

Abusive Police Officers: Working the System

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Abstract

This booklet explores how police authority, training and culture are used by abusive officers to enhance their power and control over their family members. Officers who batter use tactics of control that they have acquired through professional training and experience, including exaggerated forms of verbal, psychological, and physical abuse.

Introduction

No one knows the extent to which police officers abuse their wives or intimate partners. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) states that the rate of officer-involved domestic violence “is estimated to be at least as common as that of the general population.” There has been little research on the prevalence of officer-involved domestic violence. In one study, 40% of police officers self-reported having been violent toward their spouse or children; in another study, 28% indicated that they had behaved violently toward their spouse. “Regardless of the statistics, any rate of domestic violence involving police officers should be considered unacceptable.”

I have worked as an advocate, counselor, and educator in the field of domestic violence since 1985. In 1996, while working in a community-based domestic violence agency, I designed a program tailored to meet the unique needs of victims whose abusers were police officers. Victims received individual counseling, participated in group sessions with other victims of police officers, and consulted with legal advocates who were educated on issues pertaining to officer-involved domestic violence. I published *Police Domestic Violence: a Handbook for Victims* in 2000. The response was overwhelming; victims of police officers, advocates, and law enforcement administrators from all over the country began to contact the agency for additional information and to relay their own personal experiences with officer-involved domestic violence. Recognizing the scarcity of assistance and information related to this issue, the Battered Women’s Justice Project contracted with me to implement a national program that currently provides information to victims, training to advocates and police departments, and technical assistance to those working with these cases.

This booklet examines how police authority, police training, and police culture can be used by abusive officers in intimate relationships to bolster their power and control over their victims. Information was gathered from an extensive review of literature on police culture and police administration. Information about tactics used by officers was based on reports by victims, victims’ family members, and

advocates. I wish to express my thanks to them and to my colleagues who contributed their comments and expertise.

In addition to employing the same tactics that civilian abusers use, officers who batter typically use tactics of control that they have acquired through their professional training and experience including exaggerated forms of verbal, psychological, and physical abuse. My intent is to demonstrate how the police culture's values and perspective can translate to exerting control and dominance within a personal relationship and how it can also provide rationalization for such abusive behavior.

This is not in any way to suggest that all police officers are batterers, or that the influence of the police culture will turn non-batterers into batterers. Rather it draws connections between police officers' professional training and worldview and the characteristics and worldview of civilians who batter. Their professional credibility and training uniquely position officers who batter to explain, defend, and summon institutional support and assistance from the very systems to which victims are theoretically supposed to turn to for protection.

Arena of power

Despite the substantial changes in society's response to victims of domestic violence over the last 30 years, many victims remain reluctant to report this crime to the police. Many members of marginalized or minority groups do not want to involve the police department or the court in their personal lives. Whether their reluctance is based on their past experience with the police or on their negative perception of law enforcement, these victims feel more threatened by the possible consequences of the system's intervention than by their abusive partner's violence. These victims may include members of racial and ethnic minorities, undocumented immigrants, lesbians, women who have a criminal record, and victims in rural areas. Such victims also include women whose abusers are members of law enforcement.

Even though many police victims go to great lengths to conceal the abuse, some officer-involved cases do come to the attention of the system either through a victim's call for emergency assistance or through someone else reporting. Those who work in the system—advocates, police, civil attorneys, prosecutors, judges, and social service providers—often express feelings of inadequacy and frustration when these cases come to light. Their frustration reflects the reality that remedies and legal strategies commonly used in civilian cases often prove sorely inadequate or ineffective in cases involving police officers. Laws and policies that were written to protect victims of domestic violence and to hold abusers accountable are often not consistently enforced when the perpetrator is a police officer.

There currently exists great variation in police department policies and in how police departments respond to and document incidents involving officers. A 1996 amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968, referred to as the Lautenberg Amendment, removed the "official use" exemption with respect to misdemeanor domestic violence convictions that had previously been granted to members of law enforcement. This means that an officer convicted of a qualifying domestic violence misdemeanor loses the right to possess a firearm even while on duty. In 1999, the IACP released a Model Policy on Domestic Violence by Police Officers (for discussion of the IACP policy, see Lonsway & Harrington 2003). The number of law enforcement agencies that have implemented a policy is not known. In 2003, Lonsway surveyed large police agencies throughout the U.S. and concluded that less than 30% have a policy. The number is likely to be substantially lower among small police agencies. In reaction to a high profile incident in which the police chief of Tacoma, Washington murdered his wife and then committed suicide, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs issued a resolution in November 2003 that mandated all its members to adopt a policy on officer-involved domestic violence.

