



LESBIAN VOICES is published quarterly by MS. ATLAS PRESS, 330 South 3rd Street, Suite B, San Jose, CA 95112. Phone (408) 289-1088. Editor: Rosalie Nichols. Associate Editor: Johnie Staggs.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are \$7.00 per year (four issues). Single copies \$2.00 each. Back issues - Vol. II #2 thru Vol. III #1 - \$1.50 each; Vol. I #1 thru Vol. II #1 - \$1.00 each. Vol. III #2-3 (this issue) \$3.00. (Vol. I #1 and Vol. I #4 are sold out, and there are only a few copies of Vol. II #1.) All copies are mailed in plain closet-envelopes.

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CONTRIBUTORS: Please specify by-line you wish used and also include a short paragraph about yourself for publication. [I found out that some womyn do actually read this page.] You will receive two complimentary copies of issue in which poetry appears, or five copies for articles, stories, reviews, etc. All rights revert to the individual contributor after publication. During this past year, we have been unable to notify authors of acceptance or rejection. We will try to write personal letters to each of you soon. We had a fire in our shop December 18, 1977. It does not appear that any manuscripts were lost, but please always keep a copy of what you send. If you do not hear from us by October 1, 1978, please write again since it is possible that some correspondence could have been lost in the fire.

ALL VIEWS EXPRESSED in this publication are the ideas and opinions of the individual contributor. Favorable treatment of any idea, ideology, product, etc. in LESBIAN VOICES does not constitute an endorsement by this magazine, its editors or publisher. We welcome differing points of view on controversial issues, but request that ideas be expressed clearly and rationally and in a tone and style compatible with LESBIAN VOICES. We attempt to present a dignified format and a positive, constructive sense of life, in keeping with our belief that lesbianism (and indeed life itself) can be and should be good, wholesome, fulfilling and joyful. We reject the view of lesbianism as material for psychiatric study, religious censure, or pornography -- all of which treat lesbianism as sick, sinful, or salacious. We reject this view of lesbianism whether it is promulgated by straight society, voyeuristic men, or by lesbians themselves.

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COVER: CHURCH AND STATE -- NO UNION UPON ANY TERMS by Thomas Nast, <u>Harper's Weekly</u> , Feb 25, 1871	
Photograph on page 34 by Tee Corinne.	
Line drawings on pages 65, 70, 71, and 75 from THE WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET, Women's Press Collective, 1975.	
While it is impossible to acknowledge the source of every idea, the Editor wishes to acknowledge the general influence that the philosophy of AYN RAND has had on her intellectual development.	

The Legend of Lilith/Genesis Anew

In the beginning
God created woman
and man,
and there was Lilith also.
Does anyone know the true tale
of the love that flowed between
her and Eve?
How alike they were
the two, reflecting each other's beauty
not angular and rough
but soft and flowing.
How their hands faltered
when first they touched
each other's breasts,
seeking to find the answer
to the mystery of their love.
Oh the wonder and excitement
that moved between them
as they leaned into each other
and softly kissed.

In the beginning God created
woman
and this
was enough.

-- SUZANNE R. FRIED

EDITORIAL

On Straightism

During recent years, we have witnessed an increasing conflict between two opposing sexual ideologies in our society: STRAIGHTISM and INDIVIDUALISM.

STRAIGHTISM, as an ideology, maintains that:

man and woman were created by a Supernatural Being

"Male and female created He them" Genesis 1:27

this Supernatural Being has a Divine Purpose or Will or Plan in which man and woman, as His creations, play a part;

in particular, there is a Divine Injunction to procreate

"Be fruitful and multiply" Genesis 1:28

woman was created as a subsidiary to man

"I will make him an help meet for him" Genesis 2:18

"She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" Genesis 2:23

woman was commanded to be subservient to man

"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" Genesis 3:16

children were commanded to be subservient to their parents

"Honour thy father and thy mother" Genesis 20:12

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord" Ephesians 6:1

In the words of Jerry Falwell, when he kicked off his "Clean Up America" campaign on the Old Time Gospel Hour on national television on May 13, 1978:

God makes it very clear that the husband-wife relationship, one man and one woman for one lifetime, is pure and holy and heavenly, and it's the ONLY way. . . The sweetest and most heavenly thing on this earth is a Christian Home -- where Daddy loves the Lord and follows Jesus, where the Christian wife is in subjection to her husband, and where the children are obedient to their parents, and they all serve God together. . . That's all that God will honor and all that God will bless.

God, according to the Straightists, exacts a strict punishment for violation of His Divine Will, for example:

"For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death" Leviticus 20:9

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife. . . the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." Leviticus 20:10

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." Lev. 20:13

"A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." Lev. 20:27

STRAIGHTISM, promulgated not only by Protestant fundamentalists but also by the Catholic Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Humanae Vitae," attempts to restrict sexual activity to forms which are

potentially procreative. STRAIGHTISM outlaws masturbation (solitary or mutual), oral copulation and sodomy (homosexual or heterosexual), and birth control (premature withdrawal, contraception. "the pill," sterilization, abortion) as being contrary to God's Law. Recently (and somewhat inconsistently) even modern procreative techniques such as artificial insemination, "test-tube" fertilization and embryo implantation, cloning, and (one would suppose) parthenogenesis have come under fire by the pious Straightists -- because nothing must be allowed to circumvent the relationship between heterosexual coitus and reproduction, not even in order to help a heterosexual married couple give birth to a much desired child!

Because STRAIGHTISM is based on Christian mysticism -- including a belief in God as a Supernatural Authority, God's Commandments as a binding guide for human life, God's Law as the guideline for secular law, God's Judgment as the ultimate criterion for good and evil in human character and behavior -- Straightists do not hesitate to impose their beliefs on others. They do this by proselytizing, by social and economic pressure, sometimes by private violence, and ultimately & most effectively by government force. STRAIGHTISM IS AN AUTHORITARIAN SEXUAL IDEOLOGY WHICH SEEKS TO IMPOSE THE HETEROSEXUAL, HIERARCHICAL, SELF-ABNEGATING, MYSTICAL, NUCLEAR FAMILY LIFESTYLE ON OTHERS THROUGH THE USE OF INSTITUTIONALIZED FORCE. Anyone who voluntarily accepts the Straightist ideology deserves the consequences.

The alternative to STRAIGHTISM is INDIVIDUALISM.

While Straightism is based on Other-Worldliness and life after death (*"whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* John 3:16), INDIVIDUALISM is profoundly concerned with human life in this world, the only world we know exists.

While Straightism is based on Mysticism and Coercion, INDIVIDUALISM is based on reason and independence, both intellectual and physical.

While Straightism collectivizes and regiments humankind (note that the Straightists are always talking about "our community, our schools, our taxes, our country"), INDIVIDUALISM recognizes and respects the inherent right of every person to freedom and autonomy.

While Straightism reduces human sexuality to the animal level of perpetual breeding -- with an infinite regress of generations into the past and into the future -- INDIVIDUALISM discovers romantic love with its integration of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of a mutual relationship based on shared, personally chosen values.

While Straightism subordinates humankind to an inscrutable Divine Purpose, INDIVIDUALISM holds human happiness on earth as the highest purpose, the individual happiness of each person as her or his highest goal. It's YOUR life -- LIVE it!

Rosalie Nichols

(Author's Note: Well, here's a new twist on an old hackneyed theme. Maybe you've heard about the Klansman who died, went to Heaven and got kicked out by God because - She was black! This idea had been carried out on picket signs during certain Women's Liberation marches and the 1975 Gay Parade. So, I'm taking liberty for a further variation on this basic theme. My apologies to Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, Jehovah, Moloch, Mammon Galt, and my personal god, who is an Oak-tree. Any resemblance to real people or events is deliberate and intentional.)

Serena Wyant was dying. The operation had been successful, but the heart failed to respond. The clock in the hall ticked ominously, down corridors where nurses and personnel glided in silence.

In the delirium that followed, visions of her childhood moved in, treading on fields of lilies and magnolias, swamps and bayous, and tall stands of tobacco and corn. The simple cabin merged into view, where she was born and dreamt her dreams. It was God's country, peopled by God's folks -- the simple hardworking, God-fearing farmers who hoed the earth and harvested the meagre gain.

She remembered the white-steepled church, and Reverend Howells preaching, and hound dogs howling and baying at the moon. Old Tabitha, a neighbor's servant, served her herb tea of Hyascamus, Muscarina and Datura. And at evening, when crimson clouds flamed the closing of a day, she saw God's face in the vapors, with fiery eyes and white flowing beard.

L'Morte County was a good land and had only good people, and for years she had known no others. Yes, there had been other kinds of folks, so different that they had to be separated into their own kinds of towns and reservations. Yet, the black ones and the copper ones knew their place, and God's Will would prevent trouble.

The change came about on a trip to New Orleans just before the Lenten season. Orleans was a sunken city, with the great river flowing above, separated only by levees. Ghostly sepulchers marked the ancient cemeteries, and an eerie past haunted the old French quarters. She shuddered at the ornate ironwork on the sagging tenements, reeking of abysmal sin and corruption. A door yawned open and les filles sauntered onto the street, swaying on high-platformed shoes. The fog closed in, surrounding her in darkness and loneliness.

A trumpet blared and a thunderous roll of hooves awakened her. And the river of silks and sequins and brocaded capes flowed like lava on all sides of her. On horseback and foot, or monstrous hallucinatory floats came the Strangers. They laughed and sang, swished and swayed in grand Satanic splendor. She fled in terror and recovered gradually, in her cabin midst the native corn.

A day or so later, she came upon the deserted old mansion, sinking in the swamp, vacant since the great Civil War. She had heard that it had been sold, and she wanted to know if the new owners were Godly and good, like the folks she had known all the time. Through

a clearing she watched, as the new owners, bearded and handsome, walked down the veranda hand in hand. Their voices were gentle, their accents cultivated; not like the down-to-earth rough-talking farmers she knew. And suddenly it dawned on her: they were Strangers!

The sun came down in a blaze of glory, and after a draught of country tea, she saw the message. The Hand moved out of the clouds pointing to her, and her brain reeled from the thoughts. The message was clear, she heard it all: "Save our land from the Strangers!" If we don't, the Strangers will recruit our children, our husbands and wives, and there will be no more good folks like you and I to inhabit this country. "Organize and protest and act. For this is God's Will!"

Her mind momentarily returned to reality, and she prayed: "Oh, God in Heaven, spare me, give me another day to follow my calling, and fulfill the purpose for which I was placed on this earth. . . Oh, my God!"

The silence was filled with music; celestial organ wafting waves in spirals of light. The light intensified, then waned, for she found herself floating, far above her body, while doctors and nurses huddled in frantic attempts of resuscitation.

The light returned and more celestial music, winding endless flights of stairs. Domes and cupolas of pearl floated down, with Archangels walking, hand in hand.

"Ahah -- she's made it - her heart's beginning to beat," said the doctor. "I think we've saved her."

Serena spent months in recovery and silence. Reverend Howells held her hand and asked repeatedly, 'What had she seen in the Great Beyond?' She could not answer, but only hung her head and wept. He asked whether he could continue her program of saving our families, only to meet a response of fearful silence.

Eventually neighbors had doubts of her sanity, for at home she sat for hours on the porch and cried. Granma Zelma came around and suggested a visit to Tabitha. "She's Heathen we know, now runs a jiu-jiu shop in New Orleans. But she's helped a lot of folk, simply by purging their minds of guilt and sorrow."

Serena consented, and she entered the cavernous shop. Amid dripping candles, Tabitha hypnotized her and gave her an ouija board to record her thoughts. Muffled drums in the background and masked gods all around. Incense in the air and an exalted tension -- the writing went on and on.

Tabitha awakened her, and showed her the message. She read it and fainted; her neighbors read it and trembled in disbelief.

"For I, who departed from life six months ago, descended into Heaven to meet my Lord, and my God, She was Gay!"



Ain't I Virtuous?

Oh Hail Mary Full of Grace!
I say to you, Sister Mary Regina,
If I mutter little prayers to Our Lady
and Our Father
will you deem me suitable
to teach in your Academy of the Holy Names?

If I forsake my overalls and blue jeans
to some hidden corner of the closet
(and little do you know what else
I'll be keeping in the closet
as long as we know each other!)
will you grant me entrance
into your most blessed halls of female education?

If I dedicate all my Spanish teaching
to the pure grammatical structures
and christ-like corrections,
and exalt the monarchical christianization of America
and oppose the hellish separation of Church and State,
will you see fit to witness my signature on a holy contract?

If I forget the alienation, guilt and self-persecution I suffered
growing up at Sunday Masses and Thursday catechism classes
and the fears that my every act was either a mortal or venial sin
or my childhood forgetfulness indulging me into hamburgers
at a luncheonette on a Friday afternoon
was dooming me to burn in the everlasting fires of Hell,
will you graciously employ me?

If I keep my lustful lesbian consciousness
tucked away in some spiderwebby corner of the classroom,
and don't say that Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz
was really a frustrated lesbian
who saw no other alternative
than to sit in a 17th century Mexican convent cell
frantically writing poetry that shocked the clergy,
will you hire me today and remember my poor soul
in your prayers tomorrow?

Oh Hail Mary Full of Grace!
I say to you, Sister Mary Regina,
If the Lord won't give me a job these days, who will?!

-- Jan Braumuller

Goldie Locks' Halloween
or
A Witch Is Not a Wicked Queen

BY JANET SCHRIM

Goldie Locks was walking down a path in the forest. The wind whipped her heavy coat and the air was filled with the dry rustling and the many colors of autumn leaves. The sun shone brightly through the bare branches of the trees.

"What a beautiful day!" shouted Goldie. The chill wind tossed her curly blonde locks and she shivered. It was an awfully long way to her friend's house and Goldie wished that there was somewhere she could rest and get out of the cold for a while.

Just then she saw a small white cottage off to one side of the path. She left the path and walked over to a short stone wall, through the wooden gate and up a stone-paved path to the heavy wooden door of the cottage. She knocked on the door very boldly. A beautiful young woman with dark flowing hair opened the door. She was a little older than Goldie and dressed simply but colorfully.

"Hello. Who are you? Hardly anyone ever comes this way through the woods."

"My name is Goldie Locks," said Goldie, "and I'm on my way to visit a friend of mine for Halloween, but it's so cold out... I wonder if I might come in for a while and warm up?"

"Of course. It is very cold out today, though beautiful. Come in and have some tea with me. My name is Snow White." She smiled and motioned Goldie in.

"Thanks very much," said Goldie. So Snow White and Goldie Locks shared some hot tea and buttered blueberry muffins in the warmth of the little cottage in front of a blazing, crackling fireplace. Snow White showed Goldie around the cottage, and everywhere there were seven of this and seven of that, except of course in Snow White's room. And Snow White told Goldie how the seven dwarves who lived there had taken care of her after her stepmother, the Wicked Queen, had tried to kill her by ordering the royal huntsman to take Snow White into the forest and to kill her. The Huntsman, however, could not kill her and instead abandoned her.

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"The seven dwarves have been so good to me. I've been here three weeks now. But I do miss my girlfriends so! I am so glad that you happened by! The seven dwarves are at work all day and when they come home, they usually just eat dinner and go to sleep. I'm very lonely here. But I am alive and safe."

Goldie was fascinated with Snow White's escape and she shared the story of her own adventure in the house of the three bears. Goldie was having such a good time with Snow White that she forgot about her friend's Halloween party. When she finally remembered, it was beginning to rain really hard. She wanted to go, but she did not want to get all wet and besides that, it was getting dark.

"You can stay here tonight if you want to. I think this rain is not going to let up for a long while and it's tricky enough to travel in the dark without the rain. The seven dwarves are visiting some friends and won't be back till late tomorrow. I would love to have you stay here tonight," said Snow White.

"I guess my friend will understand if I don't show up tonight. It will be a very different Halloween...quieter than I'm used to. But I think I'll enjoy it. I like being here with you." Goldie smiled.

Just then there was a knocking at the door. Curious as to who was wandering around in the storm Snow White and Goldie both went to answer the door. Outside a very old woman with a wrinkly face and thick grey hair stood. She wore a long dark cloak. She smiled and spoke, "Would you let me come in out of the rain? It took me a little by surprise and I should like to dry off if I may."

Snow White and Goldie gladly let the old woman in. They all sat by the fire and had tea and muffins and talked together. The old woman's name was Willomena but she liked to be called Willo. Snow White asked where she lived.

"Oh, I live a short distance from here in the woods. I was gathering herbs nearby and not paying attention to the weather. Usually I would not be surprised like that, but I had my mind on tonight's celebration," said Willo.

"Are you having a Halloween party?" asked Goldie.

"Something like that," said Willo. She paused for a moment and gazed at the two girls very thoughtfully. "You girls seem trustworthy to me. I will tell you about it, but you must promise to tell no one about it."

"I promise," said Snow White.

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"I promise," said Goldie Locks.

"All right. You see, Halloween is just a new version of a sacred festival in an old, old religion. Someone who observes the old religion is today called a witch, though originally the term was wise one. I am a witch and all the witches near here will come together tonight for our most important festival. Witches everywhere will celebrate tonight.

"The harvest celebration is passed, more than a moon ago. Now we observe the coming of our new year. We will enjoy the bounty of the harvest, we will dance and sing in honor of the Earth. She is now beginning a long rest, to restore herself for the bearing of new life in the springtime, and with the beginning of the Earth's rest, our year begins. We will come together in love and be strengthened just as the Earth is now being strengthened. The year begins with a time of rest and renewal just as a woman's cycle is counted as beginning after the outward flow of blood has stopped, when a woman's body begins to restore itself.

"A witch is someone who honors the Earth and knows her ways, someone who is in touch with the Earth and with herself, or himself for some men are witches, and with other witches. A witch knows the healing that comes from the gifts of the Earth." Willo fell silent.

"I never knew that!" said Snow White with wonder.

"Yes," said Goldie, I've heard that witches are evil and do terrible things to people. Why do people say these things about witches?"

Willo wept. Then she said, "There are those people - powerful people, who do not want us to follow the old beliefs. They want everyone to follow the newer religion of the king, to heed the words of his priests. They wish all power for themselves - and yet they do not have half the knowledge of the Earth that we have. They tell the people that the old religion is superstition or that we worship the devil and do the devil's work. How absurd! If anything is the work of their devil, surely it is their lying and deceit! Yet more and more people are taken in by their treachery!" Now Willo was furious and animated, her voice rising, her eyes flashing.

"They cannot deny us our beliefs and our knowledge. There is no power than can do so! Even now our numbers are few and we must often hide; a time is coming when we will seem to have vanished, but we will always be! And one day the old wisdom will again guide the people and the Earth will be honored and cared for instead of being taken for granted and laid to waste!"

Goldie and Snow White were moved by the old woman's words. They hugged her tightly and asked if they could go to the celebration with her that night.

"Not tonight," said Willo, "but if you wish, I will take you to meet the other witches at the next full moon. We can all talk and get to know each other better."

Just then there was another knock at the door. Goldie, Snow White and Willo all went to answer it. Outside stood another old woman. Her face was gnarled and stiff; her gray hair seemed lifeless. "Hello, dearies. Won't you let me come in and dry out? I was caught in the rain earlier and had no place to go, so I kept on walking until I saw the light from your windows." She paused, a questioning look on her face, then added, "I have some lovely apples here in my basket to share with you."

Snow White was just about to tell this old woman to come in when Willo whispered in Snow White's ear, "Let me handle this."

"What is your name?" asked Willo.

"My name is, uh, Wendy," said the old woman.

"I don't think I know you," said Willo. "Step into the light so I can see you better. The old woman stepped forward a little. Willo reached out and pulled the old woman's hood back. She looked very carefully at the old, gnarled face. Suddenly she moved her hand from hood to hair and pulled off a wig. With another swift movement, Willo removed a false nose, some face putty, and some actors' make-up from the "old woman's" cheek. The discovered imposter screamed with anger and flung both her arms upwards to push Willo's hand away. Apples from her basket were scattered all over.

Snow White nearly fainted as she recognized - her step-mother, the Queen! But Goldie supported her for a minute and Snow White recovered from the shock.

"Get out of here and don't come back! Witches of the forest know how to deal with your evil and deceit. Go! Go back to your castle. And if you ever impersonate a witch again, if you ever try to harm Snow White again, you will regret it, I promise you that!"

The half-disguised Queen ran away as fast as she could. Soon the three friends heard the sound of a carriage pulling away at a short distance. Willo closed the door and they all sat down by the fire once more. "How did you know that she was a fake? Did you know who it was?" asked Snow White, still a little dazed.

"I know all the people in this area and all the witches for miles and miles. The make-up job was not extremely good, and her cloak wasn't drenched as it should have been, merely a little wet. I was not sure who she was, but I did think of the

queen. I think she will leave you be - at least for a while.

"Make sure you dispose of those apples carefully. Unless I'm badly mistaken, they are filled with poison. The Queen is a Borgia, you know. Perhaps I will take them with me and see to it myself," said Willo.

"I'm glad you were here," said Goldie Locks.

"Yes, so am I," said Snow White. "You saved my life. Thank you. But must you leave?"

"You are certainly very welcome," said Willo. "Yes, I must be going. The rain has stopped and I must not disappoint my sister-witches - they are expecting me. But I will return tomorrow and take you to my cottage if you like." Goldie and Snow White were both very eager to visit Willo and spend time with her and they said so.

"You can stay for a few days if you wish," said Willo, "and if you enjoy your stay you are both welcome to come and live with me. I would like some company and I have plenty of room. Snow White, I extend this invitation to you particularly. I know that the seven dwarves are good fellows, but they are not particularly interesting company for a young woman. Of course, as I said before, you are both welcome to stay, if you like."

"I would like that," said Snow White.

"So would I," said Goldie. "And you can teach us about herbs and about the other wonderful things that you know."

Goldie and Snow White kissed Willo good-bye and watched her walk away in the moonlight till she had vanished from sight. They slept very soundly that Halloween night warm together in Snow White's bed dreaming dreams of new friends and a friendly old woman.

The End
and
A BEGINNING



RENEGADE WOMAN/ARMED AND DANGEROUS

FIRST: The phone call from Georgia, relating that you can't come home to New York on your Christmas/New Years leave because the NYPD is after you for a minor crime you committed before you enlisted in the army. I don't believe you. You tell me you're broke, haven't saved your money. I yell and shout, feeling you have made a fool of me, allowing you to reverse the charges on all those long distance phone calls. So you could (supposedly) save your money for your (our?) future. You are fighting contriteness, keep asking me not to yell. I forgive you because I love you--- And promise to send you the money to come home.

SECOND: You drop out of sight---no word from you at all--- You just seem to have disappeared off the face of the earth. I am worried and suspicious and angry and hurt. The 'happy holidays' are spent in a hell of your making. And we can't seem to get any worthwhile information from the army. Even my money comes back from the new fort, marked: PRESENT ADDRESS UNKNOWN. I think of starting a personal investigation of my own--- But am persuaded to give up the whole idea. I worry about 'facts' coming to light--- Afraid to make too many waves where the military is concerned--- Not for me. But for you. I seek advice. Even those who are willing to help have their doubts. So I wait, alone and lonely. And in torment. And I'm not even sure what it is I'm waiting for.

