

RECEIVED APR - 7 1993

Cynthia G. Baldinger
564 Euclid Avenue
Greensburg, PA 15601
(412) 832-2544
April 2, 1993

Representative Thomas Caltigirone
P.O. Box 210
Room 106 South Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

IN RE: Proposed Child Abuse Bill

Dear Representative Caltigirone:

I am writing in regard to the telephone conversation we had last night concerning your participation with the proposed new legislation dealing with false child abuse charges. As I stated to you last night, I have been experiencing a nightmare for the past month which I have documented every step of the way and enclosed for you to review. As I told you, there is absolutely nothing that I would like more than to testify on behalf of this legislation. I believe that I have documented in great detail all chains of events concerning my situation and also believe that I would make a good witness for your cause. Please bear with me over the length of this letter. My case is very involved but clearly illustrates not only the horrors of the Children's Bureau, but also the ease with which the institutions of the mental health unit and school districts help make these atrocities possible. It is insanely criminal!

My son, Bruce, came to me on April 3, 1992 with an untreated ringworm condition and requested that I permit him to remain in my home. I agreed and got him immediate treatment. He had been living previously with his father because his father ran away with him for a month when Bruce was only 9 months old. When we divorced, the father threatened to run away again the first time he had visitation. In order to prevent this, I gave the man custody voluntarily. I took my son to our local Children's Bureau the following Monday. They said that this was a clear case of neglect (advanced neglect as you can see from the enclosed photos), but refused to investigate the situation because I had obtained treatment for him. I could not impress upon these people that I was in contempt of court since I was the non-custodial parent and had not returned him to this clearly unhealthy situation.

I retained an attorney (not the one I have now) and pursued custody. When the Court said that my son had to return to his father's home, he lost emotional control of himself. The Judge became concerned and ordered psychological and home evaluations for all persons in both homes. Mr. Dennis Donohue from the Westmoreland Hospital Mental Health Unit was appointed as the liaison between the Mental Health Unit and the Court.

On June 11, 1992, Mr. Donohue requested a postponement of Bruce's return to his father's home, and a temporary custody Order was granted to me for the duration of the evaluation. By August 23, 1992, Bruce's father decided to relinquish custody to me. Even though during those few months of evaluation, Mr. Donohue told us that he'd tried to arrange for Bruce and his father to meet at the mental health unit, Bruce's father refused. Although Bruce had some violent outbursts over the course of the next several months, I attributed them to his period of adjustment to a new situation as well as his father's clear rejection.

On September 15, 1992, my son had knee surgery for torn cartilage which was the result of an untreated injury he sustained during wrestling practice in February, 1992, while he was living with his father. His father had very good medical insurance and there was absolutely no reason for the ringworm or the knee injury to have gone unattended. This injury was also undocumented by his wrestling coach who wrestled him for the duration of the season with his knee wrapped with $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch layer of adhesive tape for every match from Sections through States at Hershey, knowing that the kid was in pain and had received no medical treatment. At this same State Tournament at Hershey, my son admitted to me that he and another kid got drunk on champagne which was brought in by the adults at the end of this tournament to celebrate one of the older boy's victory. At this point, I was leary of permitting Bruce to wrestle this season, but I did because he was so good and it meant a lot to him.

Early into the 1992-93 wrestling season, Bruce began to nearly starve himself in order to wrestle in the 152 lb. weight slot on his team. He would go for several days and eat next to nothing, so just before the second week of December, I called his coach at home and asked him to talk to Bruce because not only was he starving himself, but he had become mean and nasty to every member of the family with no provocation. The coach never did talk to my son like he said he would, even though I'd told this coach that if things didn't improve, I would be forced to withdraw my permission for my son to wrestle. This kid is just under 6 feet tall and his average weight is between 160 and 165 lbs. When he weighed in for a tournament just before Christmas of 1992, he weighed in at 149 lbs. - he'd lost nearly 10% of his body weight at a time when he was growing rapidly as well as being under a demanding physical strain. I have enclosed all correspondence concerning my final decision to permanently withdraw Bruce from wrestling. All of this correspondence with the key people was done by certified mail.

