
CHAPPAQUA POISON

An American Tragedy

A documentary narrative in forty-nine chapters
from four surviving archives

Copyright © 2026. All rights reserved.
Published in association with a federal civil rights complaint.
No part of this book may be reproduced without permission.

Build: 2026-03-25

CHAPPAQUA POISON

An American Tragedy

CONTENTS

Prologue 2019

Part I **THE FOOL**

1. The Fool *May 2010*
2. The Girl on the Boat *Summer 2015*
3. The Bite *Summer 2015*
4. Tara Knoll *Spring 2016*
5. Nothing Stolen *Late 2016*
6. The Illness *Late 2016 - Early 2017*
7. The Wine Bottle *Early 2017*
8. The Ultrasound *2017*
9. The Brooklyn Apartment *Summer 2017*
10. The Builder *Late Summer 2017 - Summer 2018*

Part III **THE HOUSEHOLD**

11. Eleven O'Clock *January 2018*
12. January 27, 2018 *January 27, 2018*
14. The Morning After *Late January 2018*
15. The Sheraton *February 2018*
16. Terms *February-March 2018*
17. The Jet *March 2018*
18. Save This, I've Got Him *March-April 2018*

Part IV **THE KIDNAPPING**

19. The Leaning Tower *Spring-Fall 2018*
20. The Niacin Flush *Spring 2018*
21. She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine *May 2018*
22. "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter" *May 2018*
23. The Uber *June 4, 2018*

Part V **THE COURTS**

24. Crabtree's Kittle House *August-September 2018*
25. A Special Relationship *October-November 2018*
26. Sixteen Visits *January-September 2019*
27. The Bruises *March-April 2019*
28. The Ambush *September 21, 2019*

Part VI **THE PATTERN**

29. The Memo *2019*
30. Aunt K *2017-2021*
31. The Reno Bottle *December 2019*

Part VII **THE COURTS II**

32. Five O'Clock *February 6, 2020*
33. Two Defaults *2020-2021*
34. Four Discoveries *2017-2020*
35. The Mutual Order *May 19, 2021*
36. Grandma's Letter *May-August 2021*
37. Erase, Deactivate, and Delete *November 5, 2021*
38. Bora Bora *January 5, 2022*
39. Orders as Weapons *November 2021*

Part VIII **THE TRIAL**

40. We Were Hit *September 29, 2020*
41. The Appellate Reversal *March 22, 2023*
42. What Twelve People Saw *February 16, 2022*
43. What the Jury Found *February 22, 2022*
44. Affirmed *September 15, 2023*

Part IX **THE RECORD**

45. The Record Is Open *2023-2026*

46. The Demand *2025*

47. For Evie *present*

Where Are They Now *2025-2026*

Back Cover

Appendices

A. Cast of Characters

B. Timeline

C. Evidence Index

PROLOGUE

Someone at the Gate

A court-ordered exchange at dusk. A blacked-out SUV. Two men in camouflage. A child in the back seat. A court supervisor who filed an affidavit and was removed from the case.

Chappaqua is an Algonquin word. The translations disagree — shapequa, meaning “running water” or “boundary” or “place of separation” or “laurel swamp,” depending on which linguistic tradition you consult. Another rendering says shah-pah-ka: “the rustling land,” a place where you could only hear the wind moving through the leaves.

The hamlet sits in the town of New Castle, in northern Westchester County, thirty miles north of Manhattan along the Harlem Line of the Metro-North Railroad. The Quakers settled it in the 1730s. Horace Greeley — the crusading editor of the New York Tribune, the man who told a generation to go west — found his dream home here in 1854. By the late twentieth century, Chappaqua had become what it remains: one of the wealthiest communities in the United States, a hamlet of stone walls and mature canopy and median household incomes exceeding two hundred thousand dollars, where the

landscaping signals money without displaying it and the houses disappear behind hedgerows.

Bill and Hillary Clinton moved here in 1999. The zip code is 10514. The volunteer fire department was established in 1910. The high school is named for Horace Greeley, who never saw it built.

This is where the Walsh family lived.



Crabtree's Kittle House sat at 11 Kittle Road — a building that had stood since 1790, when the hamlet was farmland and the nearest courthouse did not yet exist. By 2019, it was a restaurant, the kind with cloth napkins and a wine list and a parking lot screened by hedges. It was also, on this particular afternoon, a supervised visitation site.

Stephen Russell arrived early. He always arrived early. He had learned that arriving early meant fifteen minutes of sitting in the car with the engine off, watching the road, confirming that no one was already positioned at the entrance.

The visit was with his daughter, Evie. She was two years old. He had not held her unsupervised since she was taken to New York fourteen months earlier — removed from California in violation of an automatic temporary restraining order issued by the San Francisco Superior Court, transported across the country by members of her mother's family, and installed in the Walsh compound on a hill above Chappaqua.



The visit ended at dusk. Claudette La Melle, the court-appointed supervisor, was driving. Evie was in the back seat. The phone call had come: bring Evie back after sundown.

The instruction was unusual. Supervised exchanges were daytime events. A nighttime return was not standard. But the instruction came from the family, and the family's instructions had a way of becoming the arrangement whether the court had ordered them or not.

La Melle drove. The roads narrowed. The streetlights thinned. Northern Westchester in November: the canopy stripped bare, the branches overhead like a lattice against the last light, the darkness arriving from the ground up as the road climbed.

They reached the bottom of the long, uphill driveway leading to the Walsh compound. The heavy iron gate appeared in the headlights. Next to the gate, partially concealed by the tree line, a blacked-out SUV.

Two men. Dark clothing. Camouflage. Objects in their hands — elongated, held at the sides, the silhouettes ambiguous in the darkness. The objects could have been anything. They looked like what they looked like.

Someone yelled from the window of the SUV: "Who are you?"

La Melle panicked. "My husband," she yelled back — identifying Stephen, out of fear. The identification was reflexive, the kind of thing a person says when the alternative is silence and silence feels dangerous.

The heavy iron gate began to open. La Melle wanted to escape the men. Her instinct was to drive through the opening gate and get up the hill to the safety of the Walsh home immediately.

Stephen got out of the car. He moved around to the back and positioned himself between the SUV and the back seat where his daughter was strapped in.

La Melle didn't wait. She hit the gas. The car surged forward through the open gate and sped up the long, steep driveway toward the compound. The taillights swept across the bare trees, growing smaller and fainter as the car climbed the hill.

PROLOGUE

Stephen stood on the pavement and watched them go. Then the taillights vanished over the crest, and everything went black. He was left standing alone at the bottom of the driveway, and the only sound was the wind.



PROLOGUE

PART I

THE FOOL

1

The Fool

May 2010

*A man walks into the Kremlin without
credentials during Victory Day. No one stops
him. The digital record survived.*

The flight left New York in the evening.

Business class was quiet in the way long flights are quiet — a soft mechanical hum beneath the sound of glasses touching trays and the occasional zipper closing somewhere in the cabin. A Sony Vaio sat open on Steve's tray table. The computer was half the height of most laptops, brushed metal, angular, the sort of device that looked more like equipment than electronics. On the screen a game of Peggle clicked softly as colored pegs disappeared one by one.

He moved between the game and email. A message confirmed the meeting. Another confirmed the hotel.

Outside the window the Atlantic was black.

Dinner arrived on a tray that attempted something Russian. A small dish of pickled vegetables, a dense brown bread, something meant to resemble borscht. He ate some of it, drank a Scotch, and spoke briefly with a flight

attendant who had the kind of composed beauty that made people look up from their trays as she walked the aisle.

Later he swallowed an Ambien.

The lights dimmed.

By the time he woke the plane was descending. Below the wing the city appeared in blocks — long fields of concrete high-rise apartments arranged in repeating patterns, gray towers connected by narrow roads and darker strips of trees. From above they resembled circuitry laid across the land.

The plane landed at Domodedovo.

The terminal was plain and fluorescent. The architecture felt temporary even though it clearly wasn't. People moved quietly through the corridor toward passport control.

Steve took out his phone. The signal returned immediately. Messages refreshed. A hotel confirmation appeared again: Metropol.

He opened Foursquare and checked in.

Domodedovo International Airport.

Steve recognized the layout. He had spent years building the systems behind booths like these — the access-control architecture that airports and transit authorities and governments paid for so that every crossing produced a record and every record matched a name.

At passport control three windows faced the line of travelers, but only one was open. Behind the glass sat a young officer in a pressed green uniform.

Steve stepped forward and took his passport from his pocket.

Before he reached the counter the officer looked up. Their eyes met. The officer jerked his head slightly toward the open space beside the booth — not toward the counter but toward the passage next to it.

Go through.

The motion lasted less than a second. The officer was already looking past him.

"Next."

Another passenger stepped forward.

Steve was still holding the passport.

He slid it back into his pocket and walked through the opening beside the booth.

No stamp. No scan. No one said anything.



Outside the airport the air felt cool and metallic.

The taxi ride into Moscow moved through long avenues lined with concrete apartment towers, identical in ways that made them appear less like housing and more like infrastructure — a city built in repetitions, as if the architects had been given one drawing and told to fill the horizon with it.

Eventually the geometry changed. Older buildings appeared. Stone facades. Domes. The river opened beside the road and closed again between embankments.

The Metropol Hotel stood near the Kremlin wall, across from the Bolshoi Theatre and a few blocks from Revolution Square. The building was Art Nouveau — arched windows and ornamental tile work across the facade, a ceramic mural of idealized figures spanning the upper stories. It had been there since 1905.

Inside, the lobby was marble and stained glass and dark wood that held the light in a way that made the space feel older than the century. An elevator bank stood behind panels of colored glass. The hallways were wide enough to feel empty even when they weren't.

The room upstairs was expensive without being impressive — antique furniture, heavy drapes, a bed that felt older than the carpet beneath it.

He dropped his bag and went back outside.



For the next two days he walked.

Across bridges. Along the river. Down narrow streets where the buildings leaned inward as if listening.

Victory Day banners hung from poles and across intersections — red fabric with gold lettering marking the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet victory in 1945. Black and orange St. George ribbons appeared tied to car mirrors, backpacks, coat lapels. The entire city was preparing.

Near Red Square temporary stands were already rising. Metal barricades waited in stacks. Trucks moved equipment through streets that had been partially closed.

He descended into the Metro.

The station looked less like transportation than architecture. Marble columns ran the length of the platform. Chandeliers hung from vaulted ceilings — not fixtures but actual chandeliers, crystal and brass, as if someone had moved a ballroom underground. Mosaics showed workers and soldiers moving through idealized fields and factories. The walls were porphyry and onyx, polished to a depth that reflected passing trains as dark shapes.

The escalator descended at a steep pitch, deep enough that the bottom disappeared before you reached it. It took nearly three minutes to climb back up. People stood motionless on both sides, patient, as if accustomed to emerging slowly from underground palaces.



Green-tinted Hipstamatic photograph of a Moscow Metro station — arched marble ceiling, fluorescent lights, commuters silhouetted on the platform

Back above ground he continued walking.

The Kremlin wall appeared suddenly — red brick rising high above the street, thick enough to look more like fortification than boundary. Towers with green copper roofs punctuated the line of the wall at intervals. Guards stood in dark uniforms with red trim.

Near the entrance stood the Tsar Cannon.

Tourists photographed it from every angle. The barrel was enormous — cast in bronze in 1586, weighing forty tons, a ceremonial weapon so large that the four

cannonballs displayed beside it could never have been fired from it. It had never been fired at all.

Beyond the wall the domes of churches caught the afternoon light — gold leaf that turned white at certain angles and deep orange at others, depending on where you stood.

Later he ate alone at a restaurant where the tables were spaced widely apart and the waiters moved quietly between them. At a bar he shared Uzbek cheese and vodka with two Russian women who alternated between English and another language that moved too quickly for him to follow.



The next morning he reached Red Square early.

The square was mostly empty. Victory Day equipment had already been staged across the cobblestones.

Tanks. Transport trucks. Mobile missile launchers mounted on enormous wheels.

A hundred and sixty-one vehicles in all, though there was no way to know that by looking. They were arranged in rough columns, spaced apart like pieces waiting to be moved across a board.

Soldiers stood in loose groups beside the vehicles. Some smoked. Some leaned against the trucks and talked quietly. The boots of those walking across the square made a hard sound against the stones.

Steve crossed the square slowly.

The cobblestones were uneven and slightly slick, worn smooth by centuries of footsteps. The morning air was cold enough that breath was visible. St. Basil's Cathedral stood at the far end with its colored domes — candy-colored spirals above a city dressed in khaki and matte green.

He passed one of the launch vehicles.

Up close the machine was larger than expected. It sat on eight axles — sixteen wheels, each one nearly the height of his chest. The long cylinder mounted above the chassis extended well beyond the length of a bus. Steel brackets held it in place along the frame. The paint was matte green. There was no insignia on the side, just a serial number stenciled in white.

It was a Topol-M. An intercontinental ballistic missile on a mobile launcher. A nuclear weapon, parked on the cobblestones, guarded by a teenager in fatigues who appeared to be eating an apple.

Steve stood beside it for a moment.

He could hear the soldier's teeth against the skin of the fruit.

He took out his phone. Hipstamatic was already open. The launcher filled the square frame. He took two photographs.

Then he stood there.

He thought about posting one. It would have made a good post — a tech founder from San Francisco standing alone next to a nuclear weapon in Red Square on the morning of the largest military parade since the Soviet Union collapsed. An Instagram caption before Instagram captions existed. He knew at least one other tech founder who had tried to buy an ICBM from the Russians, years earlier, to start a rocket company. They had laughed at him and he built his own rockets instead. That story was already famous by 2010.

But something about the morning stopped him.

The square was very quiet. The sound of the soldier's apple, the boots on cobblestones, the faint wind moving across the open space between Lenin's Mausoleum and the GUM department store. He was standing next to a weapon that could eliminate a city, and no one was telling him to move. Every checkpoint between New York and this

cobblestone had been designed to create a record of his passing, and none of them had.

He put the phone back in his pocket.

Nearby a group of young soldiers climbed off a green bus and walked toward the line of vehicles. One of them laughed loudly at something someone had said. Another adjusted his belt.

Steve walked toward the far side of the square.



Later that day he passed another security checkpoint near the Kremlin grounds.

The guard looked at him.

Then the guard tilted his head toward the opening beside the gate.

Steve walked through.

That evening he returned to the Metropol through streets that had filled again with people. Soldiers in dress uniforms moved through the sidewalks in small groups. Vendors sold ribbons and flags.

Somewhere music played over loudspeakers.



Months later a phone buzzed on a desk in San Francisco.

A notification from Foursquare.

You are no longer the Mayor of Domodedovo Airport.

Someone else had checked in more times.

The title had moved on.

Stephen Russell, you are no longer the Mayor of Domodedovo Airport.



The Girl on the Boat

Summer 2015

A boat on the Hudson. A girl in a red-and-white dress holding a chihuahua and a vape pen. She runs a handbag company and a marketing agency. Her clients are all in construction. Her friend got hit by a wrecking ball. So did she.

On a Saturday in the summer of 2015 Steve took a cab to a marina near Wall Street.

The dock had the usual weekend disorder: ferries idling in their slips, charter boats tied along the floating docks, a few finance guys in sunglasses carrying coolers toward vessels that looked richer than their apartments.

Steve arrived alone.

The woman he had invited from Tinder was already there, standing beside the dock in ripped shorts that were fashionable in the way college clothes often are — deliberate damage presented as style. She was younger than he had expected. Pretty, brunette, already bored.

He was living in Nolita that summer, in a flat he shared with Garrett Camp. Camp had co-founded Uber. He was rarely home. The company was getting enormous — growing in that way where the people inside it stopped being able to describe what it was becoming and the

people outside it couldn't stop talking about it. In New York the conversation had a particular edge. Taxi medallions, which had traded like real estate for decades, were collapsing. Families who had held them as retirement assets were watching their value dissolve. The men who controlled the medallion market — men with Russian names and offices in Brooklyn and documented connections to organizations that predated Silicon Valley by a century — were losing fortunes. Some of them had badges. Some of them had other things.

Steve had recently met a guy named Jamie Siminoff. Jamie had built a video doorbell called Doorbot and taken it on Shark Tank, where the investors had passed. The product was good. The pitch had gone badly. Jamie was rebuilding the company from a warehouse in Santa Monica, renaming it Ring, and Steve had offered to help — the kind of handshake arrangement that happened constantly in the connected-device world, where everyone knew someone building something and most of the somethings would fail and a few would become enormous. Steve had patents in the space. Jamie had a product that worked.

But that was California. This was a Saturday on the Hudson.

Chris Ochoa was already aboard.

Ochoa moved easily around the deck, greeting people, opening drinks, introducing strangers to one another as if the introductions themselves were the point of the afternoon. Nobody quite knew what Ochoa did for a living, but everyone assumed it involved something interesting. A club promoter maybe. Something else too. He lived in a brownstone across from Sean Parker and seemed to know everyone in New York.

The engine turned over and the boat eased away from the dock.

Manhattan lifted behind them, glass towers stacked against the sky.

The boat's owner was a chubby guy who had made money doing something no one on the boat could quite name. He stood near the wheel with two Asian women positioned on either side of him — not models exactly, but pretty enough for the arrangement to be legible. He had introduced them to everyone individually, twice. His pupils were wide enough that the afternoon light should have been painful.

Ochoa walked over holding two drinks.

"Come meet someone," he said.



She was standing near the rail.

She was holding a small brown chihuahua against her chest with one arm. In the other hand was a handbag and a slim blue vape pen. Her dress was red and white — wide horizontal stripes wrapped around her body in alternating bands that bent and curved with her figure.

The dog was screaming.

Not barking in bursts but yipping continuously in a high nervous pitch that made people glance over their shoulders.

Ochoa made the introduction.

"This is Tara."

Steve nodded.

The dog screamed again.

She adjusted the animal against her shoulder and smiled apologetically.



Tara Walsh on a Sea Ray boat on the Hudson River, red-and-white striped dress, holding Riley the chihuahua against her chest, sunglasses, hair blowing in the wind

"Sorry," she said. "He's very nervous."

Riley.

That was the dog's name.

He reached out and scratched Riley behind the ears.

The dog paused for a moment, confused by the calm.

That seemed to amuse her.

"You're good with dogs," she said.

He offered her a drink from the cooler.

She shook her head.

"I'm in AA," she said. It came out easily — no weight behind it, no performance of difficulty. A fact about herself offered the way someone might mention a food allergy. She held up the vape pen. "Gave up smoking too. This is my last vice."

She hit the vape and exhaled a thin cloud toward the water.

She did this approximately every ninety seconds for the rest of the afternoon.



They began talking.

The boat moved north up the Hudson. The skyline shifted behind them and the river opened wider ahead.

"I run a marketing agency," she said. "And handbags." She took the bag off her shoulder.

Tara Knoll.

The name stayed with him because it sounded less like a brand than a place.

The bag looked ordinary at first glance — soft leather, careful stitching — but when she opened it another zipper appeared beneath the first, then another pocket hidden beneath that.

Layers.

"It's practical," she said. "Women's bags are terrible. Expensive and useless."

He turned the bag over in his hands, looking at the seams.

"Practical pouches with plenty of pockets," he said.

She laughed.

"That's actually perfect."

She explained that the bags were manufactured in China through a contact her friend Jesse Ozeri had. Ozeri's father was in import and export. Tara designed the bags in New York while Ozeri's connections moved them through

factories overseas. The marketing agency was mostly construction clients — contractors, developers, the kind of companies that moved money through projects.

[BLOG ARCHIVE — STEVIELOVESEVIE.COM]

Mom started a handbag business that features practical and pretty bags with plenty of pockets. Tara Knoll — the name that sounded less like a brand than a place. Soft leather, hidden zippers, layers within layers.

StevieLovesEvie — Kelly Turnure's evidence archive.

SLE-129 — The handbag business. Tara Knoll: hidden compartments

He liked talking to her. The conversation moved easily between subjects — the construction clients, the bag factories, the logistics of importing from Shenzhen. She was smart in a way that interested him: not polished-smart, not credentials-smart, but the kind of intelligence that assembles a business from salvaged connections and makes it work through force of will. He had spent his career around people like that. The best and the brightest, sometimes in disguise. A smart person failing because of a simple missed piece of the puzzle was catnip to a man who built things for a living.

At some point she took out her phone.

"Look at this," she said.

On the screen was a photograph of a man sitting at a table covered in cash. The bills were spread flat, overlapping, filling the surface like tiles. Hundreds, mostly.

"That's my friend Zar," she said. "Russian. He got injured on a construction site. That's his payout."

She scrolled to something else.

"And this is my friend — her apartment got hit by a wrecking ball." She turned the phone so he could see a

news article. A building. Damage. A woman who had received a large settlement.

"Same thing happened to me two years ago," Tara said.

She said it the way someone describes a coincidence — lightly, without emphasis, as if wrecking balls passing through apartments were the kind of thing that simply happened to people she knew.

She put the phone away and hit the vape again.

Riley yipped.

Steve scratched the dog's neck and the noise stopped briefly.

Across the deck the boat's owner was explaining something loudly to one of the women, who was looking at her phone. The other had fallen asleep in the sun.

The Tinder date had disappeared into conversation with someone else.

Steve noticed and didn't move.



They stood together near the rail while the boat passed long stretches of shoreline.

The houses began appearing — enormous properties behind trees, lawns sloping down to private docks. Some were old stone estates that looked as though they had been built when the river was still the center of American industry. Others were modern glass perched at the edge of the water.

Most of them looked empty.

No one outside.

No children on the lawns.

Just long quiet houses reflecting the sun.

"People buy them," Tara said, following his gaze. "They just don't live in them."

She took out her phone again and scrolled back to the photo of Zar sitting at the table covered in cash.

"I should tell you that story," she said. "Over dinner."
He said yes.

[BLOG ARCHIVE — STEVIELOVESEVIE.COM]

I'm on a boat — Mom and Dad meet on a boat on the Hudson River. The origin of the story that would become everything. A Saturday afternoon, a marina near Wall Street, a girl in a red-and-white dress.

StevieLovesEvie — Kelly Turnure's evidence archive. Years later, she would document this afternoon for a child who was not yet born.

SLE-131 — Mom and Dad meet on a boat on the Hudson River

The boat turned south. Manhattan appeared again ahead of them, the buildings catching the late light. Riley had fallen asleep against Tara's shoulder.

The dock appeared. The engine slowed. People gathered their things and moved toward the gangway.

Steve helped Tara off the boat. Riley shifted against her chest but did not wake.

He gave her his number.

She called it before he reached the street.

"Ochoa's uncle has a house in the Hamptons," she said. "This weekend. Do you want to come?"

He did.



The Bite

Summer 2015

A weekend in the Hamptons. A dinner in white. A dog bite that became a fourth date. Riley the chihuahua was there — packed, planned, present. Three years later, the abuse journal would move Riley back to the city and rewrite every detail of this weekend. The photograph proves otherwise.

In the summer New York empties itself toward the ocean.

The city grows heavy in July. The heat settles between the buildings and the streets hold it there. The sidewalks smell faintly of hot metal and garbage trucks. Men loosen their ties by noon. Women carry their shoes in their hands by evening. The air in the subway tunnels stops moving.

By Friday afternoon the city begins to slide east.

Cars appear in long ribbons on the highways leaving Manhattan. Convertibles with the tops down. Black SUVs with beach chairs strapped awkwardly inside. Station wagons carrying coolers and children. Taxis dropping people at Penn Station with garment bags and canvas totes.

Everyone is going somewhere.

Out past Queens. Out past the last commuter towns. Out to the thin stretch of land where Long Island dissolves into sand and water.

The Hamptons.

The name is spoken in New York the way people say weather. It's not a destination so much as a seasonal instinct. When the heat rises high enough, people simply go.

Ochoa said his uncle had a house there.

He said it casually, the way Ochoa said most things — as if houses in the Hamptons were a natural extension of the city itself. As if everyone knew someone whose uncle had a house.

They left later than planned.

Three couples meant three different clocks. Someone was still getting dressed. Someone else needed to stop somewhere first. New York organizes itself around momentum rather than schedule.

By the time they reached the highway east the traffic had already thickened.

Cars crawled forward in long quiet lines. Radios hummed softly. Windows were open. The air smelled faintly of salt long before the ocean appeared.

Ochoa drove with the patience of someone who had done this many times.

Steve watched the city recede in the mirrors.

Beyond Queens the landscape changed gradually. Warehouses became small houses. Small houses became trees. Eventually the road narrowed and the trees began to lean toward the pavement as if listening to the cars passing underneath.

The Hamptons were never announced.

They simply appeared.

Gray shingle houses sat behind trimmed hedges. Gravel driveways curved between lawns that ran toward small private beaches. The architecture was careful in the

way expensive things often are — simple shapes, quiet colors, nothing that looked like it needed attention.

Ochoa turned down a narrow road lined with tall grass.

His uncle's house stood at the end of it.

Gray shingles. White trim. A long porch facing the yard. The pool reflecting the sky like another piece of water placed carefully beside the first.

Music drifted through the open windows.

Someone had already opened wine.

The house was already occupied. Friends of Ochoa's uncle, friends of friends, a few people who seemed to have been there since Memorial Day and simply never left. Someone was adjusting the grill. Someone else was asleep on a lounge chair with a magazine over his face.

At one point Tara mentioned a man named Matan Gavish — Israeli, someone she knew from the city. She described him the way people describe someone who won't stop calling. "He's obsessed with me," she said, half-laughing, rolling her eyes. She made him sound small. A nuisance. A man who wanted more than she was willing to give. She moved on to the next subject before anyone could ask a follow-up question.

The moment Tara stepped out of the car Riley began barking.

He tore across the lawn in tight circles, yipping at the pool, yipping at the grill, yipping at a bird that had made the mistake of landing on the fence. People watched him the way you watch a small natural disaster — amused, slightly concerned, unwilling to intervene.

Tara set her bag down and looked at the pool.

"This is perfect," she said.

The afternoon moved the way Hamptons afternoons do — slowly, expensively, with long stretches of nothing punctuated by someone opening another bottle.

Steve swam. Tara laid out on a towel near the deep end, vaping in steady intervals, Riley curled in the shade of her chair.

At some point a man appeared on the deck and began talking.

He was a friend of Ochoa's — a nightclub owner, or a nightclub investor, or someone who had once been in a room where a nightclub was discussed and had decided that was enough. He was deeply committed to neurolinguistic programming. NLP. He explained the concept without being asked and continued explaining it after being asked to stop.

"It's about patterns," he said. "The way you frame an interaction determines the outcome. Buying a table isn't buying a table. You're buying the frame. The table says something about you before you say anything about yourself."

He talked about tables the way other people talk about real estate. At certain clubs out here the table was the conversation. The wait was the credential. Being seen choosing not to go was better than going. He knew the owners. He knew the managers. He knew the women who knew the managers.

Steve listened politely and went back to the pool.

Tara moved through the gathering the way a current moves through a room — touching everything, altering the temperature of whatever she passed through. She talked to everyone. She remembered names. She asked questions that made people feel interesting and then moved to the next person before the feeling wore off.

People asked Steve about Uber.

This happened whenever someone learned he lived with Garrett Camp. The questions were always the same — what's the valuation, is it going public, how do the drivers feel about it. Steve's answers were always the same: he didn't work for the company, he just lived in the

apartment, he knew as much as anyone who read the newspaper.

Nobody believed this.

In the Hamptons, proximity was credential. If you lived with the founder of Uber, you were an Uber person. Steve let the conversations happen and said nothing useful.

Late in the afternoon he tried to move Riley off the lounge chair.

He reached down to pick the dog up and Riley bit his finger.

Not a warning snap. A full bite — teeth through skin, a bright shock of pain, blood beading along the knuckle.

“Oh my god,” Tara said. She took Riley and pressed him against her chest. “He’s harmless. He just gets scared.”

Steve held his hand under the faucet by the pool and watched the water run pink.

The dog was small. The harm was small. But the bite had a quality to it — a willingness to let something sharp exist in the space between them and call it harmless.

He wrapped his finger in a napkin and went back to the deck.

