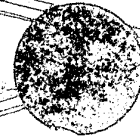


# FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

DECEMBER 1982



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## Directed Patrol Systems

# FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

DECEMBER 1982, VOLUME 51, NUMBER 12

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**The Cover**  
With the effectiveness of traditional patrol practices being questioned, police departments must now seek innovative ways to patrol. See article on directed patrol systems, p. 1.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C. 20535**

**William H. Webster, Director**

The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget through February 21, 1983.



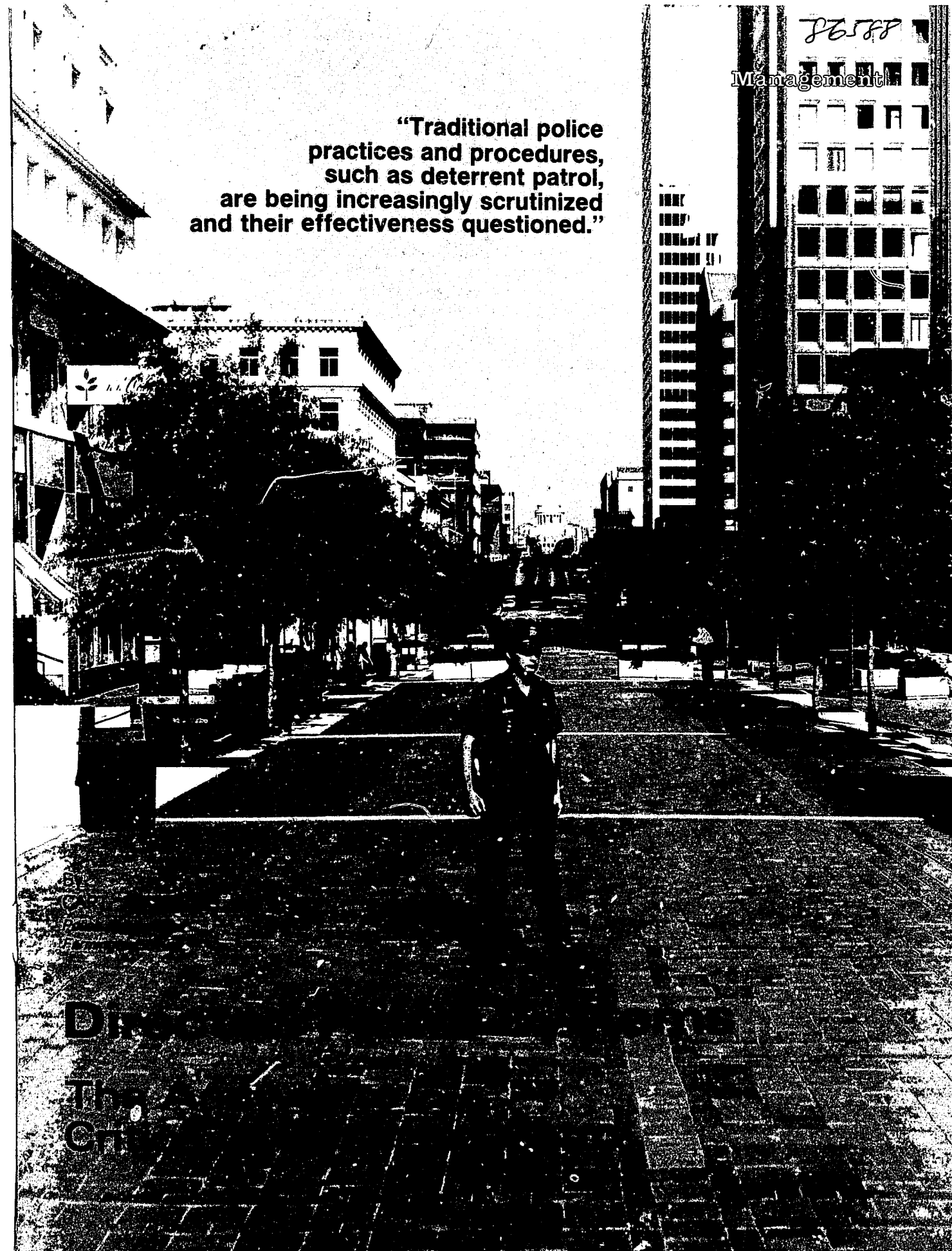
Published by the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs  
Roger S. Young, Assistant Director

