

Three Black Women, Why Did They Die?

An Anarkata Zine

Soe Noire



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This pamphlet was created by Soe Noire, inspired by the 1979 pamphlet created by the Combahee River Collective. It was created for Black Women. If you are not a Black Woman, please read it and share it with a Black Woman.

In a country that does not have an institution that supports or brings justice to Black Women who are survivors of gender based violence; we only have Community as a form of protection. When you have an Anti-Black police force whose objective is to disproportionately imprison Black people and to only protect abusers, the wealthy, and private property; we only have knowledge as a form of power. In a country where Black women and girls in AmeriKKKa are at higher risk of homicide, we only have self defense as a form of liberation. Additionally, we as the Black population in this country cannot rely on Western gender stereotypes to protect Black Women. The myth of men “naturally” being protectors of women can be easily debunked when you live in reality; and the reality is that men are disproportionately responsible for *Femicide, and the brutalization of Black Women. Black Women are more likely to face gender based violence, with the perpetrators of this violence being **cisgendered men. The average lifespan of a Black Transgender Woman in Amerikkka is 35. Queer women and girls of color are at a higher risk of homelessness and job discrimination. Black women and girls are at a higher risk of homicide and domestic violence than any other race. Women as a whole are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone they know, compared to a stranger. When Black women and girls are murdered, it is expected. With some exceptions in the culture such as Breonna Taylor and Shanquella Robinson, there is hardly any mainstream uproar. News stations are silent, social media is selective, and many people opt for blaming the victims for their deaths and moving on instead of holding these murderers and violent perpetrators responsible. Many would rather point their fingers at survivors, instead of trying to dismantle systems such as **Misogynoir, **Rape Culture, and Sexism, which keep the cycle of violence going. It is not a coincidence that statistics show that Black women and girls are at a highest risk for gender based violence compared to other races. It is not by accident that the culture, celebrities, and magazines underreport, make light of, or ignore Misogynoir entirely.

“The most disrespected person in America is the Black Woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black Woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black Woman.”—Malcolm X

In order to achieve true liberation from oppressive systems such as sexism and queerphobia within the Black Population, we must empower ourselves with knowledge and Self Defense. There is no politician that will protect Black Women, no celebrity or idol working in the interest of Revolution for Black Women. True liberation starts in our homes, our families, in Sisterhood, and in character.

I decided to write this pamphlet after reading How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and after doing my own research on the collective. I was and am constantly enraged by the unnecessary deaths that affect Black Women, and want white supremacy and sexism to be burned down and destroyed within the Black population. I also wanted to honor and educate about the legacies of the lives of three Black Women/Girls whose lives were unjustly cut short due to Misogynoir and Femicide. May

this pamphlet empower you and provide you with the knowledge you need to resist and fight against sexism in the Black population. With the strength of our ancestors, the knowledge and history of the Black freedom fighters that came before us, we will see Black revolution in our lifetime. Ase.

TOYIN SALAU

Oluwatoyin “Toyin” Salau was a 19 year old Black Girl from Tallahassee, Florida. Her birthday is August 27. She had a revolutionary spirit and was a crafty person, teaching herself how to sew and paint. She liked astrology, and wanted to go to cosmetology school. She was a model and BlackLivesMatter activist who was passionate about fighting against police brutality. She was Nigerian-American, and was described as being very spiritual and loving by her friends and those who knew her personally. She was witty, and had an unwavering sense of justice that led her to attend protest after protest despite dealing with homelessness and being a survivor of sexual trauma. Her life was tragically ended after being kidnapped and sexually assaulted by a Black man who offered her shelter. She spent her last days fighting for justice, going viral online in a video at a protest for Tony Mcdade, a Black trans man who was brutally murdered by pigs. Her death is a painful one, an unjustified one, one that is felt years after by people who knew her on and offline. “Silence is the best weapon for some but not for me, I will not be silenced.” Toyin Salau And she cannot be silenced. May we continue to honor her, remember her, and all the causes she fought for. May her legacy live on. ASE.

RITA HESTER

Rita Hester was a 34 year old Black Woman from Hartford Connecticut. She was a singer and entertainer in downtown Boston, and moved there in her early 20s to get involved in the local rock scene. She did poetry, danced, and was “born to be a star” according to her younger sister Eartha. She was attacked and murdered in her own home, and unfortunately passed from her injuries at Beth Israel Hospital. Twenty five years after her killing, the police have done little to nothing to seek justice for Rita, most likely due to her Black transgender identity. Local news reports inaccurately reported on her case, going as far as to cruelly insult her identity, and deliberately misgender her. But regardless of this, her surviving family refer to her as “a passionate artist, a lover of animals, and a world traveler.” Her murder was the catalyst that led to the creation of Transgender Day of Remembrance; a day recognized on November 20, to commemorate trans people murdered through violence. May her legacy live on. ASE.

