



FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE YOU
KNOW IS BEING ABUSED

DETECTIVE DAVID L WILLIAMS

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FOR
HER LIFE**

Fighting for Her Life
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DETECTIVE DAVID L. WILLIAMS



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To Mom and Dad
for the example of Samaritanism, the esteem of books,
and the allure of Batman's cape.

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As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice.

— First paragraph of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Why Does My Friend, Family Member, or Co-Worker Stay With a Violent Man?

“Why would a woman stay with an abusive man?”

You could as easily ask, “Why does a soldier run in panic as the enemy charges?” The response is that human beings don’t always live up to the ideal of the simple question or easy answer. Most of us see ourselves as the hero in any given story, which makes it more difficult to watch a friend or loved one making decisions based in fear and secrecy. The truth is that leaving an abusive partner is hard and dangerous, and tough words from well-meaning family, colleagues, or friends, such as “I’d never let a man put his hands on me,” are little more than bluster if not supported by action and deed. Brave words merely spoken mean next to nothing; courage actually lived is the stuff of legend.

In this book you will read of failures and why, of successes and why. One such success story is about Renee, and her story of courage is as profound and inspiring as those of legendary heroes.

By the time I met Renee she’d endured years of brutality at the hands of a man she’d wed as a teenager, and I suspect she would not be alive today if she hadn’t gotten the help she needed to escape her abuser.

BRAVE WORDS
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THE THEME
OF THIS BOOK IS
HOPE . . .
AND TAKING
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SAFELY.

Renee's story was a successful one, due in large part to her courage, the efforts of police officers and prosecutors, and the assistance of victim advocates. But know that Renee's success, and the success of so many others, was also thanks to the support of her parents, her employer, and her friends. Certainly, the services of the professionals helped, but the value of long-term emotional support from loved ones can never be overstated.

The theme of this book is hope . . . and taking those first terrifying steps to live life safely. This is where you come in because taking decisive action to escape enforced bondage has always been best accomplished with help.

Getting involved means placing less emphasis on "Why would she stay with someone who abuses her?" and more energy into the question "What are WE going to do to make sure this never happens again?" The answer involves courage, commitment . . . and you. If you've ever uttered phrases, such as "I'd do anything to help" or "that man better never lay a hand on you," I'm offering a challenge to turn your words into courageous action that will make a difference in a way mere words can never do alone.

I was a twenty-two-year-old rookie the first time I saw domestic violence. He'd thrown her through glass, and she kept mumbling it was her fault. He told us she was crazy, and she referred to him as a "good man when he's sober." I remember wanting to punch him in the mouth and wanting to lecture her about being an idiot. She stayed with him, knowing it would happen again someday, and at that stage of my life I absolutely could not understand.

That was three decades ago, at the start of a career that has now bridged across two cities and has included such adventures as patrol and paramedic work in rough urban districts, helicopter rescue, a walking beat, SWAT, school resource officer, and detective. At some point along the way I was allowed to only take on investigations involving violent crimes, most of which occurred in

people's homes, and those types of cases have been the focus of my professional life for the last several years.

I've learned at least one thing along the way: Anyone can be a victim; it takes something more extraordinary to be a survivor. As that relates to intimate partner violence, the kind of strength needed to leave a man who has already hurt his wife or girlfriend—and who has threatened to do far worse—may be more than your friend, loved one, or co-worker can imagine.

This isn't a book likely to be read by victims of domestic violence—at least not at first. To have a copy in their home would be akin to committing an act of treason punishable by pain or death. They can't keep the information pamphlet handed to them as they left the emergency room last time; they can't carry a cop's business card in their wallet; they can't store the local women's shelter phone number on speed dial. These are things that get them hurt when they're found, and batterers—being the jealous, controlling folks that they are—always find them.

So instead, this is written for the sisters, brothers, daughters, and parents of intimate partner violence victims; the co-workers and supervisors, hair stylists, physicians, fellow PTA members, and dental hygienists who might just spot telltale clues of secret injuries or spirits being crushed; and maybe at some point this book could be for the victims themselves when they finally get to a place in their lives where reading a self-help book isn't a cruel irony anymore.

Consider this a call to arms that we take on this monster as an educated, determined group that won't rest until every man, woman, and child can live in their own home in safety and surrounded by love. The strategy is to form a shield wall to protect them, and then we fill those solid walls with patience and persistence, information and empathy, love and forgiveness. We make sure they have access to any services they might need, including legal advice, transportation assistance, job-hunting skills, safe living

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accommodations, medical and mental healthcare, education, and child support. And certainly, that shield wall includes my brethren, the good men and women serving in law enforcement across the country, who have a sworn duty to protect them from harm.

There was no one simple answer as to why that woman stayed with the “good man” those many years ago. I wonder if things might have been different had she found sanctuary within her own shield wall. There is no going backwards, however. There is only forward and better.

It begins with us. It begins today.

A WORD ON GENDER AND BIAS

*Man is born a barbarian and raises himself
above the beast by culture.*

— BÁLTSAR GRACIÁN

I bear a scar on the inside of my upper lip from a woman. She was tiny—no more than five-two, one hundred pounds with clothes on. She was also angry, as I should have surmised by the fact that she'd just tried to kill her husband by smashing an air conditioner window unit on his head.

The problem, it seemed, was that he refused to engage with her, as a sexual partner, as a business associate, or as her friend. He was her husband, but he'd given up completely on the idea of participating as such in any manner, preferring, I suppose, to simply exist at the same address as her.

This made her purely homicidal one evening, thus the attack with the air conditioner, rendering him a bloody, moaning fellow, still reclined in his favorite chair and much the worse for wear.

Enter young rookie officer Williams, gung-ho, confident in my abilities to assess the situation and bring matters successfully under control. It became clear after a time that she'd done what she did, and there was nothing for it except to make an arrest. The fact that she kept shouting, "I wish I'd killed you," was what we call a "clue" in law enforcement, and as two EMTs worked on keeping the husband's face from falling off, I went to make the arrest.

I AM FULLY
AWARE OF THE
FACT THAT
SOME WOMEN
ARE **VIOLENT**
AND **DANGEROUS**

Mind you, I had participated in some form of martial arts since high school. The hand-to-hand combat training at the police academy had come fairly easy to me because of that background, and I outweighed her by at least eighty pounds.

Pride cometh before a fall, and my fall came when this angry, ignored pixie hit me so hard in the mouth with a telephone that I know—I know!—my eyeballs switched places for a moment.

Mouth blood went everywhere, and her husband feebly pointed at me in a “see, I told you” fashion. She clawed at me like a cougar in a bathtub. The EMTs stared in shock as I finally wrestled her long enough to get her handcuffed, which didn’t stop her from continuing to try to bite, head-butt, and kick my shins all the way out to the car.

Where was my senior partner, you might ask? He was standing back . . . laughing hysterically.

I eventually almost forgave him.

The point is, I am fully aware of the fact that some women are violent and dangerous, and it doesn’t matter if they are tiny and cute. They can kill you, and that is why every allegation of domestic violence must be thoroughly and fairly investigated before blame, arrest, or conviction takes place. That having been said, over ninety percent of all physical attacks in the home involve a male as the predominant aggressor and the female as the victim.

At this point in any lecture I have ever given on the topic, someone raises his hand to point out that the numbers are probably skewed in light of the fact that men don’t report intimate partner violence as often. The reasonable and honest answer to that comment is that women don’t either. Some women don’t report because they don’t want their neighbors to know; some don’t because they are living in the U.S. without documentation, and they’re terrified of deportation; many don’t involve the police because they’ve been threatened with their lives if they do so; others because the man who would go to jail is the

only breadwinner in the family, and the choice of getting beaten up on occasion is an easy one to make over homelessness. There's lots of reasons, all of which we'll discuss, but be clear from the outset that people of both genders, different sexual persuasions, all races and cultures, and at every level of financial income avoid making formal complaints in these matters.

This book, however, is primarily about physical and emotional abuse of men toward women, and I have no apology to offer for that. Now, that's going to make a few folks truly indignant, and I hope they are able to get over it. The realities are that men tend to be more violent and persistent in their attacks than women. Women are six hundred percent more likely to be attacked by an intimate partner, and a current or former intimate male partner is the perpetrator in approximately thirty percent of all female homicide victims. Furthermore, husbands, boyfriends, or former male partners commit nearly thirty percent of all rapes and sexual assaults. So if you want to write a book about the oppression of men by aggressive women, get to typing, but I'm going to stick with this topic.

This book is also not specifically about child abuse, though that particular form of violence is a malignancy in our society. We will, however, focus at points on how domestic violence affects children emotionally, and how it can misshape the rest of their lives. There is convincing evidence that domestic violence, child abuse, generational violence, and sexual predation on children are all interrelated. Thus a logical strategy for preventing child victimization is to take violence among adults in the home as a serious threat to the children living there as well.

That all having been clarified, let's move on to focus on why this is a community problem, as opposed to a "private matter," because once we all agree on that we can start making significant change.

WHY IS A “PRIVATE MATTER” OUR CONCERN?

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church,
and gave himself for it . . .*

— EPHESIANS 5:25

“There’s a killin’ fixin’ to happen . . . ya’ll best hurry.” The voice of that 911 call was monotone, as if the person talking to our dispatcher was used to such things as killings next door. Two of us were dispatched to the domestic disturbance in a neighborhood populated almost entirely by police-hating white supremacists, and neither of us expected to find a friendly welcome.

“No Name Lane” was the actual name of the street we entered, an unpaved, dead-end road off a business highway at the south end of the city. Rotting shacks lined the narrow lane, and one cannot enter No Name without a sense of time travel and of being watched by members of a predatory, well-armed militia. The shacks were backed by nearly eighty acres of undeveloped forest, and it was rumored that the militia members trained for the ultimate showdown with “the government” in those very woods. Meth and moonshine funded the operation, and the Law was most unwelcome.

We hustled through the mudhole of a front yard, around a damaged trampoline and two rusted lawn mowers, and past a snarling pit bull on a logging chain and a plastic hobbyhorse missing both eyes. All the while we

heard a man screaming profanities at a woman who was begging him to stop on the other side of the front door.

Everything went silent at our rap on that door. The screaming and pleading stopped. No engines passed by on the highway three hundred yards and a world away; even the damned dog shut up. And those watchful eyes were still on us.

“Who is it?” demanded the male voice inside.

“Police Department. Open the door.”

“This is a private matter. Get gone unless you got a warrant.”

There followed a woman’s whimper and a scraping of something heavy being moved to block the door, and it was at about that moment when my boot went through the doorknob.

He was a skinny fellow with bowl-cut bangs in the front and a mane past his shoulder blades, a homemade rebel flag tattooed on his left shoulder.

He threw things in an attempt to keep us at bay: a can of green beans, a shoe, and a handful of cigarette butts from an overflowing Folgers can. And then he went to jail, screaming about suing us for violating his rights and demanding we show him our warrant.

The woman’s bloody nose and bruising cheek and throat would heal. Who knows what would have happened if that world-weary caller had not made the decision to stop the killin’ going on next door?

The same woman reminded us at least four times on the way to the hospital, “I don’t much like cops, but you guys are okay, I guess.”

I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve been ordered from someone’s home after responding to a violent incident with the statement, “This is a private matter,” bandied about like it was an order from the president. “You can’t come in here without a warrant” is another statement made to police officers as they approach the residence, and a lot of batterers try to slam the door in the cops’ faces.

Which begs the question: Was our call on No Name Lane a private matter? It happened behind closed doors within the confines of private property. As a nation we've always jealously protected private domains, so much so that we fought a war to win our independence from a king and his troops who had no misgivings about entering property of private citizens on little more than a whim.

Entering someone's home while acting as a government agent must be done judiciously and with respect toward the occupants and toward the Constitution. Taking this responsibility lightly will get you sued, cause your police department to be as despised as were those redcoats, and maybe even get you hurt (remember how violent those colonists got, after all).

That having been said, there are times in police work when the authority to enter another's residence must be used, even with great force. Certain search warrants and arrest warrants fall into this category, as do emergencies when someone's life could be in danger. The Supreme Court refers to this as "exigent circumstances," stating that if there is an emergency in which lives or freedoms could be in peril, law enforcement officers can enter a home to perform a rescue and initiate an investigation. Further, police and the communities they protect still have an interest in the matter once peace is restored for a number of reasons.

First of all, there is general agreement that just because the violence stopped when the police arrived doesn't mean it won't kick up again when they leave.

Second, it stands to reason that if domestic batterers are willing to be violent toward the love of their life they'll be willing to use violence toward others. Thus a known violent offender is considered a danger to the entire community and not just the people living there with him.

Third, any caring community should be greatly offended by domestic violence. Such crimes insult us all, as a society and as a culture. As such, we as a community become victims of the crime. This is an important distinction,

one that we'll discuss in more detail later when we look at who "presses charges." For now, just understand that intimate partner violence is a crime against the entire community.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, is the fact that domestic violence greatly affects the next generation. Children that witness violence in their homes are significantly more likely to also be victimized in their home as well. They are also exponentially more likely to grow up as batterers or victims of battery because they've grown up believing that this is just the way things normally occur.

For all these reasons, communities have the right and responsibility to send cops into a residence to restore the peace, investigate the crime, and take action to try to prevent it from ever happening again.

Frankly, if we didn't accept this as a shared responsibility we would all be much the worse for it. This is the stuff of souls, and each one of ours is on the line when we choose to ignore the problem. This is a culture that respects Samaritans. We worship in different ways, but we universally aspire to heroism. Being a hero doesn't require a cape, large muscles, or a gun. It calls for courage, persistence, integrity, and enough street savvy to suspect something is wrong when even the victim is trying to hide the problem.

We, as a culture, tend to be caring and righteous. We get thick in the throat and send money when we see people suffering from tsunamis and earthquakes on the other side of the world. We have canned food drives and give our used clothing to shelters. Most of us call the police when we think someone is breaking into our neighbor's house. And, yes, we have it within ourselves to muster the strength to confront a loved one when we think she is being systematically abused and make binding promises that we will stand with her as she weathers her storm.

Allow me to wax romantic for a moment. This ugly dragon called Violence is a problem for our whole village. In our actions

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and oaths, my brother officers and I make a commitment to meet this dragon at the castle walls each and every day, and all we ask is that you stand behind us, point out the dragon when he tries to hide, and support us in this struggle.

Let's talk about how we can do that together. Part of that conversation must include some insight about secrets because that dragon mentioned above just loves for dangerous secrets to be kept. Helping someone who is being abused means understanding that they're not always going to be honest, and that they're not always going to tell you the whole truth. We talk about why that is so in the next chapter.

DANGEROUS SECRETS

*In the mind and nature of a man a secret is an ugly thing,
like a hidden physical defect.*

— ISAK DINESEN

Boogiemen exist in the dark domains behind closet doors and under beds, those places we all dread as a child. Once released from their hiding places, boogiemen have the ability to assume any shape, choosing some demon form most frightening to the person allowing them to be real. For some this might be a giant reptile. For others it might be a scary clown. Whatever form the nightmare takes, one thing remains constant. It thrives on secrecy, consistently shifting form and method, keeping the victim off balance and terrorized. It is the lurking unseen that is most frightening, and a parent's only weapon against an imagination in panic is to show our children how to address the problem using a combination of courage, humor, honesty, and exposure.

I had a case once that had initially started as a frantic 911 call from the victim—an intelligent, educated woman with two lovely children living with her husband of twenty years in a home fit for kings. During the call she frantically whispered, “Dear, God. Please help me. He’s going to kill me . . . He’s got a gun. Please hurry!”

All the while an angry male voice could be heard in the background, demanding that she show herself. His anger intensified as he yelled that he

would kill her if she didn't stop hiding. The dispatcher heard a rifle shot and was greatly relieved when the woman asked her to hurry once more after a few seconds of dead silence. The call went on like that for three minutes, at which point two officers arrived and quickly took the ranting husband into custody.

The woman was bruised around both eyes, and her tongue was bleeding. Dark imprints in the shape of four fingers and a thumb encircled her slender neck. The children were traumatized, having thought until moments before that they were about to witness their father murder their mother. The officers recovered a large-caliber rifle on the billiard table in the family room. One round had been fired, and there were nine other bullets loaded and ready to go.

The husband, a professional of good and long repute in our city, had gotten drunk and taken out some frustration on the wife because she had not gotten his salmon-colored shirt to the cleaners yet. We later learned that he'd done this many times before. The family had been living in fear for years, and the wife had all but resigned herself to believing she would one day die at his hands.

Within a week of my meeting her for the first time and learning all these details, they were back together. She told officials and teachers at the children's school that the police had lied to the newspaper about what really happened, and that her bruises were caused by a car accident. She called the chief of police and the mayor and threatened to sue the entire department if we didn't "drop the charges" against her husband. Their neighbors wrote letters of support for the husband, telling the prosecutor, in the most wonderful prose, what a fine man and upstanding community leader he was. In short, this family, and their network of friends, tried pretty damned hard to put the boogiemani back in the closet because even a terrifying secret kept private seemed better than everyone knowing one existed at all.

“Why?” you may ask. In this woman’s case, it was more important to maintain that façade of “respectability” than it was to protect the safety of herself and her children. In other cases, it is all about financing. He’s the breadwinner, and there would literally be no bread if he went to jail. Sometimes it’s about misplaced loyalty or perhaps about an open disdain toward cops. Some people are more worried about having their children see the father arrested than they are about their children seeing Mommy get strangled by Daddy. In a great many cases, the abuser has established himself as respectable or trustworthy to a degree that his threats to take away her children seem real. There is also the substantial issue of pride and shame. No matter how bad a guy he is, he’s still her husband, and she doesn’t want the neighbors to know what a jerk he really is. And finally, in the vast majority of cases, there is also the element of threat associated with him being ten times angrier after getting out of jail if she was the one to call the police.

Secrecy prevails in many of these instances, which is why I’ve said that crimes, such as domestic violence, sexual assaults against children, and stalking, thrive in this environment. Batterers are, by and large, charming people to the outside world. They also tend to be fairly crafty about the injuries they leave. While it isn’t uncommon for police officers and paramedics to see damage to the eyes and face, it is much more common for victims to suffer injuries underneath areas covered by clothing. This makes detecting the problem more difficult for friends and loved ones who might be willing to step in.

The result is a contract of secrecy between the abuser and the victim. She doesn’t involve social services, friends or family, or the police and prosecutor because of shame, financial dependence, fear of retribution, or loss of her children. He, in turn, promises to stop using violence in order to get his way and, in exchange, he provides a sense of security (albeit a false one), stability, and even some sense of hope for a better tomorrow.

The problem is that this contract is nonbinding, unenforceable, and hopelessly unfair. You can't form a true partnership with terrorists, and you don't offer a ride across the river on your back to a creature that lives to hurt you. These alliances, forged in secrecy and shame, are lopsided. There can be no lasting joy or hope in an environment where you live with the knowledge that physical violence and emotional degradation is a possibility twenty-four hours a day.

If you want to fight violence in the home, you have to attack it at the root. You strip away the secrecy just like you would pull away old carpet to expose mold to sunlight, and then you have a chance at making a difference. The lesson here is that when you encounter someone trapped in a relationship like this, you do what you must to help her see that nothing can change until she confronts the fear.

This pattern of keeping secrets and of continuing to live in an unhealthy environment is referred to as Battered Woman Syndrome. Simply put, Battered Woman Syndrome occurs when a woman is so entrenched in living this self-destructive lie that she can't imagine living life any other way. In a later chapter we'll discuss what I consider to be actual addictions of people living in this type of environment to the people they know deep down may someday kill them. I've never met a crack cocaine, methamphetamine, or heroin addict who wasn't entirely aware of the fact that the drug was killing him and that he needed to

stop, but addiction is rough. I submit that addiction to another human being, including or maybe even especially one that is destroying you, is as hard to break as the obsession of heroin or cocaine.

Battered Woman Syndrome exists, and its existence makes it extremely difficult to talk a person living in this pattern into getting out. A mother, police officer, co-worker, friend, or therapist is going to get a lot of "yes, but" answers when trying to urge a victim to take action.

IF YOU WANT
TO FIGHT
VIOLENCE
IN THE HOME,
YOU HAVE TO
ATTACK IT
AT THE ROOT

Yes, but he's really a good guy. He's just under a lot of strain.

Yes, but he's only violent when he drinks.

Yes, but he would just find me and hurt me worse if I left.

Yes, but he has all the money.

Yes, but he's a good father.

Yes, but he promised it would never happen again.

Suffice it to say that when you encounter a woman who is actively living the secret of domestic violence, and whose mind is so brainwashed that she is a poster child for Battered Woman Syndrome, you're probably not going to talk her into taking effective action to change her predicament in one or two heart-to-heart talks. Imagine trying to get a chronic cigarette smoker to quit after one good talking to. No, something dramatic almost always has to happen. Maybe it's an arrest, or maybe it's her little girl whispering that she's scared of Daddy, or maybe it's injuries so severe that hospitalization is required.

Eventually, there may come a time when the flimsy walls constructed to maintain the secrets fracture and fall. That is the moment to quietly, firmly, and with loving resolve let her know once more that you are there for her, and that you will do anything to help her out of her miserable hole. If you've learned what you can about all her secrets and excuses, and if you know what services and options are available, you'll be ready with answers and options when her "yes, buts" start back up.

WHAT “CYCLE OF VIOLENCE” LOOKS LIKE

May all beings be happy, may they be joyous and live in safety.

— TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

My colleagues and I used to be dispatched to a couple from time to time that crossed the line in a dramatic fashion. We'll call them Tim and Louise, and they're those kinds of people you never forget but wish you could.

Tim and Louise were large human beings. Both of them topped 350 pounds, minimum. She had hair that fell down past her waist, but it was always oily and never brushed. He had a beard that never seemed to fill in completely, never got shaved, and never grew longer. Both wore plaid flannel, navy-blue sweat pants every day of the year, and I'm pretty sure they shared three shirts and two pairs of pants between them. Their body odor was overpowering, even outside—upwind.

On those dismal days when my partners and I were to visit, we always arrived to find all of their living room furniture outside their trailer, neatly arranged on the front “lawn”—a sixteen-by-twenty foot patch of white gravel bordered by Johnson grass growing as high as my hip.

The inside of the trailer would be bare by the time we got there, with the exception of trash, debris, cat litter, and rotting food strewn about. Their home's scent was a delightful medley of kitty poop, beer puddle, ashtray, and carcass.

Both Tim and Louise had a speech impediment, and the mild difficulty one might experience in trying to understand them, as they spoke over one another at level ten volume, was exacerbated by the fact that they were both invariably snot-slinging drunk.

I never arrived without finding them both bruised and bleeding, completely out of breath, and demanding in huffy-puffy screams that we immediately vacate their property.

Thing was, it was a planned fight. That was the reason for the furniture being outside. You see, Tim and Louise considered themselves to be intelligent people, and they'd learned years earlier that their neighbors called the cops much faster if they were fighting outside the trailer. In order to prevent such a call to the police, they adopted a strict policy of moving their furniture outside the home, then going back in and commencing to viciously beat each other.

I am not making this up. They would cooperate fully in lifting the couch, two chairs, television, and television stand out into the yard, go back inside, ask each other if they were ready, and then attack.

I hate duels. The thought that two men could agree enough to actually hold off on trying to murder one another and civilly arrange to meet in the early morning hours at a private park so that they could then shoot one another or run the other through with a saber is entirely brutish. My God, if you're communicative enough to be able to hold off on the violence and arrange a meeting, surely you possess the higher brain function to find some peaceful accord. Frankly, I have more understanding of two guys who suddenly square off in a bar and get to swinging than I do of the selfishness and pride-driven process of the prearranged duel. At least the two idiots in the bar didn't pretend to be civil and intelligent before trying to kill each other.

Perhaps that is why Tim and Louise have bothered me so over the years. Couldn't they have used the energy expended to

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FALLING-IN-LOVE
PROCESS IS SO
POWERFUL

move the furniture and destroying each other to, say, go on a walk in separate directions—or vacuum?

Alas, Tim and Louise were all out of anger by the time we arrived. Whatever they'd fought about was long forgotten, and all they really wanted at that point was to put the furniture back inside before it rained and get revenge on the nosy neighbors who had called the police.

Tim and Louise would start calling out challenges to said neighbors once they got their breath back. Louise was notorious for calling out ideas about how she and her loving Tim were going to exact their vengeance. Sometimes she would tell them she was going to kill them in their sleep. Some days she promised to key their car, slash their tires, or kill their cats. Tim would scream across the little gravel lot at them, announcing to the world that he knew their children were having sex with stray dogs and that the husband was gay. Louise would announce to their public that the neighbor's wife had syphilis.

Always, as Tim and Louise were led away to patrol cars, they would challenge the targeted couple to a duel later. Tim would ask the husband if he would fight him when he got out of jail later. Louise would shout similar challenges to the wife.

"We're gonna come back here and get you when we bond out," said Tim. "You get a babysitter for your brats because the four of us are going at it tomorrow."

"I can't believe you got my man in trouble like that!" spat Louise. "I'm gonna tear those fake highlights right out of your head when we get back."

"I love you, darlin'," announced Tim to Louise as his head was guided into the car.

"I love you too, baby," she'd coo back. "I'll call my momma to get your bail going."

And off to the hospital or jail they would go, depending on the severity of the injuries.

We went back the next day once, called again by those same neighbors who were greatly alarmed at having to explain to their children what Tim and Louise were doing with all their clothes off. The kids had seen them “making up” through an open, curtainless window, and they’d reportedly sprinted back into their own home to ask all the questions one might expect children to ask in that situation.

Louise answered the door buck, buck, buck naked.

“Get a good look?” she snarled.

“Yes, ma’am,” I replied, as I momentarily fought off panic, believing I’d gone blind in my right eye. “Would you please put some clothes on?”

“What are you doing back on my property?” queried an equally naked and soused Tim.

I explained.

At which point Tim wondered why I had insisted that they stop fighting just one day earlier, and now I was “getting on to them” for doing just the opposite.

“We’re making love, not war,” belted Tim, and this set off a two-minute guffaw session between the two as my partner and I waited patiently and prayed they would put clothes on.

We were back for another fight a week later.

As amusing as Tim and Louise might be, their “love” was nothing short of disgusting. Perhaps they chose this pattern over loneliness. Maybe this was all they’d ever known, but surely no sane, truly loving person can see this cycle of “honeymoon” romance followed by mounting tension and culminating in vicious, despicable combat as normal or healthy.

Tim and Louise weren’t so terribly unique in this pattern. Though their willingness to cooperate in staging their fights was definitely weird, their cycle of violence has been something I’ve seen repeated in other couples literally thousands of times over the years.

Every relationship has cycles. Couples have good days and bad, crappy mornings and nice evenings, arguments and make-up sex, boredom and joy. It is our nature to ride waves of varying intensity throughout the course of our lives. Metaphorically, we can look at it like riding in a boat on the ocean. We have some control over where a relationship goes if we look at our communications skills, investment in the relationship, and shared dreams and goals as paddles, sails, and rudders. After that, the ocean of life presents us with big and small waves over which we have less control, and it is the function of the successful relationship to ride them without capsizing.

Every relationship starts somewhere, whether in a bar, a grocery store, an introduction from mutual friends, in the workplace, or through a computer website. Regardless, most romantic relationships begin with intensity.

Falling in love is fun, and it feels good. Some people get addicted to that feeling and have a hard time maintaining a long-term relationship because that falling-in-love process is so powerful. Some enjoy the feeling so much that they put the love they already have in great peril for the express purpose of later getting to make up and “fall in love” again. Many times they don’t know that they’re doing this, simply accepting their fate of intermittent turbulence peppered into an otherwise gratifying relationship.

Every relationship eventually experiences moments of tension. Maybe there’s a disagreement about how to budget the finances or about how to discipline an unruly child. Maybe an argument starts when one gets a text message from someone of the opposite gender, and the significant other finds it. Perhaps an argument starts over who should be the next president or who didn’t put gas in the car.

Regardless, people in healthy relationships argue sometimes, even though they may be in love and the best of friends. Again, cycles happen, and they can be cleansing. Generally, if there has been honest communication and a true

spirit of trying to understand the needs of the other person in the relationship, what follows can be lovely and strengthening to the couple.

“I understand what you’re saying, and I won’t leave sacks from fast food restaurants on the floorboards anymore.” (You can fill in your own moment of cooperation and forgiveness here.) And this, of course, can be followed by moments of intimacy and laughter that are entirely pleasant and normal.

What is abnormal and decidedly not okay is when an argument or a moment of tension turns violent or threatening. That is the line never to be crossed.

Often a woman is angry with her abusive partner at the time the police arrive, and officers frequently hear that she wants to press charges to the fullest extent of the law. However, it is just as common that officers and prosecutors learn the victim has gone back to the abuser within hours, days, or weeks of the violence, and that she is now his greatest supporter.

I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve heard, “He promised he’d never do it again . . . He promised he’d go to counseling . . . He promised he’d stop drinking.”

All the promises are met—for a while. Flowers are sent, apologies are made, and we discover that the two have “fallen in love” once more. I’ve heard from countless women that their relationship has never been better as they beg me to get the prosecutor to drop the charges.

And then a week or a month later, the cycle comes full circle, and she is beaten once more.

“I’m leaving him this time . . . really. I won’t live like this. Press those charges.”

Until his next love poem arrives with the letter written from his jail cell, promising it will be different this time, and at our next meeting with her she has decided to give him “one more chance.” This is called the honeymoon phase of the cycle, and

THE CYCLE IS
A SYMPTOM OF
A BATTERER'S
OBSESSION
WITH EXERTING
POWER AND
CONTROL

it is as predictable in many cases as the seasons. The circle that began as passionate love, transitioned into a period of tension, and culminated in violence begins anew at the honeymoon phase, only to be repeated again and again.

This is what victim advocates, police, prosecutors, and YOU are up against as we try to help an abused woman. Frustrating? You bet. Winnable? Absolutely! Our challenge is to recognize the cycle and understand that it is a symptom of a batterer's obsession with exerting power and control over everyone in his household.

POWER AND CONTROL: WHEN BATTERERS USE VIOLENCE TO GET THEIR WAY

*I said: Messenger of Allah, how should we approach our wives and
how should we leave them? He replied: Approach your tilth when or how you will,
give her (your wife) food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself,
do not revile her face, and do not beat her.*

— SUNAN ABI DAWUD 2142

To truly understand intimate partner violence and associated stalking, you must have a firm grasp on the concept of power and control. Batterers hit, kick, and strangle as a form of control; stalkers literally hunt their victims and toy with them during their violent mind games because they want to re-establish control. Once you get that concept, you begin to see just how vicious and cruel these types of relationships can be.

One of our more difficult cases involved a soldier and his wife. Unlike most batterers who tend to back down quickly when confronted with someone their own size, this man was a certified tough guy. He'd been in combat, led men well by all accounts, saved some lives and took some others, got injured but volunteered to go back. He also routinely beat his wife.

During the investigation a lot of other things came out, things she'd been afraid to tell anyone before her sister finally encouraged her to get help. In a tearful interview she disclosed that this soldier, a hero by most accounts, had blocked her from all relationships, including those with her own family and friends. He allowed her to work, but he used a stopwatch to time her as she

traveled to and from her job. She was required to call him the moment she walked into her place of employment, the second she left, and at least twice during her lunch break. He called as many as forty times each day to make sure she was sitting at her desk, grilling her on the intentions of her male co-workers, demanding that she get their full names, dates of birth, and social security numbers so he could have a “CIA friend” check up on them.

She never refused these demands, but there were times when she simply couldn't provide the information he needed quickly enough, or she was caught in traffic and didn't arrive home in time. On those occasions he generally practiced chokeholds and excruciating joint locks he'd learned in his career. At times she was rendered unconscious, but it was rare that he left a bruise or scratch—he was too savvy for that.

She was not allowed a cell phone or email access, and he insisted on reading and editing the letters she wrote to her mother. He controlled the bank account, he checked the odometer on her car at least twice weekly, and he reviewed receipts for groceries with a ruler and highlighter.

Did he really have friends in the CIA? Who knows, but given his profession it was certainly plausible. This, and the fact that he was a decorated soldier, was tremendous leverage in his never-ending schemes to control this woman. She lived in terror that he could kill her and get away with it, simply because of the mysterious relationship he had with spies and snipers. She knew he could and would find her if she ever tried to leave him.

SHE LIVED,
ESSENTIALLY,
AS A
PRISONER
OF WAR

Think about that. Here was a woman he'd stood with at an altar nine years earlier and swore in front of man and God to honor and to protect her for the rest of their lives. And yet, at some point along the line, he embarked on a pattern of torture and psychological warfare to “keep her in line.”

She lived, essentially, as a prisoner of war, and when she finally came forward it was more to tell us whom to suspect when she turned

up dead than as an actual plan to get away from him. Frankly, she didn't have any hope for that, but her sister convinced her to make a statement so justice would be served after her murder. She waited until he was redeployed to the Middle East before she took steps to get free.

Male entitlement still exists and, like its obtuse cousin, racism, it may stick around for some time to come. There are men in this world who believe that women are there to serve them. Most of us are beyond that, but there remains that portion of my gender that are entrenched with the sense that they must control every aspect of a domestic partnership, and that any hint their authority is being questioned or usurped must be met with force and punishment. This power and control phenomenon is as counterproductive as slavery in that it breeds contempt and destroys any positive feelings the relationship might once have had. Who still believes that the way to a woman's heart is through discipline and cruelty?

The guys we arrest for beating on their women do, I suppose.

I am not suggesting that good relationships, in which more traditional models of male and female roles exist, can't thrive. Look, I'd rather chop wood than cook, or mow the lawn instead of dust, and if I were living with a woman who enjoyed just the opposite I don't see anything wrong with dividing tasks accordingly and getting the jobs done. There are women in this world who desire to be a homemaker and stay-at-home mom and represent the archetypal "housewife" persona while her husband goes off to work. If that relationship is a happy, productive one, who are we to suggest doing it otherwise? If, however, that role is forced through mental and physical abuse, control of transportation, communication, and finances, isolation from friends and family, and expectations of perfection that can never be met, we have moved away from a loving, effective partnership and into a relationship of captor and prisoner.

WHEN THREATS WORK: THE NEXT OMINOUS STEP IN MAINTAINING CONTROL

The most potent weapon in the hands of an oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.

— STEVEN BIKO

“All I have to do is make one phone call, and you’ll lose your bratty kid.”

Caleb worked for the juvenile court. He was respected and well liked. His job put him in touch with many of the local police officers and child welfare investigators, and their phone numbers were in his directory. He knew people who had the authority and responsibility to take children out of dysfunctional homes, and it was this fact that compelled his girlfriend to believe he could make her worst nightmare happen.

Jennifer had an anxiety disorder. Who wouldn’t when your boyfriend strangled and slapped you on nights when you didn’t feel up to sex? Making matters worse, Caleb enjoyed sharing Jennifer with other men. He liked to watch, though he’d often sneer and call her hateful names for doing exactly as he’d demanded. She hated this, but resistance was futile because Caleb seemed almost eager for her to disobey him so he’d have an excuse to rid his household of her inconvenient child.

Caleb’s leverage was that she was prescribed medicine for her anxiety.

“Aha,” he announced after finding the prescription bottle. “I knew you were crazy.”

“I’ll call child protective services and tell them what a crazy witch you are,” he’d threaten on those nights when she just couldn’t imagine lying with another of his friends.

And because of his “connections,” and her own embarrassment for having to take “crazy pills,” she remained his sex slave for years.

Threats are simply a form of psychological warfare. That’s not to say that some people won’t follow through with their threats, but the objective in threatening is to worm a way deep into the psyche of the target in order to achieve a personal, hateful agenda.

For the purposes of illustrating the concept of psychological manipulation, let’s look for a moment at a man who has chosen a path of hate and violence to accomplish his political agenda. That man lives and works around other people, perhaps as a postal worker or delivery driver, and often the people around him have no idea he plans to destroy human lives and valuable property to meet those goals.

Occasionally, this man must interact with a person or persons he considers enemies—people he fully plans to injure or destroy at another opportunity. If the opportunity isn’t right, though, the man may feign pleasantness and cordiality. In fact, this conveyed sense of respect and friendship, false as it may be, works well in terms of keeping the “enemy” off balance and always guessing where the next attack will come from.

On Friday, our hypothetical man has lunch with members of the governing board in his region. They all smile at one another, shake hands, break bread, and have a pleasant day talking about sports, weather, a comedian or musician on a television show the night before, and so on. On Saturday, our fellow sets off a bomb inside the same building, killing eight of the acquaintances from the day before and himself in the process.

THREATS
ARE SIMPLY
A FORM OF
**PSYCHOLOGICAL
WARFARE**

The killings are tragic, but the aftermath is even more ominous. How can the other people dedicated to peace and equality ever truly believe one another again when they aren't sure who among the smiling "friends" is planning to blow them into vapor the next day? Distrust and dissension follow, and peace accords fall through because no one trusts the others at the table. The violence and hatred continue.

The man who ate lunch with the others, and then shattered himself just so he could cause this chaos, got exactly what he wanted. It is little matter that he was destroyed. What matters is that he and his ilk now control the situation, and they can extend that control indefinitely with strategic reminders that it could happen again. The man has more control in death than he had in life.

