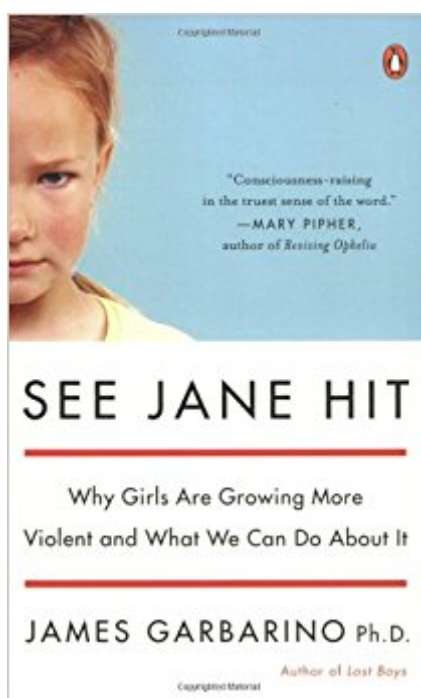


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# See Jane Hit: Why Girls Are Growing More Violent And What We Can Do About It



## Synopsis

From one of America's leading authorities on juvenile violence comes a groundbreaking investigation of the explosion of violent behavior in girls. With *Lost Boys*, James Garbarino became our foremost explicator of violent behavior in boys. Now he turns his attention to its increasing incidence in girls. Twenty-five years ago, ten boys were arrested for assault for every one girl. Now that ratio is four-to-one and dropping. Combining clinical experience with incisive analyses of social trends, Garbarino traces the factors—many of them essentially positive—behind the epidemic: girls' increased participation in sports and greater comfort with their physicality, but also their lack of training in handling aggression. See *Jane Hit* goes beyond diagnosing the problem to outline a clear-eyed, compassionate solution.

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## Customer Reviews

Garbarino, a respected authority on juvenile violence and aggression (*Lost Boys*), takes a fascinating look at girls getting physical—from the assertive physicality expressed by healthy girls to criminal violence on the part of troubled ones. He lauds girls' release from the obligation to be "ladylike" in an increasingly egalitarian society, a "new freedom... [that] can boost self-esteem and self-confidence." But at the other end of the spectrum are girls who are more vulnerable to today's increasingly "toxic social environment"—a deleterious entanglement of hypersexuality and materialism—and prone to asocial violence. Garbarino cites U.S. Justice Department statistics that the rate of girls arrested for assault is approaching that of boys. Examining biology,

early childhood development and the effects of mass media, he builds on the work of other psychologists and social historians while adding texture to his accessible narrative with first-person accounts of girls' experiences—X-rated name-calling, punching, brawls with baseball bats. Society, he asserts, should allow girls to be "physical and popular in a nonsexual and nonmaterialistic way." What girls need, he concludes in this evenhanded but eye-opening book, is positive identity, a sense of rootedness and spirituality, and benevolent adult involvement in their lives. (On sale Feb. 20) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Garbarino, author of *Lost Boys* (2002), now investigates girlhood aggression. Through voluminous research and brief first-person statements from teens, Garbarino uncovers a steadily increasing trend toward violence among America's girls. He asks, "Are the forces that put women into professional basketball the same forces that put U.S. Army private Lynndie England in the position of torturing Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison?" He finds answers in perspectives as varied as those of Thich Nhat Hanh, Mary Pipher, and Betty Friedan. In discussing the influence of pop culture on girls, Garbarino analyzes the impact of Hermione's socially acceptable punch in the third Harry Potter movie and the physical aggression in the cartoon *Powerpuff Girls*. He also investigates the traditional sources of acceptance for girls and their growing frustration with relying on others for personal validation, a shift that has girls excelling in sports as they rely on aggressive play to achieve victory. The message that "aggression works" is taught loud and clear in American society, and, as Garbarino proves, today's young girls are clearly listening. Colleen Mondor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As I read the reviews of others for *See Jane Hit*, I noticed that the reviewers came from either the academic side of the fence or the "in the field" side of the fence. I would like to offer a perspective from both sides in the hope that we can look at Garbarino's work from a more balanced perspective. Having taught graduate counseling courses since the 1970's and being a contemporary of Dr. Garbarino, I can tell you that his research skills and body of work in the field of adolescent psychology is highly respected by academia. Both *Lost Boys* and *See Jane Hit* are considered classics in the field. I had training with Dr. Garbarino in 2008, and can say that he has consistently updated the statistics that continue to show a marked increase in violence among girls. Also, having worked in K-12 public education for over 30 years (and for the last ten in a program for at-risk

adolescents), I can attest to the fact that violence among girls is increasing just as Dr. Garbarino warned. But, past the "warnings," go to the suggestions regarding "what we can do about it" and read carefully how he outlines the positives. It is actually a "hopeful" book from a professional who has made his life's work the positive development of adolescents!

