

Truth's Timeline: countering parental alienation propaganda with evidence

2009 and 2010:

Your mom left for three long weekends to have her first affair with Syd Torchio, <https://www.facebook.com/syd.torchio>, in Philadelphia, spending the mortgage money and ultimately losing the house to foreclosure. She left you and I without any word or communication, I remember you asking "where's mommy?" and crying. For three long weekends I consoled you and said that she had to go on a trip and would be back soon. She "worked late" on Fridays at Eureka! and never came home until the following Monday.

April 2009:

Most of our possessions were out of our home at 1993 McClendon Dr. But without reason, your mom took 23 of my photography books, my pro darkroom enlarger, some records, and some of my clothes and put them in the driveway behind the fence in the rain for four days. I still have my enlarger and the books. We still had electricity at the house, so I grabbed fans and spread out the books so the pages wouldn't stick together. But there's no way to flatten books. And there was no reason to commit that violent act. Your mom lost her home because it was the Great Recession. Mortgage debt was being bought and sold. There was an average of 7,500 foreclosures per month from 2007 to 2013. In the case of the McClendon house, your mom and Eve's dad took out a \$50K home equity loan to do renovation work right before they divorced. And as your mom said, she "used that money for her divorce lawyer and to live on" along with her GCN job. When a financial agency bought the mortgage, they also bought the outstanding home equity loan. This nearly doubled the mortgage payment from \$1200/month to \$2200/month. Then your mom spent several mortgage payments on plane tickets, etcetera as I wrote above. I'm not judging her for her actions. I'm describing her actions. There's a difference. My therapist at the time asked me why I didn't press charges against your mom for the property destruction. Only 10% of domestic violence events against men are reported. I was thinking of the long term salvaging of our relationship because we had kids, you and Eve.

December 23, 2009:

I texted three of my coworkers at The IRC: Kim, Monica Bierge, and Charlie Curling to leave our home two days before Christmas because of the violence your mom was instigating. I'd confided in them for some time that the situation was unbearable. She was physically, emotionally, and verbally abusive without cause and nearly nonstop. This occurred in front of you and Eve as well and to the point of me asking over dinner several times to wait until you both went to bed to have adult conversations. That didn't stop her. On this day she grabbed my phone from my hand at Hampton Terrace. You were three and followed her down the stairs. She confronted me while reading my texts: "why are you leaving?" she was screaming. Before I could answer that I wanted you and Eve to have a peaceful Christmas, and with you staring in shock at her, your mom punched me in the jaw as hard as possible in front of you. I didn't react. I didn't raise my arms from my side. I ask for my phone and I left. I heard back from two of my coworkers, Charlie and Kim, but I decided to come back home after driving and talking to them for

an hour. I was welcome to stay with any of them. When I came back, I learned from your mom that she had called the police and she stated that she told them I had attacked her—a blatant lie, thriving on that type of behavior, but I was unaware at the time what it defined, now I feel I’m an expert in subtypes of psychopathy: especially narcissistic P/DO, and borderline P/DO.

August 2010:

I called your mom to pick me up from my third major surgery at Emory Hospital. I was under full sedation. She refused to pick me up for an unstated reason. I would only assume that she was involved with someone at the moment and wouldn’t leave. I was in extreme abdominal pain and was walking from Emory University hospital all the way to our home—four miles. I had no wallet with me. It was a prescient moment, showing me your mom’s true nature. Later in the custody trial, she told Nora that when she had to recover for 6 months after childbirth, that I didn’t help either you or her. The opposite is the truth. As I’ve written, she went immediately into emergency surgery from the labor room. They did an emergency hysterectomy, packed your mom’s body with ice and still couldn’t locate or stop the hemorrhaging. **THIS WAS NOT DUE TO YOU.** This was because of the labor inducing drug Pitocin. Your mom was not the first or last pregnant mom this happened to because of that practice. As I’ve written before, I lived with you at the hospital nursery and visited your mom during the four days she was in the ICU. I fed you, cleaned you, changed your diaper, held you, talked, sang and did birdsongs with you where I slept—in the parent’s lounge in the nursery. I ate from the snack machine and ran across the parking lot for chicken sandwiches. I didn’t leave the hospital at all until your mom came out of ICU. The last three days in a regular hospital room you, me, Eve, stayed with your mom. When she came home, my four professors at GSU anthropology wrote one-page letters each in support of my hardship withdrawal to take care of you and your mom. I cut back my hours at work to 4 hours, 10am-2 pm M-F, just 20 hours. And I did that until your mom could return to work at GCN.

March 2011:

I was let go after four years as the healthcare specialist for the IRC. Half the staff of 45 was let go that day and over the next month due to the Great Recession. I began helping your mom out at Eureka at the First Existentialist Church, some weeks full time. I was volunteering at Grady Hospital’s International Medical Clinic a few days a month, but mostly working and never paid at Eureka while I was job searching. One day as I was putting in applications and searching for work—I’d never not worked in my life, starting in my dad’s restaurant at age 13 as a full time busboy—and your mom came in angry, directing it again at me without reason. As she screamed, she pulled the computer power cord out of the wall, then called the police. Six Atlanta police officers in three squad cars pulled up to our Palifox home. They listened to our stories separately, then brought us into the living room. One male officer asked your mom, “Ms. Smithson, are you willing to plug the computer back in and log Mr. Greenberg back on to create peace in your home?” She’d appropriated all of my passwords and changed them including my photogmlg@gmail.com account, my personal email. She replied “yes” to the officer. All six

watched her restart the computer. She regularly made fake calls to the police. I later learned why. You mom raged at my job loss, though she was fired in 2006 three days coming back from maternity leave, and after eight years as the grants manager with the Georgia Center for the Nonprofit. Karen Beavor, who is still the director of that agency was the only person besides her mom who visited her in the hospital. I supported your mom when she was let go. She never talked about it, but they were auditing the employee roles there at the time and I thought they discovered she'd lied about having a Master's degree, not the last time she did that.

