



The Lady of Justice and Institutional and Judicial Betrayals – Does Engaging an Attorney Secure Justice for Women and Avoid Mental Abuse?

Raya Raijaleena Brink

International and European Lawyer, Master of Arts, Pedagogue, Raya Raijaleena Brink LAW FIRM Leo's Peace Ltd, Finland

Citation: Raya Raijaleena Brink (2026) The Lady of Justice and Institutional and Judicial Betrayals – Does Engaging an Attorney Secure Justice for Women and Avoid Mental Abuse?. J. of Psy Ins Review 2(2), 01-12. WMJ/JPIR-133

Abstract

This evidence-based research indicates that judicial and institutional betrayals are more common than rare in legal processes. As Mia described the outcome, she felt like she had been “mentally raped”. However, no institution or judicial process should harm those who rely on them, and everyone should be equal before the law. Currently, the legal system appears to favor a small elite over justice or the people it is supposed to protect. Furthermore, women often appear to be at a disadvantage in legal proceedings, possibly because men frequently dominate adjudication and women do not enjoy priority. Accordingly, laypersons are not valued; instead, they are mostly perceived as stupid. Ethical breaches, monopolistic practices, and lack of oversight leave individuals humiliated, disempowered, and psychologically harmed. Meaningful reform - through transparency, psychology, and stronger accountability - is vital to restore fairness and trust in adjudication.

Although attorneys in this research and their association appear to behave as if they were a state organization with the power to enact laws, they do not possess such authority. One may wonder, without personal experience, whether attorney education encourages arrogance, or whether individuals with superiority tendencies are drawn to that education and title. Whatever the case, significant change is needed to prevent this kind of elitism, as no attorney should enjoy inviolability. Robust external monitoring and correct enforcement of Directive 98/5/EC is essential, alongside ensuring that lawyers have the same opportunities to exert influence as other legal professionals. Equally important, mental health professionals should greatly modify adjudication, shaping practices to ensure humanity.

***Corresponding author:** Raya Raijaleena Brink, International and European Lawyer, Master of Arts, Pedagogue, Raya Raijaleena Brink LAW FIRM Leo's Peace Ltd, Finland.

Submitted: 06.04.2026

Accepted: 08.04.2026

Published: 22.04.2026

Keywords: Attorneys, Directive 98/5/EC, Equality Before the Law, Institutional and Judicial Betrayal, Legal Principles, Mental Rape, Utilitarianism

Introduction to Legal Psychology, the Lady of Justice Standard, and Attorney Ethics

When examining the fairness or morality of legal processes, the Lady of Justice – a symbol of justice - embodies all the virtues that would be so necessary even today. She is the personification of a fair and impartial judicial process, and stresses objectivity without favoritism or prejudice. Her sword represents the power to punish injustice, and the scale exemplifies the vitality of evidence for a just verdict. Accordingly, her blindfold stands for impartiality (Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center) [1]. Pursuant to this legal principle, even when it stems from the Roman goddess Justitia, everyone is equal before the law, and justice shall be impartial [2]. See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: The Lady of Justice with her symbols for just judicial processes (created by AI)

As every law and legal process involves humans, it is nevertheless often forgotten that every legal process can accordingly exhibit psychological abuse. Attorney Corbett defines psychological abuse as emotional distress, including being humiliated, shamed, depressed and experiencing anxiety [3]. The worst cases cause self-destructive thoughts and trauma [3]. Furthermore, even though her legal category appears mainly family law, her definition suits any legal process, for that matter, as the victimized person faces intimidation, threats, and is addressed with abusive language, with the goal for the victimizer to gain the upper hand or dominance for their own personal gain [3]. Another term for pain due to adjudication is secondary victimization, mainly used in sexual violence cases. Thus, victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often suffer from *secondary*

victimization due to court hearings and defence lawyers' abusive cross-examination and [4,5]. When attorneys in Finland employ intimidation, coercion, or falsely assert authority beyond their legitimate power, they also engage in judicial and institutional betrayal by misleading the court. The consequences of such betrayals can be profoundly harmful for those affected, violating both the Attorneys Act and the Finnish Bar Association's by-laws on honesty, diligence, and the client's best interest [6]. It has to be mentioned, nevertheless, that I have also observed ethical attorneys.

Institutional Betrayal and Attorney Misconduct: Reassessing Legal Representation and Women's Inequality before the Law

Abusive conduct by legal professionals can, furthermore, erode an individual's trust in legal institutions and, more broadly, undermine confidence in the principle of equality before the law. If an attorney abuses that authority, even without legal justification, the victim perceives the law as threatening rather than protective. Thus, attorney misconduct directly undermines the ideals represented by the Lady of Justice, making the trauma both personal and systemic. This can lead to fear, anxiety, and long-term mistrust of legal institutions. Based on these facts, this research aims to critically determine whether hiring an attorney benefits women in judicial cases. Research will be based on the EU Directive 98/5/EC on lawyers' free market, the Finnish Attorneys Act, the legal principles or by-laws of the Finnish Bar Association [6].

