

UNAPOLOGETIC

The Journal of Irresponsible Gender



- A tranny at Sister Subverter!
- Bitch Hips: Chicago's Trans-fronted punk-rock band!
- M2B!
- + Comix, arts+crafts, fiction &more!



Since this is the first issue of Unapologetic, nobody's written me any letters yet. Next time, though, I'm not going to get that excuse, so y'all better write me quick! I understand that you're all busy with your lives, so to guarantee a healthy letters page in issue two, I've drawn up the following skeletons for just about every letter to a queer politics zine ever written. Feel free to fill them out however you like, submissions need not be on original paper- hell, photocopy this page and fill out seventy different copies to make sure I get the point.

Mail completed letters page madlibs to:

Unapologetic
 Jo J. McGEEHAN
 3712 N. Broadway #564
 Chicago IL 60613

THE GOOD VERSION:

Dear Anne,

Wow! I just finished your <ordinal> _____ issue and loved it! Especially the article by <contributor> _____ on <topic> _____. Its great to see a <noun> _____ who can be so <adjective> _____ and so <adjective> _____ and still be righteously <adjective> _____! I even showed it to my <adjective> _____ friend who did <noun-activity> _____ with <proper noun> _____ in <region> _____ back in <time period/era> _____ and even <pronoun> _____ thought it was <adjective> _____ and <adjective> _____! Keep up the <adjective> _____ work- this is the <superlative> _____ zine I've come across in <time period> _____!

<trendy catch phrase> _____

THE BAD VERSION:

Dear Anne,

I have just finished reading your <ordinal> _____ issue- and reread it <adverb> _____, I might add- and while I think the <adjective> _____ idea of your zine is <adjective> _____, <contributor> _____'s article on <topic> _____ seemed <adjective> _____ and a bit too <adjective> _____.

For one thing, why does <pronoun> _____ feel the need to link <plural noun> _____ with <gerund> _____? Its difficult enough to be <adjective> _____ or

<noun> _____ already due to people's <adjective> _____ associations with <adjective> _____ <plural noun> _____ - why do you need to confirm this in the press?

Why can't we just have articles about nice, normal <adjective> _____ <plural noun> _____ living their <adjective> _____ lives without <noun> _____ to whom the idea of <noun> _____ or <adjective> _____ <noun> _____ is just plain <adjective> _____?

<adverb> _____

THE TRANSISTERS LETTERS PAGE MEMORIAL REALLY REALLY BAD VERSION:

Dear Anne,

HOW DARE YOU print <contributor> _____'s pack of <capitalized adjective> _____ LIES about <topic> _____?

Is it too much to ask for <pronoun> _____ to actually THINK before committing poison pen to paper? Obviously- or your article just MIGHT have contained some mention of all the <adjective> _____ <adjective> _____ REAL <capitalized plural noun> _____ who make <possessive pronoun> _____ pathetic whimpering seem <adjective> _____.

So <adjective> _____ <noun> _____ <verb> _____ <adjective> _____ <noun> _____? Maybe it wouldn't be such a problem if <contributor> _____ would give up <capitalized, incorrect possessive pronoun> _____ fantasy of <gerund> _____ <adverb> _____ as a(n) <adjective> _____ <noun> _____ and admit the OBVIOUS TRUTH about <plural noun> _____: REAL <adjective> _____ <noun> _____ <verb> _____ <capitalized adjective> _____ <plural noun> _____!!!

Anne, please don't embarass us <adjective> _____ <plural noun> _____ with any more of <contributor> _____'s <adjective> _____ <obscenity> _____.

<new-agey signoff> _____

PS- Your mama dresses you funny!



UNAPOLQGETIC

Editor:
Anne Tagonist

Writers:
Anne Tagonist
Ella Frederick
Kylie Paintain

Moral Support
SARON
Sue
Janice

this is: **ISSUE 1**
1 December 1997

Write me at:

Unapologetic
% J. McGEEHAN #564
3712 N. Broadway
Chicago IL 60613

Housing and Stuff

Tori, Sobhan, my sister, my other
sister, Liana boy, Shalin, the J-Crew,
Sue, Bowers House, Jen's Mom

Everyone from the September
Vulva Riot - I lost all the addresses,
I'm soooo sorry! Tell shahn and I'll
mail you stuff.

Everybody else - I wrote too damn
much of this zine! Everybody should
submit something next time so it
won't seem so monotonous, espec-
ially Ken - come on, all the articles
FHM promised he fell through and now
the zine looks like any other non-rep-
resentative gurlie zine and I don't
want to bother printing one of those. Next
Issue should be done by MWTI and will
have articles on getting thrown out of the
HRCF's OutVote '96 on + FHM safer sex (wat!)

Gender and its Dis-Contents

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What the fuck is this zine and why did I write it - editorial

And why tell all of this and why now? Not that any of us feels guilty, you understand. It's just that some of us were believing our own mythology. Losing ourselves in our own lies, losing ourselves in our yearning to cease being the "other."

Jan Brown, Sex, Lies, and Penetration: a Butch Finally 'fesses Up

It comes down to anger, anger is this omnipresent part of my life. Sometimes it gets out of control and starts to hurt, but mostly it drives me to tackle things I would otherwise have backed away from.

I see really amazing things happen all the time because the right person got the right anger at the right time. For instance, there's a book out called A Girl's Guide to Taking Over the World, which is a collection of articles from grlzines. One thing I've noticed about the writing in it, and in riot grrl and queer zines in general, and punk music and basically any media where you have people just getting stuff OUT to each other regardless of whether what you're doing lives up to somebody's standards is this almost redemptive transformation of and through anger.

It starts with self-loathing- a certain misery about being too fat, queer, other-than-white- any number of existential conditions, but through the process of just having the space to start screaming about shit, it changes. We get hoarse and giddy, oxygen starved from yelling, and collapse together in a giggly heap. When we sober up, we realize that what the shit, we like each other and we ain't that bad, so we take all the energy from before and start looking for whoever told us there was even a such thing as too fat, or that queer was a bad thing to be, or that white was something you either were or were other than, and start planning all sorts of colorful things to do to them when we find them. Whee hee!

So I guess I should make a few confessions about the first version of this editorial. I moaned a lot. Its been two years and my breasts never grew and I'm really quite tall, and I'm extremely insecure, and everybody calls me sir and thinks my ID is fake or my credit card is stolen and the MtF community doesn't "get" butch and I'm single and I'm probably just going to get old this way and blah blah blah blah, y'know? And what bothers me is how typical this is of tranny writing. We bond over how awful our lives are, how true and tragic our suffering inner spirits are (should I maybe say our true selves?) how misfortunate was the accident of our birth, and how misunderstood we are in the world. And then we don't learn anything from it.

Well, that's not quite true. Like I said, we bond over

it. Pain proves our authenticity, especially from a psychoanalytic viewpoint. If we are, as we strive to prove we are, just normal men and women with one little birth defect, of course we should be miserable when it proves to have a greater effect than, say, my sister being born without tear ducts (true fact!) The more unhappy we are with our plight, the more real we must be and the more doctors and the rest of the world will have to respect us.

But the truth is, if we base our legitimacy on what the rest of the world thinks of us, we ain't never going nowhere. Its not just a matter of who we grant the authority to determine whether we merit recognition either as our chosen/actual gender or as people, its whether we leave that legitimacy open to debate in the first place. Yes we do suffer- we get killed, beaten, raped, harassed, fired, thrown out, abused, excluded, and driven to suicide every day of the year. But we prove nothing- and we change nothing- by tearfully bewailing our fate. And when we take refuge in dogmatic constructions of our lives like "passing is everything" or "it is impossible to be known as a transsexual and as a woman" or even "some day when the hormones take a fuller effect I won't have to deal with this any more" all we do is reaffirm the right of society to kill us as they please. We give them excuses, reasons. We allow for the inevitability of some types or some phases of trans existence that while they don't really deserve abuse, certainly have it coming. Even if we include ourselves in these subcategories, as most of us have to, the effect is still the same.

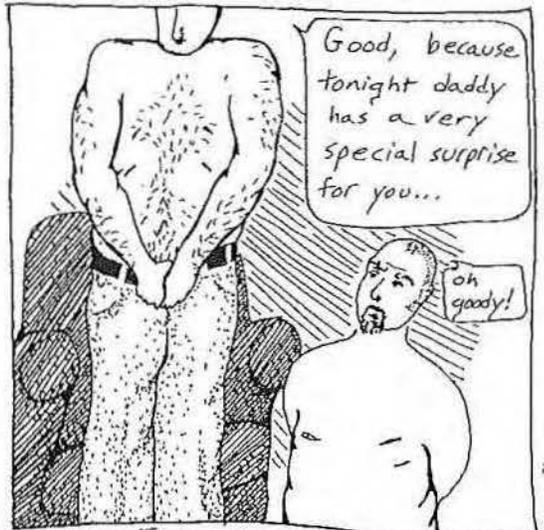
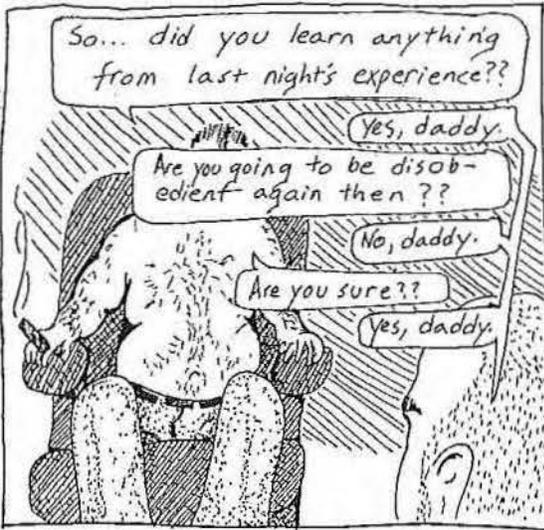
So I'm waiting- and writing- for a transition of anger. This zine isn't about pain, its about laughing and hugging and then turning around raising holy hell fighting back. Its about finding our who's really responsible for how much we wish we were different and showing them we don't have to be to kick ass. Its about having more fun than the fusties who think girls should look like girls and boys should be well hung. Its about rooting out all the weeds of trans-hatred that grow in every mind in this culture, our own included, owning up to their existence, and then throwing them away. Its about molotov cocktails made from hormone vials, and about breaking into the HRCF's national convention [my article about which will appear in issue two, I hope] Its about just being queer and living day to day in a fucked up world, and its about overblown principled manifestoes. What the hell else is there to write about anyway?