August 2011:

Your mom and I weren't speaking to each other and I was living in a separate room off your bedroom. It was clear your mom was in another relationship but I didn't confront her. I didn't confront her the first time either because I didn't care for her as a person at that point, someone who immediately began to have affairs after committing to having a child with their partner. I had all my possessions packed in boxes and in three weeks, I moved us into our Derrydown home, creating peace in your and my life for the first time since you were born. Your mom and I weren't arguing. In fact, we agreed that we would mirror the same custody schedule that Eve had with her dad: 5/5, 2/2. You called your mom each night your were at our home, and then called me from your other home. You were sad, but we talked every time you needed to—as we've always done.

October 8, 2011:

That Saturday morning, I had just made use homemade pancakes and we were eating breakfast when there was a knock at the door. It was your mom. She was crying, asking to come in. She sat with us at the table saying she wanted to reconcile. You were raising your arms, excitedly chanting "Team Love! Team Love!..." the name you and Eve coined for our family. Though that was not the time to have that discussion as there could be no deep discussion about what she was asking for in that moment, I agreed to talk about it. Later that morning your mom and I agreed to live together, apart. I went back to working at Eureka! as I was still volunteering at Grady Hospital and looking for work in the Great Recession. I'd never not worked in my life but I wasn't alone. She slept at our home when you were here and I stayed at your other home. Your mom and I were together every day for the next several months, no arguing, almost back to a loving relationship. But she couldn't have an adult discussion about what she did, so I wasn't about to suggest we move back in together. She wanted to trade keys to each other's homes and cars—though both cars were mine, Ursula and the beige 80's Volvo 240D I bought from Chris Tavel, the owner of Loose Nuts Cycles when my '89 Camry was totaled by a texter on my way to work at the IRC.

February 21, 2012:

Your mom had texted without calling stating that she had to work on some Eureka accounting issues and would stay at her home. I wrote back in support. You were at our home and I explained that your mom had to work and wouldn't be over. This was the first she and I had been apart overnight since 10-08-2011, but I didn't think twice about it. The next morning I was making your lunch and realized both lunch bags were at your other home. I left a voice message, then texted your mom that we were going

to swing by to pick one up on the way to Mary Lin. As we pulled up to the Palifox house, I recognized Lee Redfern's Saab station wagon. Lee and I knew each other for years, even before your mom and I started dating in October 2004. He and I also played music together. We drove Ursula up the steep drive to the back door which we always used. I left the motor running, saying I'd be right back. I used the key your mom insisted I have, one I'd used for half of the previous four months to bring you, Eve, and I home and cook dinner while your mom closed down Eureka. At that point I knew your mom had been having an affair with Lee. She had to get through the holidays and Lee was still living with his long-term girlfriend Lori. For me in that moment, I knew there was going to be no more "Team Love". These were not adults. I knew Lee had been fired from several bike shops because of his temper. I opened the door and immediately loudly announced "I'm just here to get Emmett's lunch bag". Your mom knew I was on my way and why, for the sole reason I mentioned. I got the bag from the pantry, then turned toward the door. I saw my house key and car key on her keychain and grabbed it. Then, your mom screaming and throwing whatever she could, Lee came out of the back room. I walked in and told him he was a weak, little asshole and slapped him like a grandma. I went back to the car. You were calm as could be, completely unaware of anything that occurred in the three minutes before. I got into the driver's seat and shut the door and put my seatbelt on, the motor still running. I took off the emergency brake and just before we started backing down the driveway, your mom burst out the door with Ellie. She was screaming and the dog was barking. She leaned into the now open driver's side rear door, nonstop screaming. You were shocked and started crying. That was her goal, that's always a gaslighting narcissist's goal, to create chaos. I didn't know it at the time. And I don't mean it as an insult whatsoever. It's the reality of what was occurring. Your mom was trying to deflect the fact that she was sleeping with one of my friends. Again, that's not a slight, that's what she was doing. At that time she climbed halfway into the back seat screaming and holding barking Ellie, she was intentionally slamming Ursula's back door from the inside into the stucco wall of the house. To reiterate, I had my right hand on the steering wheel, my foot on the brake, and the car transmission was in reverse. I was reaching my left arm backwards out the open driver's window trying to prevent the rear door from slamming into the house again. Then she abruptly left, I assumed correctly to call the police as she's done so many other times to blame me for something that she caused and was in the wrong. We backed down the drive. You were balling your eyes out. It was a heartbreaking moment, a display created by your mom in order to cause damage to us. I stopped the car at the base of the mailbox at the street, took off my keys from your mom's keychain, then gently tossed them so she could find them when I notified her they were there. Then I turned to you and in a loving voice asked, "do you want to go to school to be with your friends or have a special day with daddy?" You replied, "have a special day with daddy". I asked if you wanted to go straight home or to the Decatur Library. You said the library. We went into the kids section and you started looking and reading. We then went over to the computers with your books to check out. I then emailed your mom: "you'll find your keys at the base of the mailbox and we need to put on parent faces for Emmet's birthday party this Saturday." About an hour later we came home. We had our screen doors open and as I was putting an Aretha Franklin record on, you asked if you could make a card for your mom. I said yes, wondering why you asked. And as you were drawing her card, which is still on your wall in your room, two DeKalb police cars pulled up a man and a woman. The man asked if he could come in. I said sure and opened the screen door—no idea why he was there. He commented he liked the music. He said, your wife said there was some violence at her home, and asked my story. I told him

that she had wanted to reunite and we had been back together. I mentioned that we were there to pick up the lunch bag and that what she described was as true as her saying “I love you” to me the day before. I later learned that this was the second law enforcement entity she called. Originally, she contacted the Atlanta Police Department, they wrote a report without taking statements finding no evidence of what your mom was describing. Then when she realized that they weren’t going to do anything, she called the DeKalb police department. I learned later that the woman DeKalb officer was there to take you if the man was going to arrest me. But he didn’t because nothing your mom said could be corroborated, there was no there, there. Then, at the end of the day at 5:30pm, nearly 10 hours after we left your mom and Lee, realizing that Atlanta and DeKalb police weren’t going to do anything because whatever she was telling them had no validity, she went to the DeKalb Sheriff’s Department and this time they both embellished their stories and got a temporary protective order and filed charges, most likely with Lee’s dad’s help as he’s a high level attorney with connections. I never got to attend your birthday party or see you again for the next 391 days after dropping you off at school the next morning. That morning began your 5 days at your other home.

