



*Summer 2022*

## **Helping Victims of Domestic Violence**

Cases of domestic violence continue to flood into our office at an alarming rate. Our prosecutors review more than 5,000 reported incidents of domestic violence a year. The high-profile defamation trial of former spouses Johnny Depp and Amber Heard could motivate more people to come forward with allegations, especially male victims of this traditionally underreported crime.

Prosecutions of some domestic violence cases are stronger these days thanks to an important change in Florida law that took effect last year. Secretly-recorded phone calls can now be used as evidence.

Previously, if a defendant violated an injunction by calling the victim, and she recorded the conversation without the defendant's knowledge, prosecutors couldn't use that recording at trial. It became a he said/she said situation, with the defendant denying he ever called.

The change to the law, supported by our office, was a huge victory for survivors of domestic violence. Section 934.03(L) says that a person who is protected under a temporary or final injunction may lawfully record the other person without their consent if the call violates the injunction.

These recordings can be provided to the police, to an attorney, or the court as evidence of a violation. Our Domestic Violence Elimination (DOVE) Unit handles cases including assault, battery, sexual battery, stalking, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of a family or household member by another household member.

Florida law requires domestic violence to be treated as a crime rather than a private matter. Our office has even seen more cases as a result of complaints from uninvolved bystanders. More people are calling the police when they see an act of domestic violence. In the ol' days, folks tended to mind their own business.

If you know of someone in danger, call the **Florida Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-500-1119**. For more information, visit [myflfamilies.com/service-programs/domestic-violence/](https://myflfamilies.com/service-programs/domestic-violence/)