

Making an Issue of Incest

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When we first spoke out, ten years ago, on the subject of incest, of our abuse, as children, by fathers and stepfathers, of our childhood rape by older brothers, stepbrothers, funny uncles, grandfathers—there was, for all the pain, sometimes humor.

And there was, even through the anguish, a terrific mood of ebullience, of fantastic hope. Not only was it thrilling to pull insight and clarity from turmoil. But then—in the late 1970s—there was that sense of empowerment, of possibility for real change.

In these ten years things have become unimaginably worse—for child victims, now, and for the women, their mothers, who try to protect those children. And for survivors, who now find the very stuff of their trauma, their degradation, their violation as children, the common currency of talk show guest “experts” and “professionals”; find their courageous speaking-out transformed into no more than a new plot option for ongoing dramatic series.

People say to me, “Well, but at least we’re talking about it now.”

Yes. But it was not our intention merely to start a long conversation.

In breaking the silence, we hoped to raise hell. Instead, we have raised for the issue a certain normalcy. We hoped to raise a passion for change. Instead, what we raised was discourse—and a sizable problem-management industry. Apart from incest educators, we have incest researchers, incest experts, incest therapists, incest awareness programs, incest prevention programs.

And, of course, we have that immense backlash from fathers’ rights groups, which now threatens to re-entomb children and women in silence—in fear for their very safety once again.

This society has now devised systematic torments for children who tell of abuse. We label these torments “help.” We now tell children in schools to tell. And when they do tell, we either disbelieve them, or

we encourage the empowered intervention system to yank them from their mothers into foster care. We call this "help."

After we have yanked the child into state care, we now turn to the mother and we explain: "We have done this because you 'failed to protect' the child. We have done this because, even though you didn't happen to know of the abuse, even though you just found out, you 'should have known'." We call this the "best interest of the child."

When a mother now attempts to protect her child by divorcing the abuser, or when she discovers the abuse after divorce, on visitation, there is a near certainty that she will be disbelieved: perceived as a "vengeful" woman in an "acrimonious" divorce dispute. She is a sitting duck for abuse by the system; for vilification by the courts; for charges of vindictiveness, instability, "delusional psychoses" by the mental health professionals; and for charges of outright lying by the father and his lawyers. As well, she faces serious disbelief by a public already brainwashed to believe in that pillar of the new incest mythology: the "incest mother"; that weak, needy, domineering, cowardly, passive, manipulative, frigid, and sexually rapacious creature who (a) always tells her child to shut up and never say that again, and (b) always chooses her husband over the child.

In a nutshell, a child's disclosure of rape by the father will be believed by those in power, and by the public, so long as the mother disbelieves the child. And she will be punished for that. A child's disclosure of rape by the father will not be believed by those in power and by the public, so long as the mother believes the child and acts to protect her. And she will be punished for that.

And so even as 800-numbers continue to blare out from radio and TV sets across the nation—protect kids, report abuse, help is available—women are doing jail time for refusing to send the child who's disclosed abuse for her weekly "visitation." And the clear message deriving from experiential reality, rather than propaganda, is reaching an increasing number of women: take the kid and run.

The media is abuzz and atwitter with reports that *women* have formed an Underground Railroad. That *women* are helping other women escape! That they are offering sanctuary to those many, many mothers whose children have disclosed sexual abuse by their fathers—and who are being vilified, pilloried, jailed by the courts, for trying to protect those children; who are, in fact, apt to lose not only custody, but all visitation with those children.

Underground Railroad. It certainly has resonance (although the news accounts and TV presentations seem oblivious to the full implications of the phrase). It sure puts the slavery piece in place. It tells us just how uppity it was of us to speak out about paternal child-rape; just

how deeply our defiance of a longstanding presumed male prerogative cuts.

Underground Railroad. Alas, for all its splendor as simile, it is inaccurate in one crucial way: for these women and children, *there is no North*. There is no state, no place, where safety can be relied on; no area in the country that promises protection. Indeed, ironically, I am told that women from Canada are seeking haven here—even as U.S. mothers and children look toward Canada with hope.

Yet the sad fact is that many, many feminists have so far failed to identify what is being done to these children and women as a “feminist” issue. Nor have I noticed many incest survivors impassioned by this backlash which has all the genuine menace of a full-scale declaration of war. They seem not yet to understand. Our speaking out, as adult survivors, about our childhood incestual assault, did not threaten the status quo. It challenged nothing in the present; cost those in power nothing in the present—economically or politically. In fact, our coming forward opened a new frontier for therapeutic specialization.

