



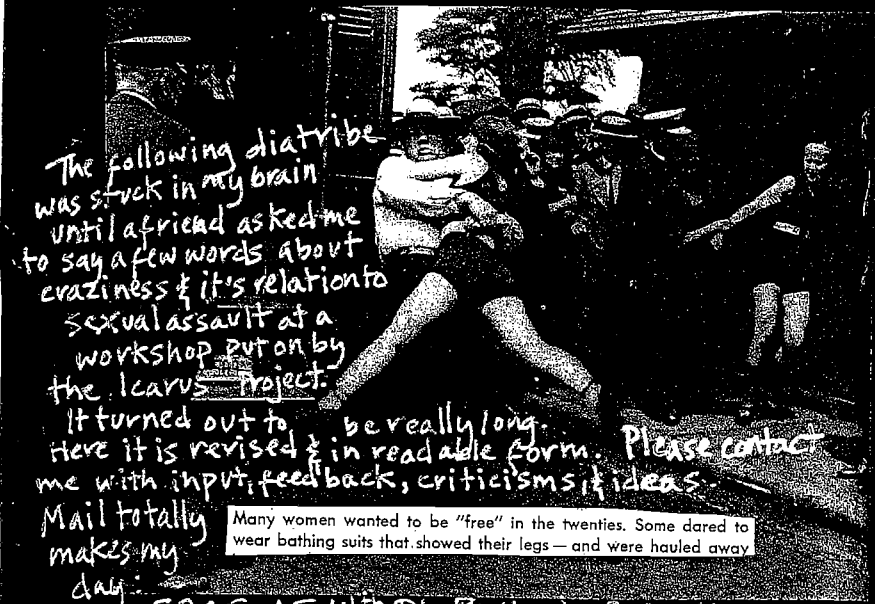
WITCH-HUNT



ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH AND CONFRONTING
SEXUAL ASSAULT IN ACTIVIST COMMUNITIES

By Annie Anxiety

①



The following diatribe was struck in my brain until a friend asked me to say a few words about craziness & its relation to sexual assault at a workshop put on by the Icarus Project.

It turned out to be really long. Here it is revised & in readable form. Please contact me with input, feedback, criticisms & ideas.

Mail totally makes my day.

Many women wanted to be "free" in the twenties. Some dared to wear bathing suits that showed their legs — and were hauled away

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PLEASE MAKE LOTS OF COPIES!

"We surge through the sex dungeon where our kind are kept, the butcher shops where our kind are sold; we break them loose; Amnesty International will not help us, the United Nations will not help us; so at night, ghosts, we convene; to spread justice...I am an apprentice: sorcerer or assassin or vandal or vigilante; or avenger; I am in formation as the one who will emerge."

--Excerpt from "Mercy" by Andrea Dworkin

emerge

Props to: Samira, Chach, STV, Shoogs, Deets, and everyone else who can't keep their mouths shut, Julie, In Thar, Dyanne & Molly, Robbie Chronic, all members & ex-members of the 14th Place Phenomenon, for your courage, support, inspiration & love. And to all the important people I was meant to know in this lifetime: The Apocalypse Crüe. You know who you are. C'mon guys, let's do this whole revolution thing..

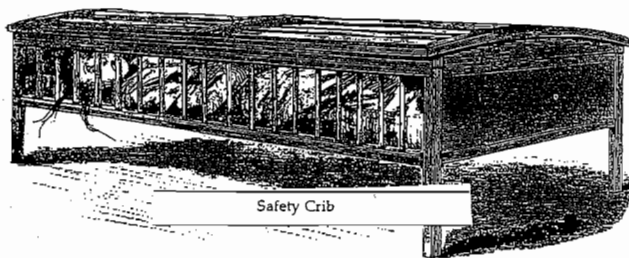


Love,
Annie

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and her allies, it bears a creepy resemblance to "guilty until proven innocent", or rather, "discredited until proven credible". We need to go beyond this, and begin to examine how forced gender roles, patriarchy, and misogyny are conditioned to live inside us (myself included, of course, with all my gender-binary references to "male" and "female"). How these aspects of our society promote disbelief of the survivor (a.k.a. blaming of the victim), and how they affect our own personalities and interpersonal relationships. I don't have all the answers, and I could go on and on. These are my thoughts. Please write me with critiques, support, ideas, and resources. I hope this little zine will be informative, empowering, and if anything, dialogue-provoking. Thanks for reading.
Love, Annie

LASH BACK!!



Safety Crib

INTRODUCTION

For the sake of sharing, and perspective, the author (me) has been diagnosed with the following psychiatric disorders: Attention Deficit Disorder, Anxiety and Panic Disorders, Agoraphobia, Major Depressive Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and Borderline Personality Disorder. Self diagnoses: Oppositional-Defiant Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Dissociative Identity Disorder. So I'm Crayzee! But my main issues for now are panic, agoraphobia, and depression. Thanks for reading. .

The politics and issues surrounding the subject of mental health are extremely important to me on a personal level. Furthermore, I believe they are relevant to all forms of activism, and fundamental in the fight to end oppression and its effects, both internal and external. I feel that the politics of mental health serve as an umbrella for many different issues, aspects, and important discussion topics such as: building awareness and becoming more inclusive of people with mental disabilities and others struggling with mental distress and disorder within activist communities; providing support, and seeking alternative ways to cope in this disturbing, chaotic world; and understanding that we are all different people, with different realities, all living on the same planet; I believe sharing how our minds work, and how our individual experiences in the world have shaped our inner landscapes, is an important exercise in gaining tolerance, exercising compassion, and building unity.

