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**EVICTING THE BATTERER: INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL  
STRATEGIES SOME BATTERED WOMEN USE**

by

**CECILIA THERESA CASTELINO-PINTO**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York**

**2003**

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Abstract

EVICTING THE BATTERER: INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL  
STRATEGIES SOME BATTERED WOMEN USE

by

Cecilia Theresa Castelino-Pinto

Adviser: Professor Leanne Rivlin

This dissertation explores why some battered women “stay put” (i.e., evict their batterers rather than flee to confidential locations), and the process and means by which they establish *home* in the site-of-battering.

This study also examines “electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention programs” developed to help battered women keep their housing, by placing the burden of leaving home on the batterer, and equipping the woman with a pendant alarm and/or cellular phone to summon rapid police response.

Policy and practice recommendations for law enforcement, housing planners and, battered women service providers and activists, and for battered women and society in general, are based on interviews with 36 battered women who: (1) attempted to keep or reclaim their housing by evicting their batterers; or (2) could (re)claim their housing but chose not to; and/or (3) tried to flee from their batterers.

The women’s ages were between 21 and 60. They were from various racial/ethnic/religious, and economic groups. Most were same race/religion couples. One-third of the participants were in alarm programs; almost two-thirds responded to

flyers in police precincts, hospitals, victim service centers, and (incarcerated) battered women's programs.

Almost fifty percent (17) "stayed put," and thirty-three percent (12) fled to a *known* address (e.g., parents'), primarily because of a socio-environmental connection (more than the pendant alarm) which served them well in terms of physical safety, emotional healing, economic viability, and residential stability. They had sustaining positive memories and relationships, reliable (in)formal vigilantes, affordable low rents, and familiar public schools in which their children excelled and had safe friendships.

Their personal contentions with safe-place tended to stem from the *surveillance* and *isolation* tactics of batterers; the fuzzy boundaries between private vs. public *space*, and/or private vs. public *good*; and the simultaneous need for *connectedness* and *anonymity, change and stability, remembering and forgetting*.

The report aims at stirring attitudinal change in residential communities, and programmatic change in (non)government agencies, toward psychologically, ideologically, materially, *and* practically fortifying battered women who want to keep or reclaim their housing, without the batterer and the post-separation violence, which puts them at grave risk, not unlike women who flee to confidential addresses.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the thirty six women who participated in this study, and must remain anonymous, I owe my deepest gratitude. Without their willingness to re-live their pain during, my lengthy interviews, this dissertation could not have been realized.

I am also very grateful to the many people and organizations who have helped me, more than they recognize, with their specialized knowledge, intellectual prowess, financial might, spiritual strength, and/or their place and position within “the system.”

Throughout New York City, domestic violence officers and detectives at police precincts; health coordinators at public hospitals; and domestic violence counselors at Safe Horizons (Victim Services), effectively transmitted my call for participants.

Alisa Del Tufo, Founder/Director of the Family Violence Project, Urban Justice Center, in a leap of faith, permitted me to conduct the evaluation interviews for the Alternative to Shelter (pendant alarm) program, and provided pertinent information on various occasions. Susan Wilt, Asst. Commissioner of the Injury Epidemiology Program, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, granted me permission to include the alarm program evaluation interviews in this dissertation. Domestic Violence Prevention Officer (DVPO) Lawson of the 24<sup>th</sup> precinct, Lorraine Schimoler, and assistant district attorney Cynthia Watson provided valuable information.

This dissertation would not have reached completion without the constant, generous support, unstinting forbearance, and scholarly inspiration of Leanne Rivlin, the chair of my dissertation committee, along with Michelle Fine, Alisa Del Tufo, Susan Wilt, and Joyce Gelb. They all worked with me, on a marvelously timely basis, despite their very demanding schedules, which included care-giving, and even the loss of Susan’s

father just four days before my defense. They, individually and collaboratively, helped me recognize several significant theoretical and policy implications of my findings. All inaccuracies, oversights, and obstinacies, however, are obviously my very own.

Maxine Wolfe wholesomely critiqued an initial draft. Maxine has also been an inestimable inspiration to me, as an academic, and an activist. Donna Coker offered me her insights and writings, at a very critical phase of this project. Maria Arias was most responsive to my lengthy queries. David Chapin commented on the penultimate draft.

The late Sue Rosenberg Zalk (Vice President for Student Affairs) helped retain federal funding for me, when the completion of this project was threatened by my poor health. Hilry Fisher (Director of Research and Sponsored Programs), Sharon Lerner (Special Assistant, Student Affairs), Mary Clancy (Director of Student Health Services), spared no effort in obtaining a vote of confidence from my funding sources.

Judith Kubran and Maria Helena Reis provided smooth, administrative support. Ann Batiuk, Tania Levey, Millicent Liange, Hazel Rollins, and Elizabeth Small, channeled fund applications and subsequent funds. They all spared me valuable time, energy, and undue anxiety. Judith Kudith has been a constant, unfailing support.

Peter Harris, together with Barry Carr, John Chianese, Cecelia Denniston, and Foster Henry, provided valuable, timely, recording and transcribing equipment. The Graduate Center mailroom, telecommunications, and inter-library loan services were a reassuring constant.

Ab Abraham (Bursar), Linda Edwards (Dean), and Judith Waldman (Dissertation Assistant) offered considerable support.

This research was, in part, inspired by my observations of, battered women's encounters with, "the system." These observations were made possible by the advocacy training and experience I received from Sakhi for South Asia Women.

At the outset, I inquired, from those with specialized knowledge, about the feasibility and potential value of this project, for the cause of battered women. Elizabeth Fox, Catherine Hodes, Joyce Klemperer, Michelle Lowere, Leni Marin, Detective Marquis of the 79<sup>th</sup> precinct, Kristin Morse, Camille Murphy, Sr. Mary Nierney, Toun Onabanjo, Urmilla Lall, Prema Vora, Sujata Warriar, Charlotte Watson, and Mary Zachary provided encouraging comments and valuable information. At that time, I also gained valuable insights from brief correspondence with Louise Chawla, and Barbara Katz Rothman, and from brief consultations with Robyn Cirillo, Beth Richie, Susan Saegert, John Seley, and Julia Wrigley.

The organizers and participants of the Environment Design Research Association (EDRA) workshop on Home as Trauma, contributed to the development of some ideas in this dissertation; especially Lynne Manzo, Nora Rubinstein, and Mary Valmont.

Numerous friends supported me through the years. John Henry Johnson offered me, unfaltering friendship, and invaluable research assistance, throughout the long course of this project. Gina Philogene has been forthcoming with research and analytic suggestions. Irene J. Mitchell commented on a previous draft of this dissertation. In a casual conversation, Waverly Coleman, retired police sergeant, offered valuable insight. Johannes Fritsche, and Keith Lawrence suggested pertinent literature.

Corrine Bertram, Amy Beth, Katie Cumiskey, and Andrew Kirby taught me valuable skills. Caitlin Cahill, Claudia Mausner, Marianne McCauley, Carol Oliver,

Talya Rechavi, Rosemarie Roberts, Mun Wong, Bill Yeaple shared timely information. Susan Bercaw, patiently fulfilled my responsibilities as student representative.

Kristin & Omid Balouch, Alanna Brady, Gina Coniglio, Priti Darooka, Neena Das, Chella Das, Sundarabhai Dhas, Sondra Graff, Anjali Jain, Nina Jensen, Ruth Kanost, Vaishali & Sunil Khushalani, Joicy Koothur, Deepa Majumdar, Jeanmaire Manelski, Sunita & Ram, Varsha & Tim Pilbrow, and Yola Rego offered timely emotional support, relaxation, or entertainment. Celeste Hastings offered restorative massages. My building superintendent, Juan Couazo, has been very dependable.

On a daily basis, my companion and spouse, Venantius J Pinto, strengthened and energized my resolve to bring this project to fruition, with his art, loving care-giving, thoughtful errands, unique meal preparations, intellectual stirrings, and, most importantly for me, his intuitive ways of helping me experience sound sleep.

My parents, brothers and sisters and their spouses, especially my dear departed sister, Esther, and again, my partner, Venantius, his parents and brothers, have given me unquestioned freedom, and constant spiritual, emotional and financial support, to pursue my academic interests. My niece, Larissa, briefly served as a research assistant. Cousin Ron and aunt Lil offered me a serene environ, in Cape Town, to focus on part of my data analysis.

Many generous grants permitted me the time and resources to complete this project. The groundwork for this publication was supported by funding under a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The substance and findings of this work are dedicated to the public. I am solely responsible for the

accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this dissertation. My interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government.

Very generous funding was also provided by the City University of New York, Graduate Center, through the McCune Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, the Alexander Naclerio Award, the Nina E. Fortin Memorial Award, and the Qualitative Research Award. The Environmental Design Association (EDRA) Student Research Grant which permitted me to travel and share my early efforts on this work.

Special thanks are due to Sara Miller McCune for her very generous foundation fellowship. Susan Brunson, Armand Carrier, Jane Karadbil, Charles Taylor and Ann Weeks administered my HUD grant. Colette Daiute administered the Qualitative Research award. Devyani Guha was the angel who provided very timely and pertinent information regarding the HUD dissertation grants.

All the faculty in the environmental psychology subprogram, contributed to my intellectual development and research training. They also, as a brilliant faculty, collaboratively provided me with much needed financial support, through the Center for Human Environments, in the years leading up to this project. Instrumental in providing research assistantships and analytic experience were: David Chapin, Roger Hart, Joe Glick, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, Pam Reid, Susan Saegert, Gary Winkel; and Sheridan Bartlett, Heléne Clark, Selim Iltus, Alison King, and Keith Lawrence.

I dedicate this publication to the memory of three fabulous women who supported me, with delightful distinction, and departed before I could fully thank them: Esther Castelino, Diane Tong, and Sue Rosenberg Zalk.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The term “battering” has been used to describe a wide range of abuse and neglect (viz., physical, psychological, sexual, economic) that an intimate partner *actually* commits, or *threatens* to commit, against a woman he/she claims to love, honor, and protect, within an “intimate relationship” or “family”—close quarters that are traditionally, socially, and culturally represented as sources of nurturance and mental health.

Given that this study is focused on the housing issues of battered women, it became imperative to introduce an umbrella phrase, *residential* abuse, to express a set of coercive behaviors backed by the explicit or implicit *threat* of, or *actual*, loss of housing.

- banishing the woman from the apartment or house;
- locking her out in the yard, during day or night, in sunshine, rain, or snow;
- doubling up “temporarily”, with a partner (in an housing emergency) but then invoking squatters rights when evicted for staying past the stipulated deadline.
- making wife sign off her rights to the house in the event of separation/divorce.
- making her give up her apartment and move in with him, then abusing her.
- terrorizing the woman into relocating, either once or repeatedly.

Battering occurs more often within the ideological sanctuary of home, than outside it. Gelles’ (1974) reported that the typical location of marital violence was the kitchen. The bedroom and living room were the next more likely scenes of violence. Some were unable to pinpoint the exact location because their battles began in one room and progressed throughout the house. Avni (1991) draws parallels between *home* (the site of battering) and Goffman’s (1961) rigorously researched characterization of a *total institution*.

Persons in a total institution (Goffman, 1961) lead an enclosed and formally regulated life, cut off from the wider society for an extended period of time. They are there either because they self-commit to a (noble) mission; or they are incapable of caring for themselves due to sickness, old age, etc.; or they are (believed to be) harmful to self and/or others. The qualifier “total” signifies the existence of barrier(s) to social interaction with people outside it, to the extent that *no passage* of even any information is permitted across barrier(s). All aspects of life are conducted within the same place and under the same single authority. All activities are structured, governed by formal rules, and monitored with the ultimate purpose of control over the residents, and a small or large amount of economic profit. The roles and positions of all persons within total institutions are strictly demarcated and hierarchical, and often imparted through “obedience tests” and “contaminative exposure” to unsanitary physical and interpersonal conditions. The conduct and demeanor of subordinates must reflect their place in the order of dominance within the institution, and any “privileges” (i.e., withheld ordinary rights) that inmates enjoy are solely dependent on the extent to which they strip themselves of their possessions and “identity kit,” efface themselves and adopt a deferent posture, and (perhaps irrevocably) erase their cherished past home-world culture, in the service of the authority. Any self-redeeming actions the inmates take only “loops” back onto inmates thus entrenching them deeper into the tyrannical environment which in turn strives harder to strip them of agency and make them internalize the worldview of the authority. Battered women are subjected to similar atrocities by their batterers. Even when extreme isolation and intense surveillance are not part of the batterer’s modus operandi, he degrades the home into a total institution. Most notably, Goffman (1961) remarked that total institutions exist *with the complicity of the rest of society*.

Even without the use of *actual* force, there is a wide range of abuse perpetrated, usually by men, within intimate relationships and romantic love. Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo and Keita (1993, p. 1054) articulate a continuum of abuse, broader than the popular and traditional definition of battering:

1. acts that involve coercion/control enforced through explicit threat of violence;
2. compelling compliance through the use of implicit threat of violence;
3. coercive behaviors backed by *explicit threat of loss of something valuable*, viz., one's children, a job, an educational attainment and, I add, one's housing;
4. coercive behaviors backed by implicit threat of loss of something valuable.

Women's responses to battering have largely depended on the real and/or perceived structure of power relations embedded in the *home environment*, and the *environment at large* (i.e., community resources, law enforcement, media, housing availability, and so on). Societal and institutional attitudes that normalize, accept, and justify violence between family members, as well as attitudes about women, men, and gender roles, leave women vulnerable to assault. Battery and marital rape are still not universally regarded as punishable criminal offenses. Wife-beating has had social and legal sanction throughout history (Brownmiller, 1975). The literature on battered women's responses, and the impact of shelter programs primarily focuses on a narrow range of outcomes, i.e., "staying with" the batterer, "fleeing" the batterer, and "returning to be with" the batterer.

Within the past decade electronic police alert programs have been developed to help battered women keep their housing, by primarily placing the burden of leaving home on the batterer. Such programs also offer women an avenue by which they can develop and exercise a sense of entitlement to their housing and empower them to take a stance to end the abusive relationship, bolstered with the knowledge that they have police support.

This dissertation is an attempt to link two bodies of literature that have not spoken to each other: one on *woman battering* and the other on *meanings and experience of home*. The primary objective is to enlighten policymakers, service providers, battered women, and their advocates about battered women's motives for "staying put" in their housing without their batterers and the process and means by which they establish a sense of home (i.e., safety and comfort) in their "site of battering" and "reservoir of abusive memories."

The findings are presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 4 presents the strategies the women used to end the abuse and/or the relationship. Chapter 5 focuses on the women's meanings of home, the attempts at home-making, and the safety strategies of women who evicted their batterers. Chapter 6 describes the outcomes of an "electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention program" (referred to as "alarm program"). Chapter 7 discusses some theoretical implications regarding the concepts of choice, home, and neighborhood for battered women.

This study reveals that women who evict their batterers either fled to shelters in their previous attempts to end the relationship, and/or locked up their apartment/house and moved temporarily to a shelter or family/friends' place for a brief period of time *after* they evict their batterers. Some also flee after some years of "staying put." Therefore, Chapter 8 offers recommendations for various levels/aspects of policy planning and implementation with regard to personal safety, community protection, and affordable housing for battered women in general. Chapter 9 concludes with a summary of the significant findings and related theoretical and policy implications.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Nature and Prevalence of Violence in Intimate Adult Relationships

Battering has been defined as the *actual* or *threatened* physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse of an individual by someone with whom they have, or have had, an intimate relationship (Family Violence Prevention Fund, n/d). The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 95% of assaults on spouses or ex-spouses are committed by men against women (Douglas, 1991). In contrast, victimizations by intimates and other relatives account for only 5% of all violent victimizations against men (Bachman, 1994). Such violence against women in the home has been a common practice throughout history (Dobash & Dobash, 1980; Martin, 1976). However, it was the opening of refuges for battered women in the late 1970s, upon pressure from women groups, which labeled the issue as wife battering and brought it to public attention. The numbers of women who fled to these refuges dramatically demonstrated that there is a massive hidden demand for a means of escaping violent husbands and partners (Binney, Harkell, & Nixon, 1981), and that woman battering is a social evil of epidemic proportions with far-reaching consequences, and therefore, must be stopped. The U.S. Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence, which published its findings in September 1984, recommended that:

family violence...be recognized and responded to as criminal activity on grounds that an assault is a crime, regardless of the relationship of the parties. A person beaten in the home is no less a victim than [one] beaten on the sidewalk in front of the home. The law should not stop at the front door of the family (p. 12).

The extent of battering in the general population and the housing needs of battered women remain difficult to assess because of the private nature of the crime. Often it happens *only* behind closed doors and within four walls. Also, our societal and institutional attitude of not only blaming the victim, but also not guaranteeing protection to the victim, does little to empower battered women to overcome the shame of admitting and/or the fear of retaliation from reporting that their husbands/partners are violent with them. In a 1986 study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the most common reason (49%) for not reporting incidents of domestic violence to the police was that the women considered the crime to be a personal or private matter. Another 12% said they did not report it because they were afraid of reprisal from the abuser. Other reasons offered in the same study were that the crime wasn't important enough or that the police could not or would not do anything (Rose & Goss, 1989, p.8). Another Bureau of Justice Statistics study (Harlow, 1991) revealed that 51% (1,118,889) of the victims of intimate violence reported the incident to keep it from happening again but only 24% (526,536) reported the incident in order to punish the offender. In 1992, there were more than 160,000 "911" calls coded as "family disputes" (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993). This figure, however, is not indicative of the true levels of domestic violence because "911" calls are coded by the offense perceived to be most serious at the time of the call. If the call is about a man beating his wife it would be coded "assault in progress" and not counted in the above statistics (Gelb, Kamber, & Nelson, 1997). Dutton (1987) found that only one out of seven wife assaults is reported to the police and less than one in 100 (for whom prima facie evidence of wife assault exists) is convicted in court. The National

Crime Survey discovered that close to half (48%) of all incidents of domestic violence against women were not reported to police (Langan & Innes, 1986).

Between 22% to 34% of females seeking care in hospital emergency rooms are victims of domestic violence (Stark, Flitcraft, Zuckerman, Grey, Robinson, & Franzier, 1981). Yet, as recently as 1993, the Commonwealth Fund survey found that 92% of American women who were physically abused by their partners did not discuss these incidents with their physicians and 57% did not discuss the incidents with anyone. Physicians too, like most other community welfare personnel, fail to discuss battery with injured women who come to them. For every 25 battered women admitted to the emergency room at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, only one had been identified by hospital staff as battered (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993). In one study of 476 consecutive women seen by a family practice clinic in the Midwest, 394 women (82.7%) agreed to be surveyed. Of these patients, 22.7% had been physically assaulted by their partners within the last year, and the lifetime rate of physical abuse was 38.8%. However, only six women said they had ever been asked about domestic violence by their physician (Hamberger, Saunders, & Hovey, 1992). In another study (Warshaw, 1989) it was found that in a major metropolitan emergency department that had a protocol for domestic violence, the emergency department physician failed to obtain a psychosocial history, ask about abuse, or address the woman's safety in 92% of the domestic violence cases.

Several attempts have thus been made to estimate the scale of battery in the general population. Almost every report, advocacy manual, and outreach leaflet on domestic violence states that "more women seek treatment in hospitals for injuries from domestic violence than from all muggings, auto accidents, and rapes *combined* (Center for

Disease Control, 1985; U.S. Surgeon General, 1985).” This statistic is staggering despite the fact that many women remain uncounted because they are not at liberty or do not have the means to obtain treatment, or may seek treatment but are afraid or ashamed to disclose that they were dealt those injuries by a current or former intimate partner.

Several studies indicate that the level of injury resulting from domestic violence is severe: of 218 women presenting at a metropolitan emergency department with injuries due to domestic violence, 28% required admission to hospital due to those injuries, 13% required major medical treatment, and 40% of the 218 women had previously required medical care for abuse (Berrios & Grady, 1991). An analysis of the FBI’s 1988-91 Uniform Crime Reports, by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (n.d.) revealed that 42% of murdered women were killed by their male partners. Moreover, as Angela Browne, said in her testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary in December 1990,

figures based on surveys are marked underestimates in that such surveys do not include those in our population without telephones, those who do not speak English fluently, the very poor, and all individuals who are homeless, institutionalized, hospitalized, or incarcerated in jails or prisons at the time the survey is conducted.

#### Why does battering occur?

Two theoretical perspectives have dominated the search for answers to this question: the *family violence perspective* (e.g., Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) and the *feminist perspective* (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Hammer, Radford, & Stanko, 1989). Despite the figures mentioned above which indicate how enormous a *woman’s* issue battering is, the family violence perspective maintains that women and men are equally likely to engage in violence based on survey data (Straus, 1980) showing that men and women report similar incidences of physical violence against their partners and that in

49% of the homes in which violence occurred, both men and women were perpetrators.

Feminists criticize these results by pointing out that many of the women's acts of physical aggression are attempts to defend themselves from men's attacks (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). In support of the feminist perspective Sigler (1990) notes:

...throughout history, men have been held responsible for their [sic] women and children. With this responsibility, men were given power...and were expected to use so-called reasonable force in the exercise of their responsibilities. At times reasonable force has included death and has typically included beatings and deprivation of food and other resources (p. 2).

Psychological and situational theories of why battering occurs attribute abusive behaviors to personal characteristics of both men and women, and to life experiences like stress, unemployment, poverty, alcohol or substance abuse, past child abuse, and depression. These theories fail to explain why many more people in similar or worse circumstances *do not* batter their intimate partners or children.

Pence and Paymar's (1985) "power and control" theory states that people use violence to maintain power and control over others; that the use of violence is always a choice, and that in our society it is a choice that can be made by intimate males to meet their needs with little or no consequence because of asymmetrical gender power perpetuated by a patriarchal social system. Messinger and Eldridge (1993) report that only 7 percent of the 911 calls concerning domestic violence result in arrest, despite a long-standing "pro-arrest" department policy in New York City.

Such tyranny by men over women in intimate relationships plays itself out under several pretexts including "family values," "cultural preservation," "nationalist sentiment," and/or under the pretext of "acculturation" and "adaptation" to the challenges of living abroad (in the case of immigrants). Women who are the family breadwinners

and/or green card sponsors of their spouses are not exempt from being battered. It is heartening that battered women who are green card sponsors of their spouses can, and some do, withdraw their sponsorship with evidence of the battering.

The extent to which law enforcement and society-at-large espouses the theory that men and women are equally violent in the context of marital conflict, will determine the obstacles battered women encounter in their attempts to flee or evict the batterer, and deter post-separation violence.

#### Cycle of Violence: The Rainbow after the Storm

Many abusive partners become remorseful after inflicting violence. Their contrite behavior may include promising to never hit again, agreeing to seek counseling if the woman does not leave and/or talk about it to anyone, asking for her help in stopping it, reminding her of how hard he works, pointing out the incredible stresses under which he is operating, acknowledging the wrongfulness of his violence to the children, and demonstrating his love for her in meaningful ways (Hart, 1990, p. 8).

Based on the observation of such periods of kindness and loving behaviors Walker (1979) charted the three phase cycle of violence: a *tension building phase* which could extend over several months/years; the *acute battering phase* which could occur for 2 hours or extend over several days; and a *honeymoon phase* during which the batterer convinces the woman that he is sincerely contrite, loving, and dependent on her for support and forgiveness and healing. The honeymoon phase initially lasts longer than the acute battering phase but shorter than the tension building phase. With time the length of the tension building and honeymoon phases tend to reduce drastically as the violence

escalates in frequency, severity, and duration. What implications, if any, do these stages have on the timing and process of evicting the batterer?

### Climate of Terror, Isolation, and Captivity

Battering is not an isolated, individual event but a pattern of abusive behaviors consisting of various tactics and occurring in multiple episodes over a course of an intimate relationship, that result in a wide range of consequences, some physically injurious and some not; but all psychologically damaging. Some acts are criminal by law in some states (e.g., physical assault, sexual assault, menacing, arson, kidnapping, harassment) while other acts are not illegal (e.g., name calling, interrogating children, denying the use of the phone or the car, forbidding participation in family gatherings, forcefully preventing her from leaving, forcefully banishing her from her home one night, only to hunt her down and bring her back by the following night).

Psychological abuse largely involves relentless criticism, humiliation, threats, and isolation through various means ranging from subtle (e.g., requiring the women to obtain permission from their husbands/partners when they wanted to make phone calls, especially to family members even when the phone was placed in a space that could be easily supervised such as the living room), to blatant (e.g., not installing any phones in the house; or placing the phone in a space that is not easily accessible such as in his locked study; or even installing a phone in the bathroom so as to rule out the possibility of her claiming that shampooing is what kept her from responding to his unpredictably frequent phone calls from the office checking up on her whereabouts and actions; or connecting a beeper to the home phone so as to monitor all outgoing and incoming phone calls).

Batterers use isolation to sustain the power of their violence and to ensure exclusive attention and absolute obedience from the women they claim to love.

In contrast, in the few instances when women may be batterers, the male spouses or partners do not experience such a “climate of terror and captivity” as do battered women. Pence and Paymar (1993) report that over a span of 10 years, just 3.5% of offenders mandated to the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Program for batterers were women, and that the battered male victims of *only seven* out of a total of “just under 100” female batterers experienced post-separation violence:

...were unable to leave the situation without increasing their partner’s violence. These seven men, like thousands of women who have sought safety at the shelter, were being pursued and terrorized by their partners. They, like many battered women, needed legal protection, safe housing, and tremendous emotional support. [But by and large]...[t]he civil protection order and the criminal court process are effective tools for protecting almost all male victims because women rarely engage in “separation violence,” the violence that occurs and escalates as victims attempt to leave their abusers (p. 6).

The same authors also report that of 27 women who were killed in 1990 by their male partners in Minnesota, half of them were trying to end their relationships. However, none of the public documents indicated that any of the men killed by their partners during the same year were attempting to leave their relationship.

Given the grave risk of separating from the batterer, how do women who evict their batterers and “stay put” in a place known to the batterer, protect themselves from post-eviction violence?

#### Violence after Separation: Not Mere Threats

A woman who leaves a violent partner is left with few, if any, necessary resources, and finds herself fearfully navigating a world in which the presence of the

batterer and his violent and controlling behaviors are often shocking and deliberately far reaching, spatially across state borders and temporally several years after separation. The violence after separation escalates and sometimes becomes lethal. Early surveys assessed domestic violence only among intact couples, reinforcing a widespread belief that wives were the exclusive target of battering. The National Crime Survey Data (cited in Stark & Flitcraft, 1988), however, indicate that separated women are the most vulnerable group with divorced women next and married women last; “whereas only 15.6% of all assaults among married women are domestic, fully 55% of assaults among separated women are by a male intimate (p. 308).”

Separated or divorced women were 14 times more likely than married women to report having been a victim of violence by a spouse or ex-spouse. Although separated or divorced women comprised 10% of all women, they reported 75% of the spousal violence (Harlow, 1991). A 1980 report to the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice stated that 30% of the assaulted women in their survey were separated from their partners when the attack occurred (cited in Browne, 1987, p. 114). Sixty percent of the women seeking help at Maryland shelters were not married to the abuser (Wiener, 1989, p. 5).

In a 1986 study of women seeking divorce in Philadelphia (Kurz & Coughy, 1989), 11% of the women reported that they were battered during separation as well as during the marriage. Four percent of the women stated that they were assaulted during separation *even though they had not been abused during cohabitation* (italics mine). Thirty-two percent of the women said that they were fearful during negotiations for child custody, about 22% stated they were fearful of retaliatory violence during negotiations

for child support and 27.7% were fearful during negotiations for property. Thirteen percent said they gave up legal rights because of their fear of retaliatory violence.

In a study in Philadelphia and Chicago (Cazanave & Zahn, 1986) almost 25% of the women killed by their male partners were separated and divorced from the men who killed them; another 29% were attempting to end the relationship when they were killed.

In Jones' study of 37 battered women (cited in Ewing, 1980, p. 28), despite threats, physical control and isolation nearly one-third managed to leave their batterers, but in each case the batterers forced them to return. Two were forced back home at gun point, and another returned when the batterer put a gun to her child's head and ordered her back. Two were forced to return by threats to kill their loved ones. In two other cases the batterers tracked the women across state lines to get them to return. One batterer found his wife seven years after she left him and "cut her up." A national study (cited in Browne, 1987) compared the homicide rates between the years 1976-79 and 1980-84. It revealed that in 72% of the states there was an increase in the killing of women partners after separation. There are cases on record of men still harassing and beating their wives twenty-five years after the wives left them and tried to go into hiding (Jones, 1980).

The spousal murderer does not fit into any demographic or psychosocial profile—he may be young, old, rich, poor, black or white—but there do seem to be some common triggers. High on the list, according to Knapp (1992) is sexual jealousy and the threat of being left, which are often singled out as the prime motivators behind spousal murder and murder-suicides, in which the killer does in both, his wife and himself, and sometimes, children as well.

Batterers are not out of control. Indeed they choose the victim, time, place, violent tactic, and severity of assault when committing domestic violence (Senate Hearings, 1990). He assumes that: he is entitled to control his partner; that he is a moral person, even if he uses violence against his partner; that he will get what he wants through his use of violence; and he will not suffer adverse, physical, legal, economic, or personal consequences that outweigh the benefits achieved by the violence (Senate Hearings, 1990, pt. 2, p. 140). Thus, often batterers are stunned when they are arrested (Kylen, 1991).

Del Tufo (1995) aptly compares our society's differential response to hostages versus battered women and hostage-takers versus batterers:

In manuals given to people who are in danger of becoming hostages (e.g., wealthy businessmen or international leaders)...are taught all the feminine graces: To be a good listener, sensitive to the feelings and desires of the captor, to be as non-aggressive as possible. Rescued hostages are treated as heroes for surviving using this behavior. Battered women are severely criticized for it.

...One big difference between the treatment of battered women and hostages, however, has to do with the help hostages receive in order to escape and the support they get after they've escaped. Battered women are never rescued; it's *their job* to escape. And if they escape, who is there to protect them? The batterer can just stroll in and recapture his "hostage" whenever he pleases.

...Society's treatment of hostage-takers is unambivalent. Hostage-takers are tracked down, imprisoned, and punished to the full extent of the law. The typical batterer, if he's *unlucky* and gets a really tough judge, might even be sent to counseling for a few weeks (p. 103, italics mine).

How do some battered women evict their batterers, and keep themselves safe, despite our society's victim-blaming, and consequent non-rescue attitude?

### Sources of Support Battered Women Seek

Women in situations of battering find themselves dealing not only with the particularities of a specific trauma (e.g., a head-injury) and the fear of future assaults, but also with the complexities of an intimate relationship with the batterer, especially given

the “family” context which often gives the batterer social, if not legal, permission to use violence (Ganley, 1995). Unlike victims of stranger violence, victims of domestic violence face social barriers to a separation from their batterers as well as barriers to other strategies for self protection (Hart, 1993).

Battered women respond to the entire pattern of abuse rather than simply to one episode or one tactic (Ganley, 1995). The battered woman’s attention is most often focused on survival. She knows that any expression of anger, resentment, or challenge to the batterer’s power will result in violence (Del Tufo, 1995). Yet:

One of the most interesting things that researchers found when they examined battered women’s behavior was how much they sought help to resolve their problems. It became clear in these studies that the real problem was the help that was offered—and that battered women are neither passive nor helpless....Battered women’s help-seeking behavior increases as the battering becomes worse, culminating with the woman trying to leave the relationship. Battered women had extensive contacts with the police, courts, district attorneys, ministers, therapists, Al-Anon groups, and child protection agencies....very little of this help seemed to help. Most of it seemed designed to actually hurt her efforts to be safe....It is not battered women who are helpless, it is the system that is helpless....The 18 women killed in New York City in 1993 all had restraining orders....Something more effective must be offered to battered women (Del Tufo, 1995, pp. 104-105).

Similarly, Bowker and MacCallum, two social work researchers, found that as violence continued, women turned increasingly to informal, inter-personal sources of help, like friends, as well as to formal sources of help. In their study, between the first and last violent incident, the use of lawyers rises from 6% to 50%, while those of social service agencies increases from 8% to 43% (cited in Schechter, 1982, p. 232).

A study based on 1,000 women’s written responses to a *Woman’s Day* questionnaire (Bowker & Maurer, 1986) found that although women were more likely to receive help from counseling agencies (50%) or the clergy (33%) than from women’s groups (21%), their ratings of effectiveness were greater for women’s groups. Sixty

percent rated women's groups as 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' compared to 47% for counseling agencies and 34% for the clergy. Women's groups were also rated *least often* as 'not effective' or 'causing increased violence' (23%) compared to counseling agencies (37%) and the clergy (46%).

Only 42% of the women who had been struck once in the marriage had sought some type of intervention, while 100% of the women who had been hit at least once a month and 83% of the women who had been struck at least once a week had either obtained a divorce or separation, called the police, or gone to a social service agency (Gelles, 1987). Hart (1990) very pointedly states:

When friends, family, and helping agencies, such as police, shelters, clergy, courts, medical personnel, educators, and therapists, lend substantial and concerted efforts to assist battered women in the leaving process, battered women are more likely to leave and secure protection for themselves and their children. Therefore, when battered women stay, we as a community should look to see what we are doing to hinder the leaving process and then make changes to facilitate leaving and ultimate safety.

This study seeks to learn about the various kinds of societal supports needed by women who want to become violence free without losing their housing.

### The Meaning/Experience of Home-and-Site-of-Abuse

According to the environmental psychology literature, people invest places with meaning and significance and act in ways that reflect various dimensions of their relationship with places — physical, spatial, behavioral, emotional, social, cultural, political, and economic. Housing is one such place, one aspires to, for at least the physical amenities that sustain life, and at most the privacy and safety within which one can let down one's hair, put up one's feet, relax, and just be oneself. Saegert (1985)

subtly alludes to the housing problem: “[units of housing] are something we search for rather than produce (p. 287).”

Dovey (1985) reflects on the experiential aspects of *home* that distinguish it from *house* and highlights a concept of homelessness that differs from the contemporary one:

Although a house is an object, a part of the environment, home is best conceived of as a kind of relationship between people and their environment. It is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places...the concept of “the housing problem” is not identical to that of “homelessness”...the housing problem can be, and often is, solved in a manner that creates homelessness (p. 34).

Home environments are at the core of human life (Altman & Werner, 1985).

Home has been thought of as a sacred place (Eliade, 1959), a secure place (Rainwater, 1966), a place of certainty and stability (Liiceanu, 1983), a site of resistance (hooks, 1990). Home is demarcated with both physical and symbolic boundaries which ensure its dweller can control access and behavior within (Dovey, 1985) and which make home a highly potential site for protected violence. All the previously mentioned characteristics of home seem tragically untrue for a woman in a battering situation when one understands the psychological, sociological, linguistic, and philosophical connections between home, dwelling, being, and relating to others in one’s community or neighborhood.

Korosec-Sefarty (1985) suggests that *dwelling* be understood not only on the basis of the activities it shelters or generates but also on the basis of its instrumentality — i.e., providing space for the experience of the sacred and that any wandering, any exile [is] a rupture with oneself, and any “going-home-again” amount[s] to a returning to oneself. She cites the comparison Heidegger (1958) makes between the verbs *to inhabit* and *to be*: “Being human means: being on earth as a mortal, that is, to dwell (p. 173).” She goes on to cite a similar comparison between *dwelling* and *being*, made by Liiceanu (1983):

The Greek verbs designating dwelling: *oikein*, *naiein*, *demein*, etc....communicate through the idea of *duration/stability*, the fact of existing, and it is interesting to see that in Greek they are the only verbs entirely interchangeable with the verb *to be*," with which they are genuinely synonymous (p. 106).

On the other hand, the Greek word for house (*oikos*) does not refer to the dwelling as building but as a guarantee of stability (Korosec-Sefarty, 1985), i.e., "the order in which took place and unfolded the fundamental actions of life—birth, childhood, kinship, all possessions, their management, the conception of descendants, and the framework for their birth" (Liiceanu, 1983, p. 106, cited in Korosec-Sefarty, 1985). Lévinas' (1961, p.125; quoted in Korosec-Sefarty, 1985) meditation on dwelling introduces the idea of self-communion (*recueillement*) which is a necessary condition for nature to be represented and processed, which is actualized as dwelling, and which amounts to creating a distance from the outside world, arising from an intimacy, i.e., dwelling (Korosec-Sefarty, 1985, p.71).

Saegert (1985) comments on the activity and geography of the experience of dwelling:

[Dwelling] is something we do, a way of weaving up a life in particular geographic spaces. We may center our experience of dwelling in our home, in our neighborhood, in a network of places connected by airplane routes, or in an image of our place in the world, to name but a few alternatives....it does not assume that the physical housing unit defines the experience of home. It connotes a more active and mobile relationship of individuals to the physical, social, and psychological spaces around them (p. 287).

Self-reported residential histories provide countless examples of the ways in which people often feel "not-at-home" in their housing, and report a sense of self and home which may reside outside of any residence or conventional form of housing:

My home was really this bag. I designed it to do everything, its been adapted to every need. It carries...all I need to survive and do work. I was homeless in a

sense, but I was equipped to operate while staying in motion (Horwitz & Tognoli, 1982, p. 337).

So then, where is home for a woman who may not experience it in herself because she feels physically defiled from beatings and psychologically effaced/debased from constant insults, criticisms, and/or self-imposed guilt for “provoking” violence and/or reacting in self-defense? A woman in such difficult and dangerous circumstances may also be unable to experience home in a place outside of herself because she may experience her housing environment as an unnerving set of activities and objects which either trigger a replay of past violence or send a chill down her spine or an eerie echo ringing in her ears of threats of future violence. She, very often, also lacks easy access to other places given the isolating tactics of her batterer. The following quote, though not from a battered woman, speaks to this kind of despair from loss of home:

It was a kind of hell to spend a year in that place—a situation where you don’t really have a place of refuge. So I think you can be in a situation where home isn’t anything but a word, where you function (Horwitz & Tognoli, 1982, p. 338).

An aspect of home this dissertation would like to capture is the extent to which the meaning of home is physically place-bound for women who experience battery in their housing. Does a batterer take away an aspect of a woman’s “home” even if she “stays put,” evicts him, and takes safety measures to control (i.e., prevent) his access to her and her children, if any?

#### Staying Put and Evicting the Batterer: Is it a Desirable/Viable Option?

In 1993, more than 5,000 women in the City and more than 4,000 in the rest of New York State were turned away from domestic violence emergency shelters because of lack of appropriate space. In that year, there were 864 beds in 13 domestic violence

residential programs but 4800 calls were received at the Human Resource Administration (HRA) Domestic Violence Hotline. In 1997, the New York City network of battered women's shelters had 1157 beds that served approximately 300 families at any given time (Gelb et al.,1997). Yet, an unpublished study by the Human Resources Administration (HRA) (cited in Gelb et al., 1997) found that due to the shortage of domestic violence shelters, fewer than 1% of battered women receive the shelter they require.

While the statistics on availability of *emergency* shelter provisions are distressing, *transitional* and "*permanent*" housing is even more scarce: fewer than one-third of those who have found space in a domestic violence emergency shelter are able to move on to independent living; almost half go into the homeless shelter system and one-fifth return to the batterer. The lack of transitional shelter and affordable permanent housing, due to factors such as income, race, exclusionary zoning, and discrimination in mortgage lending practices, forces many women to choose between violence and homelessness, and presents little or no incentive to leave the batterer in the first place.

On the other hand, it may be precisely the lack of access to other housing which makes it desirable for battered women to at least have a viable option of keeping or reclaiming their home and getting the batterer to move out. It could also be that the supposed goal of secrecy and hiding out, associated with fleeing to a confidential address, increases (for some) the sense of vulnerability and powerlessness that battered women feel. For others, fleeing perhaps heightens the fear of being mercilessly hunted down as a weakling. Such were the reasons why Women's Advocates, the first battered women's shelter in the US, remained confidential *for only one year* after it opened in 1971, during which time it worked towards ensuring police protection (Women's Advocates, 1980).

Advocacy groups, therefore, found it desirable, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to lobby the judicial system to offer battered women the option of obtaining Vacate Orders and to place the burden of leaving on the batterer. Rural service projects, without local shelters, often successfully used Vacate Orders and supported women in their efforts to stand firm against their batterer's recurring threats (Schechter, 1982).

Also, during this historic period in the battered women's movement—in the late 1970s—some women who fled to shelters (which were then more action-oriented and less service-oriented) emerged feeling empowered to reclaim their home by evicting their batterer and sometimes housed two or three other battered women they had befriended during their shelter stay (Stevenson, 1982).

These days, according to Victim Services (1994), many women who leave domestic violence situations have never lived alone, having gone from their parents' home into the relationship that became abusive: 41% of the women in Victim Services' emergency domestic violence shelters (which operates approximately 13.5% of the City's emergency shelter beds) are under 25 years of age, have incomes below poverty level, and have two or three children. In addition, as always, women in battering situations are often made dependent on the batterer for financial and emotional support given that most batterers control the household finances and isolate the battered woman from her family, social network, and job opportunities.

There is anecdotal evidence (Cirillo, 1996) to suggest that even when women (the two she encountered in her private psychotherapy practice) have owned their housing and are financially able to make the necessary mortgage, utilities, and tax payments, they have fled from or sold their marital/cohabited housing in an attempt to protect themselves

either from the onslaught of real violence that usually escalates after separation or from the memories of violence and abuse they feel plagued by if they continue to live in the same physical space in which they were abused.

However, in my experience, as a volunteer advocate for South Asian battered women in New York City, I have met at least two battered women who, for almost four years now, have continued to live in the same apartment in which they had been physically and psychologically abused. They promptly file violations in court to have the batterers arrested. Both batterers have visitation privileges—one “supervised” by Victims Services in family court; the other woman’s visitation is “unsupervised” but she designated her local police precinct as the location for child drop off and pick up. Both the women I encountered had economic constraints, whereas the two women that Cirillo encountered had the economic means to move. This dissertation seeks to understand if some women continue to live in the site of battering (after evicting the batterer) for reasons other than economic affordability.

By and large, however, Messinger and Eldridge (1993) expose the courts reluctance to infringe on batterers’ property rights:

Our [housing and other] courts are increasingly reluctant to infringe on the property rights of a batterer....The batterer’s assumed property rights outweigh a battered woman’s right to safety for herself and her children. This judicial attitude [results] in a reluctance to issue orders of vacate which...exclude the batterer from the home....Currently, no grounds exist in Housing Court to have a batterer evicted for physical or emotional abuse. Advocates in Housing Court frequently recount the shift in a judge’s questioning following any attempt by a family violence victim to secure a home for herself and her children. Judges focus on the woman’s relationship with her batterer and ask intimate questions regarding her personal life, often suggesting...she would be better off seeking accommodations with friends and relatives. Every step of the process reinforces the return of the woman and her children to the abusive home environment (p. 77).

### Safe Alternative Housing for Women who Flee Their Batterers

Literature on the property rights and housing issues of women indicates that for most women their only access to adequate housing (though not necessarily safe) is through their role as mothers, dependent wives or chattel. Despite increasing recognition of women's need to escape from violent men, the provisions allowing them to do so remain grossly inadequate. Through the centuries battered women have sought shelter in monasteries, temples, almshouses, homes for destitute and poor women (Mies, 1981), "houses of unhappily married women (Cohen, 1992)," organizations aiding families of alcoholics (Tierney, 1982); shelters for homeless people (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993; Zörza, 1991); state psychiatric institutions (to which they have been committed by their batterers or his agents); and there's no telling how many resort(ed) to the grave as their ultimate and fully guaranteed safe dwelling.

Alternative accommodation is one of the basic needs expressed by battered women seeking help and lack of it is one of the major obstacles to leaving "home" and one of the chief reasons for returning "home." Refuges, or shelters as they are called in the United States, play a central part in providing emergency accommodation for battered women. Battered women's shelters offer a lot more than accommodation: they promise protection from violent partners, mutual support, and help on a range of practical problems facing battered women who leave home. However, shelters will generally not accept male children over age 12-13 years, and the largest family size accepted usually depends on the space available. Most emergency shelters for battered women are funded by the Human Resource Administration (HRA). Others are under the auspices of private agencies or religious organizations.

In the 1980s, an emergency shelter system evolved in New York City largely in response to numerous court orders (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993). In 1987 New York domestic violence programs sheltered 7,700 women and children (Dwyer & Tully, 1989). Citywide, 13 battered women's programs (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993) provide shelter, safe dwellings, and safe homes for battered women, which are licensed and regulated by the Human Resources Administration (HRA). The Department of Social Services (DSS) defines domestic violence shelters as "*congregate* residential facilities with a capacity of 10 or more persons serving exclusively domestic violence victims." Safe dwellings have a capacity of 9 or fewer persons. And safe homes are a *network of private homes* dedicated for use as *temporary* emergency shelters for exclusively domestic violence victims.

Messinger and Eldridge (1993) present the following real-life scenario, and comment on the sparse housing provisions offered by the City:

Although not all women who are battered seek shelter, nearly 40 percent (7,000) of the 18,000 women and children in New York emergency shelters are fleeing violent domestic situations (p. 71).

When a woman enters an Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU), she walks through a metal detector, has her belongings searched, and is told to sign on a long waiting list. She is surrounded by squalor and dozens of other families vying for a chair or a spot on the floor to rest....Once her name is called, the battered woman will tell her story to a City caseworker on the other side of a bullet-proof partition, hoping the others on line behind her do not overhear. As difficult as this scenario is, it...gets a lot worse...on this odyssey...(p. 73).

Those who are lucky enough to find a placement in a specialized battered women's shelter face a federally imposed 90-day limit on their stay, at which point they are often transferred to a Tier II shelter run by HRA or a non-profit provider (p. 71).

Something is really wrong when the initial choice afforded most of these women is a plastic chair in an EAU or returning to their batterer (p.71).

Numerous women are forced to go back to their abusers because of lack of safe affordable housing. Fifty-nine percent of women and children seeking shelter in New York City's battered women's programs were turned away for lack of space in 1987

(Dwyer & Tully, 1989). Thus, many battered women continue to live at home under the threat of perhaps more severe violence because they risked leaving and found no option other than homelessness. Some of these women return to emergency shelters when the abuse becomes intolerable again. This results not only in much staff time being devoted to helping battered women get rehoused each time, but it also decreases staff morale and increases staff “burnout.”

For several years the New York Coalition of Battered Women’s Advocates has unsuccessfully fought to remove one of several obstacles to housing faced by battered women in shelters: the length-of-stay requirements of the Emergency Assistance Rehousing Program (EARP) which provides a cash subsidy to landlords who rent to a homeless family with a lease of 32 months. The 10-week wait for an EARP application often forces women in battered women’s shelters to wait until their shelter stays have expired before they can apply for this subsidy (Morse, 1994). This leaves them insufficient time to obtain more permanent housing thus making a move to a tier II (transitional) shelter inevitable and increasing the likelihood of her returning to the abusive home environment.

Thus, after the 90-day limit elapses battered women often find themselves being transferred from the relative “comfort” of a battered women’s shelter to the uncertainty of the general Tier II shelter system, awaiting the availability of more permanent housing (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993, p. 74). Tier II shelters are required to provide help in finding “permanent” housing (but only *after* a stipulated 10 month period of stay) by providing assistance in filing applications for housing run by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and New York City Housing Authority

(NYCHA); or private sector housing through the EARP, and the recently cut federal Section 8 Voucher/Certificate Program (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993, p. 72).

Battered women are very likely to encounter several other City agencies and systems, including the police and courts, in their quest for safe, affordable housing. Women and children living in NYCHA or HPD housing are often forced to seek a housing transfer to escape their batterer, and these frequently require long waits (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993).

Two rental subsidy programs are relevant to battered women seeking housing for themselves and their children: a Foster Care Prevention Rental Subsidy is available for families facing imminent risk of foster placement due to inadequate housing; and a Family Reunification Rental Subsidy which provides assistance when the only factor preventing reunification of a mother with her children in foster care is inadequate housing (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993, pp. 75-76).

One other major obstacle to easily accessing safe alternate housing in the private sector is the practice of requesting references and conducting credit history checks. Many battered women tend not to have references or credit when the battering includes social isolation, controlling her access to money, and/or ruining her credit history through reckless expenditures on the part of the batterer, usually in the tension building phase, and on gifts for her, usually in the honeymoon phase of the cycle of violence.

All in all, the lack of adequate “transitional” and affordable “permanent” housing forces many women to choose between violence and homelessness, leaving many women without any incentive to leave the batterer in the first place. Yet frighteningly, according to the Center for Disease Control’s Violence Epidemiology Branch (Hecht Schaffran, n.d.)

it is because of domestic violence that women are in nine times greater danger in their own homes [i.e., it is assumed with the batterer still living there] than on the streets.

### Coordinated Intervention Programs to Help Battered Women Keep their Housing

The first large-scale study of refuges in England (Binney et al., 1981) also focused on the attempts of battered women to find long-term housing. This survey found that of the 656 women they had initially interviewed in refuges, 10% of the 84 they selected to interview (i.e., those within a 60 miles radius from where the research team was based) 18 months later were “living in previous home with old partner excluded.” These researchers made a firm recommendation based on the following findings:

Few women in the survey wanted to go back to their previous homes but some were being *forced* by the housing authority to pursue this route to permanent accommodation. While 30% of the women in the survey were trying this route to housing, only 8% were successful and a year later, only 4% were still living in their former homes. It was clear from the research that without much more effective protection, this was not a viable housing option for most women (p. xv). Although a third of the women in the survey were trying to get rights over their previous homes, either to live in or to transfer for another tenancy, only 16% of all women wanted to live in their previous home again. Most felt that they would be *unsafe* there or that *bad memories* of the place and the *response of neighbors* would make it difficult to start life afresh (p. 86, italics mine).

**Recommendation:** Housing Authorities should not recommend that the most appropriate route to permanent separate accommodation is for a woman to exclude the violent partner under the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act (p. xv).

An example from Duluth, Minnesota in the late 1970s/early 1980s (Schechter, 1982, pp. 176-77) illustrates the possible effectiveness of a comprehensive program which places the onus on the batterer and community institutions rather than on the woman. While this experimental program, painstakingly designed and staffed by feminist activists, was in operation, the Duluth shelter had empty beds for the first time. The

program consisted of utilizing probable cause arrest when there was a visible injury, issuing immediate protection orders to the woman, *enforcing* automatic eviction orders for the batterer, mandating counseling for the batterer with a counselor who said the batterer was entirely responsible for the violence, and sentencing batterers to jail for violations of court injunctions reported either by the woman or the counselor. This project in Duluth, a city of 100,000 people, received special cooperation from the police and courts for its duration. The project coordinator noted, and was perhaps flabbergasted, that the day the research component ended, the Duluth police who had been participating in the project stopped arresting batterers!

Inspired by the success of the short-lived Duluth experiment, the Shelter Workgroup of the Commission to Combat Family Violence (Giuliani, 1999) ordered a study to determine whether women entering New York City domestic violence shelters with their children would have remained in their home with an enhanced security system which would include: a new lock, a Vacate Order, a bracelet for tracking the batterer, a home-alert pendant the victim could activate to summon police, mandatory arrest of the batterer following a violation, and a home alarm system. That study (O'Sullivan, Wise, & Douglass, 1995) of 82 women (55% of whom were leaseholders), reported that fifteen of the 37 leaseholders felt they would have been able to remain in their home with such protections. Nineteen out of 27 who were leaseholders but lived in private housing without rental assistance said they would feel unsafe even with the proposed protection measures. Five out of seven New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents would have remained in their homes with the above security measures. Two out of five women who held leases to their private housing but fled to shelters and applied for public

housing, said they would have remained in their own apartment had the above protections been made available to them.

Given the sizable percentage of women who would have opted to remain in their housing with enhanced security measures and the batterer evicted, the Alternatives to Shelter one-year-pilot project began in September 1995 as a partnership among agencies of the City of New York including the Office of the Mayor, the Police Department, the New York County District Attorney's Office, and local not-for-profit organizations including Victims Services and St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Crime Victims Assessment Project. Ten Upper West Side residents of the 24th Police Precinct in Manhattan who are endangered in their homes because of their abusive relationship and preferred to stay in their homes have been selected. Their abusive partner was ordered to vacate the housing, and the women were provided the enhanced security of a home alarm system (donated by private companies) and a rapid police response. The alarm systems installed in their homes are monitored by trained agents. The women have also been given a cellular phone and they carry a pendant alarm to protect themselves by alerting police when in danger outside the home. The program does not communicate at all with the batterer so as to leave the batterer in the dark as to these facilities being provided to his partner. The program also offers the women an array of social and criminal justice services including support groups and referrals to legal services.

Community support is presented as the foundation of this pilot project and community involvement is considered critical in keeping the women safe. A series of posters have been put up in the neighborhood to sensitize the residents and business

community in the neighborhood to the need for their help and support in ensuring a life free of violence to their neighbors who may be in situations of battering.

Frisch (1995) describes seven different electronic monitoring programs in New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, designed to help battered women remain in their homes, none of which have been systematically evaluated. A graduate team at New York University's Wagner School of Public Service (Giuliani, 1999) phoned over 140 domestic violence experts and program directors nationwide in disciplines and settings ranging from law enforcement, to social work, to alarm manufacturing; contacted every state task force and domestic violence coalition; scanned over one hundred Internet web sites and links of domestic violence programs, public safety businesses, law enforcement, and state and federal offices overseeing domestic violence intervention; reviewed nine databases, twelve journals, and eight books/monographs in criminal justice, law enforcement, and the social sciences. They found no published evaluation of any of the electronic monitoring programs. They then attempted to survey 76 electronic domestic violence intervention programs nationwide, but only 48 programs (63%) participated in the survey. Most of the programs which returned the survey, utilized pendant alarms with panic buttons for the victims. Six programs also used, or planned to use, ankle bracelets for the offenders. Sixty four percent of the programs were coordinated by a law enforcement department (viz., sheriff, police, probation, or district attorney; the others were administered by nongovernmental residential or nonresidential domestic violence service providers. Over half of these programs were in their infancy (i.e., less than three years old), most served less than 15 participants at any given time, and false alarms due to technical failure or user error were more frequent than actual emergencies. Most

programs (88%) reported 0-5 emergencies per year, one program reported 6-10 emergencies, 4.5% reported over 16 emergencies and 4.5% failed to provide this data.

This dissertation aspires to identify what the breadth and depth of the evaluation measures should be, and what process and outcome variables are most meaningful from the standpoint of various battered women's lives.

Saegert's (1985) work with Jacqueline Leavitt on low-income tenant co-ops created out of landlord-abandoned buildings, focuses on the social and communitarian value of being interested in and attentive to the psychological aspects of housing environments as extending beyond the sociological premise that housing is an expression of status and group identification:

All the co-ops we have studied have gone far beyond landlord norms of cleanliness and attractiveness in restoring apartments for habitation. Conversely, when newly painted halls are vandalized or a newly restored apartment suffers damage from a careless tenant, the blow to the active tenants is more than financial and aesthetic. They are reminded of the lack of *mutual regard for each others' well-being among members of the community* (Saegert, 1985, p. 294, emphasis mine).

In this same spirit, this study seeks to determine how those of us invested with privilege to investigate and develop life-enhancing housing as a community, can psychologically and financially invest in safe, long-term housing for women in situations of battering not only as a show of regard for their healing and future well-being, but also as a spoke in the wheel of the (social) justice system.

### Research Questions

In light of the literature on the meaning of home, the lack of alternative, safe, affordable, housing, and the escalation of violence after separation, I seek to explore:

1. how battered women feel toward the housing in which they were battered.
2. why some battered women try to keep their housing by evicting their batterers.
3. the experiences (including struggles/obstacles, if any) of women who:
  - a) live in the housing in which they were battered, without the batterer.
  - b) relocate to other "permanent" housing without the batterer.
4. what meaning(s) and experience(s) of home and home-making do battered women have while experiencing and/or anticipating violence after separation.
5. the ways in which (i) particular kinds of violence, and/or (ii) the presence/custody/visitation of children, impact on:
  - a) the women's feelings toward the site of the abuse, during the abusive relationship and after separation.
  - b) the meanings and experiences of comfort, safety, home, and home-making, during the abusive relationship and after separation.
6. which protective measures (taken by the woman and/or others, and/or gestures of support, and/or real assistance), or lack thereof (particularly from neighbors, family, friends, police, courts, advocacy groups, and service agencies), (i) contribute to, or (ii) detract from:
  - a) the woman's sense of safety
  - b) the woman's sense of agency
  - c) the woman's sense of home.
7. how programs, especially those developed to keep battered women in their housing minus the batterer, could be made more efficacious, so as to provide battered women safer and more "permanent" housing alternatives.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

Most studies of battered women have focused on women who used battered women's shelters and other community services. In order to obtain a more diverse sample, in a previous study (Castelino, 1994), I attempted to access battered women independently of women's programs by posting advertisements in local and national newspapers for an entire month. It proved exceptionally difficult to recruit participants: only two women responded (one from Florida, the other from Texas). Therefore, this time around, I sought out other avenues of access to volunteer participants. One such avenue was posting flyers at police precincts, victim service offices, and emergency rooms in public hospitals. Another avenue was seeking permission to interview women in a pilot electronic monitoring program. I thus interviewed 36 battered women in all.

#### Feasibility Phase

The highly sensitive circumstances of the women I sought to reach and engage, necessitated accessing battered women's service providers and activist organizations. This necessitated a feasibility phase to ascertain whether these groups would endorse this as a worthwhile project and lend me their cooperation in disseminating my "Participants Wanted" flyers (Appendix A) at their outreach programs. So, I met with various program coordinators.

In the course of these interactions, I was informed that there is a major difference in legal alternatives provided in New York and New Jersey for battered women who seek

Orders of Protection. In New Jersey when a woman seeks an Order of Protection she is *automatically* granted Vacate Orders, whereby her abusive spouse or partner is ordered to leave the residence and not return to it for a stipulated duration. This difference presented the possibility of a comparative study of post-separation violence in the context of automatic vs. petitioned Vacate Orders.

Therefore, in May 1996, I visited a residential program for battered women in New Jersey. Four battered women volunteered to be interviewed right away. Only two of these women were residents of New Jersey. Of the other two, one was from the borough of The Bronx in New York City and the other was from Connecticut. Of the two New Jersey residents, only one went to court for an Order of Protection. The other “stayed put” and evicted her batterer without taking recourse in the court system. The one who did go to court happened to be Russian. She was not automatically granted a Vacate Order because the lease was in her battering husband’s name (who was Russian too). He was on disability benefits and the abuse was mental and verbal—not physical.

I then contacted the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women and contrary to what I had been told previously, I was now informed that battered women in New Jersey have to request a Vacate Order and only then will the judge *consider* granting it. However, there are *several* grounds on which judges *do not* grant Vacate or Exclusion Orders to batterers; particularly if the lease/deed is in his name and he has been paying the rent/mortgage (Clark, 1996).

So, with much disappointment, I abandoned the idea of a comparative study between the neighboring states of New York and New Jersey. However, I have included

in this report some relevant quotes of the four women that I interviewed in the New Jersey residential program.

### Interviews with Battered Women in New York City

The four feasibility interviews in New Jersey helped me develop an extensive interview schedule. The questions (Appendix B) were about the nature of abuse they experience(d); their survival strategies; their meanings and experiences of comfort, safety, and home; the nature of their relationship to the housing in which they experienced abuse; and the role of community and public programs (such as the electronic monitoring programs) in relation to their comfort, safety, and housing needs and experiences.

Interviewing is an invaluable method for documenting the experience of the invisible and the intangible; it allows the interviewees to speak, in their own voices, many with an inspirational quality, about their lives and loves, tragedies and triumphs. Talking about the abuse (in comparison to filling out a questionnaire) helps several women to put the abuse behind them by telling the story of how they finally overcome fear and take measures to escape and/or end their life-threatening relationships.

The research was introduced to participants as:

1. a study of the feelings battered women have to the housing in which they were battered, and the meanings and experiences of home and home-making to them.
2. a study of the difficult and challenging (particularly any non-institutional) ways in which some battered women (try to) end the violence and/or keep their housing and have their batterers move out.

In order to help the women give me their perspective on the “lay of the land” I began each interview (Appendix B-Part B) with some variation of the following question: At this point in your life, where are you in terms of ending the relationship, stopping the violence, moving on with your life, and protecting your life?

Most of the interviews lasted two to three hours. The interviews were tape-recorded with the fully informed consent (Appendix C1 to C3) of the participants. The tapes did not contain their identities, and will remain in a locked cabinet until the analyses are completed and the tapes are erased.

#### Soliciting Volunteer Participants in New York City

During the summer of 1996, after getting encouragement from a few program coordinators and activists, but not their full support to obtain participants, I did a mass-mailing (Appendix D) to all the police precincts in New York City, all the emergency departments in New York City hospitals, and all the Victim Service Agency centers in New York City. I sent them a brief version of my research proposal, the approval letter from my school’s institutional review board, and several Participants Wanted flyers (Appendix A) in attractive colors with tear-off tassels, and a self-address stamped postcard with appropriate boxes to check and mail back to me if they wanted to meet with me. I requested them to display the flyers in prominent locations within their premises, as well as personally hand some out to women who had experiences related to my investigation:

1. women who tried/trying to *flee* their housing.
2. women who tried/trying to *keep* their housing.
3. women who could keep/reclaim their housing but *did not want to* do so.

I also put up flyers in lesbian and bisexual dedicated spaces but none of the callers mentioned being in a lesbian or bisexual abusive relationship. The ATS pendant alarm had been offered to one gay man who was being abused by his gay partner but he declined to enroll in the program and even dropped the Order of Protection that had been granted to him by Manhattan Criminal Court. Had he been enrolled I might have considered interviewing him for the purpose of comparative analysis.

Shortly after doing the mass-mailing, I received phone calls from a police detective and the director of a woman's health program complimenting me on the fine work I was doing and assuring me of their full support. I regarded these calls as a welcome indication that I did not need to make any follow-up phone calls subsequent to the mass-mailing.

#### Alarm Program Evaluation Interviews

The Department of Health of the City of New York granted me permission to use data (Appendix E) from the interviews I conducted as part of the evaluation of one "electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention" program called Alternative to Shelter (ATS). It was a pilot project commissioned by Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani in 1995 in order to "give domestic violence victims and their children the option of remaining in their homes through the provision of state-of-the-art security technology and a coordinated community response (Giuliani, 1999, p. ii)." It was coordinated by the 24th Police Precinct in the Upper West Side area of Manhattan.

The program consisted of providing ten selected women who lived in the neighborhood and considered themselves to be at serious risk for post-separation violence, with a home alarm, pendant alarm and cellular phone program to dial 911 to

summon rapid police response, regardless of whether they had “stayed put,” had moved to their parents’ place, or had obtained another apartment after a shelter stay. They were also required to sever all ties with their battering partners/spouses, required to obtain an (exclusionary) order of protection, required to cooperate with prosecution or civil proceedings against their partners/spouses, and were encouraged to attend the individual and/or group counseling services offered by the program.

I was permitted to solicit the participation of the ten battered women who had, at the time, completed a year in the Alternative to Shelter (ATS) program, as well as the eleven others who had declined enrollment in the program. I did contact most of the women who declined program membership, but none of them agreed to be interviewed.

After I completed nine of the ten evaluation interviews with the women in the ATS program (from September 1996 through March 1997), I presented an interim report (Castelino, 1997) to Mayor Giuliani’s Commission to Combat Family Violence. The tenth woman in the ATS program was hard to reach. However, a woman who had declined the program at first (to try temporary separation-with-marital counseling) later joined the program (when he went into her apartment and threatened to kill her). It was she, the eleventh program enrollee, who became *my* tenth ATS program participant.

Since *none* of the women in the ATS program had occasion to use the pendant alarm, I was pleased that a member of Giuliani’s Commission to Combat Family Violence (who is also a member of my dissertation committee) requested the coordinator of the (Abused Women’s Active Response Emergency) AWARE pendant alarm program in Brooklyn (an older program with many more enrollees than the ATS program), to grant me access to women who had *used* the pendant alarm. The program coordinator of

AWARE preferred that I contact only those women whose cases had been closed. So I ended up with only two AWARE women. Both agreed to be included in this report. However, one was verbally abused and stalked by her 31-yr-old son and his wife.

### English-speaking Participants Only

Two Spanish-speaking battered women called but I turned them down, with sincere apologies, because I do not speak Spanish. Having a Spanish interviewer (and simultaneous translator for me) would no doubt have added to the already lengthy interview. Later, when an English-speaking participant informed me that a few Spanish-speakers in her support group wanted to participate, I entertained the idea of doing a focus group with a lunch break. So, I requested her to kindly let me know how many were interested. She, however, did not get in touch with me again. I decided not to call her because she, like most other battered women, had numerous and mounting personal concerns (viz., child custody hearing, his criminal court hearing, her criminal court hearing on account of the false harassment charges he filed against her, her futile frantic search for pro bono lawyers to represent her, the fear of losing her three-month-new job because of absenteeism due to an incessant stream of court hearings every two weeks).

### Selection Criteria

My previous research (Castelino, 1994) familiarized and sensitized me to the difficulty of accessing battered women and engaging them in research. Knowing it would be difficult to select participants on the basis of demographic variables such as number of children, race/ethnicity, education/socioeconomic status, length of relationship, length of separation, type/tenure of housing, and so on, I interviewed all English-speakers who

responded to my flyers over a span of fifteen months (from August 1996 through November 1997), since they all had one or more of the housing experiences under study. Four women did not keep the appointments and did not call to reschedule.

#### Sources of "At-large" Participants

Of the 20 women who were recruited via the flyers, seven were from Victim Services centers in Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island. Five were from hospitals in Manhattan and Brooklyn, but *not* from the *emergency* department: one read my flyer in the maternity ward, one in the infant care unit, and three were encouraged to contact me by their crisis intervention counselors. Six came through law enforcement branches: two were encouraged by the domestic violence officers of their police precincts, one was encouraged by the police detective on her case, and three read my flyers at STEPS (a program for battered women incarcerated for attacking their batterers in self-defense). One of the twenty at-large participants had learned of my study through an acquaintance of mine. One was informed by a participant who had been interviewed (snowballing). Borough-wise: six were from Manhattan, eight were from Queens, four were from Brooklyn, one was from Staten Island, and one was from the Bronx.

#### Interview Settings

Callers were requested to suggest a place they considered safe, comfortable, convenient, and quiet enough for an extensive confidential conversation. St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Crime Victims Assessment Project on the Upper West Side of Manhattan generously offered me, at no charge, the use of their cozy resource room for

conducting interviews: Only one of the “at-large” women opted for that location because that’s where she saw my flyer.

Seven of the twenty “at-large” participants preferred to use an empty seminar room at the Graduate Center (which, at the time, was in a building adjacent to the Grand Central Terminal). It gave almost all of these women a particular satisfaction to be inside an institution of higher learning, to read the schedule of classes or guest lectures or student projects displayed on the notice boards, to sit in a seminar room, and so on. Three of them had done two years of college. The other four had high school diplomas. None of the ATS and AWARE program women opted for the seminar room interview setting.

Seventeen women invited me to their apartment, house or condo: seven (of ten) ATS women, eight (of 20) “at-large” women, and both the AWARE women. Two of these ATS women were living in their parent’s place; they both did the interview in their bedrooms. Four of these ATS women did the interview in the living room, and one in the dining room. One of the two AWARE women was interviewed in her living room and the other preferred to be interviewed in her business space (i.e., a beauty salon in the front room of her house). Of the eight “at-large” women who invited me to their place, five were interviewed in the living room, 1 in the dining room, 1 in her studio apartment and one in her single room occupancy (SRO) 4’ x 8’ living space. Clearly home-interviews were a more popular option with those who were in the alarm programs even if they had *not* “stayed put” in the housing in which they had been abused.

Participants who requested a phone interview were read the appropriate consent form (Appendix C1-C3) over the phone and were asked if they agreed to participate. Their verbal agreement and the fact that they exercised a choice (i.e., to be interviewed

over the phone) constitute their formal informed consent to participate. Three of the ten women in the ATS program opted for phone interviews; two of them scheduled a time at which they requested me to phone them, and one *phoned me* at a scheduled time from her workplace. Of the 20 “at-large” women, four opted for phone interviews: three requested me to call them at their apartments, and one at her workplace.

Two of the ATS women who requested phone interviews asked for it to be done in two sessions of an hour each. Both women ended up not doing the second session of the interview — several appointments were made with both but neither was inclined to keep the appointments. That could be because they were each very happy in their new relationships, and had not experienced post-separation violence for almost a year.

Of the 18 women in all who “stayed put,” eight opted for a home-interview; six of these were in an alarm program. Of the five “stayed put” women who opted for phone-interviews, three were in an alarm program. And of the five “stayed put” women who preferred to make a trip to my school to be interviewed, none were in an alarm program. Perhaps women in an alarm program, having had close and frequent contact with the program and law enforcement personnel, were more open to accepting “helping professionals” into their personal space.

Three participants were still living with their batterers, primarily because they were still figuring out how *not* to lose their houses (given that all three had financially contributed toward the purchase of their houses). What surprised me was that all three of these women opted to be interviewed in their houses, even though I alerted them to the danger of provoking their husbands by my presence were they to return from work earlier than usual or were a neighbor to inform him that there was a visitor. However, all three

happened to live in two-fare zones in Queens. So the long trip to me and long absence from home if he happened to call to check-in on them, would likely be more devastating. One other participant who was still in the her abusive marriage but was not “staying with” her battering husband thanks to his active duty in the U.S. Navy, made the trip to the Graduate Center all the way from Brooklyn with her 3-month-old infant in a stroller.

### Compensating Participants

A dissertation grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made it possible for me to compensate all participants (including those in the alarm programs) with a very nominal amount of \$40, to cover transportation costs and express my sincere appreciation for painstakingly imparting their incisive knowledge of experiences painfully embodied and endured.

Participants who had put the abuse behind them found it worthwhile to reopen healed wounds in the hope that something they say would make a valuable contribution to other women’s lives, and/or prevent other battered women from making the same mistakes they made, and/or open batterers’ eyes and change their ways. .One of my last participants, Natalie, a nursing assistant, implored, “I hope you *really* use it to change and make things better for women in abusive relationships.”

Of the 12 alarm program participants, only two women in the ATS program appeared to do the interview because it was a program requirement. The other seven expressly mentioned that they were eager to see vital improvements in the program.

### Maintaining Confidentiality

Every effort has been made to remove information that might compromise the identities and status of the women and their children in terms of social standing, immigration, civil/criminal/marriage law, employment, housing, and welfare. These measures, to erase or make anonymous such sensitive information, were taken also in light of the possibility of research documents being subpoenaed as evidence in court.

I myself transcribed all but three interviews not only to protect the confidentiality of the women but also to register the distinctive voices of the women and represent their experiences and exhortations with integrity. In the three instances where someone else transcribed, I listened to the entire tapes to verify accuracy and detect omissions.

### De-Stressing and Optimizing

Based on my prior research and volunteer advocate experiences with battered women I knew it was imperative for me to have a steady source of emotional support throughout the research and writing process. I was aware that the women's narratives would overwhelm me but I was not prepared for the extent to which I did internalize the narratives and jeopardized my own marriage with outrageous emotional outbursts. I sought free crisis intervention one day in the summer of 1998 when I had a physically violent outburst against my husband. I then stayed with my sister for a few months, during which time my brother called me regularly to pray with me and read comforting scriptures to me.

Another important source of support were the very women I interviewed. Given that there are no individual, demographic, or personality characteristics which put

particular women at risk for battering or even for homelessness, and that being in such life-threatening situations is no indication of inherent psychological weakness. People in difficult circumstances have strengths they can draw upon to nurture others. The emotional support I sought from them was not on a long-term basis, nor intensive. I expressed my grief and anguish to some portions of their experiences and their response was most supportive and encouraging.

I found it helpful to take outings by myself to reflect and dwell on certain uncomfortable feelings in order to understand the nature, sources, and consequences of those feelings, and to better advocate for positive fundamental social change. An activity which helped me work through some of my grief and anger was making presentations of the disturbing and empowering aspects of my data, to college and continuing education students, upon invitation from friends who are college professors.

I had intended to keep a journal to avoid making my mind and soul the permanent receptacles of my emotional responses to the dreadful experiences of my participants, and to aid me in transforming them into resourceful stirrings. However, massive burnout from intensive caregiving activities and lifetaking events (viz., rapidly progressing cancers in a close friend in 1998 and then my own dear sister in 1999-2000) not only made journal keeping a foggy notion, but also brought my entire dissertation work to a grinding halt until the summer of 2001.

### Analysis

The interviews were analyzed using qualitative analytic techniques for theme identification, concept development, and theory formulation around the meaning and

experience of home for battered women. The analysis addressed how their meanings of home and experiences of abuse impacted on their feelings toward the housing in which they were battered. Special attention was paid to the geography of their everyday lives.

In interviews with women who “stayed put,” the analysis was particularly focused on their explicitly and implicitly expressed values and disadvantages, struggles, and risks of “staying put.” I was keenly attentive to the cultural underpinnings of “staying put” and placing the burden of moving on the batterer.

