

Testimony of Lisa Magnano

Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

Monday March 10, 2008

IN SUPPORT OF

HB 5875- AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
VICTIMS IN FAMILY RELATIONS MATTERS

Good afternoon ladies & gentlemen. I am Lisa Magnano. Jen was my sister-in-law and Scott was my husband's brother. I know that Jessica just explained to you how her mother turned to the police and the courts upon her return to Connecticut in hopes that they would be able to protect her from her very real fear of her husband. Jennifer followed every order that she was given by this system, which in the end failed her.

I am now going to tell you what Scott was up to while Jen was on the run. In the beginning of May, 2007, I received a call from Scott telling me in a nut shell that Jen had lost her mind and taken the kids and disappeared. He asked me to help him to find her. We spent hours on the phone while he would guide me through different topics to research on the internet. He had me trying to locate the address of every shelter in every area that he thought that Jen might have run to. I tried explaining to him that that was why they are called shelters, so that angry husbands CAN'T find them. This did not deter him, at one point he even showed up at the offices of a shelter in Meriden trying to get information from the woman there.

In the mean time, by tricking the customer service representative for one of Jen's credit card accounts, he got Jen's address and new cell phone number from this person. It turned out that she had gone to California. Scott had me looking up information on shelters in California while at the same time he put in a call to his other brother who had lived in California. He convinced his brother to call a friend out there and ask that the friend drive by Jen's brother Steve's house to see if they were there.

Scott had also immediately contacted a lawyer and was given the advice to go down to the court house and file for temporary custody of the children. Scott was awarded custody of his children and this now put Jen in the position of being a kidnapper. When Jen filed papers from California, this gave Scott the ammunition that he needed to force her back to Connecticut.

Three weeks before she died, Jen contacted us and we were given the real story of what had happened in her life with Scott. We asked them to stay with us for the weekend. We found out from Jen that the court had ordered in a civil order that Scott could not come within 300 feet of Jen. They had also told both of them that they were not to try to get any kind of gun or weapon. The first night that Jen & the kids stayed with us we heard a noise outside, but upon investigating it, found nothing. The next day I went to all of my neighbors and told them about our situation explaining to them that if they saw his vehicle they were to call the police. I went to my neighbor, who is a policeman, and told him the situation, described the vehicle and gave him the tag number. That officer told me that Scott had been there the night before because the officer had thought that Scott was following him so he made note of the license plate. The crazy thing about this is that after reading the court order, the officer told Jen that because it was a civil order, he would not have been able to arrest Scott!

This is why this law would be important in helping victims in these situations because the perpetrators of these crimes do not have respect for the court systems and feel that they are above the law or any order from the courts. Because of Scott's disregard for the court system we now have two children who are not being raised with the tender love and guidance of their dear mother. My husband and I are raising Jen's son David, while his sister Emily resides in California with her aunt and uncle. Our hearts are broken over the devastating effect that this has on them daily.