Roman mis-handled

by MIKE KENDRICK

Murder is a crime. So is robbery. Possession, traffic-
ing of weapons and controlled substances? Yes. But rape? These days, a lot of people can't seem to think so. At least, that appears to be the case in the recent arrest of filmaker Roman Polanski.

Polanski is alleged to have given the girl champagne and sedatives, and coerced her into various sexual acts. In the ensuing scandal, Polanski fled to France, where he held citizenship, and has been cowardly avoiding extradition to this day.

While Polanski was finally arrested two weeks ago in Switzerland, leveled like it would be a fairly cut-and-dried prosecution. After all, if any other Joe Rapo has been unjustly accused of a crime, the girl might have been found guilty of perjury.

There's a major fallacy in the disconnect between Roman Polanski as an acclaimed artist and Roman Polanski as a child rapist. Many of his support-
ers blithely throw him into the same world's most significant films of all time. For what it's worth, I don't think Roman Polanski is a great director, and I've never seen The Pianist, but I'm heart-warming. Like many, I continue to appreciate the contributions that Polanski has made to cinema, but his personal life shouldn't affect his reput-
tion as a professional.

But what if so few Polanskii apologists fail to accept is that he hasn't been arrested for what I'm sure was a similar performance in Flashdance? It's been arrested for over three decades of living happily as a con-


Strip away any of the celebrity trappings — Roman Polanski is a sex offender who's yet to be punished for his crime.

What truly bothers me in this case, though, is not Polanski's actions, so much as how stupidly dismissive his fans have been. Western culture seems to be so afraid of the concept of rape that it's essentially criminal-
ized the victims, and constantly makes excuses for the criminals who commit the act. Rosemary Galley (who since became Samantha Geimer) has publicly forgiven Polanski and
tained that he likely would have acted differently if given a second chance. I can't speak for Geimer, or for any rape victim for that matter, but so often, it seems the victims are so vilified by society, that even they're willing to downplay the long-lasting and traumatizing effects of rape.

It's bad enough when a rape victim is per-
dominated or given a lighter sentence in any regular case; even worse when the victim is seemingly punished for "dressing improperly" or "being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But the even more nonsensical
standard of celebrity cases like this truly take the cake.

Strip away any of the celebrity trappings — Roman Polanski is a sex offender who's yet to be punished for his crime. 30 years of pretending to be sorry isn't enough to wipe out the damage he's done, and by forgiving or dismissing a deliberate act that happened decades ago, his supporters might as well be giving permission for it to happen again.

reader poll

"What do you regret most about the first month of the new semester?"

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<th>Option</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
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<td>Didn't get the classes I wanted (8%)</td>
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<td>Too much time spent partying (12%)</td>
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<td>Not enough time spent partying (34%)</td>
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<td>Nothing: My life is perfect (25%)</td>
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<td>I didn't go into the trades (2%)</td>
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THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

"Have you filed a claim for the SU's Health Plan yet?"

vote online at thegatewayonline.ca

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