



Meeting Summary

# ILLINOIS FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCILS

## **Semi-Annual State Council Meeting**

**January 21, 2004**

**Loyola University**

**Chicago, Illinois**

### **Stalking: How can the system be used to it's maximum potential to identify stalking and prevent homicide?**

There were approximately 236 people in attendance from local and state committees and councils.

#### **Welcome**

The day began with a welcoming address by Judge Thomas G. Russell and Janice DiGirolamo, Co-chairs of the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils. Judge Russell said, as you know our topic today is stalking. There is no question that this topic is gaining high profile as a domestic violence and criminal justice issue. In fact this month, January, has been designated by Congressional Resolution, the first annual National Stalking Awareness Month.

About 1.4 million people are stalked annually in the United States, most of them women of course. While stalking is a crime under the laws of every state, it is an offense which often is not prosecuted effectively because the system players are looking at isolated events instead of a whole pattern of behavior which may be a big red flag for the need for immediate intervention. Many of you are players that can make the difference that will save lives and hold stalkers accountable for their actions before someone is seriously hurt or killed. I believe our individual and collective efforts must be seen to have an impact on the larger issue of human conflict that reaches far beyond this immediate topic. Indeed, our conversation today has the potential to shift world consciousness in a direction that will create a more peaceful planet.

Janice thanked everyone for being present and continuing to learn and add to their existing knowledge.

Janice introduced Sasha Walters. Ms. Walters shared with the group her story, her experience as a survivor of stalking.

#### ***A Stalking Survivor's Story***

**Sasha Walters**

I came from a family culture of violence. My mother was an alcoholic and very violent. Growing up, I thought that violence was a “normal” part of relationships, and that was how people acted in relationships.

I met him when I was 14 years old. Early into the relationship he began to isolate me from my friends and family. When we were apart he constantly asked where I had been and who I had been with. He told me all of the people that he didn’t want me hanging out with and as that list got larger, my world got smaller and smaller.

Then came the day when I hit him playfully. He grabbed me, wrapped my arm around my back and threw me against the refrigerator. At that time, I didn’t know that his actions were wrong. I didn’t know that his actions were against the law. There wasn’t any information available to me on teen dating violence at the time.

Over time the violence escalated. He would hold a knife to my throat for long periods of time and repeatedly reminded me that at any time he could kill me and get away with it. I was thrown into a chair at a friend’s home as our friends looked on. I was asked to leave and after that incident, those same friends continued to “hang out” with him. His behavior was “normalized.”

When I ended the relationship two years later (at the age of 16 years old), he told me: “If I can’t have you, no one will. You won’t feel safe and no one will feel safe around you.” It was then that he began following me. He would stand outside of the store that I worked at for hours at a time watching me through the window while I bagged groceries. Once I was hanging out with a friend. We were walking down the street when he appeared, seemingly out of nowhere and ran up and threatened my friend. He then told me that he had my telephone tapped, always knew where I was and that this was proof. There weren’t any stalking laws at the time; therefore, when I went to report his behavior to the police, I was told that they couldn’t do anything because he hadn’t done anything yet. It was a scary time. I didn’t feel safe in the world.

He was later arrested for breaking and entering and incarcerated for a few years. That is how I got away from him.

I met a guy in college and had my second experience with stalking. Early into the relationship, I saw clear signs that his behavior could escalate to violence and broke it off. He began calling me and continued calling after I asked him to stop. In one day he left 30 messages on my answering machine.

My third experience with stalking came at the hands of someone that I had known for a long time. We began dating and his behavior soon escalated to violence. He began punching me. And although he did not live in Chicago, he would drive to Chicago and leave scary notes on my car. He would watch my house and threatened to kidnap and rape my younger sister.

By this time there were laws on the books to protect people from being stalked. I called him on the telephone and told him that he was stalking me, that I had enough evidence to prove it and I would contact the police if he did not leave me alone. I do not recommend calling someone who is stalking you; but fortunately, in my case, the promise of police involvement was enough to make him stop. If you are being stalked it is important to plan, to know where you can park and where you can put your things so that you can get out quickly and safely if needed. And documentation

of the stalker's behavior is very important. Keep dates, times, specifics of the behavior and names of people who witnessed the behavior.

My experiences being stalked have forever changed the way that I live my life. Wherever I go and wherever I am, I always wonder if someone is watching me or following me. I still park down the block or around the corner from wherever I am going.

