

Issues Download #6 – Reproduction/Parenting: the Glass Wall

Herb Goldberg quotes a man who has encountered what we will dub the “Glass Wall”: “Man’s role—how has it affected my life? At thirty-five, I chose to emphasize family togetherness and neglect my profession if necessary. At fifty-seven, I see no reward for time spent with and for the family, in terms of love or appreciation. I see a thousand punishments for neglecting my profession.”ⁱ

Should the husband/father prioritize family and decline to work more than 40 hours a week, he will lose out to other men willing to work 60+ hours a week. In truth, *most* fathers would choose to cut back on work in favor of family. But, in a world where a father may well be thought of more as “wallet” than parent, a man’s efforts to emphasize parenting may cost him more than benefit him.

If men are to be true equals in parenting, if men are to break through the Glass Wall, we need to acknowledge, honor, and *support* fathers, not merely as “second parents,” but as parents who contribute an important, uniquely different, masculine *style* of parenting.

As seen from the politicized male perspective, we now embark on an analysis of parenting in general and fatherhood in particular. Father-hood, of course, begins at conception.

Because only girls and women can get pregnant, we preach that only females need be wary of sex. Isn’t it true, however, that only males can be put to work paying off 18 to 21 years of legally enforced child support payments?

“Legally, women hold the cards,” says Kathleen Parker.

If a woman gets pregnant, she can abort—even without her husband’s consent. If she chooses to have the child, she gets a baby and the man gets an invoice. Inarguably, a man should support his offspring, but by that same logic, shouldn’t he have a say in whether his child is born or aborted?ⁱⁱ

Even within wedlock a mother can abort a child with or without the father’s consent. Yet fathers *not* married to the mothers of their child-*ren* have even *fewer* parental rights. Given that 40 percent of children are born *out* of wedlock, father’s rights suffer accordingly.

In the heat of the moment should he forgo the awkwardness of a pleasure deadening condom, only she has a birth control pill, and so only she has birth control. All he has is her word for it that she’s taking the birth control, an assurance that’s legally irrelevant in a court of law.

Upon pregnancy, the woman can choose between abortion, adop-tion, or suing for childpayments. About all the father can do is await the mother’s decision, a decision in which the biological father has few legal rights, even though her decision will have a profound impact on all aspects of *his* future life—an impact that is not solely financial. While facilitating men’s personal growth work I have seen many a man reduced to tears while telling the story of a woman he loved, the child they conceived, and the aborting of that child—*his* child—against his wishes.

Will the mother abort his child; will she give birth to his child? Will she include him in parenting or shut him out? Will she take the child and up and move away? Will he pay for a child he is not allowed to parent? Will he be deceived into paying for a child sired by another man? Will he refuse to pay and live life as a criminal ever at risk of imprisonment? Will she raise the child without his ever knowing he has a child? Will she then sue him for ten or more years of retroactive childpayments?

Sentimentality alone has us believing that women alone suffer vulnerability in sex. This gender sentimentality is powerful! There is great beauty and poetry in it. But if we are to strive for fairness in our gender analysis, we mustn’t allow this sentimentality, driven by instinct, to derail our *thinking*.

We’re told that it all comes down to “her body, her choice.” How is the fetus part of a woman’s body when, in fact, the fetus is a geneti-cally unique individual? It’s *his* body being used to work a job, *any* job, so long as it pays the bills. What makes her “labor” so much more important than his?

Anyway, if it all comes down to “her body, her choice,” then how do we account for the low legal status granted surrogate mothers? How is it that a surrogate mother, having been paid to give birth to a child but who changes her mind and fights for the right to parent the child—the *child that came from her*

womb—loses out in court to the woman who contributed an egg (genetic material) and payment? Does a father not contribute semen (genetic material) and pay for his child?

When parenting rights are contested between two women, a prior legal contract usurps giving birth. When parenting rights are contested between a woman and a man, generally, it's no contest. Given that physical custody is more or less automatically granted the woman, and abortion/adoption decisions are the woman's sole prerogative, perhaps it's not a matter of mother's vs. father's rights as much as it's a matter of the rights of women simply usurping the rights of men.

Warren Farrell describes the worst-case scenario as seen from the male point of view.

