

New Years Day, 2006, I it was the happiest time of my life, or so I thought at the time. I got engaged to, who I thought was, the man of my dreams. We did not set a wedding date right away. Every time we talked about it, we would have reservations and just be very non-committal about when. We had a very volatile year that year. Broke up and got back together at least 3 times. I took a temporary tour of duty to DC, while my fiancé took a job out in Denver. We started to commute to see each other. On one of his visits to DC, we decided to just go get married. We did it in haste, almost like we wanted to just do it before we changed our minds again. He went back to Denver shortly after we got married. When he got back to Denver, he called me asking me to take some nude pictures of myself and text them to him. I was hesitant. He told me that it would help “hold him over” until we could see each other again. “After all, men have needs and if you don’t give me an outlet for my needs, maybe they will get fulfilled somewhere else”. He promised me that he would look at the pictures on his phone and delete them shortly after. This was the love of my life, the man of my dreams and I trusted him wholeheartedly. So, I, reluctantly, conceded. A year or two passes, we were struggling with a troubled marriage. He mentions to me at one point that he has those pictures on his email. I wasn’t happy about that. They were supposed to have been texted pictures on his phone only, then deleted within a day or two. Then I found out that he still had them and that they were in his email. I told him if they were in his email, it was just as good as being posted on the www. He just told me I was crazy that nobody could see them if they were stored on his email. He assured me that he would delete them immediately. Then on March 15, 2009, my 35th birthday, we got into an argument. He got mad and left. He did not come home until 9:00 the next morning. He smelled of smoke and alcohol. He went out to a buddy’s house and got drunk. He was telling me stories about the previous night. He told me that one of his friends had started seeing a new girl and had taken pictures of videos of her and them having sex, without her knowing. The friend started showing all the guys the pictures and video’s. My husband was telling me how wrong it was and he could not believe that he would do that. I remembered about the pictures that my husband had had of me at one point. I asked him about them. He said those had been gone for quite a while now. I was skeptical because he had told me the same thing before. He left the house. I started doing some thinking and got very nervous. I got into his email and saw that, not only did he still have the pictures; that he forwarded them out to all of his buddies. I had never felt so little in my whole life. I felt sick to my stomach. I wanted to throw up. I felt so ashamed, disgusted, dirty and betrayed! The man who I loved and trusted with my whole heart, at one point, had violated me in the most intimate way. I called him and confronted him about it. He told me that he knew that I wasn’t happy in the marriage and had wanted to leave him. He did not feel like I treated him with the appropriate respect, so he wanted to show me how it felt to be disrespected. He knew that was the ultimate violation to me and that it would cut me to the core worse than anything else. During our short 3 year marriage, he was constantly doing things to exercise his control over me. He would draw his fist back at me, threatening to punch me when I was 6 months pregnant. He would punch the bed next to my head and said it would be my head next time, if I didn’t start respecting him more. He bought an assault rifle and handgun and pointed the handgun at me when I was “nagging” him about not having a gun safe and I did not like those being unsecured in the house with our child. He once told me that I was white trash I was because I would not eat my lunch in the order that he directed me to. He was constantly reminding me that I was “damaged goods” and that no one would want me because I had already been seen by the world (in the pics he sent out). When I had to deploy to Afghanistan, he hacked into my

individual savings account and stole all of my deployment money, so I would not have any money to leave him when I got home. When I got diagnosed with depression and started anti-depressants, he told me that I was nothing but a crazy whore and no judge would let me keep my daughter. After 3 years of marriage, when the continuum of violence had escalated to the point of physical abuse, I finally found the nerve to leave him. The pictures were just one more tool that he used to dehumanize me, humiliate, control and continue to abuse me, sexually, emotionally and physically.

The fact that there are still such intimate and private pictures of me available to be distributed is constantly on my mind and is completely humiliating. I never know when or where they can resurface again. It has taken away my control over my own sexuality and privacy. It has affected my self esteem, caused trust issues in future relationships and has left permanent scars. I feel like I have no sense of privacy. It was a violation in the most personal way. I share a beautiful daughter with my ex. Not only has it affected how I feel about myself, it has affected how I view raising my daughter. I am so scared that if it is perfectly ok to do what he did, what will stop perpetrators from violating or exploiting my daughter in the same way? I am not comfortable when she goes to see her father, knowing who he is and that fact that he is still friends with all those people he sent my pictures to. Are they going to view my daughter the same way and use that as justification in their predatory heads to violate her in despicable ways? If someone's wife is not off limits, I doubt they have the humanity to respect my daughter. I fear that one day my daughter will see pictures of her mother in a completely disgusting way.

It is my body, shouldn't I get to choose who gets to see it?!