

The Rape Relief Files

The Province Thursday, April 17, 1986

By GREG MIDDLETON
Staff Reporter

QUESNEL — The sentencing of two men for an attack on an Indian woman saw protesters trading barbs yesterday with one defendant's lawyer and family outside the court.

About 100 protesters arrived before the sentencing demanding stiffer penalties for sex offenders.

Two other men involved in the attack had received minimal sentences earlier.

Carl Reimer and Kyle Lornsen were sentenced yesterday to a year in jail for assaulting a 21-year-old native Indian woman as they forced sex on her.

The demonstrators brandished placards reading "Four Against One Isn't Racial Fun" and "It Could Have Been Your Mother."

As police took the convicted pair to jail, Reimer's mother screamed abuse at the demonstrators.

"This is awful," she yelled. "You're just doing this sensationalism."

The four 19-year-olds pleaded guilty to assailing the woman after they had taken her to an abandoned room near Quesnel.

Reimer's lawyer, Gibbs, said the ordeal had been because the protesters reported his victim.

"The sentence is a kick in the pants," Beattie said. "I wasn't severe what they did."

Gibbs said Reimer had been wrongfully and unjustly accused of rape by the woman.

Reimer's mother accused the protesters of sensationalizing the trial for the media and said her son was the real victim.

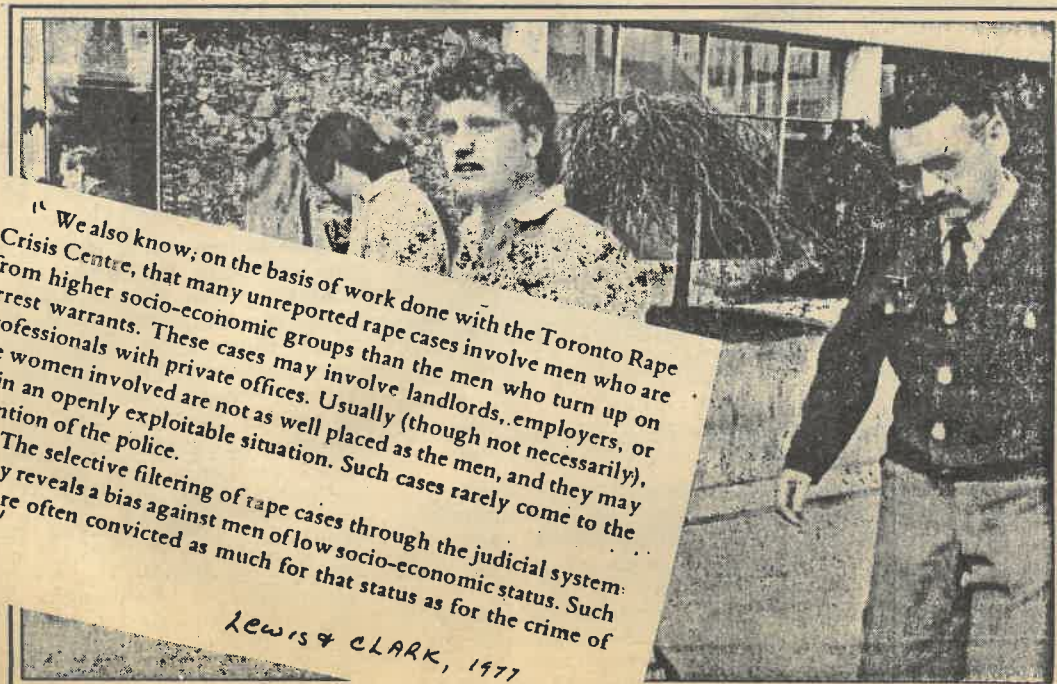
But Beattie said: "Women are still more victimized by the judicial system."

The woman, who cannot be named, failed to testify clearly about the Sept. 4 assault.

"She couldn't back down because she was getting too much support from these people," Gibbs said, indicating a courtroom packed with members of local women's groups and the Indian band. He said Reimer was a "gentle boy."

Editorial, See Page 36.

Protests swirl over sex case



"We also know, on the basis of work done with the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, that many unreported rape cases involve men who are from higher socio-economic groups than the men who turn up on arrest warrants. These cases may involve landlords, employers, or professionals with private offices. Usually (though not necessarily), the women involved are not as well placed as the men, and they may be in an openly exploitable situation. Such cases rarely come to the attention of the police.

The selective filtering of rape cases through the judicial system clearly reveals a bias against men of low socio-economic status. Such men are often convicted as much for that status as for the crime of rape."