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It is my belief that psychiatry can at times be used as a place to turn to for solace, as well as a tool of social control, designed to benefit the powers that be. I strongly feel that psychiatric oppression fuels and serves as a facilitator for most other kinds of oppression such as: Racism-psychiatry's obsession with eugenics, or "racial hygiene", which is still being practiced in med schools and genetics labs all over this country; psychiatry's incarceration and sterilization of indigenous peoples in mental institutions, racist acts like the Federal Violence Initiative in Chicago which would focus on treating a predisposition to violence in inner city children with psychiatric meds. They are still searching for that elusive violence gene with all its racist implications. Classism-where the choice between receiving psychiatric treatment or a jail sentence is determined by economic status; most all psychiatric and therapeutic services are only available to the insured, and are often the first programs to have funding cut, leaving people on state and federally funded insurance programs shit out of luck. Homophobia is an obvious one, homosexuality only until recently being stigmatized as a psychiatric disorder, and trans and intersex people being abused and mutilated in psych wards and hospitals. Ageism-with the invisibility and mistreatment of the elderly in institutions, and youth being one of the biggest cash cows for the pharmaceutical industry while being denied any right to decide for themselves. We must include all of these issues in our

discussions of mental health and psychiatric oppression and encourage dialogue if we are going to attempt to understand the realities of other humans we share this planet with.

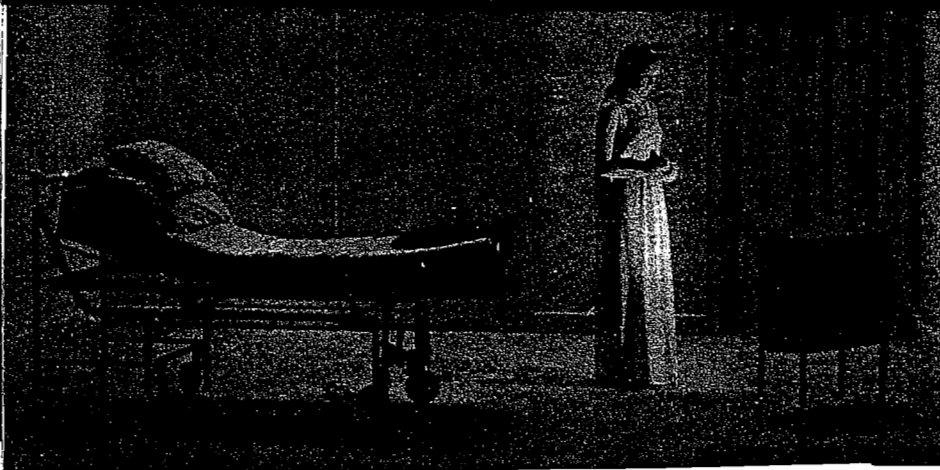
nature, and their original intentions. I am constantly baffled by these reactions, and by the lack of initiative on the part of these men to take a decidedly *anti-rapist* stance. Instead it comes down to defensiveness, or a he said/she said situation, rather than an opportunity to examine and deconstruct the oppression that lies within. Honestly, it's amazing how far a little humility will go in facilitating the healing process, but unfortunately a humble perpetrator is rare. The dangers in letting a perpetrator talk his way out of it lie in his influencing others and the continuing discredit of the survivor, and other outspoken survivors after her. This is the way it has always been. We are striving for a complete overhaul of the way that we as a community think about rape, consent, and assault.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this issue to me, falls under the subject of "allegations". If an allegation qualifies as a rumour until the accusations are proven true beyond a reasonable doubt, then we will likely get nowhere. If the one who originally brought about the complaint and all those helping to circulate the perp's name on the underground message service are discounted until they offer "proof", or until the perpetrator admits wrongdoing (or until enough of the perpetrators friends find the accusations to be legitimate), it is pretty clear where the power lies. And that is not with the survivor or their supporters. On the side of the perp, this system of establishing credibility seems to represent the "innocent until proven guilty" myth of the current Justice system. However, on the side of the survivor

names of all perpetrators and suspected perps known to me in the Portland area, and I hope others will not be afraid to do the same for me. There have been postings on the local Indymedia letting people know when known perpetrators have been sighted back in town. There has been huge backlash and condemnation on that site for naming names. I refuse to let taht sentiment scare me into silence. I'm ready to reclaim the rumour mill and use it to start churning out the facts.

