macht of Rape and Rape Avoidance: Behaviors, Attitudes, Ideologies and Response of Significant Others" (paper presented at the International Sociological Association meeting, Mexico City, August 1982).


21. This finding is also reported in McDermott (n. 6 above). According to our study, this relationship does not hold for Black women.


23. Personal communication with Mary Pennington Anderson, attorney in the case.


25. While we have been focusing on rape avoidance strategies as a way of coping with assault, there were additional ways in which women coped. Depersonalization—feeling as if it were happening to someone else, as if it were not really happening, as if one were dreaming—was a relatively common response, although, as one might expect, it was more common among raped women. Thus, 44 percent (19) of the raped women mentioned they experienced depersonalization, while 22 percent (11) of the avoiders had this response.


30. Riger and Gordon (n. 27 above).

READING 41

"Femicide": Speaking the Unspeakable

JANE CAPUTI and DIANA E. H. RUSSELL

Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood once asked a male friend why men feel threatened by women. He replied: "They are afraid women will laugh at them." She then asked a group of women why they feel threatened by men. They answered: "We're afraid of being killed."

However disproportionate, these fears are profoundly linked, as was demonstrated on December 6, 1989, at the University of Montreal. That day, 25-year-old combat-video aficionado Marc Lépine suited up for war and rushed the school of engineering. In one classroom, he separated the women from the men, ordered the men out, and, shouting "You're all fucking feminists," opened fire on the women. During a half-hour rampage, he killed 14 young women, wounded nine other women and four men, then turned his gun on himself. A three-page suicide note blamed all of his failures on women, whom he felt had scorned him. Also found was a hit list of 15 prominent Canadian women.

Unable to complete an application to the school of engineering, Lépine felt humiliated by women he defined as "feminists" because they had entered tradi-

From "Femicide": Speaking the Unspeakable", Ms. Magazine 1, no. 2 (September-October 1990):34-37.

The authors would like to thank Joan Balter, Sandy Butler, Candida Ellis, Marny Hall, and Helene Vann for their invaluable comments on this article.
tional male territory. His response to the erosion of white male exclusivity was a lethal one. It was also an eminently political one.

In the massacre's aftermath, media reports regularly denied the political nature of the crimes, citing such comments as Canadian novelist Mordecai Richler's: "It was the act of an absolutely demented man [which does not] lend itself to any explanation." This despite Lépine's clear explanation of his actions. Whether individual hate killers are demented is beside the point. In a racist and sexist society, psychotics as well as so-called normals frequently act out the ubiquitous racist and misogynist attitudes they repeatedly see legitimized.

Lépine's murders were hate crimes targeting victims by gender, not race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. When racist murders—lynchings and pogroms—occur, no one wonders whether individual perpetrators are crazy or have had bad personal experiences with African Americans and Jews. Most people understand that lynchings and pogroms are motivated by political objectives: preserving white and gentle supremacy. Similarly, the aim of violence against women—conscious or not—is to preserve male supremacy.

Early feminist analysts of rape exposed the myths that it is a crime of frustrated attraction, victim provocation, or uncontrollable biological urges, perpetrated only by an aberrant fringe. Rather, rape is a direct expression of sexual politics, an assertion of masculine norms, and a form of terrorism that preserves the gender status quo.

Like rape, the murders of women by husbands, lovers, fathers, acquaintances, and strangers are not the products of some inexplicable deviance. Murder is simply the most extreme form of sexist terrorism. A new word is needed to reflect this political understanding. We think femicide best describes the murders of women by men motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership of women. Femicide includes mutilation murder, rape murder, battery that escalates into murder; historical immolation of witches in Europe; historical and contemporary immolation of brides and widows in India; and "honor crimes" in some Latin and Middle Eastern countries, where women believed to have lost their virginity sometimes are killed by male relatives.

General male identification with killers demonstrates how rooted femicide is in sexist culture. For example, engineering student Celeste Brosseau, who had complained about the sexism of the engineering faculty at the University of Alberta, was subjected to hundreds of her "fellow" students chanting "Shoot the bitch!" when she participated in an engineering society skit-night shortly after Lépine's assassinations.

The misogyny motivating violence against women also distorts press coverage of such crimes. Rape, femicide, and battery are variously ignored or sensationalized in the media, depending on the victim's race, class, and "attractiveness." Police, media, and public response to crimes against women of color, poor women, lesbian women, women working as prostitutes, and drug users, is particularly abysmal—usually apathy laced with pejorative stereotyping and victim-blaming. Moreover, public interest is disproportionately focused on cases involving nonwhite assailants and white middle-class victims, such as the uproar over the 1989 Boston murder of Carol Stuart, a pregnant white woman who, her husband falsely claimed, was shot by a black robber. (She had been murdered by her affluent, white husband.)