Lewis & CLARK, 1977

Carl Reimer (facing camera) and Kyle Lornsen leave court...

...and cuffs after receiving one-year jail sentences.

TWO 'BULLIES' JAILED FOR ATTACK

By GREG MIDDLETON
Staff Reporter

QUESNEL — Two men who punched a native woman after forcing sex on her were sentenced yesterday to a year in jail. "You are bullies," B.C. Supreme Court Justice Gordon MacKinnon told Carl Reimer and Kyle Lornsen. "You have no common decency."

The two 19-year-olds pleaded guilty last week to common assault.

Original charges of sexual assault and

assault causing bodily harm were dropped when they pleaded guilty to the lesser charge.

Reimer, Lornsen and two friends, who were sentenced earlier, attacked a 21-year-old woman they had picked up at a gas station.

"She had closed every bar in town," Reimer's lawyer, Richard Gibbs, said in his defence yesterday.

"She was partying and she was drunk

... Her evidence was so vague the Crown couldn't ask for a conviction on the sexual assault charge.

"She didn't know if she consented or not to anything."

Gibbs said his client only punched the woman after she'd bitten him.

Lornsen's lawyer, Jim Cluff, said his client merely punched the woman out of sympathy for his injured friend.

The men plan an appeal.

Harrison

In the Spring of 1979 we were set up in the lobby of the Harrison Hot Springs Hotel. Ten of us from the B.C. Federation of Women and a few from a prisoner's rights group were camped out as it were in the display area of a conference on the "Incarcerated Offender". We were invited by the organisers - criminologists - as a rape crisis centre to attend the conference and to have a display table. Angela Davis was among the invited speakers.

Well, Angela cancelled out and we read the programme carefully. We decided to use the display area reserved for us, but to boycott the conference and attract those participants we could to an alternate conference with an ex-con, prison activist and radical feminist rape crisis worker in the lead. We used the table area to construct a sort of three-dimensional display (actually a jail cell) from 2 X 4's and plastic, to symbolise our objection to solitary confinement in Canadian jails. We had a woman in the cell and literature about rape about violence against women and against jails.

The conference was three long days and evenings. We took turns womaning the table and tending to the 'prisoner' in the cell. Across the display room from us sat two prison guards watching and guarding two male prisoners who were displaying their art work. Two lifers. We wondered (but only to ourselves as women fighting violence against women) what the

two men, one white and one Native could have done to now be 'lifers'. They eyed us throughout the days that followed. We wondered what they thought of all of us and wondered what they thought of how we had represented, and were speaking, their lives.

The judges, the lawyers, the John Howard people, the prison guards and architects, and all those who are part of the criminal injustice system came to the display room. Many walked past our table as though we had not constructed a jail cell right in their midst, as though we did not have a woman inside the cell. As though one of the prison activists and ex-prisoners with us was not wearing an eye-patch, prisoner's uniform and leg shackles which impeded his movements. Some stopped to talk to us to tell us that they supported us, but they had families to keep and mortgages to pay. Some came to tell us how ridiculous we looked. Some came to hear our side of the story and nearly everyone at the conference talked about our presence. We leafletted each workshop room during the three days, rewording the subject under discussion and calling on participants to attend our alternate discussions. Fifty people came to the alternate and everyone was unsettled by our presence, our image, our message and our perseverance. Certainly we were. Our boldness encouraged us through the planning of the action and motivated us the first few hours, even the first day. Sustaining was another matter -- we were unsure of our-

selves, scared and had our necks way out. We were increasingly conscious of the two lifers watching us, but making no contact.

Were we insulting, liberal, silly to them? The guards with the guns across the room stopped making contact, and that was a good sign. Provincial government officials were in and out of the room, and we were sure they were preparing the beginning of the end of our funding. We were short with each other, conscious of each others idiosyncracies. Some of us wanted to fold up the cell and go home after the first day, some after the second. -But we decided to stay, that the participants of this conference would not be able to leave the Hotel without seeing the jail cell and its message as the last image.

Near exhaustion and discouraged, we hung on through the last supper hour. I was at the table, our woman was still inside the cell and the others took a supper break. The final speaker of the conference was just taking the mike. This was Ramsey Clark; the ex Attorney General of the U.S.A. and Angela Davis' replacement. I knew very little about him except that he was a Democrat and was the A.G. during the Attica prison riots of the late 60's. I wanted to see him and was interested in what remarks he would leave the participants with. I had agreed to boycott the conference so I could not go into the main room and just take a seat. The display room was empty and the two 'lifers' were inside listening. I moved to the open doorway to take a look at him at least and heard him saying "The law in all its majesty forbids the rich as well as the poor to steal bread and sleep under bridges".

