

"I feel like driving a knife through your neck. How dare you talk to your old friends about us, you have totally betrayed me, I have done everything to make you a better person, give you a better life and you go behind my back and talk to your so called friends about us, they don't give a stuff about you or me, I just want to drive a knife through your neck. Look in the mirror, have a good long hard look, your soul is empty". On occasions, when trying to protect myself from rage fuelled assaults, she (■■■■) would spit in my face.

"I want to kick you in the balls, come on coward, take your hands away and give me a clear shot, coward, coward". Another time she threatens to hit me with a pair of iron fireside tongs, I am exhausted, I am sitting on the edge of the bed, I feel totally defeated, I lower my head and say go ahead, she strikes me on the top of my head with the metal tongs and draws blood.

On a rare occasion I ring my brother to ask how my frail mother is going, while talking she is standing next to me - "look at you, your shoulders are slumped while your talking, stand up straight like a man, let your brother know he is not controlling the conversation, you are, stop talking in a whimpy voice, stand up to him and be a man. He doesn't get to make all the decisions about your mother ... you're pathetic!"

After an evening of abuse from her wine fuelled mouth I take myself off to another room and lie down on a makeshift bed on the floor to escape her torment. I had placed a couch in front of the door to keep her out. I try to get some sleep. I am crying. She yells at me through the door to let her in, I refuse. She kicks and kicks at the door until the hinges give way and she pushes the couch out of the way and yells abuse at me. She disappears and I feel relief. She reappears with a jug of cold water and throws it over me, my bedding and clothes.

Most nights after ■■■■■ had gone to sleep, we sat on the couch. ■■■■ would continue to drink her second bottle of wine and ramble on about loving me, making my life better and how she was so good for me. I felt that I had to sit and listen to her or else she may once again turn on me and abuse me. Usually she would pretty much pass out about 11p.m. I would help her to bed and then be up an hour later attending ■■■■■ needs, bottle feeding, nappy changing, often more than once, while she went into a deep alcohol induced sleep.

These evenings would often turn into a nightmare of threats and abuse. If [REDACTED] were sitting on my right side and I happen to move to adjust my sitting position by putting my right leg over my left she would say “body language, you’re moving away from me, your not paying any attention to what I am saying are you?” Then [REDACTED] would start interrogating me and telling me about how touching my moustache area with my hand was a sign of lying to her and start analysing every body movement I made. She would discuss in detail how I had lusted after females we passed by in the supermarket or the street that day. [REDACTED] would fill my mind with graphic visions of me having sex with some woman we passed in the street and when I tried to deny I had any interest in this other woman she would point to my body language and trap me into false confessions. The abuse and interrogations would go on for hours. If she was still half conscious when we went to bed she would kick me as hard as she could forcing me to retreat to the couch to try and get some sleep.

Most of the time I was sleep deprived, no way could I lie down on the bed during the day and have a nap with out provoking her wrath so I would grab an overcoat and some news papers and go out to the garden shed. How I escaped her attention I don’t know. I lay the paper out on the cold pavers that make the shed floor, and lie down between garden tools, petrol tin and the lawnmower with the coat over me for some warmth and eventually manage to cry myself to sleep but probably only get 15 minutes of real sleep. If [REDACTED] found me she would cut me again with words like “you pathetic sniffing shell of a man, look at you grovelling on the ground like a baby, you make me sick to my stomach”.

I went to the doctors and told him I had sleep problems and mentioned the relationship problems but not in too much detail as I knew [REDACTED] would use her highly cultivated ‘Gestapo’ interrogation techniques to get out of me everything I told the doctor. After returning home, sure enough, the interrogation began. As soon as she discovered I had mentioned our relationship she flew into an uncontrollable rage. “How dare you talk to another person about problems we might be having, it is total betrayal after all that I have done for you.” Her abuse was horrific and non-relenting. Looking back I feel I had only two choices to escape her rage – one would have resulted in her being knocked out, the other – harming myself. The first wouldn’t have been a real option, as I am not a violent person, so I did the second option. I downed the whole bottle of sleeping pills the doctor had just given me.

