

## Female Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Feminist Response to the Penn State Sexual Assault Scandal

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*It is estimated that 1 in 4 female children and 1 in 6 male children are sexually abused before the age of 18. 73% of the victims do not tell anyone for a year, 45% of the victims do not tell anyone for 5 years, and some victims never tell anyone at all.*<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The Penn State Sexual Assault Scandal, its documents, and its outcomes offer a unique opportunity for a Research One University. If Penn State brings all of its vast resources together in order to study what occurred in its own community, it may be possible to not only demystify the local systems that allowed the crimes of Jerry Sandusky to take place, it may also be possible to identify global practices that permit violence against women and children and protect the perpetrators. Creating such a watershed moment in my local community will require identifying and unpacking entrenched systems of gender, class, race, religion, education, and law, and once the cultural practices of these systems are exposed and questioned, the foundations of everything we, in State College, Pennsylvania consider “civilized” will be questioned. Naomi Wolf said in *Fire With Fire*, “Patriarchy’s foundation has rested for millennia on the unwritten but rigorously enforced rule that women and children keep the secrets of men, and suffer abuse in silent shame,” but what happened in Central Pennsylvania may change everything because secrets were told and they were told by young men.<sup>2</sup> When men tell the secrets of men, a cultural shift has taken place, but women must take the lead in redefining our local and global cultures. This article is not a call to action, but an action plan to begin the process of eliminating sexual assault in my community one secret at a time.

### Introduction

Between November 4 and November 9, 2011, unprecedented events occurred on a university campus. Allegations of child sexual assault were brought against former Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky, who was arrested and charged with multiple counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, endangering the welfare of a child, indecent assault, unlawful contact with a minor, aggravated indecent assault, and attempted indecent assault.<sup>3</sup> Vice President of Business and Finance Gary Schultz and Director of Athletics Tim Curley were asked by Penn State President Graham Spanier and the Penn State Board of Directors to step down from their positions, and within hours of their dismissals Graham Spanier was removed from his position and legendary head football coach Joe

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkgcISE/b.6250779/k.4BB6/How\\_Prevalent\\_is\\_Child\\_Sexual\\_Abuse.htm](http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkgcISE/b.6250779/k.4BB6/How_Prevalent_is_Child_Sexual_Abuse.htm)

See “References” for all sources cited.

<sup>2</sup> Wolf, Naomi, *Fire With Fire*. Fawcett Columbine: New York, 1993. P. 18

<sup>3</sup> “Penn State ex-coach charged with abuse, AD with perjury”. *USA Today*. Associated Press. November 5, 2011. <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/story/2011-11-05/penn-state-abuse-case/51083628/1>.

Paterno was fired.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, Schultz and Curley were arraigned on charges they lied to the grand jury and failed to properly report suspected child abuse, and allegations of perjury and failing to report a child molester were made against Paterno and Spanier.<sup>5</sup> On June 22, 2012, Jerry Sandusky was convicted of 45 counts of sexually abusing 10 boys over 15 years and on October 9, 2012 he was sentenced to serve no less than 30 years in The State Correctional Institution in Greene, PA, which is a maximum security prison housing most of the state's death row inmates. On November 1, 2012, the original indictments against Curley and Schultz were amended to include felony charges of child endangerment, conspiracy to commit perjury and child endangerment, and new misdemeanor charges of obstruction of justice and conspiracy to obstruct justice. Also on November 1, 2012, Graham Spanier was indicted on felony charges of perjury, child endangerment, conspiracy to commit perjury and child endangerment, and misdemeanor charges of obstruction of justice, and conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/sports/2011/11/05/penn-state-ex-coach-others-charged-in-child-sex-case/#ixzz2B65S1Wnd>

Gary Schultz had retired in 2009 after 14 years as Penn State's senior vice-president in the Office of Finance and Business, and in July of 2011, he stepped back into the position on an interim basis while Penn State held a national search for his replacement. In his position as senior vice president for finance and business he led the division that includes the offices of Human Resources, Physical Plant, University Police, Investment Management, Auxiliary and Business Services, Corporate Controller, University Budget, Legal Services and Commonwealth Campus Business Operations. [http://live.psu.edu/tag/Gary\\_Schultz](http://live.psu.edu/tag/Gary_Schultz) July 29, 2011.

