

KIM

I was drugged and rendered helpless when I was sexually assaulted by my husband. I felt violated, ashamed, and did not know what to do. I had been married to this man for 26 years and believed we had a respectful and honest relationship. We are both well known in the area where we've lived for many years. He was the Governor of a very large International Organisation and seen to be a really good bloke with community interests at heart.

He established and developed, with my help, a very successful business, that is still owned, and I worked, the whole time I was married, for a very large organisation as the Occupational Health Manager.

I was terrified about reporting the assault and firstly sought advice from a solicitor who instructed me to go to the Police. Because of living in a small town with people knowing about this very private issue, I did try to sort the matter out at home but was left with no choice as he reneged on leaving the property.

I reported to the Police and was advised to seek an intervention order for my safety. The next day I was placed on the witness stand for nearly three hours. My treatment in that court that day felt like another assault. I was made to feel dirty and that I was lying. I was accused of being an alcoholic, a drug taker, and trying to get his money. The Magistrate said there was not enough evidence presented at the time and adjourned the case for 6 weeks. I asked the Police prosecutor, 'Where to from here?' He told me not to go back to my home, as in six weeks time, I would certainly not be granted an Intervention Order.

So there I was out of my home of over 26 years.

I raced home, grabbed some clothing and left the house feeling confused and bewildered. I was taken in by friends. We have since been back to court. He pleaded guilty and has been remanded on bail to re-appear in court later in July.

Intimate partner sexual assault is very difficult to prove, my reason for being successful in him pleading guilty was after I discovered he had drugged me, I convinced my doctor to conduct a drug test on my urine. The test result came back with a very high contamination of benzodiazepines. I told my husband that this was the case and he needed to talk to me about it. All the time, I had a tape recorder hidden in my pocket (thank goodness), and he finally admitted to it. There were a lot more contributing factors that we had as evidence, but his admission on the tapes (those precious tapes) was enough for the police to take the case on.

In the courtroom I heard things like ...

'Your Honour; this is a private matter and it does not belong in the court room'.

'This poor man has gone through enough with his public fall from grace in the community and his picture placed on the front page of the newspaper'.

'This is the act of a sad, lonely and sexually frustrated man'.

'She only wanted him out of the house and she wanted a property settlement'.

My client has endured considerable distress after his previous court appearance generated media coverage. '(He's) a person with an exemplary reputation, very well known, who has had the most embarrassing and humiliating, and completely awful fall from Grace'.

His solicitor apologised to me on his behalf, after stating he thought the apology was unnecessary. It meant absolutely nothing to me as he then continued to insult and twist the truth. The apology should have come from the perpetrator.

It appears he feels no shame and seems to be in denial as he continues to lie about the events, even in the court, and to the wider community. To add insult, he was seen at a very public function where he flaunted around with a woman at his side only four days after the court case was publicised on page 1 of the local newspaper.

After the initial courtroom experience, my anger and frustration gave me courage to write a letter of complaint to the Police as they had not explained the court processes to me, and therefore I went into the court totally unprepared for the onslaught. My complaint was followed up by a very professional police woman who visited me at my home. She set up a referral for me to seek counselling from CASA and it was then, and only then, that the healing process, slowly but surely, began.

There have been severe consequences for me as a result of this heinous crime committed against me by my husband. I had to move out of my beautiful home. I have since been diagnosed with depression and hypertension. Earlier, before I had counselling, I contemplated suicide and it was the face of my beautiful grandson that came as a very strong image. I was driving at the time. I parked the car and sat on the roadside for a very long time and just sobbed and sobbed. I am so grateful for my loving family and beautiful friends around me to support me. I now know that taking my life would serve no purpose and give more pain for everyone.

There is life after sexual assault and I do have so much to celebrate and live for. I have my beautiful family and friends; a new home; very little money; a very old car; but I have my life back and I am safe.

During all this, I am, as well, going through the Family Law Courts to try and get a property settlement.

Living in a rural community where you are well known has its disadvantages. The media actually named me in the press release, and that is against the law - to name the victim - and now my very private life is out there for all to read and make judgment on published issues that were not true or accurate.

When asked by a member of the Police force, would I do this again? My quick reply was, 'Yes, I would!', as this behaviour needs to be stopped at all costs. I have since thought about it, knowing the hell I've been through over the past eighteen months and hope I never have to make that call ever again in my life.

And now, I wonder, if indeed I would say 'yes' in the future. He is still ensconced in the former matrimonial home and hanging onto his precious possessions and his money. All I can say is 'I wish him a long and lonely life'. AND: He does not deserve to have me in his life.