

# OPINIONS

## An awareness of domestic abuse



**Caroline Mann**  
Columnist

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. One in three American women suffers abuse at the hands of her intimate partner.

These women are beaten, verbally abused, isolated, kicked, raped, locked in closets, told they are worth nothing, and even killed, often with children in the house.

In fact, women are more likely to be killed by their male partner than by all other types of perpetrators combined, according to a 1998 study by Neil S. Jacobson and John M. Gottman.

It is therefore not surprising that half of these women develop depression, and an estimated 25 to 40 percent attempt suicide after experiencing abuse, according to a 1993 study by Lisa Goodman.

Furthermore, children who witness domestic violence are more likely to be victimized or become abusers. They are also at risk for psychological disorders.

"My earliest childhood memories are of watching my mother being violently abused," said Daniel McCamish, a UNCA student. "It has haunted me ever since. The abuse robbed me and my mother of the loving attachment that normally exists between a mother and a child."

Abusive relationships involve far

more than physical violence. Obsessed with power, abusers may control victims through intimidation, public humiliation, isolation, sexual abuse, threatening to commit suicide, damaging property, manipulating children, threatening divorce, withholding financial resources, harming animals, threatening to take custody of children and stalking.

Why doesn't the woman leave? As many times as I've heard this question, it still disturbs me. A more reasonable inquiry might be, why is the abuser allowed to stay?

Regardless, there are many reasons why a woman doesn't leave an abusive relationship: because she is afraid; she has no financial resources and no support system; she feels helpless or ashamed; she is reluctant to take her children away from their father; she loves her partner and wants to believe him when he apologizes and says he will never hit her again; she has learned to be passive; she blames herself for the abuse; and perhaps the most compelling reason—because women are most likely to be killed by their abusers after they leave the house.

Despite these terrifying obstacles, most women do leave. An increasing number of domestic violence agencies, such as Helpmate, pro-

vide support and resources for these women.

Through community awareness and education, societal views about domestic violence are gradually changing. In 1968, 20 percent of the population thought it was okay for a man to hit his wife. In 1994, only 10 percent agreed with this statement, according to a 1997 study by Murray A. Straus.

However, we should wonder why one out of every 10 Americans still think domestic violence is acceptable.

In the struggle to eliminate abuse, knowledge is power.

"It is important that we educate ourselves, not only for our own safety in relationships, but for that of those we love," said Sarah Raskin, outreach and volunteer coordinator for Helpmate. "It is the responsibility of everyone to know the signs of domestic violence, and what resources are available to help a loved one make the difficult and brave transition from 'victim' to 'survivor.'"

"The more resources and support that a victim... can access, the more likely she/he will be able to create safety in her/his life," said Raskin.

There are many ways you can help eliminate abuse: educate yourself

and those around you, speak out against domestic violence, and support a violence-free community by attending Domestic Violence Awareness Month events such as the Candlelight Vigil on Oct. 25, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the City-County Plaza, and the Clothesline Project, which will be displayed on the UNCA quad Oct. 26 through 29.

What can be done on a large scale to end domestic violence? Perhaps the government could sponsor domestic violence awareness programs that were half as extensive as the campaigns against drugs.

Community organizations are often silent about domestic violence. Perhaps church groups, parent-teacher associations or fraternities could sponsor domestic violence awareness events.

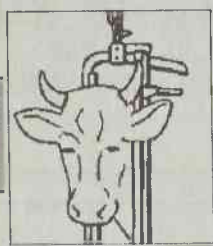
"Ultimately, any attempt at solving the problem of abuse must acknowledge that the power imbalance in intimate relationships reflects the power imbalance in our society," said Margaret Matlin.

Perhaps gender roles need to be questioned.

*If you or someone you know is being abused, call Helpmate's 24 hour crisis line at 254-0516 for support and information.*

**"Why doesn't the woman leave? As many times as I've heard this question, it still disturbs me. A more reasonable inquiry might be, why is the abuser allowed to stay?"**

## 'Media frenzy' causes mixed views



**Sean Clancy**  
Columnist

I was watching the VH1 concert for New York City, and I became agitated because of the media frenzy we are having in our country in regards to terror.

Here's what's terrifying me more than anthrax.