February 23, 2012:

I was coming back up Craigie Ave. into our backyard at Derrydown after a long bike ride. Just as I noticed a woman at our backdoor about 40 yards away, a DeKalb Marshal’s SUV cut me off, a marshal came running at me, pushing me sideways off my bike and drew a 45cal. handgun on me, handcuffing me on the ground. I was being arrested and had no idea what for. I was taken to the DeKalb County Jail and booked for four misdemeanor charges. When they read them, I realized that your mom crossed the line, now lying to the police to incite arrest for fake events. I refused to go into the jail cell and slept in my biking clothes for five days. I was allowed a call and contacted the property manager at our home who knew I was telling the truth and knew, like all of my friends and coworkers that I was a great dad and loved you with all my big heart. She took my bank card, and withdrew cash for bail and I went home. I was immediately placed in a diversion program as the court considered the charges related to “Depression related to the situation itself”. You remained with your mom, though nothing about what she accused me of was related to you. I was forced to take 24 weeks of classes at “Men Stopping Violence”. I refused to “admit” I did anything, because I hadn’t. There were men in there who, one guy shot their partner in their apartment courtyard, the kids were there, and she survived. Another guy had “beaten his wife beyond recognition and shoved her in an oven”, she also survived. They both regularly saw their kids—still. Each time I refused to say that I committed violence against your mom, I was forced to leave, pay the money for that session, and that added another week. During that first 8 months, I was my own lawyer. This was still the height of the Great Recession, and had no choice, and it was fruitless.

June 2012:

At one point your mom accused me of contempt against the temporary protective order because of facebook posts that never mentioned your mom. This was also the first time I realized your mom was

regularly stalking my facebook account. Throughout this time, I've never stated anything to malign your mom, nothing demeaning, only facts with evidence and witnesses. One of the pieces of "evidence" your mom had the second contempt hearing was a paragraph I wrote to one of my oldest friends on facebook. I described that getting you back home and seeing this nightmare end would feel like "Steve McQueen jumping the fence of the POW camp in 'the Great Escape'" —a true story of a WWII US officer escaping a nazi POW camp by leaping the fence on a motorcycle and the winner of the Best Picture Oscar for the year the film was released. Your mom actually stated that this was a kidnapping threat. There were a few other pieces of disconnected anecdotes and screenshots from my facebook. Another was the picture of us at Glen Memorial Church's Halloween Pumpkin patch. In the photo, you pushed my chin toward the camera and said, "make a tough face dad!" It's a great photo of us, cutting up as we always do, loving fun. Your mom told the judge that the facebook picture was a direct threat to her, that we were making faces at her—though there was nothing about your mom in the caption, the post, or the image of us. The judge actually gave me a warning, though none of this was real. However, this didn't satisfy your mom's disorder—again, describing this that way is not a slight, she needs to get help.

About a month later, I had to send your mom court documents related to a hearing date. Waiting in line at the post office, I doodled an anarchy symbol, an old punk rock symbol on the bird's wing on the stamp. I had to go before Judge Stroud and explain that I was Pro Se and was required to notify Cheri of any court-related events that she had to participate in. She told the judge that the anarchy symbol was a threat, though your mom loved punk rock, and the letter was a violation of the TPO. This time your mom had a court advocate from the Dekalb Women's Center or some other entity with her. And I had to hire a lawyer or I would have been taken to jail for that. The same Judge Stroud listened to us both, then asked your mom "what exactly am I looking at?" Your mom began to reiterate the charge, but the Judge cut her off and asking for any evidence. And because she had none, Judge Stroud stated "I am dismissing this for lack of evidence." Your mom's court advocate conferred with her stating they were no longer going to represent her and they didn't.

In this though, your mom learned that she could manipulate the courts almost as easily as she could the police. A reminder that this is not an insult; it's a fact.

October 2012:

Finally, I learned of Atlanta Legal Aid and met with the managing attorney, Deborah Johnson. She listened to me for about an hour the first time, crying the entire time. Then she asked me back three more times to interview me about the situation. At some point I received a phone call from her stating that they wanted to take my case. I received a call from my first attorney to meet. Within a week, they took affidavits of my three coworkers. My lawyer suggested we work with a Guardian ad Litem; that's how Nora Kalb-Bushfield began working with me. In just over four months my lawyer set the custody court's Judge Coursey straight as to what was actually occurring—everything I've previously described here.

March 2013:

Judge Coursey signed a court order that you and I would return to 5/5/2/2 visitation as we always had. We had to begin slowly in which we had to meet at “Nia’s Place” for half hour sessions at first. You called me Mark the first two weeks. Your mom trained you in that year she took you by using the courts and law enforcement entities, though nothing she stated had anything to do with you and even though the terrible, real abusers in that class I was forced to take did see their kids. She wanted to erase me as your dad. So at first she trained you to call me by my first name. I asked you at one of those visits, “Kiddo, what’s with calling me Mark. I mean, you can call me with whatever you like, but you’ve always called me Dad or Daddy”. You said, “I’ll call you Dad”. And you never called me Mark again until the reunification therapy sessions began.

April 2013 to June 9, 2014:

Finally you were home and it was like you never left. You’re mom had married Lee one month after she took you in the backyard at Palifox. Good, I thought, someone else to direct her energy. Unlike before 02-2012, she no longer spoke to me when we saw each other at Mary Lin. And, she trained Lee to not speak to me either. I always said hello, even though I was ignored, because I’m not 5 and I’m not the type of person to take that bait or sink that low into pettiness—ever, under any circumstances. When your mom asked for extra time that summer during your trip to Lancaster, of course I said yes. I didn’t ask for “make up time”. I expected that they would be as flexible as me, but I was wrong about that. One chilly day, I saw your mom in the front hallway at Mary Lin and as I was waiting to pick you up, I said, “oh, I realized both of Emmett’s winter coats are at our home; I’ll drop one off at your door on our way to school tomorrow”. Liz Blanco Di Sipio was standing next to me. She was one your mom’s Eureka! clients. Right as I finished my sentence to your mom, she began screaming and running down the hallway to the principal’s office with her arms flailing above her head, “YOU’RE A PSYCHOPATH! YOU’RE A PSYCHOPATH!...” I was flummoxed like a deer in the headlights. I turned to Liz and calmly asked, “did you see that?” Neither of us had any clue as to what had just happened. But in reading about it and going over it with my therapist, I learned exactly what “gaslighting” is and what causes a person to commit it. Three times, your mom tried to use Liz as a witness to that event, once in a 2014 temporary order, again in the 2017 final custody trial, and in the recent contempt hearing. Liz Blanco Di Sipio refused, but your mom still included her name in the court documents, even listing her as a potential witness in the court docket twice.