### ***Stalking Laws & Prosecutorial Strategies***

**John Prior, J.D., Wilber Law Firm**

#### ***Stalking Law***

The following is an excerpt from Mr. Prior's power point presentation defining specific stalking laws:

##### ***Stalking (720 ILCS 5/17-7.3) Class 4***

A person commits stalking when he or she, knowingly and without lawful justification, on at least 2 separate occasions follows another person or places the person under surveillance or any combination thereof and:

- i. At any time transmits a threat of immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement and the threat is directed towards that person or a family member of that person; or
- ii. Places that person in reasonable apprehension of immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement or restraint; or
- iii. Places that person in reasonable apprehension that a family member will receive immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement or restraint

(a-5) A person commits stalking when he or she has previously been convicted of stalking another person and knowingly and without lawful justification on one occasion:

- (1) follows that same person or places that same person under surveillance; and
- (2) transmits a threat of immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement or restraint; and
- (3) the threat is directed towards that person or a family member of that person

##### ***Aggravated Stalking (720 ILCS 5/17-7.4) Class 3***

(a) A person commits aggravated stalking when he or she, in conjunction with committing the offense of stalking, also does any of the following:

- (1) causes bodily harm to the victim or
- (2) confines or restrains the victim; or
- (3) violates a temporary restraining order, an order of protection, or an injunction prohibiting the behavior described in subsection (b)(1) of Section 214 of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 (750 ILCS 60/214).

##### ***Cyberstalking (720 ILCS 5/12-7.5) Class 4***

(a) A person commits cyberstalking when he or she, knowingly and without lawful justification, on at least 2 separate occasions, harasses another person through the use of electronic communication and:

- (1) at any time transmits a threat of immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement or restraint and the threat is directed towards that person or a family member of that person, or
- (2) places that person or a family member of that person in reasonable apprehension of immediate or future bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement, or restraint.

### *Some facts on domestic stalking*

Domestic violence is a cycle of escalating violence that can include: verbal abuse; criminal damage to property; phone harassment, pushing, slapping and shoving; punching and kicking; strangulation; and stalking.

A person commits stalking when he or she, knowingly and without lawful justification, on at least 2 separate occasions follows another person or places the person under surveillance. Incidents of surveillance count as surveillance even if the person being watched is not at home.

When I was a prosecutor, I was told to wait 48 hours before filing a stalking case because a victim might change her mind and the case could not move forward. Because domestic violence is a cycle of escalating violence:

- a domestic battery charge could be the beginning or the culmination of a stalking case.
- Victims must be interviewed to help identify stalking behavior.
- Stalking, if unrecognized by the prosecutor, frequently culminates in homicide.
- When you prosecute a murder case the tragedy has already happened.

As a prosecutor or a police officer, when you get a domestic violence case, ask yourself, “might I also have a stalking case?” You can talk to the victim or an advocate for the victim if the victim does not want to talk. The biggest resource I had as a prosecutor was the victim advocate. I could speak with the advocate and lay out the entire game plan. **Confidentiality does not prevent the officer or the prosecutor from discussing the evidence and strength or weaknesses of the case with the advocate.** The advocate can then talk to the victim and encourage her to move forward with the case or share additional information to strengthen the case.

Domestic stalking (multiple acts of domestic violence) places the victim in a tough situation:

- ▶ the arrest of a family member
- ▶ bond conditions
- ▶ reporting violations of the bond order
- ▶ obtaining an order of protection
- ▶ reporting violations of an order of protection
- ▶ frequent court appearances
- ▶ interference with employment or education
- ▶ family members taking sides

### *Problems*

Some problems identifying and or prosecuting stalking cases:

- Unlike other crimes, victims often do not know the elements of stalking, consequently, many cases of stalking are not reported.
- A lack of communication between law enforcement agencies and prosecutors within one county can cause many stalking cases to go undetected.
- Jurisdiction is an issue when there are multiple cases in multiple counties involving the same defendant and the same victim.
- Prosecutors fail to consolidate multiple cases of domestic violence into one stalking case with additional offenses.

It is not uncommon for a jury to hear three separate events attached to three separate cases each involving the same offender and victim. Lack of consolidation of cases causes the victim to be responsible for multiple court appearances before multiple juries. These cases need to be

consolidated so that the same jury hears about each of these events and so that the events are seen as a pattern of behavior - not isolated events. I remember encountering five cases against the same defendant with the same victim. That victim had to go to court for each of these cases before five different juries. It would be better to have one case with five counts and one jury listening to the entire continuum of violence. Also, it is important to include all events, i.e, even a home invasion because it shows intent.

