



THE VOICE

The Journal of the Battered Women's Movement

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*Published opinions do not necessarily
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The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) has worked over thirty-three years to end violence against women by raising awareness and educating the public about the effects of domestic abuse. Our work includes developing and sustaining ground-breaking public policy at the national level and assisting the 2,000+ urban and rural shelters and programs at the local, state, and regional levels of the nation in the programming they offer to victims seeking safety and assistance. NCADV represents and connects all survivors, victims, and allies working to end domestic violence at the grassroots level.

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Save the Date!

**NCADV's 15th National Conference Domestic Violence
and
NOMAS' 37th National Conference on Men and Masculinity**

Preserving Our Roots While Looking to the Future

July 22-25, 2012

Denver, CO

Special Keynote Speaker: [Ellen Pence](#)

NCADV, in partnership with the [National Organization for Men Against Sexism](#) (NOMAS), will be holding our next conference, *Preserving Our Roots While Looking to the Future*, July 22-25, 2012 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Denver, Colorado.

Join the many advocates, activists, survivors and allies working to end domestic violence for this critical conference aimed at challenging and informing those working within the movement and/or "system" to provide the most effective solutions and support to domestic violence victims. At each NCADV conference, we work to connect and empower victims and survivors of domestic (and other forms of) violence through specialized workshops and discussion sessions, strategy sessions, survivor institutes, caucus meetings, our Survivor Speak-out, and other organized events aimed at providing a space for victims and survivors to process their experiences, connect with others and heal. Our conference themes, workshops, presenters and events are structured to provide victim service providers and allied professionals with the information they most need to guide, challenge and improve their work.

The National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) is an activist organization of men and women supporting positive changes for men. At NOMAS' Men and Masculinity conferences, we evaluate and examine diverse aspects in gender identity, gender roles, the construction of masculinity, and the experiences of men's lives, specifically as related to the role of men as allies to the women's and sexual assault domestic violence movements.

Registration will open soon (watch for special emails announcing this).
Early registration rates begin at \$200pp for NCADV members and \$275pp for non-members.

The conference hotel rate is \$129 a night.

**SOON TO COME:
Registration Opening
Call for Workshops***

**If you wish to speak at an NCADV conference, please know we require you to apply through our call for workshops process. We do not take unsolicited requests for speakers. Join NCADV's email list to receive the alert: www.ncadv.org.*

Contributors in alphabetical order:

Lee Alcott

Lee Alcott is the Executive Director of the Barren River Area Safe Space, Inc., a domestic violence shelter and program in south central Kentucky. She is a past President of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, and has received numerous awards for her work with homeless battered women. A self-taught artist, Lee is a Licensed Professional Art Therapist. She has been appointed to the Kentucky Board of Licensure for Professional Art Therapists as well as the KY Council for Interstate Adult Offender Supervision.

Amy Andress

Amy Andress is the Victim Assistance Coordinator at the Pearl Police Department in Pearl, Mississippi. Mrs. Andress works with victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault on a daily basis. As an advocate, Mrs. Andress works to ensure all rights of crime victims are carried out. She serves as an advocate for the victim throughout the criminal justice process and works closely with public and private agencies to assist the victims with various services. Mrs. Andress has served hundreds of victims as an advocate in the courtroom. Mrs. Andress has been successful in implementing the victim notification program at the Pearl Police Department, which has been a tremendous asset to the victims she serves. In addition, Mrs. Andress started the metro-Jackson area's first Batterer's Intervention Program and was selected to present this program at the Mississippi Attorney General's Conference. In addition, she has presented "How to Improve your investigation on strangulation" to officers across the state of Mississippi. Mrs. Andress has also spoken to various groups on her personal life living with an abuse and how she came to be a survivor. Mrs. Andress holds degrees from Mississippi State University in Education. She taught school for many years before using her past personal experience to help others. Mrs. Andress lives in Brandon, Mississippi with her husband and three children.

Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro

Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro is an award winning writer author of novels *Caparazon* (2010), and *Los documentados* published in Puerto Rico and Spain. She also won the National Institute of Puerto Rican Literature Prize in 2008, the Woman Latino Writer Award Residency from National Hispanic Culture Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2011 and the PEN Club Prize on 2010 and 2006. Arroyo Pizarro is the Director of Puerto Rican writers participating in the Second Puerto Rican Word Festival attended in Old San Juan and New York on 2011. She teaches Survival Creative Writing Workshops in San Juan, PR for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Ben Atherton-Zeman

Ben is a spokesperson for the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (www.nomas.org) and is a public speaker on issues of violence prevention. He has given presentations in 43 states, Canada, China and the Czech Republic. Ben has spoken at military bases, colleges, high schools, public theatres, conferences, houses of worship and juvenile detention facilities.

