

In this one line, Sheehan de-constructs the events at Cronulla and we see his agenda emerge. Although he has written numerous articles that claim to speak for women (particularly Muslim women) who are silenced by oppression, the binaries of US vs. THEM in relation to “Men of Middle Eastern Appearance” and Anglo girls dismisses the complexities at hand in contemporary Australian society.

Sheehan implies that the men involved in the retaliation attacks after Cronulla with their “self-styled intifadha” reveal not only their violent nature but through their abhorrence of “Western” women’s freedom, they lay stake to these women as objects of harassment and sexual assault.

Nonetheless, Sheehan’s *Girls Like You* should be read for what it overtly reveals about the failure in our legal system for victims of rape:

“Only about one per cent of those who have been sexually assaulted ever see their assailants sent to prison.”

Rape and Sexual Assault is a fundamental issue in our society and yet, it seems that the stigma attached to victims of this crime has not changed. Many women, including some of the girls mentioned in Sheehan’s book, choose not to proceed with laying charges against their offenders as it is often a lengthy, costly

and draining process for the victims.

Sheehan’s account of the questions posed by defence lawyers in the K trials highlights the intimidating and confusing tactics employed in order to misrepresent the girls involved as being promiscuous. As if by accepting a drive and entering a friend’s home these girls were somehow encouraging this kind of cruel and vicious behaviour.

Earlier last month it was revealed that the NSW Rape Crisis Centre received one to two calls every week from women who had been gang raped. From 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005, the Crisis Centre received 2927 calls, 59 of these were related to gang rape cases. It seems that sexual assault particularly against women in the 16-25 age groups is increasing and yet, the legal system makes it more difficult for victims of rape to see their attackers brought to justice- and it’s obviously not only “Men of Middle Eastern Appearance” committing these crimes.

Girls Like You is fundamentally significant as it reveals the flaws in the Australian legal system in prosecuting and sentencing those guilty of sexual violence towards women. However, what Sheehan chooses to convey and conceal about crime and young men of “Middle Eastern Appearance” indelibly contributes to the current anti-Arab and Islamic zeitgeist of our context. ■



Finger on the Dirty Pulse

[Elise Phillips]

It’s refreshing to see a young, female artist whose primary talent is not looking good in a bikini and shaking her booty. Unfortunately, that’s probably why you have never heard of Ember Swift.

Ember Swift (and yes, that actually is her real name) is a Canadian singer-songwriter with a passion to make a difference in the world through her music. “The Dirty Pulse” is the ninth release on her own independent label, “Few’ll Ignite Sound”, and is an eclectic mix of folk, reggae, jazz and funk.

Swift’s smooth, jazzy vocals and upbeat rhythms allow her political views and social commentary to shine through without preaching or weighing the music down. She clearly has a positive outlook and a sense of humour, as evidenced by her song “Ten



Pin” – a tribute to the therapeutic joys of ten pin bowling.

“The Dirty Pulse” is instrumentally rich, despite the fact that the band contains only three members, and there are plenty of new things to listen to on each subsequent playing of the album. However, while the lyrics and melodies are well-crafted and interesting to listen to, for me the songs lack that certain something; the hook which draws you in.

Ember Swift has resisted the usual commercial path in favour of maintaining her independence and her ideals. She is a committed activist and has taken part in several international panels on sustainability in independent music, healthy touring, and women in music among others. She really puts her money where her mouth is, and is not only a talented singer – she has a voice. ■