When officers are involved in domestic violence incidents, most laws and institutional policies are neither impartially nor consistently enforced. Both the criminal justice system and police administrations allow for a great deal of discretion and the police and the courts often exercise their power of discretion and avoid implementing their policies or enforcing the laws against one of their own. When an officer is

the alleged abuser, enforcement often depends on the rank and reputation of the officer, the reputation of the victim, what circumstances surrounded the incident, the strength of the evidence, and perhaps most significantly, the credibility of the involved parties. Judgment of a person's credibility can be influenced by race, class, reputation, status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical attributes, health, sobriety, and, of course, gender.

Authority to use force

It is the role of the police to protect life, property, and the constitutionally guaranteed rights of people, and to preserve social order. To this end, society authorizes the police to coerce citizens to obey their orders—non-violently whenever possible. A citizen's knowledge that the officer has the authority to take him or her into custody and/or to use physical force is often enough to prompt a citizen to obey an officer. Police are trained in many forms of coercion that escalate in degrees of force: projection of a command presence and voice, verbal manipulation of the subject to persuade him or her that it is in their best interest to "behave," issuance of a warning as to what will happen if the subject refuses to cooperate, or physical "guidance" and use of force. It is a subject's choice whether to submit to police authority or to resist it; resistance is likely to elicit a predictable, trained police response.

Officers who batter employ the same forms of coercion in their intimate relationships. They believe that it is their role to provide for and to protect their wives and children, and in return they feel entitled to respect and obedience. Many abusers believe that physical force is acceptable in order to maintain control. The abusive officer's sense of entitlement within the home is bolstered by his similar sense of entitlement to authority on the street. He is likely to be predisposed to interpret conflict between him and his intimate partner as a threat to his position of control and power within the relationship. He may react to his intimate partner as he reacts on the street when someone questions his authority, argues with him, or physically touches him. The more the victim resists his control by asserting or defending herself, the more justified he may feel to escalate his use of force.

In most cases, it is not necessary for the abuser to use physical violence to gain or maintain control over his intimate partner. He can employ the same verbal and psychological tactics and techniques that he uses on the job to manipulate his victim into doing what he wants her to do—without ever raising a hand to her. He may employ non-violent coercion that misuses his police authority, such as reminding her of his professional power, threatening to have her arrested, incarcerated, or committed to a mental institution. Non-physical coercion is more pragmatic because non-physical tactics are difficult to prove. However, should the victim resist his psychological and emotional manipulation and continue to challenge him, they both know that he could resort to violence and that she has little recourse.

Since the officer is trained to use only the amount of force necessary to gain compliance and only in response to the subject's resistance, theoretically the suspect determines the level of force the police officer must use. If a person files a complaint against an officer for use of excessive force, the officer may defend his behavior by stating he used the level of force warranted by the suspect's behavior. For example, the officer might state that the suspect resisted arrest, assaulted the officer, or was at risk of harming himself or others. In a similar manner, when the victim of domestic violence by a police officer alleges assault or battery, the officer-batterer may justify his use of force by claiming that the victim was out of control, attacked him, or was at risk of hurting herself or the children.

Culture of control

In the police world, society is often divided between the police and the non-police. There are good guys and bad guys, and everyone is potentially a bad guy. This tends to breed skepticism and suspicion of all non-police; no one outside of the police is to be completely trusted. Police officers are required to remain on high alert and are rarely able to let their guard down. Officer safety and survival on the street require officers to trust each other with their lives and work as a unit. Any encounter with a citizen, even a seemingly routine traffic stop, can turn into a confrontational struggle between life and death. In this struggle, gaining and maintaining control equates to survival.

In a contest of strength or strategy on the street, the police either win or lose—there is seldom an in-between. The bad guys strive to outsmart the police and avoid accountability. Officers must prevent that from happening because they cannot command respect for the badge if they cannot maintain control. An officer who faces a threat to his control of a situation might use more force than required by the actual situation; he may even pull the trigger to keep the upper hand. Fellow officers understand how that can happen. Whether or not other cops who witness the altercation agree with how the other officer handled it, they are committed to the basic tenet that police officers must remain in charge.

