

Research and News About Violence 2
From: www.your-martial-arts-resources.com

Drop of hand that triggered attacker's lifelong urge to kill:

From: <http://society.guardian.co.uk/crimeandpunishment/story/0,,1758349,00.html>
(April 21, 2006):

On a Wednesday afternoon last summer Naomi Bryant was walking along the street near her home hand in hand with a man she had bumped into in the local pub. A trusting, 40-year-old woman, she had invited the man back to her home but felt embarrassed when she caught sight of friends and dropped his hand. It was a deadly error.

They carried on to her modest redbrick house on an estate in Winchester, Hampshire. The man, Anthony Rice, hid a kitchen knife in his trousers and went upstairs to check that nobody else was home. He then strangled Ms Bryant with a pair of her tights and stabbed her in the neck, back and chest 15 times. He hid her body under a bed, leaving it to be found by Ms Bryant's teenage daughter and her ex-partner.

Later he told police: "There is a determination in me to kill. This urge is inside me and it's really, really deep set and I have to satisfy that anger." He had decided to kill Ms Bryant as soon as she dropped his hand.

When Ms Bryant's family learned of Rice's past, they were astounded that he had been free to wander around unchecked and unmonitored. Since the age of 15 he had attacked at least a dozen women, terrorising some at knifepoint and revelling in the power he felt he had.

His offending was incessant. He was on home leave from prison when he committed one series of offences. One sex attack was committed 13 days after he was released from another jail term while in a hostel for ex-offenders.

When he was jailed for life for a violent attempted rape in 1989, probation officers said he ought to be kept behind bars indefinitely. And yet when Rice, 49, was released from the life term in 2004 he was considered a low enough risk to be given a place at a Christian residential training centre near Winchester. Within months he had killed Ms Bryant.

Her mother, Verna, said yesterday: "I don't think he should have been released in the first place. He's obviously very ill. He had been in prison for most of his life. He wanted to go back inside. Committing an offence got him back inside."

A report into the case of Rice which was commissioned by the chief inspector of probation, Andrew Bridges, is due to be released within a few days. It will criticise the way Rice was handled at the centre, Elderfield, and examine the workings of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (Mappa) system meant to bring together police, probation and centre staff to manage people like him. The Rice case also informed home secretary Charles Clarke's announcement yesterday of new powers to control violent offenders.

Dundee-born Rice's criminal career began in 1972. At 15 he was given a supervision order for six assaults on women and three years later was put on probation for four indecent assaults. A year on he was behind bars, having assaulted one woman and indecently assaulted another. When he was 25 Rice attacked a woman at her home, seizing her by the throat, producing a knife and forcing her to remove her clothes before raping her. At Edinburgh high court Rice was convicted of rape and four cases of assault and jailed for seven years.

The sentence did not stop him. Five years later, in June 1987, Rice was on home leave from prison, staying with his sister in Surrey. He stole her diary and began phoning her friends, making obscene suggestions and threatening to kill them.

Thirteen days after being released from prison for those offences, Rice was staying in a hostel for recently released prisoners in north London. After spending a night in a pub he stopped a 33-year-old woman in the street and asked her for directions. He attacked her, pushed her into a front garden and over the following hour he sexually assaulted her and threatened her with a knife.

Rice was easily found and told police: "People say rape is about sex, but this is only part of it. Rape is about power and I had power over her - sex is just an extension of it."

In June 1989 for this attack Rice was jailed for life at the Old Bailey. Probation officers who had interviewed him said they believed he should be locked away indefinitely. The common sergeant of London, Judge Thomas Pigot QC, told him: "You are clearly a menace to the community. The public is at risk of serious injury while you are at large." Rice grinned as he was led away.

Rice spent the last 18 months before his release at Ford open prison in West Sussex. He was trusted enough to have a regular nine-to-five job outside the jail.

In November 2004 he was freed on parole. He was found a place at Elderfield. The centre, in the village of Otterbourne, is run by the Langley House Trust, a Christian charity. It provides places for 19 men, whom it trains in skills such as horticulture. Villagers tolerate the presence of the former prisoners but they have always been assured that only non-violent men lived there.

In April last year Rice sneaked out of the hostel and spent the night eight miles away in Southampton. At 5.30am he hit a woman over the head with a brick and returned to the hostel. He thought police would trace him within a few days. But the woman had not seen him and, apparently, nobody at the hostel knew he had sneaked away.

He began to feel untouchable. Those who knew him at the hostel say he was "cocky" and liked to lord it over other residents, believing his status as a lifer made him a cut above them.

Then came his meeting with Ms Bryant. When he was arrested two days after the attack in London, Rice told police he had picked on Ms Bryant because he judged she was "vulnerable".

In court his barrister said Rice wanted to stay in jail for the rest of his life. The judge, Mr Justice Tugendhat, ordered that Rice be held for at least 25 years before being considered for release. By that time he will be in his mid-70s.

Study reveals domestic abuse is widespread in Syria:

From: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0425/p04s01-wome.html>
(April 20, 2006):

Damascus, Syria - This country's only shelter for abused women is largely a secret. Victims learn about it through local churches, aid agencies, or lawyers. It has just 10 beds for the 22 people who were recently staying there.

But a new study released earlier this month that says as many as 1 in 4 Syrian women may be victims of physical violence is beginning to reveal just how widespread a problem domestic abuse is throughout the country.

The study, funded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and conducted by the state-run General Union of Women, is the first of its kind to try to quantify and explain the types of violence Syrian women face.

"Violence is in every home in the Arab world," says a woman who works at the shelter and asked for anonymity because of the sensitivity of their work.

"The number of abused women is more than 1 in 4. We hope that with a hotline we'll be able to help the largest number of women possible. We hope we can provide these women with a type of hope so they can know themselves and can rebuild their self-esteem," she says.

The shelter is currently working on acquiring a larger home and is trying to set up a hotline for domestic abuse. There are no domestic abuse hotlines in Syria.

Women's rights activists pin the problem of violence against women on societal shame associated with divorce, a lack of education on what exactly abuse entails, a shortage of shelters, and weak laws that fail to protect women who face abuse.

"There is a type of traditional thinking that it's [shameful] to go to the police with such problems," says Maen Abdul-Salam, who heads Etana Press, a publishing house dedicated to women's issues. "Families usually feel ashamed. They don't want to talk about it. There needs to be more education to change the mentality."

