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Domestic violence is a serious social problem that impacts the lives of women around the world. Strangulation, a form of homicide used by men, is the third leading cause of death for women after guns and knives (Sorenson, Joshi, and Silvitz, 2014). Society blames battered women for being in the abusive relationship as if we can control or caused the situation. Personally, I had no control over my abuser. Life threatening fears prevent the victims from speaking out even if they escape the immediate surroundings. I had concerns of my abuser's retaliation by him threatening those whom I love, such as mother, children and my dog was enough to keep me from leaving.

After, finding the courage to leave him it became worse. Violations of protective orders were not enforced, and fears of him getting even with me by turning family and friends against me for having him removed from our home. Trying to live a normal life was non-existent I was scared to even walk my dog. He controlled my life through the legal system. Every day, we lived in fear because he threatened to kill my mother, son and myself. He was a coward but had the means to hire someone else to do his dirty work.

Social class has a role in domestic violence due-to-the-fact that it is under reported by the middle class. Abuse of the middle-classes differs because we have a veil of silence, which prevents us from speaking up about such abuse. Affluent abusers have a sense of narcissistic entitlement. The more money he made, escalated the abuse against me. He felt above the law and got away with abusing me. His bizarre behavior was a barrier for me to seek help because it was shameful, and I risked disbelief. He is a skilled manipulator proficient in the technique of control and fear. I feared him, and the violence escalated because he had no fears of our judicial

system. Before the attack I was told, “You are in the way of my lifestyle.” I told him to get out or I’m calling the police. He jumped on top of me as I laid on the bed. I reached for my phone. He grabbed the phone as I tried to unlock the pass code, which prevented me from calling for help. I screamed for help, but I was silenced by strangulation. I remember his hands on my neck, seeing his cold dark eyes while he head-butted my face. I heard him cry out “take my hand” then I lost consciousness.

After the attack I experienced the following: concussion, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, chewing pain, (resulted in a liquid diet) weight-loss, lost and cracked teeth, severe headaches, concentration, memory, PTSD, and insomnia issues. I am at risk of a stroke, so my future is uncertain because I was strangled and left unconscious for 11 hours.

Today there is more sympathy for drug abusers than with victims of domestic violence. When I found the courage to speak out against my successful, and respected husband, I needed help. There is very little support for victims of forced strangulation from a spouse or intimate partner. I discovered there was more sympathy for drug abusers than victims of crime. I sought help because this was the worst incident that I had ever experienced. The assault was a serious threat on my life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. I felt justified enough to seek help and no longer had contact with my husband. I knew if I stayed and told no one about the abuse he would kill me because a divorce is costly and he was stingy. Early in our marriage I was forced quit my job, which then put him in full control of our finances. He basically owned me and gradually took away my self-esteem, friends, and family, which began multiple years of control and manipulation.

Little attention is paid to the lifetime effects of domestic violence on aging women. Some women my age stay in abusive relationships because they cannot afford to leave their

abuser husbands. The nursing homes are filled with elderly women who have been abused by the men they loved and cared for.

Until we can get rid of all the old stereotypes of domestic violence that are deeply imbedded in all of us we are likely to keep shaming the victim into silence. According to just-world-beliefs I deserved to be strangled beaten and left for dead.