



November 4, 2011

CDVC response to media coverage on Dustin Paxton trial

As the Dustin Paxton torture trial continues to garner large amounts of media attention, comments and questions have arisen around the victim's testimony and his choices to remain in an abusive environment:

- *Accused torturer Dustin Paxton's alleged victim says he was in survival mode when he was forced to perform frequent sex acts and endured daily beatings because he "had no options" to leave. **National Post***
- *A man the Crown alleges was tortured by his former roommate says he was beaten so viciously he thought he was going to die and he submitted to performing sex acts in the hope that would make the attacks stop. **Canadian Press***
- *The alleged victim in a bizarre case involving allegations of brutal and sustained assaults testified Monday he never fled his situation because he didn't want to "be a sissy" and had "big dreams." **Calgary Herald***

In response to the news coverage, we, the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective (CDVC), wish to challenge possible stereotypes and victim-blaming language and beliefs, with information about victimization in the summary below:

- Domestic violence is ultimately a power issue and individuals remain in abusive relationships for many reasons. While the Paxton case is unique in that the abuse involves same-sex, roommates and business partners; the reasons for the victim staying remains the same.
- Battered woman syndrome: This references any individual who, because of continuous and severe domestic violence usually involving physical abuse by a partner may become depressed and/or unable to take any independent action that would allow him or her to escape the abuse. This condition explains why abused people may not seek assistance from others, fight their abuser, or leave the abusive situation. Sufferers may have low self-esteem, and are often led to believe that the abuse is their fault. Such persons may refuse to press charges against their abuser, or refuse all offers of help, perhaps even becoming aggressive or abusive to others who attempt to offer help. Well-known cases include Jaycee Dugard, Patty Hearst, Colleen Stan and Steven Stayner.
- One's control over another results in:
 - The abused is unable to escape because they are kept in a constant state of fear and/or danger.
 - The abuser becoming omnipotent; by being the person who is the source of fear, but also the source of solace or respite from the abuse.
 - The abused becoming dependent upon gaining the abuser's indulgence as a means of survival.
 - The abused giving total compliance to gain the abuser's indulgence.
 - The abused surviving by continually and vigilantly monitoring and attempting to pacify the abuser's moods and behaviour.
 - The abused feeling that their sense of autonomy and self-being has been destroyed.

- The primary obsessive focus of an abuser is to subjugate and bind another person to them; thereby removing the possibility or hope of leaving the abuser. Abusers seek out and prey upon those in our community who are vulnerable or susceptible to their tactics.

The victim of this case is not the first person to react to the abuse in this matter, and unfortunately, he is not the last. Like the cases of Jaycee Dugard, Colleen Stan, and Patty Hearst, he became compliant to the abuse as a tool and coping/defence mechanism.

As the trial continues, we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions or would like additional information on domestic violence and abuse.

Please contact the following spokespeople for additional information:

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