



There are moments when institutions are required to decide whether they will simply follow the limits of what the law permits, or whether they will exercise the judgement, humanity, and responsibility that survivors deserve.

This is one of those moments.

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin stands firmly with the survivor who has asked that video and other evidence documenting the violence done against her to not be released publicly.

Her request should matter.

Her dignity should matter.

Her privacy should matter.

And the fact that the person who harmed her is a prominent professional athlete does not make the most traumatic moments of her life public property.

Domestic violence is not public entertainment.

Survivors should not become collateral damage in our pursuit of transparency, accountability, ratings, clicks, disciplinary investigations, or public curiosity.

For decades, survivors and advocates across Wisconsin have told us what happens when systems take control of a survivor's story. A survivor reports violence and suddenly deeply personal pieces of their life can move through law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, courtrooms, medical systems, attorneys, employers, media organizations, and other institutions.

At every step, someone else may be making decisions about information that belongs to the most painful chapter of that survivor's life.

That loss of control has consequences.

And when the evidence is a video documenting violence, those consequences can become permanent.

Once released, that footage cannot be meaningfully retrieved. It can be copied. Posted. Shared. Edited. Commented on. Analyzed frame by frame. Turned into content. Preserved online indefinitely.

The public may move on.

The survivor does not get that luxury.

Wisconsin has made a commitment to crime victims that they will be treated with fairness, dignity, respect, courtesy, sensitivity, and privacy. Those rights cannot simply be words we invoke when they are convenient. They must carry weight precisely when institutional interest and survivor autonomy come into conflict.

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin therefore calls upon every institution with the authority to request, obtain, release, publish, broadcast, or distribute this footage to exercise that authority responsibly.



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That includes public agencies.

That includes media organizations.

That includes the National Football League and its member organizations.

And it includes every institution deciding whether access to this footage is truly necessary to fulfill its responsibility.

There is a difference between accountability and exposure.

There is a difference between transparency and voyeurism.

There is a difference between having the legal ability to obtain something and having an ethical justification for making it public.

We should be capable of holding someone accountable for causing harm without requiring the person harmed to relive that violence before an audience of millions.

We should also be asking why survivors continue to bear so much of the cost of our systems' responses to violence.

Survivors are asked to report.

To disclose.

To document.

To cooperate.

To trust the process.

And then, too often, when they ask those same systems to protect their privacy, dignity, or autonomy, they discover how little control remains in their hands.

That contradiction should concern every person working to end domestic violence.

It concerns us.

As Wisconsin's statewide coalition against domestic violence, we work alongside programs and advocates who support survivors every day. We know that decisions made in courtrooms, government offices, newsrooms, workplaces, professional organizations, and other institutions do not remain contained within those spaces. They shape whether survivors believe reporting is safe. They shape whether survivors trust systems enough to seek help. And they shape what survivors believe will happen to their stories once they tell someone what has happened to them.

The implications of this moment therefore reach far beyond one case.

A survivor should not have to calculate whether seeking accountability could someday mean watching the violence committed against them to circulate across television broadcasts, social media feeds, websites, and group chats.



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No survivor should have to make that calculation.

We urge those entrusted with this evidence to listen to what the survivor herself has said.

Do not mistake public interest for public entitlement.

Do not allow celebrity to eclipse survivor humanity.

Do not turn evidence of violence into content.

And do not ask survivors to trust systems that will not also demonstrate that they can be trusted with survivors' most vulnerable moments.

Survivor autonomy does not become less important when a case receives national attention.

It becomes even more important.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Monique C. Minkens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monique C. Minkens

Executive Director

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin – The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence