



THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Abused by zero tolerance

By MARGARET WENTE, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2003

Ten months ago, Nezha Saad got mad at her husband. The mother of four young children has a mood disorder that often makes her anxious and depressed, especially if she forgets her medication. Sometimes she lashed out at him when she was upset. This time, she phoned the police.

It was the worst mistake of her life.

Ms. Saad long ago retracted her allegations that he had threatened the family. It didn't do her any good. Her husband, Mohammed, spent six weeks in jail before he was bailed out. Today, he is under a restraining order and is not allowed to live at home. He has been suspended from his teaching job. He can only visit with his kids in a public place, under supervision. There is a lien on their house to pay for legal bills. Nezha has been forced to go on welfare.

And her husband's trial isn't until September. "I am suffering twice," she says. "Once for what I said, and again for what happened afterward."

Ms. Saad is an articulate, intelligent woman who immigrated with her husband from Morocco in 1989. They settled in Burlington, Ont., to raise their family. They thought they were coming to a just society. But now they've been caught in the gruesome consequences of a well-intentioned policy that was supposed to protect women and children. Instead, it has ripped families apart and brought them to the brink of financial ruin.

Zero tolerance policies grew from widespread complaints that domestic abuse wasn't being treated seriously by the police or the courts. The Ontario Crown Policy Manual, the prosecutors' bible, says that "all such assaults shall be prosecuted with vigour," whether or not the complainant agrees. In order to bring even more resources to bear on the problem, Ontario set up dedicated courts that specialize in domestic abuse cases. But zero tolerance means that many prosecutors hesitate to drop even the flimsiest of cases, even when the couples have put their troubles behind them. The result is a nightmare of backlogs and delays.

When Ms. Saad phoned the police, she told them her husband had taken their youngest daughter somewhere and that she was worried he was going to kill her. "I thought he was going to kill me, kill the kids," she says. In fact, he'd taken the child to buy a toy. There were no signs of any physical abuse; her husband, she says, has never even spanked the children. But he was charged with uttering threats and taken off to jail. The police urged

Ms. Saad to take her kids to a women's shelter. "I was so scared, so confused," she says. "I was lost. I didn't know who to listen to or what to do. I just did what they wanted me to do."

Staff at the shelter, she says, pressured her to turn up the legal heat on her husband. "I and the children were inundated with information about how abusive men are. My children were exposed to more abuse in the shelter than they were ever exposed to outside of it." A children's aid society worker urged her to take the kids and move to another province. Her husband was denied bail until the family was settled elsewhere.

So Ms. Saad wound up in housing for abused women. Her kids were miserable. They were attacked by other kids. They just wanted to go home and get their father back. After three months, they moved back to their house in Burlington, and she owned up.

"When I tried to admit my mistake to the Crown Attorney's office, I was basically told that I was a liar and that I had better stick to my original statement, which was made under pressure and while suffering from anxiety." She was told that if she got in touch with her husband, or even took his side, she could lose the kids.

Ms. Saad is outraged at being treated like an infant. She is astonished at the way that abused women are being reabused by a justice system that treats them as if they are too helpless to be believed or make their own decisions. A few weeks ago, she wrote a letter to Ontario's Chief Justice, Roy McMurtry, after he expressed concern about the backlog in the courts. "Just put a stop to the persecuting and criminalizing of fathers," she wrote, "and ensure that the principles of equality and fundamental justice are upheld."

The Chief Justice can't solve this one. It's up to the politicians. Meantime, the Saads are not alone. As The Globe's Kirk Makin reported in a damning piece last month, countless other families are being tormented for minor and even imaginary assaults. And millions of dollars in public money is being spent to prosecute cases without merit.

Meantime, Nezha's kids keep asking when dad is coming home. Her son, who's 7, misses him terribly. Just before Valentine's Day, he wrote a poem to him in French. His mother translates:

Daddy, I miss you

You are my sun

So please dad wake up

You are always in my heart.

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"Almost as many men as women suffer spousal abuse, Statscan says"

By ALLISON LAWLOR - Globe and Mail Update, Wednesday, June 26, 2002

Almost as many men as women suffer violence at the hands of their spouses, but women are much more likely to seek help, says a Statistics Canada report released Wednesday.

Eight per cent of Canadian women and 7 per cent of men reported at least one incident of spousal violence between 1994 and 1999, Statscan reported in the fifth annual Family Violence in Canada report released Wednesday.

While both women and men reported being the victims of a significant amount of spousal violence, the nature and consequences of such violence is more severe for women.

Women were twice as likely as men to report having been beaten and five times more likely to say they had been choked, Statscan reports.

They were also five times more likely than men to have received medical attention and to have been hospitalized as a result of the violence.

Men reported being less likely to report spousal violence to police or to use a social service such as counselling or a shelter. While almost half of women (48 per cent) who were abused by a spouse reported using a social service, only 17 per cent of men did.

"Lower reporting rates by men may reflect the less severe nature of the violent incidents experienced by men and the fact that social services for male victims may not be as widely available," Statscan reports.

The report also found that the rate of family homicides recorded in Canada since 1974 have declined. Seventy-seven per cent of the nearly 2,600 spousal homicides recorded in Canada since 1974 have been against women.

Since that year, the spousal homicide rate for women has decreased by 62 per cent and for men the rate has dropped by 55 per cent.

In 2000, 55 children and youths were victims of homicide. Of those, 31 were killed by a family member. Statscan reports that is the lowest rate in 27 years.

In another report released Wednesday, more than eight in 10 parents expressed some concern about their children's exposure to violence in school and in the media. Eighty-two per cent of parents reported some degree of worry about their children's exposure to violence at school and 83 per cent reported some degree of worry about their children's exposure to violence on television, in movies and in music videos, report released Wednesday by the Canadian Council on Social Development and Family Service Canada found.

For the study, 1,021 parents were surveyed. The survey is considered accurate within 3.1 percentage points.

The Toronto Sun

CANADIAN PRESS, Wednesday, Jun. 26, 2002

"Study: Men not reporting spousal abuse"

OTTAWA (CP) -- Eight per cent of women and seven per cent of men experienced at least one incident of spousal violence, says a study based on information collected between 1994 and 1999.

Statistics Canada says that although men reported being victims of spousal violence, figures indicate the nature of the violence was more severe for women.

Women in violent unions were more than twice as likely as men to report having been beaten, the agency reported.

Female victims were five times more likely to have been medically treated or hospitalized as a result of the violence.

The lower reporting rates by men may reflect the less severe nature of the violence, Statistics Canada said. It may also be that social services for male victims are not be as widely available.

The most commonly reported emotional consequence for both men and women victims of spousal violence was being upset, confused and frustrated.

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The Toronto Sun

CANADIAN PRESS, Wednesday, Jun. 26, 2002

"Spousal murder rates at 26-year low; highest rates in West, lowest in Nfld."

OTTAWA (CP) -- Spousal murder rates dropped to a 26-year low in 2000 but women were still victims in the overwhelming majority of cases, with Northern and Western Canada recording the most wife murders and Newfoundland and Labrador showing the least, a government report revealed Wednesday.

In 2000, 67 Canadians were killed by their spouse or former spouse.

The number of women killed by their husbands dropped 65 per cent nationwide to 6.3 per million couples from 16.5 per million couples in 1974, the Statistics Canada report found.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the rate was just 4.1 per million couples, while the rate was 77.8 in the Northwest Territories, 47.3 in the Yukon and 16.1 in Manitoba.

The homicide rate for men killed by their wives fell by more than 50 per cent to two per million, the report said.

Shootings and stabbings were the most common causes of death.

The decline in spousal murder rates may be partly due to the fact that men and women are marrying older, the report said.

"As the proportion of young people getting married has declined, exposure to violence in the highest-risk age groups may be reduced," the report says.

"Furthermore, the increase in the age of first marriage may reflect greater selectivity among would-be spouses."

In 1974, the average Canadian woman was 22 when she got married; the average man was 24. By 2000, the ages had risen to 28 and 30 respectively.

Other factors that may have contributed to the decline in spousal violence are women's increased participation in the workforce, delaying childbirth and having fewer children.

"All of these social changes have provided both women and men with increased opportunities for economic independence which may help provide alternatives to remaining in abusive situations which, in turn, may help avoid escalation of violence to homicide," the report said.

Three per cent of women and two per cent of men experienced at least one incident of spousal violence with a current or ex-spouse during a 12-month period, the study said.

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The lower reporting rates by men may reflect the less severe nature of the violence, Statistics Canada said. It may also be that social services for male victims are not as widely available.

The most commonly reported emotional consequence for both men and women victims of spousal violence was being upset, confused and frustrated.

Since 1974, almost 2,600 spousal homicides have been recorded in Canada.



THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"Men as likely to face abuse from partner, Statscan says"

Women suffer more severe consequences, more likely to seek medical attention

By KRISTA FOSS, Thursday, June 27, 2002 – Print Edition, Page A8

In the pressure cooker of domestic relationships, men and women are almost equally likely to boil over and lash out violently at their spouses, according to a newly released Statistics Canada report.

In the fifth annual look at family violence in Canada, based on a survey on victimization and more recent police statistics, 8 per cent of women and 7 per cent of men reported experiencing at least one incident of spousal violence from their current or former partners between the years 1994 and 1995.

However, the study also concludes that women report suffering much more severe consequences from domestic battles that end with blows. Women were twice as likely as men to report having been beaten, five times as likely to say they'd been choked by their partners and five times as likely to have received medical attention as a result of the violence.

The report says that the definition can have an effect on the estimates of violence and can include Criminal Code offences, threatening, psychologically controlling and emotionally abusive behaviour.

Women were also more likely than men to report spousal violence to the police, use a social service, require medication, take time off work or suffer depression, fearfulness and sleeplessness. The study also notes that when it comes to spousal homicide, women are the victims in the vast majority of cases.

Still some men's groups laud the Statscan findings because they don't support the old prejudice that men are the only ones who become physically violent behind the closed doors of the family home.

"It demonstrates that there has been a severe bias against men in the past in not considering them victims," said Earl Silverman, program co-ordinator for the Calgary-based advocacy group, Family of Men Support Society. ". . . To try and deny the other side of the coin reduces the credibility of the first side."

Mr. Silverman said that so much attention has been paid to providing social supports to female victims of domestic violence that men who are abused have nowhere to turn.

Academics who have spent their careers researching the subject of domestic violence, think otherwise: They question the research's rigour and its lack of context.

Desmond Ellis, a York University sociology professor, finds the Statscan conclusions inconsistent with his research or with that done by his colleagues at the LaMarsh Research Centre on Violence and Conflict Resolution.

"Ignoring context, meaning and motive [in violent incidents] is misinforming," he said yesterday. "And not separating out different types of violence is misleading."

Prof. Ellis said there is a big difference between violence used to control a spouse -- which he says research shows is more likely committed by males -- and violence that occurs in trying to end or settle a conflict.

"Control-motivated violence has implications for what happens when you separate from a spouse" he said. "And the consequences for women when they separate, are in our view, more serious."

If the Statscan study sounded a positive note, it was that the overall rate of family homicides has gone down in Canada since 1974. The homicide rate for women has decreased 62 per cent -- to 6.3 women per million couples from 16.5 women -- while for men it has dropped by 55 per cent, to two men per million couples from 4.4 men.

The report also shows that separated women aged 15 to 24 had a rate of spousal homicide far higher than the average: 113 per million separated couples in the years 1991 to 2000.

SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

Women victims of spousal abuse are more likely than men to experience sleeping problems and to use medication or drugs.

.....	Female victims	Female non-victims
Trouble falling asleep		
or remaining asleep.....	39%.....	20%
Medication/drugs to sleep...	20%.....	10%
Medication /drugs to calm		
down.....	19%.....	6%
Medication/drugs to get out		
of depression.....	17%.....	5%

.....	Male victims.....	Male non-victims
Trouble falling asleep		
or remaining asleep.....	29%.....	13%
Medication/drugs to sleep...	9%.....	7%
Medication /drugs to calm		
down.....	8%.....	4%
Medication/drugs to get out		
of depression.....	7%.....	3%

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Ottawa Sun

Double standard in abuse cases: Study

By NELLY ELAYOUBI, Ottawa Sun September 5, 2002

Men aren't being treated fairly by police, prosecutors and the courts in domestic assaults, according to a recently released study in British Columbia.