So this brings me to the dilemma of how to implement a safer space policy, if we cannot agree on who is "right" and who is "wrong". I believe that if somebody (man, woman, trans, etc.) feels that a crime was committed against them, that they were violated, assaulted, abused, or raped, no matter what the circumstances, we as a community need to acknowledge, despite the lack of "evidence" that something very wrong occurred. It is also my belief that many many people, good and bad, have harmed others without realizing that what they were doing was wrong. Therein lies the problem. Patriarchy, misogyny and abuse are so embedded in all of us (and by that I mean *all* of us), that it is inevitably a harrowing experience to be called out as an abuser or an assaulter. I feel that every incident has to be dealt with individually, and according to the reactions of the suspected perpetrator, as well as the wishes of the survivor. Often the reactions of an accused perpetrator can be more than revealing of their true

Though I do not identify as wholly female, or subscribe to the limitations of my born gender, my experience in the mental health system is that of a woman being seen through the distorted lens of misogyny, and I've lived my life saturated by the rape culture of the patriarchal society we live in. This is my testimony to that experience, and to the experiences of millions of others struggling with their mental health in a society that hates us. Here is my story:



Silence is deadly. It sinks deep into the soul, permeates the psyche, festers and mutates until we are no longer able to recognize it for what it is, until we forget that our pain had a name, an origin, an identity all of its own. It becomes us, consumes us, quiets us, drags us down into the dark depths, fills our pockets with stones and leads us into that cold river, presents us with a bridge to the hereafter and dares us to jump. The pain of silence locks us in a padded room to wonder how we got there, shuts us in our bedrooms to wonder why we're still here. Sometimes it begins to boil, this silence, our secrets, sometimes they will not rest easy. Sometimes they unearth themselves from the soil they were buried in, they scream to be heard, our stories, they pound on the walls of our fleshy bodies, hammering at our brains, and at eyelids clamped shut. They writhe in agony and anger, our visions, emotions, they scream defiantly when they are hushed, they claw at the restraints of the status quo, they balk at the limitations of "appropriateness", of "acceptable behavior" until they erupt with a fury that is both devastating and unavoidable, like a flood, or a volcano too long dormant, exploding into our consciousness, raining fear, anger, and chaotic dissonance. This is our madness.

The politics of mental health, this movement that we are becoming a part of is a big one, it's important. It gives us the potential to understand each other's experiences and gain a sense of empathy that we may not have had before, as well as the opportunity to connect on a more intimate level with those immediately surrounding us, cutting through the shell of alienation so many of us inhabit. A lot of dialogue has started up around these parts in the last year or two, indicating to me that I'm not as

posters to his car, because that would be ostracism (though I prefer to call it "sabotage" and "property damage").

So where exactly does this leave us, but frustrated, disempowered and helpless? Though I maintain that there were some great points made in this article as well, and if you haven't read it, seek it out (they're free) it left me with a distinct "we know what's best for you" taste in my mouth.

I personally don't have all the answers, not even close. But I believe that one of the places to start is by getting the names of suspected and known perpetrators to those who have the least to gain by their presence, as well as getting the power out of the hands of the perps, and redistributing it to the survivors. I want to know names, I want to know if these guys are in my house, at a show or event, or in a place I consider to be safer than most even if their guilt has not been "proven". Until I have a name and can put a face to that name, the punk/activist community remains a mirror to me of the society we live in at large, where anybody could be a threat, there are hundreds of thousands of unknown perpetrators walking around and for all I know, they could be my lover, my neighbor, or somebody I consider a friend. I know the dissemination of this information is important, if only from all the victims/survivors I know who state that yes, if someone had warned them about him, it would have made a difference. I realize the danger of putting actual names down in writing, so I will make the offer to anybody concerned to contact me and I will tell you confidentially the

holding? How does one wade through the gossip and hearsay often associated with these issues? How do we deal with these issues in a proactive manner without falling back on sheer ostracism as an answer; and how as men can we stop ignoring this?" Later they state, "We are not intending to set a policy that those 'accused' (quotation marks added) of sexual assault should be shunned. Ostracism should be the last case scenario not the first." Obviously, I'm taking this somewhat out of context, but I'm using it to illustrate all the "shoulds" that we as women (and others) are confronted with in trying to deal with these issues. I've heard them all. We *should* not resort to violence, because violence is bad (we are often told this even in self-defense situations! And especially in after-the-fact community confrontations). We *should* not discuss the details or start naming names until actual guilt can be determined. We *should* not ask too much of an "accused" perpetrator in reparations, especially if the perp has admitted to no wrongdoing. We *should* not go to the police because that is not the anarchist way, though I've heard the argument of "you *should* have gone to the police, that's what they're there for" as well, which does not take into account the traditional lack of respect and privacy that the police, detectives and justice system show to survivors. We *should* not shun the guy, or send him off to the next community, where he will most likely continue his behaviour (which I agree with to an extent). And we *should* not destroy his musical equipment or paste "rapist"

alone and isolated as I always thought I would be because of my mental health. I am not the only one living with this madness, the fear, that overpowering sense of urgency mixed with an overwhelming feeling of despair. People are beginning to talk, to open up their hearts and mouths, to introduce the reality of what it is like to live with so-called "mental illnesses" into activist circles. Last winter there were a lot of meetings around here, support groups were beginning to form, discussions were being organized, there was a fervor of activity, of inspiring voices, of new ideas, there still is...

But amid all this activity, something else was growing, something born from the same constructs of our society that encourage silence, fear, and distrust. Something equally destructive that comes from centuries of repression and denial, violence and pain, and abuse of power. This movement comes on the crest of a wave of unheard screams. It carries with it words like "rape", "assault", and "consent", and is crashing down on the shores of activist communities all over with the resounding cries of "justice", and "never again". It shakes the walls of patriarchy with a fury that is palpable, threatening the familiarity of misogyny, and the comfort of sexism. This threat is embodied in the wave of critical-mass-hysteria you can sense welling up in the hearts and throats of women and other

people all around us. It is not a witch-hunt, not merely a new cause or a bandwagon, it cannot be trivialized as a "woman's issue", or an ISM. Rape is an issue of mental health, it is political, it is personal, it is not to be ignored any longer. This is our anger. This is the roar which lies on the other end of silence.



