

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, I would be happy to rephrase the inquiry. However, it was my clear understanding that inquiries request no conclusion of the Senate; they are largely instruments of exchange. Perhaps His Honour can suggest for me a better articulation?

The Hon. the Speaker: I am afraid I could not do that now, but I would be prepared to discuss the matter with the honourable senator outside of the chamber.

The facts are that even an inquiry would be resuming debate on an issue which has already been settled, and that is against the rules.

Senator Cools: In any event, as I said before, if it is the wish of the chamber that I rearticulate the inquiry, I will do that.

Senator Kinsella: Let us hear your speech.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable Senator Cools, if you are asking leave of the Senate to proceed in this way, of course, any senator can do that. That is not for me to decide.

Are you asking for leave to proceed with the order as it is structured?

Senator Cools: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, as I was about to say, the intention of my inquiry today is to call attention to what I had intended to say last week.

Honourable senators, spousal violence is an age-old problem. Men and women connected by sexual relationships, upon the breakdown of those relationships, are known to inflict hurt on each other. Some even kill one another. Folk music is dotted with examples. The famous folk song "Frankie and Johnny" relates an experience of lovers and of lethal violence.

Frankie and Johnny were lovers,
Oh, Lordy, how they could love.
They swore to be true to each other...

Johnny went by, 'bout an hour ago,
With a girl named Nellie Blye...

Frankie got out at South Clark Street,
Looked in a window so high
Saw her Johnny man a-lovin' up
That high brown Nellie Blye...

But Frankie took aim with her pistol
And the gun went root-a-toot-toot.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

She, Frankie, shot Johnny dead.

Honourable senators, the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Allan Rock, holds that spousal and domestic violence is a major

reason for this initiative, Bill C-68. Mr. Rock told the Ontario Women's Liberal Commission on April 12, 1995:

There are women who are at risk in their homes and police didn't have the information or the tools to protect them.

On other occasions, he has maintained that the firearms issue is a women's issue. The Honourable Sheila Finestone, Secretary of State for the Status of Women, agreed. In a news release of December 6, 1994, Mrs. Finestone stated:

Firearms control is a life-and-death issue for women in Canada.

Feminist groups repeatedly told the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs that women live in a constant state of threat and fear of death inflicted by men with firearms in their homes, and that children live in a constant state of threat and fear of death inflicted by men with firearms in their homes.

Honourable senators, domestic violence is insufficiently understood. We are just now beginning to gain some comprehension of the terrible tragedy of spousal violence. Comprehension is also required of feminine aggression.

Family violence is deeply troubling. My life's work has been in the area of spousal and family violence. In many relationships, there are tangles of pathologies, coercive patterns and numerous dynamics which reinforce one another.

Many gender feminists interchange the term "domestic violence" with "domestic homicide." This is not a true picture. Most spousal violence will never reach the state of spousal killing. The essential element that must be present if spousal conflict is to become spousal homicide is murderous intent. I have seen several relationships where murderous intent was present. Often, couples do not recognize its presence, and have no insight into its workings. Murderous intent is the key element. When present, there is a probability that the situation could escalate to spousal killing, but spousal abuse has no escalating spectrum. A spousal slap does not inevitably become a spousal homicide.

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Common spousal abuse is a different social problem from spousal homicide. Spousal homicide remains a largely misunderstood and tragic social program. Some bold initiatives are required to probe the darkness that lurks in violence, sexual interaction and impulses to hurt and to kill.

Honourable senators, I am disquieted that much testimony before the Senate committee was either incorrect, inadequate, misstated, manipulated, exaggerated or loaded as a gender issue. Some confounded the issues. Their techniques include playing with percentages and combining the unrelated, and are obvious to those knowledgeable in the field.

Honourable senators, various feminist groups appeared before the committee to support Bill C-68. Ms Arlene Chapman of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters insisted that: