

“Machismo” a Latin Curse

The theme I chose for this project is domestic violence. A problem so mentioned, but yet so "normalized" because many people do not know the true meaning of this abuse. An abuse that is not just physical because there are many ways that domestic violence manifests in different homes every day.

It is a subject in which many agencies are trying to educate more and more, and progress is being made but continues to largely still be ignored, and we must instruct more and provide the tools and assistance to help and to be helped. I want to focus on my culture and my race, us Mexicans. Sadly, we have lived a culture of "Machismo, " a strong sense of masculine pride, where the man commands, says, orders, raises his voice, even hits because he is the "man of the house" and what he says goes no but or ifs. It is such a sad upbringing that many Latino families have lived through, but that has changed little by little, and we will continue to change it. I live in a border town where domestic violence is sadly prevalent, and I have experienced it very close in two different situations.

My older brother was a victim of domestic violence when his first wife abused him verbally and physically, and the police had to interfere. His wife started to become highly violent verbally and physically. My brother was upbringing the Mexican protocol where a "man does not hit a woman" and thought this implied letting a woman do what she wanted with him because of her sex. He thought he was respecting her without realizing that he was disrespecting himself. I clearly remember that I was in High School when this situation happened where the police intervened, and this woman, Martha, was arrested and trialed for domestic violence. I remember it shocked me a lot because I could not get across my head that my older brother, my hero, the invincible, the man that nothing can defeat him and nothing or nobody can go against, was in this situation. On the other hand, it was also very shocking and confusing at the same time to know that a woman could commit domestic violence against a man because it was always known that it is usually the man who commits the abuse against the woman.

Another domestic violence situation that marked my life tremendously was only two years ago in Nogales, AZ when a friend, classmate, and neighbor was murdered by her partner and held their baby hostage for more than 5 hours. It shook the entire community since Nogales is relatively small, and you do not hear about these types of tragedies as often as you do in big cities. Her name was Berenice Aguirre, and she was my classmate and friend since we were in elementary school. We both lived and shared beautiful and vital milestones, and her life was taken from her and us. We will not have the opportunity to continue living and accomplishing new goals. Berenice represents all of us as women, which has been truly heartbreaking for me.

Coincidentally we both lived in the same apartment complex, and I remember that day as if it was yesterday police lights and chaos everywhere. It was a moment of panic, horror, uncertainty because we all hoped that Berenice was alive and that she would be just a hostage victim. A whole community prayed and implored that she would come out alive; however, she had been dead for hours when they found her. "When officers conducted a sweep of the other bedrooms, they found Aguirre's body." (Clark et al.) This case hit home directly and very close to the heart of many of us, and we want to get involved in educating and assisting those that do not know they are even in a vulnerable and toxic relationship.

At the time of Monday's incident, Estrada was already facing a domestic violence aggravated assault charge at Nogales Justice Court stemming from an incident on Nov. 30, 2018 in which he allegedly assaulted a woman with the initials B.A. by impeding her breathing by "placing hands around B.A's mouth and nose." (Clark et al.) We must unite our voices, knowledge, strength, and energy to help the vulnerable and ignorant because those who strike once will strike twice, three, four times, or as many times until a tragedy puts an end to it as it happened with Berenice. Love should not hurt in any way, and if it does, that is not love.

County Victims Services, Arizona Department of Economic Security Domestic Violence, National Domestic Violence Hotline, and Raising Arizona Kids are just a few of the many helpful and free resources available in our cities, county, state, and federal. We must stand and instruct everyone so that more tools and resources are easier to find and access for all victims and their families at a local, state, and federal level without being scared or remorseful to use the resources.

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