



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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I have written many articles and recorded many public service announcements on the topic of domestic violence. Especially in October, as this is Domestic Violence Awareness month. The aspect of domestic violence that I wanted to address in this article was how friends, families, and co-workers respond (or in many cases do not respond) to domestic violence situations.

In February 2014, a Crandall, Texas police officer and his wife were found dead in their home. Sergeant Nick Pitofsky fatally shot his wife, Vanessa, and then himself. Here is the official quote from the Crandall Police Department; “[He] was well respected by his peers and will be deeply missed by the city and department as a whole.”

Also in 2014, we all witnessed an elevator surveillance camera capture Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice viciously assault his then girlfriend and drag her lifeless body into a hotel hallway. The Raven’s organization tweeted “Janay Rice says she deeply regrets the role she played the night of the incident.”

Notice the public reactions to these two incidents by co-workers and employers. In the case of Crandall Police Department, their spokesperson failed to consider that the sergeant was a *murderer*. In my book, it is difficult to attach the word “respect” when this man killed his wife.

The Baltimore Ravens largely supported Rice. At his press conference Rice stated “I won’t call myself a failure. Failure is not getting knocked down. It’s not getting up.” Given the circumstances, this was an ironic, if not thoughtless statement, that falls right in line with the with the demonstrated disconnect to the issue of domestic violence that the Ravens displayed.

Many famous people have discussed how it was common knowledge that O.J. Simpson routinely battered his wife, Nicole. Is this as frustrating to you as it is to me? In light of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Americans have been told, “If you see something, say something.” Why doesn’t this apply to domestic violence? When you hear a co-worker discuss troubling information about his or her intimate relationship (either as a potential perpetrator or victim) please, speak up.

The worst possible outcome of an abusive relationship is death. As I write this, several of the murders we are prosecuting are domestic violence related. It is my hope that friends,

family members, and co-workers will not stand by and excuse the behavior, or ignore the behavior until it is too late. There is help and there is hope if we can intervene sooner than later.

On October 24, 2015, our office will host the 5th Annual Justice Run. Proceeds from this race benefit Family Services of Tulare County and Central California Family Crisis Center in Porterville. These fine organizations stand ready to help families in need and we support their efforts. This 5k, and one mile walk, honors Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to support two tremendous organizations and it is also an opportunity to meet members of community who are dedicated to stopping domestic violence.

For the first time our race will be held in Porterville, at Granite Hills High School. For more information, please contact (559) 636-5471 or visit our website at www.da-tulareco.org/justicerun.htm.

I look forward to seeing you there and please remember, there are no silent crimes. Report domestic violence and let us help.

Tim Ward
District Attorney