

Interview with Lieutenant Howard Black

Colorado Springs Police Department

September 30, 2010

1) Your resume shows that you were the program director of DVERT from 1996-2003 Can you explain the impetus for this program and its general purpose?

*"I was involved in a national research project measuring the effects of arrest rates on recidivism. We were shocked to find that arrest did not deter domestic violence or the rate of recidivism. We needed another strategy...one of containment. Containing the situation and applying the experts in human services, animal control and humane society, the prosecutor's office, mental health and addiction services."*

2) Has cross reporting between partnering agencies helped to circumvent or reduce domestic violence in your community? Do you feel that coalition building is an essential tool in the reduction of domestic violence?

*"We have between 15,000 and 20,000 reports of domestic violence a year. We are holding our own considering how rapid the city is growing. Have we reduced those numbers? I can't say without statistics but we have made a difference in those 15-20 thousand lives."*

3) For the record and from your experience of 27 years in law enforcement do you believe there is a link between child abuse and animal abuse?

*"There is definitely a link between animal abuse and domestic violence. The link is well documented and we see the cycle of violence every day. Animals are used to intimidate and threaten victims. When we had animal abuse associated with the arrest of the perpetrator we saw juries give them more time and we were amazed."*

4) While maintaining the privacy of the individuals involved is there a particular situation that highlights the importance of the DVERT program and cross reporting between agencies?

*"I could show you hundreds of cases. Domestic violence is extremely complex and if partners can sit around the table with other agencies... that makes all the difference in the world. There is too much victim blaming in this country. Juries ask, why do they stay? Why do the victims make*

*the choices they make? We need to educate juries. My wife is an expert witness and many times the victims are too afraid to leave. ”*

5) Your resume shows that you have presented at the national Symposium on Domestic Violence and have had faculty positions at the Federal Bureau of investigations, the US Justice Department and the United Nations Domestic violence collaborations for China. Would you consider yourself to be an expert on the topic of domestic violence?

*“The more I know, the more I know... I don’t know about domestic violence.” On a case by case basis domestic violence is challenging because of its complexity. Everything goes back to family violence. Domestic violence is the nexus ... ”*