“All I maintain is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it’s up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences.”

Albert Camus, *The Plague*
What is going on here?

The more acquaintance rapes are reported—and the more acquaintance rape claims are taken seriously by prosecutors, judges, and juries—the more people clamor that women are falsely claiming they’ve been raped. And if the accuser is not lying, then she is responsible for the incident by drinking and being sexually promiscuous, her actions resulting in sexual penetration that, though unwanted, cannot be considered serious or harmful.

12.3 percent of American women over 18 years of age (>14 million women) state they have been forcibly sexually penetrated within their lifetimes—620,000 of these within the last twelve months. 

--Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Acquaintance rape skeptics

- Ridicule statistics
- Claim over broad definition of rape that is really “bad sex”
- Claim as many as 50% of rape allegations are deliberately false
The number of rape cases in which charges are filed has declined.

- Between 1971 and 2006 the number of defendants charged with rape as a ratio of the number of rapes reported to police have been cut in half.
- This decrease contradicts allegations that out-of-control prosecutors are filing an increased number of cases.
- In 80% of these incidents the accuser knows the accused.

Rate of “false” reports

The Distortion of Rape Statistics

Backlash to perception of anti-male feminists
Is acquaintance rape the price for women’s sexual freedom?

Is acquaintance rape the result of women’s promiscuity?

How did we get here?

Against Our Will, by Susan Brownmiller in 1975, sought to make the act of rape, like lynching, a political crime.
Is it an epidemic?

In her book *The Word of a Woman: Police, Rape and Belief*, researcher Jan Jordan identified the curious paradox:

“when women accuse men of wrongdoing, they are doubted; when they retract, they are believed. If they allege abuse, their word is suspect; if they retract an abuse allegation, their word suddenly becomes credible. One is prompted to ask: Why is women’s word to be trusted only when it excuses and absolves men of responsibility for their violence against women?”

Psychologist Patrizia Romito commented in her book on the current acceptability of rape denial, noting that

“whereas pro-Nazi denial and anti-Semitism have been opposed and punished by society in their turn (in many European countries denying the Holocaust is against the law, for example), no punishment by society exists for those who trivialize male violence against women and children.”

*Deafening Silence*
The psychology of victim blaming

"Attributing responsibility to the victim makes us feel less vulnerable: if they suffered violence because they made a mistake, we can keep our belief in a just world or at least a predictable one, and we may find security in the fact that, if we behave well, nothing bad will happen to us."

Patrizia Romito, *Deafening Silence*

Psychiatrist Judith Herman has also reminded us that "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness."

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Responding to rape deniers