

couple said he did it because he hates homosexuals and bisexuals.

Previously, Robert James Acremant had said he shot the women during a robbery that went awry, and their homosexuality made it easier.

Acremant said in a letter to his hometown newspaper, the *Stockton (Calif.) Record*, that he invented the robbery motive because he was nervous about how other jail inmates would react.

"Now I just don't care what people think, including the jury," Acremant, 27, wrote from the jail where he is awaiting trial on aggravated murder and related charges. "They can kill me for all I care. I've never liked life anyway."

Trial was set for February.

In the August 8 letter, Acremant also said he killed a man last year in a drunken rage after the man made a pass at him.

The bound and gagged bodies of Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill were found in December in the back of a pickup truck. They had been shot in the head.

Gay community leaders expressed fears they were killed because they were outspoken champions of homosexual rights.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 23 August 1996

GAMES HELP FUEL WOMEN'S REVOLUTION

While the US men's 4 x 100 relay team was busy being trounced, their distaff counterparts were on the same track—four fast females running for gold.

Chryste Gaines, Gail Devers, Inger Miller and Gwen Torrence thus joined what became an ever-increasing circle during the Olympics: women who delivered big performances and received a lot of notice for doing it.

Amy Van Dyken left the swimming pool with four golds.

Kerri Strug became a poster girl for athletic fortitude.

Marie-Jose Perec of France produced the

same 200- and 400-

metre double that

Michael Johnson did,

and not much less impressively.

It would be absurd to suggest that Olympic heroines are

some kind of a 1996 innovation.

Long before there was Gail Devers, there was Wyomia Tyus, and Fanny Blankers-Koen. Before Van Dyken, there was Dawn Fraser of Australia. Nadia Comaneci and Olga Korbut were gymnastics wonderkids before Strug and Dominique Dawes were born.

Still, there's no doubt the Atlanta Games catapulted women's sports to a new level of interest in those achievements.

"These Olympics, probably more than any before, are showing a lot of little girls it's okay to sweat, it's okay to play hard, it's okay to be an athlete," tennis gold medallist Lindsay Davenport said. "It shows how far women's athletics has come, just in my lifetime."

Davenport was born in 1976. That year, in Montreal, 1,247 women competed in the Games. Eight years before that, in Mexico City, a total of 781 women participated.

In Atlanta, the number of women was an all-time high of 3,779—or 37 percent of all athletes.



What accounts for such vast increases? To Donna Lopiano, executive director of the Women's Sports Foundation, it has much to do with what Davenport referred to—a marked shift in cultural attitudes toward women in sports. It also has to do with an ever-growing number of girls who are playing sports at a young age, creating what Lopiano called "a critical mass" of participants.

"The progress made to date has been made possible by the first generation of mothers and fathers whose daughters (not only) play sports but can get athletic scholarships doing it," Lopiano said.

But the biggest factor of all was the passage in 1972 of Title IX in the US, legislation that demanded men's and women's sports be treated equally. Title IX meant scholarships. It meant increased respect, funding, opportunity.

The more that women began to play, and play well, the more a market began to develop. Corporations saw the upward attendance curve.

They saw a chance to reach female consumers, who were not only playing, but watching, too.

Even sports that did not get huge air time flourished.

"It was another step, bigger than most," Mia Hamm said, speaking of women's soccer's Olympic debut.

"Maybe it will help start a league, give girls who want to play soccer something to look forward to."

The same can be said for a whole spectrum of women's sports at the Olympics, where change is coming faster than a Lisa Fernandez heater.

Ask Dot Richardson about that. When she was 10,

Richardson wanted to play Little League Baseball. The coach said sure - just cut your hair, dress like a boy and we'll call you Bob.

Dot discovered softball instead. The year was 1972, the same year Title IX passed, and an athletic revolution began.

Source: South China Morning Post, 7 August 1996

GANG RAPE AS PUNISHMENT

Gang rape is common practice—it is used to punish girls who have more than one boyfriend. Gang rape might even be used as “a punishment” if a girl tells her boyfriend he has passed a sexually transmitted disease (STD) on to her.

This startling information emerged from one of the workshops held with young women in Mpumalanga last year to develop the Women's Health Project workshop manual on sexually transmitted diseases.

The issue of gang rape came up during role plays in a workshop. In the workshop a “girlfriend” had to tell her “boyfriend” that she had an STD. This is followed by a role play in which the “boyfriend” discussed this information with his “friend.” In this role play the “boyfriend” said: “I was so annoyed by this girl who said that it was me who made her ill. When I realised that I also have the disease, I decided to arrange a group of boys to come and rape her.”

In the discussion after the role play we asked the young women whether gang rape was a reality in their community. They said gang rape happens in their community; it is a common practice especially as a punishment for a girl who has

more than one boyfriend. Then young men meet and arrange that a group of men should rape such a girl.

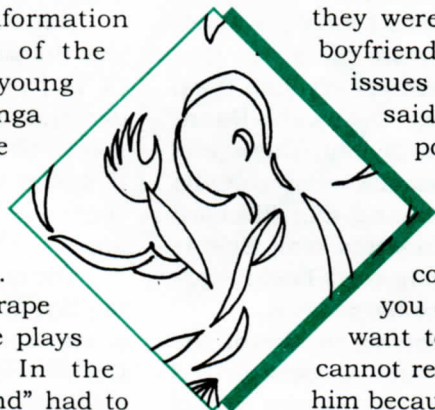
The young women described gang rape as a method that is used to punish women “who do not behave well.” They said girls “behave well” out of fear that they may be gang raped and even felt it was good that “misbehaving women get punished because it is wrong for them to make the boyfriends fools.” Young women who sympathised with girls subjected to gang rape were in the minority and they also voiced their condemnation of such girls' behaviour.

While the young women said they were not scared of their boyfriends and could discuss issues with them, they also said they were not in a position to suggest the use of condoms to them. They told us: “Even if you have the condom there is nothing you can do if he does not want to use them and you cannot refuse to have sex with him because he is going to beat you up”.

The young women didn't question the inequalities in relationships. They saw men as leaders who should always also be initiators.

The above issues have come up in STD and other Women's Health Project workshops. As a result of this, WHP feels that there is a need for educational materials that will address violence, health and sexuality issues.

Source: Women's Health News, May 1996, No. 18



APPROACHING MID-LIFE? READ ON

Women who reach natural menopause menstruate between 400-500 times during their lives.

Smoking can bring on an early menopause.

Japanese women have a very low rate of menopausal complaints. It is suggested that this may be due to their higher consumption of *tofu* (soya bean curd).

Mangoes are an anti-depressant.

Banana and lettuce calm your nerves.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) helps improve memory and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's Disease

Men also experience midlife changes when the testosterone levels in their bodies decline.

Some researchers believe that testosterone treatment may prove equally effective for male patients as oestrogen is to females.

Source: NEWomen NEWSletter Winter 1996

MURDER PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON PROSTITUTION

SOUTH AFRICA—The prostitute's corpse was found buried upside down in bushes near Milnerton in November 1995, her legs and buttocks protruding above the ground. The post mortem revealed she had probably been buried alive.

In January 1996, another body was found near Durbanville, and police announced a serial killer was on the loose in Cape Town. He had murdered at least nine prostitutes, strangling them with their clothes, and torturing three of them before they were killed.