

“FROM THE EYES OF A SPOUSE OF AN UNDERCOVER”

The letter below is in the words of a wife of an undercover detective who worked a “deep, long term” undercover case for 4 years. Their relationship slowly fell apart during the undercover case, which leads to a divorce at the conclusion of the operation. Not all of the facts in the case are totally correct however they are close and in the spouse’s mind they are correct. This letter does not glorify the undercover, in fact it is very negative, but the undercover feels that sharing the story may in fact save an undercover’s marriage or just as important, their career.

Dave came home from work one day and said he is doing an undercover case where he has to pretend he is single. Carol, this girl at work, will be his mock girlfriend she’s gay though, so I don’t have to worry.” He will have his own apartment; he can’t wear my wedding ring or carry pictures of the kids or me in his wallet. He has to look like he’s not a cop so he will have to work odd hours too.

We could not be seen in public together, if we did go out in public which was very rare, Dave would walk way ahead of us, like he didn’t even know us, or walk way behind us, either way we weren’t really ever together. Kawika (their son) was not allowed to call him “Dad” especially in public. I remember one time Dave stopped off at the local Blockbuster near our family home, and ran into one of the “bad guys”. He came home and was so stressed that the guy saw him in this area. I grew up in Seattle and grew up with all the traditions of living in a big city. I wanted to go to the “Bite of Seattle”, Dave said no. But he said no to everything, because ya know, the bad guys may be there. I got my way and we went at Dave’s discretion. Sure enough Dave was pushing Kawika in his stroller when one of the bad guys came up to him. Dave said, “quick take off your wedding ring and you’re my roommate and Kawika Do not say DAD.” The two exchanged words and did their deal. When the guy left I got my ass chewed out for wanting to take the family out for some fun.

Dave was always on the phone taking bets and doing the bookie deal. The kids and I had to be dead silent. It was like EF Hutton spoke! We could not make a sound. I would be so stressed; can you imagine trying to teach a 2 year old to be quiet on cue?

When an extended family event came up Dave would have to drive his own car and meet us there. The family was always divided; there was me and the kid or kids, depending on the time frame. And then there was Dave. As time went on, I began to notice Dave’s personality change; this was about 6 months into the case. He would refer to this guy named “Mark” as a cocky, irresponsible self-centered ass. Not someone who I would like. Dave started acting the way he described this guy. Well I called him on it. I said, man you act just like that creep Mark. Dave said I’ve always been cocky. I said no, you’re just plain fucking rude and you better wise up, because I would have never married you acting like this. I said you’ve been hanging around that guy Mark too long. It’s like watching a kid who does great in school then starts to hang around the wrong crowd of kids and drops out of school. The longer the case went on, the more I began to see Dave’s morals and values fading. He had become so hardened hanging around those losers with now morals, values or integrity. I saw our marriage slipping away and became very concerned. I would try to talk about it with Dave but he would just say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I don’t need romance, I don’t need anything. He would say that I was really needy. I could not

understand how this neat guy I married was turning into someone I could not reason with. He really did become them!!!! What about me? What about our kids? Don't we matter to him at all anymore? Or is he so consumed with his new life and identity that he is numb to us? Has he shut us out of his life so much that there is no place for us anymore?

Our family was so dysfunctional it was spinning out of control. Dave would treat strangers better than he would treat me. I really began to hate him for doing this to the kids and me. Once he even said in front of his family that he would get rid of me before his dog, because his dog was more important. It took every ounce of my being to control myself from not knocking him upside his head.

Here I had given him my marriage commitment, 2 beautiful children, and 4 years of a totally useless case, for what? His fucking glory! His career? I thought, oh great, ya know when this is all over he'll get all kinds of awards to decorate his walls, all kinds of recognition for the job he has done, a big pat on the back, but nobody, not a soul will even give a fuck, what I went through. Oh ya, I'm supposed to think I'm lucky, I get to stay home. Nobody had a clue what the kids and me had to live through, on a daily basis. Guess what, it wasn't even our choice. It was forced on us, for our protection, but when we really needed the help and protection, nobody was there for the kids and me. When Dave was home, he would sleep, work in our basement, and then go to work. If I did not go downstairs to visit him with the kids, we would have never, ever seen him. He worked 7 days a week, so there was no down time for me. I would plead with him not to work in the basement or to take a day off. He would always tell me no. I just could not wait for this case to end!

I had to carry a gun on me at all times, just in case I would need to use it. Something as simple as reaching into my purse to grab for my lipstick, gum or my wallet was a constant reminder that my life was no longer what I knew it to be. I remember walking out to my car with our son one day, and when I got him in his car seat, for an instant in my mind, played a picture of me being shot in the back of my head and landing into his lap. I instantly snapped out of my daydream and checked around to make sure no bad guys were around. When I got into the car I had to constantly look into the rear view mirror to see if I was being followed. I remember Dave telling me that I always needed to know what color car was behind me at all times. In fact, I had to watch for the car to turn off and then check to see what color the next car was because sometimes when you're being followed one car picks up where the other one has left off.

