

I'm not sure what a submission entails, so I am giving my 20 years of life experiences with my ex-husband (who I will refer to as EX), which began at the age of 14.

We met at high school and started "going steady". He seemed to me to be a mature lad i.e. driving a car to school in the early 60's when some of the teachers didn't even own one! He took an interest in me, and I was really flattered. All the girls thought I was so lucky. He began to ask me to go to his place for the weekend. I lived in a home of seven children ( [REDACTED] ), an older sister and brother, and a younger brother, so we all vied for some attention. This didn't bother me too much, however the attention he paid to me was a real thrill. Our father hadn't returned from war at that long (mid 1940's) and found life a struggle - although I didn't realise that as a young girl. My mum worked so hard, never resting and dad was a work-a-holic just to get food on the table and try to do up the house we lived in. Life was hard for our family and so I was excited about being invited out for the week-end.

This soon became a regular arrangement, being picked up Friday night and brought home Sunday night.

Years later I realised this was the early stages of his control over my movements, preventing any social contact with any body else. Their house was a rented farm house, about 5 kms from a small country town, so there was no interaction with any body else (except his mother) and no access to transport.

Over the years I observed her "giving in to his every" whim, any money he wanted, anytime he wanted the car, or any other demand. (Hence driving to and from school!) She use to be polite to me, but I always, even as a young girl, felt she did this simply to please him. His father was a shearer, who I didn't see very often, but there seemed a lot of tension when he was there. However he was a heavy drinker and use to take his son to the local hotel (even though he was well under-age). I didn't realise this was a habit

because my parents never had alcohol in the house, and I had no knowledge of the effects of alcohol. I occasionally went with them when they stated "We're just going into town" completely unaware of what they meant! I use to sit and wait in the car, occasionally the father would bring me out a glass of lemonade. I would just sit and wait, thinking "They'll be here soon". I soon learnt it was not a good idea to "just go into town" because it was for a drinking session.

When I left school, I worked as a [redacted] in a news agency, but later applied and began work at "[redacted]" at Salisbury. During this time, a group of "Old Scholars" from [redacted] approached my [redacted] sister and me to ask if we would participate in a "Debs Ball". We were thrilled and excited. Due to our parents financial situation I asked the EX's mother if she would make my dress, as he had agreed to be my partner. When the night arrived, he picked me up at our house, in a foul mood. He ruined my night, spent most of the night out side, whilst everybody else was enjoying themselves, took me home, dumped me off while all the other debs and their partners had a ball. I later found out he was furious with his mother because she refused to clean his shoes!

The weekends continued, being picked up and dropped off at my front door. I became interested in a transfer to [redacted], being offered to staff, but he continued to control my movements, even though I thought he "loved" me. During this time, I was also interested in going nursing. This had been my childhood dream. At this suggestion he constantly reminded me how difficult it would be to get to and from the hospital. (Not having a family car, although there was a train service, he constantly re-inforced the difficulties getting to and from the train station to the hospital, walking alone at night). Always a negative, never any encouragement, often with comments such as "Don't blame me if anything happens to you!" He also became angry at the thought of <sup>me</sup> staying at the Nurses Quarters, where he would not have access to.

After my thoughts of going to Moosera were expressed, I became pregnant at [redacted] years of age. So we "had to get married"! On our wedding day, on leaving the church, I had difficulty struggling to get into the car with a long dress on, flowers etc. He began hitting me on the leg in front of people gathered outside the church telling me to "move over!"

This put him in a foul mood for the rest of the day. We stayed at the [redacted] Hotel, next to the [redacted] building. On our arrival he went down stairs to the [redacted] Building, bought a Sunday Mail, and read it from cover to cover. This was the first night of our marriage!

The following day we caught [redacted], where he left me in our seat, headed to the bar and drank until he could hardly stand up. On arrival at [redacted], late at night, I had to carry the luggage up a hill to [redacted] where we were booked in.

Each morning of the "Honeymoon" he left me early to spend the day with [redacted], which he had arranged previously, unbeknown to me. I learnt later, his mother paid for all the expenses. This was the beginning of the marriage for the next 17 years.

We continued to live with his mother until the baby was due. She told me she wasn't going to take responsibility for getting me to hospital, although he continued drinking heavily each night.

