

State of Minnesota

County
Ramsey

District Court

Judicial District:	Second
Court File Number:	
Case Type:	Personal Injury

Timothy Hutchinson
Plaintiff

vs

Civil Complaint

Steven Anderson
Defendant

LEGAL CAUSE(S) OF ACTION

▪ **Defamation**

- A false or offensive statement, either verbal or written, about the plaintiff was made by the defendant
- The defendant made such statement to a third party (someone other than the plaintiff)
- The defendant acted negligently or with malice in making such statement
- The plaintiff suffered damages, including damage to his reputation specifically caused by the defamatory statement

▪ **Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress**

- The actions or conduct of the defendant were extreme and outrageous
- The defendant acted intentionally and/or recklessly
- The defendant’s actions or conduct caused severe emotional distress to the plaintiff

The Plaintiff makes the following complaints against the Defendant:

If you have more than 1 complaint against Defendant, list each complaint separately, including any supporting facts.

1. Steven Anderson caused undue stress and separation between my daughter and I.

My daughter, Brittany, and I were very close and spent time together frequently. See Facebook screenshots, (Exhibit A). She began dating Steven Anderson, director of youth services at Calvary Church in 2020. Within a few months Brittany came to me and said she was breaking up with him. She said that she felt as though she couldn’t be herself around him because was too controlling. She later said that she had another meeting with him, during which time he “shared his heart” with her. Brittany said that Steven told her due to his upbringing he had difficulty

properly expressing himself. Because of his explanation, she decided to again date him. Upon hearing that I decided to give him a wide swath of grace and patience when dealing with him. He took advantage of this, as documented below.

Shortly thereafter Steven approached me to help support his ministry – which is his full-time job. He says Calvary Church cannot afford to pay him a salary, so he fundraises as a substitute. I began supporting him financially and further worked with him to improve his presentation in an effort to find others who would also be supportive. I continued sending money every month for 2 ½ years – even during the time when he would file an HRO against me, as I still had hope we would settle things peacefully. My wife later said that Steven told Brittany that I wasn't sending money and had refused to help them. I eventually stopped sending money after the June 2024 payment. This is when my wife moved out of our family home due to the stress of the problems Steven caused after becoming engaged to our daughter, Brittany.

Within months after he began dating my daughter, Steven approached me and asked what it would take to have my blessing for him to marry her. One of the things I mentioned was spending more time with our family - we barely knew him. I told Steven that family was important to us, and that if he was to marry my daughter then we would want him to feel welcomed in our family and hopefully would be an active part of it.

Afterwards he made an effort to be at our house almost on a weekly basis, and things seemed to be going well.

One day he called to ask if we could hang out sometime. I said yes and we picked a date and time. When that time came, he arrived at our house, and we talked for quite a while. I sensed he had something he wanted to say or possibly ask me - maybe even permission to marry Brittany. Finally, after 3 hours I asked him *"Is there something you wanted to ask me?"* He then asked for my blessing on marrying my daughter, and I gave him that blessing. My wife and I even helped with a temporary ring until he could buy one.

Once he proposed and my daughter accepted, his entire demeanor towards myself and our family changed. Documented below are lies and exaggerations he said about me in an HRO (Harassment Restraining Order) and my response which reveals how Steven has engaged in a campaign of libel, slander and harassment which has caused significant harm to both myself, and my family.

Shortly after their engagement, he manipulated her and convinced her to stop talking with me so they could *"focus on their relationship"*. That was the last time I ever spoke with her. The last thing she said to me was *"Dad, I love you so so so so much!"*

Steven's manipulation of my daughter has included making her fearful of me through a false narrative of his claim of me threatening him with a gun, being an overall dangerous person to him, her, and the church, and convincing her to join him in filing for an HRO under false pretenses. I asked many times what the problem was and also asked to resolve any differences. He never responded. After trying for a long time without any response, I texted him the following: *"You lost far more than you gained."* Meaning, we could have had a great relationship, but he had another agenda. I tried to make peace and amends 15 times. Steven made zero attempts and refused all of my attempts at making peace.

During this time, I had been offering blanket apologies for things I had not done, just to have a relationship with my daughter. He never responded and instead continued taking everything I've done, as pure and honest as my actions were, and greatly exaggerated them and spun them into looking like everything I do is a threat to him.