I perked right up as he followed with "I have been a lawyer and I have had all the power there is in the U.S. to make legislative changes and I stand before you as an abolitionist. I practice law 2 days a week to try to see that people don't go to prison and I work in half-way houses the rest of the week to get people out of prison. Most of the crime in America is against property. Do away with poverty and we will do away with organised crime. I have come more looking for your help than offering mine".

I excitedly called to the woman in the cell to come and listen. The others joined us as they returned from supper. We gathered, standing filing the doorway, visible to everyone who had attended the three long days. From the back of the large room, the two lifers, seated next to their armed guards, looked at each other, looked at us, rose from their seats, walked down the aisle and stood with us in the doorway. Their guards nervously shifted in their charis, but let them walk.

The people in the audience looked from Clark to us to Clark. When he was through and walking away from the platform, judges and lawyers and organisers of the conference approached him. But Clark kept walking to greet the prisoners and ex-prisoner and us in that order. He walked with us to our display table, wished us well in our work, thanked us for our gruelling three days of sustaining the pressure on the participants. He took some of our articles, shook hands, and left.

Beattie

Child Abuse: Robert Noyes

The Rape Relief Files

WOMEN REPORTED TO US

- 27% ATTACKS BY STRANGERS
- 40% ATTACKED BY MALE FAMILY MEMBERS
- 26% ATTACKED BY CASUAL ACQUAINTAINCES
- 7% ATTACKED BY AUTHORITY FIGURES SUCH AS MD'S, TEACHERS ETC.



Many of the psychiatrists who saw Noyes over the last 15 years knew he was assaulting children. They tried to encourage him to stop. But they chose to protect their client rather than the kids at risk.

The collusion of Noyes' colleagues and psychiatrists has been exposed in the media. Several school boards have asked Attorney General Brian Smith to make an inquiry. They are searching for the fault in their system that allowed this 'sicko' to continue teaching and assaulting for so long. But the point is not being made that Noyes' colleagues did hide his behaviour.

The result was that they protected the status of their profession, and did not protect children. The psychiatrists were committed to their treatment program and committed to their client's confidentiality. But their commitment did not 'cure' Noyes, and he went on assaulting. Men must be exposed and stopped immediately.

Now Noyes is caught. He will be sentenced June 9, 1986. I don't know what B.C. Supreme Court Justice Raymond Paris will decide. There hasn't been consistent sentencing of child sexual abusers. According to the Vancouver Sun and provincial court records, Terrence Turrell, a foster father, was convicted of 15 counts against one 15 year old girl, in B.C. in 1985. He was given a seven year prison term, and the girl was awarded \$30,000. Walter Nugent, a girls' softball coach, was convicted of two counts of sexual assault. He was ordered to psychiatric treatment, four months in jail and two and a half years probation. Paddy Graber, a folk dance teacher, was convicted of one count and given a one-year jail sentence. A lot rests on the judge's attitude.

There are approximately 43 designated dangerous offenders in all of Canada. But perhaps Justice Paris will decide to make an example of Noyes by sentencing him harshly.

The judge isn't asking my advice as a feminists and rape crisis and transition house worker about what should be done with Noyes. I'm not given the power to make the decision.

But it is my opinion that the current legal system offers no real rehabilitation for men -- rehabilitation that would always work in the interests of women and children as well as the men. Imprisonment does not usually change men's attitudes and actions against women and children. Only a small percentage of men are convicted. Medical treatment will not stop Robert Noyes. Fifteen years of psychiatric coddling have not compelled Noyes to change.

Exposing Noyes in public and denying him any position of authority over children are more likely to change his behaviour. Noyes should be prevented from all contact with children, including his own if their mother wishes it.

The best of the worst choices may be imprisonment and psychiatric treatment for Robert Noyes. But I say: No more excuses of 'pedophile' or 'fixated homosexual'. Whatever the judge decides, Noyes should be held accountable for his conscious decisions. He should be dealt with as one ordinary man amongst the many who assert their power over us.

If so many men hadn't colluded with Noyes, this man could have been stopped 15 years ago.

Child sexual assault has received a lot of focus in the media, the school system and in the Ministry of Human Resources in the last few years. I'm angry at the myths about child sexual assault that continue to be propagated by these groups. I disagree with the treatment of men who sexually assault children.

