

My name is [REDACTED] I am [REDACTED] years old with two kids now [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I was in an abusive relationship with the children's father [REDACTED] for over [REDACTED] years before I left in [REDACTED], in those [REDACTED] years I was sworn at, spat at, things thrown at me, controlled, interrogated for everything I did and everywhere I went, if I took "too long" to do the food shopping I was accused of having affairs, isolated from my family and friends, threatened if I tried to leave I would be found and killed, when I found out I was pregnant [REDACTED] told me I had to have an abortion, when I tried to leave to raise the child myself he threatened to kick me in the stomach and kill the child, at pediatric doctors' appointments, I was called horrible names and degraded for having routine examinations, in labor I was told that I was disgusting and every vile swear word you can think of and I had embarrassed him, and it only got worse when I got home with the baby, my son was yelled and sworn at from day one, told he wasn't wanted and he'd ruined [REDACTED] life, as he grew older he would be slapped in the head, thrown across the room on to a couch, and pushed in the fridge, kicked in the bottom, my daughter wasn't treated as bad but was still yelled and sworn at, I knew I had to get them away from him before one of us ended up dead. So I fled on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and that was a horrendous day in its self, I moved my kids and I into [REDACTED] and for the past [REDACTED] years I have been fighting to keep my children and myself safe from their father, I never imagined that leaving that horrible life threatening situation would turn in to the easy part, trying to keep us safe would turn out to be impossible, there was a intervention order put on the [REDACTED] at the court house [REDACTED] days after I left with kids, and I still have that in place, trying to get anyone to listen when he breached it turned out to be ridiculous, threatening texts phone calls to me and my family, left a typed note the gate that he was going to slit some of my family's throats, called work safe on some of them with ridiculous story's trying to cause trouble, everything was reported to the police, but nothing was ever done, I'd just get told there wasn't enough evidence or there was nothing they could do or one occasion after going to the police station when [REDACTED] had asked my son where we now lived and my son told him, I was told that if I proceeded with making a statement" it would just piss [REDACTED] off more so I should just go home and ring 000 if [REDACTED] turned up at my house and buy my own surveillance cameras so if he did try to kill me it be on camera ""come back when one of you is hurt then we can do something ". I went to countless different police officers trying to get someone to help me and keep my kids safe, and after about [REDACTED] months, I ended up having to travel 1.15 hrs. To get a female police officer to take a statement from me, it took a further [REDACTED] months for them to get [REDACTED] to court for the 6 breaches, which I wasn't invited to attend. I was never told of the outcome I had to ring on a weekly basis to try and get any answers, and after months I found out he was convicted and charged with the 6 breaches and fined around \$[REDACTED]. I had never had any involvement with the police or lawyers before I left [REDACTED] but have found out the hard way that it is nothing like I imagined, I imagined that police lawyers and the court system would be there to protect my kids and I, but after [REDACTED] years of going through the family court system I am still stunned at how wrong they get things, even my own solicitor has treated me horrible, lied and denied me any chance of keeping my kids safe. After telling my solicitor about the family violence my kids and I were put through, he told me "it can't have been that bad you stayed there [REDACTED] years, it's not like he was knocking your teeth out when you conceived your kids", none of my evidence was ever looked at properly if at all and I was just left sitting in the court house corridors month after month to be told if I didn't agree to [REDACTED] demands my kids would be taking off me, and intimidated in to signing orders I did not want to, on one occasion I tried to explain that I couldn't agree to one of the phone call days as I would be at work and my solicitor said "I don't give a f#%k just sign it" told it was

only legal aid they don't pay enough to do anything, when I told them that I had real concerns that [REDACTED] would seriously hurt the kids or kill them if he got them I was told "that's just a risk you will have to take because he is their father" and he needed the chance to prove that he wouldn't kill them by spending time with them, but if he did kill them then I would have a case!, I have been humiliated, degraded and been in tears all because of a solicitor that does not understand what family violence is and a system that hasn't even got any common sense. I'm treated like the bad one, when all I have been trying to do is keep the kids safe now and for their future, I follow all the court orders, I was told my kids at ages [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would have to be responsible for themselves and know right from wrong and would have to ring 000 if they were in trouble at their father's house. They would have to stand up to a man they were scared of if they didn't feel safe at his house, How is this the best interests of the children?