His deliberate actions, hyper-exaggerated claims and outright lies have caused significant harm; due to the stress of Steven's actions, my wife and I ended our 31-year marriage. We sold the family home where we lived for 24 years, and I became homeless. I had to quit my job as a Safety and Compliance Manager. I enjoyed a corner office and had 70 people working for me - but had to quit due to my declining work performance as a result of the stress caused by Steven's negative actions and words. The day prior to selling our home I moved my belongings into a storage unit. Within a short period of time that unit was broken into and most of my valuable possessions were stolen.

It is important to note that I have enjoyed a great relationship with the others my children have dated or married. With one notable exception; a man named Kyle, who assaulted my daughter and subsequently assaulted myself. (More details on this later). Prior to Steven, my daughter Brittany dated a man name David Zimmerman for several years. David and I got along exceptionally well. When Brittany decided to break up with David, he came directly to our family home to spend time with me. I explained that since Brittany is my daughter, I needed to advocate for her. He responded, *"I know, but I feel so much better being with you."*

My youngest daughter, Vanessa, was dating a man named James Anderson (a common last name – no relation to Steven.) When he was homeless, I took him into our home just a week prior to our home being sold due to my divorce. Despite going through my own personal challenges, I still helped him. One of the ways was to help James come up with a life plan and I even rented him a hotel room. Later, when my daughter decided to end that relationship, I continued paying for his hotel room and gave him money for food and other expenses.

My oldest daughter, Victoria, dated and married a man named Jacob Rademacher. During the 12-years my daughter has been with him, Jake (Jacob) and I have enjoyed a great relationship. He has never been fearful of me, nor felt threatened in any way, shape, form or manner. Jake and I have been to hockey games, on vacation, road trips and more together. He's a fantastic son-in-law who calls me "Dad". I hoped for the same with Steven, but the evidence will show he has a different agenda.

Exhibit / Evidence; A. Facebook screenshots.

2. Steven Anderson lied about the conversation regarding a phone call about a wedding guest list.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 17.

"Within a week after Brittany and I began our engagement, the respondent began to take issue with our wedding planning. He began to call me to argue for things to be different on decisions that my finance and I had made."

My response;

His statement is false. One day Brittany was at our family house speaking to her mom and I about the guest list. It sounded as if Steven had already invited so many people there was barely any room for our side of the family. At least that was the impression I got from the conversation. At one point I heard the number of guests was already more than the total amount they agreed upon. Brittany seemed stressed by this process. Her mom approached me afterwards and asked me if I could help with this matter. She suggested I make a friendly call to Steven, and I agreed. The following day I called Steven and asked one question: *"How does the guest list honor the*

mother and father of the bride?" His reply was all about his family and never directly answered my question. He then stated that he didn't think his response answered my question. I calmly replied, *"Not really."* He then said he would get back to me about this. I offered a suggestion on how they might decide on a guest list, and he said that he would discuss this with Brittany. We then talked for a short while about other non-wedding related things and ended the call on a positive note. I then shared the details of this conversation with my wife, and we thought that call was enough and that Brittany and Steven would work things out. (He never got back to me to answer the question.)

The only other time I ever discussed the wedding with Steven was during a time when he called me about a non-wedding related topic, and I asked him if my wife and I would be able to meet his parents before the wedding. He replied, *"Not my dad, but maybe my mom when she comes to town to help me finish planning the wedding."* He made it sound as if he and his mom would be doing the wedding planning and not Brittany. I asked, *"Does Brittany know about this?"* He said yes. I then asked if there would be anything that Mrs. Hutchinson (Brittany's mom) would be able to help with. He replied, *"Maybe my mom can find something for her to do."* I then repeated an earlier question, *"And Brittany knows about this?"* He again replied, yes. I then calmly said, *"Oh, ok."* That's as far as the conversation went.

The only time I discussed the wedding with Brittany was when she came to me with a concern about their wedding photographer. I gave her some advice on how to approach Steven to discuss this topic, and nothing more.

Compare this to my oldest daughter's wedding. I caused no problems whatsoever, did not interfere with any planning, and they will both testify to that. I would have done the same for Brittany and Steven's wedding, except Steven had other plans to exclude me as the evidence will show.