Love,

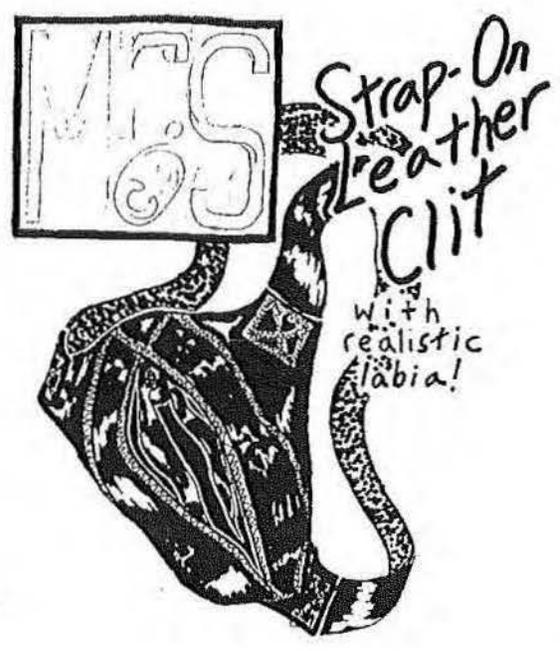
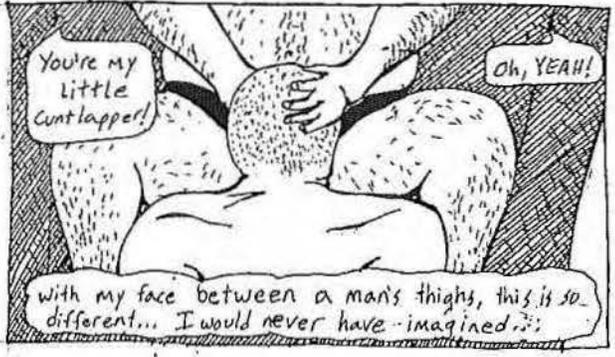
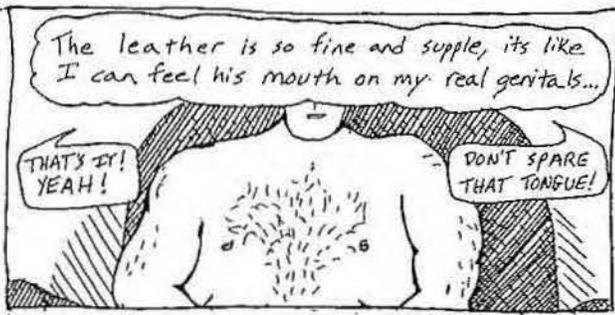


Porn,
 Porn
 Chicken
 an' 
 Porn,
 chicken
 an' porn an'
 Porn an' porn

This one's for Shawn "Nec" May post. Wazorp?



Nov. 17 Are "Are you my honey?" Taggart



Sister Subverter Diary, August '97



by Anne Tagonist

So there I was at a HomoCore show when this friend of mine comes up, hands me a flyer and tells me about a DIY anarchist women's gathering taking place in a few months down in Arkansas. She assures me its trans-inclusive and sure enough there on the flyer it says "woman-identified transgender" folks are welcome. I figure heck, its been a slow few months with the Avengers and my job'll be up around when the conference is happening so I mark my calendar and plan to call for directions.

Six weeks or so later, it all actually happened, and I managed to be there for it- this is my diary of the trip, admittedly written post-facto. It happened beginning on Tuesday August 19th and continuing through Sunday the 24th, but due to other considerations I didn't end up leaving until Friday the 22nd. It takes place in a different region every year but out of respect for the privacy of the women whose land the gathering was held on, I'm not going to talk about the exact location here.

Road Trip Down:

I road-tripped down to Sister Subverter with my trusted friend, apartment-mate, fellow Avenger, and occasional partner in crime Sue. We were originally going to leave at 4pm, but traffic getting out of Chicago on a Friday evening was so bad that we decided to stop off at a bookstore and then our favorite coffeeshop to wait it all out. It wasn't until 8pm that to the tune of Cypher in the Snow's Militia song, we finally cruised out onto the highway in our teensy Geo-clone.

Ordinarily road-trips are a trade off for me. On the one hand, I like the constant motion and changing landscape, but on the other hand this particular trip took us through downstate Illinois and then southern Missouri, two areas where playing the Eeny-Meeny-Miney-Bathroom game can have very high stakes- and even stopping for coffee can get iffy.

Luckily, we discovered that a lot of rest stops

have these oversized don-john-style tearooms outside of the main bathroom building which don't ever seem to have gender restrictions posted on the outside. I hadn't known this particular phenomenon was still so common, but I guess in places like southern Missouri gay male sexuality is still so overwhelmingly closeted that what would seem a joke in Chicago is an assumption out here. Either that or I'm misreading the whole thing, I can't say for sure. All I know is we made it to the land without bursting.

Day One:

We drove all night and arrived early the next morning, discovering along the way exactly how unsuited our city car was for the dirt roads of Arkansas. When we found the land, we copied down a crude map from the one at the registration trailer and looked over the rules. No running water. No electricity. Food is vegan, and cooked collectively. Everybody helps out with everything. Plumbing for the moment is buckets and pits, although one of the projects the gathering was undertaking for the owners of the land was the construction of a permanent enclosed cob composting toilet. As at Michigyn there were SM and chemical-free spaces, though the big play party had already happened (the night before) I was a little worried about having no electricity (I never learned how to shave with a blade) and about the exposed toilets, but I soon discovered that here as everywhere, nobody really wants to watch you take a dump. The registration women said their shift was almost over and it was time for breakfast- would we like to come? Sue and I decided to leave setting up the tent until later and go with them.

Food was served in the main circle, an open area with a food tent, info tent, and the ever-important barrels of water. There was cream of wheat in an enormous pot on a table, and a rack of assorted dishware. All around was the most powerfully comfortable assortment of women I had ever seen. Everybody was punk. The gathering was primarily (though not exclusively) white, but otherwise there was quite a

range of bodies and ages. The median age for the group seemed to be maybe a year or two older than I- 23 or 24- but there was a large contingent in the final years of high school and another of people in their late twenties, and there was a visible number of women in their thirties and forties and possibly beyond. I may still have been the tallest woman there- though not by more than a quarter of a boot sole- but I was neither the butchest, the piercedest, the scrungiest, the youngest or any of the other "ests" I often end up being.

We sat down next to some Chicagoans from the A-Zone one of whom turned out to be Sunny Chapman's daughter! I was wearing my Coalition for Positive Sexuality t-shirt, which turned out to be a great conversation starter since one of the other women there had been part of the crew that had printed the original Just Say Yes booklets. We shot the shit about neighborhoods and past organizing in chi-town and I tried to get more of a handle on the routine of the gathering. After all, most of the women had been there for three or four days already and knew each other and the drill.

I went to the first workshop of the day, on intentional communities- actually it wasn't supposed to be, but it ended up that way. I've spent two solid years plus a few extraneous weeks here and there in cooperatives and other intentional communities, but always in urban environments. At this workshop it seemed that most of the women had been living in rural or even wilderness communities- I was fascinated. In Chicago, Womyn's Land or even just cooperative land seems like an oxymoron and a retro-pop-culture reference, but never a real possibility. Here, though, were women who were living on it right through 1997- and even more who were interested in maybe doing so in the future. Advice was traded about locations, dealing with authorities, banks, neighbors, would-be-residents- somehow despite all the frustrating stories of interpersonal conflicts, ideological fallings-out, and days when stuff just doesn't go right- all of which were very familiar to jaded ol' me- there seemed to be so much energy coming out of this idea that I found myself regaining faith in the idea that its healthier for people to live collectively, even if like most healthy things it takes a lot of work.

And if the first workshop hadn't re-convincd

me, the next one probably would have. It was presented by the CHAOS collective, a "collective of primarily women artists and activists dedicated to social change... work[ing] within the direct action community on numerous issues, including indigenous struggles and the anti-nuclear movement. CHAOS provides organizational and logistical support through cooking, music, craft, performance, conflict mediation, and non-violence training." [ed. note- I think the "primarily women artists" refers to the two or three male children associated with the group] They've been together for I think six or seven years and they've just recently acquired land they intend to eventually all move onto.