Interviews with women in the alarm programs were analyzed for the impact of the alarm system as well as the “coordinated community intervention” aspect of the program, on post-separation violence, sense of safety, and meaning of home.

Ongoing, iterative content analysis was conducted during the interviewing phase so as to inform and enhance subsequent interviews, and take stock of any other categories of women, and battering, and/or housing experiences I needed to include in order to arrive at sound conclusions and policy recommendations.

### Impacting Programs and Policies

In October 1997 I submitted a report with recommendations to Mayor Giuliani’s Commission to Combat Family Violence. Some of my recommendations have been incorporated in the Commission’s proposed expansion plans (Giuliani, 1999). The extent of implementation and enforcement of proposed measures remains to be studied.

## Chapter 4

### VARIED FACES AND RESPONSE MODES OF BATTERED WOMEN

The sole selection criteria for participation in this study was the experience of being battered by an intimate partner or spouse and the experience of trying to end the abuse by fleeing from the house and/or evicting the batterer. This investigation was not focused exclusively on any race or ethnicity, nor on any particular economic class, type of housing, family size and composition, or type and severity of battering.

Twelve of the 36 women in this study were in an “electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention” (henceforth “alarm”) program. Ten of them were in the Alternative to Shelter (ATS) alarm program, which was coordinated by the 24th Police Precinct in the Upper West Side area of Manhattan. Two were in the Abused Women’s Active Response Emergency (AWARE) alarm program in Brooklyn coordinated by the Kings County (i.e., Brooklyn) District Attorneys Office.

Four of the 36 women were interviewed in the feasibility phase of this study. They were in a battered women’s shelter in New Jersey. One of these four women was the Director of the facility and an ex-battered woman who “stayed put” (i.e., evicted her batterer). Another was a staff member-and-resident (fleeing from her batterer).

The remaining 20 (of 36 participants) responded to boldly illustrated Participant Wanted flyers (see Appendix A) displayed in relevant institutions all over Greater New York City—police precincts, Victim Service Agency offices, public hospital emergency rooms, battered women’s organizations, incarcerated battered women’s organizations, as well as in lesbian organizations. However, only women in heterosexual relationships

responded. The wide range of heterosexual women who participated in this study provides evidence that there are no *typical* or *identifying* psychological-sociological-economic-theological characteristics of battered women.

From the women's narratives, I gathered that the batterers ranged from a 37-year-old Caucasian millionaire (who was nonetheless *financially* abusive), to penniless men who kept promising they "would get a job." And, from the blonde hair, blue eyed 38-year-old stranger who pursued Marisa at a free concert in the park when she was 45 and single, to a childhood friend who was determined to make Avril his wife since *he* was 12. One batterer (a 50-year-old Trinidadian) was a prison chaplain with a Ph.D. in Divinity.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The ages of the women at the time of the interview ranged from 21 to nearly 60. Ten women were in their 20s, 15 were in their 30s, eight were in their 40s, and three were between 50 and 60 years of age. The batterers' ages ranged from 23 to 65. Six batterers were in their 20s, 17 were in their 30s, ten were in their 40s, one was 50, one was 65, and one was dead (from substance abuse and AIDS in his early 40s). Two women had five abusive relationships each. I included the ages of their last batterers only, since neither of them were experiencing post-separation violence from their previous batterers.

The relationships lasted from between seven months to 35 *years*. The women who did not have children or had children only from a *previous* relationship, tended to be able to *start* ending the relationship within a year. It often took these women between several months to roughly three years to sever all ties with the batterer. The relationships tended to last for 7 to 10 years or more, if the batterer was the father of one or more children, or the batterer and/or the woman was addicted to drug or alcohol, or the batterer

had been diagnosed schizophrenic, or the batterer had sustained a severe head injury (e.g., Cindi's used-car dealer husband was shot in the head, in a robbery, in his used-car parking lot), or when the abuse was mostly punching, slapping, and property damage with a serious injury only about once a year.

Table 1 presents the racial identities of the women in this study and the kind of housing stance they had taken at the time of the interview, i.e., "stayed put" in their apartment/house/building, fled to a confidential address or moved to a known address (e.g., parents' apartment/house), were "putting up" with the abuse while planning how to keep their children and their co-purchased houses, or half of the re-sale price.

Table 1  
Racial distribution of participants by residential response to the abuse.

Woman's Race	Stayed Put		Fled/Moved to Shelter/Relatives/ New apartment		Putting Up With Abuse	Served time in prison	Total
	With Alarm	No Alarm	With Alarm	No Alarm			
White	2	2	1	-	2	-	7
Black	4	3	-	7	-	2	16
Hispanic	3	3	1	2	1	-	10
Russian	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
South Asian	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>

Most of the batterers' were of the same race as the women. Two of the White women who "stayed put" with alarms had Black batterers; Sara's was African American, Liz's was Jamaican. One Hispanic (Chicana) who "stayed put" without pendant alarm (Marisa) had a Caucasian batterer "with blonde hair and blue eyes." The one South Asian woman who *fled without alarm* had a Caucasian batterer. All the other women's

batterer's were of the same race as the women but were perhaps of a different ethnicity. Not all the Hispanic women identified themselves ethnically. Two Hispanic women who stayed put with alarms identified themselves as Puerto Rican; one had a Mexican batterer, the other's was Dominican. One Black woman who stayed put with alarm was Trinidadian while her batterer was Jamaican.

Table 1 also presents the number of women who had the assistance of a pendant alarm in the apartment/house in(to) which they had "stayed put" or moved. Two women (one White, and one Hispanic), who had moved to their parent's place, were within the jurisdiction of the ATS program and had qualified for the pendant alarm. So the alarm systems were installed in their parents' house/apartment. The South Asian woman who had a pendant alarm had fled to various places and was eventually in an apartment of her own within the jurisdiction of the ATS program and had qualified for the pendant alarm.

The strategies the women employed to end their abusive relationship were somewhat different from their situations at the time of the interview. For example, in Table 1, Justine, has been counted as an Hispanic who *stayed put with alarm* because she was in that situation at the time of the interview. However, she had ended her relationship by evicting her batterer *three years before* the ATS alarm program was made available to her. Shazia has been counted as a South Asian who *fled with alarm*, but she had fled to about five different locations and was well settled in a Mitchell Lama apartment before she was offered a pendant alarm. Marisa is counted as a Hispanic who *stayed put without alarm* (although she moved and was eventually given a 911 dialing cellular phone). I categorized her thus, because her new apartment was in the *same* building, she had no pendant alarm, and she lost her cellular phone privilege because she

did not abide by the rule: “call the program coordinator once a week.” Francine, an African American had ended her relationship by evicting her batterer and “staying put” for three years. But she had fled to a shelter a month before I interviewed her, because her husband sneaked into her apartment through her third floor kitchen window, put a gun to her, and threatened to kill her. So, even though she stayed put for three years, I counted her as a Black woman who *fled and had no pendant alarm*, but I recount her narrative when discussing factors that help women “stay put” and remain safe.

Glenda, an African American, had five consecutive abusive relationships. She had *fled* from the first four abusers and was living in an apartment that belonged to her fifth romantic partner who had been abusive, but had suddenly disappeared for eleven months. On his return, with no explanation about where he had been, he asked her to pack up and leave immediately. She locked him out that night. He caught her unawares the next morning and in self-defense she ended up injuring him with a knife which she had become accustomed to carrying around as protection. I counted her as a Black woman who *served prison time*, as opposed to a Black woman who *stayed put without alarm*.

Claire, an African American, was “putting up” with her abusive husband while she waited for a shelter vacancy for herself and her four children (ages 7, 11, and 14; the two youngest were twin girls). To keep Claire from fleeing, her husband kept holding on to one or two children under some pretext. Each time she was able to leave the apartment with *all* four children, the 24-hour domestic violence hotline said, “We don’t have anything [shelter space], call back tomorrow at 10 o’clock!” She did not go to her mother’s or other relatives’ because of threats he made to them. Claire ended up shooting her husband in the leg, for which she served seven days in Rikers Island. So I counted her

as an incarcerated Black woman, rather than as one who was *putting up* with her batterer until she could flee to a shelter. Ten years prior, she had fled to a shelter with the two children they had at the time, but he hired a private investigator and forced her back home.

I interviewed both incarcerated women after they had each found an apartment, shortly after their release. Claire was being careful to keep her address confidential upon her release, but Glenda was not “in hiding.” If I had added an “in hiding” category to Table 1, I would have had to move into it the three women I interviewed in the New Jersey shelter, and Claire who did 7 days in prison. Also, Hazel, an African American who tried to “stay put” after evicting her batterer, but was talked into leaving her lovely affordable 17-year-long apartment, by her assistant district attorney. She was on the run ever since (i.e., breaking a lease almost every six months), for almost three years.

With an “in hiding” category, however, it would have been hard to categorize Sandra who fled to an inexpensive hotel after 10 years of abuse and was stalked for about three years. So, she then went to a battered women’s shelter, and then into *absolute* hiding within New York City itself, for almost 20 years. Her parents and siblings thought that her husband had killed her, until one day, a year before this interview, she cautiously attended her grandfather’s funeral. Not only was her family overjoyed to see her, but she too literally “danced the jig” at the cemetery when they informed her that her batterer was dead!! He had died of AIDS a few months prior. She, however, intensely mourns the disappearance, of her four children, into the foster care system. Her attempts to locate them have failed. Her oldest boy was five and her youngest boy was only *two months*, when she fled and was robbed of her four babies, by child protective services, who cruelly charged her with child neglect.

The categories presented in Table 1, thus, have their shortcomings due to *changes-over-time* in the women's situations. I would have liked to present similar tables for employment status, parental status, visitation/custody issues, type of housing, leaseholder status, batterer's employment, and so on. However, due to changes-over-time in those aspects too, it is problematic to present them in a blanket manner. Hence, all relevant demographic characteristics will be presented within the context of the women's responses to the abuse and the strategies they used to end the violence and/or the relationships. For example, Gladys, a 40-year-old Latina, was the director of a battered women's residential facility when I interviewed her. However, when she was torrentially experiencing brutal physical and sexual abuse from her husband, she was a waitress, Later when she dropped her Order of Protection and took him back, he stopped physically abusing and raping her; instead he rampantly destroyed furniture and other property. That's when she decided to get a degree in Social Work. In the meantime, her housing status changed. They lived in a private rental apartment until her number came up for a subsidized rental apartment. They moved in to the new apartment *together*, along with two children (the younger, a boy, was his; the older girl was hers from a previous relationship ten years prior). When, despite their improved standard of living, the abuse carried on in the new house, she evicted him. He comes by to pick up his son, as per their out-of-court agreement, and has not been abusive ever since the eviction. She, however, has learned her lesson the hard way and is determined never ever to take him back into her home. Presenting Gladys as a *professional in a managerial position*, in an employment distribution table, would not be as meaningful and informative as presenting her changing status from waitress to graduate student to program director.

Of the 12 women in the alarm program, only one (Avril) would not have “stayed put” (i.e., she would have moved), had she not been offered the pendant alarm. In fact, the 41-year-old African American singer, would perhaps have still been in the “putting up” category, had she not been offered the alarm. She would have “put up” because the affordable Mitchell Lama apartment with 24-hour security guards was hers, and she had lived in the neighborhood for six years. So she did not want to be the one to leave, especially “because he was the problem.” She was in an absolute quandary: itching to evict him, but terrified of serious retaliation from her 35-year-old black belt, crack-addicted, 10-year-long abusive husband. Therefore, had it not been for the alarm program, she would still have been trapped in her abusive marriage.

#### The Nature and Degree of Battering Before Separation

Almost all the participants were subjected to the entire gamut of abuses—verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, financial, residential, and property damage—*actual* as well as *threatened*. Most of the women narrated specific incidents and abusive behavior patterns of the batterer, indicating that they were in a severe and pervasive web of abuses.

The women who “stayed put” were clearly contending with batterers who were as dangerous, if not more dangerous, than the batterers of women who fled, were “putting up”, or were incarcerated. Most participants mentioned at least one incident in which the batterer used at least one weapon or object such as a kitchen knife, baseball bat, hammer, meat chopper, razor blade, ice-pick, crowbar, pitch fork, steering wheel club lock, space heater, and so on. When no weapon was actually used, there was implicit threat of use (e.g., as Liz, an athlete and gym director said, “He keeps two machetes in his house...”).

None of the participants' batterers were law enforcement officers. Twenty five year old Kristin's husband is in the U.S. Navy. She "puts up" with severe beatings and fractures during his few-and-far-between brief visits ashore, just so her children can avail themselves of the educational and other benefits they are entitled to:

I'm not gonna run from him...what I'm doing right now works for me...it may not work for other people...I'm not playing with this idea...that we're gonna be OK...because we will never ever be OK. I'll be civil with him for the fact that we have three little boys...that's as far as it will be...civil...that's it. You have betrayed me by hitting me [several fractures]...by sleeping with another woman...what else can you possibly do...if you kill me...you're gonna deprive your children of a mother...you'll be in jail. So I've thought about all those...and I'm at peace with myself now...if something's gonna happen its meant to happen...at least I'm at peace with myself and that's that.

Kristin reported it a few times to his Commander, but he was not even reprimanded. She avoids going higher up in the chain of command for fear that she will inadvertently jeopardize his commendable career, and rob their children of an immense source of pride:

The better he does at his job the better its for my kids...matter of fact he just got a Sea War commendation...Every promotion or upgrade he gets that's more money for my kids, and being little boys I want them to be able to grow up on a positive step of knowing that their father has accomplished something and not be like majority of typical little black [kids] who go, "My daddy's been in jail"...or "My dad hangs out on the corner."

### Sexual Abuse by Batterers

Most women mentioned sexual abuse just in passing. But, Astrid, a 35-year-old African American legal secretary, described the changes in her boyfriend's sexual behavior over time, as the abuse escalated:

At the beginning it was this really broad, wonderful, freeing thing, especially as far as sex was concerned...it felt different than the relationships I had been in before. Once he forced me to have sex with him while he was drunk; that's when I first realized I didn't feel safe. It kicked up stuff from being raped [10 years prior].

[Then]...he wanted sex *all* the time. That was an obstacle...making me late for work...I couldn't do my school work...I couldn't sleep coz he wanted sex...so [then] I had sex *just* to be able to sleep. But then *that* did not work...coz he wanted sex *every two hours!*

She, was able to evict her 36-year-old African American live-in boyfriend-and-rapist, thanks to a neighbor who did not ever hesitate to call 911 when she heard trouble. But, much as Astrid wanted to hold on to her affordable, conveniently located, Manhattan apartment (which was only a ten minute walk from work, school, dance class, park, gym, favorite art museum), she mourned the loss of her home, when she was unable to keep paying the rent due to financial abuse over three years. In addition, an extended disability leave (for severe depression from the abuse), was forced upon her by her six-year long supportive employer; it was either get fired, or take disability leave.

Gladys, the 40-year-old Latina program director of a shelter for battered women, mentioned being raped repeatedly on her living room couch by her 40-year-old Latin husband of 12 years. At the time of the interview, she had been living violence-free for four years after evicting her husband. She developed a strong aversion to couches, and therefore had no couch in her living room, nor anywhere else in her apartment.

Cindi, a 48-year-old American Jewish medical secretary, mentioned that her abusive husband, a 44-year-old Moroccan Jew from Israel, stopped being sexually intimate (i.e., abusive withholding), when she began reporting the physical abuse. And Sandra who went into total hiding for twenty years, after ten years of abuse, said, "He wouldn't touch me there...I didn't want no part of him anyway."

Given the romantic entanglement, and the consequent obligation to help, rather than punish their batterers, several women, including Astrid, were unable to, in good

conscience, end their relationship when there was no obvious infidelity on the part of the batterer. Astrid explicitly articulates what several women implied:

[When] I became scared to leave...I was coming home [a ten-minute-walk from work] at lunch time...to check on the apartment...to see if there was another woman!...I almost hoped that there was another woman in my apartment coz I could never take the infidelity...him cheating...because for me that was the drawing line. You cheated on me...if I ever caught...I think I wanted to catch a woman in my apartment...just so I'd have enough rage or something to say...that's like the ultimate betrayal. [But that] never happened...

And, Hazel, who ended up losing her 17-year-long Section 8 apartment, alluded that sexual abuse in a marital relationship “wasn't that type of violence” for which one could expect police action. That was why she made no police reports in the second and third years of her marriage.

#### Child Abuse by Batterers: Unfair to Penalize Women

From the women's narratives, all the batterers with child(ren) were, more often than not, abusive *in the presence of* their child(ren), and/or psychologically either abusive and/or insensitive to their child(ren):

He never hit her but he was abusive to her because he would do it in front of her...he didn't care if she was there. And he's abusive to her now because he'll tell her he's coming to see her and he doesn't come...he doesn't call her. Then when he does see her he has another little child that's not his daughter but he used to date the mother and the father left the child before the child was born...so he claimed to be that child's father and that child does not know he is not her real father. He treats that child better than he treats his own daughter. And my daughter feels it...she sees the difference, and it bothers her. So that's why I stopped her from going over to visit [him].

[Instead] I have my daughter in therapy now [age 9] because she is hurting inside. She says, “My daddy doesn't love me,” and she doesn't understand why he treats her the way he does. So I'm getting her therapy as we speak.

— Tricia, about their only child; “stayed put” without alarm.

Most participants with children, were conflicted about ending the abusive relationship, because of the selectivity of the battering target (i.e., not being abusive to the children). That is what often made it hard for the woman to end the relationship and deprive the child(ren) of a father who behaved lovingly towards them. When asked what she misses of the abusive “home” she fled from, Shazia, the 30-year-old South Asian science student, voiced her deepest regret: “My daughter is away from her father...that’s the main thing I miss.” Shazia had “put up” with her abusive husband for 10 years in order to delay that eventuality. Almost four years after fleeing, Shazia still felt unable to provide a satisfactory *home* for her daughter, because “she does not have her parents together” and *that*, Shazia feels, will always be a critical missing aspect in her daughter’s life and experience of home.

Most women with children, such as Avril, the 41-year-old the African American singer, became comfortable about ending the relationship with her 35-year-old crack addicted abusive husband (who had pursued her since *he* was age 12), only *after* he started becoming an abusive father to *his* biological son from a previous relationship:

[H]e would wake my [step]son up at three o’clock in the morning on a school night, to pick up a piece of paper off the floor. Stupid things! He would get mad at him about something and I saw him literally crack him in the chest like he was a grown man and send him flying across the room.

I made it clear to him, “When you are around me I do not want you placing me in jeopardy. I do not want you placing my son in jeopardy. And with a child in the home, and you smoking crack, that’s real stupid. Because not only will you get arrested, I will get arrested, even though I don’t know what you’re doing, and then the child will be placed in foster care...”

— Avril has no children of her own; stepson age 9 at time of interview. When it was having an effect on my kids, especially on my son, that’s when I wanted to give him [eldest son] better. They’re very smart [three children ages 4,5, 8] and they were picking up on things [abuse] that were happening in the household...that were involving us [the couple].

— Francine, stayed put minus batterer for three years, then fled to shelter

Batterers with child(ren) are potential threats to their child(ren) even when the child(ren) have grown up:

My children saw the abuse...[but] my children was [sic] adults when he first abused them [directly, physically]. When they were kids he never touched them...but the opposite...when they was all grown...my daughter [age 29] came here in 1992 to visit [us] with her children...and she helped me to clean up...which he didn't let me do [because a stinking house was his way of keeping visitors at bay]. So, he took a curtain rod and he beat her with a curtain rod on her finger. We called the police...he was not arrested...he was just told not to come here any more and he ran...and then I filed for divorce [after 30 years of abuse]. [But] after six months he came with his Rabbi and... convinced me that he now became religious and that he loves me a lot and that I'm a good person and a good woman...there's not another woman on earth. [So] when I went to court I discontinued the divorce case...I said to the judge I want six months to see how is he doing...he was very good to me for [exactly] six months [only]...I made a big mistake [not going through with divorce]!

— Muriel, about one of their two daughters; they had no sons.

Sandra, who was age 23 when she fled and went into *complete* hiding for almost 20 years, experienced child abuse from the *system*. When she fled to a shelter, her oldest boy was five years, and her youngest boy was only *two months* old. Yet, the child protective services cruelly charged her with child neglect, robbed her of her babies, and floated them in the moral high ground turbulent waters of the foster care system. Now, even though they were all above the age of 18, Sandra had not been assisted in locating them:

I went through hell...I'm looking for them...and they're pushing me one side...and there's nothing I can do...I did everything I could...and I just still can't find them...then when I heard their father died, I tried to call the New York Fondling Home and I told them if you can get in touch with them just tell them that so I won't have that hanging over my head that I didn't try to find them...and I just can't handle it no more...if they come through, they come through...if I see them ...I hope to see them before I'm dead... The Fondling Home say they can't tell me nothing...I said, "But they're over 18 now. Why you can't tell me?" They ain't saying nothing...they don't want to give me where they're at or nothing...I [even] called and spoke to their social worker...they ain't telling me nothing...I got all their social security numbers ...all except one. I'm gonna try one more thing...I'm gonna call the Red Cross and make them look for them and that's it...I can't do it no more...I've really been pushing it...the doctor told me I

don't need the worry no more because my ulcer...the more I'm worried the worse this ulcer's gettin'...

— Sandra saw my study flyer when she went to hospital for a sonogram.

To prevent precisely what happened with Sandra's children, Afra's public assistance caseworker, deplorably but wisely, advised this 34-year-old Nigerian, not to go to a shelter. Through most of the interview, Afra was in tears, and in pain from a chronic back injury caused by an awful push from her husband, in her fifth month of pregnancy:

I didn't go to shelter...the case worker that I had says, "No...the foster people want to help me by taking [the 5-month-old] till I get better [from back injury caused by batterer]." I said, "No" because they said I have to go through court to get her back...So my caseworker said that she will try as hard as possible to make sure that I get a place. They assigned me to social worker, they helped me fill out a form for Section 8, and she said I have to wait till they call me...

So Afra, and her five-month-old boy became a wandering unsheltered household for more than a year, because Afra's application had been misfiled for public housing, instead of for Section 8 housing:

I keep [sic] hanging around till they called me for interview...the Bridge to Life donated a bassinet, a blanket [for] the baby...I was sleeping on the floor [anywhere]. My [72-year-old] mother would go to a center for old people. [So] sometimes we would all go to [it] and stay there till they're closing...and [then] we would leave and...get on the subway and ride from here to there, from there to there... until morning. Sometimes they [the subway attendants] let you stay. Sometimes they ask you to leave...when they send the train for service you have to leave...while the train is running you sleep...and get up again when it stops. [Some nights] I was sleeping on a bench in the church...I even begged. I was like on the street for two or three months. I had to go to charity places and ask them for help. [When] I would get some money and I would go to New Jersey and stay with few people that I know...and come back to New York again.

[Now] they gave me a place [through Section 8] that I'm living in right now...three bedrooms...because my hospital bed, the doctor says, has to be in a separate room.

### Early Warning Signs: Discounted or Underestimated by Women

Some participants mentioned not having any prior clues about their boyfriends' or spouses' proclivity for any abuse and control, let alone of terrorizing proportions and life-threatening magnitude. Hazel, the Corrections Officer, who was talked, by her assistant district attorney, into leaving her 17-year-long Section 8 apartment, after she evicted her husband and he (a seasonal construction worker in his mid 30s), lashed back at her by taking her fireproof door off its hinges, remembers a fabulous beginning which, she believes, began to erode in the second year of their marriage, when he started using crack:

If there were dishes in the sink, he'd wash them. If I said my feet hurt, he rubbed them. If I needed help with my table, he'd say, "I'll wash it for you." If I said I was cooking, me and him would get in the kitchen and cook together...make all these meals! If I woke up in the middle of the night and wanted to talk to somebody, he would listen...never got angry. If I'd say, "Let's take a walk," he was ready!

But...he started hanging out and started doing drugs...crack! It took a while for me to find out...to figure out that there was something that I could not see...that was stronger than me...that had more power...that became his love!

Yeah...I married him too quickly...in about a year...but that year was not a bad year...he was not sexually or verbally abusive...matter of fact we didn't even really have that much sex...but it was good...it didn't seem like that [sex] was all he wanted...and we could laugh and talk...we were friends...and that was important to me. And the kids liked him...

By the second year it started getting verbal...he started getting real irritable...like saying I didn't keep the house clean enough...he didn't want to see no dishes in the sink at no time...starts telling my daughter what she should do...wanted me to have a baby...and I was not having a baby under them circumstances. Then he would accuse me of having sex on my job...un-normal things...un-natural things...checking my underwear...things that you just wouldn't believe...calling me a lot at work to ask me if I'm not f'ing somebody...that was the beginning, and it just got to a point...it just kept e-l-e-v-a-t-I-N-G! Other participants admitted to knowing about their partners' violent behaviors

but considered them *redeemable*. They seemed to think that all it would take was the right woman to humanize him. The batterer, with his intelligence, wit, charm, public image, and so on, often did ensure that *she* felt ordained for his redemption.

Some women who sensed their partner's *potential* for physical violence, regarded them as noble knights, who would *not* use violence against the women they loved. Sara, the 54-year-old Caucasian office receptionist, felt "vulnerable" in the streets of Manhattan after living 26 years in Queens, and the 48-year-old African American, who lived in her SRO building, started out being "very protective" of her:

When I met this guy I was like...very vulnerable...I didn't know the streets...he was there for me as far as...I was so scared to live in this kind of environment and not knowing the streets. He was very protective at first.

Marisa, the 47-year-old Chicana teacher had no intention of having a boyfriend.

But when she lost her Board of Education job, due to budget cuts at the start of Giuliani's mayoral administration, she also lost her apartment due to rent default. When she was subsequently unable to rent even an SRO apartment because her credit rating had plummeted, she requested her 40-year-old blonde haired, blue eyed friend to help her obtain an SRO apartment in his name. She made a verbal agreement with him that she would live there by herself and would transfer the lease to her name as soon as the management was comfortable with her credit rating. He, however, moved in with her, and although she did not like that, she appreciated his protection:

I was almost unconsciously glad he came and stayed with me...coz this is a rough [SRO] building and I didn't know anybody.

Astrid, the 35-year-old African American legal secretary, like Marisa, did not want to share her tiny studio apartment in Manhattan. But when her 36-year-old African American boyfriend moved in anyway, she felt the way Marisa did, especially because she had a particularly troublesome neighbor, whose raucous late night parties she disliked:

[The] building I was living in at the time, was majority male... young men. My downstairs neighbor [N] had been very abusive to the woman who had lived in the apartment before me.... I already had a reputation in my building for going knocking on doors saying, "Please keep the music down....". So then when I met B [boyfriend] I thought, "This is perfect!" My downstairs neighbor was huge...I

[now] had someone that could match him. And that's what happened. [When there were loud parties] B would go in and speak to N and we didn't have any problems.

[Later in the relationship] When B would leave [was evicted] N would act up. I mean it was like I thought at some point that they were working in cahoots together to see who could drive me crazy!...just with the noise [loud parties and music] and me thinking that I needed protection. And then what had happened is that I had then needed protection against B which was really scary...to think that the person that I went to for protection...was the person that I then had to get protection from.

Astrid was among those who saw no tell-tale signs, which raised red flags to alert her about the danger she was courting. She had been fending for herself since age 18, and was envisioning a career change. She had planned to go part-time to law school, but her lofty plans were derailed by what began as a “wonderful, freeing” relationship:

Before school started [first semester of undergraduate Law], I wanted to meet someone, just to have like a fling. I got what I wanted. When I was walking to my apartment a very handsome man, 6 feet, 180 pounds, same age as me [32 then], came up to me and started talking. He was from California visiting a friend in New York [a couple buildings away]. We had a wonderful time. He continued to court me for the next three weeks. He sent me something different everyday at my job...flowers one day, candy the next day...but not being obsessive yet.

When leaving [for California] he said, “I need hundred bucks just to get back and do some things.” I figured he spent a lot while we were out so I gave him money and he said, “I'll send it back to you.” [A couple months later] *he* showed up at my door...suitcase and everything. I told him he could stay only two weeks because school had started. He said he'd be moving out in a couple of weeks to his friend's apartment two buildings away, which he *did*.

[Also during those two weeks] he was doing so many things I liked...he was making my meals...breakfast, lunch, and dinner when I had to go to school, nursing me to health when I was sick...

But slowly...v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y [over the course of a year] the story changed. He moved in [again] and started drinking in my apartment while I was going to school and work...and he wanted sex *all* the time.

[After the reporting abuse] I started to find out [from the police] that in California he got arrested for fighting and for DWI. [In New York too] he hurt his friend with whom he had been staying two buildings away. His friend had called the police and kicked him out. [That's when] I had let him into my apartment because he had lied about why he couldn't live with his friend anymore. [But] it had always been something about [his] rage and anger.

— Astrid legal secretary and in law school; he unemployed and alcoholic.

The three-week romantic fling which Astrid had hoped for that summer, very gradually turned into a long-and-winding roller-coaster nightmare. It was *three years* before she was able to free herself from him, because she was “holding on to this fantasy that maybe it was just a little dint” and “it would all be great after he got a job” and stopped drinking. At the time of the interview she was on extended disability leave, living confidentially in the house of a battered woman who had “stayed put.” Astrid was able to live violence-free, and the other woman was able to keep making her mortgage payments with the additional income from Astrid’s rent.

Unlike Astrid, 34-year-old Tricia *knew* that the 32-year-old African American man she was marrying was (in the words of Astrid) “about rage and anger”:

Before I married him he was in a work release program for possession of a gun without license. I saw little signs of abuse... but I was 26...I felt I was getting older...I wanted a baby...I wanted a husband...I wanted to settle down. So, I overlooked it...I thought he’ll change...it will get better...at the time I didn’t know any better. So, I got pregnant and I told him if he wanted me to have the child that we had to get married...so we got married...my parents gave us a nice Betty Oliver wedding...the limousine...the reception... the whole 9 yards.

— Tricia, ex-production manager of recording company, lost her job due to absenteeism from abuse, now works in police precinct; he is a salesperson.

Contrary to Tricia’s notions, her love and the arrival of their baby only made it worse. Unlike many batterers who are physically abusive during the pregnancy, hers became *physically* abusive only *after* the delivery. Prior to that he was verbally abusive and “smashed things.” But after the delivery he began pushing and punching Tricia. She was able to become violence-free only *six years* later, although she informally evicted him a year and half after the baby’s birth, by many changes in her locks and phone numbers.

Avril, had an ectopic pregnancy “after he had flung [her] from wall to wall”. She had been *engaged* to him a year prior to this violent incident. Yet she proceeded with the

wedding and chose *not* to report that incident to the police until *ten years* later, because her love for him prompted her to protect him and help him change over time:

When you're in love you're going to try and help this individual... you're going to try and make sure that nothing happens to this individual... you're going to be the mother, the father, the sister, the brother, the lover, the friend...you're going to try and be everything to this individual.

— Avril's a singer and teacher, he was a salesman and crack user.

Liz, a 30-year-old Caucasian athlete and gym director, was attracted to the healthy life style of a Jamaican fellow athlete. In hindsight she reproaches herself for being taken in by his athletic discipline, and regrets blaming herself for his lack of emotional self-discipline and self-control:

[T]he only reason I think we got together was because we both compete...we both go to bed at 10, get up at 5, we have a healthy lifestyle...that attracted me...someone who didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't go to clubs. But there was nothing else at all. There was nothing else I could even think of. And I kept saying, "Let me put it in perspective...some people don't have that kind of common interest." So I worked on it. I really tried...thought I could make a difference... even though I was busy I made excuses to myself, "Maybe I was in the wrong"...I [did] that a lot.

When Liz's self-blaming did not reduce his violent emotional outbursts, her love for him prompted her to go one step forward—be financially generous and move in with him, in the hope that it would relieve his stress, help him do what he enjoyed, make him happy and consequently non-abusive:

...the first reason I moved in with him was because he needed help paying his rent...I was making money [as gym director] and things were OK so I moved in to help him pay [the rent]. At the beginning...we were splitting...then I was paying [it all] because he wanted to get on with a new career...and then he wanted to start training full time instead of working for [a reputed department store]. I said, "Go ahead, I'm supporting you, go ahead for a while, [do] whatever you need to do." ...I thought he'd be happier [doing] what he loved to do...[but] it didn't change his character...[instead] he started blaming me coz he had no money...

Like Avril, Lorna, a 31-year-old Latina stay-at-home ex-model with a 6-year-old daughter, went ahead with her second wedding despite a serious *mishap*. Unlike Avril, Lorna was unsure if her knee injury a couple weeks *before* her wedding was *solely* her fiancée's doing:

He moved the car and closed the door on my leg...that was reckless endangerment...that sprained my knee, twisted my ankle two weeks before our...church wedding. He said he didn't do it...*I made him do it*. I believed him...I was sort of already programmed for this from my mom...I was the black sheep of the family...so I got that from her too...I was the screw up...now he's affirming it...so they both can't be wrong.

— Lorna, evicted and divorced her husband two years later.

Claire, the 31-year-old who shot her husband, was warned by the batterer's sister not to marry him. But Claire was a “naïve” 15 year old at the time and could not envision how a “gorgeous” black youth, with long gold streaked dreadlocks, could “ruin [her] life”:

It began...it should have been apparent to me...but I was 15 years old and I had no sense. When we were just dating, a woman that he was living with, who he said was just a roommate...poured boiling water on him and stabbed him...and I went to visit him in the hospital, naïve as I was...and he said it was a drug deal gone wrong...and [still] I had no question. And I look back at it now and I'm like Jesus I was just so naïve. He was 8 years older than me and was just gorgeous... long dreadlocks, down to his behind, and gold streaked from the sun. And the fact that he was just so damn good-looking, I just couldn't believe that he was interested in me. And the fact that other women wanted him...that he got so much attention...made me more interested. But yeah...that could have been a good sign that I shouldn't be involved with this person. [Even] *his* sister's sitting me down and saying, “He's gonna ruin your life!” didn't mean anything to me. I had no experience with seeing [abuse]...my mother wasn't hit by any man...I certainly never saw it...I never even really saw her in any arguments.

### Talking Non-Violence and/or Sobriety into the Batterer

Some *positive qualities* of the batterer such as intellectual brilliance or health consciousness, and/or some *debilitating habits* of the batterer such as substance use or righteous anger (i.e., triggered by real or perceived racism, corporate greed, and so on)

and/or the batterer's abusive childhood is what either delays the labeling of battering, and/or fuels a desire in many women to respond virtuously and compassionately:

...he was just very angry at everything...and I tried to pacify him...He's had an abusive childhood! His father raped him and beat him up ...he had no home...he moved in with his mom who had three other kids and he was...he just became...rebellious...[but] he's brilliant! I mean he's very, very intelligent...went to the marines... supposedly honorably discharged from the marines. [Now] I don't believe it...I think it was something else...I think something happened and he got booted and he carries a lot of rage!...[He lied about] publish[ing] a book of poems he wrote about me...but he's very angry at the world that he's not getting...a fair share...very frustrated...with training and racing...getting sponsors...everything...and it came down on me. And the more I tried to pacify him [by focusing on] all the other [good breaks he was getting] the angrier he got and it just built up...just unbearable.

— Liz, Caucasian athlete and gym director, he a Jamaican athlete.

Laura, a 43-year-old Caucasian legal secretary often tried to get her 44-year-old Irish husband (who used to be a toll collector on the express way) to seek help with his alcoholism. Since "he never did anything [abusive] when he was sober," she believed that "him dealing with his alcoholism [would] make a difference." But the only time he went to the VA for a month-long detoxification treatment was when he was arrested for DWI (i.e., driving while intoxicated) and was court-mandated to attend an alcohol rehabilitation program. When a couple of the older women at the VA told her that "all the men [there] appeared like such angels...and [counselors] weren't really aware of what was going on [at home]," she tried to get his counselors to address his abusive behavior. She was disappointed that:

...they weren't there [i.e., relating to her reality]. [To them] it *wasn't* an abuse situation...he was in there for detox...and when he finished his month he was able to leave and there was no real follow-up on the abuse issue.

Since he wouldn't deal with the alcohol as a problem, I decided I had to deal with what he was doing to me, which was the violence. I'm going to a co-dependent group...and I'm seeing a therapist. Neither one is covered by my insurance so I have to pay for them. And that's my entire discretionary income for the month. Without that [expense] I could afford my rent very easily. I also

go the Victim Service group [for battered women] which is free. He thought I was crazy...going for therapy. [Since then] I stopped really communicating to him [about] what I was doing or about my life.

— Laura “stays put” in her childhood apartment inherited from her mother; a neighbor made her promise never to take back the batterer.

Laura, like most women whose batterers are (recovering) substance habitués,

continues to ponder the relation between alcoholism and battering:

I wonder if his battering came from alcoholism or if the alcoholism was an excuse. I wonder a great deal whether or not treatment would be successful on him. If he only battered when he was drinking does treating him for alcoholism stop the battering? That’s something I have been thinking about a great deal. And I don’t have a solution for that yet, or an answer.

Although the following narrative by Cindi may enlighten Laura about the unpromising correlation between sobriety and non-violence, she would still like to entertain the possibility that sobriety would work wonders in her partner and she could yet have an abuse-free relationship with him. Had a concerned gay neighbor not made her promise to never take him back, she would have hastened to give him another chance.

Cindi, the 48-year-old American Jewish ex-medical secretary (who lost her 16-year-long job in a hospital due to the abuse), is still “putting up” with her Moroccan Israeli Jewish abusive husband, because he was wonderful until *a year after* he was shot in the head by a car thief in his used-car parking lot. Cindi has repeatedly tried to talk him into getting himself neurologically examined and getting treatment for his anger, but he refuses:

I guess I love my husband because I remember him before the shooting and he was different. So I’m always feeling sorry for him. [The doctors] told me that they never removed the bullet...it is still in his head...they felt if they removed it, it would do more damage. He was fine [after that]. He told me I was gold, that I was so wonderful, and he was so sensitive to me...and our relationship was very close...

The abuse began a year later. He [started] drinking...mostly beer, he stopped working, he wasn’t shaving, wasn’t getting dressed, moved out into the

living room, didn't sleep with me, couldn't stand to touch me, sometimes he came home, sometimes he didn't come home, I never knew where he was...

[Now] he's not drinking anymore...[yet] at the slightest thing that I do he starts cursing me...I have trouble functioning. There are never two or three days that are normal [non-abusive]...

[So] I told him about the program I watched [on 20/20] where this man just abused his wife for no reason until she told him she was leaving, and that he would have to get help. He went to I think a neurologist where they put him on some kind of brain scan and they found that part of the brain that was showing anger was the cause for all his hostile abusive nature and they put him on antidepressants, they said it was a very good drug treatment for anger, Paxil I think, and he was able to function, and he didn't have those outbursts any more, and they were back together and fine together...[So] I always tell him go [to the doctor]...He tells me, "That's not me."

Hazel, the 39-year-old African American, who has been a full time Corrections Officer for over 20 years, and who was talked by the DA into leaving her 17-year-long Section 8 apartment, wishes she had been as quick to act on her abusive husband, as she had been with her first non-abusive, good-provider husband who had had just one extramarital affair. She reminisced about the man who, at the time of the interview, was hounding her to the extent that she was moving almost every six months:

He was like 6'4"...weighed 250 pounds...attractive...very talented...he could sing [admirably] out of this world! He was a professional boxer at one time. [Two years into the relationship] he would just disappear...and he would tell me, "I'm gonna see my son." But he would disappear!...for two, three days! I would call around...and me and his mother ended up getting into a good relationship...she told me, "Leave him alone because he's not being a good husband. If he's going to disappear that's not good...there's AIDS out there...you don't know what he's doing when he disappears..."

And he would want to have sex all the time... and if I didn't want to have sex, he'd punch the wall...curse me out...grab me...[Yet] for some reason I didn't know how to let go! I'm thinking of the cooking together...the companionship... the good [occasional] sex [of the first year]...And I would try to help...like give him car fare...even tried to take the son in. It was hard to let go. I was trying to understand him...I started saying, "If you're not going to come in, call me"...things I was saying to him [that] I never said to my first husband [who] took care of everything [and was not abusive].

I thought that I could help him...that all he needed was love...and maybe his mother had too many kids and didn't give him the right love...and I would show him the right love...coz he was good.

So into the third year of the relationship, when cameras, and gold, and money starting disappearing, and he was destroying property more frequently, Hazel found herself spiraling deeper into the redeemer mould; she put him on her medical insurance so he could have access to rehabilitation programs, even though she herself was “scared to sleep,” had “started taking medication for depression,” was often taking disability leave, and “didn’t know if she was coming or going.”

This was going into like the third year...now I’m seeing everything as what it was...and I [still] thought maybe if he could go into a rehab...if I can talk to him to go away and get help. He went to about three or four different places...never stayed... Bellevue had a place...Beth Israel had a place...I could name them...I put him on my medical coverage...now I can’t get him off!

When Marisa’s blonde hair, blue eyed boyfriend was “spitting at...and throwing things at” her, the 47-year-old Chicana ex-teacher, “would go [to friends in Queens] and then...come back because...[she] wanted to resolve the problem with him in a human...civilized manner”:

I tried to discuss with him...that he should get another room...he wasn’t paying rent here so he should save his money and that I would help him...coz I just wanted ...to get some distance...at that point I didn’t want him to leave...I wanted him to maintain a friendship with me...

He said, “If anybody is going to leave its going to be you, even if I have to kick you through the fifth floor window with all your shit.” I wasn’t going to be denigrated like that...I mean there’s ways to resolve conflict...I was already beginning to verbalize how to resolve that conflict....

Astrid, the African American legal secretary, “first realized [she] didn’t feel safe” with her boyfriend when “he at one point forced [her] to have sex with him while he was drunk.” She hoped talking to him about her hurt and her teenage experience of stranger rape would put a stop to any further sexual abuse:

...stuff started clicking...I didn’t have to live with someone that was forcing me to have sex with him after I had already said no...[But] my boundaries

starting shifting [and] I started thinking, "He'll change, this is a new relationship, once he realizes that I'm uncomfortable [with forced sex], things will change." [So] we did have a serious discussion about our relationship.

After I went through this...mini nervous breakdown...I had to talk to my friends...and I was just really lucky that they listened to me and they said, "Look, take some time...think about this." But NO, what I did then was I let him back in...I hadn't see him for a couple weeks...but then he started with the begging and...again the flowers at the job and *he* had even gotten a *job*! So then I kind of felt, "OK, *that* was the first time, *now* he's changed."

Astrid could not have been more wrong; that was just the *beginning* of the abuse!

She was able to evict him only three years later, by which time she too was evicted by her landlord; she had been defaulting on rent for too long due to her financial abuse all along.

Claire, the 31-year-old who ended up shooting her husband in the leg with his gun, had given her husband many chances to keep his promises to be non-abusive, hoping that she could successfully model to her White mother and Black father how they could have been the family and parents she never had. Only after five years did she flee to a shelter:

When I'd say, "I'm going to leave...then he would be very attentive and loving...and then I used to try to reason with him like he had sense...I would try to make it like a cooperative thing...that we were agreeing...coz I couldn't resign myself to being a single mother. Being fatherless when I had grown up...I felt it was negligent of me as a mother not to allow them to have a father when he obviously wanted to be a part of their lives. I was going to show my father what a real family was like...I always felt a lot of rejection from him [for turning out black-skinned]...he's an artist...had exhibits up at the Guggenheim and he just thought he was God's gift to the earth. My mother basically avoided relationships with men and that was another thing that made me more resolved. I was not gonna be like my mother and have no man.

So between trying to one up my mother and father...it just worked in his best interest...in terms of him trying to keep me in that relationship. I was really committed to keeping this family together no matter what...which really blinded me to the facts of what was going on...it took things getting really bad, for me to actually be able to leave [ten years prior to her shooting him in the leg].

### Mental Cruelty: Insufficient Grounds for Evicting Batterer

When women *do* recognize early that they are in an abusive marriage and decide to end the fledgling relationship, they are often talked out of it by relatives or friends on the premise that all relationships have teething problems, and that for the children's sake, they must attempt to make their marriage gums stronger:

It was abusive from the very beginning...my relatives, my parents they think that if you have kids you have to keep your marriage...they don't consider that if you're unhappy you can make your children unhappy also.

— Eva, Russian, unemployed, moved to parents' for 10 months to trigger reform.

Despite opposition from her parents and relatives, 34-year-old Eva went to family court for an Exclusionary Order of Protection (i.e., a vacate-and-stay away order). The judge denied her plea. He granted her husband the apartment because: he was disabled, the apartment had been obtained with *his* Section 8 eligibility, and the abuse was *largely* verbal:

...because it was mental and verbal abuse. [But] I just couldn't stay there...he was putting me down all the time...it seemed even physically I felt how I lose my energy and I could not live in this state...I couldn't function properly being in this environment. After listening to both of us, judge decided that my husband being on disability...and he didn't commit so much crime...he has his right to stay in the apartment. I told judge that I'm not afraid of him once I'm separated...[that] just when we're together I cannot bear it...so actually it was dismissed...my [temporary] restraining order... judge didn't approve the final [permanent] restraining order. [But] staying with him is so destructive for me that I would rather stay away.

— Eva, then moved to a shelter with their newborn and 4-year-old.

Later, Eva regretted approaching the court without legal representation:

It was not considered as domestic violence because I think first I'm not afraid of him, being at a distance he doesn't bother me, and he's not a danger to my children. I'm not much knowledgeable about what does it mean... mental abuse. I think I have to get more information about it. I told judge that he was threatening me, putting me down all the time, [that] I left [separated for 10 months already] because I couldn't stand it anymore, I was physically exhausted because of all the things between us. I have other proof which I didn't want to bring [reveal]. I was

told [by social worker] that I don't need [legal representation]...she said, "This is enough coz it's a clean cut case." But it was not. His presentation was...not direct lie...but it was lot of lie. [Also] he's not eligible for this kind of apartment because he's alone and this two bedroom apartment was given because of a child. This apartment is under [his] Section 8. That's why I feel that I don't have right to proceed trying to get him to vacate.

Perhaps what Eva "didn't want to bring" up, in court, was something that *could* have driven her 45-year-old Russian husband to kill her—that he brought his disability upon himself in a drunken brawl:

He was drunk and he was beaten up...so right now he collected disability benefits for six months...he says he must now apply for SSI...actually he can work...[but] he kept telling me that I am healthy and educated [so] I can go to work while he'll take care of the children. But I think being an alcoholic, I don't think [it] is appropriate for kids to be around him.

Trinity, a 28-year-old Honduran Bronx resident whom I interviewed in a New Jersey shelter, began the interview by illustrating her sisyphian task of proving abuse when one displays no signs of mental damage; the criminal court judge was not convinced until her husband "attacked" her in the courtroom:

...its not like most places you go and they believe you right away...unless you have physical marks on you. If you don't have physical marks, it is something you have to prove with a whole bunch of paper work. So its not like you can just go into the judge and say, "He abused me and I want an order of protection" and they give it to you. You have to *prove* how you was abused. If you was emotionally abused and you're not to the point that you're *crazy*, its very hard to prove it.

His family was *there*. I knew I could not win unless there was somebody [legal representation] there to help me. Then I said something I knew would tick him off and he attacked me in the courtroom. And it took like twenty [court] officers to get him off me. Coz he was a very strong man. I knew I had to cross that boundary of pissing him off so the judge can see that I'm telling the truth. So that's when the judge was like, "She's really serious about what she's saying.

Trinity was immediately granted an Exclusionary Order of Protection and her 28-year-old Jamaican husband was arrested for attacking her in court. Yet, *two hours* later

she fled with their little boy to a friend's apartment, because he showed up at the apartment on grounds that he was on the lease:

Two hours...before I could even get home and take off my clothes and relax and get my mind together, he was knocking at the door [in violation of the *stay away* order]. That's when I picked up my son and just left. I went to a girlfriend's house and she told me, "You can't stay here but you can go to a battered women's shelter." And I was like, "A shelter?" That's when I became aware that these things do exist.

So two days later, Trinity and her toddler went to an overcrowded emergency assistance unit (EAU) where they slept on the floor until they could be accommodated in a battered women's shelter far enough from his apartment. But her shelter stay was short lived because she was a green card holder and was therefore ineligible for extended government assistance:

I went to this homeless place...me and my son...and we slept on the floor for like two weeks. This was just a holding place before you get to a shelter. All the shelters were filled. So we were there for two weeks and my son caught pneumonia...and no money as usual so I had to stay there coz they were giving me three meals and stuff.

Then my number came up for a shelter...but that shelter was like two blocks from my house and I didn't even know that there was a shelter there; [shelters are confidential and therefore have no markers]. So I said I can't go to that shelter coz that's too close. So I had to wait another two days...that's when I came to this shelter [in New Jersey]...they paid my transportation. I only had my green card for two years [so] I was not eligible for emergency or any kind of government help. [But] my son is American so he's entitled to everything. [Yet] welfare was giving me \$162 a month and they told me go find an apartment with that. Anybody in their right mind knows you can't even find a bedroom for that much a month. I have no job [he made me stop going to college]...I have a child...and I'm in a State [New Jersey] that I don't even know.

Reflecting on the Exclusionary Order of Protection she expressed her regret that the judge did not order her abusive husband to keep paying the rent:

I was supposed to stay in the apartment. Unfortunately, because the apartment was in his name, the judge told me I have 60 days to leave. I thought my husband was not supposed to come back to the house. He says it is his house

so he came back [two hours later when he was supposed to have been arrested for the assault in court].

I was happy because I won a little bit and I was sad because judge didn't believe me all the way. Why couldn't he give me the apartment and let my husband pay the rent? Here I am with no money, my education is not that good because he made me stop going to college, and I have the kid and no money. I should have kept the apartment instead of my running to a totally different State.

[But] I was afraid because he's in prison...that part is good...but what about his brothers...now I have the whole family against me instead of one person. So yes, I was afraid.

[After the order was granted] The police is like, "Well you can go back [home] coz you have this paper." It's a piece of paper you know. Its not like a gun you can defend yourself with it...he can rip it up and still kill you. Then what? He'll go to jail and that's it...or probably don't even go to jail!...because these orders of protection are really *garbage*...I never felt comfortable with it even though I still have the permanent one...for five years.

#### Delaying Recourse to Police and Courts

Many women unwittingly risked their lives by refusing to lose their virtue of tolerance, and/or refusing to resort to public humiliation and shame induction, as was the situation with 32-year-old Ruth, the Caucasian piano teacher, whose batterer is a professor in a prestigious university in New York City and is well known on Wall Street.

...I knew that he had to be arrested...that it was dangerous for him to get away with it...but I was not into humiliation...I was trying not to have all his employees see him being taken out in handcuffs...

Liz, the 30-year-old Caucasian athlete and gym director, was also trying to end her relationship with her Jamaican boyfriend and fellow athlete, without reporting him to the police and ruining his prospects for a better future:

...I really tried to keep him out of jail because...he's Jamaican...he just feels that everyone's out to get him because he's black and everyone hates him and ...so I figured, "He's gone back to school for pre-med, he's training, he competes...I don't want him to have a record coz its going to make a big difference." So I waited and I waited for 8 months and I finally...it was getting to the point where it became violent and threatening...

Marisa, the 47-year-old Chicana, explains that she took a few months longer to *start* ending her abusive relationship with her tall, white boyfriend with blonde hair and blue eyes, because it took her a while to realize how dangerous he was:

I didn't press charges until three or four months after my foot was broken [he stamped on it]. Now I'm more aware of the danger that I was in...but I wasn't then. I was aware that he was being abusive and I was trying to get away from him but I couldn't design a safety for me, to get away with respect and dignity...and still maintain my self-worth.

When Marisa *did* start calling the police, he would lie to them, and they would only "escort him out." So she ended up calling 911 twice on the same day, and when [upon advice from friends] she insisted on not letting the officer leave without noting her complaint, she was threatened with arrest:

I started making them fill out reports and then they got irritated and they said Look the next time we come we'll arrest you both!.

That prolonged Marisa's abusive relationship further:

I didn't call the police after that...and the violence continued... but I was always alluding more and more to getting help...in some kind of way.

Four months after her foot fracture, she met with the Domestic Violence Officer (DVPO) at her precinct. He encouraged her to move and suggested she apply for an apartment at the Phipps West Plaza complex but when she ran into a dead-end there, she felt he was avoiding her:

He felt bad for me...at least he manifested that...in his frustration he says, "Why don't you move out!?"...I go, "I want to move out but I don't have another place!"...and he says, "Why don't you look?!"...I say, "I am looking but I cannot find another place"...and he even went to the extent of saying, "Look, go to this building and make an application"...and I went to that building and they weren't even giving out applications for housing...and then I would call for him and he would always be gone...and then when he'd speak to me he'd say, "Well I have to go in 5 minutes"...so he was avoiding me...

This is when Marisa turned to her doctor for help, and was grateful that her attending physician obliged her by giving her a letter certifying the severity of her injuries. The police and assistant district attorney were therefore, more responsive to her when her batterer tried to break into her apartment with a crowbar.

Avril, the African American singer, too “dealt with” her abusive husband and his crack use “on and off now for ten years” because:

When you’re in love you’re going to try and help this individual... you’re going to try and make sure that nothing happens to this individual...you’re going to be the mother, the father, the sister, the brother, the lover, the friend...you’re going to try and be everything to this individual. But if this individual does not want that, then you need to back off. There comes a point in time when you are no longer gonna be pushed around. With me, being a southern belle, people think and take my kindness for weakness. If you’re trying to assist someone to help them be a man, which at 35 they’re supposed to already be, and they’re not helping in the situation...they’re not changing, they’re not doing the right thing...instead constantly doing the wrong thing, you have to leave them alone. You have to let them fall so low that they wake up one morning and they realize, “Yesterday I had a roof over my head, I had food in my mouth, I had nice clothes on my back, and now I don’t have a thing.”

Liz, the English American athlete and gym director was terrorized into feeling responsible for her batterer’s life because:

...he threatened to kill himself three times! He overdosed on muscle relaxants, mixed boric acid, bleach, and pepto bismol one day when I was going to leave him. [But after 8 months in the terrorizing relationship] I was like, “You know what! You want to kill yourself!? Go ahead.” But I lived with that guilt for a long time. I don’t know if it’s women in general but I seem to want to help more than hurt people, and I take a very good beating for a long time until I cross that point that I’m just fed up... [That crossing point was] when it got violent, when it got vicious and I was getting 16 calls a day at work.

The women who ended the abusive relationships were those who refused to resonate on the strings of loyalty that their batterers strummed, each time the women sought police action:

At that time I wanted it [the arrest], but then later on I felt like, "Boy! I shouldn't have did that," Because to this day he holds that against me...this is why he hates me...but I don't care...he can hate me...coz he was wrong...and when you do wrong you have to pay. He'd say, "You are my wife...we're supposed to stick together...what goes on between us is *supposed* to go on between us.

— Tricia, African American, ex-production manager in record company; now works in a police precinct.

...when I started getting my stuff out [exposing the abuse], all of a sudden for him I was hitting below the belt. [When] I was saying what I felt...[he'd say] that I couldn't say that, that I didn't know what I was talking about, that that's not really loyalty or love coz if I really loved him I would help him and know that he's just going through some stuff.

— Astrid, the African American legal secretary

Even when Astrid took a wee step, from "being silent" to "yelling back," her batterer made her feel she had driven him to the edge of a cliff:

I tried being silent...and then I got so angry I started yelling back. But see that was the mistake...me yelling back...because...that's when he would strike out.

Most women strive to avoid stooping to the batterer's level. But as the violence escalated, like several other women who do not want to be the ones to report it, Liz, began to loathe herself because she began mirroring her batterer's behavior in self-defense:

When I started standing up for myself...[he] just got overbearing. I tried to be more prompt when he asked me to do something...I just was a little more careful. I knew I was always walking on egg shells with him...so many times I wanted to walk out the door rather than...start fighting...[but] he'd barricade himself in front of the door and sit there and start crying. And I felt terrible.

[Then when] it became like throwing things and breaking...and he was getting me so angry...I started throwing things, or I'd put my fists up...coz he would come at me to hold me down...and I felt terrible.

In light of the various difficulties battered women encounter with regard to reporting their abusive partners or spouses, Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, urges neighbors to call the police:

Neighbors should know to call the police when they hear their neighbors battling. I wanted to report him every time he would get abusive but he would pull out the phone cord...or block my access to the phone, and lay across the front door to

prevent me from getting out. [I]f somebody had called the police ...it would be a way that it [his arrest] wouldn't have been my fault [and] I could still *have* police protection...at least I could tell him it wasn't my fault.

Claire's neighbors never called 911 the many times they heard her screams, but several called 911 when her husband started screaming after she shot him in the leg with his own gun. A month before that she had gone to the precinct to make a report by way of which she could obtain an Exclusionary Order of Protection. But her sister's fears of him killing her for evicting him, and her own experiences and perceptions of a racist law enforcement system, kept her from inviting white supremacy to deal with male supremacy in the privacy of her home:

By the way, it was the precinct which is now notorious with the [racist police brutality case]. I had gone to them about a month before for the first time [after 15 years] to file a report and get an Order of Protection [even though] my sister [was] crying, "No please don't do that, when we have enough money we'll move [you], he's going to kill you if you get him kicked out." I had just reached the point where I couldn't continue...you tolerate so much disrespect and so much vile behavior...it becomes the straw that breaks the camel's back. I was willing to take the chance of him killing me. I said, "Well, at least he'll be killing me on the street, not inside my house!"

So I went down to the precinct with my daughter, after an incident when he choked me and I passed out. My daughter called 911 ...of course when the cops came I told them everything was fine...classic! But later on I decided to go down there and file a report so that I could go to family court and get him removed. [But] the officer we got was such an ass...he said, "I'm on duty tonight, you want me to round him up?" like this was some kind of joke!

Although I filed a report, [his remark] just turned me off. I had resisted being involved with the system because number 1...when you invite police officers into your home, being a person of color, you run the risk of getting beaten by them also...they have no respect for you...its just, "Here's another nigger who can't handle their own personal business. Also I live in a doorman building...maybe if I lived in a private home it would have been different...but [here] it was like a show for all the neighbors and the whole neighborhood. And I couldn't imagine standing up in court and saying, "I have no control over what's going on inside my household, would you please intervene on my behalf Mr. White Man! That doesn't strike me as fun.

I wish [though] that I had become involved with the court system at that point because then I would have been given the preferential treatment...and I would have been the victim...instead of being the one who was on trial...accused.

I was in jail for seven days from that day...he was in hospital for only a day and a half...he was not mortally wounded...he's not a cripple...he doesn't have a little dudu bag...collostomy bag to use the proper term. I really wish that it hadn't gotten to that point. But I can't really say if...I wouldn't have been...dead or *severely* injured.

### “Watch Out” Zones and “Hide Out” Zones During Abuse

Most batterers tend to be unpredictable and inconsistent, and take delight in the element of surprise. Yet, battered women evaluate various spaces in their apartment/house in terms of their escape value, watch-out value, hide-out value, and *spaces of possibility* and *prospect* in order to protect themselves from imminent attack:

He used to try to corner me in the kitchen once in a while because its a room with a small doorway. Or he would try to corner me in the bathroom, block my way, to force me to listen to him. So, I would feel very trapped. I would try to keep to areas where there was at least room to run around in, or alternate exits. And neither the kitchen nor bathroom had an alternate exit.

I would be terrified to use the bathroom when he was drinking or I would pick my moment and be very quick because I would expect him to come in. Or I would be always listening for him. I used to have what we would call psycho shower curtains, from the movie, totally from that shower scene, which is a shower curtain you could see through, so that I could see if he came in. And once in a while he did come in. He would either be yelling at me, or be criticizing me, or demanding that I finish and hurry up to go out and get him dinner, or something.

— Laura “stayed put” in this apartment which she inherited from her mother.

Tiffany who “stayed put” in her Mitchell Lama apartment and shortly thereafter spent two weeks in a hotel, courtesy of a witness protection program, reflected on why she spends more time in the living room after she evicted her battering husband, and how she and her three little sons would dodge him during the abusive relationship:

When he was here, he would always come in the bedroom and close the door...so I was always out in the living room or the boys' room...I guess that's why I gravitate more [to the living room]...though I have the TV and everything in my bedroom, I only come in here to sleep, really ...or *lately* [a year and a half after the eviction] I've been listening to music in my [bed]room more...but I stay out in the living room more.

[Before the eviction] I would go in the bathroom from time to time [to avoid a beating]...but again, he would never let me stay away from him...[because when] his back would be turned...we'd be slipping out the apartment or I'd be dialing 911...so he would watch me.

After fleeing to New York City from her 21-year-old abusive boyfriend several States away, Girija, a 23-year-old South Asian American student, is cautious about letting a new partner move into her apartment, and risking another hostile siege of her stronghold:

...I'm at a point in my life...where I've had some relationships that are sort of serious...but I feel...moving in with somebody is like this huge thing....To me your housing is like the last stronghold...this is like my mighty fortress... where I like lay out all my battle plans....I didn't even want to have a roommate this year...let alone live with a lover or partner....I feel ...its just like an invasion...and sort of like breaking down of yourself...to like the bottomest level...taking away everything from you...and its like when you are living with your batterer...they can do that...like on every single level they can really control you...and its just...horrible!

#### Workplace as "Out of Reach" Zone

Participants who were gainfully employed, felt their workplaces were safe zones, at least from the physical abuse, if not from their batterers' phone calls. When batterers trespassed that phantom zone, most women drew the finish line in the relationship:

At work I would generally feel at home because he wasn't there and he wasn't drinking. And I felt that they [co-workers] were really protective of me. And had there been trouble he would have been arrested immediately or there were enough guys who volunteered to beat him up to keep him from harassing me. I always felt work was a sanctuary.

The day I went for an OP was the day he came to my office demanding lots of money. He met me downstairs as I came into work, he never went upstairs. He came in a rental car and waited across the street from my office building. He called to me...I went over there and he was smelling of vodka and was demanding seven thousand dollars to leave in a rental car that he rented on my credit card! I told him no and we argued a few minutes and I went upstairs and maybe after 45 minutes I dropped everything and I went down to court for the Order of Protection, with one of the lawyers from my office.

I don't know that I was reluctant [to get an Order of Protection up until this point]. I had wanted it at a few other times but I couldn't get out of the office. And I guess I didn't feel ready...I think this time coz he had come to my job for the first time I really felt that he had invaded my last space and I just broke...it was like the straw that broke the camel's back. And I guess he just crossed a boundary that I didn't know was there.

— Laura, Caucasian legal secretary.

Astrid stopped "being silent," and started "yelling back" was when her 36-year-old Haitian boyfriend invaded the one space she felt was off-limits to him:

I was still going to work...that's the one place that I actually felt safe. [But then] if I worked late, he was coming up to the job to meet me. He had already developed a relationship with the security guard at my job...so that he could get access into the building without being carded!

— Astrid, African American legal secretary.

#### Social Ties Maintained despite Batterer's Isolation Tactics

Some batterers got their partners to start drinking or using drugs with them to increase their isolation and control over them under the pretext of desiring a deeper connection with them. This was how Carol and Astrid started drinking. Astrid was able to stop as soon as she realized the trap into which he was working her. Carol went into a couples' rehabilitation program with her husband, from which they both emerged sober, and began planning to have a child. However, it was then that her husband increased the abuse and as soon as she slipped in her sobriety, he obtained a court order against her which threatened banishment from the home and the loss of her daughter if she took a drink. Once when she had a couple of beers and went into their yard to work on her vegetable patch, he locked her out, called the police, and had her arrested.

Glenda's husband provided her with home appliances of every kind, even a giant freezer, to keep her from stepping out of the apartment in the Bronx:

All the walls were bone white, wall to wall carpeting from the moment you came in the door in all the rooms and bathroom, except the kitchen. The kitchen had a washer and dryer. He bought me a Kirby vacuum cleaner, a stereo system that had an 8-track cassette, the reel-to-reel old fashioned movie...everything all hooked up together...a big, big TV...anything and everything just to keep me in the house...[even] a big, giant freezer full of food so that I didn't have to go shopping too often. "All the luxury to keep me happy," is what he called it.

But because I wouldn't fill up the washing machine full of water, to wash one pair of socks [his favorite] when he had 78 other pairs, he broke my arm.

Glenda's husband ran a business from home. If the batterer worked outside the home, to ensure that the stay-at-home women *did* stay home, the batterers usually called home many times in the day, and fitted a phone even in the bathroom to rule out the, "I was in the shower," excuse if there ever was no response when they called. Some batterers arranged to have incoming calls forwarded to their cell phones, or had a hidden tape-recorder plugged into the phone line, in a closet or behind a desk, which silently switched on each time a call came through, and recorded the entire phone conversation, so that the women could not be contacted by anyone without the batterer knowing about it.

Despite such calculated isolation tactics, all the women in this study maintained close ties with *at least* one family member and/or friend:

...he was trying to control me, my mind, my time with my parents...he fought with my parents continuously that they should leave us alone...that he was taking care of me.

— Liz, fled to her parents' house and joined the ATS alarm program.

I can't even *talk* to my friend...could you just imagine sitting down and just enjoy having a discussion with somebody... he would not accept it...he did not accept even when I was cooking and talking to my friends...he would interrupt me 600 times or just hang up the phone. [After evicting him she found out that] he called [all] and said, "If you'll call again I'm going to call the precinct and get you arrested because you're hassling us." I didn't know that. They just stayed away [from then on]...and that's it.

[Also] we kept changing synagogues. By the time he sees that I'm getting comfortable and I'm getting all ready to make friends... boom!...he doesn't like it anymore...the Rabbi...the people...always find something wrong...to move.

In 1992 I had no friends...none whatsoever that wanted to deal with me...I was practically alone...alone in the full sense of the word...just two friends [despite all odds]!

— Muriel, evicted him from house they co-own, after 35 abusive years.

Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, eventually started telling her sister and a co-worker “about [the abuse] all the time” and she would show them her bruises “just so that somebody would know if [she] had died, who might have done it.” She also began attending Victim Services’ support groups where she not only learned “to act on automatic” to end the relationship and abuse, but also cultivated enriching friendships:

I have developed a wide social life from the [Victim Services’ support] group...I speak with the women regularly...enjoy their company...go out to dinner with them...which is important because one of the aspects of abuse is isolation. So just to be able to socialize with somebody is very unusual.

In good relationships...there can be loud words and cross feelings, when there’s an argument...they don’t go that far...to become personal attacks. I might consider that battering if it is continuing and totally destroys and injures one of the partners. But on a given take, in a fair conversational level...no.

### Temporary Get-Aways During Abusive Relationship

Contrary to the popular notion that women stay in abusive relationships because they are financially dependent on their batterers, the *employed* women in my study who had temporary get-aways tended to take longer to end their abusive relationships, than working women who had *no* get-aways; though not as long as women who were explicitly or implicitly coerced into being socially isolated and/or financially dependent.

Earlier in the abusive relationship, Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, “used to go to a hotel” to escape the abuse:

One of the things he would do is keep me up all night. And I would always have to go to work the next day. [When] I couldn’t stand it in my house...I would run. And I would be so exhausted that I didn’t want to spend the night wandering the streets coz I would need to be at work. And I didn’t want to sleep at work coz I didn’t want anyone to see me in the morning [at] one job. [At her other job] it

was a matter of I couldn't get access, so I didn't want to be there. [So she'd go to] like a nice hotel. And it got to be very expensive. And one night, I tried to get a hotline number [from] a hotel room and I couldn't find one, and [then] they [the hotel] handed me like a 40 dollar phone bill and it was all local calls, nothing that should be 40 dollars....

Later, when she began confiding in family and friends, her sister and a co-worker made their apartments available to her at any time of day or night without prior notice, and she commuted to work from wherever she was:

...whenever I wanted I had two safe homes to go to...my sister's place in Riverdale and a co-worker's place in New Jersey. I would never let [10-year-long Irish partner] know where I was...each time I left home...even [daily] before I went to work...I would dial some random numbers so that [my partner] would not be able to redial the last number I called [to harass friends/family or discover the refuge]...He would call me at work and leave 30 to 40 messages during the nights I was not at home...I did not leave any of my address or telephone books at home. My personal documents and keys would be in my jeans or skirt pocket at all times...I had a bag of clothes at work, and sets of clothes in both the safe homes. I had keys to the safe homes too and neither place minded me coming unannounced.

I have another friend down in the village that I had gone to once or twice. Her husband was away and came back so I could no longer go there. To her I could walk. My sister is much further. So a lot of where I would go would depend on what time it was and what transportation was available....

Tiffany, the 31-year-old African American who had locked up her apartment for three weeks after evicting her husband and was later put up in a nice hotel by the DA's witness protection program, had several get-away options even during her two year abusive relationship:

Well there's nothing like your own [home]...but to answer your question...I do have very good friends and my family...I can always depend on them. [When] it came down to the point where I had to just pick up and leave my apartment with my children, I would have a place to stay...a safe place...and I would not have to worry because they would be there for me. My immediate family lives in Manhattan very close [emotionally] and near by.

Tiffany's get-away possibilities did not prolong the length of her abusive relationship beyond two years, perhaps because she had overdrawn on those resources

during her previous non-abusive, yet difficult, relationship which landed her in a Red Cross Tier II shelter for eight months.

Cindi, the 48-year-old Jewish medical secretary, has been “putting up” with her 44-year-old Israeli abusive husband but for only two days a week because he refuses to move out. On the other days five days of the week she lives with her ill mother in Brooklyn in her childhood Mitchell Lama apartment, and takes career enhancement courses near her mother’s house:

I’m fortunate right now that my mother is still alive. I stay there most of the time. I don’t really have to come home. When I come home for a day or two it is just so horrible that I can’t wait to run back to my mother’s house. When I pull into our driveway and I don’t see his car I feel relaxed ...that I can come into my home and just feel comfortable and just have peacefulness. For the last couple of years, I sometimes pray, “G, I hope he’s not there.” If I see his car I feel hesitant to open the door...because I don’t know...how I’m going to be greeted. If I don’t see his car I feel relieved and then I *want* to come into my home.

In the morning when I get up...I just want it to be peaceful...I feel, “Please just sleep until I’m out of the house...so I can function. [Or else] I just run out...I don’t comb my hair...I just leave it wet...and comb it in the car as I’m going to work...so I don’t have to hear him cursing me again.

The *one* time that Shazia, the 30-year-old South Asian science student, went to her uncle’s place, it was just to get away from the tension she had caused by registering in college for the first time. She used to be a medical student before she migrated to the U.S. but he would not permit her to study here. In the face of opposition, she ended up enrolling late and there was only one *evening* course still open, so she registered for it. “For three days after that he stayed very angry and he didn’t talk.” So when a long weekend came up a few days later, she went to her uncle’s place with their 8-year-old daughter and an overnight bag. But she never ever went back to her abusive husband because of the intensity with which he stormed into her uncle’s apartment and ordered

her to return. Fearing the worst, based on past violence with a meat chopper, a couple choking attempts, and promises of future violence, she decided against going back:

...from one or two weeks I was afraid of him...his face was like he would any time hit me.... [So] I [had] talked to my school women's club...and they said that if you were really scared you shouldn't go back. That's the reason maybe I was little bit prepared in [my] mind...but had no intention to leave him at all. [But] when he came to my uncle's house and tried to say, "You have to come home now!" I said, "No I came here to stay few days." [Then] I closed [locked] the door in the kitchen and called Victim Service hotline...they said, "You should call police if you are really scared." He was kicking on the door...he would have taken me...forcefully...if I wouldn't [have] lock[ed] the door. So I called police. That's the first time I called police [after 10 years of abuse]...he couldn't believe [it].

When the police came he just kept quiet [sobered]...he said, "Oh my daughter is sick...she's not taking her to hospital, so I'm here." And the police said, "[Then] why don't you [just] take her to the hospital?!" [So] he got scared. I never [ever] went back...I was scared...I had my green card with me...I had some kind of feelings [hesitation]...but I said, "NO!"

Although Sara's batterer never lived *with* her, she started staying away from her SRO, just to avoid his banging on her door and abusive phone calls:

I tried to run to different places so I wouldn't have to see him...I tried locking him out...I tried not answering the phone...I went to the movies by myself...I went to bingo...I went visiting...just to get away so I wouldn't have to be there. [Mostly] right across the street [from the SRO]...but he didn't really know where I was so I was safe there for a while.

Unlike Sara, Hazel, who had been "putting up" in her 17-year-long Section 8 apartment, and then ended up renting a different apartment almost every six months, had been unable to get away from her abusive husband from about the third year in their relationship. Her only respite was at work or at *his* mother's:

[In about the third year] he was locking me in a room. If I went out of the house...if I went to the store...I could almost count to ten and he would be there. I don't care where I was at...he would be there! And I could have left him laying in bed, looking at TV...[but] I would get to where I'm at and he would be there! I worked at Rikers Island at that time [as correction officer] so he wouldn't come out there...but sometime I got off the train station at our stop, he would be there. So purposely I would get off the stop before...and walk all the way around to get home. So he'd be at the train station and I'd be home. And he would get [roaring]

MAD! "How did you get home...by car?!" I'd say, "I took the train...stopped at the store"...mad different excuses...or else I couldn't breathe!

