

Viewpoints



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Dissatisfaction

Proposal to place visitation decision in hands of President Palms makes sense

SG President Brian Comer and former SG President Carl Solomon presented a proposal to the Board of Trustees last week that would give the power to control campus visitation to USC President John Palms. The three-page memo details the numerous problems the visitation policy has wrought and the consistent student dissatisfaction with present restrictions.

Among the problems Comer and Solomon attribute to the visitation policy are a significant drop in housing enrollment since the policy's approval in 1988 and a lack of community within the individual residence halls.

The motion to transfer authority to the university president wasn't seconded in last week's meeting of the Student-Trustee Liaison Committee, and is to be discussed at the next meeting.

The fact of the matter is, most students aren't happy with the visitation policy as it stands, and presumably, the purpose of student housing should be to satisfy students, right?

Few would argue that a president's first responsibility should be to that of his constituency and the satisfaction of the student body is, or should be, the most important part of Palms' agenda. That being the case, what is the problem with giving the president the right to correct what exit surveys list as the biggest gripe with student housing?

According to the report, a significant reason for visitation restrictions is campus security. The campus in 1993 is well-lit and nearly covered by call-boxes, and most residence halls have a perimeter access system that prevents nonresidents from entering the building.

In addition, nearly every building has student-workers whose job is to check the keys of entering residents, although this particular "security" is seldom a reality, as most keys are never checked at most halls.

The implication that students in "traditional style" residence halls can't have opposite sex visitors after 11:30 p.m. apparently is a move to prevent students from fostering relationships that extend beyond daylight hours.

Thus, the visitation policy prevents male and female students from studying together in their rooms as often as it prevents sexual liaisons, if not more so.

Students don't need USC to act as a moral guardian, and the backlash from attempts at such activities is that students are forced to study together in the library, which closes relatively early, or somewhere else. Students are here to pay for a place to live and an education, not to be insulted by ludicrous restrictions.

Comer and Solomon's administrations seem to have taken positive steps toward doing what students have repeatedly stated that they want — a change in the visitation policy — and one would hope that the president of the university would be competent to make such a decision.

Accused taking advantage of victimization status

While guilty or not guilty, or some variation of the two, is the historic plea of those accused of a crime, today's high profile accused enjoy a new legal loophole: victim status.

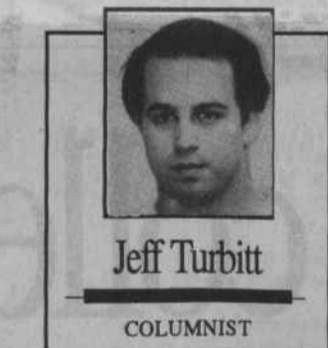
The role of victim has come a long way in the American psyche. Years of unreported rape and prosecuted cases which tended to put the real victim on trial, became an issue ingrained into the American consciousness beginning in the late '80s. Just as sympathies to Vietnam veterans changed with films like "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July," Jodie Foster's 1988 film "The Accused," which documented an actual rape case in New Bedford, Mass., did the same. It was a start in this shifting of American attitudes toward rape, and victims.

Throughout the late '80s there were media reports, and talk show testimony by stars like Oprah Winfrey, the Jacksons, Roseanne Barr and others of how sexual and physical abuse were not being prosecuted with just diligence. As a result, sympathy to claims of victimhood of these crimes are now at a peak. But the cruel irony of this is that the alleged victims are turning violent.

By this victim conditioning, the public is not more likely to overlook, or forgive, cold-blooded murder or hate crimes. When Damian Williams hits truck driver Reginald Denny with a brick in a race riot, society is put on trial more than Williams, the real perpetrator.

In what should be an open and shut case in California, where the two Menendez brothers shot their parents dead in cold blood but claimed prior sexual abuse by the father, a jury finds itself hopelessly deadlocked. No matter how patently obvious the crime, vague claims to personal trauma can mitigate the callousness of the resulting actions.

When Floyd Brown was indicted



Jeff Turbitt
 COLUMNIST

in relation to the slaying of Eau Claire student Earnest Dunlap, Brown gave the reverse victim process in his original court statement.