Local gender equality advocates shared the findings of Gender as a Factor in the Treatment of Domestic Partner Abuse by Police and Prosecutors: A Pilot Project, by Edmonton, Alberta lawyer and university professor Grant Brown, outside the Ottawa Police building on Elgin St.

There's a double standard that sees men treated more harshly at each stage of the criminal justice system, said Glenn Cheriton, of Commoners' Publishing Society, a local Ottawa action organization.

SAME PROBLEMS HERE

He has filed a freedom of information request to obtain a copy of the Ottawa Police policy on domestic assault. He dropped a copy of the new study in the police chief's mailbox yesterday and plans to follow up with him today.

"We're looking for a partnership with the police because we believe in treating people fairly, both men and women," Cheriton said.

Cheriton said that although the study was conducted in B.C., there are examples where men have been discriminated against by police in Ottawa.

"It's no different than racism," he said.

Wendy Byrne, chairwoman of the board of directors for the Women's Action Centre Against Violence, disagrees that Ottawa Police discriminate against men.

She said without "dynamic understanding" of domestic violence in the courts, it's difficult for any parties -- women, men and children -- to be treated fairly.

Justice may not be so blind

Some of the findings of Gender as a Factor in the Treatment of Domestic Partner Abuse by Police and Prosecutors: A Pilot Project Study, by Edmonton lawyer and university professor Grant Brown, include:

- Men are more frequently charged than women, including in minor injury cases.

- Men are more likely to be taken into custody once charged.
- Men are more likely to be found guilty than women.
- Women are more likely to make bail than men.
- Women used a knife-like object in 24.2% of the cases they were charged. Men used a knife-like object in 5.4% of cases.
- Charges against women for inflicting high-level injuries were withdrawn in 77.8% of cases.
- Women found guilty were more likely than men to have been intoxicated or to have committed their offence in the presence of children.



Battered Men

While medical groups champion campaigns to reduce domestic violence against women, a new study indicates that men are victims as often as women.

The study included 516 patients who presented at the emergency department of Charity Hospital, New Orleans, La, in July 1995. Using the index of spouse abuse (ISA), a validated survey tool, researchers determined the prevalence of domestic violence in 4 areas: physical violence that occurred recently or more than a year ago and nonphysical violence that was recent or had occurred in the past.

Based solely on ISA scoring, the researchers said 19% of the women patients and 20% of the men had experienced recent physical violence. They pointed out that some experts fear attention to domestic violence against men will de-emphasize the importance of services for women.

"Recognition of the global nature of violence may be more realistic than assuming that only women are victims," the researchers wrote in this month's *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

(JAMA. 1997;278:620)

NATIONAL POST

Sheltered from reality

For too long, says an authority on violence against women, society has ignored the fact that women can be violent, too

Donna Laframboise

National Post , Monday, November 23, 1998

Erin Pizzey has a kind, round face and wears her white hair in a bun, but an ordinary grandmother she is not. Indeed, she has the distinction of being the person who founded the world's first battered women's shelter in England in 1971, and who, in 1974, wrote the first book on marital violence, *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear*.

On a recent visit to Canada, Pizzey told audiences in three provinces that the shelter movement has been "hijacked" by anti-male feminists who, rather than being part of the solution, are helping to perpetuate abusive families.

Pizzey says her years of experience have taught her that there are two kinds of battered women. "One of them I call innocent victims of their partners' violence," she says in her soft British accent. "They were genuine victims who were coming in, bringing their children. They needed refuge, they needed help, they needed legal advice."

While the public is well acquainted with this picture of the battered wife, Pizzey says many other abused women don't belong in this category. She describes them as "violence prone" people who, in addition to being battered by their partners, behave violently themselves -- toward their husbands as well as their children. Some of them lack effective verbal communication skills. Others are addicted to the adrenaline rush that can be a by-product of tumultuous relationships. Virtually all were raised in profoundly dysfunctional families themselves, and have never learned any other way to behave.



Dave Chan, National Post / Erin Pizzey, the founder of women's shelters, is now a critic of the institutions.

Pizzey says that when the first battered woman she ever encountered showed her extensive bruising from her neck to her waist, she felt a "split second of absolute outrage that this could be going on" and that no one -- from social workers to police officers -- apparently cared enough to do anything about it. Pizzey took the woman home and tucked her into the top bunk in her son's bedroom. When her husband inquired whether the woman's spouse knew where she was hiding out, Pizzey responded, "Of course not, she's not going to tell him, not in the state she's in."

The woman, however, had been in contact with her husband, who soon appeared at the front door. Pizzey learned much later that this turbulent marriage prevailed for decades, until the unhappy couple eventually died within a few months of each other. "Those two couldn't live without each other, they couldn't live with each other, but what they did do was destroy their five children," says Pizzey. "They were both deeply responsible" for that damage.

Of the first 100 battered women she gave refuge to, "62 were as violent or even more violent than the men they'd left." But nearly 30 years later, society is still unwilling to acknowledge that violent women exist and is therefore still not offering them any help. "I have pleaded for the cause of violent women," says Pizzey.

Today, virtually all battered women's shelters -- including the one Pizzey founded -- are operated by feminists whose analysis automatically stereotypes men as aggressors and women as victims. On both sides of the Atlantic, employment ads for women's shelters routinely require that applicants subscribe to a feminist understanding of domestic violence.

As a result, the large number of women served by these shelters who require assistance themselves to interrupt destructive patterns are actually having their behaviour reinforced when shelter workers assure them they are not to blame.

Pizzey says this sends a terrible message to children trapped in violent families. Kids learn that "this is what women do, this is what women are. My mother can batter me, hit me, beat me, shame me, humiliate me, and society ignores what she does. But my father has only got to lose his cool" and he's stigmatized, criminally charged and "loses his family" in divorce proceedings.

"There are many, many women who take off a shoe and just throw it at a child," says Pizzey. "We had to teach these women to take responsibility for their behaviour. Screaming, ranting, yelling at people is part of their normal everyday conversation. No one's ever told them they were violent."

Although she says "the worst beatings I ever saw were women beating each other up," in lesbian relationships, she stresses that female violence is often more indirect than male violence. "When you're working with violent women," she says, "one of the things you notice is that they will provoke until the man lashes out. 'Look, he hit me.' And I'd say, 'Okay, I'm not interested in the bomb. Where's the hand that threw the bomb?' "

Instead of stressing personal responsibility on the part of women who are themselves behaving inappropriately, Pizzey says today's women's shelters are fortifying a childish mantra: "He did it. He made me do it. It's not my fault."

Pizzey is offended by the fact that shelters promote the view that all men are suspect. "Give me an answer why men can't work in shelters," she demands, pointing out that the first money her shelter ever received was spent to employ a man to work with the children. "Many of them had never known a kind, gentle man."

In sharp contrast to current policies, Pizzey's shelter met with every willing man whose wife had fled there. Rather than keeping the shelter's location secret, a sign loudly announced its presence in the community. In her view, the surveillance cameras and bulletproof windows of contemporary women's shelters amount to "expensive paranoia."

She says facilities that once taught people more humane ways of relating to one another have been turned into bunkers where an us-versus-them mentality festers. This has happened, she says, partly because battered women's shelters receive millions in funding each year.

"I knew that once we were getting any form of recognition, but above all, any funding, we would be in serious trouble," she says. "Because the feminist movement was hungry for funding. And it didn't take long for them to invade a very small conference that we had and to vote themselves into the national [shelter] movement. And they began by saying: 'All women are victims of men's violence.' "

Pizzey says she hesitated, for many years, to publicly criticize what was going on in shelters because she feared these very necessary facilities would lose public support and be closed down. Today she thinks the average person is sophisticated enough to understand that it's not the concept of the shelters she's critical of, but the feminist philosophy that currently permeates them.

"What we need to do is reclaim the shelter movement," she says. "It was hijacked 30 years ago. It was used for false purposes."

NATIONAL POST

'One-stop divorce shops'

A letter of support from a shelter is proven to be enough to win custody battles

Donna Laframboise

National Post, Saturday, November 21, 1998

Two years ago, Terri admitted that she abused the battered women's shelter system. Although her husband had never assaulted her, she told a Winnipeg conference examining false allegations in family law that she lied to shelter staff, and to herself, because it was absurdly easy and because she had something to gain.

Terri says her husband's drinking problem made their seven-year relationship a rocky one, and that she had left him before. Her mother urged her to go to a shelter, she says, in the belief that the counsellors would help her achieve independence. Terri (who requested anonymity to spare her now former husband further embarrassment), says she telephoned a Winnipeg shelter and was told only abused women were admitted.

"I went to the door and I cried and said that my husband was abusive. My kids weren't with me because I didn't want them to see how I had to get in."

Terri says the intake worker accepted her story at face value. So she retrieved her sons, then three and six years old, and went back to the shelter where staff began coaching her on how to gain the upper hand in divorce court.

Terri says residents were told that "the first thing we needed to do was obtain a restraining order against our spouse. We were instructed to write down our complaints on paper and bring them with us when we went to see our lawyer."



Photo by John Lehmann, National Post / Over the past four years, Louise Malenfant has been an advocate for 62 individuals who claimed to be falsely accused of child sexual abuse during divorce proceedings. In a third of those cases, she says, a women's shelter was involved.

In Terri's case, the result was a 10-page affidavit alleging not that her husband was physically abusive, but that he displayed characteristics one might expect in an alcoholic. "A lot of the stuff I wrote up in the court document was about his hygiene. I complained about always having bladder infections because he never had a bath." On the basis of this affidavit, she says, "I got the restraining order and soon after I got full custody of my children with no visitation for my husband."

Later, the full import of her actions sank in. "I realized what I had done. My children had not seen their father for a year, yet I was never afraid that he would harm them or myself," says Terri, now a 36-year-old therapist. "It was not a fair fight. I had the shelter and the women's movement on my side."

During parliamentary committee hearings on child custody and access earlier this year (the final report is due in early December), women's shelter spokespeople showed up in full force. Their propensity to stereotype all fathers in custody battles as abusive and all mothers as besieged victims came as no surprise to lawyers and community activists alarmed by the role shelters now play in divorce matters. In addition to providing moral support to women who appear on their doorstep, shelters also supply letters of endorsement that are highly prejudicial to the women's spouses in court -- despite the fact that the shelter employees have never met the men involved, have only heard one side of the story, and have only known the women for a short time under highly artificial conditions.

Susan Baragar, who practices primarily family law in Winnipeg, describes herself as a feminist but believes nevertheless that it is "all too easy" for women to get these letters from shelters, and warns that they are a highly potent weapon.

Judges are "most definitely swayed" if a woman is staying at a shelter and court documents include a letter from the facility implying that the father is dangerous, says Ms. Baragar. "I mean, you've got sort of a 'professional' now saying he shouldn't see his kids."

Ms. Baragar, herself, has used the tactic on behalf of her own clients. She cites a recent case in which she represented a woman who "came in with this two- or three-page letter which I attached to the affidavit, and [the father] was denied access on that basis. Nothing else. It depends on the judge. Some judges are more cautious than others. But in that particular case he was absolutely denied access."

Ms. Baragar says the opposing lawyer "argued that this was not an unbiased letter, that both parties had not been interviewed. He got absolutely nowhere."

Since the parent who first secures legal child custody is almost certain to be awarded it later (authorities are reluctant to disrupt the children's lives once again), relationships between fathers and children are being ripped asunder in some cases merely on the say-so of a shelter worker.

In 1995, a Manitoba shelter worker wrote a two-page letter on behalf of a resident. The worker was able to discern, from their first meeting, that the woman "had been a victim of abuse in her childhood and now as an adult." Writing that she hoped "the court will recognize

this letter of support," the worker pronounced the woman to be "intelligent, insightful, and sincere."