By then I started telling my mother, my friends...what was really going on...trying to find ways to not be with him as much...even go to his mother's house [which] had a lot of people...and [where] I knew he would be at his best behavior. That third year, going to the fourth, I spent a lot of time around his family.

And when he would want to stay [home]...I was making all these plans, "I'm going to my mother...I'm going to my aunt..." But then his following me drove me crazy...almost chasing me around...people in my area would know what I was doing...coz I was actually running, but walking.

And one day...I'll never forget...I just started walking...and walking...and I ended up walking to the precinct...no somewhere close to the precinct I seen a cop car and I said, "Can you please help me!" They said, "What's going on?" I said, "Somebody's following me...my husband's following me...he's gonna hurt me." Coz [by then, the fourth year] it was starting to get out in the open [on the street]... constant threatening...shoving...holding me. So they said, "Come on, get in." I couldn't believe the cops said, "Get in." They drove me to the precinct...and introduced me to a woman [officer] who took care of domestic violence...I ended up spending a lot of time at the precinct talking to this officer...whenever I felt overwhelmed... even at my job...personnel service...a social worker talked to me a lot.

When 25-year-old Kristin lived on or near the naval base, there were no getaways for her, because if she did not go home even one night, "it was gonna be ugly" for her. So one day her mailman gave her mace:

My mailman felt sorry for me coz one day he happened to come by when we were arguing in the hallway and I think he saw him grab me. The next day he said, "Next time he puts his hands on you, you mace the shit out of him." He gave me two big nice size cans of mace. I said, "Thank you!" and I laughed so hard when he gave them to me. He showed me how to use them, "Make sure the arrow is aimed at him, step back..." But the one time I tried to use it on him I ended up spraying myself. It was horrible. I started coughing, my eyes were all red. So I just got in the cold shower and let the water hit my face.

None of these participants were "putting up" with the relationship because of financial dependence on the batterer. Rather, it was because they had the option of leaving without "separation" or "divorce," while they tried various means to salvage their marriage (i.e., the noble mission with which she entered the social-turned-total institution), so that they would have no regrets about not giving counseling, drug rehab, a

better job for him, and so on, a fair chance. Going away *willfully* to get some distance from the batterer, peace of mind in which to strategize an action, and relaxing comfort away from the tensing terror, is psychologically at the positive end of a continuum in comparison to being *banished* frequently from one's apartment or house, which is on the negative end. Muriel, the 53-year-old Caucasian recalls wanting to come back to safeguard her rights to her house, each time she was "thrown out":

I feel very unhappy with myself that I've been thrown out so many times by him...[with] just the clothing what I had on. "Get out of here you're a whore, You're no good... Who's going to believe you [about the abuse]? You're going to be out in the street."

When the kids [were] grown, I always had clothes [and shoes] ready downstairs...in the basement. When he threw me out...many times I [with two daughters] went to friends houses but then I came back...because my girlfriend said, "You know if you leave the home ...he's going to claim that...you abandoned him and according to the law if you abandon him then you're not going to get nothing...you'll be left with nothing."

On a daily basis I would remain in a different place...when I came to a realization that I'm going home at the end of the day...I'd say I've got to go home...its my children and I need to go...even if its not comfortable...even if its dangerous...its shameful that you're breaking a home...its a lot of things that you have to consider...Legally...[he] can kill you, but as long as you left the house you abandoned [him]...I find that absolutely ridiculous...and I saw it every time...he hit me...they never arrested him...and I said, "Wow! The law is definitely not on my side...I gotta be here."

### Locking Out the Batterer: Aids and Obstacles

The police arrested Muriel's abusive husband, at age 65, when he beat her on the stomach with a baseball bat and tried to strangle her with a leather skirt. A family court judge then granted her an Exclusionary Order of Protection and she duly enforced it by changing her locks and permanently sealing shut all her windows, after 35 years of "putting up" with the abuser. Chapter 5 presents other reasons why 23 of the 36 women in this study had at some point in time tried "staying put" in their apartment or building.

Three other participants (Bernadine, Carol, and Cindi) were “putting up” with their battering husbands because they co-owned and co-purchased their houses and were looking for ways to keep their house, or split the proceeds from the sale of the house and/or obtain a fair divorce settlement. Thirty seven year old Carol, a Caucasian pastry chef, was made to sign an abusive post-nuptial agreement by her 40-year-old Caucasian husband of 22 years, which has left her feeling utterly trapped and leaves her with little incentive to adhere to her alcohol recovery program:

He made me sign this post-nuptial agreement that if we were ever divorced or separated that he [would be] the owner of the house...he had it notarized... which isn't fair...because we've been together 22 years...when I moved to New York, I brought my own pots and pans...we didn't have one stitch of furniture... not a stereo...nothing...so everything is ours together...so that's not fair that he's playing that game. I'm his wife...I'm entitled to it...whether we're divorced or not...let the court decide...if it comes to that...coz it was under duress.

Sometimes I feel like I want to run away and go back home and be with my parents in Colorado. But then I'd never see my [4-year-old daughter]...coz he would fight for custody. He's had an Order of Protection on me since the time she was born...that if I had something to drink I would have to stay away from the home...and he told me the reason he was doing that is...if we ever got a divorce that he would have ammunition to get custody of her. So like he's always kept me trapped. He didn't let me take her out [not even to the park]...he locked the stroller up so that I couldn't...locked my bike up so I couldn't ride when I was pregnant...locked my car up when I had a car...he won't let me on a train with her...on a bus with her...so I'm like a prisoner in my own home!

[During the days of physical abuse] I reported to the cops a couple of times...in the middle of the 80s. One time I was bruised all over my face, all down my neck it was so bad...had concussions...called the cops on him and he ran so he didn't have to confront the cops. My boss at one time said he wanted to hire somebody to beat him up and let him know how it feels.

All my participants who were “putting up” with their husbands had been attending Victim Services' sessions to learn about their alternatives and put in place a necessary support system. Hopefully, like Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, they will know “exactly where to go, what to do” when opportunity presents itself:

Victim Services taught me what I needed to do in order to act on automatic. So when he came to my *job*...to demand a large sum of money...I was in a panic [coz first time at workplace]...but I knew exactly where to go, who to see, what to say. I was able to react [i.e., go immediately to court] without thinking about it. I had been keeping a log book with a chronology of what had been going on. So I was really all set to do it. I became educated through the [Victim Services] group.

Laura's Irish batterer would make her pay him to leave, but when she paid he still would not leave. When she finally got an Order of Protection and he was jailed, he refrained from breaking her changed locks, like he did prior to the Order of Protection:

I started asking him to leave since about 1990. I would tell him to leave and it didn't work...he wouldn't leave and would demand money in return and we would go back and forth with that. [When] I would get disgusted...I would allow him to rent a car for a few days coz I couldn't stand having him there. He would demand money from me [to leave] and when I paid it he would have to go to sleep first and he would just never leave. He would make me sign promissory notes that I owed him money...that I would pay him seven thousand dollars if he left by a certain day never to return. I would sign them because I knew they were invalid. [Being a legal secretary,] I know the laws, so a promissory note really didn't scare me and I was careful when I had to write them not to put certain things in them.

[When locks were changed] he took a nail and broke them, so I couldn't lock him out. [But after obtaining the Order of Protection] I had my keys and my locks changed immediately. I gave my order of protection to my neighbors, office receptionist, office building security...and I told most of my friends about it...to call the police.

— Laura “stayed put” in the apartment she grew up in since age 2.

Some women told the batterers they themselves were moving and giving up their lease, in order to motivate their batterers to look for another apartment for themselves:

I told him, “I’m out of here.” And he was like, “Wo! where you going?” I said, “I don’t know where I’m going but I’m going somewhere.” And since he wasn’t working he wasn’t telling me, “Well you can’t go.” He was like, “Oh okay. I guess I need to find me some place to move too.” “Yah, I guess you do.” Coz he knows he can’t go [with me]...if I moved in with my mother or birth father, he couldn’t move in coz they don’t like him.

—Avril, African American singer was unsuccessful with such talk.

Almost all the women, nevertheless, first tried *talking* their batterers into leaving.

Some set a date by which they told their batterers to move out. Gladys, the 40-year-old

Hispanic, who later became program director of battered women's shelter, talked it over with her management company before *insisting* that her 40-year-old Hispanic husband move out. She had told him to move out several times before. But this time she repeated herself a few days later and stopped feeling afraid of him. And, he did move out himself:

...because the abuse continued, I shared some information with the housing manager...what I plan to do...she said, "Do whatever you have to, to stop the abuse...and he'll be out of the lease." That was basically it. I thought she would understand coz's she's a very nice woman...we didn't have a friendship but when I used to go to her office [for other housing matters] she made me feel good. I always looked for him to leave and [for] someone to help me do it. I'm pretty sure there are many women out there that just want this person to leave and they just don't know how to go about it, and they're so isolated that they can't even advocate for themselves...they're afraid to use the phone, to give their right name or their phone number, thinking that if you call he's going to answer the phone. [Now] I made changes within myself so as not to take any crap from anyone.

[Then] I got him out. I just talked to him, "Look, I want you out because you are not helping me financially and I think I can manage on my own, you're not doing X, Y, and Z, and I'm responsible for education, rent, everything. We're not even a family anymore, so I want you to leave.

Since I had said that many time before, that message was in one ear and out the other. [This time] I *followed up* the next week and said to him, "Look, I meant what I said, I'm giving you till the first of the month, you're things are going to be outside and I mean it." This time I was able to talk to him and tell him that. From this like scary feeling I went into like facing him, confronting him. I was no more the woman that used to hide, lock herself in the bedroom, put the blanket over her, tell the children, "Shh...quiet, don't breathe, don't talk, don't sneeze, don't move, nothing!"...because I didn't want anything to provoke him. [But this time, after 7 years of abuse] Whenever he slammed a pot I would just confront him and say, "Do you have a problem?" I was not afraid anymore...and how did I come about doing that? I have no idea!

Whether or not the batterer left without putting up a resistance, the women usually changed the locks, as did Gladys:

I did change the locks on the front and back door. But the reason why I didn't push it with the legal system was because I know he's a man that's afraid of the legal system [from his five-days jail experience four years prior].

Very rarely did just a change of locks keep the batterers away as it did Gladys' batterer. Most batterers banged aggressively on the door. They knew it would embarrass and/or scare the women into letting them in. The women usually did open up to avoid being a nuisance to their neighbors and consequently losing their apartment on grounds of tenant misconduct; they put public good before their own private good:

I'd just be too scared...many a times I wanted to call the cops when he went to work. One time I even changed the lock and then when time came he put the key and the lock was changed, he started knocking on the door...I just panicked so much...my daughter said [in hushed tones], "What are you going to do!? Daddy's going to know you changed the locks." I said [in hushed tones], "I'm going to tell him I lost the keys and I changed the locks." And she said, "So you're going to let him in!?" I said, "Yes." So she said [in hushed tones and exasperatedly], "So why did you change the lock?" I said, "I'm afraid to leave him out there...he might start banging on the door, and kicking it or something." Coz I didn't want him to cause a scene...and have the neighbors hear...and the kids were in the house...and they would get nervous...I didn't want to go through all that...so I just panicked and I opened the door and I told him, "Listen, I lost the keys so I had housing change the lock." I must have done that maybe two or three times.

— Yula finally "stayed put" with help from the alarm program.

Some batterers broke the lock and entered:

I've changed my locks three, four times...I owe New York City Housing [NYCHA] a hundred dollars from changing locks so much...it's to the point where I rather just go get a top lock than change the cylinder...because it's costing me...money I don't have. One time the cops had called some place [perhaps Victim Services' free lock change program]...and that's when they put the sliding bolt lock on...when they came the next morning to change the cylinder...they was going to take the sliding bolt lock off...I told them No, they could leave it there...I felt a little more safer with it.

[Whenever he broke in] he did the usual screaming, yelling, cursing, calling me all type of names...verbally abusing me...I'd ask him to leave, "If you don't leave I'm gonna call the cops again, I don't want to see you get arrested. But they said if they come back they gonna have to arrest you." That didn't phase him AT ALL. [Then] by the time the cops came he would go all the way up to the roof, cross the building and come down into the next building...a building in which you don't see the entrance.

[But since 1995] he cannot live in New York City Housing until the year 1999 I think it is...they do a criminal background check on you...and for whatever reasons...when I asked, they said they didn't have to tell me. I know he had a felony before...so that could have been it. They do it with everybody...a criminal

background check...to see if you're a violent person...or you had sold drugs in the past...stuff like that...

— Lilian, 27-year-old African American hair-braider, is still visited by him.

I had a [male] friend change the locks...[but] he'd opened them. Every time I changed the lock, he opened it. When I was at work, he'd come with his drills and his tools and open the lock. When I'd come back from work the old locks were back on the door. I would be able to get in coz I always have the old keys. I ended up spending so much money on locks!! I have about five locks in my attic...new locks that were all taken apart. So changing the locks was not something to do with someone like my husband.

I think a judge will feel sorry for my husband because he was shot and maybe feel that I'm abusing him. The shame of it all is that I would have to be the one to leave my home...coz I don't think he would ever leave...

— Cindi, "putting up" with him, stays five days of the week with her mother.

Some batterers broke down the door or took it off its hinges. Natalie's ADA

introduced her to the AWARE alarm program when her boyfriend broke down her door:

Within seven months [the total length of the relationship] I asked him to leave my house [one bedroom apartment] numerous times...more than once a month. That's when he'd get more violent. So I changed the locks one day and I called him on his pager and told him I changed the locks and he could pick up his stuff at my girlfriend's house [at the end of the hall on her floor]. And he said, "OK, fine." But what happened was he wasn't far and I didn't know that. [Shortly thereafter] as I was getting his clothes together, he put his keys in...trying to get into the apartment and he realized that the locks *were* changed. So he started ringing the door bell. I was scared so I stayed in my bedroom. I was trying to be quiet so he would think that I'm not here and leave. [But] he broke my door down!

When he came in he realized that I was here so I ran for the phone to dial 911. He took the phone from me and started beating me. I was trying to leave the apartment and he wouldn't let me leave. He slammed me on the table...he was choking me at one point...again I ran and tried to get to the phone. He then started hitting me on the head with the phone...and kicking me. [Frantically] I was trying to run outside...he grabbed my clothes and ripped one side of my shirt. But I finally ran out of the apartment and started banging on peoples' doors...here on this floor...trying to see if I could get help...until I got to my girlfriend's...her sister was home...she opened the door for me and called 911. By the time the police came he was gone. But they took a report...I gave them his mother's address and phone number...they called and asked him to come to the precinct to talk about what happened...and that's when they arrested him.

— Natalie "stayed put"; he visited her after his one year prison term; she first dialed 911, but minutes later pressed her pendant alarm's panic button.

When the women stopped hiding the abuse and began informing their family and friends, one other non-institutional means of keeping out the batterer usually presented itself—a male relative, friend, or co-worker threatened to or actually beat up the batterer:

I just feel like I'm [now] a stronger person and he would WANT to stay away from me...if he knows what's good for him...because now everyone knows as far as my family and my friends. There was a time when I did not let my family know what I was going through...and I did not really let my friends know the extent of what he was doing to me. And now that everyone knows...around the time he's due to get out...I don't think he'll...if he even tried to get near me he wouldn't be able to...because although I tell them, "You can't do anything to him"...so many people want to get a piece of him...specially my family...I don't think it would be smart for him to come around me.

Also, I barricade my door with a steel pole and a step-master [exercise equipment] because my door is right opposite a wall. So even if I was to unlock my locks and try to pull the door open, it won't work...and my kids know how to do it too. The fire department couldn't even get in here if they had to. The only one who'd get in is Jesus Christ...So I feel safe that way...and I live up high [3<sup>rd</sup> floor]...and there's no fire escape on my windows...so he couldn't get in through the windows...that makes me feel safe.

— Tiffany, declined the alarm program to try mediation; she later opted in.

Despite Tiffany's barricade, her husband did enter with a duplicate set of keys she had failed to safeguard herself against. She had not *felt* the need to change her locks because she made it a point to ask him for his set of keys when she put him out. And he did not have to battle the barricade, because he lay in wait for her to get home one evening and let himself in with his set of keys, before she was able to position the barricade:

When I told him he could not come back in here, I would ask for his keys, and he would give me the keys and I never really followed through with changing my locks. I would at times...and then I wound up taking him back...it was a yo-yo thing. I thought he didn't have keys, but he did...he made an extra copy.

The day I went to the precinct to file a complaint against him...he watched my children and I come home...and we had been in the apartment maybe five minutes and he walked in after me...by opening the door before I got a chance to barricade my door. So he had the opportunity to terrorize me until two o'clock that night...because we didn't get a chance to get out. That's when he pulled out a bat and threatened to kill me. I had to ask permission to see the kids. I told them "Just let me handle it, don't try anything, it will just make things worse." They just ate and went to sleep, while he continued with his lecturing...and how he's

going to hurt me...occasionally smacking me...then he'd get tired and reverse gears and say, "Look, lets be friends, I forgive you."

The only way the women were able to get an Exclusionary Order of Protection was to report the abuse during, or shortly after, an abusive episode, and have the police arrest him. But the police claimed that they were able to enter an apartment to arrest a batterer only at the time of the crime. After that time had passed, they claimed that they needed to come up with ingenious ways to lure batterers outside the apartment, in order to make the arrest. Natalie's batterer who was called to the precinct, to talk about happened after he broke down her door, did not go to the precinct when asked to, after he visited Natalie upon his release from prison. The second time around he told the police to contact his lawyer. Grace, the 21-year-old Venezuelan, described how her 23-year-old Colombian husband was arrested from outside his parents' apartment a whole twelve hours after he gave her a brutal beating:

...we had an argument the night before and then the next day in the morning he was so upset and nobody was in the house [his parents' apartment]...he started [abusing] me...I felt pain and I was crying...it was like 9 o'clock so he left [for work] and I was by myself in the house. I saw myself in the mirror all hurt and I felt so miserable...awful thoughts came to my head...I don't want to continue with this life any more...I have to talk to someone...I never spoke to anybody...I don't have that much family here...then I said, "Let me call the police"...I dialed 911 and then I hung up [in a flash]. Suddenly after that someone knocked on my door and said "The police!"...I'm like, "Who called you?"...and he's like, "Someone called and hung up and we're here!" I'm like, "I didn't call you"...and then they're asking me, "What's wrong with you?!"...then I say, "Nothing!"...I was scared that time...I didn't know what to do...the police intimidate me. But thank God they [came] and they *saw* me...I couldn't lie to them...my hair was so messed up...he had pulled my hairs...my neck was red because he was trying to choke me...I have lacerations on my chest...he scratched me...the black and blues on my arm. [So] they took the report right there. I was scared to make this report because first of all I don't know if this could make things worse...I don't know what was gonna be my husband's reaction after that.

[That] night this detective came looking for him...they came to the house and they knocked on the door and they asked for somebody else name and then my husband came out and he's like, "No he doesn't live here..." and the detective

asked him, "And what's your name?" and he said, "Such and such"...and then he's like, "OK, I want you...and they got him out there." I was very scared...very nervous since I was [still] living with my in-laws after they got him arrested...and it was a very sad picture to me.

He stayed in jail overnight and then he was not allowed to be in the house for two weeks...[nor] come close to me and the baby after he came out of jail. [Since] he didn't come home for two weeks, I dropped charges...which I think was a big mistake. I thought by going through that experience he changed and he will not do it again...[but] it didn't work that way...it just became worse...its a VERY confusing situation.

Grace was flabbergasted but pleased that her husband was automatically (without any request from her) ordered to stay away from the apartment for two weeks even though she was staying in his parents' Queens apartment. She made haste to get a job since her green card had just come through. One month after she got a job, she rented an apartment in another area of Queens and moved out with their ten-month old daughter. Her mother flew in from Venezuela to live with her, because her grandmother who was already living with her, was working and therefore unable to help Grace with childcare.

Hazel's *request* for an Exclusionary Order of Protection, on the other hand, was denied by a female judge "because he had been living there over sixty days":

I had an Order of Protection...I had it for a while! The first time I think he really got out of hand...I told him I'd get an Order of Protection. The [female] judge said she can't put him out. Because he had been living there over sixty days...there's some type of law...like squatter's rights...that if a person stays in your house over three months...something like that...they can't be put out ...so he had those rights...and the judge told me straight to my face I can't put him out. [Even though] that's what I wanted, she said, "I can't put him out. If he does anything, call the police...and it will go from there." She said the only way I could get him out was to get him arrested. But every time I called the cops, they let him walk... they were making no arrests...they'd take him out...and next minute I know he's calling me! They were not following what they were supposed to do. They're supposed to take him to the precinct no matter what!...and he would tell me, "You can't put me out!"

— Hazel, correction officer, both 39, both Black, he a construction worker.

Avril, who tried to get her husband to start looking for an apartment for himself by telling him she would be giving up her lease and moving, had actually been “putting up” with him just to be able to remain housed in, and not lose, her Section 8 Mitchell Lama apartment. When the domestic violence officer at her local precinct informed her of the ATS pendant alarm program, she felt positively fortified. She then courageously restated her non-violence “ground rules” to her husband on the last day of 1995 while they were on their way to a New Year’s eve party. The first instance he violated those rules, and did not move out on his own, she called 911 and had him arrested; during which time she had the pendant and door alarms installed and solicited assistance from her neighbors to ensure her safety:

He was fine that day and I told him, “New Year is coming in and if you do not acquiesce to everything that I have already said as far as the things that you are not supposed to do and the things that you are supposed to do, you will not be here, you will not be a part of our lives. I have dealt with this and you on and off now for ten years. I am not going to deal with it another day. The first time that you raise your voice, the first time that you act like you want to attack someone, the first time that I smell anything [i.e., crack] that I know should not be in here, the police will be called and you’ll be gone...now do we have an understanding?” And he looked at me and he said, “Yes.”

Since he couldn’t decide to do it [move out] on his own [when he violated her ground-rules], the police assisted him; lock, stock, and barrel.

Sara, the 54-year-old Caucasian office receptionist, who “stayed put” in the same SRO building, never had her 48-year-old African American boyfriend living *with* her; so *she* did not have to “evict” him nor did she have to change locks. While he was in jail at Rikers Island, her building manager told her about the ATS alarm program and encouraged her to participate in it. She qualified for a pendant alarm because he had been calling her from jail. So the alarm was installed before he returned from jail. After his release he moved back into the building. When he resumed the abuse, “the building management had

lot of reports and they went to court and apparently got a case against him and evicted him...and banned him from the building.”

Francine who had “stayed put” for three years in the neighborhood in which they both grew up, and then fled to a shelter in New Jersey, describes the futility of obtaining an Exclusionary Order of Protection when the batterer’s name is on the lease:

He was out of the house for three years but he kept coming back every time he felt like it. I was very clear that he should stay away...but it didn’t matter to him. Even though I used to try to keep him out of the house he used to break my door and come in as many times as he chooses just because his name is on the lease. Called the cops...standing there with my Restraining Order and everything...they couldn’t do nothing coz his name was on the lease. It makes no sense. The landlord couldn’t tell him that he couldn’t go on the property coz his name was on the lease. I even had proof...door beaten down and everything...the [police] would say as long as they can’t catch him in the act they cannot do nothing. To look for him, they couldn’t find him. He was very smart.

[After three years], realizing that nothing could keep him away, he was getting more violent. I had a deadbolt lock and fireproof door and I still could have gone boom! He climbed through the porch...to the third floor...managed to come in through my kitchen window. My son kept telling me that he seen somebody coming up, but my porches were weak so I kept telling him there’s nobody in the porch. But he came in, grabbed me while I was walking to the pantry, threw me on the refrigerator, and threatened me with a gun ...that I wasn’t going to last a week. He could have killed me and there would be no trace of him coz half the neighbors on our block and in the building were his gang members and I wasn’t going to doubt his words [the threat], coz at other times he said he was going to do such and such and he would do it. So I just picked up the most important things...which were my kids [ages 4, 5, and 8]...and left with the clothes that were on our backs.

For similar reasons, some other participants who stayed put, especially those with Section 8 housing, were wisely saving up for such an eventuality or were paving the way to move to another apartment in the same building. Tiffany’s *batterer’s* aunt advised her to move before her husband’s release:

His aunt said, “Sometimes you can get a divorce and do all these things but a person just won’t get the message to leave you alone [so] maybe you should move by the time he gets out.” Well I listened to what she said and I’m saving money

so that if I do have to move there won't be a strain. But I'm not trying to leave right now.

Tiffany returned her 911 cellular phone when her husband got incarcerated for three years. But she made a special request to keep the alarm system because she was afraid he would use one of his many girlfriends to inflict harm on her, or her children:

He had been involved with so many people that I felt I don't know who he's told where I live. I don't know if he had a picture of me. He had that advantage over me. So I still wanted the system although he was incarcerated because he had dealt with so many other women and I don't know all of the lies he told them...he made it as if I'm out to get him. So who knows! Maybe these women wanted revenge on me or whatever the situation. I didn't want anyone trying to come up into my apartment, or cause harm to me or my children. And I don't even know who the enemy is. That's why I still wanted the system...so that in case that did happen, I would have a means to get help...and so would my children.

If he does attempt to contact or harm her during his three year term or upon his release, Tiffany is determined to exercising her legal options, and relocate if thus inspired:

First of all I will call the DA's office and tell them I want to press new charges because he violated my order of protection by calling my house. I'd want him to tag on another year. That would be the first thing I would do.

#### Temporary Get-Aways After Evicting Batterer

Of the seventeen women who had "stayed put" at the time of the interview, four locked up their apartments for between two weeks to 3 months and "disappeared" (for safety and emotional support) immediately after the abusive partner or spouse was evicted and/or arrested. Even if the batterer was arrested there was the possibility of him retaliating through his "friends." Yula, a 32-year-old Puerto Rican, went to a shelter for over a month with her three girls aged 4, 5, and 11, while the other three, Lorna, a 31-year-old Latina, Justine, a 28-year-old Latina, and Ruth, a 32-year-old Caucasian, went to their mother's, father's, and parents' home respectively.

While the DA was convincing Tiffany, a 31-year-old African American, to relocate *after* she evicted her husband, and before the ATS alarm was installed, she temporarily locked her apartment for almost two months:

...we did stay with one of my close friends for a month and I also stayed with another close friend for about three weeks. But I would come to the apartment during the day to get clothing, coz I have three children. And that's a lot of back and forth. As a matter of fact it was during the summer months... so it was kind of...the timings...because the boys weren't in school...and I didn't have to worry about the stress of them having to deal with homework and things like that...and they were in a summer day care program and the baby at the time always had day care. It was hard...because [the first friend] she lived a far distance, another borough...so it was a lot of traveling with bags [sighs]...it used to get heavy. I would lock [the apartment] and leave.

Some months after she was fitted with the ATS alarm, Tiffany's assistant district attorney (ADA) moved her and her three children into a nice hotel with round-the-clock security, immediately after her husband absconded at the time of his trial:

When he [29-year-old husband] found out I was in the court house [to testify], he left the court room...and that's when the bench warrant for his arrest was issued. So from that time they put me in a hotel...I didn't want to go into the hotel...but they put me in a very nice hotel...my children and I...for about two weeks...gave me spending money...the works... although I had to miss work and my kids had to miss school...

It was a witness protection program...but I mean I felt like I was on TV...like it was a movie...because when I would come home to get clothes I had police escort, guns drawn...I felt so important!!...cop cars, people looking at me like, "Oh my God! What did she do?! Did she embezzle something?!"...I guess I went beyond feeling ashamed...I had to just do what I had to do...protect myself for my children...and [in so doing] sent a message to him to let him know that he's not gonna win!

We had a good time!...I always try to make the best of the situation... but I don't know...I actually wanted to go home...

### Post-Eviction Violence

The nature of post-eviction violence experienced by women in the ATS and AWARE alarm programs are presented at some length in Chapter 6: *Impact of Alarm*

*Programs on Post-Separation Violence.* Of the 20 “at-large” (i.e., non-alarm, non-shelter) participants, eight “stayed put” in the same apartment, house, or building. Even though “staying put” did not always involve evicting the batterer, the violence experienced by those who “stayed put” is discussed in this section.

Of the eight non-program, non-shelter women who “stayed put”, only Marisa, the 47-year-old Chicana, who remained in the same SRO building, was given a 911-dialing cellular phone by the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, when her evicted 40-year-old Caucasian batterer attempted to poke at her with a crowbar through the peephole and simultaneously break into her apartment. Her ADA had wanted her to move to another State after this incident, but she refused to move farther than two floors down in the same building. That was when her ADA gave her the 911 cellular phone for added security.

However, she ended up having to return it because:

...the rule was that I had to call in once a week...and I wouldn’t do that coz I was in such a tizzy...I mean I forget even to eat sometimes [with] the distress. I would be calling them more...I’m not a closed person...if I would have felt that the people that were running these programs really cared about the people versus cared about their telephones. They would ask me how I was, real superficially, and then they’d say, “Do you still have the telephone? Are you using it? Does it need batteries?” And they were more concerned about the phone and [about] me meeting their demands.

Even though the police detective and ADA were *eventually* being thorough and firm with Marissa’s batterer during his *second* arrest and trial, she missed the 911 cellular phone because she did receive a couple more death threats:

When I was gathering evidence for the second trial...I got a phone call [sobbing] saying that he [40-year-old Caucasian boyfriend] was in Mexico and that I was going to be killed [by his friends] very soon. Then, [the next] time he didn’t even bother disguising his voice...he just said, “Look, you’re gonna be killed...you might as well just take care of yourself before that.” And then...a couple of days [later] he went into the [local] Precinct to put a complaint in against me! [The

Domestic Violence Detective told him] that it was just a lot of lies...that he didn't believe him...and they just arrested him there.

Hazel narrated her neighbor's experience with post-eviction violence after her neighbor evicted her police officer husband:

My neighbor [too] went through a domestic situation...her husband was a police officer...he got so crazy...he was a sergeant or something... Puerto Rican...and he started pulling his gun on her...she was too afraid to tell the authorities what he was doing. She bear-ed with it and *she finally got him to leave*...because I think he had a girlfriend or something...and he left out...but every so often he would come and harass her and make her have sex. One day...this scared me a lot...he came to my house and he said, "Did you see W?" And I'm like, "No." So he says, "Well, tell her I came by." Something told me to look down the hallway and I could see the light from her apartment door. I go in there and her house is *ransacked!* And I'm thinking, "She's in there...he's killed her and tried to use me as an alibi...." I went in there and thank God she *wasn't* there!

Sara, the 54-year-old Caucasian office receptionist, who "stayed put" in her SRO apartment, was receiving phone calls from her 48-year-old African American boyfriend even from the Rikers Island jail where he was for five months:

I couldn't believe that...he's in jail for harassment and he's still harassing me from jail...how is this possible! I went to the precinct to report it and ask if there was any way that they could make him stop. Which they did...they did not let him call me any more...they screened his phone calls.

After his release, he moved back into the same building and resumed the abuse, in violation of her restraining order:

he used to stalk me...like different places...I 'd go to the bathroom and the bathroom is in the hall...so he'd be there...and even in the kitchen...and I had to call downstairs to security to get him away from me. He has also come to my job twice, claiming he is there to see someone else.

However, Sara was feeling violence-free at the time of the interview thanks to the wholehearted support she received from her SRO management. He was evicted as well as banned from entering the building. Shortly after the ban, he attempted to contact her elsewhere, but she steered clear of his path, and he eventually stopped stalking her:

Shortly after that I was somewhere else [running an errand] and he came in front of *that* building...but I had already let him know that I had an order of protection. I could have had him arrested there but I didn't want to...I just wanted him to *leave me alone*...so I went out another entrance...and I haven't seen him since and he hasn't bothered me, so I've been free to pursue my own life right now and...I'm currently engaged [to be married].

Afra, the Nigerian medical assistant who was pushed to the ground in her fifth month of pregnancy, and could not practice anymore because of a back injury she sustained in that push, had "stayed put" in the Queens condo she had been renting for some years before she got married. Her battering husband fled after he pushed her because she asked him to call 911. Since she was bleeding and was in tremendous pain, she had meant, "Get me ambulance assistance." But he feared the worst and absconded ever since. While she was in hospital, for several months from the day he pushed her, she lost her condo apartment although she had been making timely rental payments; the owner of the condo defaulted on mortgage payments which resulted in foreclosure. When she got out of hospital she was mortified to learn that her apartment was cleared out, and her belongings, including the bed, had been put in storage by the bank. She convinced the bank to let her stay there a few more months. Her husband did come by once during that time, and she opened the door without peering through the peephole because minutes earlier the police detective had called to say he was on his way to her apartment, and the 24-hour doorman was new on the job and unaware of her situation. When she realized it was her husband, she tried to close the door but he pushed hard enough to break the chain lock. She told him she was expecting the detective, so he ran off down the stairs about the same time that the detective was coming up in the elevator. After that she installed a burglar alarm and would leave it on all the time. And each time she left the apartment she was instructed by the detective to call her precinct and inform them where she was going,

what time she expected to get back, and which subway, if any, she would be riding so they could alert the transportation police. She also traveled everywhere with a home health attendant for as long as she had one.

She tried to get another apartment in the same building but was unsuccessful. She misses that condo complex (not the apartment because he knew its entrances and exits) because it was opposite a court building, it was close to subway, shops, and church, and she knew a few helpful people there. All the other apartments she has had ever since, have been in deserted locations which were previously designated two-fare zones (i.e., longer commute with a bus to subway transfer, and perhaps less frequent service too).

When Grace, the 21-year-old Venezuelan, reported her 23-year-old Colombian husband and he was automatically arrested and given a two weeks vacate order on account of the severity and extensity of injuries, he stayed away from her but then his parents (in whose apartment they were living) became verbally abusive towards her:

My mother-in-law and father-in-law came up to me and yelled at me and screamed at me and cursed me and told me so many things...and I say, "Sorry I tried telling him not to hurt me many times...this is the only way he might be able to stop this...I'm scared for my life." At that point my daughter is three months old and what I tried to defend myself, "What's gonna happen if he hurts me really bad...I mean he goes to jail and I go to the hospital...how about my daughter? Why are you accusing me...you seen this violence going on all the time and you never intervened or tried to help me." I told his mother, "You're a mother...you've been a wife...and probably you've been through this before." And I know she did because her husband used to hit her also...he was an alcoholic.

Clarissa, a 23-year-old Mexican housekeeper began experiencing, what I term, *postural* abuse from his relatives who lived a few doors away, when the judge granted her an Exclusionary Order of Protection without her specifically requesting an eviction component to the Order of Protection:

He just live now two houses from my house and he always sit outside on the steps...he sit there and smoke... his friends and his family lives there. Now when I go home [daily] and [when] I go out with my little boy, then they look at me like this [scornfully], "Oh what she did!"...I feel like stranger...and they say [about evicted husband], "Poor him, he don't have a house...she has all the house." I feel bad about that at first...now I don't care what they say.

And he told me, "All my family thinks that you are no good woman. So I said, "Who is a good woman? ...the woman who lets her husband hit her all the time?" Then he don't talk.

I'm glad I live where I don't have to pass them. I live close to the subway and I don't have to pass them to get to the subway or to the store...or to the park...they have to pass my house.

His sister [age 31] is the only one that I don't think is thinking like the rest of her family. She say "hello" to me...and that it's their [husband's and relatives'] problems not my problems...

She, like many women, had resorted to family court only to "make him stop" the abuse, the death threats, the frequent banishing. And the night before she went to family court he had threatened to kill her and himself, at knifepoint:

...he didn't let me cook for myself and my little boy. [When] I was trying to cook because I was hungry...he get a knife and then he told me he's going to ruin my life first and then he's going to ruin his life by himself. I was so scared...I run to the bedroom and get my baby and then I went to my sister and she told me to stay with her. The next day I went to the family court and ask for an Order of Protection and when I see the judge he told me my husband has to stay away from home...and then I say, "OK."

He always told me to leave home...and I leave my home twice because those times he hit me and I went to my sister...both times...but I don't want to do any more every time he hits me to go with my sister. That's why I went to Family Court...maybe it makes him stop doing that.

When I got home that day...I didn't want him to leave my home because I didn't feel very well to do that. [So] I tried to speak to him again and tried to get the things go better. He say, "No, I want to get divorced and everything." I said, "OK." Then I went to the police department because the judge told me give the Order of Protection to the police to give it to him to get away from home. And then at night the police went and told him to leave home...and he left home.

Although she was pleasantly taken aback by the Brooklyn family court judge's ruling that he should vacate his house, she was preparing to move to Queens, because her name was *not* on the house deed, even though she had paid for the house. At the time of

the purchase she was told that she could not have her name on the deed because she had no social security number. Even if her name had been on the deed she would have moved eventually because his family and relatives lived on that block. The house she will be leaving is a two family house; they rent out the top floor.

When her 33-year-old Mexican husband, a clothes presser in a factory, filed for child custody of their two year old boy, she was relieved that he was granted only visitation, although her lawyer did not show up and her husband falsely accused her of being quarrelsome and adulterous. She understood that the custody battle remained pending. For visitation, she preferred to have him come to the house while she visited her sister or cousin. He sometimes stayed longer than the stipulated time, but since he did not do so excessively and did not violate the order of the protection, she prudently overlooked it:

I told my husband I don't want that your family told bad things to my little boy so maybe it's better that when you have visitation you come here on Sundays and I go to my cousin or to my sister. I get back when he has to go. Sometimes he tries to stay longer...like half an hour...[then] I go to my bedroom...or watch TV.

#### Post-Fleeing Violence and Housing Hardships

Sandra who ended up going into hiding for almost twenty years, fled with her four children the night he threatened to kill her. In the past he had broken her nose one time, her jaw the next, dragged her to the basement the next time where he stabbed her with a pitch fork. She had made several police reports during her ten year marriage, but the police would only walk him around the block. So the day he threatened to kill her, she put sleeping pills in his food and took off with her four children, never to return. She would have liked to have gone to her grandfather's but she's glad she didn't because that's

where he went first to look for her and would have killed her grandfather, if her grandmother hadn't called the police. He then went to *his* sister's place looking for her and almost killed his sister too! He always carried a knife. So she was glad she steered clear of family, and not knowing about battered women shelters, she booked herself into an inexpensive lodge in Manhattan for *six months*, at about \$60 a week (in 1976). She did not step out of there for *anything*; the lodging attendant bought her everything she needed. Then when she surfaced to get a job, he did locate her and would stalk her for some years until she approached Legal Aid lawyers who recommended a batterer women's shelter, where she stayed for a while and then went into complete hiding for almost 20 years:

Six months I stayed in that hotel...I didn't even go outside. The man would go out and buy sandwiches and bring it to me. I'd tell him to go coz I was scared to death. I think it was sixty dollars for a week. I had some savings...I was never one to spend a whole lot of money...I always used to keep some aside.

After the six months was up, I had to come out in the open. I got a job as a bar maid [in mid-Manhattan]...and all of a sudden he started to appear!! He would be there every night, just looking in that window...for years! I told the bouncer...there's nothing else I could do. But when I moved to live closer to my job and started walking from home to work, I saw MFY Legal Aid Service, so I stopped in there and told them my story. I thank my lucky stars I met them two lady lawyers...and they told me about the battered women shelters...and that's what saved my life. Everybody thought I was dead. They thought he killed me; they really did! I know I could have been dead. It was a wonder I wasn't dead.

[Although he's dead], it ain't ended for me; he still got me coz I haven't seen my children yet, its been too long [chokes with tears], it still affects me.

Soon after 31-year-old Marizine's Dominican husband of 17 years, was arrested for attacking her with a kitchen knife, she moved with their three children to her mother's place in the neighborhood where they had both grown up. Almost immediately after that, the young Puerto Rican started receiving threatening phone calls from his mother too!:

There was threats...not from him [in jail]...but from people he knows in the streets [from his drug dealing activities] and...his parents...that's their only son...the mother made threats that she will get us back! That she will get me and my mother back for what we did to her son.

So, Marizine stopped sending her children to visit their grandparents. When his parents missed their grandchildren's regular visits, his mother stopped her threatening phone calls, and Marizine resumed the children's weekly trips to his parents' place.

Liz's batterer, a 28-year-old athlete, attempted suicide when she *tried* to move out. So she stayed in the relationship a few more months; for a total of eight months.

*After* she moved out to live with her parents, she, her parents, and her close friends including those in other parts of the country and abroad, were being harassed and threatened:

...finally the only way I managed to move [out] was by telling him, "Look, we're in a studio [apartment], we're fighting, I'm going to move out to my parents home, and when your lease is out we'll move in together." When I got out that's when the harassment, the stalking [began]...because he [B] knew I wasn't coming back. He called my friends in Miami, London, everywhere... [to tell them] it was all my fault, that I was crazy, that he was willing to help me, [that] I needed treatment, and he would pay for it...December, January and February were absolutely horrendous. My friends support[ed] me a hundred percent...and he threaten[ed] my friends [too]. And I relied on my family, my parents, who were very close...and my very good friends...one of them had the opposite with a woman who stalked and harassed him for ten years! And it was the same pattern. [S]o he was very protective [and] tried to convey to me it wasn't about me and...I shouldn't feel guilty.

Her Jamaican ex-boyfriend even went over to her British parents' three-storied house (in which the ATS program alarm was installed), to threaten them:

B came over [to parents' place] one night after we broke up...to meet with my parents. He sat them down and started speaking to them in a very stern, very English, proper tone, very condescendingly to them...that he wanted to be with me...that I wanted to be with him... and they shouldn't have got involved in the first place to try and change my mind. And at this point my parents knew that there was no chance [of getting back together]. [So] my father...I've never seen my father lose his temper...he started telling him, "That is ridiculous. My daughter is 30 years old, she makes her own decisions. If you come near my daughter again...we're going to press charges, we're just here to support her. We don't like you as a person, we don't care if you're black or you're white, whatever you are, we don't like you as a person." And he took a pounding from

them and then he pulled me outside and said, "We need to discuss this." I said, "No!" My friends did the same. They were very much straightforward, "Leave her alone." And [they'd] hang up.

Liz illustrates the invaluable protective support friends and lay community members can provide a battered woman after she ends the relationship at grave risk:

People in the park that know us, saw it [the stalking after moving out], because it was so overt...he would wait in front of the park at four in the morning for me until I'd go running at six. And my friends started to come with me. My friends asked me to call when I was leaving work, would take me home, call me in the middle of the day to check on me...and I was always changing my route and he was watching that. All my friends...my girl friends...would call me up and just make sure I was home and that nothing happened and couple of my friends lived in *his* building and they would let me know, like if they saw him walking around, that he was coming towards my neighborhood. [E]veryone I know got involved... at least 25 people... always supported me...they're always around me. My friends all the time, [even] now [a year and a half later], call me and see if I've heard from him.

Grace, the 21-year-old Venezuelan, who had moved out of *his* parents' apartment after she had been granted an Exclusionary Order of Protection, started receiving "obscene faxes" at the legal firm where she worked as a file clerk, when she served him court papers via messenger service after he filed for child *custody* of their ten month old daughter. He also called her employer with the intention of getting her fired:

After I moved away he didn't like that at all...I believe that probably...he can see that I can be on my own...that I don't depend on him any more and ...he sees that he doesn't have control over my life any more...and so he went to family court and applied for custody and wants to take the baby away from me now. So I believe...he plans to make my life difficult and cause me any trouble he can.

[Also] after I moved...he started harassing me at work...calling me on the phone and cursing me...calling my manager...probably she can get me fired ...sending me obscene faxes at work... which cause me to be embarrassed in front of the rest of the people who work with me. [One fax read] Thank you for sending me these papers with your boyfriend, it was very low from you to have your boyfriend serve me these papers. [Another fax read] I want you to return my tapes because I believe now you must be entertaining your lovers.

So...I got all those faxes together and the phone calls and I went to the precinct and I told this to police officer and they got him arrested [on August 25<sup>th</sup>] for violating the order of protection.

However, before that, on August 11<sup>th</sup>, the 23-year-old Colombian battering husband had also got Grace *arrested* by falsely accusing her of making harassing phone calls to him. Perhaps if Grace had moved *within* the previous police jurisdiction, *he*, like Marisa's batterer, might have been the one arrested for filing false charges against her:

My family was so scared...they hired a lawyer right away...they couldn't understand why this was going on. [In Criminal Court] I went in front of the judge...it was a lady...a different judge [from when he was initially arrested]. [When] the district attorney request a 500 dollar bail...the attorney that my family hired he fight so good for me and he said, "No this woman has been through violence." He explained the whole situation. [Yet] what they gave me is an order of protection against *me* that *I* don't get close to him...until the next hearing which was Sept 9 [one month later]. Its so ironic...I feel so upset when I remember all this...On Sept 9, I go to court...and the district attorney is accusing me because he does not drop charges...[even though] I dropped charges for *him* the first time. So they try to convict me and declare me guilty. So I really needed my attorney...[glad] I asked some people to lend me money to defend myself...fifteen hundred dollars so far...just for coming one day...I wish I could have that job. He explained in front of the judge, "Hey! you cannot convict this woman, things happened to her..." So the judge asked the district attorney if he has been well informed about the complainant...my husband...and the district attorney said, "No." He didn't have any idea. So the case was adjourned for Oct 7 which is next Tuesday. Its awful!...everything I've been through...

Grace tearfully spoke of the indignities he visited upon her with his false charges:

Once they transferred me from precinct to the jail...they put handcuffs ...like you were a criminal...its awful! There is no sentence... [but] you have a record for life...they took fingerprints...pictures just like if you were a criminal...that's the process. Its really, really messed up...so I do have a lot of pressure, I do feel very depressed, very nervous many times. Next Tuesday I have to go to Criminal Court in front of the judge again...and on Friday I have to go fight custody for my daughter. I mean even though I don't live with him any more I still have this pressure and this harassment keeps going on. It's not something endless...it's something that ends...so this *will* end soon...but I do have charges against me...I hope these charges get dropped. The judge ordered the DA to investigate further what 's really going on in this family and I hope they have done that.

When Grace moved she accepted her husband's offer to help her, just so that her landlady would recognize him if he did come by to harass her and would call the police. However, Grace herself failed to dial 911 when he did come by. He would watch her through the window since she had a street level apartment. Once, when he saw her on the phone for longer than usual, he frantically started banging on her window and entered on the pretext of missing his daughter and wanting to see her. Grace regrets not enforcing her order of protection and having him arrested at that time.

Afra, the 34-year-old Nigerian, who roamed the streets and slept in subway cars and on church benches, had to move three times within one year *after* she obtained Section 8 rent vouchers, because her 40-year-old Nigerian husband who has been absconding ever since he pushed her during her pregnancy, has been able to get her phone number each time she moves, and threatens to kill her and abduct their daughter. Since she has an address for him in another State, and her back injury prevents her from practicing as a medical assistant, she obtained an order of child support and an arrest warrant and took it to her local precinct where they promised to "enter it in a computer and the police precinct in the other State will pick it up and arrest him." However, she was later informed by her local precinct that *she* must travel to the other State, visit *his* local court, and request their assistance. She is terrified about going into his turf and feels more vulnerable after she learned that he served five years in prison for rape in his late 20s. He continues to be a threat because during his frequent visits with his sister in New York City, he drives around trying to locate her, and visits their 3-year-old daughter's preschool with threats to take her to Nigeria. She has instructed the preschool that the child should be sent home only with a certain taxi driver who also drops her off daily.

Afra's ex-husband used to be a restaurant chef and car salesman, but now keeps changing his job to dodge child support. She is pleased that with the help of a Legal Aid attorney she got a divorce on grounds of domestic violence; the divorce was granted despite his absence. Afra has resumed attending her Registered Nurse courses whenever her back injury permits, while her 72-year-old mother attends to childcare.

Claire who ended up shooting her husband in the leg in self defense after 15 years of abuse, had fled to a shelter in Upstate New York after five years in the marriage. But her good-looking husband with gold-streaked dreadlocks hired a private investigator to locate her, on grounds that she had stolen the getaway car. But it turned out that the car was hers, the insurance was in her name, and she herself had been paying the car note with her job as a nursing home attendant.

25-year-old Kristin, who has decided to "put up" with the abuse during her Navy husband's brief trips home, did flee a year before this interview, from east coast to west coast only to find herself in hospital with multiple fractures:

One time he started hitting me in the bathroom, banging my head on the floor...and blood started coming out of my ears. I remember my eyes rolling back in my head, and him saying, "Get my bitch!" And I remember thinking to myself, "No just lay here completely still." When I came around about an hour later I could smell fresh blood. I got up to the sink and washed the blood off me. He was sleeping and I was in so much pain. I grabbed my purse and went to a pay phone to call a cab. I got on a plane and flew to aunt's place on the west coast. The ticket was over seven hundred dollars because there were no coach seats left. I didn't care...I just wrote a check coz I was getting out of there. I was good at hiding injuries: I just left my hair hang and put on a hat, and used wet naps to wipe out blood.

[The next day!] His brother on the west coast calls me and says, "Please come out here because he's here and threatening to do something really stupid if you don't come here." I said, "Alright, I'm coming ...but not by myself. I went with my cousin and his wife. I said to him, "I'm not going back with you anywhere, this is what we need to do: What you need is to get counseling...and I do too because I've always had a smart and nasty mouth, and it will probably

never go away unless I really put forth an effort to try and change it. He said, "OK, but we gotta go back home." I said, "OK great! I'll go back home."

But on the way back to the airport, I'm driving and even though my husband's friend who came out with him is with us, my husband reaches over from the back seat and turns off the car. I see an umbrella coming across my face and then all I see is stars like in the cartoons...and I heard him saying, "Get out the car!" But I couldn't get out because the seat belt got jammed. Then I remember laying in the street sprawled and him just beating me...like how Rodney King got beat...and people were just driving by! I could feel blood on my back and I just lay there crying and screaming for help. It wasn't deserted...it was a Friday night in October at dusk...so people were driving by just looking!

By the time someone did finally call 911, I had busted blood vessels in my eyes...my collar bone was fractured in two places, my pelvis had two or three hairline fractures...and I could barely walk...it hurt so bad to walk. The police took pictures of my face and finally took me out in an ambulance. By then my eyes started jumping and couldn't stop because of nerve damage. And while my aunt who had been through such abuse is saying, "Don't say Oh God now because I told you to stay away from him" I'm thinking "He must love me because he's taken his time to do this to me...it's got to be love." So eventually I'm thinking, "I don't like people really telling me what to do...these people are in my business to much...my husband loves me." So I went home...to make my marriage work. I was not thinking rational.

Hazel, the 20-year-long corrections officer, who had "stayed put" and evicted her batterer, later allowed her ADA to talk her into fleeing to a confidential address when he took her heavy metal fireproof door off its hinges. Fleeing did not put her at any advantage; it totally devastated her as well as her teenage son and daughter (ages 16 and 18 respectively). She has had to move almost every six months because her batterer has been finding her at each address and hounding her to take him back. When she figured out that he was using their dentist and her medical coverage to stay abreast with her moves, she was aghast that she could not get him off it until they were legally divorced:

Right now...I'm still trying to find a place where I feel comfortable...and where this person cannot find me. Within a year and a half I've moved two times! I'm finding out [that] because I was married to this person...he is able to go to the dentist and find out my new address...and I thought that this [fleeing] would be a way he could be removed from certain documents so I could be safe. [But] we have to [also] get a divorce! I [had] put him on my medical coverage...going into

like the third year [of the abusive relationship]...I thought maybe if he could go into a rehab. Now I can't get him off!

A few weeks before this interview, Hazel put her name on a waiting list for a Legal Aid lawyer. She began her interview with me by heartbreakingly mourning and grieving for the loss of her home, in which her children grew up, in a vibrant and safe neighborhood in Manhattan's Lower East Side. It also had a picturesque view—all for a regulated rent of \$500 (in 1996). And her ADA convinced her to leave it all *permanently!*

I lived in a beautiful building for *17 years*. I was the first person who lived in that apartment...brand new...that was my home. We [she and her first husband] put in for it together...Section 8 housing...we seen them building it and we applied...I was pregnant [with first child]...and we got it!

There were two bedrooms...but it looked like three...coz the dining room was like a room itself...it had a divider you could close off...and a window and a door that ends into the kitchen...that was a room! Small kitchen...beautiful shelves. Plenty of closet space...down a long hallway it had nothing but closets!

My living room was tremendous!...facing the water...I could look out the window and look at the beautiful water!...and at night time...the city all lit up! People would come to my house and just want to sit and look out my window! I lost everything [sighs].

I was so happy there! I miss my privacy...a room of my own... that I could close the door...I miss the view...I miss the two bathrooms. I miss the rent...having that subsidy [Section 8] to help me...24 hour doormen, security cameras...I knew the area...I was born and raised in that area...so I was happy...friends, family, the FDR drive park...go down there...have picnics... the seaport right next to it [exhilarated]. I had everything...China Town... Seaport...Battery Park...I could go anywhere! and it was fine!

[Despondently] I guess being lonely I made a choice [to get married again]... he started out good...but he had insecurities that I didn't know of.

Hazel then laments about being left in the lurch by a well-intentioned but inefficient, ill-equipped, and short-sighted system, which convinced her to forfeit the invaluable social capital and (in)formal vigilance she could rely on in her former affordable apartment and safe neighborhood, in exchange for dilapidated housing in appallingly unsafe neighborhoods for sixty percent additional rent:

I never really wanted to leave there...I belonged there...it was my home and he was in my space...he needed to get out. [But] because of this [battering] situation and having these people in my life [the ADA and Victim Services] telling me it would be better for me, safer for me to move...I eventually moved. In that moving, I did a lot of searching myself. I found out [too late] a lot of safe places would not take my son...if a boy is over 10 years old they don't want him there. So they left me to wonder, "What am I supposed to do with my son?" They tell you to leave your home, just leave it... and I lived there 17 years, so I've got 17 years worth of my life...furniture...you know in this place...what was I supposed to do with this? Put it in storage? Another bill?...that I couldn't afford!

They [the ADA and Victim Services] put me for an apartment but the apartment was 300 dollars *more* than what I was paying...in a *very* bad neighborhood. I'm not a prejudiced person...but I wondered if I was a white woman would they have put me in such a *poor*, unsafe neighborhood...where one could walk right through the door! That really disturbed me. I guess you caught me at a good time because I'm feeling...victimized again by the system. I believe [they're] just saying, "You could do this [prosecute], battered women; we gonna help you."...and they really can't help you. I think God is doing something...so that I can be strong and not let it destroy me... not let the system destroy me...because I know there's going to be a way hopefully ...that I will succeed with this...but there's a lot of women out there...who have given up. I'm living in a place now where the rent is 750...that's just too much for me...and I struggle to pay it ...so every couple of months I'm being threatened to be evicted...because I'm not paying on time. I've thought about getting another job...but mentally...I don't know if I can handle that.

The District Attorney miserably failed Hazel even after she agreed to prosecute her batterer. She feels like a complete fool to have wholeheartedly trusted a system which promised to put her best interests foremost:

When the DA recommends that you prosecute this person...because of the things they've done...you agree even though you're skeptical...because you have to be concerned whether or not this person really gets picked up. If he walks away...or if he's not picked up right away...I have to worry... because this person stalked me many times...threatened my children...who were not his children...and put my life in danger...physically, mentally, sexually, and...I just keep running and praying and trying to find *some* place somewhere that could *really* help me...and I went to Victim Services and I felt that these people are sitting there and they want to hear the story...but they really don't have maybe the funds or...certain things to help you.

Fleeing *permanently* from her Section 8 apartment, in tandem with the prior financial abuse, put Hazel in the financial doldrums too:

I remember one time I hid rent money under the TV and he came in and went right for the TV! I said, "What ya doing at the TV?!" and the next minute I know, "He's picking the TV up! I think it must have shown on my face...dollar signs! [laughs heartily]. It was like he could smell it. I had ripped holes in hats...in soles of my shoes...and in touched those shoes saying, "Why don't you wear these shoes?!" There's something spiritual that's keeping me able to talk about this and laugh about it! But it wasn't funny then!

I had to file bankruptcy!...Chapter 13...coz he stole all my money. [So] no credit...for seven years! I lost Section 8...they have not revised Section 8 for some time now...to fit [inflation]...rent is high. I'm on this high priority list...that's what they say...but this just has no meaning...no one tells you too much of anything...and its destroying *my* life. The lady who's helping me at Victim Services feels bad about all that...

I make 24 thousand dollars a year...that's not a lot of money for three people. And I've used all my money, savings, checking, pension, any income that I can get doing overtime, so I can have a safe place to live...but so far I haven't been successful.

The intense and unceasing emotional and financial strain, in addition to the move away from their childhood home and friends, has also taken a mighty toll on Hazel's teenage children. Her 16-year-old son got arrested after their second move:

My son's having a lot of problems...he's not doing good [arrested for breaking-in and robbery]...and he don't sleep in the room that he's in...he says its too small, he can't breath, there's no window...so he sleeps in the living room. When I'm at work he sleeps on my bed." He says to me, "Mommy, why did you ever meet [*him*]?" Now they're like big kids and they're looking at me and going, "WHY?!"

Since her children were frustrated with their housing, since her husband had once again located her whereabouts, and since her rent was steep, Hazel was preparing to move for the fourth time in one and a half years! She had applied for an affordable apartment on a decent block, but was denied because she did not know the current whereabouts of her once incarcerated, now absconding 39-year-old husband, who was a seasonal construction worker:

I put in [applied] for one place...and this lady...she's talking to me...like trying to be friendly...she was a interviewer for housing, for the apartment that I was accepted for...and because I didn't tell them where my husband's living...I was

denied. He was incarcerated. That's what I said. "Where's he going to live when he comes out?" *I don't know but he's not living with me!*

### Batterer's Post-Eviction Whereabouts

Unlike the Lower East Side "OK-I'll-move" Hazel, the Upper West Side "no-I'm-not-moving" Tiffany who was eventually put up in a "nice hotel" for two weeks, illustrates how carefree-ly batterers roam around even when there are bench warrants out for their arrest; while the women remain prisoners of the system:

He was...on the ten most wanted list. I wasn't frustrated...I was angry and...hurt...because...my friends would see him shopping with other women...this was so funny...and ironic...he would be ALL OVER TOWN...my ex-husband is very recognizable...he has green eyes, he's very fair skinned, and he is very, very easy to spot. And every day, it would never fail, one of my girlfriends would call me up, "Guess who I saw shopping in Caldors," or "Guess who I saw talking to this girl on a hundred and twenty fifth street"...you would NEVER believe what...I even had one of my male friends [a Federal Express employer] tell me he saw my husband on the train at six o'clock in the morning...

That's the only part that made me angry...that he was around town...parading...just living carefree...knowing that there's warrants was out for his arrest...he had at least two or three warrants...

Every time he was spotted...I would call...one of the detectives in [the ATS alarm program]...I stayed in touch with them [the detectives] constantly...

Tiffany was dumbstruck six months later when his whereabouts fell right into her lap, courtesy of her income tax accountant. It was only then that the "special team looking for him" arrested him:

I went to file my taxes...and I've known her [accountant] for 3 or 4 years...from filing my taxes there...and every time I've gone to file my taxes, [batterer] and I were together. And I remember coming in that day, and she kept looking at me...She said, "you're T right?" And I said, "Yeah." She said, "I have to tell you something...Do you know [batterer] was in here, the week before with another woman...and he got back at least 3,400 and change." And he had claimed my son, which he hadn't paid a penny for him...and gotten back all this money...and when I went to claim my son they were giving me a hard time, and I have proof that I paid all the day care and all the expenses...and he had paid nothing...he just had his social security number... So this girl gave me the information. That's how I found out where he was staying. Actually the address he'd used, wasn't the

address he was staying at...he gave a Brooklyn address...but he left a Manhattan telephone number ...of this other girl friend he was with [whom he beat up too]...

After Astrid, the 35-year-old African American legal secretary, put her 36-year-old Syrian Haitian boyfriend's stuff in the corridor, he made no attempt to contact her for two whole weeks. She was not terrified that he might suddenly creep up on her because she "really didn't think he was that far off yet." Instead, she began to fret about his whereabouts, fearing he was dead or homeless, although his mother and brother lived here:

...the one time I had got the order of protection, I had packed up all his stuff and put it out in the hallway. I called him and said, "Your stuff is out in the hall...you have until 5 o'clock to come get it." That was one of the smartest things I did. He came and he knocked.... I happened to be on the phone with the domestic violence officer at my precinct. She said, "Don't let him in, just keep talking to me; his stuff is out there, he'll take it and leave." He took it and he left.

About two weeks later I didn't hear from him. By the end of the first week I was like really good, "I hate him, I don't want him." The second week I was like, "How come I haven't heard from him? Is he dead? Where is he? What is he doing?" I didn't know where he was sleeping, I was thinking he was homeless. [But!] he had been in Jamaica for two weeks with his brother and for two weeks I was worried about him...something is not right here...this man is verbally, emotionally, and physically abusive and now I'm missing him. I was reading books on victimization...I was getting stuff but it was coming really slow. That was the cycle. That was my co-dependence.

I would have felt better [if] he would have learned a lesson...got knocked down a couple of pegs. I thought I was doing something. I thought, "Oh I'm putting his stuff outside, I'm standing up for myself...I got my order of protection."

— Astrid took him back; he invoked squatters' rights; she fled a year later.

Muriel's husband tried to use his key to get in one night after he had been ordered by a judge to vacate. He moved to another house that they co-owned a couple blocks from the house in which they had lived for 20 years, in which Muriel "stayed put."

When Muriel reported a violation of the order of protection, he absconded for two weeks:

One night I went to battered women classes. When I came back this couple that I know from my synagogue saw me going out of the subway and they offered me a ride because it was already late...9 o'clock. When we came here [to the house] I saw him...trying to open my door. So I says to him, "What do you think you're

doing?!” When he saw me and saw the other people he just got into his van and...left. So I called 911 and they came and they took the information and they told me that they saw him because they know his big van and they were just down the block. They promised me that the detective will be here and they're going to have him arrested. [But] he decided he's going to Florida...because he knew he's going to be arrested. When he came back from Florida, I call the detective to arrest him. “Oh! He doesn't open the door! We cannot open the door! We cannot arrest him if he doesn't come out through the door!”

Since Avril's crack-addicted batterer had bench warrants out for his arrest and had made threatening calls for a couple of months after he did three weeks in “the toms,” Avril used her Caller ID to keep track of his whereabouts and inform her precinct:

They [police] haven't been able to find him. The places that they have gone looking for him! I was told he was in a hospital doing some sort of program...a drug research program where they were paying him to do drugs because they wanted to see the different reactions of different drugs and this, that and the other. When you are in a program they [program administrators] don't want to help the police because they want the person in the program for whatever reason.

The last time I had a glimpse of him on the street he had gone down [in body weight] from 195 to about 160. He's a beanpole...face is all sunken in, his hair is all shaved off. I saw him about two weeks ago, walking down the street. He didn't see me; I saw him. He's in a shelter. He lives on Ward's Island. He doesn't know I know that either. But I've been able to keep track of him. With caller ID when he called me I was able to call back at a later day and find out exactly where he was calling from...made friends with security and found out exactly where he was, what he was doing, what bed he was in.

Caller ID did not help Tiffany track her husband's address, during the six months her friends kept spotting him all over town, because was using a stolen cell phone:

He's a con artist...so he knows all the little tricks. He always had an illegal cell phone...meaning its not registered in his name. He probably stole the phone and paid someone to hook it up illegally. That's how he was making calls to me.

Natalie felt safe knowing that her batterer was locked away with a one year prison sentence for breaking down her door, and then again sentenced to 90 days in prison for going to her apartment the day he was released. She was furious, however, that, both times, she had not been informed by *someone*, perhaps the AWARE program, that he

was (being) released. To avoid being in Natalie's shoes, Tiffany, my last interviewee and the last ATS pendant alarm beneficiary, was looking forward to enrolling in the VINE program which had just been launched (shortly after Natalie's unnerving non-information experiences), to keep battered women informed about their incarcerated batterers:

I have a good ADA...a female...and I could call her and she'll give me information. Like I have his address...where he's at, his ID number, everything. [But] sometimes she doesn't get right back to me. [So] I'm going to be joining the VINE program...where every move he makes, I'll know...if he's transferred to another prison, or if he's up for parole or anything like that. It's a new program...I think it's the DA's office that runs it. One of the detectives in the [ATS program] had let me know about it...then I heard about it on the news.

I think you call up 1.888.FIND4NY and you give them the information on the person's who's incarcerated...like their ID number or a little bit about your case...if you have a number on your Order of Protection...or your case number...and they can trace the person who is incarcerated and keep track of them...and in any kind of change in their status or whatever...they'll notify you.

However, the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) program is an automated telephonic information system which places, on survivors, the burden of keeping themselves informed of their batterer's whereabouts (and release dates) within the New York City prison system.

### Battered Women's Responses to Unhelpful Neighbors

All the women advocated neighborly intervention via a 911 call, during an abusive episode, even when they were feeling embarrassed or ashamed of the way their husbands or partners were treating them. Many of the women who "stayed put" did so because of the informal vigilance they needed most especially after the separation. Many of the participants approached neighbors who were not spontaneously helpful. Some kindly solicited neighborly assistance:

Neighbors should know to call the police. I...have told friends...that they should call the police when they hear their neighbors battling. Because I think that

if somebody had called the police for us things might have been different...it would be a way that it [his arrest] wouldn't have been my fault [and] I could *still* have police protection...at least I could tell him it wasn't my fault.

[So after obtaining the Order of Protection] I had my keys and my locks changed immediately, [and] I gave [copies of] my order of protection to my neighbors, not my landlord. I told most of my friends about it. I have one at work. The receptionist has one, my [office] building security has one. [I instructed them] to call the police. Two of them will call if they see him—my neighbors. Co-workers may or may not, I don't know.

— Laura's neighbor made her promise not to take him back.

Other participants accepted their neighbors' inaction:

When [he] came in and took some of my belongings...a neighbor seen him leave with the stuff but would never speak on [testify about] it. She would come downstairs to my house...we would go shopping together...I felt we were fairly close. When she needed me I was there. [So] I asked her, "F, when the cops was here and asked you, 'Did you see anything?' why didn't you say Yes?"...and she said, "I did." But I *know* she didn't. She just stood behind the cops and was shaking her head up and down. She never verbally said, "I...seen so and so take so and so." That caused me to have to...get a whole new ID, birth certificate, social security cards. He [also] took a TV I bought, which really made me upset because this was quite [an] expensive, big TV.

— Lilian "stayed put" in her public housing apartment.

Some other participants bluntly pointed out, to neighbors, their cruel indifference:

One time...there was a lot of screaming going on in my house...and when I saw the [next-door] lady downstairs, about two days later, I was very upset at her. I told her, "You know something? I hope that I would never be in the position that you're in." And she said, "Excuse me?!" I said, "You heard me arguing, you heard this man screaming, cursing at me, and you didn't even bother to call the police!" I said, "Ms, if I was to hear *anybody* in *any* kind of trouble on my floor, next door, *anywhere*, I would be the first one to call 911...because I just won't want to be responsible...I would feel so bad if something would happen to somebody and I heard it, and knew it, and didn't do anything about it." And I said, "Ma'am, that man is crazy...he is crazy...and I wish once in a while when you hear something going on in my house...obviously I can't call the cops coz he's right next to the phone...but I'd appreciate it if one day you can call the cops...coz God forbid anything happened to me, you're the only one that knows coz you live right next door to me...and you're not even willing to help me!" And she just told me she wasn't getting involved...*flat out*...that's what she told me, "I'm not getting involved." And I said, "Well, I hope you never need any help...I really do...because neighbors like you I don't need...I want somebody that's *gonna* help me...and obviously you're not her."

— Yula, "stayed put" in her public housing apartment; with ATS pendant alarm.

### Summary

At the time of the interviews, three out of 36 participants were still living with their abusive husbands in the houses they co-owned, but they were researching and developing their housing and financial alternatives. Seventeen of the 36 interviewees were “staying put” in the apartment/house which harbored memories of the abuse, but was rid of the bodily presence of the abuser. Most of these women were able to evict the batterer by obtaining and *enforcing* an Exclusionary Order of Protection, which was usually granted only when the batterer had no tenancy rights and/or was arrested for physical abuse. Their apartments, over time, became legacies of their endurance, more so than reservoirs of enduring memories. Twelve other women were at an address *known* to the batterers either because the woman (and children) went to live with her relative, or because the batterers had visitation rights.

Four of the 17 women who had “stayed put” were *truly* violence-free and had almost no fear at the time of the interviews (i.e., their batterers were not in jail, were not absconding arrest, and were not harassing them), as opposed to four of the 22 women who had fled or moved. Of the three women who were desperately trying to keep their address confidential, two had moved thrice (i.e., rented two different apartments) within a year, because their husbands displayed an apparent predatory appetite fanned by flight.

Only one of my 36 participants had been able to remain in complete hiding for twenty years, because when she fled she severed all ties with even her very own parents and siblings, and the foster care system robbed her of her four children. Also, only one woman got back together, and is actually having a pleasurable happy *violence-free*

*relationship* with the husband from whom she had fled to a shelter two hours after the judge ordered him to leave the apartment. She took him back only because he became and continues to remain non-violent and non-abusive. He took full responsibility for his violently abusive behavior, he went regularly for counseling for almost a year before they got back together, and now they, together, continue to go regularly for couples counseling.

It appears that battered women tend to have various contentions (i.e., personal internal debates and strife, perhaps between their mind and soul) regarding their identity, and consequently, regarding the strategies they adopt, to end the violence and/or the relationship. Their contentions often stem from the *combination* of the generally *demanding* “woman roles” of care-giver, mother, home-maker, bread-winner, career-builder, better future-builder, and so on, in *addition* to, and often times in *opposition* to, the *traumatizing* “survivor roles” of family-breaker, safe environment-seeker, healing environment-maker, life-defender, crime-reporter, child-protector, secret-sharer, scar-bearer, and so on. Also, they have the additional psychological burden of being identified as “the problem” and “the solution” by not only their batterers, but often also by their family, friends, and others who identify themselves as “well-wishers.”

Similarly, given their myriad and conflicting roles, the kinds of contentions the participants tended to have, regarding what qualities constitute a safe place from which to launch a violence-free future, tended to be primarily, not exclusively, contingent upon:

- their batterers’ tailored *surveillance* and/or *isolation* tactics;
- the value the women placed on private vs. public *space*, and private vs. public *good*;
- and their simultaneous need for connectedness and anonymity, change and stability, remembering and forgetting.

When the batterer's surveillance operations did not extend as far as their workplace, the woman kept her job even if she fled her apartment. Such was the case with Hazel, the corrections officer. She was certain that her fleeing every six months was not on account of her steady job, but was because of her inability to get his name of her medical insurance. Given that she allowed the "domestic violence experts" to talk her into fleeing her 17-year-long apartment with vigilant doorman and neighbors, she was rightly determined not to get talked into giving up her 20-year-long job. As soon as she would get a call from him on her new telephone number, she would move again, because she knew it would not be too long before he figured out how to get to her apartment. But with each move her teenage children became more disturbed. That usually re-ignited her regrets and grief at the loss of home, i.e., their anchor in the world which had a considerably wide circumference given the Section 8 low rent; prime location on the water front; reputable neighborhood school; and long, trusted, dependable friendships.

Constant surveillance tended to bring about isolation of the woman, even if obvious isolation tactics were not being employed by the batterer. This was due to the woman not spending time with others, so as not to implicate or endanger others, even when at school or at work. Also, when suggesting social visits with the batterer, the woman tended to opt for visits to his family more often than hers, because if they were visiting her family he tended to intensify his surveillance and/or become increasingly suspicious and hostile towards her parents and/or siblings. Only women who were certain they would not be endangering their parents, moved to their parents' place after ending the abusive relationship. Some lived with their parents for well over two years.

For all the participants, their home during the abuse had more of the qualities of a public space than a private space. This was largely because: (i) they could not *be themselves*, since they were under the constant terrifying scrutiny of (or fearful anticipation of scrutiny by) their batterers, and (ii) it was the site-of-a-crime; and cessation of the crime or escape from it was not easy with or without public intervention. Given the high likelihood of post-separation violence, the women had to consider the possibility that their home would continue to have some degree of publicness for private good. The goodness of outcome, from seeking public intervention, is never assured, both, in terms of physical safety, and in terms of supportive response for the women and children, from public agencies such as children protective services.

The women in the *pilot* Alternative to Shelter alarm program on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, did understand that they were risking their personal security, by participating in a program which had not yet been established (i.e., empirically confirmed) as a public good. In fact, a couple of women in another similar demonstration program had been killed, despite the pendant alarm.

Colette, who was being abused by her son and daughter-in-law, had to consider the safety of her hair salon clients (a public good), given that her hair salon (a public space) was in the front room of her house (a private space). With the goodwill of her clients and neighbors, she felt affirmed in her reluctance to move and give up her livelihood. The alarm program and the protective efforts of her two other children, helped her stave off the fear and guilt of endangering her clients too. Her other son often brought his friends to her place to reduce her feelings of vulnerability and isolation.