### *Advantages*

- ◆ Unlike other crimes, many offenders do not know the elements of stalking, consequently, many stalkers can be caught off guard. I have heard offenders say “I didn’t know what stalking was. I didn’t know that it was a felony to watch her and to follow her.”
- ◆ Putting a perpetrator in jail is not always the end of the story. Even in jail, if the perpetrator is calling or writing threatening letters to the victim, the prosecutor can add a stalking charge.
- ◆ A victim who comes to the hospital and reports to a nurse or doctor what happened, that reporting can be used in court and is not considered to be hearsay. Statements made by the perpetrator can also be used in court, especially if the doctor can show that the injury is not consistent with how the perpetrator said that it occurred
- ◆ Victims have been told that they can not record or videotape someone without the offender’s permission. A victim can videotape or photograph a offender. No one has a reasonable expectation of privacy, for example, standing in front of or parked outside of one’s home.

### *Suggested Solutions*

“Pay me now or pay me later.” We need to put in the time up front to try to resolve these cases. We can’t think that we have done our job just protecting the victim. Victim safety is foremost, also victim prevention. We must put the offender away to hopefully prevent future victims.

We need more multi-disciplinary domestic violence units. As a prosecutor, I worked with a multi-disciplinary domestic violence unit in McClean County. The unit was comprised of representatives from the state’s attorneys office, police departments, victim advocates, 911 communication center, DCFS, adult probation, juvenile probation, hospitals, emergency medical technicians, and crisis intervention services for children. The unit would meet regularly to: adopt effective prosecution protocols, foster collaboration and information sharing within the unit, set up training sessions, and strengthen relationships between the community and local law enforcement. Meeting is important. If you come together at least twice a month, it helps to come up with solutions and make a plan that helps everyone.

Advise the victim to seek an order of protection. Stalkers often attempt to use the court system as another means to continue to exercise power and control over their victims. Although stalkers will typically violate an order of protection or a stay away condition of bond in a way that appears innocent, i.e. calling the victim on her birthday, we must still advise the victim to seek an order of protection because it is a “court ordered” “stay away.” Additionally, with regard to prosecuting a stalking case, some juries might say that “his following her was innocent, because maybe he just wanted to look at the children.” But an order of protection can convince a jury, since the offender knowingly violated a court order. In response to a question, Mr. Prior agreed that it is important to do a risk assessment with a victim because an order of protection can be a trigger for the

perpetrator to do more harm. We can't give victims false hope. A piece of paper won't protect or save her. It helps if she can work with an advocate to safety plan. No one can make her safe, but her, and we as a team can help.

Prosecutors are teachers. We are educating the jury. Our objective is to bring the crime scene to the court room. Research shows that 83% of learning is through sight, therefore, the more we incorporate (photographs of the scene, photographs of injuries, diagrams, timeline of the perpetrator's behavior, etc.) the better the jury learns what occurred. In some cases especially if the victim is reluctant to testify, a picture can be more dramatic, than her testimony, in showing how the incident happened or how many stitches she received as a result.

Prosecutors need to consolidate multiple cases of domestic violence into a stalking case. In a stalking case, the jury is allowed to learn about multiple acts of domestic violence.

### ***Internet Safety***

**Mike Sullivan**, Detective, Naperville Police Dept.

A cyberstalker is a person who uses the Internet to harass, intimidate and/or strike fear in a victim. Cyberstalking is similar to other types of stalking (surveillance, telephoning, etc.) and is used to illicit the same results as stalking that does not involve the use of the Internet. What is different about this form of stalking is the tools used. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), email, web pages, websites, search engines, images, listservs, Instant Chat Relay (IRCs) are all tools used by cyberstalkers.

### ***Profile of a cyberstalker***

There are three types of cyberstalkers: the obsessive stalker; the delusional stalker; and the vengeful stalker. The most common type of cyberstalker is the vengeful stalker who is typically an ex-boyfriend, ex-girlfriend, ex-husband or ex-wife. The most dangerous type of cyberstalker is the delusional stalker.