Three Finnish cases will also be exemplified with Mia, Eve and hindering attacks on my work as a lawyer, unfortunately, on a quite regular basis. As in all previous case studies, the current cases will also be discussed anonymously [7]. I will thus use anonymous acronyms for the attorneys and other legal professionals to exemplify the behavior of especially attorneys, who are also members of the Finnish Bar Association. Thus, it is essential first to establish what institutional and judicial betrayal means, and then form the legal basis for attorneys:

What does institutional and judicial betrayal mean, and what is the legal basis that attorneys have to follow?

Drawing on my extensive legal work since 2007, the cases of Mia and Eve - an existing phenomenon also in

my work - suggest that some attorneys may engage in discriminatory or elitist practices. When doing so, they can use their professional principles and norms against other experts and laypersons, who are not bound by such principles and by-laws. Accordingly, the attorneys' representative body, the Finnish Bar Association, appears to function more as an advocacy organization for attorneys than as a genuine defender of the law, despite its motto explicitly invoking the role of "Defensor legis" (the Bar). If attorneys are not following their own regulatory principles or the guidance of Lady of Justice - or, quite frankly - the law, the process can be deeply traumatic for the individual in question. In that manner, adjudication can cause irreversible mental harm, and thereby an institutional or judicial betrayal may be committed. Regarding the terms - to me, as a lawyer - the terms appear synonymous, as every institution is supposed to obey the law. Yet, some sources define them as institutional betrayal, as committed by attorneys, and judicial betrayal by judges, courts, etc. Thus, this research will examine the following facts:

1. What kinds of institutional or judicial betrayal may attorneys commit when their conduct amounts to psychological abuse for women?
2. In case of exploitation caused by attorneys, what could be done to make the application equal to all women?

Applying the Doctrinal Legal Method in a Cross-Disciplinary Framework

This evidence-based argumentative research employs a doctrinal methodology while adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating insights from law, psychology, established legal principles, and observed practice with case studies. This study on legal psychology aims to critically examine the causes of mental abuse by attorneys, whether elitist or discriminatory. Therefore, this study explores the issues through case studies that exemplify abusive behavior or legal misconduct that can lead to injustice against the victimized person. The mental health impact of legal processes must be emphasized to ensure a healthy adjudication, whether in civil or criminal cases.

Using a qualitative, critical perspective, the study integrates insights from law and psychology, practical and observed experience, to provide a comprehensive view of how attorney utilitarianism shapes the legal

field and procedures. Particular focus is given to Finnish practices. This research accordingly aligns with broader comparative and theoretical approaches that advocate for legal reform in attorney policies and adjudication [8]. It aims to advance fairness for women who are helpless if an attorney misuses their legitimacy. Where gaps in implementation are identified, potential reforms are suggested.

Institutional Betrayal: When Institutions Harm those Who Depend on them

The title of this chapter is drawn from Christl, whose work aptly captures the phenomenon under discussion [9]. Hoffman explain the essence of institutions as structures with history, culture and policies, and can - as made by people - exhibit conflicts of interest and influence [10]. Institutional betrayal is a well-established concept in U.S. psychology, defined by Smith and Freyd as wrongdoing perpetrated by trusted and powerful institutions, such as governments or the military [11]. Institutional betrayal occurs when institutions fail to protect, or actively harm [sic!], individuals who depend on them [11].

For example, Smith and Freyd describe cases in which a college freshman, who reported sexual assault, was subsequently subjected to harassment and an insensitive investigative process, contributing to her suicide [11]. Comparable dynamics arise in the military, where personnel may remain silent about sexual harassment due to fear of career repercussions [11]. Across these contexts, powerful institutions violate the trust placed in them, thereby exacerbating harm and undermining individuals' safety and well-being. This pattern exemplifies institutional betrayal, as institutions not only fail to protect but also contribute directly to trauma and distress [11]. As Smith and Freyd emphasize, this phenomenon remains insufficiently recognized, both by victims and within the broader field of psychology [11].

Judicial and Institutional Betrayal: No Real Consequences For A Father Found Guilty of Incest

The case of Lana Lawrence exemplifies law enforcement's inaction and nonchalance, even when her father's guilt of incest and rape was clearly established. She was a sixteen-year-old victim of her father, a former police officer [12]. Lana's abuse was reported to law enforcement, it proceeded to court, and her father was charged with a life felony. Yet,

despite the conviction, he never served any prison time - an outcome that left Lana confused, hurt, and retraumatized for decades [12]. This failure of the legal system represents a clear case of judicial betrayal. Lana experienced *betrayal trauma*, and she is not the only one due to systemic failure, where institutions can become perpetrators of harm when justice is not carried out [12]. Lana's case also exemplifies institutional betrayal, as she lost trust in the ruling judge who was supposed to protect her. Despite the incriminating evidence that the judge had witnessed in Lana's opinion, the judge only declared a misdemeanor with no prison time [12].

