

Staying for the Good Times A Portrait of Intimate Partner Violence

By Allie Bayat

I was angry all the time. I wasn't myself. The anger, hurt and frustrations came in waves.

According to the Department of Justice, non-fatal intimate partner violence (IPV) has declined since 1993. The statistics seem promising, but for someone that is affected by violence it's frightening.

The first time it happened to me I didn't even realize what was happening. I found myself in a violent relationship fueled by alcohol and rage. I knew all the statistics. I knew all the signs, but it managed to consume my life. Within weeks of beginning my relationship I sat curled in a corner with a shotgun in my face.

My life was heading in a good direction. I felt carefree, and successful. I wasn't lonely or bored. He was always there. He said and did all the right things at first. Soon I was living with his logic. Everything I knew to be right was turned upside and substituted for his sense of the world. He would guilt me or mock me "normal people don't think like you," he said. "I'm not educated like you, I'm normal and you're not." If I questioned anything I was "crazy," or "unreasonable." If I didn't drink with him I wasn't a good girlfriend. If I didn't make dinner I wasn't a good mother.

He had his "demons" but the rage was directed at me. He'd get drunk. I'll never forget the day he told me our puppy had served its purpose. I could hear him in the back yard. I heard the clink, thud and a yelp. I felt this cold horrible feeling inside the pit of my stomach. He came in with a grin telling me he did what had to be done. He saw the horror on my face and laughed as he informed me I was being "a stupid b..." He didn't harm the puppy. He was trying to scare me. It wasn't long before I was on my knees in the backyard at the end of that shovel. When he was drinking it was funny to him, to see me afraid. I stayed. I should have left then.

After months of emotional and psychological abuse I found myself face down in the driveway of my home. The memories come in flashes. I awoke to lights blinking, my face in the gravel and his feet kicking the side of my head. He dragged me by my hair to clean up before the police arrived, threatening, if I got him arrested. After the police left I walked into my bathroom, feeling the aches and pains, but nothing compared to the face I saw in the mirror. It wasn't me. My face was a purple, bloated and bruised. My eyes and lips were black and purple, swollen shut. My back and legs were swollen and painful. I could barely walk. My head ached. I couldn't eat or drink. He blamed me for everything. As drunk as he was, he had his story ready to explain it away.

I was in a haze. I changed how I looked to keep the criticism away. He didn't like my style, my looks, and my attitude. He criti-

cized my education, the things that interested me, the places and people I liked. He even criticized my thoughts and opinions.

My school and work suffered. I was angry all the time, unhappy, and ashamed. It wasn't a slow progression. It happened hard and fast. It took over my life before I had a chance to even realize what was happening. I stayed for the good times, thinking that if only he wasn't drinking, or if only he found stability and peace, then maybe we'd have good times again. But when the good times came I didn't even recognize them anymore. I barely recognized myself. I didn't tell anyone.

"Violence between intimates is difficult to measure --because it often occurs in private, and victims are often reluctant to report incidents to anyone because of shame or fear of reprisal," according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

I knew real fear the last time he hit me as I lay face down in my living room. He repeatedly stomped on the back of my head. I felt myself begin to lose consciousness. Only anger got me through that night. It was the first time I stood up to him. It was the first time I told anyone. The support helped me through that night. It was the first time I let him know I would fight back anyway I had to.

"You may not realize it, but the impact of IPV can reach far beyond the actual or threatened abuse... You may have more physical health problems, mood problems, and may also affect your job or career," according to the United States Center for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

There was no hope for me until I spoke up and got help.



Courtesy of femaleimagination.wordpress.com

Domestic Abuse Help

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV)

CARE- Family Domestic Violence Program

1225 Ramsey St. Fayetteville, NC 28301

Office: (910) 323-4187

Crisis: (910) 323-4187

Fax: (910) 677-2661

Cumberland County Mental Health Center

711 Executive Place Fayetteville, NC 28305

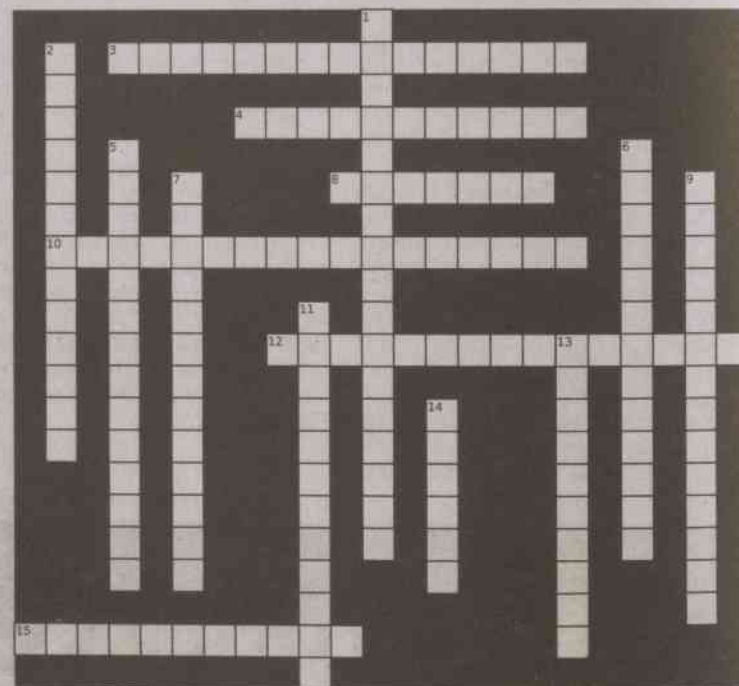
National Domestic Violence Hotline

Phone: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)

Web: thehotline.org

Black History Month Anna Lee

We all know about MLK and Harriet Tubman. But what about other underrated African American figures?



- | Across | Down |
|--|--|
| 3 Invented telephone transmitter | 1 His idea helps us know what time it is |
| 4 Female astronaut | 2 Founded the first AME church |
| 8 Made the first pyramids | 5 He invented the stoplight |
| 10 First African American to be nominated for Best Actress | 6 He sketched the filament for lightbulbs |
| 12 She created hair care products | 7 Created a surgery to improve eyesight |
| 15 Famous tennis player | 9 The Supersoaker watergun |
| | 11 First African American Nobel Peace Prize Winner |
| | 13 The Talented Tenth |
| | 14 Fastest woman of all time (nickname) |

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