That combination of kindness and threats, charm and violence, utilized on a global scale is also a strategy used by domestic batterers. The political terrorist targets people who are perceived enemies of his nation, clan, or ideology. The fanatic in your loved one's home also sustains an environment of limited warfare. Both forms of terrorists do this out of a sense of (real or imagined) threat, an affront to their dignity, and/or a desire to extend their sphere of influence and control.

At its simplest level, both kinds use the threat of future violence to remarkable success. It is the lack of rhythm that is most unsettling of all. If you step into a boxing ring, you know you're likely to get hit. You can adapt, and your tolerance for that extra stress can rise. If, however, you know you're going to get attacked at some point, but you don't know when, you live life under constant pressure with little or no hope of feeling peace or contentment. There are times of relative peace in both types of combat zones, but the sense of it is fleeting and artificial.

Psychological warfare can be effective in the domestic setting. We know this from the fact that victims are cowed by little more than an arched eyebrow or that "certain smile." They can be held in what amounts to

enslavement or servitude for years prior to anyone finding out, all because of a mind control technique.

The threats generally include something specific about the targeted victim. For example, if the victim once said something disparaging about her mother, the person trying to control her might bring up the insult years later and threaten to tell the mother exactly how her daughter feels about her. Never mind that she said those things in a heated moment years earlier. The controller knows how badly it would affect his wife's relationship with his mother-in-law, and he will be more than happy to use it if and when the time is right.

Most threats fall into one of four general categories: taking the children, financial ruination, ostracization from friends and family, and more violence (including death threats).

In the case of violence, it should be fairly obvious that this is simply a threat to hurt the victim or people the victim cares about. In one case I worked, a woman called from a shelter to report years of physical abuse culminating in a brutal assault. Actually, she didn't call. The social workers at the shelter did because even though she was living in a safe, secure facility, the man was calling her incessantly, threatening to kill her in each and every conversation.

Why she kept answering her cell phone is a little beyond me, except for the fact that she had been conditioned to respond when he said or did certain things. One of those things was that she was required to pick up the phone within two rings if she recognized the number as belonging to him. I later learned she was not allowed to answer if it was not her husband, even if it was from their children's school.

The staff at the shelter were terrified that she was going to walk out at any moment because the woman was so habituated to his demands that she repeatedly told them she thought it might be better if she did as he had told her to do.

You have to understand that the shelter staff could not and would not stop her from leaving. Life is choice, and as bad a choice as it would have been for her to leave the locked facility and run out to his car, it was still her decision to make.

Eventually they got her to agree to speak with me, although when I first walked in I had my doubts as to whether she would even tell me her name, much less make a police report or pursue prosecution.

Both of her eyes were black, her nose was swollen and crooked, her hair had been pulled out in huge hunks, her left ear was covered with a softball-sized dressing, her arms had enough bruises running their length that they looked like a leopard pattern, she had trouble breathing because of the cracked ribs on her left side, and she walked slightly hunched over because of the pounding she took to her pelvis and kidneys.

The whole thing started when she “smarted off” to him that she wasn’t going to have the abortion he was insisting she have. He told her he’d just get rid of the baby himself, and he commenced to land a flurry of kicks and blows, primarily aimed at her uterus. When he left to go to work the next morning, she did the bravest thing she’d ever done in her whole life. She left.

Make no mistake, her terror didn’t end simply because she packed the kids and a small suitcase and made it to a sanctuary. Just as I have rarely seen anyone with a worse beating, I had also rarely seen a more genuinely

frightened human being. Doors opening made her jump. Cars driving by made her cry. When his favorite television show came on the shelter’s TV, she ran sobbing from the room. His phone calls caused her to hyperventilate, and twice she developed hives and had to take a tranquilizer.

I happened to be present during a moment when he called, which wasn’t the miraculous timing you might think because the bastard was calling every five to ten minutes.

THREATS WORK

THOUGH...

UNDERSTAND

JUST HOW

SINISTER

THEY CAN BE

He was one angry fellow, and I overheard phrases that led me to believe he intended to kill her and everyone in the shelter if she didn't get her butt outside and into his truck when he pulled up in the next few minutes.

Boy was he surprised when I was the one who actually climbed into his truck, but it wasn't to go home with him.

Threats work though, and anyone who is trying to help a victim recover her freedom needs to understand just how sinister they can be. The intimidation she's endured again and again over the years is as big a reason for her staying in an abusive situation as anything else. That being the case, I think it's important to expose some of the more common ones for the shams they are.

"I'll Take Your Children From You!"

One of the most common threats has to do with taking away a victim's children. I don't know about you, but there's nothing more frightening to me than that. The truth of the matter is that if investigators have all the facts and do their job they can expose an abusive parent for what he or she is. This can become extremely important in a child custody battle, especially one in which one of the parents has access to a lot of money, but the other has been the victim of abuse. How fair is it for the abuser, who has a lot of financial support from enabling family members, to use the leverage of cash flow to win his or her day in court?

A solid investigation can level the playing field. Even though police officers are not working in the capacity of a private investigator, anything they discover in the course of their investigation can be used at a civil trial. For example, if a police detective speaks with a former girlfriend of an abusive man, and that girlfriend reveals that he was abusive to her and to her children while they were dating, that information can potentially be presented by the current wife

as evidence that he has a history and pattern of being cruel to the people he is supposed to care for. Judges tend to be pretty intelligent people, and if they are presented with facts, as opposed to bluster and innuendo, they generally make sound decisions relative to safety, fairness, and what is in the best interest of the children involved.

Threats about taking the children may be the cruelest form of mental abuse. It is a form of manipulation that tends to work well, but it is also a method that tends to shrivel when exposed to scrutiny and revelation. Friends, victim advocates, police officers, and prosecutors need to understand just how terrifying and effective this threat can be, and then be ready with the counter argument that exposure of cruelty and systematic manipulation tends to make victims stronger and in a better position to maintain connections to his or her children.

“I’ll Leave You Homeless And Penniless!”

This threat seems to be about as common as any other. Batterers plan their situation so that they are in control of finances, the lease agreement or mortgage, ownership of all vehicles, and all accounts with important links to family and friends, such as telephone service and computer access.

A new twist on this old story has to do with modern technology and twenty-first century dating practices. We’ve been seeing more cases having to do with women who left everything behind—including social and family connections, a good job, and a community in which they are known and trusted—all for the sake of a man they met and fell in love with over the Internet. Ain’t that a kick in the teeth? Somehow multitudes of intelligent, caring women fall in love with a man via their keyboards and tiny video cameras perched atop their

computers, give up just about everything valuable in order to move several states away, and realize weeks or months later what a flytrap they've walked into. There are few women who feel more betrayed and humiliated than this group, and time and again we hear how resistant they were to admit their dysfunctional situation to family back home after realizing how duped they've been.

All I can say to that is be proud, but don't be prideful. There is an important distinction, and if your pride is keeping you from reaching out for help to people who love you and who dream of being able to help, swallow that pride and extract yourself from the trap. Most likely you'll shake your head in wonder six months later, amazed and grateful that your nightmare didn't go on one additional day because you had the fortitude to take action.

Back to financial concerns: Yes, the prospect of being homeless and poor is a daunting one. Indeed, it is cited as the number one reason women leave shelters and go back home to what they know will be a bad situation.

Choice one: A place to live where, in most cases, you get food, a bed, and a place for your kids.

Choice two: Homelessness, hunger, and the potential for exposure to violence and sexual assault and/or prostitution.

Choice one requires that you tolerate emotional and physical abuse from time to time, but at least you know the guy. Choice two is terrifying and shouldn't even have to be a choice at all.

So let's agree from the start that choice two is not a viable alternative, and choice one must be eliminated as unacceptable. Other options must be generated if there is to be any hope of breaking the cycle of violence and getting people out of an abusive situation.

One obvious option is for a victim of intimate partner violence to go stay with friends or family. In many cases, this is an excellent move. The person is around people who care for her, are likely to protect her, and will give her time

to heal and get back on her feet. Unfortunately, this isn't an option in many cases due to distance, strained relationships, fears that the family members will be placed in peril by exposing them to the menace of the abuser, or a simple lack of financial resources for a host family.

Domestic violence shelters are generally an option, though most carry a thirty to forty-five day time limit simply because they must keep making space for the next victim to get in. Forty-five days isn't a whole lot of time when you've been left with nothing in the bank, no job, no transportation to go find a job, and no time to go out looking for suitable living conditions.

Suffice it to say that financial burdens are a big whopping challenge in the context of making a bid for freedom from an abusive situation. Shelters that go the extra mile to assist in procuring long-term, low-cost housing, assisting with transportation needs so that clients can get to job interviews and make it to work, and offering life skills training—such as interviewing skills, budgeting, and finance management—go a long way toward generating conditions that allow victims to break out of their cells and become self-sufficient, productive citizens.

Let me put a bug in your ear before we move from this section on finances. One of the biggest obstacles faced by victims in this situation is a need for transportation. Some cities have excellent mass transit options, such as busses and light rail. Other cities simply don't, and it is there where we actually see a higher incidence of victims returning to abusive spouses because getting back and forth to a job, getting the kids to school or to the doctor, and being able to make reasonable trips to the grocery store become almost impossible. If you want to help, consider donating an old car to a local shelter. In most cases the shelter will have local volunteer mechanics repair it to working condition for free, you get a big tax break, and a person struggling to make a new life for herself and her children gets a big break.

**FINANCIAL
BURDENS**
ARE A BIG
WHOPPING
CHALLENGE
IN THE CONTEXT
OF MAKING A
**BID FOR
FREEDOM**

“I’ll Tell Your Friends And Family About . . .”

Couples share intimate secrets. It’s one of the more enjoyable aspects of being romantically involved. Unfortunately, in a situation in which one person is trying desperately to control the other, old secrets can come back to haunt the person of his/her obsession. For example, maybe he knows she’s embarrassed about having herpes or that she once got arrested for shoplifting; perhaps she spoke ill of her favorite aunt’s new boyfriend after a family reunion (the one the aunt ended up marrying), and now she’s worried about hurting the aunt’s feelings; maybe he’s just willing to make up lies about her to the family, and she knows he is charming enough to make everyone believe her. Regardless, the idea of being ostracized from the people you care about is intimidating when used as a manipulation tool. Remember that we are probably talking about a person who has been verbally abused and put down for years in some cases, so when a man who professes to love her on Monday turns around and calls her ugly or slutty on Tuesday, it actually matters to her. You or I might be able to laugh in his face, but she may not have the insight and confidence to shrug off insults at this point in her life. The threat of ostracism is much bigger than one might realize, especially for someone living a life in which she already feels lonely and cut off from the rest of her world.

“I’ll Kill You If You Try To Leave Me!”

Death threats are another effective way to control the people you claim to love. Death threats, both outright, such as in “I will kill you if you don’t come home” and veiled, such as “You know what will happen if you don’t come home,” come after years of physical and emotional abuse, episodes of strangulation, menacing whispers promising to commit homicide followed by suicide “If I

ever catch you with another man,” and incidents involving gun barrels held to the head and knives held to the throat.

In other words, the threats are taken as real and, frankly, they should be. After all, we’re talking about a controlling, ego-driven bully who might consider it fitting and honorable to kill his wife if she left him, and then intentionally get in a gunfight with police so that he can go out in a blaze of spiteful, meaningless “glory.” Death threats must be taken seriously. I assure you, the victims take them seriously, and police officers, advocates, prosecutors, and judges must also.

Death threats are hard to prove. They are seldom announced in a public manner, and it is only in golden, rare moments when they are recorded. However, diligent digging on the part of an investigator can sometimes reveal previous victims’ statements that he made similar threats to them when they were dating. Those statements from previous victims can be helpful in establishing a pattern of violence.

Sometimes victims are able to make phone calls to the suspect in the presence of a police officer who is recording the whole conversation, and those calls may result in a rich line of audio evidence. The transcript below is a portion of an actual recorded phone call between a woman and her boyfriend in a case I worked several years ago. She’d endured physical and emotional abuse from the man for some time, but this particular day she’d had enough. The man was certainly a VIP in our city, with lots of political and financial connections. We had to make sure we got him solid. What do you think?

VICTIM

Hey.

SUSPECT (loving tones at first)

Hey, muffin, what’s up?

FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE

VICTIM

I've got to go to the doctor.

SUSPECT

What for?

VICTIM

I'm bleeding from my vagina, and I think my nose is broken.

SUSPECT

What are you going to tell them?

VICTIM

I won't tell them you hurt me. I'll tell them I fell, but I need some money
so I can pay them.

SUSPECT (not so nice anymore)

Bitch, you don't need to go to the doctor.

VICTIM

I'm bleeding from my vagina! You hit me there. Why did you do that?

SUSPECT

Just take a shower. It's probably just some little scratch. You're gonna go to
the doctor for a little scratch? They're just going to laugh at you.

VICTIM

Billie, my nose is broken. You broke my nose!

SUSPECT

Is this about the money? I didn't hit you that hard. Besides, there's nothing they can do for a broken nose anyway. You're just gonna have to tough this one out. It'll heal. I know what you're trying to do. You're trying to work me for some money, and it isn't going to work. You just need to take a shower and shut your mouth.

His attorneys advised him to take a guilty plea after they heard the recording.

Recording a phone call between victim and abuser is nerve wracking because it involves her making a phone call to the person she is most afraid of in the world. The Supreme Court has ruled that this tool is acceptable in most cases, as long as one of the two people talking on the phone knows the call is being recorded. Rules can vary from state to state, so you'll need to check with a local law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office before diving into this method, but these recorded phone calls may be the best evidence source in a "he-said, she-said" situation.

"I'll Kill Myself If You Leave Me"

This threat is effective in many cases. We are dealing with confused and complicated emotions. A victim of long-term abuse can feel many things toward her oppressor: hate, love, terror, joy, loathing, and sympathy. No one wants to live with another person's suicide on his or her conscience, so this threat can be effective in terms of getting her to come back. Unfortunately, once she's back, she's trapped again. There is a much better alternative, and we'll discuss how to handle this threat in more detail in the chapter on leaving and living safely.

Strategies For Handling Threats

There are actions that can be taken in these situations that can allow a person to avoid the pitfalls associated with threats, and this is a time when loved ones and colleagues can help a victim perform these actions in a logical, successful manner. One of those strategies may include using the criminal justice system to help, and I strongly believe this is an important tool when one person is threatening another. Being aware of what threats might come, and what they mean when they do, allows victims, and the friends and loved ones of victims, to participate more intelligently and supportively in their own defense. People living in a situation in which threats are being made should generally come forward and expect a high level of support and expertise from their police agency.

There isn't much point to preparing for prosecution if you don't take care of the most important aspect of the case, which is making sure the person making the threats can't follow through. I once spent part of a semester in a kindergarten classroom as part of a team charged with keeping a man from kidnapping a child he had previously molested. The man was out on bond, and he'd made his intentions to take the child and flee to another country clear. I reviewed primary colors, shapes, and the alphabet for days, played a lot of four square, and felt a lot of pride when that child was still happily sitting in his classroom after the man was finally sent off to prison.

Round the clock protection is nearly impossible for most agencies in most situations. This is an unfortunate result of tight budgets, leading to inadequate manpower, coupled with the never-ending fountain of a thousand public safety and law enforcement duties to be performed each and every day. However, there are things any police agency can handle. Let's say, hypothetically, that a batterer/stalker has been released from jail on a bail bond, and he's made it clear that he has no intention of relenting in his efforts to terrorize and control

his ex-wife. What are some of the things that can be done to keep her safe, at least until trial?

Extra Patrol

Extra patrol is exactly what it sounds like. Officers are assigned to provide extra presence and surveillance of a residence or place of employment during periods when stalking is suspected. There are four objectives.

First, establish a clear demonstration that officers have taken the victim under their wing, and that they'll be looking out for her.

Second, have officers familiarize themselves with a potential trouble spot so that their response time will drop dramatically if and when a call for emergency help comes in.

Third, offer some sense of relief and security for a stalking victim. We get numerous reports from victims that they were finally able to get a decent night's sleep because they knew the police were patrolling their area and looking out for them. Having two or three officers routinely come to check on you—who know your case and who have taken a genuine interest in your safety—can make all the difference in the world in terms of a victim's morale, fortitude, and anxiety level.

Finally, catch someone in the act while doing a routine extra patrol. A potentially serious crime is thwarted, peace and safety is restored, and the bad guy goes to the pokey. That is considered a touchdown in my business.

Civil Standbys

Civil standbys are controversial in law enforcement, and not every agency does them. A civil standby involves dispatching one or two officers to provide

security while a person goes back to their former residence to collect certain belongings. For example, a battery victim who has escaped a bad situation into a shelter may need to go back to the house to get her social security card or birth certificate. Maybe she needs an important legal document or a few changes of clothes. There are some things that are so important that people will risk another beating or worse just to retrieve them, and it is better, in my opinion, to spend ten minutes offering a safe passage than to deal with the fallout of a brand new offense later. Call it crime prevention.

Civil standbys are not about moving furniture or arguing about who keeps the plasma TV. They should be quick and clean; get what you need and get out. Yes, a person who left the house for safety reasons may never again see a cherished dresser or lie again in a comfortable bed and, frankly, officers don't have the time to spend while estranged couples quibble over possessions. People throughout history have had to drop treasures too heavy or bulky to carry quickly while being pursued by oppressors, and it may just be that escaping a life of oppression in the home means leaving behind important, expensive items. I'm not saying it's fair, and I would hope those issues would be resolved in a legal, equitable process, but when we're talking about lives, leaving the stereo system behind doesn't seem like such a sacrifice after all.

Agencies that provide a civil standby service generally limit their officers' on-scene time to around ten or fifteen minutes. Officers are not allowed to make decisions about property, so contested pieces must remain in the house. Officers are not allowed to assist in the moving, so they shouldn't be asked or expected to help hoist a couch or carry a suitcase. Their job is to keep the peace, maintain everyone's safety, eliminate false allegations, and keep the person retrieving items focused on priorities.

Alarm Systems

Alarm systems are not generally dispensed by police agencies, but most agencies have the ability to help stalking victims access free alarm systems. Unfortunately, most police agencies don't even know they can do this. I'm loath to plug any individual company, but fair credit is due ADT Alarms, a nationwide company with a long history of providing high-quality systems and monitoring. ADT will provide an alarm system, free of charge, in homes for victims with documented stalking problems. This service is called the ADT AWARE program, standing for Abused Women's Active Response Emergency, and it has quietly been adding another layer of protection and security for victims since 1992. The victim must adhere to certain rules, such as maintaining a valid order of protection and not allowing the perpetrator back into the home. The local police agency or prosecutor's office must acknowledge that the client is a victim of violence and/or stalking, that the stalker is at large, and that the victim is cooperating or has cooperated in any applicable investigation and prosecution.

In exchange for following these simple rules, ADT outfits a residence with entry alarms, security keypad, an emergency button worn on a necklace, glass-break detection, and twenty-four-hour monitoring. Free! Do you understand how valuable that can be for someone who lives in dread that the person she most fears will eventually come and break down her door? It makes a huge difference, and ADT should be proud of this community service.

I would encourage you to explore this possibility with your local police agency if you know of a person suffering the indignities of stalking. I would also encourage local police agencies or prosecutor's offices to explore the AWARE program with an ADT official. Their website is www.ADT.com, or you can locate a representative through a local ADT office.

Surveillance Systems

In the worst stalking cases, it is sometimes helpful to install surveillance systems able to provide video evidence of trespasses, acts of intentional damage to property, residential burglaries, and actual physical attacks on the victims. The best kind of system is motion activated so that it is not recording all the time, and it is also important that the system be well hidden.

These systems are expensive, and it is infrequent that small to mid-size police and sheriff departments have one. Fortunately, quite a few narcotics squads have such a system. They use it to track the comings and goings of dealers into suspected distribution sites, but the system is usable in a stalking situation. The challenge is usually getting the narcotics guys to let an officer investigating a stalking complaint use the equipment and setting it up. Surveillance cameras and recorders are coveted because there aren't enough systems to go around, and buying more isn't generally feasible.

Enforcement

We'll discuss the pros and cons of aggressive enforcement of protection orders and laws relating to intimate partner violence in another chapter. Suffice it to say for now that proactive enforcement tends to be the most protective, helpful solution in terms of getting stalkers to mend their ways. I know that it feels like this would just tend to make them mad, but the reality is that when agencies show they are not going to dilly-dally with this type of nonsense, the nonsense tends to stop much sooner.

In the next chapter, we're going to reveal some of the lies men tell when they're caught being violent. One of the most common is the excuse of "blind rage." Friends, family members, and co-workers can get fooled by a blind rage excuse, so let's expose it for the scam it tends to be.

MYTH OF THE RAGE-A-HOLIC: WHY “BLIND RAGE” IS NO EXCUSE

As men in rage strike those that wish them best.

— WILLIAM S SHAKESPEARE

The following is an excerpt from an interview I did with a man who had just beaten his girlfriend and her child. This portion of his statement came a little over an hour into the interview. He’d lied about almost everything to this point, but eventually he got tired and knew we knew he was lying. He finally threw in the towel, hoping he’d get credit for “being honest:”

WILLIAMS

So, what was going on in your head right at the moment you smashed the baby through the wall?

SUSPECT

I don’t know. I just lost it. I was trying to get her to drink some milk or something. I don’t know. She just kept crying, and I wanted her to shut up. I just lost it . . .

WILLIAMS

You lost it. The baby was crying too much, and . . . so are you saying you lost what . . . your temper? Control? What did you lose?

SUSPECT

My control, I guess. I go into these rages, and I don't remember nothing. I just lose it sometimes when I get that mad.

WILLIAMS

You've lost it with the baby before, haven't you?

SUSPECT

Yeah.

WILLIAMS

How many times? What's the most number of times you think you've lost control while you were taking care of the baby?

SUSPECT

I don't know. Maybe six?

WILLIAMS

The baby is six weeks old. So are you saying you go into a rage and lose total control about once a week, every week, for as long as that baby has been alive?

SUSPECT

Not every week. Sometimes it was like two or three times in one week, so that adds up to six pretty quick.

This guy's statement wasn't so different from a lot of others I've heard over the years. Loss of control due to rage is pretty handy as an excuse for having done inexcusable things. This guy literally shoved that six-week-old baby

through sheetrock. I asked him about the hole in the wall during the interview. I'd already seen it, but he didn't know that. Specifically, I asked him about the size of the hole. His answer: "About baby size."

Here's what tripped him up in terms of his whole "It's not my fault because I don't have control over my rages" defense. After he was done hurting the baby, and then beating and threatening the baby's mother for good measure, he had her call 911 for an ambulance because the baby had stopped breathing. In the background he could be heard whispering, "Tell them she fell off the couch." Oh, and that hole in the wall I mentioned a second ago? He had the wherewithal and control to actually pin a poster over the damaged sheetrock before the ambulance crew arrived. It was a picture of a dragon, something I always found ironic.

Now, given that he had the ability to quickly manufacture a lie, rehearse the lie with the mother of the baby, feed her lines as she spoke with dispatchers, cover evidence of his crime, and initially tell an almost-convincing story to the paramedics and police officers, how much do you believe that he lost all control due to some rage impulse just moments before?

When it was all said and done, we cut a large section out of the wall and submitted it as evidence so that we could show the actual "baby-sized hole" at trial. We never had to, though. He ended up taking a plea bargain for ninety years in the pen.

Miraculously, the baby healed well and was fine, and let us be thankful she was too young to remember the monster that was her father.

I'm sure that there are actual instances of human beings losing total control, Dr. Jekyll style, and causing all sorts of mayhem and nastiness. In most cases, however, it's been my experience that loss of control due to rage is a weak excuse offered by the bad guy when he knows he's caught.

Why doesn't he "lose it" with his demanding boss who rates his work as substandard, his probation officer who insists on yet another pee test,

the unarmed police investigator accusing him of horrible crimes in an interrogation room, or the judge who sentences him to hard time that will take up a big portion of the rest of his life? Surely, all of those people served to rile him up, stress him out, or otherwise just piss him off, and yet he doesn't lose control with any of those people—just the one with whom he lives, has sex and children, breaks bread, and shares dreams (not to mention, the ones who are significantly smaller and weaker).

Obviously, I'm not a big fan of the blind rage excuse. I am, however, a supporter of the mentally ill, and I consider myself to be a long-time advocate for better treatment by police officers and jail staff for those suffering from mental illness. I believe strongly that we, as a society, don't do enough preventive treatment for people suffering from severe mental illness, and as a result we end up having to feed and house them in our prison systems for years after they commit crimes while ill. At least sixty percent of the men and women in our prison system suffer from a severe mental illness, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, and I have to wonder what kind of positive effect increased preventative care would have on our national crime stats.

I'm not talking about that type of severity when I speak of the people who use blind rage as a crutch when they get caught, though. If they were truly psychotic, that rage would not simply go away as soon as they got their way, and common sense would dictate that it would come bubbling right back as soon as stressors, such as challenges to their authority or loss of freedom, became a reality.

Along these same lines, I can't tell you how many times I've heard the phrase "He's a nice man when he's not drunk." Look, mean drunks are just mean people who mask their jerk-ness most of the time and only lose the façade when alcohol or drugs cause their defenses to drop. I don't drink much, but I tend to be fairly happy when I have a beer or two. In fact, one of my hard and fast rules is that I don't drink when I'm sad. How pitiful is it to cry in

one's beer, after all? Yes, I certainly understand that alcohol is used to numb the pain of . . . whatever . . . but I also know it sucks to be sad and drunk simultaneously.

My point is that I'm an essentially cheerful person. Cheerful people who choose to drink (and not drive) tend to be fairly cheerful when they quaff a few with their friends. Conversely, the "angry drunk" is usually an angry person who only shows the world his or her true nature when the spirits allow them to do so. And, presto, the guy who gets drunk, gets mad, and gets violent has a built-in excuse for his actions: "I lost it because I'd been drinking."

This distinction is important when we talk about prevention and changing patterns of violent behavior. We hear the term "Anger Management Program" when we discuss how best to get a batterer to stop hurting others, but truly that is only one portion of the puzzle. If we can agree that such a person really can control and manage his anger, then we have to acknowledge there is more to it than just sending a guy through a class for six weeks and believing he's a changed man.

There is a high probability that a batterer grew up watching one person in his home batter another. He may have been the victim of such abuse, and so there is a valid argument to make that he simply doesn't know any other way. It is also likely that he hates that part of himself, and there is a portion of him that doesn't like being the bully. This is why I lean heavily in favor of Batterer Intervention Programs.

**ANGER
MANAGEMENT**
IS ONLY
ONE PORTION
OF THE PUZZLE

Batterer Intervention Programs differ from Anger Management Programs in that they strive to focus, not just on the anger, but also on the patterns and cycles leading to abusive situations, the history of abuse within the individual, and effective strategies for having successful relationships. It is a much broader picture than just looking at the anger. The anger must be taken into account, by all means, but it is only one chair at the table.

Because Batterer Intervention Programs addresses so much more, they tend to be much longer programs. Anger Management style classes tend to average around six weeks, whereas Batterer Intervention Programs may be as long as six to nine months.

I find an analogy in this area with a person who earnestly wants to quit using an addictive substance. There is little reason to believe an addicted person will quit simply by saying, "I'm not going to use that substance anymore." The person might be more successful if their friends and family support them in their goals, and then their success could be even more possible if they seek treatment with a physician. To take it to the next level, that person probably needs to explore the emotional reasons for having tried the drug in the first place and the back story behind falling into an addictive lifestyle. Is there depression involved, an obsessive/compulsive disorder, or a series of destructive behaviors that must be dealt with? Maybe there is an issue with that person growing up while watching the adults in his or her life abusing the same substance, and that person never learned that there is life beyond the substance.

Regardless, it is clear that the more inclusive and supportive a substance abuse program, the more successful the addicted person will be in getting and staying sober. I believe the same holds true for abusive domestic partners. The more open they are to exploring the fundamental reasons for their anger, their actions, and their responses to stress, the more successful they can be in their own lives and in the important relationships in their lives.

Batterer Intervention Programs are growing in number across the country. They can be court ordered, or they can be found offered by mental health facilities, through some churches, or through referrals from domestic violence shelters. If you are a loved one of a victim, or even of a batterer, it is important to know the distinction between "controlling" one's anger and learning patterns that will allow a lot of that anger to finally be released in a positive

way. One is simply an excuse for unacceptable behavior, and the other is an actual path toward a life in which peace and quality relationships can become a reality.

I think it's important as we move on to discuss some of the tumultuous fallout that occurs when people are dealing with conflicting emotions and logic. People earnestly trying to help a friend often find themselves the target of unwarranted anger. Her loyalties seem to shift like a hole dug in the sand at high tide, and understanding this phenomenon is critical if you plan to stay involved and ride out the coming storm.

WHY HER LOYALTIES SHIFT, AND WHY SHE'S SO ANGRY WITH YOU

Faithless is he who says farewell as the road darkens.

— J.R.R. TOLKIEN

Years ago when I was on patrol, I routinely drove through the parking lots of nightclubs right around closing time. The presence of a prowling squad car cut down on the fights and reminded exiting patrons that it might be a good idea to hire a taxi to get home instead of having to deal with me and a drunk driving arrest.

One night I was cruising through the lot of a particularly notorious Country Western-themed club. Some of the people waved, a few made pig noises, but in general everyone was well behaved enough that I was heading toward the exit. The music was still thumping loud enough I could actually feel the bass, and a mass exodus of people in all manners of cowboy dress and levels of intoxication were spilling out. The air was a heavy mix of perfumes and body odor, and the chatter melted into a festive buzz.

All of a sudden dozens of people started pointing toward the back of the club, and there was a frantic tension to the gestures. I told the dispatch center that I was heading around to the back of the building to check out a possible fight, and I heard a fellow officer say over the radio that he would start heading my way to back me up.

A crowd had gathered, and as I rounded the corner I saw a man pummeling a woman who was curled up in a ball on the ground, trying desperately to cover her head as he threw a hailstorm of blows and screamed in her ear. He had a knee on her back making it difficult for her to move, and none of the “cowboys” were moving to help.

I yelled, “Police!” as I yanked him off, and he stumbled sideways. He was back at me before I even had my handcuffs out, and I distinctly remember thinking, Where is my backup, and how long will it take him to get here? The attacker was gigantic.

I know storytellers have a tendency to embellish the size of the fish that got away or the level of threat from an enemy, but this guy was the size of an elevator door—honest.

Now, I’m not too big an idiot, and I most definitely wanted to run for it, but the problem was that this enraged bull had just been trying to stomp the brains out of the woman. She was still lying in a fetal position, sobbing and bleeding near the edge of the loose circle of onlookers—who were still onlooking and making no move whatsoever to help me.

So I didn’t have much of a choice about staying in the battle. My advantages were that I was sober and faster. His were that he was bigger than a Clydesdale, angry as a rodeo bull, and evidently feeling no pain. I really wanted the backup officer to hurry up.

He came at me so fast I didn’t even have time to grab for my pepper spray or baton, and for the next minute or so he and I shoved and growled at each other all over the parking lot. I remember flying over a car hood at one point.

Finally, I got him in an off balance moment, and I was able to send him rolling sideways. This worked great because he hit his head on a car fender as he went down. It rang his bell just enough that his fight was over, and I moved with all speed to handcuff him. Right about the time I got the second cuff on his wrist (which was, by the way, as thick as a softball), the woman who had

been crying in her little puddle of blood climbed onto my back and began clawing me from front to back.

At this point, the whole scene went from being a crowd-enthraling gutter fight to slapstick as I flailed around the same parking lot, trying valiantly to remove the shrieking harpy from my flanks, all the while doing my best to keep from actually hurting her.

My partner arrived about the time I was finally able to remove her, and within seconds she slipped into a sleepy calm. She went from iron maiden to cuddly in twenty seconds, and it didn't take much longer than that for the crowd to disperse. The show was over.

Loyalty is a quirky thing. It keeps men from running away in combat, makes us feel defensive when someone insults our family or heritage, and occasionally makes us cruel toward people who are trying to help us.

In this woman's case, I'll never know if her loyalty stemmed from fear of this man trying to kill her, love of the same man, hatred of police, or loathing of the person taking her man's freedom away. She fought like a lioness for a man who had just beaten and mocked her, and though that story will always be a vivid one for me, the issue of misplaced loyalty is one that has come up thousands of times in my cases over the years.

In the chapter on substance abuse I make the argument that the use and abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs is directly tied into violent relationships—either as a way for oppressed individuals to cope with the misery of their lives, as a tool used by the controlling personality to manipulate his or her victim, or as a chemical catalyst for touching off angry, violent episodes in situations that might otherwise have remained peaceful.

There is another form of addiction in these relationships, and that is the addiction to the relationship itself. We discussed earlier how it feels good to fall in love or to make up and renew a love—so good, in fact, that some people unconsciously sabotage their otherwise positive relationships just so they can

experience that wonderful vibe again. Actual chemical reactions occur within the brain when humans feel passion, and anyone who has ever felt that knows that it is as alluring as crack cocaine must be to a junky.

So, too, is the sense that being with someone, even someone who treats you like dung, is preferable to some people than the loathing they feel for loneliness. I think we as a culture would do well to teach our children that it is okay to be alone and even lonely every once in a while, that it won't kill you, that it transitions naturally, and that we grow stronger and more introspective because of those periods. A natural forest fire is a little sad and a lot destructive, but it is also an integral part of how natural habitats renew and grow stronger. During lonely times, I would recommend listening to a lot of music, reading a good book, taking on a new activity in something outside your normal comfort zone, and accepting that this phase will pass. I would not, however, recommend going back to a person who routinely tortured you just so you don't have to feel the pangs of loneliness.

When considering the fact that many victims of domestic violence repeat the cycle of violence six, seven, eight times or more before they finally make a dramatic change and remove themselves from the equation for good, it is fair to point out that people who go into a rehabilitation setting to combat addictions to alcohol, cocaine, methamphetamine, and prescription pain killers often must go through the rehabilitation process just as many times. Statistically, it may take half a dozen tries to leave your lover—six times to kick crack addiction. Hmm.

Let's throw one more analogy into this mix. Lower-level prostitutes generally use a "pimp," a street thug of some level of violent reputation, to act as a security agent on their behalf. This may or may not be voluntary, but one thing that remains constant is that the woman working for the money must share a significant portion of her profits with this bodyguard. Generally, this business relationship is marked with violence, especially if the pimp doesn't feel he

has gotten his full share. Yet we know that most prostitutes won't leave the man to go work with another, if for no better reason than the known qualities of the current man are psychologically more acceptable than the unknowns of a potential new "boss."

I think the same holds true for a number of women involved in a domestic violence situation. Remember that she has been belittled and emotionally battered along with her physical injuries for a long time. Yes, he beats her, but she can recognize the developing tension for what it will become and either take steps to calm him down (such as through sex) or at least be somewhat prepared when the hitting starts.

If, however, you have come to believe that you are as worthless and unappealing as he's told you, how is it possible for you to conceive that another man would want you or treat you well? Given that, I can imagine a lot of scenarios in which a battered woman believes so deeply that she can never "do better," accepting her lot in life as simply a hardship to bear along with low pay, sick children, or menstrual pain.

People latch onto awful causes, and swear fealty to cruel and arrogant leaders, for reasons so odd we fail to fully understand their logic. Look at the followers of Jim Jones, David Koresch, or any dictator bent on ethnic cleansing throughout history, and you get a feel for how powerful and intense an ill-gotten loyalty can truly be.

I don't pretend to understand fully why someone would be loyal to a person who routinely terrorizes her, other than to point out that loyalty, in its purest form, is one of the more redeeming human qualities. Sadly, this loyalty is manipulated by cruel, controlling people who thrive on the fact that there are individuals in his world who love, hate, revere, and dread them so much that they will stand by them no matter what. The only answer to that is a consistent, firm message that blindly following madness is madness, and then follow that message by offering paths to a different way.

CHEMICAL
REACTIONS
OCCUR WITHIN
THE BRAIN
WHEN HUMANS
FEEL PASSION

What happens, though, when those being abused and manipulated feel all hope is lost? What if they feel that no one and no agency can help? Self-destruction is one answer, but lashing out to destroy the source of all that despair is another. In the next chapter, we examine the all-too-common tragedy of when victims give up all hope and ultimately kill their abuser.

WHEN VICTIMS KILL

Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out:

— JAMES WEBSTER

The police had been called to Ellen's house three times before the night my team and I first got involved in her life. All three previous instances involved hints that Robert, her husband of twelve years, had victimized her in some fashion, but Ellen never would cooperate with the responding officers or make a disclosure about what he'd done to her.

It is fair to say that Ellen had opportunities to get help and, whether because of fear, loyalty, dread of losing Robert's significant finances, or just shortsightedness, Ellen never took advantage of those offers.

One night Ellen shot him while he slept. Then Ellen recruited her brother-in-law to help her dispose of the body, promising Robert's little brother half of Robert's assets once the dust settled. Robert's little brother was a meth-head and far more loyal to his addiction than Robert.

Ellen and Little Brother hauled Robert downstairs and wrapped him in plastic bubble wrap and blankets so that when they were done Robert looked like a great big burrito. And then, for whatever reason, Little Brother just left him down there in the garage.

