

TESTIMONIES

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# Alex of Detroit gives testimony of BAMN's Abusive and Coercive Behavior

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Our battle against BAMN continues as one of our readers and subscribers at the **Secret Survivors of BAMN** Facebook page gives out her testimony via a Facebook message. The following statements here are original and unedited for our readers to read as follows:

” Thanks! I had to find it. I wrote this out about a year ago for a Facebook group that my mom runs. Full of teachers who are active in the DFT fight and who have had run-ins with BAMN but didn't really know about their manipulative tendencies: Firstly, I would like to point out that while some of their ideas can occasionally be sound, they are a radical organization. That is the hook that got me in the net. I agreed with some of their political opinions. In the end, however, I was emotionally blackmailed into being part of BAMN by my significant other. She told me repeatedly that if I wasn't a member and didn't actively participate in the group's activities that she could no longer be with me. Being that she was raised in this environment, as her parents are two of the founding members, I can now realize that she was just as manipulated into following this methodology as I was and because of her deep emotional ties has not been able to “see the light” as I and every other person I know who has left BAMN has been able to do. So they start out luring kids with field trips and the chance to skip classes for meetings. When I was at Cass Tech they had a very strong presence because Steve Conn was one of the math teachers and most of their student leadership came directly from Cass. The kids who are just in it for ditching school are using mostly as bodies and extra mass during the rallies and protests. They could care

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less what happens to these kids but the more numbers they have on their side the better the protests look to the media. If you are not just in it for ditching school and had actual political leanings, they invited us to after school meetings where we would discuss current group events or if there was a particular rally, protest or election coming up we would do things to contribute to that, such as making signs and calling people who had signed petitions with their contact information. Here again, is where I specifically was pressured into doing things that made me uncomfortable. I do not like talking on the phone. I can talk to family members and I have, after years of doing it, been able to be comfortable talking at work. I used to have extreme anxiety about it. I expressed this very clearly to my ex and to the leaders of BAMN but was given the impression that there would be consequences if I didn't ie: Being ejected from BAMN's inner circle which would lead to being dumped. It all came back to that. So I worked through my anxiety and called these people during the times when I couldn't finagle my way into doing some other task and the overlords were pleased with me. So much so that I started being invited to the next level of indoctrination, which were the weekly "studies", where they held discussions based on the writings of political leaders like Fredrick Douglas, Martin Luther King, Marx, Malcolm X and more. A great number of these studies took place in a house with about 7 cats. Which I am very, very allergic too. Again, expressing my allergy and not wanting to put myself through that would lead to those looks or "Well...Okaaaay..." statements or trying to convince me how much I needed to go. Basically, all tools that would express to me what consequences I would face if I didn't go. So I went. When I graduated high school, I was relatively free from it since I went to WMU and they have no presence there. And are not willing to make that two hour drive. In the 5 years I was at WMU, Shanta Driver came to speak once and I got the feeling that the reception she received was not all that welcoming. The summer after my second year in college, I wasn't taking summer classes and so went back to the other side of the state, spending the majority of the summer with my girlfriend, her best friend and her best friends boyfriend who were all members of BAMN. That summer, since I mostly

*lived with them, that meant that I also had to be deeply invested in BAMN. Again, all of the things that made me uncomfortable came to the fore. Additionally, I was coerced into attending certain city council meetings and the like. Again, just for the credibility of having an extra body. In one meeting, in particular, the day after the 7th and last Harry Potter book came out, I sat reading that throughout the entire meeting unless someone nudged me to ramble on cue or chant something in particular. With their policy of extra bodies, the cannon fodder would sometimes be involved in protests or things that we were never informed of in advance. Again, a particular example, I believe it was a debate between Jennifer Granholm and Rick Snyder and we were protesting Granholm in particular. The only reason I know that specifically is because my mother called to ask where I was and I told her that I was protesting Granholm and when she asked me why, I couldn't give her an answer. I legitimately had no idea why I was there. I was instructed to come along to the protest, hold a sign, chant something and walk in a circle within a specific radius outside of Cobo hall. There was no other information given. Rallies protesting bans on Affirmative Action, sure, I could quote what I had been told but if someone had asked me why (And they did ask when I was asking them to sign petitions) I would have to have one of the other members who had the script down better than I had step in and offer our taglines. That was a bit of a wake up call for me. It led to me finding any excuse that I could to not be involved as much any more. It was thankfully towards the end of the summer and I had to go back to school anyway. 6 months later, my girlfriend broke up with me. I'm not saying that there is 100% a direct correlation or that I am not 100% percent better off, but I am also 100% positive that it was awfully convenient that the timelines of me removing myself from BAMN and the relationship ending coincided so perfectly. The other hard core BAMN members also stopped speaking to me around that time as well. Even if I would see them out and about places, they would be at best polite, when I had previously assumed that we were close friends. Now, almost ten years later, some of my closer friends that joined BAMN with me and even my ex's best friend's now ex-boyfriend – people*

...and eventually she says, "I'm not saying that people who have gotten out – we call BAMN a cult. That is truly what it amounts to. Charismatic leaders emotionally and/or mentally manipulating more impressionable people into following their wishes for fear of consequence. I'm sure that's how Steve Conn got people to vote him into the DFT. When he is not in a manic or alcoholic tailspin, he can be very charismatic and can convince anyone to do anything. He's had plenty of practice."

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 LUKE MASSIE

AUGUST 22, 2016

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## 2 thoughts on “Alex of Detroit gives testimony of BAMN’s Abusive and Coercive Behavior”



**Ann Turner**

AUGUST 22, 2016 AT 1:48 PM

THANK YOU for sharing your story. I am so very happy that you have found freedom from this cult!

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**Luke Massie**

AUGUST 22, 2016 AT 8:41 PM

This post is important because BAMN does have the ability to control their organizers and destroy families and relationships.

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