



Emerge

Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence

E-Mail Newsletter

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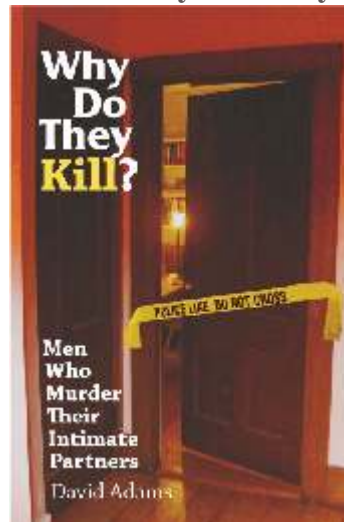
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"Why Do They Kill?" by David Adams



In September 2007, [Vanderbilt University Press](#) is releasing a book by David Adams, Co-Director of EmERGE. Entitled "Why Do They Kill? Men Who Murder Their Intimate Partners," this book is an in depth look at domestic violence homicides or attempted homicides and contains profiles of different killer types.

Moving backwards from the murders they committed through their adult lives, relationship histories, and their childhoods, the author sought to understand what motivates the men to kill.

Why Do They Kill? is the first book to profile different types of wife killers, and to examine the courtship patterns of abusive men. The author shows that wife murders are not, for the most part, "crimes of passion," but the culmination of lifelong predisposing factors of the men who murder, and that many elements of their crimes are foretold by their past behavior in intimate relationships. Key turning points of these relationships include the first emergence of the man's violence, his blaming of the victim, her attempts to resist, his escalation, her attempts to end the relationship, and his punishment for her defiance.

Critical perspective on the men's accounts comes from interviews with victims of attempted homicide (standing in for the murder victims) who survived shootings, stabbings, and strangulation. These women detail their partners' escalating

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patterns of child abuse, sexual violence, terroristic threats, and stalking. The section on help-seeking patterns of victims helps to dispel notions of "learned helplessness" among victims.

Excerpt 1:

(from Chapter 4: The Killer's Upbringings)

A number of the men said that, while once fearful of their fathers who abused their mothers, they had learned to emulate them in their treatment of their partners. There appeared to be two aspects of this. One was to develop a general dislike and antipathy towards women. The other was to develop a tough and sometimes hypermasculine exterior.

When his parents were still living together, Everett had always defended his mother against his father's attacks. He continued to live with his mother for several years after his parents divorce and had very little contact with his father. After a visit with his father when he was fifteen, Everett decided to live with him in another city, where his father inducted him into a life of crime. Asked what had influenced him to make this decision, Everett said, "I was attracted to my father's philosophy which was to do unto others before they do unto you. I was just tired of being scared. Together we was strong and nobody could beat us."

Explaining how his upbringing had influenced him, Emmit said "Maybe because of my father, we was so scared and mentally beaten (referring to his mothers, sisters and himself). The turning point came when I was fifteen. My brother, Elroy, used to beat on me real bad every single day. He would degrade me in front of my friends an shit but I couldn't do anything 'cause he was my father's favorite. Then one day, I beat him bad and after that he never touched me again. And I was my father's favorite after that!"

Excerpt 2:

(from Chapter 7: Patterns of Possession and Punishment)

Though threats of violence would logically seem to lessen the need for physical assaults, this did not seem to be the case for the perpetrators I interviewed. Not only did their threats become more frequent and serious over time but so too did their physical violence. This was because their usual threats and level of violence had failed to prevent their partners from seeking to end the relationship or from otherwise defying them. Over time, even their increasingly brutal assaults were no longer working. Already having failed their primary mission of maintaining the relationship, many concluded "the next best thing" was to kill their estranged partner. As several killers stated, killing at least insured that "no one else would have her". Killing one's partner communicates not only the ultimate act of control but also of ownership since one prerogative of ownership is to destroy that which is no longer of use to us. Recall John's chilling words about the importance of having sex with his wife, Debra, shortly before killing her: "It was a way of preserving us as a couple forever" John added

that he also intended to show the other man whom he assumed to be Debra's new partner that, "I was the last to have her". John was attempting to proclaim his eternal ownership of her.

Emerge is pleased to announce that we are offering an opportunity to order this book directly from our office. Orders will receive a discounted price of \$25 (with \$3 S/H) ***for the first 100 copies sold***, and the book will be mailed out by August 27th.

Ordering directly from Emerge means you will be supporting our agency in its work to stop domestic violence, and each order from our office will be shipped with an autographed copy!

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