

Episode 130-- What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence (an...

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SPEAKERS

Kate Ranta, Rachel Louise Snyder, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:10

This is the legal disclaimer where I tell you that the views thoughts and opinions shared on this podcast belong solely to our guests and hosts, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay, we find it disturbing too. Hi, I'm JJ.



Kelly Sampson 00:40

And I'm Kelly.



JJ Janflone 00:41

And together we host this podcast, which is Red, Blue, and Brady.



Kelly Sampson 00:44

Welcome everybody.



JJ Janflone 00:46

And I didn't say Hey, everybody this time, and I've got to say it feels wrong.



Kelly Sampson 00:50

Do you need to say it now?



JJ Janflone 00:51

I you know what? No, I'm gonna hold off. I can cope.



Kelly Sampson 00:55

Okay, good, because we have a lot to talk about this episode.



JJ Janflone 00:59

Yeah, this week, we're taking on domestic violence, including if we should even be using that term, the forms abuse can take and how firearms specifically impact the safety of you know, women across the US. Although I do want to make a really quick note and say that while we're only talking about, you know, women and women in heterosexual relationships in this particular episode, we do want to recognize that domestic violence doesn't just impact, you know, women or women in those sorts of relationships.



Kelly Sampson 01:31

And to do so, we are joined by author, activist and survivor Kate Ranta, who has previously been on the podcast.



JJ Janflone 01:38

Back on episode 11, which is when the podcast was just a little baby Kelly.



Kelly Sampson 01:43

Oh, it's all grown up!



JJ Janflone 01:46

I know!



Kelly Sampson 01:47

We're also joined by author and Professor Rachel Louise Snyder, who wrote the acclaimed book, "no visible bruises: what we don't know about domestic violence can kill us." All together, we try to unpack a very difficult sometimes triggering things. So take care of yourselves, listeners. If you need assistance, please be sure to check the description of this episode for links to resources.



JJ Janflone 02:09

Yes, always take care of yourselves. We know that this is a heavy podcast. Hey, it's so great of both of you to join us. Can you both go ahead and introduce yourselves? And you know, Rachel, since it's your first time, and Kate's old hat at those of you go first?



Rachel Louise Snyder 02:27

Sure. My name is Rachel Louise Snyder. I'm the author of "no visible bruises: what we don't know about domestic violence can kill us." And I'm a professor of literature at American University in DC.



Kate Ranta 02:39

I am Kate Ranta. I am author of "Killing Kate: a story of turning abuse and tragedy into transformation and triumph." And I am a domestic and gun violence survivor and activist.



JJ Janflone 02:52

Well, and I have to say Kelly, and I were so excited to have both of you on. But it's a weird sort of excitement to have, right? Because we're we're talking about something that I think a lot of folks are really uncomfortable talking about, which is domestic violence. And so I'm wondering if we can just maybe start off with Rachel, if you could talk about, you know, what brought you into writing this, this book, what brought you into focusing so much on such a hard subject?

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 03:18

Yeah, I thought you were gonna say what brought you to writing? I was like, well, that's a really big answer. But you know, people sort of position my work as in that in that way, like, as dark or as, you know, depressing or whatever. And I I actually don't think of it that way. I think of it like, the more we talk about it, the more we can format change. But also, I think it's I think it's really when we talk about domestic violence, at least when I do, I'm talking about survivors, survivors like Kate, I, you know, I came to domestic violence really, through the back door. I was a journalist overseas for years, I did stories of human rights, you know, women incarcerated for love crimes in various countries or child brides and Gosh, lots and lots of places, you know, sex crimes, that kind of that kind of thing. And it really wasn't until I had moved back to America after many years of living overseas, and I met the friend and sister of a friend, very close friend of mine. And she and her team had created a program to try and use the science, the research of the highest risk factors for domestic violence, is homicide to try to prevent it. And it just blew my mind that you could do that, that this research even existed that that we didn't know about it, you know, in the larger sort of media sphere that I was part of. So I started researching it that was 10 or 11 years ago and I just have not I have not stopped I just there's always more to learn.

K

Kelly Sampson 05:02

And in reading your work, Rachel, it obviously brings to my case book title, which is "Killing Kate." Because Kate, you are in danger, the minute that that former relationship started, which is something that Rachel's book talks about. And so to start from kind of a basic place, because a lot of times people don't know what we mean, when we say domestic violence, I'm wondering if you could tell us what is domestic violence? I,

K

Kate Ranta 05:27

I wish that we could change sort of the narrative and phrasing around domestic violence, because domestic, it just seems so watered down to me. I mean, this is really like, what I experienced was really like male terrorism. I mean, that's, that's what it was, you know, so much psychological warfare, the idea of coercive control, just such controlling and manipulative behavior, my ex was not outright physical with me. And so I think the way that we speak about domestic violence just has to be brought into a lot more just because the physical is just a small piece of it. And from all the survivors that I know, the emotional and psychological components and financial components of domestic violence is is that's the stuff that's that is last so long, and it just it's the nightmares, and all of that, that creeps up over the years. Yeah, it for me it. I don't know, domestic violence just seems to not cover it completely.



