

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

### **CASE SCENARIO #1: Mary & John**

Mary and John met each other in a bar in Yellowknife about five years ago and started dating. Two months later, John asked Mary to move in with him. John was renting a two bedroom apartment from Northern Property. In the beginning, John was very caring and showered Mary with gifts and flowers at every occasion. John told Mary that he had a good job at Diavik Mines and she wouldn't have to work or want for anything. Mary agreed and moved in with John. John wanted Mary to spend all of her time with him and didn't want her to have an outside job. Approximately one year later, Mary became pregnant.

As the months go by, John complains that Mary's friends are bothersome and forbids Mary to see them anymore. As Mary's pregnancy moves along, John tells Mary over and over how lucky she is to have him. John tells her that he loves her unconditionally, even though she is fat, and that she is lucky to have John, because no other man would want her.

When Mary is about 7 months pregnant, she and John are having an argument over Mary asking John for a few dollars to buy a baby basket. As the conversation heats up, John hits Mary for the first time and orders her to sleep on the couch until after she delivers the baby as he cannot stand to be sleeping next to a fat woman. After the birth of their baby boy, John yells at Mary all the time, saying that she can't do anything right and she is an unfit mother because she can't get the baby to stop crying. John hits Mary for the second time and leaves the house.

The next morning when Mary gets up, John is back with flowers and chocolates and promises on his mother's grave never to lift a hand to Mary for the rest of his life. Mary embraces him and says she forgives him and that it wasn't his fault because he is a hard working man. Then she starts apologizing to him and promises that she will be a better spouse in the future. For about a month, Mary and John are on the honey moon they never had. Life is good...they hold hands in public and kiss with passion.

After a particularly difficult rotation at the Mines, John comes home. Mary thinks to herself that John looks different. John starts accusing Mary of infidelity with the butcher down the street. Mary denies this story as preposterous, after all, they are vegetarian and she has no reason to go to the butcher shop, but she did say hello to the Butcher yesterday on her way to the fish market as he was putting out the garbage. John is furious and forces Mary to have sex with him despite her protest.

As usual, the next day, John comes crawling in with flowers and chocolates, promising that it will never happen again. As usual, Mary forgives him and she promises to be a better spouse.

At the beginning, these episodes were very rare, but within a few weeks, the yelling and the hitting happens every day. Mary decides to talk to her brother about it. Her brother tells her that

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### **CASE SCENARIO #1: Mary & John (page 2)**

John is a good man, provider and good father. Mary's brother advises her that John must be stressed and that she should be more understanding and things will calm down. He also cautions Mary that it's best not to talk about this as it would be bad for John's career if all of Yellowknife knew that John and Mary were dealing with a few issues.

Mary agrees and tries to be more patient and to be a good spouse but the violent behavior escalates and continues. John always has something to say about the house, the baby or about Mary. One evening, Mary receives a call that her mother is sick. Mary asks John whether she could go be with her. John is furious and forbids her to leave. Mary goes anyway. When she returns, John has obviously been drinking and tells Mary that he has put down 'Juno', Mary's precious golden retriever. In a fit of rage, John starts kicking and beating Mary. Although Mary is shielding herself, she is hit in the eye and cheek. Other punches hit her arms which she is holding up to her face to protect herself. Their toddler is watching and crying in fear. Mary is able to escape John's blows and runs to the bedroom and locks herself in. She is able to call the RCMP. The RCMP attend the residence and after seeing the state of the house and John's mental state, they arrest John and take him to the cells for him to sober up. The female Officer in attendance convinces Mary to come out of the bedroom. Mary is bruised and shaking and she has her toddler wrapped in her arms. The female officer asks Mary if she would like to go to Allison McAteer House, just for the night. Mary is reluctant but eventually agrees to go just for tonight.

### **What happens to Mary?**

#### **Mary goes to Allison McAteer House**

The RCMP officer calls a taxi for Mary. Mary and the child are taken to Allison McAteer House. You are the intake worker and you greet Mary on arrival and then proceed with her admission to the shelter. During the interview, Mary tells you that she is terrified of John and that just before the RCMP got there, he threatened to kill her and that as the RCMP were taking John away, he was yelling: 'you'll pay for this...I'm not done with you yet!!' Mary is shaking and crying and says that she believes that her life is in danger because she heard that John's brother, Fred (also known in local circles, as 'Kujo'), was also a jealous and controlling boyfriend. Two of Kujo's girl friends' have mysteriously disappeared. No one has seen them in two weeks, but because these women are from Eastern Europe, there has been no missing person's report filed by family. Yesterday, when John was mad at her, he threatened her by saying that if she didn't have sex with him, she would suffer the same fate as Gretel and Gerda. He didn't say anything more according to Mary and they could just have been deported for all she knows.