

HELEN SMITH, PhD

MEN ON STRIKE

**Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage,
Fatherhood, and the American Dream—
and Why It Matters**

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*To my father, who taught me how to love, and
to my husband, for keeping his achievement alive,
and, of course, for Julia always.*

*And to the Army of Davids who
helped me put this book together.*

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Prologue

Enslavement used to be based on race, now it's based on gender.

—Carnell Smith, advocate for male paternity fraud victims

If you are a wimp, this book is not for you. The suggestions I make in this book are difficult and require sacrifice and if you, as a male, do not feel you are up to the challenge, put this book down and go elsewhere. What I am going to describe to you requires a revolution to change the culture, and thus the political climate in this country that allows laws and actions against the male sex that would never be allowed against the female one.

Perhaps you think this is fair, that men should suffer for the ills of their ancestors and for the discrimination against women in the past. Maybe you are a chivalrous white-knight type who loves nothing more than the thought of saving a damsel in distress and would like to see your fellow man brought to his knees by laws that limit men's reproductive and personal lives as well as their livelihoods. Maybe you have political ambitions or work in a field that requires you to favor female privilege over male justice and you have no intention of changing because you benefit from this two-way arrangement. Maybe you are just a guy who wants to get laid and acts in a politically correct manner in the hope of getting

more women. If so, you are not my audience, but you might want to stick around and learn something.

If you are a woman, the main focus of this book is on men but you may find some of the information of interest. It may help you to understand more about what the typical men are going through in this country and why they don't marry as readily anymore or go to college as often as they once did. Though you may disagree with much that is written here, keeping an open mind to how men *actually* feel and think as opposed to how the media, white knights and other women tell them how to think and feel may help you to understand how to connect with men in a more open and intimate way. Your husband, son, father or brother will thank you for it. And as Martin Luther King Jr. once said from a Birmingham jail, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." If we as women allow injustice to men today, who knows what will happen to us tomorrow? If learning about men rather than blaming them for all the ills of the world appeals to you, welcome.

My actual audience is the man who knows that something in today's twenty-first century is amiss. He can't put his finger on it exactly but feels deeply that modern society has turned its back on the average male. All around you, you hear the question, "Where have all the good men gone?" But you know instinctively that it's the wrong question. The right one is "Why have all the good men gone on strike?"

This book will tell you why and tell you and society how to fix it. Because if we don't, our society will never be the same. Our sons, brothers, fathers, uncles and husbands will live in a world where they will not know due process, where a man can be jailed for no other reason than that a woman pointed a finger at him, or because he raised his voice to her or where he can be placed into involuntary servitude to pay for eighteen years for a child that is not his. Oops! Too late. This is already happening in the United States of America.

Men are sensing the backlash against them and are consciously and unconsciously going "on strike." They are dropping out of college, out of the workforce, and out of marriage and fatherhood at alarming rates. So much so that a number of books have been written about this phenomenon in recent years that look at the "man-child" of today and summarize that he and his arrested development have taken a vacation from responsibility because he can, or because he can now get sex on demand.

Or worse, these books discuss how his irresponsible behavior has harmed females, since his only purpose on earth is to serve women. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most men are not acting irresponsibly because they are immature or because they want to harm women; they are acting *rationally* in response to the lack of incentives today's society offers them to be responsible fathers, husbands and providers. In addition, many

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are going on strike, either consciously or unconsciously, because they do not want to be harmed by the myriad of laws, attitudes and backlash against them for the simple crime of happening to be male in the twenty-first century. Men are starting to fight back against the backlash. This book explains their battle cry.

Helen Smith, PhD
Knoxville, Tennessee

Introduction

Why is a woman writing this book? you ask. I thought the same thing for years. Let me tell you a bit about myself and give you some background on men's issues so that you will understand why I have come to the conclusion that there is a war against men in our culture that needs to be ended before it is too late. I will also tell you why, as a psychologist and as a woman, I am the person who should write this book.

