

# "It's Quite Fabulous"

Women's groups have been struggling for years to counter the "she deserved it" mindset for victims of sexual assault.

But a recent incident reveals we as a nation still have a long way to go.

On July 11, Catherine Becker of California allegedly drugged her husband, tied him to a bed, severed his penis, and threw it in a garbage disposal.

The great majority of Americans were disgusted and appalled. But a surprising number were amused, even moved to laughter.

## *"Hysterical" Reactions*

Sharon Osbourne of ABC's *The Talk* was beside herself over the incident. She described the sexual assault as "hysterical" and announced to her national audience, "It's quite fabulous."

TV personality Wendy Williams made a joke of the gruesome assault: "It was more efficient than throwing it in a field, where they could pick it up." Worse, Williams believed the man deserved his fate: "When you cross a woman, all is fair."

## *What if the Roles Had Been Reversed?*

Picture the opposite scenario...

A deranged man tied his wife to a bed, took a kitchen knife, cut off her breasts, and ground up the remains.

Such an incident, unimaginable as it is, would have triggered a national outpouring of outrage and fury, as well as calls to toughen criminal sanctions for perpetrators of such heinous deeds.

And what was the reaction of the national news media to the Becker incident? Actually, there was no reaction, because the major networks considered it a local story.

And what did the leading domestic violence organizations have to say?

Do a Google search of the words "National Network to End Domestic Violence" and "Catherine Becker" – zero hits. Then visit the website of the "National Coalition Against Domestic Violence."

Again, silence.

## *A Double Standard We Can No Longer Tolerate*

When a woman is victimized by a sexual assault, sadly there are still some who have a "blame the victim" attitude.

But when we remain silent about male victims of sexual assault – or worse, make light of the travesty – we are opening the door to a reversal of decades of progress in assuring female victims of crime are listened to and get the help they need.

All victims of sexual assault and domestic violence deserve compassion, services, and support.

It's that simple.