Consider the case of Robert Olav Noyes. This teacher and principal pled guilty to 19 counts of child sexual assault on January 7, 1986. Noyes assaulted children over a period of 15 years in several school districts. Since his conviction, there have been 45 days of sentence hearings which involved 28 witnesses, many of them psychiatrists.

The Crown prosecutor has wanted Noyes designated a 'dangerous offender', which would give him an indefinite prison term, supposedly to keep society safe forever from a 'monster'. Noyes' defense has argued that this is cruel and unusual punishment -- Noyes has a wife and two kids, so he should be given a short jail sentence and a long probation. Journalists and medical experts have had ample opportunity to express their opinions about Noyes and about child sexual assault. Feminists have not had the opportunity to comment, and we must.

The women's liberation movement has been working for 15 years to discredit the myth of the 'pervert' in the bushes as the only man who rapes women and children. We have been working to expose the ordinary men who abuse children sexually, rape and batter women. The sensationalistic media coverage, the practices of medical and legal institutions, interfere with our efforts as feminists.

Psychiatrists have labelled Noyes a 'fixated homosexual pedophile', medical jargon describing 'perverted sexual interests -- in boys, in this case. The label tells us that homosexuals are more likely to assault children, a conclusion which is totally unfounded and, therefore homophobic. We know that most assaults on children are committed by heterosexual men. Eight hundred incidents of violence against women and children were reported to Rape Relief in 1985. Of those which victims were under 19 years old, 52% of the attackers were male family members. The targets of male attacks are usually female, adult or child. In 1985, of the attacks reported to us on children under 14 years of age, there were 4 times as many girls as boys victimised.

The label used for Noyes is another way to scapegoat homosexuals and hide the upstanding family men who get away with assaulting their female children every day.

Naming Noyes a 'fixated pedophile' also helps him pretend to assault children due to a psychological illness, over which he has no control. The medical profession believes there is a cure for this illness. Noyes has received electroshock therapy and been given an anti-androgen drug. Similar treatments have been used on men who have been convicted of rape.

Drugs and shock therapy are intended to stop men's deviant sexual fantasies. These treatments are often used in conjunction with pornography in order to train men to not respond to certain 'deviant' sexual images. The argument goes: If these men are chemically castrated or reconditioned in their sexual response, they will no longer sexually assault or rape.

The overwhelming evidence from thousands of women and children, as reported to rape crisis centres, convinces us this is not true. Some researchers support this feminist analysis. According to Dr. R. Freeman Longo, at a recent Vancouver conference on the Sexual Offender, the treatment does not even prevent men from having an erection and there is no proof that it changes either men's fantasies or their behaviour. The medical practice of altering men's sexual conditioning sickens and frustrates me. It doesn't take an erection to commit sexual assault. It is not men's fantasies that worry me especially; but their actions.

This medical model used for dealing with assaulters does not tell the truth about male attacks. Child sexual assault and rape are conscious acts of power, acts any man could choose to do. From our experience as rape crisis and transition house workers, we know there is no particular psychological type, no mental state, no sexual preference, no class or race or age of men that makes them more likely to terrorise and attack women and children. The only things they have in common are that they are male and that they choose to attack us.

One 'pedophile' cannot be blamed while all the other men are excused for their sexism.

Noyes had a position of authority as a teacher and a principal. He chose to misuse his authority over children. He was neither sick nor out of his own control. He has to be held responsible for asserting his adult, male power over children in his care.

Noyes is not the only man responsible. He couldn't have gotten away with this behaviour for 15 years without the help of other men. In 1978, two mothers were ready to report Noyes to the police for attacks on their children. One of them sought the cooperation of Jack Thomas, then the principal of Roy Stibbs Elementary in Coquitlam, where Noyes taught. Thomas dissuaded the women because "it would harm the reputation of the school". In 1978, Berglojot Bright, a female psychiatrist at U.B.C. Day House was convinced Noyes would not stop assaulting kids. Her superiors allowed Noyes to go back to teaching. The opinions of these women were not acted on.

Bruce Avis, a Superintendent in the Ashcroft School District, knew of Noyes' actions and did not prevent them. He has since gone to hide in Australia where he can't be held responsible. Coquitlam's Health Officer in 1978, John Blatherwick, also knew of Noyes' actions and did not prevent them.