I used to consider myself a feminist but mistakenly thought feminism meant equality between the sexes. In today's culture, it means female privilege, and I believe discrimination against men is every bit as bad as discrimination against women—and I want no part of it. Now men are the ones who are in need of justice and focus. I have been blogging and writing at my own blog, www.drhelen.blogspot.com, and working with PJ Media,¹ a libertarian and conservative online website and Internet TV media company, for some time, starting around 2005 for the former and 2007 for the latter. I now blog and write on men's issues and men's rights as a columnist and blogger for PJ Media exclusively as well

as occasionally host an Internet TV show for PJTV focusing on men's issues.²

As you are probably well aware, men's issues are not exactly the topic du jour with the mainstream media outlets, unless you count the time I saw some poor guy being raked over the coals by Dr. Phil for daring to say that he did not feel he should have to pay child support for a baby that a woman tricked him into having by telling him that she had a medical condition and could not have children and was on birth control to boot. What nerve!

Anyway, my foray into writing about men's issues did not begin overnight. I have worked as a psychologist for over two decades and one of the first private clients I had was a wheelchair-bound man named John who was being beaten by his large and angry wife. My whole career took a different turn after that experience. I had known before that men didn't always get a fair shake, but with the evidence clearly in front of me and few resources to help a battered male, all I could do was try to help this guy get up the courage to get out of the situation.

I have spent many years talking to hundreds of men about their deepest, darkest secrets. Many have been afraid to talk and for others it was a relief, but the one thing they all had in common was a feeling that they were "wimps for having problems" and they felt a reluctance to go against what society expected of them: to provide for women and their families with nary a whimper. Even if the women were cheating on them, even if they were rais-

ing children alone and the women refused to help with support, and even if the children weren't theirs.

But the anger was there, seething below the surface, and in therapy it came forth in physical and emotional ways that wreaked havoc with these men and their bodies and minds. And they believed no one cared, because in reality, few did. Men kill themselves over pain like this and the statistics show they do it often. In 2010, the latest suicide statistics show that 38,364 people killed themselves nationally and 30,277 of those were men.³

How many of these men had decided to kill themselves because they could no longer see their children, had a broken relationship or were involved in a bitter divorce? Ironically, even when you look at the suicide statistics, mostly the concern seems to be about women who kill themselves. Apparently, our society cares so little about men that those who kill themselves are hardly news.

Even Thomas Ball, a man who set himself on fire on the courthouse steps because he felt jerked around by family court, was barely worth mentioning on the evening news for his dramatic ending. Ball, a fifty-eight-year-old New Hampshire man, stated that he was “done being bullied for being a man”⁴ by the family court system. But despite his horrible and public death, his last act received little media attention. Just a few activists on the web and a few news outlets such as *International Business Times* and the *Keene Sentinel*, a paper in New Hamp-

shire, picked it up. Men are literally killing themselves to get their concerns heard, but no one is listening.⁵

When no one listens, people tune out and start to do their own thing. There is a term for bailing out of the mainstream of society that I blogged about in 2008 called “Going John Galt”⁶ or “going Galt” for short. Have you ever read *Atlas Shrugged*? If not, do so. If you have read the book, you know where I am going with this. In Ayn Rand’s book, the basic theme is that John Galt and his allies take actions that include withdrawing their talents and “stopping the motor of the world” while leading the “strikers” (those who refused to be exploited) against the “looters” (the exploiters, backed by the government).⁷ One interesting fact about *Atlas Shrugged* is that the original title was *The Strike*, but Rand changed it at her husband’s suggestion.⁸ The original title of Rand’s book seems fitting for what is happening with today’s twenty-first-century man.

In some sense, men today feel very much like Rand’s characters in *Atlas Shrugged*, knowing that they can be exploited for their sense of duty, production and just for being male at any time. The state transfers men’s production to women and children through child support, alimony, divorce laws, and government entitlements that are mainly for women, such as WIC (grants to states for women, infants and children) or welfare payments to single mothers. It is not only in family relationships that men are screwed, but also in many areas of modern so-

ciety. Men are portrayed as the bad guys, ready to rape, pillage, beat or abuse women and children at the drop of a hat. From rape laws that protect women but not the men they may accuse falsely to the lack of due process in sexual harassment cases on college campuses to airlines that will not allow men (possible perverts!) to sit next to a child,⁹ our society is at war with men and men know it full well.

