

MEDIA EDUCATION
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TRANSCRIPT



Challenging media

THE DATE RAPE BACKLASH

MEDIA & THE DENIAL OF RAPE

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Media and the Denial of Rape

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Susan Faludi *Author, *Backlash**

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INTRODUCTION

Montage of news articles about campus rape

[Text on Screen] *In 1987 the Media called Date Rape an EPIDEMIC. By 1993 they were calling it RAPE-HYPE.*

[TV interview: Katie Roiphe] *I honestly think there's not as big a problem, um, and, and that's what I'm questioning is that there's not really a rape crisis.*

[ABC News] *Newsweek's current cover story poses a question that is on a lot of people's minds, Sexual Correctness, Has it Gone too Far?*

[TV: Beverly Hills 90210] *And you believe her? It's not like this girl (inaudible) or maybe she forgot to tell you about her major party personality and everything out of her mouth was a come-on. She wore this sexed up lingerie.*

[Text on Screen] *Between 1987 & 1993 the media reversed their position on date-rape. Why?*

CALLIE KHOURI: Hello, I'm Callie Khouri. Recently, the mainstream media have focused a lot on stories that call into question the seriousness of date rape with headlines like "Rape Hype", "Crying Rape" and "Sexual Correctness, Has it Gone too Far?" reporters have criticized many feminists for being too victim-oriented and have accused them of exaggerating the figures on sexual assault and rape to make it appear that there is an epidemic when there isn't one. In this program, we're going to examine how this media campaign came about and what drove it. Specifically, we're going to look at how the media changed their position from one that recognized date rape as a serious problem in 1987 to one that by 1993 dismissed it as rape hype.

One of the central players in this story is a young graduate student from Princeton University, Katie Roiphe who in 1993 wrote a book entitled *The Morning After – Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus*. The book itself is a flimsy and superficial look at the issue. As University of Southern California law professor Susan Estrich puts it, "a paragraph of opinion shamelessly expanded to a book." However, the media's attention to the book has been anything but flimsy. They have focused a tremendous amount of attention on it and on Katie Roiphe using her ideas to change the way America thinks about sexual assault, particularly on college campuses. As we'll see, books don't have to be good to be taken up by the media. They just have to say things that powerful people in the media want to hear. This program is not about Katie Roiphe's book but about the ways in which the media has reported on and represented sexual assault in general and date rape specifically, ways which deny the reality of all forms of sexual assaults against women.

CONSERVATIVE ORIGINS

CALLIE KHOURI: In 1991, award-winning journalist Susan Faludi wrote a book entitled *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. In her book, Faludi documents a growing backlash against the gains that women have made in the last twenty years. The aim of the backlash is to put the real concerns of women in areas such as work, politics, harassment, education back into the closet by trying to convince women that their present problems are caused by too much feminism and independence.

SUSAN FALUDI: Katie Roiphe's book has been taken up with such relish for the same reason that media seems to take up with relish anyone who criticizes an issue raised by the women's movement. Every time, whether it's sexual harassment or domestic violence or child molestation, if it's an issue that's been largely concealed from public view and then has been brought up by the women's movement chances are we'll have about five minutes of media attention giving serious consideration to this issue followed by a five-year stoning of feminists for having the temerity to bring this to public attention.

CALLIE KHOURI: With this in mind, the question then becomes – where, between 1987, when the media discovered the date rape epidemic and 1993 when it proclaimed date rape hype did the backlash begin? The answer is pretty clear. It is conservatives and especially conservative men who first launched the attack against women concerned about sexual assault. In 1991, an article appears in the Right Wing Journal commentary by a man named Norman Podhoretz attacking feminists. Another writer, Neil Gilbert, launches an attack in the conservative journal *Public Interest* as well as in *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed pieces. Meanwhile, had joined this conservative attack in 1990 with an article that ridiculed any concerns that men or women might have about date rape. Writer Katha Pollitt of *The Nation* has traced the attack back to other conservative and anti-feminist, anti-women journals.

KATHA POLLITT: I was looking through *Heterodoxy Magazine*, which at *The Nation* we read this for laughs, which is a very conservative magazine, tabloid about everything that's wrong with campuses from the Right Wing point of view and there was an article by Suzanne Fields who is a syndicated columnist, very conservative syndicated columnist and it was all date rape hype. It was the same thing and it was a lot of the same incidents that are in Katie Roiphe's book. The date rape thing has been sort of, was sort of percolating around in this kind of journalism for quite some time before Katie Roiphe latched onto it.