Femicide is the ultimate end of a continuum of terror that includes rape, torture, mutilation, sexual slavery (particularly in prostitution), incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional battery; sexual harassment; genital mutilations (clitoridectomies, infibulations); unnecessary gynec-
A LETTER FROM CLAUDIA BRENNER

January 1971

Dear Friend,

On May 25, 1968, my lover, Rebecca, was murdered. I survived with five bullet wounds. At the trial of the butcher, it was proven that we were attacked because of who we were—because we were two women living our lives and looking for each other.

I hope by the time you are reading this letter, the butcher will be in jail. But, my love doesn’t have to be in jail for me to feel at peace.

Later that day, we broke camp and continued our hike. As we checked the map, we realized that we were being followed by a man who sat at the edge of the trail and watched us.

He asked us if we were lost. We said no, and turned left onto a side trail. He continued along the main trail. The encounter made both Rebecca and me sick.

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logical operations ( gratuitous hysterectomies), forced heterosexuality, forced sterilization, forced motherhood (criminalizing contraception and abortion), psychosurgery, abusive medical experimentation (e.g., some efforts to create new reproductive technologies), denial of protein to women in some cultures, cosmetic surgery and other mutilations in the name of beautification. Whenever these forms of terrorism result in death, they become femicides.

Federal statistics do not reveal the scope of violence against women. Surveys by independent researchers show rates of female victimization that should shatter us all. For example, in Diana Russell’s random sample survey of 930 San Francisco women: 44 percent reported being victimized by rape or attempted rape, 38 percent by child sexual abuse, 16 percent by incestuous abuse, 14 percent by wife rape, and 21 percent by marital violence.

As with rape and child sexual abuse, femicide is most likely to be perpetrated by a male family member, friend, or acquaintance. Ironically, the patriarchy’s ideal domestic arrangement (heterosexual coupling) is the most potentially femicidal situation. Husbands (including common-law) account for 33 percent of
had to go for help alone. I covered Rebecca, gave her all the first aid I could think of, and started out for help.

Before I left, Rebecca was unconscious. We never had a chance to say goodbye.

Soaked in blood, I walked on the rugged trail about two miles to a forest road. I was completely terrified that whoever had attacked us might be following and attack again. I walked on the road another two miles before I finally saw a car. I stopped the car and the driver rushed me to the police in nearby Stephensburg.

All I could think about was Rebecca. The State Police immediately began a search for her.

That evening, I was admitted to the Horizon Medical Center trauma unit. I had emergency surgery that night. The next day, I learned that the police had found Rebecca's body. She died from the bullet wound that hit her back and exploded in her liver and lungs.

But my trial did not end with the horror of Rebecca's death.

The State Police caught the man who murdered Rebecca—the same man who had followed us on the trail. Stephen Roy Carr. We now know that Stephen Roy Carr stalked us, hid eighty-five feet away in the woods while we made camp, shot to kill and let us for dead.

During the legal proceedings that followed, it became clear that Carr had attacked us because we were lesbians. Carr's lawyer even implied—during the trial and the appeal—that Rebecca and I had provoked the attack.

The implication that Rebecca and I had "teased" Carr with our sexuality, and that we were responsible for this man stalking us, spying on us, and shooting to kill us was not only outrageous, it was disgusting.

Fortunately, the trial judge refused to allow this line of argument. On October 27, 1988, Stephen Roy Carr was convicted of first degree murder and later sentenced to life in prison without parole.

I survived the attack, but in the months that followed I was consumed with grief and fear. My world centered on the knowledge that Rebecca was dead and that somehow, I was alive.

I had always known that the world was not a safe place for lesbians. But somehow, I believed that nothing in this world would ever happen to me.

It seemed that I could not do was to look like a stereotypical lesbian and be discreet about my expressions of affection to other women. That security was shattered by the bullets.

Sincerely,

Claudia Brenner

all women murdered between 1976 and 1987 in the United States.

Violent crimes against women have escalated in recent decades. Some believe this increase is due to women reporting them more. But Russell's research on (largely unreported) rape, for example, establishes a dramatic escalation during the last 50 years. Although it is not yet possible to assess the number of sex murders in any given year, virtually all experts agree there has been a substantial rise since the early 1960s. A surge in serial murder is recognized by criminologists to have begun in the 1950s, and has become a characteristic phenomenon of the late 20th century in the U.S. The vast majority of serial killers are white men and most of their victims are women.

