

News

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SHE WAS 31 and was his school teacher when he was 16. When they went overseas, they shared a room together.

That unofficial school trip to Japan in 1988, when they became intimate, was the beginning of their alleged on-off relationship over the past two decades.

And they carried on, even after they had both got married and had children of their own. The student is now a banker in his late 30s.

These are allegations that the woman's husband, a 47-year-old businessman, made in a divorce suit which he filed against her in 2009.

The woman was teaching in a top boys' school during the time of the alleged affair.

She is now 54 and a teacher at a girls' school.

She has denied these allegations in her defence and counterclaim.

She also rejects her husband's allegations that she neglected her family's emotional needs and had ransacked the matrimonial home since moving out, taking valuable items not belonging to her and siphoning money from special bank accounts they had set up for their children's future and education.

She claims that her husband had physically abused her and had had an affair with one of their maids.

We are not naming the couple or their children as there is a court order against it.

The woman's lawyer, Mr Koh Tien Hua, applied for the order to protect the identities of the couple's two sons, aged 17 and 19.

Yesterday, the husband took the stand on the first day of the trial.

He told the court that he was asking for a divorce on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour, in particular his wife's "improper association" with her ex-student.

Alleged affair sparks trouble

He said it was her relationship with the man that was "the straw that broke the camel's back" and that the most recent rekindling of the relationship in 2008 had resulted in her treating him and their children differently.

In his statement of claim and affidavit, which were tendered in court by his lawyer, Mr Kevin Lim, he described the events leading to the breakdown of their marriage.

The court heard that he first met his wife in 1980, when he was preparing for his O levels and she was his tuition teacher.

Later, when she was doing her master's in education in Scotland, she visited him in the US, where he was pursuing his undergraduate studies.

She had initiated their romance and was also the one who called it quits a couple of months after she returned to the United Kingdom.

They did not speak to each other until she contacted him sometime around 1988 or 1989, when he was doing national service, and suggested they meet.

They got married on Dec 17, 1990.

About seven years into their marriage, he found credit card statements that showed her shopping and dining on dates that did not correspond with any of the occasions when she had gone out with friends or family.

He said that she admitted to meeting up socially with an ex-student whom she was helping with some problems.

When he told her to stop doing so since

Businessman files for divorce from school teacher wife over her 'improper association' with former student. She denies it, but he claims...

It started when boy was 16

THIS PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

she was not a trained counsellor and no longer the man's teacher, she agreed.

But a couple of months later, he found similar credit card statements.

She admitted to still seeing the ex-student. He accused her of having an affair, which she denied.

This scenario would be repeated many times over the course of the next year.

In August 1998, during an argument, she accused him of being insecure. Enraged, he snapped and hit her.

She filed a police report against him and they appeared in family court.

But they resolved their differences and she agreed to break off contact with her ex-student.

But 10 years later, in August 2008, he began to suspect that she was having an affair, as she would often receive SMSes at odd hours and was evasive about who they were from.

She also became "markedly more emotionally distant" from him and their sons.

He decided to investigate the matter by installing a programme onto his laptop that would allow him to clandestinely monitor her online activity.

This was because she would use his laptop to check her e-mails and surf the Internet.

The programme managed to take and save screenshots of whatever was on the computer screen at regular intervals while she was accessing her e-mail account.

He said that what he found confirmed his suspicions. The screenshots showed that she had "again become romantically involved" with her ex-student and that they would make time in the week to see each other.

'Seduced' boy

The e-mails also indicated that they had first become intimate when the man had been a 16-year-old schoolboy.

Then, on an unofficial school trip to Japan, she allegedly "seduced" the boy, using a word the ex-student himself had used in one of the e-mails.

He said the e-mails showed that his wife and her then-student slept in the same room and "were watching each other sleep".

He started divorce proceedings and on Sep 16, 2009, obtained a search order to secure all e-mails between his wife and her ex-student.

He said the e-mails, which had been compiled into two thick bundles tendered as evidence, "showed much flirting and sexual innuendo being tossed back and forth between the two".

When asked by her lawyer, Mr Koh, if he had proof that the affair was sexual in nature, the man said he had no photographic or video evidence, which was why the grounds of divorce was changed from adultery to "improper association".

The court heard that the man and his wife had not had sexual relations for the past 10 years. The man said this was due to his medical condition, including nerve damage, hypertension and a stroke in 2002 that led to severe diabetes.

He had also told his wife to stop touching or holding him in 2008, at around the time he discovered the revival of her relationship with her ex-student.

He said she had a "hypocritical habit" of treating him poorly in private, but playing the loving wife in public.

"I told her if she didn't love me, she should just stop holding and touching me altogether, whether in private or public," he said.

The trial has been adjourned to a date yet to be fixed.