

# National NOW Family Law Advisory *Ad Hoc* Committee Recommended Reading List

## **All But My Soul: Abuse Beyond Control**

**By Jeanne I King, Ph.D.**

*All But My Soul* is a true story of abuse beyond control. It is a heartfelt personal account of an upper middle class family entrapping itself in the classic Cycle of Violence. Dr. Jeanne King tells her family story and addresses a psychosocial dysfunction affecting 1 out of every 3 women in America today. Written with love and wisdom, *All But My Soul* uncovers a social political scandal that re-victimizes the abused. It shows how a well-documented family abuser uses the system to push the protective mother out of their abused children's lives. This compelling, suspenseful and informative expose discloses domestic violence taken to an amazing, outrageous extreme. (from the book cover).

## **The Batterer as Parent**

**by Lundy Bancroft and Jay Silverman**

*The Batterer as Parent* takes readers inside homes affected by domestic violence, imparting an understanding of the atmosphere that batterers create for the children who live with them. The book explains how children's emotional recovery is inextricably linked to the healing and empowerment of their mothers. While written for professionals, the book's accessible style makes it engaging and useful for abused mothers, and anyone wishing to assist children exposed to battering.

## **Childhood—It Should Not Hurt!**

**by Claire R. Reeves**

The book covers issues of incest and child sexual abuse, the greatest hidden epidemic in the United States. Readers will get information on recognizing the signs and symptoms, and what to do if your child has been sexually abused. The book explains the difference in family, juvenile and criminal courts; social service agencies, and the guardian-ad-litem, and it prepares families that may find themselves in this complicated and often confusing arena. The sections about child molesters arms parents with knowledge to protect their children. The book also offers advice for adult survivors of sexual abuse to help them reclaim their lives and move forward.

## **The Custody Wars—Why Children are Losing the Legal Battle and What We Can Do About It** **by Mary Anne Mason, Ph.D, J. D.**

This book looks at how custody issues are settled and how the needs of children are often ignored. Mason reviews the legal, sociological, and psychological literature to provide extensive examples of how the courts deal with issues relating to children as well as technology and the use of frozen eggs and donated sperm. She also discusses single-sex couples and stepparents. This is fascinating read that encourages people to reconsider how children are handled in divorce cases. Mason suggests many alternatives, all of which include letting the child's voice be heard throughout the divorce process.

**Divorced from Justice, The Abuse of Women and Children by Divorce Lawyers and Judges  
by Karen Winner**

Women in divorce cases experience abuse, not justice, from the judicial establishment, states Winner, journalist and former investigator for the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. She guides readers through the inner dynamics of divorce court proceedings and uncovers the too-common scene of unethical lawyers using the fee-for-profit system for self-enrichment and insensitive judges misapplying community property, equitable distribution, and no-fault divorce laws. Wives fare worse than husbands because they lack adequate financial resources for competent legal defense; face gender discrimination from the mainly male legal profession; and, after the divorce, descend in economic status, if not into poverty. Winner provides examples of wives who fought for their rights and won, and she advocates citizen activism and government intervention to discipline the legal profession and insure justice.

**From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done about It**

**By Amy Neustein and Michael Lesher**

In this astonishing book, sociologist Amy Neustein and attorney Michael Lesher examine the serious dysfunction of the nation's family courts—a dysfunction that too often results in the courts' failure to protect the people they were designed to help. Specifically, the authors chronicle cases in which mothers who believe their children have been sexually abused by their fathers are disbelieved, ridiculed or punished for trying to protect them. All too often the mother, in such a case, is deemed the unstable parent, and her children are removed from her care, to be placed in foster care or even with the father credibly accused of abusing them.

**Managing Your Divorce: A Guide for Battered Women**

**National Council of the Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Dean Louis W. McHardy, Executive Director; Family Violence Department Resource Center on Domestic Violence Child Protection and Custody, Meredith Hofford, M.A., Director**

This booklet is intended to be used by battered women who are representing themselves, without an attorney, in court cases involving child custody. This is not a recommendation to go into court unrepresented. In fact, we start the booklet with a piece on "How to Find an Attorney." What we recommend strongly is that if there is any dispute or conflict about the arrangements for custody and visitation, get a lawyer! Battered women have spoken repeatedly about the loss of custody as the greatest threat in their lives, saying that it is more painful than the physical violence they have suffered. The stakes are extremely high in custody disputes; get a lawyer. To order: Write or call: P.O. Box 8970; Reno NV 89507 (800) 527-3223.

**A Mother's Nightmare-Incest: A Practical Legal Guide for Parents and Professionals  
by John E.B. Mayers**

Protecting children from child abuse using the legal system can be a complicated and devastating process for parents. Suspecting sexual abuse, a mother may seek divorce and custody, or if already divorced, request withdrawal of visitation rights. When unable to prove abuse, however, the mother

may be labeled "hysterical" and jeopardize her case. This easy-to-read book assists professionals and parents in reducing the likelihood that the legal system will backfire.