In 1979, Gayle Bezaire was the first lesbian mother to win custody of her children. But the court said she could not have a lover and Gayle lost her children for having a lover, and also lost her appeal despite evidence that the father had been abusing the children. During a visit with the children Gayle found further evidence of physical and sexual abuse, and in November, 1980 she was charged with abduction. Five years later (Dec. 85), Gayle surrendered to the police. She faces a maximum sentence of 30 yrs when she goes to court Apr 30 in Windsor. Because the original custody order was a breach of her civil rights, groups and individuals are asked to send support letters and donations to PO Box 6597 Stn. A, Toronto M5W 1X4.

Decide

With this 15 years of work we have built many small successes. We Vancouver feminists have done our share. We contributed lots of pioneering work: Rape Relief was the first anti-rape crisis centre in the country; Vancouver Transition House was also a first; the first nationwide anti-rape conference happened here; as did the first Canadian Women-Against-Rape action; the first Take Back the Night and the first Walpurgis Night.

This year, the Vancouver Lesbian Connection had a great, joyous public presence. The Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes has been remarkably straightforward, proud and visible everywhere from the West End to Nairobi. The Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion and the Vancouver Women's Health Collective have led critical fights this year, even while they are starved out financially. My own valiant collective has gone on to begin our thirteenth year as an organisation, and our fifth year as operators of an independent transition house. Expect plenty of witchy celebrations this year!

Sometimes it looks and sounds like our demands as a movement have been adopted by lots of other groups. Suddenly we find that everyone claims to endorse our pro-choice campaign; no man to the left of Ronald Raygun will argue publicly against equal pay; the governments will give us all money for any project that has child abuse in the title; and the Christian churches claim to have a new understanding for Mary Magdalene's position as a prostitute.

But women must be warned that the women's movement has not extended to include, not gotten so powerful that it has consumed, the churches, the state or big union hierarchies. Some of the groups and people that appear to support us, and at least our reform work and victories, are in fact lethally dangerous in their power to replace our radical demands. It is vital that we, the autonomous women's movement, keep repeating that even equal pay is a short term goal. What we really demand is freedom from wage slavery for ourselves and everyone else.

We demand not only free childcare, but that men do half the nurturing work of the human race; for the old, the sick, the young, themselves and us.

It isn't only that we want nicer meetings, with better process, we demand recognition for the role of social relations in changing the world.

Not only do we insist that groups of women deal with, and minimise, the classism that separates us, but our demand is for an end to all such domination. There will be no classes.

Not only do we recognise and fight racism and imperialism in our women's groups now, but we work knowing that the face of democracy, when it comes, will not be white.

We demand not only decriminalisation of home birth, abortion, prostitution and lesbian literature, but actually our intent is to have full control over our bodies, and especially over our sexuality and fertility.

Not only do we demand respect for our research on the sexual abuse of children, and recognition that it is the women's movement who has revealed this abuse, but we still insist that the world recognise that it is not mostly kids, but women, who are sexually abused and it is virtually always men who do the abusing.

Not only do we want women-owned and run shelters, but we demand an end to violence against women.



TAKING BACK THE NIGHT . . . women march down Burrard Street Friday during sixth annual protest against violence towards women

400 women march to protest violence

By AVRILL PETERS
About 400 chanting women marched through downtown Vancouver Friday night protesting rape and violence against women and children.

"Tonight I will be able to walk past the sex shops on Granville Street without my head down," said Drena McCormack of Vancouver Rape Relief. "Together we are taking back the night, and the day, too."

McCormack was addressing cheering women in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery at the sixth annual Take Back the Night protest organized by Rape Relief and Women's Shelter.

"I'm here tonight for those of us who were warned about strangers and then were attacked by men we know."

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Six motorcycle policeman and two police cars directed traffic as the marchers set out on their route along Granville to Helmcken, then crossing Hornby to Smith to Burrard and Nelson where they stopped at St. Andrew's Wesley Church.

Organizer Bonnie Agnew said the marchers did not request police assistance nor did they apply for a parade permit "because we don't want to ask male authority. In the past, the police haven't stopped the march. We are asking that women watch for women to keep together to prevent police or men in cars

from dividing us from each other."

While the organization accepts men's donations and other support, "we don't want it in the form of walking with us . . . because every man is a potential rapist and it's not fair or safe to pretend that's not true," said organizer Lee Lakeman.

"Most women can't walk down the street (alone) at night, but we're this strong (in number) can."

Marcher Kim Nightingale said: "I'm out here for some way for me to get to the street to say I'm

violence women have to put up with all their lives."

Holding signs that read: Fight Back, Stop Rape, and Equal Choice for Women, the marchers confused passersby who stopped along Granville — some with smiles of support, others looking perplexed, and some who watched the spectacle with looks of disgust.

