

# opinion & CAMPUS LIFE

## NO MORE "POWER OVER" US

By Morgan Ericson  
Staff Writer

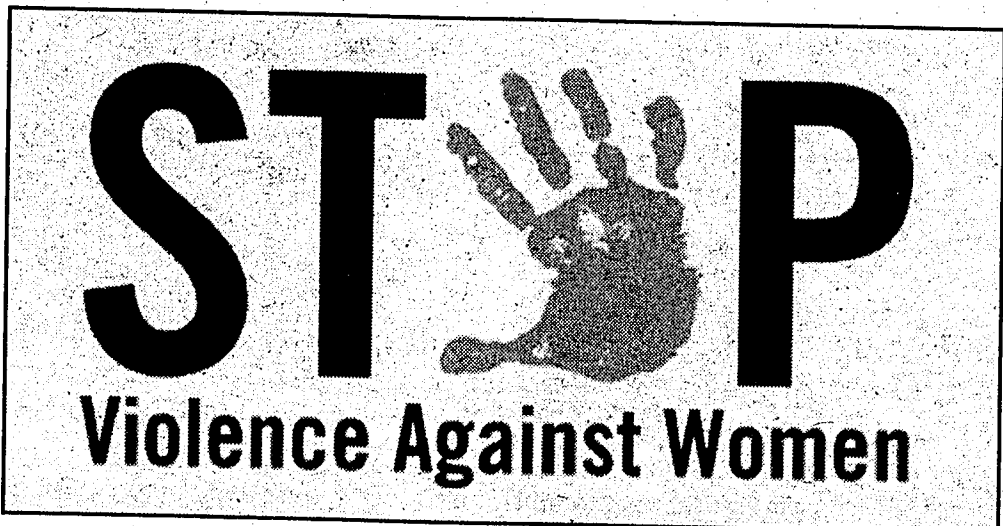


Photo courtesy of www.amnestyusa.org

As a 12-year-old I remember awakening one night to a frantic call exchanged between my mother and her best friend, Sherry, whose husband had become enraged and beat her against the wall. I myself witnessed emotional abuse for over two decades and, like Sherry, felt no sense of power or direction while I eavesdropped from hidden corners. The fear associated with those experiences would resurface when I overheard my neighbor beat his girlfriend and break her nose. These experiences, however grave or emotionally devastating, are only small representations of the global problem of domestic violence, gender mutilation, and trafficking of women.

How do abusive relationships, such as the aforementioned, begin? According to interpersonal communications specialist Patricia Evans, these negative behaviors stem from a cultural and individual belief in Power Over. For centuries the West has propagated this idea, the belief that we have "tremendous Power Over the earth and its people and resources" and that "we have the power to wipe out our world" (Evans 29). Ideas such as Manifest Destiny, NAFTA, and our intervention in Iraq demonstrate our Power Over ideology on a national level. However, the United States is not the only nation to manifest this type of behavior: Machista cultures in Latin America have also propagated this model in their treatment of gender roles, as has Europe.

Authors Stephen Arterburn and clinical psychologist Margaret Rinck suggest that a misunderstanding of anger also contributes to the problem of domestic violence. They suggest that society directly and indirectly tells men that they must be strong and impenetrable: "if a man is unable to rise

above the stresses of life, he feels shame" (Arterburn 87). In response to this idea, men generally bury their emotions and then become angry.

Some men become what psychologist John Friel dubs "Offender-Little Boys": outwardly they are destructively powerful but inside they remain vulnerable. Women, conversely, are still directly and indirectly taught to be 'nice' and even submissive, an ingrained idea that keeps many women stuck in unhealthy relationships. Perhaps part of the problem of physical and emotional abuse becomes an outdated and misguided understanding of anger and Power Over.

