

# Portrait of Crazed Rage

BY AQUIL F. BASHEER

**Y**ou feel your body tense as the car pulls into the driveway. Up to now your day has been a pretty decent one. But you feel the headache coming on as you hear his footsteps hitting the walkway pavement.

As you listen, you hear the door slam (a prime indicator that it's going to be one of those nights). You hurry to prepare yourself for what you know is going to follow.

You tell the children to run up the stairs; lock their door, and pray. You brace yourself for the verbal abuse, the swearing, the intimidation, ultimately followed by the hitting—yes, the hitting.

You can stomach everything else, but it's the striking, over and over again. The only reason he stops is because of fatigue. After being beaten, he then has the nerve to want to have sex with your broken body! You say to yourself, "this man is sick, very sick!"

But you stay; you have stayed for over 15 years! You tell yourself it's because of the children, but you know better—it's out of fear.

You known of his "sickness" for some time, going back to the first "slap" at the wedding (letting you know he was in charge!). You ignored that because you thought he was just under pressure due to the ceremony.

Then came the first beating, which you also excused because you felt, to some degree, it was your fault. You were caught in a traffic jam and failed to make it home in time with the car which in turn made him late for work.

You chose to stay with him and endure this madness because you do not want to break-up the family; you want the children to have a father! You want to be "one big happy family." Big happy family? You tell yourself that there is no happiness here! You think about all the hospital visits, the broken bones, the excuses you always have to make to the people close to you, the on-going pain that you know the children are feeling.

You know that something must be done and now! **Enough is enough! But what should you do? What can you do?** You don't have those answers but you know you are going to find out tonight!

You prepare for the worst. As you hear the door open you become extremely strong-willed, focused, and prepared. The children have seen and been through enough. You have endured your last beating. This family has been through enough torment! No more. Tonight is going to be different. You tell yourself if he attempts to put his hand on you or the children, he's going to lose

his life! You stopped loving him years ago; as a matter of fact you despise him. You dread his touch and when he forces you to make love with him after he beats you, you not only want to vomit, you actually do.

A woman is beaten in the home every 15 seconds! More than 5,000 women are beaten to death each year. On the average one-third of all homicide victims are women killed by their husband or boyfriend.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 14 and 45. More than 50 percent of the young men between the ages of 11 and 21 who are in a detention center/jail for homicide have killed their mother's abuser. Fifty-one percent of all murders occur in the home; 72 percent of emergency room assault cases are women; 30 percent of hospital room visits are attributed to beatings; and one out of 12 women are battered while pregnant.

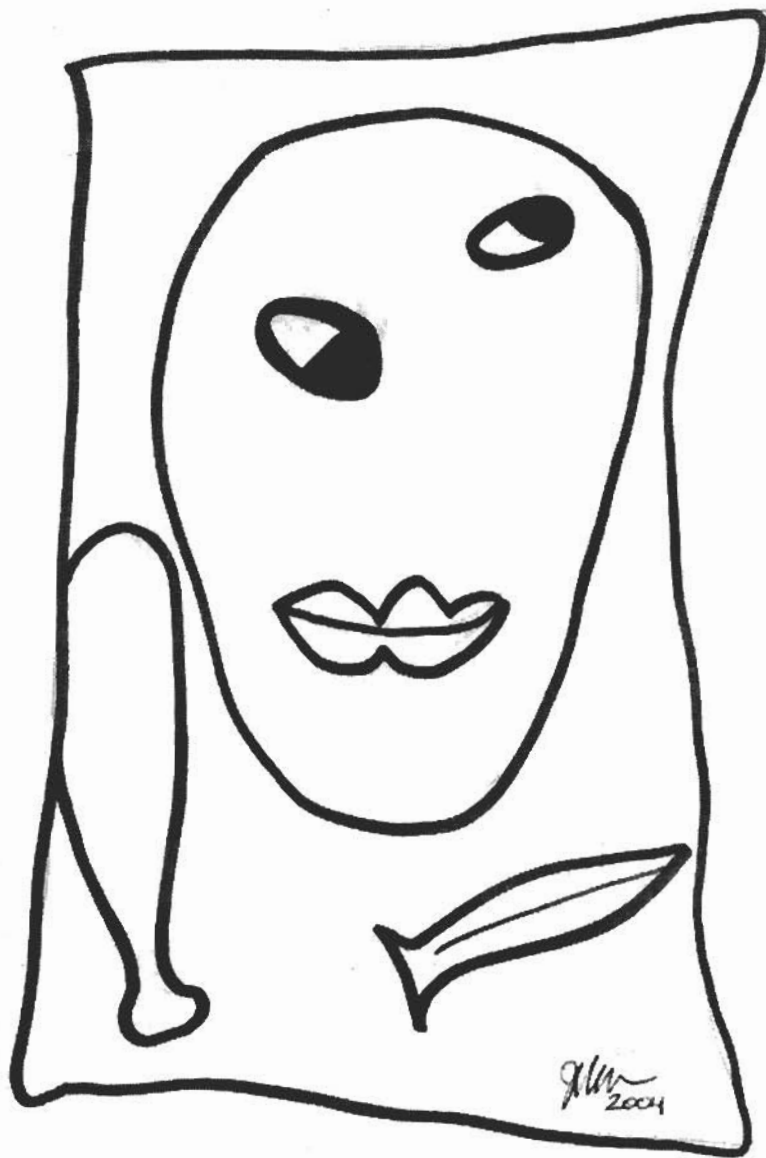
Over half of American women are safer on the street than in their own home!