Several days later, Ellen started to figure out that Little Brother was out of his mind, and I think it started to dawn on her that he might just get it into

his head to get rid of her so that he wouldn't have to share a single penny. This must have irritated Ellen greatly because it was her original plan, after all. One might assume that Ellen would take the initiative to rid herself of Little Brother as well, but that would still leave her with the body disposal problem. The problem was growing steadily more cumbersome because Little Brother's girlfriend moved into the house and brought her toddler daughter. Simultaneously, Robert was starting to decay and melt inside the burrito, and no amount of deodorizer, baking soda, and lye was going to keep covering the rancid smell seeping out into the quiet little neighborhood.

Ellen had to take drastic action, so four days after she killed her husband she walked into a police station in a completely different city and made a sobbing confession about how she'd had to kill her husband before he killed her.

Ellen also told the officers that Little Brother was heavily armed, extremely paranoid, and decidedly unwilling to be taken to jail. She didn't mention the toddler or the girlfriend, but I'm sure she had other things on her mind.

Given the nature of the crime, the fact that the house was situated in a small, peaceful neighborhood, and the knowledge that Little Brother would probably not come out of the house willingly, a decision was made early on that the Emergency Response Team (also known as SWAT) would make entry into the house in the middle of the night with the hope that Little Brother would be asleep and could be taken quickly by surprise.

I was a medic for the team in those days. My job was to be as close to the team as possible and to render emergency treatment in the event that an officer went down under fire until the scene could be made safe for ambulance paramedics to come in and take over.

That night Little Brother, who was wide awake on a meth binge, started shooting as soon as the first man entered the house, despite the fact that his girlfriend and her child were in the home. A round went through the side of

the house and struck the home across the street hard enough that the family inside heard the thump and felt the vibration.

The lead men who went into Ellen's house that night deserve incredible praise because instead of spraying the retreating bastard with automatic rifle fire they realized immediately that two innocent people were inside as well. They could have justifiably opened up on him right through the sheetrock walls, but they hunkered down, got the woman and her child out, and then talked Little Brother into surrendering.

And then we made the grizzly discovery of wrapped-up-Robert in the garage. It was destined to be a long night.

In every state of this country, allowances are made in the laws that permit individuals to defend themselves if they are under attack or to defend someone else if he or she is under attack. This is what allows police officers to intervene on a stranger's behalf if that person is in danger, and it is what allows, say, a woman who is being throttled by her boyfriend to crack him in the head with a baseball bat to get him to remove his hands from her throat before he kills her.

What is not allowed is outright murder or, in most cases, turning defensive actions into offensive ones. For example, let's say you are walking through a park at night when a man grabs you and tries to pull you into some bushes. In response, you might pull out a canister of pepper spray, a pistol, or a knife with which to defend yourself. For the purposes of discussion, let's say you're the one with the pepper spray, and you hose this bad fish down with the whole can. He's instantly blinded, and he falls to the ground writhing in agony.

At this point you're faced with three choices. Choice one is to run and call 911. Choice two is to try to take him into custody as a citizen's arrest. Choice three is to beat the snot out of the guy for all the pain he has brought on the world, exacting justice and even ensuring, in a limited way, domestic tranquility once you're done with him.

For the record, choice one is your best bet. Unless you are trained and ready to actually take somebody into custody, you're much safer to just get away from the sobbing fellow and call for police as soon as you're at a safe distance. Choice three (the beating him option) would certainly be the most gratifying, but at that point you will have crossed the line from simply defending yourself to becoming an offender.

You need to understand that vigilante justice is viewed dimly by the criminal justice system, and each additional kick or whack with a stick exposes you to increased criminal and civil liability. In other words, you could get arrested, or the guy could turn around and sue you later.

We've all seen videos of cops abusing a guy who just led them on a high-speed pursuit or resisted arrest. The adrenaline is pumping, and it is easy to get into the mindset of demanding a little street justice before the guy is carted off to jail. It's wrong, of course, and those beatings are a stain on my profession that I resent greatly, but I certainly know that feeling of wanting to let the thug know he should never, ever do what he just did again.

Those videos play again and again on television and the Internet, and they occasionally lead to a community outcry focusing on police brutality, calling for overhauls of the police department, firings of the officers involved, and additional training. These measures might well be valid and healthy for a department if the video footage demonstrates a department-wide sensibility

and not just the actions of a rogue cop who went too far. It is just as likely that such video presents the cop's actions out of context and don't include all of the suspect's actions leading up to the arrest and struggle. I'm just asking that everyone—media, public, police investigators, and judges—present the entire story before passing judgment.

Regardless, the scrutiny of the media and the public serve to remind us that vigilante justice is unacceptable. Just as it is true

**VIGILANTE
JUSTICE**
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SYSTEM

that police officers are allowed to defend themselves, victims of abuse must be afforded the same consideration. It is also true that just as police officers are expected to uphold the law during even the most trying of moments, citizens must be expected to do the same.

In other words, unless you are defending yourself in a moment of violence, you don't get to act as judge and jury toward another human being, even if that person is wicked and will probably be dangerous toward you in the future. As tempting as it might be to plunge the wooden stake into the heart of a vicious monster, if we as a culture value the sanctity of fair investigation and due process, we cannot tolerate anything less.

The rest of Ellen's story was fairly anticlimactic. Ellen and Little Brother both picked up guilty verdicts, and both are slated to spend the majority of the rest of their lives behind bars. It didn't need to be that way, of course. Ellen was certainly frightened of Robert, and if she had taken any of the several opportunities offered to her to accept help she might have actually found her freedom and not had to stoop to murder to do so.

Some may frown at me for saying so, but I don't have a lot of sympathy for Ellen. Part of her motivation was greed, plain and simple. She lived in a city in which the police really did care and would have gotten her out of harm's way and into a safer environment if she had worked with us even a little bit. Instead, her solution was to kill a man while he slept, and then collaborate with his own brother to rid her house of his rotting corpse and split his money. Robert was a violent menace, I imagine, but she was a greedy murderer.

There have been other women, though, who have felt so trapped, so alienated by friends and family, and so let down by the police and court systems that they have honestly come to the conclusion that killing their sleeping or defenseless spouse is akin to self-defense. I can't help but wonder if they were, in fact, let

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down by the local police agency and, if so, could one proactive, supportive cop have made the difference?

The only honest answer to that question is—maybe. And if the answer is maybe, then we are ethically bound to do everything in our power to help victims of violence in the home have better choices for their life than the taking of another's. Ellen was flat wrong in what she did, but if a woman like Ellen asks for help and doesn't get it, maybe she'll come up with the idea that no other choice exists. If her friends tell her to leave him without offering a couch or an alternative place for her to go; if the police tell her there's nothing they can do; if the shelters are full and a social worker doesn't take the time to help her come up with a Plan B; if the judge won't give her an order of protection because she got stage fright at the hearing and couldn't tell him why she was afraid of this man; and if the suspect himself keeps haunting and torturing her and telling her again and again that he might just kill her next time, maybe one night she'll just decide there is never going to be a next time. If that happens, we all have to bear some of the responsibility for the resultant course of events.

STALKING IS PREVALENT—AND PREVENTABLE

To eat bread without hope is still slowly to starve to death.

— PEARL S. BUCK

I once had a bounty put on my head—scariest thing that ever happened to me. It all started with a woman I'd seen driving a little blue car in rush-hour traffic like she was a monkey on tequila and cocaine. She was moving about sixty in a twenty-five miles per hour zone, and her right tires popped up on the curb as she took a turn before veering headlong into oncoming traffic. I fully expected her to be intoxicated, but once I finally got her stopped I realized she was completely sober and utterly terrified.

Her name was Sapphire. She was pretty, with caramel-colored hair worn past the shoulder. Both of her eyes were blackening, and she'd had an earring yanked out. She wouldn't show me, but I kept catching glimpses of a knocked-out tooth. She had bruises developing on her arms from where she'd been grabbed, and it was obvious someone had beaten her.

Not that she'd tell me who. The closest Sapphire would come was to say that it was someone we (the police) knew, and that he was too powerful for a patrolman to handle.

Now at this point two things were driving me inexorably toward a man by the street name of Oleander. First, was my innate distaste for anyone who

would have abused this woman in such a way, and second, Sapphire had insulted my pride by indicating her abuser was too powerful and connected for the likes of me.

I was able to put a few facts together and figure out the identity of Oleander, a fellow I learned had been living with and abusing this woman for several years. I'd let her go so that I could hunt him down, and at that point there was nothing in this world that was going to stop me from finding him. She said she planned to leave our city and drive nonstop to her sister's house in Dallas. Considering the fact that she refused to cooperate in his prosecution and would not avail herself of any social services, such as a shelter or medical care, I figured it was as good a plan as any.

So Sapphire took off to Dallas, and I took off in search of Oleander. It took me a day to put it all together and learn his address. Saints be praised, Oleander had a warrant. I could have danced I was so happy because, even though I knew there was no way I'd ever get a good arrest or prosecution on the beating he gave his ex-girlfriend, I at least had a bench warrant giving me a reason to take him in. Shoot, Elliot Ness arrested Al Capone for tax evasion instead of murder, and I figured something was better than nothing.

My partner and I arrived at Oleander's apartment late in the evening the next day. This particular apartment complex was well known to us for crack cocaine, prostitution, and violence. Hundreds of wary eyes that could be either predator or prey watched as the two of us crossed the lot and announced our presence at Oleander's home. I wasn't sure they'd hear us over the thumping music coming from inside, but I was sure they'd seen us coming long before we ever knocked.

Oleander opened the door like he was Hugh Hefner welcoming us into his Playboy mansion. He was smiling with more teeth than I think I've ever seen inside a human's mouth—teeth so white that actors in toothpaste commercials would be jealous. He was a hefty fellow, grown physically soft in his leader-

ship, but my attention was drawn to the gold rings he wore on every finger, including both thumbs. His head was shaved, he sported a rakish mustache and goatee, and it would be fair to say he was a handsome man.

“Good evening, officers,” he said in a baritone voice easily mistaken for Barry White’s. “How can we help you?”

“You could step outside and put your hands behind your back,” I replied with equal charm.

The smile vanished, and the profanity began. There were six or seven other men in the apartment, four women, and one yellow and white boa constrictor sleeping on the shoulders of the woman nearest the door. Everyone began yelling. Oleander expressed confidence that I was serving the warrant because of his skin color. He told me he’d sue the department for racial discrimination, and that he’d have my badge because I was a racist pig. He informed his friends that I’d done things with my mother I can assure you I never did.

That was when I made what was almost a fatal mistake. I told Oleander exactly why I was there.

“I’m not arresting you because you’re black,” I said. “I’m arresting you because you like to beat women.”

It was about that time when I glanced past his fleshy shoulder and noticed Sapphire, who was decidedly not safe in her sister’s house in Dallas. I maintained stoic discipline, with my best poker face, because what I really wanted to do was blurt out, “What in heaven’s name are you doing here?”

Sapphire’s eyelids opened wide in stunned amazement, though she quickly resumed a bored expression when she realized others would see her reaction. I think she was surprised that anyone had shown up to confront Oleander, and, though I could be completely wrong, I got the sense she was a bit grateful. I’m also confident she thought I was quite stupid.

Suddenly, everyone was silent, and all heads slowly rotated toward Sapphire sitting on a brown velvet couch under a velvet picture of a matador.

"YOU'RE DEAD,"
HE WHISPERED.
"YOU'RE A
DEAD COP."

Her bruising was more pronounced after a day of swelling, and it was apparent that I was talking about her.

Oleander and his friends could have put up one heck of a fight had he chosen to that day. That, of course, would have brought a whole lot more attention to his operation. He came willingly, if not quietly, cursing me all the way. The yelling he did for the benefit of his entourage and customers; that I didn't mind so much. The whisper he spoke into my ear as I loaded him into the squad car, however, was enough to put a serious chill down my spine.

"You're dead," he whispered. "You're a dead cop."

He and I both knew that it was a moment just between the two of us. I knew he meant it, and for the first time in my career I wondered if I'd bitten off more than I could handle. The reptilian menace of his quietly spoken promise made his threat more menacing than any I'd experienced before then.

A couple of days later Sapphire sought me out at the station. I imagine it was the first time in her life that she'd ever willingly gone there, but she came up to the front desk and asked for me by name. She was wearing a sequined mini skirt with boots over her calves and a North Carolina sweatshirt.

She told me she was leaving town, for real this time, and she said she'd decided to tell me something important because she'd guessed I'd arrested Oleander in her honor. She told me Oleander had paid a man five hundred dollars to murder me. The guy he hired went by the street name of Haunch. She was pretty sure he'd killed before, and yes, Oleander had already paid him. No, she didn't know where Haunch might be found, but she knew he drove a white Cadillac with a black ragtop.

I asked Sapphire if she'd speak to my boss about the matter. She said sure, and though I just about ran to his desk, Sapphire was long gone by the time I brought him back. I never saw her again.

The next two weeks of my life were stunningly stressful. Some of my colleagues knew, but I chose not to tell my wife as she and the boys were slated to head out of town to visit family. I wasn't sure if Haunch would actually carry out the plan, and every moment of the day included a nagging sense of feeling watched or shadowed. It wasn't true, but it felt that way.

I won't claim that I know what it feels like to be a stalking victim. I was well armed and trained, and I had the backing of all my brother officers. An actual victim in a stalking situation has the support and protection of an entire police force, but she generally has fewer tools than I at her disposal and no reason to believe the obsessed person who has targeted her will ever go away.

That having been said, I feel like I have a greater empathy for what Sapphire and others like her experience when they find they will be hunted down and imprisoned each and every time they try to leave a violent situation. I know the prickles on the back of the neck associated with wondering if that sound of crunching leaves on the front lawn might be a hunter coming for me, or if that fellow following me through the grocery store or about town as I drive to work is one of his friends keeping an eye on me.

In truth, my deal was only a few days old when I happened to spot Haunch washing his Cadillac at a local car wash. Haunch had the tiniest ears I think I've ever seen on a grown man, and why I noticed that in those moments I'll never know. Frankly, I don't remember much else about him except that he seemed to truly love his car. I know that my temples were throbbing hard enough to cause distraction, and I wasn't sure I had the strength to get out of my car.

I figure he was armed, although I never knew for sure. He smiled at me when I got out of my squad car, and he took notice when I waved off another officer coming to back me. This was between him and me, if it was going to happen. I felt like it had to be that way if the thing was going to end, and if I was going to maintain any sort of credibility on the streets. I didn't want

anything to happen, but it needed to end right then and there, with me coming up on him instead of the other way around—and far away from my own home and family.

Nothing happened. Haunch shrugged and stated flatly, “Oleander’s crazy. We’re cool.”

I believe I just sort of stood there. I wish I could be more descriptive, but I remember thinking that he was going to need to rinse the suds off his car soon. I know I asked if he’d make an official statement about the matter. He chuckled. I willed myself to not thank him knowing, even in my fuzzy state brought on by the intoxication of relief, that to thank this man for not taking money to kill me would destroy any street “cred” I might have built that day. I’m pretty sure I said something like, “See you around,” to which he replied, “Yep.” He went back to spraying the wash wand, and I drove away, rudderless as to what to do then, but elated to be alive and feeling free.

The head of the local drug task force later confirmed that any contract on me had generated unwanted attention for Oleander and his crew. Undercover narcotics officers successfully spread the word that Oleander’s shenanigans were unacceptable, and confidential informants gathered credible information that the situation had “resolved.” It was good to know, but the threat was something I continued to wonder about for many months to come.

It’s an awful feeling to be pursued and monitored, not knowing when something horrible is going to happen. Perhaps you’ve felt it walking through a dark parking lot or when a patrol car slips in behind you and follows you for blocks. Maybe you remember what it felt like to have someone promise to beat you up after school or to see a shark fin flash up out of murky water between you and a shoreline one hundred yards away. Now, expand those moments to encompass every minute of the day, waking or asleep, and I think we can begin to understand the true scope of the detrimental misery of this situation.

When I refer to stalking, I am using a generic term to describe that relationship of predator and prey that might only culminate in the prey turning around and screaming, “Leave me alone.” It could, however, result in the pursuit actually ending with a kill, and it must be taken seriously.

Generally, this dance starts with phone calls and text messages from the pursuer to the targeted woman—lots of them, hundreds of them. Commonly, these early communications will establish some sort of rhythm. Some of the messages or phone calls will be cruel and degrading; some will beg for forgiveness and include promises. Most will include clues as to the level of their jealousy-based delusions, such as referring to her as a whore.

The contacts tend to increase, either by him going to her place of employment or coming to her house at all hours of the night. Some system of surveillance will go into effect, either with the hunter doing his own investigative work or recruiting others to spy on her as well.

Short or long term, there is always some encounter. The encounter is never pretty or romantic. In Hollywood movies, value is placed on the guy who never gives up on the girl of his dreams, and he is rewarded with the bride and the enduring love of her family when he interrupts her wedding right before the “I do’s” and whisks her away to be his own. In real life, this is just icky.

The ugly encounters occur in nightclubs when he “catches” her dancing with another man, in grocery stores as she is buying cosmetics, in her driveway when she gets home from work an hour later than she used to when they were dating, or right there at her work cubicle because she didn’t call to thank him for the flowers sent as an apology for accosting her in her work parking lot the day before.

Eventually some violent act comes in the form of damaged property. Maybe the houseplants she keeps on her front porch are uprooted, or her car is

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scratched from stem to stern. In some cases a pet is killed, or a brick is thrown through a window. In every case, a message is being sent, and it is an ominous one. The damaged car, the busted window, and the destroyed living things are all symbolic of a mounting hatred and a building moment of eruption. They are meant to show just how close the stalker has been and how willing he is to carry out the next logical act—unless you do what he wants.

Residential burglaries are part of the equation as well. Again, this is done to demonstrate just how close a stalker can get to the victim, showing her just how much control he still has over her life. Perhaps he'll put a picture of the two of them from happier times on top of a pillow, or he'll turn some little memento he once gave her upside down. Items he considers to be his are stolen, and, in many cases, the thing he steals has no monetary value whatsoever.

Detective Mike Proctor, a retired criminal investigator with over three decades in the trenches, wrote an excellent book called *How to Stop a Stalker*. He makes an important point in a chapter on the mindset and psychology of stalkers: that these obsessed people will commit burglaries for the sole purpose of collecting trophies, and the number one item collected is underwear—clean or dirty. Imagine, what more intimate item could he take as a prize to remind him of what he once had, to fuel him to pursue the “thing” he must have again, and to create an atmosphere of apprehension and need in the mind of the targeted person, perhaps in the delusion that she will come running back to his safe arms so he can play the hero once more?

The strategy in this type of case is to expose and investigate each and every misdeed. Remember that a violently controlling personality thrives in secrecy. Knowing this helps greatly when working to thwart the unwanted pursuits of an ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend or spouse. These types frequently discontinue their pursuit once their actions are revealed to others, especially when those others include the police. It's hard to work up the courage to puncture your ex-girlfriend's car tires when you know a police

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officer is aware of your other obnoxious acts against her, and it gets damned inconvenient and painful getting arrested each and every time you send her a text message in violation of a protection order.

This means, of course, that when a person is being followed, spied on, harassed, alarmed, and annoyed by someone she has clearly asked to leave her alone, incorporating the assistance of friends, employers, family, the police, and the court system isn't asking them to be tattletales. It's taking control of your own destiny and dealing with a problem head on.

The typical response I hear to this strategy is, "He'll be really mad if he knows I talked to the police." My answer is, "He seems pretty mad already." And, of course, we follow this by pointing out that she will be given a lot of police protection, legal advice, shelter, financial assistance, and relocation services if necessary.

In reality, most stalkers finally get it when they are confronted with the police or with court orders to leave the other person alone. A few don't, and those are the cases where I believe we can be most helpful. But it all comes down to the person at risk having enough faith in our system that she will start throwing bright sunlight on the shadowy, sneaky tactics of a stalker and let us help her.

If you or a loved one are being victimized in this manner, there are certain things to do that will be effective and certain things one might do that will eventually make one's life much harder than it needs to be. For simplicity sake, I've broken the next section down into "Things To Do" and "Things Not To Do."

Things To Do

- Tell the obsessed person one time, preferably in writing, email, or in front of a witness, that you want him or her to leave you alone, and that you do not want any more contact with him. Keep a copy of the letter or email,

or document the date and time you made this clear verbally, including the witness who saw you say this. This, of course, is a bit more difficult when you share a child or major investment with that person, but there is no good reason to continue dialogue with him unless it is with a third party present or unless information about the child or property is relayed through neutral messengers or attorneys.

- Tell someone that you think you're being stalked, even if you don't have any direct evidence. In Gaven de Becker's book, *The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us From Violence*, he speaks convincingly about listening to your intuition. I believe in intuition, and I am convinced that the people who actually listen to theirs and take action to support their little internal voice live longer, healthier lives than people who choose to ignore it.
- Keep a log of everything you find suspicious, alarming, annoying, or frightening. If he drives by your house yelling profanities and knocks over your trash can, jot a sentence or two in a spiral notebook, along with the date, time, and any witnesses who may have seen him do it. Logs come in handy when pursuing warrants and when filing lawsuits later on.
- Save all text messages, emails, social media, and phone messages. Text messages can be photographed or downloaded onto a computer. Facebook messages can be printed or subpoenaed.
- Buy or borrow a little recording device, and turn it on any time he calls. Recordings of him making threats, calling you names, and promising that you will never be rid of him are the evidentiary equivalent of chocolate pie for me—they both make my day. In some cases, you may even be able to initiate the call in the hopes of gathering incriminating statements, but this falls more into the area of entrapment and possible wiretapping issues. In my jurisdiction it's fine; in yours it may not be. Check with your local police department or prosecutor's office before you go in that direction, but recorded threats and harassment are truly wondrous things.

- Talk to your neighbors and ask them to be on the lookout for anything suspicious, especially if they could recognize your ex. You'd be surprised how neighborly folks can be at a time like this.
- Keep your phone charged and handy at all times. It could well turn out to be your lifeline in an emergency.
- Take a different route home every day, and vary your schedule. Don't be predictable.
- Trade cars with a friend if at all possible.
- Put serious thought into how you would defend yourself if you are attacked or if your home is entered. The chapter on self-defense goes into greater depth on this topic.
- Have a safety plan in case an emergency, such as a home invasion or an assault, takes place. You don't want to have to think of long-term plans in the moment of crisis, and having a few items and documents lined up and ready to go on a moment's notice can save a lot of effort and aggravation later. The chapter on "Leaving and Living Safely" is coming up.
- Take your computer to a professional technician and have them look for "spyware" and any tracking devices that might have been placed on your machine. Software is readily available that can be quickly installed onto your computer, either by hand or through unwanted emails with nasty little viruses designed to root into your system and keep a close, close eye on everything you do on your computer. Once the spyware is found, have it removed. The one exception to this is when such spyware could be used as evidence in a criminal case. If that is even a remote possibility, discuss options with your police investigator prior to having your computer examined. The investigator may want

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to have the information extracted “forensically,” meaning that a trained expert can collect information from your computer that can later be used as evidence in a trial.

- Alert your police investigator that your computer technician found such spyware, especially if your stalker seems to know things about you that he couldn’t possibly know unless he was monitoring your online activity.
- Include the police if you have even an inkling that you’re in danger. I know it feels bad to involve the police, but you didn’t start this. It’s part of taking care of yourself and the problem.
- Tell your employer. More and more employers are recognizing that an assault on one of their employees is a problem for the whole company. They want to protect valuable employees, and many will go out of their way to provide support, services, and encouragement in bleak times.
- Seek an order of protection. We spend a whole chapter on this topic later, but suffice it to say that this simple court order can save you a lot of headaches and nightmares in the weeks and months to come.
- Strongly consider pursuing prosecution if you have been stalked and/or assaulted. An obsessive personality may eventually give up on you, but he or she tends to go out and find a new victim. Participation in prosecution may help him to learn a better way of dealing with other people. If a stalking personality truly learns that lesson, albeit in the harsh school of arrest and the criminal justice system, your actions may have saved the next woman in his life from having to endure what you did.

Things Not To Do

- Do not return text messages, emails, phone calls, or letters after you have once, and only once, announced to the person that you wish to have no

further contact with him. Ignore insults, threats, and “baits” to argue. This is just a stalker’s invitation to come out and play.

- Do not keep expensive gifts. I’m sure it is a lovely bracelet, or they are pretty flowers. They are also the first items his attorney will bring up in a trial later to show what a “greedy, manipulative money-grubber” you are. Give the gifts to a third party, and ask them to return them the same day you receive them. It’s just not worth it.
- Do not agree to “one last talk.” This is a sucker’s bet, and you’ll lose. Keep reminding yourself of the cruelty, violence, rumor-spreading, and cheating you’ve already endured, and this will help steel you against whiney, sobbing pleas for one more chance.
- Do not be manipulated by threats of suicide if you won’t return. If he’s really suicidal, you can call the police so they can get him to a hospital. You don’t need to be involved any more than that.
- Do not decide to arbitrarily delete text messages, emails, or phone messages just because you don’t consider them to be of any evidentiary value. Let someone who deals with evidence for a living help you make that decision.
- Do not remain silent when receiving a barrage of harassment and threats from him, his friends, or his family. If they want to make it Us-versus-Them, I assure you we have more guys on our side. You don’t have to do this alone.
- Do not lie to yourself that everything is okay. I don’t want you walking around paranoid all the time, but you need to be wary. There is a difference, and you need to learn it if you want to be optimally safe and emotionally stable at the same time.

REMIN
YOURSELF OF
THE **CRUELTY,**
VIOLENCE,
RUMOR-SPREADING,
AND **CHEATING**
YOU’VE ALREADY
ENDURED

Moving?

Should you move? He knows where you live, and if you are convinced that he isn't going to leave you alone, or that you will never feel safe in your home, moving may be the lesser of two evils. It's expensive, time consuming, stressful, and a big old hassle, but if it means you will be safer and/or feel safer, it may be the right choice.

If you choose this route, I recommend a few simple steps to keep you safer and hopefully keep him from finding you again.

First and foremost, don't put your physical address on ANYTHING. Go get a post office box, preferably one that appears like a real address. For example, try to rent a box that uses an address like 1234 Main Street, instead of P.O. Box 9876. Use that address for bills, information sheets for your children's school admission, bank statements, letters from friends and family, petitions for protection or restraining orders, and applications to win a drawing for a new car or the trip of a lifetime. Do not give out your new home address to anybody, and instruct your children to do the same. Okay, maybe your mother and your best friend, but only if you are confident they understand the importance of this secret.

And yes, use this address when you are giving information to the police. Unfortunately, the U.S. Freedom of Information Act obligates government agencies to share certain information from their computer systems upon being requested. This means that a stalking suspect could get his hands on your new address if your police agency honors his written request to the extent that they give out this type of information. Some agencies do this, and some don't. I believe it's better to be on the safe side and give your mailing address instead of your physical home address when this is an option.

As noted above, it's important to take a different route home every night so that you aren't followed from work or school to your house. This becomes even more critical when you've moved in an attempt to get away from someone.

How sad will it be if he figures out where you've gone after all the hassle of moving in the first place?

Don't use the Internet at your home with your own identifiers. Pick new user names and passwords, and never type in any personal information, such as address, phone, places of employment, or where your children go to school. There are people in this world who make a living by finding people through their Internet use, and it would be a shame if your stalker found you because you ordered a book online and had it delivered to your house or started "chatting" with friends on a social website. There are several software options available that allow one person to know what another person is putting onto her computer. If he's ever had access to your computer, he may know the moment you've moved your Internet Service Provider (ISP) the instant you log on and be able to find your new physical address armed with that information.

Finally, remain vigilant. Put yourself in the mindset of a wild cat. Think of yourself as strong and cunning, but know that there is another person who is even stronger and endowed with a warped awareness. He may be relentless, but you must will yourself to live and persevere anyway. You can get a stalker out of your life. It takes time, diligence, and a willingness to let others help you. When you've faced that reality, you're halfway to a newfound freedom and a better life.

The Oleander "contract" story has an interesting ending. Many years after that first encounter with Oleander, I found myself investigating his death. Indeed, this man I'd built up as so menacing in my imagination lay there in a rather undignified posture on his kitchen floor, bereft of clothing, and dead from AIDS and renal failure. It was just a pitiful and ironic punctuation to an otherwise fateful saga that impacted *me* much more than him. It's been many more years since that night I sent his body off with the coroner, and as I write this I realize none of those old feelings of loathing and dread I once felt remain within me. I suppose that's the form my forgiveness has taken for that man. I'd wish as much for anyone who has ever felt like prey.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE FACTORS IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Whipping and abuse are like laudanum:

You have to double the dose as sensibilities decline.

— HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Valerie was unusual in that she'd never been one to drink heavily or use marijuana at parties. She didn't "gateway" from tobacco to pot, and she didn't test limits with binge drinking before trying crystal meth. Valerie hopped right in the deep end with her new boyfriend, who introduced her to crack cocaine on the promise that he wasn't giving her the kind that people get hooked on.

Valerie went from an A/B student, who thought a career in nursing or child care might be nice, to a cocaine addict who would go anywhere or steal anything in order to get the next pipe hit.

According to her mother, it took four months.

The lying boyfriend was also abusive. He struck her with closed fists if she tried to hide crack cocaine "rocks" from him and threatened to beat her if she held out on any money she might scrape up through panhandling or pawn store exchanges. She'd not yet fallen into prostitution, but it was likely just around the bend by the time I caught her case. The boyfriend had beaten her so badly that she'd lost a kidney and suffered permanent nerve damage to her jaw.

Valerie hated me from the moment I walked into the emergency room. I was the cops; I was the enemy.

“Nothing happened,” she told me. “I fell. No, my boyfriend didn’t hit me. He loves me.”

Her one and only question to me: “When can I leave?”

Valerie was afraid. She was afraid of her cruel boyfriend. She was afraid she wouldn’t get her next hit off her crack pipe. She was afraid of how far she’d fallen when she took a moment to reflect. What she hadn’t quite gotten was that a fear-driven life is no life at all.

Valerie was unique in that her descent into dysfunction occurred so quickly and with the abuse of only one substance. Many times, though, we see what Dr. Frederick Woolverton calls “Substance Shuffle” in his book, *Unhooked: How to Quit Anything* (pgs. 143-154). Dr. Woolverton and his colleague, Susan Shapiro, point out that often someone who exhibits addictive behavior switches from one addiction to another in a misguided belief that they’re much better off. Some addicts see switching from heroin to prescription pills, from methamphetamine to Adderall, or from “cutting” to full-body tattooing or multiple piercings as a panacea when the switch is really just a band-aid fix that hasn’t fixed anything. Yet another form of Substance Shuffle comes in the form of exchanging one abuse partner with another. It’s all terribly destructive and often terribly predictable.

Let’s begin with the premise that the use of an intoxicating substance—whether legal, such as alcohol, or illegal, such as marijuana or crack cocaine—is not in and of itself evil. People do stupid things when they are curious, frustrated, depressed, or anxious, and more effort should be made in this country to prevent use and provide rehabilitation for those suffering from addiction. My experience is that abuse of drugs is the shortest path to destruction for any individual, short of outright suicide, and that prevention and rehab programs save lives, help avert communities from deteriorating, and result in fewer inmates in our prison systems.

Putting aside the tragedy of addiction for individuals, the issue is not about the substances themselves but the black market associated with contraband. Therein lies one of the most significant challenges for modern law enforcement. That market brings with it violence, good people being caught in crossfires, organized criminal activity, and the smutty tendrils of other associated crimes that destroy communities. Black markets turn a Mayberry into a Gangland, and they must not be tolerated by anyone who wants to live in comfort and peace.

Substance abuse plays a part in intimate partner violence in a myriad of ways. For example, I have rarely gone into a home where violence has taken place when alcohol or other drugs were not used. It is so ingrained as part of the violence cycle that it is actually surprising when no drugs are involved.

I've heard it said that people on marijuana are more mellow and, therefore, less likely to have a propensity for violence. Perhaps, but make no mistake that some of the most violent people I've ever met dealt in and used marijuana on a regular basis. Yes, that harkens back to the black market issue, but individuals who dabble in or frequently access that market are inevitably exposed to that aggression. If you run in the rain, you're going to get wet.

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To be clear, however, the drugs that seem to have the most violent influence in the home tend to be alcohol, followed by methamphetamine in a distant second place. For the moment then, let's leave all the illegal activity behind and focus entirely on alcohol.

Why do some people get so sweet and funny when drinking and others want to get in a bar fight or beat their significant others? I don't have a good scientific answer for you other than to say that, in my strong personal opinion, "mean drunks" are simply mean people who suppress their jerk personality most of the time but can't keep it hidden when they drink.

If you drink with a happy person, they are likely to tell you how much they love you, how wonderful the music is, their life philosophies, and their dreams and goals. Drink with a person who is frustrated at work and you're likely to hear all about their swine of a boss for the next couple of hours. Drink with a person who is angry at the world for never getting the right girl or job or break and you're likely to end up getting into or breaking up a fight as the evening draws on. Personality and disposition play a huge role in how well people tolerate liquor and how they respond to others when they're on it.

Now expand that to include angry people who get drunk at home and who may also have a strong tendency to bully and control. A toxic situation is in the works, and this can get even worse when the alcohol begins to affect the subordinate partner as well. In other words, imagine the situation when a generally meek, controlled wife gets "uppity" because the alcohol has made a little spark of frustrated courage bubble to the surface. Suddenly, she's telling the abusive person in her life what a bag of syphilis he's been to her, and how she's not going to take it anymore. Just what is a violent, intoxicated, angry control freak to do? Reestablish the pecking order, of course.

Another all-too-frequent scenario involves the sober victim and the increasingly intoxicated abuser. In this situation the victim, in a master/serving girl routine she's been forced to play many times before, is serving the abusive partner the intoxicant. In essence, she's obliged to bring him the substance she knows will get him worked up enough to become violent. It becomes a race to see if she can get him drunk enough to pass out or to be able to outrun him before the physical abuse commences.

One more common circumstance occurs when they've been out on the town, perhaps at a dance club. This is generally a bad idea because, even if she is as homely as a hippo, a man inclined to be violently controlling will believe that she wants to have sex with every man in the bar once the guy gets a few

drinks in him. Jealousy is always ugly, but it's downright hideous with this type of personality on whisky. And heaven help her if she has the audacity to question his ability to drive while intoxicated. She might as well mock his manhood for all the misery she'll catch once they're home.

Returning to illegal drugs allows us to explore a whole slew of other ways in which substance abuse has a negative impact on domestic violence. For one thing, the fact that illegal drugs are being used has a stifling effect on people's willingness to call the police. The victim won't call for help out of fear she will be lassoed in for the dope bust or, in some cases, a significant portion of the current finances would be gone if her dope-peddling husband goes to jail.

There can't be enough attention paid to this issue. When the abuser is also a distributor of illegal narcotics, he gains leverage over the people he controls. If, for example, he is the sole breadwinner, and he's bringing in a nifty income from selling crack cocaine rocks, it may be difficult to do anything that would remove him as the source of that income.

Even worse, if the victim is addicted to the substance he happens to be selling, she knows that his removal from the home to jail also means the removal of her dope source. This can be as terrifying as homelessness and hunger in some cases. A thug can get away with a lot if he's supplying the crystal meth to an addict.

Perhaps, most tragically, many victims will refrain from seeking help when they're in a violent relationship because they are terrified that the police or child protective services agencies will find out about the drug use and take the children away from them. I don't know about you, but I'd endure torture before I'd give up my kids. Sadly, the fact that those children are being exposed to toxic pollutants, ongoing violence, and blatant disrespect for them and their mother rarely occurs to people who are trapped in this nightmare.

Yes, yes, shame on her for getting involved or addicted in the first place. Glass houses and cast stones may occur to some at this point because none of us gets through life without mistakes. Don't get me wrong, drug addiction is a whopper, and there are times when children must be taken from their homes. But, in so many of these cases, people start using drugs for the simple reason that they want to escape, at least temporarily, from the stark knowledge that their life is wretched. Drugs do that, albeit in a completely destructive way, but we repeatedly see this effort at clumsy self-medication in situations where violence and threats are a way of life. Add on some level of mental illness, such as chemical depression, and you begin to see just how slippery conditions become when street drugs are available that make you feel happy for the first time in months. Never mind that the same drugs will rot you from the inside.

This is where communities and shelters can do the most good. When a person who is being routinely bullied and beaten learns that her community will support her in getting sober, establishing a rewarding life path, and staying safe while she engages in the fight of her life, she is much more likely to place her faith and energy in getting well. If that person is successful, the community benefits from getting a productive citizen back, and the victim is rewarded with a rebirth.

It's a tough message, though. Slavery to an abuser coupled with slavery to an addiction is a tough chain to break, especially if your self-esteem is low, the danger is high, and the call of the drug is incessant. The resources and support system have to be in place, and the person must make a conscious decision that enough is enough for success to occur.

