

News Media Coverage of Domestic Violence Fatalities

National Domestic Violence
Fatality Review Initiative

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Some Statistical Issues

A Boston Surprise

- ❑ In one recent year, Boston homicide detectives opened 150 case files
- ❑ That would be an all-time record high for murders in that city
- ❑ BUT: It turned out the city did not actually have a record number of homicides that year
- ❑ WHY?

A Boston Surprise

- ❑ In 82 of those 150 cases the victim did not die as originally expected
- ❑ Boston's medical care system saved over half of potential homicide victims
- ❑ Those 82 cases became aggravated assault files, instead of homicide files
- ❑ Many victims are alive today who would have been a death statistic 25 years ago

What Have We Accomplished?

- ❑ DOJ study found that since 1976, the number of women killed by intimate partners has dropped slightly
- ❑ From about 1,600 a year then,
- ❑ To about 1,300 a year now
- ❑ That's about a 19% decline in fatalities for battered women

Maybe, The Answer is Not Much

- ❑ So, if the medical community is arguably saving 50% of battered women who would have died a quarter century ago
- ❑ And women's death statistics have fallen by only 19%
- ❑ Two logical conclusions:
 - 1. Serious domestic violence incidents are actually increasing
 - 2. The justice system has had no impact upon domestic violence and possibly has contributed to its increase

Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence

- ❑ Reviewed law enforcement records for 1994
- ❑ The records said there were 230 domestic violence fatalities
- ❑ The study found there were actually a hundred more, at least 328
- ❑ Why? Because police departments were not coding boyfriend/girlfriend deaths as domestic violence homicides, or child abuse deaths, or suicide deaths in domestic violence situations
- ❑ So the reality is almost 50% worse than the published death statistics reflect

One Other Statistic

- Neil Websdale, astonishing statistic:
 - Approximately 2,000 battered women commit suicide each year in this country
- Compare:
 - 1,300 battered women are murdered each year
- So: women in violent relationships are killing *themselves* at a rate 50% higher than their intimate partners are!

What Does This Teach Fatality Review Teams?

1. Study aggravated assault cases for near-death domestic violence incidents
2. Study female suicides
3. Accept that your mission is to change the world
 - ❑ “The System” is not saving women’s lives
 - ❑ Fatality review has the potential to hold community systems accountable
 - ❑ **If** you don’t just issue a report & go home

Some Gender Issues

Florida Fatality Review Finding:

- ❑ “Women who killed men nearly always did so out of self-defense, or less often, the defense of their children.
- ❑ “These women have always, or nearly always, been pushed to the brink of human endurance by the batterers they eventually kill.
- ❑ “While the killing of batterers by the long-standing victims of battering may not qualify as self-defense in a court of law, the act of defensive or preemptive violence by women is *qualitatively different* from the offensive acts of violence perpetrated by men against women.”

Two Different Crimes

- We know that men and women kill intimate partners for different reasons

- Usually men kill women because he thinks
 - **'She's really going to leave me this time'**

- Women kill men because she thinks
 - **'He's really going to kill me this time'**

Qualitatively Different

- ❑ Men killing women and women killing men are two distinctly different crimes
- ❑ Recognize that the crime of men killing women differs from the crime of women killing men
- ❑ In scope, history, motive, M.O., intent, justification, mitigation, aggravation, and legal defenses

Qualitatively Different

- ❑ Crime laws are gender neutral
- ❑ But domestic violence is a gender-specific crime
- ❑ It requires gender-specific solutions
- ❑ Applying gender-specific solutions to a gender-specific crime is not wrong
- ❑ Refusal to apply gender-appropriate remedies results in a denial of justice
- ❑ & shows incompetence and gender bias

'Qualitatively Different'

Websdale Quote:

- “Men often kill wives after lengthy periods of prolonged physical violence accompanied by other forms of abuse and coercion; the roles in such cases are seldom if ever reversed.
- “Men perpetrate familicidal massacres, killing spouse and children together; women do not.
- “Men commonly hunt down and kill wives who have left them; women hardly ever behave similarly.

'Qualitatively Different'

Websdale Quote:

- "Men kill wives as part of planned murder-suicides; analogous acts by women are almost unheard of.
- "Men kill in response to revelations of wifely infidelity; women almost never respond similarly, though their mates are more often adulterous."
- "The evidence is overwhelming that a large proportion of the spouse-killing perpetrated by wives, but almost none of those perpetrated by husbands, are acts of self-defense."

