This case examines the difficult choices facing a domestic violence shelter in crisis. Beth George had been on the run from her estranged husband with her two boys for three years. When the shelter hired her rather than another former resident (her roommate at the shelter) for a staff position, the roommate called her ex-husband and told him where they were. Police arrested Beth, sent the children back to their father in Arkansas, and began an investigation of whether shelter staff had knowingly harbored a fugitive. The shelter had just begun a fundraising campaign for a new building, but all financial contributions immediately stopped, throwing the organization into financial crisis. The executive director and staff were under enormous pressure and faced possible criminal sentences. The board had to try to minimize the damage to its reputation in the media, figure out how to keep the organization from failing financially, decide whether to continue to employ Beth George and the executive director who were under criminal investigation, and fend off attacks from fathers’ rights activists.

The case explores the difficult management issues facing an organization and individuals in crisis. It also examines how class, sexual orientation, race, and feminist ideology structure services to battered women. It also provides a window into the difficult job of front-line workers skating on the edge of the law as the law begins to recognize and protect victims of intimate violence. It invites readers to consider how one should decide what and whom to believe. Finally, it considers the significance of grassroots feminist mobilizing to support feminist organizations.