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Without Any Evidence
When the Fairytale Dream Dies



Part 2 How to Write a Statement of HATE
Without ANY Evidence
When the Fairytale Dream Dies



Part 3 How to Write a Statement of HATE
Without ANY Evidence
When the Fairytale Dream Dies



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For the 'Statement of Hate' by Abigail Groves to read along
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IN THE xxxx FAMILY COURT Case No ST123xxx

IN the Matter of Sandy Groves Dob xx/xx/xx

BETWEEN:

MATTHEW GROVES Applicant

and

ABIGAIL GROVES Respondent

**POSITION STATEMENT OF ABIGAIL GROVES
For Hearing Date xx/xx/xx**

I am the respondent Abigail Groves and reside at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Background

The applicant, Mr Groves, and I were married eight years ago, we have a daughter of the marriage Sandy who is 4 years of age. Sandy has commenced nursery at 'Better Kids Nursery'.

The applicant left the marital home 3 months ago on the xx/xx/xx as the marriage has irretrievably broken down due to the domestic abuse and coercive control suffered by myself, which has also impacted on the safety and welfare of Sandy.

On Mr Groves leaving the matrimonial home, I contacted Social Services who advised me that I had responsibility to ensure that Sandy was safe, and I therefore stopped all contact. I was then constantly pestered and harassed by the applicant into attending mediation, which I declined being a survivor of domestic abuse and coercive control.

I do not believe that contact between the applicant and Sandy would be safe, or indeed for myself to be in the presence of the applicant.

Allegations

1. Control over me and my friends

1.1 The marriage ended because of Matthew's controlling, abusive and coercive behaviour. He even made me feel as if the end of the marriage was my fault, and that I had failed as a wife, although in reality, I was coming to terms with the fact that I was a victim and survivor of abuse.

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- 1.2 Even before we married my friends warned me by asking if I was sure. They could clearly see something at that time that I could not. However, I realise now that he had already controlled me. He showered me with compliments and gave me gifts but now I understand that this was all part of his manipulation, and as we were married, that is when it started to feel like he owned me.
- 1.3 During the marriage Mr Groves controlled who I could see. He once said that he did not like my best friend Becky coming around the house because he thought that we would talk about him and that Becky was a bad influence. Becky was single and wanted me to occasionally go out with her to night clubs. Matthew was jealous and although he did not prevent me, he would set a time for me to come home by 3am, and when I got home he would be awake in bed waiting for me. I felt constantly controlled and watched.

2. Monitoring me with a camera doorbell.

- 2.1 In 2019, Matthew installed a video camera doorbell to the front door. There was no side or back gate to the house, so that the only entry and exit point was via the front door.
- 2.2 The doorbell camera was set to record on detecting any movement and was connected to his laptop and what he described as 'the cloud'. I don't really understand what this means and he never explained it to me.
- 2.3 I believed that this was his way of monitoring what I was doing during the day, when he was at work and I was at home with Sandy or on my own when Sandy was at nursery.
- 2.4 I was convinced that he would know or receive an alert when the door bell was activated and that by using his mobile phone that he could see me entering and leaving the house and could time how long I was away.
- 2.5 Occasionally when he got home, he would ask me if I had a good day and whether I had gone out. I believed that he was double checking on what I would say as he already knew the answer. This caused me extreme psychological distress and anxiety. I felt that I was in a prison being monitored by CCTV. I hated it, but was too afraid to tell him as I knew that if I did, he would just tell me that I was paranoid, stupid, and would laugh at me. I was constantly treading on eggshells in fear.
- 2.6 I started to doubt my own sanity and would blame myself for thinking that I must be foolish or even unwell, that is the coercive control that he had on me. I was totally submissive, I could not speak out in anyway, he was bigger than me physically and I found that totally intimidating.

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3. Anger and Intimidation

3.1 On one occasion, I cannot recall exactly what the argument was about or when it was, I challenged Matthew and he stood in front of me and looked at me with such anger and contempt that his face went red, I could see the veins in his neck and face bulge out, he had clenched his fists and I was in immediate fear that he was going to strike and hit me. He has never hit me before, but on this occasion, I felt in total fear of my safety.

3.2 I remember that Sandy was also in the room, and she would have sensed the fear. I believe that she started to cry, and it was only when I was able to go and comfort her that saved me from potentially a very serious incident of domestic violence. This incident terrified me, and from that point on, I learnt never to try and challenge him again. I accepted that I had to be submissive.

4. That I was called 'Petri' and a 'Covid Factory' when I had Covid.

4.1 In June 2021 I had Covid and Matthew called me insulting and disparaging names. On one occasion he called me 'Petri' which was a reference to a 'petri dish' and also called me a 'Covid Factory'.

