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Chelsea Filer

22h · 

Friends, survivors, and allies who care about survivors, if you have the time, please read this lengthy post. Your support would mean the world to me and would make a big difference in restoring hope for a fellow survivor.

...

I've spent the night pouring through legal documents again, and trust me, these aren't the fun kind. A friend of mine, a fellow survivor, is in the middle of a tough custody battle, and it's heartbreaking. I can only imagine how she feels, losing precious time with her child because the father has put a parenting plan in place that seems designed to control and punish her and keep her away from her daughter.

To make it worse, she's been dragged through years of litigation due to her involvement with Breaking Code Silence and the stress of that is what started all this. What's even more troubling is that a fellow survivor—someone who is currently suing her in another case—opted to testify against her in the custody case.

I have serious moral issues with that. It's just wrong for a survivor in this community to interfere in another survivor's personal life, especially something as sensitive as a custody battle. There are boundaries that should never be crossed, no matter what kind of issues you might have had in the past.

I certainly think it's inappropriate to send "unsolicited" evidence, absent an official subpoena, and especially inappropriate to send drawings that her child made, and twist the meaning of those drawings to paint the narrative that the mother is unfit or wants to die. To be clear, I have seen these drawings and they read like a sweet innocent child who loves their Mom... not anything to be manipulated and used against her in court.

Now, I'd like to address some false statements that have recently been made and clear them up based on the evidence I have read in court documents.



Home



Video



Friends



Marketplace



Notifications



Menu



Posts

Photos

Reels

Events

1. Jenny never lost custody of her child. Since the very first court order, the parents have always had 50/50 custody. However, when the parents were together, she was the primary caregiver and formed a secure attachment bond with the child.

2. Jenny's parenting time is being reduced because her ex-husband brought false allegations of substance abuse, which were completely unsubstantiated. The allegation is that he found several liquor bottles in the recycling bin, which he admitted hadn't been taken out for a month. However, Jenny says the bottles were several months old, and while she would occasionally have a drink, it was never an amount that would reach the threshold of alcohol abuse.

Sidenote: Jenny has a significant autoimmune disorder and gastrointestinal problems that cause symptoms her husband has mischaracterized as signs of drinking. Despite knowing about these illnesses and living with her for many years while she struggled with them, he still used them against her.

She also suffers from a Traumatic Brain Injury, which makes it difficult for her to wake up in the morning. He used this against her as well, monitoring her through more than 12 cameras he installed (several without her knowledge) and watching her sleep in when her alarm didn't go off. He raised a lot of "what ifs" about that incident, but provided no evidence that her accidentally sleeping in that day actually harmed her child.

3. These false claims have led to Jenny being required, via their parenting plan, to follow a rigid testing schedule where she tests herself three times a day. If she is ever late or if her device is faulty, her parenting time is reduced. She has even been penalized because she didn't test on a day she wasn't required to be tested.

4. Jenny does not have a substance use issue. After spending over \$6,200 (updated now to \$8000) on 1,300 (updated now to 1,900) sobriety tests, including four hair follicle tests, she has never tested positive for any substance.

5. Jenny is asking that, after jumping through every hoop, consistently proving she doesn't have a substance use disorder, the court would remove these arbitrary restrictions and implement a reasonable and reliable parenting schedule that serves the best



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Video



Friends



Marketplace



Notifications



Menu



Posts

Photos

Reels

Events

5. Jenny is asking that, after jumping through every hoop, consistently proving she doesn't have a substance use disorder, the court would remove these arbitrary restrictions and implement a reasonable and reliable parenting schedule that serves the best interests of the child, avoiding any further unjustified reductions in her parenting time.

6. This modification is truly in the best interest of the child, considering these restrictions have significantly impacted her, causing separation anxiety, inconsistency, confusion, and actual fear for her mother's life after the father told her that she lost time with her mom because she needs treatment "for her brain." Since Jenny has a brain injury, this was especially traumatizing for her daughter, who was led to believe her mom was too sick to see her.

7. Jenny's daughter loves her mom and enjoys their time together; she doesn't want to lose her any more than she already has. When she is with Jenny, she is cared for by her mother, as she has been since birth. In contrast, when she is with her father, she is primarily cared for by her grandmother because her father has work and other extracurricular activities to attend to during his parenting time.

You don't need to sift through 500 pages of these distressing court documents to see the truth. I believe Jenny is trying to escape an abusive relationship, and this parenting plan is being weaponized to control her and separate her from the one thing she cherishes most: her daughter.

It's also worth noting that during the discovery proceedings, when asked what he wanted, the father made it clear that he aims to take full custody and limit Jenny's visits to professionally supervised sessions that would cost hundreds of dollars each time.

I urge everyone to take a moment to imagine being in Jenny's shoes and consider how she must feel—and how her daughter must feel caught in the middle. Jenny is simply asking for a return to normalcy, for stability, and for a healthy environment devoid of constant conflict. In stark contrast, her ex seems intent on taking her child away and making it nearly impossible for Jenny to see her.



Home



Video



Friends



Marketplace



Notifications



Menu



Posts

Photos

Reels

Events

The narrative being perpetuated online by the person testifying against Jenny, suggesting she's an alcoholic and that her daughter is unsafe with her, is profoundly wrong. I personally believe she knows this isn't true, but it's convenient for her because it gives her an opportunity to get back at Jenny and hit her where it truly hurts.

I'd also like to point out that even if the ex-husband's allegations were taken at face value, the documented evidence that Jenny has passed every single sobriety test for several months proves there's no reason to continue this regimen if it unjustly interferes with her parenting time. As survivors, we should understand that in situations like this, the goal is successful reconciliation and an eventual return to normalcy. Why wouldn't we advocate for that?

I personally understand the struggle of being dragged through a lawsuit, and this woman has been through five in the last three years. The incredible stress she's under would certainly explain heightened health issues and depression. I can't blame her for having a drink during these times, and as long as it wasn't legitimately affecting her ability to parent, I believe her demonstrated sobriety and compliance with the strict provisions of the parenting plan show that she deserves a second chance.

This is why I feel the need to stand up and speak out. This woman is being dragged through the mud, and no one has heard her side of the story before deciding she deserves this. I don't believe anyone deserves this. What she deserves is our support and compassion.

No one should go through this alone, and I've chosen to stand by her, advocate for her, and try to rally support from a community that has the power to help heal her broken heart.

If you've read this far, please leave a heart or comment with supportive words so she can feel that she isn't alone.

Thank you.



Freya L Hawkins and 4 others

2 comments



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