

Protasiewicz campaign: Report exposes harassment and revictimization of crime victims by right-wing groups

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MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Today the USA Today Network – Wisconsin detailed how right-wing groups supporting Dan Kelly have harassed and victimized a crime victim who says she was “100% satisfied” with Judge Protasiewicz’s decision in her case, while distorting the facts.

Groups associated with Dan Kelly’s campaign repeatedly harassed the victim in a 2019 case asking her to participate in their false and misleading TV ads. The group said these ads were “going to run whether she approved or not,” and continued to send her messages, including the first ad, after she refused to participate.

The victim told reporters the ads “immediately took my breath away,” and she “wondered if there was any thought put into the human beings behind the cases.” An advocate for sexual assault victims also said, “There are human beings that are affected by these stories, by these cases being brought up again, and that’s very tiring for survivors, in particular for survivors of sexual assault.”

Both Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and Fair Courts America – groups responsible for the vast majority of spending to support Kelly – have used this case to mislead voters about Judge Janet Protasiewicz’s record on the bench. Court records and the victim’s statements show Judge Protasiewicz listened to the victim’s requests.

Comment from Judge Protasiewicz’s Campaign:

“Dan Kelly and his right-wing allies have made up disgusting lies about Judge Janet Protasiewicz to scare voters and hide her record of protecting public safety and holding people accountable. No victim of crime deserves to be harassed by these extreme groups or have their own words twisted and manipulated for any reason, especially for a cheap political smear. These ads are false, misleading, and it’s time for Dan Kelly to break his silence and call for them to be pulled from the air. Our campaign will contact TV stations airing these ads and demand they’re pulled from the air.” – Campaign Spokesperson Sam Roecker

USA Today Network - Wisconsin: [Rape victim says Supreme Court ads about her case are traumatizing and inaccurate](#)

The victim at the center of a rape case featured in state Supreme Court court attack ads says she is being retraumatized and revictimized by the media blitz.

“It immediately took my breath away,” the woman told the Journal Sentinel. “To see it in action. I wondered if there was any thought put into the human beings behind the cases. I am a human being who wants peace.”

The woman, who asked to be identified by her first name Emily, said she did not want to participate in the ads and did not want her case to be featured. (The Journal Sentinel does not name sexual assault victims without their consent). The ads are aimed at criticizing the judicial record of Janet Protasiewicz, the Milwaukee County circuit judge who handled the case and is running in the April 4 election for Wisconsin Supreme Court.

But Emily said she had no problem with the sentence handed down by Protasiewicz — 2 1/2 years in prison followed by 2 1/2 years of community supervision — and said that in addition to being traumatizing, the ads contain inaccuracies.

The ads were paid for by Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Issues Mobilization Council and Fair Courts America, a super PAC supporting Daniel Kelly, a conservative, over Protasiewicz, a liberal candidate. Neither campaign was involved in the ads.

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Emily said she received a call at work on March 8 that instantly transported her back to the aftermath of her assault.

The female caller said her name was Courtney and asked questions about Emily's interactions with Protasiewicz.

"She said there was a team that was putting a lot of research into my case," Emily said. After some back and forth, Emily learned the team was putting together a commercial about her 2019 rape case.

Emily was told she could participate if she wanted — to have some control of the narrative in the ad — but it was going to run whether she approved or not.

Between March 8 and March 20, Emily received 10 more calls. She answered on March 20 and told the caller she was not interested in talking about her case or participating in the making of the ad.

Then she received a text message of the first commercial.

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Protasiewicz read Emily's victim impact statement in her chambers and then listened as Emily read it in court.

After hearing everyone speak, Protasiewicz called the attorneys into her chambers and then told Kort to ask Emily what resolution she wanted. The conversation was off-record, meaning it is not included in the transcript. Emily told the Journal Sentinel that she told the court she "trusted the judge to apply the law and give a sentence that was fair."

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Protasiewicz refused the defense attorney's request for probation, saying that would "unduly depreciate how serious this case is."

"As much as part of me would like to place you on probation, I just can't do that. It's not a probationary case," she said.

Protasiewicz sentenced Guzinski to 2 1/2 years in prison and 2 1/2 years of extended supervision. She also ordered him to register as a sex offender until 2040. Guzinski was released on extended supervision last summer.

Emily told the Journal Sentinel she was "100% satisfied" with the sentence.

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The ads are not only traumatizing, they also are inaccurate, Emily said.

Ads paid for by WMC Issues Mobilization Council claim Emily was “left for dead” after her attack. She was not.

The ads also use a voiceover to read a brief portion of Emily’s victim impact statement where she describes being afraid before the narrator says Protosiewicz “ignored her pleas.”

Emily told the Journal Sentinel the judge did take into account her perspective.

“I’m not sure what the fixation is on this case,” Emily said. “They must have read criminal reports or court records to know identifiable information about me, and if they did, they would know I am just looking for peace of mind. There is nothing that would have made any inclination that I was unhappy or desired a different outcome.”

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“Bringing this back up is re-traumatizing for survivors regardless of what your political motivations are,” said Erika Petty, executive director and lead attorney at LOTUS Legal Clinic, Inc. which represents survivors of sexual violence and has no connection to Emily’s case.

“There are human beings that are affected by these stories, by these cases being brought up again, and that’s very tiring for survivors, in particular for survivors of sexual assault,” Petty said.

Read the full story here: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/-elections/2023/03/30/rape-victim-forced-to-relive-trauma-with-supreme-court--campaign-ads/70058386007/>