[I]f a woman and man make love and she says she is using birth control but is not, she has the right to raise the child without his knowing he even has a child, and then to sue him for retroactive child support even ten to twenty years later (depending on the state). This forces him to take a job with more pay and more stress and therefore earlier death. Although it's his body, he has no choice. He has the option of being a slave (working for another without pay or choice) or being a criminal. *Roe vs. Wade* gave women the vote over their bodies. Men still don't have the vote over theirs—whether in love or in war.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is said that only a man can conceive a child and walk away. But is a woman who has an abortion, or who gives a child up for adoption not a woman who conceived a child and walked away? In fact, most cities now have drop-off centers where mothers can free themselves of their infants anonymously, no questions asked.^{iv}

Even if a genetic test proves he is not the father, if she put his name on the birth certificate, he may still be required to pay should the judge rule that it is in "the best interest of the child." Often, there is a narrow window of opportunity for a man to contest paternity. If he misses the deadline, he's out of luck. Even if he is financially *unable* to pay, he risks imprisonment for failure to pay. Moreover, if the mother chooses to squander his childpayments on drugs, booze, fancy clothes, the father is legally powerless to do anything about it.

In the act of sex, men and women share equal risk. So what it comes down to is this: She is taught caution and prudent behavior and he is not. Whether in love or in war, framed as courageous, bold and brave, he is taught reckless behavior and suffers the consequences.

"Men are cold, calculating, unfeeling, inconsiderate, rude, selfish, those kinds of things," says Laurie Ingraham recounting the stereotypes about men that women are taught. "Basically, by the age of three, our parents, TV and movies have taught us not to trust you."^v While women are socialized to assume that a man cannot be trusted until he has proven himself, men are more often socialized to assume that a woman can be trusted until proven otherwise. Perhaps, while he's out shopping for an engagement ring, she's on the Internet doing a background check?

In the act of intercourse a man quite literally puts his life in a woman's hands and, most likely, he's too ill informed of his own sexual-political perspectives to know it. Because most people are trust-worthy, most women are trustworthy. But, because some people have low standards of conduct, some women have low standards of conduct.

His assumption that the woman can be trusted leaves a man more vulnerable to placing his trust where trust is not warranted. "[W]hen random DNA tests are taken of babies, about 10 percent turn out not to be the child of the father the mother declared. Since one father often has two or three children, this implies that about 15 to 20 percent of all fathers are spending their lives supporting at least one child they were deceived into thinking was theirs."^{vi} This is not just financial betrayal; it is *emotional* betrayal. And it can *only* happen to *men*.

Additionally, because women more often gain physical custody of the children, 86 percent of all stepparents are male.^{vii} And so, 86 percent of the special emotional strain and pain that goes with step parenting is also male.

Assuming the child is born and the father remains present in the child's life, what then? Says Nancy Friday:

The competitive corporate world, as it exists, has no tolerance for parental leave programs, especially for men. "What [fathers] are hear-ing, from their bosses, from institutions, from the culture around them, even

from their own wives,” says the *Time* article on fatherhood, “very often comes down to a devastating message: We don’t really trust men to be parents, and we don’t really need them to be.”^{viii}

Warren Farrell: “Almost 90 percent of men say that full-time involvement with their children would be their preference for between six months and a year if they knew they wouldn’t be hurting their family economically and they knew their wife approved.”^{ix}

So, why don’t more men come right out and ask for what they want? Well, let’s check out how it sounds: “Honey, would it be all right with you if I were to stay home fulltime? I’ll take social, emotional, and legal possession of our children while you work overtime in order to earn your family’s love by making money others will spend. OK?” Men don’t venture to ask because:

- 1) Men’s cultural conditioning leaves them feeling embarrassed even to want the role.
- 2) The severe beating men take in the media (i.e., “Mr. Mom”) leaves them feeling deeply insecure with regard to their parental competence or even worthiness.
- 3) Men are in no way encouraged to feel needed, wanted or even *trusted* in the nursery. Who could doubt what Jane Young, professor of English at City University of New York, has observed: “The accepted wisdom these days is that, as long as children are loved, it doesn’t matter whether they grow up without a father or even a stepfather, and that fathers often do more harm than good. [Fathers] are increasingly seen as verbally or sexually abusive, violent or physically and psychologically absent.”^x
- 4) Men often sense that the workplace is especially hostile toward men who make parenting a high priority.
- 5) Men don’t ask for the role because they know they won’t get it.

As for those men who don’t want the role, many don’t want it because they’ve never even thought about it. Many just don’t know what they’re missing. It could even be the case that men, consciously or unconsciously, fear developing deep emotional attachment to their children, knowing of the high statistical probability that divorce might one day take their children from them. Others, of course, are simply ill-suited to the role, but the same could be said of a higher percentage of women than we care to know.