But in 1997, after hearing submissions from the woman's spouse and the Winnipeg Child and Family Services, a judge came to a different conclusion. Only in her early 20s, the woman had already made seven sexual abuse complaints to police involving 11 different people. (The only complaint in which a charge was deemed warranted resulted in an acquittal.) "At one time or another," wrote the judge, the woman had "accused her father, brother, and sister of sexually abusing her." In the judge's view, her credibility was undermined by the fact that, "despite these allegations she had no hesitation in living with her father and her sister and in exposing her father to her own children." The woman eventually abandoned her custody bid, and the children were placed in the care of their paternal grandmother.

In Burlington, Ont., in 1995, a counsellor at a women's shelter wrote a supportive letter regarding a client and her relationship to her then two-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son. Although the children had joined their mother in the shelter only eight days earlier, the staffer felt no hesitation in declaring the woman to be a "loving and devoted mother" and in expressing the "strong feeling" that child custody should be awarded to her rather than to the husband she was leaving.

But this woman's maternal track record was in fact less than stellar. Four years earlier, the Children's Aid Society had successfully convinced a court that she was a danger to her son and an older daughter, then aged 12, who did not accompany her to the shelter.

After monitoring the situation for three months, a Children's Aid worker told the court that both children "admitted being afraid of their mother much of the time." On one occasion she allegedly threatened her spouse with a knife and then threatened to commit suicide. On another occasion, she allegedly "opened the car door while it was travelling along the highway and threatened to jump." The worker noted that "Both of these incidents occurred in the presence of the children." Nevertheless, the courts awarded custody of all three children to the woman.

At yet another shelter, in Orillia, Ont., a staffer wrote a letter in 1994 addressing the question of who should get custody of two boys, aged two and three. Despite the fact that no trial had yet been held, this staffer declared that their mother "had been physically assaulted" by her husband before fleeing to the shelter. The mere fact that the mother had shown up at a shelter was proof that she was "a conscientious and caring parent." The letter ended with the declaration that "it would be a great disservice" to the children if custody was not awarded to their mother. With the aid of the letter, the woman secured custody.

In 1997, a Toronto shelter worker wrote a letter on behalf of a woman who had been in residence for six weeks. It flatly announced that the woman had been "physically and emotionally" abused by the husband she was leaving and said that since "her children are her life," she should be assisted in gaining custody. However, in a report dated a week prior to the shelter's letter, a psychologist who interviewed the woman during her stay noted that

she'd told him her husband "has never struck her physically." Interim custody has been awarded to the mother.

Ms. Baragar has had women's shelter letters expunged from the record when attempts have been made to use them against her own clients. "There is a rule that you're technically not supposed to just attach reports to somebody else's affidavit," she says. "When I see letters like that I go pretty hardcore and insist that a separate affidavit then be sworn - which gives me the right to cross-examine the maker of the statement. [The shelter workers] usually chicken out. They haven't wanted to swear affidavits." Many lawyers, she says, are unfamiliar with the tactic.

Mary McManus, a lawyer in Victoria, B.C., shares many of Ms. Baragar's concerns. While she thinks "shelters are very important and fulfill a useful function," she feels staffers should refrain from expressing opinions regarding situations about which they have limited knowledge.

"The workers at the shelters come with different backgrounds, experience, and education. What they say may well be justified, but may not be as well."

Ms. McManus agrees that the courts "tend to place a great deal of weight on just the fact that a woman went to a shelter. I've had a lot of experience in bail hearings where men have been accused of abusing their spouse and the fact that the spouse is in the shelter can be accepted as evidence that there has been abuse."

Greta Smith, the executive director of the B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses says her organization has no policy regarding shelters writing letters on behalf of clients. While she admits it's "possible that some transition houses would write supportive letters," the idea makes her uncomfortable. "I guess I would have to see the letter. I'm sorry, I have some difficulty with that. The fact that people would write letters without some good solid reasons for writing a letter. Without seeing the letter and without finding out what the circumstances are, it would be very difficult to make a comment on that."

When asked whether it's possible that some women are going to shelters as a divorce tactic, Ms. Smith replies: "Anything in this world is possible, but I do not believe that happens."

Louise Malenfant, a community activist in Winnipeg, calls shelters "one-stop divorce shops for women," and is disturbed by their 'no questions asked policy.' She claims that in addition to helping women who make false allegations of wife abuse, shelters in her city have helped manufacture incest accusations.

Over the past four years, Ms. Malenfant has been an advocate for 62 individuals who claimed to be falsely accused of child sexual abuse during divorce proceedings. In a third of those cases, she says, a women's shelter was involved.

At 1996 public hearings into the Manitoba Child and Family Services Act, Ms. Malenfant alleged that children were taken into a room that was off limits to their mothers, subjected to a sexual abuse awareness program, and inappropriately questioned by shelter staff.

"If you expose children to sexual material and you question them repeatedly over the course of a week or two, that child can literally repeat what they've been taught," Ms. Malenfant told the National Post.

She maintains that even mothers who would not have otherwise accused their spouses of incest were compelled to treat such allegations seriously after they arose during a shelter stay. Ms. Malenfant has publicly called for an inquiry into women's shelters, and has written letters to government officials protesting their policies. As a result, that particular issue seems to have disappeared. "It was like somebody sucked that problem right out of the place," Ms. Malenfant says. "I have not seen a new women's shelter case in over a year. I don't know what [the government has] done; all I know is that it stopped."

"It's extremely disturbing," says Ms. Baragar of the role shelters have been playing in custody and divorce proceedings. "I get very angry about it from a personal basis, because I think that there are very real cases of abuse and what I see happening in the courts is that those cases now have less value because of the lies that are so easily" being told.

In the last year, Ms. Baragar says she has sensed a growing cynicism from the bench.

"Judges are now more willing to believe that this is just a lie. You know, it got to a point for a while that I couldn't pick up a woman's affidavit where she wasn't accusing him of abuse. You'd get page after page of what was being called abuse, and people were quite prepared to go to women's shelters for it.

"I mean, not everything is abuse. Just because it wasn't a fun fight doesn't mean it was abuse."

The Toronto Sun

Under Attack: The lonely cry of battered husbands.

by Karen Woodstra, Father's Day, 1994

Waves softly caressed the white, sandy shores of Florida under a clear blue tropical sky. The breeze was gentle, the air warm, the mood romantic. For a Toronto couple, it was to be the backdrop for a tryst intended to save their troubled marriage. But after three glorious days, the dream of reconciliation turned into a nightmare. He awoke at 4 a.m. to answer a pounding at the door. His wife, drunk, had been out with another man. His eyes filled with tears: "Is this what I get for trying to make a go of things?" he sobbed.

She responded with a string of profanity. He packed his bags and, as he left, she ran out behind him, carrying a pillow which she held over her hand as she punched the front window of their beachfront room. Panicking, he forced her back into the room, where she began to punch and kick him. Then she hurled a lamp. Next she ripped the phone from the wall and threw it and pulled the drawers from the dresser and threw them, too. Finally, catching him off guard, she grabbed a beer bottle and smashed it into his face.

When two Orange County police officers arrived, she screamed: "Arrest him!" The officers, noticing his injuries, said if she insisted on having him arrested, they'd have to arrest her, too. No charges were laid.

In thousands of homes across Canada, the family is a crucible for seething violence. Women are beaten daily and innocent children are victims of brutal assaults. But there is another form of violence that has been largely ignored, even laughed at. Husband abuse, according to several studies, is becoming as prevalent as wife abuse.

"Men are going through what women did in the '60s and '70s," says Mark, the victim in that Florida motel room. "I believe men will have to suffer more - as women did - before this is a fully recognized problem."

Statistics show husband abuse is spreading, but few services exist to help the victims. One such group, possibly the only one of its kind in Metro, meets in the Beaches to provide counselling and support for abused husbands.

The men who gather there weekly abide by a strict set of rules: "Keep meeting discussions confidential. Keep an open mind. Don't bring guests to closed meetings. Don't tell others how they should and should not feel."

The serious voice pauses. "What is said here, what is heard here, when you leave here, let it stay here." The meeting commences.

A dozen men from all walks of life sit in a meagerly decorated room. Portraits of the Beach Roll of Honor line two walls. The men begin to speak. The occasional silence is filled by buzzing from the overhead fluorescent lights. Traffic noises from Main St. periodically interrupt the conversation.

The men take turns telling their stories and sharing in each other's despair and frustration. As they speak, their stories are as similar as the body language: clenched fists, hunched shoulders, tense expressions, sorrowful eyes. A sullen cloud envelopes the room.

A man saturated in emotional pain allows silent tears to stream down flushed cheeks. The room is dead quiet as we watch a man, beaten by his wife and humiliated by society, draining his anguish. He speaks of how he attempted to take his life the night before.

"I tried hopelessly to save my marriage. I was willing to forget the past and to start all over." He recounts how she not only rejected his plea as he attempted to put his arm around her, but had him charged with sexual assault. He was convicted.

The group is called Male Survivors of Relationship Violence. It was formed in March 1993 and meets every Monday at Community Centre No. 55 on Main St. Its founder is a man we'll call Kevin, a man who says his wife assaulted him throughout four years of marriage.

"When my marriage ended, I searched desperately for a self-help group for abused men. What I found was society making a joke because I was abused. I actually came across people who laughed at me."

That humiliation drove Kevin to form the support group. "There are countless men out there who are faced with the same agonizing pain I experienced. Being an abused husband is bad enough the systemic abuse many of us endure afterwards is just as debilitating to our emotional well-being."

The group was funded by the federal government for the first year, but currently relies on private and corporate donations. Toronto psychiatrist Gordon Baker, whose patients include several men abused by their wives, is on the board of directors.

If husband abuse is so prevalent, why don't we hear about it? Metro Police Sgt. Sue McCoy, of the community services unit, says men are reluctant to come forward because of "fear of being labeled a wimp by society."

Abraham Kass, a marriage and family therapist in Newmarket, says: "The attitude "men are men" is a false notion. I believe husband abuse is just as prevalent as wife abuse. In my practice, the cases of wife and husband abuse are 50-50."

Scott is typical of the men who are victims of abuse. "Men think they have an image to uphold. If we admit that our wives beat us up, we'd be labeled a wussy. If you show up at work and you have a visible bruise, some people jokingly say, "What happened, wife beat you up?" Hey, I tell you, when you've had your self-esteem destroyed you don't need any salt poured into the wounds - even if it is meant as a joke."

Former Ontario Supreme Court chief justice G.T. Evans says: "So many men fear a loss of their macho image with an admission of being abused."

Christopher Murphy, a lawyer specializing in family law in Newmarket, agrees: "Men fear society's general reaction - "What a wimp, the wife beats you up" - so they rarely come forward."

The men who do come forward find they are often laughed at, or asked: "Husband abuse? Are you serious?"

Mike was brutally attacked by his wife.

"She grabbed my hair, forcing my head downwards. With incredible force, her knee smashed into my face, destroying my glasses. The flow of blood blurred my vision."

While his wounds were being stitched up in hospital, his wife admitted her guilt to police. The hospital report states "wife assaulted him." Yet the police laid no charges until Mike pressed the matter. When he told his story in family court in Toronto, Mike says the entire courtroom burst into laughter, including the judge. Mike dropped the charges.

It is common for these men to have their complaints treated lightly. They have no desire to divert attention from the seriousness of wife abuse, but merely want their plight to also be taken seriously. Instead, society tends to trample further their fragile emotional states.

"We affirm many women are faced with a serious problem," says Doug. "But not all women are lily-white. Our situation must be recognized, too."

"Mr. B" or "The Reverend Victim" recently won a \$200,000 lawsuit against Durham Region's Children's Aid Society for negligence after the agency believed his wife's flimsy accusations of child abuse. She had run off with a paroled criminal the Anglican minister had, at the request of parole officials, taken into his home. She had taken their daughters and virtually cleaned out the family's bank account. After Mr. B tracked her down and won visitation rights, she accused him of molesting the girls. The agency went to court, without his knowledge, and obtained a child protection order against him. He battled back in family court and, eventually, was exonerated. He had lost his pulpit, but fought on and won custody of his daughters.