The study of nearly 1,900 families found that violence against women was more prevalent in the countryside than in cities, that domestic abuse was more likely to happen in homes facing economic hardship and in homes where men were less educated or where women married at very young ages.

Yahya Aous, the editor of Thara.com, a website dedicated to women's issues, says a major problem is that many women are not even aware that they may be victims.

"Women start to feel like abuse is a normal part of life," says Mr. Aous. "She no longer believes it is violence. And if a woman is facing violence, there is no place she can go where they will help her with the law and with her situation."

While activists hailed the report as a first step in tackling the problem of abuse, they also said that discrepancies in the numbers and the wording of the report pose real concerns.

"This is a good report because it is the first time there is an official recognition that women are facing violence, especially to this extent," says Bassam Kadi, an activist who heads the Syrian Women's Website. "But the language in the report is not objective. In one way or another, it holds the same biases that are available on the ground."

The report says that violence often takes place because of "mistakes" made by the women or because they neglected their household duties or because they asked too many questions.

In one segment of the report, the statistics show that nearly a quarter of Syrian women are victims of physical violence. But elsewhere in the study, statistics used show that the number of women who have been beaten is closer to 1 in 10, leading to confusion about the actual number.

Like many other Arab countries, statistics on domestic abuse are hard to come by because few studies are done on the subject. Activists blame the statistical discrepancies in this newest report on a lack of professional statisticians trained to conduct such studies.

Mr. Kadi and others also say that the report fails to address the root of the problem by tackling the inadequacies in the Syrian law.

"They say the Syrian laws are good, but they are not," says Kadi. "A woman needs to have her nose broken before she can really do anything. The laws do not deal with all types of violence, like mere beating. There should be details on the role of the laws in promoting violence. They needed to ask for new laws that protect women from all types of violence."

Anchorage man arrested in wife's stabbing death:

From: http://www.ktva.com/topstory/ci_3750896
(April 25, 2006):

A man is arraigned in court today for murder after a deadly case of domestic violence bringing attention once again to a critical problem here in Alaska.

This is the 6th homicide this year in Anchorage, the first domestic homicide. The worst, most upsetting part of this story is that it involves some very young children.

Last night police received a phone call from a child saying their stepfather, 55-year-old Leng Moua was stabbing their mother with a kitchen knife.

Police say the mother, 39-year-old Shoua Lee and her husband of a few years were arguing over a plane ticket. They say she was upset that he didn't buy her a ticket to California to attend one of his son's college graduations.

“Apparently the 14-year-old girl called and reported it was her step dad that was arguing and assaulting her mother. We now know the argument was pertaining to financial matters particularly the cost of airline tickets,” said Lt. Paul Honeman, APD.

Police say the argument turned violent and then deadly and it was apparently all witnessed by her children ages 21, 14, 11, and 8.

“It's just sad because now the kids are going to have to live without two parental figures in their home. The mom of course is dead and the step dad not knowing what his role to play here whether the biological dad is available to the children. Now both parents are missing from their lives and the possibility of forever.”

Domestic violence is a severe problem here in Alaska.

A study just released reveals that, in 2003, 9 females were killed by males in Alaska, ranking our state at number 1 for the highest homicide rate among females murdered by males.

And here's a frightening statistic, over 86 percent of female victims were murdered by someone they knew.

AWAIC works with domestically abused women on a daily basis. They say it will take the whole community to make changes and stop this high rate of female abuse.

“It takes legislation it takes batterer accountability. It takes resources and it takes individuals that might make a choice to pick a phone up and call for help if they are aware someone's being battered or to reach out to someone that might have evidence of being battered,” said Judy Cordell, Executive Director, AWAIC.

Police say they are not sure if Mr. Moua had a previous history of domestic abuse. Shoua Lee died from her multiple stab wounds last night. Mr. Moua is now behind bars. His bail has been set at 300-thousand dollars.

Study reveals high rate of teen dating violence:

From: <http://www.theksbwchannel.com/news/8997562/detail.html?rss=mty&psp=news>
(April 25, 2006):

Parents often don't realize it, but their teenagers are being punched, threatened, isolated and devalued by their teenage boyfriends and girlfriends.

In fact, teen girls face relationship violence three times more than adult women. A new survey finds it's happening at an alarming rate all over the country.

Teen Research Unlimited questioned more than a thousand teens about dating abuse. Here's what they found: One in five report being hit, slapped or punched by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

A third worry about their physical safety.

A quarter say they've been isolated from family and friends.

More than half say they've compromised their own beliefs to please a partner.

The most shocking result: Many teens think this behavior is normal.

"These teens just want to fit in," said Jessica Aronoff, Executive Director, "Break the Cycle."

"They want to be in a relationship, and they're not confident enough to stand up and say, 'wait a second -- I deserve better.' In fact, they often don't even know they deserve better."

This week, more than 350 high schools around the country will teach the "Love is Not Abuse" curriculum to help teens identify and end abusive relationships.

New York Senator, Hillary Rodham Clinton supports the program. She said, "Education and support for teens will prevent them from turning inwards when they face abuse and isolating themselves from their friends and families."

Researchcers say part of the problem is that teens are entering serious relationships too soon.

Aura Lee Lune is a peer educator who said she's witnessed 7th graders who start going out at a very young age. "It's a security issue. It's something that makes them feel comfortable because someone else is really supposedly caring for them."

Fashion designer Liz Claiborne paid for the study. She's part of a growing number of corporate and government leaders interested in stopping relationship violence - no matter how young the victims.

One interesting point from the research: Technology has put teens in constant contact with Instant Messaging, Text Messaging and Cell Phones.

So many victims don't see it as controlling when a boyfriend wants to know her whereabouts say, 10 times a day. They consider it normal.

Lollipop rage:

From: <http://www.banburytoday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?sectionid=687&articleid=1467474>
(April 27, 2006):

A child could be killed by "arrogant and ignorant" motorists bringing a new form of dangerous driving to the area's roads – lollipop rage.

The phenomenon has seen everything from motorists driving through school crossing patrols to hurling abuse and even stones and bottles at lollipop people.

Now a campaign has been set up to tackle the increasing problem of lollipop people

being terrorised by motorists, which is plaguing Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

Ellen Kershaw has been helping children cross the road outside Hook Norton Primary School for five years, but said lollipop rage had almost caused her to quit her job.