While it can be helpful to understand some factors that lie behind toxic behaviors, it is also helpful to look at the facts: How many women will become victims of violence? In an article written by Amnesty International in 2008, the organization states that one in three women will be "beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused." Within the United States alone, a woman is raped every six minutes or battered every fifteen seconds, and Alaska Native and Native American women are 2.5 times more likely to be assaulted or abused.

Even in nations like the United Kingdom and Europe domestic violence is the leading cause of death for women and children from ages 16-44. In many nations, women-trafficking and genital mutilation procedures take place; according to Amnesty International an estimated two million girls undergo forced genital mutilation (FGM) procedures annually. Honor killings still take place in the Middle East and other regions with an estimated five thousand girls killed each year according to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNPFA) estimate in 2000.

While you might not represent one of these statistics, take your part to prevent and end the problem. Amnesty International, the World Health Organization (WHO), and Stop the Traffik are good sources to consult for more facts and reports. If you have never taken a self-defense class, consider taking advantage of Meredith's beginning and intermediate Karate courses. Raise awareness by throwing a movie night—Searching for Angela Shelton (Shelton 2004) and Trading Women (Feingold 2003) are two documentaries that respectively explore components of sexual assault and the trade of women and children in Burma, China, and Thailand.

Other action steps include making a donation or volunteering with Interact, located off 612 Wade Avenue in Raleigh. Try to buy fair trade products. Be a friend who other victims of assault can trust. If you are religious, pray for the reintegration of victims and that officials would enact legislation to prevent trafficking and assault. Whatever option you choose, do not forget them. Do not forget us. ■

## PALIN HAS WHAT IT TAKES

By Danielle Beck  
Staff Writer

How many blows can one presidential candidate take at another's running mate? Since the day Senator John McCain announced his running mate for the 2008 presidential election, Presidential candidate Barack Obama has been attacking Sarah Palin. Many of the news reports, including the liberal ones, have increasingly shown footage of Obama on the campaign trails, throwing more verbal punches at Palin than talking about his plans if he wins the election in November. So much of this election has been

based on experience, and Obama could handle attacks when people were talking about his inexperience. In the last few weeks, however, he has talked about the lack of experience he "thinks" Sarah Palin has, but he has repeatedly been wrong.

Palin has five kids, one of them with Down's syndrome and another is a soldier in Iraq; she has raised them all with the help of her husband. Those facts alone indicate that Palin has more experience than Obama has ever had in his entire life. Palin is a governor of a state

and knows a whole lot about politics; being a governor is equivalent to being a president but at the state level. She voted against building the Bridge to Nowhere and is not afraid to admit that her pregnant teenage daughter made an adult decision to have sex without thinking about the consequences.

Unlike Obama, Palin is not afraid to say what it is she believes and she stands by it. She has been accused of being a flip-flopper on different occasions. Yes, she may have changed

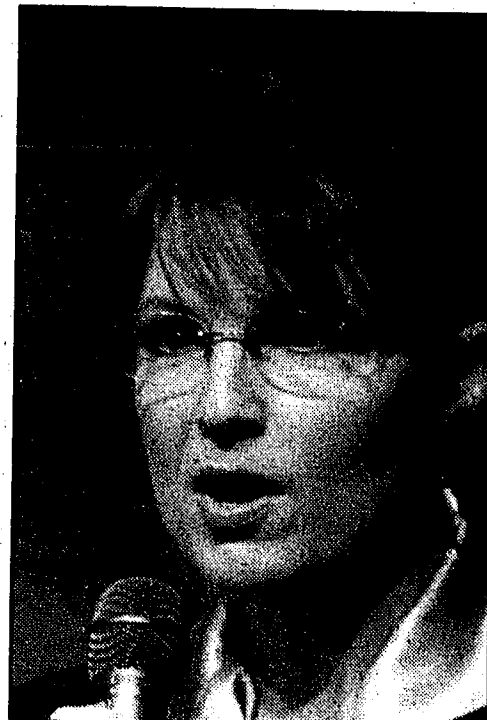


Photo courtesy The Vancouver Sun

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