Commitment to that basic tenet fosters what is known as the “code of silence” among police officers. The subject of a police action may subsequently give an entirely different account of the struggle that occurred, but it will be the subject’s word against the collective word of the officers who witnessed the incident. The desire to preserve solidarity among the officers involved has the potential to lead the officers to agree upon a particular version of the incident so that there are no inconsistencies in their reports.

An officer who physically batters his intimate partner is confident that he can rely on the code of silence and that he will not be held accountable for his violent behavior, even if the victim does make a police report. He can probably count on receiving the support of his colleagues within the department and within the court, whether or not they personally or professionally condone his behavior. They may rationalize his behavior, saying that he was stressed out, under a lot of pressure, feeling provoked by the victim’s disrespect or, quite simply, that officers are simply ordinary people who sometimes make mistakes. Intentionally or not, his colleagues thus serve to reinforce his power over the victim, resulting in her victimization on both a personal and an institutional level.

Victims’ Safety Measures & Advocate Interventions

Though many victims of civilian batterers are not well-served by the various legal remedies and safety measures available, victims of police officers are among the most vulnerable and standard remedies may exacerbate their situation. Because of the abuser’s status and power within the system, the victim and all those involved must carefully consider the possibility of the abuser’s immediate retaliation as well as the long-term implications of each remedy. It is important that advocates give accurate information which will help the victim develop realistic expectations. A victim needs to know that she may encounter strong resistance from the system when she accuses an officer of a crime that could cost him his career.

For victims of police-perpetrated domestic violence, safety measures that rely on the police or the court for enforcement draw the victim further into the abuser’s personal and professional arena of power. In this arena, the abuser knows how things work, has personal and professional connections, and has access to information. These advantages require that professionals working with victims rethink, reevaluate, adjust, or possibly avoid altogether the standard legal strategies and safety measures that they routinely employ in “civilian” cases, such as the victim obtaining an order of protection, reporting to the police, or going to a domestic violence shelter.

The following explores some of the complexities involved with these remedies and provides suggestions for alternative strategies that might be helpful in counterbalancing the abusers’ advantages.

Order of protection

Often, a civilian victim’s first step is to obtain an emergency protective order. The order of protection can exclude the batterer from the home, can protect the victim’s rights to be free from bodily harm, and protect her right to move about the world freely. The protective power of this legal document, however, hinges on the ability and willingness of the police and the courts to enforce it. Lacking enforcement, it is merely a piece of paper. In an agency that is focused on protecting the officer, the service and enforcement of the order is a problem.

When a police victim obtains an order of protection, the officer perceives it as a threat to his professional standing. He is likely to do everything within his power to persuade the court to vacate the order. He may do this by casting doubt on the victim's credibility and motive, and by blatantly denying that he has done anything to warrant the order.

Suggestions for advocates:

- Before a victim engages the legal system by obtaining an Emergency Order of Protection (typically limited to 2 or 3 weeks), she should consult with an attorney or legal advocate about the merits of her case. If an experienced attorney or advocate believes it is unlikely that the victim's case is strong enough to overcome the batterer's objections to the order in the plenary hearing, it may be wiser not to obtain the Emergency Order. The judge's refusal to grant a long-term order serves to reinforce the batterer's sense of power and increases the victim's sense of powerlessness within the system.
- The advocate might explore the willingness of the abuser's employing department to issue an Administrative Order of Protection. This is a direct order from a supervisor to the officer stating that he is to refrain from particular conduct toward the victim. The advocate should inform the victim that requesting an Administrative Order could lead to an investigation.
- The victim can inform the court about the types, number, and location of firearms owned by the abuser (other than department-issued) at the time of the hearing on the protection order. If the order is issued, the abuser will be required to surrender all personally owned firearms.

Department notification

Some victims seek the assistance of the "police family" by talking to someone in the department. Their hope is that the department will be able to get the abuser help or at least hold his behavior in check through the job. Departments vary in their receptivity to civilian complaints about their officers, and victims report that departments vary in their receptivity to complaints about domestic abuse as well. Some department supervisors are approachable and demonstrate genuine concern for the victim's situation and her safety. Other supervisors become defensive and hostile when a woman dares to accuse a police officer of abuse. This anger is often misdirected at the victim for having spoken out about the violence rather than focused on the officer for perpetrating the violence.