After a rather brief period of anger, Bruce appeared to be adjusting to the situation, until his team lost to Connelville in the WPIAL Team Championship. He'd decided, with the aid of his team and coaches, that had he been permitted to wrestle for the duration of the season, the team would have made it to States. Needless to say, all hell broke loose at my house because my son

went on rampage after rampage. His rampages included his hitting my 5½ yr. old, trying to bait my husband (who is a very gentle and non-confrontational man) into physical altercations, and finally, hitting me. On Saturday, February 29, 1993, I finally decided that he needed some emotional help. I contacted the Discovery Unit at Monsour Hospital in his behalf. I was told to take him to the emergency room. Bruce was sent up to his room to change his clothes and when he came down the stairs, he bolted out of the door.

I located him at the police station several blocks away by phone and when the officer asked me what I wanted him to do with Bruce, I told him to bring the kid home. Bruce went there claiming that I was drunk and abusive towards him. When the police brought him home, they saw that he had lied and left him in my care. The enclosed police report bears this out. On Monday, March 1, 1993, he was finally admitted for a 3 to 5 week stay in the Discovery Unit. On Tuesday, March 2, 1993, I received a complaint of child abuse in my mail claiming "emotional abuse" of this kid.

At 8:30 A.M. on March 3, 1993, my attorney, my husband and I met with Mr. David Donati at the Children's Bureau in regard to this matter. At that time, he was given copies of every piece of correspondence concerning the wrestling issue and verbally said that he did not think that there was any real case, although he claimed that he would have to talk to my son at the Discovery Unit.

By March 8, 1993, Judge John E. Blahovic issued an Order appointing Dorean N. Petonic Guardian Ad Litem for my son as a result of a letter he received from Mr. Dennis Donohue at the Westmoreland Mental Health Unit which is also enclosed. This man had no jurisdiction in this case as of August, 1992 as well as the fact that he clearly states that he does not have all of the facts.

I had received a call from Mr. Donohue on February 24, 1993, but instead of talking to him, I immediately contacted my attorney for him to find out what the guy wanted. Mr. Donohue had been very unprofessional with me in the previous year in that he liked to make arrangements for me to do things without ever consulting me, and knowing that he no longer had any jurisdiction in my life, I had my attorney handle the matter. My attorney was unable to reach Mr. Donohue that day, and two days later when they saw one another at the courthouse, Mr. Donohue had nothing to say to my attorney. I learned later that there was no need for him to get back to me or my attorney because he had already taken things into his own hands and run to the Judge with incorrect and incomplete information.

Upon learning this, I went on a search and destroy mission in my son's room where I found an appointment card for him with Mr. Donohue on February 24, and an early dismissal slip signed by the vice principal (Mr. Falcon). To date, nobody has been able to explain how my son was transported to and from this appointment, and who gave permission for him to be dismissed early, because I never made any such request. Mr. Falcon was also the man who chose

not only to disregard the improprieties of the wrestling team on January 5, 1993, but also approached my son on January 11, 1993, asking him if he still wanted to wrestle. He was confronted over this issue in my certified letter to principal Albaugh on January 13, 1993, but was the source of Mr. Donohue's misguided information to the Judge.

Bruce was retained in the custody of the Children's Bureau on March 16, 1993, and placed in the YMCA Youth Shelter awaiting further disposition. At the "hearing" on March 25, 1993, Mr. Donohue tried to convince me to permit my son to return to his father's home until a 90-day period had elapsed, during which time, we would all enter into family therapy. I refused, saying that the father had violated every Court Order I'd ever had with him and that since this man had not only neglected serious medical conditions in the previous year, but had also been a party to physical confrontations with this kid along with his wife which resulted in his refusal of a relationship with my son for the past year, I found even the mere suggestion to be ludicrous. When Bruce was released from the Discovery Unit on March 16, 1993, he had been diagnosed with Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Dysthymic Disorder. Considering this as well as the previous year's history with his father, this would have been the absolute worst decision. I felt that Bruce needed a neutral situation during this 90-day period of family therapy if it were to result in success. That's what they finally agreed to in the Order of Court of March 25, 1993. Interestingly enough, although they dragged this out for more than half of the day, the last thing these people wanted was a real hearing with real testimony on the record.

The next day, March 26, 1993, I talked to Mr. Donati and he said that he wanted my husband and I to sign a "Family Plan" of some sort, but that "Plan" would include my son's eventual return to his father's home. I let him know that I vehemently opposed this. I also let him know that not only were the child abuse charges against me determined to be unfounded, but that I had gotten appropriate medical care for my son which the discharge diagnosis supported from the Discovery Unit. The only reason I wouldn't permit Bruce to return to my home at that time was that I wanted him to receive continued counselling to get himself under control prior to any return to my home.

