

A ZINE
EXPLORING
GENDERED
VIOLENCE

SPEAK OUT!



CREATED IN:
SANTA CRUZ,
CALIFORNIA

Dear Readers:

We posed the question to folks of all genders and sexual orientations in our seaside community of Santa Cruz, CA: Have you experienced gendered violence? Tell us about it!

What is gendered violence? Gendered violence can include sexual assault, physical violence, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, catcalling, objectification, and any other act that perpetuates structural inequality on the basis of gender.

We got the word out by posting flyers around town, making announcements at public gatherings, reaching out to the local newspaper and radio station, and creating a website for submissions.

We named our project **Speak Out Santa Cruz**, because we felt it was time to create a platform for people to speak out about the injustices they have experienced based on their gender. We hope that this zine can be a source of consciousness-raising, a medium for self-expression, a way of giving voice and space to those who may have been silenced in the past, a source of empowerment, a way of standing in solidarity, and a mechanism for educating our community.

In the first month, our inbox was empty. We were worried that people may shy away from opening up about their vulnerable experiences to a society that has been conditioned to keep quiet. But as our submission deadline approached, the submissions came flowing in. We received several a day: artwork, collages, poetry, stories, guides, etc. Community members wanted to share their stories. Furthermore, individuals approached us, commending our choice to explore this important topic. We were thrilled.

It is with great pride and excitement that we present you with our zine, "Speak Out!" Our hope is that this publication will be a community resource for years to come. Pass it on. Share it. We hope it travels outside our Santa Cruz bubble. We will no longer be silenced. It's time to SPEAK OUT!

Sincerely,

Julia Fogelson and Mary Mykhaylova

Every time I run, I look
behind my shoulder every
few minutes to see if
anyone is following me.

I don't know
any men who do
this. This is the part
I don't like about
being female-bodied.

Like a good girl

If there was any misconception before
Let me state it plainly:
I am not asking for it.

I implore you to consider
That maybe I don't want your attention
It is no compliment
And after you walk or drive away
Your catcall or car horn continues to
blare

I don't understand your motivation
To reduce me to my body
The sum of my parts
But I know I am so much greater

And every single time
I get a little angrier
A little less patient
This is what really scares me

That one day I will just snap
Talk back
Yell back
Swear back
Make the wrong gesture
I am scared of your reaction

Whose fault is it then
That I didn't stick to my role
Of compliance and patience
That I didn't turn the other cheek
Like a good girl should

M.M.

A Very Good Place to Start by Chrissann McCann

WHAT??
"Blue is for boys,
and pink is for GIRLS???"
Let's all use our Tinker Toys
to give our dolls CURLS!!!!
Right from the start,
I knew we were doomed,
the way we were dressed up,
and boxed up and groomed.
When people don't see
who we truly are,
it makes us unsteady,
unsure who WE are.

Really it's not
a radical thought,
that for us to be US
is to be WHO WE OUGHT!

Don't tell us that boys
only stand up to pee,
race around in their cars
and go swimming top-free.
And why should a girl
only care for the home,
never knowing the joys
of hiking alone?
Harmony comes
from respecting our choices,
not from hiding our faces,
nor shushing our voices.
Warfare and violence
will not break the silence.
Nor will coaching a transguy
until he "relents".
Consistently
teaching all children how
to accept one another
must happen RIGHT NOW.

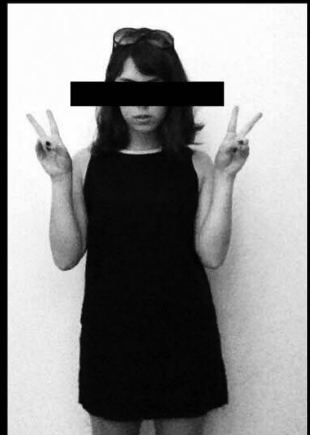
Stand up and stand out,
speak up, speak OUT LOUD!
When you say what you think,
Be yourself and BE PROUD!



MY
LITTLE
BLACK
DRESS
DOES
NOT
MEAN
"YES"



ABOLISH
RAPE
CULTURE



The Body Remembers

“My best friend was raped.”

What? My friend is reaching out, but I’ve already started to disconnect. I turn up my music. Stupid lyrics, stupid songs. I keep mishearing them in my head: songs of desperation, yearning, ownership. Where am I? I feel myself slipping away from my bed, into my head, backsliding into my past. Where is my body? It’s not mine anymore.

My friend keeps talking, explaining. I am trapped between words on the screen and the pounding in my heart and head. I feel sick.

“It wasn’t the first time.”

What? I can’t hear you anymore. The music gets louder, uncomfortable. I change the song.

“She said no. She was crying...”

I touch myself; I am present. I need to feel here, and alone, and safe. Sometimes alone is safer.

“They had a history...”

To be that intimate with someone, to be so close. Terrifying. What did my sister tell me before I left for college, when she took me up into her room alone and looked at me with empty eyes? What was my first lesson? Trust no one, don’t let anyone get close to you. Even your best friend could betray you. I was raped. It could happen to anyone. It could happen to you. And at a certain point, “could” becomes “will,” becomes “did happen,” past tense. It did happen to you, when something is taken, you are uncertain, your body is not your own and you can’t tell anyone.

And then the questions that we ask, that she has to ask her friend, that we ask ourselves, so we can analyze and blame and try not to judge when that is all we know to do:

Did you know him? Were you drinking? Did you tell him no? Do you remember?

(Do I want to remember?)

I think about an afternoon I spent with my then-boyfriend in high school, when things were good, and okay, and then he did something that no longer felt good and was not okay, and I said so, but he insisted that it was, that it felt good, that it should feel good. And something cracks inside, and my body is not my own. The fear is instilled.

(Do I want to remember?)

I think about my sister taking me up into her room the week before I went to college, sat me down, and told me she had been raped. Twice. By people she knew. I want to protect you, but you have to watch out for yourself. Remember that you can’t trust anyone.

(Do I want to try?)

