

THE ZINE FOR LEATHERDYKES AND OTHER BAD GIRLS

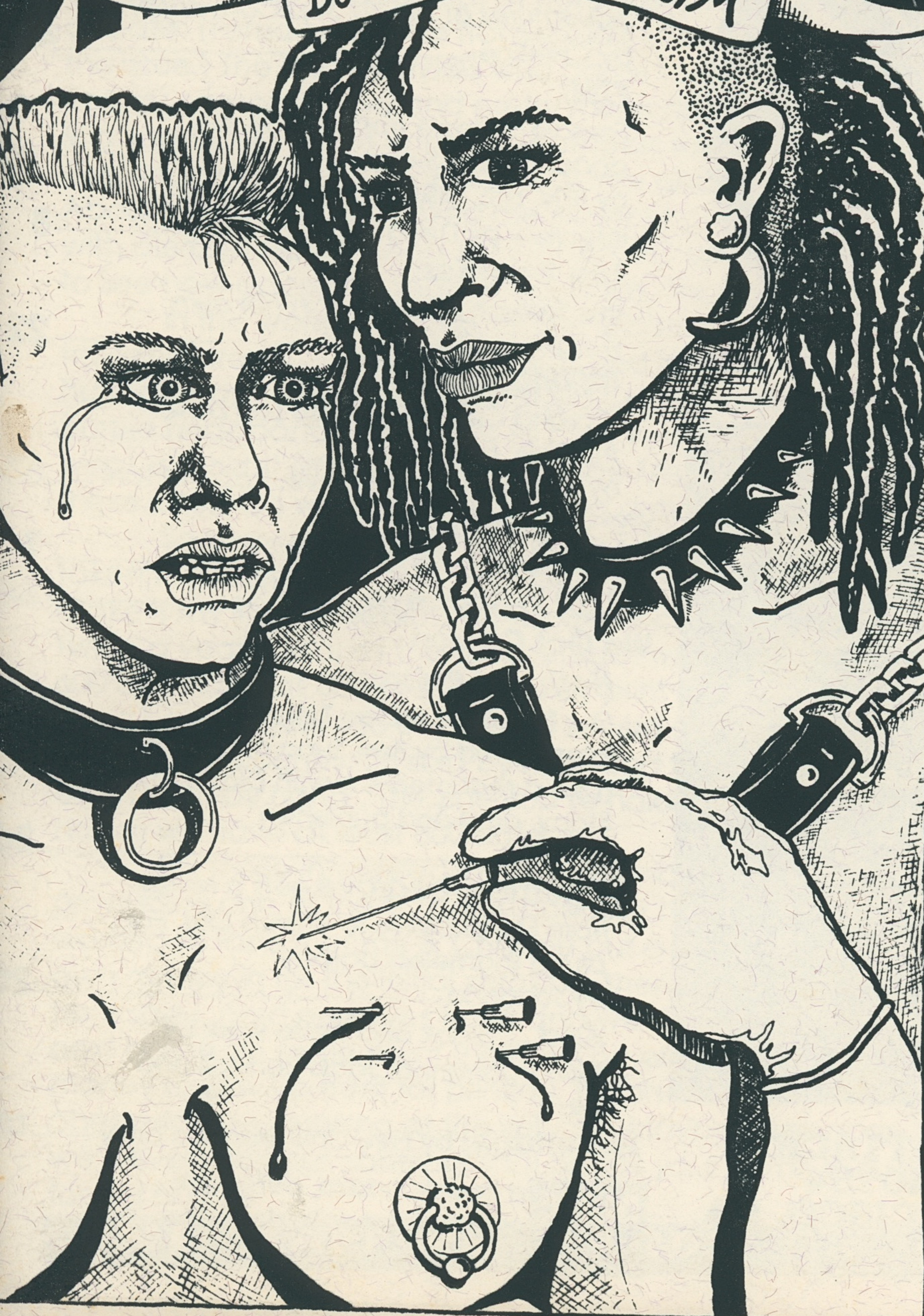
BRAT ATTACK

no.

3

THREE
BUCKS

DO-IT-YOURSELF S/M



**WORKING
CLASS
S/M
DYKES**
lay it down!

**HOTHEAD
PAISAN
KBRAT**
Interviews our
favorite lesbian
terrorist

**FEMALE
TO
MALE**
transsexuals
in the leather
community

plus erotica,
comix, art, an
undercover
expedition,
the "lesbian
serial killer"
and
Powersurge
'92....



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CONTENTS

We Got Events!

Powersurge 92 by Joan 24

We Got Features!

Editoria Christabella:

Adventures at the '91 Sep Convention
by Christine 4

FTM!

