

April 2021

Pamphlet: "One of These Days POW Right in the Kissar"

Hubbard House (Jacksonville)

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"ONE OF THESE DAYS--

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RIGHT IN THE KISSER!"*

* Jackie Gleason, *The Honeymooners*

Wife Abuse

"WIFE-BEATING IS A PUBLIC ISSUE AND NO LONGER A PRIVATE PROBLEM."
James Bannon, Commander, Detroit Police

In 1974, 740 women filed complaints against their husbands with police agencies in Washtenaw County, Michigan. Attacks with an electric sander, a shotgun, knives, a leather belt with a brass buckle, a hunting knife, a hand ax, a car and a telephone were reported. In Harlem, N.Y. and in Norwalk, Conn., police received 4 to 5 charges of wife abuse a day in 1974. Miami's Citizen Dispute Settlement Center handled nearly 1000 cases of wife abuse. Since wife abuse is considered the "single most unreported crime in the country" by law enforcement officials, these statistics represent the tip of the iceberg. Both national and local officials estimate that there are 10 unreported cases for every one reported case of wife abuse.

Wife Beating Is A Crime, Not Just A Personal Problem

It is a complex problem that involves much more than the personal interaction between a husband and his wife. It has roots in historical attitudes toward women, the institution of marriage, the economy, the intricacies of criminal and civil law, and the delivery system of social service agencies.

It Is A Criminal Problem Of Huge Proportions

In Jacksonville, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning has recently issued a report on assault. According to the report, 52% of criminal assaults result from domestic quarrels. 40% of all assaults take place at home. According to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, 70 to 90% of all police calls are in

response to family quarrels. 60 to 70% of local murders result from domestic quarrels, and domestic intervention is the single most dangerous type of call handled by the Jacksonville police. A spokesman from the Sheriff's Office states that serious assault by a close friend or a family member is far more likely to occur to a Jacksonville resident than assault by a stranger. On the national level, the FBI reports that 1/3 of all police killed in 1974 in the U.S. (as well as 1/3 of the 25,000 police assaulted) were trying to break up family fights.

It Is A Complex Social Problem

Case histories confirm more and more that the marital relationship itself is usually not the cause of wife abuse. A husband may be experiencing intense pressures outside the relationship. Or a woman may be dissatisfied with her husband's performance outside the marriage. When the pressures build up, the husband resorts to physical abuse. Both the husband and the wife often accept assault as a normal, justifiable response to frustration. "Most women have been raised and socialized to believe that they must make their husbands happy," states Marjorie Fields, an attorney with the South Brooklyn Legal Services Corp., "so they not only take the beatings; they tend to feel responsible for them, their guilt feelings prevent them from getting out."

It Is A Universal Problem

Wife beating is rarely an isolated act. Most case histories point to years and years of smaller abuses that escalate to an incident of serious assault. Many lesser abuses are accepted by society as normal male/female behavior, and so the signs of more serious problems are often overlooked in the early stages of wife abuse. Wife abuse is not just a lower-class phenomenon. It cuts across all racial and socio-economic lines. It is just as

common in Washtenau County, the 31st richest county in America as it is in Harlem. It is just as common in Jacksonville. According to a Sheriff's Office spokesman, "People have not taken the issue seriously because the problem of wife abuse is as common as green grass. How do you get people to believe that they can change the grass from green to purple?"

It Is An Age-Old Problem We Are Now Beginning To Recognize

"A SPANIEL, A WOMAN AND A WALNUT TREE, THE MORE THEY'RE BEATEN THE BETTER THEY BE."

Old English Proverb

"A WIFE MAY LOVE A HUSBAND WHO NEVER BEATS HER BUT SHE DOES NOT RESPECT HIM."

Russian Proverb

"IT IS ILLEGAL TO BEAT YOUR WIFE AFTER 10:00 P.M. OR ON SUNDAYS."

Pennsylvania Law

For centuries women have been beaten by their husbands but have not reported their beatings. This hesitancy can be explained by a number of attitudes; they're embarrassed; they think that they are failures; they love their husband; in a marriage it is the wife's duty to help her husband. But today a growing number of battered women are realizing that they are not alone. They are speaking out and coming together to find solutions to the problem of wife abuse.