[http://live.psu.edu/tag/Gary\\_Schultz](http://live.psu.edu/tag/Gary_Schultz) June 23, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/10/sports/ncaafootball/-joe-paterno-and-graham-spanier-out-at-penn-state.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/10/sports/ncaafootball/-joe-paterno-and-graham-spanier-out-at-penn-state.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

Note: Joe Paterno died of lung cancer on January 22, 2012 before trial was set.

<sup>6</sup> "Some question timing, others hail charges un case." Matt Carroll, *Centre Daily Times*, 11/2/12, A, 1-3. After the initial charges in 2011 were filed against Schultz, he returned to retirement and does not receive a salary from Penn State. After initial charges were filed against Curley, he was placed on administrative leave with full salary, but his fixed term contract will not be renewed when it expires on June 30, 2013. Although fired as president on November 9, 2011, Graham Spanier remained employed by the university as a tenured professor on a \$700,000 year-long sabbatical leave that ended on November 9, 2012. On November 10, 2012, Spanier was placed on administrative leave at \$600,000 a year, but is not scheduled to teach classes at Penn State in spring of 2013. Dawson, Mike. "Spanier indicted on felonies." *Centre Daily Times*, November 2, 2012, A-3

## Foundations

The documents that support the charges brought against Jerry Sandusky, Graham Spanier, Tom Curley, and Gary Schultz provide not only an outline of alleged cover ups, non-compliances, and deceptions at the heart of a community tragedy, the documents provide a template for identifying core cultural systems and practices that permit sexual violence and protect its perpetrators. The Penn State Sexual Assault Scandal, its documents, and its outcomes offer a unique opportunity for a Research One University. If Penn State brings all of its vast resources together in order to study what occurred in its own backyard, it may be possible to not only demystify the local systems that allowed the crimes of Jerry Sandusky to take place, it may also be possible to apply findings to the global problem of violence against women and children. Creating such a watershed moment in my community will require identifying and unpacking entrenched systems of gender, class, race, religion, education, and law, and once the cultural practices of these systems are exposed and questioned, the foundations of everything we, in State College, Pennsylvania consider “civilized” will be questioned as well. Naomi Wolf said in Fire With Fire, “Patriarchy’s foundation has rested for millennia on the unwritten but rigorously enforced rule that women and children keep the secrets of men, and suffer abuse in silent shame,” but what happened in Central Pennsylvania may change everything because secrets were told and they were told by young men.<sup>7</sup> When men tell the secrets of men, a cultural shift has taken place, but it will be up to women to take the lead in redefining our culture. This paper is not a call to action, but an action plan to begin the process of eliminating sexual assault in my community one secret at a time.

Taking action comes down to challenging the flow and dispersal of information and challenging how specific information is used to create and control legislation and dictate behavior. Specific kinds of information show that women and children have been sexually assaulted by men since the beginning of recorded history. Women and children have kept quiet about sexual assault because the same sets of information show what happens to women and children who tell the secret. From Gilgamesh to Greek myths, to songs plays and poetry about African, Bosnian, and Japanese rape camps, from ESPN’s reporting on the Kobe Bryant rape trial, and to every fifth episode of “Law and Order: SVU,” civilizations and their legal and moral systems always seem to be at odds with the victims of rape and sexual assault.

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<sup>7</sup> Wolf, Naomi, *Fire With Fire*. Fawcett Columbine: New York, 1993. P. 18

Conflicting ideas about the basic criminality of sexual assault are reflected in contemporary American culture's fascinated with sex crimes. A simple Google search looking for movies that feature rape scenes lends over 2.5 million results in .29 seconds. Engaging with the secrets of sexual assault inside a culture hamstrung by legislative and moral mine fields is difficult enough, but finding ways to eliminate sexual violence inside a civilization "glamoured" by sexualized media and entertainment markets seems, at times, insurmountable.