She said: "I get drivers to whom it doesn't seem to matter who is in the road. They seem to think it is their territory. You see them coming and think they will stop but then they don't.

"It happens most days and always seems to be people who are in a hurry. If anything did happen I would never forgive myself.

"I have been very close to giving it up, especially last year when I had an incident where I was crossing with children and a car just didn't see us. I had to push the children to the side of the road out of the way."

Mrs Kershaw now carries a piece of paper and a pen on each shift so she can take down the registration numbers of drivers who ignore her sign.

Brenda Shooter is the only remaining lollipop lady in Banbury, having helped children across The Fairway in the town for 15 years.

She said: "I've had a few drivers stick their fingers up at me and tell me to get out of the road. They come speeding along here and then if I'm in the middle of the road they have to stop, and some of them get short-tempered.

"I've seen a couple of people fly straight past and I've had to usher the kids across quickly and jump out of the way to avoid being run over. With lots of little tots crossing it could be really serious."

Oxfordshire County Council's senior road safety officer Mandy Rigault said it was a significant problem in the county.

"We want to try and shame people. Presumably they would not drive through a red traffic light, so why go through areas where children are crossing? It doesn't make sense," she said.

There are 65 crossing patrol staff around Oxfordshire, with lollipop people in Banbury, Chipping Norton, Deddington, Hook Norton, Enstone, Fritwell, Sibford Gower and Steeple Aston.

The council's school crossing patrol supervisor, Roger Keable, said there was a clear threat of a serious accident.

He said: "It has become increasingly dangerous and there have been a few narrow escapes."

Listing dangers such as drivers revving their engines at children and using threatening language, he added: "People are impatient and can't be bothered to stop.

It's a complete lack of respect from arrogant and ignorant people who just don't care.

"They drive up very close to the patrol, get just two feet away from their legs and try to intimidate them. There are incidents every month."

He added: "Crossing patrols help vulnerable, defenceless people cross the road. They are providing a valuable community service and it's important drivers are considerate of other people and think about the consequences. If someone was hit it would be horrendous."

Mr Keable said Oxfordshire was considering getting involved in the national Stop means Stop campaign. It is designed to highlight the fact failing to stop at a lollipop sign is dangerous and a criminal offence resulting in up to a £1,000 fine and three penalty points. In 2005 there were more than 100 serious accidents on school crossings up and down the country.

Cllr David Sparks is chairman of the Local Government Association's Environment Board, which is behind the project. He said: "It is outrageous that anyone should ignore an order that compromises people's safety. Surely drivers cannot possibly be in such a hurry they are willing to risk injuring or even killing somebody."

"In the past councils have found themselves having to provide staff with self-defence classes and training sessions on how to tackle confrontation just to enable them to perform their jobs. Thoughtless drivers need to be reminded abuse will not be tolerated."

Warwickshire County Council is one of the first local authorities in the country to sign up to the Stop means Stop initiative. Its school crossing patrol supervisor Val Murphy estimated there were as many as ten near-misses a year because drivers simply sped through the patrol.

She said: "Some quite dramatic things happen. Drivers go up the pavement to get round them rather than stop."

"Some crossing patrol staff have had bottles of milk thrown at them – and sadly it seems to be getting worse."

Shanghai workers hire surrogates to vent anger:

From: http://news.inq7.net/world/index.php?index=1&story_id=74022
(April 28, 2006):

Shanghai, China -- Can't stand your boss, but can't afford to quit ? Hire a stand-in to yell at instead.

A pair of Shanghainese entrepreneurs are offering themselves as targets for verbal and -- within limits -- physical abuse, letting frustrated office workers vent without killing their careers.

Zhang Li and Chen Jun, the founders of Wantong Ltd., said their own workplace frustrations inspired them to quit their nine-to-fives and form the company in March.

"I was an office worker before, so I know by experience what a big market there is for this kind of service," Zhang told The Associated Press.

For 100 yuan (13 dollars) per minute the pair will listen to complaints and insults. For 20 yuan (3 dollars) more, they'll even take a slap -- but only from a female client.

Zhang said they aimed to cater to their clients' needs while avoiding too much violence. They're keeping a low profile and relying on word-of-mouth, since the law isn't clear on whether such services can be contracted out, said Zhang, who declined to identify his former employer or give other personal details.

So far, they've had five clients in their first month of business, all well-paid office workers, Zhang said.

Two wanted to insult them, one chose the slapping option and two just wanted to talk, he said.

Stalker's victim still lives in fear:

From: <http://www.yorkshireday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=55&ArticleID=1471174>
(April 28, 2006):

A mother-of-three who survived a stalker's attempt to throttle her in her kitchen at an East Yorkshire resort has told how she lives in constant fear of her life. Dave Mark reports on the devastating aftermath of an attack that has left her feeling like a prisoner in her own home.

Sam Marshall used to think of her immaculate home on a council estate in Bridlington as a safe haven that provided a loving environment for her three children. Today it feels like a prison.

Ms Marshall, 32, has become the victim of a stalker whose campaign of terror has left her afraid to step outside. Even within the confines of the property she loves, she is constantly reminded of an attack that almost killed her.

She was almost throttled on her back doorstep by a man who has been repeatedly sighted staring into the house over the back garden, and who hung a dead frog from her security light within days of the near fatal attack.

She does not believe the most terrifying of the encounters was attempted rape. She believes it was attempted murder, and is convinced that the culprit will return.

The single mum is now just a shell of the strong, independent and vivacious woman who has raised her children largely on her own. She often breaks down in tears as she remembers the blank look on the face of her attacker who tried to strangle her on her kitchen floor. She has even changed her appearance and tightly curled her hair in case the attacker picked her out because she reminds him of somebody else.

She cannot sleep, fears being in the house on her own, and finds herself constantly imagining the reaction of her children – who were upstairs asleep during the attack – if they had come down the next morning to find her dead on the kitchen floor.

Even when she does leave the confines of her home, she fears making eye contact with strangers, and constantly feels watched.

She told the Yorkshire Post: "I can't live like this. Everything has changed since it happened. I don't know the right way to behave, or what I'm supposed to do. This man could come back at any moment. The hardest part is not knowing who he is. He's a complete stranger. I just know it's the same guy we've been spotting at the bottom of the garden."