That having been said, I don't believe in coddling either a battered woman or an addicted person. By and large we are talking about people who have a certain amount of street savvy and survival skills, and their propensity to try to manipulate the situation to get out of

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an arrest, invoke pity, deny responsibility, and repeat the same mistakes over and over tends to be pretty high. A person can't just talk about taking action as in "I'm going to give him one more chance" when she's already given him ten one-more-chances, or "I've got control (of my addiction) back this time. It [using] won't happen again." She must actually take action.

They can't say they're going to go to AA meetings but always have a reason why they couldn't go that day. They can't say they'll go to rehab if it ever happens again or promise to make an appointment with their doctor to get medical help. If you're talking about the possibility that you need rehab, you probably need rehab. They can't promise to stop going to the liquor store and then find themselves in line at the corner drive through. Taking action is the difference between staying in an abusive household or escaping, killing yourself and destroying your family with drugs or seeking professional help, living lies that are wrecking your faith and the faith people have in you or demonstrating to the world that you are strong enough to control your own destiny.

On the other hand, something remarkable happens when a person can finally break the chain of addiction, including the addiction of an abusive lifestyle. People who find it within themselves to escape and make new lives for themselves—whether that be through a structured process, such as a twelve-step program, going to a shelter, rehabilitation, wrap-around support of loved ones, medical interventions, or some method of their own device—take on a certain zeal and passion.

You can see it in their physical makeup, in that they look and move healthier than when they were being oppressed. Many talk about their escape with the enthusiasm of a religious convert, bubbling over with their desire to spread the message of hope and empowerment they may be feeling for the first time in years. It's a response observers fervently hope lasts, and one in which loved

ones and the professional service providers in their lives will line up to support and encourage.

As of this writing, I've known Valerie for just over four years. She still wants to be a nurse, and I imagine she'd be a good one if she can stay clean and sober. She's tried—five rehab centers at last count, and she takes each one seriously. Cocaine's grip is strong in her, though, and while I hope, I am not always hopeful. Valerie's boyfriend is long gone, having finally realized we would never relent in our efforts to keep her safe. Now if only we can do the same for the other monster in her life.

STRANGULATION: THE BIGGEST RED FLAG

*Mankind have . . . corrupted nature a little, for they were not born wolves,
and they have become wolves.*

— VOLTAIRE IN CANDIDE

I experienced a near-drowning incident during a training exercise in a river rescue course several years ago. The river tried to swallow me at one point, and it was a little dicey for a few minutes until my comrades got rope to me and dragged my butt out of the current. I believed in those moments that I was going to die. It was so terrifying being crushed under tons of water with no ability to get out on my own. I remember one instant when I considered inhaling water to make my inevitable death go faster. I believed my mistake of getting sucked into a whirlpool of death was not survivable, and in my panic, twenty feet from an unattainable surface, I sobbed in defeat. Just then I flashed on an image of my young sons, of them growing up without a father, of the shame I felt in giving up. It was time to fight, and the spoils of victory were one more breath and another minute of life.

Suddenly, there were ropes being thrown to me, as if heavenly clouds had parted and a celestial lifeline had been dropped as a reward for my renewed vigor. I remember wrapping the first rope I could grab around my arm three times and thinking that the river would have to pull my arm off before I'd let

go. Moments later, I was drifting in calmer waters, looking at a beautiful blue sky, and praising God for giving me a second life.

Let me tell you, I felt pretty stupid—but extremely fortunate to be working with the valiant men and women who saved my life—and completely meek and empty of spunk. I had used up all my fight in the river. I apply that experience to what a woman must feel right after she's just been through her own fight with suffocation. That empathy makes me understand that whatever fire she had in her belly was extinguished at the moment she thought she was dying from one of the most terrifying deaths imaginable.

Strangulation is such a leap in the level of violence and danger that it deserves a chapter of its own. Most strangulation cases don't end in a death, but every case implies a victim was seconds away from being murdered. Subsequently, a strangulation case becomes a priority investigation when it crosses my desk.

Most strangulation incidents occur in a flash and generally only last a few seconds. When the word strangulation is used, most people picture an image of a person using a length of rope, a belt, or piano wire.

In a domestic violence scenario, what is more typical is that a man grabs a woman's throat with one or both hands and squeezes. Usually he'll continue to the point that she can't breathe and her vision goes dark from a lack of blood flow to the brain. This is all occurring in the context of threats and other acts of violence, so there is every reason for the victim to believe she is about to die. If any instrument is actually used, it is usually a pillow or a wet towel shoved down onto her face hard enough to create a sense of drowning. Sometimes this is done with enough force to break her nose and bones in the face.

There are few things more intimidating than the thought of dying by suffocation. Victims talk of being choked by their attacker and describe their vision narrowing as if they are looking into a tiny tunnel. We tend to hear sounds, even after our vision has clouded, and victims frequently report

that they could hear the batterer snarling or cursing even as they were losing consciousness.

Choking is the term generally used by victims to describe strangulation. Technically, however, choking is what happens when something blocks your windpipe from the inside, such as a piece of food. Strangulation is the act of squeezing the throat from the outside, which results in the clamping off of major blood vessels and the airway. Whether a victim says choked or strangled is less important than understanding the dangerousness of this offense.

Strangulations usually occur at the moment when a woman is denying the man something. That could be denial of sex, respect, herself (as in when she's leaving), or some item he is demanding, such as her cell phone.

It doesn't take a lot of imagination to see how this thing plays out. They argue, she says she's leaving, he orders her to stay, she grabs her purse, he yanks it away, she slaps him and turns to head out the door, he snatches her and encircles her throat with his hands.

"I'll kill you before you leave me!" He squeezes, sees her eyes open in terror and, in most cases, shoves her down to the floor right before she goes completely unconscious.

The psychological result is overwhelming. The man has clearly shown that he controls her life. Remember the power and control phenomenon? For a few seconds he literally held her life in his hands. It was his to do with as he chose. He chose not to take it, and don't think for a second he won't remind her of that in subtle ways in the hours and weeks to come. How euphoric and god-like to control the destiny of another human being when you are, by your nature, a person who craves control.

One of the more egregious strangulation cases I ever worked involved a giant of a man with the musculature of a professional wrestler. The man was solid, strong as a tractor, and as selfishly dense as a two-year-old.

His girlfriend got pregnant, a fate he equated with the destruction of his dream to play pro football. In an argument over what was to be done about the situation, he demanded she have an abortion. She refused, so he struck her with one of his enormous paws while repeatedly reminding her that she wasn't going to get any of his football career money. She weighed maybe one hundred pounds, and the top of her head came to the middle of his chest. His blow sent her tumbling.

He'd slapped her before, but she told us this was the first time he'd ever hit her "like a man," and she decided she'd have none of it.

"Fine," she said, "I'll raise our baby on my own, but you're going to pay child support," at which point she grabbed her purse and tried to leave his apartment.

He responded by tackling her. Tackling her! And she fell in a crushed, petite mess on the cement porch outside. At that point, he decided it wouldn't be good for the neighbors to see all this, so he dragged her back in by the hair and shut his door. Once back inside, he berated her, questioning whether he was even the father of the child. He insinuated she had been "slutty" and, therefore, could be pregnant from someone else.

She'd never been with any other man, and the fact that the father of her unborn child was accusing her of such hurt her to the core. It made her pretty angry too, and she reacted to his offensive allegation by slapping him as hard as her little pixie-sized hand could muster.

Then the pounding began. He never hit her in the face, a fact he repeatedly pointed out to me later, as if this somehow made everything okay. He did, however, punch her repeatedly in the pelvis in an undisguised attempt to prompt a spontaneous abortion. After four or five ferocious blows to her lower stomach, she was able to roll into a little ball, all the while bawling hysterically and trying desperately to cover her head, ribs, and pelvis.

I suppose we'll never know why he made the transition from raining down blows to grabbing her by the throat, but that's eventually what he did. We

know from talking to both of them later that she had the wherewithal to try to dial 911 with her cell phone, even as he was hitting her repeatedly, and it became clear to us that she had tried hard to keep the phone from him by grasping it to her chest with both hands and holding onto it like it was her only lifeline in the most horrific floodwaters. You'll be gratified to know that the rest of this attack was recorded and overheard by the emergency call-taker at the 911 Center.

His response to her using her phone and trying to keep it from him was to wrestle the phone from her grip and throw it across the room (though it still continued to record) and then show her how frustrated he was with her actions by grasping her little neck in his gigantic hands and trying to squeeze the life out of her.

He was still cursing her loudly enough for the responding officers to hear him through the front door when they arrived a couple of minutes later.

But he never hit her in the face.

The thing about manual strangulation is that the injuries often don't show up on the neck right away. If someone used a rope, piano wire, a shoestring, or an electrical cord, the wound patterns are visible and distinctive. Frequently, you can pick out the pattern of the braid in a cord or the exact shape of the wire used. When hands are the tools used to squeeze the throat, it is actually more often than not that external bruising doesn't occur. This becomes problematic for police officers who are looking for visible evidence, such as redness, bruising, or swelling around the neck, especially when the victim is tanned or darker skinned.

The human throat is designed to give a bit so that all those vital things on the inside, such as large arteries, the trachea and larynx, esophagus, and cervical spine have a little wiggle room when carnivores try to clamp down on that area with large jaws. This extra room is what leads to turkey necks and cosmetic surgeries for neck lifts in later years. It is also a simplified reason for

why this area of the body doesn't visibly bruise dramatically, as opposed to the areas over arms, ribs, and cheeks where squeezing, grabbing, and punching result in small blood vessels being smashed between the force and bone.

For this reason, bruises around the neck and throat should be given extra attention because this is a clear sign that the force exerted when the attacker was squeezing was extraordinary. Visible bruising is a like gold for an investigator and prosecutor because photographs taken of a bruised and scratched throat are compelling evidence to show juries later. However, the absence of bruising doesn't mean strangulation didn't occur, and thorough investigators will ask additional questions when a victim reports she has been choked.

There are three basic areas to explore when asking questions about the effects of strangulation.

First, it is important to clearly understand what was going on inside her head as her throat was being squeezed shut. Statements like "I thought I was going to die" or "I knew he was going to kill me this time" are compelling and should be part of the police report to show how frightened she was by this action.

Next, it is imperative that questions pertaining to her pain during and after the event be asked. A statement like "It felt like my neck bones were getting ready to snap" is a chilling testimony to how far the abuser went that day. If it hurts her to swallow or take a deep breath, turn her neck, or be touched around her neck or throat after the incident is over, it is important to the investigation and prosecution that this be recorded in a police report. It is equally imperative that this information be documented by medical staff, both for the sake of making sure she gets the proper medical attention and care she needs and also for the purpose of having medical records that can be used to prosecute the batterer at a later date.

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Finally, investigators and medical staff need to know if the victim suffered or is suffering any ill effects from the strangulation, such as headache, visual disturbances, dizziness, or weakness in the arms or legs.

Which brings us to an important element often overlooked in strangulation cases and that is the need to get the victim examined and treated by medical personnel. The absence of bruising and swelling on the outside doesn't necessarily mean there isn't bruising and swelling going on internally, and one

place you definitely don't want swelling from the inside out is your throat. A victim who has mild sore throat or hoarseness at the crime scene might well suffocate from advanced internal swelling hours later, so even mild symptoms following a violent strangulation attack must be medically assessed as a priority.

Police officers investigating these crimes, as well as friends and family members, need to strongly encourage her to seek medical attention after such an episode. Obviously, no one can make a victim see a doctor, but the importance of doing so relative to her own safety, the emotional well-being of her worried loved ones, and to the elements of a successful prosecution should all be stressed when trying to convince her that she needs to be seen right away.

Yes, it is a hassle to go to an emergency room, and yes, she may not make it to work on time if she goes, and yes, someone other than her will have to take care of her children for a few hours—and yes, her life and long-term health are worth it.

Strangulation is serious business, and it is more common than most people ever imagine. An attack that involves a strangulation episode, even one lasting just a few seconds, represents a dramatic escalation in the level of violence, control, and threat to life. Manual strangulation is a big, red flag

calling attention to the fact that he may murder her next time. It should be treated with grave concern by police officers, friends and family, employers, victim advocates, prosecutors, judges and juries—and especially by the survivor, who knows better than anyone how close she came to this being her last day.

Another factor worthy of concern and attention is Intimate Partner Rape. It, too, means that the level of violence and disregard for all civility has reached a critical point. Rape is a tough subject, but you're a tough, motivated reader, so let's keep going.

INTIMATE PARTNER RAPE: THE CRUELEST VIOLATION

Coaxing, not ordering, makes love sweet.

— PUBLILIUS SYRUS

Robert was a college athlete and a god on campus. Monica was a cheerleader who thought he was “the one,” until one evening after he received a text message from another woman as the two of them watched a movie at his apartment. Her suspicions rose when he hid the screen from her and then quickly deleted the text.

Suddenly, neither had any interest in the movie. She was miffed, and she let him know. Then she told him she was going to call the other woman and let her know he was dating both of them. Robert didn’t like that idea, so he strangled her, broke her nose, and punched her between her legs.

Monica reached for her cell phone to call 911, and he ripped the phone into pieces. She tried to make for the door, and Robert tackled her onto the couch. That is where he held her for the next eleven hours.

Eleven hours of being held by a man who had made her nose and pelvis bleed, made both of her eyes swell to the point of closing shut, her throat to hurt every time she swallowed. Eleven hours of listening to him say how sorry he was and how it would never happen again if she’d just forgive him and, “Please, baby, please let me make love to you so I can show you how much I care about you. Please, baby . . .”

Monica said she told him no at least twenty times, that she begged him in sobbing pleas to let her go, and that she promised she wouldn't tell anyone about the attack if he just let her up. He refused, telling her he couldn't believe her until she had make-up sex with him to "seal the deal." Eventually, she gave in just to win back her freedom. Within ten minutes of having sex with the man, she walked out of his apartment under the bluff that she had to get to work. She went to her mother, who got her medical care and then brought her right to the police station.

In hostage negotiator's lingo, Monica had successfully negotiated her own hostage release. She got away and was able to get medical treatment and police assistance. All she had to do was get raped.

There is no case more difficult to prosecute than that of domestic rape. Convincing a jury of twelve people beyond a reasonable doubt that a man raped his wife is a high mountain to climb, even in this twenty-first century. Rape by intimate partners happens, though, and I suspect it happens far more than we know.

Consider the fact that when you are talking about a domestic violence situation you are always factoring in a significant level of power and control. A man who beats his wife does so in order to manipulate and terrorize her. The same can be said of rape in any context. A man who attacks and rapes a woman on a jogging trail or during a home invasion does so out of little interest in sex and more out of a driving desire to control and degrade.

The same is true for invading hordes throughout history. Raping and pillaging are synonymous with warfare, in part because victors get the spoils, but also because the victors have waged the war so that they can control another person or group and use the resources of that other party as they see fit. Rape—whether it be done by a bloodied soldier berserk with the fact that he lived through the battle, a stranger who grabbed a person into the darkest

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foliage of a city park, or a man beating his wife and then prying her thighs open to impale her—is all about conquest.

Where the waters get muddied is in the fact that marriage is generally assumed to involve some amount of sexual activity. Yes, women's empowerment has flourished within my lifetime, but I think most would agree that there is in our culture some expectation that a wife has sex with her husband once in a while. As offensive as it may sound, the honest truth is that many men and women believe that married women have an obligation to lie with their husbands periodically.

How often this occurs is a subject of negotiation or debate. Who remembers the 1977 Woody Allen movie *Annie Hall*, in which Woody Allen's character, Alvy Singer, and his wife's character, Annie Hall, are shown talking to their respective therapists on a split screen? The two characters are asked how frequently they have sex with their spouse. Alvy Singer replies, "Hardly ever . . . maybe three times a week." Annie Hall replies, "Constantly. I'd say three times a week."

In those two lines, a whole culture's take on spousal obligations and expectations is summed up hilariously, but it's also ironic because behind those lines there is a biting hint of the darkness and frustration inherent in many marriages. Consider another movie example. Recall the scene in *Gone with the Wind* in which Rhett Butler carries his kicking, screaming, and vehemently protesting wife, Scarlett, up a flight of stairs to the bedroom. Scarlett is shown in postcoital bliss in the next scene, but, practically speaking, Rhett forced sex in a moment when she was clearly refusing. Audiences shared a cultural "joke," and this whole scene was treated with tongue-in-cheek subtlety.

However, any amusement one might find in the maneuvers for sex in movies or television turns quickly to something more related to a horror show when the combination of male entitlement, driving power and control impulses, an already violent relationship, and a strong sexual impulse collide with a

woman's lack of desire and/or attempt to thwart her husband or boyfriend's advances. If you throw alcohol or drugs into the mix, a heated argument that he considers over but she does not, his intent to have "make-up sex," and her firm resolve that he isn't going to touch her yet, you have the equivalent of a hungry bear whose trout was just stolen.

Some of the worst attacks of a male on his wife or girlfriend I've ever investigated have involved some element of sex—either because he felt denied (and, thus, disrespected) or because the ensuing rape was simply an extension of the battery itself. Ironically, it is also one of the most under-reported crimes. A victim will make a statement about the fact that she was threatened and beaten but neglect to tell the part about how he forced her legs open and shoved his way in. That, by definition, is rape in every state in this nation, but the act is infrequently reported due to embarrassment, a lack of knowledge that a wife can be raped by her husband, or simply because the investigating officer failed to ask.

It's important that officers and medical staff members ask about sexual assault. If there has been an intimate partner violence situation, and the violence occurred out of the eyesight of other witnesses, the question of rape needs to be broached at some point. This is a conversation that must be done skillfully, sensitively, and thoroughly, but it should be explored any time there has been violence that was un-witnessed by others.

If rape is alleged, in a domestic setting or otherwise, certain actions need to take place. The victim needs to be seen by medical professionals, and a sexual assault kit needs to be collected by a certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). It's likely in a husband and wife scenario that his DNA will be found within her vagina and on other parts of her body. His natural defense is that they had sex as husband and wife, and of course his DNA is going to be in there. What should not be there, though, are wounds to her genitalia and anal cavities, other bruises consistent with grabbing and holding, patterns

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of injuries associated with strangulation, heavy bruising on the buttocks and thighs from hard, repeated spankings, pulled out hair, and bite marks.

Ah, but it was just “rough sex” he’ll say. Weigh this statement with your own experience. After sex, even playful rough sex, are you spent and satisfied, or do you get it into your head that you feel like calling the police and telling them what a violent jerk your partner is? It doesn’t make sense that a woman who is lying in a hospital bed, sore and bleeding, telling a stranger—a police officer of all people—that her husband just beat and raped her, was just involved in “rough sex.” It is an insult to my intelligence, and to good husbands and boyfriends everywhere, that some controlling bully damages this woman’s body and soul and then blames it on

having a good time.

The grim reality is that an arrest and successful prosecution for rape when the suspect is a husband or live-in boyfriend happens rarely. Almost all elements have to be in place: outward signs of abuse, internal signs of vaginal trauma, a credible victim, and a confession from the husband. An unbiased witness or a recording of the attack wouldn’t hurt either. Without this nearly perfect package, it’s tough to get some police officers and prosecutors to support an arrest warrant and prosecution. Additionally, any halfway decent defense attorney is going to make her look like the smuttiest, most unfaithful, gold-digging wife on the planet if she ever goes up on a witness stand. You think rape trials are tough? Imagine having one between two people going through a divorce.

I lean in the direction of an aggressive arrest stance if reliable evidence is discovered to support the victim’s allegations. There are untold possibilities, and every case is different, but one example of a case supporting an arrest for rape would be if the victim is credible, she has clear signs of injury and

bruising patterns consistent with being held against her will, and the suspect won't give a statement.

Yes, I know that any person has the right to remain silent, and the fact that a man decides against making a statement to the police does not make him guilty. However, if the victim seems sincerely frightened, hurt, and heartbroken, her statement is credible, and he offers no reply or evidence to refute her statement, a fair and impartial look at the facts at hand may call for his arrest.

That doesn't imply that prosecution will be successful. Again, a jury of twelve must be convinced that what you've arrested this man for really happened, and the fact that he exercised his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself can't be a sore subject at trial. He did what he felt he needed to do. So did the victim, and so did the arresting officer.

What value then is there to make an arrest if successful prosecution is going to be a gladiatorial fight to the finish? First and foremost, she knows that she was believed, and that there are men and women who will stand with her through the whole process. Having police officers, generally male police officers, care about her and protect her is empowering and uplifting. The officers aren't hurting her or emotionally assaulting her, they aren't trying to have sex with her, and they ask nothing of her other than honesty and to follow their safety instructions. Imagine being a woman who has endured routine physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and coming in contact with a professional man, wielding tremendous authority, who focuses on your needs and safety. In many cases, it is the first time in the woman's adult life that someone has shown her she has value and is worthy of protection.

Additionally, a solid arrest for rape may not make it all the way to trial, but it offers good leverage during any plea bargain stage. Notice I said "solid" arrest. Certainly, police officers could tack on additional flimsy criminal offenses in any arrest situation in an attempt to manipulate a stiffer sentence later on

down the road. However, if the arrest charges are fair, and if they represent what the evidence is indicating, including a charge of rape, the charges have a way of allowing prosecutors to stand firm when it comes time to negotiate with defense attorneys.

Finally, a law enforcement community that shows they'll aggressively pursue this type of crime gets a well-deserved reputation for being tough on known violent offenders. That reputation can be an instrument of crime prevention, as long as that tough mindedness doesn't extend into abusive practices.

One fair word of caution: an arrest for rape in any small to medium-sized community is going to generate media exposure, bitterness and hatred between her family and friends and his, and it is definitely going to make for a long day on the witness stand for the victim. She'll be grilled by defense attorneys in a way that some feel is akin to being raped all over again—this time in public. Ugly things happen when a rape arrest occurs, and it is only fair to discuss these issues with the victim before any action is taken. She needs to know what she's getting into.

By the same token, this is the time when a lot of women become stronger than they've ever felt before. They get to participate in stopping a violent man from ever hurting another woman. They have the support of an entire police department and prosecutorial team, victim advocates, medical and mental health professionals, and—in many cases—a new lease on life. The achievement of greatness doesn't come without challenge, and this is one place in which a person who has lived life as a victim can surprise herself, and everyone else, by rising to the occasion and fighting back.

SINS OF THE FATHER: HOW CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED

*I don't know who my grandfather was; I am much more concerned
to know what his grandson will be.*

— ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Children who grow up in homes where they watch abuse and are victims of abuse themselves are more likely to grow up and participate in abusive lifestyles. When you see a bully on the playground, it should make you wonder what's going on at home. Too many of these children may grow up to be batterers or abuse victims. It's what they know and, thus, the pattern and cycle continues.

One of the worst cases I ever investigated involved a man I'll call Bernard. Bernard had been born in the U.S., but his father was from Mexico. Bernard had been raised with an emphasis on preserving both heritages, so he was bilingual and completely at ease on either side of the border. He was not particularly bright or handsome, but he was good with his hands and worked construction jobs in both countries.

At some point Bernard met Geneva, a single mother of three who lived life tired and terrified she'd missed some important step in raising her children. She was also lonely and always behind in her bills. She had probably been pretty once, but life, stress, and frustration took a toll to produce deep furrows of worry between her eyes and lips that were perpetually pursed.

Bernard was no great catch, but Geneva wanted some help, maybe even someone to hold her during thunderstorms. Bernard got steady work, so his paycheck was a definite plus, and he was kind to her—at first.

They dated for five months before the wedding, and in that time he bought her the first flowers she'd been offered in a decade, took her to dinner in a restaurant where she didn't have to clean her own table, and stayed by her side when they went to nightclubs.

I saw their wedding photo once. He held a somber expression, like people from the earliest days of photography who posed as if a smile would somehow besmirch the dignity of their posterity. Geneva smiled, but even then it seemed to be created of desperation.

A happy day, I suppose, and two weeks later he beat her.

We didn't enter the picture until ten years after that wedding photo, and when we did it wasn't to deal with the fact that Bernard was a vicious wife beater. It was to investigate Geneva's daughter's allegation that Bernard had been having sex with her since she was five.

Bernard grew tired of working about two years into the marriage. He called it back pain, but I think he was just a lazy bastard who sent Geneva out to bring home the bacon. She accepted his laziness and his brutality—I don't know why, but she did—and every day she'd go off to work for ten or twelve hours and leave him home alone with her two little girls.

Geneva had a crystal ball for what eventually happened; she just didn't know how to read it. Bernard began offending against the oldest daughter, Stephanie, almost from the beginning. Years later, we learned he was a patterned monster, perpetrating his crimes over and over again, and in almost the exact same way each time.

Stephanie would get in trouble. Who knows what heinous act five-year-old Stephanie did? Whatever it was, it got her sent to her mother's bedroom

where Bernard would mete out her punishment. At least, this was the story Bernard gave to the younger sister every time.

“Stephanie has been bad. I’m taking her into the bedroom to punish her.”

He’d punish her for an hour each time.

I’ve never known exactly why Bernard never raped the younger daughter. I spoke with this girl a few times, and the only thing I can tell you is that she seemed to be more confident and better emotionally equipped to deal with the pressure that Stephanie must have felt.

Stephanie didn’t tell her mother until she was eleven. By that time Bernard had left, and we later learned he’d fled the country. For another three years he lived south of the border under an assumed name.

Geneva and Stephanie fought constantly after Bernard left. Sometimes Geneva believed her daughter and wanted to hug her to make all the pain go away, get her the best therapy available, and make up for exposing her to the danger in the first place. At other times, she’d look her little girl in the face and tell her she was lying just to get attention. Some would say there is a special place in hell for Geneva; some would say she was already in it.

All I know is that Stephanie was a shattered human being when I met her. Her eyes were dead, and any sense of humor she’d ever had was squashed. She only tolerated people, though I’m told she was a joyful child before Bernard ruined her.

As I mentioned before, Bernard was a violent man to his wife. We learned of multiple episodes during which he strangled her, struck her with closed fists, kicked her, and it was rumored that one such beating had resulted in a miscarriage. Neighbors told us of many times when he dragged Geneva out into the yard by the hair, and we found three different hospital records for her. All three times she told hospital staff that she’d fallen down.

What we now know was that Bernard was a cruel, selfish man who believed himself to be supreme and entitled. He tortured when it suited him, raped

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when he felt like it, and never once felt remorse for his actions until the day he was finally caught.

It must be nightmarish watching one parent abuse the other, knowing that you're probably next. It would be agony for an adult. I can't even imagine how hard this would be on a child. The results of this are evident. Children growing up in this environment are fifty percent more likely to abuse drugs and six times more likely to commit suicide. Clearly these situations are miserable enough that escape, in any fashion, is preferable to

continued involvement.

One more stat: over sixty percent of boys ages eleven to twenty who commit murder killed the father or stepfather who had been abusing their mother. Think about that. The number one reason isn't gang-related killings or fights over money or a girlfriend; it's the killing of the boy's father in defense of his mother. How gallant and how tragic.

I would hope that a chapter on the negative effects of domestic violence on children wouldn't require a lot of argument to make the point. I'm going to assume for a moment that reasonable people understand that children suffer when they witness violent behavior, and that it only gets worse with repeated exposures. Don't assume, either, that children can't hear abuse happening in other rooms. There are some abusive couples who actually express pride that their children have never seen the fights, but screams of terror, growls of hatred, and the sounds of furniture toppling and punches striking flesh are at least as damaging as actually seeing the images.

One of the most common occurrences when children are present involves the tug-of-war phenomenon. Generally, this occurs when the woman announces that she is tired of the abuse, and she is leaving and taking the kids. She takes her young child by the arm to lead him from the house. "Oh no you're not!" the

husband replies, and he reaches out to grab the other arm of the child. Now you have a tug of war, with two little arms being used as the rope handles.

Imagine being four years old and feeling yanked in half, physically and emotionally, by the two people you love most in the world—the same two people who now seem bent on mutual destruction, and the same two people who seem to have lost any sense of empathy toward your feelings and fears. For them, it is now all about winning the battle, and your arms, shoulders, and heart are of no concern.

I'd say that would mess with your head.

This goes to the nature of domestic violence: the absolute insistence on control, despite the consequences and the dereliction of responsibilities for people who deserve the protection and respect due members of a family.

In these situations, it is more often than not that both parents will immediately make accusations that the other is unfit to bring up the child, or that the other parent is abusive. In-laws quickly take sides, and anonymous calls get made to departments of human services or child welfare agencies.

"She takes drugs and passes out while she's supposed to be watching the baby."

"He spends all his money on beer, and the baby needs formula."

It tends to get nasty fast, and investigators have their hands full trying to find some sense of truth.

Too often the truth is that the child is living in an abusive environment that is not physically or emotionally safe, where illegal drugs are being used, where financial resources are poorly prioritized, and where the toxic environment is unlikely to change until someone steps up to make that happen.

If you had a crystal ball that told you your new boyfriend was six hundred times more likely to rape your daughter, would you even consider allowing that man inside your home? Of course you wouldn't. You'd turn him down for a date, drop him off at the curb,

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or chase him off with a chain saw. There's no way a reasonable, loving mother would keep such a man around given such a forecast.

The thing is, there is such a crystal ball. It's called propensity for violence in the home, and, in my opinion, there is no better single indicator for the likelihood of incest.

For years I had a nagging feeling that there must be some correlation between men who were known to have been violent toward the members of their family and men who molest their daughters, stepdaughters, nieces, and grandchildren. I finally asked a friend of mine who worked in a battered women's shelter. She was intrigued by the idea and said she'd hunt around to see if anyone had done a study on the question. Wonder of wonders, a professor at Harvard had studied the theory, and the conclusion from the study was that there was a clear correlation.

It makes sense. In domestic violence situations in which an adult male is the abuser, you are almost always dealing with a jealous, controlling personality. My experience is also that these men tend to be narcissistic, that their own needs and desires come first, and in their minds they can do no wrong. There is a keen sense of entitlement, when you get right down to it, so the fact that he knocked his pregnant wife around is of little consideration. She failed to meet some desire of his, so her pain and fear are secondary.

In light of this, it is no big leap to realize that such a personality could easily come to believe that he is also entitled to "mate" with the other people in the house, whether they are his own children, toddlers or teens, male or female.

There can't be many things in this world more cruel and destructive than incest. When a father, stepfather, or uncle offends against a little girl, she remembers it forever. She comes to believe it was her fault for being "too sexy," and she'll frequently have deep-seated guilt over her perception that she has stolen her mother's man. She may be doomed to a series of failed, unhealthy relationships, and when you see their young, betrayed faces, you

wonder if they'll ever have the capacity to be truly happy again. They've seen all the horrors of the world: cruelty, dishonesty, violence, rape, and the most extraordinary levels of treachery.

Bernard's capture happened out of the blue, years after the rapes on Stephanie were first reported. We'd gotten pretty solid information that Bernard was, in fact, living in Mexico. A warrant was issued for him on a number of offenses, and every few months I'd get a new lead to follow or eliminate. It was frustrating, knowing he was out there somewhere.

God bless the American free enterprise system and a growth market in the Georgia area because one day Bernard came back to the U.S. on his way to a promised construction job in Atlanta. Federal officials at the border didn't buy his fake ID card, and that evening I got a call from a border patrol official who informed me Bernard was caught and in custody.

You'd think that was party time, but the next few days were tense as I awaited his extradition back to our state and thought about how to gain his confession. It was almost four weeks before he and I finally met for the first time, on a Monday. We'd both just had breakfast.

I paused at the entrance to the interview room. I knew he was sitting on the other side of that door, waiting to lie to me, to justify what he'd done to Stephanie and her mother. I've lost count of how many interviews I've done with bad guys over the years, and every one was important in its own way. That day with Bernard, though, was and will always be one of the most important I've ever done. On the other side of that door stood a defiant, cruel man who had ruined lives all in the name of his own pleasure and whims. I had to get him to confess, and I remember thinking that I would simply not leave that room until he told me all he'd done.

By lunch Bernard had confessed his many, many sins. It was a recorded, videotaped interview, and I guess you could say that the happy ending was

A STRATEGIC
END TO
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IT'S AN
AUDACIOUS CALL

that Bernard was sentenced in a way that meant he would never see the outside world again, except through a prison window.

This chapter wasn't written just to tell stories and show how cruel the world can be. Sure, there are mean people out there, but there are also courageous ones—people who notice that a child is coming in to school with a lot of bruises, people who observe that a child is sleep deprived, possibly from having to listen to her parents cage fight most nights, and people who realize that a child who is starting to bully at school may be seeing and

experiencing the same things at home. Just as importantly, this world is filled with people who expend the time, energy, and courage to take action so that these children can be protected, provided services, and offered a chance at a better life than the unhappy one they're living right now.

Victor Vieth of the National Child Protection Training Center (www.NCPTC.org) has called for a strategic end to child abuse within three generations. It's an audacious call, but upon reading his essay and hearing him speak so passionately on the subject, one comes to understand he's onto something valuable.

The plan calls for the systematic training of front-line professionals who are likely to come in contact with abused children, such as victim advocates, police officers, teachers, medical staff, etc., so that they have a clear understanding of the problem, signs, and symptoms of abuse and effective tools for addressing each challenge. It doesn't end there, though. The plan also calls for other professionals, such as staff in religious institutions, attorneys and judges, media personnel, and elected officials to be educated as well so that essentially anyone who could potentially play a part in bringing hope and security back to an at-risk child becomes part of the solution team.

One of the integral pieces in the plan calls for semester-long classes for front-line professionals so that graduates leave a criminal justice or child

advocacy program ready to hit the ground running. This training will include extensive coverage of such concepts as mandatory reporting, effective victim interviewing skills, evidence collection and statement corroboration, and decision-making strategies to facilitate successful, long-term solutions to some of the most difficult problems we ever face.

The idea is to break the connection of generational violence by placing emphasis on solid reporting, complete and accurate investigations, and collaborative follow-through on all levels. We know that many families perpetuate child abuse from generation to generation. Thus, the strategy is to effectively end child abuse by working to interrupt the violence of a first and second generation. Children—all children—will stand a chance of growing up in a home devoid of violence and, thus, will not have lived a history that could dictate a violent future.

It's an awesome undertaking, and the goal is so lofty as to be shooting for nothing less than miraculous. Miracles happen, though, and the only shame would be in not pursuing such a dream.

The time is now. It's now because of visionary leadership like Vieth. It's now because of a broad willingness of diverse professionals to train and collaborate at unprecedented levels. It's now because organizations from the private sector recognize that child abuse and domestic violence negatively impact the bottom line but, more importantly, that to participate in ending the epidemic brings great honor to their respective companies. This time is now because our communities demand it, and our elected officials are listening. Mostly, the time is now because these children need us to be the generation that dreamed it, planned for the dream, and then took decisive action to make it come true.

I'm in. If you're on board as well, you'll have to put your energy and passion into actions to include the following.

Report suspicions of child abuse to your state's Child Protective Services Division or to your local police agency. It is far better to err on the side of

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caution and launch an investigation than to allow a child to endure even one more night of terror at home.

Support a child abuse advocacy center in your area or nationally, such as the National Child Protection Training Center or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. This support can come in the form of monetary donations or volunteering your time.

Insist that all measures that can be done to end domestic violence in a home where children live be undertaken. This includes involving the police, using the courts, getting child protection services involved, and doing what you can to remove violence from the home—or remove the child from the violence.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, takes higher priority than preventing children from hearing, seeing, or enduring abuse in the home. Children should be able to live happy, productive lives, without the fear and shame associated with violence in their own homes. They are scarred—sometimes physically, but always emotionally—every time adults in the home are abusive to one another. If there was ever a time to get involved, not “mind your own business,” or get downright pushy, it’s when a child is in danger. We speak of courage in this book, and a child in danger is your opportunity for a defining moment of heroism. Don’t blow it.

WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DOES A VICTIM HAVE?

Parents can only give [children] good advice or put them on their right paths, but the final forming of a person lies in their own hands.

— ANNE FRANK, *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*

Let's say that you have a hypothetical loved one with tuberculosis. She has been to see doctors who have told her that she will always have the disease, but that there are steps she can take to lessen the severity. Additionally, she is told that the disease is contagious, and that she must do certain things to protect her spouse and children from getting infected. She is to take her medicine every day, wear a mask around her family so they can't catch her germs, and follow a specific lifestyle, including exercise and diet.

At first she resists, but her children beg her to follow doctor's orders. They've learned that they will not even be allowed to be around her if she doesn't follow the steps to protect them from getting hurt, and they desperately want to keep seeing her. Finally she relents, agreeing to take the medicine even though it gives her a stomach ache, wear the mask even though she is embarrassed for people in the community to know of her disease, and stick to the exercise and nutrition regimen even though she doesn't feel she has the time or energy. She does all this because she, too, wants to be with her children, and she considers it her responsibility to take action in order to keep them.

Things go well for a time in this hypothetical scenario. The tuberculosis patient stabilizes, her family thrives, and the future is bright. At some point, however, she makes an independent decision that she doesn't need her medicine anymore, and the daily disciplines start tapering off to once or twice a week before finally ceasing altogether. The hated mask is forgotten one day, then another, and eventually is never worn again.

The old cough starts up again, and in short order her friends and family begin to worry about her health and safety. More gravely, they begin to worry about the well-being of her children and their risk of exposure to toxins that could literally destroy them.