Even without the variable of the alarm system, or the publicness of seeking police and court interventions, the women, who were evicting their batterers, were concerned about the nuisance their batterers would cause their neighbors or the management/landlord, by banging the door and/or breaking it down. Women who “stayed put” valued their personal safety as well as their relations with neighbors, and therefore decided to engage in personal disclosure, in order to solicit public (i.e., neighborly) good-will and protection. By so doing, their public social network inadvertently widened the circumference of their private space (i.e., their home; their safe space). Liz’s home-range extended over to Central Park, given the protection extended to her, by other athletes for almost three years. Her home-range also extended to her workplaces, because her batterer was banned from going to the two gyms in which she worked as manager.

The relinquishing of personal privacy for personal security, remained a personal choice. The degree to which they engaged in personal disclosure was proportional to the extent to which they felt safe under public scrutiny. Since support from public programs is not guaranteed for women, and penalties such as loss of children to the system, or loss of child custody to the batterer, are not uncommon, some battered women feel they have absolutely no home—no safe place—neither in the privacy of their dwelling, nor in the publicness of the system. When the batterer files false charges or petitions for child custody the woman is figuratively dragged to the most public of spaces where she has no control of the kinds of personal information revealed (much of it fabricated, but some true), and where she is robbed of her prerogative to keep particular information private.

One participant who had valuable social neighborhood networks (i.e., relatives, place of worship, and a vibrant community of her ethnic group), preferred to flee rather

than “stay put” because of the pro-marriage mentality in her ethnic community, and the high probability of getting ostracized, for calling the police on her butcher-knife wielding husband. She, therefore, preferred to use social networks in her university community to obtain dormitory housing, rather than “stay put” in her residential community where she had helping organizations, such as a house of worship (a public space for public good). Although she was friendly with several worshippers there, she was certain they would amount to no private good for her, because of their pro-marriage stance. On the contrary, had she “stayed put” she would have been considered a public nuisance; a bad influence to young girls in her ethnic community.

The next chapter illustrates that the women who “stayed put” had little need for *anonymity* (i.e., a shield from violence and shame), when they had a good measure of protective connectedness. With that same shield, they were able to bring about *change* (i.e., end their relationship, but not always the violence), without forfeiting their *stability* (i.e., their long term housing, long-term jobs). Although most of the women who “stayed put” were constrained by economics (as were those who fled or “put up”), their socio-environmental connectedness they felt, toward their home and neighborhood, was deep, and reason enough to “stay put.” To drive this point home, Avril said that even if she won the lottery tomorrow, she would keep the apartment, despite the unpleasant memories. She would use it as a summer home, and occasionally in winter, when she wanted a white Christmas. The unpleasant memories would help her *remember* that which she must not *forget*—her continued vulnerability to her batterer.

## Chapter 5

## HOME-MAKING BY BATTERED WOMEN WHO “STAYED PUT”

The focus on the meanings and experiences of home and home-making for battered women stems from the reality that some battered women want to keep staying in the same house, apartment, or neighborhood in which they were battered, even though these places may not only evoke memories of the abuse but *may* put them at risk of persistent, blatant, treacherous, insidious, sinister, or deadly forms of post-separation violence from the batterer himself, or his agents.

This raises several questions of interest to an environmental social scientist. I have chosen to address three questions:

- what are some reasons for “staying put” (i.e., keep staying in the same apartment/house after evicting the batterer) at tremendous risk to their lives?
- how do they handle any unpleasantness, discomfort, fear, and “inheritance of ghosts and/or contamination of place” (Fine, 1997)?
- what implications does this have for the “concept of home” given that home is considered a place where one *seeks refuge* from outside violence and where one is *able to exercise control over access*?

At the time of the interview, 17 of the 36 participants, were “staying put” minus the batterer, in the apartment, house, or building in which they were battered. Four others had “permanently” evicted their batterers at an earlier point, but at the time of the interview, were no longer living in the site in which they were abused. Of these four women Francine and Astrid relocated due to the batterers exercising their tenant rights. Grace moved with their baby even though the judge ordered him out, because they had all been living with *his* parents. Afra was forced to move with their newborn because the

bank foreclosed on the condo she had been renting; even though she had been duly paying her rent, the condo owner had been defaulting on the mortgage payments.

### Reasons for “Staying put”

Laura, the first woman to respond to my Participants Wanted flyer, had made her batterer move out 18 months prior to the interview. She expressly told me that her motivation for sharing her experiences with me stems from her belief that the findings of academic research are seriously considered when policy and legislation are being formulated and amended. She strongly approved of my objective to impress upon policymakers and community residents the need to support women who, like her, desire *not* to suffer the loss of **socio-environmental connectedness** as a necessary accompaniment to the loss of intimate relationship. The **layering of place-based memories** is what sustains Laura in her decision to “stay put” in the site of her abuse:

I feel at home in my current housing and neighborhood because that is where I lived since the age of 2. The memories of the abuse are balanced out by the memories of the many childhood Christmases in this apartment, the voices of the family while I was growing up, the trips to and from school, the meals my mother cooked in this very kitchen.

Yes I do [have unpleasant memories in various rooms] and they’re related to his bad behavior and him trying to corner me in these rooms. But also I remember all these rooms without him. So I’ve tried not to let him take them away from me—these rooms, the use of these rooms, my neighborhood, or friends that I had before I knew him.

Tricia, who has a scar of her battering husband’s wedding ring on her face, refused to flee the home which she had **acquired painstakingly and over time**, even though her parents “wanted [her] to move where he can’t find [her]” when “he told [her] parents he was going to kill [her]. She was *not* in any special police or DA protection program. Yet:

I REFUSED! I said, “No, this is my home...I bought this...this is a co-op...I took bank loans...I paid back banks for this...nobody’s driving me out of my home...I got this before I got together with him...I’m going to keep it...and I’m going to fight to keep it...I’m not letting him drive me out of here...God is going to take care of this. And God did deliver me from that situation...I’m still here and I’m comfortable...and my home is nice...it’s very comfortable...I decorated it [with family help] the way I wanted it...and this is my home.

Tricia had lived a long time (13 years) in “her” apartment and had not added his name to the deed. She had lived even longer in that very same Mitchell Lama Co-op. At age 18 she owned her own studio apartment there, while her parents lived right across the street in a public housing project. Later she moved into a one bedroom and when she was pregnant, she was fortunate to get a two bedroom terrace apartment, with two bathrooms. Her monthly maintenance fee was \$500 at the time of interview (in 1997).

Likewise, Lorna who used to be a fashion model in her teens, chose to “stay put” in her apartment with the help of the alarm system, in the face of on-going long-distance terrorism by her evicted batterer, not only because she grew up in that building, but also because she had family very near by:

This is my home!...I grew up in this building...my mom’s been in this building for almost 27 years...I was four when I moved here [to this building]...and if there’s any place I’m going to feel safe...rather than move out of this neighborhood...this is better for me...my cousin lives right upstairs on the 15th floor on this side and my mom lives on the other side of this *same* building.

Lorna “stayed put” also because of the affordable maintenance fees since the Mitchell Lama Cooperatives are funded by New York State, and because of the economic constraints which come with the territory when the sole breadwinner is evicted from the premises, and is no longer a financial contributor, but moreover, continues to be a health hazard despite their divorce:

Basically I can't afford to go anywhere else. I wasn't working when we were together. [T]he divorce was settled on an agreement that I keep everything in the apartment *and* the apartment...and he doesn't have to pay alimony or anything...I don't want that link...the interaction. I don't want to be stuck trying to fight for money and not being able to pay my rent. He's the one living home with his mother and father...he's got a 40-thousand-dollar-a-year job...he's got two cars...and I had nothing...I'm on welfare right now...because it's the only way that I can support my daughter...I can't afford to go back to work[because then] I'll have no medical...and [I'll] have to dish out more money for after-school programs and a sitter.

When I first had him arrested, he threatened, "Enjoy the apartment while you can." He was convinced he would get the apartment...not that he wanted the apartment. He wanted to give up the apartment coz he didn't like being in the city. His family is in Brooklyn...he wants to be with his family. My family is here...and quite frankly the rent is only 469...I can't afford to live anywhere else.

Laura, like Lorna, mentions later in the interview, her *financial* reason for "staying put"—her apartment is rent-stabilized, and even though her landlord wanted her to vacate it, she, being a legal secretary, was legally able to inherit her mother's lease with the same low rent agreement her mother had:

...\$994 and change. I can pay the rent quite comfortably...[but] if I go to therapy groups, which cost me up to \$350 a month, then I have to be extremely frugal to be able to pay the rent.

Like Tricia, Avril, the African American singer who performs around the world, felt a *sense of entitlement* to her apartment, but she would not have taken the risk of "staying put" had she not been offered the *alarm system* by her local police precinct:

Before knowing about the program I would move out of this State. [But after being introduced to the alarm program] I chose to stay home, in my home, and make him leave because it's just that...it's my home. I don't feel like my son and I *need to*, nor did we *have to*, relocate. We didn't cause anything, we didn't start anything, and *he did*. So because he was the problem he was the one that had to leave. Since he couldn't decide to do it on his own, the police assisted him—lock, stock, and barrel...[Even] if I win the lottery tomorrow...I would pay up the rent on this apartment for a year...go some place else [warmer than New York] and

this apartment will be a place that I will come to probably in the summer time or...when I want to have a white Christmas.

Avril goes on to express the **value of environmental memory cues**. Notice though, that she does not claim any *inherent* positive value of memories, but rather implies the need for, and encourages, a transformational attitude in battered women:

He threw me across the video cabinet and knocked it down. So every time I look at the video cabinet, *that* I'm going to remember. My son even remembers *that*...he has talked about it. [Then there's] the sofa...that's where he used to sit to get high all night. I still use it. *Its mine!* I bought it, I paid for it; its mine. So I don't care. *I am not going to let his downfall be my downfall.* I am happy, I am secure... my son is happy, we run through here and play...

...its just like you're looking at pictures of an old place that you lived [in], where you experienced certain things.... Its going to bring back the memories but you can't let the memories affect you. If anything, *you have to make the memories make you stronger.*

**Self-fortification** is precisely what seems to be Muriel's motivation for "staying put" in what she refers to as "a horror home." Up until a few months prior to this interview, her house was a reservoir of 35 years of exclusively unpleasant, humiliating, and terrifying memories. Yet Muriel, a 53-yr-old Jewish Israeli American, intends to hold her ground for as long as the financial institutions lend her their services at affordable rates. Her income was forcibly tied up in various joint business ventures with her 65-yr-old battering husband. At the time of my interview, their joint venture was buying and renting six-unit apartment buildings. But, she had no income in hand because he always instructed tenants to pay rent directly and solely to him. Thus, having no access to funds and properties until the divorce settlement, she had not been able to make the \$1750 monthly mortgage payments, and the banks were threatening foreclosure. Nevertheless, Muriel was very relieved to be able to "stay put" in her home of 20 years when a criminal

court judge ordered her battering husband to Vacate and Stay Away from her after he beat her in the stomach with a baseball bat and tried to choke her with a leather skirt. Even though he lives a couple blocks down in another house which they co-own, which makes it necessary for her to be alert and take long round about routes to the bus, subway or synagogue, Muriel's self-empowering intent on "staying put" in her "horror home" stems not so much from the verbal, physical, financial and other abuse, but more so from the equally frequent banishment from home (which I categorize as *residential abuse*):

I feel that finally nobody can throw me out of here...and this I think is most good for me. I feel very unhappy with myself that I've been thrown out so many times by him...[with] just the clothing what I had [on], "Get out of here you whore... you are nobody...who's going to believe you? ...you're going to be in the street." He cannot do [that] *this* time...he *cannot*. By staying here I think I'm going to prove to myself that I'm not a person you can play around with whenever you want...throw me [out] or bring me back...like he did...I survived the situation...

Muriel kept coming back to this house because she wanted there to be absolutely no legal grounds on which he could shunt her with a one-way ticket onto the express train headed for destitution:

Home means a place that you really love...[where] you're protected...you raise your children...a place that you wanna come to at the end of the day. [This] was definitely not a place that *felt* home...it was more dangerous to be in the house than outside in the street...but I was raising children and this was my home.

I was afraid to leave because... my girlfriend said, "He's a smart fellow. If you leave the home, he's going to claim that you abandoned him. And according to the law, if you abandon him, then you're not going to get nothing...you'll be left with nothing."

...[he] can kill you, yet as long as you left the house, you abandoned the person...I find it absolutely ridiculous...I [also] knew if I'm going to a shelter he's going to find me wherever I was...it was no use.

Lorna's concierge husband too entertained the idea of rendering her homeless:

At one point in the beginning he didn't care if I was out in the street or not...coz [he maintained] it was my fault.

Justinia, a 28-yr-old Hispanic health care worker, who figuratively lived on the other side of the tracks—i.e., in public housing, recognized and cashed in on the **social policing** benefits of her familiar residential environment, even though she did not have family or relatives living near by. She “stayed put” with her two sons aged 8 and 12, and decided *not* to apply for a confidential emergency transfer to another public housing, even though her batterer who “got married, divorced, and married [a third time]...[was] still harassing” her from afar:

I don't want a transfer because you know the projects nowadays are not a good place...OK here I'm not safe from [batterer], but around [this area] they [even the shop attendants] know my children and everything, and if I need help I know that I can get it. As bad as the projects are...if I move to some [other public housing project] where I don't know *anybody*...my children won't be safe. Somebody just got killed next door, and it happened while I was working. God knows it could have happened when my children were home. So to move from one unsafe area because I'm trying to run away from someone...but in reality I'm moving to another unsafe area where I'm not going to know nobody...I'd rather stay here... so I'd rather just save my money or try to get help. I am actually trying to get Section 8...I've been on the waiting list for a year...in Westchester though...coz if I can get that then I can get an apartment and still be able to afford it.

Marisa, the 47-yr-old Chicano woman, “stayed put” in her single room occupancy (SRO) apartment because she secured the low rent Manhattan apartment (\$198) with much difficulty after she lost her Board of Education job due to severe cutbacks in 1994 when Giuliani was voted in as Mayor. She had requested her 40-yr-old boyfriend (an actor) to get the lease in his name (because her credit rating had plummeted), with a promise to transfer the lease to her name at the earliest possible time. Within two months she was able to transfer the lease to her name. Shortly thereafter, her tall, white boyfriend

with blonde hair and blue eyes not only stopped paying his share of the rent but also became physically abusive. When he refused to leave, she started trying to get away from him but “couldn’t design a safety plan to get away with respect and dignity...and still maintain [her] self-worth.” When he broke her leg in two places by stamping on it, she went away for two months to live with friends in Queens. She returned to coexist with her abusive boyfriend only to be able to move out to another apartment as soon as one became available in the same building. A month later when he tried to break into her new apartment with a crowbar at 3am, shaking and trembling she kept **holding her position** by moving to yet another apartment in the *same* building

...[despite] the terrorization from the death threats and the attacks. I was holding my position for myself...I’m not the one against his welfare...I’m not the one that hurt him...I’m not going to be intimidated by him to run and hide...and I refused to change my phone number.

...and when he attacked me with the crowbar...[tried to open] the door with the crowbar...I moved [again] down here [two floors lower]...the DA came and took pictures [of the damage to the door]... they were wanting me to move to another State...and then is when they gave me the [911] cell phone [for added security].

The SRO apartment which Marisa had initially vacated eventually became vacant and the building management offered her the option of moving back into it. Although it was a much larger apartment, Marisa refused it because it held memories of the abuse:

That room subsequently became vacant...and they offered it to me...I wouldn’t take it...even though its twice or three times bigger than this room...I just felt it reminded me too much of the battles that I had there...When I [had] left [it]...I [had] felt RELIEF!

Given that she was still living in the same walk-up SRO building, the entrance to the building and the stairs were “more like a win” that she “wanted to feel” since she

“fought for this place.” She wonders what her future would have been had she accepted her assistant district attorney’s offer. She concludes she would have surely felt defeated:

...the DA’s Protection Program...offered to relocate me anywhere in the country where I wanted to go...so then they turned around and they blamed me, “Well if you don’t wanna go...its your problem.” They didn’t understand...or they did understand but they saw the futility of it...or how much it cost holding that position...but I held it...and it stopped...he’s not coming at me...

I may have been able to comfort myself...physically...maybe I’d have a bigger room...or with a bathroom...or with a kitchen...or just not been in such dismal conditions...maybe I would be repaired better...but I’d still remain with that sense of insecurity and sense of inferiority.

When I went to her apartment to do the interview, Marisa was in the process of building herself a loft and shelves. She had purchased wood from a lumber yard and had even hauled it on the bus and up the stairs all by herself. She hopes that “holding her position” and attempting to make a home amidst her “dismal conditions” will prove emotionally worthwhile and psychologically rewarding:

...so the work that I’m doing now I consider very serious work for myself...to show concretely...I’ll see how I feel when I get these shelves up...see if I can be generative in it...or at least go on to the process of healing...

Had I interviewed Hazel, the correction officer, before Marisa, I would have been able to share, with Marisa, Hazel’s lamentations about the trust she put in the DA’s promise to move her to safety. She not only mourns the loss of her 17-year-long affordable apartment in a safe conveniently located neighborhood in Manhattan with supportive neighbors and doormen, but despairs at having to find a new apartment every six months when her hounding husband locates her.

Tiffany, the African American secretary, “stayed put” because before this abusive relationship, she had doubled up with her mother and aunt and had been homeless for

eight months after her first nonabusive marriage ended. The affordable Mitchell Lama apartment, with 24-hour doorman, in which she had “stayed put” had been obtained by her as a consequence of that **previous experience of homelessness**. which she did not ever want to relive:

...I was living with my mother and my aunt...I was living from house to house... the relationship with my other two sons father [the previous marriage] didn't work out...we didn't get along...he had a lot of problems...and it was his apartment so I didn't want to stay there with him...so I moved back in with my mother when I had my middle child...and then it was too crowded living with her and my sister with two kids...then I stayed with my aunt and there was this back and forth...and then at that time I wasn't working so I was on public assistance... and my caseworker suggested that I go into a shelter...which I went to for seven days...and then from there I went into a Tier II. I would never put my kids through the shelter system again...because...I do have support from my friends... if I really needed a place to stay for a month or two months or however long...to get away...I could go *any time* of night [or] day.

#### Effects of Battering on “Homey” Conventions

Do the place-specific experiences of battering described by my participants—the pushing against the kitchen wall, the shoving against furniture, the choking on the master bed, the rape on the living room couch, the frequent changing of houses of worship (to prevent friendship formation), the constant monitoring of phonecalls, the isolation from friends and family, the written record of “transgressions,” the violent dissuasion of house-cleaning activities so as to maintain a filthy, stinking abode and ensure no visitors—do these, all too often subtle, periodically blatant and escalating acts of power and control, change the definition of home for battered women?

Gladys, my first ever participant, (i.e., a New Jersey resident who was interviewed in the feasibility phase of this dissertation) was a Latina woman and the

program director of a battered women's shelter in New Jersey. She poignantly narrated the memories of abuse which feed and fan her resistance to home-decorating:

...to this day I have a very pretty apartment...in the way its set up [the layout]. It's an apartment house...three floors and the stairs going up in spirals, and everything else. It was my dream place...kind of place [to imagine] when I was in really worse times [severely battered]. But to this day I don't have curtains up in my windows, [and] I will not fix [decorate] my house. Because he always destroyed everything. [E]ven after we moved to [this] new apartment and the physical abuse stopped, [he used to] destroy everything and anything that you could think of...

Gladys does not even look at customary and decorative home items in catalogs:

I will not ever look at a picture [in an accessories catalog] for the kitchen or the living room or my bedroom, or kids bedrooms and say "Oh! [this will be nice] for the house." I will never do that. For *so many* years, everything that I used to buy, curtains, shades, etc., he used to tear them down. When you enter a relationship...in my culture its like the woman will fix the house...If you don't have the sense of creativity, femininity...the little flowers, and the little things, you're called...what my mother calls me..."plain stale bread"...something to that effect...I'm very plain now.

Later, Gladys somberly expresses the tremendous power potential of furniture:

To this day [4 years of "staying put"] I don't have living room furniture because that was where I was constantly raped... in my living room ...for me its not necessary...the living room furniture... because I have these memories of being raped in the living room sofa.

Her 21-yr-old daughter feels awkward, so avoids, inviting her friends into a house devoid of *any* living room furniture or finery, even though it is a dream-house with symmetrical winding internal staircases and architectural elegance.

Laura, the legal secretary, who chose to stay put in the rent-stabilized apartment in which she grew up since the age of 2, mentions that she is now *unable* to use *any* music

as a means of relaxation at home because she has developed an **aversion to music**. She is thankful that music was not one of her primary or favorite means of relaxation:

I did not listen to music very much before I met him, and now I can't stand the sound of *any* music. Music brings to mind how badly he played the guitar when he was drunk and what a nuisance he made of himself by playing very loudly at the dead of night, keeping me up many nights. He had speakers four feet high [and] put them loud enough [so] the entire building would rattle. [Music] brings me back to his behavior.

### Concept of Home

Does her reflexive cringing and bracing of her chest at the sound of his footsteps returning from work, or the grabbing of her head and stopping of her ears at the blaring sound of his cursing, or her desperate attempts to get enough sleep and the feeling of utter despair and terror, render the popular concept of home meaningless?

I have focused on two main aspects of the concept of home. The first is a *feeling of safety*, which is intimately tied in with the *ability to exercise control over access* to one's place of residence. Both these salient dimensions of the concept of home are of particular concern not only for women who "stay put", but also for women who flee, and for policy planners, service providers, battered women's advocates, and law enforcement agencies. In addition to directly asking them how safe or unsafe they felt staying in an address known to their batterer, I inquired about their *quality of sleep and dreams* as an indicator of the feeling of safety from, and control over access by, their batterers.

The immediate response of several participants to the question of sleep was that they were, once again, *able* to sleep, as opposed to being kept awake night after night

during their abusive relationship, even when, or perhaps *especially* when they had to show up at work, bright, alert, and on time, the next morning:

[Before his eviction] he wouldn't let me go to sleep cause he would make too much noise. [But] those few nights that he would allow me to lay down...the problem when I was in the bedroom was that the bathroom was in the other end of the house. [So when] I got up to go to the bathroom that would generally start up a whole other round of abuse.

Now [after the eviction] I feel comfortable in those rooms, but I didn't while he was there. Now I feel comfortable throughout the apartment. I know when I get home if somebody's been there.

— Laura, “stayed put” in her childhood apartment inherited from her mother.

Fifty-three year old Muriel, was completing seven months of “staying put” in her house, but was still not able to sleep at night, even with psychiatric medications. Her wellness indicators were “sleep without medication [at night]...and concentrat[ion] [during the day]”:

I constantly wake up at night every two hours. I see him [in dreams] going to hit me...reliving what I've been through...terrifying dreams. I wake up from my dream or anxiety screaming Help, Help! If I hear something strange, I think maybe it's him and I put chairs by the basement door [in addition to] the lock....When my [girl]friend from the synagogue stayed over I slept good...I woke up twice to go to the bathroom, but I was able to just go back to sleep.... Lot of times my friends invite me to sleep in their houses and I don't want to [because] I'm finally in my home and nobody can throw me out.

With all the windows being sealed off (some friends bought the caulking material) for personal safety reasons, the lack of ventilation during the summer presented another obstacle to sound sleep.

Not all who had been offered the pendant alarm system slept peacefully:

I'm still in therapy...I'm on medications...anti-depressants... three times a day. I even have sleep medications because I don't sleep right at night.

The other night I fell sound asleep and I woke up around 12:30 [past midnight]...very very upset...and I couldn't [go back to] sleep so I woke up and I was walking around the apartment in the dark...and I looked out the window and there's a driveway opposite ...you can see it from the apartment...and his car is parked there and he's standing outside the car and looking at the apartment. So I guess...I picked up the vibes. He's definitely watching the apartment and I just thought, "how dare he!"...he shouldn't be able to do that!...this is my home!

— Lorna, stay-at-home mom, & ex-model

Lorna's battering ex-husband was able to terrify her at night by just being at his workplace and staring at her apartment. That's because he was working as a concierge in the building *opposite* her apartment building. So, she planned to call his boss and request that he be transferred. Ironically however, even though she was in the special Alternative to Shelter alarm program, the assistant district attorney assigned to her case at the time, told her that her plan to request her batterer's Workers' Union to give him a transfer was not appropriate since the Order of Protection stipulates that he not get within 100 yards from her, and he was maintaining that lawful distance. Feeling very frustrated, she abandoned her plan, figuratively kicking and screaming.

Among the 6 out of 10 in the alarm program who were still experiencing long-distance abuse by their batterers, only those women who had the support of neighbors, family, and/or friends were able to sleep peacefully. Lorna (who is discussed in the previous paragraph) could not count on her mother for consistent emotional support although she lived in the same building and helped with child care:

She refuses to speak to me...she goes into "well you were always different...you've always had a knack for screwing things up."

Avril, the African American singer, whose batterer was at-large despite a bench warrant for his arrest, had valuable first-hand experience of very timely assistance from her neighbors and doormen when her batterer tried to go to her apartment. Thereafter:

...when I lock my door and I turn on my [door and pendant] alarm, my son and I sleep a very quiet and restful sleep until we get up the next morning.

[Before her batterer was evicted] Oh of course it was different! He was always going in and out at 2 and 3 in the morning. I'd always hear the door open and always hear the door closing. I'd get up and come out. TV would be on, lights would be on, and he'd be gone.

[Soon after her batterer was evicted] I was a little pensive after he left because I know how violent he can be...he threatened to kill me, "If I can't have you, nobody's gonna have you." You know that's the standard line for men nowadays. He wouldn't kill himself. He's too vain to kill himself. He wouldn't want to be ugly in his coffin....He's a black belt...that's weapon enough...his two fists.

— Avril, African American singer

Like Muriel, Tricia, was determined to "stay put" in spite of death threats from her evicted husband, even though she was not offered any alarm or cell phone. But she paid attention to her sleep and dreams and would "disappear" for a couple of weeks with her little girl, at her parents' apartment in the public housing across the street. At times, Tricia's mother would stay overnight in Tricia's apartment to help her get sound sleep.

I used to dream that I was going to get killed...and I didn't sleep well. I didn't sleep comfortable because I always said, "I wonder if he's going to come knock at the door. I wonder if he's going to call me on the phone and harass me." I was always afraid. I was always in fear.

What finally put the icing on the cake also [among other strategies to stop the post-separation violence] was that a friend of mine went to his job and violently beat him up...and I think that too stopped him. I don't have [bad] dreams any more. I sleep well. I'm fine. I don't even think about him!

— Tricia, works in a police precinct

Marisa, who “stayed put” in 5ft x 10ft SRO apartment with no bathroom and kitchen, was doing the important work of fashioning “a comfort zone to be generative... to be able to flower into something” amidst the dismal housing conditions which now also contained memories of her abuse. She was able to sleep better after the physician’s letter indicating the severity of her injuries, got the attention of her ADA, and when her ADA stopped pressuring her to relocate. Her confidence that she could not be evicted, increased her frequency of deep sleep.

For Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, being able to have a *peaceable* home in which to unwind from the stress at her housing-related job is a critical quality of home which she is happy to have restored after evicting her batterer:

I’m eating better, sleeping better...I get to sleep *every* night...I don’t have nightmares. I’m not exercising better but that’s OK. I used to have more activity; we’d go fishing...which I am missing a great deal.

I’m much happier, I’m my own person now, in control of my life, my apartment...able to relax and be myself and not have to live up to someone else’s commands or dictates. I work with people who are in lot of crises and for me my home has always been like a sanctuary. I deal with landlord and tenant law a lot...and real estate law. We represent more the tenants. People with housing problems are often in crisis... they’re very stressed. [So] to know that I could come home to a peaceable home was always very important to me. I need to be able to come home and at least feel comfortable in my own home. And that’s something I had, even [when] my landlord tried to evict me [a month after mother died to prevent her from inheriting her mother’s rent stabilized apartment]...I knew he was...threatening me legally...I never felt that he was threatening me personally. I never felt that he would damage me, hurt me, destroy my home or anything like that.

[Before the eviction] Only when he was sober would I feel at home at home. Mainly at work I would generally feel at home because he wasn’t there.

Tiffany recalls that during the abusive relationship her apartment did not feel like home as long as it was invaded by a marauding rodent; her abusive husband:

...it didn't feel like home because I felt like...it was being *infested*...like as if you have a rat or a roach problem...I needed to get the rats and the roaches out. That's how I felt about him...he was infesting my home...he was the problem...not us...and he was the one causing discord and...tension... anxiety...stress. It was all coming from this one rodent...one pest...and once the pest was gone then...home was able to reign again. That's how I felt with him. Even the times when he would pack his bags and leave...oh! what a relief!...I would always sleep like a baby...and then he would always wind up crying outside my window...wanting to come back...for whatever reason...and the minute he came back things were right back.

### Exorcising Ghosts

Gladys, the director of a battered women's shelter, who "stays put" in the second apartment they cohabited, is glad not to be living in her previous site of abuse from which she had him arrested four years prior to evicting him. Her old apartment was rife with vestiges of the abuse which evoked phantom memories of good things that used to be associated with ghastly, destructive happenings:

The most horrible physical incidents happened in the old house. Now in this apartment even though some abuse went on, I'll stay there; it doesn't bring me memories because nothing was broken...like the broken door in the other place...anything...something there...will bring me...the stairs going down, there were like some sticks missing from the banister...wherever you looked there was trace that that was there...[where] the wall was cracked, I knew what that was. That house I would not want...I went through too much to deal with that house.

How did the women who "stayed put" handle any unpleasantness, discomfort, fear, "inheritance of ghosts (Fine 1997)" and/or "contamination of place"?

First of all I cleaned up the whole house...if you would have come here six months ago, you would probably have run out in two seconds... it [used to] stink from the dogs...two German Shepherds. He wouldn't walk the dogs...he would just leave them in the yard outside. He wouldn't let me clean the yard...the weeds was like this [waist high]... and stinks...and the basement was full with garbage...and [the dogs] urinate many times in the basement...he *wouldn't* let me clean the basement...this was the way he kept people out of the house.

So, [soon after the eviction] I bought three bottles of Clorox [laughs] and washed the house with Clorox [disinfected]...and just rearranged the furniture...put a tablecloth [embellished]...put up my grandchildren's pictures ... and my picture and dolls when I was a little girl [rejuvenated]...to make a change...to have like new beginning I can't afford to buy something new...

— Muriel, evicted husband at age 65, after 35 years of abuse.

Whether or not they “stayed put,” most of the women mentioned throwing away items which either belonged to the batterer, or were an integral part of a violent incident:

...the bedroom furniture...and [living room] furniture I chose and I like so I'm not going to get rid of it. I will get rid of this [crockery] closet ...coz I have it from the day we got married and that reminds me of [the abuse as far back] the first two three years of our marriage.

[Also] He had two baseball bats. One of them the police took as evidence and the other one was over here. So I threw that out also because I didn't want to see it. And then he had different kinds of pocket knives... threw them all out. He threw a pocket-knife at me once...in my leg.

— Muriel, evicted battering husband after 35-years.

I used to have a brass coat rack in my room and he beat me with it one night in my face. There was blood all over the coat-rack and it dried up on the coat-rack and I couldn't get it off...and I didn't throw it away. But when the relationship was over I threw it. Anything that reminded me of him, I got rid of it. The only pictures I still have of him is our wedding pictures...a Betty Oliver wedding, but it doesn't bother me to look at them. Like somebody will say, “I remember [T's] wedding”...and I'll show them the video...not often...once in a blue moon.

— Tricia, married him despite early warning signs

Unlike Tricia, Tiffany put away all photographs of him to erase the negative emotions associated with his visage and presence:

...all of his pictures...took down...because I have pictures of me and my children all over the house...in the bathroom, the kitchen, the room...coz I believe in showing happy scenes. So pictures of me and him or him with the kids all came down...all pictures came down...I didn't throw them away but they're all rubber-banded together...they're not even in the photo album...

Since 43-yr-old Laura hopes to be reunited with her 44-yr-old husband if he ever does give up alcohol, she put his belongings out of sight. She found it beneficial, however to still keep his voice on her answering machine given her mother's experience:

His guitar...some of his property does [remind of the abuse]. I have them in rooms where I don't see them very often. He has an electric guitar and an amplifier. The amplifier is hidden a very far room and I just don't...I rarely go near it. I just don't need to. His bathroom things I've put away. His clothing I've put away so I don't look at it. I have his voice on my answering machine because I feel that if he calls he can talk to himself. I also want a male voice on my answering machine [because] mother had some problems with hang ups [at that phone number]. They'd hear her voice and hang up and it would go on all night long and she never knew who it was. So the police had told her [mother] not to answer the phone, to have a male doing the recording and say that all calls are being monitored by the police, even though it wasn't true.

Tiffany and Muriel did not keep their dogs, because the dogs knew their batterers and therefore had no protective value to them with regard to post-separation violence, and would instead be an additional drain on their already stretched resources:

I got rid of the dog. Both dogs...on four legs and two legs...he's the first dog that left...the second dog was a pitbull which he bought...[which] he used to abuse....I had to give her away coz it was too much with the baby...and walk the dog.

— Tiffany had two other boys, 9 and 11, from her previous marriage.

Tiffany, like several other women, repainted various rooms in brighter colors to cast out the darkness and shadow of the abuse:

I repainted...he had a lot of dark colors on the wall...he actually painted my kitchen black...so that came off right away...to me that's evilness...and he would do this on his own...he wouldn't sit down with me and say, "Oh, what color do you want this or that." I would come home from work and boom!...the house was painted. I'm still in process of getting my bedroom painted because he put like a dark rust color on the wall...

### Making Children “Feel at Home” After Evicting the Batterer

Almost all the women, regardless of whether or not they had child(ren) made major or minor changes in furniture or layout, and in their routine at home, after the batterer was evicted, with the intention of providing emotional comfort to cope with severed bonds in personal connectedness, and with the disruption in daily routines. All those who had young child(ren), made changes first in their child(ren)’s room(s) to the extent that they could financially afford by themselves or with the help of family:

Eventually when I got him out...we started decorating her [3-yr-old daughter’s] room. My family helped me. We bought her a brass bed... we bought her a TV...we bought a carpet for her room...we bought her Mickey Mouse bedspread and curtains. I didn’t care how my room looked. I wanted her room to look nice. And she had her toys, her toy box, her bicycle. And when he came in the house [now and then] he couldn’t believe how lovely her room was. It was like he was jealous of me...he didn’t want me to have anything...he wanted me to suffer, to struggle...not have anything nice. He seems to still be that way.

— Tricia had lost a 7-yr-job due to frequent abuse-related absenteeism

In terms of the emotional aspects, some women mentioned that they were careful to move at their child(ren)’s pace:

I wanted [my son] to move at his own pace after everything that had gone on and everything that he has gone through. He had a bed that he used to sleep in. I took it down...[because now] he sleeps in my bed. He doesn’t sleep up next to me but he will every now and then reach for me. As long as he can touch me from time to time, he’s fine. [But] recently he’s been sleeping out [in the living room]. He’s been pulling [the] sofa bed out [some days]...he’ll come in, he’ll kiss me goodnight saying, “I’m going back out to sleep.” And I go, “Okay.”

He had become more open, “Well mom, see you later, you’re going to the store...I don’t really want to go, I’ll stay here and play video games.” “Okay fine.” Store is right down on the corner, no big deal. But after [a traumatic event of being forcefully separated from her by the police on the basis of a court order produced by his biological mother] he was back to, “Where you goin’?” “I’m going to the store.” “Well I’m goin’ with you.” “Okay.”

— Avril, about her stepson after the eviction of his biological father.

Some women included music and prayer in their daily routine to herald consolation and healing each new day, into their broken lives:

We get up at 6:30...I put on music...not loud...something I tape off the TV like the Cinderella movie that just came on this past weekend with Whitney Houston and Brandy... and we all dance...so my sons goes to school singing. All throughout the morning there's music playing throughout the house...and we eat breakfast together...that's important...because we spend a few minutes together...we pray together...something we didn't do when he was here...

— Tiffany, three sons, 3, 9, and 11; older two are from previous marriage.

The two daughters of 53-yr-old Muriel, *never* did feel at home in the house in which Muriel put up with her husband's abuse. They told her that they hate him and "if they could strangle him without getting arrested [they'd] probably do it!" By the time their father was evicted by a criminal court judge, they were ages 32 and 33, were married, had children of their own, and hopefully were able to create homes in which their children felt comfortable and secure. Several years prior to their father's eviction, one of the daughters adamantly but communicatively broke all ties with Muriel:

"Until the day that you receive the divorce paper in your hand I don't want any relationship with you." Out...finished...she really meant it.

### Everyday Stepping Out and Returning Home

In addition to the question about sleep, my investigation regarding the concept of home to battered women, included a question about the feelings they experienced on a daily basis while returning to their apartment/house from work, grocery shopping, etc.

[During the abusive relationship] the feeling that I would get when I would come to the door would be like an anxiety feeling and then I turned the lock and I would really get the anxiety feeling if the double lock was on. Because if the double lock was on then I knew what was going on, on the inside. Because he would only have the double lock on when he did not want me to walk in on him. If he wasn't

doing anything, or [was] playing video games, or watching television, the double lock would not be on. I could hit that bottom lock, it would turn [claps], the door would open. Everything would be fine. But you never knew. Oh I dreaded coming home when he was here. And I mean thoroughly...I used to hate coming home 'cause I never knew what I was going to find once I opened that door. Now, I love coming home.

— Avril, African American singer.

Gladys, director of a battered women's shelter, who had evicted her batterer

several years ago, found it pertinent to tell me about her 21-yr-old daughter whom she

began to fear because her behavior was reminiscent of the batterer's:

Sometimes I used to feel when she was coming home...like the batterer was coming home; that feeling...scary, tense, anxious [vividly gestured this with tense upper body, drawing tense arms closer to chest, and bowed head pressed against chest]. She has learned to be controlling and abusive just like her step-father [the batterer]—punches the walls hard enough to break it, walks into her 11-yr-old brother's room without knocking, throws the telephone bill and car keys at me...

Laura, the Caucasian legal secretary, who "stayed put" in the rent stabilized

apartment she inherited from her mother, and in which she grew up since age 2, is no

longer fearful of returning home and no longer stays out overnight to escape the abuse:

If I were to come home and the radio was on and the stereo was on, I knew he was drinking. That was one of the signs I had...'cause to me that was always a sign of his drinking.

[Now] I know that I'm going to a safe situation when I'm at home. I know that I'll be able to talk on the phone. I know that I'll feel better. I know that if I run out of let's say bread at 11 o'clock at night it waits, I don't feel like I have to run to the store immediately and get it for him. I feel less threatened, less harassed. Its actually been very good...pleasant. The amount of time I spend in my apartment...it's actually less but that's more because my social life has increased...because I'm going somewhere rather than running. I still visit my sister...that wouldn't change...I just don't stay over. I still visit my co-worker in New Jersey, that hasn't changed. I don't necessarily expect to stay anywhere overnight unless there's a transportation disaster. I know that I'm coming home and it will be pleasant and safe and...I'm not frightened anymore. I used to be terrified going home before.

Tiffany, who was put up in a nice hotel with round the clock security for two weeks, and whose husband was sentenced to three years in prison, was careful to ensure the coast was clear each time she or her children left home, until he was locked away:

I have a peaceful sleep. I say a pray and ask the Lord to watch over us...my sons and I we pray together. I don't really have a problem being here. But there was a time when I was tense...when I would get up early in the morning and listen if I hear footsteps coming off the elevator and not leaving. I would actually get on the floor, look under my door to see if I saw any feet, or anything like that, before I would even open my door. I was constantly being careful. Same thing with my children...they were the same way...turning around, looking, seeing, anybody following us? [At night] with the lights turned out, I'd look out my window. If I felt really unsafe, I could always call the precinct and they would come and escort me out of my apartment...but I never felt the need to call.

#### Financial Challenges of Home-Making Before and After Evicting the Batterer

Soon after Avril, the African American singer, evicted her batterer, she had “a little” difficulty paying the rent of \$450 per month for her Mitchell Lama apartment:

...and only because before he left he had literally stolen me blind. I had to go to different pawn shops and find my jewelry...I had to replace my son's videos because he had taken them and sold them. And I had to replace CDs and you know it was just...he sold my son's clothes 'cause I had friends that worked in a department store. When [they were] going to have a big sale they would call me and say, “They're having a red rose sale so now you come take whatever it is that you want, you put it aside, put my name on it, I'll go and get it on my discount, and then you can pay me later.” So [that's how] I was able to get my son's clothes and I would always buy...if he was an 8, I would buy a 10 and a 12...I would buy the jeans, sweaters, shirts, underwear, everything. That way I have a couple of years where I don't really have to go and buy a whole lot. [But] all that got sold; I went into my son's suitcase and it was all gone. So then I had to spend money I did not have, and go and re-buy clothes for him, and you basically have to rob Peter to pay Paul and I would rather him go to school with clothes on his back and say “Okay, well, I can't pay rent this month because I have to go out and get him some shoes and some boots and nice winter coat, and you know...that's all I had counted on having to buy. I only counted on having to buy snow boots, the regular utensils you use for school and a winter coat...but then I

had to buy everything all over again...and this time I didn't have a discount; so it was regular price. So with that, yes [it was hard to pay rent].

Gladys, made rent payments her topmost priority even if she and her teenage son and older daughter had to make do with little or no food:

I want to show my kids stability and I think that...in trying to maintain my home by paying my rent on time...its like my priority you know, its like no food fine, but you know, we have a home [laughs' with relief].

This was Gladys's second attempt at evicting her battering husband. They were both age 39 when she decided she was not going to tolerate any more abuse and gave him a month to move out from this house in which they had lived together for three years.

This interview was conducted a year after the second, and most likely final, separation.

The first eviction, four years prior, had not worked out in Gladys' favor, primarily because she was unable to pay her rent with a sudden steep drop in her income:

After he got out of jail [on bail after 5 days detention owing to the long Labor Day weekend], I had an Order of Protection, so he just went to his mother's apartment. I continued working, and I continued school. I was waitressing then. I felt good. It was like no pressure, I didn't have to cook if I didn't want to, I would be able to go outside and talk to the neighbors without being watched or questioned. So it felt good!!

[But] after two months, business in the restaurant was not too good...it was during the recession. I used to get 80-120 dollars a day...but it went down to just 20 dollars a day. I remember his mother [phone] calling me, "Oh he regrets so much what he has done and he wants to help you...he doesn't want to come back...he just wants to help you. He knows you need the money." I said, "No, no, no." But he knew where to meet me when I got out of work...and he was standing right there...very humble...and he said, "Can we talk?" At first I said, "We have nothing to talk." And he kept walking alongside of me. So I agreed finally to have tea in a restaurant...and he took my hand and put 300 dollars. Of course I needed it...how am I going to pay the rent. And that's how he came back...300 dollars in my hand and, "Bye, bye. Take care." But then that same night he came by with groceries and wanted to see his son. [He did not stay overnight but returned to his mother's place] So for me [it was], "Oh things are

looking good, he's really getting it, he's understanding." [Thus] little by little he started coming back home...and he was accepted.

Now that I look back, you don't think right away about that Order of Protection...that you yourself are violating [by taking him back]. Right now [as coordinator of a battered women's shelter] I'm asking women the same question that you're asking me, "And so you took him back home?" But being in that position, I know that that's the last thing you think about...because you're like overwhelmed. Then when the first incident occurs you just want to kick yourself in the pants. And because you took him back after he was locked up and you were the hero...you want to just put yourself in a shell and not even share that with anybody, coz they gonna think, "You deserve it because you gave him a chance." I've been through that.

53-yr-old Muriel who "stayed put" was utterly frustrated and enraged about being a wealthy lady in a big house, but living on welfare, hopefully only until the divorce settlement. She had to sign over her house to the City in order to receive public assistance by way of semi-monthly payments of \$68.50 for utilities, and monthly food stamps worth \$120 which were being reduced to \$80 without any notification and explanation. In addition, the **house mortgage payments**, which were then the City's responsibility, were not being made by the City, for a long stretch of at least seven months (at the time of this interview). Muriel became aware of the lapse in payments only when the banks began threatening foreclosure. Nonetheless, what Muriel considers most inexcusable is that it takes days of repeated redialling to be able to speak directly to her caseworker, and the awful reality that her caseworker never replies to messages on her answering machine, nor does she acknowledge the receipt of mortgage statements faxed to her, despite being fully aware of the urgency of the matter.

Laura, who stayed put in her childhood home, can quite comfortably pay her monthly rent of close to \$1000, when she does *not* have the additional expense of therapy

sessions. But being a legal secretary she is quick to point out that there is also the issue of **tenant conduct** with regard to “keeping one’s apartment”:

One other ground on which I could be evicted is if I’m a nuisance. For an old person that could mean allowing the faucet to run all night and forgetting about it or causing a fire. But it could also be threatening the other tenants, or harassing the landlord. *That* he [used to] do. He behaved badly. He would harass the landlord, he would jump on the floor. My landlord is a lawyer, he has an office directly underneath me. So, when [the batterer] would blast the radio or the stereo at night, they would hear it throughout the office, and if there was a meeting, it would disturb the meeting. Now some of that was my landlord being unhappy [that the low rent was inherited from mother who had died there]. So, he would complain a little bit more quickly. But some of it was that [the batterer] would misbehave a great deal...throw a table across the room, create a lot of noise, play his electric guitar very loudly, scream, stomp around the apartment, bang [with broomstick] on our ceiling which is the upstairs neighbor’s floor...he would throw shoes or other items at [the ceiling]...he was creating a nuisance.

After he was evicted, he still had the potential to be a nuisance and jeopardize her tenant status. Fortunately, he did not indulge in any post-separation violence.

But Tricia, on the other hand, did have to talk her Co-op Board out of evicting her, in the face of escalated post-separation violence which lasted almost three years:

When I kicked him out, he gave me a hard time and I’m glad that even though we got married I never put his name on any papers.

The 24-hour [building] security knew [he] was my husband so they would let him up. I had to give them pictures of [him], and I had to let them know that he wasn’t allowed up.

He would come in the hallway yelling and screaming, bang the door [dented it], cops come...[all this while] people are trying to sleep. My next door neighbors used to call the cops on him...and they wanted him out of here. [But] they felt like if I was still going to see him then they wanted me out too.

[So the Co-op Board] wanted to get me removed. But I fought them. I said, “Look, I can’t help what’s going on...I’m trying to get rid of my husband but you don’t have the right to kick me and my young child out of here...I bought shares in this corporation just like you.” I made them understand, and then they backed off.

The arguments which helped Tricia hold on to her long time affordable apartment, did not prevent the loss of her long time managerial job:

The critical, final break came about when I lost my job because of him. For 7 years I was the production manager for [a music recording company]. I lost my job because of him...he was calling my job...stalking me...and my job was getting tired of it. I was coming in late...I wasn't productive with work because I was stressed out with this marriage and what this man was doing to me. And then the job got tired and they laid me off.

That served to strengthen Tricia's resolve to not only "stay put" but to also sever all ties of sentiment and all lines of communication with her false-promising, insincerely remorseful husband. The job she finally got was perhaps the ultimate deterrent:

I had to go on public assistance...I was on unemployment for a year and then I was on public assistance for a year. Then I found another job...in Section 8 housing. And [after] taking City tests, I got a better job [in a police precinct]...and I been there ever since.

Laura mentioned that there is almost always the added expense of **repairing property damage**:

He did a lot of damage to the apartment walls and ceilings. He kicked in the wall, punched it in. I have French doors with little windows...he punched in some of that glass. He would throw his shoes mainly up on the ceiling. He would break chairs. He kicked in my door once. He took a nail and broke one of my locks so I couldn't lock him out. He had built a bookcase one time then he tore it down one night when he was drinking. He would throw things around, smash the remote control against the wall, several times, probably 6 [different ones]. One night he tried to take apart my computer...to "fix" it...very scary...he went after it with a screwdriver. He broke a lot of glasses and furniture. He would also break his own belongings... like his guitar.

Gladys, program director of a battered women's shelter, who avoids having any living room furniture recalls:

In the new apartment too [the one in which she “stayed put”]...he would destroy everything...curtains...just anything and everything that you could think of...that you *buy*.

In the old apartment...one evening while he was hanging out on the street corner drinking with his friends he saw a neighborhood restaurant owner walking down the street with me ‘cause he happened to be going in the same direction as me. That night my husband [her batterer] came in and took a crystal lamp that someone had given me from Germany, it was a beautiful lamp [laughs sadly]. Now you know why I don’t *buy* anything [laughs sadly]. The headboard [of the bed] was a mirror...so what he did is...I was in bed with the baby...and he threw the lamp at it...smashed it...glass splattered all over...and when I tried to run away...he was blocking the door and started hitting me and punching me.

His step-daughter, who vicariously “learned” from him between the ages of 7 and 15, was beginning to display a high potential for serious property damage at age 21:

My daughter saw a lot of it and she learned. Because that’s the way I would give in [to the batterer to stop the physical abuse], “Oh, destroy anything you want, as long as you don’t touch me.” I used to justify it like that. I could be sitting in the middle of the living room, and he could be destroying the entire house...and I would not react...I would just sit there and watch TV. And right now this is my difficulty with her.

This past weekend we had a very bad incident...she [21-yr-old daughter] punched a hole in the wall the size of a footprint! She said it was an accident, but it came from my asking her to do dishes. Dishes were piling up, and I always feel like, “I don’t ask you for rent, I don’t ask you to pay for food. The only two things that I ask you is...clean your room...and try to cooperate a little bit with the cleanliness in the whole house because we work and go to school on crazy schedules, so it would be nice if everybody chipped in, because we all live there.

I tell her, “You need some kind of anger management situation [training] coz you have the profile of a batterer.” She gets upset and she doesn’t want to hear it. With her friends she’s not like that though...it’s only with family...that’s how I see it.

Fortunately, unlike Gladys’ daughter, Muriel’s adult daughters (ages 32 and 33) did *not*, at any time while they were growing up, choose to follow in their father’s footsteps. On the contrary, whenever they visit her, they help her clean and fix, and wholeheartedly support her attempts to transcend and transform her “horror home”:

...as you see I don't have nothing...he broke everything...a big 150 dollar vase...any crystal [which I'd buy on sale]...about 30 telephones that he'd throw at me and they broke...coz every time I would speak to somebody, he gets upset and he would throw the phone at me...to tell me, "No communication."

... I'll do a lot of things if I can afford to...change the windows... half of them are broken because every time he throws something [at them]...so I put plastic until I get some money to put glass.

### Home and/or Security-related Police Policies

Avril, the African American singer, was in favor of supervised visits at *home* as a means of ensuring her child's safety:

The only thing that I don't really like about the part of the agreement [of the alarm program] is that they say that the person has to stay totally away...and if you want to give supervised visits for your child then you still can't give supervised visits for your child in the home, which I think is wrong because you shouldn't have to take the child out of the security and warmth and everything that the child is accustomed to, to go to see the parent. As long as the abusing parent comes with a police officer, there should be no problem.

In that spirit, Avril, initially requested the judge for a partial Exclusion Order of Protection whereby her evicted battering husband could come to the apartment and be there *unsupervised* only to baby-sit his son after school hours while she worked as a supervisor in a department store. This arrangement did not work for long:

...[the first] Order of Protection allowed him to come in because he would sit with my son when he would come home from school...I explained all that to the judge. But he could not menace...harass... [and] because he did it anyway, now he's *totally* excluded.

When Muriel's 65-yr-old battering husband nearly choked her with a leather skirt and hit her stomach with a baseball bat, the criminal court judge sternly gave him a Vacate Order of Protection (a mild slap on the wrist), but graciously granted him his request to enter the house, with a certain named Rabbi, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4pm, to

pick up mail and phone messages. However, the Rabbi was not able to stop him from picking up silverware and household items, so Muriel resorted to calling 911. The police promptly resolved the matter. Then one night, as she was returning from her battered women's class, she saw him trying his key at her front door. When she reported this violation of the Stay Away Order of Protection, he absconded to a southern State. After he returned, the police made no arrest because he would not answer the doorbell, and they claimed that they are prohibited by law, to forcefully enter and arrest an offender even if they have an arrest warrant. So, Muriel called her assistant district attorney (ADA) the night before the court hearing of the initial assault offense. She complained that the police had 29 days to arrest him but did not, and she urged her ADA to arrest him in court the following day.

However, the next day, Muriel's relief was short-lived because he was immediately released on \$2500 bail and a Conditional Discharge for one year with no "entry for pick-up" privileges. But, he was not barred from living only three blocks away from Muriel, in another house they co-owned. It was, therefore, no surprise that he was stalking her. On two occasions, neighbors phoned to inform her that he was outside her front door, although his mail and phonecalls were no longer coming to her address, *and* he had been sternly instructed by the judge that if he needed any personal or financial documents he had to request the DA's office to obtain them, and make arrangement to pick them up from the ADA.

Toward the end of the interview, Muriel disclosed why the police had not been arresting her husband throughout the 20 years she lived within that precinct's jurisdiction. Some years ago he had not only seriously injured two

police inspectors on a non-battering related matter (he was an opportunistic whistle blower), but had also filed a lawsuit against the police department pursuant to the same matter, and had won a hefty settlement. So, even though the police always arrived promptly, her many 911 calls only served to crystallise his sense of having unfettered reign over her. “Go screw yourself...see even the police don’t do nothing,” he used to say to her.

A woman who wishes to report and/or press charges against her batterer a day or a few days after an abusive incident, must leave the security of her home or workplace and go to the precinct closest to where the incident occurred, because reports are not taken over the phone.

He had slapped me across my face and broke my glasses the day before I had to take a final. ...I had to go to the precinct to actually press the charges.

— Astrid, unsuccessfully tried to “stay put.”

When Lorna, the Hispanic ex-fashion model, wanted to report a violation of the Order of Protection, she dialed her police precinct instead of 911 because she was in the Alternative to Shelter program and had been given to understand that her local police precinct would attend to her on a first name basis

I was told, “Call and there would be no problem...if he’s violating the order of protection.” [Then when he did violate] I figured, let me go directly to these people...they know me and what’s going on. So I called and they told me I had to go to the [precinct]. I’m like. “I’m scared to go out of my apartment...you don’t understand...I was told call and there would be no problem.” I still have the name of the detective who arrested him the first time...I call the ADA that was handling all this...and I was in contact with [the precinct’s domestic violence officer]. And they all said “No I have to go down to file.”

...it really upset me. [Despite having a fever] I went down early in the morning-right after I dropped my daughter off at school...and I had to fill out all the papers and this and that.

Lorna was even more upset and frustrated in the days following the report because of police delay in making the arrest and because he was not charged with a felony:

I was very much a prisoner in my apartment because I don't know...I felt like everybody wasn't taking me seriously...I had to constantly call [the] detective, "Have you picked him up yet?...you want his work schedule [sarcastically]...he's working right now...go pick him up...please!!"

About four days later he was arrested and set out on bail of 250 dollars...for misdemeanor!! I was given the order of protection for one year.

### Neighborly and Organizational Support Critical for Women who "Stay Put"

All the women who "stayed put" were able to keep their batterers at bay, or were not taken unawares by their batterers, and/or were able to keep their apartments, primarily because of timely intervention or information from their neighbors and/or service providers.

When Marisa needed proof that the SRO apartment was really hers although he helped her obtain the lease with his good credit rating, the real estate agent provided testimony. Then when Marisa's batterer tried to break into her new SRO apartment with a crowbar through the peephole, at 3am, a couple of neighbors foiled his plan:

This neighbor of mine right in front came out and somebody from the 5th floor came down because they were hearing the big hits...and he stopped and said, "Oh! I wasn't doing anything, I was just..." He tried to make conversation with them and he left. I was crouched down here [under the table] so that if he did break in I wasn't going to be hit. I crawled to get the phone and I was paralyzed [frozen with terror]. I called 911...and I got disconnected...I called again and I didn't want her to leave the line...so she stayed on the line for about 40 or 45 minutes...and at the end she called an ambulance for me...and then my ADA came and took pictures of the [hole he made in the] door.

— Marisa then moved to another SRO in the *same* building, and her ADA gave her a 911 cell phone for added security.

Although Muriel's 65-yr-old evicted husband was living only three blocks away (in a house they co-owned), and was still stalking her, she had not been offered any pendant alarm or cell phone by the police or district attorney. Had she been offered such

a program she would gladly have accepted and would have agreed to all the terms and conditions. Fortunately though, much to Muriel's amazement and consolation, her estranged neighbors became friendly and supportive toward her as soon they noticed her cleaning the yard which had a 10-year solid stench of dog poop in thick underbrush. That was one of the batterer's ways of preventing her friends from visiting. He had kept the neighbors at bay by being loudly nasty with them and had even broken a leg of a next door neighbor who promptly sold his house and moved away. Therefore soon after he was evicted, Muriel was very touched not only by the warm friendship they all extended to her, but also by the protective shield they were now casting around her with their vigilance. Whenever one of them noticed him lurking outside her house, usually at dawn or dusk, they phoned to alert her to stay indoors.

The assistance of neighbors was indispensable even to women in the alarm program. Avril's batterer came to her apartment (from which he had been evicted) soon after he'd been let out of jail, where he had been for three weeks. He had got into her Mitchell Lama apartment complex through a far entrance in order to bypass security. But a resident who knew he wasn't supposed to be in the building (because Avril informed them of her need for extra eyes), happened to see him and went straight to security. Security, in turn immediately informed Avril that he was in the building and instructed her "not to open her door under any circumstance."

Natalie, who was in the AWARE program, was taken completely unawares when her batterer, who was supposed to be in prison for a year, showed up at her door. She was upset that the program had not informed her prior to, or immediately after, his

release. Fortunately for Natalie too, a neighbor called to inform her that *he* was at her door. The neighbor had been informed (via a public phone) by someone who was leaving the building while the batterer was entering the building. Terrified and in absolute panic, Natalie dialed 911 instead of pressing her pendant alarm, while the batterer kept urging her to open the door to him: “a now reformed man.” Before the police arrived he had slipped a note under her door and left.

Colette, the woman in the AWARE program who was being terrorized by her son and daughter-in-law, also mentioned that neighbors have been precious informants. A jewelry shop owner on her block, below whose window her stalkers “would get high” on crack, had overheard them plotting a bomb threat, and promptly informed her.

Like Marisa, 54-yr-old Sara, a Caucasian office receptionist, had “stayed put” in her SRO apartment. Her batterer, who used to live in the *same* building, moved back to the building when he was released from prison. When he resumed his abuse of Sara, the building management evicted and banned him from the building, and the security personnel enforced the ban.

Liz was the director of a local gym, of which her batterer was a long time member. When she fled to her parents’ house and obtained an order of protection her employers at two different gyms, banned him access to their premises and facilities. Lorna had expected precisely this level of support from the ATS program, in order to get her abusive ex-husband’s employer or worker’s union to change his concierge assignment to a location outside her neighborhood. Having not got such support, she felt very let down.

Tiffany, who had the benefit of the ATS alarm, did not make a special request for vigilance of the doormen in her Mitchell Lama building because she had reason to fear that she may be perceived as being available to them for intimate encounters:

There were times I did run to the security guards and asked to use the phone. They do not carry weapons...so honestly I don't feel that they can protect me. They'll probably be looking to protect themselves. And most of them...they try to talk to me...try to rap to me...tell me I'm pretty...things like that...they flirt...that's the word! So the last thing I want to do is go talk to them and give them any kind of leeway, "Oh, I'm alone!"...although they do see me by myself. But to give them the green light, "Oh, I'm alone...if he comes by let me know...here's my telephone number"...I never did that.

Tiffany, did however, credit her local community for enabling her to "stay put":

I feel this is my home...we are here for a reason...it was a terrible ugly situation... women are dying everyday at the hands of their husbands, lovers...but I was really blessed...the Lord opened a lot of doors because of the 24<sup>th</sup> precinct and the DA's office...and the detectives...and everyone who helped me and my children. That's why I'm still here. In the future, if something leads me to move, then I'll move. But at this present time...I feel I have no reason to move.

After three years of "staying put," Francine dearly missed the "better living" she had enjoyed in the apartment and neighborhood she fled:

...coz the apartment was nice...that's the apartment that I always wanted...it was the last apartment we had just before I left...each kid [ages 8, 5, and 4] had their [own] rooms...and we both grew up in the neighborhood. Although Francine had "stayed put" in her childhood neighborhood in

Connecticut, and had supportive family close by, when he sneaked in through her third floor kitchen window and threatened her at gun point to leave by the end of that week, she was unable to keep staying put with just family support any more. She had been hoping the police would have arrested him, but they repeatedly told her that they could not do anything to him unless they catch him *in the act*. In the meantime, he had become

a gang leader of several gang members on the block, who were abiding by their gang's code of conduct although they were her childhood friends too:

Half of who lived on the block...we grew up with...was his gang members. They wouldn't get into our personal problems...they couldn't because of their rules and regulations. It was a family thing so they couldn't get involved. They were [also] scared [of him] so they would just leave him alone. They knew that if they got involved they would have made the issue worse...not for me, but for them. If they called the cops and...were found out, they would [be] considered...rats ...and there would have been harm done to them. So if he was to [come] to the apartment and kill me or something, were they going to testify against him? NO!

Francine goes back there to visit her sister and brother. She and her siblings still have keys to that apartment. They reported to her that "he still lives there and everything is just the way [she] left it." At the time of the interview Francine was in a shelter in New Jersey. Much as she wanted to, she does not have the support of the police to reclaim that apartment. Unlike the women in the ATS program who experienced abuse from afar, Francine's husband would always get up-close and was careful to not leave behind any trail that could be traced to him:

He would come personally. He used to tell me, "I won't leave anything on paper or recorded, for you to use against me. I'm actually goin' to make 'em feel you are crazy." Yah, because I had a lot of suicide attempts...and he wanted my kids.

She did not go back for any of her belongings because she has no place to put it all yet. When she does have a place of her own, she intends to go back with police escort, for her furniture, clothes, and everything else she left behind.

### Summary

By holding their ground, the women who "stayed put" intentionally, or inadvertently, contributed to uprooting a rampant social evil, which has flourished on

privacy and secrecy. Such was the case, even though many of them, at some point, usually soon after the eviction, locked up their apartment/house, and for safety, temporarily lived with parents/sisters/aunts/ grandparents/friends, or in a shelter, for between two weeks to three months.

Almost fifty percent of the women in this study were “staying put” (minus the batterer), in the apartment, house, or building in which they were battered. Most of the women were doing so with grace and courage. None were doing it on impulse, with vengeance or spite. All had a large degree of socio-environmental connectedness to the neighborhood; a connectedness, which served them, and their children, well in terms of physical safety, emotional healing, economic viability, residential stability. They had either grown up (i.e., were rooted there), or lived several years in that very apartment or neighborhood, and/or had affordable rents, vigilant neighbors, supportive parents and/or other relatives in the vicinity.

Informal policing by neighbors, doormen, and vendors was mentioned as being extremely valuable. This practice is most reliable and dependable when the batterer is easily recognized. Women who flee to confidential locations do not have this vital community support. Among the nine (of twelve) women in the alarm program who were still being terrorized, only those who had the wholehearted support of the police, judges, district attorney, neighbors, and family/friends, were able to sleep peacefully.

In transforming the site of the abuse into a site of nurturance, peace, and safety (i.e., home) the women had to first uproot the source of abuse (the battering “loved one”). They then destroyed, discarded, cleansed, or closeted elements in the environment that

reminded them of the abuse. Environmental cues that could not be avoided, were regarded as the essential trace elements (i.e., the symbolic vitamins and minerals) needed to boost their immunity against their batterers, or as *impressive* (more so than depressing) reminders of their vulnerability, and their need to maintain heightened vigilance.

When batterers co-owned/co-leased the houses/apartments, and/or indulged in financial abuse (e.g., siphoned her earnings, caused her to lose her job, prevented/restricted her earnings, ruined her credit rating), the women would have been better helped if the judges had ordered the batterers to continue making the rent/mortgage payments.

When the house/apartment in which the woman had “stayed put” was in the batterer’s turf (i.e., the batterer’s family or friends lived in the vicinity and/or the batterer was a gang leader in that neighborhood), the woman ended up moving after three or four years, if the police, judges, and/or district attorney were not performing their function.

For women such as 53-yr-old Muriel, whose social isolation from neighbors and friends was integral to the abuse, the essential support from helping agencies, family, neighbors, and co-worshippers, was forthcoming only *after* she took the initial definite and defiant measures to end her 36-yr-long abusive relationship, restore her life and home, and engage freely in, and draw sustained sustenance from, civil and spiritual communities.

## Chapter 6

## IMPACT OF AN “ALARM” PROGRAM ON POST-SEPARATION VIOLENCE

This dissertation is, in part, an evaluation of the “electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention” pilot project for battered women called Alternative to Shelter (ATS). This alarm program began in September 1995. It was a joint effort by various district- and community-level entities — the Office of the Mayor (Rudolph W. Giuliani); the 20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> police precincts, and police service area five (PSA5) in the Upper West Side area of New York City; the New York County (i.e., Manhattan) District Attorney’s office; the Upper West Side branch of Victim Service Agency; the local St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Rape Intervention/Crime Victims Assessment Project; private enterprise such as the manufacturers of state-of-the-art security systems (viz., Protech Security Company, King Alarms, and NAPCO); and the local branch of a chain pharmaceutical store which sponsored a poster campaign to sensitize the community to domestic violence.

Ten of the 12 women interviewed for this section of the dissertation, had completed a year and a half in the ATS alarm program. The Department of Health of the City of New York requested that I conduct the evaluation interviews for this “alarm” program, and granted me permission to analyze the interviews for purposes of this dissertation. I was permitted to solicit the participation of battered women who were in the Alternative to Shelter (ATS) program, as well as those who had declined an invitation to enroll in the program. However, only women who were in the program participated. Women who had declined to enroll in the alarm program did not agree to be interviewed.

Since *none* of the ten women in the ATS program had occasion to use the pendant alarm, because their post-separation violence was a “long-fingers brand of battering” (Rivlin, 1997), the Commission to Combat Family Violence permitted me to interview women who were in the AWARE (Abused Women’s Active Response Emergency) alarm program in Brooklyn and had used their pendant alarm to get rapid police response. The coordinator of that program permitted me to contact only two of the women who had used their pendant alarms. Thus, two of the twelve women discussed here are AWARE women; the other ten are ATS women.

In comparison to the ATS demonstration project, AWARE is an older, more established program (i.e., not in its pilot phase), with over a hundred participants. AWARE is a program created by ADT Systems, Inc. (a security company) but operated independently by various authorities in local jurisdictions across the United States. ADT provides the pendant and home alarms free of charge for use in domestic violence cases (Giuliani, 1999). In Brooklyn, the AWARE program is coordinated by the Domestic Violence Bureau of the District Attorney of Kings County. In contrast, the ATS pilot project is coordinated by the 24<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct in Manhattan.

#### Objectives of the ATS Pilot Project

The goal of the ATS pilot project was “to provide domestic violence victims [in the Upper West Side] the option of remaining in their own homes with added security measures (Office of the Mayor, 1995).” The broader objective was to prevent the various other tragic levels of disruption, devastation, disempowerment, dislocation, deprivation, and dispossession with which, ironically *not batterers*, but survivors get penalized.

The purpose of the poster campaign in the ATS project neighborhood was to solicit community intervention in the abatement of battering. The posters and pamphlets in English and Spanish advocated a neighborly attitude with the aptly witty slogan: *Is it your business if your neighbor beats his wife? You bet her life it is.*

#### Location of the ATS Project

The Upper West Side of Manhattan, in New York City (the area within which the ATS pilot project was conducted), is as distinct and well-known a residential area as are the East Side, Greenwich Village, and Harlem.

This densely populated, primarily residential area (with over 200,000 people living in a 2 mile by 0.5 mile area), is bordered by Central Park to the east, and Riverside Park and the Hudson River to the west. Its southern boundary (West 59th Street) includes Lincoln Center (located at West 65th Street) and Columbus Circle (at West 60th Street), where the activity and land use resemble Midtown Manhattan, in contrast to the slower pace and smaller scale residential streets of the West 70s, 80s, and 90s. At the northern boundary is the Columbia University area (West 116th Street), which has a distinct college life identity.

Although apartment buildings dominate the Upper West Side, a differentiating characteristic of this area is the heterogeneity of land use. There are many retail and discount shops, restaurants, movie theaters, bars, grocery stores, parking garages, and thriving commercial and service establishments. Broadway is an especially important influence here, since it provides a popular and accessible strip of commercial and recreational opportunities from one end of the neighborhood to the other.

High density, diversity of population and land use, strong neighborhood identity, low “crime”, and ongoing social life are the distinctive features of the metropolitan area within which the ATS pilot project was conducted.

#### ATS Project Enrollment Criteria

Enrollment in the ATS demonstration project was *independent* of the victim’s decision to flee or the “get the hitter out”. Thus, women (and men) who had fled from their batterers, evicted their batterers, or even had never ever lived with the batterers, were eligible for enrollment in the ATS project, as long as the battered person met the following participation criteria:

1. Is a person who, because of his/her involvement in an abusive relationship, would seek shelter if he/she did not receive greater protection in his/her home and/or community (within defined jurisdictions).
2. Is willing to cooperate with the program guidelines and the key program personnel (viz., the domestic violence counselor, the domestic violence police officer, and the St. Lukes-Roosevelt counselor).
3. Is willing to go forward with prosecution or civil recourse of the defendant.
4. Has an exclusionary order of protection (if not living together, a “stay away” order) and agrees to act in compliance with the order’s stipulations.
5. If the perpetrator has the right to visitation, it must be supervised and held at a neutral site (preferably a precinct or court).
6. Is a person, who is not involved in abuse/neglect of any child(ren).

The ATS program was limited to only 10 residents of the Upper West Side on grounds that it was a one-year *demonstration* project. The 10 participants were

“selected by Victim Services and St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Rape Intervention/ Crime Victims Assessment Project based on criteria developed by a Core Implementation Group comprised of City agencies and local non-profit organizations (Office of the Mayor, 1995).” Domestic Incident Reports from the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> precincts, regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity of the victim, were reviewed with the assistance of police officers and assistant district attorneys in order to identify potential candidates. Eight persons were considered *ineligible* for the program, either because their recent history indicated a reluctance to sever all ties with the batterer; or the family court rejected petitions for Order of Protection; or there were suspicions of mutual abuse based on the batterer filing counter-charges, or the level of physical abuse prior to separation was low, or the client felt the batterer was unlikely to bother her (e.g., because of tough male brother moving in).

Eleven women in all were enrolled in the program. It was possible to add an eleventh participant because one among the first 10 “completed...participation” (Giuliani, 1999, p. 5) before the pilot ended. I was unable to reach the woman who completed participation early. I was unable to contact one other woman who was enrolled in the ATS program because her phone had been disconnected. Even a couple of home visits by the Domestic Violence Officer of her police precinct were unfruitful because no one answered the doorbell at the time the visits were made. I was, therefore, unable to ascertain her housing, safety, and well-being status.

#### Criteria for Dismissal from the Program

Before enrollment each participant was informed verbally and in writing that his/her program participation would be terminated on any of the following grounds:

1. participant allows any visitation by the batterer to occur in the home in violation of a court order;
2. participant fails to cooperate with the program personnel;
3. participant refuses to cooperate with the prosecution of the case or refuses to seek civil remedy in family court;
4. participant posts bail or bond to release the abuser from jail;
5. participant leaves the residence for more than one month, for reasons other than emergency situation, in which case participant must notify the domestic violence counselor immediately about emergency leave;
6. participant jeopardizes the safety of another participant or program personnel by disclosing confidential program information;
7. there are three false panic alarms emanating from participant's apartment without sufficient cause.

None mentioned anything in the interviews that would be considered grounds for dismissal. Avril's batterer showed up at her door on their son's first birthday after the eviction, and she didn't say, "I'm calling the police" because "it was a house full," there were many people at her place including neighbors and relatives, and she felt confident that "he would have not been stupid to try and do something. So that was the only time that he was allowed. He played with him for a while and he was gone." That's when he noticed her door alarm and cellular phone and he knew for sure that she was not joking about being in a special police program.

### Interview Settings

The women were asked to suggest an interview location they considered safe and convenient. Three ATS women chose to do phone interviews. All the other seven ATS women, and the two AWARE women, invited me to their apartments. Two of the ATS women who requested phone interviews asked for it to be done in two sessions of an hour each. Both women ended up not doing the second session of the interview, although several appointments were made with both. Perhaps, that was so, because they each were very happy in their new relationships, and had not experienced post-separation violence for almost a year.

### Demographic Characteristics of Alarm Program Participants

Of the ten ATS women I interviewed, three were Caucasian, two were African American, four were Hispanic, and 1 was South Asian. Nine women were of the same race as their batterer—one was a South Asian couple, four were Hispanic, one was Caucasian, two were African American couples, and one was a West Indian couple. Both the inter-racial couples were White-Woman/Black-Man couples. The ethnic combinations of the Hispanic couples varied but not all the Hispanic women ethnically identified themselves. The two that did were Puerto Rican-Woman/Dominican-Man, and Puerto Rican-Woman/Mexican-Man. Revealing the ethnicity of the South Asian couple could be tantamount to disclosing the couples identity given the few numbers and geographical concentration of the particular community. Of the eight women who “stayed put” and evicted their batterers, one was Native-plus-African American, one was African American, one was West Indian, two were Caucasian, and three were Hispanic.

