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Why does He Hit Her? Content Analysis of Protection from Abuse Orders

Robin Y. Brown

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WHY DOES HE HIT HER?
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS

By

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B.S. University of Maine, 1995

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

(in Human Development)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

December 2003

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WHY DOES HE HIT HER? CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS

By Robin Y. Brown

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Renate Klein

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science
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December 2003

According to FBI statistics, each year 3.3 million wives and 250,000 husbands receive severe beatings from their spouses. This research tries to answer the question of why one human being would want to abuse another. More specifically, what is the function, purpose, or pay off of all this violence?

This research identifies key features in Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits that are indicative of motives underlying interpersonal abuse. This was done by using content analysis that will aim to uncover such motives by relating the abusive behavior to the circumstances under which the perpetrator enacted them and the personal and interpersonal consequences they brought about. Three questions guide this research. First, what do documents such as Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits reveal about the abusive actions the perpetrator took against the victim? Second, what do such documents reveal about the circumstances under which the abuse occurred and about the consequences of the abuse? And third, which conclusions can be drawn from these documents about the perpetrator's motives for abuse?

Upon completion of the content analysis the following motives were discovered:

1. Attacks on the woman's attempt to leave the relationship.
2. Punishment, coercion, and retaliation against the woman's actions concerning children.
3. Coercion or retaliation against the woman's pursuit of court or police remedies.
4. Assaults upon the woman's challenges to drinking and to other dimensions of male authority.
5. Attempts to try to control where she goes, whom she sees, and with whom she talks.

By looking at these perpetrators' motives for the abuse I believe we will be better able to help victims free themselves from terror and fear and to hold batterers accountable for their actions. I believe that this research into motives for abuse will help us to understand the goals and meanings that violence may have for an abusive individual and to improve our efforts to stop interpersonal abuse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	v
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Abusive Behaviors	2
The Questions	3
The Quest for Answers	4
Past Discoveries	5
2. METHOD	8
Data Analysis	9
Definition of Appropriate Text Units.....	10
Creation of Categories Definitions.....	10
Test Coding of Sample Text.....	12
Revision of Coding Rules	12
3. RESULTS	14
Motives and Circumstances	15
Generalized, Unpredictable Abuse.....	16
Abuse Related to Specific Motives.....	17
4. OTHER RESEARCH ISSUES	23
The Issue of Gender	24
Children.....	25
Law Enforcement.....	27

Substance Abuse.....	28
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	31
REFERENCES.....	33
APPENDICES.....	37
Appendix A. Protection From Abuse Order and Petition	37
Appendix B. Sample of a Protection from Abuse Narrative and a Demonstration of How it was Coded	40
BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR.....	43

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Types of Abusive Behaviors.....14

Table 4.1 Observations from 100 Protection for Abuse Order Affidavits in
Order of Frequency of Occurrence23

INTRODUCTION

He [husband] shoved me, knocked me to the floor, threatened to burn the house down, and threatened to kill me and bury my body. He said "I know the woods up there; no one would ever find you." (Protection from Abuse Affidavit)

For many women, the home will be the most violent environment they experience. In so called times of peace there is no place more violent than the home. It is within the privacy of the home that women are beaten by their husbands and boyfriends. Approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). More than twice as many women are killed by their husbands or boyfriends than are murdered by strangers. Based on victimization data, the National Crime Survey estimates that 21 million women are battered annually, with a reoccurrence of violence in 32% of the cases within 6 months of reporting (Miller & Wellford, 1997). Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999). FBI statistics say that a woman is battered every 15 seconds. In 70% of the child abuse cases I have investigated in the past as a Child Protective Caseworker for the State of Maine, I have discovered evidence of violence among adults as well. When I look at violence around us – in our homes, on the streets, around the world – what is clear is that, although men and women are both victims, most of the violence in the home is directed against women, and most of the perpetrators are men. In 2001, women accounted for 85% of the victims of intimate partner violence and men accounted for approximately 15% of the victims (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). The major male incentive for abuse is to control his female partner (Edleson et al., 1991) and the basic motive for women who use physical

force is self-protection (Saunders, 1988). Women often endure domestic violence in isolation, with no recourse, no safe haven, and no alternatives.

Abusive Behaviors

Abuse in couple relationships may range from verbal put downs and harassment to episodic or chronic physical assaults and threats (Browne, 1997). Injuries sustained by women as a result of marital violence range from bruises, cuts, to broken bones and even death. On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country everyday (Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 2000). In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). Women are much more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner. In 2000, intimate partner homicides accounted for 33.5 % of the murders of women and less than four percent of the murders of men (Bureau of Justice Statistics). Any use of violence in a relationship can dramatically alter the balance of power, destroying a sense of openness and trust on the part of a woman and resulting in a permanent sense of inequality, threat, and loss (Browne).

Increasingly, it has been recognized that there is a wide range of abusive behaviors that can be used to terrorize the victim and that do not involve the use of physical force. Although physical abuse may have ceased, battered women may still be faced with ongoing psychological abuse or threatening that physical abuse may recur. According to Pagelow (1981) one of the few things about which almost all researchers agree is that the battering escalates in frequency and intensity over time.

The Questions

As a former child protective caseworker, director of two child abuse prevention councils, a crisis specialist for a domestic violence organization, and currently a legal coordinator for the Women's Center of Southern Maryland I have often wondered why would one human being want to abuse another. More specifically, what is the function, purpose, or pay off of all this violence? This research is based on the assumption that motives for abuse need to be understood in the context of the relationship between victim and perpetrator. Essentially, when we want to answer the question "why would anybody do such a thing?", we need to know how victim and perpetrator relate to each other, how much power each has, under what circumstances the abuse occurred, and what the perpetrator accomplished with the abuse.