As the image of "woman" morphs to fit the male imaginations controlling ad campaigns, music, and an adult film industry, the male imaginations defining religious and political movements have engineered a movement to move backwards in education, women's health, and the welfare of women and children. As example, in America every state has individual definitions of abuse, assault, and rape, and recent attempts by the religious right to undermine government supported abortion funding and to throw out Roe vs. Wade has resulted in rape and assault legislations that undermines support for the victims of rape and assault. This legislative tar pit was publically unmasked in the 2012 election cycle where the terms "legitimate rape," "forcible rape," and "marital rape" became talking points of political candidates seeking the favor of a religious voting block. Talking points about definitions of rape led to the downfall of tea party favorites Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock, but for every two minutes Akin and Mourdock spent on television talking about who or what gets to control a woman's body, one rape occurred in the US, and the odds are that the victim was a female child under 12 attacked by someone she knew. The best odds, however, are with the perpetrator because only 54% of sexual assaults are reported and of those reported 97% of the attackers never spend a day in jail.<sup>8</sup> Our court system is based on physical evidence, and as stated at the beginning of this paper, 73% of child victims do not tell anyone for a year and 45% of the victims do not tell anyone for 5 years, so the probability of collecting physical evidence is, unless the attack is permanently disfiguring, next to none.<sup>9</sup>

The difficulty of trying cases without physical evidence is one problem, but the court system itself makes it difficult for advocates and professionals who are supporting the victims. I am from the United

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<sup>8</sup> RAINN <http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkgcISe/b.6250779/k.4BB6/How\\_Prevalent\\_is\\_Child\\_Sexual\\_Abuse.htm](http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkgcISe/b.6250779/k.4BB6/How_Prevalent_is_Child_Sexual_Abuse.htm)  
See "References" for all sources cited.

States and I was born and raised in North Carolina. My sister-in-law's father, Dr. Robert Dixon, was a pediatrician in Hickory, NC for over 25 years, and he devoted most of those years testifying in court for children who had been sexually and physically abused. In an interview, he told me that "continuances and delays" created impossible situations for him. The difficulty of balancing child advocacy with a "40 patients a day" case load illustrated one of the many obstacles that face child victims of sexual violence.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Dixon acknowledged that there had been much improvement in the care of victims during his career, and he cited the increasing number of Children's Advocacy Centers, like his local agency called the Children's Advocacy and Protection Center of Catawba County, NC. Child Advocacy Centers are specially designed facilities where a child can see law enforcement, a pediatrician, a mental health professional, a representative of the District Attorney's office, and an advocate in one visit, and parents can receive information, join support groups for non-offenders, and join in community efforts to heal child victims.<sup>11</sup> However, to Dr. Dixon the most notable place of improvement was with parental awareness of a problem. He noted that over the course of his career, mothers in his practice became more and more aware of child sexual assault and the children he saw in his practice were reflecting their mother's caution about meeting strangers like a new doctor. If our legal system cannot serve the needs of victims of sexual assault and abuse, then this nation cannot look towards the legal system as a way to address the problem of sexual violence.

### Strategies

The problem of sexual assault must be addressed inside each local community, inside each school system, inside each individual family, and inside each individual, and women must identify and own what we bring to the cultural table and then step into positions of leadership in this cultural conversation. Dr. Dixon gave me the framework of a very simple action plan that can be implemented immediately in every household where women are taking care of children and in every community where children are being raised by extended families.

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<sup>10</sup> This informal interview took place on November 24, 2012 at Dr. Dixon's home in Sparta, NC

<sup>11</sup> See [http://www.catawbacountycapc.org/about\\_purpose.htm](http://www.catawbacountycapc.org/about_purpose.htm) for addition information about services. See <http://www.nationalcac.org/> for the National Children's Advocacy Center and check CAC for local listings. Note: State College, PA has no CAC, but one is in the works. Currently, the path of a sexual assault victim begins with an interview with law enforcement followed by a 2 hour trip to Danville, PA and a hospital equipped for a sexual assault exam followed by further interviews with the District Attorney's office and followed, hopefully, by a mental health professional.

Our ABCs of prevention are:

A=alcohol/drugs, B=boyfriends/uncles/stepfathers, C=communication/confidants,  
D=discussions with family and community, and E=education.