Woke up the next day in hospital wishing I hadn't woken. (I often fantasised about getting cancer, as I was sure it would be far less painful than what I was going through). The nurse, trained in mental health issues, interviewed me and gleaned that I was in a troubled relationship, she asked if I would be alright and that I could come back anytime. ■ picked me up from the hospital and immediately went on the attack. "How dare you expose our private problems to the whole town (we lived in a small country town of about ■ people), she went on, "again you betray me and disgust me with your pathetic, attention seeking tactics, grow up and be a man". The trip home was ■ kilometres of abuse. She didn't let up when we got home. I couldn't take it anymore. I grabbed an overcoat (it was winter) and just walked out of the house and out of the town. I walked ■ kilometres. I knew a person, a past friend, had recently separated and guessed he may be using that road to travel on to see his daughter on the weekend. I prayed he would see me and take me to his place. ■ didn't know him so I felt a little safer. Luck was on my side. He saw me, picked me up, and let me sleep at his place that night. The next day he helped me contact my brother. My brother and his wife travelled ■ hours up from, ■ to see me. We decided to go back to the home and have a family discussion to try and sort a few things out. My mind is pretty blank on what was discussed but a friend of hers was also there and made a comment about something "evil" happening in our house. Nothing improved after they left, things just seem to get worse.

Even though the relationship was only into its ■ year I had invested everything into it. All my finances went into ■ and extensive renovations on her house – most of which I did the work for. I was with her 24/7 as I had left my job with a small redundancy package. All my family heirlooms were there. All my handyman tools were there. My musical instruments and recordings of songs I had written over many years. And most importantly, of course, ■. How could I leave? My first long-term marriage had failed, this was it – I had fully committed to a new life with this woman who bore ■ had isolated from my friends and family and felt I had no one but her. ■ threatened that if I ever left her I would never see ■ again. ■ assured me I would die a lonely old man. I felt alone and trapped.

One day after putting in [REDACTED] on an extension to the house, which was to be her [REDACTED] room, I walked into the kitchen and gave her a hug. [REDACTED] pushed me back and yelled at me in rage because I had a few bits of fibreglass on my jumper from the [REDACTED], which had stuck into her skin. She went ballistic. Her abuse was horrific. I knew I couldn't take it anymore. I grabbed my coat and asked her for the keys to my new car so I could get my wallet with drivers license and credit card etc. She refused. I had no intention of taking my car as I felt she needed it more than me to look after [REDACTED]. I just wanted my wallet. I threatened to break the window of the car but she still refused. I gave up. I found a chequebook, put it in my pocket and finally ESCAPED from her. I walked out of the house. I walked down the street. I walked. I escaped. I managed to get a \$ [REDACTED] cheque cashed and headed to my mother's house in [REDACTED] by train with just the clothes on my back.

Turned out my Mother had gone into hospital that very weekend for a [REDACTED] operation. My brother came and collected me and took me to his place. He organised a doctor and a psychiatrist. [REDACTED] sent him about [REDACTED] faxes, there where threats to blow up my old [REDACTED] with all my possessions in it, and pages and pages of other drunken ramblings denigrating me, mostly trying to turn my brother against me in an effort to get me back into her clutches. My brother had to disconnect the fax machine. I have copies of many of the faxes including the threat to blow up the [REDACTED]. I have a fax where she mentions hitting me with the fireside tongs and another talks of how she smeared her own excrement on a friend's car window.

I was at last free, but the abuse continued in other forms. A little later when I thought there might be a change in [REDACTED]'s attitude I some how managed to increase my credit card to \$ [REDACTED] and I sent her another card saying that she could use it with a limit of \$ [REDACTED] to help look after [REDACTED]. I still hadn't learnt my lesson. She quickly withdrew \$ [REDACTED] cash from the card. I never got it back and it put me in great financial difficulty. Unemployed, no car, no possessions, little money, suffering depression and loss of all sense of who I was. My self-esteem was totally shattered.

It took me a good year of counselling (mainly from a brilliant Anglicare counsellor) to get my head straight and realise what I had been through. Through numerous

counselling sessions I began to understand how much abuse had been inflicted on me. As she explained – I was suffering from PTSS.

As threatened [REDACTED] refused to let me see [REDACTED] unless I agreed to see [REDACTED] in her house under her supervision, but there was no way I was ever going to be alone with her again.

So began the ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL and post relationship EMOTIONAL ABUSE. And worst of all - the PSYCHOLOGICAL and EMOTIONAL ABUSE of [REDACTED] through her unrelenting PARENT ALIENATION regime.