Despite admonishments from loved ones, and eventually even official warnings from authority figures, the woman consistently refuses to resume the steps necessary to help herself and protect her family. Frustration grows among her closest friends and family, either because they lose patience with her or because they simply can't stand to see her hurt again. Too many times, the unfortunate outcome is that she loses the most important people in her world and is forced to leave her home and start life all over again.

This hypothetical scenario is played out thousands of times a day in homes, rich and poor, all across the land, but instead of tuberculosis being the disease addiction is the culprit. Whether that addiction is to alcohol, heroin, crack cocaine, or a violent lifestyle, the disease of addiction is rampant and as destructive as any other factor in our culture today.

Having children grow up exposed to repetitive violence or substance abuse and addiction in the home is as potentially destructive and dangerous to their mental and physical health as exposing them to tuberculosis. It doesn't matter if the discussion is about addiction to an abusive lifestyle, addiction to drugs or alcohol, or the carrying of a contagion. Victims have a responsibility to themselves, their children, and their loved ones to do whatever it takes to get free and stop the madness.

There are social workers out there who probably just cringed. How can I expect a woman who is being beaten by her husband—who has no financial means, and who is besieged with substance abuse that probably came as a result of some pitiful attempt to escape her nightmare—to have the emotional fortitude to get away from the abuser and kick her addiction? All I can say is that if she doesn't she's probably going to die young, and only after losing her children, her possessions, her hope, and her future. No one can be with her all day every day. All we can do is offer services, get her where she needs to be, show her the choices—including the rewards and consequences—and pray that she can find the strength of character to do what she must.

**VICTIMS HAVE
A RESPONSIBILITY
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STOP THE MADNESS**

Which brings me to the next statement likely to cause chest pains for some victim advocates: sometimes an arrest can be a blessing. If, for example, a woman who is being systematically abused by her boyfriend is stopped for driving her car while intoxicated and she ends up getting arrested for DWI, and she has possession of a small amount of crystal methamphetamine, she'll go to jail. Certainly, we all crinkle our noses at the thought of a victim going to jail, but the fact is that she placed everyone else in danger when she drove a two-ton vehicle while impaired, and she actively participated in and supported the toxic waste that is the black market narcotics industry. She screwed up, and she did it in a way that made her area of the world less safe and peaceful. As a parent and citizen in that same community, I demand something be done, and as a law enforcement officer responsible for the safety and peace of that community, I must take action.

In this example, she is now in jail. However, in the dark despair she feels entering a cell there is opportunity, and that opportunity comes in the form of what alcoholics call "rock bottom." Could things get any worse at that moment? She's been arrested; her mug shot will end up on the Internet; she will spend

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thousands in attorney and court fees; she will feel humiliated; and maybe, just maybe, she'll realize she doesn't want to live this way anymore. And therein lies her blessing and salvation—or at least the opportunity for it.

That is worst-case scenario, and no one hopes it comes to that. The point of this chapter is that even someone who is emotionally and physically beaten down must accept some level of responsibility. We all acknowledge that living in a violent lifestyle with someone you love or used to love is difficult to leave, but when your life and the lives of your children are in the balance, you simply must take steps to change the situation.

As I've mentioned before, I meet a lot of "Yes, but . . ." people in my line of work. We all know these people. They come saying they want advice but always have a reason why they can't participate in whatever options you suggest. For example, if I suggest a woman go get an order of protection because she is receiving death threats and she responds, "Yes, but I won't have time to do that until next week," I begin to wonder. If I then suggest that she ask someone at her place of employment to walk her to her car each evening and she responds, "Yes, but I'm embarrassed to have to ask," I raise an eyebrow. And if she misses multiple appointments with the prosecutor to discuss her case, puts up a bail bond for the man who just beat her, or gives him the address of the battered women's shelter, I must confess to having moments of frustration.

"He's going to kill me. Don't you understand? He's going to find me, and when he does, he's going to kill me." Those were the words spoken to me by a woman who'd just been brought to my office by a women's shelter employee. The woman had bruising to her face—blue-purple bruising with a yellowing edge that looked a couple of days old. The advocate waited in the lobby with the woman's two children while she and I spoke. It was the first time she'd

spoken with a police officer in the matter, and she told me she'd never included the police in any of the dozens of times he'd hurt her in the past. This woman had some real life-and-death problems, and she told me that she was afraid her husband was going to start venting his anger toward the two toddlers if she went back to him.

So we talked at length about protection orders, pursuing prosecution, and how well she would be served by the staff at the shelter for her legal needs, transportation, child care assistance, help in looking for a job, getting a new cell phone so she could call 911, and the host of other services she had available to her and her children now that she'd asked for help.

"Yes, but . . ."

And that's when we started down that path. Sigh.

"Yes, but, I know he'll come after me. He'll kill me. Don't you understand?"

I assured her I understood pretty well.

"Yes, but, I don't have time to go get an order of protection. It's just a piece of paper anyway, and it won't stop him from killing me."

I agreed with her that a court document would not stop a bullet or a knife attack, but it lent flexibility and strength for police officers in forcing him to stay away from her, and it dramatically improved our success rate in getting stalking behavior to cease.

"Yes, but it will only make him madder. Plus, I don't want him to go to jail. I just want him to get help."

At this point I reminded her that he attacked her, and that an arrest may lead to court-ordered Batterer Intervention Programs that will give him the help she says he so desperately needs. I told her that it is almost unheard of for a man to take matters into his own hands and get help for his violent tendencies if there are no clear-cut rewards and consequences for his actions or lack thereof.

“Yes, but he said he’ll get counseling and stop drinking. I don’t want him to go to jail. He just needs help.”

Sigh again.

I reiterated at that point that she’d told me not ten minutes earlier that she thought her husband was starting to become emotionally and physically abusive to her children, and I also pointed out that it is extremely psychologically damaging for a child to witness or hear one parent attack another.

“Yes, but I don’t want them to come from a broken home. Children need a father.”

“Ma’am, they need a father who is loving and supportive and who doesn’t inflict the poison of violence into the one place where they should feel most safe and cared for in the whole world—their home.”

“Yes, but he’s a good man when he’s not drinking. I think that if he can just go to the AA meetings, he can get the help he needs. Do you think you could ask that woman from the shelter if she’ll give me a ride home?”

I empathize with the dynamics of power and control, addiction to destructive relationships, and being so confused in one’s life that poor decisions are inevitable. On the other hand, I believe strongly that a horse led to water should probably take a drink. A battered spouse, especially one with children who are being exposed to emotional and physical violence, must make difficult decisions if she is to accept responsibility for her situation. If police, social workers, medical and mental healthcare providers, friends, family, and co-workers all accept and keep repeating this mantra, perhaps the woman described will change from “Yes, but . . .” to “Yes, I can.”

IMMIGRANT VICTIMS: SPECIAL FEARS AND STRATEGIES

No loss by flood and lightning, no destruction of cities and temples by the hostile forces of nature, has deprived man of so many noble lives and impulses as those which his intolerance has destroyed.

— H E L E N K E L L E R

Some time back I had lunch with a victim advocate in a local restaurant owned and operated by a family from Mexico. It is one of the best eateries in my neck of the woods, and I always enjoy my experience when I go there. The advocate was also from Mexico, and she had eaten at the restaurant frequently enough that she'd developed a relationship with the family and staff. In fact, she'd actually helped the hostess with some complicated paperwork involved in her pursuit of U.S. citizenship, so the advocate was even more popular than usual on the day we met there.

My friend arrived at the restaurant first, and, for reasons only her quirky sense of humor can explain, she informed the family and staff that she would be meeting a police detective for lunch. When I arrived a few minutes later, I was perplexed to find people greeting me who appeared genuinely terrified and unusually subservient. I was dressed in a suit, and I entered like a guy who was hungry for a good meal. I certainly don't think I conveyed any sense that I was after anyone or that I was there to create havoc.

My friend and I ate and spoke about victim's rights, strategized about upcoming training events for officers and advocates, fretted over some legislation we were trying to get passed through the state, and enjoyed the food. About thirty minutes into the lunch our waiter, a pleasant young man who had done his job well, approached my friend and asked her in Spanish if I was a racist.

I caught the basics of what the young man was asking my guest, and she confirmed his question once he'd walked away. I was momentarily floored and a little indignant that anyone would assume I was racist by virtue of my being a cop.

It was possible that he or his family had been through an unpleasant experience with police before, or maybe he'd just heard stories from others. Regardless, he was afraid of me, and that thought stayed with me the rest of the meal. A friendly, service-oriented kid, working in a restaurant I liked, was scared that I might get done eating and turn his whole world upside down. He'd done nothing to make me suspicious, and there would have been no legal justification for me to so much as ask for his ID, even if I had wanted to do so.

It matters little where you fall intellectually in the debate about immigrant rights. The fact of the matter is that people here from other countries must be afforded the same Constitutional rights as everyone else, whether they arrived here in a legal fashion or not. As a citizen, parent, and law enforcement officer in this country, I want accountability for every person living here. We are a nation founded on immigration, and I believe we can do a much better job of monitoring and streamlining the process of population flow in and out of this country. I also believe that a person who has arrived here illegally must still be protected and be allowed specific services, such as emergency medical care and police services, if need be.

Imagine for a moment being a traveler in another country. Maybe you're there on vacation, or maybe you're there for a job. Unfortunately, many of

the people in the country you are visiting don't seem to like you much, and at some point you start hearing about plans for the military and law enforcement officials to hunt you down and put you in jail. Again, it doesn't matter on which side of the immigration rights debate you fall, any reasonable person can see this would be frightening.

Now imagine you suddenly fall victim to a violent crime. Let's say you are robbed at knifepoint, and the bad guy got away with all your money and identification cards. What do you do now? The authorities have made it clear that they will incarcerate you and send you back from whence you came if they catch you. You'd like to get your stuff back, and maybe even help stop the criminal from robbing others, but you seem to have no mechanism for seeking help without bringing unwanted attention to yourself or your family.

This happens daily with undocumented immigrants in this country. They fall prey to domestic violence, aggravated robbery, extortion, and narcotics trafficking right outside their homes in full view of their children. Many feel there is nothing they can do about it. Like my waiter in the restaurant, they have no way of predicting what the cop who responds to their call for help will do. They wonder, "Will he go after the dope dealer or me? Will he help me get into a shelter to escape my abusive husband, or will he arrest me and launch a deportation process that will remove me from my children?"

I had a case once that involved a man who had arrived in the U.S. several years before his wife. He arrived here after swimming the Rio Grande, worked hard, got amnesty under a federal program, and eventually was awarded with naturalized citizenship. He opened a restaurant, and the American dream became his reality. Eventually, he held his hand out across the border to his wife, and she came to join him.

He began to hurt her almost immediately, and this evidently continued through both pregnancies and past when the youngest child entered first grade. The children had been born in America, so they held U.S. citizenship.

The husband had gained his citizenship. Mom was the only “illegal” in the family, and he reminded her of that each and every day.

He held this fact over her head constantly, threatening that he would call immigration officials if she didn’t obey him. She was convinced that U.S. citizenship came with the extra benefit of direct access to federal law enforcement agents, who were sitting around waiting for someone like her husband to call and inform on her.

This was especially terrifying because their children were U.S. citizens. She knew that deportation meant they would be left at the mercy of a man she’d come to realize was monstrous. Part of her decision to stay for as long as she had was her belief that her husband could have her sent out of the country on a whim, and that her children would become his next victims. For years she chose to endure his assaults so that her children would not have to.

To make matters worse, he routinely sabotaged her efforts to gain citizenship herself, either by “losing” her paperwork, making anonymous calls that she was using illegal drugs to immigration officials who were actually trying to help her, or simply refusing to take her to scheduled English classes and appointments. He already controlled the pocket book, her ability to communicate with her friends and family, her transportation options, and then he added the wrinkle of controlling her ability to stay in the same country with her children. No wonder it took her so long to ask for help.

During one episode, he slammed her hand in a car door. That incident was the first one ever witnessed by anyone outside their family, and it was the first time the police had ever been notified. The person who dialed 911 from a pay phone refused to leave a name and left before we got there, so there were no witnesses, but the call helped in finally allowing a police agency to get involved.

I remember that she was terrified of all of us. We were large, armed men with tremendous authority over her life right then, and she may have seen us

as Gestapo. Her husband kept yelling that he was going to have her deported, and that she had spent her last night on American soil. Her lips quivered, and her eyes filled.

She believed him, of course. She had it in her head that American citizenship came with a secret pass or power to have others jailed and deported because he'd told her so many, many times. She was convinced her husband had friends in high places that were a phone call away from tearing her from their children. He'd begun a pattern of abuse toward the boys of late, but she'd been able to distract him from them and get him to hit her instead for some time. She shuddered, imagining what would happen to them if she weren't there to shield them from a man she'd come to accept as an abusive monster.

Truth was, I felt a little stuck. The guy didn't have the swing he'd convinced her he had, but he would definitely be able to make a phone call to federal immigration authorities once he bonded out of jail. If he was successful in his plans, she'd be deported, and there would be no witness to confront him at trial. The charges would have to be dropped, and he'd reign supreme and unchallenged over two little boys. This did not feel like justice.

That's when I learned about the U visa. U visas are a direct extension of the federal Violence Against Women Act of 1994. Several strategies were employed under this act, including more police officer training, more shelters and long-term housing for victims of domestic violence, and more funding for Batterer Intervention Programs across the country. The U visa has turned out to be a nifty little idea designed to keep witnesses of violent or felony crimes in this country so they can participate in removing hardened criminals from communities without having to worry about deportation.

If an undocumented immigrant witnesses a serious crime, he or she has the opportunity to petition the U.S. government for the visa, which protects them from the deportation process during the length of the investigation and through prosecution. For assisting in removing, say, a drug dealer from the

streets, a gang member, or a violent or sexual predator, they are then afforded a chance to stay in this country long enough to earn naturalized citizenship.

This is not instant citizenship, and the process can still take years, but it offers an incentive for someone who is frightened and fed up to come forward and be offered a whole basket of protections. This is good for them because they don't have to hide or cringe every time they see a cop, and it is good for law enforcement because we keep a witness that will help us restore or maintain safe streets and homes.

The obvious blemish in this plan is that some people might manufacture a witness statement for the sole purpose of initiating a U visa application. There will always be flaws in a government bureaucracy, but this plan and process has proven valuable time and time again. Yes, some people might try to scam the system, but it would be a risky move to make up a story about felony crimes and hope it stuck all the way through the conviction phase because any discovery of illegitimacy would likely result in criminal charges and rapid deportation.

Also, the victim advocates who make referrals to law enforcement agencies tend to be discerning about whom they recommend for a U visa. Those advocates don't want to be seen as sending undeserving applicants our way, so they are generally more strict and hesitant to file than are we.

The forms are a little long and tedious. Fortunately for us, law enforcement's portion is short and simple. We are asked to sign a document confirming that the applicant was an important part of our investigation, and that he or she cooperated fully with that investigation. We then attach our police reports related to the matter and send it off for processing. This is a good thing because law enforcement officers tend to have too many pieces of paper on their desks anyway, so something we can sign and move out in two minutes makes us happy.

Make no mistake, if you are a violent criminal, a sexual predator, a thief, or a drug dealer, I want you gone. I want you in jail for your sentence and immediately deported afterwards. I want to know everything about you, including what friends and family you have in the area, so my colleagues and I can round you up even faster if you ever sneak back into our country. I want immigration officials to take a wife or child batterer as seriously as a member of an organized criminal conspiracy, and I want your life to be absolutely miserable while you scurry around in my country, trying to evade detection while preying on others.

However, if you're a decent human being who somehow made it here from some other country in the simple hope of creating a better life for yourself or your children, I don't want you to have to go about your day afraid of the police. Yes, I want you to apply for documentation and be identified (just as we are through social security, taxes, driver's licenses, etc.). And yes, I want you to go through the proper—admittedly long and bureaucratic— process to earn citizenship here, just as I would if I were to choose to seek citizenship in another country. My new home country deserves that respect and show of allegiance.

Regardless of how or when you are identified, I want the message to be loud and clear that the police should and generally do recognize the difference between the severity of an undocumented worker and a drug dealer or a child molester. They just can't reasonably be put in the same category. It would be like comparing a person speeding in her car to a person who steals cars. If you want to get anywhere with the intricate, deeply entrenched problems associated with immigration, you have to start from a foundation of common sense and respect for the diverse human condition. When you have that, you can

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participate in making sound, humane decisions that have the potential to improve individual lives, families, and entire communities.

People who are afraid and being preyed upon need police assistance. The alternative is for them to live in a form of slavery or to raise arms themselves in vigilante justice. Many street gangs around today were created as a result of a need for greater protection, coupled with a lack of faith in local police. Neither of the alternatives is acceptable, so some mechanism for allowing oppressed people to come forward has to be allowed. Currently, a part of that mechanism can be realized through the U visa program and through police agencies and officers able to exercise discretion when it comes to reaching for the greater good.

WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL POLICE RESPONSE LOOK LIKE?

No man in the wrong can stand up to a man in the right who just a keeps on a coming.

— CREED OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

One of my proudest moments at work occurred when I was interviewing a guy who had been involved in a bank robbery. The guy turned out to be more of a dupe than one of the actual robbers. He had the misfortune to be sitting in the car, smoking marijuana, when his two buddies got it in their heads to rip off the bank right next to the grocery store where they'd stopped to buy bread.

The dupe kept saying to us, "I told them not to do it [the robbery]. I told them they wouldn't get away with it." And then Dupe said a profound thing. "I told them, man, they won't let up around here. They hunt you down just for smacking your girlfriend in this town. What do you think they're gonna do about a bank robbery?"

I was gratified because the reputation we'd been building for years had evidently seeped into the mumblings and confederacy of street thugs. The word was out that our department wouldn't tolerate intimate partner violence, and I couldn't have been more proud.

What exactly do the police do in a situation of domestic assault and/or stalking? Depending on how one perceives the police, this question could be answered in a dozen different ways. If your only image of a police agency centers on how likely officers from a department are to write you a speeding

ticket, your views on how those officers would handle something more complicated, such as intimate partner violence, may be somewhat skewed. If you get all your information on police tactics from fictional television shows, again, your insight may be limited. So, let's break it down and look at what should occur as part of a professional, proactive police agency's response.

We begin with the emergency response in many situations. Someone calls 911 to report that an assault is occurring, and a call-taker gathers information about where the assault is occurring, how many people are involved, whether alcohol or drugs are a factor, could there be weapons, what does the suspect look like, and what has occurred up to that point—all while the caller is still on the phone. Simultaneously, the information is sent to a dispatcher, who sends two or three officers to the address and keeps them updated on new developments as they respond.

It's important to know that the dispatcher is sending officers even while the call-taker is still getting information. That information is critical for a couple of different reasons.

First, officers generally have a better idea of what is going on and how best to respond when call-takers continue to gather information. If, for example, a call-taker alerts a dispatcher that the suspect has left the scene, responding officers will know to be looking for a "balding, white male wearing a blue plaid shirt leaving the area on a purple bicycle." If, however, a dispatcher is given information that the suspect has just fetched a shotgun, this is information that may save a lot of people's lives, including the responding officers.

The second valuable asset gained when a call-taker elicits information during the call is that all that information is evidence. In most cases, calls into 911 centers are recorded. Imagine the impact of a recorded phone call played for a jury months later at trial when the victim is heard whispering, "Please hurry. I think he's going to kill me this time," while in the background the suspect can be heard growling, "I'm going to kill you."

Evidence . . . sweet, sweet evidence.

So a good call-taker can make or break the case. In some instances, there has been little for me as an investigator to do other than collect the recorded phone call, make sure copies of it were made for the prosecutor and defense attorney, and then sit back and smile because our case was made the moment someone dialed 911.

It's also important for all the emergency call-takers out there to remember that, while they're gathering evidence, they also need to let the scared person on the other end of the line know that the police have been dispatched. I've listened to hundreds of 911 calls over the years, and by far the most disconcerting thing a call-taker can do is to forget to impart this simple piece of information. The call-taker keeps asking questions, and if they omit the fact that the cavalry is coming the callers get frustrated and more frightened, believing they have to convince the call-taker that the situation is bad enough to send the police. This is cruel, and it is completely avoidable by simply pausing long enough to say, "Okay, the police officers (or paramedics, firefighters) are being dispatched. Stay on the line with me so I can get more information." Three seconds of investment will pay off huge dividends by keeping people calmer, safer, and more informed than if they think you're not taking them seriously.

Early on in the conversation, the police dispatcher sends officers to the emergency, and two to three officers hustle to the scene. When a crime, especially a violent crime, is in progress, officers tend to use their emergency lights and sometimes sirens in order to get to the scene faster.

But officers approach the house in a manner that will minimize them being targets for anyone inside who might take offense at the fact that they're coming to investigate, and many times they will literally sneak up on a house or apartment in the hopes of being able to actually witness actions or statements that will later be used as evidence in the investigation. For example, as officers approach they may hear "Please don't hurt me anymore" or "I'm going to kill you."

Rest assured, officers aren't going to stand around and take notes at this point. The situation has reached or is reaching critical mass where someone is getting hurt or about to get killed, and the job is to secure everyone's safety and restore the peace. Focusing on gathering clues—such as listening for incriminating statements or watching for signs of a struggle as you move forward to make the rescue—should be an integral part of the initial response, without actually slowing the response.

Once contact is made with the parties involved, it's important that officers make sure the scene is safe. Domestic violence scenes can be extremely dangerous for officers for a number of reasons.

Officers are entering someone's home, a place people rightfully feel is private and sacred. Our Founding Fathers made it clear that a person's home is his castle, and government agents (especially police and military) have no business there unless there is a lawful and exigent reason for it. We've already discussed the fact that the Supreme Court has given a clear green light for police officers to go into someone's home when evidence of domestic violence exists, at least until all parties have been made safe and peace has been reestablished.

That having been said, Americans are rightfully offended when police officers force their way into their homes. This feeling is often compounded by the fact that the reason the officers are in the home in the first place is because someone in that house is a control freak who is bullying his or her relatives. How well do you think that type of personality responds to the fact that uniformed men and women, who represent the essence of authority, "intruded" into his castle?

The answer to that question depends on the personality and the level of intoxication of the primary aggressor in the house. Some batterers are cowardly when faced with someone who can actually handle their physical attacks; some are just stupid and decide to strut and swagger, thinking this

will be impressive to someone; a few will actually try to attack the officers to demonstrate that he's not scared of them or anything else. One must put on a good show for one's lady, after all, even if she is the same lady one was smacking around minutes earlier.

These scenes are also dangerous because drugs or alcohol are almost always involved. There is also no way of knowing if there are other people lurking around inside the house or if there are weapons stashed about. Officers are at a disadvantage when in someone's home who may have planned for that day when "intruders" bust in by planting weapons that can be grabbed and utilized at a moment's notice. Again, we're dealing with a controlling, paranoid personality. It doesn't take much to realize that type of personality may have planned in advance for the day when police officers or others enter his home by force. He could decide to go down in a blaze of glory and take a few cops with him at the same time.

In short, restoring safety and peace is paramount when officers arrive at a domestic violence scene. Once everything is under control, the next phase of the investigation can begin.

Investigations begin with a conversation. The pace slows considerably from the moments of the emergency response, and officers begin speaking with everyone involved. If someone is injured and needs medical care, the conversation may have to wait, but the fact gathering begins as soon as possible.

Any investigation should begin in neutral. I want to go my whole career without ever sending an innocent person to jail, and the only way to ensure that is to begin each case without preconceived notions. Any investigation is simply a pursuit of truth, and other people besides police officers should and will decide the consequences for any actions. The police don't work for either the prosecutor or a defense attorney. We don't work for battered women's shelters or for men's rights groups. We are keepers of the peace, defenders

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of the Constitution, and seekers of truth—nothing more or less—and any variation on those roles begins to erode the purity and simplicity of the craft.

The pursuit of evidence begins with a neutral, unbiased conversation with everyone who has anything to do with the story once peace has been restored. More and more, patrol officers are recording those statements, and I think this is fantastic. Recording interviews captures not just the statement but also the emotion of the moment. Six months later, all parties might just end up in a jury trial, and, for the most, part all emotions are minimized and downplayed in a courtroom. However, having a recording of the victim crying and saying in a tiny, frightened voice that she thought she was going to die is vivid evidence. It is more pure in its raw emotion than anything she might experience at trial months later. No one can say that the officer paraphrased her statement inappropriately, and it might even help victims recall certain feelings and sensations afterward so they can accurately describe their mindset at a later date.

Children tend to be great witnesses if you get their statements early on. If you wait too long, someone in the family may coach them as to what to say to keep the suspect out of trouble. Conviction rates shoot up when children at the scene are interviewed and photographed within a short time after the actual incident took place. There's something about recording sad little voices and being able to present frightened little faces from the worst night of a child's life that tends to sway juries inexorably.

Once all the statements are collected, or perhaps as they are being collected, an effort is made to collect physical evidence. This includes photographs, the collection of blood samples, hairs that were yanked out during the melee, any weapons used, ropes or tape used to bind the victim in cases where a

kidnapping or false imprisonment took place, or surveillance video if the attack took place in a public area.

If there is any piece of evidence I believe is more overlooked or forgotten than others, it is the surveillance video. Many businesses and ATMs are digitally recording every minute of the day, and a simple canvass of the neighborhood can reveal unbiased evidence that has a way of cutting through all the lies and memories blurred from alcohol or drug use. One of the most compelling pieces of surveillance video I've ever seen is shown at conferences on intimate partner violence. A man is recorded strangling his girlfriend into unconsciousness and then making a show of helping her up and patting her lovingly as security guards approach. Bless her heart, she actually stands there smoothing her hair and wrinkled dress as the punk that was her boyfriend schmoozes the confused guard. A good piece of evidence might be out there waiting to be discovered by a heads-up officer, and I encourage anyone involved in such an investigation to snoop around and see if it exists in your case.

Medical records, especially those documenting treatment by ambulance crews or emergency room personnel, generally become part of the case file as well. These are usually gained through a subpoena, and they are at times the most important documents in the case. If, for instance, a paramedic writes the following report:

"The patient complained of pain to her left eye, lower left back, and both upper arms. Bruising patterns were noted developing in all of these areas. The patient reported that these injuries resulted from her boyfriend punching and kicking her repeatedly. She indicated she was experiencing significant pain over the area of her left kidney. She said the boyfriend kicked her there three or four times, and that he was wearing Western-style boots at the time."

Now, let's take a hypothetical, though common, scenario in which this same patient has not made a disclosure to police. Officers arrived at her home

after neighbors call 911 to report that a man was beating a woman next door. The police officers find the woman lying in a bloody, crying heap on her living room floor, being screamed at by a drunk guy in a tank top who says he is her boyfriend. He politely offers to tend to her wounds so the officers won't have to be bothered and can go about the business of dealing with "real" criminals.

She mumbles something about falling down while casting fearful glances in his direction, but later she tells the ambulance crew exactly how the boyfriend beat her. It is perfectly acceptable to use the statement from the paramedics as part of the overall case evidence package. Clearly, she made the statement to the medical personnel while under a lot of stress and emotion—an "excited utterance," in legal lingo. A person, such as a paramedic or a nurse, who hears an excited utterance may be allowed to testify to what they were told, even though under normal circumstances it would be considered "hearsay" and would not be allowed.

Once all the witness statements are compiled and all the evidence has been gathered, it's time to talk to the suspect. I've already mentioned that any fair investigation begins with a neutral balance, but by this time in the case, accusations have been made. In my opinion, it is only fair and right that the person accused get a chance to tell his or her side of the story. Sometimes they tell it right when you're walking in their front door, and sometimes they don't tell it until the day of the trial. Defense attorneys caution against an accused person making any statement at all, but there are times when giving your version of events can help you greatly. With that in mind, investigators often take an accused person off to the side or into an interview room and see what he or she has to say. If it becomes clear that the person did the crime, or that the accused person is lying about his part in the incident, a trained investigator will push and prod until the truth comes out.

Incriminating statements made by the suspect, such as "I shouldn't have hit her" or "I wasn't really trying to hurt her" or "I was just trying to scare

her a little,” are golden. It’s game over when batterers utter such responses, especially if they are made spontaneously or after they’ve been given a Miranda rights warning.

At some point, decisions must be made. Do we have probable cause to make an arrest? Should an arrest take place? What do we need to do to make sure everyone remains safe and peaceful once we leave? And what is in the best interest of this household and this community? Hopefully, the investigation has shed enough light on the truth so the decisions, albeit grim and critical, can be made in a judicious and proper manner. An arrest could be the blessing this family has been praying for, but the knowledge that a man’s freedom is at stake should never be taken lightly. Cops are paid to make the tough calls, and, if the investigation has been done properly, they can do their job well and wisely.

After all is said and done, the case is handed off to a prosecutor. They’ll review the facts, ask more questions if anything is unclear, draw their own conclusions, and make their own decisions. The prosecutor is the ultimate authority on whether formal charges will be filed or whether the matter will be dropped entirely. The victim will have a say, as will the investigating officers, but the final decision comes down to the people who will be responsible for taking the case to trial. If they think they can win, and they believe in the merits of the case, we get ready for trial day. Conversely, if they don’t think they’ll prevail, the charges go away. This is as it should be in that this process lends a solid and fair check on police authority and ensures weak cases or outright unfair accusations don’t proceed.

So that’s a domestic battery case in a nutshell. Officers get to the scene quickly and immediately go about making everyone safe and restoring the peace; they collect witness statements and evidence, compile information from sources, such as medical records and past criminal history; they pin down the victim’s statement and try to elicit a confession from the suspect; they make

decisions based on the evidence at hand, such as whether or not to make an arrest; and, finally, they hand the whole package over to the prosecutor and move on to the next call.

This chapter has attempted to show what good police work should look like. You should expect nothing less than a professional response when you call the police for help, but we've all heard or experienced stories of poor police work. The next chapter focuses on how to set expectations with your local police agency and get what you need when police assistance is necessary.

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING INADEQUATE OR INCOMPETENT POLICE WORK

Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves. What is equally true is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on.

— ROBERT F. KENNEDY

I have known a small number of bad cops in my time. Most police officers, however, are extraordinary men and women who live by a code of ethics more precious to us than anything else, save our families. I've never known even one officer who came to work thinking he was going to do bad work and make the world a little worse today. I've never personally seen an officer take a bribe, and the one officer I learned had been taking bribes from illegal immigrants after he bullied them was caught, convicted, and now lives in our prison system.

I've seen physical abuse of a suspect by only one officer that occurred after he and I chased a man who had just pulled a knife on a third officer. The officer started punching the suspect repeatedly, even after it was clear the fight was over. It got bad enough that I jumped in between the officer and the suspect and got rewarded with two punches to my own back intended for the bad guy's head. That particular police officer is no longer in law enforcement.

To date, I've arrested two police officers: one for drunk driving and the other for strangling his girlfriend. It was uncomfortable, but I'd do it again tomorrow if the situation called for it. I'm loyal to my fellow officers. We are a band of brothers who work in a profession seen by many as a necessary

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evil but which is, in fact, a mission of Samaritanism. We often feel that we stand alone against the world's dragons, yet are just as likely to be despised for the job we do as appreciated for it. That feeling of standing shoulder to shoulder against tides of violence, greed, and thoughtlessness, especially when there is always an element of danger associated, creates a spirit of bonded love and respect known only by soldiers in combat and other public safety professions. I want my brothers to live their dreams and live up to the ideals set forth in the oath of service we all take, and I've rarely been disappointed.

That having been said, once an officer starts abusing his badge and authority to get away with crimes that could result in injury or death to another human being, all loyalties to him from me are gone. He has, in essence, turned his back on everything the badge stands for, forsaken the foundational ideals, and left himself open for whatever comes. There is a thin blue line that marks us all, but once we cross that line, there is rarely if ever any going back.

Yes, there is bad policing out there, but it is nowhere near as rampant as one might assume based on how our profession is portrayed in film and television. Shows starring a handsome leading man or a grandmotherly type working as a private detective couldn't exist without the premise that the police in the private detective's town are too incompetent, corrupt, overwhelmed, or lazy to get the job done themselves, thus forcing the victim to hire someone to solve the crime out of desperation. How many donut jokes can there be out there? And folks, let me just clue you in: raising your arms in mock surrender and announcing "I didn't do it" when a uniformed officer walks by may seem like the funniest, most original jest in the history of comedy, but I assure you that the officer has heard that joke several hundred times and is only smiling out of professionalism. Imagine how you'd feel if you were told the same knock-knock joke several times a day, every day, for twenty years.

The point is that Hollywood stereotypes and our culture's general lack of ease with authority figures leads to a situation in which it is easy and amusing to assume that police officers in any particular city are incompetent and ineffective. The drawback to this is that this attitude just widens the chasm between citizens and the people sworn to protect them. Police officers experience bigotry every time they don a uniform or announce their profession. All of us have been hated, literally hated, simply for the profession we've chosen and the clothing we wear. If you believe that police work is a type of culture, which it is, then it is a simple jump to see that officers are mocked, despised, prejudged, and disregarded simply for their participation in that culture. Substitute a race or a religion for my profession's culture, and you can see how entirely inappropriate this type of bigotry is.

One of the most significant problems this creates relative to domestic violence is that women who are being beaten down by their partners find difficulty in seeking help — they simply don't feel they can trust police officers to do the job. For many people trapped in an intimate partner violence nightmare, the thought of reaching out for assistance from a group of professionals trained, equipped, and sworn to protect them is too big a leap because failure on the part of the police could mean more pain. If a victim has grown used to the idea that cops are just a bunch of lazy idiots, how on earth can she trust them with her life or the lives of her loved ones?

"All citizens must be able to depend on the police to defend and protect them. The public must insist that the police not be allowed to ignore any pleas for help from stalking victims simply because nothing serious has yet occurred." That was written by Captain Robert L. Snow in his book *Stopping A Stalker: A Cop's Guide To Making The System Work For You* (pg. 215). He's right. Where are we if people can't trust the police? We know from experience that

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distrust or lack of faith provides a perfect breeding ground for households, neighborhoods, and large sections of cities to deteriorate into vice-driven battlegrounds. It is equally important for citizens to simultaneously keep their agencies accountable, while viewing law enforcement in a fair light, as it is for police officers and agencies to consistently perform their duties in an exceptional manner.

One of the objectives in writing this book is to dispel some of those myths in which officers are portrayed as uncaring or ineffective. In the last several years there has been a huge push across this nation for police agencies to take domestic violence and stalking more seriously than has ever been the case in the past. In some cities, units specifically assigned to investigate and address abuse in the home are called Homicide Prevention Units because there is a clear correlation between aggressively using the criminal justice system to combat this type of crime and lowered homicide rates.

Think about that for a minute. Police agencies assign officers and detectives to pursue cases involving intimate partner violence and the homicide rates in those cities tend to go down. When you consider that at least fifty percent of all homicides are done by people who know each other and have lived together, this makes a lot of sense.

POLICE AGENCIES
PURSUE CASES
OF INTIMATE
PARTNER
VIOLENCE AND
HOMICIDE RATES
IN THOSE
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TO GO DOWN

We are all used to police agencies reacting to a crime. An offense gets reported, an investigation ensues, perhaps an arrest is made, and we go on to the next call. An argument can be made that the suspect can be rehabilitated or “learn his lesson,” but for the most part these actions constitute a slowing mechanism on crime rates with a dash of deterrence thrown in.

Something bigger happens when a police agency takes on the responsibility and dedicates manpower to addressing domestic violence crimes. Every major study in the last thirty years clearly shows a direct link between solid police work and aggressive

prosecution (including mandatory jail time in conjunction with long-term Batterer Intervention Counseling) and decreased homicide rates, decreases in repeat offenses within the same home, lower incidences of officers getting hurt, and increases in the confidence levels the general public has for their police departments.

This is good police work and good government. The executive branch of the government, as represented by every police officer across this land, has as its most important function the protection of the citizenry. There is no more important or sacred duty of government than that. Yes, governments get bogged down in bureaucracy and, in some cases, outright inefficiency, but when it gets right down to the base objective, taking care of the safety and welfare of each other is what it's all about in a government of and by the people.

Therefore, it's logical that when programs which are repeatedly shown to be effective in better ensuring the safety of the community are identified, it makes sense that the resources and support of police chiefs and elected sheriffs fall behind them. More and more, that is what communities are getting. I've said for years that twenty-first century policing has an opportunity to do a better job for those we serve than at any time in this nation's history, and programs like domestic violence units can be a big part of that.

What of the other side of the coin, though—the indifferent or ineffective police response? Taking out the extremes of outright corruption or criminality, there are essentially two categories into which poor police work falls: cops that hate doing reports and cops that have lost (or never had) empathy toward the victim.

Nobody in law enforcement particularly likes paperwork, but it is a part of the job. The police report lays the foundation for just about everything that comes next, including a case being assigned to an investigator, proceeding to prosecution, civil court processes, such as in child custody issues or lawsuits,

what is presented to the media, and the compilation of crime statistics used in strategic planning and crime prevention efforts.

Even the smallest of agencies have too many cases in a year to remember subtle details from each and every one, and an officer who tries to go to court based solely on his memory of events that happened nine months earlier, and without having read the details in a report he wrote way back then, is being foolish if he thinks he can just “wing it.”

