# Bridget has controlled the narrative

After the movie last night, spooky thing about the impact of generations, I wrestled all night with the conviction that Miriam just believes a kind of simple story -- something like what Mary Pat believes sometimes -- and that I am the unreasonable person.

A conviction that I ought to put in writing some kind of last will and testament to pass on to my children. Written out of the conviction that I have lost them any way. So I rehearsed some of the data in my sleep. I don't like having to go over the territory again.

## Long history

* years of Bridget's abuse of me and the girls
* the decision to leave was mine because Bridget wouldn't make it together. It was made specifically for the girl's best interest, followed by a decision for me to escape a toxic relationship

## Meeting in February

At this point in the history, Mary Pat was non-existent. I had not a single shred of involvement with her other than as a professional contact.

* I had concluded in the fall of 2010 that I could not longer justify staying in the marriage.
* I met with my bishop to inform him of that fact. It was the content of that conversation that largely informed the conversation that I sought out with Bridget some time in early February.
* Bridget's refusal to have a conversation in Feb. 2011 about the girl's best interest. Trying to set the conversation with accusations that were imaginary:
  + implying that there was more to the pre-school incident than employees and regulations gone amuck
  + she and her family blamed me for her estrangement from her son (she told me at the apartment in Waikiki in the week or two after 9/11
  + that there had been inappropriate something or others in the dealings with difficult pastoral situations at St. Andrew's
  + since she and all others have refused to talk to me since then, I don't know all of what she has accused

with threats that I knew she was capable of following through with:

* "... you probably think that the girls are going to go with you."
* for years at that point I knew that she was willing to go against her own best interests to cause me pain or destruction. **In this case hurting me has gone down as in her best interests.**
* she said in the Jan event that she was going to go to the bishop to tell him the real scoop. This followed a long pattern where she was willing to go to inappropriate great lengths to undermine me. In the early 1990's, when she had already begun demanding that I seek a divorce, at a dinner with a clergy couple that she had had hopes we might be friends with, she spent the time passionately telling them all the things that were wrong with me. Finally, I said, "Just stop." and of course the possible friendship ended there.
* The next communication from her was a phone call, informing me that she would be moving out with the girls at the end of ...?

## Long history of conflict unto the death

She first started wanting me to initiate divorce before Lydia was born. That continued year after year.

For several years in Honolulu, I would try to make a new beginning by telling her that I loved her, that I was sorry for wrongs of the past, but that I was uncertain of what she wanted or where her feelings and convictions were. Trying to say, "Show me a sign." She refused to say, always responding with, I'm not ready to commit to that, we'll have to wait and see.

She had bailed on the only viable counseling that we had entered into, walking out of a session, never to return. The content of the final few sessions with the counselor had been to process what I should do on my own, since she had elected not to be a partner.

For many years I had claimed that we had **zero problem-solving ability** between us. That if the problem had entailed getting out of a wet paper bag we would not have been able to do it together.

## Long history of thinking that I was crazy

In recent years I have learned how this pattern of the victim being manipulated to think that they were crazy of is characteristic of bullies and people with severe behavioral dysfunction -- our president is a case in point.

It is a pattern also of *I hate you, don't leave me* which had resonated with me from the 1990's amidst conversations with the organist Philip Peter.

For several years my spiritual director -- the person who, without any question, knew me the best -- had been saying to me, "Given the evidence, why do you not get a divorce? For your own good and for the sake of the children?" Repeatedly I said, "Because I have made a promise and a pledge." In the end, the only thing that made sense "for my sake and the sake f the children was to make a break." **At this point there was still no presence at all of Mary Pat.**

I thought of it in terms of: "I know that it is going to cause a lot of pain to make a break, but the pain she inflicts on me will eventually come to an end." Prior to this the only end that I could imagine was with my death.

## Girls

* I have never put down in writing the pattern of abuse that I witnessed between Bridget and our two daughters. It was in fact one of the main conscious reasons for my change of mind in 2010-11 to seek a divorce.
* One of the most real memories I still carry with me is telling people, from my spiritual director down to just ordinary people (when it seemed appropriate) that Lydia and Emma were the lights of my life and that I would do anything for them, including die for them. That was genuine and it ought to be heard in the context of my decision in 2010-2011 to make a break with Bridget. **I came to the conclusion that it was the best thing for the girls.**
* There were two parts to my seeing that it would be better for them. One was that they were being fed a model of love and family that was in fact destructive for them. Divorce would lead to being done with modeling that lie. My hope also was that by re-configuring the family that they could begin to find their way out of the impact of Bridget's seeming rejection of them.
* I didn't realize the degree to which B. would use the girls as a weapon against me. I shouldn't have been surprised.
* I had so much I could have offered them. B. made sure that wouldn't happen. A big one now in the years after their graduation is that I offered them the chance to have a free college education. Now they are enslaved to student loans.
* To hear a child plead with a mother to spend time with her and the mother's response is a clear and emphatic, "No." To hear a mother continually over years and years make jokes at the expense of her daughter. The message of the joking was, "You are inferior." Agony and impotence.
* Bridget made sure to sabotage Lydia's counseling that I had initiated during B's absence. For B. the answer was always to take a drug. She had not wanted to deal with Jacob's acting. She just wanted a drug to fix it. The same was true for Lydia. She sabotaged many efforts I made to play a role in the decision-making in the family. And she made sure the girls knew what she was doing.

## Other

* Bridget began to triangulate me with my family in the 1990's. I was aware that she contacted Owen in the 90's and openly complaining to him about what was wrong with me. He did the same with my sister who was the easiest to turn against me, since Shirley had spent her whole life resenting me for various things.
* In our courting years I was as open as I could possibly be about my past. That included betrayal in my first marriage. Working through the guilt, retribution, peace, and forgiveness had provided me with some strength in attempting to go into second marriage. As I learned only after the marriage had happened, Bridget never forgave me for the sins of my first marriage. I was forever condemned to try to "prove" that I had paid for my sin, that I was worthy of Bridget's forgiveness.
* Bridget lived with me under the terms that I could never measure up to her standards.
* I came to believe that the marriage had begun under false pretenses because she wanted me to promise me that we wouldn't move away from her family. That promise represents a bargain at the beginning of the marriage. It is grounds for annulment if one is thinking in those terms.