During this time period you got to know my girlfriend at the time, Dr. Julia Brock, a great history professor. You two had a great relationship, and I’m grateful you not only met a person of that level of grace and intelligence, but also got to be a part of a person’s life who acts on those traits, building community and bolstering other’s lives. She loved you as one of her own family and still asks about you. She was brave as one of my five live witnesses in the 2017 final custody trial. I use the word brave because she endured persistent stalking, both in person and online from your mom and Lee. Once, she showed me photos that your mom had posted on facebook of the old trash ally behind the cottage Julia rented for years in Atkins Park. The photo showed Julia’s bedroom window as the only building in the picture. She and us together saw your mom driving her white van down St. Charles Pl. where she lived, though that’s not a regular cut through street. One day, she arrived home from work and Lee was

leaning on a bicycle, parked directly across the street from Julia's home. He stared for a few minutes, then left on the bike. These were grown adults in their 40s!

We took our time introducing you two to each other. The first time we hung out for a lengthy visit to her home, we went up to Piedmont Park and hung out at the Noguchi playground, ate, then came back, then headed home. When we got home, you plopped down onto our Thonet rocking chair, the one you made me promise never to sell; it's still there. You said, "Dad, I knew where Julia lived!" I was sitting on the couch across from you, so dumbfounded I didn't believe I heard you right. I asked, "what'd you just say Kiddo?" You replied, "I knew where she lived. Move drove the van there and pointed up the driveway and said, 'that's where your dad's girlfriend lives'." I said nothing but positive affirmations back to you, "oh interesting" or something. Then, I immediately emailed my lawyer that night. This incident was horrific. The intimidation was barbaric, not the normal behavior of someone who's mentally healthy.

Another day after I picked you up from school, you sat in the rocking chair again and told me, "my stepdad hurt me. He picked me up like a football and threw me into my room. He shut all the lights off in my room [from the fuse breakers], barricaded both doors, and wouldn't let me out for about two hours even though I was crying. I wanted to do the same to Lee after he said that. However, I reacted by telling Cheri in the hallway if there was mention of abuse against Emmett again, I was going to report it to CPS. There was never another mention of abuse.

In March of 2014, I got the call I'd been waiting for from my lawyer. Your mom got the same call, though from Nora because she had no lawyer and could no longer access a court advocate. My lawyer relayed Nora's message that as Guardian ad Litem she was preparing to write her final report to for the Final Custody Trial. This meant the trial was a month or so away. Nora said, "I'm only recommending keeping the same 5/5/2/2 schedule because things had gone so well and there had been no conflict." I was at work as a manager for the Second Life Thrift Store, my Recession job for two years where they still ask about you. I ran out in the parking lot to jump for joy, know that truth, love, and beauty will always outlast and overcome those who champion decrepitude, especially for their own power. Everyone was elated. They knew how hard I fought to bring you home. They all knew our story. Julia was elated too. It was a triumphant moment in which Love overcame—it always will.

Without realizing it then or anytime over the next two months, your mom had other plans. Pathological narcissists feed off the fear created in others, thriving on chaos, and anything antithetical to our humanness. This is a definition, not an insult. There are a thousand academic studies across multiple discipline on the subject from politics to psychiatry and then some—Google Scholar any of those keywords and open your eyes.

Two months later, some Friday night in May, you were with your mom, and Julia and I were getting ready to see a film at Landmark Cinema. Sitting in her car, my phone rang and it was Nora. She was yelling, a first. I'd never heard her raise her voice, as my lawyer and I asked for her services and I'd known her over a year. When she calmed down, and as I had her on speaker so Julia could hear, she screamed, "You choked your son!"

Time stopped. No one had ever heard or stated anything like that or any incident that had ever occurred of any form of me physically, verbally, or emotionally abusing you. I'm incapable of that behavior. I never abused you.

Your mom and I had been in court more than a dozen times and nothing like that ever came out of her mouth, though plenty did as I described earlier that had no basis in fact or any form of reality. This was her at her lowest. She was shifting from using the police, to using the courts, to using you as a weapon. She wasn't targeting me per se. She was targeting the need for a child to have two parents in their lives. She was sexually abused by her stepfather, a story she told me, and never had therapy for that. Her mom was very young and would continue to go out and party, leaving a preteen Cheri to care for her two younger siblings at night. Cheri has no concept of what it takes to be in a committed monogamous relationship. That's fine for those who are honest about it with their partners and both people want that. But that was not the nature of your mom and I's six-year relationship. And she resented it. When your mom was 34, she reached out to her biological father who rejected her at a lunch date at a restaurant—no therapy, no books to help. She thought nothing about abandoning us when Eve was with her dad and your mom was using our mortgage money on last minute flights to meet her lover in Philadelphia and DC. Cheri disdains fatherhood and the need for a child, even an adult child to have two parents. She got that from her mom—period. This is the truth, not an insult.

We all have our challenges. But self care and getting to the heart of negative emotions, the origin of these and getting support to rise above those challenges is the key. When you were in utero and for two years after I attended weekly sessions with a therapist and went to two years of Al Anon men's group to make certain that most of the way my folks parented was going to enter into my parenting. As I mentioned to you elsewhere, I also relied on my close friends who were and are all great parents and their recommendations like Alfie Kohn's "Unconditional Parenting" book--no spanking, no time outs. We talked with each other when you were upset, or feeling down, and when you were filled with joy which was most all the time when we were together.