4.2 This was very cruel and I felt unsupported, an object of humiliation whilst being very unwell, particularly with people going into hospital, being put on ventilators with the possibility of dying. It was a terrifying experience, and he showed himself for the uncaring and insensitive man that he is and has always been and how he coercively controlled me throughout the marriage with degrading comments.

4.3 He tried to make me feel guilty, as if it was my fault that I had caught covid, and that I could potentially spread it to him. I was terrified that if he caught it, then he would blame me and would try and make my life a misery. I was treading on eggshells, praying that only I would be infected so as not to cause his rage and anger to flair up. It caused an atmosphere of fear in the house that was also detrimental to the welfare of Sandy.

4.4 Even with Covid I had to look after Sandy, Matthew did nothing to help. We all had to self-isolate together and this made me realise once and for all that the marriage could not go on. He was so uncaring, unsupportive and insensitive.

5. That he once referred to an ex-girlfriend in derogatory terms

5.1 I believe that Mr Groves has a problem with women, particularly strong women. Before meeting me he had a number of previous unsuccessful relationships. He once referred to his ex, Jennifer, as a 'manipulating bitch'. They were together for 3 or 4 years and I have no doubt that she survived similar abuse to myself. I wanted to reach out to some of his ex-girlfriends but I could not locate them.

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6. That he laughed at a sexist joke and made a lewd comment humiliating me.

- 6.1 Matthew would have male friends who would feed into his ego and misogynistic views. On one occasion we went out for an Indian meal with his friend from work and his wife. During the meal, we had had 3-4 bottles of wine and Matthew's Friend started to tell an offensive joke about how many women it took to change a lightbulb or something similar, Matthew laughed out loud, and I could not believe that he would do that in front of me, putting me down as a women during a night out.
- 6.2 At one point myself and his colleague's wife went to the toilet together, we were away longer than anticipated because we were apologising to each other for our husband's behaviour. She wanted to be friends but doubted that her husband would allow it. I said that Matthew would probably not allow it either. When we got back to the table, Mr Groves was tapping on his watch saying, 'you were gone a long time'. This was typical of him monitoring me, almost to the second. He then said, 'Did you have fun?' 'Can we watch?'
- 6.3 At first, I could not understand what he was saying, his friend started to laugh and I realised that he was implying something that was totally offensive and degrading. It ruined the rest of the evening. I sat there almost in tears. He did not understand the hurt and opened up another bottle of wine when all I wanted to do was to go home. I was trapped unable to say anything. I did not want to make a scene as it was his work colleague and I also wanted to protect the wife of his colleague. If I made a fuss, then she may also get into trouble when she got home. I sensed that she was in a similar situation as myself, a victim of abuse and coercive control.
- 6.4 When we got home, Mr Groves asked if I had had a good time, I said that I was shocked about his comment. He told me to, 'get over it'. He was drunk, we all were but that was no excuse. He did say 'sorry', the next morning, but I knew that this was not real and that he was just manipulating me. This is what he does, he controls not only with aggression but also by apologising to disarm you and to then try and make you feel guilty as if it was you being overly dramatic and ruining the evening. When you are under constant coercive control, you feel as if you can't win and after a while you lose the energy to fight back.
- 6.5 I am worried that Mr Groves will express his attitudes about women to Sandy and that he will also control and manipulate her to feeling totally inferior to men. He will teach her to be fearful, to not aim to reach her full potential, to be second best and to please a man. This is not what Sandy should be exposed to and needs to be kept safe from such views until his attitude towards women changes.

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7. That Mr Groves shouted at Sandy

7.1 On one occasion Mr Groves shouted at Sandy when she had dropped her food on the floor. Sandy started to cry. She was only 3 and Matthew's initial reaction was to shout at her in anger, rather than being understanding, compassionate and nurturing. I feel that this is how he is going to parent if he was ever on his own with Sandy, and that she is too young to understand or to communicate her fears and issues.

7.2 Sandy needs to be of an age where she can understand what is happening to her and to be able to communicate her fears to me. Until then, she will be confused travelling back and forth from my loving warm home and Mr Gove's house that is full of tension and control with the risk of abuse. He simply does not have the patience to understand Sandy and her needs. Contact, if any at this time, needs to be built up slowly at Sandy's pace.

8. That Mr Groves does not fit Sandy's car seat properly

8.1 Matthew has never been in Sandy's life, he was always focussed on work rather than the family, all he wanted was promotion to a senior management position in health and safety. Because he claims to be highly trained in health and safety he intimidates and bullies me by saying that he always knows what's best for the family. However, he rarely practices what he preaches.

