

Statement on Experience of Financial Control in Marriage

I met my then husband at the age of 22 and married him, embarking on what I believed would be a journey of love and partnership. However, over the course of our 19-year marriage, I found myself ensnared in a web of financial control and manipulation.

From the outset, my husband assumed complete control over our finances, citing his supposed strength in managing money. Despite entering the relationship with credit card debt, his continual references to this financial burden served to undermine my autonomy and reinforce his dominance over our financial affairs.

As our family grew and I transitioned into the role of a stay-at-home parent, the extent of his control became more apparent. He insisted on managing all financial accounts, relegating me to a position of financial dependency. Any attempts to assert my independence or request access to funds were met with resistance and justification for his unilateral control.

Moving overseas for his work only exacerbated the situation, as he further isolated me from our financial resources, designating himself as the sole decision-maker and gatekeeper of our finances. During visits back to Australia, I found myself reduced to pleading for funds, subjected to his scrutiny and begrudging allowances.

Following the breakdown of our marriage, his manipulation extended to financial support, with promises of assistance abruptly rescinded without discussion or warning. Left to navigate the challenges of single parenthood without adequate financial support, I found myself reliant on family assistance and government benefits to make ends meet.

His financial abuse extended beyond mere control, as he covertly accumulated debt and misrepresented his income to avoid his obligations. Despite his substantial earnings, he falsely declared minimal income, leaving me to shoulder the financial burden of paying him child support while pursuing my education and rebuilding my life.

Even post-separation, his tactics of financial abuse persist, as he withholds vital information and fails to fulfill his legal obligations, prolonging the financial uncertainty and hardship I face.

In recounting my experience, I aim to shed light on the insidious nature of financial abuse within intimate partner relationships and advocate for greater awareness, support, and regulatory measures to protect survivors and prevent such exploitation in the future.