

I am currently enmeshed in a custody dispute [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Along with his affidavit, he was instructed to attach proof of his allegations. He attached no proof that I suffer from depression, which I don't. Nor did he attach any proof of my suffering from insomnia, which I certainly do as a natural stress reaction. His proof of my educational neglect was an unfinished reading, writing and arithmetic assessment conducted without my knowledge [REDACTED]

In my opinion, this test does not demonstrate proof of educational neglect for a neurotypical child, and our daughter is not a neurotypical child. In my opinion, my ex partner should not have been able to bring this to court, and that he has been allowed to is an example of legal abuse against me, and also against our daughter who is also stressed by this process. It is an example on how the legal system allows and assists one party to abuse another.

We were directed to a court appointed psychologist who proved to be incredibly biased against me. My ex partner and his wife presented as calm, rational and "amazingly" tolerant of me. I presented as absolutely terrified, which the psychologist interpreted as manipulative, psychologically unsound and proof of their allegations against me. Several of these allegations could easily have been brought up in her interview with me, but weren't. As far as I can tell from the reading of the report, it wouldn't have made any difference because she wasn't going to believe me anyway, as she didn't believe much or any of what I said on other discussed topics. As part of her information collection, the court appointed psychologist was to observe each of us with our daughter. His wife was allowed to sit in on most of the observation of our daughter and her father, which changed the typical dynamics and set the mood so even when his wife left, normal dynamics between the two would not have been observed.

From my perspective, the court appointed psychologist bought the charm and lies of a man with a personality disorder. She held my fear of being treated unfairly against me while treating me unfairly. Her report was released without enough time to seek the psychological assessment I'm obliged to undertake and can only pass if I don't display fear of that which any parent ought to be afraid of; without enough time to have that assessment done before the next court date, which will drag the process on even further. It is beyond me how a person with an A4 page length of qualifications, decades of experience and who is highly regarded in the courts could not consider that a person displaying fear may legitimately have something to fear. That a woman under stress, where she knows anything she says can be recorded and shown to her abuser, might be too afraid to speak. I was too afraid to speak, because No one ever told me that displaying fear is tantamount to an expression of guilt, though, I am not sure I could have pretended not to be terrified when faced with a person who has so much power to hurt me and my daughter. In disbelieving me, she has made recommendations for contact which will assist my ex in his ability to discredit me. I can't adequately parent our daughter while I am sick, and under the stressful circumstances of the past few years, my immune system is not what it ought to be and I am more susceptible to illness. With few exceptions, every time our daughter has spent time at her father and his girlfriend, now wife's, house she has come home sicker than when she left and I have caught it off her. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This leads me to think there has to be some element of choice. It is certainly a "good" tactic to use as it renders me incapable and can't be proven to be deliberate.

From my perspective, the court appointed psychologist assisted in his legal abuse of me. Her ordering a psych assessment of him too, as I had raised concerns, gives me no hope. It is notoriously difficult to diagnose disorders such as Narcissistic Personality Disorder. They lie.

I am in danger of losing custody of our daughter if I cannot pass a psychological assessment that demonstrates I am not substantially affected mentally and emotionally by the possibility of losing custody of my daughter to the man who perpetrated domestic abuse against me, to the man who has

abused our children, [REDACTED] the man whom I believe to have Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and his wife who, from my perspective, does not treat our daughter as a valued person either. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was afraid to try, and she has chosen not to. We will also be ordered to post separation parenting classes where I expect to earn black marks against myself for appearing unco-operative, even though it is not possible to co-parent with a person who will lie, forget or ignore as is convenient to them. Damage reduction is really the only path open to me, and my attempts at that have been held against me by the court psychologist.

Theoretically, divorced couples should not get to court. They should be mature and sort it out themselves, or if necessary, attend mediation. My ex told me he wished to attend mediation [REDACTED] [REDACTED] While mediation is supposed to be the next step when discussion between the former couple have failed, my ex refused to tell me what he wanted to go to mediation about so I had no opportunity to resolve it with him. I duly turned up to the mediation evaluation, which did not go ahead because mediators will not touch DV cases. In a way, this opens the door to those wishing to use the legal system to abuse their victims. The mediators could, perhaps, form a first line of defence but they do not. Another problem is that domestic violence against a partner forms no part of child custody cases. Or if it does, I can't see how, other than to punish the victim for being a victim.

Most forms of domestic violence are not illegal, so, as my lawyer said, there's nothing she can do about it. Like most responsible parents, I have and continue to work through abuse prevention information with our daughter. Unfortunately her father has made himself an exception to some of those rules, and I am not allowed to contradict that. Our daughter walks on eggshells around him, which is something even I did not suspect until recently. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] From what I can understand, she uses all her energy to keep him happy, so has no energy leftover. This explains quite a bit of the conflict we have about her lying and not attending properly to school work. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Due to this stress and the stress caused by the court process (these not being her only sources of stress either) she has had so much trouble attending to school work that I've had to drop subjects. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am not the cause of those problems so I haven't much power to solve them. I try to keep a good balance between not contributing to further stress on our small girl, while keeping in mind that educating her is necessary but this is difficult. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I don't appreciate the sabotage. I don't appreciate the effect it has on our daughter's education or on the relationship between the two of us. I don't appreciate being held accountable for someone else's sabotage either.