"For me, the greatest abuse was the insidious set of lies my wife told," said Mr. B. "She took nine years of my life away. That hurt more than any physical action."

Mark, whose stormy marriage ended on that Florida vacation, acknowledges hundreds of women are routinely abused by their husbands. He just wishes people could believe the opposite is also true.

"I can't speak for everyone but, in my situation, my wife had no problem uttering death threats or slicing my arm with a knife. I feel women are more apt to use a weapon to counteract the man's physical strength. Look at John Bobbitt (whose wife lopped off his

penis). I don't feel he's an angel, but he certainly didn't deserve that!" Crimes committed by women are on the rise.

Metro Police statistics show 13,454 women were charged with Criminal Code offences in 1992, a 31% increase since 1990. Men still commit far more crimes, but the number of women being charged is climbing at a faster rate than men.

"I believe women became more violent at the same time of the alleged equality between the sexes," says former justice Evans. "They became assertive."

Peter (not his real name) says his wife constantly tried to provoke him during their 14-year marriage.

"I could never figure her out. One time she threatened me with a knife. I was terrified. She had malice in her eyes. I only forgot to take the garbage out!"

Peter locked himself in his room and called police. When they arrived, they found a calm woman sitting in a rocking chair, bottle-feeding her baby. No charges were laid.

He recalls: "She would throw objects - flower pots, plates, anything in an attempt to injure me. What hurts most is that no one believed me."

Peter finally wrote to Premier Bob Rae, and Rae replied: "I have read your letter and agree society must recognize that men are also victims of domestic violence. You raise a number of important issues about victims and abuse. Our government feels that all such violence is completely unacceptable."

Manitoba recently enacted a zero tolerance policy on domestic violence in which the government decided to deal harshly with all domestic assault cases, whether by a male or a female. The legislation was opposed by women's rights groups, which argued women are usually acting in self-defence. In Saskatchewan, the recently passed Victims of Domestic Violence Assistance Act allows for the removal of the abuser from the home. Newfoundland is drafting similar legislation, says a government minister.

Attitudes are slowly changing.

In July 1993, a man was given a conditional discharge for assaulting his wife after telling Cobourg provincial court she persistently provoked him. Judge John Bark stirred up a ruckus when he said from the bench that he was reminded of a not-well-publicized statistic that far more men are assaulted by their wives than the other way around. James (not his real name) would agree with the judge. He endured repeated verbal and physical assaults after his wedding in 1988. If something was in need of repair around the home, and he was unable to fix it, his wife would slap his face and call him useless.

James was reluctant to speak about his experience. He is a short, thin man, almost frail. He says his wife outweighed him by 45 kilograms (100 pounds). Toward the end of his marriage earlier this year, James lost his job.

He blamed his home life. After three weeks of job hunting, she threw boiling water at him, demanding he get work immediately. Shortly after the incident, James says his wife forced him at gunpoint to perform oral sex. Later that night, as she slept, he escaped with only the clothes on his back.

How much is really known about relationship violence against men?

A study done by University of Alberta psychiatry professor Roger Bland found 22.6% of women admitted hitting or throwing things at their husband, while 14.6% of men admitted hitting or throwing things at their wives.

Scott doesn't know about statistics, he just knows how he was belittled and hurt by his wife.

"When she was worked up about something, her voice was as loud as a clap of thunder. We were evicted from an apartment because of it." A shadow crosses his face. "I put up with so much verbal and physical abuse. There were times I was terrified. At the end of the relationship, she threw a metal address file at me, leaving a deep gouge in my hand. She went wild and destroyed countless possessions in our home. Thankfully, my daughter slept through it all. When the police arrived, she told them I did the damage."

Scott says the police interviewed his wife, then arrested him. He was convicted of assault and jailed for 60 days. "She told the police I pushed her into a glass table. No scars on her - she was the one who destroyed it - I get time for it. To make matters worse, she got custody of my daughter from my first marriage."

In a 1993 federally funded study conducted by Reena Sommer and others at the University of Manitoba, almost 40% of women polled said they had threatened or physically abused their husband, considerably more than the percentage of men who admitted abusing their wife. A 1985 survey, conducted by family violence researchers Murray Straus and Richard Gelles at the University of New Hampshire, revealed nearly twice as many wives threw things at their husbands than vice versa.

Denis says his wife threw dishes, lamps, candleholders, even a rocking chair at me. I never knew when to expect her violent outbursts, so I lived almost in constant fear for two years. One time, she had cut herself and in her blood wrote: "I hate you."

"People ask why I put up with it. I felt that being a man meant you absorb it all." Eugen Lupri, a sociology professor at the University of Calgary, specializes in family and gender relations. Lupri conducted a national survey of some six million couples in 1986 and found the overall violence index was 17.8% for men and 23.3% for women. The severe violence index was 10.1% for men and 12.9% for women.

Why do abused men remain in abusive relationships?

As with abused wives, abused husbands are likely to remain with their wives if they experienced or witnessed abuse in their childhood or have limited economic resources.

Mr. B says one reason is "many men honor their vows `for better or for worse.' It's something they hold tight to." People tend to settle into routines and patterns, which we are reluctant to sever. Toronto psychiatrist Gordon Baker says we accept these routines for two reasons: "security and sanity."

In many cases, abused men are the type who were reared to never strike a woman, even in self-defence.

"It was understood ever since I could remember, I was never to hit a girl," says Denis. "I believe many men raised in the '50s and '60s had that drilled into them."

Many men also remain in an abusive situation to be near their children, and to protect them. Some husbands become the target of abuse when they try to protect their kids.

Alan (not his real name) fears for the safety of his son. "She has serious problems, yet won't acknowledge them. With her short fuse, I worry about our son. Her temper is a time bomb."

Mildred D. Pagelow, a research professor of sociology at California State University, says men and women stay in relationships after the initial experience of violence for many of the same reasons: They love their spouse, the spouse is genuinely apologetic, disclosure of violence would cause embarrassment, or the behavior is excused by circumstance (alcohol, drugs or stress).

Debbie De Gale, a social worker with The Elizabeth Fry Society in Winnipeg, has established a program called Women For Change. It provides counselling for women who abuse their partners.

"Violence is a learned behavior. Women, as well as men, have witnessed or experienced violence in their childhood."

De Gale notes many women are in reverse roles now. They are the family breadwinners and facing more stress than ever before.

What will it take for society to recognize men are also victims of spousal abuse? Former chief justice Evans says: "Men must talk about their situation."

Sgt. McCoy says: "Education will help men get recognition that they, too, are victims of spousal abuse. Everyone has the right to be safe and comfortable."

For men who are suffering, Mr. B, has a few words of inspiration:

"Truth is always strong, no matter how weak it appears. It just doesn't come out as quickly as we would like it to."

"Violence should not be a gender issue - it is a human issue."

Studies on Spousal Abuse

The following statistics were provided by former Easton Alliance For the Prevention of Family Violence, a centre that helped abused men in Toronto, Ontario, Canada,

Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd, and Christopher (1983) discovered that 78 out of 644 high school students had experienced courtship violence. A closer examination of 70 students revealed that 50 students (71.4%) reported that at some time, each partner had assumed the role of both victim and aggressor. Of the remaining 28.6%, the relationships were described as follows: 1.4% - male abuser only; 5.7% - female abuser only; 8.6% - abused male only; and 12.9% - abused female only.

Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd, and Christopher (1982) found that their sample of 355 college students yielded 79 who had experienced premarital violence. Once again, nearly 70% (53 of 79) were involved in relationships in which the abuse was mutual. Of the remaining students, 10% were in relationships where the male was the only abuser, while 22% said that the female was the sole abuser. These studies indicate that much of courtship violence is mutual, but when it is not, the female is just as likely to be the sole abuser as the male.

Straus et al. (1980) reported that out of a nationally representative sample of 2,143 couples in 1975, 28% had experienced violence at some point in their marriage, and 16% had experienced violence within the past year. In nearly half of those families, the abuse was mutual (i.e., both spouses had committed a violent act). Of the remaining couples, the husband alone was violent in 27.7% of the cases, while the wife alone was violent in 22.7%. Only slight differences between husbands and wives were found in the annual incidence rates of overall violence - 12.1 per 100 husbands compared to 11.6 per 100 wives. The mean frequency of violent acts in 1975 for men was 8.8 and 10.3 for women. When examining severe violence, women were more violent than men. Severe wife-to-husband violence occurred in 4.6 out of 100 families, while the rate for severe husband-to-wife violence was 3.8 out of 100 families

Ten years later, the overall rate of violence by husbands had declined slightly, but violence by wives showed a small increase. Straus and Gelles (1986) in a telephone survey of 3,520 households, discovered that the rate of overall violence by husbands dropped to 11.3 (from 12.1), while wife-to-husband violence rose to 12.1 (from 11.6). The rate of severe violence by men in 1985 was 3.0, down from 3.8, and the rate of women was 4.4, down from 4.6.

An unquestioned belief about human behaviour is that men are more aggressive than women. Yet when Frodi, Ropert-Thome, and Macauley (1977) surveyed the empirical literature on aggression, they found that 61 percent of all studies reviewed did not show men to be more aggressive than women, and that "...women [did not show] consistently lower tendencies than men to be physically aggressive. "

The inter-generational transmission of violence by abusive wives to their children has been demonstrated by Walker (1984). In her study of over 400 battered wives, 29% of the wives

and 35% of the battering husbands had witnessed their mother inflicting violence upon their father during childhood.

Reena Sommer, Gordon E. Barnes and Robert P. Murray (1991), in a study of 1257 (615 male and 642 females) Winnipeg residents, found that approximately 39 percent (39.1%) of married or cohabiting females participated in at least one form of spouse abuse with their current partner.

The following stats were provided by The Men`s Television Network, (905) 898-1107

M. McLeod, researcher, found violence against men is more destructive than violence against women. Her study revealed that women utilized weapons in 80% of cases. M. McLeod, "Women Against Men", Justice Quarterly, 1, 1984

A study of 150 Quaker families found the incidence of severe wife-to-husband violence to be three times that of husband-to-wife violence. Brutz and Ingoldsby, 1984

Research confirms that male victims of severe violence by female partners encounter widespread bias if they try to get the authorities involved. AnsonShupe, Indiana University/Purdue University, 1994

In a 1986 study, Professor Eugen Lupri found the overall violence index was 17.8% for men and 23.3% for women. Eugen Lupri, University of Calgary, 1986



Battle of the Sexes

Spousal Abuse Cuts Both Ways

abc NEWS.com

Feb. 7, 2003

Women commit some 800,000 acts of violence against men every year, according to some surveys, but men sometimes feel uncomfortable talking about it.

— Tawny Kitaen and Chuck Finley's marriage was a sizzling example of beauty meets brawn in *Sports Illustrated's* swimsuit edition four years ago. She was all legs and curves, with a mane of sleek, sexy hair. He was an all-star baseball pitcher for the California Angels and then the Cleveland Indians.

But their high-flying marriage suffered a scandalous breakdown. There were allegations of domestic violence and acts of brutality with a bizarre twist. Though Finley is a strapping 6-foot-6-inch-tall pro athlete and Kitaen is just 5 feet 7 inches tall, she was arrested for beating him.

Last April, Kitaen was charged with spousal abuse after a nasty fight in the couple's car. She allegedly kicked him in the arm and leg and twisted his ear. At one point, she allegedly pressed her high-heeled shoe on his foot as it was on the accelerator.

Kitaen initially entered a not guilty plea, but agreed to 52 weeks of anger management in an effort to get the charges dropped. Finley has filed for divorce.

An Equal-Opportunity Crime

The couple's story left many wondering: How could a woman batter a man? It happens more often than you think.

Although women are most often the victims of domestic violence, surprisingly, men are battered by their partners more than 800,000 times a year, according to surveys cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I would do anything — sock 'em, put my hands around their neck, choke 'em," said Angela Corey, a serial abuser.

Meeting Corey today, she comes across as a bubbly, wholesome Sacramento housewife. "I'm adored by so many people. People think I'm the greatest thing in the world," she said.

It's hard to imagine, but she said she was once downright vicious, battering 15 different boyfriends. She's telling her story now to help dispel some of the common myths about

women and violence.

