

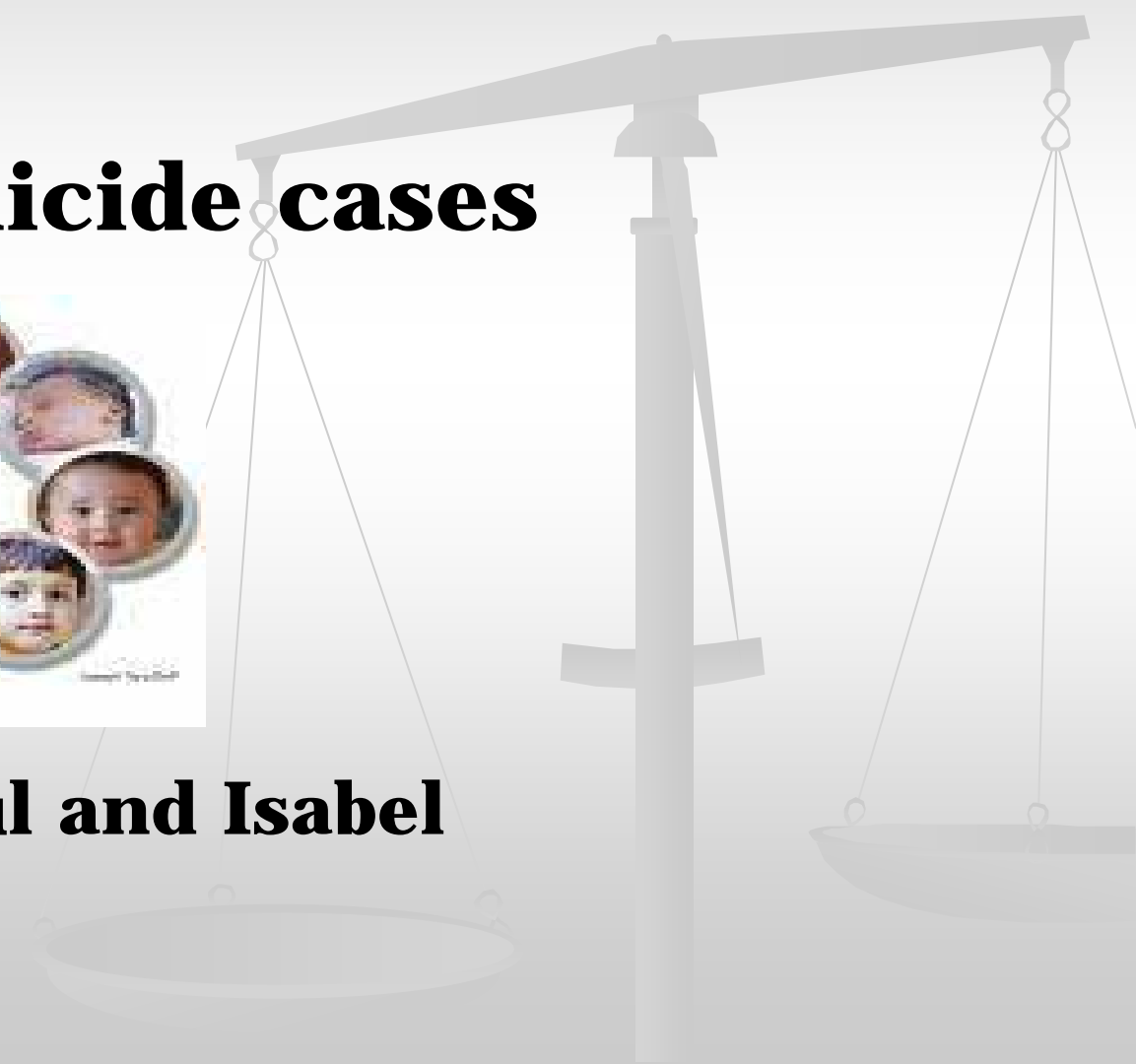
# **The Paradox of State Intervention**

## **in child homicide cases**

**by Janice Sim**



**The story of Paul and Isabel**



# “LAW”



- ★ Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Sections 8, 9(a), 36(c), 43, 48, 233