Tara watched him come back and sit down.

“You’re not mad,” she said.

“He weighs four pounds,” Steve said.

She laughed.

That evening they went to dinner.

The restaurant had white tablecloths and candles and the particular hush of a place where the bill would be handled by someone who didn’t look at it. Everyone at the table was wearing white. Steve wasn’t sure if this had been coordinated or if it was simply what happened in the Hamptons in summer — a uniform adopted without discussion, as if the season itself had a dress code.

Tara ordered a glass of wine.

On the boat she had said she was in AA. That had been a week ago.

Steve watched her drink it. She drank slowly, talking to Ochoa about someone they both knew, and the glass emptied without ceremony.

Falling for someone is, among other things, a negotiation with what you're willing not to see.

After dinner they walked through town.

The streets were warm and emptying out. Shop windows still lit. A few people outside a bar, laughing at something. Ochoa led them to a small park where a pond sat behind a low stone wall.

In the pond was a turtle.

A big one — sitting on a rock near the surface, motionless, ancient-looking. Riley strained at his leash and yipped. Tara held the dog back and laughed. Ochoa took out his phone.

The four of them stood at the edge of the water: Steve, Tara, Riley under her arm, and Ochoa beside them. The turtle on its rock. The pond behind them catching the last of the light.

Ochoa took the photo.



Facebook screenshot — Steve Russell, Tara Walsh, and Chris Ochoa on a dock in the Hamptons, leaning over a pond to look at a turtle, August 2015

They walked back to the house in the dark.

The weekend was warm and long and easy. They slept in the same room. He thought about how she laughed

when he said something funny and how Riley would fall asleep on his chest if he stayed still long enough.

By Sunday they were a couple.

Not officially. Nobody said it. But when Ochoa drove them back to the city, Tara gave Steve the address of her apartment on the East Side — the upper fifties, near the aerial tramway that crossed the river to Roosevelt Island. She told him to come over Tuesday.

He came over Tuesday.

And Wednesday.

There was a French restaurant around the corner that became theirs — small tables, a handwritten menu, a waiter who started recognizing them by the third visit. They ate there three or four nights a week whenever Steve was in town. He would fly from San Francisco, take a car to her apartment, and by the time he arrived she would have Riley in her lap and a reservation for eight o'clock.

Then she started flying to him.

Potrero Hill. His house on Vermont Street — the real crookedest street in San Francisco, not the tourist one. She would arrive with Riley in a carrier and a suitcase and stay for a week, sometimes two. They walked the hill in the morning and ate at the places he liked and she fell asleep on the couch while he worked.

It was easy.

Everything about her was easy.

The finger healed. He didn't think about it again until the fourth date, back at her apartment on the East Side, when she noticed the skin around the bite had gone red and slightly swollen. She sat him down and cleaned it with something from a brown bottle and wrapped it carefully, holding his hand steady with both of hers.

"See?" she said. "I take care of you."



Tara Knoll

Spring 2016

*Easter dinner at a house called Tara Knoll —
Steve's only visit to the Walsh compound in
Chappaqua. Walsh Sr. performs the patriarch.
Michael counts change at the table. The sisters
wear matching outfits. Brienne watches from a
chair. Something about the family is off. He
never went back.*

He had already met Brienne.

Tara's older sister lived in Brooklyn with her husband Caleb in an apartment that smelled like coffee and laundry detergent. Books everywhere. A small dog sleeping in a patch of sun. Brienne talked the way some people write — in long, unsparing paragraphs that did not stop for the listener's comfort. She had a blog about the family that read like a confession someone had started as therapy and never quite finished.

She told Steve things about Tara's family that Tara had never mentioned. That Tara had once tried to legally emancipate herself from her parents as a teenager — a process that requires convincing a court that a family is unable or unfit to care for a minor. The details shifted depending on who told them.

"We're a complicated family," Brienne said.
He said nothing.



Easter fell in late March that year.

They drove north on a Sunday morning. The highway narrowed past the city. The houses grew larger. The trees grew taller. The distance between driveways widened until one house disappeared before the next came into view. The lawns became deeper, the fences replaced by hedgerows that concealed entire properties from the road. The silence was different here — not the absence of noise but a quality of enclosure, as if the landscape had been arranged to prevent being overheard.

Chappaqua.

The house was called Tara Knoll.

It sat at the end of a long driveway that curved through old trees — the kind of driveway designed so that you could not see the house from the road. Stone and wood. Large without ostentation. Clearly expensive. Clearly prominent. And dark.

Inside, the rooms had the particular dimness of a house where the curtains stayed drawn and the lamps were never quite bright enough. Hardwood floors with the sheen of long maintenance. The furniture was stiff, expensive in a way that discouraged comfort. The air held something — not a scent exactly, but a temperature, as if the house kept its own climate separate from the season outside.

"Not many people have the patience for these old houses," someone said.

Tara's father met them at the door.

Stephen Walsh Sr. shook Steve's hand firmly and asked questions about technology in the way someone asks

about a field they do not work in but want you to know they could have.

Walsh spoke as though Steve already knew who he was. The Bronx. The climb. The money. He had written a book — or at least attempted one — a rags-to-riches account that reportedly named people from the old neighborhood who preferred not to be named. Steve tried to find it later and couldn't. But Walsh carried himself as if the story had already been read.

Tara had never mentioned any of it.

Steve didn't care. Walsh seemed certain that he would.



Before dinner the family played touch football in the yard. The Kennedys at Hyannis Port.

Steve ran, caught, and threw. His body felt wrong — heavy, slow, bloated in a way he could not explain. Not fatigue exactly, or not any fatigue he recognized — a heaviness that began behind his eyes and settled into his joints, as if the weight were coming from inside the bone. He had felt this way on and off for weeks now, a thickness in his limbs that didn't match his diet or his sleep or anything else he could measure. He ran a few more plays and stopped early.

From the porch he watched the family continue without him, moving through the grass in groups of two and three, throwing spirals that wobbled and fell short. Brienne sat in a chair near the railing, watching too — not playing, not cheering, just watching the family perform its idea of itself on the lawn. She held a glass of something clear and did not drink from it.

The yard was large enough that the neighbors' houses were invisible. The hedgerows rose ten feet high on every side. From inside the property line, the rest of Chappaqua did not exist.



Walsh family on the columned porch at Tara Knoll, Chappaqua — cherry blossoms in full bloom, wicker furniture, glass coffee table, American flag visible through the columns



Dinner was set.

Maura Walsh had cooked. She was a vegetarian. The plate placed in front of Steve held a piece of meat — chicken, perhaps pork — that had been microwaved or underprepared to the point of being almost inedible. Pale, unseasoned, uncertain.

"I'm a vegetarian," Maura said. "I didn't know how you liked it."

Steve ate four green beans.

Around the table the meal continued. The food was joyless. The house remained dark.



The dining room filled.

Brienne sat beside Caleb, watching. Brendan had come up from the city — Tara's younger brother, who ran a citizen-journalism operation chasing ambulances and filming crime scenes. He had relationships with police officers, the kind that came from showing up before the tape went up.

Tara's aunt had also been a police officer. Thirty years in undercover narcotics.

Two adopted Korean sisters — Kiara and Mariah — sat together in matching outfits, three years apart but dressed identically. Between courses they colored or played a small board game. No one remarked on the symmetry.

The conversation moved through the family's version of itself. Volunteering at soup kitchens. Charity work. Service.

Walsh had made his money in financial services during a period when financial services also meant navigating a collapsing mortgage market.

They talked about Steve through their teeth. They called him rich in the tone of people pointing out a character flaw they had decided to tolerate.

They did this while seated in a house on seven acres at the end of a private drive in one of the wealthiest towns in Westchester County.



Michael Walsh sat at the far end of the table.

He was Tara's older brother. A developmental disability shaped his speech and movements, though not his eyes, which were sharp and attentive. Beside him sat his fiancée, who was also his special-education teacher.

At some point during dinner someone placed a handful of coins on the table.

"Michael, count the change."

Quarters, dimes, nickels, pennies. Michael arranged them carefully, touching each coin as he counted, whispering the numbers under his breath.

The family watched.

Not the way people watch when they want to know the answer, but the way an audience watches a demonstration it has seen before.

Michael finished and announced the total.

"Good job," someone said.

Dinner continued.



After dinner they drove back to the city in the dark.

The highway was quiet. Tara was quiet too — the kind of quiet that comes after someone has shown you something and is waiting to see how you interpret it.

She told him things on that drive. Not all at once — some on the drive, some on other nights, some in the way that a person reveals a family gradually, testing how much the listener can hold.

Her parents were in AA. Both of them. They had done the twelve steps — the moral inventory, the amends, the structured atonement that the program requires. They had been in anger management. They had done the work that people do when the alternative is losing everything.

Michael — the brother who counted change — had a developmental disability that the family managed but did

not explain. Their first son, their first attempt. Then the girls — Tara and Brienne — who had both, in different ways, tried to leave. Brienne through Brooklyn and the blog. Tara through emancipation at fifteen. The estrangement between the sisters was real and old and neither of them fully understood the other's version of it.

Then the Walsh parents had adopted. Kiara and Mariah — the Korean sisters in matching outfits. A fresh start. New children who would not carry the genetic weight of the first ones. But the pattern had repeated: the same conflicts, the same intensity, the same gravitational pull that the family exerted on anyone who entered its field.

Steve listened. He heard a family that had tried to repair itself and failed, then tried again with different children and failed again. He heard a house on seven acres that contained the wreckage of multiple attempts at redemption.

[BLOG POST — JANUARY 21, 2018 — A BRIE GROWS IN BROOKLYN]

"Why do you think mom did such and such to us?" my sister and I frequently ask each other these days. Because my sister sees how strong Cleo is. Cleo reminds her of herself. My mom punished us both for being strong willed. We were hit.

A Brie Grows in Brooklyn. The sister who watched quietly from the porch would write these words two years later on her public blog.

ExQQ_06 — Brienne Walsh, "Another Uncomfortably Candid Post About Pregnancy"

The trees grew smaller. The houses moved closer together. The city lights appeared ahead, humming and alive, and they drove into it without speaking.

He never went back to Tara Knoll.



Nothing Stolen

Late 2016

Power cut to one unit. Neighbors still have theirs. The electrical closet forced open, hinges removed. Drill holes in the walls. Nothing stolen. The intrusion itself was the point.

He landed in San Francisco late on a weekday afternoon.

The car from the airport took the highway south toward Potrero Hill. The city appeared in pieces through the windshield — the skyline downtown, the cranes at the port, the hills rising green and sharp beyond the freeway.

Vermont Street.

His house sat on the real crookedest street in San Francisco — not Lombard, which had the tourists and the postcard shops, but Vermont, which had the grade and the switchbacks and no tourists at all. The street dropped steeply between rows of houses that clung to the hill at angles that seemed to argue with gravity. On clear days the view from the top reached across the bay to Oakland. On foggy ones the street vanished into white halfway down.

He had lived here through the years when Potrero Hill was still the quiet side of the city — before the tech money

moved south from SoMa and the coffee shops started charging five dollars and the rents tripled. The house was small, practical, the kind of place a man who built things for a living would choose: close enough to the office, high enough on the hill to see anyone coming.

He pulled his bag from the car and walked to the front door.

The lights were off.

He tried the switch inside the door.

Nothing.

He tried another.

Nothing.

He opened the breaker panel. Everything was where it should be — switches in the right positions, nothing tripped.

He stepped outside and looked across the street. The house opposite had lights. The building next door had lights. The restaurant down the hill had lights.

Only his unit was dark.



He walked around to the side of the building where the electrical closet sat — a metal panel mounted to the exterior wall that controlled the building's power distribution.

The door to the closet had been forced open.

The hinges had not been broken. They had been removed. Someone had taken the pins out carefully, lifted the door free, and left it leaning slightly open. The work was precise — no tool marks on the frame, no damage to the metal, nothing that looked rushed or improvised. Someone who understood electrical panels had opened this one the way they would open their own.

Inside, several switches had been moved.

He went back inside, found a flashlight, and began walking the house.

In the hallway he saw the first hole in the wall.

Small. Round. Clean.

A drill hole.

There were more in the bedroom wall. More along the baseboard. A few in the floor. They were evenly spaced — the kind of holes made by someone who knew exactly what they were looking for, or exactly what they wanted to place there.

He checked every room.

He checked the way a man checks who has spent years designing security systems — starting at the perimeter and moving inward, noting every change, every absence, every surface that looked slightly different from how he had left it. He had built his career on this: the technology of noticing. Video surveillance, access control, the invisible architecture that determines who moves through a space and who cannot. His company had sold these systems to banks and governments and transit authorities. The irony of standing in his own dark house, holding a flashlight, was not lost on him.

Nothing was missing.

The computer was still on the desk. The equipment in the closet was untouched. The cameras were still mounted — but the power had been off, and without power the cameras recorded nothing.

Nothing had been taken.

The power had been cut to his unit and no one else's. The electrical closet had been opened with the precision of someone who understood the system. Holes had been drilled into the walls and floors of his home.

Then whoever had done it had left.

The intrusion itself was the point. Whoever had done this had not come to take something. They had come to demonstrate that they could — and had left nothing behind

that would make a police report worth more than the paper it was printed on.



He called PG&E. He called the police.

He took photographs — the closet, the hinges, the breaker positions, the drill holes. One after another, methodically, the flashlight held at an angle to catch the shadows inside each hole.

The documentation reflex that had governed his professional life activated now in his own home, aimed at something he could not yet name.

He didn't sleep that night.

He walked the house instead — checking windows, checking locks, rechecking the cameras that had recorded nothing because the power to record had been the first thing cut. Whoever had entered had known what the cameras were. Whoever had entered had turned them off before doing anything else.

By morning the facts were clear, even if the explanation was not.

The power to his unit had been cut. The electrical panel had been opened. The walls had been drilled. Nothing had been stolen.

He filed it the way he filed most things — as a fact without an explanation, placed alongside the other facts without explanations, and left there.



The Illness

Late 2016 – Early 2017

Something is wrong with Steve. Conflicting diagnoses. Tara moves in to take care of him. The symptoms don't match any single explanation. Neither does her attentiveness.

He tried to end it.

He called Tara and said the things people say when they want a relationship to be over without wanting to explain why. He was busy. He needed space. He wasn't sure about the future. The sentences were vague by design — the vocabulary of someone who has decided to leave but doesn't want to fight about the leaving.

Tara was quiet on the phone. Then she wasn't.

Then he stopped answering.

For a few weeks Steve lived alone in the house on Vermont Street and tried to remember what his life had felt like before her. He went to work. He ate at the places he liked. He sat on the deck in the evening and watched the fog come in over the hill, which it did every night at roughly the same time, a gray wall moving silently across the rooftops until the city below disappeared.

A bottle of Pinot Noir most nights. Sometimes two.

The routine was simple. The routine was fine.
Then the routine stopped working.



It started with sleep. He couldn't fall asleep. Or he could fall asleep but couldn't stay there — waking at three, at four, at five, his mind moving too fast for the hour, his body too tired to get up. He lay in the dark and listened to the house and the house was quiet and the quiet made him more awake.

Then the fatigue arrived. Not the kind that follows a bad night — a deeper thing, a tiredness that lived in his muscles and his bones and wouldn't respond to rest. He slept ten hours and woke up exhausted. He slept twelve and felt worse. The fatigue had a quality no diagnosis would fully explain — a heaviness that lived not in the muscles but deeper, as though something at the level of the organs were quietly laboring to process a load they had not been designed to carry.

He started having trouble thinking.

Not confusion exactly. More like delay — a half-second gap between the thought and the word, between the intention and the action. He would stand in front of the refrigerator and forget what he had come for. He would open his laptop and stare at the screen as if the screen had to explain itself before he could begin. The delay had a quality none of the doctors could place — not the fog of a bad night but something more specific, as though the pathway between intention and action had acquired a resistance that caffeine could not override and willpower could not clear.

Adderall helped him get to work. He had taken it for years — a prescription, nothing unusual, the kind of pharmaceutical scaffolding that half of Silicon Valley used

to hold the day together. But now it felt like the only thing holding anything together.

He saw a doctor. The doctor ran tests.

Lyme disease. That was the first diagnosis.

He saw another doctor. More tests.

Babesia. A tick-borne parasite. The second doctor was confident.

He saw a third.

Epstein-Barr. Chronic reactivation. The third doctor explained it as though he were explaining a mystery he had solved many times before.

Three doctors. Three diagnoses. Each one confident. None of them the same.



Lyme made sense, at least geographically. In between the Ukraine trips for Ring he had spent time with Jamie in Nantucket. Jamie's house there was the kind of house that successful founders buy before the really big money arrives — comfortable, on the water, just expensive enough to signal that the bet had paid off but not so expensive that the bet was over. Nantucket was tick country. Half the island had a Lyme story.

They sat on the porch one evening, the harbor smell drifting up the hill and the light going amber over the water. The evening was warm enough to sit without a jacket, which on Nantucket meant summer had approximately three days left. Jamie was a good dad — fiercely, vocally, in the way that some men are good at fatherhood the same way they're good at building companies: with total commitment and no irony. He had said something to Steve once that Steve never forgot.

"No matter how much you love your wife, you will love your son a million times more."

He said it the way he said most things — with certainty, as a fact he had discovered and was now reporting. Ollie was everything. Jamie's whole architecture of ambition — the company, the patents, the Kleiner money, the trajectory toward the thing that Amazon would eventually become — all of it was downstream of the kid. Build the company to secure the family. That was the logic. Steve understood it. He shared it.

Steve showed Jamie a photograph on his phone. Tara. In a swimsuit. She had sent it that afternoon.

Jamie looked at the photo.

Don't date her, he said. *She's bad news*.

Steve asked what he meant.

Jamie didn't elaborate. He said it the way people say things when they know something they don't want to explain — a warning delivered as a statement of fact, without supporting evidence, expecting the listener to trust the tone.

Steve turned the phone around again.

Jamie looked at the photo a second time.

Date her, he said.

They both laughed.



Steve didn't know which diagnosis to believe, so he believed all of them. He researched Lyme with the obsessive thoroughness of a man who builds systems for a living. He read everything — medical journals, patient forums, treatment protocols, the political warfare between infectious disease specialists and Lyme advocates. He learned that the testing was unreliable, that the CDC's diagnostic criteria were contested, that an entire population of chronically ill people had been told their illness was not real.

This made him angry.

Jamie's son Ollie had Lyme. That connection — two men in the tech world, both affected by the same tick-borne disease they'd both likely picked up on the same island, both frustrated by the medical establishment's response — became the seed of something. They called it LymeZero. A nonprofit. The idea was to build an information platform that would do for Lyme what no one had done: organize the research, connect the patients, challenge the institutions.

He met a woman named Michaelanne Petrella who worked on health information sites. She became part of the project. Steve threw himself into it the way he threw himself into everything — totally, immediately, at the expense of everything else.

The illness didn't care about his research.

He kept getting sicker. The fatigue deepened. The cognitive gaps widened. There were days when getting from the bed to the desk felt like crossing a country.



Tara called.

She had heard he wasn't well. She offered to come stay with him. To help. To take care of things while he focused on getting better.

He said yes.

He said yes because he was tired and because the house was quiet and because when a person is sick enough, the one who offers to hold the door open becomes not the most important person in the world but the most necessary, and the difference — between important and necessary, between chosen and accepted, between love and dependence — disappears inside the fatigue.

She arrived with Riley in a carrier and a suitcase and moved into the house on Vermont Street as if she had never left. Not offered to help — took over. She organized

the pill bottles on the kitchen counter in a row. She knew the dosages. She knew the timing. She sorted them and decided when he took what. Steve, who was too tired to argue, let her. He was grateful. He told himself he was grateful. She had converted the kitchen into a pharmacy where she controlled every substance that entered his body.

She told people he was sick.

She also told people he was not sick.

To his face she was the caretaker. To others she was something else. She told friends he was paranoid. She told his mother he was having episodes. She made fun of him for thinking he had Lyme — to the same people she told he was too sick to work.

Some days were better and some days were worse and the pattern didn't follow any logic he could identify. He felt better when she was away. He felt worse when she came back.



Tara Walsh in a high-rise San Francisco apartment at sunset — pink light through floor-to-ceiling windows, city skyline behind her, hands clasped, looking down



On the cameras he had installed after the break-in, he began seeing things.

The same face near the house. A person standing at the corner who hadn't been there the day before. Someone sitting in a car with the engine off.

He called FBI Special Agent Phalen. Phalen had worked a case tangential to one of Steve's companies —

the kind of contact that exists in the background of a career spent building surveillance technology. Phalen listened. Steve described what he was seeing. Phalen didn't say much.

Through a contact at Carnegie Mellon — the university with one of the best facial recognition programs in the country — Steve sent camera footage for analysis.

One man appeared twice. Bald, dressed head to toe in Disney Store clothing — the kind of outfit that should have been invisible in its ridiculousness but wasn't, because Steve had seen him before. Once near the house. Once outside a restaurant where Steve was having lunch with a friend. Two different locations, two different days, the same man. Carnegie Mellon confirmed the match.

He was being watched.

Or he was sick and imagining it.

Or both. The illness made the footage harder to trust. The footage made the illness harder to explain. He could not describe what the cameras showed without sounding like exactly the kind of person who sees things that aren't there — which, depending on which diagnosis he believed that week, he might have been.

[LABORATORY ANALYSIS — March 9–15, 2017 — Doctor's Data, Inc.]

Heavy metals panel ordered by Dr. Ha Dang, ND.
Result: Lithium at 1.1 µg/mg — six times the maximum reference range of 0.18 µg/mg. Additional elevations: Bismuth 66 µg/g (reference <2), Lead 3.3 µg/g (reference <2), Mercury 3.4 µg/g (reference <3). No lithium prescription on file. No known dietary or occupational source.

Lithium at six times the reference range. No prescription. The first data point. Discovery production, *Russell v. Walsh*.

A-1 — Hair Elements Analysis, March 2017

Steve sat at his desk in the house on Vermont Street with the fog coming in over the hill and the nightly Pinot Noir half empty beside the keyboard and the camera feeds cycling silently on a second monitor and the woman who was taking care of him asleep in the next room.

He did not know what was wrong with him.

He did not know why he was being watched.

The lab report sat in a folder on his naturopath's desk, unread. Lithium, six times the reference range. No prescription. A data point without a story.

**[LABORATORY REPORT — LABCORP — HEAVY METALS
TOXICOLOGY PANEL]**

LabCorp heavy metals toxicology report documenting Stephen Russell's exposure levels. The second laboratory to flag anomalous results — confirming what Doctor's Data had found. Two labs. Two methodologies. The same answer.

A second lab confirmed the first. The numbers were not artifacts. Discovery production, Russell v. Walsh.

ExI_02 — LabCorp Heavy Metals Toxicology

The fog came in over the hill the way it did every night. The house on Vermont Street was quiet.



The Wine Bottle

Early 2017

She threw a wine bottle at his head. The relationship ends. Or it should have. The breakup has the shape of a Gone Girl exit — perfect victim, perfect villain, nothing quite adding up.

The obsession with Lyme worked.

Not the way medicine works — not through treatment or diagnosis or the careful application of clinical knowledge. It worked the way obsession works. He read everything. He changed everything. He adjusted his diet, his supplements, his sleep schedule, his environment. He treated his body like a system and optimized it the way he optimized systems — methodically, relentlessly, without asking the system for its opinion.

He started to feel better.

Not well. Not the way he had felt before. The improvement arrived in episodes — a morning where his thoughts kept pace with his intentions, an afternoon where his body felt like something he inhabited rather than something he carried. Then a day of the old thickness returning without warning, and he would wonder whether the recovery was real or whether he was learning to work

around whatever had broken. But the fog lifted enough that he could see the shape of his life again, and the shape was wrong.



Tara had been isolating him.

Not obviously. Not the way people imagine isolation — no locked doors, no confiscated phones, no dramatic confrontations about who he was allowed to see. It was subtler than that. She made fun of his friends. She described their calls as interruptions. She was tired when he wanted to go out and energetic when he stayed in. She had opinions about his family that she delivered as observations — casual, funny, slightly poisonous — and over time the calls got shorter and the visits got further apart and the world shrank to the size of the house on Vermont Street and the woman inside it. The previous circumference of his life became difficult to remember.

His brother noticed. His mother noticed. They said things. He heard them the way sick people hear advice — as noise from a world that doesn't understand what the inside of this feels like.

There was also the matter of her exes.

She talked about them the way some people talk about weather systems — as forces that had passed through her life and might return at any time. There was a man named Steve — another Steve — who threw parties where he hired models to attend. Steve had not known such things were done. There was someone else who appeared in stories that didn't quite resolve, whose name came up at odd moments and then disappeared. The exes were neither past nor present. They occupied a space between the two that Steve found difficult to map.



He decided to end it.

This time he didn't call. He told her in the house, in the kitchen, standing near the counter where the wine bottles lined up against the wall.

He said the relationship was over.

The response was not proportional.

Tara's face changed. Not gradually — not the slow collapse of someone absorbing bad news. It changed the way weather changes in the mountains: one moment clear, the next a system moving in from a direction you hadn't been watching.

She screamed.

The words were about his appearance. His worth. The things she had given up. The things he owed. The sentences didn't connect to each other — they arrived in bursts, each one louder than the last, her body moving closer as the volume increased.

He had learned, in the months of illness and recovery, to be very still when things got loud.

She grabbed a bottle of wine from the counter. Full. Pinot Noir. She threw it overhand.

The bottle hit him in the solar plexus. The impact was a flat, heavy shock — not sharp, not cutting, just the sudden compression of a full glass bottle meeting his body with everything behind it. The air left him. He bent forward. For a moment the room contracted to a single point of pressure in his chest.

He straightened up.

A few inches higher and it would have hit his throat. A few inches to the left and it would have hit his ribs hard enough to crack one. If she had aimed for his head and connected, the bottle was heavy enough that the math changed entirely.

She had not aimed for his head.

But she had thrown a full bottle of wine at a man standing six feet away, and she had not missed.



Steve reached for his phone.

He speed-dialed his brother Jon. The phone rang twice.
“Hey.”

Steve put it on speaker. He set the phone on the counter between them.

“Tara just threw a full bottle of wine at me,” he said. “It hit me in the chest. I’m okay but I want you to hear this.”

He said it the way a man who builds surveillance systems says things when he wants them documented — plainly, without emotion, with the understanding that the record is the point.

His brother listened.

Tara listened too. Her face changed again.

“If you call the police,” she said, “I’ll tell them you hit me.”

The sentence hung in the kitchen. His brother heard it through the speaker.

Steve looked at her.

He didn’t call the police.

In San Francisco, domestic violence calls result in both parties being arrested. The city’s policy is mandatory dual arrest. A man with a bruise on his chest and a woman who says he hit her — both go in, both get booked, both get the same charge. The policy exists to protect victims from retaliation. It also means that the person who makes the accusation first controls the outcome.

She knew this. Or perhaps she didn’t know the policy specifically — perhaps she only understood, without needing to be told, that the accusation would be believed before the bruise.

He made a different deal.

“I won’t call,” he said. “You leave.”

She left.



The house was quiet. The marine layer was settling over Potrero Hill the way it did most evenings, the fog pressing against the windows and turning the streetlights outside into soft circles that illuminated nothing.

The bottle was on the floor. The phone was still connected. His brother was still on the line.

"You okay?" his brother said.

"Yeah," Steve said.

He wasn't sure that was true. But the house was quiet and the woman was gone and for the first time in months the air in the room felt like something he could breathe without wondering what was in it.

He picked up the bottle. It hadn't broken.

He put it back on the counter.



Fourteen months later, in a sworn response to a domestic violence restraining order, Tara Walsh would describe under oath what she had learned to do with a bottle of wine.

"I put 100mg of Seroquel in Petitioner's red wine, which is a similar dose he would often take to help him sleep."

"The Nanny helped crush the pill into a fine powder and mix it with another cup to dilute the powder into the wine. Thereafter, Bryan Crutcher poured himself a glass of wine. I asked him why he was drinking so early to which he replied: 'I am drinking so he sees me drinking and drinks his faster.'"

