
A Work Force Under Siege: A Gendered Perspective On Women In Military Service

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Abstract

The workplace is increasingly becoming a hostile environment for many employees. To date, the focus of much of the research on this issue has been on occupational violent crime (OVC). This essay looks beneath the veneer of OVC to an examination of the gendered nature of much of this violence. Using a conceptual framework of a continuum of violence (from incivility -- to sexual harassment and sexual abuse -- to fatal violence), Newman demonstrates the hazards for women at work. She develops and illustrates her arguments by reference to women in the military, with its quintessential male-dominated organizational culture and structure. She concludes that the dynamics of gender power are central to a better understanding of violence at work.

Introduction

It can be argued that workplace violence is the fastest-growing form of violence in the United States (*Bonfield, 1996, p. B7*). The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention characterizes workplace violence as an "epidemic" (*Richarde-Kreiner, 1997, p. E3*). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workplace homicide has more than doubled in the past 10 years, making it the fastest-growing form of murder (*Richarde-Kreiner, 1997, p. E3*). While violence is experienced in both private and public sector organizations, the emphasis in this paper is on violence or threats of violence against public administrators, particularly with respect to women in military service. This essay attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is it about *public* agencies and their personnel that might encourage acts of violence within those agencies and against public personnel?
- How is this violence experienced by female public administrators? More specifically, what is the nature of the work experience within this context for female military personnel?
- To what extent does *gender power* explain the at times abusive and violent behavior experienced by many of these women?

A brief overview of the extent of workplace violence is useful in setting forth the context for the discussion which follows. In their recent article, "Violence in the American Workplace: Challenges to the Public Employer," Nigro and Waugh (1996) cite some alarming statistics:

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that between 1980 and 1989, there were 7,603 homicides in U.S. workplaces, making murder the third leading cause of death in the workplace (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993a, p.8*). [More recently, Silverstein (1994) reports that, according to the U.S. Labor Department, homicides accounted for 1,004 work-related deaths in 1992].
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, of the nation's nearly one million victims of workplace violence in 1994, 30 percent were federal, state, or local government employees (*U.S. Department of Justice, 1994*).
- Public administration's prominence in the ranking of workplace homicide rates (3.4 per 100,000) is explained by reference to justice and public order establishments (courts, police, legal counsel and prosecution, corrections, and fire protection). [Of significance, two-thirds of workplace violence occurs in the health care and social services industries

(*Bonfield, 1996, p. B7*) -- predominantly staffed by public and not-for-profit employees].

- Between August 1983 and May 1993, 29 postal workers were killed, and 16 were wounded in ten separate episodes of murderous violence by current or former Postal Service employees (*Barringer, 1993, p. A7*).
- NIOSH's National Traumatic Occupational Fatality (NTOF) data "identified homicide as the major occupational hazard for the nation's women" (*Bell, 1991, p. 730-731*).
- The U.S. Department of Justice (*1994*) reports that the average annual number of workplace victimizations from 1987 through 1992 included 13,068 victimizations of rape.

Clearly, the mandate of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (General Duty Clause, Section 5[a][1]) requiring employers to have a workplace that is "free from recognized hazards" (*Thomas, 1992b, p.61-62, as cited in Nigro and Waugh, 1996, p.327*) appears to be unfulfilled.

A Conceptual Framework of Violence

It is a truism that how we define a public problem shapes (if not predicts) how we attempt to solve it in terms of the various alternatives we generate and from which we ultimately select. Do we view violence at work, especially against women, as an organizational problem, as a public health problem, and/or as an expression of "power against/over" co-workers? Do we include in our analyses violence that arose outside of employment, but that is manifest at work (such as domestic violence)? Certainly, each of these issues is worthy of consideration. In order to capture the multifaceted nature of violence at work, the following continuum of hostility in the workplace is offered:

**Incivility <-----> Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse <----->
> Fatal Violence**

Each of these principal points on the continuum are discussed in turn.