The Judges' solicitors and police and everyone who comes into contact with people in the court system need to be properly educated as to what family violence truly is, they are still of the backward way of thinking you have to be bashed daily to have any say, have to have photos of black eyes and broken bones to be believed

The primary carer of the children needs to be taken very seriously when it comes to what behavior's they witness at home, I spend almost 24 hours a day 7 days a week with my children so when I tell the court that my son is wetting the bed, having anxiety attacks, tantrums etc. from stressing about having contact with their father, I am told my opinion doesn't count because I could just be making these things up to be vindictive, get a psychologist report for them I'm told, I take my kids to a psychologist and they see a counselor at school but these people don't witness what I witness and are around every day. They don't spend 5 hours trying to get my son to sleep through the tears and confusion of an innocent child trying to understand why their father isn't like other fathers at school etc.

The court system sent [REDACTED] to men's behavior change programs, parenting classes, family reporters and psychologists to get their opinion, all the MBCP did was give him enough information to know how to not get court doing and saying the wrong things, all they have to do is nod and agree for a few hours and they get a certificate! It just made [REDACTED] more cunning, but in the courts eyes he has ticked all the boxes, he talked to a psychologist for an hour, they never met me or the kids and they say he shows no threat to us. The family report writing psychologist said she could see my concerns with his behavior and acknowledged he would continue his bad influence on the kids but there was nothing she could do because the courts expect everything to progress and she had only seen 2 cases in her long career where a parent was not allowed access to their children, these "professionals" need to be allowed to write the truth, not what the court expects. Parenting classes can't simulate a child crying for hours and see how they control their temper or any of the other of hundreds of everyday situations that are involved in raising children, but they get a certificate for that and that's all the court cares about. It needs to be recognized that there is something seriously wrong with a father telling their son that he hates him and he ruined his life and he wanted to abort them for all his [REDACTED] years of life is not something you can just ignore and they will never change, The court system and all associated need to treat every case as it is, not all the same, yes there are some people out there that are drug users and drunks and welfare bludgers that are just wounding the system but don't put us all in the same basket

I work part time and get a single parent pension payment ,I pay for everything for my kids and myself , I send them to a great catholic school to give them the best chance possible of a good education and future ,provide food clothing uniforms books a house and toys , [REDACTED] doesn't work never has ,so all the child support taken out of his bank by csa is \$ [REDACTED] a fortnight , I would prefer no money because this payment is another way he has an entitlement to the children , he does not contribute to their education but I have to supply him with a copy of their school reports .They should make him work and pay for them properly if this gives them those sort of entitlements .Or take away these privilege's.

Intervention order breaches need to be as serious as they claim on paper, if you breach them you get jail time not just a slap on the wrist and a warning, if questioned at all, police need the education to understand what family violence is and the authority to act and convict perpetrators when they breach not give countless chances or just ignore the victims because they don't understand or say there's nothing they can legally do. I did not know when I first left that pets are included in family violence offences, and no law enforcement ever mentioned it. [REDACTED] kept my dog and my kids pets and refused to let me have them, by the time I found out about this every police officer said it was too long ago to do anything about and weren't that concerned, and the abuse that my dogs suffered from [REDACTED] over the years was horrendous and he should be held accountable and it also needs to be acknowledged in court as how it connects with the way he treats humans

Legal aid needs to be fair enough to compete with paying clients, I have been told on several occasions that I wouldn't find any solicitor that would bend over to help whilst getting paid from legal aid, and was treated so badly by one solicitor because of it that I have made an official complaint about them, this is not fair, everyone should be entitled to the same legal representation regardless of price.

There needs to be school based classes to educate children about family violence and programs to ensure they can get advice, help, and support when needed

Common sense needs to be used in the court system , judges need to be given all relevant information about each case to make any sort of judgement , it should not always be left to solicitors arguing in the hallways of court houses to make orders when there are grave risks to the children's wellbeing with a parent , just because a parent has ticked all the boxes in a supervised visit for an hour does not ensure that they have changed and should not be forced to progress to whole days then over nights they need to take in to account the long history of abuse and not just keep taking risks with innocent children's lives .Perpetrators need to be stood in the witness box to explain what they have done , and they need to take full responsibility for their actions and punished appropriately , not the victims pleading for understanding and having to relive every detail in public and try to prove our story while the perpetrator sits back and just denies all or blames us for causing it .

The best interests of a child is NOT always to have both parents in their lives, some children would be so much better off if they didn't have to be forced to stay with someone who is just using them to control their ex-partner or "win" the game it is to them, it just continues the cycle of family violence, remove the damaging family violence patterns and kids can get on with living a normal life filled with love, security, stability not be dragged down that horrible path. Some people do not ever change no matter

how much help they get, or how good of an act they can keep up in the court house, we need to accept this and change the things that are possible to change like protecting children from these people and allowing them to grow up without any more damage being done from violent perpetrators and situations. No more children or mothers should have to die or be damaged because of family violence we need to at least make a start in the right direction and hold perpetrator's accountable at the FIRST act of family violence.

Thank you very much for your time

Regards