Information about the context (i.e., circumstances, consequences, etc.) of abusive behavior is often lacking in studies that focus only on the type and frequency of abuse. Nevertheless, classic research on battered women has suggested that the circumstances of the abusive incident, the relationship between victim and perpetrator, and the consequences of the abuse for both need to be taken into consideration in order to understand what motivates abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Similarly, more recent work on interpersonal violence suggests that contextual information, such as expected outcomes of violent actions, influences a perpetrator's decision to use violence (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). For example, if a woman does not leave or seek help after the first episode, it can be taken as a sign of acquiescence, which usually leads to more violence (Cousin, M., Skeek, F., & Pohlmann, L., 1994), even though staying, especially given the lack of resources and social supports for leaving, should never be read as accepting violence (Davies, 1998). Not all women could benefit from their partner's arrest, protective orders, and other court responses. Taking the

steps that will end the relationship does not mean that the violence will stop. Some studies have shown that he may be more likely to hurt her after she has left (Arendell, 1995; Davies, 1998; Ellis & Stuckless, 1992; Mahoney, 1991). He may continue to have access to her, particularly if they have children in common and there is ongoing contact due to court-ordered visitation. For some battered women, the decision to leave will increase the severity and number of risks they face. For others, leaving will lessen the risks.

The Quest for Answers

Motives for abuse can be analyzed from different perspectives. Perpetrator statements concerning motives are not necessarily informative as perpetrators are apt to deny, minimize, or justify the abuse in order to present themselves in a desirable manner or avoid prosecution by the legal system (Ptacek, 1988). In particular, perpetrator accounts of abusive incidents are often at odds with the actual outcomes of abuse such as victim's fear, injury, and loss of autonomy and the circumstances under which the abuse was perpetrated. For instance, Dobash and Dobash (1979) present several examples of violent attacks where the circumstances do not explain, let alone justify the attack (e.g., when a woman reports being attacked in her sleep).

In contrast, victims usually are able to give very informative descriptions of the outcomes of abuse as well as the circumstances under which abusive behaviors occurred. Such accounts are required in protection from abuse orders or restraining orders where the victim, in most cases a woman, needs to describe the abusive incident, its consequences, and the history of abuse in her relationship to the perpetrator. Protection from abuse orders and other text documents related to abusive incidents provide important information about the

relationship between victim and abuser and about the “outcomes” of abuse (for the victim, the perpetrator, and their relationship) and may help us understand what the abuse does to the victim and the relationship, and what the perpetrator may have tried to accomplish with the abuse.

Past Discoveries

For example, after analyzing testimony from women seeking restraining orders Ptacek (1997) concluded that abuse was aimed at curbing women’s autonomy and independence. Men used abusive behaviors when women challenged male authority or privilege. Such “challenges” included leaving the abuser, taking actions to protect children from an abusive father, or criticizing a man’s drinking behavior or extramarital affairs. In a study by Gerber (1991) people were asked to describe the personality traits that are typical of the two sexes. Women were portrayed as being concerned with responding and accommodating to the needs of other persons. In contrast, men were depicted as being concerned with enhancing their own selves and exerting their will on others (Gerber).

Abuse or battering is a system of behaviors used by one person to control another person’s actions and feelings. One way to think of these behaviors is as tactics, actions that are chosen and planned. The abuser is not “out of control”; he is trying to control his victim. Dobash & Dobash (1984) found that men tended to use violence when female partners were perceived as questioning male authority or challenging the legitimacy of the man’s behavior. Hamberger, K.L., Lohr, J., Bonge, D., & Tolin, D., (1994) predicted the following gender differences in self-stated motivations for violence: a) the female perpetrator will exhibit violence motivations primarily related to self-defense and retaliation for prior violence, and

b) male perpetrators will exhibit more violence motivations related primarily to domination, control, or punishment.

In a similar vein, the present research aims to understand motives for abuse by analyzing documents pertaining to actual incidents of interpersonal abuse: Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits. An Order for Protection from Abuse is a means of getting legal protection, whether or not you have called the police or pressed charges. An order for protection can bar the abuser from assaulting or harassing you, make provision for temporary child custody and support, protect or allocate property, or have the abuser removed from your mutual residence. If he violates the protection from abuse order, he can be arrested and held accountable for his actions. If someone is violent and there are no consequences, those behaviors are reinforced. In these affidavits individuals are often eloquent in their descriptions of the strategic goals of the batterer's abusiveness. After the Maine Protection from Abuse Act went into effect July 1980, victims of domestic violence were afforded a new set of legal options. In the glare of recent media attention to crimes against women, courts are now hearing the testimony of abused women in an unprecedented manner (Ptacek, 1997). Only women who have been battered can testify about both the physical suffering and the meanings that the violence has had in their lives.

The Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits used in this research were taken from the State of Maine Department of Human Services case records in 1998. Such records typically consist of a variety of documents pertinent to an individual case. For the present research only Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits will be used because they are likely to contain important information about the context of the abusive incident and the goals and motives underlying the abusive behavior. The affidavits are written statements by the victim, usually

one or two paragraphs in length that describe the abusive incident. The victim has to describe in detail the most recent incidents of abuse; she has to state what happened and when as well as who did what to whom. Victims also need to describe any injuries and detail the history of abuse in their relationship with the perpetrator. A sample copy of a Protection from Abuse Order Form is attached (see Appendix A).

The primary purpose of the present research, based on the earlier work of Ptacek (1997), is to identify key features that are indicative of the motives underlying interpersonal abuse. The content analyses will aim to uncover such motives by relating the abusive behavior to the circumstances under which the perpetrator enacted them and the personal and interpersonal consequences they brought about. Three questions guide this research:

1. What do documents such as Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits reveal about the abusive actions the perpetrator took against the victim?
2. What do such documents reveal about the circumstances under which the abuse occurred?
3. What conclusions can be drawn from these documents about the perpetrator's motives for abuse?

By looking at perpetrators' motives for abuse I believe we will be better able to help victims free themselves from terror and fear and hold batterers accountable for their actions, for violence is the individual choice of the perpetrator. I believe that this research into motives for abuse will help us understand the goals and meanings that violence may have for an abusive individual and improve our efforts to stop interpersonal abuse.

METHOD

This research involved secondary data analyses; no original data were collected from human subjects. The documents used for this research were sampled from Department of Human Services' (DHS) case records in 1998. These records are confidential. They are not public records (such as court records) but are under the control of DHS. DHS was willing to provide these data for research purposes, provided that the cases remained anonymous and the documents were de-identified.

The case records from which I have sampled the text documents for use in this research are located in the State of Maine Department of Human Services Bureau of Child and Family (DHS Bangor Maine Regional Office). From these records I drew a random sample of 100 cases by selecting every third case that contains a Protection from Abuse Affidavit. The affidavit was drawn out of the case file.