As an investigator, I want to know if someone has been breaking into houses using a tool with a particular size or shape so I can compare it to the damage caused by the guy police officers caught using a chisel to break into a home last night. Maybe I can clear up ten or twenty additional cases, but if officers along the way have decided that doing a report when there weren't any suspects wasn't worth the time, we've all lost a lot of ground and a lot of opportunity to solve other crimes.

The same holds true for crime victims. If, for example, your car gets broken into one night and some change and a little music player is stolen out of your console, you might think it's not a big enough deal to report. What if, however, the thug who broke into your car also burglarized a home two blocks from your house and broke into another seven cars three streets over. What if that guy has a partner, and the two of them have been going out every weekend night for the last six months and are, at this moment, hoarding car stereos, jewelry, money, knives, keys to people's homes, and more? Do you still think it's too small a deal to report? Maybe the break-in of your car is the one in which they messed up and smeared DNA containing sweat on a car seat or left a fingerprint on the glove box. Or maybe they were caught later the same night and confessed to their spree. Unfortunately, without a police report there would be almost no way to identify you as a victim and get your stuff back to you.

Obviously, it's important to document crimes, concerns, and information that might later lead to a successful resolution of a problem through police reports. It doesn't happen, however, if victims or informants don't report, or if police officers don't make a report.

I'm going to tell you the secret that will insure a police report gets filed each and every time you need one. I want to reiterate that the vast majority of police officers are conscientious and hardworking individuals who use good judgment in deciding when and how to file a report. There are those times, though, when an overworked or distracted officer makes a shortsighted decision against filling out the paperwork so he or she can move on to the next assignment. This may be done out of slothfulness, or it may be due to a sense of urgency to get moving to another emergency. Whichever the case, if you feel that your situation might require documentation, it is probably important that the officer get this done for you. To make double sure you get the services you need, simply ask one question of the officer taking your statement: "How can I get a copy of this report later?"

This tells the officer that you want a report done and that you will be coming to find it later. Any officer with at least a week of street time under his belt will know that not filing a report at that point will likely get a supervisor involved in his or her life in the near future. Supervisors are generally much nicer than the screaming lieutenants you see yelling at officers in the movies, but they are still people to be avoided for circumstances in which you should have done something and you didn't. There is simply no reason to bring that kind of scrutiny and discomfort into your life for no other reason than you didn't completely do your job. That being the case, when you politely ask an officer how you can get a copy of a report later, you're all but assured one will be filed.

I recommend that you actually do get a copy. Police officers are human, after all, and it is possible they misunderstood an important element of a case or left out a detail. Most officers will be happy to fix any mistake they made.

ASK
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OF THIS
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LATER?"

They will not, however, change the facts of the case to meet your wishes. You can call downtown all day long and yell that the officer didn't do this or that right, but if he or she has gotten the facts straight, you'll move a mountain before you get them to change one comma.

There may come a time when a police officer actually tells you that he and his department won't be taking any further action on a matter. In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred there will be a good reason for this. For instance, it may be that a law enforcement agency isn't designed to serve a particular need, such as in a civil contract matter.

If, however, you still feel strongly that your needs haven't been met adequately by the police officer assigned to your issue, take it to the next step. In other words, ask to speak to the officer's supervisor. If the supervisor won't fix the problem, go up another level. If you've reached the chief or sheriff and the issue still hasn't been handled to your satisfaction, the next recourse is to make your complaint known to the prosecutor's office or to a law enforcement agency also having jurisdiction in your area. For example, if a city police agency isn't dealing with your problem, ask the county agency to look into the matter. If the county sheriff's department won't step in, take your report to the state police.

Chances are that if you have made it to that many agencies you're frustrated,

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but it could also mean you're missing some important piece of information that all those officers are telling you. I'll say again that most police officers, sheriff's deputies, state police personnel, and federal agents are hardworking, conscientious men and women who strive every day to get the job done. It's likely they know what they're talking about, even if you don't particularly like the answer. That having been said, if you encounter an officer or an agency that doesn't take violence and stalking issues seriously, you are

well within your rights to keep talking until somebody listens. This is your life or the life of a loved one we're talking about, after all.

That pretty much covers a poor police response based on lack of appropriate action, but what about poor police work founded in a lack of empathy? If you've got a police officer that has lost the ability or energy to care about the people in his or her jurisdiction, you've got a problem.

It happens. Fatigue or poor morale sets in, and the result is that sometimes cops stop caring or thinking they can do good anymore. This is a dangerous time because an officer who comes to believe his contribution has no merit or value will get lazy, angry, judgmental, or distracted.

Without making excuses, I think it's fair to point out that police officers are generally overworked and underpaid for the amount of risk and responsibility they bear. They have to make life-and-death decisions under ongoing scrutiny from the public, fellow officers, everyone within the criminal justice system, and criminals. It's a lot of stress with asymmetrical compensation, and if an officer has stopped being able to feel the intangible rewards, such as honor, brotherhood, contribution to the greater good, and the thrill of hunting bad guys, it's easy to develop the notion that it is stupid to keep going to work every day.

I don't know a single officer, including myself, who hasn't felt that way, and it is during those times when you notice more the hateful stares, the heat vapors rising out of your ballistic vest, and the fact that your city council is waiting yet another year to get your pay raise to you. Inevitably, it is during one of those low times that a uniformed officer will be standing in line at a grocery store, minding his own business and waiting to purchase some juice and a bag of almonds, when a perfectly reasonable-looking mother points you out to her five year old and says, "Do you see that police man? If you're not good I'm going to have him arrest you."

And in that single moment you know how much that woman must despise you because she has now taken the one solid thing you had left in your profession, that of being a friend to children, and turned it around so that you are now the symbol of the worst, most terrifying form of punishment: incarceration, removal from family, and contact with bad people. It is on those days when a police officer hates back and doesn't want anything to do with . . . anyone.

Maybe that's the officer who shows up to take your complaint that your ex-boyfriend is harassing you. Does that mean he should take your complaint any less seriously? Absolutely not, but we are dealing with human beings here, men and women going through divorce or financial trouble, with sick children, or a job weighing too heavily on their shoulders that day.

None of that is your problem, and I don't expect anyone to feel sorry for a cop who can't put all that aside and be the professional he or she promised to be. If you're in trouble, we are supposed to protect you and serve you at least to the point where you are safe, you understand the plan that will be put in place to meet your needs, and you have the information you need to move on with your life.

We can't move away from this chapter without first acknowledging the fact that, in rare instances, police officers are the problem themselves. If a police

officer is battering his wife or abusing his children, he is no longer a cop. He has crossed every legal and ethical line imaginable and is now using his badge and authority to perpetuate his criminal actions. Police officers as abusers are more dangerous than most batterers because they understand the system, know how to hide injuries on their victims so they don't show later, and know how to talk to other police officers to minimize their responsibility.

Additionally, it is not an easy thing to arrest a police officer. His ability to put up a good, if not deadly, fight notwithstanding, the

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notion of arresting a brother officer is a difficult one for any of us. We all know that an arrest will likely mean the end of a cop's career, and the fact that he may be exceptional at his job and always "there" for his fellow officers doesn't help matters much.

Victims may be even more reluctant to come forward, knowing that other officers could easily skew the facts to make her look like the problem or to try to hide the matter from the public and the prosecutor. How terrifying it must be to make a police report to police officers about a police officer, knowing that if they don't take a fair look at the evidence or take decisive action that the officer in question will be even more empowered and controlling in the future.

Regardless, police officers that batter must be stopped, and it may be up to his department to stop him. However, it is probably in the best interest of the victim, the accused, the department, and the community at large for the matter to be turned over for investigation to another jurisdiction if there is a concern that the matter could be minimized. In other words, if a person makes a complaint that a police officer working for a city has attacked her, that city department may choose to refer the matter for investigation to the county or state law enforcement agency. This is a sound strategy because it removes any sense of impropriety from the minds of the community and sets a level, fair playing field for the investigation to continue.

Police officers in this country, by and large, are honorable, hardworking men and women who want to participate in making their community safer and keeping the peace. Unfortunately, negative myths and stereotypes make it difficult for people who are in trouble to come forward and place trust in cops. In the majority of circumstances, victims will be treated well, and their needs will be met. In those instances in which this is not the case, there are effective recourses to pursue before giving up in frustration and deciding to simply tolerate continued abuse. Further, for those rare times when a police officer

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is the actual suspect, it needs to be clear to victims, communities, and the batterer himself that this behavior won't be tolerated, that it will be investigated, and that the officer will be fired, arrested, or both if the evidence speaks against him.

It is only by understanding the expectations of police agencies, demanding that the bar of professionalism be set high, and officers consistently showing communities that we are doing the job we were hired to do—and doing it well—that the crime of domestic violence and stalking can be confronted head-on and dealt with effectively.

RESTRAINING/PROTECTION ORDERS: CURE-ALL OR SNAKE OIL?

Action is the antidote to despair.

— JOAN BAEZ

“It’s just a piece of paper. It won’t stop a bullet.”

This was said by the rather cynical mother of a college coed who had been living a nightmare for eight weeks before finally walking into the police station to ask for help. Kim had ended things with her ex-boyfriend after he shoved her into the refrigerator one night. Evidently, she’d been spending too much time on homework and in class, so when she announced she’d volunteered to be on a committee at school it just set him off.

Bam—into the refrigerator Kim went, and then he shoved her backwards over the kitchen table. She chipped a tooth and suffered a mild concussion. He was instantly all about the apologies.

“I’m sorry. It will never happen again.”

“Get out,” Kim demanded while holding a bloody rag to the back of her head.

“Please don’t leave me,” he whined.

“Leave me alone!”

And he did . . . for two days. Then the text messages started, sometimes as many as three hundred a day. Some were apologetic, though many were abusive and cruel.

“You whore. I can’t believe you’re treating me like this. Are you already f—ing someone else?”

The pretty flowers she’d planted for her apartment balcony were torn from the roots. Her car was keyed. PhotoShopped photographs of her with a bull’s-eye on her forehead and of her torso being mauled by hyenas were sent from anonymous email accounts to her computer. He spied on her at work, and he swore to mutual friends that he’d get her back.

Our strategy for stopping this course of conduct started with an order of protection. He ignored it—once. Then the ex-boyfriend decided jail was just an awful place and, as quickly as he’d turned vicious, he backed off. I believed her when she told us she never heard from him again, and some time later we learned he’d taken a job in Nevada.

Sorry, Nevada.

Yep, Kim’s mom was right. A piece of paper cannot stop a bullet or a knife, but I believe that in many cases restraining orders, also called protection orders in some states, can save lives.

The important thing to remember about restraining orders is that most people actually abide by them, and the percentage of people who don’t can be effectively dealt with if the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction respects the order and enforces infractions.

A restraining or protection order is an order from a judge clearly telling one person that he or she is to leave another person alone and to not make any attempts to be around that person. The order specifies places where the person receiving the order cannot go, such as a house, a place where the other person is employed, or a school where the person’s children attend. You generally get protection or restraining orders at the municipal or county courthouse in the area where you live, and in some states police officers have the authority to grant them temporarily. I recommend calling the local police department or

prosecutor's office if you're not sure where to request such an order in your area of the country.

The orders vary a little from state to state, but they tend to be specific in that the person being served (respondent) must not contact the person asking for the order (petitioner) in any form, perform any action that would alarm or annoy the other person, or have other people make contact on behalf of the respondent.

Driving by the petitioner's house while screaming profanities and making insulting finger gestures has always fallen into the area of offensive actions, as have phone calls and letters. In the last few years, we've also seen lots of cases involving email, social media, and cellular phone text message harassment.

Contact is contact, and it is my opinion that even text messages warrant action on the part of the local law enforcement agency. Some would say that a text message or email is no big deal, but in many cases an email is merely a test by the respondent to see what the real boundaries are. If the petitioner responds back, even to curse him and tell him to leave her alone, a dialogue has begun. If the petitioner doesn't tell the police about the infraction, the respondent knows that the boundary has been moved back from what the judge set. "Absolutely no contact" has now become a "little bit of contact." From there it is a simple matter to try to move the boundary again with a phone call. If she engages in his conversation and doesn't tell anyone that the respondent has broken the protection order, he now knows that yet another boundary has been set.

From there it progresses to a conversation in which he begs for a meeting so he can tell her all the things he has done to correct his behavior. If she agrees to a meeting, he will tell her about getting baptized the night before, how he's set up an appointment with a counselor, how he hasn't had anything to drink in four days, and how lonely he has been without her.

**RESTRAINING
ORDERS**

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ON STRAIGHT
ABOUT WHAT
SHE WANTS

Earlier we discussed the cycle of violence prevalent in the majority of abusive relationships. Every relationship experiences tension, but sometimes in dysfunctional relationships that period of tension culminates in violence and an aggressive display of control to reestablish subservience. That period of controlling violence is followed by what is referred to as the honeymoon period, during which the batterer makes lots of promises, goes to great lengths to make up for their “loss of control,” and eventually convinces the victim that he will never hurt her again.

One of the great values in restraining/protection orders is that they short circuit the honeymoon period and allow a period of time for the victim to get her head on straight about what she wants out of a relationship, whether she truly wants to be involved with the person who just beat her up, and what options and resources she has at her disposal so she can get on with her life.

However, if the respondent successfully moves the boundaries set by the court order, and he is eventually able to use all the manipulative charm he can muster, it is likely that he will convince her to come back and start the whole cycle all over again.

Even if that is not the case, if she truly has set her mind that she is not going back to him, the fact that he is getting away with additional contact is unbalancing. The petitioner took the time and committed the energy to ask a court to help her keep a person who has hurt her and frightened her away. If the respondent ignores the court order and continues to make contact without any consequences, how confident do you think she is going to be in the strength and authority of the court and local law enforcement?

Law enforcement officers need to look at protection order violations as direct insults to our own system. Without losing our tempers or challenging the respondent to pistols at dawn, we need to feel a sense of disrespect

toward our badge and to the criminal justice system each time we hear of an infraction. This type of violation calls for action because action on the part of law enforcement sets the judge's court order in concrete and makes the boundary absolutely clear if it wasn't before.

Aggressive enforcement action is generally all it takes to reestablish the legal, correct boundary. Most people learn the lesson quite well after one arrest. Sitting in a jail cell for a few hours has a way of clarifying one's priorities and setting straight how important it is to leave the petitioner alone. I've said before that an arrest can be a blessing, certainly, in this instance, for the victim, but also for the respondent in that it may stop him from carrying on in a way that will get him popped later for something more serious, such as a residential burglary or a stalking offense. Let's put this in the category of "tough love" and move on.

Now, every once in a while you'll have a guy that won't learn his lesson easily. One arrest doesn't do it, and maybe three or six won't either. This is a dangerous fellow. Ignorance or testing limits is one thing, but this type of offender is telling the world he isn't concerned with judges, police, other people's safety and security, or anything else for that matter. People like this are controlling and narcissistic, believing themselves better than and above the law and the needs of others.

This personality is like a leech, gulping down huge quantities of time, manpower, and the victim's sense of well-being. He will try souls and fray nerves. He will smile at the time of arrest and blame everyone but himself when he bonds out.

And he will likely end up damaging or killing the victim at some point if he is not stopped. Don't take this offender lightly. Complete disrespect of lawful orders, especially on the heels of enforcement of said orders, is a huge red flag signifying danger.

Police agencies work hard with this group, disseminating information and photos of the suspect to all officers, providing heavy extra patrol at the victim's home and place of employment, requesting warrants for more serious offenses when they apply, and dealing closely with the prosecutor and service agencies to make sure everything that can be done is done.

I'm a firm believer in restraining/protection orders, in most cases. They are effective in the majority of cases in getting one person to leave another alone, allowing time for the cycle of violence to be disrupted and hopefully replaced with a more positive, safe life pattern. They only work if police agencies don't use them as a bluffing tool, so enforcement is critical when offenses occur. One arrest is generally all it takes, but repeated challenges to the order must be met with repeated enforcement. In the words of an old lieutenant of mine, "Be as friendly and polite to people as they'll let you be."

SHELTERS: HAVENS IN THE STORM

So long as he lives a guest should never forget a host who has shown him kindness.

— HOMER

I was once dispatched to a shelter after one of the social workers called to report the presence of a suspicious duffle bag on the driveway. The shelter had received a call from the husband of a woman who had been admitted into the facility a few hours earlier. She was a mass of bruises, and her children had been witness to her abuse. They were already traumatized by the time this man figured out where they were and began what could only be described as siege warfare. He was ready and willing to wait outside for as long as it took and to use any tool at his disposal to make her come out early.

He'd been in the military, and one of his first tactics was to call the shelter and say he would be leaving them a "little surprise" on their driveway if his wife and children didn't come out immediately. The shelter worker wouldn't even acknowledge that his wife and child were in there, much less make a commitment that they would walk outside into his treacherous hands.

So he left his surprise—a red duffle bag that he made a show of holding up for all to see before gently placing it on the driveway within ten feet of the building itself and then driving away in a flurry of squealing tires, honking horns, and profane threats.

The shelter staff dialed 911 and told our dispatch personnel that the man had left the bag, that he had been a munitions expert in the military, and that he had a history of extreme violence. There was no other reasonable judgment to make than that the man might have left a homemade bomb by the shelter, and I wondered if he was really cruel and desperate enough to blow up his own children.

Now, I don't know one dang thing about bombs except that I don't want to be around when one of them blows up. The only bomb squad in our area was about fifteen miles north of the shelter that day, and they had already gotten word that we needed them to respond immediately. In the back of my mind, I sort of hoped they would be able to travel their fifteen miles and get there before I arrived, despite the fact that I was maybe half a mile away at the time. I knew that wasn't going to happen, though, and so as I drove to the scene I began planning the evacuation of the shelter and a nearby apartment building, blocking off roadways, getting the fire department to respond, calling the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and FBI to help with the investigation, and decidedly not getting blown up in the process.

When I turned the corner to view the shelter building, however, I saw Corporal Phil Crosby reaching down and picking up a red duffel bag from the driveway. Phil is a tall man, simultaneously goofy and cool, as patient as any cop I've ever known, and I decided he was either intensely brave or remarkably stupid.

I guess it was just brave because the bag didn't blow up, and he looked up smiling and holding the thing out to show me like it was a big fish he'd just caught.

"It's just rocks," he called out to me, and I went from an adrenaline pumping machine to one relieved, slightly shaking, giddy cop.

Phil had been an engineer in the military before his law enforcement career, and he'd kept up his skills by doing a National Guard assignment. He'd been

in combat in Iraq, and at the time of this incident he was slated to go back. He was, to say the least, not impressed with the duffel bag. He'd seen the real thing over in the desert, and somehow he just knew it was a bag of rocks. He never told me how he knew, and it was obvious he took great pleasure in my simultaneous pride and discomfort in his save-the-day move. I greatly admire Phil, and while I stood there deciding whether to punch or hug him, all I could do was shake my head in wonder at his courage or boneheadedness—whichever way you prefer to look at it.

What was the shelter staff doing at the time? They were doing their job and doing it well. Obviously, no one could leave because the maniac could have been hiding outside, waiting to snatch his wife or children the moment they fell for his decoy duffle bag, or he could well have been out in a nearby tree line with a rifle waiting to get revenge on the woman who had “ruined his life.”

Staff members got everyone to the side of the building opposite the duffel bag, then moved tables and heavy objects to create even more of a barrier between their clients and the primary source of danger. Some read to children, others soothed the women who had fraying nerves, and every one of them stayed calm and supportive during those tense moments. I'm sure the staff members were as frightened as any of the clients, but they maintained a cool demeanor and kept everyone safe. I wouldn't have expected any less, but that doesn't diminish the heroism and calm they demonstrated that day, and I suspect those women, children, and I will never forget it.

We played the game of tag when we were children, and, in most cases, there was a designated place to catch our breaths known and respected by all as “base.” For fifteen seconds you could hang onto a specific tree limb or place your foot on a particular rock, and the “it” person couldn't tag you. (Not that he wasn't waiting ten feet away for you to come back off the safety zone so he could tag you.) Tag was fun, but it was also part of our socialization, a safe way to exercise, laugh, and in some way learn that even the hunted have methods of

getting away and finding safety. Whether you're trying to escape an oppressive regime by fleeing to another country, get to a building as lightning explodes all around you, or find a safe place where a man who just threatened to kill you can't get in, the concept of shelter is universal.

Caring people have staffed every shelter I've ever dealt with—predominantly, but not exclusively, women, who go to work every day with the intention of helping people find base and stay on as long as resources allow. Some don't trust cops, some love us; some hate all men, and some know that their clients have come away from relationships with the worst exceptions and not the norms for my gender. All of them have the advantage that they don't have to be primarily concerned with things like due process of law and listening to the other side of a story. Their sole purpose is to provide safe haven for a woman who has been beaten in her home and the children who have been physically and/or emotionally abused themselves in that same household.

The responsibility extends beyond just immediate safety needs, however. Most shelters also provide counseling so a battered woman can begin the process of healing from all the psychological trauma she has endured, and perhaps learn within herself why she felt the need to stay with such a vile human being for so long.

Shelters generally try to provide some level of financial support or job-hunting assistance so a victim isn't forced to make critical decisions based solely on whether she will be able to feed and house her children. Many provide transportation—giving rides to court dates and doctor's appointments, shuttling kids to schools, and taking women to apply for jobs. Some shelters even offer refurbished used cars, donated by members of their community, so former victims can take even more control over their own destinies. Remember that batterers control things most of us take for granted, such as transportation, communication, and finances, so the ability of an escaped victim to earn her own paycheck, drive around town to do her own errands,

and speak to friends and family as she wishes is huge. This is freedom, and shelters are in the business of helping people collect those freedoms again.

Shelter staff members assist clients with legal paperwork so critical processes, such as protection or restraining orders, divorce petitions, or immigration documentation, can get rolling. Many shelters now even provide access to free legal advice from local attorneys who have graciously volunteered a certain number of hours out of their own schedules in order to contribute to the cause. Legal matters are scary, and having someone around to explain and help wade through the process can be empowering.

Regardless of the services provided, staff members in shelters are vigilant and protective, if nothing else. I hold an image of them as sentries on castle walls, calling down to demand the business and identity of travelers approaching the gate, more than willing to charge any barbarian impudent enough to try to breach their little fortress or endanger their charges.

Because of the secure nature of shelters, most don't allow people to simply drop in without a screening process. Access to a shelter generally comes after a battered person or a person who is in danger of being attacked makes a phone call to the shelter and talks to a staff member. The call might also come from a police officer looking for sanctuary for a victim or from a hospital trying to find a safe place for a patient it is expecting to release soon.

Regardless, the shelter employee will ask several questions to ascertain the severity and sincerity of the situation. It is not unheard of that a stalker will send a sister or adult daughter into a shelter pretending to be a battered woman in order to get close to the fleeing wife or girlfriend or confirm that she is actually there. This, of course, is rare, but it is a concern for shelter staff members. The privacy and safety of their clients is of paramount importance, and they guard against treachery every minute of the day.

Shelter staff members won't even confirm to me that a woman is one of their clients unless the woman takes the initiative in contacting me. I often

call a shelter and ask them to pass along my contact information to a victim I've heard is there. I know the shelter will not confirm that she is, in fact, their client, but I am confident at that point that the woman will get the information she needs to contact a specific person at the police department who is interested in her case. We may never hear from her, but at least we've reached out through shelter staff. In most instances, that is all that is necessary for a frightened victim to come forward and start availing herself of police services.

Once the shelter employees are confident that they are dealing with a victim (or potential victim) of domestic violence, they will offer shelter and services if bed space is available. Bed space is a big issue because it is a rare time when there is enough space to meet the needs of any particular region. Victims are turned away at times, and there is nothing more frustrating or frightening than to have to tell a woman with children that there is simply no safe haven for her there. Sometimes clients are sent to motels or to other shelters. Sometimes they are given bus fare so they can at least get out of the area. Regardless, it is a less-than-optimal choice thrust upon shelter staff members.

In many cases, however, the victim is welcomed and provided a host of services. One of the primary goals of any shelter is to create an environment in which the clients can choose their next step in life based on what they can learn about how unhealthy a violent lifestyle is to them and to their children. They

are given information about how to secure long-term housing, financial assistance, protections afforded them through the criminal justice system, and other options and services that could help them change their lives dramatically.

I'm told that staff members rarely get down to serious talks of counseling, life planning, and tackling tasks, such as job hunting and legal issues, for two or three days after most women arrive. This is simply because most women sleep and walk around in a haze during that time. Some haven't felt safe enough to sleep

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MEET THE NEEDS
OF A REGION

well in years; others must simply get through the raw emotions and realities associated with the fact that their lives have just changed forever in a dramatic, bridge-burning manner. It's a lot to take in, and it takes time. Professional shelters make allowances for that.

Some victims do change their lives. Some go back to the man who drove them into shelter in the first place. Regardless, for that brief period in their lives they were safe and given time to breathe. A shelter staffed by conscientious people who have dedicated themselves to protecting and empowering those who have suffered from abuse in their own homes was their "base" for a time, and sometimes that is all a person needs to get back into the game.

SELF DEFENSE: WHAT'S LEGAL AND WHAT WORKS?

To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

— GEORGE WASHINGTON

I used to chaperone field trips for my sons' school, and it was inevitable that their friends would eventually ask me questions about police work. On one adventure, a young lady I've known for years as a friend to my children popped out that she heard there was no self-defense law in our state, and she wondered aloud how she could defend herself in a way that she wouldn't get in trouble if someone were trying to kidnap her.

I felt overly protective, and I *wanted* to tell her she could shove a pencil through his ear. The answer I actually gave: Do what you must to stop the danger so that you can get away, and try to remember enough details about the man to give police once you're safe. I admit, it's not quite as satisfying a response, but it is the correct one.

At police academies, cadets are drilled daily on the concept of self-defense and appropriate use of force. Officers across this land are well versed in the concepts of when to use force, what level of force to use, when to escalate, and how to de-escalate that level when the threat is minimized. By and large, when we adhere to those principals the bad guys go to jail with minimal injuries to them or to officers. When we use too little force, officers tend to get hurt, and

when we use too much we can end up on the evening news as a download from somebody's videophone.

At one point in my career I worked a bicycle/foot patrol beat in a bar district adjacent to a large university. This particular strip is also well traveled by a number of motorcycle clubs, some of which have a deserved reputation for criminal activity. It is a diverse mix, to say the least, but, by and large, the area is relatively peaceful. That isn't to say that there aren't fights or illegal activity, but I would be embellishing if I were to paint this strip as a Wild West or drive-by-shooting type atmosphere. For the most part everyone gets along, though a few times each night someone gets boneheaded and attracts the attention of the foot patrol officers.

I wrestled a lot of drunk people in those days, and I'd be lying if I said it wasn't a little fun on occasion. A bit of a scrap with someone obnoxious when you know right is on your side and nobody gets seriously hurt is . . . well . . . kind of entertaining, in a Viking sort of way.

The point is, there was rarely a need to use so much force that some fraternity guy, one of the football players from the university, or some fellow wearing "colors" from a motorcycle affiliation suffered lasting damage. If I couldn't get them under control myself, there was usually another officer there to help me. No one was brutalized, and once the fight was over and the person was handcuffed there was no need to curse at him.

But the fact of the matter remains, there were times when it was necessary for me to defend myself. I had at my disposal my own physical size and skills, a baton, pepper spray, a pistol, and, in later years, a Taser device. I've used deadly force twice in my career, and I would be most gratified if I never had to do so again. But, in each case, I justifiably used the appropriate level of force to protect others and myself from harm. I deserve to go home healthy after every shift. My children and family deserved for me to come home. And so,

in those instances when I was forced, I lawfully, judiciously, and firmly used physical force in order to make sure that happened.

Now, if I were justified in doing that, why in heaven's name wouldn't my son's friend, or someone's wife, or someone walking through a park at night not have the same rights and justifications? I would argue that they could be given more leeway in their actions. For example, it would be inappropriate for me to unsheathe my baton and get to whacking a one hundred forty pound fellow who is barely able to walk because of his intoxication. I'm sure we can all agree that I should be able to bring him under some control in a less aggressive manner. However, if that same man were to advance on his one hundred pound girlfriend in a violent manner, might she not be justified in smacking him with a lamp, at least until she could get away from him?

So let's agree that she can defend herself against an attacker, even if that attacker is her husband. The law says you can in all fifty states, and I know of no ethical or spiritual dilemma posed if someone defends herself while genuinely afraid, as long as the force he or she used was reasonable.

So, what is reasonable? The answer to that question begins with understanding that actions of force will be armchair quarterbacked later, especially if someone gets hurt or killed as a result of those actions. If a man approaches you in a grocery store and asks for the time, it would certainly not be reasonable to hose him down with pepper spray. If, on the other hand, a man jumps out from between cars in a parking lot and startles you, most people would understand why you emptied your spray canister into his face. The fact that he tells police later "I was just asking her for the time" doesn't matter because his approach was alarming and touched off a survival response in you.

Most people would agree that if a guy suddenly appears from behind a car and confronts a solitary woman in a dark parking lot, her action to temporarily blind and disable him with pepper spray would be reasonable. At that point

she would be expected to run away, dial 911, call for help from others in the parking lot, or simply drive home. If, however, she chose to stay and act as a vigilante by pummeling this man with the tire iron from her car, she would have exceeded the limits of what most consider reasonable. Yes, we all have those visceral feelings about wanting to thrash this man as the symbol for all the world's injustices and fears, but she really shouldn't. For one thing, it's dangerous because he could still get up, and for another it starts making the person who was originally the victim into a suspect herself. Things get too cloudy, and criminal prosecutions are already difficult as it is. No, I would rather her survive the day to act as a witness on behalf of the state to stop this man from ever considering grabbing a woman in a dark parking lot.

What choices, then, do people have when faced with the dilemma of how best to protect themselves? First of all, there is no perfect system. Any weapon can be taken and used against you. Some weapons take a lot of practice and are expensive, others are bulky and difficult to conceal in a pocket or purse. Can a child get access and hurt himself or his friends?

These concerns deserve consideration, and it is better to do that now than try to make a decision in a moment of violent panic. So, in the following pages we'll touch on some of the most prevalent self-defense methods available. One of those methods may appeal to your sensibilities, abilities, and lifestyle more than the others. If so, I encourage you to explore that idea further and become fully versed and prepared for a moment when you encounter a violent situation.

Guns

Guns. The great equalizers, tools of my trade, and pieces of hardware as integral to America's history as Manifest Destiny and Thanksgiving. In the right hands

**GUNS MUST
BE INCLUDED
AS A
VIALE OPTION,
ALBEIT AN
OPTION RIFE
WITH
DRAWBACKS**

they've been used successfully as peacekeeping tools and in the wrong hands as instruments of hate, greed, and oppression. In short, guns must be included as a viable option when discussing self-defense, albeit an option rife with drawbacks.

If you have a gun you're able to get to quickly and efficiently in an emergency, chances are you're going to survive a violent encounter. The surprise factor of whipping out a .38 caliber revolver from a purse is at least as effective as the actual firing of the weapon. If the user is practiced with the weapon she carries, and she is able to control her adrenaline well enough to maintain composure and control while under attack, she is a walking deadly weapon.

There is something to be said for the confidence that having a concealed firearm instills in the carrier. Taking swagger out of the equation, many women express a greater sense of safety and empowerment when they know they are likely to win the day if that day takes a violent turn. That confidence only comes with familiarity and practice with the weapon itself, so the choice to carry a firearm must be made in the knowledge that regular practice is required. It simply won't do to take the thing out of the box, place it somewhere on your person, and believe you'll be able to remember how to aim and fire when the bad day comes.

It is also crucial to remember that your own gun can kill you or someone precious to you. Guns are fascinating to children. I've been to scenes where a child has been destroyed by a poorly placed handgun. Please, don't let this happen to your family. Again, you have to know something more about your weapon than what you've seen in the movies, and you have to have a plan in place for making it impossible for a loved one to find and use the thing when it's not in your possession.

The other thing to consider about a gun is whether or not you think you can actually use one on another human being. It's one thing to hose a guy

down with pepper spray and then run away screaming for help; it's entirely another to pull a trigger knowing you're about to kill another human being. I recommend you choose a self-defense tool other than a gun if you're not sure you can fire the weapon in an emergency. Simply put, he may call your bluff. If so, the gun will be taken from you, and the man who was angry beforehand is now enraged — and armed with your own firearm.

If you choose to go the path of a gun, take the step of participating in a gun safety class. Reputable gun dealers and instructors can be found in just about any community in this country, many of which can be located by simply looking up “guns” in the yellow pages or “concealed handgun certification” in an Internet search engine.

These classes teach the specifics about the model of weapon you choose, and they go into greater detail about self-defense laws in your particular state. Most classes offer actual shooting times so participants can safely learn the operation of their weapon or try out different models until they find the one that is right for them. Always start with a gun safety class, and then make a commitment to practice regularly.

Knives

A lot of people carry a knife as a defensive weapon, and there are practical, sound reasons for this. A knife is easily concealed, some models can fold up and be safely stored in a purse or pocket, and the dangers associated with accidents are minimal as compared with a gun. A knife is menacing, and a person wielding one with a degree of confidence will likely make a would-be attacker back down.

A knife, though, must be used in extremely close quarters, so there is no distance advantage, such as with a Taser, gun, or pepper spray. A knife defense

IF GRISLY
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requires slashing and stabbing human flesh and bone, a fact most people don't consider when opting for a bladed weapon. If you believe you have the stomach for slashing at the hands, face, and throat of a man who is trying to hurt you, a knife may be a reliable option for you. However, if the reality of close-quarters combat and the necessity of grisly tactics concern you, using a knife as your defensive tool may not be a good choice.

I say this because every weapons system employs a certain amount of bluff, whether that comes from the acrobatics of Asian martial arts, the obligatory stare down of pre-bout boxers, the challenging bark of a little dog, or the presence of a nuclear arsenal. Pulling a knife out of your purse might do the trick if a would-be attacker can be bluffed into backing down, but it could be deadly if he decides your puny efforts are an insult or a joke. If he gets the knife, which he probably will unless you're extremely aggressive and somewhat skilled, he might use it against you. You will lose the most important fight of your life in a terrible way. Also, predators almost always carry a knife themselves, and if an assault takes place in a domestic violence situation, there will be any number of kitchen and steak knives around for him to grab. The fact that an attacker can simply step back, smile, and pull his own blade while you stand there in a defensive stance is a serious drawback.

The legality of certain types of knives varies from state to state. Illegality could depend on how the knife opens, such as with a switchblade or a "butterfly" knife, or it may depend on blade length. It's a good idea to make sure you're carrying a legal weapon if knife defense is your choice. I'd also encourage you to train with your weapon. Various martial arts schools offer specialized knife training, and I'd recommend you find a reputable one to learn knife-fighting skills.

For all these reason, I encourage you to give a lot of consideration to choosing a knife before you slip one into your purse, especially if that is the only weapon you plan to use.

Martial Arts

I believe training in martial arts should be mandatory for every preteen in America. It is an amazing confidence builder, it instills discipline, it empowers women to walk down the street with a certain confidence, while simultaneously addressing the concept of limits, safety, and making good choices. Martial arts are a fun way to exercise, and the skills learned over a period of time could be life saving someday.

It is only fair to point out that martial arts training takes time to become effective in a combat situation. One can't expect to go to a four-hour class and be well prepared for any life-and-death scenario. That having been said, there is value in attending seminar-style self-defense classes because they tend to teach simple, easy-to-remember skills that are effective when one is confronted by an attacker.

The most important "skill" to learn, however, is a level of tolerance for the sudden surge of adrenaline, fear, and anger that can be completely overwhelming at the outset of a predator attack. All the skills in the world won't help you if you are frozen in fear when attacked. Long-term martial arts training builds a system within an individual in which his or her body responds more automatically and with a higher level of built up tolerance for the snarling, vicious attack. Predators in the wild use a screaming growl to paralyze prey in the moments before the pounce, and human predators also tend to use ambush and fear tactics to disable a target. Martial arts training may take two or more years to diminish this effect, but the upsides of confidence, body/

**MARTIAL ARTS
TRAINING
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OTHER
DEFENSIVE
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mind harmony, greater awareness of one's own surroundings, and an enhanced ability to meet startling challenges in a calm, fluid manner can make this a good, long-term investment. Martial arts training also allow users to incorporate other defensive systems, such as firearms, bladed weapons, blunt weapons, or chemical sprays, more effectively because of the instilled calm under fire that has developed over time.

Choosing a martial arts school that suits you is important. If you choose a school or an instructor that gives you the willies, you won't be able to relax and trust enough to learn the lessons being offered.

You need to pick a martial art that appeals to you. For some people it's the discipline and strategy of boxing. For others it is the mystery and acrobatics of Tae Kwon Do. Mixed martial arts, a combination of the best practices from a variety of different styles, is gaining in popularity, and there is something to be said about learning the best parts of different disciplines when you're learning skills that you may one day use to fight off a real attack.