*Female-to-male transsexuals talk
about the Big Switch*
by Billy, Eric, Mike, Sky & Shadow;
interview by Deva 8

Lee Wuornos:

*the "lesbian serial killer" in her own
words* 22

Talking Class:

*Working Class S/M Dykes Lay Down
the Line; Part One*
by Christine, Fidi, Jenieve, Ro, and Toni 38

We Got Erotical

Untitled by Miriam Bloom 7

Lost in Space by Toni 34

We Got Comix!

Hothead Paisan

Our Favorite Lesbian Terrorist
interviewed by Bess Tuna on KBRAT
(plus a *real* interview with Diane and
Stacy, artist and publisher)
by Fish 26

Artemis Oakgrove gets a review
from Mo of *Dykes to Watch Out For*;
plus a shameless parody
by Johanna 20

And.... black and white work by
Julian, Johanna, Jacki Randall and
Fish

Tickertape! by Fish, Christine and Holly all

PLUS a questionnaire, personals,
announcements, zines and
resources...

Yodelling Torture

I sat in a circle of Lesbians gathered under the timber beams of a Girl Scout Lodge. We sat in age order, so that the youngest and the oldest dykes were next to each other. I thought, "They look so familiar, like family. I don't need to be afraid here. They'll never know my true secret identity." And then they started to go around with introductions. "Tell us your name, when you came out as a lesbian, and when you came out as a separatist." Uh-oh. I knew I shouldn't have ventured out from the kitchen. Stories of that profound moment when each dyke had decided to take a stand as a sep were offered up to the group. My hands were sweating. I was counting how many sisters before they got to me. I would be caught, exposed, banished or worse. I stayed in the circle long enough to avoid suspicion, then made a convenient escape back to the kitchen where that evening's meal awaited preparation. I didn't even complain about having to listen to Alix Dobkin for the tenth time in two days.

Yes, I was an undercover SM spy at the Separatist Convention, an annual event held in the Midwest. No, there was no covert plot. I was not sent to infiltrate the seps and make them feel "unsafe". I was there by chance. I was staying with a friend on my way out to San Francisco, and she was cooking for the Convention. She needed some extra kitchen help, and I offered to come along. Even though they were separatists, and I was a sadomasochist, I figured we were all dykes. And I could use the money. I would keep my mouth shut out of respect for their need for community, and hope I didn't get spotted by any seps from my hometown. I didn't realize what a nerve-wracking experience I was setting myself up for.

Seps are not "live and let live" liberals. Seps are revolutionaries. Seps are not non-violent. They would prefer all the men on earth dead. Seps don't believe in letting everyone do what they want as long as it's consensual. At least not these seps. These are the hard-core, the serious movers and shakers, the policy makers. Sarah Hoagland, Julia Penelope, wimmin like that. They believe that you have to fight the patriarchy, resist the world-wide, age-old war against women in every aspect of your life. I agree with a lot of what they believe, I just don't take it as far as they do. I'm just not that disciplined, or that certain. Alright -- I'm not that much of a judgmental fanatic.

by Christine

and Other Tales

For three days I cooked non-stop, listened to far too much bad wimmin's music (the dreaded Alix Dobkin yodeling torture), and tried to sort out my feelings about being "the enemy". This was the group that had banished two SM seps from the convention the year before. This convention included a debriefing on the incidents that had happened that year at the East Coast Lesbian Festival (some seps harassing SM dykes had been thrown out). I was not among friendlies here. I was too busy to attend any of the workshops, but I was sort of glad. I didn't want to take the chance of being found out.

Some observations: Seps are very cool about being fat. It's politically incorrect to be fat oppressive, so all the fat-phobes have to keep their opinions to themselves. I think that's my favorite thing about them. When it comes to food, seps prefer it free. Meat-free, dairy-free, wheat-free, caffeine-free, chemical-free, egg-free, corn-free, soy-free, spice-free, sugar-free.... Some seps seem to think it's politically incorrect have a sense of humor, since most jokes are racist, sexist, classist, ableist, looksist, or oppress people in some other way. Men always want women to smile all the time, so these seps cultivate the somber look. Besides, who could smile in the middle of the war against women? Seps can't dance, but who could to Alix Dobkin? The part of the conference that they most looked forward to was the big community meeting at the end, where they (surprise, surprise) decided on policy, argued over definitions, and processed. Seps do flirt, with much eye-contact, backrubs, and sharing over herbal tea.

I met one sep who I thought would make a really great SM dyke. Her name was Amber. She came into the kitchen to help out, and really livened things up. She was loud and boisterous, friendly, and had great eye contact. When she took off her shirt to chop veggies I knew I liked her. But then she told a story about visiting some friends of hers, and how hard it was for her as a sep to spend time with them because of how patriarchal they are. Seems these friends had behaved politically incorrectly by: a) inviting Amber over to for Christmas dinner (oppressive Christian/Capitalist holiday), b) serving TURKEY (need I say more?), and c) talking about how butch one of the couple was (butch/femme is a big sep no-no).