[REDACTED] used weaknesses in the Family Court System, which seems to strongly favour the mother, to deny me contact. So the court battles began and so also the inevitable emotional turmoil and extreme financial burden (\$[REDACTED]). Over about [REDACTED] years there were numerous affidavits, court appearances, court orders, amended court orders, [REDACTED] family reports, at least [REDACTED] different Child Representatives, [REDACTED] or more different lawyers/barristers, a huge number of lawyer/barrister meetings and consultations – all of which was, what I consider, administrative/financial/emotional abuse.

I had to first have supervised contact, travelling [REDACTED] hours on a weekend to see [REDACTED] for a few hours each fortnight. Then unsupervised contact for [REDACTED] hour a fortnight. Then an over night stay fortnightly. Eventually a whole weekend of [REDACTED] nights a fortnight. I had managed to get work but had to adjust hours so I could travel to see [REDACTED]. Even when I moved back to the town where [REDACTED] lived I ended up forgoing some work to ensure that I got to contact 'pick up time' exactly on the dot of the clock or she would have and denied contact as she did do on numerous occasions anyway.

Forget Christmas and Birthdays – no way was I ever going to get those. When contact did land on [REDACTED] Birthday weekend she took [REDACTED] out of school early to stop me from having [REDACTED] on his birthday. Legal letters offering compromises and pleas from local police achieved nothing except a Chief Police Sergeant being reported to his superiors for supposedly hassling her.

One Sunday afternoon, when returning my [REDACTED] after contact, I was walking out the gate and [REDACTED] produced a realistic looking replica gun, pointed at my head and pulled the trigger. There was the sound of some description. [REDACTED] said, "Watch your back, one day it could be real". [REDACTED] was on the veranda looking very distressed. I

didn't know what to do. I was in shock. I left and started the trip back to [REDACTED] trying to fathom what had actually happened. The next day I reported the incident to the police in [REDACTED].

The police interviewed [REDACTED] and confiscated the gun, which they noted was truly 'life like'. In the interview [REDACTED] claimed the whole thing was a joke and that I would have known it was a joke. [REDACTED] said she took our [REDACTED] to the toy store when she bought the gun and told him she was going to play a trick on dad (although she would have used my first name as she didn't want [REDACTED] to think of me as [REDACTED] dad). The police charged her and took her to court. I remember well - the case was heard on the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. In court she continued on with her "joke" story. At the end of the case the judge commented that [REDACTED] showed no remorse, that it was no "joke". To the surprise of the police prosecutor [REDACTED] was given a police record of 'assault with a weapon', a \$ [REDACTED] fine and costs to me of \$ [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] never paid me of course.

Despite this court case ruling and subsequent criminal record I still had many years ahead in and out of the Family Court fighting to maintain my contact with [REDACTED]. I believe if the positions were reversed, if I, as a man, had used that gun and threatened her life I would have been put on a very strict supervised contact regime, and if I was the custodial parent I probably would have lost custody.

In the early days we were both ordered to attend separate parenting courses, I attended mine, she did not. Later, when [REDACTED] was about [REDACTED], we were both ordered again to attend Parenting courses, again separately? In these sessions it became evident that there was an underlying assumption that both parents needed to wake up to themselves and learn to work together for the sake of the child and that the course would give us the tools to do this. The facilitators did not take into account the possibility that the mother could be a partner abuser and an active skilled alienator. I did my best to get across this point without pursuing the truth aggressively but they just didn't get it. I slipped back into deep depression during this period and had to seek some personal counselling - I was being abused again via the Family Court System.

[REDACTED] always had a wonderful time with me/us when we had contact weekends and I have over 4,000 photos to prove this. Every time [REDACTED] came I told him I loved [REDACTED] and although I know in my heart [REDACTED] loved me and still does [REDACTED] could never form the words

to say [REDACTED] loved me [REDACTED] could only say "a-ha". [REDACTED] could hardly ever accept hugs (when [REDACTED] was hugged [REDACTED] whole body stiffened) and couldn't give hugs to me or to close extended family members. [REDACTED] has been severely emotionally damaged by [REDACTED] mother's relentless alienation regime.