For the past seventeen years, Ben has worked as a prevention educator for rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs, and state coalitions. He is an advisory board member for the White Ribbon Campaign in the United Kingdom. Ben identifies as a "recovering sexist" and believes every man must challenge violence and sexism in the world and in themselves. He met and fell in love with his incredible wife, Lucinda, eleven years ago while they were both doing improvisational comedy in Maine. They live in Maynard, MA and have no children except themselves. Find out more about Ben at www.voicesofmen.org.

Bonnie Brandl

Bonnie Brandl holds an MSW from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She has worked with battered women and their children for over 20 years and with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence for over 16 years. She co-authored *Elder Abuse Detection and Intervention: A Collaborative Approach*. Her numerous published articles, manuals, and booklets on domestic abuse in later life have been distributed throughout the country, and she has presented at national, regional, state, and local conferences.

Melinda Brooks

Melinda Brooks graduated from The Ohio State University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology. During the final two years of her college career, she volunteered as an intern with the Franklin County Municipal Court Department of Probation Services. Upon completing her degree, she was hired as a Probation Officer in 1996. Ms. Brooks has experience working with general supervision, investigation, sex offender, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health caseloads within the FCMC Probation Department. In 2005, Ms. Brooks was awarded the George Farmer Line Officer of the Year award by the Chief Probation Officer's Association for her exemplary work in the field of community corrections. Promoted to her current position of Probation Officer Supervisor in 2007, she now oversees the Domestic Violence Unit, Victim Assistants, Sex Offender Program, ADAP Probation Officer and CATCH Program Probation Officer.

Stacey L. Corbitt, MSTC

Stacey Corbitt is a technical writer and part-time college professor of writing and sociology. She has been both a volunteer advocate and the Executive Director for a domestic violence and sexual assault victims' service program in western Montana.

Kathy Cound

I am Kathy; I survived a 7 year marriage filled with battery and emotional abuse. It took a lot of strength when I thought I had none. I found help and left my now ex-husband. I am currently disabled due to injuries sustained to my back when I was married. My injuries are degenerative, which means when my abuser fractured my spine all those years ago, it has taken some time to catch up to me, I can't sit or stand for long periods and suffer pain every day. I have PTSD from years of abuse. I am currently married to a wonderful man and we have a life I could never have dreamed of before. Together we have 5 kids. I attended meetings of the Alabama coalition against domestic violence for a little while and I found that with work, I didn't have time. I am very passionate about helping other women seek help and leave their abusers. I am very passionate about changing the laws regarding domestic violence. I think it will take people

internationally giving a voice to an underserved population of Americans suffering with domestic violence overseas.

Kristen Luppino-Gholston, LMSW

Kristen Luppino-Gholston, LMSW, Remla Parthasarathy, JD and Shea Post, M.Ed are members of the Executive Committee of the Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence (ECCAFV). Ms. Luppino-Gholston is the Domestic Violence Community Coordinator at Child & Family Services Haven House. She coordinates legislative advocacy, conducts trainings, and coordinates the economic empowerment program at Haven House. She also works on issues of elder abuse and intimate partner violence in the LGBT community. Ms. Parthasarathy is a Clinical Instructor for the Women, Children, & Social Justice Clinic at the University at Buffalo Law School. She has represented victims, coordinated a domestic violence court, and has served on the Board of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Shea Post is the Outreach Coordinator and Case Management Specialist in Victim Services at the International Institute of Buffalo. She conducts outreach, provides training, sits on the Family Court Muslim and Immigrant Collaborative and is a member of the Child Advocacy Center's multidisciplinary team. Combined, they have 31 years of experience in the area of family violence. The ECCAFV is a group of activists working to dismantle the root causes of domestic violence at the individual, organizational, and institutional level. The ECCAFV understands that domestic violence is a manifestation of sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression, and the only way to end domestic violence is comprehensive social change. Since 1978, the ECCAFV has sought to encourage dialogue and promote greater understanding of domestic violence through appropriate media, legislative advocacy, awareness-raising, and training activities.

Kris Macomber

Kris Macomber is completing her PhD in sociology at NC State. Her dissertation research examines men's increasing involvement in the violence against women movement. Kris works at the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, as the Evaluation Specialist.