Steven and Brittany were married on June 19th, 2021. I believe Steven pushed for this day to be chosen because the following day was Father's Day, and I would not be able to celebrate it with my daughter, Brittany. I allege that he did this intentionally to further harm me emotionally.

Phone Calls.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 17 – 18

"The frequency and hostility in Respondent's telephone calls increased. Amidst these interactions Brittany and I decided it would be best to set boundaries around our wedding planning and conversations with us about them."

My response;

There never were any harassing phone calls. This claim is a lie. I only made 6 phone calls to Steven in total the entire time I have known him. Two of those were about allowing him to borrow one of my wife's rings to propose to our daughter. Another call was to offer him the same advice my Father-in-law gave me prior to my marrying his daughter nearly 30 years prior. Steven became agitated and responded rudely to me. Another call was to ask if he wanted to get together and hang out – he said *"No"*, then hung up on me. There was a call about us doing a video chat to discuss some potential changes to his fund-raising presentation (I volunteered to help him with this). The other call was months later. I left a voicemail when I was upset with him after a long period of him intentionally doing things to harm both myself and my family. (More on this later.)

It should be noted that Steven made plenty of calls to me, however. He would say things such as;

- a) *"You're not a very good father."*
- b) *"Brittany deserves someone better than you."*
- c) *"If you want to have a relationship with your daughter, then you need to submit to me and let me control you."*

Here again I gave him a wide swath of grace and patience because of what he told my daughter about not being able to properly express himself. During these times I tried to steer the conversation away from negative comments and towards something more positive and family oriented.

3. Steven Anderson manipulated my daughter Brittany into thinking I am dangerous.

Brittany does Steven's laundry at our house, which I honestly didn't mind. He makes it clear that he is concerned about Covid, so when I discovered some information about that virus and fabric, I wanted to share this with him. Soon afterwards as Brittany was leaving the house, she said Steven's laundry was in the dryer and asked that once done I place it outside the front door for him to pick up. I figured this was out of concern for Covid, so I decided to write him a letter, and placed in in the laundry basket along with his clean clothes. It basically said I had done some research on Covid and was surprised it could last up to 48-hours on our clothes. Said I could appreciate his concern for being exposed to Covid. Maybe it's best his clothes are not washed at our house - at least now for now.

I then said it would have been nice to see him today. That we could have safely visited for a few minutes, especially since I tested Negative just the day before for Covid. I signed it by saying "Hope you have a wonderful day."

(A copy of this letter is included in Exhibit / Evidence – see end of this section.)

When his clothes were done, I placed them outside the front door as requested. When Steven arrived, he read the note, threw the clothes into his car, slammed the door, then stared at our house for a full minute with an angry look on his face. He then got into the car and sped off running through a stop sign and speeding up the street at approximately double the speed limit. My intentions in writing that letter was pure – I really wanted to have a good relationship with him, but it seemed he turned it around and used it as an opportunity to have a tantrum.

Then, just a day later, I came home from work to discover he was hanging out at our house with Brittany, for several hours. So, he can't come inside to pick up the laundry, or even ring the doorbell and say hi, but just a day later he can spend hours inside our home? And he's here without any acknowledgment of the letter. This seemed very disrespectful. As Brittany and Steven were leaving, Brittany said *"Hi dad"* – I responded, *"Hi honey!"* Then Steven said, *"Hello Mr. Hutchinson"*. I responded with a rather dry *"Hi"*. It bothered me that he was so rude just the day before, as well as multiple times previously, and now today when my daughter is there, he's acting nice and innocent. I didn't want to say or do anything that would be upsetting to Brittany, so I did not ask him for any explanation – at least not at that time.

Several hours later my wife came home, and I told her about this and that it bothered me. After all, he had a history of being rude to my family and myself. I spoke loudly about how upset I was and said that I did not want Steven at our house again. I then texted Steven and said he was not welcome in our home until there was mediation.

At no time when I was venting did I make any threats against Steven. My only comments were that he was disrespecting me in my own home, and I did not want him at our house anymore until differences were resolved.

