

# Blackwater rape case



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Justice? What Justice? You're walking down a dark alley and you feel a little scared, right? That's normal, so don't worry. Well how many of you feel that same way while standing next to a government agent or a security guard? I can't name many, but the number is rising. American women working in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to be sexually assaulted while their assailants go free. The very same men that travel hundreds of miles to "protect us" are the ones who are committing some of the most heinous crimes, against US. It has to stop.

These people are in Iraq working for our government as privately hired security and abide by no law, so in the end most of these men go free. NOT OK. Within the borders of Iraq, KBR's agents are generally free of the bounding of any laws from both our country and theirs and are using that very fact to their own benefit. But the truths of their immoral actions are being revealed and should be stopped. Dawn Leamon, who worked for a branch of KBR and had told her excruciating story to The Nation a week before, told them "With my back to the packed room and my voice (mostly) steady—I was being sodomized and forced to have oral sex with a KBR colleague and a Special Forces soldier two months earlier". When she reported the incident to her KBR supervisors, instead of receiving justice and help, she hit a series of obstacles.

She was told to stay quiet about it or they'd try to make it seem as if she'd brought it on herself or even lied about it. But that's only one story. Take Mary Beth Kineston's experience for example. She worked as a commercial trucker for KBR in Iraq, and testified that she had been raped in the cab of her truck by a KBR subcontractor employee at night while she was waiting in

line to fill her water tanker truck. When she immediately reported the incident to her supervisors not one person did a rape kit test, referred her for medical treatment or even offered to escort her back through the dark to her quarters that night. KBR/ Blackwater may try to keep it under wraps but the stories need to be told and they need to be brought to the light and to its greatly deserved justice.

As the number of women coming forward with these cases rises, Congress has begun look deeper and to question why these crimes are not being prosecuted. In fact, there are several laws on the books that would allow these cases to proceed through trial. But, the problem is not in their lack of legality, but the lack of will. These companies want to keep their power and secrecy and pursue personal objectives and will use political and legal loopholes to undermine the horrifying problems at hand.

Obviously, US military contractors greatly want to avoid the bad publicity that would soon come if these complaints were not kept secret. With huge amounts of money hanging in the balance, with KBR having an estimated \$16 billion in contracts, their stakes are high. The jurisdiction to prosecute these men for these crimes like the alleged rapes of Leamon and Kineston is clearly shown under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act and the Patriot Act's special maritime and territorial jurisdiction provisions. But somebody has to want to prosecute these cases. It needs to be done, and it needs to be done now. There have been over seven hundred reported cases of these alleged rapes, and only eighty-three cases have led to courts-martial.

Why? Why won't our government step up and take responsibility for the very men they hired to do our work. Why? Because, it's our DIRTY work. The work they don't want us as a public eye to see. The fact that these agents are "between the lines or legality" means they don't have to take responsibility for their actions which is not only legally, but morally wrong in all aspects.

As a country, we need to feel safe with those that are there to protect us and run our day to day lives. So fess up KBR, and give these men and women the justice they deserve. It has to be done. -MY BRAIN