FROM COLUMBINE TO SANTA BARBARA

MEN CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA
MATTHEW SHEPARD’S OCTOBER MOURNING
MASTERING FATHERHOOD • LOVE, FURY, FATHERS AND SONS
COLLEGE GUYS AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
Wanted: Men to Change Masculinity Narrative

By Rob Okun

In the aftermath of Elliot Rodger’s misogynist-fueled rampage in Isla Vista, California, citizens around the country were once again either grieving, furious, or shaking their heads at the inevitability of it all. Another mass killing: seven dead, including the killer. Thirteen were wounded.

Commentaries noting Rodger’s association with the men’s rights movement followed, as did sound bite analysis of his 137-page manifesto of hatred of women (and heterosexual men in intimate relationships). Amid all the sound and fury, two key points remain largely obscured:

• Despite the explicitly gendered motivation for his killing spree, the national conversation since the May 23rd mass murders is overwhelmingly still focused on gun control and mental health rather than masculinity

• Men have again largely remained silent in the conversation.

Yes, not all men harass women. And, yes, all women have, at some point, been harassed by a man.

If that simultaneous truth can gain traction among men—from the pulpit to the factory floor; the softball field to the corner bar, then there’s a chance, a chance, we can change the prevailing narrative about masculinity. It’s a big if. As long as we spend our social capital on gun control and mental health to the exclusion of how we socialize boys and serve isolated, lonely, disaffected men, we will be on a fool’s errand.

(Notice that more men weighed in on Twitter and in the blogosphere about listening to women’s experience, including urging men to follow the Yes All Women hashtag, an irrefutable reality check that overwhelmed the “not all men” defense some males offered as a sign of individual innocence.)

We can no longer deny what is fundamental to all mass shootings. We have had more than enough wake up calls—Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook (see Jeremy Earp’s interview with Jackson Katz beginning on page 10.) And, we can ill afford to ignore the toxic effects of conventional masculinity, an urgent health care issue essential to ensuring a safe future for our society.

A week after the Isla Vista rampage, Leonard Pitts, the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, wrote a piece focusing on how he and many others were running out of outrage over such mass murders. Despite feeling he was “running out of words” to talk about such tragedies, Pitts concluded he couldn’t afford to. It was a good column. Except. Except that of its 666 words, not one used any form of the term “male”, “man,” or “masculinity.”

As long as we spend our social capital on gun control and mental health to the exclusion of how we socialize boys and serve isolated, lonely, disaffected men, we will be on a fool’s errand.

I belong to a movement of profeminist, antisexist male activists. We have for two decades been campaigning to place masculinity in the center of the mass shootings debate. Even though all but one of 68 such rampages over two decades has been perpetrated by (overwhelmingly white) males, the media, government, and academic institutions largely ignored gender in the discussion. So we need men with a platform like Leonard Pitts to speak out. (Bob Herbert was such an ally when he was a columnist for the New York Times.) And, we need their counterparts with far-reaching platforms in government, the military, academia, the entertainment and sports industries, and in faith communities. We also need everyday men—your brother, my son. Your work mate, my friend. Men who in the aftermath of the tragedy in Isla Vista have begun to wake up to the reality women live with—that any day they could be raped or beaten—can no longer turn away from that truth. It’s about a man seeing himself as more than an “active bystander.” It’s a consciousness shift to being a stand up guy.

That’s the silver lining in the storm cloud over sunny Isla Vista and the nation. Yes, Elliot Rodger demonstrated how easy it is to procure guns, heightening efforts at passing gun control laws. And, he sparked renewed efforts to improve mental health services. But the biggest unintended legacy of Rodger’s manifesto may be that his expression of loneliness, isolation, disconnection, and anger as a man may finally be heard. After nearly 70 mass killings in 20 years, maybe we’re ready to put masculinity in the center of a national debate that for too long has left gender out of the conversation.

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**On the Cover:**
Richard Martinez crying at the memorial for his son Christopher, killed in the mass shooting in Isla Vista, California in May. Surrounding him are mourners gathered at a candlelight vigil to honor the victims. Associated Press

**Male Positive • Pro-feminist • Open-Minded**
NOW Founder on Men

Judy Norsigian, executive director of Our Bodies Ourselves, left a flyer about Voice Male in the visor of my car when she was visiting me and giving a talk. She had copies of the magazine that she distributed at New College. I was glad to know about the magazine and the new Voice Male book about men who stand with women for gender justice.

Sonia Pressman Fuentes
Sarasota, Fla.

The writer, 85, is author of Eat First: You Don’t Know What They’ll Give You, The Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter, and one of the founders of the National Organization for Women.

Masculinities 101

Masculinities 101 is a blog project of the new Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities, at Stony Brook University. A forum for activist scholars in the field of menandmasculinities, it draws connections between social science research and everyday life. We aim to support activist work by providing a scholarly context to contemporary issues of gender, race, sexuality, and class. We promote critical race and feminist explorations of men and masculinities in order to engage activists and scholars in necessary conversations for social change. You can follow us on Twitter: @masculinities101 and like us on Facebook. Or, contact us via email: masculinities101@gmail.com.

Cliff Leek
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Letters may be sent via email to www.voicemalemagazine.org or mailed to Editors: Voice Male, PO Box 1246, Amherst, MA 01004

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What happens when a transgender activist gets to turn the tables and ask her interviewer to prove her womanhood? Transgender activist Janet Mock grilled host Alicia Menendez about her identity, genitalia, and womanhood not long ago in a segment for Fusion TV’s AM Tonight. Menendez answered a series of invasive questions like “Do you have a vagina?” and “When was the moment that you felt your breasts budding?”

The interview was a parody of typical media interviews with transgender people, with Mock asking Menendez—who is cisgender—many of the same questions she routinely has to deal with as a transgender woman. The segment highlighted the way that even trans-welcoming media personalities can objectify and dehumanize their transgender guests by focusing on their bodies and medical histories.

In January, Katie Couric was criticized for an interview in which she asked a transgender guest whether she had undergone surgery on her “private parts” (Winter 2014).

At the end of the AM Tonight interview, Menendez remarked that, even though she had helped write some of Mock’s questions, she “didn’t realize how awful and invasive some of them would feel.”


THE KISS SEEN ‘ROUND THE WORLD
Who had trouble when openly gay newly drafted NFL player Michael Sam was shown kissing his boyfriend on ESPN? For one, Amy Kushnir, cohost of The Broadcast, a Dallas, morning show. She walked off the set after a heated discussion with her other hosts about the airing of Sam’s kiss. Kushnir argued that the kiss was being “pushed in our faces” and objected to having her sons watch two men kiss. Kushnir also claimed she also opposed seeing heterosexual kissing on television, prompting skepticism from her cohosts and eventually resulting in Kushnir’s exiting the set.

Invited onto Fox News in mid-May, she described the kiss as “shocking,” “over-the-top.”

[continued to page 6]
and lamented that people with “traditional values” couldn’t express their views without fear of getting “lambasted.” During an edition of the Fox News program America’s Newsroom, radio host Lars Larson accused the gay community of showing a “lack of tolerance” for those who say “yuck” at the sight of two men kissing.

When Kushnir was asked on The Kelly File by fill-in host Shannon Bream if she also opposes risqué advertisements regularly shown on ESPN, she made clear her complaint is limited to the airing of the same-sex kiss. Though she claimed she would oppose any display of sexuality on television, she apparently had no problem being hoisted on the shoulders of two shirtless erotic dancers in a recent taping of her show.

**Jimmy Carter’s Call to Action**

Former president Jimmy Carter has issued a call to action to end the abuse and subjugation of women, which he refers to as the “worst and most pervasive and unaddressed human rights violation on Earth.”

Carter issued his strong statements about gender equality in a recent interview with NBC News’ Andrea Mitchell. The former president’s latest book is A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power, and discusses the issue of women’s victimization around the world.

There’s significant data to back up his claims. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in three women around the world is subject to sexual violence at some point in her life. In many parts of the world, women still aren’t receiving adequate health care and education. Every year, about 14 million girls under the age of 18 are given away as child brides, and an additional 4 million women and girls are bought and sold into slavery. And according to the United Nations, at least 125 million girls in Africa and the Middle East have undergone female genital mutilation.

In his book, Carter argues that conservative faith leaders have indirectly contributed to the ongoing violence against women by furthering a society that allows inequality to flourish. “Religious leaders say women are inferior in the eyes of God, which is a false interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. When [people] see the Pope, the Southern Baptist Convention, and others say that women can’t serve as priests equally with men, they say well, I’ll treat my wife the way I want to because she’s inferior to me,” Carter told NBC News.

Carter’s book makes the case that the United States is at least partly responsible for perpetrating the ongoing violence against women around the globe, since the U.S. wields such great international influence.

**Be That Guy**

A video urging men to be leaders in stopping violence against women broadcast at the Indianapolis 500? It happened. Breakthrough, a global human rights organization’s “Be That Guy” campaign video was screened multiple times on the jumbotron at the Indy 500, one of the highest-attended sporting events in the world.

The 30-second “Be That Guy” animation, presented in an edgy, appealing style—and taking place at a race track—depicts one racing fan stopping a buddy from harassing a waitress with the tagline: “Hands are for beer. And high-fives.” The crowd cheers for the guy who intervenes. The animation is designed to show that while it does take some courage to “be that guy,” most people want to be and, if encouraged more people will, according to Mallika Dutt, Breakthrough president and CEO.

To watch the animated “Be That Guy” PSA or find out more about ways to get involved, visit www.breakthrough.tv.

**Preventing Rape on Campus**

In response to President Obama’s goal to prevent campus sexual assault, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), along with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), have released recommendations for addressing sexual violence on campus.

According to the White House report, Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action, one in five women have been sexually assaulted while in college, and 63 percent of men who admitted to committing rape/attempting rape said that they had committed an average of six rapes each (White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, one in 71 men have been raped at some time in their lives and one in 21 men have been forced to penetrate someone else during their lifetime.

Sexual violence can undermine a student’s academic career, creating an economic and social ripple effect over the course of their lifespan. While the individuals who commit these crimes need to be held accountable, the NSVRC and PCAR know that they do not commit sexual violence in a vacuum, according to Donna Greco, NSVRC training and technical assistance director. In fact, sexual violence is preventable—it is a learned behavior that is shaped by individual, relationship, community, and societal factors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). NSVRC and PCAR believe that in order to prevent these crimes, universities need culturally relevant, comprehensive strategies that engage the entire campus community on multiple levels—from recruitment to graduation.

To read the in-depth recommendations, visit http://tinyurl.com/motbm5b. For more, visit www.nsvrc.org and www.pcar.org.

**Dad Models Accepting Gay Son**

The following note from father to son could serve as a model for other parents responding to their children coming out.

Nate,

I overheard your phone conversation with Mike last night about your plan to come out to me. The only thing I need you to plan is to bring home OJ and bread after class. We are out, like you now. I’ve known you were gay since you were six. I’ve loved you since you were born.

—Dad

P.S. Mom and I think you and Mike make a cute couple.
What’s happening with men and masculinity?

That’s the question Voice Male tries to answer each issue as it chronicles manhood in transition. The changes men have undergone the past 30 years, our efforts following women in challenging men’s violence, and our ongoing exploration of our interior lives, are central to our vision.

The magazine’s roots are deep in the male-positive, profeminist, anti-violence men’s movement. We draw inspiration from the world-changing acts of social transformation women have long advanced and the growing legion of men agitating and advocating for a new expression of masculinity.

At this key moment in the national conversation about men, Voice Male has much to contribute.

Join us! 4 issues—$28 / 8 issues—$45 Institutional Rate: 4 issues - $40 / 8 issues - $65

Voice Male is a superb, groundbreaking publication offering a powerful way to engage men in working towards gender justice and to encourage younger men to learn new ways to become a man. Every individual and institution interested in gender equality and violence prevention should subscribe and spread the word!

—Judy Norsigian, coauthor and executive director, Our Bodies, Ourselves

“Know Thyself” said the ancient Greeks. “Recreate Thyself” says Voice Male. This vital publication aims for nothing less on behalf of all men. Voice Male is an important tool in our struggle to re-imagine ourselves in the world.

—Bill T. Jones, artistic director, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company

To subscribe—or to make a tax-deductible gift—please use the enclosed envelope or go to: voicemalemagazine.org
in the midst of growing outrage and deepening concern about sexual violence, sexual harassment, and the flourishing of rape culture on our campuses, Voice Male contributing editor Michael Kaufman has written a guide aimed at campus men. It takes an accessible and honest look at these issues and provides a positive approach to help young men learn about the consequences of their words and actions. The booklet applies to all relationships, although the particular emphasis is on men’s relationships with women because that’s where most (but of course not all) dating violence occurs. This excerpt about consent was inspired by Harry Brod’s lecture “Beyond, ‘But we were both drunk’: The Ethics and Erotics of Sexual Consent” (www.harrybrod.com).