Some News Media Issues

Experts tell us domestic violence negatively impacts many of society's worst problems, including:

- Homicide
- Suicide
- Violent assault
- Juvenile delinquency
- Child abuse
- Child abduction
- Child runaways
- Child suicide
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Homelessness
- Workplace violence
- Jail overcrowding
- Rape
- Kidnapping

A Local Newspaper Encounter

- DV agency executive with 15 years experience in community advocacy & direct service to battered women
- Set up a meeting with news reporters & editors of local midwest metro daily
- To try to improve the quality of coverage of domestic violence issues
- **How?**

A Local Newspaper Encounter

How?

- Give DV crime coverage the same priority as other crime coverage
- Put DV stories in context
- Help readers understand a counter-intuitive aspects of DV
- Avoid the most common errors in DV news coverage

A Local Newspaper Encounter

□ **RESULT?** *“It was by far the most hostile meeting in all my years of community activism.”*

Why?

- If domestic violence has a proven statistical connection to most major social concerns,
- Why is it so difficult to persuade news reporters and editors to improve coverage of domestic violence issues?

Why? Maybe. . .

- Make a mental list
- Any three women you know
- Now consider:
- Statistically, one out of every three American women
 - has been the victim of domestic violence
 - is currently being abused, or
 - will suffer abuse during her lifetime
- And what about American MEN?

Help for Persuading Skeptics

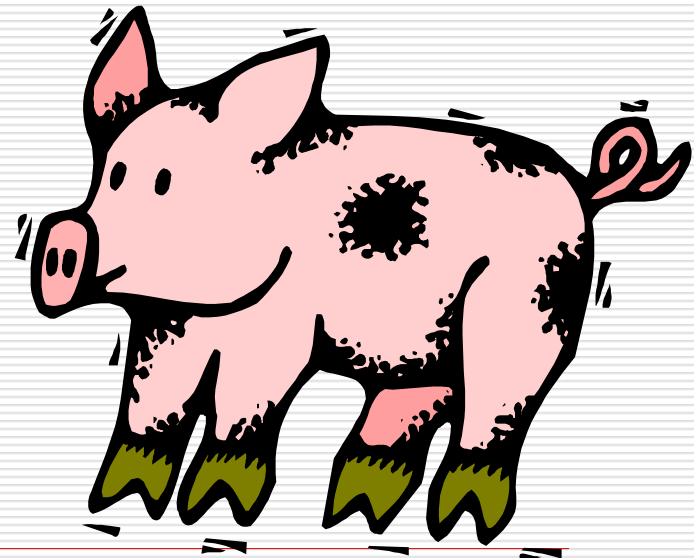
- ❑ **State DV Coalition of Washington**
- ❑ Study of fatality review files for the last five years
- ❑ **One-fifth** of all domestic violence-related deaths were not one of the intimate partners, but innocent bystanders
- ❑ Of the 308 deaths during that period: 19% of those killed were children, friends, family, new boyfriends of the victims, and law enforcement
 - Sue Parrott, *Domestic Violence Can Hurt Victims' Supporters, Too*, The Bellingham Herald (Bellingham, WA) Opinion Section, Pg. 9A (Apr. 7, 2004)

Help for Persuading Skeptics

- The lives we save when we work against domestic violence are not just battered women and their abusers, but children, neighbors, and police officers

Justice and the Pig

- ❑ Insist upon *justice*
- ❑ Even the most unworldly citizen has a sense of simple justice
- ❑ Consider the jury
- ❑ And the pig



The Ten Most Common Errors in DV News Coverage

- ❑ Review of 1,000 news items/week
- ❑ **Includes News Errors in Categories:**
 1. Excusing the Perpetrator
 2. Praising the Perpetrator as a Good Father
 3. Minimizing the Violence
 4. Implying Mutual Responsibility for The Violence
 5. Blaming the Victim
 6. Missing the DV Implications
 7. Selective Coverage
 8. Inconsistent Coverage
 9. Failure to Demand Official Accountability
 10. Failure to Challenge Judges

1. Excusing the Perpetrator

"Perpetrators are partially absolved of responsibility when the media claim that violence occurred in the heat of the moment or under the influence of drugs or alcohol."

