

In 2002 I entered into a relationship with a man who became violent over the course of our time together. He was emotionally abusive in the beginning and eventually it escalated into physical abuse and moments when I thought I was going to die. He at times locked me out of my home (when I was 6 months pregnant), locked me in the home and also threatened to kidnap our child (after she was born).

When my daughter was [REDACTED] old I finally managed to end the relationship for good. It took a couple of years to disentangle my emotions and my self esteem. When I realised my daughter was still being exposed to violence when she visited her dad I took steps to have him only have supervised access. This triggered a series of events which led to me taking out a restraining order and making police reports.

One of the items on the restraining order was that he was not to contact me via phone at all or come near me. He had other ways of contacting me through my solicitor. He breached the intervention order by making repeated phone calls and sending text messages to me. I attended [REDACTED] police station and asked them to become involved as he was breaching the intervention order.

The police on duty basically told me to go away as they had real crimes to deal with. They said that it is not a breach of an intervention order to call someone and I couldn't prove that anything wrong had occurred. I urged them to look up my order and confirm that what he was doing was a breach. They said they couldn't see that. More importantly they gave no importance to the crime that was committed against me. I sat in the station crying for several hours begging them to help me and eventually my friend removed me as he thought there was no good to be gained by staying any longer.

I then took a copy of my intervention order (a week or so later I think) to a different police station and requested they take action. The time line now is fuzzy but eventually my abuser was taken to court and given a suspended sentence for breaching the order.

I also wrote to a local member of parliament to make a complaint about how I was treated at [REDACTED] station. I was then contacted and visited by a senior member of police, I believe the person in charge of the [REDACTED] police force. Or a Deputy of some kind. This man sat in my crappy little flat with his shiny badges and assured me that police were given training in domestic violence and that his officers would be put through that training again.

He also mentioned that there was some error in their system that meant they were not able to see the details on my intervention order and did not know that my abuser was committing a breach.

I feel very strongly that they should have believed what I was saying and not told me to go away. I do not believe that the systemic error in their computers was a reason for my poor treatment and lack of assistance. The police on duty simply did not consider it to be a crime unless I turned up dead

when it would be important enough to take action. There was a underlying misogyny that I came up against.

I note that in the Luke Batty case there is still issues with the police computer systems being blamed for the lack of comprehensive response to their situation. Whilst I acknowledge that it makes a difference for computer systems to be working well, the main issue in my eyes in the attitude of the officers in the force. They did/do not want to become involved because it is messy and they perceive the women to be partially to blame for their own circumstances. They are not "real" victims.

When my house was burgled several years later I was disgusted to see how differently a nice married lady in the suburbs with a nice clean crime was treated in comparison to how I was treated as a victim of the crime of domestic violence.

I think it would help if all police stations had access to a therapist who specialises in dv and can assist a woman who is attending a police station to make a report. There should be a support worker immediately made available to all women requesting help from the police. I do not think any amount of training will change things over night, but if there is support from someone to help a woman be heard by the police it might make a small change to the way they treat women who are victims of dv.

I consider myself well educated and strong. I think I was lucky to teach myself how to manipulate the law and my abuser to eventually get him out of my life entirely (he now lives in [REDACTED] and has no contact and provides not support to his child). I think for someone who was not as well educated at research as me (I was working as a legal typist and was exposed to legal knowledge) it would have been even more difficult to extricate themselves.

It is well known a restraining order is just a paper trail you lay to help keep your kids/home if you end up in family court. It is no protection and the police will not enforce them.

I tried on multiple occasions to access the domestic violence help line and I could never get through. It should be funded to run 24 hours a day. I could never find help outside of legal aid provided to me. I felt like I was entirely on my own despite many efforts to reach out for help.