Partly as a result of all the negative stereotyping, a man who would let it be known that he wants to become a househusband (a word only recently added to the dictionary) has little chance of attracting a woman who would want to marry him. Men who would “free” women of parental responsibilities are more often perceived as men who would encroach upon the woman’s territory.

Nancy Friday:

Overworked as women may be, they will not easily relinquish the nursery role. And though many deny it vehemently, on some level they know that she who bears and raises the human race plays the most powerful role in all of human life. The prospect of giving men parity in the nursery, of seeing some men doing “women’s work” as well as they, is intolerable.^{xi}

Author Cathy Young has also observed women’s reluctance to part with their parental primacy. This “Maternal Chauvinism,” says Young, “is a dad’s greatest obstacle to parental parity.”

Women’s determined efforts to maintain controlling interest in their children’s lives is something Ms. Young refers to as “maternal gatekeeping.” Historically, it is one of the principal mechanisms forming and maintaining the Glass Wall.

In the 1994 book *Peer Marriage*, Pepper Schwartz, a sociologist at the University of Washington, reports that . . . for the most part, the re-sistance to fully shared childrearing came from mothers, not fathers. These women had been all for co-parenting in theory; once they actually became parents, Schwartz notes, they succumbed to “the siren call of motherhood” and started hogging the baby. In some cases, it was the men who rebelled against being shut out and pressured the women to curb their possessiveness. . . . In a 1985 survey, only one in four mothers strongly endorsed 50-50 parenting, while two out of three seemed “threatened” by the idea. . . . A few years ago, *Redbook* ran an article called “My Husband Is Too Good a Father” by Beth Levine. Levine’s husband, a home-based freelance writer, was an active, nurturing father to their young son, which was exactly what she had always wanted. What she had not expected was to feel hurt

every time the boy cried for Daddy, not Mommy.

“I’m ashamed, but I hate that I am not the center of my child’s uni-verse,” she wrote. “When I am honest with myself, what I really want is for Bill to be an eager but charmingly inept father, a soldier to my general. . . .” “The man who’s just trying the waters at being a parent and participating in the household feels very clumsy and unanointed, and then he gets defensive,” says Braun-Levine. “We keep giving orders and saying, ‘This is the way you do it, and if you can’t do it my way, just stand here and hold the dirty clothes.’”^{xii}

To the degree that Man assumed authority in the workplace, Woman assumes authority in the homeplace. Woman’s greater power in the domestic and parental realms may not be the *kind* of power feminists seek—who seeks that which they already have?—but the fact that women covet that power proves its worth. Says Dr. Roy Schenk:

Even today, women are invested in continuing to be the primary socializers. For example, the National Organization for Women is fighting vigorously to block the increase of joint custody after divorce, even though greater involvement of divorced fathers in child rearing would be in women’s best interests, first, because involved men have been repeatedly shown to pay child support and, second, because in joint custody the mother is relieved of the burden of total responsibility for child care. But these reasons don’t stop NOW from fighting against joint custody, because the desire to maintain women’s control of the socialization process is stronger than the desire to benefit women.^{xiii}

Feminism’s initial promise of deeper father involvement has only been fulfilled for some. Because, says men’s activist Glenn Sacks, “when-ever there’s any kind of legislative attempt to try to make it so fathers can have more time with their children after divorce, or fathers could have shared parenting after divorce—the feminists, all the time, right down the line, they fight it like crazy! And, to me, that’s just a total betrayal.”^{xiv} It was NOW’s opposition to joint custody that precipitated Warren Farrell’s split with feminism. And again the point is made that feminism’s influence is often contrary to its stated goals.

These domestic/parental powers women possess are enviable. Without them, life can be an emotional wasteland. Herb Goldberg quotes a man who knows this truth all too well.

I went through the wedding mechanically, devoid of any emotion. I simply figured I was following a road that was meant for me to follow. . . . Our first baby was born. . . . Marie was ecstatic. I felt her joy. I really did. It would have been hard not to. But I did not feel my own joy. There was a glow coming out of her, but I had the feeling that it had nothing to do with me, that anyone could have stood in my place. It seems to me that there was a game plan laid out long before I got there and I merely was pushed from spot to spot, like some checker on a board. Yes, I was happy I had a daughter, but I felt more of a numbness. Here I am. What am I doing here?^{xv}

Lacking his female equivalent’s domestic/parental powers, a man often feels peripheral in his own home and suffers accordingly. The world of women is as vast, as deep, as essential, as rewarding, and at least as rich in the basic archetypes of life as is the world of men. To be dis-enfranchised and rendered inferior and subordinate in the world of women carries costs equal to being disenfranchised and rendered inferior and subordinate in the world of men.

