

One from the heart

I can't think of anything more awful than when the police came to arrest my son. It was 7.30 in the morning when I saw them coming up the garden path towards my back door. I remember it all so vividly. I can still see the black identification wallet on the policemen's hand, he opened it and turned it towards me. I was frightened because until then I did not know anyone who'd been arrested. The police asked where my son was. I explained that he had taken something to help him sleep and was in bed. Then I just lowered myself into a chair and everything went into slow motion. I was crying quietly and kept saying, "Why? Why?"

The police told me that they had 100% proof that my son had killed his girlfriend the mother of his child. My son is such a gentle boy, such a kind and loving person he could not have done something so awful, it was impossible, preposterous, quite ridiculous. As a family we had never had a single dealing with any kind of violence. After he was taken away I just wanted to run and hide. I went to my father, with tears streaming down my face I told him I would quite understand if he did not want to know me any more. He simply took me in his arms and told me that he loved me. I was in a terrible state. Bringing murder into any family is a terrible thing.



I looked on my son's girl friend as his "common law wife," after all she was the mother of my first grandchild.

On the day of the murder my son had been at work all day, although he had a lunch break and a coffee break there was never time for him to be able to return to the flat, carry out the murder and clean himself up. He had gone home after work at about 10.30pm. The door was ajar, which he was surprised at as they normally kept it locked. He went in and found his girl friend's body; she had been stabbed 69 times. He was incoherent with grief. He rushed downstairs to a neighbour. Then went back to look for the baby, he was part covered with a blanket. He grabbed the baby and rushed out again to call the police. He was absolutely devastated, distraught and unable to think straight.

My son was taken in for routine questioning, then cleared of all involvement. When I picked him up from the police station he was in a state of extreme shock.

And could barely talk. We had a stiff whisky. That night I just lay there everything going round and round in my head, sleep was impossible. The word "murder" was so terrible I could not bring myself to say it. My tongue was too big for my mouth and my lips could not form the word.

In the six days before the police arrested my son he had not been not sleeping, eating, he was heartbroken. When I first saw the policemen on that terrible day I thought they had come to tell us that they had the person who did it, not that they thought my son had committed this heinous crime.

My son had been unfaithful to his girlfriend he went with another woman. This other girl wanted him to leave the mother of his child and stay full-time with her. He was not willing to do that, she was incandescent with rage. She told the police that he had killed his common-law-wife so that he could be with her.

I never got to the stage when I seriously had to accept that my son had done this horrendous thing. But at the time the police were very convincing and I did have to seriously consider the blacker side of things. Every ounce of me knew he hadn't done it. But I realised I wouldn't be the first mother to be taken in.

My son told me that on the journey back to London the police had hit him and threatened to push him out of the car. After this journey the police maintained that he had made a full confession. He remained adamant that he didn't.

By the time it came to trial I was confident that justice would be done. On the first day of the trial my son and the "other woman" stood on the dock together. They were both accused of murder. They both pleaded "Not Guilty."

On the second day my son stood alone in the dock. His co-defendant had agreed to plead "Guilty to conspiracy", a lesser charge, on the understanding that she would turn Queen's Evidence. She gave evidence for the Prosecution against my son.

All the forensic evidence, fingerprints, bloodstained clothing and the witnesses pointed to her; there was no direct evidence against my son. I know that she literally

got away with Murder. Maybe if the law for “Double jeopardy” is brought in she will finally be brought to account for what she did.

She was jailed for four years and my son for “Life.”

I could not believe the system had let my son down so badly. By accepting her plea my son had been pre-judged as “Guilty.”

Nearly two years later The Appeal Court overturned the verdict and my son was released. The senior Appeal Court Judge made it clear that my son should never have been charged as there was no evidence against him. My son was totally vindicated and was told that he should never have been charged in the first place. When The Appeal Court Judge said that the “Appeal was allowed”, that my son’s conviction was quashed. I could not believe it. I kept wondering if I had heard right. I rushed to our solicitor; he would tell me if I had got it wrong. I didn’t want to give him the chance of saying that. I just kept thanking him over and over.

My son hugged me and together we walked out of Court.

I was just so happy I couldn’t keep still. I had this kind of fizzy excitement inside me like a huge shiver that would shake me from head to toe. I couldn’t stop touching my son; I even slipped into his room when he was asleep and pulled back to duvet to make certain that I was not deceiving myself. I wanted him to be free so much I wasn’t sure that I hadn’t dreamt the whole thing.

We are now trying to pick up the pieces of our lives. My son does not feel bitter, just incredibly angry at the system, the police and the Crown Prosecution.

The other set of Grandparents are looking after the baby, they are not prepared to accept that my son did not murdered their daughter. Even though my son was exonerated the grand parent were legal permitted to adopt the child against his father’s wishes. These grandparents will not let the boy see either myself or his father. I feel so terribly sad for both my son and my grandson. My son has paid a heavy price for a crime he did not commit.

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