He started work at a local [redacted] office and soon was transferred to another small town in the country. I had accompanied him to the official opening of this office, I was eight months pregnant. He became so drunk, another couple had to drive me home.

[redacted] I was admitted to hospital for an induction. (His mother was friendly with the [redacted]), which was unsuccessful, although I was left at the hospital for 3 weeks prior to my [redacted] birth, having to endure many procedures to induce the baby. He was born one morning at [redacted], with no support from family. Later his mother told me she "thought I heard the prom ring, but paid no attention," during the night.

After our son was born, we moved to the town where he worked

4

The drinking continued, I had no money, no phone, no transport, no friends, often no food. I would occasionally go to a service station and buy bread and milk and "book it down." I was soon refused further purchases because he would not pay the account.

Even though 6 o'clock closing at hotels was the law, he would buy 2 bottles of beer and "spend time with his mates at their place" until all the alcohol was consumed. This pattern of drinking continued.

He lost this job, between moving house, back to his mother's, he gained employment with [REDACTED] another shift to a country town.

He lost this job also, having used an expense account allocated to him, but which was used for alcohol, and work commitments not honoured, disputes with customers and many other problems. The State Manager told me one day "I've made plenty of mistakes in my life, but he (EX) would be the biggest"! At the termination of this job, life deteriorated even more, although at one point, he promised to "pull his weight" because we were expecting our second baby. This promise of course only lasted for several months.

We continued moving houses due to constant non payment of rent, often going back to live with his mother, sometimes sleeping on the floor.

At the time of my [REDACTED] birth, we were living in a small rented house, he had a job as a [REDACTED] salesman. I was later informed by his work mates, that he had organised for them to take me to hospital, because "he didn't want to". However the night I went into labor, it was 10 pm, so instead he instructed me to iron 5 shirts, & he had enough for the week (I had done the washing that day), after my water broke and was dribbling down my leg. I also had to cook him a [REDACTED] so he had "something to eat".

He once again promised "to give up the drink" after our daughter's birth, again only lasting a short time. On one occasion, whilst having a drinking session "down the river" with a group of people, there was a discussion about buying fish and chips for tea. Because I agreed

He got into the car, slammed the door while I collected all the chairs, esky, rugs etc. I put the bassinet in the back seat, with our son, and sat in the front nursing our new baby. On our arrival home - without a word - he grabbed the bassinet, walked into the house and flung it from the doorway of the lounge room to the back of the room. His anger was so intense, I don't think he even realised I was actually holding the baby, and she wasn't in the bassinet! Needless to say this behaviour was fairly typical, however it stepped up another level. Once again, no words were spoken.

On a later occasion, after rumours circulated about an affair between a single man and a married woman, he told me if he ever caught me in bed with another man, he would kill me, the man and then himself so he wouldn't have to take any punishment or blame!

He was so drunk on several occasions during the night he opened [redacted] inside the wardrobe. Once again not a word was spoken.

Fortunately for me, when our youngest was about 4 years old, I was offered a temporary job supervising at a [redacted] shop. The manager and his wife also had a 4 year old, so it was organised for them to play together and supervised by his wife. I enjoyed this work, and after 6 months, I was approached to manage a [redacted] for the [redacted] needing accommodation while working at the Workshop. The decision was very easy for me, as it meant a live-in job (a secure home), including all expenses. As I was paid a salary, this seemed unbelievable! (I remember thinking "There is a God. His role, as explained to him, was simply to support me, and occasionally cut the lawns. He agreed, but as could be expected, the first night of this new venture, with 8 residents and 2 children to settle in, he spent the evening at the hotel. This was to be the beginning of the end. He soon got himself a job on a rural property at [redacted]. He came and went as he pleased, with no communication or support.

6

A few years earlier when our daughter was about 2 years old (she loved having a bath), we had bought a contract with [REDACTED] which supplied [REDACTED] food, included in the deal was a freezer, from which payments for the freezer were deducted from a monthly account for the ordered food.

