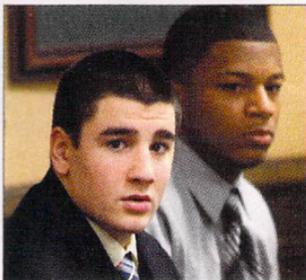


Steubenville: A very modern rape case

“It was a sickening crime that fit an all-too-familiar story line,” said **Adam Cohen** in *Time.com*. Drunken young football players sexually assault a 16-year-old girl at a party. But what made the Steubenville, Ohio, rape case so different—and so 21st century—was how the assailants and their witnesses recorded the crime on cellphones, and then posted photos and video on social media. Instagram photos showed Trent Mays, 17, and Ma’lik Richmond, 16, dragging their unconscious victim around by her hands and feet, before violating her. A 12-minute cellphone video featured a partygoer mocking the passed-out girl as “dead” and “so raped.” Mays later texted a photo of the naked girl with the caption, “Bitches is bitches. F--- ’em.” Thanks to the digital evidence, Mays and Richmond this week were found guilty of rape and sentenced to a minimum of one year in a juvenile jail. As they now know, “the Internet never forgets.”

What’s really important about this case, said **Dave Zirin** in *TheNation.com*, is what it tells us about “jock culture,” misogyny, and rape. As in so many high schools and colleges, athletes in Steubenville were treated like “rock stars” by both adults and students. That hero worship left



Mays, Richmond in court

Mays and Richmond thinking they could rape a girl in front of 50 of their peers—none of whom tried to intervene—without fear of consequence. Even after witnessing the disgusting evidence, some people continue to view the teens as fallen heroes, said **Mallory Ortberg** in *Gawker.com*. CNN reporter **Poppy Harlow**, for example, said after the verdict that she

found it “incredibly difficult” to see “two young men that had such promising futures” have their lives destroyed. Really? “Their dreams and hopes were not crushed by an impersonal, inexorable legal system.” They raped a girl, and are now very justly suffering the consequences.

Their punishment will “serve an extremely important purpose,” said **Kathleen Geier** in *WashingtonMonthly.com*. Convictions for sexual assault in the U.S. are woefully rare: Out of every 100 rapes that occur, only 46 get reported to police, 12 lead to an arrest, nine are prosecuted, and just three result in a prison term. Those low conviction rates reinforce the still-prevalent idea that some women “deserve” to be raped. Mays and Richmond’s very visible jail sentence has struck “a powerful blow against rape culture.” Let’s hope other young men take notice.