

# When Feminism Turns on Women

Anger at Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation to the Supreme Court shows no sign of diminishing. In the eyes of feminists, his appointment represents "[a clear reaffirmation of an entrenched, patriarchal hierarchy](#)." However, the fact that Christine Blasey Ford's largely evidence-free allegations against Kavanaugh were so nearly successful in overturning his nomination suggest the patriarchy is not as entrenched as it once was. Kavanaugh's [show trial](#) tells us far more about the state of feminism today than it does about the death throes of the patriarchy.

The response to Kavanaugh's appointment shows us that feminism is now as anti-women as it is anti-men. Recent days have seen high-profile feminist campaigners direct a torrent of abuse at one woman in particular: Senator Susan Collins. Collins, a Republican from Maine, had shown support for Ford but, in the crucial vote, backed Kavanaugh.

In [justifying her decision](#), Collins went to great pains to stress her support for all victims of sexual assault and for Ford in particular. "Every person, man or woman, who makes a charge of sexual assault deserves to be heard and treated with respect," she said. "The #MeToo movement is real. It matters. It is needed. And it is long overdue." But, she concluded, "In evaluating any given claim of misconduct we will be ill-served in the long run if we abandon the presumption of innocence and fairness, tempting though it may be."

Collins is absolutely correct to defend these important principles. The mantra of #MeToo and the Kavanaugh hearings has been "I believe." But the idea that women should be believed without question or evidence presents them as naive innocents who never lie or misremember. It holds them to a different legal standard than men and turns the clock back on women's rights. Equality before the law was a major demand of

feminists from previous eras; today it seems like “believing” takes precedence over equality.

For her cool-headed defense of long-held legal principles, Collins stands accused of betrayal. She “betrayed the interests of the women and sexual-assault survivors she professed to support” according to [Lisa Ryan at The Cut](#). [Diane Russell](#), an activist for the Democrats, was more specific: she argued that Collins voted to “betray Maine women and Maine survivors” by ignoring their stories. “There is a special place in hell for women who cover for rapists,” Russell continued. Presumably she has privileged insight into exactly what happened between Ford and Kavanaugh 36 years ago that allows her to circumvent trials and juries and find Kavanaugh summarily guilty all by herself.

Bizarrely, some activists seem to have more loathing for Collins than Kavanaugh. Lawyer and “social entrepreneur” [Kat Calvin](#) tweeted: “Never let Collins have a moment of peace in public again.” This has since been shared well over 33,000 times. The hatred for Collins has even given rise to a [crowd-funder](#) to get her replaced as senator from Maine. A cool \$2 million was raised before Collins made her speech; the site crashed as she was speaking.

Feminist commentators and activists are clearly furious that Collins could “[vote against believing women](#).” They are nonplussed that she could express support for victims of sexual assault and yet back Kavanaugh. The only explanation for Collins’ volte-face is, we’re told, [hypocrisy](#). But it’s perfectly possible to feel sympathy and endeavor to support women who claim to have been sexually assaulted while at the same time maintaining the important presumption of innocent until proven guilty. There is no logical reason why women should be unconditionally believed any more than men. Feminists might not like it but, as Collins argued, evidence and proof are the basis of justice.

Yet rather than trying to understand the reason for Collins' vote, activists have only extended the net of hatred further. Over at the [New York Times](#), Alexis Grenell moves deftly from disdain for Collins to fury at "all the women in the Republican conference" before eventually focusing her anger on the category of "white women." White women, Grenell opines, "will defend their privilege to the death." In the eyes of Grenell, women think and act according to the dictates of their race. There is a "blood pact between white men and white women," she tells us, though how this ties in with Ford's whiteness is anyone's guess. Apparently, all white women are "gender traitors" who have "made standing by the patriarchy a full-time job."

So there we have it. The show trial of Kavanaugh shows us exactly where feminism is heading in the #MeToo era. Women are not to be considered rational beings equal to men before the law but as emotional creatures who deserve special treatment. Women's political views are, apparently, determined by their race. And it's legitimate now to make explicitly sexist and racist arguments in the pages of respectable national newspapers—as long as "white women" are the target.

Today's feminism divides the world into "good" women and "bad" women. Good women suffer, empathize, and believe other women without question or criticism. Bad women, on the other hand, raise awkward questions about evidence and principles of justice. As Grenell demands to know, come November, "Which one of these two women are you?"

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