

Such a Nice Man

Category: Me, Too

written by Pris Campbell | January 2, 2023

He could have been named Mr Congeniality. He was warm and friendly to people around him, always ready to do a favor. I met him when he worked a summer where I was working. His masters degree wasn't enough to get the jobs he wanted, so he decided to apply to PhD programs. He and I became friends over the summer, and I helped him with feedback about grad schools, housing, and so on. His wife and child had stayed that summer where she had a full-time job so she could continue working.

He had told me several times that she bored him, but he never made cruel remarks about her. The following summer, after he was accepted into the PhD program, she came out before him to confirm a job and rent their apartment. She slept on my sofa until she got settled. He and I had started writing a book in our field together, so I occasionally went to their nearby apartment to work on parts of it.

Apparently, he began feeling comfortable enough to be himself in my presence. On several occasions, I witnessed him raging at his wife. She would cry, and their son would hide behind a chair. She had said or done nothing to trigger these rages.

It was during this time that he told me he had had multiple affairs with other women. He said his wife let him have sex with her, but she was boring in bed.

He and I grew apart soon after that, but before I moved away I saw him once. He introduced me to his latest affair, a very attractive teacher he met in a workshop he ran. He was in Mr Congeniality mode again. The woman told me what a wonderful man he was.

Knowing where he worked, I contacted him about ten years later searching for a mutual friend. Yes, he was still with his "boring" wife, he told me. Yes, he was with a new affair. I heard about them only once more. They were moving to the midwest after his upcoming retirement. She had stayed with him. I felt bad for her but could do nothing then or earlier.

Fists aren't the only way to abuse a woman.

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