

Man given probation for choking wife

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A Niverville man has been given an 18-month suspended sentence with supervised probation for choking his then-wife in front of their daughters.

The 42-year-old man, who is technically still married to the woman he choked was convicted through trial and was sent to St Pierre court on Tuesday for his sentencing.

The accused said he hasn't seen his children since he choked his wife but is overall happier than before because he doesn't have to see the woman he tied the knot with and he's also able to reconnect with his friends.

"I definitely regret that night, I know that it shouldn't have ever happened, I never should have done that to my wife period, and especially in front of my children, that's even more inexcusable," he said.

"It was just unfortunately a mental snap that night based on all the other issues that we had been going through, the lack of trust that I also had there from her, it just pushed me over the edge."

"You're absolutely right, I should've left, I should have walked away, I should have left the marriage prior to all this," he said to Judge Lee Ann Martin.

The victim said she and her daughters have been going to therapy since that February evening, she also said that the children were terrified, and have been asking repeatedly if the front door is locked, or who is walking down the street.

She said that they have missed daycare and school to go to therapy and that she's missed work to do the same.

"No one should have to feel unsafe in their home, no one should have to change to locks in order to feel safe, no one should have to have their kids constantly ask if the doors are locked, no one should have to constantly reassure their kids that their father is not coming back to hurt them or their mother, no one should have to seek out therapy in order to feel safe, no one should have to ask their seven-year-old daughter or their child of any age to call their grandmother, no one should have to request that call in order to survive the violence in front of their children in their own home," said the victim. "No mother should have to answer that terrified call from their granddaughter saying, 'daddy's hurting mommy, come quick.'"

She said that if her daughter hadn't called her grandma to report what her dad was doing, she would probably still be in that toxic relationship, with her kids witnessing the pain the couple had gone through for even longer.

"Since the incident, there's been many sleepless nights being worried about him showing up at my house, not only for myself but for my girls as well," she said. "I had to install cameras and change the locks in order to feel safe."

Crown attorney Valérie Hébert asked for the accused to be in custody for six months, followed by 12 months of probation.

Defence attorney and NDP MLA Mark Wasyliv argued that his client is a good person, he does a lot for the community, and he has no prior criminal record, and asked for a lighter sentence. The convicted man works in construction and is a volunteer firefighter, where he won the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal.

Wasyliv said he had heard comments from people at TMT Construction that Rempel is a model employee.

He said that one of his concerns with getting convicted is that he might lose his job as a volunteer firefighter with the Town of Niverville. He added that people who oversee him have said it might not be in the crew's and town's best interest to keep him on staff.

He added that he has also been going to therapy since the incident and completed a four-month parenting course through Child and Family Services. He also said he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because of his firefighting and that his broken childhood is partly to blame for the incident, having been abused and bullied as a child.

"You've had many many things that were going on that were never ever dealt with, instead you pushed the meat down and, on this date, I accept that you just lost it, and you lost it in a very serious way," said Martin.

"You went berserk, it could've ended up much worse, and you did this in front of your children, your children as I understand, who loved you."

Along with the probation, he was handed a two-year no-contact order with the woman he is currently in the process of getting a divorce with. Surcharges were waived.