The conventional wisdom is that women who are involved in domestic violence are acting in self-defense. Corey says that's not always the case.

She recalled the first time she abused a boyfriend. She said it was sparked when she didn't get her way. "So I reacted. I chased him with knives," she said.

She said her anger was often triggered by not getting her way, or being called names, or getting in an argument over something silly. She said she felt the need to get her point across. "And to get it across, I used my fist," she said.

Corey said she felt that her boyfriends had caused her to act abusively.

Like most women who batter, Corey said she learned to be angry early in life. She said she was molested by a trusted adult as an adolescent.

Flashing back on that same rage at being violated, Corey said, may have contributed to one final, horrifying assault when she and a boyfriend had come home from a bar with a couple of friends.

She said her boyfriend was making a sexual advance, and pushed her down on a bed. When she got up and he tried to kiss her, she bit him hard. "I felt something in my mouth, and I spit it out, and it was his lip," she said.

Corey said, at the time, she wasn't remorseful, or sad, or sorry for what she'd done. She was simply scared about going to prison.

Women Batterers Often View Themselves as Victims

Untangling the roots of their rage is part of what Corey and other women do in a batterers class, but they don't get a lot of sympathy for their troubles. "They come into this program and they're absolutely convinced that what they did was justified. ... They make an awful lot of excuses," said Claudia Dias, an attorney and psychologist, who runs batterers programs for men and women. Angela Corey attends one of her classes.

Dias thinks women who batter are much harder to treat than their male counterparts. According to Dias, female batterers "start from a place where everyone sees them as victims." She said men tell the very same stories of childhood abuse, yet men are never excused for hitting women. Women, on the other hand, have gotten just the opposite message.

"Look what's on television. It's a comedy when a woman slaps a man," Dias said. Our culture is replete, she said, with subtle and not-so-subtle permission for women to hit men. As a result, men are subject to a different set of rules. Many don't hit back, and very few call for help.

According to a controversial, landmark study co-authored by Richard Gelles, a University of Pennsylvania dean and psychologist, women are seven times more likely than men to be injured in domestic violence, but women also hit men as often as men hit women. Gelles said both genders do it because they want control.

Gelles said, "Men will often batter because they want to be left alone. An awful lot of the women I interviewed who use fairly extreme forms of violence, including stabbing their husbands and boyfriends, said very specifically and consistently, 'It was the only way I could get him to put the paper down and pay attention to me!'"

Angela Corey's case illustrates Gelles' point. "You start to yell and scream and you're not getting their attention, so you kind of vent out and hit them," she said.

Taking It Like a Man

It seems incredible that it took 15 boyfriends and countless acts of violence before Corey was reported to the police, but several men who talked with *20/20* say they know firsthand how it happens. Whether they've suffered a single brutal incident, or years of battery, men rarely call for help.

They risked ridicule to share their side of the story with *20/20*. Most men in this situation, such as Jerry Miranda, have a hard time convincing friends, colleagues, even the legal system that they are victims of domestic violence.

The disbelief continued up until the day that his wife, who had battered him for 25 years, tried to kill him at work. She came at him with a knife, and struck him so hard with it that she actually bent the knife blade in his shoulder.

He said it took four men to hold her back, and that she threatened to return and kill, not only him, but everyone he worked with as well. She is now serving 10 years in prison for attempted murder.

Equal Time for the Crime

The only way to stop female batterers, many men believe, is to hold them just as accountable for violence as men.

Angela Corey agrees. She said, "Going to jail made me stop. ... I'm telling you, reality hit me that day like nothing. Because I thought, this is forever."

Corey said she swore off violence the day she went to jail. But it took months of counseling before she had a true change of heart. She never thought what she was doing was wrong until she started her classes.

"I learned that it's a lot easier than I think it is to control my temper," she said.

CECIL WHIG

SERVING CECIL COUNTY SINCE 1841

Protest raises questions about gender bias *** Domestic violence staff walks out on video showing abuse of men**

By: Carl Hamilton 05/15/2003

(Comprised of representatives from law enforcement, the judicial system, county government and other agencies, the council meets once every two months to discuss domestic violence issues to better serve the community.)

"(The DVRCC) does not use or support the use of melodramatic materials ... no matter what victim group is emphasized. The use of skewered, sensationalist materials, often based on misleading statistics, myths, and non-scientific research, is non-productive to our mission and provides a disservice to all victims of violence," according to one passage in the statement.

After reading the letter, Dunne and her colleagues left the meeting before the council and guests viewed the videotaped segment of "20/20," a news magazine program aired on ABC television.

The segment included interviews with male victims of domestic violence and with women who assaulted their husbands or boyfriends. Some parts graphically described the attacks.

In the wake of the DVRCC protest, several officials who attended the meeting are wondering what, if any, ramifications will come from it.

"My major concern is that judges in both the circuit court and district court are legally and ethically obligated to deal with all persons on a gender neutral basis," said Cecil County Circuit Court Administrative Judge Dexter M. Thompson Jr.

He continued, "This puts us into a bind because we have a county agency that -- at least on the surface -- is indicating that we shouldn't even be discussing this type of issue at the Family Violence Council meetings."

According to Thompson, state law precludes judges from even associating with people or agencies suspected of gender bias.

State Sen. Nancy Jacobs (R) of the 34th District, drew the same conclusion after witnessing the walkout. (Jacobs attended the meeting as a guest because as a legislator she has introduced several bills to combat domestic violence.)

"I think it shows a gender bias. It almost showed a closed mind," Jacobs remarked. "At the least, them walking out showed insensitivity. It wasn't professional."

Chief Darrell Hamilton of the North East Police Department commented, "We were all at that meeting for the benefit of all abuse victims, not just a select group. One group can't be prosecuted more aggressively than another -- that's not justice."

And Richard Achuff, chief investigator with the Cecil County State's Attorney's Office, commented, "Quite frankly, it sent the message that they have horse blinders on and can't see anything peripherally."

But Dunne and her associates maintained Wednesday that the DVRCC isn't gender biased.

They reported that the DVRCC has participated fully with the council on the numerous occasions it has addressed the issue of domestic violence against males.

The Whig met with Nicholas J. Ricciuti, director of the Cecil County Department of Social Services, and Margaret Diem, coordinator of Human Services, in addition to Dunne.

Dunne and her associates acknowledged that women do assault men in relationships, but the problem isn't big enough to justify the amount of time and money spent on it.

"Given the small number of cases, an inordinate amount of time has been spent on this issue. We've all seen that video before. We believe the issue has been adequately addressed," Diem said.

According to Ricciuti, about 300 women are housed at this county's women's shelter annually, and all of them are victims of domestic violence.

Meanwhile, 14 men in this county sought services last year from the domestic violence program, he said. Counseling and shelter are among the services a man may receive, he added.

"The number of men receiving services from the DSS (Department of Social Services) because of domestic violence is less than 20," said Ricciuti, noting that his department has never received a gender bias complaint concerning its handling of male domestic abuse victims.

He continued, "On a scale of one to 10, this is not a high priority. The numbers dictate everything. It all comes down to time management and budget."

There isn't a shelter exclusively for male victims of domestic violence in Cecil County, for example, because it wouldn't be financially responsible to create one, Dunne reported.

"Proponents for (male victims) want to see equal services, but that just can't happen when 85 to 90 percent (of the victims), and maybe even higher, are women," Dunne said. "We provide comparable services."

Not only are there fewer male victims of domestic violence than female victims, but men often require fewer services anyway, according to Dunne.

Women usually are the primary caregivers to their children and, therefore, the urgency to find shelter is greater for them, Dunne explained.

"Women need more services than men. It's not that we discriminate against men," Dunne said.

According to Ricciuti, other types of domestic violence victims now demand more attention.

And that directive comes from the Maryland Department of Human Resources, which selected Cecil County Social Services to develop a three-county pilot program to address the latest trend.

"The real issue now is how to we reach out to the elderly victims of domestic violence, and victims who are disabled and victims who have a limited proficiency in English," Ricciuti said. "They are the under-served population. I would say domestic violence against the elderly is the biggest problem."

Considered a model agency by state officials, this county's social services department is designing a program to find those types of victims in Cecil County, Prince George's County and St. Mary's County and then help them, Ricciuti said.

Federal and state officials believe the number of domestic violence victims in those groups is high. Cases go unreported for a variety of reasons, including language barriers and cultural differences.

So, in addition to demonstrating their disdain for the videotape presented as a learning tool, Dunne and her colleagues departed early Monday to make another point.

"We've been addressing this issue (male domestic violence victims) over and over," Dunne noted. "We want to move the county in a direction that aligns us with state and national projects designed to reach out to these under-served groups."

She continued, "Our time is valuable and our work is undermined when the priorities of the (the council) are not properly aligned with our center, the state coalitions and networks, and when we do not focus on all under-served victim groups equally."

Addressing the sudden departure by the DVRCC group, Thompson commented:

"The whole point of these meetings is to discuss domestic violence issues openly so we can deal with them more effectively. If they didn't like the video, they could have stayed and vocalized their displeasure. I was shocked because it was highly inappropriate."

Jacobs agreed.

By challenging statistics presented in the video, Dunne and her colleagues exhibited an attitude reminiscent of one prevalent decades ago, when social workers started addressing the domestic abuse of women in the United States, according to Jacobs.

Male domestic abuse victims today face a similar plight female domestic abuse victims encountered several years ago, Jacobs reported.

"People were out there saying there was a problem, but, back then, we didn't have the statistics like we do today," Jacobs said. "So to me, it was hypocritical for (the DVRCC) to dispute the statistics (in the video) and then walk out."

She added, "It wasn't a wise move. This just cements the stereotype that women in these groups are man-haters."

Dunne and her colleagues, however, viewed their early exit as a last resort after voicing their concerns at past meetings -- to no avail.

"The (council) membership has tolerated the domination of the topic of male victimization for over a year, despite the fact that DVRCC and other partners have clearly demonstrated that male victims do indeed receive comparable services in this county as mandated by COMAR law," Dunne wrote.

To that end, Dunne recently presented a one-hour report to the human services committee of the council on mandated and non-mandated services that the DVRCC provides "for all victims of violence, including males," she said.

"Minutes from that meeting found that the report on these services was more than satisfactory. In addition, the DVRCC has met and, or, exceeded all state and federal program audit requirements for providing mandated services to victims of violence in Cecil County," she added.

Viewed as the start of the last-straw incident, Dunne openly objected to the videotaped segment of "20/20" after first seeing it during a sub-committee meeting, she said.

Then the executive committee was supposed to review the tape, accompanied by her comments, before presenting it to the council, she added.

But the tape bypassed the executive committee, and it was presented to the council Monday, according to Dunne, who wrote her statement after learning that the video would be played, despite her official objections and the lack of further review.

"I'm not into dramatics but I felt I had to do something," Dunne said, adding that she told council leaders beforehand that she and her colleagues would object and leave.

Her written statement concluded, "Please excuse us from the rest of this meeting, as we cannot support the use of histrionic materials. Thank You."

Ricciuti -- their boss -- supports Dunne and her colleagues.

"Walking out of the room is not only the right thing to do sometimes, sometimes it's the only right thing to do," Ricciuti said.

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The Boston Globe

In abuse, men are victims, too

By Cathy Young, June 16, 2003 on page A15 of the Boston Globe - Editorial / Opinion

THE FAMILY Violence Prevention Fund is marking Father's Day with a campaign to honor men who have pledged themselves to an effort to stop violence against women and children. It sounds like a positive and inspirational effort. Yet on second thought, one can see why some fathers' activists are rankled. Imagine a Mother's Day campaign that focused on stopping women's abuse of children.

On the campaign's website, the organizers congratulate themselves on seeing men as not just "the problem" in domestic violence but a part of the solution. So far, so good. But the underlying approach is still one that assumes the perpetrators are men and the victims are women, ignoring the complex picture of family violence that emerges from nearly three decades of research.