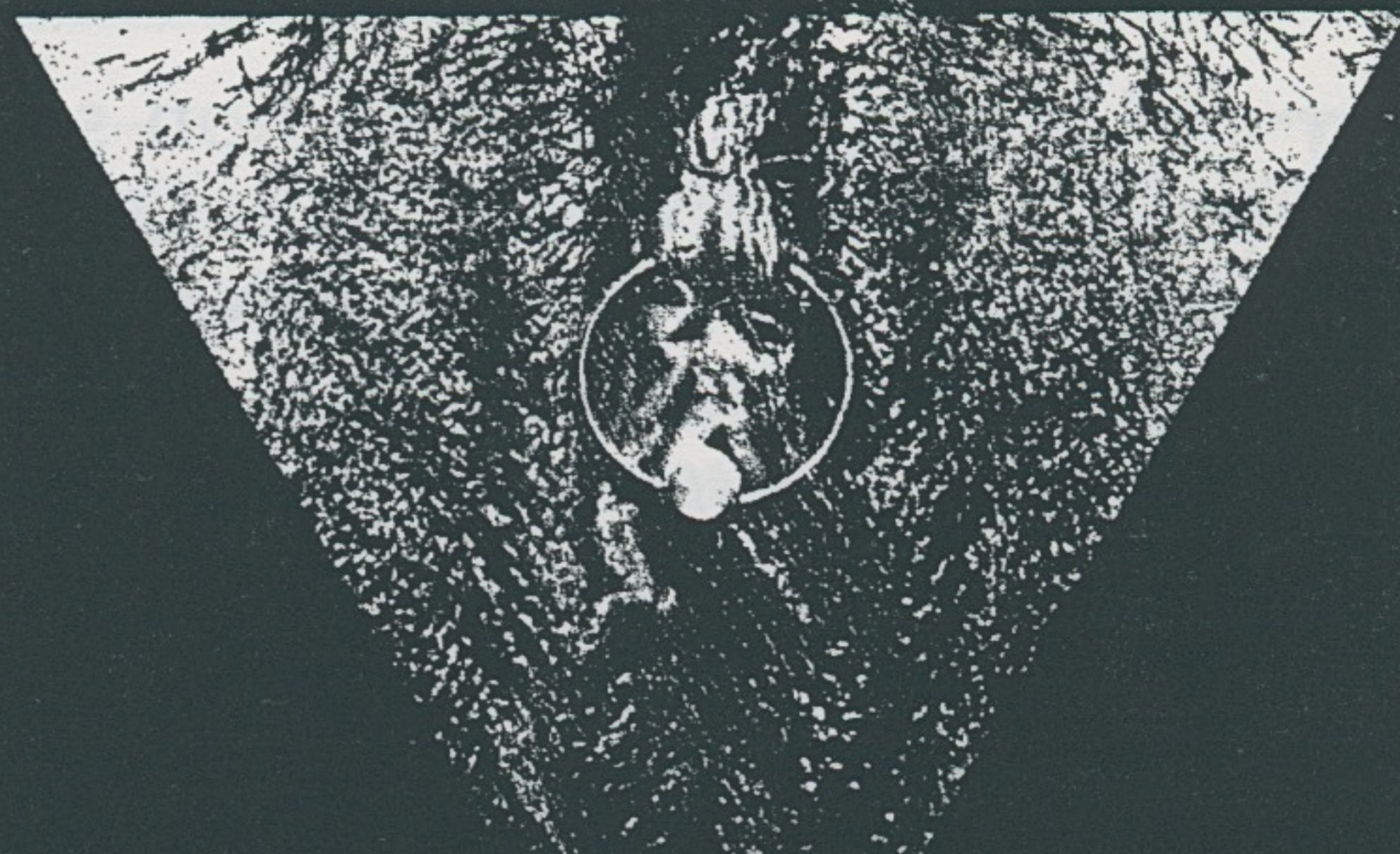
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Sympathetic moans all around from the other veggie choppers. I slipped a Madonna tape into the machine in silent protest. Wished I could have warned those friends not to waste their Yuletide hospitality on Amber next Christmas. Later that night I observed Amber doing a serious scene with her lover. Non-consensual emotional bottoming, of course. Amber's girlfriend was a secret sep femme bitch top.