--Brendan Selby, *Speakers criticize news media's coverage of domestic violence*, The Stanford Daily, www.stanforddaily.com, Thursday, March 4, 2004

"Many statements about the perpetrators 'had an overly sympathetic quality and implied an element of victimization of the murderers, either by circumstances or frequently by the adult female' [in a news study]."

--Kim Deterline *A Hell of a Nice Murderer: Double Standards in Domestic Violence Coverage*. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, July/August 1994, <http://www.fair.org/extra/9407/nice-murderer.html>

1. Excusing the Perpetrator

- 2003: **Timothy Thayer** shot to death his ex-wife Teresa, after threatening her life several times, & firing a gun inside her home in front of their children
- She had taken out two restraining orders against him
- *Winston-Salem Journal* (Winston Salem, NC) uncritically quoted the acting sheriff: "People get in arguments, and in the heat of the moment pull out a gun and shoot somebody. I don't think that he had it in his mind driving down the road that he was going to go in and kill people."

1. Excusing the Perpetrator

- 2004: **David G. Rayburn** beat his wife and stepson to death by clubbing them with a sledgehammer while they slept
- *The Boston Herald* reported he was overwhelmed by financial & personal difficulties
- And quoted co-workers uncritically as saying: "He was a really, really nice guy," and a "huge football fan"

1. Excusing the Perpetrator

- ❑ 2003: **Francisco Fuentes** broke into his ex-wife's apartment, held her hostage, killed two men, threatened to kill 7 children, and shot 3 police officers before being killed himself
- ❑ He was at the time free on bond on criminal charges for three separate incidents of child custody interference, violating a protective order, and shooting the ex-wife's boyfriend

1. Excusing the Perpetrator

- ❑ *The Dallas Morning News* extensively and uncritically quoted friends and the killer's lawyer that the perpetrator
- ❑ Was distraught over the divorce and the unraveling of his life
- ❑ And was an 'Awesome Dad', 'Pained by the Love For His Children'
- ❑ The newspaper never questioned the justice system's handling of the 3 pending criminal charges

2. Praising the Perpetrator as a Good Father

“White male perpetrators were frequently described in positive terms. For instance, a man who shot and killed his ex-wife and then hurled his daughter off the Golden Gate Bridge was referred to as ‘a sweetheart,’ a ‘loving father,’ and ‘a hell of a nice guy.’ A man who shot and killed both his children was called ‘a loving father.’”

--Kim Deterline *A Hell of a Nice Murderer: Double Standards in Domestic Violence Coverage*. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, July/August 1994, <http://www.fair.org/extra/9407/nice-murderer.html>

2. Praising the Perpetrator as a Good Father

- ❑ 2003: **Kevin Shannon** shot his 10-year old son Grant, then killed himself, in front of the boy's mother
- ❑ Police say the father shot the boy rather than turn him over to the mother after visitation
- ❑ *The San Francisco Chronicle* quoted neighbors about how healthy and strong the father-son relationship was, & how they played ball together. "[The boy was] very well supervised, very well taken care of."

2. Praising the Perpetrator as a Good Father

- ❑ 2004: Harry Lee Zimmerman Jr., is charged with killing Tamara Nicole Zimmerman, his 4-month-old daughter
- ❑ The baby was shot in the head at close range with a bolt-action rifle
- ❑ *The State.Com* (South Carolina) called the incident a domestic dispute
- ❑ And quoted a family friend: "He loved that baby more than life itself."

3. Minimizing the Violence

3. Minimizing the Violence

- ❑ 2004: As Miriam Pedroso tried to flee
- ❑ Her ex-husband, **Ortilio Pedroso**, ran over her multiple times in a parking lot in West Palm Beach
- ❑ She was dead when paramedics arrived, officials said
- ❑ *Sun-Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
HEADLINE: "Divorce Quarrel Ends in Tragedy"

3. Minimizing the Violence

- ❑ 2004: Glenda Vittimberga was found decapitated in her Pasadena home
- ❑ The lead suspect, **Mark Guerro**, walked in front of a big rig on an interstate highway the same night
- ❑ The *Los Angeles Times* uncritically reported that detectives said the deaths were the result of a "domestic dispute"

3. Minimizing the Violence

- 2004: **Clarence North** went to his wife's new residence, argued with her, shot her once inside the new home, then chased her out into the front yard where he shot her again
- He then shot himself in the head
- *The Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA.) LEAD PARAGRAPH: "Domestic problems between a man and his wife spiraled out of control. . . ."