Frankly, it doesn't matter too terribly much which style of martial art you choose as long as you stick with it long enough to employ it automatically under stress. You can't think "He's lunging at my head, so I will now incorporate a saber-tooth spinning ankle kick to his solar plexus" while under direct attack. Your moves, whatever they are, have to come without thought as the result of hundreds of hours of practice to develop muscle memory and instantaneous action. In short, you simply have to pick a style that is best for you because you're going to have to practice it often and long. Your martial arts school, your teachers, and your style all have to provide a balanced combination of prodding, enthusiasm, and skill, and they must provide that in a way that keeps you motivated and comfortable enough that you keep going, even on those nights when it would be more comfortable and pleasant to sit home and watch a martial arts movie on TV.

Pepper Spray

I'm a fan of pepper spray as a self-defense tool, but I also have strong reservations. Pepper spray is exactly what it sounds like—concentrated spicy heat from peppers that has been liquefied and compressed into a spray can small enough to fit inside a pocket or purse. It's agonizing when it gets on you, and it all but forces you to keep your eyes shut.

Spicy heat is measured in Scovilles, as opposed to temperature heat measured in Fahrenheit or Celsius. The hotter the pepper, the higher its Scoville index. For example, a really hot jalapeño pepper would top out in the rating at 10,000 Scoville, whereas a habañero pepper would scald and blister your mouth and lips at 300,000 Scoville. Now factor in that pepper spray available to the public comes in at 2,000,000 Scoville, and police pepper spray can be as much as fifty-percent more concentrated than that, and you can see that the spray in those little bottles is super-powerful stuff. You read that correctly: pepper spray concentrate is well over twenty times stronger than what you would feel if you got jalapeño juice on your fingers and then rubbed your eyes. The manufacturers remove the pepper oils and other factors so blistering and long-term damage doesn't occur, but they leave in—and even concentrate—the stinging effects of the spice itself. The result is an agent so painful and debilitating that cops consider it a badge of honor once they have successfully completed their pepper spray training, which includes taking a full blast to the eyeballs followed by having to defend against police trainers “attacking” them.

In addition to the excruciating pain associated with getting this spray on your face, it also generally results in temporary blindness. I once had to wrestle a fellow with my eyes closed the whole time because my partner sprayed him but also got me.

**PEPPER SPRAY
CONCENTRATE
IS OVER
TWENTY TIMES
STRONGER THAN
JALAPEÑO JUICE**

Pepper spray also gives you the feeling that you can't breathe. You can. There's plenty of oxygen to go around, but it will now be mixed with a cloud of pepper mist, which creates a feeling of thickness in the air and in the throat. Imagine having your face over a bowl of freshly cut onions and peppers with a towel draped over your head to hold the vapors in, and then multiply that a few hundred times. It feels awful, and it makes people imagine they aren't breathing right. They'll feel fine in twenty or thirty minutes, but that feeling of air hunger works for you when you're trying to get away from an attacker.

There are drawbacks to pepper spray. The biggie is that if you accidentally spray yourself or spray your canister into a heavy wind, you'll be the one who is temporarily blinded and disabled. Imagine being attacked while simultaneously writhing in agony from your own spray.

The other drawback is that it sometimes won't have the desired effect on the attacker. A guy freaking out on PCP or on a meth binge may not feel what you and I would feel, or they may be able to ignore the pain of the spray while under the influence of some narcotics.

Finally, I've never sprayed the stuff without getting a little of it on me. Usually, I get it on the fingers and wrist of the hand holding the spray bottle. It feels like a sunburn for a while, but then it goes away. The most important thing to remember is that you must spray it away from you and never upwind.

Batons/Bats

USE {A BAT} LIKE
YOU'RE AIMING
TO HIT ONE
OUT OF THE PARK

Batons and baseball bats can be effective weapons. Obviously a bat isn't going to fit into your purse, but collapsible batons are available for personal use. A hearty swing of a bat is an intimidating thing, and it tends to win fights pretty quickly. It is another weapon, however, that can be fairly easily taken away and used against you. If you choose to use a bat or a baton, use it

like you're aiming to hit one out of the park and not swatting at a fly. Convince the attacker you'll crack his skull if he takes one step toward you, and then do your best to crack his skull if he takes one step toward you.

Tasers

Taser devices similar to those used by police officers are now available for personal civilian use. Indeed, a new trend has come along in which Tasers are touted at gatherings similar to a Tupperware or a Pampered Chef party. Attendees are shown a variety of Taser models, and demonstrations on live volunteers are common. I'm sure it's a hoot.

Every police officer who wears a Taser device on his belt has been shot with it. This is done both to show how effective the little thing is and to also develop some sense of empathy for that future suspect who will someday feel what you felt on the day of training.

It hurts . . . a lot. It hurts much worse than pepper spray, but it doesn't last as long. Generally, the charge in a police Taser will keep delivering current for five seconds. The officer can pull the trigger again immediately after the electric current stops from the first deployment, if necessary, to keep a violent person subdued long enough for handcuffs to be applied. In contrast, some civilian Taser and similar devices can be set to apply a constant, non-stop delivery of current so the bad guy keeps buzzing away and foaming at the mouth while the would-be victim hurries off to dial 911.

Taser devices deliver approximately 50,000 volts of electricity into a target through two little barbs that are projected from the device into the skin of an attacker. Volts hurt, and they cause your skeletal muscles to contract to the point of absolute loss of control, but they don't have a strong effect on cardiac muscle. Amps, another component in electricity, will kill you. Amps race

TASER DEVICES
DELIVER
APPROXIMATELY
50,000 VOLTS
OF ELECTRICITY
INTO A TARGET

through your heart and cause disruption of the electric signals controlling its rhythm, and amps cause the significant burns and bursting of flesh associated with being electrocuted. This is what makes a Taser device considered less lethal than a gun. Yes, the bad guy is going to be in a lot of pain, but unless he hits his head on a rock while falling because he can't control his muscles anymore, he probably isn't going to die.

The biggest drawback to Tasers is the fact that you need to have decent aim in order to get both probes to pierce the skin. The barbs must both stick in order to complete the electric circuit, so if one hits and the other doesn't you've wasted a shot. Some Taser devices are now available for a second shot, but most civilian use models only give you one chance right now. It has to be a good one, and for most people this means you have to be close to the target. The target, of course, is an angry attacker who will be even angrier once you've tried to hit him with a Taser.

Even if you miss, however, the Taser is still a pretty handy weapon. The electric current can also be immediately sent into an attacker through two small probes on the business end of the thing. The current is completed between those two little probes, so if you shove the thing into someone's neck or groin, he is going to see fireworks and believe a bomb has gone off in his head. The only problem with this type of deployment is that you have to be in really close to use it.

The point of this chapter isn't to talk you into buying a gun, taking Jujitsu, or carrying pepper spray in your purse. The objective is that you identify a method of self-defense that you can use on a moment's notice should the day ever come that you must defend yourself. The time to plan is not when you're under assault, and making life-and-death choices in one or two seconds is poor strategy. Think about your options, skills, and mindset now so you can

act automatically under the stress of attack later.

That all having been said, we are still talking about domestic violence here, and self-defense has another consequence when utilized against someone with whom you live. We have to go back once again to the concept of power and control at this point. One person has convinced himself that he effectively owns another. Ownership comes with certain privileges, such as sex on demand, and certain “responsibilities,” such as administering discipline when the “property” has done wrong.

Consider how explosive a situation would become if a person with that ownership mentality were to be confronted by his wife or girlfriend wielding a baseball bat. This is more than simple predator/prey, such as you’d face from a mugger or rapist in a dark alley. This is pride, ownership, household dominance, and an affront to his will, all rolled into one. He will consider it high treason, an insult to his manhood, and a challenge that must be met and conquered so definitively that the challenge will never present itself again.

There will be no mercy.

A mugger or stranger rapist can be chased away by an aggressive stance or by calling attention to their actions through screaming, air horns, or whistles. It doesn’t always work, but criminals who utilize sneak attacks are not as invested in you specifically, and they may run away.

Domestic violence attackers, however, are devoted to their dominance and her submission, so self-defense and counterattacks must be suppressed, extinguished, and even mocked as puny and impossible. Therefore, they must ratchet up the level of violence and then play constant reminders of that episode in the months and years to come so no defensive line is ever drawn again.

What does this mean in a chapter devoted to an inalienable right to defend oneself when under attack? It means it would be

SELF-DEFENSE
HAS ANOTHER
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WITH WHOM
YOU LIVE

better to avoid the attack completely, if at all possible. That is why in the next chapter we delve much deeper into best practices for leaving and living safely. I believe a person may and should defend him or herself when under attack, and that any defense should be aggressive, violent, and effective so the person attacked can live another day. No one gets to decide when my life or the life of my family members ends without a serious fight. However, avoiding the fight altogether—re-claiming one's life and one's freedom through avoidance, strategy, and careful planning—is simply the better route to go when possible, so let's move on and start figuring out how that can be best accomplished.

LEAVING AND LIVING SAFELY: PLANNING HER GREAT ESCAPE

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

— CHINESE PROVERB

A lot of women believe they are betraying a boyfriend or spouse in pre-planning their exit. I applaud their loyalty, but it is misplaced in this situation. I would simply ask the person to tell me what she would recommend to a best friend, little sister, or daughter if that person was in her situation. This is an eye-opening question that, if answered honestly, can motivate a battered woman to finally take action. We humans are dog-like in terms of how much abuse we'll take before turning on someone toward whom we've felt loyalty, and this is especially true within the dysfunction of a violent relationship. Leaving is sometimes the most logical answer, but the thought of moving out of a home, even a dangerous one, is so daunting that many victims can't even take the first step by themselves.

Consider that we are talking about a person who has been emotionally abused and belittled for an even longer period than she has been physically abused. That works on a person's mind after a while, and so many times I've met people who started the relationship as confident, competent individuals, only to end up baffled as to how they came to be so subservient to, and reliant upon, their partner.

MOVING
IS ONE OF
THE FIVE
BIGGEST
STRESSORS
IN LIFE

Moving is one of the five biggest stressors in life (along with death of loved ones, serious illness, divorce, and changing careers). You've got the physical act of moving, which we can all agree is a pain in the rear. You've also got all those tasks to get done, such as switching water service, letting everyone know your new address and phone, changing legal documents, meeting new neighbors, getting the kids enrolled in school, and finding out which pizza place delivers to your neighborhood. It's big.

It gets even bigger when you contemplate leaving with little or no money, no assistance moving bigger furniture items, swearing your kids to secrecy so they don't give step-daddy the new address, coming up with creative ways to keep your own name off new accounts, such as utilities, cable, and rental agreements, and having to pick and choose who is to be told the new address because some people will be more loyal to him than you.

Lest we forget, you're doing all this while under a cloud of low self-esteem, fear, and a nagging sense that you are betraying a person who, on the one hand, has been your life partner for some period of time and, on the other, might well kill you next time he sees you.

**THE MOST
DANGEROUS
TIME IN A
WOMAN'S
LIFE IS THE
FIRST FEW
DAYS AFTER
SHE LEAVES
AN ABUSIVE
RELATIONSHIP**

There's another element to all of this that must be disclosed, and that is the fact that statistically the most dangerous time in a woman's life, the time she is most likely to be murdered, is the first few days after she leaves an abusive relationship.

There is an analogy to be found throughout history when considering the reaction of imperialistic countries to rebellious uprisings amongst their colonial subjects. The British, for example, didn't take it well at all when the American colonists announced they were breaking off the relationship and moving out on their own. It's easy to see that a man who believes all is owed to him, and that he is a person to whom loyalty and

subservience is everything, would react aggressively when confronted with what he perceives as treason.

So, leaving is hard and leaving is dangerous; those are facts a battered woman must know and accept before she takes this gigantic step. It's easy for the rest of us to say "Just leave the no-good bum," but we have blinders on if we think it is that simple. My personal belief is that freedom from tyranny is worth risking all, but I acknowledge that I approach that from the perspective of a person who can defend himself, has resources, and has friend networks that allow me flexibility. However, I can also say with genuine confidence that people who have been living in an abusive situation tend to have significantly better lives once they make use of all the services available to them to get out of the imprisoned life they have been leading. Thus, if the time has arrived for a woman to leave, and she has made her decision, it's time to take action.

The next step is to decide what to do about it. If the decision is to go ahead and start the rebellion, what steps can be taken to maximize success and to live through the process? That brings us to the concept of the Safety Plan.

I'm a fan of the World War II movie *The Great Escape*. It was based on an actual event in which prisoners of war from allied countries worked together for months to plan and execute one of the most daring and successful escapes from a German military prison ever. The success depended on planning, patience, and a lot of good bluffing and acting. It made for an exciting movie, but the story lends itself well to the analogy that people who are imprisoned in their own homes must also plan well, utilize a variety of resources, and be bold when the time for implementing the plan comes.

In *The Great Escape*, everything hinged on successfully digging tunnels, which meant creatively coming up with ways to mask the sounds of digging and ways to slowly, consistently displace and camouflage all that removed dirt. They were deep within German occupied territory, so a lot of work went into

THERE HAVE TO BE
EMERGENCY PLANS
FOR THE NEXT TIME
VIOLENCE IS ABOUT
TO BREAK OUT

gathering identification and travel documents, improving German language skills, and getting the men ready to discretely travel through the countryside, without attracting undue attention, until they could make it to free soil.

Safety planning for the person trying to escape a domestic violence situation is just as crucial and intricate in many ways.

There have to be emergency plans for the next time violence is about to break out, steps to take while planning the actual escape, contingency plans in case things go wrong, a complete list of all the things to take along, and specific steps to take once you've actually made it. Let's go through these, point by point, and make sure everyone is on the same page in this safety planning area. It should be stressed that most of the following bullet points can be accomplished and set in place by loved ones in preparation for that day when she's finally ready to take the leap.

Emergency Plans Before Leaving

Let's assume that a person has opted to stay in a violent home for any number of reasons, or she's working up to the day when she actually leaves. Perhaps she's just waiting for Christmas to be over, or for one more paycheck to come in before she pulls the plug. This is a dicey time because she knows things could go bad in an instant. There have never been so many eggshells in her home, and she's trying hard not to step on any of them. There needs to be a plan in place just in case an emergency occurs—a preparation that will allow her to escape at any hour of the day or night without being badly injured and with a chance of getting away for good. Here are reasonable steps to take as part of that plan.

- Avoid rooms where a batterer has access to weapons (kitchen or garage), especially if he seems to be gearing up for a violent outburst.
- Have a plan in place as to what exits to use if trapped in any part of the house. A good way to think of this is as if you're pre-planning for getting out in case of a fire.
- Talk over your situation with a trusted neighbor, friend, or family member. Neighbors can be asked to call 911 if they hear screams of fear or hostility. This simple step gets neighbors involved who would otherwise try to ignore the problem as "none of their business."
- Establish a code word or phrase you can use with a trusted friend or family member. This code phrase should be something simple and something that could conceivably come up in conversation, such as "No, my allergies are fine today" or "Can you pick up some root beer for me when you go?" The code word or phrase is to be used only when an emergency is brewing, and it means "Call the police. Things are getting ready to go very bad here."

Planning Your Exit

Life is complicated enough without having to worry about all this, I grant you, but a little bit of careful exit strategy can make all the difference in terms of safety, lifestyle, stress level, and the ability to quickly and smoothly move on with your life. Here are some good ideas to implement before the escape, assuming of course that you have the luxury of time.

- Establish a post office box, as explained in the chapter on Dos and Don'ts related to moving to a safer place.

ALWAYS
REMEMBER
THAT YOUR LIFE
IS **MORE**
IMPORTANT
THAN ANY ITEM
OR DOCUMENT

- Establish a bank account. This needs to be done in a separate bank from the one you share with the batterer. You'll have to disclose all your transactions if you go through a divorce process later, but a bank account all your own is empowering and allows you to take your half of the financial assets and put them somewhere safe when the time is right.
- Pack a bag with enough clothing, toiletries, vitamins, prescriptions, and anything else you absolutely need to live out of a suitcase for several days. **DO NOT** store this bag in or near your home. Discovery of a "jump" bag by a batterer will get you hurt. Store it with your most trusted friend or family member.
- Gather your birth certificate, social security card, driver's license, other personal identification cards (military, passport, etc.), insurance documents, a checkbook or bank passbook, food stamps, savings bonds, vehicle registrations, a copy of the lease or deed to your home, medical and school records, and any other legal document that might apply. Having to reconstruct all of those documents from a shelter phone or a motel room is tedious, so avoid this problem by planning ahead.
- Have a list of important contact phone numbers.
- Give a copy of all of the above documents to a trusted family member or friend, or place them in a safety deposit box in your new bank.
- Give a set of important keys to that same trusted person, or put them in the bank box.

One word of caution: If the batterer has control of important items of yours, such as personal documents, medicine, financial records, etc., it's critical that you make decisions based on your safety. You may need to get police officers to stand by while you collect these things, as mentioned in the chapter on

dealing with threats. Having an officer on site as you collect important items is a great idea if you haven't been able to do this in safety previously.

Always remember, however, that your life is more important than any item or document. Choosing to leave things behind in order to live for another day may be a painful but wise decision in some circumstances.

After The Escape

After leaving, certain actions must take place in order to ensure maximum safety and to cement your resolve so you don't reverse the difficult decision you made.

- Make a list of grievances. You may have already done this, but now would be a good time to create or update a list of all the really bad things done to you that created an environment so hostile you felt the need to leave. This might include all the times he hit or threatened you, denied you basic rights, lied, belittled you, hurt the children, or cut you off from family and friends. This list will embolden you during those times you're feeling lonely or guilty for leaving. It's a great defense for your heart when he starts sending love letters, flowers, and text messages promising to change.
- Change the locks on your doors if you have stayed in your own home.
- Give copies of your protection order to your children's school, your place of employment, trusted neighbors, and to any police investigator involved in your case. Keep a copy of the order with you at all times.
- Show photos of the person you fear and your order of protection to neighbors, and ask them to call the police if they see him show up around the neighborhood.

- Ask someone to screen your calls at work—although this may not be possible if you are responsible for answering phones.
- Have someone walk you to and from your car each workday. Attacks and confrontations in place of employment parking lots are common. The buddy system works, so resolve that you will not walk to your car, at least for the first few weeks, unless someone is with you or watching.
- Talk to your children about the importance of not divulging your new address or showing the batterer where you live.
- Seek assistance and guidance from people who deal with intimate partner violence for a living, including battered women shelter staff members, victim advocates in the prosecutor's office, police agencies, and attorneys. You're probably new to all this. Believe it or not, they could well have a trick or two up their sleeves that will help keep you safe and smooth out the new life path you've taken.
- Seek therapy. Look, you've been through a lot of emotional trauma, and there's no sense in carrying all that pressure around if there are professionals who can help you get rid of it and learn from your experiences.

LIFE SPENT
IMPRISONED IS
SHORT AND BITTER;
FREEDOM AND A
LIFE LIVED WELL IS
WORTH GREAT RISK

Nineteenth century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." This experience can debilitate you and make you afraid of the whole world, or it can make you stronger and wiser. Let people help you now, and later you can help someone else. But first, you must get out. Life spent imprisoned in your own house or apartment is short and bitter; freedom and a life lived well is worth great risk. To get there requires courage, planning, and action, and it is my fervent hope you can muster all three.

EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES: STRATEGIES FOR A SAFER, MORE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE

Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required ...

— LUKE 12:48

My family and I used to run a stable and equestrian center in central Texas, and one summer we had an employee who was maliciously harassed by an ex-boyfriend. We dealt with it successfully, but there were times when we didn't know what we needed to do. It was a small but thriving business with a nice mix of high-end Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, and mischievous little Mustangs, but anyone who has ever been in the stable business knows your clients aren't the horses—they're the horses' owners.

And our clients were nervous because the idiot in question kept coming by our place when I was away at work, intent on following his crying ex-fiancé around the stables, and repeatedly asking her why she wouldn't talk to him anymore. He'd throw a profane hissy fit and leave in his pickup fast enough to make everyone jump out of the way and cough dust for half an hour. The woman was still in her teens—a darling little thing who became one with the saddle and animal when she rode—who found life's true joy in working where she knew she was valued and in a place where she could be around horses all day long. It seems particularly unfair to rob someone of that kind of happiness by stalking them like you own them.

The horse owners were just out there to enjoy nature and be with their animals, and this guy's little rants were upsetting to them, the ex-girlfriend, and to all the horses. Horses don't like to be upset, and their owners know it, so it took about two of these scenes before the complaints started flooding in.

Mind you, these were complaints about our business. No one blamed us for the problem, but the expectations were high that something be done about it, and rightfully so.

Well, we banned him from the property and meant it when we said we'd prosecute him for trespassing if he came back, so he took to waiting one hundred yards outside our gate for her to get off work. This was also concerning to us all because I knew he had access to weapons, and he seemed particularly unbalanced during those hot summer weeks. This created a unique predicament because, as the property owner, I felt responsible for my employee, all of our clients, all of the horses and, of course, my own family. Our boys were young at the time, and I was worried they might get in the way of one of his tantrums. Another concern was the fact that our barn was filled with a particularly dry, combustible substance called hay, and I didn't put it past our idiot to seek some form of retaliation via that avenue. It was a prickly, confusing time.

The happy ending is that she eventually got a protection order, and he seemed to lose all interest in her after spending two nights in jail for violating the order. He seemed like such a determined fellow, but forty-eight hours in the pokey resulted in his leaving Texas and moving to one of the Dakotas. Go figure.

Think about the many complexities of our situation. We had our employee who had every right to be frightened and alarmed, animals that would have been defenseless had he gotten it into his head to snipe them with his rifle from the abundant woods around our place, our clients who were annoyed and worried enough that some were considering taking their business elsewhere,

valuable and easily destroyable property, and, most precious of all, our own children who were forever toddling about the property, all but oblivious to the tons of horse flesh and hooves, wild animals, and the potential maniac who kept trying to drop by. It was through a combination of good communication, utilization of the criminal justice system, determination that he would not be allowed to continue disrupting all of our lives, and an absolutely loyal stand by our employee that eventually won the day.

DO EMPLOYERS
HAVE A
RESPONSIBILITY
TO OFFER
ASSISTANCE
TO AN EMPLOYEE?

Which brings us to the thematic question for this chapter: Do employers have a responsibility to offer assistance to an employee who is the victim of intimate partner violence and/or stalking? If you've read this far into the book, chances are your answer is yes. Your answer will likely be followed by a question: "How much should a company do, and how involved should a business be in the private life of any individual employee?"

An employer's responsibility is, first and foremost, to operate a profitable business. If he or she fails to do this one thing, nothing else really matters. If the business fails, no one has a job. Yes, we hope that all employers, from the two employee mom-and-pop store to the multinational corporation, care about the lives of the people who work for them, but the emphasis must be on the bottom line.

So, let's talk about the bottom line. For the purposes of discussion, let's pretend that you, the reader, are an employer in a company that sells—I don't know—light bulbs. Yes, you're the owner of the Light Bulb Store, famous in your community for selling the highest quality light bulbs at the lowest prices. Your logo is a bright yellow light bulb with a huge smile, and your tag line is "We brighten your day with prices you'll flip for!" ("Flip" the light switch—get it? Made that up myself.)

Things are swell and business is booming until you sit down one day with your accountant and learn that a new business is moving in next door. That business, Ralph's Toxic Chemical Outlet, has another store in a different part of town. Ralph's first store is located next to a business that sells lampshades. The lampshade business used to do quite well until Ralph moved in, but then customers started getting affected by the chemical fumes, employees started calling in sick or were distracted to the point of inefficiency about such matters as whether the exposure to Ralph's toxins would be the death of them. Ralph himself is kind of an obnoxious fellow, cursing and spitting out on the sidewalk in front of the lampshade store, and the result has been that what had once been a thriving little business is now starting to go under because Ralph won't control his toxins or keep his filthy habits to himself.

What would you do if you were the owner of the Light Bulb Store and you learned that Ralph was planning to move in next door? Would you demand that your landlord stop the deal? Would you use the courts to bar him from setting up a shop, knowing his business will kill yours? Would you use every law and ordinance at your disposal to keep Ralph in line if he did go into business next door? This is your livelihood we're talking about here. How much are you willing to take from Ralph?

Now let's say the toxins aren't chemical in nature. Instead, they are the toxins that spread in the form of fear, hate, and dread. In this scenario, Ralph isn't the owner of a cruddy business. Now he's a guy who has lost his wife because he beat on her, threatened her, and generally made her life miserable when they were together. She finally got tired of it, and now she's moved out. Ralph doesn't know where she lives yet, but he knows where she works. The place of employment becomes his primary focus for attack.

Ralph has two ideas in mind. First and foremost, he is going to make her come back to him because the thought of losing control over someone who he most enjoyed manipulating in the whole world is, to a control freak like Ralph,

completely unacceptable. Second, Ralph is going to make her pay for leaving him, and he probably doesn't care much about anyone else around her.

There are ways Ralph can accomplish both of these agenda items at the same time. He can make her life at work so intolerable that she gets in trouble and gets fired, and he can simultaneously manufacture a scenario in which she must once again depend on him.

Ralph and his ilk often start with multiple phone calls to her place of employment. I've had cases in which these guys will call one hundred times a day, and not answering the ring isn't an option because customers call in on those same lines. Imagine trying to operate a business or stay on track with a project if you have to answer the phone literally every two or three minutes.

At some point in the day during all these calls, a supervisor gets wind of the fact that an employee is receiving multiple calls from her boyfriend. The supervisor tells her she needs to stop taking personal calls at work. This is a nasty rock and a hard place. She knows she's about to get in trouble, she's embarrassed to be receiving this kind of scrutiny, and she knows that Ralph isn't going to stop calling unless she does what he wants. Eventually, she acquiesces, agreeing to meet Ralph for a talk after her shift if he'll stop calling her work. Ralph is happy and stops calling for a while. Ralph has also learned a new control technique, one that he plans to use many times in the future to get her to talk to him, get her to have sex with him, and even get her to move back in with him.

The next tactic is to start showing up at her work. In some cases, he will be in the parking lot a few minutes before the start or end of her shift. This means she must endure a torrent of profanities, pleadings, apologies, promises, and threats during the walk from her car to the building. Imagine starting your work day under this kind of pressure, knowing that, even if you do make it safely into the building, he's going to start the onslaught of phone calls right after the door closes behind you.

If that isn't bad enough, the thought of him being out in the parking lot to meet you after work is worse. In this instance, the woman now has to deal with the fact that she has no built-in excuse for why she can't stop and talk to him. She isn't running late for work, so he'll demand to know why she won't just give him a chance. The fact that he hurt her two nights earlier doesn't register for him because he is a narcissistic bully who is only thinking about the fact that she won't do what he wants her to do.

She now has to contend with the fact that he will most likely follow her in his car when she drives off the lot. He likely knows where she lives, where her children go to day care, knows her friends, where she buys groceries and does her banking. There is no sense that she can get away from him, and, in so many tragic instances, that parking lot scene is where her resolve to stay away from him erodes in a pool of despair and fatigue. She agrees to dinner, during which he will be at least as charming as he was when they first met, and by the next morning they are back together again.

Ralph scores another control hit, and the cycle repeats.

In some cases, Ralph's incessant behavior still doesn't sway her to meet with him, give him another chance, or get her to come back. This causes Ralph to take his game to a new level. Many times these guys will call employers and make complaints about her customer service or inform her boss that she needs to be drug tested or investigated for embezzlement.

Ultimately, if none of these tactics work, some stalkers will take it to yet another level, which may include actual physical attacks on her, her co-workers, and/or anyone else who happens to get in the way of his objective to make her come back and to make her life miserable in the process.

All of these tactics cause problems for an employer. Supervisors don't like it if some jerk is calling incessantly and tying up phone lines, causing his employees to be distracted and upset, generating unfounded complaints that must be investigated, or putting the staff in actual physical danger.

All of this activity wastes time, resources, and money, chipping away at the company's profitability.

Given that, an employer has two options: get rid of the target employee, or help her get rid of the jerk. It's really as simple as that, though both options carry unique challenges, responsibilities, and risks.

An excellent study done at the University of Arkansas through the Sam M. Walton College of Business found clear evidence that domestic violence costs employers baskets of money every year. How big a basket? The study indicated it would need to be a basket big enough to hold six billion dollars every year. These costs came in the form of absenteeism in some cases, workplace distraction in most of the cases, and increased healthcare costs. Six billion dollars a year wasted because employees are getting beaten up the night before they have to go to work, or they're sitting at their work stations wondering if he's going to kidnap the kids today or be waiting in the parking lot to kill them after their shift.

A company could decide that it just isn't worth the effort. There may be a line of folks out the door waiting for the next job opening, and it might make prudent business sense to let a stalking victim go and replace her with somebody who will be there every day, will be focused when at work, and won't drive up the company's healthcare costs. On the other hand, the University of Arkansas study also found that former victims of domestic violence were every bit as reliable once their situation had resolved successfully, and I imagine many of them must feel a higher level of loyalty to an employer who stood by them during their personal storm.

How we, as a culture, perceive injuries is a funny thing. If I bust my lip playing football the day before my shift, I have a great story to tell at work the next day. If, however, my domestic partner slugs me and causes a bruise under my eye, I may not go to work

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until it heals. If I just have to go because I'm all out of sick and vacation time, I might choose to cover the black eye with gobs of makeup, but I'm going to be wondering what people are thinking of me all day—wondering if they bought the story that I walked into a door frame.

Or what if my children are crying the morning after a particularly nasty episode, during which their father beat me in front of them and called me horrible names? What if I just can't find it in my heart to send them off to school that morning crying and traumatized, but I also can't afford to hire a baby-sitter so I call in sick (again) to work.

Another scenario might be that he seriously hurt me this time, and I had to go to the hospital. There was a long wait at the emergency room, and I didn't get released until two hours after my shift started, so I called my boss and told him I'd fallen and broken my arm.

Maybe I'm actually that jerk who beat my wife and terrorized my kids the night before, and I know the cops are looking to arrest me. Do you seriously think I'm going to show up for work today just so I can be humiliated in front of my friends by being led off in handcuffs? Or maybe the police actually found me, and I use my jail phone call to let my supervisor know I'm taking a day off due to "stomach problems."

I once dealt with two remarkably similar stalking cases, two of the worst I've ever encountered, and both of them occurred within the same year. In both cases, the targeted women worked for the same employer but in different facilities. The company for which they worked is one of the largest and most respected in our area, with a solid reputation for excellence within that industry. Both were college educated professionals with excellent work histories, respected by their supervisors and colleagues, and both with career plans that included staying employed where they were and continuing an upward rise within that system. One of the women had children, though from a different man than the one who almost took her life. The other one also had

children, but they were grown and off to college by the time her stalker began his pattern of torment.

In both cases, the men in question relentlessly called these women, both of whom had broken up with them after violent episodes. They both snuck into the respective places of employment and accosted co-workers of the women in an attempt to locate them within the buildings. In both cases, the security systems within the facilities and the police officers from my agency were utilized on several occasions. In both cases, the men had guns, binoculars, and handcuffs, and one of the men had a set of night vision goggles.

One of the women was eventually forced to leave her home because she never, ever felt safe there. The other was forced to leave her home when an intentionally set fire destroyed it while she was at work. We eventually arrested her stalker for arson, along with several other offenses, but I have wondered how she will ever feel completely safe again knowing that a man who once professed to love her was crazy and cruel enough to burn down her home because she wouldn't go on any more dates with him.

As similar as these stories are, they differed dramatically when it came to how the women were treated by their respective supervisors. Remember that they both worked for the same employer. The same person signed their paychecks, but they worked in two different locations under different supervisors.

In the first case, we found that the woman was completely and totally supported by her supervisor and co-workers. If her stalker had come back into the building, I'm convinced that a vigilante group would have quickly formed, and the man would have been chased off the premises with pitchforks and torches. She was given some time off to get her affairs in order after her house burned and for the times when she was expected in court, and she was offered counseling for herself and her children. Her boss routinely checked on her spirits and safety plan, and she existed in a supportive cocoon-like environment for months while we investigated and sought prosecution.

In the second case, the woman was temporarily reassigned to a different facility. She was not supported when she told her boss she needed time to go to protection order hearings or to meet with the prosecutor. Some of her co-workers supported her, but others griped that they had to pick up the slack left by her because she was taking off too much time. One vocal group decided that her stalker was probably going to hurt all of them and wondered why she was being allowed to stay if her presence was putting them all in peril.

Ironically, I later learned that one of the more vocal members of the group had previously taken half a year off for maternity leave, and another had threatened to sue the organization when there was talk of cutting back on paid cigarette breaks. Sigh.

The woman was eventually forced out of her job. Too bad, too, because she was a specialist in her field, and replacing her was something of a problem. Nonetheless, she was given a severance package and a promise that she was eligible for rehire as soon as her stalker went to prison or left her alone.

The silver lining in this story is that she found a higher paying job out of state and met a man who treats her like a queen, which is nice because she certainly deserved a break. The stalker went to prison, and the good guys won, but I occasionally shake my head as I remember her story and wonder how her employer could have done things differently.

The fascinating concept in the respective stories of these two women is that they worked for the same company but were treated differently. There were variations between the individuals and their problems, but the basic story was the same. If anything, the man stalking the woman who kept her job and was surrounded by supportive administrators and co-workers was the more dangerous of the two. He burned down his ex-girlfriend's house, for goodness sake.

Why, then, did one supervisor and facility respond with wraparound services and the other all but shove a valuable veteran worker out? I don't

have an answer, but I do know that inconsistency is a breeding ground for lawsuits, poor morale, and communication deterioration.

One question that a company might ask itself is whether or not an existing policy on workplace violence is enough to cover the specific issues related to domestic violence. Most companies have some idea or plan for what management and staff will do if, say, a co-worker shows up to work and starts beating up somebody else. Many companies, schools, and government agencies now routinely consider what to do in case of a shooting incident or a bomb threat. Is that enough to cover how a company should respond when an employee is being hunted and tormented by her ex-boyfriend?

It may not be enough when a company has to deal with the potential landmines of domestic violence and stalking for a couple of different reasons. Most policies and procedures adequately deal with what to do in the event of a violent episode or even a potentially violent incident, such as a bomb threat. What most agencies don't address specifically, and what should be as crystal clear to all employees as possible, is what to do when a situation has the potential to get hot but has only reached a warm stage.

In other words, if a guy was attacking a woman in the parking lot a number of things would likely happen right away, many of which were already dictated by policy or procedural guidelines. Security would either intervene or get backup to assist the woman in trouble; someone would call the police; witnesses would give statements; and everyone would document what they saw as part of the company record. The fact that an emergency took place invokes a certain amount of action, much of which is addressed in the company's policy and procedure manual.

What if there is no emergency but the potential for one exists? Yes, security can be alerted, but what other preventive measures can be taken? Under what circumstances should the police be called? Does the employee need some type

of assistance or counseling? Does the company have any legal exposure or the potential for exposure?

If a victim hasn't asked yet for help, does a company step forward and offer anyway? What if she is still in love with him and resents what she perceives as a supervisor's intrusions into her personal life? Or what if she is afraid of him but knows that she can always manage to calm him down better than her boss or some police officer possibly could?

It is the ambiguity in certain situations that confuses the issue. No wonder companies have traditionally shied away from getting into specifics when it comes to writing policy in this area. That having been said, I think there are a few points that can be covered in a company manual that will help clarify an organization's position in this area.

- The company will become involved at some level if and when other employees may be at risk.
- The company will become involved, if only to learn more about the specific issues, when there is reason to believe the business' enterprise is being jeopardized.
- The company will provide reasonable protection and security for an endangered employee.
- The company can provide information on services available to victims of intimate partner violence, such as shelters, legal aid, medical care, criminal justice and police protections, transportation, and counseling, and do this in a discreet, compassionate manner.
- A company may choose to seek certain remedies for its own losses, such as seeking prosecution in criminal courts for such offenses as threats, violent or destructive acts, trespassing, and thefts.

- A company may choose to seek certain remedies through civil courts, such as torts for lost revenue and costs incurred when dealing with the ramifications of domestic violence and stalking that has encroached into the workplace itself.
- A company may also choose to organize a Domestic Violence Response Team, potentially comprised of personnel from such departments as Security, Human Resources, Legal, Medical, Employee Associations, Management, Training/Continuing Education, and Public Relations.
- This Domestic Violence Response Team (varying in size based on need, size of organization, etc.) can be tasked with various duties, such as spreading the word about company initiatives in this area, training management and leadership about what is to be expected in a domestic violence situation, providing information about services to victims, arranging appropriate security measures for specific challenges, and establishing effective communication channels with area law enforcement agencies.

One thing that should be made clear for members of such a team is that they are not being charged with solving all the problems. Their primary task is to know what resources are available, both inside and outside of the company, and to delegate specific tasks out to those services.

In other words, members on a team like this won't be sitting on phones all day trying to find shelter for a woman who came into the home office crying because she knows she'll be beaten when she goes home that night. The team would have numbers to local shelters, and they would offer those numbers to the woman. The shelter staff is experienced at finding appropriate places for the woman to stay, and they'll follow up with her for other services, such as counseling, medical care, legal advice, etc.

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Another example might be a woman who discloses to a co-worker that she is being stalked by her ex-boyfriend, and that the torment is resulting in her feeling deeply depressed. Yes, security needs to get involved, but wouldn't it be nice to also have numbers for crisis hotlines or licensed therapists who can immediately address the problem and help this woman start feeling alive again? This is an employee in crisis, not significantly different from one who is worried about serious health issues or going through some other personal issue, such as divorce or financial problems.