Author Lauren Slater experienced the male brand of disenfranchisement firsthand when she took the role of “provider” while her husband took the role of “nurturer.” Not surprisingly, their daughter Clara “started to like my husband more. This was the first problem, and it was piercing.” Of course it was. And the situation grew more painful and increasingly competitive.

“I’ll go,” I’d say, throwing off the covers. “No, I’ll go” he’d say throwing off the covers. And then there was the night I heard it. “Papa!” she screamed. What happened next is obvious. Papa leaped up, ran to her room, and Mama lay alone, listening through the monitor to sounds of cooing and comforting, not mine. . . . I wanted to touch my daughter, my baby girl—it would not be too much to say I ached for it—but someone had usurped me, at my insistence. . . . I fully realized how the modern mother, freed from the burden of primary caretaking, gains a lot and loses a lot, in language, and in love. . . . I finally came to understand my father, and what must have been his inevitable feeling of “fringeness” as his wife ran the domestic show.

To be loved second-best: How have men tolerated that all these years? How awful, how hurtful. It makes you want to withdraw. Now I see why fathers fade away. There is no way to compete with the devotion a child feels for her primary caretaker, and it’s so easy to feel rebuffed when the little one shakes off your hand

and runs for her obvious favorite. So you retreat, to your den, your desk, your TV, where there is always football.^{xvi}

Sharing the workload is one thing, sharing the children equally is quite another thing. Naturally, a man will balk at equality in the childcare workload when he doesn't have equality in the actual parenting (including equal say in the big decisions). If, in some manner, he receives the message "These are *my* children;" she, in some manner, will most likely receive the message "Then *you* take care of them."

Men keep women "less than" in many ways and women keep men "less than" in many ways. But the most insidious part of "maternal gatekeeping" is the badmouthing. According to the kids themselves, "Moms are almost five times as likely to badmouth dads as dads are moms."^{xvii} Moms wish to maintain primacy in the parental role. For economically empowered women the "male role" of protector/provider is available, but largely shunned. What does that tell us about what women *really* think of the male lot in life?

A woman looking through the Glass Ceiling can see the tip of the success pyramid but—owing to gender bias together with various sociopolitical structures—feels thwarted from inhabiting that same space in the same way. A man looking through the Glass Wall can see the mother/child nexus but—owing to gender bias together with various sociopolitical structures—feels thwarted from inhabiting that same space in the same way. Many women break through the Glass Ceiling. Lauren Slater's husband is a representative of the less common father who's managed to crack the Glass Wall.

Having gained power over men within the world of men, a female VP may experience herself struggling outside cultural norms and feeling extra-vulnerable. Having usurped power over a woman within the world of women, a "househusband" may experience himself struggling outside cultural norms and feeling extra-vulnerable. Some women in Lauren Slater's place might do just about anything to take back the parental primacy to which mothers feel specially entitled. To ensure their "rightful" place at the center of their children's emotional lives, some mothers might bad-mouth fathers. Some mothers might even divorce husbands who prove to be "too good" at parenting.

The book, *Divorced Dads*, by Sanford Braver (with Diane O'Connell), recounts three specific case studies of divorcing couples that, when combined together, "capture the essence of our findings." The first involves "Jeremy" and "Roxanne" and their son "Bradley." Jeremy enters fatherhood determined to be the very best dad he can be. But how does Roxanne *really* feel about that?

She complained that he had bonded with Bradley even more than she had. She began to doubt her own femininity and maternal nurturance, he surmised. She now saw Jeremy as a threat, not an ally. That he had truly become a new-age father seemed a nightmare to her, not the dream-come-true he had assumed it would be. The hostility that emerged annihilated the foundation of their marriage. She secretly began interviewing divorce attorneys and eventually found a suitable one and served Jeremy with papers.^{xviii}

Like other fathers faced with it, Jeremy was unprepared for the anti-male bias (misandry) he would soon encounter. He assumed such things only happened to *other* men, "bad" men who deserve it. Surely any judge *must* recognize and honor a father-son bond as profound as his, right? But "the judge just decided on the basis of traditional sex roles," says Jeremy. "She was the mother and I was 'only' the father, pretty much useless, like someone's appendix."^{xix} His attorney had warned Jeremy in advance that the mother would almost certainly win custody and she did. And now, "She's really trying to cut me out."

