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## Heroic Israeli Dad: Family Courts 'Massacre love and relationships that can never be replaced'

May 9th, 2011 by Robert Franklin, Esq.

[Here's](#) Joel Leydon on fathers in Israeli family courts (*Israel News Agency*, 4/16/11). He's a professional reporter in Tel Aviv and, to say the least, he brings remarkable perspective to fathers' rights - or the lack thereof - in Israeli family courts. Put simply, it's a war and fathers are losing.

Amazingly, Leydon's set-up is a terrorist attack on a Tel Aviv hotel in 2002. Leydon was having dinner with friends three blocks away when an explosion rocked everything around them. He grabbed his reporter's notebook and headed in the direction of the explosion as the sound of sirens filled the air.

When he arrived on the scene, the police and firefighters had already removed the living from the destruction and only the dead remained. Twenty people died there that day and 180 were injured.

By any measure it was a horrifying scene. It is Joel Leydon's illustration of what's done to fathers in Israeli family courts.

Many years later, a massacre of another sort is taking place in Israel. A massacre of loving, caring relationships between fathers and their children. For in the democratic State of Israel, thousands of good dads have had their parenting rights stolen from them. All it takes is an angry, psychotic spouse to make an unsubstantiated claim of child abuse.

If Leydon has a rosy view of family courts in the U.S. and England, it may be because things are worse in Israel.

If a claim of child abuse was made in London or New York, social works and forensic psychologists would be dispatched in hours to protect the child. To ascertain what had happened and if the charges were false to protect the father from a ruined relationship with his children, to protect his reputation.

Would that it were so. But in Israel Leydon tells us that family courts have no money to investigate claims of abuse, so they're pitched to the child welfare agency that's similarly short of funds.

While this paper file bounces between family court in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa or Kfar Sava and child welfare in Holon, Ra'anana, Beer Sheva or Hadera the father is told that the only way that he can now see his children is in supervised visitation centers (merkaz kesher). Many fathers will not bow to this humiliation order by a callous family court and opt to simply walk away. Leaving thousands of children without fathers in Israel.

I hate to tell Leydon, but change a few names and that's an altogether familiar story. False charges of abuse are used here as there to create "facts on the ground." Those include fathers prevented from seeing their children during the pendency of the divorce which inevitably results in the mother's getting primary custody afterwards.

Leydon's story of David Marcus is familiar to all who follow fathers' adventures in family courts, again with the names changed.

One father in Israel, David Marcus, an immigrant from Chicago living in Haifa, tells his story. This reserve officer in the IDF who saved 53 children in Haiti and advises the Israel government on public affairs has been treated no less than a criminal.

It all began because Marcus's son told him his mother was hitting him. Marcus reported his ex-wife to the child welfare agency, but didn't want the children taken from her. That started a campaign by her against him.

That included being stalked and beaten in the presence of his son by private detectives and perjured testimony hired by his ex who earns \$2 million a year. Marcus contacted child welfare again and was told to hire a forensic psychologist for which he has no money.

Marcus cites the phenomena that are so familiar to family court watchers everywhere in the English-speaking world. The gender bias of the child welfare agency, the interminable investigations and examinations that, even if they determine a father's innocence and good parenting, take months and sometimes years to complete. During all that time, he is separated from his children.

Even if the father is able to find the moneys for these professionals, months go by that we do not see, hug or care for our children. PAS - parental alienation syndrome sets in. The children lose interest in a father that they do not see and fathers are harassed into finding a comfort zone free of private detectives and threats of prison.

In short, what mothers bent on revenge can't do themselves, the system of child custody is happy to do for them.

For his part, Marcus understands that

Every child deserves and needs both parents. Joint custody and equal, shared parenting urgently need to become the norms of Israel society.

To that end, two Israeli organizations, Fathers4Justice Israel and The Coalition for Family will make their way to Geneva next month to acquaint the delegates to the United Nations Council on the Welfare of Children with the many barriers family courts place between fathers and their children.

Whether it is a suicide bombers belt going off or going to a school to pick up your child and being told that you can't - both are massacres of love and relationships that can never be replaced.

Yes, the metaphor is over the top. But that's what people are driven to when patent injustice is met with indifference, ignorance and smugness.

It's something we in the U.S. are all too familiar with.

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(Las Vegas Review-Journal, 5/1/11)

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