

Saad Gul

I am a VERY angry Pakistani

"I know Pakistan. Pakistan is a good friend of mine. What was presented in these pages last week was no Pakistan."

My first reaction to the piece that appeared in these pages a week ago was one of absolute outrage. Why? Where did these figures come from? And when people began asking, it came to pass: there were probably far more people out there who read it all, accepted it, and internalized it. Pakistan can be safely bashed, it is true. As a "brown Islamic" country, one doesn't run into the same problems that would arise if say, Africa, Latin America, or even the Far East were criticized. In over three years in America, I have seen maybe a dozen negative news stories about Pakistan, and not a single positive one.

Yes, we have problems. The entire world does. I would be the last one to deny that. But we are nowhere the nightmarish backwater hell that was presented in the article. So let me offer a few points in our defense, and all I ask is that you keep an open mind. Firstly, the head of the Pakistani government, Benazir Bhutto, is a woman. That in and of itself should say a lot. Secondly, so is her second in command. Bhutto defeated her two brothers to become head of her party, so her position is not by

default. The people had a choice, and they elected her. Feeling better yet?

Now to the unpleasant parts. To be raped is NOT a crime in Pakistan. I don't know how to put it in simpler terms. It is not. In 1982, fourteen years ago, there was a *single* instance where a legal bungle led to the arrest of the victim by mistake. The outcry was immediate, the victim was swiftly released with the personal apologies of the Inspector General of Police, the Chief Justice, and the President of Pakistan. The rapist was hanged.

I have no idea where the figures of the number of rape victims in Pakistani jails came from. (See below for my own sources). But I DO know this: with three amnesties in the past 10 years for all female convicts (except terrorists and murderers), the number of female prisoners in Pakistan is minuscule. In 1989, there were literally fewer than two dozen female prisoners in the Republic.

Under strong pressure from the women's rights movement [yes, we have a STRONG women's rights movement that includes APWA (All Pakistan Women's Association), WAR (War against

Rape) and WAF (Women's Action Forum)], the government instituted a Women's Police Force. Run exactly parallel to men's police, this force runs its own patrols, precincts, and makes its own arrests. This force, all female by law, is the ONLY one allowed to arrest women. Women cannot be held in a male police station. Therefore, the figures of women prisoners being raped in custody are ludicrous. It's simply

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impossible. And, I would like to remind you that per capita, according to SUNY-Albany, the United States has TWENTY-SEVEN times as many rapes as Pakistan. (And no, I don't believe that we have any special disgrace attached that leads to massive underreporting, which the study attempts to compensate for in any case).

On to the law. The article confused two different components of the law. *Zina ul jabr*, or rape, is far easier to prove than *zina*, or extramarital sex. Rape is proved in the same way it is in the US: with physical evidence proving absence

of consent. I have NEVER heard of the "two-fingers" test which the article espouses. Nor of four Muslim witnesses being required for a conviction. I can assure the reader that Pakistani justice is swift in rape cases, and the rapist normally pays the price for his sins within an year of the crime. NOT ONCE have I ever read of four witnesses being present or being asked for.

Zina, on the other hand, or an accusation of extra-marital sex involves four "reliable" witnesses. Basically put, if I want to accuse anyone of extra-marital sex (a serious charge in most Islamic societies) I had better have four respected people to back me up. If I don't, I have falsely accuse someone, another grievous charge. I will pay a heavy price for accusing an innocent man or woman.

In addition, I have considered the specific incidents provided in the article. Rape is a serious crime in Pakistan. Rarely does it fail to warrant the death penalty. The Prime Minister normally (and this is a long standing tradition, patterned on the time of the Caliphs, preceding Bhutto) pays a personal visit to the family of the victim. The case is normally handled under the direct supervision of the

President's Body Guard, the Pakistani version of the Secret Service. I could not find any law or reports about the cases cited in the article.

I can say that similar cases in 1990 were handled swiftly, and the perpetrators (save one, who happened to be underage) have been sentenced.

Where do MY figures come from? Well, the Pakistani Ministry of Law, APWA, and War Against Rape. SUNY-Albany has some good statistics.

In addition, my grandfather, a justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and provided a quick overview of the Law on Rape, which to base my assertions. Having lived there, and having access to first hand and unbiased sources, I will stand my ground against anyone who attempts to prove otherwise.

