



This is a scandal- but not in the way The Sun would have you believe.

'Kids home girls in sex party shocker' screams the front page of The Scottish Sun today, the behaviour of these young teen girls 'a total disgrace' according to one eye witness.

Hang about.. What? Can we please just take a step back here?

Firstly, the legal age of consent in Britain is 16 so those with whom the young girls have been 'having sex' have in fact, broken the law. I carefully place having sex in inverted commas here, because I cannot be confident that this was not in fact, rape. And rape and sex are vastly different things. One is about power, control, domination and violence, the other is about pleasure and one vital distinction between the two is consent. Do we know these girls were not coerced?

Even if one takes the argument that we are individuals with differing levels of maturity and thus perhaps, hypothetically, just maybe, these young teenage girls had agreed to partake thus it must have been consensual intercourse. Even if one adopts that frankly shady argument, the levels of intoxication at this 'booze fuelled' event surely cast this incident further into the murky shadows. Can you consent if you have exceeded a certain level of drunkenness? Well honestly, no. You can't. And neither could these girls.

So let's step back again and look at just who these girls are. Well, as The Sun so succinctly puts it, they are in a 'kid's home'. So these are in fact, children in the care of the state. Teenagers who, for whatever reason, cannot live at home with their families and have thus been entrusted into governmental care. I know people who work in social work, and I know the lives of these kids can often be horrendous, unimaginably so for those who have not experienced it. Childhoods full of physical, sexual, emotional abuse. Relationships torn and damaged beyond repair. Trust and love absent concepts. The decision taken to remove children from their familial homes aren't taken lightly and are only done in circumstances in which it is considered essential for the child's safety and wellbeing. These girls are by any standards vulnerable.

But no, not according to The Scottish Sun. To them, these girls are a target to exploit for a sensationalist story in which readers can lament at the youth of today and unite in the condemnation of this 'disgraceful' behaviour. These girls aren't people after all, they are a tool, a pawn to sell papers and means of making money. The Scottish Sun misdirect their outrage and direct it in full force at the victims of the encounter, too young to legally give consent, too drunk to give consent and in an inordinately vulnerable social position. When news broke of the deaths involved in the Sydney Siege, Rupert Murdoch tweeted his 'congrats' to the New York Times for picking up the scoop first. Well, Gordon Smart, editor of The Scottish Sun. Congrats. Congrats for pointing the finger of blame in entirely the wrong direction and launching an attack upon the victims. Congrats for editing a paper so that on Page 3 readers will be able to admire Tracey from Warwick, bare breasted for your pleasure and as they turn the page they can read all about your exclusive on yet another childhood abuse



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scandal. Congrats for contributing to this awful, misogynistic culture and putting profit before people. Congrats.