



have layers. An important insight can be seen in a story from the Southern United States about Baptists and bootleggers. In the US South, each county can decide independently whether or not to allow whisky to be sold. Thus, the region is a patchwork of “dry” and “wet” counties. This is an easy decision for Southern Baptists, because of their strong moral beliefs. Southern Baptist pastors regularly campaign against hard liquor because it is sinful and therefore forbidden. Not that sin has much to fear from preaching. All that results is hypocrisy. Publicly, everyone in these communities must claim to oppose alcohol.

Bootleggers, perhaps surprisingly, also support prohibition, not because they oppose drinking, but because it is good for business. Bootleggers realize that prohibition doesn't eliminate the demand for whisky; it merely raises the price (and their profit). Prohibition works by increasing the difficulty of buying liquor. Drinkers must either pay higher prices to purchase alcohol locally or drive further away - possibly hundreds of miles - to find a legal liquor outlet or bar in a “wet” county.

The UN appears to work in a similar way. The clamour for disarming civilians in the UN can be better understood once one realizes that the idealists and the dictators co-operate (albeit indirectly) like Baptists and bootleggers. Disarmament is driven by an alliance of anti-gun preachers and the world's dictators who cynically wish to disarm their own civilians in order to maintain power.

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The idealists attract the support of the naïve by claiming that the world can be made safer by reducing the total number of firearms owned by civilians. This may sound appealing, but it does not reflect the way the world really works. To be successful, the idealists are choosing to work hand-in-glove with dictators in Asia and Africa to pass high-sounding UN resolutions that take guns from civilians

but not governments. Sudanese farmers are disarmed, but not the government and not terrorists.

Why doesn't the UN rein in tyrannical governments? As surprising as it may seem, the UN's disarmament resolutions ignore government weapons because the UN recognizes the sovereignty of all countries, regardless of the nature of the government. Thus, government armaments are deliberately excluded. The very core of the problem is thus ignored.

While some countries support disarmament out of idealist concerns, it's a sad and remarkable matter that others cynically recognize that they will be able to better control (or eliminate) annoying civilians in their own countries once they have all the guns.

It is more than disappointing that the UN started has not been more effective in ushering in a better world. The UN is increasingly being seen as worse than just ineffective. Even the UN's strongest supporters are dispirited by the UN's inability to cure itself of widespread corruption.

Sources: Deaths by Mass Unpleasantness: Estimated Totals for the Entire 20th Century ●

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Black and Blue Sari

A gory chilling crime thriller or a life story

Black and Blue Sari is the first book the author, Kamal Dhillon has ever written. She doesn't know, there may or may not be more to come. She talked to the editor of TAOM at length about her book and the circumstances that led to her first attempt at creativity. It took her three years to write but wants and hopes every Indo-Canadian woman reads it.

The child was terrified by her mother's screams for help. The sight of her father's thick belt imprinted on her mom's tiny body was unbearably painful and confusing to the little child. That awful occurrence increased in frequency and violence each time. She dreaded the next explosion and fear kept her up most nights. How could she feel safe when her father, who was supposed to be her role model, was spirally out of control?

She could never speak in her mother's defence for fear of making things worse. She would just sit there being a sad helpless onlooker to the dreadful on-going saga.

The abuse that this six-year old had witnessed was overwhelming. Where were all of her mom's and dad's relatives when she needed them? Why were they turning a blind eye to all that was happening? No child should have to live under these circumstances and be a continued witness to such mind-boggling abuse. She felt trapped and had no choice but to continue living with her harsh, distant, abusive father and seemingly voiceless mother. The nightmares and hallucinations plagued her nightly.

Where did all the blood on the floor come from? From her mom? Chills ran through her body as she stood paralyzed in shock, yearning to release the screams that arose within her. Her days and nights were spent crying and feeling extremely alone. Fear was her constant companion.

Did her father love her?

Had she done something to cause her dad to act like this? He seemed so hard hearted. Maybe if she tried her best to be very, very good, he would stop.

The impact of this situation causes her to experience difficulty in expressing herself



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both at home and in school. She became increasingly withdrawn and began having frequent panic attacks. As a result, her grades in school were negatively affected.

Her mom was being bullied and treated like a servant. It baffled her why her mom was dealt with worse than their real servants.

At the same level, she loved her father – but resented him and felt that he didn't deserve the title of a father. How did her mom do it? How did she raise her and her younger siblings under such extreme brutality?

