

Episode 56



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.
Music provided by: David “Drumcrazie” Curby
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*****Brady legal music*****

JJ

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*****Brady musical introduction*****

JJ

Welcome back, everyone to Red, Blue and Brady. COVID-19 has caused a lot of really specific concerts, right, when it comes to gun violence and domestic violence. Namely, that, you know,

close quarters, financial anxieties, health concerns and rising gun sales are all bringing extra stress into the home and could lead to more severe or even lethal cases of domestic violence.

To discuss this, I'm joined by the great Ruth and Rachel, both from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the NCADV, which is the nation's leading grassroots voice on domestic violence. Then in our Unbelievable, But segment for a little bit of levity in these times, we're talking about the risk of alcohol, karaoke, and guns. Now finally in our news segment we're wrapping up with a long list of remembrances of individuals lost to gun violence.

*****music plays*****

JJ

So Rachel, Ruth, thank you so much for calling in today. I know much like those who work in gun violence, those who work in domestic violence have been far busier than we would ever like to be in these last couple weeks. But, you know, just knowing that domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in a death than those involving other weapons or bodily force. Just knowing that is a really scary statistic.

And I want to unpack all of that and unpack what people can be doing in this time. So let's go ahead and jump right in and can I start by having you two introduce yourselves?

Ruth Glenn

Okay. Certainly. My name is Ruth Glenn. I'm the chief executive officer of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Rachel Graber

I'm Rachel Graber, I'm the director of public policy at the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

JJ

Could you tell me a little bit about the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence? What is it that you do, just a little bit about your organization?

Ruth Glenn

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence works with three pillars in regards to providing a voice for survivors as well as holding abusers accountable and supporting advocates. We do that through many of our projects. We have a couple of programs that support that work and then certainly on our public policy side, which is really addressing any legislative or policy issues federally that might impact domestic violence victims and survivors and or the people that provide them services. We're definitely a part of that and make sure that there's no due harm and that every available means of safety and supporter is afforded to domestic violence victims and survivors.

JJ

And it's such a noble cause with such an important cause. And I'm assuming one where, you know, as we have to talk about domestic violence in the time of COVID-19, one that you're very concerned about. I'm assuming that you all have been exceptionally busy recently, and I was wondering if you could tell our listeners you know a little bit about why there's such a concern about domestic violence around COVID-19?

Ruth Glenn

It's well known that proximity for victims of domestic violence to their abusers is always problematic, right, and in this time, when we're being asked to self-isolate, quarantine, stay at home, stay in place whatever the terms are that are being used. If you are sharing a space with a potential abuser or and someone who's already caused you harm, it only enables the abuser. These COVID protocols and COVID actions that need to be taken only enable the abuser to have one more tool or one more means at their disposal by which they can commit this abuse. Isolation being a prime factor, financial, all of those types of abuses are exacerbated during this time.

Rachel Graber

So I guess the only thing that I would probably add is that because you mentioned, we know that one form of abuse that is very, very common is financial abuse. About 99% of people who experience physical violence also experienced economic and financial abuse. And so you have situations in which a survivor has left an abusive relationship, has found alternate housing, has a job and is rebuilding financially, but is still financially and housing insecure.

And what we see in times of economic crisis, a lot of these survivors are low wage workers. They're the first people who are laid off, and so if they don't have the financial resources to continue paying their rent, continue paying their bills, there's a higher risk that they might end up having to return to an abusive relationship in order to really have their basic financial and housing and nutrition needs met. And that's a particular concern right now because we again are facing a financial crisis as well as a public health crisis. We also know that, due to the social distancing requirements, shelter capacity is lower than normal because people just can't be as close together so you can't fit as many people into a shelter. And so we're concerned about reduced capacity at the same time as there may be and we've heard from direct service providers that there's an increased need.

JJ

Well, and I think there needs to be awareness too that when we're talking about domestic violence, we're not just talking about violence between, you know, significant others. It's violence within the family, right? So this isn't just one particular type of violence, and as you pointed out earlier too, like it can be financial, it can be emotional, it can be physical it can be threatening to kick someone out of their home in the time of the virus. So there's a lot of forms this could be taking too. So one size fits all solutions don't work quite so well.

Ruth Glenn

Right. I would also have us think about you know, that there's two pieces that you bring up, which is first what is the definition of domestic violence? And it's pretty wide ranging, but we

have chosen to stick with that term. So that it is understood that in most instances it is someone who claims to whether they're male, female, no matter what a social, economic or background or faith or whatever they come from. But the one that is usually committing the violence is the one who is supposed to care for you. So that that does, you know, give you that broad definition. And then secondly, the types of violence and you are absolutely correct that during COVID we can see it.

