

**Anybody but Dad - 2****Date:** Monday, October 10 @ 10:59:18 EDT**Topic:** Help!**Shoshana Harper**

October 7, 2005

I am writing to ask that you intervene as soon as possible in this matter concerning a United States citizen living in Israel. Evan Watkins is an adult voting resident of New York State and resides with his 12 year old son, AW, in Givat Shmuel, Israel. AW has been subjected to both physical and emotional abuse from his mother, Leah Dahan Watkins, including death threats, physical assaults and unspecified threats if her actions are reported. In Israel, unlike the U.S., no relief has been afforded the minor child despite repeated reports by both the child and the father to the courts, police, social welfare and child protection agencies concerning the abuse.

The purpose of this urgent letter is to prevent the child, AW, from being placed in a closed institution rather than being allowed to stay with his father as per his stated preference and that of independent social workers and psychologists who have interviewed AW. AW is a bright child with no emotional disabilities.

The immediate need is for protection of AW' basic civil rights including the right to stay with the non-abusive parent, in this case the father. We request gender neutral application of Israeli law regarding physical and emotional abuse and assault. I further request the State Department/U.S. Embassy accept official, albeit not original, documents required for AW' citizenship application – birth certificate and parents' marriage certificate.

Below is the summary of the most immediate incident. Also attached are a report by one social worker that accompanied AW to the police and a formal evaluation by two other social workers.

Two weeks ago Leah Dahan Watkins, the mother, threw AW to the floor, tore three phones from his hands injuring his hands and broke one telephone when he tried to call for help. Ms. Watkins then closed and locked the windows as AW screamed for help and locked him in the house so he could not leave. AW was afraid to let his mother out of his sight due to fears of being stabbed by her. He therefore did not sleep. This fear is based on Leah Dahan Watkins' repeated threats that she will kill her son AW. In the morning following the incident, the mother told AW not to tell anyone what had happened or she would "do something evil" to him.

Complaints were filed that and subsequent days with the court, social welfare, child protection and the police. Israeli law requires that the child be interviewed immediately. However, no such interviews have taken place. The agencies refuse to respond to mail, fax, e-mail or phone calls by the father, Evan Watkins, or the minor child, AW.

At this point, the police have accused Evan Watkins with violation of visitation orders since the child refuses to go to his mother's home.

Two requests for an order of protection from the mother were denied by the family court. The reasons stated for the denial were: 1) That the father, Evan Watkins, had previously appealed the custody decision of this court; 2) The parents have been litigating since 1996; and 3) Unbelievably, the courts claim the incident does not meet the requirements of the law for an order of protection.

Instead of interviewing the child according to Israeli law, the social welfare and child protection agencies have convened a "Decision Committee". The purpose of which is to place AW outside his home. In other words, they plan on placing him in a closed locked institution or a foster family rather than place him with his father. The third option is to place him with the mother and limit the father's access to one hour per week under social worker supervision. The social worker and judge have stated that they do not believe AW and that he is being influenced by his father when he reports incidents of abuse.

The social worker, Hanna Greenfeld (Givat Shmuel, Israel) stated to AW upon his last complaint to her that she does not believe him. Rather, Ms. Greenfeld believes the mother who contacted the social worker on her own in advance of any complaint by the child. The social worker further stated she believes the mother and that AW needs psychiatric medication and treatment.

The social worker, Hanna Greenfeld, has never placed any child in the custody of their father. She stated to the father, Evan Watkins, years ago that "mothers need their children and that's the way it will be in your case also". She systematically applies this doctrine in every and all incidents. The police have not investigated because of the intervention by this child welfare social worker in violation of a legal mandate.

Since that incident AW's mother and sister have threatened him with once again "doing something evil" to him if he does not return to the mother's home. They twice attempted to enter the apartment of Evan Watkins while he was at work and remove AW. AW has complained to all of his teachers including the guidance counselor. The only response to him is that "your mother loves you". This has been the only and consistent response on every complaint made by AW himself over the past five years.

The father, Evan Watkins, has been found by leading Israeli psychologists (Sharona Yeshuron, Tovi Peled, Bruria Koblenz, Dr. Naomi Cahen, Dr. Daniel Gottlieb) to be healthy and normal and completely capable of raising a child. Most reports to that effect have not been permitted to be admitted into evidence by Judge Tova Sivan and Judge Yehudit Shtufman (or were simply totally and completely ignored), nor have similar reports showing AW's preference for living with his father.

Four of the five psychologists were never permitted to testify even though they came to court on the appointed date and at the appointed time; the judge sent them home without permitting testimony. Dr Cahen who did testify, testified as to the mother's violent behavior and the father's significant contribution to the child's healthy development, she was not given additional cases by the court.

Similarly five witnesses to the mother's violent behavior towards the child came to court; they too, were sent home without being permitted to testify.

Similarly, no witness to the father's good relationship with the child were permitted to testify.

There is no court action currently pending.