CHAOS lives collectively, often without work or permanent residence. They pool their money to support each other and their work. More interesting than any of their projects what struck me was the freedom they've given themselves in finding new ways to live, and the amazing trust they have in themselves, in their survival, in their ability to continue their work despite a mode of living where their only support is from each other. Virtually all the questions other women had for the collective had to do with how they could break out into a life like that, and how they hadn't been entirely sure it was possible. CHAOS made it seem actually easy, and right

No running
water. No
electricity.
Food is vegan
and cooked
collectively.
Everybody
helps out with
everything.

now on the road trip home as I write this, I know I can't be the only attendee still thinking about trying.

After lunch (Sloppy Joannes! I swear I didn't make that up...) there was a boychick workshop, which I guess I attended because I felt like I had to. The facilitators approached it from an open gender identity perspective, rather than a "transgender" one. I was glad about that, since it seems like discussions about transgender (and "transexual" of course) always end up devolving into arguments over exclusionary definitions, and at this particular workshop there was too much of an inclusion of things to talk about.

I have a feeling it was the first workshop at all of Sister Subverter to deal with gender, because it seemed like everybody who showed up had some gender-related issue, from penetration to transition to safety to faggot-identified butches chasing drag-queen-identified femmes, that they desperately needed to get off their chest and talk

Cont on following page

about with someone. It really should have been four or five workshops- everything that came up was emotionally intense and really needed more than the smidgen of time allotted to it.

I believe I was the only M2F at the workshop- at the whole gathering actually, not that I went around asking and not that my trannydar is anything close to good- and I remained a chickenshit and stayed in the closet throughout. Because of the overwhelmingly female-assigned-question-mark-identified vibe of this particular workshop I felt at the time that me coming out as this huge passing butch grrl who... what the hell, usedta be a guy? would've only been disruptive but thinking about it now, I wonder if it wouldn't've been the best thing I could've done with myself there.

Actually, this is my biggest regret of the whole event. I wish I'd come out. I wish I'd arrived sooner, and had felt comfortable enough to out myself or even hold a workshop on M2F issues. It was, after all, a completely DIY gathering, working only because individual attendees were willing to bring up and discuss things that are important to them, and if I'm here now writing a zine about this, obviously it must be something that's important to me. I think "chickenshit" is the only applicable term, because the gathering was technically open, I wasn't being disrespected for looking funny, and the few people I did come out to individually seemed to think it was pretty cool. On the other hand, while nobody came up and asked me directly, I imagine most women there either figured me out or guessed on their own that there was something about myself that I wasn't telling- and I hate that. Next year.

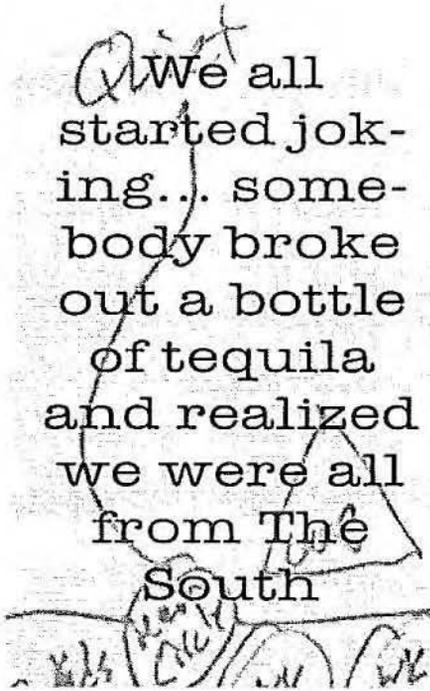
The boychick workshop ran a lot later than anything else that was going on. When it finally wrapped up, Sue and I decided to set up our campsite. As we were unpacking the tent, a few other late-arriving carpools came up the path and began setting up by us. Some of their friends came over and we all started joking and talking and before you knew it, somebody had broken out a bottle of tequila and realized we were all from The South. (I'm a Virginia ex-pat, Sue being from close-enough southern Indiana was the exception)

Mostly the areas represented were cities- college

towns, actually: Austin, New Orleans, Atlanta, Chapel Hill, Houston. Somebody passed around an address list, we christened our campsite the Southern Grrls' Trailer Park and started we started calling ourselves the Southern Militia. That first evening we spent as a pack getting drunk (and missing dinner) and then cruising from one campfire party to the next around the gathering. It was in this context, with these women, that I first felt comfortable going around without a shirt.

I find this whole episode fascinating. There were a lot of people on the land, all of them very committed to the political communities they came from.

Yet with all the ways people's backgrounds could be classified: by race, nation, region, gender, sexuality, class background, political affiliations, age, socioeconomic status etc... the two most vital spontaneously-formed identity groups were the Jew Crew and the Southern Militia. Since I left Virginia basically as soon as I could, being southern isn't something I think about much, but it still affects me. Its hard to come up with a precise list of ways. Maybe this is why the Militia was such a successful running gag- being southern is an important and pervasive side of our identities, but one that hasn't acquired any of the emotional weight such distinctions often carry. Its real, but its also mostly just good for a joke.



Day Two:

Sue and I woke up superearly to drive into town the next morning. I had spotted a publicly-accessible power-tower by a phone booth out in front of the police station, and was intending to use it to shave. One of the Militia members I was out to came along, and we decided to stop in at I kid you not it was actually called Granny's Kitchen for breakfast. It was so good, like Golden Nugget only better. While we were eating, I suddenly remembered that I had signed us up to cook lunch that day, and we hurriedly paid and bolted for the land.

We still had no real idea how to manage preparing a meal. Of the other two women on the sheet, one was the food coordinator for the whole event, who had signed up just to make sure she could be around to answer any questions we

had and the other was like Sue and I doing her first cook. Luckily Tracer (the coordinator) was able to provide us with a lot of good information, and we somehow also found a whole crew of women from California who would help us cook so that we could drive them to the Fayetteville airport by four PM. With all that help we were easily able to convert a few pounds of dumpstered and donated food stuff into a passable curry-and-rice dish- yum again. Unfortunately the collective water barrels ran dry during the preparation, so we had to take off for the airport before any washing-up could get done. I think we all felt really bad about this, but nobody seemed to know what to do about it except wait for a truck.

If you ever want to make a stir, try walking a handful of five-foot-ten-or-over punctured punk dykes in body paint into the Fayetteville airport. This is a part of the country where dry counties and religious billboards are part of the scenery, and most people probably don't realize they've ever seen a lesbian before. On our side, we'd been warned to avoid townies and certainly not to tell them what exactly was going on just a few miles away. With all that paranoia, though, this was as near as we came to risking a confrontation with outsiders all weekend, and honestly nothing happened. We got stared at, sure, but mostly we just ate airport food and joked about daring each other into the bathroom. The townies realized we weren't going to stick up the lunch counter or anything and we realized they weren't going to string us up or anything either. I never felt unsafe during this whole episode, only amused. When the plane took off, the three of us remaining said goodbye to everybody before walking out- I'm sure we made their day.

After the airport we decided to go swimming at the watering hole people had been using about five miles off the land. We got lost- very lost- on the way there, so I had a chance to make sure I was out to everybody in the car and that they were cool with that. This quickly became important because in the course of the conversation I found out that people had been swimming naked. This is what first brought up for me the issues that became the basis for this zine.

I had felt wonderful going topless. I felt like having small boobs and nipples, not to mention a few pale-blond-but-still-long-and-scraggly hairs between them was

finally no big deal. This was, after all a crowd of women many of whom were similarly small-chested, or had more facial or body hair than we're supposed to believe is "feminine," or were fatter than we're supposed to believe is "healthy," or basically held their bodies with more self-confidence than women are ever supposed to feel. Here on the land, my body issues and discomfort with going topless faded into my beautifully "imperfect"- and perfectly gorgeous- surroundings. Plus, shit, I like not having to wear a shirt all the time- I like feeling air and sun on my body, and I hate feeling like the only reason I'm wearing something is because that's the custom or the law. I feel like going topless is a decision I'm adult enough to make for myself (thankyouverymuch) and I resent it when its made for me. But, bottomless?

Some background- under this seemingly-hardcore surface of gender ambiguity, I know I'm still someone who is only comfortable being female- otherwise I would probably never have gone to the gathering in the first place. What exactly "female" means beats the hell out of me, but it still seems, I don't know, right somehow. So correspondingly I stand by the idea that my body is a female body- not necessarily a body that immediately signifies femaleness, but the body of a female person for sure.

At the same time, my body has a few added contradictions that might completely baffle, not to mention offend, someone who wasn't expecting them. I decided against swimming nude- and it turned out there was a straight family at the swimming hole that day anyway- but it really got me to thinking. Was I just respecting the wishes of the organizers to create a women-only space? How is it that there is a line across my waist that separates those parts of my body that are allowed in women-only space from those that aren't? Must transpeople always purchase their wholeness rather than assuming it as a natural fact of existing as a body? How does my refusing to go naked imply my complicity in this sort of self-dissection and self-delegitimization? Could there be a gathering where I could feel comfortable being fully visible and fully female with the contingent body I am now?