3. Minimizing the Violence

- ❑ 2004: 3-time prison felon **Michael Williamson** threatened to shoot his wife, grabbed a shotgun, fired a single shot into the wall of their mobile home
- ❑ St. Petersburg Times (Florida) uncritically quoted authorities as calling the incident “a lovers' quarrel”

4. Implying Mutual Responsibility

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- ❑ 2003: **Leobardo Gonzalez**, allegedly shot his estranged wife at least three times in the face, then killed himself
- ❑ Cindy Gonzalez had a restraining order against her husband
- ❑ He had spent time in jail on DV charges
- ❑ Fresno Bee (California): "couple killed in a murder-suicide had a long history of domestic violence, police said" "couple's problems included financial worries;" "couple had marital difficulties"

4. Implying Mutual Responsibility

- 2004: Officers shot to death **Wayne Scott**, 45, when he refused to heed orders to stop assaulting his partner Judy Quarles with a bat and knife
- Courier News (Bridgewater, NJ)
HEADLINE: "City couple in dispute had troubled history"

5. Blaming the Victim

“The news media chastise victims of domestic violence for staying in abusive relationships and places undue emphasis on irrelevant facts like whether the victim dressed promiscuously or was unfaithful.”

--Brendan Selby, *Speakers criticize news media's coverage of domestic violence*, The Stanford Daily, www.stanforddaily.com, Thursday, March 4, 2004

5. Blaming the Victim

- 2004: **Frank Mora** pleaded guilty to murder and kidnapping of Linda Montano who had been expected to testify against him about prior beatings she'd suffered
- *Albuquerque Journal* quoted killer's attorney, "this was a case of people highly intoxicated and probably not intending to hurt anybody, but it happened"
- And said the victim apparently died from blood loss after "failing to get medical treatment"

5. Blaming the Victim

- 2004: **Joseph H. Smith Jr.** shot longtime girlfriend Ayanna Lachay Taylor in the head with a shotgun, took her aunt hostage, then confronted police, who shot him dead
- *The Washington Post* quoted friends that the victim
 - never sought help from the courts,
 - rarely called police when her fights with Smith 'turned violent,'
 - and 'she always took him back'

5. Blaming the Victim

- **Jan. 23, 2003 Oprah Winfrey Show:**
- **WINFREY:** “Well, I think that's a really, really important question to ask that we haven't asked women for years. We've only played the women as victims and never asked them to--to ask themselves: What is your role in this?”
- “For years, I have done shows on battered women and domestic violence, and for decades, it has been believed that family violence was a social problem with one solution: Men who are violent should be punished.”

5. Blaming the Victim

- January 23, 2003 The Oprah Winfrey Show:
- "But now there are new voices that are challenging how we look at and how we treat violence in the family. It is not as simple as we had thought. They say the truth is that most battered women choose and even want to stay with their abusers.
- "And these women don't want their abusers to go to jail, and most of all, they want to keep their families together.
- "Some experts also say--and this is very controversial--that we are underestimating the role that women play in an abusive relationship."

6. Missing the DV Implications

6. Missing the DV Implications

- 2003: Convicted sniper-killers **John Allen Muhammad**, 42, and Lee Boyd Malvo, 18, were charged with
 - 13 shootings, including 10 deaths,
 - over a three-week span in October in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.
 - They are also suspected or charged with shootings in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Arizona and Washington state

6. Missing the DV Implications

- ❑ Almost totally ignored by the news media is the possibility this entire killing spree may have been one extreme domestic violence case
- ❑ Muhammad's ex-brother-in-law thinks the killings were part of an elaborate scheme to murder Mildred and the couple's three children, and make it look like the work of a random sniper
- ❑ The killings ringed the house in Clinton, Md., where his former wife and children were living
- ❑ He was spotted staking out the ex-wife's house
- ❑ He had threatened her,
- ❑ *"If you ever leave me, I'll kill you and the kids."*

