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FOCIS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2016

I'm a Female Wrestler and a Victim of Domestic Abuse

Being a strong woman means being allowed to be vulnerable and ask for help.

BY JADE , WWW.XOJANE.COM

As a female professional wrestler, I understand the pressure female athletes feel to serve as role models to other women by being strong and letting them know that they can shatter any glass ceiling. (Note to women reading this: Yes, you can!)

But being a "victim" doesn't seem to fit into the narrative of being a strong woman. When people see me, they see a muscular woman who wrestles both men and women. They think that I can surely take care of myself, and kick ass if a man ever tried to raise a hand to me. The reality is that I was a victim of domestic violence, and for so long I felt pressured to be silent around my own abuse, allowing it to continue behind closed doors.

Not only was I embarrassed by what was happening, I stayed silent because I didn't want to be known as a victim. In order to be a top female wrestler, I needed to be perceived as a strong woman, not a victim. Besides, I was working with World Wrestling Entertainment's (WWE) NXT program, and my ex and I were both working with TNA Impact Wrestling at the time, so I felt I had to protect both of our careers.



FRONT PAGE STORY cont.

That's why silence seemed like the best option. But I know now that silence allows the issue of domestic violence to thrive. The statistics are loud and clear: 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. I never had a black eye, but whenever my ex didn't like something I said or did, he would choke me. Eventually, I realized that his mindset was, "because I'm not leaving a mark on you, it's OK."

I was recounting this experience with Brian Pacheco of Safe Horizon, an organization that helps victims and is trying to change the way we talk about domestic violence, who informed me how much danger I was really in. He told me that strangulation can be a significant predictor for future, often lethal violence. I was stunned to learn this. Looking back, had I stayed, I wonder if I would still be here today.

I'll never forget the red flags: The time he kicked my injured knee. The times he kicked or punched our dog. Or the time he scooped me up and put me in a closet. I laughed because there was no lock, I could simply get out. But he put the chair between the closet and door so I couldn't open it. The situation freaked me out, and I couldn't call for help because he took my phone. I broke down that door and finally fought back. But he took me down with ease and wrapped a towel around my neck.

Many people don't expect victims to fight back. But many of us do. Do we not deserve to protect ourselves? I was so in love with him though that I wouldn't give it my all, only fight back enough to get him off.

FRONT PAGE STORY cont.

I knew I had to leave the relationship. And when I finally told people, more often than not, I wasn't believed. Some of our mutual friends thought I was exaggerating and making it up.

In fact, when I filed the order of protection, my ex's trainer tried to talk me out of it. He told me that I was hurting my ex's career because I have a bigger name and so I should be more considerate.

But it was when I told other female athletes, other female wrestlers, that my heart sank. When I disclosed my abuse to them, many disclosed the same to me. Today, I shatter that silence. Because being a strong woman means being allowed to be vulnerable and ask for help when we need it. And we should be believed, not blamed.

You may have noticed my purple nail in some of my recent matches. I started painting my nail last year when I first saw Safe Horizon's #PutTheNailInIt campaign to end domestic violence; it was my secret way to say, "I survived." Now, I paint my nail to let other survivors know I believe you. It's OK to speak out. It's OK to seek help.

Join me and take the #PutTheNailInIt vow to end domestic violence. No one should have to suffer in silence.

Charged With Rape, He Pleaded No Contest To An Assault Charge. Now He's Suing His Victim.

Tyler Kingkade Senior Editor/Reporter, The Huffington Post, www.huffingtonpost.com

After four years, two criminal trials, and finally a plea agreement, a former University of California, Davis student thought her rape case was settled last month when her attacker received his jail sentence.

Then just a few minutes after the sentencing hearing on July 19, Yee Xiong was served with papers for a civil lawsuit accusing her and family members of defaming Lang Her, the UC Davis classmate she accused of rape.

“Just when I thought it was over, it was not,” Xiong told The Huffington Post. Xiong reported to police in July 2012 that she woke up after a night of drinking at a social gathering to find Her sexually assaulting her.

Following two mistrials, Her pleaded no contest on May 13, 2016, to assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury.

Her was sentenced last month to one year in jail, five years' probation and a requirement to register as a sex offender, in addition to paying restitution to Xiong. He must surrender to serve his jail term on Aug. 30, according to the Davis Enterprise.

But after pleading no contest to the assault charge, Her filed a \$4 million civil lawsuit on May 20 against Xiong and several members of her family, accusing them of defamation. “I feel like the nightmare doesn't end,” Xiong said.

Charged With Rape, cont.

The suit says Xiong and her family members defamed Her by calling him a “rapist” on Facebook, and claims they “colluded” to brand him as such, especially among the Hmong community. (Both Xiong and Her are Hmong.) One family member, the lawsuit complains, used Halloween photos of Her “without permission or consent” to present him in a “false light.”

The civil suit, if it’s not dismissed, could mean Xiong would have to go back to court on the defense, explaining how it was not defamation for her family to call Her a “rapist” after reporting him for rape.

Her told investigators at first that he didn’t have any sexual contact with Xiong, only to later change his story to say he did and it was consensual. His story changed after forensic testing revealed his DNA in swabs from Xiong, according to local reports.

Her’s family offered to have him marry Xiong, she said in court, and when that failed, offered to give her any amount of money she wanted in hopes of avoiding punishment for him. Xiong believes that the civil suit is an attempt to intimidate her family.

