I have been re-reading the emails we sent each other 3-4 years ago. Truly dreadful stuff.

I will not resend these to you as I think you too would find them upsetting. I feel there has been a kangaroo trial of me with you as judge and jury and me unable to defend myself. It is easy to character assassinate someone but unfair not to give them the right to respond.

Yes I married your father when I was 21, young naïve and immature. But I did care for him at that time.

When we returned from our honeymoon in Ireland he sat on the bottom of the stairs in Springett Avenue – our new home – and told me he had made a mistake. Just imagine how I felt. I had little to do with the ‘wedding’ – this was left to Nan and Gran but I knew it had cost quite a bit. How could I go running home to my Mum and Dad?

Eventually Pat calmed down and I assumed this was just part of his anxious personality which I had been dealing with. I buried my head – mitigating circumstances I have described already. I needed to grow up.

One night in the first year of our marriage Pat did not return home until after midnight. We had a telephone but he chose not to use it. He arrived home very drunk. I had been so worried and asked him where he had been. He ignored me and turned on the TV. My big mistake was to turn it off. I ended up on the floor being kicked for I cannot remember how long. My face was marked as was my neck. Well and truly beaten and in shock. He became very remorseful and I forgave. This was the beginning of a coercive relationship. It happens and is happening to many relationships as I write. I told no one. Too ashamed I suppose and feeling a failure.

There were many other incidents and I experienced them, continued to bury my head and continued to hope I could ‘make it all better’. How naïve was that? Pat never changed and became increasingly more difficult.

Yes I continued and had you and Matt. I loved you both. I breast fed you taught you both to read – was up at night for 18 months for Matt who was a very anxious baby.

When we returned from Nassau we returned to Springett Avenue. Pat had a job in Worthing but stayed with Gran during the week. I managed as I have always. Then Gran suggested we swapped homes. We moved to Ditchling Road and she took over SA.

Eventually we decided to sell SA and had put an offer in on a house further up Ditchling Road. Then the bombshell. Gran told Pat that she wanted to stay in Ringmer and that he was always telling her what to do with 177 and now was his opportunity. I was devastated. I did not want a seven bedroomed house which had not been maintained in years – I saw all the pitfalls. But the pair of them wore me down until I had to accept the inevitable.

We had to have four students on a three meals a day basis from language schools to pay all the bills. I decorated, cooked organised and worked a 16 hour day. I was truly manic wanting to make it work because I was worried about debt. The students gave you and Matt much attention. It was a physically very hard time spinning all the plates.

Then when he was 30 Pat came in from work one evening to tell me he was not eating with the students anymore – he was in a state, telling me that ‘if you haven’t made it by the time you are 30 you might as well give up’. He had breakdown of sorts although we were not allowed to talk about it. He saw a psychiatrist, had medication and it was shoved under the carpet.

We sold 177 and moved to Edburton. For a time things were reasonably calm. Bernadette’s became a focus of our lives and you and Matt did well in school.

Pat continued with his mood swings – the stonewalling when I was least expecting it. One terrible time I asked him for some help with Matt who was being very difficult one morning. What Pat did still shocks me. He beat him, kicked him until he wet himself. I never got over that but suffice to say I never asked him for any ‘help’ again.

Many times I asked him for a separation but he would always say ‘You go’. I took advice. There was no matrimonial homes act in those days and I would have forfeited my half of the house despite it being in joint names. I did not have the means to earn a good income and therefore this is why I chose to go back and get my RGN. I remember Pat towering over me saying ‘There are many men who would not allow their wives to do what you are doing’.

This period was very difficult for me and both you and Matt. I cooked every day and assume you all ate if I was at work. I bought a dishwasher as no one helped clear up. Nan had just retired and I paid her well over the living wage to clean the house once a week. I believe Pat disappeared most nights to the pub. He was determined not to support me despite constantly complaining that we did not have two large salaries coming in. Matt became increasingly difficult to deal with and you would not talk despite my many efforts. You will dispute this.

Eventually I became qualified. During this time you were becoming anxious and withdrawn and this culminated with you walking off campus. Your father said he would go to Newman to sort the punitive behaviour of Ms H – a very nasty woman. I could not believe it when it transpired he did not support you. We had one of our dreadful rows which meant I said what I thought and he stonewalled.

I suggested you go to Varndean and you did have an interview and they offered you a place. You told me that Pat had said you would be out of the house if you changed 6th form? I remember saying to just do it but you would not. Pat was a bully at the highest level.

Our financial state became quite healthy after I qualified. The irony was that this was the time Pat chose to leave having an affair with another lecturer.

You went to Warwick and Matt to the Army until he told me he would go AWOL if I did not write to his Commanding Officer to release him.

I collected you and took you back to Warwick, once brought Nan. Once Pat and I collected you together.

Pat continued to harass me to sell the house – he wanted his money – despite the fact he had a flat with money I had also raised on my mortgage to help him out.

Yes I met David and we moved to Finchingfield. You had returned to go to Sussex Uni. Your choice and I felt very bad at leaving. Matt went on his travels.

Then the sky falls in again and I return to Brighton to support Matt which I am still doing.

We all have memories but how we interpret them is very different. I tried my best to support you financially when I could which was when I retired and then later when Nan and Grandad were both dead.

I asked for your support once – for the notes which were so awful – a cabal of mainly male psychs jumping on board to assassinate my character while I was trying to support Matt and work with Pat his father. I regret asking you and would never have done so if I had realised the impact. But Kyran we had plenty of time to talk over the years and I do not think you could accuse me of not being a listener. Maybe I am wrong again.

I could go describing incidents over the years which have been dragged back recently but I am trying to move on again.

What I will say is that Pat never stopped talking about Edward Gordon Dale. There were so many secrets about this man – went away for three years – supposedly to Switzerland and one incident Pat mentioned was that when he came back Pat and Tony were 5-6 and 3-4 respectfully. He apparently took them for a ride in the country – they lived in Worcester and then made them get out some way from home as some sort of character building exercise. We and I alone spoke to Gran on many occasions but she was tight lipped and would not discuss EGD.

I hope that I have been a little more open about the past and I am willing to discuss anything and apologise again for all the things I got wrong but Kyran I am not the wicked person you seem to have me down as. I would dearly love to see you again.

lmx