



The Victim Advocate Committee presents...

SPEAK OUT!

June 2017

Welcome to **SPEAK OUT!**

This newsletter is intended to be an informative, educational, and uplifting publication. Many of the articles will be written from members of the Victim Advocacy Committee as part of the Domestic Violence Task Force. If you would like to submit an article or comments please visit our website.

 www.pinellasdvtf.weebly.com

 facebook.com/PCDVTF/

 Mark your calendars for the upcoming Domestic Violence Task Force Meetings

July 18, 2017

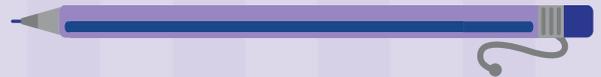
September 19, 2017

November 21, 2017

 5771 Roosevelt Blvd.
Clearwater, FL 33760



A Word From Our Task Force Chair



Thank you for taking the time to read the first bi-annual Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force newsletter! We are so happy to share some of the terrific work being done to open up conversations and provide education about domestic violence. The PCDVTF is made up of a cross section of our community working to have a coordinated community response to end domestic violence. By reading this you are making steps to be a part of that mission. We would love to hear from you about the efforts you or members of this community are making to eradicate domestic violence. Together we can come up with strategies to be better at eliminating domestic violence in the future. Please feel free to share this newsletter with anyone you think would benefit or would like to be a part of our movement to reduce domestic violence and

**keep Pinellas County a safe
and just community!**

- Bobbie Hodson

Who Can Help Me?

Misdemeanor Domestic Violence



Alexis Upton

Lead Trial Attorney



In this issue we highlight Alexis Upton, the new Lead Trial Attorney for the Misdemeanor Domestic Violence unit at the State Attorney's Office. Alexis grew up in northern Virginia. She attended Virginia Tech for her undergraduate studies, where she was a double major in Political Science and International Relations with a minor in French. She loves college football, especially the Hokies (Virginia Tech). Alexis typically makes it to at least one Virginia Tech game a year. During college, Alexis studied abroad in Paris twice and lived in Paris for several months after graduating from Tech. She can still speak and understand some French. Alexis went to law school at Stetson University in Gulfport, FL. She was a part of the prosecution clinic during her last semester of law school at the State Attorney's Office in Pinellas County. Following that experience, she knew she wanted to be a prosecutor. She was hired as an Assistant State Attorney and worked in Pinellas County for four years. When she left, she was handling felony cases, including child abuse cases, and was a member of the DUI Manslaughter Squad. She eventually left the State Attorney's Office to do civil defense work. Alexis worked in civil defense for approximately 3.5 years. Through this experience, she gained a lot of great trial experience and worked under talented trial attorneys.

Ultimately, Alexis missed being a prosecutor and went to the State Attorney's Office in Orange/Osceola County in April 2015. She was a "general felony attorney" in the Kissimmee office. Alexis handled a range of cases including aggravated assaults, aggravated batteries, burglaries, etc. The vast majority of her cases had victims and she worked with a victim advocate on a near daily basis. Throughout her career, she has tried over 45 jury trials. The opportunity arose for Alexis to return to the State Attorney's Office in Pinellas County to become the Lead Trial Attorney of the Misdemeanor Domestic Violence division. She returned to the State Attorney's Office in Pinellas County at the end of November 2016. There are four other attorneys in the division.

Since returning to the State Attorney's Office in Pinellas County, Alexis has become active in the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force. She volunteered to chair the Steering Committee of the Task Force and has been working closely with members of the Task Force in the development of trainings related to Intimate Partner Violence and Strangulation. These trainings are designed for law enforcement, prosecutors, medical personnel, or anyone looking to better understand and assist victims of domestic violence.