Aside from child abuse (which is more often committed by women) and violence in same-sex relationships, study after study shows that anywhere from one-third to half of spousal or partner assaults are female-on-male. While men are less likely to be injured because of gender differences in size and strength and less likely to be murdered by their partners, violence by women against men is no laughing matter - as it is often treated in popular culture. Earlier this month, a New York woman was charged with beating her former boyfriend to death with her high-heeled shoe.

The domestic violence establishment still clings to an ideology that denies or minimizes violence against men. Some advocates are vehemently hostile to any attempt to even raise the issue. Last month in Cecil County, Md., several staffers of the Domestic Violence Rape Crisis Center walked out of a meeting of the county Family Violence Council to protest the showing of a videotaped segment of the ABC News show "20/20" focusing on battered men and abusive women. (Their statement complained about "sensationalist materials, often based on misleading statistics, myths, and nonscientific research" - which is rather ironic, since domestic violence groups have relied widely on sensationalism, shoddy research, and bogus statistics such as "battering is the leading cause of injury to women.")

Other attempts to dismiss violence against men are more subtle. The May issue of the National Bulletin on Domestic Violence Prevention features a column by Andrew Klein, domestic violence consultant and former chief probation officer of the Quincy District Court, titled "Recognizing abused men." A more appropriate title would have been "Refusing to recognize abused men." Klein offers a "test": "How many men do you know who fall into the following categories?" and then rattles off a list of questions that clearly

presuppose the answer, "Few if any."

Some of Klein's criteria seem deliberately designed to fit mainly women. For instance: "How many men ... have had to give up their careers, education, leisure activities" to devote themselves to pleasing their female partners? Not many; but then, giving up work to "please" a spouse is a traditionally female role. Men, on the other hand, may be physically and emotionally abused for failing to live up to the traditional male role of breadwinner - not making enough money or for being out of work.

Or: "How many men are accused of 'parental alienation' because they seek to limit their female partner's access to their children?" Here, Klein seems to assume that the victim in such a case is the parent being accused of parental alienation, not the one denied access to the children. One may turn his question around and ask how many women are falsely accused of sexually abusing their children.

Other questions imply that, in Klein's view, men hardly ever end up in emergency rooms because of assaults by women and women don't exhibit pathological jealousy or poison their partners' friends and relatives against them. In fact literature such as the 1994 book "The Violent Couple," by William Stacey, Lonnie Hazlewood, and Anson Shupe suggests that women are about as likely as men to engage in various controlling behaviors.

The myths and realities of domestic violence have a special relevance to fathers. While it is widely assumed that a man can easily leave an abusive relationship, many men are trapped because of their children, knowing the abuser is likely to get custody. Meanwhile, some feminists use the specter of male violence as a scare tactic to deny equal rights to fathers - for instance, vehemently opposing joint custody on the grounds that abusive men will use their access to the children to terrorize their ex-wives.

These are some of the issues a Father's Day campaign focusing on domestic violence could address. Maybe next year?

Cathy Young is a contributing editor at Reason magazine. Her column appears regularly in the Globe.

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http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/167/oped/In_abuse_men_are_victims_too+.shtml

The White Ribbon Campaign: The Children's Version of the Gender Blame Game

May 7, 2003 by Richard L. Davis

To truly understand the dynamics of domestic/dating violence one must recognize that it is a complex, multifaceted, and often misunderstood dilemma that must be viewed through an unbiased lens. All impartial academics and researchers agree domestic violence or dating violence has no single cause nor is there a single cure.

In 1995 Jeffrey Fagan wrote in the National Institute of Justice research report, *The Criminalization of Domestic Violence: Promises and Limits*, "Assuming that patriarchy and power relations alone cause domestic violence leads us toward conclusions that do not consider a full array of explanatory variables from other disciplines." Concerning the White Ribbon Campaign Fagan's advice has fallen on deaf ears. His logic interferes with their agenda.

The issue of high school domestic/dating violence, the specific focus of the White Ribbon Campaign needs to be presented in a more unbiased fashion. I have three daughters and two sons. I understand my daughters, as data document, are at greater risk to experience more serious, injurious and sexual domestic/dating violence assaults than their brothers.

As a retired police officer I know full well that those who suffer black eyes, bruises, broken teeth, cracked ribs, busted noses, and fractured jaws at the hands of those who profess to love them, are much more often women, not men. However, I do not view my three daughters as always being innocent and angelic victims and their two brothers as destined to be demonic abusive perpetrators. If only the enigma that is domestic/dating violence were that simple.

The White Ribbon Campaign proclaims that many men, their website excludes all women from any blame, have come to believe that violence against a woman, child or another man is an acceptable way to control another person. Do they believe that women or girls never use violence as a dating or familial controlling tactic? They claim that female dating violence against males is a rare event. This documents quite clearly that they spend all their time preaching to high school students and no time listening to them.

Why is it that the White Ribbon Campaign and others who moralize about dating violence in schools to our children seem to be only concerned with violence against males by females? Can it be possible that no one in their organization has ever read a single dating violence study? This is supposed to be their area of expertise and their website documents they don't have a clue. Or worse still, they know the truth and simply hide it.

An article in the August 1, 2001 *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality," begins by quoting from a National Institute of Justice study that reports 1.5 million women are physically and/or sexually abused each year in the United States. For the next seven pages this biased article documents only the problems adolescent girls face concerning dating violence.

Would it not make sense to at least mention that while they have been paid only to research girls, they could at least have a couple of lines about how boys can have similar problems. I suppose that also interferes with the agenda.

The same JAMA article would be headlined in a Boston Globe article, "One in five teen girls abused." No mention of boys here either. Using the same focus as the White Ribbon Campaign, the JAMA article concludes that, "Parents and peers appear to play a role in supporting adolescent males' [emphasis added] violence toward dating partners..." As long as female violence is painted invisible I suppose girls do not need any parental or peer support about their violence as we are told there is not any.

The article does contain important information concerning the plight of my three daughters; but, what about my sons? Why does not the JAMA article address boys as victims? Why do the authors of the article choose to ignore the plight of boys? Is it because the Violence Against Women Act is more concerned with males as perpetrators and not victims? Perhaps the name, Violence Against Women Act," might be a clue.

Another similar, yet unbiased, report, Date Violence and Date Rape Among Adolescents: Associations With Disordered Eating Behaviors and Psychological Health, concerning the same type of adolescent abuse was administered in the Minnesota public schools and it reports that nearly 9 percent of girls and 6 percent of boys report some type of abusive date-related experience. Why is it that the JAMA article never once mentioned the problems faced by adolescent boys?

The information in the JAMA article was from the 1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey documents that 18 percent of females and 7 percent of males report they were hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with. Also 16 percent of females and 6 percent of males report that someone had sexual contact with them against their will.

While the JAMA article, notes that 1.5 million women are physically and/or sexually abused each year by an intimate partner the authors had to cut a sentence in half so that they could hide the complete fact. The sentence purposely cut in half by the authors, reports that 834,732 males suffer abuse. Perhaps 834,732 victims is not quite a rate event.

What purpose do the authors believe is being served by hiding the plight of boys and men? Should not all of us regardless of age or gender deserve to be free from abuse? What is the real agenda of the White Ribbon Campaign?

The findings from the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) survey in the report, Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women, documents that 40.0 percent of surveyed women and 53.8 percent of surveyed men report being physically assaulted by a parent, stepparent, or other adult caretaker as a child.

Another National Institute of Justice sponsored study, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, from the same NVAW survey estimates that annually, 4.8 million women and 2.9 million men will suffer from intimate partner assaults. Is not a victim of abuse a victim of abuse?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau report, Child Maltreatment 1996: Reports From the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, documents that 17,590 children were physically abused by men and 21,757 children were physically abused by women. Do not expect to find this "rare event" data on the White Ribbon website.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-99, documents that concerning violence between person of the same gender reports that on an annual basis 13,740 males are victims and 16,900 females are the victims of same sex abuse. Does this mean that women are more violent than men when they can be?

The Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, Murder in Families, documents that "in murders of their offspring, women predominated, accounting for 55 percent of the killers."

If domestic/dating violence is caused by gender inequity, what accounts for the fact that the majority of males do not abuse women? What is the cause of same sex violence? Why the high number of assaults on males as adults and/or children by females?

Why don't those who insist on reducing the exploration of domestic/dating violence to a gender battle between men and women understand that they are performing a disservice to many victims of abuse, regardless of age or gender?

Why do so many domestic violence advocates continue to argue about what is or is not "abuse?" Why does the White Ribbon Campaign proclaim that we should ask only male students to take a pledge not to hit female students? Do they really expect us to believe that female students only hit male students in self defense? Have they never spoken to a female student who hit her boyfriend because she was jealous?

After 4,000 years of written human history that ignored the issue of domestic violence, why not present the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to our children? The message to our children should be that no one deserves to be hit, regardless of age or gender.

Is it possible that the gender blame game is keeping many people away from the issue of domestic/dating violence? Unbiased data document that being a domestic/dating violence abuser or victim, can be a problem for any of us regardless of age or gender. Perhaps once the White Ribbon Campaign decides to end their gender blame game, more people, both male and female, will get involved in seeking solutions and providing resolution.

Richard L. Davis

Richard L. Davis served in the United States Marine Corps from 1960 to 1964. He is a retired lieutenant from the Brockton, Massachusetts police department. He has a graduate degree in criminal justice from Anna Maria College and another in liberal arts from Harvard University. He has a BA from Bridgewater State College in History and he minored in secondary education. He is a member of the International Honor Society of Historians and

an instructor of Criminology, Group Violence and Terrorism, Criminal Justice and Domestic Violence at Quincy College in Plymouth, MA. He is a past president of the Community Center for Non-Violence in New Bedford, Massachusetts and the vice president for Family Nonviolence, Inc. www.familynonviolence.com in Fairhaven, MA. He is an independent consultant for criminal justice agencies concerning policies, procedures, and programs concerning domestic violence. He is the author of Domestic Violence: Facts and Fallacies by Praeger publishers and has written numerous articles for newspapers, journals, and magazines concerning the issue of domestic violence. He has columns concerning domestic violence at www.policeone.com, and www.nycop.com, is a distance learner instructor in Introduction to Criminal Justice and Domestic Violence for the Online Police Academy and has a website at www.policewriter.com. He and Kim Eyer have a domestic violence website The Cop and the Survivor at <http://www.rhiannon3.net/cs/>. He lives in Plymouth, Massachusetts with his wife and the two youngest of five children. He experienced domestic violence professionally for 21 years as a police officer and personally as a child and as an adult. In his retirement he continues to use his education, experience, and training to help the children, women, and men who have had to endure violence from those who profess to love them. He may be reached at rldavis@post.harvard.edu.

<http://mensnewsdaily.com/archive/a-e/davis/davis050703.htm>

NATIONAL POST

Women emerge as aggressors in Alberta survey

67% of women questioned say they started severe conflicts

by Brad Evenson and Carol Milstone, 10 July 1999.

This item may be cited as Brad Evenson and Carol Milstone, *Women emerge as aggressors in Alberta survey*, National Post (online edition), July 10, 1999.

OTTAWA - Women are just as violent to their spouses as men, and women are almost three times more likely to initiate violence in a relationship, according to a new Canadian study that deals a blow to the image of the male as the traditional domestic aggressor. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the study, however, is the source of the data -- a 1987 survey of 705 Alberta men and women that reported how often males hit their spouses.

Although the original researchers asked women the same questions as men, their answers were never published until now.

When the original Alberta study was published in the Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science in 1989, it was taken up by feminist groups as evidence of the epidemic of violence against women.

The researchers, Leslie Kennedy and Donald Dutton, say they were primarily interested in male-to-female violence at the time.

In any case, the one-sided Kennedy-Dutton study was cited extensively in a 1990 House of Commons committee report *The War Against Women*, which ultimately led Brian Mulroney, the former prime minister, to call a two-year, \$10-million national inquiry into violence against women. The inquiry's 460-page report made 494 recommendations aimed at changing attitudes in governments, police departments, courts, hospitals and churches. It also led to a torrent of lurid news features about battered women. The current study, which will appear this week -- again, in the Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science -- says that while the need to stop violence against women is obvious, violence against men is being ignored.