My own first very real, very close to the surface wake-up call on the nature of the mental health industry, and the subtle politics encompassed in the frame-work of mental illness came to me about 5 years ago when I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. The term "borderline" was coined to describe someone who is on the borderline between neurosis and psychosis, and is defined by these distinguishing traits: (make a mental note of any that might apply to you.)

who are tired of staying home. Who are tired of watching the show from the back because that's where it's safe to dance, who are tired of arguing our piece with friends who continue to play shows with known perpetrators. We are the people who won't risk someone's safety just because all the "facts" haven't come in yet, referring to the confused, virtually nonexistent system used to determine who is "right" and who is "wrong", the "accused" or the "accuser". We want to know names, and we want to be able to match them with faces ("that's the guy..."), and we want our choices and decisions respected. We want our presence valued as much as that of a renowned punker, respected zinester, or ardent activist.

People have infinite ideas on how to determine the guilt or innocence of those involved in a sexual assault situation. I feel that a diverse array of responses to a perpetrator in our midst should be encouraged, as every situation is different, and must be dealt with individually. Not questioning the survivor is probably the most radical thing you can do to counteract the role that rape currently plays in our society. But this consistently seems to be one of the most difficult things for the activist community to do as a whole, especially when it comes down to people we revere, or who we know and care about being outed as perpetrators.

In the article I'm referring to, the author(s) ask such questions of themselves as, "are Blackthorn members to be the judge of who is wrong and who is right should a situation arise at an event we are

themselves, as well as from peers of suspected perps, and others who hold influence and sway. Which is why my heart sank when, barely a quarter of the way into it, the subject of "gossip" and "hearsay" was brought up in such a negative light. It has been the tendency from what I've seen and experienced to use these terms to discount what the survivor has to say, or to discount representatives that the survivor has chosen to disclose this information to the community at large. It is my belief that that which is consistently dubbed "the rumour mill" is actually an intricate system of protection used by those of us who need to cut our losses. Meaning, there are many of us who, because of our background, or abuse history can no longer afford to subject ourselves to threatening, unsafe situations (i.e. a place where a perpetrator may turn up.). Gossip has traditionally been used as a means to disseminate information to a variety of women through word of mouth. "Gossip" has never been credited as a valid form of communication, at least not by the (predominately) male power-holders. There are no words in this language to show gossip in a positive light, so I would venture to say that this traditionally female form of communicating pertinent information to those that will most benefit from it, is actually the tattered remnants of an oral tradition; one that cannot be so easily taken away, or replaced with more "logical", judicial ways of determining who the perpetrators are. The "rumour mill" is used by those of us who are tired of remaining silent,

1. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonments
2. A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.
3. Identity disturbance: marked and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.
4. Impulsivity in at least 2 areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g. spending money, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating, etc.).
5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats; self-mutilating behavior.
6. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g. intense episodic dysphoria [dissociation], irritability; or anxiety, usually lasting a few hours and rarely more than a few days).
7. Chronic feelings of emptiness.
8. Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights)
9. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideations or severe dissociative symptoms.

In order to get into this special program of group therapy and stress management skills training, I had to qualify as borderline which was not hard. I was fucking crazy, angry, scared, and I wanted help. I had never participated in group therapy before, and I was curious whether I would be in a group with both men and women, or whether the groups

would be separated by gender. In response, I was told that they hadn't had to deal with that issue yet, because out of the fifty or so people in the program, none of them were men. Surprised, I soon learned that 75% of all diagnosed borderlines were female, and that men usually did not seek treatment.

So lets go over some of those symptoms again, shall we? And you tell me whether they sound subtly gender-specific or not: impulsive actions regarding sex, shopping, reckless driving, binge eating...bad girl! Self-mutilation, yeah, chronic feelings of emptiness, check, bad self esteem, totally. Inappropriate intense anger? recurrent physical fights? Frequent displays of temper? When exactly are these behaviors viewed as appropriate, or should I say, desirable in women? I mean besides of course when our child's life is in danger. When are we not expected to control our anger, our rage, act feminine, fulfill society's expectations of who we should be, how we should act? Step out of line and you're called crazy, a bitch, trivialized, scoffed at, laughed at, and attacked.

Despite our many outward differences, I formed strong bonds with the women in my group. Everyone there was my age and up, on to about their mid-fifties. Some of us were from the city, some from the suburbs. All of us battled depression. All of us had been diagnosed with numerous other psychiatric disorders. All of us were currently medicating. Some of us were cutters, some of us were suicidal. Some of us had family, kids, some of us were queer, some of us were conservatives from Lake Oswego. Some of us had been sent to therapy by our husbands, or by our families. We came from different ethnic and economic

AFTERTHOUGHT.

NOTES ON GOSSIP, THE RUMOUR MILL, AND IMPLEMENTING SAFER SPACE POLICIES

This afterthought was inspired by a recent article in local Portland activist newspaper Blackthorn #4 addressing sexual assault written by the men of the collective. Though I was much appreciative of the article, especially the parts where consent was discussed, and a copy of the collective's "safer space policy" was posted, I was disturbed by a few of the statements made throughout the article, feeling they were representative of many sentiments and backlash I've heard from the (predominantly) male punk/activist community as a whole.