I did not know that Brittany was in her bedroom and had overheard what I said. I honestly thought she had left and had specifically waited until I thought she was gone to vent my frustrations. My wife gave me a hug and we went and made dinner together. Within 10 minutes or so, we were in the kitchen laughing about some silly memes on Facebook. Yes, I raised my voice. Yes, I was upset. He's going to marry my daughter and he's treating me poorly. Any reasonable father would also be upset. But there was no threat.

I later learned that Steven used this as an opportunity to convince my daughter to move out of our house by claiming she was in danger remaining there with me.

Exhibits / Evidence; S. Laundry Letter.

The Books.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 18.

Repeated in Affidavit - Steven with Exhibits. Page 1.

"When I shared my desire to marry his daughter, months prior to asking for his blessing, he gave me two of his books, including an autobiographical work, Painful Secrets, wherein he claims to have almost committed a mass shooting as a teenager. With this context, the Respondent's placement of the gun on the banister was clearly meant and taken as a threat and intimidation towards me."

My response;

This is a gross exaggeration. In both filings he claims I gave him a copy of the books a "month" before in one and "months" before in another....it was actually 3 days prior to his asking to marry my daughter.

During a previous time that we had met, he mentioned that he heard I wrote several books. I confirmed that I had. He said that he would like to read them. I sell these books on Amazon so I typically do not have any extra copies at the house. When he expressed an interest in reading them, I went to see if I had any available copies. I found one copy of 'Painful Secrets' and one copy of 'Casting Out Doubt'. I then generously gave him a free copy of each. Had he not mentioned my being an author, I would never have thought to give him a copy of any of the books. I have not previously given a copy to any of my other daughter's current or former boyfriends, nor any of Brittany's former boyfriends.

Soon after, he asked if we could hang out for a while. I said yes, and he came over to our house. Once here he mentioned that he had read both books. One was my memoir, and he didn't really talk about that - it was the other book, the one about miracles. I was surprised he had read them already as I had just given them to him three (3) days prior. When I commented on this, he said that he had stayed up late at night to finish them. We talked about the book 'Casting Out Doubt' for a few minutes, then began talking about other topics. At no time did he seem concerned about the contents of my memoir, nor was it ever mentioned.

That evening, I had a feeling he was there to ask me if he could marry my daughter. This was an important evening, and I didn't want him to feel rushed - so I remained patient and waited. Finally, three hours later I asked if he was there, by chance, to ask me question. He said yes and asked if he could marry my daughter. I asked for there to be several conditions, and he agreed. One of them was not to interfere in my relationship with daughter. He promised that he wouldn't. Then we talked about a ring, and I offered to borrow him one of Brittany's mom's rings to

propose with. That would give him time to go ring shopping. (He has since broken the promise to not interfere in my relationship with Brittany many times over).

It is important to note that I have used my memoir, *'Painful Secrets'* as a tool to help make bullying awareness and prevention a national issue. Along the way I have prevented 6 school shootings and also prevented 300 teen suicides. I would never use this book as a threat to anyone. My wife is a high school science teacher who has given copies of this same book to some of her troubled students. She has witnessed their lives being changed by it and has seen them carry this book around with them every day as a sign of hope and overcoming life obstacles. (See exhibit P for feedback from notable individuals.) Here again, Steven is making wild claims that are simply not true at all.

Exhibit / Evidence; B. Books on Amazon.
Also, P. *'Painful Secrets'* feedback.

4. Steven Anderson falsely accused me of displaying my gun in an attempt to intimidate him.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 18.

"At the time, my fiance lived in respondents home. I visited while the respondent was at work, to make plans for the wedding. He returned before I left, and we only exchanged a brief interaction on me way our the door, however, he placed his firearm on the banister by the front door, in plain sight. I couldn't help but feel as though he had intentionally placed the gun there for me to see."

My response;

This was around the time when there were riots in Minneapolis after what happened to George Floyd. There was talk about the riots going to the suburbs. At the time my wife asked me if I still had a gun. I replied yes. The fact that she asked this question shows how discreet I am with it. I never show it to anyone, open carry or even discuss it.

She then said it would make her feel safer if she could see it regularly. So, for a short while, placing my firearm on the upstairs banister became a temporary routine for me.

