

## MSNBC's Tamron Hall Uses Sister's Murder to Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

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The details surrounding the death of her sister are haunting.

**Renate**, the sister of MSNBC "News Nation" host **Tamron Hall**, was found face down in the pool of her own home in 2004. There were signs of a struggle. Her sister's hair had been pulled from the back of her head, and the nails on each of her sister's finger were broken.

Hall knew her sister described her relationship with the man she loved as a "love-hate" situation and one where they would "break up to make up." But the night she died, Hall's sister had, had enough:

"My mother spoke with my sister that night, and I know she told my mother she wanted out of the relationship and it was time to move. She also spoke with my younger brother that night, and the next morning, my sister was dead," Hall told **Aol. Black Voices** in an interview.



And although it's too late for her sister, Hall is out **sharing her personal story** in an effort to help younger women. Hall also works with **Day One**, a New York City organization dedicated to the issue of teen domestic violence. As part of **National Domestic Violence Awareness Month**, Hall recently hosted Day One's fundraiser and did a story on her new show, "**News Nation with Tamron Hall**," about the issue of domestic violence

"She has been a wonderful advocate. When people in prominent positions come forward to discuss their individual situation, it can make a big difference on the population," **Stephanie Nilva**, executive director for Day One, told **Aol. Black Voices** in an interview.

In many ways, Renata's story is similar to what happens to many women.

"The most dangerous time for people is when they are trying to end a relationship. When they go to get a restraining order or they try leaving a person or other ways to put a stop to the violence, the stalking or violence can increase because that person feels a loss of control," said Nilva.

The numbers regarding domestic violence are staggering. One in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime with an estimated 1.3 million physically assaulted by an intimate partner every year. Much of that abuse is never reported to police. One-third of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner.

For black women, the numbers are even worse. The top cause of death for black women ages 15 to 34 is homicide at the hands of an intimate partner. From 1993 to 1998, black females experienced intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 22 times the rate of women of other races. Only 17 percent of black women reported the abuse to police.

Hall said she meets many women in the same situation:

"Many of the girls I've met at Day One are the same way. They are in college, they have great personalities and are charming, bold and dependable young girls who, like my sister, end up in these relationships that they can't for whatever reason walk away from, even though in their hearts and minds they know it's wrong and they need to get out of the relationship. This experience just really just opened my eyes to the fact that my sister was not on some island alone and that what happened to her should be rare but it is not."

Although Hall says her sister's male partner was named as a person of interest in the case, there was never enough evidence to charge him. Her family felt the effects of her sister's murder. Four years after the death, Hall says her normally healthy father, who had exhibited signs of depression since the incident, passed away at the age of 78 after a brief illness.

To help prevent other families from feeling that pain, Hall is working with Day One to advocate for longer periods for restraining orders and tougher penalties for violating those orders.

"We are looking at legislation to protect people to increase the time of orders of protection and put some teeth behind it so these individuals know if they cross the line, they are going to jail," Hall said. "That's what I like about Day One. It's not just a support group; they are actively involved in influencing legislation to show people who choose to abuse that we mean business, that it is not a crime we take lightly."

Education is also a big part of the process. Hall said she admires Day One for reaching out to young men and teaching them that hitting or abusing women is never right. Young women also need to learn the early signs of abuse, such as a boyfriend who keeps too close tabs or beats up other boys. Too often, Hall said, young girls mistake those warning signs for signs of affection:

Read the full article: <http://www.bvblackspin.com/2010/10/14/msnbcs-tamron-hall-uses-sisters-murder-to-speak-out-against-do/>.