Not thrown. Dissolved. The DV-120 form — the box designated for the respondent's account — contains a step-by-step description of a coordinated drugging operation: the pill selection, the crushing into powder, the

dilution into wine, the security guard pouring himself a glass so Steve would drink faster. Filed under penalty of perjury, in the language of someone explaining a household routine.

Under oath, she described both incidents as reasonable responses to a man in crisis.

On the day she left California for the last time — June 4, 2018 — a recording captured what she told her father on the phone in the back of an Uber, their eleven-month-old daughter beside her.

[AUDIO RECORDING — June 4, 2018 — Security Infrastructure — Authenticated Recording]

Tara Walsh, speaking to Walsh Sr. on speakerphone in the back of an Uber. Eleven-month-old Evie beside her.

Tara Walsh: “Cops will arrest me for poisoning Steve. But it’s Seroquel cause Steve is psychotic.”
Authenticated recording. Security infrastructure capture, Russell v. Walsh.

ExMM_UBER_04 – Uber recording, June 4, 2018

In the quiet kitchen on Vermont Street, the man she would call psychotic had done the only thing available to him. He had put the phone on speaker so his brother could hear. He had said *I won’t call, you leave*. He had picked up the bottle she had thrown at his chest.

It hadn’t broken.

He didn’t know about the wine yet.



The Ultrasound

2017

She calls months after the breakup. She's pregnant. The baby changes everything — or is supposed to. The reconciliation has the architecture of a con: create the crisis, offer the solution, own the outcome.

The phone rang three weeks later.

He almost didn't answer. The number was Tara's and the weeks since she had left had been the quietest weeks he could remember — quiet in the way a house is quiet after a storm, when the silence itself feels like evidence that something has passed.

He answered.

"I'm pregnant," she said.

He didn't believe her.

He had reason not to. She had said this before — the same words, the same timing, always arriving at the precise moment when the distance between them had become comfortable. Twice before she had called with the same announcement. Twice before the pregnancy had turned out to be something else — a miscarriage, a false test, a story that dissolved before it required proof. Each time, the announcement had brought him back. What a

man who wants to be a father cannot defend against is the possibility that this time it might be true.

She also couldn't decide which story to tell. To some people she said she wanted the baby but Steve had told her to get an abortion. To others she said she didn't want the baby but Steve was forcing her to have it. The narratives were contradictory and she deployed them interchangeably, depending on who was listening and what she needed from them. To Rashmi, her closest friend in New York, she confided that she hoped she was not pregnant — or that if she was, she would have a miscarriage. To no one did she mention that her profile on Bumble was still active, listed under her branding consultancy, available for messages.

"No you're not," he said.

He said other things too. Blunt things. He suggested she wasn't pregnant. He suggested that if she was, she shouldn't be. The words were harsh in the way words are harsh when someone has decided that the truth matters more than kindness and is wrong about which one they're delivering.

She cried.

Or she said she cried. The distinction had become harder to identify.



The next day a video arrived.

Tara, crying. Shaking. Her face filling the screen, mascara streaked, the trembling voice of a woman in distress. She said she might be pregnant and didn't want to be. She said she couldn't even bring herself to take a test.

[iMessage — Zar — 2017-09-23]

September 23, 2017

Tara: If I take any more meds I will be a zombie
 Tara: In an electric wheelchair
 Zar: Not more meds. Different meds. I think you are actually going a little bit crazy.
 Tara: Omg I'm not
 Tara: It's fucking awful
 Tara: I don't want to talk about it
 Tara: Switch topic
 Zar: Excellent Bob Job.
 Tara: Boob job?
 Tara: Like this video of me fake crying?
 D-7 — Tara Walsh to Zar, September 23, 2017

Steve watched it once. He watched it again. He closed the video. He didn't watch it again.



Days passed. He was living his life again — or trying to. He went to work. He went to dinners. He had met someone.

Her name was Kelly.

He had met her after the breakup, at The Battery — a private club in San Francisco where the tech world gathered in a building that looked like it belonged to an earlier century. A man named Adeo Ressi had been talking to her — too forward, too persistent, the kind of attention that fills the space around a woman and makes everyone nearby uncomfortable without anyone doing anything about it. Steve walked over and started talking to her. Not to Adeo. To her. The conversation shifted. Adeo drifted. Kelly stayed.

She was smart and warm and direct in the way that people are direct when they don't have anything to hide. She had a quality Steve recognized from his own work: she organized information naturally, saw patterns in noise, assembled complex things into clear structures. It was the kind of mind that builds things.

They started seeing each other.

It was the first time in a long time that Steve had spent time with someone who didn't make him tired.



Tara sent it by text — a photograph of a document confirming pregnancy, dated, signed by her OB-GYN. Steve looked at it for a long time. He called the doctor's office. The note was real.

She was pregnant.

He called Kelly.

He told her the truth — that his ex-girlfriend was pregnant, that the baby was his, that he didn't know what this meant but he knew it meant something. Kelly listened. She didn't say much. The call ended the way calls end when someone is processing something that doesn't have a response.

He ghosted her.

He didn't mean to. Or he didn't mean to permanently. But the pregnancy changed the geometry of everything, and the geometry of Kelly — the simplicity of it, the cleanness — suddenly didn't fit the shape of what his life was becoming.



He flew Tara to San Francisco.

The appointment was at Zuckerberg Hospital. A standard ultrasound. The waiting room had the fluorescent calm of a place designed to contain anxiety. They sat beside each other in plastic chairs that were bolted to the floor.

The technician called them in.

The screen was gray and moving — the underwater static of an ultrasound, shapes forming and dissolving in

the sound waves. The technician moved the wand across Tara's abdomen. The room was quiet except for the machine.

Then a shape appeared.

Small. Moving. The flutter of something that was not yet a person but was already present — a heartbeat visible as a pulse of light on the screen.

Evie.

She didn't have a name yet. She was a shape on a screen in a hospital in San Francisco and she was real.

Steve looked at the screen and something in the room changed. Not the light, not the temperature, not the sound — something in him. The thing on the screen was his daughter.

Tara looked at him looking at the screen and she smiled.



After the appointment he took Tara to lunch. They talked about logistics — apartments, schedules, money. Tara wanted an apartment in New York. She wanted him to pay for it. She wanted to be back together. She said these things in the order that made sense to her, which was the order of need: shelter, money, reunion.

He didn't want to get back together.

He knew this with the clarity of someone who has recently been hit with a wine bottle and threatened with a false accusation. The pregnancy was real. The baby was real. But the relationship that had produced them was something he had already decided to leave, and the pregnancy did not undo that decision.

He told Tara he would support her. He told her he would be a father. He did not tell her he would come back.

He flew her back to New York.

He sat in the apartment on Vermont Street and looked at the ultrasound printout — the small gray shape with the visible heartbeat — and he did not call Kelly and he did not call Tara and he sat with the image until the fog came in over the hill and the room went dark.



The Brooklyn Apartment

Summer 2017

Tara finds an apartment in a mob neighborhood down the street from her sister. She asks Steve to come help look at places for the baby. He goes to the hospital instead. The door closes behind him.

Tara found an apartment in Brooklyn.

The neighborhood had a reputation that depended on who you asked. Real estate agents called it up-and-coming. The families who had been there for generations called it something else. The buildings were brownstone and brick, the storefronts a mix of bodegas and new coffee shops, and the men who gathered outside certain social clubs on certain corners had the unhurried quality of people who had been there longer than the coffee shops and would be there after the coffee shops were gone.

Brienne lived down the street.

Tara's apartment was close enough to walk. The sisters who had tried to leave this family — Tara through emancipation, Brienne through her blog — were now living within blocks of each other in a neighborhood where family was the operating system.

Tara called and asked Steve to come to New York.

She was pregnant. She needed help finding the right apartment. She wanted him to see the neighborhood, to look at layouts together, to imagine where the crib would go. She framed it as logistics — co-parenting, planning, being responsible.

Two months earlier, Tara had texted a friend named Zar a video of herself crying — or performing the act of it.

[iMessage — Zar — 2017-09-23]

September 23, 2017

Tara: If I take any more meds I will be a zombie

Tara: In an electric wheelchair

Zar: Not more meds. Different meds. I think you are actually going a little bit crazy.

Tara: Omg I'm not

Tara: It's fucking awful

Tara: I don't want to talk about it

Tara: Switch topic

Tara: Like this video of me fake crying?

SCREENSHOT_TARA_FAKE_CRYING_ZAR — Tara Walsh to Zar, September 2017

[VIDEO EVIDENCE — September 2017 — The Backup — Device Extraction]

The video Tara sent to Zar with the message: "Like this video of me fake crying?"

Device extraction. The Backup archive, Russell v. Walsh.

VIDEO_FAKE_CRYING — IMG_8074, September 2017

He went.

He went because the ultrasound was on his phone and the shape on the screen was his daughter and the idea of an apartment with a second bedroom where he could visit felt like the most normal thing in a life that had stopped being normal months ago.



He stayed at Ochoa's place in Brooklyn. Ochoa had always been easy — the kind of friend who doesn't ask questions about what's happening in your life unless you bring it up, and who always has beer in the refrigerator and a couch that's available.

When Steve left Tara's apartment that evening, she had handed him his things. His bag. His pill bottle. She had been managing his medications since the illness — sorting them, deciding dosages, controlling the timing — and the Adderall had been in her possession. She gave it back to him the way she gave back everything she had taken charge of: as a favor, as caretaking, as proof that she was looking after him.

He took one at Ochoa's place.

The feeling was not the Adderall feeling. Not the focused clarity, the bright alertness, the sense of the evening organizing itself into clean lines. This was something else. A looseness in the edges. A heat that shouldn't have been there. The room was the same but the room was different.

He took another. Trying to counteract whatever was happening by adding more of what should have been working.

It didn't help. The high of Adderall laced with something else is a specific experience — not sharper but wider, not clearer but stranger, the edges of perception softening in ways that amphetamines alone do not produce.

The night stretched. Ochoa fell asleep on the couch. Steve couldn't sleep. He paced the apartment. The walls seemed closer than they should have been. The lights were too bright. He turned them off. The dark was too dark. He turned them back on.

A year later, Tara's midnight text to Steve's psychiatrist would describe the method she had already perfected.

[iMessage — Dr Gopal — 2018-05-22]

Tue, May 22, 12:20 AM

So I came home and the nanny told Steve about another thing I had told her in confidence- sometimes when he is out of his mind on drugs and won't sleep I have put seroquel in his wine- bc I don't know what to do. The nanny has been throwing me under the bus every night- last night she told him I wanted her to say he was a bad dad. I told Steve I was sick of the nanny throwing me under the bus to him, didn't feel comfortable with her working her and sent her home. So Steve is saying I'm having another episode- but I am totally calm, not emotional. I don't feel comfortable with someone taking care of my daughter who is looking to throw me under the bus to Steve- also for a bunch of other reasons I've been asking to get rid of her for like a month.

G-20 — Tara Walsh to Dr. Gopal, May 22, 2018

The pills Tara had handed Steve that evening at her Brooklyn apartment were the same Adderall she had been managing for months — sorting, deciding dosages, controlling the timing. She had given the bottle back to him the way she gave back everything she had taken charge of: as a favor.



At some point he remembered a phone sensor kit he'd gotten at a tech conference — a little device that measured environmental factors. Inside the kit was a toy Geiger counter, the kind that reads background radiation in a room and usually shows nothing.

The thought arrived the way thoughts arrive at four in the morning after a night that has gone wrong in ways you can't identify: clearly, urgently. He was thinking about the Cold War. About poisoning. About the break-in at his house and the drill holes and the people outside and the illness that three doctors couldn't explain.

He held the Geiger counter next to the pill bottle.

The readout showed approximately 200 rads.

The number was not zero and nothing about this night had felt the way it was supposed to feel.

"Ochoa," he said. "Wake up. I need you to drive me to the hospital."

Ochoa drove.



The hospital was bright and fluorescent in the way hospitals are bright at five in the morning — a brightness designed to keep everyone awake, including the people who shouldn't be there.

In the waiting room Steve sat with the pill bottle in his hand and waited.

He looked up.

Across the room, sitting in one of the plastic chairs, was a young man he had seen before. Slavic features, blondish hair, thin — the kind of person who shouldn't register twice but had. Steve had photographed him weeks earlier near the house on Vermont Street and shared the images with law enforcement. The same face. A different city.

Then he saw Tara.

She was standing near the intake desk, speaking with an orderly. The orderly glanced toward Tara and then toward Steve. The orderly walked over.

"Come with me," the orderly said.

Steve stood. Tara appeared beside him. The three of them walked down a long corridor — fluorescent tubes in the ceiling, linoleum that hadn't been replaced in years.

"Oh," she said. "I forgot my phone. I'll be right back."

She turned around.

Steve stepped through the door.

The door closed behind him.

The orderly did not follow.



The room was white. Plexiglass partitions divided it into sections. Metal chairs were bolted to the floor. The lighting was the same institutional fluorescence as the hallway, but flatter — as if the room had been designed to hold people who did not want to be seen.

Steve stood in the center of the room.

He understood.

Psychiatric holding. He was in a psychiatric ward. The door behind him was locked. Tara was gone. The orderly was gone. The corridor outside was empty.

He sat down in one of the metal chairs and waited.

"Do you want to hurt yourself?"

"No."

"Do you want to hurt anyone else?"

"No."

The questions continued. Standard intake. The kind of scripted assessment designed to determine whether a person presents a danger to himself or others — the legal threshold for involuntary commitment in most states.

He answered every question the same way: clearly, calmly, without the agitation that would confirm what the orderly had been told to expect.

"You shouldn't be here," the doctor said.

The doctor's assessment was correct in a way he could not have known. The man in the metal chair was not psychotic. He was poisoned.

He was released.



Outside the hospital the morning was bright and ordinary. People were going to work. Cars moved through intersections. The city was doing what the city always does at seven in the morning — organizing itself around the assumption that the night before was normal.

Ochoa was in the parking lot.

Steve got in the car. They drove back to Ochoa's apartment without saying much.

The next day he called Don Ackerman, his security consultant.

"Don, are you trying to 5150 me?"

Don stammered. Then: "Yes. Yes, we are."

Steve sat with that for a moment. The man he was paying — the man whose job was to protect him — had just admitted to coordinating a psychiatric commitment.

"Don, if you thought I needed help, why didn't you drive me to a hospital? Or a hotel? You're following me around."

He demanded a report. He wanted Don on the record. What arrived was something written by Prendergast — not Don's words, not Don's account, but a document prepared by an associate and delivered under Don's name.

Later — days later, weeks later — Tara's texts arrived. Not apologetic. Angry. The plan had not worked. The commitment had failed. The doctor had said the wrong thing, or the right thing, and Steve had walked out when he was supposed to have stayed.



Ochoa had the pills tested. No radiation — the Geiger counter had been reacting to static electricity, not to anything in the bottle. But the pills had produced an experience that was not Adderall. A wrongness that Steve's body recognized, even if the instrument could not name it.

Gavish — still in Tara's orbit, the man she had described dismissively at the Hamptons weekend — had a place in Brooklyn. Not far from Brienne. Not far from the apartment Tara had chosen for herself. The neighborhood that Tara selected for the baby was the neighborhood where every piece of her parallel life already existed: her sister, her boyfriend, the infrastructure Steve didn't know about.

The doctor had answered it, or part of it, in four words.
You shouldn't be here.



The apartment Tara had chosen was never about logistics. Seven months later, Tara would explain the real calculation to the man she was seeing — the one who already lived in Brooklyn, near Brienne, near the apartment, near everything Steve didn't know about.

[iMessage — Matan — 2018-02-20]

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Tara: Steve is trying to blackmail me to move to sf-
been such a wonderful experience

Matan: You're being strung along and manipulated

Tara: Yeah well he's pushing me into a corner- my
dad said having the baby was my idea and my
problem. So I have to do whatever to survive

Tara: If I sue him for child support I will get like \$2k
a month

Tara: Which is not enough to live off of

Tara: I'm better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can- then leaving him for good.

Matan: Okay, have a fun 40 yrs

MSG-MATAN-006 – Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish,
February 20, 2018

I'm better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can — then leaving him for good.

The apartment. The invitation. The pill bottle handed back like a favor. The orderly who appeared on cue. The girlfriend who forgot her phone at exactly the right moment.

Two years after the hospital, Tara would explain to Steve's own attorney what leaving Evie with her father would mean.

Leaving Evie alone with Claudette, Linda or Steve would basically be a conscious decision of giving her up for adoption or signing her death warrant. Never happening.

I suggest Claudette. Shes a nice lady.

The doctor at the Brooklyn hospital had said four words. Steve Russell shouldn't have been there.

A jury of twelve would eventually agree.



The Builder

Late Summer 2017 – Summer 2018

He leaves New York. Gets a driver. Returns to work. Ring is growing — Kleiner money, Ukraine team producing, Amazon watching. Jamie wants more than Steve can give. Prism gets caught in the middle. He meets a woman named Kelly at a ranch that used to belong to the painter of cottages. For a while, life is normal. Then two catastrophes collide.

He left New York.

The decision didn't arrive as a decision. It arrived as a direction — the way a person who has been underwater long enough stops thinking about swimming and starts thinking about air. He packed a bag at Ochoa's apartment. He didn't call Tara. He took a car to JFK and sat in the terminal waiting for a flight to San Francisco.

The terminal was full of people going places.

He was going home again.

The flight was five hours. He slept. When he landed the air was different — the dry, bright California air that smells like eucalyptus and exhaust and distance from whatever you just left. He took a car to Potrero Hill. He opened the door to the house on Vermont Street. Riley was

not there. Tara was not there. The house was quiet the way a house is quiet when it belongs to one person again.



Through someone in his network he was introduced to a man named Tom LaFreniere. Tom was former FBI — undercover work, the kind of career that leaves a person permanently calm in rooms where other people are not. He ran a company called DynaSec. He listened to Steve describe the break-in, the illness, the hospital, the people who appeared in different cities wearing the same face. Tom listened without interrupting. When Steve finished, Tom studied him the way people who have spent their lives watching other people study someone.

Tom told him not to worry about it.

Bryan Crutcher disagreed. Bryan was a retired San Francisco police officer — fifteen years, the last several in the tactical unit — who worked with Tom's network, and he thought Steve still needed help. Bryan arranged drivers. Not taxis. Not rideshares. Drivers. People who would be there when Steve needed to go somewhere, who would know the routes, who would function as the first quiet layer of something Steve did not yet call security but that was security.

He cut Tara off.

Not completely — she was pregnant with his daughter, and the logistics required communication. But the late-night calls stopped. The visits stopped. He answered texts about appointments and due dates. Everything else went unanswered.

The Pinot Noir went back to one glass instead of two.

What Steve did not know was what Tara was building on the other end of the silence. Three days after Evie's birth — January 30, 2018 — Tara texted her father: "Dad can you please call me important. Steve is out of control

back at my apartment security guys called me that it's not a good situation for me to go back to — not sure if you have any ideas."

[iMessage — Dad — 2018-01-30]

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Tara: Dad can you please call me important

Tara: Steve is out of control back at my apartment security guys called me that it's not a good situation for me to go back to- not sure if you have any ideas

Thursday, February 1, 2018

Tara: See she cries!

Dad: Oh gosh she's beautiful. I am less worried for sure

Dad: Evelyn will have a difficult time dethroning the queen

Friday, February 2, 2018

Dad: How are you feeling ?

Tara: I'm much better not sad or anything. Steve said he spoke to you sorry if it was annoying

MSG-WALSHSR-002 — Tara Walsh to Walsh Sr., January 30 — February 2, 2018

The security team that Tara referenced — the team Steve had hired through Tom's network — reported to Legacy Protection, which had Walsh family connections. The same infrastructure Steve built to protect himself was now generating reports that Tara could reframe. "Steve is out of control" became the story. Two days later, baby photos. Two days after that: "I'm much better not sad or anything." The crisis dissolved as quickly as it had been manufactured, but the narrative had already been delivered to the man who would deploy it.

He went back to work.



Ring was growing in a way that had stopped being theoretical. Steve had brought in Kleiner Perkins — his own investors from the 3VR days — and they had led a hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar Series B. The Ukraine team he had recruited was producing. What had started as a handful of engineers — Steve connecting with a contact named Jason Mitura, recruiting one by one — would become an entity employing a thousand people before the war, one of the largest AI research operations in the region.

The product was selling in volumes that made Amazon start paying attention, though nobody said that out loud yet.

Jamie had the money. Jamie had the team. Jamie had Steve's IP under a licensing arrangement that gave Ring access to the Prism Vision architecture — the pipeline processing system that could analyze video locally, extract semantics, protect privacy, and minimize the need to stream everything to the cloud. Steve had designed this. His engineers had written the code. Ring Pro was Prism Vision, rebranded.

Steve went to the Ring offices in Santa Monica. He reviewed technical architecture. He spent time with Jamie in the way that men who have built something together spend time — not always talking about the thing, but always aware of it, the way you're aware of the weather.

Jamie wanted more.

He wanted Steve to join Ring directly — not as an advisor, not as a licensing partner, but as an executive. CTO.

Steve said no.

Part of it was what he could say. He had a company — Prism Skylabs — and investors who had backed that company, and a fiduciary obligation to pursue its own path. Prism's platform had applications in consumer, retail, oil and gas, banking, government. The licensing

deal with Ring was supposed to be one channel, not the whole river.

Part of it was what he couldn't say. A daughter was growing inside a woman he could no longer trust. The woman had been poisoning him — not metaphorically, but with chemicals in his food, a fact so strange that it existed in its own category of comprehension, a fact that made him seem unstable to describe it. He had security now. He had medical records that documented his deterioration. He had a system of monitoring and verification that was necessary because the person carrying his child was a threat.

He would have loved to say yes. The success, the trajectory, the chance to be part of something that was about to become enormous — Steve wanted all of it. He wanted to get rich with his friend and build the product he had designed and ride it into whatever Amazon had planned. But the cost of saying yes was abandoning Evie before she was even born.

So he said no without the reasons. And Jamie — who was standing on the edge of a billion-dollar acquisition and needed everyone around him to be simple — filled the blank with the worst possible interpretation: that Steve was being disloyal, difficult, arrogant. The man who had said *no matter how much you love your wife, you will love your son a million times more* could not see that Steve was doing exactly that — choosing the child over the deal. He could not see it because the choice looked, from the outside, like refusal.



What came next was systematic. Jamie began telling third parties — potential investors, board members, strategic partners — that Prism's technology was overrated. He described the architecture as a dead end. The privacy

claims were oversold. The customer base was weak. The team was unstable. He described it in meetings and calls, to people who would have valued and bought it, all of them hearing the same message: Ring's founder did not recommend this company. If Ring's founder didn't recommend it, why should anyone else?

Steve would later describe it simply: Jamie talked about it in a way that was a death blow to the company. Potential acquirers who had been interested stopped returning calls. The technology was the same. The conversations were not.

Steve formed a new entity — Prism.AI — to continue work on the platform architecture. But the company that Ring had been built on was gone, and Jamie had the Kleiner money and the Amazon interest and the team of a thousand in Ukraine, and Steve had a termination agreement and a stack of patent assignments that Ring kept sending via DocuSign, unsigned and ignored. The architecture he had designed was running inside a product that was about to sell for over a billion dollars, and the architect had been told his work was worthless by the man who was selling it.

He had built the system. The system had been taken. He would build another one.



Sometime after the Brooklyn hospital, after the house on Vermont Street had stopped feeling like a crisis center and started feeling like a house again, Steve saw Kelly.

A tech event. The kind of evening where people stood in small groups and talked about companies and funding and the weather in San Francisco, which never changed and which everyone discussed as if it might. She was there. He was there. She looked at him the way someone looks at a

person they remember liking but who had disappeared without explanation.

He told her what had happened. Not all of it. Enough. The pregnancy, the decision, the reason he had vanished. He didn't mention the drugging or the hospital or the things he couldn't prove. He told her the part that was legible — a man who had learned he was going to be a father and had made a mess of everything adjacent to that fact.

She listened.

"You look unfinished," she said. "Not broken. Unfinished."

They started spending time together. She helped with the Ring case — the legal filings, the strategy, the process of assembling a complaint that would eventually run to fourteen counts. She was organized in a way that made rooms feel cleaner. She understood systems the way Steve understood systems — not as things to admire but as things to build.

One weekend she took him to a ranch in the hills south of the city. The property had once belonged to Thomas Kinkade — the painter of cottages, the man who had made a fortune painting light coming through windows in a way that made millions of Americans feel something they couldn't name. Kinkade was dead. The ranch remained. Horses stood in the golden grass. The hills rolled away in every direction.

They walked along a fence line. Kelly's hand was in his. The afternoon was warm and still and entirely normal in a way that nothing in his life had been normal for a very long time.

"This is nice," he said.

She laughed at the understatement.

It was.



On July 6, 2018, Steve sent an email to Jamie.

“Sorry I didn’t call you but I have been a little busy. Tara took the baby and ran off to NY after it was discovered she had done something very bad.”

Two catastrophes in one sentence. The business partner he was suing for destroying his company. The mother of his child, who had been discovered drugging him and had fled with their daughter. Both relationships had promised something — success, family — and both had ended in betrayal that Steve described with the same flatness, the same absence of self-pity, the same tone of a man reporting facts he cannot change.

The complaint against Ring would settle in early 2019. Kelly helped build it. Fourteen counts. LA Superior Court. The first legal win — and the first evidence that the Steve-Kelly partnership could produce something that worked.

The fog kept its schedule. The house on Vermont Street held its ground.



Beneath the surface of the family Steve was trying to build, the denials had already taken shape.

The drugging denials followed a progression — from Abby Tedla’s kitchen revelation (“she did it all the time”) through Tara’s shifting accounts, each one smaller than the last, until the denials reached their final form.

[DEPOSITION VIDEO — 2021 — RUSSELL V. WALSH — CGC-18-570137]

Steve Russell describes the drugging denials under oath: the progression from “all the time” to “twice” to “once” to silence.

Sworn testimony, San Francisco Superior Court.

Clip11 – Russell Deposition, Drugging Denials, pp. 31-36

And Matan Gavish — the man Tara had told “pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can” — had known all along. He knew about the BPD diagnosis. He knew about the pattern. He had received the real register while Steve received the performance.

[DEPOSITION VIDEO — 2021 — RUSSELL V. WALSH — CGC-18-570137]

Matan Gavish testifies about his knowledge of Tara Walsh's BPD diagnosis and the pattern he observed.

Sworn testimony, San Francisco Superior Court.

VID-012 — Gavish Deposition, BPD Knowledge

The man who built things and the man who received the truth — both under oath, both describing the same woman from different angles of the same scheme.



THE BUILDER

PART III

THE HOUSEHOLD

11

Eleven O'Clock

January 2018

Steve flies to New York with his security team ahead of Evie's birth. Tamper screws set to eleven o'clock. NYPD drivers on shift. The birth of his daughter is being planned alongside logistics that have nothing to do with joy.

The tamper screws were set to eleven o'clock.

The ritual began at the front door and moved clockwise. A precision screwdriver — the kind meant for electronics, with a magnetized tip and a rubber grip — lived in the pocket of his jacket by the entrance. He carried it the way other men carry a wallet.

He started with the outlet cover in the hallway. Two screws, each turned so the slot pointed to eleven o'clock — the position chosen not for any technical reason but because it was precise enough to detect minor disturbance and arbitrary enough that no one would know the position was intentional. A person entering the apartment might touch a light switch, might lean against a wall, might open a panel looking for something. But a person would not think to return a screw to eleven o'clock.

He moved through the apartment: living room switch, kitchen outlets along the backsplash, bathroom switch,

bedroom outlet behind the nightstand, hallway smoke detector cover, thermostat panel.

Fourteen screws in total. He checked them every time he left and every time he returned. The process took eleven minutes going out, nine coming back — faster on return because the question was binary: moved or not moved.

This was his security system. Not the cameras that had failed him the night someone cut the power on Vermont Street. Not the Ring system he had helped build. A screwdriver and fourteen screws, set to a position on a clock that no one else was reading.