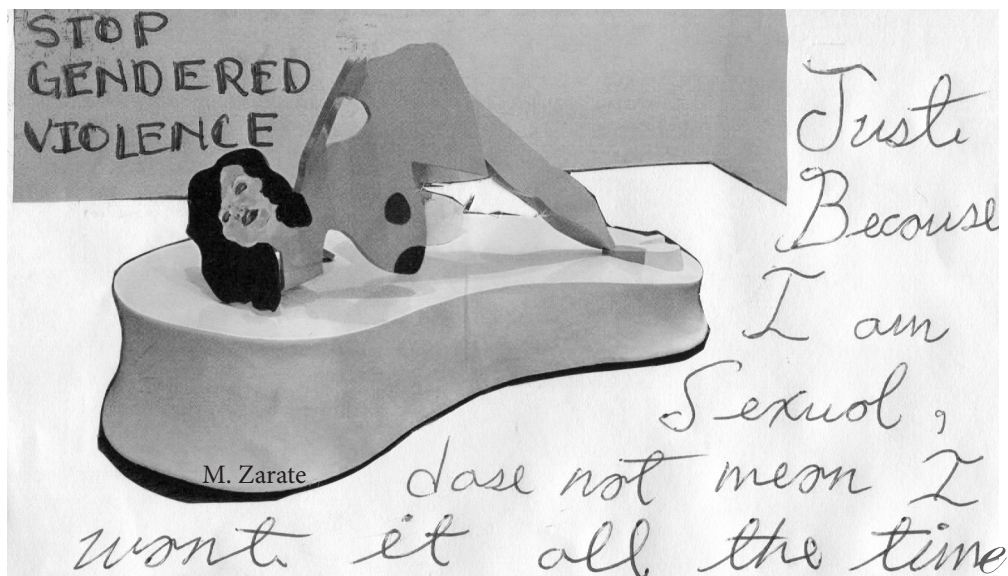
I think about my own history, my body. The times I had sex when I felt so detached, I wanted to feel detached, because all I felt was pain, I was crying... but he didn't see at first, didn't know, didn't stop till he saw, and then the moment was burned into both our heads, he didn't want to be that guy, I didn't want anything to do with myself or anyone, and a piece of our relationship was irrevocably lost.

(Can I have my body to myself?)

I think about the night I met someone when I was studying abroad, went out for an endless night of dizzying laughter, too many free bottles of wine, I don't remember what room is mine, and where did I leave my shoes?... And you wake up when he puts you in the top bunk, and his mouth is on yours, and you don't know what to do so you just go along, you go along. And he is moving and things are going inside you, and all you want is to shout out, but you just say no, no, please no, and you know, you know damn well that "no" is the same in Spanish as in English, but it happens anyway. And a piece of yourself — lost. And the next day you see him in the hostel, you want to curl up and die, all you know is that he has a piece of you, something he thinks is special, shared, and you want him to keep it all for himself, throw it away and never think about it again. But you reach out, you text, maybe you even date him, for a little while, to try to write over what happened when you didn't want it to, because maybe if you get control, you decide how things go the next time, or the time after that, it'll erase the first time. But you can never erase the first time, or the shame.

I wish I could end this monologue with a... resolution. Resolve and a solution, how nice. But all I have is an emptiness, a discomfort, a bad feeling in the pit of my stomach. So I shake it off and change the song. Tomorrow, I will start confronting this. Tomorrow.

M.T.

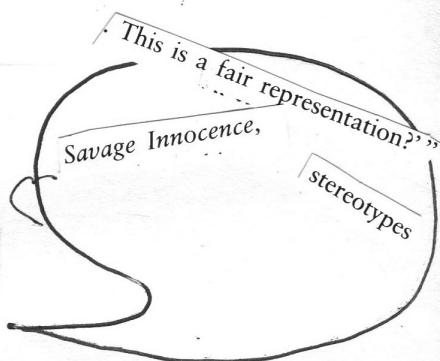


~~PLEASE~~

~~STOP~~



STARING



DON'T
BOTHER

♡ Girls just wanna
have Fundamental rights

Tales of the Grim Sleeper

By Willow Katz, Sin Barras

In 1985, after 11 Black women had died in serial murders in South Central Los Angeles, the Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders (BCFBSM) was formed by community members and family members of women killed. In 2014, BCFBSM wrote: “Why is it that across the US, and across the world, the serial murders of ... Black women in South Los Angeles since the mid-1980s are unknown? ... By late 1980, based on reports from the community to the BCFBSM, our count was as many as 90 women. Today we suspect the number of victims may be as many as 200.

Our experience of decades of fighting for justice ... has been that the lives of those of us who are Black, impoverished, and criminalized don't matter to those in authority. – We don't count, we are considered disposable from throwaway communities. The police referred to these murders as NHI – no human involved.

There have been huge protests over the police murders of Michael Brown, Eric Cantor, and 12-year-old Tamir Rice. As a result, the world now knows how devalued Black lives are in the US. *But they don't know that when Black women are murdered and the police do nothing and/or are complicit – as the label NHI and the facts of this case suggest – that they too must be held to account.*

The US Department of Justice is looking into the recent spate of killings of Black men; we want an investigation into the handling of the serial murders of Black women in Los Angeles city and county. Officials in both must take action.

We want a permanent memorial in South LA to the memory of the victims. None of us will ever forget them, and we will continue to demand an end to the poverty, neglect and devaluation that led to their tragic and untimely deaths.

Every Life is of Value: Black Women's Lives Count, Black Lives Matter.

BCFBSM has organized protests, press conferences, community outreach campaigns, and more. Some of their work is reflected in the new film *Tales of the Grim Sleeper*, by Nick Broomfield, who said Los Angeles reminds him of Johannesburg. It was shortlisted for an academy award [trailer at http://www.pipelinead.net/uploads/HBO/grim/GrimSleeper_promo_v3_lo.mov].

Tales of the Grim Sleeper shows the criminal neglect or worse in law enforcement's handling of the investigation, the devaluing of the lives of Black women and sex workers struggling to survive in the most impoverished part of LA, and the vulnerability to violence of women who are considered “illegal” and easy prey, in particular, women who are homeless, work on the streets, and/or are caught up in the crack epidemic.

A police commander asked Black Coalition protesters in LA if they were prostitutes, and if not why did they care about the murders “because the guy was only killing hookers.” The US PROStitutes Collective (US PROS) supports the work of the BCFBSM and is helping to show the film. In 1984, US PROS held a demonstration at the San Francisco Federal Building to support Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders.

