

IN THIS ISSUE

FRONT PAGE

I Didn't Know a Man
Could Be Abused by
a Woman

Page 2

FRONT PAGE STORY
cont.

Page 3

FRONT PAGE STORY
cont.

Page 4

She Was Shot And
Survived. Now She
Has To Relive The
Worst Night Of Her
Life.

Page 5

She Was Shot cont.

Page 6

If The Senate Can
Agree On One Thing,
It's Basic Rights for
Rape Survivors

BACK PAGE HAPPENINGS

STAFF

Erik Lyon
BHS
Director

BRITTANY
FOCIS
Program
Coordinator

**Mark
Kroll**
Editor
& Newsletter
Design

FOCIS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2016

I Didn't Know a Man Could Be Abused by a Woman

A staggering number of men are victims of domestic violence by their female partners.

By Julie Schwieter Collazo www.goodhousekeeping.com

When Jacob Noll was growing up in the Midwest, he could never have imagined he would experience domestic violence. "I was a straight, white guy in a normal, small town that kind of catered to people like me," he says wryly. "My family was really close. My folks are still together. There were no big family problems that would have given me some kind of a window into how dark the world can be." Yet Noll spent several years in such darkness after falling in love with Courtney, a woman he met online.

Courtney was a year older than Noll, and from the start, he was enchanted by her presence online. She was pretty, he says, but more than that, she found him funny and engaging. Noll says he "made a play" to meet Courtney in person, they lived a few hours apart from each other, and was disappointed when she declined. But a year later, in 2006, she emailed Noll "out of the blue." She was just out of a relationship and asked if he wanted to get together. "I ran at it," he says of her offer. "It was an adventure to get to know her because she lived far away."

It was the summer of 2006, and Noll was 22 years old. He was a somewhat rudderless college grad; he wanted to do big things, but wasn't sure what that looked like. Instead, he poured his energies into nurturing a relationship with Courtney. She was charming and funny, but also vulnerable. He thought he could help her, perhaps be her knight in shining armor. The long-distance relationship progressed quickly. Even from the beginning, Noll saw signs of volatility, but he always found a way to write them off, even when they involved Courtney's episodes of drinking too much and passing out. "I would always put it back on myself and say, 'You're a guy who's not good with emotions and feelings. You're dumb, you're a dunce, and she just knows more [about feelings]," he admits.

It's easy for Noll to look back now and see the trajectory of emotional and verbal abuse that led to physical battering, but at the time, Courtney's behavior and words convinced him that the problem was his alone. She was emotionally volatile and from the beginning, exhibited extreme mood swings, but Noll was sure that, as a man, he just didn't understand women's emotions. "A relationship like that warps your thinking," he says. "I took every mood swing at face value and trusted it, took it seriously, and was willing to believe I was the cause of it." He knew he was in too deep, but he was also uncertain about how to turn back. He proposed to Courtney. It wasn't long before the physical abuse started.



FRONT PAGE STORY cont.

One of the first episodes of battering occurred as the couple was preparing their wedding invitations. Courtney, who was drinking more frequently, was also becoming increasingly violent. While working on the invitations, Courtney was "sneaking away and getting drunk," Noll recalls. When she returned, "she slapped and punched me. Then, she actually got on top of me and started choking me..

He says he tried to postpone the engagement, but Courtney became hysterical at the suggestion. "She was on her knees, apologizing while holding my wrists very tightly, making a big show of being sorry, and it worked." By summer 2007, they were married.

Noll still didn't accept that he was a victim of domestic violence, mainly because it never occurred to him that a man could be abused by a woman. But though women are three times more likely to be killed or seriously injured by a male partner than vice versa, up to 29% of straight men in the United States have been the victim of physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. (Even more, up to 48%, experienced psychological and emotional abuse at the hands of their partners.) Each year, more than 830,000 men are victims of domestic abuse, that's one every 37.8 seconds.

Still, Noll continued to try to "be a good guy and do the right thing," he recalls. Because Courtney was manipulating him emotionally and verbally, he was willing to believe he was the one with the problem. He felt compelled to help Courtney with her emotional instability. "I believed if I could be good enough, that I could help put things together and help manage this very unmanageable person," he says.