Again, she literally asked me to do this. This is the only reason I would ever leave my gun out; because it was at the request of my wife. I would come home from work and place it on the end railing at the top of the steps, go into the kitchen and greet my wife with a kiss, unpack my lunch bag, then go put the gun away in our bedroom. It was only out for approximately 3 minutes. I did this only for a few weeks, then asked if she was OK with me not putting it out anymore, as I never was comfortable doing this. She said yes, and I stopped leaving it out for her to see.

One day while Steven was over, he saw the handgun in its usual place and made an incorrect assumption. He then used this occasion to begin placing thoughts into my daughter's head that I am a dangerous person, and they are both at risk of me harming them with the gun.

Steven claimed it was *"on the banister by the front door, ..."*. This is a false claim. It was actually on the 2nd floor of the house – Steven remained in the lower level and was never near the gun. It was also holstered, and I never went near it while he was in the house. During this entire time, he never saw me – he only heard my voice coming from the kitchen.

I have never waved this gun around or used it to threaten or to harm anyone. I am a very responsible gun owner. To imply that I have used my firearm to harm or threaten someone is a lie; but Steven wants to falsely portray me as a crazy man with a weapon.

5. Steven Anderson gave me a list called “Ruled of Engagement” which he required my wife and I to agree to in order for us to continue being involved in the wedding planning.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 17.

"The respondent took issue with some of the wording in our Rules of Engagement..."

My response;

Brittany and Steven came up with something called ‘*Rules of Engagement*’, and presented them to my wife and I. We both agreed to follow these rules. At this time, we were at our house sitting at the dining room table. Afterwards, Brittany and her mom went into the kitchen. I got up and said I was going to the bathroom. I began walking away but then stopped and turned around to retrieve something from the table. At that time Steven had stood up and was bent over picking up a bag from the floor with his back towards me. He did not realize I was standing there. Just then I heard him say “Oh, this is gonna be good!” He said it in a very deep voice as though he was almost growling. To me, it sounded demonic. He suddenly stood and spun around to face me. He began smiling and started trying to tell a joke. It seemed like he was trying to cover for something. I was too stunned to speak or respond. He then called to Brittany saying they should leave.

Afterwards, my wife looked at me and asked, “*Honey, are you OK?*” I didn’t want to make a scene so I just responded by saying I was OK. We then went into our bedroom together and prayed for them as a couple. The following day I shared what happened with my brother. Shortly after that I sent them both an email asking a question about how to ask a question. Nothing more. Simply asking how they preferred me to ask a question.

Something in the ‘*Rules of Engagement*’ was not clear and I was merely asking for clarification. Steven immediately took offense to this and began accusing me of manipulation. This email conversation included Brittany, her mom, Steven and me.

Suddenly I got an email from Steven stating that if I loved Brittany that I would “*Lay down everything.*” This to me means submitting to him and goes along with his earlier comments about submitting to him if I want a relationship with my daughter.

I then realized that he had sent the email directly to me and had excluded Brittany and her mom. I then said I would not continue this conversation with him in that email thread and would only have a discussion involving Brittany and Mrs. Hutchinson. I then went back to the previous email thread and responded in a somewhat sharp manner. Afterwards I asked my wife to be the one to send out any emails from me to them. In that way I could be assured that both her and Brittany would be included in the emails.

Exhibit / Evidence; C. Copy of the Rules of Engagement.
Also, D. Seeking clarification.

6. Steven Anderson claims that because I had an emotional response and I raised my voice that I cannot control my anger.

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 17.

"On the same day he returned home and Brittany reports visible signs of anger (slamming doors, slamming things, yelling, etc.)" "This email and anger was the first clues towards irrational behavior and unwarranted responses. I only expressed my concern for effective conflict resolution....and he took it as an insult to his intelligence and he was unable to control his emotional response."

Steven Filing Part 1. Page 18.

"I then called my fiancé to share the news with her, [about a text I sent him banning him from my property} and I could hear him, yelling and angrily attacking my character because I had done laundry in his house. At this point I began to seriously fear for the emotional impact on my fiancé."

My response;

Later, after the email exchange, I was talking with Brittany and my frustration boiled over, and I raised my voice about how Steven would not answer the seemly simple question about the wedding guest list, has made no effort to be a part of our family, and has been acting rudely towards me. I was also terribly upset that Brittany is showing signs of stress and I haven't seen her smile in days. I am very concerned and even heartbroken that she should have to go through this during a time when she should be celebrating. My being agitated certainly did not help matters.