I survived that weekend in separatist country without being outed as an SM dyke. At the time I was just an SM hopeful, on my way to San Francisco while visions of leather-dykes danced in my head. It would have been doubly infuriating to have been branded an enemy without ever having actually been branded, or flogged, or caned. Now I know better than to try a stunt like that again. A friend of mine was recently called before a PC lesbian version of the infamous Committee on Un-American Activities (the 50's, Senator McCarthy, commie witch-hunts, ring a bell?). Seems it was brought to the attention of the committee (which was reviewing my friend's writing for a scheduled reading) that she had once collaborated on a piece of writing with a known SM dyke (me). She had to defend herself, and her completely vanilla writing, because of her association with me, and I live 3,000 miles away from her and that small (minded) town. She got a taste of the prejudice that drove me away, and she's not even remotely into SM. I was enraged by her story, but then I decided to take it as a form of flattery. After all, I never thought I would be such a notorious pervert.

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NERDS PUSSY-WHIPPED WOMEN DADDY'S GIRLS

explore my masculinity. So of course I'm going to go off and do that. In five years, who knows? I may find a common ground where I'm fifty-fifty. But right now that's not where I'm at.

And I'm tired of people assuming that they know what's going on with me because of what somebody else is doing. Or — the men identify me as a woman and won't play, the women identify me as a man and try to get me the hell out of women-only space. So what am I left with?

Billy: I find that a lot of people don't take my shit seriously. They think it's play, because I'm not on testosterone now. I don't feel male, and I've never felt female. I tried — I went through the whole lesbian separatist bullshit, "I hate men", blah blah blah. It never occurred to me that I could change my gender. So a lot of this stuff is really new for me and I want to make sure that the reason why I'm doing it is because I can't live in this body anymore. I want to make sure that when I start the testosterone, that I'm not doing it because I feel pressured. I do other stuff — I work out, I pack, I bind [my chest], I do things that are really physically uncomfortable to me so that I can look more of what I want to be or what I feel inside. And being in the dyke community, and being in the leather community, people still try to pigeonhole you. I wish that people would just accept me how I feel. Accept the



FTM

Female to Male

*with Billy, Mike, Eric,
Sky & Shadow*

*A discussion organized &
facilitated by Deva*

name [change] and the energy that I put out. Which I feel is very male. I've had this problem for ten years now with women being attracted to my boyishness and my masculinity, but once they get involved with me they tell me I'm too male.

They encourage me to play with this, and when I talk to them about how I feel inside, and really let my guard down with them and talk about all this shit that I felt as a kid and all the shame around this....

Deva: It crosses the line.

Billy: Yeah, it crosses the line. It's not a fad. This is a very real, very personal, very hard thing for me to deal with in my life. It's not something that's easy, that's fun, that's a game. I won't, at this point, wear facial hair. Cause I want a

real moustache. I want a real beard. I'm not content with glueing something on. I want it to come out of my face. I want it to be mine. I don't want it to fall off while I'm kissing somebody.

[Laughter]

Eric: The lesbian place was really good for me from thirteen to twenty. That was a place for me to be in a genetic female body and be butch — to be male. I ran into a lot of problems with being called too male, and I would try really hard not to be sexist. But then I couldn't live with the split anymore, playing with stuff... I didn't want to go back to being *she*. I was like, "No, this isn't a game for me anymore." And I disagree, I think it *is* a fad. I have a hard time... I mean, it's nice that it's really common in terms of people talking about it, so that I'm not such a freak to people, but on the other hand I feel really uncomfortable with it being so casual. Because for me it's a very painful thing.

Shadow: I feel ripped off sometimes. It's like, people who are fucking around with it are invalidating my experience. And for some of them I'm sure it's not intentional. But some of them

— their attitudes....

Billy: It's drag.

Deva: Are you talking about gender play or are you talking about taking testosterone?

Shadow: I've seen both. I mean, people who have done the

testosterone — not so much here in the last few years — but people [who] have vacillated back and forth and all of a sudden they don't want to do it anymore. I'm tired of the people who got into this, "Oh, I screwed up, I didn't mean to do this, the doctor should have been more thorough in their tests, they should have stopped me from doing this...." That's bullshit. I spent ten years trying to figure out if this is what I was going to do or not. The one thing I wanted to be very clear about was how well I knew myself before I did any of this. And people who don't take that responsibility for themselves piss me off to no end. Because those of us who are serious about it end up paying for it. Not only by the attitude out there but also monetarily. Meaning, the doctors won't do the surgery unless you have cash up front. And we're talking not about five or six hundred dollars, we're talking anywhere from five thousand dollars for just a chest surgery to fifteen and thirty thousand dollars for a hysterectomy and beyond that for the phalloplasties. It has a snowball effect. And gender is the issue of the nineties. It all of a sudden sparked in the late eighties and now everyone's talking about it and doing it.