No one in their circle of family and friends knew that Noll was already being abused by his wife. He had alienated his friends by throwing himself into the relationship with Courtney, and he worked hard to conceal her behavior from others, even when she ended up in a psychiatric hospital for a brief episode of inpatient treatment. She continued the verbal and emotional abuse, and the physical violence persisted. The couple would fight for hours at a stretch, ending only after exhausting themselves. "She could go and go and go and beat you down until you're suddenly on your knees, crying and apologizing, and you don't even know why." Noll's social ties were effectively cut, and he was alone. He knew his marriage wasn't healthy, but he continued to feel the weight of responsibility: "I was very focused on being an upright, 'good guy.'"

Increasingly, however, Noll couldn't write off Courtney's attacks. Physically cut off from everyone else in his life, he used email to slowly reveal his abuse to his one remaining friend and the pastor at his church. "But even then, I was using this coded language, like 'She's strong willed. She has emotional outbursts. Things are tough, she's moody.'" The idea of being abused was one he still hadn't articulated, which is not uncommon for men, who struggle to reconcile domestic abuse with ideas about masculinity.

But the terrifying tipping point came when Courtney discovered Noll's emails and confronted him. "She was just devastated," he recalls. "I had *talked* about her, like I'd told tales out of school or something. This was an atom bomb in our relationship."

FRONT PAGE STORY cont.

Noll adds that he felt guilty for hurting her so deeply. "I had committed a grave sin. Talking about these awful experiences was breaking the code of silence around the relationship, so in the logic of this relationship, she had the right to be broken and devastated."

It wasn't until his parents intervened that Noll articulated he was being abused. One weekend, when he and Courtney were supposed to go home for his brother's birthday, Noll called his parents to say Courtney wouldn't be joining him. He continued to shoulder the blame, saying he thought his marriage was in trouble and that he'd "done something terrible," but his parents broke through the defense. "My dad asked, 'Has she ever hit you? And I said, 'I'm not going to answer that,'" Noll remembers. "That's what started it. To hear my parents' voices, these two people who love me and have good heads on their shoulders, made a light bulb come on for me."

It would take more than a year for their divorce to become final, and extricating himself from the relationship and abuse wouldn't be easy. "I was still religious and I was hanging onto that and I said to my parents, 'You can pray for us.'" It wasn't until his father said, "Jacob, I think this situation has had enough prayer," that Noll realized he had to get out. "I knew she wouldn't change, it was no longer my responsibility to help her change, and it was the first moment I realized I was in an abusive relationship," he says. But recognition of the abuse didn't eliminate the barriers to leaving the marriage. Noll wasn't confident he could get out of the house safely and he had to make an escape plan with the help of his family.

Leaving a marriage defined by domestic violence hasn't been the end of Noll's challenges. The divorce took more than a year to finalize. And Noll had to get a restraining order to prevent Courtney from contacting him: She had shown up at his workplace and snuck into the basement of the home they had lived in. Even when that was behind him, the effects of the abuse rippled across the rest of his life. "I didn't even really start dating again until I was 27," he says, and a serious relationship, his first since the divorce, ended last summer. "In some ways, it was harder," he says, because "there's something neat and tidy about the person you were with being a monster."

These days, Noll is in therapy, where he's working to unpack the past so it doesn't repeat itself. "I don't live in fear that I'm going to be hit again," he says, "but I have a lot of work to do on myself. What's the trauma and what's just the way I am? I'm conflict-avoidant. I have a concern about big shows of emotion, unstructured, out-of-control emotions. I've had to learn about boundaries and how to talk about my own interior life without fear." He's relied heavily on family and friends, reconnecting after being isolated from them during his marriage, and written a book, called *The Love Bomb*, which has been a key part of his healing process.

While he's not currently in a relationship, "I'm taking a break from relationships" he says, he's hopeful about the future. "It was a big shock learning that something that scary, unpleasant, and toxic could find me," he says. But today, he finally feels free, from an abusive relationship.

She Was Shot And Survived. Now She Has To Relive The Worst Night Of Her Life.

“Knowing I have to see him is making me panic.”

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

Kate Ranta had work to finish and a flight to catch from Washington D.C. to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when a wave of anxiety surged through her. She dashed to the bathroom, afflicted with what her fellow domestic violence survivors call “court stomach.” “I feel like my skin is crawling,” she wrote in a Facebook post last week. “Knowing I have to see him is making me panic.”

