



BBC : "Husband murdered wife who left him"

["Husband murders wife who left him" – BBC News](#)

The murderer of Caroline Parry was her former husband whom she had left after enduring 27 years of abuse from him. The article gives examples of his extreme emotional and psychological abuse, controlling behaviour, and his obsessive response to her eventually leaving him to live with her mum.

The BBC's headline is an appalling example of victim blaming and sexism.

First victim blaming :

The presentation of the fact that she had left him, in isolation of any other information, suggests that this was a "reason" or justification in some way for what happened to her.

If you think that's an over the top analysis; of course the BBC didn't mean that, - then think about the fact that abusive men invariably seek to blame their victim and justify their abuse.

"she pushed my buttons", "she provoked me" "she had an affair" and of course the cardinal sin " she left me"

Such language is commonplace, hence the EVB campaign. It permeates our media, which in turn infects the language used in families and social circles.

For the BBC to use such terminology simply encourages the public view that victims of domestic abuse deserve what they get. They don't. Whatever Caroline Parry, or any other victim does, there is never an excuse or justification for domestic abuse, whether physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial. There is never an excuse for murder.

It would have been simple for the BBC to write an appropriate headline – I suggested

"Woman murdered by abusive former husband"

Second: sexism

Caroline was a woman, an individual, we know from the report she was a much loved daughter, a mother and above all she was a person in her own right. Her former husband had spent years denying this, imposing his will on her, preventing her from enjoying her life, limiting her contact with her mother, treating her as a possession. She had finally escaped this and was enjoying her new life, and had met a new partner.

The BBC headline drags her straight back to the life he forced her to live. She was simply "wife" - a term so loaded with expectation of what a wife "should" be as to further support the insinuation that she somehow deserved it because she "left him". She wasn't his wife, she had left him. So it's not even factually accurate.



Why does this matter?

Women are suffering domestic abuse like this, right now. Most of them endure it for years before they seek help, or find the strength to leave. Too many more are murdered, most often by former partners. Messages like this in our public media simply make it less likely that they will report it, seek support, escape. It makes it more likely that women will be seriously hurt or killed.

Caroline didn't deserve to be murdered, and she didn't deserve to be referred to as "wife". My thoughts are with her family at this dreadful time.