This is not intended to be a diss on the men of that collective or their attempt to enact non-sexist and safer space policies within collectives, which I think is important, especially coming from other men whom perpetrators may consider friends and/or role models. It's more a critique of the typical responses and reactions when it comes to the point of people within our community attempting to "deal with the perpetrator", using this article by the men of the Blackthorn as an example.

I was excited to see the article in print, and support many of the points made. Like I said before, there is a necessity to see this issue addressed within the punk/activist community from the collectives

This river of Courage: generations of women's resistance and action,
by Pam McAllister. She collects stories and history from all over the
globe. Read it.

For Her Own Good: 150 years of the experts advice to women. by
Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English. These two wrote two awesome
zine-type pamphlets about the extinguishment of witches and midwives,
and the appropriation of healing by (male) MDs and scientists. The book
is updated and chock-full of info, especially on doctors and motherhood.

Crazy For You: the making of women's madness, by Jil Astbury. this is
a British book, so it talks alot about goings-on in Europe. Real essay-
like writing, very informative, lost of stuff about Freud and Dora in
this one.

Also: REFUSING TO BE A MAN: Essays on Sex & Justice
By John Stoltenberg
& MEN'S WORK: How to stop the violence that tears our lives
apart. By Paul Kivel. ADD YR OWN ↓

backgrounds. All of us had extensive histories of abuse. Some of us had
been raped. 75% of all borderlines report being sexually abused. some of
us were currently in abusive relationships. None of us had ever had any
of these experiences interpreted as real and valid. We were able to
validate them for one another, support eachother, and it was utterly
empowering. I have no idea where any of these women are now. I only
hope they've survived, and that they're okay.



PRETTY TO LOOK AT

By her third week, Ann cared enough about ap-
pearances to benefit from a visit to the hospital's
beauty shop. Interest in a new hairdo is an im-

portant sign of recovery. To Ann, every glance
had once been hostile. Now she could not only
bear them, she was brave enough to invite them.

Sexual violence does not exist in a vacuum. It permeates our consciousness, it affects people to their very core, women, men, and all genders in between. Rape can make you crazy. Denial can drive you insane. Sexual assault, unnamed, unacknowledged can start a seed of madness growing in one's soul whether their story is corroborated or not. According to the statistics, rape survivors are 13 times more likely to attempt suicide than non-rape victims. 75% of women in drug and alcohol programs report having been sexually abused. One in every 6 american women report being raped or sexually assaulted in their lifetimes. 61% of rapes and sexual assaults go unreported to the police. If they are reported, there is only a 50.8% chance an arrest will be made. Factoring in unreported rapes, about 6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail. 15 out of 16 rapists will go free. Do you feel crazy? Do you feel your blood boiling? Take a few deep breaths...Rape, though alienated and isolated through backlash and denial, is a form of social control which directly affects all women, and others that men wish to dominate. There have been way too many casualties in this hidden war.

Violence, sexual violence does exist outside the form of male to female aggression. Women batter women, and women abuse men. Men are abused by men, and rape and sexual assault do occur within the trans community. I myself was violently and psychologically abused by a woman for years. According to the justice department, one out of every 8 rape victims are male. Oops! There's that word "victim" again. It has been hard in navigating this sea of statistics to avoid using that word. I want to use empowering words like "survivor" but it's hard to tell from these cut

reading suggestions:

Transforming a Rape Culture, edited by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth. This is an awesome book with many many contributors of all kinds, including Bell Hooks, Andrea Dworkin, and Gloria Steinem. Lots of different perspectives.

Patriarchy: Notes of an expert witness by Phyllis Chesler. She's awesome. About 30 years ago she wrote the groundbreaking Women and Madness. Patriarchy includes a rad essay on a Woman's Right to self Defense, taking in an elaborate array of case studies.

Commonsense Rebellion: Debunking Psychiatry. Confronting Society. by Bruce E. Levine, MD. This is a cool book about all aspects of our institutional society, and how it produces the symptoms of mental illness. Not much at all about women of feminism in here, but a good read nonetheless.

Girl, Interrupted, by Suzanna Kayse. This was a terrible movie, but the book is amazing. talks alot about Borderline Personality Disorder, and other female predicaments.

I know there are many other resources out there that I was unable to track down. So I thought this page could work as a chain letter by adding resources & running off more copies of this little zine. What do you think?

MORE RESOURCES: ADD YOUR OWN!

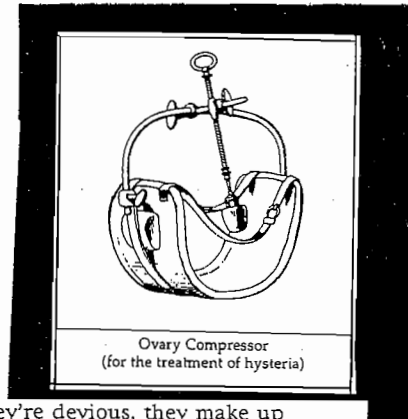
and dry factoids whether the so-called victims survived or not. I don't know if they take into account the number of those raped who have ended their own lives in desperation... Or if it counts in the statistics when somebody has been raped and then murdered, or whether that's just murder, or whether anyone's counting.