When the child was taken to independent social workers from Jewish Family Services (Israel) they found severe mistreatment at the hands of the mother and suspicion of sexual abuse in addition to the rest. In addition, the findings showed a continuous relationship of trust between the child, AW, and his father, Evan Watkins. **From the report by Jewish Family Services:**

“He [AW] appeared comfortable, genuine, and even enthusiastic in discussing his relationship with his father, who he seems to revere.” ... “He requested clearly that we help him not have to live with his mother any more, and he freely contributed examples of why it was painful for him to continue living there with her. ... “

“Some of what he said was quite dramatic, including descriptions of the threats and rage of his mother...” “He begged to live with his father... “His father is making repeated attempts to flag ... problems ...”

“...persistent verbal abuse and threats from the boy’s mother, to Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) as the mother blocks relationship with his father, to the possibility of abuses that are being well concealed, such as sexual abuse of a subtle or less subtle nature....”

“It is evident that the social worker assigned to him, has overlooked relevant evidence of AW’s distress, and has cast in concrete her personal bias in this case. She prefers children be in their mother’s custody WITHOUT REGARD TO AW’S ACTUAL NEEDS. She does not seem to review the events of the case as they unfold.”

.... Recommendations: “It is imperative that AW receive protection from the Family Court System.” *“There is reason to believe that this case has fallen through the cracks of the Family Court System....It is our recommendation that full attention be turned to moving all responsibility for this case, and for AW’s well being, into the hands of new and unbiased psychological assessment personnel – whether court appointed or private.”* **“Reviewing the record reveals patterns of case prejudice and oversight that are not serving this boy’s needs.”** ... **“It is time for a serious judicial and clinical re-evaluation...”**

Social Services, Child Protection and the Court seem to believe that removing a child from a caring parent constitutes “protection”. ... **Anybody but Dad.**

In a September 2005 meeting with the social worker Efrat Lavi, Mr Watkins and a social worker from Jewish Family Services, the social worker (Ms. Lavi) stated that she “has orders regarding the case” and she “..is forbidden to make any changes whatsoever” [to the existing arrangements] “without regard to the facts.”

She also stated her “preference that AW be moved to an Emergency Shelter.” ... without regard to the facts...!

The judge, Tova Sivan, has stated off the record, and against Israeli law, that no man will ever get custody – joint or full – in her courtroom. In Israel there is no procedure to change judges. In this and many other proceedings, all currently concluded, the minimal standards of Western justice have not been met.

The judge, Tova Sivan, has been specifically aware of the situation since the fall of 2004 (when she herself spoke with the child) and has done nothing to help the child.

On September 7, 2004 AW was summoned by Judge Tova Sivan to speak to her in chambers without parents. He told her everything concerning the physical beatings and verbal attacks by his mother. The judge stated this in her report. Judge Sivan then followed AW’s comments

with this sentence: “The father’s words from the child’s mouth.” In one sentence the judge and social workers neutralize years of abuse by the mother and construct build a foundation for removing the child from the father. The basis being the child’s love for the non-violent male parent.

Following the interview with AW (Sept 7, 2004) Judge Tova Sivan referred both parents to a second court appointed parenthood evaluation (the first was in 1996). In his evaluation, Dr. Daniel Gottlieb, recommended joint custody.

Judge Tova Sivan stated she did “not understand how Dr. Gottlieb could make such a recommendation.” Judge Sivan refused to summon Dr. Daniel Gottlieb to help her understand his recommendation for joint custody. Instead, Judge Tova Sivan proceeded to *reduce* visitation between the father, Evan Watkins, and the son, AW. Judge Tova Sivan granted full custody of the son to the abusive mother, including sole authority for psychological treatment. The judge stated the child needed psychological treatment. The mother, Leah Dahan Watkins, has done nothing to heed this order. Instead, she threatens the child with murder and “evil things” if he tells what is going on in her home.

The child, AW, has run away from his mother’s home following the September 2005 incident – one of the last in a continuing series of similar incidents over the course of years. AW refuses to return to her home out of fear. He has stayed with his father.

This past weekend, the father (Evan Watkins) compelled the minor child to stay with his mother. The child agreed only upon the condition that two friends stay overnight with him as protection against violence by his mother.

AW has not been able to get official U.S. citizenship papers because of the requirement for original birth certificate and marriage certificate which his mother took upon his birth.

Conclusion

Consistently, Israel (courts, social workers, Child Protection and Police) will move mountains to remove a father on any pretext. They do absolutely nothing to protect children from abusive mothers. Israel does nothing to implement the terms of the International Agreement on the Child in spite of having signed it.

Israel uses illegal and prejudicial gender biased proceedings to protect abusive mothers instead of protecting the children. Children who are able to complain on a consistent basis and children who move of their own accord to their fathers are removed by court order (frequently initiated by Child Protection social workers) to “Emergency Shelters”.