Going to the department is a risk. Victims should be informed that the abuser has a right to know that she has made a complaint, the exact nature of that complaint, and that her complaint is likely to trigger an investigation. During the ensuing investigation, the abuser may deny the allegations and seek to discredit the victim, enabling the department to define the incident as a "he said, she said" situation. When this occurs, department findings are generally made in favor of the officer, especially an officer who may or may not have a decent reputation on the force, but in whom the department has a significant investment.

If the department does take her complaint seriously, they may temporarily confiscate the officer's department-issued weapons and strip him of his police powers pending an investigation. It is likely the abuser has access to other weapons, and the victim knows that his body and hands alone are powerful enough weapons to maim or kill her. Stripping him of his police powers, the source of his identity, could be the most threatening action they can take against him and actually increases the victim's danger.

Suggestions for advocates:

- It is important that advocates become familiar with their local police department's policies. It is also important to understand the department's internal investigation process.
- The victim may get a better response from the police department if an advocate goes with her when she makes the complaint.
- The advocate can assist the victim in identifying what she hopes to accomplish by going to the department and whether it is in her best interest to do so. The victim should think about

potential responses of the department and what impact those responses might have on her safety. For example, does she want the department to do an internal investigation? Does she want the department to suspend or fire him? What are the implications for her safety if the department does take action?

- The advocate can help the victim clarify which of the abuser's behaviors she wants to report and how she wants to present the information. If the victim chooses to withhold some information at the time of the original complaint, it may damage her credibility later.
- The advocate can ask that the police department do everything possible to facilitate the complaint procedure for the victim. This may include meeting somewhere other than the department, allowing an advocate to be present, and ensuring that the investigator is knowledgeable about domestic violence and sensitive to the victim's situation.
- The advocate can ask that the police agency cooperate with the victim in addressing the victim's safety needs.
- The advocate can act as a liaison between the victim and the police department to keep the victim informed during the investigation.
- The advocate can advise the victim on what to do if the officer engages in any subsequent abuse or acts of retaliation.

Patrol response

Some departments have policies and protocol that can work to the benefit or the detriment of the victim, depending on her circumstances. For instance, a policy that requires responding officers to notify their supervisors may deter a woman who only wants crisis intervention and no other departmental involvement or investigation. Responding officers, upon learning that the alleged perpetrator is one of their own, respond differently than they would respond to a civilian call. Police response can differ depending on whether the responding officers are from the abuser's department or from another jurisdiction. If an incident occurs within the batterer's jurisdiction, his coworkers will respond to the call. Their personal relationship to the abuser, his rank, the policies of the department and many other factors will influence how they handle the situations. If another police department responds to the call, there is still a possibility that the officers will know the abuser. Even if they do not know him, once he identifies himself as an officer they are likely to treat him differently than they would treat a civilian abuser.

Many victims say that the responding officers show more concern for how they should handle the situation and its implications for the abuser's career than they show for the victim's safety. This concern may be even deeper if the department policy professes "zero tolerance" of officer-involved domestic violence because the officer could be terminated based on a guilty finding in a criminal or administrative proceeding.

Responding officers and supervisors who collude with the abuser reiterate the abuser's warning that reporting the incident is a drastic step that could cost the officer his career. They may remind her that she risks not only unleashing the abuser's wrath, but also that of his fellow officers. The officers may inform her that her court case, should she pursue it, hinges on one thing—her credibility—which they can easily undermine or destroy by including or omitting some detail in the police report or in their testimony that taints her character or casts doubt on her motive for calling the police. This could make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prove her case beyond a reasonable doubt. The officers can inform her of this with certainty because it is within their power to create the reasonable doubt necessary. They write the police report, take the photographs, collect and preserve the evidence, and provide testimony in court.

Suggestions for advocates:

- Advocates can encourage local departments to adopt policy and protocol for responding to officer-involved domestic violence situations.
- The advocate can suggest that the victim get the name and badge numbers of the responding officers and request that they call a supervisor to the scene.

- The victim should document everything she remembers after the police leave. She should get someone to take photographs, and obtain a copy of the police report to verify that it is accurate. If it is not, she should ask to amend it or make an additional report.