She lived with the constant fear, “when I wake up in the morning, will my mother be alive”?

The child alienated herself from the world around her. She had thoughts of running away. She found it hard to rust others – especially grown-ups.

A sense of familial duty and obligation caused her to rally around her mother. Her dad was very unstable and unreliable. He drank and smoked all the time, totally disregarding the fact that her mom was very allergic to cigarette fumes. She wondered how many more times she would have to watch him beat her mother ruthlessly. “Please no more....!”

In between his beatings, he would tell the child that he was disciplining her mother and she was welcome to join in to hit her.

Truth or lies? She knew that they were lies, but it almost seemed like a relief to believe them because of how convincingly he said them and often the lies were being crammed into her head.

Why was he rampaging on about how her mom had wrecked his life? More lies?

She could not bear the sight of her mom being grabbed by her throat again. What would be next?

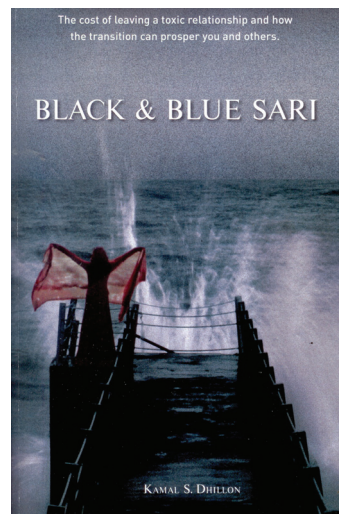
The petrified child hid in the corner of her bed and wept. She was shaking uncontrollably. The tiny space that she called her room became her shelter and her place of refuge. Her whole fragile world seemed like it had been thrashed. She often wondered when the season of mourning and anger would end.

When is it ever going to be okay?

She was the bravest survivor of all. She survived the horrific atrocities. She suffered

alone; hiding her secret well and making sure others didn't learn about the abuse in her home. She feared abandonment and the repercussions. She had endured so much loss, uprooting and separation. Her home had become a battlefield. Inside there was only audible silence. There was no joy.

The outbursts from her father were frequent, unprovoked and unpredictable. There would be a litany of abuse inflicted on her mother by her father. She felt it was her job to protect her mother. She tried to take an adult responsibility but at the same time she



herself w a s b e i n g deprived of the security and care s h e wanted a n d needed. Intimidation pervaded h e r d a i l y life. She did not know a

life of peace. Violence had been an integral part of her family for as long as she could remember.

She longed for a home where there would be no more shame and embarrassment. She felt like a child held hostage.

“Not a word from you, young lady. I will deal with you later, unless you want to end up in the same place as your useless mother,” were the hateful words that came out of her father's mouth.

The thing about her dad was he seemed great in front of others. He made sure that her voice remained silent. She had tremendous ambivalence as to who the enemy was.

The child often stayed behind after school to help clear the desks with the teacher. Then she would walk home very slowly. Anything to be away from home. School was an escape from her domineering father. It helped her forget the most painful aspects of her life at home.

Her mom was her idol. She knew her to be a loving woman who covered her children's

faults. She would take the blame herself. Whenever her dad was away, the child noticed her mother wearing make up. “Wow mom, you look so beautiful. I want to look just like you when I grow up”, she would proudly tell her.

Little did the girl know that she would be helplessly watching many more tragedies to come. Yet in the end she would burn up all her built up anger, rejection and lies wit him. She would eventually find the strength to let it all pass away.

That man was my.....The child my.....

These are excerpts from a just released book ‘Black and blue sari’ by an Indo-Canadian woman. It is an engrossing tale of wife beating, domestic violence, physical and mental abuse, castigation, humiliation, rape, persecution unimaginable to the human mind. Written by Kamal Dhillon, the story sometimes turns so gory and gruesome that sleeping after reading a few pages of this book is just not possible.

Kamal talked at length to the Asian Outlook correspondent about her new book which, she says was set in the early eighties. Says she, “The story begins when the protagonist falls for this man in her teens. He is handsome, belongs to a well settled wealthy family from India but settled in Canada. She secretly has a crush for him but makes the mistake of telling about it to her little sister who spreads the word in the family. The parents then try to find out about this boy, as the girl has reached marriageable age (18 years), finished high school and it is time for her to get settled and start a family of her own. To cut the long story short, they are married soon and our star is very proud to be married to him because of his looks which surpass all of her sisters’ husbands and their wealth.”

