

Do Women Wearing Bikinis Deserve to Be Sexually Assaulted?

A teenager in Australia pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting nine women and girls but was not sentenced to prison. Instead, he was put on two-years' probation. Why? The judge reasoned that, as a Muslim who had immigrated from Afghanistan, "seeing girls in bikinis is different to the environment in which he grew up."

Seriously? This young man assaults nine different women and girls on a beach in Australia, and the court only gives him probation because he came from a different culture?

I understand that in Afghanistan, women are required to be completely covered. And so, it would be quite a shock for a Muslim teen raised in that country to come to Australia and see so much flesh.

It's for that very reason that some believers who come from conservative religious backgrounds avoid going to crowded beaches. They're not into the bikini culture.

I can relate to that personally, which is why I avoid crowded beaches myself. I'm no more comfortable surrounded by women in bikinis than I'd be surrounded by women in their underwear.

But I fully understand that these women are not asking to be sexually assaulted, no matter how they're dressed. And it would never dawn on me in a million years that I had the right to assault them because of their scanty attire. God forbid.

You might say, "But you were raised in America, so this is not foreign to you. You understand the culture, which is similar to Australia."

That's true.

But do you mean to tell me that this 17-year-old teenager from Afghanistan thought that what he was doing was fine? That, as he swam in the water and "spent two hours grabbing women, aged between 15 and 24 years," he had no idea he was upsetting them?

The court was told that the "defendant grabbed his victims ..."
And the Crown attorney, Nick McGhee "said the defendant was seen swimming up to his victims 'in quite a predatory manner.'"

And he had no idea this was a bad thing? He had no idea he was at a beach where these girls went to swim, not get assaulted? And, after the first girl reacted to him, he still thought they were inviting his predations?

The judge also noted that the young man had a difficult background, having lost his father in 2011.

But how, exactly, does this lessen his guilt before the court? How, precisely, does this mitigate his responsibility?

It is all too common for convicted criminals to have troubled pasts, and our prisons would be nearly empty if judges looked the other way because the guilty party was raised without a dad. (I don't mean to sound uncaring here. I'm simply talking about a judge doing his or her duty.)

As for the idea that the teen came from a different culture and therefore was not fully responsible, how far will the courts take such logic?

"Your honor, I killed my daughter because she disgraced the family by dating a non-Muslim boy."

"Your honor, I poisoned my son because he apostasized from the Islamic faith and became a Christian."

“Your honor, I burned down the TV station because one of the hosts made disparaging comments about the Quran.”

“Your honor, I butchered the cartoonist because he mocked the prophet Muhammad.”

“Your honor, that’s just what we do in our culture. Please understand I wasn’t used to your way of doing things, and I’ll do better next time.”

Would the judge accept arguments like these? Hardly. (Or perhaps this same judge would accept such arguments. That’s what is really scary.)

What if you came from a cannibalistic culture where tribal disputes were settled with knife fights, and the winners ate the losers? How would this play out in court?

“Your honor, yes, it’s true that I roasted and ate my neighbor, but it’s a cultural thing. If I had lost the fight, I assumed he would have done the same to me. So, can I go home now?”

It’s bad enough that these girls and women have to deal with the trauma of being assaulted and groped. It’s even worse when the court sympathizes with their attacker rather than with them, finding a reason to look the other way. And what kind of message does this send to other Muslim immigrants, who will surely hear of this court case in the days to come?

Ironically, if an Australian woman living in Afghanistan decided to dress as she did in her home country, she’d be lucky to escape a mob assault on the streets, let alone experience leniency from the court. Yet in Australia, a young man guilty of multiple sexual assaults is let off the hook because of his Muslim background.

This is being open-minded to the point of utter foolishness. It sets a very dangerous precedent, too. {eoa}