

**Phoenix New Times**

**May 29, 2003**

**Letters to the Editor**

**Hitting a Nerve**

**Image problem:** I am writing this letter to you about Heather Grossman ("[Paralyzed in Paradise](#)," [Amy Silverman, May 1](#)). I am one of the many nurses who had the privilege of working with Heather. I was not one of the nurses contacted about the abuse that Heather suffered. I left for many reasons, and one of them was the difficulty in watching someone being slowly, and deliberately, tormented. Someone who could not defend herself but was held prisoner to the endless tirades and tantrums for some ridiculous "something."

At the time that I worked with Heather, John was concerned about his "image" and the opinion of others. He was more careful about what he did and when he did it. He had it written in our communication book that if he came into the room while we were caring for Heather, we were to immediately leave until he was through "talking" to her. Anyone, including the kids, could hear his verbal abuse through the closed door.

The rest of us have the ability to walk away from such idiocy. This is not a choice that Heather had. She was held captive and forced to listen to the sometimes two-hour-long ranting and raving of John, because of an injury caused by her first abusive husband that left her paralyzed from the neck down. I watched her try at first to defend herself or the kids to him and then slowly, after the abuse continued on and on, she would just lie in her bed and silently listen to the verbal assault.

She heard over and over about what a terrible wife and mother she was. That she could not do even the simplest of things right. That he could not do what he wanted because of her or because of the kids. When I would return to the room after these marathon "talks," Heather would be so upset and emotionally spent that it would take hours just to get her calmed down so that she could finally fall asleep. She would wake in the morning to much of the same thing with John storming into the room complaining about the kids, sometimes dragging them with him, so that he could berate them in front of their mother. They, too, would hear about just how awful they were and that they obviously were a "Samuels" and not a Grossman. They would have to answer repeatedly if they wanted to be a Grossman or a Samuels, and if they wanted to be a Grossman, they better start behaving differently. Their rooms were "inspected" and if the least little thing was not done correctly they were marched in front of Heather where she would hear about what a horrible mother she was and what terrible kids she had. The child would have to listen to their own mother being "trashed" in front of them and know that their turn was next. This is what they started their school day with and what Heather started her day with.

The rest of us could make the obvious choice to just leave, and it still would be scary for some of us. The choice for Heather is incomprehensible to those of us who do not have to worry about our next breath, or wonder who will lift us out of bed and place us in a wheelchair, or give us a simple sip of water.

There are many reasons that I will always look back on my time spent with Heather and count it a privilege and an honor to have had the extraordinary experience of getting to know her. If any of your readers ever have the opportunity to meet this remarkable person, they will understand why I say this.

*Debbie Cason, RN  
Via e-mail*

**Inhuman treatment:** The most heinous crimes are the ones committed against children and anyone who cannot defend themselves because of physical/mental infirmities. John Grossman is not human. He is evil. How can we allow him to walk the streets and expose other victims to his abuse? Abuse isn't a strong enough word for the horrific things he's done to this family. I've met this family and thought Heather extremely nice and the children very well-behaved. I'm heartsick they've had to live through this sick torment inflicted by this barbaric person. I can only hope we as a society would want to prosecute John to the fullest extent of the law and protect its most vulnerable citizens. I pray for Heather, her children and

her parents that they will be vindicated. John should suffer the consequences of his actions because he knows right from wrong. I think it's perfectly obvious why Heather and the children were afraid to come forth in the beginning. It doesn't take a genius to figure it out. Put yourself in their shoes. Have you ever been that afraid for your children's lives or your own life? As far as the case in Florida, this is a completely separate issue and should be judged on that basis. Please don't let the legal/moral time clock run out on this family.

*Maxine Schuman  
Via e-mail*

**A friend in need:** Last August our 14-year-old son found a new friend at school named Ronnie Grossman. We were thrilled because Ronnie is an intelligent, respectful boy who enjoys being with his friends. We like him a lot. The one odd thing was that Ronnie would never talk about his father.

Our family was shocked to read your article and to find out all that Ronnie has endured. We need to help this family. Heather has obviously done a good job rearing Ronnie and his brother and sister. However, Ronnie does not talk about his situation and in fact tries to cover everything. It is scary to think how the abuse in that house has affected him and will continue to affect him the rest of his life, especially if it is not brought out in the open and justice is served.

Heather needs support to help her continue to live for these children. They need Heather to be there for them in body, mind and spirit. She and her family need validation of this awful situation so they can continue to move on.