People were "fed out of bus windows" the procession of "Women unite, and 'Incest, we have re prof-

Silver said he was not connected with the women's group.

He said about 90 per cent of passersby support his protest against violent movies such as Junior, playing at the Downtown theatre.

"Why pay \$5.50 to see a restricted movie about a maniac with a chainsaw slaughtering defenceless, half-naked women? Teenage girls, you know?" he asked.

Meanwhile, the chanting women — some carrying candles — marched to the church with no interference from the public.

Cpl. Doug Hardman said the event caused no problems for police.

In Manitoba, about 200 marchers took to the streets, and about 100 men marched through downtown streets in both Calgary and Edmonton on Friday night.

The Sun PAGE A5 ***** SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1985

LETTERS

The Sun, 2250 GRANVILLE ST., VANCOUVER, B.C.

Menace to her own cause

Lee Lakeman is a menace to her own cause. By insisting that men who supported the Take Back the Night march were not wanted on the actual walk "because every man is a potential rapist" she undermines the very progress women have made in changing male attitudes.

She refuses to acknowledge (openly, through the march) that not all men are bad, and that, believe it or not, some even try to pass the word to their fellows that women are not objects born for abuse. Perhaps the potential rapists she speaks of would benefit from seeing that there are indeed men who think and act differently.

It is as insulting to men to call them all potential rapists as it is to women to call them all potential whores. Wake up, Lee Lakeman! Women do not walk alone in their fight — and visible acknowledgement of that would only benefit the community.

R.H. SYNNING
5-2618 Ontario

The more I read The Sun, the more convinced I am that the time has come for a male-equality movement. Three items in particular lead me to that conclusion.

The first is an editorial about giving distinctive licence plates to anyone found guilty of drunk driving (The Scarlet Driver, Sept. 19). You said that would not be fair to the wives of drunk drivers. Are we to presume that women are never drunk drivers?

45440 Labelle Chilliwack

The second item is the Ann Landers' column in the same issue. In response to a woman who claimed she could wrestle 190-pound men to the ground, Landers said men don't like to lose to women — as she put it, "It's not in the nature of the beast." Never mind the stereotyping — such comments would not be allowed if made about women. Why the double standard?

The last item also has to do with such stereotyping, and is perhaps the most serious of all. One of the organizers of the Take Back the Night march said "all men are potential rapists." By the same token, all women are potential prostitutes, and all of us are potential prime ministers. But few of us become any of those things, and to claim that all men are potential rapists is as sexist a statement as any male chauvinist might make. The difference is that he wouldn't be allowed to get away with it.

Men have been too complacent about feminist sexism and media insensitivity. It's time they spoke out more forcefully to ensure that all people are treated with respect, not just women.

R.J. McKELLAR

2341 — 168th Street Surrey

I was interested to read that Lee Lakeman of Rape Relief and the Women's Shelter believes "every man is a potential rapist." In view of such a sexist remark I urge all men to

boycott in every way those two organizations and any others affiliated with them.

Men should also demand of their MPs, MLAs, and city officials that all funding to such fascist organizations be halted immediately.

In the meantime, I think that they understand are potential prostitutes must govern our behaviour accordingly.

P. NELLE

Men's Act MPO Box 4490

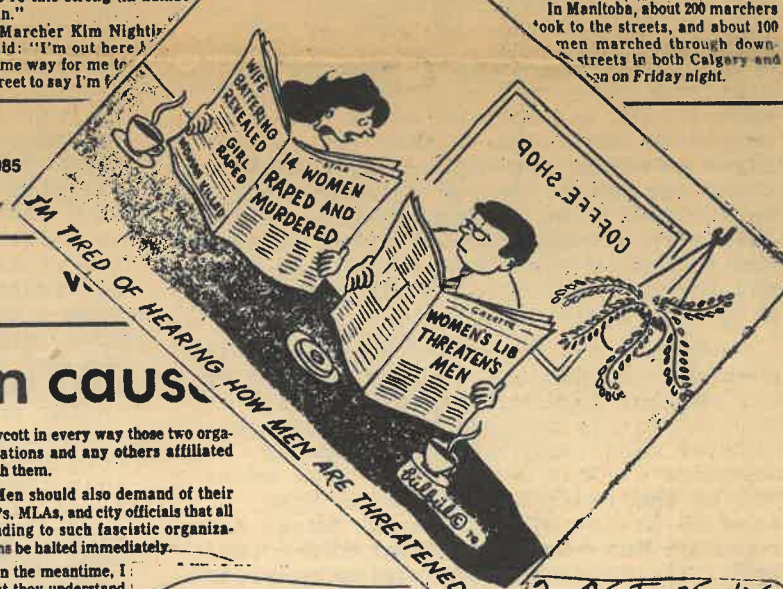
I take great umbrage man's blatantly anti-

What a marvellous twisted, selfish log would gladly take heaven forbid I should walk in her footsteps (ing) distance. I'll just que, then she wouldn't meet me.