Rachel Louise Snyder 06:39

You know, I had a, I had a conversation with the linguist, Deborah Tannen, about this once about why she writes a little bit about this kind of, well, I'm gonna say it, domestic violence is impossible to get around that. But she writes a little bit about it, and a book that a recent book of hers called "You're wearing that?" I think is the name of it. And she's talking about parent to child violence in that context. But what she says is that the word domestic softens everything, because we think of domestic as the woman's sphere. And it's, it's that that allows us to kind of look the other way, you know, I tried for a little while to call it intimate brutality, sort of mirrored over police brutality, that it is a sort of brutality within an intimate sphere, whether that's, you know, parent to child or spouse to spouse or whatever, hasn't taken off yet. But I do think that intimate partner terrorism is a much closer telling of the experience of somebody in that situation.



Kate Ranta 07:47

I would agree with that 100%, intimate partner terrorism to me, as somebody who experienced it directly that that speaks more to my experience, and what happened, then domestic violence, and the other one that drives me crazy is domestic dispute, as if the, you know, victim had some part in that right. And that just, that drives me crazy.



Rachel Louise Snyder 08:13

I'm like, what other crime do you say is a dispute? Like, they had a dispute over who owns the car? And the guy who didn't own it took it? I mean, it's just like, it's so crazy the language itself, you know, if I could great headline writers to never write that phrase again. I totally would.



Kate Ranta 08:29

Correct. Absolutely.



JJ Janflone 08:32

Yeah, dispute sounds like something you take to small claims court, whereas, you know, when you're actively talking, and I mean, Kate, obviously, in your experience, but then Rachel, in those experiences of the folks that you detail in your book, you know, these are things like people bringing rattlesnakes into the home and taunting, you know, their their partner with them. And I think that gets into a second thing that we have to hit definitionally before we move on, which is that abuse takes a lot of different forms. And

that I think a lot of times, folks in every context, but especially in the US don't understand what that form is, when it comes to I'm just going to start calling an intimate partner terrorism, when it comes to this particular form of violence, what it actually looks like. And so I'm wondering, too, if we can sort of talk about that abuse a little bit from financial abuse, to psychological abuse, especially these forms that you know, it's hard to, you know, there's no law against psychological abuse on the books that I'm aware of. And Rachel, you talk about this quite a bit in your book as well.

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 09:31

Well, there actually is starting to be laws. So the first law against what we would call psychological abuse or coercive control was in France and they've they've since you know, rewritten parts of that law, but in you know, the UK, Ireland, Scotland, they've all passed coercive control laws and so has California and Hawaii. Connecticut and Maryland are looking at them so and Hawaii and California, just were in January 2021. So they're brand new, and California is laws only in family court. So it's a civil, it's a civil law, not a criminal law. But you know what it looks like. And I'm interested in Kate's experience at the granular level here, but what it looks like is financial control over somebody, or not allowing someone to see their friends and family, isolating them, like you don't ever have to have, there's a, you know, there's a reason my book is called no visible bruises, you don't ever have to have that physical piece of it for it to be abuse. I mean, certainly that exists. A lot of times, I mean, that the case that you're talking about the rat with the rattlesnake is in my book, a man brought a rattlesnake home and kept it in a cage and told his wife that he would put it in bed with her if she got out of line or put it in the shower with her. Another thing that that happens all the time is that the children are used for leverage, you know, I'm gonna take these kids away from you, if you do X, Y, or Z. And so those children become part of the pattern of coercive control.

K

Kate Ranta 11:05

The rattlesnake thing made me think of which it goes to guns my ex husband had, he was military, and he had a lot of guns in the home. And he knew I wasn't comfortable with them, but he would, from time to time, take them out, and like lay them on the bed and clean, you know, "clean them," you know, in front of me, that kind of stuff. And he would take the gun and play with the laser light on the wall and think it was funny that that sort of stuff. And it was it was really scary and intimidating. And I didn't know how much danger, I was actually in with all of those guns in the home. And then I would say, you know, some of the other things, definitely financial control, he hid. Actually, he did the opposite. He didn't take complete control of both of our finances, but he kept me in the dark about his own. So I never really knew how much we really had at any given time, I

didn't know what money was coming in and out of the bank accounts, everything he did was all very insidious and slow and taken one thing at a time. I didn't see it for what it was. And it's it's, it's so hard because hindsight is 2020. And I see it so clearly now. And when I know of others that are in similar situations, I'm like, No, you have to see it. But a lot of these things that they do it, it seems so off the wall for an outsider to hear, like the example of the rattlesnake. But when you're in the thick of it, and you're in the middle of it, it just it becomes your normal, so it's hard.



