

Statement of Bobette Leslie

In 1980 I first met Susan West at my workplace. She and I began a long friendship that lasted until 2006. During that time we were very close and shared our deepest feelings and life experiences, and trusted each other with our most intimate details. Susan was a single mother at that time and was in a relationship with her boyfriend, Mike Cline. When I met her two daughters, Angie and Jacqueline, I was immediately drawn to the two beautiful and talented young girls. Angie was the oldest and was struggling with school and I privately tutored her for a short time since I had a degree from the USC School of Education, and was especially interested in children who had difficulty in learning. Although the girls were from different fathers, and were very different themselves, I found them to be very close with each other and it was obvious that mother and daughters had a very close bond.

I eventually met Mike and we were all friends and frequently shared dinner and friendship time. When Susan and Mike decided to marry, Susan asked to hold the wedding and reception at my house in the country. I kept Angie at my house for a brief time while she was in High School because she was having trouble with her parents in a typical teenage fashion, and it was thought that I could help diffuse the situation.

Not long after Susan and Mike were married it became apparent to me that although Mike was a seemingly very easy going, lovable guy, there were some dark shadows to his personality. Not long after they were married Susan led Mike to make a profession of Christ as his Savior and became a Christian. This was quite a transformation because I knew Mike and his family had been deeply involved with the darker religions of Astrology, Fortune Telling, and Palm Reading, and had convinced Susan and Angie to have Psychic Readings. What concerned me was that I didn't see a real change in Mike's character, he seemed to use his new religion as a means to control Susan and the girls with a very religious list of do's and don't's rather than true Christianity, which is based on Faith, Hope, and Love and a personal relationship with a loving Father.

I dismissed Mike's religious rigidity with his immaturity in his faith and always believed that as he grew in his relationship with God he would take on the graciousness of Christ. I was very disappointed in that as time went on he became more judgmental and his control of Susan became more and more solid. She was trying to be the best wife possible and Mike's intellectualism was difficult for her to argue with, so I watched her come increasingly under his domination. It was particularly damaging to Susan's relationship with her daughters. Mike used his religion to unlovingly judge everything about Angie and Jacqueline that he didn't like, damning them to hell for their behavior and driving a wedge between Susan and her daughters. It was a very malicious and clever plot of Mike to gain control of Susan and isolate her from her girls.

Susan and I remained close friends during this difficult period of her marriage with Mike, and she would many times come to my house sobbing in tears with stories of the conflict in her home between Mike and her daughters and herself being torn between them. She also confided in me that Mike had a sexual addiction problem and his sexual appetite was voracious and it was a terrible burden to her to keep him satisfied, though she did her best to please him, it seemed to never be enough.

In 1987 I moved to California to live on my family's ranch, and I didn't see much of Mike and Susan. Although we did stay in touch, I lost track of the more intimate details of the family until I was asked to take in Angie's three boys after her arrest and incarceration. It was Angie's idea to send the boys to me to care for until she could be released and able to care for them again. I gladly accepted and received the boys at my home who had been driven there by Susan. Unfortunately Angie had given all legal control to Mike and Susan, so I had to deal directly with them over the care of the boys, rather than just keeping it between Angie and myself. The boys were with me for nine months and they were very much a part of my family and had integrated in with my three children. The six of them referred to each other as brothers and sisters, and although there were obviously "sibling" disputes, our home was unusually happy and peaceful.

Angie's two oldest boys, Sam and Jake, were in Little League with my son, and the youngest son, Zeb, was taking Teakwood lessons with my youngest daughter. My oldest daughter, Stefanie, happily played the part of the older sister to all five of the younger children. After the boys had been with us for a few weeks, Susan came by herself to visit and check in with us to see how we were doing. She was quite pleased with the progress we had made at adjusting to the new environment.

It was during this visit that Susan confided some very disturbing facts about Mike. Susan stated to me that she was devastated to learn that Mike had an addiction to pornography and regularly masturbation while watching pornographic videos. She mistakenly had taken this very personally, as though she was not enough, and I let her know that this was entirely Mike's problem and had nothing to do with her. She was still trying her best to be the "perfect Christian" wife by "submitting" to her husband. I was very disappointed that after all this time of perfect church attendance, Bible studies, and Christian friends that this was all their faith had lead to, but a never ending list of do's and don'ts and straining to give the appearance of Righteousness, while living a life in complete debauchery and defeat. All the while, Mike continuing to judge and condemn to Hell anyone not living up to Mike's hypocritical standards.

I also had another visit during the boys' stay with me from their Aunt Jacqueline, Susan's youngest daughter. It was clear that the boys adored their aunt, and she reciprocated the feelings. During her stay, Jacqueline confided in me some more disturbing details of her young relationship with her step-father. Once incident she recounted to me, of when she was 16 years old, he spanked her on her bottom with his hand turned my stomach. The inappropriateness of this and the implications of stepfather placing his hands on his beautiful teenage stepdaughters's backside is reprehensible and the damage it did to Jacqueline's soul was irreparable. She is a very sad and damaged soul to this day, and one can only imagine what she didn't have the courage to tell me.

Mike Cline is an evil, hypocritical liar. He is clever and knows how to keep his sickness hidden from view, while putting on the appearance of goodness. He made my friend's life, Susan, a living hell. He succeeded in isolating her from her children, who were the most important people in her life.

My prayer is that every accusation against him be taken seriously and he not be taken at his word, and there be some effort on the part of the justice system to get at the truth of his actions and business dealings throughout his marriage to Susan. Mike Cline is not the person he pretends to be.

Bobette Leslie Padella

805-933-3781

405-712-4949 (daughter Victoria)