

## ***Domestic Violence is on the Rise***

Tabitha R. Brown, Esquire

The statistics are troubling. Every 15 seconds, a woman is beaten by her husband or partner in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Four million American women experience a serious assault by a partner during an average 12-month period.<sup>2</sup> On the average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends every day.<sup>3</sup>

We watched the national news stories covering the Prince George's County, Maryland woman, Yvette Cade, who was doused with gasoline and set on fire by her former husband after the judge, Richard Palumbo, dismissed her case and lifted her protective order. We read the Essence magazine article, *The Secret Shame of Prince George's County*, which investigated why domestic violence is increasing at an alarming rate in one of America's most prestigious Black communities.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline at (1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-799-SAFE) defines domestic violence, "as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.

Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together or who are dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels."

If you are a victim of domestic abuse or know someone who is a victim, there is help!

- Develop a safety plan for you and your children.
- Call 911 if you are in danger or need immediate help.
- Get medical attention if you have been injured and keep copies of your medical records. Take photographs of scars and bruises and record a written description of when you were injured and what happened.
- Keep some money, change of clothes, spare keys, and important documents in a safe place (other than your home) in case you need to leave in an emergency.
- Contact your local domestic violence program for information about the law, shelters, counseling, legal help, and more ways to keep you and your children safe. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence provides a comprehensive list of Domestic Violence Service Providers by county at: [http://www.mnadv.org/dv\\_providers.html](http://www.mnadv.org/dv_providers.html)
- You can apply for a protective order from any Circuit or District Court clerk or District Court commissioner. All forms are available at: [www.courts.state.md.us](http://www.courts.state.md.us).

<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigations

<sup>2</sup> Issues and Dilemmas in Family Violence: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*, February 2003.

---

The author, Tabitha R. Brown, Esq. is a practicing attorney with **The Law Offices of Tabitha R. Brown** located in Washington, DC. Attorney Brown's practice focuses on Contract Law which includes matters involving Business/Corporate, Employment, Family, Foreclosure and Bankruptcy, General Counsel, Health Care, Homeowners Associations and Condominiums, Immigration, Real Estate, and Wills, Trusts and Estates.

Attorney Brown is available for speaking engagements, article submissions, and legal consulting. Contact: [tbrown@tabitharbrown.com](mailto:tbrown@tabitharbrown.com) or (202) 544-5790.