US PROS is a multiracial network of women who work or have worked in different areas of the sex industry. Founded in 1982, US PROS campaigns for the decriminalization of prostitution and for justice, protection, and resources, so that no woman, young person, or man is forced into prostitution through poverty or violence [<http://uspros.net/>].

US PROS exposes the “police racism, harassment, brutality, and criminalization” of sex workers, “many are formerly incarcerated people”; and “the torture of losing our children to fast track adoption.” “Women, mainly Black and Brown mothers, are going to jail for ‘crimes of poverty’ like prostitution, homelessness, shoplifting, selling drugs, etc. – the criminalization of survival. Increased benefits like welfare and food stamps and other social services would mean less poverty and less women going to jail. US PROS campaigns for the decriminalization of prostitution and for higher benefits and wages so that no one is forced into prostitution through poverty or violence.”

Contact Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders at bcfbdm15@gmail.com; Sin Barras at sinbarras@gmail.com, www.sinbarras.org; US PROStitutes Collective at uspros@prostitutescollective.net, www.uspros.net, 415 626-4114.

Willow Katz is a member of Sin Barras, a prison abolitionist and prisoners' rights organization in Santa Cruz, CA.

One Sex Worker's Experience

I remember the first time I told my therapist I had been a sex worker. Immediately, her disposition changed; adjusting her glasses, she became brusque and businesslike. "How old were you and for how long?" she asked, pen poised by her pad of paper, body canted slightly forward so as not to miss a word.

Amused by her serious demeanor, I responded, "I was 21, and I only did it for three weeks."

I feel it is necessary to explain a bit of my psychology, and how my early experiences created a perfect recipe for me to begin selling my own body for money. From an early age I can remember wanting to work. I used to play, "Going to the office". In daycare I asked the teachers, women whom I saw every day taking care of children, what their "real" jobs were, if they worked in office buildings. I experienced envy in eighth grade when the fourteen-year-olds talked about their after-school jobs at McDonald's and Wendy's while thirteen-year-old me was still too young to "work".

I guess you could say I felt possessed by the desire to support myself, to attain autonomy, to not be constantly asking my parents for money. So by the time I reached college, I started trying to take any odd job I could to make money. Babysitting proved to be the most lucrative gig around, and somehow I managed to land a job caring for a young teenager during my Sophomore year. Unfortunately he aged out by the time I reached Senior year, and despite weeks of interviews, I could not get hired by anyone else.

It was also around that time that I experienced a revolution in the way I thought of my sexuality and identity. I had just returned from a five week trip overseas during which I "found" myself and gained a confidence I had been yearning for my whole life. Months of reading fashion blogs sharpened my sense of style and my makeup abilities. Suddenly, I wasn't being ignored anymore at parties. Boys wanted to talk to me, to dance with me! I began going out more and making more friends, reveling in my newfound persona.

Right around that time I met "Miguel". After a slew of one-night stands (enough to make up for my remaining a virgin throughout the entirety of freshman year) I decided two things: 1. No sex for the month of October. 2. I wanted a boyfriend. Unfortunately, Miguel didn't exactly have the same goals of commitment and monogamy. He and I had a few sleepovers but we didn't have sex: until one night it happened, against my will.

We had both been drinking, and we began playing a sexually charged game of truth or dare. I remember lying on his bed, on my back, and seeing him start to rip open a condom in the moonlight shining in through his window. I was too shocked to say anything. I never said no—but he also never asked me if it was all right. When it was over, I went to the bathroom and discovered a tiny bit of blood on the toilet paper. October had not yet passed.

I came to a realization after that night. If men were just going to take it, I was going to charge for it. This actually solved a number of my current concerns. Sex work was incredibly lucrative; job, check. If I decided to have sex for money, I could do it with several people on the regular; pseudo-boyfriend, check. But one of the biggest things was that I just liked having sex, and I didn't like feeling guilty for wanting to do it with lots of different people. Knowing at the outset of a date that we would be having sex was incredibly liberating. I didn't have to worry about not being called again, wonder if he really liked me, wonder what he thought of me for fucking on the first date. I could simply enjoy myself. I read a blog post on "Sugar Daddy Dating" and made profiles on a couple of "dating" websites which truly were fronts for men to meet women and pay them for sex. After a couple of duds (one man told me he was 60 but must have been in his 70s or 80s. He also didn't seem to understand that the crux of our relationship would involve me exchanging sexual favors and my companionship with him for his money) I finally met "Rob". Rob did not have any pictures up on the website, but I really didn't care.

We met at a fancy restaurant in Midtown Manhattan one Monday night. I confess to slight anxiety when Rob showed up. He was 48 years old and obese, and I wondered how I was going to have sex with him. Our date at the restaurant went wonderfully. He taught me how to eat fish with bones (you use your fork to lift the skeleton in one piece) and we had one glass of fancy wine each. He convinced me to come back with him to his apartment; I don't remember exactly what was said, but I think I said something about the danger involved, and he agreed that it was surely a risk.

Back in his apartment, he took things very slow with me. I can honestly say it was a wonderful experience and I left his apartment that night hundreds of dollars richer than when I

came. Walking outside in the fresh November air in NYC, I felt so giddy, so alive. I told all my friends about it, partly because I thought it was cool, partly because I wanted them to know where I was just in case I didn't come home one night. "My new job is....I have sex with men for money!" I recall telling one friend.

