

May 7, 2003.

Silvana [REDACTED]
357 [REDACTED] Road
Toronto, Ontario [REDACTED]

Jewish Family and Child Services
4600 Bathurst St.
Toronto, Ontario M2R 3V3

Attn: Mr. Gordon Wolfe, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Wolfe

Re: H [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] (child) J [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] (father) and F [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] (mother)

I am writing to express my shock and dismay about what appears to be the unfair treatment of H [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] and his father, J [REDACTED] K [REDACTED], both of whom are neighbours of mine. Up to now, I have withheld sending this letter because Mr. K [REDACTED]'s lawyer was concerned about how my letter might affect Mr. K [REDACTED]'s legal position. He felt that my testimony might be more helpful in court on the stand. In light of what I know about this family's history and after seeing a copy of a recent proposal by your organization to Mr. K [REDACTED] concerning access to his son, I cannot hold back my concern any longer. If this young boy is exposed to further abuse, I want it to be on the record that I have advised your agency of what I know. Although I have been a witness to abuse in the home, no one from your agency had contacted me to date regarding Howard and his father. I still would be more than pleased to have your workers speak to me so that I can tell them what I know.

I have been told that Mr. K [REDACTED]'s son, who is currently under the care of your agency, has been allowed to be in the unsupervised care of his mother while at the same time being denied the equal opportunity to be with his loving father. In light of the physical and verbal abuse that I have witnessed perpetrated in the family home by the boy's mother, Ms. K [REDACTED], I find it very objectionable in what would appear to be the one sided manner in which your agency has dealt with the situation involving this young boy and his parents. It would seem as if the abuser, Ms. K [REDACTED], gets all the rights and gets rewarded through your agency for abusing the members of her family.

As a person with intimate and first hand knowledge of the activities in the K [REDACTED] family home and the parenting styles of the two parents, it deeply upsets me that that no one from Jewish Family and Child Services has ever spoken to me about the events that I have witnessed in the family home. I understand that H [REDACTED] has a child's lawyer from the Province of Ontario, but again, no one from that office has spoken to me. Seeing as no one has come to question me about events in the family home, I feel that this letter may be the only way to get my information to those who are involved with H [REDACTED] and his parents.

As a friend and neighbour of the K [REDACTED] family, I have known J [REDACTED] K [REDACTED], F [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] and H [REDACTED] K [REDACTED] for almost three years. I am a mother of two adult children ages 26 and 23 years of age. I have resided in the lower apartment of the K [REDACTED] residence and have been living there for the

past three years. My apartment in the K█ residence is a self contained apartment, located in the basement directly under the K█ family residence.

Since becoming a tenant in the basement of the K█ home, I have been in the K█ Home many times to socialize as a visitor and friend. I have come to know both Mr. and Ms. K█ and their son H█ very well. I have been in their home many times to help at times of conflict in the home and both parents have consulted with me during their difficulties in the home. Ms. K█ has even stayed with me in my apartment on a temporary basis when she has experienced difficulties with her anger.

Because of the wood frame residential construction of the family home and because noise from the main floor easily transmits into my apartment below, I am able to easily hear any kind of disturbance from the K█ home directly above.

Ms. K█'s anger problem

Not long after I first moved into the basement apartment of the K█ home, it became apparent that there was a problem with Ms. K█'s anger. Often, I would be disturbed to hear Ms. K█ yelling and screaming upstairs at H█ and his father. Her voice was very loud and carried down to my apartment and even outside of the house. These fits of anger erupted on a fairly regular basis after the time I moved into the home and up until the time that Ms. K█ vacated the family home last year.

During the many times I heard Ms. K█ become verbally abusive to H█ and Mr. K█, I have never heard Mr. K█ yell back at Ms. K█. In all the time I have lived in the family home, I never witnessed or heard of anything that would lead me to believe that Mr. K█ responded in any abusive manner during Ms. K█'s fits of rage.

There were also times when I would hear Ms. K█ yell and scream at her son, H█. Sometimes, during times when she was screaming at H█, I would hear H█ crying back, "No mommy, No Mommy". It was clear that H█ was in distress by his mother's intense anger and aggression. On occasions, I heard Ms. K█ yell at H█ and demand he to do things she wanted.

Sometimes, as a result of Ms. K█'s yelling, things would be so noisy that I would go upstairs to see what I could do to help calm the situation. When I went upstairs, I often found Ms. K█ in an angry and upset state. During these times when Ms. K█ was angry, I always found Mr. K█ to be in control of himself. Most times I found Mr. K█ trying to reason with his wife.

