



The Monthly Rag

Brought to You by the Feminist & Gender Studies Student Advisory Council and Edited by Kadesha Caradine (FGS '16)

#BlackLivesMatter by Nebeu Abraha ('18)

He who witnesses an injustice but stands idly by and allows the injustice to continue is just as bad, if not worse, than the original aggressor. With this belief in mind, last Tuesday, we shut down Cascade Ave.

Recently, Darren Wilson was not indicted for murdering Michael Brown. As I sat with my fellow peers in complete disbelief following the decision, it became clear to me that the verdict meant that Michael Brown's life was declared unworthy of trial. This case is relevant, because it is bigger than just Michael Brown. This case made an indirect statement on the status of Black men in America. Black lives simply don't matter as much. Black lives are disposable, Black people are a source of danger, and our "justice" system will allow Black lives to continually be taken without any repercussion and in some case with reward.



It is imperative to recognize the main point to take away from our rally is that we are not only protesting Daren Wilson. We are not only outraged by his freedom. More than that, we are painstakingly frustrated with the system that makes stripping Black mothers of their teenage sons common place in our society. Although it sure would have helped ease the pain, Darren Wilson's arrest would not have ended police brutality or bring Michael Brown back to life. We often become much too concerned with the "facts" of the case, which are often frighteningly easy to skew, when the single truth that we need to focus on is that a life was lost when it didn't need to be. That's it. Michael Brown is dead. Black teens are being gunned down in the streets as if it were a national sport. This is the problem. When the verdict came out, I was not concerned with Darren Wilson. In my eyes, it was the killing of Black teens that was not indicted that day. This is the injustice that I see and the injustice that I have and will continue to combat.

Practicality is a luxury that we couldn't afford. To catalyze the change that we wanted to see, my fellow BSU officers and I had to think big. After spending much of the evening just trying to process the non-indictment of Wilson, around midnight, we began to take action. The march that shutdown streets in the second biggest city in the state of Colorado, the march that had several news stations begging for interviews, the march that had police officers scrambling to redirect traffic and regain control of the streets, was all started by 4 heartbroken students who wanted change. Once one person proposed the idea that we should shut down a street, we ran with it. We were up with the team of student leaders at CC sending last minute emails and speaking to news stations after hours at 2 am. We knew that the college-bound Michael Brown would have had a prolific voice if he had lived, but we wanted to ensure, that in his death, his voice would ring out ten times louder than it ever would have.

For the Michael Browns of the past, present, and future, we fight.

A Rape on Campus by Angela Kong ('17)

In order to change the discourse surrounding sexual assaults on college campuses, colleges need to reassess what issues and concerns need to be prioritized and brought to light. As Attorney Wendy Murphy states, "In these situations, the one who gets the most protection is either a wealthy kid, a legacy kid or an athlete. The more privileged he is, the more likely the woman has to die before he's held accountable." The responsibility of the actions performed should not attributed to the victims; it should be expected that those accountable for such actions, regardless of their background, are facing the consequences for their actions. Women in society are not being treated properly, and perpetuating gender expectations in relationships often results in dismissing these harmful actions, as they would be seen as men being unable to "control themselves" in the heat of the moment, and women feeling as though it's their responsibility to fulfill a man's needs.

As Janice Radway writes, "When asked why they [Smithton women] read romances, the Smithton women overwhelmingly cite escape or relaxation as their goal." These women are resorting to reading romances in order to escape from their unfulfilling lives. Expecting women to serve men reinforces gender inequality, and prioritizing men's opinions and privileged positions over women's causes rape and sexual assault cases to become less important and significant since it results in creating a "bad reputation" for men being accused. Additionally, media perpetuation of these paradoxical expectations make it even more difficult for women to be heard and recognized for being victims of an unjust and unequal society that privileges men and those in positions of power. Sabrina Erdely notes, "Victims should be encouraged to come forward as an act of civic good that could potentially spare future victims." In order for this to happen, victim blaming needs to change to allow rape victims to have the courage to come forward and know that they will be taken seriously and that their rapists will be held accountable.



A Body for Every Body by Lauren Robinson ('18)



Recently, Victoria's Secret changed one of their advertisement taglines from "The Perfect Body" to "A Body for Every Body." It took over 16,000 signatures on a petition in the U.K. and a string of impassioned responses by citizens across the globe to drive this popular lingerie company to oust their intensely body-shaming ad campaign. However, the campaign is not over. The "perfect body" posters still hang in the Victoria Secret stores. Moreover, they did not actually change much about the ad. They simply changed the white text on top of the pictures of the stick-thin, glossy models—who remained in the background. Additionally, Victoria's Secret disregarded the influence of the citizen's vigorous campaign on their decision to change the text. They proudly claimed that they were the ones to realize the advertisement was overtly body-shaming many women and that they made the executive decision to change it to something more inclusive. Additionally, while "A Body for Every body" seems inclusive, it does not match what is behind it: the same perfectly airbrushed women, presenting a homogenous definition of beauty.

What is Victoria's Secret trying to convey to its costumers with an advertisement about "The Perfect Body" with ten "flawless," playful women in the background? They are presenting a narrow-minded definition of beauty and constituting exactly who is allowed to wear their lingerie. All of these models have similar body types, hair styles, excessively made-up faces, sexy smirks and shiny skin tones. This advertisement utterly lacks diversity, even though the costumers who shop at Victoria's Secret have an extensive array of body types and appearances. According to Chris Jordan in "Marketing 'Reality' to the World," media "must be able to attract large numbers of people," and it must "attract the 'right' kinds of people." By applying Jordan's belief to the Victoria's Secret "Perfect Body" campaign, the average customer would be expected to maintain this image of "perfection" to be able to shop there.

This block on *The Rag* online: Read extended versions of the above articles. Additionally, the application for Heidi's summer 2015 course in Berlin is due on 12/5 at 5 pm—find the link on the site. Finally, if you would like to submit to the **Block 5 Rag**, email Editor Kadesha Caradine at Kadesha.Caradine@coloradocollege.edu by **Friday, January 23 at 5 pm!**