It is not an employer's responsibility to handle the problem for the employee. It may be, however, that an employer chooses to be supportive and offer various suggestions and services to good employees so their people can get back on track and return to maximum effectiveness sooner. Bottom line, this is a business decision, though it is one in which the lives of human beings are interwoven. Personally, I can't stand the thought of some stalker making himself such a nuisance that an employer fires the ex-girlfriend just to be rid of the stalker. It's not fair, and it tends to perpetuate the pattern of abuse and terror in that the victim is left with even fewer options, resources, and support than before. I would much rather see employers cowboy up and take some calculated, strategic risks for good folks, all the while working in partnership with local law enforcement, professional specialists within the company, social service agencies in the community, and the victim to create successful, safe, and even profitable solutions to the challenge at hand.

For more information on how this translates into actual policy and procedure, visit the website at www.CAEPV.org. There you will find excellent examples of how other companies have put their philosophical stand against domestic violence into practice and written declarations that they will stand firmly with employees suffering from domestic violence and stalking. CAEPV.org

publishes a list of resources and suggestions, including sample policies that can easily be adapted for just about any company. Here, for example, is a sample policy offered by the CAEPV.org website covering a general statement that could be used as the backbone for a more extensive policy:

“(Company Name) recognizes impact of partner violence on the workplace. Partner violence is defined by (Company Name) as abusive behavior occurring between two people in an intimate relationship. It may include physical violence, sexual, emotional, and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and economic control.

“(Company Name) is committed to heightening awareness of partner violence and providing information, resources, and guidance for employees and management to address the occurrence of partner violence and its effects on the workplace.

“(Company Name) intends to make assistance available to employees involved in partner violence. This assistance may include: confidential means for coming forward for help, resource and referral information, special considerations at the workplace for employee safety, work schedule adjustments, or leave necessary to obtain medical, counseling, or legal assistance, and workplace relocation (if available). In responding to partner violence concerns in order, (Company Name) will maintain appropriate confidentiality and respect for the rights of the employee involved.

“(Company Name) intends to publish, maintain, and post in locations of high visibility, a list of resources for survivors and perpetrators of partner violence.

“(Company Name) will not discriminate against an employee in any employment actions (including recruiting, hiring, promoting, disciplining, or terminating) because the employee is, or is perceived to be, a victim of domestic violence, or deny job benefits or other programs to employees

based solely on partner violence related problems. When employees confide that a job performance or conduct problem is related to partner violence, in addition to appropriate corrective or disciplinary action consistent with company policy and procedure, a referral for appropriate assistance should be made to the employee."

"To enable employees to seek assistance for domestic violence needs, we encourage management to respond to employees who are victims of domestic violence in an open-minded manner. Respecting employees needs for confidentiality and self-determination whenever possible, we reserve the right to disclose limited information and take action when it is clearly necessary to protect the safety of our employees" (CAEPV Sample Workplace Policy, 14 April 2015)

CAEPV.org also makes suggestions for sample content on education and training, safety and security, how and when an employee can take leave, such as sick, vacation, or Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) time, and procedures for including leadership and management in a domestic violence challenge.

They've already done a lot of the work and any company, large or small, would benefit from some research time spent on this organization. They also provide best-case examples and highlight above-and-beyond efforts by companies that are putting their money, time, and resources where their mouths are when it comes to this issue.

Domestic violence and stalking are clearly bottom line, profit margin concerns for companies. Billions are lost each year in this country alone due to lost time, workplace distraction, and medical costs, all associated with this one issue. Companies are faced with a choice: to get rid of an employee whose personal life and problems are intruding into the workplace environment, or to stand with a person going through a personal crisis and offer security, guidance, and support, all the while protecting the company's interests and assets.

It takes courage to launch and successfully run a business. It also takes courage to stand shoulder to shoulder in a conflict and accept some of the brunt from the opposition so one person doesn't suffer all of the pressure, pain, and fear alone. I call upon that spirit of entrepreneurship and grit to incorporate proven methods and find innovative ways to support good workforces in this challenge. I believe the reward will be a long-term, loyal employee, and a safer workplace.

MEN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENDING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The buck stops here.

— PRESIDENT HARRY S TRUMAN

The early part of my life was spent in Killeen, Texas, a small city north of Austin and adjacent to Ft. Hood. This was during pre-1968 Vietnam and during the thick of the Civil Rights Movement. Killeen was a conservative town primarily populated by pro-war military members and their families. My father was a minister, and we lived in a parsonage owned by the church. Mom was an elementary school teacher, and my little sister had just been born when all kinds of drama hit our household.

Dad broke away from the conservative values of the town and his church, and he began using his pulpit to speak out against the war and in favor of Civil Rights. It was entirely common for Martin Luther King, Jr. to be called a communist in those days and in that community, so when my father announced there would be a memorial service at the church for Dr. King the day after he was murdered, it punched the temper buttons of a whole lot of folks.

The vice president of the church board came into my father's office, livid to the point that his face matched his red hair.

"What do you think you're doing holding a memorial service for that communist in my church?" he all but yelled.

My father had considered this man a friend, though a philosophical opposite, so he was briefly taken aback. He recovered quickly and answered, “What would you do if a firefighter died?” His fiery friend calmed considerably and replied, “We’d hold a memorial service.” My father finished the conversation by saying, “I believe Reverend King was a firefighter, fighting the inferno of racism and hate. He was a hero, and we ARE holding a memorial service for him.”

They had the service, which touched off weeks of threats, including bomb threats and whispers about crosses being burned on our front lawn. We didn’t ride in our car for at least a month. I was just shy of six at the time, but I remember my mother crying about it once. I also remember how proud she was of my father. It was a scary time—not just for us, but also for the whole country. My point is that if a young couple with two small children who could easily have been thrown out of the church-owned house, and who had credible reasons for believing actual physical danger was a possibility, could find the nerve to speak out against injustice, surely good men can do the same when talk among their buddies turns toward violence against women.

Picture a group of guys from your office having a couple of beers after work, talking about sports, politics, the workday, etc. They spot a black guy dancing with a white woman, and then a few minutes later a group of Hispanic men walk in speaking Spanish. This results in a new conversation, held not quite at a whisper level—a spewing conversation filled with hate.

What do you do? Do you correct your friends, the guys you’ll see the next day and every workday for the next few years? Do you show your disgust and walk away? Or do you laugh along and lamely throw in a couple of racist insults yourself, knowing you just gave up a little of your own dignity in order to keep fitting in?

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Edmund Burke said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” In that one statement, Burke summed up the responsibility for all the historical evils of the world. Surely there were good but silent men who knew slavery in a country founded in freedom was wrong; that the deceit and military capture of lands west of the Atlantic Ocean from the people already living there was not a activity fair and judicious people practiced; that the internment of good citizens during World War II, simply by virtue of the fact that they were of Japanese descent, was a smear on our core values; that devaluing women in words and simulated deeds present in some popular music, videos, and electronic games is a vicious backhanded slap to all the strides women have made in the last one hundred years.

Good men simply can't be silent any more, and they certainly can't participate in cruel circles. I don't put such participation on the same level as the cowards who wear hoods and terrorize families or who strap on bombs and destroy peaceful communities in the twisted belief that their prophet will condone their actions. I do, however, believe that participating in such vitriol is spiritually and ethically akin to such people and their ideas. Indeed, where do you think the ideas of terrorism evolve? They sprout and are nurtured in just such conspiratorial, invective, hallway or alleyway conversations.

Jackson Katz wrote a book entitled *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help* (Sourcebooks, Inc., 2006),” in which he makes the point that calling violence against women a “women's issue” negates the fact that men must be actively involved in order to reduce or eliminate the problem. He argues that this is a society issue, not just a women's issue, and calling it such takes the excuses away from men who don't consider it their problem. Katz makes it personal, calling attention to the fact that the majority of men have at least one female in their lives who is precious to them, who must be protected at all cost, whether that be a mother, daughter, sister,

wife, girlfriend, or grandmother. In personalizing the issue, Katz forces all reasonable men to realize that violence against any woman could have been violence against that loved one and, thus, is a concern for all of us.

Gentlemen, let me be clear. If a group of guys is sitting around, and one or two of them start making statements that imply support for violence against women, I want you to imagine they're saying it about your little sister, your mother, your girlfriend, or your daughter. If you don't respond with something like "Hey, dude, that's un-cool" or "How about you knock it off" you're not the tough guy you want everyone to believe you are.

More importantly, men who believe that violence in the home is as oppressive and destructive to our core values as is racism must find it within themselves to spread that word to their children through example, through teachings, and through action.

Imagine a father-son talk that includes the topic of how to properly and kindly treat your girlfriend or wife. Is that not as important as a sex talk, staying off drugs, or imparting our philosophies about life? Imagine men refusing to listen to or buy music recordings, video games, or movies that feature or support violence toward women. Imagine a whole culture re-embracing chivalry and gentleness toward the fairer sex while simultaneously admiring the talents and perspectives women bring to the table.

It can happen. It is happening. Violence against women is going to be around for a while, but I see good men being more vocal and vigilant about showing the world that misogyny is not okay, and that they are appalled at the attitudes and actions of a small, petty minority of our gender. That's good because that is exactly what it will take. The Civil Rights Movement succeeded as well as it did because people of all races stood up and demanded that it happen. It was

IMAGINE
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IT ABOUT
YOUR LITTLE **SISTER**,
YOUR **MOTHER**,
YOUR **GIRLFRIEND**,
OR YOUR **DAUGHTER**

the right thing to do. Ending violence against women and children is one of this generation's great engagements, and it's critical that it be faced with the same courage, determination, and diversity.

Gentlemen, this isn't just a "women's issue." We have an important part to play, and the time has come to join the good fight.

COMMUNITIES: WHAT YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY CAN DO TO END THE VIOLENCE

*We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters
and righteousness like a mighty stream.*

— MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Hopefully, by this point you have reached some decision that domestic violence carries negative effects beyond the walls of the houses in which it occurs. It places a heavy burden on our communities in terms of time, money, wasted resources, and a factor of shame we all share. Moreover, domestic violence carries with it other diseases, such as drug and alcohol abuse, perpetuation of the violence when children from these homes grow up and repeat the only patterns they've ever known, and a general sense of despair and hopelessness that marks the beginnings of a rotting culture.

There is a philosophy in law enforcement called the Broken Window Theory. In this theory, a police agency recognizes that certain symptoms in a community strongly indicate that things are going downhill fast, and the most expedient way to stop this is to pay attention to the small details. For example, if a window gets broken in an abandoned building in the middle of your city, you could choose to leave it as someone else's responsibility. However, hoodlums will take the lack of initiative to fix this small problem as a sign that the police and the community at large don't care or are too busy with bigger issues to respond.

Soon another window is broken, and one night every window on the east side of the building is shattered. Graffiti follows, no surer sign that thugs are setting up business. Corner drug dealers spring up, followed by prostitutes. Somebody has to keep all this in line, and street leadership emerges. Generally, such leadership is gained by force and intimidation, and something far short of a constitutional democracy rules the streets.

At this point, the police are way behind the curve, and agencies in this predicament will spend years and extraordinary resources to catch up and get things back under control.

All for a broken window.

Obviously, that is an extreme example, but the Broken Window Theory is time tested and well recognized in modern police work as an important point to remember when police administrators set priorities for their departments. You can't let the small things go too long because that tends to let the bigger issues fester. A small streak of rust will eventually creep all the way down the side of a boat, but a little scrubbing and attention on the front end will keep you afloat for years to come.

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Which brings us to communities responding to the insidiousness of domestic violence. What roles do members of a community play? Primarily, communities must foster solid partnerships with their police agencies. A town or section of a city in which there is little or no trust between officers and the citizenry is a gravely ill place to live, analogous to being in a house rotting from black mold. Information doesn't flow; indeed, it is intentionally stifled. I hope we've already agreed on the point that violent crime, especially crimes committed within the home, breed and flourish in secrecy, so a community in which secrets are kept because of a lack of faith in local law enforcement is one in which there is little hope.

Once a reliable partnership and trust has developed between a population and its protective agency, it is imperative that those lines of communication be used frequently. Police agencies need to get out to neighborhood meetings and local events to spread the word that they're there and willing to help. A good dose of "Officer Friendly" never hurt anything, and a uniformed police officer passing out badge stickers to children, teaching people how to properly install car seats, speaking at gatherings on the department's ongoing efforts to fight crime, patting kids on the back and shaking hands with their parents goes a long way toward gaining or maintaining trust and loyalty. Performing excellent, cordial, and vigilant police work each and every time out in the field is, of course, the expected follow-up to all those efforts at goodwill.

By the same token, once police agencies have earned trust, members of a community should acknowledge it. That means that local media tells stories of good works, and not just salacious or scandalous ones. Citizens should tell stories of the polite officer who pulled them over for speeding, and not how unfair it was that they were stopped in the first place. Police should be included in problem solving, and not just used as the last resort.

Police officers don't have crystal balls, so someone has to tell us when crime is being committed. It doesn't matter if the crime is someone selling crystal meth on a street corner or of children being abused. We can't do our job as effectively if the members of the communities we serve don't trust us enough to include us in the scenario. If we don't deserve the trust, communities need to scream, push, and prod until change occurs. If your local agency does deserve your respect and trust, grant it to them in a timely manner, let them in on the problem, and prepare to be impressed as they go to work for you.

Communities must also support, both financially and ideologically, shelters that allow people escaping violent homes a place to stay while they recover, get their bearings, and come up with a long-term solution. Shelters tend to be a lot like a plumbing system. You know it's out there somewhere, doing what

**SHELTERS ARE
A PERFECT
FUNDRAISING FIT
FOR LEADERSHIP
ORGANIZATIONS**

it does, and in the back of your mind you know that's a good thing, but it's certainly not something pleasant to consider. If, however, your plumbing (or your local shelter) is barely patched together with duct tape and prayer, it may be time to invest in something more solid and defining of the consideration for which your community should be known.

Shelters are a perfect fundraising fit for leadership organizations, such as Junior League or Rotary, and I've been amazed at how diligently members of such groups work on behalf of local shelters for battered women and children. There are a lot of charitable opportunities out there, but shelters are one type that tend to get overlooked or thrown on the back burner. Yet shelters are full of people getting well and strong, people who are taking the first steps in a new journey in which they can become productive and empowered. They are worthy of a community's attention and devotion, and I encourage you to find ways to get involved with them.

Communities can be supportive in other ways as well. Pushing for legislation that makes it simpler and safer for victims to come forward and report crimes, and which clarifies laws so that officers can provide more effective enforcement, can be successful in curbing domestic violence. Is the law on stalking well-written in your state? How simple is it for someone to be granted an order of protection? Is strangling your wife a misdemeanor or a felony? What if she's pregnant, does that change things? If you don't know, ask. I assure you, members of your local police agency, prosecutor's office, or shelter will know or have suggestions as to what would make things better, and then your community or group can make it part of your mission to make change happen. There is little in this world more empowering than working with an elected official to create or modify laws, and I think everyone should experience the process at least once.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, communities must be vigilant in the mindset that domestic violence won't be tolerated. This could include active support of such strategies as:

- Radio, television, and billboard ads announcing that violence in the home is unacceptable here.
- Community support of regional domestic violence units that would allow investigators from different towns and cities to share information and intelligence about known violent offenders with each other in a more streamlined, aggressive manner, and allow such units to work closely together in finding and bringing those offenders to justice.
- Domestic violence courts in which these cases are expedited through the court system so victims can realize rapid relief and batterers can enter Batterer Intervention Programs within weeks of their last offense.
- Police agency led programs for citizens to recognize and appropriately respond to injuries suspected of being caused by domestic violence. These programs are called such names as Citizen Police Academies or Citizen Awareness Programs, and they go a long way toward establishing those effective, trusting lines of communication mentioned earlier.
- Neighborhood watch programs, but with a clear understanding that ALL suspicious activity in a given neighborhood will generate a call to police, including suspicious activity within any home in that neighborhood. One of two things will happen if neighbors take care of each other in this manner. The bad guy will leave the neighborhood, or that family will finally get the help they need.
- Legislative initiatives designed to support and protect battered women.

**COMMUNITIES
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TOLERATED**

- Funding for shelters.
- Training designed to better prepare social services employees, police officers, paramedics, and firefighters to recognize and respond effectively to domestic violence situations.

Police can't do this alone. Communities that foster preventive programs, remain vigilant and resolute in the affirmation that domestic violence crimes are unacceptable, and that step out of regular comfort zones to clearly demonstrate these principals through positive action are more likely to remain essentially safe, healthy places in which to live. Fix one broken window today and you will save your community from replacing a thousand panes later.

USING OUR INSIDE VOICE: THE BLESSING OF INTUITION

I believe in intuitions and inspirations.

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

This short chapter is for the whole choir, whether it be the victims, the friends of victims, the cop investigating the crime, the social worker who is trying to make reason of a bad situation, or the stranger who happens to be walking by a house and hears sounds of what could be a domestic assault in progress. I'll sum up the whole message in four words: Listen to your intuition.

“When you are at imminent risk, intuition forgets about all . . . logical thought and just sends the fear signal. You are given the opportunity to react to a prediction that has already been completed by the time it comes into consciousness.” Gavin de Becker wrote that in his book *The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us From Violence* (Little, Brown & Company, 1997, page 88)..” The point in that paragraph, and in the entire book for that matter, is that people who listen to their inner voices tend to survive longer and live lives of greater quality. That voice, sometimes called intuition, is what keeps you from walking down dark alleys or going out on a date with a guy who gives you the creeps.

De Becker lists the messengers of intuition: nagging feelings, persistent thoughts, humor, wonder, anxiety, curiosity, hunches, gut feelings, doubt, hesitation, suspicion, apprehension, fear. Perhaps you're having an irrational

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fear as you dip your toe into ocean water while gazing out toward the sunset, but it is likely your anxiety is that voice telling you there's a nine-foot bull shark sniffing around in the shadows ten yards out. Maybe the guy I'm investigating for allegations that he forged some checks is innocent, but my gut is telling me that he's also good for some robberies and muggings we've had in the same area.

I had a sociology professor in college who swore that human beings had lost all instinct and intuition as we developed higher brain functioning and reasoning skills. I assume he made that announcement, always in an indignant tone, and always on the first day of each semester, just to provoke a big debate in the classroom. As a college sophomore, I was pretty sure he was wrong; as a veteran lawman, I know he was. There are universal mysteries out there, and one of them is how we sometimes know without knowing. Given that, isn't it prudent to pay attention?

Which is exactly what I'm asking you to do. If you have a nagging feeling that your brother-in-law is attacking your sister, or you have a suspicion that your ex-boyfriend is watching you, you may be right. Embrace it for the free knowledge that it is before you actually have to pay for having not listened. If the voice calls you to act, take action. If that means you suddenly feel the overwhelming compulsion to run from an underground parking garage, kick off your heels and be a track star.

We hear a lot about intuition from stalking victims. They know with the clarity of a flashing sign that they're being followed or are under surveillance. I've often heard "I feel silly for calling, but I just have a feeling that he's watching me."

I'm glad they call because I'd much rather have officers check the area and make sure she's safe than blow off her nagging feeling and leave her to be hurt. Which one do you think would be easier for a police officer to live with?

The way to live this life is to strike a balance between wariness and paranoia. Too little in one direction, and you end up getting hit by a bus; too much and you arrive at mid-journey worn and insane. There is no quarter given in this world for extreme naiveté, but by the same token you don't have to go overboard and become a cynical hermit. The balance lies in trusting yourself to know your limits, listening to your inner voice when it calls for you to tread cautiously, and allowing yourself to ask for help when appropriate to do so.

We are the richest of beings in that we have been endowed with higher reasoning and brain function in addition to our instincts and intuitions. When we combine all of these innate skills, we have the potential to achieve a life harmony and internal alarm system unique in the entire world. And it is that combination that allows us to dream, create, conquer challenges, and run like a gazelle when predators try to pounce.

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WHEN IT CALLS

WHAT FRIENDS AND FAMILY CAN DO TO HELP

Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.

— GEORGE BURNS

So what will you do when you see your beloved friend, daughter, or sister enduring torture for months and years? It is as difficult a prospect as can be imagined, one I've tried to analogize with substance abuse and addiction, inasmuch as trying to communicate with a woman being systematically abused — but not yet ready to leave — is akin to trying to talk to a cocaine addict who hasn't figured out she's lost control of her own soul.

The discussion leads to arguments, defensiveness, parries of insults, and false allegations, all designed to get the concerned one off subject. If you say something disparaging about the abusive boyfriend, and she ends up going back to said boyfriend, how comfortable do you imagine the next family gathering is going to be when she shows up arm-in-arm with him. Every time he smirks, you'll want to club him, and every time she has a new bruise, you'll want to shake her. You are intermittently her confidante, her enemy, her safe haven, and her great betrayer. Your own safety may be in peril because a batterer is likely to extend his frustrations to you, perhaps even to your family, and there will be times it feels like there is no winning this ugly, senseless fight.

And yet, you love her, and you grieve for all the time and security she has lost. Which brings back the original question: What do you do? There are

no simple answers to this, but where else do you start but at a beginning? Beginnings come from a quiet acknowledgement of your own fears, and an open-ended, humble offer to be there when she is ready. Telling a person in this situation that you are afraid for her safety, concerned about the emotional welfare of her children, that you simply won't stand by and watch without taking action for her safety and to protect her kids, and that you believe she deserves a better life, a better situation, is as caring and genuine as it gets.

It probably won't work; at least not the first time. She'll likely get angry, just as an alcoholic will attack you and remind you of all your sins and mistakes. There may be months of silence filled with wringing of hands and tubs-full of worry. You'll suffer over whether or not to call the police or to involve social services to at least protect the children (which you *must* do if children are in physical or emotional danger). Eventually, if your offer was genuine, and if you remain her friend even when she has attacked and turned her back on you, she may return.

Maybe that turn will come when she agrees to sit down with you and a victim advocate, a shelter social worker, or a police officer to discuss options; maybe it will be the evening she calls looking for a couch to sleep on for a few nights; maybe it will be the morning she calls from the hospital. You know her better than I do. All I know for sure is that in all this complicated mess—interwoven with family politics, strained friendships, hair-pulling frustration, and countless nights of terror—her takeaway message is simple and consistent: We'll be here for you when you're ready.

There can be no greater love than that.

TELLING A
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ON COURAGE

If I have to, I can do anything.

— HELEN REDDY

Renee appeared successful by all rights. She was a top performer in her career. She owned a lovely home, and she was married to a man who appeared charming to the rest of the world. Renee was living a lie, and it nearly killed her.

It wasn't much at first, she told us: a grab of her arm and a sharp glare, then an episode of hair pulling. He lost his job due to alcoholism, and he resented her for having a job when he didn't. One night he slapped her face. She told him she'd leave if he ever did it again. Another day he punched her ribs. She prayed he'd become the man he'd promised to be. Renee and Perry kept their secret for three years. Friends and family caught on, and the inevitable "Why don't you just leave" questions began.

And then one evening, the night I met her, in fact, Renee's life changed forever. I'm not sure she ever got a good answer as to why. Maybe it was another failed job interview. Maybe it was just too much liquor mixed with envy and self-loathing. Whatever, he was livid when she walked in that evening. Renee told me later she'd been in such a good mood when she got home. She didn't initially recognize how intensely angry he was as she entered to see him sitting on the side of their bed.

Without warning he struck her hard enough to cause blood to erupt from her mouth. No “good evening” or “I hate you.” Just *wham* and she was on the ground so stunned she never even thought to fight back.

He was on top of her almost before she hit the ground, and then he was beating her with his fists, pummeling her pretty, confused face. An earring was yanked out of her ear, and teeth plopped to the back of her throat.

At some point everything went black. She thinks he simply stopped and waited for her to wake up. Then he mocked her for hours, binding her with packing tape and repeatedly telling her he was going to kill her.

That was the plan, I’m convinced, but her husband (Perry) decided he needed to get a little drunker before he actually carried out the execution. Poor Perry was out of bourbon, and how can you be expected to murder your wife if your tank isn’t full? It was a quandary, to be sure. So Perry got it in his little reptilian brain that they’d need to run an errand to the liquor store before he did the deed.

Now you might imagine that this, in and of itself, was a problem for Perry because to get to the store he had to drive. As mind boggling as this may seem, Perry knew he was too drunk to drive. That’s right. He didn’t want a DWI, which meant he had to take Renee. Renee was a bloody mess, and she had tape all around her wrists and ankles. Hmm. What to do?

Perry untied her ankles for a start, and then he dragged her into the kitchen where he found his large grilling fork. He poked her ribs with the two fork spear tines and warned her he’d run it through her ribs if she tried to call for help. He told her the plan. They’d pull up to the liquor store window with her driving and him holding the spear against the right side of her chest. She’d order bourbon. He’d pay because her wrists would still be bound. She’d drive them to a little park he knew. He’d drink some more, and then he’d kill her. That was the plan.

You probably won't be surprised to hear that Renee didn't like the plan, so she came up with her own.

Perry hauled and shoved Renee into the driver's side of the car and pushed her onto the seat. He was a crafty one, Perry was, and he chuckled as he caught himself almost handing her the car keys before he got in himself. He actually wagged a finger at her, like she'd just tried to pull a fast one. Then he stumbled around to the other side of the car, pushing the button for the electric garage door right before he opened the passenger side and tried to climb in.

Renee timed her escape perfectly, waiting until he'd committed the bulk of his frame to sitting but not until he was balanced and dangerous again. In that moment she sprinted out of the car, away from the garage, and down the street to a house she'd never even visited before. Did I mention she was nude? He'd stripped and raped her hours earlier, and blood from her mouth, nose, and ears ran off her chin and between her breasts as she ran screaming for help to complete strangers three doors down.

God bless those neighbors, a young couple that had just moved in. They got her inside their home, locked their doors, called 911, and got Renee a blanket. I found her sobbing on their kitchen floor, a bloody, mascara-smeared, injured, terrified mess a few minutes later.

Perry fled, drunk driving and all, but an hour or so after we arrived on the scene he began calling her phone. Renee was at the hospital by then, so I answered. He was a bit surprised, I'd say, but he recovered well enough to give me a thorough cursing. In words so slurred I could barely recognize them as English, he invited me to mortal combat. I asked where I could meet him. He told me he was going to sue me for answering his wife's phone. I offered to meet him so he could serve me with legal papers. He asked if I was sleeping with his wife. I assured him I was not, pointing out that she was currently in a hospital. He said he didn't believe me, and he swore he was going to kill her if he went to jail.

He refused to meet with me that evening, though he promised to get even with me someday. Anyway, he was caught the next morning after calling the sheriff's office to ask directions after he'd gotten lost on a little rural road a few miles outside the city. A quick-thinking dispatcher realized she was talking to the man my department had been hunting all night, and she sent a deputy to scoop him up.

Poor Perry still had the barbeque fork in the car and Renee's blood all over his clothes. Some idiot had actually sold him a new bottle of bourbon. As he was handcuffed and led away, he made the statement, "I'm going to kill her when I get out."

Perry went to trial seven months later, and on that day he was cleaned up and articulate, charming and persuasive. You could almost see why Renee fell for him in the first place. He lost the trial and went to prison, but that's not the point of this story.

Renee earned it.

She'd lived through Perry's threats and bullying for years. She endured his occasional slaps and the nights when he'd choke her. He was a good man, she'd tell friends. He promised to change, and she was resolved to wait for him to be the man he promised—until the day he tried to murder her. She got away. She found help. And then she started the long road to surviving.

Renee is a perfect example of how loved ones and co-workers can help in dire situations. Perry put up a bail bond to get out of jail before trial, so for several weeks Renee was haunted by the fact that the man who'd tried to murder her was walking free. She imagined every bump and creak in the night was Perry, and every pair of headlights turning down her street was coming to run her down.

Friends offered her bedrooms and meals so she could get out of her frightening home. Co-workers traded cars with her on a daily basis so Perry never knew what she was driving. Those same co-workers were proactive

about calling the police department any time they saw someone matching Perry's image in the company parking lot. Renee's mother and father were divorced and hadn't spoken in years, but they and their respective spouses came together as a protective family unit, determined to protect their "little girl."

I've spoken of assembling a shield wall, comprised of those close to someone trying desperately to survive domestic violence, and in Renee's case that is exactly what happened. As soon as she shed light on all those terrible secrets she'd held onto for years, she found herself surrounded by a battalion of loved ones, colleagues, and professionals determined to keep her safe.

The trial was rough, but that was a necessary part of her journey. She cried on the witness stand at times. She handled the obscene grilling his defense attorney put her through, and at the end of the day she stared her ex-husband down. She actually caught his gaze and held it until he looked away.

Three years into his fifteen year sentence, a parole board released Perry back into the world he hated so much. Despite impassioned, reasonable objections from my department and from Renee and her friends, Perry walked. Within months he violated the terms of his parole by leaving his halfway house and getting drunk. The police department where he'd moved didn't have the manpower to go fetch him back. He was issued a written reprimand, and this held him in check for two whole weeks. He checked into a nineteen dollar a night motel and got hammered enough to break a window and curse the responding police officer. He was issued another written reprimand for this parole violation.

Renee called me when she got messages from mutual friends that he was planning to come back to our city. He'd promised to kill her someday, and we all had a strong feeling he had decided someday had arrived.

We battened down. Renee's home was placed under heavy surveillance. We got her an alarm system, and she petitioned for an order of protection. The prosecutor's office was briefed, and the local parole office was alerted. Most

importantly, the friends and family who'd been in her corner before coalesced back into the protective team they'd once been.

The day of the protection order hearing arrived. I honestly didn't believe the man would show up. Renee somehow knew he would, and I joked to keep her spirits up and her butterflies under control as we waited for the judge.

The hearing was held in a one-hundred-year-old courthouse. It's a fine old building with hardwood pews for the public and ancient leather chairs for the litigants. There were couples seeking divorce or their own orders of protection present. Lawyers mumbled and checked their watches, and the bailiff called for us all to rise.

The judge and Perry entered the courtroom at almost the same time, albeit through different doors. Renee saw him first, and I felt her stiffen beside me. The judge looked out over her courtroom and commenced with the first cases. We were fourth or fifth on the list that day, and I figured I'd need all that time just to get Renee back in shape to testify.

Perry looked dapper, wearing that same suit he'd worn at trial nearly four years earlier. He tried to get her to look at him, but he caught my glare instead. He didn't try again for the rest of the hearing.

Renee was suddenly back in that house, being terrorized and believing she was about to die. His presence had so startled and unbalanced her that she couldn't speak. The first case settled, and she was on the verge of hyperventilating.

Renee held a thin stack of legal papers in her hand, and I motioned for her to give me one. With hands trembling hard enough to cause the paper to ripple, she handed it to me and then clutched both hands to her mouth. The second hearing ended, and a man and woman left the courtroom no longer married.

I wrote, "Today, be a warrior. One more time."

THIS IS A
STORY OF
**PROFOUND
COURAGE**

Renee read it, and all the composure, strength, and confidence she'd had before the monster who had been her husband tried to end her life came flooding back.

The third hearing settled within three minutes, both parties having already agreed to this term or that, and Renee's case was called. She rose with grace and spoke with the clarity and poise of a queen. She was granted her permanent order of protection, and Perry, coward that he was, slunk from the courtroom and out of her life forever.

A few months later he absconded from his parole once more, this time to a crappy little tent in Southeast Missouri. He got into an argument with another man over a bottle of bourbon, and he ended up stabbing the man in the chest. Renee's first words upon hearing of his life conviction for murder were, "I'm finally free."

This is a story of profound courage. Not for the police because, frankly, we did little more than collect evidence and present it at trial. The heroism was all Renee's. She was terrified and under attack, but she kept her head and she lived. Later, she had nightmares about facing the man in open court, but she dominated in that courtroom. Later still, she was put through another court process and, even though she thought her heart might stop because of her fear, she regained control and pulled it out once more.

Her bravery continued even after that. She was finally able to start venturing from her home after therapy and the healing that comes with time. She started working outside the home again, and today she is married to a wonderful man who loves her and treats her accordingly.

Nowadays, she speaks to groups about her experiences in the hope that she can encourage others to escape. She writes, and she was even highlighted in a training video produced to teach police officers in how to better approach and handle stalking situations.

Renee has come pretty close to full circle—a feat that is all her own, though

she was supported by victim advocates, the police, friends, and medical staff members. Somehow she kept her head high, and now she's doing her part to make the world a little better, a little safer for others.

That's the key, isn't it? She does her part, we do ours, and you do yours. Maybe for you that means speaking out against violence in the home, volunteering in a shelter, donating an old car or clothing, or making sure your workplace is safe and supportive. Perhaps participation means encouraging a victim to seek help and assuring her that help is available, going the extra mile if your job is to serve victims, or simply voting for political candidates and supporting law enforcement officials who actively engage in solutions to these problems. Whatever form it takes, some level of involvement from family and friends, co-workers, police, courts, lawmakers, and communities is a major part of the solution.

This fight is long from over. Violence in the home survives, scurries, seeks invisibility through secrecy, doubt, and misplaced blame. Too many children live in fear, shame, and bewilderment at the damage their parents inflict on one another. Controlling personalities wreak havoc and sow disillusionment and dread by stalking a person they once promised love, simply because she exercised her inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If there is even a small spark within each of us that humankind has value—and that most people have within them enough goodness, enough “human-ness,” to do the right thing—I have to believe we as individuals, we as communities, and we as a culture can — and will — rise to the challenge.

I believe we're winning. We win each time a person who has lived in virtual, and even literal bondage is set free—supported in moving toward a new life in which she and those she loves don't live afraid each minute of the day. We win each time a batterer finally realizes his method of dealing with those he should be

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protecting, instead of damaging, finally gets it and puts all his faith, energy, and resources into creating in himself a better man. We win each time a police officer goes home at the end of the shift knowing in his heart he got to be a hero that day. We win when we share a common spirit that violence won't be tolerated in our communities. And we win when that commitment is supported by a structure of informed, motivated community members so that lasting change happens.

So I challenge you to extend a hand to someone in need, to show the world in action and deed that you, your family and friends, your town and faith, your race and your gender, won't stand for cruelty and terror in the home.

I promise you won't be alone.

ACTION STEPS

*See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil . . . I have set before you
life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life . . .*

— DEUTERONOMY 30:5, 19

By now you're IN, sold on the idea of being part of your friend, loved one, or co-worker's support system, and eager to get started. This book is peppered with actions steps you can take to do just that. For simplicity sake, many of those actions are listed below.

Action Steps For Friends And Family Members

- ✓ Contact a local shelter and ask what services they provide for victims. Also ask the shelter what services they provide to friends and family (some will offer counseling services).
- ✓ Research four specific laws in your state. This can be an Internet search engine search or a more in-depth search at your local library. You need to learn (at a minimum) about how your state addresses:
 - Domestic Battery
 - Harassment
 - Stalking
 - Protection or restraining orders

- ✓ Refer back to the chapter “Leaving and Living Safely,” and assist her in gathering the items listed for her escape plan.
- ✓ Discuss her feelings about self-defense, and assist her with her choice (pepper spray, martial arts training, etc.).
- ✓ Discuss evidence collection, such as keeping text messages, taking photos of bruises, and making recordings of profane or threatening phone calls. (It’s better to have evidence and not need it than need to it and not have it.)
- ✓ Help with transportation needs for protection orders, meetings with prosecutors, and job interviews.
- ✓ Consider purchasing her an inexpensive no-contract phone so she has a way to communicate if the batterer breaks her phone. She must understand this phone is for emergencies and must remain well hidden.
- ✓ Consider (if feasible) providing shelter for her, especially if local shelters are full.
- ✓ Always, always keep the communication lines open, even if she’s angry or silent for a time. Eventually, she’ll need and want you back, and you’ll be glad you remained available.

Action Steps For Employers And Co-Workers

- ✓ Implement a Domestic Violence Response Team (see chapter on “Employer Opportunities: Strategies for a Safer, More Effective Workplace”).
- ✓ Review your agency’s policies and procedures relative to intimate partner violence. See the Resources for links to policy suggestions or contact us.
- ✓ Make it clear to ALL employees that you stand by them in times of personal crisis.

- ✓ Feel free to contact me at **David@ShieldWallConsulting.com** if you have additional questions or training needs. At Shield Wall Consulting, LLC, we deliver outstanding training for companies concerned about workplace violence, and this training is provided in a manner that promotes team-building and general morale while facilitating safe, positive outcomes during dangerous incidents.

SHIELD WALL CONSULTING, LLC

Workplace Violence Seminars

Preparing your workforce for the REALLY bad day at work.

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WEBSITES

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence: www.CAEPV.org

National Child Protection Training Center: www.NCPTC.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.NCADV.org

National District Attorneys Association: www.NDAA.org/pdf/unto_third_generation.pdf

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Detective David Williams is a thirty-year public safety veteran with experience in helicopter rescue, patrol, undercover, and investigations. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the Fraternal Order of Police, Rotary International, and The American Legion have all honored Williams for his work with families and children in crisis. He is now the director of Shield Wall Consulting, LLC, providing workplace violence seminars and anti-bullying/anti-violence training for schools.