I used to buy all the baby food because I knew what he liked and what he didn't like. I shopped for his clothes, I knew his favorite books, I knew his favorite Barney characters, I'd get on the floor and color with him. But now if she admits I have any role with him at all, it's as if that will undermine her role as the "primary parent," which the judge decreed she was. . . . She really would prefer that I just . . . pay my child support and disappear.^{xx}

In fact, to *guarantee* they will never again feel the piercing pain of being parentally "usurped," some divorcing mothers might even accuse the father of abuse and then, through the use of a restraining order, have the father removed from the picture *entirely*.

There is no masculinist movement attempting to tear apart the matrisensus, or bring motherhood down from atop its pedestal. Motherhood power is secure. On the relatively rare occasion that a woman's

parental primacy *is* threatened, however, we can see that the fragile male ego is matched by a fragile female ego. We can also see that such a woman, with the full backing of the legal system, is tremendously empowered to slap down the “usurping” male. Meanwhile, those women in vast numbers who penetrate the Glass Ceiling may *feel* extra vulnerable but, as we will soon explore in detail, there is reason to believe that such women—again with the full backing of the legal system—are *very* well protected indeed.

“To be loved second-best: How have men tolerated that all these years?” Men have endured being loved second-best just as women have endured being respected second-best. David Lindgren, therapist and cofounder of New Warriors, is wont to say, “We want respect, but we *need* love.” (“All You *Need* Is Love”?) I suspect that being loved second-best is *so* painful, society in general and men in particular have felt the need to escape full cognizance of it through denial. Society knows full well that women are respected second best, but society has yet to come to grips with men being loved second best.

When women enter the male realm they encounter the male pain within. Only then, when *women* (like Lauren Slater) experience it, is this pain followed by complaint, complaint that gets published and circulated into public knowledge. And so, only now do we begin to hear about the downsides that come of *not* being the primary caregiver. Only fifty years ago, men were so disenfranchised within the world of women that a man who was both husband and father was not even *allowed* in the delivery room! Fathers did not penetrate that particular Glass Wall until the 1970s.

As viewed from a politicized male perspective, anthropologist Lionel Tiger describes the current legal environment many fathers face:

And in family courts, the presumption of male behavioral malefaction has yielded heartbreakingly numerous cases in which men are charged with domestic violence to which courts overwhelmingly—often in brief hearings in which the male is not even present—issue temporary “restraining orders.” These frequently segue into permanence, and award women the dwelling they’ve shared, financial support and the all-important privilege of custody—mothers gain custody in 66% of uncontested cases and 75% of contested ones. Less than a quarter of parents are awarded joint custody. Judges issue such orders based only on the word of the alleged victim. It is small wonder the overwhelming majority of such actions are sought and achieved by women. It has been legitimately argued that there is a merciless post-marital racket of therapists, lawyers, judges and governmental advocates who prosper because it is so easy to define males as guilty.^{xxi}

If you doubt the ease with which women are granted restraining orders, consider the now famous case involving talk show host David Letterman. A New Mexico judge granted Colleen Nestler’s request for a restraining order alleging that Letterman forced her to go bankrupt and caused her “mental cruelty” and “sleep deprivation.”

Nestler requested that Letterman, who tapes his show in New York, stay at least 3 yards away and not “think of me, and release me from his mental harassment and hammering.” . . . Nestler’s application for a restraining order was accompanied by a six-page typed letter in which she said Letterman used code words, gestures and “eye expressions” to convey his desires for her. . . . She said he asked her to be his wife during a televised “teaser” for his show by saying, “Marry me, Oprah.” Her letter said Oprah was the first of many code names for her and that the coded vocabulary increased and changed with time.^{xxii}

Before dismissing the above as nothing more than a bad “joke” that has nothing to do with *you*, consider this:

Judge Daniel Sanchez issued a restraining order against Letterman based on those allegations. By doing so, it put Letterman on a national list of domestic abusers, gave him a criminal record, took away several of his constitutionally protected rights, and subjected him to criminal prosecution if he contacted Nestler directly or indirectly, or possessed a firearm. Letterman had never met Colleen Nestler, and this all happened without his knowledge. . . . Asked to explain why he had issued a restraining order on the basis of such an unusual

complaint, Judge Sanchez answered that Nestler had filled out the restraining-order request form correctly.^{xxiii}

So, where then is the male protest?