During the show, Richard Gere was booed for trying to inspire "compassion," while Jim Carey was holding up pictures of victims that relatives in the crowd would hand up to him.

He seemed more like he was signing autographs and giving shout-outs to victims than honoring them.

As he did so, saying, "Here's a real hero," moments before following with "hey, catch me" as he stage dove and crowd surfed in a truly tear-jerking display of remorse.

Finally, Paul McCartney came out and sang, "How can you laugh when you know I'm down?"

I almost cried because the music was so bad, but then the irony of his words made me laugh at the insanely distorted view of all the people enjoying this bizarre event must have.

Later, I saw P-Diddy on some other show wearing what appeared to be a slightly altered four-star general's uniform.

I thought this was funny, since millionaire P-Diddy's only front-line experience has been in nightclubs. But hey, the people love it. As long as he supports our troops, nothing else matters.

On another station, some very enthusiastic gentleman is trying to sell me a \$200 knife-and-sword set that consisted mostly of weapons suitable only for Klingons and serial killers.

It also had three swords that caught

my eye, the "United States Marine Corps" sword, the "Starship Trooper" and the "Conan."

I would normally try to say something funny right here, but it's just too frightening that there's a market for this stuff.

What is even more frightening is all he has to say is "any hesitation could cost you the chance to own this beautiful set," and people get worried.

This country is on some kind of politically and economically motivated crack that we are freebasing from our televisions.

The thinking individuals who make up this country have united to become one big brainless mob, incapable of rational thought above a third grade level.

I saw a ventriloquist with a puppet in United States army fatigues on her lap, singing a prayer or a psalm to Old Glory.

On the heels of the "We Still Pray" bumper stickers, combined with the boom in the trendiness of American flags, there is a big surge in red, white and blue "God Bless America" bumper stickers.

Yeah, God created Americans and Satan created Afghans, it's in the Bible somewhere.

I know that people are upset about the little glimpse of what the rest of the world is like every day, but treating President George W. Bush like some strange cross between Jesus and Rambo really doesn't seem like it could be all that productive.

There are people over there getting bombs dropped around them who probably haven't even heard about the World Trade Center attack, much less been behind its destruction.

Action must be taken to stop terrorism, but bombing the bejesus out of them isn't going to stop terrorism.

They already hate us, so why kill a bunch of them to see if that will change their mind.

This tragedy has been a strange and mysterious answer to Bush's prayers. He could declare that everyone has to wear all purple clothing because Taliban hate that color, and retailers wouldn't be able to sell purple clothes fast enough.

Since this started, Bush has gotten a pseudo-Cold War cooking. It started as the war on terrorism, which worked out well because apparently, terrorism only grows in Afghanistan.

If revenge is a good reason to go to war, then I guess Hitler did the right thing after that nasty treaty of Versailles devastated what was left of the war torn fatherland. His only mistake was that he went after the wrong ethnic group.

Our president is a money-grubbing politician, using patriotic propaganda to create an environment in which dissent with the government makes you a friend of terror.

I don't like Osama bin Laden, and I don't like innocent people dying. I don't limit the word "people" to describe only Americans with a sliding scale for other people based on their economic status or their level of industrialization.

Whatever you believe, you have to remember that the U.S. government is not God.

Our lawmakers are the least suitable people to make ethical decisions in the country. The coveted and almighty Constitution was written by a bunch of wealthy white male slave owners.

The forefathers were undeniably smart, but definitely not profits bearing the seeds to Eden.

In case you haven't noticed, our perfect country is riddled with problems, and we are at the top of the food chain, economically speaking.

Poor people in Afghanistan are not living in projects or living off welfare. They are in tents and handcrafted shelters, doing what we would call camping, except it is every day life, not just a vacation.

There are rational reasons why everything that is happening is happening.

Ask, "why is this" about everything. They hate us why? Most people in poor countries either hate us or want to move here. It's not as simple as we are better than them, so they're envious or jealous.

I don't really care how you feel about any of this, but it would make me feel safer to know that at least you do feel something.

If all you know is that the people of the Taliban are "screwed," then you should do some more research.

Take the "for sale" sign off your face so you can see the simple truth: reality is a lot more complicated than George W. Bush and the president of his fan club, Crieg Lovelace, would have you think.

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