It is the women now acting to protect child-victims who are radically defying the patriarchy—challenging it in the arena where all women are most vulnerable: the courts. And they are being hounded and punished—even unto death.

Such was the fate of Dorrie Lynn Singley—dead, at 27. Her story—the stuff of legend and ballad—may help illuminate what we are speaking of here.

A young Southern woman, of ordinary rural background, who loved to cook, sew, clean, and mind her kids, Dorrie was divorced from her husband, Tim Foxworth, in February, 1984. According to newspaper reports, she later swore in an affidavit that she left Foxworth because she found him requiring her daughter, Chrissy, to fondle his genitals.

Dorrie took the child and went to Texas, evading visitation. In July, 1986, when she returned to Marion County, Mississippi, she was jailed for ten days for denial of visitation, for contempt.

On November 26, an Assistant District Attorney, Margaret Alfonso, interviewed Chrissy. A year later, Alfonso would write to psychologist Franklin Jones, “I had no doubt this child is being abused.”

Meanwhile, in December, 1986, Foxworth filed for custody of Chrissy.

And meanwhile, as well, another woman in Mississippi was in a similar circumstance. Karen Newsom, described in the press as articulate, intelligent, a teacher, had medical and psychological testimony that her young children, Katy and Adam, were being sexually molested by her former husband.

Both women shared an attorney, Garnett Harrison, a longstanding feminist activist: founder of the Jackson, Mississippi rape crisis center,

author of the Mississippi Protection from Domestic Abuse Act passed by the legislature in 1984.

And they shared a judge, Judge Sebe Dale, described as a "stern rural judge." "Witchhunt!" Judge Dale opined about Newsom's allegations. "Shades of Salem!" he cried as he reversed custody, and sentenced Newsom to indefinite time in jail when she refused to comply and secreted her children away.

Forty-three days Karen Newsom would hold out in that jail before crying uncle and revealing her children's whereabouts. Forty-three days in a Mississippi jail is a long, long time.

Dorrie's ten days in jail had given her real feeling for what that was like. She swore she would never go back (and then swore she would if she had to).

On August 4, 1987, Judge Dale awarded custody of Chrissy to the father. Dale produced, as support for his decision, the fact that Dorrie's eight-year-old son and her six-month-old son were "born out of wedlock." He spoke of her "nebulous" plans about marrying the baby's father.

Judge Dale called Dorrie a liar. And he said, in conclusion, that "the environment for Chrissy while in Tim's custody was a stable one, and wholesome and well-suited to Chrissy's needs and best interests."

In defiance of the court, Dorrie did not turn Chrissy over to Foxworth. In defiance of the court, she had Chrissy examined at the New Orleans Children's Hospital by sexual abuse expert, Dr. Rebecca Russell. Russell found "marked hypervascularity (an increase in the number and size of the blood vessels) of the hymen and perihymenal tissue." She found gaps and scarring of the hymen. In short, there were, in Dr. Russell's opinion, genital findings which "could only be caused by molestation, and not from vaginal infections or self-stimulation by the child."

"2 Women Refuse to Let Children Return to Alleged Sexual Abuse" headlines a story in the *Mobile (Alabama) Press Register*, August 16, 1987.

Two women say they'll go to jail before they turn over their children to fathers they accuse of sexually abusing the youngsters.

"I don't intend to turn them over," said Newsom, 30, of Gulfport. . . .

"I'm sure I'll be found in contempt, which I am in contempt. I'll stay in jail," said Newsom. . . .

"And I'll follow in right behind her," said Singley.

Both Karen and Dorrie had supporters. With the turn of events, a group of women were galvanized to action as Mothers Against Raping Children (MARC). Karen Newsom's two children were hidden away. And Dorrie and Chrissy went into hiding as well. Sometimes together,

for more time separately, they became fugitives. The women were labeled kidnappers and hostage-takers—and said to be using tactics that were terrorist.

Here is what Dorrie, our young kidnapper-terrorist, wrote in her journal on August 27, a week after Karen had been jailed.

Lord, how much longer can this mess continue? The whole system is crazy. What more can they do to these children? First, these sick men have sexually used them, Dale gives them to the perverts, Karen & I protect them by hiding them. . . . The State refuses to hear these children's cries. . . . I can't even begin to express what I feel right now. Anger, fright, loneliness and even hatred. I don't want to hate. It's not in me.