Next year as I said before I plan to hold a work-

try walking a
handful of
five-foot-ten-
or-over punc-
tured punk
dykes in body
paint into the
Fayetteville
airport

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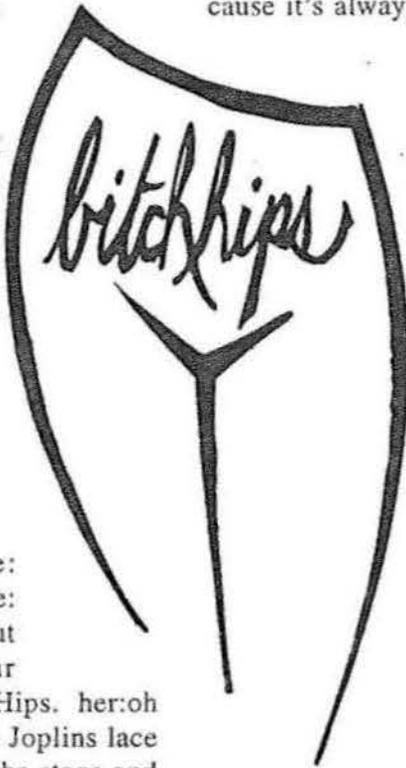
Not many people have heard about BitchHips. We're facing many of the obstacles Indy bands face with distribution and press. And sometimes it gets to me farther down cause we even have to fight within Indy venues, it's like were too queer for rock, too experimental for punk, we're too rock for gay, we're too tranny for drag, we're too dirty for trannies, we're too punk for artrock. It's hard being in-between but I guess I'm bitching. but I'm also dreaming. and I'm seeing, well first I've been having this reoccurring dream

and its about this man born man and all his life since he was like 4 or 5 he's been finding presents. They're always wrapped and have women to women cards on them and at first he only found on or two but recently, he's only 19, he's found one or two a month.

Now I don't know what perspective I've been seeing this dream last night in the dream it said "we are sorry to there are 20 women in ther join us or be waiting for his answer the dream will turn women start making science. I guess it's a tiple transexuality but instigator of peer pres-call.

and there's been returning to with thighed parchlipped tips are trailing my my bands name- "me: dog?— her:A bitch. me: of the female body?(I put hip)— her:A hip, Your Bitch? me:No it's BitchHips. her:oh and I'm feelin like Janis Joplins lace when she would mount the stage and thing in the audience. I'm standing sturdy, just like Janis used to do, with my girl's knee pushing up against...

Now my original train of thought involved a political/practical dream. The kind that you gotta have to make it in a world that doesn't want yah. It's about queers writing to each other, and singin to each other and making pictures to each other and none of it is warm, it's all harsh and real (that's what I am). So you should all start by ordering the official unofficial BH fan zine and four track extravaganza— only \$4 each and worth it (featuring the new songs *No Womb For You*, *Rock 'n' Roll Genitals*, *Bad Skin*, and a surprise track) - no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Then you can write us and have us write for you in your zine- see how this works out, soon we'll all have venues. And you will have heard of us.



he found a note and tell you this but you and you can ei-lonely" I'm still and I'm curious if color once the their way to his con-dream about mul-I've always been an sure so it's anyones

this day dream i've a freshfaced full girl and her finger-hips as I telling her What's a female Now what's this part her hand on my band is called Hip that sounds familiar." hoes early in her carrier promise to ball every-with my legs spread and

with my legs spread and

BitchHips c/o Ella Frederick
1740 N Maplewood 1W
Chicago, IL 60647

Tomato Potato Chips

there's enough danger
in putting something sharp in your little mouth
without
adding the responsibility of someone else's tongue
kiss with chips
salt and vinegar
loaded with screwdrivers
can really get you high beyond cuts and tongues

you want Her body
you Want her body

and you just meet
and she whispers
"want's a fresh faced girl like you
doin" at a fancy party like this-
you a lesbian?
you rrr like something soft."
You are soft
but she's to busy lookin' in your eyes
takin' down the vodka
'n' being wheat colored
to think of what could compare to you
soon there's smoky sweat involved
and the sweetness of your blood
on your cheeks
your butt cheeks
cause she's clawing at 'em

You want her body
you want her Body

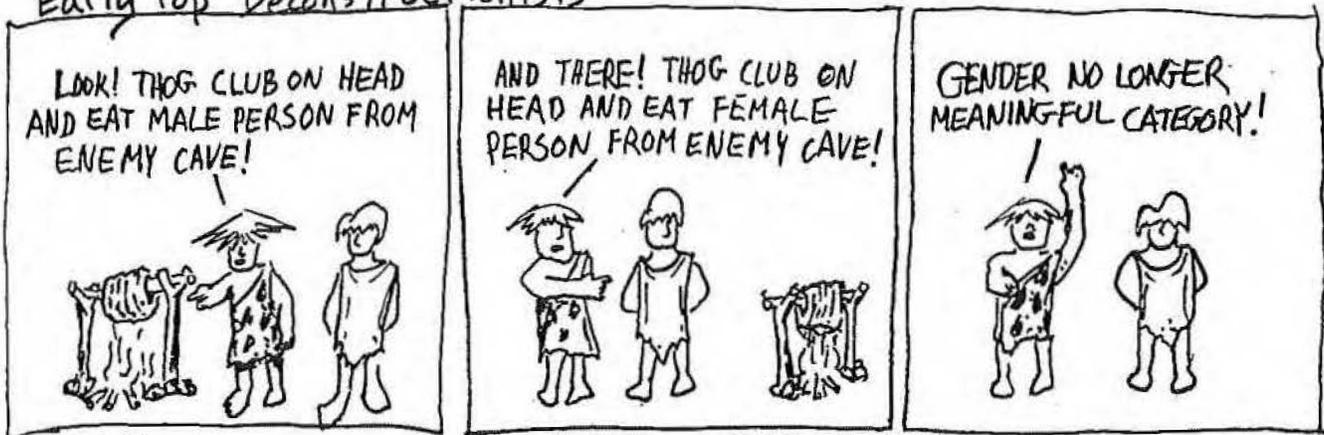
she is experiencing your inner thigh
with her well sucked hand
and it's slipping up your slip
you're both eating the party potato chips
and the oranges and vodka
her hand finds you well licked
she tells you she wants to suck up
your spaghetti straps
butter and spicy rich
garlic
on your skin
she knows what you had for dinner
you a woman of dog chewed soup bones
you're a tomato

And your exboyfriend of eight years ago.
saunters up and says to her
"what are you doing with my exboyfriend?"
and she looks up at you
"You're a guy!" and walks away

