

Society Skirts Sexual Assault

This piece discusses topics of SA and other sensitive topics that may be triggering

State courts do not seem to take sexual assault cases seriously and sexual harassment is a natural everyday occurrence for most females in society. Although sexual assault is not a women's issue, it is treated as such by the justice system, which shows a lack of concern and regard for their everyday safety.

Sexual assault, Abuse, and Harassment are all issues that are prevalent but often skirted around by society and the justice system. Courts dismissed several cases of sexual assault because of lack of evidence and plea bargains according to Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network ([RAINN](#)).

This lack of evidence, also known as a sexual assault forensic exam or "rape kit," must be DNA evidence conducted from the crime scene. However, according to the [statute of limitations](#) per state, the testing of the evidence could be put on hold because of other high-priority cases like murder.

Tik Tok is a popular hub for social issues where people highlight sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual assault. Users have been able to call attention to cases to spread awareness. For example, the Tik Tok account known as "GenZforchange", brought attention to Denim Day, April 28, a day created in solidarity with SA(sexual assault) survivors. It is a response to an Italian Supreme Court ruling in 1998 which overturned a conviction because the victim was wearing tight denim jeans.

A recent Tik Tok trend created from a statistic: "97% of women aged 18-24 have experienced sexual harassment". In the trend, young women put a finger down for harassment they've

experienced. In response, Emily Cocea, 18, a Tik Tok user with 143.4K followers, had the concern that young boys may be falling into this dangerous thought pattern of “sexism isn’t that bad or feminism isn’t that important, the number, 97% to see repeated again and again is very eye-opening to the reality of the world that we’re in.”

Cocea utilizes her platform to spread awareness about sexual assault, abuse, discrimination, and the lack of public policies that combat these issues. “Freshman year, some bad stuff happened to me. Very quickly I had to become accustomed to the world that I live in and exist in as a woman” she said. Cocea described her content on Tik Tok mostly having to do with sexual assault and sexual violence, and: “... the way that a lot of our policy, legally has to do with revenge, like extending sentences or applying the death penalty sooner.”

Shaine Spillman, a political science major at SMC, a former women’s rights club president at her high school, and advocate, notes how “the verbiage in the way that we talk about sexual assault and rape always has a focus on women: ‘she was raped’ and not ‘he raped her’.” This also sheds light on the fact that Sexual Assault is not a “women’s” issue specifically, but accountability that must be placed on lawmakers and the rapist.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence, assault, harassment, or abuse and needs resources, click this [link](#).