Editor—Thomas J. Deakin  
Assistant Editor—Kathryn E. Sulewski  
Art Director—Kevin J. Mulholland  
Writer/Editor—Karen McCarron  
Production Manager—Jeffrey L. Summers  
Reprints—Mary Ellen Drotar

ISSN 0014-5688

USPS 383-310

“Traditional police practices and procedures, such as deterrent patrol, are being increasingly scrutinized and their effectiveness questioned.”



# Spouse Abuse

## The Need for New Law Enforcement Responses

By

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Police Executive Research Forum  
Washington, D.C.

and

MICHAEL QUIRK

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Atlanta, Ga.

In recent years, family violence has become an increasingly visible and important social issue. Public awareness of family violence began to develop during the late 1960's, when child abuse was identified as a major problem. More recently, spouse abuse (defined as violent acts<sup>1</sup> among married and unmarried sexual partners) has been acknowledged as equally serious. Many consider these assaults to be among the most frequent and underreported crimes in the United States. Over 2,800 homicides a year occur among family members, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that the victims of lesser forms of family violence number several million each year. Further, the effects of such violence are not confined to family members. The *FBI Uniform Crime Report* data show that 32 percent of the reported assaults on officers during 1976-1980 occurred in connection with "responding to a disturbance call,"<sup>2</sup> as did 16 percent of all officer deaths during this 5-year period.<sup>3</sup> These assaults represent an enormous drain on public resources, as they consume significant amounts of police officer and prosecutor time. Taxpayers' dollars are also spent on a range of social services, mental health programs, emergency shelters, and child protection services for these families.

### Police Intervention

Increased involvement of the criminal justice system has been advocated as a primary means of reducing spouse abuse. Particular pressure is being placed on the police to intervene more directly in these cases to protect the victims and arrest the assailants. Some officers resent this trend because they, along with many citizens, believe these cases are private matters and not a part of "real" police work. Trained, socialized, and rewarded to apprehend and arrest felons, many officers resent these victims for distracting them from their preferred crimefighting activities. Moreover, frustration often turns into either hostility or indifference when officers repeatedly encounter victims who are routinely beaten and fail to press charges or return to the battering relationship. If these victims refuse to help themselves, the officers conclude that there is little they can do for them. This attitude is further complicated by the belief of officers that many of the victims provoke the attack and get only what they deserve or that the couple is engaged in a sadomasochistic relationship. More often than not, many of the real reasons women stay in battering relationships—economic dependence, fear, and learned helplessness—are not apparent.

Other police officers willingly accept intervention into spousal violence cases as a legitimate part of their duties, but they are more concerned with their lack of training to handle these calls effectively. They may be particularly sensitive to the physical danger these calls pose for all police officers, and as a result, respond in a hasty or superficial manner. Many officers have found spouse abuse to be a frustrating



Ms. Loving

problem because, until recently, there have been no social services or shelters to which they could refer victims or assailants for long term assistance. Even when services are available, officers can become frustrated and indifferent because they are seldom able to determine from the agencies whether their intervention was helpful.

The new emphasis on arrest in spouse abuse cases is of particular concern to many police officers. Until recently, police in most jurisdictions were trained to avoid arrest in this type of case or were restricted by statute to making a warrantless arrest in a misdemeanor assault case if the assault occurred in their presence. New laws in 20 States, however, have greatly expanded police arrest powers in these cases, making probable cause sufficient for a warrantless misdemeanor assault arrest.<sup>4</sup> Even so, some officers resent arrest mandates as intrusions on their professional judgment and flexibility, while others regard them as a narrow-minded approach that will have a minimum effect on the overall problem. Painfully aware of the overcrowding in jails and delays in the court proceedings, many officers believe that a singular reliance on arrest in response to these calls is neither realistic nor effective.