THIRD: A letter arrives almost five months later. From some female soldier, claiming to be an army buddy, Attached to the Army Security Agency at some fort in Kansas. She claims she is looking for you as a friend, not to 'lock you up,' Having been interrogated herself about your desertion. She also fears for your safety, but manages to give me the low-down, Confirming the suspected lies, betrayals, etc. Ironically, some things I didn't believe turn out to be truths And some truths taken for granted turn out to be lies. I am not surprised; nothing you do anymore can surprise me. But the thing that probably disturbs me the most is the revelation That you are on the loose with a gun in your possession. I have dealt with your unstable personality/ self-destructive tendencies Enough to realize that you could become a running time bomb If you are backed into a corner of desperation. Even your shrink was against your decision to enlist!

FOURTH: Now the FBI has warned us that you are (still) a fugitive, Considered ARMED and DANGEROUS. But they won't tell us what you have done that makes you 'dangerous.' (To anyone but yourself, that is.) And I keep thinking/feeling that this has got to be a bad dream. But I know it's really a living nightmare.

It started when you walked into my heart
 and I walked into your arms,
 Turning friendship into love. And loyalty. ---And obsession?
 And now I feel certain that you will get yourself killed.
 If you are not dead already. (Which I often believe you are.)
 But that's okay, find your peace in your own way---
 'Cause what else is waiting for you here but---
 A psychiatric ward in some army prison hospital??

FIVE: Wherever you are---whatever happens---
 Know that I am here.
 And that I still love you.

-- Dorothy Feola 1976

Reprinted from *LESBIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION*.

Waltz

-- Dorothy Feola

I doubt if I had taken more than two sips of my drink before she came in. I could tell at a glance that she was really annoyed. As she drew near the table, I caught such a look of disgust on her face that I felt like putting my hands over my eyes to block it out. But I put them over my ears instead. She opened her mouth to speak---but didn't. She turned around and went back to the bar instead.

That was a dumb thing to do, jumping out of the car in the middle of traffic. Just because someone wouldn't answer you---because you were (unreasonably?) angry---because she wouldn't respond to your verbal advances. What a merry-go-round life could be, full of thoughts and actions and gestures that were enough to make one dizzy when matched, yours to others. And vice versa.

Then she was back. With a drink in her hand. Which surprised me.

"See this," she said, soberly, indicating the glass in her hand. "I don't really want it. My ulcer isn't gonna be a bit happy about it. What's more, I can't even afford it. At these prices, I'll probably have to go without lunch tomorrow." She paused for just a moment, probably to make sure I was getting it all straight in my head. "But every time I'm with you lately, I seem to need a drink to steady my nerves." And with that, she sat down, banging the glass down in front of her.

So now I was driving my friends to drink. What next?

A feeling fostered by spite made me take some singles out of the breast pocket of my jacket and deliberately let them slip out of my hand, falling onto the table, right in front of her. "I always pay my own way," I told her. "Even when it comes to buying friends."

She looked directly at me, expressionless, for the most part; then sighed quietly, dropping her eyes. "I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that."

I leaned heavily on my elbow, my fingers massaging my temples. Dumb. Dumb. So many things said and done lately were regretted. People got scared. Or angry. Some were bewildered. Sometimes I was one of them. "Okay," I agreed, trying not to sound too contrite, yet sincerely trying to get the message across. "And I'll pretend I never said it."

She hesitated, then nodded, looking up at me. "Fair enough." She sipped her drink. (I didn't think it was a good idea, with her ulcer and all, but I wasn't about to give her any advice at the moment, no matter how well intentioned.) "Now, can you tell me why you felt it necessary to get out of the car in the middle of traffic? Obviously it wasn't because you couldn't wait to get here---since we were only a block away to begin with."

"It was your idea to come," I reminded her, skirting one particular issue and edging toward another. "I'm beginning to think you're afraid to be alone with me."

"I'm not biting tonight, pal," she assured me. She didn't say anything else for the moment. I met her gaze, waiting. "If you think I'm gonna spend the whole evening defending myself against your snide, offhand remarks, you've got another think coming, chum." She lifted her glass to the statement. "And that, as they say, is that," she finalized it.

I raised my own glass to it, stifling a sudden urge to stick my tongue out and give her what has come to be known as 'the Bronx cheer.' Only, the way things had been going between us lately, she'd probably think I was coming on to her or something. Sometimes there was just no way of winning. And the best thing to do was to try to ignore the whole thing.

Right as I was swallowing what was a fair amount of alcohol mixed with what I wasn't sure (since they'd brought me the wrong drink to begin with), I spied two mutual friends of ours that I thought it best to see alone. Before they had a chance to talk to Ray. Or vice versa. I jerked to attention, almost choking on what I was swallowing. "Come on---" I encouraged, jumping to my feet.

"What---?"

"Let's---er---" I suddenly became aware of the music that I had gotten so in the habit of blocking out. "Dance- That's it---let's dance--" A quick glance across the room told me that we were spotted. Without any further ado, I pulled Ray to her feet, dragging her behind me.

"The money---we left the money on the table---"

"It'll be safe," I brushed it aside.

"Are you kidding-?" She stopped short of the dance floor. "In this country---?---in New York---?---in here---?---at these prices---?"

And she hurried back to the table. Damn! I'd almost made it. Boy, was she getting to be a real penny-pincher since she had gone back to school. And on top of that, she had no romance in her soul.---Like the night I bought a long-stemmed red rose from a little old lady with a basket of them, right there, on that very dance floor---where she had come from, I had no idea, I happened to turn around and there she was---and presented this sweet gift to my dear friend, Ray, as a token of my warm affection for her. (And anything else that she might decide to throw into the bargain.) And did I get a kiss or even a hug for my thoughtfulness-? No way. I got a witty remark, like, "What'd you do, grow it while you were standing here waiting for me?" And a grin. And a "I gotta leave early tonight, I gotta get up early---" The plain fact was, I was certain, that she was afraid to show too much affection, for fear of giving the wrong impression. And it was mostly my fault, of course. She was so damned frightened of having to confront the guilt that might possibly result from our 'getting involved.' She worried about me getting hurt. Only--- is it possible to get hurt when you're in so much pain to begin with?

"Hi, Lee," someone tapped me on the shoulder. "What's new?"

A member of my old C-R group stepped past me, holding the hand of someone that I didn't recognize.

"Hello, Joanne," I said, a bit abstractly. "---And I think I'm about to get slaughtered." She stopped for a moment, eyeing me curiously. "Sorry. Thinking out loud. How are you, Joanne?"

"Not bad. And you?"

"Oh, I'm--" I shrugged, glancing back at Ray, in deep conversation with the two women who were about to become former friends of mine, "--in hot water again, thank you." Drawing myself up to my full 5'3", I steadied myself for the encounter. "See ya around," I threw over my shoulder, starting on the long road to the short fuse.

"Hey, here she comes, the dykes' answer to James Bond," Del, the shorter, heavier one announced, grinning like a fool.

"Knock it off, willya, dummy," I grumbled, pretty pissed off already. "You had to go and open your damned big mouth, didn't you-?"

"I'm sorry, Lee," Monica, her lover (and always the more sensible and discreet of the two), apologized for them both. "But you never said not to say anything---"

"I know, I know---" I dismissed it all with a wave of my hand. "I didn't think we'd all run into each other so soon. In fact, I had no idea I was even going to be here tonight; I thought I would be spending a nice quiet evening at a friend's apartment." And with that, I turned to look at Ray. I shouldn't have.

"You mean it's true---?" she asked, incredulous, her voice a strain above a whisper. "It's not a mistake---?"

"I was going to tell you myself---tonight even---"

"You threatened a government agent---?"

"Just wait until you hear---"

"You actually told her that you'd pay to have her beat up?"

I shrugged, slipping my hands into the pockets of my jacket. "I didn't exactly put it that way---"

"You said you'd be willing to pay to have a job done on her if she didn't tell you everything she knew," Del reminded me, obligingly.

"Oh, my god-!" Ray gasped.

"Who asked you-?" I snapped at Del.

"I don't believe this---" Ray mumbled, sitting down, as if the wind had suddenly been knocked out of her. "You're the one who threatens government agents and I'm the one the FBI keeps getting in touch with." She shook her head, as if dazed. "This system has got to be in even worse shape than we figured."

"Listen---it wasn't that kind of government agent," I assured her, trying to make the whole thing sound better. "It was an Army Security--I hesitated for a moment--"person."

"An agent," Del volunteered. Monica slapped her in the back of the shoulder with the palm of her hand. "Well, it was," Del told us.

"How the hell would you know-? She never said she was an agent. She merely said she was attached to the Army Security---"

"Agency," Del finished for me.

Without saying anything, I gave her a dirty look.

"I'm glad you both think this is some sort of game," Ray told us, obviously trying to control her temper. "Need I remind anyone that something really far out must have gone down to drag the Feds into this? And obviously they haven't found what they're looking for---or they wouldn't keep contacting me all the time."

"Yeah, well, you can have it," Del told her. "I don't know where she is and I don't wanna know. And the less I know the better."

"You're all heart," I muttered, snidely. "All of a sudden no one cares about her---as if she never existed---"

"I never heard of her," Del remarked, casually, yet deliberately.

Impulsively, I made a move toward her, but Ray grabbed my hand and, unobserved, pressed it against her thigh. "Very wise," she told Del, while I stood there, almost in shock. "How did LFL get into this anyway?"

I didn't answer right away. Neither did anyone else. I looked around the room, trying to think of a better reason. I couldn't come up with a damn thing. Mostly because I couldn't detach my mind from my hand. And they were all waiting expectantly when I looked back. I shrugged. "I---er---told them---?"

Ray was staring at me, sort of nonplussed, and I soon felt her hand slipping out of mine. "Well---I wasn't too cool that day---I was really uptight---or I wouldn't have said anything at all. I know they've got enough of their own problems---But I really do think they have a way of being paranoid---telling me to watch what I say on the phone---suggesting I get an attorney---"

"Well, maybe they've got good reason to be," she jumped in, her tone of voice sharp, harsh. "You live in a world of your own---how the hell would you know about the hassles they have to go through, fighting for gay rights?!"

"I think it's time we moved on," Monica suggested, a good attempt at keeping it casual. "Maybe we'll see you later."

"Don't count on it," I told them. I had the feeling it was going to be a long evening. Even if it ended early.

As Del passed me, she stopped a moment, leaning over toward me. "Don't forget to tell her about the chair you swung at Jessica---tiger."

"Will you get the hell out of here-!" I warned her. (Sometimes she really went too far, but actually I couldn't help

liking her.) Grinning, she gave me a quick peck on the cheek. Then was pulled away by Monica.

I was almost afraid to sit at the same table with Ray again. But I did. I tried to give her a genuine smile in return for her concentrated look; but I had the feeling that my face would crack and my features would dissolve.

"Is that the Jessica I think it is?" she asked, sounding almost bored with it all. (The danger sign?) I nodded. "So you finally got her, huh?" she said, in the same tone of voice, nodding herself. "So what are you gonna do now that you're becoming the macho butch type, get even with anyone who has ever given you any trouble in the last few years?"

"That time in the C-R group---"

"That was a whole year ago-!" she practically hissed at me. "It took you a whole year to get up the guts to tell her off-?" She raised her eyes to the ceiling, tapping her fingers on the table. "With a chair, no less."

"Well, I didn't forget. And I made sure she knew about it. That's all. Plain and simple."

"Next you'll be beating up on me, I suppose, just because I refuse to go to bed with you."

"Don't think it hasn't crossed my mind," I told her, realizing full well that I would never lay a hand on her in that respect. She responded to what I said by giving me her full attention and not saying anything. And maybe that's what I was really after by saying what I had said. "Listen, no one's ever gonna do a number on me again, I don't give a damn who they are, or in the name of what---love, hate, spite, or indifference. It took me all these years to wake up---and I still don't like the idea of hurting anyone---but I'll run right over them if I have to."

She leaned back in her seat, taking a crumpled pack of cigarettes out of the pocket of her jacket. I lit one of my own matches for her. She didn't thank me in any way, but her eyes stood with me. "And what's your ace in the hole? I mean, surely you must know something now that you weren't aware of before---"

"I guess you might call it an ace in the hole," I said, watching the match burn between my fingers. "I don't seem to have any long-range plans anymore, that's all." I brought the match up to my lips and blew it out. But continued to stare at it. "So it doesn't much matter what happens to me anymore."

When I leaned over to drop the match in the ash tray, I caught a fleeting grimace on her face. "What's the matter---?"

---your ulcer again---" She nodded, sighing softly. "Then what are you drinking this stuff for?" I reached out and slid the glass away from her. "Can I get you anything?"

She shook her head. "Let's go back to my apartment. You drive."

I drove back to Ray's small apartment on 2nd Avenue, between 90th and 91st Street. It was a pretty good drive from where we were in the Village and, with her resting quietly against my shoulder for most of the trip, I wasn't quite sure if she was awake or not. But as soon as I parked the car, she came to, sitting up straight in her seat.

"How do you feel?" I asked her.

She shrugged. "I've felt better; I've felt worse," she commented, drily.

"Tell me," I began, leaning my arm lightly against the steering wheel, "what the hell were we doing out drinking? Someone who doesn't really drink and someone who has a deal with her ulcer not to. ---Especially since we could have been in a nice cozy apartment, fooling around---or something."

"We weren't 'out drinking.' You know that's not the reason we go there, when we go at all. And as for me, that drink was a fake ---I had what's-her-name, the blonde behind the bar, mix up something that looked like a drink." She reached over and took the car keys, which were dangling from my fingers. "It was only for effect; I thought it was about time you felt guilty for a change." There was a slight pause as she looked back at me. "Close your mouth. I'm learning these tricks from you. I was just a bright little student from Queens before I hit the big time.---And all of a sudden I'm involved in FBI plots. My father must be turning over in his grave."

"I'll go you one even better than that," I told her. "I was just a quiet, rather introverted housewife from the Bronx."

We were practically on top of each other in the cramped little car, yet we both seemed to withdraw into our own worlds of thought for a few moments. All I did was fall in love with an obviously unstable woman---and now I was suffering for it ---not knowing if she was alive or dead---the pictures in my mind of her being shot down by FBI men---not even knowing the real facts behind it all---it all seemed so unfair---to the both of us--- *Don't think about it*, I warned myself. *Think about better times*--- No, that was depressing too; I cried a lot when I thought about the happier days. *Well, think about the waltz then*---that's the only safe thing to think about. *But remember, it's fantasy*---and always remember to separate the real from the fantasy---or you'll end up as spaced out as

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she obviously was. Even you couldn't help her---and now they'll kill her---if she's not dead already---because you didn't have enough time---before they took her away from you---

"Did you hear what I said-?" Ray's voice interrupted my familiar thoughts. I looked at her, seeing her now. "I said, do you want to take the car to get home for tonight?"

I tried to smile. I almost succeeded. "Are you trying to get rid of me or something? I thought I'd come up and tuck you in. And I'll try not to make a pass."

"That'll be the day. Okay, come up. But remember, I don't feel so well, so don't start giving me a hard time." She opened the door on her side, then hesitated, still looking at me.

"Yes? More instructions?"

"Oh, go to hell," she mumbled, getting out of the car.

And this time I really did smile.

Once in the apartment, she immediately took some kind of medicine, without even taking off her jacket. I opened up the convertible couch for her. "Rushing things tonight, aren't you?" she remarked goodnaturedly, slipping out of her jacket.

"Don't sweat it---I'm only staying for ten or fifteen minutes." Truth was, if I actually had anything like that in mind, I would never have had the guts to do anything as forward as that. Not with her dreaded fear of 'sexual intimacy' getting in the way of our 'friendship.' How many times had she told me by now about how important friendship, our friendship, was to her? And, unfortunately (?), the way she told it, it always made a lot of sense. And you can't argue against logic. I know. I've tried. Almost everytime we're together, in fact.

I took off my jacket, handing it to her. "You look pale. I suggest you get ready for bed. I can wait in the hall if you like."

"Don't be silly," she said, propping both jackets over her shoulder. "I can always get undressed in the bathroom." She laughed quietly, then went to hang the clothes up in the hall closet.

I was standing by the window when she came back, carrying her robe with her. Almost without thinking, she threw the robe over the one armchair and started to unbutton her shirt. Suddenly she paused, looking up in the silence around us, as if to check out whether it was right (safe?) to continue. I didn't give her the break she might have been looking for---by turning away---or even averting my eyes. Instead, I reached out to her with those eyes, caressing the parts of her body I might have

wanted to touch had things been different between us.

"You're about to make me self-conscious and both of us uncomfortable," she warned, softly, avoiding direct eye contact.

As usual, her own special brand of 'cold water'; the soft-sell kind, all done with a gesture of good will. Well, I was getting a little tired of it--- "Oh, well, by all means, let's not get into any of those kinds of trips," I told her, a poor attempt at flippancy. I turned away from her, waving my hand in disgust. "Go on, I won't look."

"You're not going to make me feel guilty-!" she cried out, almost in anguish.

It took me off guard, and I turned back to face her. "I'm not trying to---"

"Yes, you are," she insisted, bringing her fist down soundlessly on top of the back of the armchair beside her. "You do it time and time again---and it's all so fruitless and unnecessary---because I can't help you---not that way---I can't stop your pain and your anger---not with my body---it doesn't work that way. ---When are you ever going to be able to understand that?"

I sighed heavily, nodding, even though I wasn't quite sure at that point what I understood or believed in anymore. "I understand. Or I understand that I better start understanding---since one and one never adds up to two anymore. Love is pain. Pain is anger. Friendship is frustration---indifference---"

"That's not true---it's all in your head---you feel like everyone's against you because you can't seem to realize that you're in the grip of something that could be very destructive for you. Can't you feel a difference in your personality already? You're being driven by something that seems without reason or direction---for someone who wasn't worth half of what you're going through. Already you're half in and half out of a fantasy world---that's why you're becoming so frustrated and hostile---people aren't conforming to your own way of looking at things---and you can't control them---like those characters you write about in your stories. And you still can't realize how lucky you are to be rid of her---how close you came to avoiding what very well could have been a dangerous situation for you."

I shook my head. "No---I could have helped her---"

"Will you stop these damn head trips!" she shouted at me. "You keep forgetting that I was involved with her once too-! And it was scary! I'm the one who's been trained along these lines---but when it came to a personal relationship---it scared the hell out of me But I was lucky enough not to be blinded

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by an irrational love obsession."

"Look---I don't want to hear anymore---" Sometimes I felt like shaking her, shaking her until she was senseless, devoid of reason and logic. In a dejected manner, she turned her back on me, sitting down on the arm of the chair. I guess I should have left then and there. But I didn't. I turned away, looking out of the window. Compared to what was going on inside, the night seemed very much alive outside, with lights and noise and people and traffic. A real show. An open drama. 'Outsides' were always like that. 'Insides' were empty and dead. It was like that with me. There was this big, dark hole inside of me ---oh, I functioned very well around the darkness of the hole ---my heart and head were so involved with (my) thoughts and feelings that imagination and creativity were the least of my worries lately---and I had absolutely no trouble getting most of it down on paper. The handful of editors I dealt with on a regular/personal basis seemed pleased with my work---yet two of them had warned me, individually, that I might be draining myself dry, putting too much energy into my emotions and too much emotion into my writing. And only one of them really knew the half of it---we'd tossed the subject around often enough. And always came up disagreeing. But it didn't matter; I'd still rather discuss it with her than anyone else. She had a way of disagreeing that didn't make me feel as 'irrational' or 'obsessed' as some others.

"You can't stand by the window all night," Ray's voice informed me. "What's on your mind, anyway? Can we talk about it?"

"Tracey---" and I smiled to myself, thinking about her.

"Well, that's a welcome change," she practically sighed.

"Know what she said when I told her that bit about not being able to sleep with my back to the door all those months?"

"What?"

"Nothing." I laughed softly, thinking about it. "It was one of the few times since I've known her that she was at a loss for words."

"She's becoming important to you, isn't she?"

I nodded, still not turning to look at her. "Yeah, I guess she is. She's strong---and that gets to me, you know, strong, intelligent women---there's something about her independence and confidence that screams security in my ears every time I talk to her. If I live to be a hundred, I'll never be where she's at, living with that kind of natural confidence. Or be able to inspire it, the way she does in me."

"Yes, I've noticed that she does seem to have something of

an influence on you. And a healthy one for a change. All I can say is, thank heaven there's someone around with a complete sense of reality that can handle you."

I turned around, wondering exactly how I was to take that. Her shirt was completely open now, hanging out of her slacks, exposing a certain amount of bare flesh. I was surprised, but tried not to show it. As for her, she wasn't actually smiling, yet there was a natural, quiet, sort of relaxed look about her. At any rate, she definitely didn't appear uncomfortable or self-conscious. Only---no use kidding myself, there wasn't anything really seductive or even suggestive about the whole thing. Perhaps it was a gesture of good faith, trust---I'm not sure what---but it worked to turn me away from any train of thought along other lines. And suddenly I wanted my waltz. I felt safe with the fantasy of it. Desire---decisions---it was sometimes too much to deal with---but my waltz gave me a chance to daydream, to block it all out---at least for a little while. And it was waiting for me now---somewhere outside of that room---

"I have to go---I'll get my jacket---" I crossed the room and went into the hall. I got my jacket out of the closet and came back into the room again. "I hope you feel better---call you later on in the week," I said, slipping into my jacket and zippering it up. "Sorry if I upset you too much."

She shrugged easily. "It won't be the last time," she assured me. "But we keep coming back for more so---so I guess the good must outweigh the bad, huh?"

I nodded in agreement. "It must say something for us."

We paused where we were, looking directly at each other. Then she asked, "Tell me, do you know where it is you're going?"

"Sure. I'm going home." Even if I felt sure it wasn't what she meant.

"Think you'll ever get there?" she pursued.

I stepped closer to her, drawing her shirt closed, with the tenderness of my affection as well as my fingers. The time for caution was gone now and we were both well aware of it. She knew that my thoughts were now with the woman I really loved. She always knew. Even when I didn't. It's a good thing one of us could always see through the maze. "Listen," I told her, earnestly, "I'll find my way home okay, but it has to be my way, on my time and on my own terms. Don't rush me. No amount of pushing or shoving is gonna get me there any faster. Or safer."

"I know," she nodded. "Only sometimes it seems like you're going so far out of your way to get there. ~~It would be such a~~

damn shame if you got so lost that you could never find the right way again. I'd really hate to see that happen."

"Point well taken. Now on with the show---and kiss me good night---before I change my mind and refuse to leave---until I get what I came for." We kissed on the mouth. Then embraced.

"Ray---" It was an impulse.

"What?"