On August 28, at Dorrie's contempt of court hearing, Garnett Harrison tried to get Judge Dale to look at Dr. Russell's medical report. The judge refused. Then he held Dorrie in contempt.

Dorrie, however, did not attend the hearing. Instead, she took cover.

And, later that day, after learning the outcome, she wrote in her journal:

I'm glad I didn't go. I think they intended to lynch me. . . .

It's a shame when so many are so blinded. Even worse is when it's a whole town. And to protect a *RAPIST*, instead of a 5½-year-old child. Who has repeatedly said her *FATHER DID IT*.

On September 2, Dorrie developed what she believed to be a severe migraine headache.

On September 3, she was brought to the New Orleans home of Judy Watts, a children's advocate. Watts says that Dorrie "was sick off and on throughout the time she was with me. When she wasn't in pain, though, she kept busy around the house. She cleaned, washed dishes, did laundry. She sewed and cooked. She'd have dinner waiting for me when I got home. She read magazines and books."

Dorrie's journal, though, testifies to chronic torment, acute isolation, and to the abysmal dislocation experienced by someone who has suddenly stepped outside the world as she has always known and believed it to be.

On September 14, she wrote:

I guess they picketed yesterday at jail. I hope so. I know this is getting to Karen. It's been 26 days. She must be feeling totally helpless.

I know I feel that way. Somehow trapped and unable to help yourself or speak up for yourself. And (especially) when you have finally gotten to where you could speak out.

And, virtually without relief, there were the terrible headaches.

I still have the migraine. I sure could use a hug. Even a sticky hug & kisses.

My head is worse today. I can't tell you how alone I feel. . . . Oh and Karen still in jail.

On September 15, Dorrie's ability to speak was impaired.

She had insisted vehemently from the time she came to this house that she would not go to a hospital. They'd learn who she was and she'd be sent back to jail and she'd probably stay there the rest of her life because she would never, ever tell where Chrissy was.

However, the severity of the attack left no real choice. She was examined at Charity Hospital and told her physical condition was good and she was suffering from nerves. Well, that certainly sounded credible.

What seems—if not incredible, then at least uncanny—is that Dorrie suffered this temporary loss of speech on the very day when Karen Newsom's spirit broke and she decided to speak. After more than forty days in jail, she told the whereabouts of her children. She was then held a few more days until she disclosed the whereabouts of her children's "protectors."

In the event, about thirty women courageously stepped forward to "confess" their participation in the protection of Karen's children.

However, the screws were tightening.

Now Foxworth's attorney started threatening the members of MARC with kidnapping charges. Garnett Harrison's phone records were subpoenaed, and she was threatened with prosecution. The FBI was on the case. A federal grand jury was convened.

Dorrie missed most of this.

On October 13, she was stricken severely with the brain aneurysm which would rupture and kill her. She was taken to the hospital, where she died the next day.

Her last journal entry was made on September 21:

I decided to add this to my journal today. It may never be read. But writing it helps.

Judge Dale, Honorable, isn't that what they call you? Honorable, isn't that what you're supposed to be? I find this hard to believe.

An honorable man would protect the innocent rather than the accused. At least that's what I always believed. I thought justice was what protected a victim. How wrong I've been for 27 years.

Over the past months, I've seen how honorable you are. I've seen how you chose to protect the innocent. For now, my children as well as I, am a victim of your justice.

It sickens my soul to think you have such power. The power to destroy a human being's life. To turn that person inside out, without even blinking. To turn your head on a criminal who could destroy another life. Literally destroy this time.

I've managed to keep the life that was set out to be destroyed protected. I chose to protect that life through your so-called courtroom, and now I have to do it alone without your so-called courtroom of justice.

That life being a five-year-old child. A child whose life has barely begun. She's a victim of today's society. A victim of a courtroom that does not serve with justice. A victim of a so-called father who takes his sexual pleasures from his daughter. How sickening? How horrifying to a five-year-old child.

The saddest day in my life was telling my 8-year-old goodbye and my 9-month-old son. And then came my 5-year-old daughter, who I've tried and will continue to protect, goodbye. They know I love them. I hope God helps each one through this horrid time we're going through.

My other hope is for justice to work for the innocent. No child deserves to be raped. And no child should be forced to live with her rapist. And no mother should be punished for loving what God gave her to love and protect.