According to studies, 99% of all mass, sexual, and serial murder is committed by men. We as women, statistics or not, have been painfully aware of this ever since we first stepped out into the world. We've had these facts subconsciously shoved down our throats, have been conditioned, instructed, coached in the art of vigilance, to be aware of the possibility of rape, of assault, of brutal murder. We've been threatened, blamed, have been told it is our responsibility to be safe, have not been told how in the hell we're supposed to do that. (Especially considering the fact that in 66% of reported rapes, the perpetrator is a friend, or someone else the survivor knows, and 6 out of every 10 rapes happen in our own homes, or the home of a friend, relative, or neighbor). And if it is impossible to be safe, no matter how hard we try, it is our fault, we were asking for it. We must have been, cuz how could a respectable family man, or a punk-rock veteran, or a hard-working anti-sexist activist have possibly committed these crimes without being provoked?

The other night me and my friends were watching Law and Order. Criminal Intent. At the end of an inane, long, drawn out saga of crime and intrigue, they pinned it on the least expected, the blond beauty, the murderess, and to think she was this close to getting away with it and pinning it on her unsuspecting husband, that conniving bitch!



I mean, that's what women do, right? They're devious, they make up stories for attention, for revenge, just to ruin men's lives! Now I know this is only T.V., but I felt the urgent need to sit up and share this bit of info I'd discovered with my roommates: That according to the department of justice, about 90% of *all* violent crimes are committed by men, and of that remaining ten percent, battered women and women who kill in self defense account for about half of all women who kill. Aileen Wournos was repeatedly raped, and had her life threatened by some of the quarter million johns that she had had sex with for money. Quarter million...She took a gun, her only real form of protection, and killed the last man who ever raped her, who ever threatened her life, and then took out five



RESOURCES CONT.

Women Strength/Self Defense Program (Portland Police)
(503) 823-8296 Free class taught by women volunteers

Movements In Change (← current?)
Self-defense organization that addresses Domestic Violence & sexual assault: 4826 N.E. 22nd PDX, OR 97211 (503) 289-9183

Support Coalition International: www.mindfreedom.org
Really awesome organization out of Eugene fighting against psychiatric oppression & working for the rights and support of psychiatric survivors.

The Icarus Project: A website devoted to the networking of people identifying as bipolar or manic depressive.
~~the~~ info@theicarusproject.net or Icarus Project, P.O. Box 10
Spring Glen, NY 12483

RESOURCES For THE N.W. & ELSEWHERE

ONE WITH HEART: SELF DEFENSE CLASSES
(503) 231-1999 4231 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. Portland, OR 97215
www.onewithheart.com offering classes in women's & children's
self-defense classes

HYSTERIA: A survivor support collective in PDX, hysteriacollective@
yahoo.com
providing support & helping fund counseling for survivors

RAINN: Rape, abuse & incest National Network
National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE free & confidential
Portland Women's Crisis Line: (503) 235-5333 or 1-888-235-5333
P.O. Box 42610, Portland, OR 97242 email: info@pwcl.org

WWW.escapingHades.com
Tori Amos' ~~survivor~~ rape survivor resource page

GIRL ARMY: (510) 452-3941
physical & psychological self-defense out of Oakland
www.girlarmy.org

F.I.S.T.: Feminists In Self-defense Training, (206) 782-5662
P.O. Box 1883 Olympia, WA 98504

more. And we the people of the state of Florida gave her the chair, saw her fry six times over, that crazy lesbian bitch. After we acquitted city supervisor Dan White of murdering Harvey Milk and San Francisco mayor George Moscone in cold blood because he claimed to have eaten "too much junk food". Men with guns and badges in this city give death sentences without trial, or jury, for crimes that were never committed. It's a mad fucking world.

I want to take a minute to address the men who may be reading this: The anger you sense in these words is real. If you are my ally, then you have nothing to fear. I invite you to join me in my anger, my outrage, because this work can't be done without you. If you react with defensiveness, it tells me there is something inside of you that needs to change. We all have shit to work on, we all have parts of us we would like to keep hidden. If you feel discomfort, recognize it as a sign that the patriarchy conditioned to live inside of you is beginning to lose its power. Welcome this discomfort. Talk about it. Feel your way through it. Remember, these concepts of consent and definitions of rape are relatively new, and just beginning to be discussed openly. We cannot change things that have happened, or acts we may have committed in the past. We can only acknowledge them, accept them, and move forward, committing ourselves to ending rape entirely, deconstructing the patriarchy within us, and confronting sexism as it occurs. These words are not an attack, but a call-out for action, for change. I hope you can hear me with open hearts and ears.

This spring marks the anniversary of when rape was thrust into the eyes and ears of the activist/punker community here in Portland, making us realize that even in our little sphere, violence and hatred could still survive, alongside revolutionary rhetoric and anarchist values. Ever since that time, I have been plowing through books and articles about gender politics, looking for anything that could connect the rape epidemic with the abuse and mistreatment of women on the basis of their mental health. Here are some of the things that I found:

Words are dangerous, and language can be used as a tool of oppression without our even knowing it. The words "Lunacy", and "lunatic" were derived from the word "Luna", Latin for moon, and were coined to describe the *bizarre* behavior of women, as coinciding with the different phases of the moon. Hysteria, comes from the Latin word *hyster*, meaning uterus. Meaning, something innately wrong with one's uterus, ovaries, reproductive system, implying that the root of a woman's madness lies in her biological make-up.

