



David Morrison says, 'If You Can't Respect Women, Then Get Out'

It's not too late to say sorry, David Morrison. Many are still waiting to hear a few simple words



Miranda Devine October 23, 2016 12:00am

The visit to Townsville of former army chief David Morrison last week ended in humiliation when a savvy local reporter rocked him with a question about the Jedi Council sex scandal that launched his career as a gender maven at the expense of innocent officers.

“What a ridiculous assertion,” Morrison thundered at Townsville Bulletin reporter Kieran Rooney.

“I’m surprised actually and disappointed you would take this opportunity, when I am here in a civilian capacity engaging with the business community in Townsville around diversity, to try and dredge up a matter that is years old.”

The outburst prompted the Bulletin to slap Morrison on its front page under the mocking headline: “Return of the Jedi”.

Townsville is a garrison town where Morrison is widely detested because of the egregious injustice done to one of their own, the former commanding officer of the Joint Logistics Unit North Queensland, Lt Col Karel Dubsy, sacked by Morrison for not reading emails containing sexist material cc'd to him.

That's right: NOT reading. Not even opening.

Morrison's logic was that Dubsy, as commanding officer, should have been across the entire contents of his inbox.

The reality was that, having made the thundering "standard you walk past" YouTube speech in 2013 which catapulted him onto the global stage as a feminist hero, Morrison had to justify his claim of systemic sexism in the Australian Defence Force.

The most senior scapegoat was the blameless Dubsy.

On June 13, 2013, two months after his YouTube speech, Morrison called a press conference to announce that a group of 17 Army officers were allegedly, "in production and distribution of highly inappropriate material demeaning women across both the Defence computer systems and the public internet."



Former commanding officer of the Joint Logistics Unit North Queensland, Lt Col Karel Dubsy, was sacked by Morrison for not reading emails containing sexist material. (Pic: Supplied)

The group came to be known as the "Jedi Council". Dubsy was not one of them.

Asked the highest rank of the men involved, Morrison replied: "There is one lieutenant-colonel who is part of this group".

He didn't name Dubsy but everyone in the Army knew who he was.

“There were not many Lieutenant Colonels in Townsville subjected to an Australian Defence Force Investigative Service office raid on June 5, 2013,” Dubsy recalled later.

“Then my name and image were released in the media. Despite knowing I had done nothing wrong, (Morrison) made no effort to protect my name... He embarrassed (me) on national TV.”

Army investigators trawled through every email Dubsy had sent or received and all they found were two private emails to two male friends, containing no images but with the words “DD boobs” and “shag”, which Dubsy admits was “inappropriate language” but hardly a hanging offence.

“Morrison tried hard to pin the Jedi Council on me but when he couldn’t, he sacked me from command because ‘I failed to remain aware of issues that affect me, my unit and Army’.

“... everyone thought I was part of Jedi Council. I was just dead man walking.”

Dubsy didn’t just lose his command, and an upcoming prestigious posting to the United States. He lost his reputation and his identity.

In October, 2013, he was officially cleared, in a letter from then Defence Force Chief David Hurley, saying “I accept... that you were not a part of the activities of a group styled ‘the Jedi Council’”.

Hurley also made the decision, against Morrison’s recommendation, not to terminate his service.

But by then Dubsy was a broken man. The father of two succumbed to PTSD, triggered by events in Afghanistan, was discharged from the Army medically unfit and has been in and out of psych wards ever since.

His pain culminated in a suicide attempt on Australia Day this year, while at home watching his TV in disbelief as the leader he felt had betrayed him was honoured as Australian of the Year.

So when Army people complain that Morrison has done nothing for veterans, there is a special sting in their accusations.



David Morrison,

with former ANZ CEO Mike Smith and former prime minister Julia Gillard, has been criticised for doing nothing for veterans. (Pics: News Corp Australia / John Feder)

Vietnam veteran Tony Dell, founder of Stand Tall 4 PTS, a charity for post-traumatic stress sufferers, says: “It was an absolute travesty he was made AOTY. I travel around the country and talk to a lot of veterans and a lot of people in Defence and no one says a kind word about him.”

Veterans still fume about Morrison’s comment to the ABC last year that: “I don’t think that there’s a military solution to anything.” And they can’t forgive his attack on the Anzac legend as too male and “Anglo-Saxon”.

Dell says when he asked Morrison last year to appear at a PTSD forum to be held in Brisbane six months later: “Without a moment’s hesitation he said ‘I’ll be too busy’.”

Of course, by September Morrison had retired from the army, become chairman of the Diversity Council and embarked on a lucrative career as gender warrior.

As he nears the end of his AOTY post, in which his much ridiculed attempt to ban the word “guys” was the highlight, there is mounting pressure for an apology to Dubsy.

All Dubsy wants is official recognition of what the private letter from Hurley states, that he was not part of the Jedi Council.

“It galls me that Morrison does not understand that if you publicly accuse someone of something and then find out they’re innocent that you should then correct the record publicly.”

Just a few words would mean so much.

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