### **Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody**

**By Phyllis Chesler**

What qualities make a woman a good mother, "fit" to be awarded custody of her children? Are these qualities different from those that make a father fit to have custody of his children, if he wants it? The preponderance of evidence suggests that they are, as Chesler amply illustrates: mothers are measured against an ideal, and can always be found wanting in some respect; fathers who have neglected, molested, kidnapped, beaten, and brainwashed their children are nonetheless awarded custody over the claims of the women who have been their primary (often sole) nurturers for years. This new title is similar in format to Chesler's now-classic *Women and Madness* and will doubtless evoke similar passions. Here she has drawn together empirical data, mythology, case studies, historical research, and political analysis to produce a stunning and exhaustive indictment of the treatment of mothers by the modern justice system. (from *Library Journal*).

### **Overcoming the Devastation of Legal Abuse Syndrome**

**by Karin Huffer**

This book has an ominous subtitle: "Warning: Protracted litigation can be hazardous to your health." Author Huffer offers numerous case studies on the invisible cumulative stressors complicating recovery from dealing with the justice system. It can be used as a self-help manual or a textbook for legal and health professionals. The methods outlined for dealing with losses and grief during litigation are sound and meet the standards of managed care. The victimization felt in the court system is well documented and validating to those who have experienced similar devastation of their belief systems. The burdensome duration, economic oppression, misinformation, character assassination and betrayal felt during and after legal proceedings are discussed.

### **Puppet Child**

**A novel by Talia Corner**

Rachel Belmore is a poised, determined, yet vulnerable advertising executive fighting to bar her charming former husband, Dr. Wesley Belmore, from molesting their five-year-old daughter, Ellie. Caught in a nightmarish justice system, Rachel's odyssey takes a turn for the worse when she loses her battle in the court of Judge McGillian. The judge, a gregarious man who believes that he applies the law without prejudice, is nevertheless trapped in his biases, which throw him into the eye of a media storm. To save Ellie, Rachel must take the law into her hands and suffer the consequences. *Puppet Child* is a moving tribute to a mother who remains dignified, honest and loving as she changes the rules.

### **Scared to Leave, Afraid to Stay: Paths from Family Violence to Safety**

**by Barry Goldstein**

Goldstein tells the story of ten women as they escaped their abusers seeking a better life. Through these cases, the book shows how courts handle legal issues such as orders of protection, custody,

visitation, support, marital property and criminal prosecutions. It tells about the resources available for women seeking to leave their abuser.

### **The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize it and How to Respond**

**By Patricia Evans**

Almost everyone has heard of or knows someone who is part of a verbally abusive relationship—if they're not involved in one themselves. In *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, you'll find validation and understanding—it's not "all in your head"—and encouragement for your efforts to change the situation. In this expanded second edition, author Patricia Evans explores the damaging effects of verbal abuse on children and the family, and offers valuable insight and recommendations to therapists, as well as those who seek therapeutic support. (from the book cover).

### **Whores of the Court, the Fraud of Psychiatric Testimony and the Rape of American Justice by Margaret Hagen**

A whistle-blowing insider, Hagen, rails against forensic psychology and psychiatric practitioners. In her view, the booming business of expert testimony in child custody, criminal rehabilitation, child abuse, and psychological injury/disability cases wastes society's financial resources and yields decisions probably inferior to those that could have been made by the general public. As an "infant" science, she argues, psychology can't provide the answers to the questions posed in such situations.

### **Why does he do that? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men**

**by Lundy Bancroft**

*Why does he do that?* explains and describes the minds of abusive men. The book covers early warning signs of abuse, the abusive mentality, problems with getting help from the legal system, and the long, complex process of change. After dispelling 17 myths about abusive personalities, author Bancroft sheds light on the origin of the abuser's values and beliefs, which he finds to be a better explanation of abusive behavior than reference to psychological problems.

### **When Dad hurts Mom**

**by Lundy Bancroft**

Nearly three-quarters of women who are chronically mistreated by their partners have children. In this sensitive, author Bancroft gives those women ways to help their children heal from the pain of seeing such abuse. Using anecdotes, Q&As, bulleted "points to remember" and a caring but firm tone, Bancroft tells abused mothers exactly what actions they should take to help their children. Don't blame children (or yourself), he says, and let children know it's good to talk about the verbal or physical abuse they've been exposed to.

### **Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life**

**by Evan Stark**

Author successfully argues: "...The social endowment men inherit from sexual inequality...allows them (but rarely women) to shape discrete acts into patterns of dominance that entrap partners and

make them subordinate." Stark "...considers the challenges posed to law, policy, the service system, and the advocacy movement by reframing woman battering as the liberty crime of coercive control." And outlines "...a three-pronged strategy: to craft a statutory response; to refocus justice, service, and grassroots advocacy on women's freedom and autonomy as well as their safety; and to reengage the advocacy movement in the 'dance of justice.'"

**For Lawyers:**

**The Impact of Domestic Violence on Your Legal Practice: A Lawyer's Handbook**

**American Bar Association Commission on Violence**, 2nd Edition

It provides an overview of domestic violence and the law, and it aids attorneys in every field of practice in representing clients responsibly, by helping them recognize domestic violence and how a legal matter may be impacted by domestic violence. Over 80 authors contributed to this comprehensive reference publication that covers topics such as "Safety and Domestic Violence," "Men's Role," "Protective Orders and Other Injunctive Relief," "Criminal Matters," and "Domestic Violence and the Workplace." This publication is a valuable tool in assisting attorneys with the intersection of domestic violence and the law. Find more information about these publications [online](#).