



## **Emily Yoffe: ‘It’s the perpetrator’s fault...except not.’ (TW)**

So today Emily Yoffe of Slate, (@YoffeEmily) in the wake of Maryville and Stubenville and just in time for the new college terms, published a piece entitled “College Women. Stop Getting Drunk”.

Actually the headline sums up exactly the tone of the article, and it is one long classic rape myth trotted out, one after the other to prove Ms Yoffe’s central thesis: that the increase in young women binge drinking has created ‘a prey rich environment’.

Every trope is regurgitated: how often college women are assaulted, how drink is the ‘common denominator’ in all these assaults, how women out drinking are prey to predatory men - and who she actually describes as ‘lions in a prey-rich environment’, an appalling illustration whereby the man is just behaving according to masculine stereotype, and women are at once both powerless prey and would also be able to control the ‘predatory behaviour’ if they were sober. If they don’t drink, the situation will be under control, of course... Drunk women, she says, ‘render themselves defenceless’.

Despite the disclaimer that ‘it’s the perpetrator’s fault’, Ms Yoffe is also particularly concerned that the bad and wicked feminism (which apparently gives women license to go out and behave in such un-lady like ways). It giving young women a ‘distorted message’: She quotes Anne Coughlin - professor at the University of Virginia School of Law – who claims that women are being ‘infantilised’.

Beyond the shocking level of victim blaming – where everyone except the rapist bears the burden of responsibility for their actions – there is an irresponsible degree of conflating the problem of binge drinking and substance abuse and addiction with the insidious level of assault and rape that so plagues college and university campuses both in the US and the UK.

Worse is yet to come, as the level of disbelief she has for the victim is revealed – which is both nauseating and beyond irresponsible. It would seem that if you wrote to ‘Dear Prudence’ about being assaulted, she may not believe you.

“But when you are dealing with intoxication and sex, there are the built-in complications of incomplete memories and differing interpretations of intent and consent. To establish if a driver is too drunk to be behind the wheel, all it takes is a quick test to see if his or her blood alcohol exceeds the legal limit. There isn’t such clarity when it comes to alcohol and sex.”

My biggest concern (even given the above) is the 3 victims of rape she interviews – it seems incredibly clear that having picked up on the ‘common denominator’ of drink, this is where the focus of the interviews has been and I am genuinely concerned at the possible manipulation of these victims for the sake of a point about alcohol consumption amongst young people that Ms Yoffe clearly feels she needs to make.

I worry that these young women have been manipulated to prove Ms Yoffe’s central thesis; I am angry that Ms Yoffe continues to try and push a message that claims to be responsible yet



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places both the burden of responsibility on the victim and so loudly proclaims the age-old socialized message of 'boys will be boys'; and I am horrified that she does this from the platform she has been given, with all the privilege she has.