Three had completed college, two had some college, two had completed high school and two had 10<sup>th</sup> grade education, one of whom was getting a GED. Seven were employed, three were unemployed, and seven were receiving public assistance or Section 8 rental assistance.

Six couples were within a couple of years apart in age. In two of these couples the woman was two years older than her batterer. All of these six couples were in their late 20s and early 30s. Four other couples were between five to seven years apart. In three of these couples the woman was older (ages 27, 41, and 54) than the batterers (ages 23, 35, and 48 respectively). The South Asian couple was twelve years apart with the woman in her early 30s and the batterer in his early 40s.

#### Separation and Housing Status of Alarm Programs Participants

Most of the women in the ATS program were just getting out of a battering situation. However, two of the ten ATS women joined the program after more than a year of separation from their batterers; both were motivated by child-related fears.

Shazia, a 30-year-old South Asian science student, joined the program soon after her 10-year-old daughter was taken from school by her 42-year-old South Asian abusive husband, almost *two years after* she had fled to her uncle's apartment, then to her college dorm, then to a battered women's shelter, then to a Tier II shelter, and at the time of the interview had obtained a Mitchell Lama apartment.

The other long-time-separated woman, 28-year-old Justine, a Hispanic public health worker, joined the program when her batterer asked her baby-sitter about her children's school schedule, *three years after* "staying put" in her public housing

apartment and evicting her 30-year-old Hispanic ex-husband with an Exclusionary Order of Protection. However, she is now eager to move far away since not even her enrollment in the program has been instrumental in getting him “jail time so that he learns his lesson” and stops harassing her and her children:

...so right now what me and my boyfriend are doing is just trying to save money to move completely. I've had to change my jobs...change my baby-sitter...to get him to leave us alone. And this is the only thing left to do...move out of here.

All but one woman in the ATS program was recruited by the police or district attorney. Sara, a 54-year-old Caucasian office receptionist, was informed about the ATS program, and encouraged to join, by the manager of her SRO apartment, after her 48-year-old African American batterer was arrested and detained:

My manager in the building brought it up to me and asked me if I was interested. She thought it would be a good idea if I participated. She said she'd be willing to go with it...be supportive of it.

— Sara's building manager learned about the pendant alarm at one of several public awareness events of the ATS program.

Of the other six ATS women I interviewed, one other woman (Yula [age 32]) “stayed put” in public housing funded by New York City, three women (Avril [41], Lorna [30], and Tiffany [31]) “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama Co-operatives which are subsidized by New York State and have 24-hr doorman service, two women (Liz [30], and Marizine [31]) fled to live with their parents so the alarm was fitted in their parents' apartment/house, and one (Ruth [32]) “stayed put” in her private rental apartment in a building with 24-hour doorman service.

Of the two AWARE women, one (Natalie [27]) “stayed put” in her private rental apartment in a high rise complex with no doorman service, and one (Colette [nearly 60]) “stayed put” (in relation to her 31-year-old son), in the attached house she

owns. Her abusive son and daughter-in-law lived a few doors away from her until they were evicted due to non-payment of rent for over a year. They still frequented the neighborhood to terrorize his mother because he had signed over legal custody of their three daughters to her (his mother) when his battered wife had pressed charges against him and disappeared. When his wife returned after years of disappearance they joined forces and now claim Colette forcefully took the children away from him. Due to blatant evidence of parental drug use, and gross child abuse and neglect, Colette is unwilling to surrender the lives of her grandchildren to her far-from-reformed son.

In effect, *none* of the women in the alarm programs were in confidential addresses, even when they moved to their parents'. Nine of the 12 women had evicted their batterers a year and a half prior to the interview. The alarm system was fitted in their apartments a week or two after the eviction.

All the women in the alarm programs were in neighborhoods with which they were familiar, and where their housing was affordable. Even Ruth, the Caucasian piano teacher, who had a private rental apartment in a 24-hour doorman building in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, paid less than \$500 per month in 1997 for her fairly large one bedroom apartment, because it was in a rent-regulated building.

Of the six women who "stayed put" four locked up their apartments immediately after the abusive partner or spouse was evicted and/or arrested. The women went away for between 15 days to 3 months. Yula went to a shelter for over a month with her three little girls, while the other three went to their mother's [Ruth], father's [Justine], and parents' [Liz] place. Tiffany was in a witness-protection

program for two weeks, during which time she and her three children were discreetly moved into a nice hotel.

### Batterers' Knowledge of the Enhanced Security Program

None of the batterers were *directly* informed about the *alarm being installed* and none of the women who were interviewed knew for sure if their batterer was aware of the full extent and capability of the equipment. Avril's batterer who showed up at her door on their son's first birthday after the eviction and she let him spend a little time in the apartment with the birthday boy since she had a house full of guests. That evening was when he realized the police protection Avril was receiving was no small matter. He too perhaps did not comprehend the full extent of the program:

He saw the alarm and the phone, "Oh you can afford a cellular phone? You can afford an alarm?" "No, the city can afford it, the city put it in for me, it goes with the domestic violence program that I'm in." "Oh!" So then that let him know I'm not joking.

— Avril [41], African American singer, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama flat.

Four other women reported that their batterers knew of the *alarm* (i.e., a regular door alarm, not specifically of the *pendant* alarm) because he or his family members had been *deliberately* (but vaguely) informed about it either by the woman herself or by her family members or friends or security guards as a way of dissuading him from "messing" further with their daughter/sister/friend/tenant:

He [28-year-old Jamaican boyfriend] does know that they were putting this [alarm] system in...he doesn't know the whole details...he heard that from [my friends]. *So he was shocked that I was going to take those measures.* I mean totally... totally beyond belief. But he'll never accept what he's done. And he'll never think he's done anything wrong and he'll think it's all me...coz that's just the way he is.

— Liz [30], Caucasian athlete & gym director, fled to parent's house.

I spoke to one of his cousins whom he is in touch with...and I told her at the time...I was telling his whole family, "If you speak to him tell him to turn himself in"...coz this was a time when there were like three and four warrants out for his arrest...and I said, "Just let him know that if he comes by me he's definitely going to be arrested because I'm being watched by the precinct." So, I don't know if that scared him or what...but I know for a fact that he was not trying to come near me. He [29-year-old African American husband] did know there was a warrant for his arrest...and he did run from the police...so he knew that his time was short.

— Tiffany, African American secretary, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama flat.

When he [33-year-old Mexican common law husband of 17 years] got arrested...the alarm lady mentioned the program to me...about the security system and stuff and I told her, "Yeah I want it...coz I was really scared and I was all alone [with their three little daughters aged 4, 5, and 11]...I didn't know whether he was in or whether he was out...whether he was going to come after me because I had him arrested...so I was really worried. But then when I found out that he was in the Tombs...Lorraine [the alarm program coordinator] called me a couple of days later and told me that he was in the Tombs...that he was not coming out...that there's a thousand dollar bail. And his family also called and guaranteed that he wasn't going to get me. I said, "Look, if I decide to drop the charges I still have the order of protection and I have a security system...if this man comes anywhere near me I won't give him another chance...I will lock him up...I want you to make sure...each and every one of you is going to understand this...I'm not going to go through this." And luckily I dropped the charges and he has *not* bothered me since.

— Yula, Puerto Rican cash register clerk, "stayed put" in public housing.

### Violence Before Separation

Of the eleven women who were in abusive intimate relationships, the time frame of the abuse before separation ranged between 4 *months* of living together (Ruth) and 16 *years* of living together (Yula). For the three others who lived together the abuse before separation lasted 7 months (Natalie), less than 1 year (Liz), less than 2 years (Sara). Of those who were married, the abuse before separation spanned between 5 to 10 *years*.

In addition to serious verbal, financial, and residential abuse, the physical abuse of the alarm program participants included punching, scratching, biting, being thrown against walls and furniture, having their clothes ripped off and numerous death

threats. Moreover, seven of the ATS women had been attacked with weapons such as a razor blade (Sara), kitchen knife (Marizine, Avril, Yula,), meat cleaver (Shazia), steering wheel club-lock (Justine), baseball bat (Tiffany). One ATS and one AWARE woman had been choked (Ruth, Natalie). Lorna's husband closed the car door on her leg, and at another time broke her arm. Liz's boyfriend used to hurl and destroy heavy objects (e.g., bicycles, audio equipment, etc.), round about her and she feared he would use his two machetes on her.

In addition, one karate black belt batterer (Avril's) was using crack, two batterers were involved in drug dealing (Marizine's and Justine's), and one was alcoholic (Sara's). Two had been in jail for drug dealing, two had been convicted before for battering, and five had been arrested before for battering.

#### Long Distance Post-Separation Violence

Six of the ten women in the ATS program and both the AWARE women continued to experience post-separation violence. However, none of the ten women in the ATS program had reason to *activate* their alarm device because the batterers did not *demand* to be let in, nor did they *successfully* attempt to secretly break in at any time of day or night. This surprising finding of apparent restraint on the part of the batterers seems not to be directly related to the installation of the alarm system. Instead, the interviews reveal that the batterers' physical restraint is highly connected with the fact that almost all of the batterers (9 out of 12) were either very expressly and sternly told by the woman's family (6 out of 12), and/or their own family (2 out of 12), or the building security (1 out of 12), "Don't you dare mess with her another time 'cause she or we *will* report you," or "...she's being watched by the precinct."

And/or the batterers realized after a week or ten days “in the Tombs” (i.e., in jail, 3 out of 10) that they were no longer “above the law.”

Oh he [35-year-old African American husband] knows, he will tell you himself that an Order of Protection will have you arrested if you violate it. He now understands. His whole thing before was “I don’t care about an Order of Protection...it ain’t goin’ to do nothin’ to me.” But when he was arrested and locked up [for 3 weeks] he now sings a different tune.”

— Avril, African American singer, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

He got arrested [*immediately*] because he broke the Order of Protection...the first one...and he spent one night in jail and I never heard from him again. Nothing...I do see him every so often because we both compete...we’re both athletes...we’re both in the park very often...he does see me...he does look my way and continues on...[N]one of my friends have heard from him...none of my co-workers...no one has seen him. He’s changed his whole plan so he doesn’t get in my way. He knows that I wasn’t playing around... I think *that* one night was enough to scare him off...that I meant business...that I wasn’t going...to wait around. He lives right around the corner...but I never see him now...a friend sees him training at night ...two or three nights a week...he doesn’t train at all during the day ‘cause I am out during the mornings. He just stopped...coz he knows better. I don’t think he’ll come near me with a ten foot pole actually at this point.

— Liz, Caucasian athlete & gym director, fled to parents’ house.

Such physical restraint on the part of the batterer is in direct contrast to the experience of 32-year-old Yula who had changed her locks several times in the past and whose ex-common-law husband (for 17 years) had been arrested *overnight* several times before the “final” separation at the time of joining the alarm program:

One time I even changed the lock and then when he put [his] key and the lock was changed, he started knocking on the door...I just panicked so much...my daughter [9-years-old at the time] said [in hushed tones], “What are you going to do!? Daddy’s going to know you changed the locks.” I said [in hushed tones], “I’m going to tell him I lost the keys and I changed the locks.” And she said “So you’re going to let him in?” I said “Yes.” So she said [*exasperatedly* in hushed tones], “So why did you change the lock?!” I said, “I’m afraid to leave him out there...he might start banging on the door and kicking it or something.” I [had] changed [the lock] to keep him out, but then I was *so scared*...and I didn’t want him to cause a scene and have the neighbors hear...and the kids were in the house...and they would get nervous...I didn’t want to go through all that...so I just panicked and I opened the door and I told him, “Listen, I lost the keys so I had Housing change the lock.” I must have done that maybe two or three times.

But this man too did not *even* approach her building or stalk her outside, after the “final” separation, not *only* because of the alarm system but *also* because of a *week-long* (not just overnight) arrest, and her new partner’s massive body build:

[T]hey took him, I heard, to the Tombs [for a week]...on a thousand dollar bail. ...then when he got out on bail we had to go to court and it just got real ugly...his family also called and guaranteed that he wasn’t going to get me. I said, “Look, if I decide to drop the charges I still have the Order of Protection and I have a security system...if this man comes anywhere near me I won’t give him another chance...I will lock him up...I want you to make sure...each and every one of you is going to understand this...I’m not going to go through this and...I dropped the charges. ...that was almost a year ago and he hasn’t bothered me since.

He called here once to speak to me to see if he could pick up the kids...and my boyfriend [new partner] and him had like a little conversation...my boyfriend told him, “Listen I live in this house now...and I’m not trying to take your kids away from you but I’m gonna tell you something. I don’t know what happened before between you and my girlfriend...but whatever happened is not going to happen now. I will never let anybody hurt her or any of the children. I could never tell you, “You can’t see your kids,” coz those are your kids and your very attached. All I’m saying is that if we do everything by the book...and if we do everything with respect, then we wouldn’t have any problem...but the minute that you cross the lines, it would be a problem.”

[H]is sister, [the one] which is very [emotionally] close to me came to my house and saw my boyfriend [who] is 6’1, black, 252 pounds...her brother [the batterer] is 5’3...[so] he don’t want to go [near my boyfriend] coz he’s a very, very big man. I asked [the batterer’s sister], “Do you honestly think he would leave me alone?” And she said, “That week in jail scared that man something terrible.” She said, “He came out skinny and he got into a fight while he was in there and he had like a bruise under his eyes. He don’t want to go back to jail.”

For 42-year-old Avril however, “Three weeks of jail time is just long enough to make somebody *angry*.” An “overnight arrest” or “a walk around the block”, which were some police measures taken prior to the women being in this program, proved to be the most detrimental — such lenient “actions” only confirmed the batterer’s beliefs that he was indeed “above the law” and that she was utterly at his mercy since her only recourse is a law which “has no teeth.”

Avril's batterer had been "assisted...lock, stock, and barrel" out of the apartment by the police because he would not leave on his own after being served an Exclusionary Order of Protection which mandated him to vacate the apartment immediately. They had been married for almost ten years, and had not only been childhood friends, but he had been devoted to her since *he* was 12 years old:

He was always the cute little boy that would come up to you and want to give you a hug, "Hi how are you?" and you give a hug and pat him on the head and cluck [with the flick of the tongue], "See you later, bye!" And he'd run on. And he [had] told his family throughout the years "I'm going to marry her."

Despite such prolonged friendship, he came back at her with a vengeance, after spending three weeks in jail:

One day he came into the building, I was up here [in her 9th floor apartment], I didn't know he was in the building, and this was soon after he was arrested, when he'd been let out. I got a phone call from [building] security...they told me, "Do not open your door under any circumstances. Someone [who had seen him coming through a far away third entrance to the apartment complex] just came and told us *he's* in the building."

So, even Avril's alarm system ended up not being used at all because he was intercepted by a security guard, was escorted out of the building, and in no uncertain terms was reminded that his restraining order forbade him to come to the apartment complex. According to Avril, "community action works but you have to be *a part of the community* for it to work." True to her philosophy, she herself had mobilized her neighbors and security guards to "watch her back" and be her "informants."

But a few days later he blasted Avril over the phone: "I'll have my boys burn that motherfucker [apartment complex] to the ground." Her alarm system was unable to protect her from such smoldering harassment even though his behavior could legally be considered "menace and harassment with the use of an instrument" — which makes it a felony, in addition to a violation of the Order of Protection.

It thus becomes quite apparent that the non-use of the alarm system does not imply the *absence* of post-separation violence. On the contrary, post-separation violence is a very real, ongoing, seriously troubling, highly anxiety-provoking, and nerve-racking experience for 6 out of 10 women in the ATS project. Their batterers very shrewdly use forms of violence that cannot be intercepted or apprehended by the use of the alarm system or the cellular phone. Thus, six out of ten batterers continue to systematically and relentlessly violate the psyches and lives of the women through seemingly benign and/or romantic acts such as:

calling from public phones:

He calls...he lets it ring...he knows my answering machine picks up on the fourth ring...so he only lets it ring three times...or sometimes he'll let the machine run through and then he hangs up. If I answer he hangs up...or he'll hold on for a couple of seconds and then click....All I could do was file a complaint...since he doesn't say anything...there's nothing I can do...I can't accuse *him* of it...there's no proof that it's actually him...its pretty *frustrating*...there's no proof in a court of law...[and] since he hasn't said anything he's not violating anything.

— Lorna, ex-fashion model, stayed put in Mitchell Lama housing.

sending red roses:

Phone calls were one thing but now I'm really worried because I mean...a dozen red roses...he's really not letting go...so I'm scared and he knows that the Order of Protection is up [expiring] in a week. [The card that came with the roses read] "Happy 31st , \_\_\_ [her name]. As we get older our bodies don't function like they used to...but we get better looking as we get older...love always...one wing." I'm assuming the "one wing" means that he's got a broken wing without me supposedly. But since he didn't actually sign [his name]...[and] someone from the flower company wrote it...[and since] he didn't come within a hundred yards of me...there's nothing on the Order of Protection that says he can't send something to me.

— Lorna, ex-fashion model, stayed put in Mitchell Lama housing.

sending better-yourself books:

...he'd send me books and he would say that the guys [our friends] in the health food store were giving them to me...like one of those John Gray books "Men are from Mars..." because...it was about me...that I'm the one who couldn't communicate, and I'm the one with the problems.

— Liz, athlete and gym director, fled to her parents' apartment.

wanting time with, and/or news of, the children:

He took me to court twice for my child...knowing he cannot get visitation rights...just to bother me...knowing that I had to take the time off and go to court...he used to call me at my job and harass me...so I had to change my job...he then found the baby-sitter's daughter and started asking her questions...then I had to find a new baby-sitter [and also enrolled in the alarm program]...so I think my alternative is to just move out of here [from the apartment in which she "stayed put" minus him for the past three years]. Every time I've tried to move ahead with my life he's always tried to find some other way to harass us.

— Justine, public health worker, "stayed put" in public housing.

employing friends or others to act on his behalf:

I'm a victim of hi-tech stalking...he's not stalking me...but his private detectives are...its just constant...he's such a coward...his behavior is so cowardly that he could hire someone to run you over.

— Ruth, piano teacher, "stayed put" in private rented apartment.

There was threats...not from him...but from people he knows in the streets... I was scared that he would send someone...not his parents...to do something. And his parents...that's their only son...his mother made threats that she...will get me and my mother back for what we did to her son. His parents told him not to call; "they might be recording it."

— Marizine, housewife, fled to her parents' apartment.

Thus, most batterers who actively terrorized their ex-partners and children did

so in very clever ways so as *not* to:

1. violate the exclusionary order of protection, and/or
2. reveal their identity and/or whereabouts.

One woman succinctly commented on how the social representation of stalking downplays its treacherousness and relegates it to the ranks of "harassment:"

...he's such a tricky guy that so much of what he does cannot be proven...its a just a way [to make] me to feel uneasy at all times.

Reflecting on the high incidence of such insidious post-separation violence, social psychologist Michelle Fine (1997) questions: "Are we giving the credit (for such tricky-ness) where it's due? Have *these men* scanned the Criminal Law shelves in libraries, shared trade secrets, been exemplary boy scouts, and *studied* which terrorizing behaviors are legal? or Is it *the law* that tricky-ly [sic] provides batterers this much leeway?!"

Pendant alarms, Call tracing, and other such state-of-the-art security and communication systems have clearly not been capable of monitoring and protecting the women in the program from seemingly non-violent yet potentially murderous behavior. As Ruth who "stayed put" in her affordable rental apartment aptly says:

I don't feel like the program has let me down...I think it was kind to give me the protection I needed...and to do this for free... and this did make me feel safe in my home...but nothing has happened since...except it's just horrible ...I see what he is capable of...how he [still] scares the daylights out of me.

— Both Caucasian, in mid-30s; she piano teacher, he economics professor.

### Violence-free Living

Of the four ATS women who were not experiencing post-separation violence at the time of the interview (i.e., a year and a half after the alarm was installed), Sara was living more at a her boyfriend's place than in her own SRO. She had been receiving calls from her batterer while he was in jail and for six months after the alarm had been installed. She reported the calls from jail to the ATS program coordinator and they made sure he stopped that. When he was released, he moved back into her SRO building. When he resumed stalking and abusing her, the building management and security evicted him and banned him from even visiting the building.

Yula had a massive new and loving boyfriend who made it clear to the batterer that he would not let anyone hurt Yula ever again.

Shazia's batterer had relocated to another State. He would come to pick up his 11-year-old once in three or four months. Shazia would meet him on the street in front of her Mitchell Lama building, in full view of the security guards. They still had heated arguments between themselves, over their daughter's schooling, religious education, and vacation schedule.

Marizine's batterer who had been married to her for 10 years and had lived together for 7 years prior to their marriage, had now become romantically involved with another woman who was living in another borough.

#### Police Response to Pendant Alarm Activation

Twenty-seven year old Natalie (a Trinidadian private nursing assistant) who "stayed put" in her Brooklyn apartment was ironically taken *completely* unawares when it was time for her to use her AWARE program pendant alarm. The reason she was taken *completely* unawares was because her 23-year-old batterer (a Jamaican security guard) had been doing a one year prison sentence for battery and assault. She was appalled that although she was in the AWARE program, she had not been informed prior to his release, nor *immediately after* his release.

Sure enough, upon his release, he blatantly violated her Order of Protection by heading straight for her apartment — the one from which he had been evicted and had resisted the eviction by breaking down her door and viscously assaulting her. This

time he calmly knocked on her door; he did not holler nor bang the door, but patiently waited for her to absentmindedly answer a perfectly normal knock on her door.

Thanks to her neighbor's nephew who happened to meet him as he entered the building, and who called his aunt from the nearest public phone, who in turn lost no time in calling Natalie, she knew who was at her door. When he knocked she had been on the phone and casually called out, "Who is it?" He had not answered, but her neighbor's warning call came through, just at that moment, on her other line, since she subscribes to Call Waiting service. Nevertheless she panicked more than she anticipated because she expected him to be still in prison! In her state of intense panic she dialed 911 instead of pressing her "panic button" (i.e., the pendant alarm). That was where she "wasted" a few precious moments with the 911 dispatcher who asked to describe his clothing so she could relay the information to the officers who were headed to her apartment. Since he had broken down the door before, she was afraid to creep up to the peephole to be able to describe his clothing. When the officers did not appear as quickly as she expected, she realized her mistake, hung up, and only then pressed her pendant alarm. It worked absolutely silently as was designed; it did not beep nor did it start up any alarm or siren.

By this time her batterer had slipped a note under her door on which he said he had changed and gave her a telephone number at which to reach him that evening at 6pm. While he was walking out of the building, she was able to see him from her 12<sup>th</sup> floor window. So she excitedly described his clothing to the pendant alarm attendant who surprisingly had no communication line to the officers who *had* arrived instantly.

Natalie was impressed with the speed at which police officers arrived after she pressed the pendant alarm. But, given the delay in her use of the pendant alarm and the absence of a communication line between pendant alarm attendant and responding police officers, the batterer escaped arrest in bright daylight. Being familiar with his “bag of tricks” she disregarded his note and handed it over to the detective.

However, even with the telephone (which happened to be his mother’s) and the address of his mother’s apartment, the police were able to arrest him only three whole weeks later, soon after he committed another crime and the victim called 911—he had beaten and robbed, instead of paying, a sex worker from whom he received services. The police told Natalie that had the sex worker not reported him, they would not have been able to “catch up with him.” Apparently, they had been trying to arrest him in the two weeks after he showed up at her apartment but when they called the number which he had slipped under her door, he told them they would have to first speak to his attorney.

Natalie was upset that when they finally arrested him, just like after he had broken down her door and almost killed her, this time too he was released on bail and was allowed to roam freely until his sentencing. She also was very disappointed that despite his visit to her upon his release and his assault of a sex worker, he was charged only with Class B Misdemeanor and sentenced to only 90 days in prison.

During my interview with her, she was still flabbergasted that she had not been informed of his release even though she was in a special District Attorney’s Office program. Five months later when I called her to tell her that I was ready to mail her

the interview transcript, she was furious that even after his 90 days prison term she was not given any prior or subsequent notification of his release!!

Colette was reluctant to use her alarm because her son and daughter-in-law were stalking her and she did not feel that was sufficient reason to press the panic button. Her police detective then instructed her to use it even if they, or one of them, was “*just watching*” her house from across the street, or seemed to be “*just passing by.*” When she did she was very impressed with the speed at which the police arrived at her door. But they were not able to arrest the offender(s). She remains terrified because her son knows how to come into her house through her roof and her neighbors whose property he has to trespass are quick to complain to her about it, but very reluctant to call 911 to report him. He has managed to escape arrest each time she has used the pendant alarm.

#### Impact of the “Coordinated Community Intervention” Component

Natalie, nonetheless, was glad that she was in the AWARE program not only because of the pendant alarm which brought her rapid police response, but also because the District Attorney’s office gave her police detective all the relevant information at no expense to her in terms of time and effort. But as we already observed in other aspects, the alarm programs did not quite deliver on their promise of “coordinated intervention.”

Two of my interview questions (“Was there anything you expected the program to do that you found it didn’t do?” and, “What was your experience with the police and the DA after you joined the program?”) elicited utter frustration from all six women in the ATS program who continued to experience post- separation

violence even after joining the program. They were expecting the system to at least *perform*, if not *excel*, in its punitive function (read protective directives).

The following five quotes eloquently voice the women's disillusionment with the "coordinated" component of Alternative to Shelter program. The lengthiness of the quotes reflect the high significance of, and dire need for, an *efficient* and *coordinated* community intervention system:

[I expected the program] to keep him locked up if he didn't do what he was supposed to do....[the district attorney's] hands are somewhat tied when it comes to certain things. When he [ex-husband] went to criminal court, I talked to the ADA...that he *had* to do rehab...that was my stipulation for him not going back to jail...that he *had* to do rehab, and it had to be a *very strenuous rehab*. But when he got to court *that* didn't happen. The judge probably didn't know about my stipulation because it wasn't mentioned. *My stipulation [was that] in order for him to be released on his own recognizance he has to do rehab*. I called the ADA back and I asked him, "What went wrong? What happened? Did you go?" He said, "Well no, I didn't go, I sent a note." "A note! You sent a note!? This man is walking the street, this man is extremely livid at the moment because I had him locked up for three weeks, regardless of the fact that he did something to have me have him locked up. I told you that he had to either do rehab or go back to jail!" "Well I sent a note down to his legal aid." "His legal aid is on his side! She's not going to tell the court you requested *that*, if *he* says he does not want to do it." [So] he didn't do a day!!!

— Avril, African American singer, "stayed put."

Justine had evicted her batterer three years prior to enrolling in the ATS program. She had "stayed put" in her six-year long public housing apartment and neighborhood instead of applying for an emergency transfer to another public housing where she would have been a total stranger with no one to watch her back. She chose to "stay put" and hold on to the advantage of having neighbors and neighborhood store keepers of watchdog-integrity. She holds the justice system largely responsible for her mounting desperation to move:

To tell you the truth...I don't believe in the justice system. He could have gotten time...I think if he would have gotten time he would have learned his lesson and

he would have left us alone. But he got away with it...he's been caught four times now... pleaded guilty I think about three times...and still he's been able to get out on [five years] probation ...I was told that the reason why he didn't get [attempted] murder was because I didn't have a broken bone with that heavy steel pipe beating [when he almost killed her by beating her mercilessly with a steering wheel lock]...I mean I don't see the sense of the system...I don't!!

I have to protect me and my [two] children and its been really difficult ...I tried to go to counseling so they [the kids] don't lose their minds...I try to progress myself to get out of that situation and we're being held back...the court allowed him to take me through that trial...to take me through that BS and for nothing...I think that the system really has let me down [sighs resignedly]. I really do...and my last alternative is to move away from here.

— Justine, public health worker, “stayed put” three years *prior* to alarm.

Justine's subsequent experience with the police is alarmingly striking in its conspicuous lack of the customary courtesy one would expect in such trying circumstances, particularly when enrolled in a special “demonstration” police project:

[The police] are still the same [even after joining the program]. I went to serve him an Order of Child Support...to modify my child support...and I had to go to the precinct to get the police to accompany me...and when we served him the papers...the cops just let me go. I said, “I have an Order of Protection and you're just leaving me here?” ...and they said, “You walk away and we'll stay here for a minute.” I told them, “Can you just drive me maybe a couple of blocks because I'm afraid of this man...and I have an Order of Protection against him.” They told me, “We'll stay here a couple of minutes while you go.” So I took a cab for a block...from across the street and I left...but I was really stunned that they just left me there with an Order of Protection in front of his job!!!

— Justine, public health worker, “stayed put.”

The six out of ten women in the ATS program who continue to be terrorized by their batterers echo feelings of intense insecurity and fear caused by inadequate and delayed communication with their respective Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs):

I've been working with the ADA. I don't like him at all. I think he had too many things going on. And that's a problem. He couldn't get back to me enough. He didn't have enough information for me. I called him up to find out about when the court dates were and it was taking him days to get back to me. He was always very rushed. And one day I had to see him and he was going away on vacation. And so he set me up with another guy and he knew my name and I knew his name but they made me come down and I sat there for like 4 hours before he could see me. Then he saw me and...went through a whole bunch of stuff and he said “you

know what, I can't work with you" ...because he knows me...he's a member of [a neighborhood organization of which I was the director at the time]. So I wasted a whole day and had to wait two weeks before [my previous ADA] came back. And it was just...he was doing so many things...I mean I'm lucky it wasn't a shooting situation or it wasn't really violent...but if it was!...I was petrified. I'm a real strong person with strong friends...but if it was someone else I think they would have been petrified if they had to work with him...because you couldn't get a hold of him...I just found that really tough...and that made me uncomfortable more than anything!

— Liz, athlete and gym director.

Another woman, Lorna, points out the danger of rigidly interpreting the already limited stipulations of an Order of Protection, and emphasizes the need for flexibility in reporting procedures, the value of quick arrests, and the importance of regarding post-separation harassment as a serious offense, warranting safety parameters tailored to the couple's everyday geography (i.e., rather than a fixed, non-contextual 100 yards stay-away zone). Although her ex-husband was engaging in post-eviction harassment, he was permitted to work as a concierge in the building right opposite hers in the Upper West side, even though he was part of a union which serviced buildings all over the city. Since he had moved to his mother's place after she evicted him, his job could very well have been transferred to a site in Brooklyn. When she started waking up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night, she realized it was because he had been watching her bedroom window from the drive of the building across hers. It was then that she became eager to get him transferred, but her ADA discouraged her, because he saw no grounds on which he could back her up, since he was not violating the 100 yards stipulation of the restraining order. However, even though he persisted with phone harassment and verbal abuse, nothing was done about it, despite her enrollment in the ATS alarm program:

Also, he violated the order of protection...[he] actually called me and spoke and harassed me...and he had his friends doing it also...I was very ill...my mother in fact was taking care of my daughter...I was running a 103

temperature...and [he] accused me of fucking someone else...and I'm a whore...and I'll never be anything without him...and how dare I do all this to him. [So] I called [my police precinct to report it]...they told me I had to go down there [to the precinct]...I'm like, "I'm scared to go out of my apartment...you don't understand...I was told, 'Call and there would be no problem'...so now I'm calling coz he's violating the order of protection."

I called the precinct instead of calling 911...I figured, "Let me go directly to these people...they know me and what's going on"...I [also] call the ADA that was handling all this...I was in contact with [the domestic violence] police officer...And they all said, "No I have to go down...file another [report]"...Yes, although I was in the program already...which is why it really upset me. I went down to the precinct [with high fever] early in the morning right after I dropped my daughter off at school.

[After that] I was very much a prisoner in my apartment...I felt like everybody wasn't taking me seriously...I had to constantly call the detective, "Have you picked him up yet?...Do you want his work schedule?...He's working right now go pick him up please!" *Four days later* is when they picked him up! He was arrested and set out on bail of [only] 250 dollars!!...that was it...basically a slap on the wrist...for misdemeanor...he pleaded guilty to *harassment*...the original charges were *assault in the second degree*. I think it was *reckless endangerment*... there were two or three charges...he pleaded guilty to the lesser...which I believe was harassment...regardless...it doesn't matter coz all three were just misdemeanors...because I was his wife!...if it happened to a stranger it would be a felony.

— Lorna, ex-fashion model, "stayed put."

In addition to the above, the difficulty Lorna experienced with serious delay in trials, despite being in this special enhanced criminal justice program, was a primary reason for dropping the charges. Two of the five women who were still experiencing the crazy-making, paranoid-sounding, long distance, symbolic mode of battering admitted to being on the verge of dropping their charges too:

I actually had [the charges for] the second [violation] dropped... because [his trial] kept being put off, put off, put off...and I'm suffering from depression...[and] I ended up going to the hospital for a month...for psychiatric treatment!!

...the assault occurred on May 5th 1996...it has been going to trial every 6 weeks and it keeps getting put off [as of February 2, 1997]...the DA says they are allowed to put it off...that this is a relatively young case and that the courts are so backed up...

Another woman, 32-year-old Ruth, felt pressure to drop the charges due to terrifying experiences at the district attorney's office. Unlike Natalie (a Trinidadian) who was horrified about not being informed of her batterer's release yet had only good things to say about the DA's office, Ruth (a Caucasian, whose batterer was a Caucasian economics professor and millionaire) echoes the futility of taking recourse in the program which was felt by the six ATS women who were still being terrorized by their batterers:

I don't want to go into what happened at the DA's office. But...the DA, the Bureau Chief, and some other guy...all were grilling me at this table...and the Bureau Chief said he didn't believe me...and that my story didn't add up. He said, "Do you really think these pictures show assault?" I mean I look like *Nicole Brown*...and I said, "I don't know!" And he said, "Why are the pictures so blurry?" I said "I didn't take those pictures...the *detective* took them." "Why didn't you take better pictures?" I said, "Well wouldn't that have shown I was doing this for the money...I didn't take any pictures...I relied on the ones that the *hospital* took and that the *detective* took"...and he just accused me of lying about everything...and I told him "If you're going to keep doing this to me...hook me up to a lie-detector *right now*...I don't know what to say to you...I'm telling you the truth...hook me up." "Oh no, I won't do that." He told me I was caustic. My lawyer told me that the word in the DA's office is that I managed to piss off the whole DA's office...and I managed to piss them off because I stood up for myself.

...now isn't it a co-incidence that my ADA [with whom she worked for 8 months] had said, "This is one of the strongest cases I have ever seen...[he] *will* be convicted...you're a great witness"...just confidence after confidence in me...and then *his* lawyer and some other scum bag met with this Bureau Chief guy and then everything changes...[now] my ADA says, "You haven't got a case!" She told me it was definitely going [to trial]...my brother postponed a trip to England so he could be there for me. For two hours the Bureau Chief grills me about everything under the sun..."Why didn't I pack a toothbrush?" And I said, "I thought maybe I had one." "I don't even believe that you didn't pack a toothbrush!"...things like that. So then [my DA] says to me that she's going to possibly drop it to *just* battery [from assault and battery]....My lawyer said to her, "If this case is dropped or dropped down it's going to look like something very strange happened in that office...and I'll get to the bottom of it!"

Meanwhile I was just a *basket-case* and [my ADA] said to me, "What happened to you in there...when you go to trial, it will be 10 times worse!" I'm also doing this [not backing down and withdrawing the charges] because I think that he will kill somebody...and I think he would have killed me...and everybody I talk to thinks that it escalated so quickly that he almost held me prisoner in his huge house [an *isolated mansion* in New Jersey]...and he would have killed me.

[Also] my lawyer for the civil case said, "He has a reputation for beating up women"...he gave that information to the District Attorney... with the other girl's name [a professional woman in a high profile job] and [the ADA] *didn't* take advantage of that...she hasn't subpoenaed this [other] woman [whom he beat up in the past]...I said, "Did you ever contact this girl [referred to her by first name]?" She said, "Well no I never did...I can't really put her on the stand." And I said, "Why can't you?" ...and I told my [civil] lawyer about that and he said, "That's baloney!"

— Ruth, piano teacher, "stayed put."

Another comment by Ruth reflects the need for articulation, by the program, of the levels and mechanisms of coordination between law enforcement agencies:

No I didn't [request the police to research his criminal record]...I didn't know that the two were connected. I thought that it had taken its natural progression...that you go to the police and then it moves on to the DA's office...and now they handle it. Everything that's sent to me is "the people of the State of New York vs. [the batterer]." I figure it's out of...that the precinct did their job and it's moved to now this other thing.

In stark contrast, Liz, the English American athlete and gym director, was very pleased that even though she dropped charges the first time:

the detectives re-opened the case [when the post-separation violence continued]...I pulled out everything ...I [had] kept every tape, every letter, everything he ever gave me. [The alarm program coordinator] said, "Press charges." ... And he had the nerve to call the precinct to tell them that I was crazy and not to worry about it. It was so weird to me. And the detective just laughed. And we went through all the courts...I did all that stuff and when we went to serve him the papers... the order of protection...the first one...he wouldn't sign them. He's like, "What if I don't sign them?" [The police officers] said, "Well then we lock you up...simple as that." So he looked in the hallway coz I was down the hallway...I was crying...I was hysterical...and that's not my character. [H]e started screaming at me "why are you doing this to me...I haven't done anything"...really violently...and the cops are looking at him like, "Hello!" And he did sign them and then the next day he broke them by calling me and sending me flowers. And that's when the police wrote the second Order and they locked him up. And it was quiet after that.

— Liz, English American athlete and gym director.

Liz's positive experience with the police is probably what encourages her to:

...speak to [the Domestic Violence Officer of her precinct] quite a bit...he's great...I call him every so often and they know where I am.

### Other Snags in the Coordinated Intervention Component

Two out of the six ATS women who continue to be terrorized by their batterers strongly suspect that the friendships and misplaced loyalties of police officers and assistant district attorneys play a significant role in why they are not receiving the protection they expected as participants in this special program.

...the last time I saw him in the street I waved the telephone at him [the batterer]...I said, "The police are only a phone call away"...I really don't think he'd care...if he doesn't care about the Order of Protection, I don't see what being in the program could mean to him.... He knows its wrong...but he can get away with it...so he's doing it...he thinks he's above the law...his best friend is a cop...his best friend gave him one of those complimentary shields...he's gotten out of tickets, etc.

— Lorna, ex-fashion model, "stayed put."

I knew that he had to be arrested...that it was dangerous for him to get away with it...but I was not into humiliation...I was trying not to have all his employees see him being taken out in handcuffs...[so she gave him the name of the detective to whom he had to go and turn himself in] But his father used to be a NY Police Officer and so what he did was use that information to have his father call up this detective and use that kind of clout that "I was a cop and you're a cop and how we're all wonderful together"...So that's my reason for wishing [I had not given him that information]...because now I see what he is capable of...how he has followed me and harassed me and *scared the daylight out of me*...why was I trying to save him humiliation?!

— Ruth, piano teacher, "stayed put."

### Programs' Potential for Creating a Sense of Community

In response to the question: Were there any unexpected, unanticipated benefits from being in the program?, three of ten ATS women, two of whom were still being terrorized, and the AWARE woman who was being abused by her son and his wife, delighted in feeling positive socio-emotional connectedness with program personnel:

[I'm] meeting some very nice people who have...become close associates of mine...they call me periodically and...they check in... they send me letters and I call them. I see them on the street. I am extremely happy with the program.

— Avril, African American singer

There is one police officer [the domestic violence officer]...who I was introduced to [by the program coordinator]...he always recognizes me whenever he sees me. Once I saw him in the [community health center] and once I called because I had a message from the program coordinator and he knew me...that makes me comfortable.

— Shazia, South Asian science student

I'm totally impressed with the whole...the way the police have worked with me...totally impressed. Its funny...I talked to friends of mine who...like they would say to me "if it were me I'd kill him myself or..."we'd take it into our own hands." And the more time I spend with the different...I mean it was a pain in the butt!...I mean hours of my day at a time [when] I was working and I couldn't get downtown...it was two days and three...they were there...totally there for me...and I would do it again. And I know if I needed anything I know where to go. I would never do it alone. They were just there. I mean the guys [police officers] that work with me anyway...they were just really nice...they were friendly and they listened...I just felt really good with them...coz it was like they knew what they were doing.

— Liz, Caucasian athlete and gym director.

The other seven of the ten ATS women did not mention experiencing any such sense of connectedness with the program personnel or police officers.

#### Impact of the Alarm System on Everyday Life

Five of the 12 women in the alarm program had child(ren), ranging from age 3 to 12, whose father was the batterer. Three women had children only from previous partners: Lorna had an 8-year-old daughter from a previous relationship; Tiffany and Natalie had two children each from previous non-abusive marriages. Two women [Liz and Ruth] were never married and had no children, and two other women [Sara and Colette] had children above age 20. Colette's youngest son [age 31] was her batterer.

Visitation and/or child support seemed to be a matter to contend with for all but two of the women in the program who had children. Avril's foster child was staying at a confidential address. In Yula's case the brother or nephew of the batterer would come to pick up the kids and take them to his sister's apartment in another borough where he would spend an extended amount of time with them. Another woman would take her child to the sidewalk in front of the building where the child's father would be waiting. The building security was, in all cases, instructed to not ever permit the abusive partner into the building.

Even though none of the women interviewed had reason to activate the alarm, the devices either did make them feel safe, or did remind them that they were vulnerable and unable to protect themselves and their children. By implication, their capacity for mothering is called into question by their children, and mother and children feel a heightened pressure to act responsibly and press the right button "to ward off death" or "when in the jaws of death." However, none of the women mentioned actually wearing the pendant alarm around the neck. The following quotes, from two different women, are sketchy descriptions of how the alarm devices got woven into their daily-life activities:

I have a burglar alarm which the Alternative to Shelter program gave me, I have a cellular phone which they gave me...and I have the little pendant thing that I have in the house where I know where it is...out of the reach of my son...though he knows where it is...he knows he can only go and push it if its an emergency...he knows if someone starts kicking at that door, take that phone [the cellular phone], get that pendant, push the button, take the phone into the bathroom, lock the door, and dial 911 on that phone....I instructed him. Children should be involved where they are able to. Children should be instructed on how to turn the equipment on at night just in case you come home and you're tired from work and you fall asleep. They should know their job is to turn that alarm on. They should *not* know the code to turn it *off*, but they should know the code to turn it on. I turn it on when I leave home, I turn it on when I go to bed...really *he* [7-year-old son] turns it on before we go to bed...that's his job.

— Avril, African American singer, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama flat.

...very frustrating...I have this cell phone from the 24<sup>th</sup> [precinct]...I have the order of protection...I'm carrying these things around but even that...what do I do if he comes up to me on a blind side..."hold on...excuse me...I have to call 911...please don't hit me I have a piece of paper"? I mean if you think about it...then they put the alarm system in my apartment...which is great...but about two weeks after they installed it all of a sudden it says "check status"...its so confusing...trying to figure this thing out and then trying to have them explain something over the phone...and the numbers that you have to remember...and already my memory is short because of the depression...and I'm trying to deal with the telephone...and my daughter...and trying to keep everything as normal as possible... especially for her...and constantly looking over my shoulder when I'm outside. I have also stopped carrying the cellular because really...I even confronted Police Officer [in charge of domestic violence] ...I said, "What happens if he gets so close I can't call?" He goes, "Hit him with it." I was like, "Oh great!" I don't want to be that close to him...that's the whole point! And he's a big man and I don't think the cell phone...I think the cell phone will have more damage than he would.

— Lorna, Hispanic ex-fashion-model, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama flat.

Regular technical difficulties with the equipment were experienced by four of the ten ATS women and one of the two AWARE women:

I got this equipment...and the alarm sometimes don't work!! Because it rings... we might be on the computer sometimes and it might just go off...and we had to call somebody to fix it twice already...but other than that I feel safer here...its just that now my children feel it...now my children know that there's an alarm that we have...to watch over us and I don't like that either...we feel unsafe now... in the sense just another thing to make us feel unsafe...me and my children...just like my little...my son was always...at the beginning he was frightened to live... to be here...he thinks his father might come back and we'll have to ring the alarm and call his father...so it was really difficult for us...I mean in a way its safer... because I can call that button...I can press my thing and get help...you know but in a way its like when is this going to end?...when am I going to be able to get on with my life?...I have to worry about my past [even though the separation occurred 3 years ago]...and that [the alarm system] is just another reminder to us...that its not over...that here we are still trying to protect ourselves.

— Justine, Hispanic public health worker, "stayed put" in public housing.

Several women mentioned that their telephone went completely dead when the security company re-calibrated the devices on a regular basis:

It [the alarm] was installed quickly, and the company calls up periodically; they reset it every night at 3 o'clock in the morning and I'm asleep, I'm not on the

phone at that time. So that's perfect. The only thing that I don't like is the fact that when they're resetting it all your phones are dead for thirty minutes. Find a way not to just totally shut me off for 30 minutes, coz that's dangerous.

— Avril, African American singer, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama apartment.

The phone goes dead and then sometimes there's this beep that goes off...and its hard to cut it off...so that's the main problem I had with it. The beep sometimes stayed on *all night*...it didn't turn off. They showed me how to try to reset it. But sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. The technician would come and fix it the next day...a lot of times...the technician has been here at least maybe five or six times!

And...there's times when the sensor didn't work...like when you open the door you're supposed to hear a beep...and it gives you a certain amount of seconds to put in the code. Well...there was no beep because it was not picking up the senses for the door...so in essence it was useless.

— Tiffany, African American secretary, "stayed put" in Mitchell Lama flat.

I can't get into my phone...it just makes this weird "di di da la"...it's usually not more than 10-15 minutes though but it's always after 10 or 11 o'clock...

— Ruth, Caucasian piano teacher, "stayed put" in private rental apartment.

Some activities of the women were not quite conducive to carrying the cellular phone around at all times:

Most of the time I have [the cellular phone] on me. Today I didn't which is weird but I usually keep it on me....But not when I'm running.... but I don't go [running] alone...I'm pretty good with that.

— Liz, Caucasian athlete and gym director, fled to parents' house.

#### Supplemental Protection Measures taken While in the Program

Five out of the ten women in the program felt compelled, by their batterers' clearly abusive but cleverly non-apprehensible ways, to take other measures to feel safe and protected. An additional "safety" device four of these women obtained for themselves on their own initiative was Caller ID. A generic reason was "because of the weird phone calls." Its usefulness? As Avril put it:

Caller ID is one of the best things in the world...I was able to call back at a later day and find out exactly where he was calling from. Made friends with security [of the rehabilitation facility he was staying in] and found out exactly where he was, what he was doing, what bed he was in.

I invested in Caller ID because I don't have the money to get my phone number changed and it was cheaper to get Caller ID...this way I could have a record of whatever number printed out and I can have it with me...and he's been calling from pay phones and...some numbers get repeated...and I have kept a log of it...in the month of January alone it was 15 or 16 phone calls...so I really don't think its wrong number.

But after all the time and expense she and other women put into such research, the police kept saying they were unable to arrest the batterers, even when they had bench warrants for their arrest!!

None of the women got themselves a dog to watch over them, however they did resort to other measures to reduce their batterer's accessibility to them:

...every year I change my number...I just don't want to hear him.

— Justine, Hispanic public health worker, "stayed put" in public housing.

All the women, except the two who were in public housing had the benefit of 24-hour building security. Avril, the African American singer, in a Mitchell Lama Co-operative apartment, felt confident he would not be able to walk past security:

Security at my building is good. They know him on sight. So therefore with them knowing him on sight he knows he can't just walk up in here.

But when he did manage to slip past security, she was glad she had talked her neighbors into watching her back:

...you have to get to know your neighbors, because one day he came into the building, I was up here, I didn't know he was in the building, and this was soon after he was arrested, when he'd been let out. I got a phone call from security. Someone else that I speak to saw him and went straight and told security because they knew he wasn't supposed to be in the building. Community action works but you have to be a part of the community for it to work.

Fifty-four year old Sara, a Caucasian office receptionist who “stayed put” in her single room occupancy (SRO) apartment, solicited the support of not only her own building security but also of neighboring buildings:

I’ve bonded with a lot of people like the security in other buildings who are aware of the situation. I made them aware that in case I needed help you know I can go to a doorman and tell him what’s going on.

Lorna, the Hispanic ex-fashion model learned to use pepper spray and carry it instead of, rather than in addition to the program’s cellular phone:

I have pepper spray...[I] stopped carrying the cellular [phone] because really... what happens if he gets so close I can’t call?...I don’t want to be that close to him...[besides] he’s a big man and...I think the cell phone will have more damage than he would.

Shazia, the South Asian science student, plainly said, “The cellular phone is too heavy. That’s why I don’t really carry it around.”

Justine, the Hispanic public health worker with the ATS alarm, resorted to taxi cabs in addition to *her* own cellular phone:

[Since] he moved back to the neighborhood and has his family and a lot of friends here, I just take an auto [from work] and come straight home.

We have our own [cellular] phone...that I take along with me...I usually have that phone...because I can make [other] calls on my phone. [But] when I’m around the area I use [the cellular phone provided by the program from which I can dial only 911]...coz he lives few blocks away...he moved back [in this neighborhood].

Like Justine, Natalie in the AWARE program in Brooklyn uses taxi cabs between home and work and anywhere else she goes even when he is in prison because he has friends living a few blocks from her and “one time when he had called from jail, he said that he could send his friends after me.” So, she uses public transportation only when she is with someone else. In effect, the over-the-phone

threat *from prison*, was not only emotionally terrorizing but also financially staggering, given the daily taxi fare incurred.

### Role of Community in Helping Battered Women “Stay Put”

Almost all of the alarm program women I interviewed articulated the absolute necessity for practical and timely assistance from neighbors and local community residents and organizations especially in terms of reporting and surveillance:

...everyone’s being great. I mean my friends are great...I’ve changed jobs...I’m three blocks from home even though anything could happen anywhere. But I don’t run alone anymore...rarely... I run with my friends...and everyone in the park...*everyone*... about 40 people that I train with...look out for me. So even if I’m running alone and they see him...they’ll run by me and they’ll say, “He’s on the road” or whatever...I usually keep [the 911 cellular phone] on me.

[Also] he was banned from [the gym] where I worked [then] and he wasn’t allowed anywhere, within 500 feet I think it is, of me. But he fought that one too. He went to them and said, “This is ridiculous...I’m a member...I’ve been a member before she even started [working here]...and...*she’s* crazy.” They said, “There’s totally no way...as long as [she] works here, you cannot come near here.” And like two days later he stuck up signs all around the gym. He stayed after closing, stuck up signs saying that I was a lesbian and I left him for a woman. ...and he hand-wrote them...they are done with a ruler...there were like 17 of them. And I’m thinking, “Who has the time to sit and write these stupid...and stick them up in a gym.” So they [the ADA] held them as evidence....

[Later] he was banned from [the gym] where I am now [working].... Anywhere that I am, he cannot be. ...I have rough days when I see him every so often...because I feel *sick* when I see him.

— Liz, Caucasian athlete & gym director, fled to parents’ house.

A neighbor [called the police]...because I made my floor aware of what was going on. If you do not let your neighbors know what’s going on within the confines of your walls, you could be in a detrimental situation, and there will be no one to help you. If you advise your friends and your neighbors of what’s going on then when they hear screaming or yelling they will pick up the phone and dial 911. You will get assistance. But people don’t understand [that] you have to *be* a friend to *have* a friend. And if you don’t speak to your neighbors and you walk past them and don’t say good morning or good afternoon, or smile, and they walk past you and don’t say anything they’re not going to come to your assistance. They’re not going to want to be bothered. Community action works but you have to be a part of the community for it to work.

— Avril, African American singer, “stayed put” in Michell Lama flat.

I have been told that he is around...by my friends...I have one [whom] I was very close with...she used to always tell me when he was around...she was around for the kids...but now she has moved.

— Justine, Hispanic public health worker, “stayed put” in public housing.

It is unfortunate and disheartening that the responsibility for garnering community support is on the woman being battered even during these times of heightened anti-domestic violence public announcement campaigns:

The people next door many a times they heard me arguing and hollering...they would never call the police...never, never, never, never!! As a matter of fact my father one day knocked on the neighbor’s door and told them “Here is my number, if you ever hear of them arguing I’d appreciate it if you call me.” And the neighbors said “No...I’m sorry I won’t take the number coz I won’t get involved.” And my father was very, very upset. But I said, “Those people they say ‘hello’ and ‘good-bye’...I don’t even know those people’s names or nothing!” I’ve never knocked on their door, “Can I borrow sugar?”...nothing. So they would never get involved. But they’d hear me screaming and hollering and fighting and never...nobody ever called the cops. The first time anybody ever called the cops was when my daughter...was coming in from her curfew and she heard the screaming and hollering and *she* went downstairs and *she* called my mother...that was the first time you know anyone ever called the cops. All the other times it was either I snooped to the phone and made it or some way I managed to get to the phone. But as far as neighbors...no...I *wanted* them to call the cops.

— Yula, African American cash register clerk, “stay put” in public housing.

### Reasons for Not Enrolling in the Program

Based on the ATS program records, 14 persons declined an invitation to join the ATS one-year pilot project. One woman felt her situation “did not warrant” the “comprehensive protection” offer, while another woman felt “overwhelmed” by the comprehensive protection measures, and yet another felt “uncomfortable” with the “scope” of protection offered, particularly the information packets (including photos of the batterer) circulated to all the precincts. One woman who had difficulty obtaining an Exclusionary Order of Protection from family court, became frustrated

with the process and decided it was easier to move. Subsequently she did relocate to another borough. One woman was reluctant to take any action (in addition to eviction) that would negatively impact upon the batterer's life by signing an agreement to proceed with prosecution.

Three women could not avail of the offer because they were relocating outside the ATS catchment area. One of those three relocated to her mother's home, while her brother moved into her apartment. Since she was also recovering from a serious physical illness, living with her mother addressed both her safety and health needs. Another one of three women who moved out of the Upper West Side, opted for a shelter placement when her batterer tracked her down at her new *confidential* address.

One woman and one gay man preferred to attempt reconciliation. Two others allowed their batterers to move back into their households. One woman failed to keep two appointments to sign the ATS contracts, and did not return subsequent phone calls. Three other persons did not reveal their reasons for declining the ATS offer.

One woman felt uncomfortable about signing away her right to sue for monetary compensation if the program failed to protect her.

#### Police Protection Not Guaranteed

"If you knew that a woman in the program had been killed, would you have still joined the program (Del Tufo, 1996)?" is what I asked the women who had signed away their right to sue for monetary compensation if the program failed to protect them. All of the women said they would still have joined for three basic reasons:

1) having something is better than having nothing, (2) no precaution is totally fool-proof, (3) when our time is up we go regardless of what we do to ward off death.

All, but one, were going to “stay put” whether they had the alarm or not, so they felt having the alarm was some protection better than none.

The one woman (Avril) who was not pushing too hard to end the abusive relationship until she was able to move to another State, felt fine about “staying put” when she was told that she qualified for the pendant alarm. It was only after she was assured of police assistance that she warned her batterer about evicting him if he did not change his ways. After the eviction and installation of the alarm, she mobilized her neighbors and building security personnel. So having done all that, she felt:

If [an alarm program participant] was killed by a batterer it was just her time to go. You can only do so much to protect people and people have to go further to protect themselves.

I believe the woman who got killed in Queens [was in the news at the time of this interview] would be alive today if she had been in the Alternative to Shelter program, because she would have had a cellular phone on her and she would have been able to dial 911. 911 would have been able to get in contact with transit, and send transit to wherever she was in the subway. But she didn't have that, so she was stabbed to death in the subway.

— Avril [41], African American singer, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

Lorna, the Hispanic ex-fashion model, whose batterer worked as a concierge in the building across from hers, said if she had known that someone was killed despite the alarm program, it would not have stopped her from enrolling because she is not one to argue about the usefulness of a strategy unless she has first tried it herself. But given the terror she continued to experience with him being allowed to work across the street, and him not experiencing any penalties for providing fake certification that he is receiving counseling, she wishes the ATS program had been more useful to her:

I probably would have [joined] because...I'm one of "don't argue till we try it." Now that I've been in it...I don't see much use in it.

...you got to explain to them [alarm attendant], "My husband is here threatening me...I have an order of protection...please come pick him up." And you've got to hope he's still there [when the police arrive].

...and even with the alarm system...[when her daughter got curious and pressed it one day], the voice thing never worked well in this...usually they'll come in and listen but they can't hear me or what's going on in the apartment. Even when they supposedly fixed it...it still didn't work. And...I can hear them but they can't hear me. They could hear the alarm though.

A few women said they would have been curious about the exact

circumstances in which a woman with an alarm had been killed:

There's only so much any one could do...you're human beings. From the beginning they [ATS program] said to me that in absolute emergency the only way the cops wouldn't be here is if a cop was down. I could understand that...how many places can any one be at one time. But if someone was killed I mean...its life...its a terrible thing to say, "You can't do everything." If you were telling me that the police were there and had gone in...I would want to know more details, How did it happen? Was there a bomb placed in the house? What was it? No it wouldn't change what I thought.

— Liz [30], Caucasian athlete and gym director, fled to parents' flat.

One of the many (almost one hundred) enrollees in the AWARE program did indeed get killed by her batterer, and her family members explained that she did not press the panic button because once before when she had used it, it made a sound which they claim provoked the batterer to become lethal. All the women I interviewed knew for a fact that their pendant alarms worked absolutely silently. Each woman indicated, with varying levels of articulation, that she alone knew the kinds of strategies she had tried before, and the degree of confidence and goodness she felt about them:

I feel that everybody's situation is different. My situation is probably different from another person's situation who has probably been killed. Maybe there was drugs involved. I don't know. Maybe there are guns in the house...I don't know ...so I cannot compare my experience or my situation to that of someone else's.

I would still want the program because at least I know that I'm doing all that I can to ensure my children's safety, whereas I'm not going out trying to buy a gun, or...trying to find an illegal way to protect myself and my kids...that just might backfire. So I feel confident in being a part of this program so that if I am confronted by him one day, and I just might have to pull a knife out on him...at least I did all I could...as far as the law is concerned.

— Tiffany, African American secretary, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

The women were not being rashly defiant. They each alluded that if it had gotten to be exceedingly dangerous for them to carry on in the program, they would have fled to a confidential address, knowing full well he would track them down if he wanted to:

If its gone so far as...he's already tried to kill her and he missed, she needs to move. Because if he tried to kill her and he missed and they didn't catch him, she needs to pack and move. Because she does not need to stay even with the program in a place where he is still accessible.

— Avril, African American singer, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

Fully aware of the limited time-frame of the ATS pilot project, Liz, the 30-year-old Caucasian athlete and gym director, who had moved into her parents' house, zoomed to the future with foreboding,

I don't know if anything...is really over ever...he could spark off one day and decide to come back for me.

#### Suggested Changes for the Electronic Component

Given that none of the ATS women needed to *activate* their emergency alarm or use the cellular phone provided by the program, their suggestions for program/equipment changes are bound to be of a limited range. Two of the ten ATS women suggested tailoring the program to women's needs on a case by case basis:

I think women should be offered maybe the choice between Caller ID, pepper spray, the cellular...depending...each circumstance is different...whatever they feel more comfortable with...[based on] how the other party is harassing them. It

still doesn't do anything when it comes to guns and getting killed. When someone's determined to blow you off the walls I don't know what to do about that.

— Lorna, 30, Hispanic ex-fashion model, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

Three of the ten ATS women commented on the need for memory aids and/or reducing the complexity of the procedures for operating the alarm devices:

There was a slight fault with the whole alarm thing...I don't know how the other women feel...but I felt like I was getting something for nothing. I felt grateful and I wanted to understand the alarm but...that alarm is *really complicated*...like if you're in real danger...let's say this happens and then this happens and then this doesn't happen and then you're really in trouble...you're about to be killed or something...press this button...and then this will happen...*complicated* like that.

And I wanted to understand it...[but] I didn't want to keep going over it with them coz [the program coordinator] has been here [at the apartment] for three hours already [and] was so nice and everything...I remembered it and then immediately went on vacation and then I forgot...now I don't know which buttons are for what...[but] I was ashamed to call them back and say [I forgot]...for fear that they would think I didn't appreciate the alarm...or that they would think that I just wanted to get the alarm in my apartment...and if I have forgotten the instructions then I must not be that worried about my safety or else I would have tried hard to remember...So I was afraid to make a phone call to find out again how I should work the alarm. I think that there should be a sheet of paper explaining how [to work the alarm]...that you could review.

— Ruth, 32, Caucasian piano teacher, “stayed put” in private rental flat.

A quick on-and-off reference guide, in addition to the half-inch thick booklet, could also lower its nuisance potential to residents, and the police force:

The first day...we didn't know how to program it [the alarm system]. I thought I did it right, and I left to go for a run and when I came back my parents were sitting like this [bracing themselves] shaking. I said, “What happened?!” They go, “Well the police came,” and being that the police at that time had a picture of myself and of [the batterer], they didn't know who my parents were in the house. And my mum said, “Five big guys came to the door” and she just couldn't believe it! And after that they showed them how to set it properly. It was very funny. After that we're all like real careful at how we set it.

— Liz, 30, Caucasian athlete and gym director, fled to parents' house.

Fewer numbers to remember to activate the system would be helpful:

Two weeks after they installed it, all of a sudden it says, “Check status.” It's so confusing...trying to figure [it] out and then trying to have them explain [it] over

the phone...and the numbers that you have to remember...already my memory is short because of the depression...and I'm trying to deal with the telephone...and my daughter...and trying to keep everything as normal as possible...especially for her...and constantly looking over my shoulder when I'm outside.

— Lorna, 31, Hispanic ex-fashion model, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

As mentioned earlier, two of the ATS women suggested lightweight cellular phones. In contrast, women in the AWARE program were *not* given the additional security of the 911 cellular phone for protection on the road. When Natalie's batterer was released, (once again without prior or subsequent notification to her!) after serving ninety days for showing up at her door after his one year prison term, Natalie picked up enough courage to tell the AWARE coordinator about her uneasiness on the street, she was asked if she still needed the program altogether. She ended up not asking for the cellular phone for fear that she would be perceived as too demanding, and would lose the pendant alarm too.

*None* of the twelve alarm program women actually *wore* their pendant alarms around their neck as their design and name suggests. Almost all of them mentioned placing it on a nail out of the reach of children. Natalie, the 28-year-old Trinidadian nursing assistant from the AWARE program, explained her anxiety about setting it off accidentally while it is was around her neck and getting dismissed from the program:

I have it hanging on a nail...that's where I always keep it...because they had mentioned to me before if it should ever by mistake go off over three times...I didn't want that problem....

When the alarm is installed, care should be taken to secure phone connections, to prevent false alarms like the ones that went off three or four times at 54-year-old Sara's SRO apartment in which she had “stayed put”:

My telephone plug sometimes comes out of the wall since its near the bed...and that will trigger off a false alarm. They [the security company] would call me and make sure I was alright.

Four of six women with children below 12 years of age touched upon the need for child monitoring equipment, or sending away their child(ren), from home and school, to a confidential address. 30-year-old Shazia voiced her need for a beeper:

...I [am] too worried about my [10-year-old] daughter...when I [am] in school [university] and she is in school [the] whole day...I [have] no way to talk to her....One day...in school...she got a little paper-cut...she was scared...she had her father's beeper number so she called [him]...and he came to the school to pick her up [and he took her away in violation of the Stay Away and Child custody order]. If I could just talk to her some way and she could reach me, she would not have had to call her father!!

All the six women in ATS program who were experiencing post-separation violence suggested stricter legal sanctions:

I think first and foremost it's got to be felonies...if its good enough for strangers why not in your own family...I would think that makes it even worse...that you know this person...this person supposedly loves you...and you beat the crap out of her...and that's supposed to be love?! I think it makes it worse and it should definitely be felony...it will be taken more seriously...and have a mandatory program that he has to go through...and mandatory jail-time. Have some sort of penalty even if it is 30 days....a misdemeanor you can get dismissed...if he stays clean for a year regarding the Order of Protection and doesn't get arrested he can petition the court to have his case closed...and it never shows up....so at the very least...felony and 30 days...for the initial and if he violates that, to go longer from there.

— Lorna, Hispanic ex-fashion-model, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

Lorna also exposed the shallowness and limited scope of the Mayor's special ATS “demonstration” project. Despite her vocal objections to her ADA, her batterer was *allowed* to work as a concierge in the building opposite hers. The program should have been able to arrive at some legitimate grounds on which she could

proceed with her perfectly reasonable and judicious band-aid fix to her post-separation violence:

He's a concierge...so its building maintenance...32B...huge union ...there's plenty of buildings...he can get transferred! [But] I was told [by the ADA] I don't have any grounds...as long as he stays a 100 yards away from me!

All the women who had their batterers arrested or in prison, or released, strongly suggested instituting a way of keeping them informed of when their batterer is being released from jail. Thirty-one year old Tiffany, who was one of the last women I interviewed, informed me that she was joining a new program called VINE which was set up in late-1997 (i.e., soon after Natalie shared her outrage at *not* being informed a *second* time about her batterer's second release):

I was told by my ADA [that] from the time he was incarcerated [for three years]... she had put me down to be notified of any changes. I have a good ADA...a female...I could call her up and she'll give me information...like I have his [prison] address...where he's at, his ID number, everything. [But] sometimes she doesn't get right back to me.

[So] I'm going to be joining the Vine Program where every move he makes I'll know. If he's transferred to another prison, or if he's up for parole or anything like that. [And] *they're* supposed to notify me of any move he makes. It's a new program...I think its the DAs office that runs it. One of the detectives in the 24<sup>th</sup> precinct had let me know about it. Then I heard about it on the news two weeks ago [October 1997].

There's a number you call...I think its 1.888.Find4NY...and I think you have to tell them a little bit about your case and if you have a number on your order of protection...or your case number...and they can trace the person who is incarcerated and keep track of them. In any kind of change in their status or whatever...*they'll* notify you. Like say if he's getting out tomorrow, I'll know. So that I won't walk on the street and he'll just walk up to me and I'll have no idea that he was out. I'm not afraid of him but want to be alert for my children's sake. I think it's a great program.

—Tiffany, African American secretary, “stayed put” in Mitchell Lama flat.

As with all programs, the proof of the pudding is in its pleasantness, with regard to the ease of use, and goodness of outcome experienced by its consumers.

The Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) must be evaluated.

### Summary

Despite the alarm program, seven out of twelve batterers were, at the time of the interviews, relentlessly abusing their ex-wives or ex-partners, or parent (as was the case with Colette in the AWARE program) with a long-fingers brand of battering, from frighteningly close quarters (as was the case with Avril, Colette, Justine, Liz, Lorna, Natalie, and Ruth). The alarm system lacks the mechanism, at this point in time, to combat such “non-placebound” and “non-arrestable” ways in which batterers exert their power to terrorize the women and children they profess to love.

The batterers’ *physical* restraint (which was why none of the women in the ATS pilot project needed to press the panic button of 911 cellular phone) is highly connected with the fact that almost all of the batterers (9 out of 12) were either expressly and sternly told by the woman’s family (6 out of 12), and/or their own family (2 out of 12), or the women’s building security (1 out of 12), “Don’t you dare mess with her another time ‘cause she or we *will* report you,” or “She’s being watched by the precinct.” And/or the batterers realized after a week or ten days “in the Tombs” (i.e., in jail, 3 out of 10) that they were no longer “above the law.”

The apparent *lack* of consistent, sustained, and concerted implementation of the “coordinated community intervention” blueprint, makes it difficult to assess the impacts of the coordinated community intervention component of the Alternative to Shelter program on the quality of life of the women and its impact on these batterers’ post-separation behavior vis à vis these women. All the women who experience the long-fingers brand of battering in spite of having the alarm system, hold law enforcement personnel responsible for not being the *teeth* in the jaw of the law.

## Chapter 7

### THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

#### **Personal Agency and Healing**

##### The Psychology of Coercion and “Choice”

There is a tectonic dynamic to battering (Pinto, 2002); the batterer systematically and coercively shifts and deforms the basic structures of respect and loyalty upon which the intimate relationship is founded, by constantly and forcefully expressing new needs and changing the sources of anger and tyranny. Integral to battering are the relentless sequential and parallel attempts, by the batterer, to eliminate all escape routes from the relationship. Thus, battering is, in essence, an assault on the “freedom” of “choice.” The apathy/hostility of local communities and state agencies towards battered women, often seal the exits tighter, and ensure captivity rather than the safety of “agency” and “choice.”

The batterer, feverishly, yet calculated and furtively, enforces control (i.e., exerts coercion, impels and compels compliance, and frustrates the prospects of choice) in many or all of the following ways:

1. actual violence, implicit and/or explicit threats of force, actual and/or threatened loss of children, and/or loss of valuable resources such as housing, job, documented immigration status, education and job training opportunities, (kinship) child care assistance, and so on.
2. elimination of opportunities for relaxation, sleep, solitude for reflection.
3. curbing the development of personal expressive talents, e.g., singing, painting, poetry, crafts, musical instrument, dance, drama, design, lighting, and so on).

4. obstructing the battered person's desires to contribute to society by way of active involvement in the children's school, in one's community of social/spiritual development and worship, in a community-based advocacy and/or service organization, in a tenant or block association, and so on.
5. inducting the battered person into debilitating practices of alcohol and/or drug use; prostitution and/or sexual promiscuity; theft and/or other petty crime.

The battered person's responses to battering (i.e., putting up with/fleeing/evicting the batterer; reporting to family/co-workers/police/doctors or maintaining strategic denial or secrecy; pressing or dropping of charges against the batterer), are all acts of *resistance*, *agency*, and, *sovereignty* directed at minimizing loss of life/relationships/resources, and paradoxically maximizing resources/alternatives/options, within a despotic (i.e., anti-freedom-of-choice, anti-resistance, anti-negotiation) home environment presided over by the batterer, and often governed by hostile or unsympathetic local communities and state policies and practices toward battered persons.

Society's negative feelings (ranging from annoyance to hatred) towards battered persons who give the batterer several chances to demonstrate a change of heart, are fanned by magazines and TV shows which present battered persons as having a pathological degree of denial and/or emotional dependence on the batterer. Yet, family values, popular folk and classical art and literature continue to propagate the theme of the oppressed partner healing the wounds of the oppressive partner through persistent suffering, service, and prayer. When a battered person has resisted the schooling into this ideology, the batterer forces the battered person to acquiesce and endure.

On, the one hand, women who break off from or evict an intimate partner/spouse at the first hint of abuse or control, risk being labeled "over-zealous" or "westernized"

feminists, or “bitches.” On the other hand, many people believe that the first time a woman is hit, she is a victim but the second time, she is a volunteer. When the same belief is also held about children who are sexually abused by adolescents or adults, it is clear that society as whole is to be blamed for favoring the abuse of power and privilege (in both these contexts it is largely the abuse of male power and privilege). In my experience of accompanying immigrant battered women to court, I have observed battered women actually and painfully encountering disapproval and disdain, from their own parents and/or siblings. It is not uncommon to see in a court waiting- room, the *woman's* parents and/or siblings accompanying and offering moral support to the batterer!

Clearly, exercising “choice” while traversing an expansive landscape, scenography, and choreography of coercion, which extends outside the home in the form of hostile societal attitudes and state policies and practices towards battered persons, is as terrorizing as side-stepping landmines.

The various forms of resistance on the part of battered persons are therefore all commendable, regardless of the ultimate outcome. A woman who puts up with the batterer is not to be regarded as having any less strength of conviction, or any lower self-worth than a woman who flees, or evicts the batterer. A close examination of each one's web of abuse (i.e., the kinds and morass of vulnerabilities inflicted on her, or threateningly held over her by the batterer and/or the state), will reveal each battered person's wisdom and prudence, regardless of whether or not they are still *with* the batterer, in body, mind and/or spirit.

When my participants appeared to *refrain from “choosing”* freedom from their batterers, they did so with an eye on their future and a foot in their past. Such was the case

primarily because they had well-founded fears that the system would only heap upon them more constraints, indignities, and loss, rather than offer them safe, life-enhancing choices.

There is need for intense, rigorous study of the psychology of coercion and “choice” at the confluence of psychology and law (Fine, 2002).

### Early Intervention: Almost Never Early Enough

Threat and fatality assessment expert, Gavin de Becker (1997), points out that femicide of an intimate partner, is not about passion or fury, and therefore it can be prevented by *early* intervention:

...the majority of husbands who kill their wives stalk them first, and far from the “crime of passion” that it’s so often called, killing a wife is usually a decision, not a loss of control. Those men who are the most violent are not at all carried away by fury. In fact, their heart rates actually drop and they become physiologically calmer as they become more violent (pp. 183-184).

In the end, stalking is not just about cases of “fatal attraction”—far more often, it is about cases of *fatal inaction*, in which the woman stayed too long (p. 184, emphasis mine).