I hesitated, feeling warm and comfortable. (Which could easily have become a trap, I realized.) "Wouldn't it be nice if we could waltz together sometime, just the two of us, all alone?"

She pulled back to look at me, amused, but with furrowed brow, her head askew. "What did you say?"

"Nothing." I shook my head. "Forget it. It was nothing." It wasn't for us. And I knew that. And maybe, just maybe, what we had was even better. At least it was real. I never doubted that for a moment.

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I started to hum it while I was walking north on 2nd Avenue. Then I whistled it under my breath. Soon I was doing both, changing back and forth. Then it was there (in my head), I could hear it, without having to make the music myself: an organ, playing our waltz, THE LAST WALTZ (as it was called). I slipped my hands into the pockets of my jacket, starting to keep time with the movements of my footsteps, my hidden fingers doing their own secret steps. The street cleared, it became one big, empty room, with thick, plush, wall-to-wall carpeting---I was waltzing with the woman I loved---and I smiled (as usual) at her denims and heavy construction shoes (sometimes it was army fatigues and boots), so out of place, yet---so right---so easy and natural and right in our Waltz of Love.

The lights dimmed in the streets---(soon) there were no streets---only that room---only us---we held each other close, our bodies blending together---I could actually feel the closeness, the warmth of bodily contact---with her bending over because I loved to hold her around the neck, pressing her against me, even though I was so much shorter than she---

I was almost hit by a car on East 94th Street.
It was nothing for me to worry about.
It wasn't the first time it had happened.
It probably wouldn't be the last.
And, frankly, I really didn't care very much.
I had other things on my mind.

THOUGHTS from a DISABLED DYKE

by Mary Gennoy

I'm tired of listening to you Lesbians who bitch about other dykes' lives and keep your attitudes of negativeness about your self-worth and the power you've got within yourselves. All I've heard lately is how poor you are, you could never live in the country, it's an "elitist privilege," etc.

Why don't you face reality and look at the facts? How many of you are aware that most of America's poor live in the country? I bet not one of you, or maybe one out of a hundred of you self-pitying dykes might be aware of this fact!

Next - don't tell me your poor sad story - I don't want to hear it. It's your problem if you don't believe in yourself - but I know that I'm the most important person in my life and I can do anything I want to do. Women can be strong, and it may be hard and I'll probably become discouraged as I often have in the past, but I'll never give up!

Giving up is giving in to men - it's giving the patriarchy proof women are weaker than men, and I am not ever going to let them say that about me! What made me strong? Myself. I was born with a club foot, arthritis in both feet, ankles and legs, a bone missing from both of my arms, an incurable disease which doctors can do nothing about and a 65% hearing loss in both of my ears.

This past year I've had three major surgeries done (only one was partially successful). When I was born, I spent the first six months of my life hospitalized, having surgery, casts and braces put on. As I grew older my parents and I were told that I would never have use of my hands or my arms and that I would not be able to walk. I rejected that. I rejected the overprotection my family forced upon me. I tried and tried and many times cried and wanted to quit, but I forced myself to be able to walk. I knew I could and I wanted to live my life as normally as I could. After that, I overcame my handicap of no use of my arms and hands. I learned how to feed myself, dress myself, brush my teeth, wash my hair, etc. Tying my shoes (or braces) was one of the hardest things for me to do, but I did it!

Even now, I have much difficulty being able to write or use my hands and arms due to pain and the disease growing worse, but I refuse to stop going after my goals and my dreams! After all I've been through, I'll never, ever quit - neither should you because whatever you want to do, it can be done - no one ever said it was easy!

THE COLLECTIVE

In the collective they decided what color to paint each wall, and then they painted walls after walls after walls, while some of them brushed and rolled and climbed in the rooms for hours, and some of them brushed and rolled and climbed in the rooms for days, and some of them brushed and rolled and climbed in the rooms for minutes, and some of them said that's great and walked away. And in the collective they decided that the garbage had to be taken from the rooms to make them livable, share the shitwork folks, and every woman muscle of them found a bag or box and set to work collective papers and bottles and rags and all the stuff the last ones left behind, and every woman muscle of them hauled it to a pre determined dump. Except for those few women who were drinking cokes in what was soon to be the lunchroom and who carried out no garbage for the cause at all, and except for those few women who got tired too fast and maybe took one bag to carry out before they left.

And in the collective they decided everyone had to be a critic and to give and take, and everyone had to have her say but go along with vetos if the others made it no. And some of them were critics in the nicest way, and some of them were critics on an ego trip, and some of them were critics of the things they didn't know, and some had great ideas that were brilliant and ignored. And then in the collective they decided that some members could not stay a part, and then they sorted out which members were not members anymore, and then they called a meeting where those members next were stood against a painted wall and talked about and at. And some of them were talking who had nothing real to say, and some of them were standing who had said too much too real, and some of them were standing for which others held a grudge, and some of them were talking who had just one use for groups, and some of them were standing who had tried too long and hard, and some of them were purged that day while other some were not. And in that new collective something old was born.

-- Diane Stein



Set me free from the chains I am in,
You, society, hold the key.
Don't stifle my expression, or hide my words,
Oh please, just let me be.

You frown on me for what I am,
Condemn me for what I am not,
You treat me as if the way I feel,
Is some disease I've got.

You set my standards to the ones that you hold,
And demand that I abide.
I guess you just don't give a damn,
About what I feel inside.

You cheat on your wife,
And drink yourself drunk,
And claim that it's all right.
But when I show compassion for another human being,
You're at me with your knife.

I used to think you hated me,
'Cause you didn't understand.
But now I ask you why?
Because I don't prefer a man?

You've hassled me, you've labeled me,
You've screamed until I've cried.
You've pushed me out of your "normal" world,
And now I have to hide.

You've told me I should be ashamed,
Of the feelings I install.
At least I have some feelings,
'Cause you've never felt at all.

So next time you condemn me,
Take a look around.
You have corruption everywhere,
It's happiness I've found.....

-- Anon.

Masquerade

by Suzanne R. Fried

Elizabeth did not remember when the odd little gifts began turning up on her doorstep or even where they came from. She only knew that they struck a familiar note which seemed to reach something deep within her.

The bouquet of dried flowers was the first thing she found lying on the steps leading to her house. Tiny flowers of yellow and purple tied by a faded blue velvet ribbon. The afternoon rain had begun to wash away some of the flowers so many of the stalks were bare but the remaining flowers evoked a sense of the familiar, the known, and Elizabeth was disturbed.

The next surprise to appear was a faded lithograph of a handsome man dressed in clothing of the early 1900's. He was fullbearded and carried a dressy black top hat in the crook of his arm. From the nature of his clothes she could tell that he was dressed for what seemed to be a festive occasion. An opera cape was draped carelessly across one shoulder and his cutaway jacket seemed to be in expensive taste. But what caught her eye was the familiarity of the man's expressive face. Large dark eyes stared out across time and space seeming to convey a message to Elizabeth, a message she felt was for her eyes alone. For when she showed the lithograph to other people none seemed to find him familiar or startling in any degree. Only Elizabeth found his direct gaze disturbing.

The third surprise was a gift from her friend Amy. It was a journal with a torn red velvet cover, all the pages were filled with neatly inked handwriting. The book lay for days with the picture and the flowers and when she saw the three objects together, she sensed that the book was the missing piece to a puzzle she knew nothing about.

The journal lay forgotten for a few days until one day when Elizabeth was home from her job with a slight fever and a bad cold. She awoke late and after a light breakfast of tea and toast, she picked up the journal and brought it into the bed with her.

October 1899

I am tired from work today and feeling a bit lonely. I met a woman on my lunch hour and we spent some delightful moments engaged in conversation as we strolled about Central Park. Autumn is rather beautiful this year and the trees are a palette of color. Her name is Renee Clark and perhaps we will meet once again at lunchtime. I feel lonely tonight and I

realize now how much I miss Amelia. It has been six months since the pneumonia took her life and I am still grieving.

October 15, 1899

I have neglected writing in my journal for many days. Renee and I have been seeing quite a bit of one another. She is the first woman for whom I have felt anything since A. died. She is interested in a career for herself in a new field, that of photography - what a free-spirited, independent woman she is. I find her refreshingly different and interesting compared to the women one usually meets. We are going to see much of each other and I am happier than I have been in a long time.

Elizabeth closed the journal and let it fall from her hand. She was feeling sleepy from the medication she was taking for her cold and reading the boldly inked handwriting was tiring her eyes. It was dusk when she awoke and at first she was confused as to where she was. Elizabeth spoke aloud to the quiet room. "I must have been dreaming. There was a young woman, very attractive, with masses of brown hair. She carried a camera with her and I remember feeling very deep emotion for her, as if I was in love with her. She looked vaguely familiar, almost like Amy, but there was something old-fashioned about her. I don't know, it must be this journal I'm reading. I think I'll make some dinner and get back into bed." Just then the doorbell rang.

"Who is it?" called Elizabeth, sitting up in her bed.

"It's me. Amy."

"Oh, Amy, I'll be right there."

"Amy, what are you carrying?"

"A picnic supper for the two of us, I called you at work and they told me you were home ill, so on my way home I bought a few goodies from Tower Deli and here I am. You haven't eaten yet, have you?"

"No, come in, but don't come too close, I don't want you to catch my cold."

The two women sat down on the couch in the living room, which doubled as Elizabeth's bedroom since it was a small studio where she lived. The house was an old one which had been subdivided into small studio apartments, but the charm of the old architecture still remained and Elizabeth loved her tiny apartment as if it were the largest home in the city. The aroma of just cooked chicken and potato salad filled the small room and the two began to eat their supper.

"Amy, I have just been reading the journal you gave me - I even dreamt about the woman this man has fallen in love with."

"Well, I'm glad you're enjoying reading it - listen, how about

coming to dinner Friday night, that is if you're feeling all right."

"O.K., let's make it tentative and I'll call you Friday morning to verify it - I think I'll stay home from work the rest of the week. I really feel lousy and the forecast is for snow tomorrow. Some autumn this is, yick!"

The two friends finished their dinner and sat talking for a long time until Amy looked at her watch.

"God, it's after one, I better be going. Listen, sweetheart, let me bring dinner here again tomorrow, I want you to rest as much as possible, after all, if I don't take good care of you, who will?"

Elizabeth laughed. "Oh, Amy, you treat me too well, in fact you spoil me rotten, but I do appreciate your kindness."

"Kindness? It's love, honey, pure and simple, just love."

There was an embarrassed silence as Elizabeth gazed at Amy. The two had been friends for a year or more but this was the first time either one had mentioned the depth of emotion they felt for one another.

Amy broke the silence with a short laugh. "Look, E, don't be frightened, I do love you and why not admit it. I never felt this close or warm to anyone before, male or female."

She reached out to touch Elizabeth's hand. "E, I'm in love with you, and I have been for a long time. Is it too horrible or ugly to talk about?"

"No, no, Amy, only, only I don't know what to say."

"Do you love me, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, yes, I suppose I do, but am I in love with you - that's something I'm too scared to think about. I'm not a lesbian."

"Darling, look at me - why label it, I've loved you since we first became friends and, well, now it's deepened. I, I want you, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth withdrew her hand from Amy's grasp.

"Look, Amy, I'm really not up to this, not tonight, please, let me be alone to think about this. It's so sudden. Frankly, I have thought about you a great deal lately. I miss you when we are apart. But I'm frightened by this whole thing, too. Can't you see, I'm scared, to love you and to admit to this would be admitting to being a lesbian, and I don't know if I'm ready to deal with something that heavy. Go now and I'll see you on Friday, please, go."

After Amy left, Elizabeth found it hard to go to sleep so she

picked up the journal once again. The next entry was two months later than the last one.

December 1, 1899

I have told Amelia how I feel about her. She too feels strong emotions for me. I have asked her to come live with me. She is afraid but she wants me and my love for her as strongly as I want hers. We want to be wed but this is impossible unless one of us disguises her female self behind the guise of being a man.

Elizabeth dropped the book from her trembling hands. So this was why Amy had given her the journal. It wasn't a man's diary, but a woman's and a woman who had been a lesbian. Even then women met and fell in love just as they had now -

"Now?" said Elizabeth aloud. "Now? Oh, my God, what am I thinking of? Yes, I suppose I do love Amy, but what will I do about it? What is there to do?"

Suddenly it dawned on her, the gifts she had received the week before must have been from Amy, the lithograph, the flowers.

"Why, she must have sent these to me to startle me into thinking about love, and women in love... The silly woman, did she think I needed convincing when it came to my feelings for her? I guess I am as in love with her as she is with me, and that's all that counts."

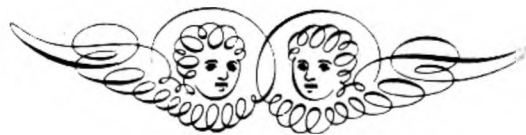
The next day Elizabeth telephoned Amy at work.

"Amy, I do not have to read anymore of the journal you gave me, and as for the lithograph and the flowers - when did you model yourself as an Edwardian gentleman? It's a most convincing picture, but you see, I'd know your eyes anywhere - and the flowers, you know I know your garden's pickings, since I helped plant them last Spring. You didn't have to go through all this trouble to 'set me up.' I love you and yes, I feel about you just as you do about me, or as Miss X felt about her Amelia."

There was a momentary silence and then Amy's voice, filled with emotion came over the wire.

"Is dinner at your place tonight O.K.?"

"Yes, darling, it's fine - only please, don't wear a beard, it'll tickle me when I kiss you."



THE CASE OF THE CLOSET CASE JITTERS

For V.S., who convinced me that every poem is a political statement

If ever I met anyone with
The advanced symptoms of
THE CLOSET CASE JITTERS,
It's you, my learned friend.
Admitting your attraction to
Other women,
But denying you are a lesbian,
Is too much of a contradiction
As far as I am concerned.

I always felt you were
'Heavy' and 'far out' enough to
Psyche yourself out---
But not 'flaky' enough to
Waltz with denseness---
While surrounded by a
Transparent smoke screen.

We have only to look into our
Herstory,
Which is only just coming to light,
To become aware of the dangers/unhealthiness
Of these Virginia Woolf/Emily Dickinson
Type games.
Yet,
How many of us can be as indifferent/detached
As Gertrude Stein?

If we could get/be together more often,
More as friends than associates,
I'm sure I could coax you out of
The darkness of the closet.
And what a scholarly gift you would be
For/to the Lesbian community.

-- Dorothy Feola



(Photo by Tee Corinne)

Barbara Grier & Donna McBride visit S.F. Bay Area

Neither Profit nor Salvation

by BARBARA GRIER

[Editor's Note: The following speech was given by Barbara Grier, aka Gene Damon, as Keynote speaker for Women Together Day at San Jose State University's WOMEN'S WEEK in March, 1977.]

In the last several months while I've prepared, or tried to prepare, to speak to you today, I've often thought--talking to myself in the bathroom mirror, riding back and forth to work--how extremely arrogant it is for anyone to get up in front of a group and pretend to be able to discuss in 15, 20, 40 minutes the subject of Lesbians and Lesbianism.

I'm 43 years old. I've spent virtually my entire life from age 14 studying the subject. (If I have 5 more lifetimes ahead of me, I'll barely begin to scratch the surface, even though I've specialized primarily in one tiny aspect of the panorama of our existence, the Lesbian in literature, because, after all, there are millions of Lesbians.) There are millions of Lesbians in the United States. Not thousands nor hundreds of thousands, but millions of women who are Lesbians. We have many things in common, but we have many more things not in common with one another. What is true for one of us may not be true for hundreds of thousands of us in different personal circumstances.

34 Probably the Lesbians sitting in this room have a little

higher sense of what we call "consciousness" but maybe not even that, because I'll bet there are some closeted Lesbians in this room too. In fact, there are probably quite a few secret Lesbians sitting out there listening to me now. And as I'm talking, you're beginning to shake inside or squirm a little. There's bound to be some of you out there. There are always some of you in every room where there are a few women, always. Every time you ride a bus and there are a handful of women on the bus, someone on that bus is probably a closet Lesbian, maybe several someones on that bus. In fact, the closet, that ridiculous place, may be just exactly the only other thing we have in common besides the basic one, that we are Lesbians.

I'm not even sure that I want to try to define the word Lesbian in front of a group like this. Those of you out there who know what the word means don't need any explanation, and those of you who do not, why are you here? But the closet, we all know about closets. We hang our coats, shirts, pants, shoes, lives in closets. In fact, not just some of us, not just a few of us, not half of us, or three quarters but more like 95% of us live our lives in closets.

Now, even the closet folk have differing levels of "closetism"...I guess we'll coin a word. Some of us live in closets part of the time, some of us live in closets, say, 75% of the time and 25% we're out of the closet. We have select people to be out of the closet with. We're out of the closet with all of our gay friends, for example, and five select heterosexual individuals that we've chosen throughout our lives to decide to confer the great honor on them of telling them that we're Lesbians, and holding very still for a few moments and looking into their eyes for fear they'll flinch, back up, turn away, reject us outright, as if it mattered. As if it mattered a damn bit. It is the closet that is our sin and shame.

There's been a lot of talk since the late 1960's about coming out of the closet. There've been marches and speeches. There'll be many more speeches, at least, if not so many marches since marching doesn't seem to be this year's thing. There'll be some slogans:

"2,4,6,8, gay is just as good as straight"
"3,5,7,9, Lesbians are mighty fine"

The first slogan is an insult, and the second slogan is silly.

There will be speeches and more slogans. There will be another tiny percentile point rise at the end of the year in the number of visible Lesbians. This or that artist, this or that writer, this or that composer, this or that politician, this or that priest, this or that minister. A few more of us will come out of the closet. Come out, come out, wherever you are. That will be very good for them and that will be very

good for the handful of people whose lives they touch and it will probably even be somewhat beneficial for the Lesbians who have access to their public derring-do and take some comfort from their acts.

But coming out of the closet is getting to be less and less of an option and more and more of an obligation. It is not a matter of "you ought to because it's healthier to live like an open free person" or "you ought to because it's easier" because deception is difficult at best....you have to carry it forward and it keeps you busy looking over your shoulder on both sides. And you ought to because being in the closet is not necessary any longer. It's a moral obligation. It's not a matter of coming out of the closet because it's good for you. It's not a matter of coming out of the closet because it's good for your lover, because you're going to feel better, because it'll eventually loosen up your relationships with your neighbors or help at work. It has nothing to do with that. You need to come out of the closet because you know you're a Lesbian and every one of you who stays in the closet makes it harder for the woman down the street to come out of the closet. We help oppress each other, we are our own oppression. We even have a few women out there who are ashamed of being Lesbians. That's hard to imagine, I know, but it's true. There are still Lesbians out there who are ashamed of being Lesbians. Incomprehensible, illogical, of course, but it exists. Now, there are a few people who remain in the closet and enjoy being uncomfortable about being Lesbians, and I'm not sure if anything I say here today is going to have any effect on any of them. But there are some weird people everywhere, there are even some weird Lesbians, so if you're weird in this way, fine, stay in the closet, I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to the run-of-the-mill Lesbians out there, the women who do not belong in the closet, are not comfortable in the closet, don't really want to be in the closet, are not comfortable in the closet, don't really want to be in the closet, but think for some real or imagined reason... and imagined reasons are every bit as good as real reasons ...that they must remain there because if they don't stay in the closet, if they come out, they're going to lose their jobs or no one will love them or people will point at them on the street and laugh or their co-workers will have nothing to do with them or well, make up your own reasons. I'm sure there are as many reasons as there are closet cases out there.

But it's not a matter of choice any longer. I'm not really asking you to come out of the closet, I'm telling you. You have to come out of the closet, you have to come out. Not only do you have to, but the time has come where those of us who are out of the closet need to put pressure on those who are in. And I don't mean unkind pressure but real pressure. We need to talk to the women we know who know that they are gay and that we know they're gay and that they know

we know they're gay but who for one reason or another still remain in the closet. If there is a crusade in the future, the crusade is to strengthen our numbers publicly. I mean make those women who are Lesbians and know they are Lesbians stand up and be counted. It is time to do so. Once again, I am not advocating that you run around with sandwich boards. I am not saying you need to go out on the street and chalk it in front of your house. I am saying that you need to start acting like you really are. Don't lie, don't pretend. Behave as you are, you're a Lesbian, act like a Lesbian, be glad you're a Lesbian, tell the world you're a Lesbian, subtly, of course. But make sure that every thinking, intelligent person anywhere around you, that has any relationship with you, however casual, is aware or likely to be aware of your orientation. It's the least you can do for the cause, it's the least you can do for your own people. We have a terrible disadvantage....we aren't marked in some clear cut way. We can't be seen, we aren't visible. As others have suggested, I too wish we'd all wake up lavender some morning and solve that part of the problem. We cannot be seen and because we can't be seen, we can pretend, and in years past, perhaps there were reasons for it. Perhaps it was better, perhaps it was easier to pretend. But it's not good anymore, it's not healthy, it doesn't feel good, it's not good for you, and it's very bad for the movement. It's very bad for the future. It's extremely bad for the young Lesbians now, the 10-year-olds, the 15-year-olds, the ones who are 20 and looking to us as examples. Why not make this world a little easier for everyone who comes after us? It's really not too much to ask. Don't we owe the world that? Shouldn't our passage through it enrich it? Shouldn't our having lived mean something good for those who come after us? And what about our own lives? There are an awful lot of young people in this world. Why should we reinforce in them fear for the safety of any job? Why should you for a minute imagine that you have to fear for your job? One of the reasons that women are having trouble in universities and in businesses on a professional level is the closet. Many women who would be active in the women's movement, women who have the knowledge and the wherewithal to do wonders are cautious in many cases because they fear that if they rock the boat about feminism, someone will come out with the fact that they're closet Lesbians and rock their boat back a little. I've heard that argument offered up so many times, I can't count it. The way to combat it is to come out first.

What it boils down to is this. when you start counting the women who have succeeded on an historical level, you find that virtually all famous women were Lesbians. Not all, but virtually all. Such enormous quantities of them, such a proportion far out of reasonable belief that you're forced to come up with one of two conclusions. Either almost every woman must be a Lesbian given the choice to be, which happens

to be my personal opinion, or, if you can't accept that you must at least accept that those women who step out in the world and do something important in it are Lesbians. It is unrealistic to believe that some social body is going to turn upon all of the successful and creative women in the world and put them out of commission by some kind of mass genocide. I rather doubt that that's going to happen. For one thing, there are far too many women for it to happen. If all the Lesbians come out of the closet, think how many famous women that's going to concern. Think for a minute in your head about every entertainer you can name who is gay, every movie star that you know is a Lesbian. Think about that for a few minutes. Then let's talk about all the women we learned about in school in literature. Let's take one relatively small group---American women poets. Let's name the famous American women poets that we now have reasonable proof were Lesbians. There's Amy Lowell, and Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie and Sara Teasdale. Get the point? Did you ever hear of any of those women? Could you get through school without having heard of any of them? We can go on, there's quite a list more. Let's see, who's the latest one to come out publicly? Adrienne Rich was the winner of the National Book Award a couple of years back. She's just come out, and Olga Broumas has established her reputation on her Lesbian poetry. In fact, I have trouble finding heterosexual women poets. Marianne Moore, as far as I know, is the only famous American one, but I'm sure there are some others. There just aren't very many, for some reason, there just aren't very many. So when all these women come out, including all the women who work in factories and work on switchboards and run elevators and work for Macy's Department Store as I do, when all the women come out, how is it going to change the world? Well, for one thing, it's going to make it easier for all of us to live in the world. It's going to make it impossible for people to be fired for being Lesbians because it is going to be extremely difficult to fire all the Lesbians and still run all the businesses, and all the schools, and all the universities, and all the churches because you cannot get rid of all your talent and keep everything moving forward properly. And an awful lot of talent would have to go. But I'm not really asking or cajoling or convincing, I'm trying to tell you in as kind a way as I can that it's time to come out of the closet and it's time to make sure everyone around you comes out of the closet too.