Almost four years since the night Ranta was shot, the trial for her ex-husband Thomas Maffei is set to begin with jury selection in Broward County, Florida. Police say Maffei, a retired Air Force officer, pulled the trigger on Ranta. He is charged with two counts of attempted murder, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, false imprisonment and other crimes. If convicted of the most serious offense, he faces 25 years to life in prison.

Every day in the U.S., an average of three women are killed by their intimate partners, abusive boyfriends, husbands and exes. Firearms are the most popular weapons of choice; one analysis found that a woman is fatally shot by a current or former partner every 16 hours.

In 2012, the year Ranta was shot, an estimated 202 Floridians died in domestic violence homicides. (Ranta didn’t get to cast a vote in the presidential election because she was in the hospital recovering from her injuries.) That number doesn’t include the countless other women who survived homicide attempts, often with debilitating physical and psychological injuries, and lived on to tell their stories.

Police say that on Nov. 2, Maffei showed up unannounced at Ranta’s apartment in Coral Springs, Florida, and tried to forcibly gain entry. The couple had separated a year earlier and were going through divorce proceedings.

She Was Shot And Survived. Now She Has To Re-live The Worst Night Of Her Life cont.

Ranta had had temporary protective orders against her estranged husband in the past, but at the time of the shooting, he was no longer subject to one.

Ranta and her visiting father, Robert Ranta, held the door closed, but Maffei fired three times through the door and then barreled through, shooting once more, according to police. Ranta was shot twice, in her chest and her right hand. Robert also had two gunshot wounds, one in his side and one in his left arm.

William, Ranta's then four-year-old son, witnessed everything. When police arrived, the boy told them that his dad shot his mom. Maffei was arrested at the scene.

"I could feel myself dying," Ranta said. "I thought I'd die on the ground, in front of William."

In the years since the shooting, Ranta has become an outspoken advocate for stricter gun laws, speaking out about the link between domestic violence and firearms and appearing in a documentary on the National Rifle Association. She's now a national spokesperson for Moms Demand Action and a survivor fellow with Everytown for Gun Safety. This summer, she spoke on the steps of the U.S. Capitol during House Democrats' sit-in to protest inaction on gun bills.

Meanwhile, Maffei has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him. His defense attorney, Fred Haddad, told HuffPost he intends to show that his client suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder due to his military career, and was over-medicated on the day of the incident. "He had issues regarding the medication, that I think will be addressed," Haddad said.

If The Senate Can Agree On One Thing, It's Basic Rights for Rape Survivors

A rare moment of bipartisanship brings the nation closer to much-needed help for sexual assault victims.

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

The Senate voted unanimously to approve legislation enacting new rights for rape survivors. The Sexual Assault Survivors' Rights Act, sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), would provide sexual assault victims a right to be informed about the results of forensic testing of their rape kit, and the right to have their kit preserved free of charge until the relevant state's statute of limitations has expired.

Amanda Nguyen, the 24-year-old founder of a nonprofit called Rise, lobbied Shaheen to introduce the bill. Nguyen was sexually assaulted in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and currently has to officially request every six months that her rape kit not be destroyed, although the statute of limitations in the state is 15 years.

"It's been 10 months now since Amanda Nguyen first walked into my office," Shaheen said in a statement. "The system failed Amanda and so many other survivors of sexual assault across the country. Today, the Senate has sent a message that it's time to change the culture around how survivors are treated in our criminal justice system."

In a separate statement, Nguyen urged the House to pass the legislation because it "will have a profound impact on the lives of the more than 25 million survivors of sexual assault across the U.S."

Shaheen's legislation was tacked onto the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act, a bill to provide federal funding to improve the tracking of sex offenders through state registries. Her proposal would also set up a working group established by the attorney general and secretary of Health and Human Services to coordinate and disseminate best practices on the care and treatment of sexual assault survivors and related forensic evidence.

The bill is endorsed by the Rape Abuse & Incest National Network, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, International Association of Forensic Nurses, Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Separate legislation introduced in the House urges states to adopt their own laws providing sexual violence victims the right to prompt testing of a rape kit, and the right to a counselor or advocate. The House resolution simply urges states to do so, but does not create any right as the Senate bill does.

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 DOMESTICE 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**

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



This project was supported by the Grant no.2013-WF-AX-0025 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), U.S. Department of Justice, and through Grant Award Number DS13041660 from the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA). The points of view, opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibit are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or of Cal EMA. Cal EMA reserves a royal-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, and the use materials and to authorize others to do so.