JJ Janflone 12:53

Well, and I think that gets to as well, as you both talked about in your text, which is sort of this belief people have they're like, why don't why don't the women just leave? Again, ort of the idea of dispute puts it back on the woman in the relationship, why don't you just leave, just walk away, it'll be fine. Or, as we often hear a lot in gun violence prevention circles. You know, just buy a gun, and you'll be fine to protect yourself. When, when that is statistically that one that doesn't work. In fact, it's more dangerous for the woman once weapons have been introduced, but also to is that I do believe that most folks will attempt to leave about seven times or so before it can actually stick. But then also, that's the most dangerous time for an individual when when they've left. So is this is a big ball of mess?



Kate Ranta 13:42

Well, I told you, I think that I've said before, about how I have been blamed myself for my own shooting. Like why didn't you, you didn't protect your family? Why didn't you have a gun on you in order to protect yourself and your family from this guy? And it's like people want to armchair quarterback these situations like this is what I would do as if they know step by step what went down in that apartment and it was like we didn't even know we had a gun until he shot through the door. I was already hit. So what I'm supposed to have a gun and shoot back at him when there's a four year old child and my 68 year old father in the room. And he was military. He knew his way around guns. I wasn't trained that way. It's just it's it's infuriating. And it does it should not go back on the woman. Why? Why do I have to be in my head? Yeah.



Rachel Louise Snyder 14:40

You know, it's also asking you, Kate to embody, you know, a man's experience a military man's experience. Like that's not who you are. That's not who you want to be in the world. I mean, there's so many I could spend the next hour and a half talking about just the statistics and the realities of all of these situations, why doesn't she just leave? Well, you

know, you don't have a burglar come into your house and then the police come in and say, My God, there's a crime that's been committed here. I'm so sorry. But we're going to take you the victim away and let the burglar stay in the house, which is what we do with domestic violence victims when we're asking them, why don't you just leave? You know, the fact is, they do leave, they leave all the time. Sometimes they are killed or attempted, you know, as you said, JJ it's the most dangerous time. But even beyond that, I think when we are picturing leaving, we think like, suitcase packed at the door, we don't think at the like at the granular level about what that means. What happens if your kid is in the school play, and the only shelter bed available is across the state. What happens if you're taking care of elderly parents? What happens if all the shelters in your area won't take pets? What happens if you have to leave all of the you know, hand me downs that your grandmother left for you when she died? I mean, there's just all these kind of logistical things, not to mention the fact that you can't just take a child from their school and enroll them in another school without paperwork for both parents if the parents are still married. So there is this bureaucracy that holds victims in place, right along with all the other psychological elements of it. I remember it in my book, a woman who was ultimately killed by her abuser, and then he killed both of their kids and then himself. And her sister recounted to me in the weeks leading up to that homicide that they were all really, really scared. But this woman said, you know, and they were talking about things like, let's buy her a wig and cover her and tattoos so that she won't be recognized, and we'll move her two states away. But she really was like, where am I going to go in this world that he's not going to find me? We have children together, you can't just walk out of your life. You know, you can't. Everybody is findable these days. So I think it's such a complicated question. And it's partly why I spend like the whole first third of my book, deconstructing what's wrong with that question, and why it's an impossible question.

K

Kate Ranta 17:19

It's a horrible thing to put on the shoulders of a victim that's going through it. And it's, it's just absolutely offensive to ask somebody that question. You know, I did just leave when, when the very first time that he threatened to punch me, and he didn't actually do it, but he threatened to, you know, I bailed. I bailed and I left and I took my kids, and the cops let him stay in the house. And I had to call my parents hysterically crying in the middle of the night to come get us. And they just said, Oh, well, he doesn't have anywhere else to stay. And you do. So I had to wake my small sleeping children up and go to my parents house, everything was put on us, instead of just so he had a place to stay. It never occurred to me, I was so naive. I didn't know anything about any of this, until I went through it. And I was so naive to think that I'm the good guy. So of course, it's all gonna go my way and go fine. It didn't. Nobody did anything about him until he actually came and shot us. He was given a million chances. He broke the restraining orders, police, the judicial, the judicial

system, judges, nobody, nobody would do anything about him. It was all on me trying to prove that he was a bad guy. And for me, I would say that I am in a unique position that I was actually shot twice, and I know what it feels like to be shot. And I think that we have kind of a fear of going there a lot of times in these discussions, which I get, you know, out of respect for me, but I do have a need for people to understand what it actually physically feels like when a bullet you know, goes through your right hand and shatters it and it goes limp and you fall on the ground and there's blood splatter up the wall and you're crawling around in your own blood and dying. I mean that's that's the reality of, of what happened. And I think we need more discussions about that when we talk about gun violence. Especially when there are people like me there that lived through it and can directly speak to the damage that it does not only physically but mentally and emotionally.



