

For Educators: Law Enforcement Training

Director's Note

I'm film maker and not an expert on police procedures. My closest contacts with the police came early in my career, when I was a young reporter covering the night police beat in Richmond, VA. I never had a better time doing a job.

Law enforcement and police work are a huge part of "Power and Control: Domestic Violence in America." Since the early 1980s, so much of society's response to domestic violence has been at the level of policing and prosecution. The film chronicles how that response has evolved, and how it works today on the streets.

It wouldn't have been possible without the gracious cooperation of police departments in three very different jurisdictions: Duluth, MN, Baltimore, MD and New York City (my home town). Thanks to department heads and patrol officers in those places, we have a documentary, as well as the more specialized film on domestic violence law enforcement.

I hope that police departments, agencies, police academies and college criminal justice programs find the law enforcement film to be of value for training and teaching. I encourage everyone to use the film, the video interview excerpts on this site and the resources on this page.

Please contact me with any questions or suggestions.

Peter Cohn
Director/Producer
Hillcrest Films

What the film is about

“Domestic Violence and Law Enforcement” explores how three very police departments respond to domestic violence. The film starts in Duluth, MN, home of the influential “Duluth Model” and the first jurisdiction to introduce mandatory arrest. Lt. Scott Jenkins is our primary Duluth subject — Jenkins is internationally known for his authoritative and incisive domestic violence trainings. We ride along with patrol officers on the street, and learn some of the aspects of Duluth's highly detailed procedures for responding to domestic all.

Next, the Family Crimes Unit in Baltimore, MD, an innovative program that puts a domestic violence detective team on the streets as first responders and follow up investigators. We interview Lt. Vernell Shaheed, head of the unit, who talks about how her group has put an emphasis on convicting chronic domestic abusers through improved investigative and evidence gathering techniques. We follow two detectives from the unit as they make a home visit with an abuse victim who is being intimidated by her abuser.

Then on to, Bronx, NY, and the 46th Precinct — probably the nation’s busiest domestic violence patrol area. We interview Dep. Chief Kathy Ryan, head of the NYPD's domestic violence unit, and learn how her command has organized more than 300 domestic violence police officers spread over the city's five boroughs. We follow officers from the 46th Precinct as they make home visits in the Bronx.

Lt. Jenkins in Duluth concludes with a reflection on his more than 20 years involved in domestic violence policing.

Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Issues for Class Discussion

A teaching plan for using "Domestic Violence and Law Enforcement" in class could include a discussion of key points of the film. What follows are some of the film's most important points, along with direct quotes from the film. These make starting points for discussion or assignments -- there are many more details and nuances to each question.

What is an important factor that makes domestic cases different than most other crimes?

LT Jenkins: These are people who have real things in common. They have a life that's common. They have children that are in common. And the stakes are very high for losing those things. And that keeps them together.

What is victim blaming?

LT Jenkins: I held a lot of the beliefs as a man raised in this society but also as a -- as a professional police officer that -- um -- it takes two to tango. And I bought into what the batterer wanted me to believe -- is that these things were about her. About the way she treated him. About the way that she demeaned him. Or pressed his buttons. So I bought into a lot of that.

Prior to the early 1980s, what was the attitude of most law enforcement agencies toward domestic violence?

Michael Paymar: "Law enforcement really minimized domestic assault cases. It was considered a private matter between a husband and a wife."

What are the underlying ideas of the Duluth Model of domestic violence policy?

Ellen Pence: The Duluth model is bringing all the criminal justice people together -- police -- 911, and having them operate from policies that we've all agreed on. The -- 911 will always send a police officer out. Police will arrest when they've got certain conditions. Prosecutors will prosecute when they can, etc. etc. All the way down the line. With the idea that the system will shift the burden of responsibility of controlling the batterer off the victim onto the community. The idea is that you focus on the abuser. You bring the power of the State and the community to do that. You're trying to reduce the opportunity of men to batter.

What is the basic role of an officer responding to a domestic call?

LT Jenkins: When that officer first arrives on the scene, they are now a filter or a trap for the rest of the system. They're the eyes and the ears of everybody else involved in domestic violence response...It requires police officers to be multi-taskers. And to be able to divide attention and learn those skills. You're required to look for physical evidence that corroborates, to treat injuries -- um -- to take care of children that are on the scene. And then ultimately make a decision on -- on what it is that you believe happened here. Based on what you see, what you hear and what you're able to document

What are some of the consequences of improper police response?

LT Jenkins: The stakes are so high. If we make the wrong decision it could impact, adversely impact the safety of a woman and her children for years. She won't access services. She won't call the police again when she really needs 'em. She may take the law into her own hands. And and commit a dangerous assault or a homicide, God forbid, herself

How frequently do domestic violence take place in the US?

DET Degraffinried: The FBI says that a woman is a victim of domestic violence every 18 seconds.

