



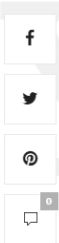
COLLEGE LIFE



This Must-Read Book Examines Why Sexual Assault On Campus Is Still So Prevalent

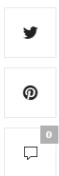
NOVEMBER 1 by NATALIE ZISA

Like 37 Tweet SAVE SHARE 1



You might feel like you've heard this before, but sexual assault is alive and thriving on college campuses. You can read any of the articles on our site to know that, let alone any other major women's publication. But that's just a small amount of the information available on the topic, leaving us with more questions than answers. Which is why journalist, Vanessa Grigoriadis, spent three years trying to find out why **campus rape is still so prevalent**.

She was inspired by the story of Emma Sulkowicz, who carried a 50-pound mattress for nine months to protest the handling of her alleged rape. She interviewed 120 students at more than a dozen schools, about 80 professors and university presidents, as well as psychologists and sociologists, to ultimately publish her 300-page book titled, *Blurred Lines: Rethinking Sex, Power, and Consent on Campus*. The book is sectioned into three parts: Consensual, where she describes college life and consensual sex, Nonconsensual, full of stories to which I wrote in the margins "WTF" and "DISGUSTING" and The Man, meaning universities and their responsibility in the matter.



Reading *Blurred Lines* wasn't the easiest thing to do. Over the course of the week that I read the book, sexual assault seemed to make it into my dreams in some weird way. (If reading about it was playing games with my mind, then I could only imagine how those who have lived through it must feel.) But for every twisted dream I had I also knew this book was invaluable to me and many of my peers.

Having just graduated from college in May meant that a lot of what I read sounded familiar. These stories echoed what my friends and even myself have experienced. I read that it's common for relationships to start with a casual hook up (not the other way around), that alcohol changes what a girl would consent to, and that while some girls wanted to own their sexual experiences, others were embarrassed about their lack of. Often, the book's title proved itself appropriate as many of the stories came across as mixed signals and blurred lines.

But there was also a lot of information that I was unaware of. I received some serious clarification on Title IX. I learned about the kind of support that's available for survivors, a majority of which was started by campus activists. And I found out that victims depend on universities to administer justice, rather than the police.



Though I wish there was a simple answer to Grigoriadis' question, she couldn't exactly provide that. But she did provide a lot of information that could help going forward.

DID YOU KNOW...





- **Fraternities play a big role in this scenario, so some schools are trying to co-educate them.** Grigoriadis makes it clear that she doesn't believe all frat guys are predators, but that much of the behavior they participate in leads to sexual assault. Being that only fraternities are allowed to throw parties/provide alcohol, means that they control much of the social life on campus. And a lot of what they consider tradition, secret hazing and pledging rituals, is promoted as the epitome of masculinity. To sum it up, she says, "I believe sexual assault happens in large part because of cemented gender norms that tell guys they must pursue girls at all costs...so having institutions with cemented gender norms controlling social life on campus seems like a really bad idea." Grigoriadis' alma mater and where she spent much of her reporting, Wesleyan University, ruled to **co-educate its fraternities** in 2015. Harvard followed in their footsteps a year and a half later with its frats and final clubs. And Dartmouth University may be looking to do the same.

- **"Yes means yes" makes a whole lot of sense.** It sounds cliché, but communication is key even in the bedroom. Advocating for this doesn't necessarily mean you need to use an app or pull out a contract to ensure that you received consent (though that's an option), but being concerned about what's enjoyable for your sexual partner would fall under that category. It's true; college students aren't necessarily hooking up with people they know very well, so some feel uncomfortable communicating. But quite frankly, it's for both parties' benefit. When interviewed on the topic, Kevin Carty, a Brown University frat brother, made a good point, "If talking about sex is easy in a parlor game, then it's easier to talk about sex when you're having it."

- **Speaking of, boys should be apart of the movement too.** Girls know all about looking out for their friends, but it's very rare that guys bear the same responsibility to each other. What would it look like if guys checked on their friends before they took a girl upstairs? Of course, the faces of this movement are young women, but it doesn't have to be. Fortunately, Grigoriadis says she met more "woke guys" than she expected. Henry, a philosophy student from Vermont, explained that things became a lot clearer when when his female friends spoke to him about their experiences. "The fact is that women and men do not inhabit the same city. We do not walk the same streets, have the same banal interactions with cashiers and waiters and strangers in elevators..." he says. If all it takes is a little bit of dialogue for boys to become allies in the movement, then we might just get somewhere.