Finland has also exhibited both institutional and judicial betrayals regarding, e.g. sexual violence. The Finnish governmental news agency, Yle, has reported how police had delays in investigating sex crimes against a minor [13]. Accordingly, the police inaction appears grave in sexual crimes, as Yle has reported several cases where serious mistakes were uncovered in police investigations of sexual offences. Another example was the case where a suspected rape was only taken up for police processing more than three years after the investigation request [14]. One can only suspect how difficult it is for a victim, not to mention how challenging it is to prove a crime after several years of its perpetration.

Utilitarianism by Institutional Judicial Betrayal: The Lawyer Directive Benefits Only Attorneys

Finland is a member of the European Union, and was thus obligated to implement the EU Directive 98/5/EC into Finnish law. The Directive was originally adopted to facilitate the permanent practice of lawyers across EU Member States and free movement of legal professionals [15]. To define a lawyer versus an attorney: all attorneys are lawyers, but attorneys have additional education in trial advocacy, which is mainly conducted online. To exemplify, the case is the same for general practitioners in healthcare versus medical specialists. In Finland, however, the Attorneys Act and the Finnish Bar's by-laws restrict its application exclusively to attorneys-at-law, granting them full rights to appear in court and practice independently [6]. Unfortunately, the lawyer Directive was adopted in a discriminatory manner by altogether 15 Member States under Article 1, Object, scope and definitions, point 2, to only concern the free market for attorneys [16].

By conditioning professional recognition of only attorneys on the Bar membership rather than on EU-recognized qualifications, Finland's implementation discriminates against non-attorney lawyers and undermines the Directive's liberalizing purpose [16]. The Bar itself explicitly promotes the common interests of attorneys-at-law and develops legislation (the Bar), reinforcing this profession-specific bias. Nevertheless, this has not gone unnoticed, as the European Commission has highlighted the unusually strict national regulation:

“restrictiveness in Finland is highest for lawyers, (slightly above the EU average)” [17].

The Finnish implementation conflicts with the Directive's objective to liberalize the legal profession and safeguard income opportunities for all qualified EU lawyers. The obvious involvement of attorneys and the Bar in shaping these regulations is evident, given that no lawyer would accept such extreme professional restrictions. Considering that Finland has approximately 20,000 lawyers but only 2,400 attorneys, the implementation clearly disadvantages non-attorney lawyers, creating a form of professional discrimination within the Finnish legal market [18]. Thus, the Finnish implementation of the Directive constitutes both judicial and institutional betrayal, given that institutions and law have deviated from the Directive's original liberating intent and have not protected lawyers.

Directive's Implementation Violates Both the Constitution and the Competition Act: Restrictions on the Right to Work and Market Freedom

The Finnish implementation of Directive 98/5/EC also infringes Section 18 of the Finnish Constitution, which guarantees every citizen the right to work and freedom to engage in commercial activity [19]. By granting certain legal professions exclusively to attorneys (in Finnish: asianajajat), the system prevents most lawyers (in Finnish: juristit) from practicing their profession and earning a living. This restriction directly violates the constitutional rights, limiting access to employment and professional freedom [19]. The exclusive attorney privileges may also constitute an abuse of dominance under Section 7, Abuse of a dominant position, of the Finnish Competition Act [20]. By restricting opportunities for lawyers, these practices limit competition, artificially constrain the market, and prevent lawyers from freely engaging in

their occupation - violating both the Competition Act and constitutional rights.

The Directive's Implementation Exemplifies Discrimination and Elitism by Attorneys and Finland

The current system is highly elitist and discriminatory, excluding roughly 90% of lawyers from opportunities reserved for attorneys. With only 2,400 attorneys versus about 20,000 lawyers, privileges are concentrated, allowing high fees while marginalizing the majority. This undermines equality and limits fair participation in the legal market. As a regular lawyer, exemplified in the Directive, I have faced ridicule, downgrading, and discrimination, reflecting elitism that preserves the legal market for only around 10% of legal professionals. The case of legal aid attorney ST (see also below) illustrates this clearly. She attempted to apply internal attorney rules to a non-member regarding my hourly billing, overstepping professional boundaries and restricting my ability to claim fair payment. These actions reveal how the Bar (Asianajaliitto) prioritizes attorneys' interests, operates with little accountability, and further constrains the professional freedom of non-attorneys.