Mr. Sullivan referred to a newspaper article on the front page of the Tuesday, November 1999, *Denver Post*. The headline read "Killer Used 'Net to Stalk Victim,," a case in which a delusional stalker killed Amy Boyer, the victim of his stalking. Unbeknownst to Ms. Boyer her stalker had been stalking her for years. He developed a website, *AmyBoyer.com*, detailing on it: how he felt about her; how she rejected him in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and how she had to die because of that rejection. Online, he purchased her social security number, work address and other personal information. He kept that website for 2 ½ years. The day that Amy died, he waited outside of her car for her, killed her and then himself. Three months prior he had placed a detailed description of how he was going to kill her on the website.

The main target of a cyberstalker are people that are new to the Internet. Most individuals who are stalked online feel that they did something wrong, that they must have gone to the wrong place online. A stalking perpetrator's purpose is to terrorize that person and make her/him feel fear and that they are in some way wrong. Stalkers will use social engineering by asking questions to find out more about you. Inform the stalker that you are reporting them to the Internet Server and the police. Save all pieces of contact and the complete email including the header of the email.

Mr. Sullivan gave several additional examples of cyberstalking:

- Perpetrating sexual harassment by posting a victim's address and telephone number on a news group, Blog or an electronic bulletin board with a message advertising/offering sex with that victim.
- A perpetrator in jail on death row posted the details of a murder of a woman, committed by him.

### ***The law and cyberstalking***

Currently there are 46 cyberstalking laws on the books. A new federal law prohibits the posting of advertising or inviting anything of a physical or sexual nature about a child on the Internet. The Internet Crimes Against Children law has made it easier to prosecute these crimes across state lines and internationally.

### ***Catching a cyberstalker and protecting yourself***

When a criminal commits a crime on the a computer, he does law enforcement a favor because that activity leaves a footprint. The header of an email shows the mail settings which includes the originating IP number. This number is unique to the originating email address and can be traced to find the person who set up the email address.

Some suggestions:

- ▶ Keep virus scan programs updated. There is a trojan (virus) that if transferred to your computer can be used to take total control of your computer. And if you have a webcam on your computer, it can turn the webcam on and view into and listen into your home (or the place where the computer is). And if you have a webcam, do not leave it on and do not leave a child in front of it unattended. One click and that child can be seen by others who are online and have a webcam.
- ▶ Know what information about you is out there on the Internet. You can use the search engine at *www.google.com* to check to see if your name, social security number, telephone number, address, etc. are on the Internet. On the main page, Google will allow you to do a search in the following categories: images; groups; news; and froogle. Do a search in each category. Often a person's personal information will be on the Internet if placed there by a stalker or if it is part of a public document.

Also do a search at *www.feedster.com* to search blogs. A blog is a website that people can go to and write anything on it. Find out if there is information on a blog about you.

Jayne Hitchcock, herself a victim of cyberstalking developed a website for victims of stalking (*www.HaltAbuse.org*). The website gives helpful information on how to file a complaint if you are being cyberstalked and how to find out if the stalker had other victims besides them.

***Viewing Stalking as a Pattern of Behavior and Safety Planning as a Broad Based System Effort***  
**Cheryl Howard**, Executive Director, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### ***Stalking as a pattern of behavior***

In 1978, after a long history of abuse in the relationship, a wife left her husband, a male nurse at a nearby hospital. From that point, her estranged husband began following and harassing her. One day he followed her to his sister's home. He beat her, shot and killed her in front of her 11 year old son and then burned his sister's home to the ground.

He served time in prison and was released. He remarried and was abusive to his second wife. The second wife got an order of protection and moved to a different county. He followed her there. She moved from county to county, and he continued to pursue her in each county. He came to the hospital where she worked and harassed her.

She moved to her father's farm where the concern over safety was so prominent that her father would carry a gun with him to milk the cows.

In May 2002, he killed his 14 year old daughter in her maternal grandparent's home, and then set that home on fire. He drove to Carlinville, IL, parked his car at a nearby gas station, walked to his sister-in-law's home and shot and killed her. It is believed that from there he intended to go to his wife's job and kill her, but when he returned to his car he was met by police officers and killed himself.