It Is An Economic Problem--

Battered women not only feel guilty and embarrassed about their situations, but if they do speak out they usually find themselves with no support from friends, family or society at large. Their problem is economic. Battered

selves and their families. When women do take action they often find that social institutions do not operate to support them. Police, social service agencies, child support authorities and divorce courts all too often act to "preserve the marriage" by leaving the woman no option but to return to her husband "to make a go of it." The behavior of the husband is generally condoned by the courts and the police. A New York Judge commented, "The situation is not going to change until the police see these cases as citizen protection and not a wife protection." Most battered women spend months or even years in futile efforts to free themselves from their husbands. There has been no nationwide organization or agency to provide temporary shelters for these women. Their only refuge has been to relocate with friends or family or leave town.

Wife Beating Is A Community Problem

There are agencies in Jacksonville now providing services for battered women, but their services are very limited. In a survey of 24 local agencies, 9 provide some services--mostly unsolicited counseling. Services are highly fragmented. There is no agency that considers, as a priority, providing comprehensive services to battered women. Fifteen agencies receive inquiries but are unable to provide adequate services due to lack of trained staff and a lack of agency guidelines to treat the problem. Staff from several agencies admitted that the problem in Jacksonville is indeed very large, and that there is a tremendous need, far exceeding their capabilities to provide for it. As one staff person noted, "unfortunately the present legal system and police force don't seem to be equipped to deal with the problem and these (organizations) are our only available tools." A staff member from University Hospital stated, "We get these women in here beaten up, all bloody. We patch them up, take care of their wounds and then have no recourse but to send them back home." These professionals agree with other professionals across

the country that the greatest immediate need of physically abused women is for protective shelters where they can stay with their children while they decide on a course of action. Local agencies have enthusiastically endorsed the establishment of such an agency in Jacksonville and have expressed a desire to work closely with it's staff.



A Community Solution

Many communities have already rallied in a grassroots effort to prevent wife abuse. Thirteen full-time shelters for women now operate nationwide, and 28 more are open on a part-time basis. Refuge houses are being planned by hundreds of other communities. Jacksonville is one of the communities in the forefront of this social movement. In Jacksonville such a refuge already exists. The Hubbard House Project, an extension of the Jacksonville Rape Crisis Center, was conceived early in 1975. The house itself, Hubbard House, opened in May 1976 on a limited basis. Funding was provided by a local foundation. Hubbard House is located at 1231 Hubbard Street. At present the Project operates a 24 hour hotline and the House is open for limited walk-in counseling. All services are provided by trained volunteers. The Project operates a speaker's bureau to help promote community education.

What Services Are Needed?



During our first two months of operation, Hubbard House received over 40 calls from battered women. Volunteers are now beginning a community public information campaign so that the number of calls is expected to increase substantially. The 24 hour crisis hotline and walk-in counseling can help some of these women. But as it now operates, Hubbard House cannot help thousands of battered women in Jacksonville. Above all these women need a safe place to go and time to think. They need a temporary shelter open 24 hours a day. They need childcare, crisis counseling and emotional support. But crisis intervention is not enough. To break the battered wife syndrome, victims must be provided with a sense of continuity and stability in their quest for help. They must have access to a central agency where they can go for long-term, comprehensive referral and counseling services not otherwise offered in the community. They need help in exploring their alternatives--financial, legal, educational and career.

How You Can Help

The problem of wife abuse is an old problem and a large problem. But Jacksonville is recognizing the problem and recognizing that something can be done about it. Hubbard House is taking a leading role in the country by providing comprehensive services to battered women; a role that will mean better lives for the victims of wife abuse and their families. We are confident that many responsible and conscientious members of our community share our concern and commitment to providing this vital social service in Jacksonville. We earnestly encourage you to invest your dollars in our community's future. Please support Hubbard House.



HUBBARD HOUSE

RAPE CRISIS CENTER
AID TO BATTERED WOMEN
& SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN

1231 HUBBARD STREET JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207 ♀ (904) 398-7728 or 354-3114

Please send your tax deductible contributions to:

HUBBARD HOUSE PROJECT
P. O. Box 10551
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

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