As I walked out of the kitchen, I was so disappointed in myself for having raised my voice (something I had never done before to her) that I slapped the doorway with my open hand. I truly felt awful about how I had acted.

She later she came to me, and we discussed the guest list. I accepted her explanation, apologized for raising my voice, and asked that we move forward. The following day I went to her and asked if we could do a reset, one where we could together enjoy the journey of her getting married. She agreed and we spent some enjoyable time together.

There was no slamming doors, slamming other things or emotional outbursts of any kind (other than raising my voice once to Brittany). His claim that I was *"unable to control his emotional response"* is completely false and unfounded. My wife was at home during this time – if any of this had actually happened, my wife would have come to investigate. She will testify that this never happened and it was a peaceful evening at home. This is yet another attempt by Steven at disparaging me through his lies and manipulation. In an earlier HRO filing he used words to describe my actions, such as; *"RAGE, ANGER, IMPATIENCE, SLAM, STOMP, and SCREAMING."* No one has witnessed me doing any of these and this is nothing more than character assassination.

I had only raised my voice twice. The second time I was unaware that Brittany was home and talked loudly to my wife. She did not feel any concern for her safety, and even walked over and gave me a hug. I rarely, if ever, talk in an upset manner. My wife knew I was no danger to anyone and understood my need for a hug.

His claim to have begun to *"...seriously fear for the emotional impact on my fiancé"* is nonsense, completely baseless and all a part of his plan to cause a division in my family.

Ever since I had given Steven permission to marry my daughter, he no longer made any efforts to be a part of our family or join any activities. It's like a switch was flipped and he became cold towards us. He has spoken rudely to myself, guests at our house and has acted this way towards my other children. It appears he was only being nice to obtain my blessing, then his real personality came out. One day I talked to Steven and told him that I do not hate him nor am I trying to stop the wedding. I have a good relationship with my other daughters' boyfriends and hoped to have the same with him. His only response was "thank you for sharing that" in a monotone voice. There was no appreciation or gratitude - no saying anything like, 'wow I'm hoping for that too.' Nothing.

The fact that I had remained calm for so long given all the terrible things he had been saying to me, just shows how rational and peaceful of a person I really am. Since that time, over 3 years ago, not one person has witnessed me raising my voice at all. These two instances were rare and only due to the stress that Steven was causing in my family.

7. Steven Anderson refused to engage in mediation to resolve the conflict between us.

Steven was texting me some inappropriate comments and I responded by asking him to not contact me anymore in this manner. He responded by saying that Brittany suggested mediation. I said yes, and that if he wanted to pick a place for that to happen, that I would pay for those services. He responded by saying that the only way he would agree to mediation is if it were at the church where he works. This seemed to put me at a disadvantage because they are familiar with him and do not know me. But I agreed to this anyway figuring I would just set the truth free and let it defend itself.

Afterwards, as I thought about mediation it occurred to me that mediation meant all the bad and negative things Steven had done would be revealed and that could have very negative impacts on him. After a time of prayer I sent the following email, striving for peace, and once again apologizing for things I haven't done, and admitting to things I never did, all in an effort to have a relationship with my daughter.

"This email is an open apology to my daughter, Brittany. I have failed you. Not just a little, but a lot. During the past weeks I have been so focused on being right, about winning a disagreement, that I lost sight of something far more important; our relationship and your happiness. I have always put you first in my life, and now just months before your wedding I have fallen far short of what I should have been doing. You have every reason to be mad at me, hurt, disappointed and feeling less than loved by me. For that I apologize - profusely. I love you more than life itself and literally live in daily agony over the state of our current relationship. In response I'll say this:

I resign.

Completely and fully resign.

Not from being your dad of course, but rather from the disagreement that caused this. The [previous] letter I emailed states my position and stands as the truth as I know it. But that's as far as it goes. I'm done with any disagreement with Steven. My time and energy is now going to be focused on you, Brittany. To work hard restoring our precious relationship and ensuring this never happens again. Ever. And, to help celebrate the upcoming wedding and make these months before the wedding as enjoyable as possible.