

WEEK OF REFLECTION

Feminism – come closer

“FEMINISM.” I am a feminist. Please don't back away from the word. I know it may look unappealing to you, but that is only because you must move closer.

“Feminism.” From a distance, all the misconceptions surrounding it look real. They are manipulating your ability to see the true meaning of the word. “Feminism.” Take a good look, move closer. Closer.

If you push past the negative stereotypes tarnishing the surface, you will realize they were never actually real at all. Just shadows which served to frighten off so many people. Women who were never able to pass beyond the intimidating illusions into the empowering reality of the word. Men who could not see beyond the ugly images blocking their view.

Never given the opportunity to participate in a belief that will deepen their respect for women and increase their understanding of humanity. Don't be misled, keep going. Move closer.

“Feminism.” Once you have travelled beyond the surface distortions the essence becomes clear. You see that it is a beautiful belief in the equality of men and women. A belief in the intelligence and integrity of the female sex. You find it hard to understand why you hadn't seen the true meaning of feminism before. You mistook the superficial



PHOTO: TARA GIBSON

stereotypes adorning the body of feminism for its soul. How can anyone reject a word that simply promotes equal dignity for women? You didn't know that was the real definition? Of course not, there are some damn good obstacles designed to obscure your vision. Take a closer look, don't allow yourself to be manipulated by false illusions.

Feminism is not about male-bashing. It is not an attempt by women to prove they are better than men. Nor is its goal to create a female-dominated society. It is an attempt to make people understand that men and women should respect each other. It is the belief that women are equal to men, not submissive objects to be controlled by men. It is about taking pride in being a woman. Don't let yourself be fooled by the false stereotypes, they are stealing a precious gift from you.

Feminism has given me self-respect, strength and freedom. It has saved me from defining myself according to a demeaning and imprisoning definition of “woman,” created by a patriarchal society. It has instilled in me the desire to develop my human potential, uninhibited. That is something we all deserve.

Meg Murphy

Memories of Montreal

I found it very difficult to write an article on the upcoming anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. For a week, I sat down for hours on end, pen and paper in hand. The result of my efforts was a sea of crumpled-up foolscap all over my desk and bedroom floor.

Frustrated with my failed attempts, I started to think about where I was on that tragic day. A day that left Canadians horrified at this senseless act of violence carried out by Marc Lépin. An act of violence towards women. Twenty-seven people were shot by a .223 calibre semi-automatic rifle that Lépin had wrapped in a plastic bag.

My memory seems to fail me on that particular detail, but I know I was living in Ottawa at the time, an hour-and-a-half drive from Montreal.

It was on a Friday afternoon. I had just finished work for the day and

was headed over to one of my favorite drinking holes to meet some friends. The conversation we had was the usual strange array of chit-chat, which consisted of anything from the Dark Ages in the U.K. to doing somersaults down the hill at the Arboritium half cut.

One of the topics that we touched on was the violence in the United States. Sure Canada had its share of crime, but not to the extent that our neighbours in the south had it. No, not Canada, we didn't have people walking in off the streets into fast food chains and post offices going on a killing spree.

I had to eat those words...

Shortly after five o'clock something on the T.V. caught the bartender's eye. He turned up the volume very loud, drowning out the voices of people in their separate worlds. What followed was to

be etched into my memory forever.

“Fourteen women were killed at école Polytechnique in Montreal.” These words echoed throughout the tavern. Several people shouted out, “What?”, while others told the newscaster to fuck off. Then there were people like me, who sat there in my chair staring at the television screen in disbelief.

Complete silence fell over the tavern. Everyone watched and listened intently to what the hell had happened. Bit by bit the reality of the horror unfolded. You could hear people beginning to cry.

A regular at the table across from us had a friend attending the university. I didn't know her particularly well, except for the occasional hello in passing. She spent half an hour on the pay phone trying to get in touch with her

friend. Sometimes I can still hear her crying into the receiver, asking her friend to please pick up the phone. “Please pick up the phone, please God let her be there.” The man that she was with went over to her. He took the receiver from her hand and hung it up. “I'll drive you to Montreal,” he said, “I'm sure she's fine you'll see.” That was the last time I ever saw her there.

When I finally got home that night. I lay down on my bed thinking about what had happened. I couldn't hold back the tears any longer. I kept asking myself: Why? Why would someone take innocent lives? Why did he single out women? It just didn't make sense.

I thought nothing like this would happen in Canada, but it did. It happened in Montreal, therefore it could happen anywhere.

Deborah Willis, BGLAD

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