The call from Tara came in the second week of January.

She was due in two weeks. The pregnancy was high-risk — preeclampsia had been developing for months, and the blood pressure readings were moving in directions that required monitoring. The OB-GYN wanted her at a hospital that could handle complications. Steve had arranged a specialist at Columbia Presbyterian months earlier. He had the concierge insurance that made the arrangement possible. He had the phone number and the room reservation and the date circled on a calendar.

He called Bryan Crutcher.

Bryan had been providing drivers since the fall — former NYPD, people who knew the city, who understood the difference between driving someone to the airport and driving someone whose situation required the kind of attention that didn't announce itself. The drivers worked shifts. They waited in cars that were clean and nondescript and always had a full tank of gas.

The cost was enormous. The birth of his child was being planned alongside logistics that had nothing to do with joy: communication protocols, shift schedules, the practical reality of a man who believed his environment was not safe and was spending money to make it safer.

Bryan said he'd fly with him.

They took a morning flight from SFO. Steve sat in the window seat and watched California disappear beneath the clouds. Bryan sat in the aisle seat and read a newspaper the way someone reads a newspaper when they are not actually reading it — eyes moving, page turning, but the attention directed somewhere else entirely.

Five hours later they landed at JFK.

The driver was waiting in the arrivals lane. The car was black and warm and moved through the Belt Parkway traffic with the practiced patience of someone who had driven this route every day for years.

The Brooklyn apartment was cold when they arrived — the kind of cold that collects in a place no one has occupied for weeks, radiators silent, windows beaded on the inside, the air holding the flat mineral smell of a room waiting to be used again. Steve walked the rooms the way he always walked the rooms — checking the windows, checking the locks, checking the fourteen screws.

All at eleven o'clock.

The apartment was close to Tara's. Close enough to walk, which was the point — close enough to get to the hospital quickly, close enough to be present for appointments, close enough that when the call came he would already be in the city.

The doctor appointments happened in the days that followed. Steve went with Tara to the OB-GYN. He sat in waiting rooms that smelled like antiseptic and floor polish and watched other expectant parents flip through magazines that were six months old. A couple across the room was arguing in whispers about a name. The woman kept shaking her head. The man kept trying. Tara's blood pressure was monitored. The cuff tightened on her arm every fifteen minutes, the machine cycling through its compression and release with the indifference of equipment that does not distinguish between routine and

emergency. The readings were discussed. The doctors used the word “concerning” the way doctors use it — not to alarm, but to prepare — though whether the preparation was for the patient or for the chart was a distinction Steve’s profession had taught him to notice.

The due date was January 27.

Bryan had established the rotation. One driver during the day. One at night. Steve could call at any hour and a car would be downstairs within ten minutes.

The Walsh family knew he was in the city. Tara had told them, or Brienne had told them, or the information had moved through the family the way information always moved through the Walsh family — quickly, selectively, with each person knowing a slightly different version of what was happening and why.

There was also a man named Joe Prendergast. He was from Walsh Sr.’s hometown. After the birth he would surface alongside Walsh — not as a family friend visiting a grandchild but as an operative, working with Walsh Sr. in ways that Bryan’s security detail would not learn about until later. Prendergast’s presence at the hospital, alongside the father of the woman who had just tried to have Steve committed, would become one of the details that changed the shape of what Steve thought he understood about the family.

One evening Steve sat in the Brooklyn apartment with Bryan. The apartment was quiet. The radiator clicked and hummed. Outside, the neighborhood did what the neighborhood did at night — the social clubs stayed lit, the bodega on the corner stayed open, and the men who gathered on certain stoops spoke in low voices about things that had nothing to do with anyone walking past.

Bryan had a way of sitting that was both relaxed and alert — the posture of someone who had spent fifteen years on the force and could not turn off the part of his brain that assessed every room, every window, every exit.

Steve told him about the tamper screws.

Bryan looked at him.

It was not the look of someone who thought the screws were paranoid. It was the look of someone doing the math — fourteen screws, eleven minutes, the daily ritual of a man whose professional career was building surveillance systems and who had been reduced to a screwdriver and a clock position.

“That’s good,” Bryan said. “Keep doing that.”

[SWORN DECLARATION — JULY 2018 — COURT FILING — RUSSELL V. WALSH]

Bryan Crutcher’s sworn declaration documenting the security operation he ran for Steve Russell in New York — former NYPD drivers on rotating shifts, communication protocols, the infrastructure built around a man who believed his environment was not safe and was spending what it cost to make it safer. The sworn account of the man who sat in the quiet and said “Keep doing that.” Filed in custody proceedings.

G-34 — Bryan Crutcher Declaration, July 2018

They sat in the quiet for a while.

Tara had texted Steve’s mother the month before — December 21, the winter solstice. She told Linda Russell that Steve could not be listed as the father on the birth certificate if he was not at the hospital.

The statement arrived as information. The implication arrived later: paternity itself was conditional. Not on biology, not on love, not on the nine months of flights and doctor’s appointments and wire transfers and worry — but on physical compliance. Be there or lose the name. The condition accomplished what effective coercion always accomplishes — it made the demand indistinguishable from a gift. Be present for your daughter’s birth. Who

would refuse? Who would notice that the invitation carried a leash?

He was there.

He was already there — in a cold apartment in Brooklyn with a retired cop and a precision screwdriver and fourteen screws set to a position on a clock that meant nothing to anyone but him.

The city hummed outside the window. The radiator clicked. Bryan turned a page.

Four days.



On January 26, Tara texted Brienne from the hospital.

“At hospital! Blood pressure was too high — in triage waiting to be seen.”

Then, half an hour later: “They said most likely they will section me today.”

Then, at 10:07 PM: “C section tonight!”

[iMessage — Brienne — 2018-01-26]

Friday, January 26, 2018

Tara: At hospital! Blood pressure was too high- in triage waiting to be seen

Brienne: Wow

Tara: They said most likely they will section me today

Tara: Ouch Iv needle killing me

Tara: C section tonight! Mom and Dad coming to hospital

Tara: It's crazy I will have a baby on a few hours

Tara: I'm honestly so stressed out with you and Brie fighting with Steve and this is the most important moment of my life. I just wish you could put aside your difference for a short while for the sake of me and my daughter.

Brienne: K. I will be coming

Tara: Ok I love you very much ❤🖤

MSG-BRIENNE-013 – Tara Walsh to Brienne Walsh,
January 26–27, 2018

Evie was born on January 27, 2018. Steve was there. The tamper screws were still set to eleven o'clock. Bryan was downstairs. The driver was in the car. The security infrastructure that had been built to protect a man from the woman carrying his child now surrounded the hospital where that child entered the world.

The screwdriver was still in his jacket pocket.



January 27, 2018

January 27, 2018

Evie is born by emergency C-section. Steve sleeps in a chair for four days. The Walsh family fills the corridors. Then Tara gives him Adderall, and the fog returns.

Four days before Evie's birth, Walsh Sr. sent a text message to his daughter:

"Delete delete"

— *Stephen Walsh Sr., iMessage (January 23, 2018)*

Two days before Evie's birth, Tara sent a text message to her sister asking her to bring Seroquel and Adderall to the hospital.

[iMessage — Brienne — 2018-01-26]

Friday, January 26, 2018

Tara: At hospital! Blood pressure was too high- in triage waiting to be seen

Tara: They said most likely they will section me today

Tara: C section tonight! Mom and Dad coming to hospital

Tara: It's crazy I will have a baby on a few hours

MSG-BRIENNE-013 — Tara Walsh to Brienne Walsh, January 26, 2018

Then Evie was born.

She arrived by emergency C-section due to preeclampsia — the decision made quickly, the medical team moving with practiced urgency. Steve was in the room, gowned and masked, standing where they told him to stand. The operating room was cold in the particular way of surgical suites — a cold meant for someone else's purposes. A blue drape separated him from the procedure. He could hear instruments but not see them.

And then there was a sound. Not the first breath, which was silent, but the first cry — sudden and impossibly loud for a person that small. A nurse held her, blood-streaked and wailing, her face compressed into an expression of pure objection to the cold and the light and the sudden enormity of air.

He held her. Seven pounds. Her eyes were closed and her mouth was open and her entire body was the effort of breathing. Her fingers found his index finger and curled around it with a grip that was reflexive and complete — the grip of a person who has no idea what a hand is but knows instinctively that the thing to do with a hand is hold on.

Her head. The smell of her head. There is no way to describe this to someone who has not held a newborn. It is a signal — biological, chemical, ancient — that arrives through the nose and lands somewhere below language. Steve held his daughter against his chest and breathed her in and something in him rearranged permanently.

Evelyn Grace Walsh. January 27, 2018. New York Presbyterian Hospital.

He had chosen the name months earlier. Evelyn — from the Irish, *aibhilín*, the light of evening. He wanted her name to carry something older than the city and the hospital and the fluorescent light she had arrived into. The specific light that comes when the sun is low and the world is warm and the day has not yet ended but will.

JANUARY 27, 2018



Steve Russell playing with toddler Evie — she stands in a red-striped dress, he kneels in a blue polo and baseball cap, offering her an orange ball, colorful toys on the floor

[BLOG ARCHIVE — JANUARY 27, 2018 — STEVIELOVESEVIE.COM]

Medical documentation of Evie's birth — emergency C-section following high-risk pregnancy complicated by preeclampsia. The clinical record of the moment the story's center arrived.

Emergency C-section. The medical record beneath the human one. StevieLovesEvie, Kelly Turnure.

SLE-109 — Evie is born, January 27, 2018



In the recovery room, Tara held Evie against her chest and wept. The weeping was quiet — the kind of crying that happens when a person is too exhausted to manage what her body is doing. She looked at her daughter with an expression that Steve would remember.

The moment lasted less than a minute. Or it lasted longer — he would not remember the duration, only the expression, which stayed.

Then the Walsh family arrived, and Tara's posture changed, and something closed behind her eyes.

Mother and baby did well. The phrase appeared in medical records.



The hospital room had no bed for him.

Steve had arranged a private suite through the concierge insurance. What he got instead was a room that felt like something else — a monitoring room, the kind of room that had been designed for situations that required observation. There was no sofa, no cot, no fold-out chair that approximated a bed.

There was a recliner. Approximately fifteen degrees past upright.

The chair was six feet from the bassinet. He positioned it so that when Evie was in the bassinet, he could see her face through the clear plastic wall.

He slept in that chair for four days.

Not continuously. In fragments — twenty minutes, an hour, the kind of sleep that hovers at the edge of consciousness without ever fully crossing into it. Every small sound woke him. And underneath all of it, the sound he was listening for: Evie's breathing.



The Walsh family filled the corridors the way the Walsh family filled any space: completely.

Steve Walsh came with the confidence of a grandfather whose first grandchild had been born. Maura came with the quiet intensity Steve had learned to associate with her — watchful, present, saying little. Aunt Colleen was there — the NYPD aunt, the union attorney. Brienne was there.

They moved through the hospital as if they were in charge of it.

Brienne had insisted that Steve should not be in the delivery room. The insistence had the quality of a directive, not a suggestion — the older sister asserting family authority over an event that was not hers to control. Steve was there anyway. He was there because the child was his and because no one had physically prevented him from entering the room where she was being born.

And then details that he filed away:

Walsh Sr. was with Prendergast. The two of them together in the corridors — not visiting separately, not arriving at different times, but together, moving as a unit. The man from Walsh Sr.'s hometown and the patriarch of the family, side by side at the hospital where Steve's daughter had just been born.

And Colleen's face. Aunt Colleen — the NYPD aunt, the one with the union connections and the institutional fluency — looked at Steve once, in the hallway. The look lingered in a way that didn't match the occasion.

In the days that followed, Tara began introducing the baby as Gracie — not to Steve but to the nurses, to the family, to anyone who came through the room. She used the name not as a nickname alongside the one Steve had chosen but as a replacement for it. The campaign had the quality of an undoing — the first thing he had given his daughter, and the first thing Tara moved to erase.

The family called her Evie.



Then Tara gave Steve Adderall.

It had passed through the family network — controlled by Brienne, carried by Kiara, delivered by Tara. The Walsh medication system operating as a collective unit.

Steve took it. He had been awake for three days. The chair was destroying his back. His daughter was six feet away and breathing and he needed to stay awake to hear her breathe.

The sensation was familiar.

Not the Adderall sensation — the other one. The same dissociative fog, the same unreliable quality of reality that he had experienced on the night at Ochoa's apartment, the night Tara had given him his pills back, the night that ended in the psychiatric ward.

The same wrongness. The same loosening of edges. The same heat that shouldn't have been there.

[CORRESPONDENCE — 2018 — RUSSELL V. WALSH CASE FILE]

Comprehensive drugging summary from the case file, sent to Kelly Turnure. Documents the pattern of medication administration — not a single incident but a system. The Adderall at the hospital was one node in a network that included Seroquel, Ativan, and substances Steve could not identify.

The Adderall at the hospital was not generosity. It was the pattern continuing on the day his daughter was born.

EMAIL_9755 — Drugging Summary to Kelly Turnure



He watched her sleep.

He sat in the chair. The monitor beeped. The fluorescent lights hummed above the bassinet.

Evie's fingers curled and uncurled in her sleep.

Steve knew Tara was struggling with her medications. He had watched it — the adjustments, the attempts to stop, the returns. They had been through it together. He knew she was still taking them and trying not to take them. It was part of the architecture of the household.

At 10:54 that night, six feet from the bassinet where Evie slept, Tara sat in the hospital bed with her phone and sent a text to her sister asking for drugs.

"No signs of withdrawal from my drugs."

— Tara Walsh, iMessage (January 27, 2018, 10:54 PM)

Steve was in the room. The recliner. The monitor beeping. His daughter's fingers curling and uncurling in her sleep. And Tara, on her phone, managing the other life — the pharmaceutical one — that ran parallel to the one they were supposed to be sharing.



The Morning After

Late January 2018

He returns to the Brooklyn apartment after four days in a hospital chair. The tamper screws have moved. The air smells wrong. Something adhesive settles on his face. Then Tara and her father arrive and tell him to leave.

He returned to the apartment and knew immediately that something was wrong.

The air was different. Not stale — the way an unoccupied apartment goes stale after four days — but chemically different. A sweetness underneath the regular smell of the rooms. Something industrial.

The tamper screws had been moved.

Not all of them. But enough. The positions were wrong — the careful eleven o'clock alignment disturbed, the fixtures showing the evidence of hands that had not known to return the screws to the position they'd been left in. The apartment had been entered while Steve was at the hospital watching his daughter breathe.

Crutcher's team had set the screws before Steve left for the hospital. Every outlet cover, every light switch plate — positioned to the same mark, so that any disturbance would be visible on return. Tara's texts from

that week showed Matan and her sister's husband in the apartment. They had not known about the screws.

He was already altered. The dissociative fog from the Adderall Tara had given him at the hospital had not fully cleared. He was tripping — his word for it, the cognitive distortion, the sense that reality had become unreliable. The same fog from Ochoa's apartment. The same looseness of edges.

He called his security team in San Francisco. They assessed remotely. Their instruction was immediate.

"Box up the fixtures."

If the fixtures had been tampered with, the fixtures were evidence. Preserve them. He began the work — unscrewing outlet covers and light switch plates, placing them in containers, documenting the process — while the apartment around him continued to feel wrong.

Then the fumes intensified.

It began as the smell — sweet, chemical, industrial adhesive. Then sounds from above, from the spaces between the apartment's surfaces where building systems ran. Something was being applied.

[VIDEO EVIDENCE — January 2018 — Device Recording — Steve Russell iPhone]

Gas and fumes visible emerging from a light fixture in the Brooklyn apartment. The substance entered through gaps around fixtures and baseboards — the mechanism made visible in real time.

Recorded by Steve Russell as fumes entered through fixture gaps during the contamination event. Device recording.

ExMM_10 — Gas from Light Fixture, Brooklyn Apartment, January 2018

The fumes entered through gaps around light fixtures and baseboards. Steve began spackling the entry points, sealing gaps, pressing paste into cracks with shaking

hands. Evie was coming home. She was days old. The apartment had to be safe.

The spackle did not hold. The fumes found new paths. The substance — airborne, particulate, or direct contact, the mechanism was never identified — settled on his skin. His face felt tight. Then stiff. Then hardened. His brain fog deepened — or the fog had been there already and the fumes worsened it, the distinction academic when the result was the same.



The door opened.

Tara was there. Steve Walsh was behind her. He had not removed his coat. He had driven from Chappaqua.

“You need to leave.”

Tara said it. Steve Walsh said it. Steve needed to leave his own apartment — the apartment he had rented, the space where his daughter would live.

Maura was outside, waiting in a vehicle.

Tara and Steve never saw the Walshes. In the entire relationship — years — they had visited Tara Knoll once. The family that had been absent for everything was suddenly present for this. Walsh Sr. had driven ninety minutes from Westchester to stand in a doorway in Brooklyn and tell the father of a three-week-old baby to get out.

Steve tried to show him. The screws. The fumes. The contamination visible on the fixtures he had already begun boxing. Walsh Sr. stood in the doorway and did not step inside and did not look at what Steve was pointing toward. He had not come to investigate. He had come to deliver a sentence.

Steve Russell's text messages to Steve Walsh during and after the confrontation at the Brooklyn apartment. The texts document the eviction in real time — a father trying to communicate with the man who just told him to leave the home where his newborn daughter lives.

Contemporaneous messages during the forced departure from the Brooklyn apartment. Device backup, Russell v. Walsh.

D-11 — Steve Russell to Steve Walsh, January 2018

He left.

His cognitive function was compromised. His face was covered in adhesive. Steve Walsh was in the doorway. He left because the fumes were real, because his brain was not working correctly, because the alternative was a confrontation he was not capable of having.



The glue took three days to come off his face.

The motel was half an hour from the apartment. He checked in. The room smelled like carpet cleaner and air freshener — the chemical brightness of a space cleaned for anonymity, which after the apartment was its own strange comfort. His daughter was three weeks old. She was in a Brooklyn apartment that he had been told to leave.

In the bathroom the adhesive had tightened the skin around his cheekbones and forehead, pulling it into an expression that looked like surprise or alarm — a mask made of whatever had settled on him in the apartment. He peeled it away, leaving the skin underneath raw and pink.

Petroleum jelly. Rubbing alcohol. The cognitive fog lifted in increments. With distance from the apartment — from whatever had been in the air — his thinking cleared.

The pattern was the same as before: symptoms present in the environment, symptoms absent from it.

His clarity, returning, demanded documentation. He wrote to his attorneys. Subject line: "Tara drugged me."

No police report documented the fumes. No environmental assessment was ordered. No investigation determined what had been applied to the building, by whom, or through what mechanism it entered the apartment.

In subsequent filings, the departure was characterized differently: he left. He abandoned the home. He was not present. The apartment that had been made uninhabitable was the apartment Steve had "left."



On the second night in the motel, he held his phone. The screen was dark. His thumb rested on the glass without pressing anything.

He scrolled through the contacts in his mind — not on the screen, but mentally, name by name, face by face, testing each one against the sentence he would have to say.

The sentence was: *I am in a motel because my apartment was contaminated with an adhesive substance and my girlfriend's father drove up from Chappaqua and told me to leave and my daughter is three weeks old and I cannot get to her and there is glue on my face.*

He tried variations. He rearranged the clauses. He led with different details. But the follow-up questions would come — *forced how?* — and the answers would unspool the way they always unspooled, each honest detail adding another layer of implausibility. Adhesive. Fumes. Tamper screws. A father who appeared when the apartment became uninhabitable. A girlfriend who had been managing his medications.

That was the trap. Not just the physical acts — the pills and the fumes and the adhesive — but the construction of a situation so improbable that describing it accurately made the describer sound like a person who needed the psychiatric unit his girlfriend had tried to put him in.

He put the phone down.

He thought about Evie. She was in the Brooklyn apartment. She was twenty-one days old. The half hour between this motel and that apartment was impassable, not because of distance but because of a dynamic he could not yet name.

He did not yet have the evidence. The tamper screws were in boxes in the apartment he had been told to leave. The toxicology was months away. The declarations were years away. The jury verdict was five years away.

On this night, in this room, he had only the truth. And the truth sounded insane. And there was no one to call.



[CORRESPONDENCE — 2018 — EMAIL RECORD — RUSSELL CASE FILE]

Email correspondence between Steve Russell and the Ackerman/Enenstein security operation. The security apparatus billing Steve tens of thousands per month had been in contact with Tara's family and associates before Steve arrived in New York.

The paper trail documenting contact between Steve's hired security and the Walsh family network. The arrangement that would come to be called Legacy Protection.

D-31 — Russell Correspondence with Ackerman/Enenstein Security, 2018

The security team — the apparatus that had been billing him tens of thousands a month to protect him — had already been talking to Chris Ochoa. The Enenstein

correspondence established it. Don Ackerman had coordinated with Ochoa before Steve arrived in New York, asked about cocaine use in a way that revealed prior contact, and Tara had access to Steve's email. The protection Steve believed he had hired was something else entirely.

In that motel room, with adhesive still pulling at his skin and his daughter unreachable in the next borough, he could not yet see the shape of it. The security apparatus, the family arriving at the door, the fumes from above — they were not separate events. They were the same event, coordinated across different addresses and different relationships, converging on the same result: Steve, alone, in a motel, with no credible way to describe what had happened to him.

The protection was not protecting him. It never had been.



15

The Sheraton

February 2018

A chaotic sequence of locations after leaving the Brooklyn apartment. Motel 6. A rest stop meeting. An evidence box with items missing. A local officer's warning: don't trust anyone.

He felt better the moment he left the apartment.

This was itself information. The fog that had settled over his thinking — the dissociative looseness, the chemical haze — began to clear within an hour of driving away from the Brooklyn building. By the time the motel appeared along the highway, the edges of his perception had sharpened. The headache was receding. His face still felt tight with adhesive, but his mind was returning.

Symptoms in the environment. Symptoms absent from it. The place itself seemed to be the variable.

[Laboratory Analysis — 2018 — Redwood Toxicology]

Redwood Toxicology drug screen results confirming the presence of Zolpidem in Steve Russell's system. Scientific laboratory analysis providing objective forensic evidence of chemical sedation.

The body had known before the mind could name it. Every hour away from the apartment was another degree of clarity — the sedation receding, the cognitive edges sharpening, the looseness of reality tightening back into something he could trust. His impairment had a chemical source, and that source was in the apartment he had been told to leave. The departure was the diagnostic no one had thought to run.



The first night was the Motel 6.

He sat in a hotel bar waiting for a driver — not one of Bryan's people, but a local contact, someone connected through channels that had been activated in the days since the apartment. The bar was the kind of place that exists between other places — anonymous furniture, ambient sports broadcasts, the particular emptiness of a weeknight in a hotel that caters to travelers who are not traveling for pleasure.

A man named Albert arrived.

Albert was Israeli. He carried himself the way people from that world carry themselves — alert without appearing alert, patient without appearing to wait. He had been referred through the security network that had formed around Steve's situation, a web of contacts that connected retired law enforcement to private investigators to people whose professional backgrounds were described in carefully vague terms.

Albert drove him to the Motel 6.

The room was what Motel 6 rooms are. A bed, a television bolted to the dresser, a bathroom with a shower whose water pressure suggested plumbing from another decade. Steve sat on the bed and stared at the wall.

He tried coconut oil on the adhesive. It did nothing except make his inflamed face shiny. The substance had

hardened into something like a second skin — translucent and stiff, a mask he had not put on and could not take off. He rubbed at it and stopped. It was not coming off tonight.

He hurt. He was exhausted. He was alone.

He met Ackerman at a rest stop on the New York Turnpike.

Ackerman had been holding a box of Steve's belongings — documents, devices, evidence collected during the months of surveillance and documentation. Items Steve had entrusted to the security infrastructure that was supposed to be protecting him.

They met in the parking lot. The rest stop had the usual architecture — a food court visible through glass doors, families moving between cars and bathrooms, truckers standing beside rigs in the far lot. The ordinariness of the setting made what happened next feel stranger.

Ackerman returned the box.

Steve opened it in the car. He began checking the contents against what he knew had been inside.

Items were missing.

Not everything. Not in a way that suggested careless handling. Specific things were gone — a clear camera that had been concealed inside a paper towel roll, a modified air freshener, devices that had been placed in the apartment to document what was happening inside it. The kind of things that would matter if the situation Steve was documenting was real and if the people he was documenting it against had access to the people he had trusted to hold it.

He closed the box. He looked at Ackerman. He did not say what he was thinking.

[CORRESPONDENCE — 2018 — EMAIL RECORD]

Email correspondence between Steve Russell and the Ackerman/Enenstein security operation. The security apparatus billing Steve tens of thousands per month

had been in contact with the Walsh family network before Steve arrived in New York.

The correspondence told the same story the box did. The security infrastructure Steve had been paying to protect him had been coordinating with the people he needed protection from. The missing items were not an accident. They were a selection.

He called Ackerman. The conversation was short. Ackerman mentioned the 5150 — the psychiatric hold from the hospital. He mentioned Prendergast, one of his operatives, whose reports on Steve's behavior had been filed as evidence of instability. He mentioned thirty thousand dollars.

Steve listened to the man he had hired to protect him describe the price of protection that had never been protecting him. The symptoms Prendergast had documented — the confusion, the irrational behavior, the disorientation — were the symptoms of being poisoned. And the man whose job was to investigate the poisoning had instead documented the symptoms as proof that Steve was losing his mind.



The Sheraton in Mahwah, New Jersey.

The hotel was a tall white monstrosity that seemed out of place among the suburban sprawl — a Sheraton along a highway corridor where New Jersey becomes the kind of New Jersey that exists between New York and everywhere else. Inside, five stories of atrium lobby — an indoor waterfall, tropical greenery, views of the Ramapo hills through extra-wide windows. Mostly empty in late winter. Steve checked in and waited.

Tara came to lunch.

She arrived with an entourage that Steve had not expected. Auxiliary police. Staff from what appeared to be a battered women's shelter. The lunch — at a table in the hotel restaurant — was surrounded by people whose presence communicated something specific: that the woman sitting across from Steve was a victim, and the man sitting across from her was the reason she needed protection.

[SWORN DECLARATION — JULY 10, 2018 — COURT FILING]

Tara Walsh's sworn declaration in response to Steve's ex parte request for temporary emergency custody, July 10, 2018. Contains her version of the relationship and events, including claims about Steve's behavior and mental state during this period.

He sat with this. The food came and went. The conversation was logistics — Evie, apartments, money. The auxiliary police stood near the entrance. The shelter staff sat at an adjacent table.

Steve ate and said what needed to be said and did not say what he wanted to say, which was that the woman surrounded by protective infrastructure was the same woman who had crushed his medication, managed his pills, tried to have him committed, and — three days earlier — stood in a doorway with her father and told him to leave his own apartment while his face was covered in adhesive.



Later that day the Israeli security team arrived.

The debrief happened in the hotel room. The security team moved through the assessment with the efficiency of people who had done this before.

A local officer named Moe Canal — not part of the security team, not part of Ackerman's network, someone separate, a former New York detective with decades behind him — pulled Steve aside.

"Don't trust anyone," he said.

Steve looked at him.

Canal did not elaborate. He said it the way Tom LaFreniere had said "don't worry about it" — as a conclusion delivered without supporting evidence, expecting the listener to understand that the conclusion was itself the evidence.

Steve stood in the hallway of the Sheraton in Mahwah, New Jersey. His daughter was in Brooklyn. His apartment had been contaminated. His evidence box had been returned with items missing. His girlfriend had arrived at lunch with a domestic violence escort.

And a local officer had just told him not to trust anyone.

He stayed three days.

Tara brought Evie to the Sheraton. They fed her, changed her, walked her in a stroller through the hotel corridors and out into the cold. In these hours the rest of it — the box, the phone call, the auxiliary police, the warning — receded into the background of something he could not yet name. He was a father holding his daughter in a hotel in New Jersey. The adhesive loosened from his face over those three days — petroleum jelly, rubbing alcohol, strips of translucent dried glue peeling away in layers, raw pink skin underneath. His face came back. His daughter was in his arms. The simplest things in the story were the truest.

