

96 and Not Dead Yet: The Woman in White

by [Reg Green](#) (May 2025)



"I'm the editor of *Libelle*," a voice on the phone said. "It's the largest Dutch women's magazine, with two hundred thousand

readers.” Trying to visualise the two hundred thousand largest Dutch women disturbed my sleep for a week.

I’ve had a similar problem a number of times. Last week I heard a man on television being introduced as an aging expert, though he looked quite young to me. Whenever an interviewer is described as a breaking news reporter, I want to put my arms round her and put her together again. And when I lived in London, I was always glad I didn’t work in Old Fish St.

But this awkwardness in the language can have more serious consequences. Decades ago, after a dinner meeting at a Detroit hotel where there had been a noisy racial protest the night before, the black cloakroom attendant couldn’t find my wife’s raincoat. It should have been easy to see because among all the grays and dark blues it was white. At last I spotted it and pointed.

“Oh, it’s that white woman’s raincoat, right?” he asked. Our eyes met. “Considering what happened here last night, don’t you think that’s wise?” I said. A long silent moment passed, then we both burst out laughing.

Ah, those were the days.

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