Based on statistics gathered government agencies and community advocacy organizations across the nation, alcohol and drugs in the home creates a risk for sexual assault, as does the presence of boyfriends and immediate and extended male family members. Lack of communication about suspected incidents and incidents that have occurred creates more risk, and not seeking or being provided with education about what sexual assault looks like and who is most likely to be victimized furthers the ability for predators to target children. Mothers, women, and girls should create confidants inside their community and make agreements to tell their confidant if something happens. Sometimes a buffer between law enforcement and judgmental family members makes all the difference. If every mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, and female community member pledged to stay aware, be a confidant, and to speak out, then a transformation of ideas could take place. In a talk back during my new works festival, my friend Deb Margolin, the mother of feminist performance art, said, “The single most radical act a woman can make is to stand still on a stage and speak.”<sup>12</sup> Women must radicalize themselves in order to protect children and in doing so, we will protect ourselves and re-create a culture where sexual violence is no longer an expectation.

I am, at heart, a radical 1990s feminist. There was something about the third wave feminist, white and privileged as she was. With all of her anger, her biases, her first world problems, she went to the streets and to Washington and to NOW, and she created a movement with a movement. She got called out by Naomi Wolf for making women victims and Camile Paglia for making “rape a symbol of male-female relations,” but Paglia’s assertions that feminist rhetoric made young women more vulnerable to assault has real time resonance on my university campus. Rape statistics at Penn State rise on a yearly basis, and an argument can be raised saying that more rapes are being reported, but prior to the Sandusky conviction, my university had not been in full compliance with the 1990 Clery Act, which is a federal act requiring open reporting of sex crimes and a key element in the cases against Penn State

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<sup>12</sup> Deb Margolin appeared at my new works festival Cultural Conversations on February 24, 2011, where she premiered her solo piece “Anita Hill.” She said this quote during a post-show talk back.

administrators.<sup>13</sup> Sexual assaults on college campuses rise every year, and in 2011, the Obama administration took steps to address the rising tide of sexual violence. Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan unveiled new federal guidelines under Title IX requiring universities to take “prompt and effective action” in cases of sexual assault. Duncan said, “The misplaced sense of values and priorities in some of these cases is staggering. As caring adults, as parents, and leaders we must deal with the brutal truth, and the facts around these incidents can be shocking.”<sup>14</sup> When the federal government has to step in and compel college and university administrators to take “prompt and effective action” in cases of sexual violence, this is the signal of a culture where everyone is at risk.

### Obstacles

A cultural transformation will not happen unless we are willing to look at how we got here. Fourth wave feminist Jessica Valenti observes how the mainstreaming of pornography, how magazines like *Maxim* and *Playboy* define “hotness” and make it important, and how the insanity of the *Girls Gone Wild* empire has influenced the behavior of college-age females. Her feminist response to all of this sexual agitation is to tell young women to “stop getting so drunk” and to figure out whether they are actually “having fun” or having something else, and then she says, “Do what you want to do, but be aware of why you are doing it.”<sup>15</sup> This is at least *some* advice for college aged females, but for this 1990s feminist

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<sup>13</sup> According to the requirements stated by the Clery Act, which is the federal act that requires all colleges and universities that receive federal financial aid to report crime statistics on campus and locally, Penn State’s 2012 Safety Report compiled by the Penn State University Police states that there were 8 “forcible” sex offenses in 2009, 4 in 2010, and 24 in 2011. In the article “Police Investigate Sexual Assault: Release Statistics from 2010-2012” by Laura Nichols that appeared on 10/3/12 at the website StateCollege.com, the State College Police reported 40 sex crimes in 2010, 47 in 2011, and 45 so far in 2012. <http://www.statecollege.com/news/local-news/police-investigate-sexual-assault-release-statistics-from-201012-1146929/> The University Police and Public Safety department is responsible for filing reports on crime and this department is under the control of the Division of Finance and Business formerly headed by Gary Schultz. As documented in the Freeh Report, Penn State was not in compliance with the 1990 Clery Act until after the Sandusky trial, so there was no record of Michael McQueary witnessing Sandusky assaulting a young boy in the locker room of the football athletic complex, and although information was shared with “senior athletic-department and university officials, including the former president, Graham B. Spanier, “no record exists” of a report to the police. <http://chronicle.com/article/IgnoranceLow-Priority-of/132839/> Paglia, Camile. *Vamps and Tramps*, Vintage Books: New York, NY, 1994. p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.publicintegrity.org/accountability/education/sexual-assault-campus>, <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2011/04/04/3885/biden-duncan-highlight-new-federal-guidance-campus-sex-assault-probes>