CALLIE KHOURI: The idea that date rape was nothing more than feminist inspired hype was a difficult one for conservatives and males in particular to make with any credibility. What the political right needed was someone else, preferably a young woman calling herself a feminist, to put forward the same ideas. In 1991, while a student at Harvard, Katie Roiphe does just that and in *New York Times* Op-Ed piece. *Playboy Magazine* is so pleased with her that they reprint the article in 1992. In 1993, Roiphe produces the book *The Morning After*, an expanded version of her article. The

book receives a great deal of media attention, especially from the most important news outlet in the country, the *New York Times*.

KATHA POLLITT: There have been six positive interventions in her career by *The New York Times*. There was the Op-Ed piece from which this all began. Then they published a section of the book as a cover story in the *Times Magazine*. She got a favorable review in *The Daily Times*. She got a favorable front-page review in the *Book Review*. Then she had an “At Lunch with Katie Roiphe” in the Style section and then just this week she had a sort of thumb-sucking Op-Ed piece about Lorena Bobbitt. Katie Roiphe discovers that men and women don’t like each other very much and she thinks we ought to think about this. It’s very funny, you know.

THE CREATION OF A “CONTROVERSY”

SUSAN DOUGLAS: Well, as everyone knows, you know, the most important news outlet to get into is *The New York Times*. It's the one with the most prestige. It's regarded as the leader in the news media and so once you get the imprimatur of *The New York Times* you've kind of made it in the news media and you made it as a legitimate spokesperson for, for whatever.

CALLIE KHOURI: Following the lead of *The New York Times*, the rest of the media falls into line. Suddenly, there are an explosion of stories on what is now labeled as The Date Rape Controversy. Newspapers across the country devote substantial coverage to the new controversy. Conservative columnists such as George Will and Charles Krauthammer bemoan the new “victim feminism”, what Will labels as gothic feminism. Magazines such as *Newsweek* run cover stories on the problems of sexual correctness. *New York Magazine* has a major article with the title “Crying Rape”.

The Atlantic Monthly runs a cover story about Feminism's Identity Crisis. On television, CNN devotes whole shows to the issue. The NBC program NOW features Roiphe and her ideas. *Good Morning America* examines the issue. Conservative political commentator John McLaughlin invites Roiphe onto his show, twice. Date rape even makes its way into entertainment television where *Beverly Hills 90210* devotes an episode to it. The show focuses on one of the principal male character's rejection of a young woman he dated briefly. As a result of the rejection, and at the urging of the campus radical feminists, she accuses him of raping her. In the end, however, the young woman portrayed throughout as unbalanced admits that the rape was her own fault.

[TV: Beverly Hills 90210] *I didn't say yes but I never said no.*

[TV: Saturday Night Live] *Is – It – Date Rape?*

CALLIE KHOURI: Even the comedy show *Saturday Night Live* gets into the act with a sketch called “The Date Rape Game”.

[TV: Saturday Night Live] *Welcome players. Let's take a look at our board. The categories are Halter Top, She Was Drunk, I Was Drunk, Kegger...*

CALLIE KHOURI: Campus acquaintance rape has become a joke for the media.

[TV: Saturday Night Live] *I Paid for Dinner and Raging Kegger. Alright, Ariel, you're our champion. The board is yours.*

CALLIE KHOURI: But why has the issue of date rape received such attention and why has Katie Roiphe been so well received by the powerful men who run the media? Why are conservative male commentators such as George Will, Charles Krauthammer and

John McLaughlin suddenly caring about or at least claiming to care about victim feminism? Why are they all extolling the ideas of Katie Roiphe?

KATHA POLLITT: There are cultural spaces for different kinds of people. There are spaces for the Catholic intellectual, for the Jewish intellectual, for the Woman and these spaces must always be filled and one space there is right now in the culture is for the anti-feminist feminist. We don't hear so much from say Phyllis Schlafley anymore. When Marilyn Quail came out and said, you know, women want to preserve their essential nature as homemakers, everybody laughed but there's a big space for women who said, "I'm a feminist". That's what Camille Paglia says. "I'm a feminist and let me tell you the women's movement has it all wrong." There is a very big cultural space for this.

CALLIE KHOURI: bell hooks is a feminist writer and teacher.

BELL HOOKS: And that's why it's so sad because I really do feel that Katie Roiphe will look back at this book one day and say to herself, "how could I have allowed myself to be manipulated and used by those more powerful forces in mass media that really want to push an anti-feminist line?" I think that those forces don't even care about date rape but they do care about smashing feminism and the power of feminism to intervene on male violence against women.