Alexis Upton can help law enforcement by answering case related questions.
727-464-6221

For general case information, contact the victim witness department at the state attorney office
727-464-6090



COMMUNITY HEROES



Law Enforcement : Officer David Green

Officer Green has been employed by Largo Police Department since January of 1995. During the summer of 2016, Officer Green recognized a need and began to find a way to address it. Specifically, domestic abusers were calling their victims from jail, violating their “no contact” orders, and manipulating their victims. Officer Green took on the task of listening to hours of jail calls. He did this in addition to his regular call load. Then, in an effort to hold abusers accountable for their behavior, he completed arrest affidavits and reports for violation of pre-trial release, with multiple affidavits for multiple days of calls. In addition, if he identified tampering with a witness behaviors on the calls he would also add that new charge. Officer Green recognized that some of these abusers did not learn from the new charges and continued to violate. So he continued listening to their calls, creating new affidavits, and began respectfully requesting that the judge revoke the abuser’s phone privileges (as a consequence). The judge frequently did so. The dynamics of domestic violence are complex and frequently victims are manipulated into resisting prosecution. In the cases Officer Green was working, even if the underlying domestic battery charge was not prosecuted, the violation of pre-trial release charges were. They were easy to prove and did not require the cooperation of a victim. Officer Green’s efforts send a clear message to abusers that their behavior will not be tolerated and they will be held accountable. This creates safety for victims and our community in general. His efforts are commendable. As such, he is a community hero.



Community Leader: Ellen Woll

Ellen Woll is a co-founder of JAEDA, the Jewish Alliance to End Domestic Abuse, and has served as JAEDA’s chair since its inception. Under her leadership, JAEDA has brought many domestic violence educational programs to the community; including, Elder Awareness: How to Protect Ourselves and Those We Love. She is currently working hard on the October 2017 presentation of “The Yellow Dress” at Saint Petersburg College. Ellen is an active member of the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force and serves on its Primary Prevention Committee. She participated in the Task Force’s Court Watch program. She has sent letters and made follow-up calls to Pinellas County Schools to bring dating abuse awareness programs to parents. Ellen is a past president of the Clearwater Chapter of Jewish Women International, an organization that works hard to educate and advocate about healthy relationships. She has also chaired the Temple Ahavat Shalom’s preparing and serving of a Christmas dinner at The Haven. This event takes place every year.



Assistant State Attorney: Elizabeth Zuroweste

Elizabeth Zuroweste has been at the State Attorney’s Office for over 10 years. She is a hard working prosecutor that devotes herself to each one of her cases, and as her supervisor puts it, “with an additional flare for domestic violence cases!” Elizabeth understands the dynamics of domestic violence relationships and takes it upon herself to ensure the safety of the victims she is working with. She reaches out to victim advocates for assistance so that victims are receiving information on all the services and resources available to them. She maintains contact with victims throughout the criminal justice process to keep them informed and to simply check in. Outside of her work with victims in the courtroom, she has made donations to local domestic violence shelters. Thanks for all you do, Elizabeth!





October Domestic Violence Awareness Month



Domestic Violence Awareness Walk
October



CASA Peace Breakfast
October 19th



Haven Luncheon
October 17th



The Yellow Dress Presentation
October 19th



**Purple Dot Yoga
Free Yoga Class**
October 28th

For more detailed information about these events
please visit our website!
www.pinellasdvtf.weebly.com

How Can You Help?

Do you, or someone you know, have a service you can donate for victims in need?
e.g., moving company, medical, counseling, yoga, locksmith ..etc

The Local Domestic Violence Centers Need:

#1 Children's Clothing

#2 Air mattresses

#3 Baby Wipes, Pacifiers, Diapers, Rash Cream

If you are able to donate items or services please contact

Katie Gardner at 727-464-6090

If unable to drop off, an advocate can pick up your donations.



Advocate Contact List

Age 60+	570-9696
CASA	895-4912 (South)
CPD	562-4420
HAVEN	442-4128 (North)
LPD	587-6730
PCSO	582-6259
PPPD	369-7864
SAO Advocate	464-6090 (Small PD's)
SPPD	893-7780
Suncoast	530-7273 (Rape Crisis)



IN THE NEWS

Man that shot Orlando cop had history of domestic violence

By: Amanda Harrington

In December of 2016, 24-year-old Sade Dixon was fatally gunned down while pregnant with Markeith Loyd's child. Dixon and Loyd were dating for three months when Dixon moved back into her parents' house. She told them that she got into a physical altercation with Loyd and he reportedly bit her in the back, which caused her to have to get a tetanus shot. He arrived at her home three days later and shot her. He also fired shots at her brother, but he survived. Two weeks before Loyd shot Dixon, he posted on Facebook saying; "Goals!!!! To be on Americas most wanted."