6. Missing the DV Implications

- ❑ Muhammad's ex-wife Mildred also thinks he aimed to make her a victim of his sniper attacks. "He was creating a diversion."
- ❑ She said he changed after returning home from serving in the first Persian Gulf War
- ❑ She quoted him:
- ❑ *"Just know this. You have become my enemy, and as my enemy I will kill you."*
- ❑ During a bitter custody battle, he kidnapped the kids and held them out of the country on a Caribbean island for 18 months

6. Missing the DV Implications

- ❑ Malvo told psychiatrists that one of Muhammad's missions was to get his children back from Mildred/
- ❑ Mr. Malvo's lawyers suggested in court that the motive for the killings was not extortion, but involved his ex-wife.
- ❑ They say the shootings, which were scattered near Ms. Muhammad's home in Maryland, were an effort to disguise her eventual murder, so that their children would not know their father had killed their mother.

6. Missing the DV Implications

- ❑ Virginia Prosecutor Richard Conway:
- ❑ "The evidence will show that Mr. Muhammad became obsessed with finding her.
- ❑ "Once he pinpointed her location ... shortly thereafter, shootings occurred in the area where Mildred Muhammad had relocated."
- ❑ The trial judge refused to allow testimony that Muhammad had threatened his ex-wife or kidnapped the children because there was "no supporting evidence."

6. Missing the DV Implications

- The D.C. sniper story was national news for 2002-2003
- How much of this did you see reported?
- Why did news media ignore the most compelling explanation for serial murder?

6. Missing the DV Implications

This is the **PROFILE** of violent batterers

- Controlling
- Obsessed
- Violent
- Threats to kill
- Trained in weapons
- Trained in use of force to solve problems
- Manipulation of children
- Abduction of children
- Absolute **entitlement** to children
- Contemptuous of authority
- Unremorseful

7. Selective Coverage

7. Selective Coverage

- ❑ Compare news of pretty, young **Elizabeth Smart**, pretty, young **Chandra Levi**, or pretty, pregnant **Laci Peterson**
- ❑ With 1,300 other DV victims each year
- ❑ San Mateo County credentialed about 400 representatives of the media for the Scott Peterson trial
- ❑ CNN's Web site during jury selection phase showed over 500 stories since Laci Peterson disappeared

7. Selective Coverage

- ❑ Compare their news coverage with 1,300 other DV victims each year
- ❑ Like: **Dena Raley**. Her mother says she disappeared in 1999 from a husband with a history of DV
- ❑ Or **Evelyn Hernandez**. Like Peterson case, she was pregnant, disappeared, & her body washed ashore in 2003. Unlike Peterson case, her 5 year old son also disappeared & never found.

7. Selective Coverage Explanations

- Victor Neufeld, producer of CBS' "Early Show"
 - It connects on many different levels
 - It's about parenting and love and romance, and
 - It's that wonderful photo of Laci Peterson and that wonderful smile, and
 - It's a mystery what happened, extraordinary things happening to ordinary people

7. Selective Coverage Explanations

- ❑ Tom Rosenstiel, director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism
- ❑ Like a soap opera, it's easy for the audience to drop in and out of the lengthy coverage
- ❑ And more importantly, this kind of story is cheap, very cost-effective at a time when
- ❑ Network news divisions are being cut back, correspondents are down 30 percent, bureaus are down by half
- ❑ And you can cover it for a very long time

8. Inconsistent Coverage

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Susan Smith** (drowned 2 children)
 - **Andrea Yates** (drowned 5 children)
- With:
 - **William Eric Krost** - Alabama man fatally stabbed his three young children, killed the family pets, and then hanged himself in apparent anger over plans for a divorce, in 2003

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Ian Robbins**, Arizona man killed his 3-year-old son with a high-powered rifle while the boy was in his ex-wife's hands. He then shot his ex-wife and his 7-year-old son before killing himself, in 1997
 - **Anthony Lamar Bailey**, Michigan man shot his 4 children, killing 3, before setting house on fire, in 2003

8. Inconsistent Coverage

□ Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide

- **William F. Reichert** – Wisconsin man shot his wife, Miranda, and their two children, Cara and William "AJ," both younger than age 5, in their beds before turning the gun on himself, in 2003
 - **Christian Longo** – Oregon man strangled his wife, MaryJane, his 2-year-old son Madison, his 3-year-old daughter Sadie, and his 4-year-old son Zachery, and then went to Starbucks, in 2001
-