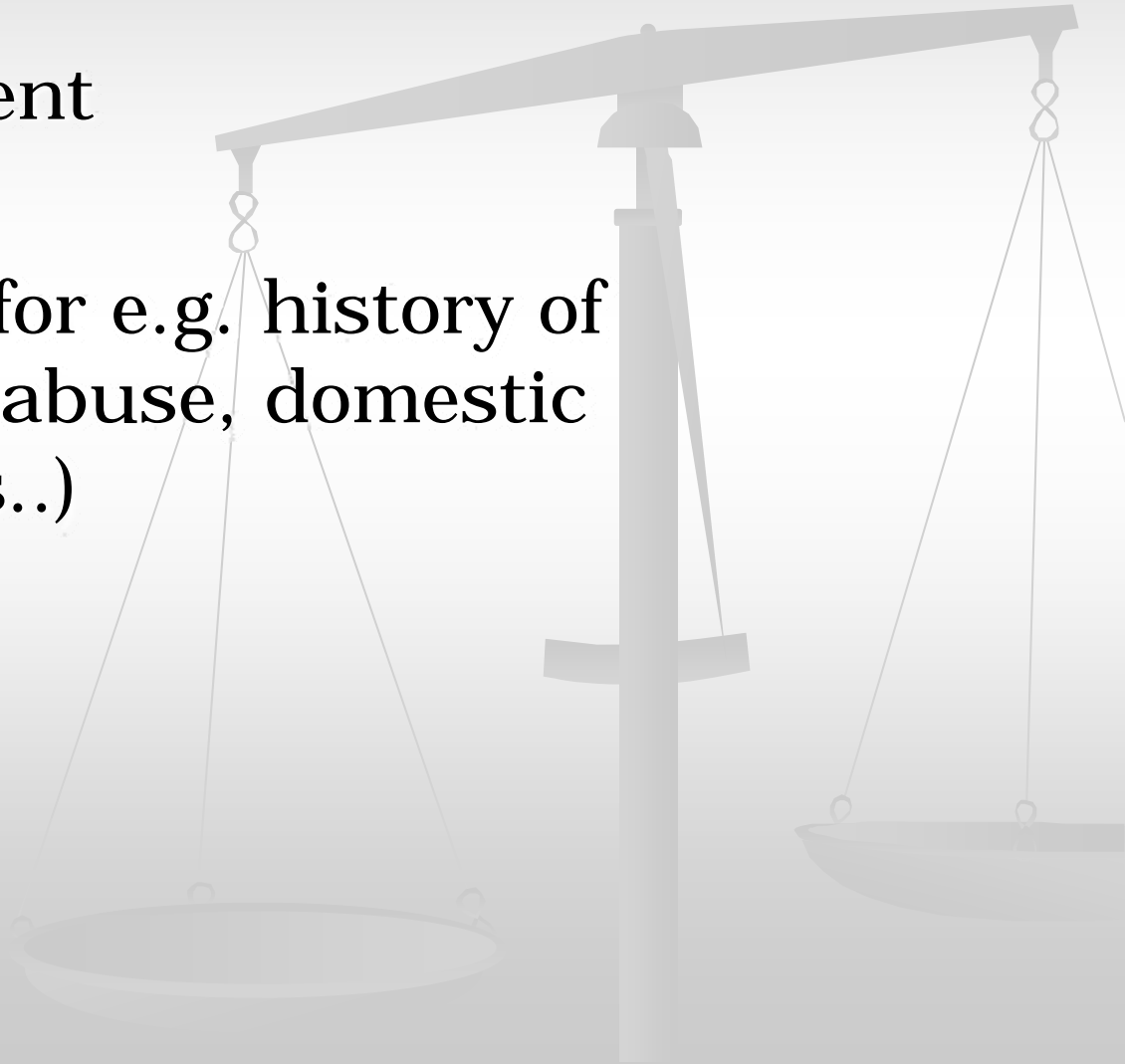
Section 23

- ★ The role of the State

# “DEATH”

*“Where is thy sting?”*

- ★ Disempowerment
- ★ Dysfunction – for e.g. history of violence (child abuse, domestic violence, drugs..)
- ★ Depression



# “LIVES - lost”

Later, Isabel said, “for me, finally taking out an AVO was an admission that the situation was beyond my control and I wanted outside help. I don’t feel that help was adequately given. When I reported the breach the two officers that attended offered me a choice whether to report the breach officially or not. I should not have been offered a choice. [Paul] was not arrested. The next time I reported a breach, it was because he had assaulted me. He was not arrested. On the third occasion he broke the AVO he was to murder the children and my father and take his own life. The AVO system was for me too slow, too cumbersome and sadly ineffective. I felt too much of that onus of responsibility on me... the fact that we had been in a domestic violence situation and the attitude towards that by the police and seen by the public is appalling. There is such a stigma attached to domestic violence yet it is in the family who are assaulted, raped, abused and murdered. It is on domestic violence calls that the police must be their most vigilant. I felt there was a general reluctance by male officers to find out what was really going on in my first two calls... I didn’t think that reporting a breach that he was calling to arrange access was so serious in a significant way because that would screw up someone else’s life such as a job or go to prison.”

# Conclusion

- ★ Awareness
  - ★ Best police practice framework for handling domestic violence
  - ★ Need for greater inter-agency communication and cooperation
  - ★ Need to address strategic failings
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