

Tariq Ramadan rape accuser says he told her he was raping her “because you don’t wear a hijab”

by Hugh Fitzgerald



There are new items of interest to those following the tale of Tariq Ramadan, [here](#).

The first item is about Tariq Ramadan’s health. It’s partly old news: the claim that he has been suffering from multiple sclerosis – apparently, according to his lawyers, “since 2006,” though it was only revealed after he was arrested – and that in detention, they further claim, he could not possibly receive the medical care he needs. Some may have suspected he was only playing “*le malade imaginaire*,” in order to gain sympathy and obtain release from prison, to be put instead under house arrest. But here is the new news: a medical report

ordered by the judges has concluded that Ramadan does indeed have multiple sclerosis. At the same time, it has also been concluded, on the basis of testimony by both doctors and prison authorities, that proper medical treatment is compatible with his detention (which his lawyers insisted was not possible), and that he will be receiving all the medicines he requires and, as well, assured of four weekly sessions with a physiotherapist (how many M.S. sufferers receive as much?). The French authorities are keenly aware that his lawyers, and his vast following – those two million Facebook friends and 200,000 followers on Twitter – will be keeping track, eager to claim that he has not been provided with proper treatment. The magistrates are determined not to provide grist for Ramadan's mill.

The second item of interest has to do with the ongoing charges of rape by three women in France, which Ramadan has always denied, as he has denied, until now, *any* sexual contact with them. After consultation with his lawyers, Ramadan has now decided to change his story in one respect. He now admits to a "relationship" with his third accuser, "Marie," but not to her version of those relations. "He knows her, he had a relationship with her, but not what she described," said Ramadan's lawyer, Emmanuel Marsigny. Ramadan does admit to consensual sex with "Marie." "Marie," it should be noted, was at one time an escort girl, which does not help her in making a claim of being sexually violated by Ramadan, even though she had given up that line of work long before. So what was their relationship, according to Ramadan? His lawyers have not said. But It is likely to be this: he was not her rapist but her client, possibly one who "paid" for her services not just with money but also with the wisdom that that "towering intellect" and "foremost scholar of Islam" imparted to her, a clearly troubled soul.

Ramadan continues to claim that he had no sexual encounters of any kind with the other two French women, Henda Ayari and

“Christelle.” By admitting to a long-running adulterous liaison with this ‘Marie,’ his lawyers may have concluded that this could make his denials, as far as Henda Ayari and “Christelle” are concerned, more believable. Certainly we will now see, all over the Internet, his supporters holding up his revised account of his encounters with “Marie,” not as evidence of Ramadan’s meretriciousness but, rather, of his essential truthfulness.

Ramadan has undoubtedly concocted a story to explain away the initial lie. I should imagine it will go something like this: “When I was first asked about ‘Marie,’ I denied having relations with her, not because I feared a criminal charge – I knew I was completely innocent of that – but because I did not want to hurt my wife. I wanted to protect her from having to learn of my encounters with ‘Marie,’ I wanted to protect my family. Is that so hard to understand? But as I saw the French judicial system at work, with all these people relentlessly determined to bring me down – and I knew, of course, this whole campaign had more to do with my role in explaining Islam than with anything else – I realized that the truth of my meetings with ‘Marie,’ this escort girl, however embarrassing and banal, had to be told. But before I told anyone else, I first had to tell my wife. She had to learn it directly from me, and not from a sordid and twisted newspaper account. She understood. Of course it saddened her. How could it be otherwise? But our marriage is strong enough to survive my moments of madness with the lady who hides behind the alias ‘Marie.’ And if she still insists our sexual relationship was not consensual, for which I paid and am still, though in a very different way, paying, then I have a question for her: Is it really conceivable that over several years, in different cities, you came knocking at the doors of my various hotel rooms, begging to be admitted, in order to be raped? That is simply unbelievable. Of course the sex was consensual. It could not have been otherwise.”

“My illness, my multiple sclerosis, is one great worry for my family. And these wild charges of rape, of which, let me repeat, I am completely innocent, are another. But as long as I have my wife’s faith, and that of my children, and the unwavering support of so many people who, having attended my lectures, or seen them online, and read my books, or listened to my audio tapes, and then befriended me on Facebook – I think there are now two million of them – or follow me on Twitter, I am content. They know the truth about me. I will face this ordeal as I have faced others, with serenity, with faith, sure that even in today’s France, with this incredible hostility to Muslims, no matter how long it takes, justice will ultimately prevail.”

The third item of news about Ramadan is contained in [an interview with Henda Ayari in early April on the Egyptian Dream channel](#), in which she describes how she stopped being a Salafist and became a liberal Muslim, why she wrote her book, and why Ramadan first contacted her. He had seen her Facebook posting, in which she did not wear a hijab, and – ever the moralist – wrote to chastise her for not being a good Muslim.

Here is a transcript of Ayari’s interview:

I decided to write my book following the [2015] Bataclan terrorist attack. I was shocked when I saw the victims, the killings, and the blood on TV. I realized that political Islam and the Salafis constitute a danger.

I was coerced into marriage when I was twenty. I went to Tunisia on vacation, and within a day, I was married to a Salafi man I did not know. For the subsequent ten years, I lived as a prisoner with that man. I gave birth to three children and wore the niqab. We traveled to Saudi Arabia, where he wanted us to settle. He used to beat me up and had no respect for me. One day, I decided to run away with my three children.

