

Stand Up American Women, Stand Up

You Must Stand Up For Me

And I Must Stand Up For You

In 2004 the article printed below appeared in the Houston Chronicle. A woman was sentence to prison for the murder of her husband and not one woman in this country said a word. Why? Are you so comfortable that the life of another woman does not matter to you? Have women come to the fork in the road where we are so caught up with MTV and reality television, and dance fever that we say to ourselves let someone else deal with it, I have my own life to live? Was Dixie Shanahan prosecuted to keep the other women in line in Iowa?

The Houston Chronicle (Houston, TX), May 11, 2004 p6

Wife gets 50 years for killing abusive spouse:

HARLAN, Iowa - A woman who shot her abusive husband, then left his body in their home for more than a year, was sentenced Monday to 50 years in prison by a judge who said the mandatory sentence was unjust. Dixie Shanahan, 36, must serve at least 35 years under the state's mandatory sentencing law. "The mandatory minimum sentencing structure imposed on this court is in my opinion wrong," District Judge Charles Smith said. "It may be legal, but it is wrong." Smith said Shanahan shot her husband, Scott, after suffering 18 years of abuse. "No human should have to put up with that," the judge said.

Is the imprisonment of Mrs. Shanahan going to be the only reaction this country will make regarding violence against women?

Since the turn of the century over 24,000 defenseless women have been murdered in this country; not one of these women was armed when they were murdered. And not one of these women was the aggressor when murdered. Do you not think you owe it to your daughter to stand up to this violence and become informed as to what is occurring around you? There must be a reason why women keep being murdered.

Stand Up American Woman, Stand Up.

Stand Up American Woman, Stand Up Your time has come.

Your daughters are being taken from you.

Your mothers are being taken from you.

Your sisters are being taken from you.

Your grandmothers are being taken from you.

Your cousins are being taken from you.

Your aunts are being taken from you.

Your nieces are being taken from you.
And your friends are being taken from you.
They have been taken, never to return.

Stand Up American Woman, Stand Up Your time has come.

Turn off your television.
Turn off your radio and listen to yourself.
Close the doors to your desires.
Close the doors to your heart and listen to yourself.
Ignore the beauty pageants.
Ignore the contests of life, and listen to yourself.
Listen to yourself for the sounds of laughter.
Listen to yourself for the sounds of life.

Where is the laughter?
Where is the life?
We buried them together.
We buried them with her, never to return.
We must become women who are not afraid of the night.

Excerpt from Hands across America, Chapter 4, page 275