that I picked up (there may well be more).

20:05

Amanda Lamb: *I don’t know how you can compare someone who abuses & molests 6 year*



old children & 7 year old children – who don't have a voice – with somebody that's... (Amanda is interrupted by Matthew Wright (MW): he does this a lot)

20:15

AL: (in response to MW stating that Forrest started sending “inappropriate texts” to his pupil at the age of 14) *Yes...naïve misguided, stupid, foolish....all of those things but, but 14 & 15 year old girls are very different to 6 year old girls. When I was 15 (laughs) I had a teacher at my school that.....I wouldn't say behaved inappropriately but it could have led some...he was always very...he would make a bee-line for me: he would sit with me, talk....and at 15...I was quite, I was quite a mature 15 year old, um, and I.....* (interrupted by Stefan Gates & MW who explain that the nature of the power imbalance – teacher-pupil – is key regarding this crime)

20:56

AL: *Yeah. I think the word 'abduction', and what he's going to go to jail for – abduction – I think it's probably, I think it's probably the wrong word. He didn't 'bind' her and stick her in the boot of a car and drive off. I would be very surprised,...He's gonna end get – I reckon he's gonna get about 3 or 4 years compared to Stuart Hall and compared to this guy (Ovenden) and this is where I don't understand: they don't protect the **innocent** children in these cases.*

“The **innocent** children in these cases”...so we are all victims, but some are more innocent/worthy than others.

Plenty more infuriating viewpoints were shared from this point on, but I think it is very clear that Amanda Lamb did indeed engage in victim blaming. It is sad, but not surprising. This is everyday victim blaming in action. It is entirely possible that she is unaware that she victim blamed, yet instead of checking that out: with a campaign that is built upon challenging victim blaming culture, she went straight to defence and denial.

Amanda, I was one of your “innocent children”, one of your “14-15 year old girls” and also an adult survivor. The sexual abuse and rape that I experienced as a young child and as a teenager at the hands of men much older than me, was horrific. I did not deserve it at 14, just like I did not deserve it at 5 years old. Your views on “victims who are innocent” may well have harmed many 14 and 15 year olds who are experiencing sexual abuse and coercion but now feel unable to speak. Power dynamics matter and I am so incredibly disappointed that they don't matter to you.

If you are unaware of the safeguarding issues between teachers and pupils, read this post:
<http://tillyjean.wordpress.com/2013/06/20/no-romeo-and-juliet/>

If you want to learn more about the culture of victim blaming, I suggest you read these posts:
<http://everydayvictimblaming.com/view-most-recent-submissions/>

Amanda Lamb's views on victim blaming are not isolated: they are part of our culture. Don't accept this culture: fight it. Every victim matters, Amanda, I matter.