

HE'S DRUNK, SHE'S A VICTIM



WHOEVER THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE AN INEBRIATION double standard?! But indeed there is. And unfortunately, it's not even funny—it's dangerous.

Men are supposed to get drunk to bond and to have fun. At worst, someone ends up waking up with an unfortunately placed tattoo or with a fun story about ending up in Mexico or some such shit. If you're a woman, you're supposed to drink to "loosen up," specifically for the sex. And while I'm definitely not against having some drinks and getting your sex on, this dynamic is part of what makes for date and acquaintance rape—and that's just scary.

I have done my fair share of partying. You might even say that for a time I was a party girl. I went out and got drunk, fell down while drunk, and definitely let alcohol grease the wheels for several hookups. But I also saw some disturbing shit in those days that I wish I hadn't. I saw girlfriends the morning after a night of binge drinking who said they didn't remember if they had had sex. I saw guys grabbing at women in a way that went beyond sexual or flirty—it was aggressive. I saw stuff that I'd rather not even mention here. Again, this isn't to say that I think drinking is an inherently bad thing. But I do think that our drinking culture and the inebriation double standard target women in a creepy way, and that they allow for women to be blamed when something bad happens.

Take cheap drinks and bar deals. The ladies'-night phenomenon is really something else—you have to love the genius of bar owners who make it easy and cheap for women to get ridiculously drunk, and then have guys pay to come and hang out with them. Be honest—you know this shit isn't about making a nice night for women; it's about providing drunk women for men! (Besides, the drinks at ladies' night are always watered down or sucky sugary margaritas that give you a wicked headache in the morning.)

But it's not just crappy bar deals we're talking about. Just think about the way that women are still (still!) blamed for their own rapes if they had the gall to have a drink or two. The common sentiment is still that women who get drunk either are sluts who are looking for an excuse to have sex or should have known better than to make themselves "vulnerable." Writer (and general badass lady) Jaclyn Friedman wrote an amazing article on drinking and rape in which she discussed her own assault and what could have been done to stop it:

Let's look a little more closely at that correlation between rape and alcohol. That's not a correlation between female drinking and rape. It's a correlation between all drinking and rape. In fact, studies have shown that it's more likely that a male rapist has been drinking than that his female victim has. So if we want to raise awareness about the links between drinking and rape, we should start by getting the word out to men that alcohol is likely to impair their ability to respond appropriately if a sexual partner says "no." When was the last time you read that article in any kind of publication?

Well, because of the drinking (or any kind of substance, really) double standard, you never would hear of something like that. Instead, the

onus for rape is put on the woman who was drinking, not the rapist—drunk or not. Jaclyn hit the nail on the head: “The silence around men’s drinking is, of course, part of a much larger ‘boys will be boys’ culture, one which played a large part in my assault. The party I attended was for a men’s sports team; the coaches provided the alcohol.” So why is it, then, that all of the warnings about rape and drinking are directed at women? Shouldn’t we be telling young men that drinking puts them in danger of crossing the line? No way—because guys’ drinking is fun; it’s normal socializing. But girls’ drinking has always meant the same thing: sex.

Take the seventeen-year-old woman in California who was gang-raped—despite three female eyewitnesses pushing their way into a room where the girl, with clothes around her ankles and vomit on her face, was being assaulted with ten men looking on. (The three young women fought to get her out of the room; they had seen her being dragged in and figured something bad was going on.) Charges against the men were dropped—apparently they couldn’t know if the woman consented or not because she was drunk. Never mind that she had puke all over her—that sure screams, “I’m ready to have sex,” huh? (And just a thought—if a guy woke up and had been raped by another man after drinking too much, do you have any doubt in your mind that people would believe the victim? Just saying.)

Now, you can’t talk drinking, assault, and woman blaming without talking about Girls Gone Wild. Tricking drunk women, or making out like coerced drunk women are just being the exhibitionists they always wanted to be, is the whole philosophy behind the porn (and sleaze) empire Girls Gone Wild. I mean, in what universe can you sign a consent form while shitfaced? If you signed a will or a contract while under the

influence of something, it wouldn’t be valid. Yet drunken teens agreeing to strip? Not a problem. And again, I’m not saying that all the women in those videos have been taken advantage of. But the model that CGW is working under assumes that these women need to be tricked, convinced, and, most important—good and drunk. I’m sorry, but that just does not sound like fun.

See... *what to do?*

Don’t get trashed. Obviously, I’m not against drinking. And I don’t think that women should forgo having a social life in what will probably be a vain attempt to protect themselves against assault. (Remember, it’s not a drunk woman who facilitates a rape, it’s the fucking rapist.) But I do think that young women drink too much and that it’s just generally bad for us. Besides, nothing worth doing is more fun when you’re drunk. Arm yourself with knowledge about rape culture and victim blaming. And if you have a bad feeling at a party, or about a drunk friend or a drunk guy, follow your instincts.