After the weekend, I picked you up from school and when we got home, you sat in the rocker because I wanted to ask you what Nora was talking about. "Nora said I choked you. What was she talking about. Can you tell me about that?" You replied, "mom said you choked me as punishment for breaking Eve's plate she made at Polly's." I knew the plate, the one with all the Jewish symbols on it. It sat on the shelf in the kitchen next to the dining table right by the doorway to the big dining room. It was white with blue lettering and other colors. It was on a small stand and about 10" in diameter. And I never saw that plate in a broken state—ever. What I replied with though was a question. "Kiddo, do you remember when I was picking you up at the back of Mary Lin on the street behind the playground and when you go into Ursula, you accidentally knocked a glass onto the street and it shattered". You said yes. Then I asked you how I reacted when it broke, "what did I do?" "You picked up the broken glass". "and then what did I do?" "You took it over to a trash can." "And?" "You threw it away." "And theeeeeennnnn?" "We drove home," you were laughing. "That's right! When something breaks, we clean it up and move on because it's an object". I never asked you if the plate was glued back together or what Eve did with her plate made at Polly's. Even if the story were true about me being there when Eve's plate broke I would never, ever in a million year punished you for it, let alone choke you. You're

not afraid to use your brain. You understand logic. Use your logic in this scenario and free yourself from this spell. None of that story is real.

What's real is the severe damage it's caused for the sake of one person's ego needing propping up for lack of any other support. Your mom needs help and for 12 years I've said repeatedly to many stakeholders in my personal life and actors in the judicial system that all I care about her is that she loves you and the only way that's going to really happen is that she gets help by getting into therapy. That's been my wish for your mom for over a decade.

June 9, 2014:

That night, after I dropped you off at school, I called your mom's phone as I'd done for years to ask about your day and tell you about mine and say "gimme my 'mooch!' and sweet dreams, I love you Kiddapops!". But no one answered and there was no voice mail. Every atom in the universe froze. Sound silenced.

Every year on that day or that week I protested on the steps of the DeKalb Courthouse with my sign: "DeKalb, Why Can't I See My Dad?" Strangers would cheer me on in low tones entering the courthouse, "stay strong brother" and so on; some took my picture. Deputies gathered more than once, conferring but not arresting me or forcing me to leave. They let me be because everyone who works in that building knows what Parental Alienation is. They know the affects it has on the alienated parent and the kids. They also know there are no laws against it in any county court system in the US, Canada, or Great Britain against it. Your mom knew that when she researched it. I'm certain she research it.

June 10, 2014 to November 14, 2017:

Nora called to announce that she filed a Temporary Order to suspend my visitation rights. It's important to note that **THERE WAS NEVER A TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDER FILED**. Let me reiterate that: here was never a TPO in place from the time of your mom's sui generis accusation in 2014 or after and there was never one related to you ever prior. Nora tried to force me to go back through the Men's Stopping Violence program though the only evidence she had for that or any of her actions from 06-09-2014 was the words that came from your mom that were without precedent, history, witnesses, or any form of proof other than hearsay. I refused for six months. Then she tried to tell Judge Coursey that I never completed the program the first time, though the founder of the program was at my side along with the court social worker. Finally, on your birthday in 2015, Nora brought me into court for a possible contempt charge if I didn't complete the program a second time. I entered the program again. And again I refused to be coerced into stating I abused you or your mom because it never happened. And I'd rather suffer from that system's thin denigration that sell out my integrity.

When I completed the program again, Nora allowed for a type of reunification therapy. She brought in Susan Boyan, her best friend and neighbor for decades. Each time I went to my sessions with her she was inebriated. Once she was 45 minutes late, arriving only after I spoke with her estranged husband and officemate. Once she didn't show up at all. Also, she was shifting the billing, changing amounts and dates. It took two years to get her to settle on a realistic amount based on my accurate records. I only

mentioned this because she was a real hack who happened to be my only lifeline to reunification for at time—really horrible. My allies were coworkers and dear friends, several of whom were on the witness stand. Susan Boyan was not there for you or me.

Once, she “allowed” us to have a phone conversation. We had 10 minutes on speaker phone. We spoke for about 2 minutes before I said, “I miss you and love you with all my heart”. Without warning or any rule to justify it, she disconnected the call. She gave no explanation—just shallow cruelty. That was our last meeting.

I had a new lawyer, the compassionate effective one moved away though she was shocked as a veteran family law attorney as to what was happening in our case. The new lawyer was also a veteran Legal Aid attorney but he had no compassion or passion left in him. Every week for two years I called to get him to pressure the courts to get our case on the docket. Your childhood was a stake. He didn’t care whatsoever. I asked for a different lawyer several times but I was at the mercy of their schedule. Above that though is a policy in DeKalb County Family Law Court that married couple custody cases had to reach resolution within 120 days. If you weren’t married, then your case was going to get pushed back. That and right before Christmas in 2015, I was the last one left a my job at JF&CS. My lawyer called solely to yell that he didn’t wasn’t to be lobbied to move our case up. So I waited and waited like a prisoner of your mom’s making. We were both prisoners, though there’s a reason I’ll get to for why you don’t see it that way yet.

November 15 and 17, 2017:

The custody trial finally was occurring. My coworker Aloma Gamon who adored you and was a great human, my former girlfriend and good friend Dr. Julia Brock, my former psychiatrist Dr. Sarah Juul, and one of my oldest friends Steve Witte were four of my five witnesses. My lawyer didn’t wasn’t to call Steve and I acquiesced. The others spoke of our deep, loving relationship as parent and child, dad and son. There was no countering them, steadfast in their witness and great character—as all my friends are. They know me as a great parent and honest, creative, and very hard working intelligent human being—full of compassion.

Some highlights of those two days:

Your mom stated on the witness stand that your middle name Lee came from her grandmother Rosalee. When I nearly fell to the floor when I heard that, I didn’t know which grandmother; I’d only met your mom’s mom’s mom and I’d only ever known her by her nickname, never by Roselee—no idea who that was. Reread what I just wrote, then read it again. Imagine the delusion it took to say that under oath in a final custody trial. Seriously, I had to watch the end scene in the film “The Caine Mutany” several times just to make some molecule of sense about the reasoning behind thinking that anyone would believe anything from a person’s mouth with would make that assertion.