This entry is signed, "A Loving Mom, Dorrie Singley."

In early December, Chrissy surfaced in San Francisco and was turned over to the juvenile authorities there. For a moment, there was hope that they would protect her and not return her. However, that did not happen, although the Mississippi authorities made some promises about a correct investigation toward the child's protection. To begin with, she was placed in the home of the district attorney. Next, she was given into the custody of Foxworth's parents. And on New Year's Eve she was returned to the custody of Foxworth.

How did we get here? How did we get from the starting point of a "dread taboo" to the point where another mother worn out, beaten down, defeated, said, "The court just gave my baby to a rapist." How did we get from the so-newly-reached vantage point of believing children—to the backlash which renders any particular child suspect, in any particular instance, where she identifies any particular offender?

In retrospect, it was frighteningly easy. Our understanding of incest as a longstanding male prerogative, a routine behavior traditionally permitted to men, was based on history, based on theory, and, of course, utterly corroborated by women's testimony. For centuries, men have molested their children because it has been their privilege to do so. Whether incest was overtly permitted—as it once was—or tacitly permitted—as it once was—or whether continuance of the permission was ensured by denial, as when Freud held sway, a certain proportion of the male population sexually exploited their own children for a simple reason: they chose to, and they could.

And our simple, homespun analysis of the situation as one of ordinary, everyday patriarchal prerogative was completely congruent with the understanding of the molesters themselves. One father, on na-

tional TV, said, "You have to understand. At the time I thought I was doing her a favor." Another said, "I'm a good man. I don't run around. I provide for my family. And I've never slept with anyone except my wife and my daughters."

We correctly identified the permission for men to molest their own children as a method by which girl children learned, at a very tender age, their sexual vulnerability, their status as sexual objects for male gratification; and by which boy children, molested by fathers and step-fathers at a very early age, learned what their future possibilities and prerogatives could be with their own children.

We identified incest as effectively *legal*, and we called for the repeal of the license. We challenged the system to make it a crime—as it is to molest the neighbors' kids.

However, what we saw, and what the offenders saw, as a license to exploit, the powers-that-be saw as a potential threat to the status quo. And the mental health professionals saw as a business.

We called it traditional, they called it deviant. We called it criminal, they called it sick. And the offenders—the perpetrators—when they finally caught their breath—they called it a big lie. Our political understanding was all but completely obliterated.

"Sick" became so thoroughly ingrained as the correct way to "understand" that even the appearance, in 1980, of a group of perfectly respectable doctors and professors under the banner of the "pro-incest lobby" could not shake the public's need to disbelieve the obvious. These men were passionately promoting the healing powers of "positive incest": they sought an open permission for sex with their children. They said incest was sometimes beneficial (take two children every four hours and call me in the morning). And the media and the populace looked at these perfectly normal men and as one voice they cried, "Sick! That's sick!"

What we failed to apprehend, in our exuberance, was the sheer passion and intensity that lay behind the endorsement and behind the permission: the power of the backlash that would press its thumbs to the eyeballs of anyone who tried to withdraw that permission.

We failed to apprehend, too, what would happen when the state took one look at the size of the problem and had an epiphany: If they treated paternal child molestation as a crime, there was the prospect that one-tenth of the otherwise law-abiding, productive, economically useful and prosperous male citizens would be diverted to making license plates in jail.

And so to label these crimes against children a disease was itself, in fact, a child of necessity. The problem was that they could not identify the offender, singly, as the sick one. For one thing, in the public mind,

to be so sick as to orally rape a two-year-old is to be very sick indeed. In fact, it made the fathers' protestations that they didn't see they were doing anything wrong seem like an insanity defense.

For another thing, to identify the offenders singly as the sick ones would raise the idea of an offense, and have everyone wondering why you were trying to keep the bastard in the home. There was nothing for it, really, but to see it as a "family disease," a "symptom of family dysfunction."

Enter, the "incest mother"—that dreadful, "collusive" woman, who "always knew on some level"; who positively shoved her daughter in as a sexual surrogate; who invariably chose her man over her child; who was at once sexually rapacious and frigid; who denied and who lied. The "incest mother."

Never in history has the rotten mother been of such service to her country.

It was this "incest mother" who provided the very foundation on which the experts built their "disease model," their treatment intervention schemes, their decriminalization defense. It was she around whom intervention was structured, toward whom counseling was aimed. She, who was the justification for the proliferation of treatment programs designed to "keep the family intact." The fact was she seldom existed. But by now facts didn't have much power to bother anybody. The state had its new mythology. The "experts" had their problem-management industry. The paternal child molesters of America were once again safe.

