

Domestic violence is about control and power. Rape, is about control and power. Yet the court, particularly the court appointed psychologist, disregarded the notion that there was domestic violence and sexual assault in the marriage.

1) I was told by this psychologist that the voice of myself, my children and my extended family were not enough to prove domestic violence and that should I get up on the stand to give evidence he suggested that I take Xanax, because I was too distraught to discuss the abuse.

2) I had a statement from the perpetrators oldest son that he slept with a baseball bat in case his father arrived, but was told by the court psychologist that since the statement was almost 2 years old it had no bearing the case.

3) I was also told by the court appointed psychologist that I could have left at any time and since I stayed the abuse and sexual assaults could not have been that bad. I tried to leave a number of times, but each time I went back because of the stigma, embarrassment and numerous promises of change. The court psychologist did not want to hear this.

As a result of the psychologist report the court has essentially allowed the perpetrator to retain control and power that he had when we lived together. By order of the court, he must have my residential address, rather than simply use the fact that my son is enrolled in a metropolitan school to prove that I live in the specified region. Do I feel safe? No. Will I ever feel safe? No.

The court has also given him control over our lives by granting him shared cared. This means that he has the final say on things like which school the child can attend, whether I can send the child to a psychologists and any activities the child wishes to pursue. He is able to change the court orders when he wishes, as I must have the child available as per court orders but that does not mean that he necessarily takes the child.

The police that attended the domestic violence call out were quite frankly a disgrace. They were bored. I was told that because I could not be specific about whether I was hit, in front of my children, with a closed or open fist I could not press charges. I was also not told that once the officers left I could not pursue charges against the perpetrator. It took me a whole day talking to my lawyer and attending the police station in order to receive a safety notice.

Yes I obtained an intervention order but he broke that many times. When I went to the police they dismissed each visit because it was an acrimonious separation. There is now an undertaking in place but he breaks that.

Friends and the church community supported this man because how could a nice Christian man do any of the things that I accused him of. Eventually some of them apologized but not one of them helped me. They would not give a statement because they were afraid and thankful that this man was out of their life. What they didn't understand was that without their help he would remain in mine.

I was let down by the community, the police, the court system and continue to be let down by the very system that states that it aware of domestic violence. It has to change. If there is an allegation of domestic violence raised it must be treated seriously.