

Domestic Violence vs. SM - A Checklist

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This checklist is intended to function as an initial analysis tool for anyone needing to make "go-no go" type choices as to the probable nature of a "violent" situation, and therefore how to advance in terms of resource allocation, investigation priorities, need for separation of the parties, and likelihood of Houghton/Spanner type community support of participants on personal liberty / consensuality grounds. Typical users would include rape & violence victim counselors, police officers, emergency medical personnel, prosecutors, etc. It should be emphasized that this tool functions independently of Battered Wife Syndrome, Stockholm Syndrome, etc.; in almost all cases, this checklist will work regardless of which party is claiming the consensuality exception - the "abuser" or the "abusee."

Domestic Violence

- Parties emotional, focus on each other, despite police presence, discuss "fault."
- Apparent abusee will not meet eyes of authorities, says "I made him do it."
- Apparent abusee talks only of apparent abuser.
- Apparent abuser cavalierly dismisses injuries.
- Fresh wounds to the face.
- Healing wounds to the face.
- Scars typical of face wounds.
- Protestations of remorse accompanying multiple injuries.
- Bruising to front of torso other than breasts.
- Old or new defense wounds (fingers, hands, inner wrists & forearms).
- Presence of children in home during activity.
- Presence of children in room during activity.
- Chaotic, unfocussed marks indicative of a moving target.
- Hiding & use of "at hand" household items to inflict injuries along an evasive path of flight.
- Entreaties & pleading to "Please, please, just go away. You'll get me in more trouble."
- Autopsy reveals:
 - Broken & rebroken facial bones, fingers, & ribs.
 - Multiple ages & locations of bruising internal organs, especially liver.

Consensual Sadomasochism

- Parties rational, verbal, focus on police, discuss consensuality.
- Protestations of remorse & distraction accompanying single, isolated injury.
- Apparent abuser angry with self over isolated injury.
- Absence of defense wounds.
- Apparent abusee is defiant to authorities, makes eye contact while claiming complete choice and autonomy.
- Immediate recognition of terms, "What is your Safe Word?" and animated discussion.
- Ordered marks confined on carefully delineated meaty areas - breasts, thighs, back above kidneys, buttocks, etc.; very often "lined up" in an obviously artistic, controlled way.
- Concentration of "torture" marks on male or female genitals.
- Little evidence of "stray" marks.
- Black leather or other "fetish" clothing, bondage equipment, sexual "toys," etc.
- An obviously prepared "playroom," "dungeon," or other delineated "shrine" or special area.
- Tattoos of "erotic" or other distinct styles.
- Carefully placed patterned cuttings, scarifications, or burned brands.
- Pride or outright defiance in display of marks, tattoos, etc.
- Use of language such as "marks" vs. "scars"; "power exchange"; "consensual," etc.
- Invitations from the apparent abusee to "Butt the Fuck out of my life!"