



Canada Court Watch

A program of the National Association for Public & Private Accountability
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The Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Children and Youth Services
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Dear Minister

Re: Veiled threats being made against children and parents by CAS workers

This past weekend, Canada Court Watch received yet another disturbing call from a teenager who reported that workers with an Ontario Children's Aid Agency threatened to place him into a secure treatment facility (Syl Apps) if CAS workers were to find out that he was using a recording device to record abuse of children in his mother's home.

The teen reported to Court Watch that he had captured, on videotape, a recent violent physical altercation between his mother and his older sister. The teen said that he did this because he had told CAS workers on several occasions about the ongoing abuse and neglect occurring in his mother's home but that CAS workers did not act on this information. This teen felt he had no other option but to record an incident to show the CAS workers that he was not lying to them. The boy also felt that this might help protect his siblings as well as himself from abuse in the home.

The boy said that instead of being thanked by CAS workers for his help in getting the facts out regarding this case, the CAS workers chose to threaten him with incarceration should he attempt to use a recording device again to record abuse. The teen also told Court Watch that CAS workers instructed his mother to take away his personal cell phone, which was part of his safety net to the outside world. Although the boy's father had purchased the phone for the boy's own safety and security, CAS worker apparently felt that it was within their jurisdiction to have this boy's personal property confiscated. Cutting off this boy's ability to communicate with the outside when violence was occurring in his mother's home would in reality only serve the purpose of helping his mother conceal any abuse occurring in her home. Needless to say, this boy and many members of his extended family have lost all respect for the CAS and its workers. He and his family now see the CAS as being biased and totally useless in helping children from being abused. The boy informed Court Watch that his only option now is to run away from his mother's home and to live with his father seeing as the CAS and the police are of no help.

This teen also reported that CAS workers took him to a CAS appointed professional who he was led to believe was a psychologist and that he was put under a lot of pressure at this meeting to support the position of the CAS and his mother. Although it was the boy who was supposed to be meeting with the professional, the boy reported that CAS workers and his mother were present in the room during the meeting and that during the meeting he felt afraid and intimidated to speak openly and truthfully because those abusing and threatening him remained in the room during the meeting with this professional. The boy indicated that when he did attempt to disclose the truth, that the CAS worker and his mother quickly interrupted and discounted what he was attempting to say to the CAS appointed professional. The boy said that CAS workers and his mother denigrated the boy's father during this meeting and that the CAS professional appeared to be in agreement with their views, even though the professional never asked any information about the father. In essence, what this CAS agency did was put this boy in a room of people who were basically on his mother's side and then ganged up on him in an attempt to intimidate and bully him into compliance using psychological terrorism with the support of a CAS professional.

This boy indicated that during all of his dealings with the CAS workers, he felt that CAS workers were biased against his father and that CAS workers were actually trying to help his mother cover up abuse in her home involving the other children. The boy indicated that everything that CAS workers did seemed intended to be to marginalize the abuse going on in his mother's home and to avoid his mother from having to face the consequences of her actions.

The teen has requested that until he has safely fled his mother's home and is free of threat and intimidation by CAS workers, that we not identify him or his family by name. He feels that he is old enough and mature enough to handle the current situation and is more afraid for his safety by what CAS workers might do to him for reporting their incompetence. He simply no longer trusts the CAS.

At some time in the future we will be meeting with this boy and will conduct a videotaped interview regarding his experience with CAS workers similar to what we have done with other children who have been adversely affected by CAS workers. As an example of the type of interviews we do with children, we have enclosed a DVD copy of an interview with one child, Candace, which was recorded earlier this year. In this interview, Candace, who is now 20 years of age, voluntarily came forth with her own personal story of abuse by CAS workers with the intent that by going public, her experience may help other children currently being adversely affected by CAS agencies.