The only early intervention measure, I gathered from his book, *The Gift of Fear* (de Becker, 1997) is that women should trust their intuition, and end the relationship in very certain terms, very early on. It is only a matter of time when a “benevolent control freak...becomes a malevolent control freak (p. 179).” Some very early signs (two or more of the following), which all my participants misinterpreted, are:

1. At the inception of the relationship, he accelerates the pace, prematurely placing on the agenda commitment (going-steady, living-together, or marriage).
2. He displays eagerness to be with her all the time (not necessarily because he wants sex all the time, but because he wants to monitor her). In effect, he volunteers to cook most of her meals, or undertakes tedious tasks (cleaning behind her stove/fridge, fixing her plumbing), or takes her out a lot (shopping or to restaurants). All in all, he is excessive, if not yet obsessive.

3. He responds with extreme emotionality (love, commitment, hate; if not yet jealousy) towards her or others, and/or suffers from mood swings.
4. He consistently blames others (if not yet her) for his circumstances/actions.
5. He is consistently or intermittently unemployed even though he is employable (his temper and misconduct on the job get him fired, or he quits to perhaps avert garnishment orders from previous undisclosed relationships).
6. He is persistent (got her correct telephone from a church friend; pursued her at a free concert; or was a childhood friend who was *determined* to make her his wife since *he* was 12).

Gross (1994) points out that:

Men pursuing unlikely relationships with women—and *getting them*—is a commonly promoted theme in our culture[,] [especially in several box office hit movies]...if you stay with it...eventually you'll get the girl....[But] persistence proves only persistence—it does not prove love (p.3; emphasis mine).

Upon identifying a “benevolent control freak,” since he is very likely to *refuse to accept rejection* (i.e., the termination of the friendship/relationship), how does a woman reduce her chances of being stalked by him? Gross (1994, p. 215) advises “[a]void circumstantial rejections or reasons....” He cites de Becker’s theory of a stalkers’ cognition to illustrate the importance of being “direct and clear:”

The dictionary definition of ‘no’ doesn’t include ‘Not yet’ (which the stalker hears as ‘I’m changing my mind’), ‘Give me time’ (which tells the stalker to keep the pressure on), ‘I’m not ready for a relationship’ (which will be interpreted to mean that you really want him but just don’t know it yet), ‘I have a husband’ or ‘I have a boyfriend’ (which indicates that your mate is what stands in the way), or ‘Maybe’ (which prompts the stalker to prove how much he loves you). If the pursuer doesn’t hear—or heed—the words: *I’m absolutely not interested in a relationship with you*, then something is wrong (Gross, 1994, p.215-216).

Most importantly, Gross (1994, p. 216) highlights the importance of being careful not to come across as being “patronizing, derisive, or harsh.” Instead, “allow the individual [the potential stalker] to maintain his dignity.” All in all, “[g]ive the impression that you expect a

reasonable response.” This implies: avoid giving him any indication that you *fear* negative consequences on account of the termination.

In effect, both Gross and de Becker imply that all the women who are evicting, or moving away, or fleeing from, their (potential) batterers are at risk for harassment and/or (fatal) injury. Even if the woman is doing so as early as one day before the marriage (or the living-together/going-steady agreement), she is at moderate to high risk. By then it is already *too late*, even if the obvious control and abuse has not yet begun.

One of my participants (Maria, age 40), who was a program director of a shelter, went steady with a prison Chaplain (age 50) for six years before they got married. During the years prior to their marriage he spend almost *all* of his time with her in her public housing apartment in Staten Island while she pursued a Master’s degree. A month after the wedding he pressured her into giving up her *18-year-long* public housing apartment. Prior to the marriage he had agreed to let her stay there for one more year since her place was closer to her university and she had to complete one more year of course work. In hindsight she realized that the first recognizable act of abuse was what I classify under the rubric of *residential abuse* (forcing her to give up her apartment). Soon after that he began the verbal abuse and the constant reminders that she was in *his* house. Just a month later he threatened to throw her out the window. She immediately obtained an order of protection and continued to stay with him. But despite the order he carried on with the verbal abuse and residential abuse (“get out of *my* house”). So a week later she quit her job (since domestic violence shelter staff are permitted to disclose the address of their workplace to their husband and children) and moved in with her son at an address unknown to her abusive husband. I interviewed her, a month after she had moved out of his apartment.

When she sought an order of protection, the judge asked her if she would like him evicted. She told the judge she “would not be able to make the monthly mortgage payments of eleven hundred plus other utilities.” At which time the judge told her it was safest for her to leave his house. If as a natural consequence of *his bad choices* (regarding *his* use of male power and privilege), the judge had granted her a vacate order and ordered garnishment of his salary for mortgage payments and utilities, Maria would have “stayed put” since his friends (the other pastors at his church) had been telling her to regard the house as hers no matter how abusive and devious he had been. Since she was assured of their support, she would have liked to have been qualified for priority housing on grounds of domestic violence and “stayed put” until her housing came through.

However, since the judge did not create the conditions which would help her “stay put,” she tried twice to flee to a shelter but she was turned down because no beds were available. So she moved in with her son at an address unknown her husband. Her husband attempted to obtain her address from her former workplace. Since her address had not been disclosed, and she had not heard from him nor seen him after that, she had no idea if he was still trying to locate her. Perhaps he did not pursue her for fear that, since domestic violence advocacy is her area of expertise, he would lose his job and become an inmate among those to whom he now ministers. Nonetheless, his assault on her self- and place-identity was colossal, given the loss of her long term (18 years), affordable (\$245/month) apartment, in a safe neighborhood, coupled with the experience of immediately thereafter feeling destitute with *no home*, seeking the very services (residential and non-residential) she had been organizing for others. At the time of the interview, she had applied for Section 8 housing but could not be short-listed because she was not staying in a shelter.

She was angry with herself “for making bad decisions.” Although her husband’s friends, and his father, knew he had abused his two previous wives, none of them made any mention of that to Maria. The first recognizable act of abuse was after the wedding, but by then she felt committed to making the marriage work so she conceded to his *persistent requests* to give up her apartment.

Advocates tend to refrain from training women and girls to assess reality (i.e., to factor-in asymmetric gender power) and accordingly arrive at reasonable relationship choices based on *actual, present, circumstances* (i.e., his present unemployment/work release status) rather than *potential, future, possibilities*. Identifying bad choices made by the women amounts to victim blaming, when it is not accompanied by the highest degree of accountability for offender(s). The identification of victims’ bad choices is usually presented as the *only* means of crime *prevention*, when, in fact, it is merely a means of *perhaps* safeguarding potential victims from bad consequences that societies-at-large fail to prevent.

The bad choice for which Maria was angry with herself, was her choice to focus on her marriage commitment rather than on the ominous constellation of his behaviors. For instance, *his very unreasonable demand* (since she was studying and living in Staten Island, and he was pressuring her to move to Long Island). And, *his being persistent*, and refusing to accept ‘no’ for an answer, when the ‘no’ was based on very reasonable and factual grounds. Moreover, *his breaking a verbal agreement*, since prior to the marriage, he had agreed to let her stay in her apartment until she completed her studies.

### Cultural Practices Mediate Personal Agency

Cultural practices constrain or enhance personal agency. Had it been a cultural practice to stop and read the signs at the juncture in the road, her husband generated, barely a

month after their marriage, it would have logically implied that Maria would have felt no cultural coercion to make her marriage work.

Then, given her reasonable desire to make her marriage work, she would have clearly seen the arrows (i.e., the road signs) directing her to: “Live in your apartment (till you get your degree) and suggest he get help!” Later, at the end of that parallel journey (which could have been a long one year), she would have looked to see if the arrow pointed toward “Reunite!” or toward “End your marriage!” When the signs are read for what they are, and there are no societal pressures which introduce self-doubt, the woman perhaps does favor the option by which she retains (or maximizes) her own resources. Choosing to maintain the status quo (i.e., her keeping her own apartment, but him not seeking help) would perhaps still have amounted to making a bad choice. As the relationship within an abusive marriage prolongs, even if the couple is not cohabiting, the woman’s degrees of freedom reduce with each passing day, due to verbal abuse and monitoring over the phone.

In the Wape culture (Mitchell, 1992), abuse of women by intimate partners is very rare, because several cultural practices are in place to support separation, and discourage post-separation pursuit by the man. For instance, even when a woman does not live in her family’s village, but moves to his, the woman’s relatives have the “right” and the “duty” to intervene. Their intervention is usually only limited to making their presence known, as a witness to the abusive incident. Their mere presence is what induces shame in the man for beating his wife, and abuse is regarded as a legitimate reason to end a marriage. The woman is not expected to make any attempt to save the relationship because she is in no way held responsible for his behavior. When a woman temporarily leaves her husband, no reason for his pursuit of her is considered good enough. He must wait till she returns of her own

accord, with the accompaniment of her relatives. Until that time, he is expected to fend for himself or depend on his relatives.

In Moyotte too (Lambek, 1992), there is no cultural support for abuse in intimate relationships. An intimate relationship is not regarded as a disciplinary relationship. Neither partner is under the sexual control of the other. When adultery or the suspicion of adultery leads to violence (usually limited to loud brawls), it is almost always between the same gender, and in public. Garifuna women likewise (Kerns, 1992); are culturally imbued with the notion that they are autonomous adults, and they experience no cultural pressure to make their relationship or marriage work.

In all of the above non-U.S. cultures, the women do feel shame when they are abused. However, when the women attempt suicide because of the shame, her desperate reaction reflects poorly on the man. Rightly, the blame is placed squarely on the abuser.

#### Evicting the Batterer: Safety, Connectedness, and Experience of Home

“Staying put” did not always involve evicting the batterer. Marisa moved into another apartment in the *same* SRO building when her blonde hair, blue eyed boyfriend refused to move out of her apartment. Sara’s boyfriend had been living in his own apartment in the same SRO building. The building management evicted him only because he resumed the abuse after spending 5 months in jail. Colette was receiving death threats from one of her adult children who had never lived in her current housing. Therefore, as the qualitative analysis progressed, the usage of the phrase “staying put” was broadened to include women who continued living in the same dwelling unit, or same building, or same block, i.e., in the *vicinity of*, or the in the *actual* site of battering.

Seventeen out of 36 interviewees had, in addition to the horrifying memories, other (highly positive) experiences in the housing in which they were battered. They had either grown up there, or had lived in that apartment or neighborhood most of their adult life, and/or had supportive parents and/or friends living in that very neighborhood or fairly close by, and/or had strong ties with the neighbors and security personnel in that very apartment building, and/or were familiar with the neighborhood store attendants whom they and/or their children could count on for help and protection. All of these women mentioned that such longstanding ties with the people in their building and/or neighborhood were their primary motivation for “staying put” and not letting the batterer rob them of those life-enhancing memories. These women did not allow the batterer to make them throw away those priceless informal community policing agents or walk away from affordable, rent-stabilized/rent-controlled apartments.

Those who wanted to “stay put” for these very reasons but were pressured into fleeing to confidential housing either by the District Attorney or some other service provider, have not ceased to have deep regrets for allowing the domestic violence law enforcement “experts” talk them into leaving their long-time, affordable apartments which were in safe, familiar, convenient locations in Manhattan or one of its boroughs:

I could list so many things that happened...and I'm nowhere...I'm lost...I'm living in a place now where the rent is \$750...that's just too much for me...I struggle to pay it...so every couple of months I'm being threatened to be evicted because I'm not paying on time...and I can't keep up.

— Hazel, permanently fled her 17-year-long rent stabilized apartment with 24-hr doorman, upon insistence from her ADA.

All participants who stayed put worked at transforming their site-of-abuse into a sanctuary. For most women (whether they “stayed put,” moved, fled, or “put up”), their housing never ceased to be home during their abusive relationship; it logistically (in the

philosophic and militaristic sense) became a consternated, hyphenated home that was in desperate need of restoration and reinforcements; an infested-home that needed exterminator treatment, a horror-home in need of heroic expulsification, and so on.

Most mentioned home as a place where one can “just *be* oneself” (not necessarily valued, but certainly not ridiculed), and “function” (*serenely* not necessarily superlatively, but certainly not frantically); rather than having to meet someone else’s *abusive* expectations and demands, and be accused of, and severely (possibly fatally) chastised for, often outlandish, imagined transgressions.

Although Claire “*saw* a lot of bad stuff” while she was in jail, her personal seven day experience at Rikers Island (for shooting her husband in the leg in self-defense) came closest to her concept of home: “someplace that you feel safe when you go in and close your door and feel like you’re allowed to be yourself there.” In the fifteen years of her marriage since age 15, she “never ever had that, living *with him*.” Claire’s experience of home (i.e., safety and sovereignty) in a place where one would conventionally expect the total institutional repertoire of surveillance, subjugation, and sufferance, brings into sharp focus the extent to which batterers strategically strip off the sense of home, and in so doing intensify the experience of horror by eliminating times, spaces, and activities of recreation, reflection, recuperation, and repose.

One of my queries going into this research was: Were we to have the best of all possible worlds in which there was *immediate* and *easy* access to alternate *safe* and *affordable* housing, would women still *want* to continue living in the site-of-battering? Marisa’s experience addressed this precise query. Marisa “put up” with her abusive boyfriend until another apartment in the same SRO building (a floor below) became

available. She immediately moved out from the cohabited apartment to get away from him. When he was arrested for trying to break into her new apartment with a crowbar, the large cohabited apartment became available. The SRO management offered it to Marisa for the same low rent (\$198 per month) that she was paying for her new apartment. She cringed at moving back into the site-of-battering which harbored ghastly memories. In fact, she even moved from the one that bore the scar of his attempt to break in (a gaping hole in the door). At the time of the interview, she was in the third apartment (a tiny 5ft x 10ft room) which was one floor below the second apartment, and two floors away from the cohabited site-of-battering:

That room subsequently became vacant...and they offered it to me...I wouldn't take it...even though it's twice or three times bigger than this room... I just felt it reminded me too much of the battles that I had there. When I [had] left [it]...I [had] felt RELIEF.

Avril, too put in an application for a transfer to another apartment in the same Mitchell Lama building. Her motivation, however, was to move from a one bedroom to a two bedroom. Afra happened to mention that had she been able to “stay put” as long as possible in her rented condo (which the bank had taken over), she would have “stayed put” until another apartment in the same complex became available. Her reason for wanting to move was not past memories of the abuse, but the greater probability of future violence in the marital condo since he knew all the entrances and exits to it.

For women who were co-purchasers of their houses, having to be the ones to move out, in order to escape the violence, was usually a matter of intense shame and humiliation. They tended to “put up” with their abusive husbands who refused to leave, until they themselves were able to move out with dignity and self-respect, *and with* their children. Fifty-three year old Muriel was the only house owner (among four) who was able to get her

batterer arrested during a violent episode, *and* court-ordered to vacate. She had the option of moving into a vacant house that they co-owned only a couple of blocks away. But she insisted on “staying put” in the cohabited “horror-house” even though the house and yard were stinking and filthy from dog droppings (in the yard) and dog urine (in the basement) because he did not let her clean up after their two dogs, for the latter ten years of their 20 year stay there. That was one of several tactics he employed to keep visitors away and keep Muriel isolated. She was determined to do all the scrubbing and disinfecting necessary to “stay put” in that “horror house” and make it the home she had hoped to make ever since she left her childhood home in Israel. This house and location had appealed to her the minute she had caught sight of it 20 years earlier. Although she had *no* pleasant memories in it, she was eager to create strong, happy memories so as to overpower/erase the horrifying ones accumulated over her 35 year long abusive marriage. Unlike the women in apartments who “stayed put” because of supportive neighbors, and/or 24-doormen, and/or family in the building/neighborhood, Muriel had *no* such support, and had not counted on getting any, because her husband had alienated all their neighbors by being personally nasty toward each of them. However, all her neighbors rallied around her when they saw her cheerily cleaning up her yard *after* the eviction.

Muriel’s motivation for “staying put” was, therefore, to regain her dignity and vindicate her degradation, and she went about it with a sense of entitlement rather than in a spirit of vengeance. She had taken him back five years prior, after she had evicted him and started divorce proceedings, because he came to her with a Rabbi who vouched that he had been reformed. He behaved himself for exactly six months, which was the duration of the Order of Protection. Had the judge *ordered him* to keep paying the mortgage until their

divorce (since he held and controlled all their finances from rents in a 6-unit building they owned), her degradation over 35 long years might have been vindicated to some extent. Instead, given what amounted to a miscarriage of justice (in the absence of retribution), she now had to endure the humiliation heaped upon her by the system as well, i.e., put up with being "a rich lady on public assistance," with a lien on her house, the bank serving her foreclosure notices, and her credit rating forebodingly plummeting, because Welfare had not been paying her mortgage as promised.

#### Consequences of Fleeing: Obstacles to the Experience of Home

Participants who fled to their parents, relatives, friends, usually put them, too, in the line of fire. Only those who moved in with their parents received the backing they needed and continued staying there for as long they needed. Those who fled to live with aunts or uncles, or friends with addresses known to the batterer, had little choice but to flee within a few days to a shelter from where they proceeded to their jobs/college, or resigned from their jobs, dropped out of college, or went on extended disability leave, on grounds of severe depression caused by domestic violence.

The two women who fled and rented another apartment, without an intervening shelter stay, have had to apartment hunt and move almost every six months because their husbands made it their business to know their unknown addresses. Three women who had fled to a shelter at some point were also tracked down by their batterers, and had to endure unfavorable environmental conditions of crowding in which their children took ill, and picked up negative behaviors from other children. All the women who fled to an address unknown to the batterer, mentioned being unhappy with the size of the apartment, and/or the

location, and/or the rent, and/or they were unable to establish a home (i.e., continuity and stability) in it because they had to box up and move just as they were settling in.

My participants who fled to confidential addresses mentioned that the most common grounds, on which a batterer is able to obtain a woman's address, is that she is "married" to him. He, therefore, continues to have *authorized* access to her records especially if she had him covered by her medical insurance, if they had filed joint income tax returns, and so on.

It was heartening that one participant, Afra, was able to obtain a quick divorce, through the help of Legal Aid Services, just a few months after her husband fled the police and did not return. What was disturbing, however, is that she *still* was one of the two women who had moved three times within one year. Prior to these moves however, she convinced the bank to let her stay in the marital apartment as long as she could. They began foreclosure proceedings because her landlord defaulted on mortgage payments even though she had paid him her monthly rent all along. She even looked for another apartment in the same condo complex and was sorry that none was available. When she had no other choice but to move, she mourned the loss of her 6-yr-long condo, and neighborhood, where she had a safety net of helpful neighbors and church members.

Hazel was the other woman who, after two years, was still on the run with two teenage children and kept being an unprotected stranger in her new and deserted neighborhoods. With her teenage children, she deeply mourns their loss of home, and regrets letting the domestic violence "experts" talk her into leaving her lovely rent-stabilized Section 8 apartment of 17 years, supportive vigilant neighbors and doormen who recognized her batterer on sight, and a reputed public school in which her children excelled and felt at home. Environmental psychologist Leanne Rivlin (1990) explains:

Woven into the geography [of home] are complex social networks that compose the substance of people's lives. When people are relocated these connections may be lost along with the housing...These attachments and the significance of the home must be recognized...(p. 50).

The one woman who went into *total* hiding after being stalked for a year, still mourns the loss of her children to child protective services, and suffered the severance of all ties with her parents, grandparents and siblings for 20 *long* years. She was unable to fully experience the sense of home (i.e., motherhood, connection, fellowship, and passing on her legacy), because her attempts to locate her now adult children have failed.

### Home and Healing

Since most of my participants mentioned that the liberty of being oneself is integral to the experience of home, and since batterers systematically work at stripping their spouse/partners' identities, it is no surprise that a significant indicator of healing mentioned by most participants was the rediscovery of self. To this end, some participants mentioned putting up old photographs of themselves that most closely represented their inner- and social-selves. Looking frequently at that photograph helped them advance their healing by identifying several of their forgotten positive qualities.

Architect and landscape architect Clare Cooper Marcus the author of *House as a Mirror of Self* (1995), and *Housing as If People Mattered* (1986), among others books, has been conducting interviews with individuals, since the mid-1970s, about their relationship to their past and present homes. Based on over 60 such interviews with "young and old, owners and renters, men and women," she has observed that after "[t]he trauma of divorce...[t]he house that was once perceived as stable, nurturing, and calm may now be seen as oppressive, stressful, even unsafe" (Cooper Marcus, 1995, p. 222). Most of my participants who evicted their batterers seem to have the exact opposite sequence of the experience of home:

oppressive, stressful, and unsafe during the abusive relationship; but stable, nurturing, and calm, after the eviction, when there was no post-separation violence.

From Cooper Marcus' (1995, p. 249) insights, I extrapolate that in order for a woman who has just evicted her batterer to sufficiently mourn her plight through the course of the abuse, to grieve the separation from the man she once loved or perhaps still loves, to comfortably reformulate her self-identity, and to reconnect with her contaminated and estranged house/apartment, she would be better off not changing anything in the house/apartment until she feels she has passed through a period of *expressed* grief and anger. My participants who had little children, mentioned taking care not to disrupt their children's rooms and schedules very much soon after the eviction, as a way to ease their children's pain and lessen their children's feeling of instability. Perhaps the women need to be extending themselves the same leeway, by counterintuitively, resisting the urge to remove, rearrange, repaint, and reframe too soon after the eviction, with the intention of transformative remembering and self-generative grieving.

When one is forced to leave a house/apartment, due to divorce or a natural disaster, Cooper Marcus (1995) recommends that one must *fully express* one's grief through ritualistic mourning. She suggests choosing a quiet corner in the current home and creating a simple altar of memories which could include a photograph or one's own impromptu drawing of the house/apartment, some mementos and a vase of flowers:

...the symbol of hope, rebirth, growth—just as they are on the grave of someone you love who has died.

When it feels right to do so, spend a little time each day, sitting, looking at the shrine. Let whatever feelings emerge have their place; if you feel grief, let yourself cry; if you feel anger, tell the house what you feel about the loss; if you feel nothing or just numbness, let that be too....

Return to your shrine, change the flowers, rearrange the mementos as often as you want to—just as you might visit the grave of a loved one. No one need know

about your shrine. It is there for you, to serve you, as long as you need it. We all need a time and a place to anchor and express our grief...Give yourself permission to grieve for your lost home; your connection to it may be every bit as deep and complex as your links to human companions (pp. 248-249).

Since some of the women who evicted their batterers felt the need to lock up their apartments and go to a of the relative or friend's place for personal safety and emotional support, the shrineandburial ritual may help them grieve sufficiently and discharge their anger adequately before they return to their apartments.

With regard to home-making in a new dwelling, Cooper Marcus (1995) cautions:

the temptation may be to start fresh, with no reminder of times past. Though the move...may be a healthy decision, it is unwise to cut all ties with the earlier home, for the grief embedded in those ties must be experienced. To not do so is to court future disaster in which the same pattern is repeated; unacknowledged emotions tend to reemerge. One way to express those feelings to yourself might be to conduct a dialogue with your former home, represented by a photograph or drawing. Tell it all that you are feeling—positive or negative—and repeat this exercise as long as the feelings continue to emerge (p. 249).

According to environmental psychologists, Proshansky, Ittleson, and Rivlin (1976) forced physical changes within one's environment (including within one's home) and forced relocations may impact one's place-identity—a less discoursed, but significant, dimension of self-identity:

The development and maintenance of an identity in the individual does not depend entirely on how others react to his [sic] behaviors, skills, and achievements. It is also a matter of places and things, and the acquisition of both serves to define and evaluate the identity of the person for himself [sic] and for others. The loss of valued objects or places, or unwilling separation from familiar physical settings... may contribute to a blurring or even a loss of identity (p. 178).

Perhaps this why, for some women who fled their batterer or were banished by him, going back to the actual physical site of battering with a psychotherapist (and police escort if batterer still lives there) has contributed to their healing (Gorfinkle, 2002), by way of excavating the psychic crevasses into which they had been excruciatingly wedged.

### Independent Living

The fact that many women who leave domestic violence situations have never lived alone, having gone from their parents' home into the relationship that became abusive (Victim Services, 1994) is presented as a reason why many battered women are hesitant to leave the financial patronage of their batterers. None of my participants mentioned *that* as a reason for not ending their abusive relationships sooner.

All the battered women I have encountered have been eager to live on their own. In fact they even lament at having to share an apartment (due to economic constraints), especially if they must share it with another battered women. Their eagerness to live on their own stems from a need to territorialize space, which is associated with a need to move freely without any restrictions in one's home. In a shared apartment, there is no such freedom in common spaces (such as the living room, kitchen, and bathroom). They have commented that perhaps a year or two after the separation from an abusive partner/ spouse this intolerance to shared living is most acute and wears off with time (actually with healing). However, the irony is that with time and healing they also obtain the financial means for independent living, by which time independent living is regarded as an indicator of healing.

The phase of roommate intolerance is not an indicator of psychological disturbance. According to geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), it is within the range of healthy relationships with space:

Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom....A healthy being welcomes constraint and freedom, the boundedness of place and the exposure of space. In contrast, the claustrophobe sees tight places as oppressive containment, not as contained spaces where warm fellowship or meditation in solitude is possible. An agoraphobe dreads open spaces which to him do not appeal as fields for potential action and for the enlargement of self, rather they threaten self's fragile integrity (p. 54).

## Collective Sanctions and Safety

### Fatality Assessment

This dissertation provides additional evidence that separation does not guarantee safety. The post-separation violence described by my participants illustrates that fleeing from a batterer is usually not as self-protective and life-enhancing as it is made out to be. People who ask in utter dismay or disgust, "Why doesn't she LEAVE?!", need to know that besides the near-impossibility of finding vacant shelter beds and decent, affordable, long-term housing in a safe neighborhood, she is at risk of being killed by her batterer when she is *trying* to get away. She is more so at risk when she *does* get away. Seventy five percent of spousal murders happen *after* the women leave (de Becker, 1997, p. 184).

More recently, the *Daily News* (McPhee & Marzulli, August, 2002) reported, that on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2002, 33-year-old Catalina Cabassa, a researcher from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center was fatally stabbed three times by the husband she had fled. He fled and "is still at large." She "had filed three domestic incident reports (DIRs) with the police [and] even told co-workers if she ever failed to report to work, they should call the police." The director and founder of the New York Police Department's (NYPD's) domestic violence unit, Lucia Davis-Raiford, is reported to have said that there were no "actionable steps the Police Department could have taken."

In mid-April 2002, 27-year-old Juana Castillo, mother of a 5-year-old son, living with her mother in Brooklyn, who had been separated for two years from her 31-year-old boyfriend, is reported to have "walked into the 76<sup>th</sup> Precinct stationhouse in Carroll Gardens at 1:40am, Monday [April 15] and told officers that her ex-boyfriend, Alex Fernandez, 31, of Queens, had been threatening [to kill] her" (Weir, 2002). At 6pm that same day, she was

beaten and shot to death in the back of an East Harlem pawnshop in which she worked. Two shop managers tried to keep him from entering but he wrestled with them and fatally shot one of them in the face, stepped over him, and chased Juana. Moments after he killed Juana, he pointed his gun at Emergency Service Unit officers, who shot and killed him (Fenner, 2002). Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly is reported to have said that when Juana reported the threats, “The police handled that in normal procedure” (Weir, 2002). In addition, “because the offense—second degree harassment—was a violation, not a felony, the officers told Castillo to go to Criminal Court [for] an order of protection (Weir 2000, p. 62).”

de Becker (1997), a leading expert on threat and fatality assessment, notes that “engage and enrage” (cited in Gross, 1994, p. 209) is the dynamic which triggers femicide:

Many homicides [sic] have occurred at the courthouse where the women were seeking protection orders, or just prior to the hearing. Why? Because the murderers were allergic to rejection. They found it hard enough in private but intolerable in public. For men like this, rejection is a threat to the identity, the persona, to the entire self, and in this sense their crimes could be called *murder in defense of the self* [contrary to self-defense] (de Becker, 1997, p. 186).

He has also observed that femicide in intimate partner violence is highly predictable:

Of all the violence...spousal homicide is the most predictable, yet people are reluctant to predict it (p. 184).

The first step toward deciding which words actually portend danger is understanding what threats are and what they are not. A threat is a statement of intention to do some harm, period. It offers no conditions, no alternatives, no ways out. It does not contain the words *if, or else, until, unless*. Sentences that do contain those words are not threats; they are intimidations... With intimidations, the motive is always right in the statement, and the outcome the [intimidator] desires is clear. “*Unless you apologize, I’ll kill you.*” The [intimidator] wants his conditions met—he does not want to inflict harm. With threats, no conditions are offered...because the speaker sees few alternatives. [So], threats carry more likelihood of violence than intimidations (p. 108).

Another tip: Threats that are end-game moves—those introduced late in the controversy—are more serious than those used early. That’s because those used early likely represent an immediate emotional response as opposed to a decision to use violence (pp. 108-109).

...if a bomb threatener is angry and hostile, the [warning] call [he makes] is probably designed to cause fear and anxiety. A caller who wants to discharge anger over the telephone by using violent imagery (“You’ll all be blown to bits”), or is agitated and aggressive, is not behaving like a real bomber. Most real bombers are patient *I’ll-get-you-in-time* type of people who can mortgage their anger for another day. They express anger by blowing things up, not by making hostile calls. Ironically, bombers do not have explosive personalities (p. 111).

[Therefore] content is far less significant than context, and the choice of alarming words usually speaks more of someone’s desire to frighten than of his intention to harm. “I’ll blow your head off” or “I’ll gun you down like a dog” may, *depending upon the context*, portend *less* danger than does the simple statement “I can’t take this any more” (p. 112, emphasis mine).

...MOSAIC-20, an artificial intuition system [designed by the author’s firm]...assesses the details of a woman’s situation as she reports it to police. This computer program flags...cases in which the danger of homicide is highest.... This system brings to regular citizens the same technologies and strategies used to protect high government officials. That’s only fair considering that battered women are at far greater risk of murder than most public figures (pp. 192-193).

Jacquelyn Campbell (upcoming), and sixteen other investigators across eleven cities in the U. S., recently studied the risk factors for femicide from intimate partner violence. They reported that a very dangerous batterer may be assessed very quickly with the question “Does/Did your partner try to control/surveil all your daily activities?” Such extremely controlling and constantly monitoring batterers, whose blood pressure *rises* when they are abusive, have been categorized as pit bulls, by Jacobson and Gottman (1998). Several of my participants’ batterers were the pit bull type. The other kind of very dangerous batterer, the kind whose blood pressure *lowers* during an abusive action, have been categorized as cobras (Jacobson & Gottman 1998). The latter are not the jealous type but yet insist on living together even though they conduct a life parallel to their spouse/partner (as did Maria’s husband, the prison chaplain). The cobra type of batterer becomes calmer and more focused during a terror-inducing incident. Both types of batterers threaten to, or even actually do, use a gun or a knife (as did many of my participant’s batterers).

Women at high risk for femicide who seek police protection need to be directed to the Domestic Violence Officer and/or Domestic Violence Detective. Given how quickly a woman at high risk can be identified, these special officers must be authorized to obtain emergency restraining orders electronically. More importantly the women need to be fortified immediately with various protection devices: a light weight 911 one-touch-dial cellular phone with geographic position system (GPS); a generic looking kevlar (a bullet proof fabric) jacket; a generic looking dark glasses (but which are actually bullet proof); and a nondiscreet potential shield (e.g., a clipboard or umbrella made from bullet proof material). Perhaps every precinct should have at least five sets of such equipment for women who are at high risk. Since a show of fear fuels the threatener (de Becker, 1997, p. 109), the woman must be supported to maintain her regular schedule when enrollment in a witness protection program is not warranted.

#### The Informal Vigilante: Negates Diffusion of Responsibility

As mentioned before, the dwellings of women who “stayed put” did feel like home (a protected cocoon to curl up in) after they evicted their batterers, even if they lived in a crime ridden public housing complex. This feeling of protection was largely a function of social capital (Putnam, 1993): the trustworthy informal relationships and social networks they had build over time on the principle of reciprocity, and therefore could come to depend on, for vigilance against the batterer, and for emotional, social, financial, and/or spiritual support. The economic stability they felt with their affordable rents, the presence of neighbors and/or doormen who knew of their predicament and easily recognized the batterer, the financial and emotional support from family, friends, familiar co-workers and co-worshippers, and the consolation of not having to uproot their children from their homes and schools, were more

than adequate compensation for the alertness they had to maintain. But having the extra reliable eyes (including those of store workers) to watch their backs, they were more relaxed and comfortable in their site-of-battering than women who fled to confidential locations where they knew nobody, and where nobody knew their batterers; which is exactly what the batterers used to their advantage.

After an experience of battering, *any place without the batterer* (including the site of the battering) felt like home (i.e., a safe-place). Therefore, when the neighborhood had supportive infrastructure and conveniences desirable in any residential environment, the women did consider the feasibility of “staying put.” When the neighborhood and/or building was crime-ridden *and* lacking in social capital and informal and formal policing agents, participants were *not* eager to “stay put.” It is significant that none of my participants, whether they “stayed put” or fled, mentioned home as a place where one can “let down one’s guard.” They had no illusion or false sense of power and control over their batterers’ access to themselves, their children, and their homes. Therefore, “feeling *practically* supported” (by family, neighbors, *and*, most certainly, law enforcement) was a necessary and often sufficient factor for “feeling safe” in the apartment/house, even when the lights were turned out at night, and it got really dark, literally and figuratively.

Inquiring about the women’s quality of sleep and dreams was a useful method of assessing the women’s post-eviction/post-move level of safety and comfort. Within a few weeks after the eviction/arrest, most were able to sleep soundly. When they continued to feel distressed in their sleep (as was the case with four of the 17 “stayed put” participants), it was primarily because they did not feel solidly supported by the domestic violence combat machinery within law enforcement and Human Resources Administration (HRA).

The post-separation neighborly protection, received by my participants, challenges the *diffusion of responsibility* phenomenon (Latane & Darley, cited in Cherry, 1995) which tends to occur when people know (or assume) that many (helpful) people are around. Each one, then, tends to assume that someone else will do, or must have already done, something about the screams, or the disturbance.

The diffusion of responsibility, or civil inattention phenomenon has been thoroughly researched since the murder of Kitty Genovese in New York City in 1964. She was attacked at night just outside her home. She fought off her murderer, but he returned and attacked her again while she lay injured in the street. He ran away and returned several times. The murder took a full half an hour, during which time; although she was screaming for help in a densely populated neighborhood, no one came to her assistance, nor did anyone alert the police. This lack of responsiveness occurred despite the fact (which the police later established) that her screams were heard by at least 38 of her neighbors.

Most of my participants initially mentioned that through the course of their abusive relationship, they were frustrated that none of their neighbors would dial 911. So later, most of my participants who evicted their batterers or moved to a known address, expressly requested help from their neighbors, their doormen, and in one instance, even the doormen of neighboring buildings. In another case, where the woman did not approach the neighbors because her husband had antagonized them, the neighbors sensed the certainty of her resolve to end her 35-year-long abusive marriage, based on her attempts to beautify her front lawn. When neighbors were uncertain of the woman's resolve to separate, they were reluctant to make her safety their business. A male neighbor of one participant, therefore, made her promise him that she would not reunite with her batterer. Only then did he assure her of his

vigilance. However, this participant's common law husband was taking adequate measures to become non-abusive and accept her autonomy. Therefore, almost two years after the eviction, she was anxiously preparing to inform this neighbor that her partner was making steady improvement, and so she would break her promise (i.e., take her partner back), but only if he did change.

Perhaps in order to avoid such personal and binding safety contracts with people generally regarded as dependable on the basis of emotional and/or geographic proximity, a few participants went one-ring beyond their closest contacts (Fine, 2003). They told several neighbors on various floors, rather than just one friendly neighbor on their floor. Two participants told their building management, rather than individual guards. One participant garnered the support of her rental manager, before she evicted her husband. Yet another participant's tax consultant ended up being the critical link to her safety.

#### Radical Nonintervention: Cultural Practices to Combat Secrecy, Isolation and Stigma

Men of the Wape tribe (in the Sandaun Province in Papua New Guinea) do not beat their wives, because of various social sanctions against the use of non-peaceful means to resolve conflict (Mitchell, 1992). One social practice, Mitchell, observed in Wapeland, was collective neighborly action:

In the unlikely event that a couple becomes so angry during a quarrel that they begin to shout at each other, women of the hamlet, a few sometimes armed with large sticks, descend upon the house and stand around it until the *woman* joins them outside (p. 93; emphasis mine).

This practice is perhaps what inspired the concept and technique of radical nonintervention designed by the Threat Management Unit of the Los Angeles Police Department's, for use specifically with stalkers. Linden Gross (1994, p.208-209) explains

that the goal is protection for the woman rather than prosecution for the stalker. It calls for surprise-plus-unconventional action, *not inaction*, and certainly not single-handed action by the victim. I speculate that it is termed *nonintervention* because the face of law-enforcement is not prominent and it is not directed at controlling or restraining the aggressor. Instead:

preventing encounters between the stalker and his target becomes the primary objective (p. 208-209).

Some victims have set up a pool of neighbors to meet them when they arrive home from work *each day*. Others summon help by sounding an alarm each time the stalker is sighted. By *pre-arrangement*, the neighbors respond at the sound of the siren or bell. These kinds of deterrents frequently discourage a stalker and persuade him to transfer his focus to someone more accessible (p. 209, emphasis mine).

The salient aspects of radical nonintervention appear to be: (i) minimizing the isolation of the women at high risk times of the day or week, (ii) keeping the perpetrator unaware of the intervention; and (iii) making it an out-of-the-ordinary *collective* action.

Muriel's neighbors engaged in radical nonintervention when they phoned to alert her whenever her evicted husband was hovering in wait for her outside her front door. Knowing that at least one neighbor (the one who happened to call her; it was a different one each time) was practically close to her, at the same time that he was outside her apartment, most certainly lessened her isolation, and perhaps her terror. The same was true about Natalie's friend who lived at the end of the hallway, and Avril's neighbor who notified her doorman, who in turn phoned her and instructed her not to open her door.

Judith Stevenson (1982), the then vice chair for coalition building of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, described in playwright fashion, a collective post-separation safety strategy that may very well have been based on true stories:

Best security in the world. Ten to fifteen other women, a couple of baseball bats and a telephone. Those guys don't stand a chance....[L]ots of us have decided to live together as roommates—cheaper and safer. My old man never comes around any

more. Got tired of being harassed by my friends. Tell you the truth, I think he's scared. But he doesn't tell his buddies a bunch of women scared him off! (pp. 27-28).

One thing's for sure—there's a whole lot less guys in this town thinking its safe to beat up on their women any more. And we're not "their women" any more either! And they're starting to know it (p. 28).

And last month, a woman over in the First Ward decided she wanted to move back to her house and turn it into a shelter. Seven women from the shelter moved in with her—and they just took all her old man's stuff and threw it out in the street. Told him to go and find his own place to live! (p. 28).

All my participants liked the idea of developing collective protective practices.

However, one of them liked the violence suggested by the baseball bats, nor the idea of women taking the law into their own hands. Their other reservations were related to the easy availability of guns these days and the increasing use of guns by batterers.

At my dissertation proposal presentation, environmental psychologist Nora Rubinstein (1996) suggested developing a practice of placing a sticker on all battered women's front doors after the separation/eviction, indicating they have special police protection (even if they are not conferred program membership in an alarm program). Her suggested practice would amount to radical nonintervention if it were coupled with the police actually briefing the neighbors and soliciting their assistance in *alerting*, and *congregating* with, the at-risk neighbor, at the first sign of danger.

There needs to be a way of ensuring that the police precinct *is* immediately notified of the batterer's presence, just in case he is not deterred by the collective protective convergence towards the woman. With particularly dangerous stalkers, Gross (1994) cautions:

...in cases that have escalated and carry the definite possibility of danger, interventions of any kind can aggravate the situation (p. 208).

de Becker (cited in Gross, 1994, p.208) adds:

It amounts to a form of Russian roulette. Even though the odds are good, five to one in your favor, no reasonable person wants to play.

Radical nonintervention demands a level of social capital which women who “stayed put” tend to have. However, for women who have fled, it calls for (i) taking necessary measures to make it socially, psychologically, and materially safe to identify themselves to neighbors and the local law enforcement authorities, and (ii) *cultivating* an anti-stalking informal vigilante for them. The “don’t be ashamed to identify yourself as needing protective friends” message can be disseminated more pervasively and quickly by non-domestic violence neighborhood groups. However, the danger is that some well- or not-so-well-intentioned neighborhood leaders and organizations (like some priests) may have a pro-marriage bias, and may orient the woman towards reuniting with her batterer.

#### Stake in Conformity: Negated by Inadequate Sanctions

Grasmick and Bursik (1990) differentiate among the deterrence effect of “state imposed” costs (e.g., arrest by a police officer, eviction by a judge), “socially imposed” costs (e.g., loss of freedom, loss of housing, loss of respect) and “self-imposed” costs (e.g., shame, guilt). William and Hawkins (1989) identify three other categories of costs: stigma (e.g., shame), attachment costs (e.g., loss of relationship), and commitment costs (e.g., loss of job). The practice of sanctioning batterers operates on the hope that the intended costs are felt as such by batterers.

Stake in conformity theory suggests that the individual characteristics of batterers mediate the deterrence effect of sanctions. For instance, Sherman and Smith’s (1992) analysis of the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment revealed that batterers who were “married and employed” at the time of the arrest had the lowest average number of reported

post-arrest assaults. Those who were “married or employed” committed a moderate average number of subsequent assaults, and those who were “neither married nor employed” had the greatest number of reported post-arrest assaults.

Based on my participants’ narratives, the batterer’s (un)employment-plus-marital status did not seem to mediate the deterrence effect of neighborly sanctions enforced by the presence of an informal vigilante (e.g., an entry-ban imposed on the batterer by the woman’s building management, and doormen who enforced the ban). Sara’s 48-year-old African American batterer had been unemployed during the abusive relationship as well as after he served seven months in jail for abusing her. Even though she had the alarm installed while he was in jail, she experienced harassment in the common spaces of her SRO building, after he came back into his apartment in that same building. She eventually stopped experiencing post-separation violence, not because of her enrollment in the alarm program, but *only after* her building management filed a case against him in housing court based on the abuse and complaints from other tenants. As an outcome of the case, he was not only evicted from the building but was also banned from even visiting the building. In addition, Sara herself solicited the support of neighbors:

I feel a lot more confident coz he’s not in the neighborhood. And also I’ve bonded with a lot of people like security in the other buildings who are aware of the situation. I made them aware that in case I needed help...I can go to a doorman and tell him what’s going on.

Of the six batterers (out of 12) who continued the post-separation harassment despite the alarm program, four were employed—one was an economics professor in one of the private prestigious universities in Manhattan. He was also a millionaire who owned a sprawling mansion in New Jersey. Another batterer, who kept up the harassment even after he had been convicted of domestic violence, owned a roofing company. Yet another had an

auto sales business, and one was a concierge who was permitted to work in the building opposite his ex-wife's apartment even though he had been convicted of domestic violence.

Moreover, the batterers who were unemployed tended to have college education and job skills. So they were quite employable, and it was often their misconduct on the job that kept getting them fired. Or perhaps it was a ploy for averting garnishment orders from previous undisclosed relationships.

A battered woman seems to have an understanding of whether her batterer is likely to feel an exaggerated cost (i.e., if he would regard a restraining order as a threat to his *life* and so attack her life), or if he is likely to feel no cost at all and carry on with the abuse despite the sanction. The woman's judgement therefore needs to be heeded by family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and law enforcement.

The women who experienced post-conviction harassment felt that despite the conviction, their batterers continued to consider themselves above the law, because they not only received too little or no prison time, but also their court-orders to attend batterers' treatment were not enforced.

#### Social Disorganization: A New Formulation

Deterrence theorists suggest that informal social controls may be as important or more important than formal sanctions in restraining offenders (Grasmick & Bursik, 1990). In reviewing the NIJ arrest study data in Milwaukee, Elizabeth Marciniak (1994, p.38) observed that most of the batterers who lived in neighborhoods with high social disorganization were not deterred by arrest for misdemeanor domestic assault. They recidivated within six months.

The conventional indicators of social disorganization in a community have been poverty, weak economic structure, and high levels of family disruption (operationalized by the proportion of female-headed households and divorce rate). However, most of my participants who were experiencing post-separation and post-conviction harassment lived in low crime, mixed income neighborhoods.

Three of my participants reported an immediate cessation of all kinds of harassment (even phone harassment) when they, their friends, or their parents indirectly warned off the batterer by telling his parents'/siblings/friends that she was in a special alarm program. This happened even though none of them revealed the scope of the program or the capability of the equipment. For most of the other women, the harassment ceased when the woman had an informal vigilante (i.e., neighbors/doormen who alerted the woman when the batterer was around, a building management that imposed an entry ban on the batterer). But four out of twelve women in the alarm program were still experiencing long distance harassment (e.g., blank calls, watching her apartment, interrogating the baby-sitter, stalking) a year and half into the program. All four attributed the continued harassment to inadequate action on the part of their assistant district attorney. Their ADAs either told them that they did not have a strong case to proceed with prosecution, or that nothing could be done about the fact that their batterers were living or working in their neighborhood. One was a professor at a prestigious university in her neighborhood. He was not being prosecuted perhaps because his father was a retired police officer. Another was a concierge in a building opposite hers, from where he would constantly watch her bedroom window. A job transfer for him was very feasible because he belonged to the union which serves many buildings in all the boroughs of New York City. So she wanted to approach his boss or union and request a transfer, but her

ADA discouraged her. He believed she had no grounds on which to back her up since her ex-husband was not violating the 100 yards stipulation of the restraining order. But that did not allay her fears because restraining orders have expiration dates, and the date on hers was soon approaching.

Another undeterred batterer was the one who visited his ex-partner, in violation of the restraining order, the very day he finished his one-year prison term. He could have been arrested immediately at his mother's place because he had violated a restraining order of a woman in a special alarm program. However, he was arrested a whole *two weeks later*, and only *after* he assaulted a sex-worker who reported it. Despite the two crimes, he got sent back to prison for only 90 days.

All the women who "stayed put" were not at all sorry they did so. They were, however, sorry that one or two law enforcement personnel (viz., an arresting police officer, police detective, assistant district attorney, and/or judge) did not rise to their expectations, i.e., were not informative enough, protective enough with them; and were not quick enough, alert enough, firm enough, restrictive enough, punitive enough, with the batterers. All the women who moved or fled and were willing to prosecute their batterers felt the same about law-enforcement personnel.

None of the women, however, held any individual officer of the law personally responsible for falling short of their expectations; they each alluded to an "understanding" that the detective's, and/or attorney's, and/or judge's "hands were tied" by the penal code, and/or operations order, and/or normal procedure, and/or loyalty to fellow officers of the law. The latter seemed to be the case with Ruth. Her batterer's father had been in the police force, and so she was initially pleased when her ADA told her she had an air tight case. Later,

however, he told her he doubted her charges, he criticized the photos of her bruises. Even after she approached a private lawyer for a second opinion on her case and *discovered through that lawyer* that her batterer had abused two other women before her, her ADA kept telling her she had no grounds for prosecution. This, despite the fact that she was enrolled in a special electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community (i.e., enhanced criminal justice) intervention program.

Thus, my data suggests, in domestic violence studies, it may be more meaningful and revealing to assess social disorganization on the basis of the presence/absence, and degree/nature, of neighborly support and actual law enforcement support; not merely the *promise* of support from being in a special alarm program. Women who “stayed put” were sustained by their neighborly safety net. Those who fled had neither. So the latter kept moving each time their new telephone number had been discovered by their batterer, which turned out to be almost every six months.

### The Civil Society

The informal vigilante is akin to the civil society (Cohen & Arato, 1992). A civil society is achieved when most citizens (neighbors, in this context) behave responsibly of their own free will. Most notably, when responsibility is not merely conceived of, but also practiced as, not just minding one's own business, but in addition, being actively concerned with the fate of society as a whole. Consequently, a civil society's citizens do, when they can, seek out, and support, volunteer activities of their own free will. After Muriel evicted her 35-year-long abusive husband, her formerly estranged neighbors, on their own initiative, started greeting her and conversed with her. They not only made her feel like a human being again, but also alerted her, by way of a phone call to her, each time one of them saw her

husband loitering outside her house. Several other participants, however, had to be the ones to present their need for protection to their neighbors.

The potentially positive impact of civil society (in this context, the post-separation informal vigilante) was unable to sustain the woman's residential tenure and/or emotional well-being when the batterer was permitted to live, work, and/or operate as a gang leader, in the woman's neighborhood.

Effective partnerships between law enforcement and neighbors, as reflected by the assistance claimed to be offered to victims of stalking by the Threat Management Unit of the Los Angeles Police Department (Gross, 1994, p.208-209; see section on Radical Nonintervention earlier in this chapter), exemplifies the civil society type of synergistic citizen-governance networking needed to protect women and children, during and after abusive intimate relationships.

### Non-domestic Criminality

For women whose batterers are *very* dangerous (i.e., closely fit the profile of men who have killed their partners), or for women who do not have supportive neighbors and are constantly on the run, arrest and incarceration of their batterers for a *non-domestic* crime (e.g., trespassing, illegal gun possession, abuse of the 911 system), may prove to be expedient and life-saving. A trespass arrest has the same conviction term as a restraining order violation. But because it depersonalizes and undomesticates the situation, the city (rather than the victim) becomes the prosecutor and it thus presents less risk to the woman (Gross, 1994, p. 210). One study reported that although 39% of intimate victims of assault wanted charges dropped (perhaps because their batterers were very dangerous), 65 % of their cases still resulted in guilty pleas (Ferraro & Boychuk, 1992). This statistic demonstrates

that often there is enough evidence for the state to obtain a plea of guilt and levy substantial sanctions, without endangering the woman by urging her to obtain an order of protection, press charges, and/or permanently leave her home and her life-enhancing informal vigilante. Currently, Mayor Bloomberg's additional emphasis on upholding quality of life issues, perhaps opens up many more avenues for the state to by-pass the restraining order route and, from the inception of a case, impose strict and fair *non*-domestic violence sanctions on very dangerous batterers.

On December 17, 2002, a batterer, Caine Cassidy, shot his ex-girlfriend, Angela Riddick, in the eye and then shot himself. "Authorities believe[d] it was the *third* time in two weeks [he] fired a gun at [her]...[once] through [her] apartment door...but wasn't immediately charged because of a lack of evidence" (Weir, Burke, Goldiner, 2002, p.7, emphasis mine). Eight days earlier, he had "wildly fired" at her and had "rammed" into her car "during a chase in Mount Vernon." He was immediately chased and arrested by the Westchester police. However:

Despite that brazen attack, [he] was only charged with attempted assault. Dave Herbert, a spokesman for Westchester District Attorney Jeanine Pirro, said there was "not sufficient evidence to make a case for attempted murder." [So] [t]he next day, [he] appeared in Mount Vernon City Court and prosecutors asked for \$25,000 bail. Judge Brenda Dowry Rodriguez [however] set bail at \$5000 [five thousand dollars] bond or \$1,500 [fifteen hundred dollars] cash, which [he] paid. [And], [t]he judge ordered him to stay away from [her].

It wasn't immediately clear whether Westchester authorities knew [she] had accused [him] of firing a shot through her South Bronx door [a week earlier]. [And], Bronx [detectives] investigating the door incident didn't learn of the Mount Vernon shooting until after he was sprung (p. 7).

It is therefore necessary to coordinate all the courts—municipal, district, superior, probate, and family—so that family and criminal court judges can review a batterer's *criminal* history from across all the courts before ruling on any case regarding a battered

woman and/or her children. To this end, it is also necessary to cross-index orders of protection by the offenders' names, so that batterers can be tracked, for possible legitimate apprehension, over a range of "non-domestic violence" systems/agencies, and can be detained without the women being held responsible, and fearing retaliation.

Angela's shooting may have been averted, if her batterer been held on a non-domestic charge: He hurt a police sergeant during the chase and tried to grab an officer's gun.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

#### **Compensating Participants**

Had I not been able to monetarily compensate my participants, I had planned to offer each participant five hours of my time for errands, babysitting, resume writing, court accompaniment, and so on. Based on my prior experience as a volunteer battered women's advocate, I consider five hours a reasonable (not extravagant) amount of time, given that a court date or a visit to the welfare or public housing office easily takes up an entire morning and often spills into the afternoon, making it a long 8-hour day.

#### **Language Barriers**

Spanish and other non-English speaking battered women are likely to have some other important issues regarding safe housing related law enforcement (including immigration law) that have not surfaced in this report. These women's experiences need to be systematically studied and addressed with effective programs and services.

#### **Accessing Battered Women who do not (Re)Seek Institutional Help**

Battered women who do not use community services *at all* are an elusive constituency. Some of these women get "totally defeated and...become ill, crazy, or

otherwise incompetent. But many...do not stop strategizing and agitating to make a better existence for themselves and for their children (Gordon, 1988, p. vi).” More of these women, than those who *use* community services, perhaps end up being murdered, or in prison for injuring or killing their batterers in self-defense. The latter are unable to substantiate their self-defense pleas because they have no documented reports of the abuse. Methods to access battered women who do not use community services would, therefore, save many lives as well as prove valuable in terms of policy and practice. Exercise clubs (like the YMCA and Lucille Roberts), laundromats, hair salons, and free concerts in the park may be places to access women who are not isolated and/or surveilled yet refrain from reporting the abuse.

It is also necessary to study the outcomes for women who do seek state intervention at one point, but do not return to the police or courts ever again: “the women who elect non-cooperation [with prosecution] in return for concessions from the batterer and do not experience subsequent abuse[,]...the women who reunite with a formerly abusive partner and no longer experience abuse[,]...[as well as] the women for whom [*proceeding with*] *prosecution resulted in increased violence* (Coker, 2001a, p. 826-827).”

A model for accessing battered women who do not use community services, for quickly disseminating findings to battered women, and for getting the immediate attention of relevant government bodies, was powerfully demonstrated by Mies (1981) through an action research project in Cologne, Germany. Her female Social Pedagogy students organized a street action with posters, photos of battered wives and newspaper clippings. Signatures were collected from passers-by to prove, to the Social Welfare Department, the urgent need for a Women’s House for battered women. Passers-by who tarried were interviewed about their views and experiences regarding wife beating. The tape recorded interviews provided

first-hand data to the welfare authorities. The action got press coverage (i.e., wide and immediate dissemination of the results) which not only generated public interest but also mobilized the municipal authorities' own research cell to investigate the problem of battering and police indifference. But women who tend to shy away from using community services, may not even stop at such "action sites."

#### Are Special Teams Creating an "It's Not My Job Mentality?"

Since Mayor Giuliani instituted Domestic Violence Units in police precincts a decade ago, with a Domestic Violence Prevention Officer (DVPO) and a Domestic Violence Detective (DVI) in each of the city's 76 police precincts (Giuliani, 1999), and now Mayor Bloomberg is creating domestic violence response teams (Saul 2002), it would be worth studying if there exists an "it's not my job" mentality among officers who are not in these special units and response teams.

#### Vacate Orders through Housing Court

Given the courts' reluctance to infringe on the property rights of a batterer, and the absence of grounds in Housing Court to have a batterer evicted for physical or emotional abuse, Messinger and Eldridge (1993) suggested that a study be implemented to examine the feasibility of using Housing Court to issue vacate orders which would exclude the batterer from the home.

My data, that all five participants who were co-owners were/had been "putting up" with their batterers for between 10 to 25 years, suggests a need to go even further than issuance of vacate orders through housing court. Maxine Wolfe (2002) suggests a law by which a batterer forfeits his property rights. If such a law is established, its implementation,

must be accompanied, when necessary (as was the case with all my co-owner participants), by an order to continue making monthly mortgage payments for between two to five years, or an order of garnishment to that effect.

In the study for a position paper for such a law, careful attention needs to be paid to the circumstances under which the *women* could thus lose property. For instance, the law should be framed to protect Carol on the basis of her, perhaps undocumented, past history of physical abuse and present emotional and residential abuse, i.e., the post-nuptial agreement he made her sign that states she loses her rights to the property, and her child, if she were to separate or divorce him).

#### Mental Health Benefits of Transforming Site-of-Battering into Home

We are worked upon by the immediate environment we create. That is, in the process of (re)creating it, we see formerly unrecognized aspects of ourselves mirrored in it, and integrate those reflections back into our sense of self (Yandell, 1995, p. xiv). Based on this Jungian view, that we learn about ourselves through our engagement with people, objects and places, one could study the mental health and human developmental merits of safeguarding the sanctity of personhood by creating the conditions for women to feel at home in their housing, and with themselves, after evicting the batterer.

For instance, does the sequence of remaking the environment (i.e., the aspects of home that the women first and foremost “fix”, secondarily attend to, and so on) reveal aspects of battered women’s mental health and/or developmental aspirations? For instance, does she sense: reduction in specific fear, reduction in generalized anxiety, a boost to her self-esteem, a desire for mastery over her immediate environment, a yearning for wholeness?

As an expression of felt-freedom do they attempt to create wide spaces in their apartments by moving around furniture, or repainting their walls, since spacious is closely associated with the sense of being free, and freedom implies having space as well as the power and enough room in which to act (Tuan, 1977).

Do the activities of home-making after evicting the batterer satisfy any desire for individuation (i.e., inner wholeness)?

### Ankle Bracelets for Batterers

A graduate school team at the New York University's Kaplan School of Public Service administered a survey to over 76 electronic monitoring programs nationwide. Of the 48 programs that responded, six mentioned that they also incorporate or plan to incorporate electronic monitoring of offenders with ankle bracelets, *in addition to* providing home alarms and cellular telephones to the victims (Giuliani, 1999).

It would therefore be possible to assess the impact of electronic ankle bracelets on batterers; particularly its effectiveness on:

- increasing the safety of the battered partner.
- preventing the abuse of partners other than the one whose home, school, workplace, and other designated areas are computerized as "hot zones" via satellite tracking technology.
- reforming batterers, given the tangible tag of culpability they wear.

It would also serve to document the ways in which batterers dodge electronic monitoring devices; and assess the efficacy of preventive measures for such infractions.

Since the use of electronic bracelets prior to criminal conviction has been deemed unconstitutional because they limit personal liberty and are virtually imprisoning (Del Tufo, 2002), systematic study needs to be undertaken to document the extent to which battered

women end up with limited personal liberty and as virtual prisoners when batterers who engage in post-separation terrorism are permitted to roam freely.

### Adolescent Batterers

The adolescent daughter of one of my participants was exhibiting, toward her, the abusive, controlling behaviors of her stepfather. A study of court records reported that in a six month period (between September 1992 and June 1993) 757 civil restraining orders were issued by the District and Probate Courts in Massachusetts against adolescents between 11 and 17, most of them for violent physical abuse towards an intimate partner (Cochran, Brown, Adams, & Doherty, 1994, p. 4):

Of these 23% were female offenders. Over half (54%) of the total offenders had a prior delinquency or adult arraignment for a violent offense. One quarter had three or more prior delinquency or adult arraignment for violent offenses. Seventeen percent had a prior arraignment for violating a civil restraining order. Nineteen percent were under probation supervision at the time the order was issued. At age 15, 16, and 17 they already have established patterns of violence and abuse (p. 5).

It is necessary to study the effectiveness of treatment programs that are aimed at early intervention in the intergenerational transmission of violence.

In a 1989 survey, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth graders were asked, "Does a man who has taken a woman out for a ten-dollar dinner have the right to demand sex from her and force her if she refused?" One-third of the boys and one-fourth of the girls said, "Yes" (U.S. Senate, 1993, p. 81; cited in Gross, 1994).

Early child education and parent education workshops should delete aspects that perpetuate asymmetry in gender relations and include messages that discourage the abuse of male power and privilege, and accept women's autonomy and (non)consent. Longitudinal

studies of children, across race/ethnicity and class, who have had such gender relations enhancement education would help assess the impact of such instruction.

Identify elementary school curricula that incorporate domestic violence. For instance, includes the history of domestic violence, as a history lesson. Evaluate the impact of such integrated elementary school education on prevention of, and healing from, abuse at home.

### Transformative Separation

Trinity, was the only participant in this study who reconciled with her battering husband two years after she fled to a shelter. She did not experience abuse in any form again. In those two years her husband experienced the loss of his apartment for conducting illegal activities in it, after which he sincerely grieved the loss of his wife and children, sought therapy, and made amends.

Martha Mahoney (1994, cited in Coker, 2001, p. 827) relates the story of another woman who reconciled with her abusive husband after a two-year separation, and reported no further abuse. To end the violent relationship, she sought the help of her church. Her church assisted her in negotiating with her husband that he must move out, work with a men's prayer group, attend counseling, and take a sabbatical from his campus ministry position.

Donna Coker (2001, p. 827) writes of a battered women's counselor in the Navajo Nation who had separated from her abusive partner for two years and reconciled with no repeat violence. During the two-year separation he began alcohol treatment and counseling, while she resumed her education and became financially independent.

There is potential for developing a remedial model, based on systematic post-reconciliation studies (e.g., five and ten years after the reunion). These studies could focus on identifying the various factors that lead to authentic and lasting transformation in batterers,

and the measures that must be taken to sustain and/or re-infuse an appreciation for peaceful conflict resolution. All of the above illustrations involved a two-year separation. However, the optimal length of time remains to be empirically ascertained, and it may (or may not) conclude that two years is indeed an adequate length of time apart.

### Comparative Chronology of Strategies

Male batterers usually engage in post-separation violence even if the woman ends the relationship very early on (i.e., at the first sign of abusive control). Therefore, the woman's personal agency during and after the abusive relationship, must be supplemented with tailored neighborly and institutional support. To this end, it would be illuminating to comparatively chart the chronological sequence, of the strategies/spaces/ relationships used, by women who ultimately "stay put without the batterer," compared with those who "flee from the batterer," and the obstacles/barriers they confront as they try to escape violence.

### Ecological Analysis of Fatality

In light of the findings of this dissertation, it is important to conduct an analysis of ecological circumstances of the women who were killed by their batterers despite being in a special alarm program. Such an analysis would help identify any potential dangers that have not been identified in this study, and that may not be deterred by the informal vigilante-plus-responsive law enforcement.

A seven to ten year follow up study, of all my participants who "stayed put" after evicting their batterers, would help determine the robustness of the finding that an informal vigilante is, indeed, as life-sustaining as it appears thus far.

## Chapter 8

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rather than marshal logical arguments and empirical data,  
critical...theorists tell stories—fictional, science-fictional, quasi-fictional,  
autobiographical, anecdotal—designed to expose the pervasive and debilitating...  
—Judge Richard Posner

**Safe, Affordable Housing for Battered Women**

Political scientist Joyce Gelb and her associates (1997) present a broad overview of how domestic violence policy and infrastructure in New York City have been shaped during various Mayoral administrations since the 1960s, primarily in response to pressure from local and national women's organizations. During the past decade, while I volunteered as a battered women's advocate, and more recently while I focused on this study, I have observed that previous initiatives, (viz., confidential shelters in residential neighborhoods, scattered networks of safe homes, private hotel rooms secured by the city, Section 8 subsidies given to landlords to provide affordable and stable apartment leases, and so on) have been reduced in numbers, or diminished in importance, or done away with, (alongside cuts in the education budget at the school and university level), during the Giuliani Administration, when newer initiatives such as the alarm programs and "getting the hitter out of the home" were introduced. Batterers' treatment programs were created under the Reagan administration in the early 1980s largely as a means to divert dollars away from shelters which were perceived by the administration as instigating women to leave their abusive husbands rather than helping them cope with men's ways, for the sake of preserving family values (Wolfe, 2002).

### Shelters

The previous chapter provides evidence that even in a small “electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention program” in Manhattan’s Upper West Side (which is a mixed-income, low-crime neighborhood) where the program “wasn’t finding endangered-enough women” (Wilt, 1997), six of those ten alarm program women continued to experience long-distance abuse from their batterer. Also, prior to joining the program, seven of the ten had fled to shelters or to family and friends before they were able to return and evict their batterers, or they had to remain in the shelter system and/or double up with family or friends until they obtained a Mitchell Lama, public housing, or Section 8 apartment.

The multi-lingual, dedicated 24-hour, 7 days a week domestic violence hotline, which was launched at the start of Mayor Giuliani’s administration, and is the only city hotline of its kind in the entire nation (Giuliani, 1999), did not work for Claire because each time she was able to escape with *all* her children (as opposed to one or two of them being kept occupied by her battering husband), the hotline attendant merely told her to call back a few days later to check if any vacant shelter beds show up in the system.

All of the infrastructure victories won by battered women’s groups in the 1980s, therefore, need to be strengthened in quality and quantity; not merely maintained or reinstated. Most certainly, *none* are dispensable. Also, new affordable housing stock with good transportation facilities needs to be produced, so as to rapidly re-house women in battered women shelters, and keep emergency shelter beds constantly available.

Battered women’s shelters also need to be extra-attentive to the privacy needs of their residents. Environmental psychologists Leanne Rivlin and Maxine Wolfe (1985)

have documented the significance of privacy for people in institutions. They observed that even in mundane nonresidential institutions such as schools and day care settings, adults and children use and value a “place to retreat from the stimulation, intensity, and surveillance of institutional life.” The provision of such “stimulus shelters” (Wachs, 1973) wherein battered women can obtain relief from the regulations, obligations, and humdrum of collective living, can be met with dedicated spaces, and by increasing the possibilities for unscheduled solitary activities, e.g., gardening, strolling, reading, even for the children. Permitting residents to personalize their space serves several critical needs, for instance, the needs for self-determination, solitary space/activity, and self-worth.

### Rehousing Programs

Given that a woman who seeks shelter faces a federally imposed 90-day limit on her stay in a specialized battered women’s shelter (Messinger & Eldridge, 1993), she should be permitted to apply for alternate affordable housing immediately, without a ten-week shelter stay requirement (Morse 1994) before applying for an Emergency Assistance Rehousing Program (EARP) which provides a cash subsidy to landlords who rent to a homeless family with a lease of 32 months. It is not profitable to establish such policies aimed at preventing abuse of the system by women who falsely claim (i.e., pretend) they are battered. The 90-day requirement endangers battered women, and exhausts the zeal and morale of shelter staff. And perhaps, despite the 90-day red tape, the pretend cases do “pass” as battered women. That is perhaps because they have the stamina (due to the absence or lower levels of anxiety and depression) to endure the arduous long haul to safe affordable housing, unlike the 15% who return to their unsafe homes, braced to “put up” with their batterers (Morse, 1994).

Applications must be processed with diligence. Afra's year-long plight of sleeping on church benches and in subway cars, would have been avoided had her application for Section 8 vouchers been filed appropriately and processed rapidly. Among the many issues I encountered during my years as a volunteer battered women's advocate (1992-1996), one fairly recurrent issue was that New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was not processing applications expeditiously, much to the despair of battered women who lost their priority status because their Orders of Protections were no longer valid at the time their applications were being processed.

#### Social Capital and Informal Policing Agents

The near impossibility of finding alternative affordable housing in safe neighborhoods with good public transportation facilities and good schools, seems to be the overriding determining factor of whether or not a woman who is determined to end a violent relationship uproots herself and her children, or evicts her batterer. The thrust of recent battered women's electronic protection programs need to be attentive and sensitive to individual women's rationales for "fleeing" or "staying put" in their housing without the batterer. Supportive neighbors and building security, and the presence of family and/or friends in the vicinity are precisely the kinds of *social capital* and *informal policing* that the Police Department and the District Attorney need to recognize. Law enforcement could harness such neighborly support, to bolster their efforts and fulfil their mandate of providing "equal protection of the law" to battered women who sensibly (not mindlessly, nor rashly) desire to "stay put" and evict their batterers.

### Emergency Rental Programs for Women who “Stay Put”

Trinity fled two hours after she was granted an Exclusionary Order of Protection because she had no means of paying the rent, and her battering husband ignored the Vacate-for-60-Days order, on grounds that he held the lease:

I wanted him to stay away from me, the child [1-year-old], and the home. Unfortunately, because the lease was in his name, the judge told me I had sixty days to leave. Now when your husband is taking care of all the bills, when you don't have much funds for you to move, and when your family is not willing to help you...why couldn't [the judge] give me the apartment and let my husband pay the rent? Here I am with no money...my education is not that good coz he made me stop going to college, and I had the kid and no money...so I should have kept the apartment instead of me running to a totally different state.

— Trinity and 1-year-old slept two weeks on the floor of a holding place prior to a shelter vacancy.

Also, there is need for an emergency rent program which helps leaseholder battered women (such as Astrid) keep their housing, while they temporarily go into hiding. There must be a welfare program similar to Section 8 which will pay rent directly to the landlord. This will allow the women to lock up their apartments and/or go on disability leave from their jobs for three to six months when employers are supportive but reluctant to sacrifice optimum productivity due to depression and/or absenteeism.

### Priority Rehousing Status for Women who “Stay Put”

Women who “stay put” must not be penalized in terms of their priority status for emergency housing. If they later need to move, they must be given the same priority status that is given to women who flee to emergency shelters.

### Restitution and Housing Payments by Batterers

Batterers should be court ordered to pay restitution, via wage assignment, for losses sustained due to damaged property, for mortgage payments on the houses from

which they have been evicted, at least until a fair divorce settlement is made to the women (as in Muriel's case), or for reasonable alternative arrangements the women may want, or be forced to take (as in the case of Hazel). Or, as in the case of Muriel, a lien should be put on any other property the batterer owns (rather than on the property in which the battered woman "stays put"), for as long as the battered women needs to receive public assistance but to which she is not eligible due to properties she co-owns with the batterer.

### Possession Rights for Women who Flee

The law must have provisions whereby a woman who *flees* a battering spouse or partner does not lose possession rights (e.g., on grounds of abandonment as was one of Muriel's reason for "putting up" with her battering husband for 35 years), but is later able to evict her batterer and reclaim the house from which she fled. According to Joan Zörza (1991), staff attorney at the National Center on Women and Family Law, and head of the National Battered Women's Law Project, "once a woman is out of the home, many judges are unwilling to reinstate her (p. 427)." Even if her name is *not* on the deed of the property, the court must allow her to present evidence that her claim is just and upright, without requiring her to bear the burden of documenting a lifetime of emotional, physical, financial, and residential cruelty.

### Credit Rating

For women whose credit ratings are ruined as part of the abuse, or as a consequence of ending the abusive relationship, Human Resource Administration (HRA) must vouch for their credit worthiness; and real-estate agents, car dealers, and so on, must

be mandated to accept HRA's certification of credit worthiness for a reasonable stipulated period. This will ensure that the financial victimization is not prolonged.

Credit rating bureaus and banks would serve battered women well by entertaining appeals for low-interest credit on grounds of battery. Police reports or HRA certification must serve as adequate documentation, in lieu of Orders of Protection; since court orders are tedious and time-consuming to obtain, and rarely deter future violence in the absence of substantial penalties of retributive and/or devastating consequence to the batterer.

### **Child Protective Services**

#### Loss of Children to the System

All my participants who had children, including Avril who had a stepson, were protective towards their children:

It could be four in the morning and I'd pack up my kids [three boys] and we'd be out of there. There's no way I would ever leave my children; children come with me always.

— Tiffany, 31-year-old African American administrative assistant to the director of a national philanthropic organization.

Yet, to this day, many battered women are accused of child neglect and are heart-wrenchingly robbed of their children by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), as was Sandra, for perhaps a lifetime! In fact, Coker (2001a) points out that:

Several changes in child protection laws and policies have increased dramatically the number of child abuse investigations founded solely or primarily on the basis that a child's parent is the victim of intimate abuse. Some police departments [including New York City] have developed policies that require officers to report to child protection services every case in which a child is present at a domestic violence call (p. 833)...Child welfare workers and courts frequently blame battered women for their children's exposure to violence...[which] suggests that the mother could control or could avoid the batterer's violence. In many cases, neither is true....Separation is no guarantee of safety....Thus, separation often requires careful planning...[but] child protection workers [fail] to understand the

dangers of separation and the importance of women's material resources to their safety...(p. 836).

It is heartening that twenty battered mothers recently filed a class action lawsuit against ACS, and that Brooklyn Federal Judge Jack Weinstein ordered the City to stop taking children away from battered mothers, and to make haste in reuniting families (Claffey, 2002; Lombardi, 2002). However, Coker (2002) mentioned that several of those mothers had been threatened by ACS workers after the judge's verdict.

Natalie mentioned that when she went to the hospital with severe injuries after her batterer broke down her door and mauled her, she did not mind being interrogated about her children's safety. What she considered inappropriate, however, was the precedence that concerns about her children took over the immediate comforting care and medical attention she needed at the time. A question or two to establish the safety status of her children would have sufficed. The rest could have waited until she first received all the care and treatment that she herself deserved.

Afra, who was dealt a chronic back injury by her husband, was sadly but astutely advised by her caseworker to stay away from a shelter if she did not want her children to be taken away by child protective services. She and her infant slept in subway cars, on church benches, and showered in ex-colleagues homes once a week for well over a year.