As you can see from the other enclosed correspondence, Mr. Donati has continued to play games with me by saying one thing and doing something else to the point that I refuse to interact with him or his agency unless it is in writing. If what they are doing is legitimate, why would they have a problem with that?

If you string all of this information together, you will see a conspiracy emerging that is far reaching and disgusting:

1. Bruce was suspended from wrestling on December 30, 1992, by me for absolute disregard to my parental authority;

2. At the meeting that I initiated with Mr. Falcon, athletic director Melago, Bruce, Randy Guhl (a friend of mine, substitute teacher and former wrestling coach for other school districts) and myself, Mr. Falcon and Mr. Melago refused to confront the serious issues outlined in my letter dated January 13, 1993, where I finally withdraw my permission for Bruce to wrestle permanently;
3. January 11, 1993, Mr. Falcon stopped Bruce in the halls to ask the boy if he wanted him to wrestle. This issue was also confronted in my certified letter of January 13, since I viewed his action to be sheer pressure on my son;
4. Around the weekend of February 20, 1993, Bruce's team lost the WPIAL Team Championships which took them out of the race for the State Title. It is at this time that Bruce begins to go off the deep end with everyone at home;
5. February 24, 1993, Bruce is illegally signed out and transported to Mr. Dennis Donohue at Mental Health;
6. February 24, 1993, Mr. Donohue calls me and is "unavailable" to my attorney only 5 minutes later;
7. February 25, 1993, Mr. Donohue sends his letter to the Judge requesting a Guardian Ad Litem for my son;
8. February 27, 1993, Bruce runs out of the house to the police claiming "abuse" and tries to contact Mr. Donohue;
9. March 1, 1993, Bruce is admitted to the Discovery Unit and some mysterious caller makes an allegation of child abuse against me that is rather vague;
10. March 3, 1993, my husband, attorney and I meet with Mr. Donati at the Children's Bureau, at which time Mr. Donati was given copies of all correspondence with the school and a written request was made for us to receive a copy of the complaint of abuse which mysteriously took nearly 10 days for us to receive;
11. March 8, 1993, Judge Elahovic appoints a Guardian Ad Litem for my son as a result of Mr. Donohue's letter of Feb. 25, 1993;
12. March 16, 1993, Bruce is released from the Discovery Unit with a diagnosis of Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Dysthymic Disorder and is placed at the YMCA Youth Shelter in "emergency" custody of the Children's Bureau;
13. March 25, 1993, a "hearing" for disposition of Bruce is

held where Mr. Donohue and Mr. Donati (Mr. Donati remained discreetly out of the room) tried to convince me to permit my son to return to his father's during the 90-day therapy period, which I refused. This resulted in the Order of Court on March 25, 1993;

14. March 26, 1993, Mr. Donati still tries to get me to sign a "Family Plan" with the ultimate outcome being that my son return to his father's after the 90-day period of therapy, eventhough the charges of emotional abuse against me were determined to be unfounded;
15. March 26, 1993, my attorney notifies Bruce's Guardian Ad Litem of a pctential lawsuit against the school district for his knee injury;
16. March 28, 1993, I learn that Bruce's father was at the YMCA Youth Shelter visiting him when the Court Order of March 25, 1993, clearly states in item 7, that visits will occur according to the recommendation of the family therapist. No recommendation had been made at that time, and if there had, I was never contacted;
17. March 29, 1993, I sent by certified mail, a letter to Mr. Donati confirming the above item from the March 25th Order of Court;
18. March 30, 1993, I pack and my husband delivers the items requested on March 25, 1993, by my son, in writing, to to the Children's Bureau;
19. April 2, 1993, I send a certified letter to Mr. Donati making a written request for a copy of this "Family Plan" as well as written confirmation that I was to contact Mr. Donohue myself about the family therapist. We were told that someone from the therapist's office would contact us to set up this therapy when we were in Court on March 25. To date, nobody has been in touch with us about this, although Mr. Donati made a point of saying to me on April 1, 1993, when I talked to him on the telephone, that not only had Bruce's father and stepmother signed the "Family Plan", but that they had either met with or had arranged a visit with the family therapist;
20. April 3, 1993, my attorney sends a letter to Mr. Donohue with a copy to Mr. Donati, letting them know that I have not been contacted about the family therapy.