Legal Aid Attorney and Accountability: Allegations of Procedural Fraud and the Exploitation of Taxpayer Funding

The above case in my lawyering work exemplifies how elitist attorneys can act, even when they are governmental officers at legal aid. The case concerned my former client, SJ, who hired me to handle a disputed estate, signing both an assignment agreement (hourly billing) and a power of attorney. After paying an advance, the client refused to pay subsequent invoices, falsely claiming the scope of work had been different. This claim is, however, contradicted by witnesses and documentation. The client then sought legal aid, where the legal aid attorney ST, a member of the Bar, without any verifiable evidence - claimed to accept only approximately 8% of the invoiced work. Attorney ST also indicated eagerness to litigate. This sounded threatening, as so many other legal professionals aim to discriminate against regular lawyers. This is exemplified by, e.g. a district court judge AN, when he stated that because I am not a Bar member or licensed trial counsel, my documentation would

carry no weight. Again, this violates the Finnish Constitution of Freedom of Enterprise, Section 18, as everyone has the right to earn a livelihood [19]:

“The Constitution of Finland, Chapter 2, Section 18 - The right to work and the freedom to engage in commercial activity. Everyone has the right, as provided by an Act, to earn his or her livelihood by the employment, occupation or commercial activity of his or her choice. The public authorities shall take responsibility for the protection of the labour force” [19].

The legal aid attorney ST's attempt to arbitrarily reduce the agreed compensation obstructs lawful business activity. Accordingly, as lawyers and attorneys should know, mutually agreed contracts are valid under the Finnish Contracts Act under Chapter 1, Section 1(1) [19]. Under the Contracts Act, unilateral reduction of fees by a client or their attorney violates the Act and the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*. If such conduct were accepted, contractual certainty would be undermined, and small enterprises would face extreme financial risks if every client could engage legal aid to receive huge “discounts”:

“Contracts Act, Chapter 1 - Conclusion of contracts, Section 1 (1). An offer to conclude a contract and the acceptance of such an offer shall bind the offeror and the acceptor as provided for below in this chapter“ [19].

The case of attorney ST's misconduct also exemplifies concerns regarding the Finnish Legal Aid Act and suspicions of procedural fraud under the Criminal Code, Chapter 36, Sections 1 and 2, as it appears that public funds are being used to support a claim that may constitute an abuse of process [20]. There are furthermore indications that the client may be presenting misleading claims to avoid payment. Yet, legal aids are obligated to ensure the accuracy of claims they advance. Assisting knowingly false claims may give rise to liability for participation in procedural fraud [21]. The case raises broader concerns about the unequal treatment of jurists/lawyers. Despite being a qualified legal professional, the legal aid attorney ST dismissed my work for lack of Bar membership. This reflects structural discrimination, particularly given that only a small proportion of Finnish legal professionals are admitted as attorneys, a minority of

around 10% of legal professionals. Nevertheless, the client remains bound by the agreement and is liable for payment. The conduct described raises serious concerns regarding contractual integrity, equal treatment within the legal profession, and the proper use of legal aid resources. Under the Legal Aid Act, aid should not be granted in such circumstances:

“Legal Aid Act, Section 7 - Restrictions to legal aid. Legal aid is not provided if: 3) pleading the case would constitute an abuse of process;” [20].

To summarize so far, the figure below illustrates how arrogance, elitist behavior, monopoly-seeking, and insider practices among attorneys aim to create an enabling environment for utilitarian purposes:

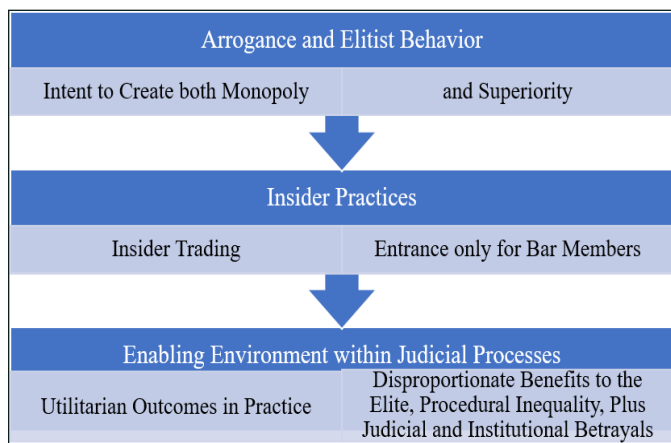


Figure 2: Factors that enable utilitarian actions within judicial processes

Mia’s Humiliation by Judicial and Institutional Betrayal in Divorce Proceedings: Conflicts of Interest, Incapacity, and Failures of Legal Safeguards

I have previously discussed Mia and Tim’s divorce case in Brink, R. R [7]. At the time Tim executed the divorce, Mia was suffering from severe psychological distress and was, as supported by medical evidence, legally incapacitated. The marriage has also been rough as children were frequently ill, and solely Mia’s responsibility. This also meant that Mia was financially dependent on Tim, as her own career was not possible due to family restraints. As the proceedings advanced, Tim’s corporate lawyer, ER, suggested that Mia should engage an external attorney. ER reasoned that, as Mia opposed the divorce proceedings, she should choose attorney ES, his former subordinate, to represent her in the divorce.