adjust your skirt now
tell her you're a tomato

by Ella Frederick

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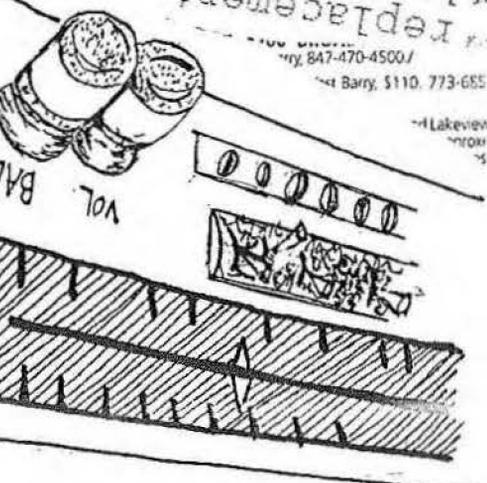
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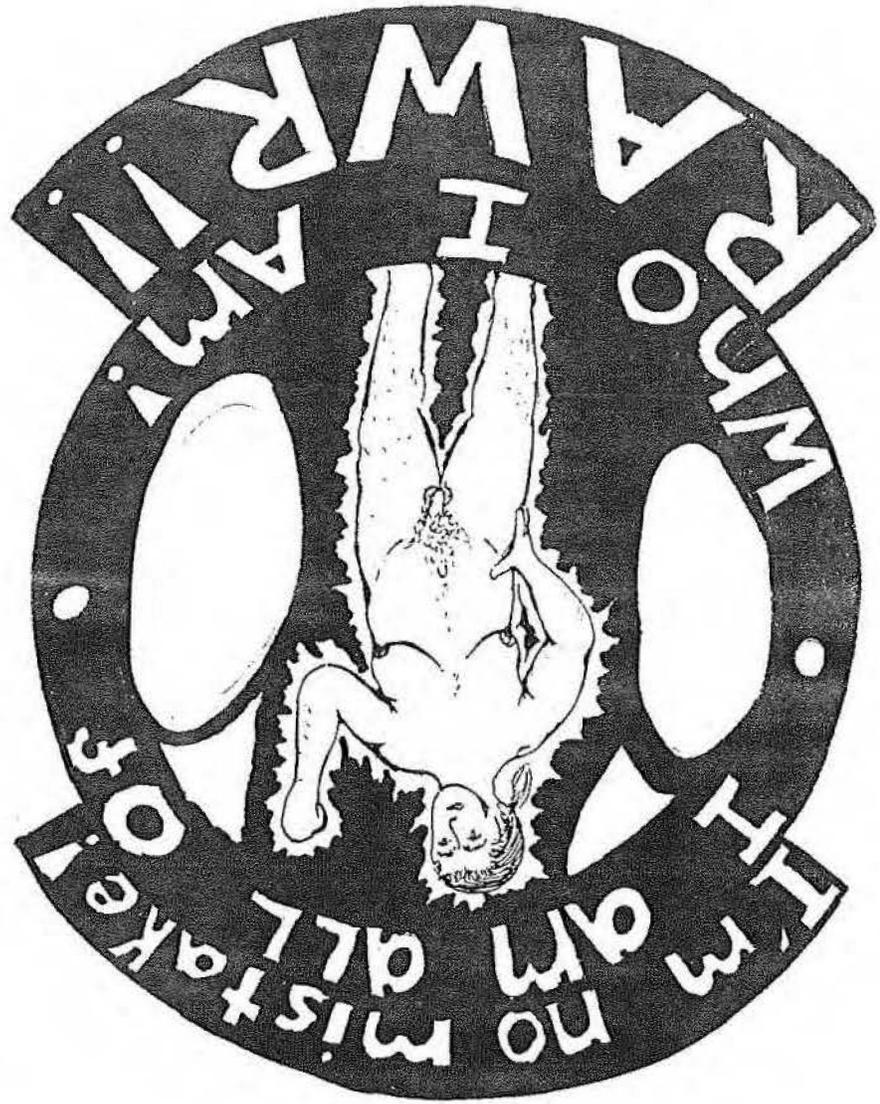
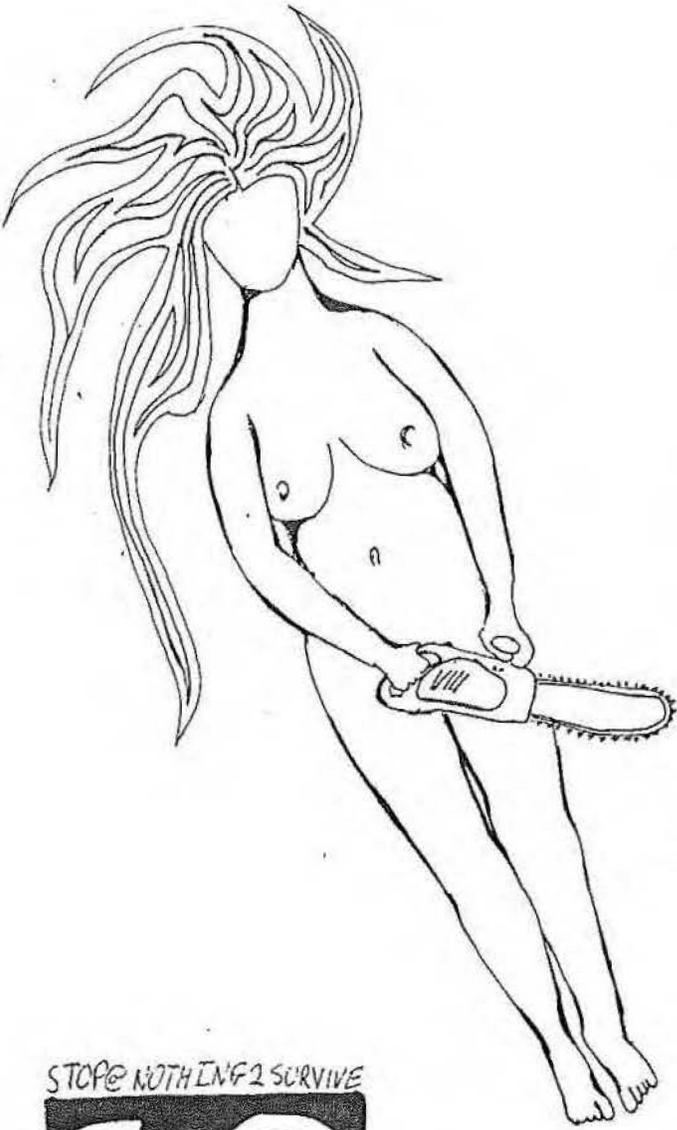
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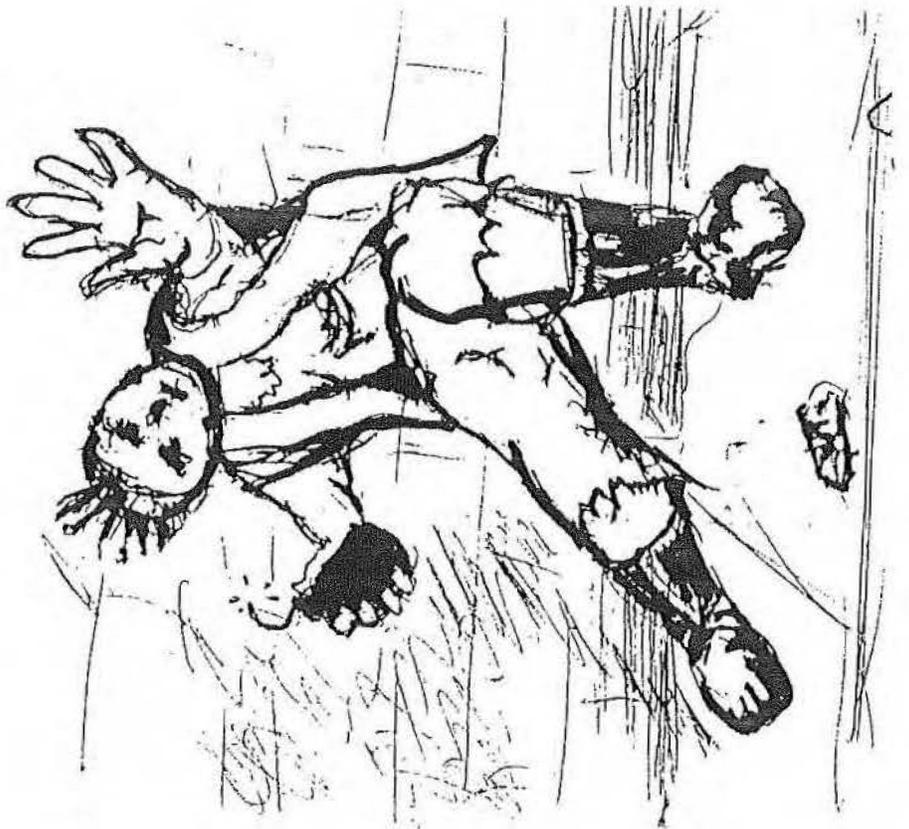
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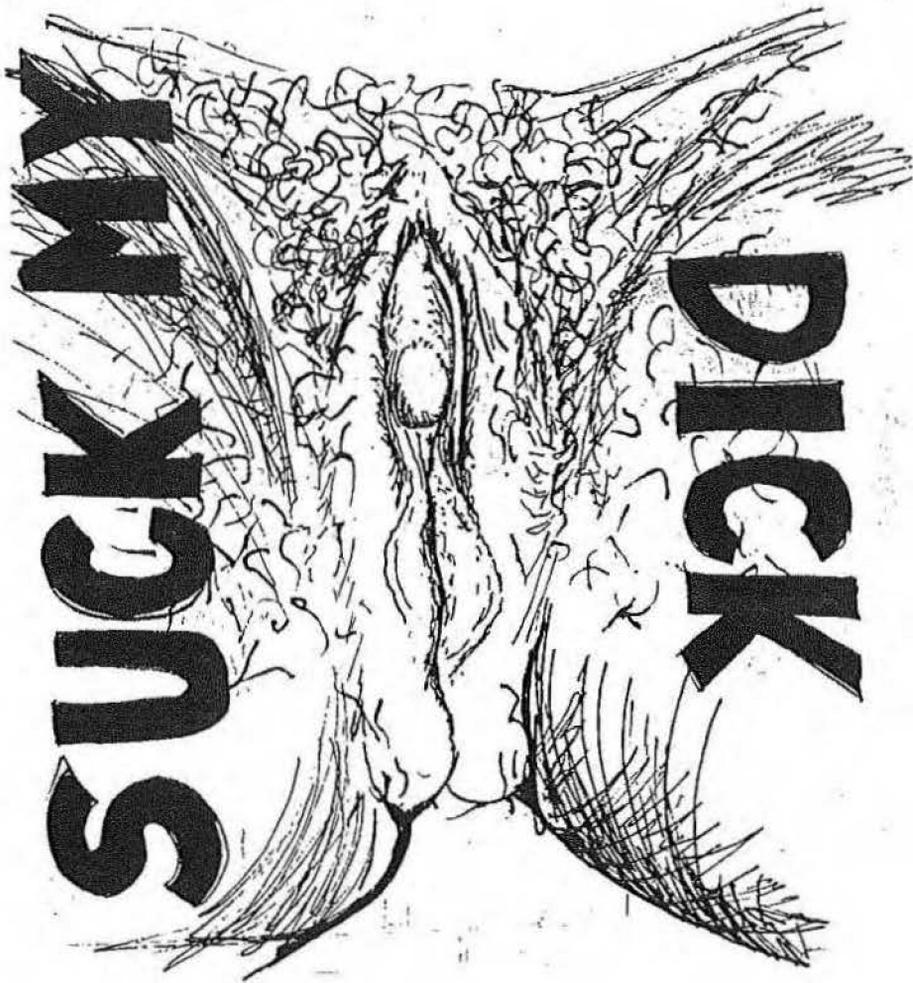


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STARBACK!



**UNAPOLOGETIC:
THE JOURNAL OF
IRRESPONSIBLE
GENDER!**



So my current plan when this is finished is to teach myself screen printing. Hopefully I'll make the stuff on page 13, the cover, and these drawings here into patches. Write me and see what I've come up with! Make patches or stickers yourself!

M

2

B

by Kylie Paintain

"MtB? What's that?"

Most people have heard of male to female (MtF) transsexuals and even lesbian transsexuals but male to butch (MtB) is something new entirely for many. Those who have a problem with MtF transsexuals identifying as a lesbian.....

"Why go through all the mtf stuff and then id as lesbian?"

.....are usually stuck at the misconception that transitioning is all about who you want to have sex with. So an mtf who chooses to identify as butch will be particularly strange for them.