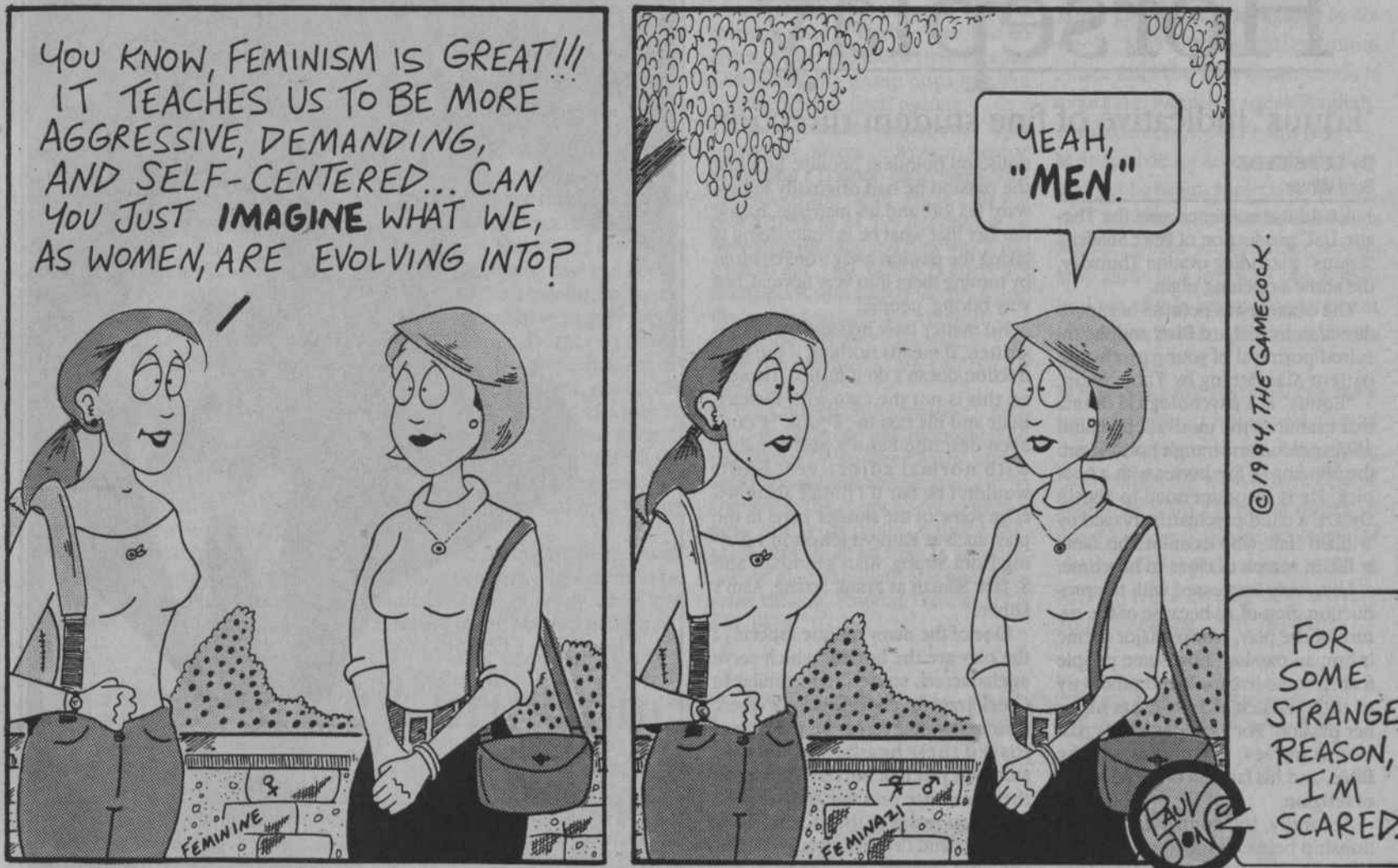
"He kept coming towards me like he was still going to do something to me. I didn't want to shoot him. I really didn't want to have any problem at all with him 'cause, I guess, that's just how I am."