Loyd was evading arrest for the shooting, and was later captured after killing an Orlando Police Lieutenant Debra Clayton. He was charged with first degree murder with a firearm, unlawful killing of an unborn child, attempted murder, and aggravated assault. He has a total of ten charges against him.

Turns out Loyd has an extensive criminal record, which includes domestic violence charges. His ex-wife, Lacarsha Robinson, filed for divorce and filed for a temporary injunction against him, but it was dismissed. She pressed domestic violence charges against Loyd but those were also dismissed. A family member of Robinson said that Loyd fired shots at her in October of 2015. The other charges that he has on his record (that goes back for decades) include dropped murder charges, cocaine trafficking, and battery on a corrections officer.

Florida "Accused Serial Killer" Has Domestic History With Victim



By: Katie Gardner, Victim Advocate

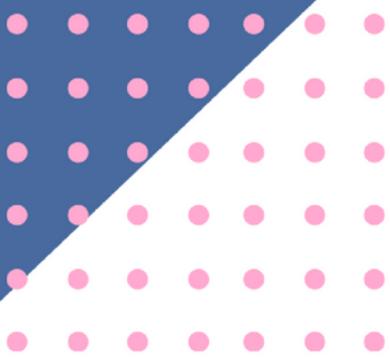
Tuesday, January 31, 2017, Alicia Greer and Jacqueline Moore were found dead in the Emerald Sands Inn in Santa Rosa County, Florida. Friday, February 3, Peggy Groz was found dead in her home in Baldwin County, Alabama. Monday, February 6, Kayla Crocker was shot and killed during a home-invasion in Escambia County, Florida. Four lives lost, tragically and unnecessarily.

The one thing all of these cases have in common is William "Billy" Boyette and Mary Rice, Boyette's accomplice. Their crime spree came to an end in West Point, Georgia where Boyette committed suicide and Rice was captured during a stand-off. Rice is being charged with capital murder and robbery in Baldwin County, Alabama for the death of Peggy Groz. It is believed that Groz was killed in order for Boyette and Rice to steal her vehicle. In Santa Rosa County, Florida, Rice faces a charge of accessory after the fact to the first-degree murder charge for the deaths of Alicia Greer and Jacqueline Moore. In Escambia County, Florida, Rice is facing a first-degree murder charge in the death of Kayla Crocker.

Boyette has an extensive criminal history. In 2003, Boyette plead guilty to aggravated assault in Florida's Santa Rosa County and served a small jail sentence. He was also arrested for felonious possession of a firearm following his release from jail. There were numerous attempts to charge Boyette with domestic violence offenses in Santa Rosa County, but his spouse would not cooperate.

Prior to the stand-off in West Point, Georgia, Boyette's brother spoke out about his violent history. Boyette's violence and rage started at a very young age. When Boyette was 4-years-old, he knocked the family's dog out after hitting it over the head with a hammer. In junior high, Boyette is alleged to have raped a young girl at a party. Boyette spent multiple stints in jail, only to become more criminally intelligent. He often threatened violence on members of his family.

Alicia Greer, one of the victims in the double homicide in Santa Rosa County, Florida was an ex-girlfriend of Boyette. Their relationship started in November of 2016, and everything seemed fine, until Alicia's parents got a call she was admitted in to the hospital. Greer had sustained a black eye, cut on her lip, cut on her forehead, busted lip, and bruises all over. Greer disclosed to her parents that Boyette had kicked her in the face and knocked her out. Once she came to, she'd realize he'd stolen her car. Santa Rosa County had issued warrants for his arrest on battery, kidnapping, and grand theft charges. Her parents reflected that, although they never met Boyette, they had a bad feeling about him. Not too long after, the parents got notified of their daughter's murder. Greer was shot so badly, that the family could not have an open casket at her funeral. Alicia Greer was 30 years old.