We see this escalation of violence against females as part of a male backlash against feminism. This doesn't mean it's the fault of feminism: patriarchal culture terrorizes women whether we fight back or not. Still, when male supremacy is challenged, that terror is intensified. While women who stepped out of line in early modern Europe were tortured and killed as witches (estimates range from 200,000 to 9 million killed), today such women are regarded as cunts or bitches, deserving whatever happens to them. "Why is it wrong to get rid of some fuckin' cunts?" Kenneth Bianchi, convicted "Hillside Strangler," demanded to know. "Kill Feminist Bitches!" is a revealing graffiti found on the Western Ontario campus after the Montreal massacre.

Law enforcement officials have noted the growing viciousness in slayings. Justice Department official Robert Heck said: "We've got people [sic] now killing 20 and 30 people [sic] and more, and some of them just
don't kill. They torture their victims in terrible ways and mutilate them before they kill them." For example:

Teenager Shirley Ledford screamed for mercy while Roy Norris and Lawrence Bittaker of Los Angeles raped and mutilated her with a pair of locking pliers, hit her with a sledgehammer, and jabbed her in her ear with an ice pick. The men audiotaped the torture femicide from beginning to end.

In 1987, police found three half-naked, malnourished African American women “shackled to a sewer pipe in a basement that doubled as a secret torture chamber” in the home of Gary Heidnik, a white Philadelphian; 24 pounds of human limbs were stockpiled in a freezer and other body parts were found in an oven and a stew pot.

Such atrocities also are enacted upon women by their male intimates. The case of Joel Steinberg, who murdered his adopted daughter, Lisa, and tortured his companion, Hedda Nussbaum, for years, is extreme but not unique. In 1989, a California man was sentenced to 32 years in prison for torturing his wife in a 10-hour attack. After she refused anal sex, Curtis Adams handcuffed his wife, repeatedly forced a bottle and then a broomstick into her anus, and hung her naked out the window—taking breaks to make her read Bible passages adjuring women to obey their husbands.

A sense of entitlement is a major cause of sexist terrorism. Many males believe they have a right to get what they want from females. Consider the hatred exhibited in response to a trivial challenge to male dominance: female students at the University of Iowa complained about the loud stereotypes of male students on the floor above. A response in graffiti titled “The Top 10 Things To Do To The Bitches Below” was found in the men’s bathroom and then published in the university newspaper, including exhortations to beat the women “into a bloody pulp with a sledgehammer and laugh” and instructions on “how to mutilate female genitalia with an electric trimmer, pliers, and a ‘red-hot soldering iron.’” Similarly, a suggestion was made in the University of Toronto engineering students’ newspaper that women “cut off their breasts if they were sick of sexual harassment.”

To see where these students get such gruesome ideas, we only need look to pornography and mass media “goreography.” An FBI study of 36 sex serial killers found that pornography was ranked highest of many sexual interests by an astonishing 81 percent.

### MURDER: RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO OFFENDER (TEXAS, 1988)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife/common-law wife</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other—known to victim</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/common-law husband</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/stepson</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/stepfather</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-wife</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter/stepdaughter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/stepmother</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual relationship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-husband</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Relationship was known in 1,355 of 2,053 murder cases.

Such notorious killers as Edmund Kemper (the “Good Killer”), Ted Bundy, David Berkowitz (the “Son of Sam”), and Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Buono (the “Hillside Stranglers”) were all heavy pornography consumers. Bundy maintained that pornography “had an impact on me that was just so central to the development of the violent behavior that I engaged in.” His assessment is consistent with testimony from many other sex offenders, as well as research on the effects of pornography.

Femicidal atrocity is everywhere normalized, explained as “joking,” and rendered into standard fantasy fare, from comic books through Nobel prizewinning literature, box-office smashes through snuff films. Meanwhile, the FBI terms sex killings “recreational murder.”

Just as many people denied the reality of the Nazi Holocaust, most people refuse to recognize the genocidal period in which women are living—and dying—today. Some husbands and fathers act as full-time guards who threaten to kill if defied. “Dedicated Bible reader” John List was convicted this year in New Jersey for mass murder, after escaping detection for 18
years. List complained that his wife refused to attend church, an action he "knew would harm the children." His daughter wanted to pursue an acting career, making him "fearful as to what that might do to her continuing to be a Christian." In a rage over his loss of control, this godly man slaughtered his wife, daughter, mother, and two sons.

If all femicides were recognized as such and accurately counted, if the massive incidence of nonlethal sexual assaults against women and girls were taken into account, if incest and battery were recognized as torture (frequently prolonged over years), if the patriarchal home were seen as the inescapable prison it so frequently becomes, if pornography and goreography were recognized as hate literature, then this culture might have to acknowledge that we live in the midst of a reign of sexist terror comparable in magnitude, intensity, and intent to the persecution, torture, and annihilation of women as witches from the 14th to the 17th centuries in Europe.

