

WEEK OF REFLECTION

December 6 to 10, 1993

Remember Montreal

At first, they viewed it as a prank, some kind of collegiate farce in keeping with the festive spirit that marked the second-last day of classes at the University of Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. The man was young, about the same age as most of the roughly 60 engineering students gathered in Room 303 on the second floor of the yellow-brick building sprawled across the north slope of the mountain in the heart of the city. He entered the classroom slowly, a few minutes past 5 on a bitterly cold afternoon. There was a shy smile on his face as he interrupted a dissertation on the mechanics of heat transfer. In clear, unaccented French, he asked the women to move to one side of the room and ordered the men to leave. The request was greeted with titters of laughter. "Nobody moved," recalled Prof.



Ecole Polytechnique, décembre 1989

Yvan Bouchard. "We thought it was a joke." An instant later, Bouchard and his students discovered that what they were confronting was no joke.

SHOTS

The young man, who would later be identified as a 25-year-old semirecluse name Marc Lépine, lifted a light, semi-automatic rifle and fired two quick shots into the ceiling. "You're all a bunch of feminists, and I hate feminists," Lépine shouted at the suddenly terrified occupants of Room 303. He told the men to leave - they did so without protest

- and, as one of the young women attempted to reason with him, the gun-toting man opened fire in earnest. Six of the women were shot dead. Over the course of the next 20 minutes, the young man methodically stalked the cafeteria, the classrooms and the corridors of the school, leaving a trail of death and injury in his wake. In four separate locations scattered around three floors of the six-story structure, he gunned down a total of 27 people, leaving 14 of them dead. Finally, he turned his weapon against himself, blowing off the top of his skull. Most of the injured and all of the dead - except for the gunman himself - were women.

It was the worst single-day massacre in Canadian history. And the very senselessness of the act prompted an outpouring of grief, indignation and outright rage. The City of Montreal and the Province of Quebec declared three days of mourning. Vigils were mounted in cities and towns from coast to coast. Churches held memorial services. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his wife, Mila, travelled to the school to offer their condolences on behalf of the rest of Canada. With the flag atop Parliament fluttering at half-staff, the Prime Minister asked a hushed House of Commons: "Why such violence in a society that considers itself civilized and compassionate?"

Excerpted from Maclean's Magazine, edited by P.F.

More than Fourteen...

Four years is a long time, the length of an average university education. But the past four years have in no way diminished the impact of the Montreal Massacre. On December 6, 1989, fourteen women were killed simply because they were women.

Marc Lépine entered l'Ecole Polytechnique, separated the women from the man and shot the women for being "a bunch of feminists." Lépine's name is well known. The Week of Reflection

pays tribute to those who are not so well known, the women killed at the Polytechnique.

The Week of Reflection is also a time to remember all the women who have suffered and continue to suffer. The Montreal Massacre is a symbol of this violence. During the Week of Reflection, we remember not only the 14 who died in the Montreal Massacre, but the unseen, often unrecognized victims of violence - those living in abusive relationships, those who are survivors of assault, and

those who died as victims of violence. They are our sisters, daughters, wives, girlfriends, mothers and friends.

The Week of Reflection is a time to pause and consider the progress that has been made, and the work that has yet to be done, to curb violence against women.

Text by Lisa Lachance, Laura Penny and P.F.

REMEMBER

SONIA PELLETIER
NATHALIE CROTEAU
ANNE MARIE EDWARD
MARYSE LAGANIERE
ANNE-MARIE LEMAY
BARBARA MARIA KLUEZNICK
ANNIE ST-ARNEAULT

HELENE COLGAN
BARBARA DAIGNEAULT
MICHELE RICHARD
MARYSE LECLAIR
GENEVIEVE BERGERON
ANNIE TURCOTTE
MAUD HAVERNICK

Gun Control

In December 1989, a gunman stole fourteen of the best and brightest from l'Ecole Polytechnique.

Last summer, another gunman took four teachers from Concordia.

In addition to rising awareness of violence against women, there was, following the

Polytechnique tragedy, a tremendous swell of support for tougher gun control. This was a relatively new phenomenon, since gun control was never really an issue before: the tragic events focused our attention on our surprisingly weak gun control laws and on the fact that we may not be immune to frightening gun-related violence, which claims the lives of 35 000 Americans each year.

The Coalition for Gun Control, a non-profit organization founded by students from l'Ecole Polytechnique and other supporters of gun control, is calling on students to help once again. It wants you to sign a postcard addressed to the new Minister of Justice, Allan Rock, asking him

to enact tougher gun control laws.

An action as simple as signing a postcard - and mailing it free of charge - represents a meaningful and concrete tribute to the fourteen women killed at l'Ecole Polytechnique and to the four teachers killed at Concordia University.

While restricting access to firearms will not end violence against women, it is certainly a step in the right direction. Combined with campaigns to raise men's awareness of their role in the prevention of this violence, it is an integral part of ending this scourge once and for all.

Text edited by P.F.

Silence is a form of Violence

AS PART OF THE WEEK OF REFLECTION:

Dr. Michael Kaufman, originator of the White Ribbon Campaign, will speak on men's responsibility for ending violence toward women.

Tuesday, December 7, 1993
7:00 pm
Dineen Auditorium

ALL WELCOME



Memorial Service

Monday, December 6, 1993

Saint Thomas Chapel

4:00 P.M.

PRESENTED BY THE
UNB AND STU WOMEN'S
COLLECTIVES



Dear Mr. Rock,

I am concerned with public safety and believe Canada needs stricter gun control to help prevent violence. Legislation should be introduced to include:

- possession permits which are periodically renewed
- a cost-effective system to register all guns
- a total ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines
- controls on the sale of ammunition
- tougher restrictions on handguns

Despite strong support from health care, police, municipal and women's organizations, these measures were not included in Bill C-17, which passed in December 1991, because concern for gun lobby interests outweighed concern for public safety.

I am calling on you to introduce these measures and am looking forward to your response.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____
POSTAL CODE: _____
DATE: _____

Hon. Allan Rock
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, ONT.
K1A 0H6

