

Women are Afraid of Supporting Unsympathetic Victims

From Amber Heard to Nicole Brown Simpson, women (including feminists) have unleashed disproportionate disdain on “imperfect victims.”



by Phyllis Chesler

I’ve been thinking about this question for a long time and more recently again, ever since the Depp-Heard trial from Hell. The public reactions horrified me. How can any woman psychologically survive the amount of online hatred which Amber Heard received from other women—even as so many women cheered and rooted for Johnny Depp? Both are far less than perfect victims but the Bad Boy elicited sympathy and admiration, the woman, disgust, disbelief, and demonization.

Why is it always like this? Why is it still like this?

Nearly three decades ago, another infamous trial centered on domestic violence between a famous man and his bombshell blonde ex-wife captured the attention of the nation – the

trial of O.J. Simpson for the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The jurors in the case, [eight of whom](#) were women, voted “Not Guilty!” The jury also consisted of eight African Americans, one Hispanic man, one Hispanic woman, one white woman, and one man who described himself as white and Native American. In other words, this was a jury of eleven minority members and one white woman. In another report, the jury was said to have been composed of [ten women](#) and two men.

At the time (1995), I wondered whether this jury thought their verdict was long-overdue symbolic payback for more than 400 years of slavery, lynchings, de jure and de facto segregation in America, payback for the beating of Rodney King, the murder of Black Panther Fred Hampton, the assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Was this primarily race-based revenge since O.J.’s two victims were white? And because so many African Americans have been so ill-served by America’s justice system? Or, did the female jurors have more sympathy for the charismatic O.J. than for his very beautiful, blonde, white wife and her white friend?

But there are so many other examples of women (including feminists) behaving badly, with cruelty and cowardice, towards other women – especially towards less-than-perfect-victims. Nicole Brown Simpson, like Amber Heard, was “unlikable” – she was too pretty, too rich, had a life that was too perfect before it all went south. She didn’t respond to her victimization the way women wished they might have. She was no angel. She was human, and flawed. This is enough to make other women hate her, or fear being hated like her.

Once, when I was helping a very brave mother rescue her two daughters from their violent and incestuous father, I asked a feminist therapist-colleague to see the mother and daughters, who were in hiding, for no money. She refused and said: “I

don't want to take any risks—especially for a woman who is an alcoholic, a chain smoker, and who has been beaten down, battered, and who would make a terrible witness in a trial.”

And so would you honey, if you had lived her life.

In 1987, when I began organizing around the [Baby M](#) case, America's first high-profile surrogacy case, some radical feminists had my back. Most liberal feminists, though, disapproved of my position and tried to shame me. They said that Mary Beth Whitehead, the birth mother who did not want to relinquish her baby, was “not a feminist,” “had only finished high school,” “was married to a garbage man,” and could not possibly be as good a parent as the wealthier and better educated Sterns. Worse: Mary Beth was a stay-at-home mother, a religious Catholic, and did not have a career.

Such feminists did eventually all sign a letter supporting Mary Beth's (and their own) right to play Patty-Cake with their children in any way they chose to do so. (Mary Beth had been accused of playing this game the wrong way which was therefore viewed as further proof that she was an unfit mother).

This view may have been self-serving. The unspoken agenda among such feminists may also have been based on the fears that each middle class and exceptionally well-educated feminist had about the possibility that they, themselves, or their daughters might be infertile and might need a “surrogate uterus” (a birthmother) of their own. Or, that their gay sons might need a “surrogate” newborn.

“They did not want to damage their reputations or their ‘brand’ by sticking up for an unsympathetic woman.”

But I think that another factor was also involved, namely, their fear of being tainted by standing up for a less-than-perfect victim. Ambitious career women, including feminists, were already under siege. They did not want to further damage

their reputations or their “brand” by sticking up for an unsympathetic woman. Therefore, they failed to acknowledge some of the larger issues involved, namely the endemic exploitation of the poor by the wealthy; the psychological trauma involved when a newborn is being separated from her birth mother; and the life-long trauma for the birth mother who, after being pregnant for nine months and going through labor, must then relinquish what would otherwise have been the “fruit of her womb, bone of her bone, apple of her eye.” Legalized, commercial surrogacy is Big Business for doctors, lawyers, and mental health practitioners and it is largely available to people with a great deal of money.

As has been said: wealthy, white, heiresses with their own private jets do not usually become [“surrogate uterus”](#) or “breeders” for an infertile African-American woman who lives on welfare—or for a gay man who happens to be poor.

Liberal feminists do not see it this way. They strongly justify what I view as tunnel vision, entitlement, and heartlessness by claiming that a woman’s right to sell the use of her uterus and to sell a new-born human being is the right that women must have if they are to have the right to sell their genitalia for money, and the right to have an abortion. Lose one—lose them all is their view.

They support the right of a wealthy, infertile woman or a wealthy, womb-less gay man to buy whatever it is they want, no matter whom else may get hurt in the process. They also support prostitution for the same reason. They simply will not entertain the facts about the routine and dangerous violence that prostitutes face, their short shelf lives, their blue collar wages, their need to be addicted in order to endure the contempt and the pain—or the facts about the kinds of families most prostituted women come from: Impoverished, highly dysfunctional, abusive, incestuous, physically and psychologically violent, etc.

Thus, too many women (and men too, of course) are absolutely willing not only to sacrifice other women to routinely dangerous lives, but they also view them as non-sympathetic, hard-to-like, whores, who have “chosen” or provoked whatever bad things have happened to them. They have seen themselves as morally superior to such “fallen women.”

Can you imagine what the initial feminist response was to my involvement in the [Aileen Carol Wuornos](#) case in Florida, the first so-called female serial killer?

“Phyllis, she is not a feminist role model. She’s a killer—how can you defend her?”

Anti-feminists, who comprised Wuornos’s jury, as well as the presiding judge and prosecutor, were even worse. They viewed Wuornos as “pure evil,” a woman who corrupted, and infected fine men with sexual diseases, etc.

Which brings me to the well-known phenomenon of women who cheer on [very bad boys](#)—serial killers who have killed women, murderers who have killed their wives. I have also written about this phenomenon elsewhere.

“Women pay a high price for associating with or for being associated with Bad Girls.”

I am talking about [Ted Bundy](#), the serial killer of more than 100 girls and women, who nevertheless, or who therefore attracted many female fans, and who married a woman and impregnated her while he was in prison; Richard Ramirez, a Satanist, and serial killer also known as the Night Stalker, who married a woman while in prison; teenage girls who adored and followed Charles Manson and helped him murder a heavily pregnant woman and her friends; and teenage girls today, who gush girlishly online about mass shooters such as the Columbine Killer.

Battered women who have finally killed their batterers in

self-defense have often and routinely received life sentences without parole—but they did not tend to attract female fans or offers of marriage. Badass women, with previous prison records, who kill for money, or while high on drugs, or to assist their boyfriends who have often battered them into doing so do not often have fan clubs or marriage offers either.

Women pay a high price for being associated with “Bad Girls.” These days, that prohibition and punishment has been expanded to include association with Thought Crimes, Bad Ideas, and politically incorrect ideas. Most women, including many feminists, have not been trained to endure criticism, shunning, or becoming unpopular.

We should start strengthening women in such warrior arts.

First published in [4W](#).