Even the principal of the local Catholic Primary School was sucked into the [REDACTED]'s alienation regime, probably out of fear of her wrath and rage, causing great emotional distress to myself, my wife and to [REDACTED], especially around contact pick-up times and parent teacher interview times. One example is when my then partner and now wife (who spent a lot of time with [REDACTED] on our contact weekends – designing and planning fun activities for him) and I were waiting for a parent teacher interview. We were next to go in when the principal got a phone call from the mother. He came and told us my partner would not be able to attend the interview. He had had a call from the mother who had insisted my partner had nothing to do with [REDACTED], was not his mother and she was to be prohibited from attending the interview. More abuse from this bully of an alienating mother that was particularly hurtful to my wife. I spent a whole week writing a letter to the local Catholic Diocese highlighting all the negative and alienating actions of the principal but they simply said they support the principal.

I could tell you a lot more incidents of her abuse against me and her alienation activities or abuse of [REDACTED] but that would take an enormous amount of your committee's time to read and I think you might have the gist of the abuse inflicted by this woman on me and [REDACTED].

Sorry, but to conclude I do wish to mention a couple other things that happened in the Family Court. On one occasion early on, after reading the mother's affidavit, a judge said something like, "I believe the mother's affidavit shows a possible case of abuse by the mother against [REDACTED]", he then ordered a Child Rep. to get involved. The momentum of the judge's instincts was lost in subsequent hearings.

I was vindicated in the last Family Court hearing when the judge ripped into the mother. Finally a judge was able to see the lies and manipulation of the mother. But it didn't stop her. The first contact after that hearing was deliberately sabotaged and denied by the mother. At [REDACTED], obviously under huge pressure from [REDACTED] mother, decided not

to visit anymore. I have had no contact for the last three years he turns [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] this year. I have kept copies of all court documents and relative material.

How can I not mention abuse by the Child Support Agency that in my experience favours the mother over the father? Where one parent can alienate a child from the other parent, cause the cessation of contact and then demand full payments from the alienated parent. I have always paid my CSA payments but feel sickened by the fact that I have to give these payments to the woman who has abused both [REDACTED] and I and continues to abuse [REDACTED]. It is my opinion that The Australian Government, through the Child Support Agency, financially rewards child abuse (Parent Alienation).

Obviously this following information is not to be publicly published.

The perpetrator of abuse against my son, [REDACTED], and myself is [REDACTED].

I respectfully thank this hearing for listening to me.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS:

I recommend that this Royal Commission acknowledge the painful and real abuse suffered by men who have been abused by their partners.

I recommend that this Royal Commission acknowledge the massive psychological and emotional damage done to children who have been alienated from one of their parents by the other parent.

I recommend that this Royal Commission do all in its power to stop parent alienation.

I recommend that this Royal Commission look seriously at the inequality suffered by men in the Family Court and Child Support Agency.

If abuse of a man by his partner is not acknowledged then how does the Family Court, the police, the public and the media truly believe that a mother is capable of abusing their children through Parent Alienation.

There is a public general assumption that the holy grail of unconditional love is the love a mother has for her child and that to believe a mother would psychologically and emotionally abuse her child for her own selfish sick reasons is just not thinkable. It is

also a public general assumption that women and only women are the victims of domestic abuse and men and only men are the perpetrators of such abuse. I would like to see, especially for the welfare and emotional health of so many children out there, that the Royal Commission debunks these myths. The terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' should not be confined to a sex stereotype. Yes, on the numbers, women are most likely to be victims and this has to be stopped with the full force of the law, but it is incredibly dangerous to have systems in place that ignores or minimises the effect of partner abuse on men and child abuse by mothers.

I recommend that this Royal Commission look at videos created by Ryan Thomas, a victim of Parent Alienation, to have a fuller understanding of the methods used to alienate a parent and the effects that has on the child and the other parent, all Family Law practitioners and students should study his videos.

<http://www.ryanthomasspeaks.com>

I recommend that this Royal Commission further develop tests to identify parents that alienate children from the other parent. I think when an alienating parent is identified they should lose custody, they should not be allowed to continue abusing their child and damaging them for life. There are good loving fathers and, most likely, mothers, who have suicided over this issue and children who are having their lives permanently and severely damaged by Parent Alienation. It is imperative that this Royal Commission and the Family Court address this issue. This organisation claims the signs can be diagnosed.

<http://www.eenymeenymineymo.org.au>

I recommend that this Royal Commission encourage education programs to be developed to combat Parent Alienation. I am an [REDACTED] with experience [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] both for boys and girls and believe in the power of education.

Thank you again for listening to me,

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]