



# GENERAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

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SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ESCORTING  
WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ATTACKED OR  
THREATENED WITH VIOLENCE

*Vers. 1/2/2012*

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## CHAIN OF EVENTS

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The chain of events in the case must be analyzed. It is important to take in consideration all events occurring in the case, including all reporting, when assessing a threat. First, one must determine whether the case is one of principle (honor) or of emotion (affection), as the case history is longer and the likelihood of violence greater in cases involving principle. Next, the characters of the parties involved must be assessed. For instance, a person with a history of violence is more likely to become aggressive (beyond the obvious; repeated violence!), because they have less to lose from a social standpoint.

The frequency of violence can also play a role. If the aggressor often uses violence as a tool, it is unlikely that they will turn to other methods. If the violence follows a particular pattern (e.g. consumption of alcohol!), that pattern, if apparent, is relatively easy to break or avoid through the aggressor getting treatment and through the injured party avoiding contact.

As violence is, in principle, a means of control, it is reasonable to assume that when the aggressor loses control over the injured party, he will try to regain it. If the aggressor takes a step back in the process and tries to regain control through manipulation, it is less likely that he/she will use violence in the presence of others.

Gavin de Becker Inc. has put together a list of four important questions for assessing whether a person is considering using violence. The system is called JACA and stands for **J**ustification, **A**lternatives, **C**onsequences and **A**bility.

We need to try to determine *how the aggressor himself views* these four factors. That is, can the aggressor morally justify the use of violence to himself and others? - Does he have other, better alternatives than violence? - Does the aggressor understand the consequences of using / not using violence? - Does he personally believe he has the ability to use violence and violent instruments?

### Motive and method

To create a profile for a violent offender and thereby predict risk, we need to know a little about the act of violence and the events leading up to it. Both Dr. Robert Hare and FBI special agent John Douglas (the latter has more than 25 years of experience with profiling) have established through different studies that violent offenders develop different patterns depending on their social background and early personal development.

In the case of violence against women, there are a few absolute factors:

1. The offender is most often male.
2. The offender experienced emotional or physical deprivation in his childhood, or
3. Is socially dysfunctional
4. The offender is or has been lacking in confidence
5. The violence is a means of control, a privation arising from previous experiences, where affection (or control) was taken away from or denied the offender.

These are basic factors. To determine the extent to which the pattern of violence has developed, the following must be examined:

- a. Type of violence – is it sexually oriented, psychologically oriented or physically oriented?
- b. Character of violence – e.g., are weapons used or not, are specific weapons involved, etc.?
- c. Amount of violence – is it one blow, or is the victim beaten for hours?
- d. Time horizon - Did the violence begin suddenly or has it escalated over time. If it escalated, how did it escalate?

Comparing this with Gavin de Becker's JACA gives us a solid foundation on which to build a prediction.

### Acute isolation

The injured party can minimize the likelihood of further violence by simply avoiding contact completely. Linden Gross, author of *Surviving a Stalker*, recommends that all contact be ended or only take place via a third party. This is also a good idea in cases of divorce / division of joint estates for which the reason is violence. The less contact there is, the better. The emotional bond will dissolve over time, thereby minimizing the likelihood of violence. This is not true in every case, however, as some cultures have traditions that disregard emotional bonds.

Throughout the case, the victim should be reminded often that the consequences of violence are not only black and blue marks and injured pride, but can also include loss of life. Either their own or someone else's. The victim may have experienced violence so often that the violence itself no longer constitutes a threat. In that case, the situation becomes all the more intense, as the aggressor has to turn to more violent methods to get his way. Consequently, death is not always intentional, but is just as often accidental.

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR ESCORTING

The following should be considered before an escort takes place or prior to contacting a security professional:

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## VICTIM'S HISTORY

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- 1) Is the victim well educated? (language problems? – analytical ability? - general empathy?)
- 2) Does the victim have family who can assist with the case's practical problems and legal documents?
- 3) Does the victim have another network? (specify)
- 4) Is the victim calm or impatient in nature?
- 5) Is the victim physically capable of resisting an attack?

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## AGRESSOR'S HISTORY

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1. What is the aggressor's nationality?
2. Is the aggressor a political or religious extremist?
3. Has the aggressor ever been jailed in Denmark or elsewhere? (if so, why?)
4. Is the aggressor well educated? (language problems? – analytical ability? - general empathy?)
5. Does the aggressor have family who can assist in intimidation, provocation or attacks targeting the victim?
6. Does the aggressor have another network? (specify)
7. Is the aggressor calm or impatient in nature?
8. Does the aggressor have a military, paramilitary or police background?
9. What does the aggressor do for a living?
10. Has the aggressor ever practiced a martial art?
11. Describe the aggressor's physique? (height, weight, build)
12. Does the aggressor have any children with the victim?
13. If so, describe the emotional bonds, if any.
14. Has the aggressor ever been treated for a mental ailment?
15. Does the aggressor take or has he taken any psychopharmaceutical/antidepressant drugs?

The questions can be put to the victim in the form of a statistical survey so they are less frightening. The answers can, of course, benefit the center, the legal counsel and the authorities. A copy should be sent to the police along with any reports, as the answers can underscore the gravity of the case.

Only rarely will assistance from security professionals be required. However, this must be decided early on in the case. In cases in which security professionals are involved, the above considerations and the professionals' own assessment should form the basis for determining how little or much security is needed.

The security professionals should always observe the following:

1. Avoid all confrontation.
2. In case of aggravation of the normal picture, remove the client.
3. When confrontation is unavoidable, retake initiative and control the situation.

If the security professionals you contact ask few (or no!) questions, find another company. Always use the police whenever possible!

ICPTA

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