Words like "nag", "bitch", "moan", and "harp" have been used to describe women's complaints, serving to trivialize the grievance and encouraging silence by denying that any injustice has even occurred. Many women keep their mouths shut to avoid being perceived in such a negative light, instead internalizing their dissent, ultimately taking it out on themselves.

We are endlessly assaulted with derogatory terms for sexy/independent/liberated women, these slurs numbering well into the hundreds (bitch, slut, cunt, ho, promiscuous, irresponsible, trashy, etc.).

Nolen-Hoeksema's studies have found that people who habitually ruminate but are not depressed are more likely than nonruminators to develop depression later.

There may be biological reasons behind women's tendency to brood, but no genetic predisposition or difference in the brain has been found.

Still, Nolen-Hoeksema said, "There are cultural and personality contributors to rumination."

Women tend to forge intense emotional connections and to care deeply about relationships, she said.

"Our investment in relationships can be a source of great richness in our lives," but taken too far, it can become destructive, Nolen-Hoeksema said.

In a book published last year, "Women Who Think Too Much," Nolen-Hoeksema recommends a

variety of strategies to help teenage and adult women cut down on overthinking.

"When women ruminate, we blow things up," she said. "It helps to have friends who can help you reflect on a problem and find a solution."

Staying active can help. For teenage girls, playing a sport or engaging in other extracurricular activities can keep them from brooding about bad grades or broken romances.

Another strategy is to cultivate a circle of friends.

Just make sure, she said, that the friends are not too prone to rumination themselves. **End**

Artwork
by Sybil

A leading theory is that sex hormones help induce depression in some women by affecting messenger chemicals in the brain that influence mood. Dr. Meir Steiner, director of the Women's Health Concerns Clinic at St. Joseph's Health-care in Hamilton, Ontario, who studies the relationship between hormones and mood, thinks that the sensitivity of these neurotransmitters may increase when hormone levels are high or in a state of flux, and decrease when they are low and stable.

Studies of hormone levels

But to blame women's higher rate of depression on hormones is too simplistic, experts say. Not all women become depressed when their hormone levels seesaw.

Such findings indicate that it is not hormone levels per se that make some women feel moody or depressed at times of hormonal flux, but an underlying vulnerability, said Dr. Mary Blehar, formerly of the National Institute of Mental Health and now director of cancer

prevention, control, behavior and science at the National Cancer Institute.

"What that vulnerability is is the big question," she said.

Genes may tell much of this story. Zubenko, for example, suggests that some genes that raise women's risk of depression may exert their effect in the presence of high levels of estrogen, then decrease in influence when estrogen falls after menopause. But biology cannot entirely explain the sex difference.

"It's not just genetics," Steiner said.

Worry about little things

Women, Nolen-Hoeksema says, are at least twice as likely as men to be abused, and abuse often leads to depression. Another important factor, she said, is the greater tendency of girls and women to ruminate over the common curveballs of life, such as criticism at work or school or rejection by a friend.

By contrast, men are more likely than women to distract themselves from a problem, often by going off and doing something active. That's a healthy reaction, Nolen-Hoeksema said, because it blunts the emotional sting of everyday disappointments and setbacks.

In studies during the past decade, Nolen-Hoeksema has consistently found that women react more strongly than men to such experiences, finding them over and over without being able to come to a resolution or to move on. Dwelling on problems causes the initial sadness to snowball, she said.

Never being presented with words to describe our sexuality in a positive light, while being aware that the same does not hold out for the male gender which, linguistically is condoned for his sexual exploits (playboy, ladie's man, stud, Romeo, Cassanova, player, mack, etc.). In fact, most insults "designated" for men often require a derogatory reference to the women in their lives (bastard, mother-fucker, son-of-a-bitch, etc.), or to their own "emasculatation" (faggot, pussy, cocksucker, "girl", etc.).

Women have been perceived, since the beginning of modern medicine as sick by nature. During the witchhunts of medieval Europe, women were demonized by priests according to the Malleus Maleficarum, or Witch Hammer, which were the texts used to determine whether a woman was to be burned as a witch or not. Thousands of women were murdered, sometimes hundreds in one day. I read of two European cities in which only one woman was left alive in each city. One woman left. I tremble in fear for her, the only one, and shake with revulsion at the sadistic priests.

Around the turn of the last century, the torch of god and authority was passed to the doctors of modern medical science. Treatments like hysterectomies and clitoridectomies, the removal of the clitoris, were common solutions to the "woman problem", and the maladies of hysteria, frigidity, and sexual promiscuity. This is around the time that Sigmund Freud came along, offering his theories on neurosis, and his opinions of female sexuality. Here's one asinine quote among many of Freud's: he says,

"Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity...Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem—those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply—you yourselves are the problem."

Freud, in finding that *all* of his female psychoanalysis patients had been sexually abused by men in their family, or friends of the family, was overwhelmed by his discovery. In his denial that such rampant sexual abuse was possible, and his disbelief that so many respectable men



An early nineteenth century ovariectomy

Researchers find the tendency in women to be global and identify several factors, making the solution more like a combination lock than a key

By SUSAN GILBERT

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

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For centuries, doctors have recognized women's vulnerability to depression and proposed a variety of explanations. The female of the species, with her "excitable nervous system," was thought to wilt under the strain of menstruation and childbirth, or later, the pressures of work and family.