A. Incivility

Growing public cynicism about government, and the adoption of an "us versus them" approach between citizens and public administrators tends to breed incivility on the job. The collective Jacksonian democratic notion that "government is us" appears to have been eroded by an individualistic "what's my interest" perspective on the common enterprise of public affairs generally, and public attempts to address shared problems through public agency programs and activities (*Commager, 1993*). Opinion polls track the steady decline of the public's trust in government (*Ruscio, 1997*). Recent studies underscore the point. For example, Steel, Lovrich and Pierce (*1994*) found a strong relationship between cynicism toward government and support for tax revolts and the holding of misinformation about the size and content of government budgets. Tax revolts, of course, are a tangible expression of public mistrust of government.

A related issue is the growing debate between the *customer* and the *citizen* conceptions of the public on the part of public service officials (*see, for example, Berman, 1997; Denhardt, 1997; Luton, 1993; Schachter, 1997*). It has been argued that if both the provider and the recipient of a public service perceive of the recipient as a "customer" of public services, that particular perception largely absolves the customer of any responsibility for the outcome in that relationship. In contrast, if the perception on the member of the public is that of "citizen," then there is a mutual recognition that government is indeed "us;" that is, that the recipient of public services shares the responsibility for the quality of the exchange with the public administrator. Patterson (1995a) captures the essence of the debate:

Putting the powers of individual political citizens back into the picture helps us to see a *two way relation*, and suggests that real citizen empowerment means doing more than improving service delivery. We misapprehend empowerment when we reduce it to passive consumerism (*p. 26, emphasis added*).

The notion of customer, then, may fuel perceptions of estrangement, of being "disenfranchised" and powerless to improve the relationship between governmental employees and service recipients. The assumption

here is that power resides overwhelmingly with public administrators. This orientation contradicts the values of public service, and is very much at odds with the notion of public *servants* acting on the basis of a public trust of authority. Many public service agencies constitute monopoly providers of given services, hence the notion of "customer" is largely illusory. As Patterson (1995a) states, "Because in government citizens are not customers and bureaucrats are not entrepreneurs, neither can necessarily take their 'business' elsewhere" (p.2).

Of course, current governmental reform efforts initiated under the reinventing government mantra encourage the notion of customer-oriented service sensitivity (*see, for example, Fox, 1996; Frederickson, 1996; Miller, 1994; Moe, 1994; Schachter, 1995*). While it is a truism that government should be run in a *business-like* manner, we should resist the temptation to run government fully *like a business*. Patterson (1995a, 1995b) provides further insight here. Noting that market metaphors are fashionable and their embedded prescriptions have become official policy in the 1990s (1995a), she states:

The customer service metaphor is more than an inaccurate and unilluminating rhetorical device. Whether taken [as] rhetorical or literally, the marketization of the public has important implications, among these a tendency to obscure the political character of encounters between bureaucracies and citizens. In such interactions, market language supplants democratic imagery to such an extent that all but the most pro forma political participation appears unnecessary (p.2).

Clearly, the notion of "customer" is limited and limiting, and skews the balance of power towards the public administrator. Citizenship and citizens themselves become marginalized in the process (Patterson, 1995a, p.3). This dynamic becomes the source of much of the discomfort and contempt that people direct towards governmental bureaucrats (Patterson, 1995a, 28/29). Furthermore, as Ingraham and Romzek (1994) remind us, the wholesale importation of private sector models of successful management into the public sector should be carefully scrutinized. Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Korac-Kakabadse (1997) reinforce this argument. They refer to the currently pervasive "managerialist view" of public administration -- in which civil servants pursue a results-oriented approach to their management, using private sector management principles and

practices such as customer service -- as a "managerial meta-myth" (p. 9). This myth gains ground against a growing distaste for the public sector (*Bentham, 1970, as cited in Korac-Kakabadse et al.*) "which is constantly under suspicion of being inefficient, wasteful and, thus not giving value for money" (p. 9). If public administration values of responsiveness and accountability are to be upheld, significant adjustments to "business" strategies must first take place (*Ingraham and Romzek, 1994; Newman, 1995b*). In the process, the myth -- that the private sector has a monopoly on solutions to public sector problems -- becomes exposed, and the estrangement of the public from public servants may diminish. Civility and the responsibilities of citizenship rest in the balance.

B. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse

Despite more than three decades of anti-discrimination legislation, sexual harassment continues to define the work experience of many public employees. As a manifestation of a power imbalance in the workplace, sexual harassment is experienced by both women and men. Given that more men than women are in positions of organizational and positional power, the overwhelming majority of victims of sexual harassment are women (*Kelly, Guy, Bayes, Duerst-Lahti, Duke, Hale, Johnson, Kavar, Stanley, 1991; Newman, 1993; Kelly, 1995*). Sexual harassment becomes a mode of domination that takes a sexual form against women (*Newman, 1993*). "The sexualization of sexual harassment negates the definitive role of power and authority" (*Stuhldreher, 1992, as cited in Newman, 1993, p.368*).

The scholarly literature is replete with references to sexual harassment on the job (*see, for example, Kelly and Stambaugh, 1992; Guy, 1992; Stuhldreher, 1992; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1987, 1995; Newman, 1995a*) and sexual harassment and violence (*see, for example, Fitzgerald, 1993; Simpson and Trost, 1986*). In legal terms, sexual harassment is expressed as *quid pro quo* and hostile work environment. Regardless of type, sexual harassment serves to remind women of their "place" in the organization. "Sexual harassment may also be a result of a broader gender system change. For example, Chafetz (1990) sees an increased rate of sexual harassment as one indicator of a culture lag" (*Newman, 1993, p. 368*).

Sexual assault represents a more extreme and violent form of sexual harassment. Sexual assault, like sexual harassment, is not confined to the workplace of course; domestic violence spills over to the workplace,

oftentimes resulting in sexual assault. Most recently, occurrences of domestic violence are being cited as a spillover from a *mentality of violence* from the workplace (for example, police officers and military personnel). Whatever the cause and effect, sexual assault is an expression of power over another, and constitutes a blatant abuse of that power. As with sexual harassment, sexual assault is best understood in terms of a power imbalance; a focus on *sex* obscures the issue.

C. Fatal Violence

Murder and terrorism represent the extreme end of the continuum of violence in the workplace. In the public sector context, government employees come to represent the "great evil." As the tragedy of the Oklahoma City bombing reminds us, public servants are perceived as "fair game" by those who are bent on retaliation for perceived past governmental injustices. It was only the fact that the Federal Building in Oklahoma City housed *public* employees that caused it to be targeted. Those public administrators were at risk from such a perverse attack solely because they are public administrators. That was their only "crime."

This tragedy is among the latest and most devastating occurrences of violence against public administrators. Postal violence is ever present. In the past 12 years, 35 supervisors and co-workers have been killed by postal employees (*Pelton and Stein, 1995, p. NI*). Despite the call by Postal Service officials to crack down on violence, the Postal Service remains a fertile ground for deadly violence (*Pelton and Stein, 1995, p. NI*). It is noteworthy that the General Accounting Office has referred to the Postal Service as "a 'dysfunctional organizational culture' in which autocratic managers battle adversarial employees and unions" (*Pelton and Stein, 1995, p. NI*). These Chicago Tribune staff writers further report that postal violence is linked to the Postal Service's "paramilitary-style hierarchy, which relies heavily on a top-down system based on an elaborate structure of rules" (*Pelton and Stein, 1995, p. NI*). In addition, it is significant that the typical assailant in workplace murders, among other characteristics, has a military background (*Boyle, 1995, p. B1*).

While postal violence receives much notoriety, there have been numerous less visible and arguably less costly episodes of violence and violent intent against government employees. For example, in Spokane, Washington earlier this year, the City Hall was the target of a (pipe) bomb attack. This incident was followed by other acts of violence against

Spokane area government employees. In each case, it is the fact that these targets were in the *public* domain that causes each of us pause.

To summarize this section, the concept of power -- its use, misuse and/or abuse -- appears to feature in each instance on the continuum of violence. This is the case at the passive end of the continuum -- incivility. As a source of bureaucratic power, public administrators have considerable discretion in how they implement any given public program. They have the power and responsibility to directly administer inducements and sanctions, rules, rights, information, and decision-making structures -- that is, to define and control individuals -- and they do so with ample discretion (*Patterson, 1995a, p.3/4*). This administrative discretion can be applied judiciously or not. At the very least, it represents a factor in any equation of public administrator/service recipient exchange. When applied inappropriately (from the recipient's perspective), a sense of powerlessness and frustration may ensue. Cynicism and incivility become the order of the day. In terms of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, the expression of power is even more explicit. Fatal violence, of course, becomes the final tragic expression of power. How might gender dynamics interact with the expression of power along the continuum? This question is best addressed in terms of the nexus between *gender* and *power*, or in other words *gender power*. It is to this topic that we now turn.