***The cost of domestic violence: The Social Impact. Are these acts a private matter?***

Cheryl explained that both cases represent two patterns of stalking that ended in murder. The murder of three people. She provided the following examples to help the audience understand that many people are affected by one case, and that the impact is broad and felt throughout the whole community:

In the first case the victim's death affected 163 people throughout the community. Some of the people affected were:

- ▶ 1 - wife who was murdered
- ▶ 1 - wife's eleven year old son who witnessed her murder
- ▶ 2 - the wife's parents
- ▶ 4 - the murderer's sister and family
- ▶ 5 - the dead wife's brother and his family
- ▶ 50 - students at the son's school
- ▶ 30 - neighbors at three different residences
- ▶ 30 - church friends
- ▶ 5 - other community members
- ▶ 5 - friends
- ▶ 30 - healthcare professionals

In the second case both victims deaths affected 243 people throughout the community. Some of the people affected were:

- ▶ 1 - fourteen year old daughter who was murdered in her maternal grandmother's home
- ▶ 1 - the second wife
- ▶ 4 - the second wife's sister and family
- ▶ 12 - the second wife's parents and family
- ▶ 40 - healthcare professionals
- ▶ 130 - high school freshmen
- ▶ 30 - church friends
- ▶ 5 - other community members
- ▶ 10 - friends
- ▶ 10 - domestic violence program staff

In Springfield, IL eleven murders occurred in four years with an average of 1,485 people affected by those murders.

In Madison County, thirteen murders occurred in four years with an average of 1,755 people affected by those murders.

One hundred murders can potentially affect up to 135,000 people. This is the size of a city with a population like Springfield, IL.

***The cost of domestic violence: The Direct Costs. Are these acts a private matter?***

Cheryl provided for the audience some of the direct costs that can be the result of a domestic violence related case:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Direct Costs: Medical and Mental Health Care</b></p> <p><b><i>Cost Per Victimization by Intimate Partner:</i></b> \$838 per rape \$816 per physical assault \$294 per stalking incident</p> <p><b><i>Costs: Intimate Partner Rape</i></b> Mean daily earnings lost is \$69 Mean daily value of time lost from household chores is \$19</p> <p><b><i>Costs: Intimate Partner Physical Assault</i></b> Mean daily earnings lost is \$93 Mean daily value of time lost from household chores is \$24</p> <p><b><i>Costs: Intimate Partner Stalking</i></b> Mean daily earnings lost is \$93 Mean daily value of time lost from household chores is \$24</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Present Value of Lifetime Earnings</b></p> <p>Expected average value of lost earnings that intimate partner homicide victims would have otherwise contributed to society: <b>\$713,000 per fatality</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Costs: Law Enforcement Officers</b></p> <p><b><i>1 homicide</i></b> = resources of one full time police officer for one year or approximately <b>\$50,000</b></p> <p><b><i>Law Enforcement Costs Example</i></b> Springfield, IL: 11 murders in 4 years \$550,000</p> <p><b><i>Law Enforcement Costs Example</i></b> Madison County, IL 13 murders in 4 years \$650,000</p>

### ***Some final thoughts***

Domestic violence affects everyone. We must recognize domestic violence as a pattern of behavior, a video not a photograph. We must also look at safety as a pattern and understand that the responsibility for safety does not just belong to the victim.

### ***Various Perspectives and Issues Within System Approaches:***

#### **Panel Presentation**

A multi-disciplinary panel reacted to two scenarios. Panelists first introduced themselves and offered brief remarks.

#### **Steve Brockway, Moline Police Department**

What we have found is that the problems are the same throughout the state. Collaboration is the key. We need to work together as a team. Currently I'm working with a committee examining fire arm laws and how to better enforce those laws as they relate to domestic violence and stalking.

#### **Suzin Farber, Assistant Public Defender, Cook County**

I have been an attorney for 16 years, handling misdemeanor level cases and representing clients at bond hearings, throughout trials and at order of protection hearings.

#### **Jennifer Greene, Court Advocacy Program Director, Family Rescue**

Our program provides comprehensive legal advocacy services for victims.

#### **Linda Hart, Domestic Violence Program Coordinator, Cook County Social Services Department**

Domestic violence officers monitor sentences. Our department provides partner abuse intervention services, conducts specialized assessments of offenders, make referrals for services to victims and make lethality reports to the court.

#### **John Prior, J.D., Wilber Law Firm**

I am a former state's attorney and worked with the domestic violence unit in McClean County.

#### **Mike Sullivan, Detective, Naperville Police Department.**

#### **Sasha Walters, Director of Advocacy, Rape Victim Advocates**

Our agency helps victims through the medical and court process. We also provide group and individual counseling.