Mike: It's like anything else. For awhile, blood sports was the big thing. And for a while, fisting was the big thing. And then, gender and cigars and moustaches were the big thing. I take a contrary view to Shadow. I don't feel invalidated. I feel that anyone who wants to play with it and explore it in any way, shape or form they want to — fine. Those people who are serious, and it's part of their life, will either continue to crossdress and play with gender or will come to the realization — if they are FTM — to deal with that. I think the people who really fuck us over are those people who start the process and then put it off on somebody else. I mean, if you make the con-

scious decision to go forward, you are responsible for making that decision.

Sky: Part of the problem that I have is clearly exhibited by the group of us gathered here. I think I can safely say that everyone except me is very very male-identified as a primary identity. My dysphoria

has to do with my physical body, and not my emotional self. Everybody else in this room is physically much more

androgynous than I am. I clearly have very "girl", curvy body parts, and always have. My dysphoria has to do with my body not being the body that lives inside of my head. I get a little annoyed — a lot annoyed — about this process having to be one way. About everyone's assumption that if you start this, "this" is the end result. Because it's different for all of us.

My striving is to be what I really believe lives inside me, and that's a shape shifter individual. That's an individual who can walk in many different kinds of worlds. That masculine person who has lived inside of me never got validity because I have 38DD tits. No matter what I do, I have those. Even when I would bind, even when I would do those things, there are certain physical characteristics that come [only] by using the drugs — the squaring of the jaw, the typical male receding hairline at the temples, the voice — unless you're fortunate enough to have that.

I think the important thing is, just like all the stuff we do in our lives, we all have individual reasons for doing them. For one of us to say, "What you're doing isn't ok because it's not what should happen" is just as absurd as people putting that crap on us when we were in the dyke community. My emotional affini-

ties are still very clearly with queer women. I'm forty years old, and I've been involved with dykes for more than half of my life. I'm not going to give that up. That's where I feel good. I don't particularly feel good about certain individuals now who want to put their

The men identify me as a woman and won't play, the women identify me as a man and try to get me the hell out of women-only space. So what am I left with?

- Mike

trips on me, but all in all the dyke community is home. My process is not to fully identify and realize myself as a man. But neither am I a woman.

Eric: This group is not extremely representative of FTM's.... I think I'm the only one in this room who is pretty much only into girls and pretty much straight male identified.

Although I have a lot of history in the gay community — it will always be a part of me, just as having been born female will be part of me — that's one part that we should say something about.

Deva: I don't think it's a very homogeneous group, I do think that you are all very different, but in a sense you are all in the same community.

Billy: A pervert panel for a pervert audience.

Deva: Are most of the FTM's fag-identified or are they they straight identified? Is there shit between the people who want to see girls and the ones who play more on a fag level? What's all the inter-dynamics in the community?

Sky: Up until the time when this particular group of people got involved with the FTM group here in San Francisco, it was all very non-pervert, all very heterosexualized.

Shadow: Except for Lou, who was one of the guys who ran the FTM organization. [He] was

gay, and had a male lover, but he was the only one.

Billy: Part of it too was that if [the doctors] knew that you were going to change and be homosexual they wouldn't do it. So Lou Sullivan was a real pioneer in that.

Eric: They didn't get it that gender identity and sexuality were two totally different things.

Billy: When I started going to FTM groups, there were other people that were Leather-S/M people, but prior to that....

Eric: There still are people who are freaked out. There are a lot of FTM's who have gone and who have not come back. There is now a specifically straight-identified Female-to-Male group in San Jose. We all have to figure out what works and where it feels comfortable for us.

Mike: I've noticed that the FTM group that meets in San Francisco is fairly diverse. There is a percentage that is gay identified, there is a percentage that identifies as perverts, there is a percentage that identifies as straight. There haven't been any major politics, but I guess if people have been uncomfortable around the

that's so much total bullshit. There are lots of masculine women. I had a lot of masculine tendencies. I was too extreme, I was too male, I was too this, I was too that — you know, all of those behaviors that were assigned to men that women could not have. So all those sorts of butch identity things that I had in the past, I still have. They haven't gone anywhere, it's the physical body that didn't match what lived in my brain or what lived in my heart.

Mike: Yeah, definitely.

Billy: For me, if I can look in a mirror and not see my body between my belly button and my knees, I would like that a lot because I like the way my upper body looks. If I could just have slimmer hips and just have that male body that I have wanted and seen on myself all of my life, that would make all the difference.

Shadow: Yeah, I've never worn shorts before. I hated the way my legs looked. Now I love wearing shorts. My legs look great, they look how they're supposed to look.

Sky: People are given drugs in this society to correct problems. You have cancer, you take this drug, you have diabetes, you take insulin,

I'm tired of the people who got into this, "Oh, I screwed up, I didn't mean to do this, the doctor should have been more thorough in their tests, they should have stopped me from doing this...." That's bullshit. I spent ten years trying to figure out if this is what I was going to do or not.

- Shadow

pervs they haven't said anything; they have just kind of disappeared and done their own group.