It took national ridicule plus Letterman's team of high priced lawyers to *finally* convince Judge Sanchez to dismiss the case. Any woman, for *any* reason, can get a legally enforced restraining order against *you*. She need only fill out the request form correctly. If you should lack the clout that comes of wealth and fame, then *you* can expect repercussions both horrendous and long lasting. Over matters of infinitely less import, for vastly lesser powers men hold over women, *women* scream bloody murder!

And, if you doubt anti-male bias in divorce courts, consider the words of ex-judge Richard Huttner regarding divorced fathers:

You have never seen a bigger pain in the ass than the father who wants to get involved; he can be repulsive. He wants to meet the kid after school at three o'clock, take the kid out to dinner during the week, have the kid on his own birthday, talk to the kid on the phone every evening, go to every open school night, take the kid away for a whole weekend so they can be alone together. This type of involved father is pathological.^{xxiv}

Can anyone be in doubt as to which parent was awarded custody in this man's court? And what of his influence as a member of the New York State Commission on Child Support? Obviously, not all judicial bias is as "pathological" as the bias displayed by this particular judge, but anti-male bias needn't reach *this* level to dash a whole lot of father's hopes of equality in parenting.

Along with accountability, we also need to empathy interpret the actions of fathers whose status as parents takes on meaning only when it comes time to pay. Like Lauren Slater, we need to realize that at least some of the men who fail to mail their support checks for the full 18 to 21 years do so because they care too *much*, not too little.

It is the pain of being reduced from father to "visitor," of having involvement with their children limited to the standard every-other-weekend "visitation rights"—a mere four days out of each month—or the pain of being shut out of their children's lives entirely that can make it all but unbearable to stay in their children's lives only to the extent of sending a check each month. It's not the money; it's everything the check represents and reminds him of that makes the monthly ritual of filling it out and sending it so painful for the ex-husband/father. Under the circumstances, a man may feel a deep need to make a clean break with this painful chapter of his life.

If all that weren't enough, he may *then* experience the conflict between his obligation to love and support children from his previous marriage vs. his *new* obligation to love and support the children of his *current* marriage (whether or not those children are biologically his own).

Phyllis Schlafly:

In January, President George W. Bush signed the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act without public debate, even though evidence has surfaced that Congress should have examined it before the law was extended. The act, which costs nearly \$1 billion per year, is one of the major ways former President Bill Clinton bought the support of radical feminists. . . . Passage of the Violence Against Women Act was a major priority of the American Bar Association for whose members it is a cash cow. . . . A recently issued ABA document called "Tool for Attorneys" provides lawyers with a list of suggestive questions to encourage their clients to make domestic-violence charges. Knowing that a woman can get a restraining order against the father of her children in an ex parte proceeding without any evidence, and that she will never be punished for lying, domestic-violence accusations have become a major tactic for securing sole child custody.^{xxv}

Books like *Fathers' Rights* by Jeffery Leving (1997), *From Courtship to Courtroom* by Jed H. Abraham (1999), and *Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family* by Stephen Baskerville (2007) are filled cover-to-cover with the abuses of these ex parte proceedings wherein only the accuser need be present. The accused may have no knowledge of the legal machinery set in motion behind his back. So long as such cases are adjudicated under civil—as op-posed to criminal—law, the accused is *not* assumed innocent and does *not* have to be convicted "beyond a reasonable doubt."

And then there's the purely emotional side of it all. In his book *A Man's World: How Real Is Male Privilege—and How High Is Its Price?*, Ellis Cose quotes Dr. Jean Bonhomme, president of the National Black Men's Health Network.

I've found it easier to console people with cancer and AIDS than to console fathers who have lost all contact with their children. I mean, it is one of the most devastating things that can happen to anybody. . . . We think that men cannot love children. And I think that that's erroneous. I think that men have a huge capacity to love children. I think men love in a different way. I think they're protective. And they try to create a safe environment, but men can and have traded their lives to protect their children. They go to work in dangerous jobs. They'll face physical dangers and things of this nature. I mean, how can you say that a man can't love if he's willing to lay down his life for his child?^{xxvi}

Actor/musician Bob Geldof puts a human face on the matter. In an interview with TV host Daphne Barak, Geldof recounted how the discovery that the law was "skewed" in ex-wife Paula Yates's favor—just because she was a woman—plunged him into an "ocean of grief."