At times, Ms. K█ would carry her anger outside of the house. She would "freak out" and be totally out of control. Sometimes she would be in the driveway yelling and screaming. Her fits of yelling and screaming were known by the neighbours and Ms. K█'s outbreaks caused neighbours to be concerned about the family. When Ms. K█ got angry, the neighbourhood knew. I believe some may have been afraid of her. Her fits of anger were frightening.

Ms. K█'s yelling and screaming in the family home was so loud and disruptive in my basement apartment that on several occasions I even considered leaving to find other accommodation. I thought that things would get better with Ms. K█, but they never did until she left to live elsewhere.

At one time, police brought Ms. K[REDACTED] to stay in my apartment after an incident in which it was alleged that she had become physically abusive with Mr. K[REDACTED]. The police wanted to take Ms. K[REDACTED] from the family home and felt my apartment would be a suitable retreat on an emergency basis. The police told H[REDACTED] that he had to stay with his mother. During the time that Ms. K[REDACTED] stayed in my apartment with her son, she continued to denigrate her husband constantly in the presence of myself and her son. Her anger at her husband was very apparent. H[REDACTED] kept wanting to back to his home and to see her father, but could not because police told him to stay with his mother.

During the time when Ms. K[REDACTED] stayed with me in my apartment, we tried to see if she could move to be with her brother or her sister who lived further away. Unfortunately, none of her family members were willing to help her and none were not willing to put her up in their homes.

After another incident when Ms. K[REDACTED] was charged and jailed for assaulting Mr. K[REDACTED], she attempted to call me to ask me to bail her out of jail. I was away at the time and was not able to help. Again, I found it unusual that she would call me first, a non family member, rather than ask her family to bail her out of jail.

During another one of Ms. K[REDACTED]'s violent incidents, I went upstairs to see what I could do to help. During that incident, Ms. K[REDACTED] stormed past Mr. K[REDACTED] in the kitchen and without any provocation, physically and aggressively pushed Mr. K[REDACTED] out of her way. It was clear to see that she was angry and was bullying her way past Mr. K[REDACTED] as she walked towards the door to leave the house.

H[REDACTED]'s relationship with his parents

During the entire time that I have lived in the family home, I have had many opportunities to observe, first hand, Mr. and Ms. K[REDACTED] with their son H[REDACTED]. During the time that Mr. and Mr. K[REDACTED] lived together, it was always evident that the parental bond between H[REDACTED] and his father was always stronger than with his mother. The mother's constant and abusive yelling at both father and son in the family home certainly did not help in her relationship with her son. From what I witnessed it is clear why H[REDACTED]'s relationship with his mother is not a good one.

I have always observed good communication between H[REDACTED] and his father. They chat a lot when they are in the home. Mr. K[REDACTED] gives H[REDACTED] piano lessons and sometimes I see H[REDACTED] showing his father how the computer works. Often they watch TV together. Their interaction around the house seemed normal and healthy.

I have never witnessed or heard Mr. K[REDACTED] lose his temper at H[REDACTED] or get physically or emotionally abusive with H[REDACTED] in any way, whereas I have often heard Ms. K[REDACTED] get angry and become emotionally abusive with both H[REDACTED] and his father. Many times I observed Mr. K[REDACTED] taking an active role in his son's life. I observed Mr. K[REDACTED] take H[REDACTED] to the park, play games with him and help teach H[REDACTED] how to play the piano. In comparison, I did not observe Ms. K[REDACTED] participate in her son's activities to the extent as I saw Mr. K[REDACTED].

I have noted that Mr. K[REDACTED] always appeared to be very conscience of H[REDACTED]'s diet. Mr. K[REDACTED] ensured that H[REDACTED] ate balanced and nutritious meals. Even after Ms. K[REDACTED] left the home, Mr.

K[REDACTED] emphasized a balanced diet and made sure that H[REDACTED] ate fresh fruit and vegetables. Ms. K[REDACTED] did not seem as interested in housework, cooking and nutrition as was Mr. K[REDACTED].

It was Mr. K[REDACTED] who I saw the most, getting H[REDACTED] off to school in the morning, preparing lunches and picking H[REDACTED] up after school. Overall, while Mr. and Ms. K[REDACTED] were together and after they were apart, it was Mr. K[REDACTED] who was seen to be doing the greater share of caring for H[REDACTED]. After Ms. K[REDACTED] moved out, I noticed that H[REDACTED] was better dressed than when Ms. K[REDACTED] lived at the home. H[REDACTED] was always clean and well dressed by his father.