On the last night he went back to his room. He closed the door. He sat on the edge of the bed.

The room was quiet. The highway hummed outside the window. The ice machine down the hall cycled on and off. Through the curtain, the hotel's blue entrance lights cast a cold circle on the parking lot below.

He was very far from the house on Vermont Street where the fog came in over the hill and the quiet was just quiet.



Terms

February–March 2018

Weeks of phone calls from San Francisco to New York. Tara blames her parents. Tara promises cooperation. Tara asks about finances. Then she asks for a private jet.

He went back to San Francisco.

The flight from Newark was five hours and he slept through most of it because the week in New Jersey had produced the kind of exhaustion that sleep doesn't fix but the body demands anyway. When he landed the air was the same dry California air and the light was the same pale coastal light and nothing about the city had changed except that his daughter was three thousand miles behind him and the distance between them was not geography.

He opened the door to the house on Vermont Street. The street was quiet — the real crookedest street in San Francisco, not the tourist one, the switchbacks descending the hill in tight turns that most visitors never found. Inside the house was the same way he had left it. His things in their places. The heavy gray curtains were open and the light came through the tall windows — the park visible across the road, a dog barking somewhere below, the

gentle sounds of a neighborhood that did not know he existed. White marble countertops. A commercial-grade range he had barely used. The silence of a house occupied by one person.

The phone calls started immediately.

Tara called in the evenings — New York evenings, which were California afternoons, the time zone gap creating a rhythm where his workday was interrupted by her nighttime. She called when the baby was fussy. She called when the baby was asleep. She called when the apartment was quiet and the conversation had the texture of two people trying to find a version of their situation that both of them could live inside.

The calls followed a pattern — blame first, then concession, then the questions — the three movements of a negotiation in which one party does not know he is being negotiated.

[iMessage — Walsh — February 2018]

February 2018

Tara: That's not a lie it's true- I went through family court and it destroyed my family forever

Tara: My whole family just wants me to be close, but living with my parents is honestly not good for my mental health. You know the background very well

Tara: And Brendan controls the whole household like turning of the WiFi for hours this morning- you think I'm evil he is far far worse

Steve: You chose to go home

SCREENSHOT_TARA_WALSH_HOUSEHOLD_ABUSE — Tara Walsh
iMessages, February 2018

First, she blamed her parents. The conflict — the apartment, the fumes, the departure — was her father's doing. Steve Walsh had overreacted. Maura had been worried. The family had interfered the way the Walsh family always interfered, and Tara was caught in the

middle, and if everyone would just step back and let her handle things, everything would be fine.

Then she promised cooperation.

[iMessage — Walsh — July 21, 2018]

Saturday, July 21, 2018

Tara: I know the miscarriage was really hard on you too and I'm sorry you had to go through that

Tara: But you need to get sober and get yourself together before you can see Evie

Tara: Please don't start court proceedings- that will only make things worse for everyone especially Evie

Tara: Thank you for paying the child support

TEXT_TARA_JUL21_MISCARRIAGE_CONDITIONAL — Tara
Walsh iMessage, July 21, 2018

She would bring Evie to California. They could share time. They could figure out the logistics. She would be reasonable. She wanted what was best for Evie. She said this in a tone Steve had heard before — the sincere, specific voice she used when the words were exactly what the listener needed to hear. He could not tell whether she meant it. He could never tell whether she meant it. What he could tell was that the tone was always the same, whether the promise was kept or broken.

Then the questions came.

How was the house? How was work? How was Ring? Was Jamie's company doing well? How much did the security cost? What was he spending on apartments? Did he still have the stock options?

The questions were casual. They arrived in the middle of other sentences, nested inside conversations about the baby and the schedule and the weather in New York.

He answered some of them. He deflected others. But the questions kept coming — each one a small probe pressed gently against the architecture of his finances. How much had the security cost. What had he paid

Ackerman. Were there legal fees. The questions arrived with the cadence of concern and the structure of an audit.



While Tara was calling Steve with blame and promises and questions, she was talking to two other people about a version of the same situation he would not have recognized — or perhaps would have, because the voice she used to lie to him was the same voice she used to tell the truth, and distinguishing between them had never been a skill the situation rewarded.

On February 20, she told Matan Gavish the economic truth beneath the phone calls. Her father had told her that having the baby was her idea and her problem. Child support would be roughly two thousand dollars a month — not enough. The alternative was already calculated: “I’m better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can — then leaving him for good.”

[iMessage — Matan Gavish — February 20, 2018]

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Tara: Steve is trying to blackmail me to move to sf- been such a wonderful experience

Tara: No it kind of is bc baby is a lot of work and not sure how I can build or keep business- and he’s taken back his offer to support me here- only if I am there

Tara: To be a “family” or else

Tara: Lawyer up

Matan: You’re losing to him already

Matan: You’re being strung along and manipulated

Tara: Yeah well he’s pushing me into a corner- my dad said having the baby was my idea and my problem. So I have to do whatever to survive

Tara: If I sue him for child support I will get like \$2k a month

Tara: Which is not enough to live off of

Tara: I'm better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can- then leaving him for good.

Matan: Okay, have a fun 40 yrs

MSG-MATAN-006 — Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish,
February 20, 2018

Two days earlier, she had sent Jesse the conditions — eleven demands typed into a message thread. A trust for Evie within thirty days. Couples therapy. No legal fight if she decided to take Evie and return to New York. The final condition was an escape clause written before the arrival.

[iMessage — Jesse Ozeri — February 18, 2018]

February 18, 2018

Tara: No adderol or cocaine consumption in house.

Tara: Must go to couples therapist once a week
(Steve can pick therapist if preferred)

Tara: No kicking Tara/Evie out of house for first 6 months.

Tara: A trust for Evie and Tara must be set up upon arrival in SF (within 30 days)

Tara: Steve must stay committed to relationship with Tara for first 6 months

Tara: After 6 months, must give 30 days notice for Tara to leave house.

Tara: If Tara returns to NY, staffed transport must be provided.

Tara: If Tara returns to NY, Steve must pay for new residence with his name on the lease.

Tara: If Steve and Tara break up, a monthly financial support agreement for Tara/Evie must be established within 30 days. Financial support must include salary for Tara for one year as she re-establishes her business.

Tara: If Tara returns to NY, she will be able to take Evie with her without any sort of legal fight from Steve.

Tara: Steve will financially support Tara and Evie for their stay in SF.

Tara: What do You think of sending Steve those rules for me to come to and? Sf.

MSG-JESSE-001 – Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, February 18, 2018

The phone calls Steve was receiving — the blame, the cooperation, the financial questions — were the performed register. The Rules List and the “pretending I want to be with him” calculation were the real one. The terms Tara was negotiating with Steve were not the same terms she was describing to Jesse and Matan. Steve was hearing a woman trying to find a way forward. Jesse and Matan were hearing a woman who had already decided the direction.



Then she asked for a private jet.

Not a first-class ticket. Not even a business-class seat with the extra room for a car seat. A private jet. She said it would be easier with the baby. She said the airports were stressful. She said she wanted to bring the nanny.

He said yes.

He said yes because his daughter was in Brooklyn and he was on Vermont Street and the distance between those two facts was not going to be closed by negotiating the class of airfare. He said yes because the cost of a charter was a number and Evie was not a number. He said yes because after three weeks of phone calls that moved through blame and promise and financial inventory, someone had finally said something that ended with his daughter on a plane pointed west.

He booked the jet. He arranged the car service on this end. He told his mother.

For the first time in a month Steve felt something that approximated hope.

He went to work. He took calls. He checked the confirmation email twice to make sure it was real.

A week. His daughter would be here in a week.

The house on Vermont Street would not be quiet much longer.



17

The Jet

March 2018

A private jet carries Evie from Teterboro to San Francisco. Steve waits at the other end. What he cannot see — what is happening simultaneously in text threads with Jesse, Matan, and Walsh Sr. — is that Tara has planned the exit before the arrival.

Two weeks before the jet left Teterboro, Tara sent Jesse her conditions.

Eleven demands, typed into an iMessage thread on February 18, 2018. No adderall or cocaine consumption in the house. Couples therapy once a week. Steve cannot kick Tara or Evie out for the first six months. A trust for Evie established within thirty days. If Tara returns to New York, staffed transport must be provided. If they break up, a monthly financial support agreement within thirty days. A salary for Tara for one year as she re-establishes her business.

And the final condition, placed last as if its position could soften its meaning: “If Tara returns to NY, she will be able to take Evie with her without any sort of legal fight from Steve.”

She asked Jesse what he thought of sending Steve these rules.

[iMessage — Jesse Ozeri — February 18, 2018]

February 18, 2018

Jesse: Hahaha

Tara: Will u please come to Flywheel??

Tara: By ur yourself

Jesse: I can't make it

Tara: Yt I know

Tara: I also hate the haha a lot

Tara: No adderol or cocaine consumption in house.

[...]

Tara: If Tara returns to NY, she will be able to take Evie with her without any sort of legal fight from Steve.

Tara: Steve will financially support Tara and Evie for their stay in SF.

Tara: What do You think of sending Steve those rules for me to come to and? Sf.

MSG-JESSE-001 — Jesse iMessage Thread, February 18, 2018

The Rules List was never sent to Steve. It existed in the space between two people — the woman assembling the plan and the man who loved her enough to hold it. Jesse would later confront Tara's cycles. He would tell her she manipulated him into thinking she was making progress. But on February 18, he received the blueprint and said nothing.

The eleventh condition was not a condition. It was an escape clause written before the arrival.



Two days later, on February 20, Tara was talking to Matan Gavish.

The conversation covered Steve, the compound, the financial architecture beneath every decision Tara made. She told Matan that Steve was pushing her into a corner. That her father had said the pregnancy was her idea and her problem. That she would get perhaps two thousand dollars a month in child support — not enough to live on. The alternative was already formed: “I’m better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can — then leaving him for good.”

[iMessage — Matan Gavish — February 20, 2018]

Matan: I’m going to DC tomorrow

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Tara: Oh wow

Matan: Oh no

Tara: Pf, oh wow, two days left

Matan: Wow. I’m really busy now don’t have much time for chit chat

Tara: All my friends and Brendan get annoyed I’m not so free to chat for 1.5 hours

Matan: By Felicia

[...]

Tara: Which is not enough to live off of

Tara: I’m better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can- then leaving him for good.

Matan: Okay, have a fun 40 yrs

MSG-MATAN-006 — Gavish iMessage Thread, February 20, 2018

Walsh Sr. controlled a seven-acre estate on Whippoorwill Road in Chappaqua. He had a carriage house. He had a gate. He had the kind of quiet authority that comes from never having to raise your voice because everyone already knows the hierarchy. And he told his daughter — the mother of a seven-week-old — that the baby was her idea and her problem.

The compound was safe as long as you stayed.

"I really can't stand living here and things get's bad when I say I want to leave."

— Tara Walsh, about the Chappaqua compound

Tara said this about her parents — not about Steve, not about San Francisco. About Whippoorwill Road. The abuse activated at the boundary. The captivity was not imprisonment but conditional safety: the compound provides, and the compound withdraws, and the mechanism is the same whether you are Tara at twenty-nine or Brienne at fourteen or Kiara at twelve. And now the woman who could not leave the compound was preparing to enter another man's home in another state, with conditions she had already decided not to honor, calculating from the first demand to the eleventh exactly how to leave again.



On the night of March 2, a Friday, Tara was talking to Matan again.

The conversation moved through logistics — her dogs, the trip, when Matan would arrive to say goodbye. She told him to take care of the animals. To love them. Not to be rough. Then the register shifted.

"Maybe you can kidnap me and Evie so we don't have to leave."

It was nearly midnight. She followed it immediately: "I really don't want to I just can't do it on my own."

[iMessage — Matan Gavish — March 2, 2018]

Friday, March 2, 2018

Tara — 10:44 PM: When she lies like this I feel v relaxed and happy

Matan — 10:53 PM: It's a mess outside

Tara: Matan in Spanish is "they kill"

Tara — 11:07 PM: Lol I didn't know that

Matan — 11:07 PM: Yeah

Tara — 11:19 PM: You better take awesome amazing care of them and give them lots of love all the time

Tara — 11:20 PM: Ok?

[...]

Tara: See you then still I'm heartbroken to leave them

Tara: Would you ever fly to sf and help me bring them back? If I bring them

Tara — 12:09 PM: Call me when you wake up

MSG-MATAN-005 — Gavish iMessage Thread, March 2-3, 2018

Matan did not respond to the kidnapping suggestion. The next morning he said he'd shoot for 9:30.

The voice in the "kidnap me" text was not the voice of the Rules List. It was not the calculating register of "pretending I want to be with him." It was something underneath both — a woman who did not want to execute the plan she had built, who wished someone would stop her, who asked the man who loved her to take the decision out of her hands. No one did. She went to the airport.



The morning of March 3, Tara was messaging Jesse. She was flying on a private jet — Steve had chartered it for Evie's first cross-country trip. Jesse asked about the dogs. Tara had a different concern.

"Bc im worries about the journey back if things don't work out."

She was not worried about the dogs. She was calculating the return before the arrival.

"I don't want to stay there too long with Evie where I could never leave in a court."

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Tara: Would you ever fly there and help me carry back my dogs?

Tara: If not those bc I'll leave them with Matan few weeks.

Jesse: If I have time I guess I'll fly. that

Tara: It should only be hours

Tara: So it's a plan

Jesse: How much is it

Tara: I'll look into it

Jesse: Yup

Jesse: They're adorable.

Tara: Bc im worries about the journey back if things don't work out

Tara: I don't want to stay there too long with Evie where I could never leave in a court

MSG-JESSE-002 — Jesse iMessage Thread, March 3, 2018

She was asking Jesse to be her extraction team. Would he fly out? Would he help carry back the dogs? The dogs were the cover story. The child was the jurisdiction. Tara understood — was telling Jesse explicitly — that staying too long in California with Evie would create a legal reality she might not be able to undo.

While Tara was in the cab to Teterboro, her father texted.

“What is Evelyn’s SSN?”

[iMessage — Walsh Sr. — March 3, 2018]

Dad: Will call around 6/5

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Dad — 10:18 AM: What is Evelyn’s SSN ?

Tara: I can't access it right now headed to airport cab give it to you later or tomorrow

Tara: It's in her security box in my suitcase

Sunday, March 4, 2018

Tara: Will get it to you tomorrow long day about to get some rest. Arrived safely all going well and Evie is doing great

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Tara: Evie heart is doing much better! Just left cardiologist- only one small hole they are not worried about at all- all the rest closed. They said the remaining one will close on its own and we don't have to come back for a year. Great news!

Dad: That's terrific!

MSG-WALSHSR-003 — Walsh Sr. iMessage Thread, March 3-6, 2018

Tara couldn't access it — the Social Security card was in a security box inside her suitcase, and she was already in the cab. She would give it to him later. The man who had called the pregnancy “my idea and my problem” was now requesting the baby's identifying documents on the afternoon of departure. Trust setup. Insurance. Legal paperwork. Whatever Walsh Sr. needed the number for, he needed it on the day his daughter boarded a jet to a city she had already planned to leave.



Teterboro Airport sat in the New Jersey marshlands — no commercial flights, no terminals crowded with families, no lines. A parking lot, a lobby, and a door that opened onto the tarmac where the planes waited.

Tara boarded with Evie and Saoira.

Evie was seven weeks old. She was small enough that the car seat overwhelmed her — a tiny presence inside the engineering of safety straps and padded plastic. Saoira carried the bags. Tara carried the baby. The three of them climbed the stairs into the cabin.

Saoira was a condition of the flight. Tara had insisted she come — a friend from New York, someone she trusted,

someone she wanted beside her for reasons she did not explain. Steve agreed because the jet was booked and the baby was coming and the cost of an extra seat on a charter is zero.

The plane was smaller than what the word “private jet” suggests to people who have never been inside one. Eight seats. A narrow aisle. A bathroom the size of a closet. But the cabin was quiet and there were no strangers and the seats reclined and Evie could sleep without the roar of two hundred other passengers.

This was the first private jet Steve had ever chartered. He was not a man who chartered jets. He was a man who had built a tech company and was spending what it earned on the logistics of keeping his daughter close. The alternative was Evie staying in a Brooklyn apartment where the Walsh family controlled the environment and the distance between father and child was not geography but architecture.



Steve was in San Francisco, waiting.

He had arranged the house — a three-level townhouse in North Beach. He had hired a nanny, Abby Tedla, recommended through a network, agreed to start immediately. He had set up a room for the baby. He had arranged his life into the shape of something that could receive a family, or something that looked like a family, or something that might become one if the architecture held.

Five hours. He watched the flight tracker on his phone. The small dot moved across the country from right to left — New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, the long flat middle, the Rockies, Nevada, the descent into the Bay. He watched the dot the way fathers have always watched the doors of rooms they cannot enter.

The plane landed at SFO's private terminal in the late afternoon. The car was waiting on the tarmac — Bryan Crutcher's driver. Steve stood beside the car and watched the jet taxi to the apron and stop.

The door opened. Tara stepped out. Saoira stepped out behind her.

Steve took Evie.

For the first time since January 27, his daughter was under the same roof as him. The fog came in over the hill and the city got quiet and the house got warm. For one evening, the arithmetic of their situation — the flights and the phone calls and the lawyers — receded to the edges, and what was left was a man and a woman and a baby in a house in San Francisco. The baby was breathing. The breathing was enough.

He did not know about the Rules List. He did not know about the exit planning, or the compound dynamic, or the financial calculation that had already reframed this arrival as a temporary extraction. He did not know his daughter's Social Security number had been requested by the Walsh patriarch three hours before takeoff. He knew only what was in front of him: Evie, warm, breathing, home.



Within days of the landing, Tara shared an iCloud photo album called "My Life in San Francisco."

It arrived on Steve's phone because she had sent it — her album, her photos, her decision to share. Steve's response, in a message to someone else: "Well you sent them so, it's a big whatever. Prob some auto sharing thing, but way to be dramatic."

[iMessage — Walsh — March 2018]

March 2018

Walsh: [Shared iCloud Photo Album: "My Life in San Francisco"]

Walsh — 3 hours later: That's a lie, doesn't scare me and has nothing to do with Evie.

Steve, to someone else:

Walsh — 3 hours later: Well you sent them so, it's a big whatever. Prob some auto sharing thing, but way to be dramatic.

SCREENSHOT_TARA_MY_LIFE_SF_TOP_TRAP — iMessage
Device Capture, March 2018

The album would later appear in court filings — not as evidence that Tara had shared her own photos, but as evidence that Steve had violated the Temporary Order of Protection by receiving them. She manufactured the contact, then weaponized it. The scheme was running before the first week in San Francisco was over.

Months later, after everything that would happen in the North Beach townhouse — the poisoning, the confession, the departure — Tara sent Steve a text that said the truest thing she would ever tell him about the jet.

| [Text Message — 2018 — Discovery — Russell Messages]

In hindsight. As if what happened in San Francisco were the result of a departure gone wrong — rather than an arrival that was never meant to last.



Save This, I've Got Him

March–April 2018

A three-level townhouse in North Beach. A nanny. A grandmother. For weeks it feels almost ordinary. Then Tara takes a knife sharpener to Steve's iPhone. Nine marks that look like bullet holes. She photographs a bruise on her thigh and texts her boyfriend. Save this. I've got him.

The house in North Beach had three levels.

The master bedroom was upstairs — that was where Steve's mother stayed. Linda had flown in from the East Coast to help with the newborn, because that is what grandmothers do, and because the situation around her son's daughter required the kind of steady, unquestioning presence that only a mother provides. She was a retired registered nurse. She cooked. She watched. She lived inside the household the way nurses live inside the situations they cannot fix — alert, present, taking notes.

The lower bedroom was Steve and Tara's. The office on the middle level had been converted into a nursery — a crib, a changing table, star decals on the wall, an animal mobile with reindeer and birds, a polka dot blanket. The baby's closet was organized with the particular care of a father who had prepared: tiny hangers, pink blankets

folded on shelves, diapers stacked in rows, a stuffed lamb on the top shelf watching over everything.

Abby Tedla arrived to work as the nanny. She was competent and calm in the way that people who care for children professionally are calm — the particular patience of someone who understands that the needs of a two-month-old are urgent without being complicated. Feed her. Hold her. Change her. Watch her. Repeat.

Two members of the Israeli security team lived nearby. Close enough to be available. Far enough to be invisible. The household had the architecture of a family surrounded by infrastructure — nanny, grandmother, security — that no ordinary family requires.



Diptych — LEFT: Steve in Nordic sweater kissing newborn Evie. RIGHT: Steve asleep on sofa with baby Evie in pink stripes on his chest.

For a brief period it felt almost ordinary.



Evie slept in two-hour fragments. The adults slept in the spaces between her sleeping. The house filled with the sounds of a newborn — the small cries, the feeding sounds, the white noise machine that ran constantly in the nursery. Linda cooked. Abby organized the bottles. Steve went to work in the mornings and came home in the evenings and held his daughter and the rhythm of it — the simple, exhausting, beautiful rhythm of a household with a baby — was something he had not known he wanted until he was inside it.

Tara was quieter here than she had been in New York. The Walsh family was three thousand miles away. Her father's voice did not arrive through the walls. Her mother's presence did not fill the kitchen. For the first time since Steve had known her, Tara existed in a space that was not shaped by the family she had tried to leave as a teenager.

Steve recognized it because he recognized her. They were alike in this — two people who had stood up to the Walsh family's gravity and paid for it. Tara had tried to emancipate herself at fifteen. She had fought the same machine Steve was now learning to fight. The difference was that she had been fighting it since childhood, and the childhood had broken something that the fighting could not repair.

But here, in North Beach, three thousand miles from Chappaqua, with a baby and a nanny and a grandmother who cooked dinner — here, the broken thing was quieter. Tara held Evie without the particular tension that Steve had learned to read as the presence of her parents in her nervous system. She slept. She ate. She existed in rooms without scanning them first.

Dr. Gopal explained the clinical term in their sessions together. Tara's borderline personality disorder was iatrogenic — caused by her mother overmedicating her as a child through a psychiatrist named Dr. Faedda,

substituting pharmaceutical management for emotional development. The little girl who had been drugged into compliance had grown into a woman whose only model of care was chemical. Gopal thought the prognosis was not good. He estimated five years of DBT therapy before Tara could safely be the primary caretaker. But he also saw what Steve saw: away from the source, away from Chappaqua, the symptoms were receding.

This was the window. The long shot. The best chance of Tara's life to be a family.

It lasted weeks.



On March 7, 2018, at 2:36 in the morning, Tara sent a text message to Jesse Ozeri.

[iMessage — Jesse Ozeri — March 7, 2018]

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Jesse: Hey! Did you call me yesterday?

Tara: How are you doing?

Jesse: How are you doing?

Wednesday, March 7, 2018 — 2:36 AM

Tara: That sure true I'm really really unhappy and I don't know what to do

Tara: I feel trapped but like I can't survive here either

Tara: I want to fall asleep and not wake up

Tara: Please don't tell my sister

MSG-JESSE-008 — Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, March 7, 2018, 2:36 AM

"I'm really really unhappy and I don't know what to do. I feel trapped but like I can't survive here either. I want to fall asleep and not wake up. Please don't tell my sister."

The house was quiet. The baby was asleep. Steve was asleep. The grandmother was upstairs. Tara sat in the

dark with her phone and told the only person she still trusted in New York that she wanted to stop existing.

The next day, the WiFi stopped working.



Steve was in the shower.

He heard a sound — thud, thud, thud — coming from somewhere in the house. He put on pants and went into the hallway that connected the bedroom to the kitchen. On the wall, as he passed, there were deep indentations in the drywall. Fresh. Half an inch deep. Something had been driven into the wall with force.

Then a different sound. Not thuds — a crack, followed by another crack. A sharp, percussive repetition that he knew, as he heard it, was not a good thing.

He moved quickly. The nursery was on the left as he walked down the hallway. He went there first. Evie was asleep. The crib was still. The mobile turned slowly above her head.

The sound was coming from the kitchen.

He turned left at the end of the hallway and the kitchen opened in front of him. Pendant lights hung from the ceiling. The granite island sat in the center of the room with its white bar stools. The professional range gleamed against the far wall. It was the kitchen where Linda cooked dinner. The kitchen where the bottles were lined up on the counter. The kitchen where the household had been ordinary for weeks.

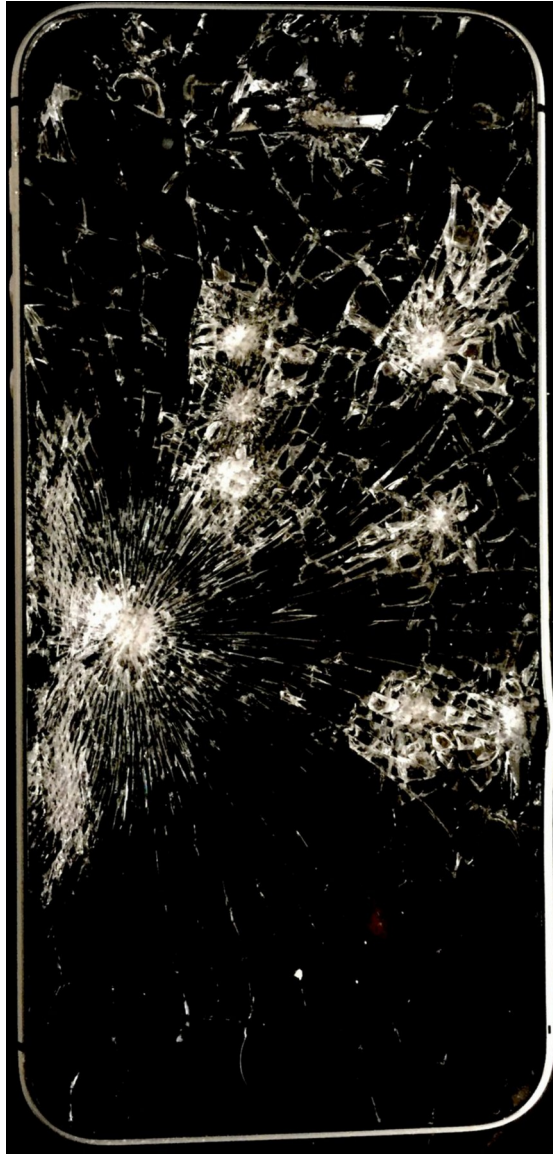
Tara was ten feet to his left, facing him, standing over the butcher block.

She had taken the knife sharpener out of the knife block — the heavy steel rod used to sharpen knives, a foot and a half long, solid metal with a textured handle. She was holding it over her right shoulder and bringing it down

in stabbing motions, repeatedly, onto something on the butcher block.

Steve's phone.

His iPhone 4 — the tiny brick-shaped phone, the last one Steve Jobs actually designed, the tank of a phone he had carried for years because it was indestructible and he loved it. It lay on the butcher block and Tara was driving the tip of the knife sharpener down onto the screen, again and again and again, in a repeating stabbing motion.



Steve's iPhone 4 — nine impact points from a knife sharpener, spider-web cracks radiating from each strike, each one a separate deliberate blow

Nine marks. Each one a separate impact point with spider-web cracks radiating outward. Each one a separate decision — the arm raised, the rod brought down, the glass

punctured, the arm raised again. Not a throw, not a smash, not the impulsive destruction of someone who has lost control. A stabbing. Deliberate, repeated, aimed.

Tara said the WiFi wasn't working.

She turned to the iPad. It was significantly more fragile. Steve does not remember exactly how she broke it. The phone was the shocking thing — the image that stayed.

He grabbed the laptop. It was somewhere in the combined kitchen and living room, and he picked it up and held it above his head because he understood, in the seconds between the phone and the iPad, that she was destroying every device in the house. His devices. His documentation capability. His connection to the outside world.