I could not live without my kids. I missed the sound of them turning in their sleep. I just wanted to go to some dark, grey corner of the world and howl into the void. . . . The key in my pocket still fit in the door, but I was no longer allowed (to put) this key in the door and go into my home. It's very hard to get your head around that. I went to the door, and I was too humiliated to knock on my own front door. That's my house, my home, my children. I could hear them laughing in there. I was too scared of (knocking) and one of my kids opening the door and saying 'Hi Dad' and not being allowed to let me in. I didn't want to impose that on them. I didn't want it to happen to me. I didn't want her to come to the door and say, 'What are you doing here? You're not allowed to come here.' So, I went back out, and I sat in the car and I just cried. I just stayed and watched their bedroom lights go off, and I went home. That shouldn't happen to anyone. If you put impediments in the way of men seeing their children - making them jump through all sorts of humiliating hoops - the kids become a weapon, a sword and a shield simultaneously. You're suffering so much. Eventually, no person can take that and the kids lose a father. It is hurtful.^{xxvii}

If the Zero-Empathy rule were revoked, we'd know that many "dead-beat dads" are really "beat-dead" dads.

We'd find it in our hearts to do better than lump together, denigrate, and vilify disenfranchised fathers to the point of having what are, in essence, "debtors' prisons" (outlawed since the Debtors Act of 1869), reinstated solely to incarcerate them. And we'd be fair enough toward men to admit it if, for whatever reason, non-custodial fathers pay a larger portion (60 percent) of the child support they're ordered to pay than non-custodial mothers (46.8 percent).^{xxviii}

All men's issues are society's issues, but the issue of diminishing fatherhood especially so. "Fathers have a unique and irreplaceable role to play in child development," says David Popenoe, echoing so many in the field. "Fathers are not merely would-be mothers. The two sexes are different to the core, and each is necessary—culturally as well as biologically—for the optimal development of a human being."^{xxix}

Father absence can be linked to almost every issue of delinquency in our world today. Stephen Baskerville:

Virtually every major social pathology of our time: violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy and scholastic failure, unwed pregnancy, suicide, and other psychological disorders—all these correlate more strongly to fatherlessness than to any other single factor. . . . Children from affluent but separated families are much more likely to get into trouble than children from poor but intact ones, and white children from separated families are at higher risk than black children in intact families. . . . It is hardly an exaggeration to say that fatherless children are tearing down our civilization.^{xxx}

Christina Hoff Sommers concurs:

The boys who are most at risk for juvenile delinquency and violence are boys who are literally separated from their fathers. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports that in 1960, 5.1 million children lived with only their mother; by 1996, the number was more than 16 million. As the phenomenon of fatherlessness has increased, so has violence. . . . In *Fatherless America*, the sociologist David Blankenhorn notes that "Despite the difficulty of proving causation in social sciences, the wealth of evidence increasingly supports the

conclusion that fatherlessness is a primary generator of violence among young men.” William Galston, a former domestic policy adviser to the Clinton administration (now at the University of Maryland), and Elaine Kamarck, a lecturer at Harvard’s J. F. Kennedy School of Government, concur. Commenting on the relationship between crime and one-parent families, they say, “The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature.”^{xxxix}

There’s an equally strong correlation between lack of fathering and unwanted teen pregnancy. For example: “In a study of inner-city Baltimore women who were teenage mothers, one-third of their daughters also became teenage mothers,” remarks Warren Farrell. “But not one daughter or son who had a good relationship with his/her biological father had a baby before the age of nineteen.”^{xxxii}

Father energy is absolutely vital to a society’s health and wellbeing. I don’t mean to diminish single mothers or disparage their heroic efforts but, because women are equal partners in the sculpting of our world, the emphasis on Women’s Rights must be accompanied by equal emphasis on women’s *responsibilities*. Women’s collective choices impact our world; therefore, like men’s choices, women’s choices must be held accountable to the greater good.

Unlike men’s controlling interest in the work world, women’s controlling interest in the domestic realm remains well protected and secure. The problem is that many women, perhaps unconsciously, want to “have it all.” Some women mean to maintain advantage, privilege, superiority, and ownership in their traditional realms *plus* gain equality within men’s traditional realms to boot. Such women apparently believe that the world will not be gender-equal until it has been made *perfect* for women—without regard for men.

Reproduction/Parenting issues are men’s issues because it is in the profound and fundamental realm of reproduction/parenting that Man is most clearly seen as the “Second Sex.”