You know, I was speaking with someone the other day and they just couldn't believe it, and I said, you know, it's amazing the links that abusers will go through to keep control of a victim or survivor. And I have a picture of, uh, and I can speak from experience. I'm a survivor of domestic violence myself. Pretty horrific domestic violence. But I can see an abuser using COVID as a means by which they not only isolate or financially, but even use that as a threat against a victim. I will throw you outside. You'll never be allowed back in, and you'll get the virus, you know. So there's all of these different ways COVID can exacerbate and really intensify the types of abuse that might be occurring and then let's say add a firearm to that mix and you've got some really bad news going on.

Rachel Graber

But I think there's also more opportunities for power and control, both in people being isolated but also the COVID-19 pandemic, it really opens up new avenues of power control. You know, Ruth was talking about the way that people are using the virus itself to threaten, to coerce, to control. So it's one extra tool in an abusers arsenal, no pun intended.

JJ

And the additional thing and sort of why, in particular, I was really excited to speak to both of you today because I think it's so important is we're seeing a rise in gun sails across the board and seeing just some chatter online now about sort of the rise in maybe domestic violence incidents that have involved a gun. And that really concerns me, because I've read quite a bit that you know the number one way victims die from domestic violence is by a gun. And I was wondering if we could talk about the intersection then of guns in the home and how those can become very dangerous to people.

Ruth Glenn

Absolutely. So I'll start from an NCADV perspective, which is our acronym of course. We have made guns and domestic violence, firearms and domestic violence a priority of ours for years cause we know that it is a dangerous intersection, and when someone has access to a weapon, a firearm and they have the ability to coerce, threaten, harass or commit, God forbid, lethal acts with a gun. Then domestic violence survivors are put in further danger and further risk.

We lose 53 women on average a month in the United States in regards to guns, gun violence and domestic violence, that's appalling. From a place of what we do about this as far as our efforts and on policy and projects and prevention and those types of things, they haven't changed much, but we are very, very concerned about COVID and its impact for those that are abusers who have, like I said before, much more proximity. And if they have a weapon, a firearm, a gun, um, it is very, very dangerous and the intensity by which victims might be experiencing that abuse

with a firearm. I can't even imagine what that must be like. And I think that we'll be seeing more in regards to that.

Rachel Graber

I would also note that one thing that we are concerned about and again I don't know, but you can't understate the importance of social distancing and flattening the curve. So, um, everything that we're saying we're not critical of what's happening. We completely support everybody's need to maintain public health and public safety. So with that disclaimer, one thing that we are concerned about is we're seeing a lot of courts, either transitioning to finding services a different way or closing, and, as you know, protective orders often either, they include language to prohibit respondents from possessing orders, or um understate state or federal law, often prohibit respondents from possessing firearms.

And so in cases where court access is diminished or or not available, we're really concerned that abusers will be able to maintain control of firearms because there's no court available to issue protective orders, and we know that a lot of courts are being really flexible and innovative and making sure that while simultaneously complying with social distancing guidelines, they are able to still hold hearings and issue protective orders. And we really, really appreciate that, applaud that. We also know that in some jurisdictions law enforcement is being told not to respond to any crime that is not violent, which would include things like, for example a violation of protective order that doesn't include physical violence.

So again we know that a lot of our frontline domestic violence programs, shelters advocates are working very closely with their local communities with their courts, with their law enforcement to make sure that protective orders are still issued, protective orders are still enforced and we again, really applaud those efforts and cannot overstate the importance of all of the work that our direct service providers are doing. They're doing an amazing job to support victims and survivors of domestic violence.

JJ

And so, on that end, can you tell me a little bit about the program you have DISARM?

Ruth Glenn

So one of the projects that NCADV has this is called Disarm Domestic Violence that's disarmedv.org, it's a collaborative effort between us, The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, The Alliance for Gun Responsibility and Prosecutors Against Gun Violence, and it's an interactive tool that helps victims and survivors to understand what the laws are in their states related to domestic violence and firearms. It's a multifaceted tool. It's designed not just for victims and survivors, but also for domestic violence advocates for lawyers, for lawmakers, for students. For anybody who has an interest in this issue. It's state by state information, there's a section in what I would refer to as legalese that really drills deep down into what the statutory language actually is.

There's a section specifically for victims and survivors and advocates really talking about what are the resources in your state? What can a protective order and what can a judge do for you in

your state? How do you go about obtaining that? And what you ask for when you are asking a judge for a protective order to make sure that it directly addresses the intersection between domestic violence and firearms and takes away the abuser's guns. And then also a section with public health data. So how many people are killed every year by intimate partners with firearms? How many protective orders have been submitted in the NCIC. That sort of thing.

It's a really great project, a lot of really amazing in depth information. And if anybody has any questions about state law and you know about, you know, how does the state law help them and protect them? Definitely suggest folks check that out.