Tara chased him around the kitchen island. Three times around — the granite island with the white bar stools, the one where the baby's bottles were lined up, the one under the pendant lights where Linda served dinner. Steve held the laptop over his head and circled the island with Tara behind him and the kitchen that had been ordinary for weeks became the track of a chase that lasted long enough for three full laps before she lunged.

She got a hand on the laptop. Steve pulled it back. Her hand slipped and she fell — onto the floor, near the island, near the corner that was at perfect height to catch a person in the thigh.

Abby was in the house. Linda was upstairs. Evie was asleep.



Linda Russell, retired registered nurse, filed a declaration under penalty of perjury. She had been upstairs when it started. By the time she came down, it was over.

"When I arrived she had already destroyed a new iPhone, an iPad, and possibly a computer. She was hysterical. When I asked her why she was breaking things she said it didn't matter because Stephen could afford to buy new phones and computers."

Steve told his mother what he had seen: "Tara had chased him around the house, broken his phone and other devices, and had dived at him trying to grab a laptop."

Tara told Linda she had fallen to the floor when she tried to take the laptop. Neither Tara nor Steve seemed hurt. Neither needed medical care. The incident ended the way Tara's incidents ended — with Tara apologizing, reassuring everyone that she was in a good state of mind, that she wasn't a threat to the baby. It was, Steve would testify four years later, "very much a kind of inversion of the story that's told now."

Four years later, Tara would object twice from the defense table as Steve described the scene to a jury.

She would say he wasn't allowed to testify to things he didn't have factual evidence on. The judge would overrule her. Steve would describe the knife sharpener, the butcher block, the nine marks that looked like bullet holes, the WiFi. The jury would listen. Tara would say "whatever."



A week to three weeks later — Steve is not sure exactly when — the bruise entered the conversation.

Tara had a bruise on her thigh. It was large, the kind of mark that comes from impact with something hard. The kitchen island was at perfect height. Steve had not noticed it at the time. He did not learn about it until Tara told him, and the way she told him was not a complaint. It was a statement of position.

If I have a picture of the bruise, it could be real trouble for you.

Tara photographed it.

She sent the photograph to Matan Gavish — the man she had mentioned dismissively at the Hamptons, the one she told friends she'd kicked out and blocked and would never see again, the one she kept seeing. Throughout the pregnancy, throughout Steve, Gavish had been there — receiving financial documents, taking calls on a number Steve didn't know existed. He was the archive.

The message read: "Save this. I've got him."

The next day — March 9, 2018 — Tara sent an email from her Vital Branding account to Gavish. The subject line: "Keep these important." Photographs attached, sent from her iPhone. Matan replied: "Okay."

The bruise photograph was for the file. The file was for later. The kitchen island that had caught Tara in the thigh as she chased Steve around it became, in the photograph, evidence of violence committed against her. The phone she had destroyed — the documentation tool she had eliminated — could not record what she was now documenting.

The household continued. Linda cooked. Abby fed the baby. The security team drove them places. They went to Hawaii together a week later — Steve and Tara and Evie, the family that had almost been ordinary, traveling to a place where no one knew what had happened in the kitchen.

The bruise faded. The phone was replaced. But the photograph survived. Gavish held it. He would hold anything she sent him.

And in the kitchen in North Beach — the one with the pendant lights and the granite island and the butcher block where the knife sharpener had come down nine times — the bottles were still lined up on the counter, and the baby still needed feeding, and the household continued to function around the absence of the devices that had been destroyed inside it.

SAVE THIS, I'VE GOT HIM



SAVE THIS, I'VE GOT HIM

PART IV

THE KIDNAPPING

The Leaning Tower

Spring-Fall 2018

Steve moves into a sinking building and goes to the police. The building absorbs its lean internally. So does the investigation.

He almost bought a house in Presidio Heights.

The neighborhood was the part of San Francisco where the old money lived — not the tech money, which congregated in SoMa lofts and Marina renovations, but the money that had been there long enough to have hedges instead of fences and driveways that curved. The houses were large and quiet and set back from the street in the way that expensive houses are set back when the people inside them have decided that proximity to the sidewalk is a form of vulnerability.

Steve liked the house. The rooms made sense. The light came in from the correct direction. The yard was the kind of yard where a child could play — not a courtyard, not a terrace, but an actual yard with actual grass and enough space for a girl to run. He could see Evie in it.

George said no.

George was the security advisor who had been brought in to assess Steve's living situation — not the architecture

of the house but the architecture of the threat. He had the bearing of someone who had spent decades reading spaces for what they concealed rather than what they offered. Where Steve saw light and rooms and a yard, George saw sight lines. Where Steve saw a driveway that curved, George saw an approach with limited visibility. He walked the property the way a general walks terrain: counting windows, measuring setbacks, noting which neighboring structures overlooked the yard where a child might play.

The house in Presidio Heights had too many access points. Too many windows facing public streets. Too many ways in for someone who might be looking for ways in.

Steve did not argue. He had hired George specifically because George saw what he could not, and when George said a house was wrong, the house was wrong. The threat George was assessing was not abstract. Tara had solicited her ex-boyfriend — a Krav Maga instructor with an IDF background — to come to San Francisco and hurt Steve. Jesse Ozeri, Tara's closest friend, had confirmed it. The security architecture was not precaution. It was response.

The alternative was the Millennium Tower.



The building stood at 301 Mission Street in SoMa — fifty-eight stories of steel and glass and reinforced concrete, the tallest residential structure in the city. Steve signed the lease on a penthouse not because it was beautiful, though it was, but because it offered what Presidio Heights could not: controlled access. One entrance. A lobby with security personnel who checked identification before allowing anyone past the desk. Elevators that required key cards. Hallways with cameras. The infrastructure of a building designed to keep people out —

which was, by the spring of 2018, exactly what Steve needed to keep his daughter safe.

Evie's crib went in the bedroom. Her toys went in the living room. The floor-to-ceiling windows looked out over the city and the bay and, on clear mornings, the East Bay hills beyond. The penthouse had the particular stillness of a residence at the top of a building — no street noise, no neighbors through the walls, just the hum of systems designed to make life at that altitude feel like the ground.

The building was sinking.

Not in a way you could feel — not yet, not at this point in the subsidence — but in a way that was documented, measured, and known. The Millennium Tower had been settling unevenly since before it opened. The foundation, driven into fill rather than bedrock, was compressing at different rates on different sides. The engineers had reports. The residents had lawsuits. The tilt was measurable in inches per year, and the inches were accumulating. A ball placed on the living room floor would roll, without assistance, toward the sinking corner of the apartment. The most expensive residential building in San Francisco was listing to one side, and everyone who lived there knew it, and most of them stayed anyway, because the views were extraordinary and the sinking was slow.



*Steve silhouetted at Millennium Tower dining table —
purple sunset through floor-to-ceiling windows, city
skyline*

Late at night, after Tara and Evie were asleep, Steve sat at that dining table with his laptop open and the camera feeds cycling. Fourteen cameras. Four monitored entrances. Motion alerts configured to ping his phone. Beyond the glass, the fog had come in and turned the city to a dark framing of its own light, and at the top of the Salesforce Tower an LED art display cycled through silhouettes that looked, from fifty-five floors away, less like ballet than like a red-light district window. He had built surveillance systems professionally — the 3VR platform

had been deployed in banks and airports and transit hubs across the country — and now he was deploying the same architecture to protect his own household. The irony was not lost on him. The inventor of institutional video surveillance was watching his own front door.

What the cameras could not show him was what was happening inside the apartment. The security architecture pointed outward. The threat was already past the lobby, past the key-card elevator, past the cameras. It lived in the kitchen, in the wine glass, in the pills managed and offered as care. The surveillance systems Steve had spent his career designing were built to see intruders. They could not see a household.



In July, Steve went to the police.

George had made the connection — the same instinct that read buildings for threat vectors had read the situation and concluded that what was happening to Steve was a crime, and that crimes belonged with the police. He connected Steve to the Special Victims Unit of the San Francisco Police Department. The case was assigned to Sergeant Brendan Caraway.

Steve wrote Caraway an email. The subject line was “Lithium in My System.”

“Previously, I sent you a test I had done roughly around the second time Tara moved in with me in March 2017. The test showed off-the-charts Lithium in my system, but I had never taken nor had I access to any Lithium.”

“I view this as significant because it’s a clearer tie between a test and drug Tara had access to and it shows that she was likely drugging me without my knowledge all the way back in early 2017.”

The email did what a report to police is supposed to do. It named a substance. It attached lab results. It identified

witnesses — Jesse Ozeri, who had confirmed Tara solicited her ex-boyfriend to come hurt Steve; Bryan Crutcher, the retired Vallejo police officer on Steve’s security detail who had personally observed a white pill floating in Steve’s wine glass. It described a pattern of episodes that aligned with known pharmaceutical effects. It gave the police what police need: a drug, a victim, a perpetrator, a witness, a lab report.

But the email was already a reduction. The subject line said “Lithium in My System.” It did not say: *My partner manufactured a psychiatric narrative to explain the symptoms her drugs were causing, weaponized that narrative through family court, isolated me from anyone who might notice, and is now using the institutions I turned to for help as instruments of the same campaign.* Steve gave them the lithium, the Seroquel, the pill in the glass.



Two months later, the case went formal.

On September 28, 2018, the law firm of Eisner Gorin — certified specialists in state and federal criminal law — sent a seventy-four-page demand for prosecution to Rani Singh, Head Deputy District Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco. SFPD Report Number 18-0494149.

[DEMAND FOR PROSECUTION — SEPTEMBER 28, 2018 — EISNER GORIN LLP — TO SF DISTRICT ATTORNEY]

Re: VICTIM: Stephen Russell (SFPD Rpt. No. 18-0494149)

“My firm represents Mr. Stephen Russell relating to a prolonged pattern of poisoning by Mr. Russell’s ex-girlfriend, Ms. Tara Walsh. Mr. Russell is a victim of a crime and respectfully urges your office to prosecute Ms. Walsh under applicable law.”

“Failure to file any charges would set a dangerous precedent that spiking a partner’s drink with a dangerous substance is acceptable conduct so long as great bodily injury or death luckily does not occur.” pages. California Penal Code § 347(a)(1). The case SFPD chose not to prosecute.

PDF_DEMAND_PROSECUTION – Eisner Gorin LLP,
September 28, 2018

The letter cited California Penal Code § 347(a)(1) — poisoning as a felony. It included Bryan Crutcher’s declaration, Tara’s own sworn admission of administering Seroquel, the lab results, the medical timeline. In December, an eighty-three-page supplemental memorandum followed. A three-hundred-and-eighty-two-page evidence binder accompanied it. Nearly five hundred pages total — organized, indexed, cross-referenced, delivered to SFPD and the DA’s office.

The demand letter was thorough and it was correct and it framed the crime the way criminal law requires: a substance, a victim, a statute. Seventy-four pages to say *she put drugs in his drinks and that is a felony*.

The Walshes had not poisoned Steve and then hidden. They had poisoned him and then *helped* — expressed worry, called doctors, told his mother he needed to be institutionalized. The drugs created the symptoms. The symptoms confirmed the narrative. The narrative justified the control.



Steve met with the Lieutenant of the Special Victims Unit.

The meeting was brief. The Lieutenant had read the file — or had been briefed on it, which is not the same thing — five hundred pages of evidence, toxicology, declarations. He looked at Steve the way people in institutions look at someone whose story does not match their face.



The Pontius Pilate pattern. Five hundred pages of evidence, and the institution's answer was that the victim looked wrong.

QUOTE-GOOD-VICTIM – SFPD Special Victims Unit, 2018

The official reason the case was not forwarded to the District Attorney was that it lacked probable cause. Five hundred pages. Laboratory reports. A sworn confession. A witnessed admission. The system determined that probable cause had not been established.

Sergeant Caraway told Steve what had actually happened. The DA's office had asked Lieutenant Juarez not to send the case over. The reason, Caraway said, was political — they could not say yes or no. A poisoning case involving a wealthy family, a custody dispute across two states, a father who documented everything — the merits were not the problem. The merits were inconvenient.

Three layers of the same failure. The official story: insufficient evidence. The political story: the DA could not afford the case. The human story, delivered in a room at the Special Victims Unit: a man who had been poisoned by his partner, who had assembled five hundred pages of proof, who had come to the police with laboratory reports and sworn declarations and a witness — and who was told, to his face, that he did not look enough like a victim to be treated as one.

The case sat in the system. It did not move.



The Millennium Tower continued its imperceptible descent.

The engineers measured the tilt and published their findings. The building absorbed the lean internally —

distributing the stress across its structure, across floors and walls and joints that had been designed for plumb but now lived at a slight angle that was invisible from inside any single apartment. The foundation, driven into landfill rather than bedrock, settled at a rate that was cumulative across years but undetectable across days. The residents adjusted without knowing they were adjusting. The building made its own instability invisible to the people who lived inside it.

From the penthouse, at the dining table, with the sunset through the floor-to-ceiling windows and the city below and the baby monitor quiet in the next room, Steve could see the whole skyline. He could not see the lean.

In the fall of 2018, the case sat in the system, and the building leaned, and both were designed to make the lean invisible from inside.



20

The Niacin Flush

Spring 2018

A wine-and-art event. Two women who walk past the table too many times. Fifteen minutes later, his skin turns red and his body heats up. Tara records the entire episode. He recognizes the feeling from exercise supplements: niacin.

The invitation came from Sean Snyder.

Sean was Steve's financial advisor — a man who existed in the overlap between money management and social architecture, the kind of person who knew which events were worth attending and which clients might benefit from attending them together. The event was a wine-and-art evening at a hotel in downtown San Francisco. Dinner, a gallery walk, the kind of evening that exists in every city where people with money gather to look at things that cost money while drinking things that cost money.

Steve went because Sean asked and because an evening out sounded like the kind of normal that had been missing.

The hotel was one of the older ones — marble lobby, brass fixtures, the kind of carpet that absorbs sound and suggests permanence. The event was on the second floor.

Tables were set in a room that connected to a gallery space where paintings hung on temporary walls.

The dinner was unremarkable.

Steve sat at a table with Sean and several others. The wine was good. The conversation moved through the usual channels — markets, real estate, the general weather of San Francisco money. The paintings in the gallery were the kind of paintings that people buy at hotel events — large, colorful, competent without being extraordinary.

Two women walked past the table.

They were extremely attractive in the specific way that registers — not beautiful in the ordinary sense but constructed for attention, the kind of beauty that is aware of itself and deploying itself with intention. They walked past once. Then again. Then a third time. The path they took through the room brought them within a few feet of Steve's chair each time, and each time they slowed slightly, and each time they did not stop. The gallery opened onto the dining room and the traffic between the two spaces was steady — guests, servers, the women — so that the space around any table was never entirely still.

Steve noticed. He did not dwell on it.

Fifteen minutes after the last pass, Steve began to feel wrong.

It started as warmth — not the warmth of a room or a drink but an internal heat, radiating from somewhere behind the sternum — the body's own response to what it mistook for burning. Then his skin flushed. His face turned red. His hands turned red. The redness spread across his neck and arms in a pattern that was visible, rapid, and alarming.

His heart rate climbed.

The sensation was intense — not painful exactly, but overwhelming in the way that a physiological reaction is overwhelming when it arrives without warning and without explanation. Steve pushed back from the table.

He called his security team.

Tara was present. She was at the event. And she was recording.

The recording captured the episode as it unfolded — the redness, the confusion, Steve standing and moving toward the exit.

Tara texted multiple people while the episode was happening. The texts described what she was seeing. They went out in real time.

The driver arrived. Steve got in the car. The plan was the hospital.

But in the car, moving through the city, Steve recognized the feeling.

He knew this sensation. Not from poison. Not from drugs. From exercise supplements. Niacin. A B vitamin that, in high doses, causes exactly this — the flushing, the redness, the heat, the racing heart. It is temporary. It is terrifying to someone who doesn't know what it is. The redness pattern was identical. In a supplement capsule, taken deliberately, the flush lasted twenty minutes and was merely unpleasant. In a drink, unannounced, it was indistinguishable from a medical emergency.

[LABORATORY REPORT — SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS]

Patient: Stephen Russell Per M. Hatcher | **Specimen Type:** Urine

Collected: 03/07/2018 | **Reported:** 03/09/2018 4:52 PM

Final Result Summary:

Carboxyclopidiem detected by LC/MS/MS (2360 ng/mL) Zolpidem detected by LC/MS/MS (1 ng/mL)

He told the driver to turn around.

They did not go to the hospital. The flush subsided over the next hour. The redness faded. The heart rate

normalized. By the time they reached the Millennium Tower, Steve looked and felt approximately normal.

But the recording existed. The texts existed. The next day, Tara emailed the videos to Matan Gavish with two words:

“Listen. Save.”

— Tara Walsh, email to Matan Gavish (April 2018)

Tara had not caused the flush. Or she had. The mechanism was unclear — niacin could have been in the wine or in the food or in the glass before either was poured. Steve did not know.

What he knew was that the episode had been documented. And the documentation had been distributed. And that this was not the first time his body had registered something that should not have been there.

Three months later, Steve sent an email to Sergeant Brendan Caraway at the San Francisco Police Department, his family law attorneys, and — blind-copied — Dr. Gopal. The email described what he had found while preparing for court: a test from early 2017 showing lithium levels six times the reference range. He had never taken lithium. He had never been prescribed lithium. He had asked Tara at the time and she had denied access to any. Now, going through synced family photos, he found a fragment of a conversation between Tara and her twelve-year-old sister Kiara — discussing Dr. Faeda, the family psychiatrist, providing lithium scripts to the mother and now to the child.

“The test showed off-the-charts Lithium in my system, but I had never taken nor had I access to any Lithium... I found a small number of phone screenshots that were synced amongst the other family photo backup... a fragment of a conversation between Tara and her 12 year old sister Kiara in May 2017 talking about Dr. Faeda the family psychiatrist providing Lithium scripts to the mother and now to the 12 year old sister.”

The email connected the lithium to the family — the same psychiatrist, the same drugs, the same covert administration pattern now appearing in a twelve-year-old. It connected the niacin flush to the earlier test. It connected the episodes Tara had documented in her “mental health journal” — the nights Steve felt drugged and had panic attacks, the time he threw up in the shower — to the discovery that he had been drugged, by Tara, and not to help him.

The niacin flush was one data point in a pattern that had been running since early 2017. Each episode was experienced as confusion. Each was documented by Tara as evidence of instability. The scheme created the symptoms and then presented them as proof that the symptoms were the disease.

The event was not just experienced. It was produced.



She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

May 2018

The nanny approaches Steve in the kitchen: 'This will probably get me fired.' She has a brother in the FBI. Her brother told her to tell Steve immediately. The poisoning stops being a suspicion.

The kitchen was quiet.

Evie was asleep. Tara was in the bedroom. The Millennium Tower apartment had the particular stillness of a penthouse in the early morning — no street noise, no neighbors, just the hum of systems designed to make a building at the top of the sky feel like the ground.

Abby Tedla walked into the kitchen.

She had been Evie's nanny for weeks now — hired initially for nights because Tara's medication prevented her from staying up, then expanded to most of the day. She was good at the job. Steady. Patient. The kind of person a baby settles into. She fed Evie. She bathed Evie. She held Evie when Evie cried and rocked her and sang to her in a voice that was low and calm and belonged to someone who

understood that the job of caring for a child is not a performance.

Abby stood in the kitchen and looked at Steve.

Her face was different. Not the face of someone about to discuss schedules or diaper brands or the particular logistics of infant care. The face of someone who had been carrying something and had decided to put it down.

"This will probably get me fired," she said. "But I have to tell you."

Steve looked at her.

Abby told him she had a brother in the FBI. She had told her brother what she had been seeing in the apartment. Her brother had told her to tell Steve immediately.

Tara had been putting drugs in his drinks. Tara had asked Abby to help. Tara had asked Bryan Crutcher — the security chief who shared wine with Steve in the evenings — to participate. The drug was Seroquel, an antipsychotic. The method was crushing it into a fine powder and dissolving it into red wine. Tara's justification, delivered to Abby as if it were reasonable: the drugs were meant to help Steve so he wouldn't be crazy.

"Ms. Walsh had been putting drugs in his drinks without his knowledge and she had asked me to lie and tell social services that he was a bad dad/person. Once Ms. Walsh realized I was not going to lie for her or condone her mistreatment and drugging of Mr. Russell, she began to treat me with disdain and ultimately fired me."

The disclosure had two layers. The first was the drugging — the pills in the wine. The second was the ask. Tara had asked Abby to lie to social services and say Steve was a bad father. That was the architecture: drug the man, then recruit witnesses to confirm the symptoms the drugs produced.

Abby had refused.

This will probably get me fired.

The sentence stayed in the kitchen after Abby left the room. Steve stood at the counter and understood that the mystery governing his body for two years had been standing next to him the entire time, handing him a glass of wine. He did not yet know how many substances. He did not know whether the lithium — the result from a year ago that no doctor could explain — was connected. He only knew that trust had been the delivery mechanism. She had not needed to break in. She had needed only to be loved.

She had needed only to be loved. The recognition carried a question he could not answer in the kitchen: had he known? Not the drug — the architecture. The sleep that arrived too fast. The mornings that felt borrowed from someone else's body. If some part of him had understood, then staying was not loyalty. It was something else entirely.



Steve called Dan Ochoa — the security guard on shift that morning — and asked him to stay. He spoke calmly. He did not raise his voice. He had the particular composure of a man who has just learned that the mystery that has been governing his life for two years has a name and the name is the woman sitting across from him.

He asked Tara to explain.

Tara responded.

"I do it all the time."

The statement arrived without hesitation. Not a confession — a correction, as if Steve's surprise at learning about the drugging was itself the thing that needed explaining. Of course she did it. She did it all the time. This was known. This was normal. This was what she did.

Then: "We all do it."

The circle expanded. Not just Tara. Everyone. The household participated. The drugging was communal, collaborative, a group activity rather than an individual act.

Then: "They did it."

The circle moved again. Not Tara. Them. The others. The responsibility shifted across the room in real time — from admission to normalization to deflection, three statements in the space of a minute, each one contradicting the one before it.

Dan sat on the couch and listened.

Abby, in her sworn declaration, would describe what she had observed across the weeks she worked in the apartment: "I saw her drug him on at least two occasions; however she told me and Dan Ochoa that she 'did it all the time.' This caused me to fear for Mr. Russell's safety and I saw the effects on those two occasions after he drank the tainted wine. It appeared to cause him to lose consciousness shortly after."

Abby was so concerned that when a friend of Tara's was visiting, she threw away all of the open containers of food and drink in the house. She told Bryan not to eat or drink anything either. It was the only time she threw away the food. She wasn't otherwise concerned for her own safety.



Tara fired Abby in the hallway.

The firing happened within the hour. The woman who had told the truth, who had followed her brother's advice, who had risked her employment to protect Steve — was told she was done.

Steve caught Abby before she left. He asked her to stay. Not for Tara. For Evie. The baby needed someone who was not compromised, not complicit, not part of the

architecture that was being built around her. Steve gave Abby three months' severance and asked her to continue caring for Evie for as long as she could.

Abby agreed. For a time.

That night — or more precisely, at 12:20 in the morning — Tara sent a text message to Dr. Gopal, the psychiatrist she and Steve had been seeing together.

[TEXT MESSAGE RECORD — May 22, 2018 — 12:20 AM — Device Screenshot — DVRO Filing Exhibit]

The admission buried inside the complaint:
 "sometimes when he is out of his mind on drugs and won't sleep I have put seroquel in his wine." The word "sometimes" contradicts the "twice" she would later claim under oath.

LEGAL-DVRO-GOPAL-TEXT — Tara Walsh to Dr. Gopal,
 May 22, 2018, 12:20 AM

The text message contained two registers at once. The admission — "sometimes when he is out of his mind on drugs and won't sleep I have put seroquel in his wine" — was folded inside a complaint about the nanny. In Tara's telling, Abby was the problem. Abby had been "throwing me under the bus every night." Abby had told Steve things Tara had shared "in confidence." The nanny's crime was not lying when asked to lie.

And the word "sometimes." Not twice. Not on two specific occasions during psychotic episodes. Sometimes. An ongoing pattern described in the present tense, to her own psychiatrist, in a text she believed would remain private.

Dr. Gopal did not respond.



Russell Affidavit:

I went for another visit a few days later, and again Ms. Farquharson had Tara attend the bulk of my visit. I again expressed my concern about having Tara present for my time with Evie, but she dismissed my concerns. My family and nanny were sent away before Tara's arrival and I spent moments in between calming my crying daughter as Tara walked away and just before her scheduled nap. The visit was short, unnatural, hampered by the fact that Tara had deliberately not shared any details of Evie's schedule, diet, toys, etc, before the visit, though I had asked for that information.

Page from Steve Russell's sworn affidavit detailing the poisoning allegations — the kitchen confrontation, Abby Tedla's disclosure, and Tara's admission that she had been putting Seroquel in his wine.

Tara told Steve something else during those days after the disclosure, something that would find its way into his sworn affidavit months later: she was drugging him so that they would both be crazy. Otherwise, she feared she might lose custody. In Tara's mind, that made sense. She had grown up in a household where her mother medicated her, where mental illness was the condition for connection, where being manageable meant being loved.

□

Sworn affidavit. The poisoning was not only control. It was attachment.

QUOTE-TARA-CRAZY-TOO-TOGETHER — Tara Walsh, May 2018

The poisoning was not only control. It was attachment. If Steve were also mentally ill — if he too needed medication, if he too were unstable, if the drugs she administered could make him as sick as she had been made — then they could exist in the same system. The one she knew. The only kind of family she had ever been shown.

Steve stood at the window and looked out at the city. The fog was coming in over the hills. He knew now. Not everything — not the scope, not the duration, not the full extent of what had been done to his body across the years of the relationship. But the central fact.



Weeks later, when Tara filed her sworn response to Steve's domestic violence restraining order petition, she did not deny the drugging. She could not — too many people had watched. Instead, she described it. In detail. Under oath.

"I put 100mg of Seroquel in Petitioner's red wine, which is a similar dose he would often take to help him sleep. Seroquel at this dosage has no therapeutic affect and purely used as a sleeping pill."

"The Nanny helped crush the pill into a fine powder and mix it with another cup to dilute the powder into the wine. Thereafter, Bryan Crutcher poured himself a glass of wine. I asked him why he was drinking so early to which he replied: 'I am drinking so he sees me drinking and drinks his faster.'"

In Tara's sworn version, the number was two. Two incidents. Both in May 2018. Both during "psychotic episodes" where Steve was "clearly out of touch with reality." The nanny had helped. The security guard had helped. Everyone had helped because Steve was a danger to himself and everyone else.

But the text to Dr. Gopal said "sometimes." The admission to Dan and Abby said "all the time." And in February 2020, in an email to Steve's attorneys proposing settlement, Tara would write: "The two times I have openly admitted to putting Seroquel in his wine, Steve was not even working." The confession that began as "all the time" had become "twice." The woman who had crushed pills into powder and dissolved them in red wine was asking what damages he could possibly have suffered.

The shrinking worked in one direction only. "All the time" became "we all do it" became "they did it" became "twice" became "purely used as a sleeping pill" became "he took the medication willingly." Each version smaller

than the last. Each version more justified. Each version moving the responsibility further from the woman who had stood in the kitchen and said it without hesitation.



A year after the kitchen disclosure, Steve's attorneys subpoenaed Abby Tedla for a deposition in the San Francisco Battery case. The proceeding was held on April 26, 2019 — Case No. CGC-18-570137, Russell v. Walsh. The court reporter was present. A videographer recorded. Counsel for Tara Walsh did not appear.

The deposition lasted five minutes.

[...]

[...]

Commencing at 1:15 p.m. Ending at 1:20 p.m. Tara's counsel did not appear. Abby appeared, was sworn in, and refused to testify. She said a friend had told her she had a right not to. She said she didn't realize this was the same as a court subpoena. She asked to say something on the record: "If I get subpoenaed, I'll testify." The attorney explained that this was a subpoena. The deposition concluded.