SUSAN DOUGLAS: I think it's really important not to over-emphasize Roiphe herself. First of all, she didn't sell that many books. She was picked up by the media and because of what she was saying but she didn't sell that many books. Women don't buy those kinds of books and it's kind of a one-liner anyway. What is important about her, is that she's really a symptom and kind of a pawn, and one in a line of anti-feminist women that gets picked up by the media to serve as surrogates for conservative men so it's, it's what she represents and more so than her as an individual.

“BAD SEX?”

CALLIE KHOURI: The most common claim now being made by the conservatives is that many young women prodded by campus feminists are being pressured into calling what was just a bad night, rape.

[TV Interview: Katie Roiphe] *To use rape to include all the kind of, you know, this night where you didn't mean to do this thing and you had a little too much to drink and you ended up with this guy.*

[CNN News: Interview Camille Paglia] *I'm sick and tired of blaming economic necessity for women going to the office, putting a lot of perfume on, flirting outrageously, letting their boobs hang out, okay, and then somehow afterwards wanting to declare it sexual harassment when people respond in a rational way to them.*

[CNN Larry King Live Interview Camille Paglia] They can like act like daddy's little girl and dress like Madonna and drink eleven tequila's and then after the fact, you know, be convinced that they've been raped the next morning. Dress like Madonna but if you're advertising honey, you'd better put out, okay, or you're giving the wrong signals and that's why...

CALLIE KHOURI: Young women who claim to have been assaulted by acquaintances are, according to Roiphe, oversensitive or, according to Camille Paglia, foolish. In any case, the fault is their own. Is this true? Are women just crying rape in order to rationalize actions and choices that they later regret? We talked to a few young college women about their experiences to see if they reflected what the media were saying.

[Rape Victim, 16 years old when assaulted] *When I woke up, um, an acquaintance of this friend whose house we were at, um, was there and assaulted me. And I remember that while it was happening I, I couldn't, I couldn't move. It's a kind of terror that I think it's like unimaginable unless it happens to you. And I remember like just swallowing down all of the fear and all of the terror that I felt and thinking it was something that I couldn't ever share with anyone else, like I couldn't talk about it and it, and it could never be better, like that I was sort of spoiled from this point on.*

[Rape Victim, 19 years old when assaulted] *He just came in and he just, you know, started, and it was just a normal conversation, you know, and he just said, "well, why, why are you breaking up with me; how come you don't want to see me anymore; you don't answer my calls and I don't understand." And I said, and I just tried to explain, "well, I just don't want to be with you anymore because I feel like I have to do things on my own and I like to spend time with my friends; I need to study; I need to be serious, you know." And he just, he just got, got kind of mad; "well why, you know, this, this just doesn't make any sense, you know; don't you remember when we made love", this kind of stuff and he was 21 at the time. So he locks the door and he just, you know, says "well can, let's just make love one more time and then, you know, just let this be the goodbye or whatever" and I said, "no, you know, I don't want to even have to do*

anything with you anymore” and, um, so he just starts getting closer and closer and he was like “come on, why not”, you know, and he says, “it’s always so good” and I was like “maybe for you but not for me”. He was big-time into, he, he had stacks of Hustler and Penthouse and, um, he liked to do things in that way, you know, where the woman really actually wants it or whatever and I’ve seen this portrayal of women in these magazines and since then, and even at his house, I never flipped through them until later, I figured out the correlation. And what he did was he just started kissing me and grabbing me or whatever, and before I knew it we were on the bed. He had pulled my pants down and I couldn’t get my pants off and so he just pushed them up so that I could be open for him and so he, that’s when he did it and the whole time I was trying to speak he was choking me so...

[Rape Victim, 14 years old when assaulted] *I went to the symphony with my parents and, um, then back to his house to watch a movie and we started messing around and stuff on his couch just kissing and things, and, um, he was touching me and stuff and, you know, I had never had those things done to me before and all of a sudden I realized that it hurt and that it wasn’t just his fingers anymore and... To this day I can’t remember if I was screaming in my head or out loud but I know that I, I didn’t want it to happen, that my permission was not asked and that I was sitting on a couch with my arms behind me and, um, him on top and I couldn’t move. I remember I had worn a mini skirt, the last time I ever wore one and, um, I had my pantyhose around my ankles and couldn’t move my feet.*

THE ATTACK ON MARY KOSS

CALLIE KHOURI: The growing backlash against the reality of sexual assault is in large part a response to the often-quoted statistic that one in four college women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape. This figure emerged from the research of psychologist Mary Koss, now at the University of Arizona in Tucson, in a study conducted in 1987. In this research, Dr. Koss surveyed over 6,000 undergraduate students, men and women from all over the country, and asked if they had been sexually assaulted after the age of 14. It is this unsettling but very important research that has come under attack from anti-feminist conservatives and from Katie Roiphe. We're going to carefully examine the criticisms against it. The basis of Roiphe's claim that Mary Koss' research is flawed is her own personal experience while a student at Harvard.