JJ

No, that's an amazing resource that I think is available because that's been one of the concerns that I have had personally. It's just this fear of how can people get assistance you know, particularly if you're, you know, let's if home isn't a safe place for you and there is no space there whatsoever to get away to make a phone call to make an exit plan. How can people navigate that space?

Ruth Glenn

Well, and I think you know, outside of the context of guns for a second is I think, our advice to survivors from a philosophical place in a kind of like a higher place to a reality place and a pragmatic place is you know, victims and survivors are really resilient, and they've been enduring for however long whatever it is that they've been enduring right? During this, I want us to be really thoughtful and cheerful. And I think Rachel alluded to it briefly.

But I want us to be thoughtful and careful about, you know, alluding or saying that these services are limited, they are. But as Rachel also stated, our advocates and the resources available to survivors will be there if survivors need to reach out. They get to make that decision. But we will do as a collective, and I don't mean NCADV generally but I mean, as those that work in this field of work. We will do all that we can to support survivors and, quite frankly, particularly when there's a firearm present. We intend to do all that we can from practice to policy to make sure that they're safe.

Rachel Graber

To piggyback off what Ruth said. I also since, I'll put on my director of public policy hat that I guess I never really took off. It's really important in this time to support our domestic violence programs financially. We know that we're seeing a decrease in volunteer hours because people are practicing social distancing in times of economic crisis. We often see a decrease in charitable giving and so a lot of our advocacy right now is really focused on making sure that money gets out to our direct service providers. To the advocates to the shelters to the people who are providing the services for victims and survivors so that they can, for example, provide hotel accommodations so they can shift to providing services remotely, while also utilizing software that maintains victims and survivors confidentiality.

So there are a lot of expenses that we're seeing increased expenses, something some cases on it. So we have been working very closely with Congress to get more money out, to direct service

providers in the supplemental appropriations bills we are very happy to see an extra \$45 million for the Family Violence and Prevention Services Act and \$2 million for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. But we also know that's just a drop in the bucket, right? So we are going to be asking for more resources.

Ruth Glenn

I feel far more comfortable referring as a starting place for anyone that might be seeking safety resources information about their own safety. We like referring them to the hotline. In fact we do refer them to the hotline which has the means by which to get them to the right place. Whether it's the community domestic violence program, the police, whatever that way be. If it's family, friends, folks who are concerned about COVID and the issues that DV programs are presented with and advocates are presented with.

If family and friends want to know more information about how to help a survivor, if there are resources that anyone's looking for about how to respond to domestic violence and COVID in their own community, in general or otherwise, then we certainly refer people to our own website, which is a wealth of resources. So those are in my mind those are the top two and then, you know, sometimes survivors don't want to call a big, long number to get the help that they need. The hotline offers a chat service if they feel safe using their phone or computer, and then their state coalition can also get them to the most appropriate direct service program providers. So there's a couple of avenues by which they can seek safety and help if they'd like to do that. And again, if resources and information such as DISARM DV and those types of things or what you need then, we would certainly direct folks to our website.

Rachel Graber

Just if anybody is listening, who needs this information: the number for the hotline is (800) 799-7233. If you want to text, text "love is" to 22522. Or you can chat online at thehotline.org.

Ruth Glenn

And then, of course, our website for other information and resources is www.NCADV.org.

JJ

Thank you. There will be links always to everything here in the description of the podcast. So if people are like me, you're not very great at writing things down.

Rachel Graber

And I would also honestly suggest if folks do have an interest in getting involved and in particularly obviously, I work in the public policies space to sign up for our action alerts. It's both an opportunity to understand and know what's going on at the federal level on issues related to domestic violence, and also raising that individuals can get involved in helping push for federal legislative action.

JJ

You know, what do we have to do, you know, this is a very unfair question, but what do we have to do, you know, as a whole, as a society as America to help fight domestic violence and and gun violence during this time? What would you like to see come out of this situation?

Ruth Glenn

I think it's imperative during COVID that there is an understanding that if we're going to close Hobby Lobby and we're gonna close Kohl's and we're going to close almost everything but a grocery store, I guess I just do not understand the essential need for gun stores. And, um, the increase of accidental suicide and domestic violence related gun deaths will increase. I guarantee it as long as we designate them, or some states that are as essential places of business. I don't understand.

And you know it's not a laughing matter. But unless we can shoot coronavirus, I just have a little bit of not understanding. And then the second thing would be really comprehensive background checks. And I don't know that gonna occur while we're going through COVID. But it sure does amplify why we've been fighting for comprehensive background checks, right? Because here we are in this time and we're seeing more first time gun buyers and what does that mean? Are they getting the background checks that should and hopefully prevent something bad from happening? So yeah, those are the two things that I hope we don't lose sight of now. And as we move through COVID from my perspective.

