

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.

The police have stepped up their manhunt, forming a task force which visited prostitutes at their usual places, inviting the women to visit police stations to have their fingerprints and photos taken and their personal details recorded on a database. The information will be used to keep track of women and, if the killer is not caught, help to identify the victims.

More than 200 frightened prostitutes responded and were interviewed by police by mid-January, volunteering information about themselves and offering new clues about the killer.

This unusual co-operation between police and prostitutes has raised hopes of continued sympathy for sex workers from officialdom. However, a police spokesman said that the police would have to comply with the law, which prohibited acts of indecency for reward.

Ilse Pauw, coordinator of the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Group (Sweat), welcomed the police's new cooperative approach to catching the killer by working with prostitutes and said she hoped police protection would continue in the future.

The organisation was aware of numerous incidents where women prostitutes were abused by their clients. "But they tell us they can't go to the police station to report what happened to them because they were involved in an illegal activity at the time of the assault," Pauw said. "What they want is to be taken seriously and their cases to be treated equally with other women."

While the decriminalisation of prostitution would improve

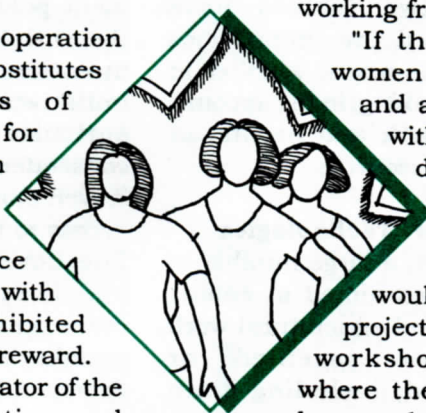
the service prostitutes receive from the police, Pauw said it would probably take time to remove the stigma attached to the profession. Pauw said while police deserved credit for their effort to catch the serial killer, she had no doubt that their reaction time had been slower because the victims were prostitutes.

Pauw said while it was assumed women working street corners were more at risk, all prostitutes were vulnerable to assault or murder by their clients. "It's too simplistic to say they're safer at an agency or working from home.

"If the clients knew the women could report abuse and assaults to the police with impunity, I have no doubt sex workers' safety would improve tremendously."

Pauw said Sweat would undertake a major project this year to provide workshops to sex workers where they can discuss and learn the implications of decriminalisation, or the legislation of prostitution. "People don't always understand their options and we want to ensure they make informed choices."

Source: Mail & Guardian, 1 February 1996



WORLD MEDIA EMPIRES

The international media scene points to empires that practically determine what's news and what's not.

Among these empires is Time Warner Inc., formed by a merger of Time Inc., and Warner Communications, and is the largest media corporation in the world. It owns Time, Life, Fortune and Sports Illustrated

with a worldwide readership of over 120 million. Its assets (\$15.9 billion in 1994) are greater than the combined domestic product of Bolivia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Albania, Liberia, and Mali. It is also the second largest cable company in the world and one of the largest book publishers.

Last year, Time Warner merged with Turner broadcasting which further raised its combined revenues to \$18.7 billion.

Reuters, established since 1849 has become the main provider of print and broadcast news from developing countries, thus determining what is foreign news. It also owns part of the British Independent Television News (ITN) network and the Worldwide Television News (WTN).

News Corp. Ltd., controlled by Rupert Murdoch, has the highest newspaper circulation in Australia, almost half of the circulation in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the South and East Asian market. He controls Fox Broadcasting Network and 20th Century Fox movie studios, is part-owner of CBS/Fox video and is the world's largest distributor of videocassettes.

Wire Services

Wire services are instrumental in determining the flow of information. For decades, international news has been gathered and distributed by five major wire services: AP (US), United Press International (US), Reuters (UK); AFP (France) and TASS (Telegranfnoi Agentsvo Sovestkavo Soyuzo of the former USSR).

The dominance of these wire agencies has resulted in disproportionate coverages of first world news and a