Miss Marshall was at her home on the night of April 4 when she heard a noise outside at 10.20pm. When she opened the door to see what it was she was confronted by her attacker.

She said: "He just went for me. I went down on the kitchen floor and he just kept squeezing my throat. I was going blue. I could feel myself fading and I was just so terrified I wouldn't see my kids again. He was getting off on it, but his face was just blank.

"I still don't know how I got him off. I just used all my strength and managed to push him off with my leg and he fell out on to the step.

"I threw a coffee cup at him although I don't know if it hit him and I ran up the road screaming. I locked myself in the cupboard in the kitchen and called the police.

"My home feels different now. It sounds daft but I want to rip up the kitchen tiles where it happened because I can't stop re-living it. The window to the back door where he got in is still smashed and there are all these reminders of what happened. "The bruises and cuts on my throat made me feel sick when I looked in the mirror. "Part of me almost wants to see him again so I can ask him why he is doing this to me. My life doesn't feel my own any more."

A suspect has been arrested by police in Bridlington, and bailed. He was questioned after Bridlington residents noted his similarity to an e-fit pictured released by police, which Ms Marshall has been distributing all over town.

She said: "I haven't seen the suspect yet but my gut feeling is that whoever is doing this is still watching me and hasn't been put off.

"You read about people who fall victim to these sick people, but it's so random. I haven't done anything wrong and there's a man out there who wants to kill and hurt me."

A spokeswoman for Humberside Police said: "This was a truly horrendous incident made worse by the fact it took place at this woman's home.

"We are taking it as seriously as can be, and one can only imagine the effects this ordeal will have had on the victim."

Client Violence Focus of Workshop for Social Workers:

From: <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/fast-execute.cgi/article-page.html?article=79270009>
(May 1, 2006):

Buffalo, N.Y. -- The April 14 death of Sister Karen Klimczak, a lifetime peace activist who lived and worked in a Buffalo halfway house and who was killed by one of the parolees staying there, points to a disturbing trend that impacts anyone who works in social services: client violence.

The risk of violence is a reality for most social workers in practice today, says Christina E. Newhill, a nationally regarded social work educator, and it is vitally important that those in the caring professions learn to minimize those job-related dangers.

Newhill, associate professor of social work at the University of Pittsburgh is the author of the book "Client Violence in Social Work Practice".

According to a survey Newhill conducted of 1,600 social workers, 58 percent reported one or more incidents of violence during their career, whether it is property damage, threat of violence, attempted assault or actual physical assault.

The survey found that among professionals working in the criminal justice system, 79 percent report experiencing violence. The survey also showed that male social workers are more likely to experience violence than women, although women tend to worry about it more, she said, adding that violent incidents "take a significant emotional toll."

Newhill's workshop will show participants how to recognize risk factors associated with violent behavior, as well as develop skills to defuse and prevent violence.

Many risk factors can be determined by simply reviewing the client's record. Younger clients are more likely to be violent than older ones. Males are more likely to be violent than women, although women are becoming more so, she said.

"Certain psychiatric symptoms are a warning -- paranoia, command hallucinations, violent fantasies, as well as people with anger toward authority or who blame others for their problems," Newhill said.

It's important to look at the client from an historical perspective. "Do they have a history of recent or frequent violence? Do they have a history of being abused or of witnessing domestic violence?" she asked. A work history of continually being fired or of getting into fights with people also can be a clue.

In an agency setting, the layout of the office can be used to minimize the risk of violence by furnishing it with furniture that is heavy and difficult to move and use as a weapon.

"Most injuries occur because the client grabs the thing nearest to them," Newhill said. "Avoid having anything around that could be used as a weapon -- stapler, letter opener, tape dispenser -- put them all away and out of sight."

She also recommends that practitioners sit by the exit if the room has only one, or better yet, have two exits so the client can leave if things become too intense emotionally.

Field interviews present a different set of conditions, Newhill said.

"When you're going on a home visit, sign out and leave information on where you are going and when you'll be back. Carry a cell phone." Some agencies, she noted, have begun to use global positioning systems during field visits.

She said it's important to listen to your gut instincts, and to leave if you get the feeling things are not going right. And don't conduct interviews in the kitchen, where a variety of weapons are easily at hand.

The main thing, according to Newhill, is that agencies need to increase awareness of client violence. Workshop participants will receive handouts and other training materials that they will be able to take back to their agencies to share with coworkers.

"I'm hoping participants will walk away from the workshop with tools they can use in practice. Training makes a huge difference," she said.

Oxford don runs young offenders experiment:

From:

http://www.oxfordstudent.com/tt2006wk2/news/oxford_don_runs_young_offenders_experiment
(May 4, 2006):

An Oxford don has been given approval to experiment on young offenders in a £2million experiment into the effects of nutrition on behaviour. Dr Bernard Gesch, from Oxford University's department of physiology, anatomy and genetics, will be using inmates from the Polmont Young Offenders Institute in Scotland as guinea pigs in order to investigate the effects of healthy eating on antisocial behaviour.

Pam Rodway, who is working on the project, told The Oxford Student: "I feel this research is important and also that there is a link between diet and behaviour." Similar studies undertaken in the past have shown a clear improvement in the behaviour of inmates who were fed greater amounts of vitamins, fatty acids and trace minerals.

Gesch has previously worked with 231 inmates from Aylesbury YOI, and he found that a group whose diet had been enriched committed an average of 26 per cent fewer violations of the prison code than before the experiment began. Serious breaches, usually involving serious violence, dropped by 37 per cent. The Scottish Executive and Scottish Prison Service are looking into using diet in prisons.

Dr Andrew Fraser, the Health Chief of the SPS, has formed the Good Food Group in order to investigate the issues. He said: "The SPS welcomes evidence-based research that will improve the wellbeing of prisoners. We are willing to be a setting for research into nutritional content of food in relation to behaviour and all other aspects of well-being." The Soil Association is involved with the Food For Life project, which is working to look into similar issues.

Emma Noble, a spokesperson for the Soil Association, added the group's backing to the Polmont experiment. She said: "Every school we are involved with has shown an improvement in behaviour and attention span in pupils who have a greater nutritional intake. There is no reason why this can't apply too to young offenders." The Home Office is waiting to establish a nutritional regime for prisoners until it hears of the results of a pilot scheme being run in Dutch jails.