Unfortunately, the call that we received from this teenage boy is not uncommon. We receive other similar calls from children and parents from across Ontario. Just as with this boy, other children involved with CAS report being threatened and coerced by CAS workers to take sides in custody battles. Many parents report being intimidated by CAS workers under threat of having their children taken from them if they do not comply with the erratic and illogical demands of CAS workers. Other parents with children in care tell of workers intimidating them with threats that they will lose visitation privileges with their children should parent's request to have meetings recorded. We recently interviewed three boys who live in Richmond Hill, Ontario who reported how the York Region CAS turned a blind eye to their mother's violence and abuse against them and their father and focused more on how to help their mother conceal evidence of her abuse of the children.

The Citizens of Ontario, especially our youngest and most vulnerable, should not feel like they are being terrorized by CAS workers. Children and parents should not have to feel that CAS workers are biased against one parent as part of some hidden agenda. It is time that steps be taken to make sure that children and families feel safe when dealing with CAS workers and their agencies.

Canada Court Watch believes that one way to help put an end to these incidents of threats and coercion by CAS workers is to ensure that children and parents have the right to record all meetings between themselves and CAS workers or professionals and that children and parents be notified of the right to record prior to any meetings. Children and parents are complaining about CAS workers not being truthful and twisting what was said during meetings. Audio recordings of meetings can largely eliminate this problem and help protect children and even the CAS workers. The girl Candace, who was mentioned previously, in her interview, stated that she would have felt safer as a child if CAS workers had recorded meetings with her. She too reported that workers manipulated what was said in meetings to the advantage of CAS. She indicated that if what some of the CAS workers had been caught on tape at the time, that some of the CAS workers would likely have been put in jail for their crimes.

To help reduce the abuse of children and families in the future stemming from the abuse of power and authority by CAS workers, on behalf of justice-minded citizens of Ontario, we would kindly request that you take prompt steps to correct this situation. We would recommend that your Ministry send out a memorandum to all CAS agencies in the Province of Ontario advising them that they are to permit recordings of meetings upon the request of children or parents and that CAS workers be compelled to notify children and parents of their right to do so. In this day of inexpensive and compact audio recording devices, it would cost CAS agencies very little extra to record meetings using this current technology and to provide copies to clients at no charge. Potentially, the Province of Ontario could save millions of dollars annually as a result of increased worker accountability and fewer complaints. Under no circumstances, should CAS workers be intimidating parents by telling them that if they request to record meetings, that CAS workers will refuse to attend which is what is often occurring now.

If you would like to see and hear more about current abuses of children and families by CAS agencies in Ontario just visit our website at <http://www.canadacourtwatch.com>. As I write this letter there are children being forcefully and unlawfully detained under threat by incompetent and unlicensed CAS workers. I know of one girl from Barrie, Ontario whose case I personally intervened with, who would be more than happy to meet with you to describe how her loving family has been devastated by the malicious actions of unlicensed and unaccountable CAS workers from the York and Simcoe CAS agencies. In this case, the worker who currently is largely responsible for keeping this girl away from her loving family against her wishes, including her sisters and brothers, holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Physical Education. He is not even a registered social worker in the Province of Ontario!

As the chairman of the National Association for Public and Private Accountability, I am very concerned about this issue. I too, was once a victim of threats and intimidation by workers with the Durham CAS. After my ordeal which was reported in newspapers around the world, I became the first Canadian to successfully sue a children's aid agency. My case against the CAS has even been debated in the Parliament of Canada. In my case, CAS workers were found guilty

in court of malicious prosecution, blackmail and perjury. I am deeply concerned that after so many years, the abuse of power and authority by CAS workers (many of whom are not licensed) continues to occur in this Province. It is time to put a **STOP** to this madness being forced upon many children and families by mostly unlicensed and unaccountable CAS workers.

If you would like to meet with me personally to discuss some of the problems affecting children and families in our Province, I would be pleased to do so, then just send me an e mail to my address listed below indicating your willingness to meet. Our recommendations could save the Province of Ontario in excess of one hundred million dollars annually from the current CAS budget but even more importantly, help to stop abuse of many children and families by CAS workers and their agencies.

Your response in writing would be appreciated.

Yours Truly
CANADA COURT WATCH

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorian A. Baxter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Archbishop Dorian A. Baxter, National Chairman
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