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# Domestic violence can be deadly

It's not just 'a family matter,' and perpetrators deserve stiff sentences.

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Twenty to 40 years.

It doesn't seem like enough for killing a spouse or girlfriend.

But it is the maximum penalty for third-degree murder, and so we'll have to live with those sentences.

Or, more accurately, Toby Robert Taylor and Brian Green will have to live with them.

Literally.

Those were the punishments recently passed down in their respective homicide cases.

Toby Taylor was convicted of third-degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment for the January 2008 electrocution death of his wife Kirsten. He was acquitted of first-degree murder, which would have meant life in prison.

Judge Tom Kelley rightly gave him the maximum sentence for third-degree murder, explaining that the former Lower Windsor Township man was a "serial" domestic violence offender who the judge said had shown he could not be rehabilitated.

Mr. Taylor, who did jail time in western Pennsylvania for shocking another young woman, claimed his victim was a willing participant in the electrocution episode, but obviously the jury didn't believe him.

He's a dangerous individual who should spend the rest of his life behind bars. But even if he serves just the minimum, he'll be nearly 60 when he gets out.

In the case of Brian Green, he recently pleaded guilty to shooting and killing his girlfriend, Tracey Green, at their York Township home in June 2008.

Tracey Green died on the floor of the garage as her 16-year-old daughter Anglecia held her.

It's a heartbreaking case. As Anglecia said in court last week, she's lost her mother and feels overwhelmed trying to fill that role with her 10-year-old brother. He comes to her with problems and questions. "I don't know what to do," she said. "I'm only 17."

Mr. Green deserved life in prison, but prosecutors accepted the plea deal to spare the children from testifying. So be it. He'll be an old man before -- if -- he gets out of prison.

The points to remember here:

--- Domestic violence is a potentially deadly crime. Emphasize crime, even in cases where there are no weapons involved and the victim survives. It is not, repeat not, a "family matter" as some abusers call it -- including a man who recently ran unsuccessfully (thank goodness) for district justice following a domestic violence conviction.

--- Violence and murder can happen anywhere, in the best of homes, in the nicest neighborhoods, in rural areas and small towns, not just "the city" -- as so many York-bashers in this county wrongly assume.

--- If you or a friend or loved one are being abused, get help. Call Access-York or another shelter/advocacy group to keep yourself and your children safe.