Rachel Louise Snyder 19:58

I wanted to ask you that. What does it actually feel like to be shot?



Kate Ranta 20:04

So it's, um, it's almost like a time warp. So, for us the bullets. My dad and I were pushing on the door to keep him out and he shot through the door three times. I can't tell you how many times people are like, Well, do you think he intended to kill you? Because he didn't, you know, because I'm here, I guess that at first he shot through the door. And I'm like, Well, yeah, we were standing right behind it. He knew. And he shot, you know, right in the middle of the door where he knew we were standing. So it was like, the the, you heard, I heard the shots first before I realized what was really happening. And so in my mind, it was like a immediate denial. Like, is this what it is? And then realizing, very quickly that Yes, it was. And then he was like, already in pointing the gun shot, which one went through, that's the one that went through my hand. And it was just, it's like sheer, absolute sheer terror. Things aren't making sense. I was, you know, begging him not to do it begging for my life. I didn't have a fight response at all. And I had no response to fight back. I was definitely begging. I had been shot through my, my left breast, didn't even realize that that had happened until we got out and I was on the ground with the police. And you know, it's, I could feel kind of the, you know, the kind of cold setting in and I knew I was in trouble in the shock. And you can't even make good decisions. You know, I got out of there. He told me to leave, and I got out of there. But I didn't take my son with me. Like I couldn't. And then my dad came out with my son. But I thought my dad was dead because he had shot him too. And it was just, it's all very jumbled. And you go back through, like, what should I have done? Or what would I have done differently? But I mean, if you can't think straight, you can't think clearly. So yeah, I mean, it's it's just painful. It's so painful. My hand was

like, um, it was like a baseball glove. Like it was so swollen. My fingers were like sausages. I had to go through grueling occupational therapy for almost a year just to get the hand moving again. So I can make a fist. It's still numb to this day. My dad, left arm is disabled, and he's older now. And it's gotten worse. You know, people just underestimate what what it is to be shot. And, you know, I wish that we did have, more time and more platforms to talk about that.



Rachel Louise Snyder 23:01

Thank you for sharing that.



Kelly Sampson 23:04

And I'm glad you mentioned that the underestimation because I know everyone I've ever talked to who has suffered a gunshot has said, you know, you have no idea that the toll that that takes physically and emotionally, so yeah, no one died. But well, right. There's no trauma. And, Kate, I just want to, you know, once again, thank you for sharing your experiences with us. Because it's just hard to even imagine everything that you went through. And, Rachel, I want to go back to what you were sharing about some of the bureaucratic elements, in addition to the psychological ones that can make it really hard for someone to leave, because I think what you're getting at is something you talk about a lot in your book, too, which is sort of the intersectionality of violence and how violence is also connected to things like poverty and health care, and all with so many other contextual societal elements. And so I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the intersectionality of violence and how it deals with sort of intimate partner terrorism, I think is what we're calling it now.



Kate Ranta 24:05

Yeah, it's really something I didn't fully understand until years into my research the ways in which so I'll tell you why I'm not crazy about intimate partner violence, because there's so many other forms of intimate violence that happens child to parent and, you know, it's useful that we're talking about this right now during COVID, or in maybe hopefully on the tail end of COVID. Because we have a sort of perfect storm of a situation where we don't know how bad the domestic violence is behind closed doors and we don't know how bad the child abuse is. And the number one predictor of future victims and perpetrators is someone who sees it or endures it in their home as children. And you know, what that tells us is that domestic violence or intimate terrorism or familial abuse or whatever you want to call it intimate brutality is like the first line of violence for so many other social ills that we're facing. So, you know, it's the leading cause of homelessness for women in the

country today. It has, you know, rates of poverty. I mean, unemployment is one of the top 20 risk indicators for domestic violence, homicide, it's not causal, it's not a reason that someone kills their partner. But it is a stressor, sort of like addiction, it, you know, again, is a stressor in one of those top 20 high risk indicators. So, you know, everything that we are facing, and of course, we haven't even talked about mass shootings. I mean, it is, not only is there a link between those who perpetrate mass shootings, and those who commit violence in their home. But mass shootings are often domestic violence homicides. We think we think, for example, about the first mass shooting that this country ever saw the University of Texas tower shooting back in the 60s. And we forget, I have this in my book, but we forget that he started the night before by killing his mother and killing his wife. You know, when we talk about Newtown, and we talk about the school, but we forget that he started with his mother, all of these are domestic violence, homicides, they're just not framed that way. So there is this, this intersection of everything from sort of gender inequality, right across the line to really extreme acts of violence, like a mass shooting. And if we took domestic violence more seriously, I really believe we would see a ripple effect and all these other types of crimes and social issues.