Home environment

During the time when Ms. K[REDACTED] lived in the family home, I noted that some of her housekeeping habits left something to be desired. One thing she did that I noticed is that she would put clean clothes in garbage bags after they were washed. One room in the house that Ms. K[REDACTED] kept her possessions was very untidy. I noticed that Ms. K[REDACTED] often wore the same clothes day after day.

During the times that Mr. and Ms. K[REDACTED] were living together, she did not take a lot of interest in cooking and other household chores. It was Mr. K[REDACTED] who seemed to take more of an interest in the chores around the home. After Ms. K[REDACTED] left the home, Mr. K[REDACTED] continued to cook meals and care for H[REDACTED]. After Ms. K[REDACTED] left the family home, I have noticed that there has been a noticeable improvement in the cleanliness in the home. Mr. K[REDACTED] maintains a clean home environment, cleaner and more organized than when Ms. K[REDACTED] lived in the home.

After Ms. K[REDACTED] left the home and left H[REDACTED] with his father there was an immediate change in the atmosphere. No longer was there any yelling and screaming. Since Ms. K[REDACTED] left the home there has been peace and quiet in the home. I never heard any problems between H[REDACTED] and his dad. I have always seen H[REDACTED] and his father happy.

Based on my observations, Mr. K[REDACTED] is a very peaceful non-violent man. Both he and his son have been victims of Ms. K[REDACTED]'s anger and frustration. Mr. K[REDACTED]'s relationship with his son appears to be a very close and loving one. There is no doubt in my mind that H[REDACTED] is safe in the care of his father.

In light of what I know about this family and have witnessed first hand, I am totally shocked to hear that your agency has promoted the boy's access to his mother, who is the abusive parent, and then not encouraged any access to the father, who I can say, has never abused the child as has the boy's mother. The response by your agency to support the mother's relationship with the child but not the father's relationship, in my mind, demonstrates a bias in favour of the mother. It is not fair to H[REDACTED] that he be forced to go with an abusive parent while being denied contact with a loving parent. If anything, H[REDACTED]'s relationship with both of his parents should have been given a chance.

I would be pleased to speak to anyone from your agency should you wish to personally interview me as to what I have witnessed in the K[REDACTED] home. I would also be willing to provide testimony in court if required.

Based on my first hand experience of events in the K████ home, Ms. K████ regularly exhibited aggression and anger towards her husband and son and had a very violent temper. Based on this, there can be no doubt as to why Ms. K████ may be experiencing difficulty in her relationship with her son. In light of Ms. K████ being the abusive parent, manipulating the situation to prevent H████ from having some meaningful parenting time with his father will only increase the boy's anger and frustration at his mother as well as turn him against workers at your agency.

This boy must be absolutely frightened, confused and angry being forced by your agency into the care of the parent who has abused him in the past while being denied the opportunity to be with the parent who has only tried to protect him in the past. This in itself, is child abuse!

I would strongly urge your agency to ensure that H████ is given the opportunity to have meaningful access to both of his parents, not just one. Why can't your agency resume H████'s contact with both of his parents, set down some rules for them to follow, and then to monitor this situation as was proposed through his lawyer? Why not give H████ the fair opportunity to be with both parents and to give both parents at least the opportunity to meet the criteria of your agency? This can't be done when your agency only allows the abusive parent to have time with the child. I believe that your agency's current one sided approach, which seems blatantly in favour of the mother, will only lead to possible disaster and possible further abuse and harm to this young boy.

Young H████ must be utterly frightened and confused by a child welfare protection system which denies him the right to be with the non abusive parent and then forces him back into the clutches of the abusive parent. What kind of example is your agency setting for this young boy? Certainly this sort of treatment is not Justice or about the best interest of the child!

If further harm comes to this boy at the hands of this boy's mother as a result of the actions of your agency, your agency will be clearly to blame for this. I suspect that much emotional harm has already been done to this child as a result of your agency denying this boy his right to spend any meaningful time with his loving father. This is so wrong and so unfair!

I would hope that your agency will take the necessary steps to correct this injustice and show this young boy that your agency is willing to respect his wishes and that his access to his loving father should not be cut off while letting the abusive parent have access to him. Allow this young boy to start spending some time with his dad.

Your response in writing to my concerns would be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly

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Silvana ██████████