

Rice controversy turns eyes to NFL

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It was the hit seen around the world. Baltimore Ravens football player Ray Rice punching his wife and knocking her unconscious ? the whole scene caught on an elevator surveillance camera.

The public outcry continues to roar ? Rice has since been suspended by the NFL ? and domestic violence has taken root in the public spotlight where experts are hoping it will stay.

“It might just represent a sea change in our attitudes toward domestic violence,” said [Tania Tetlow](#), a former federal prosecutor and an associate professor at Tulane Law School.

The NFL now has an enormous opportunity to begin changing how society looks at domestic violence, she said.

“The NFL has such a part in defining masculinity for us and what real men do. Athletes show all this courage and hard work but they also have the opportunity to talk about how real men don't hit their wives or beat women,” Tetlow said. “If that were happening in a way that changed culture it could accomplish vastly more than the legal system could do.”

Since the Rice video was posted online by TMZ.com last month, the National Domestic Violence Hotline has reported an increase in calls for help, leading the NFL to commit additional resources to help the hotline answer more calls.

“Because of the videotape, you can't look away,” Tetlow said. “You can't make up the mythology that somehow she provoked it or deserved it.”

But it also has exposed some glaring problems. An average of 12 million people have been the victim of what is commonly called “intimate partner violence” ? four out of five victims are women.

According to a study published in [Criminal Justice Review](#), prosecutors do not file charges in 70 percent of cases that are investigated by police.

Rice is only the latest NFL player to be accused of domestic violence.

“It's generally not about anger and lost tempers. It's about control and power and getting your way,” Tetlow said. “Violence is a very effective way to do that.”

Tulane University football players recently [took a stand against violence](#) (see their video, above).

If you or someone you know needs help, call the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) at 1-800-799-7233.