



2 Impasse Cristol
Rue du Port
34140 Mèze
France
26. August 2010

FROM : Jason Armstrong <ja@riverdrums.com>

FOR THE ATTENTION OF : Jane Hansen <jhahov@statsforvaltning.dk>

RE : Remarks concerning the names of my daughters, Tatjana Svane Armstrong and Sophia Svane Armstrong

I welcome this belated opportunity to comment on the name change of my daughters, Tatjana Svane Armstrong and Sophia Svane Armstrong to Tatjana Svane and Sophia Svane.

I am opposed to the change of their names, and would like their full name to be returned to them :

- the process followed was illegal and irregular
- the attempts to address the situation since then have better served to retain the status quo, and cover irregularities afterwards
- the name change did upset Tatjana, in particular, and while she may have been taught to accept it, the matter should be redressed
- my daughter's names at birth were agreed between Maria Svane and myself to reflect both their parents, and they were christened Svane Armstrong. Their Armstrong heritage should not be wiped from their history because Maria has a whim to do so

In reference to your request, please find herewith the information requested :

My connection with Tatjana (7) and Sophia (3) and time spent together

I was present at Tatjana's birth, and formed a strong bond with her from then. She was closer to me than to her mother for the first four years and three months of her life, a source of some tension between Maria and I.

We first lived in Copenhagen for six months after she was born, and then we lived together in Johannesburg, South Africa, until Maria Svane left for Denmark with my daughters at the end of March 2007.

I was actively involved in all aspects of raising Tatjana; from taking her to and from nursery school, to feeding, washing and playing with her.

I lived with Sophia, for 6 months after her birth in South Africa in October 2006, until she returned to Denmark with Maria Svane at the end of March 2007.

When Maria Svane decided to return to Denmark after the failure of our marriage, I agreed with her that I would allow the children to live in Denmark, and that I would also move there, set up a

separate home, and remain an active father to my children.
We agreed I would be able to see the girls as much as possible.
My sole purpose in moving to Denmark was to be a father to my daughters.

I arrived in Copenhagen in early July 2007. I then organised my work so that I would be able to spend every afternoon with Tatjana and Sophia, picking them up from their schools early in the afternoon, and returning them to Maria Svane's apartment at 17.00.
They also spent weekends with me. Tatjana was bewildered at the sudden change in her lives, but we managed well, and retained a strong bond. I grew closer to Sophia, too, over this time.

After hearing I had begun a new relationship (with my future wife), Maria Svane asked the statsforvaltningen to restrict my access to the girls to every second weekend. I objected to this, and asked for them to spend equal time with me. However, the statsforvaltningen ruled, in October 2007, that I could only see the girls every second weekend. I retained access to Sophia at her playschool three mornings during the week.

I continued to ask both Maria, and the statsforvaltningen, for more access to the children, and also for permission to travel with them so that they could see the rest of their family in South Africa, but without success.
My parents visited us in Denmark during the summer of 2008, and my girlfriend (later my wife, Christine) and her daughter, Kayla, visited me several times in 2007 and 2008, and also spent time with Tatjana and Sophia.
These visits went very well, and we all remained very close and loving, despite the difficulties we experienced from Maria Svane. My relationship with Sophia grew in this time into a full relationship, based on trust and love, and my bond with Tatjana remained untouched by our travails.

By the end of 2008, after repeatedly failing to bring about either a better relationship with Maria, or seeing more of my daughters, I decided to temporarily move back to South Africa at the end of January 2009.
I spent the rest of 2009 in Johannesburg in South Africa, where I married again.
During these 11 months, we made plans to move to France, to be closer to the girls, as this would facilitate more frequent travel to Denmark.

I nonetheless visited Copenhagen from South Africa three times during this year, and spent two separate weeks in June and July with Tatjana and Sophia - one of them with my wife, step-daughter and son, Jared - and the other with my mother.
I also spoke to my daughters on the phone every week from South Africa, a right I had to defend from Maria who felt inconvenienced by this.

We moved to Mèze in France, in January 2010, in order to be closer to Tatjana and Sophia in Copenhagen.
Thus far, I have seen them the following times this year (2010):

- * 12 - 19 February
- * 28 March - 5 April
- * 28 - 31 May
- * 30 July - 9 August

And will see them again for these times:

- * 27 - 30 August
- * 23 - 28 September
- * 21 - 26 October
- * 25 December - 2 January

I also talk to Tatjana and Sophia once a week, every Thursday night at 17.30.

I maintain a very close and loving relationship with both girls.

A child's sense of identity

The children should feel that they are identified with both their parents, even if their parents are no longer together. I feel that the girls' names as they are/were; "Tatjana Svane Armstrong" and "Sophia Svane Armstrong", represent their connection to both of their parents, Maria Svane and Jason Andrew Armstrong.

I feel the children should retain this link to me, their father, as it is in their interests to feel that they have a connection and bond with both of their parents.

Tatjana, in particular, has a strong sense of what her name means, and is aware that she is part of a much larger family of Armstrongs.

We joke with each other, using the phrase *stærke muskler* with each other as a reference to our name - the family crest features a muscled arm flexed, a literal interpretation of "Armstrong".

Objection to prior process

I only found out that the girls' names had been changed when I was talking to Tatjana on the 29th October 2009. She mentioned to me that her name was no longer Armstrong, and that her mother had told her that she was now called 'Tatjana Svane'. I was shocked by this, and Tatjana added that when she was with me, she would be called Armstrong.

Only the next day, presumably after Tatjana told Maria she had told me, did I receive an email from Maria informing me:

"For practical reasons the girls names have been changed to:

*Sophia Svane
Tatjana Svane"*

I object to the way in which this process has affected Tatjana and Sophia, and especially Tatjana.

Tatjana finds herself in a situation where she knows that her parents don't agree. She has told me a few times, when she is with me, that she wants her name to stay 'Armstrong'. I'm sure that she can't say this directly to her mother.

When the parish (Timotheuskirken) contacted me on the 17 June 2010, and said that Tatjana needed to have a chance to express her opinion, I said that I would like her to be accompanied by someone other than her mother, and I suggested her brother, Jared, who is studying Engineering in Copenhagen.

The next thing I heard though, was that Tatjana had already been to talk to the parish, accompanied by her *mormor*.

I don't consider her at all a neutral person, as she lives with Maria, Sophia and Tatjana. In fact, Tatjana told me that her *mormor* said that it would be better for her to keep the name 'Svane', because she lived with her mother.

So she directly influenced Tatjana as to what she should say.

So now Tatjana finds herself in a position that, she feels that whatever she says she is going to upset one of her parents.

I feel strongly that this has been an invalid and incorrect process, and that it has already caused much damage, and it should be reversed.

The small inconvenience of changing their names back should not outweigh the loss of their greater heritage.

Origins of the Armstrong name

The surname 'Armstrong' originates as the name of a Scottish clan on the border between England and Scotland.

The original bearer of the Armstrong name is thought to be a Danish prince, Siward Fairbairn, who lived from about 995 to 1056 AD.

Thus, the name could be said to be returning to it's place of origin, in Denmark.