I'd like to tell you about my sister. My sister is five years younger than I am. Her name is Diane. She lives less than an eighth of a mile away from me in a valley in Missouri, forty miles east of Kansas City, Missouri. She lives with another woman. They consider themselves married. They have a number of closeted gay friends like themselves, both male couples and Lesbian couples. They're very open with them or at least as open as they are able to be open

with anybody or anything. They've both worked at the same company for more than ten years and it's a company with a hundred or so employees. They've been together all of those years and in that length of time, owned two pieces of property together. They still think, and will tell you, that none of the people they work with know they're a Lesbian couple. I don't think all the people they work with are that stupid myself, but maybe they are. But when you ask them why they don't let the people they work with know, for sure, they say they don't fear for their jobs at all and they wouldn't mind if their bosses knew, but they'd hate for their co-workers to know they are Lesbians. Have you ever thought for a minute what people think of you if they don't think you're Lesbians? Think about that. Do you really want to be thought heterosexual? I personally do not. Think about it, just think about it.

I'd like to tell you about Donna, the woman I'm married to. She is head of several departments at the Kansas City--Missouri--Public Library. When we started living together over five years ago, I had been a patron of that library for 15 years or so. Needless to say, every librarian in the system had heard about the notorious Barbara Grier who collects thooose books, so there would have been no possible way that Donna could have remained in the closet in any sense. It's been a rich and rewarding experience for her in every way.

I think I can demonstrate using her as an example how seriously it can disadvantage you to be known as a Lesbian. When we began living together, she was an assistant in a department in the library, a professional librarian, simply one of many in a department. She's now head of several departments and she's doubled her salary, and she's very well thought of by everyone she works with, very well liked, and they know that she's a Lesbian. They know that we're a couple. They don't make a big point of it, they don't run around discussing it at great length, at least, not with Donna. But if it has caused her any inconvenience, she hasn't noticed it.

But there's another comparison between my sister Diane and her life, and the life Donna and I enjoy, and it's probably the most important one. There are young Lesbians in the library in various positions who are open, increasingly open, and they are using as their example the obvious, unstated but present-presence of Donna in their lives. It's okay to be open in the library. Not flamboyant, not troublesome, not obnoxious, but open, casual, obvious. After all, why not?

I don't know how the young Lesbians at Diane's company feel about her ludicrous behavior but I can guess. And if there are any shy and timid ones I hope they are not hurt

by her bad example.

Now, coming out despite everything you ever heard or feared is not difficult. I came out when I was 12 years old. I have been out ever since and I have been out with all the people I've ever been around. And I'm not a special and not a privileged person. I worked in a non-professional position in a public library. I worked for a mutual fund called Hamilton Funds. I've worked in a whole bunch of miscellaneous offices, the Singer Sewing Machine Co., Pyramid Life Insurance, Macy's Department Store, where I now have a quasi-clerical job, but it's a perfectly ordinary punch-a-time-clock kind of job, but every person in Macy's knows who I am and what I do. There was an article about my life in CHRISTOPHER STREET magazine in October, 1976. There's a dog-eared, tattered copy of CHRISTOPHER STREET that went all over my department. Everybody in the place read it and everyone came and talked to me. My boss, who is a stereotype male-chauvinist-pig, oppressive person who dislikes everything that he doesn't particularly share an intimate acquaintance with, the kind of person who has a bumper sticker that reads "Take your boy hunting and you won't go hunting your boy," even my boss finds somehow an obscure pride in my openness.

But I'm not asking you, I'm telling you that you have to come out of the closet. We have to, we all have to be out, we have to because there's nowhere else to go. We've done all we can do as a small, isolated, spotlighted public movement. It's not enough that every year a few thousand kids come out of high school and decide, boy, oh boy, I'm going to break with the enemy, my family, I'm going out and I'm going to live my life. That's one kind of coming out. They've got a long way to go. They're going to walk out of society and walk back into it, and walk out of it and back into it and go through a lot of changes, a lot of education processes, a lot of jobs, a lot of things. Right now, I want all of those women who have made their "place" in the world, I want all of those women over 25 or so who have jobs and responsibilities and obligations and functions to perform and a life of their own and don't-bother-me, I'll-call-you, and I-don't-see-why-I-should-do-that-because-I-did-it-all-myself, let-them-drag-themselves-up-by-their-bootstraps, I don't owe them anything. But you do. You owe them plenty. You owe them your wit and wisdom. You owe them all the suffering you went through passed by, the right not to have to go through it all just like you did. It's not that it wouldn't make them stronger, perhaps, but it's just not necessary anymore. What is necessary is coming out. Coming out every day in every way. Neither for profit nor salvation, but because this is the time to come out.



EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

In the Summer 1976 issue of LESBIAN VOICES, I set forth an editorial policy as follows: "This is a lesbian-feminist publication. The first standard I apply to material is whether it would or should interest lesbian-feminists. The second standard is whether the material is rational, i.e. does it make sense or is it blind rhetoric or emoting. The third standard is the quality of the writing. The fourth standard is whether it is constructive. Within these guidelines, there is plenty of room for controversial subjects, provided they are dealt with rationally and constructively. I assume that the readers have minds of their own and are capable of using them to form their own reasoned judgments on controversial issues."

This summer I was presented with the opportunity to publish articles on two controversial subjects -- freedom of association and the right of self-defense. Applying my editorial standards, lesbian-feminists, and particularly lesbian separatists, should certainly be interested in the question of freedom of association. And all lesbians, as women, certainly should have a vital interest in the right to self-defense. Both articles met the other standards of being rational, constructive, and well-written. Both, however, were authored by men.

Except for occasional letters, LESBIAN VOICES has not published male authors, nor have we encouraged men to submit manuscripts. This is partly because we feel that men already have an abundance of publications and that our pages should be reserved to encourage female authors. But it is also because so many of us, as women and as lesbians, have had such bad experiences with members of the male sex in general that we no longer wish to take a chance on individual men or to expose ourselves to contact with the viewpoints and attitudes of individual men (see "Do All Dogs Bite?" in the Winter 76/77 issue).

In the case of the two articles in question, however, I felt that their potential value to lesbian-feminists outweighed my objections to publishing male authors. I have, nonetheless, put the articles in this special "Guest Section" -- a pull-out section, if you will -- out of respect for the feelings of any of my sisters who may have had even worse experiences and become even greater "Man-Haters" than I have.

I hope, however, that you will not pull out this section, but will read it.

Robert Sirico's article "A Call to Consistency" is the only full-length essay I have encountered dealing with freedom of association as it applies to gay liberation. In his article, Mr. Sirico draws a clear line between legislative action aimed at securing the

by her bad example.

Now, coming out despite everything you ever heard or feared is not difficult. I came out when I was 12 years old. I have been out ever since and I have been out with all the people I've ever been around. And I'm not a special and not a privileged person. I worked in a non-professional position in a public library. I worked for a mutual fund called Hamilton Funds. I've worked in a whole bunch of miscellaneous offices, the Singer Sewing Machine Co., Pyramid Life Insurance, Macy's Department Store, where I now have a quasi-clerical job, but it's a perfectly ordinary punch-a-time-clock kind of job, but every person in Macy's knows who I am and what I do. There was an article about my life in CHRISTOPHER STREET magazine in October, 1976. There's a dog-eared, tattered copy of CHRISTOPHER STREET that went all over my department. Everybody in the place read it and everyone came and talked to me. My boss, who is a stereotype male chauvinist-pig, oppressive person who dislikes everything that he doesn't particularly share an intimate acquaintance with, the kind of person who has a bumper sticker that reads "Take your boy hunting and you won't go hunting your boy," even my boss finds somehow an obscure pride in my openness.

But I'm not asking you, I'm telling you that you have to come out of the closet. We have to, we all have to be out, we have to because there's nowhere else to go. We've done all we can do as a small, isolated, spotlighted public movement. It's not enough that every year a few thousand kids come out of high school and decide, boy, oh boy, I'm going to break with the enemy, my family, I'm going out and I'm going to live my life. That's one kind of coming out. They've got a long way to go. They're going to walk out of society and walk back into it, and walk out of it and back into it and go through a lot of changes, a lot of education processes, a lot of jobs, a lot of things. Right now, I want all of those women who have made their "place" in the world, I want all of those women over 25 or so who have jobs and responsibilities and obligations and functions to perform and a life of their own and don't-bother-me, I'll-call-you, and I-don't-see-why-I-should-do-that-because-I-did-it-all-myself, let-them-drag-themselves-up-by-their-bootstraps, I don't owe them anything. But you do. You owe them plenty. You owe them your wit and wisdom. You owe them all the suffering you went through passed by, the right not to have to go through it all just like you did. It's not that it wouldn't make them stronger, perhaps, but it's just not necessary anymore. What is necessary is coming out. Coming out every day in every way. Neither for profit nor salvation, but because this is the time to come out.



EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

In the Summer 1976 issue of LESBIAN VOICES, I set forth an editorial policy as follows: "This is a lesbian-feminist publication. The first standard I apply to material is whether it would or should interest lesbian-feminists. The second standard is whether the material is rational, i.e. does it make sense or is it blind rhetoric or emoting. The third standard is the quality of the writing. The fourth standard is whether it is constructive. Within these guidelines, there is plenty of room for controversial subjects, provided they are dealt with rationally and constructively. I assume that the readers have minds of their own and are capable of using them to form their own reasoned judgments on controversial issues."

This summer I was presented with the opportunity to publish articles on two controversial subjects -- freedom of association and the right of self-defense. Applying my editorial standards, lesbian-feminists, and particularly lesbian separatists, should certainly be interested in the question of freedom of association. And all lesbians, as women, certainly should have a vital interest in the right to self-defense. Both articles met the other standards of being rational, constructive, and well-written. Both, however, were authored by men.

Except for occasional letters, LESBIAN VOICES has not published male authors, nor have we encouraged men to submit manuscripts. This is partly because we feel that men already have an abundance of publications and that our pages should be reserved to encourage female authors. But it is also because so many of us, as women and as lesbians, have had such bad experiences with members of the male sex in general that we no longer wish to take a chance on individual men or to expose ourselves to contact with the viewpoints and attitudes of individual men (see "Do All Dogs Bite?" in the Winter 76/77 issue).

In the case of the two articles in question, however, I felt that their potential value to lesbian-feminists outweighed my objections to publishing male authors. I have, nonetheless, put the articles in this special "Guest Section" -- a pull-out section, if you will -- out of respect for the feelings of any of my sisters who may have had even worse experiences and become even greater "Man-Haters" than I have.

I hope, however, that you will not pull out this section, but will read it.

Robert Sirico's article "A Call to Consistency" is the only full-length essay I have encountered dealing with freedom of association as it applies to gay liberation. In his article, Mr. Sirico draws a clear line between legislative action aimed at securing the

human rights of gay individuals and so-called "gay rights" legislation which violates the principles of private property and freedom of association, for example, anti-discrimination laws.

I recall that back in the 1950's, civil libertarians fought all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to establish the right of gays to "congregate" in gay bars without being routinely raided by the vice squad of the Alcoholic Beverage Control agency. This decision recognized that gay individuals had the same right to freedom of association as other citizens. Now, in the 1970's, gay activists are seeking anti-discrimination legislation that would violate freedom of association.

The right to associate includes the right NOT to associate, i.e. to discriminate. The right of association and non-association is also closely related to the right to privacy. The right to privacy is the right to EXCLUDE other people from our privately owned property -- whether our letters, our bedrooms, our homes, our social clubs, or our businesses. There can be no privacy without the right to control of private property.

Inasmuch as anti-discrimination legislation violates these rights and freedoms, it has already produced two destructive results: (1) It has been used by males against feminist separatists (several feminist businesses have had complaints brought against them for discriminating against men), and (2) it has given Right-Wing Bigots a plausible excuse for creating a violent backlash against gays. As Mr. Sirico points out in his article, when we violate the rights of others, we must expect to have our own violated, sooner or later.

Don Kates' article "Rape: Legal and Practical Aspects of Armed Self-Defense" is an informative summary of the advantages and legal limitations of the use of lethal weapons in women's self-defense. Dr. Kates cites numerous examples of successful armed resistance by women against criminal attackers and notes that he was unable to turn up a single case in which an armed woman lost her gun to an attacker.

While we may not lose our guns to attackers, we are in very great danger of losing our guns to the bureaucrats. Nor are we to be allowed the use of non-lethal repellants, such as tear gas, which is already illegal in some states. As Dr. Kates points out, some legislators apparently hold the view that "crime will disappear if only its victims are deprived of all means of self-defense."

In the Summer 1976 issue of LESBIAN VOICES, I defined feminism as follows: Feminism is a political philosophy which recognizes and upholds the human rights of the individual woman, which are the rights to her own life, liberty, property, and pursuit of happiness. While feminists generally deplore violence because of its association with the Brute Force Ethics of the enemy, feminism as defined here logically includes the right to self-defense. If handguns are the most effective weapon of self-defense for women, then we should be opposing gun control and educating ourselves about use of firearms. Dr. Kates' article is a step in that direction.

A LESBIAN BAR OF THE FUTURE UNDER ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS?



FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION
IS THE CORNERSTONE OF SEPARATISM

A CALL TO CONSISTENCY by Robert Sirico

If it is the liberation of gay people that is the desired goal of the Gay Movement, one should look for a political system that would coincide with this objective. To be just, a political system would have to insure the liberty of all other persons as well. No one can claim, with any consistency, to be in favor of the protection of "minority rights" without favoring the rights of the smallest minority - the individual.

The foundations for such a system are not to be found in the present structure of Gay Liberation, although they were implicit in the revolution that founded the United States.

The system that best protects minority rights is capitalism. The capitalist system stands for the protection of private property. It affirms that property is the result of the time, effort, labor, and ability (i.e. life) that a person puts into acquiring it. Thus, all property rights are merely

the implementation of the more rudimentary right, as explicitly stated in the Declaration of Independence: "the right to life" (1). Anytime the government overrides these rights, or any extension of them, it does so at the expense of being - in the literal sense - capitalistic. (It is important to note here that a pure capitalist system has not yet existed. American society does not consist of a truly free enterprise system, but rather of a "mixed economy.")

The right to "be" homosexual is a natural right, and at its very root is the principle of the right to own, control, and do with one's property what one wishes. Indeed, what in the world could be considered more one's personal property than one's own body?

It must be understood then, that those who advocate legislation to prohibit certain sexual acts (when done, of course, with another consenting individual) are not being consistently capitalistic. Although many "conservatives," usually thought to be pro-capitalistic, often support prohibitive laws, their position is contrary to free enterprise. Instead of supporting the sovereignty of the individual, such advocates will find their only justification in a collectivist system.

Collectivism is that political system which says that "the good of society" transcends the rights of an individual. This system's ideal is the rule by majority. In an extreme sense, it has been referred to as the "dictatorship of the proletariat." But no matter what form collectivism takes it is still based on the idea of "the common good before the individual good."

At the present time, there is a great flurry of activity and energy being spent by gay groups to get "fair employment" legislation passed. It would be safe to say that the "gay community" is singularly agreed, perhaps more than on any other issue, that laws are needed to forbid private employers* from discriminating against people on the basis of their sexual orientation. But, not only is such legislation ineffectual, the precedent it sets has an actual element of danger for gay people.

Some background is necessary.

A notable shift has taken place in the "civil rights" movement, the Women's Movement, and now the Gay Movement. The issues that initially engulfed the Black, Women's, and Gay Movements were those surrounding the repeal of restrictive, arbitrary and discriminatory laws. History is laden with examples of such

* Please note that when I am referring to an employer in this article, I am intentionally restricting my remarks to "private employers" as opposed to employment supported by tax dollars paid by all citizens.

laws. What was then begun as a movement for the validation of individual rights has become a movement for their obfuscation. As a result, the drive for the liberation of gay people is now being pulled in two equal and opposite directions:

For instance:

1. When a government (federal, state or local) makes a law that forbids the licensing of a gay bar and gives as its reason that "it could be detrimental to society," what is needed in order to solve the injustice is not more government, but less. Such a law is in need of a quick and merciless death.

If, on the other hand, someone came up with the idea that "we need gay bars in this city to provide a place for gay people to socialize" and lobbied a law into existence that stated "there must be a certain number of gay bars in a city of a certain size," such a law would be in equal need of a quick and merciless death. Such laws only extend the power of government.

2. When gay people object to laws that classify love between two women or two men as felonies, their objection is well founded. The reason for the injustice of such laws lies in the fact that there has been a violation of the right of private property. The argument that is used to show the harm of such legislation is: the State has no business extending itself into the area of what consenting individuals do with their bodies (their property). If it is then said that "because what I do sexually is my own affair, an employer should be prohibited from discriminating against me in employment," the very principle that limits the State's say-so in the area of sexual activities is contradicted.

Jobs are a property, the property of the employer, and unless the parties involved consent to engage in an employer/employee relationship, the owner's right to conduct his/her property as he/she chooses has been violated.

You will notice the similarities between the use of State power to end discrimination and rape. Both depend on the use of force. In the first case it is legalized, in the latter it is not. Notice that both require an unwilling partner. The thin line that separates the two is merely an arbitrary determination of illegality. If a person professes to be against rape, consistency demands that he/she also oppose the economic rape legislated against private business owners in the form of "anti-discrimination" bills, ordinances, or any other use of government power. Rape then is merely the sexual expression of collectivist economics.

In a truly capitalist society, provided a person does not coerce anyone to engage in something which is against his or her will, he/she is at complete liberty to pursue any course of conduct he/she chooses.

Jarret Wollstein, in his article "Economic Freedom and Monopoly Power" (THE INDIVIDUALIST, March-April 1970), sums it up like this:

Where do my rights end? Where yours begin. I may do anything I wish with my own life, liberty and property without your consent; but I may do nothing with your life, liberty and property without your consent. If we recognize the principle of man's rights, it follows that the individual is sovereign of the domain of his own life and property, and is sovereign of no other domain. To attempt to interfere forcibly with another's use, disposal or destruction of his own property is to initiate force against him and to violate his rights. (emphasis his)

When a community has the authority to grant freedom, it does so as a good-will gesture. This is decidedly not a right, but a favor. A right does not require the permission of society to exist, as it exists independent of good-will. It should be easily seen that favors can be withdrawn upon the decline of good-will (as in Russia). What gay people need is not good-will from society, but rather a system of government that recognizes and protects their inalienable, unalterable rights: specifically the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But how can I be free to pursue happiness, you may ask, if people are permitted to fire me from my job? Dr. John Hospers, professor of philosophy at USC, points out in his book LIBERTARIANISM that there are three senses of liberty.

1. The most radical meaning of the word liberty is that it is the absence of coercion by another human being. If everyone is to have liberty, it would be impossible to possess also the "liberty" to deny the same to others.

2. Under the best of circumstance someone may "feel" enslaved, enslaved by fear, enslaved by doubt, but that determination is subjective, i.e. based on individual thoughts, and not necessarily on outside coercion.

3. Freedom is limited by ability - that is, a person has the freedom to jump from a skyscraper but not necessarily the freedom to fly. And so it is that people should have the freedom to pursue their own happiness - no government should have the power to prohibit the employment of gay people - but only that person's ability (not the government) will guarantee the attainment of happiness.

Another reason laws which dictate to employers who they must hire are of potential danger to gay people is that such laws are actually attempts to legislate morality. Any aware gay person knows all too well the Bible-toting bigots who appear at city councils, state legislatures, or congressional committees to quote from Leviticus, Romans, and 1 Corinthians in

an attempt to show God's disapproval of same-sex relationships. Aside from the fact that such theology is highly questionable (2), gay activists have been most successful in pointing out that the State is not the proper vehicle for implementing ethical standards of conduct.

The purpose of government is threefold: 1) to protect its citizens from criminals, 2) to protect its citizens from foreign intruders, and 3) to settle disputes between citizens on the basis of objective law. Nowhere in these three purposes can the legislation of morality be justified. Any morality.

Granted, it may be wrong for an employer to discriminate against a person on a non-job-related basis. It could be considered downright immoral for the owner of a factory to practice a prejudice against an individual simply because that individual engaged in same-sex relationships. In addition to this, it would be economically unsound for that owner to practice discrimination if that gay person was capable of producing more efficiently than his or her heterosexual counterpart (3). But to say that an employer doesn't have the right to be immoral if he or she so chooses is validating the very same arguments that the anti-gay moralists use in their attempts to ram heterosexuality down the throats of gay people.

In the City of Los Angeles there exists a very active and vocal gay community. Strangely enough, as of this writing, there are no laws that would prevent a private employer from discriminating against gay people. Yet, during the past five years, in which I have been extensively involved in almost every aspect of Gay Liberation, I have yet to find a clear cut case of job discrimination. (Although clear cut cases may exist, they most certainly do not exist in sufficient quantity to justify the paranoia that seems to permeate the gay community over this matter.)

Why? It is my contention that gay people in L.A. have done a good job in educating the general population. Most people who live in L.A. are able to distinguish between myths and facts regarding gays. They have seen gay people on T.V. talking about what homosexuality and lesbianism really is. They know that most homosexuals are not security risks per se. They are cognizant of the fact that 98% of child molesters are heterosexual men (police department propaganda notwithstanding). And even if they were not knowledgeable of the foregoing, they realize that the social milieu is not too tolerant of blatant homophobia (i.e. prejudice against homosexuals based on fear).

The only real teeth that homophobia has is legislation. Without State power homophobes cannot bite; they can merely decide to withhold from gay people what they own. Who would want to deny the right of people to dispose of their property

as they so choose? The cause of homophobia is ignorance, and the only effective way to combat ignorance is to acquaint homophobes with the facts. That means education.

In spite of the argument that lobbying for legislation is a form of education, it should be clearly seen that the true nature of education must be non-coercive. If education is forced, then it no longer remains education, but becomes instead mind-control. Legislation is a form of education like a subpoena is a form of a party invitation.

Take these facts into account:

1. If education is the root cure for homophobia, why are there an overwhelming number of gay "civil rights" or political groups and a comparatively smaller number of gay educational groups? Why do the left-wing militants (who claim to speak for all gays) use all their energy to get laws passed (i.e. State coercion) instead of performing needed educational work?