Crime Victim Compensation

Financial Assistance May Be Available For Victims of Crime

What You Should Know

The Office of the Attorney General may provide financial assistance for eligible crime victims, but only after all other sources of payment have been exhausted.

- ✓ Medical/Dental Expenses
- ✓ Mental Health Counseling
- ✓ Wage Loss/Property Loss
- ✓ Loss of Support
- ✓ Funeral/Burial Expenses
- ✓ Disability Compensation
- ✓ Domestic Violence Relocation
- ✓ Human Trafficking/Sexual Battery Relocation

Contact your local law enforcement agency and a victim advocate can assist in filling out the application.

How To Apply

Submit a completed and signed claim application via email to vcintake@myfloridalegal.com, via fax to 850-414-5779 or 850-414-6197, or via mail to the address below:

Bureau of Victim Compensation
The Capitol, PL-01
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050



Applications can be found at myfloridalegal.com under the victim advocacy department tab



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & POLICE RELATED SHOOTINGS

By: Katie Gardner, Victim Advocate

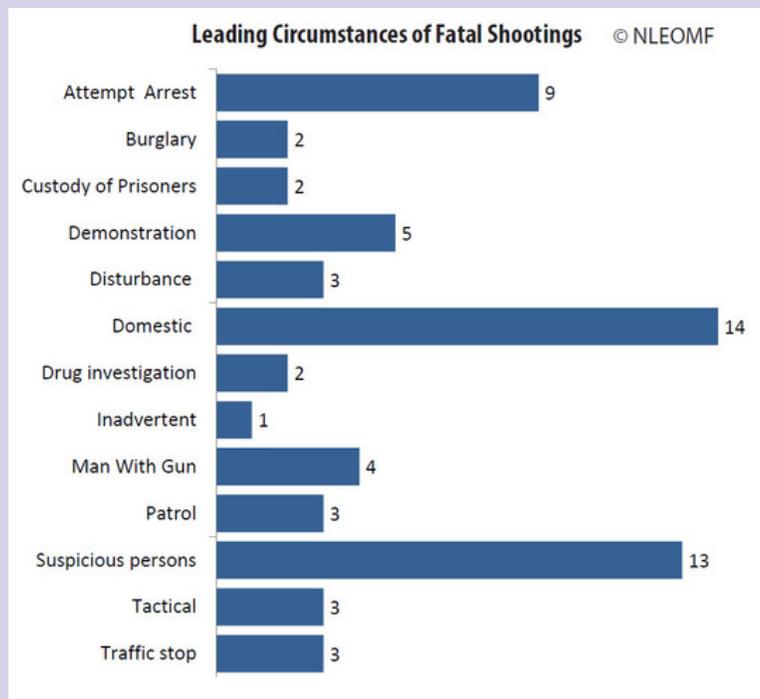
Domestic violence calls are one of the most, if not the most, dangerous calls for officers to respond to. These calls have so many moving parts that often times, an officer responding doesn't know the situation they're entering into. Individuals involved are highly emotional, there may be drugs or alcohol involved, or one party may have a weapon, for instance, a gun.

If a gun is involved, the situation is extremely dangerous. When responding, officers may not know whether the incident has already occurred or whether it is still in progress. They may not know whether the perpetrator is still on scene or has fled. The perpetrator may have left and returned. It's important to keep in mind that the perpetrator can go from zero to 100 at the flick of a switch.

No matter what the information given to the responding officer is, the situation could easily have changed in the minute(s) it takes to arrive on scene.

Officers are killed most often when they are arriving on scene. The perpetrator knows they're coming – it's an ambush of them. Because the nature of domestic violence is maintaining control over the victim, the officer who is arriving is coming and taking away that control.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund's Fatalities Report, 135 officers were killed in the line of duty in 2016. The largest number of these fatalities was firearm-related with 64 officers being shot and killed across the country. Of these 64 fatalities, 14 were domestic related.



Domestic violence calls are incredibly lethal calls for everyone involved. The unpredictable nature of the call means everyone involved is at risk – officer, perpetrator, children, and victim. These perpetrators feel threatened; they are losing control of the situation. They want to maintain power and control over their victim and prevent outside help from taking that power and control away at all costs. Sometimes, that cost is loss of life.

