

Royal Commission into Family Violence Submission

I'm a victim of Domestic & Family Violence & I feel that the system has let both me & my son down continually.

I first reported & acknowledged that I was a victim after my ex partner hit me & held me by the throat against a wall saying to me "I'll fucking kill you bitch!" At this point I got away & called the police. This happened when my son was only █ months old in █ of █. Prior to this happening I suffered years of emotional, verbal, psychological & sexual abuse from this person.

My son is now █ years & █ months old & I've been desperately trying to postpone the inevitable overnight stays with his father. I was in court today & even after a damning family report categorically showing his inefficiencies as a decent human being let alone a parent I was unable to withhold my son from overnight visitation. As it's "what's expected & normal"! I'm sorry but when a person is obviously abusive & shows no signs of remorse, empathy or even acknowledgement for their behaviour how does the court then still find that they are fit to "parent" a child? Though-out this process I've had to speak to lawyers, police & counsellors & the main consensus was until your son is seriously injured there's nothing you can do! But how do you prove emotional abuse especially on someone so young? He even told the family report writer that his father was naughty & that he was scary but it was still found that at █ he would commence overnight stays with his father.

I've also been told to keep diaries of everything but to date no one is "allowed" to read them connected to the case. I've also been told that "as long as the main source of support for a child is caring, loving & strong then they'll turn out fine"! Another two of my favourite quotes from the counsellors in the Family Relationship Centres are that "it teaches kids resilience" & "the world sucks"! I'm sorry but I don't want to live in a world where a █ year old needs to know what resilience is.

This commission & most of the talk is about reforming perpetrators but what about the ones like my ex who do not believe they have a problem & therefore will not reform? They still have to attend all of the "Men's Behavioural Change Programs" but it's "attendance" that's the focus not what they learnt from the course. Or what the counsellors may have gotten out of the attendees. Even the psychiatric assessment my ex did was a joke but adequate in the eyes of the court. There was no background information provided to the Psychologist it was all based on what he heard from "him" in a one off session, so again a box could be checked.

There needs to be accountability on these perpetrators of Family Violence & not just those who physically inflict injuries. To be honest, they are the easy fixes as no one can deny the damage caused. It's the verbal & emotional abusers that it's your word against theirs & how do you prove this sort of abuse when it's so insidious & covert in nature. I know I suffered for years & now what to protect my son from the same sort of torment but I'm unable to as the law doesn't recognise this as "bad" enough to warrant protection against. "After all he's his father & he only has one"! Why should this therefore give him the right to be able to damage my son which he's already started to. He's shown himself to be deficient in normal human emotion & behaviour. So surely the best interest of the child is to limit his time with him not condition him into accepting bad behaviour?

I'm truly very glad that this commission has been put in place to try & help those of us who are victims of domestic & family violence. But it needs to go further in looking at the perpetrators & especially those who are not capable of reform.

The system also needs to move faster. From the time I was hit & threatened to be killed, I've had a ■ year intervention put in place. I've spoken to that many different agencies & had to tell my story to over & over again & rehash everything to each person, from the start. It took ■ years from the point of the IVO for my ex to face charges of ■ & ■. After me telling so many people about what happened to me police, legal people & counsellors it took until late last year for the family report writer to actually hear me & have me then contacted my the Sexual Offenses & Child Abuse department of the police to contact me to ask about the situation. Prior to that I had no idea they even existed or that they were somewhere I could go. Especially when my son came home with a large bruise under his arm, saying daddy hurt me! But all could hear was everyone telling me there's nothing you can do & who's going to listen to a ■ year old. So I did nothing & then ■ months later when they did & wanted to interview my son he's wasn't able to recall the incident & there was no evidence. I'm still going to make an official report about the sexual assaults against me but not sure if I want to peruse it further as it may put me & my son in further risk of violence of worse.

Anyway I'm very passionate about this topic & want to do everything I can to protect my son from a violent abusive man. If this small thing can help me, my son or any other person who's a victim then I want to be part of it.

Thanks for your time.

Regards,

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