Hearing Nora gasp the word “**NO!**” as my own lawyer stated without my permission that you would testify before Judge Coursey was one of the most surreal moments of my life. This was a lawyer that took over our case as the great lawyer we had moved closer to her and her husband’s family when they

had their first child. I told the new lawyer before the custody trial that I had nothing to hide and that I never abused you. I told him that that wouldn't be appropriate however because I suspected that you were being groomed and coached by your mom—I later learned that was absolutely happening.

March 24, 2018:

The first time I saw you in public since I dropped you off at your mom's on June 9, 2014. I was photographing the March for Our Lives, covering it as I'd done with all the marches, just like in the 14 years I was photojournalist, several in Atlanta, one in Chicago, since the BLM/NAACP March in the summer of 2016. At the end of the march at the Capital Building, people were gathering for speakers in the park across the street "Liberty Plaza". As I was coming into the back of the park, I had my camera up to my face photographing. I did a double take recognizing you from behind, about forty feet away. You were with your mom on top of a concrete dome. I was so proud of you that you were there with your sign, just like the 30,000 great souls marching with us! I took one photo of you up there. I knew I wasn't going to approach you because your mom would have flown into histrionics. Not that I cared about that, but her behavior would have caused you trauma. I walked about ten feet closer and photographed you again. But just then your mom saw me out of the corner of her eye and began rushing you away. I retraced my path out the back of the park and sat on the Capital's sidewalk across the street. I was waiting for the speakers to begin to go back and photograph them. Just then I saw your mom pulling you toward a Capital police officer. I could see her frantically yelling, feigning fear. Then you both disappeared. In our conversations with Eleecia the reunification therapist, in 2023 you asked me, "why were you stalking us when you knew there was a protective order in place?" I recorded all of the sessions with the reunification therapist solo and us together and have AI transcripts of every word. I replied the truth: "there was never a protective order, not then or ever". Nora Kalb-Bushfield when your mom persuaded her that after years of successful coparenting and never any mention of any form of me abusing you coming out of your mom's mouth or in our history or with any witnesses, facts, or reality until Nora announced her final report decision in March 2014—Nora filed a **"TEMPORARY ORDER" TO SUSPEND VISITATION BETWEEN PARENTS**, not a Temporary Protective Order or Protective Order or Restraining Order or whatever other lies your mom told you. She was lying to you. That is not an insult. That is the only truth there is.

July 2018:

It took six more months for Judge Coursey to publish his decision, the Final Custody Order. He mandated reunification as the "goal", "that the child should have a relationship with his father". He spoke about negative influence from the mom on the child toward the father. He mandated that that behavior cease. He stated that both parties shall agree on a reunification therapist or if not in agreement, each parents choice would confer with the other to choose a neutral third.

Immediately your mom emailed the name Susan Boyan. I began reaching out to providers right away and it took from July to September, contacting over 40 therapists, waiting on callbacks and referrals that led to further dead ends. No one wanted to take this case because of the poison you mom was spreading. Finally though, I met Marsha Schechtman, who I spoke with in her office for two one hour

sessions. She had two 3' x 6' bookshelves completely filled with books on Parental Alienation, equivocal child abuse, borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. She was a veteran of family law custody cases—high-conflict cases. I want to mention that I always described our custody case as one-sided high-conflict. Your mom and I never had conflict until she got caught in her second affair. But even after that moment, I didn't care enough for her to waste my energy on any kind of conflict with her.

Between your moms' two-word email in July and November, I didn't hear from your mom. And when I wrote her that I found a great reunification therapist, someone that would have your, you, best interest at the center, I still didn't hear back. Finally, I called and spoke with Susan Boyan in December 2018. She said, "I've never heard from Cheri, and besides I wouldn't have agreed to take the case". At that point I realized that your mom was going to try to ignore Judge Coursey's Final Custody Order. I went to the DeKalb Courthouse clerk and was given the documents to file a contempt charge against your mom. This wasn't only about me. This was about you and what the Judge after hearing two days of witness testimony, that you needed your dad.

On my mom's birthday on December 8, 2018, I was meeting a date at the Emory Gamelan Ensemble concert. I was a bit early, waiting by the front doors when your mom came barreling through them. I realized in a flash that you might be with her. And there you were—only the second time I'd seen you in 3.5 years at the time—because your mom had sequestered you from me intentionally to feed the part of her brain that needed that type of dose—fear and intimidation without anything else than giving her a serotonin burst whenever she cheated others: in her financial dealings, in her relationships, in her workplace...As I've said for 12 years, "it's not my mental illness". A reminder that getting help for mental illness is all I've wish for her those same 12 years. Many have heard me say this and could corroborate.

I knelt down when I approached you. Your mom told you in a very low tone, "it's alright". I reached for your hand and you pulled back. This was another indicator that you were being coached by your mom. I told you how much I love you and missed you. I gave you a riddle in that moment because I knew your mom could explode with gaslit malice at any second. I said, "kiddo, do you remember when you came back home in 2013, how you were looking for spiders in the hall and in your room? You said that you mom told you that I was in the hospital for a spider bite..." This was true, I spend six days at Emory hospital with spider bite in March 2012. You knew that from her because she stalked my facebook page. She told you that story a year later when you were coming home for the first time in 391 days for two reasons: first to spread fear in you at the very thought of being in your own amazing room in our loving home; and two, to make certain she got across that she would attack me even from safe spaces like my own facebook page—though everything horrible that had occurred since 2009 was of her own design and making. At that point your mom put her hand on your shoulder and began to physically pull you away. In the last second I had, I gave you the riddle: "us being apart is exactly like the spider bite". She then said exaggeratedly loud, "AlIII right!" and pull you completely away as I say "I love you G!"