Early November 2016, here in Pinellas County, Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies were responding to a domestic call in Lealman. While officers were arriving on scene, they saw John Zemola ramming his truck into his wife's car and into her house. Zemola's wife told deputies that she was out with friends and when she returned home, she saw him destroying her home. As the deputies started to approach Zemola, he reversed his truck out into the street, but the truck became disabled.

Zemola exited the truck with a knife. Deputies order him to drop the knife and Zemola responded, "You're going to have to kill me." Zemola began to approach the deputies, and when he was 3-5 feet away, they fired multiple rounds, striking Zemola in the upper body. He died on scene.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & POLICE RELATED SHOOTINGS

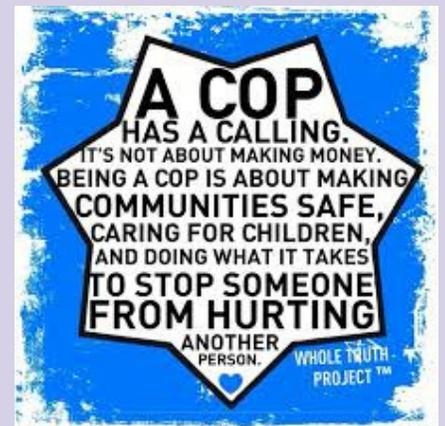
Zemola had a history of mental health related issues and had been drinking at the time of the shooting. He also had 6 prior battery arrests and one prior assault on a law enforcement officer arrest in Pinellas County. Later in November of 2016, an eerily similar incident took place in Lealman. Deputies responded to a call from the neighbor of a woman whose boyfriend had been violent and was intoxicated. The woman went to the neighbor's apartment following the dispute. After the incident, the girlfriend had scratches on her neck. Deputies responded to the girlfriend's apartment, but no one answered. Deputies knocked again, stating they were Sheriff's deputies, and William Beavers, age 43, hurriedly opened the door and charged at one of the deputies with a large knife shouting, "You're going to have to kill me." The deputies drew their weapons and asked Beavers to drop the knife. When he refused and came closer, they fired several rounds. Beavers died on scene.

In 2016, domestic related police calls were the leading cause of shooting deaths of officers

In December 2016, a man in Palm Harbor was shot by Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies while responding to a domestic call. Stanley Eversol, 55, had threatened his girlfriend for days because she had won a free vacation and elected to take a friend instead of him. He further threatened that if she called police, he would kill them. Deputies received the call from the daughter of a friend of Eversol's girlfriend. She'd gone over to check on them and saw Eversol in the yard with a crossbow. Upon arrival, deputies saw Eversol pointing the crossbow at the window. He then came out, pointed the crossbow at them, and threatened to shoot them. Two

deputies across the street fired semi-automatic rifles at Eversol, shooting and killing him. Each of these three situations could have easily turned lethal for the officers involved. Training is vital for a safe response to domestic violence calls. These calls should be treated as high priority and potential homicides. Officers should approach carefully and use discretion, and they should always respond with another officer.

On March 15, 2016, Jeffrey Falsey, 24, shot and killed his mother's fiancé in Lealman. During the domestic dispute, Falsey shot more than 30 rounds at deputies and wounded Deputy Michael Ficocelli. The fiancé, Daniel Kulwicki, 68, was found dead inside the mobile home. Deputy Ficocelli received a gunshot wound to the leg and was taken to Bayfront Health St. Petersburg. The incident is said to have begun over an argument about donuts. Falsey was out on bond for a domestic violence charge when the shooting occurred. He has a vast history of domestic violence, serious mental health issues, and an arsenal of firearms and weapons given to him by his father. When deputies knocked on the door, a voice inside told them to come on in. The deputies did not feel comfortable entering the home at that point, and spoke through the door. While speaking through the door, they heard the first rounds of shots being fired. The deputies scattered, hiding behind cars while bullets were flying. Falsey was watching his destruction from inside through a video surveillance system. In his possession, he had a shotgun, a TEC-9 semiautomatic pistol, a .223rifle, a .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun, and an abundance of ammunition. What seems like an incident that lasted mere seconds is reported to have lasted two hours. Falsey was taken into custody by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.