The data are the written narratives contained in Protection from Abuse Order affidavits. Most would assume that all documents analyzed at the DHS Bureau of Child and Family Services would consist of allegations of child abuse causing a sampling bias, but these particular documents are different because at this time the courts were sending DHS all their Protection from Abuse Orders, not just those alleging child abuse. Also, in most of the cases indicating inter-adult violence the perpetrator is a man but occasionally the perpetrator is a woman.

To ensure client confidentiality all affidavits and all family correspondence used in this research was de-identified using this process. I made a photocopy of each affidavit in the sample I drew from DHS files. The original documents immediately went back into the

file they were drawn from. No one besides me will see these documents before they have been de-identified.

Any identifying information on each photocopy was blacked out with a permanent marker. That is, names, addresses, phone number and/or social security numbers were blacked out. If available, information on gender and/or age of perpetrator and/or victim will be recorded on the text document in a de-identified form. Gender will be coded 1 (male) or 2 (female). Date of birth will be converted to age in years with 1998 as the reference year.

Data Analysis

As text documents the data contain rich, qualitative information that is most appropriately analyzed by content analytic procedures. In general, content analysis refers to a sequence of steps designed to allow systematic inferences from text (Weber, 1990). Words, phrases or other units of text typically are classified into a few content categories so those units with similar meanings are assigned to the same category. The content categories used in this process should be valid; that is, they should represent variables of interest (in the present research: motives, or circumstances pertaining to motives). The classifications should be consistent; that is, different coders should classify the same text units in the same way (Weber). Content analysis is useful in domestic violence research because the researcher can operate directly on texts/transcripts of human communications. It also yields an unobtrusive measure in which neither the sender nor the receiver of the message is aware that it is being analyzed. The specific steps involved in this type of content analysis are outlined below.

Definition of Appropriate Text Units

Considering that the texts used in the present research are relatively short, appropriate text units may be words or sentences rather than entire paragraphs (e.g. “threatened”, “assaulted”, and/or “he struck me on the right side of my face”). Another useful text unit can be a *theme* encompassing a perceiver (e.g., the victim), the agent of an action (e.g., the perpetrator), the action (e.g., an abusive behavior), and the target of the action (e.g., the victim). Such a theme extends over more than one sentence, or there may be more than one theme in a sentence. An example of this is “He tried to kill me and threatened to kill my children. I want this man to leave me alone. I want no direct or indirect contact with him ever again”. There are two themes in this example: 1) the threat of murder and 2) the goal of wanting no further contact.

Creation of Categories Definitions

This step served to define the content categories and clarify the coding rules. Coding rules help raters decide as to which category a text unit should be assigned. Content categories typically should be mutually exclusive because this makes it easier to arrive at consistent classifications. Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar (1987) developed “The Power and Control Wheel” after interviewing battered women in support groups and men in batterer’s groups. The women were asked to identify the ways in which they felt they were controlled, and the men were asked to identify what tactics they used to maintain an environment of fear and control (Pence, 1993). With the help of “The Power and Control Wheel” Model from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota the following categories and definitions were formed and defined:

- A. **SEXUAL ABUSE**
Making her/him do sexual acts against their will; treating him/her like a sex object.
- B. **VERBAL ABUSE**
Harsh words spoken with the intention of causing emotional pain (e.g., name calling, insults, putting other person down).
- C. **PHYSICAL ABUSE**
An act carried out with the intention of causing physical pain and/or injury (e.g., hitting, slapping, kicking).
- D. **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**
Neglecting him/her; causing him/her to worry, making other unhappy; not being there for her/him emotionally; playing mind games and/or manipulation; making him/her think she is crazy; minimizing, denying and/or blaming the abuse on her/him.
- E. **COERCION – THREATS - INTIMIDATION**
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her/him; threatening to leave him/her or to commit suicide; making him/her drop charges; making him/her do illegal things; making her/him afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying his/her property, abusing pets, displaying weapons.
- F. **ISOLATION**
Controlling what he/she does, who he/she sees and talks to, what he/she reads, where he/she goes; limiting his/her outside involvement; using jealousy to justify actions.
- G. **USING CHILDREN**
Reporting to welfare, making her/him feel guilty about the children, using children to relay messages; using visitation to harass him/her; threatening to take kids away.
- H. **STALKING**
Following him/her; calling him/her at home and/or at work; having others follow her/him; breaking into his/her home; leaving him/her notes, sending letters.
- I. **USING MALE PRIVILEGE**
Treating her like a servant; making all the big decisions; acting like the master of the castle; being the one to define men's and women's roles.

These categories illustrate that violence is part of a pattern of behaviors rather than isolated incidents of abuse or cyclical explosions of pent-up anger, frustration, or painful feelings (Pence, 1993). The general point of “The Power and Control Wheel” Model is that

the violence in this pattern is only one of many control tactics employed in the service of a motive to exert general control over one's partner (Johnson, 2000). This study is based on the assumption that control is the underlying motive for violence. That all, or nearly all, motives are in the service of control by men of women and children.

Test Coding of Sample Text

The rater read the text samples and applied the coding rules. Text coding helped to assess the clarity of category definitions and coding rules. Some rules were found to be ambiguous; and some category definitions needed to be revised.

Revision of Coding Rules

If interrater consistency is low, or there are problems with ambiguous category definitions/coding rules, the definition or rules may need to be revised. After reading 20 text samples and applying my coding rules I discovered some of my categories to be ambiguous and in need of revision. The emotional abuse category is very broad – it encompasses every other category. For example if someone is physically abusing you, sexually abusing you, and/or verbally abusing you – that is also causing emotional harm. I decided to remove the emotional abuse category and created a new category in its place – Neglect. I placed the following items (playing mind games, making her think she is crazy, minimizing, denying, and blaming) under the verbal abuse category. The item, causing him/her to worry, was placed under the coercion-threats-intimidation category. I defined neglect as:

Not being there for him/her emotionally; abandonment; deprivation of essential needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care etc.; not speaking to him/her.