For information on ordering ManTalk for your campus, visit www.michaelkaufman.com/mantalk. And if you purchase a license to distribute it on your campus, please put Voice Male on the order form under Partnership Code. That way 20 percent of the proceeds will go to support the work of the magazine.

**Rules of consent: to make sure you both want to do it!**

We have a phrase for any type of sexual act when one person doesn’t want to do what the other person is doing to them: it’s sexual assault, or, simply, rape. Consent is when both people agree to do the same thing and let the other person know. There are four rules of consent:

**Rule 1: When it comes to sex, only yes means yes.** “Maybe,” doesn’t mean yes. “I guess so,” doesn’t mean yes. “Let’s see what happens,” doesn’t mean yes. And “no” never, ever means yes.

Unless you want to commit date rape, you’ve got to hear a “yes” to have consent and there has to be a “yes” on your side too. Sample: “Hey, do you want to tear off our clothes and have sex until we can’t walk?” “Yeah, that sounds cool.” That’s consent.

**Rule 2: It’s your responsibility to know if you have consent.**

If a cop pulls you over when you’re speeding, it doesn’t help to say, “Officer, I didn’t know there was a speed limit here.”

Ditto with sex. It’s your responsibility to learn the other person’s limit and it’s their responsibility to learn yours. And remember, it’s not their responsibility to say “no”; it’s your responsibility to know they say “yes.” Some people say, “Well, how can you know for sure?” My friend Harry responds, “Man, how could you not know? Can you imagine waking up some morning and wondering if you’re a date rapist?” Or, to put it differently, how could you not want to have good (consensual) sex?

**Rule 3: Nothing you’ve already done gives you permission to do the next thing.** You’re kissing like mad; she’s totally into it; that must mean it’s okay to get your hand under her shirt. Wrong. You’ve got your clothes off and you’re all over each other; that must mean it’s okay to have intercourse. Wrong.

The truth is that, unless you’re involved in a regular relationship and have already worked out a set of rules (although “no” still means no), every time you go to a new “level” you’ve got to get consent.

Some people say, “That sucks. That totally breaks the flow.” I’d be lying if I didn’t say there’s a bit of truth in that. But by both of you knowing you’re doing what you want, there’ll be a thousand times more sexual energy than if one person is getting off and the other would rather watch reruns on TV or is uncomfortable or scared.

Even better, because you’ll know for sure, and you’ll both be talking about what you want, we guys become much better in bed.

**Rule 4: If you’re intoxicated, you can’t give or get consent.** If either of you is too drunk, or high, to completely know what you’re doing then it’s impossible to have informed consent. You can’t give it and you don’t know if you’ve truly got it. Afterwards neither of you knows if one of you is a date rapist.

If you’re with someone and you make a decision together to get wasted and have sex, that’s not assault because consent happened when you were sober. (Again, at any point, “no” means no and “stop” means stop.) But, if it’s the other way around, there can’t be consent. It’s the law.

Voice Male contributing editor Michael Kaufman is one of the leading profeminist figures promoting gender equality in the world. He is the author/editor of six books on gender issues, democracy, and development studies, and also wrote the award-winning novel Possibility of Dreaming on a Night Without Stars.
normalizes the alienation between fathers which these statements create a culture that to create false values."

nonessential work-related responsibilities is of ‘co-laboring’ in a delivery room due to lifelong bonding and sharing in the responsibility leave is critical in helping dads create about masculinity and fatherhood. Pater short-sighted and reflect old-school thinking said, “I think these comments are pretty life to challenging the ways in which sports and athletes could be a metaphor for social change and elevate the birth/nurture/fatherhood role and responsibilities over work.”

He then said to me that this kind of sexist mentality not only harms families, not only harms men, but also quite specifically harms athletes. “I’m convinced the number-one common denominator in locker rooms is father-child dysfunction,” he said. “It’s what pathologically elevates many performances. ‘I will prove to [the coach/father figure] I am worthy of my dad’s love and acceptance,’ at the expense of self and others. If any group should understand need for dads in delivery rooms it should be athletes and the athletic world.”

I would also add that the only reason Daniel Murphy even had the option to take this time off is because it was collectively bargained into his contract by his union. There are millions of men in nonunion jobs who don’t even have this option, not to mention millions of women who risk their employment in the United States by taking time off after the birth of their child.

I think there is something else going on as well. The comments from Boomer and Francesa smack of a kind of existential fear from an older generation of sports radio jockeys about the ways in which definitions of masculinity and sports have been rapidly changing. There have been two dominant kinds of masculine archetypes for the last thirty years in sports. Either you could be heterosexual, misogynist, talking loudly but saying nothing with a goal of trying to become a commercial brand; or you could be a heterosexual evangelical Christian, talking humbly with a goal of trying to become a commercial brand. Those who strayed outside of these norms have only done so with considerable risk to their standing in the media or even their job.

But in the last two years, these archetypes have changed. We have seen players such as Jason Collins, Robbie Rogers, and Michael Sam break new ground as gay athletes. We have seen Royce White and Brandon Marshall speak out about their mental health challenges and show that this kind of openness does not demonstrate weakness but courage. We have a new cultural consensus that does not see concussions as a bizarre badge of honor but a danger sign. We’ve had Jonathan Martin go public about being bullied by teammates, forcing the NFL to confront long-standing locker-room behaviors. Poisonous, narrow definitions of masculinity are being challenged. A player’s missing opening day to be with his wife on the birth of their child clearly caused Boomer’s and Francesa’s brains to rupture. Their idealized sports world as a masculinist cocoon absent of progress and insulated from the real world, where every day is 1985 (or even 1955), is withering before their eyes. People are deciding that ruining your life and your relationship with family in the name of a potential fear from an older generation of sports is deciding that ruining your life and your relationship with family in the name of a
danger sign. We’ve had Jonathan Martin go public about being bullied by teammates, forcing the NFL to confront long-standing locker-room behaviors. Poisonous, narrow definitions of masculinity are being challenged. A player’s missing opening day to be with his wife on the birth of their child clearly caused Boomer’s and Francesa’s brains to rupture. Their idealized sports world as a masculinist cocoon absent of progress and insulated from the real world, where every day is 1985 (or even 1955), is withering before their eyes. People are deciding that ruining your life and your relationship with family in the name of a potential fear from an older generation of sports is deciding that ruining your life and your relationship with family in the name of a
On April 20, 1999, high school seniors Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold walked into the cafeteria and library at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, began shooting, and killed 12 of their classmates and a teacher—and wounded dozens of others—before taking their own lives.

The rampage shocked the nation and sparked a fierce national debate about gun control laws, youth violence, bullying, school security, and violent video games.

But 15 years and scores of mass killings later, the national conversation about rampage killings seems to be stuck at an impasse—fixated almost exclusively on the issues of guns and mental illness. The result has been virtually no sustained analysis of the most glaring variable of all: the stunning fact that 99 percent of school shootings, and at least 67 of the last 68 mass shootings overall, have been committed by men and boys.

Recognizing the Columbine anniversary as an important opportunity to reflect on the tragedy 15 years later, Jeremy Earp, director of Tough Guise: Violence, Manhood & American Culture, interviewed cultural theorist and anti-violence educator Jackson Katz, a Voice Male contributing editor and creator of the Tough Guise films, about the acceleration of mass killings by men and boys over the past decade.

Katz, whose work focuses explicitly on the relationship between violence and cultural ideas about manhood, has been in the forefront of the bystander-focused violence prevention movement. With colleagues, he worked with the Columbine school system in the wake of the shooting. Tough Guise 2 examines the epidemic of male violence in America—from school shootings to bullying to sexual assault—against the backdrop of a culture that has normalized, and glamorized, violent masculinity.

**JEREMY EARP:** In your violence prevention work you’ve argued that we need to stop glossing over the fact that men and boys commit the overwhelming majority of rampage killings. Can you say more about that?

**JACKSON KATZ:** The media-driven conversation about the causes of school shootings and mass shootings tends to focus on two main issues: gun availability and mental illness. What this leaves out, of course, is the single most important factor: the gender of the perpetrators. It’s as if no one wants to talk about the 800-pound gorilla in the room—the stunning fact that 99 percent of school shootings, and at least 67 of the last 68 mass shootings overall, have been committed by men and boys. Instead there’s this endlessly de-gendered talk about shooters, killers, suspects, youths, perpetrators, and troubled teens. As a result, we never ask tough, basic questions about why it is that men and boys are far and away the most common perpetrators of this kind of violence.

**JE:** Whether it’s Columbine, the Boston Marathon bombing, or, more recently, the mass shootings in Isla Vista, at Fort Hood, or the mass stabbing in Pennsylvania, why do you think mainstream reporters and analysts seem to be so allergic to looking at the gender of the perpetrators?

**JK:** In part, I think it says a lot about the invisibility of privilege and how that plays out linguistically. Since men are the dominant gender, their dominance is often hidden behind universals: it’s all about disturbed or angry “people” committing unspeakable acts of violence. A useful way to see how this works is to imagine what
would happen if girls or women committed 99 percent of these shootings. If that were the case, does anyone seriously think we’d be talking about guns and mental illness as the first line of explanation? Does anyone seriously believe we’d still be talking about “people” going on shooting sprees? I don’t think so. It’s obvious there would be a lot of talk about what’s going on with girls, as girls. But when it’s boys, the gender piece stays hidden and we talk about all of these other important—but in my view secondary—factors. And the result is that we don’t examine the role cultural ideas and narratives about manhood play in rampage killings and other manifestations of violence.

JE: What would an analysis of mass shootings that emphasized gender, and especially dominant cultural ideas about masculinity, reveal to us?

JK: Well, for one thing, we’d pay more attention to how school shootings are almost always revenge killings carried out by boys who have been bullied, socially ostracized, or marginalized. We know from the journals of Klebold and Harris that this was the case with Columbine, that they saw mass murder as a way to win back respect and project strength in a peer culture that saw them as weak. Violence was a way to reclaim their manhood. They say this explicitly. And we need to try to think about what this means given that a powerful and pervasive theme in our culture, and other cultures as well, is that violence is not only a legitimate means—but a glamorized means—of proving or reclaiming manhood and masculinity. We need to look at how that shapes behavior in the real world. Think about it. If you’re a man and you use violence to respond to a situation, you might not solve the problem, but no one will think you’re less of a man for acting violently—even if you use demonstrably disproportionate force. But if someone threatens you and you respond by withdrawing and refusing to use violence, you risk being shamed and “unmanned.” You risk being diminished as a man in the eyes of your peers, and perhaps in the eyes of women around you as well, because everyone’s bought into this same invented discourse about what a real man is, what toughness is, etc. We don’t have anything like these same kinds of deep-seated cultural narratives and mythologies about femininity. And that’s one of the reasons so few girls who are bullied resort to violence. Female victims tend to internalize the abuse and turn inward, hurting themselves further, putting themselves into situations of greater vulnerability. Boys tend to externalize, to take it out on others. Unless you want to maintain that this process is hardwired or genetically linked to biological sex, it’s clear that gender norms are implicated—and that means this stuff can be unlearned.

JE: What about the argument that men and boys are hardwired or at least have a greater biological propensity for violence?

JK: It’s true that the capacity for violence is hardwired into our species. In that sense, it’s biological. But guess what? The capacity for nonviolence is also hardwired into our species. The question isn’t whether biology plays a role. The question is how we organize our societies and the gender norms that shape behavior in such a way as to deemphasize and discourage violence rather than glamorize and encourage it. It’s also important to remember that while of course boys and men share the same DNA and hardwiring, a relatively small percentage of boys and men commit acts of violence. If biology were destiny, wouldn’t more men be violent?

JE: Where does mental illness fit in here?

JK: Whether mass shooters suffer from personality disorders, or mental illness, this can hardly be said to trump gender. To see why not, just ask a basic question: If mental illness is the reason for most school shootings, why aren’t 50 percent of these shootings done by girls and young women? Don’t girls and women suffer from mental illness in roughly similar proportions to boys? If so, why are 99 percent of these shootings done by boys? The fact is that even boys with personality disorders and mental illness are products of powerful gender norms and cultural narratives that affect everybody. It’s always amazing to me when people say, “Oh, he’s mentally ill,” as if no further explanation about why he went on a shooting rampage is necessary. One of the most insidious things this does is to suggest that mentally ill people are violent, when the vast majority of mentally ill people aren’t violent at all.

JE: You’re talking about how cultural norms of manhood have the capacity to shape violent behavior. How is that different from saying that the culture—whether it’s violent movies or violent video games—causes violence?