Each of these four situations could have easily turned lethal for the officers involved. Training is vital for a safe response to domestic violence calls. These calls should be treated as high priority and potential homicides. Every person involved in a domestic violence call is at risk – officers, witnesses, bystanders, everyone. For many of these shootings, the shooters have an extensive violent history with multiple failed opportunities for intervention. These men are dangerous. They are murderers. Officers should approach carefully and use discretion, and they should always respond with another officer.

How Batterers Get Victims to Recant

The 7 Stages of Manipulation

The Victim is Strong and Determined

Step 1

- Victim resists the accused perpetrator's account of what happened
- Heated arguments from jail between couple about what happened



The Perpetrator Turns Himself into The Victim

Step 2

- He minimizes the abuse
- Perpetrator appeals to her sympathy by telling her how he is suffering
- Victim feels guilt / regret / worries for him & tries to soothe him



The Couple Bonds Over Their "Us Against Them" Love for Each Other

Step 3

- They imagine how terrible it will be without each other
- He convinces her the court system is trying to hurt them & their family



The Perpetrator Asks the Victim to Recant

Step 4

- He tells her she has the power to keep him out of jail
- The victim feels his life is in her hands
- She believes she will be hurting him by cooperating
- Victim agrees to recant



Step 5

The Couple Constructs Their Recantation Plan

- He gives her specific instructions on what to say
- They view the court system as the enemy that wants to keep them apart or destroy their family



Step 6

The Batterer is Emboldened

- The batterer has learned that his actions have no lasting consequences
- The batterer has learned that his victim can be manipulated



The Cycle of Violence Begins Again

Step 7



Is this Happening to You?

- Contact a local victim advocate for help or to discuss your options
- If there is a no contact order in place and you are being contacted by perpetrator-please report it to law enforcement

A Look at Esteban Santiago

By: Chakia Harris

Most Americans will witness or experience a traumatic event at some point in their lifetime. Violent crime, death, and illness are just a few incidents of traumatic events that can change lives forever. Esteban Santiago committed a heinous crime that many Americans will remember for the rest of their lives. The Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport shooting killed five Americans and injured others. No matter the circumstances, U.S citizens live in fear in regards to safety and security within their own nation. Many ask why Esteban Santiago would or could commit such a horrendous act. However, Santiago's behavior and struggles with mental illness may have been a direct indicator of his dangerous and malicious intentions.

Esteban Santiago was born in New Jersey and moved to Puerto Rico with his mother and brother when he was two-years-old. There appears to be no history of delinquency throughout his childhood, however Santiago

would engage in behavioral patterns that would link him to criminality later in life.

While joining the Coast Guard, Santiago was deployed to Iraq for about one year.

It was reported that he was strongly affected by seeing a bomb explode near 2 of his friends. Santiago was reported to have few issues while serving until he was

discharged for less than satisfactory performance. For about two years Santiago

would move to Anchorage, Alaska where he met his girlfriend. Santiago was 24, his

then girlfriend, Gina Peterson, was 40 years of age. Santiago had a history of and

was a known batterer. Abusers employ many methods of control and live to instill

fear within their victims. Santiago was employed by a security company based out

of Nebraska and appeared normal. Coworkers stated that he was soft spoken and never appeared to be violent or unstable. Santiago never

spoke of his personal life and was liked by many coworkers; however, once away from the public eye Santiago would employ a form of

terrorism that approximately one third of American women will experience within a lifetime. That form of terrorism is domestic violence. Law

enforcement in Anchorage was called to Santiago's home January 18, 2016 after Peterson alleged that Santiago had broken down a bathroom

door, hit her on the head, and began to strangle her. The case resulted in a deferred prosecution agreement. Santiago was served with a no

contact order and was caught violating this order when police spotted him at Peterson's home. Abusers often ignore no contact and

restraining orders. Regulation of such an order poses a conflict for law enforcement as well as victims since the victim is sometimes required

to report the violation. Santiago later entered a mental health facility after he had disclosed to authorities that he had voices in his head telling

him to engage in terrorist activities for the Islamic State (IS). Santiago was released four days later and was diagnosed with no mental illness.