Gender Power and Workplace Violence

"[G]ender relations so far as we have been able to understand them have been (more or less) *relations of domination*" (*Flax, as cited in Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995, p. 19, emphasis added here*). "Gender relations can be more accurately named gender power relations. Gender power occurs at the nexus of gender relations and power relations. From this vantage point gender relations can encompass relations between members of the same sex as well as members of different sexes." (*Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995, p. 19*).

In order to clarify the concept of gender power and its significance to a propensity for violence against women on the job, some definitions are first helpful. According to Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (*1995, p. 5/6*):

- Gender is different from sex, which is rooted exclusively in biology. Gender consists of a broader social construction, ultimately

prescribing, and generally leading to, an entire way of being. Gender, then, is the social construction of biological sex, how we take biological differences and give them social meaning. In the process, we create a set of practices and norms for interpersonal behavior, roles for individuals to perform, ways of being, ways of knowing, standpoints and worldviews.

- Gender power is the power that results from our gendered (e)valuations of things and behaviors, our ways of being, behaving, and structuring social relations. Gender power permeates and follows from all facets of human interaction. It operates at interpersonal levels, as a social category, within institutions, and normatively. It shapes political actions.

Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (1995) discuss gender power in terms of governance and leadership. Their starting point is that masculinism is as much an ideology as feminism. Masculinism masquerades as universalism. That is:

Masculinism is considered the norm of being and acting in the United States and elsewhere, with feminism and femaleness considered deviant from this norm. This gives men and masculinity a privileged position in interpersonal institutional relations and the important structures of society (p.5).

Moreover, masculinity permeates politics and power (p.11). "In the American polity, all avenues of public power -- and the authoritative organizations used in their implementation -- have historically been controlled by males...Public authority, whatever the particular arrangement, has rested with men" (p.19).

One important but largely invisible by-product of men's domination of institutional power has been their ability to allocate society['s] values and resources through a self-justifying ideology. Men's position atop social institutions has enabled them to structure institutions, create laws, legitimize particular knowledge, establish moral codes, and shape culture in ways that perpetuate their power over women (p.20).

Gender power, then, is a useful construct when examining and attempting to better understand the differential experiences between those with power and those without power in any public organization. However, it is in the military establishment and institutions -- traditionally and consistently male-dominated, rigidly authoritarian and founded on strict adherence to those with power -- that the nuances of gender power become illuminated particularly well.

Women in the Military: An Illustrative Case Study in Point

The experience of women serving in the military represents a salient case study of violence in the workplace and demonstrates the expression of gender power in sharp relief. Misuse and abuse of power and authority as manifest as gender power are central to any examination of women's work experience in the military establishment -- with its strict "masculine identity" (*Dickinson, 1997, p.C14*) and a hierarchical structure organized for violence (*Harmon, 1996, p.A5*). As the recent controversies at the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute demonstrate, women's perceived intrusion into these formerly all-male bastions, and the socialization process that occurs within a rigid, hierarchical and authoritarian organizational culture, shape the treatment of the powerless cadets within these organizations. Being female and powerless represents a double jeopardy.

The military establishment is the quintessence of Weber's organizational hierarchy, and rests upon strict adherence to superior-subordinate relationships. To a lesser extent, this is true of the post office, with its para-military organizational culture. Recall that Weberian orthodoxy includes "pathological" aspects such as the domination of the individual and the destruction of individual personality through dehumanizing regimentation (*White, 1997*). Given the focus of this essay, this recollection is of more than passing relevance. For example, in a recent study, *White (1997)* examines the effects of a rigid hierarchy on moral reasoning. He concludes, in part, that "the primary determinant for the restriction in moral development is the result of the rigidly hierarchical organization design" (*p.34*). The implications for the (mis)treatment of women in the military are patently clear.

Moreover, it can be argued that the military has a culture of violence. The cult of violence (violence-for-violence's-sake) is the quintessence of the American military (*Vulliamy, 1997, p. T2*). Violence

permeates every aspect of the military lifestyle, including the problem of family violence (*Landay, 1997*). The perception (if not belief) that the military must be comprised of tough warriors and the observation by one officer that real warriors "are like rapists" (*Greeley, 1997, D4*) shapes, if not predicts, the military's culture. According to Greeley (*1997, p. D4*), this culture "does not tolerate the presence of women and will do all it can to punish them and get rid of them." At the very least, it seems that -- with some notable exceptions -- the U.S. military is grimly determined to keep women on the fringes, if not forced out entirely (*Greeley, 1997, p. D4*).

