

# Who Could Possibly Think of Saying Something Like This?



For years, Americans have worked to overcome the sting of harmful racial stereotypes. But Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) buses are currently carrying an ad that depicts a smiling African-American girl who innocently predicts, “One day my husband will kill me.”

The ads were placed by the Family Place, a Dallas-based group that receives funding under the federal Violence Against Women Act.

## Ads “Made me Cringe,” are “Ugly, Toxic, and Wrong,” “Outright Lies”

The ads have spurred a national campaign to remove the offensive material, spearheaded by columnist Glenn Sacks.<sup>i</sup>

Media commentators have deplored the ad’s flawed message:

- The ads “made me cringe – and wonder to no restful end, whether I want my own young child to absorb such an alarming message.” – James Ragland, *Dallas Morning News*, 10/31/08
- The ads are “ugly, toxic, and wrong.” – Amy Alkon, *Advice Goddess Blog*, 10/28/08
- “The statements are not simply an exaggeration of the truth, they are outright lies.” – Barbara Kay, *National Post*, 10/29/08
- “You’re running ads on the buses that a black man is going to kill his wife one day? What does that say to a young black man?” – David Russell, *CBS News*, 10/29/08
- “I’m livid that children are being used this way.” – Josefa Salinas, *KHHT Morning Show*

## African-Americans Speak Out

According to African-Americans for VAWA Reform, “studies show that black men and women engage in partner violence at similar rates.”<sup>ii</sup>

*“Having this young African-American child convey the message that her husband will murder her one day is sexist and racist. It also teaches little girls to be afraid of Black men. This leads to the destruction of the African-American family.”* -- Elizabeth Crawford, president, African-Americans for VAWA Reform

One Department of Justice analysis, “Murder in Families,” found African-American men and women were almost equally likely to be victims of intimate partner homicide: 47% of victims were male, 53% were female.

## Misleading Statistics, Harmful Stereotypes

The domestic violence industry has a documented record of promoting one-sided statistics and harmful stereotypes.<sup>iii</sup> The DART ad:

1. Ignores the fact that women are as likely as men to instigate domestic violence.
2. Implies that marriage is dangerous. But the *exact opposite is true* – compared to dating or cohabiting couples, persons in intact marriages are *far less likely* to be victims of partner abuse, according to FBI statistics.
3. Hides the fact that adult partner violence harms boys as well as girls.

## ***Harmful to Children, as Well***

The domestic violence industry wants to criminalize all forms of family discord. Advocates now claim that raising your voice, facial gestures, or even being “concerned” about your relationship are all proof of domestic “violence.” Such actions justify heavy-handed police intervention, they say.

Such policies only serve to escalate partner conflict, weaken families, and send children to single-parent households. That places children at far higher risk of child abuse and a broad range of other social pathologies.

## ***Authorities Call on DART to Remove Ads***

Two billboard companies – Clear Channel Outdoor and CBS Outdoor – previously rejected the ads. A CBS spokesperson said the ads could be seen as both “misleading and disturbing.”

Over 60 domestic violence authorities say the ad presents a “distorted and counterproductive view of fathers, children, and domestic violence.” These persons “respectfully request that DART remove these ill-advised ads as soon as possible.”<sup>iv</sup>

*“Domestic violence cuts across all races, all income brackets, all levels of education – and both sexes.”* -- Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell

## ***An Industry Out of Control***

Each year the federal government spends \$1 billion to curb domestic violence. But industry insiders admit VAWA-funded programs have been ineffective:

*“We have no evidence to date that VAWA has led to a decrease in the overall levels of violence against women.”* -- Angela Moore Parmley, PhD, U.S. Department of Justice

Instead of working to improve its programs, the domestic violence industry is using taxpayer money to make claims that have no basis in fact and play on persons’ fears.

Earlier this month our nation elected its first Black president, proof that America is capable of breaking through the stereotypes of the past.

We call on elected officials to speak out against DART’s defamation of African-American men.



**Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting**

A coalition of over 70 organizations around the country has come together to reform domestic violence laws:  
[www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Reform-Coalition-Declaration.pdf](http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Reform-Coalition-Declaration.pdf)

For more information, contact RADAR at:  
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### **References**

- <sup>i</sup> <http://www.glennsacks.com/dart/>
- <sup>ii</sup> [http://www.aavreform.org/docs/AAVR\\_facts.pdf](http://www.aavreform.org/docs/AAVR_facts.pdf)
- <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/RADARreport-Education-For-Injustice.pdf>
- <sup>iv</sup> [www.glennsacks.com/dart/endorsements.php](http://www.glennsacks.com/dart/endorsements.php)