K

Kelly Sampson 26:56

And it's interesting, you know, it's we're talking about, kind of this intersection, and connection between policing, domestic violence, and also mass incarceration. A lot of times we talk about the law, we will say, what should happen or what's on the books, and not necessarily what actually happens in real life. And, Rachel, you do a great job in your book of talking about how things can go right, and how things can go wrong. Even if the laws on the books are, you know, supposedly protective. I mean, Kate, your story mimics that as well. And so I'm wondering if you could share a little bit about that disconnect that often occurs with listeners?

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 27:34

Yeah, I mean, there's a lot, there's a lot of evidence that suggests that a police presence is not necessarily. And I'm going to, I don't mean to sound snarky here, but it's not necessarily a calming presence in any given situation. And that police, even if they're trained, even if they're doing everything they're supposed to be doing can escalate the very presence of police, or the very presence of you know, bureaucracy in the judiciary can escalate a domestic violence situation, you know, there's a lot of there's a, there's, I have a huge explanation in my book for what happens when, you know, police show up to a domestic violence call and a victim suddenly is screaming at the police Get out of here. This is our, this is our private life it's on your business, etc, etc. You know, there's there's psychological reasons as to why somebody is acting that way. Usually, it has to do with

the fact that an abuser has convinced a victim, that they are more powerful than any system of law enforcement or judicial system that can be brought in. How do they do that? Well, because maybe they get arrested, but they bail out hours later. Right. And that suggests a system that prioritizes the freedom of a perpetrator over the safety of a victim. And they only they only need a message like that once to get it right. They may not articulate it in quite that way. But they get it. So I think when we talk about the systems that we have, it's not always a matter of, you know, training or passing new laws. I mean, I talked a few minutes ago about coercive control laws. I'm not at all convinced that passing 50 coercive control laws across every state in this country is necessarily a good answer, because I'm not convinced that the police are going to be able to identify a nuanced situation where there's no bruise to be found, or there's no blood. Right? So I think that that the conversation that we're having today and conversations I've been having for the two years since my book came out, is really about bringing in every possible conversation and community organization that we can think of bring in your HR department to trainings at your local domestic violence agency, bring in your local clergy. If you're in a book group, talk about domestic violence for an hour with your book group because we have to come up with safety measures that are beyond just the judiciary and law enforcement and locking, locking someone away, which is another form of ignoring the problem entirely. Oh, let's throw that throw him or her in prison. That's also not solving any any problems. Right. But that's my two cents in a nutshell.

K

Kate Ranta 30:28

Yeah. And then I would say, just anecdotally, when I referenced earlier, the incident where he threatened to punch me, and I had, you know, I was, he had driven up the street, I had jumped out of the car, and he drove away with our then 2 year old son. And I had called the cops. He managed to get home and get our son out of the car and into back into his crib. And I come running up the street. I'm hysterical and traumatized. I had never, this had never literally never happened to me before. In my life. I hadn't processed any of what had just happened. I run up, I'm crying, hysterical. He's out there with his military coins, giving coins to the cops and buddy, buddy, and I'm a war veteran, which he wasn't, you know, and and here I come, all hysterical. And one cop did pull me aside out of the group that was there. And he said, if he didn't hit you, this time, he will hit you next time, go get a restraining order. I didn't even know what that entailed. Nobody told me what to do. I just kind of winged it, you know, in the next in the aftermath of that, but the police were not a calming factor at all, I really opened my eyes in a not so good way to like, Huh, I guess, you know, maybe I'm not going to be believed. And when I saw the police report, afterwards, when I got my copy, the same cop that had pulled me aside and seem to be on my side, wrote the report as if I was the hysterical wife. And, and you know, that my, my ex husband said that his wife just loves drama, and had all of these weird sort of

quotes in there. That made me look bad somehow, or that I had done something bad. I don't know what it's gonna take. I mean, we talked about training, and we talked about this and that I l'm, l'm with you, Rachel. I don't know. I don't know. And and with coercive control, please. I know, that that wouldn't even be enforced. The physical stuff is barely enforced, let alone. Yeah, I mean,