"Our society seems to harbour an implicit acceptance of women's violence as relatively harmless," writes Marilyn Kwong, the Simon Fraser University researcher who led this study.

"Furthermore, the failure to acknowledge the possibility of women's violence . . . jeopardizes the credibility of all theory and research directed toward ending violence against women."

The study shows roughly that 10.8% of men in the survey pushed, grabbed or threw objects at their spouses in the previous year, while 2.5% committed more severe acts, such as choking, kicking or using a weapon.

By contrast, 12.4% of women committed acts of minor violence and 4.7% committed severe violence.

The violence is seldom one-sided. Of those surveyed, 52% of women and 62% of men reported that both partners were violent.

When questioned about who initiated the most severe conflicts, 67% of women believed they had started it; only 26% believed it was their male spouse.

Regardless of who started it, women appear to end up the losers in the struggle. A major U.S. study on the topic shows 3% of women suffer injuries in spousal violence, while only 0.4% of males were hurt badly enough to seek medical care.

Publication of the "other side" of the violence study provides a sharp illustration of how social science is manipulated to fit a particular agenda.

"It happens all the time. People only tell one half of the story," says Eugen Lupri, a University of Calgary sociologist whose research shows similar patterns of violence against men.

"Feminists themselves use our studies, but they only publish what they like.

"As some feminists say, it's counter-intuitive. We would not expect that to be true; and if things are not expected to be true, for some people they are not true."

Even the federal government appears to turn a blind eye. In 1993, Statistics Canada began to keep track of assaults by men on women in its Violence Against Women survey. But it does not measure the female-to-male violence. "At the time, it was decided that since violence against women was more prevalent, we would only keep track of that," explains spokesperson Shelley Crego.

Ms.Crego said this decision was based on police reports, noting women complain more frequently of assault by men than vice versa.

In her article, Dr. Kwong implies this creates an incorrect picture. "It is important to keep in mind that, within the criminal justice system, any of the physical acts endorsed by these respondents would constitute assault," she writes.

Nor does it appear that violence is confined to married or common-law relationships.

In a separate study to be published this week, researchers from the University of Regina and Wilfrid Laurier University report that 39% of males surveyed said they suffered violence while on a date, compared with 26% of females. "This sex difference has been found in other studies of physical and psychological dating violence," report researchers Donald Sharpe and Janelle Taylor.



Besieged males deserve benefit of the doubt

By Bettina Arndt, April 11 2002 , Sydney, Australia

The video did a great job. For we potential jurors gathered last month in Sydney's criminal courts, it was helpful to see actors playing typical jurists, showing us what we had in store. But what was striking to me about this educational video was that the villain, the one person we were destined to hate, was male. A male in a suit, to be precise. An arrogant, impatient businessman who irritated the hell out of everybody with his pushy, obnoxious manner.

Today, men are the only standing target. It is no longer permissible to take potshots at women. A few decades of lobbying by women activists has taken care of that. But men are still fair game for television advertising showing them as bumbling and incompetent and scathing attacks in newspaper and magazine articles. Last year British novelist Doris Lessing spoke out against this continual, demeaning humiliation of men: "The most stupid, illeducated and nasty woman can rubbish the nicest, kindest and most intelligent man and no one protests. Men seem to be so cowed that they can't fight back, and it is time they did," she pronounced.

In Australia, some men are fighting back. The West Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner is considering a complaint made by members of a local men's group against the Women's Policy Office. At issue is the WPO's "Freedom from Fear" campaign against domestic violence, which members of Men's Confraternity WA claim is discriminatory and sexist.

The Freedom from Fear campaign is based on the presumption that "the perpetrators of violence are almost exclusively male" a presumption the complainants see as hurtful, insulting and wrong. Their 102page complaint lists the substantial body of international evidence showing domestic violence is by no means an exclusively male preserve.

A new book by New Zealand academic Garth Fletcher *The New Science of Intimate Relationships* (Blackwell, 2002) sums up the evidence from more than 70 studies involving more than 60,000 people in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Britain, Australia, Korea and Israel: "The rates of violent acts (both minor and major) reported by men and women in intimate relationships are roughly equivalent; however there is a slight tendency for both men and women to report that women are more likely to be initiators of violent than men," Fletcher writes.

The WA complaint by Brett Kessner and Ian Cugley argues that the refusal to acknowledge the extent to which women can be perpetrators of violence means male victims are frequently denied help by domestic violence services and the police. "The sad

reality is that male victims are subject to a range of social and political obstacles and prejudice when it comes to domestic violence. The Freedom from Fear campaign does nothing to encourage male victims to come forward," Kessner and Cugley write.

Last month, a date was set for a final hearing in an 11 year court battle over just such a case. A Canberra man, Mr K, is claiming compensation and apologies for alleged discriminatory treatment by the ACT Domestic Violence Crisis Service. In 1990 he sought help from the DVSC, claiming he and his son had been physically abused by his wife. DVSC staff refused to assist him but instead counselled his wife and helped her to obtain court orders for Mr K to be evicted.

Mr K's initial complaint of discrimination was dismissed by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Sue Walpole on the basis it fell outside her jurisdiction, but an appeal to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission led to a determination that Mr K's "less favourable" treatment was not due to his gender but resulted from "hopelessly ineffective, unprofessional and inadequate procedures" and "seriously flawed policy". An appeal to the Federal Court determined this second commissioner to have erred in law, and the matter was returned to the HREOC for reconsideration. Last month, Mr K finally learned his case is to be heard by the Federal Court in September.

This is not to deny the great threat posed by men's superior size and strength, which means men are more likely to use violence to coerce and control their partners. But men are right to object when portrayed as the only aggressors in intimate relationships. Neither sex has a monopoly on vice or virtue.

We must consider the consequences of denying men our trust. I am reminded of a conversation I had last year, after spending a week ferrying children to and from the snowfields for interschool competitions. Each day I would offer lifts to young male snowboarders hitching rides along the route. Another mother was horrified. "They could be axemurderers," she told me.

True enough; axemurderers are more likely to be male. But as a mother of two sons, I hate the idea of my boys growing up in a world which assumes them to be likely predators. Hence I feel I have no choice but to act on my knowledge that most men deserve the benefit of the doubt.

Yes, there may be some slight risk in letting these scruffy big boys into the family car, but for me the price of treating all males with suspicion is far greater.

Bettina Arndt is a staff writer.

Canada

From the website of



Health Canada



Spring 1998, Volume 6, Number 1

Men and family violence

Studies show that men and boys are just as likely to be the abused as to be abusers in cases of family violence. Family violence and abuse are issues of control rather than an issue of who is stronger. It takes different forms, depending on the age, sex, and circumstances of the abused and abuser.

A 1995 study of young American military couples, in which male violence might be expected to dominate, found that the incidence of violence was the same for both men and women. A survey of Detroit emergency room admissions showed that 38% of those admitted due to family violence were men. A 1994 Ontario study showed that boys and girls experience similar rates of all types of abuse (46% for boys, compared to 54% for girls), including sexual abuse. In the 8-11 year age group, boys accounted for 42-44% of sexual abuse reports. Differences between abused men and women appear primarily in the severity of physical injury. Women are more at risk for extreme or life-threatening injury.

A 1996 Health Canada report found that it is as difficult for men and boys as for women and girls to admit that they are abused and more difficult to find help. The report suggested that the current "patriarchy theory" of abuse, the expectation for males to be tough and able to protect themselves, and a lack of recognition of the different forms of sexual abuse contributed to this problem.

Another problem is that there is a lack of resources, such as shelters and counselling, available for abused men and many front-line workers, such as police and social workers, have not been trained to handle these cases.



Studies shatter myth about abuse

By Karen S. Peterson, USA TODAY, June 22, 2003

WASHINGTON — It is not just men who hit women. Women hit men, too. And the latest research shows that ignoring the role women play in domestic violence does both women and men a disservice.

There is little doubt that women get hurt more than men. She may slap him. But then he may hit her harder or more often.

By not understanding the mutual role they often play, women are at great risk for injury, new studies show.

Still, the newest findings challenge the feminist belief that "it is men only who cause violence," says psychologist Deborah Capaldi of the Oregon Social Learning Center. "That is a myth."

The number of women who hit first or hit back is "much greater than has been generally assumed," Capaldi says. She says she is surprised by the frequency of aggressive acts by women and by the number of men who are afraid of partners who assault them.

Capaldi and two other female researchers call for a re-evaluation of treatment programs nationwide. Such programs focus on men and ignore women. Men are court-ordered into some type of rehabilitation, and their women are told in support groups or shelters that they had nothing to do with the violence, Capaldi says.

"Prevention and treatment should focus on managing conflict and aggression for both young men and women," Capaldi says. Each needs to understand the role both play while still putting a "special responsibility" on the man, who can inflict greater injury.

The three women did different studies but presented them as a team recently to a conference sponsored by the Society for Prevention Research. The National Institutes of Health sponsored much of the work.

The researchers emphasize they are not blaming women. "We are not saying anybody is at fault," says psychologist Miriam Ehrensaft of Columbia University. "But new data is emerging that says women are also involved in aggression. If we do not tell women that, we put them at risk."

Rita Smith of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence is not convinced that men are afraid of abusive women. "That fear is a critical factor in any domestic violence situation. And the abuse is part of an ongoing pattern to control someone else's behavior."

Murray Straus, co-director of the Family Research Lab at the University of New Hampshire, has found both men and women are involved in physical aggression, but he emphasizes injury rates are not the same. "The likelihood of an injury to a woman requiring medical attention is much greater. Men cause more damage."

The little-talked-about involvement of women in mutual aggression with men is "the third rail of the domestic violence field," says Richard Gelles, dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. "Touch it and you get electrocuted." Both he and Straus have done studies that caused fiery controversies.

Gelles says the lifetime risk of a woman being struck by a male intimate partner is about 28%. And "depending upon who is doing the survey and how you measure it, you could get numbers of up to 50%." But he says a man's lifetime risk of being struck by a woman is also about 28%.

Many researchers' findings in earlier, government-financed studies emphasize the man's role.

Patricia Tjaden's study for the non-profit Center for Policy Research, sponsored by two government agencies, questioned 8,000 men and 8,000 women. She found women three times as likely to be assaulted in some way over a lifetime by a male partner than the reverse, and seven to 14 times as likely to be attacked, including beaten, choked or threatened with a gun.

Different research tools and methods pick up on different kinds of intimate partner violence, Tjaden says. But still, she says, she has "always had trouble with the mutual-abuse argument. Where are all the male victims?" It is women, she says, who are subjected to "systematic terrorism."

The young are particularly prone to aggression. Erika Lawrence of the University of Iowa told the prevention conference that one-third of newlywed women and one-quarter of newlywed men engage in physical aggression.

The subject of partner violence is a minefield. Even defining it is controversial. Some call verbal abuse a form of battering. And all sorts of studies are done in all sorts of ways. Those based on crime statistics and reports from women's shelters tend to show dramatic aggression by men against women. (Gelles cautions that some men may not realize or admit they have been assaulted by a woman and may not report it as a crime or seek treatment.)

"Family conflict" studies may reflect a broader population, Straus says, and take into account lesser types of aggression that don't lead to arrests or broken limbs. These studies show about the same rates of aggression by men and women.

It is clear that women suffer physically more at the hands of men than the reverse, says Faye Wattleton of the Center for the Advancement of Women. But still she says it is good

to bring new research to public attention. "I applaud the women who had the courage to present these findings. We don't make progress by suppressing the evidence."

HOW INFO GATHERED

The studies presented to the Society for Prevention Research are "community based," meaning they deal with a general population, one not in treatment or in trouble with the law. Data are based on:

• **Oregon Youth Study.** Deborah Capaldi of the Oregon Social Learning Center is looking at 200 men and their romantic partners, collecting data at four stages, from ages 17 to 27. The men are from an "at risk" neighborhood in an Oregon city but include those who are thriving, she says. They and their various partners fill out questionnaires, are interviewed and are videotaped while interacting, frequently with pinches or slaps. Capaldi concludes, in part, that "young women were more likely to initiate physical aggression than young men," and "young men were injured as well as young women" and were sometimes afraid of their partners.