2. If legislation is the key to ending oppression, what assurance is there that these laws are effective? Wouldn't it be pointless to spend such a great deal of money and effort for a mere token achievement? Would the quota system be used to insure that employers were complying with the law? If the quota system was used, what percentage of a company's employees should be gay? Kinsey's statistics - 7 to 10%? Or should the percentage reflect only the number of those out of the closet? And how would this information be obtained? Ask it on a job application? The absurdity of this should be self-evident.

3. What prevents an employer from firing a gay person and giving as the reason a job-related cause? To force upon a homophobic, unwilling employer a gay employee solves no real problem and may well create needless discomfort for both that gay person and the employer. Imagine having to work under an employer who does not wish to employ you, but must.

4. Should such legislation be uniformly enforced, it would mean that gay businesses, say a lesbian bar, would have to hire its share of non-gay male employees. Is that fair to the women who may not choose to associate with men, or is the right of free association to be nullified as well?

5. And if employers cannot discriminate against employees, why should employees be permitted to discriminate against employers?

It is blatantly evident that "fair employment practices" legislation is ineffective for the simple reason that equality cannot be legislated. To solve the real problem it is necessary to go to the heart of the matter - fear - which is the result

of ignorance. If the inaccuracies are corrected, it is not too far to correcting the socialized effect: discrimination.

Gay people will never be able to abolish all homophobia from the face of the earth any more than blacks or women have rid the world of racism or sexism. What is needed is to create a climate where homophobia is frowned upon, so that the free choice of people to order their lives as they choose is preserved, and at the same time allowing them to see the economic disaster of arbitrary discrimination. Short of out-right mind control, other attempts just won't work, and gay leaders aren't calling for that -- as yet.

Finally, the goals of the Gay Movement should be severely re-thought and questioned. Is the ideal to get all non-gay people to "accept" all gay people? To listen to most "gay leaders" one would have to respond in the affirmative. But such a concept runs directly counter to what should be the hallmark of the Gay Movement - INDIVIDUALITY.

Oscar Wilde, following his ruination by the statist homophobes of his day, was referred to as a "martyr to his individuality" (4) and gay women and men have preserved, for the most part, that heritage. Shall gay people now abandon their individuality for the sake of the "community"? Why? What then has the struggle been for?

The goal of the Gay Movement should be to allow each person to deal freely with other people, in all that that means.

There is only one political system consistent with true Gay Liberation and that is capitalism; and there is one battle cry of the true Gay Liberationist - LAISSEZ FAIRE - HANDS OFF!

Footnotes:

(1) For a clear definition of what human rights are, see the article "Man's Rights" by Ayn Rand in THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS (New American Library).

(2) See THE CHURCH AND THE HOMOSEXUAL by Fr. John McNeil.

(3) For an interesting study of the cost of discrimination, see THE ECONOMICS OF DISCRIMINATION by Gary S. Becker (University of Chicago Press).

(4) The Scientific Humanitarian Committees Yearbook (1901).

Formerly executive director of the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles and a minister of the Metropolitan Community Church, ROBERT SIRICO is now chairperson of the California chapter of Libertarians for Gay Rights.



(Rubens: Diana's Nymphs Surprised by Satyrs)

RAPE: LEGAL & PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ARMED SELF-DEFENSE

by Don B. Kates, Jr.

Against the background of skyrocketing rape statistics, the Joan Little and Inez Garcia cases raise the controversial question whether (and by what means) a woman ought to resist a rapist? Obviously in most situations resistance by an unarmed woman is futile and perhaps dangerous. But armed defense is even more dangerous since a rapist will invariably get a gun away from a woman and use it on her -- or so at least innumerable movie and television scripts affirm. It seems that a woman who doesn't have a male around to protect her had better just "lie back and enjoy it" -- hoping her attacker doesn't have it in mind to murder or mutilate her afterwards.

But those who warn women against keeping pistols for their own defense grow strangely reticent when pressed for concrete examples of dire results. In fact our research has turned up not one case in which an armed woman lost her gun to an attacker. It is interesting that the same big city departments which poo-poo women's armed self defense take a very different tack in training their own personnel. Police manuals advise that taking a gun away from even an untrained person is extraordinarily hazardous and should not be attempted unless the alternative appears to be an immediate and certain death.

Just as armed resistance does not guarantee the woman's death, neither does passive acceptance of rape assure that she

will escape with her life. Authorities generally agree that the rapist who murders does so not because of anything his victim has done, but because he has made up his mind in advance to kill. Statistically speaking, although her chances of success are slight, the unarmed woman who resists does not appear more likely to suffer serious injury or death than those who acquiesce.

Perhaps the calculation ought also to include an inquiry as to the number of rapists captured, injured or killed by their intended victims. As to unarmed women the answer is obviously nil, whether they resist or not. But a very different story emerges from our study of upwards of 150 cases of armed resistance by women against criminal attackers in the past few years. The criminal was wounded or killed in forty-three percent of the instances and captured or driven off without a shot being fired in another 50%. In the remaining 7% the rapist, whether or not wounded, escaped. Typical examples:

-- California, 1969: A Los Angeles woman shot and seriously wounded an attempted rapist who broke into her house. Police charged him with two other rapes.

-- Maryland, 1970: Punched in the face and stomach by a mugger who yelled "you know what I want," a Baltimore woman drew her pistol and gave him a bullet in the neck instead.

-- Oklahoma, 1971: A Tulsa woman who, while holding her baby in her arms, shot to death a man who forced his way into her home was cleared of manslaughter charges. The Judge commented, "If more people did this, we would have less of the problem we have in this country."

-- Ohio, 1971: Attacked by two men who followed her on the street while walking home from work late at night, a Cincinnati nurse shot one. The other fled.

-- Tennessee, 1972: When a Chattanooga woman responded by drawing a pistol, the man who was preparing to rape her left in too great a hurry to take with him the clothes he had just discarded. He was later traced and caught by reference to I.D. found in the abandoned clothing.

-- Texas, 1973: A Dallas woman pulled a pistol on two men who attacked her while she was fixing a flat tire in a deserted area. They ran.

-- Detroit, 1974: A woman shot and captured a mugger who had knocked her down on a dark street.

-- Illinois, 1974: A Chicago woman pretends to faint when a would-be rapist breaks into her apartment. As he attempts to undress her after having carried her to the bed, she kills him with a pistol kept under her pillow.

-- West Virginia, 1975: A retired school teacher awakened to find a man with a rifle in her bedroom. Knocking the rifle away, she seized her pistol from the nightstand and shot him to death.

-- Texas, 1975: A would-be rapist was fatally wounded by a woman psychologist whose bedroom he had invaded at 3:20 a.m.

MARTIAL ARTS, NON-LETHAL WEAPONRY OR GUNS?

Karate, judo and other martial art require years of training to master and rigorous practice and physical conditioning to keep up. Even then, it is dubious that they would protect a woman against a determined and physically stronger attacker, much less two or three of them.

Those who claim that women would be equally unable to defend themselves with guns will be surprised to learn that firearms instructors have found that women take much more readily to pistol training than men. The director of the Chattanooga, Tennessee Police Academy recently described the results of the Academy's public service pistol training course for civilian women:

A short course was devised wherein the women received

two hours of classroom instruction and one hour on the range. *** To our amazement the [women's] average score and number of hits on target were better than that of the average recruit after 24 hours of instruction and practice. Most of the women had never held a revolver, much less fired one.*

His explanation was that the women, not having machismo hangups about firearms instruction, were just more able to benefit from it.

Recent developments in non-lethal weaponry (tear gas, stun guns, electric hooks, etc.) show considerable potential. Intelligent legislative policy should encourage development of non-lethal weapons as alternatives to private possession of firearms. Unfortunately the same legislators who oppose handguns have proved equally hostile to non-lethal weapon systems, apparently in the view that crime will disappear if only its victims are deprived of all means of self-defense. Ironically, since laws against non-lethal weapons are not opposed by the highly effective gun lobby, non-lethal weapons are often forbidden in the very states in which private citizens are still allowed firearms. As a result of legislative prohibition, the market for non-lethal weapons is so limited that manufacturers are discouraged from attempting to develop and refine them to a point at which they might replace firearms.

GUN LAWS AND PERMIT RESTRICTIONS

Handguns are preferable to all other firearms for self-defense because they are the most maneuverable and portable, and least lethal. (Handguns were involved in 80% of the published women's self-defense incidents we have compiled.) Most states allow women to keep a handgun in the home but forbid carrying it outside without a police permit. In most jurisdictions these are virtually unobtainable except by the very rich and those who have political influence.

It is often argued in support of restrictive weapons permit policies that private possession of firearms is unnecessary since the police are available to give whatever protection is necessary. This might be questioned by women who have gone to the police after having been raped or mugged -- or because of threats from an ex-husband or boyfriend. Given police budgetary restrictions, it is virtually impossible for them to supply personal protection to citizens who cannot afford private guard service. The police can only rely upon the hope that the citizen's fears are unfounded -- and upon the universal doctrine that a police department is not civilly liable for damage resulting from denial of a gun permit or failure to provide police protection. Typical is the case of

* From Hicks, "Point Gun, Pull Trigger" in the May 1975 POLICE CHIEF, magazine of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, emphasis added.

Linda Riss, an attractive young woman, was for more than six months terrorized by a rejected suitor well known to the courts of this state.... This miscreant, masquerading as a respectable attorney, repeatedly threatened to have Linda killed or maimed if she did not yield to him: "If I can't have you, no one else will have you, and when I get through with you no one else will want you." In fear for her life, she went to those charged by law with the duty of preserving and safeguarding the lives of the citizens and residents of this State. Linda's repeated and almost pathetic pleas for aid were received with little more than indifference... On June 14, 1959, Linda became engaged to another man. At a party held to celebrate the event, she received a phone call warning her that it was her "last chance." Completely distraught, she called the police, begging for help, but was refused. The next day [the suitor] carried out his dire threats in the very manner he had foretold by having a hired thug throw lye in Linda's face. Linda was blinded in one eye, lost a good portion of her vision in the other, and her face was permanently scarred. After the assault the authorities concluded that there was some basis for Linda's fears and for the next three and one-half years, she was given around-the-clock protection.

[Nevertheless the City has denied all liability, forcing Linda to sue.] What makes the City's position particularly difficult to understand is that, in conformity to the dictates of the law [of New York which forbids any civilian to have a pistol] Linda did not carry any weapon for self-defense. Thus, by a rather bitter irony she was required to rely for protection on the City of New York which now denies all responsibility to her.

Without even bothering to describe the facts, the other six justices of New York's highest court voted to deny Ms. Riss compensation in view of the settled law that a citizen has no legally cognizable right to police protection.

Despite the laws against carrying weapons, almost 10% of the incidents we found involved women carrying handguns outside their own homes. Strangely enough, although men are regularly prosecuted for illegally carrying weapons when they use them in defense of self or others (or even to capture a criminal and hold him for the police), women do not appear to be prosecuted under such circumstances. This may represent sympathy toward women's self-defense by police and prosecutors. More often, however, it is simply a shrewd calculation of the sympathy which jurors might show. An acquittal in a highly publicized trial on a firearms charge might actually increase the number of citizens illegally carrying firearms for defense.

* 240 N.E.2d 860, 22 N.Y.2d 579.

THE LAW OF SELF-DEFENSE: NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR WOMEN

A woman is entitled to shoot a potential murderer, rapist, armed robber, mugger (but not purse-snatcher) or burglar, even though her possessing or carrying the firearm is illegal. While she could be prosecuted for illegal possession or carrying, in such circumstances she would not be prosecuted for homicide. The prosecution of Joan Little represents the proverbial exception which proves this general rule. Ms. Little is, after all, a black woman prisoner who killed a white prison guard to prevent his raping her. Had she been neither black nor a prisoner, it is virtually inconceivable that she would have been tried.

While the enforcement of the law may sometimes be paternalistically indulgent, in theory women have no special privileges or rights of self-defense despite the centuries in which they have been regarded as the "weaker sex." The legal theory of self-defense recognizes no distinctions based upon sex; a woman's rights against a stronger male attacker are no greater than those which a weaker man would have against a stronger attacker.

The law divides force used in self-defense into two kinds: force likely to produce death or serious injury ("deadly force"); and force not likely to produce such injury. In general, deadly force can be used to defend only against an attack involving deadly force.* Thus, a person may reply to an ordinary punch, blow or kick only with similar force, and not with a deadly weapon. This is true even where the attack is unlawful and completely unprovoked and even though the attacker is physically stronger. A California court has held that a wife may not kill her husband to prevent his slapping her around, even though California law makes ordinary misdemeanor assault a felony when committed by a husband upon a wife.** But deadly force could be used if it is reasonable to believe that the attacker, having used his physical superiority to obtain a decisive advantage, will thereafter inflict death or serious bodily injury.

The test established by the law of self-defense is always one of "reasonability." In examining any situation, the law asks: Would a reasonable person, in these circumstances, have believed herself to be threatened with death or serious bodily injury? The threat must be immediate as well. A person who in perfect seriousness verbally threatens another with death cannot be cut down unless he has the apparent intention and ability to immediately carry out that threat.

Nor may deadly force legally be used to defend against deadly force if non-deadly force would clearly suffice. All things being equal, Billy Jean King would not be entitled to shoot an aged and enfeebled man who attacked her with a knife

* The question whether rape is "serious injury" which may be repelled with deadly force is discussed in the specific section infra on rape.

** People v. Jones, 191 C.A.2d 478 (Cal. 1961).

since under these circumstances an athletic young woman should easily be able to wrest the weapon away or otherwise defend herself without either killing or being killed.

But in determining whether someone who reasonably believed herself threatened with death or serious bodily injury reacted reasonably, the law recognizes, and allows leeway for, the effect upon human judgment of personal peril and an emergency situation. In Justice Holmes' famous phrase, "the law does not require detached reflection in the presence of an upraised knife." Moreover, the doctrine of self-defense applies even where the danger, although reasonably apparent, was unreal. Thus, a person may reasonably fear a murderous attack when accosted in an angry manner by an enemy who is known to carry a weapon and who reaches suddenly into his pocket -- even though it turns out that he was unarmed and was only reaching for a handkerchief.

In a few states the courts have held that a person attacked outside her home or business cannot use deadly force if she could instead have safely retreated. The rule in a majority of states, however, is that a person subjected to a murderous attack has no duty to retreat, but may reply in kind. The difference is largely theoretical since most people probably would retreat from the field of fire rather than further endangering themselves, in the very unlikely event that such an option were open. It is always true that a person may proceed about her lawful business, and need not refrain from going to any place, or by any route, merely because she knows that she will unlawfully be attacked with deadly force if she does so.

Finally, the doctrine of self-defense does not encompass any right to use deadly force for the purpose of revenge. After an attacker has been disarmed or if he retreats, there is no present and immediate danger which justifies killing him. This was the prosecution's legal theory in the Inez Garcia case: That she would have been fully justified in killing during or immediately before the rape, but not afterward.

SELF-DEFENSE IN RESISTANCE TO ROBBERY

Many of the cases we found involved women using deadly force to protect their businesses from armed robbery rather than their persons from sexual or other non-monetary crime. One San Francisco liquor store owner had killed three armed robbers in separate incidents in the ten years since her husband was gunned down in the same store. Similar is the case of a St. Louis woman who, after killing an armed robber in the tavern she had operated since her husband's death, commented: "They didn't scare me out when they killed my husband and they aren't going to scare me out now." A woman's rights under these circumstances are identical to those of a male store owner or employee: deadly force may be used against one who, armed (or apparently armed) threatens to inflict death or serious injury in order to obtain money. Indeed a woman (or a man) may kill even an unarmed criminal who

threatens, and has the apparent ability, to use superior physical strength to kill or gravely injure.

DEFENSE OF PROPERTY

As a general rule, the right of self-defense applies only to defense of the person, not of property. A woman who kills an armed robber is justified not because the robber intends to take property, but because his means of doing so is to threaten her with death or serious bodily injury. The doctrine of self-defense would not allow a businesswoman to shoot a shoplifter nor would it allow her to use deadly force to prevent purse-snatching. An appellate court did exonerate an armed store owner who concealed himself in his darkened store at night, and, without any warning, shot down a burglar who had broken into the store. But the grounds here was, again, protection of person rather than property. Although the burglar was in fact unarmed, the store owner was entitled to presume otherwise and was not required to call out giving the burglar the first shot.*

A limited example of self-defense to protect property is the right of a woman inside her residence to shoot someone who is breaking in. In part this obviously exemplifies the special sanctity with which the law endows a residence (the idea of home as castle). But it also represents a common sense recognition that one who forcibly breaks into residential premises may be assumed to be expecting to act against persons inside rather than merely taking unprotected property.

The sanctity of the home would not authorize its owner to shoot a man she had voluntarily admitted if he later refused to leave -- or even a complete stranger who walked through an unlocked door -- unless the man's conduct independently threatened her with death or serious injury. Similarly, a homeowner would not be privileged to shoot if, from outside, she observed someone breaking into her empty house. Nor could she shoot in the back a burglar whom she found running out the back door with her television set in hand.

DEFENSE OF OTHERS

Traditionally the theory of self-defense allows one to use deadly force to protect another from a murderous attack only if the person protected bears some special relationship to her, as for instance her parent, child, guest, employee, etc. A horrendous example is that of an elderly Connecticut man who in 1965 was convicted of manslaughter for killing one of a gang of rapists who failed to disperse when he fired a warning shot. Although the defendant would have been fully justified had the woman being raped been his wife or daughter, the fact that she was a stranger to him was held to deprive him of any right whatever to protect her. That the law of self-defense should coun-

* Nakashima v. Iakase, 8 C.A.2d 35, 46 P.2d 1020 (Cal. 1935).

tenance a conviction under such circumstances shows it to be severely defective.

Except by some quirk in Connecticut law, it is difficult to see why this case did not fall within the privilege of a citizen to use deadly force to prevent the commission of an atrocious or violent felony. Although this privilege and the privilege of self-defense are often confused in judicial decisions, they developed independently upon roughly parallel lines. In most situations it makes no practical difference whether a person's conduct is analyzed under the privilege of self-defense or the privilege to prevent the atrocious felony. But since the latter does not depend upon any relationship between the actor and the person protected, it is a more just and rational principle for "defense of others" cases. Application of the narrower self-defense rule is particularly inappropriate in a society in which, increasingly, women and men live together in relationships approximating, but not involving, marriage.

RESISTANCE TO RAPE

Whether in her residence, on the street or elsewhere, a woman is clearly entitled to use deadly force against a rapist who threatens death or serious injury to obtain her acquiescence.

But what rights does she have where he merely uses physical strength to overpower her, or attempts to obtain acquiescence by threat of non-serious injury? The question will be of comparatively little import in most situations. A woman threatened with rape by a total or comparative stranger, like the store owner who shot without warning, is entitled to use deadly force because she is entitled to assume that her attacker is armed, and/or that, whether or not she submits, he may pose a threat to her life. But a woman who kills an ex-husband, ex-boyfriend or other acquaintance may have acted purely to prevent the rape itself rather than out of any fear that he would kill or badly injure her if she resisted.*

Nevertheless the privilege to use deadly force in such a situation is so well established (and consequently prosecutions so rare) that it is difficult to find a modern appellate decision on the point. The older cases we have found justify the use of deadly force simply by reference to the severe physical and emotional consequences of rape and the woman's loss of both

* Of course it should not automatically be assumed from the fact that the rapist is acquainted with his victim that he will not harm her. There is even some evidence that the acquaintance-rapist is more likely to seriously injure his victim than the stranger-rapist. LeGrand, "Rape and Rape Laws: Sexism in Society and Law", 61 Cal. Law Rev. 919, 922-923 (1973). On the other hand, this may reflect merely the fact that women are less likely to report an acquaintance-rapist unless he does injure them.

public and self-esteem.* Most often these considerations are cloaked in flowery rhetoric as for instance the following excerpt from a 1912 case upholding a father's right to protect his daughter:

Under [Oklahoma's justifiable homicide] statute, a father would be justified in killing the man who would attempt to kill his daughter. How then can it be said that the statute does not also give him the right to kill to prevent the rape of his daughter? Which is worse, to kill the body and let the soul live, or to kill the soul and let the body live? One is physical pain and death, the other is moral desolation and spiritual assassination.

As was said by Chief Justice Lumpkin in *Biggs v. State*, 29 Ga. 723, 76 Am. Dec. 630 [Ga. 1860]: "What is that annihilation of houses or chattels by fire and fagot, compared with the destruction of female innocence -- robbing woman of the priceless jewel which leaves her a blasted ruin, with the mournful motto inscribed on its (sic?) portals, 'Thy glory is departed'? Our sacked habitations may be rebuilt; but who shall repair this moral desolation? How many has it sent suddenly with unbearable sorrow, to their graves? In what has society a deeper concern than in the protection of female purity and the marriage relation?"

The father who could witness debauchery of his daughter and not rush to her assistance would be a base counterfeit upon true manhood's coin. Humanity, reason, justice and the statutes of Oklahoma all give to him the right and make it his duty to act in the defense immediately and with the most effective means at his command. He is not required to take out pencil and paper and inquire as to whether he could prevent the commission of the crime by resort to some other means than the instant killing of her assailant. All that the law requires is that he should act in good faith and upon reasonable appearances of imminent danger to her, and the law will hold him guiltless, even though it may afterwards turn out that he might have saved her by pursuing some other course... It is our duty to make due allowance for the weakness of human nature upon one hand and to respond to its highest hopes and noblest inspirations upon the other. In this

* See, e.g., *State v. Besares*, 283 Pac. 738 (Utah 1929); *Litchfield v. State*, 126 Pac. 707 (Okla. 1912); *People v. De Los Angeles*, 61 Cal. 188 (1882); *State v. Nodine*, 259 P.2d 1056 (Or. 1953); *State v. Payne*, 227 N.W. 258 (Wis. 1929); *Lewis v. State*, 118 So. 708 (Miss. 1928); *Flynn v. Commonwealth*, 268 S.W. 1111 (Ky. 1921); *State v. Young*, 96 Pac. 1067 (Or. 1908); *State v. Neville*, 51 N.C. 423 (N.C. 1859); *People v. Cook*, 39 Mich. 236 (Mich. 1856).

manner only can we aid in securing the administration of justice in its purity in Oklahoma.*

The closest we have found to a modern case enunciating the right to use deadly force to repel rape are cases involving self-defense against forcible sodomy. And uniformly the all-male appellate courts involved have held that forcible sodomy is such an extreme imposition upon human dignity as to justify the use of deadly force to repel it.**

Certainly the psychological injuries with which the old rape cases (stripped of their Victorian language and concepts) were concerned are still present when a woman is raped. Studies of rape victims have shown long-term emotional consequences for all, with many suffering severe impact, including feelings of extreme helplessness, anxiety, depression, shame, guilt and fear of contact with others.*** Physical consequences include the danger of pregnancy or venereal disease and the hazardous and/or painful and debilitating medical procedures necessary to protect against both.