JK: The mainstream debate about media effects and the relationship between media and violence is embarrassingly superficial and simplistic. It’s not about whether “kids” know the difference between fantasy and reality, or whether they’re somehow so impressionable that they’ll just go out and imitate the violence they’re exposed to in movies or song lyrics or first-person shooter video games. What I argue in my writing and films is that since gender—and therefore We need to increase men’s emotional literacy. So many men who experience feelings of sadness, doubt, insecurity, grief, and loss often mistakenly identify those feelings as anger.
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF VIOLENCE IS COMMITTED BY MEN?

- 86% armed robberies
- 77% aggravated assaults
- 86% firearm suicides
- 10% murder
- 87% stalkers
- 1% rape
- 99% rape

REDEFINING MANHOOD

Most men aren't violent, but 90% of violent crimes are committed by men. The question is why? For too long we've identified masculine strength with violence. But true strength comes from challenging the myth that being a real man means putting up a false front, disrespecting others, and engaging in violent and self-destructive behavior. Let's lose the tough guise and start being real men.

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Toughguise2.com
media education foundation
Tough Guise 2, a documentary featuring anti-violence educator Jackson Katz, looks at the real world consequences of American culture's glamorization of violent masculinity.

61 of 62 mass shooters*

* between January 1982 and July 2012
What kinds of specific questions do you think we should be asking about these cultural scripts?

JK: For one thing, I’d like to see people talking about what it means for men to be strong, beyond the obvious and crude definitions of strength that are equated with physical strength and the willingness to inflict violent damage. I’d like to see discussions about the need to increase men’s emotional literacy, because so many men who experience feelings of sadness, doubt, insecurity, grief, and loss often mistakenly identify those feelings as anger, and then respond to that anger by taking it out on others. I’d like to see more open discussion about the fear of violence that’s a major part of so many boys’ and men’s psyches—especially about how this fear triggers feelings of vulnerability, which in turn produces a desperate need to defend oneself against this vulnerability given we live in a culture that equates male vulnerability with weakness. It’s pretty clear that fear, in all of its dimensions, is one of the key factors at work in the American gun culture—especially men’s fear of other men, and their fear of their own vulnerability. This fear sometimes has a racial subtext, as we’ve seen in the law-and-order movements that arose in the 1960s (in part out of white fears of black crime), and we see it today with so-called Stand Your Ground laws.

JE: On the subject of guns, what do you make of the way debates about guns, and gun control, have played out in mainstream media and politics in the wake of high-profile mass shootings?

JK: For me, the ongoing debate about guns in this society is really a proxy debate for what’s going on with changing ideas about American masculinity. Guns are instruments of violence that can be used either to defend oneself or to impose one’s will—and this makes them tools for the enactment of certain kinds of manhood. Now I fully understand, and relate to, the desire to protect oneself and one’s family in a dangerous world. But where I part company with a lot of pro-gun advocates is that I don’t allow fear to dictate my actions or undermine my ability to think rationally about risk.

Legendary media researcher George Gerbner’s concept of “the mean world syndrome” is very useful here. What Gerbner’s research found is that in a media culture filled with violence—perpetrated overwhelmingly by violent men—many men feel an inflated and unrealistic sense of threat which they feel the need to arm themselves against. Of course, this is the same logic that drove the nuclear arms race during the Cold War, and drives militaristic ideologies to this day. And the problem is when the very thing designed to protect us ends up being the greatest source of danger—all because we’ve caved to fear and looked to hollow myths of toughness to alleviate this fear.

JE: Why do you think the epidemic of everyday violence barely even registers in the news?

JK: Mass killings get the most attention and have specific characteristics that are worth exploring. But routine murders, assaults, and rapes come out of the same social and ideological system. Whether it’s a 14-year-old African-American boy killing an innocent bystander on a bus in the midst of what might have been a charged encounter with gang rivals, or a retired white male police officer in a movie theater shooting a man he was arguing with after the victim threw popcorn at him, cultural ideas about manhood play a major role in countless murders and other violent incidents in this society. Again and again, the baseline theme is men and boys lashing out when they feel they’ve been disrespected as men. This kind of violence cuts across race and class the same way higher-profile mass shootings do, with the one constant being that violent crime is disproportionately committed by men. And yet the media conversation about everyday violence is just as de-gendered—and therefore just as superficial—as the conversations we keep having about mass shootings.

JE: Coming back to Columbine. As you know, the anniversary of Columbine was also the anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing. And that’s not coincidental: we know that the Columbine shooters deliberately planned the attack to occur on the anniversary of Oklahoma City. What links, if any, do you see between these two seemingly very different cases of mass murder?

JK: Whether the grievances are personal, as in Columbine, or political, as in the Oklahoma City bombing, the pattern holds: men and young men carrying out acts of mass killing to make some kind of statement and impose their will on the world. One thing Harris and Klebold had in common with Timothy McVeigh was that they took matters into their own hands and sought to rectify grievances with violence. This is an old story, and it’s a highly gendered story. Whether it’s about settling personal scores against others in a school culture you experienced as oppressive and bullying, or resisting a government you identified as oppressive, the idea is that violence is the way to set things right and perform a kind of redemptive, heroic masculinity in the process. Harris and Klebold and McVeigh were well aware of the script they were writing for themselves, a script that placed them at center stage in a manly act of will and determination. What we need to remember, of course, is that there’s nothing at all natural or inevitable about this script. It’s been normalized, yes, but there’s no necessary connection between being a man and using violence.

JE: Meanwhile, the anniversary of Columbine was followed just a day later by the Boston Marathon, and memories of another brutal mass murder. Here, again, with the Boston Marathon bombing, we...
What exactly is a man? This is the question that has been pounding in my head since first watching Elliot Rodger’s chilling “Retribution” YouTube video posted right before he went on his stabbing and shooting rampage in Isla Vista, California.

I was struck by his numerous references to being a “man,” his feelings of rejection by women, his frustrated desire to have sex with them. He was a man feeling absolutely powerless, enraged at being denied the gender privilege that men enjoy in a male-dominated world. Blend that warped sense of male grievance with mental illness, America’s abundance of guns, and the epidemic of violence against women and girls on our planet, and you get prime conditions for bloody scenes like that in sunny California. To simply say “he was crazy” or “gun control is the problem” is to ignore how different forces operate together, over and over, leading to horrific slaughters in places like Newtown, Columbine, and now Isla Vista.

If we examine the perpetrators of American mass murders of the last 20 years, overwhelmingly they are men. Sooner rather than later we must ask ourselves when and how we are going to redefine manhood away from violence, retribution, guns and killing. When will we teach men and boys that power comes not from the barrel of a gun, that there are other ways to express or deal with pain or trauma, ways rooted in peace, love, nonviolence?

That Rodger spoke so bluntly about his desire to destroy women — although several men were caught in the crossfire of his rage, too — speaks to a terrible pattern in our society and around the world: One in four females in America have been or will be the victim of some sort of violence from an intimate partner, including sexual assault. That number is one in three across the globe. Have men been victims of some form of violence at the hands of women? Sometimes, absolutely. But the number pales in comparison to male attacks on women and girls.

It is not simply disturbed people like Elliot Rodger, either. It’s star athletes, like Ray Rice, who admitted last week that “I failed miserably” a few months after a videotape captured him dragging his unconscious wife from an elevator after knocking her out; it’s television star Michael Jace, who was recently charged with the shooting death of his wife, allegedly in front of their two small children; it’s a military culture confronting a rape epidemic, as well as a higher rate of domestic violence among combat vets when they return home; it’s a higher rate of domestic abuse among police officers. It’s a media and entertainment industry that portrays violence against women as acceptable.

But it is also much closer to home than we think. Last week I visited a New York high school, as I often do as a community activist and speaker, to talk about issues relevant to them. A number of the young men there thought there was nothing wrong with describing women in language eerily similar to Rodger’s YouTube video. Females were referred to, for example, as “thots,” a term that has exploded on social media and means “that ho over there.”

These young men also said that if women dressed or behaved a certain way they deserved to be mistreated or abused or worse. Does that mean these young men will go out and kill women they hate or feel disdied by? No. But it does suggest that gender violence — physical, verbal, emotional — is something we often ignore, something that has become acceptable and justifiable. How many more young men with views like Elliott Rodger are out there?

Yes, I am deeply disturbed by what seems like a clear case of Rodger’s mental illness, coupled with the social and cultural disconnect that allowed him to buy guns with ease, and the idea that police officers who paid him a visit only a month before were persuaded by him that there was no reason to take action. We of course have to make mental health a priority in America. It does not matter if it is an Elliot Rodger in California or countless inner city men in my home community of Brooklyn.

But it is not enough to say “no more.” We must actually begin to have conversations, locally and nationally, on the state of American men and boys. Clearly something is terribly wrong when every single diss or beef felt by a disturbed man can build and deform until it becomes another slaying or mass shooting.

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had a mass killing perpetrated by troubled young men with a grievance—and yet the issues you’re talking about seem to have gone more or less completely unexamined in the public discussion about this case.

JK: The more I’ve learned about this case, the clearer it’s become that gender was absolutely crucial to what motivated the Tsarnaev brothers. When you read about Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older brother who masterminded the bombing, you start to realize that religious ideology wasn’t the only, or even the main, thing that drove him to commit this disgusting attack. It now seems much more likely that he found in jihadist teaching a rationale for reclaiming his manhood and rationalizing his feelings of failure and marginalization. In that sense, the marathon bombing had a lot in common with school shootings and other acts of mass killing by young men who deliberately set out on a twisted mission to redeem their masculinity and win respect by instilling fear in others.

JE: Finally, what does it tell you that 15 years after Columbine the phenomenon of men and boys committing mass shootings not only has continued, but also seems to have accelerated despite all of the endless expert punditry and analysis over the years in the wake of Newtown and other shootings? And how can the kind of cultural analysis you’re offering here be fashioned into practical prevention strategies in the real world that can actually make a difference?

JK: I appreciate that Columbine led to increased awareness of school safety issues, and I also think it’s really important that there has been more thoughtful discussion about bullying and the stresses many people experience in our high-pressure society. But the problem is that there’s been little, if any, sustained discussion about how the stories we tell ourselves as a culture about manhood factor into rampage killings and other forms of violence. That needs to change. I’m not so optimistic, or naïve, as to believe that an honest dialogue about manhood will solve this problem. But I am convinced that at a minimum it will give people a language to understand what’s going on in these cases at a deeper, more meaningful level.

The bottom line is you can’t deal with a problem until you name it. And unless and until we start focusing explicitly on how our ideas about manhood are implicated in men’s violence, we’re just going to keep lurching from one tragedy to the next, with little understanding of what’s really happening or how we can break this destructive pattern.

To learn more about Jackson Katz’s larger analysis of masculinity and violence in the Media Education Foundation’s (MEF) new film Tough Guise 2, go to ToughGuise2.org. Jeremy Earp is production director at MEF.

Resources
Mass shootings
http://www.motherjones.com/special-reports/2012/12/guns-in-america-mass-shootings

Tough Guise films
http://www.mediaed.org/toughguise2/streaming.html

The Mean World Syndrome: Media Violence & the Cultivation of Fear:
http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/143/presskit_143.pdf
n the northern areas of South Africa’s Western Cape almost half of the population is jobless. Liquor stores in the towns provide a predictable outlet for people’s boredom and frustrations—and contribute to a range of social problems: fighting and aggression, substance abuse, domestic and sexual violence, child abuse and absent parenting.

Lenie Januarie, acting supervisor for the Children and Families Program at the Department of Social Development (DSD), cites parental neglect as a major problem and says that cases of child abuse constitute the highest intake for her office. Assault is the most common crime in Vredendal, one of the biggest cities in the rural area, and there are many cases of sexual and domestic violence each year. Januarie says she has been living in this area for 30 years. She represents DSD in the Matzikama Men and Boys Network—a partnership between Sonke Gender Justice, the Gender Transformation Network, and DSD. It’s a new initiative in the area and the first of its kind.

The network aims to promote gender equality and to encourage men and boys to play a positive role in their families and communities. “We have set a platform for men and boys and families and redirecting their vision in terms of their own lifestyle and how to go about their everyday living,” explains Andrew Julies, a local councilor, pastor, and chairperson of the Matzikama Men and Boys Network steering committee. Leigh Kordom, a youth coach at a local school, says the network encourages men and boys to play an active role in promoting gender equality: “It gives them a platform to stand up as men because the men in the community are mostly the ones that [get] talked about badly.”

Since it was created in August 2012, the network has been actively implementing Sonke’s MenCare campaign, a campaign Sonke cochairs together with Instituto Promundo in Brazil and other global partners. The MenCare Campaign recognizes that nearly 80 percent of all men will be fathers in their lifetime and aims to increase men’s healthy involvement in nonviolent, equitable parenting. This is important work in South Africa, where studies show that 48 percent of children have absent fathers, a number that was on the upward trend when MenCare was launched.

