

Erin Pizzey (Part Two)  
Founder, 1971  
Chiswick Women's Refuge, London

### **Struggle for men's groups**

I knew that we needed a house for men. Men who were perpetrators, or men who were victims, but we needed to replicate what we had. And in those days it was called the Greater London Council, and in fact Ken Livingston was one of the members of it. And they gave me a big house for peppercorn rent in the North of London, it was a gorgeous house, and I naively assumed that I would get the same support for men that I would get for women. Now the interesting part is the millionaires who were involved by now who were more than willing to put their hands in for women and children wouldn't put a penny in for other men. They simply wouldn't. And I've talked to men's groups all over the world. You can talk to men's groups, and they'll say exactly the same thing. Men do not support each other over emotional issues. Business issues fine, sports fine, but when it comes to emotional issues men are so used to channeling everything through women, that when it comes to taking care of each other emotionally they don't do it. And the result is what you see in men's groups, all over the world, is lots and lots of chiefs, very few Indians.

### **Men at Chiswick**

...And I must say the most important part of the treatment approach was having men involved. There always were as many men working at Chiswick as there were women and volunteers. Because for me, and this is something the mothers and I discussed before when we first got a bit of money, and the first person we employed was a man to work with children. Because many of the women had said, well my children have never known a good gentleman. All the men in our family and his family have all been violent. And therefore this is very necessary.

### **From Trojan horse to billion dollar industry**

The first people that I got involved to help me with the men, so that we had an outreach to the men, they were nuns. We had a big local convent, and they were brilliant for men, because you know it's very frightening for a man to have another man come in, but the nuns were just wonderful. And many of the men were non-violent. The women, the woman coming in complaining was actually the violent one. So, I never from the beginning could see that it was anything to do with the idea that it was 'the patriarchy.' To me the whole thing was just a false front, it was like a Trojan horse. They came in, they needed the money. they needed a cause under the guise of protecting all women against men. This Trojan horse was then trundled out, and it became a billion dollar industry, which it is.