

Remembering Amie Harwick

By Julie Carter
Opinion Editor

For many, Valentine's Day is a wonderful time to celebrate intimate romantic relationships on an utterly happy day. However, this year's Valentine's celebrations turned tragic for numerous people as they faced violence perpetrated by the very people they might have traditionally observed the holiday with.

On Feb. 14, actress Hayden Panettiere, known for her roles in shows such as "Nashville" and "Heroes," was allegedly punched in the face by her boyfriend, Brian Hickerson. Hickerson was arrested on charges of domestic battery after Panettiere called police where she stated "He beat the fuck out of me."

Hickerson was released under the condition that he does not consume alcohol, willingly submit to searches of his vehicle for alcohol if pulled over by the police and not have direct or indirect contact with Panettiere.

This is far from the first time Hickerson was arrested for allegedly causing Panettiere physical harm. In May 2019, he was arrested

for felony domestic violence. Hickerson pled not guilty to the charge.

In the same month, a judge issued a protective order that Hickerson not come within 100 yards of Panettiere.

In September 2019, the case against Hickerson was dismissed under joint decision by the prosecution and judge. The protective order for Panettiere was thereby dismissed as well.

On Feb. 15, Amie Harwick, a former Playboy model and well-known sex therapist, died after she was thrown from her third-floor balcony, allegedly by ex-boyfriend Gareth Pursehouse.

Harwick had filed restraining orders against Pursehouse twice with one expiring just weeks ago. In her statements for the restraining orders, Harwick stated that Pursehouse "choked me, suffocated me, pushed me against walls, kicked me, dropped me to the ground with force, force-restrained me, slammed my head into the ground and punched me with a closed fist."

Harwick also noted in court documents that Pursehouse broke into her apartment multiple

times and told her "things would get worse."

Pursehouse was originally arrested on suspicion of murder, being released on a \$2 million bond. However, Pursehouse was re-arrested on an official murder charge in which he is slated to face the death penalty as he had the special circumstance of lying in wait for Harwick.

Panettiere and Harwick are only 2 devastating cases of violence against women in recent memory. Countless other women go through this every minute of every day, unable to speak up about what is happening to them.

Panettiere and Harwick did speak out. However, it wasn't enough to protect them from those who hurt them.

There must be more we can do to protect women in obvious or unobviously threatening situations. As the world currently stands, the options for women to do anything to get out of these scenarios is slim to none unless it goes too far.

Thankfully, Panettiere didn't face the same fate as Harwick, but she is far from in the clear.

Can married men be priests?

By Mickayla Smith
Staff Writer

Pope Francis will not allow married male deacons to become priests and he will not allow women to become deacons, according to NPR. Currently, there is a shortage of clergy members in the South American Amazon, and the shortage has had a significant impact on the Catholics in the region.

Some people aren't happy with Pope Francis's plans for the Amazon. Some of his conservative critics within the church have accused Francis of heresy because of his views on homosexuality and divorce. "Ultra-conservatives in the church in Europe and the US have warned allowing married priests in the Amazon could trigger total abolition of the clerical celibacy requirement," NPR's Sylvia Poggioli wrote.

Last October, Pope Francis responded to the requests with a three week Synod of Bishops that included countries from the Amazon region, from Brazil to Bolivia, Colombia and Venezuela. Deacons are allowed to oversee weddings and baptisms, but they're not allowed consecrate Communion wafer and wine.

This shortage of priests has made it difficult for Catholics to celebrate sacraments. "They can't have a priest for weeks or months, which, if they can't have a priest, that means they can't have Mass," Rocco Palmo, editor of the website Whispers in the Loggia, told NPR last year. "If they can't have Mass, they can't have the Eucharist, Holy Communion, the thing that Catholics consider to be the bread of life, the thing that keeps us alive spiritually."

Pope Francis's response came in a document called "Querida Amazonia" - or "Dear Amazon." In this document, he talks about the issues he had with ordaining married men as priests and women as deacons.

"Priests are necessary, but this does not mean that permanent deacons (of whom there should be many more in the Amazon region), religious women and laypersons cannot regularly assume important responsibilities for the growth of communities," Francis wrote, "and perform those functions ever more effectively with the aid of a suitable accompaniment."

The role of women in the Amazon has kept the church alive through their devotion and deep faith. Pope Francis stated that women, "should have access to positions, including ecclesial

services, that do not entail Holy Orders and that can better signify the role that is theirs."

Not only did Francis talk about the role of women in the church, but he also addressed the impact of climate change and the struggle to preserve the Amazon's culture and their natural environment.

According to Vatican News, Pope Francis laid out his four "dreams" for the Amazon. He proposed "an Amazon region that 'fights for the rights of the poor,' that preserves its distinctive cultural riches,' that 'jealously preserves its overwhelming natural beauty' and lastly, that the Christian communities might be 'capable of generous commitment', incarnate in the Amazon region."

With everything said and done, I think there are good intentions with this proposal, however, I still believe married men should be ordained as priests.

If the Catholic Church is so worried about people not being able to celebrate sacraments and mass, then why wouldn't the Church make it more accessible for its followers? It seems as though the church is in limbo regarding this issue, and it's about time that there is a permanent decision made.