<sup>15</sup> Valenti, Jessica. *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters*. Seal Press: Berkeley, CA, 2007. P. 41-59.

it is not “prompt and affective” enough to deal with the behavioral options available to the *next* generation of young girls. The 2012 documentary *Sexy Baby* by Jill Bauer and Rhonna Gradus illustrates how “hyper-sexualized media and marketing, reality TV, sexting, porn-chic, *Girls Gone Wild*, and the online viral culture” is affecting our culture and our young girls. This documentary follows 3 women, a former porn star, a young kindergarten teacher, and a twelve year old girl named Winnifred. Winnifred is the next generation of “Do what you want to do” young female, and Winnifred is exploring her options via the internet. Admitting that her interests have shifted from gymnastics to posing provocatively for Facebook photos, Winnifred warns us all about the days ahead saying quite simply, “We are the pioneers.” Winnifred’s generation is the pioneer of a civilization where access to information is unlimited, and the consequences of limitless information are unknown.<sup>16</sup> If behavioral options for Winnifred are being provided by reality TV, *Girls Gone Wild*, *Maxim*, and *Playboy* the consequences may be exactly what a few major industries are counting on.

According to the US Department of Justice, the average age of children victimized by the sex trade industry is 12 years old, the same age as Winnifred. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2.5 million children run away each year and within 48 hours one third of these children are recruited into the underground world of prostitution and pornography.<sup>17</sup> Winnifred *sees* the world, but she does not know who is out there producing parts of it. Bauer and Gradus have been criticized for the explicit nature of *Sexy Baby*, but the explicit nature of the documentary is nothing compared to the explicit nature of sex trafficking. The 2007 documentary *Very Young Girls* by Rachel Lloyd and David Schisgall tells the story of thirteen and fourteen year old girls who are “seduced, abused, and sold on New York City streets by pimps and treated like adult criminals by police.”<sup>18</sup> Lloyd, herself a survivor of sex trafficking in the United States, is the founder and director of Girls Education and Mentoring Services located in New York City. Beginning as a one-woman outreach program in 1998, GEMS is now “the nation’s largest organization offering direct services to American victims of child sex

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tribeca/sexy-baby-connects-the-dots\\_b\\_1989044.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tribeca/sexy-baby-connects-the-dots_b_1989044.html)  
<http://movies.nytimes.com/2012/10/19/movies/sexy-baby-a-documentary-about-internet-pornography.html>

<sup>17</sup> Statistics available at Stop Child Trafficking Now  
<http://www.sctnow.org/contentpages.aspx?parentnavigationid=5827&viewcontentpageguid=29d295d1-5818-4e7a-bde1-f61690fa44a8>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.gems-girls.org/veryyounggirls.html>



trafficking.” GEMS works with girls and young women between ages 12–24, “who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking,” and GEMS empowers them through education and opportunities to exit the sex industry.<sup>19</sup> Bauer and Gradus, and Lloyd and Schisgall are telling secrets and although sex trafficking is against the law, the US State Department and UNICEF report that child/human trafficking is the “second largest criminal enterprise, after drugs,” and the global market of child/human sex trafficking is estimated at “\$12 billion a year with over 1.2 million child victims.”<sup>20</sup>

Legislation cannot change the cultural practice of sexual assault, and the fear of bringing a rape case to court can be illustrated by how the behavior of the legal profession moves in and around whatever legislation is in place. When a female victim bring charges against a male, the act of **parcing** rape into terms like legitimate, forcible, and marital can be looked at as a behavioral response to the possibility of criminal conviction. The standard practice of **blaming** the female for being “provocative, seductive, suggestive, proposing, teasing, or just plain “asking for it,” and positioning a male as “helplessly lusty, sexually frustrated beings, responding to sexually provocative women” can be viewed as another behavioral response by the legal profession.<sup>21</sup> **Turning the victimizer into a victim** can be viewed as another behavior, and on the day before his sentencing, Jerry Sandusky read a statement on a Penn State student run radio station:

In my heart, I know I did not do these alleged disgusting acts. A young man who was dramatic, a veteran accuser, and always sought attention, started everything. He was joined by a well-orchestrated effort of the media, investigators, the system, Penn State, psychologists, civil attorneys and other accusers. [ . . . ] Before you blame me, as others have, look at everything and everybody. ... Evaluate the accusers and their families [ . . . ]. Think about how easy it was for them to turn on me given the information, attention and potential perks.<sup>22</sup>

By assigning blame to others, “a person can achieve moral superiority while simultaneously disowning any responsibility [ . . . ] The victim stance is a powerful one. The victim is always morally

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.gems-girls.org/about/our-team/our-founder>

<sup>20</sup> Statistics available at Stop Child Trafficking Now

<http://www.sctnow.org/contentpages.aspx?parentnavigationid=5827&viewcontentpageguid=29d295d1-5818-4e7a-bde1-f61690fa44a8>

<sup>21</sup> “Rethinking “Don’t Blame the Victim:’ The Psychology of Victimhood.” *Journal of Couple Therapy*, 4 (3/4), 15-36.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/10/08/jerry-sandusky-reads-statement-on-radio-show-denying-disgusting-acts/>

right, neither responsible nor accountable, and forever entitled to sympathy.”<sup>23</sup> The challenge of the victim often becomes maintaining their right to *be* the victim. On my campus, the word victim was used to describe everything from the football team to the entire university. There are only 10 victims of the Penn State Sexual Assault Scandal at this writing, but more are on the horizon. The difficulty of a rape trial is an illustration of the difficulty of the topic itself. If a culture can agree on providing safety for all of their citizens, then the true issue will become defining violence itself. Defining violence in the twenty-first century will require unpacking every system of power we call “home.”

In my home called State College, Pennsylvania, not only are rape and assault victims bound by localized interpretations of criminal acts, fear of being blamed themselves, and fear that the victimizer will become the victim, they grapple with their greatest fear: not being believed. On the night Jerry Sandusky was found guilty, Attorney General Linda Kelly, one of very few women on the Sandusky case, stood on the steps of the Centre County Courthouse and opened a door to the future saying, “One of the recurring themes of the witnesses’ testimony, which came from the voices of the victims themselves in this case was, ‘Who would believe a kid?’ And the answer to that question is, ‘We here in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania would believe a kid.’”<sup>24</sup> When Attorney General Kelly brought new indictments against Spanier, Curley, and Schultz, she opened the door further saying: “This is not a mistake, an oversight or a misjudgment. This was a conspiracy of silence by top officials at Penn State, working to actively conceal the truth, with total disregard to the suffering of children.”<sup>25</sup> Attorney General Kelly’s public indictment of a corrupt system began with a 15 year old boy named Aaron Fisher who told a secret and was believed. Attorney General Linda Kelly, Jill Bauer, Rhonna Gradus, and Rachel Lloyd give women a strong template for change: believe the children and tell the secrets.

### **Action Plans**

As I continue to grapple with a “feminist response” to sexual assault scandals everywhere, I must grapple with what being a “feminist” means in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a 2012 Skype interview with my students, sociologist, activist, and solo performance artist Kimberly Dark gave an elegant solution to a

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<sup>23</sup> Rethinking “Don’t Blame the Victim:’ The Psychology of Victimhood.” *Journal of Couple Therapy*, 4 (3/4), 15-36.

<sup>24</sup> <http://pacast.com/a.asp?9891>

<sup>25</sup> “Spanier indicted on felonies,” Mike Dawson, *Centre Daily Times*, 11/2/12, A1.

decades old quandary. Dark said, “Feminism might not be a definition, but rather an operation, an undulating response to situations and experiences.”<sup>26</sup> Dark frees feminism to change, to develop as cultural situations emerge, all the while reacting fluidly within specific borders. To fight a culture defined by sexual violence, I suggest that you choose your own borders and defend those walls. I always say to my students, “Comply out of respect, Resist out of Intellect.” I comply with the laws of the land, but I resist people who interpret the laws in ways that disempower women and children. As an advocate for young people in my community, I teach students between the ages of 13 and 21 to stand on a stage and tell their own stories about bullying, violence, assault, body image and self-esteem, and I have those kids tell their stories in front of peers and community audiences. After the kids tell their stories, I invite the audiences and the kids to talk together about co-creating a safe place for them and those who follow. As a professor, I use media, the entertainment industry, and the internet as tools of inquiry and empowerment in all of my classes. I meet my students on their Facebook and Twitter turf and use the sites as documents that serve the academic requirements of a Research One institution, all the while teaching students to think critically about all that information and to talk about it with their friends and family.