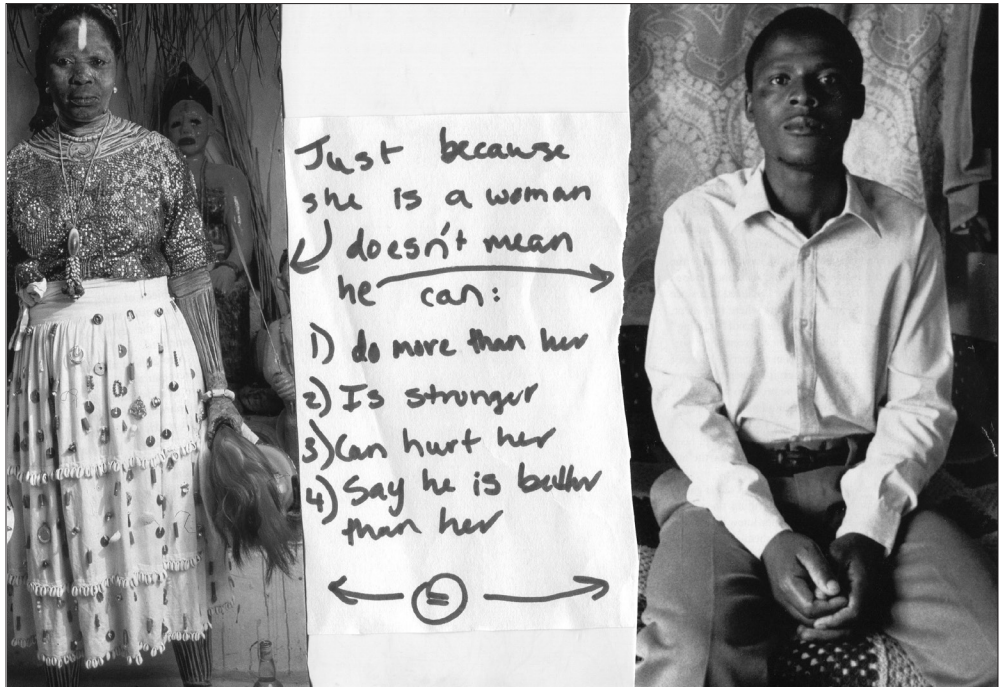
I had another client the following weekend, and again had a great time. This man was very short, also fat, and very hairy. If I met him in a club or at a party I never would have considered him a potential romantic interest. But wave a few hundred dollar bills in my face and I'd gladly lay down and open my legs.

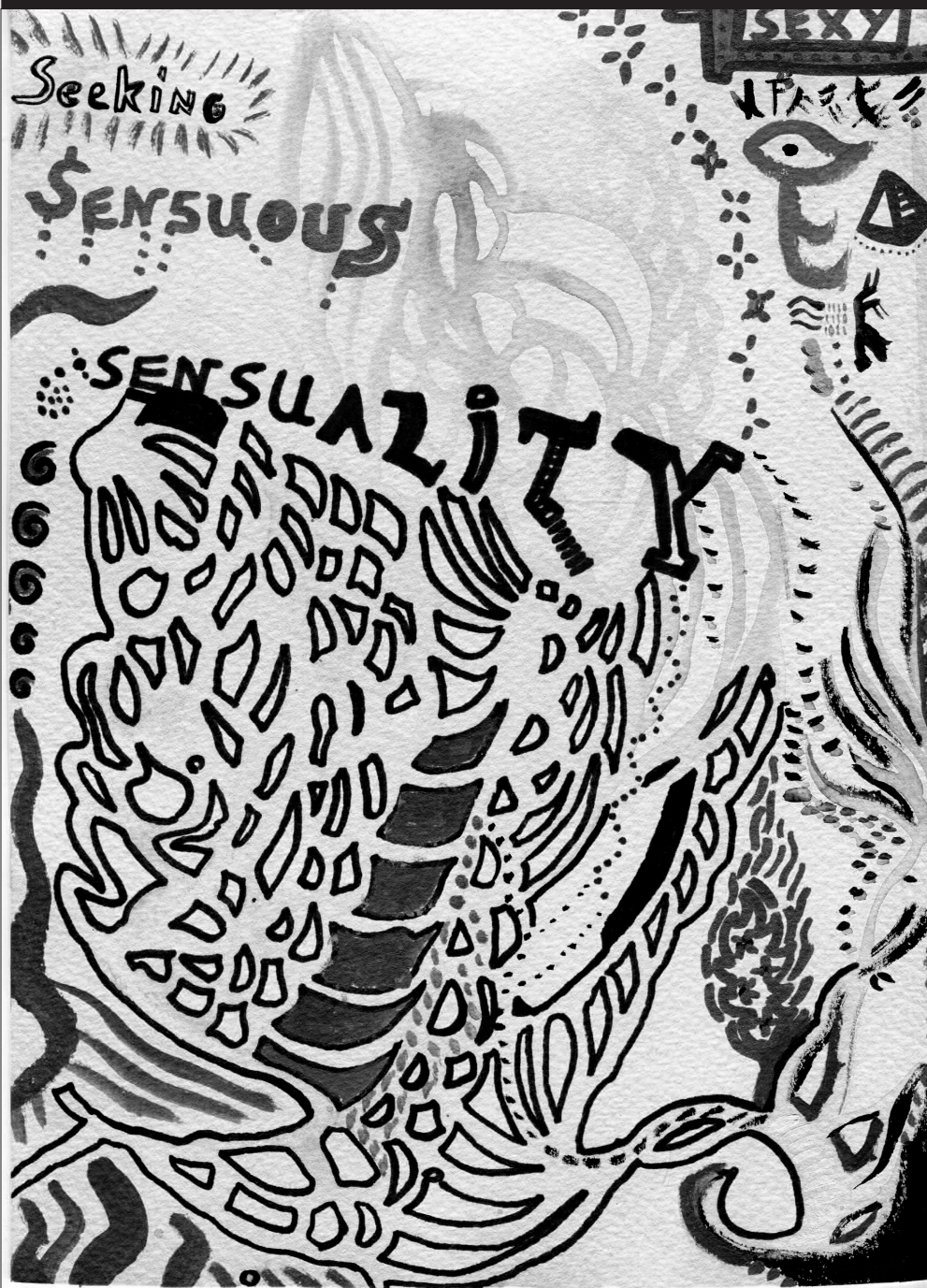
Everything came crashing down as quickly as it started. Exactly one week after my first date with Rob I had my period. He said it wouldn't be a problem. We met at a German restaurant and ate tiny sausages with miniature forks. In his apartment afterwards he removed my tampon and put a towel down. Then I guess he decided he didn't need to use a condom due to my period, despite my telling him to.