Victims of violence urged to talk:

From: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/glasgow_and_west/4750203.stm
(May 8, 2006):

Free phones are being installed in eight hospitals in Strathclyde in an attempt to encourage victims of violence to contact police.

The pilot scheme funded by the Violence Reduction Unit will see phones located in A&E wards in the coming weeks.

Karyn McCluskey, of the VRU, said the trauma of violence and the ban on mobile phones in hospitals made it difficult to report violent crime.

A&E consultant Dr Duncan Gray welcomed the initiative.

Ms McCluskey said police were keen to encourage more victims of violence to contact them, and added that a recent study suggested violent crimes were under-reported by more than 50%.

"Clearly, we need to be able to place our resources right where incidents of violence are occurring," she said.

"Obviously, we have a pretty good idea where violence is likely to take place, but this data provided by the free phones will provide us with that crucial piece of additional information."

The initiative was aimed at reducing the number of violent victims in A&E departments and violent assaults throughout Scotland, she added. Dr Gray said serious injuries and deaths caused by assaults made up a large part of hospitals' workload.

"This new initiative to provide phones to encourage patients to report assaults follows another initiative we are piloting together with the Violence Reduction Unit," he said.

"This involves forms being provided in our department for assault patients to complete with details of the assault they were involved in. The data is anonymous and is passed to the police to help them focus their resources more effectively on areas where assaults have been occurring."

Violent Developments:

From: <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20060527/bob8.asp>
(May 26, 2006):

Henry was headed for serious trouble. The 15-year-old provoked an endless series of fights at school and frequently bullied girls. Teachers regularly suspended him for his classroom disruptions. Older students taunted Henry in the hallways by calling him a sexual pervert or jeered him for having been held back in kindergarten. At home, his father browbeat and denigrated the boy, while his mother cried and muttered about how sick Henry had become.

Henry liked violent video games. He downloaded information from a Web site on how to make pipe bombs and drew pictures of gory deaths of people who mistreated him. The boy openly expressed jealousy of the attention lavished on the youths in Columbine, Colo., who in 1999 fatally shot 12 of their classmates and a teacher and then committed suicide.

In 2001, Henry's life took a fortunate turn. At his high school principal's insistence, he and his parents sought psychotherapy from Stuart W. Twemlow of the Menninger Clinic in Houston. In individual and family sessions, psychiatrist Twemlow zeroed in on the boy's fury at his parents and his tendency at school to view himself as a passive victim who needed to strike back at evil tormenters.

Henry's feelings of rage abated as he grasped that his father struggled with his own deep-seated problems. Henry began taking martial arts training, as suggested by Twemlow, and attending a new school that had a healthier social environment. His grades improved. He started dating.

Henry's story highlights a theme that is attracting increasing scientific attention: Like all children, chronic troublemakers and hell-raisers respond to a shifting mix of social and biological influences as they grow. Some developmental roads arc relentlessly toward brutality and tragedy. Others, like Henry's, plunge into a dark place before heading into the light of adjustment.

Developmentally minded researchers are now beginning to map out violence-prone paths in hopes of creating better family and school interventions. New evidence indicates that a gene variant inherited by some people influences brain development in ways that foster impulsive violence, but only in combination with environmental hardships. Other studies explore how family and peer interactions build on a child's makeup to promote delinquency. Separate work examines ways to counteract the malign effects of bullying rituals and other types of coercion in schools.

"Violence is such a complicated issue," Twemlow says. "There's always a set of preconditions to violent behavior and never just one cause."

Andreas Meyer-Lindenberg says that he knows what a genetic risk for impulsive violence looks like in the brain. Ironically, he and his colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md., traced a portrait of rash aggression in the brains of placid people free of emotional problems, brain disorders, substance abuse, and arrest records.

Meyer-Lindenberg, a neuroscientist, directed studies of 142 white adults who had inherited one of two common versions of a gene that triggers production of an enzyme called monoamine oxydase A (MAOA). That enzyme controls the supply of an important brain chemical. One of the gene variants yields weak MAOA activity in the

brain, resulting in elevated concentrations of serotonin. Too much of that chemical messenger upsets the regulation of emotions and impulses.

The other gene variant sparks intense MAOA activity, leading to serotonin concentrations at the low end of the normal range.

Several teams have already reported that children who endure severe abuse and also possess the weak-MAOA gene variant commit violent and delinquent acts later in life far more often than do abused kids who carry the strong-MAOA gene variant (SN: 8/3/02, p. 68: Available to subscribers at <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20020803/fob3.asp>).

In Meyer-Lindenberg's study, the 57 men and women with the MAOA-light gene displayed a set of neural characteristics that appear to weaken a person's ability to hold emotions and aggressive urges in check. Brain scans of these participants revealed unusually small inner-brain structures involved in emotion regulation. This effect was stronger in the 27 men than in the 30 women.

The same men and women displayed intense activity in two emotion-related structures, the amygdala and the hippocampus, when they looked at emotional facial expressions and recalled emotional experiences; they had sparse activity in impulse-control parts of the frontal brain during a computer task that required self-control.

In contrast, volunteers with the strong-MAOA gene displayed less intense responses to emotional input and more activity related to impulse control. These brain responses indicate greater control of emotions and impulses, the scientists report in the April 18 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Noting that each of the study participants was law-abiding, the Meyer-Lindenberg team proposes that the weak-MAOA gene variant contributes only slightly to the brew of ingredients that fosters impulsive violence.

Meyer-Lindenberg's finding of genetically influenced brain differences "gives rise to the possibility that [the weak-MAOA variant] contributes to a vulnerable neural signature that could turn nasty given adverse environmental circumstances," remarks neuroscientist Essi Viding of University College, London.

MAOA-gene-mediated brain disparities in nonviolent people "provide clear evidence against genetic determinism of violent behavior," adds psychologist Terrie Moffitt of the Institute of Psychiatry in London. In 2002, Moffitt and her colleagues first reported elevated rates of violence and lawbreaking among people with the weak-MAOA gene who had been abused as children.

Child-development researchers are also exploring the interplay of individual and environmental factors. Consider the work of psychologist Kenneth A. Dodge of Duke University in Durham, N.C. He directs a study of psychological and academic adjustment in 585 boys and girls from three midwestern communities. Participants have been tracked from ages 4 to 21, so far.

