



## Men's violence against women & obfuscation by the media

Recently an article was published on the BBC news website called [Domestic Violence: One month's death toll](#) by Alex Morrison. It used the recent conviction of David Gikawa, who murdered Linah Keza last year, to ask how commonplace such crimes actually are.

So far, so good. Domestic violence is a huge issue and it is good that the BBC is highlighting it, no?

It would be if this article was not full of the same mythology, inaccuracies and obfuscation that have always plagued reporting on violence against women. The type of reporting that, far from helping to address the epidemic of murdered women, actually contributes to a culture that sees such crimes as inevitable and therefore unstoppable.

In answering this question, Morrison chose the cases of eight 'people' who were killed as a result of domestic violence in a given month (September 2011). Actually, all but two of the victims listed (one was a baby and one was the father of a victim) were women killed by men and obscuring that obvious fact with the generic term 'people' is disingenuous and serves to ignore the reality of women being overwhelmingly the victims of domestic violence and abuse. In all of these cases, the primary target was female. The sex of the victims is extremely significant.

As is the sex of the killers, which Morrison also neglects to address.

As he writes;

On average about seven women and two men are killed by their current or former partner every month in England and Wales.

Is he assuming that we all know the killers are male in the overwhelming majority of cases? If so, then why imply that women are killing their male partners at a third of the rate of men, when this is at odds with all available data on offender profiles in general? Perhaps the author is merely responding to the lack of intimate partner homicide offender data. If so, then why not make a point of that?

Maybe the author was adopting an equality position, thereby recognising that men and women commit violent crimes. I'm all for equality but refusing to see the elephant in the room is not helping women and it isn't actually helping men either. As available statistics show, men are committing the vast majority of violent crimes against women and against each other and domestic violence within gay relationships is a real issue.

But the reality is this; data from the Crown Prosecution Service shows that in the five years between 2007/8 to 2011/12 (which includes the month chosen by Morrison), **93.4% of those convicted for domestic violence crimes were men.** ([Karen Ingala-Smith, 2013](#))



Domestic violence statistics also show that in cases where heterosexual men report violent abuse from a partner, the majority were found to actually be the primary abuser in the relationship or to be engaging in mutual violence with their partner. (Women's Aid)

Further, a study based on reports to police found that in cases where the offender was female, only 5% were in heterosexual relationships. This means that the vast majority of incidents of female perpetrated domestic violence were within the context of lesbian relationships. (Hester, 2009)

Where women have killed male partners, it is overwhelmingly after suffering prolonged abuse and violence.

And then there is the matter of multiple victims. In three of the five cases listed, the male offender killed or attempted to kill other people in the close to the primary victim; a baby, a father, a mother, a friend. This is not an uncommon phenomenon and adds further tragedy to the killings. The violence of the man in such cases has an impact beyond his intended victim. In still further cases, loved ones of the woman are deliberately killed first in order to cause her as much anguish as possible. I could find no evidence of a female offender targeting the family of her male partner in addition to him.

What could possibly cause such devastating violence? Morrison does not explicitly address this question. He lists the cases and includes a brief précis of the circumstances surrounding each death. It is a catalogue of tragic oversights and unanswered cries for help amid unspeakable violence and terror. What Morrison does, is to include the reasons the men gave on arrest and at their trial. Some are quotes and some are put forward as facts;

During the trial, prosecutor Dafydd Enoch said **Gol was unhappy and homesick** - but said nothing could explain the "cold acts of murder in which he indulged".

Ms Roberts, 24, who had three children, had tried to end the relationship two weeks previously, **which police said prompted the attack**.

**After discovering his wife had begun a relationship with another man**, 60-year-old Leeman killed her with a semi-automatic pistol

Charito Cruz was hit 50 times with a hammer **after she ended her relationship with Muhammed Asad Niazi**.

The court heard **Leeman had become obsessed** with his belief that his former wife's new partner was a paedophile



Why choose to add this information? This was not in the context of 'poor excuses men give for murdering women', this was as an add-on, a padding out of the horrific tragedy of a woman's death. There is no valid reason and pointing out that these motives were rejected in court does not cancel out the ingrained misogyny of including them in the first place. It emphasises a culture where a man who murders his female partner can claim provocation, something that is too often dismissed in the rare occasions where abused women kill their tormentors. These men killed because they were violent and abusive men, there is no other reason.

The article uses a quote from Sandra Horley CBE, chief executive of the domestic violence charity, Refuge;

"One of the reasons why so many women and children are killed is, quite simply, because the people who have a legal duty to protect them have failed,"

What else did Ms Horley say that was edited out? Did she suggest, for instance that male violence might be a thing? I really hope she did. I will take the liberty of paraphrasing her comment for the sake of accuracy;

One of the reasons so many women and children are killed is, quite simply, because men are killing them.

We know to our horror how many women are killed by men. The media need to name the problem as [men's violence against women](#).