

Getting Away with Murder



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出版者:

出版时间:1996-12

装帧:

isbn:9780684870489

The reality is that women leave all the time. Often they give up their homes, friends, family, and jobs, all in an attempt to be safe and far from their abusers. And most of the time, leaving doesn't protect them or make them safe. There are millions of women from many different social, racial, ethnic, religious, economic, and intellectual backgrounds, who call the police, testify in court, swear out orders of protection, seek care at hospitals or at the offices of private physicians, detail their injuries, allow their injuries to be photographed, flee to shelters, to friends or family, and even, trusting of the system, bravely name and identify their abusers for police to arrest, prosecutors to prosecute, and judges to sentence. These are the same women who depend on the system to protect them, rely on the good advice and instructions of law enforcement officers and on the judicial process, and in the end are brutally and violently disappointed, if not brutally and violently injured or killed. Domestic violence is a crime. For this reason alone, it must be stopped. To stop it, however, takes courage, not only courage on the part of the victims to report it but courage on the part of every one of us to condemn it for what it is -- a crime. We have approached this issue as a journey, taking everyone -- victims and batterers, as well as men and women who believe they have never suffered abuse at the hands of an intimate partner or have never inflicted it -- through the process of this crime, from the beginning of a relationship to the

beginning of abuse, to the actual physical assaults, to the police, hospitals, social service agencies, shelters, batterers' intervention programs, offices of lawyers and prosecutors, judges, and into the private lives of the victims and their children. This is the only way that we can see to find the weapons needed to stop it from happening again and again, before there is nothing left but shattered lives.

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