[TV interview: Katie Roiphe] From my own experience, um, you know, being in school for the past eight years or seven years, um, that I don't feel that one out of four of my friends are being raped.

BELL HOOKS: I thought it was very sentimental and self-indulging for Katie Roiphe to say if her friends were being raped they would tell her. In fact, you know, don't you understand anything about the politics of shame and silence at all and, in fact, I think lots of, you know, incredible things have happened to the people I love and they would never tell me, not because they aren't open people but that when traumatic things happen it becomes a lot harder to talk about them. I mean, one of the, the saddest things about *The Morning After* is the degree to which you see everything framed through this kind of incredible culture of narcissism, this incredible sense that the experiences of Katie Roiphe could constitute what the norm experience is for females.

[TV interview: Katie Roiphe] The perspective that I've written this book from is, is from my personal experience because I'm not, um, a scientist and, and that's what I know.

CALLIE KHOURI: But surely there has to be more to the controversy than simply Katie Roiphe, a privileged young woman at an elite educational institution saying that Dr. Koss' research did not match her own experience, doesn't there? Indeed there is. Roiphe attacks the research of Dr. Mary Koss; however, when we look closely it is a little strange because from the footnotes it appears that she has not even read the article where Mary Koss reported the results of her study. It is not cited. How is she able then to criticize this study? Again, the footnotes tell the story. She relies almost exclusively on the work of Neil Gilbert, who as we have seen, was one of the first conservative men to respond so negatively to women concerned with date rape. All of Katie Roiphe's criticisms are ones that were first made by Neil Gilbert, so who is Neil Gilbert?

KATHA POLLITT: Neil Gilbert has done no studies of his own. Neil Gilbert is a professor of social welfare at Berkley who writes in non-peer reviewed conservative

journals like *The Public Interest*, attacks on Mary Koss who he sort of follows around like this Javer, like, you know Les Miserables.

SUSAN FALUDI: And he's hardly an objective neutral bystander either. He has a rather major axe to grind, an axe that he has shown before, a few years ago, before he started going after the rape prevention movement. He was on another soapbox and that was an attack on the California Child Assault Prevention Program, which was a program in the schools to combat sexual abuse and he thought this was a real waste of money. He particularly objected to the program being inspired by feminists. In fact, I think he said words to the effect that it had been tainted by feminist thinking.

CALLIE KHOURI: Gilbert has three main criticisms now being voiced by Katie Roiphe. The first is that Mary Koss works with an overly broad definition of rape to include situations that most people would not consider rape. He writes that "Mary Koss takes a strict legal definition and gives it a loose empirical interpretation." Katie Roiphe voices Gilbert's criticism.

[ABC News Interview: Katie Roiphe] *Unfortunately, the definition being used on campuses has far extended beyond that to include, and this is in the American College Health Association pamphlet, things like "sex with someone who is intoxicated", "verbal coercion or pressure manipulation" and that's not including threats of force.*

CALLIE KHOURI: We asked Mary Koss about the charge that her definition of rape is too broad.

MARY KOSS: You do find some researchers who rather than study rapes study the concept of sexual assault and that is a broader concept but in my research where I have used the word rape I have used it in its legal sense. The definition of rape I adopted was the Ohio legal definition because that was the state I lived in at the time I did this, did this research. I'll give you an example of the, I'll give you the three questions that were used to measure rape in my study because what I have to do as a researcher is I've got to make up questions that bring that legal definition to life. You've got to try to figure out how do you ask people things that will get at all that is intended to be covered by that legal definition so the three questions I came up with were the following: Have you had sexual intercourse when you did not want to because a man gave you alcohol or drugs? Have you had sexual intercourse when you did not want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc) to make you? Have you had sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc) to make you?

CALLIE KHOURI: Based on only these three questions, Mary Koss found that 15.4% of the college women in her sample recalled an incident that met the legal definition of rape. An additional 12% had experienced attempts where penetration did not occur.

Together, these figures add up to 27.4%. The often-quoted figure in that one in four college women has experienced rape or attempted rape comes from these findings.

Mary Koss did ask other questions about sexual harassment and sexual coercion but as the study makes clear to anyone who has read it, these questions were not factored into the 27.4% figure. They were reported separately so why are Gilbert and Roiphe distorting Mary Koss' very precise and careful study?

The second criticism that Gilbert makes is that Mary Koss inflates her figures by including data on the role of alcohol in these incidences. Gilbert writes, "what does having sex 'because a man gives you drugs or alcohol' signify"?