Theatre is about “what if.” What if everyone educated themselves on sexual violence in their own communities? What if everyone educated themselves on how to identify women and children at risk and then volunteered to be a confidant for a young person? What if everyone reading this article volunteered once a month in a women’s crisis center or a local Child Advocate Center? What if everyone reading this suggested that a sex education programs should be developed K-12 that taught children about their bodies and how to self-protect against assault? What if women everywhere made an agreement to disagree with violence? In the US, women hold the majority of corporate middle management positions, comprise the majority work force in government work, education, health, human resources, and financial activities, and women dominate higher education at every degree level. That’s a lot of women with a lot of power to disagree. Shakespeare said, “All the worlds at stage.” It’s

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<sup>26</sup> Kimberly Dark visited my classroom via Skype on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 to talk about the role of female solo performance in contemporary culture. Dark has visited Penn State twice as a resident artist with Cultural Conversations, PSU’s yearly new works festival. [www.kimberlydark.com](http://www.kimberlydark.com), [www.culturalconversations.psu.edu](http://www.culturalconversations.psu.edu)

time to stand still on our cultural stages and speak. When I was 17, I was sexually assaulted by an adult male. Right after the assault, I told someone and they said, “Get used to it.” I agree to disagree.

### Update

Since writing this paper in 2012, The Pennsylvania State University has begun exploring research initiatives in the study of child maltreatment, and in October of 2013, a call went out for applicants to fill seven tenure track positions in the Departments of Biobehavioral Health, Educational Psychology, Counseling and Special Education, Human Development and Family Studies, Pediatrics, Psychology, and Sociology. These hires are a direct result of a 2012 Presidential Task Force proposal to form and fund a network that includes “four Penn State centers of excellence in Children, Youth and Families working under the auspices of the university-wide, Children Youth and Families Consortium.”<sup>27</sup> Housed inside the Social Science Research Institute, the four centers that make up the Network are The Child Study Center, Dr. Karen Bierman, Director, The Center for Protection of Children, Dr. Benjamin Levi, Director, The Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Dr. Ed Smith, Director, and The Center for Children and the Law, Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Director.<sup>28</sup> In addition to degree programs and research initiatives, there have been two national conferences at Penn State on Child Protection and Well-Being and the third is scheduled for May of 2014.<sup>29</sup> Locally, the Centre Country Children’s Advocacy center opened in Bellefonte, PA, on November 13, 2013, and serving under the umbrella of the Mount Nittany Health System, “the center will provide a place for specialists to interview a child instead of a child having to go through multiple interviews-with a case worker-a police officer, a prosecutor and an doctor-in multiple places.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [www.ssri.psu.edu/thenetwork](http://www.ssri.psu.edu/thenetwork)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ssri.psu.edu/thenetwork/initiatives/presidential-task-force-on-child-maltreatment>  
[https://app2.ohr.psu.edu/jobs/home\\_EJMS/detail.cfm?vac=%25%22TW%3F2\(%3C%20%0A](https://app2.ohr.psu.edu/jobs/home_EJMS/detail.cfm?vac=%25%22TW%3F2(%3C%20%0A) The four foundational Centers of the Network: the Child Study Center, [csc.psych.psu.edu](http://csc.psych.psu.edu), in the College of the Liberal Arts, the Center for Children and the Law, ([http://law.psu.edu/academics/research\\_centers/children\\_and\\_the\\_law](http://law.psu.edu/academics/research_centers/children_and_the_law)), in the Penn State Dickinson School of Law, the Center for the Protection of Children, ([www.pennstatehershey.org/web/protection-of-children](http://www.pennstatehershey.org/web/protection-of-children)), in the Penn State Hershey College of Medicine, and the Prevention Research Center, (<http://www.prevention.psu.edu>) in the College of Health and Human Development.

<sup>29</sup> <http://protectchildren.psu.edu/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.centredaily.com/2013/11/19/3897617/centre-county-childrens-advocacy.html>  
<http://www.mountnittany.org/>  
<http://www.mountnittany.org/childrens-advocacy-center>