8.2 I am horrified and scared by the way that he fits Sandy's car seat into the car. He is totally complacent, and the seatbelt is always loose. I have to always adjust it but in doing so am treading on eggshells because he gets really irritated and irate when I do. Sometimes I have to make an excuse for checking the back seats of the car, that I left something there or that Sandy needs a toy, just so that I can make sure that the car seat is correctly positioned.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Prior to our marriage, I was a confident and outward looking person, who loved to socialise and go out, but that soon stopped as I lost my confidence and my spirit. When I went out with my girlfriends, they would ask me how I was and I would lie stating that I was fine and happy. I did not want to open up to express my own feelings and emotions because they wanted to have a good night out. My friends always looked genuinely happy in their relationships, and I knew that I was the odd one out. That is what happens when you are a victim of coercive control and abuse, you shrink into yourself and put up a false front, hiding the truth from everyone around you. When we split up and I told my friends that Matthew had coercively controlled me, they were shocked.

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- 9.2 Having now separated, my confidence and self-esteem is returning, I am however still fearful every time that I receive a text or e-mail from Matthew. Although the correspondence is not overtly threatening, as he is too clever to do that, but for everyone who truly knows Mr Groves, they will understand how they are subtly controlling and pressurising.
- 9.3 Every correspondence would trigger my anxieties and would send me into a mental spin for the rest of the day, making it difficult to focus on the needs of Sandy. It is like being repeatedly haunted and caught in a reoccurring nightmare. I sought advice about a non-molestation order, but was advised that there were insufficient threats in the e-mails to pursue one.
- 9.4 After the relationship ended, I considered it too unsafe for Sandy to be with Mr Groves, not only because he would manipulate Sandy in the same way that he has manipulated me, but I could not face seeing him because of my own trauma caused by his abuse. Just having to be in his presence after understanding everything that I have suffered feels too much to cope with. I hope that in time, he can take the necessary steps to self-reflect and attend courses so that I can have the confidence that he has changed, and for me to feel safe and secure. However, until he admits to his abusive behaviours, this is not the right time.
- 9.5 Matthew has previously questioned my mental health as being overly anxious and paranoid. However, this is just another form of him gas lighting me, making me doubt my own sanity and behaviour. It worked for a long time, I thought that I was a bad mother and bad wife, until I started to realise that I was being oppressed. I felt as if I could do no right.
- 9.6 The fact that Matthew has applied for a Child Arrangements Order seeking 50/50 shared care is again a sign of his manipulation and coercive control. He is using the family court to punish me for leaving him. However much he may state that he has the flexibility to manage a 50/50 shared care arrangement or that he can reduce his hours, the welfare of Sandy is not his motivation, or intention.
- 9.7 He has never had the interests of Sandy or the family at heart. If he wanted us to be his family, he would never have behaved in the way he did. The court process is giving him the ultimate opportunity to cause me and Sandy significant suffering. He is very intelligent and manipulative, and I am fearful that he will be able to manipulate the court into believing that he was a good husband and father and for me to once again be gaslighted, not just by him but by the court process.
- 9.8 As a mother, I need to be believed, but as things happen behind closed doors, the abuse and coercive control it is very difficult to prove. Those who coercively control are clever and don't leave evidence, they keep their victims feeling vulnerable and defenceless.

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9.9 I can't believe that I fell for his charm, but I did, and I feel very disappointed in myself. I feel guilty that I did not do better to protect Sandy.

9.10 As with all abuse that is psychological, emotional, and coercively controlling it is almost impossible to demonstrate. In many ways I would have preferred it if he had been violent towards me, at least then, any pain and trauma can be understood and explained with bruises and marks, however, psychological abuse and the subtle nature of coercive control is totally hidden.

9.11 Many people ask me why I did not walk away earlier. This demonstrates a naive understanding of a coercively controlling relationship because when you are in it, being controlled in a way that impacts on your everyday life becomes the norm. You feel so financially and emotionally controlled that you are scared to leave. I was financially controlled because he was the breadwinner, and I was scared that if I left that I would have to resort to benefits and would not be able to look after Sandy.

9.12 In his C100 application Matthew accuses me of parental alienation, which is again another tactic of someone who is coercively controlling, to constantly attack me and to try and manipulate the family court to get what he wants rather than what's in the best interests of Sandy. I am not alienating Sandy from him, I have even made it clear in my statement that I would be willing for supervised contact if safe to do so. If Matthew denies his behaviour, then I would welcome a fact-finding on my allegations and for Cafcass and the court to recommend the best way forward. Until then, I don't feel that any contact would be appropriate, as I would fear for my safety in terms of handovers and that Matthew will try and manipulate Sandy and that until issues are resolved she would be caught in his conflict.

9.13 My mother has always supported me, and since we have split up and the truth has come out, she has been there for Sandy and I. She is willing to supervise Mr Groves with Sandy under a court order and would be available for one hour every other weekend. She would allow Matthew to see Sandy at her home or in the local park which is a short walk from her house. I would not be involved in the handovers.

9.14 I totally oppose a 50/50 shared care approach.

This statement is to the best of my belief and knowledge true.