

Dana M. Bellingrath:

If you get a one-year protective order, it restrains the defendant, the person who committed the act of domestic violence or acts from having any contact with the victim for up to a year. That's direct contact or indirect contact. So they can't go through a family member and pass messages along. But it requires them to stay away for a year.

What makes it different from other types of restraining orders? There is another civil restraining order. What makes it different is that if somebody violates it, then the police have the ability to, if there's probable cause to believe that they've violated this order, then they can arrest them. And so there are criminal consequences in terms of arrest, so you don't have to go back to court to have them held in contempt. It's just an immediate, if there's probable cause.