

and unresolved issues pertaining to criminalized youth in Canada.

The legal system reinforces sexist, racist, and classist stereotypes of women while simultaneously legitimizing patriarchal notions of the need to socially control women. We must all commit to transforming the social and economic position of girls and women and adamantly challenge attempts to further subjugate women if we are truly interested in addressing violence in our communities. We must also refuse to fuel panic with exaggerated and inaccurate claims about increased violent offending by women and girls. Refusing to address the issues raised by the involvement of women and girls in our criminal justice system will continue to cost us much more than money.

An earlier version of this article was originally published in the Summer 1997 issue of Canada's Children (Child Welfare League of Canada). Reprinted with permission.

Kim Pate is the executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS). CAEFS' 22 member organizations work with and on behalf of women and girls involved with the justice system, particularly those in conflict with the law.

References

- Butts, Jeffrey A. *Update on Statistics: Offenders in Juvenile Court, 1992*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, October 1994.
- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS). "Submission of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs Regarding the Comprehensive Review of the *Young Offenders Act*—Phase II." Ottawa: April 1996.
- Chesney-Lind, Meda. *The Female Offender: Girls, Women, and Crime*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1997.
- Howard League. "Imprisoning Girls." *Criminal Justice: The Magazine of the Howard League* 15.2 (1997).
- Sales, Nancy Jo. "Privileged Predators: Lost in the Park." *New York* 16 June 1997.
- Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. *Renewing Youth Justice: Thirteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Ottawa: House of Commons, April 1997.
- Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. *Youth Court Statistics: 1991-92*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992.
- Women and Imprisonment Group. *Women and Imprisonment*. Melbourne, Australia: Fitzroy Legal Service, 1995.

LYN LIFSHIN

I Went to the Dentist

I'd brought my daughter
Karen so she wouldn't be
afraid of the dentist
I'd gone so often
always had gas
Karen was 9 then
he put me out the
next thing I knew I was
being hurt he'd over
dosed me with gas
I was in pain he was
on me and I could
see him shove my
daughter out of the
room before I went
out I remember his
tongue in my mouth
I'd come to and he'd
grabbed my breasts
I had contusions
I was a singer but
the overdose of gas
damaged my lungs so I
can only sing once
or twice a week
now I was afraid if
he saw me come to
he'd shove more gas
on me when I left
I was crying my daughter
heard me scream thought
it was my teeth being
drilled I went to
the police they wired
me sent me back to
see what he'd say I
wouldn't go without one
of them in the hall
I got enough to convict
him for weeks I
worried about getting
pregnant when I
asked about intercourse
he wouldn't tell me,
just smiled

Lyn Lifshin's next book, Before It's Light, will be published in the Fall of 1999 (Black Sparrow Press).