Prosecution

The conviction of a police officer for a domestic violence misdemeanor results in his inability to carry a weapon. The loss of his ability to carry a weapon could terminate his employment in law enforcement. Since prosecutors rely on the cooperation of the police in all of their cases, they may be reluctant to pursue charges that can potentially destroy an officer's career or embarrass a police department.

Prosecutors are also reluctant to pursue cases they are unlikely to win. The Public Affairs Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) reports that nationwide the number of officer-involved cases referred to prosecutors was 168 in 2000, 169 in 2001, and 201 in 2002. Less than one-third of these cases resulted in convictions. Among factors prosecutors consider when determining whether to proceed with charges are the anticipated cooperation and testimony of the police, the police report and evidence, and the victim's credibility. As noted above, the collection and preservation of evidence that supports the victim's allegations and the police reports are both in the hands of the police. The prosecutor may anticipate that fellow officers' loyalty to the accused officer may compel them to distort their testimony. The prosecutor also knows that the judge and/or jury may be biased in favor of the officer because of his professional credibility and that they may wish to avoid action that may result in termination of an officer's career. Finally, politics between the prosecutor's office and the community may also have considerable influence on the prosecutor's decision to pursue the case.

Prosecutors also anticipate whether the victim is likely to cooperate by testifying against the abuser. In officer-involved cases, not only is there an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser in their personal relationship, there is also an imbalance of power in their respective relationships to the court. The court is the officer's professional arena. He is comfortable in court, and court personnel are his colleagues and friends. All of these advantages serve to intimidate and isolate the victim.

Any outcome of a criminal case may well be a "no-win" situation for the victim. As previously stated, if the abuser is convicted, he is likely to lose his job, leaving the victim to deal with his retaliation and the loss of his financial support; if the officer-batterer is acquitted, the court validates his belief that he is invincible and above the law, leaving little deterrent to further abuse.

Finding herself overwhelmed by this double bind, the victim may do whatever she can to avoid cooperating with the prosecution. She may perjure herself by recanting and urge the court to drop the charges. If she is forced to testify, she may not do well on the stand. She may sound confused or vague, make contradictory statements, or report difficulty remembering the details of the incident. She may minimize the abuse because she is ambivalent about the possible consequences of either verdict. She may be distracted, anxious, depressed, angry, emotional, and display an "inappropriate" affect. The defense attorney is likely to say that her testimony and her demeanor on the stand indicate that she may be confused, lying, or unstable.

The prosecutor who anticipates all of the above complications may try to avoid the risk of going to trial. The prosecutor may offer the abuser an opportunity to accept a plea bargain. Typically, the charges will be disturbing the peace, criminal destruction of property, or reckless conduct because a conviction for these charges does not trigger the gun prohibition.

Suggestions for advocates:

- Part of the advocate's role is to educate the victim about the legal process and explain the roles and objectives of the various players.
- The advocate can explain that the state is required to prove the abuser's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The prosecutor may believe the victim's account, but anticipate that the state will not be able to present a winnable case.

- Victims of police officers often refuse to testify because they fear the abuser's retaliation. Prosecutors and judges can be supportive of victims by understanding their reasons for not participating in the prosecution, and by not chastising them for being "uncooperative".

Flight

Advocates and other professionals should always consider the professional mind-set of an officer when they discuss the victim's plans to leave. Police officers are trained to pursue suspects who flee from them, as fleeing is viewed as the ultimate defiance of police authority, and they are authorized to use extreme measures to apprehend a fleeing suspect. Many victims of police domestic violence who have fled from their abusers report that their batterers have gone to great lengths to find them and force them to return.

Police officers, particularly those trained to be detectives or work undercover, are well versed in investigative techniques. Technology assists them in finding anyone, anywhere. Police have the ability to check records and backgrounds, conduct license plate and criminal background checks, investigate suspects' credit records, bank records, and phone records, and so forth. They can keep suspects under physical and electronic surveillance to prevent them from eluding the police. They know how important it is to know what the suspect is doing, planning, and thinking. Abusive officers are likely to pride themselves on this ability, and they let their victims know it. When the victim flees, she challenges the abuser's personal and professional ability to find her. He may use his access to police channels of information, police surveillance equipment, and police personnel to assist him in tracking her down.