After the categories were clarified the same 20 text samples were recoded. These categories worked much better. I continued coding the remainder of my sample (80 more) using these categories (See Appendix B). Upon completion of coding all 100 samples, I discovered that only 92 out of the 100 cases involved violence by men or women. The other 8 cases the men were not found to be violent and neither were the women. Because of this I am basing my analysis on an N of 92.

RESULTS

Table 3.1 presents each abuse category followed by the total percentage of times this type of abuse was present in the 92 cases (e.g. physical abuse was found in 79 out of 92 PFAs = 86%). To illustrate this I listed examples of text items contained in the affidavits placed in their appropriate categories.

TABLE 3.1 TYPES OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS (N=92)

Types of Abuse	Examples
Sexual Abuse 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -He grabs me in public. -He forced me onto the bed and made me have sex. -I told him to leave and he kept touching my breast and tried to make me kiss him.
Verbal Abuse 86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -He began yelling obscenities. -He called me a slut/whore in front of the children. -He called me a stupid bitch.
Physical Abuse 86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -He was arrested for trying to strangle me. -He grabbed me by the wrists and threw me on the bed. -He shoved me – knocking me to the floor. -He grabbed me by the throat and pushed my head back. -She slapped me in the face. -He burned me with a cigarette. -He broke my arm with a tennis racket.
Neglect 14%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -He has been absent for 1 year. -He threw me outside. I slept in the car. -He will not listen to anything I have to say. -He left us abandoned with no money, rent due, and electricity shut off.
Coercion-Threat- Intimidation 98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -He said he would rather have my son dead than be with me. -“You are lucky that I did not kill you last night”. -He’ll smash and break things. -He said he hired someone to kill me, but will just have them stab me in he back so that I will be paralyzed and no one can have me.

Isolation 14%	-He won't let me visit my friends. -He does not want me to go back to school or get a job. -He won't let me use the car.
Stalking 35%	-During lunch he followed me and ran into my bumper. -He calls me all night long and hangs up. -He has been to my job looking for me.
Using Children 35%	-He said I could leave but I couldn't take the kids with me. -I let him take the kids for a visit and he won't return them. -He told his daughter if they move he will give away or kill the animals.
Using Male Privilege 8%	-He said that women should not work outside the home. -He ripped my checks and told me which bills to pay. -He gets angry when I don't have supper ready for him.

Motives and Circumstances

Motives and Circumstances could not easily be separated. The American Heritage Dictionary defines Circumstance as “a condition or fact that determines or must be considered in the determining of a course of action”. In the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, Motive is defined as “a rationalization, justification, or excuse that a person gives as the reason for his or her behavior”. Motivation is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behavior (Biehler & Snowman, 1997). Circumstances and motives are intertwined (e.g. she got a new job is the circumstance and the motive is he is trying to prevent her from working, or she wants to leave is the circumstance and the motive is he is trying to prevent her from leaving). In the 92 affidavits, circumstances and motives could be noted in 65% of the cases (n=60). In the

other 35% I was unable to recognize the circumstance in 18 affidavits, and motive in 32 affidavits. In these 32 cases the abuse was overwhelming and unpredictable.

Generalized, Unpredictable Abuse

“For the past three years he has been swearing at me and my children. He is like a time bomb. You do not know what to expect, what kind of mood he is gonna be in when he comes home from work.”

“About a year ago he began hitting me. He has threatened to kill me. He knocked a cup of hot coffee on me, threw me up against a wall, began choking and hitting me around my upper body with his fists while calling me a bitch.”

“He as been convicted of domestic violence two times, broken my arm with a tennis racket, and turned my bed upside down with me in it.”

“He hit me with a club, choked me, bit my nose, put a loaded gun to my head, cut me with scissors, and told me to put my son down or I would drop him when I fell.”

In these women’s lives the violence seems to be everywhere, all the time, and unpredictable. It fills their entire experience. It is not related to specific instances. In 80% of those cases years and years of abuse were reported. These affidavits described the more severe cases. They include things such as strangulation, death threats, weapons, assaults, and injuries. It has been suggested, in fact, that the most stressful aspect of an abusive relationship is the unpredictability of the perpetrator. A very occasional, but unpredictable, episode of violence might therefore be more stressful than a more frequent, predictable pattern (Rosenbaum, 1988). Once someone has used violence against you, it increases the impact of threats, isolation, and humiliation.

Abuse Related To Specific Motives

In those affidavits (68 out of 92) in which motive could be recognized I found, like Ptacek (1997), the following four motives and, in addition to Ptacek's findings, a fifth motive. These motives are all instances of control. Each is described below:

1. Attacks on the woman's attempt to leave the relationship. (53%)
2. Coercion or retaliation against the woman's pursuit of court or police remedies. (16%)
3. Assaults upon the woman's challenges to drinking behavior, to sexual entitlement, and to other dimensions of male authority. (12%)
4. Punishment, coercion, and retaliation against the woman's actions concerning children. (9%)
5. The attempt to try to control where she goes, whom she sees, and to whom or with whom she talks to. (18%)

Attacks on the woman's attempt to leave the relationship most often keep women in destructive relationships and terrorize them after they leave. This motive was found in 53% of the cases. Martha R. Mahoney (1991) prescribes a new concept called "Separation Assault" to describe the kinds of assaults men use to curb the autonomy of women, specifically those assaults designed to prevent women from leaving, force women to return, or retaliate against women after they have left (Ptacek, 1997).

"I left home and he was extremely distraught. He loaded a shot gun, barricaded himself and held off police until they gassed him."

"He said he would buy a hand gun and use it if I left him. He said if I can't have you no one will."

Women described being assaulted for attempts to get a divorce, being physically prevented from leaving abusive situations; and suffering violence and abuse for their efforts to get the batterers to leave (Ptacek).

Among victims of violence committed by an intimate, the victimization rate of women separated from their husbands was about three times higher than that of divorced women and about twenty-five times higher than that of married women (Federal Bureau of Investigation Statistics, 1995). When considering the 92 cases involving men physically abusing women, in 41% the woman had already left the abuser. 13% were at a shelter or other confidential location. There was a divorce already pending in 20% of them. Women in 30% of the cases stated they were not able to leave because they fear for their lives.

"I fear for my children and my safety."