When the Bataclan attack took place, I decided to tell my story on my Facebook page. I posted my pictures before and after – at age twenty, wearing a robe, and at age 38, without even a hijab. I wrote that I had used to be an imprisoned, oppressed woman. Today, I am a free woman. Following my Facebook post, I was contacted by the Flammarion publishers. They suggested that I write a book and tell my story, in order to help other women. I also founded an NGO to help women.

In that book, in a chapter I titled “Zubair,” I wrote about what had happened to me. A man I had admired raped me. That man is Tariq Ramadan.

[...]

There are French women who converted to Islam, and who, by the age of 17-18, have two or three children. They were married at a very young age. Some 16-year-old girls were contacted by Salafi Islamists via Facebook, and then had a religious marriage via Skype.

I know a girl who was contacted by a man. He signed a religious contract with her over Skype. At night, he had sex with her, and she got pregnant. Then he dumped her. In France, many girls who converted to Islam are miserable, because they are abandoned, forgotten and deserted, with children. They receive no help or support. They wear the hijab and are not sure whether to keep it on or take it off. They are miserable. I was contacted by elderly French people whose children converted to Islam. They do not know what to do, and they contact me for advice, because their children do not want anything to do with them. One man told me that his daughter refuses to talk to him altogether, ever since she converted to Islam. She had a religious marriage with a Salafi man.

I think that there is a real problem. Why do the French fear

Islam? Because of those Islamists, who use Islam in order to control and imprison women, and in order to accomplish political goals. I denounce this. I remain a Muslim and am proud of my Islam. I am a secular feminist who defends women's rights. Today, I call upon French politicians to help NGOs like mine, so that these NGOs can help women.

[...]

There are also girls who were recruited on Facebook and the Internet to go to Syria. I know girls who tried to travel to Syria "after communicating with a guy on Facebook. The guy would then propose that the girl go to Syria. I know a guy who traveled there. He was told that he would be working for a humanitarian organization, but, in fact, these guys are used as cannon fodder. These guys are being sacrificed in the war, believing that this is Islam. The women are used like whores or captive slavegirls to give birth to children.

[...]

In 2012, I posted on Facebook a picture of myself without a hijab. That day, Tariq Ramadan wrote to me: "Assalaam alaykum, sister Henda. How are you? What you are doing is not good."

[...]

He said that I was drawing the gaze of men and that this is not good. I thought that this couldn't really be Tariq Ramadan. Tariq Ramadan would not have sent me such a message. I wrote back: "Tariq Ramadan wouldn't have time for this. You are impersonating him." He wrote: "I really am Tariq Ramadan. If you don't believe me, I'll prove it to you." He suggested that we move to Skype. I agreed, and he switched on the camera, and I saw the real Tariq Ramadan in front of me. I was shocked. It was incredible. I didn't expect this – Tariq Ramadan talking to me, taking an interest in me, appearing before me. I was a little shocked. Then he said he could call

me if I wanted. He asked for my phone number, and suggested that we meet the following Saturday.

[...]

I considered him to be like a big brother or an imam. I had a lot of questions about Islam that I wanted to ask him, and besides, I had a chance to meet someone I admired. I trusted him. I didn't expect him to turn against me.

[...]

He said: "You should come up to my hotel room, because there are many people who might recognize me. It's better if we talk in my room, where it will be quieter." Since I saw him as a brother and an imam, I trusted him completely. I admired him and thought him to be the model Muslim man.

[...]

[When I got there], he went to wash his hands. Then he shook my hand and gave me a welcome kiss. I didn't expect this, but I admit that I let him do it. Then, all of a sudden, his behavior changed. **He became very violent toward me. He pushed me onto the bed, and that was it. He did what he did.**

[...]

When he pushed me onto the bed, I said no. I said to him that these things could get out of hand. This only made him angrier, and he did what he wanted. **He was very violent. I thought I was going to die that night because he choked me and slapped me.** He said to me: "This is what you are asking for because you don't wear the hijab."

So here is Tariq Ramadan, the great exponent of a moderate and ethical "European" Islam, who turns out to be not much different from the "religious police" in some Middle Eastern county, insisting that Ayari should wear a hijab; her failure

to do so “is not good.” She repeats this: **“He said that I was drawing the gaze of men and that this is not good.”** Of course, Tariq Ramadan knew whereof he spoke. He had his own “gaze” drawn to her and suggested that she give him her phone number, and they could subsequently arrange to meet. He soon called her; they met at his hotel where she thought the great man would provide her with his wisdom – “I had a lot of questions about Islam that I wanted to ask him” – and he suggested that too many people would recognize him in a public space, and that things would be “quieter” in his room. She saw him as “a brother and an imam,” she “trusted him,” and so they went to his room where her ordeal at the hands of this serial rapist, and violent sexual predator, began.

And at the end of it all, Tariq Ramadan, having ripped off the mask of the “moderate” Muslim and expert in Muslim morality and ethics, told Henda Ayari that **“you are asking for [the slapping, the choking, the violent rape] because you don’t wear the hijab.”**

That tells us a lot about the real Tariq Ramadan. The misogynistic moralist lecturing Muslim women on proper behavior is on display. So is the maniacally violent serial rapist who explains, and excuses, his own behavior, claiming it was brought on by a victim’s own islamically inexcusable behavior – it’s all there, in that last reported remark. Henda Ayari deserved what she got, Ramadan told her, “because you don’t wear the hijab.”