What can a woman do if she is trapped in a cycle of viciousness? What are some of the strategies she can implore to survive these life-threatening circumstances?

First she must commit herself, inclusive of her family, to survival. She has to realize that when the man in her life has adopted the aforementioned frame of mind, he has become a menace to her. She has to deal with him just as she would any other dangerous threat. He is not her "soul mate" at this point! He is a monster and must be dealt with accordingly.

A woman in this predicament must be ready to move at all times with the ultimate objective being total removal from this one-sided relationship. The following are necessities that must be done. Take these points extremely seriously; there is a 76 percent greater risk of women who leave their batterers being killed as opposed to those that stay in the relationship.

- Believe in yourself, become self-reliance and independent.
- Understand and realize that this transition will be difficult but must be done.
- Try to avoid becoming overly emotional; this is not about love, but survival!
- Develop a survival plan; commit to it, and practice it



thoroughly. If possible have a secure, isolated place to retreat to (a safe house).

- Create a safe route out of the house and practice using it under pressure.
- Maintain a survival kit for yourself and your family. This kit should be able to keep you afloat for a couple of days while you attempt to get stabilized.
- Keep spare money, car keys, documents (identification, birth certificates, social security cards, and medical

records), and clothes that are unknown to your husband or the abuser.

- Always try and have some form of transportation available to you.
- Have a contact or two that knows of your circumstances and that can assist you in a time of need.
- Keep some form of communication with you at all times. Also keep spare change so you can make a phone call in an emergency.

The children are aware of his mood shifts. They are used to what happens when they are told to go to the room. They will cover their ears and increase the TV volume once the shouting starts. They try to drown out their mother's screams as they hear the slapping, the thumps and items breaking. They wish they could do something and tell themselves one day when they get older they will stop this insanity! They also have developed hatred and disrespect for the man they once called their father.

As you attempt to stand up to him, you hit the ground for the second time because of his blows. You try to stand but can't get up. You didn't realize your children have been watching the whole time. You watch in horror as your 11-year-old daughter screams to her father to stop hitting you.

As he turns to discipline her, she lunges at him, stabbing him in the stomach with the 14-inch butcher knife she had taken from the kitchen moments before the argument began. As he falls to the floor, the knife thrusts farther into the upper stomach, reaching and penetrating his heart. Your husband stares at her in total dismay. Simultaneously, your nine-year-old son hits him across his skull with the bat this same man bought for him to play ball with the neighborhood boys. He dies in a pool of his own blood.

Another family has been psychologically and physically shattered and destroyed by the senselessness of domestic violence, a tragic malady so widespread it has devastated and destroyed tens of thousands of lives. Unfortunately, it will continue its destructive path as long as society continues to turn the other cheek and fail equip the targets of this insanity with the skills and strategies to combat it.

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