

with no immediate cause

from *Nappy Edges* by Ntozake Shange

every three minutes a woman is beaten
every five minutes a
woman is raped/every ten minutes
a little girl is molested
yet I rode the subway today
I sat next to an old man who
may have beaten his old wife
3 minutes ago or 3 days/30 years ago
he might have sodomized his
daughter but I sat there

before I ride the subway/buy a paper or drink
coffee from your hands I must know
have you hurt a woman today
did you beat a woman today
throw a child across a room are they
little girls pants in your pocket
did you hurt a woman today
I must have to ask to obscene questions
I must know you see
the authorities require us to
establish

immediate cause
every three minutes
every five minutes
every ten minutes
every day.

Quoted in *Stopping Rape: A Challenge for Men* by Rus Ervin Funk



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