

My interest in the Duke lacrosse case centers on several issues:

1. The question of what does a university (administration, faculty, and students) owe its students who are in legal jeopardy, or more generally under some sort of cloud. What rights should these students have? How far can other students go in expressing their opinions about a case without their protests becoming harrassment? How can the faculty and administration express themselves, while at the same time showing respect toward both the accused students and students who are outraged by alleged conduct. Professor Stephen Baldwin's essay in the Chronicle expressed my thoughts about the principle of *in loco parentis* better than I could have done, but it only covers a portion of this topic.
2. The rise of political correctness on campuses, coupled with the rise of post-modern thinking. Before I began to read "Until Proven Innocent," I thought that these were non-issues or minor issues at best. I acknowledge that there may be serious problems in academia after all. Moreover, Professor Baldwin's experience shows that type of political correctness or post-modernist thinking that the Duke case evinces is not simply a liberal-versus-conservative issue.
3. The question of how to be a responsible consumer of news. A parallel exists between the Duke case and the shooting of the Brazilian electrician, Jean Charles de Menezes in London in 2005: In both instances, the initial impressions turned out to be wrong or greatly misleading, yet the incorrect impressions have a way of lingering on. Who is responsible, the initiator of the falsehoods, the media who amplify them in good faith or otherwise, or the consumer of the news, who may not be sufficiently skeptical about what he or she learns? The only antidote to incorrect information would seem to be getting the correct information out there in as many ways as possible.

For these reasons among others, I chose to become an amateur journalist. To my surprise, I now see that sometimes nonprofessionals dig a little more deeply than professional journalists, because of personal interest or expertise. In addition, I am coming to the point of view that a citizen should be more than a consumer of news; one should at times also report upon it or comment upon it. This is one of the great advantages of the Internet, though there are pitfalls as well.