CONCLUSION

A substantial factor in the appallingly high, and ever increasing, incidence of rape is a feeling among rapists that women are helpless victims and that this is one crime which can be committed with comparative impunity. One factor in this feeling is the incredibly low number of rape convictions. Another factor inducing boldness in rapists is the unwarranted belief that women are physically and legally unable to protect themselves. Only when both these factors are dispelled will the incidence of rape be radically reduced.

* Litchfield v. State, 8 Ok. Cr. 164, 126 Pac. 707 (Ok. 1912).

** People v. Collins, 189 C.A.2d 575, 11 Cal. Rptr. 504 (Cal. 1961); State v. Robinson, 328 S.W.2d 667, 670-671 (Mo. 1959). See also Commonwealth v. Lawrence, 236 A.2d 768, 771 (Penn 1968).

*** See Queen's Bench Foundation, Rape Victimization Study (San Francisco, 1975), pp. 11-29. This also includes a review of literature involving somewhat older and less extensive studies of rape victimization, as well as findings from written and oral discussions with physicians and others who have had direct contact with numerous rape victims. Similar conclusions are reflected in a paper delivered to the American Psychiatric Association by Dr. Joseph P. Peters, Director of the Philadelphia Center of Rape Concern. See Los Angeles Times, May 8, 1975.

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RAPIED: One Woman Speaks

by Lisa Fenton

"You must be kidding," I stammered. "That's not funny."

The car was going very fast.

"I'm not."

He was huge. I hadn't noticed how huge when I got in the small sporty car that seemed even smaller now. My chances of fending him off seemed pretty limited considering the vast size difference. I'd have to talk my way out of it. I'd talked my way out of sticky situations before; I could do it again. He'd been very friendly when I first got in the car. Surely I could reason with him.

"Look, you could probably find someone very willing just down the road -- now wouldn't it be more enjoyable for you if the other person wanted to?"

My mind was an eddy of all the ploys and advice given throughout the years for what to do when faced with the possibility of rape.

"You're in the car with me now."

The arguments swirled faster and faster; I frantically searched for the one that would work.

"But I don't want to," I whispered.

He turned to me and his eyes were calmly direct and his voice cool.

"I really don't care what you want."

Then I began to believe there would be no talking him out of it. My body started shaking as we passed the place where I had wanted to get out. We drove on long past points of familiarity. There were no more shopping centers, no more houses. Undeveloped land appeared more frequently now. We'd stop soon. I tried one more appeal.

"Look, I'm a Lesbian. I don't even have sex with men willingly. Please don't do this---" I paused hoping for some effect. He was stonily silent and larger than ever.

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"I'm begging you." This last with a sob of desperation. I felt terribly tiny.

"Wow, what a trip!" Some strange light came on in his dull eyes. He stared at me for a moment. "Well, I've made up my mind, baby. One way or another I'm making it with you and that's all there is to it. We can have it nice and easy or we can have it rough." He paused and looked at the road. "I really don't want to hurt you but I will if you don't cooperate."

The car stopped.

While he was busy with the brakes, I made an attempt to get out of the car. Halfway out he dragged me back, crying.

"Now look here, I'm 6'5" and I weigh close to 300 pounds. Those are odds you don't want to mess with. It would be a whole lot simpler if you'd just be willing." All 5'1" and 105 pounds of me trembled.

Now I became an obedient child following orders. Get in the back seat. Take off your clothes. Lie down. Terror dissolved me to tears that ceased with one glare. There was no space he didn't occupy.

My stomach knotted; my whole body tensed. His hands were as cold and methodical as his voice. I felt pierced through as he began. He never stopped talking throughout actually raping me. He impassively appraised my body, my sexual preference, the act itself as he experienced it. Finally it ended with a short gasp on his part and permission for me to "Get dressed now."

Fear still governed my actions. Would he let me go now that I'd been so willing? Would I still be harmed or killed even though I'd cooperated?

"Well, now," he said, settling himself at the wheel of the car, "I'll take you wherever it was you were going. The movies, wasn't it?"

When he let me out a few minutes later, I immediately got his license plate number and then debated about whether to go to the movies or call the police. I hadn't struggled so had I really been raped? He didn't threaten me with an actual weapon so had I really been willing? I was just as much victimized by the myths and misconceptions about rape that we are socialized with as by the man who raped me.

I called the Rape Crisis Center and waited for someone

to come. Previously, I called the police, twice in one hour and they hadn't shown.

I was terribly calm now and when the two women came, very quiet. First, we went to the county hospital for the physical exam that is imperative if a woman is to file a charge of rape. We waited for hours and I became not only calm but jovial. I "forgot" why we were here and cracked jokes with the women from the center and thought "This is so bizarre!" And then they called my name; it was my turn.

What an incredibly small room it was dominated by a gynecologist's special examining table with glinting metal stirrups. My calm disappeared. I felt faint. The nurse came in cheery and young and very pretty. With a hospital gown in her hands, she said, "Get undressed now," and that's all it took. Some part of me broke then and I cried and the idea of being naked and so very exposed horrified me to near hysterics. She held me very tightly and told me that an exam was unavoidable if I wanted to have a case, if I wanted to press charges. "Do you want to press charges?" The anger began then. "Yes--oh, yes."

The doctor was an intern and very businesslike with a fellow intern with him. This was all procedure to him, a procedure with certain questions to be asked and a process to go through. As he made ready to examine me all the while asking and asking and asking, my legs shook in the stirrups ---clank clank clank.

"Why are you so nervous? You've been examined before?" he asked.

"Because I was just raped and I don't want any goddamn man touching me there!" I was furious and crying loudly now. He was dumbfounded and put forth a show of professionalism feebly saying, "Don't think of me as a man touching you there but as a doctor examining you." It hurt and the process continued.

The detective at the station listened kindly. There was no accusation about my seductiveness nor questions about my private life; I did say from the first that I related exclusively to women. Now the story must be repeated and repeated. Over and over. It must be heard by this person and then another. It must be copied down. It must be told again and again and again.

Four AM. I go home. I had been hitch-hiking to the movies at 5:00 in the afternoon when the long ordeal began and now 11 hours later it had at last ended. It was over.

I was raped over a year ago--in November of 1975--and it still isn't over. Immediately afterwards and reoccurring in the months since, I feel the repercussions of the attack:

Once passing male motorists shouting remarks at me made me indignant; now I feel vulnerable and exposed. I won't ride on an elevator alone with a man; I wait for another. Any physical gesture or touch from a man usually makes my body automatically go rigid and my heart pound. Fifteen months afterwards, talking about being raped brings on severe physical stress including hyperventilation.

That stranger stole a part of my confidence in dealing with men. He took a large measure of spontaneity and independence from me. There are lots of things I don't do anymore---no more solitary early evening walks after dark; I don't hitch-hike; I don't talk to possibly interesting strangers. Quite often, I am very afraid.

As the man drove me back to where I had wanted to go, I sat in silent shock.

"I have something to ask you." My voice was very low.

"Yeah?" He was very convivial now.

"Would you do this again?"

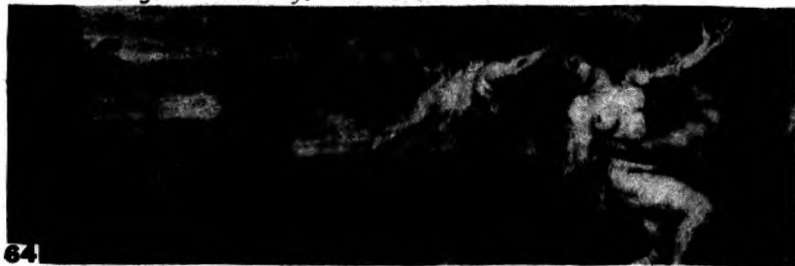
"Sure. Why not?"

Even with a license plate number, that man was never apprehended. There's no way of telling how many women he subdued by the threat of his size alone or how many he physically abused before raping them.

Women are easy victims. We aren't taught to be comfortable using our bodies as weapons; most of us are ignorant of the art of self-defense. I was as much intimidated by my deficiency in protecting myself as I was by the rapist's threats. I was an easy mark, as are most women.

That man is still out there.

It's goddamn scary. It never ends.



The WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET

by and for women

THE WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET, Women's Press Collective. 1975. \$1.50.
Available from Diana Press, 4400 Market St., Oakland, Calif.

We are a group of women who have spent our lives living in danger of attack from men. In other words, we're just like you. (p. 1)

This is how the (unfortunately anonymous) authors of this valuable booklet introduce themselves and their subject. Having tried different methods of self-defense, including not going out alone or staying home a lot, these women, mostly inexperienced in firearms, began to get guns and learn how to use them. This proved to be easier said than done: "While in the process of trying to find out more about guns, we realized how difficult it is for a woman to get the necessary information...The same mystique that keeps us isolated, unconscious, and vulnerable also keeps us unarmed." (p. 1)

Having done the basic groundwork of rounding up information on the purchase, care, handling, and legal use of handguns, the group "decided that one of the best things we could do for the women's community and women's movement was to share our collected knowledge in a feminist gun pamphlet." And they did an excellent job of it.

It seems to me that rape and the threat of rape are on the increase. Maybe this is just because I live in San Jose, where rape around the San Jose State University campus has received a lot of publicity and political attention lately. Apparently rapes in San Jose have been averaging about one a day for the last few years. Following the rape of a nun in this highly Catholic, Chicano area, however, the pillars of the community decided it was time to do something; so, in addition to giving out free rape-whistles to female college students and posting a \$1000 reward for information leading to conviction of rapists, the city has been using police decoys. The decoy system has been working like a mousetrap -- they no sooner empty it and reset it, than they catch another one. Which is a commentary on how bold rapists have become in this area.

Whether rapes are actually increasing or not, we find ourselves becoming more rape-conscious. For some of us, it is a matter of no longer being willing to live passively in a threatening environment, such as described in the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET:

Being a woman in a world run by men you find that your life is in constant danger of one form or other. Going to work in the morning (or especially if you work in the evening), going to the grocery store, or just taking a walk down the street can be a danger-filled experience. Women with cars are spared a lot of worry about protecting themselves when they leave their homes, but they still must worry about the danger from attack in their homes -- half of reported rapes occur in the woman's own home. Then there's always walking from your car to where you want to go -- that's often quite a distance. Women who must rely on buses, walking, or hitchhiking for transportation are in even more danger. (p. 2)

For others, there is an increasing awareness of the sexual politics involved in rape:

For men to maintain a successful oppressive patriarchy, women must be defenseless. If we feel helpless then we will be afraid to escape from ties with men and male institutions. (All men are capable of rape and murder; all men are potential rapists and murderers. That includes both the stranger on the street and men you know well--frequently relatives.) We will be maintained by a rapist of our choice to protect us from other rapists. (p. 2)

Or, as Susan Brownmiller put it in her book AGAINST OUR WILL: MEN, WOMEN, AND RAPE (Simon and Schuster, 1975):

...the rapist performs a myrmidon function for all men by keeping all women in a thrall of anxiety and fear. Rape is to women as lynching was to blacks: the ultimate physical threat by which all men keep all women in a state of psychological intimidation.

Women have been raped by men, most often by gangs of men, for many of the same reasons that blacks were lynched by gangs of whites: as group punishment for being uppity, for getting out of line, for failing to recognize "one's place," for assuming sexual freedoms, or for behavior no more provocative than walking down the wrong road at night in the wrong part of town and presenting a convenient, isolated target for group hatred and rage. Castration, the traditional coup de grace of a lynching, has its counterpart in the gratuitous acts of defilement that often accompany a rape...

...today the incidence of actual rape combined with the looming spectre of the rapist in the mind's eye ...must be understood as a control mechanism against the freedom, mobility and aspirations of all women... (pp. 254-255)

And a few men, viewing the rise of the feminist movement in recent years, have even written articles "warning" that there will be an increase in crime, violence, and rape if women withdraw their civilizing influence and domestic services from men. This seems to me but a veiled threat that if women don't submit voluntarily to men, there will be an increasing use of brute force. The "Battle of the Sexes" may, it seems, become more than a metaphor.

Whether or not one accepts the sexual politics analysis of rape and whether or not one believes that "all men are potential rapists" (perhaps the authors mean that all men are physically equipped -- psychologist Nathaniel Branden once made a statement to the effect that the defining difference between women and men is that men can rape) -- the danger of rape is a fact of life for virtually all women.

It is also true that what each woman does (or does not do) about aggressive male behavior affects all other women to some extent. The woman who says that she feels flattered or complimented when a man whistles at her on the street makes it that much harder for those of us who are trying to get rid of unwanted intrusion on our privacy. On the other hand, the police-woman decoy who recently shot a would-be rapist when he held a knife to her throat did all of us a great service -- not only by putting that particular rapist out of commission, but more importantly, by serving notice on all other potential rapists that their next selected victim may have a gun.

I have at times been distressed by the number of lesbians and feminists I have encountered who believed in (1) pacifism, or (2) gun control.

If "pacifism" were limited to my dictionary's definition of "opposition to war or violence as a means of resolving disputes," then I could consider myself a pacifist. For certainly brute strength or martial skills prove nothing from a moral standpoint -- unless one subscribes to some form of the medieval superstition of trial by combat, in which divinity intercedes in behalf of the righteous party. But "pacifism," as I have encountered it, means total non-violence, even in self-defense. I have actually met women who said they would not defend themselves against a rapist or who would stand by while a mother, sister, or lover was raped. Further, I have met pacifists who felt that acting in self-defense was as immoral as the initial aggression, or who felt that self-defense meant "lowering" oneself to the level of the aggressor. (I must add that I have, on the other hand, met some people who did seem to buy into the brute force ethics of the aggressor in

the course of "self-defense" -- or who went out of their way to provoke an act of "aggression" so that they could unleash their own violence and then engage in "overkill." Among some Lesbians, in an effort to be strong, independent, assertive, and courageous, there is a danger of becoming "male-identified," i.e. accepting brute force ethics, or taking on the value system of the oppressor.)

"Pacifism," in my opinion, is utterly evil when it means (a) not opposing aggression, (b) letting an aggressor get away with his heinous acts, (c) encouraging a class of people, e.g. women, to be willing victims, (d) prohibiting victims from defending and/or avenging themselves, (e) adding insult to injury by telling the victim who does defend or retaliate that she is on the same moral level as her assailant.

Fortunately, the women's movement seems to have moved away from pacifism, at least on the personal level and particularly with respect to the crime of rape. The Joan Little and Inez Garcia cases, receiving as much support from the feminist community as they did, went far toward establishing a woman's right and moral legitimacy in meeting violence with violence. Also slowly being established is a woman's right to defend herself, rather than rely on male protection. The powers-that-be still frown severely on "taking the law into your own hands," however, no matter how inadequate police protection or the administration of justice.

Women are "conditioned" (i.e. encouraged, pressured, rewarded, psychologically manipulated) to be self-sacrificing altruists. Being altruistic includes being all-forgiving and not fighting back. (I met a woman once who actually took her rapist home with her to talk over his "problems"!)

This combination of altruism and pacifism may be difficult to overcome, as noted by the authors of the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET:

When we do manage to terminate all our connections with men, then we are still left with the well-planted electrodes of passivity in our brains. We either take no measures to be constantly ready to defend our own lives and the lives of other women - or we carry hesitations, doubts, the feelings that: "I don't really know if I could fight back"; "If I had a knife or gun or black belt in the martial arts, I don't know if I could kill a rapist attacking me - I don't want to hurt anyone." We either feel too weak or too magnanimous to want to protect ourselves.

And the painful, disturbing thing is that none of us knows when it comes down to it and it is our life or the attacker's life, if we could really kill. And it is never so clear cut as your own life at stake. Too many women have submitted to rape with the idea that by not resisting they were protecting their lives, and they probably felt they were doing the best thing up until the moment they were actually killed by their attackers. And women too often

are trusting of men to the point that they endanger their lives.

The only way I've figured out to try and eliminate the all-nurturing masochist in each of us is to remember that the man or men who attack, rape, mutilate, and try to kill you, have and will do the same to as many women as they can. While you defend yourself, bear in your mind all the women you love that you are fighting for, especially those you know who have been attacked. (p. 3)

Fighting for the sake of other women, defending or avenging loved ones who have been or might be victimized, can provide a powerful incentive toward stopping the rapist. But I would like to see the day when a woman's own person, body, and life means enough to her to fight for her own sake, as well as her sister's. I would like to see the day when a woman will feel morally outraged if a man tries to impose his will on her. I would like every woman to feel that her own life, will, and integrity are so precious to her that she will ardently resist any attempt to mar them.

Our society is dehumanizing and demoralizing in many ways for many different people. Being mistreated, victimized, or oppressed is demoralizing in and of itself. But not being able or allowed to fight back is even more demoralizing. A society that tells an individual that she may not fight back is telling her that her life is valueless, that she is valueless. It takes a great deal of psychological independence not to accept and internalize that message, and give up.

Equipping oneself for self-defense against actual physical assault is one way of not giving up. And a handgun, or "equalizer," as it is appropriately nicknamed, is an excellent tool of self-defense for women. Even after overcoming the habits of pacifist/altruist thinking, however, many women still have to overcome feelings of repulsion or unfamiliarity. As the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET puts it:

Women often relate one of three ways to a gun: "It's horrible, male, and deadly; I won't go near it." "I don't like guns at all, but they seem to be the only way I can successfully defend myself, so I carry one." "I love guns, I go shooting on the range lots, and I have the cutest little set of revolvers, automatics and antique rifles that you've ever seen. Next week I'm getting a cannon." The last may seem a little weird, but imagine getting yourself a sweet little .38 special snubnose that goes with you everywhere and you realize that FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE YOU ARE NOT AFRAID - not when you sleep at night, not when you take a walk alone in the woods, not when you go to the corner store - then

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you almost begin to like that male death machine which will protect your female life. Then it's not so weird to get excited about learning to shoot well-- and it's a real skill. AND YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT FEAR YOU'VE BEEN LIVING IN UNTIL IT'S GONE.

The first difficulty in obtaining gun consciousness is that most women are taught that guns are out of their realm of reality - like high paying jobs and self-respect. And that is part of the male propaganda - that women be afraid of guns - because men are afraid of women and a woman with a gun in her hand is indeed a wonderful fright...

Until the last couple decades (and still in most rural areas today) guns were as natural a part of someone's life as a screwdriver or can opener. Everyone had one and knew how to use one, including many women. Guns were used for protection and to get food. Once you get past the psychological hurdle of getting a gun, in most places you can indeed walk in a store, order a gun, wait the legal length of time, and go home with a gun of your own - A GUN OF ONE'S OWN! (p. 4)



[It might seem strange to say, as above, that "men are afraid of women," considering how much power men hold in this society. But part of that fear can be explained by what my partner calls "The Lion-Tamer Syndrome": The Lion-Tamer is in the cage cracking his whip, while the Lion cowers and roars and paws the air. But he knows what is going to happen if he drops that whip....! And if he does drop it accidentally and the Lion attacks (my friend continues), what happens to the Lion...? They say she went mad, and they shoot her.....]

Because of gun control legislation, it may soon be not so easy for a woman to walk in and buy a gun. As the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET put it, "My own decision to get a gun was very difficult but the knowledge that it may soon be almost impossible to buy one forced me to decide quickly. (And from the traffic in the gun store, I could see I wasn't the only one thinking along those lines.)" (p. 43)

Restriction of gun ownership is a violation of the right to self-
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defense. It is also discriminatory (mostly along the lines of class and sex, probably also race) because it restricts gun ownership and use to the privileged few who are approved by the government. These would tend to be upper- and upper-middle class white heterosexual males, as far as the civilian population goes. The ultimate restriction would be to deprive the citizens of weapons entirely and leave guns, knives, tear gas, etc. in the hands of the government alone. The citizens would then be totally dependent on the government for protection (and we know what a GREAT job the police are doing now), while the government would be in an ideal position to use its massive brute force not for protection of citizens' rights, but for oppression, repression, exploitation, and persecution. The WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET comments:

New York State has the most repressive gun laws. For instance, in New York, applying for a permit to buy a handgun involves submitting three personal references, six photos of yourself, fingerprints, a \$20 fee, and filling out a long questionnaire. They allow only three reasons for owning a handgun: (1) for target shooting (you must prove membership in a gun club); (2) to protect your "premises and property," (3) to transport valuables. (You'll notice that this list does not include protection of your own body.) Even if you meet requirements for gun ownership, there is a delay of months before the forms are processed. If you are found with an unlicensed gun, the penalties are stiff.

New York laws are the model for those who would like to see government agents hold a monopoly on ownership and use of firearms. It seems most likely that other states and the federal government will soon adopt similar laws. This would be a logical step in the destruction of constitutional rights that the various government agencies are working at daily. It's getting harder and harder to keep informed about the new repressive laws being passed about every aspect of our lives.

As usual, the mass media lays the groundwork for acceptance of the new laws and attitudes, and so it gives us a glimpse or warning of what's to come. A special TV movie pictured the tragic and danger-ridden life history of a revolver ending with a scene where a little boy accidentally blows his brains out with it. The movie was followed with a plea to all good, safety-conscious citizens to turn their guns in to the nearest police station. What a chilling, ominous demand! After all the stories we've heard about unarmed women being raped by police, often after having called for help against another rapist. After seeing the films and

from the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET



reports of armed police and soldiers forcing unarmed Jews into concentration camps, and unarmed Japanese-Americans into American concentration camps. After reading of camps being prepared in the U.S. in recent years. Being aware of the deepening economic depression and of the increase in violent crimes against women. They want us to turn in our guns?!!! (p. 43)

Any woman who does not want to own a gun or other weapon certainly has the right to make that voluntary choice. But when women sanction, condone, and support the government's confiscation of my tools of self-defense, then they are unwittingly aiding and abetting in the violation of my rights and crippling my efforts to protect myself. I would ask these women to reconsider. I know that they think they are taking a position against male violence by trying to get rid of guns, but women will be among the worst victims of gun control and confiscation.

Lesbians and feminists, in particular, should be very sensitive to any type of government legislation that creates "crimes without victims." Mere ownership of a weapon should not be a crime for a citizen who has not aggressed against another person. Carrying a weapon, even concealed, for use in self-defense should not be a crime. In fact, for those most likely to be attacked, such as gays and women, society should be encouraging wise precautions against assault, rape, and murder. Using a weapon should not be a crime, when it is used in self-defense. The only time the use of a weapon should be a crime is when it is used to violate the rights of another person, i.e. when there is a victim.

I have seen a billboard recently which states in big letters: USE A GUN, GO TO JAIL. How much better if this ad read: RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS, OR LOSE YOURS!

There are some minor, but serious, errors in the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET which I feel I should mention, since I am strongly recommending the book. On page 39, it states:

[A local policeman] volunteered the information that even if someone breaks into your own home, in order to justify using a deadly weapon or a deadly martial arts blow, you must be able to prove beyond any doubt that your life was really in actual danger. And you must be able to prove that you tried every possible way to escape without fighting back, and that you were, so to speak, "backed up against a wall."

