


WILL BOYS BE BOYS

STILL?



By Carmen Scott

Have you ever been called shorty, sunshine, sexy or sweetheart when your name doesn't even start with the letter S? Have you ever been jeered at, hollered at or followed by members of the opposite sex simply because you crossed their line of vision? Have you ever been brushed up against, grabbed, groped or otherwise violated by someone you don't even know? Has anyone ever licked their lips at you or looked you up and down as if you could be found on a KFC menu? If you answered yes to any of these questions, chances are you're female, and chances are you're fed up.

As a 19-year-old female I can expect unwelcome male advances at each and every social function. For 100% of women my age, harassment has become an unwanted fact of life. Guys seem to rationalize such conduct as a form of courting or flirting with the opposite sex. But I want to know, how many quality relationships actually

began with a "hey girl" and a lick of the lips? Their behavior can be more accurately defined as a form of harassment, and in the game of love, harassment doesn't get you anywhere. UNC-CH junior Shannon Burke points out that, "You might win a cheap feel but you lose in the long run because clearly, you're not getting my phone number."

Oprah Winfrey recently dedicated a show to the phenomenon of teen on teen harassment. Many of her male panel members argued that the way a girl dresses can often invite unfavorable attention. Leah Irvin, a UNC-CH sophomore says, "a girl's dress does not always reflect her personality; and even if she is looking for attention, it doesn't necessarily mean it should be negative. Besides, she'll have to put up with the attention whether she's in jeans or a G-string."

Others might argue that lack of a voiced objection will encourage males to continue their improper behavior. The reason a female doesn't always say "don't touch me

or get out of my face," is because she doesn't know who you are. She does not know what will set you off, she is not familiar with your psychological history and she does not know if you have a criminal record. She does know, however, that you were never taught to respect a woman; why should she assume you were taught never to hit one? The safest thing for her to do is to simply walk away.

According to a study performed by the American Association of University Women, four in five 8th through 11th graders have experienced some form of harassment by the opposite sex. For one third of them, the harassment started as early as elementary school. In the past, parents and teachers have written this type of behavior as boys-will-be-boys; but how do they write it off when the behavior survives from school playground to college campus? Is it still the standard "boys will be boys" excuse? If that is the case, I have just one question: When do these boys ever become men?