

I know I said yes, but I meant no; you should have known that

written by NARSOL | May 26, 2014

An article in *Time* magazine's May issue titled "The Sexual Assault Crisis on American Campuses" by Eliza Grey is a must-read for those following the trends of sexual assault issues and concerned with where those trends are leading us. It uses the microcosm/macrocosm concept by focusing on one university, the University of Montana in Missoula, as reflective of the situation of college sexual assault throughout all of the United States.

As one would expect from *Time*, the piece is reasonably balanced and objective; nevertheless, the message is clear: sexual assault is a serious problem on American campuses, and the initiatives being mandated from the White House to deal with the problem need to be taken seriously. Just the name is impressive—the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault—and its mandate even more so: "To strengthen federal enforcement efforts and provide schools with additional tools to combat sexual assault on their campuses."

What this translates into, according to even the pro-task force *Time*'s piece, are attitudes and actions that will, more than ever, equate an accusation with an act and shout "rape apologist" to anyone who insists or even suggests that a male has the right to a fair defense. And yes, the students who are to be protected from sexual assault are female—totally, it seems—which means that males are

whom they need to be protected from.

I found several things in the article especially disturbing. One is the fact that the county attorney of Missoula, Montana, after White House and media scrutiny descended on his town and college, was obviously taken to task in that his record did not reflect an appropriately enthusiastic prosecution of college rape cases. The criticism was so severe that he felt it necessary to publicly defend his record—he says his prosecution rate is consistent with national averages—and is not cooperating with the Justice Department's investigation into his office on the basis that they are overstepping their bounds.

I also am disturbed by the fact that, while the role of alcohol and partying and drinking is acknowledged in contributing to the confusion about what is and is not sexual assault, virtually all if not totally all of the responsibility for behavior within this context is on the male. A female drinking to the point of not being sure what she did or with whom is a victim. A male in the same situation is a rapist. Rape is an abhorrent crime. It should be prosecuted and punished. But I simply cannot find justification for the opinion that the same behavior in two different people has opposite meanings based on the gender of the people.

I tend to be more in sync with Cathy Young, who shares her analysis of the situation in her own op/ed, ["Guilty Until Proven Innocent: The Skewed White House Crusade on Sexual Assault."](#) She concludes, "A far better solution would be to draw a clear line between forced sex (by violence, threats or incapacitation) and unwanted sex due to alcohol-impaired judgment, miscommunication or

verbal pressure. For the former, victims should be encouraged to seek real justice: a rapist deserves prison, not expulsion from college. For the latter, the answer is to promote mutual responsible behavior, not female victimhood.”