This is a lot of misinformation, either reflecting the level of ignorance of the policeman or possibly revealing a deliberate malevolence toward women's right to self-defense. I would urge readers to study carefully the article by law professor Don B. Kates, Jr., "Rape: Legal & Practical Aspects of Armed Self-Defense"

in this issue of LESBIAN VOICES. On page 5/, he states:

A limited example of self-defense to protect property is the right of a woman inside her residence to shoot someone who is breaking in. In part this obviously exemplifies the special sanctity with which the law endows a residence (the idea of home as castle). But it also represents a common sense recognition that one who forcibly breaks into residential premises may be assumed to be expecting to act against persons inside rather than merely taking unprotected property.

Some statements in the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET in the section entitled "Thoughts on Inez Garcia" seem to have been distorted by the author's politics:

...as ludicrous and absurd as it may sound, if it was not a case of rape but instead a case of Inez saying she was trying to protect or retrieve her private property that had been stolen, then she may not even have been brought to court. Money is the one thing men understand, since it's their invention - and it's the only thing they can understand women killing anyone about. Money is sacred, but a woman's life is not - to male eyes. Even where it is legal to carry a gun if you think your life or your property is in danger, if you're a woman, it had better be your property you've protected, because they cannot understand how you can take seriously an attack on your body. And now that has been recently re-defined in a court of injustice so that we are sure to know. We are expected to disarm ourselves - for our own protection. This means open season on women by all men. (p. 44)

And also on p. 46: "...you can always say he was after your purse."

To begin with, I would not pay men the compliment of saying that they invented money. There are enough men already going around claiming to have invented everything that has ever been invented. Why encourage them? The use of money arose from bartering. It seems to me to be just as likely that women, who in "primitive" societies are frequently the traders, first started using certain items, such as shells (used by the California Indians for money), as a standard of value and medium of exchange. (California Indians carried on trade all up and down the Pacific Coast and inland.) Money was a useful commodity until the government began to devalue it. Monarchs did this in medieval times by "clipping" portions of precious metals from coins, which were then put back into circulation. In colonial America, the government of Massachusetts did the same thing by issuing paper money in 1690 to pay clamorous soldiers. The Continental Congress did likewise in 1775 to finance the Revolutionary War, from which came the expression

reports of armed police and soldiers forcing unarmed Jews into concentration camps, and unarmed Japanese-Americans into American concentration camps. After reading of camps being prepared in the U.S. in recent years. Being aware of the deepening economic depression and of the increase in violent crimes against women. They want us to turn in our guns?!!! (p. 43)

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"not worth a Continental." According to my encyclopedia, when a proposition was before Congress to establish a regular revenue system, one member exclaimed, "Do you think, gentlemen, that I will consent to load my constituents with taxes, when we can send to our printer and get a wagon load of money, one quire of which will pay for the whole!" And inflation of U.S. currency has been snowballing ever since.

Perhaps the author meant to say that men invented paper money. For this, I gladly yield to them the credit, no pun intended.

The author is in error, however, when she tells her readers that a gun may be legally used to "protect or retrieve" private property. Again referring to the article on "Rape: Legal & Practical Aspects of Armed Self-Defense," page 57 of this issue:

As a general rule, the right of self-defense applies only to defense of the person, not of property. A woman who kills an armed robber is justified not because his means of doing so is to threaten her with death or serious bodily injury. The doctrine of self-defense would not allow a businesswoman to shoot a shoplifter nor would it allow her to use deadly force to prevent purse-snatching.

...a homeowner would not be privileged to shoot if, from outside, she observed someone breaking into her empty house. Nor could she shoot in the back a burglar whom she found running out the back door with her television set in hand.

Also, the "Law" really frowns on individuals "taking the law into their own hands" by "retrieving" stolen property by use of force. This is partly because of considerations of due process and objective law, but it appears, in my opinion, to be additionally a jealousy of their powers, which they wish to monopolize and reserve unto themselves even though it is the victim who has the right and the interest in seeing justice done. In some cases (e.g. Indian land), it would even appear that it is the purpose of the law to prevent stolen property from being retrieved (as the Pit River Indians found out a few years back when they were arrested for occupying a "PG&F campground" and were convicted of trespassing when the court arbitrarily ruled that the land belonged to PG&E).

Aside from these minor exceptions, I can wholeheartedly endorse the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET. In addition to the information it provides on legal and ideological issues, it contains chapters on ballistics (speed of bullets, killing power, bore and caliber, variety of ammunition, reloads, etc.); sizes, weights, and types of handguns; gun safety; how to buy a gun

(different brands, new and used guns, accessories, etc.); how to take proper care of a gun (cleaning and storage); learning to shoot (finding a teacher, where to shoot, dry firing, grip, shooting stances, proper sighting and firing, range rules, etc.); and other subjects.

The booklet is written in a comfortable, personal style and deals honestly with the apprehensions and uncertainties experienced by the novice, in a manner which would probably not be found in a male-authored booklet on such a subject. A male acquaintance who read the book (and liked it) described it somewhat deprecatingly as being of the "ball-crusher school" of self-defense. It is that. The illustrations (some of which are reproduced here) reflect the controlled outrage stored up by many women from years of male harassment and chauvinism. Written with a feminist perspective, the WOMEN'S GUN PAMPHLET fully lives up to its subtitle, "A Primer on Handguns By & For Women."

--reviewed by Rosalie Nichols



"When I began writing detective stories... the doer of evil was not a hero: The enemy was wicked, the hero was good. It was as crude and as simple as that. We had not then begun to wallow in psychology. I was, like everyone else who wrote books or read them, against the criminal and for the innocent victim."

-- Agatha Christie, quoted in a New York Times review of her book "Agatha Christie: An Autobiography"

Our Lesbian Heritage

A REVIEW OF GAY AMERICAN HISTORY AND LESBIAN LIVES

by *Judith Schwarz*

GAY AMERICAN HISTORY: LESBIANS AND GAY MEN IN THE U.S.A.: A D
A Documentary by Jonathan Katz, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976
Hardbound \$19.95, Paperback \$9.95.

LESBIAN LIVES by Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid, Editors, Diana
Press, 1976, Paperback \$5.75.

How many times have you gone to the local bookstore or library, eager to find out more about early women-loving-women -- your sexual and emotional ancestors, so to speak -- and found the task of looking up your history almost impossible? Up until now, we have had very few resources to fall back on in our search, unless we were content to stay with Gertrude Stein, Sappho, and Virginia Woolf. Jane Rule's book of literary lesbians, LESBIAN IMAGES, was the only good source, besides scattered articles in feminist or lesbian publications. We may have had secret suspicions about many of our fore Sisters, but they were seldom confirmed in any concrete way in the "restrained" and "delicate" handling that most authors used when discussing any "unusual" personal relationships. Perhaps the younger gay women who sometimes talk as if they were the first lesbians on earth came by that sad piece of misinformation because of this conspiracy of silence placed on our history. I have found time and again that we as a people do care to learn about the brave and hidden women who came before us, if only someone can help us find out where to start in researching and reading about our history.

We are all in luck this year! The two newest additions to our growing library of literary resources are Jonathan Katz's GAY AMERICAN HISTORY and Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid's LESBIAN LIVES, a collection of biographical articles from the fondly remembered, now defunct, first lesbian magazine in America, THE LADDER.

After reading them from cover to cover and using both books as recommended reading in a Lesbian History seminar at San Jose

State University's Women's Center, I feel even more confident that these books are incredibly necessary and craved-for reference works, and a vital link in our rapidly growing sense of self-worth as a people. Obviously, news of their existence spread like wildfire throughout our communities, since the large first edition printing of GAY AMERICAN HISTORY was completely sold out within a few short months after it hit the bookstores. I have heard of women who started reading LESBIAN LIVES at bedtime, and the next thing they knew, sunshine was pouring in their windows and the alarm went off for work.

For all their similarity in subject matter, these two books and the concepts behind them are as different as -- well, as gays and straights sometimes seem. GAH is a complex, scholarly, well-researched work, yet the way it is laid out and its excellent writing makes reading its nearly 700 pages a pure delight, whether you devour it all at once, or enjoy the book in mini-sessions a section at a time. It is worth every penny of the seemingly high paperback price of \$9.95, and no gay man or lesbian should live without it. I cannot, regretfully, say the same about LESBIAN LIVES. The only part about the book worth the price of \$5.75 are the wonderful photographs, and they are marvelous.

As Jonathan Katz remarks in the introduction to GAH, "Gay people have for a long time been oppressed by generalizations based on unrepresentative samples. It will require years of additional detailed historical detective work and analysis to bring to light the myriad, subtle, and far-reaching implications of the Gay American experience, to set it firmly within the larger framework of American history." Surely, though, Katz (and the legion of gay historians, scholars, and just plain interested people who helped locate the goldmine of information) has made a remarkable beginning. What he has done is gather together an enormous collection of literary, medical, legal, popular and journalistic writings to illustrate the existence of and the pressures upon homosexual people since the beginning of recorded history in America. The book is divided into six sections: "Trouble: 1566-1966," "Treatment: 1884-1974," "Passing Women: 1782-1920," "Native Americans/Gay Americans: 1528-1976," "Resistance: 1859-1972," and finally, "Love: 1779-1932." There are also over 100 pages of footnotes and bibliography, again divided into the chapter headings, so that you may continue reading from the original materials (if they are in print or available through inter-library loan) if you find yourself fascinated by a particular person or subject.

Lesbians will be especially interested in the many references to women throughout the book, which Katz makes easy to find through the use of a small woman's symbol before each title in the Table of Contents. Don't expect to walk away from this book feeling calm and unruffled, though. Anger and horror are more common emotions after reading many of these documents. There is, for

instance, the tragic murder of Freda Ward by her lover, Alice Mitchell, in 1892. Family interference and separation drove Alice Mitchell literally insane, as well it might have anyone who went through the misunderstanding and torment she did. If a woman-loving-woman survived her family, she still had to watch out for the torture-chamber devices her family doctor could cook up in order to "cure" her of her "affliction." These included everything from "cold sitz baths and a course in intellectual training" (1884) to aversion therapy in 1970, which didn't work. If none of that worked, there was always the time-honored standby, female castration -- surgically removing most of the female sexual organs and/or cutting away the clitoris so that the woman would no longer experience abnormal sexual desires (or any sexual feeling, for that matter!).

Naturally, the "Passing Women" section is of great interest to Lesbians, whether one feels these women were actually Lesbians or not. The most renowned of the women who passed as men was Dr. Mary Walker, famous Civil War surgeon; yet it is obvious that her own morality would not have tolerated any overt Lesbian sexual activity. This was not the case, however, with Lucy Ann Lobdell, the "Female Hunter of Delaware County," New York (1829-1891?). Hers is a striking story of a courageous and independent young woman who "donned male attire, spending much time in the woods with a rifle" after a disastrous marriage broke up, leaving her back at her parents' cabin with an infant daughter. She supplied her family with an abundance of provisions, which earned her a local fame, and led to her writing a small booklet about her adventures and early life. She later met an educated but poor woman, took the name of Joseph Lobdell, and they went off into the woods together as "man" and wife. The sad conclusion of this strong woman's life was in an insane asylum, where the logbook records that "she is uncontrollably indecent & immoral & insists on wearing male attire calling herself a huntress." Society succeeded in beating her proud spirit into madness with its weapons of religious and moral codes of sin and guilt coupled with strongly enforced dress codes that made Lobdell an oddity for wearing the kind of "male attire" we women of the twentieth century take as our natural right to wear.

Katz does not simply focus on the white majority; he also includes a large body of material on homosexuality among Native Americans, such as the Kutenai female berdache (c.1811) and the Mohave Indian Lesbian, Sahaykwisa. Although the sources of these accounts are white men, and as such should be read carefully for the biased viewpoints they felt toward all non-white peoples, Sahaykwisa's story shows that even among the somewhat freer cultural mores of the Native Americans, Lesbians had a rough time of it. True, the Lesbian was somewhat accepted as a male member of the tribe, but each of her wives suffered from ridicule and teasing by the other tribal members, which eventually drove them away. Sahaykwisa became known as a witch and was also renowned

for her successful treatment of venereal disease. She was murdered by two men after her apparent decline into prostitution and drunkenness as she grew older and suffered more and more from public mistreatment and humiliation.

The final chapter of GAY AMERICAN HISTORY on "Love" is a great relief after all the previous accounts of madness, legal entanglements, and very little Lesbian resistance to public persecution. Margaret Fuller, Dorothy Thompson's diary containing an intimate account of her erotic passion for the German baroness Christa Winsloe (author of MAEDCHEN IN UNIFORM), and Mary Casal's turn-of-the-century Lesbian love affair described in her autobiography THE STONE WALL all testify to the existence of satisfying encounters between two women. They, of course, only scratch the surface of even the published documents on Lesbian relationships, much less the unpublished diaries and letters still awaiting their discoverer in the many archives across the nation.

After the riches of GAY AMERICAN HISTORY, the dated and poorly researched articles in LESBIAN LIVES are a major disappointment. The articles, edited by Barbara Grier (also known to faithful LADDER readers as "Gene Damon") and Coletta Reid, were originally written anywhere between 1957 and 1972, when THE LADDER ceased publishing. A reader soon begins to wonder if the writers and editors assumed that any woman who wore pants before 1960 was gay! For instance, they include an article on Amelia Earhart, yet a careful perusal of the evidence given shows, if anything, only that Earhart took flying lessons from a woman who "dresses and talks like a man" (Neta Snook), but in no way does it even hint that she was ever involved with a woman, or even close with a particular friend. After all, it would be great if we could claim all the marvelous independent women like Amelia Earhart as women-loving-women, but not at the expense of the truth. This book is a very poor piece of scholarship; but then, it was not meant to be anything more than a collection of admittedly dated biographical sketches. Yet any Lesbian woman interested in history must realize that there are too many real gay women of equal stature that we can lay claim to with solid evidence, to accept the shoddy thinking behind some of these writings.

I would also like to ask why we persist in idolizing and praising only the women who lived out their "masculine" side of their personalities, and never make heroes out of their "feminine" lovers or counterparts? (See? Even here I have had to resort to those old damnable false labels of masculine and feminine -- knowing full well that each human being has a mixture of both in their emotional and mental make-up -- yet these labels are unfortunately still the only ones our tired old sexist language allows me which will make my point in a quick, recognizable shorthand.) Do we downplay more traditionally feminine women because they

only remind us of the more socialized parts of our selves that we all wish to forget ever existed? Or do we revere a macho, cruel woman like Jo Carstairs (of all people!) because she acted out hidden depths of our personalities that many of us wish we could more openly show -- traits like daring and aggressiveness and a blatant disregard for other people's opinions of us? An interesting subject for another article sometime . . .

The best of these writings are by Elsa Gidlow and Lennox Strong. Who is Lennox Strong? She was certainly the most concerned with historical accuracy, and by far the best scholar and most insightful writer. If all the contributions were as excellent as hers, this would have been a far better book. As it is, *LESBIAN LIVES* is still an indispensable addition to any literate Lesbian's library, but the reader should be careful to remember not to take every woman in this book as a Lesbian, and also to remember that if we are to discover our heritage, we must go further into the original diaries, letters and papers of the women concerned, rather than rely on second-hand reports based on other second-hand sources. We want to build a herstory on truth, not on unexamined assumptions and half-baked misrepresentations.

[*As I recall, Lennox Strong is one of the many pen-names of Barbara Grier, or Gene Damon, former editor of *THE LADDER*. See the interview with Barbara Grier in the October 1976 issue of *CHRISTOPHER STREET*. -- Rosalie Nichols, Editor]

SITA

REVIEWED BY *Nancy Manahan*

SITA by Kate Millet, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977, 322 pp., \$10 HB

SITA is an excruciating book. Kate Millet describes the last four months of her disintegrating relationship with another woman in such brutal detail that she lays bare a side of experience many would prefer to deny,

The events take place in 1975, nearly three years after Kate and Sita met and fell in love. Although both are active feminists, they see themselves as an improbable couple: Kate from a middle-class Irish-Catholic background, now a New York Bohemian artist; Sita from an aristocratic Italian/Brazilian background, now a West Coast university administrator.

Kate returns to California to teach a class on women writers and to resume her place in the house she and Sita had rented and happily lived in the previous spring. But when she arrives in Berkeley, Kate finds that Sita's children, their lovers and their friends have turned the house into a commune and that other people now occupy Sita's life. Sita, proclaiming her independence, casually spends nights away from home, letting Kate assume that she is either on necessary business trips or with an old (male)

friend. Kate, believing in Sita's right to independence, struggles with jealousy and feels guilty for being "possessive." Not until she has returned to New York does she discover the extent of her lover's betrayal: Sita had all along been having a serious relationship with yet another man of whose existence Kate was completely unaware.

Part of Sita's power is territorial. She is on her turf, surrounded by family and friends, deeply involved in her job, and often simply too busy for Kate. Kate stays in the house alone, friendless, powerless to stop Sita's chilly withdrawal.

How many people go through this business of separate rooms, visits, beds declared vacant or closed or independent, nightly hopes, fears, disappointments. Everywhere in the world it must go on and I never thought much about it, believed everyone slept in double beds without a qualm or a flurry. Never suspected the possible stratagems, moves, advances and retreats of pieces and pawns, the thousand possibilities of inflicting torture, withering little shoots of hope annihilated in the soft closure of a door. (p. 188)

Watching for a sign that Sita still loves her, Kate grasps too eagerly when a little affection is proffered. Hopes soar wildly when Sita slips into the old warmth and approval, only to plummet into sick dread as she turns cold again. Kate feels teased, manipulated, barely tolerated.

Why doesn't she leave? Kate debates the question daily, cancelling and reinstating her class as she changes her mind. But the part of her which saw Sita as a life-partner and desperately needs this woman she loves refuses to give up. Another part of her, the artist, recognizes "the lure of experience itself" and confesses to an "obsessive desire to record, study, analyze, preserve" (p. 251). It is the artist who has caught as no writer before has -- in much greater detail than, for example, Simone de Beauvoir in *THE WOMAN DESTROYED* or Violette Leduc in *LA BÂTARDE* -- the minute by minute process of a slowly dying love.

Another process I've never seen so successfully represented in literature is the repetitious re-telling of the past in time of stress. Millet ritualistically chants the story of the love she and Sita shared, sometimes in memory of that once powerful force, sometimes in an obsessive hunt for where it went wrong. Was it here? Was it there? Or was it as early as . . . ? We come to know the sequence of events so well that we begin to participate in the chant, like the chorus of a Greek tragedy.

Three years ago when *FLYING* was published, critics attacked Millet for exposing too much of herself, for not having decency

enough to keep some things hidden.(1) It is acceptable to present such material under the cloak of fiction (male writers have been doing so for centuries) but Millet violates a taboo in letting us know that it is all real and that it happened to her. As Jean Baker Miller remarks, "The status quo is upset when one admits one's weakness publicly. The very fact of acknowledging feelings of weakness and vulnerability is new and original."(2)

Millet's willingness to make such acknowledgements is one of her greatest strengths. Of course, women have been long depicted as passive, emotional, dependent, possessive creatures. For a feminist to admit to these traits may be dangerous; others can gloat, ah-ha you see, even the brightest women really ARE like that. Indeed, establishment critics have made much of the apparent contradiction between Millet the author of a brilliant theoretical work (SEXUAL POLITICS) and Millet the woman enmeshed in the emotional. But by exploring an emotional pattern that has been despised by men and women alike and by struggling not to simply accept the conventional definition of such "feminine weakness," Millet makes it easier for us to acknowledge that part of ourselves. Besides, if we censor whatever might conform to sexist stereotypes, we put an intolerable shackle on our creations. Having once recognized those stereotypes, our responsibility is to write as honestly as we can.

Millet has another purpose in sharing her experience of life in the way she does. "What I wanted to do," she says about FLYING, "was to break down respectability, discretion, and even privacy as we have understood it because it is so much of a dodge." (3) In SITA she has continued this campaign, raising the thorny question of a writer's responsibility to her subjects' privacy. It is one thing to reveal yourself; it is another to reveal your acquaintances, friends, and lovers. Millet makes a practice of sharing her manuscript with those involved before it goes to the printer and wouldn't have published this latest book, she says, if Sita hadn't read and liked it.(4) Nevertheless, the privacy issue remains a troubling one in need of further exploration as we create new definitions of women's art.

Another remarkable thing about SITA is the fact that half of it was composed months after the events it records. "At the time I simply couldn't write a lot of what was happening," Millet says. "For example, I jotted 'Napa and Sonoma Trip' in my notebook and then left five blank pages."(5) This after-the-fact creation is impressive in a book whose very power lies in its raw journal-like immediacy.

At only one point -- in the final two-page apostrophe to Sita -- does she sacrifice that immediacy. According to Millet, this "coda" was originally in the middle of the book, but she wanted to end with her appreciation of the woman she had loved

and of their years together rather than conclude on "a surly note." (6) Since the book, however, is a journal of anguish, I would prefer that it be allowed its final measure of pain. Just before the coda, Sita calls to announce she is in love with a man, and that it is all over between Kate and her. After the call, a stunned Kate writes, "I do not know yet that I am free." Following that superb sentence, a tribute to the woman who has caused her so much grief feels jarring.

This quibble aside, SITA is an enormously moving book, and in addition to powerful writing, it offers another treat: the exquisite silk screens on the front and back covers. When I couldn't bear the tensions of the text any longer, I could close it and relax into the sensual solidity of Millet's nudes.

Thank you, Kate, for another brave and beautiful book.

-- Reviewed by NANCY MANAHAN

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) See Julia P. Stanley's trenchant analysis of critics' attacks on what they term confessional writing in "Fear of FLYING?" SINISTER WISDOM, Fall 1976, p. 52.
- (2) Jean Baker Miller, TOWARD A NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), p. 36.
- (3) SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, May 25, 1977, p. 17
- (4) "Kate Millet: Interaction Between Sculpture and Writing," with Holly O'Grady, FEMINIST ART JOURNAL, Spring 1977, p. 23
- (5) From a conversation with Kate Millet, May 19, 1977.
- (6) Ibid.

I smelt the crisping winter air,
And held myself in tow:
Because you just had said to me
That I must let you go.

No more to laugh, to play, to share,
No more to hold and love,
No more the gentle, fun-packed jibe,
No more the playful shove.

The chilly air seeped in my bones
And shivered me down through,
As I stood silently that night
And cried out after you.

-- Lee Kinard

Ill Wishes

May 2, 1977

Dear Sisters:

On April 14, 1977, A Woman's Bookstore [Ann Arbor, Mich] adopted a book policy, part of which reads: "We will not carry any books which we judge to be in any way sexist, heterosexist, racist, classist, imperialistic or ageist." On April 28, 1977, we decided to not carry LESBIAN VOICES for this reason.