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Shahab Behzadpour**, Florida man incinerated himself, his 3-year old son and 4-year old daughter by setting fire to his car and crashing into the house where his wife was staying in 2003
 - **Nicholas Ryding**, Arizona man drowned his two sons, ages 3 1/2 and 18 months, and shot his wife in their home, in 1994

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Steven Horne**, Missouri man murdered his wife and two young children and then spent the remainder of Father's Day sitting in his home, in 2003
 - **Jose Jesus Zacarias**, California man police say strangled his 3-year old son and 9-year old stepdaughter, & left them for his wife to find after work, in 2003

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Mark Anthony Fregia**, California man set fire to car with his wife, their son, and her daughter inside, leaving the wife critical and the children dead, in 2003
 - **Bryan Randall**, Florida man, when his wife got a DV order against him, tried to kill his 4 children by drowning & truck crash, but only 2 died, in 2003

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - **Jay Handel**, British Columbia man, picked up his estranged wife from neighbors where he was staying and took her to a hill overlooking their home, in 2002
 - The house was engulfed in flames

8. Inconsistent Coverage

- Compare coverage of women/men who kill their children in familicide
 - Their six children were inside the home
 - Sebastian, 11
 - Roxanne, 9
 - Martial, 7
 - Moriah, 6
 - Levi, 4
 - Lydia, 2
 - Four were shot; two were strangled
-

9. Failure to Hold Officials Accountable

9. Failure to Hold Officials Accountable

- ❑ Nov., 2003: Akron Police suspect **Kimani Edward Ware** of tying up 4 children, stabbing his girlfriend and raping her 12-year old daughter
- ❑ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*: "He was charged with domestic violence against his girlfriend earlier this year. Trundle said he was not yet sentenced on that charge."
- ❑ *P.D.* covered the trial (45 year sentence), but never questioned WHY Ware was free to commit those crimes.

9. Failure to Hold Officials Accountable

- ❑ 2003: **Mark Simmons** was sentenced to life in prison for strangling and stabbing Lily Levy to death, 5 months after shooting her in the head
- ❑ *Orlando Sentinel* (Florida) reported that Simmons was involved in 15 prior domestic violence cases
- ❑ But did not question WHY the criminal justice system did not end his violent criminal career before he killed Levy

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ Judges are the last of the autonomous monarchs
- ❑ Judicial discretion is almost unlimited
- ❑ Judicial discretion can be another phrase for personal bias & prejudice
- ❑ Judges in Ohio have fewer continuing education requirements than beauticians
- ❑ If journalists don't question them. . .

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- **2003:** Glenda Meraz implored the police and the courts to protect her baby daughter from her husband's death threats
- The **unnamed California judge** in the divorce proceedings told her
 - The father's right to see one-year old Gessica outweighed her reports of death threats
- Gustavo Gonzalez put a gun to the toddler's head and squeezed the trigger, before he killed himself

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ **2004:** Richmond County Superior Court **Judge Neal W. Dickert**
- ❑ Dismissed Angela Van Eeden's restraining order against Willie G. Allen because he had not yet been informed of the restraining order
- ❑ Judge Dickert now gets to preside over Mr. Allen's death penalty trial for killing Ms. Van Eeden

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ Ernest Garland Allen shot Kathy Allen six times on Thanksgiving Day 1994 with a .22-caliber revolver
- ❑ Allen was convicted of the shooting **An unnamed North Carolina judge or magistrate** lowered Allen's bond to \$50,000
- ❑ He got out and killed Ms. Allen
- ❑ He got life in prison

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ **2004: Maine Superior Court Justice G. Arthur Brennan**
- ❑ Reduced Gregory Erskine's bail from \$1,000 to \$200
- ❑ He was charged with threatening to kill Lisa Deprez with a kitchen knife
- ❑ Three days later she was found beaten to death
- ❑ Erksine was charged with her murder

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ **St. Louis County (MO) Circuit Judge Joseph A. Goeke III**
- ❑ Awarded both parents joint legal custody of 5-year old adopted children
- ❑ Even though the father admitted sexually abusing his infant daughter over a period of 18 months
- ❑ **2004:**The Missouri Court of Appeals was called upon to rule that the man has no right under Missouri law to visit the child