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 32:51

it's what's amazing about that is the way you started that story, which was he took our two year old. So that is a message. Right? That's, that's all you need to know that he's aware of your most vulnerable spot. I mean, it's just I mean, yes, the cop is writing hearsay, it probably wouldn't have been admissible in a court of law. But it doesn't matter. It's the beginning of a system that is giving a very specific message to a victim. Now survivor, yay. Like, you know, it just like, you know, what, what can I do? While he's taking his two year old? He's the father. What are you gonna do? You can't do anything. I mean, this is why we have to think beyond our systems. He took the the child on this ride around the neighborhood. He was crying. And then we were asked to leave the house. And he got to stay. Like I said, it's just, it's infuriating. And I am just one story of a million stories like this. I don't know. I don't know what the change is.



JJ Janflone 33:53

But then it makes me think Kate in your book when you talk about even the judge thanking your ex husband for his service during your trial, as if he still had some sort of like, quote unquote, Hero value when he's on trial for shooting you and your father.

K

Kate Ranta 34:09

He was in a jumpsuit and shackles and I had to be in the same room as him. This is after the shooting. And this judge looks over his paperwork and is like, Oh, you did 25 years in the Air Force. Thank you for your service. Meanwhile, I have a giant the lint on my on my arm from being shot through my hand. And everybody knew why we were there. And he still got thanked for his service. And l'm sitting there like, I almost died. Does anybody care?

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 34:42

I'm appalled at that Judge. I hope somebody filed a formal complaint against him out you know



Kate Ranta 34:50

It was a female. It was a female judge.



Rachel Louise Snyder 34:53

Oh my god.



Kate Ranta 34:57

Yeah, no, no, that it was a female thanking him and I'm sitting, I just, I had just as bad experiences with female judges as I did with male judges. It didn't really make any difference. I mean, that's not surprising because female juries will often, you know, convict women who were killed to not be killed, right women who killed in self, defense it's a it's a classic, you know, a classic research conundrum.



JJ Janflone 35:27

But so it's just we we do have laws on the books, but the laws don't do any good. If the folks who are supposed to be pushing for them are the folks that could be helped by them don't know that they exist. If there's no if there's no money, if there's no training, if there's no oomf behind it, there's no enforcement. Yeah, it's like a restraining order.



Kate Ranta 35:43

The gun that he used to shoot us was one that he bought, after his guns were removed. And there had been a temporary restraining order against him.



Rachel Louise Snyder 35:53

Yeah, I mean, you hear I mean, in rural areas, you hear people all the time say, Well, you know, there's 30 guns per household, we have nowhere to store them. I mean, just stupid, stupid stuff that we rarely enforce that, you know, California did a pilot program a couple of years ago, and a researcher named April Zeoli wrote about this, do you know her ZEOLI Yeah. And they they enforced it like, seriously and took guns away from abusers. And homicide rates went way down. But of course, we know that the gun is not merely just as Kate described her husband cleaning his guns. That's a classic example of somebody who is saying like, this is the threat that I pose to you, right, I'm going to clean my guns as a constant reminder that you know, who holds the power because remember, this isn't happening in a vacuum. This is happening in the context of a lot of other behaviors that

are all suggesting that same message, the police Pooh poohing your situation, the child being taken on a drive around the block, and then the gun being cleaned, right, it's all of these things in concert with one another. So guns are used often as visual symbols of, of who holds the power. And, you know, there there's a there's a woman I interviewed who was shot by her father, who said that her father used to just keep all of his guns on the wall. Like you might display plates, you know, and I think this is a really common scenario. And it is again, like this reinforcement of power. And then everything in our culture reinforces that same power, right? music, movies, television shows, the victims are always women, the perpetrators are always men that you know, etc, etc, etc. So, guns undeniably make a tense situation lethal,

K

Kate Ranta 37:51

Then with the macho thing Yeah, I definitely experienced that too. He in my book, I talked about how he had we had a, like, an alarm in the house, that was a barking dog. And one time it went off, and he leaped out of bed all drama, grabbed the shotgun that was under the bed, and proceeded to sweep the house, you know, like Rambo style all around the house. And it was it was really bizarre. And that was kind of early on in our relationship. And I won't, I won't say that. I was like, Oh, yay, he's so strong. You know, I wasn't like that at all. I was kind of like, that was weird. But okay, I guess he just wanted to make sure there wasn't an intruder. But it was seriously like, over the top movies style, sweeping my house, I'm sure others have experienced that as well.