Dr. Garbarino's book is indeed "shocking" and "scary"--not about girls, but about the continuing decline in scholarship regarding young people. The entire factual basis for this book is open to serious question. Dr. Garbarino rests his case on the claim that girls' violence has increased steadily and sharply in recent years, especially the last decade. Yet, virtually all of his sources for this alarming claim consist of secondhand citations; Garbarino shows no evidence of having looked at original data. A "footnote mill" has developed on youth issues, in which alarmist authors such as Garbarino cite other alarmist authors as their sources, who in turn cite him and each other, creating a round-robin of panicky myths with no basis in the factual references they pretend to be based on. At best, these misleading statistics cover only decade-old time periods (selected to make a few upward trends of the past appear to still be going on, while failing to note recent, sustained declines); in other cases, they're simply phony. As a result, this book is a compendium of outdated, recycled myths about girls, some concocted by unreliable interests and all of them seriously outdated. Examples: Garbarino: 25 years ago, the ratio of boys' to girls' aggravated assault arrest rates was 10-1, now it is 4-1, according to "official arrest data" (p. 4). Someone apparently made this up. In 1975, FBI Uniform Crime Reports (Table 35) shows 5 boys arrested for aggravated assault for every girl, not 10. Garbarino: From 1990-99, girls' rates of aggravated assault rose by 57%, while boys' rates fell 5%. Very misleading. Why are 1999 figures being cited in a book published in 2006? The FBI UCR (Table 40) shows girls assault arrests rose from 1990 to 1995 and have since FALLEN FOR NINE STRAIGHT YEARS. By 2004, girls' assault rates were 30% LOWER than a decade ago. Garbarino: There has been a "seven-fold increase in per-capita aggravated assault rates among youths in the United States from 1956 to 1996" (p. 184). Garbarino cites an unreliable website for this silly claim. The FBI's 1956 crime report covered just ONE-FIFTH of the country and relied on fingerprint records (most juveniles weren't fingerprinted then). The best source, the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS, which includes crimes not reported to police), shows aggravated assault has plummeted among all age groups and both sexes, reaching its lowest level in 2004 than at any time since the survey first began in 1973. Garbarino: 7% of girls get into fights at school (p. 9). Nothing new about that. The same source (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance) shows 9% of girls got into a fight at school in its first

survey in 1993. Monitoring the Future shows the percentage of girls getting into fights hasn't changed much in at least 25 years. Garbarino: The 1990s brought a "growing mental health crisis in middle-class boys, coupled with the onslaught of violent images present in popular culture (TV, video games, movies, and music)" (p 14). Another absolutely baffling claim, contradicting Garbarino's own earlier statement that boys' violence is falling. During the 1990s, as all forms of violent popular culture proliferated, boys' violence rates PLUMMETED as never before--especially among middle-class youth. From the early 1990s to 2004, both the FBI and NCVS show boys (and girls) suffering and perpetrating dramatically less violence. Boys' rates of assault dropped 45%; girls' fell 32%. Murder, rape, and robbery among both boys and girls plunged by 60% to 70%, falling to their lowest levels in three to four decades. The NCVS shows assaults and other violence against teenaged boys and girls fell by an astonishing 60% over the last decade. Monitoring the Future, the leading survey of high school behaviors, shows violence by and against youth of both sexes, from fights to homicide, declined sharply. National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) figures show murders and hospital emergency treatments for violence fell sharply among youth. Instead of examining what the best references actually show, Garbarino cites emotional anecdotes (which could be found in any era or applied to any group in society) and outdated, secondhand sources. Garbarino: "Now, girls are getting more physical when they are assaulting themselves, cutting and stabbing, poisoning and shooting themselves, in record numbers" (p. 9). How does he know? Records of self-inflicted (suicidal) injuries are not available for past decades. Girls' deaths from drug overdoses, other poisonings, gunshots, cutting instruments, and suicides and possible suicides are much lower today than in the 1970s, '80s, or '90s. California posts hospital ER cases on self-inflicted injuries, whose rates among girls have dropped 10% to 15% since 1991, while Center for Health Statistics figures show girls' suicide rates have fallen by more than 50% (yes, you read that right) and are now at historical low levels. Garbarino: "fewer than 3,000 kids kill themselves each year," and more kill themselves than others (p 180). The first half is true, sort of. NCHS reports 918 youths (under age 18) committed suicide in 2003, 203 of them girls. Quite a bit "fewer than 3,000." The second half is not true. More than 1,100 were arrested for homicide. Garbarino is recycling made-up rumors. Why didn't he check primary vital statistics data? Garbarino: Note the "near absence of girls in accounts of killers in the past." He must mean other than Caril Anne Fugate (14 year-old serial killer, 1959), Mary Bell (child killer, 1968), Brenda Jean Spencer (shot up elementary school, 1979), the Manson Family girls (1969-70), the murderous girls cited in a raft of official documentaries and books in the 1940s and '50s, on and on. In EVERY era, adults say that youth, especially girls, are getting more violent and hypersexual. In fact, FBI and health statistics