[At this point the tape ended and there is a break in topic]

Sky: I think this notion of masculinity and femininity being assigned to certain genders,

and that's what I see this as being, personally. I am taking medicine, I am taking a drug that will correct this particular problem that I have. Not that it's going to make me into something that I am never going to be. I am never going to be a man, plain and simple. The only part of my body that I'm interested in getting rid of, and this really has little or nothing to do with what I see as my gender, are my tits. I have not liked my tits since fifth grade when I got them. They

continued on p.15

don't belong on my body. I can't run, I can't lift weights, I can't do lots of things cause they get in the way. I'm not interested in altering the lower part of my body at all. It works just fine, I like the parts that I have.

Deva: I think that that's a major question that people have. Do you use your pussies? Do you still like to get fucked in your pussies? Does that become an area where you're going to re-direct that energy into some other place? Is it something you never really felt comfortable with before?

Eric: All of us are so different around this. I have never been into penetration and I have always thought that my clit was not big enough, you know, thank god for dildos. But still, sex is very hard for me (eek). It's just a constant reminder.... I have never felt that that part of it was me; it was not right.

Billy: For me, this is really interesting because up until about a month ago, I've never really been into vaginal penetration. I've just always been into assplay. I've been trying to get my lovers to do it to me for like ten years, and because I have this other hole, they always assume that that's what I want to have filled. It's just not the case for me, I'm anal...[general laughter]...in a lot of different ways. It's not

I feel real thankful that there's a great FTM community of people that will drop their drawers and show me what testosterone has done to their clits.

-Billy

that I hate that part of my body, it just doesn't feel like it quite belongs to me. It has a lot to do with how I perceive myself and that that is the part of me that makes me female. I've been packing a dildo for ten years now, off and on. I finally have one that feels comfortable to pack

all the time. I like the way my clit works, and I like the way my butt works, and I don't know how much

I want to fuck with that based on the types of surgery that are available right now. I'm exploring my options, and I feel real thankful that there are people close to me right now that are doing this, that I can talk to — that there's a great FTM community of people that will drop their drawers and show me what testosterone has done to their clits. It makes me feel like there's hope for me of feeling comfortable in my body without butchering it.

Eric: For me, I hope to get surgery. [But] it would be crazy not to fear that we are going to lose what already does work to the extent that it does.

Shadow: [With] most of the surgeries you suffer some loss of ability to orgasm or even for sexual desire.

Sky: Genetoplasty is probably our best bet at this time. That's my personal judgement.

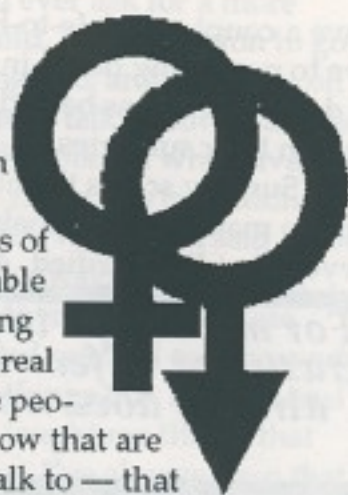
Deva: How is that different from phalloplasty?

Shadow: They release the clitoris, which is in like an enlarged hood, and they take the labia and they enlarge it a little because most of the time with testosterone they usually shrink. Then they'll insert prosthetic balls, and actually create a scrotal sack out of the major labia. But you don't fuck with any of the sensation.

Sky: Phalloplasty is reconstruction from other parts of the body... like skin grafts.

Eric: The [lower] surgeries are not great for us right now.

Shadow: Not great for either direction. Male-to-Females suffer the same loss as Female-to-Males do, it's just not talked about a whole lot.



I have a couple of Male-to-Female friends who have to pee laying down in a tub because of the damage that has been done to them through their surgeries.

Mike: Surgery scares the hell out of me. I've done so many medical malpractice cases [as a lawyer] that I'm terrified. As far as I've gotten

For me, I hope to get surgery. [But] it would be crazy not to fear that we are going to lose what already does work to the extent that it does.

-Eric

is upper surgery — I can't wait to get my chest cut. But I'm still not happy with what I've seen. Just recently I heard about this doctor in New Orleans that does a decent job so you don't have a scar going from one side of your body to the other, but until I can afford it, and until I can check this guy out, I'm not going to do anything. As long as it gets done by next year, that's good enough for me.

Sky: I'm a pig. I like to pitch and I like to catch. I am way interested in penetration in all of the available openings. I like to get fucked in the cunt and I like to get fucked in the ass, and I don't foresee that being an issue for me. It depends on what kind of modality I'm in. Often times when I am doing the stiletto heels, and the seam up the back of the leg stockings and the leather skirt, I know I am downright evil and I'm just a fucking bitch, and that's exactly how I want to be treated, and that involves having my cunt fisted and whatever. When I'm doing a Daddy thing, when I'm clearly in my male modality or my male mood stuff, I don't want my cunt fucked with at all. In all circumstances, in all situations, my clit is of course very important. My clit or my dick, depending on how it is that I perceive my body to work that particular moment.