[ABC News Interview: Katie Riophe] *The question that the psychologist who wrote the study uses is – did you have sex with a man who, when you didn't want to because he gave you drugs or alcohol? And my problem with that is, you know, what's wrong with us? Why don't we take responsibility, you know? If a woman decides to have a drink isn't it her choice? Why is it that, you know, men are giving us drugs and alcohol and, of course, it's also a vague question so...*

CALLIE KHOURI: We, again, asked Mary Koss to respond.

MARY KOSS: There's no research that's above criticism and I can understand people feeling like well that question is subject to multiple interpretations and they just don't feel that I correctly operationalized or made real the legal definition of rape by asking that question so I'm glad I constructed the survey the way I did. It's like building blocks and I can back out certain questions from the numbers if I want to and it's possible to do that with the alcohol issue, to just take those situations out where a woman is saying she had sex against her will because a man gave her drugs.

CALLIE KHOURI: The figure for rape and attempted rape goes from one in four to one in five if you eliminate the question of alcohol altogether, still a very alarming figure.

Neil Gilbert's third criticism seems to be the most serious. Gilbert claims that a lot of the women who were defined as victims by Mary Koss did not define themselves as victims and do not label what happened to them as rape. Gilbert asserts that it is a term that Mary Koss uses, not the women themselves. He writes, "73% of the students whom Koss categorized as victims of rape did not think they had been raped".

[TV Interview: Katie Riophe] In that one in four statistic it turns out that 73% of the women that the psychologist doing the study questioned didn't believe that they had been raped.

CALLIE KHOURI: We ask Mary Koss to respond to this criticism.

MARY KOSS: Let me just give an analogy. If I went to a chemical dependency treatment program and administered an alcoholism screening test to one of the clients

there and I said, “do you drink in the morning to get rid of a hangover? Do you hide liquor around your house?” -- and the person responds “yes”. “Have people in your family complained that your drinking is interfering with your life?” -- and the person responds “yes”. “Do you have periods when you can’t remember what you’ve been doing because you were drinking?” – and the person responds “yes” and then I turn around and say, “do you consider yourself an alcoholic?” and the person says, “absolutely not”. Do I then turn them out of the chemical dependency program because they don’t think they’re an alcoholic or do I pay attention to the characteristics of their behavior as they’re describing them, which qualify that person to be an alcoholic? And it’s the same thing with the rape victims. The fact that they had intercourse against their consent because a man threatened bodily harm or used physical force means that they qualify as rape victims and the fact that they don’t realize this does not disqualify the experience from happening.

BELL HOOKS: You know, I talked to one of my sisters recently who told me that her husband frequently comes home and, you know, has sex with her while she’s sleeping and she really hates that and she doesn’t want to do that and I said, “that’s marital rape,” and she said, “oh no, no, no, it’s not rape, I mean, I, I like to have sex some of the time” but so she herself just described the case of coercion and having sex against her will but the moment I used the word “rape”, she didn’t want to acknowledge it. But the point of that is that she doesn’t want to be so politicized that she has to transform that relationship and I think the reason people don’t want these terms like “rape” and “assault” ought to be used is that they compel women to think differently about the politics of their lives, to think that I have to change this, um, to think about individual rights and the notion of democracy and justice that is inclusive of women and that’s threatening right now.

KATHA POLLITT: But, you know, it’s funny. There’s this whole attack on the anti-rape movement and certain aspects of the feminist movement that say, “you all want to see yourselves as victims. Well, why don’t you just stop whining? But the true is, although I’m sure that, you know, you could find people that derive some kind of gratification out of seeing themselves as victims and presenting themselves to the world in this way, the much more common phenomena is people who will go through every mental gyration in the book *not* to see themselves as a victim, and will think, you know, I shouldn’t have gone there; I shouldn’t have done that; I, I had a funny feeling about that; it was all my fault even though I shouldn’t have been, you know. I shouldn’t have walked through that tunnel in the subway. I should have, you know, gone where there were more people – so I’ve heard this, you know, hundreds of times from people. That’s the first thing people do when something, and it’s not just with rape but with, with robbery, with burglary, with assault, with being mugged. People always think of all the things they could have done and they always blame themselves.

[Rape Victim, 14 years old when assaulted] I felt like I had done something morally wrong and that it was probably my fault for not making it clear.

THE RESEARCH RECORD

CALLIE KHOURI: From the mainstream media, one might get the impression that Mary Koss was the only researcher in this field. Although her research is very prominent, there are many other researchers who have conducted studies on this subject and there is remarkable consistency in their findings. For example, a 1987 study, based on 795 students at two large state universities, found that 27% of the women had been involved in forced sexual intercourse on a date.