The program works through media, program development, policy advocacy, and community trainings to involve men in fathers’ groups and as advocates for participatory fatherhood. From logos on T-shirts resembling construction signs saying “Men At Work” and showing a man changing a diaper, to billboards and posters depicting active fathers, the MenCare project works to change how everyone sees men, including how they see themselves.

Across Matzikama, people now wear MenCare T-shirts sparking conversation and contributing to gradually shifting social norms. MenCare’s “My Dad Can” program uses media to promote positive local role models as examples of good, involved fathers. And MenCare fatherhood groups create safe and supportive spaces for men to explore the role of their own fathers in their lives and to reflect upon how they can be involved fathers in the lives of their own children. Reflecting on the personal impact the training has had on his life, Johannes Cyster, a barber from Vanrhynsdorp says “Becoming a father was difficult for me because I didn’t have a father in my life, so I must learn it for myself. In Vanrhynsdorp it is difficult because some of the fathers don’t take fatherhood very seriously; people don’t know how to be a father. They only know ‘I have a baby; now I’m a father,’ but they don’t act like fathers.”

Other participants echoed similar sentiments, and the sessions are proving to be valuable even to those without children. “It gave me an advantage because we don’t have children and we can start now already, and plan the future and put away money,” Kordom says.
Rodney Fortuin, who runs the Matzikama Men and Boys Network (and is Sonke’s Western Cape Community Education and Mobilization Manager), says the network produced MenCare posters were enthusiastically received by the community. Part of the success was due to the beautifully engaging photos and messages in the language predominantly spoken in the area, Afrikaans—both of which connected with the people of the Matzikama municipality.

The posters show a man kissing his child, another man with his hand on his pregnant wife’s stomach, a family playing cards, a man reading to his five children—all people from the Matzikama community. The poster of a man preparing his baby’s bottle reads, *Jy Help My Om Gesond Te Bly. Jy Is My Pa. “You Help Me Stay Healthy. You Are My Father.”*

Fortuin says Januarie even cried during the poster launch. When asked why she was crying, she said was shedding “tears of joy” because she was so touched that local community members were positively involved with their families and were featured in these posters. Januarie says seeing the community’s reaction to these posters has been one of her best moments working for the network so far. Even though she’s one of the lead organizers, she says she’s learning as well. Januarie, a trained social worker, says she is changing her attitude and opening up her mind around LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) issues: “You see we were traditional, old-fashioned on the roles of men…”

While the steering committee and the network have been busy, the consensus is that there’s still much more to do. “You can never take for granted that the little resources that are poured into rural communities make a huge difference to people’s lives. People within the community have shown a hunger and a desire to bring about change within their community,” says Fortuin, noting that there is a sense of immense gratitude expressed by the community in the workshops and events. He says they are eager to see what development opportunities will come next and how they can participate.

Matzikama is a deeply religious community and, as such, the churches have an important role to play in making gender equality a reality there. Churches are playing an integral part in the network, effectively mobilizing people to attend workshops. Julies speaks of how his work with the network has influenced his life as a pastor. “Over three or four Sundays I’ve talked about families in the church because people come into church…with family issues.” He says he has to deal with the issues there and then, or else his parishioners will just go back home with the issues unresolved.

Jonathan Matthews, a pastor at the New Apostolic Church, who is also studying community development, says the network is breaking all sorts of gender and sex-related taboos. “I brought my wife and my mother-in-law with me. My mother-in-law is 63, and after one session… they couldn’t stop talking about it. I mean someone at 63 didn’t know about gender and gender equality and about sex and the different sex you get… Before this experience she wouldn’t talk about such things because it would be taboo… It just goes to show that through the network people start feeling free to talk about stuff. So in that sense, the Men and Boys Network is making a great change…my mother-in-law goes with other seniors and she talks about it there with them.”

Teen pregnancy and young parenting is also a major issue in Matzikama. The MenCare workshops provide young fathers with the skills they need to be involved, equitable parents. Students also appreciate the open nature of the discussions afforded by the “Teenage Gender, Sex and Sexuality” training sessions that the network holds with high school students. Teenage pregnancy is an issue affecting both boys and girls, and the training addresses male and female sexuality. “I got the opportunity to explore more of what a boy needs to know in terms of sexuality so when I get to the point where I have to say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ I will know what to do,” says student Jeremy Matthews. The students also expressed a desire for this type of education to be rolled out into the community and for it to be offered to students in lower grades so they have necessary information before they start having sex.

Both organizers and participants say that because of their involvement, they have to pay attention to what kind of role models they are. “They know, ‘Oh, these are the guys that are on that program—manhood and fatherhood’ so they are watching us. Are we doing what we are supposed to be doing?’” says Cyster. Julies concurs: “I can’t be a part of this network, attending the programs, then going out there and doing negative stuff. It keeps me in line personally… People look at me and they must see, this [guy] is the example. And I want to follow this example.”

As the Matzikama Men and Boys Network promotes gender equality, it also promotes human rights. Some of Matzikama’s faith communities have come out in support of gay rights and gender equality since the network was established. Franklen Ludick, a member of the Flame and Fire Prayer Warriors, shared openly that his opinions on gender, sexuality, and fatherhood have changed because of the network’s work: “My [mindset] changed a lot.”

The MenCare program demonstrates that healthy and functional families set the stage for healthy and functional communities. In an area that for decades has had consistently high levels of absentee fathers, targeting men and boys to play a significant part in making gender equality a reality is vital in the work of turning bad news into good.

Colin Adam Young is a freelance writer who has done consultancy work for Sonke Gender Justice. He lives in Cape Town.
Writing *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard* has been a long journey, one that took me over 11 years and began with a terrible coincidence.

My journey began October 12, 1998, the day I flew across the country to give a speech about the controversy over my children’s book, *Heather Has Two Mommies* at the University of Wyoming, in celebration of National Coming Out Day. It was entitled “Heather’s Mommy Speaks Out: Homophobia, Censorship, and Family Values” and focused on the difficulties I had in getting my book *Heather Has Two Mommies* published, and how important it is for every child to see a family like his or hers reflected in a piece of literature. That was the day the world found out about the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, the gay Wyoming college student killed in the most visible anti-gay hate crime in American history.

I imagined Matt Shepard, whose picture had been splashed all over the newspapers, sitting in the front row of the auditorium listening to my speech. I knew he had planned on coming to my lecture. I knew he had attended a meeting of the school’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Association to finish planning Gay Awareness Week the night he was attacked. I knew he had been robbed, kidnapped, beaten, and tied to a fence, where he remained undiscovered for 18 hours, all because he was gay.

That night I promised the people attending my lecture that I would do my best to make sure Matt was not forgotten. To this day, I open all my speeches on LGBT rights by honoring Matt’s memory. I tucked a photo of Matt inside my wallet, which I still carry with me wherever I go. I attended a lecture given by his mother, Judy Shepard, at the University of Massachusetts, and afterward I went backstage to greet her. Though I never met Matt, he has become an important part of my life, as he has for so many others.

In 2008 something happened that made *October Mourning* possible: I was appointed poet laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts, the community where I lived. This honor inspired me to focus fully on poetry, which has always been my first literary love. In the fall of 2009, I created a project called “30 Poems in 30 Days,” inviting the poets of my community to write one poem a day during the month of November to raise money for a local literacy organization.

And on October 12, 2009, the 11th anniversary of Matt Shepard’s death, something else happened that was crucial to the writing of my book: the play *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later (An Epilogue)* premiered in 100 cities, including Northampton. The Tectonic Theater Project, whose members had gone to Wyoming shortly after Matthew Shepard’s murder to interview people and create a play called *The Laramie Project* had gone back to Wyoming 10 years later to interview the people of Laramie once more, to see what had and hadn’t changed. Their new play unleashed a wave of emotion in me, reconnecting me once more to Laramie, to Matt’s death, and to all I experienced in that grieving community.

When I got into bed that night, I couldn’t sleep. Instead, I picked up a pen and wrote the first draft of the poem “Wounded.” The next day I wrote “The Fence (that night).” When November arrived, I knew that my 30 poems would explore the impact of Matt’s death upon the world.

Always a morning writer, I found myself scribbling in the middle of the night. Thoughts of Matt left alone on the prairie for 18 hours kept me awake and inspired to write about his death from the imagined perspectives of the “silent witnesses” to the murder.
I wanted the stars, the fence, and the wind to symbolically bear witness to the tragedy spawned by hatred, and to deliver a message of hope.

Yet something was missing. I didn’t know what it was, but I knew I had to travel back to Wyoming to find it. A few months later I flew to Denver, drove to Laramie, and visited the site where Matt’s murder had taken place.

As I walked across the prairie, the land felt spongy beneath my feet. Though it was April, there were still patches of snow all around. The wind was brisk and very cold against my face. The fence was solid under my hand. I said Kaddish, the Jewish mourner’s prayer, and placed a customary stone on the fence. Two hawks flew overhead. I stared at the sky, so big and open, and again wondered what it had witnessed that night more than a decade ago.

And on April 12, 2010, 11-and-a-half years to the day since Matthew Shepard died, I flew home and wrote the last poem of the book while soaring through the air. “Pilgrimage” takes its form from an ancient Navajo prayer and incorporates lines from Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist traditions. The poem allows readers to pay their respects to Matt; it also reminds readers of the great beauty of the world and conveys a feeling of hope.

It is my wish that October Mourning will carry that message of hope, born from a horrific act of violence, to readers of all generations: to those of us who are old enough to remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when we first learned of Matt’s murder, and, perhaps more important, to our youth who are not old enough to remember.

Those attending college this fall were only preschoolers when Matt Shepard was murdered. Those attending high school were younger or not yet born. But Matt’s legacy will live on, and I intend October Mourning to be a vehicle for that legacy, to help our youth remember the lesson of his life and death: That all of us, no matter how old, no matter where we live, deserve to be free to be who we are. Hatred ended Matt’s life, but love can unite us.

Lesléa Newman is the author of 60 books including: A Letter to Harvey Milk, Nobody’s Mother, Hachiko Waits, Write from the Heart, The Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The Best Cat in the World, and Heather Has Two Mommies. A past poet laureate for Northampton, Massachusetts, she is currently a faculty member of Spalding University’s brief-residency MFA in Writing program.

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**The Fence
(that night)**

I held him all night long  
He was heavy as a broken heart  
Tears fell from his unblinking eyes  
He was dead weight yet he kept breathing

He was heavy as a broken heart  
His own heart wouldn’t stop beating  
He was dead weight yet he kept breathing  
His face streaked with moonlight and blood

His own heart wouldn’t stop beating  
The cold wind wouldn’t stop blowing  
His face streaked with moonlight and blood  
I tightened my grip and held on

The cold wind wouldn’t stop blowing  
We were out on the prairie alone  
I tightened my grip and held on  
I saw what was done to this child

We were out on the prairie alone  
Their truck was the last thing he saw  
I saw what was done to this child  
I cradled him just like a mother

Their truck was the last thing he saw  
Tears fell from his unblinking eyes  
I cradled him just like a mother  
I held him all night long

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**Pilgrimage**

The land was sold and a new fence now stands about fifty yards away. People still come to pay their respects.

—Jim Osborn, friend of Matthew Shepard

I walk to the fence with beauty before me  
*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*

I walk to the fence with beauty behind me  
*Yit’gadal v’yit’kadash*

I walk to the fence with beauty above me  
*Om Mani Padme Hum*

I walk to the fence with beauty below me  
*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit*

I reach the fence surrounded by beauty  
*wail of wind, cry of hawk*

I leave the fence surrounded by beauty  
*sigh of sagebrush, hush of stone*

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male bonding
for Adrian, J., Christopher, Matthew & Randall

i want my sons to know
men who smile

i want my sons to know men
who own their imperfections

i want my sons to know
men who listen

i want my sons to know
men who hear hearts, see words

i want my sons to know men
who honor women

i want my sons to know
men who appreciate the arts

i want my sons to know
men who adore their mamas

i want my sons to know men
who aren’t afraid of tears

i want my sons to know
men who respect their fathers

i want my sons to know men
who use fists in self-defense only

i want my sons to know
men who value and dignify men

men who work hard, can’t
spell quit, understand no

i want my sons to know
men who apologize

i want my sons to know men
who have relations with The Divine

men who question everything
men who know humility

i want my sons to know
men who read books

i want my sons to know men
who laugh at themselves

i want my sons to know men
who see possibility

a father’s incantation
after Aracelis Girmay

here scraped knee and runny nose
here open eyes, laughter

here push swing, here

chicken nuggets, here soccer

ball, grace, here blue train

engine, backpack, summer

camp, swim trunks, here

what’s for dinner? here what

are we doing today? here smelling

pee, testosterone, here books, science

counting to 100, ABC’s, here gunshots

screams, short fuse, here prayer, here

prayer, here prayer, here a new day

cranky, hope, here respect, kindness

balance, here scabs, barber, tears, here

hugs, popsicles, here winter coat, the bill

is paid, here keep an eye on your brother

watch your mouth, here yes ma’am, call

your grandma, cha cha, rumba, jive, here

new shoes, clean clothes, here i don’t wanna

take a bath, here strep throat, asthma, allergies

here more questions, answers daddy here

logic

daddy can we go to the store today?
i want a remote-control car: no son

we cannot go to the store today

because i want a rocket ship to the moon

but i can’t have a rocket ship
to the moon because i have to buy

food for you to eat and the electric

bill is hungry too, plus rent is due.

even after taking care of those needs

if i could afford a rocket ship when

would we go? i have to work on monday

and you have school. ok dad, can we

go to the playground, please?