He met and befriended the delivery man who was a young lad. During this time they became very friendly and began conversing on friendly terms each time he delivered the order. He admitted, whilst talking to EX that he used to remove packs of frozen food from orders whilst filling freezers for customers, which nobody noticed because the freezer would be so full. So eventually EX was in trouble for not paying the [REDACTED] and the company threatened to re-possess the freezer. They came one day to collect the freezer when I was home alone, but I didn't answer the door. Another day a trailer was parked out the front of our house. (It was a Thursday which was Market Day, so he would get home very late after another drinking bout) When I saw the trailer (which was clearly visible through our front windows), I panicked, thinking the freezer was being re-possessed. Our son was at school, and our daughter was home with me. Because visibility was clear into our front rooms, I ran the bath and crawled on my hands and knees to and from the bathroom and played with her all day. I crawled around the kitchen to prepare food and bottles all morning and afternoon until her afternoon sleep. About [REDACTED] some people came to pick up the trailer. It was his cousin and his wife, who, unbeknown to me, were attending the [REDACTED] market and came to collect their trailer! This was very typical of the intimidation and fear I lived with on a daily basis. P.S. The delivery lad who the EX befriended was sacked, because EX rang the company and made a complaint against him, accusing him of stealing the food orders.

We constantly had bailiffs at our door with summonses for unpaid debts. Always shifting from one house to another because of rent arrears. If we went to the Supermarket, he paid at the check-out and kept all the change, preventing me from access to any money.

2

A few months after settling into my position as manager of the [redacted] my boss [redacted] discussed my salary with me. It had been paid into a joint Bank account, which of course meant my access to it was undeniable. I agreed to have it paid into an account in my name, but having an amount nominated by me, sent each fortnight for my & my children's needs. Over the ensuing years my account accumulated to secure my and the children's future.

After we separated (another stressful saga, leading to police using a court order to evict him, until the last day, when he finally collected his possessions). The local Post Office handed him my personal mail one day, which was a bank statement. He used this in the Family Court claimed half of it & was awarded that amount! I had kept out the children, while he paid nothing for their upkeep, he paid nothing for power, food, rent, phone or any other expenses for seven years, due to my salaried agreement, and then took half of my earnings.

In the early stages of my employment I needed a car. He had told his mother (who wanted to sell her car) it was worth [redacted] (This was in the mid 70's) It was a lot of money. I offered to buy it, which I did, [redacted] Unbeknown to me, she took the money, and secretly gave it straight back to him.

The marriage lasted 17 years, and from the time our daughter was 10 years old, he suddenly decided he wanted weekends access. He had no money, so I assumed he would be unable to push the issue, as I was so concerned for her safety, due to his drinking, driving and ability to care for her. However his mother (who had recently re-married a wealthy [redacted]) suddenly was paying for all his court and legal expenses. Although I had concerns regarding arrangements (He was at the time sharing a [redacted] with another alcoholic), he and his mother went through the family court, constantly adjourning procedures etc, costing me more and more money on legal fees. He refused to communicate regarding any agreements, paid no maintenance, constantly re-organised access weekends each time I had a weekend off, to make my life as difficult as possible and using

our [redacted] year old daughter to manipulate me and the system.

He organised his former boss, also a heavy drinker, to swear on oath and say that I used to go to the office at the [redacted] where they worked as salesman, and collect his pay every fortnight! He continued to lie throughout the family court system, sometimes sobbing in court! Our son was [redacted] years old at this time, so he was free to make his own choices.

I have lived with death threats, hit men threats, financial abuse, manipulation, fear, stalking and abuse of all kind

He never physically hit me because he knew if I appeared with bruising, there would be questions he would be confronted with. Towards the end of the marriage, I suffered from anorexia.

This is a snap shot of a portion of daily living within this "marriage". I later married a man who has and is the love of my life. We have been happily married over 40 years. Early in our relationship, EX threatened his life. I had a conversation at that point, stating I would understand if he wanted to leave the relationship because I knew he would never leave us alone. As expected this has been the case. During the entire time EX has continued to cause family manipulation through in-laws + associations through family circles.

I always felt lost and not believed because EX always put on a friendly demeanour. Only recently have I been able to label this behaviour - Co-ersive abuse.

PLEASE STOP THIS SILENT, CRUEL, UNACCEPTABLE, LIFE DESTROYING  
CO-ERSIVE ABUSE.

