Dear Editor:

Many people apparently condemn the public for not responding to the screams of a dying woman. This is uncharitable and benefit unfairly from hindsight.

Let me give a few reasons why it would be rational for modern urban Canadians not to respond to screams.

First, it is difficult to know if the screams one hears at night indicate a real life-threatening problem or it's just the usual noise made by excited teenage girls. I used to live near a park in Coquitlam, I know. Of course, given hindsight, it is convenient to say it is easy to tell the difference, but this is self-serving. Saying this must give people a feeling of moral superiority.

Second, few of us would be able to help if we did go investigate. What would you do faced with a violent criminal – or a gang of them? Modern urban Canadians are unarmed and untrained to deal with a murderer or a group of teenage thugs. It isn't rational to go out to help. If you did, you'd just become another victim.

If you 'just grabbed something,' as I've heard suggested on the radio, you'd just get yourself in trouble. It's illegal for anyone in Canada to carry a weapon. In hindsight, it may sound good to say you would help, but few Canadians would know how to handle the situation properly.

Third, calling the police is little better. The response time is slow, and by the time they arrive, the crime has been committed, and the culprits have fled. The police are so underfunded there isn't enough personnel to respond to every call. Then too, I believe many of the calls are 'false alarms.'

Fourth, even if the police did catch the perpetrator, the courts wouldn't convict them. Or even if the courts did convict them, they'd be back out on the street again soon anyway.

It looks like it is not rational for a modern urban Canadian to get involved. Society appears to prefer victims to survivors. Our schools teach pacifism rather than community service. And the federal government has given up its duty to protect the public.

Cordially,

Professor Gary Mauser
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