Another 1987 study of 748 students at a large southwestern public university concluded that date rape and other forms of sexual aggression in dating situations appear to be common among college students.

A 1990 study of college students found that 11.4% of Mexican-American students and 16.4% of Anglo-American students have been victims of date rape.

A 1982 study of 400 college women found 20% reported forceful attempts at sex.

Another 1982 study of 547 female faculty staff and students found 11% reported forced sex.

A 1982 study of 263 college women found 25% reporting unwanted sex.

A 1984 study of 404 women found a 16% incidence of attempted rape and 8.8% for completed rapes.

A 1986 study of 147 women found 24.5% of women reporting sexual contact based on threat or physical force.

One of the most interesting verifications of Koss' research appeared in 1991 in a book entitled *The Day America Told the Truth*, written by two male advertising executives, James Patterson and Peter Kim, both of the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency. They wanted to find out what Americans really thought about a whole range of sensitive issues: morality, sex, crime, violence, work, religion. After reviewing their findings, Patterson and Lee were surprised to have uncovered two hidden epidemics of abuse in America. One was child abuse; the other was date rape. James Patterson is chairman of the J. Walter Thompson Ad Agency in New York.

JAMES PATTERSON: There is a very real, very large problem with date rape in this country. The number we came up with for date rape was one in five, which is about, I think it's around 18-million adult women in the country who believe that they've been victims of date rape. 4% said they weren't sure, which is an interesting statistic in itself but, you know, whatever. It is, it isn't a, it isn't a black and white issue. It is a gray issue for a lot of people but there's an awful lot of people out there who feel in their hearts that they have been raped in a dating situation. We found that more than half of the people who had had that happen to them had never told anyone about it, literally no one.

CALLIE KHOURI: The only empirical evidence against the research which documents the prevalence of date rape and sexual assault is offered by Neil Gilbert when he refers to a study conducted by the National Crime Survey of the Bureau of Justice statistics which found that only 1.2 women out of 1,000 over the age of 12 were victims of rape or attempted rape. Why is this study so out of line with the rest of the research in the field?

SUSAN FALUDI: Go back and look at the study, you find it's a government study that is so badly flawed that even the government researchers who worked on the study themselves say that it terribly under-counts rape and they're in the process of overhauling the study. Just to give you a couple examples, the study operates on an antiquated definition of rape. It does not include sodomy; it does not include anal intercourse. It also is a study that does not actually ask, "were you ever raped"?

THE RESEARCH ON MALES

CALLIE KHOURI: So, while social science does not have the accuracy of physics, one thing is clear. There is not an expert in the field, male or female who denies that acquaintance rape is a serious problem. Now, most of the research that we have looked at regarding sexual assault within dating relationships has been based mainly on the responses of women. Let's presume, for the sake of argument, that this research didn't exist, that we ignored what thousands of women have been telling researchers about sexual assault. What would we know about sexual violence from the research that has been conducted on men? Dr. Neil Malamuth of UCLA is a leading expert in the area of male sexual aggression.

NEIL MALAMUTH: But if we look at the responses of men in our studies, most of them have been college students, although we've studied men who are not students as well, we find that a substantial percentage, as many as let's say about a third or more indicate that they have some attraction to sexual aggression, that they could think of themselves as engaging in sexually aggressive acts, including rape so, for example, if we ask men, "how likely would you be to coerce a woman into sexual acts if you could be assured that you would not be punished and you would not be caught", we find that about a third of men indicate some likelihood that they would engage in such a behavior. And when we compare men in the general population, including college students, to convicted rapists, we find that there are many parallels, many similarities and that these kinds of self-reports do tell us that this kind of phenomena of sexually aggressive behavior is not a rare isolated behavior but occurs in many college campuses among many men.

CALLIE KHOURI: We can also learn a great deal about male attitudes and behavior from how men talk about sex. Sean Gilmore of the University of Illinois conducted interviews with male students on the subject of the language men use when talking about sex. You need to be warned that you are going to hear some very graphic and violent language in what follows but remember that this language reflects the attitudes that these men bring to their sexual relations and that in at least some male groups, this language is considered normal.

[Young men, identities blurred]

You get two different guys with, with girls they may not like, like a, kind of a hate sex type thing where they just say like "I fucked her really hard", you know, "I did her so hard, she, you know, she's got to be pissing blood right now" but, you know, you'll see, there will be a, a group of guys in bars and maybe some little, real pretty little girl will drive by, and you know, somebody will say, "man, she really needs a dick in the ass" or "somebody should fuck her and leave her" or stuff like that, you know, just "she really needs to be left out in the cold", you know, just like to be taught a lesson or something.