ⁱ Goldberg, Herb, *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (New York: Signet/Penguin, 1976) p.5.

ⁱⁱ Parker, Kathleen, *Save the Males: Why Men Matter, Why Women Should Care* (New York: Random House, 2008) p.x.

ⁱⁱⁱ Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) p.36.

^{iv} “Decriminalization of the Abandonment of Newborns,” National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center website, aia.berkeley.edu, 2000.

^v Kammer, Jack, *Good Will Toward Men: Women Talk Candidly About the Balance of Power Between the Sexes* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994) p.43.

^{vi} Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *Father and Child Reunion: How to Bring the Dads We Need to the Children We Love* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2001) p.145.

^{vii} Hetherington, E. Mavis and Jodl, Kathleen M., “Stepfamilies as Settings for Child Development,” in Alan Booth and Judy Dunn, eds., *Stepfamilies: Who Benefits? Who Does Not?* Hillsdale, N.J.: L Erlbaum, 1994.

^{viii} Friday, Nancy, *The Power Of Beauty: A Cultural Memoir of Beauty and Desire* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996) p.59.

^{ix} Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) p.364.

^x Kammer, Jack, *Good Will Toward Men: Women Talk Candidly About the Balance of Power Between the Sexes* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994) p.144.

^{xi} Friday, Nancy, *The Power Of Beauty: A Cultural Memoir of Beauty and Desire* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996) p.52.

^{xii} Excerpted from “The mama lion at the gate” by Cathy Young for Salon.com. The same material may be found in her book *Ceasefire!: Why Women and Men Must Join Forces to Achieve True Equality* (New York: The Free Press, 1999) pp.56-57.

^{xiii} Schenk, Roy U. Ph.D., *Thoughts of Dr. Schenk on Sex and Gender* (Madison, WI: Bioenergetics Press, 1991) p.28.

^{xiv} Glenn Sacks quoted from: Garcia, Guy, *The Decline of Men: How the American Male Is Getting Axed, Giving up, and Flipping Off His Future* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009) p.134.

^{xv} Goldberg, Herb, *The New Male: From Macho to Sensitive But Still All Male* (New York: Signet/Penguin, 1980) p.146.

^{xvi} Slater, Lauren, *Elle*, July 2001, pp.69-70.

^{xvii} Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *Father and Child Reunion: How to Bring the Dads We Need to the Children We Love* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2001) p.48.

^{xviii} Braver, Sanford L., Ph.D., with O’Connell, Diane, *Divorced Dads: Shattering the Myths* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1998) p.149.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, p.150.

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- ^{xx} Ibid.
- ^{xxi} Tiger, Lionel, *You've Got Male!*, Rutgers University, December 17, 2005, p.A10. See the *Wall Street Journal* on line, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB113477972844425239.html>.
- ^{xxii} Pace, Gina, "Letterman Fights Restraining Order," CBS News, December 21, 2005, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/12/21/entertainment/main1156547.shtml>
- ^{xxiii} Hession, Gregory A., J. D., "Restraining Orders Out of Control," August 4, 2008, <http://thenewamerican.com/node/8647>
- ^{xxiv} Huttner, Richard, quoted by Young, Jane, *New York* magazine, November 18, 1985.
- ^{xxv} Schlafly, Phylis, "Domestic violence law abuses rights of men," May 12, 2006, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, signonsandiego.com
- ^{xxvi} Cose, Ellis, *A Man's World: How Real Is Male Privilege—and How High Is Its Price?* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) p.21.
- ^{xxvii} "Geldof: My grief at losing my girls," by Churcher, Sharon, *Daily Mail*, 05/14/07, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/showbiz/showbiznews.html?in_article_id=454490&in_page_id=1773.
- ^{xxviii} US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Table 1, 04/98 as quoted by Kammer, Jack, *If Men Have All the Power, How Come Women Make the Rules?* (2nd Edition, Jack Kammer, 2002) p.106.
- ^{xxix} Popenoe, David, *Life Without Father: Compelling new evidence that fatherhood and marriage are indispensable for the good of children and society* (New York: Martin Kessler Books/The Free Press, 1996) p.197.
- ^{xxx} Baskerville, Stephen, *Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, Inc., 2007) p.12.
- ^{xxxi} Sommers, Christina Hoff, *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000) pp.129-130.
- ^{xxxii} Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *Father and Child Reunion: How to Bring the Dads We Need to the Children We Love* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2001) p.36.