

DECEMBER 6, 1989

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

by Karen Kading, District 11—Thames Valley,
member of the provincial Status of Women Committee.

Many of us remember exactly where we were, what we were doing or who we were with on a day where something historically significant happens. On December 6, 1989, I was employed in the library system at Western University and was avoiding working on my Master's thesis. I had taught overseas for two years prior to the library position and I was planning to leave the current job and re-enter teaching the following month. On that day, as the news began to filter in across the news services, everyone was shocked to learn about the events that had taken place in Montreal—14 women had been murdered, simply because they were “feminists” enrolled in an engineering program, a program traditionally dominated by males.

Every person I spoke to over the next few days was shocked by the event, regardless of gender, religion, race, culture or orientation. Several members of the women's community came together the next evening at the home of two students, who had recently arrived from Montreal to attend Western. Both of these women were overcome by grief and shock; they were reeling at the thought that they could have been among the murdered women had they not left Montreal. We all mourned the loss of these sisters, who were strangers to us, together.

Another woman I know mentioned that she had been driving by École Polytechnique that day on the way to visit a friend. Robin recalled seeing the bodies being carried out of the building, only to discover the story of the massacre later. She joined with other women in Montreal to commemorate the murdered women the next day.

The Wyrd Sisters, a band based in Winnipeg, wrote a song entitled: *This Memory* from the album, *Leave a Little Light*, 1993. Here are some of the lyrics:



Later on that evening, I turned on my TV,
Listened as they're talkin' about the news of a shooting spree.
Fourteen young women shot dead in Montreal!
Oh, it's a killing of us all.
Yes, it's a killing of us all.
But it could have been me, just as easily.
Could have been my sister, left there to bleed.
Oh, it could have been my father or brother done the deed—
Oh no! Don't let me lose this memory.

Indeed, it easily could have been any woman, in any country, at any time. Examples of misogyny and violence against women can happen anywhere and are reported frequently in both national and international news. I love Canada; I love this country, but it is not perfect. Attitudes and assumptions do not change unless we continue to challenge our own outlook and that of others.

As Canadians, we have the reputation of being very polite. There are times when our politeness masks covert misogyny, racism, homophobia, and a variety of other “isms”; we have all heard the inappropriate comments whispered behind a hand, and perhaps experienced attitudes passed on by relatives, friends and family that we may have adopted as our own without really examining them, especially in our youth.

Canada, it turns out, is not quite the Utopia we all like to think it is.... Relatively speaking when compared to other countries, we are a young nation. We still have our own growing pains and many issues to address and resolve. As the December 6 Day of Action on Violence Against Women again approaches, I urge everyone to support an end to abuse and inequality, not just for the women who were murdered in Montreal, but for every woman who has ever faced gender based violence and harassment and for every woman ever murdered at the hands of a partner or stranger just because she was a woman.

Gift Guide

Canadian Women's Foundation has created a gift guide that can help you find meaningful gifts for the people you love. By choosing items from some of their partners, they're supporting CWF's work to help women and girls across Canada move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership. It feels good to give, but it feels even better to give with purpose!

www.canadianwomen.org/get-involved/shop



CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

FONDATION
CANADIENNE
DES FEMMES

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- www.cbc.ca/news/politics/sterilization-indigenous-1.4902303
- www.ctvnews.ca/canada/amnesty-calls-for-accountability-on-coerced-sterilization-of-indigenous-women-1.4174239
- www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/ilhan-omar-congress-women_us_5be6f353e4b0769d24cdc53b
- www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-kavanaugh-hearings-just-wont-leave-me-alone_us_5bc9fd17e4b0b7cd198dbbda
- www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/me-too-founder-tarana-burke-wrote-a-love-letter-to-christine-blasey-ford_us_5bbe0b13e4b01470d057b8fb



Check out our first documentary video, now on the museum's website and YouTube

A Struggle to Remember: Fighting for Our Families
Un précieux héritage: Les luttes syndicales pour la famille

A Struggle to Remember: Fighting for Our Families explores how Canadian feminists, unionists, and political activists built a potent coalition, mobilized public opinion, and achieved vast improvements in maternity leave and other family leave benefits.



www.youtube.com/channel/UCIsrQHw4hNZaJCUNUFFzsvw



Public Service Alliance of Canada

CHILD CARE VIDEOS FROM PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

PSAC is today launching new social media video ads in support of our long-running campaign for universal, high-quality and affordable child care in Canada.

