

Submission 269

I worked as a Technician [REDACTED]. I worked for the [REDACTED].

When the [REDACTED], retired, the people in [REDACTED] Branch [REDACTED] went to [REDACTED] for the evening Farewell Party.

At about 8pm I was asked if I wanted to stay any longer. I said "Yes", not knowing that it was a loaded question. "Good, you can drive [REDACTED] home. The rest of us are leaving now."

[REDACTED] and I left the party 30 minutes later. [REDACTED] was drunk. I was driving. I was driving a Government car and I was still on duty as the Farewell Party was an official event. [REDACTED] was known to have a loud mouth and a loose tongue after only one or two beers. He reacted to alcohol in a very bad way after drinking only a minimal amount. I had witnessed [REDACTED] behaviour on other occasions when he was drinking and he became loud and aggressive, even "hands on". I was not looking forward to the drive back [REDACTED].

Almost immediately we got into the car [REDACTED] started to find fault with me. His tirade of criticisms became more and more personal. By the time we reached [REDACTED], [REDACTED] had talked almost continuously for the past hour. By the time we reached [REDACTED] he was demanding answers to questions to do with my private life with "You don't go out with women. You don't go out with men. Just what is your story?"

Ten minutes later, just outside of [REDACTED], [REDACTED] said "I like you, [REDACTED]. But I don't like you *that* much...." There was an aggressive tone in the second sentence. I became more alert to [REDACTED] babble. I sensed that [REDACTED] was going to become verbally abusive. I tensed.

What happened next took me by surprise. [REDACTED] broke down crying and asked me to kiss him [REDACTED].

Then [REDACTED] right hand came over and touched my thigh with the back of his right hand.

I was overcome by an awful fear of claustrophobia, being trapped as it were, in the car with this person. I had to focus all my mental capacity and physical awareness on driving not to go off the road. I was in shock for a few seconds. Time went so very slowly.

"Change the subject, [REDACTED]" were the words that came out of my mouth. [REDACTED] hand went back to his lap and he was silent for the rest of the 20 minute trip to [REDACTED]. I dropped him off at his house. I was tense until he was out of the car because I know that [REDACTED] could be physically as well as verbally abusive.

I did my best to put the incident behind me. It was "business as usual" in my work and interactions with my colleagues in [REDACTED] Branch.

About six weeks later a colleague, [REDACTED], asked me to enter data into a computer. It was the early 1980s and computers and computer programs were only taking off and taking over from the former method of entering data for computer analysis. This original method was to enter the data values by punching holes in thin cardboard cards. This older method of statistical analysis was time intensive and done by [REDACTED] Branch. Now that PC computers were provided in each Branch, data analysis was done using software programs on these computers. However, the data still have to be entered via a keyboard.

I was typing in the data. At one point there was a problem which I could not solve and I asked [REDACTED] for help. [REDACTED] was equally baffled. He called [REDACTED] for help. [REDACTED] was Branch Manager and more adept with computers in those early years. While [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were discussing the matter, [REDACTED] joined [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were standing behind me. I was seated in front of the computer. They talked. I listened. I didn't understand anything that was being discussed because it was mainly about data analysis rather than the problem with the software program I was using on the computer. I waited to be told what to do.

There was a short pause and then [REDACTED] punched me in my upper left arm. "Wake up!" he yelled at me. I was confused. I was shocked that I was punched in the workplace. I was wide awake and simply waiting to be shown what to do to remedy the computer problem.

The Branch Manager, [REDACTED], didn't say anything to [REDACTED] even though he was a witness to the assault.

I said "I'm waiting to be told what to do. You've been talking among yourselves about the problem but you haven't explained anything to me." I had not been directly addressed in any part of the conversation. I was not aware that I was supposed to do any particular keystrokes on the keyboard.

To me [REDACTED] physical aggression was a direct result of my rejection of his sexual advances six weeks earlier. I felt certain that my rejection of [REDACTED] sexual advances were the cause of his aggressive attack. His actions were a violation of my physical self.

