

# An Open Letter to NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY

## Lady, you should know better.....

My first response was – oh no, I need to write another letter. Your column made my blood boil.

First, I'm sick to death of insults. I've been a feminist since 1973, and am totally pissed off by being blamed for everything. It's the new game – trash the feminists; blame the feminists. Bad enough that the right wingers blamed us for 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina! It would be funny if it wasn't so wrong.

Second, your comments are unbelievably stupid. Of course, feminists talk about risky behavior. We were the **FIRST** people to talk about what **WE** call rape avoidance. Every rape crisis center worth its salt, every prevention program I know about talks about the risks of walking alone, walking alone at night, drinking and drugging to excess. Etc. It's we feminists who talk about how alcohol use/overuse undermines our ability to resist assault.

Of course we discuss how to avoid stranger rape – we advocate that women and girls learn self-defense, plan ahead, be aware of our surroundings, trust our instincts, partner with other women while jogging, etc. etc. etc. Don't believe me? – well, try doing something really wild and creative – google avoiding stranger rape, and guess what? A ton of sites will pop up written by – guess who? – *feminists*.

You **ARE** right about *one* thing. We are **VERY** clear. No matter what a woman or girl does, she doesn't deserve to be raped. (Guys, if you drink too many beers with your buddy, pass out and he rapes you anally, were you stupid to trust him? Stupid to drink? Deserve to be bugged?)

Third, it was we feminists who first floated the very radical, very dangerous notion that no woman and girl deserved to be raped. Even if she's married to the rapist. Even if she is a boy or man. Before 1970, you had to be a nun with 16 stab wounds to get a rape conviction. Of course, your deliberately uninformed comments are part of the movement to go back to those days. They fuel the backlash to give men back the power to control women.

Fourth, your stupid comments are very, very dangerous. At Duke University, we once again see the well paid immoral defense attorneys spinning the tired old tune. It was her fault. She was asking for it. She wants to sue him and get money. She drinks. She uses drugs. She slept with other men. And this time, it's all set up for them. After all, strippers should know better than to go to a frat house – with drunken boys – especially drunken white boys from a famous sports team.

Comments like yours give permission to the media, spin doctors and immoral defense attorneys to go after rape victims, Ms. Riley They give sanction and permission to the thugs who threaten rape victims with death, break into their homes, slander them on the internet, etc. etc. etc.

Ms. Riley, are you saying that men are basically violent, that there are going to be rapists no matter what, and that women should get over it and just avoid risky behavior? (Risky defined by

you). I don't buy it. I do not – and will never – believe the lying slander about men – that they are violent and over sexed and can't help themselves. Rape is culturally sanctioned behavior. And by the way, we (feminists) **WILL** change this disgusting aspect of our culture.

In fact, the boys at Duke are part of the sports culture – that says that famous sports stars entitled to slug people, make homophobic comments, rape women, get drunk, tear up the neighborhood, and piss on the walls. And no, not all jocks do it – which of course proves my point – it's not biological, it's not innate – it's learned behavior and it's a **choice**.

I'm really angry at you, I'm angry at women who get famous and get paid for trashing other women – for attacking the women who have suffered and struggled to achieve some safety for women and girls. For shame. Shame on you.

Ms. Riley, do you really believe your own nonsense – that only CERTAIN *types* of women get raped – and it can't happen to strong, smart women who are never in the "bad" side of town, never "choose" the wrong guy to date or marry, never have too much to drink, never have a date rape drug slipped into their soda water while they are not looking....

If you believe that, Ms. Riley, *I've got really bad news for you*. You're really mostly in danger from the men you know. Most women and girls are raped by family members, dates, acquaintances, etc. (Yet another fact unearthed and publicized by the feminist movement). Although many rapists do target women and children they perceive as vulnerable – prostitutes, strippers, women with disabilities, women of color, their patients, clients, parishioners – some do not. And, you know, you might sometime miss your flight and get stranded in the bad part of town. You might run into three rapists with a gun. Your mother, sister, best friend, daughter or nephew might be raped. If you are raped (and I fervently hope you never are), we feminists will be right there – telling people that it wasn't your fault, and you aren't to blame. You'll have the option of going to a free rape crisis center, where dedicated, passionate, underpaid people will do their damndest to help you, regardless of your politics.

And Ms. Riley, an immoral defense attorney, and people like you in the media are going to dredge up anything you have ever done wrong (and everyone has done SOMETHING wrong, Ms. Riley), and it's going to be on the front page.

And, I'll be writing yet another letter.

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*Note: This letter was submitted to the Wall Street Journal in response to her April 14, 2006 column. As of May 3, 2006, this letter has not been published.*