Something had changed between the kitchen and the deposition room. The sworn declaration Abby had signed on July 6, 2018 — four pages, fifteen paragraphs, every detail of the drugging, the firing, the verbal abuse, the attempt to flee with Evie — still existed in the court file. It would be entered as evidence at trial. A jury of twelve would read her words and return a verdict of battery, domestic violence, malice, and fraud. Eleven of twelve agreed.

But the woman who had spoken those words into existence never spoke them again in a room where a court reporter was present. Her declaration endured. Her voice did not.

SHE ASKED ME TO PUT DRUGS IN YOUR WINE

The kitchen was quiet again.



22

"You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

May 2018

A message arrives from Tara. Dramatic, accusatory, the kind of thing she sends often enough that it reads like noise. The phrase about abandoning their daughter is a warning. Steve doesn't recognize it yet.

The apartment did not change.

The Millennium Tower penthouse held its shape — the same kitchen, the same living room where Dan had sat on the couch and listened, the same bedroom where Tara slept, the same adjacent unit where the security team rotated through their shifts. The fog came and went against the windows fifty-eight stories up. Evie needed feeding every few hours. The dishwasher ran. The systems hummed.

What had changed was the information inside the apartment. Steve knew now that Tara had been crushing Seroquel into his wine. Abby knew she had told him. Tara knew Abby had told him. Dan knew he had sat there and watched the confrontation. Everyone in the household carried the same fact, and no one had left.

Tara had not moved out. Steve had not asked her to. The arrangement — though arrangement suggests something negotiated, and nothing in this apartment had been negotiated — was held in place by the infant in the next room. A five-month-old girl who needed to be fed, bathed, held, and rocked to sleep by people who were no longer pretending that the household was anything other than what it was. The pretending had ended in the kitchen. Everything else continued.



Abby stayed.

She had been fired in the hallway and then asked to stay, and she stayed — not for Tara, not for Steve, but for Evie. She worked day shifts and night shifts. Sometimes she worked twenty-four hours straight. She slept in the apartment. She knew this family the way someone knows a family when they live inside it seven days a week and cannot look away.

She knew what Tara called Steve.

Fat. Stupid. Drug addict.

The names came often enough that when Abby was later asked under oath how many times Tara had yelled at Steve, her answer was not a number.

[SWORN TESTIMONY — AUGUST 29, 2018 — DVRO HEARING — CASE NO. FPT-18-377425]

Fat. Stupid. Drug addict. And Steve's response: quiet all the time.

LEGAL-DVRO-TEDLA-NAMES-QUIET — Abrehet Tedla, DVRO Hearing, August 29, 2018

A lot of times. She lost count.

And Steve's response — every time Tara yelled at him, every time the names arrived — was the same. He was quiet all the time. He didn't say much.

This was the household.



On May 15th, an argument moved from the living room to the master bedroom.

Patrick Williams was in the apartment that day. Williams was a retired police officer — twenty-eight years with Vacaville PD — working private security through Crutcher & Associates. He had been living in the adjacent unit, part of the rotating detail that occupied the apartment next door. He knew Steve. He knew Tara. He knew the rhythms of the household — and he had spent nearly three decades learning to distinguish between the arguments that stay arguments and the ones that become something else.

The argument was not unusual. Tara's voice carried through the walls the way it often did. But this time Williams heard the argument move — from conversation to confrontation, from the living room toward the bedroom — and he went to the door.

He saw Steve backpedaling out of the master bedroom. Tara was pushing him. She pushed his shoulder. She kicked at his shin, trying to get his foot away from the door. Steve did not push back. He did not raise his voice. He was doing what he always did — trying to talk to her, keeping his body between the argument and the room where Evie was.

[SWORN TESTIMONY — AUGUST 29, 2018 — DVRO HEARING — CASE NO. FPT-18-377425]

Retired police officer, 28 years. Saw Tara push. Saw Tara kick. Steve was calm, nothing aggressive.

Williams was not concerned for anyone's safety during the argument itself. It was just arguing, and then pushing, and then kicking — and then from somewhere behind the door, Evie began to cry.

Williams heard Steve's voice: "Did you drop the baby?"

Tara's voice: "No. The baby fell off of the bed."

Williams went to check. The baby had fallen — off the bed, onto the floor, landing near shoes and a purse. Tara said she was fine. Williams looked at the baby to make sure. The crying stopped. The apartment settled back into its particular stillness.

Years later, Tara would sit in a different room — a courtroom in Westchester — and describe the apartment on Harrison Street in a different way. She would say that Steve had broken her phone, smashed it into pieces. That he had tried to break her laptop. That he had smashed her around the kitchen, banging her against walls. That she had bruises all over her body. That she wanted to call the police but his security guards convinced her not to, telling her that if she did, Evie could be taken away.

She would not mention the retired police officer who had watched from the doorway. She would not mention who had been pushing whom.

No police report was ever filed.

Her own sister, Brienne, wrote a statement on Tara's behalf describing Steve beating Tara unconscious. Under oath, Tara was asked: is there anything in Brienne's statement that you know to be untrue? Her answer: "I thought her statement was beautifully written and very true, except for one point. She said Steve had beaten me unconscious."

The follow-up question: "So Steve has never beaten you unconscious?"

"No, he hasn't."



The bruises were real.

Not the ones Tara described — not the bruises she said Steve had put all over her body by smashing her around the kitchen. But bruises existed. Steve's doctor had been finding them for months — unexplained marks on Steve's body, dark and symmetrical, appearing without explanation and fading without treatment. They were not the bruises of impact, not the purple-yellow bloom that follows a blow. They surfaced from within, as if the blood beneath the skin had simply lost the ability to stay where it belonged. The doctor documented them. Steve could not explain them. They appeared and disappeared with the irregular rhythm of something metabolic, not mechanical.

Seroquel causes bruising.

The antipsychotic medication Tara had been crushing into Steve's wine — the drug she admitted to in the kitchen, the drug she described to Dr. Gopal hours later as something she did when Steve "wouldn't sleep" — suppresses platelet function. Bruising is a known side effect. The skin breaks easily. The blood pools visibly. A person being given Seroquel without their knowledge would develop bruises they could not explain, and those bruises would appear to anyone looking at the body from the outside as evidence of something violent.

The scheme was circular. The drug created the symptoms. The symptoms became the evidence. The evidence supported the narrative. The narrative justified the drug.

Two months before the kitchen disclosure, on March 8, Tara had gone to Steve's bedroom and stabbed his phone with a knife sharpener. The next day — March 9, 2018, at 6:23 PM — she sent an email from her Vital Branding

account to Matan Gavish. The subject line: "Keep these important." Attached: photographs, sent from her iPhone. Matan replied at 3:26 PM: "Okay."

The photographs were not introduced as evidence in any proceeding. The police report was never filed. The bruise narrative survived without the bruises because the narrative did not need them — it only needed to be told. The accusation was the evidence. The repetition was the proof. And the drug that created the real bruises on Steve's body — the ones his doctor could see but not explain — continued to be administered by the woman who was simultaneously telling people he was the one causing harm.

[SWORN TESTIMONY — JANUARY 5, 2022 — INQUEST HEARING — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT, FILE 154703]

The version the Westchester court heard. The retired police officer who watched from the doorway was not in the room.

LEGAL-INQUEST-VIOLENCE-ACCUSATION — Tara Walsh,
Inquest Hearing, January 5, 2022

Four years later, in a courtroom in Westchester, Tara would deliver the version that survived: Steve had broken her phone. Smashed her around the kitchen. Banged her against walls. Bruises all over her body. She wanted to call the police but the security guards told her not to. She ran into the bedroom with Evie and locked the door.

The retired police officer who had been in the adjacent apartment — who had watched Tara push Steve, kick his shin, who had confirmed under oath that Steve was calm and nothing aggressive — was not present in the Westchester courtroom. No one in the Westchester courtroom heard from Patrick Williams. No one heard from Bryan Crutcher. No one heard from Abby Tedla. The court that heard the bruises story never heard from the

people who had been in the apartment. It heard from the person who had not been there.



Tara's phone was always in her hand.

After the disclosure in the kitchen, the messages changed — not in kind but in frequency. The architecture of Tara's messaging was consistent: an opening of performed vulnerability, a pivot to accusation or demand, and a close that positioned her as the aggrieved party whose cooperation was conditional on Steve's compliance. The pattern repeated across dozens of messages, each one arriving on Steve's screen with the weight of urgency and the structure of manipulation.

"Every time I look at her I think of you and it hurts all the time that I ruined everything."

Steve read the message. He responded: "You need help and you will get it."

"I only acted that way because I loved you deeply and my mind is messed up."

Another message, another day. The performed remorse continued: "I accept I made horrible decisions." "I wish more than anything I had just been grateful and loving and made you feel cared for." "And now Evie potentially has to suffer for the rest of her life for my mistakes."

Each message contained the same structure. An admission that sounded like accountability, followed by a condition that revealed it was not. The apology was the opening bid. What came after was the point: demands about money, complaints about the security team, instructions about how Steve should behave if he wanted access to his daughter's life to continue uninterrupted.

Between the messages to Steve, there were messages to other people. To Dr. Gopal, hours after the kitchen disclosure: "The nanny told Steve about another thing I

had told her in confidence." The drugging reframed as a betrayal of trust — not Tara's act of poisoning, but Abby's act of telling. To friends: the situation described as Steve's instability, his paranoia, his inability to function without Tara's care. The narrative of madness continued to be broadcast from the same apartment where the confession had already occurred.

Under oath three months later, Tara would be asked about the messages she had sent Steve — the ones that said she still loved him, that she wanted to have another child, that she wished things were different.

"So you were lying to Steve?"

"I was, to appease him."



Tara Walsh selfie — performative distress, looking directly at camera

The selfie arrived during this period — Tara's face arranged for the camera, hair down, eyes directed at the lens with an expression of composed sadness. It was not a photograph of someone in crisis. It was a photograph of

someone composing a document of crisis. The camera was not incidental. The image was the point.

Steve had been reading Tara's messages for years. He knew the cadence — the emotional opening, the escalation, the demand, the theatrical exit. He had learned to read them the way a person learns to read weather: noting the conditions, adjusting, continuing. The messages came. He responded or he didn't. Evie needed feeding. The dishwasher needed running. Life in the apartment above the fog line continued along its particular, broken axis.



One message was different.

It arrived on a Tuesday. It was long — the kind of message Tara sent when her grievances had accumulated past the capacity of a single sentence. It moved through complaints about him, about the apartment, about the situation, about money, about the security team. Words piled on words the way they always did, each clause carrying the specific weight of someone who has decided that the volume of the complaint is more important than its precision.

Buried in the middle, a sentence:

[BLOG ARCHIVE — MAY 2018 — STEVIELOVESEVIE.COM]

"You almost made me abandon our daughter."

You almost made me abandon our daughter.

It was not theater. It was a plan. StevieLovesEvie, Kelly Turnure.

SLE-094 — Tara Walsh text to Steve Russell, May 2018

You almost made me abandon our daughter.

He read the sentence twice.

The sentence was dramatic in the way Tara's sentences were always dramatic — weighted with accusation, structured to make the listener responsible for whatever Tara was about to do. The word "almost" suggested restraint. The word "abandon" suggested sacrifice. The construction of the sentence — "you made me" — was the grammar of every message she had ever sent: whatever I do, you caused it. Whatever happens next, it is your fault.

Steve had heard this grammar before. He had heard it when she threw the wine bottle. He had heard it when she claimed he had frightened her with a gun that did not exist. He had heard it when she explained that she put Seroquel in his wine because he "wouldn't be crazy" without it. The language of blame was the language of the household, and Steve had lived inside it long enough that the sentences had lost their ability to make him stop.

He put his phone on the counter.

The fog pressed against the windows. The city was invisible — the buildings, the bridges, the water, all of it swallowed by the marine layer that rolled in from the Pacific and turned the penthouse into a room suspended in white. The Millennium Tower leaned imperceptibly on its foundation, the way it had been leaning since before Steve moved in, settling into the soft clay beneath the landfill at a rate engineers measured in fractions of inches per year. The building was designed to feel stable. The ground beneath it was not.

Evie made a sound in the next room — the small, contented sound of a baby who is being held by someone who is holding her correctly. Abby was with her. Abby, who worked twenty-four-hour shifts and slept in the apartment and knew what Tara called Steve and stayed anyway because the baby needed someone who was not compromised.

Steve went to see his daughter.

The message sat on the counter where he had left it. The screen dimmed, then went dark. The sentence — *you almost made me abandon our daughter* — remained inside the phone the way all of Tara's sentences remained inside the phone, indistinguishable from the hundreds of messages that had come before it, carrying no more weight than any of the others.

It was not theater. It was a plan.



23

The Uber

June 4, 2018

Three months before the departure, Tara texts a friend asking to be kidnapped. On June 4, 2018, she walks out with Evie and calls an Uber to a bus zone. Bryan Crutcher jumps in the back seat. The recording captures everything — including Tara telling her father that police will arrest her for poisoning Steve. Walsh Sr. tells her to come home. Then agrees to conditions he later admits, under oath, he was never genuine about. Tara flies to New York and never returns.

Three months before Tara walked out of the Millennium Tower with Evie, she told two different people what she was planning.

To Jesse, on March 3, 2018, she explained why she was worried about returning to San Francisco. She was flying on a private jet. Jesse asked why she didn't just bring her dogs. Tara had a different concern: "Bc im worries about the journey back if things don't work out." She was not worried about the dogs. She was calculating the return — whether she could get out again with Evie once she was inside the jurisdiction.

[iMessage — Jesse Ozeri — March 3, 2018]

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Tara: Would you ever fly there and help me carry back my dogs?

Tara: If not those bc I'll leave them with Matan few weeks.

Jesse: If I have time I guess I'll fly. that

Tara: It should only be hours

Tara: So it's a plan

Jesse: How much is it

Tara: I'll look into it

Jesse: Yup

Jesse: They're adorable.

Tara: Bc im worries about the journey back if things don't work out

Tara: I don't want to stay there too long with Evie where I could never leave in a court

MSG-JESSE-002 — Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, March 3, 2018

In the same message thread with Jesse, Tara had been composing what she called the Rules List — a set of conditions Steve would have to meet before she would agree to return to San Francisco. No adderall or cocaine in the house. Couples therapy weekly. Steve must stay committed to the relationship for six months. A trust established for Evie within thirty days. If Tara returns to New York, staffed transport provided. If they break up, a year's salary while she rebuilds her business.

The Rules List was never sent to Steve. It was a performance for Jesse — a way of appearing to negotiate a return while engineering the conditions under which she would never have to make one.

To Matan Gavish, on the night of March 2, she was more direct.

[iMessage — Matan Gavish — March 2, 2018]

Friday, March 2, 2018

Tara: So what time can you get here tomorrow am?
 Matan — 11:29 PM: You leave at 10?
 Tara — 11:35 PM: 10:30
 Tara — 11:36 PM: Maybe you can kidnap me and Evie so we don't have to leave
 Tara — 11:36 PM: I really don't want to I just can't do it on my own
 Saturday, March 3, 2018
 Matan — 10:01 AM: I'll shoot for 9:30
 MSG-MATAN-005 — Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish, March 2, 2018

"Maybe you can kidnap me and Evie so we don't have to leave."

It was 11:56 on a Friday night. It was followed immediately by: "I really don't want to I just can't do it on my own." Matan did not respond to the kidnapping suggestion. The next morning he said he'd shoot for 9:30.



On June 4, 2018, Tara picked up Evie from the crib, put on her coat, grabbed a bag, and walked out of the penthouse at 301 Mission Street without saying where she was going.

The security team noticed. Bryan Crutcher noticed.

Bryan had been with the household since the early days of the Millennium Tower. Fifteen years on the San Francisco Police Department — Community Service Bureau, SWAT, Motors/Traffic, Street Crimes Unit, Force Options instructor. Currently a credentialed special investigator under contract with the federal government, running pre-employment polygraphs for seven law enforcement agencies and holding a California private investigator's license. He had spent enough time in this household to know what a person leaving for an errand looked like. This was not that.

Tara bypassed the arranged transport. The security team had drivers for this — cars that were available, drivers who knew the routes, a system that existed precisely so that Tara and Evie could move safely around the city. She did not use them. She called an Uber.

The Uber arrived at 301 Mission and stopped in a red zone where buses were loading and unloading passengers. Tara carried Evie into the back seat.

Bryan had seconds to decide. The family car was in the Millennium Tower's valet parking structure, two floors underground. Heavy traffic was moving through Mission Street. The red zone had buses loading and unloading around them. By the time he retrieved the car and cleared the garage, the Uber would be on the highway. He walked to the Uber, opened the door, sat down beside Tara and Evie, and explained to the driver that he had been instructed by the father of the baby to ensure the child's safe arrival and boarding of the plane to New York.

[SWORN DECLARATION — JULY 9, 2018 — FILED UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY — CASE NO. FPT-18-377425]

A retired SFPD officer describes what he witnessed in the back seat of the Uber. Filed under penalty of perjury.

LEGAL-CRUTCHER-UBER-SFPD — Bryan F. Crutcher
Declaration, July 9, 2018

Tara objected. Bryan told her — and repeated several times — that he was not trying to stop her, that he was not trying to impede or prevent her from leaving. He was simply ensuring the baby's safe travel and boarding of the plane. He even asked the Uber driver if she wanted him to call the police so they could document that he was there voluntarily and not causing a disruption. The driver declined.

The Uber driver did not see it that way. She saw a woman in the back seat with a baby, being accompanied

by a man the woman did not want near her. The narrative assembled itself in the time it takes to check a mirror. The driver began coaching Tara on how to get through the airport — told her not to mention mental health issues because someone could take her baby, gave advice on how to handle being served with legal papers.

The driver had known Tara for approximately twelve minutes.



The recording captured everything.

Multiple audio segments were captured during the ride — by the security infrastructure, by the phones in the car, by the ambient recording that ran whenever Evie was present. Tara's voice. Bryan's voice. The driver's voice. Maura Walsh's voice coming through the speakerphone. Steve Walsh Sr.'s voice coming through the speakerphone.

Tara called her mother first. The conversation was frantic on both sides. Tara told her a petition had been filed, that she didn't know what would happen if the police were at the airport. She said Evie was not a resident of California, that they lived in New York. She asked her mother what she was supposed to do, then told her: "Mom you are really stressing me out, you are not helping me."

Bryan said very little. When Tara called him a bully, he said he was just looking out for Evie. When she said Steve was trying to take the baby, Bryan said: "He's not trying to take the baby." When Tara told her mother Steve didn't care about the baby, Bryan stayed quiet. He was listening. He was trained to listen.

Tara told her mother — and the Uber driver, and the recording — what she believed about herself and about Steve: "He's just been trying to break down my character and brand me as an unfit mother." And: "You are hurtful and manipulative. And I just want to not engage with you

any more. You are a bully. You are a bad person. The truth will come out.”

Then she called her father.

[AUDIO RECORDING — June 4, 2018 — Security Infrastructure — Authenticated Recording]

Audio captured inside the Uber during Tara Walsh’s unauthorized departure with Evie. On the recording, Tara can be heard on the phone with Walsh Sr.:

“Cops will arrest me for poisoning Steve. But it’s Seroquel cause Steve is psychotic.” She then calls her doctor and tells him she knows he believes she has severe borderline personality disorder. The recording captures the real-time manufacture of the counter-narrative — constructed in the back of an Uber with their infant daughter on her lap.

Tara Walsh captured on audio telling her father that police would arrest her for poisoning Steve.

Authenticated recording.

ExMM_UBER_04 — Uber Audio Recording, June 4, 2018

The words on the recording are precise: “Cops will arrest me for poisoning Steve. But it’s Seroquel cause Steve is psychotic.”

She said it on the phone with her father, in the back of an Uber, with her infant daughter on her lap and a retired police officer sitting beside her. She acknowledged the poisoning. She identified the drug. And she reframed it in real time — not as a crime but as treatment. Not poison but medicine, administered to a man who needed it because he was psychotic.

Bryan Crutcher made a mental note: *Don’t use the word poison*. He was listening to the counter-narrative being assembled in the seat beside him, and he recognized what was happening because he had spent fifteen years watching people construct stories under pressure.

Tara also called her doctor during the ride and told him that she knew he believed she had severe borderline

personality disorder and that every problem in her relationship with Steve was her fault.

Then came the moment the patriarch took control. Tara told her father: “I guess I have no choice... the security guy says they might arrest me for poisoning Steve.”

Walsh Sr. told her to come home.

“Ok Dad I will go home.”

The decision did not come from Tara. It came from the same voice that would direct every subsequent move in the custody war — the man who would later testify under oath that he viewed Steve Russell as “unstable and dangerous” while writing emails that said the opposite.

The Uber turned around.



Steve’s phone had been lighting up since Bryan’s first text. He read the messages and the floor moved beneath him — not literally, though the Millennium Tower was still settling into the bay fill beneath it — but in the way the floor moves when the thing you feared but told yourself would not happen is happening on your phone in real time.

He filed a Petition to Establish Parental Relationship — FL-200 — that same day, June 4, 2018, in San Francisco Superior Court, case number FPT-18-377425. The petition triggered Automatic Temporary Restraining Orders. Neither parent could remove the child from California without court order or the other parent’s written consent.

Tara was personally served with the Parentage Petition on June 5.

She returned to the apartment. But not for long.



Within days, Steve negotiated what he believed was a reasonable compromise. On June 8, he emailed Steve

Walsh Sr. and Tara with the subject line “Restraining Order and Vacation to New York.” Three conditions: a parent meets her at the airport; she stays exclusively at her parents’ home; she returns with Evie within two to three weeks and takes no steps, legal or otherwise, to delay or avoid that return.

Walsh Sr. replied the same afternoon.

“Works for us — I appreciate your flexibility Steve”

“Works for us — I appreciate your flexibility Steve.”

The next day, Walsh followed up: “Yes I’ll talk to her — will be in touch.”

Steve asked Walsh to get Tara to send a short note acknowledging the conditions in writing, so she would not be in violation of the restraining order. Walsh said he would talk to her. No written acknowledgment ever came.

Three years later, under oath at his deposition on April 26, 2021, Walsh Sr. was asked about this exchange — the emails where he thanked Steve Russell for “timely updates” and expressed appreciation for his “flexibility,” all while believing none of it. His testimony:

“I would say I was not entirely genuine.”

The agreement was a production. Walsh Sr. knew when he wrote “works for us” that it did not work for them. He knew the conditions would not be honored, that the two-to-three-week visit would become a permanent relocation. He admitted this under oath. He used the word *humor*. He said he was managing a man he considered unstable — not by confronting him, not by calling the police, not by filing a protective order — but by writing warm emails and agreeing to conditions he had no intention of enforcing.



On June 6 — two days after the emergency filing, three days before the departure — Tara emailed Matan Gavish.

Wed, Jun 6, 2018, 9:45 PM — Tara to Matan: “Matan seriously jsust your number?? WTF he cant see my email”

Wed, Jun 6, 2018, 9:46 PM — Tara to Matan: “What do you think of my abuse journal? Spent all day writing it.”

Wed, Jun 6, 9:30 PM — Matan to Tara: “What is ur nickname?”

Thu, Jun 7, 12:23 AM — Tara to Matan: “I’m about to get restraining order against him shit is going to get crazy I need your help with RC please this is serious. Bastard is going down.”

Thu, Jun 7, 12:49 AM — Tara to Matan: “Please send me your number- signal name TaraEvie”

Thu, Jun 7, 7:11 AM — Matan to Tara: “I’ll call you later. I’m not convinced this is Tara.”

Thu, Jun 7, 1:33 PM — Tara to Matan: “It’s me arat natam we should have a code word”

“What do you think of my abuse journal? Spent all day writing it.”

One minute before that message, she had emailed: “Matan seriously jsust your number??” Within hours, she was proposing they move to Signal — the encrypted messaging app — with code words. “It’s me arat natam we should have a code word.” *Arat natam*. Tara Matan, spelled backwards. The urgency was not the urgency of a woman documenting abuse. It was the urgency of a woman manufacturing a document and trying to reach her editor on a secure channel.

The abuse journal rewrote the history. In particular, it rewrote the beginning.



Facebook photo posted August 1, 2015 by Steve Russell. Four people on a dock in the Hamptons feeding a turtle in a pond — Steve Russell, Tara Walsh, Chris Ochoa. Riley, Tara’s chihuahua, is present. The photo directly contradicts Tara’s later claim that she was ‘whisked away’ and that Riley was home alone.

This is the Hamptons. Summer 2015. Steve and Tara's third date. A dock, a pond, a turtle, and Riley the chihuahua — Tara's dog, there because Tara had packed a bag and brought him. An early weekend that ended with what both of them, at the time, described as the start of something.

In the abuse journal Tara wrote on June 6, 2018, this weekend became something else: "She was then taken with Steve and his friend Chris Ochoa to go to the beach — whisked away quickly in the am — but it ended up being a whole weekend affair in the Hamptons — an overnight stay Tara was not told about. She remembers feeling used and just wanted to go home."

That was Tara's lie. Matan's was worse.

Three months earlier, on March 9, 2018, Tara had emailed Matan with the subject line "Keep these important." Matan replied: "Okay." He was the repository — the safe-deposit box for the fabricated narrative as it was being assembled. And he was more than that. In February 2018, when Tara told him she was "better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can — then leaving him for good," Matan's response was not horror. It was counsel: "Lawyer up." "Trusts can be altered." "You're losing to him already."

So when the abuse journal arrived in his inbox, Matan did not simply store it. In discovery, an earlier version of the document was found — the version Tara wrote *before* she sent it to Gavish for edits. Both versions contained falsehoods. But the version Matan returned was different in specific, material ways.

[FORENSIC DOCUMENT COMPARISON — June 2018 vs. August 2019 — Discovery — Hymowitz Discrepancies Analysis]

Tara's version (June 2018): "She was then taken with Steve and his friend Chris Ochoa to go to the beach — whisked away quickly in the am — but it ended up being a whole weekend affair in the

Hamptons — an overnight stay Tara was not told about. She remembers feeling used and just wanted to go home.”

After Matan’s edits (August 2019): “I was whisked to go ‘to the beach’ with Steve and Chris. I resisted, but they were very aggressive, so I complied. Hours later we arrived at a home in the Hamptons. I was then told we would be staying the night there. At the time, I had a dog, Riley, I had to go back and feed. They said I had to stay — I called a friend and my sister to get me but they were busy. One of my friends went to feed and walk Riley. At the time, I felt used and uncomfortable, but for some reason I also thought I was interested in Steve. I guess this was the start of the abusive cycle with Steve.”

Side-by-side comparison submitted to Dr. Paul Hymowitz, court-appointed forensic evaluator. Matan moved the dog out of the photograph.

DOCX_HYMOWITZ_DISCREPANCIES — Abuse Journal: Before and After Matan's Edits

In Matan’s version, “whisked away” became “I resisted, but they were very aggressive, so I complied.” A night of drinking too much became waking up “unclothed in his bed” with no memory — the implication no longer alcohol but drugging. Her reference to being in AA was deleted entirely, hiding her addiction history from the forensic evaluator. And Riley — the dog who sat on Tara’s lap in the turtle photograph, who was visibly, photographically present in the Hamptons — was relocated to an apartment in the city, home alone, needing someone else to come feed him. The line “I guess this was the start of the abusive cycle with Steve” was added as a coda.

This was the version submitted to Dr. Paul Hymowitz, the forensic psychiatrist appointed by the court to evaluate whether Steve Russell was a danger to his own daughter.

Matan Gavish did not merely receive a fabricated abuse journal. He weaponized it. He took a lie and made it darker, more clinical, more actionable — and he moved the

dog out of the photograph because the dog proved the whole thing was false.



On June 9, Tara flew to New York with Evie.

She had provided Bryan Crutcher's team with a copy of a round-trip ticket showing a return in eleven days. She had asked the security team to watch her two dogs while she was gone. She had spoken to the concierge about arranging things at the apartment for her return. Every signal said she was coming back.

By June 22, it was clear she was not. Steve's conversations with Tara made it plain — she was staying in New York, she was not returning with their daughter, and the conditions of the agreement were not going to be honored. On June 25, she emailed the Millennium Tower concierge asking to be removed from building notifications. She would no longer be staying there.