Another important concern for many officers is the increased threat of civil litigation as a result of these new arrest requirements. Facing greater public scrutiny of their performance, officers are particularly susceptible to

charges of false arrest, false imprisonment, and improper or excessive use of force. Noting these risks, 11 States have enacted police immunity laws to protect officers against civil suits for action taken in a good-faith effort to enforce the provisions of a domestic violence statute.<sup>5</sup>

Changes in emphasis of police interventions illustrate the continuing problem that family crises pose for police agencies. These crises raise conflicts between the family's right to privacy and the right to equal protection under the law for each family member, as well as challenge cultural traditions that place a high value on harmonious family life.

The last 2 decades have seen an increasing tendency for law enforcement agencies to seek and apply the expertise of behavioral and social scientists to police work. This alliance has revolutionized the ways the criminal justice system deals with the mentally ill, the homeless, and juvenile offenders. A part of this revolution has been the adoption of crisis intervention techniques for dealing with disputes between neighbors, landlords and tenants, and family members. Generally, these procedures call for the responding officer to calm the dispute, listen carefully to both parties without showing favoritism or fixing blame, and suggest ways to resolve the problem without involvement of the criminal justice system. Although useful in many contexts, the techniques of mediation and negotiation are applicable particularly in spousal conflicts that do not involve the use of violence.

The failure to make the distinction between spousal conflicts that involve the use or threatened use of violence and those that do not results in confu-



Special Agent Quirk

sion and poor police performance. By combining all family calls into one broad category and assigning it a low-priority status, important distinctions have been overlooked, procedures have remained irrelevant, and most important, the victims and police officers have suffered repeated assaults and injuries. It must be emphasized, however, that the failure to make these distinctions is not unique to law enforcement. Until recently, both social service agencies and the judiciary were committed to the philosophy and practice of keeping the family unit together at all costs, a commitment which is slowly being replaced with a more realistic approach that acknowledges the need for some couples to divorce.

#### Pressures for Change

Women's rights groups have criticized police handling of spousal violence calls mainly because of the officers' refusal to make arrests in these situations. They are particularly offended by the terminology of the crisis intervention approach, which labels these calls "a dispute" or "a conflict" and the people involved "the disputants." This language, they believe, hides the prevalence of wife beating cases. Moreover, they view some officers' insistence on taking a neutral stand in these situations as possibly resulting in subtle encouragement to assailants. The same may also be said of the failure to arrest the assailants who, they contend, may continue the assaults if they are not punished. These beliefs have led several

women's groups to file class action suits against law enforcement agencies, charging negligence and violation of the victims' civil rights. The most notable of these cases, *Bruno v. Codd*,<sup>6</sup> was brought by 12 battered women against the New York City Family Court. In a June 1978, consent decree that settled the case, the department agreed to make arrests when there is reasonable cause to believe that husbands have committed felonious assault against their wives and to send one or more police officers in response to every call from a woman who charges that her husband has assaulted or threatened to assault her. The police also agreed to inform a battered wife of her rights to a criminal or civil court proceeding, to provide protection or aid in getting medical help if she needs it, and to help in locating the assailant if he has left the scene.

In a similar case in Oakland, Calif., a group of battered women brought a class action lawsuit against the Oakland Police Department,<sup>7</sup> charging that wife beating calls were given a low priority and that officers responded to them with a policy of avoiding arrests. They also charged that the police did not inform victims of their rights to make citizens' arrests. In an out-of-court settlement in November 1979, the department agreed to treat all domestic violence as alleged criminal conduct and to make arrests in appropriate cases. It also agreed to develop new training materials and implementing orders to include the development and distribution of a resource brochure for battered women.

In addition to these lawsuits, many State legislatures have enacted statutes specifically designed to reduce spouse abuse. The statutes have several or all of the following provisions:

### "... many State legislatures have enacted statutes specifically designed to reduce spouse abuse."

- 1) Identify "spouse abuse" or "domestic violence" as a specific crime;
- 2) Grant criminal court jurisdiction over certain family offenses;
- 3) Make violation of a restraining order a criminal offense; and
- 4) Eliminate requirements that a misdemeanor assault occur in an officer's presence before an arrest can be made.

