Nila's Journey

THEN

My parents arranged for me to get married and at the time I had agreed to it. I got married in July 2010 in India and soon after started to have issues with my husband's family. My in-laws did not like me or my family and felt that we were "too modern." Things started going downhill from December 2010.

One weekend we had gone sightseeing in Central London. We got off the train and my husband starting arguing with me about not doing his laundry. I asked him why he got annoyed over silly issues. At this point I could tell that he was getting angrier because I spoke back to him, which he considered rude. With continuous back and forth in a pointless conversation, we came out of the station. He was trying to hold my hand and I kind of turned away as I was annoyed at him and I told him not to touch me.

I was upset and didn't feel like talking to him. This made him angrier and we continued arguing on petty things. I was really upset; I had only been in the country for one month.

At this point I noticed that he was holding my hand very tightly. I was trying to get on the bus to go home at this point but he was trying to make me talk to him and wouldn't let me go. I was trying to resist him and all of a sudden he head butted me and went onto to slap me. A passer-by had witnessed this and had alerted the police. As we continued to argue the police arrived and one officer handcuffed him and another officer took me inside the police car to talk.

Trident Reach

The survivor's name has been changed to protect their identity.

The police officer said that someone had reported the assault one me. Because I was new to the country and I didn't want any trouble or cause issues with the family, I told the police that everything was fine. He was still hand cuffed on the side of the road with the officer. The officer didn't believe me when l said that everything was ok as the issue had been reported by someone else and said they would have to investigate.

After the situation with the police, he would say that he went against his family's will to be with me and he would remind me of this all the time. He would pick any issue to start a fight and suddenly had issues with the way I dressed. We had a joint account and my salary would go into that account. When I later got a job at the local children's hospital, I decided to open my own bank account and he objected to this but I went ahead so that my salary was then paid into this account.

One day I overheard my husband speaking with a friend over the phone. In a fury I could hear him shouting that I was a bad wife and that I had ruined his life. He said to his friend that "She has no shame, she is not leaving... I wish she was dead" and "I am that fed up that I feel like I will murder her, I want to kill her, she is not wife material, and she wants to stay here for free." He also said that I had not spoken to his family, I had not given him a child, I am that bad of a girl that I wouldn't even be worthy of his spit and he cursed himself for bringing me here from India. He was swearing about me in our native Gujarati language and calling me a prostitute. I felt scared for my life as he was so angry, so I started recording the conversation whilst I was stood outside his room. He kept saying that he was going to murder me. He was talking so loudly my brother and everyone in the house could hear.

I was so scared that I called the police straightaway. The officers arrived within ten minutes and spoke to us separately. At this time I was just crying badly, I was shaking and I didn't know what to say, I could not even talk properly. I was afraid to tell the police straightaway that my husband was talking about killing me; I could not speak much as I was in shock and had anxiety. I later told the officers that my husband had made threats to kill me and that I made a recording of what was said. The police officer said they wouldn't be able to understand the recording as it wasn't in English. I later learnt that he had denied everything.

The police told me that they were leaving as there was no crime committed and no further action would be taken. I begged the police to take me somewhere else. They said they couldn't help me with accommodation but that they would however email me a list of agencies that might be able to help me, that night. I couldn't sleep at all.

I felt so scared, lost and alone.

The next morning I gathered the courage, left the house and then went to report the whole incident properly to the police. I called a number of support agencies and no one would answer or call me back. I eventually got through to an organisation called MK Act and finally managed to get an appointment for an assessment with a support worker. The support worker explained to me that as I didn't have access to state benefits, I was unable to go to refuge. However she helped me to apply for destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession which then allowed me to seek refuge accommodation. With the support worker's help and guidance I was able to leave the South, gain legal representation and moved into a Trident Reach refuge in the Midlands.