Now researchers are constructing more scientific theories to explain why women are nearly twice as likely as men to become depressed. Social bias and women's higher rates of physical and sexual abuse and poverty, experts say, clearly play a role.

Scientists also are studying genes that may predispose girls and women to the disorder. They are examining the likely role of estrogen and even linking the development of clinical depression to negative thinking, which is more common in women than in men.

"This is a global phenomenon," Meana said.

It is unlikely that any single gene, hormone level or type of experience explains the higher incidence of depression in women, experts say. Instead, several genes probably work in concert with the ebb and flow of reproductive hormones to change brain chemistry in ways that might set the stage for depression, especially after an emotional ordeal.

Another risk factor appears to be something that researchers call overthinking, a tendency to dwell on petty

slights, to mentally replay testy encounters and to wallow in sad feelings. Studies show that this type of negative thinking is far more common in women than in men and that it can be a harbinger of clinical depression.

"The gender difference in overthinking is strongly tied to the gender difference in depression," said Dr. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, a professor at the University of Michigan and a leading researcher on women and depression.

About half the risk of depression is thought to be genetic. The single gene, 5-HTT, that has been definitively linked to depression is no more common in women than in men. But preliminary research suggests that other depression-related genes exist that mainly affect women.

I hope this writing encourages other people to speak out, share their stories, show no fear in this time of "no time". As a closing statement, I want to ruminate on the saying, "Justice is a woman with a sword." It makes me think of the Greek myth telling of the birth of the warrior goddess Pallas Athena. She was born from the man-god Zeus, a womanizer, rapist, a trickster keen on new sexual conquests. She started as just a headache, a thorn in his side, if you will. The headache grew and grew, until it consumed him, and he could ignore it no longer. He called on his son Hephaestus to bring an ax, which he did, and split open the forehead of Zeus. Out sprang Athena, fully grown, fully armed and outfitted, prepared for battle. She was respected and revered by many, including Zeus, who entrusted her only with the use of his mighty thunderbolt.

Inside the skull of every madwoman is a warrior with a sword. She is hammering to get out. She will not be hushed. Can you feel it? When the pain in your mind, in all of our minds gets to be too much, think of her, of Athena. She is not the goddess of war in the sense that she is the female counterpart to the malevolent Ares (Mars), who craves war for the sake of violence and destruction. No, she is a symbol of grace, of righteous vengeance, of strength. She demands justice, and we need her, all of us. We must let her out or she will destroy us. She must be heard. We must take action and empower ourselves, each other. Because we have a lot of work to do, and we can't afford to lose any more warriors. Thanks.
The end.

could commit these crimes, he developed his own theory on the matter, and that was one of blaming the victim, a term which he called the "seductive child". He based all his following theories on the subjective fact that young women and girls invited sexual attention from older men, and not the other way around, imploring his female patients to accept that their revulsion was really subconscious desire.

Many of Freud's sexist theories have been debunked as gender-biased, and much of his research questioned because of its subjective nature. The important thing to keep in mind about Freud though, and (many) others like him, is that he has influenced generations of psychiatrists, much of the literature taught in med schools is still based on his findings, and many of his theories have just been honed and sculpted to fit into our modern times. The values he based his work on still prevail. Just recently I cut out this article on women's depression, and our "proneness" to mental illness from the Science section of the Oregonian. Listen for yourself: *FLIP FORWARD A COUPLE PAGES TO READ →*

Women, trans people, and men committed to ending sexual violence have recently become very vocal and visible in addressing sexual assault within the activist/punker communities. These voices and actions have been met with a resounding backlash, echoing with words like "witch-hunt", "the accused", and "the rumor mill". Here I'm going to address the cowards who use words like "witchhunter" to describe women who attempt to identify and confront perpetrators living among us, in our communities, in communal spaces. This is for men who cry "witchhunt":

LISTEN...

You, who call my sisters witchhunters. Women strong and powerful enough to advocate, to fight for the wounded and the fallen, brave enough to hold members of our community accountable for their actions despite the consequences, you liken them to medieval demons who tortured, murdered, brutalized whole scores, whole cities of women, our would-be ancestors brought to an early grave for the sin of their sexuality, their knowledge, their power. You are punishing us still...Maybe, for the first time in your life, you are feeling what it is like to walk into a room, and not automatically know if you're safe, not know who your friends are, or why they are looking at you like that. Maybe this makes you feel hunted. But you, my friend are no witch. And I don't have time to feel sorry for you, no way, no time, not when a woman in America is raped every 2 minutes...Every 2 minutes. Think about that. I do not have time to listen to your version of the story, your convoluted truth, not when there is a woman out there, millions of women, who have no one to turn to for support, for validation.

I don't have time to nurse your wounded ego, or shed a tear for the dying patriarchy.

This is a poem by an anti-rapist man, Haki R. Madhubuti:

"Our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters ceased to be the women men want we think of them as, loving family music and soul bright wonderments they are not locker room talk not the hunted lust or dirty cunt burnin hos bright wonderments are excluded by association as blood & heart bone & memory & we will destroy a rapists kneecaps, & write early grave on his thoughts to protect them."