Right before Christmas 2018, I received an email from one of your mom's friends, someone I barely knew but knows your mom well, even now. They pulled 16 images your mom had posted on facebook and emailed them, asking if that was me, the adult man with their face blurred out in each photo. I told them it wasn't me it was your stepdad. Each of the black and white photos is a happy moment during

their marriage, some with you or you and Eve, most with just he and you mom. And on each of the photos, your mom had captioned details of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse that had occurred according to the captions. They were most disturbing. I still have them all. One reads, “I criticize, belittle, and make fun of the kids, and scare them by fighting with their mom”. The photo shows his blurred face, you, your mom, and Eve. From February 21, 2012 to April 13, 2013 and from June 9, 2014 until today, occasionally I’ve tried to imaging the mindset of someone so deeply disturbed that they would lie to their own child so they wouldn’t have to be bothered to coparent, while letting their own child be abused by a known abuser, your mom’s husband who regularly beat up his live in girlfriend, Lori, while he was having an affair with your mom—facts, not insults, reality, not hyperbole, history, not fantasy. Why would your mom alienate you from your own father, keeping you from half of your childhood, even to the point of abuse from your stepparent? She needs help and I hope she gets it. I’ve said that since day one and I’ll say it again in this document.

January through June 2019:

I made the decision in that moment to not file for contempt but to move forward with non confrontational means to bring your mom to the realization that following Judge Coursey’s Final Order was in your best interests. I contacted Families First and eventually met with Christopher Igbokwe a six-year veteran caseworker that did parental mediation in these types of cases. He reached out weekly by phone to your mom for six months and would check in with me monthly. In late July 2019, I got my last call from him in which he reported that your mom never returned a call though she knew why he was calling, leaving voice mails each time with a full description of why he was calling.

So I tried the route mandated in the Final Order, your mom for no other reasons than to feed her ego and not have to be bothered by coparenting, refused to comply with what was in your best interests. Then I tried the second nonconfrontational route, professional mediation from a well respected family services nonprofit. She ignored your best interests for her own shallow schadenfreude. There is no other explanation that is based on reality, history, or the result of any witness testimony—people who knew you with me, your great, loving dad. You can ask any of them: neighbors, lifetime friends, former girlfriend, and former coworkers. There were 40 Eureka! parents and your mom’s employees who could testify to that even now as I took care of their kids for a nearly a year and knew them even longer from the time your mom started Eureka! in 2006—one of her employees was a witness in a custody-related hearing. Your mom came up to Ida during a courtroom break. Ida was sitting next to one of my IRC coworkers who was also a witness along with the property manager at the time at our apartment complex. Your mom walked up to her and said to her long time employee, “you know you’re dealing with a psychopath!”—her favorite crutch, name calling, diminishing and demoralizing others to prop herself up—real reality, not an insult. If she has friends, they encourage her to get help. But she hides it so well from everyone, including herself. She believes every lie she’s told you about me. That’s the toughest part of it for someone who’s going through what she’s going through, a lifetime of trauma without getting help because she genuinely believes it’s everyone else, not her. Again, there are countless academic articles on the subject, not something I’m inventing for the sake of argument. I don’t have to prove anything. Since I was in high school, I’ve adhered to Mark Twain’s axiom: “I always tell the truth, that way I don’t have to remember anything.” As destructive as her behavior towards others has

been, it's nothing compared to the weight of what she carries inside her. Without help, she is already eyeing her next target—guaranteed. I hope she gets help for all our sakes, including her next victim.

July 2019:

I went to buy you a bicycle off of craigslist. Even though you weren't home, I updated your bike to a bigger model throughout the time we were apart. When I arrived at the home of the seller, I realized that this was the address where I initially sent the child support payments, always certified letter with either a certified bank check or USPS money order because both were traceable and the envelope required a signature. Before I tell you the story about the bike seller, I'll tell you about the child support payments. Keep in mind that I have five archival boxes of documents, hours of recordings, a hundred emails, and multiple witnesses to everything I'm describing in this timeline. During the first year of child support, your mom would report me to GCSS saying that she didn't receive payment. Everytime this occurred, I would go to the Miller Rd. Child Support Office to talk with their lawyer and a caseworker to show them the signature confirmations and the bank and postal service record that the check or money order was cashed. Finally, I spoke with them about putting myself on self-report so I could do auto deductions to protect myself; but you can't do that in Georgia. Eventually your mom did that to me out of spite or whatever gives her a serotonin burst. I've always paid child support, except for twine when I was laid off like during the first few months of the pandemic—Georgia mandates no child support payments during the time a worker is displaced. Then a strange thing happened, your mom started writing "return to sender" on the envelopes. For five months, the USPS money orders in their certified, signature only envelopes were being returned. She then called GCSS and tried to take me to court for nonpayment—because that's what a 7th grader would do, right? Right. I emailed her to meet me at the Family Law Center in the DeKalb County Courthouse, where they know your name and our case, and made her sign a receipt with the staff as witnesses in order to pick up the money orders she said she never received—was she mad! Why? Because she had to do the right thing, right? Right.

So here was the house and there was the landlord, Norm Bielowicz, 404-784-0780. Call him up, he'll tell you everything you're about to read is true. I bought the bike after about 10 minutes, then I pulled out my phone, showed him my screen with your picture, and asked, "do you recognize this person?" He was a little surprised and the randomness of it. "Yes, of course!" I replied, "Emmett's my son. This address is where I sent the first round of child support payments." We talked for over an hour about what your mom had done to alienate you from your dad, me. He, without me asking about your life there, told me what happened to you and your mom in that basement apartment. Norm and his wife were retire civil servants in DeKalb county. They bought their home on Connecticut Ave. in Candler Park in the early 70s and had always rented out the basement apartment for extra income.