As this corporate lawyer, ER was already the long-time lawyer of Tim’s father and attorney ES’s former boss at court, there was a conflict of interest. ES had, in this way, a prior exposure to Tim’s interests. Later at the court proceedings, ES also testified against Mia as Tim’s attorney-witness. This was a clear conflict of interest, as ES should not represent a client against a former client, Mia. Yet, both ES and Mia’s second attorney, MR, and both courts accepted this, even when Mia had not given her consent.

Under the international legal principles and the Finnish Bar Association’s by-laws, an attorney must not represent a client whose interests are opposed to a former client in a way that may damage the former client:

“An attorney-at-law may not accept an assignment in the same matter from two or more clients if there is a conflict or a significant risk of a conflict between the interests or rights of those clients” [22].

The Finnish version of the Attorneys Act, §5c, i.e. Laki asianajajista, emphasize that attorneys must maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained from clients [6]. The same law is present in the Bar’s Code of Conduct regulations: Taking on a client who is the opponent of a former client is also prohibited under Loyalty (3.1), Avoidance of conflict of interest (3.3), and Conflict of Interest in the same matter (6.1). Thus, an attorney cannot take on a new assignment without the affected clients’ consent [22].

Mia on Attorneys: “They Think I am Completely Clueless”

Despite the attorney by-laws (the Bar) and the Attorneys Act, Mia’s first attorney, ES, acted without her informed consent [6]. Mia repeatedly stated she could not make decisions regarding the divorce, yet no safeguards or delays were implemented. Proceedings were conducted under coercion by her ex-husband, including threats of public exposure, which materialized through cyberbullying. Attorney ES failed to act independently, protect Mia, or address conflicts of interest with the opposing lawyer, ER. He also provided inadequate legal advice on her rights, including the prenuptial agreement, resulting in the exclusion of substantial marital assets to Mia’s serious detriment after a 20-year marriage.

Accordingly, after Mia understood that the attorney ES

had failed her, she went to a public legal aid attorney, RJ, to get help. The leading attorney told her that her office would not take the case because of Mia's counterpart, a rich man, and advised her to try other attorneys in her city. Yet no one agreed to represent her, which is why she engaged the attorney MR, from a further away city. Yet the legal aid attorney, RJ, told Mia to complain about the attorney, ES, to the Bar, but said she would not do it for her. Thereby, the phrase "a crow does not peck out another crow's eye" appears equivalent, and everybody appeared to think Mia was totally stupid.

Mia's Appeal for Justice: Psychological Harm and Alleged Procedural Irregularities Under the Criminal Code

Mia appealed to the Finnish Bar Association with a complaint against attorney ES, but it was totally ignored, even though it showed signs of procedural fraud under the Criminal Code [23]. Accordingly, Mia's sister told her after the divorce that she observed how Mia was getting sicker and sicker the further the marriage continued. Today, she understands it, as her body is still aching from the mental abuse during the marriage, cyberbullying and other threats by so many parties during and after the divorce. In her complaint to the Bar, she explains that she was depressed and was treated like a pariah with open hostility in a state with a good reputation for human rights:

"I apologize for my delayed response; I have been suffering from depression and fear, and addressing this matter remains extremely difficult. I submit that the attorney ES's conduct constitutes a breach of the core professional duties of competence, diligence, independence, and loyalty. He failed to carry out the essential legal steps required in a divorce matter. He did not investigate my ex-husband's assets, no estate distributor was appointed, and no division of marital property was conducted. As a result, the prenuptial agreement was never properly assessed or subject to legal adjustment, and the matter was concluded without a lawful and informed basis. At the time, I was in a severe psychological crisis. In such circumstances, the attorney had a heightened duty to safeguard my interests and ensure informed and voluntary decision-making. Instead, he failed to assess my capacity, disregarded my condition, and allowed the process to proceed under clear coercion and pressure from my ex-husband and his corporate

lawyer.

Attorney ES further failed his duty to provide correct and sufficient legal advice. I had been led to believe I had no rights to my ex-husband's assets, and ES did not correct this misunderstanding. On the contrary, ES created the impression that the prenuptial agreement was being adjusted, although no such legal process had been undertaken. This failure led directly to a significant loss of my financial rights. Accordingly, attorney ES's later assertions that I was fully aware of my legal position are unfounded and unsupported, and do not discharge his duty to ensure informed consent. Likewise, his claim that I did not request clarification of assets is irrelevant, as the obligation to investigate and advise rested with him.

