

Terri Fleming, G'70, calmly sits upright, her fist beating against her shoulder.

“He would pull me down to the ground by my hair, bruising my tailbone or injuring my knees, while pounding his fist against my shoulder all while yelling ‘I never hit you with my fists!’” Terri explained.

Unlike Terri, many women cannot fathom the reality of domestic abuse, but one out of every three women is a victim of domestic violence.

Relishing Life

Life in Germany with Bob Fleming, G'70, could not have been better. Terri taught and was involved in the art arena while Bob was active in the music community. But in 1991 Bob died. Terri returned home for a short while, running into a former classmate in July 1992. Little did she know this was not just a chance meeting. Her former classmate courted her even after she returned to Germany – writing, calling and even visiting. Just six months after becoming reacquainted, they were married.

“Part of me knew things were going too fast, were too perfect, but he was such a good actor,” Terri said.

Only once during the two and one half years they lived in Germany did Terri witness any unsettling behavior, which was quickly explained away as a disagreement with his mother. In fact, she was so comfortable with her new husband she divulged intimate details about the abuse she suffered at the hands of her father. This would later come back to haunt her. To Terri, her seemingly loving husband was sympathetic and understanding.

“I willingly believed everything he said. It all seemed so perfect,” Terri said.