• **Marriage and Family Development Project.** Erika Lawrence's team interviewed 172 newlywed couples recruited from marriage license records. The University of Iowa team checked in every six months for four years. Lawrence found that one-third of couples used physical aggression, including pushing, slapping, shoving and hitting with an object. Her earlier studies show that one-half of engaged or married women and one-third of men are physically aggressive.

• **Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study.** This 30-year study draws on young adults followed from birth in New Zealand. Researchers say study results are applicable to the USA. Miriam Ehrensaft of Columbia University worked with data on almost 1,000 people; 9% were in relationships with abuse that resulted in injury or attention from agencies such as the police. Men and women participated. However, this type of abuse required a very aggressive male and resulted in injuries requiring treatment for more women than men. In less dramatic instances, the "perpetrators were primarily women."

By Karen S. Peterson



Taboos hide same-sex violence

SUNDAY , 26 SEPTEMBER 2004

By TIM HUME

Gays and lesbians are being trapped in violent, abusive relationships by a code of silence around same-sex domestic violence.

Experts say domestic violence is just as severe and as prevalent in same-sex relationships as in heterosexual ones, with a third of homosexual partnerships estimated to be abusive.

But a taboo exists around what the gay community calls the "second closet", resulting in under-reporting of violence and a scarcity of support services.

Auckland's Jo Butler, who runs one of the few programmes for lesbian victims of domestic violence, says there is an ideological reluctance from many lesbians to acknowledge women can be as abusive as men.

"I think lesbians have to get real about this," she said.

"Nobody's talking about it, but until we as a community face up to this, then nothing's going to happen. It's really hard for women coming out with this if no-one wants to hear about it."

Her Auckland-based Breaking the Cycle programme had counselled lesbians who sustained abuse as bad as in any heterosexual relationship, including sexual violence.

The gay community needed to take ownership of the problem and encourage victims to speak out, or perpetrators would continue to abuse and victims could go on to offend in new relationships themselves.

"Quite frankly, we don't need the bad press, but unless we acknowledge it, women will continue to be abused and not helped."

Battered lesbians very rarely came forward, as they feared homophobic responses from police and mainstream support agencies, who could be ill-equipped to understand the power dynamics in same-sex relationships, or may minimise the offending as a mere "catfight".

While refuges were an option, they were not ideal, as lesbians often faced prejudice from other women there, and feared that their abuser would be able to track them down.

For battered gay men, support services are even more scant. Graham Barnes, a domestic violence programme developer in the United States, studied abusive gay relationships in

Auckland with a view to establishing a programme to fill the "huge gap" in services for battered gay men.

He believed a specialist gay service was needed to overcome the reluctance of battered gays to reach out to mainstream services, and urged the gay community to raise awareness on the issue.

Young gays and lesbians new to the gay community – particularly poor, ethnic gays and lesbians – were most vulnerable to abuse by older, well-established members, he said.

Gay and lesbian domestic violence had different dynamics to heterosexual abuse in that perpetrators could complicate matters by passing themselves off as the victim in the relationship, or could maintain psychological control over a partner by threatening to "out" them.

Neville Creighton, director of Auckland's Gay/Lesbian Welfare Group, said part of the reluctance to acknowledge gay domestic violence was due to "a feeling our partnerships have to be bigger, better, brighter and safer than straight ones to be valid".

Eugene Moore, a sexual orientation trainer and consultant to the police, said police were becoming more aware of same-sex domestic violence. But support services for victims were virtually non-existent, he said.

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

Women who batter, and the men who fear them

By ROBERT L. JAMIESON JR., SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER COLUMNIST, Friday, June 4, 2004

So what's a guy to do?

Dean Lai-how did everything by the book when his ex-wife began harassing and haranguing him. It wasn't enough to stop her fatal attraction.

In January, Dean looked out the window of his apartment near Seattle. To his shock, his ex-wife was just standing in the parking lot, looking up.

In March, his ex-wife showed up at the Target department store in Lynnwood, where Dean worked. She approached with a plastic container of kerosene while smoking a cigarette. She told Dean she had "something he would cherish the rest of his life," according to prosecutors.

The next day the ex appeared at his apartment complex at 3 in the morning. When Dean arrived, she followed him to his unit and threw a lighted Christmas ornament filled with kerosene as he rushed to shut his door, police say. The ornament didn't ignite, but detectives later found kerosene on the door and walls.

There was the time the ex-wife allegedly told Dean she was so angry with him she felt like running him over with a car. On another occasion she falsely accused him of molesting her children. Letters accusing Dean of pedophilia mysteriously turned up in neighbors' mailboxes. Police do not believe the accusations were legitimate but do suspect Dean's ex-spouse had something to do with the letters.

Yet another time, prosecutors say, the ex-wife told Dean that she could easily buy a gun and use it.

Dean decided enough was enough. He applied for a protection order. A hearing was set for May 19 to decide whether to make permanent a temporary protection order that Dean had gotten in March. The day before the hearing, the 34-year-old was slain by his ex-wife, police say.

Society often hears terrible stories about domestic violence. The stories typically involve women who are beaten for months or years before their boyfriends or spouses maim or kill them. Statistically speaking, women who are injured or killed by the men in their lives make up most domestic-violence cases.

A 1998 National Violence Against Women Act survey found about 1.5 million women are victims of domestic violence each year, compared with about 835,000 men. The Justice

Department said in 2000 there were 1,247 women killed by "intimate partner" violence compared with 440 men that year.

But the National Institute of Mental Health, which has studied domestic violence at length, has said women are as likely as men to initiate violence. That counters the claims that women hit only in self-defense.

"One thought is that female aggression has always been a function of protection, or reaction. But the data doesn't support that," Martin Fiebert, a psychology professor at California State University-Long Beach, said in an interview with the Knight Ridder/Tribune news service.

Fiebert has reviewed more than 100 research studies on domestic violence.

"It turns out, in 50 percent of the cases, you can't separate who started it," he said. "And in the other 50 percent, it's equal."

Experts believe the number of male survivors of domestic violence is a conservative figure at best. That's because in addition to the broad stigma surrounding domestic violence, there is also the misguided societal notion that such violence doesn't "apply" when men are the targets. And what guy wants to admit that his girlfriend or wife beat him up?

But women can be violent. Their violence can be escalating, predatory and lethal.

That is the case with Dean, who represents the less visible face of domestic abuse.

Reading through police reports and court papers, it becomes apparent that Dean's ex-wife, Rebecca Lynn Lai-how, was ticking, waiting to detonate.

The couple separated three years ago. They divorced a year ago.

Ironically, the justice system came to appreciate Rebecca's potential for danger only after Dean was dead and Rebecca had turned herself in to police.

"The defendant's escalating violence in this case as well as her apparent mental health and substance abuse issues render her a poor candidate for pretrial release," writes Mary Barbosa, a senior deputy prosecutor for King County.

Rebecca, it turns out, was building to her crescendo in a case mirroring so many in our region in recent years in which men have killed wives or girlfriends.

But here is one big difference: Dean's killing for some reason failed to make front-page news or stir up the public outcry that predictably reverberates when men kill estranged female partners. Is it because the victim was a man?

Dean lived in mortal fear. The protection order he sought against his ex-wife was never served because Rebecca could not be located. Dean was waiting to move away after

Rebecca was served with the order. "He felt that way his new address would not be in the (order) request and Rebecca would not know where he was living," court documents say.

In April, Rebecca got her hands on a Ruger .357 revolver. A sales receipt shows the gun was bought at a Portland-area gun shop. On May 18, around 10:30 in the morning, authorities got a 911 call from a Renton apartment.

Dean was on the line: *Help me! I've been shot! By my ex-wife!*

Dean had been walking a dog when a woman jogged up with something black in her right hand, according to one witness. A bang sounded. A neighbor heard Dean scream: "Ouch!" The neighbor saw the mystery woman chase Dean as he scrambled toward the stairs of his apartment and dashed inside.

Police and medics had to force open Dean's locked door. They found him dying on the floor of the dining room. Medics couldn't save him. The bullet had entered his right shoulder and ravaged his lungs, lodging in the aorta.

At the police station after the shooting, Rebecca said the gun and bullets were in the trunk of her blue Mitsubishi, parked right outside. She looked eyes with a detective. "No one was supposed to get hurt like this," said Rebecca, 41, who has been charged with first-degree murder.

Her words are what so many batterers tend to say. They say it after they harm the ones they love.

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The Boston Globe

The other aggressor in domestic violence

By Cathy Young, 12/1/2003

ALLEGATIONS of domestic violence involving celebrities are nothing new, but two such stories in the news in the past couple of months have had a relatively unusual twist: The accused perpetrators were women and the alleged victims were men.

First, there was the lawsuit against Liza Minelli by her estranged husband, David Gest, claiming that the singer-actress had subjected him to repeated physical abuse. Then actor Christian Slater's wife, Ryan Haddon, was arrested on charges of battery after smashing a glass on her husband's head and causing a cut that required stitches. Yet despite such incidents, the public perception of domestic abuse as something that horrid men do to helpless women persists. People who have challenged this stereotype (myself included) have been called everything from anti-feminists to backlash peddlers to apologists for abusive men.

Well, now someone with strong feminist credentials challenges a lot of the conventional wisdom on domestic violence and ways to combat it, and confirms a lot of the things we dissenters have been saying for years. That someone is Linda G. Mills of New York University, a professor of law and social work and author of the new book, "From Insult to Injury: Rethinking Our Responses to Intimate Abuse." Mills, 45, is a feminist who has spent a decade working on behalf of battered women. Moreover, as she reveals in her book, she herself, 20 years ago, was a battered woman -- though she would prefer the more neutral term, "woman in an abusive relationship."

Drawing both on research and on her own experience in the field, Mills concludes that the conventional feminist paradigm of domestic violence as a form of patriarchal oppression is woefully inadequate. It is manifestly irrelevant for abused lesbians and gay men; it also has little meaning for women of color, who do not see the men in their community as powerful oppressors. Even for white women, it is a vast oversimplification of a complex reality. "Years of research, which mainstream feminism has glossed over or ignored, shows that when it comes to intimate abuse, women are far from powerless and seldom, if ever, just victims," Mills writes. "Like men, women are frequently aggressive in intimate settings."

"From Insult to Injury" is full of such heresies. Thus, Mills asserts that women who stay in abusive relationships often do so not just because of "women's socialization within a patriarchal system" but for complicated emotional, familiar, and cultural reasons. In many cases, she says, this decision has to be respected. She claims that policies of mandatory arrest and prosecution in domestic violence cases not only disempower women -- who aren't given any say in the handling of the case -- but actually endanger them, since an arrest may trigger an escalation of further violence. She suggests that mothers' physical

violence toward children, particularly male children, plays a key part in perpetuating the cycle of abuse.

Mills does not deny (and neither does anyone else) that male violence toward women is more likely to result in physical injuries than the reverse, and that women in abusive relationships are more likely than men to be in danger. But she argues that this is no reason to disregard female violence, which needs to be acknowledged not only out of fairness to male victims but out of concern for female victims as well: A woman who starts a physical confrontation with her male partner may well find herself severely battered. To understand and prevent male violence, Mills concludes, we must understand female violence as well, whether it's physical assault or psychological aggression.

Where do we go from here? Mills is critical of the current "lock 'em up" dogma; instead, she would like to see a practice of "Intimate Abuse Circles" in which the spouses could discuss the abuse in the presence of other family members, relatives and friends. While she stresses that batterers must be held fully accountable for their actions, she also wants to see more emphasis on healing rather than punishment.

Currently, Mills's plea for reform is unlikely to have much effect. The ideology that views men as wolves and women as lambs is too deeply entrenched, and despite some feminists' claim that the media are eager to leap on any "antifeminist" bandwagon, Mills' thought-provoking book has received little coverage. Her message needs to be heard by politicians, judges, prosecutors and many others. It took the "mainstream" feminists about 30 years to establish their monopoly on the public debate about domestic violence. Mills's book may be the first step in dismantling that monopoly.

Cathy Young is a contributing editor at Reason magazine. Her column appears regularly in the Globe.

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