Santiago was able to obtain a firearm because a judge had not committed him and he possessed no criminal record.

Batterers and abusers often use firearms to intimidate their victims. Santiago planned the attack and boarded a plane from Anchorage to Fort

Lauderdale. Santiago carried only one bag with an unloaded 9mm Walther PPS. Santiago had apparently researched gun laws in Florida and

knew he was within his legal right to fly with a gun in the state of Florida. After receiving his bag, he went into a restroom, loaded the gun, and

fired, killing five people. The five victims were all over the age of 55.

The case of Esteban Santiago demonstrates what can occur when criminals are permitted to walk away with domestic violence diversion

even after felony crimes are committed. Gina Peterson, as well as the five brave men and women who were murdered, received no chances

in regards to their lives and their loved ones. Such an event should demonstrate what occurs when firearms are placed in the hands of violent

criminals especially those with domestic violence histories. If Santiago plead guilty to the felony domestic violence case, he would not have

been able to own or possess a firearm.



Batterer Behaviors

Warning Signs of a Possible Abuser

-  **Jealousy**
Jealous of your time with family, friends, co-workers, etc.
-  **Controlling**
Tries to control your comings and goings, your money, what you do and what you do talk to. Insists on "helping" you make decisions.
-  **Blaming**
The abuser's job, lack of job, family quarrels are often your fault.
-  **Isolation**
Cuts you off from your supportive resources such as family, friends, co-workers, or community activities.
-  **Hypersensitivity**
Easily upset by the annoyances of everyday life. Cannot take criticism of any kind.
-  **Verbal Abuse**
Says cruel and hurtful things. Degrades, humiliates, and objectifies you.
-  **Threats of Violence**
Says things like, "If you leave, I'll kill you." "If you do...I'll beat you."
-  **Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde Personality**
Sudden mood swings and unpredictable behavior; loving one minute, angry and punitive the next.
-  **"Playful" Use of Force During Sex**
May throw you down and hold you down during sex. May start sexual acts while you are sleeping or demand sex when you are sick or tired.
-  **Cruelty to Children or Animals**
Insensitive to their pain or suffering. May tease and/or children and animals.
-  **Past History of Battering**
Has been violent towards past significant others or spouses, but has lots of excuses; says he was "pushed over the edge".



FEAR OF REPORTING BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Rebecca Jordan, Victim Advocate

As Advocates we strive to help all victims, no matter the color, religion, age, citizen, or non-citizen status. Our relationship in our communities depend upon our knowledge of resources and the ability to have the trust of our citizens. It took a long time to get to this point of being known as people who will help victims get through some of the most difficult times in their lives. Along with the fear of actually reporting the crime, is the stress of living as an invisible community with limited resources to help them. We cannot go back to the days when there was no help for victims, especially victims of domestic violence. There was a time when domestic violence was considered a family problem. Police were not able to help these victims and could only say, "Work it out." Once the officers left the beatings continued, and sometimes got worse. It took a lot of hard work by many different people to change the laws for victims of domestic violence.

Cecelia Friedman Levin, Senior Policy Counsel for Asista, an immigrant justice group, said that "Abusers commonly threaten victims that reaching out for help will result in their removal or separation from their children." She further stated, "Before the executive orders on immigration, the advice advocates would commonly give is that the police are here to help, that there are policies in place that protect all victims. But now, depending on the jurisdiction, those advocates may pause before giving that same advice, especially if they're seeing increased immigration raids in their communities and given the wide breadth of enforcement priorities laid out by the Administration."

The Los Angeles Police Department said in a statement : "While there is no direct evidence that the decline is related to concerns within the Hispanic community regarding immigration, the department believes deportation fears may be preventing Hispanic members of the community from reporting when they are victimized." Such fears are not limited to California. Many women's rights activists were disturbed by the arrest by immigration agents of an undocumented woman at a courthouse in El Paso, Texas, immediately after she sought a protective order against an abusive ex-partner. "Sadly, it appears that aggressive tactics, including arresting people at courthouses, are having a chilling effect. The result is that more victims will be vulnerable to abuse.