"I am afraid that his obsessive behavior will cause him to snap and one day I may lose my life."

"He goes crazy when I leave."

When a battered woman chooses to leave, safety must be her first consideration. For some women, the "separation violence" is worse than the violence they experience while in the relationship, and for some women it is lethal. Research shows that many women face increased danger following separation (Browne, 1997; Ellis, 1992; Sonkin, Martin, and Walker, 1985). More women are murdered by their partners during the period of leaving and shortly thereafter than at any other time (Davies, 1998). Of women who are stalked by former husbands 80% are physically assaulted by that partner and 30% are sexually assaulted by that partner (Center for Policy and Research, 1997). These attempts to maintain a

coercive connection with women reportedly occurred even years after the relationship ended (Ptacek, 1997). Only the abused person can truly judge when it is the safest time to leave.

Coercion or retaliation against the woman's pursuit of court or police remedies is another motive that keeps women in abusive relationships. Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that most intimate partner victimizations are not reported to the police. Only approximately one-fifth of rapes, one-quarter of all physical assaults, and one-half of all stalkings perpetrated against female respondents by intimates were reported to the police (Tjaden & Thonnes, 2000). The majority of victims who did not report their victimization to the police feared retaliation, thought the police would not or could not do anything on their behalf, or considered the incident to be a private or personal matter (Tjaden & Thonnes).

"I called the police again and he got very angry, started yelling, and got in my face. He shoved me away from the phone and tore the phone off the wall. He called me a whore and a slut and said he would kill me in my sleep."

"He punched me in the face (left eye) and told me that if I called the cops he'd kill me."

"He's very upset that I've called the police. When I left he went to his top drawer to find his handgun."

"I drove directly to the police station and he stopped following at that point. He later came to the police station and began screaming there."

Assaults upon the woman's challenges to drinking behavior, to sexual entitlement, and to other dimensions of male authority was discovered in 12% of these cases. Men used violence when female partners were perceived as questioning male authority or challenging the legitimacy of the man's behavior. Examples from these Protection Order Affidavits of this are:

"He said that women should not work outside the home."

"He ripped my checks and told me which bills to pay."

"He gets angry when I don't have supper ready for him"

These men believe it is their right to define men's and women's roles and to instruct and punish their partners, whose duty it is to obey them without questions. Violence in the family is directly linked to status in the family and to socialization. Men are culturally prepared for their role of master of the home even though they must often physically enforce the "right" to exercise this role. They are socialized to be dominant and women to be subordinate (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Punishment, coercion, and retaliation against the woman's actions concerning children is another reason as to why women fear leaving, and these occurred in 16% of the cases. In these affidavits the average age of the woman was 31 and the average age of the man was 33. In 82% (75 out of the 92) of the abusive incidents children were involved. This is consistent with my investigation of child abuse cases in which 77% of them also contained abuse between adults. In 64 out of the 92 affidavits the mother was the primary custodian. The average number of children was two. Threats were made to take the children in 32%. In

5% the abuser threatened to kill the child. In 23% of the cases the abuse occurred during visitation. Fathers took the children against the mother's will in 9% of these cases. Of these cases 21% involved custody issues. In 43% of these cases child abuse was involved where the child was abused during the altercation between the adults. However, child protective services were only involved in 10% of these affidavits. Sometimes children are injured unintentionally when acts of violence occur in their presence.

"He took a swing with his foot but he missed and kicked the baby on the side of the head."

"He knocked me down with the baby in my arms."

"He threw a bottle at me while I was driving and glass flew on the baby in the car seat."

A baby doesn't even have to be born yet to be at risk. One woman reports that while she was pregnant, he broke her hand and punched her in the chest numerous times. Another stated that she almost lost her child when she was 6 weeks pregnant.

Life is ugly for children when one parent is abusive to the other. They see and hear things no one should experience. They are powerless to protect the abused parent or to stop the abuser. Sometimes they call the police, run to the neighbor's house or call their grandparents. Sometimes they hide in their rooms and pretend to sleep. Sometimes they try to intervene. Sometimes they are killed.

Although many parents think that their children are not aware of the violence, between 80% and 90% of the children indicate the opposite (Hart, 2000). According to FBI statistics, when women are murdered by their husbands, children are present in 25% of the cases and each year an estimated 4 million children witness domestic violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1980).

Unlike Ptacek (1997), I discovered another motive. In 18% of the Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits the motive was the attempt to try to control where she goes, whom she sees, and with whom she talks to.

“He would not let me accept the new job.”

“He accused me of having an affair with my girlfriend and did not want me to go there anymore”.

“He told me when to go to bed and when to get up”.

Women are often times cut off from all resources, friends, and family. If a woman has same-sex friends, they are a "whore", a "slut" or "cheating". If a woman is close to her family, she's accused of being "brainwashed". The abuser accuses people who are supportive of causing trouble, and may restrict use of the phone. Due to this behavior, the woman becomes gradually isolated from all of her friends and family. Many women can not use the car (or have one that is reliable), go to work, or go to school. Some abusers will even try to get their partners into legal trouble so that they are afraid to drive or go out. This also serves to reinforce the woman's dependence on the abuser and to maintain the relationship.

OTHER RESEARCH ISSUES

While analyzing the 100 protection order affidavits I discovered other findings which I found interesting and important to include in this study. These items pertain to other aspects of domestic violence such as gender, children, law enforcement, and substance abuse. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the affidavits analyzed and the wealth of information that can be gleaned from them:

TABLE 4.1
OBSERVATIONS FROM 100 PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER AFFIDAVITS
IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE

OBSERVATIONS	PERCENTAGE OF AFFIDAVITS
WOMAN IS THE PLAINTIFF	92%
CHILDREN INVOLVED IN INCIDENT	75%
MARRIED	71%
WOMAN HAS THE CHILD(REN)	64%
POLICE INVOLVEMENT	55%
HISTORY OF ABUSE	49%
THREATS/ATTEMPTS TO KILL	47%
CHILD ABUSE INDICATED	40%
SHE LEFT HIM	38%
ALCOHOL USE	29%
THREATS TO TAKE CHILD(REN)	29%
NOT MARRIED	27%
ARRESTS	23%
VISITATION PROBLEM	21%
CUSTODY ISSUES	19%
DIVORCE PENDING	18%
ABUSER IS A RELATIVE (NOT PARTNER)	18%
VEHICLES INVOLVED	18%
THREATS TO CALL POLICE	18%
WEAPONS USED	18%
MAN HAS THE CHILD(REN)	16%
PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS NOT GRANTED BY A JUDGE	14%
SOMEONE ELSE INTERVENED	13%
DRUG USE	13%
PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER VACATED	11%