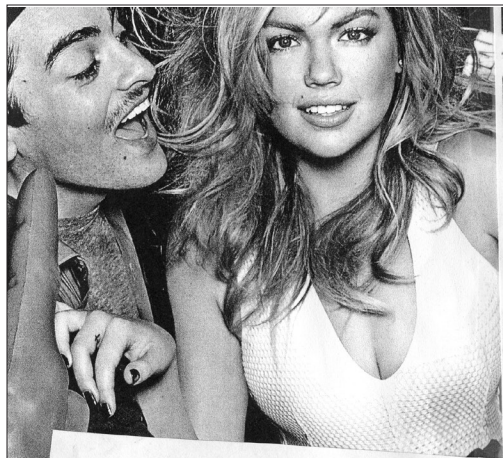
My vagina hurt for days afterwards. By the time I got to Planned Parenthood almost a week later the pain had still not abated. The doctor had barely looked at my undercarriage for ten seconds before announcing, "This looks like herpes."

The first emotion I felt was anger. Now what was I supposed to do for money? I had just received an email from a man offering to pay me \$6000 to see him twice a week. I couldn't believe Rob would destroy my product like that. I knew I had to stop having sex for money. I simply could not in good conscience continue as I was without informing these men of the risks, and I absolutely refused to let them know of my disease and risk the humiliation of them rejecting me or, and I'm still not sure which is worse, the inevitable price negotiations that would follow. At the time, I had only been sexually active for two years and four months.

So, now I have an incurable, contagious STD. Amazingly I have managed to have more boyfriends than ever before, and even dated one person for a year and a half who never caught my condition despite tons of unprotected sex. Two of the guys I've dated even had the herpes as well. I have spent hours and possibly days at this point ruminating on the choices I make and how those choices have affected my life and will continue to affect my life. When I deconstruct the events enough, I can realize that it was my attempt at regaining control over gendered violence that resulted in the advent of my job as a high-class escort; and it was ultimately gendered violence again that gave me the disease which ended my newfound occupation.







- I asked this question to a group of middle school female-bodied individuals. We came up with the following:
- The men are looking at her like an object
 - Their faces are aggressive and dominating
 - The men are being violent (physically) with each other and her.
 - The way their prevented appears sexualized.



Just because
someone of a mature
age enjoys
casual sex doesn't
mean to harass
them by calling them a
"slut" or shaming
them in any other
way.

Gendered Violence
is...

a male saying
"why don't all the
males in the room
help move [heavy object]
when I, a female,
am one of the
strongest people in
the room."

Victoria Pozos



"Why Can't my
brother do it?"

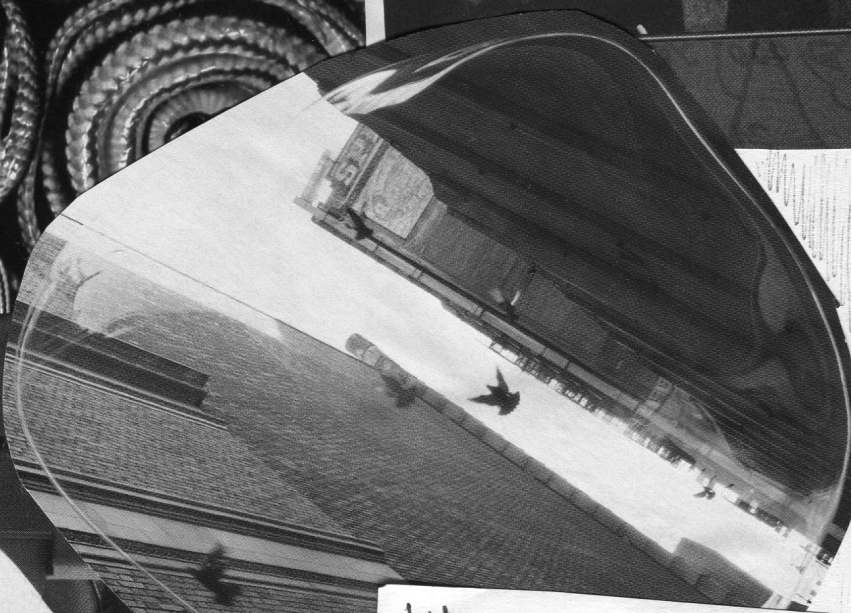
Gracias Anita Hill
by Theresa M. Cariño

Gracias Anita Hill.
Thank you **Mujer**.
You are a woman of
great courage.

Gracias Anita Hill.
Thank you **Guerrera**.
You are a warrior
for justice.

Gracias Anita Hill.
Thank you **Maestra**.
You are a teacher of
righteousness.

Gracias Anita Hill.
Thank you **La Luz**.
You are the light
for those in doubt.



Women are not objects

... set me free ~

PLEASE
DO NOT
DISTURB

Soraya Lugo



Letter to Teenage Girls 1/9/15 by Raggedy Andey

they will never tell you the truth which is that,
you cannot win.
the game you are expected to play with all your heart
is one you must lose in the playoffs
to have your opponent even want to compete with you.
early on i realized clothes made me a prude or a whore
and neither of these are titles of a person who has won anything worth owning so,
dress how you want.
they won't want to invade you any less if you hide,
they won't want to silence you any less if you scream irrationally loud so,
scream irrationally loud.
you are not responsible for making men feel a certain way.
it is the earmark of a weak minded human being to have their train of thought
so easily derailed by your cutoffs on a hot day.
you are not responsible for the demons you let out of boxes,
simply by existing.
call the demon by it's given name, on any given day
and when they tell you this is how the game is played
and that you'll have to make sacrifices that feel a whole lot like little deaths,
tell them you withdraw your pawn.
that no strategy you could concoct could allow your feet to stand on a starting line
that is programmed to trip you.
it is a fucking war out here so make yourself into some armor.
i have walked around for twenty years with useless hands and a gun for a mouth
that has to fire inward on most days because
no one can eat this much of my fire but myself.
they will implant an anger in you that they will later try to deny,
hold fast to this anger
it is what you have won after surviving living in female skin
after living in a skin that invites the other half of the world to make you into a
wound.
kiss every entitled male, every innocuous statement
with vitriolic fire that digests your enemies into an acid worthy of your consumption.
show no mercy to a world that does not allow to wear your headphones
while riding a city bus
show no mercy to a world that does not allow you to walk alone at night
without weapons of keys and pepper spray
show no mercy to a world that does not allow you to own yourself
a world that tries to turn your pain into a cartoon
become an ember fanning itself
refuse this game
and set the whole fucking world on fire.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CREEPY MEN IN CVS WHO CALLED ME BEAUTIFUL
THREE WHOLE TIMES IN FIVE MINUTES

