



Tacoma police chief's wife says he pointed a gun at her

David Brame denies allegations, says it was she who abused him

By RUTH TEICHROEB, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER
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Brame / SL

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The wife of Tacoma police Chief David Brame has accused him in court documents of pointing his service revolver at her and trying to choke her during two separate incidents in the past six months.

[Note: The article originally stated that David Brame's wife, Crystal, obtained a temporary restraining order against him. However, the order in effect applied to the

handling of marital assets, custody and dissolution issues. [Crystal Brame](#) also applied for a restraining order regarding her personal protection, but that request had not been adjudicated.]

Brame, a veteran officer who rose through the ranks to become chief in January 2002, denied those allegations in court papers filed in King County Superior Court last month.

He maintained he was the real victim of domestic violence during his 11-year marriage. His wife, Crystal, filed for divorce two months ago.

As evidence of his wife's volatility, Brame, 44, claimed his wife scratched, bruised and pushed him during two altercations in September 1996.

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Brame said he reported the assaults to police -- first to his boss, then-interim Chief [Ken Monner](#), and to an officer who photographed his bruises; then to police in Gig Harbor, where he was living at the time.

Both times Brame insisted that police not arrest his wife or even investigate his allegations -- even though a state law requires officers to arrest anyone accused of domestic violence if the complaint is credible.

He explained his unusual behavior in court documents by saying he wanted to "protect himself" in case his wife ever tried to malign him with false abuse allegations.

Brame refused to comment yesterday, as did his wife's attorney.

Tacoma City Manager [Ray Corpuz](#), who hired Brame, cautioned that accusations made during a contested divorce must still be proven.

"He's doing a great job," Corpuz said. "I'm not interested in exploring David's personal life at this time."

Mayor [Bill Baarsma](#), who sits on the City Council's public safety committee, was surprised at the allegations but said they were a "private matter."

"He's been an outstanding chief," Baarsma said. "Unless there's a complaint filed with the city manager as to his performance, I'm not prepared to comment."

There are discrepancies between Brame's version of events and what Gig Harbor Police Chief [Mitch Barker](#) said yesterday his officers recall and records indicate.

While Brame visited Gig Harbor police twice in September 1996, Barker said Brame was "vague" about his marital problems and did not report any physical assault by his wife.

"If someone comes in and says they've been assaulted by a domestic partner, we have an obligation to investigate," Barker said.

A Gig Harbor police report indicates that Brame told an officer on Sept. 15, 1996, that his wife had been "verbally hostile" but that he had "not used physical force of any kind" on her. He said he was worried she might make "false allegations" of abuse.

Thirteen days later, Brame appeared again at the Gig Harbor police station, this time telling an officer that he'd had an altercation with his wife but that "nothing happened," according to Barker.

Refusing to say more, Brame phoned a Tacoma detective who met privately with him at the Gig Harbor police station, Barker said.

In court papers, Crystal Brame, 35, portrayed her husband as controlling and jealous, refusing to let her use their credit card without permission and checking her car's odometer to monitor trips to the grocery store.

She also accused him of leaving his loaded service revolver on a bedroom shelf within reach of their two children.

Her fear increased last November when she alleged that Brame "choked me and threatened that he could snap my neck if he wanted to." It was the fourth time that year he'd tried to choke her, each time sending flowers later to apologize, she said.

And just before they separated in February, she alleged in court documents that Brame pointed his service revolver at her, "telling me 'accidents happen.' "

She did not report either incident to police.

Fearing Brame's reaction and wanting to protect his career, his wife said she filed for divorce in South King County, and did not ask for a restraining order even though her attorney urged her to do so.

She claims her husband's continued threats prompted her to seek a temporary restraining order on March 26.

"I do remain very afraid of my husband," she said in a court declaration.

A hearing on the restraining order scheduled for last week in Kent was canceled after a motion was filed to move the case to Pierce County Superior Court.

In court papers, Brame blamed his wife's "ferocious temper" and emotional instability for the abuse, noting his embarrassment at being victimized by someone who is just over 5 feet tall and weighs 105 pounds. Brame is 6-foot-1 and weighs 175 pounds.

"As hard as it is to believe and as ashamed as I am of this fact, Mrs. Brame has physically abused me for a number of years, often in the presence of the children," Brame said.

He recalled his frustration as a police officer when domestic violence victims refused to cooperate with police.

"Now, I see that I have become the very victim who frustrated me all those years," Brame said.

But he denied pointing his revolver at his wife or choking her, saying that he was "scrupulously careful" to defend himself in the least aggressive manner when she attacked him.

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