Quraysh Ali Lansana is author of eight poetry books, three textbooks, a children’s book, and editor of eight anthologies. He is associate professor of English and creative writing at Chicago State University, where he served as director of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing from 2002 to 2011. He is also a faculty member of the Red Earth MFA Creative Writing Program at Oklahoma City University. His new book, The Walmart Republic (with Christopher Stewart), will be published in September by Mongrel Empire Press. The poems here appear in his new book, Reluctant Minivan, Living Arts, Tulsa (May 2014).
Play It Cool

I was a fool who frequently tried to play it cool
Hiding my fears and insecurities beneath chauvinistic male bravado
Although I spent my young adult life in conflicting debates
Meeting my soul mate was fate

A manifestation of destiny
She was the missing ingredient to my delicious recipe
Regretfully, I committed repeated infidelities

I was a BAD boy acting like a GOOD man
Arrogance bred stupidity
Asspired to be sexual
While impersonating a highly astute intellectual
I’m from new school blended in old school philosophy
But flunked out of having just a little bit class!
Chasing after other woman, honestly

I was 19 when I met the love of my life, Tanisha
Inside the Clark Atlanta University rec. room
“What’s up? How you doing? My name is Art! Nice to meet you!”
She was checking out this corny basketball player looking guy
I took a shot, intercepted his pass to her and said “Hi”

Her eyes were Hypnotic
Spellbinding!
Cocoa-brown
Her giggle was melodic
Excuse me Miss, but “How-Can-I-Be-Down”?

She was slightly taller and thin
With the most beautifully smooth chocolate skin
I still remember when
We talked for hours and hours on end
Just laughing!

Cool
Hiding my true feelings and insecurities beneath this chauvinistic male bravado
Although, I cry myself to sleep some nights
I time travel my daydreams reliving every moment
Since we met much differently

Band-Aids don’t stop profuse emotions from overflowing
Alcohol doesn’t heal a deep hurt left unattended
Drugs can’t numb the pain of our separation and
Apology poems don’t mend broken hearts!

So I offer mine seeking forgiveness
The bottom line is…
I cheated and I lied!
I prayed for her return then cried when she denied!

I lost a great woman In search of the real man in me
A hard lesson to learn only after losing my queen AND my family
I wanted to help her raise our daughters correctly
So I hope that one day that they can still love me!
Respect me!

I was a fool who frequently tried to Play It Cool
Always fronting
Now, I’m longer on the prowl
Just good will hunting

Boston poet Art Collins is cohost of the Lizard Lounge Poetry Slam and a former member of the Lizard Lounge National Poetry Slam Team (2008 and 2010). He is an educator in the Boston Public School system and performs his poetry with aspirations of reaching a global audience.
Prize-winning poet, essayist, and fiction writer Richard Hoffman is the author of Half the House, a memoir about coming to terms with the childhood rape he suffered at the hands of his baseball coach. In his new memoir, Love & Fury (Beacon Press, June, 2014) Hoffman grapples with the legacy of his boomer-generation boyhood in a rustbelt Pennsylvania town. Along the way, he explores the often unspoken values men inherit and draw upon as they navigate their roles as husbands, sons, fathers, and grandfathers. Tracing five generations of his family’s history, focusing particularly on his complicated relationship with his father, “a man given to extremes of grief and rage, to violent turns of emotion,” Hoffman asks difficult questions about how poverty and shame, faith and disillusionment, and sex and exploitation, affect men’s daily lives.

Hoffman’s meditations on his family, past and present, are touched off during a tense time in his home life: “The house was a stressful chamber of unspoken worries, recriminations, angers, misunderstandings and fears,” he writes. “And although the house I’d grown up in was filled with angers more chronic, tensions more constant, the two situations made a rhyme I wished I could erase.”

Taking readers back to that Allen-town home, where his father and brother lived, Hoffman writes of his father’s decline and eventual death from a bone-marrow disorder. He recalls his blue-collar upbringing, during which two of his brothers slowly died of muscular dystrophy, and his mother, heartbroken and desolate, smoked three packs of Chesterfields a day, “moving toward the only escape available to her.”

Love & Fury offers a wide-ranging look at the consequences of the past and how American values, especially violence and the savagery of war, class, race, women, and masculinity, shape individuals and the families they create. It is also a penetrating look at the nature of family life—the daily sacrifices and disappointments, the deep betrayals and unimaginable forgivingnesses, as well as the deep love and profound connections that reinforce family ties.

What follows are two excerpts from the book.


“Not for me,” Joe said.

I shook my head.

The funeral director rose. “Shall we go then? To choose a casket?”

Some were closed, some open. Some were wood. Some aluminum, some steel. Some were fine furniture: walnut, maple, cherry. Silks and satins inside: white, powder blue, silver, or rose. In only a moment I was overwhelmed. Joe asked, without quoting a figure, what she had in “a kind of midrange one.” She showed us a deep-plum-colored steel casket with a buttery satin lining. And a muted silver model, blue inside. And a coppery one. I wasn’t especially decisive; I just wanted this over with. “I think this one. What do you say, Joe?”

He shrugged, pursed his lips, nodded. We’d chosen the darker one. It had a little work where the railing was attached all around for the pallbearers.

“Very well then. Now, Richard, I understand that you would like to spend some time with your father?” I nodded.

Back at her office she gave me a card. “Your father’s at our other location, on Fourth Street. Do you know where that is?” I nodded again. “The address is there on the card. I’ll call to let them know you’re coming. You understand that our aesthetician hasn’t finished with him yet,
hasn’t finished his work. I want to be sure you understand that.”

It was perfectly appropriate that she was so businesslike and accommodating and I wished she was something more, although just what I couldn’t say.

The other funeral home was across town, in a neighborhood near where I’d gone to high school. It was alive with bodegas, hoagie shops, travel agents, restaurants, fruit markets, and, at that time of day, kids coming home from school, the boys wearing ties and white shirts, the girls in their plaid Catholic jumpers. Whenever my father got on one of his rants about how the city was falling into ruin, my brother would tell him to come off it, that if he spoke Spanish, he’d think it was a great place to live.

I had been gripping an upright of the steel shelving, hard, a red crease in my palm. I moved toward my father. I touched his face and stood looking at him.

The expression on my father’s face was odd, a kind of self-satisfied smirk. Maybe that’s too strong a word, smirk. It’s hard to describe because although I’d seen the expression thousands of times, it was always fleeting, the prelude to a wisecrack, or laughter, or his saying, “Aw, go on!” incredulously, a slight movement of the lip—except that now it wasn’t a movement—on its way to something else. In the next instant surely he would say something.

The day before, I had set out as soon as my brother called to say that he’d taken my father to the emergency room. Traffic was heavy on the interstate. My brother called a couple of times to let me know what the doctors were saying. The next time he called he said, “Well, you didn’t make it. And neither did he.” The hospital staff wanted to know how far away I was and if they could move the body or if I’d be there soon. I said I was far away.

Alone in a car is a good place to get such news. I cried a good while, without restraint, before calling my wife and then my friend Will in Michigan, who loved my father like another son. He’d played baseball on one of my father’s teams and had stayed close to him and our family for more than forty years. “The world is different now,” I said to him. And then I spoke to my father, the one I’d made of him, the one in my head. Loud. I thanked him and said good-bye.

As if he were ever going to go away. I was trying to feel some of that grief now with all that was left of him in this stark room, but it was futile. A single fly, large, loud, came buzzing in a series of loops toward me, close enough that I shoed it away; it seemed to labor in the closeness and heat as it rose to a top shelf and alighted somewhere out of sight.

I was trying to orient myself. I looked away, scanning the shelves of plastic jugs and bottles, cartons, paper towels, not seeing anything. I wasn’t feeling anything, either—no tears, no lump in the throat, no heartache.

But I recognized my state of mind. Had I been younger, had writing not been a part of my life for more than forty years, I would have panicked at my lack of emotion. I would have levied a terrible judgment on myself. But by now I knew that I was recording all of it, not only to write about it but to keep it, as I could not if I were distracted by sentiment. I knew I would weep again for my father, for his suffering, for the injustice of his life, for his loss. In that moment I was receiving a kind of imprint, as if I were recording a period of time, and a place, that would forever exist inside of me, a camera oscura, my time with my father’s body in this room forever mine. I can return to that room now at will. I swear if I actually went back there I could tell you which cartons and containers had been moved. At any time now I can reinhabit this storeroom pieta and I can grieve all I want, all I need.

The fly came humming toward me again and I ignored it. It alighted on my shoulder for a moment then zigzagged off toward the windows, where it buzzed along the frame and bumped along the frosted glass, looking for a way out.

Then I did something impulsive: I pulled the blanket from my father and stared. I began with his feet and noted where he’d torn off the nail of his big toe with a pliers a couple of weeks before; he’d bloodied it on the doorjamb in his bare feet, and trying to free the nail from where it had cut into his flesh, he tore the whole thing off. I looked at his bowed, arthritic legs and bony knees, his penis and—he had a dozen names for them—“the family jewels.” He called them his privates. (Inflected with his army experience, the term became a quip, an adage: “Privates take orders; they don’t give them.” Good advice.) A hirsute man, my father’s abundant chest hair came right up to his neck, and I could see that the mortician had shaved a little there, probably when told that we wanted to bury him without a necktie. And that smirk which made me want to say “What?”

It was not so much that I was looking at him; it was more my body, my whole body, recognizing itself in his.

It occurred to me then that someone might come in. What would they think? What would they think I was doing? I didn’t even know what I was doing. I placed the blanket over him, kissed his forehead, patted him twice on the shoulder.

At the door I looked back at the body on the gurney, my father’s body, the body we share. It seemed to mean, as surely as any broken bony Christ’s down from his cross, “Don’t be fooled. This is how it ends.”

Except—suddenly I know it, wordlessly—it doesn’t end.

Don’t be fooled.
Years ago I volunteered with the Alternatives to Violence Program, or AVP, but only on two weekends. Both times I was the only male on the team of five. Mostly I stood off to the side and watched the women present the material. The program is designed so that after several weekends you become certified to teach the curriculum; after a few more, you’re certified to lead a team.

I recall returning from the first weekend disturbed and uncomfortable, but it was hard for me to grasp what was bothering me, especially since it was my first time inside a prison, but I sensed it had something to do with the approach my AVP colleagues were taking. Still, who was I to criticize?

So I returned a couple of weekends later for the second session of the course. At one point, when the lead teacher turned to write on a newsprint pad mounted on an easel—“deescalate”—one of the inmates caught my eye and nodded in her direction, making a lewd gesture with his hand and mouth. None of the women saw it. He looked at me, all but winked at me: we know the score, don’t we? I did nothing. Which put me on his side, I suppose.

And yet, that moment, and that inmate’s vulgar schoolboy gesture, snapped me out of any illusion that we were getting through to any of the men in the room. The immaturity and misogyny of that moment, not to mention the look I received from the inmate and the complicity of my inaction, combined in a way I recognized. For all of our differences, we men shared standard-issue American boyhood. In that curriculum, violence, not so much hidden as disguised—as athleticism, as patriotism, as ambition—is of the essence.

The boys who got an A in the course, and had they had other opportunities, other arenas in which to deploy their gladiatorial training, they might have been CEOs or senators. They would get an A in this course, too, because after all, telling women what you have figured out they want to hear is also part of the hidden curriculum of boyhood.

I seldom hear anything that sounds like the truth about boyhood. I myself have been lying about boyhood ever since it ended. Not that I can point to a moment when it ended. I used to do that, too, tell about the moment I became a man, but that was another lie. As I work to strip away the lies, I see why it was I needed each of them. Or maybe as I outgrow the need for each lie, it becomes clear to me for what it is, becomes defined and articulate, and slips away, but not before I get a glimpse of all the other lies—and a few truths, too—it was connected to. Sometimes it feels as if I am unraveling, but I no longer think that’s a bad thing. Maybe when I’m done unraveling there will be time enough remaining to make something new of myself, something more of my own design. If not, then at least I will have spent my time on a project of my own, quixotic though it may have been.