UNFIT MOTHER ALLEGED	11%
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INVOLVED	9%
ADULTERY ALLEGED	9%
BAIL CONDITIONS	9%
ABUSER TOOK KIDS WITHOUT CONSENT	8%
VICTIM FOUGHT BACK	8%
BOTH TRIED TO GET PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER	7%
CONFIDENTIAL RESIDENCE	7%
THREATS TO KILL CHILD(REN)	5%
HE LEFT HER	5%
BATTERED WOMAN'S SHELTER MENTIONED	5%
GRANDPARENTS INVOLVED	5%
ABUSER WENT TO VICTIMS PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	5%

The Issue of Gender

Throughout this study male pronouns are used to refer to batterers and female pronouns to refer to those who are battered. Dealing with gay and lesbian battering is beyond the scope of the book. I use gender-specific pronouns not only because 92 out of 100 cases involved men abusing women, but because battering is not a gender-neutral issue. In intimate heterosexual relationships where violence is occurring, the primary aggressors are typically men, and the victims are women. Every source of data, from police reports to hospital emergency rooms, from counseling centers to divorce courts, points to an enormous gender disparity in who is initiating the violence, who is more physically harmed, and who is seeking safety from the violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

This doesn't mean that women never use violence. A person who is kicked or punched or spit on or cursed or dragged from room to room or thrown down on the floor usually responds with some kind of physical defense. Women often kick, scratch, and bite the men who beat them, but that does not constitute mutual battering.

A woman was the plaintiff in 92 out of the 100 cases (92%). Research suggests that 95% of abuse is male to female (Davis, 1998; Pagelow, 1981; Hamberger, 1994; Dobash, R., Dobash, R.E., Wilson, M., & Daly, M, 1984). So far, I have encountered 8 Protection from Abuse Order Affidavits in which a man was the plaintiff. These differ greatly from the women's affidavits. Unlike the women's affidavits, the men's affidavits do not allege any physical abuse to themselves but allege abuse and/or neglect to the children. These may be artifacts of this sample, but it should be noted that at this time the courts were sending all Protection from Abuse Orders to DHS, not just those alleging child abuse. Male plaintiffs also allege child abuse by the mother's new partner, that the mother is an unfit parent, and adultery. In one case the judge granted one of these. This particular affidavit was not granted to protect the male plaintiff, but was granted on behalf of the children only. What surprised me about this Protection from Abuse Order was that the mother (defendant) tried to get an order against the plaintiff eighteen days earlier and it had been denied. In his affidavit he stated "she beat me up and had me arrested" which was consistent with part of her statement that she "pressed charges against him ", but she stated she "pressed charges against him for assaulting her". Even though he had a history of violence, he was still given temporary custody of the children. This leads into the next topic:

Children

There were visitation problems in 21% of these cases. Children continue to be a controversial issue – should fathers who are abusive to their partners have the right to have unsupervised visits with or have custody of their children? If the judicial system allows this, isn't it putting these children at risk for the threat of physical abuse and/or emotional abuse?

So far, only approximately 15 states have passed legislation recognizing that domestic violence should affect child custody hearings.

Batterers sometimes intentionally injure children in an effort to intimidate and control their adult partners. These assaults can include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of the children. Children are also injured - either intentionally or accidentally - during attacks on their mothers. Assaults on younger children may occur while the mother is holding the child. Injuries to older children often occur when an adolescent attempts to intervene in violent episodes.

Children can also be adversely affected by witnessing domestic violence. Although many parents believe that they can hide domestic violence from their children, children living in these homes report differently. As mentioned earlier, research suggests that between 80% and 90% of these children are aware of the violence (Hart, 1993). Even if they do not see a beating, they hear the screams and see the bruises, broken bones, and abrasions sustained by their mothers.

“He came home, picked up the coffee table, and threatened to smash my head in with it. Told me I was going to end up in a gutter dead. Said he was going to pound my face into the gravel in the driveway. He spit in my face; saying fuckin bitch, you’re nothing but a fuckin loser, doing all of this in front of our 9 year old son. My fear is that he is really going to hurt me and doing this in front of my son all the time is damaging my son.”

In addition, a good parent does not degrade, assault, manipulate or terrorize the other parent. Batterer’s counseling programs have long understood that estranged fathers will

often use children as weapons against their former wives or partners (Ptacek, 1997). After separation or even divorce, women are often still forced to negotiate child support, child custody decisions, and visitation under threats of violence (Ptacek). Abusive partners use children as pawns in custody fights to coerce their female partners to reconcile with them. Often, these coercive incidents occur during court-ordered visitation (Hart, 1993).

Law Enforcement

Fifty-four percent of all intimate partner violence against women was reported to the police between 1993 and 1999 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). In this study, police were involved in 55 out of the 100 cases analyzed. In 23% of these 55 cases the perpetrator was arrested. Nine already had bail conditions of no contact with the victim. In 23 out of the 100 cases a threat was made to call police, but they were not called. Examples are:

“While I tried to call the police he threw a suitcase, stool, laundry basket, and a cup at me.”

“He told me if I called the police he would kill me.”

Police spend one third of their time responding to domestic violence calls. These assaults are often dangerous and it is important to assess the situation carefully before deciding to who should intervene.

Sometimes police intervention is not in the best interest of the victim even though the criminal justice system can be a powerful tool for the victim of domestic violence. It can protect her by ordering the assailant away from her, both before the trial and after conviction. It can also alter the dynamics between her and the abuser, empowering her to end the violent relationship. But in some communities police are extremely slow to answer domestic

violence calls, and many calls are not responded to at all. Their reasons range from fear of being killed (not surprising, since about one fifth of police homicides occur when they respond to domestic violence calls (Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 2000), to discouragement when they answer the same call month after month and nothing seems to change, to pure and simple sexism (“If she is getting beaten up by her old man, she must deserve it.”). Victims may feel it’s not worth it to call the police if there is little likelihood of arrest or jail time for the batterer. In addition, arrest of an abusive partner might be a risk for a woman, particularly if the arrest will lead to other risks such as retribution, loss of his job and income, or public embarrassment.