show the murder rate by girls nationally is now at its lowest ebb since 1975; in California, the lowest level ever reliably recorded. There are so many misstatements of basic fact in this book (and in most alarmist books on youth) that a book could be written to refute them. Compounding Garbarino's mistaken reliance on outdated data from the mid-1990s, and his failure to note that violence and other problems among girls plunged sharply since then, is his prediction, in the last chapter, that girls' violence will increase even more in the future. Ironically, while teenage girls and young women show declines in violence over the last 10 to 15 years, older women show large increases. The FBI reports violent crime rates by women ages 30 to 59--the parents of teen girls--leaped by 50% since the early 1990s and have nearly tripled over the last quarter century (all figures here are rates that account for population changes). In fact, teen girls show the LOWEST rates of violence increase (or an actual decline) over the last 10 to 30 years of any female age group, no matter what time period is chosen. The best evidence indicates that much of the rise in arrests of females of all ages for assault results from new laws mandating tougher policing of domestic violence, not real increases in violent behavior. Dr. Garbarino's book perpetuates a deeply troubling academic ethics crisis in depicting American youth. Garbarino and his colleagues who have made equally inflammatory statements about "girls' violence" surely must be familiar with the easily available facts from standard references that I'm stating here, yet they fail even to mention them. Predictably, without even rudimentary fact-checking, "experts" and media reporters quickly praise every book (note the reviews here) that claims youth are getting worse. Finally, I agree with Dr. Garbarino that there are many consumerist, exploitative, even "toxic," elements in American popular culture. However, this does not license scholars and culture critics to buttress their criticisms by exploiting young people as handy metaphors for social decline. Branding girls, even "sympathetically," as more violent and unhealthy exposes them to harsh stigmas, misdirected treatments, and more punitive policies. In reality, girls are doing remarkably well in their welcome transition to more active roles in society. They don't deserve the unwarranted fear campaigns this book and many others create. Mike Males, Sociology Department, University of California, Santa Cruz [mmales@earthlink.net](mailto:mmales@earthlink.net)

I think this book offers solid discussion about girls and growing violence. As someone who works with teens, as an author and ministry worker and speaker to teens, I'm not worried about the statistics near as much as what I see happening in the lives of some of our girls. There is more violence among girls. Our younger girls are losing their innocence, many are accepting less than any other generation in terms of relationships, and many are angry. I love working with teens. This is

an amazing generation. They are intelligent. They are able to do more than their mothers and grandmothers, but the reality is that a growing segment of young girls are reacting with violence, and this book offers some insight. Does it have all the answers? Absolutely not, but neither do I, but it asks some great questions and offers some interesting information that should trigger conversations among those who care about our girls.

Experts in the field including the FBI reveal that the apparent increase in female youth violence represents a policy change in the arrests for family violence. Police generally are required to make an arrest in situations of domestic violence. So when teens get violent against their parents and the police are called, the arrest rate goes up. There is no reason for this book with its false claims to have been published. The claims are consistent with the media hype and anti-feminist sentiment but not with the criminal justice statistics. Katherine van Wormer-co-author of *Women and the Criminal Justice System*

I completely disagree with the previous reviewer who slams this book (and others with similar concerns about today's youth) in such a tunnel vision manner. This book is an important social commentary for any parent to read, and for any adult to ponder. Any parent who has had the challenge of raising a girl in today's violence-filled society, knows the real story. The complete real story may be too big to fit into one book, but THIS book is about an issue that is very close to parents' hearts. And it should be. Is it alarmist to be concerned about today's girls when it comes to the impact of violence in their lives? I suspect readers will be intelligent enough to read this book for what it is: A concerned and informed point of view about girls and young women.

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