Israeli police frequently refuse to accept complaints from fathers; when accepted they are routinely found to be “Not in the public interest” when filed against women. Identical complaints are prosecuted vigorously when filed by women against men. Women who are found to have committed perjury are simply sent home. Women who admit to assault are sent home. Women who admit to filing false complaints are sent home. Lawyers advise female clients to file false charges because it is effective at removing fathers from their homes.

Gross violations of childrens’ basic civil rights are a daily occurrence in Israel. Basic and minimal standards of Western justice are routinely breached. Fewer than 200 men in the entire country have custody of their children via Family Court and/or the Child Welfare system. Statistically, this is highly unlikely to be the result of gender neutral application of law.

Almost no research regarding the ability of fathers to care for children is done in Israel. Research from other countries is termed in court by Israeli judges to be “An American fad whose time has passed” and professional journal reports to that effect are not allowed to be entered into the protocol (e.g., Judge Shtufman, 1999).

Court protocols are controlled by the judges. The typist does not enter anything into the protocol unless specifically ordered to do so by the judge. Frequently the judge dictates the entire protocol word-by-word for the typist to enter. Recording is forbidden in spite of the fact that Israeli law specifically states that a person may record *any* conversation in which he/she is an active participant.

The media are forbidden to cover proceedings or to report about them *even with identifying details removed*. The media is pressured and threatened to not cover any aspect of Family Court. This includes reports of gross and illegal abuses of power.

This is neither justice nor is it law, nor is it a matter of “considered opinion”. It is unfettered and systematic implementation of gender biases on a national scale turning children into tools to be used against their fathers, into needless battlegrounds and prizes to be conquered instead of children to be loved by both parents.

I thank you in advance for your help in protecting the child, AW.

Respectfully yours,

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The father, Evan Watkins, can be reached in Israel as follows:
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Please write your Representatives in Congress:
<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/?lvl=L>

<http://www.senate.gov>

Below are organizations with additional details concerning similar situations in Israel.
<http://www.horut-shava.org.il/HoSh/about/english.htm>

http://www.mishmoret.org.il/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=19 (Hebrew site)

BELOW ARE SIMILAR CASES IN ISRAEL:

Unfortunately this is not the only case of this sort. Yakov Ben Issachar is the father of a 12 year old daughter. The daughter is currently locked in a closed institution. Father and daughter are allowed 1 hour per week visitation under the supervision of a social worker. During a visit several weeks ago the daughter passed Mr. Ben Issachar a note stating she wants to see the judge. The supervising social worker insisted that she see the note. Mr. Ben Issachar refused to hand over the note and was sent to jail for 10 days.

The emergency child shelter which the daughter is currently housed in, according to Israeli law, states 3 months as its maximum stay. After 3 months Mr. Ben Issachar requested his daughter's release. The social worker asked the judge for clarification on the 3 month law.

The judge clarified by stating three years. This is illegal according to Israeli law. The daughter is still currently in the institution and the appeals have been denied.

In another case, Reuven Dinko's 12 year old daughter ran away from her mother's house to her father's house as a safe haven. The social workers handled this by getting a court order requiring Reuven Dinko not to meet with his daughter. His daughter ran away again. Because Mr. Dinko did not throw his daughter out of his house he was given a one year prison sentence. The judges also stated that "the sentence is light in view of the circumstances" !!!

In the case of Ilan Gloska, his wife has refused for the past 2 years to enable him to meet with their daughter. The two other children live with Ilan.

The social worker Jocelyn Dabul (Kiryat Yam, Israel) has illegally passed confidential information to Mr. Gloska's wife. This illegal action is nevertheless supported by the supervisor who has kept information from the judge. In addition, immediately following a formal complaint by Mr. Gloska, the social worker initiated a "review". The self initiated "review" was extremely prejudicial and false.

A police letter from Commander Yehuda Shemesh to Mr Gloska's wife states that Mr Gloska was given an Injunction removing him from the house. However, in the actual police files the Injunction was issued against Mr Gloska's wife. She in fact signed the letter acknowledging receipt. In addition, a letter from the duty officer at the time shows that Cmd Shemesh ordered the Injunction against the wife. A letter from the court appointed psychologist testified that the good relationship between the daughter and Mr Gloska "is threatening to the wife... and this is the reason for the wife's attempting to alienate the daughter from the father." This uncomfortable fact is ignored by the Judge and social workers and the father and daughter do not have any contact.

As time passes, facts that interfere with policy get changed / ignored as "required".

Anybody but Dad.

Him Yitzhak Pur's wife and family are friends with the Jerusalem social worker Rachel Gabai. He was removed from the house, in spite of the psychologists report describing Yitshak as "loving and good to his children" and the children as being "...at the mercy of the mother".

His wife ceased taking her psychiatric medication against doctor's orders, the children are beaten .. but the mantra "Anybody but Dad" is again in effect in Israel. Yitzhak Pur is removed and the children are with an abusive mom. The social worker is attempting to force the children to change their testimony.

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