#### Need for Policy Guidelines

In 1979, the Police Executive Research Forum conducted a study for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to determine how law enforcement agencies could improve their response to spouse abuse calls. Among the most important conclusions of the final report was the need for law enforcement agencies to update and revise their policies and operational procedures for these calls.<sup>8</sup> Too many agencies, it was found, were relying on the crisis intervention approach developed in the late 1960's, with its emphasis on reconciliation of the parties and arrest avoidance. The forum report recommended that law enforcement agencies' policy statements address the following areas: 1) Proper use of law enforcement actions against the assailant; 2) extent of attention and protective services given to the victim; 3) proper use and enforcement of civil remedies; 4) proper use of civilian social service aides; and 5) nature of relationships with social service agencies and battered women's groups.

The report also recommended new agency procedures that would provide officers with practical guidelines for performing their proper functions when restoring order and safety,

determining whether a crime has been committed and taking proper law enforcement actions, and making social service and legal agency referrals for family members. New procedures and programs should be monitored and evaluated for several years. In addition, a mechanism should be established to determine the abused victims' satisfaction with the procedures, to process their complaints, and to review the effectiveness of new police training programs.

Another important task is the development of arrest criteria for spouse abuse cases. The forum report, for instance, recommends that arrests be made in cases involving serious injury, use of deadly weapon, and/or violation of a restraining order.<sup>9</sup> Other arrest guidelines, such as those developed by the Chicago Police Department, list the following factors as indicating that an arrest should be made:<sup>10</sup>

- 1) *Serious, Intense Conflict*—Officers must first consider the nature and intensity of the dispute. Intense disputes of a serious nature most often require an immediate arrest. An intentionally inflicted serious injury certainly requires arrest of the offending party for battery. Likewise, severe property damage is a measure of dangerous aggression which may call for an arrest. However, officers must remember that damage to co-owned property is a civil matter. Any resulting arrest cannot be based on damage to the property, but should be based on the assault or disorderly acts committed.

- 2) *Use of Weapons*—If the parties have indicated any intent to use an inherently or potentially dangerous object during the dispute, either offensively or defensively, an immediate arrest of the offending party would be appropriate to prevent a further, more serious confrontation.

- 3) *Previous Injury or Damage*—If the complainant has previously been a victim of the offending party's aggression, officers should consider the extent of any previous injury or damage. The present conflict could become more serious if an immediate arrest is not made.

- 4) *Previous Court Appearance*—A previous criminal court appearance against the offending party may strongly indicate a victim's sincerity to prosecute. An immediate arrest should be made when it is apparent that the victim's interest would be best served by returning the parties to the court that handled the former complaint.

- 5) *Previous Attempt to Sever the Relationship*—If there has been a previous voluntary separation of the parties, indicating an attempt to end the relationship, there is less need to consider the disruptive effects an arrest may have on the relationship. If the parties have separated, intrusion should be considered an aggravating factor.

**"All segments of the criminal justice system must be sensitized to the serious nature of these cases and to the need to hold the assailants accountable for their action."**

6) *Second Call to Police*—A second call for police service may indicate that conciliatory measures have failed. An arrest would be appropriate to avoid further escalation of the dispute after officers again leave the scene.

7) *Children or Mentally Deficient or Intoxicated Parties Involved*—When children or mentally deficient or intoxicated individuals are assailants or victims in domestic conflicts, special consideration is required. As assailants, they are not easily reasoned with, and as victims, they are not easily able to avail themselves of criminal, civil, or other remedies. The discretionary latitude of officers is far more limited in such circumstances, and an arrest is more likely to be appropriate. When an arrest is appropriate, officers must ensure that provisions are made for the care of children who would otherwise be left unattended.

Another set of arrest standards for domestic violence cases was issued by the Westchester County, N.Y., district attorney in December 1978.<sup>11</sup> They mandate arrest in the following cases:

- 1) Whenever a gun, a deadly weapon, or a dangerous instrument has been used,
- 2) Whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a felony has been committed,

3) Whenever there has been a maiming or other serious physical injury,

4) Whenever there is a history of criminal activity between the parties and where the defendant's record indicates violent criminal history, and

5) Where, in the judgment of the police officer, the sanction of an arrest appears necessary for the future protection of the victim.