I have spoken about personality disorders being associated with family violence. The other is a lack of accountability from the wider community. No one other than myself ever told my ex he was out of line. Relatives I now barely speak to even treated him more kindly than they have me. I don't know my legal obligations about keeping quiet about his abuse, but I don't speak out anywhere I think he might get to hear of it because I'm afraid. The only way he can hurt me is through my daughter, so that's what happens. Most likely if his friends were aware, they would do nothing, but they will never do anything because they will never be aware. The police and legal system cannot help either, because most abuse is not illegal. The medical and mental health professions cannot help either, because they cannot treat people they do not see, and no one with a personality disorder thinks there is anything wrong with them. I have heard that some therapists practice "schema" therapy with people who have personality disorders. While I wish I could cut contact with my ex and for our daughter and I to be free from his abuse and in her case, grooming for future abuse at the hands of a spouse, it is not his fault he has a personality disorder. (Assuming I am correct about him having one.) People don't have them by choice. I wish my ex could try schema therapy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Not that I would believe it had worked because I have learned not to trust him after a decade of broken promises.

Legally speaking, parents have no rights, only children do. In my experience, this amounts to children

having the right to endure legal forms of abuse and their non-abusive parent has virtually no legal right to prevent it. The legal system seems to support whoever is willing to behave the worst. For all I know, there will be consequences to him for some of his actions, but if so, that will happen at the end of our legal journey and that journey has already cost my family \$██████████, with the end nowhere in sight. I am one of the lucky ones. Most of that has come out of my mother's superannuation fund. If I had to rely on Legal Aid, which I might not even get thanks to funding cuts, I would lose custody of my daughter to our abuser. I have evidence to support my claims, but I despair of getting the legal system to pay attention. No one wants to read through a decade of emails and Facebook communication to see patterns of behaviour.

██████████ someone called Child Protection Services on me. It took over a year to get the case closed. She said she realised within minutes of meeting me that her time was being wasted and I was obviously very in tune with my children. ██████████ I thought this was a compliment at the time, but the court psychologist seems to have taken that as proof of my being manipulative and controlling. CPS did nothing about the concerns I brought up with them about my ex, ██████████. The police did not see fit to follow up that idea either. It could not be prosecuted as it is only his word against mine, but it is not even on record. Or if it is, no one has provided any consequences to him and he is free to continue abusing us. It appears there is a certain standard of parenting expected, and exceeding it is just as dangerous if not more, than not meeting those standards. It could be a misplaced perception on my part, as I can't consider myself to be unbiased, but it seems like I'm being punished for being too good at my job.

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 ██████████ Enjoying our own privacy is a flaw to be punished. Dealing with my own emotional issues in my own way is something to be punished. I am expected to present as affected by trauma and to avoid presenting as a victim of trauma. ██████████

██████████ My lack of desire to hand my child over to therapists who refuse me information is considered a flaw, yet how am I to raise my daughter and help her manage her troubles if I am not allowed to have the information I need? She is not a teenager, where minding my business would be appropriate. ██████████

██████████ It is not helpful to treat me like an enemy, yet if I do not submit to it, as I have no legal obligation to do, I am considered controlling and manipulative. ██████████

██████████ I don't know what measures can be put in place to deal with this, but I sure hope these damned if you do, damned if you don't situations can be dismantled in some way.

I do not like the way homeschooling is treated with prejudice by many of the judges. Our daughter and I are lucky ours is neutral on the topic. Seeking court orders to prevent homeschooling is a not uncommon reaction from non-custodial parents who were previously supportive or neutral on the topic. In our case, the court psychologist has ordered me, if I am allowed to continue homeschooling, to provide updates each term and at the end of the school year to my ex. ██████████

██████████ He has access to more information than a school ever gives a parent, and chooses not to access it. The barrister said homeschooling is viewed negatively by most judges because it is bad for socialisation, according to psychologists. This is very outdated information, but they have no obligation to care about that. Homeschooling is legal and ought to be treated on par with public or other forms of private schooling. I also object to the apparent dynamic where my ex, as the applicant, is assumed innocent until proven guilty (if I can get anyone to read my proof) and I am assumed guilty until proven innocent and am liable for those costs. ██████████

██████████ This is a cost he should have incurred when seeking evidence to attach to his original affidavit.

There should be some way of fortifying oneself pre-emptively. I don't know how it is done. It seemed safer to wait for my ex to take me to court, but now I don't know if that is true or not. It is a lot clearer

and easier to find information if the abuse was violent. There seems to be nothing if it is not violent, because that is not illegal. And, of course, you must hand over your children each fortnight to be abused. If you don't, it looks bad in court when you finally get there. Surely his lawyer should not have allowed him to bring the issue to court with no proof, but the lawyer is obliged to do as they are directed, which only makes them another part of the way the system allows one person to legally abuse another. Maybe there needs to be a way of domestic violence being recorded officially. You can't make being loud when people are sleeping a crime, but it is still something that can be a form of abuse. Or maybe that won't work either, as people would probably just accuse each other.

I think the results of this investigation will be too late for me, but I hope they reduce the trauma other people must endure. I wish I had been able to write this more cohesively, so my apologies for that. Trauma that I must pretend I do not feel has made that difficult. I'm glad this royal commission has gone ahead, so thank you for that.