We are gravely concerned that our county and state officials are not coming to her aid. What could possibly be stopping them? Does the Grossman family have that much money that somehow our officials are afraid to prosecute? Sorry, but I had to ask. It seems unbelievable that there is a refusal to prosecute. There seems to be no reservation in pursuing the Catholic Church, however, over such matters. Cases of elder abuse have been prosecuted (thankfully) on far less evidence.

Did the attorney's office even interview the witnesses? Did any investigation take place about John Grossman and his past marriages and subsequent divorces? Is there a family history of abuse that should be looked into? Would this case be handled the same if the husband didn't have money to hire the best attorneys and many of them, to head off Heather and the children at every pass? I know I am not the only one in this community who has many questions.

John Grossman and his family need to own up to the past abuse and get help. Heather, Ronnie and the twins are victims of a cruel system if they won't even take a look at the 1,100 pages of corroborated abuse.

These children need their mother and she needs support. Let us now, as a community, support her and take a stand against abuse in rich and poor homes. We are either going to protect those in our society who cannot do so themselves or we are not.

*Carrie Jackson  
Scottsdale*

**Victims' rights:** As a friend of Heather, I am grateful that *New Times* has brought her ordeal to the forefront. Perhaps it has helped other abused and battered families step forward. But if they face the same maze of dead ends that Heather has faced, their role as victim will only continue.

Heather Grossman and her children are victims of physical and extreme emotional abuse. They are also victims of a legal system that may be broken beyond repair.

Are we to believe that the Paradise Valley Police Department documented in-depth accounts of abuse, corroborated by witnesses without any inkling of whether county officials would recognize these as serious crimes? Clearly the Paradise Valley Police Department was surprised that the county willingly turned a blind eye to these events. According to the article, the County Attorney's Office had contact with and accepted the wealthy Mr. Grossman's accounts of various incidents. Did the County Attorney's Office contact the victim to discuss the allegations? No, it did not.

John Grossman has been divorced twice before; both divorce documents are sealed. Clearly the story of abuse did not start with Heather. The judicial system is an advocate of John Grossman's gross deeds, but who will champion Heather's cause?

The Florida legal system failed Heather and on account of their negligence she is a quadriplegic. The Arizona justice system has failed her as well. If the Arizona system allows John Grossman to go free, the trail of abuse will only continue. Somewhere else another woman and more children will be abused and terrified all thanks to our thoughtless and unaccountable judicial system.

*Tricia McKnight  
Scottsdale*

**Fiscal education:** It's been three weeks since I read the article "Paralyzed in Paradise," and it *still* has left a haunting feeling in me! Such a story of bad luck and bad karma, but to let a man who is so clearly angry and abusive over his wife's high-level disability go free is simply saying that the abusive behavior is okay both morally and, more important, legally.

This story also clearly shows that abuse can be seen by many and no one either is noticing it or feels it's their place to make mention of it. Going through so many nurses means that many saw abuse, were victims of it themselves, saw that the children were being emotionally abused, and no one came forward to report this? Money, in this case, seems to be the root of evil.

There's nothing wrong with money, but it seems that this awful man's family -- with his father's financial help -- is not only encouraging the abuse, they're saying it's okay for it to happen! I know we all want to support our children's behavior, even if it's not always proper, but this has gone too far. Using daddy's influence, power and money to allow the son to walk away free of any responsibility of his abuse, his terrorizing, his animalistic behavior is not only wrong, it's illegal! How can 1,000 pages of detailed documentation not mean anything? How can eyewitness accounts not have any value? Honestly, it's time to call the legal system to task on this. If this were happening to any other family (i.e., with less money and influence), the guy would have been in jail long ago.

Obviously, the money that's allowing Heather Grossman to stay alive is also the same money that's slowly killing her.

Thank you for not fearing this man's family like the legal system has by bringing to light what a monster this guy is. At least someone has! "Paralyzed in Paradise" was very well written and a big thanks to this newspaper and its staff for being courageous enough to print it!

*Laurie Baker  
Columbus, North Carolina*

**Phoenix New Times**

**May 22, 2003**

**Letters to the Editor**

### **Sympathy Strike**

**Judge dread:** I just finished reading "[Paralyzed in Paradise](#)" ([Amy Silverman, May 1](#)) and am speechless! I happen to know Heather Grossman and the children. My 12-year-old son wrote a letter to the judge telling about the harsh behavior John Grossman used against the family dog Raider, who by the way was just awarded to John! I am in complete amazement! How much is a family supposed to take before someone helps them? This is a family dog that my children have played with! How can a judge be so cruel? This dog means nothing to John, but has been a loving companion for these children through all of the horrible times! Very unfair! These poor children!