Like I said earlier, I do believe that Pakistan is a Utopia. But I do want to point out that traditional Islamic law provides a woman's right to inherit property, engage in business, and divorce their husbands over 1300 years before European law did.

We abolished the traditional South Asian practice of bride price. Not bad really, for a bunch of strange brown people from away.

Ike Bailey '95 and the Black Student Coalition

Black Student Life at Davidson College

The following are excerpts from a column written in *The Davidsonian*, by Jay Ferguson '92 and Anthony Foxx '93, on January 20, 1992:

"It is the year 2007, and students from the year 1991 and '92 gather for a school reunion. We join our two pontificants, J: and A:, little older, a little wiser, and more attuned to the simpler pleasures of life. . . .

J: Well, here's the student directory, but now that I think about it, how are we supposed to know which of these students is black? Let's ask Mr. Eaves.

A: Dean Eaves! Hey, remember, '92 and '93, Davidsonian column "Questionin' That?" It's J: and A.: We're looking for some current black students to talk to. When we left, black students were making an indelible mark on Davidson and its future. We want to know what's going on.

J: Uh-uh. . . Uh-huh. . . You don't say! Dean Eaves, you've got to be putting me on. Do you expect me to believe that there is not one single black student on this entire campus? I mean, this is 2007, for

cries out loud! Black student enrollment and graduation rates have been on the rise for the last 10 ten years! What's wrong with this picture?

A: Come to think of it, there was another development taking place as we left. The attrition rate for black students increased for the same reason that the numbers of black students stayed consistently low: Davidson adjusted, but it didn't change. The school seemed perfectly willing to allow students to initiate things, but it never extended beyond itself to meet the demands of a burgeoning, diverse group of students.

J: One thing that would have pleased me of the black students that were here then was for there to have been more blacks in positions of authority at Davidson. I recognize that, at that time, the competition for black administrators and faculty was heavy. However, Davidson made no effort to hold onto the quality people that it already had. Losing people like that really hurt my feelings, and I sensed that I wasn't alone in that sentiment.

A: No you weren't. Those de-

velopments hurt us and the school. I couldn't help feeling a little strange walking across the stage at graduation. I was glad to be walking, to be sure. But I also felt like one day I would return and find no more black people and no diversity, and I have!

J: With the benefit of hindsight, it's clear that there were numerous things that could have been done to avoid what we're seeing now. . . We knew that diversity in numbers did not directly translate into a diverse environment. We knew that action needed to be taken to ensure that the mainstream would reach out and engulf students that were outside of it, instead of forcing them to compromise their character in order to fit in. I guess nobody listened until it was too late."

It's not too late. But if you were looking for diversity and happened to gaze at the pictures on display in the College's Union Gallery entitled "Davidson in Retrospect," you may well think that Foxx and Ferguson were on to something.

But, it's not that late. For the

fall of '96, there are still 67 enrolled black students at Davidson. That number is more than none, but hardly represents a critical mass. From the years 1983 through 1992, 160 black students enrolled at Davidson; 119 decided to stay and finish their undergraduate degree here. We don't pretend to know the exact reasons why those 41 students did not finish here, but we do have a pretty good idea. And if you are really concerned about Davidson's future, its struggle to become more diverse, and some of the reasons why those 41 students did not remain, then we suggest you attend "School Daze: A Parody of Black Student Life at Davidson" on Tuesday, October 1st at 7 pm. in the 900 Room.

In the movie "A Time To Kill" a very interesting dialogue went on between the white lawyer and his black client. The lawyer, be-

lieving he was a true friend of the client, because he respected (from afar), and even sympathized with his struggles and the struggles of those like him, found out one thing very interesting: that the really weren't friends. The client said (paraphrase): "Jake, we're friends, and we never have broken up because you are a good man, because you think like me. . . Our daughters don't play together, and you don't even visit where I live."

If you have any concerns, interested in finding out more about black reality at Davidson College, you will attend the parody discussion, bring those tough questions you've always wanted to ask, and listen, really listen. Come out where black Davidson students live. And when you have your questions, maybe your daughters could help you together.

Rock Our World: Write for Opinions
call Kristen or Nina @ 2148

submit articles and letters to the Editor by Wednesday evening

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