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# **People Like This Really Exist?**

**Scenario One:**

Domestic violence relationship where the parties are separating and there is a risk of domestic homicide (i.e. history of strangulation, death threats, stalking, depression/unemployment in abuser, hesitance to report to authorities by victim).

**The Decision:**

Choice A: Deem the risk as high and implement detailed safety plans/strategies to mitigate risk. These would be expensive/time consuming for agencies involved (who are horribly underfunded) and sometimes very difficult for victim to do (such as changing phone number, arranging custody visits through 3rd party, notifying work/changing work arrangements, physical and online security measures, etc.)

Choice B: Deem the risk as moderate or low and implement less detailed/expensive/time consuming safety plans. Continues risk of homicide/suicide though. If homicide occurs, huge liability issues for agency.

**Things to think about:**

The husband has a proven history of violence, but seems to be calm in the current scenario. You however have no way to ascertain if his behavior is legitimate, or a ruse.

Your boss is painfully aware of the current budgetary situation. In addition, funneling money into this situation where it may or may not be necessary may prevent your department from providing funding to a future situation where the danger to the victim is clear and present.

**My Thought About Scenario One:**

When reading about this abuse scenario all I can think about is the what if’s. What if the husband becomes violent again? What if the husband kills the wife? The what if’s scare me to death in my own life and are a great cause for anxiety in my life. Now the abuse is definitely not new and will not be going away anytime in the near future. I have had several friends and family that have been abused mentally, physically, and emotionally. The majority of the time I didn't even know the abuse was happened until after a major event like going to the hospital from injuries from the abuser, and the victim went for help. In abuse situations there isn't much you can do besides show your love and support, then direct them to the appropriate help. The good thing about this abuse scenario is that we (the agency and me) are the help for this women. So we have been allotted two choices one you deem the wife is at high risk of attack. Or two deem the wife is at moderate risk of attack.

I would choose option A, just for the soul reason of there is a risk of homicide. Implementing a all possible plans to mitigate risk maybe expensive and time consuming but if it saves one life then it would be worth it. From the information given points to the high probability of homicide the husband has a history of violence, combined with death threats, and a depression and recent unemployment of the husband. I was wondering if depression and unemployment are a cause for domestic violence. Depression affects people in many different ways, some of these ways are extreme fear, anger, and irritability. Fear, anger, and irritability all are issues that can lead to violence. (netwellness, 2002) A study from the University of London found that corresponding increases in female unemployment and domestic violence. Abusive males who are about to lose their jobs or have lost their jobs are more likely to abstain from violence due to an economic incentive. Whereas women who are economically dependant on their spouse are more likely to stay with an abusive spouse. (Crime Report, 2013) Now we don’t know the employment status of the wife, but I can see the loss of their marriage and employment; might make someone even more depressed, fearful, and angry. As Yoda said, “Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.” (Yoda, 2015)

The issue with choosing option A is option A is expensive which is a problem because of budget cuts to my department. Now spending money on this domestic violence situation might cause problems with funding a equally bad or even worse situation in the future. I have to the thought of not being able to help someone else down the road really made me think about choosing option B. But we don’t know what is going to happen in the future or what our consequences are going to be. But we have to worry about the here and now. The problem is right now we have a risk of homicide and if I didn't do everything humanly possible to prevent further harm to come to this victim I for one couldn't live with myself. Those what ifs would haunt me forever. By choosing option A we don't have to be concerned about liability issues for the agency if the homicide actually happens, the death of the poor women, and the incarceration of the husband. My agency and I will have to overcome the budget restrictions for further clients when we come to that bridge. Or in other words future Alex will take care of it. Or as Sri Chinmoy once stated, “let us not worry about the future. Let us only do the right thing today, At this moment, Here and now. Let the future take care of itself.”

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**Scenario Two:**

Sentencing very violent, but first time offender (There was an Australian example where a 19 year old private school rich kid killed his girlfriend by stabbing her 48 times). The offender has no priors, and comes from very wealthy, very influential family.

**The Decision:**

Choice A: Throw the book at him!

Choice B: Recommend treatment/lesser prison sentence. Risks repeat offence and additional victims. Provides supervision in the community, linked to better outcomes for offenders.

**Things To Think About:**

Evidence shows that long prison terms can make people worse (get students to research this), community not protected in the short term, violence may have have been situational (i.e crime of passion?), treatment rather than punishment might have better long term effects for offender.

Risks repeat offence and additional victims. Provides supervision in the community, linked to better outcomes for offenders.

**My Thoughts About Scenario Two:**

Today, I was walking around my neighborhood trying to figure out my thoughts on what sentence I would give this first time violent offender. I was thinking like I was the judge on this violent offenders case deciding on the appropriate sentence. To be honest, I felt a surge of responsibility and fear. Violent Offenses are violent crimes such as rape, murder, other sexual crimes, robbery, and aggravated assault. (FBI, 2011) I was able to talk with my cousin who is a county court judge for Cache Valley he told me the majority of the time he gives first time offenders the benefit doubt, but he included that he also looks at the circumstances of the case as well; Asking himself what is the likelihood of reform for this offender? (Brian, 2016) Justice and Reform is the whole goal of the criminal justice system. So, I have to ask myself is the lesser punishment going to meet the demands of justice? And Will the punishment help reform the individual? Disclaimer: Not knowing what the crime was that the offender did really is irritating me. I have really strong feelings against murder and especially rape because of experiences in my life. I know it would be hard for me to separate my feelings from a rape or murder case.

Thinking about the fact that he comes from a very influential and wealthy family was eradicated out of my mind, and should never even be analyzed when making a decision on sentencing. Justice is suppose to be blind, now I know a lot of the time justice is not blind, just look at the Brock Turner's case. Brock raped a passed out drunk girl behind a dumpster and only served a 90 day sentence for the crime. A crime that typically gets three to six years in prison. Many speculate the reasoning behind the sentencing was because he was a swimmer for Stanford and first time offender. (nbcnews, 2016)

I would choose option A, and Throw the book at him. Without knowing what exactly the person did and the reasoning behind the violent crime I would have to throw the book at him. Everything that I have read in regard to long term sentences I found that they do make people worse but everything I read to support this was for non violent offenders. I agree with them, if this was a non violent offender with no priors this would be a different story. The fact that this is a violent offense is the main reason why I would throw the book at him. Violent offenses are offenses that involve force or the threat of force, such as I have said previously rape, murder, manslaughter, robbery, and aggravated assault. All of which are major crimes, and crimes committed against individuals that can have lasting consequences. (nber, 2013) We have to see justice done, reading up on the Brock Turner case where Brock was given a lighter sentence and reading the victim's response to the sentencing chilled me to the bone. She states, “You have dragged me through this hell, dipped me back into that night again and again. You knocked down both our towers. I collapsed at the same time you did. Stripped of titles, degrees, and enrollment, my damage was unseen and I carry it with me wherever I go.” Obviously she doesn't feel Brock did not meet justice for what he did. How can I also deny justice to someone in a similar situation. (CNN, 2016)

Now the other half of justice is reform of the individual, which is needed but the punishment must fit the crime always. The matter of no priors weighed heavily on my decision. To me no history of priors shows a chance for reform, but this line of thinking is a double edged sword because there is a chance the perpetrator has done violent crimes before but has never been caught. I believe that the offender has a right to be reformed and show the world that he is reformed but not at the expense of justice.

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