Remaking oneself. Isn’t that what prison affords the opportunity to do? Wasn’t that its original purpose? Is this not called a “correctional institution”? In reality, I doubt that society wants more Gramscis, Dostoyevskys, Malcolms.

About a year after my AVP experience, I was given the chance to lead a men’s group at “The Farm,” Concord’s prerelease facility. It was not an AA meeting or really anything like it. But it was called Tools of Recovery and based on a curriculum a local pastor and doctor had devised. The term “recovery” was understood broadly. When I first agreed to lead this group, the program was designed as an eight-week course. It usually took five or six weeks for the men to finish giving voice to their resentment at being incarcerated. During that time my role was to listen. I recall one man doing time for possession of a handgun:

“In my neighborhood? Where I live? Know what we call a nigger with no gun?”

“Dead.”

The second time I ran the course, I lengthened it to ten weeks. Finally, it found its real length—twelve weeks. I remember one guy in an early class who really helped me to shape subsequent discussions. Many of the men had children, and we were talking about what it takes to be a good father. Some were angry that their children’s mothers never brought them for a visit. Others were remorseful about missing years of their kids’ growing up. But this guy was thinking of his own father. “My father?” he said, “My father? I fuckin’ hate that guy! I fuckin’ hate him! But I fuckin’ love him, too. Y’know what I mean?” Or maybe it was the other way around. I honestly don’t remember. What I recall is the ferocity of his emotion and how utterly deflated he was a moment later. The oscillation between a hateful bitterness and an angry love is exhausting.
In the late 1970s and early 1980s, small groups of men began to mobilize, joining the women-led movement to end violence against women. The sociopolitical climate in which the battered women’s movement gained momentum, had been powerfully influenced by the social justice movements that had simmered and exploded during the preceding decades.

There were major struggles including the fight for human rights for men and women of color, women in general, gays and lesbians, and survivors of poverty and war, among others. They were struggles in which members of different marginalized groups would sometimes unite to confront their common oppressors—and, sometimes, succumb to the divide-and-conquer tactics of those same oppressors, fighting amongst themselves.

For the relatively few men who attended the biannual meetings of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the voice and soul of the battered women’s movement, it was alarming and enlightening to hear women tell the “herstories” of their brutal and widespread subjection to the wanton violence of men. The truth-telling was powerful, not only for its eloquence but for its stark revelations of the ways that race, gender, and class were used by men to both oppress and divide women in their efforts to unite against men’s violence. So, for example, women of color not only had to deal with the sexism of their brothers of color, they had to deal with the racism of their white sisters. Lesbians had to deal not only with men’s heterosexism but also with their sisters’ homophobia. And queer women of color had to deal with . . . well, all of it.

As one of the first men’s organizations to address women’s oppression by men, Men Stopping Violence often struggled with questions that sought to clarify and define men’s roles and responsibilities in the work to end male violence against women. How, in a sexist world, could men work in true solidarity with women? And how, in a historically white-led movement, would we address racism? Given that all forms of oppression reinforce the oppression of women, how would we address the ways in which these oppressions intersect?

We Are the Work: The Making of Men Stopping Violence (MSV) is about how one organization went about answering these and other vital questions and how those answers ultimately became the core principles of our work. It traces the origins and implementations of those principles. The book is not a document based on research and evaluation, one that measures the impact of intimate partner violence and the effectiveness of batterers’ intervention programs (BIPs) in addressing it, but by tracking MSV’s growth it does examine the strengths and limitations of BIPs and particularly the role a batterers’ intervention program can play within the context of community-based strategies. And this is not my memoir but, in effect, a memoir of MSV. It’s how I remember MSV’s inception and evolution, told in a narrative form that tracks the stories and events that shaped our work from 1982 to 2012. Sometimes I reference myself as an example of those who have been impacted by this work. Like many of the men referred to in this book who have struggled to come to terms with their role in either furthering or ending gender oppression, I had to struggle with my own challenges.

The beginnings of our work with men acting abusively focused on accountability and responsibility. We needed a model that would communicate to the men referred to us—as well as to the community as a whole—that his “problem” was not a matter to be addressed in a client-therapist relationship, but rather that his abuse was not only a violation of his spouse but an offense against the acceptable norms of his community.

We designed and implemented a public “orientation” as the first face-to-face contact we would have with men. In a public
group gathering, we instructed men on what would be required for them to enter and complete our 24-week class for men who batter women. We spelled out the conditions of the contract, including the tuition required to pay for the course. By framing the work in educational terms, we were directly refuting the notion that mental health issues were at the root of men’s battering and that men could relearn how to be strong and powerful without being overpowering and dangerous.

Orientation is also where men directly experience the importance we place on keeping agreements: men keeping agreements with other men and men keeping agreements with women, especially their partners. When promoting the orientation, we clearly communicate that in order to attend, men have to arrive between 6:30 and 7 p.m. with their $20 fee in hand. A late arrival or no fee will result in their having to come back two weeks later for the next orientation. In fact, just before locking our front door we post a sign indicating that orientation has begun, and that if they want to pursue our program they can return—on time—in two weeks.

One night when I was facilitating the orientation, I was 15 minutes into my rap when there was a loud pounding on our front door, located at the bottom of the stairs on the first floor. I advised the 18 men in the room that there was a man who had arrived late who was having difficulty accepting the consequences of his late arrival. I also requested that they join me in ignoring his efforts to get me to respond to him. His persistent pounding made him hard to ignore, but eventually he stopped and we continued on without distraction. About five minutes later, there was a huge crash just outside the door of the orientation. I realized I couldn’t ignore it and asked the men to wait as I investigated the source of the noise.

When I stepped into the hallway I encountered a large man who appeared dazed as he floundered around on the floor. Turns out, this was the man (I’ll refer to him as Carl) who had been pounding on the front door. When he wasn’t admitted, he climbed up the side of the building, wedged open a second story hallway window, climbed through, and fell eight feet to the floor. Having lost his balance, he landed hard and awkwardly just outside the door of the orientation room.

When I asked Carl what he was doing, he explained that he had scaled the building to gain entry because he couldn’t go home to face his wife without attending the meeting. As I was helping him to his feet, I wanted to know that his climbing through the window was his way of saying how motivated he was to get into our program. As I walked him back down the stairs and back out the door, he first asked me if I would call his wife to tell her how hard he tried to make the meeting. I advised him that if he really wanted to pursue the program he’d return on time for the next orientation with his $20 fee. He did return two weeks later, on time and with the fee.

Carl subsequently entered the program, never missing a single class in six months and in complete compliance with all of our program requirements. I would often refer to Carl when talking to community partners about men who enter our program, particularly to partners who wonder if these are men with mental disorders who simply can’t control themselves. I explained that Carl wasn’t “out of control” when he chose to climb up the side of our building. He thought of himself, like many men do, as an exceptional man with exceptional needs, for whom the rules simply didn’t apply. And when clear limits, boundaries, and expectations were set, he was able to consistently demonstrate complete control of his behavior. This in the context of the message that says that men will demonstrate self-control and stop battering women when the community sends a clear message that their criminal behavior won’t be tolerated, and that meaningful consequences will be imposed when those boundaries are violated.

One other thing about the night Carl attended orientation: as mentioned, if men don’t have the $20, they are told to return with their fees at the next orientation in two weeks. Sometimes when a man appears desperate to attend the meeting we will give him the option of asking other men in the room if they will lend, or outright give, him the money for the orientation. I can’t remember when we started offering that as an option, but the interesting thing is that on almost every occasion, as was true the night Carl arrived late, when a man asks other men for help, they produce the money for him. Mind you, when these men first arrive they are feeling angry and convinced that they don’t belong there. Nonetheless, they would pull dollars out of their pockets until the man met his obligation. While I came to believe in the importance of expecting more of men, I also came to understand that I shouldn’t underestimate the capabilities of men. Perhaps, two sides of the same coin.

Men Stopping Violence was founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1982. Founding director the late Kathleen Carlin (center) invited clinicians Dick Bathrick, M.A. (left), and Gus Kaufman, Jr., Ph.D. (right), to lead the organization’s initial batterers prevention groups.

Former director of programs and a cofounder of the Atlanta-based organization Men Stopping Violence, Dick Bathrick is a longtime marriage and family therapist, and a consultant and trainer addressing issues of race, class, and gender both in the U.S. and abroad. He can be reached at bathrick.consulting@gmail.com.
Notes from Survivors

Ending the “Ordinary” Abuse of Young Men and Boys

By Charles Knight

I was late that day on my way to the lunchroom in high school. The hallway was almost empty. A couple of older boys called me over to where they stood to one side. Suddenly eight other boys emerged from a nearby stairwell and grabbed my arms and legs. Despite my desperate struggle, they overwhelmed me. With my head restrained by many hands, one of the boys, his mouth coated in bright red lipstick, forced his lips to mine and then, for the finishing touch, inserted his tongue. The assembled gang chanted, “You know you like it!” followed by “Fag, Fag, Fag…”

It was my first kiss. No way did I like it!

The assault didn’t last long, and when it was over I was left alone, very alone, with my anger, my hurt and my humiliation. I was young—only 14—but I knew two truths of my culture for a boy my age: 1) to be singled out as a “fag” by other boys was a deeply shameful thing and 2) there was no adult I could safely go to for comfort or really any kind of support.

Fifty years later I can report there are changes for the better. Women organizing and the struggles of LGBTQ communities are responsible for much of the progress. One Boston-area institution that was helpful to me is Close to Home (www.c2home.org), a Dorchester community organization that works for the prevention and healing of domestic violence and sexual abuse. I signed up for a writing workshop they sponsored, seeking to refine some journaling I had begun about this high school incident.

As I worked on successive drafts I realized that the incident—and the intense feelings it unleashed—had presented me with a rather profound life choice. I could seek protection from more humiliation and abuse by learning the skills of cruelty and domination, or I could ally myself with others in the struggle against social cruelty and structures of domination.

When the writing group performed our monologues for the community several of the performers recounted incidents of rape, one particularly vicious. Working in this ensemble for weeks, I learned so well the one particularly vicious. Working in this ensemble for weeks, I learned so well the performance rules or face humiliation and, very often, violent represen.

Gender conformity enforcement by peers is always part of the experience of growing up for boys—the incident in which I had a role was just one variant. Most boys are not chosen, as I was that day, to play the part of the designated deviant. Most boys are either bystanders or gang members. Still, we all receive the same lesson: conform to narrow gender performance rules or face humiliation and, very often, violent represen.

I came to understand my experience as an example of an “ordinary” sort of gender abuse. Issues of social position and identity are highly charged for boys in middle and high school. Some boys take on the role of enforcing gender conformity, in part because of their own insecurity about masculinity. Gender conformity enforcement by peers is always part of the experience of growing up for boys—the incident in which I had a role was just one variant. Most boys are not chosen, as I was that day, to play the part of the designated deviant. Most boys are either bystanders or gang members. Still, we all receive the same lesson: conform to narrow gender performance rules or face humiliation and, very often, violent represen.

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The deeply internalized structures of domination and oppression get passed on from generation to generation.

Feminists and scholars of gender have long pointed to the function of homophobia in regulating the behavior of men and boys. Protection of LGBTQ youth from commonplace abuse in schools also benefits “straight” children, serving to protect them from gender conformity assault. Today, boys and girls are beginning to have more freedom to grow into varied expressions of masculinities and femininities.

For boys and men this “liberation” has been a long time coming. Pioneering femenist scholars and activists including Michael Kimmel, Harry Brod, and John Stoltenberg began work on masculinities in the 1970s. In 1975 male students in a women’s studies class in Knoxville, Tennessee, organized the first National Conference on Men and Masculinity. During the following decade men and women founded organizations across America explicitly to challenge men’s violence against women. Many of these organizations also offered space for men to explore how they can change their experience of gender and their relationships with the men and women in their lives.

Today men are organizing around the world. In 2009 activists gathered in the first Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality held in Rio de Janeiro (the second will be held in New Delhi in November). Recently, Men Engage (www.menengage.org), a network of hundreds of organizations in communities around the world promoting gender equality, has been recognized for its years of international collaborations between activists and scholars. And in 2013, the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities was founded by Voice Male national advisory board member Michael Kimmel, author-activist and professor of sociology at New York’s Stony Brook University (http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/csmm/).

A half century after I suffered alone from a commonplace, but nonetheless abusive, performance of peer gender norm enforcement, there is good reason for hope that soon this sort of abuse will no longer be an ordinary part of boys’ lives. With increasing confidence I look forward to boys, enjoying the freedom to grow into men better able to find satisfying relationships with their chosen loved ones as well as with diverse people in their communities.

Voice Male national advisory board member Charles Knight is a father of three and grandfa ther of two, and a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington, D.C. He lives and works in Cambridge, Mass. A version of this article first appeared on WBUR’s blog, Cognoscenti.
It's a great time to be a father!

