

"#MenToo English"

#MenToo

Now that the storm around #metoo is somewhat abating I would like to sound my male voice. I was enormously pleased by the #metoo action and its worldwide success. Chapeau to these courageous women! My remaining concern at present is the question of: "Why took it so long?" But then, my personal experiences too are of missions that were impossible.

So may I have your attention for the problem of female abuse against men? If you are surprised that such a thing would exist then you know this world only poorly. I used to believe that this phenomenon would be 5% at most when compared to abuse by men against women. Admittedly the literature on this topic is scant but it does exist. Admittedly too, abuse by women often takes quite different forms. Look for example at these TV series (mostly from the USA) about real life murder cases. Today I have come to the opinion that the relation is simply 50-50.

Very well then. Let me start by telling that my wife (presently ex-wife) wanted to murder me. Initially she did this by psychological methods. One technique consisted of accusing me of unfaithfulness. Not with just one particular woman. No, her list of 'other women' in the end contained 36 names, all of honorable women from our own social circle. No, there was absolutely no truth to this. Not one fling, not one secret kiss, nothing at all. Reason: I loved my wife to bits. How then to defend against such allegations? Very difficult indeed. Of course, I denied it but that made no impression. Then I asked for evidence. She just turned on her high heels and walked away.

It got worse. At a certain moment the situation became really dangerous. She threatened to kill me, so she told me. She told me not once, but many times. This always happened at 3 AM. The children by this time had left home, so her shrill shouting was heard only by me. Her weapon? Oh, very cleverly she found the ideal lethal weapon. The boning knife from the kitchen drawers! This is a very effective weapon for a slight woman against a big man. Placed between the ribs it requires only light pressure to create a deadly wound. She threatened me over a period of months at end. At the time I would sleep with a blanket clamped tight between my toes and my hands. If and when the lethal attack would come my plan was to throw this blanket over her, if only I would have the chance.

Why did I not take more adequate measures? Fear, shame and a couple more of those things. Why not seek help from the family physician? I knew how he would have reacted. He would have shown up at our place with an ambulance and two strong male nurses. I did not want that. Not for her, not for the children. Wait until she would strike? Then she would end up in jail and I did not want that either. Children, family? They would almost certainly not believe me, or rather refuse to believe me. In the end it became a divorce. I said nothing and just departed. Out of fear, but also filled with shame and self-reproach for having failed to prevent it all. My entire environment turned unanimously against me. I was declared guilty of everything, and I had not the slightest idea of what I might have done wrong. There had never been any concrete allegations against me. Except then these sexual escapades that had never happened. But then, my ex-wisely never touted such stories to the outside world.

Deeply depressed (Oh, yes, that too) I left my home, friends, everything, only to be pursued by my ex at every step. She literally robbed me blind. At one point she confessed why she had not killed me as planned: "I was afraid that your life insurance (almost a million) would not be paid out to me if I did". I did no longer care. My thoughts were: "Go ahead. Take it all, since I won't survive this anyway. One little flu and I will succumb".

Why did I not offer more resistance? False shame, plus the feeling that no-one would believe me anyway. Plus the belief that nothing mattered anymore. No matter how I looked at it, my marriage was kaputt and beyond repair. I had struggled for 40 years to keep my beloved lady from self-destructing. Now it had happened and she had taken me with her in her fall. Ten years later it proved that indeed nobody would believe me. I had sought and found help from professionals. Through self-study I had learned about psychotic afflictions. I also understood more about Angst. My own fears but also the fear of those in my environment. Just imagine their feelings that I (as father, or as friend, or as an in-law) would be proven right! I wrote a sort of personal history that I circulated to friends and family. All hell broke loose. All of a sudden I was a cheat, a liar, a fantast. No-one tried to verify anything I had written. That would have been fairly easy. Unanimously a slanderous attitude was adopted.

I hope that the parallels with many #metoo stories are evident. Not only the bare facts but also why these are only now coming to the fore. Altar boys, boarding school children, gymnasts, aspiring young artists. And, of course, men and women in relational situations.

I now appeal to all men who at one time were abused by their female partners, be it by physical force or by psychological warfare. Please, come forward.

Write to this newspaper or to my e-mail address du4ro8@kpnmail.nl or to my twitter account [@nostalgiapublis](https://twitter.com/nostalgiapublis). My website www.nostalgiapublishing.nl gives additional information about myself and my publications. The latter are all these are in Dutch, however.

#MenToo c/o Auguste van der Molenschot

(Nom-de-plume, but real name and address known by the editor of this newspaper)