Lakeman tars all same brush instead on their own merits.

Women have my debt for the terrible circus have brought them to extreme. My sympathy respect — only my narrow-mindedness.

RICH
2341 — 168th Street Surrey



Wounded innocence and outrage smack of gender defensiveness

Man the battlements, boys, the feminists are at the gates! The cries of wounded innocence and outrage expressed by Messrs. McKellar, Kenny, et al., smack of gender defensiveness that arises from threatened privilege, not from any justified offence (Menace to Her Own Cause, Sun letters, Sept. 28).

The women who must look over their shoulders when they walk alone on the street at night don't need our "deeper sympathy." What they need is the right to walk alone without the fear of being attacked by a man.

It is not easy to acknowledge oneself as a member of the dominant group in an oppressive economic, social, and cultural relationship. It is rarely easy for men to accept. Accepting it doesn't mean we have to like it. The most important thing is to work to change the nature of the relationship between men and women.

That the statement that "all men are potential rapists" is gaining growing support from women indicates it has a basis in fact. But to argue over whether it is fact or rhetoric is to miss the point. The real question is what are we going to do about a situation in which women are not allowed to walk

alone at night — or, often, to be alone with a man — without the fear of being attacked?

When individuals encounter a generalized statement about themselves as members of a social group there are usually two kinds of responses: to seek an understanding of the statement and its context, or to erect barriers to understanding and lash out at the perceived threat. Your correspondents' responses indicate they have taken the latter route.

As a matter of fact, men do participate in the Take Back the Night March by doing childcare — not as high-profile as marching in the street, perhaps, but equally vital.

Men are not senior partners in women's fight for equality. We should not presume to frame the questions or provide the answers. It is an issue in which those who bear the brunt of the violence must lead the way. Our position in this struggle is to lend support when asked and criticism when invited. To do otherwise is to perpetuate the very conditions that have created the present situation.

BRENT GIBSON
JEFF SOMMERS

1-1727 William

psst
wanna see the rest
of our files?
872-8212

MARCH 8'86 Lee

Criminal Injustice System

The Rape Relief Files

According to Lewis and Clark:

- * 1.8% of all rapes result in convictions
- * most rapes reported to police do not go to court
- * only 50% of those that do go to court result in convictions

In October of 1984, a 14 year old girl from Saskatoon was held in a juvenile detention centre until she agreed to testify against the man who sexually assaulted her. She was released four days later, when she agreed to testify at a preliminary hearing.

Keltner

Dr. A. Keltner, a criminologist of some reknown at S.F.U., had his assistant make us an offer in January of 1979 he thought we could not refuse. He was intending to present his findings from recent studies done on "the rapist in our society" at a public lecture. He was intending to entitle the evening "On Rape". His offer was to share the podium with us and we could take home any of the donations that might come from the public that evening.

We had heard of this man before. Several years earlier, he encouraged one of his female students to join our training session in order to work with 'rape victims'. We suspected that he intended to get his student to 'tell all' about the rape victims that she worked with and that he would have access to our files -- that is, to the lives of women who called us, without their agreement, or our agreement for that matter. We guessed that he would then earn a reputation, further research monies and points for looking like he and the feminist rape crisis centre were working in cooperation.

So this time, we viewed his offer with even more suspicion. Partly because of our earlier indirect experience with him and partly because he is a criminologist whose speciality is "sexual deviance". This is a theory that contradicts the feminist contention that rape is an act of aggression, anger and contempt for women and a far-too-normal act. His study was done using convicted rapists, who represent 1.8% of men who rape, and who have been jailed more as a result of the class and race bias of the court system than of any judges' urge to protect women.

We requested a meeting with Dr. Keltner to firm up the details of his proposed "joint presentation". I was quite sure after this meeting that he was up to no good. I was also quite sure that we should agree to be part of the evening, but that we should be careful not to fall into some trap that he may have laid. We were also inexperienced at taking this kind of action together.