The St. Paul Blueprint

Thirty years after co-leading the effort that created the Duluth Model, Ellen Pence continues to work to improve society's response to domestic violence. Her most recent major project is the St. Paul Blueprint, a comprehensive set of new policies developed in St. Paul as part of a major interagency effort. The project began in 2006, and released the new comprehensive approach in early 2010.

The Blueprint offers guides and protocols for law enforcement at all levels, from patrol through supervision. Although they were designed specifically for St. Paul, they can be useful in any jurisdiction, with only a few minor adjustments to reflect local procedures and statutes. Law enforcement content of the Blueprint can be accessed below.

Complete Law Enforcement Chapter (Chapter 3)

Law Enforcement Sections:

- Patrol Response to Domestic Violence
- Protocol 1: Patrol Response to Domestic Violence
- Patrol Report Checklist
- Protocol 2: Victim Engagement Guidelines
- Conducting Investigations in Domestic Violence-Related Cases
- Protocol 3: Conducting Investigations in Domestic Violence-Related Cases
- Supervising Investigations in Domestic Violence Cases
- Protocol 4: Supervising Investigations in Domestic Violence-Related Cases
- Supervising the Patrol Response to Domestic Violence
- Protocol 5: Supervising the Patrol Response to Domestic Violence

Practitioners' Guide to Risk and Danger in Domestic Violence Cases

Training Memos

Interventions with Victims of Battering as Suspects or Defendants
Victim Engagement and the Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence
Law Enforcement Response to Strangulation
Response to Children in Domestic Violence-Related Calls
Miranda Rights and Domestic Violence Cases
Making the Arrest Decision
Law Enforcement Response to Stalking
Law Enforcement Response to Persons with Disabilities
How a Prosecutor Reads a Domestic Violence-Related Report
How a Defense Attorney Reads a Domestic Violence-Related Report

Additional Material

Supervising Domestic Violence Cases - Case Review Checklist
Patrol Supervision - Domestic Violence Patrol Report Review

Duluth, MN PD

Duluth Police Domestic Abuse Policy

Duluth PD Mandated Victim Assistance Policy

Duluth Police Report Writing Checklist

News coverage of the Blueprint

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), April 1, 2010

[Minnesota Public Radio](#) April 1, 2010

Domesitc Violence And Law Enforcement: Chapter Summaries

Chapter DVD start times are in parenthesis.

Duluth: Where It Began, MN (0.00)

Introduce Lt. Scott Jenkins, Duluth, MN PD. Jenkins discusses the nature of domestic cases, and how the Duluth Model evolved in his years in the department. When he started, the approach was "separation and mediation." His tendency was to blame the victim.

Michael Paymar and Ellen Pence, founders of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth in the early 1980s, talk about how they initiated Duluth's mandatory arrest policy, which has now become a national standard.

Duluth police officers talk about the policies and procedures in effect today. We see an officer responding to an actual call.

"The stakes are so high. If we make the wrong decision it could adversely impact the safety of a woman and her children for years," Jenkins says.

Baltimore: A Centralized Approach (7:28)

In Baltimore, much of the domestic violence police work has been centralized in the Family Crimes Unit, a detective squad that handles investigations, follow up and, when possible, crime scene response. We interview two detectives from the unit, and Lt. Vernell Shaheed, head of the unit.

Shaheed emphasizes that the unit focuses on developing strong cases that can lead to convictions, even in situations where victims are not prepared to testify in court.

We see the two detectives on a home visit with a victim who is being intimidated by her abuser and the abuser's family.

The Bronx: In the Nation's Busiest Precinct (11.11)

A look inside the 46th Precinct.

Interview with Dep. Chief Kathy Ryan, who heads up the NYPD domestic violence units, which have a total of 300 officers. 25% of felony assaults are attributable to DV, and the city has over 1.8 million orders of protection in its online system.

Officers in the 46th precinct assemble for a roll call training.

A DV advocate who works from the precinct discuss her role there.

Interview two officers from the 46th.

Duluth: The Next Steps 17:26

Continuing the interview with Lt. Jenkins.

Officers responding to a DV call.

Jenkins emphasizes the value of teaching philosophical and ideological issues to police officers. "I've had a part, just by virtue of my gender, in perpetuating violence against women."

EXTRA FEATURES

Interviews and their length in minutes in parenthesis.

Lt. Scott Jenkins, Duluth PD (4:12)

Jenkins discusses the role of the police officer responding to a domestic violence call. Key is to understand that the officer is getting information that will be used by other agencies that follow up after the initial incident. Also key to recognize that the victims of abuse are the most at risk in the situation.

Lt. Vernell Shaheed, Baltimore, MD (4:30)

Unit's priority is to get jail time, even when victims recant or change their minds. The unit seeks to obtain evidence that was not gathered when calls were handled only by patrol. Emphasis on videotaped statements and other ways to build up a case. Detectives receive training on how to work with victims, partly in an effort to increase prosecution.

Dep. Chief Kathy Ryan, NYPD (1:11)

Ryan describes the NYPD's domestic violence police organization.