A third approach to arrest criteria was published in a revised domestic violence training manual of the Oakland, Calif., Police Department, which states: "It should be presumed that arrest is the most appropriate response in domestic violence crimes which involve apparent felonies, allegations of repeated acts of violence, situations where an offense is committed in your presence, and situations in which a citizen's arrest is demanded."<sup>12</sup>

In many jurisdictions, if police officers choose not to arrest an assailant for a misdemeanor assault, they may initiate several effective law enforcement actions where permitted by State law. These include:

1) *Misdemeanor citations*—Similar to traffic tickets, these citations are issued as a condition of release from police custody. They require the assailant to promise to appear at a hearing and post bail that will be returned. An assailant who does not appear is considered guilty of the misdemeanor and forfeits the money. The assailant also will lose the money if he loses the case. This citation could lead to the assailant's arrest only if a magistrate issued a warrant when the assailant did not post bail or did not appear at the court hearing.

2) *Protective custody*—Used in lieu of arrest to keep a citizen lawfully in police custody for 1 or 2 days in situations where the person is drunk, appears mentally unstable, or acts out of control.

3) *Domestic violence summons*—Currently issued in Ohio in cases where there are insufficient grounds for arrest. Both parties in a domestic violence case are required to participate in a voluntary counseling program. This is a method of diversion from the criminal justice system, but prosecution may be considered if the resulting arbitrated agreement is broken by either party.

4) *Domestic violence temporary restraining order*—May be filed in municipal courts by police officers after arresting an assailant or filing a criminal complaint against the assailant with the prosecutor. The restraining order is used as a means of ensuring the safety and protection of the victim. A hearing on this motion must take place within a given period of time, and the presence of the officer may be required at the hearing.

#### **Liaison Efforts**

While police can do much to improve their responses to spouse abuse cases, they alone cannot reduce the problem. All segments of the criminal justice system must be sensitized to the serious nature of these cases and to the need to hold the assailants accountable for their action. Moreover,

community resources must be available to deal with the underlying cases of the abuse on a long term basis. Emergency shelters, 24-hour hotlines, counseling programs for victims and batterers, and legal services must be available. Since police are often the only outsiders to be summoned during these violent conflicts, it is imperative that they have both the necessary diagnostic skills to determine what kind of assistance is necessary and reliable information about available social services in the community.

Since these cases often grow more violent over time, police can help monitor for patterns of repeat abuse. In Westchester County, N.Y., for example, officers are required to notify the district attorney of all spouse abuse incidents, including those that do not involve arrest. The district attorney then sends a letter to the assailant, either directing him to cease the abuse or to come in for consultation. Another letter is sent to the victim informing her of available options. A case file is then established on the household and monitored for subsequent incidents.

Another approach developed by the Detroit, Mich., Police Department involves the use of a triplicate-copy social service referral card for officers' use in these cases. One copy is sent to the social service agency to which the victim has been referred by officers, another is sent to a police department domestic conflict monitoring project, and the third copy is left with the victim, who can use it as proof of prior abuse during subsequent police intervention.

These cooperative efforts can be augmented by numerous other activities, such as officers distributing referral cards for battered women's shelters to victims, providing victims with information about legal remedies, and encouraging assailants to enter treatment programs.

#### **Training**

All police officers should be trained to handle spouse abuse. The stress and danger involved in these calls make it imperative that responding officers learn not only how to defuse and contain these situations but also how to ensure the safety of all involved parties. Because many of those cases tend to regress over time, officers must learn to respond in ways that will neither escalate the immediate violence nor contribute to a subsequent deterioration of the situation. Police training programs should be designed to improve officers' intellectual grasp of the nature of the problem and clarify their law enforcement duties in these cases.

The training program should also teach the officers how and when they should instigate the options available to them, such as arrests, citations, restraining orders, and crisis intervention skills. Additional training topics should include safety precautions, medical procedures, and techniques for establishing order and security.