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- ❑ **2004:** A 13-year-old rape victim from Lawrence, Kansas, spent much of a week hospitalized after an emotional breakdown, in which she mutilated her arms and wrists with broken glass
- ❑ What triggered the incident, the girl's mother said, was a judge's finding days earlier
- ❑ **Douglas County (KS) District Judge Paula Martin**
- ❑ Ruled that the girl was an "active participant" in her own rape
- ❑ And that her two 19-year old attackers deserved probation, not prison

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- **2004:** Sharen May requested a court restraining order, at the advice of police, saying her husband :
 - had a history of drug and alcohol abuse
 - had become increasingly depressed and emotionally erratic
 - had repeatedly threatened to take her children and make sure she never saw them again
- **San Mateo County (CA) Supervising Family Law Judge Rosemary Pfeiffer** said she wouldn't consider granting such an order until the husband was given a chance to contest it. She wrote on the file: "Fear of removal unfounded"
- Sharen May was ambushed in an elevator after a mediation session and stabbed to death
- Her estranged husband Lawrence Edward May was arrested

10. Failure to Challenge Judges

- Cindy Sharon Lemons said in her protection order application that her estranged boyfriend had
 - Given her a black eye
 - Shot at her
 - Threatened to flip the van over with her children inside
 - **2002: North Carolina District Court Judge Andy Corbett** denied Lemons' request, saying she failed to prove the man committed acts of domestic violence
 - Lemons, 20, was shot to death outside the mobile home she shared with her grandmother and three children
 - The boyfriend, Tarvaris Novack Mickens, 26, has been charged with first-degree murder
-

Footnote

- ❑ In the same year, 2002, authorities say at least 73 people died in domestic violence incidents in North Carolina
- ❑ North Carolina consistently ranks in the top 20 states with the highest rates of female homicides

Help

- ❑ ***Crime Victims Rights in the News Media***
- ❑ Washington, DC, National Center for Victims of Crime
 - <http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/>

- ❑ **Toolkit to End Violence Against Women**
- ❑ From the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office
- ❑ Chapter 11. Engaging the Media, Advertising, and Entertainment Industries
- ❑ What the Media Can Do To Make a Difference
- ❑ <http://womensissues.about.com/library/bltoolkit11.htm>

Help

- ❑ **Center for Disease Control (CDC) Intimate Partner Violence: Fact Sheet**
 - http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipv_facts.htm#Intimate
- ❑ **Crime Victims Rights in the News Media**
 - NY City Alliance Against Sexual Assault
 - http://www.nycagainstrape.org/survivors_factsheet_42.html

Help

- ❑ **Media Insensitivity To Victims Of Violence - the media is concentrating more on crime coverage, often wounding the victims again with their insensitive coverage**
 - **By Sue Carter**
 - ***USA Today* (Magazine), July, 1999**
 - **http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1272/is_2650_128/ai_55149341**

□ ***News Coverage of Violence
Against Women: Engendering
Blame***

- By Marian Meyers
- Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1997.

Help

- ***Covering Domestic Violence: A guide for journalists and other media professionals***
 - Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2002
 - http://www.wscadv.org/projects/FR/Media_Guide.pdf

Help

- ❑ ***Not All Domestic Violence Studies Are Created Equal; Researchers are "advocates" or "pioneers"-- depending on what they find***
- ❑ By Jennifer L. Pozner
- ❑ Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting, November/December 1999
- ❑ <http://www.fair.org/extra/9911/domestic-violence.html>

Help

□ ***A Hell of a Nice Murderer: Double Standards in Domestic Violence Coverage***

- By Kim Deterline
- Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, 31 Oct 2003
- <http://www.fair.org/extra/9407/nice-murderer.html>

Help

- ❑ Kline, E., Soler, E., and Campbell, J. (1998). *Ending Domestic Violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- ❑ Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, with local journalists (2000). *Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Journalists*. Warwick, RI: Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- ❑ Stevens, J. (1997). *Reporting on Violence: A Handbook for Journalists*. Dorfman, L. and Wallack, L. (Eds.) Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Media Studies Group.

News Media Coverage of Domestic Violence Fatalities

Concluded

National Domestic Violence
Fatality Review Initiative

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