The women in this study who were unable to take their children with them (viz., Bernadine, Carol, and Claire — because he non-abusively literally held on to the children, or he had an order of protection which stipulated that their mother not take them out of the house, even to the park, etc.), "put up" with their abusive husbands because no matter where they fled, they would not have been able to feel at home in any safe place without their children. Claire, who had made several futile attempts to find a shelter

vacancy the few times she was able to get away with her four children, ended up injuring her husband by shooting him in the leg and going to prison for a year. She was thankful that her mother was then able to get custody of the children.

Glenda, who was incarcerated for one year for knifing her fifth batterer in self-defense, had two grown children, ages 20 and 23, who had been staying with her mother for several years prior to her incarceration, ever since she was coerced into crack abuse by one of her previous batterers.

Epstein (1999, cited in Coker 2001, p. 833) relates the case of a woman who was charged by the state attorney of failure to protect her daughter, even though the mother immediately reported her husband's abuse of their daughter, obtained an exclusionary restraining order that denied him access to the child, and cooperated with his prosecution.

Mahoney (1994, cited in Coker 2001, p. 836) reports the case of a woman whose "parental rights were terminated because a psychologist testified that she *might* enter a second violent relationship." And in New York, children have been taken away even when "the mother's estranged husband punched her in the face while one child was sleeping and the other was at school" (Sengupta, 2000, cited in Coker, 2001, p. 833).

### **Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice for Batterers**

Statutes prohibiting wife beating have existed in the United States since 1641 (Pleck, 1987, p.21). Yet battered women's advocates and some public policymakers are still attempting to convince society and the criminal justice system, four centuries later, and at the dawn of a new millennium, that domestic violence is *unabatedly on the rise*

primarily (*not entirely*) because the criminal justice system fails to effectively intervene and levy proper criminal sanctions.

Sociologist Kathleen Ferraro (1993, p. 165) points out that “the proper function of the criminal justice system” (i.e., “to protect and reinforce the social order through punishment of individual deviants”), is “fundamentally at odds with a structural, gendered analysis of woman battering” (i.e., that “woman battering is rooted primarily in the structure of the social order, rather than the pathological psyches of individual men”). Nonetheless, I submit, the criminal justice system must *perform* (rather than *abdicate*) its proper function, and the Attorney General and legislative bodies must assume their responsibility to empower the criminal justice system to perform its role, and ensure it does so *effectively*. The use of violence and abuse of any power and privilege (including that of males over females) is a matter of individual choice and responsibility. If that was not the case, *all* men would be abusive and violent towards women.

Laws and ordinances in a *just and unoppressive* society prescribe standards of ethical human conduct with the primary purpose of being protective, of self and others, more so than restrictive. The criminal justice system, therefore, has always been endowed with the *potential* to effect fundamental social change. Its success in this endeavor resides in its *timely* (i.e., swift) enforcement of *judicious* sanctions against the primary aggressor.

Through the course of the following sections, especially towards the end of the section titled *Felony versus Misdemeanor*, it will become clear that increased criminalization of battering has worked against many battered women (Sparks, 1997). This is because, based on the U.S. constitution, laws are applied equally, even to both

parties in intimate partner violence. Not sufficient concessions are made in favor of the woman, even when the man is established as the primary aggressor in the relationship, as opposed to in the activity (i.e., alcoholism/drug use/theft/prostitution), or in the incident (i.e., when the woman injures or kills the man in self-defense, especially if it is theorized that the woman initiated that particular incident. Judicial insensitivity to battered women is practiced under the protection of the U.S. Constitution.

### Officer Safety

One participant mentioned that responding to domestic calls is perceived by police officers as being *very* dangerous. However, according to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (1999, p.8), “the risk of officer death in responding to domestic calls has been overstated...largely because the FBI grouped the “disturbance calls” data in its annual report on officers killed and assaulted. Until 1982, the “disturbance” category included bar fights, general disturbances, and citizens brandishing firearms, in addition to domestic situations.”

However, “when domestic calls were separated from other disturbances (Garner & Clemmer, 1986, p.24; cited in IACP, 1999), the data on officer deaths from 1973 through 1984 revealed 69 deaths associated with domestic disturbances, compared to 151 for other disturbances. During the same period, 210 deaths were associated with robberies, 162 with traffic situations, and 75 with burglaries; and 65 officers died accidentally because of their own actions or the actions of other officers.” Therefore, of the 732 officer deaths in the eleven year period studied, 9.43% were related with domestic calls.

Despite the lower incidence of officer deaths associated with battering compared to other situations, officers must be cautioned about the possibilities of assaults and

injuries when responding to domestic calls. However, their risks must be put in proper perspective, and they must be exhorted to give domestic violence calls the same priority as other life-threatening calls, and to respond in pairs, never alone, to every house call.

Restraining Order: A Horn which Toots, “The Courts Can’t Stop Me!”

The police is like, “Well you can go back [home] coz you have this paper.” It’s a piece of paper you know. Its not like a gun you can defend yourself with it...he can rip it up and still kill you. Then what? He’ll go to jail and that’s it...or probably don’t even go to jail! These orders of protection are really *garbage*...I never felt comfortable even though I still have the permanent one...for five years.

— Francine, “stayed put” for three years, then fled to a shelter when her leaseholder husband, who was at-large, reclaimed the apartment at gun-point.

I had umpteen number of temporary orders of protection and then I was granted the permanent order of protection for one year and I even had him arrested a second time...because he broke that [order of protection]. I avoid him by any means possible. [But] he works right across the street...it’s very frustrating... that he’s allowed even in this neighborhood...[when] he can get transferred. [But] I was told...by the DA’s office...I don’t have any grounds...as long as he stays a 100 yards away from me. [But] the order of protection runs out this month.

— Lorna, “stayed put” in her Mitchell Lama flat; her mother and cousin lived in the same building.

Abuse Prevention Orders are commonly referred to as Orders of Protection or Temporary Restraining Orders (TROs). The police measure success by focusing on the outcome of arrest practices, and the criminal courts have their sights on the outcome of prosecution and sentencing; for civil courts, the effectiveness of restraining orders is the focus of analysis (Ferraro, 1993).

Restraining orders allow the court, on an *ex parte* basis (i.e., without the abuser present in court), to order the abuser to refrain from further abuse, refrain from contacting the plaintiff, vacate the home, and even rule on custody of the children. In 1979, Massachusetts issued 3,400 restraining orders; in 1993, this number increased to over

52,000; and by September 1994 it dramatically increased to 145,263 (Finn & Hylton, 1994, p. 1). It is not clear how many of these were renewals, and extension of validity.

However, Grau, Fagan, and Wexler (1984, p.23) found that TROs did not reduce verbal and emotional abuse, and that subsequent abuse was more likely among men with histories of severe domestic violence. So they reported that women who had been severely battered were not effectively protected from future violence by TROs. Fifty-three year old Muriel, mentioned that after she got an Order of Protection, her 65-year-old battering husband, who *with her*, co-owned a store for 18 years, then a taxi limousine business for several years, and now a real estate business...

was trying at least not to be very violent...but still he was very abusive after that...throwing watches and ashtrays and penknives and phones ...whatever comes to his hand. I have about thirty [broken] telephones downstairs coz every time I would speak to somebody...he would throw the phone at me...to tell me, "No communication!" [with friends and family].

Chaudhuri and Daly (1992, p.245) reported that TROs have a deterrent effect on employed men with no prior criminal histories, no drug or alcohol abuse, and low levels of initial violence. Men who did not share these characteristics were not deterred by TROs. Andrew Klein (1996, p. 211), chief probation officer of Quincy District Court in Massachusetts did a two-year study and found that civil intervention, especially largely non-enforced civil intervention, will not deter repeat criminal activity among men who display a pattern of chronic domestic abuse. A restraining order is, more often than not, a horn which toots: "The courts can't stop me!" (Davis, 1998, p. 126). Dr. Susan Cayouette (cited in Bass, 1994, p. 1), clinical director of EMERGE, the nation's first batterers treatment program, says, "Getting a restraining order or a divorce can give a woman a false sense of security: if a man is determined to find her and hurt her, it's

pretty hard to prevent that.” In fact, Carol Arnett (cited in de Becker, 1997, p. 189), executive director of the Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council says, “...shelter workers ...are very cautious about recommending restraining orders...[because it] may well be endangering the woman.” Moreover, in a study of 179 cases of stalking by the San Diego District Attorney’s Office (cited in de Becker, 1997, p. 187) “about half of the victims who obtained restraining orders felt their cases were worsened by them.”

Chaudhuri and Daly (1992, p.245) observed that TROs generally increased police responsiveness to calls from battered women. However, police were *not* more likely to *arrest* men for violating TROs than for committing battering, unless the men were also involved in other offenses. In Ferraro’s (1989b, p. 178) police study, 3 out of 17 women said their TROs did not help at all. Several of my participants mentioned that the police need to literally *see* their Order of Protection, and if the women had forgotten to carry it, when they perhaps changed their pocket book, then the police would not be empowered to make an arrest. Some women, therefore, made several copies of their Order of Protection to put in their other jacket(s) and/or pocket book(s). Others filed the original for safekeeping and subsequent photocopying because invariably the police officers want to take it away for their records.

Linden Gross (cited in de Becker, 1997) in his book on stalkers and their victims, referred to restraining orders as law enforcement’s “knee jerk response” to domestic violence. Veteran police lieutenant and sociologist Richard Davis (1998) says restraining orders were “a response initiated by our public policymakers at the behest of victim advocates (p.28).” However, since advocates have historically lobbied for simultaneous multiple interventions, it is very likely that they lobbied for restraining orders in

conjunction with use of probable cause arrest when there was a visible injury, *enforcing automatic eviction orders* for the batterer, *mandating counseling for the batterer with a counselor who holds batterer entirely responsible for the violence*, and *sentencing batterers to jail for violations* reported either by the woman or the counselor.

However, Bass (1994, p.1, cited in Davis, 1998) reported in the *Boston Globe* that “even in Berkshire County, Massachusetts’ toughest county, from September 1992 to July 1994, as many as 75 percent of those arrested for violations of restraining orders did not see a day in jail.” Cochran’s (1995, p.17) qualitative analysis of civil restraining orders, under the auspices of the office of the commissioner of probation of Massachusetts trial court, found that across the Commonwealth, the majority of those who violated the order never saw as much as a day in jail, and that since the inception of the Registry of Civil Restraining Orders in September 1992, domestic violence had not moderated, but rather had increased. Nonetheless, in Greater New York City, a battered woman continues to be advised to get an order of protection *to ensure the most effective police response*, although it is only in Brooklyn that violations of the order are brought to the prosecutors’ office for criminal prosecution (Urban Justice Center, 1996).

Davis (1998, p. 40) points out that in many States the violation of a restraining order is a crime, but the actual act of assault or battery of an intimate partner is still not regarded as any more serious than hitting a stranger. He recommends that restraining orders should be *criminal* in nature and only issued by criminal courts rather than family courts, in order to impress upon the community that domestic violence is *not* a “family matter.” He also recommends an *intensive* probationary period for first-time defendants and probationary visits to the victims’ homes; and for subsequent violations, a mandatory

one-year prison sentence plus mandatory completion of a proven and effective batterers' treatment program.

Granting Orders of Protection which are for limited time periods, i.e., for three months, six month, one year, etc., go against the overwhelming evidence that the cycle of violence is not just a theory, but a confirmed truth about the nature of batterers and the practice of battering. Time and time again, battered women's testimonials and court records have confirmed that the remorseful "honeymoon stage" in a battering relationship is indeed transitory. Time-bound Orders of Protection only serve to endanger women further by reinforcing women's trust, hope, and belief in their batterers' *promises* to change for the better. Unless law enforcement policies and practices reflect that reality, many battered women will not be inspired early enough about the facts of battering and factor them into their decision making.

Expedient supplemental legal-plus-social, remedial-plus-restorative, measures must be taken, in addition to granting an *initial two-year* Order of Protection, to treat the batterer *and fortify the survivor*. This will enable the survivor to, self-protectively, in good conscience, and with dignity, sever all ties with the batterer, with the assurance that the "battering loved one" is being swiftly and surely sanctioned (not condoned) with dignity, as well as being psychologically, spiritually, and behaviorally helped (rather than written off as irredeemable). Within the context of such an "comprehensive equal but separate, batterer and survivor intervention approach", infractions of the no-contact stipulation, on the part of the survivor, are likely to be rare.

The reality, however, has been that battered women (especially those in poverty-stricken, immigrant communities, and crime/drug zones) are coerced, most often by child

protective services and/or the welfare department, into “voluntary” participation in parenting classes and battered women support groups (Sinden, 1999). However, they are not provided the material resources needed to separate safely from the batterer (Murphy, Musser, & Maton, 1998) such as childcare and transportation funds for a new job and/or housing search, the first and last month rent plus deposit for new housing; money for basic furniture and childcare, help with new school enrollments, stationery funds for photocopying restraining orders and duplicating photos of the batterer for childcare providers/school, security personnel at the apartment building and work site. Law professor, Donna Coker (2001a, footnote 135, p. 836), who used to be the coordinator of a battered women’s program in Honolulu, Hawaii, observed that battered women’s safety is usually compromised when they are required to attend so many “services.”

#### Mandatory or Presumptive Arrest Policies

I was very up and down about [him being arrested without my consent]. At first I didn’t want him arrested. Then I...actually began to believe that the reason he was arrested was because he did things that were crimes...and I would never let a stranger treat me the way he treated me. So...I sort of think he deserved it. I mean I’ve almost convinced myself that he deserved it.

— Laura, legal secretary, “stayed put” in her childhood apartment.

In 1981-82, the Police Foundation conducted a study (Sherman & Berk, 1984a) at the Minneapolis Police Department, soon after state law “empowered” (as opposed to “mandated”) police to make arrests in *misdemeanor* domestic assaults. The research design was, therefore, applied only to misdemeanor domestic assaults. A lottery selection determined which of three responses police officers would use for each incident: arrest the suspect (in jail for *at least* eight hours), send the suspect from the scene for eight hours, or provide advice which could include mediation. According to the victims’

reports, 19 percent of those *arrested* repeated violence within six months, compared to as many as 33 percent of those kept away from the scene, and 37 percent of those advised (International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP], 1999).

Veteran police lieutenant and sociologist Davis (1998), based on his analysis of domestic assault arrest studies, and his experience in the Brockton, Massachusetts Police Department (ten years of responding to domestic violence calls as a cruiser officer, eight years as a police detective and sergeant, and three years as a lieutenant training and lecturing on the subject), concludes that, “Mandatory arrest and...*civil* restraining orders *without proper criminal sanctions* are assuredly flawed solutions for preventing the complex enigma of domestic violence (p. 83, emphases mine).” Elsewhere in the same book (p. 11) he characterizes these management strategies (civil restraining orders and mandatory arrest policies) as a “deception” when they lack the consequential support of appropriately fitting criminal sanctions.

From another (though not an entirely diametric) standpoint, in order to safeguard the humanitarian rights of perpetrators, the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] (July 14, 1994) suggests:

...police officers must be well trained to understand the severity of domestic violence...that physical assaults of family members are tragic and dangerous crimes of violence...[that] mediation...or a walk around the block...although suitable in some circumstances, may not always be the best solution. [Then] the officer must base the decision [of] whether or not to arrest...on the same factors ...employ[ed] in other criminal cases...The arrest decision [must] not be based on antiquated stereotypes which diminish the seriousness of this crime... [neither must] arrests be used as a symbol to send a “message”...[because] arresting a person is a serious matter that should only take place as the first step in a criminal prosecution...[and because] any period of incarceration, even a few hours, represents a significant deprivation of liberty... [which] may be necessary and justifiable in particular cases based on the judgment of the officers at the scene... Police should arrest an abuser when appropriate, but they should not be forced to do so [by mandatory arrest policies].

In Greater New York City, the officer *must* arrest a batterer if:

1. S/he violated an order of protection, OR
2. The officer has probable cause to believe that s/he committed a *felony* (i.e., a crime resulting in serious injury or involving the use of a weapon).

In other crimes which result in an injury that is not serious, the officer decides whether to arrest depending on whether s/he decides that an arrest would prevent further violence. If the battered person has been harassed or threatened, but not physically hurt, the police may not arrest, but must refer him/her to the proper court if s/he wishes to obtain an order of protection. In addition, whether or not there is an injury or arrest, the officer may take the victim to a place of safety *within the same borough* if the victim so desires (Urban Justice Center, 1996).

Ironically however, even though violators of restraining orders *must be arrested* when reported, it does not mean that they all get serious sanctions from the courts. Many of my participants were appalled with the slap-on-the-wrist kind of sentencing. Natalie's batterer knocked on her apartment door the very day on which he finished serving his one year sentence for breaking down her door when she evicted him. He had been absconding from the police and was located only when a sex worker he beat up reported him. Even with the additional criminal assault on another woman, he got only 90 days for violating restraining orders on the very day he got out of prison:

This is what I was told...that he was only able to get ninety days...that's the most he could have gotten...the trial came down to a bench trial...it was a B misdemeanor and he could get only ninety days for that.

According to Davis (1998, p. 88), in 1994, although the Brockton District Court in Massachusetts made 327 dispositions for violation of restraining orders, 202 were

dismissed by the court, 112 were found guilty, 9 were pronounced not guilty, and 4 were transferred to other courts. Of the 112 found guilty, 37 were placed in jail, 21 were placed on probation, 18 received suspended sentences, 13 were placed in programs, and 23 were continued without a finding.

### Officers' Demeanor and Quality of Arrests

I went down to the precinct with my daughter, after an incident when he choked me and I passed out. I decided to...file a report so that I could go to family court and get him removed. [But] the officer we got was such an ass...he said, "I'm on duty tonight, you want me to round him up?" like this was some kind of joke! Although I filed a report, [his remark] just turned me off.

— Claire, age 31, shot her husband in the leg in self-defense a month later.

Sherman and Berk (1984a, p.6) reported that when victims felt that the police listened to them, then that favorable interaction in itself was more closely related to reduced rearrests, than several other variables including the batterer's background. Goolkasian (1986, p.24) urges officers to be aware of the subtle ways in which their language can affect outcomes. Officers' (un)favorable attitudes about battering are conveyed to the survivor and batterer via nonverbal cues of stance and demeanor (i.e., that domestic cases are a private matter and seldom go anywhere, as opposed to the criminal nature of the act and the legal remedies that the state can invoke). More recently, an evaluation report (in October 2000) of the State of New York mandatory arrest provisions found that the "meaning of mandatory policies for battered women... depend[s], in part, on the quality of the[ir] interaction...[with] police officers...[and] their satisfaction with police response often depends on the demeanor of the officers." (Coker, 2001a, p. 857).

Similarly, *how* arrests are made may be as important as *whether* they are made, and having a personal experience with battering, either as a batterer or survivor, will greatly affect the efficacy of law enforcement. Therefore, *immediate* remedial measures and/or criminal sanctions must be rendered to officers of the law who are either batterers or survivors of battering (IACP, 1999, p.8).

Officers would do well to treat all batterers firmly, and authoritatively; but always with *dignity*. The batterers' dehumanizing behaviors and moral turpitude do not justify *demeaning* treatment. Moreover, the women's *fear* of police brutality often works to the batterers' advantage since it invariably features as one of the top three reasons for why women delay or permanently avoid resorting to law enforcement; the first two reasons being retaliation, and ruin (of the batterer's career with a police record).

Angela Harris (2000; cited in Coker 2001a, p. 855) points out that in marginalized communities, *hypermasculinity* often characterizes the response of police officers, as does the behavior of batterers. Within this context of aggressive "poor policing [which] frequently takes the form of indiscriminate, violent, and racist intrusions...provoking fear, resentment, and contempt among the population ostensibly to be protected (Harris, 1997, p. 21)," Coker (2001a) comments that instead of sending a message of "intolerance for domestic violence (p. 849)"...[and] "expressing the moral worth of the victim (p. 856)," mandatory policies "sometimes...[have] more to do with expressing state control over men in subordinated communities (p. 856)."

### Victim Preference in Arrests

Sandra and Hazel never hesitated to press charges against their husbands the many times they called the police, yet the police did not make arrests. They both resented

having to eventually give up their apartments and go into hiding, only to find themselves on the run, while their batterers roamed carefree, in the heart of the city, in broad daylight.

I asked participants who were *in favor* of mandatory arrest for batterers, how they would respond to a battered woman who said, “I would feel offended if my batterer was arrested without my consent.” “This is what I’d say,” said Tiffany:

Do you want to *not* have feelings and be six feet under?! Or would you rather *feel* something? Why give that person a chance to hit you again? You know accidents happen...may be people who are abused just might fall over a glass table and cut their neck or something or slit their wrist...and it wasn’t intentional homicide...but now your kids don’t have a mother. So forget about feeling offended! Get it together!

There were times when before I actually said, “Yes arrest him,”...he would cry and he would say to me, “Please don’t have me arrested, I’m sorry”...or, “I’ll never hit you again”...he would be like butter...he would melt...but he is this big strong bully.

That’s why I think mandatory arrests are good...because it gives the two people space and time. That woman, when he’s not arrested, can’t think clearly... [when] he’s still there in the house...can’t talk on the phone... can’t really get help because he’s there. Even if its an overnight arrest, a lot of men have never seen the inside of a jail...just being in one will shake them up [even if it is only an overnight arrest].

But, Avril is strongly opposed to short term arrests; more so to overnight arrests:

Family court only gives six months for violations of orders of protection. Six months is just long enough to make somebody angry.

Eve Buzawa and Thomas Austin (1993, p. 84) point out that “mandatory arrest policies go against the tradition of victim preference and officer discretion to respond to the desire and concerns of the victim that has long been recognized and generally accepted as an important role in determining proper police action.” However, according to Ferraro (1993, p. 170), “the prospects of victim cooperation are not a legally relevant consideration for arrest decisions, particularly when presumptive arrest policies are in

effect. The police officer's job is to determine probable cause, not to weigh the likelihood of victim cooperation."

When I asked my African American participants if the disproportionate number of African American men in prisons was a likely reason why some women may not report African American men who batter, none of them mentioned that as a reason. On the contrary, Tiffany explained:

It doesn't matter what color your skin is. If you can raise your hand to hit another person it's beyond a Black issue, so to me that's not an excuse...I don't care what color your hand is if you're smacking me across my face...you deserve to be held accountable for your action. So to me that's a cop out—another Black man in jail. It's going to be another Black-on-Black crime when he puts you six feet under!

However, it is important to point out that, one year after the introduction of mandatory arrest in Duluth, Minnesota, in the early 1980s, Dobash and Dobash (1991) found a *proportionate decrease* in arrests of minority men from 32 percent (N=22) to 8.5 percent (N=175). But by and large, "[t]he system is only getting those available for capture" says Dr. John Aponte, a former police psychologist who now counsels court-mandated batterers, the vast number of which are on welfare, unemployed, or have prior criminal records (cited in Sontag, 2002, p. 57):

That says to me that system is rounding up the usual suspects...And...the men know it. When the men in my group see only other poor people in the program, it makes them think, I'm just here because I got caught, so I have to learn how to not get caught."

Most of the contemporary domestic violence policies and practices are rooted in the early 1960s (Davis, 1998) when the International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP] national training manual specified that arrest was to be avoided whenever possible

in responding to domestic disputes (Fagan, 1996). However, the present model policy of the IACP (1999), for officers responding to a “family violence” call, stipulates:

1. Officers should make an arrest when probable cause and legal authority exist to do so. Field release and issuance of a citation are not permitted in domestic violence cases when grounds for arrest are present.
2. If an arrest is not made where probable cause exists, officers shall fully explain the basis for their non-arrest decision.
3. The officers should emphasize to the victim and the offender that the criminal action is being initiated by the state and not the victim.

The on-scene investigation section of the IACP’s response procedure has nine more points, the last of which states:

If the offender has left the scene and a crime has been committed, the officers will:

- (a) Search the immediate area if potentially worthwhile;
- (b) Obtain information from victims/witnesses as to where the offender might be;
- (c) Seek an arrest warrant; and
- (d) Refer the matter to the investigative unit.

Yet, 53-year-old Muriel had been calling the police to arrest her 65-year-old husband for many years but the police kept saying, “Oh! This is a civil matter...you have to go to Family Court.” Later in the interview, Muriel disclosed that the police did not want to have anything to do with her husband because he, a malicious opportunistic whistle blower, not only seriously injured two police inspectors over a non-battering matter, but even filed two lawsuits against the police department over that same matter and had won a hefty settlement. But in February 1997 when he beat her with a baseball ball on her stomach and tried to choke her with a leather skirt, she was relieved that the

police not only finally arrested him but that the judge also issued him a Vacate Order saying, "OUT!" even before the Assistant District Attorney made a plea for one.

### Arrest Warrants and Absconding Batterers

None of my participants' batterers who absconded went into hiding:

He was on the Ten Most Wanted list [yet]...my friends would see him shopping with other women...this was so funny...and ironic...he would be ALL OVER TOWN. My ex-husband is very recognizable...he has green eyes, he's very fair skinned, and he is very, very easy to spot. And everyday, it would never fail, one of my girlfriends would call me up, "Guess who I saw shopping in Caldors," or "Guess who I saw talking to this girl on a hundred and twenty fifth street"...

I wasn't frustrated...I was angry and I was hurt...that he was around town...parading...just living carefree...knowing that this warrant was out for his arrest...he had at least two or three warrants.

Every time he was spotted...I would call...one of the detectives in [the ATS alarm program]...I stayed in touch with them constantly.

— Tiffany, had the ATS alarm; their tax accountant knew where to arrest him.

Many participants' batterers were at-large at the time of the interview, some for almost a year:

They promised me that the detective will be here and they're going to have him arrested. BUT...he decided he's going to Florida...because he knew he's going to be arrested. [When] he came back from Florida...every time I called the detective, "Oh! He doesn't open the door! We cannot [force] open the door! We cannot arrest him if he doesn't come out through the door!"...So until the day that we were to go to court for the first offense, they still did not arrest him. So I called this unit for Domestic Violence in the Criminal Court and I told them, "Listen, they had 29 days to arrest him and they didn't arrest him yet!" So the Domestic Violence Unit in the court agreed that tomorrow when he's gonna come to answer his first offense [the assault], they're going to have him arrested [for violating court orders]. And that's what happened.

— Muriel's relief was shortlived; he got Conditional Discharge with \$2,500 bail.

In the six-city study (Atlanta, Charlotte, Colorado Springs, Metro-Dade, Milwaukee, and Omaha) sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to reevaluate the findings of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (NIJ, 1984), Omaha was the only city that examined the deterrence effect of issuing an arrest warrant

for batterers who fled before the police arrived and the police had probable cause to believe he committed domestic violence crime. The Omaha Domestic Violence Police Experiment observed that “offenders who flee before the police arrive are substantially deterred by warrants for their arrests (Goldsmith, 1993).”

The police must develop creative ways of locating and arresting absconding batterers. Posters with photographs of dangerous absconding batterers could be used (e.g., Call 1.800.577.TIPS if you have information about any absconding batterer).

Natalie’s batterer was given a phone call at his mother’s house. He was called to the precinct to discuss his behavior the morning after he broke down her door, and was arrested at the precinct. When batterers do not comply with such a request, it must be considered a non-bailable offense and the sentence must be stiffer:

He left court [fled from the courtroom just before his hearing]...that’s why there was a warrant for his arrest. So he violated his parole...he had a bench warrant...in other words, the manure hit the fan...so he was up a creek without a paddle... there was no way he wasn’t going to do time. Once they had him [six months later], he wasn’t leaving, because he had violated parole... and everything else, so...there was no way he was going to walk. There was no bail posted for him...he was remanded.

He’s going to be in for three years...and his term has to be served consecutively...he cannot do the years together...he has to do one year and the next year and then the next year...[coz] he also battered another woman in the process...[and] she also pressed charges against him...that’s how he was able to get so much time.

— Tiffany’s tax accountant’s contact information for him happened to be the other woman’s home phone number.

### Victim Participation in Prosecution

The most common stereotype of battered women, that many police officers hold on to, is that the victims will *not* follow through with prosecution. In Ferraro’s observations of policing (1989b, cited in Ferraro, 1993, p. 170), “every officer relayed

stories about cases in which the police had expended extraordinary resources or endangered themselves, only to have the woman recant her story in front of a judge.” Police officers, prosecutors, and judges, must be trained to not allow such stereotypic views to affect their determination of probable cause for arrest, and consequently put them at risk of being charged with failure to protect battered women. Officers and prosecutors need to be trained to stop thinking of battered women who drop charges as “voluntary participants in a life-style that includes violence (Ferraro, 1993, p. 169),” but rather as women who are justifiably terrified by the batterer’s promises to kill them, or their children, or their parents, or their new intimate partners.

In an attempt to increase penalties for woman battering, some jurisdictions decided to disregard the fact that one person’s medicine may be another person’s poison. They adopted mandatory victim witness cooperation policies whereby women are not given the choice of dropping charges. Women who drop charges or fail to testify are charged with contempt of court, and may be incarcerated for refusing to testify (Dobash & Dobash, 1991; cited in Ferraro, 1993). However, one study on the effects of prosecution (Ford & Regolie, 1993, cited in Coker, 2001) compared cases in which women were *allowed* to drop charges, with cases in which women had no such choice. Regardless of the case outcomes, they observed a fifty percent reduction in violence during the first six months after case resolution. The women who were permitted to drop charges, but chose to proceed, experienced less recidivism than did women who were not allowed to drop charges. Women who were permitted to and chose to drop charges, ended up with the greatest risk of re-abuse. The authors concluded that “any intervention helps” (p. 157), and thus recommended that women be allowed to “determine the

prosecutorial track for court outcomes.” Soft no-drop policies (Hanna, 1996, cited in Coker, 2001, p. 843) offer more flexibility by requiring victims to first get educated about domestic violence by watching a video or talking to counselor, and then discussing their concerns with a judge before they drop prosecution. Successful prosecution, however, is the norm when “victim witness protection programs” provide battered women with (i) information about the legal process, and (ii) support for testifying (Ferraro, 1993, p. 172).

In trainings, police officers, prosecutors, and judges also need to be impressed with the fact that although 39 percent (N=104) of intimate victims of assault wanted charges dropped, 65 percent of their cases resulted in guilty pleas (Ferraro & Boychuk, 1992). This clearly demonstrates that “even if women do not want to follow through with prosecution, it is likely that there is enough evidence for the state to obtain a plea of guilt if the case is serious enough to warrant felony prosecution (Ferraro, 1993; p. 172).” Furthermore, in the same study, “16 percent of cases where, victims fully cooperated with and desired prosecution, resulted in dismissals (p. 172).” This clearly illustrates that a woman dropping charges is not the only reason why cases get dismissed, and/or get demoted from superior court to the lower courts.

Cindi, whose husband has a bullet lodged in his head from a robbery, usually called 911 during an incident, or reported the incident at the precinct shortly thereafter. But she just could not bring herself to take the next step of going to court to obtain an Order of Protection, because *that* would amount to *her* attempting to put him in jail. She prefers him to be summarily penalized with imprisonment and/or intensive treatment without her involvement after her initial 911 call:

If you have feelings for someone that you’ve lived with for so many years, you don’t want to feel like you’re [personally] responsible for putting them in

jail. If you didn't have a say in it, then he can't hold you responsible. So if it's just a governmental law where they just come and arrest him, once you make a police report, and it's not up to the spouse [after that] that would be good. I would be afraid to put him in jail. We need to be taught that we're all adults and nobody can hit somebody or abuse someone without facing certain penalties that will happen because it's just governmental law.

And there's a whole stigma when a woman calls the police on her husband and he goes to jail, and then when he comes out he could do something worse. But when it's just the law where they come and arrest him once you call 911, then he couldn't hold you responsible.

Cindi seems to suggest that any 911 call or report from a battered woman should be regarded as a desperate plea for immediate and long term *police protection for herself*; rather than perceive her as a whistle blower or hostile witness. Then, on the basis of law enforcement's understanding of the modus operandi of batterers, the system (starting with the responding officers) must responsibly and expediently assess and adjudicate without ever requiring the woman to press charges, be it in the privacy of the police precinct or *in the presence* of the batterer in court. At no point, must the batterer, his lawyer, or the prosecutor need the woman to press charges in order to proceed with criminal or civil prosecution. The woman's description of abuse and physical, emotional, financial damage should suffice. In effect, the activity of pressing or dropping charges must be the responsibility of the law enforcement system. Society, with legislature as its astutely functioning (not *titular*) head, must play the role of conscientious objector to the rampant practice of battering.

Some of my participants dropped charges because the court process does not necessarily result in prosecution and meaningful sentencing and, therefore, their taking recourse in the law is more likely to reinforce the batterer's attitude that he still "reigns high above the law." Any swift-and-sure character the criminal justice system has, often stops at the point of arrest. Indeed, since "arrest is often the only punishment the

offender will ever receive (Davis, 1998, p. 29)", most chronic offenders regard arrest as just a temporary inconvenience, rather than as a corrective measure aimed at inspiring behavioral change. Even in the landmark Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman & Berk, 1984b, p. 270), only three of the 136 arrested batterers were formally punished by fines or incarceration — "not the type of statistic that promotes confidence in the ability of police [actually the courts] to protect the victim from further injury (Wallace, 1996, p. xi)." Davis (1998, p. 37) underscores the fact that nonviolent crimes such as car theft and graffiti spraying are felonies which exact higher penalties than woman battering. In addition, the penalty for a second and subsequent conviction for car theft is a mandatory one-year sentence, but there is no mandatory sentencing for a second and subsequent battering. It is little wonder then that Sherman (1992), the principal investigator of the landmark arrest policy-defining study, reported that mandatory arrest laws for misdemeanor domestic violence violations, has not helped but rather has compounded the problem.

In trainings, police officers, prosecutors, and judges need to be inspired, through frequent informative sessions, about several other well-founded reasons why a woman may drop charges, so that the ambivalence (stemming from grounded, justified fears) in these battered women (who seem to constitute a third of all battered women, at any given time) will be respected and appropriately dealt with, rather than permitted to evoke disdain. During this study and even earlier, as a volunteer advocate for battered women, I observed that women are the best experts on their own lives. They are willing to explain their rationale to those who seek to help them by sincerely discussing the limitations of

the system, as opposed to deceiving them that the system is working in their best interest one hundred percent.

Research on criminal justice intervention suggests that women “who oppose arrest and prosecution” are “those involved with the *most* serious offenders and those whose offenders are new to the criminal justice system.” These women “predict it will result in further violence” and are “often accurate in their assessment (Coker, 2001a, p. 816).”

Veteran police officer Davis (1998) suggests: instead of “displaying intolerance” towards women who are terrified of ending their abusive relationship, society, especially law enforcement agents, must acknowledge, *nonjudgmentally*, that just as some people are afraid of high places or confined spaces, so too some are terrified of leaving an intimate partner whose abusive controlling power they have experienced first hand and know only too well. And just like someone with a fear of heights needs tremendous support to slowly but surely back off from even a high, barred window, so it is with almost all battered women, through a substantial period of the relationship. And just like hostages who are celebrated for using “all the feminine graces: [being]...a good listener, sensitive to the feelings and desires of the captor, ...as non-aggressive and acquiescent as possible...[and] treated as heroes for [thus] surviving (Del Tufo, 1995, p. 103),” so also must women who drop charges be commended for prudently being cautious about not antagonizing their soon-to-be at-large hostage-taker.

Perhaps if police officers, prosecutors, and judges have a *positive* knee-jerk reaction of applause for the women who drop charges, and *listen* to the kinds of trouble these women anticipate, then police, prosecutors and judges can help these women take appropriate safety measures to “stay put” without the batter, or flee in a timely manner,

while the prosecutors and judges levy judicious sanctions. If a woman specifically states that she desires help for her batterer rather than prison, the courts must have a mechanism in place to ensure that the batterer is mandated to attend an *intense* 36 week, court certified batterers' intervention program which lays full responsibility and ownership of the violence on the batterer, unlike in the case of Lorna, an ATS program woman :

...just before I was supposed to appear before court...all of a sudden [her ex-husband's] lawyer pleaded, and I said, "Fine! I want him to leave me alone and he should get help." A whole bunch of bogus bills and stuff he brought to court stating that he was getting psychiatric help...conveniently from a psychotherapist that works in the building that he works in [as concierge]. So he knew this person ...and this person does not specialize in abuse...he handles marriage counseling. I told the DA, "This is ridiculous...he knows this guy beforehand...he conveniently lives in the same building that [batterer] works in...how much therapy is he actually getting?!"

When the criminal justice system rightly and highly regards each and every battered woman as an expert on her batterer's thoughts and behavior, and consults her as a worthy collaborator, then women will be able to express their dilemmas and describe the outcomes they desire. When I asked Lorna if she seriously believed that the psychotherapy would help her batterer (the concierge) make the profound changes he needs to make, she expressed her doubts:

I question it simply because you could only get out of therapy what you want. I'm sure that he still believes none of this is his fault ...[that] I'm doing this to him. He broke my hand...and I made him do it. He moved the car and closed the door on my leg...that was reckless endangerment... and I made him do it.

But Lorna perhaps would not have had that dilemma if she was a beneficiary of the landmark experimental project in Duluth, Minnesota in the late 1970s/early 1980s (Schechter, 1982, pp. 176-77) which was a comprehensive program that squarely placed the onus on the batterer and community institutions rather than on the women. The program used probable cause arrest when there was a visible injury, issued immediate

protection orders to the woman, *enforced* automatic eviction orders for the batterer, mandated counseling for the batterer with a counselor who, in no uncertain terms, told the batterer that he was entirely responsible for the violence, and sentenced batterers to jail for *violations* of court injunctions reported either by the woman or by the counselor. While this experimental program was in operation, the Duluth shelter had empty beds for the first time! But shockingly, the project coordinator noted that the day the research component ended, the Duluth police who had extended its special cooperation to the project (as did the courts) stopped arresting batterers!

#### Felony (Serious Crime) versus Misdemeanor (Minor Crime)

I was told [by the ADA] I don't have any grounds [to request his transfer] as long as he stays a 100 yards away from me...*unless it's a felony*...all he was charged with was misdemeanor...even with the assault on me...it was so frustrating! The original charges were assault in the third degree, reckless endangerment, and...there were two or three charges. He pleaded guilty to the lesser...which I believe was harassment. Regardless...all three were just misdemeanors... because I was his wife! If it happened to a stranger it would be a *felony*. [So] he stayed in jail for two days and was released on 250 dollars bail...and that was it...basically a slap on the wrist...and its so frustrating that he's even allowed to work in [my] neighborhood...

— Lorna's ex-husband worked as concierge in building opposite her bedroom.

Over two decades ago, Joan Zörza (1989), staff attorney at the National Center on Women and Family Law and head of the National Battered Women's Law Project, wrote:

The injuries that battered women receive are at least as serious as injuries suffered in 90 percent of violent felony crimes, yet, under state laws, they are almost always classified as misdemeanors (p. 33).

Moreover, retired police lieutenant and sociologist, Richard Davis (1998, p. 133) points out that the purpose of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment from early 1981 to mid-1982, and several other subsequent studies was to:

attempt to provide an answer to the much-debated question of how police should respond to *misdemeanor cases of domestic violence*... little thought was given to the reality that as long as domestic violence calls remain misdemeanors, they will remain just what the law states they are, minor crimes... [and] will continue to be considered minor crimes by most police departments, prosecutors, and... courts. Since these studies, little effort has been made to make domestic violence assault ...and battery a crime in and of itself... If domestic violence is to be considered a serious issue by the criminal justice system, why is it so difficult to make domestic violence a felony?

However, in Ferraro and Boychuk's (1992) study of 104 cases of intimate violence and 100 cases of nonintimate violence filed for prosecution, "although all original charges were felony offenses involving serious or permanent injury, or the use of lethal weapons, most were bargained to lesser offenses", "only 11 percent...received prison sentences [of an average of 1.5 years]," "43 percent received probation sentences from 1 to 70 months" and "almost a third (32 percent) of the cases were dismissed [including 16 percent of cases where the victims *desired* prosecution] (Ferraro, 1993, p. 171, emphasis mine)".

Most importantly, having worked intensely with battered women in marginalized communities, law professor Coker (2001a) presents the devastating impact of mandatory arrest, no-drop prosecution, and increased criminalization of domestic assault, *often exclusively*, on battered women, perhaps much to the delight of batterers, and the perpetuation of a society in which the only real choice for many women is between the despotism of control, surveillance, and robbery (of her agency and children) by *state or male*:

The danger is that feminist law reformers will both overestimate the state's power to do good and underestimate the power of the state to do harm... [and] overlook the importance of women's material resources in the calculus of whether state intervention is likely to do harm or good (p. 823).

When mandatory and pro-arrest policies are adopted, more women are arrested for domestic violence[,]...conviction for domestic violence can result in the deportation of a non-citizen (p. 831)...battered women who are arrested often lose the protection otherwise afforded by special domestic violence legislation...

[and] evidence of an arrest, even if the women are not charged, is sufficient in many states to prevent them from child custody laws that disfavor a violent partner (p. 832).

Aggressive criminal intervention also threatens to increase the state control of battered women who are involved, even peripherally, in criminal activity... [which] is often connected to their abuse (p. 837). Women who are [thus] arrested risk losing custody of their children...[t]hey may also be barred for life from receiving welfare benefits and their student financial aid may be compromised, thus ensuring their continued economic dependence on male partners and their continued vulnerability to further abuse (p. 839).

[U]nwarranted certainty in the efficacy of social change through criminal justice reform facilitates ignoring *today's* harm because of a belief that it will be better in the future (p. 830)...[that] it will benefit *other* women or *future* women (p. 829)...[However,] [c]riminal interventions *coupled with* assistance directed at alleviating the sources of women's vulnerability are likely to be more effective. Without this assistance, mandatory policies are likely to be harmful (p. 840-41).

Ensuring that the state responds to battered women is critical, but it is not clear that mandatory policies [and increased criminalization of battering] are the only, or best [means] (p. 843)...[Besides] mandatory policies are sometimes adopted for reasons unrelated to feminist organizing, such as...to appease "tough on-crime" constituencies...currying favor with female voters or...to be[come] eligible for federal funds [e.g., under the Violence Against Women Acts of 1994 and 1996] that require state grantees [to] adopt a pro-arrest policy (p. 844-45).

Zörza and Woods (1994) reported that in Kansas City, the arrest rate for women in domestic violence incidents rose from 10% to 20% following the implementation of a mandatory arrest policy. Clearly, in the absence of overwhelming support for battered women from all quarters, "state power...simultaneously empowers and disempowers women (Naranch, 2001, p. 33)" and therefore, the degree of agency (i.e., resistance to battering) or complacency (i.e., victimization and helplessness) each battered woman demonstrates, cannot be considered a function of the woman's inherent nature, but must be understood and acknowledged as being a dialectic function of the support : suffering ratio she perceives for herself and her children within the context of:

- i. the racial environment, i.e., the "pressures to cast police officials as outsiders and hostile to the community [which] frustrate the development of Latinas'

empowerment (Rivera, 1994, p. 248), and similar racial solidarity pressures African American women in poor communities encounter (Richie 1996).

- ii. the law enforcement environment, i.e., the attitude, demeanor, and actions of law enforcement (which often amounts to in-action or over-reaction) and that of child welfare workers (who behave perceptually stubborn and refuse to see and sense a worthy mother in the foreground, against a deviant background).
- iii. the physical environment, i.e., quality of housing, transportation, jobs, street lighting, drugs, and gangs.

In reviewing the NIJ arrest study data in Milwaukee, Elizabeth Marciniak (1994;) found that residence in the most marginalized neighborhoods was a stronger predictor of increased post-arrest violence, than was the unemployment status of those arrested.

Coker (2001a, p.857) explains:

If [the woman's] community believes that calling the police for domestic violence is disloyal, [it] not only may [the community's] assessment effect her own values, but it is [also] likely to reflect the kind of assistance she will receive from her community[,] if she rejects their assessment.

The one woman in my study who ended up in prison for *one year* for knifing her (fifth) batterer in self-defense, had been coerced into a heavy and frequent use of crack by her second batterer under the pretext of desiring a deeper bond with her. In a study of incarcerated African American women Beth Richie (1996) found that batterers also force women into illegal sex work, or theft, and drugs. Kathleen Daly (1994, cited in Coker, 2001a, p. 838) reported that women who ended up being charged with felony in New Haven, Connecticut, had either been in relationships with violent men and/or were associated with a partner or family member who used or sold drugs.

Since the felonization of battering within the existing system only bodes more doom for many battered women, stronger criminal measures should not be advocated “as a corrective for the history of profoundly inadequate and sometimes hostile response of the criminal justice system to domestic violence cases (Coker, 2001a, p. 803).” The most effective corrective measure would be to establish fundamental transformation, i.e., the creation of a system in which there resides a pervasive climate of *unwavering* and *unquestioning* support for *all* battered women (see section *Cultural Practices Mediate Personal Agency*, in previous chapter).

### Plea-Bargaining

It was a menace second degree, harassment second degree, assault second degree, and assault third degree. But he was allowed to plead guilty to a lesser charge...criminal mischief in the fourth degree.

He pleaded to this lesser charge when one juror's father died, the jury was disbanded, and my ADA declared it a mistrial.

— Marisa, Chicana, “stayed put” in SRO building; he blonde haired, blue eyed.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the National Institute of Justice Research Reports state: “there remains inconsistent and inconclusive knowledge about the effectiveness of criminalizing domestic violence...(Fagan, 1996).” Were the criminal justice system to perform its *proper* role in the preceding centuries, or even in the preceding decades, we perhaps would not be floundering today for appropriate measures to address the escalating spate of male violence in intimate relationships.

### Mediation and Couples Therapy

One of the ATS alarm women, Tiffany, had turned down the alarm when it was first offered to her, because she wanted to give mediation a chance. Only one of my participants had a positive experience with long-term couples counseling or mediation.

The batterers of the other women who promised comply with the women's wishes, or the court's mandate to seek therapy, usually attended only for the first session, if at all! They almost always blamed subsequent non-attendance on the lies they claimed the women told during their first session.

Of my 36 participants, only Trinity mentioned that counseling *really* worked for her battering husband who had been dangerously brutal:

It was to the point that if he didn't kill me, I was going to kill him...I was planning how to kill him already...because he was [no longer] the man I married...he started drinking and became very violent...he [even] *attacked* me in the courtroom and it took twenty officers to get him off me.

[Two years after she fled to a shelter] He knew what he was doing then was wrong. I'm back with him. Thank God everything is working out fine now. We've been going to counseling and it's been almost a year and there has been no abuse...no physical, no verbal, no mental whatsoever. And some of the ladies ask me how I did it. I think it's just...you have to know who you're dealing with. He knows he lost everything...[even] the apartment...by doing something illegal in it. Now he's aware that I'm aware of my rights; you don't have this naïve person who doesn't know her rights. And now he knows I'm not afraid. That was my biggest mistake in the past...being afraid of him. Now I'm the one in-charge of the money...before he used to sell drugs and he had all the money. Now there's money for me on the side in case of emergency. Now he's become a better man instead of a child; before he didn't understand responsibilities of a man. He's 28...but he's like 16...still wants to play with GI Joe toys. I think it was positive for me leaving...it wasn't positive for him breaking my arm...every time I remind him of it so he doesn't slip up. We went to counseling together...it was 150 percent helpful...one of the counselors was our friend. She says he's not just acting that he's changing...he's really changing...he doesn't do drugs or sell drugs either. Now we never go to sleep with an argument on our mind...we either kiss up and go to sleep or stay up until 4 or 5 in the morning until it is finished...even if its about a needle. That's like our main rule in the house.

Family Court judges concluded that mediation is inappropriate for battered women because batterers often use mediation to further manipulate and frighten the women (Herrell & Hofford, 1990). Batterers often agree to mediation, couples therapy, or individual counseling only as a means to gain "unfair tactical advantage" (Zörza, 1991); to get their women to drop charges and disregard their Orders of Protection. In light of

this, it must be noted that Trinity, the 28-year-old Honduran, went for couples counseling only after her husband acknowledged that “what he was doing then was wrong,” and after he gave up drug dealing and drug use, and attended therapy sessions regularly on his own.

### Batterers’ Treatment Programs

Battered women in committed relationships keep hoping for change and tend to believe that treatment will motivate batterers to make the profound changes necessary to stop their battering. However, there is very little evidence that any current batterers’ treatment program is widely effective (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998, p. 44). Battered women need to understand that batterer’s treatments are effective *only when* batterers accept *sole* (not *shared*) responsibility for the abuse they inflict, the control they exert, and the terror they induce. The reality is that batterers *shirk* all responsibility and blame their women, their childhood, or their current circumstances. Many batterers even claim that they do not *remember* inflicting the women’s injuries, or that they were accidents. For instance, Astrid’s batterer said to her: “I just did a backhand stretch. I had no intention of smashing your [reading] glasses [on the morning of an important exam]!”

One long-standing Denver program for abusers, AMEND, reports a 75% dropout rate after the first one or two sessions. A study “of abusers who *partly completely* [sic] attended counseling in Minnesota” (cited in Gondolf, 1988) shows that 40% of the abusers resumed physically abusive behavior within 4.5 months after participating in counseling. It is therefore, very important to refer the women to battered women’s programs where they can get full information about treatment programs for batterers and

evaluate whether these programs are likely to effect the change that will make life safe for them (Gondolf, 1988; Okun, 1986).

The women need to be informed that, even when batterers are *mandated* to treatment programs the courts do not closely monitor the batterers' attendance and progress (Cochran, Hanrahan, & Prior, 1994).

In order to illustrate the importance of ensuring an extended period of separation between spouses/partners *and* mandating the batterer to intensive individual treatment during this separation, I invoke Rebecca Solnit's (2001) spatial analysis of violence. It highlights the navigational force of a batterer's volition, which is what needs to be made positively maneuverable, before attempting mediation and/or couples therapy:

One can speak of [violence] as an execution of aggression...rooted in instinct. Another explanation is spatial. Violence is the rejection of *negotiation*, which finds a route that accommodates both wills; and of *surrender*, which values other things above the triumph of will. The violent will desires to be unimpeded, to go straightforward, to meet with no opposition. We can think of it almost as a physical desire, a volition, a will to move forward. Engagement is a problem, a slowing down, a halt. Violence is the physical removal or obliteration of this impediment to the trajectory of will (p. 87, italics mine).

### Sanctioning Batterers in the Armed Forces and Police Force

I went to the Command and the command was like, "OK...you can go to JAG [Judge Advocate General]." I just wanted [the Command] to speak to him...and to reprimand him in some way, shape or form...but there was nothing done. If he was reprimanded, he would have been on restriction, where he couldn't leave the ship...or he would have lost pay...but he lost nothing! And if I did go to JAG, if JAG *chooses*, it goes through a chain of command...LPO...the XO...the Chief...the Lieutenant...Master Chief...Captain. And after a certain point, it goes to Captain's Man. But it doesn't really go that far...so I didn't even stress it.

— Kristin puts up with husband's beatings when is not away in the Navy.

All soldiers and police officers should be firmly and persistently instructed, and inspired, about the inappropriateness of control and violence in *combat-free* zones, about

the need for *them to be* respectful, loving, and trusting in intimate relationships, and about willfully enlisting and engaging in Operation Safe Home with the mission to overthrow the dictatorship under which “home is combat-zone” and reinstate the indigenous sovereignty of “home as comfort-zone” wherein all adult residents have the privilege of humanistic self-determination and are trusted to live up to that privilege responsibly.

The armed/police forces are reluctant to lose soldiers to prisons, because “many soldiers cost more than \$100,000 each to recruit and train; money that goes down the drain if a soldier is discharged or imprisoned (Lutz & Elliston, 2002, p. 19).” Reported batterers, and those who display a *marked* propensity for control and/or violence in non-combat arenas, should be sent to a series of intensive, small-group, batterers’ treatment (e.g., 3-month programs, for two or three consecutive years) *instead of*, not in addition to, their regular scheduled vacation.

#### Tracing Phonecalls of Batterers

In order to request a trace on a call, my participants were told to dial \*57 soon after receiving a hang-up call. None of my 33 participants had any positive outcome of this service to share with me, although it offers promise for tracking down absconding batterers. Neither did any of the participants mention any stricter sanctions for the use of the phone as an instrument (i.e., a weapon) to induce/sustain a climate of terror. All the calls my participants received from jail/prison were death threats. Batters who call from jail or prison must experience restorative or transformative sanctions (Coker 2001b).

Phone tagging/trapping and other means of documenting initial abuse and subsequent violations are worthless if the police and courts do not use it to: (i) arrest absconding batterers, (ii) extend or toughen sentences of batterers already in prison, (iii)

deny bail, (iv) deny plea bargaining, (v) deny phone privileges, and (vi) resist using other means of *condoning* post-separation harassment which continues to stagger the heartbeat and choke the breath out of countless women, families, and communities.

### Batterers' Abuse of the 911 System:

Two days after he was released from his first arrest, I'm watching TV with a glass of wine going, "Aah! He's arrested! I'm in my home!" Just when I was taking that exhale and I'm thinking everything is going to start calming down...*five* policemen show up here. They say, "We received a phone call that you're suicidal. May we come in?" I said "Sure!" They said, "Ma'am have you been drinking?" I said, "Yah...this is basically my first night in the apartment with the locks changed...and I'm trying to relax!" "Are you suicidal?" I said "No!" "Is there anybody else in the apartment?" "No...go ahead look." They looked around. Two of them then realize they came with him the day before as escort for him to pick up his things. So they get on their walkie-talkie, "What's the number that called?" It was my husband's work number. So one of them used my phone right away and told him, "If you call in one more false alarm...I will arrest you for abuse of the 911 system...and harassment of her.

By this time two EMS workers were coming in...they had the gurney outside or the wheelchair or whatever...they had to take my blood pressure...

At the very least they should have sent him the bill...for the ambulance!

— Lorna, "stayed put," had ATS pendant alarm; he was allowed to work in opposite building as concierge.

Given how slippery batterers usually are, and how reluctant battered women can be about pressing charges, why should the police and courts also grace batterers with mere warnings despite *blatant abuse of the system*?! Why the conspicuous absence of *any and all* penalties?! Is not the woman's grace (by way of several "second chances") sufficiently bountiful?! Why are batterers spared immediate, reasonable consequences? This amounts to connivance by the system and makes law enforcement criminally culpable in the practice of battering. Presenting women with a choice between two evils (i.e., between police inaction or potentially abusive state control) is a circular way of ensuring that women either suffer in silence, or brace themselves to shoulder the flag of

vulnerability that they hoist when they file police reports which only serve to expose their nakedly *defenseless* (i.e., unprotected) separatist stance (in relation to the batterer).

### User/Research-Friendly Archiving

My research suggests that it is imperative to cross-reference all databases.

In most jurisdictions, cases are categorized by offense (Ferraro, 1993). It is also important to be able to categorize them by victim-offender relationship, and to document the reason(s) for non-arrest *and* arrest, in order to conduct more systematic research on the effect of arrest, prosecution, probation sentences, and prison sentences on batterers and battered women.

Recently, the *Daily News* reported (Hutchinson, 2002) that the police department's domestic violence tracking system needed overhauling:

The city controller [William Thompson] blasted the Police Department's domestic violence tracking system yesterday [September 16, 2002], saying it's practically useless in preventing stalkers, and batterers from making the leap to murder. [He] said the system which cost the city \$1.17 million in 2000 doesn't do half the things its manufacturer [Information Builders, Inc.] promised...[It] was supposed to provide precinct commanders and detectives easy access to a database of all domestic violence complaints filed in the city...[but] the system [is] so full of bugs that...even domestic violence officers weren't aware of many of the...reports being filed...[and] of 290,000 reports filed through the first eight months of this year, about 94,000 [32.4%] had not been reviewed by a domestic violence police officer and a commanding officer, as required by an NYPD operations order...[because] instead of speeding up access to reports, at least 50% of the users griped that it slowed the process. About 73% said the system spat out inaccurate or duplicate reports. (p. 16).

Meaghan Morelli, an advocate with the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program at Mount Sinai Hospital, who trains the police in domestic violence outreach at precincts in Manhattan and Queens, is quoted (McPhee, 2002) to have said:

Cops have to do a lot more than keep track of batterers on a computer. In theory, something like the domestic violence database is a good idea...But some women

may not want to go into the emergency room for treatment if they are afraid of popping up on a list somewhere (p. 7).

Invasion of individual privacy is the double-edge sword of technology that we have to be wary about. If, however, technology is utilized efficiently for effective policing and swift-and-just sanctioning of batterers, and women experience a marked change in society, and unquestionable public condemnation of batterers at all levels of society, only then will large numbers of women unashamedly, unwaveringly, and perhaps even unassailably, obtain the help they need to end the abuse. They would, perhaps, welcome the integrated database. Cindi, for example, would not still be “putting up” with her husband for fear that the judge will consider her as the batterer for not being *more* understanding and caring towards her man who still has a bullet in his head from an armed robbery perpetrated against him. Trinity would not have had to fear her husband’s family who came to support *him* in the courtroom, and wonder how she will protect herself from his family when her testimony sends him to prison.

If the database worked relatively flawlessly, and was used efficiently *and* creatively, by police officers, district attorneys, and judges, then Grace would, most likely, not have had to experience the terror and indignities of being handcuffed, fingerprinted, and subjected to a criminal mugshot, when her batterer obtained an order of protection against her by pressing false harassment charges against her.

It is, therefore, necessary to cross-index orders of protection by the offenders’ names. It is also necessary to coordinate all the courts—municipal, district, superior, probate, and family—so that family and criminal court judges can review a batterer’s *criminal* history from across all the courts before ruling on any case regarding a battered woman and/or her children.

### Coordinated Community Intervention Programs for Battered Women

Since the ATS alarm program was coordinated by the 24<sup>th</sup> police precinct while the AWARE program was coordinated by the Kings County District Attorney's Office, had I been permitted to interview at least ten women in the AWARE program, I might have been able to assess the impact of the coordinating agency on the program's efficacy.

However, based on the ATS participants' intake forms, my interviews with nine ATS participants, and interviews (conducted by graduate students at New York University's Wagner School of Public Service) with representatives of the key agencies involved in the ATS pilot project (viz. New York City Police Department, Victim Services (now called Safe Horizons), St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, the Commission to Combat Family Violence, and Protech Security Company), the Commission (Giuliani, 1999) recommended that:

The New York City Human Resource Administration (HRA) should be the lead agency...to continue...implementation of the program on a greater scale. Unlike the majority of security programs that are initiated by a District Attorney's Office, a city agency can integrate both the law enforcement and social services aspect of the program most successfully. HRA is especially appropriate because they administer the City's residential and non-residential domestic violence services, and are thus in a position to ensure that the full complement of services are offered to a domestic violence victim. Additionally, since the program aims to cast a wide net for participants, HRA has the capacity to identify potential candidates, including those with Family Court Orders of Protection, who are not yet involved in the criminal prosecution of their abusers (p. 18).

*With HRA as the lead coordinating agency, the police precincts, hospital emergency rooms, and the...Domestic Violence Hotline should be considered critical points of entry for identifying potential participants (p. 19).*

In May 2002, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that "[his] administration is creating domestic violence response teams consisting of officials from an array of city agencies, including law enforcement and social services, to assist victims and children most at risk (Saul, 2002)." The 43<sup>rd</sup> Precinct in the Bronx and the 67<sup>th</sup> Precinct in

Brooklyn have been announced as the testing-plus-demonstration venues for his team approach. The teams are mandated “to identify high risk households and offer help” via a case manager assigned to each family, and through the use of 911 dialing cellular phones donated by Verizon Wireless (Saul, 2002).

Hopefully these teams have taken to heart the ATS women’s quotes and recommendations presented in my in-progress ATS evaluation report (Castelino, 1997); particularly the need for clearly formulated procedures which facilitate inter-agency (i.e., coordinated) intervention, which result in heartening outcomes (i.e., women and children in safe, life-enhancing homes), which further inspires new and improved inter-agency collaborations. Yolanda Jimenez, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (and former deputy commissioner of community affairs for the NYPD) “intend[s] to coordinate every kind of agency that works to prevent this kind of violence and to provide help for those who are victims of it” because “government can serve people and serve them well when everything is well-organized and there is room to implement well-thought-out new ideas (Crouch, 2002). However, it is necessary to coordinate all the courts—municipal, district, superior, probate, and family—not just the ones that deal with “this kind of violence” so that family and criminal court judges can review a batterer’s *criminal* history from across all the courts before ruling on any case regarding a battered woman and/or her children. It is also necessary to cross-index orders of protection by the offenders’ names, *in addition to* the current practice of filing under petitioners’ names. This way, dangerous batterers can be tracked (for possible legitimate apprehension) over a range of “non-domestic violence” systems/agencies, and can be kept away from battered women and their children without them fearing retaliation.

Coordinated community intervention programs (CCIPs) which provide electronic safety devices to women who are deemed deserving are a rarity and serve a very limited number of women, in very selected [lower-middle to upper-middle class, and mixed racial/ethnic] communities. CCIPs, even without electronic safety devices for the women, appear promising in three out of five studies reviewed by Coker (2001a, footnotes 60-62, pp. 816-17). For instance, Tolman and Weisz (1995), reported that “recidivism drops progressively for those who complete the most protocol steps” of a multifaceted intervention program. Also, Murphy and his associates (1998) found that “the cumulative effects of successful prosecution, probation monitoring, and completion of court ordered counseling resulted in lower recidivism rates.” And Thistlethwaite (1998) and her associates observed that “while the length of jail sentences or probation were not significant predictors of recidivism, the *combination* of jail sentences and probation, or a fine and probation, correlated significantly with reduced recidivism compared to jail alone, fine alone, or probation alone.”

Largely because of non-reporting due to the fear of state abuse, and strong disapproval or hostility from community members, such programs tend not to reach those who are likely to most benefit (i.e., women who are very poor, very non-white, very immigrant, or those who injure the batterer in self-defense, or who engage in drug or prostitution related crimes as a part of/consequence of/escape from the battering). The system does not stop at routinely and dismissively deeming women in such communities unworthy of vantage supports, legitimate escape routes, and safe, sure prospects, but often ruthlessly subjects *women* in these communities to state-perpetrated atrocities of child-snatching, arrest, prosecution, and incarceration (Coker, 2001a).

When the Spring 1995 conference hosted by the National Institute of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services concluded that “the final answer to domestic violence lies beyond the criminal justice system because the answer involves societal behavior and values that cannot be altered by the criminal justice system (cited in Davis, 1998)”, it should also have pointedly stated that the Legislature must invest powers in the criminal justice system, and that judges in criminal, and family courts must responsibly recognize that their office is a mega-shaper of societal values (alongside movies, music, magazines, mentors, and mascots).

The ever-growing uphill task of getting a patriarchal criminal justice system to *enforce* fitting criminal sanctions on batterers, together with multifaceted supports for women and children, and with no penalties for women and children, confirms the importance of viewing battering “not only as a crime but also as a manifestation of structured gender inequality (Ferraro, 1993).”

In order to illustrate that programs and policies work, *not* by good intentions alone, but rather by *altered* practices, I liberally quote Native American essayist and literary critic, W.S. Penn (2001):

...language is power. Given language may be false, but given power is most often false—so false that the givers invent words like *empower*... Women are “empowered” to refuse the patriarchy. Blacks are “empowered” to resist racism.... (p. 136).

...the grammatical construction of sentences that use words like *empower*...rarely [have] much agency—no one gives power; there is no activity or work involved...[R]ather it is passive—it is a given; it happens without description or effect. Indeed, the construction comes to mean that if one is “empowered,” then one is “allowed” (p. 137).

How would you like it if you were [a battered woman] and [a male/female/androgynous police officer/prosecutor/judge]...said, “Okay, I’ll allow you to talk endlessly about [gender, battering, patriarchy]...In fact, I’ll set up an ‘empowerment zone’ [read: shelter, support group, coordinated response program, batterer eviction program] in which you can talk about [gender, battering,

patriarchy] all you want. I'll even put you on TV [website and domestic violence database], and only [those] who want to agree with you will watch (but I as giver will go right on being [patriarchal, woman-blaming, woman-punishing]) (p. 137)."

The formidable obstacles to increasing protection for women through the criminal justice system are best surmounted through persistent monitoring and involvement from local activist groups, as demonstrated by the successes of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program in Duluth, Minnesota, a small community as opposed to a large urban center, "where a committed group of activists...coordinated the components of the system and insisted on adherence to feminist values (Pence & Shepard, 1988; cited in Ferraro, 1993, p. 175)." Veteran police officer Davis (1998), however, is convinced that "authentic and certifiable progress will occur only when the majority of our public policymakers are women (p. 6)...who want to create that change (p. 18)."

Any system that coyly acknowledges its failings and pleads inability to perform efficaciously, is comprised of individuals who have abdicated their *individual powers*. Notable *progressive* (if not *radical*) change will occur when each individual in the legislature and criminal justice/law enforcement/child protection system is inspired to rise above the notion that (s)he is just a cog-in-the-wheel. Each individual must acknowledge and grasp the full impact of the operative phrase "the system is a failure because I—a system programmer and/or operator—am a failure." Each must courageously and heroically "blow the whistle" on themselves, or be easily entreated when notified of their misguided attitudes (e.g., that battered women are blameworthy), and accept responsibility for initiating or perpetuating unjust, corrupt, and/or inadequate, inefficacious practices. Most of the instances in my data where individual police officers

or assistant district attorneys were not efficacious, were not so because of the limitations of the law, but because of individuals oversights, work overloads, or misplaced loyalties.

All agencies must also inspire their staff to observe best practices. Donohue (1999) reported, "Two...employees of the Queens district attorney's office allegedly tried to sabotage the prosecution of a man accused of setting his girlfriend on fire...." The woman's court-appointed interpreter allegedly conveyed a death threat to her; that she would be killed if she did not drop the charges and accept an out-of-court settlement of \$50,000 or the gift of a house. An office clerk allegedly tapped into the prosecutors' computer system, obtained the victim's new address, and passed it on to the accused. The interpreter was charged with bribing a witness, tampering with a witness, and intimidating a crime victim. The clerk was charged with misdemeanor official misconduct.

Towards the end of my interview with 53-year-old Muriel, she mentioned that when she informed her ADA of her precinct's reluctance to arrest her husband because he had seriously injured two police officers, and won a hefty settlement from the police department, her ADA instructed her to report post-separation abuse directly to him. It is commendable that he did come to her aid. However, also giving her a 911 cellular phone and identifying her as a woman in the DA's battered women's program, would have been additionally reassuring to her. Perhaps her ADA did conduct an assessment of her level of risk and ruled out her *need* for it.

If Juana, who was shot and killed at her workplace (the pawnshop), did indeed tell the police what a relative knew [that "He told her, 'I bought a gun. It's got your name on it, and it's got my name on it.' And that he had been stalking her for days" (Fenner, 2002)], and if "normal procedure" does not *require* the police to take appropriate

measures to protect her life, over and above making the required aggravating senseless suggestion to obtain an order of protection, then necessary changes have to be made to the “normal procedure” to which Commissioner Kelly referred.

Within the existing legal code, Lorna’s ADA had no choice but to classify her husband’s arm-breaking, ankle-spraining violent acts as misdemeanors instead of felonies. However, humanitarian laws of decency, and law enforcement’s mandate to reduce crime, dictate that her ADA should have supportively informed her that he would look for an angle by which to legitimately request her ex-husband’s employer or union to transfer him to a building outside her neighborhood, perhaps even outside her borough.

In effect, each individual law enforcement officer must be inspired about an everyday kind of heroism — of exemplary self-conduct, of supporting one’s good intentions with appropriate actions, and thereby radically transforming the lives of women and children in families, neighborhoods, and cities, through the use of singular, *custom-tailored* strokes for much-belabored folks. The outcome of vast numbers of sincerely dedicated officials, and socially just practices, which collectively and consistently condemn battering, and wholesomely support women and children, is bound to be nothing less than a soaring of humanity in beatifying, glorious trajectories.

### **Advocacy Organizations for Battered Women**

#### **Accompaniment**

Service providers or advocacy groups for battered women, whether they are coordinated or operated by community activists (who focus on political change) or mental health professionals (who focus on individual behavioral changes), strive to inculcate a

sense of independence and self-sufficiency in battered women to replace the dependency and lack of self-worth and self-confidence that is assumed to have contributed to their victimization. To this end, many of them encourage English-speaking women, who have no family and friends in the city, to go on their own (i.e., without any accompanying person) to seek an order of protection, file a police report, visit a public assistance office, and/or other relevant agencies. Non-English speakers are accompanied primarily to serve as interpreters and the woman is encouraged to learn English quickly so that she no longer needs such accompaniment. Empowerment (i.e., the development of agency) is presented as the driving principle, when in actuality this insistence on self-reliance is due to resource constraints, overworked personnel, limited numbers of volunteers, and/or the limited time of volunteers due to their own obligations of school/jobs/childcare.

However, given that social isolation is not only conducive to battering, but is also systematically and persistently engineered by the batterer, several highly competent and independent participants in this study illustrated the particular significance of having someone with them, since the gravity, of evicting or fleeing one's batterer, is of Sisyphean proportions, courtesy of a law enforcement and social system that often colludes with batterers:

When he came to my office and demanded seven thousand dollars, to leave in a rental car that he rented on my credit card, I dropped everything and went to court for an order of protection, *with* one of the lawyers from my office.

— Laura, age 43, Caucasian legal secretary for almost ten years,  
in a firm which represented tenants against landlords.

Every time I went to court I had a different person coming with me...and this is [a] statement...that I'm not alone. I made sure that every time I went with a different person, because if I'll go with the same person all the time it's like I only have this one friend. [Now] he knows that I have a lot of friends. And he would curse the people I came with. He thought that if he will do those faces and spitting and cursing that they will leave me. Not that I needed them for testifying

or anything coz he's the defendant. I just wanted them for support; somebody sitting next to me made me feel stronger...and it was a statement that I'm not alone anymore.

— Muriel, age 53, Jewish, real-estate business co-owner and co-manager, “stayed put” and evicted her husband after 35 years of harrowing marriage.

### Monitoring Police and Courts

Coker (2001a) points out that:

The dilemma for feminists is to develop strategies for controlling state actors—ensuring that the police come when called and that prosecutors do not trivialize cases—without increasing state control of *women*.

[And although] [a] number of battered women's advocates believe that mandatory policies should be adopted *only* when the policies are part of a “coordinated community response” that includes significant advocacy and services for battered women (p. 845)...[and] the effectiveness of mandatory policies depends, in large part, on the existence of effective battered women's organization[s] (p. 844)...[which] engage in ongoing monitoring of the criminal justice system (p. 845)...[m]any advocacy programs are simply not prepared to take on this monitoring role.

In my experience as a volunteer advocate, I observed that some groups do not desire to make that their agenda, while others lack the staff, funds, know-how, and/or stamina to take on that additional role. It takes a heightened and intense level of engagement on a fairly daily basis with police and court officials for the level of monitoring required to ensure the effectiveness of “coordinated intervention.”

An advocacy group which serves the people of a particular culture, language, or sexual orientation in New York City, needs to monitor the various courts and police precincts in *all* the boroughs, which amounts to a monumental undertaking for a volunteer-run, community-funded organization.

### Radical Social Change Agenda

When membership is in constant flux, and arrives from academic, professional, and production/service spheres, (and with some in each sphere having being battered), the internal tensions caused by differing visions (and ethnic sensitivities) of the path to fundamental social change, it makes monitoring the criminal justice system an even bigger challenge, with some volunteers in the organization in support of sacrificing the immanent interests and imminent needs of *some* women, for the greater good of *all* women in some indefinite future. For example, pressuring a woman to file a civil case against the batterer in addition to the criminal case, pressuring another to allow the organization to conduct a mass protest against the batterer at his Fortune 500 workplace, and so on. There is a fine line that must be respected between *appealing* to battered women to take more daring and public shaming stances against their batterers, and *pressuring* them to adopt such drastic measures. Perhaps through public service announcements they could invite battered women who wish to take such stances, to contact the organization for help in undertaking their desired actions, and thereby advancing the organization's radical/fundamental social change agenda.

Coker (2001b) phrases this omnipresent tension in feminist and battered women's advocacy groups as a "dilemma of making domestic violence a public responsibility in the context of racists and classist public systems (p. 9)." It is precisely in the nexus of the controversy between the role of advocates as "organizers for social change" or "service providers" that she positions her arguments *in favor of* "plac[ing] women's material conditions at the center of our [activist] efforts (p. 814)."

### Neighbors: A Critical Lifeline

None of the 36 women in this study objected to, or took issue with, anyone for making a 911 call. On the contrary, almost all the women, even when they were in their “give him another chance” phase, *lamented* at the, “I mind my own business...I won’t get involved” stance. Making a 911 call is different from face-to-face intervention in that it does not put the caller at risk of injury from the batterer or the battered woman. It also does not put the battered woman in the dilemma of aligning with a stranger or family member and provoking escalated levels of violence, or aligning with her batterer and allowing him to gloat over his sway over her.

But perhaps until the climate of excessive and abusive state control for battered women in marginalized communities changes, neighbors in poor communities, drug zones, immigrant/people-of-color neighborhoods, may do more harm than good by calling 911 when a woman is being beaten.