2/9/15 by Raggedy Andey

do you think it makes women feel good to be evaluated in this way?
to be cased down each aisle
“hey beautiful”....no response
32 seconds later and two aisles down “you’re really beautiful”
look, i’m out to buy cleaning supplies
i’m not here to entertain the notion that you have a cock
and that keeping it’s demands to yourself seems to be a problem for you.
that is not my responsibility.
do you believe it is a woman’s responsibility to make up for
your sexual shortcomings?
and do you believe this is anything but that?
do you like the idea that i might be more than what you see,
just so that you can have more to reduce?
do you think that when i create a wide berth between us
i am playing hard to get?
do you think the prey enjoys seeing the canned hunters?
last i checked there are
four walls, two of you
and one of me
so that’s exactly what this is.
don’t you think the animals chasing the girl is just a bit tired?
you are the reason my shoulders never stop bracing
you are the reason women hate the words “relax” and “smile”
because you give us every reason to be tense and to frown.
made to be war-torn vigilant then asked what we are so serious about.
so, there’s a 50/50 chance you’re just a pathetic under fucked 40 something
with romantic dreams of sweeping me off my feet to an island.
and there’s a 50/50 chance there are zip ties in your back pocket,
a dungeon torture chamber for a basement and romantic dreams
of sweeping me off my feet and into my trunk to drive me to said basement, so
YEAH
i’m a little fucking tense.
because i’m too smart to think you’re being polite.
i am not flattered, i am 5 seconds from homicidal.
wrong
small
weak
looking
girl.
3 aisles down you whisper to your cohort
“she’s perfect”
which begs the question.....perfect for what sir?

are you buying ingredients for a stew or are you tryna fuck?

i dress like this

1. for me

2. to pull the demons from the shadows (looks like it worked)

trust me when i say this:

absolutely nothing about my physical appearance betrays the truth which is that
there is a barrel between my lips,

which makes me a man like you's worst nightmare.

when women are evaluated in this way,

our indoctrination robs our sails of any wind

and redirects the way our fire would have us react.

deer in headlights disarmed.

we have swallowed huge cotton balls of silence in the name of
not being that girl

in the name of not being the squeaky wheel.

best not draw attention to all the attention that is drawn to us,

lest everything that ever happens to us be chalked up to our fault for being noisy.

you see, all of the above i can say to you, in a poem

but in that moment all of my breath was starlit in broad daylight,

i cannot happen in real time

i am stuck observing me too.

our institutionalization as paper dolls is what cuts out my tongue

and leaves me grabbing for me keys and heading for my car.

this is a prayer,

to be raggedy andey,

in the moment,

the next time i have to ask cavemen a few questions.





Power Play

"It is a feminist thing—

THEY HAVE HACKED YOUR BRAIN

"Memories
are like flies
swarming around
me, and I'm
not sure I want
to remember."

Other Viewpoints,
Other Dimensions

I felt so much pressure

“IT SEEMS LIKE
ANYTIME
ANYBODY
SINGS ABOUT A
WOMAN, THEY
OBJECTIFY THE
HELL OUT OF
THEM. I'M AT A
POINT WHERE
I WANT TO SAY
SOMETHING
DIFFERENT ABOUT
WOMEN.”

Hundreds of protesters marching, protecting each other from batons and tear gas, fighting back with whatever resources they can: this was the scene on December 6, 2014 in Berkeley, CA. Groups of both students and community members had gathered in protest of the racialized and gendered police violence that terrorizes the lives of various people everyday.

Recently, protests have exploded across the nation to fight against this violence. People have been rising up in mass, fighting the growing police state that currently dominates all of our lives. One thing that made Berkeley stand out recently was how certain protesters drew connections between police violence and the death of Kayla Moore.

Kayla Moore was a black trans woman whose mental and physical abilities did not conform to the ableist standards of our society. On February 12, 2013, police responded to a disturbance call in downtown Berkeley. Upon arriving to Moore's apartment, the police decided to arrest her for a warrant that some officers believed may not have even been for her. Regardless of this discrepancy, two cops immediately handcuffed her with two pairs of handcuffs, and used another device to restrain her legs. During the ensuing struggle, Moore and the two cops fell on a mattress, with Moore landing face-down. It was in that position that they proceeded to detain her. It was only after she had stopped breathing that they turned her around.

Moore's family, as well as a report by Berkeley's independent Police Review Commission, argue that the police not only caused Moore's death, but additionally failed to give Moore the care she would have needed for resuscitation. Police responded to these allegations with a fairly typical smear campaign, spinning the fact that she was on drugs at the time of her arrest, and attempting to justify her death on the grounds that she was "obese" and had cardiovascular disease—sound familiar? The official statement of the police was that Moore "died in police custody," a disturbingly vague statement that allowed the cops involved to shrug off all responsibility. However, activists have argued that those cops were the most significant and direct cause of her stopped breathing, and intentionally allowed her to die. The Police Review Commission has since released a report supporting these claims. Over a year later, protesters in Berkeley can still be heard chanting: "Who killed Kayla Moore? Berkeley PD!"

Moore's case is only one of far too many. We could also talk about the 2008 Memphis, Tennessee case of Duanna Johnson, a black trans woman who was beaten, sprayed with mace, and handcuffed so tight that it cut off circulation to her hands, all while she was already in custody at the police station. At the end of it all medical staff came to make sure the cop was OK, not her. She was murdered shortly after her release. Nobody was ever arrested for murdering her.

Or we could talk about Islan Nettles, a black trans woman who was beaten to death in front of a police station by a man who had been catcalling her in Harlem, New York City, 2013. Her murderer was charged only with misdemeanor assault, and all charges were eventually dropped.

Then there's the story of Yaz'min Shancez, whose burned body was found behind a dumpster in Fort Myers, Florida. Police there were "reluctant" to even categorize what had been done to her as a hate crime. Most states in the U.S. don't even have laws explicitly protecting trans people from any forms of discrimination.