How can Rick Romley let such a horrible case of abuse like this go unnoticed? Heather could not defend herself. Why is his office not pressing charges? He is giving Heather's ex-husband a free pass to go out and abuse again. Is a 200-page police report with several witnesses not enough evidence to press charges? In the future I will never again support Rick Romley.

It clearly seems to me that many people have been persuaded by John's father's money! This is such a sad story for the whole family. I felt so helpless after reading this story I can't even imagine how Heather feels.

*Jocelyn Schuman  
Scottsdale*

**AG-gravated:** Great article! Do not let up. Get 'em!! The Grossmans and the Arizona attorney general are ignorant wretches and other things I could call them that are not for print!

My heart goes out to Heather -- a beautiful, wonderful and strong spirit. I hope someone comes up with a cure for spinal ailments.

*Don Carter  
Orono, Minnesota*

**Appall bearer:** I am appalled at the story I have just read. To think that in this day and age people can get away with such cruelty. What kind of a world do we live in? It is so clear that money talks. What about this woman and her children? How will they survive? Rick Romley needs to take action to protect our women and children now!

*Ellen Schnall  
Scottsdale*

**Witnesses for the prosecution:** I find it horrifying that in the year 2003, the DA's office can be so in the dark ages regarding domestic abuse. How much more evidence is needed to prosecute this case? It sounds as though there are multitudes of witnesses to corroborate Heather Grossman's story as well as speaking to her credibility. How much more does this poor woman and her children have to suffer?

Please do the right thing.

*Donna B. Shortt  
Laguna Niguel, California*

**Taking action:** Thank you so much for printing the very well-researched article about Heather Grossman. It has, though, left me feeling speechless and, of course, incensed. I am taking this first course of action to beg Rick Romley to please reconsider taking action about this horribly obvious case of abuse. It is apparent that Heather is too weak to fight for herself; we as a community must stand up together and do it for her!

*Merry Cole Bender  
Via e-mail*

**Abuse of justice:** I read your story about Heather Grossman and I was saddened beyond belief that anyone would have to endure the life that Heather has endured. I also have to say that I am sickened that Rick Romley's office is not all over this case to prosecute. According to your article, there are several witnesses who saw Mr. Grossman verbally and even physically abuse Heather, not to mention the Paradise Valley police and their reports. Also, according to your article, Mr. Grossman's attorney found only one witness who saw nothing. That does not make sense to me. Based on the numbers alone, I would think Mr. Romley's office has no other choice than to seek justice for Heather and her family.

I am writing to support Heather Grossman and her family to see if there is anything we, the public, can do to support her case. It seems to me that if we don't go after the "bad" guys when we have witnesses to prove the case, what happens to those women and even men who are abused who don't have witnesses? I guess they have absolutely no chance at all for justice. Heather and her kids have been through enough.

*Nancy Fisher  
Via e-mail*

**Phoenix New Times**

**May 15, 2003**

**Letters to the Editor**

**Heather and Yon**

**Motherly love:** My heart goes out to Heather Grossman and her kids (["Paralyzed in Paradise," Amy Silverman, May 1](#)). Shame on the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for dismissing Heather's case! The county attorney needs to be schooled in domestic abuse behavior so that next time he won't so easily dismiss this type of case.

I am a mom who has a child at the same school that Heather's kids go to. I have seen Heather on numerous occasions visiting the school in support of her kids. I feel so bad about what has happened to her and her kids at the hands of her sick and abusive husband. How can anyone be so cruel? This man should definitely be punished!

His family should continue to pay for her medical care. They are the ones who created this monster!

I want Heather and her kids to know that there are many people who care about them and wish them nothing more than to get the respect, love and care they deserve. If this article said anything, it speaks volumes of a mother's love and the will to survive.

*Patrice Farner  
Via e-mail*

**Helping hand:** Thank you for your article on Heather Grossman. It is appalling to me that the county prosecutor thinks he doesn't have enough evidence to go to court. So, Heather changed her story. Has he ever been the victim of mental and physical torture? People will say what they need to say in order to stay alive. It is only when they feel safe that the truth can be told. What about all the other people who are willing to testify as to what went on? It sickens me that this man will be getting away with terrorizing Heather and her children. I was wondering if you knew of any efforts being made on her behalf. I'm sure that this story has enraged more than just a few people and it is my guess that if we knew where to express our fury, we would. Can you help? I've e-mailed the county prosecutor's office as well as the governor. What more can I, as well as other concerned victims' advocates, do? I wish *20/20* or one of the other news programs would get ahold of this, but I don't know how to go about that. I'm appalled and sickened that this case is being dismissed and would appreciate any suggestions. Thank you.

*Mary Buchanan  
Prescott*