### Public Service Announcements

They should advertise! The little pamphlets are fine that they slip under people’s door. [But] people pick them up and throw them in the trash because they consider them menus and junk. So they really don’t even take the time to look at them. And if someone is in a situation where they are being battered, or abused, physically or emotionally then a lot of times they’re not the ones that’s able to get the mail. So if you send something through the mail to all the different residences the batterer is goin’ to toss it in the trash.

But everybody watches television. We have enough stations. If Donna Hanover, who was Rudy Giuliani’s wife, can get on television and do a two-minute segment about South Street Seaport or something that’s going on in Little Italy, then she can get on that same television in the morning when people are watching, or in the afternoon when women that are battered are usually home and no one is there with them because the batterer is at work, or in the evening, or at night. Thirty seconds here, a minute there—it could save lives!...it could give those women just enough umph that they need to pack up and go, or to go to the nearest precinct and say, “I want to become a part of the Alternative to Shelter

program and I want you to put him out!" But if they don't know, they're not goin' to go. — Avril, African American singer and teacher.

Citywide public education poster campaigns were implemented for the first time during the Giuliani administration. Such efforts need to be increased and expanded to target not just those being abused (and neighbors in areas with electronic programs) but posters and public service announcements must address and publicize the varied faces of convicted batterers so as to lift and cast aside the veil of privacy and bill battering as a criminal offense, which must be faced squarely and condemned at every level of society.

The protective power of neighborly interventions, demonstrated in this study, calls for the expansion of the "Is it your business if your neighbor beats his wife? You bet her life it is!" campaign. Posters that provide only a toll-free number for confidential services sustain the climate of secrecy in which battering flourishes.

### **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

The primary objective of all recommendations is to enhance the safety and comfort of survivors, and ensure that they do not experience "helping" interventions as a second victimization. Knowledge of sound practice guidelines relevant to one's own field *and* that of others' lays a good foundation for "coordinated community intervention."

The recommendations have been prioritized within each section; each section begins with measures that must be adopted immediately.

#### **Overarching Recommendations**

- Regard battered women as their very own safety expert.
- Commend survivors for seeking help, and provide advocacy services, even when they are undecided about severing all ties with the batterer.

- When women decide to give the batterer another chance, gently, not impatiently, inform them that batterers, even those that have overcome an addiction, change their controlling ways only when they genuinely accept *full* responsibility *and* seek help to shed their insecurities and develop self-worth. Instruct them about the various stages in the cycle of violence, especially the honeymoon stage.
- Support their decision to evict or flee. Foresee and provide them all the assistance they need to evict their batterer or flee, to be safe and comfortably (re)housed, and to attain a degree of self-sufficiency, and self-worth, that prevents another abusive relationship.
- Tailor the support system to the survivor's assets and liabilities, and the batterer's customized modus operandi, *within* the context of wealth or poverty, undocumented or transitional immigration status, and availability or lack of other material resources.
- Each legal and social intervention strategy should be subjected to a "material resources test" (Coker, 2000), to ensure that access to material resources is furthered, rather than hindered or denied, by that particular intervention, based on the experiences of battered women who most severely affected by gender/race/class inequalities, and based on the particular circumstances of the particular woman seeking intervention.
- Establish de-stressing and anti-hypermasculinity programs for police officers, and those in the armed forces, to help reduce overaggressive policing, and stop woman-battering.
- Establish empathic communication training programs, and figure-ground reversal perceptual exercises, for police officers, assistant district attorneys, child protection workers, and judges, to change their demeanor and attitude toward battered women.
- Ensure good education, job training, job opportunities, decent liveable wages, for all men, women, and youth especially those in marginalized communities, so as to render all peoples less vulnerable to becoming entrapped as perpetrators or victims of violence.

### Legislature

- Substantial federal funds to combat domestic violence, under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), need to be allocated, through non-criminal justice routes, for:
  - i. the improvement of battered women's and children's material conditions.

- ii. the development of life-enhancing social networks and infrastructure in poor and low income neighborhoods.
  - iii. specialized treatment services for children and youth who have witnessed/been abused during violence against their (step) mother, or whose mother/father was killed during intimate partner abuse.
- A batterer who absconds to another state, different from the one in which court orders and/or arrest warrants are issued, must be apprehended by the other state's local apparatus, when notified by authorized law enforcement agents, without requiring the survivor to personally visit the relevant authorities there.

**Judiciary: Family Court, Criminal Court, Housing Court, Federal Court**

- Evict the batterer regardless of length of tenancy.
- Suspend the batterer's name from the lease for six months.
- Order the batterer to pay rent/mortgage if he had been paying it, or has the means to but had not been contributing to it.
- If the batterer had been paying rent/mortgage and his income is jeopardized because of detention, order temporary emergency public assistance for survivor with liens on his property instead of liens on the premises in which the survivor will be staying.
- When the batterer has a home-based business and needs to enter the home after eviction, a police officer must escort him; no rabbi/priest, or friend/family member must be permitted in lieu of a police officer.
- Order the batterer to pay restitution, via wage assignment if need be, for losses sustained due to property damage.
- A survivor who flees a battering spouse/partner must not lose property rights on grounds of abandonment.
- A survivor who flees a battering spouse/partner must not lose custody rights of children on grounds of abandonment.

- Tailor the stay-away zone parameters to the couple's everyday geography (rather than the fixed stipulated 100 yards), so as to court-order a job transfer when such is pivotal to the survivor's safety and plainly feasible.
- Batterers who persist in post-separation violence must not be permitted to live or work in the woman's neighborhood, even if it happens to be the batterers' childhood neighborhood.
- Order the batterer to intensive batterer's treatment even if the survivor drops charges.
- Cross-index court orders with defendants name; not just petitioner's name.

District Attorney's Office: Assistant District Attorneys

- Assess the legal, restorative, and retributive sanctions the survivor wishes to have imposed on the batterer; including demanding a transfer of the batterer's workplace if his present job location is a threat to the safety of the survivor.
- Adopt "soft" no-drop policies (Hanna, 1996) which allow survivors to choose to drop charges only after they have either:
  - i. watched a domestic violence video that is tailored to their race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation;
  - ii. spoken to a domestic violence counselor who addresses the issues of their particular marginalized or privileged status; or
  - iii. appeared before a sympathetic judge (in the absence of the batterer) to explain their reason(s) for dropping, and to benefit from the judge's response to their concerns.
- Assess, together with the survivor, the risk for post-separation violence.
- Collaboratively assess (i.e., with the survivor, and with family and friends whenever possible) the survivor's safety net in current housing.
- Do not insist on relocation when a safety net is evident.

- Provide temporary sanctuary with 24-hour surveillance when the risk of post-separation violence is high.
- Provide pendant alarm and 911 cellular phone when risk is moderate.
- Present possible dangers of: (i) staying at same address, (ii) of moving to another known address, and (iii) moving to a new neighborhood without neighborly supports.
- When a safety net is present in the same neighborhood, and survivor must move or chooses to move, suggest safety of relocating within the same precinct to prevent harassment by way of counter charges by the batterer which could lead to survivor's arrest in a precinct unfamiliar with the case.
- Train survivors (whose batterers are incarcerated within the New York City criminal justice system) to use the VINE system to track their prison status and release dates.
- Provide free answering machines and Caller ID to survivors to document post-separation abuse via the telephone, in order to facilitate prosecution.
- Tag survivor's phone to identify location of an absconding batterer.
- Before any prosecution, research the *complainant's* police records to confirm that the charge is not being filed by a batterer as a form of post-separation abuse.
- In jail and prison, block calls to the batterer's target telephone numbers (i.e., the survivor's home and work) as soon as the batterer arrives. Then electronically log the batterers' attempts to call those numbers, and lengthen detention for such infractions.

**Police Department: Domestic Violence Officer, Detective, other Officers**

- Expand the comprehensive Police Strategy No. 4, designed to break the cycle of domestic violence through proactive measures (Giuliani, 1999). Whether or not an arrest is made, or a formal complaint is filed:
  - i. Officers who respond to a 911 domestic violence call must inform both parties that abusing a spouse or partner is a punishable crime. Both must then be escorted in a supportive and dignified manner; the woman to a Victim Services (now known as Safe Horizons) counselor and the man to a men-against

violence activist. Both must be informed that the controlling and violent person in the relationship is fully responsible and that even verbal and emotional abuse, and isolating and monitoring behaviors are criminal offenses.

- ii. Responding officers must, that same day or the next day, with the agreement of the respective woman, visit all the neighbors on the floor, as well as doormen, if any, to: (i) inform that their neighbor (mention the apartment number) is in a special police protection program and (ii) request them to call 911 at the least hint of trouble. In the case of an absconding batterer, show them a photograph and ask them to Call 911 if they sight the batterer, even if he is not being troublesome and abusive. The objective of this is to enable all battered women (even those who are not given a pendant alarm or cellular phone) to inform their batterers (directly or indirectly) if they so choose, that they are in a special police program.
  - iii. The domestic violence detective must be given the name and address of both parties. A background check must be done on the suspected batterer, and the partner/spouse must be notified immediately of any previous police record of the offending partner/spouse that may be unknown.
  - iv. Suspected batterers must be discreetly surveilled, so as to determine their everyday geography with the aim of preventing future abuse and/or increasing the speed of arrests when warranted.
  - v. Anyone who appears intoxicated with drug or alcohol must be taken to a detoxification treatment center, and shortly thereafter must be visited by the domestic violence prevention officer at the detoxification center to discuss supportive and remedial measures to end the violence and/or the relationship.
- Women at high risk for femicide who seek police protection must be directed to the Domestic Violence Officer and/or Domestic Violence Detective. Given the ease with which a woman at high risk can be identified, these special officers must be authorized to obtain emergency restraining orders electronically, and the woman must be given some safety device or rapid police alert equipment.

- Collaborate closely with men-against-battering activist groups. Provide them all the police assistance they need to stay in touch with batterers, especially with those who abscond and/or resist reform.
- Notify the survivor of the existence of a domestic violence database and instruct her how to invoke a database search to *protect* herself if false counter charges, filed by her batterer, could get her arrested, handcuffed, and processed as a criminal.
- Ensure that all reports are entered into a Domestic Violence Database which is user-friendly and operated by experienced staff rather than by Domestic Violence Officers whose time is better spent reviewing and following up cases at hand, pursuing absconding batterers, following up on survivors who are “putting up” with batterers until they have a favorable opportunity to leave (with their children).
- When escorting a survivor to serve court papers to a batterer, do not leave survivor unprotected on the way out of, or in the vicinity of, the batterer’s premises; escort survivor as far as possible, or to the nearest means of transportation the survivor prefers. If waiting for taxi or bus, remain vigilant until survivor boards and takes off.
- Soon after a separation or eviction, domestic violence prevention officers (DVPOs) must call and/or visit the survivor once a week during the first month, unless the survivor explicitly requests otherwise. During these contacts:
  - i. inform the survivor of various kinds of post-separation violence batterers have been known to indulge in, e.g., counter charges against survivors which do lead to real arrests and prosecutions of survivors.
  - ii. discuss appropriate actions the survivor can take if faced with each kind of harassment.
  - iii. impress upon the survivor the role the police can play, so as to encourage the survivor to inform the precinct and/or call 911 in case of any further abuse, and to stay in touch with the DVPO, to think aloud about safety, and even after relocation so as to notify the local precinct at the survivors new address.
- Dispatch an unmarked police car to escort a survivor who wants to flee.

- After relocation, contact the survivor's new local precinct, even if it is across state borders. Brief the respective authorities on the case details and request their vigilance and assistance with any pending matter or anticipated situation.
- Before an arrest is made based on harassment charges, research the complainant's police records to determine if the complainant is a batterer and is indeed the one perpetrating the harassment by filing false charges.

Victim Service Agency (now known as Safe Horizons)

- Provide a service similar to Access-a-Ride for survivors who resort to daily taxis for safety. Or, the Access-A Ride service should expand its mandate and extend its services to battered women and their children.
- Expand the dead bolt locks installation service to include the installation of wide-angle viewers in all the doors to the apartment or house. Connect them to a monitor that is not close to any of the doors. This ensures that all visitors can be identified, and described to a 911 dispatcher if need be, without getting close to any doors or windows.
- Domestic violence counselors must have as much a presence in drug and alcohol treatment facilities, in child protection services, and in public housing, as they do in police precincts.
- Provide long-term counseling for children and teenagers who have witnessed battering, and more specialized programs for children witnessed the batterer kill a parent/sibling.
- Provide all services on a "pay as you can" (rather than "free") basis, so that all battered women, even those in white collar or professional jobs, feel *entitled* to avail themselves of protective measures (such as the expedient and excellent lock change program) sooner rather than later, instead of putting them off until they can spare discretionary income based on an ethical rationale: "I can afford the locksmith next month, so I should not be taking the city's money, for which there are numerous legitimate takers all the time."

### 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline

- When a caller is desperate to leave the batterer immediately:
  - i. get the survivor's exact location (i.e., apartment number or cross streets if survivor is already on the run), and tell the survivor to expect a police car within a few minutes.
  - ii. arrange for an unmarked police car with plainclothes officers to make the pick-up from the house or apartment door so as to help with any luggage and children.
  - iii. scout for a safe location in this order of preference: a confidential domestic violence shelter, a vacant hotel room slated for such emergencies, a place of worship in another neighborhood, and lastly an Emergency Assistance Unit.
  - iv. radio the escorting officer the address of the best possible safe location.

### Human Resources Administration (HRA)

- Provide temporary emergency assistance to survivors by putting a lien on batterer's other property, if any, instead of on the property in which survivor "stays put."
- Provide temporary emergency rental subsidies to survivors who want to keep their apartments but: (i) are in danger of losing it due to financial abuse and consequent inability to pay the rent; and/or (ii) need to lock up the apartment for one to three months immediately after evicting the batterer.
- Vouch for the credit worthiness of women whose credit ratings plummeted during the abuse or after the separation. Real-estate agents, car dealers, and so on, must be mandated to accept HRA's certification of credit worthiness for a reasonable stipulated period. This will ensure that the financial victimization is not prolonged.
- Do not penalize survivors who "stay put," in terms of their priority status for emergency housing. If they later need to move, they must be given the same priority status that is given to survivors who flee to emergency shelters.

- Police reports must serve as adequate documentation, in lieu of orders of protection, since court orders are tedious to obtain, and often ineffective in deterring future violence.
- Increase the number and capacity of shelters, safe homes and dwellings.
- Construct new affordable housing with good infrastructure and transportation.
- Survivors who double-up with relatives due to unavailability of shelter space, must still be given rehousing priority.

#### New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and other Building Management

- Offer the survivor a transfer to another apartment within the same building or complex when the survivor wishes to “stay put” because of an existing safety net.
- Avoid transfers to street-level apartments, and those with external fire escape access.
- Upon request from a psychotherapy program, permit access to a survivor’s former apartment, for therapeutic benefit to survivors, with the informed consent of current residents, and in the presence of plainclothes police officer when necessary.

#### Administration of Children’s Services (ACS):

- The safety of children must be promptly, but *briefly*, established when a woman with physical injuries accesses a hospital or health clinic and identifies herself as being abused by her spouse or partner. When there appears to be no immediate danger to the child(ren), a *fuller* sympathetic investigation of her children’s safety must be suspended until *she* is first given the *emergency* treatment and care she deserves.
- Battered women must not be penalized by child protective services for seeking residential services and disclosing the true circumstances of their plight. The presence of their children with them, on that harrowing flight to a shelter, is evidence enough of admirable mothering under extremely constraining circumstances. Robbing the survivor of child(ren) is a victory for batterers and amounts to state connivance.
- Battered women who present themselves as being wronged must be reunited with their children as soon as they present their grievance, regardless of the age of the children at the time the claim is presented.

- When an incapacitated battered woman with children seeks emergency residential services, her children must not be taken away from her, even temporarily. Instead, her eligibility for a home health aide must be extended, or reinstated, to the extent that her circumstance dictates.
- When ACS slates a child for foster care, the decision must not be acted upon unless reviewed and approved by an overseeing committee consisting of representatives from Victim Services, a battered women's advocacy group, a foster care service watchdog organization, and *whenever possible*, one battered woman who has been thus wronged in the past, if none of the other committee members experienced such grievous loss.
- When the overseeing committee approves ACS' decision, children of battered women must be identified as such in the records and database, so as to enable speedy family reunification. Then kinship foster care (i.e., placement with supportive relatives or friends) must be favored over career foster caregivers.
- The overseeing committee must also determine the services the mother needs in order to speedily reclaim her children. The committee must present her their recommendations in a supportive manner.
- The overseeing committee must periodically (semi-annually) review the mother's treatment and recovery status, and re-evaluate its recommendations.

### Alarm Programs

- Give participants a quick reference palm card with the alarm activation process.
- Design the pendant alarm for wear around the neck *as well as* to *pin* onto clothing.
- The alarm activation codes should be a common-sense relevant words (rather than a few series of numbers) which can be easily remembered under panic conditions.
- Conduct a session and/or develop an appealing 45-minute video for participants to view at the program coordinator's office, in order to:

- i. instruct them about appropriate occasions for activating the alarm, so as to stress the importance of erring on the side of caution (i.e., even if the batterer seems to be uneventfully passing by the apartment or house).
  - ii. instruct them about the potential benefits of calling the program coordinator once a week, so that it does not feel like a yoke being placed on them to keep them *in tow* (in the surveillance and disciplinary sense of the phrase).
  - iii. instruct them that the pendant alarm is designed to get activated only when the panic button is deliberately pushed, so as to increase the compliance rate of *wearing* the alarm as opposed to hanging it on a nail for fear of accidentally activating it.
  - iv. inform them about the number of women who have been killed despite the availability and/or activation of the pendant alarm, and the known and/or speculated reasons of non-activation of the alarm, or untimely police response.
  - v. invite them to return to the program coordinator's office if they wish to re-view the video, discuss their situation, volunteer their time, and so on.
  - vi. if the program is being declined only because batterers photos are disseminated to all precincts, limit the dissemination to relevant precincts only.
- Increase the survivor's ease of staying in touch, by putting the name of the program coordinator on a *lightweight* 911 cellular phone, which is also programmed for one-touch dial access to program coordinator.
  - Verify that all of the survivor's phone connections and jacks are secure, in order to reduce false alarms.
  - Inform the survivor's residential and office building security management to instruct all security personnel to:
    - i. be on the look out for the batterer.
    - ii. discreetly make a "hang-up 911 call" or keep the phone off the hook and drop hints for the 911 dispatcher while engaging the batterer in conversation.

- Affix photos of the batterer in a discreet yet visually accessible location of the security personnel's station as a reminder, and for the benefit of new personnel.
- Provide hard-to-reach survivors with alphanumeric pagers so that the alarm program and VINE system (see below) personnel are able to reach them, especially when the batterer is released.
- In the absence of reliable 24-hour building security, install a wide angle camera outside the door so that the survivor can conduct a security check before stepping out of the home on a daily basis. Also, when there is a visitor, the survivor can discreetly view whoever is at the door, and if it is the batterer, to be able to communicate clothing and possession of a weapon, if any, to the alarm attendant and/or police dispatcher.
- Be equally concerned, responsive, and protective towards all the program participants, regardless of how often or seldom the participants stay in touch. Inspire participants to stay in touch and to volunteer information about their safety and well-being. Do not penalize, but rather suggest and/or provide appropriate resources to participants whose material and/or emotional circumstances make it difficult for them to keep in touch.
- When batterers persist in post-separation violence and have been convicted of domestic violence have them wear an three-way (Coleman, 2002) electronic bracelet, to alert survivor and 911 despatcher simultaneously.

#### The Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system

- Set up the system to prime customer service representatives ten days prior to a release. Notify the survivor at that time, to doubly ensure the survivor's safety.
- Have on file, the telephone number of a trusted relative who could be informed of the release date in case the customer service representative is unable to contact the survivor.
- Given the frequency with which survivors' telephone numbers change; design a quick method for the women themselves, or a service representative, to update the system's records in this respect. The system must be tamper-proof to ensure that the survivors' information is not disclosed to *anyone*, nor updated fraudulently.

- Expand the system in order to also be able to inform survivors' about releases from eight-hour detention, overnight arrests, or short-term jailings.
- Conduct a systematic evaluation of the system's efficiency and efficacy.

#### Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Programs

- Have a domestic violence counselor on site.
- Firmly address the entire gamut of abusive and violent controlling behaviors while under the influence of alcohol, especially towards intimate partners, children, and parents.
- Inform participants that their success at sobriety should carry over to any controlling behaviors that persist, rather than be used as a leverage, and moral high ground from which to inflict more abuse, in more insidious ways.

#### Corporate Activism against Battering

- Banks must offer survivors savings and checking account with no fee and no minimum balance requirement. Also, no interest on balance (transfers) for one year.
- Phone companies must offer a free confidential phone line to survivors who stay put, in addition to free service and Caller ID on the old line. This will enable the survivor to connect the old number to an answering machine, lower the ring volume, and never answer it. Her batterer's phone harassment will thus be less intrusive, nonresponsive, and available for scrutiny by a threat analyzer.
- Offer women who are in hiding, an off-premises voice-mail/answering service, which will prevent the batterer from using reverse directory search to obtain the survivor's address.

#### Civic Activism against Battering

- Call 911 when a neighbor sounds in danger. Alert a neighbor who has evicted her abuser.
- Create a pervasive support system for survivors, while they are in a situation of battering. Doctors, social workers, employers, building security services, real estate agents, and so on, must provide all persons who disclose, or are suspected of being battered/manipulated, a letter certifying the extent and cause of injury, absenteeism,

public nuisance, the true owner/leaseholder of the house/apartment, or whatever the case may be. Such “standard practice” will provide survivors socio-emotional support, and documentation of the abuse, to end the abusive relationship sooner rather than later.

- Do not penalize survivors, or pressure them to report the abuse before they are ready. Instead, employers, building managements, and so on, could file independent police reports and press criminal charges against the batterer, when the batterer is, for instance, endangering the life of an employee (i.e., the survivor); directs abuse at the doctors, nurses, hospital property, building property; creates a nuisance at the survivor’s residence by yelling, banging on the door, or breaking down the door; is harassing the survivor’s employer with phone calls or faxes; is costing the company by interfering with the productivity and efficiency of the employee (i.e., the survivor).
- Human resource/payroll assistants, who experience the anger of men, when complying with court-ordered garnishment of their salary for child support or maintenance (Mitchell, 2002), could file reports of such behavior to the court, as well as to the domestic violence officer at the local police precinct.

#### Batterers’ Parents, Mentors, and Well Wishers

- Hold batterers *solely* accountable for their abusive behaviors and urge them to seek help.
- Challenge their fundamental beliefs: Yes, it takes two hands to clap, but one to clobber.
- Highlight the bizarreness of abuse in intimate relationships: Battering is like “teeth biting tongue” (Lambek, 1992), and should be just as rare.
- Instill in them self-worth and self-pride: Self-acceptance and a sense of achievement can reduce the extortion of validation, reverence, and loyalty from a partner or spouse.
- Help the survivor to end the violence and/or the relationship, and help her be safe.

#### Separated Battered Women

- Call and/or visit every business from which you obtain services to notify them of the separation and of your need for (i) their protection, and (ii) information about the batterer’s whereabouts (if absconding arrest).

- Notify INS/IRS about the separation on the grounds of battering. Mention the specific reason for notifying them (e.g., to ensure that the batterer is not permitted to claim child support when *not* contributing a penny, or to ensure that the batterer's green card application on the basis of the marriage is revoked, or that the green card be revoked because the application was submitted under duress, and so on).
- If you change your telephone number due to harassing calls or a change of address, request your phone company to let you keep your old number too at no charge, on grounds of domestic violence. Keep the old number with the ringer turned off and hook it up to an answering machine. This way the batterer will vent his frustrations on to the tape, rather than on to you. Simultaneously he gets the message that you can resist his harassment. The tape will give you and law enforcement agents and/or treatment providers a record of his violations and a sense his state of mind and patterns of escalation (de Becker, cited in Gross, 1994). This, however, like most strategies will not shield you from the terror and trauma of the harassment.
- If you move and want to keep your address confidential, use a private post box service for *all* your mail and list your mail box number as the apartment or suite number. Give this nonhome address to friends, family, utility and phone companies, creditors, businesses, organizations, and agencies including victim services, public assistance, department of motor vehicles, voters registration, and new credit card applications, and credit reporting agencies. Send a letter to all the offices with the "new" address and request them all to remove the "old" address from their files.
- If you request any service or delivery *at* your home, make sure your name does not appear on the service or delivery order. Instead, coin a business name (Gross, 1994).
- If you need to be reached on the phone by more than a handful of very trusted and supportive people, an unlisted telephone number may not be sufficient to keep your address confidential. Under such circumstances, an off-premises voice-mail/answering service is safer (Gross, 1994).
- Take measures to ensure that the points where phone lines enter your home is/are inaccessible (Gross, 1994).

- Keep in mind that cordless phones, baby monitors, and hearing aids are essentially radio transmitters. Therefore conversations on/around them can very easily be picked up on a scanner or shortwave radio.

### Elementary School Education

- Integrate domestic violence in the curriculum. For instance, the history of domestic violence and of the battered women's movement, as a history lesson (Fine, 2003). Every section of the curriculum, including physical education, must have a module on domestic violence.

### Public Service Announcements

- Posters which provide only a toll free number for confidential help perpetuate the shame and secrecy associated with domestic violence.
- The poster, or sound bite, must have at least three public education components: (i) a fact about battering (e.g., the honeymoon phase), (ii) an advocated behavior (e.g., focus on safety, not on shame), and (iii) a criminal penalty for primary aggressor in the relationship, regardless of who initiated any particular incident.
- Expand the *Is it your business if your neighbor beats his wife? You bet her life it is!* campaign. Advocate specific behaviors and attitudes, e.g., "Call 911" or "Alert your neighbor when the man she evicted is outside her door." or "Violence is never a fair price for bad choices."
- Messages on milk cartons could, perhaps, reach women who are isolated and surveilled.
- Perhaps all posters could have a border of convicted batterers' mugshots with their sentence stamped, so as to emphasize the *public* and *criminal* nature of battering, and transfer misplaced shame and blame from battered women to batterers.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

#### **Home and Transitional Housing**

##### Experience of Home During the Abusive Relationship

Almost all the 36 participants, in this exploratory study, had been violently abused and almost all experienced death threats. Yet for as many as 29 participants, who “stayed put,” in the same apartment or neighborhood, after separating from the batterer, their housing had never ceased to have the “stability” aspect of home throughout their abusive relationship. This was because most of the women who “stayed put”, had either grown up in that apartment or neighborhood, had family or friends near by, or they had waited many years on a waiting list to obtain that apartment with federal or city subsidy. So they all had strong positive memories or socio-environmental connections which they did not permit the batterer to erase or sever. Two participants also lived just a ten-minute-walk away from their jobs. Most of their rents or mortgages were affordable since they had them for 10 to 20 years.

In order to experience the “refuge” and “restorative” qualities of home during the abusive relationship, some were able to get away and stay at their sister’s or friend’s apartment. All these women had keys to their get-away apartments which permitted them to leave at any time of day or night. Others who were unable to stay overnight elsewhere because of extreme surveillance would try to spend as much of the day, even on weekends, at work or at school. When even that was not possible, she would visit his parents’ place. Women who had none of the above temporary escapes, resorted to diary keeping and/or

spent as much time alone as possible in the bathroom or outdoors doing gardening or shoveling snow (if they lived in a house).

### Evicting the Batterer

Participants who evicted their batterers, or fled, did so usually as a last resort, after they tried to stop the violence in various other ways. They usually first to *enhanced his autonomy* (e.g., urged him to seek treatment for alcoholism/crack addiction/a psychiatric diagnosis, got him a [better] job, financially supported his higher education, and so on). Simultaneously or subsequently they *subordinated their own autonomy* (e.g., gave up their own job/study plans, agreed to sexually satisfy him as often as he wanted, agreed to drink/use drugs with him, agreed to overlook any infidelity, and so on).

The actual eviction occurred either with the woman just changing the lock, after giving him various warnings; or with a neighbor or passer-by calling 911 during a violent episode. In such cases, the batterers were arrested, and the judge granted vacate orders.

None of the women evicted their batterers out of spite or vengeance, but because they had a moderate to high degree of positive feeling and positive attachment to that apartment/house, building, and/or neighborhood. Also, they took the eviction route to end their relationship, because they were certain that if they fled, their batterers would go to any length to locate them. They would then be at a grave disadvantage, because they would be strangers in an unfamiliar place, where they would have no neighborly protection. Since most of these women had stable, long-term jobs and were the sole leaseholders, they preferred to hold on to these valuable assets and to benefit from the protection they could get, from people who knew their batterer on sight.

### Co-ownership: Obstacle to Evicting the Batterer

All five of my participants who were co-owners, had been “putting up” with their batterers for between 10 to 35 years. Since they all had an emotional and financial investment in their homes, and had familiar neighbors for protection, they all wanted to take the eviction route. One of them was able to evict her husband of 35-years, after they co-purchased another house, into which he moved, when she evicted him. The other women were not certain the judge would rule in their favor because their batterers co-owned the house and they had more complicated personal, immigration, and marital histories. A law by which a batterer forfeits his property rights and pays the mortgage for as long as is needed, is very likely to enable women who are home co-owners, end abusive relationships sooner. If such a law is enacted, measures must be taken to ensure that it is not used against women.

### Automatic Vacate Orders

Automatic vacate order were appreciated by the all the women who were granted them. They helped the women feel validated. However, when batterers co-owned, co-leased, or were sole leaseholders of the houses/apartments, and/or indulged in financial abuse (e.g., siphoned her earnings, caused her to lose her job, prevented/restricted her earnings, ruined her credit rating), the women would have been better helped if the judges had ordered the batterers to continue making the rent/mortgage payments.

### Post-Eviction Homemaking

After the eviction, the women worked at transforming their site-of-abuse into a sanctuary. This usually involved *removing* many (not all) reminders of the abuse, *re-introducing* aspects of themselves that felt lost to the past (e.g., joyful photographs of

themselves; paints and easel if the woman had been an artist), and *reflecting* (alone and/or with the children) on good times gone by and those yet to come.

When there were no positive feelings towards the apartment/house in which they were battered, but there were socio-economic-environmental advantages to staying in the neighborhood (e.g., low crime, low rent, in Manhattan, walking distance from work), the women did move to another apartment, but stayed *within* the *same* building or neighborhood.

#### Alarm Program Women Used Shelters Too

Prior to joining the alarm program, seven of the twelve women had fled to shelters or to family and friends, before they were able to return and evict their batterers. When judges did not evict the batterers because they were the sole leaseholders/owners, the women resorted to a shelter and/or doubled up with family or friends until they obtained a permanent affordable housing. Also, after they evicted their batterers, several women needed a safe place for a few days until the alarm was installed, and/or until their batterer was arrested.

#### Foster Safe Homes

Several participants called the domestic violence hotline almost on a weekly basis and were told, time and again, that there were no shelter beds available. Alternate emergency housing must be increased by way of new construction of affordable housing, and a quicker processing of re-housing applications. Permitting women to apply for subsidized “permanent” housing as soon as they enter a shelter, rather than the 90-day required stay will help keep more shelter beds vacant.

The number of safe homes (i.e., *private homes* dedicated for use as *temporary* emergency shelters for exclusively domestic violence victims) must be increased. One to do

so, could be to offer subsidies to people who are willing (for altruistic, not malicious, reasons) to house distressed single women and/or women with children. For instance, the Quakers have a tradition of housing travelers. Such institutionalized doubling-up, could be beneficial to battered women who need a short stay soon after they evict their batterers. These homes could also serve as a comfortable way-station before a vacancy comes up in a domestic violence shelter. My data suggests that substantial numbers of people are likely to respond favorably to exhortations for such “foster safe homes.”

### Emergency Rent Program

There is need for an emergency rent program to help leaseholder battered women keep their housing, when they temporarily need to go into hiding. There must be a welfare program similar to Section 8 which will pay rent directly to the landlord thus allowing the women to lock up their apartments and/or go on disability leave from their jobs, for three to six months, when employers are supportive but reluctant to sacrifice optimum productivity due to depression and/or absenteeism.

### Child-related Obstacles to Fleeing

Women who did not want to “stay put” (nor “put up” any longer), but had more than two little children, or at least one teenage child, were limited in their options for a safe place because the batterer intentionally held on to the children; or shelters had limited space for women with many children, and *no* space for teenage children.

When batterers did not indulge in, or ceased, post-separation harassment, participants tended to make out-of-court arrangements for child visitation or joint custody. When batterers filed for child custody and/or visitation, it was a form of post-separation abuse.

### Post-Fleeing Grieving for a Home and Groping for Safety

Some women who had positive attachments to their apartments *and* supportive neighborly infrastructure in the building and/or neighborhood were *forced to permanently move* after separating from the batterer. All these women *deeply* regretted and mourned the loss of their long-term homes.

In addition, their batterers were terrorizing them (with phone calls) into moving almost every six months. The ones who were hurting most from the frequent moves were their children, because of the separation from friends and the drastic shortage of quality time with their mother. Also, the devastating shortage of dispensable income, due to moving costs, steep security deposits (i.e., two-three months' rent), and high rents (i.e., two to three times their previous rent), prompted at least one of the teenage boys to steal, which got him in trouble with the law, while his mother worked at her 20-year-long job as a corrections officer. This mother had been urged by her district attorney to permanently leave her 17-year-long apartment with a waterfront, French-window view, low rent, protective doormen and neighbors (i.e., an informal vigilante), and well-reputed neighborhood school.

### "Staying Put" and Healing

Emotional healing was more a function of post-separation violence, than a function of "staying put" or "fleeing." It was, also, more a function of support from neighbors, law enforcement agencies, victim service agencies, and human resources administration, than a function of "staying put" or "fleeing." Participants who "stayed put" with the expectation or promise of support, from the above-mentioned agencies, but did not experience actual support, were frustrated. The non-responsiveness of "the system" got in the way of their well-being and healing. On the other hand, participants who were forced (especially by

assistant district attorneys) to permanently leave their home, for the primary purpose of their safety, were promised the support for “the system” for rehousing. When these women were not helped, even with safe, transitional housing, the grief for their lost home and safety net, caused injury rather than healing.

### **The Pendant Alarm Program**

#### **Alternative to Shelter: The Alarm Program**

During the time that one participant, in Lower Manhattan, was shortsightedly being urged by her district attorney to permanently leave her 17-year-long home, the Upper West Side area of Manhattan was experimenting with offering a few battered women (ten in all), timely (and temporary), electronic (pendant alarm and 911 cellular phone) supports, to help them end their abusive relationships without having to permanently leave their homes. Even women who had moved to their parents’ place or had obtained another apartment after a shelter stay, were eligible for this electronic monitoring-plus-coordinated community intervention program. Two women in this study were enrolled in a bigger, and more established alarm program in Brooklyn called AWARE. The level of fear was considerably lowered when the pendant alarms were installed in their own or their parents’ apartments/homes. When post-separation harassment did not cease due to inadequate support from law enforcement, the women experienced no additional reduction in fear.

#### **Deterrence Effect of Indirect Informing**

None of the batterers had been informed, either officially or directly, about the women’s enrollment in the program. Four of the twelve women who told their batterers’

parents/siblings/friends that they were in a special police program, without revealing any details, stopped experiencing harassment from the batterer, his parents, or his friends.

#### Enhanced Criminal Justice Component of the Alarm Program

One of the stated goals of the alarm program was, enhanced criminal justice intervention (Del Tufo, 2003). Alarm activation meant that the police would respond sooner, and there would be more evidence with which to obtain successful prosecution. In all cases, the police did come rapidly, whether the alarm was activated by technical failure or deliberately by the woman when the batterer was outside her door. However, the batterers, for reasons unknown, did not wait too long outside the women's apartments. A striking finding of this study is that, in none of these cases did the police pursue the batterer, even when the batterers' whereabouts were known, easily accessible, and not very far from the women's homes. Ironically, most of the women whose batterers were at-large, one for as long as six months, despite arrest warrants, happened to be in the special alarm program.

#### Inadequate Post-Arrest Sanctions Sustain Post-Separation Harassment

Women who did not receive adequate response from the police and/or the district attorney, most notably, four of the twelve women in the alarm program, continued being harassed from afar. They felt frustrated with the limited interpretations of the law, or the misplaced loyalties of law enforcers, or the unreasonably large caseloads of law enforcers.

Most participants who had contacted their domestic violence officers or detectives, commented that they would have kept more in touch with them had they been more available (i.e., had extended hours and more support staff).

Yet again, it was the presence of supportive neighbors that helped some of these women sleep well at night despite the lack of full support from law enforcement. But when participants lacked the full support of parents or relatives (i.e., they were accused of contributing to their own victimization), then even if the family/relatives lived in the same building/neighborhood, the woman was not able to sleep well. This finding suggests that, what mattered more than the promise or presence of support, was the practice of support.

#### Coordinated Community Intervention Program (CIP)

The ATS alarm program was officially called a coordinated community intervention program. CIPs are suggestive of a system-wide response to battering, which encompass the utilization of arrest and prosecution policies coupled with batterer's treatment programs, and immediate, significant outreach and advocacy for the survivors (Edleson, 1991, p. 203). However, the ATS alarm program was seriously lacking in the batterer's treatment. Moreover, when participants insisted on treatment and subsequent incarceration in the case of treatment noncompliance, the ADAs were displeased. In effect, batterers ended up getting no jail time and no treatment. The CIP component of the ATS alarm program was limited to the availability of counseling for the women and children, and to public involvement and awareness (Giuliani, 1999). Three out of the 12 women in the alarm program were frustrated that the batterers were not mandated to attend intensive treatment. These three women insisted on treatment for their batterers for reasons of safety, not reconciliation.

## Neighborhood Safety Measures

### The Informal Vigilante

Neighborhood and community support, especially by way of banning the batterer from entry to the woman's home and work building, was mentioned by most participants as the most critical factor to their safety and their ability to "stay put" and feel safe after evicting their batterers. Women who fled were usually very dissatisfied with their new neighborhood, rent, and/or apartment size. So instead of soliciting neighborhood support they preferred to move in the hope that the next place would be better in all respects.

### The Dense City Component

Neighborhood supports proved to be beneficial to most of my participants, all of whom lived in New York City, a dense metropolitan area. However, other women within the same cityscape, and those in rural plains, hilly terrains, or suburban lanes, may require more fortifications from family, friends, co-workers, gatekeepers, and law enforcement agencies.

### Post-Separation Presence of Batterer in Women's Neighborhood

When the batterers were permitted to live or work in the women's neighborhood, they continued the harassment. Since most of the harassing batterers who were permitted to live or work in the woman's neighborhood, had been convicted for domestic violence, they could have been made to wear three-way electronic bracelets (Coleman, 2002), which could have been programmed to alert the police and the women, when their batterers were dangerously close to them. These women, who were spending most of their limited income on daily taxis, to and from work, despite being in the pendant alarm program, would have benefited,

psychologically and financially, had any reasonable, precautionary measure(s) been taken by law enforcement.

For as long as their batterers were at-large, these women could be helped in one or more of the following ways: cost-effective door-to-door transportation service such as Access-A-Ride; ordinary looking but state-of-the-art bullet-proof jackets or umbrellas; and a *soundless* 911 one-touch-dial cellular phones with a geographic positioning system which does not require the woman to say even a word to clue-in the 911-dispatcher.

In evaluating such programs, attention needs to be paid to the impact on the *everyday life* activities, geography, and emotionality of the women and children: the degree of fear, anxiety, joy and comfort with which the women and children exit and enter home on a daily basis; the ease with which they sleep and wake up, cook and clean; their levels of attention to and productivity at their studies and/or jobs; substantial changes in their dispensable income; boosts to their healing and recovery; and any substantial changes in their behaviors, material resources, and living standards.

#### Enhance Material Resources

Since 1995, all of the federal funding available to New York City through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), to combat domestic violence, have been channeled through the criminal justice agencies. This has been so, primarily because VAWA was consolidated into the Crime Bill in 1995, despite the fact that many feminists opposed such a consolidation (Brooks, 1997).

However, the findings of this dissertation suggest that, a substantial amount of these funds need to be allocated, through non-criminal justice routes, to the improvement of

women's and children's material conditions, and the development of life-enhancing social networks in neighborhood environments.

The material resources that have been demonstrated, in this dissertation, to play a very essential role in increasing the safety, reducing the fear, and vulnerability of battered women include: affordable housing in safe neighborhoods, affordable higher education, rent subsidies, good neighborhood schools, security guards in residential buildings, friendly neighborhood stores, door-to-door affordable transportation, improved health care, non-punitive child protection services, free lock change, free caller ID with a new confidential phone line (in addition to the old phone line), and free private mailboxes with addresses that look like home addresses (for women whose batterers keep locating them).

#### Healing Programs for Children and Youth

Participants who had children were frustrated with the lack of specialized services for children and youth who have witnessed their (step-) father, abuse their (step-) mother. There are almost no specialized programs for children whose father or mother has been killed in intimate partner violence. Measures must be taken to heal children and youth, rather than criminalize them, in order to break the intergenerational transmission of battering behaviors.

#### Shun Secrecy, Isolation, and Stigma

The finding that alert phone calls and entry-bans were extremely protective, and often even deterrent, widens the scope for envisioning ways in which general neighborhood facilities, such as tenant organizations, real estate offices, post offices, hair salons, grocery stores, cafes, religious organizations, neighborhood health centers, and so on, can help facilitate the development of a neighborly protective responsiveness for women in general.

Neighborhoods would, thus, inevitably become protective even toward women who have fled from their batterers and are usually unprotected strangers in their new neighborhoods.

Public service announcements that discourage victim-blaming would perhaps encourage many more women to reveal their predicament to a neighbor and/or real estate agent. Then, hopefully, her neighbor will offer her vigilance, while the real estate agent introduces her to appropriate community resources.

The protective power of neighborly interventions, demonstrated in this study, points out the folly of public service announcements that provide only a toll free number for confidential help. Such posters perpetuate the shame and secrecy associated with domestic violence. The power of vigilant neighbors calls for taking giant steps towards de-privatizing domestic violence, de-stigmatizing battered women, and expanding the “Is it your business if your neighbor beats his wife? You bet her life it is!” campaign.

Non-domestic violence neighborhood services and groups could be one vehicle by which, “Beat the shame! Seek neighborly protection!” kinds of messages can be disseminated pervasively and quickly, before serious injury is inflicted, on separated women. Popular writings, and music lyrics, about battered women’s lives being saved by (anonymous) neighbors who, even though they perhaps believe, “She is in it because she likes it,” they also believe, “Violence is never a fair price for bad choices.” Such media exposure would go a long way in cultivating neighborly support for battered women.

However, one of the many dangers, of a woman going public (i.e., disclosing her predicament), is that some well- or not-so-well-intentioned neighborhood leaders (e.g., some priests), or neighborhood organizations who have a pro-marriage bias, may dangerously orient the woman towards reuniting with her batterer. Another danger is that another abusive

man may pursue her. Three of my participants' abusive relationships began with the woman viewing her male friend as a protector (mostly against street crime), little knowing that she would, sooner than later, need protection *against* him. Yet another danger of a woman seeking protection, as was feared by one of my participants, is the high likelihood of her being wrongly perceived (e.g., by a male guard) as seeking intimacy.

Therefore, all public announcements encouraging women to cultivate neighborly protection, must also include a toll-free number by which women can also access private (i.e., support groups), public (i.e., shelters), or criminal justice (i.e., pendant alarm) options.

However, with the de-privatizing of domestic violence, women who are re-victimization as a consequence of disclosure, will hopefully seek out other neighborly resources to protect themselves.

### The Civil Society

A striking finding of this dissertation is that what battered women are in critical need of, and which over 50% of my participants were fortunate to experience, is civil society (Cohen & Arato, 1992). In civil society, people (i.e., neighbors, in the context of this study) practically exert themselves for their own-being and that of society at large.

However, the general notions of civil society are often overly optimistic, and disregard the ambiguities and conflicts inherent in real civil societies. Therefore, the previous section discusses the *potential* dangers that battered women could expose themselves to, when they disclose their need for protection; even if they do so discreetly, and to people presumed to be reliable confidants (e.g., one's own mother, the batterer's sister, one's religious mentor, one's supervisor, one's doorman).

When neighbors and law enforcement were supportive by their practice, not merely by their presence, the batterers ceased even the long distance harassment.

### **Tailoring Law Enforcement**

#### **Domestic Violence Units' Mandate**

The primary mandate of domestic violence units in the police force and district attorneys offices should be meaningfully different from the standard arrest-and-prosecute mandate. Overwhelming evidence suggests that the standard mandate of winning criminal convictions, puts women in serious jeopardy. Seventy five percent of women who get killed, are killed by their batterers, at the courthouse or thereafter (de Becker, 1997). Sixteen percent of cases where the women fully cooperated with, and desired prosecution, resulted in dismissals (Ferraro, 1993). In this study too, even though all 12 women in the enhanced criminal intervention alarm program, desired prosecution from the outset, six women indicated that little or no legal action was taken, even though they filed reports of persistent harassment.

Therefore, the primary stated mandate of domestic violence units should be: prosecution with an eye on the safety of the women and children. My data clearly illustrates that the safety of women and children is not just a "social work" issue, i.e., it is not outside the domain of criminal justice mandate.

Participants who found the criminal justice system adequately responsive of their wishes, continued to seek state intervention and thus lessened their vulnerability to serious injury or death. Mandating batterers to a serious 30-52 week treatment, when participants requested treatment instead of incarceration, would have been beneficial to participants. The benefit to participants would have been either a violence-free life if the batterer had truly

changed, or a greater willingness on the part of the woman to separate and/or re-seek state intervention, given that the state had adequately supported her in the past. Thereby, yet again, perhaps greatly reducing her vulnerability to serious injury or death.

Therefore, a battered woman must be regarded as an expert (on her own safety), who can greatly benefit from the supportive input from a team of other experts (viz., police officers, detectives, and assistant district attorneys) to manage her threats, lower her risk of femicide, and enhance her well-being.

#### Despotic Control by Male or State?

One participant who had children had very unfairly been robbed of her children by the child protective system. Another participant slept for almost an entire year on a church bench or in subway cars because she had been wisely warned, by her case worker, not to avoid going to a shelter because child protective services would want to “help” take care of her children. Three participants, who had often called 911 during the abusive relationship, were threatened with dual arrest (i.e., that they too would be arrested the next time they called 911). A woman’s invitation for state intervention, is thus threatened to be (ab)used as a means to create additional sites for state control against her.

#### Incarceration after Treatment Noncompliance

When women wanted their partners/spouses to be mandated to batterers’ treatment, they also indicated that *if the batterers failed to comply*, they should serve reasonable time in jail/prison. However, contrary to the women’s wishes, the men who refused batterer’s treatment, were not given any jail time past their initial detainment.

### Alternatives to Incarceration

Several participants wanted to try out all possible remedies and alternatives to incarceration before separation/divorce. However, at the time of the interviews (1996-97) none of the women were offered the option of transformative justice, where, in addition to being held fully responsible and accountable for the abuse, and being required to make material retributions, the batterers are also challenged, by male peers. They are urged to use their analysis, understanding, and experience of race and class oppression, to redefine their gender norms and expectations, and treat their partners/spouses, and children nonviolently (Almeida & Dolan-Del Vecchio, 1999).

The effectiveness of such a “healing justice” program remains to be evaluated. The evaluation should focus on the program’s ability to: protect the women, transform the batterers, maintain the criminal status of domestic violence, resist the privatization of domestic violence, accept the unwillingness of some women to forgive and reunify; and resist pressuring women to choose between their family and their safety. The indicators of transformation in the batterers must include not only the extent to which they resist and oppose abusive control, but also the extent to which they support the women’s autonomy (Coker, 2001b).

### The Folly of Uniform Policy Implementation

This study supports the notion that one-size-fits-all solutions are usually wrong. The data call for a *tailoring of the implementation* of programs and policies to each recipient’s assets and liabilities. The data call for *flexibility* and *adaptability*, which are the hallmarks and cornerstones of intelligence and evolution (Johnson, 2002).

Uniform sanctions for all batterers, does result in unequal protection for battered women. Sanctions for batterers must be tailored to ensure that battered women's material resources, safety, and well-being, are enhanced by them.

### The Take Seriously Component

Most of my participants felt that their complaints were not taken seriously by the domestic violence combat machinery (i.e., by individual persons implementing any given policy). The alarm program, however, initially did make all twelve women feel that someone was seriously listening to them, rather than forcing them to leave permanently or seek shelter.

I hope that the findings and recommendations of this study are taken seriously, so that the many women who entrusted to me their knowledge and experience will have the satisfaction of seeing vast improvements in the policies and practices which directly impact them. For, as one of my participants, Laura, expressly stated:

I want to be of help by sharing my experiences because I believe that the findings of academic research are seriously considered when policy and legislation are being formulated and changed.

## Appendix A

## STUDY ANNOUNCEMENT

# PARTICIPANTS WANTED

for a study on  
**Battered Women's Relationship to Their Housing**



## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED

ABUSE FROM A PARTNER/HUSBAND  
AND

- tried/trying to leave your housing
- tried/trying to keep your housing
- tried/trying to get him to leave and stay away from your housing
- was/are able to keep or get back your housing but didn't/don't want to



ARE YOU WILLING TO DISCUSS ABOUT IT  
IN A CONFIDENTIAL TWO-HOUR-INTERVIEW WITH ME?

**\$40**

If so,  
PLEASE LEAVE ME A MESSAGE AT  
**212.642.2567 EXT. 3**

OR

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME & PHONE NUMBER  
CALL 212.642.2566 10AM - NOON ON THURSDAY and ASK FOR CECILIA

I will compensate you with \$40 in gratitude for your participation

*Thanks ∞ Cecilia*

**PARTICIPANTS WANTED**  
for a two-hour  
confidential interview on  
**Battered Women's  
Relationship to Their Housing**

Please call Cecilia at  
212.642.2567 ext 3  
and leave a message  
or  
212.642.2566  
on Thurs 10am-Noon



**PARTICIPANTS WANTED**  
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or  
212.642.2566  
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**Program Status:** Current Did-not-Enroll Quit Terminated-by-Prog-Coord Completed NA  
**Abuse:** Physical Verbal Emotional Financial Sexual Property Hospitalized Yes No **Weapons:** \_\_\_\_\_ His/Hers Present Used None  
**Source of OP:** Family Criminal None **Violated:** Yes No **Arrested:** Yes No **Prosecuted:** Yes No **Sentence:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Vacate Order:** Grant'd-on-request Denied-on-request Grant'd-automatically None  
**Site of Abuse:** Apt House Condo Coop Tenant-Org'd Own/Rent Pub Housing/Pvt # of Floors: \_\_\_\_\_ # Units per Floor: \_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_/mth  
**Currently living there?** Yes/No With/Without batterer Tried to keep but couldn't Did not want to keep Trying to Reclaim  
**Alternate Housing:** Apt House Condo Coop Tenant-Org'd Shelter Own/Rent Pub Housing/Pvt #Floors: \_\_\_\_\_ #Units/Floor: \_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_/mth  
**Violence after Separation:** None **Frequency:** More Less **Severity:** More Less **Kind:** Physical Verbal Emotional Financial Sexual Property

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Setting: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant #: \_\_\_\_\_ Precinct #: \_\_\_\_\_

**UPPER WEST SIDE ALTERNATIVES TO SHELTER PROGRAM**

**PART A: SURVIVOR/BATTERER/HOUSEHOLD PROFILE**

**Age:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Race/Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Language:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
hers/his hers/his hers/his  
**Employment:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Education:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Immigration Status:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
hers/his hers/his hers/his

Children:Age	Gender	Country of Birth	Whose Child?	In whose Custody?	Visitation Schedule/Setting	Effect of Housing on Each

Have custody/visitation arrangements been court ordered? Yes No **If no,** Did you both come to a mutual agreement out of court?  
 How much are you exposed to him around the matter of custody/visitation

Does any one else live in your house/apartment? Yes No  
**If yes,** who else? Since when? Until when?

Do you have any family in the US? Yes No In New York? Yes No

Does your partner contribute financially to you and/or your children? Children only Both Neither  
**If yes,** How? How often? Is it Court ordered? Yes No Mode of payment? directly through Court

What's your marital status with your abusive partner? Married/Never married Since \_\_\_\_\_ **Now:** Separated/Divorced Since \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many times have you separated? \_\_\_\_\_ Lengths of time? longest \_\_\_\_\_ shortest \_\_\_\_\_ When did you last separate? \_\_\_\_\_

**If still married,** Do you plan to divorce him? Yes No **If no,** why not?  
**If yes,** Have you filed for divorce? Yes No **If yes,** When? \_\_\_\_\_ How is the case proceeding?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Appendix B

**PART B: STORY OF SURVIVAL**

1. At this point, where are you in terms of your attempts to: stop the violence/end your relationship  
protect your life  
proceed with the business of living your life?
2. Did you try to end the violence or keep your housing by making your partner/husband leave? When was that?  
How come you did that?
3. Did you try to end your abuse by moving out yourself? When was that? How come you did that?
4. Did you, your friends, family, or neighbors try any other "decent" or "dirty" strategies to change or escape  
your abusive situation? Why? When? How?
5. Did it ever occur to you to try and keep your housing and make your partner/husband move out? Why (not)?
6. I know there are difficulties, obstacles, and challenges in arriving at any decision. I would like you to talk  
about the difficulties you may have had while coming to this decision of either leaving or making him leave?  
What were the various pros and cons you may have considered while reaching this decision?
7. Did your children play any active role, pose any arguments, etc. in convincing you to either leave or "stay put"  
and keep your apartment?
8. Did your housing history, the number of times you may have moved from one apartment to another, play any  
role in your decision to "stay put" or leave?
9. What do you think might be the feelings and experiences of a woman who made her batterer move out and  
kept staying in the same apartment?

**PART C: RELATIONSHIP TO SITE OF BATTERING**

1. What feelings, if any, do you have to the housing in which you experienced violence?
2. If you ever tried living there without your partner, How did you feel in various rooms  
LR, DR, BR, Bathroom, basement, attic, etc...?
3. Did your partner destroy or damage any property or belongings?
4. Do any objects/activities in your current housing remind you about the abuse? How have you dealt with that?
5. Has there been anything really good or safe about continuing/not continuing to live there?
6. Anything really uncomfortable/unpleasant/inconvenient about continuing/not continuing to live there?
7. Have you noticed any changes in your sleep, dreams, feelings of anxiety, ability of relax.
8. How about any changes in your feelings as you come and go to and from your housing?
9. Is there anything you miss about that housing or neighborhood?

**PART D1: EXPERIENCE OF COMFORT, SAFETY, AND HEALING**

1. Do you find yourself seeking comfort? When?
  
2. And are you able to find comfort? How? Where?
  
3. Do you find yourself seeking safety? From whom? or what? When?
  
4. And are you able to find safety? How? Where?
  
5. Do you find yourself seeking healing? When?
  
6. And are you able to find healing? How? Where?
  
7. Can you say at this point whether or not you are healed from your abusive experiences?
  
8. How can you tell or recognize that you are healed?

**PART D2: MEANING OF HOME**

1. What is home for you? What is your meaning of home? What does the concept of home mean to you?
2. Where is home for you?
3. Did "home" have a different meaning for you before you were battered?
3. What places or activities, if any, make you feel "at home"?
4. What places/activities used to make you feel "at home" but not anymore?
5. Were you aware that such violence could occur in a home?
6. What steps, if any, did you take to feel at home in your current housing? Has that helped you feel at home there?
7. In your opinion, do your children feel at home in your current housing?
8. Have you had to make any special efforts to make your children feel at home?

PART E: KEEPING ONE'S HOUSING & BEING SAFE IN IT AND OUTSIDE IT

1. What have been your experiences in getting housed safely either in your own apartment or elsewhere?
2. Have you, your friends, family or neighbors found it necessary to do anything "decent" or "dirty" to make you feel safe and protected from your partner in your current housing?
3. What steps, if any, did you take to feel safe in it? Do you feel safe?
4. What has been most effective in making you feel safe?
5. Did you ever leave your current housing in order to be safe? If no, why not?  
If yes, When? Where did you go? For how long? How did you come to be in danger again?
6. Has your partner done anything to get you evicted from your current housing?
7. Has anyone or anything been particularly helpful in keeping your current housing?  
making you feel safe?
8. Has anyone or anything been particularly unhelpful and even dangerous in keeping your current housing?  
making you feel safe?
9. Has your partner been abusive after you moved out or had him move out? If no How come?  
If yes How? Where? How have you dealt with it?
10. Has your partner ever taken out an OP on you?
11. What was the most recent abusive act by your partner?  
Where? When? Weapons? What? Whose? Used? How did you deal with it?
12. What has been/will be your response to his polite request to move back into your previous housing with him?  
forceful/violent attempts to move you back to your previous housing?

**PART F: THE ALARM PROGRAM**  
For women not in the program

1. Do you know about a program which gives some battered women alarm pendants and install an alarm system in their housing after they evict the abusive partner?    yes    no            If yes, Which one do you know?
  - a. How do you know about it?
  - b. What do you know about it?
  - c. What do you think are the objectives of it?
  - d. What are your opinions/feelings/experiences, if any, of such a program?
  - e. Would you recommend that program to any women you know? Why (not)?
  - f. Would you like to have one of those alarm gadgets? Why (not)?
  - g. How would you feel if your housing was wired up & connected to your local precinct to enhance your safety?
  - h. (If so) How did you feel about not being eligible for the program? Why weren't you eligible?
  - i. (If so) Why did you waive participation in such a program even though you may have been eligible?

**PART F: THE 24TH PRECINCT ALARM PROGRAM**

**1. UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM**

- a. What in your understanding is the program? How did you first learn about the program?
- b. Who explained the program to you?
- c. Was the program explained to you in detail, in words you could understand clearly and easily?
- d. And the part about the equipment and how to use it? Was that explained in sufficient detail?
- e. Were there any aspects of the program you did not understand fully at first?
- f. Are there any aspects of the program that you are still not clear about?
- g. What suggestion, if any do you have for making the entire program more easily understood?

**2. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PROGRAM**

- a. Why were you interested in this program?
- b. What did you expect it could do?
- c. Did you believe that this program would help you to be safe? Yes No Has it lived up to that expectation?
- d. How, if at all, has it kept you safe?
- e. How, if at all, has it helped you keep your housing?
- f. Do you think this program gives women a false sense of security?
- g. Before you entered this program did you want to relocate in order to be safe?  
If yes, where did you want to go? Why didn't you go there?  
If no, why did you want to stay?

**3. WORKING THE PROGRAM**

- a. Do you have a cellular phone? Yes No If no, Why not?
- b. Have you used the alarm system? Why? What has been the response program-wise and partner-wise?
- c. Have there been times when the batterer has been inside your home but you did not press the alarm? If yes, what were those occasions? Why didn't you use the alarm?
- d. Have there been times when the batterer was outside your home and you didn't use the alarm? If yes, where? when? why was he there? Why didn't you use the alarm?
- e. Have there been false alarms? How Come? What happened partner-wise? and program-wise?
- f. Has your partner been arrested for violations while you were/are in the program?
- g. Have you had difficulty consenting to criminal prosecution? Did you consent or refuse? Why?
- h. How do you feel about the mandatory prosecution agreement in the program?
- i. In your opinion, what should the program do when women refuse to prosecute?
- j. How do you feel about mandatory counseling? What do you find (un)helpful?
- k. How do you feel about the quality of the equipment? quality of installation? quality of maintenance? Did the equipment fail to function at any time? Were you in danger? What did you do?

**4. IMPACT ON BATTERER/VIOLENCE**

- a. While in the program, did you see any changes in your partner's behavior or attitude to you?
- b. Does your partner know about the program? Did you tell him? If no, who informed him?
- c. What do you think he believes the program can/will do? Has knowing changed his behavior?  
In what ways?
- d. Has there been more or less abuse/harassment/stalking/phone calls/threats/break ins after installing alarm sys?
- e. Do you think that the alarm system has had a deterrent effect?  
If yes, why? If no, why not?
- f. Have you ever tried to keep him away from yourself or your housing prior to this program?  
How? What subsequently happened?

**5. IMPACT ON ACCESSING OTHER RESOURCES**

- a. Has being in the program affected your priority for public housing, if you wanted it?
- b. Has it been easier or more difficult to get public assistance, if you wanted/needed it?
- c. Have the police or courts been more or less responsive or sensitive to you since you've been in the program?  
in their speed of response and attitude to you  
in their speed of response and attitude towards your partner  
number of arrests  
jail time
- d. Has the Child Welfare Agency been more or less involved since you've been in the program?
- e. Has been easier or more difficult to get a home attendant, if you wanted/needed one?

**6. COMPARING LIFE IN THE PROGRAM TO OTHER INTERVENTIONS SOUGHT**

If you have tried other housing options, compare your life when you tried other options:

- a. confidential address
- b. an address known to your partner, like say your mother's apt.
- c. trying to keep your home without enrolling in this program

**7. EXPANDING THE PROGRAM**

- a. If you knew that a woman in this program had been killed by her batterer:  
Would it have affected your decision to join or continue being in the program?  
In what ways? Would you have participated differently in the program? Please describe?
- b. Should this program be offered to women whose partners are extremely dangerous?
- c. In what type of situation would you not recommend this program?
- d. Would you recommend this program to other battered women?
- e. What would you consider before recommending this program to other battered women?
- f. Do you think that this program should be expanded? In what ways?

**8. IMPROVING/CHANGING/STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAM**

- a. Have you ever felt like getting out of the program?  
     If no, why not? If yes, why? Why didn't you?
  
- b. How would you change the program to make it more helpful to you?
  
- c. What have been the least helpful aspects of this program for you?
  
- d. What have been the most helpful aspects of this program for you?
  
- e. What improvements or changes do you suggest with respect to the following?

Aspects	Suggestions for Changes/Improvements
Equipment	
Necessity of Cellular Phone	
Role of Police	
Role of DA	
Role and Number of Staff	
Role of Counselor	
Role of Alarm Company	
Mandatory Prosecution	
Mandatory Counseling	
Role of Children	
Role of Neighbors	

**PART G: POLICE INTERVENTION**

1. What have been your experiences with the police?
2. What was the most serious abusive act by your partner?  
Where? When? Weapons? What? Whose? Used? How did you deal with it? Did you have to be hospitalized?
3. Have there been incidents after separation where the police were called to your home to protect you? When?  
Who called the police? What, if anything, did the police do?  
What, if anything, did you want the police to do? & did not want them to do?
4. How about violent incidents in other locations? Where?  
Who called the police? What, if anything, did the police do?  
What, if anything, did you want the police to do? & did not want them to do?
5. Have there been instances when you felt the police were sensitive and helpful to you? Can you describe them?
6. Have the police acted in ways that you felt were unhelpful or even dangerous to you? Can you describe them?
7. Have the police ever arrested or threatened to arrest you?
8. Would you have liked your partner to be mandatorily arrested? Why/why not?
9. Would you have liked him to be mandatorily prosecuted? Why (not)?
10. Would you have liked him to get a jail term? If no, why not? If yes, why? and for what length of time?
11. How many times has he been arrested for abusing you?
12. What's the longest amount of time he has been jailed for abusing you?
13. Has he ever been in trouble with the law for any other reasons? Has he ever been on probation or parole?
14. Did you ever file a criminal case against him? For what? What was your experience with the DA?
15. Would you have liked your partner to be mandated to attend batterers treatment programs?
16. Do you believe that batterers programs would help him to stop battering you? How?
17. What has been your experience with the Domestic Violence Officer in your local precinct?

**PART H: EVERYDAY LIFE AFTER SEPARATION**

1. Do you find yourself frequenting any places more often than before?

2. Do you find yourself avoiding any places or routes?

3. Do you engage in any activities more than you used to ?

4. Do you avoid engaging in any activities?

5. What changes, if any, have you noticed since you separated?

general health

cooking, eating

physical health, psychological well-being

staying elsewhere overnight

kinds of relaxation activities, places you are able to relax in

time you spend in your n'hood, away from it

involvement in your n'hood

involvement in religious, social, cultural, political groups

**PART I: ATTITUDES/ROLE OF COMMUNITY**

1. Do you believe that community should help battered women keep their housing?
  - Who, in your opinion, is the "community"?
  - What should they do to help?
  - Is there anything you think neighbors should not do so as to avoid putting the woman in danger?
  - Has the kind of housing & neighborhood you are in played any role in protecting you?
2. Have neighbors or passers-by ever assisted you or called the police when they noticed you being abused?
  - How did you respond to that?
  - Did you find their interventions helpful at the time?
  - What, if anything, should they have done differently?
3. How do you feel about encouraging neighbors to intervene in battering cases?
4. What would you consider to be community support for battered women who want to keep their housing?
5. How did your/his neighbors/family/friends/coworkers respond to
  - your attempts to move out/end your relationship?
  - your attempts to evict him?
  - your attempts to keep him away?
6. Has anyone said to you that you would be better off moving to a confidential address in order to be safe from him?

**PART J: LOOKING AHEAD**

**1. What anxieties, fears and hopes do you have at this point in your life about:**

**your future safety from your abusive ex-partner?**

**your current housing**

**your relationship with your partner**

**your children**

**your family/friends**

**his family/friends**

**your current relationship**

**developing an intimate relationship with another adult**

**income/getting a job/keeping a job**

**rent/mortgage payments**

**2. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?**

## Appendix D

## REQUEST TO ANNOUNCE STUDY



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PH.D. PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY  
SUBPROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL

33 WEST 42 STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10036-8099  
212 642-2575 FAX 212 642-1986

August 20, 1997

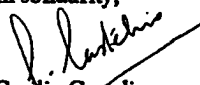
Dear Domestic Violence Officer:

I am writing to request you to please assist me in reaching battered women by posting the enclosed Participants Wanted flyers where women are most likely to see them.

If you know of any battered women who successfully or unsuccessfully tried to keep their housing by getting the batterer to move out kindly give each of them a green flyer, if possible.

I have enclosed an abstract of my study and my university's review board's approval letter. I will be very pleased to meet with you if you would like to know more about the project. Thank you.

In solidarity,

  
Cecilia Castelino  
tel/fax: 718.472.5306

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YORK COLLEGE

## Appendix E

## PERMISSION TO USE ALARM PROGRAM DATA



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
125 WORTH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

August 21, 1996

Ms. Cecilia Castelino  
45-38 44th. St.  
Sunnyside, New York 11104

RE: Permission to Use Data

*Cecilia*  
Dear Ms. Castelino,

Alisa Del Tufo of the Urban Justice Center and I are pleased to have you working with us on the evaluation of the 24 Precinct Alternative to Shelter program. A major part of the evaluation are the in depth interviews that you are conducting with three subsamples of battered women: those in the program; those who considered the program but did not enroll; and a third group of battered women that fits into neither of the first two categories. We understand that in addition to the information pertinent to our evaluation you will also be collecting data concerning housing issues and other variables of interest to you. We hereby give you permission to use any and all of the data collected from all three groups, minus any identifiers, for your dissertation which is on a related subject.

Sincerely,

*Susan Wilt*  
Susan A. Wilt, Dr.PH  
Director, Epidemiology and Surveillance  
Injury Prevention Program

Appendix C1

CONSENT FORM FOR WOMEN-AT-LARGE



THE  
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SUBPROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL

33 WEST 42 STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10036-8009  
212 642-2575 FAX 212 642-1986

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW  
and  
TO RELEASE INTERVIEW INFORMATION

I, Cecilia Castelino, am asking you to participate in an interview about the feelings battered women have to the housing in which they were battered and about the struggles and obstacles faced by battered women who may or may not have tried to keep living in, or reclaim, their housing by getting their abusive partner to move out. The information you offer will be useful to people who advocate for, plan, or manage safe and viable housing alternatives for battered women such as battered women's advocacy groups, housing policy planners, public policy planners, and law enforcement agencies. This study is part of my Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

The interview will be conducted in English. The questions will be about women's strategies, be they "decent" or "dirty," "institutional" or "non-institutional," to survive and feel safe and protected, about the meaning and experience of "home," and about the struggles and obstacles faced in keeping your housing and feeling safe in it. Refusal to participate or refusal to answer any questions will not affect your relationship with programs in which you may be currently enrolled.

I will compensate you with \$40 for your participation in a one-time two-hour-long interview.

I agree to be interviewed  I do not agree to be interviewed

I am also asking your permission to tape record the interview so that nothing is missed and so that your words are not changed or misunderstood. You can turn off the tape-recorder anytime during the interview. The tapes will be erased soon after the interview has been transcribed. All written records and audio tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet.

I agree to be tape-recorded  I do not agree to be tape-recorded

The information in your interview, will be used in my Ph.D. research project report, and in publications such as a "Tips" brochure for battered women and battered women's programs. Your name, the names of other people, places and other such identifying information you mention will not be used in anything I write or discuss. Changes will be made to ensure that the information does not reveal who you are or where you live. Whenever possible, what you say will be combined with what other participants in this study say. You can choose not to tell me your name, telephone number or address. You can refuse to answer any questions and you can stop the interview at any time.

You can request me to let you review a written transcript of your interview. You can then discuss the transcript with me and suggest modifications and new information to make it more accurate and clear.

I want to review my transcript  I do not want to review my transcript

If you have any questions now or in the future you can reach me at 212.642.2567. You can also contact my advisor Professor Leanne Rivlin at 212.642.2563. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study you can call Hilry Fisher at the Office of Sponsored Research, City University of New York—Graduate Center, at 212.642.2059.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (You may choose not to use your real name) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix C2

## CONSENT FORM FOR ATS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



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212 642-2575 FAX 212 642-1986

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW  
and  
TO RELEASE INTERVIEW INFORMATION

My name is Cecilia Castelino. I understand that you have had some involvement with the Upper West Side Alternatives to Shelter Program developed in order to help battered women keep their housing without the batterer in it. I would like to interview you about your positive and negative experiences with the program. Your opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program are very important and useful to people who plan safe affordable housing for battered women. Your participation in this evaluation of the 24th Precinct alarm program will help us try to get the Mayor's support to increase the effectiveness and merits of such programs.

The questions will be about your strategies, be they "decent" or "dirty", to survive and feel safe and protected, about your meaning and experience of home, about the struggles and obstacles you face in keeping your housing or feeling safe in it.

I would like your permission to tape record the interview so that nothing is missed and so that your words are not changed or misunderstood. I will be the only person listening to the tapes and transcribing them. The tapes will be erased as soon as they are transcribed.

I am currently doing a Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I have been selected to do the program evaluation interviews because my Ph.D. Dissertation is about the feelings women have towards the housing in which they were battered and the strategies some women use to keep their housing and make their abusive partner or husband move out. Your name will not be used in my dissertation nor in any reports, publications or discussions. Changes will be made to ensure that the information does not reveal who you are.

You may refuse to answer any questions. Such refusal will in no way affect your relationship with the program. You may stop the tape recorder at any time. You may also stop the interview at any time, in which case we would need to reschedule another time to continue where we left off.

If you have any questions now or in the future you can reach me at 212.642.2567. If you have any concerns about this interview you can contact the Program Officer of the Alternatives to Shelter Program at the 24th Precinct at telephone number 212.678.1850. Thank you for your participation.

I agree to be tape-recorded                       I do not agree to be tape-recorded  
 I want to review my transcript                       I do not want to review the transcript

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(You may choose not to use your real name)                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix C3

## CONSENT FORM FOR AWARE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



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33 WEST 42 STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10036-8098  
212 642-2575 FAX 212 642-1986

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW  
and  
TO RELEASE INTERVIEW INFORMATION

My name is Cecilia Castelino. I understand that you have had some involvement with the AWARE Program developed in order to help battered women keep their housing without the batterer in it. I would like to interview you about your positive and negative experiences with the program. Your opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program are very important and useful to people who plan safe affordable housing for battered women. Your participation in this interview will help us try to get the Mayor's support to increase the effectiveness and merits of such programs.

The questions will be about your strategies, be they "decent" or "dirty", "institutional" or "noninstitutional" to survive and feel safe and protected, about your meaning and experience of home, about the struggles and obstacles you face in keeping your housing or feeling safe in it.

I would like your permission to tape record the interview so that nothing is missed and so that your words are not changed or misunderstood. I will be the only person listening to the tapes and transcribing them. The tapes will be erased as soon as they are transcribed.

I am currently doing a Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I have been selected to do this interview because my Ph.D. Dissertation is about the feelings women have towards the housing in which they were battered and the strategies some women use to keep their housing and make their abusive partner or husband move out. Your name will not be used in my dissertation nor in any reports, publications or discussions. Changes will be made to ensure that the information does not reveal who you are or where you live.

You may refuse to answer any questions. Such refusal will in no way affect your relationship with the program. You may stop the tape recorder at any time. You may also stop the interview at any time, in which case we would need to reschedule another time to continue where we left off.

If you have any questions now or in the future you can reach me at 212.642.2567. If you have any concerns about this interview you can contact ADA Cynthia Watson at 718.250.3343. Thank you for your participation.

I agree to be tape-recorded                       I do not agree to be tape-recorded  
 I want to review my transcript                       I do not want to review the transcript

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(You may choose not to use your real name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Interviewer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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