For most of recent history, raising children has been the primary responsibility of women. In the last 30 years a new world has opened up for men to play more significant roles in bringing up the next generation. As more fathers became involved in raising our children, men realized what mothers have always known: children are amazing! Involved fathers report higher overall satisfaction in their own lives, not to mention the myriad benefits that an involved father brings to his children.

Unfortunately, many families are not partaking in this cornucopia of benefits. According to the U.S. Census of 2009, 45 percent of African American children aged 6 to 11 grow up in single-parent homes predominately led by mothers. The rate is 17 percent in Latino families, 14 percent for white families, and 7 percent for Asian families. Those numbers represent pain and shame for millions of boys and girls, men and women. I've sat with emotionally armored urban men—adults with their own families—who cried hard and for a long time when given some quiet time to reflect on the loss of their own fathers.

In order to lower incidences of father absence, to decrease the pain in homes across the country, to help fathers stay connected with their families—and aware of the joy and the pain that being a parent entails—in order to take on these and other family-building initiatives, we must change the way we support men as parents. We must create relaxed, enjoyable educational environments that encourage men to become and remain fathers and dads, especially in communities where father absence is greatest. Groups of men gathered together in a structured format with the express purpose of supporting one another to become more involved, loving fathers is an idea whose time has come. I wrote the new book Facilitating Fathers’ Groups: 22 Keys to Group Mastery (P&S Press, Boston 2014) to explain how—with the help of a high-quality fathering curriculum—to take that notion from idea to reality. (The one I use most often is Mark Perlman’s The Nurturing Father’s Program).
Considerable social science research demonstrates how fathers can help improve outcomes for children when they are involved responsibly and compassionately with their family. Increases in self-esteem, better behavior, improved academics, participation in athletics and, of course, income, have all been attributed to having a father present. There’s less science involved in the how of getting a dad to that place where being responsible and compassionate is the norm. In my book, I cite examples of men who modified their behavior both because of their own sense of a higher purpose, as well as at the urging of their coparent and children.

I recall the mom who encouraged her husband to attend one of the 13-session programs I facilitate. After the graduation ceremony she came up to me and said, “I don’t know what you did, but he changed. He spends more time with the kids. He helps me around the house more. He’s just easier to be around. Thank you.”

The amazing thing about our private conversation is I knew from sitting in the group with her husband and eight other men that doing these additional things around the house was not, in his view, separate from his self-interest. He wanted to do the extra tasks because he wanted to be a good father and husband. It was simply that when he and his wife started arguing about the family, tensions got high, positions became rigid, and egos got involved. Having a group of men around him—other fathers—he could discuss the same issues without the intense charge when he and his wife were arguing. A fathers’ group allowed him to see the dynamic from a higher perspective.

When I first started facilitating groups for fathers in 1999, many people in human services told me flat out: men won’t come to these groups. Support groups focused on parenting education had been growing in popularity for a couple of decades, but “parenting” really meant support groups focused on mothering education. I had worked with fathers one-to-one for years to become more engaged as a parent and had done some of my own personal growth work in groups, so I knew men would enjoy this kind of experience if offered to them in a welcoming manner.

Over the past decade and a half what I’ve been blessed to see for myself (along with scores of other facilitators), is that 10 to 15 men at a time will voluntarily agree to start a group, and only two or three drop out. I’m convinced that most men who are fathers, or father figures, will participate in a well-run group when given the opportunity. And the changes that then take place in that father’s family are profound.

I wrote this book to both deepen and elevate the discussion about facilitating groups for men. With the large number of absent fathers, community violence, family drama, substance use, and other symptoms of personal pain in men, I am enthusiastic about spreading a message that allows men to alleviate their pain and achieve a level of healing in a setting that’s more comfortable for most men than individual therapy. Individual psychotherapy for men, especially for men of color, is not usually high on our priority list. However, working in a group with other men takes away some of the stigma of “asking for help” or admitting “something is wrong with me” and universalizes the need for human beings, female or male, to connect with one another in a supportive environment.

When I realized I wanted to capture the magic and miracles of a well-run fathers’ group in a book to inspire and guide people to duplicate the practice on their own, I struggled with how to format it. There were so many layers and angles that I would have to cover, and the thought of addressing the process in straight linear fashion seemed not only daunting, but somehow inaccurate. Then one day after I finished meditating the thought hit me: use the 22 Major Arcana from the Tarot Deck! As a young man I had used the 78 cards of the Tarot as a personal discovery tool and found them uncannily accurate in terms of understanding situations and phenomena that were happening in my life. Eventually, my intuition grew strong enough that I had a sense of what the Tarot cards would tell me before I used them, and thus my motivation to use the cards waned.

I very rarely pulled out either of the decks I still owned, but it was immediately obvious to me that the 22 characters in the primary Tarot story would be perfect to hang my exploration of group dynamics on (there are another 56 characters who play a supporting role for the 78 cards overall). The 22 characters represent archetypes that are largely universal, but I modernized some and shaped them to better reflect the needs of a group facilitator. Those 22 chapters became scaffolding that I could reasonably build my book around.

It is my hope this book will make it easier to create spaces that honor the masculine in family life. By encouraging men to be more involved, to be nurturing fathers, we can build stronger families and communities. As I wrote at the beginning, it’s a great time to be a father and it’s a great time for there to be more facilitators of fathering groups. Facilitating Fathers’ Groups: 22 Keys to Group Mastery will hopefully open the door for more men to participate in one of the best experiences on the planet: fathering.

Haji Shearer is director of the Fatherhood Initiative at The Children’s Trust in Boston, where he leads campaigns to increase father involvement. A member of the national advisory board of Voice Male, his writing has appeared in the Boston Globe, among other places. Facilitating Fathers’ Groups is his first book.
“We Are The Work” is about how Men Stopping Violence (MSV), a small, social justice nonprofit, got to do big things, about the intriguing characters that formed and were informed by MSV’s mission, about how men and women learned to work in solidarity to address men’s violence against women (VAW), about their successes and failures, the lessons which became the Core Principles that guide their work. One of those principles, We Are The Work, means that no matter where or when you enter the struggle to end VAW you have to start and stay with examining yourself.

Books can be ordered through Charis Books - www.charisbooksandmore.com or thru Amazon or Kindle.
In his new book, When the War Came Home (Levellers Press), Bill Newman, a noted ACLU attorney, shows how the idealism of the anti–Vietnam War movement still lives—most importantly in the lives of the children of that generation. The title of the book refers to the spring day 44 years ago when the Ohio National Guard opened fire on anti-war protesters at Kent State University, killing four. Following is an excerpt from Newman’s book that looks at fathering, and raising daughters. He wrote it in the summer of 1998.

The painting consisted of two waveshaped watercolor brushstrokes—one a spectrum of purple—orchid or thistle melding into mulberry, then to lilac and violet; and below it, a second brushstroke consisting of a continuum of blue, from light to dark—turquoise and teal morphing into cerulean and cornflower and ending with the thinnest hint of midnight.

Underneath, graceful calligraphy said, “The only things that parents should give children are roots and wings.”

For five years that painting, a present from our friend Lynn to celebrate Jo’s birth, hung in the doorway to Jo’s bedroom. Ultimately the picture turned into part of a pile of ashes after our nook-filled Victorian home burned down, a fire in which, blessedly, no one was hurt.

We rebuilt the house much as it was, and for years afterward, when I’d walk past the place where that painting used to be, I thought about it. But in truth, I miss it less now because, notwithstanding the elegance of both the calligraphy and the aphorism, I think it’s wrong.

Parents, I’ve decided, cannot give kids wings—although we can rush to provide a full-length mirror so that they can see and celebrate them when they begin to sprout. And we can’t actually give them roots either.

Like vegetables or flowers or anything else, once kids start growing, they’re pretty much on their own. Besides, roots are particularly tricky to appraise. You cannot see how deep they are or where they’ve spread, and you don’t know whether they are strong enough to weather a storm until after the storm.

My teenage daughters and their friends, unlike their mothers at that age, play All-Star baseball and Suburban League basketball and soccer and tennis, go after state championships, swim in tournaments, and climb mountains. They win commendations in school for excellence in technology and prove themselves whizzes at math.

For garden-variety, coming-into-adolescence girls born in the 1980s, this is how the world is, how it is supposed to be. They have few historical reference points on feminism. They do not realize that in the fight for gender equality they are radicals, revolutionaries. They take for granted, they assume and presume, a world their mothers only dreamed of. They find nothing unusual in women being Olympic stars and believe that, of course, women can be governors, senators or president, and CEOs.

There is no sense being Pollyannaish. Soon enough, our daughters and their friends will encounter gender inequality in employment, sports, and relationships, too. Nonetheless, faced with discrimination, their assumptions about life and equality should prove helpful. These daughters, in overcoming bias and stereotypes, will succeed far more and far better than their parents, who were taught Icarus too much as parable and not enough as myth.

For a present for her fifteenth birthday, Jo wants a poster that she can hang in her room next to the one of basketball star Sheryl Swoopes. She told me I could find it at the Runners’ Shop downtown—a wide-angle view of NBA star Michael Jordan with his arms outstretched, a wingspan of almost seven feet. Jo also said—she was clear about this—that underneath him are the words, “No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.” Jo didn’t read it that way. Neither do her friends. Neither will her sister.

Bill Newman is an ACLU attorney, radio show host, newspaper columnist, husband, and father of two grown daughters. (Bill-Newman.net)
Resources for Changing Men

A wide-ranging (but by no means exhaustive) listing of organizations engaged in feminist men’s work. Know of an organization that should be listed here? E-mail relevant information to us at info@voicemalemagazine.org.

For Young Men

Advocates for Youth
Helps young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health
www.advocatesforyouth.org

Amplify Your Voice
A youth-driven community working for social change. www.amplifyyourvoice.org

Boys to Men
Initiation weekends and follow-up mentoring for boys 12-17 to guide them on their journey to manhood
www.boystonem.org

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support and rites of passage programming to youth ages 8-22
www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

YCteen Magazine
A magazine written by New York City teens that helps marginalized youth reach their full potential through reading and writing
www.ycteenmag.org

On Masculinity

American Men’s Studies Association
Advancing the critical study of men and masculinities
www.mensstudies.org

EngagingMen
A public resource for anyone committed to gender justice and overcoming violence against women
engagingmen.net

ManKind Project
New Warrior training weekends
www.mkp.org

Masculinidades
Pro-feminist blog about the anthropology of masculinity. In Spanish
http://masculinidades.wordpress.com/

Menstuff: The National Men’s Resource
National clearinghouse of information and resources for men
www.menstuff.org

The Men’s Story Project
Resources for creating public dialogue about masculinities through local storytelling and arts
www.mensstoryproject.org

XY
www.xyonline.net
Profeminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/links.shtml
Profeminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/pfaq.html
Homophobia and masculinities among young men: www.xyonline.net/misc/xyhomophob.html

For Men of Color

100 Black Men of America, Inc.
Chapters around the U.S. working on youth development and economic empowerment in the African American community
www.100blackmen.org

Concerned Black Men
A national organization providing mentors and programs that fill the void of positive black role models and provide opportunities for academic and career enrichment
www.cbmnational.org

National Compadres Network
Reinforcing the positive involvement of Latino males in their lives, families, communities, and society
www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

For Fathers

Dad Man
Consulting, training, speaking about fathers and father figures as a vital family resource
www.thedadman.com

Dads and Daughters
A blog of thoughts and reflections on father-daughter relationships by Joe Kelly
dadsanddaughters.blogspot.com

Fathers with Divorce and Custody Concerns
Looking for a lawyer? Call your state bar association lawyer referral agency. Useful websites include:
www.dadsrights.org (not www.dadsrights.com)
www.divorce.com
www.divorcecentral.com
www.collaborativealternatives.com
www.cambuilding.org

Males and Family Law: Myths & Facts
Debunking common myths regarding fathering and family law and providing facts directly from the research
http://www.thelizlibrary.org/site/index/site-index-frame.html?so1thttp://www.thelizlibrary.org/iz/017.htm

National Fatherhood Initiative
Organization improve the well-being of children through the promotion of responsible, engaged fatherhood
www.fatherhood.org

National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute
Addresses the needs of Latino communities by focusing on positive Latino identity while addressing issues faced by Latino fathers, families, and communities
www.nlfii.org

Men and Feminism

Finally, A Feminism 101 Blog
An information resource, for both feminists and those questioning feminism
finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com

Guy’s Guide to Feminism
Website companion to a book by Michael Kimmel and Michael Kaufman which illustrates how supporting feminism enriches men’s lives
http://guysguidetofeminism.com/

National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS)
Pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist activist organization supporting positive changes for men
www.nomas.org

