

ONTARIO COURT (GENERAL DIVISION)

BETWEEN:

CATHERINE L.E. ROSS

Petitioner
(Wife)

- and -

WILLIAM THOMAS ROSS

Respondent
(Husband)

AFFIDAVIT

I, LISA KENNEDY, of the City of Ottawa, in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and Province of Ontario, MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I am a long time friend of the Petitioner, Catherine Ross. I have prepared a detailed letter with respect to Catherine's current situation and her ability to care for her children, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit "A" hereto. The information contained therein is true and accurate, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

SWORN BEFORE ME at the City of Ottawa)
in the Regional Municipality of)
Ottawa-Carleton on the 21st day of)
November, 1994.)

Lisa Kennedy
LISA KENNEDY


_____)

A Commissioner for taking
affidavits, etc.

Lisa Kennedy
151 Glenora St.
Ottawa, Ontario
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21.11.94

Katrina Prystupa
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To whom it may concern:

I first met Catherine Day-Ross 9 years ago. Although I had little contact with her for most of that time, during the past 4-5 months I have seen her frequently at least once or twice a week. I have had several lengthy telephone conversations with her in addition to this.

I am currently employed by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton in the Social Services Dept. I have an undergraduate degree in Psychology & an M.Ed. in Counselling. Prior to commencing employment with the R.M.O.C. in March 1994 I was in private practise for 2 years as a counsellor specializing in the treatment of female survivors of childhood trauma and other forms of abuse.

When I encountered Catherine again after not seeing her for a number of years I was appalled at the condition she was in. Catherine had lost at least 30 pounds in weight, seemed to be on the verge of tears frequently and at times her whole body was trembling. I expressed my concern regarding her physical and emotional condition and Catherine confided in me about the stress she is currently under and the enormous difficulties she had to deal with during her marriage.

First of all, Catherine expressed concern about the harsh form of discipline Bill Ross forced the children to endure. Examples of this discipline include punishing his six year old daughter, Kirsten, by dressing her in a diaper and photographing her & threatening to show this picture to all her friends. This punishment was undertaken because the little girl wet her pants, an accident which is not uncommon for children of this age. This severe and humiliating punishment could have a profoundly negative impact on a sensitive little girl. Catherine was not able to intervene in this situation and could only try to reduce its impact by offering comfort and support to the frightened child. Another harsh form of punishment the girls were forced to endure was immersion in ice cold water. For the relatively minor offense of

Spilling water on the bathroom floor while taking a bath. Bill Ross did not permit Catherine to perform the night time bathing and bedtime rituals in their home because he expected her to be performing other domestic chores which he felt were solely her responsibility. Catherine declared that she was afraid that contravening his rules regarding household management would result in further harsh punishment of the children.

Since their separation, Bill Ross has harassed Catherine constantly. Some examples of the harassment which Catherine confided to me include: threatening to rape her on more than one occasion; threatening to destroy her both physically & emotionally to the point that she would no longer be able to function; threatening to leave her penniless and removing private papers & possessions from the house. In addition to this, Bill Ross also removed essential household items such as beds etc and withheld child support which he was required to pay. Catherine was forced to sleep on the floor for a period of time and had to rely on the kindness & generosity of friends and family to supplement her meagre income once the child support money had been withheld. Catherine was forced to get rid of the family pets because during the

time Bill Ross was in the house with the children he allowed the dogs to urinate & defecate all over the house and expected his 8 year old daughter to take full responsibility for feeding the animals. Catherine had to give away these beloved puppies because she felt that the presence of urine & feces all over the house was hazardous to the children's health.

Catherine Day-Ross further disclosed to me that during her marriage to Bill he demonstrated a complete disregard for her sexual wishes, sometimes forcing her to engage in sexual acts she felt were abhorrent to her. He also threatened to abandon her from the time the children were babies. Catherine also declared that during their marriage Bill Ross would frequently make sexual advances to her in front of the children. Catherine felt that this behaviour was inappropriate, but once again her fear of Bill rendered her powerless to prevent it.

During the last few months I have had ample opportunity to observe Catherine with her children and with my own children age 6 and 9. Although the level of stress and anxiety Catherine has been forced to endure

is impacted on her relationship with her children the form of impatience, and a slight lack of discipline, I feel that on the whole Catherine is nurturing, caring parent. I believe that the children are more inclined to act out with Catherine because they feel safe with her and are not afraid of her. Conversely they may be more obedient with Bill Ross because they have reason to fear harsh punishment which may follow even minor offences. I have observed Catherine's relationship with her children and believe that she genuinely cares for them. She also has a good relationship with my 2 children. She is creative and imaginative and engages in appropriate games & play with them. I felt completely comfortable when she offered to babysit for me and I entrusted my children to her care. I was impressed that after watching a video with my children she had taken the time to discuss it with them and had patiently listened to their opinions & ideas thereby demonstrating respect and interest in them.

I asked Catherine how she had been able to cope with this high level of stress. She declared that she had consulted a physician, who had prescribed tranquilizers for her. Catherine confided that during a period of severe stress and anxiety she had exceeded the recommended

usage but had become frightened of possible addiction and with the help of her physician she had cut back to the recommended dosage and has not exceeded it since. Catherine also disclosed that during her marriage she had dealt with her fear and stress by abusing alcohol. During this time she was socially isolated and very frightened. She was unable to think clearly and did not perceive the potential for alcohol addiction. Bill Ross constantly berated her because she was financially dependent upon him, and her low self-esteem coupled with constant criticism left her feeling powerless. Catherine declared that since the separation she has begun to find other resources in the community and she has built a social support system. This has helped her to find the strength to stop abusing alcohol.

In summary I believe that if the constant harassment by Bill Ross was removed from Catherine's life, she would experience a tremendous reduction in stress. This would allow her natural reactivity and nurturing qualities to emerge and would positively influence her parenting skills. In addition I believe that Catherine would benefit by attending a support group for women who have been abused on an emotional and psychological level. She would also benefit from

the Adlerian Institute. In addition I believe that the children require further assessment to determine the impact the harsh discipline techniques practised by Bill Ross have had upon them. If Bill Ross will be spending significant periods of time with his children, I believe that a Social Service agency such as the Children's Aid Society should monitor this contact because I feel that the potential for further emotional, physical and psychological abuse by him is extremely high if his past behaviour is taken into consideration. Furthermore his tendency towards social isolation creates a climate in which abuse is more likely to occur.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you require additional information, please feel free to call me at 736-5769 (work) or 567-2642 (home)

Sincerely

Lisa Kennedy (M.Ed)

LISA KENNEDY
Commissioner, etc. for
the purposes of the General
Welfare Assistance Act

A facsimile of this document is to be considered a legal copy of the original.

CATHERINE L. E. ROSS
Petitioner

- and -

WILLIAM THOMAS ROSS
Respondent

ONTARIO COURT (GENERAL DIVISION)

Proceeding commenced at Ottawa

AFFIDAVIT OF LISA KENNEDY

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