Such determination should not be surprising, considering how deeply entrenched the warrior mentality is at military academies (*Greeley, 1997, p. D4*). It follows that if women are not welcome in military academies, then women will hardly be welcomed in the armed services. For example, the Citadel was forced by court order to admit women into their heretofore all male bastion as recently as a little over a year ago (*August 1996*). Twelve months later, the first woman enrolled at the Virginia Military Institute since its foundation in 1839 -- the outcome of a six-year legal battle.

The introduction of women, then, into this violent and heretofore all male environment has proven perilous for many women. The military leadership has largely failed in their duty to guarantee a safe working environment for all personnel, and especially for women seeking a rightful place in military service. A further failure has been the lack of compliance with a 1988 federal law that required the Pentagon to create a uniform system for reporting all crimes, including sexual crimes, in the military (*Priest, 1996, A1*). The growing reports of rape, sexual harassment and sexual assault involving drill sergeants at U.S. Army training bases represent the more scandalous and insidious treatment of female military personnel.

To borrow Mary Guy's metaphors (*1993, 1994*), glass ceilings, glass walls, sticky floors and trap doors continue to define the work experience of women in many public organizations, including military institutions. An overview of the popular press over the last several years reveals linkages between limited (unequal) opportunities for women and violence against them. For example, the glass ceiling phenomenon in the Army is discussed in terms on perpetuating violence (sexual harassment and abuse) towards female military personnel. While women make up 14 percent of the Army (or 69,000 soldiers), women are still barred from 32 percent of Army jobs

(Schmitt, 1996, p. 14). The call for equal employment opportunity seems to ring largely hollow given these figures. Exclusions block women from advancing along the three main routes to senior leadership -- armor, infantry and field artillery (Schmitt, 1996, p.14) -- and further serve to undermine (delegitimize) a woman's value and position within the overall military establishment.

The prevailing "female-hostile" culture within the military remains largely intact. From this perspective, the 1991 Navy Tailhook sexual abuse affair (which implicated 140 officers, including 32 admirals), and the reported rape, assault and harassment of more than 50 women at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland (nuance notwithstanding) over the last two years can be viewed *less* as aberrations than as manifestations of this very culture, and very likely the result of more systemic and deep-seated problems. Male violence against women in the military is not incidental, it is chronic. To date, 11 drill sergeant-instructors at Aberdeen have been charged with criminal offenses, including sexual harassment, rape of female trainees (Scarborough, 1997, p. A1), and threatening to kill or harm the victims if they disclosed the attacks (Priest, 1996, p. A1).

It is significant that one Aberdeen drill sergeant-instructor was charged on 25 counts of rape of inferior-ranking women. This drill sergeant was subsequently found guilty of 18 of the 19 counts of rape filed against him involving six female trainees (Priest, 1997, p. O1). As the women's drill sergeant, "he had near-total power over their every move" (Priest, 1997, p. O1). Clearly, gender power is at the crux of such incidences -- sex becomes the means of domination and control. A recent editorial in The New York Times summarizes the issue rather succinctly:

The recent revelations are not that men and women in the armed forces are having sex. They are that soldiers are forcing sex on military women. This is called rape, and it has nothing to do with sex. It has to do with power, violence, criminal behavior and the preservation of a military culture ... Fussing about rules of fraternization trivializes this scandal of criminal conduct and the military's condoning of it (November 21, 1996, p. A28).

It is telling that the above-mentioned drill sergeant-instructor managed to elude formal sanctions during the processing of 25 counts of rape of his female subordinates. The reported double standard with respect

to the consequences of the charge of adultery, and the fact that the U.S. Army shut down its sexual harassment and abuse hotline are further evidence of this deeply entrenched masculinist culture. Until women are fully integrated into the Army's male-dominated forces, serving or having the potential to serve at the highest levels, and in all positions (including combat positions), women will continue to be treated as unequal and mistreated by male military personnel (*Schmitt, 1996, p. 14; see also DeCew, 1995*).

