



Linda Lovelace: The Deeper Implications

by Carol Child

Deep Throat, the stag film that has been called the *Gone with the Wind* of the pornos, took \$40,000 and less than two weeks to make and to date has grossed an estimated \$600 million. The film skyrocketed Linda Lovelace to notoriety. Today, eight years later, Linda says she never saw any of that money and hated every minute of producing the film.

Now living humbly and happily on Long Island with her husband and children, Linda Boreman Marciano, the former Linda Lovelace, has recently published her autobiography *Ordeal* (with Mike McGrady). It reveals her grotesque life of horror with Chuck Traynor, the man who declares with pride, "I created Linda Lovelace." Linda alleges the sadistic Traynor held her prisoner for more than two years, denigrating her, hypnotizing her (through hypnosis he taught her the notorious throat-muscle-relaxing technique), savagely beating her and exploiting her at gunpoint into sexual prostitution and other sadisms, including bizarre orgies at the Playboy Mansion West. After three aborted escape attempts Linda finally got away. She hid out in hotels, pursued by Traynor until he met Marilyn Chambers (*Behind the Green Door*) and lost interest in Linda.

Appearing together on television interviews, Traynor and Chambers say Linda made the whole thing up. Chambers asserts she can't get enough sex, reciting word-for-word phrases Linda says Traynor wrote for her own media interviews. Traynor and Chambers aren't the only ones refuting Linda's story. Not surprisingly, a recent issue of *Playboy* suggests Linda enjoyed detailing the sexual sequences in *Ordeal* as much as she enjoyed her sexual escapades nearly a decade ago.

We may never be able to prove conclusively that Linda didn't enjoy the

sadisms nor that they even occurred. But statistics do prove battering and sexual abuse are common: one married woman in five is battered and sexual abuse is often a part. Battering occurs to all types of people in all socio-economic classes. Moreover, case histories stereotype the Lovelace/Traynor situation.

This astoundingly high incidence of batterings might lead you to conclude women have some profound craving for abuse and that Linda's craving was particularly intense. Research shows, however, most women do not thrive on abuse, but rather endure it. They endure it because they have been conditioned from childhood to be passive, to feel guilty, to feel responsible for their families. They have been taught to be victims.

While women are socialized to be victims, men, on the other hand, are socialized to conquer and control. Phil Donahue on a recent show about battered women suggested the kind of society that produces so many Chuck Traynors and the women who acquiesce is one which glorifies war. We give our kids war toys. We never get patriotic for avoiding war, only proud when we win one. We reward toughness more than avoidance of conflict. And we teach our children, "I can love you, and I can spank you."

"I can love you, and I can abuse you." After the battering the man repents, bringing her flowers in the hospital, telling her he loves her. She believes him thinking this is her true husband and the other was a man who just momentarily lost control. But the violence happens again and again, as one great world war follows another, and as with any conquered party, the woman, with faltering ego, is left feeling defenseless.

If she tells outsiders of her dilemma they ask her what she is doing wrong, suggesting perhaps she hasn't been cooking his favorite meals or keeping the kids quiet enough for him.

Often she doesn't tell anyone. She is too embarrassed. She blames herself for the gruesome acts perpetrated against her. Or she simply doesn't get to tell

others. Her possessive husband won't allow her any time with her friends.

He possesses her the same way he possesses his golf clubs, hunting rifles and the family dog. If life abuses the man, as it did Chuck Traynor, he in turn abuses his woman. And as in the Traynor/Lovelace case, homicide is a viable alternative to abuse, both physical and spiritual. The woman, like Linda Lovelace, believes she has no place to turn.

Occasionally though, a woman does get brave. She gets a job, planning to earn enough money in a few years to leave her husband and support the kids on her own. But she seldom receives equal pay for equal work performed by men. Her salary is inadequate. Twenty percent may go for child care. This same battered woman may be sexually harassed on the job. She is once again turned in upon herself.

Over and over again the woman is conditioned to think of herself as a second class citizen until she acquiesces in her dilemma. She figures it's her fate.

Thanks to Linda's story, battered, sexually abused women can now know they are not alone. If you are a battered woman, there are places to turn. There are battered women's hotlines and shelters throughout the nation and in the South Bay. Phone numbers for South Bay hotlines are: San Pedro — 547-9343 and Long Beach — 437-4663. You can also call Hotline Women USA at (800) 221-4945. Or call the Long Beach Shelter at 426-1734.

In addition, there are excellent books available studying battering and sexual abuse: *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Susan Brownmiller, Simon and Schuster, 1975; *Battered Wives*, Del Martin, Glide Publications, 1976; *The Battered Woman*, Lenore E. Walker, Harper & Row, 1979.

There are ways for abused women to fight back. The first step is uniting with other women who understand abuse problems and building the personal confidence and self-love to go ahead.

Ms. Child is a contributing editor of this publication.