Dodge's study focuses on reward sensitivity, a measure of a person's need for immediate positive feedback. Impulsiveness contributes to this trait. Less than half of the participants were considered high in reward sensitivity.

But an interesting twist emerges at age 21, Dodge says. By this age, those young people who grew up with emotionally cold, punitive parents frequently had turned to violence, crime, and substance abuse if, as 16-year-olds, they also exhibited high reward sensitivity. This pattern was especially strong among boys.

The researchers scored teenagers on reward sensitivity according to how they gambled in a laboratory task. Those deemed high in reward sensitivity lost a small pot of money in a card rigged by the experimenters so that a string of initial wins gave way to a series of losses. "For these kids, the rush of winning exceeds the pain of losing," Dodge says.

In contrast, the teens who opted out of the card game while they still had some money left were categorized as low in reward sensitivity. These kids showed considerable resilience in the face of harsh parenting and usually didn't have behavioral problems.

For the past 25 years, psychologist Gerald R. Patterson of the Oregon Social Learning Center in Eugene and his colleagues have noticed that some parents and children bring out the worst in each other. Their daily interactions consist of the parents demanding compliance with some rule or request, the child refusing to comply, and the parents eventually giving in. Long-term studies indicate that these coercive interactions foster aggression in young and old alike.

Such interactions are best understood as dynamic systems that tend toward stable patterns but that can change in response to pressure applied at key times, contend Patterson and psychologist Isabela Granic of the University of Toronto. Dynamic-systems principles have already been used to examine how children learn to reach, walk, and otherwise control their bodies (SN: 3/20/99, p. 184). In the January *Psychological Review*, Granic and Patterson described recent insights into the development of violent and delinquent behavior gleaned from long-term tracking of child-parent interactions.

The research reveals that coercive relations in families with violent children come in two varieties: mutual hostility and permissiveness. Granic directed a study of children deemed to have serious problems with self-control, some of whom were sometimes withdrawn or depressed.

Each of the 33 children and his or her mother came to a research lab and discussed a family problem for 4 minutes. Then, a knock on the door signaled that they had 2 minutes to wrap up and "end on a good note." The deadline was designed to push each pair into its routine style of confronting stress.

At that point, hostility typically escalated between mothers and those kids whom the researchers had identified as generally behaving in impulsive ways. In contrast, mothers of kids who sometimes lost control but at other times withdrew or seemed depressed usually kept peace by acceding to a final barrage of demands and whines to agree with the child's position.

Both patterns represented interactions that had become hard-to-break, aggression-promoting habits, the researchers contend.

Within their peer groups, some adolescent boys amplify their delinquent tendencies through fevered, one-on-one exchanges. Granic and Thomas J. Dishion of the University of Oregon in Eugene found that, during videotaped talks between 14-year-old best friends, some excitedly exchanged stories of increasingly deviant misadventures in a kind of antisocial one-upmanship, while others discussed any misdeeds briefly, if at all. Boys who engaged in the fevered escalating exchanges displayed the highest rates of arrests, school expulsions, and other delinquent activity 3 years later.

Other studies find that children's early behavior troubles often reflect rigid interactions at home, as exemplified by a mother and a child expressing only one type of emotion when discussing problems. That correlation held even when the single emotion was affection.

Children from rigid parent-child relationships become markedly more aggressive at transitional points in their development, such as entry into day care or the onset of puberty, Granic says. Evidence from dynamic-systems research suggests that programs offering basic parenting skills work best when administered while participants' children are in such developmental transitions, she adds.

Coercive interactions occur not just in families but also in schools and other institutions, Twemlow contends. As Henry's case illustrates, a three-way tango of bully, victim, and one or more bystanders can begin at home and continue at a child's school, where students, teachers, and administrators join the destructive dance. Henry's move to a school that actively discourages bullying had a huge impact on him, Twemlow says.

The psychiatrist and his colleagues at the Menninger Clinic have devised a series of interventions that they call the Peaceful Schools Project. Project activities aim to develop students' capacity to perceive and reflect on their emotional reactions and those of others. This skill makes it possible for them to negotiate solutions rather than to fall back on violent rituals.

Practical classroom changes get the ball rolling. For instance, counselors work with teachers to develop discipline plans in which all children in a class talk to problem students and work out agreements to keep the class running smoothly. Project officials identify children and adults who have the social skills to serve as mentors, discouraging hallway bullying and playground confrontations. Students learn simple self-defense techniques in special physical education periods.

Violent behavior, bullying episodes, and classroom disruptions declined substantially in nine Midwestern middle schools that participated in the Peaceful Schools Project for 2 years, Twemlow and his colleagues reported in the fall 2005 *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*.

The project isn't designed to erase competition and ambition from schools, Twemlow notes. The objective is to imbue kids with enough emotional literacy to foster

resilience, even as family, neighborhood, and cultural sources continue to throw them violent curveballs.

That's a longstanding theme of successful psychotherapy as well. "In the end, the goal is finding out the truth about yourself so that you can better control yourself," Twemlow says.

Some female Citadel grads surprised by survey numbers:

From: <http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/news/local/15352403.htm>
(August 24, 2006):

South Carolina -- Surveys that showed almost 20 percent of female cadets at The Citadel said they had been sexually assaulted since enrolling surprised some of the military school's female grads.

"I was definitely surprised on how high the results were," Shawana Hartman of Charleston, a 2005 graduate, said Thursday. "I was surprised they released it, I must say."

"The reason it's such a shock at The Citadel is that people say we have done a better job of assimilating women than other schools," added Madeline Rakip, who graduated in May and is now a law student at Southern New England School of Law in North Dartmouth, Mass.

The two are among the 129 women who have graduated from the formerly all-male military college since it opened its doors to women a decade ago.

Nancy Mace, the college's first female graduate, said the numbers were about on par with other colleges, but The Citadel is held to a higher standard "and that's the surprise here."

The college this week released surveys taken last spring in which almost 20 percent of the female cadets and 4 percent of male cadets said they were sexually assaulted since enrolling. The news made headlines nationwide but the effect on recruiting women cadets is unclear.

"Honestly, we don't know right now," said Lisa Poston, a 2002 graduate who is now the college's assistant director of admissions. "We're just hoping it opens everyone's eyes that we are willing and ready to confront this issue."

