

I Was Molested By My Lawyer...

This personal account of sexual molestation was documented as part of WCC's, *My Story, My Strength-Doodle for Change* Project initiated this year to draw the public's attention to the prevalence of violence against women across Malaysia, and to help end violence in society.

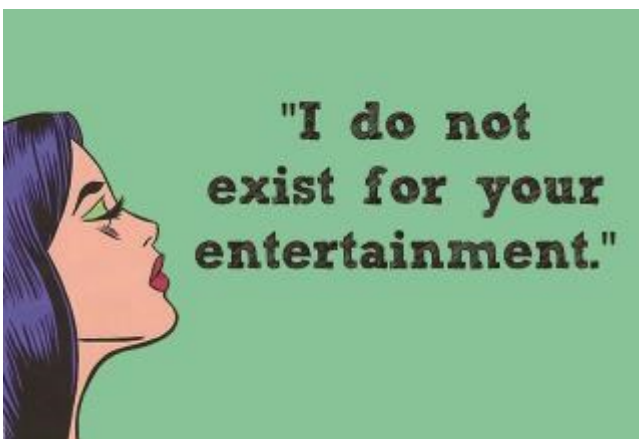
In 2009, I engaged a lawyer, Mr Z to handle a legal case of mine. On the day of the incident, Mr Z called me to meet him at his firm during lunch time to discuss my case. All his staff had left for lunch. I was sitting in his office. Suddenly he grabbed me and hugged me from behind. He kissed my neck, groped my breasts and buttocks, and attempted to slip his hands inside my clothes. I tried to scream but no sound came out. He said, "I want some incentive from you to win your case!" I struggled as much as I could. Finally I managed to free myself and ran out of the firm. Frightened and shaken, I returned to my car, broke down and cried. I then called a lawyer friend, a State Assemblyman, and my husband and told them what had happened. The following day, I met with my lawyer friend and was advised to make a police report. I did.



Back home, the first thing I did was to take a shower. For more than an hour I repeatedly washed all my body parts that Mr Z had touched. I "felt dirty". The incident continued to play over and over in my mind. It traumatised me both physically and psychologically. I could not sleep well at night, and began to have nightmares every day. The nightmares plagued me like a curse.

I began to feel anxious, fearful and helpless. I continued to have frequent flashbacks of the incident. The flashbacks caused me to re-experience the event both during my waking hours as spontaneous memories, and while sleeping, as recurrent dreams. I was haunted by obsessive thoughts of "dirt and contamination." As a result, whenever I showered, I repetitively washed the parts of my body that had been violated- my face, neck and upper body. In addition to extreme difficulty sleeping, I had trouble eating. My physical health declined and I suffered a miscarriage. My marriage suffered too as I was fearful of intimacy, and so stopped having intimate relations with my husband. Whenever my husband wanted to comfort me or hug me, I resisted. I experienced symptoms of depression such crying for prolonged periods, social withdrawal, loss of interest in pleasurable activities, sleep disturbance, poor concentration and low self-worth; and was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by a clinical psychologist.

I was referred by the State Assemblyman to seek help from WCC soon after the incident. When the police investigation officer asked me to go back to Mr Z's office where the incident took place, I shivered with fear. I shivered all the way there and was thankful that a WCC social worker accompanied me. The many counselling sessions I attended helped me go on as the social worker continuously encouraged me to stay strong. After waiting for more than a year and a half, I was told that the Prosecution's Office would not be



I was referred by the State Assemblyman to seek help from WCC soon after the incident. When the police investigation officer asked me to go back to Mr Z's office where the incident took place, I shivered with fear. I shivered all the way there and was thankful that a WCC social worker accompanied me. The many counselling sessions I attended helped me go on as the social worker continuously encouraged me to stay strong. After waiting for more than a year and a half, I was told that the Prosecution's Office would not be

taking up my case due to lack of evidence. After all that I had gone through, I felt extremely angry. The law was supposed to be fair, but had been really unfair to me. I felt betrayed by the law!

Thanks to WCC, I did not give up on my case. The team at WCC assisted me in fighting for justice. In 2011, I decided to file a complaint with the Bar Council's Disciplinary Board. When the Bar finally accepted my case, I felt so happy. I believed that I could finally seek justice via the Bar Council! Again, the process took a long time. WCC and my lawyer prepared all the necessary documents and evidence to prove my case. Only in 2013, was my case finally heard by the Bar Disciplinary Board Panel in Penang. By then, my family had already moved to another state in Malaysia. My husband and children accompanied me

back to Penang for the hearing. My PTSD returned. I was extremely worried and could not sleep nor eat properly. Feelings of anger and anxiety crept back. During the hearing, I was accompanied by my lawyer and WCC staff. I had to recall the incident all over again. The hearing took two days. Although I was relieved when it was over, because it felt as though a big load had been lifted from my shoulders, I still had to wait for the decision from the Board.

In 2014 I received a letter from the Bar Disciplinary Board stating that my complaint has been dismissed, and the lawyer was found not guilty. I felt outraged and very disappointed. I was despondent with the Malaysian justice process! Thankfully, WCC was there to provide me with encouragement to start my life anew. Most importantly, my husband gave me utmost care and support. During that period, I kept myself occupied. I enriched my life by focusing on my career and family. It took many, many months for me to recover from not only the traumatic incident, but also the draining process of seeking justice.

I am thankful to the many people who have always supported me - the team at WCC who gave me the encouragement, guidance and motivation to move on, my husband who has been, and still is, my rock, and my psychologist.

**"I am not
seeking
your
validation."**



**"My body
is not a
public
place."**



Today, I am living a meaningful life with a satisfying job. Every day, I cherish the time I spend with my kids and family. Molestation or rape, in fact violence of any form, is a terrible thing to happen to anyone. I hope one day that violence will be eliminated in society. In the fight to end violence, I will do my best to help those who are in need.

**Green Tea (pen name)
Entrepreneur, married with 3 young children**