Finally, he failed to represent me during the decisive stages of the process, leaving me alone in negotiations and appearing only at the final signing. This conduct is a clear breach of both diligence and loyalty, effectively depriving me of competent legal representation at the most critical moments. Viewed in its entirety, his actions fall significantly short of the professional and ethical standards expected of a member of the Finnish Bar Association and merit full disciplinary review".

Mia's Further Mental Pain and "Mental Rape": Normalizing Misconduct with Regulatory Silence

No Finnish institution was interested in Mia's appeal for justice. Attorney ES certainly understood that it was a case of procedural fraud under the Criminal Code [23]. Accordingly, so many lies were told, and Mia was extremely unprepared for such humiliation in any way. All this made Mia suspect that both her attorneys, ES and MR, were corrupt. Accordingly, when attorney MR partially disclosed Tim's wealth at court, Tim's second corporate lawyer, attorney TP, scolded her at the break, looking like attorney MR had violated a mutual contract. Later, when Mia contacted attorney MR about the violations, MR tried to intimidate Mia by having the most famous defence attorney RT send her an email. Tim's attorney, TP, also harassed Mia in several ways, and she complained about him to the Finnish Bar. In her letter, she explained how, during legal proceedings, attorney TP repeatedly provided inaccurate information about Mia, violating the duty of honesty and conscientiousness. Attorney TP also conferred with Mia's first attorney, ES, to make attorney ES testify against Mia at court hearings,

creating a conflict of interest and breaching the duty of loyalty.

Attorney TP also contacted Mia directly via email, using his attorney title and Finnish Bar membership to imply authority. Yet, attorney TP’s role was strictly confined to serving as the chair of the housing company, separate from divorce litigation, even though Tim’s two valuable properties were under its management. This behavior misused his professional status and exerted undue pressure, contrary to good legal practice. Attorney TP also indicated that the Board would take possession of Mia’s residence and sought to hold her responsible for water damage caused by construction negligence. These actions improperly pressured Mia and demonstrated that attorney TP failed to adhere to good legal practice, including integrity and the avoidance of conflicts of interest. Strangely enough, attorney TP was reprimanded by the Bar for using his attorney signature in this housing case, and he expressed his anger about this to Mia. The situation was highly controversial, as Mia’s former attorney, ES, testified against her in court, while the Finnish Bar effectively condoned breaches of professional ethics and conflicts of interest.

To summarize so far, *hiring an attorney alone does not mentally protect women or ensure justice*. Mia’s depression and extreme stress were used against her, and she was misled into believing the process was lawful, leaving her powerless. Her ex-husband’s wealth worked against her, reflecting a shared -conscious or unconscious - bias favoring the rich. Mia was brutally deceived because of her “lay-personness”, betrayed by the attorney institution, judges, and law enforcement. She continues to suffer mental trauma, has lost all trust in legal professionals, and feels as though she was mentally raped (see the summarized factors in Figure 3).

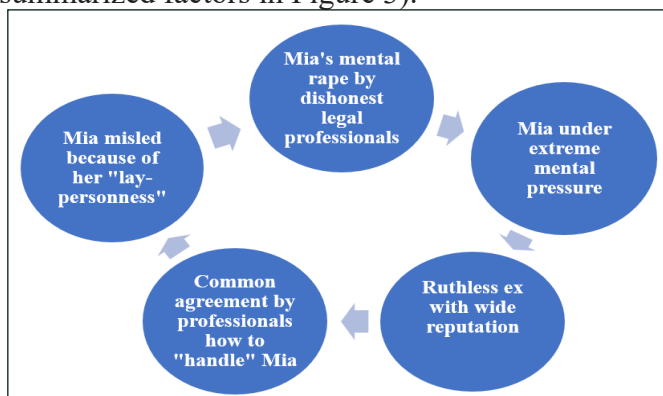


Figure 3: Individual factors in Mia’s case contributing to judicial and institutional betrayal and long-term mental harm.

Eve Surviving Violence, Navigating Betrayal: A Case Study of Institutional Failure in the Criminal Justice System

Eve engaged in a casual situationship with a foreign partner, Jay, with no intention of marriage or cohabitation. For Eve, it was a situationship – ambiguous and undefined or primarily based on convenience with no long-term plans. For him, it was sadly more serious. The situationship was tumultuous, as Jay was aggressive, and Eve ended it several times, but he kept coming back. Finally, she dared to end the situationship for good, but it was not well-received, as Jay strangled her aggressively, and she lost consciousness. She escaped by a miracle by secretly calling the emergency number, and soon, the police took him into short-term custody.