"Don't women who identify as butch really want to be men?"

I think "identifying as a butch woman" really says it all 'specially the woman bit. For me, and others like me, butch is very seperate from male. I id very strongly as female and see female/woman as my gender identity and my butch identity is an extension of this. I think you can display masculine traits/characteristics without being/iding as male or without losing any sense of being female/woman.

When I transitioned 8-9 years ago there was an awful lot of pressure for me to conform to a very stereotypical female image and role ie Het Barbie. I tried to do this - I didn't really see any other options at this stage - but it just didn't feel right so I set out to find out what was right for me. This took about 6 yrs during which time I was totally celibate. It was a difficult time as I had to come to terms with a lot of stuff about myself that I didn't like but I

think I am a better person for it.

I came out as a dyke about 4 yrs ago but all the dykes I knew were andro-dykes so while I had taken a major step in the right direction I still wasn't feeling right about me and who I was. It wasn't until someone suggested I read some books on butch/fem that I realised how I fitted in. It was amazing to read about women who felt a lot like I do - who id strongly as women but acknowledge their masculine side in a positive way.

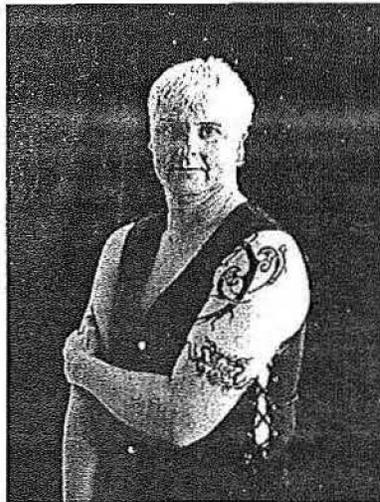
It hasn't exactly been easy - being out as a transsexual and iding as butch has caused a few problems but I figure if people have a problem with this concept and don't have the courage to talk to me in person about it then it remains their

problem and not mine. While I try to be as available as possible for people to talk to - I believe that it is only through talking about these issues that we will start to resolve some of them - I don't believe in forcing my opinions on anyone. I try to respect other peoples choices in their lives and only ask the same from others.

After all why should our individual expressions of gender be forced into conforming to what makes others feel safe or comfortable? Why can't we express our selves, our inner feelings, without being made to feel like freaks and misfits? Why does there have to be such strict regulation of gender in a society that seems to be willing to let other

Cont. on page 22

Kylie lives in Melbourne Australia with her gorgeous fem partner and her kind of gorgeous m/ bike (still waiting on some money to fix it up a bit more). The queers think Kylie's "really" het and the hets think she's REALLY queer.



Transsexual!

A Horror Movie

By Anne Tagonist

Suspense:

I don't want my human rights, I want my inhuman rights. I want to be bad. My appearance to be shocking. My origins unclear. I want to burst out of a clinic laboratory with sirens at my back and a whole wide world before me full of people as yet blissfully unaware of the horror that has been released upon them.

I want to be riding the bus when it all begins, because I'm always riding the bus and bound by my human rights it isn't much fun. With my inhuman rights I'll be slightly more noticeable and some jerk, riding home from his office job because his Lexus is in the shop is going to start it all with a single guffaw.

My first victims will be found hanging by their boots from lampposts and high-tension wires. I want the young, dashing scientist with his balding avuncular teacher (who charm notwithstanding will die in act 3) brought in to confirm what the police already suspect- that transexuals aren't really human at all, and that maybe no-one is safe.

I want word that something is wrong to get out quickly- I want to see little white families watch, terrorized, as the shadows play across their wide suburban lawns. I want to see the frat boys clump together for protection on the way to their cars, every stranger greeted with a frightened stare instead of a leer, the words "oh god, is that a transexual?" noiselessly falling off everybody's lips.

As much as my identity, my precise motives will be unclear. How do I choose my victims? Why do I let some escape unharmed? The rumour will spread that I am killing everybody who's tried to fuck with me, and while that would just take way too long, its certainly a good place to start.

For instance,



that guy, with the fluffy orange hair and letter jacket who called me a flamer and pushed me down a flight of stairs when I was fifteen? He's gonna be out walking his ugly-ass dog in the park, when strains of scary music- I want a lot of scary music by the way, no sense being inhuman if you don't get scary music- start playing, really softly. He's going to get a little bit wide-eyed and look around but at first he isn't going to see anything... then it will hit him. My god! Over there! There's an entire audience full of people mouthing the words "Oh shit, he's gonna get it now..."

And then he will.

I want rumours to circulate about my whereabouts. My exact appearance will be unclear, but a series of newscasts will get the word out at least that I am trans and inhuman, so citizens will throw themselves at the feet of people who merely look sort of like me and beg forgiveness. Yes. I want to see them humiliate themselves at the feet of these newly anointed potential killers, paralyzed by the suppressed guilt of years- no, lifetimes- of snickering and looking away.

I want people to recognize in this guilt of theirs a secret which, if revealed, could mean their life. I want them to worry who knows. I want them see public spaces become uncertain, and exposure as the danger it has always been for some- the supermarket terrifyingly full of inquisitive eyes, the walk back to their apartment from the train as a terror-trip- who knows, after all, which bush I might be hiding behind?

Crisis:

And then I want to grow. I want to get huge. Ten, twelve, fifteen feet tall... acromegaly. I want enormous arms and hands. I want a huge bullneck and a chin you could set a



glass on. I want a hairline like the coast of Norway. I want a rumbling voice like a Fatboy peeling out of the longest spotlight in hell. I want skin like concrete and shoulders like a crucifix. I want a football permanently embedded under the fingers of one hand and dog tags in the other. I want really bad makeup. And then do you know what I'm going to do?

I'm going to find the skinniest little tranny fag-got queenie I know and stomp on all the idiot high school kids who're stupidly following him home from his night job throwing rocks. Squish! Squish! My size twenty-two stiletto heels will make short work of all of them. Then I'm going to scoop him up in the hand without the football- my flame-red lips will be too humongous to kiss his patchy beard hello, but he'll understand the sentiment anyway.

Action:

Inexplicably, we'll head for Lincoln Park, but since this is a horror movie, the National Guard will already be tracking us. By the time we get to Fullerton, the first helicopters'll catch up from behind. I'll try to smack at them with something but they'll be flying too high and I'll probably be too slow and graceless. Since I won't be able to hit them, I'll start smashing the windows of every fucking sports bar and date restaurant I see instead, sparing only the ones where I know somebody on-shift.

I'll be roaring in my testosterone-shredded falsetto so that everyone will hear me coming. Frat rats, overgrown roller-blading frat rats, and their belly-shirted girlfriends will pour into the streets in a panic, giving the gay men who thought they were straight-passable enough not to get hassled time to get on the bus and gone. The helicopters will hear me too, and will now be joined by tanks and heavily armed national guardsmen, who will only hold their fire for fear or hurting the guy in my left hand. Instead of shooting they will try to crowd me towards Oldtown and the river.

Around [hey! street!], an emissary will come forward- the avuncular balding professor from act one- and plead with me to let medicine do what it can for my case. He can make me beautiful, he tells me, he has two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of plastic surgery just perfected which, though it will leave my face and genitals numb, carcino-

genic and in need of replacement skin grafts ever six to twelve months, will at least allow my boyfriend- he indicates the guy in my arm- to get off by fucking me.

Here my so-called boyfriend, permanently and non-consensually dickless, caps the loser purely out of frustration. The shooting will begin in earnest and we'll have to take off running.

The tanks and copters will be herding us towards the river around the North Avenue bridge, where they will unwittingly give my passenger and I the opportunity to rip limb from limb the policemen who're raping the transgendered illegals who work as hookers west of the bridge. We'll both enjoy that a lot- a last treat as it were, because at this point we'll both be so badly weakened by the gunshots that our movements will be slower and our thinking will be cloudy.

Did you think the ftm guy was gonna hand himself over in the end? To the Chicago cops? Pssst. Who are you kidding? You hear what they did to Logan Smith?

Resolution:

On the verge of collapse, we will stumble into the subway at North & Clybourn, slipping down the escalators and leaping onto the tracks. For one picturesque moment we will stand framed in the arch of the tunnel, a screeching train before us, and the relentless cracking of small arms driving us from behind. The lead car will come around the curve, the headlamp will cast our silhouettes on the graffiti murals on the platform and then...

...and then, we will disappear, leaving our pursuers to wonder thoughtlessly what horrible mischance of creation led to the existence of something as uncanny, as ugly, and as monstrous as our inhuman selves in the first place, and whether it could possibly happen again.

Meanwhile, deliberately invoking a possible sequel, a pedestrian leaving the James R Thompson center will be startled by a sudden snuffling coming from a grating....



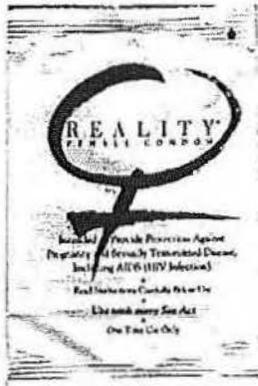
RESEARCHERS SEEKING CLUE!



CAN ANYTHING ESCAPE IT?



Anne's Reviews of Shit



Reality Female Condom

Source: Mine came free with the VIDA benefit comp from Lengua Armada, you could get yours at just about any drug store. **Cost:** Again, mine was free. Don't know how much they cost, but I hear its significantly more than "male" condoms.

