

Lesson 13

Rape and Rape Culture

Activity 1

Readings and Discussion

Within rape culture, sexism perpetuates the idea that men have power over women and women are sexual objects. For instance, sexist jokes can foster disrespect for women and show disregard for their well-being. Another example is a female rape victim being blamed for her rape because of how she dressed or acted. By portraying the victim as a slut, men come across as less worthy of blame for their actions. These rape scripts encourage the idea that men cannot control their sexuality and that exerting control over women is acceptable.

Can you see any of these beliefs playing out in the two articles below?

ARTICLE 1: [Philly Judge Criticized for Rape Decision](#)

In 2007, a Philadelphia municipal court judge Teresa Carr Deni made a controversial decision to dismiss rape and sexual assault charges against a man who raped a prostitute at gunpoint. In her decision she explained that the case was not a rape, but rather an armed robbery and a theft of services.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you agree with the judge that this is robbery?
- Is any rape robbery of a kind? What is stolen?
- Why would someone think a prostitute can't be raped? Do you agree that rape is worse than robbery? What makes it worse?

ARTICLE 2: [Roman Polanski: Backlash as Whoopi Goldberg Says Director Didn't Commit 'Rape-Rape'](#)

Another example of rape culture in the media is the statement made by Whoopi Goldberg when defending director Roman Polanski charged with sexual assault of a 13 year old female. She stated that it wasn't "rape rape."

Discussion Questions:

- What did Whoopi mean by 'rape-rape'?
- How does her statement contribute to rape culture?
- What are the key elements in this story that suggest to you that this was a rape?