Deva: Knowing how hard it can be just com-

ing out to family members about being queer, I would think it would be extremely difficult trying to explain gender issues, particularly to parents. For those of you who still maintain family ties, how has this affected your dealings with different family members?

Mike: My sister is getting married in

November, and I got a card from my mother about how nice it would be if I wore a black cocktail dress to the wedding, so I was forced to come

out to them. I wrote them a letter and just spilled my guts. The thing that hurt them the most was the fact that I would think they wouldn't love me anymore because of something that I would do. I think that I happen to be very fortunate. My mom is freaking out. My Dad... for the first time in my life I spent over an hour talking to him and he actually said how he was feeling about stuff. It wasn't about "Don't do this" or anything like that, it was about, "You're old enough to make your own decision, and whatever you decide we'll stand by you, but please please please check it out and be absolutely positive before you have any surgery that this is what you want."

The thing that he said which was the hardest for me to deal with was, "You have a black parent and a white parent and you're a mixed breed. The blacks don't like you cause you're white, and the whites don't like you cause you're black. You're doing this in terms of your gender, how are you ever gonna find a partner? How are you ever going to be happy?" Well in the middle of my father saying this, I've been having trouble finding dates. So how can I argue with the man when he's absolutely one hundred percent correct? All I know is that in order for me to have peace of mind, this is what I have to do.

Billy: I'm not out to my family about this yet because it is something that's pretty recent for me. I'll do it when it feels right. At this point I'm not ready to deal with their shit. I remember coming out to them about being gay, and it was a really big deal.

Sky: I hadn't talked to my family in about a year and a half, and then I talked to my parents on Mother's Day. And in a kind of nonchalant way, came out to them about what was going on. My mother figured it out very quickly when I said, "Hi Mom" and she said, "Who is this?" Of course, [over] a year and a half, my voice had changed significantly. My family has gotten very used to the fact that I am really different than they are, *really* different. And so this came as no big shock to them.

[I spent] most of my life being my father's favorite son. There was never any sort of thing put on it that "you're a girl and you can't do this" because it was just a survival tactic, learning what you needed to learn in order to get by in the world. I learned how to cook and sew from my mother, I learned how to fix cars from my father, and so it was pretty normal and I lived my life that way. I had a kid eighteen years ago, did not have the benefit of marriage, [and] not a big trip was put on that except for about two seconds, and then my mother went out and spread the news to the entire world that she was going to be a grandmother and she was very happy. So when I told them about this, my mother thought about it for a second, and her only concern was — was I ok, did I have friends, did people still like me. She told me, "I know that you have always done things differently in your life and I haven't always agreed with them, but as long as you're happy and it works for you, that's what's important to me. I won't worry about you."

Deva: How about your daughter?

Sky: No parent could ever ask for a more loyal, more loving child. I had occasion to go on tv not too very long ago, and she went on the television with me to talk about what this was for her, to have this person who gave birth to her suddenly make this transition. Poppy got up on the television and said, "You know, my mother has always been both of those people to me. My mother raised me alone. She went out and worked and supported me, and did those things that a traditional father would do. She taught me things that boys know." So for her, I've always been that sort of dual parent anyway. She also knows that regardless of what I look like and what I do, I will always be her mother and that won't change. She started to get a little panicked when she thought I would no longer be her mom, and so knowing that she's ok. She's very solid. She defends me left and right to people who don't get it and don't understand it. She gets it to the point where on Mother's Day I get flowers, and on Father's Day I get ties.

Shadow: I just got back two or three weeks ago from seeing my parents for the first time

*On Mother's Day I get flowers,
and on Father's Day I get ties.*

- Sky

in five years. I didn't tell them about myself, but when I started the hormones, the first time I was on the phone with my mother she says, "What's wrong with your voice?" And I said, "Well... there's an unusually high pollen count today mom, I'm a little hoarse here." And she was like, "Well god, it sounds like you're on testosterone!" and I'm like, "That's funny mom." Aaagh!!! My mother was a nurse for years, so she's not a dummy about this stuff.