Intended for: heterosexuals, bisexuals, some non-op gay transmen and trans lesbians

biens

Description: A so-called female condom, it consists of a polyurethane tube with one end closed off. This is inserted in the vagina and anchored against the cervix with a diaphragm-style ring, leaving the other end outside the labia (the outside end also contains a stiffening ring to prevent the whole device from slipping up.) It is then lubricated and fucked. Reality is unsuited for anal or oral use.

Review: These have been around for about three years. When it was first introduced, marketing emphasized the "female" nature of the device, claiming that Reality liberated women by allowing them to be the ones to put on the birth control (unlike other female-sited contraceptive methods like the pill, Reality is effective against STDs) A well-meaning friend of mine even suggested it would be a useful device for stopping the spread of AIDS in countries where women's right to control their own sexuality is non-existent, since they could put it in whether or not their partner wanted to use a male condom.

Me, I think this is crap. The device is hardly concealable when inserted, and there's nothing to stop a man from (painfully) yanking the damn thing out if he wants unprotected sex. This is rape, of course, but so is all sexuality over which one partner has no control. I can't imagine a healthy scenario in which a woman has the power to say "I'm putting this thing in and you're going to follow the directions or else no sex" but not "no condom no sex." Are straight people really that bad at communicating with each other that the only way a straight woman can know for sure that there's a barrier between her and her "lover" is if she puts it in herself?

I think the reality of Reality is what's being reflected in their current slogan: "Feels so good I can't

believe its safer sex." Because the device is stationary in the vagina, the penis experiences as much friction as with unprotected sex. Far from being a liberating breakthrough for women, Reality seems to be geared more towards men who whine that they "can't feel anything in a rubber."

And there are drawbacks, too. In addition to making a creepy rustling noise, my het friends report that Reality breaks about half the time. The promo claims a less-than-one-percent failure rate, which suggests this is another case of real life being different from laboratory conditions or maybe my friends are all really clumsy or rough-skinned or something, but if it happened to them it could happen to you. Plus, and this is my own personal opinion, the thing really looks un-erotic, like an underwater parasite or something.

I should point out that since it is made of polyurethane, people with latex allergies may find Reality a preferable alternative, but what I want to know is this: nitrile. The stuff they make those blue not-latex-but-just-as-thin-and-stretchy-and-perfectly-suited-for-sex gloves out of (for those of you who live in Chicago, Body Basics uses them for piercings) Why the hell can't somebody make a nitrile condom?

High Point/Low Point: The little sticker sloppily attached to the bottle of lube reading "The expiration date has been increased three years. Add 3 years to the EXP above."

Actually for: people with latex allergies, men who can't stand to wear condoms and the women who let them get away with that

Summary: Reality female condom is an expensive source of dental-dam-grade polyurethane. I should've reviewed the 7" it came with.



Like Cinderella (zine)

Source: mail order from Ella & Santosh
1740 N. Maplewood 1W
Chicago, IL 60647

Cost: \$4 (includes a Bitch Hips demo tape)

Intended for: Japanese high school girls (see below)

Description: Like Cinderella is a fanzine for Bitch Hips, a Chicago transpunk band that is supposedly the hottest new thing in Japan. Ostensibly writ-

posedly the hottest new thing in Japan. Ostensibly writ-

Cont. on following page

ten by "Brandy," LC mixes reviews of actual Bitch Hips shows, lyrics, and associated transpunk writings from Ella and Santosh (the two permanent members of the band) with over-the-top campy fan materials from Japan including a video script and a page of Japanimation-style paper dolls.

Mitigating Circumstance: Ella is a friend of mine and a contributor to Unapologetic. Take anything I say with that grain of salt.

Review: I'm not being fair when I describe Bitch Hips as only a transpunk band. Although he neither sings nor writes lyrics for BH, Santosh was the bassist for Heterocide before they broke up and is not, to my knowledge, a tranny himself. Since he contributes at least half the material to this zine, a more accurate description might be transpunk/homocore, if this sort of thing matters.

Much of what he writes deals with being gay and Indian, something I've never heard addressed from a male perspective. His reprinted emails describing his attempts to work as a hustler while visiting his parents in Canada, as well as the fake responses from gay magazines to whom he has supposedly submitted nude shots of himself make very interesting reading. I wish honestly he would write lyrics some time.

However, LC the zine, like Bitch Hips the band, is dominated by Ella Frederick's no-bullshit tranny-poet-streetwalker-badass-punkrocker personality. Here, she is outspoken as ever, using the various parodied fanzine formats as an excuse to put herself across larger than life. Under the irony and trappings, Like Cinderella is an extended self-interview from an artist. Without offering a single justification or excuse (let alone an apology) she touches on her sex work, her disdain for sex work, her other jobs, her body, her friends bodies, her own attractions and the not-necessarily-flattering attractions others may feel for her, the gay male community's alternating fascination and repulsion when dealing with hetero MtF trannies, and the similar ambiguity trannies feel when dealing with themselves. This is a document of out, hetero, underaged transfemale life, better than I (or Riki Wilchins, for that matter) could ever hope to do.

So yeah, giggle at the "What's your favorite color? -Seiko 12 from Tokya Japan" interview, stop yourself from laughing at the "Curry queens! Fudge pakis! Indian meat cumin in your face!" phone sex ad, but shit, at least read the rest of the zine.

High Point/Low Point: The response from DIESEL Clothing: Diesel Clothing (R) has no need for new models. But props for your interest- all Diesel (R)

wearers are the shit! Enclosed are Diesel Zines (R), so keep chillin' in our clothing and we'll keep putting it all together. -Promotional Technician

Summary: Smart zine, order it.

Further Mitigating Factors: The zine contains a page from 12" Tortillas, whose own zine (Figments of a Deranged Imagination) I've lost. Kick me, Dely.



Camille Paglia

Source: Supposedly she got her start writing articles for snotty intellectual journals in New York. She now has two books and a brief appearance in the film Watermelon Woman.

Cost: Boy is it tempting to fill something in here...

Intended For: Free-thinking "third wave" feminists

Description: A so-called lesbian intellectual neoconservative whose shockingly right-wing renunciations of queer political doctrine earned her a brief

fifteen minutes of fame in the early nineties.

Review: When I saw her cameo in Watermelon Woman I burst out laughing. Everybody else in the theater was-I shit you not- hissing and booing, so I have to wonder if I'm just making up a joke in my head or if the joke was real and I'm the only one who got it.

I think Camille Paglia is the Weekly World News of lesbian theorists. Or the Church of the Subgenius, or both. She is so earnest and so sure of herself and yet so completely off-the-wall in what she's saying that you know she's got to be making fun. But she can't turn and wink at the camera, because that would spoil the joke- so she keeps going.

And it gets better, the longer she goes on, because you just have to see how far she can take it without cracking. How many times can she use her Italian heritage as the definitive stand-in (and counterexample) for any other political identity, how cheesy a straw dog can she puff up before she knocks the stuffing out of it, how many sacred cows will she "accidentally" run over, before finally she gives up and laughs with us.

I'm not sure anymore that she ever will. Part of the joy of watching Camille Paglia flounder around trying to contradict things she hopes will make her radical (or just trying to finish a sentence- in person she always seems to have two or three going at once and as

with most overextended projects none of them ever get more than a cursory brush towards completion) is not knowing whether she's even aware yet how batty she is, and I'm starting to think she no longer realizes and will soon be talking about how contrary to what academic doctrine is beating into the heads of young people today, cunnilingus did not originate with early men trying to duplicate with their bodies the docking procedures of visiting UFOs and thank god she, Camille Paglia, is here to tell us the truth. Of course we'll all just love her the more anyway...

So in Watermelon Woman, she rambles incoherently about how the black community should accept and respect the "mammy" figure as a symbol of african abundance. She was originally presented with a script, but apparently refused it and adlibbed the whole thing. Which leaves me wondering- was she trying to parody Camille Paglia, as Cheryl Dunye's script undoubtedly had her doing. Was she in fact intentionally crossing the line between seriousness and comedy? Is there even a difference between Camille Paglia and Camille Paglia-does-Camille Paglia?

Actually for: Anyone who gets a good laugh out of her material, I guess

Summary: Damn, I already used the "Camille Paglia is the Weekly World News of lesbian theorists" line.

FIERCE FEMME



WOMEN / BICYCLES / CULTURE

Fierce Femme #1 (zine)

Source: See/Hear in NYC; also can be mail-ordered from:

Fierce Femme
1388 Haight St, Box 8
San Francisco, CA 94117

Cost: \$2 (cash)

Intended For: Women (not necessarily femmes) who have, respect, and ride bicycles

Description: "Women/Bicycles/Culture." Very dyke-punk, very SFCA, this zine includes articles on bicycles, articles on women who ride, interviews with bands whose members ride bicycles, and of course, poetry.

Review: Can I say something here? Why do all the west-coast zines I see reference the internet like mad, while east coast and Chicago zines might have an e-mail address in the masthead,

maybe? Is it something in the water out there? Back to the review:

Once I found this in NY, it became my absolute favorite zine for a long time. Its so damn cheery! If I hadn't read this, I probably wouldn't have become a bike messenger when I got back to Chicago. Betho, the editor, obviously enjoys riding her bike a whole hell of a lot, and contagiously attracts contributors who really just love riding theirs, and they all love to talk about how much they love it all. Articles include fun cycling songs (how'd they miss Team Dresch?), bicycle women filmmakers, bicycle fashion for women, Home Alive, and world news about women cyclists.