He told me that there was significant fighting between your mom and stepdad, not at first. But then at some point he was no longer around. Norm went on to describe that he and his wife and some neighbors were becoming very concerned that you were being left alone for significant and extended periods of time at an age where that is considered child neglect in Georgia. One of the neighbors, he stated, eventually reported the situation to DeKalb Child Protective Services. Child neglect is a very serious form of abuse. It's considered a felony and parents convicted of it can lose custodial rights. As he's

telling me this, an email your mom sent me a year or so before finally made sense. There was an odd email from her that said something along the lines of asking why I feel the need to report her to the authorities—I'm not going to look it up right now, but it's there. I had no idea what she was talking about, but then I did with Norm's story. This was another illustration of your mom letting you suffer rather than doing what was right and complying with the Judge Coursey's Final Custody Order to be with your loving dad, me. There is no other way to describe that, no other reality but that historic fact. Norm told me that from that point through the last you lived at that home, your mom didn't speak to the landlords or look them in the eye. The one day, six months later she moved you out in the night. Both Norm and his wife have strong recollections regarding Cheri, her behavior toward you, and the CPS child neglect investigation. His wife mentioned that Cheri accused her husband of "spending inappropriate time" with Emmett after CPS began their investigation. Good god. These are humble, older Candler Park residents, 40+ years in their home. We ended our conversation with Norm saying, "If I could ever do anything to help..."

August 2019 to August 2021:

It took nearly a year to find an attorney who would do the work, Aisha Blanchard Collins in Decatur. I had a consultation with her that went well. But it took me five months to save up the \$5000 retainer. When I let her know she declined the job because it took too long. More search and waiting for referrals and call backs. Then I was referred to Tahira Piraino, a 27-year veteran of family law in DeKalb who saw Cheri for what she was doing. Within a month I had to hire a private detective to find your mom. I learned that she removed you from school to an online education contractor that her mom dealt with in Pennsylvania. Then she spirited you to Athens to "take care of" the former boyfriend. He was the last guy your mom dated before we started dating in November 2004. At that time she denigrated him in conversations with me for working at Phoenix Grocery, a healthfood store that used to be in Athens, made fun of him for not having a car, and doing nothing but art and playing soccer. In the end, she wanted Carter Gillies' house.

Finally your mom was served court papers to answer before the Judge why she refused to comply with the Final Custody Order and its mandate for reunification. When we first met online in a hearing, your mom had no attorney and said she didn't have money for mediation because her "car was repossessed". It wasn't, the detective and process server had photos of the minivan and that's how she was served the contempt charge. I paid for the mediator and your mom spoke with him as did I, but then she announced afterward before the judge that she decided against mediation, again cheap, transparent and week hat trick. My own lawyer, who I was not friends with and was very conservative in her adherence to legal processes, courtroom decorum, and respect for the judge, blurted out loud to the mediator, "the mom is a pathological liar". She spoke the truth. Your mom needs to get help.

2022:

Your mom fought the reunification therapy process for a few months, but then agreed to the provider without coming up with an alternative. At that point I realized and spoke with my lawyer that she had a plan to create propaganda aimed at you to sway or coach you from any movement toward

the goal, reunification with your dad. There were times when it was blaringly obvious like your first chess avatar name “momentomormarc”, intentionally misspelling my name as a reminder of death. I didn’t react because I knew you were so deep in her spell that you couldn’t see the reasoning behind that. I wasn’t going to cross that line until you woke from it. Then there was your answer to my genuine question about your favorite word in German, “schadenfreude”, good one “touché” I thought, but I didn’t react because I wanted to go the path of reunification. That and being an adult means rising above differences and misunderstandings to create communication between those people or situations we don’t understand. Truth, beauty, and love are all that matter in this life. Value, community, and growth flourish solely under those tropes and wither quickly in decrepitude without them.

August 2022:

I brought it to the attention of the Judge in a hearing my lawyer scheduled, with your mom online, that she was coaching you against the reunification process even while we were in sessions with Eleecia. We had proof and were prepared to present that then. Once your mom knew that, again without a lawyer, she resigned herself before the Judge to adhere to the Final Order’s reunification mandate. This time though, the Judge issued and signed in place a Temporary Order to curtail her coaching you. So reunification therapy started again. It was during this time you asked me why I never sent you cards or letters because Nora had offered that. I know that you appreciate my answer more now that I’m placing it in the context of reality, taking it from the confines of your mom’s broken imagination. I replied, “because you never would have received them.” That’s the truth, the only truth. Another truth is your mom can repair her imagination to be able to image the strength and love it takes to be fully human and a parent. I hope that for her and have for 12 years. Everyone who know our situation could tell you that.

March 2023:

Eleecia was excited that the reunification sessions were going so well. When she and I met in a solo session, I proposed that you and I move to video and twice a month, leading up to once a week, then in person. Then in the next session with you and I, you agreed to that. However, the next session, you rejected everything. Eleecia was nearly as shocked as I was.

August 2023:

Parental Alienation is child abuse, no different that any other form of physical, emotional, mental, verbal abuse or neglect against a child. However, it’s not against the law or a reportable offence in any county in the United States, Canada, or Great Britain. The Judge created the Contempt charge and signed the Temporary Order to pressure you mom to do the right thing by you—that the court recognized and wrote in the Final Order that “unlimited, unsupervised visitation with the Father after reunification therapy due to the amount of time separated is the goal.” If the Judge decided to find your mom guilty in this context, it would have set a nationwide legal precedent. She would have been legislating from the bench, not protocol. It would have resulted in a felony and your mom would have been picked up and transferred to the DeKalb County jail immediately after the Judge’s decision. She

would have lost all custody rights and you would have gone into a temporary foster home until custodial rights were transferred to me. I never wanted that. For 12 years, people have asked what I thought of Cheri, that I must hate her for what she's done to you and I. I've always replied that it's not my mental illness, I've refused to become a victim by working very hard every day to bring this to a positive resolution and get you home.

As the Abraham Lincoln quote I included in my blog about us is written: "History is not history unless it is the truth". Or, as Dr. Jeffry B. Russell wrote in his essay "History and Truth" for the journal "The Historian" in 1987, which you will most likely have to read at some point if you're studying history: "...the purpose of history is to pursue the truth". And as I wrote to you, if you're going to study history, start with your own.

You and I were like magic together, dad and son, just amazing, such love, fun, creativity, and joy. We explored truth, beauty, and growth: art, science, history...I've never given up hope and I never will because truth and love will always triumph over those who would attempt to tear it down for thin shards of power. What a sad waste. This life is beautiful, precious, and deserves all the care we have in our minds and hearts.

I love you son, Emme G., Emmett! You're the so/un in my sky Kiddo!

Love Dad