After that, Eve bravely started the criminal process against Jay. Needless to say, Jay employed every possible means to intimidate her, aligning perfectly with his usual pattern of aggression. He also claimed to be a police informant and asserted his power through the liaison – aware that Eve’s experience with the police was traumatic. Nevertheless, she knew to consult a doctor to document her injuries both on a human figure and in writing after the medical examination. She soon realized that without the doctor’s certificate, her case would carry almost no weight in court. Yet the police offered her minimal guidance and support throughout the process, leaving her to navigate the system alone. Instead of being treated as a victim, she felt as though she were the criminal under scrutiny - an experience that starkly illustrated the procedural failures and institutional betrayal she faced.

Eve Navigating the System Alone: Betrayal in a High-Stakes Criminal Case

Eve first needed a restraining order, which she obtained herself from the court. She also requested the emergency call recordings to transcribe them for the court hearing, and they were partly in Finnish and for the most part in English. Once she finished this task, she handed them over to her attorney, HR, whom she was able to hire through her legal expenses insurance. However, the compensation was minimal, leaving Eve to manage her case largely on her own. When the

attorney's hiring was agreed upon, HR stated that his services would cost approximately 2,000 euros. Yet later, when the trial was concluded, he announced that the invoice was double the agreed price. In this combined duty between Eve and the attorney HR, she asked her attorney to cc her on emails concerning her case. However, the attorney felt no obligation to honor Eve's request, leaving her in the dark about the potential misconduct she suspected involving attorney HR, the court, the judge, and the prosecutor. She felt as though something had been agreed upon in her case beforehand, but she remained uninformed. Eve also noticed that the prosecutor had not read her documents.

Before the court proceedings started, Eve requested a closed hearing to reveal Jay's influential role as a police informant. She wanted to avoid risking public exposure in order to show the full extent of his intimidating behavior. Her attorney, HR, was against it, even though it was Eve who had mandated him. When the court proceedings commenced, the judge asked whether Eve still wished to proceed with a closed hearing, and attorney HR responded 'no', contrary to her request, while she herself responded 'yes'. She was completely ignored, and the trial became public, accessible to everyone. Eve was disappointed, as she was now unable to expose Jay's background without risking treason, which caused her evidence to reflect far less than the actual reality. Accordingly, every legal professional seemed to think she was stupid.

Eve Left Disempowered in Court Due to Her Attorneys' Failure to Disclose Inability to Speak English

Eve and attorney HR had discussed the emergency calls on several occasions, which Eve had transcribed, but the attorney HR never disclosed that he could not speak English. At the trial, although the court had arranged a phone interpreter, the interpreter proved incompetent in Jay's language. As a result, the proceedings were conducted entirely in English. When Eve's attorney, HR, attempted to question Jay, it became immediately clear that HR could manage only a single question in English, gravely undermining Eve's ability to present her case. This breakdown not only threw the trial into disarray but also exemplified a profound procedural failure and a clear instance of judicial and institutional

betrayal. As the Finnish trials appear very stuck in patterns and trapped in formalities, Eve could not pursue the case herself at the moment of the attorney's inability. This meant that the trial was over, leaving Eve very confused and not heard – just because she was a layperson – who, according to Finnish attorneys and court officials, understands nothing about law or human rights. To summarize so far, *hiring an attorney alone does not mentally protect women or ensure justice*. Eve was betrayed by the arrogance of the court, the prosecution and her attorney, because she was denied a closed hearing, the attorney did not disclose the inability to speak English, and she did not have a genuine opportunity to interrogate the accused. Most importantly, she was not valued because of her "lay-personness", and her testimony thereby had no value (see the summarized factors in Figure 4).

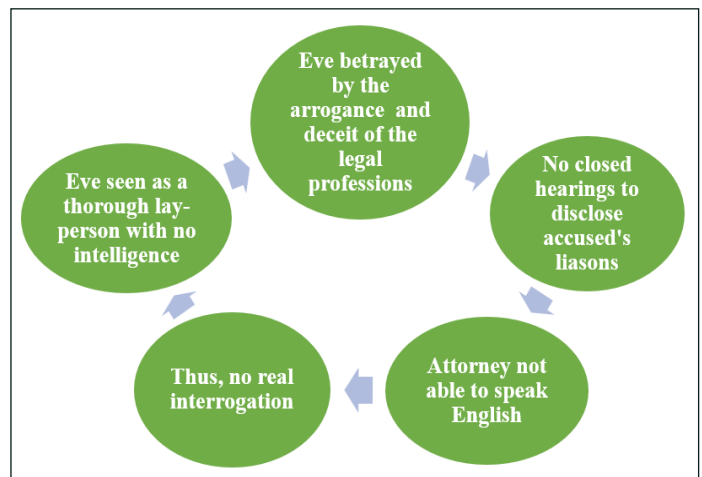


Figure 4: Individual factors in Eve's case contributing to judicial and institutional betrayal and long-term mental harm.