So, we agreed and were set to show up at 7 p.m.. What we had planned was a kind of guerrilla theatre throughout the audience after he had made the presentation and opened the floor to questions and discussions. When the evening began, he introduced himself and I rose from the audience (having decided not to share the podium with him), introduced myself and spoke briefly about Rape Relief--who we are and what we do. He then told us that he had learned that rapists had been severely abused as children and that violence is a way of life to them. He noted that rapists appear to be sexually aroused through violence and nearly all of them are confirmed

alcoholics with drinking being a way of life since early adolescence. He also made a clear distinction between the man who rapes adult women and the man who rapes children. "Pedophiles", he assured us, don't hurt children. The majority of his lecture addressed itself to the treatment of rapists based on his very skewed finding of the cause of rape.

Just as he was finishing, one woman rose from the audience, announced that she had been raped, and that her rapist was not at all like Keltner was describing. In fact, he was a neighbour of hers, never drank, married with kids, and was considered to be a model citizen of the block. On her heels, another woman stood from another part of the room, and said she was a victim of a man who was not at Keltner had described. One woman after another stood and remained standing through each of the descriptions. Women were shouting at Keltner from all parts of the room. We had planted and rehearsed only the first two women --who were the others? His students interrupted the shouting with shouts of their own to be fair, be polite. It was theatre all right and it had mushroomed into an angry confrontation from all sides of the room-- between Keltner and women, between loyal students (careful to defend him and to be seen doing so, giving their names as they spoke) and women in the room. Our plan was in disarray and we were now playing it by ear. More than 3/4 of the room didn't know that there had even been a plan in the first place. But Keltner was cool as he had the audience divided against each other.

"Well," he boomed out from the mike, "It's not that I don't believe you. I do, but my hands are tied with the data that I have access to. Now, if you gave me your files, I would have so much more to work with and would be able to further your cause so much better." Ah, the trap he had laid was not sprung. His students began shouting, "Yes, give him your files, give him your files".

One of us, sizing up the positions of power in the room at this point, strode to the front and took the mike from him. Two other women raced up and down the aisles distributing a pamphlet that had materialised from our bags, entitled Our Experience, Our Conclusions. The woman at the front told him in no uncertain terms that we had his number. She said that there were probably lots of men in his classes that had raped women and that he himself had tonight exhibited acts of aggression, anger and contempt for women, with the behavior and attitude that he displayed tonight and could understand why he could not see the potential rapists in his midst and why no woman had revealed her rape to him.

She told him that we would not hand over our files despite his sleaziest efforts to trick us into it. There was

UPROAR AT COURT



Crowd vents anger
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Raymond, top, and Deanna Boyd join protest yesterday outside the court house in Quesnel.
Province photo

Women's Group Protest Racism

supposed to be a signal (in the original plan) to let us all know to leave the room together. Amidst all this confusion, I couldn't remember the signal and tried simply to shout everyone to say that I had had enough and was leaving. We did withdraw, leaving students arguing with each other and us, and a small group gathered around Keltner, who apparently was in need of consolation.

We had walked into his trap to put pressure on us to release our files to him--We didn't know which trap it would be. We did engage many women in the audience into our theatre, and we certainly were flexible, if not non-plussed, when that happened. We were the instigators of much debate among the students at the lecture, and word of it spread like wildfire across the campus. Keltner did not get access to our files. We ran into him again at a conference on the "Incarcerated Offender" some months later. He stayed clear of us and was low profile in the conference as a whole. We didn't do too badly at all.

Bonnie

Crime rise cited with hooker
LOS ANGELES -- Police are searching for a 36-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted in a rooming house in Los Angeles.

Girl's family unable to identify body
LOS ANGELES -- Police are searching for a 36-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted in a rooming house in Los Angeles.

Green River Task Force called after skull found
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- Police are searching for a 36-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted in a rooming house in Los Angeles.

Prostitutes say attacks on rise since new law
LOS ANGELES -- Police are searching for a 36-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted in a rooming house in Los Angeles.

"Courtney" was raped by two men on her 19th birthday in 1982, while babysitting. The two men who raped her both had connections with a local motorcycle gang in Ottawa.

When the case against one of the two men came to trial, "Courtney" feared for her safety and that of her mother and sister. She refused to repeat the testimony she had given earlier and the courts jailed her for a week for contempt of court. The men who attacked her never served any sentence.

Rape Crisis Centres across the country protested the jailing of "Courtney" and criticized the criminal justice system for jailing the victim of a sexual assault.