Rachel Graber

So I guess I have two things to add. Obviously, one of our top priorities is closing the boyfriend loophole. And this is something that is not necessarily again COVID related. We are trying to be very careful to draw a distinction between COVID supplemental funding and some policy issues, but in the policy realm, you know, stalking prohibitors, changing some, making some technical fixes to the existing prohibitors. And this is really important and, you know, just dismantling the patriarchy and systems of oppression, which is just so easy. Just a cinch.

JJ

Yeah, that's why I said it was kind of an unfair question.

Rachel Graber

Down with the patriarchy!

Ruth Glenn

But when you dismantle systemic oppression and the patriarchy, you're also dismantling the systems that really promote power and control, and this idea that certain people are entitled to power and control over other people, you know. So if we want to see a society with less intimate-partner violence, you know there are things that we do legislatively. But there are also things that we need to do culturally and build an equitable society. But again like this, no problem. We'll get that done.

JJ

Easily done by the end of the month. The President's really supportive of that initiative.

Rachel Graber

No, no, not really.

Ruth Glenn

I think I think from my perspective that that is a really tough question to answer. But I will tell you that, you know, we're talking a lot about DV and COVID, between Rachel and I, we've had a lot of questions about DV and COVID, and my hope is that we don't end this conversation when and if we get through COVID partially well or whatever that looks like. Domestic violence goes on without COVID.

We lose women every day to firearms and domestic violence. I want to keep having the conversation about domestic violence, and especially about the intersection of domestic violence and firearms. I appreciate that we're talking about it right now across the spectrum. I've been busier this past two weeks than I would ever like to be busy again. But I also know that there is room to talk about this outside of COVID. And as I said NCADV has made it a priority to talk about and address the issues of domestic violence and firearms. So let's keep the conversation going until we've done something significant to reduce domestic violence and particularly domestic violence as a result of firearms.

JJ

Exactly. I want to thank you both so much for coming on. This was wonderful. Thank you, I know it's just the beginning of a conversation that, as you've said, is much longer and needs to happen more. But thank you so much.

Ruth Glenn

Absolutely thank you.

Rachel Graber

Thank you JJ for shining a light on this really important issue.

*****music plays*****

JJ

So in this week's "Unbelievable, But" we're going back to the time before COVID-19 and taking you to a karaoke bar in Florida, where an intoxicated man allegedly became upset with a karaoke song in the bar and decided to quote unquote go after the singer. So shortly after midnight, a drunken man took issue with the song that a singer had decided to play.

I think we've all been a karaoke and, you know, been upset that someone is attempting you know, like the wind beneath my wings without the range. But what most of us don't do, though, is what he did, which was attempt to confront the singer, end up falling down and then allegedly start waving around a black nine millimeter Glock 19 that he pulled from his waistband. Now, luckily, he was able to be removed from the bar before law enforcement arrived, and no one was injured or hurt.

But I think this story just underscores how very much guns do not belong in bars or in the hands of intoxicated individuals.

*****music plays*****

JJ

Now, this week's news wrap up is actually all about looking back and remembering some of those who have been killed by gun violence. On March 31st 1991 Jim the Bear Brady was shot in the head during the assassination attempt on President Reagan. That one bullet changed the course of history, igniting the fight for the Brady Bill and shaping the modern movement to end gun violence in America. Brady initially survived, but his death in 2014 was ruled a homicide caused by that gunshot wound.

Also on March 31st, but in 1995, the queen of Tejano music and the first Latina artist to have a predominantly Spanish language album, Dreaming of You, debuted and peaked at number one on the U.S. Billboard charts. Selena Quintanilla Perez was shot and killed by a former employee who was later found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Again, also on March 31st but in 2019, Ermias Joseph Asghedom, professionally known as Nipsey Hussle an American rapper, m activists and entrepreneur was fatally shot outside of a store marathon clothing in South Los Angeles by a 29 year old man who had confronted Hussle earlier in the day. The man was later arrested and charged with Nipsey's murder.

On April 1st, 1984 beloved singer, songwriter and musician Marvin Gaye was fatally shot twice by his father at their house in the West Adams district of Los Angeles, California following an altercation with his father after he intervened in an argument between his parents.

On April 2nd 2012 gunman shot people inside Oikos University, a predominantly Korean Christian college in Oakland, California Within a few hours, the number of reported fatalities reached seven. It's been the deadliest mass shooting in the city's history.

Finally, on April 4th, 1968 at 6:01 p.m. clergymen, Nobel Peace Prize winner and famed civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was fatally shot and murdered at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. He was rushed to St. Joseph Hospital, where he died almost an hour. His assassin was arrested in June of that year where he was sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee State Penitentiary.

*****music plays*****

JJ

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*****music plays*****

JJ

Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you for more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast, get in touch with us at Bradyunited.org or on social @Bradybuzz. Be brave and remember, take action, not sides.

*****Brady musical outro*****

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