The sexual assaults in the survey included unwanted touching, but 16 of the 27 incidents reported by women and 15 of the 23 reported by men involved unwanted sexual penetration or oral sex.

College president, retired Air Force Lt. Gen. John Rosa, said he released the surveys so the issues could be addressed openly as part of the college's expanded values and respect program.

Rakip said she never felt like her safety was in question at the school.

"Everyone knows each other, you know where everybody lives and even the teachers live on campus and you feel safe," she said.

Hartman, originally from Colorado, worries the fallout could discourage women from applying.

"I would fear that only because I remember the Air Force ordeal a few years ago," she said. "It had definitely shaken the entire place and what happened there was awful. It was a small percentage of guys that were involved but everyone else was tainted."

Rosa previously was superintendent of the Air Force Academy in the wake of a sexual assault scandal that found female cadets feared they would be disciplined if they reported rapes.

Rosa said The Citadel takes a strong stand on sexual assaults but it is one of the most underreported crimes and "you cannot deal with what you don't know."

He said that from 1997 until the present, 17 cases of sexual assault at the college were reported to authorities.

Of those, seven cadets did not want to pursue the cases and three were handled by civilian authorities. Of the seven the college handled, three perpetrators immediately resigned from school, two were expelled and two severely disciplined.

"It's not the first survey of this kind The Citadel has done but it's the first time it's been publicized," said Mace, likening the release to the announcement this week that in the new season of the "Survivor" television series the teams will be divided along ethnic lines.

"It was seen as a very negative thing to do, a very controversial thing to do," she said. "But one thing it will do is open up a dialogue."

So what does the college tell a prospective female applicant?

"We tell them we are The Citadel and we hold our cadets to a higher standard and we are trying our best to educate them in all aspects and morals and values," Poston said. "We are disappointed that the numbers came out the way they did, but this is typical of college campuses all over the country," said retired Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Robb Jr., a 1964 graduate and president of the Citadel Alumni Association.

"You can't hide away something like this you have to recognize it and address it," he added.

The Justice Department has estimated as many as 25 percent of women could be raped or experience an attempted rape while attending college in the United States.

NSW leads kidnapping statistics:

From: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200609/s1732168.htm>
(September 4, 2006):

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research says there is a higher rate of kidnapping and abduction in New South Wales than any other state in Australia.

The bureau says there were 238 alleged kidnappings or abductions reported to police between January and June 2004 across the state.

But it says just over half of the cases involved an actual abduction, which was most likely to be motivated by sexual desire, robbery or retribution.

In most of the other reported cases, the bureau says victims experienced an attempted abduction or a false report was given to police.

The bureau says kidnapping and abduction are "relatively infrequent" when compared to other types of crimes.

Kids run, shout, fight — and foil abductions:

From: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-09-05-child-abductions_x.htm
(September 5, 2006):

Stephanie Quackenbush recalls walking to school on a sunny morning in Albany, N.Y., last year when, a block from school, a man grabbed her from behind.

He put a towel over her face. She screamed for help. "Shut up! Shut up!" he ordered. "I have a knife. I'll stab you."

"He was trying to force me to walk with him, but I kept fighting him," says Stephanie, then 14. Two men working nearby heard her yell and ran to help.

The attacker dropped the towel and ran off. DNA on the towel linked Darius Ashley to her assault and to the abduction and rape of two other young women. He's now serving a 25-year prison sentence.

Stephanie's case fits the pattern of most attempted abductions, according to a study released today by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The typical victim is a teenage girl on her way to or from school.

The study, released as a new school year gets underway, examined 403 attempted kidnappings by strangers or slight acquaintances that were reported by police or news media in 45 states from February 2005 to July 2006. It was conducted to learn how such attempts are foiled. The study did not look at successful abductions.

Six in 10 victims fought back and escaped, according to the ongoing study's initial findings. Three in 10 ran away before any physical contact, and about 10% were saved when an adult nearby intervened.

"It is more important than ever for parents to empower their kids," says Ernie Allen, the center's president. He says he doesn't want to scare children, but they need to learn to recognize danger and, if attacked, draw attention by screaming, kicking and running away.

"We look for patterns," Allen says. "These guys don't do it just once. An attempt is likely to be followed by another and another until they're successful." That's why he wants parents to report incidents to police.

National statistics on child abductions are hard to come by because kidnapping is not classified as a major crime, says David Finkelhor, director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire. He says some incidents are reported as rapes rather than abductions.

He co-authored the most recent study on the topic by the Justice Department, which analyzed 1999 data. That year, 115 "stereotypical kidnappings" were reported — ones in which children were abducted by strangers or barely known acquaintances, taken more than 50 miles, detained at least overnight or held for ransom. Half were sexually assaulted, and 40% were killed.

A much larger number of children, about 58,000, were taken that year for shorter periods of time, mostly by people they knew but not relatives. In those cases, nearly half were sexually assaulted; fewer than 1% were killed. Nearly two-thirds were girls, mostly teens.

Finkelhor says kids should be wary of strangers — but they face greater risk of assault or harassment from other kids, family members or acquaintances.

"Allowing children to walk to school, certainly middle-school kids, in most areas of the country is a reasonable thing," he says, especially if the child is walking with a friend.

Robert Kemmet, a detective with the Oklahoma City Police Department, has studied 170 local kidnapping attempts and says identifying patterns has led to several arrests.

"We can create an environment that makes it very difficult for a predator to operate," says Kemmet, who orders extra surveillance when he knows of an area where someone has repeatedly approached children.

He cites common lures: "Hey, little girl, do you want a piece of candy?" Or "Can you help me look for my puppy?" Some predators, he says, are "bus trawlers" who drive behind a school bus, watching for a child to get off alone. "That's what the predator is counting on: the lone child," Kemmet says.

Stephanie's mother, Rhonda Quackenbush, says she always taught her seven children to yell or fight back if attacked. Never was it more important than when her family suffered an unimaginable tragedy nine years ago. Her husband and one of her two sons were shot to death at a friend's house. Another daughter, Stacey, then 12, screamed and ran away.

Quackenbush says Stephanie has recovered from her near-abduction. She is a sophomore at Albany High School who plays soccer and basketball.

She testified at her attacker's trial and says she's willing to talk about what happened: "It's a way for me to use it to help other kids."

