

### **“Maria”**

Maria,” recounted how her persecutor kept her as his property for 11 years. He referred to her as his dog (“mi perra”) and whistled at her rather than calling her by name. He told Maria she was registered to him like a car, and abused, controlled, and humiliated her at every opportunity. He tied her son up and tried to light him on fire; he mocked her religion and beat her for trying to go to church; he made her wear long skirts and no makeup; he mocked her political beliefs and told her he owned her vote too. Maria reported him to the authorities twice, to no avail. He said he would kill her if she reported him again. He sharpened his machete in front of her, warning that he wanted a clean edge when he cut her head off. Finally, Maria was able to escape and seek asylum in the U.S. The immigration judge found Maria credible and deemed the horrors she endured persecution and torture. Ultimately, the judge denied her case, citing *A-B-* extensively. He found that Maria failed to establish membership in a viable PSG, and that there was no nexus between the persecution she suffered and any protected ground of asylum. Her case is currently on appeal.

### **“Diana”**

“Diana” survived years of extremely violent physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. On many occasions, her husband “Edgar” beat her with impunity. Edgar boasted about punishing Diana specifically because she was his wife, repeatedly threatening to kill or harm her if she fled: “You married me – you are mine. I am your owner. We are married so I can do whatever I want to you.” Diana never requested police protection because there was no police presence in her town. It was also common knowledge in her community that the police generally did nothing in response to calls related to domestic abuse and reporting the abuse could put her life at even greater risk. She finally escaped to the U.S. where she applied for asylum. In denying her case, the judge held, among other things, that Diana needed to first request state protection to prove she didn’t have it.

### **“Beatriz”**

“Beatriz” from Guatemala suffered severe abuse at the hands of her partner “David.” David abused Beatriz with impunity, beating, kicking, punching, shoving, insulting, stalking, harassing, and raping her over a decade. David threatened to use his connections with police and gangs to get out of jail and kill Beatriz if she dared to call the police. David found Beatriz in another city after she tried to escape, but she was finally able to flee to the US. Beatriz asserted her membership in each of the following six PSGs: 1) Guatemalan women who cannot leave their relationship; 2) Guatemalan women who are viewed as property by virtue of their positions within a domestic relationship; 3) Salvadoran women; 4) Guatemalan women in domestic relationships; 5) Guatemalan women who refuse to conform to societal norms; and 6) Guatemalan mothers. Citing *A-B-*, the Immigration Judge rejected Beatriz’s asserted PSGs as not cognizable and found no nexus between the abuse Beatriz suffered and any statutorily protected ground.

### **“Laura”**

“Laura” from El Salvador married “Joel” 25 years ago. Soon afterward, Joel punched her in the face, breaking her teeth which remain broken to this day. He beat her often, explaining that he

was punishing her because she told him she was his equal. Laura escaped to the US and began a relationship with "Paul" with whom she has three US citizen children. Paul began severely abusing Laura, including raping her regularly. He, too, felt that as a man he was superior to Laura. Paul resides in El Salvador and when Laura was initially removed there, Paul found her within one week. She fled again and sought relief in the US. Her claim was initially granted but the government appealed, and the BIA reversed the grant based on *A-B-*. The BIA vacated the judge's determination that the harm Laura suffered was on account of her membership in the PSG: "Salvadoran females."

#### **"Patricia"**

"Patricia" from Mexico suffered severe physical, sexual, and psychological abuse from her domestic partner "Marco." He beat and kicked her, pulled her by her hair, hit her with a machete, punched her in the stomach when she was pregnant, put a gun to her head, threatened to kill her, raped her, insulted her, and beat her children. Over a period of sixteen years, Marco tortured Patricia at will, asserting his right to do so as a man. Patricia fled her home and then her country, but Marco continued to torment her, threatening to kill her when she was deported and forced to return home. She fled again and asserted her membership in the following PSGs: 1) Members in Marco's immediate family; 2) Mexican women in domestic relationships; 3) Mexican women in domestic relationships unable to leave; 4) Mexican women viewed as property by virtue of their position within the domestic relationship; and 5) Mexican women. Patricia's claim was denied because the judge, citing *A-B-*, rejected her asserted PSGs and held that the abuse she endured was not on account of her membership in any of them.

#### **"Anna"**

"Anna" from Honduras married "Victor" who turned very violent during their marriage. On one occasion Victor punched Anna in the face 20-30 times. He dragged her by her hair, beat her to the point of fracturing her nose, attempted to strangle her, and threatened to kill her. Terrified that Victor would carry out his threats, Anna fled and applied for asylum in the U.S. She asserted membership in the following PSGs: 1) Women in Honduras; 2) Honduran women in relationships they are unable to leave; and 3) Honduran women viewed as property by virtue of their positions within a relationship. The judge denied Anna's case outright for failure to assert membership in a cognizable PSG, lack of past persecution, and lack of nexus between persecution and any protected statutory ground. Anna also argued, unsuccessfully, that Victor targeted her because of her feminist political opinion that women are entitled to autonomy and legal rights.