"No person should fear that reporting a crime or going to court will put them at risk of deportation," said Michael Kaufman of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California. Standing up for our victims no matter who they are is not only what we do but is the human thing to do. The beginnings of advocacy was a battle to get victims of domestic violence to speak up, take their power back, not be afraid of their abuser, and not be afraid of the system. Don't put them back in the shadows.

Some things advocates can do:

1. Get to know the immigrant communities in your area.
2. Have procedures in place for handling translation needs.
3. Advocate for immigrant victims when they are unable to.
4. Listen to what they are saying about their history, culture, and values and most importantly fears.
5. Develop a relationship of trust and respect.

Free trainings provided by the PCDVTF

- Strangulation
- Teen Dating Violence
- Be a Better Bystander
- Intimate Partner Violence for Prosecutors



DID YOU KNOW?

➔ **Defense attorneys contact victims in the early stages of a criminal case?**

Many times the victim does not understand who this person is. These calls may be scary, intimidating, and even misleading. A victim has the right to ask to have an assistant state attorney present when they speak with a defense attorney, but may be unaware of this right. It is crucial for those involved at the beginning stages of a case to prepare the victim for this.

➔ **Live felony investigations are a vital component to the decision to file in a criminal case.**

It is important to ensure the victim has sufficient notice prior to an investigation. There are many barriers that domestic violence victims may face in an attempt to make it to an investigation. Job demands, child care, lack of transportation, are just a few examples. Some agency policies include that victim advocates and/or law enforcement officers provide transportation for victims to and from the investigation. Review your agency's policy and see how you can help!

➔ **Individuals charged with domestic related offenses are held without bond until their advisory hearing.**

Victim safety is of the utmost importance and making sure the offender is correctly charged allows the victim time to find a safe place and prepare for possible release. Eg. Elder abuse vs. Elder abuse (domestic related)

➔ **Domestic and dating violence offenders are to be held without bond until their advisory.**

In the time from the arrest to the advisory hearing, these abusers are incessantly contacting their victim to manipulate her into dropping charges, changing her story, bonding him out of jail, etc. These calls can be solid evidence in the criminal case and possibly bring about new charges.

Featured Resource

Jena Blair, Esq., Interim Executive Director for Programs,
at jenab@gulfcoastlegal.org or 727-821-0726.

Gulfcoast Legal Services

According to a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Persons in poor households at or below the Federal Poverty Level ... had more than double the rate of violent victimization as persons in high-income households.” Sadly, individuals without financial resources often go unrepresented as victims of crime because they do not know their rights and cannot afford legal counsel.

Founded in 1978, Gulfcoast Legal Services (GLS) is a 501c3 nonprofit legal aid organization that exists to serve vulnerable individuals and families in Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties. The agency represents victims of crimes such as elder abuse and exploitation, financial crimes, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. GLS collaborates with local shelters, victim advocates, and law enforcement via a services coordination plan. GLS offers comprehensive legal services, at no cost to clients, and typically refers clients to partner agencies for counseling, advocacy, and other services, including housing/shelter services and assistance obtaining victim compensation. Clients come to GLS through outreach and educational events, printed information, word-of-mouth, and referrals from medical, law enforcement, community agencies, etc., as well as from the regional legal aid call center.

Highly qualified teams of family law, immigration, tax, public benefits, housing, and consumer attorneys, paralegals, and legal secretaries provide high quality civil legal services to address the consequences of victimization. Services for clients include but are not limited to protection orders and family law and housing services to victims of domestic violence; intervention with creditors/lenders and other entities on behalf of elderly victims of exploitation, identity theft or financial fraud; assistance with custody matters for elderly victims or seniors caring for relative children; and immigration assistance and victim’s rights enforcement for victims of human trafficking.

Gulfcoast Legal Services strives to meet clients’ holistic legal needs and welcomes partnerships with law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, advocates, mental health providers, and medical professionals. For more information on GLS and its services, please contact Jena Blair at 727-821-0726.

