

LESBIAN OPPRESSION

On December 4, a gay woman was viciously attacked in the parking lot behind Gigi's, Detroit's popular lesbian bar. Reportedly, she and a girlfriend were parked there after the bar closed, when suddenly the friend's husband appeared. While the wife escaped, the remaining woman was horribly beaten, suffering the loss of one eye, crushed face bones, multiple lacerations, and neck injuries.

Leaving his victim bleeding and near death, the assailant finally left, and has not been apprehended. Apparently, no charges will be placed against him due to a lack of witnesses.

At last report, the victim was improving, though still hospitalized. Contributions can be sent to her, care of this paper.

Only a few days earlier, on November 28, another lesbian was terrorized in her home by policemen who had come to question her about a gun registered in her name. This woman had no arrest record, and was not suspected of any crime. But this apparently routine investigation turned into a nightmare.

The woman was ridiculed for her manner of dress (slacks, shirt, and boots), attacked with insults and obscenities, then taken to jail, where she spent the night. Her only crime was being gay. No charges were pressed, and she was released next day.

As news of these atrocities spread, other women have

come forward to relate similar experiences of harassment and discrimination. For instance, one woman told how some time ago, she had been involved in a fight at a gay bar. The disturbance ended before police arrived, but they singled her out for arrest.

She protested that she did not have an all-night babysitter to stay with her children. This was ignored, and police forced her into handcuffs, breaking her arm in the process. She was jailed, with no medical attention until the next day.

Later, at her trial, the judge suggested that her children be taken from her, as she was an "unfit mother." Fortunately, with the aid of lawyers, this was prevented.

Women, especially gay women, have always been the victims of violence and harassment. Detroit is no different, and reported incidents of this kind seem to be increasing. It *can* happen to *you*! Among oppressed people, individual rights do not exist, nor are there any individual solutions to oppression. Our only defense is the strength that comes from unity. We must fight for our rights, and we can only do that together.

[Please report any incidents of harassment or discrimination to the Gay Switchboard — 833-7527; or write to Daughters of Bilitis, P.O. Box 244, Greenfield Station, Dearborn, MI 48125. Legal advice and good attorneys are available through the Switchboard.]