SADE ROBINSON

Rita Hester was a 34 year old Black Woman from Hartford Connecticut. She was a singer and entertainer in downtown Boston, and moved there in her early 20s to get involved in the local rock scene. She did poetry, danced, and was “born to be a star” according to her younger sister Eartha. She was attacked and murdered in her own home, and unfortunately passed from her injuries at Beth Israel Hospital. Twenty five years after her killing, the police have done little to nothing to seek justice for Rita, most likely due to her Black transgender identity. Local news reports

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RESOURCES

BlackLine 1 (800) 604-5841 (Crisis line created to prioritize Black Women + Femmes, by a Black Woman) “BlackLine provides a space for peer support, counseling, reporting of mistreatment, witnessing and affirming the lived experiences for folks who are most impacted by systematic oppression with an LGBTQ+ Black Femme Lens.” – callblackline.com

Afiya Peer Respite – Northampton, MA

Wildflower Alliance Bowen Resource Center – Springfield, MA

Wildflower Peer Support Line – Call: 888.407.4515 (Do Not Leave A Voicemail. They are not checked. Please keep calling until you reach someone.)

(For full list of resources, please download the full zine on soenoire.com)

SELF PROTECTION

Never go home with strangers for any reason.

Always be aware of your surroundings.

Carry a portable charger whenever you leave the house, in case of emergencies.

Avoid going out alone, or leaving bars alone. Go in groups or with friends.

Learn bleed points for self defense

People you know are more likely to hurt you than strangers. Practice discernment when choosing friends, family, and romantic/sexual partners.

Always have your own money

Learn how to throw a punch

Watch self defense videos online and look for classes in your area

Lie to strangers who ask you personal questions in public (your name, where you're from, why you're there, your job.)

Do not scroll/use your phone when walking outside or on your way to the car. Be aware of your surroundings at all times, day or night.

Anxious or not, if you think someone is following you or watching you, make it known that you see them. Look them in the eyes, and get off your phone and try to get to your location as soon as possible. Predators love passive victims. Head up, and be ready to defend yourself, scream, and fight.

Phone a friend when you're going home alone.

Ask for an escort to your car if you're at the store/mall so you don't have to walk alone.

DO NOT leave your house without a self defense item for ANY reason, regardless of the distance. (pepper spray, self defense knife, mace)

If you're traveling, make sure your self defense items are TSA friendly. Bring pepper spray, a self defense door stopper and a portable lock for your room doors. (Also use these if you live in an apartment.)

Background check all your dates, romantic/Sexual partners. Do not meet a man, day or night, who you do not know, regardless how much you guys have texted or called. Get his first and last government name, his number, his school/job and where he lives. Write the info down somewhere and run a background check.

Tell at least one person you trust when you leave the house, and what to do if they don't hear from you.

Download a self defense app for when you're walking home, to your car, etc.

INDEX

Cisgender - adjective to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth; a person who is not transgender. – Wikipedia

Misogynoir - “the combined force of anti-Black racism and misogyny directed towards black women. The term was coined by black feminist writer Moya Bailey in 2008 to address misogyny directed toward black transgender and cisgender women in American visual and popular culture.” – Wikipedia

Femicide - Femicide or feminicide is “a term for the murdering of women, often because of their gender. Femicide can be perpetrated by either sex but is more often committed by men. This is most likely due to unequal power between men and women as well as harmful gender roles, stereotypes, or social norms.” – Wikipedia

Rape Culture - “Rape culture is a setting, as described by some sociological theories, in which rape is pervasive and normalized due to that setting's attitudes about gender and sexuality..Behaviors commonly associated with rape culture include victim blaming, slut-shaming, sexual objectification, and trivialization.” Wikipedia

Combahee River Collective- “The Combahee River Collective was a Black, feminist, lesbian, socialist group primarily based in Boston, Massachusetts.The group, created in response to racism within the feminist movement and sexism and homophobia within the civil rights movement, operated from 1974 to 1980. Founded by three Black Women, Demita Frazier, Barbara Smith, and Beverly Smith. ” Britannica

Rita Hester

“25 Years Ago, Rita Hester Was Brutally Stabbed in Her Apartment. Her Family is Still Seeking Closure” – written by Samson Amore, The Advocate

“Remembering Rita Hester, Who Changed What It Means to Remember Trans Lives” Written by Samantha Riedel, Them Magazine

Toyin Salau

“What Could Have Saved Oluwatoyin Salau?” – written by Clarissa Brooks, Harper's Bazaar

“For All of the Oluwatoyins and Those Alike” by written by Oluwatoyin Lanade on Medium

Sade Robinson

Family and friends join at vigil to remember Sade Robinson - WTMJ-TV article by Mariam Mackar

Eleven Black Women, Why Did They Die? by the Combahee River Collective

The Anarchist Library
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<https://www.soenoire.com/shop/p/3bwwtd>

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