Now Stephanie walks to school with friends when she doesn't get a ride. She never walks alone.

A tragic truth about teen pregnancy:

From: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=498441>
(September 16, 2006):

When I learned of the recent gang rape of an 11-year-old Milwaukee girl by a group that allegedly included both adult men and teenage boys, I was overwhelmed by a single thought. How must her mother feel?

Then I found out her mother was deceased. Although I never met the girl or her mother, as both a parent and someone who cares very deeply about our community, I needed to write about what's not being said.

And that is that sexual violence in our community gives birth to an escalating teen pregnancy rate.

Only six months ago, the relationship between sexual violence and teen pregnancy was revealed in a report titled "If Truth Be Told" by United Way of Greater Milwaukee and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Advisory Committee.

The report's statistics are almost incomprehensible. More than half of teen mothers are sexually molested prior to their first pregnancy.

Between 30% and 44% of teen mothers have been victims of rape or attempted rape, and 23% of assault victims become pregnant by their assailants.

In our state, 71% of babies born to teen girls are fathered not by teen boys but by men over the age of 20.

That's not teen pregnancy. That's statutory rape.

Milwaukee currently ranks second-highest in births to teens among the 50 largest cities in the United States. Teen pregnancy in Milwaukee has become an epidemic.

To find a cure, we must focus on more than teen pregnancy prevention; we must address sexual violence. Additionally, the antidote cannot be prescribed just to teen girls. It also needs to involve teen boys and their parents.

We must teach children about healthy relationships and what is and isn't acceptable. We must help parents talk to their teens about how to make good choices.

And we must hold accountable the adults who are violating our youth and the law.

Nationally, 42% of girls younger than 15 reported that their first intercourse was non-consensual. As a parent, that is terrifying.

Our entire community must work together to combat sexual violence and teen pregnancy. We need to be unified in our fight against sexual violence. We know from research that teen pregnancy is often a consequence of sexual assault and violence.

Sexual violence itself is often cyclical and propagated by a lack of understanding about what makes a healthy relationship. We must break the cycle.

In response to the heinous crimes, I've heard many people refer to a sense of hopelessness. As a volunteer for United Way of Greater Milwaukee, however, I know we can replace that hopelessness with hopefulness.

There are numerous initiatives being established to deal with this problem. Indeed, sexual violence is being tackled on a city- and state-wide level from every aspect, including education, prevention, contributing factors and response.

For example, sexual violence prevention is a vital component of every program in the United Way's Healthy Girls project.

As part of its ongoing commitment to this project, United Way is announcing today that it will invest another \$339,371 in the project this year, tackling teen pregnancy and violence against girls.

Also, The Parenting Network runs the local chapter of the RELATE Project, a peer-to-peer sexual violence education and prevention agency.

The network has reported that in a survey of the teens involved in the program, 56% of girls and 76% of boys thought forced sex was acceptable under some circumstances.

In the same survey with middle school-aged children (11- to 14-year-olds) 51% of boys and 41% of girls said forced sex was OK if the boy "spent a lot of money" on girl.

The numbers, while shocking, provide insight into what is one of the biggest contributing factors in sexual violence. Kids don't even know what sexual violence is.

In 2005, the RELATE Project, in conjunction with area schools, reached over 300 middle and high school students. Over 90% of participants in the program reported they were more knowledgeable about what constitutes sexual violence.

This year, the project is expanding its reach to seven Milwaukee schools and 450 middle and high school students.

Agencies like PEARLS for Teen Girls, SMART Girls of The Boys and Girls Clubs and the City of Milwaukee Health Department's Plain Talk Initiative are also focused on prevention and education.

Yes, I have hope. But more can be done. We need to look at sexual violence through the lens of substance abuse and intimate violence.

Substance abuse is intimately related with sexual violence. Meta House, a Milwaukee-based alcohol and drug abuse treatment for women, reports that of the residents in its program, 80% have histories of sexual abuse and/or incest.

Similarly, the children of parents who abuse drugs are three times more likely to be physically or sexually abused. So Meta House is specifically addressing sexual violence education and prevention with the daughters of its residents.

Sexual assault victims, as may be in the case of the 11-year-old girl, almost always know their perpetrators.

According to the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 93% of all sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone they knew, compared to 7% committed by strangers. And 58% of all assaults took place in either the victim's or the offender's home.

The average age of the offender was 24, nine years older than the average age of the victim, which was 15. And according to research, teenagers who have been victims of sexual abuse, two-thirds will repeat the cycle and abuse others.

It all sounds eerily familiar.

Organizations like the Task Force on Family Violence and the Counseling Center of Milwaukee are working to end the cycle of violence by focusing on prevention and education with children and teens who are victims of sexual assault. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault is bringing groups together to tackle the issue statewide.

In Milwaukee, there are ambassadors at every level addressing prevention.

As part of United Way's teen pregnancy prevention committee, a subcommittee on sexual violence, headed by Carmen Pitre, executive director of the Task Force on Family Violence, is currently being formed.

Its charge is to identify local strategies for creating an implementation plan that elevates sexual violence awareness as it relates to teen pregnancy.

But prevention is not enough. There must also be systems of response. So the City of Milwaukee is actively undertaking response systems to sexual violence.

It recently formed a local Sexual Assault Response Team chapter, which includes representation from the Milwaukee Police Department, the district attorney's office, the sexual assault treatment center at Aurora Sinai Center and victim advocates affiliated with the Healing Center.

The group is looking at the systems that respond to sexual assaults, including case examinations, and is determining what was done well and where there is room for improvement.

The city, through the Milwaukee Health Department, is also involved in several subcommittees that are addressing sexual violence.

Over \$11,000 annually is committed to many anti-violence events, initiatives and human resources, to provide intervention information and services for victims and survivors.

Last year, United Way programs addressing teen pregnancy and sexual violence against girls reached nearly 4,000 teens.

The programs are getting results. Ninety-two percent of participants became more knowledgeable of what constitutes sexual violence and learned prevention strategies. We are making progress.

All of these programs explain why we will win the battle against sexual violence in our community and prevent crimes like the one suffered by the 11-year-old girl.

In a recent article I read about the attack, she told police, "Nobody is on my side."

She needs to know that's not true. I am on her side. The city is on her side.

And United Way of Greater Milwaukee - and the 70,000 people who give to its programs - are all on her side, too.