There's one guy used to always call them HTB for Hurt The Bitch because every time he said he got one he hurt the bitch so he called them HTB, thrashing a woman, you know, doing it to her until she's hurting, until she's sore, you know, that's something he

bragged about, you know, all the time. The day after a guy, you know, guy goes to bed with a woman, he'll come back and he'll say, "man, I thrashed her man; I did it cause she was crying". Another one, like if you see a woman or you know a woman, a bunch of guys know a female who they perceive to be what they call a bitch, you know, they'll say, you know, "what she needs is a good fuck to put her in line", like "fuck her; straighten her out; it'll be punishment for her" or, you know, or tame her, you know, like she's some type of wild horse or something and a good fuck will just, you know, tame her so, um. Another one I've come across is, um, "doing it until she bleeds, making her bleed". That's a type of a, a thing that, you know, brag about, you know. Even if you, I don't know, a lot of guys might, even if they, you know, don't want to have intercourse with them anymore they'll do it just to, you know, try and do it until she bleeds so you can brag about it.

I don't know if you've ever heard of hate fucking or whatever but like when you're out and a girl will walk in with like this big attitude and you're like, "man, I'd just like to fuck the hell out of her; I'd pound her; I'd nail her to the wall" or something. Like on campus, there might be a girl that you know in a class or something like that and she just gets the reputation of being like what you consider a bitch or something like that and you're like "man, I'd just like to fuck her" and the same thing if she was blowing you or whatever and you hit her in the face "you dick slapped her" and they use the same thing and it goes back to the, the hate fucking or whatever. I've heard my friends say that before and it would be like you're in a bar, a girl comes in, you know, and you think she's got an attitude, you're like "man, I'd just like to dick slap her".

MALE HYSTERIA AND THE BACKLASH

SUSAN DOUGLAS: It's important not to over-emphasize Roiphe as an individual. It's also important not to single out and say Neil Gilbert per se as, as a single individual as well. Yes, Roiphe was parroting much of what he said but Gilbert as well is the tip of the iceberg. He simply represents a much broader conservative establishment in this country that does characterize much of the mass media as well. The media have become more conservative over the last 15 years and so I think we have to look at these individuals as, as people obviously in their own right but as representatives of a much broader institutional situation that progressives and feminists confront on a daily basis.

MARY KOSS: I've actually had reporters tell me that they would love to write a story about the legitimate problem of rape but that their editors tell them that the only thing they're interested in hearing about is that rape is a bogus issue.

CALLIE KHOURI: But what is driving the one-sided coverage of the date rape controversy? Susan Faludi believes that it is male fear and hysteria that is the driving force of the backlash.

SUSAN FALUDI: Long before Katie Roiphe was, was penning *The Morning After*, Norman Podhoretz, the neo-conservative writer, wrote a long, I think it was a seven-page article in *Commentary*, a Right Wing publication, in which he bemoaned all the attention that the feminists had brought on to the subject of, of rape and date rape and he warned at the end of it that this would lead to an increase in male wimps and an increase in male impotence. Then this is the real fear that, that was beneath the incredible hostility toward feminists raising the subject of date rape. It's that, not that, that this, bringing this issue up will hurt women or make women more victimized but that it will hurt the position of men who have been calling the shots when it comes to what is acceptable and unacceptable sexual behavior.

CALLIE KHOURI: Katie Roiphe herself says that she has received a lot of mail from men who are afraid that they can no longer be "real men."

[TV interview: Katie Roiphe] I got letters from Wall Street bankers and letters from professors and they all come down to sort of the same letter, which is sort of amazing because they're different languages but what they're saying is, you know, it's not okay to be masculine anymore, like how am I supposed to be a man?

KATHA POLLITT: So I think men are very frightened to think that, um, and, and there's a great interest in, ah, having a very clear definition. This is rape, this isn't rape and when women redefine it, even conversationally, this is terrifying but there is also a redefinition process going on of what constitutes fair play between the sexes, um, and I think that is happening and Katie Roiphe and Charles Krauthammer and all the other people who write, people who write on that, etc., think that's very bad. There should not be this redefinition, that this is taking, you know, normal male behavior and normal

female behavior and saying, “oh, this is just all awful”, um, and whereas this is just nature.

THE EFFECTS OF THE DATE-RAPE BACKLASH – Silencing Women

SUSAN FALUDI: What's probably the most disturbing aspect of the media's attack on feminist efforts to bring acquaintance rape to public attention is the effect it will have on women who themselves have been raped or been the victims of an attempted rape because what feminism has enabled women to do through discussion of rape is to legitimize women's experience, to give words to that experience and to give women the permission to speak up about their experience in public. The media attack will have the opposite effect.