A civilian man who goes to the police and reports that his wife has disappeared with his children may allege that his wife must be apprehended because she is a danger to herself or the children. He may claim that she is an alcoholic or a drug addict, or that she is emotionally or mentally unstable. The police may receive this man's report with some skepticism or suspicion. They could question the man's credibility and motivation for making such allegations. Depending on their awareness of the dynamics of domestic violence, they may even identify him as a batterer. A police officer, however, who makes the same allegations about his wife or intimate partner, may not arouse as much suspicion because he may be known and trusted within the law enforcement family. Fellow officers may be inclined to believe his claims because he may have previously alluded to his partner's unstable or dangerous behavior. His story may elicit concern, support and the assistance of fellow officers to locate her.

Suggestions for advocates:

- The victim and advocate should explore alternatives to battered women's shelters. They should consider whether there is anywhere that the victim could go where the abuser would not look for her.
- Shelters far away from home may be the safest. The victim should not use her own vehicle for transportation; nor should she use credit cards, ATM cards, or her cell phone.
- Advocates should stress that a police officer's access to information makes it virtually impossible for a victim of a police officer to remain hidden for very long.
- If the victim predicts that the abuser will be obsessed with finding her if she flees and she determines that staying visible is her safest option, the advocate should work with her on a safety plan based on her remaining in her home.
- The police department should not have information on the victim's whereabouts to ensure that an officer sympathetic to the abuser cannot leak the information.

Divorce

Filing for divorce may be perceived as the ultimate betrayal and a lengthy legal battle over property, money, and their children may ensue. Like other men who batter, the police officer may believe that he is surrendering if he allows the victim to succeed in "taking" what he considers rightfully his. The concept of compromise may not exist for him; his belief is that one either wins all or loses all and he prefers to

lose everything in the fight rather than risk the appearance of compromise. Too often, such police batterers decide that if they go down, they will take their victim with them. These abusers may even threaten or endanger the Guardians ad litem, prosecutors, lawyers, and any who support the victim.

Suggestions for advocates:

- Advocates can prepare the victim for a long, adversarial divorce and custody battle. The victim needs to hire an experienced attorney who understands the dynamics of domestic violence and who is not intimidated by the abuser's professional status. Attorneys who were once police officers understand the police officer's advantages and are often the best equipped to counteract the tactics of the police officer-batterer.
- Advocates can educate attorneys and court-appointed consultants in the exaggerated dynamics of officer-perpetrated domestic violence.

Counter-tactics

Not all officer-batterers wait for the victim to seek protection from the department, the police, or the courts. Some abusers are savvy enough to take steps before the victim does. For example, the officer may be the first to call 911. He may convince the police that he is the victim and that their job is to arrest her. He may then petition the court for an Order of Protection. He may rely on the judge thinking it unlikely that a police officer would claim to be afraid of his intimate partner if it were not so. The batterer may tell the judge that he fears his partner is trying to jeopardize his employment in law enforcement. Thus, the abuser may manipulate the judge into granting him an Order of Protection that includes possession of the residence and temporary custody of the children.

The officer-batterer is aware of the complications and long-term consequences in store for the victim should she be arrested. This greatly increases his power over her, as the pending charges or a criminal record can affect a custody decision, make her ineligible for various types of employment, public housing, educational resources, welfare benefits, and more.

Suggestions for advocates:

- Victims and advocates need to anticipate that the officer-batterer might put the victim on the defensive by pre-empting her in calling the police, getting an Order of Protection, or filing for divorce and custody. His increased credibility due to his professional status may facilitate his being able to access these "remedies".
- Some domestic violence agencies are not allowed to assist a woman who is named as the defendant in a criminal case. The advocate can help the victim identify other resources for assistance should the abuser have her arrested and charged with a criminal offense.

Conclusion

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) acknowledges that "victims of police officers are especially vulnerable" because of their abusers' status within law enforcement circles and because "an abusive officer may escalate behavior to extreme acts of violence such as abducting the victim, taking hostages, and committing homicide and/or suicide" when he feels his power is threatened. The IACP also acknowledges that these victims may feel powerless because of the "formidable obstacles" they may encounter when seeking police assistance. Police agencies and judges may misuse their power of discretion to avoid implementing policies or enforcing the law against one of their own. When they do implement policies or enforce the law, they may place the victim in greater danger than before the system intervened.