Priyanka Miller

Priyanka Miller is a survivor of domestic violence. Currently, she works as a website designer/administrator with Interagency Council, a non-profit domestic violence services provider. She served on the Board of Directors for Interagency and is a co-founder of DIDI- a non-profit organization, providing advocacy and referrals to victims of family violence for South East Asians. She was also nominated as a commissioner on Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Her survivor story was also featured in a documentary. She holds a master's degree in management information systems and an undergraduate degree in architecture. She has given many presentations and written several articles on this subject.

Susan M. Omilian

Susan M. Omilian is the award-winning originator and facilitator of My Avenging Angel Workshops™ based on the idea that "living well is the best revenge." Since 2001, these workshops provide the critical "next step" for women who wish to break permanently out of the cycle of violence and reclaim their lives. Her book *The Thriver Workbook: Journey from Victim to*

Survivor to Thriver! published in 2010, sets forth the motivational guidance she has successfully used in her workshops. An attorney and published fiction and non-fiction writer, Susan has advocated to end violence against women for the past 35 years. Susan's idea for the workshops came after her niece, Maggie, a nineteen-year old college student, was killed by her ex-boyfriend who then killed himself. Susan speaks out on dating violence on college campuses across the country working to improve campus prevention and intervention programs on dating violence. She is a recognized national expert and an articulate spokesperson on the process of recovery after violence and abuse. She has been invited to speak throughout the country at meetings of women's organizations, domestic violence awareness events and national and international conferences. In addition her work with women, Susan is a Massachusetts-certified facilitator of batterers' intervention programs. For nine years, she conducted Men Overcoming Violence (M.O.V.E.) groups in Massachusetts and currently she is a facilitator of 26-week EXPLORE program groups for domestic violence offenders in Connecticut.

Chris S. O'Sullivan, PhD

Chris S. O'Sullivan, PhD, is a researcher and writer based in New York City. After directing a women's program on Martha's Vineyard, she earned a doctorate in experimental psychology. She was Senior Research Associate at Safe Horizon for 12 years. She has served as principal or co-principal investigator on 10 research grants focusing on domestic violence and the courts (criminal and family) from the National Institute of Justice. Since 1998 she has served as consultant to the Spring Valley Domestic Violence Initiative and Domestic Violence Court, a consortium serving primarily African American, Haitian and Latina victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault. She has developed program proposals and written grant applications for the New York Asian Women's Center, Rockland Family Shelter and VCS.

Becky Owens Bullard

Becky Owens Bullard has worked as an advocate for victims and survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking for over 8 years. Ms. Bullard currently works for the Polaris Project as a Program Specialist for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, which houses the national human trafficking hotline. Ms. Bullard also works on Polaris' National Training Team where she has conducted trainings for service providers, law enforcement, community members and international audiences on human trafficking as well as its intersection with domestic violence and runaway homeless youth. She has produced a number of informative materials on the intersections of domestic violence and human trafficking, including the human trafficking power and control wheel and trafficking victim assessment tools for domestic violence programs. Previously, Ms. Bullard worked as a Victim Witness Coordinator for the Office of the District Attorney in Nashville, TN where she advocated for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Ms. Bullard also served as the Chair of the Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence while in Nashville and was honored to receive the 2009 Victim Advocate of the Year Award for her work in both positions. Ms. Bullard gained international experience on issues of violence against women while working with Amnesty International in Santiago, Chile as the Coordinator of the Colombia Human Rights Team. Ms. Bullard holds bachelor's degrees in Political Science and International Studies from the University of Kansas and is currently pursuing her MA in International Affairs at

Moving Beyond Abuse in our Lives

By Susan M. Omilian

*“No longer a victim, beyond a survivor, she is a “thriver” on the brink of a new life.
She’s a new breed of woman moving on after abuse and she wants her revenge.
Living well is her best revenge. She is pushing through her fears, finding positive energy
in her life and forging a new future for herself and her children.”*

—Susan M. Omilian

Del Martin’s ground-breaking book *Battered Wives*,¹ first published in 1976 sounded the battle cry for a movement to save women who were abused, beaten, and violated in their marriages and relationships. The book exposed the “dirty little secret” closely held at that time by women around the world who feared daily for their lives in their own homes. Gathering as many “facts” about wife abuse as she could since little data was known or collected at the time on the topic, Del Martin compelled the world to see that these women, completely isolated, embarrassed, and humiliated, needed to get out, go somewhere, have someone believe their story and get help.

