



PATTI GOWER/TORONTO STAR

SPEAKING OUT: Los Angeles prosecutor Marcia Clark, who became famous for prosecuting O.J. Simpson for murder, spoke out against spousal abuse at Roy Thomson Hall last night.

O.J. prosecutor Marcia Clark urges war on spousal abuse

Stereotypes about victims, abusers must be eliminated

BY TRACEY TYLER
LEGAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

If every 747 aircraft in North America were packed with women who crashed fatally into a mountain, there would still be fewer deaths than those killed annually in domestic violence, says the world's most recognized prosecutor, Marcia Clark.

But even now, there are "still an alarming number of people" who dismiss spousal abuse as a "normal by-product" of marriage or a private "family matter," the woman who prosecuted O.J. Simpson told an audience at Roy Thomson Hall last night.

But refusing to intervene in a crime is wrong, Clark said, as is buying into stereotypes about the typical "victim" or "abuser."

Assuming an abuser is a poor, uneducated "blowhard" while the victim is similar but more deferential minimizes the problem and can lead to ignoring someone's "cry for help," she said.

"It's not just the vicious, noisy, hard-drinking couple down the block," said the Los Angeles deputy district attorney,

adding that the effect of domestic abuse is long-lasting and widespread.

"It is not their problem, it is our problem," she said. "It is their children, their children's friends and their children's children who will carry the scars with them as they go out into the world."

Surrounded by a stage of flowers and Corinthian columns, Clark, freshly arrived from Los Angeles, was making one of her first public appearances since Simpson was acquitted of murdering Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman in October.

Tight security followed her from the moment she got off the plane. Two Metro police officers were on patrol outside a room in the basement of Roy Thomson Hall, where Clark met reporters beforehand. But there were no questions allowed.

Instead, what was described on her itinerary as a "scripted sound bite" was provided. Clark, in a strong voice masking her slightly trembling fingers, expressed her delight in appearing, saying she felt she had an obligation to do something useful with her celebrity.

On stage later, she said she was speaking publicly for the first time about domestic violence — a cornerstone of her case against Simpson.

"I have wanted to for some time, but I wanted to gather my thoughts on the

matter," she said.

Some audience members who lined up at microphones later also had the subject on their minds. But others had different concerns.

"As a gay woman of the '90s, I want to know, where's the short skirt and high heels?" one woman asked Clark, who wore a black pantsuit rather than her typical courtroom attire.

Clark was speechless. Other questions included the inevitable: Is she dating co-prosecutor Chris Darden? "I'm in Toronto alone."

On cameras in the courtroom: They "definitely have an impact and it's not a good one," she said, adding that she didn't go into the Simpson case thinking that way.

Television pundits "most of whom never tried a case" didn't help, she said. "I hope other judges will learn from this."

During the trial's nine televised months everything about Clark — from her legal strategy "to her hair" — was scrutinized. The Star's deputy managing editor, Mary Deanne Shears, noted in introducing Clark last night.

"I told a lovely woman who gave my hair a touch up before coming out here that, 'all you have to do is give me a quick makeover and that's all they'll report,'" Clark joked. "Her hair. It looks so different!"

CBC short-wave 'Voice of Canada' facing final axe

BY PETER GODDARD
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

Despite its 5 million listeners worldwide, Radio Canada International, the "Voice of Canada," is about to be muzzled for good.

Some of its 120 workers say they expect termination letters as early as tomorrow from CBC officials.

It's a cruel present for the short-wave radio service celebrating its 50th birthday this year.

"We expected the (dismissal) letters last Wednesday," said announcer-producer Wojtek Gwiazda.

"But something stopped (CBC's human resource department) a half-hour before they were going to give them to us. We now expect to get these termination letters this week."

Most of the staff are housed in RCI's cramped headquarters in a nondescript Montreal office building across the street from the CBC's lavish broadcast centre.

Earlier yesterday, Gwiazda's Coalition To Restore Full RCI Funding, a 5-year-old umbrella group of three RCI employee unions and a group of short-wave buffs, expected a last-minute appeal to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien might delay the decision.

Although only a whisper compared to the days when it reached 16 million people, RCI still broadcasts Canadian news in Creole to Haiti,

in Mandarin to China and in Arabic to the Middle East.

Some staffers even hoped daily broadcasts to Canadian troops in Bosnia might stay RCI's execution, but that's unlikely.

"The reason the official notice has been delayed is so that everyone can be informed," said a government source outside the CBC. "But you can say, it's gone."

RCI has been fighting for its survival since then CBC president Gerard Veilleux told Parliament in 1991 that the corporation itself could no longer afford the service.

Slashed from \$22 million in 1990, RCI's current \$15 million budget comes half from the federal government and half from CBC. That funding ends March 31.

Ironically, it was then communications minister Perrin Beatty, now CBC president, who heard the first appeal in 1991 from the Coalition.

Missing fisherman in B.C. found dead

VICTORIA (CP) — Searchers found the body yesterday of a fisherman who disappeared Sunday when a boat with three people aboard capsized off the west coast of Vancouver Island.

He was the second man to die as a result of the mishap. A third man made it to shore.

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