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 38:45

I have four I have four brothers and my older brother who's just incredibly wise and smart and has a PhD and whatever, said to me once that he had read an essay, maybe it was an Esquire or something, but about how men are constantly preparing themselves for an incident, that almost never happens, which is to say they are constantly feeling the pressure of having to protect, you know, everyone in their home or everyone around them. And that they they have this kind of internal narrative that is like, constantly pressuring them. And I think I mean, to me, it's, it's, I think we need to, to alleviate that pressure on men in the same way that we need to give agency to women, right to not be in the situations that you're in. I just I find it. I guess because men have been the dominant culture, right? They're the ones who have been making the movies until very recently, and they're the ones who are, you know, doing all the deals for all of our cultural output. There is this kind of emphasis on this is the way the world is meant to work and I think we're seeing the great harm of that.

K

Kelly Sampson 40:01

And Rachel, if I may, the when you're talking about the pressure that men are under one just interesting plug for our readers is another podcast, Jennifer Carlson wrote a really fantastic paper around the kind of gendered notions of gun violence. And this idea that you'll often see the gun lobby and their ill touting is this idea that you need a gun, because there's a stranger there is Stranger Danger, usually they're alluding to the stranger being someone with more melanin. And this idea that when you're walking around on the street, you need to be armed because you're going to be attacked. And the statistics show that that type of crime is actually quite rare. And to the extent anyone tends to be victimized by it, it's men and women are much more likely to be injured in their own homes by someone that they know. And so that distortion even impacts gun policy and weapons. And so I think you raised a really interesting point. Well, you and your brother, and one thing that you all seem to be getting at, you know, Kate, when you talked about early on in your relationship, this kind of Rambo moment. And I think, Rachel, you talked a little bit about just sort of risk factors. And so Rachel, I'm directing this one to you, because in your book, you talked about a 20 point danger assessment that you can use to prevent domestic violence, homicide, and I'm wondering if you could explain what that is, to our listeners?

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 41:23

Sure. Yeah, it was created by a researcher, a nurse and researcher at Johns Hopkins University named Jacqueline Campbell, and it was created really, you know, back in the late 80s, early 90s, she intended it for use in a health care system. And it was a way to try to identify lethality factors that could potentially lead to domestic violence, Homicide. And so so the the the 20 questions or behaviors that you mentioned, are all available, anybody who's listening can just google danger assessment, and it'll come up immediately. The answers are weighted, but at least if you you know, if you know how to weight the answers, it will give you some idea of the of any kind of lethal situation or dangerous situation that you are somebody that you love might be in and they're things like, you know, the number one sign or lethality factor is prior incidents of domestic violence. That's number one, that seems kind of obvious. But you know, in the top three or five is access or ownership to guns and strangulation, which she realized is a very different sign of lethality than say, a punch or a kick. And then there are other factors too. Are there children in the home who are not by the biological abusers? Are there addiction issues? Is there financial? Or is there unemployment or financial hardship? You know, all of these all of these things beatings, while pregnant is a different marker, there are two types of abusers one who stay away completely completely when you're pregnant, and the other who increase the violence when you're pregnant. It's that ladder, that ladder type that is more dangerous. So there are there are these lethality factors and what what I did in my

book was look at a team in Massachusetts, in fact, who had taken that research and figured out a program sort of on the ground to create safety nets around victims and keep them in their, in their homes. So you know, those those might be things like extra police drive bys, changing the locks, installing security, cameras, alerting school officials, and teachers and neighbors and co workers that this person has an active restraining order against them. There's all kinds of different potential scenarios. Shelter, obviously, is another one.



JJ Janflone 43:52

Forgive me if this is a little invasive Kate and as always, you can always tell me No, but I, you know, is it strange for you to hear this list? And then to see things that I just know from reading your book that like, Oh, my gosh, these these were, these are warning signs.



Kate Ranta 44:07

Absolutely. And, you know, I, you know, everything for me started in 2011. So we're talking 10 years ago, and I didn't have any resources. I didn't know anything about domestic violence, intimate partner, whatever we're calling it. I didn't know I just didn't know any I didn't really didn't know anything about it. The most I knew was if you if a guy punches you or something that's bad. And you know, they shouldn't be screaming at you either. But I I feel like if I had seen something like that, I'm not saying that it would have prevented anything that wound up happening, but I definitely would have known that I was in more danger than I realized I was looking over my shoulder a lot. I had the guns in the back of my mind. I thought that he could do something like that. This, but I kept thinking he won't do it because he doesn't like he doesn't want to go to jail, I thought that he would be a lot more sort of afraid, I guess I don't know what the right word is afraid of going to jail or something. But I just didn't have any of those tools to give me any information about what he might be capable of. And if I had seen that, and especially the gun part of it, you know, maybe it would have informed a little bit more. I don't know, but I can't put anything on myself.



Rachel Louise Snyder 45:37

But don't you imagine Kate that like, it would have given you the language for what you sort of were suspecting.