With the work of Del Martin and many other pioneers of the battered women’s movement, the goal of getting women out of abuse was set, and in the thirty-five years since, there has been an incredible, worldwide response to save these women’s lives. Over these years, shelters and intervention programs for women experiencing “domestic violence” (as it is now more broadly called today) came into operation in countries throughout the world. In addition, laws have been changed, police and court officials trained, judicial decisions overturned. Now, millions of women and girls are educated about the warning signs of abuse and how to get out of an abusive relationship safely.

While this important work clearly needs to continue, there is another cry arising from the millions of women and their children who have been and will be subjected to abuse – sexual assault, domestic violence, or sexual harassment— and its aftermath in their lifetimes. Some call it the process of healing or recovery after the pain of abuse. But for many, it is in fact, more simply put the journey from victim to survivor to “thrivers.” It is a third step in the movement, a missing piece for women after crisis intervention services and support groups that will allow them to live healthy, happy lives after experiencing abuse. This critical “next step” can free women and children from the grip of low self-esteem, emotional fear, shame, guilt, and hopelessness that come as the devastating, long-term consequences of abusive, destructive relationships.

Moreover, just as efforts to prevent domestic violence should focus on educating women and young girls so that they can avoid abusive relationships, women who have been abused should also be encouraged and supported not return to abusive relationships. Women who return or stay in abusive relationships often do so because they have been “conditioned” to feel helpless and hopeless, and that they somehow deserved being abused. Therefore, a viable, heretofore-unexplored strategy to prevent domestic violence is to motivate women, particularly women who have been in multiple abusive relationships, to break permanently out of the cycle of violence in their lives.

Is it possible to do this? Dr. Judith Herman believed it was and she described the process in her 1992 book, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*.² There, she

wrote that the core experiences of trauma are disempowerment and disconnection with others; recovery, therefore, is based on the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections.

Personally, had I read those words eleven years ago, I don’t think I would have gotten their full meaning. But now I can see how I have experienced both the disconnection and the reconnection on my way to recovery from two very traumatic events in my life.

One was that at age forty-seven. I lost a high-level, well-paying job in state government when the political winds shifted and I was forced out. The other, two years later in October, 1999, was when my nineteen-year-old niece, Maggie, was shot and killed on a college campus by her ex-boyfriend who then killed himself.

Looking back on these two events, I can see how when I first lost my job, I was in shock, felt empty, lost, used up, and abandoned. As a result, I disconnected and withdrew from life in the present tense. Living in the past seemed easier, going over everything that had happened to me, wishing somehow that I could have changed it. If only I had done this or not done that. If I thought about the future at all, it was to get revenge, find justice, or simply give up. Everyone and everything was against me. Why me? What had I done wrong?

It took Maggie’s death to shock me back into the present. Suddenly, other people, including my family and Maggie’s friends, needed my help to deal with their tremendous loss. While Maggie’s death was a terrible shock to me, I could see in it signs of my own recovery. After all, I had been wondering why I had lost my job and suddenly I had an answer. I had lost my job so that I could help my brother and sister-in-law in Michigan for a year—that revelation, albeit simplistic, made sense to me. I lost my job because I was needed somewhere else.

With that shift of attitude, I could see how leaving that job was an opportunity, not a loss, and while I was reluctant to say so at the time, it was a gift. Where I once felt helpless and betrayed, I was now helpful and productive.

During that year, the pain and the agony of Maggie’s death played itself out every day in every way possible. Few people on that college campus understood what happened to Maggie, that she was a victim of domestic violence, that she was stalked by a former boyfriend who was also a student at the school and lived in the dormitory building next to hers. She had tried to deal with the problem all by herself but she didn’t know the words for what was happening to her and she didn’t know how much danger she was in. After all, he had never touched her physically and yet, in retrospect, all the signs of severe emotional and psychological abuse were there. In addition, Maggie didn’t know that he had a gun and he had never mentioned harming Maggie to anyone. So no one saw the signs of danger and no one was there to help her that night.

Even I didn't see what was happening to Maggie despite my background and training. For years, I had worked as an attorney and advocate for the rights of women and founded a rape crisis center in suburban Detroit in the 1970's. After graduating from law school, I represented battered women going through divorce at a legal aid program in Michigan before moving to Connecticut in 1982 to work for the Connecticut Women's Educational and Legal Fund (CWEALF). There, I litigated sex discrimination cases, became an expert in sexual harassment, an area of law in which I was later to publish several non-fiction books, and lobbied for legislation on sexual assault and domestic violence issues.