And let's not forget Jennifer Laude, a Filipino trans woman who was murdered by a U.S. marine in Olongapo, the Philippines, 2014. The U.S. still refuses to hand this marine over to the Philippines for prosecution. The list goes on and on and on.

So not only do police and military beat and kill trans women with impunity, they also allow basically everyone else to do so. California is the only state in the U.S. in which one cannot legally use the "trans panic defense" to get away with murdering someone for being trans. And this is just what people get away with outside of prisons.

Please, take a minute to imagine what it's like to be a trans woman in a men's prison. To be subjected to strip searches that open up your trans body to the violence of guards and fellow inmates alike. To be misgendered constantly. To be raped with your only possible "relief" being solitary confinement, leaving you to have to figure out which is a worse form of torture, to be constantly raped and beaten or to be disconnected from humans altogether—though it's not like you'll really have any choice in the end.

I have chosen to focus on trans women here, because for a variety of reasons, it is the queer differences they embody that is met with more oppression than any others. This is especially true of trans women of color who additionally have to struggle against racism, as the stories

above demonstrate. In general, trans women experience higher rates of poverty, homelessness, medical neglect, incarceration, suicide, and other forms of violence than their cis counterparts, queer or not. Even higher than other trans people. According to Trans Violence Tracker, using only statistics from 2014, a trans woman is reported murdered every 32 hours. That only accounts for cases that are actually reported. Furthermore, people get misgendered all the time, making it even more difficult to record accurate numbers.

According to a recent report released by the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 47% of black trans people have been incarcerated at some point in their lives. Most of these people are trans women. The incarceration rate for trans women in general is 21%. For trans people in general, 16%. Yet these stories remain marginalized in a discourse on the prison-industrial complex that focuses on cis men. Yes, of course, black cis men make up a much larger population in prisons than all black trans people combined, but if you compare the incarceration rates of black cis men with black trans women, the gap diminishes.

Right now, people are working to build prisons specifically for trans people, as if that is the answer to the incredible amount of violence we experience during incarceration. But what we need is not more prisons; we need less and less until there are no more left. As Dean Spade, and other trans prison abolition activists have recognized, when it comes to the State, police, military: they will never protect us, they are our greatest predators. Trans people must necessarily fight for prison abolition if we are to ever have any hope for liberation. We must abolish every last prison, every last police department, every last branch of the military. We must come up with new ways for dealing with violence and injustice in our communities, new ways of socially organizing ourselves across all lines. We must work towards building a radically different social order free from white supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy, and capitalism. And many of us already are. From the activism of Sylvia Rivera and Miss Major to CeCe McDonald and Janetta Johnson, from networks of solidarity such as Black and Pink to the TGI Justice Project, trans prison abolitionist struggles have already been going strong for decades. Now, it's time for cis prison abolitionists to make more room for the voices and tactics of their trans comrades.

Untitled by anonymous

I hate that when I hear music that I like, I want to call you.

Whenever I've heard about people being haunted by someone they've loved and lost... well I guess I never believed them until thoughts of you felt less like distant memories and more like adrenaline. I used to be so strong, I could easily control and consciously adapt my thinking. You took me over like I was 'unclaimed property' like uncharted territory. See your love was like colonization, constant dehumanization, not only from you but also from me. My genuine perspective was buried under piles of what propagandic catastrophe. What I thought I was supposed to be. I assimilated to you. Your being like a statue commemorating rape of land, mind, and woman in Stockholm, cold, distant, and unrelenting. But your love was also incredibly not like colonization, I loved you so deeply. Deeper than I had for anyone else. Which all meant nothing until you said you loved me too.

Perhaps the problem is not my fleeting strength. Maybe I am measuring it wrong. As if it is supposed to be unwavering, as if it is supposed to bring me power. I have strength like the redwoods, I am easily swayed by the wind, wind not manufactured and sold down the valley or across the ocean, but wind which penetrates through all which is not of nature. I am swayed, yet grounded, by a rhythm that flows so easily through me. I will not see these rhythms as guitar strings plucked by your fingers or by the fingers of MANufactured human experience. I cannot see these rhythms in that way. These rhythms come from a place within, these rhythms come from my heart which also beats with inconsistency, which will not keep tempo when challenged, but adapts to that which stimulates it.

How To Take Action to Stop Gender Violence: Bystander Intervention

By Samantha Abeling

*Disclaimer: This how-to guide will explain the basics, as every situation is different and there are infinite ways to respond, none of which are 'wrong'.

Have you found yourself noticing an incident of gendered violence, like partner violence, sexual violence, bullying, or harassment? Did you have that 'Oh Shit' feeling in your gut, but had no idea how you could safely respond? We all have. It sucks. Well no more, comrades!

Here is a brief guide to intervening in situations of violence or potential violence. If we each know how to intervene in some way when we notice it, I guarantee we will change the cultural norm of accepting gendered violence, and will decrease its devastating effects.

"No one has to do everything. EVERYONE has to DO SOMETHING"

THE BYSTANDER EFFECT & OBSTACLES TO ACTIONS

The bystander effect is a well-researched social phenomenon where, in a crisis situation, the greater number of bystanders that are present, the less likely it is that any of them will help. It's as if there is an unspoken rule of not helping. The reason the bystander effect occurs is because as the number of bystanders increases, people are less likely to notice the situation, interpret it as a problem, and less likely to assume responsibility for taking action.

On the flip-side, once a bystander does take action, others are much more likely to assist as well; that unspoken rule of not helping turns into an unspoken call to action.

The good news is that the best way to overcome these obstacles is by simply being aware of the bystander effect. So when you come across a situation that gives you that 'Oh shit' feeling, think 'what if this was someone I loved?'

Statistics show that bystanders are present in over 60% of all violent crimes, but intervene less than 15% of the time

HOW TO SAFELY & COMFORTABLY INTERVENE

Example: You are at a party when you notice a guy trying to get an overly- intoxicated girl to his room to have sex with her.

Not everyone feels comfortable enough to intervene in this situation. Maybe you are shy, don't want to call attention to yourself, or don't feel like it's safe to get involved. That's OK! No matter the situation or your personal obstacles are, there is always something that you can do. It's as simple as remembering the 3Ds.