MEN’S HEALTH

American Journal of Men’s Health
A peer-reviewed quarterly resource for information regarding men’s health and illness
jmh.sagepub.com

Malecare
Volunteer men’s cancer support group and advocacy national nonprofit organization providing resources in multiple languages
malecare.org

Men’s Health Network
National organization promoting men’s health
www.menshealthnetwork.org

Prostate Health Guide
Offers a guide to the prostate and various conditions that can affect men’s health
www.prostatehealthguide.com

World Health Organization HIV/AIDS
Provides evidence-based, technical support for comprehensive and sustainable responses to HIV/AIDS
www.who.int/hiv/en/

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

1in6
Provides resources for male sexual abuse survivors and their family members, friends, and partners
1in6.org

Black Sexual Abuse Survivors
A national online support system for African-Americans
www.blacksurvivors.org/home.html

Giving and Receiving Guidance & Hope
A page of brief stories written by men who were sexually abused.
www.jmhopper.com/hope/

MaleSurvivor
National organization overcoming sexual victimization of boys and men
www.malesurvivor.org

Men Thriving
A peer-resource offered to male survivors by male survivors.
www.mentriving.org/forum/

Overcoming Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

1in4: The Men’s Program
Offers workshops that educate men in women’s recovery and lowers men’s rape myth acceptance and self-reported likelihood of raping
www.1on1in4.org/themensprogram.php

A Call to Men
Trainings and conferences on ending violence against women
www.acalltomen.org

EMERGE
Counseling and education to stop domestic violence; comprehensive batters’ services
www.emergevd.com

Futures Without Violence
Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse
Gloucester, Mass. volunteer advocacy group of men’s voices against domestic abuse and sexual assault
www.strongmenonbully.com
Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention
www.canikissyou.com

Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV)
Men working in the struggle to end sexual violence -
www.menagainstsexualviolence.org

Men Against Violence
Yahoo email list
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ma

Men Can Stop Rape
Washington, D.C.-based national advocacy
and training organization mobilizing male youth to prevent violence against
women
www.mencanstoprape.org

Mending the Sacred Hoop
Works to end violence against Native American women and to strengthen
the voice and vision of Native peoples
www.mshoop.com

MenEngage Alliance
An international alliance promoting boys’
and men’s support for gender equality
www.menengage.org

Men’s Initiative for Jane Doe, Inc.
Statewide Massachusetts effort coordinat
ating men’s anti-violence activities
www.mijd.org

Men’s Nonviolence Project
Texas Council on Family Violence
http://www.tcfv.org/education/mnp.html

Men Stopping Violence
Atlanta-based organization working to
end violence against women, focusing on
stopping battering, and ending rape
and incest
www.menstoppingviolence.org

Mentors in Violence Prevention
Gender violence prevention education and
training by Jackson Katz
www.mvnpational.org

National Coalition Against Domestic
Violence
Provides a coordinated community
response to domestic violence
www.ncadv.org

National Resource Center on Violence
Against Women
An online collection of searchable materi
als and resources on domestic violence,
sexual violence, and related issues
www.vawnet.org

National Sexual Violence Resource
Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource hub
relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nsvrc.org

PreventConnect
Uses online media to build community
among people engaged in efforts to
prevent sexual assault and relationship
violence
http://preventconnect.org/

Promundo
Brazilian NGO seeking to promote gender
equality and end violence against women,
children, and youth
www.promundo.org.br/en/

Rape Abuse and Incest National
Network (RAINN)
A national anti-sexual assault organiza
tion
www.rainn.org

Sexual Violence Prevention 101
Sexual assault and domestic violence
prevention workshops by Todd Denny
http://www.olywa.net/tddenny/

Stop Porn Culture
A group for those willing to question
and fight against pornography and porn
culture
stoppornculture.org/home/

Students Active For Ending Rape
Organization dedicated to fighting sexual
violence and rape culture by empowering
student-led campaigns to reform college
sexual assault policies
www.safercampus.org

V Day
Global movement to end violence against
women and girls, including V-men,
male activists in the movement
www.vday.org

White Ribbon Campaign
International men’s campaign decrying
violence against women
www.whiteribbon.ca

LGBTQIA RESOURCES

Ambiente Joven
An advocacy project and LGBTQ communi
ity for Spanish-speaking LGBTQ youth
www.ambientejoven.org

Beyond Masculinity
Collection of essays by queer men on
gender and politics
http://beyondmasculinity.com

COLAGE
National movement of people with one or
more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
or queer parent working toward social
justice through youth empowerment,
leadership development, education, and
advocacy
www.colage.org

Resources for Changing Men
Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against
Defamation (GLAAD)
Works to combat homophobia and
discrimination in television, film, music
and all media outlets
www.glaad.org

Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project
Provides crisis intervention, support and
resources for victims and survivors of
domestic abuse
gmdvp.org/gmdvp

Hear My Voice
Educates and engages young people in
the LGBTQ community to create safe
and healthy relationships, and connect
victims of dating abuse to help and legal
services.
hearmyvoice.breakthecycle.org

Human Rights Campaign
Largest GLBT political group in the
country
www.hrc.org

Interpride
Clearinghouse for information on pride
events worldwide
www.interpride.net

Intersex Society of North America
Devoted to systemic change to end
shame, secrecy, and unwanted
sexual surgeries for people born with an
anatomy that someone decided is not
standard for male or female
www.isna.org

National Resource Center on LGBT
Aging
Resource center aimed at improving the
quality of service and supports offered to
LGBT older adults
www.agingcenter.org

Oasis Magazine
A writing community for queer and
questioning youth
www.oasisjournals.com/magazine

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and
Gays
Promotes the health and wellbeing
of LGBTQ persons and their parents,
friends, and families
www.pflag.org

Straight Spouse Network
Provides personal, confidential support
and information to heterosexual spouses/
partners, current or former, of GLBT
individuals
www.straightspouse.org/home

Survivor Project
A non-profit organization dedicated to
addressing the needs of intersex and
trans* survivors of domestic and sexual
violence
www.survivorproject.org

Transgender Resources
Dedicated to educating those unfamiliar
with or curious to learn more about the
transgender community
www.glaad.org/transgender

Men’s Resource Centers
Austin Men’s Center – Austin, TX
Provides counseling, psychotherapy, and
classes helping men with their lives, rela
tionships, health, and careers
austinmenscenter.com

Lake Champlain Men’s Resource
Center – Burlington, VT
Center with groups and services chal
lenging men’s violence on both individual
and societal levels
www.lcmrc.net

Males Advocating for Change
– Worcester, MA
Center with groups and services
supporting men and challenging men’s
violence
http://www.malesadvocatingchange.org/

Men’s Resource Center for Change
– Amherst, MA
Model men’s center offering support
groups for men and consulting with indi
viduals and groups on a range of issues
related to men and masculinities.
www.mrforchange.org

Men’s Resource Center of West
Michigan – West Michigan
Consultations and training in helping
men develop their full humanity, create
respectful and loving relationships, and
caring and safe communities
www.menscenter.org

Redwood Men’s Center – Santa Rosa,
CA
A mythopoetic gathering dedicated to
filling the need for men to come together
in community healing
www.redwoodmen.org

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirma
tive center dedicated to offering a safe
environment where men may explore
their true natures and improve their health
www.saskatoommenscenter.com

Twin Cities Men’s Center – Minneapolis,
MN
Provides resources for men seeking to
grow in mind, body, and spirit and adv
ocates for healthy family and community
relationships
www.tcm.org
Male Privilege Redefined, Not Negated

By John A. McCarroll

The sort of language used to assert men’s dominance over women has a pretty recognizable pattern across the cultural landscape. Men, we are told, are in charge of things because they have something women (supposedly) lack: physical strength, honor, higher cognitive facilities, or the mystique of the male organ itself. Women, sadly “lacking” these qualities, need to be “protected” from the all-consuming lusts of strange men.

This can be spun as noble chivalry, brutal domination, or a playful battle of the sexes, but at the root it’s the same: women are denied the freedoms that men take as a God-given right, assigned subordinate status, and coerced into performative gender roles.

In this dialectic, men’s protective abilities and ravaging urges come from the same place and are both aimed squarely at women. Language, of course, did not create the patriarchy, but language is a powerful method of inscribing the possible, shaping how and what we think, and justifying the status quo.

Thus, perhaps it’s no surprise that feminist outreach toward the traditional opponents of women’s liberation — i.e., cis-gendered heterosexual men — utilizes the same language as that of domination.

Rather than attacking the institution of masculinity itself, several recent campaigns have attempted a sort of masculinity triage, trying to eliminate violence against women, while still flattering men with the label of protector. These campaigns, such as “Real Men Don’t Buy Girls,” “My Strength Is Not for Hurting,” are various incarnations of “how would you feel if someone said that to your mother/sister/girlfriend,” and have proven to be enormously popular, achieving prodigious reblogs, conferences, and media airtime.

They are, by many metrics, successful, and have gotten institutions long silent on the rights of women to speak up. I believe we are the better for them, but I also believe that they do not go far enough, and we all must, as feminists, radicals, and progressives, push against our comfort zones.

In these campaigns, the masculine mystique is still very present, albeit a kinder, gentler version. By flattering men’s strength and asking them to use it to protect women, we once again place men in the driver’s seat of culture, asking for them to renounce violence and be less vile guardians.

Common to all these messages is that men can rape, hurt, buy women, catcall, or what-have-you, but they shouldn’t. Men, we are told, shouldn’t hurt women, not because of any intrinsic rights women may have, but because other men might do it to their women, and that would be awful.

Male privilege is redefined, but not negated, in a way that leaves masculinity unchallenged and still dominant. The wonderful, complex, and multifaceted language of generations of queer, trans, intersectionalist, and sex-positive feminism and human-rights dialogues is thrown aside completely in favor of a request that straight, cis-gendered men join the rest of the world at the big-kids table.

Again, this isn’t to say that these campaigns haven’t done good, but rather, that they should go farther. There is certainly something to be said about using the language of the patriarchy to subvert the patriarchy, or of using privilege to end privilege, but it’s not clear that’s what’s being done. Rather, it looks as if men are given a privileged place in the feminist movement, one where they are praised for simply not being terrible and their much-vaunted power remains intact.

Moreover, the bar for male allies has been set tremendously low. In contrast to the sacrifices, acts of bravery, and daily fights women and LGBTQ people are expected to take on to achieve equality and justice, men are asked simply not to buy people, physically abuse people, or rape. The fact that this counts as progress is a sad indictment of how much work there is left to do, but that, I believe, is all the more reason to not sugarcoat it or water down the message.

Feminism has made great strides against patriarchal oppression in much of the world, and perhaps to finish the job, to make a world of true equality, the message cannot be compromised or simplified. Males in the movement should (and can) be challenged and encouraged to act not like a virtuous “real man,” but like humans.

J. A. McCarroll is a NYC-based writer, anthropologist, and baker. He works in reproductive rights and volunteers with Canimiz Sokakta and the Rules. Tweet @jamccarroll. A version of this article first appeared at sherights.com.
Voice Male: The Untold Story of the Profeminist Men’s Movement takes you inside one of the most important social justice movements you may never have heard of—the social transformation of masculinity. Although it’s been underway since the late 1970s, it still largely remains under the radar of much of society.

Thematically arranged essays by leading experts and moving first-person stories illustrate how a growing movement of changing men has discovered in feminism the basis for redefining masculinity and creating healthier lives. The book introduces readers to men examining contemporary manhood from a variety of perspectives—from boys on the journey to manhood to men overcoming violence; from fatherhood and mentoring to navigating life as a man of color; as a gay man, and as a survivor. The voices of a chorus of women can also be heard in these pages.

Long recognized for articulating a hopeful vision of the future of men, Rob Okun sensitively presents a vivid portrait sure to be accessible to a wide audience interested in what is happening with men. Voice Male offers compelling evidence of a new direction for men and illuminates what’s around the bend on the path to gender justice.
In this highly anticipated update of the influential and widely acclaimed *Tough Guise*, pioneering anti-violence educator and cultural theorist Jackson Katz argues that the ongoing epidemic of men’s violence in America is rooted in our inability as a society to move beyond outmoded ideals of manhood.

In a sweeping analysis that cuts across racial, ethnic, and class lines, Katz examines mass shootings, day-to-day gun violence, violence against women, bullying, gay-bashing, and American militarism against the backdrop of a culture that has normalized violent and regressive forms of masculinity in the face of challenges to traditional male power and authority.

Along the way, the film provides a stunning look at the violent, sexist, and homophobic messages boys and young men routinely receive from virtually every corner of the culture, from television, movies, video games, and advertising to pornography, the sports culture, and US political culture. *Tough Guise 2* stands to empower a new generation of young men—and women—to challenge the myth that being a real man means putting up a false front and engaging in violent and self-destructive behavior.

—Byron Hurt | Director/Producer of *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* and *I Am a Man*