But with Maggie's death, suddenly the issues I had worked on in the past became more personal and more immediate. If this could happen to Maggie, our wonderfully talented and beautiful Maggie, it could happen to anyone.

But if Maggie's death was a sign that I should reconnect on the issues of violence against women, how was I to do that? When I returned to Connecticut full-time in January, 2001, I woke up one morning thinking about Maggie and how much power there was in the moment when a woman decides to leave her abuser and start a new life. Maggie didn't have that moment but I can see that it is similar to what I felt when I found opportunity after losing my job and a renewed focus by dealing with Maggie's death. For it is clear to me now that for people who suffer significant emotional trauma or "life-altering events" such as abuse, death of a loved one, loss of a job, or a life-threatening illness, there is either a road to recovery that brings new vigor and purpose to their lives or a spiraling down into a debilitating cycle of anger, depression, and hopelessness.

On my road to recovery, I realized that I had to:

- discover opportunity in what felt like loss and chaos;
- find the positive emotions and energy to push myself forward;
- dare to create the life I wanted and desired; and
- move through my fears to find the "real me" inside.

Today, I work with women who have been abused, helping them through the five step process described above. In this work, I've found a quote by George Herbert "living well is the best revenge" very useful. For what woman wouldn't want to strike back at her abuser and blame him for destroying her life and that of her children? But isn't living well and getting on with one's life a more exacting revenge against a man who had tried to dominate, control, and bend a woman to his will?

But the work isn't easy. I have heard stories from so many women of abuse, betrayal, and dashed hopes that I wish I had a magic wand to simply wave away their pain and anguish. They have suffered greatly. Their self-esteem is low and, at times, they aren't even sure they deserve a better life nor can they envision one without abuse in it.

But given the choice of reliving the abuse and pain inflicted on them or reaching deep down inside to uncover their true heart's desires, time and again I see these women choose the latter. They can feel, as I have, the power of the moment of discovering who and what they are and the sheer magic of living out their wildest dreams. It would be, no doubt, the permanent break from the cycle of abuse for women to not only survive abuse, but *thrive* after abuse.

So what is a thriver? I have a working definition of it, which I have fashioned from my own experience after Maggie's death and from the women I have worked with over the last eleven years as they have come out of abusive relationships. That definition is:

A thriver is a happy, self-confident, and productive individual who believes she has a prosperous life ahead of her. She is primed to follow her dreams, go back to school, find a new job, start her own business, or write her story. She believes in herself and in her future so much that she will not return to an abusive relationship. She speaks knowledgeably and confidently about her experiences and is not stuck in her anger or need for revenge. Living well is her best revenge, and with her eye on the higher social good, she is a fierce advocate in her community and in the broader political arena for realistic, workable solutions to eliminate and prevent violence against women. She has found a network of women who understand and share her desire to move forward after abuse.

For the women I have met, the results they have achieved as thrivers have been nothing short of amazing. Many tell me that for years they have been able to survive almost anything, but few had felt that part of themselves –the thriver energy– that has been untouched by the abuse they have experienced. When challenged to go to that positive, thriver place, they have indeed found great jobs, earned college degrees, started their own businesses, became first-time homebuyers and, most importantly, none returned to an abusive relationship. They have done these things despite facing incredible obstacles, such as lack of financial resources and on-going legal battles for child custody and child support issues with their abusive ex-partners. The restoring positive energy in the lives of these women has given them hope that they can and will find new vigor and purpose to their lives after experiencing abuse.

What would it mean to move these singular success stories that I have witnessed into a larger context for the battered women's movement as a whole? First, I believe it would mean that the movement would have a new goal and a new set of outcomes would be sought for women once they have left an abusive relationship. These outcomes would not only make it less likely that they would return to another abusive relationship, but also would instill the idea that they can affect real, lasting change and personal growth in their lives.

These outcomes and a proven blueprint for making them happen would include:

- a more positive attitude and outlook on life;
- less focus on past events/abuse in their lives;
- personal growth and a renewed faith in themselves;
- less fear of change and more risk-taking with life and career goals;
- clear, achievable steps that can set a new direction for their lives; and
- the feeling of being supported as part of a community of women with similar experiences who strive not to return to abusive relationships.