A serious problem that police training programs must seek to overcome is the negative attitude held by many police officers—that spousal violence calls are a nuisance, that they do not constitute "real" police work, and that family matters are not the province of the police. These attitudes, which themselves are a byproduct of poor training, contribute to insensitive and hostile police responses and to a failure to provide spouse abuse victims with adequate protection. Such practices, as we have seen, can be traced to numerous factors, including the refusal of many victims to press charges or to remove themselves from the battering relationship. The tendencies of some officers to be preoccupied with their crimefighting mission and of some administrators to urge officers to resolve these calls quickly in order to reduce service call backlog contribute to this problem.

During 1981, an innovative training course on family violence was developed at the FBI Academy at Quantico, Va., and incorporated into the National Academy curriculum to supplement its traditional training programs. "Family Violence—New Approaches for Police," a 10-hour elective, emphasizes the need for police coordination between police departments, prosecutors, and community service agencies. The curriculum included guidelines for making social service referrals for abuse victims, arresting and prosecuting batterers, and detecting and investigating child sexual assault cases. Films and guest speakers were used to acquaint the officers with the dynamics of spouse abuse and with the cyclical nature of the abusive behavior. Student officers reported that what they learned in the course made their jobs easier. "Two rewards for making changes in the way law enforcement



## "Few officers have been properly trained to handle these volatile calls. . . ."

takes care of these calls are being injured less often and being called less frequently to the same homes," one California police officer remarked. A New York City police officer added, "As an investigator, my job is easier if the guy on the street handles these cases right. If they do, I won't have so many homicides on my desk."

Recently, the Police Executive Research Forum published a comprehensive curriculum for law enforcement training officers.<sup>13</sup> It presents a complete 20-hour course and includes materials for use in five 4-hour sessions, including understanding spouse abuse, statutory requirements, officer procedure and legal issues, responding to the call, disposition alternatives, and using community resources. Suggestions for lecture format, films, group discussions, and panel presentations are provided, as well as materials to be used as handouts to officers.

### Summary

Patrol officers are often required to respond to calls for help in cases involving violence among married and unmarried couples. Citizens are relying increasingly on the 24-hour availability of law enforcement officers and their ability both to "do something" to stop the violence and to provide counseling and emergency services. Officers routinely respond to these calls, often to the same households, and occasionally become targets of the violence. Few officers have been properly trained to handle these volatile calls, and as a result, often use their own discretion and instinct to resolve them.

Wide variation in police responses to these calls have been the norm for many years. Not only have police been pressured to focus their resources on violent street crimes, but they have reflected a larger cultural tradition which regards family matters as private. During the past few years, however, as spouse abuse has dramatically emerged as a major social problem, public scrutiny has focused on all aspects of the problem. Law enforcement agencies have been singled out for particularly harsh criticism for failure to provide victims with adequate protection and for not making arrests in cases involving felony assaults.

The traditional law enforcement response to these calls, emphasizing crisis intervention skills and reconciliation of the parties, is inappropriate in cases involving serious injury or repeated abuse and is not effective for reducing the number of spouse abuse incidents. In fact, it may aggravate the problem by suggesting to assailants that their violent behavior can be overlooked. Thus, the need for a new law enforcement response to spousal violence calls is clear, both to provide adequate protection to the victims and to ensure the safety of the responding officers. New perceptions of this major social problem have resulted in pressures for effective solutions, not the least of which will be effective and humane law enforcement policies and procedures.

**FBI**

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> A physical violence scale, developed by Dr. Murray Straus of the University of New Hampshire, identifies the following acts as spouse abuse: Throwing things; pushing, shoving or grabbing; slapping; kicking, biting or hitting with fist; beating up, threatening with knife or gun; and using knife or gun. See Murray Straus, "Wife Beating: Causes, Treatment and Research Needs," *Battered Women: Issues in Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 1978) p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Disturbance calls include all types, e.g., man with a gun, bar fights, family quarrels, etc.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES—1976*, pp. 286-288; 1977, pp. 286-288; 1978, pp. 302-305; 1979, pp. 304-306; 1980, pp. 336-388 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office).