Kate Ranta 45:48

Yeah, because that's in the language is exactly right. And I said this before that I didn't have that language. I didn't know how to speak about what was happening. And you're right, I that. That would have I did see a checklist about emotional abuse shortly after I shortly after I had left him. And that sort of blew the sky open as far as what I had experienced, because I had not experienced physical. But the danger assessment has been, you're right, would have given me the ability to be able to talk to others about what was happening. We were all just kind of flailing around. None of us had nobody in my family. Nobody had experienced anything like this before.

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 46:34

Yeah, yeah. And imagine if, you know, if somebody in your circle would have known about the danger assessment, this is why it's so important to have conversations in our in our communities that whatever our community activities are, you know,

K

Kate Ranta 46:50

Yeah, I have friends that have, you know, talked to me since this and said that they thought that he was off and there was something weird, but they too didn't have the language. And had they known, had they known about these things, they may have been able to talk to then me about it, you know, but nobody, nobody, I don't know if these resources have got to get out there. I mean, just everyday average, people need to know about it.

K

Kelly Sampson 47:17

One thing that I wanted to ask each of you is what's one thing that you wish people knew about domestic violence in the United States?

R

Rachel Louise Snyder 47:26

I would say that if you don't stand at the receiving end of a punch, it still has everything to do with you.

K

Kate Ranta 47:36

And I would say that the victim is never to blame. He didn't just snap. She didn't do anything to cause him to do this. This was a choice that that he made to harm the person that he purportedly loves, and possibly their family.



JJ Janflone 48:00

Rachel, Kate, I can definitely speak for both Kelly and myself, and that we would keep you here for hours. I mean, there's so much we didn't even have time to get into. But I want to thank both of you for writing your incredible books for being so free and open with your time and hopefully, once everyone's vaccinated and safe. Let's all let's grab brunch and talk more. Hi, Kelly, are you ready for me to horrify you?



Kelly Sampson 48:25

Never but yes.



JJ Janflone 48:28

So an Albany, New York children were enjoying the sunshine and playing outside. When a four year old boy found a gun on the ground?



Kelly Sampson 48:36

I just okay. I just can't, please but continue.



JJ Janflone 48:41

Yeah. The toddler picked up the gun. He pulled the trigger the handgun went off.



Kelly Sampson 48:46

Was everyone okay?



JJ Janflone 48:47

Yes. Thankfully, the bullet that was fired did not hit anyone. But I will say that is just pure luck. It turns out the gun had been put in place under a parked car. And we're not quite sure why yet. And when the car left, the gun was just sitting there making it very easy for the child to find.



Kelly Sampson 49:03

Yeah, I don't know why you put a loaded gun under a car. But that seems like the opposite

of safety, however you define it. And I'm just glad that no one was hurt, but it's just ridiculous.



JJ Janflone 49:14

Yet we were very lucky that when the boy unintentionally fired the gun, he was so shocked that he immediately dropped the weapon and ran to tell his mom who called the police to collect the firearm. But if you look at an image of this gun, and we'll try to link it to you all on social, it's actually a handgun that's been painted. So I could easily see how this kid thought that you know was just like a toy.



Kelly Sampson 49:34

Yeah. And even if it wasn't painted, I mean the fact is, you shouldn't leave a loaded firearm around. That's just you know, we the onus can't be on the four year old, but I am glad that he knew to tell an adult.



JJ Janflone 49:49

Yes, especially because Are you ready for even more horrifying news? Kelly just to end with some sadness. This is the second gun Albany police have taken off the streets this week. The owner of the gun has yet to be found.



Kelly Sampson 50:03

I wish you could see my face right now. Meanwhile, in the news this week, Congress has passed a bill at a 364 to 62 vote to counter the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes. The bill would establish a position at the Justice Department to expedite the agency's review of hate crimes and expand channels to report them. It will also encourage the creation of state run hate crime hotlines, provide grants to law enforcement agencies that train our officers to identify hate crimes and introduce a series of public education campaigns around bias against people of Asian descent. This bill is the first legislative action that Congress has taken to help increase legal response to attacks on people of Asian descent amid an uptick and discrimination and violence against Asian American communities during the pandemic. Like the series of shootings in the Atlanta area that left eight people, including six Asian women dead in March of this year. The bill has already passed in the Senate and will now go to President Biden's desk to be signed into law.



JJ Janflone 51:08

Want to share with the podcast? Listeners now can get in touch with us here at Red Bull and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call our Texas at 480-744-3452. If your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever! Kelly and I are standing by.



Kelly Sampson 51:23

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 on social @Bradybuzz, Be brave and remember take action, not sides.