Institutional Betrayal as Routine: Why Hiring an Attorney Alone Does Not Mentally Protect Women or Ensure Justice

Regarding the findings of this research, the principles of the Lady of Justice are not followed, even though they reflect a common understanding of justice of both laypersons and attorneys. The same ethical standards are reflected in the Attorneys Act and the Code of Conduct, yet they are not properly implemented [3,22]. Thus, the answer to the question in the title is 'no': engaging an attorney does not guarantee justice and may instead result in injustice, including experiences of depression, humiliation, exclusion, and lack of respect for human rights -particularly for women in legal proceedings. Failure by attorneys to adhere to the

law and their own regulations constitutes institutional betrayal and, in this context, also judicial betrayal. At the same time, the implementation of Directive 98/5/EC (Eur-Lex) appears to emphasize the utilitarian interests of attorneys. Accordingly, the cases of Mia and Eve demonstrate how such failures undermine mental health, equality, and public trust in justice, raising broader concerns about the legitimacy of legal processes. In addition, the legal aid attorney ST exceeded her authority and acted beyond her mandate.

These findings show that the Bar’s internal monitoring has failed and appears biased, highlighting a need for greater transparency in attorney practices and court proceedings. Finnish sayings such as “a crow does not peck out another crow’s eye” and “letting the fox guard the henhouse” remain strikingly relevant, as the cases reveal patterns of judicial and institutional betrayal. From attorney misconduct and conflicts of interest to regulatory silence and procedural failures, victims like Mia and Eve were left disempowered and forced to navigate the legal system alone. Legal safeguards, such as ethics, procedural fairness, and access to justice, were undermined, often favoring elite interests. These patterns show how institutional actors can perpetuate harm rather than protection, eroding public trust. The findings underscore the urgent need for greater accountability, ethical enforcement, and systemic reform to ensure justice serves those seeking it, not entrenched interests.

Breaking the Monopoly: Making the Legal System Transparent and Accountable

To prevent the concentration of power and the resulting elitism - where attorneys seek monopolies, guided by old maxims like ‘a crow does not peck out another crow’s eye’ and ‘letting the fox guard the henhouse’ - substantial institutional reforms are urgently needed. Accordingly, the current judicial process is largely an insider affair and is hardly monitored. That’s why it would be beneficial, for example, to amend the Code of Judicial Procedure (2019, see in general in Finlex) so that psychologists and legal researchers could be allowed to observe court proceedings (see also Figure 5 for summarized modifications):

Repairing the enactment of the law, and also the elitist implementation of Directive 98/5/EC:

→ When enacting or implementing laws, the

concerned parties must be present – in this case, only lawyers would have needed to be present, but instead, the attorneys truly “took the cake”;

- By having lawyers present, the implementation would have a broader basis and garner more national support;
- Therefore, for the future, the Finnish Bar and the Association for Finnish Lawyers, known as Juristiliitto, must have equal opportunities to influence legal matters, given their approximate membership of 20,000 in Finland (only about 2,400 attorneys);
- Consequently, the implementation of the Lawyer Directive must be amended to align with its original aim of liberalizing opportunities for lawyers across EU Member States;
- Therefore, the implementation of the Directive cannot remain under the Attorneys Act.

Repairing attorney monitoring to reduce partiality – however, no system is effective where individuals act dishonestly:

- Establish independent external oversight for attorneys, as law enforcement may be reluctant to investigate dishonesty or procedural misconduct in trials

Repairing insider actions of legal professionals, for example, in cases of judicial and institutional betrayals:

- Promote interdisciplinary approaches within adjudication;
- More access for mental health and legal researchers to examine how betrayals are committed;
- Involve mental health professionals to develop methods to prevent mental harm in adjudication.



Figure 5: Repairing the issues in the current attorney advocacy against institutional and judicial betrayals in Finland.

Conclusion on Judicial and Institutional Betrayals: Confronting Elitism is Vital

Across these cases and analyses, a clear pattern emerges: the legal system, as currently structured, often prioritizes the interests of a small elite, such as attorneys and institutional actors, over justice, transparency, and the psychological well-being of those it serves. Yet, everyone in a civil society should be equal before the law, whether in the hands of attorneys or the general adjudication, for that matter. From breaches of ethical duty to systemic failures in implementing EU directives, the consequences for ordinary individuals are profound: humiliation, disempowerment, and mental harm. Reform is urgently needed, even if it may pose challenges in both lawmaking and judicial oversight, to ensure that legal processes are accountable, interdisciplinary, and accessible. Only by breaking monopolies, enhancing transparency, and including mental health and legal researchers who influence the process can the system begin to uphold its professed standards of justice and fairness.

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