

## **Legal Information Workshop for NWT Women Experiencing Family Violence**

### **CASE SCENARIO #2: JACK & JILL**

Jack and Jill live in a small isolated community in the Sahtu. The community members live a traditional lifestyle, except for the health center, a small chapel, where mass is celebrated once a month and the Band office. This small community on Great Bear Lake has no RCMP Detachment. Jack works for the Band as the finance officer and Jill has always been a homemaker, looking after their five children. She speaks north slavey and very little English. Jill has a grade 5 education.

Jack has always been a heavy drinker, Jill drinks on occasion. They both survived residential school. Jack and Jill have always had a chaotic relationship and Jill can usually hold her own. Jack has a bank account where he deposits his pay check and he allows Jill to access his account to pay the bills.

One day, Jack goes to the Northern Store to buy something and he wants to pay with his debit card. The teller explains that Jack's transaction has been denied because there are insufficient in his bank account. Being an accountant, Jack knows what this means. He is furious and humiliated. He storms on his way home and confronts Jill. She denies having spent all the money. Jack starts yelling at her and demands the debit card. When she won't give it to him, he grabs her by the throat and pulls her to the bedroom where he demands that she look in her purse and find the card or he will choke her. This is all in front of the children.

Jill is terrified. She stumbles through her purse and finds the card and Jack snatches it from her. Jack points his finger at Jill and yells that from this day on, she will have to ask permission to purchase items for the family and provide the receipt to Jack. He warns Jill that he will teach her a lesson she will never forget if she does not account for her spending. Jill says that she will leave him. Jack screams that she is an unfit mother, who will never get a job and she will lose her children because he will make sure of that because he has connections and influence in the community, she doesn't.

From that moment on, Jack is very controlling. Jill has to present her case to Jack every time she needs money to buy groceries. Jack gives Jill the bank card but only after he makes her dance for him in a degrading way. Jack orders her to bring back the receipts. This goes on for over three months. After a particularly hard day, Jack comes home from work and orders Jill to go get him a six pack of beer at the Northern Store. Jill goes out and when she gets there, she notices that the mail has just been flown in on the weekly scheduled flight. She sees a notice from Northwest Tel that they will disconnect the telephone tomorrow if the bill is not paid today.

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Jill looks at the bank card, she wonders if there is enough to pay the bill and buy a ‘six pack’. She has been talking to the community wellness worker daily about her struggles and she knows that if she doesn’t have a phone, she won’t be able to talk to her anymore. Jill decides to pay the bill. She makes this decision because she knows that tomorrow is Jack’s pay day and his check will be deposited directly as of midnight, 6 hours away. Jill pays the phone bill. She grabs a six-pack out of the cooler and heads to the till. The attendant tells her that there are insufficient funds. As Jill is leaving, she is terrified. What will she do? What will she tell Jack? She must think quickly. As she enters the home, she tells Jack that the debit machine at the Northern is malfunctioning and the clerk said that it would be fixed the next day. Jack is furious, he grabs the card from Jill’s hands and grabs her by her long black hair and pulls her to the bedroom and pushes her onto the bed, where he then proceeds to squeeze his hands around her neck and yells, you spent all my money, didn’t you?! As he squeezes harder, Jill is trying to fight back but she can’t. Jack stops and points his finger at her and yells that he’s going down to the Northern to see if she is telling the truth. He leaves and locks her in the room. Jill is terrified of what Jack will do to her when she is found out. She realizes that the phone is not disconnected. She calls the community wellness worker.

#### **What happens to Jill?**

You are the community wellness worker. You answer the phone and Jill tells you frantically what happened and what could happen very soon. You explain to her that she needs to think about the children that her life could be in danger. Jill wants to leave but she can’t afford to take her 5 children south. You explain to Jill that you can make arrangements to have her flown out on the scheduled flight that leaves the next day. Jill has a lot to think about.

Jill is terrified but decides not to leave her children and fly south. She wants to stay in her home and she wants Jack to find somewhere else to live and leave her alone. She doesn’t think she can handle Jack anymore and is afraid that if they stay together, the next time he erupts he will kill her. She wants the relationship over.