As I travel today and speak about my work to providers of services to domestic violence victims in a number of communities around the United States, I always challenge the staff to find a way to incorporate the goal of helping women to thrive in their service delivery model. In such a vision for the future, they tell me they see current services being delivered in a very different way as well

Change Needs To Be Made: The Enforcement of Protective Orders/Helping the Victims

By "Anonymous"

as new programs being offered in collaboration with other providers they haven't worked with before in the community. For example, few domestic violence services currently provide job training to women in their programs or help women navigate public unemployment/job service offices where few people understand how the abuse women have experienced might impact their ability to get and keep a job. To help women thrive by getting a good job after leaving abuse, job training programs could be offered under the rubric of a domestic violence program, or women could be coached to have a positive outlook toward and persistence in pursuing jobs that expand their creative potential and increase their financial well-being.

There are many other examples of how "thriving," not just surviving could make services provided and outcomes achieved very different for the battered women's movement. But this transition won't be easy for the women or the programs.

I know from my own experience that a positive outlook on life is always hard for survivors of abuse and loss because it really gets to us sometimes that everyone else seems to have an easier life, a more comfortable journey, or a less challenging existence. But as far as I can tell, no one's life is without pain and suffering and the truest measure of ourselves is not what we have experienced in life but what we have made of our experiences.

Finding positive energy to live in the present moment despite the most horrendous of experiences and moving through our fears to discover who we really are is the key, I believe, to recovering from the trauma of abuse and loss. It is what reconnects us, as Dr. Herman suggests, to our inner strengths and reminds us that we are spiritual beings here to have a human experience in which we can learn and grow.

If in that rich, fertile ground of the present moment we can plant the idea that living well is the best revenge, our future lives will surely blossom with infinite possibilities. We don't really know how good it can get and that whatever we might have imagined is only a fraction of what we can have when we free ourselves to live well, be happy, and create the life we want to have. Then living well is not only the best revenge; it is, in fact, the song of our soul and the fulfillment of all our dreams.

I would like that to be the dream for all women battered and bruised in our society today and for the battered women's movement to take up the challenge to make what might seem impossible today become what is possible tomorrow.

¹ Martin, D. (1976). *Battered wives*. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press.

² Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: the aftermath of violence from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

I am writing this article for the enforcement of protective orders and the protection of our victims and families. Victims deserve the right to be treated with respect and should be given help rather than persecuted by law officers, welfare, families of the perpetrator, or anyone else. Victims need help being protected. Programs need to work. The lives of innocent women and children are being ruined and even taken by an angry perpetrator. Lives could be saved. Victims deserve protection and to be treated with dignity and respect without being harassed. It is our right to have the peace of mind to be able to walk the streets without having to look over our shoulder for fear of the perpetrator.

Protective orders are put in place for a reason—to protect someone. They are not supposed to be just a piece of paper (as stated by many abusers). Protection orders are not just directed at law abiding citizens who actually would follow the protection order. It is put there for the people who really don't care about following the law and are intent on hurting their victim. A protective order is exactly that, for the protection of a person for a reason.

Indiana State Law I.C.34-26-5-9 states:¹

*The Respondent/Defendant is restrained from any contact with the Petitioner/Protected Person. 1) The Respondent is hereby enjoined from threatening to comment or committing acts of domestic or family violence, stalking, or a sex offense against the Petitioner and the following household members; (family members would be listed here if any). 2) The respondent is prohibited from harassing, annoying, telephoning, contacting or directly or indirectly communicating with the Petitioner. 3) The Respondent shall be removed and excluded from the Petitioner's residence. 4) The Respondent is ordered to stay away from residence, school and place of employment. The Respondent is further ordered to stay away from the place(s) that is/are frequented by the Petitioner and/or Petitioner's family or household members. 5) The Petitioner shall have the possession and use of the residence and other essential personal effects: (stated as follows). To law enforcement officers: You are hereby directed to **accompany** the Petitioner to the residence of the parties to ensure that the petitioner is safely restored to the possession of the residents and other essential effects listed above; and /or to supervise the Petitioner's or Respondent's removal of personal belongings.*

This is a basic Protective Order taken personally from a victim. If the Respondent breaks any of these orders he/she should be arrested, no questions asked. In too many cases this is not true. It seems every time you turn on the news a family is fallen victim to tragic death:

Domestic Violence groups; Murder victim did everything right (Sun-Journal, 6/15/2011),

Domestic violence claims 4 in Maine (Worcester Telegram & Gazette, 6/14/11),

Woman and 2 children slain by estranged husband



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