<sup>4</sup> ALAS. STAT. §§ 09.55.600-09.55.640, 12.55.135, 22.15.100, ARIZ. REV. STAT. §§ 13.3601, 13.3602 (Supp. 1980) as amended by ch. 224, 1981 Ariz. Legis. Serv., p. 796 (West 1981). FLA. STAT. ANN. § 741.30 (West Supp. 1980), HAWAII REV. STAT. § 709.906 (1976) as amended by Act 266, 1980 Hawaii Sess. Laws, p. —; IDAHO CODE § 19-603 (1947 and Supp. 1979); ILL. ANN. STAT. ch. 85 § 507-a (Smith-Hurd 1979) as amended by H.B. 366 (enacted 1981); KY. REV. STAT. § 431.005 (Supp. 1980); ME. REV. STAT. ANN. tit. 19 § 769.770 (1964) as amended by ch. 420, 1981 Me. Legis. Serv., p. 836; MASS. GEN. LAWS ANN. ch. 276 § 28, 42A (West 1972 and Supp. 1980); MICH. COMP. LAWS ANN. §§ 764.15a, 769.4a, 772.13, 772.14a (West Supp. 1979); MINN. STAT. ANN. § 629.341 (Supp. 1980); NEV. REV. STAT. § 171.124 (1979); N.H. REV. STAT. ANN. § 594:10-1 (Supp. 1979); N.M. STAT. ANN. § 31-1-7 (Supp. 1978); N.Y. FAM. CT. ACT § 168 (McKinney 1975 and Supp. 1976-1980) as amended by ch. 416, 1981 N.Y. Laws, p. —; OHIO REV. CODE ANN. §§ 109.73, 109.77, 2935.03, 737.11 (Page Supp. 1980); ORE. REV. STAT. §§ 107.7, 133.055, 133.310 (1977); R.I. GEN. LAWS § 11-5-9 (Supp. 1980); TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. ANN. art. 14.03 (Vernon 1977) as amended by ch. 422, 1981 Tex. Sess. Law Serv., p. 1865; WASH. REV. CODE ANN. §§ 10.99.010-10.99.070 (1980). A State-by-State summary analysis of domestic violence legislation may be obtained for \$5.00 from the Center for Women Policy Studies, 2000 P Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

<sup>5</sup> ARIZ. REV. STAT. §§ 13.3601, 13.3602 (Supp. 1980) as amended by ch. 224, 1981 Ariz. Legis. Serv., p. 796 (West 1981); ILL. ANN. STAT. ch. 85, § 507-a (Smith-Hurd 1979) as amended by H.B. 366 (enacted 1981); IOWA CODE ANN. § 236-11 (West Supp. 1980); MINN. STAT. ANN. § 629.341 (Supp. 1980); N.H. REV. STAT. ANN. § 594:10-1 (Supp. 1979); N.M. STAT. ANN. § 31-1-7 (Supp. 1978); N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 50B-1-50B-7 (Supp. No. 5, 1979); N.D. CENT. CODE §§ 14-07.1-01-14-07.1-08, 29-01-15(4) (Supp. 1979) as amended by N.D.S.B. 2339 (enacted 1981); ORE. REV. STAT. §§ 107.7, 133.055, 133.310 (1977); UTAH CODE ANN. §§ 30-6-1 - 30-6-8 (Supp. 1979); WASH. REV. CODE ANN. §§ 10.99.010-10.99.070 (1980).

<sup>6</sup> *Bruno v. Codd*, 90 Misc. 2d 1047, 396 N.Y.S. 2d 974 (Supreme Court 1977).

<sup>7</sup> *Scott v. Hart*, N.J. 6-76-2395 (N.D. Cal., filed October 26, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> Nancy Loving, *Responding to Spouse Abuse and Wife Beating: A Guide for Police* (Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1980).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> Warren Breslin, "Police Intervention in Domestic Confrontations," *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, September 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Carl U. Vergan, "Domestic Violence Laws," *Criminal Law News*, vol. IX, No. 1, December 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Oakland Police Department, *Training Bulletin III-J (Revised) Domestic Disputes*, Oakland, Calif., Police Department, November 1979, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Nancy Loving, *Spouse Abuse: A Curriculum Guide for Police Trainers* (Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1981).

