

# Husbands are also victimized in cases of family violence

Last of a series  
By JACKIE KLEIN

There are no stereotypes for family

violence. Battering husbands and wives cross socio-economic lines. They are white, black, Catholic, Jewish and belong to all cultural groups. They are upper, middle and low-income housewives, professional women, office workers, doctors, lawyers, policemen and farmers.

Family fights conjure up images of battered women and domestic assault and violence. But in some cases, husbands are the victims. One such incident provoked a man to bring charges against his wife in Southfield's 46th District Court.

The wife, a middle-aged, affluent woman who is respected in the community, now faces a possible jail sentence for assault and battery and possession of a firearm with intent to commit a felony. She will be tried on the charges in Oakland County Circuit Court.

The couple has been married about 30 years, according to a court spokesman. The husband owns a thriving clothing business and he and his wife live in an area of expensive homes in Southfield. They had the usual marital ups and downs, but the spat was minor.

"IT MIGHT have been the middle-age crisis that started more serious arguments," the spokesman said. "Suddenly the pair began to carp at each other and things went from bad to worse. One day, the woman moved out of the house."

"When she ran out of money, she went to her husband's place of business where he wasn't there and took \$2,500 from the till. He was furious. She went home one afternoon to pick up some clothes and her husband was around. They got into a big fight and she beat him up and threatened him with a gun she took from her purse."

The man called Southfield police but refused to press charges against his wife until two months later. He doesn't seem to be concerned that she might spend a few years in jail for the offense, the spokesman said. He appears to be fed up.

ANOTHER CASE of a battling Southfield pair took a bizarre twist. Their marriage was rocky and they were separated many times, usually at the instigation of the wife. After the last time, the woman moved in with her mother and her husband was frantic. This time his wife threatened to divorce him.

The husband went to his mother-in-law's house and in front of his wife gulped a bottle of pills and said he was

committing suicide. When he fell to the floor, apparently unconscious, his wife called Southfield police and paramedics.

When a police officer tried to help a man, who had actually swallowed a few over-the-counter sleeping pills, he kicked the police officer in the groin. The officer, who was injured and had to be treated in the hospital, is suing the husband for assault and battery. The couple is back together, at least until the next tiff.

Marriage, according to Ann Landers, is 90 percent women, 10 percent men. Divorce may be on the increase in the country, but not because both spouses are rushing headlong into court.

"You keep hoping it will work," said one local woman who left her husband but finally returned. She dropped criminal proceedings against her husband who had beaten her.

"My husband is a personable, charming man and very respectable," she maintained. "We live in a respectable community. Everyone thinks my husband is a great guy. And nobody in this respectable community would believe what goes on in our house."

Each time he beat her, she said, her husband would apologize, say he didn't mean to hurt her and promise to change. He assured her he loved her.

MANY ABUSED women are reluc-

tant to file for divorce for economic reasons and concern about children. One wife said it was hard to sign divorce papers because she was worried about what would happen to her husband.

A number of abusive husbands don't believe wife-beating is abnormal, the court spokesman said. They think it's the masculine thing to do and have to be superior to someone. They consider their wives personal property.

"I know a husband who is in therapy but still doesn't realize wife-abuse is wrong," he said. "Very few men will submit to counseling or psychiatry because they can't accept the fact that they need help."

"Husbands who beat their wives seldom file for divorce. They're afraid they might lose their 'battering rams' and never find another one to take out their frustrations on. Men should learn that women aren't their property and that manhood isn't equated with the power of the fist."

Unlike women, the spokesman said, abusive men don't value marriage as intrinsically important. They view it as an opportunity to exert control. Aggression isn't striving for dominance over competitive males, but against physical inferiors — women.

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