I came out to my youngest brother and he's cool with it. His biggest concern is similar to

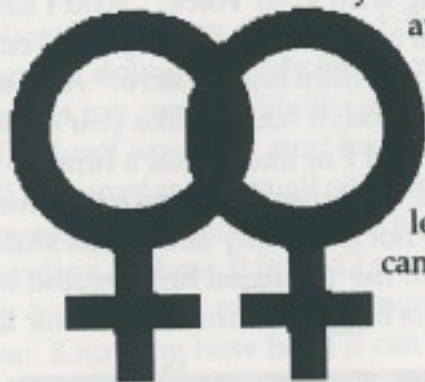
Mike's father's — make sure you pick the best damn surgery, make sure you know what you're doing before you go into it, and don't let them fuck you up. My mother, being a mother, finagled some of the information out of him one night, so they know. When I went down there that weekend, or a few weekends ago, we never had any time alone to sit and talk about it, but there were so many hints dropped from

My striving is to be what I really believe lives inside me, and that's a shape shifter individual. That's an individual who can walk in many different kinds of worlds.

- Sky

both directions. They would not quit going on and on about how good I looked. Before I went down I did shave. I wasn't going to slam it in their face, but I have changed drastically physically, so it was enough of a jolt to them just in that.

What I'm working towards is setting up a phone conversation at a time when they are both home and we can sit down and talk. But that weekend was the best weekend in the past fifteen years with my father. He and I had a very difficult time when I came out to him as a dyke; he didn't speak to me for almost ten years. Now I'm just doing a little bit at a time. I have no idea how it's going to go, I'll certainly be hurt if they go



away, but there's nothing I can do about that. I learned [that lesson] when I came out [as a

dyke], so it will just be applied in another direction.

Eric: I just finished telling my father. I wrote him a letter. He's not happy, but he didn't yell and that was a good thing. He turned sixty-nine yesterday, and he just keeps saying, "I'm

too old for this, I don't understand, I need more time to think about it", and that's ok. He asked me some questions, I know he's worried

about me, it's like the same as everybody else — he doesn't want anything bad to happen to me.

Mike: It's funny because I came out to my sister before I came out to anybody, and she was real cool on the phone, and [then] I found out the next day that she had called my ex-lover to see if I was jerking her chain and I was playing a practical joke. She had to double check to make sure it was for real.

Eric: That's what happened with my sister. She was so cool when I first told her. She was like, "Well it's not that different" and I kept saying, "Well no, it kind of is, I mean yes I've always been pretty butch and pretty male, but it is different." And right after that she kind of shut down. It's like once she got it she just couldn't deal.

Deva: Whenever I have talked to friends in other parts of the country about women I know who are either playing with gender or actually taking hormones, the usual reaction is shock, cynicism, and "You San Francisco

dykes!" So I wonder if FTM's outside San Francisco are just in different circles and more closeted, or if they generally are moving to more tolerant places.

Sky: I maintain the mailing list for the FTM group and I haven't seen a big influx of people moving here. What I *have* seen is more names across the country being added to the mailing list, trying to get information from groups that already exist. There are groups of us all over. There's certainly a lot more tolerance here — you can't have the kind of group that we have in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Deva: Is there anything else you guys want to talk about that you feel is important?

Sky: I wanted to talk just a little bit more about that particular thought, about people coming to San Francisco and this being trendy. I think that it's more of an evolution of a culture that's really starting to examine what our lives are about. We've gotten more and more defined about people who are incest survivors, people who are abuse survivors, and taking parts of our lives really apart and examining them and figuring how they work and how they don't work, and how they make us be who we are. I don't see it as a trend that will be dropped, I see it as being a trend that more people will follow and begin to examine how they feel about their sexual identity and their gender in the world.

Shadow: The cynical part of me doesn't believe that. I certainly hope that that's true, and as far as human nature goes, I would really like to see that happen because this human race could use it. But there's also the part of me that's been watching within the leather and S/M community, all of a sudden watching leather and S/M get very yuppified, and now it's the thing to look very bad and beautiful

and nasty....

Deva: Like Madonna.

Shadow: Yeah. I mean, Harley Davidson has gone yuppie, for Christ sake.... The cynical part of me says it's a trend.

Mike: The one thing that I wanted to stress was that whether you're into gender-fuck, gender-blur, gender-play, whatever you want to call it, does not mean that you are FTM or will become FTM. So whoever's reading this, if they're interested in exploring it, if it feels good, do it. Ask questions, check it out, and don't be afraid that just by trying something you're totally going to catch it.

Sky: I would like to say one thing in closing. For me, I have always looked to the women of the world to be the trend setters, to be the high aimers, to be the people who make other people look at things, make them think about them, make them feel about them. And I regard this particular process that I'm involved in to be yet another one of those things that women will be the pioneers in. Women who are in the lesbian community, women who are in the feminist community, whatever communities they are in, will begin to get a grip about this, and not only become advocates of people becoming more fully realized human beings, but will also be the pioneers in stopping this insanity of dealing with each other on a gender basis. And that will bring more humanity to us as a culture. I still have a lot of faith in women being the ones to do that. ●