The children and their mothers, however, were not—and are not. In placing themselves outside the "profile" of the typical "incest mother," in trying to protect the children, in choosing the children and not the offenders, women were placing themselves dangerously outside the convenience of public policy, and outside the available remedies in law.

Nor did these women have any real credibility with a public already thoroughly brainwashed about what a woman who chanced to find herself the mother of a child-victim should be like.

The offenders picked up on this readily. It gave them heart. It gave them hope. And it gave them a voice of such raucous outrage at the sheer injustice of things as to make our voices, when we spoke out, seem the very model of dignified, ladylike reason.

One of the backlash group's flyers tells me that "there is new hope" for those accused of sexual abuse. "We have," they say, "developed a specialized team capable of assisting on cases anywhere in this nation. . . . The team is made up of the best experts available in the United States. . . . We call it the 'annihilation team,' because our aim is to destroy false allegations. You can call it the 'A-team' for short. We mean business." The flyer is signed "The Avenger."

I have no opinion about the impact of television on small children. However, it clearly has an impact on the fantasies of some adult men.

These backlash groups, also, are being very well served by the "incest mother."

Dr. Lee Coleman, a psychiatrist based in Berkeley, California, and founder and director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatric Testimony, said before a meeting of Victims of Child Abuse Laws (VOCAL) that an allegation of child sexual abuse *might* be true under these conditions: Where you found a mother saying to the child, "How could you think such a terrible thing?"; or where you found the mother saying, "Don't let me ever hear you say anything like that again!" Paternal child molestation *might* exist, that is, wherever you had an intact family, and you had your good old prototypical "incest mother."

Coleman said,

Now, in a classic situation where the male figure is the alleged perpetrator, that is the kind of statement you might hear from a mother who is still married to the father, or who is still living with, and wants to continue to live with, the live-in boyfriend. Yes indeed, that is the kind of thing you might hear. That is the classic, intact family situation.

That makes sense when a mother who hears that her husband has molested a daughter may, in fact, have more loyalty to her husband than to her daughter, for emotional reasons, for financial reasons, and there may be a lot of other reasons. . . . And that most certainly is an abuse that anybody who becomes aware of should try to protect the child. . . . So far so good.

Now, we have a situation where the mother and the father have divorced each other. They hate each other. And they are fighting over custody of the child. Do you think you are going to hear that mother say to the child, "How could you ever think of such a terrible thing?" "Don't let me ever hear you say that again?"

"Well," he says, addressing this group with a membership of those claiming to have been falsely accused, "I don't need to tell *this* audience how totally ludicrous that is."

And so it is the nominally liberal ideology—of illness and cure, rather than crime and accountability—turned to by the state in its own interest, and enthusiastically embraced by professionals, which is providing a new shield of protection of offenders. The mental health "understanding" has generously given them a new framework for denial, a new justification for retaliation and vengeance toward child-victims and women who break the silence.

The backlash literature expresses a kind of petulant concern over what they see as "man-hating radical feminists" (which appears to include anyone who perceives child-rape as a gender, rather than gender-neutral, issue). But it is not a very serious concern that they are

expressing. And, alas, at least until now, we have given no cause why it should be. Incest in the present has not been a priority political issue for feminists.

It was not long after we first spoke out that it began to become clear that many feminists had also succumbed to the medical model. Survivors in significant numbers fell prey to the litany of shame and guilt. They fell victim to the litany of childhood sexual abuse as an individual emotional problem, and they—with the help of many of the new therapeutic “experts”—lost sight of the political/power issue at hand. That is not to say, of course, that there is no place for individual counseling, individual help, individual support. It’s just to say that when you are looking at a systematic, system-endorsed power abuse, individualized solutions—exclusively individualized solutions—are antithetical to change.

It was depressing, as well, to watch formerly feminist therapists seduced into paying the price of the ticket of access. To be fair, however, there was no other way into the incest club than to check your political persuasions permanently at the door; to agree with the “illness model”; and to speak of dynamics, etiology, of dyads, triads; and to tinker around with ever-more-fantastical methods of “behavior modification” for an “illness” in perfectly normal men.