“I think it’s outrageous for someone to try to silence his rape victim through the legal process,” Xiong said, noting that because a restraining order is in effect, Her can’t contact Xiong or her family members, either directly or through a third party. “But he’s using this to continue to harass my family and me,” she said.

Prosecutors charged Her with rape of an unconscious person, rape of an intoxicated person and sexual battery.

Her pleaded no contest rather than facing a third trial in the case, after two concluded in mistrials. The first case ended with a jury hung 8-4 in favor of acquittal; while the second had the jury deadlocked at 10-2, leaning toward a guilty conviction.

Woman in Slain Family Had Planned To Leave Husband That Day: Report Authorities are still investigating the Domestic Violence-related mass shooting.

Melissa Jeltsen Senior Reporter, The Huffington Post, /www.huffingtonpost.com

A Pennsylvania woman who was found dead alongside her three children and her husband was planning on leaving the marriage, her neighbor told The Reading Eagle.

On Saturday, police discovered the bodies of Megan Short, 33, her husband Mark Short, 40, and their three children: Willow, 2, Mark, Jr., 5, and Liana, 8. all of them had been shot, as had the family dog. A handgun was recovered near one of the adults, as well as an apparent murder/ suicide note.

Angie Burke, a neighbor who lives near the deceased family, said Megan Short had posted on Facebook about needing help moving out of her house on Aug. 6, the same day police uncovered the grisly scene during a welfare check. A family member had contacted police after Short failed to appear for a lunch date.

The Berks County District Attorney Office said there was a history of “domestic issues” between the married couple, but did not confirm the identity of the suspected shooter. An autopsy of the father is scheduled for Monday afternoon, and the investigation is ongoing. “This is an apparent tragic domestic incident,” the office said in a statement.

Burke said that last month, she posted a story to her Facebook wall about emotional abuse. Short commented on the link, Burke said, writing that it was the reason why she was leaving her marriage.

The family had been featured in news stories because their youngest child, Willow, was a heart transplant survivor.

As The Huffington Post has previously reported, the majority of mass shootings in the U.S. are related to domestic violence. Fifty-seven percent of mass shootings, defined as incidents in which four people were fatally shot, not including the shooter, involve a perpetrator targeting a family member or intimate partner, according to five years of data compiled by Everytown For Gun Safety.

The New York Times analyzed mass shootings in 2015, using a broader definition of violent episodes in which four or more people were killed or wounded by a firearm, including the shooter. In 2015, it found that 31 percent of all mass shooting deaths were related to domestic violence.

Around three women a day are killed in domestic violence homicides. Advocates warn that the most dangerous time for an abused woman is when she is attempting to exit the relationship.

Need help? In the U.S., call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

HAPPENINGS

ANGER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Wednesdays, 6-7:30pm. Co-ed six week group, start date contingent upon sign-ups. must be a FRTH registered patient. Full attendance required for a certificate. \$40 fee for non-native clients. (No couples & NOT for Court Mandates). Contact Tom @ 532-6811, ex 270

POSITIVE PARENTING & POSITIVE PARENTING OF TEENS

is done on an individual basis as space and time allow. \$30 fee for non-native clients. For info or sign up, Contact Mark @ 532-6811 ex 249.

FOCIS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Women's Support Group Tuesdays 3 p.m. to 5p.m. Self-validation & processing of abusive relationships. Intake assessments must be done before entry into the group. For info, contact Brittany@ FOCIS PROGRAM, 532-6811 ex 270.

BRAVE AT HEART CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

For anyone who has been touched by Cancer Meetings every 3rd Wednesday starting Feb 17th 2016 6:30 to 7:30 pm Call Ashley, 532-6811 ex.272

GUYS TAKE CHARGE GROUP

Thursday afternoons, 3:30 to 4:30 Guys from 10 to 13 are invited For info or sign-up call Ashley, 532-6811 ex 272

THURSDAY CRAFT GROUP

Explore both Modern & Traditional forms of beadwork. Thursday afternoons from 3:00pm to 5:00pm in the South Conference room, call Mark @ 532-6811 ex 249. for info or sign up.

NEW GROUP

Mothers Strong Support Group
New Moms Supporting New Moms Through Baby's Challenging First Year!
Contact Tracy or Diana to sign up (530) 532-6181

RED ROAD TO WELLBRIETY MEETING

For those that have suffered alcoholism and drug addiction and other forms of self-defeating behaviors, you can walk the 12 steps of the Red Road to recovery.
WEEKLY MEETINGS ON WEDNESDAY @ 6.00 PM @ FEATHER RIVER TRIBAL HEALTH
530-534-5394
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

LOCAL DV SERVICES

FOCIS PROGRAM SERVICES

Advocacy Services, Restraining Order assistance, court accompaniment, Community education and in-service training, Crisis intervention services, Women's Talking Circles, Resource information & referral service. Feather River Tribal Health 530-534-5394 ext. 270

Catalyst DV Services

24-hour hotline for DV intervention & referrals, Emergency Shelter, Children's Program at HAVEN, Transitional Housing & Household establishment Drop-in centers, Individual counseling, Support groups, Restraining Order assistance & Court Accompaniment, Community Outreach. 24-Hour Hotline 800-895-8476 Oroville Drop-in Center 530-532-6427

SHARP (Self Help and Referral Program)

Self Help center that provides general assistance to people who do not have attorneys. Assistance is provided in the areas of family law, guardianships, evictions, small claims, name changes, and restraining orders. 1675 Montgomery Street Oroville, 530-532-7015



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