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# Men, women and murder

## (and an apology from Julie Bindel)

Four weeks ago I was a speaker in a debate at Durham University, arguing for the motion, 'This House believes feminists are all too often sexists in disguise'. One of the two women opposing the motion was Julie Bindel, a prominent lesbian gender feminist journalist. The following account of the debate was sent to me by a man in the audience:

<http://j4mb.wordpress.com/2014/01/29/the-durham-debate-an-audience-member-gives-his-impressions/>

In my opening 15-minute speech I had the following to say about homeless people:

"Men are discriminated against even when they're homeless and living on the street. Across the UK about 90% of homeless people are men, many of them ex-military, suffering from undiagnosed and untreated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. State support of ex-military people with mental health issues, overwhelmingly men, is derisory. The reasons for there being so many homeless men include being at the end of the queue when it comes to social housing.

"Some months ago I wrote a blog piece on homelessness, and a female social worker who works with the homeless sent in this comment:

'If a homeless woman comes into our offices on a Friday afternoon, I'm obliged to offer her money, accommodation, food and clothing. If a homeless man comes into our offices on a Friday afternoon, I'm obliged to send him back out onto the street, with nothing.'

"As a sexist policy position, that takes some beating.

"It hardly needs saying, I hope, that homelessness is a leading cause of shortened lives, often through suicide. I've already mentioned that three times more men than women in the UK commit suicide. It's the single largest cause of death of young men, and a major cause of death of disadvantaged men in mid-life."

In response Julie Bindel said this:

“Mike told you a lie about... or the woman who emailed him told you a lie about how homeless men are told, ‘Go sod off’, and women are told [tone changed to mimicked gentle voice], ‘I’ll give you food, I’ll give you clothing, I’ll give you shelter.’ I can’t tell you how many women are in B&B accommodation, or even in tents in Lincoln Inn Fields in London, who have been abused, who have been trafficked and who have been thrown out of their homes, and they have their children *with them* because the majority of women end up being primary care givers *because men piss off and can’t be arsed*.”

“So that’s all I want to say. Please, just look at the credible statistics – and look behind them. Look at the definition of domestic violence and ask yourself, ‘Is somebody saying, yes, I’ve been domestically abused by my wife?’... and they mean *nagging*? Is that really the same as being terrorised in your own home to the extent that you actually take your children, leave your pets behind, all your belongings, and run away to a refuge? Just ask yourself. Thank you.”

The following is an extract from my final five-minute summing-up at the debate, just before the vote from the 300+ strong audience. I was heckled by Julie Bindel as I was speaking, and that section is highlighted in yellow:

“Let’s imagine that someone emailed you a link to the website of a campaigning organisation called ‘Justice for Men’ – nothing to do with my party. ‘Justice for Men’ – sounds innocuous, doesn’t it? You click on the link, and beneath a sinister logo you see the strapline, ‘Women, men and murder’. You then read this, on the first line of the home page:

‘Justice for Men was established as a campaigning organisation that supports and advocates on behalf of men who have fought back against or killed violent female partners.’

“I find the idea of an organisation supporting and advocating for men who have fought back against or killed their female partners repellent, and an example of extreme sexism. If any of you in the audience *wouldn’t* find such an organisation repellent and sexist, would you please put up your hands now?”

[In an audience of 300+ people, almost all university students, not one hand were raised.]

“Thank you. There is, however, no campaigning organisation called Justice for Men. But there is one called ‘Justice for Women’, and it was co-founded many years ago by Julie Bindel. Beneath the sinister logo on their website is the strapline, ‘Men, women and murder’...”

**BINDEL: “Lies!”**

**[Audible sharp intakes of breath from the audience]**

BINDEL: “No sinister strap line, no sinister logo.”

BUCHANAN: “The strapline is ‘Men, women and murder...’”

BINDEL: “No!”

[Laughter from women in the audience, and some applause.]

BUCHANAN: “I looked at it yesterday, Julie...”

[Further more strident interruption from Bindel, speaking over Buchanan; “And it’s actually *injustice scales*”]

BUCHANAN: “I looked at it yesterday, unless it’s been pulled...”

BINDEL: “I think it must be one of your spoofs then Mike.”

[Buchanan goes on to deliver the remainder of his summing up uninterrupted.]

“Certainly not... I can give *anyone* the URL. The first line on the home page says:

‘Justice for Women was established in 1990 as a feminist campaigning organisation that supports and advocates on behalf of women who have fought back against or killed violent male partners.’

“I can’t think of a more astonishing example of sexism than to support or advocate for people of one gender who’d fought back against or killed partners of the other gender.

“I spent some time on the Justice for Women website earlier this week. As we might expect, the website portrays a parallel universe in which women have no moral agency, so when they carry out crimes – even murder – it’s only in reaction to bad men. Men are to blame not only for their own actions, but those of women too. In this parallel universe, it seems, a woman is to be held no more accountable for her actions than the smallest child.

“Back in the real world, we saw earlier that where domestic violence is one-way, women are more likely than men to be the perpetrators...”

Julie followed my summing-up with her own, and started:

“I wasn’t going to talk about this, but I’m going to have to, because obviously Mike has raised my organisation Justice for Women, and the reason why we set this up 20 years ago was the tragedy of this handful of cases of women: these rare cases compared to men who kill women when there’s been a history of domestic violence. Who, because they have no other option, because they have tried and tried and tried to go to the police for help. Because their children have been threatened. Because quite frankly, *they go off their*

*heads with distress, with the fear for their lives and the lives of their children through the horrific sexual violence and domestic violence that they have endured...”*

An enterprising male student googled ‘Justice for Women’ <http://www.justiceforwomen.org.uk> on his smartphone near the end of the debate, found the logo and strapline, and showed the image to Julie Bindel after the debate had ended. He told me she’d then stormed off.

The strapline, ‘Murder, men and women’ was removed from the website a few days after the debate. We’ve posted blogs pieces with links to cached copies showing it was in use shortly before the debate, and as far back as 2006 at least.

After the debate I emailed Julie Bindel a link to our blog piece with the comments made by a female social worker with respect to the different support offered to homeless men and women, to prove that neither I nor the social worker had lied.

Given that Julie Bindel had publicly called me a liar twice in a debate with an audience of 300+ people, once shortly before the audience vote, I felt a written apology was in order, so we could post it on the J4MB blog and comment on it. She fell ill with flu not long after the debate, and it wasn’t until 4 February that we had a lengthy and cordial phone conversation, in the course of which she said:

‘I’m *very* sorry about calling you a liar when it turns out that you weren’t... so *please* accept my sincere apology for that... it was a *genuine* mistake on my part.’

I accepted her apology, of course, but she then quickly changed the subject, so I never discovered *which* instance(s) of calling me a liar she was ‘very sorry about’. I’ve emailed her four times (28 + 30 January, 14 + 18 February) requesting a written apology. On 30 January I pointed her to our public challenge on the matter:

<http://j4mb.wordpress.com/2014/01/28/our-public-challenge-of-julie-bindel-2/>

No written apology has been forthcoming, hence the need to publish this piece.

Maybe one day a prominent gender feminist will have the decency to publicly apologise for having made demonstrably incorrect statements in debates, in newspaper articles, in TV or radio interviews, or in other situations. Given the lack of response to our public challenges of prominent feminists and their male collaborators – link below to those challenges – we shouldn’t be optimistic, because these people have one thing in common. They’re all utterly *shameless*.

<http://j4mb.wordpress.com/our-public-challenges-to-feminists/>

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