### ***Scenario 1***

A petitioner has been granted a Plenary Order of Protection. The respondent, her ex-boyfriend, has been ordered to stay away from her, her residence and her work. In addition, the respondent has been convicted of misdemeanor domestic battery. She is now receiving 10-20 hang up phone calls a day. The respondent is continually driving by her house (5-10 times a day). She has called law enforcement and has been told that there is nothing they can do about the situation. They can't tell him not to drive on a specific street, and they can't prove the hang up phone calls are from him. This has been going on about 4 months.

*Reactant panel comments:*

- This type of case is pretty common. If the respondent has a prior conviction, a phone trap can be set up.
- You don't want to scare her further, but a lethality assessment and extensive safety planning should be done. Advise her to start a paper trail by creating a log documenting his behavior, including the description, date and time of the incident. Advise her to work with neighbors and family members who witness incidents to help her document. She can relocate and or change her telephone number if these are viable options.
- Educate the offender about what an Order of Protection means and what the conditions of the Order mean. The offender is in the habit of minimizing and rationalizing his behavior. Explain to him that his behavior is a crime.
- Get victim back on "even footing." Victim can respond to the telephone hang ups by getting an answering machine, getting a phone trap set up, using #69 to find out where the call originated from.
- An officer saying that he/she can't do anything is unacceptable. Officers can do something. If a victim does not get help, she should contact the officer's supervisor.
- These are sometimes complicated cases. I have to ask myself common sense questions like: Does he work in the area? Did he stop at her address or come to her door? Does he have to drive down that street to get to work? Driving by a residence is not a violation in Cook County. Also the victim may have wanted him to stay away at the time that she got the Order and now wants to see him, and even invites him over. Telephone records can be subpoenaed to see if the victim is calling the perpetrator.
- Get a copy of the Order of Protection to see if it is still in effect. Find out what the conditions of the Order are. Confirm that the perpetrator was served. If there is no legitimate reason for the perpetrator to pass by the victim's home, he shouldn't. Find out who else has seen him pass by her home. Attempt to find out the origin of the calls and understand that a victim may call a perpetrator out of fear to see where his head is at, how he is thinking. A victim can not violate her own Order but some judges may hold them in contempt of court.
- Occasionally there may be short calls to talk about child arrangements. It may be in the Order that he can call regarding that matter. You need corroboration. As an officer you must build the best possible case. Advise the victim to notify neighbors and ask them "did they see the perpetrator driving by?"
- The repetitive nature of the perpetrator's behavior is a red flag. A lethality assessment is so important in understanding how at risk the victim may be. When I was being stalked, I used to think that it would be so much easier to go back to him, then I wouldn't have to worry about him following me and bothering my friends.

*Audience comments:*

- As advocates we must talk with victims about proceeding with their case, some things they may encounter, documenting behavior and potential consequences of her actions.
- There are domestic violence liaisons in every police district in Cook County, and they are very helpful in advocating for the victim.
- Any police officer in the state of Illinois can serve an Order of Protection. He/she just has to document that they did.

## *Scenario 2*

A woman has filed for a petition for dissolution of marriage. Her husband has now begun stalking her. She and the kids are living with her mother. On the advice of her attorney, she agreed to allow her husband to have visitation with the children every other weekend. He sits in his car outside her mother's house for hours and watches her. He has come to her workplace many times, accusing her of seeing another man. She knows that he owns several firearms, often carrying one in his car, and he had threatened to kill her while they were still together. He calls and e-mails her many times a day, often being abusive and threatening to take the children. She has contacted the local domestic violence program and has called law enforcement a few times, but she has declined to petition for an Order of Protection fearing that would make matters worse.

### *Reactant panel comments:*

- ▶ An Order of Protection makes an officer's job easier. With an Order of Protection in place, we can violate him. Check for a valid FOID card and see if there is any way that we can seize his weapons.
- ▶ Safety planning - talk with her about ways to keep her and the children safe. Talk about what the children are experiencing. Does visitation need to be changed? What are some ways to feel safe without an Order of Protection.
- ▶ Work with advocate on safety plan. Change visitation proceedings, use a third party or another location for exchanging children.
- ▶ Put out the message in the area that the perpetrator might be carrying a weapon. FOID card or not, is there a valid reason to stop him or arrest him.
- ▶ There is a high level of lethality here. A really dangerous situation. Talk with client about how scary the situation seems and assist with safety planning.

### *Audience comments:*

- ▶ More training is needed on lethality assessment. Haven't been able to find anything on this.