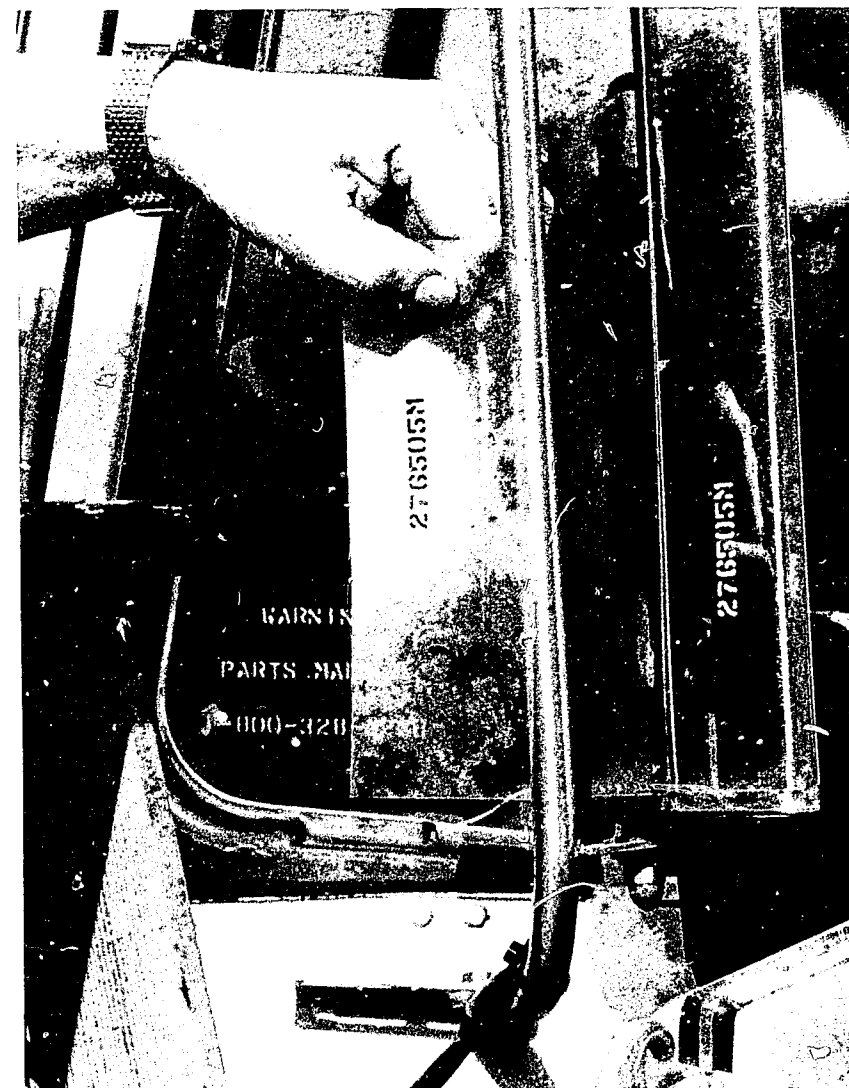
The scene is a familiar one. A truck tractor is stolen from a terminal yard, a truck stop, or off the street. It is immediately delivered to a location where a team of mechanics will dismantle the vehicle. Within a matter of hours, the remains of the truck tractor are being sent in different directions for use in repair of other vehicles or in the completion of a new truck tractor started from a glider kit. The vehicle that was originally stolen is gone forever, and it is unlikely that it will ever be recovered or that the thieves or dismantlers will be apprehended.

## Pilot Program Attacks Truck Theft

By  
LOUIS E. BRACKSIECK  
Special Agent  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D.C.

Based on statistical review of data from the FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC), approximately 1,500 stolen truck tractors were entered into the system each month during calendar year 1981. For the same period, approximately 1,100 truck tractors were cleared or canceled per month. This disparity between the entries and clearances and cancellations, graphically profiles a nagging problem in the trucking industry as well as in law enforcement—more trucks are stolen than are recovered.

A private organization is now attacking this problem with an identification program designed to deter potential thieves and to assist law enforcement officers. The Truck Renting and Leasing Association (TRALA),



The sandblasting gun and the template held at the left of this photograph combine to quickly and clearly etch the full vehicle identification number onto and outside rearview mirror.

**END**