It is unspokeably painful for most women to think about men's violence against us, as individuals and collectively, because the violence we encounter, and the disbelief and contempt with which we are met when we do speak out, is often so traumatic and life-threatening that many of us engage in denial or repression of our experiences.

In November 1989, 28-year-old Eileen Franklin-Lipsker of Foster City, California, suddenly remembered having witnessed her father sexually abuse her eight-year-old school friend, Susan Nason, then bludgeon her to death. Twenty years later, she turned her father in to the police. Such remembrance and denunciation is the work of the entire feminist movement against violence against women: to disobey the fathers' commandments to forget, deny, maintain silence, and, instead, to turn in our abusive fathers, husbands, brothers, lovers, sons, friends.

The recollection and acknowledgement of history/experience that has been so profoundly repressed is what Toni Morrison in her masterpiece Beloved calls rememory. In an interview, Morrison noted that there is virtually no remembrance—no lore, songs, or dances—of the African people who died during the Middle Passage: "I suspect . . . it was not possible to survive on certain levels and dwell on it . . . There is a necessity for remembering the horror, but . . . in a manner in which the memory is not destructive." Morrison's concept of rememory is crucial as well for all women grappling with the torment of living in a femicidal world. We too must be able to face horror in ways that do not destroy, but save us.

### RAPE: RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO OFFENDER (KANSAS, 1988)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife/common-law wife</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-girlfriend</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-wife</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter/stepdaughter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family/in-law</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granddaughter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niece</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby-sitter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: REASONS FOR ASSAULT

**Maryland, 1988**

- Alcohol 714 2,563
- Money 710
- Infidelity 652
- Children 361
- Drugs 290
- Sex 130
- Friends 125
- Relatives 114
- Food/Cooking 84
- Employment 80
- Chores 77

In 1988, there were 14,521 reported incidents of spousal assault in Maryland. In 5,988 cases, reasons for the assaults were given. These are the 12 most commonly cited.
Canadian feminists are working to have December 6 declared a national day of remembrance for the slaughtered women. We encourage women worldwide to claim December 6 as an international day of mourning and rage, a “Rememory Day” for all women everywhere who have been victims of sexual violence.

Such rituals are modes of healing, but not cures. Feminists, collectively and internationally, must take on the task of formulating strategies of resistance as massive and formidable as the horrors that confront us.

Progressive people rightly favor an international boycott of South Africa so long as apartheid reigns; why do they/we so rarely consider the potential efficacy of boycotting violent and abusive men and their culture? In 1590, Iroquois women gathered in Seneca to demand the cessation of war among the nations. We must now demand an end to the global patriarchal war on women. The femicidal culture is one in which the male is worshiped. This worship is obtained through tyranny, subtle and overt, over our bruised minds, our battered and dead bodies, our co-optation into supporting even batterers, rapists, and killers. “Basically, I worshiped him,” said Hedda Nussbaum. “We do not worship them . . . we do not trust them,” wrote Alice Walker. In a myriad of ways, let us refuse nurture, solace, support, and approval. Let us withdraw our worship.

**Reading 42**

**Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex**

DARLENE HINE and KATE WITTENSTEIN

The question of the extent and nature of black resistance to slavery has been the subject of a number of recent historical studies. These works, concentrating as they do on the examination of black male resistance to the slave system, have demonstrated that such resistance was carried on both overtly in the form of slave rebellions and covertly in indirect attacks on the system through resistance to the whip, feigning of illness, conscious laziness, and other means of avoiding work and impeding production. None of these studies, however, has considered in depth the forms of black female resistance to slavery, although they have suggested a methodology for attempting such an investigation. This paper is concerned with uncovering the means through which female slaves expressed their political and economic opposition to the slave system. What behavior patterns did enslaved black women adopt to protect themselves and their children and to undermine the system which oppressed and exploited them?

Unlike male slaves, female slaves suffered a dual form of oppression. In addition, to the economic exploitation which they experienced along with black males, females under slavery were oppressed sexually as well. Sexual oppression and exploitation refer not only to the obvious and well-documented fact of forced sexual intercourse with white masters, but also to those forms of exploitation resulting from the very existence of their female biological systems. For example, the female slave in the role of the mammy was regularly required to nurse white babies in addition to, and often instead of, her own children. In his *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, Eugene Genovese acknowledges the uniquely difficult position in which this practice placed the mammy:

More than any other slave, she had absorbed the paternalist ethos and accepted her place in a system of reciprocal obligations defined from above. In so...