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INTRODUCTION

I think that, because of some language difficulties, that my position in this case has not been accurately represented. I also have missed some of the discussions that are noted and which took place in Danish, and so wish to respond to them here.

TATJANA

I have always had a very strong and close connection to my daughter, Tatjana. The night that she was born, she slept next to my skin for most of the night. She has always had a closer bond to me than to Maria, and many people have remarked on this. The impression given that Maria stayed home and that I worked all the time is not correct. I was actively involved in her everyday life, feeding and providing for her. I would put her to bed every night and read to her. When she was sick, I would stay home and hold her the whole day. I walked her to her playschool very often, and fetched her too. Anyone who knows us can verify that she is strongly bonded to me, and that she is very happy being together with me. We play, sing, dance and draw together, and we have a lot of fun. It hurts us both to be apart. It has been said that the child is strongly identified with the mother for the first few years, but in this case I don't believe it is true; and I think that Tatjana is closer to me.

JARED

My son, Jared, lived with us every alternate week. He, Tatjana and I have a close relationship and Tatjana looks up to him as her older sibling. Jared is now 16 and has a Danish passport (his mother is Danish), and we hope to place him in a Danish university after he has finished his schooling in South Africa.

MARIA

In our marriage, Maria and I were unhappy for a long time. We saw a counselor about this during 2005. Maria has always had a violent temper, and this issue came up often during our counseling. Her temper

and violence caused me to distance myself from her. We had been living separate lives, including sleeping separately, since some time in 2005. We tried to keep our problems away from the children, but they were occasionally exposed to Maria shouting at me.

SOPHIA

Maria had been asking me to have another child. I was very strongly against this idea. I knew that our marriage was not strong, and I also was happy with my children and didn't want more. Maria kept on persisting, until she threatened that unless I agreed, she would leave with Tatjana. Faced with this blackmail and not wanting to lose Tatjana, I agreed, and Maria became pregnant in January 2006. But our relationship did not improve, and during April 2006 she asked me for a divorce.

We agreed that it would not be a good idea for us to separate then because of the pregnancy, so we continued to live together in the same house. By the time that Sophia was born, in October 2006, we had agreed that we would separate and not be together anymore. Although I was against the pregnancy, I love Sophia and intend to protect and care for her as for my other children.

DENMARK

Maria has always intended to move back to Denmark. She has not been happy in South Africa, and struggled to find work and friends there. I acknowledged that it would be better for her to return, and decided to make my own home here to be nearer my children. When we discussed that she would move back to Denmark, I had to give consent for the children to leave. Maria promised me that she would in no way prevent me from seeing them when I arrived in Denmark. Based on this, I signed the papers for them to get their passports. I feel very strongly that Maria lied to me about this, and she has tried to prevent me seeing them since I arrived in Denmark in July. She has threatened a few times to call the police if I picked them up from school. She has also lied about plans that she has for them so as to prevent me from seeing them. Maria has been extremely hostile since I have arrived here. She withdrew an amount of almost DKK 200,000- from my bank account in South Africa, causing the account to be frozen. Even though she returned the money, I was only able to use the account again after traveling back to South Africa.

I did not think it would be a good idea for Tatjana to move to Denmark immediately, because I knew that it would take me some time to sort out

all the things in South Africa, including my work, packing up the house and all the other administrative things. But Maria insisted that Tatjana go with her. I think that this was a mistake, and that the transition for Tatjana would have been easier if she had stayed with me and arrived in Denmark when I did.

RESPONSIBILITY

I also dispute the assertions that I am not responsible as a father. I make sure that the children are in bed on time. I feed them good organic food. I make sure that they are bathed and clean and warm. I play with them and teach them and take them outside. I have also organised the work I do so that I can have the time to spend with them during the day, as well as at night. As well as being the financial provider in South Africa, I have also paid for all the costs involved in the move to Denmark, both for Maria and the children. Further, I have been paying DKK 4000 to Maria since May.

DISCUSSIONS

I have tried to discuss various arrangements with Maria, but have always been met with hostility. Previous attempts at discussing various aspects of the girls future were met with the reply that if I didn't like what she wanted for them, I could go to court. Subsequent proposals have been rejected out of hand, without any attempt at discussion.

SIBLINGS

I agree that the children should grow up in a strong sibling bond. But I also question the idea that the siblings should always be together. My experience is that when there is only one parent to look after them, that the youngest gets priority and that the oldest's needs often get postponed because the baby needs the immediate attention. And also, they are nearly four years apart in age, and so cannot play smoothly together. I am not saying that they should be separated, and I do believe that they need to spend a lot of time together, only that I don't think they need always to be together.

TRAVEL

I also think the idea of Maria's that I would abscond with Tatjana is ridiculous. I love all my children. I have kept a good relationship with Jared's mother, and have spent equal time with him over the years. Whilst I have lived in Denmark, I have seen him during every holiday with his mother's consent, without there being any question of me trying

to keep him here. I attach a testimonial from her attesting to this.

FUTURE

I would like to work towards an arrangement in the long term, where it is agreed that both children will spend equal time with each parent. I understand Sophia's special needs as she is still a small baby. I want to work towards an agreement where, in two years time, both children will spend one week with each parent. And I would like to discuss how this interim period, over the next two years, can be planned so as to make this transition as smooth as possible for them.