- **DIRECT:** Directly intervene (ask the girl "Are you ok?"; silently stare at the guy & give disapproving looks; confront the guy and say "Dude, she is way to drunk too have sex with you- that's called rape"; refuse to leave the 2 of them alone so nobody can be hurt, etc.)

- **DELEGATE:** Get someone else to do it (find someone that knows the guy or the girl better than you do & tell them what's going on; find someone that's bigger & more intimidating; call the police if it's not safe to intervene, etc.)

- **DISTRACT:** Create a distraction to interrupt the escalating situation (act drunk & spill your drink on the person; ask a harmless question- ask for the time or directions, etc)

You can also use a combination of the 3Ds. My personal favorite real-life intervention: (same situation as the example) the bystander told the guy "Dude, your car's getting towed!" (Distraction). When the guy ran outside to check on his car, the bystander got the girl to her friends, told them what was happening & they safely took her home (Delegate). After his car was fine, the guy asked the bystander why they lied; they explained that having sex with a highly intoxicated person is rape and they didn't want anyone to get into trouble. (Direct)

Get creative and do what you think is the best action for you given the situation at hand.

REMEMBER- safety first!

You don't have to compromise your own safety to intervene. Some situations are more dangerous than others (if you're closer to the situation, there are fewer people around, there's more imminent violence, or a weapon is present). In those situations, your best choice is to delegate. If your gut says that your safety might be at risk, it might be time to call in the police.

Perhaps the best way to safely intervene is to bring along a few allies. There is safety & power in numbers.

Opening the Doors by Jonathan Corral

Vicariously variously slandering the names
Of intersecting identities that can't get a break
Race, ethnicity, poverty, brains
In life we're different, but in death we're the same
There isn't one person who takes all the blame
We all play a part in the prejudice game
Assuming one's gender based on sex and appearance
Has led to the deaths caused by social ignorance
2015 has just begun
But the lives of queer youth are over and done
Leelah Alcorn, an artist, and girl by nature
Thought ending her life would do her friends a favor
You took your own life so others wouldn't feel sorry
And now your family has erased your background story
Penny Proud was so lovely, adorning girls clothing
He was shot multiple times at one in the morning
Lamar the goddess, Yazmin Vash Payne
Ty Underwood, just a few other names
Trans people of color are the most unscripted
Their lives all matter, so don't get vindictive
They need media coverage not fifteen minutes of fame
I just heard their stories, so I'm partly to blame
But the oppressed are prevented from individual coverage
Even though people risked their lives in the name of suffrage
So don't say that your vote will not matter
Or the meek will stay weak while the fat cats get fatter
and don't forget the women we've shoved beneath a glass ceiling
Their oppression has taught us we need to validate feelings
But women aren't always a single force oppressed
They each have different backgrounds
So we need to progress
A nation of social and political ignorance
Can not thrive divided by our own belligerence
So what if your god and my god aren't from the same faith
let them be the ones to cast judgement and shame
Boys can hold hands with boys
And women with women
Some people need only themselves and their children
A family's a family
And a couples a couple
Nothing on earth could be more simple
But people slaughter and maim in the names of their lords
Some people hurt others because it's just what they learned
As an ally I've realized I can't steal the oppressed's show
I'm learning to use my privilege to open the doors
And let others express and get things off their chest
So if you have a story then let it transgress
The weight of the world must get heavy at times
So I'll try to help out and keep an open mind
Cuz the voice of the oppressed needs to be validated
I'm done sitting on the side lines, watching lives get eradicated

On Oct. 24, 1901, Annie Taylor was the first person to plummet over Niagara Falls in a barrel. She was 63 years old, and she survived. No one seemed to care. Ten years later, a man accomplished the same feat, and toured the World. Annie died in 1921 in poverty.



Information & inspiration
from: Radiolab,
"Taking the Plunge"

J.S.F.

Perceptions, Words, Actions

They called me a faggot,
they called me a dike
For simply wearing the clothes
that had felt right
For being comfortable
in my own skin
They called me a faggot
so they would fit in

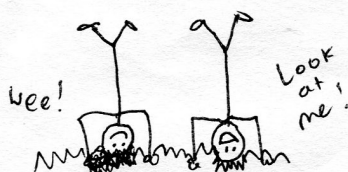
They called me a faggot,
they called me a dike
They punched me and kicked me
and said it was right
But I laughed and said,
"now how sad can it be,
to call me the faggot
when you act as thee?"

- MNM

Mansplain (verb): to explain something in a patronizing manner to a womyn, as if the man in reference was the expert in all things.

Example:

One day, my friend and I were practicing our headstands in a field.



Then, Two men on bikes stopped and ran over to us.

"Hey! Let me show you how to do that!"



STOP

Violence Against Women



SPEAK OUT!

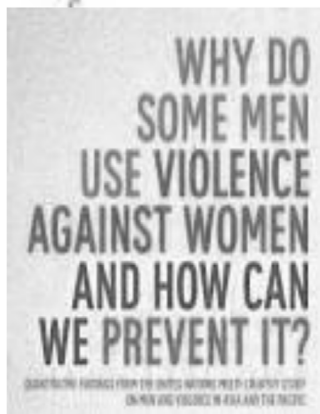


END GENDERED VIOLENCE

WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE AT A HIGHER RISK OF GENDERED VIOLENCE UNCLINING:
SEXUAL ASSAULT
PHYSICAL VOILENCE
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
VERBAL ABUSE
CATCALLING
& DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE.

GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN BETWEEN THE AGES 16-24 EXPIRENCE THE HIGHEST RATE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE- ALMOST TRIPLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

- Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and further domestic violence.
- Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls six times more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get a STI.



Recommended Resources for Further Education:

Authors

Roxanne Gay

Caitlin Moran

bell hooks

Julia Serano

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Rebecca Solnit

Film: MissRepresentation

Crisis Centers in Santa Cruz County:

Walnut Avenue Women's Center

303 Walnut Avenue

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 426-3062

<http://wawc.org/>

Suicide Prevention Service

Santa Cruz County

(831) 458-5300

Toll Free (877) 663-5433

(877) ONE-LIFE

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

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