- **Schools are putting more time, money, and resources into sexual assault cases.** Through her advocacy for protecting Title IX, Grigoriadis mentions that universities are now recruiting more "sophisticated investigators", like former prosecutors and law enforcement agents. Most schools are increasing the number of Title IX officers they have on staff, well beyond the required amount of one. Yale has 30, while Harvard has 50. And Columbia with 11 now funds attorneys to represent both alleged victims and alleged perpetrators. (Unfortunately, my alma mater, Fordham, isn't exactly doing a great job at hiring theirs.) Grigoriadis' conversation with Brett Sokolow, the nation's top university sexual-misconduct adviser, and her attendance at a training seminar for Title IX officers demonstrates just how much schools are starting to care.

If there's one thing that Grigoriadis made clear, it's that changing the culture on college campuses means big things for the country as a whole. It's no longer about a singular case at a particular university, but rather about changing the conversation on sexual assault altogether. And that's certainly what her book aims to achieve. There's far more in the book than what I discussed here: from the effects of porn to social media and pop music. No matter how complicated it may get, it's worth writing, reading, and talking about.

You can read excerpts of Grigoriadis' book on [New York Times](#), [Glamour](#), and [Vanity Fair](#). *Blurred Lines* is currently available for purchase.

TAGS: BOOKS, CAMPUS RAPE, COLLEGE, FRATS, SEXUAL ASSAULT, VANESSA GRIGORIADIS



NATALIE ZISA

NATALIE ZISA, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY MAJOR: COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA STUDIES/JOURNALISM HER HEART BELONGS TO: DANCE, HER FAMILY, AND THE BEACH HER GUILTY PLEASURES: BRUNCH, SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ON INSTAGRAM, AND CARROT CAKE DONUTS FROM DOUGHNUT PLANT TAKE HER AWAY TO: LITERALLY ANYWHERE IN ITALY - OR AN ISLAND



NO COMMENTS YET

Comments are closed

Related News



For The Girl Who Chose An "Easy" Major



Why Aren't Sorority Women Allowed To Drink In Their Own Houses?



So You're Officially A Post-Grad. Here's How To Deal



Twenty Things Every Twenty-Something Should Have



5 Perks Of Interning After College



Your Extracurricular Summer Reading List

FOLLOW US



STAY CONNECTED

Your email address



STAY CONNECTED

Your email address



Advertise Here



BUSINESS



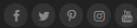
Advertise Here



BUSINESS



the lala is the ultimate lifestyle destination for bright and adventurous college women. Leading the way in empowering media, the lala stands behind a positive media mission dedicated to informing and inspiring college women from campuses across the world.



Copyright © 2017 the lala Media Group, Inc.

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[Contact Us](#)

LATEST POSTS

OCTOBER 6

21 Things To Do When The World Feels Like It's Full Of Hate

– Featured image via Anna Thetard Turn on the news. Chances are you'll get a...

OCTOBER 6

I'm Not Ready To Go Abroad (And That's Ok)

Featured image via @itsdemib As a rising junior and aspiring world traveler, I felt a...

OCTOBER 6

My Attempt To Unpack Privilege

Featured image via Anna Thetard It's a phrase we read and hear a lot these...

OCTOBER 5

For The Girl Who Chose An "Easy" Major

Featured image via Anna Schultz Raise your hand if you've ever been looked down upon...

OCTOBER 5

Why Aren't Sorority Women Allowed To Drink In Their Own Houses?

I've been to my fair share of frat parties so far in my college career...

TAGS

#advice advice beauty butler university career College college advice college life college music contributor bios dating DIY Fall Fashion fashion Featured feminism fordham university friends friendship fun girl power health indiana university inspiration instagram life advice love makeup marketing & pr rep mental health MUSIC music new music Politics Purdue University relationships social media study abroad style summer Travel travel winter Women