The plethora of problems and issues faced by victims of this crime can indeed seem overwhelming, but we must do our best to address them. It is crucial that community agencies assign their most experienced advocates to victims of police officer-involved domestic violence. Additionally, police administrators must provide focus and direction through policy initiatives and training for all ranks of law enforcement. Finally, prosecutors and judges must consider the unique circumstances of police victims.

Because of society's reliance on police officers to enforce laws against domestic violence, confronting police-perpetrated domestic violence is essential in order to eradicate domestic violence in our communities. Examining the commonalities between police abuse of authority, police mistreatment of citizens/suspects, and police abuse of their intimate partners may help identify and address the underlying beliefs and values that foster that abuse. Until police-perpetrated domestic violence is fully acknowledged and confronted, victims of police officers cannot feel safe relying on the police for protection.

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About the Author

DIANE WETENDORF is a life-long advocate who pioneered the field of police officer-involved domestic violence. Her work has helped thousands of domestic violence advocates, family attorneys, and law enforcement professionals learn how to safely help survivors. Untold numbers of battered women now know "*they are not alone, they are not exaggerating, and they are certainly not crazy.*"

Diane is the author of *Police Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Victims*, the first book written specifically for survivors of police-perpetrated domestic violence; *When the Batterer Is a Law Enforcement Officer: A Guide for Advocates*; as well as *Crossing the Threshold: Female Officers and Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence*, a ground-breaking book for women in law enforcement. Her latest book, *Hijacked by the Right: Battered Women in America's Culture War*, addresses the future of battered women services in the 21st century.

In 1996, while director of counseling for a community domestic violence agency, Diane created a unique program which provided specialized counseling, legal and advocacy services for victims of officer-involved domestic violence. Now retired, Diane has worked with law enforcement agencies throughout the U.S. and Canada; conducted workshops and seminars for local, state, and national audiences; served as expert witness in both the U.S. and Canada; and provided thousands of hours of counseling and support to survivors of domestic violence. Her website is AbuseofPower.info.

Books & Articles by Diane Wetendorf

Additional material is available on AbuseofPower.info.

Hijacked by the Right: Battered Women in America's Culture War. Family Justice Centers are the focal point of this thought-provoking investigation into the reframing of family violence. What could possibly go wrong when law enforcement enters into partnership with the other pillars of society: religion, family, government, and corporations?

Crossing the Threshold: Female Officers and Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence. Police training and culture affects officers' personal relationships. It's always a volatile situation when a police officer is the perpetrator, but what happens when both the abuser and victim are officers?

Police Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Victims. Women whose abusers are in law enforcement face extraordinary challenges. The *Handbook*, written specifically for survivors of police-perpetrated domestic violence, explores the dynamics of officer-involved domestic violence.

When the Batterer Is a Law Enforcement Officer: A Guide for Advocates. Comprehensive resource for advocates working with women whose batterers are in law enforcement. Includes safety considerations and advocacy strategies.

The Misuse of Police Powers in Officer-Involved Domestic Violence. Explores how the power and authority granted to officers to protect the public can lead to the abuse of their power.

Abusive Police Officers: Working the System. Officers who batter use professional control tactics and the brotherhood to defend their actions, receiving support and assistance from the same institutions victims turn to for protection.

Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence: An Advocate's Pessimistic Perspective. Policy and rhetoric make it appear that police agencies want victims to come forward, but agencies' actual response seems designed to ensure that victims remain silent. Addresses the progress—or lack thereof—in confronting police-perpetrated domestic violence.

Representing Victims of Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence. Attorneys and legal advocates face extraordinary challenges when representing a woman in a divorce or custody case whose batterer is a police officer.

Female Officers as Victims of Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence. Examines how the expectations and values of the female officer's profession and workplace culture influence her behavior and decisions regarding her abusive relationship.

Developing Policy on Officer-Involved Domestic Violence. Solutions good from the department's perspective can make things worse for the victim; and solutions better for the victim can leave the department open to liability.

The Impact of Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence. The FBI National Academy held a invitational summit on officer-involved domestic violence and published the resulting compilation of research in *Domestic Violence by Police Officers*. Wetendorf's chapter examines the dynamics of OIDV and the impact on victims, departments and communities.

Police Family Violence. Rather than customizing services for victims of police abusers, we expect departments to hold officers accountable for criminal behavior.

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