

Eve's notes from couples therapy March 15, 2018

He agreed that he has gaslighted at least two of his partners, and said that he wants to learn more about what he's done and understand it. He seemed to agree to do work on his own, but in the Franklin sort of way where you aren't really sure he is agreeing to a thing.

He admitted that the multiple stories about the wedding were gaslighting, but did not originally understand that there were many more issues than this. He said he wanted to learn.

He described his experience during the meeting with [redacted]. He said he felt like he was being bullied and gaslighted into saying there were five lights, that we were trying to make him agree to a narrative he didn't believe in about a specific set of events. He said that he felt like he left the meeting saying "there are four lights" over and over.

He also said that he could not talk to Amy about his ambivalent feelings about the wedding because it would have upset her too much. So now we have him saying he can't tell me the truth because of my temper, or tell Amy the truth because reasons; he has said he can't tell Sylvia the truth because she's too hard to talk to; we know from Amber that he has told Vera that he can't tell her the truth because she reacts "badly" to things.

I told him I needed him to move out, until we both recovered a sense of safety. He said the only place he knew he could go was back to Portland. I told him there were affordable rooms nearby (because of course I'd checked), and that if he lived nearby he could still come use his office and visit Stella. He said that he was worried I'd fire him and get him kicked out of the country. I told him I wouldn't abuse that power over him and I wouldn't do anything to affect his visa. He said he knew that moving out was the right decision because he felt relief.

We connected at the end of the appointment and hugged and held hands. It felt hopeful and positive when we left the office, but when we got to the street, I said "that seemed hopeful" and he withdrew and became cold again and said something like "we'll see."

Important: Early in the appointment, he told the story of being in the cabin in 2013 writing *More Than Two* and me losing my temper and breaking something of his. He then said that he has gaslighted me because I have an explosive temper and he was afraid to tell me things I didn't want to hear. He minimized his role and said I'd done things I hadn't. Minimizations/distortions he told:

- He said he got one text message; he got many over a period of time while we were supposed to be writing, and he had already said he'd turn his phone off, but then didn't. It had already taken us a long time to get focused and start being productive, and I was frustrated at that as much as or more than the messages. (Also: the alert tone he used to have for Vera's text messages was *intrusive as fuck*, especially when he got lots of messages over extended periods of time, especially when we were trying to work.)
- He said I screamed at him; I didn't. I left the room and went downstairs so as not to get angry directly at him, because I *did* feel like I was overreacting. I went downstairs and screamed into a pillow. I considered this a "safe" way to let off steam. (My anger management teacher has said this is an acceptable way to release tension.) I don't believe he heard me; I told him about it later.
- He said I broke something of his. This is true, but it was an accident, and he knows this. He had a soft-sided toiletry case that I thought was empty; I punched it. I was alone in the bathroom at the time, and he was several floors above me. I did not do this in front of him to intimidate him. Again, I considered this a "safe" outlet for my anger, like punching a pillow. The case had a plastic Q-tip case inside that shattered. I told him about it later and apologized.
- I am not proud of my actions during these events, but they're not as he characterized them.

- He in fact had become upset with me *just for leaving the room*, not for any of these other things. He did not like it that I got angry at him, full stop.
- He said in therapy that he's had his phone on silent ever since, because he's afraid to turn the ringer on. This is flatly untrue. There have been many, many times in the past four years that he has had his ringer on and gotten lots of messages in various platforms; I have never gotten upset about a text message since.
- He says I "scream at him." I do not. I have raised my voice on a number of occasions, and this has upset him, because he does not tolerate raised voices at all. Once, I screamed in the shower, when I was downstairs and he was upstairs and I didn't think he could hear me. (This was also after the gaslighting had started becoming serious.)(ETA: I did scream another time, last week. During my meltdown. He was holding me while I sobbed and I just...screamed. It was a scream of pain, not of anger.)
- He says I "break his things." The only thing of his I have broken is the Q-tip case. I also threw out a wedding photograph of his that I believed was mine, because it was piled together with my things and resembled something that had been sent to me. (I was quickly trying to clean my room for a subletter before we left for Europe, and the desk was piled with my and his things.) I also told him about this and apologized. These are the only times in six years I have damaged his property.
- There is something else I was going to add here that I forgot. I am just noticing that I forgot.

Observation: Until a few weeks ago, his narrative of our relationship has been how amazing and wonderful it is. He has said I'm a "fuck yes!" He is now rapidly rewriting the narrative to make me into a crazy, unpredictable, controlling bitch with an explosive temper.