Examples (outstanding):

Vol. 2 #4: "Dear Dyke" - pg. 31 - no comment necessary

Vol. 3 #1: "Who Is Ms. Atlas?" - pg. 3-4 - Ayn Rand is not exactly a feminist - and your principles are totally imperialistic.

"Commentary on Feminism vs. Racism" - pg. 20 - Paragraph 4 is one of the most racist comments we have ever heard, the title alone is not to be believed.

"Capitalism vs. Socialism" - pg. 45-46 - was imperialistic, racist & classist.

Please stop our subscription. We will be returning Vol. 3 #1. Please remove our name from your journal. As a lesbian, I am ashamed to have a imperialistic, racist, classist, Libertarian Party platform journal called LESBIAN VOICES. It is obvious our politics are not in the least bit similar.

In Lesbian Struggle,

Julie L. Morris
for Journals Committee

April 28, 1977

Dear Ms. Atlas:

It's About Time Women's Book Center [Seattle, Wash.] is a feminist organization. We believe that feminism does not include exploitation of the many for the benefit of a few. As you may perceive, we think that capitalism and feminism are incompatible. As a feminist bookstore, we do not feel we should carry your publication.

Sincerely,

It's About Time

Dear Editor:

January 6, 1976

. . . You might be interested to know where I found your magazine. I get LESBIAN VOICES and several other publications from "It's About Time" lesbian-feminist bookstore. LV seems one of the most variegated and interesting, if I had one complaint, it would be your typewriter. . . An aspect of a magazine you might try to nurture, cultivate, encourage is a letters column, wherein women could comment and give feedback on articles in previous issues, and add their own input without necessarily having to wait for the time to do a full fledged article or some such. It generally takes time to generate a good letter column, but once it gets going, it usually proves a magazine's best feature as a forum, steam-valve, feedback system. Idea-less "Well Wishes" while ego-boosting to editors are best edited out of lettercols, as a million variations of "I love your magazine" is neither constructive, educational nor interesting to readers. Judith Schwarz' long thesis was a genuine coup, the research staggering to me. Your cover quote [Vol. 2 #1] ought to be made into a poster.

Thine!

Jessica Amanda Salmonson

Dear Jessica:

Well, it took some time (2 years), but I finally got some idea-less "Ill Wishes" to complement the "Well Wishes" that I generally publish. Is this what you had in mind?

Best regards,

Rosalie Nichols, Editor

P.S. More follows --

SIGN ATTACHED TO LESBIAN VOICES AT ICI-A WOMAN'S PLACE BOOKSTORE IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA:

"The magazine LESBIAN VOICES represents politics that are the opposite of what the members of this collective feel -- and the whole woman's movement. For example, read the article on capitalism and socialism -- not that we're all socialists here --- but we know how we feel about capitalism.

"It is RIGHT WING, LAISSEZ-FAIRE CAPITALIST ANARCHIST (anarchists that are not pledged to community are your cut-throat fascists later on) -- they quote all the time from Ayn Rand -- We're continuing to carry it for now mainly cause we're so fucked up in our minds, and frustrated around the fact that they are lesbians --- right now it seems more productive for people to write to the mag and tell them how you feel about their attitudes."

March 15, 1978

ICI - A Woman's Place Bookstore
5251 College Avenue
Oakland, California

Dear Members,

I just happened by your bookstore last week, for a first visit since 1972, and initially was highly impressed. The store had enlarged somewhat since my first visit, and had broadened considerably in scope and content. Here, a section on the occult and mysticism, there a grouping of feminist science-fiction, a large part devoted to Lesbianism, another part on motherhood and the family, and many brochures and pamphlets on labor history and various philosophies and ideologies. Fine!, for these are all in the range of feminine experience and aid one in searching for a humanitarian form of Feminist Utopia.

However, I was shocked to see the literal blacklisting of one publication. One journal, and that one only, had a card on top of it stating that LESBIAN VOICES is a "Rightist publication" -- devoted to "Laissez faire capitalism and the teachings of Ayn Rand." It further stated that anarchists who are not devoted to the community are "the fascists of tomorrow," and urged customers to barrage the editors with letters of criticism.

All through the bookstore there were many magazines and pamphlets of other persuasions, but nowhere did I find definitive statements such as "this one is Marxist-Leninist-totalitarian," "this one is a Social-democrat-fascist rag," or "this is the product of Trotskyite-wreckers"!

Be it as it may, there are women who would disagree on the economic theory of LESBIAN VOICES -- I for one disagree with Ayn Rand 100%. There are other women who would find all super-governments (Russia, China, or the U.S.A.) highly oppressive, yet there has been no hate-campaign against these of the same magnitude.

Now to separate the editorials from the content of LESBIAN VOICES. The vast majority of articles, fiction and poetry in this publication have been non-political, dealing with such non-Objectivist material as love, tenderness, and feelings of the heart. Moreover, the contributions have been positive, presenting Lesbian life as benevolent, wholesome and upgrading. Overlooking the political-economic biases of the editors (with whom I disagree), the main impact of this publication has been positive.

It is to their credit that the editors have been broad-minded enough to present opposing points of views in discussing various aspects of gay-living. Even my incessant sniping at totalitarian private corporations has been printed. I fear that many of the so-called "Revolutionary Feminists" would not

be so tolerant. One member (or associate) of the ICI has twice tried to silence me for writing letters critical of the sexism and homophobia that has tainted so many radical movements and nations. Comes the Revolution, and perhaps Amnesty Internationale, and the ACLU, and all democratic-socialists and human-rights-oriented anarchists will be lined "Up Against the Wall"!

To conclude, blacklisting is a dirty rightwing tactic, reminiscent of the McCarthyite era. Capitalistic corporations have done this for ages, to smoke out the militant unionists. Ayn Rand has been past master of this obscenity: her work on *Alert*, alongside with *Red-Channels* and *Red Networks* have reaped acres of sorrow in the entertainment world. Her homophobia, and her exaltation of avarice and callousness are despicable. I only wish that the editors of LESBIAN VOICES would repudiate Ayn Rand (and all that she stands for), and urge that the ICI cease being Ayn Randists in reverse.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Stephens

March 17, 1978

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your letter to ICI - A WOMAN'S PLACE. Several women had told me about the sign on LESBIAN VOICES and on a trip up there, I read it and copied it down so I can print it in the next issue. Besides ICI, we have been cancelled by several other feminist bookstores (Ann Arbor, Seattle, and Denver) (actually ICI hasn't cancelled) and have received letters from them accusing us of being racist, imperialist, fascist, agist, you-name-it. Part of this is because of articles we have published, but I suspect that much of it is because we did a favorable review of *DIARY* (an anti-male-Left publication) and refused to remove it from our bookstore when the other bookstores called for a boycott. *DIARY* is critical of the Susan Saxe forces.

One of the letters also attacked your article about black muggers as "racist" even though you stated that it was a male problem. If I get a chance, I'll send you a copy so you can respond. All the name-calling letters will be published. I probably won't bother to answer them because they don't really say anything -- they merely call names. I think exposing them should speak for itself. But thank you for writing to ICI because it isn't very often anyone stands up for me on anything.

Incidentally, as you sort of indicate in your letter, LESBIAN VOICES is thought well of by many women, whether because of or in spite of its editorial slant, and we have had

many favorable reviews and friendly letters, including a recent write-up in OUR RIGHT TO LOVE (and also A GUIDE TO WOMEN'S PUBLISHING). I think the time is coming soon when the intellectual atmosphere in the lesbian, feminist, and gay movements will be much more open and hopefully return to rational discussion.

We've had a lot of problems, both business and personal -- including a fire in our shop in December -- and have been going from crisis to crisis on a survival level, but we hope to have LESBIAN VOICES out again soon, including some of your articles that you sent. Keep writing. Thanks again.

Rosalie "Nikki" Nichols

April 6, 1978

Dear Rose,

Your communique rather frightened me. I had just finished reading news of arson in the gay areas of San Francisco in the April 4, 1978 CHRONICLE. Not so long ago, there were series of arson-related fires in Guerneville, directed against hippies, gays, and ironically, the local Chamber of Commerce. [Editor's note: Our fire was not caused by arson, fortunately, but merely by an incompetent landlord.]

I am enclosing some clippings from the DAILY CALIFORNIAN and CHRONICLE, and relevant quotes from the Feminist Press. As a member of the democratic left, I know all about the FBI, CIA and similar institutions (DINA, SAVAK, KGB). I could tell you some true stories that'll curl your hair, but then, Socialists are not the only target -- ask any American Indian!

To date, no answer from the ICI or Woman's Place. And it would be a waste of time to answer name-calling letters.

I speak English, not Communes or Black-nationalese. My dictionary defines boys as male-children. Two of my assailants were beardless, high-voiced adolescents, juveniles, or if you please, "man-children." I am correct in calling them boys.

What is a racist? For one thing, a racist despises successful minority leaders such as the late Ralph Bunche, or Martin Luther King; and he delights in seeing those whose behavior is stupid and brutal. Furthermore, the racist holds these traits to be congenital and incurable and inevitable for one carrying certain racial genes. My views are the exact opposite to these. Such behavior is learned, and it can be changed. Men do rape, and men should start stopping rape. Ms. Brownmiller makes this point quite clearly. Also, responsible black leaders such as Charles Evers and the late Martin Luther King have made hard statements on the issue of criminal

blacks who pull other blacks down, and the entire civil rights movement with them.

Ultimately the question is -- Who's side are you on:

Inez Garcia, or her pair of rapists?
The slain Philippino nurses, or Richard Speck?
Carolyn Craven, or her notorious rapist?
Yvonne Warrow, or the eavesdropping child-molester?
Joan Little, or her jailer?
Nameless ghetto-women, or Eldridge Cleaver?

Sincerely,

Barbara Stephens

P.S. A number of liberal congressmen are targets of the radical right (committee for the Survival of a Free Congress). Three of them are sponsors of gay rights legislation: Michael Harrington (D-Mass), Abner Mivka (Ill.), and Patricia Schroeder (Col.). The state of Massachusetts is the scene of especially heavy right-wing activity. (from the ADVOCATE, Nov. 30) Elaine Noble's grim prophecy bears some weight. However, not all of the danger is from the Right. Michael Harrington from time to time has talked about the sinister coalition, referring to Fascist-Communist and Arab anti-Semitism. Years ago, he wrote some intriguing notes on FBI-Stalinists (the Left wing of the CP are Fosterites!).

From the feminist press:

PLEXUS, February 1978, p. 2: Letter from Elizabeth Katz, reporting the China Books, 2929 24th Street, San Francisco, has a policy of not carrying gay liberation material. In their sections labelled US Peoples' struggles and US Politics, there are actually anti-gay material from left groups. (Could you check it out?)

OFF OUR BACKS, December 1977, p. 4: Article by Janis Kelly. The Diana Press was trashed last October --- Who?

1. The US Government (FBI) is a prime suspect.
2. Or, some anti-feminist, homophobic woman-fearing Rightist.
3. Or, disgruntled acquaintances.
4. Or, someone within the movement, who attacked Diana for political reasons.

Why? Clamping down on the right of people to do their own thinking is wrapped in the cloak of some "greater good," such as: (1) Weeding out treason; (2) stop obscenity; (3) to straighten out "incorrect thinking"; (4) to protect "the revolution." The women at Diana Press clearly feel that the vandalism came from within the movement by women who disapproved of the politics of Diana Press and of FEN (The Feminist Economic Network). It may have come from a combination of agent-provocateurs and women who felt they were saving the movement from "Feminist-Capitalism."

Dear Barbara,

Amazing! Would you believe that until I read your letter of April 6, 1978, I had no idea that it was the word "boy" that prompted the charge of "racism" by the bookstore in Ann Arbor?! Over the past year since their letter was written, I have shown your article to at least a half dozen assorted women, and no one could tell me what was racist in it. Even my two partners, who are from Texas, did not react to the word "boy" as a racist term. Clearly, everyone I discussed it with took the word exactly as you meant it -- a young male.

Looking back over our correspondence, I see that on February 21, 1977, I wrote you as follows:

"I'm in the middle of getting our Winter issue out-- late as usual-- First, let me say how shocked and sorry I was to hear of your being mugged in October. I hope you have recovered, although I know that one never fully recovers from experiences of being victimized and abused, or worse. As for young black males, back in about 1966, my mother's purse was snatched by a teenage black -- she was an old lady at the time, and had never hurt a fly, in fact was always a supporter of liberal & humanitarian causes -- during the last years of her life, she lived with a degree of fear that she might be robbed of her Social Security checks -- or worse -- because young hoods in her neighborhood repeatedly broke into old people's houses and even beat and sometimes murdered them. Luckily nothing happened to her, but even the anxiety is something we shouldn't have to live with day in and day out.

"There's a controversy going on over Susan Brownmiller's book AGAINST OUR WILL. The 'Sojourner Truth Organization' published a booklet titled 'Rape, Racism, and the White Women's Movement' in which Brownmiller is accused of racism in her treatment of rape cases involving black defendants. If you read these two books and feel like doing a review, it would be most welcome. For now, I have taken two of your letters and combined them into a 'Commentary on Feminism vs. Racism' (copy enclosed). Would you like to look this over and edit it if necessary and return it for publication?"

This letter clearly confirms that I took the term "boy" as you meant it -- a young male. And I think the reaction of the Ann Arbor bookstore collective is a good example of how guilt-ridden liberals can set themselves up as self-righteous radicals. They (probably) used to be Privileged WASP's, but now they're Born-Again Bolsheviks. hallelujah!!!

Unfortunately, such word-quibbling can serve as an effective smokescreen to hide the real issues, such as black sexism & homophobia, and the disappointment & ambivalence experienced by lesbian/feminist civil rights workers when confronted with same. Some time back, you sent me the following

quotes which were published in the Summer 76 LESBIAN VOICES:

"Don't be Jew-bitches or bull-daggers" -- Black Power, an early publication of the Black Panther Party

"The only position for women in SNCC is prone" -- Stokely Carmichael

"The homosexual revolution will have to be postponed until the black revolution is completed." -- Angela Davis

"Homosexuality is a sickness, just as are baby-rape, or wanting to become head of General Motors" -- Eldridge Cleaver

"If a lesbian is anything, she is a frigid woman, a frozen cunt, with a warp and a crack in the wall of her ice." -- Eldridge Cleaver

I thought you might be interested to know that our friend Eldridge Cleaver, convicted rapist who advocated rape of white women as a political act, is still around. Now a Born-Again Christian, he was interviewed at his Eldridge Cleaver Crusades office in Palo Alto by reporters from GROUNDSWELL NEWS. Among other things, he had the following to say:

GROUNDSWELL: While you were in Paris, you spread the word you were going to come back and get into the fashion industry. The industry in the United States is already calling them the "out-rageous codpiece pants." What is it about those pants? [Editor's note: A codpiece is a pouch on the front of pants for holding the penis.]

CLEAVER: My aspiration is to re-establish a demarcation between male and female. . .there is a need to re-establish a distinction between male and female pants, and my design accomplished that. That's the intention of my design. . .[the Priests] instituted what I call penis-binding, and it's analogous to what they used to do to the feet of Chinese women. . . When you consider that once upon a time a man had the power to wag his penis the way a dog wags his tail, and look at the situation today where a lot of men can't even get an erection, you can see the result of penis-binding. It has actually atrophied the male organ and I think it's causing us a lot of problems.

GROUNDSWELL: Along these lines, what do you think about some of your Christian friends who have come out against gay rights?

CLEAVER: There are a lot of people who come out against gay rights. I'm not sure that's the best terrain on which to deal with the problem of homosexuality -- those are two different issues: gay rights is one issue, homosexuality is another issue. I'm opposed to homosexuality. I like heterosexuality myself, okay? And I've had a lot of opportunity to check out homosexuality, but in the world and in prison. I have a sister who is a lesbian and she's been a lesbian since 1952. She

used to have a gay after-hours bar and I was a bouncer at the joint. Then, I was in prison for ten years and another time I was in prison for two and a half years. Throughout my younger years I was in and out of reform schools. Reform schools are breeding grounds for homosexuality.

GROUNDSWELL: How will you fund yourself -- through books, organizations, or what?

CLEAVER: In L.A., I'm optimistic of becoming a millionaire when I get the clothing thing going. I figure I'll get a penny off every penis, because I don't think it's going to be possible for a man to continue wearing girl's clothing when there's an alternative for them. . . .

[For a copy of the complete interview, write GROUNDSWELL NEWS, 123 South Third Street, San Jose, CA 95113, or phone 289-1566]

So much for Cleaver. Another well-known black male who has made anti-woman and anti-gay comments lately is Muhammed Ali. He did a several hour interview on a PBS program, the "Black Woman." His behavior toward the very poised, professional, intelligent black woman interviewer appeared very sexist to me. And his body language spoke clearly when he kept flexing his muscles all over the place, while making bright comments to the effect that feminism was wrong because women couldn't operate jackhammers. When speaking of gays, he flipped his wrist in mockery.

Like yourself, I recognize that there are many black leaders who support the rights & dignity of women & gays. But the issue of sexism & homophobia needs to be dealt with, not swept under the radical rug.

Rosalie Nichols

P.S. Since you live in the East Bay, you might be interested in this clipping from the SAN JOSE MERCURY, October 26, 1977:

OAKLAND (AP) — Carol Murray says she and her husband Robert liked their home, even though they were white and they were harassed by some of their black neighbors.

They moved into the Sobrante Park area of east Oakland three years ago.

Mrs. Murray recalled Sunday her husband being called names as he walked their dog, of being chased by children with sticks, and of neighbors urging their dogs to attack the Murrays' pet.

She also remembered the time she was driving home and a man leaped onto her car and smashed a window.

And last month, she said, the people running a neighborhood rummage sale had refused to take their donated clothing because they were white.

Saturday night her husband decided to make one more try at community acceptance, she said.

He walked the half-mile to attend a homeowners' association meeting on plans for a youth center. He wanted to volunteer some athletic equipment, she said.

While he was walking home, homicide Sgt. Ed Subica said a woman called police to report "four or five of the local thugs are beating up on a white man."

When police arrived, the 28-year-old Murray was unconscious. He died two hours later in surgery.

Murray's father, realtor Bernice Murray, said his son had told him things had gotten so bad that "he told me last week they would have to get out."



Lesbian Voices[®] Our Contributors

ANON. - "Was oft a woman"

JAN BRAUMULLER - Lives and writes in Washington, D.C.

LISA FENTON - Lives and writes in Dallas, Texas. Her poetry has appeared in previous issues of L.V., and she authored an article "The Fierce Sound: Women's Poetry" in our Fall 1976 issue. In the DIRECTORY OF WOMEN WRITING, she says, "Writing is my craft, confessor and companion; it is breath and joy. I want to share that experience with other women."

DOROTHY FEOLA - is a free lance writer living in the Bronx, New York. She says, "Came out in the Women's Movement in December of 1974 at the age of 34. Broke into print four months later. Everything I write (for the time being) is more or less 'real.' The poems, articles, and personal documentation letters are based on fact; the stories and plays are usually half fact and half fiction, relying pretty heavily on the former. Usually find writing complete non-fiction a drag, even though I'm editor of a NOW newsletter. Easy going, take people at face value. Finding out more and more what a terrible romantic I am. Even when I don't give a damn." Most recently, she has been editing a national newsletter for women, WOMEN'S NETWORK, 2137 Quimby Avenue, Bronx, New York 10473.

SUZANNE R. FRIED - has recently moved to San Francisco from Bayside, New York. She has previously been published in FOCUS, LAVENDER WOMAN, and GAYSWEEK.

MARY GENNOY - lives and writes in Oakland, California. One of our regular contributors, she is a "disabled dyke" who has nonetheless overcome many obstacles in her pursuit of independence, personal development, and participation in the world at large.

BARBARA GRIER (GENE DAMON) - lives and works in Bates City, Missouri. She says, "I was born in 1933 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and raised all over the United States. I am a writer, a bibliographer, a lecturer, a publisher, an editor, and I have been active in the gay movement (Lesbian, Lesbian/feminist, homophile, homosexual, gay) under its various and sundry names since 1956. I am very happily married to Donna McBride and we live on a five-acre tree farm in very rural mid-America, where we are very out of the closet and very much accepted by our neighbors." She was, as Gene Damon, editor of THE LADDER, and her works include LESBIANA (Naiad Press, 1976); THE LAVENDER HERRING, THE LESBIAN'S HOME JOURNAL and LESBIAN LIVES (Ed. with Coletta Reid, Diana Press, 1976) and the basic bibliographic tool, THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE (2nd Ed. Naiad Press, 1975). Since the cessation of publication of the magazine THE LADDER, she has been involved.

with several other Lesbian/feminists, in the publishing company THE NAIAD PRESS, INC., 20 Rue Jacob Acres, Bates City, MO 64011

LEE KINARD - lives and writes in Orlando, Florida. In addition to poetry, she has completed one book manuscript and is working on a second.

NANCY MANAHAN - a Bay Area community college teacher, was a student in the class Kate Millet taught during the events of SITA [see review page 80]. She is a contributor to CATER-PILLARS, a collection of journals written by the women in that class, published by Epona Press. She has also had an article in MOTHER JONES (pre-boycott) and in the Winter 76/77 issue of LESBIAN VOICES.

ROSALIE NICHOLS - lives and writes in San Jose and is editor of LESBIAN VOICES. She is 40 years old and has been published in THE LADDER, INDIAN HISTORIAN, THE FREEMAN, INDIVIDUALIST, REASON, and various other periodicals.

JANET SCHRIM - lives and writes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her short story appearing on page 8 of this issue is her first contribution to LESBIAN VOICES.

JUDITH SCHWARZ - lives, writes, and does lesbian history research in Arlington, Virginia. She teaches a course on lesbian history at the Washington, D.C. Area Women's Center and is researching a book on lesbian history tentatively called "Close Friends and Devoted Companions." Her article "Old Maids, Spinsters, and Maiden Ladies: The Myth and the Reality of the Lives of Single Women in America, 1800-1861" appeared in LESBIAN VOICES, Vol. II Issues #1-2. Subsequent articles include "Researching Lesbian History" in SINISTER WISDOM #5 and "Directory of American Lesbians in History" in LESBIAN CONNECTION Vol. IV #3.

DIANE STEIN - lives and writes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has recently joined the staff of WOMEN'S NETWORK and had an article "Who Encourages the Woman Writer?" published in Vol. II #3 of that newsletter.

BARBARA STEPHENS - lives, works, and writes in the East San Francisco Bay Area in California. Born in the 1920's, she is a survivor of the Great Depression and a long-time socialist and civil rights worker. In addition to her interest in politics, she is devoted to photography and birdwatching. She has previously been published in THE LADDER and is a regular contributor to LESBIAN VOICES. She also writes "angry letters to editors, which the Co-op News invariably print and which the S. F. Chronicle never prints. . ."

[Editor's Note: Most of the above bio's were written by me. I hope they are accurate. Please send in a short paragraph with your material. If you don't, next time I am going to TELL ALL.....]


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