The violent culture of the military is further reflected in the tradition of hazing. Despite the fact that hazing is unlawful, hazing rituals in the military are common -- and often abusive. According to Landay (*1997*), military commanders are well aware of the violent nature of some initiation rites. It is significant that peer pressure dictates that hazing is rarely reported to military authorities. Hazing rites against female cadets are receiving increasing attention, however. At the Citadel, female cadets claimed that they had been harassed by male cadets -- their clothes were set on fire (*CNN, December 17, 1996*) and they were beaten and stabbed. Such violent behavior reflects and reinforces the power differential between male and female cadets, and is a further expression of gender power at work. Gender power also explains the rationalization offered by the Citadel spokesman in reference to this above incident. When asked for reasons why the allegations had come forth at this particular time, the spokesman stated:

I'm not saying these ladies aren't prepared...But many times, cadets as they go into finals, as the first-semester freshman begin to say my gosh, you know, it doesn't look like I'm going to make it, and I've had a lot of problems. I need an excuse. I can't tell my parents why I'm flunking out. I'm not saying that's what happened here. Not saying that at all. But it could well be, because the other two [female cadets] are not having any problems (*CNN, December 17, 1996*).

One can argue that the attempt to discount and trivialize the issue of abusive behavior against these "ladies" is barely concealed in the above account. It represents a telling commentary on the entrenched masculinist culture within this particular military academy. Within such an environment, the victim becomes the villain. A further example illustrates this point. Rear Admiral Raymond Smith, then-Commander of the Special Warfare Command, told the 1992 Presidential Commission on the

Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces that the introduction of a woman into a SEAL unit would be overwhelmingly disruptive:

Sex in males is the most powerful drive at a young age, and whether ... a man or a women initiates the relationship is irrelevant...It will happen, and when it does, it will *reduce our combat effectiveness* (Donnelly, 1997, p. G4, *emphasis added*).

Such a "boys-will-be-boys" attitude ensures that the blame for the *reduction in our combat effectiveness* rests solely and exclusively on female shoulders.

To conclude this section, continued resistance (violent or otherwise) to women in the military is myopic, given the fact that the military must include women if it is to find the trained personnel it needs (Greeley, 1997, p. D4). Women's effective integration into this quintessential male-dominated field can only begin to occur when male and female military personnel are treated and valued equally, when opportunities for advancement are available to all and, most significantly, when the military elite recognize what many of their counterparts in other (non-military) public organizations have already grasped -- that the continued strength of our armed forces is dependent upon maximizing every employee's skills and talents, men and women alike. It is the strategic (if not the ethical) thing to do.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to raise the level of consciousness about violence in the public workplace by focusing on the (gender) power dynamics of this phenomenon. Viewing violence as on a continuum encourages a comprehensive approach to the inquiry, and highlights the element of gender power in sharp relief. The following issues have been addressed:

- violence against *public* employees
- violence against female public employees, especially against women in the military
- violence as an expression of gender power

We live in a violent society. Clearly, our places of employment do not exist in a vacuum, but rather reflect the larger societal context. Our workplaces are not immune to the crossovers between violence at home and violence at work. Violence occurs in both directions of course -- witness the emerging debate on police and military domestic violence.

By any measure, workplace violence is emerging as a prominent local, state and national issue. Employers and employees of every occupational category, in both private and public sectors, are realizing that going to work may be hazardous to one's health (*Cannon, et al., 1995*). Some one million employees nationwide are assaulted and more than 1,000 are murdered every year in acts of workplace violence (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996*). Moreover, government data estimate the aggregate costs of workplace violence is approximately \$4.2 billion per year in the United States alone (*PR Newswire, October 15, 1996*). While the data on workplace violence are alarming, they may underestimate the extent of the problem and be no more than the tip of the spear. According to Bachman, 1994, as cited in Cannon, et al., 1995), "[m]ore than half of the incidents of workplace violence tends not to be reported." The specter of violence is especially threatening in tense work environments as diverse as the Postal Service, hospital emergency rooms, fire fighting (*Silverstein, 1994, p. A1*), police and corrections settings, and military institutions. The likelihood that such violence may prove fatal provides new meaning to the term "graveyard shift" for many employees, particularly the women among them.

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