On the other hand, some police are protective in the best sense of the word and will take victims to a shelter or hospital, refer them to special services for battered women, and give careful, precise advice about how to follow through with the case. Since arrest has been shown to be the most successful deterrent to further assault, police are becoming more willing to arrest batterers (Davies, 1998). Even when it is extremely hard to do, pressing charges may be worth it. Taking legal action and following through regardless of the consequences may be the only way victims can persuade batterers and justice system personnel that they won’t tolerate men’s abuse. Without intervention, the pattern of assaultive behavior will escalate in both frequency and severity.

Substance Abuse

Only twenty-nine of these cases involved drinking and only nine involved drugs. In the other 68% of the cases there was no evidence of substance abuse. Often people blame alcohol and/or drugs for the violence against women, instead of asking why it is men who

batter women. No evidence supports a cause-and-effect relationship between alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Also, alcohol treatment does not “cure” battering behavior; batterers who are also alcohol or other drug involved need to address both problems separately and concurrently (Zubretsky & Digirolamo, 1996).

Many men who batter do not drink heavily and many alcoholics do not beat their wives. For example, Walker’s (1984) study of 400 battered women found that 67% of batterers frequently abused alcohol; however only 1/5th had abused alcohol during all battering incidents on which data was collected. The study also revealed a high rate of alcohol abuse among non-batterers.

Alcohol and drugs such as marijuana, depressants, anti-depressants, or anti-anxiety drugs do not cause non-violent persons to become violent. Many people use these drugs without ever battering their partners. Alcohol and drugs are often used as an excuse for battering, although research indicates that battering is a socially learned behavior and is not the result of substance abuse or mental illness. Men who batter frequently use alcohol abuse as an excuse for their violence. They attempt to rid themselves of the responsibility for the problem by blaming it on the effects of alcohol. Men who batter while under the influence of alcohol or drugs also admit that almost a third of their violent episodes occur while not under the influence, and substances can be seen as precipitating factors rather than causal ones (Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 2000).

Most substance abusers are not randomly violent. They do not assault bosses, friends, and neighbors; they do not usually assault their partners in front of other people or out of the home. Wives and girlfriends are selected targets. Substance abuse does not cause violence. The majority (76%) of physically abusive incidents occur in the absence of alcohol (Kantor

& Straus, 1987), and there is no evidence to suggest that alcohol use or dependence is linked to the other forms of coercive behaviors that are part of the pattern of domestic violence. Economic control, sexual violence, and intimidation for example, are often part of a batterer's ongoing pattern of abuse, with little or no identifiable connection to his use or dependence on alcohol (Zubretsky & Digirolamo, 1996).

CONCLUSIONS

Batterers are a difficult population to investigate. Domestic violence results in a pattern of control and domination exerted by one person over the other in a relationship. There is no typical victim of domestic violence and domestic violence can take different forms, but its goal is always the same: abusers want to control their domestic partners through fear. They do this by abusing them physically, sexually, psychologically, and economically. Once this pattern has begun, it will cycle around again until the threat of physical abuse begins to overshadow all aspects of a battered woman's life.

It is time to stop asking the question "Why does she stay?" and to start asking the question "Why does he abuse?". Anyone trying to help a victim of domestic violence must be sensitive to the possible emotional and environmental barriers to breaking free from an abusive relationship and needs to focus more on the coercive actions of the batterer than the failures of the battered woman. This study attempts to do just that and its findings clearly indicate that abusive behaviors in domestic violence situations are motivated by the perpetrator's loss of power and control over the victim.

Abusive behaviors are not caused by stress, substance abuse, or mental illness as many people believe. Abusive behaviors are used as punishment, coercion, and retaliation against a woman's actions concerning children, leaving the relationship, and pursuit of court or police remedies. They are assaults upon the woman's challenges to drinking and to other dimensions of male authority and attempts to try to control where she goes, whom she sees, or with whom she talks. Barbara Hart (1993) states that "Battering is the sum of all past acts of violence, and the promise of violence in the future, that achieves enhanced power and control for the batterer. To change long-held patterns, men must

acknowledge the destructive nature of their present behaviors and accept the responsibility for their actions (Pence and Paymar, 1993). Although men may stop using violence, eliminating other coercive behaviors is a much longer process. If a batterer does not have a personal commitment to give up his position of power, he will eventually return to the use of threats or violence to gain control. Long-term change and a true commitment to egalitarian relationships necessitate a long, honest look at deeply held beliefs, a resolve to handle conflict differently, and an honest examination of why he wants a woman in his life (Pence and Paymar).

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APPENDIX A

Protection from Abuse Order and Petition

STATE OF MAINE

DISTRICT COURT

Location _____

Docket No. _____

COMPLAINT FOR PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

(19-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4003 et seq.)

Plaintiff

v.

Defendant

1. My full name, age, present street address, city and telephone number are as follows (list only your name if address is to be kept confidential): _____

If different, my mailing address is _____

2. My former residence (if different from above), which I have left to avoid abuse is as follows, (street address, city, state): _____

3. The full name, age, present street address, city, state and telephone number of the person abusing me (or my children) is as follows: _____

If different, defendant's mailing address is: _____

4. My relationship to the defendant is: spouse; former spouse; father/mother of my child(ren); relative; former or present sexual partner; presently living together. If none of the above, describe relationship: _____

5. Defendant and I are parents of the following child(ren) residing in my household (list names and dates of birth): _____

6. The person who has primary physical residence of the above-named child(ren) is _____

Is there a court order regarding the children? _____ If so, which court? _____

7. Check one of the following: I and/or my child(ren) are in immediate and present danger of abuse by the defendant, and I ask that the court issue a temporary order to protect me and/or my minor child(ren) without prior notice to the defendant. I am not asking for a temporary order.

