

"Don't Tell Anyone. Don't. Tell."

"Don't tell anyone. Don't. Tell." She was told, repeatedly, *not to tell*. She was his employee. He was her senior manager. He had fondled her. She had wept.

It was an ordinary day. She was alone with him in an apartment for work purpose. They had a polite chat. He moved towards her, asking if he could give her a massage. She declined. He suddenly touched her, then swiftly moving his hands grabbing her breasts and fondling her private parts. She froze. He felt the tightening of the muscles in her body, saw fear written all over her. He then moved away.

And he pleaded with her. "Don't tell anyone. Please."

She informed the head of her company, the director. The director reassured her that he would ask her manager, the culprit, to leave. "But please, don't tell anyone," said the director.

To her great dismay, she saw her molester turned up at the office, as per usual, to attend a meeting. Enraged, she approached the director, asking him why he had not instructed her molester to leave the company.

"He is a man of influence. Our organisation cannot afford to lose someone of such status."

She was stunned to hear those words flowing without hesitation from the mouth of someone whom she had been loyally working with for years. Frustrated, she proceeded to lodge a police report. The next day, she marched into the director's room, and demanded that the director discuss the case of her molestation in the presence of her lawyer. In response, he issued her a termination notice immediately.

She was crushed. But determined not to remain silent, she and her lawyer brought her case to the state Industrial Relations Department. To her amazement, the officer in charge of her case refused to hear her out, insisting that she hold her tongue during the mediation process. Instead, the officer appeared keen on listening only to the story produced by the director of her company, who twisted the facts, claiming that she refused to report for work. She lost the case.

She had reached her wits' end. She'd been shut down once more. Silenced. Shamed. For many nights and days, she wept, being emotionally angry and desperate for justice to be served.

Her filing of the police report slowly began to bear fruit. She was contacted by the police, and was subpoenaed to court. Being unfamiliar with court procedures, she called WCC hotline for help. WCC connected her with AWAM, another women NGO based in Petaling Jaya, whereby she received counsel who guided her on matters pertaining to court proceedings. On her first trip to the court, she was nervous and afraid, avoiding the molestor's eyes as she made her statement before the magistrate. By her third appearance, she felt more at ease and managed to look the molestor in the eye. Emboldened, she geared herself into arguing for a just outcome. But at the last hearing, she was told that the suspect pleaded guilty and was slapped with a fine of RM1,500. All her sufferings for a mere RM1,500 which the culprit paid easily!

With the aftermath of the court trial, she realised she has not been told of her legal rights as the victim of a crime that she can obtain compensation for the crime committed. She firmly urges victims of sexual harassment to speak out and knock at the doors of justice until action is taken against the culprit. To tell, tell, and keep telling. Until someone is willing to listen.

