

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No. 90

Date Received: 1-8-03

Secretary

28-7-2003

Committee secretary
Standing committee on family and community affairs
Child custody arrangements inquiry
Dept. of the house of representatives
Parliament house
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia



Dear sir,

I wish to make the following submission-----

Without any notice to my self my former wife left the family home and took our two and a half year old son with her in September of 2001. There was no violence orders or such like in place and have been none since the separation . My former wife just decided to up and leave and seek greener pastures. Without wishing to apportion blame, it is noted that my former wife came from a dysfunctional family and in hindsight I am now understanding of her action though not approving of it. My former wife once leaving the family home denied my right to see my son by suggesting I would kidnap him and not return him to her at nthe end of the contact period. I was forced to take court action which ultimately cost me \$45,000.00 in legal fees just to get to see my son on a regular basis. My wife told a whole pack of lies and the judge subsequently gave me week end visits once a fortnight once he commences school. I was awarded weekly contact up until this time , however this will soon cut out when he starts school. I was devastated . I was regularly having interaction with my son prior to separation including having two days off work midweek to look after him etc.

At the court hearing my former wife declared she did not believe it was in my sons interest to see his father more than one night at a time and this was contained in her affidavit. The judge ruled in her favour. <as they always do>.

Subsequent to the court decision and less than 6 months after the court decision my former wife has approached me on numerous accessions offering me additional nights. This is invariably because she now has the boyfriend staying over and she would prefer not to have my son around at the time. The most recent case was where she offered me 8 nights. I of course took this offer up, however I do find it quite galling that-----

1---my former wife makes submissions to a court declaring I should have only one night at a time

2---less than 6 months on when it suits her she uses me as a child minding service.

3---I am denied additional access when I request it.

4--- my son and I have a continuing loving relationship and he looks forward to seeing his dad on each occasion.

Immediately after separation I asked my former wife to consider a parenting plan that would involve shared access arrangements. She failed to turn up at the planned Relationships Australia meeting.

I have personally suffered financially and health wise as a result of the divorce. I had to sell my business to payout my former wife who now sits at home living off the proceeds and spends her time collecting Govt. benefits whilst either living at the boyfriends house or vice versa.

I strongly support 50/50 shared access arrangements where the father agrees to---

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- 1—the child continuing at the same school.
- 2—the child accessing the same family doctor.
- 3—there are no domestic violence matters between the parties.
- 4—there are no violence or abuse orders between parent and child.

As the matter now stands , I am unable to enjoy with my son all the things that a father would normally do with his son during the week including visiting his friends with him for after school birthday parties, after school swim lessons, contact with teachers, sports afternoons etc.

This situation is grossly unfair and one which I trust the government will change to give dads their right to be involved with their kids on at least 50% of the time each week. At the moment we are "THEME PARK " dads where our activities are restricted to quite often limited week end activities.

The matter of child maintenance is also farcical and needs to be reviewed as well. My former wife has quit her job and now receives payments from the government, from me as my sons father, and lives most nights with her boyfriend.

I request that the finding of the report be posted to me once they have been finalised.

Yours sincerely,