The end analysis as follows:

- A. The school is confronted with a serious legal issue regarding neglect which resulted in unreported injury

- B. The vice-principal, Mr. Falcon, in tandem with Mr. Donohue brew up their story about my being unreasonable by withdrawing my permission for my son to wrestle. I believe that Mr. Falcon may have failed to give Mr. Donohue all of the details regarding my decision in an effort to get the school off the hook for their negligence. What better way to do that than to incite my son to riot so to speak, and utilize Mr. Donohue's position as well as the Children's Bureau to hold me at bay by having my son removed from my home so he could wrestle? On February 27, Mr. Donohue's name appears in the police report as the person Bruce was trying to contact. Collusion between Mr. Falcon and Mr. Donohue?
- C. On February 25, 1993, Mr. Donohue has already written to the Judge requesting a Guardian Ad Litem for Bruce. This is only two days prior to Bruce's trek to the police in an effort to prevent me from placing him in a mental health unit which would interfere with Mr. Donohue's as well as Mr. Falcon's ability to communicate with Bruce and to successfully have Bruce removed from my home.
- D. Miraculously, on March 1, 1993, a report of child abuse is filed against me, how timely.
- E. Even when given absolute documented proof that the real issue was my withdrawal of my son from the wrestling team and why, Mr. Donati not only pursues the charge, but drags it out for a month, although he never asks us to submit to drug/alcohol testing, although my husband and I were willing. Curious, isn't it?
- F. Mr. Donati and Mr. Donohue realize by March 25, 1993, that they are backed into a corner by me since I am not intimidated by them and their "authority". At this point, they have no real choice but to resort to subterfuge in an effort to make it appear that I am uncooperative with them and the Court. At this point, it is impossible for them to say that my son could return to my home, since by now, they realize that Mr. Falcon and my son have used them and their naivety of the situation, and to send Bruce back here could result in the lawsuit that would eventually expose them to the Court. So, as creative as they think they are, they figure that by placing him back in his father's home, they can not only cover up what has really happened here (their abuse of position and power), but also get me out of the picture at the next disposition hearing in 90 days. The snag for them now, is that I will do nothing without it being in writing, which I have every legal right to do. What to do, what to do, I'm sure they are wondering. It should get even more interesting now.

Even as I write this letter, I have no doubts that this will

become curiouser and curiouser as we near the next disposition hearing, only this time, I want a real hearing and not one of their kangaroo courts because I want this garbage to be on record. I believe, although I cannot yet prove, that Bruce is in no foster home at all, but in the home of the president of the Wrestling Parents Association, who Mr. Donohue alluded to in his letter to the judge. This guy's name had already been mentioned by Mr. Donohue and Mr. Donati and if Bruce isn't there, it may be possible that they put him back into the father's home. Gee, I would love that one even more - talk about Contempt of Court! It would break my heart into itty bitty pieces to see the Children's Bureau be cited for such a thing. I request that the information contained in this paragraph be kept confidential since I am pursuing these guys like a starving dog after a bone and would not want to take the chance of missing this golden opportunity.

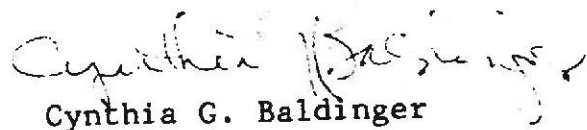
Please contact me in regard to testifying at the hearing in Pittsburgh at the end of the month at (412) 832-2544. My attorney and I have begun contacting as many people as possible in order to insure success for you in this legislation and expose these people.

In my case, there is very clear maliciousness for self-serving reasons by those in "authority" that we as citizens are supposed to entrust our children. That is the most horrifying part that I don't think that the public is aware. There is nothing at this point for these sleazes to prevent them from subjecting me, through my 5½ year old, to another circus.

Thank you for bearing with me through this lengthy letter, but I thought that a full explanation in addition to my documentation would best serve your cause in this legislation. Please feel free to contact me if I can help in any way.

I am sending Representative Birmelin a copy of this letter since it was his office I first contacted about this matter. You were the first Representative I actually got to talk to, which is why I have sent all of my documentation to you. Good Luck!!!!!!!!!!

Sincerely yours,


Cynthia G. Baldinger

cc: Rep. Birmelin
Henry Hudson, Esq.
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