The word "still" is key to his statement, for "still" implies that he was being stalked, and not the other way around. Brown is claiming to be the victim. Is there another jury stupid enough to believe him right here in the Midlands? The obvious question of why did Brown bring a gun to school if he didn't want to shoot Dunlap will be obscured in the process.

No matter how helpless you are, when you react violently to another person in a situation where self-defense wasn't called for, you have lost your status as a victim. You're a victimizer.

Lorena Bobbitt wasn't inexorably on the path of cutting off her husband's penis. She chose to do so; she is the criminal. Yet a jury called it temporary insanity.

When courts and juries tell these people they are not personally responsible, it sets a dangerous precedent against the rule of law and order.



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FOR SOME STRANGE REASON, I'M SCARED.

Quote, Unquote

"It's a privilege to be here. This is a great university and a great law school. And I think it will make a perfect center for us."

Janet Reno
 U.S. Attorney General

New feminism natural response to women's rights

You can imagine my surprise when I opened my copy of The State last Sunday and saw the words "do me" and "feminism" in the same sentence. For a moment, I thought Andrew Dice Clay was writing a guest column. However, I was wrong.

The articles I read detailed the exploits of a new breed of woman known as the "do me feminist." Apparently, many young women have "embraced a feminism that's not man-hating or castrating, but profoundly pro-sexual." Huh-huh, huh-huh. Cool.

I decided I was a natural to investigate the "new feminism." I host a talk show on WCFG-TV that deals exclusively with men's issues...OK, so it's a sports talk show. Same difference. You can still watch it at 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays on Gamecock Cablevision Channel 4.

The Sportin' Fool will have his exclusive review of "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus," and Tony Santori will discuss Bobby Knight's struggle with his superego. Now, where was I?

To prepare for my column, I decided to do two things I don't normally get to do. First, I went out on a date this week. (Feminism was not discussed.) Then, I researched the topic. Here are some quotes from the "do me's," stolen from recent magazine articles:

"Degrade me when I ask you to." — Lisa Palac, editor of Future Sex magazine.

"A lot of us just want to go spray paint and make out with our boyfriends and not worry about oppression." — Lois Maffeo, riot grrrl singer.



Pat McNeill
 COLUMNIST

"The lines between rape and sex begin to blur...the idea that only an explicit yes means yes proposes that, like children, women have trouble communicating what they want." — Katie Roiphe, feminist author.

"(Women's studies) is full of homely women who are just mad at the beautiful girls." — Christina Hoff Summers, professor at Clark University.

"Feminism should be fun...if in order to be a feminist one must be...left-wing and convinced of Anita Hill's veracity, then feminism has entered its helpless status as a perpetual minority party." — Naomi Wolf, "power feminist" author.

Naturally, these "pioneers" have been blasted by the feminist mainstream for their comments. But I think anyone who sincerely wants to help the women's movement should pay attention to these gatecrashers, no matter how tabloidesque they sound. Let me offer free advice from the perspective of the "underdone" male.

1. Anyone who believes that groups such as NOW truly represent the American woman is either drunk or stupid. The latest poll results say that less than

one-third of young females consider themselves "feminists." This is because:

2. Women have made their greatest economic and political strides during the past 15 years. According to The New Republic, women gained more in earnings during the 1980s than in the entire post-World War II era before that.

Sex discrimination was outlawed in federal programs. Women such as Thatcher and Bhutto ran countries that owned nuclear weapons. More women and men earned bachelor of science degrees during the 1980s. And that was during the "evil" era of Reagan and Bush! Just think what the next 10 years will bring.

3. With economic and discrimination problems declining, feminism has run out of unifying political issues. How many young women are going to run to the picket lines over lesbian rights? Or the Hyde Amendment? Not many. Women are as divided across the political spectrum as men are. Rape and sexual harassment are still problems, but as more women assert their power and speak up, the problems look less insurmountable.

I haven't quite made up my mind on "do me feminism" yet. Heck, I don't even know what Lois Maffeo wants to do with the spray paint. But I have no control over this debate or how it will end. If "do me feminism" is inevitable, I guess I'll have to relax and enjoy it.

