

Abused wives, a problem that 'cuts across class lines'

By JACKIE KLEIN
Part III of a series

They are cut with knives, bludgeoned with iron pipes, kicked, burned, axed and beaten.

And they're not victims of war. They are American women, battered in their own homes and often unable to escape the torture.

"Domestic violence is not a crime of the ghettos," said Kathy Sherman, a counselor in Southfield's Human Resources Department. "It cuts across class lines. Potential batterers aren't only men who have had too much to drink. And battered women may have characteristics in common."

Battered women, Ms. Sherman said, have low self-esteem and are traditionalists about the home. They believe in family unity and prescribed feminine sex-role stereotypes. They accept responsibility for the batterer's actions, suffer from guilt and yet deny the terror and anger they feel.

"These women present a passive face to the world," Ms. Sherman said. "But they often have the strength to manipulate their environment enough

to prevent further violence and getting killed.

"THEY SUFFER severe stress and psychological complaints. They use sex as a way to establish intimacy. These women usually believe no one will be able to help them resolve their predicament except themselves. But this is a misconception. There are agencies which provide assistance to abused women."

Potential batterers often were physically or psychologically abused as children, Ms. Sherman said. Maybe their mothers were battered by their fathers.

"Some of these men have displayed violence towards others, play with guns and use them to protect themselves against other people and lose their tempers more often and easily than seems necessary," she said.

"They may drink excessively, commit acts of violence against objects rather than people, and display an unusual amount of jealousy. Some expect their wives to spend all their free time with them or give a running account of where they will be."

Abusive husbands may become enraged when their wives don't listen to their advice, Ms. Sherman said. There

The services of an entire rehabilitation team were needed to help a beaten woman compensate for paralysis of her right side, inability to walk, a vision problem, and loss of speech and understanding.

could be a sense of overkill in their cruelty or kindness.

"MANY MEN have rigid ideas of what people should do," she said. "These are often determined by male or female sex-role stereotypes."

If a woman is being battered, she should seek help immediately, Ms. Sherman advises. Victims of domestic assault often believe their situations are hopeless. Many are afraid or embarrassed to talk about their beatings or think they deserve them, she said.

One woman, Ms. Sherman said, knows her husband is a violent man, but she continues to live with him. She runs a risk of being killed by him if she can't take care of herself or run far enough and fast enough to hide.

Another woman said the beatings started the first week the rent didn't get paid. She became pregnant shortly afterwards and that compounded the problem. She finally left to live with other people. After four attempts to reach her, her husband stopped bothering her and they were finally divorced.

In another case, the services of an entire rehabilitation team were needed to "help a woman compensate for paralysis of her right side, inability to walk, a vision problem and loss of speech and understanding.

These were the side effects of the

brain injury suffered after a severe beating. She took the abuse, she said, because she had no choice. Her children were young, her sisters were afraid to help because of what her husband might do to them and her doctor said this was a "family affair."

ANOTHER VICTIM of abuse, who has been married 10 years, said she wasn't beaten by her husband at first — he just hit her now and then. He later struck her with a telephone, bricks and furniture and threw her down three flights of stairs. She lost several jobs because of her injuries.

"It wouldn't have done any good to tell someone," the woman said when she finally sought counseling. "It's really sad when you're in a situation and there's no place to go. You feel helpless and hopeless."

Distraught women may feel they have no options, Ms. Sherman said, but that's not so. There are many agencies offering help, some on a 24-hour emergency basis.

In Oakland County, the Women's Survival Center, 335-1500 offers counseling, information and referral services, free legal aid and support groups for battered women and all others who need emotional help.

The center, Ms. Sherman said, makes

arrangement for abused women to stay in shelters in Oakland, Wayne and Washtenaw counties and offers free services for women and children who leave home.

"AVERAGE STAYS are from one to 20 days, allowing women time to think through their future," Ms. Sherman said. "Counselors assist with housing, legal matters, employment and financial problems. The locations of these shelters are kept confidential to protect the women."

"Legally, domestic violence is a dif-

ficult issue. Women are afraid to make formal complaints. If they do file complaints, they're afraid to follow through because they feel they have no place to go and no support."

Police tire of repeated runs to the same homes and of women charging their minds about pressing charges, Ms. Sherman said. Injunctions are hard to get, costly and not that effective.

"It all becomes a vicious circle which, in some cases, may last 10 or 20 years or until the woman is dead," Ms. Sherman said.

PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

Petitions for candidates for the office of Councilmember for the City of Farmington Hills are to be filed no later than 4:00 o'clock P.M. on July 24, 1979, at the Farmington Hills City Clerk's Office, 3155 West Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan. Petitions are available at the City Clerk's office.

FLOYD A. CAIRNS
City Clerk

Published: June 21, 1979

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF ENACTED BUDGET PUBLIC NOTICE SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 79/80 BUDGET

All interested persons are hereby notified that a summary of the Fiscal Year 79/80 budget of the City of Farmington Hills including the intended uses of federal revenue sharing funds is available for public inspection.

The budget summary and documentation necessary to support the summary are available at Farmington Hills City Hall, 3155 West Eleven Mile Road, Office of the City Clerk, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. They also are on file at the Farmington Community Library, 25500 Liberty, Farmington, Michigan and the Farmington Hills Branch Library, at 3272 West Twelve Mile, Farmington Hills, Michigan during their normal business hours.

FLOYD CAIRNS
City Clerk

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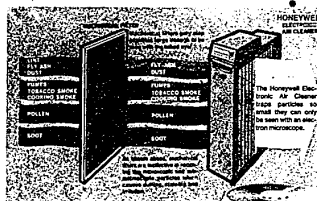
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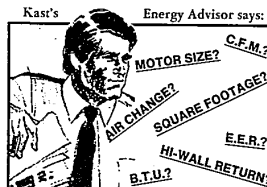
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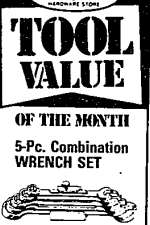


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