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Time Out

by Miriam Silver

Every time I left my terraced house a curtain twitched next door. I had come here from the big smoke, to this small village seeking privacy, taking time out from my demanding work looking forward to walking in the surrounding countryside unrecognised.

For the past too many years I've been in the public eye, pestered by the press who printed interpretations and assumptions based on my findings accusing me of betraying my profession.

I went into law, becoming a barrister, sincerely hoping I would to, I quote, 'make a difference,' my specialty being womens' rights for which I have fought a long fight.

Over the course of my career I can modestly say I have consistently done that, together with persisting in my Chambers as the only female, in a workplace dominated by men in suits (and wigs) who would never admit that they are anti-woman, especially those that aspire to outdo them.

Over the years I am glad to say I have seen an increased number of lady barristers at the bar having to be better at their job than any man.

Until this last case, which I was reluctant to accept, I was able to either ignore the press or manage to slip out of court unnoticed. She, the lady who employed me to represent her was very persuasive, and so was her solicitor.

She presented herself as well dressed, groomed, displaying an obvious diamond bracelet and Rolex watch, though the story she told was one of neglect, suppression and dominance by a husband who displayed to the world an impressive, highly successful loving, giving man.

The story she told of how he suppressed her, reduced her to a drug, medicine taking creature that had no will of her own having persuaded her that she was mentally ill. At one point he had her confined in the Priory.

The clever husband controlled the money, insisting she didn't need to worry about running the house. He employed people to do that, she only needed to appear at his side, wearing the clothes he had given her and organised, there to entertain his influential guests.

In the early days of their marriage, when she was still overwhelmed by his charm and caring, she was able to dismiss his total lack of any sexual interest. Yes, it had been like that during what she called, their courtship. He said they must wait until she was his wife, then they would talk about having the family she yearned for.

She waited, enjoying the attention, the parties, gowns and people she met, and was able to overlook his objection to all her friends, insisting that they would distract her from what was now her new life. He insisted on separate bedrooms explaining she would upset him, his job needed all his energy. Surely, he said, she could understand.

As her story unfolded, which I was able to substantiate through her sister who although worriedly had not seen her for many years, until now when she was ready to substantiate her claims and bear witness in court that her sister could never have been the culprit of this terrible crime.

This case attracted worldwide attention, I was accused unilaterally of protecting a killer and of being an overbearing woman. As a result, I was stalked and the accusations on social media unrepeatably.

Throughout a long trial during I acted completely professionally which regrettably left me in the public eye, and as my life became unbearable I decided I would take time out.

And that is why I am here, where no one will recognise me, I'm a holiday visitor enjoying walking in the surrounding hills.

Maybe I'm paranoid, hopefully that twitchy curtain was coincidental.