Victim Remorse

[Rape Victim, 16 years old when assaulted] Unfortunately, it's strange because I think the result is, is that after what happened to me, I end up thinking I wish you would hit me across the face, like I wish you would have broken my jaw or I wish you had held a knife to my throat because then people would believe me, people would take it seriously, and people would know that this wasn't my fault that this happened to me. And I think when we get to a point where victims are wishing that there had been more violence so that they could get the services and the respect and the validation that they need, there's a problem.

BRANDING FEMINISM AS ANTI PLEASURE

BELL HOOKS: That's why I feel like Katie Roiphe's book is primarily made for men and for conservative women who really want to see feminism as evil and it's interesting that it becomes a kind of way to talk about it as, as anti-pleasure and since pleasure is so much in people's imaginations right now, how do we have pleasure? How do we satisfy desire? And to say that feminism is anti-desire is to really have incredibly strong propagandistic move to disinterest young people and feminism. I mean, who have the people been that have become strong feminists? A lot of young men and women have been converted to feminist thinking through the classroom, through the college setting so why not target this issue to make feminism look bad?

SUSAN DOUGLAS: News media have been, in some ways, feminism's best ally and also feminism's most lethal enemy. On the one hand, when the second wave of feminism burst forth in 1970, the news media regarded feminism as one of the biggest stories of the year, which it was, and gave women a great platform from which to speak to millions of other women who didn't know yet that there was a women's movement and learned about it from the news media but the downside was that the way in which feminists and feminism, you know, were covered also marginalized it, feminism, as, you know, out of the mainstream, not really in touch with most women and demonized feminists as, you know, man-hating, child loathing, anti-fashion, humorless heretics from Hades right, and this stereotype is still very much with us today.

But because of this ongoing news frame about feminism being out of the mainstream, there's always going to be a news peg for the latest anti-feminist woman. The most recent one, the latest media darling is Christina Hoff Sommers who has written this book, *Who Stole Feminism*, in which she seeks to use various studies that feminists have done to debunk feminism by saying that they are statistically flawed, that they overstate women's victimization and that they overstate the kind of economic and political exploitation that women experience. This woman is, is getting picked up everywhere for the same reasons that Roiphe was picked up, for the same reasons that Paglia was picked up and there will be another one after her, you know, and it's really part of this ongoing frame in the media about demonizing feminism and using women as surrogates for conservative men and using, and pitting women against each other so that none of them really seem legitimate.

FIGHTING THE POLEMIC

BELL HOOKS: Most people have come to Katie Roiphe's ideas through the degree to which she has been serialized in magazines and in that sense people who are reading magazines on an airplane, in a bus station, in the privacy of their home aren't people looking for facts. They are catching on to that polemical argument so my sense was where we could intervene most critically would be to challenge that, that polemic rather than challenge the idea of fact so I think that's a useful critique. I don't think that's the critique that's going to sway a public away from absorbing Katie Roiphe's ideas and believing that she's speaking truth.

SUSAN DOUGLAS: I think there's actually one kind of good thing about these anti-feminist attacks, is that they do galvanize feminists and they galvanize friends of feminists who see the attacks and realize that they're kind of beyond the pail and know that women really are victims of violence in this country, and women really do suffer from domestic abuse and sexual assault and date rape, that these are very real things and women aren't statistics, they are real people, and so when these anti-feminist attacks I think galvanize a lot of us and inspire us to go out there and keep fighting the good fight, and that involves doing a lot of things. It involves teaching, women and men, the truth. It involves lobbying the mass media, calling them up, faxing them, writing to them, complaining about the kinds of coverage that we see and the kinds of coverage we don't see, saying, you know, why am I not seeing Katha Pollitt more on the McLaughlin group or why am I not seeing Barbara Ehrenreich or bell hooks or whomever? I think we have to stay on them and so I think that even though the stuff can make you rather discouraged and infuriated at times, it also keeps the juices flowing and inspires us to go out and keep fighting for equal rights, respect and security for girls and women in this country.

CALLIE KHOURI: There is a new and important task for those of us, men and women, who want to do something to change the present situation. We have to articulate and fight for our ideas as powerfully as the media that tries to distort them. Feminism isn't simply about criticizing things. It's also about men and women being able to be together in social and sexual relationships that are not primarily about dominance and subjugation. We have to show that respect, autonomy, sex, pleasure, fun and equality go together. Unless we can express this alternative vision, the media will be free to continue to distort what feminism is all about. The choice is ours. I'm Callie Khouri.