In fact, men have known that a backlash against them has been happening for decades, so why is it taking so long for men to fight back? Psychologist Warren Farrell, in his prophetic book *The Myth of Male Power*, written in 1993, talks about “the men’s movement as an evolutionary shift” and says the movement will be “the most incremental of movements” because it is “hard to confront the feelings we’ve learned to repress and hard to confront the women we’ve learned to protect.”¹⁰ Farrell believes that the greatest challenge of the men’s movement will be “getting men to ask for help for *themselves*. Men were always able to ask for help on *behalf of others*—for a congregation, their wives, children, or a cause—*but not for themselves*.”¹¹

According to Farrell, “major movements have two core stimuli: 1) emotional rejection; and 2) *economic hurt*. **When a large number of people feel emotionally rejected and economically hurt at the same moment in history, a revolution is in the making.**”¹² Lord knows, men today are feeling emotionally rejected, not just if

they divorce as Farrell discusses, but in many aspects of American life as I shall describe in the following chapters of this book. In addition, men are hurting economically, not just as husbands and fathers in a divorce, but also because of the current recession that has threatened men's livelihoods and long-term career prospects.

According to political scientist James Q. Wilson, "among the bottom fifth of income earners, many people, especially men, stay there their whole lives."¹³ The economic and psychological ramifications that men are dealing with in today's society are the perfect storm of circumstances to propel men who have been on the sidelines to fight for their *own* justice, rather than for justice on behalf of others.

That's where this book comes in. If men have a psychological barrier to standing up for their own causes and in their personal relationships because of social conditioning and even evolution, then it is overcoming those barriers that will lead to legal and cultural changes for men that are equitable and fair. Of course, there are more than just psychological barriers to justice for men. There are legal barriers, but I truly believe that the culture drives politics and politics drives the law.

As a psychologist, I can teach you the tools to identify and overcome these barriers and, as a woman, I can share with you the information you need to deal with those women and men in your life whom you are afraid to confront on your way to equality. I will not apologize

for being pro-male as so many authors and media types do. I find that disgusting. And face it, as a woman, I am not going to get as much grief as a man would for saying the same thing. I still get some, but the stakes aren't as high for me. But while my feelings matter somewhat, yours matter more in this fight. I can give you the tools, but much of the work will be up to you.

I once asked my husband what it took to be a "men's rights activist." "I'm not a man and I'm not brilliant," I told him, thinking these two traits would provide me with what I needed to work in that arena. My husband, a law professor and writer of a large political blog, stated, "You just need courage." That I have in spades, and, if you are reading this book, you probably do too. It's a good thing, because you will need this trait more than anything if you, your sons, your nephews, your brothers and fathers are to survive in today's feminized world of marriage, reproduction, college, public and private space and work. The following chapters will discuss these areas and the problems men are facing in each, and why so many of you, like the characters in *Atlas Shrugged*, have decided to go on strike.

MEN ON STRIKE

CHAPTER 1

The Marriage Strike

Why Men Don't Marry

I guess I'm one of the boycotters. . . . About 6 or 7 years ago I gradually just quit dating. Without really thinking about it, I came to the decision that I would not get married, so I wasn't interested in going through the hassle of dating. The interesting part is that I share a house with two other guys in similar situations. We all seem to have voluntarily removed ourselves not just from the population of marriageable men, but from the dating pool. One is a few years older than me, the other [is] in his early 30s. Both of them were previously married and don't seem eager to repeat the experience.

—A commenter named Ernie from PJMedia.com in response to my question, “Should Men Get Married?”¹

There are many guys like Ernie all over the country who are no longer getting married. And why should they? Western culture has spent the past fifty years making marriage a better deal for women, while for men it's become a real ball and chain, sometimes almost literally. Men used to go to work, come home and, after a hard day's work providing for their families, they rested, ate dinner and felt like “the king of the castle.” Fast forward to today, where the man works all day, comes home to cook or wash dishes, is chided for not

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