With the re-introduction of *Kiss Daddy Goodnight as Kiss Daddy Goodnight: Ten Years Later* (Louise Armstrong, 1987), I had occasion to get back in touch with some of my friends who first joined me in speaking out. How did they feel about what had happened in these ten years?

Here is what one woman, Maggie, wrote:

Dear Louise,

Ten years! My god! I remember how brave I felt saying the words, getting my story out there. All those valiant thoughts of how it would change the world, help thousands, get it out of the closet, shake foundations. In many ways the outcome has been somewhat surprising. It’s sort of like, “She labored and labored and brought forth a mouse!” *Nothing’s really changed.*

We’ve been sold a bill of goods, particularly by the mental health people and the courts. The whole message is that those kids will just have to grow up fast and learn to understand daddy and give him another chance and that daddy just somehow got off to a bad start and if we will all sit down rationally and discuss it, that:

1. Daddy will see the error of his ways and be good.
2. Mommy will realize that if only she’d been more understanding and available to daddy and more intimate, she would have stopped it from happening.
3. We would get over our shame and realize we were not to blame. And we’d all live happily ever after.

Bullshit.

Recently, I went to yet *another* seminar on incest and child abuse which you must understand is good business for the “helping” professions, and they expounded all day on early recognition, immediate involvement and intervention, etc., etc. We spent the whole day learning what we as clinicians could do to *save the kids*.

Then the bureaucrats from the state got up to speak and the first thing they said was that unless you had proof positive—i.e., caught everyone red-handed—there wasn’t really much that could be done. Talk about intellectual masturbation.

All this funding, all these incest programs are a total abuse of power. If the kids are taken away, what good does that do the kids? And where are they putting those kids? We keep hearing that they’re sometimes re-molested in foster care. Do you think those kids are going to come forward and speak about it again? And go through it all *again?*

The mother can’t win. She’s wrong no matter what happens. If she leaves, she didn’t support her husband and work it through to keep the family intact. If she stays, somehow she’s condoning it. Usually, she’s so burned by her first experience, trying to leave or trying to get help to protect the child, she doesn’t ever want to confront it again. She’s burned out.

Ten years. I’m married to a wonderful man. He’s my best friend. My heart still skips a beat when I see him. I still think he’s beautiful. We’re great together. Our lives work. We travel. We went to Africa to see the gorillas, rode elephants in Thailand. We love spending time together. And I still, deep down, don’t trust him.

I’m successful, well liked, have substance, humor, joy, and on some level I still hate myself.

It still goes back to the damage of childhood, and it pisses me off. I’m bored to death with “my story,” and furious that it can still get in my way at times. All those neurotic fears have *nothing* to do with me, with my husband, with us, with the reality of us. I’ve swollen up like a blimp since we married for fear of the kind of wonderful intimacy we have. I’m losing weight again. It’s tiring, boring, and redundant. But when I look around me—I’m more alive than most people. I have more joy in my life, more variety, more pizzazz, and part of me loves who I am. I just think it would have been one hell of a lot easier if my folks had been Ozzie and Harriet. (Maybe just Harriet?) All that *wasted* energy and all those moments of self-hatred. . . .

There are incest counselors, incest programs, incest awareness groups, incest survivor groups, incest education for mothers and kids. . . . And it’s still happening. And it’s still legal. They’re still getting away with it. There’s a whole business around it, a structure to protect it.

And we’re getting used to it. “Hey, did you hear about so-and-so? She was molested by daddy.” “No kidding. I assume she’s getting some counseling. Where shall we go for lunch?”

God, when I think back to the hope we had, the ideas we had, the significance we attached to what we were doing, the belief we had that we could change things for kids now—and then when I look at how things really are for kids now. . . .

I hate to say we made things worse. I guess *we* didn’t, but I think

things *are* worse, and maybe somebody has to say so out loud before anything can ever change.

I'd like to see survivors wake up to the power abuse, and the abuse by professionals, talking about them as depersonalized victims, objects of study to be quantified and described in terms of some prefabricated set of personality specifications.

Ten years later. Damn. I am pissed off. I think it's time for a survivor revolt. No more "poor little things," or "how hard it must be for you." Let's just get some action to stop it.

Yes. I agree. It is time, ten years later, to begin action for change. If there is to be change.

How long are we going to watch the protective women we wished our mothers had been, relentlessly hounded, legally crucified—and do nothing? How long are we going to watch as the "Chrissies" of today become—if they are lucky, if it is a very good day—the survivors, the "Maggies," of tomorrow?

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