After this incident, I was anxious whenever I was anywhere near [REDACTED]. If [REDACTED] entered the room, I discreetly left the room if I had been alone in the room. The assault was one thing but I was floored that [REDACTED] didn't later speak with me to ask if there was a personal problem between [REDACTED] and myself. I felt betrayed by the System as [REDACTED] represented the Department at a managerial level.

This episode started to affect my work. I was making mistakes. I couldn't hold concentration. My mind was an eddy of confusion because of the proximity of [REDACTED]. My direct manager, [REDACTED], noticed my change of behaviour as much as my apologies when I make a mistake. He was patient with me. After another major mistake, I told [REDACTED] why I had lost peace of mind and lost focus on the details of my work. He said "I'm sorry. I didn't know."

After some time I realised that my work output was suffering as a result of going out of my way to avoid [REDACTED], so I approached [REDACTED] about the problem. (I had hoped that he or [REDACTED] would have approached me after witnessing me being punched at the computer but the incident was conveniently swept under the carpet in what has become to be a typical management method of dealing with such issues.) While [REDACTED] listened uncritically, he offered no advice but did suggest counselling and told me not to worry that "it probably wouldn't happen again". I came away with the impression that [REDACTED] mattered more that I did in the scheme of things as he was doing his PhD and I was a technician. Having approached [REDACTED] and having received such negative treatment, I felt worse off than before I broached the problem.

But similar incident did happen again, in the dormitory accommodation provided during the Branch Workshops at [REDACTED]. During the middle of the night [REDACTED] threw a pillow at me because I was allegedly snoring. I don't know if I was snoring or not. I do know, however, that I didn't sleep very well for the rest of that night nor the next.

By this stage I was thoroughly upset by [REDACTED] behaviour. I loathed having to work in close proximity to him, particularly doing [REDACTED]. So I went to my doctor to get some advice as to how to handle the situation. [REDACTED]. I told [REDACTED] the whole story concerning [REDACTED] behaviour and he gave me a referral to [REDACTED], a psychologist [REDACTED].

Was this an isolated case? No, there were other incidents with other staff involving [REDACTED] behaviour.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A former typist in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] recounted several stories of [REDACTED] behaviour but one to illustrate the point occurred at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] place when she passed an opinion. [REDACTED] verbally attacked her with "What the fuck would you know - you're only a bloody typist!!!!!"

What is at stake is not just [REDACTED] predatory sexual behaviour but his inability to control his actions, his lack of responsibility for those actions and why such behaviour was tolerated by his superiors in the Department. His behaviour was the major underlying cause of my poor work performance after being sexually propositioned and assaulted on two occasions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Some years later I wrote to the [REDACTED] Manager about several problems that had become everyday problems in [REDACTED] Branch. One of the issues involved an email from a PhD student in the Branch who wrote that he was "working against" me. I also mentioned my experience of sexual harassment and assault while on duty in

the letter. This Head Manager for the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wrote to me and asked me to sign a Statement that I "concurred" with the outcome of my complaint. NOTHING was done about my complaint. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. [REDACTED] did not do anything about addressing the content of my letter. I wrote back to [REDACTED] and told him that I refused to sign because nothing was done about the *several* issues that I had listed. [REDACTED] sent me the email several times to sign but I would not sign it because nothing had been done to address my complaints and concerns.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I was a whistleblower and lost my job with the [REDACTED].

Two years ago I requested copies of documents under the Freedom of Information Act. In particular, I requested a copy of my letter to [REDACTED]. My letter was not on [REDACTED] file or on my file. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. My complaint was effectively neutralised by the removal and destruction of the letter from file. [REDACTED]

Nothing came of my complaint. I was stressed beyond measure. When my employment was terminated by the Department on the charge of Vexatious Behaviour, my Doctor put me on a Medical Disability Pension. I have entered retirement with having worked for the previous 16 years. This situation translates to a much lower Superannuation than I would have expected. I have experienced economic hardships. I still have nightmares about this period of my life. These workplace experiences have certainly affected my physical health and my mental well-being.

[REDACTED]