High Point/Low Point: close-up of Lala Hulse's boots... mmm-hmmm... <smack> I mean political commentary on something

Summary: Bicycles make your life fun and powerful. Especially in the bay area.



Ped Xing (zine)

Source: Can be mail ordered from:

Androo Robinson
5758 N. Winthrop #11
Chicago, IL 60660

Cost: Varies. Send him a buck or two and he'll be happy.

Intended For: "for people"

Description: this is a comic, usually, published occasionally. Subject matter tends to be light, but is

pretty much whatever-was-going-through-Andy's-head-last-time-he-was-near-a-copier.

Review: Andy writes so many short comics in so many formats under so many names, I wouldn't even call them one zine, except that with each one he apologizes for not coming out with the latest Ped Xing yet and offers the material in hand as a temporary substitute. Each "installment" is typically eight or twelve pages tops, pocket-sized, and virtually angst-free. He just likes telling little stories. If he has any recurring characters, I sure don't know about it.

High Point/Low Point: I draw a card from the Ped Xing Random Calendar every day

Actually For: people.

Summary: Sweet, silly, upbeat... yep, he's moving to Smurfrancisco in January. Write to him now so he'll send you his new address.

Sister Subverter, cont. from Page 9

shop in the first few days, and I plan to raise this nudity issue. I have no idea how it will turn out- as with this time I'm going to respect the wishes of anyone who'd rather not see me, problematic as that is- but I'm not going to let it all slide again and not let people know that I'm there. On the way back from the swimming hole we hit a stump and it took until the following afternoon to get the car working again, so the stubble I grew in the meantime probably outed me to everybody who hadn't already figured it out. Plus I'm writing this zine and mailing it to anyone who gave me their address, and word will probably get around that way...

Round-up:

So what am I taking away with me from Sister Subverter? New friends, first of all. All this random thinking and pretentiousness shouldn't change the fact that I really had a great time because I got to hang out for a weekend with some radical cool folks doing radical cool things. The politics really only made it better.

I'm coming away with an awareness of the ways in which the environment we live in can restrict us. In the real world, we as women and we as transpeople are not safe, and even just a few incidents a day can create a pervasive sense of dis-ease that takes a ton of mental energy to overcome. For me on the land, whether because I was closeted or because anarchopunkdykes aren't quite so bothered by the idea of a genderqueer in their midst, that dis-ease was replaced by a sense of safety- and with that safety came the freedom to put towards more creative goals the energy ordinarily devoted to resistance and fighting for a psychic space to survive. The question became not: uh-oh, what are they looking at me for? but hey, what do I want to do with myself now?

What I took away from Sister Subverter was the realization that anti-assimilationism is not so much about deliberately not fitting in as it is about creating autonomous spaces where the differences for which we are expelled from mainstream culture are celebrated.

Postscriptus:

Magda and I were in a northside bar selling advance copies of the Lesbian Avengers SnatchShots '98 fundraising girlie calendar when this woman- lesbian, actually- starts getting in our faces about just what did we think we were avenging anyway, didn't lesbi-

ans already have all their rights? Magda started very calmly listing incidents of discrimination and violence that the Avengers have responded to, but when she mentioned losing children to the state, the woman interrupted her.

"Oh sure," she snorted, "in the South."

Well yeah, in the South. What the hell? I'm from the South. I have friends and family in the South. There are a just as many queers in the South as anywhere else in the country and the last secession attempt I heard about went down in a bad way, so we're all still part of the same country, y'know?

But of course, its the South. Its a problem, but how can you fix it? Sure, so there's this fifth of the country where lesbians aren't allowed to raise their own children, christian terrorists dynamite abortion clinics and nailbomb queer bars, hikers get stabbed to death, Jesse Helms is always reelected, being a gay man constitutes probable cause for an unannounced home search, and you can be fired from your job as a public school teacher for mentioning that somewhere out there in the world homosexuals might exist, but what can you do about it? Its the South, y'know, ignorance and pickup trucks? God Grits and Guns? Segregation? Hell it ain't even worth mentioning. We in the eddycated north, now, we've got the Human Rights Ordinance 'cause we're smart enough to deserve it. If queers in the South ain't got the sense to move up here they might as well get shot, 'cause we sure as hell ain't risking our necks in their godforsaken region. Ain't worth saving anyway. Sheeit.

Well, the woman went on to say a few more ignorant things about lesbians while her much butcher girlfriend hid her face, and then as was par for the course, Magda broke out the sample glossies from the calendar. She totally freaked and told us we would destroy everything she'd worked for. Given her outlook that didn't bother us much, so we walked away.

M2B, cont. from Page 15

things grow?

Until very recently transsexuals where supposed to disappear once they had "successfully" transitioned but now there are a growing number of us who will not disappear, who will not shut up about gender and who will not bend over backwards to make Joe and Jill Citizen feel comfortable.

I strongly believe that the best way for me to be happy and reach my full potential is to be the best me that I can be. If that means distorting other peoples safe views on what is gender then so be it..



Privacy is a punishment
Privacy is not a reward
Publicity is a human right
Live in the light don't die by a word

-GodCo Queer Disco Anthem

I've been thinking about privacy a lot lately, and also about public transportation. I've never really had access to a car since I left home. My options for getting around have been my bicycle (or skateboard) and mass transit- and winters in Chicago are hardly accomodating to bicycles.

In cities, mass transit is its own sort of weird cultural joke. People with cars believe that the absolute weirdest shit happens on buses and trains, and to a large extent they're right. Yes, there are a lot of mentally ill people hanging out in trains, almost all of them completely harmless. Yes, there are a lot of street preachers and beggars, also mostly harmless. Yes, freaks like me and my friends also take the bus when we come to town, and you can judge for yourself how safe we are.

And yes, I've been mugged twice on or waiting for public transit, but that's not really what I want to write about. What I'm writing about here is this- a whole lot of my good gender stories happened on or waiting for buses and trains too.

From the couple who decided no woman would be wearing my boots to the drunken sport-bar patrons who couldn't decide if they should hoot at me or not, to the mostly passing man (boy actually) with the box of promotional peanut M&M's who ran off the bus when other passengers started loudly asking "What the hell is that?" to the way I've been able to track my bodyshifting by the gendered honorific Greyhound used to print on your ticket* public transit has been for me and others a sometimes incriminating, sometimes dangerous experience of relentless exposure.

Dangerous how? Bus and train coaches are sta-

tistically quite safe, you say. True- but that's hardly the whole story, because when you get off a bus or train, you not only leave that zone of safety in a manner that anyone can follow you, you also give some indication of where you live or are going. The second time I was mugged, two men followed me from either the train or the train station. This has happened twice in four years of ten-to-twenty commutes per week- hardly common, but nonetheless a risk factor I have to take into account every time I ride.

So surprising then, to pop my head into a class-access restricted forum (such as usenet) and see none of this daily experience reflected. There are tales of exposure and harassment, some quite frightening, but seemingly nothing from this particular environment. For that matter there's also distressingly little from my other less-dangerous hobgoblin situation- dealing with customers in service jobs. The employment hassles you hear about on usenet all seem to deal with coworkers, superiors, and long-standing clients- people with whom individuals have long-term relationships. This got me thinking about class and privacy.

Since privacy isn't a consumer good, its relationship with money is easily overlooked. However, ask yourself which among the following necessitate more contacts with outsiders on a daily basis- dining out in a booth at Spago or at a counter at Standeez? a freestanding house on a gated block in the suburbs or a three-bedroom apartment in a twelve-unit building on a residential block on the west side? a partnered living arrangement in which both members must work and share equally in public errands like shopping, laundry, or overseeing children's progress in school, or an arrangement where one partner works to support both financially while the other takes all the responsibility for public affairs? a register job at a supermarket or a middle-management position at a stable firm? busing to work or driving alone from a home garage to a parking garage? And what about 'hoing?

In all these cases, situations associated with middle- or upper-class life seem to be designed to minimize interaction with strangers, which is important to transpeople because interaction with strangers is where life gets the most dangerous. It bothers me that public discussions of trans-safety almost never seem to take class into account. Then again, there is so little discussion on trans class issues (except, of course, for Leslie Feinberg) that even something so simple as differential access to medical and legal resources rarely comes up- public transit seems light-years away. I don't know where I'm going with this, so I think I'll end the column.

* They've stopped- every ticket now says "Mr./Ms."

TRANSPUNK MANIFESTO

Whereas:

- Identity can never depend on anything that can be purchased, and
- Individual existence precedes group typology, and
- Male and female, masculine and feminine, straight, queer and even transgender are all received conventions and must be examined very closely on an individual basis before being applied, and
- even then aren't necessarily always applicable, and
- dominant culture has historically used criteria such as "beauty" and "realness" and genital configuration to divide us and turn us against ourselves and each other, and

◦ Medicalized definitions of gender have defined our bodies only as malformed objects in need of correction or replacement. Therefore, be it resolved that:

- We will freely disregard and destroy language and typology when they fail to reflect our realities, and
- we will reject any pathologization that alienates us, and
- we will always stand by our tranny siblings, even those who are different from us, and
- We will respond to our expulsion from non-trans communities with the creation of new trans-communities, and
- We will modify and define our bodies and lives however we see fit.

STOP@NOTHING2SURVIVE

STARE BACK!

Amc, sitting on Toni's bed, 26 Aug 97