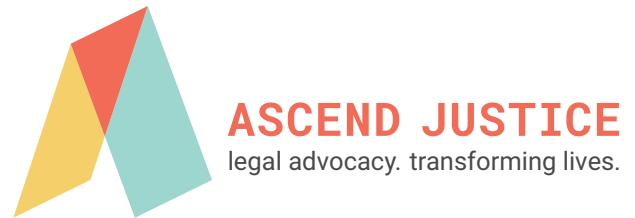


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**FOLLOWING TRIBUNE INVESTIGATION, ASCEND JUSTICE AND CYBERSTALKING VICTIM CLIENT
DEMAND ACTION FROM META, LAW ENFORCEMENT**

CHICAGO – Together with Ascend Justice, cyberstalking victim Dominique Ward, who has endured harassment and cyberstalking via Facebook from the biological father of her children, demands action from Meta and law enforcement to take cases like hers more seriously.

Her abusive ex-partner violated an order of protection on numerous occasions, and has confessed to inflicting “technological warfare” and “psychological warfare” on Ward. But he has not faced arrest, and his internet abuse was only addressed by Meta after Governor JB Pritzker’s office stepped in.

“I have taken every possible legal step to stop this behavior and reclaim my life,” said Dominique Ward. “I have filed police reports, I have asked the State’s Attorney to prosecute violations of the Order of Protection, I have contacted the FBI, and I have reached out to Meta. In each instance, I have been ignored. The only time I was able to get some relief was through the Governor’s Office pressuring Meta to act to restrict his posts. I am grateful for the Governor’s help—but we must be realistic. Most victims aren’t so lucky as to be able to access the Governor’s office or other powerful leaders. We need for Meta to enforce their own policies and for law enforcement at all levels to take this seriously and enforce the law—regardless of whether a victim has political connections.”

Lindsay Nathan, Dominique’s lawyer and Director of the Family Law Program at Ascend Justice, said, “The answer lies not with any failing of Illinois laws, we have clear paths to Orders of Protection and to enforcement of these orders with Violation charges. The problem here is a lack of enforcement, and a failure of law enforcement and Meta to one, take these violations seriously, and two, to act on them in any way at all. And this is costing victims their security, their emotional well being, and quite frankly, in far too many cases, their lives.”

Sara Block, Ascend Justice’s Director of Advocacy and Partnerships, added, “These cases upend victims’ lives, causing them to live in fear – not just fear of the next post, but fear because the harassment is often a precursor to physical violence, or part of an ongoing pattern of threats, surveillance, and violence. Even before the publication of Sunday’s article, Dominique’s case should have resulted in law enforcement investigation and action. Today, we are talking about a case in which a person has admitted to the crimes in a front page article in the Sunday paper without any apparent consequences. We demand action – for Meta to enforce its own policies and for law

enforcement to enforce the law. Dominique and other victims of online harassment and cyberstalking deserve no less.”

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Ascend Justice is a mission-driven nonprofit legal aid organization. Our mission is to empower individuals and families impacted by gender-based violence or the child welfare system—we strive to help people achieve safety and stability through holistic legal advocacy and system reform.
Learn more at ascendjustice.org.