Letters

Women shouldn't have to accept harassment

To the editor:

In response to Jeff Turbitt's column on sexual harassment, I have a few comments. How, sir, would you define being locked in a room and fondled once you told the person to get the hell off of you? What would you say when a university official made jokes at your organizational meeting and said rape and harassment doesn't happen on USC's campus?

Let me tell you something. Number one, I do not have to deal with men winking or staring at me. I do not have to deal with idiotic advances a man makes at me. Oh, I forgot, maybe you lowly women don't have the same rights and freedoms to personal invasion as you so humble men.

Perhaps, I should assume you, Mr. Turbitt, would "get off" if a woman locked you in a room and assaulted you. Or maybe you'd enjoy a woman winking and staring at you. Maybe you think women don't have the same rights to personal freedom as men.

If you want sexual harassment defined, call your local solicitor. Or have

you tried a dictionary? I will not stand for some creep to stare or gawk at me. I will not "just deal with it!" If you think all men deserve all the respect you give yourselves, try giving the other half of this planet a little respect. Look into the word harassment; what do you see? I see an ass! How's that for your definition, Mr. Turbitt?

Jennifer Dougherty
 Political science senior

Columnist doesn't advocate harassment

To the editor:

In response to Amy Meyer's letter of March 23, I find great irony, not to mention much amusement, in Ms. Meyer's implication that Mr. Turbitt, the author of that shrewd and very polished opinion with which she is so taken aback, takes not upon himself the reading, or research, requisite for the task of editorial writing.

First, I am acquainted with Mr. Turbitt, and I can assure Ms. Meyer that one would be hard-put to find, even in these midlands of South Carolina, a reader of "the newspaper" more

thorough and more consistent than he. On this accusation, then, she is wrong.

But more important, and more ironic yet, is the fact that, even as she makes this unfounded accusation, yet she herself, in that characteristically feminist zeal for rowdy righteousness and noise, has exposed both her carelessness as a reader of the fore-said "biased" (as opposed to "unbiased") opinion and her ignorance of Mr. Turbitt manifestly (to the careful reader) has to say.

What he has to say is not unreasonable when one considers that such horrific examples of harassment as Ms. Meyer describes are not defended by him. Should she take the time to re-read the editorial, she might discover that Mr. Turbitt mentions specifically the wrongness of "out-and-out" harassment, examples of which Ms. Meyer presents. What sorts of gestures do not constitute harassment, what Mr. Turbitt calls "flirting," is, or should be, another matter altogether.

Yet it seems to be prevalent in feminist circles the assumption that whenever a man refers to "flirting" he must be using that word to gloss over and make seem innocuous what is actually an offensive or a threatening act.

But this is not always the case. Now there are certain mild gestures necessary for the initiation of such figments of courtship as, say, the "date" (e.g., "What are your dinner plans tonight?"); and these, when broached respectfully, give rise to marriage and procreation, if not just an episodic romance.

If I am not mistaken, women likewise "flirt" in this way with men. This sort of thing is necessary as it is natural. As long as it is not threatening, or carried on against the expressed wishes of the second party, it is not harassment. I should think that everyone knows this, but perhaps Ms. Meyer has never been flattered with this sort of attention.

In any case, this is what Mr. Turbitt means by such terms as "flirting" or "overture." Unfortunately, in the lucrative business of victimization as it now exists, even these harmless rituals are sometimes warrant for one's perdition.

Matthew H. Dewey
 English/psychology senior

Voices

Should SG have the authority to influence the visitation policy?



"Yes. This is a university for the students, and it should be up to the students. A lot of the parents want the visitation policy, but they aren't the ones going to school here."

Paul McKinney
 History sophomore



"Yes. If there is a lot of support by the campus and the rest of student government."

Mike Dozier
 Political science junior



"I think the president should meet with the rest of the council members. He should have a conference with the senators because they have more interaction with the students."

Tracy Sabb
 Accounting freshman



"The policy is set by housing, and being a student, the president shouldn't have the authority."

Linda Kraska
 Psychology senior



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