

TBTN Brooklyn

anonymous

2010

In 1976, Claudia Caputi, a 17-year-old woman, was gangraped in Rome. In a rare move for women in Italy, she reported the rape to Rome's fascist police. A year later on March 31st 1977, when her case went to trial, Claudia was gang-raped again by the same group of men. This time her whole body was slashed with razors in an attempt to keep her silent. Within hours, fifteen thousand women mobilized in Rome's Appio-Tuscolano neighborhood, where Claudia, the rapists, and police all lived. The women dressed like the sex workers common to the district, both to declare solidarity with le puttane and to protect themselves in the crowd's uniformity. "No more mothers, wives and daughters: let's destroy the families!" was the cry heard in the street. Carrying torches, the women broke through the police lines and marched to the Fascist Party Headquarters. For the Italian feminists, this was not just a march for Claudia, but for all women who were survivors of violence. This was the first incarnation of Take Back the Night.

Tonight we march again, to refuse the violence that continues to force us to be housewives and fuck-toys, mothers and daddy's girls, to refuse to understand women's oppression in the private sphere as a simple cultural or ideological matter. We address capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy as one intrinsically interconnected system. We know that women, like people of color in New York City and abroad, are used as natural resources the rich exploit to stay ahead. We realize that atomization and isolation are integral to this plan and that this is why public space is men's space. Tonight our desires are our own, our anger is our own, our violence is our own. Tonight we refuse to be women.

We all wear skirts and black to symbolize the subversion of both womanhood and of mourning, to destroy that which destroys us.

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