Things start to turn sour within the first week of marriage. “My protagonist loves her husband and cares about him. That is why, when his friends show up one fine day after marriage and have plans to take him out drinking and driving, she steps in stop him as he should not be drinking and driving. In return, he hits her so hard that she is not only shocked but starts bleeding. “In a loud voice, he shouted at me to put my head up so it would stop bleeding. He walked to the bathroom and returned with a towel. He handed it to me, suggesting that I clean up all the mess. The mess that he started, I had to clean. I had never been hit that hard in my life and I could

feel my nose swelling. Mom and dad had spanked us as kids, but I had never seen blood like this anywhere. And while I had seen women with bruises on their faces, I had never thought it would happen to me. I began to think that this man was a liar and that he shouldn't have married me if he didn't like me. After waiting around for ten or fifteen minutes, he left to meet his friends and told me, on the way out, to behave myself while he was gone."

Continues Kamal, "That day was the start of violence, abuse, rape and victimization of the woman who thought she had loved this man enough to spend her life with him. He turns out to be psychotic, maniac, perpetual liar and abuser. To outsiders and strangers, he was sweet, charming and charismatic. At home and with her, he was an aggressive lunatic who looked for a slight excuse to hit her, torture her and show that petite woman who barely weighed 110lbs, his manly powers. For days, he would not allow her to eat, sleep or shower but would hit her till she bled."

"Do abusive men consider it their right to punish and control their partner's actions? Did he feel he succeeded in convincing others that his behaviour was rational and she needs to be taught? Does he believe that his special status as a man entitles him with rights and privileges to hurt her? It is important for him that she not disagree with him, especially in front of other people. No matter how badly he treats her in his mind they should not raise your – voice He only has the right to be angry. Does this sound familiar? The beautiful young virgin he had married just weeks ago, who proudly displayed the wedding pictures in the living room and bed room now stood staring. The girl in that picture was dead. She had been beaten away by ruthless man. The wise thing to do is to remain silent because to agree to disagree would also provoke. All she does is bow her head in shame. He strikes on the face if verbal abuse wasn't enough and makes her believe that it was her fault again. The marriage is nothing more than loveless and lifeless. What had she done and could she do anything to correct her mistakes?"

When an Indian girl gets married, most

parents tell her that now she will be only a guest in her parents' house and her husband's house is hers now. As a result of this one sentence, most girls in Indo-Canadian families bear it all, at the end of which many have paid with their lives. Amanpreet Kaur Bahia, Gurjeet Ghuman, Manjit Panghali, Navreet Waraich etc are all case in point. There may be many more who are suffering in silence because of this one



Deception - Painting by Shajila

sentence which most parents tell their daughters when getting married. Perhaps, instead if they had told them that their home will always welcome them any time of the day or night, many might not suffer in silence.

Coming back to the story, violence continues to an extent that Raj, the husband gets so used to hitting his wife that he is not able to differentiate between home and parking lot. Once, says Kamal, he hit his wife in a parking lot and a bystander called the police as he was shocked. "Thankfully, it was Canada and charges were laid against him. Being in Canada he could not use his wealth or influence and got caught in his own web. Not that his abuse subsided, for a short while

yes, but then the storyline moves to India where he has family, wealth and influence. He flies his family

out of Canada on the pretext of taking them on a holiday with no plans to come back to Canada where he was jailed for a night and the case continued."

"In fact, he was so mad that he had to spend a night in jail, that he held that night against her at all his future beatings, discussions and was always an excuse to torture his wife. She had resigned herself to a life of beatings, blood and abuse. She lost faith in God and the human being as there were people around her who refused to come to her aid. His mom actually egged him on but once in a while his father intervened, that too when too much blood was shed. Being in India helped him as he knew the police and the politicians alike and had the money to bribe them into silence."

Even the birth of two sons and two daughters did not stop his behaviour. As the story progresses, gory scenes of violence, blood, physical and verbal abuse are played in the reader's minds. She is made to live a life of a pauper, despite the fact that her in-laws are doing roaring business and there is more than enough food and other luxuries for the rest of the family and even the servants. But nothing for her and her children. She is forced to steal food with the help of the servants, who sympathize with her situation and sometimes try to help. But for the fear of losing their jobs, cannot do much.

Raj, the abusive husband makes several attempts to kill her. By strangling or drowning, but as Kamal says, "There is a

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