Here are the links to the videos:



www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kK5tweGgCA

And in French:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmglq8MhM9k



www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRYE5YZULSE

And in French:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5930mufjzw

Child care costs represent one of the biggest expenses for parents of young children after paying the mortgage or rent, and that makes it a bread and butter issue for our union and the labour movement as a whole. Learn more about our vision for a national child care system.

We welcome labour movement partners to share and promote new videos to your own members and networks. None of the videos contains PSAC branding and they were made in partnership with the national child care movement. The videos direct interest to childcareforall.ca.

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 10–11, 2019
**STATUS OF WOMEN
CONFERENCE**

A BETTER MAN

As we prepare to commemorate the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** on November 25, we are pleased to announce that the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is now streaming ***A Better Man*** free of charge in Canada at NFB.ca and the NFB's YouTube channel. You can also buy digital downloads for home and classroom viewings on the NFB's website. The film will soon be available internationally on iTunes and Amazon. For those in the United States, *A Better Man* is not currently offered online, but DVD and educational purchases can be made through our U.S. distributor, Women Make Movies.

We are grateful for the hundreds of festival and community screenings that have taken place all over the world since the film premiered just a year and a half ago at the 2017 Hot Docs Festival. In support of the **UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**, we encourage you to share *A Better Man* with your family, friends, and colleagues and help spark courageous conversations about intimate partner violence, justice, and healing.

RESOURCES

Teachers can take this opportunity to use *A Better Man*'s high school learning kit, which is publicly available at nfb.ca/education as a study guide under Teacher Resources. NFB Study Guides are designed to facilitate the integration of NFB films into the classroom and are written by Canadian educators for use in Canadian classrooms. They can be used as a starting point for teachers elsewhere to create their own lesson plans. Educators can access *A Better Man* through CAMPUS, the NFB's online education portal.

Other discussion guides, including one for men hosting their own viewing groups, are available at abettermanfilm.com/resources. There is also a guide created in partnership with the Canadian Labour Congress that helps unions discuss *A Better Man* and domestic violence with their members.

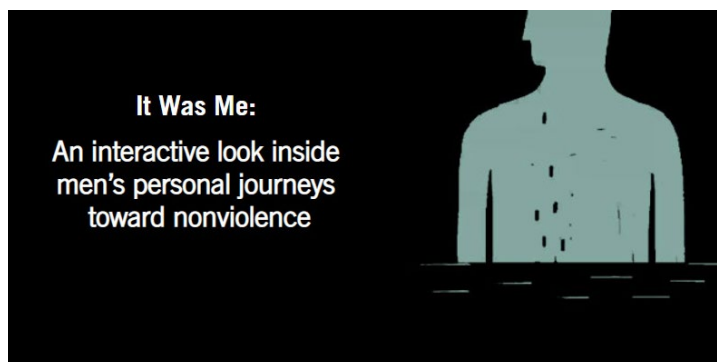
In addition to television broadcasts in Australia, Brazil, Israel, Mexico, Norway, and Spain, *A Better Man* has recently been seen by audiences in Canada, Lithuania, Singapore, and the U.S. Co-director Attiya Khan and producer Christine Kleckner have travelled with the film, visiting Indiana, Texas, Massachusetts,

and Ottawa and Waterloo in Ontario. We continue to be inspired by the many organizations and communities that are striving to end violence against women.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook or visit our website to see if *A Better Man* is screening near you. If you'd like to host your own community screening, email us at info@abettermanfilm.com.



IT WAS ME



After winning the inaugural Golden Sheaf Award for Digital Media at the 2018 Yorkton Film Festival, *It Was Me*, the interactive companion to *A Better Man*, now has its own discussion guide. This resource is made possible by Bridges Institute, which helps men take responsibility to repair the harms they have created after intimate partner violence or sexual harassment. Our gratitude to Executive Director Tod Augusta-Scott for his immense support and to *It Was Me* co-director Steph Guthrie for putting together yet another amazing discussion guide. To experience *It Was Me*, visit abettermanfilm.com/interactive.