8. I base my claim for protection from abuse on the following facts: Describe the abuse. State who committed the abuse, when it occurred and who was abused. (If additional space is needed attach another sheet.) _____

9. I have filed the following actions against the defendant: divorce or family matter action; protection from abuse; criminal complaint. *If there are any court orders against the defendant or any actions pending against either the plaintiff or the defendant, give details.* _____

THEREFORE, I ASK THE COURT TO:

- (a) Order the defendant to stop abusing me and my minor child(ren) living in the household.
- (b) Order the defendant to have no contact with me, directly or indirectly.
- (c) Order the defendant not to enter my separate residence.
- (d) Order the defendant to refrain from repeatedly, and without reasonable cause, following me or being at, or in the vicinity of, my home, school, business or place of employment.
- (e) Order the defendant not to possess or use a firearm or dangerous weapon.
- (f) Give me possession of and order the defendant to leave immediately and not again enter my residence located at: _____
- (g) Give me possession of the following personal and household property: _____
- (h) Award me custody of the following child(ren) (names and ages): _____
- (i) Give the defendant the following visitation rights with the child(ren): _____
- (j) Order the defendant to receive counseling, to pay support for me and/or our child(ren), pay damages for lost wages or injuries, pay court costs and attorney fees, and enter any other necessary orders.
- (k) Other relief requested: _____

Date: _____

Signature of plaintiff

STATE OF MAINE

_____ County

Personally appeared the above named _____
and signed and made oath to the truth of the statements in the above complaint, before me,

Date: _____

Clerk / Notary Public / Attorney at Law

DENIAL

The motion for a temporary order is denied as the allegations in the sworn complaint are insufficient to support a finding that the plaintiff and/or minor child(ren) is/are in immediate and present danger of abuse from the defendant. The clerk shall schedule a hearing on the complaint within 21 days unless the plaintiff chooses not to proceed. The plaintiff is responsible for service of the complaint and summons.

Date: _____

Judge / Justice

APPENDIX B

Sample of a Protection from Abuse Narrative and a Demonstration of How it was Coded

STATE OF MAINE

DISTRICT COURT
 Division of So. Penobscot
 Location of Bangor
 Docket No. _____

_____, Plaintiff

v.

_____, Defendant

**COMPLAINT FOR PROTECTION
 FROM ABUSE (19 M.R.S.A. 761 et seq.)**

9. I base my claim for protection from abuse on the following facts: (Please be specific. Describe the abuse. State when the abuse occurred. State who committed the abuse and who was abused. If additional space is needed attach another page.)

“_____ and have been married for 15 years. We separated on Feb. 5, 1997. In March, _____ grabbed me by the arms and threw me on the bed. I got up and went down the stairs. He came down after me, grabbed me by the arm and dragged me up the stairs. He said “I want you to watch what you are making me do. I want you to watch me kill myself.” I slept on the couch and he left early in the morning.

On April 12 I called him because I wanted to pick up clothes I had left at our house. I left a message, then called his truck phone. I couldn't reach him. I went to the house and picked up my clothes. Later, he came to my apartment. The door was locked, but he broke through the door. He took clothes that were in bags and went through my jewelry box and took some of my jewelry.

On April 26th I took my daughter _____ to our house. He came out and told me to get out of the car. I did and he grabbed the necklace off my neck. Then he pushed me. He took the keys out of my car. He said “leave, but you're not taking the car.” I went in the house with my daughter. He pushed me down the first few stairs. He told me to leave. He threw the keys on the hood of the car. When I tried to start the car he would reach in and grab the keys. He kicked the door 3 or 4 times. He threw the keys on the hood and he opened the car door wide, so that the hinges are now bent. The door now doesn't shut properly and the door is dented.

I went home (to my apartment) and called the police (sheriff). I worked from 7:00 PM to 12:30 AM. At 3:00 AM the phone started ringing. I answered, then the called would hang up. I think the phone rang like this about 50 times.

On April 28 (Monday) _____ paged me. I called him at 5:30 PM. We talked until 8:30 PM. During our conversation he said “ Good thing you were not home when I was there or I would have killed you and then killed myself.” He said, “I was in your apartment today. I can get in anytime I want.” He told me he listened to the messages on my machine and he identified who called me. He also described certain things to prove to me he had been in my apartment.”

Types of Abuse Identified and Examples:

Physical abuse: Grabbing and pushing her.

Coercion-Threat- Intimidation: Threats to kill himself and kill her. Breaking down her door, damaging her car, and taking her keys. Trying to prevent her from leaving.

Stalking: Breaking into her apartment and making the statement that he can go into her apartment any time he wants. Listening to her answering machine messages. Calling her and hanging up approximately 50 times.

Circumstances:

The parties have been separated for approximately 3 months. They have been married for 15 years. Since they have been separated, the plaintiff has tried to get her clothing, brought her daughter to his house, and talked to him over the phone. The defendant has threatened to kill himself and kill her. He has also has grabbed her, pushed her, dragged her, taken her belongings, broken her door, tried to prevent her from leaving with the car, damaged her car, harassed her over the phone, and broken into her apartment.

Motive(s):

Attacks on the plaintiff's attempt to leave the relationship.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Robin Y. Brown was born in Edmunston New Brunswick, Canada on November 30, 1972. She was raised in Fort Kent, Maine and graduated from Fort Kent Community High School in 1991. She attended the University of Maine and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Child Development/Family Relations. She entered the Human Development graduate program at the University of Maine in the fall of 1995.

Since 1991, Robin has been employed by various agencies helping victims of abuse. Robin has been employed as a Crisis Intervention Worker at the Spruce Run Association, an organization in Bangor, Maine which assists victims of domestic violence (1991-1995). She was a Child Protective Caseworker for the State of Maine Department of Social Services (1995-1999). After that she worked at the Acadia Hospital as an Intake Associate (1999), the District Attorney's Office as a Victim/Witness Advocate (1999-2000), a Visitation Supervisor for an agency called Families and Children Together (2000-2001), and worked at the Penquis Community Action Program as a Child Abuse Prevention Coordinator for two counties in the State of Maine (2000-2001).

In August 2001, Robin moved to Southern Maryland where she is currently employed as a Legal Coordinator at the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy, an agency that provides free legal services to victims of domestic violence. After receiving her degree, Robin has plans to attend Law School. Robin is a candidate for the

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