I could never relax and let my guard down. I felt cheated; I mean I could not even get into my car and enjoy the view, or pay attention to a song on the radio. For these things would be distractions that could make me loose my life or that of my children. At home every time there was a hang up call or a wrong number, I would have to document the date and time, because ya know, it could be one of the bad guys checking to see if and when I'm home. I became a total bitch; my life was so out of my own control. I felt like I had to hide from nothing that I had done. Something as simple as going to the store to buy diapers took more of an effort than what it was worth! I mean, I had to walk out of my front door like I was an America's Most Wanted Fugitive, get into my car, check every car behind me, get to the store, watch suspicious people there, make sure my gun didn't fall out of my purse as I reach for my wallet to pay for groceries, drive back

home, and check to see if I'm being followed. I was exhausted by the time I got home! I kept thinking, ok, I'm still wondering why it is I should consider myself "lucky"!

I kept trying to think of one good reason why I should stay! I mean Dave was a piss poor husband, fatherhood was something he did in his spare time and our house had become a prison with 4 walls. I was already a single parent, and had been during all 4 years of this undercover case. What did I need him for? Hell, he never as much even took me out. I was left at home because ya know; the bad guys might be out there. I really resented Dave by this point. I would bitch him out every chance I got. That's if by chance I got to see him. He was driving around in a fancy car, going out to dinner every night, and then there were the nightclubs and the nightlife. It appeared to me like he was having his cake and eating it too. But what about me? I didn't have any of that, nor did I receive any help with my 2 children. I was doing it all, with no rewards. Then I would feel guilty about feeling this way, I mean, I knew each and every day when he would leave for work, that it could very well be the last time I would see him and the last time the kids would see their father. I would be so scared that I'd be given a flag that had been draped over his coffin, as my reward.

Each time Dave would have to meet a really bad guy, I would wait in anticipation for when he got home. And if he were late, I'd pace the floor wondering where he was. Did they find him out? Was his cover blown? Is he alive now, or by the time I call the department and they find him, will it be too late? Worse yet, is when I began welcoming the annoying door to door salesman, at least it wasn't the police chaplain bearing the bad news that every officers spouse never wants to hear.

I think another hard part was that I could never express or talk about the case because it could cost me my life or that of my children. Dave would only tell me so much, and that was very little. I remember he would tell me that they would rather kill the kids and me than to take him out. Because, it would torture him more being alive with a dead wife and kids than it would if they just killed him.

I started getting concerned with the relationship that Dave had with this guy named "Dean". He was like the Grandfather of the bookie, drug dealing, crime-infested group. He really liked Dave, and trusted him. He even offered to give Dave property on Lake Washington and thought of him as a son. I think he actually may have called him son. Dave visited Dean in the hospital when he had cancer of the lung and had part of his lung removed. This made Dean think even more of Dave. This guy had houses, property, jewels, you name it, but it was all from a life of crime. Dave said that this guy was old and hadn't probably worked an honest day in his life. I was worried about Dave because I knew that if he were not undercover, he probably would really like this guy. In fact, he said that the day he has to bust him would be a very hard day for him.

Dave was hired by Dean or another one of those losers to commit an arson. When Dave told me this, I could not believe my ears. I said what if innocent people get hurt or killed? He said the FBI knew about it and they had a plan. The plan was to walk up to this guys establishment, leave the fire starting stuff at the door and run off as though someone interrupted the arson. I knew at this point that my life was crazier than any dream or nightmare I'd ever had! This was fucking unbelievable; this was like a Steven Segal movie! Dave said that the owner of the establishment

would know that it was a warning and would take it seriously. I felt like June Cleaver married to the mafia!

I never knew where Dave was or where his mock apartment was. So much of my life was one big secret. If I needed to page him I'd have to put in a secret code, which meant, "call home". The kids' would page him to tell him good night. They would always ask me where's Daddy? When is Daddy coming home? It became harder and harder to be around extended family they would glorify Dave and his job. It would again take every ounce of my being to refrain from telling them what it really was like. What glory? I think they thought he was doing regular work, like sitting in his office or something. Little did they know, little did anyone know? Dave told me his apartment had cameras hidden in pictures and he had a body wire on him so that the FBI could keep tabs on him from their cars.

I could tell that every time the case was about to end, Dave would think of more work to keep it going. He had become so consumed by this new life that he did not know what to do when it ended. When it ended, he would not come home. Instead he started living in the back of his pick-up truck at the local park and ride. I thought for sure he was having an affair or something. Then I realized that Dave really did become them. Here I thought I'd have my family back once and for all.

I began to realize that Dave had posttraumatic stress syndrome. Once again no matter whom I told, nobody believed me. It fell on deaf ears. Where is family? Where are friends? Where is this police family? Isn't anybody going to help me now!!!! It's my turn! On February 5, 1997 Dave filed for divorce. I can only say I truly felt like I hated him now. I wish I had left his ass years ago. Here I had given up so much of my life for what? I no longer cared about saying anything about this case; I would be silenced no longer. I was so hurt; it turned into frustration, which turned into anger. Dave would actually tell people my anger came from my childhood because I'm a child of an alcoholic. I'd get so pissed off and say no asshole, it came from you and this bullshit life. I would talk about what happened to the kids and me and what it was like. I felt like the only witness to a crime and nobody believed me. Someone told me that I did not have it so bad, after all Vietnam vets wives husbands actually died! I didn't care about telling anyone off anymore. I knew the truth and what had really happened. Dave had had his life; it was me that had no life for all those years. Dave even managed to play on 3 different basketball teams, a golf team, and lift weights every day. He didn't have to answer to anyone. All I can say now isDave come and get your children on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the standard days for divorced dads. You've already missed out on the first half of your children's lives, don't miss out on the second half.

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