Steve texted Walsh Sr. The reply he received reframed the entire history. Walsh Sr. told Steve that Tara had gone to San Francisco "against our wishes" and that they were "disappointed and angry with her for going out there in the first place." The patriarch who had written "works for us" four days before the departure now positioned himself as having opposed the trip. The father who told his daughter to come home from the Uber now pretended he had been against her going to California at all.



Years later, at the Battery trial in San Francisco, Tara was asked under oath about the vacation agreement and her departure.

Her testimony was two sentences: "I lied... I had no intention to come back."

She said it plainly. The woman who had agreed to conditions, whose father had written “works for us,” who had shown the security team a round-trip ticket and asked them to watch her dogs — she acknowledged, under oath, that every element of the vacation agreement was a deception. The conditions were theater. The return ticket was a prop. The dogs were a detail that made the performance believable.

The Uber recording captured the first attempt — the moment the mask slipped, when Tara told her father on a recorded line that police would arrest her for poisoning Steve and he told her to come home. The vacation agreement was the second attempt, five days later — the one that worked, because this time the departure was dressed in the language of cooperation and signed off by a father who would later describe his own agreement as not entirely genuine.

The Uber driver had been certain she understood the situation. A woman in distress. A man who wouldn’t leave her alone. A baby caught in the middle. She spent the ride coaching Tara not to mention mental health issues and advising her on how to handle being served at the airport. She had no way of knowing that the woman she was helping had, three months earlier, texted a friend at 11:56 on a Friday night: “Maybe you can kidnap me and Evie so we don’t have to leave.”

She didn’t need Matan to kidnap her. She needed an Uber to the airport, a father who would say “works for us” while meaning something else entirely, and a family system that would spend the next four years insisting the departure was a rescue.

The recording answered that question on June 4, 2018. It took the courts until January 2022 to hear it.



THE UBER

PART V

THE COURTS

Crabtree's Kittle House

August-September 2018

The first supervised visit after the emergency order. Steve surrenders California jurisdiction to see his daughter. The grandparents bring Evie to a parking lot in Chappaqua. Maura refuses to let go. Walsh Sr. intervenes. The child calms in her father's arms and cries when she sees her grandmother.

California had jurisdiction.

Evie had been born in New York but had lived her entire life in San Francisco — the apartment at Millennium Tower, the house in North Beach, the pediatrician, the nanny. When Tara took Evie in the back of an Uber on June 9, 2018, Steve's attorney Stacey Poole obtained emergency Automatic Temporary Restraining Orders from San Francisco Superior Court within hours. The California court had issued the first custody orders. The California court had the evidence — the police reports, the declarations, the nanny's sworn account of the drugging.

But Tara had filed in New York. Not in San Francisco, where the evidence was. In Westchester County Family Court — the courthouse in White Plains where her family's attorney had an office, where her family's connections ran

deep, where the proceedings would be closed to the public and decided by a single judge rather than a jury.

The two courts communicated. Under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, only one state can exercise jurisdiction over a custody dispute at a time. California had the emergency orders. New York had the child.

On September 11, 2018, Judge Arlene Gordon-Oliver convened an attorney conference in the Westchester Family Court and asked the question that would determine the next four years of Steve's life:

"Is anyone objecting to this Court having jurisdiction? If you do object, then I'll set it down for an evidentiary hearing, but do you really want to spend time doing that?"

Steve's attorney, Jason Advocate, asked for a moment to speak with his client. The calculation was this: challenge New York jurisdiction and potentially spend months in procedural litigation while Evie remained at the Walsh compound in Chappaqua, unreachable. Or accept jurisdiction — surrender California's courts, its jury system, its public record — and see his daughter now.

Steve chose Evie.

He accepted New York jurisdiction. The case would be decided in a closed courtroom in White Plains, without a jury, by a single judge who would recuse herself within the year.



Steve had already been flying to New York. He had come in mid-August and stayed for two weeks, trying to see his daughter. The court's original order had designated Walsh Sr. — Tara's father — as the person who would supervise Steve's visits with Evie. But Walsh Sr. had refused. When Steve's attorney Katherine Chestnut contacted Maura Walsh about supervising instead, Walsh Sr. came to the

law office in person: “Don’t contact my wife. This is harassment. How dare you?”

All counsel agreed: the grandfather was not going to supervise. Steve had brought Abby Tedla — the nanny who had told him about the drugging, who had stayed for Evie — and a temporary stipulation was arranged for a single supervised visit. The visit took place at the Crabtree’s Kittle House, a historic inn on the Old Post Road in Chappaqua where Steve had taken a room. The inn had gardens and a veranda and the unhurried quality of a place that expected nothing more contentious than a late reservation. The parking lot was small and shaded by trees that had not yet begun to turn.

It was one visit. Steve used an hour and a half of the three hours available.

He flew back to California. Then returned the following week.

[EMAIL — 2018-09-08 — EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE]

Three months after Tara took Evie to New York. The father addresses the grandparents — not the mother — because they are the ones controlling access. The attorneys are cc’d. The tone is formal, measured, and polite. The sentence that carries the weight: “It has been a very long time since you have facilitated a visit with Evie or even provided a picture.”

Steve Russell to Steve & Maura Walsh — September 8, 2018

EB2_MASTER_019

The email went to the grandparents, not to Tara. The attorneys were copied. The language was measured and formal — the language of a man who understood that every sentence would be entered into a court file. The request was not for custody. It was not for unsupervised time. It was for a visit. Three to four hours. In the carriage

house. With the nanny present. Both today and tomorrow work for me.



The visit was arranged for the weekend. Steve and Abby met the Walsh grandparents and Evie in the parking lot of the Crabtree's Kittle House.

Maura Walsh was very uncomfortable and looked like she had been crying.

Steve suggested they all sit for a moment in the hotel's outdoor seating area. He did not demand. He did not raise his voice. He proposed the kind of thing people propose when they are trying to make an impossible situation feel normal — or at least quiet enough that the eight-month-old in the grandmother's arms would not feel the shaking — sit down, breathe, let the baby see that the adults are calm.

Maura did not initially want to hand Evie over.

Fifteen to twenty minutes passed. Steve Russell and Walsh Sr. worked together — the father and the grandfather, the two men who had been sending each other hostile texts for weeks, who had been described to the court as adversaries, now standing in a parking lot in Chappaqua trying to convince a grandmother to let go of the child in her arms.

Walsh Sr. intervened. He and Steve were able to convince Maura to hand Evie to Abby Tedla — not to Steve, but to the nanny, to the woman Evie knew, the familiar person who had fed her and bathed her and held her through the nights at Millennium Tower.

Maura began to cry and shake as she handed Evie to Abby. Evie began to cry as well.

[EYEWITNESS STATEMENT — 2018-09 — SIGNED STATEMENT]

Two eyewitnesses. Two registers of distress — the grandmother who could not let go, and the child who

calmed the moment she was held by her father. The detail that matters most: “When Evie saw Grandma, she began to cry as well.”

Statement by Abby Tedla & Kelly Turnure —
Crabtree’s Kittle House Visit

EB2_MASTER_020

Steve and Abby walked quickly to their hotel room. Abby handed Evie to Steve.

In his arms she calmed down quickly.

He spent the rest of the visit holding her. After she was calm and happy, Steve sang her songs and talked to her for about forty-five minutes. He sat on the floor of a hotel room in Chappaqua and held his daughter and sang to her and the world outside the room — the attorneys, the jurisdictional arguments, the grandmother shaking in the parking lot — did not exist.



EB2_MASTER_001

The evidence the court would never see. Father and daughter on the floor during a supervised visit. The stuffed elephant. The striped dress. The face of a child who is not afraid of the man the court has been told is dangerous. Steve and Evie — Supervised Visit



At the end of the visit, Steve walked out toward where he had left the Walsh grandparents. But they had gotten into their car and moved to a spot high on the driveway with a view of the hotel.

Maura was crying in the car. Walsh Sr. was inside with her, trying to calm her down.

Steve approached with Evie.

When Evie saw Grandma, she began to cry.

The baby had been calm with her father. She had been held and sung to and had laughed on the floor of a hotel room with a stuffed elephant. She became distressed at the sight of her grandmother. The transition was immediate and visible — the same child, the same afternoon, two different responses that no amount of legal argument could explain away.

Steve handed Evie back to Grandma. He told her how well the visit had gone. He offered to share videos and pictures from the visit.

The car drove away toward Tara Knoll.



Three days later, on September 11, the attorneys convened before Judge Gordon-Oliver.

The hearing transcript reveals the system Steve had entered. His attorney, Chestnut, explained that Walsh Sr. had expressed “disdain” for Steve and refused to supervise. Tara’s attorney, Antoncic, told the judge that Steve had “shown up and expected everyone to drop everything.” The judge agreed: “That’s how I feel, to be honest with you.”

The court’s concern was not with what had happened at the visit — the grandmother’s refusal, the child’s distress, the tears at the sight of Maura. The court’s concern was procedure. Steve had arranged a visit through a stipulation rather than filing an emergency access request. “That’s not how we do emergencies in this Court.”

Steve’s attorney tried to explain: “His number one priority is to see this child.”

The judge appointed a supervisor. She said the name quickly, as if it had been waiting on the tip of her tongue: Delia Farquharson.

The Attorney for the Child, Jennifer Jackman, agreed immediately. She had a name ready too. The appointment happened in minutes — the casual efficiency of a courthouse where certain people are always available and certain names are always suggested.



The judge also addressed jurisdiction. After Steve accepted New York, the judge moved to the next concern: she wanted Tara to stay put. Steve's attorney had raised the possibility that Tara might leave the grandparents' home — that she might take Evie somewhere else, somewhere further from Steve's reach.

The order was entered: the mother shall continue to reside with her parents and shall not relocate without court approval or written agreement of both parties.

The order assumed that the Walsh compound was safe. It assumed that the grandparents were stable. It assumed that the family dynamics visible at Easter dinner — the controlled table, the performing children, the patriarch who counted change — were not themselves a form of confinement.

Jennifer Jackman, the Attorney for the Child, had visited the Walsh compound and reported to the court: "I just saw them recently at their home and I'm satisfied with the baby, who is wonderfully happy and beautiful, growing very, very well, is safe at the house with the grandparents and the mother."

The child who had cried at the sight of her grandmother three days earlier was wonderfully happy at the house. The child who had calmed in her father's arms was safe without him.

The court had two pieces of evidence. One was a report from an attorney who had visited the Walsh household. The other was a child's body in a parking lot, telling anyone who watched what the words in court filings could not.

The court chose the report.



Steve did not return to California. He rented a house near the Walsh compound — close enough to be present for visits, close enough that the family could see him, close enough that the town of Chappaqua, designed for privacy, would have to accommodate his refusal to disappear.

He looked at houses in Chappaqua and in the surrounding area — the winding roads through forest, the properties set far enough apart that the word neighbor was aspirational, the odd stillness of a place whose residents preferred to stay behind their gates. His attorney told the judge: "He's going to make himself available until such time as we sort out the custody situation here."

The custody situation would not sort itself out. It would deepen and harden and produce six supervisors, four recusals, two defaults, and a system that would spend four years treating the father who sang to his daughter on the floor of a hotel room as if he were the danger from which she needed protection.

But that afternoon at Crabtree's Kittle House — the parking lot, the fifteen minutes, the grandmother's arms, the grandfather's intervention, the hotel room, the songs, the elephant, the child who calmed when held by her father and cried when returned to the car — that afternoon was the last time the evidence would be simple.

After this, the system would make it complicated.

CRABTREE'S KITTLE HOUSE



25

A Special Relationship

October–November 2018

The court appoints a supervisor who promises integrity and transparency. She meets privately with Tara before the first visit, invites her to attend in violation of the court order, dismisses Steve's concerns about being poisoned, and tells him she has a special relationship with the judge. She charges \$250 an hour. The judge who appointed her later admits on the record that she wanted Steve to die on his own sword.

The order was handwritten. Judge Gordon-Oliver's pen moved across the page in clean, looping strokes — the handwriting of someone who writes orders all day and has developed a particular fluency with the language of restriction.

NOW, it is hereby

ORDERED that, the parties agree that Father shall have visitation with the child, supervised by Delia Farquharson at a minimum of 3 days per week for at least 2 hours per visits. Ms. Farquharson shall also conduct visits and observations with the Mother at her residence at least 2 times per week. Mr. Farquharson will issue written reports of her visits every 2 weeks to the court and all counsel.

The parties agree to stay away from each other (except for visitation pickup/dropoff) and agree to refrain from communication with one another except with respect to any issues concerning the child.

The Mother shall continue to reside with her parents and shall Not relocate without court approval or written agreement of both parties.

Petitioner shall withdraw her Order of Protection + Violation. Petitioner, ~~the~~ and Respondent shall withdraw ~~his~~ order of Protection in California, and any Violation petitioner has.

; and it is further

Handwritten court order by Judge Arlene Gordon-Oliver:
'The parties agree that Father shall have visitation with the child, supervised by Delia Farquharson at a Minimum of 3 days per week for at least 2 hours per visits. Ms. Farquharson shall also conduct visits and observations with the Mother at her residence at least 2 times per week. Ms. Farquharson will issue written reports of her visits every 2 weeks to the court and all counsel. The parties agree to stay away from each other (except for visitation pickup/dropoff) and agree to refrain from communication with one another except with respect to any issues concerning the child. The Mother shall continue to reside with her parents and shall Not relocate without court approval or written agreement of both parties.'

The order that would be violated before the ink dried. Farquharson was to observe both parents — father and mother — and report to the court. She would observe only one.

Father shall have visitation with the child, supervised by Delia Farquharson, at a minimum of three days per week for at least two hours per visit. Ms. Farquharson shall also conduct visits and observations with the Mother at her residence at least two times per week. She will issue written reports every two weeks to the court and all counsel. The parties agree to stay away from each other except for pickup and drop-off.

The order contained provisions for balance — observation of both parents, written reports every two weeks, the machinery of accountability. It contained no mechanism to enforce any of it. No consequence for a supervisor who ignored its terms. No remedy for the parent who discovered the violation. No teeth.

The order required observation of both parents. What happened was different.



Delia M. Farquharson was a licensed clinical social worker, a Mount Vernon City Councilwoman, and the Democratic candidate for Mayor of Mount Vernon, New York. The accumulation of titles was itself a credential in county governance — the particular résumé of a person who held office and sought office and sat on boards and knew the names that mattered and was known by them. Her campaign materials carried her photograph — professional smile, red blazer, gold earrings — beneath the slogan: HONESTY | INTEGRITY | PROGRESS.



Campaign poster: VOTE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY. DELIA M. FARQUHARSON FOR MAYOR OF MOUNT VERNON. 'I promise that all of my actions will be guided by integrity, honesty and transparency. No backroom deals, no patronage. I am a bridge builder and problem solver, not a divider. I promise: To always negotiate in the best interest of all the people of Mount Vernon, to do business better, to earn and retain the trust of the community. Mount Vernon deserves better. Let us do this together.' VOTE DELIA. HONESTY | INTEGRITY | PROGRESS. www.votedelia.com.

“No backroom deals, no patronage.” The woman appointed to protect a child’s relationship with her father had made her promises in writing. The promises were on the poster. They were not in the visits.

“I promise that all of my actions will be guided by integrity, honesty and transparency,” the poster read. “No backroom deals, no patronage. I am a bridge builder and problem solver, not a divider.”

Judge Gordon-Oliver had suggested Farquharson by name at the September 11 hearing. Jennifer Jackman, the Attorney for the Child, had agreed immediately. The appointment happened in minutes — Farquharson was called, was available, and was ready to begin. The system had a name on the tip of its tongue, and the name was Delia.

Typical court-appointed supervisors in Westchester County charged approximately seventy-five dollars per

hour. Farquharson was ordered at two hundred and fifty dollars per hour. Steve was expected to pay. Three visits per week, two hours each: the minimum cost of supervised contact with his own daughter was fifteen hundred dollars per week. Six thousand per month. The arithmetic of access, charged to the person being denied it.



Steve arrived at the first supervised visit expecting the court order to be followed.

The court order specified: the parties agree to stay away from each other except for pickup and drop-off. The supervisor would observe the father with the child. The supervisor would separately observe the mother at her residence. Written reports every two weeks.

Tara was there.

Maura was there.

They had met privately with Farquharson before Steve arrived. The supervisor — the person whose job was to be neutral, to observe without allegiance, to stand between a court and a child and report what she saw — had been in a room with the mother and the grandmother before the father walked through the door. The meeting was not disclosed to Steve. Its contents were not shared. Whatever was discussed between the supervisor and the woman who had admitted under oath to putting Seroquel in the father's wine became part of the supervisor's understanding of the case before the father said a word.

Farquharson had initially wanted the visit to take place at Tara's parents' house — the Walsh compound at Tara Knoll. A visit between a father and his daughter, supervised by a court-appointed neutral, at the home of the family that had taken the child from him.

Steve objected.

He told Farquharson that having Tara present violated the court order. He told her that Tara and he had mutually agreed in court to stay away from each other. He told her that having Tara present impeded his visitation because he was not comfortable being around the woman who had admitted to poisoning him with her medications when they lived together.

Farquharson dismissed his concerns.

Russell Affidavit:

Ms. Farquharson invited Tara to be present at the visitation and initially wanted the visit to be at Tara's parent's house. Not only do I believe that this is a violation of the Court's Orders, as Tara and I had mutually agreed in court to stay away from each other (except for pick-up and drop off), but having Tara present significantly impeded my visitation with my daughter as I am not comfortable being around Tara given that she has admitted to poisoning me with her medications when we lived together. When I tried to address my concerns with Ms. Farquharson, she quickly dismissed my concerns and said she had a special relationship with the Judge and could change the Court Order if she felt this might be better for Evie.

Russell Affidavit: 'Ms. Farquharson invited Tara to be present at the visitation and initially wanted the visit to be at Tara's parent's house. Not only do I believe that this is a violation of the Court's Orders, as Tara and I had mutually agreed in court to stay away from each other (except for pick-up and drop off), but having Tara present significantly impeded my visitation with my daughter as I am not comfortable being around Tara given that she has admitted to poisoning me with her medications when we lived together. When I tried to address my concerns with Ms. Farquharson, she quickly dismissed my concerns and said she had a special relationship with the Judge and could change the Court Order if she felt this might be better for Evie.'

The father tells the court-appointed supervisor that the mother poisoned him. The supervisor tells the father she has a special relationship with the judge. The father puts this in an affidavit. No one acts on it.

She said she had a special relationship with the Judge and could change the Court Order if she felt this might be better for Evie.

The sentence is worth reading twice. The court-appointed supervisor — the person whose neutrality was the only check on a system that had already stripped a

father of unsupervised contact with his child — told the father that her relationship with the judge was special, that the court order was flexible in her hands, and that she could alter it at her discretion.

Steve filed this in an affidavit. No one acted on it.



A few days later, Steve went for another visit.

Farquharson had Tara attend the bulk of it. Again.

Steve again expressed his concern about having Tara present. Again, Farquharson dismissed his concerns. His family and nanny were sent away before Tara's arrival. He spent moments in between calming his crying daughter as Tara walked away and just before Evie's scheduled nap.

Russell Affidavit:

I went for another visit a few days later, and again Ms. Farquharson had Tara attend the bulk of my visit. I again expressed my concern about having Tara present for my time with Evie, but she dismissed my concerns. My family and nanny were sent away before Tara's arrival and I spent moments in between calming my crying daughter as Tara walked away and just before her scheduled nap. The visit was short, unnatural, hampered by the fact that Tara had deliberately not shared any details of Evie's schedule, diet, toys, etc, before the visit, though I had asked for that information.

Russell Affidavit: 'I went for another visit a few days later, and again Ms. Farquharson had Tara attend the bulk of my visit. I again expressed my concern about having Tara present for my time with Evie, but she dismissed my concerns. My family and nanny were sent away before Tara's arrival and I spent moments in between calming my crying daughter as Tara walked away and just before her scheduled nap. The visit was short, unnatural, hampered by the fact that Tara had deliberately not shared any details of Evie's schedule, diet, toys, etc, before the visit, though I had asked for that information.'

The visits are designed to fail. The nanny who knows Evie is sent away. Tara attends but shares nothing — no schedule, no diet, no toys. The father calms a crying child between a departing mother and a scheduled nap. The

supervisor observes this and writes no report about the mother's interference.

The visit was short, unnatural, hampered by the fact that Tara had deliberately not shared any details of Evie's schedule, diet, toys, or anything else — though Steve had asked. The father was left to navigate a visit with a toddler whose comfort objects and nap schedule were kept from him, observed by a supervisor who never conducted a single visit at the mother's residence.



Steve filed a motion.

The motion documented Farquharson's statement about her "special relationship with the judge," the private pre-visit meeting with Tara and Maura, the invitation for Tara to attend visits in violation of the court order, and the absence of any observation of the mother's household. He documented the billing: two hundred and fifty dollars per hour for supervision that violated its own terms. He refused to pay.

Steve had rented a cottage in Chappaqua — a small house down the street from the Walsh compound, close enough to be present for visits, close enough that the transitions would be short for Evie. The cottage was white inside, with a chandelier over the kitchen, an orange throw on the sofa, a painting of birch trees on the wall. It was the kind of place a person rents when they are building a temporary life around a permanent priority.

The proximity — a father living within walking distance of his daughter — was not received as devotion. The Walsh family was furious. They saw it as surveillance, as harassment, as an intolerable transgression of the boundary between Steve's world and theirs. The town of Chappaqua, designed for privacy, had accommodated the

Walshes for decades. It was not designed for a father from California who refused to go away.

Steve's attorney Jason Advocate wrote to the opposing counsel: "You are making excuse after excuse to hinder Steve's right to see his daughter." The letter documented the pattern — every proposed supervisor rejected, every visit complicated, every arrangement undermined. The word "tragedy" appeared in the letter. It was not rhetorical.



Farquharson was not an anomaly. She was an appointment.

The Mount Vernon Exposed blog — run by the Black Political Caucus of Westchester, Inc. — had published a post in 2014 naming both Farquharson and a colleague, Elias Gootzeit, under the headline: "SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE SETS UP PHONY NON PROFIT TO FUNNEL FUNDS." Beneath the headline, their photographs. Beneath their photographs, the word CORRUPT in red capital letters. The blog was not an exercise in understatement. The font size alone constituted an editorial position.

Gootzeit — the same Gootzeit — would later be appointed by Judge Gordon-Oliver to supervise Steve's visits with Evie. A second supervisor from the same corruption investigation. The court that had stripped a father's unsupervised contact on allegations of instability was staffing its supervision system with people whose own public record included investigations for corruption, bribery, and misuse of funds.

None of this was hidden. The blog post was public. The campaign materials were public. The corruption allegations were public. The court either did not look or did not care. The system that was supposed to protect Evie

was running on relationships — not oversight, not neutrality, not the child’s interest — but the particular currency of a county courthouse where everyone knows everyone and certain names are always available.



Years later, a transcript from a hearing before Judge Gordon-Oliver would surface in discovery. The judge was speaking to Tara’s attorney, Antoncic. The subject was Steve’s motions — his filings, his objections, his refusal to accept the system’s terms without question.

The judge said:

23	THE COURT: Counsel, I wanted Mr. Russell to die
24	on his own sword. If he could die on his own sword --
25	MS. ANTONCIC: Understood.

Court transcript, lines 23-25. THE COURT: Counsel, I wanted Mr. Russell to die on his own sword. If he could die on his own sword -- MS. ANTONCIC: Understood.

A judge tells an attorney — on the record — that her strategy for the father was to let him destroy himself. The attorney for the woman who poisoned him responds with a single word: “Understood.”

“Counsel, I wanted Mr. Russell to die on his own sword. If he could die on his own sword —”

“Understood,” said Antoncic.

The judge who had appointed Farquharson — who had suggested her by name, who had agreed immediately when the Attorney for the Child nodded — was telling Tara’s attorney that her strategy for the father was to let him destroy himself. The father who had filed a motion documenting corruption. The father who had objected to his court-appointed supervisor meeting privately with the

mother. The father who had refused to pay two hundred and fifty dollars an hour — though refusal, in a family court, is never merely refusal; it becomes the record — for visits designed to fail.

The sword the judge wanted him to die on was the system itself — the one she had built, the one she had staffed, the one she had funded with his money and observed through a supervisor who answered to her.

Evie was eleven months old. She was learning to pull herself up on furniture. She was beginning to make sounds that were almost words. She was doing these things inside the Walsh compound, behind the hedgerows, on the schedule the grandparents kept, in the household Brienne would later describe under oath. The system that surrounded her father was elaborate and expensive and it produced hearings and orders and billing disputes. It did not produce a single additional hour with his daughter.



Farquharson would not be the last supervisor. She was the first of six. After her came others — each with their own complications, their own allegiances, their own reasons for not seeing what was in front of them. The supervision system that began in this Westchester courtroom would produce sixteen visits over the next year, conducted under six different supervisors, before ending permanently on a dark road in Chappaqua with two men in camouflage and what appeared to be baseball bats.

But the pattern was established here, in the first visit, before the ink on the handwritten order had dried. The court appointed a supervisor. The supervisor met privately with one parent. The supervisor violated the court order. The father documented the violation. No one acted on it.

The woman who promised no backroom deals conducted one before the first visit began. The judge who

appointed her wanted the father to die on his own sword. The attorney who represented the woman who poisoned him said: "Understood."

The system had a special relationship with someone. It was not with the father.



Sixteen Visits

January–September 2019

Sixteen visits. Five supervisors. Every observer reports the same thing: Steve is attentive, Evie is happy. The supervisors keep changing. The reports keep disappearing. The visits stop for five months. The court grants sole custody anyway.

The supervised visits began in January 2019, after the court-ordered stipulation. Farquharson — the supervisor who had a special relationship with the judge and who met privately with Tara before the first observation — was finished. The court had appointed a neutral agency, Children and Family Services, to coordinate the visits. A new set of supervisors would rotate through, each one a social worker or nanny assigned to observe what the system had assumed would be a dangerous father with his child.

The visits took place at Crabtree's Kittle House, the bed-and-breakfast inn in Chappaqua where Steve had been staying since September. He had rented a cottage nearby — a white house with a cream-walled kitchen, a chandelier over the breakfast bar, an orange throw on the sofa, and a playroom he had built for a daughter he was

allowed to see only at scheduled intervals and under observation.

The playroom had a white toy chest filled with stacking rings, a Fisher-Price walker, a baby piano. A road playmat covered the floor. An activity cube sat by the window. Everything a father would buy for a toddler he expected to raise — purchased instead for a toddler he was permitted to visit.



The visits followed a pattern.

Evie arrived hungry. Or exhausted. Or in a soiled diaper that had not been changed. The particular combination varied from visit to visit, but the condition of a child whose needs had not been fully met in the hours before the handoff repeated itself with a regularity that the supervisors noticed and the court chose not to examine.

Steve had food ready. He always had food ready — the specific foods she liked, the organic vegetable meals, the mango packets, the strawberry yogurt melts, the green sippy cup she recognized. He had learned her preferences during the months of visits at Crabtree's and the Chappaqua cottage, and he prepared for each visit the way a parent prepares when each minute is counted and cannot be wasted.

She ate. She played. She calmed.



Steve reading to baby Evie on ornate bed at the Chappaqua rental — dark plaid shirt, cap, pacifier, giraffe, open book between them

She moved between the toys and Steve's lap and Milly, the Cavalier King Charles spaniel who attended every visit and who Evie recognized before she recognized anything else in the room.



Five supervisors rotated through the case between January and September 2019. Each was independent. Each spent hours in the room.

Nanny Nicole observed Visit 6 in February 2019. She watched Steve make Evie comfortable, hold her, play with her, feed her. She watched Evie start to dance when she felt safe. She watched Evie refuse to leave at the end. At drop-off, they gave Evie back to her grandfather.

“Steve and Evie had an amazing bond and by the end of the visit, Evie didn’t want to leave.”

Nanny Ashley observed Visit 7 the same week. She watched Evie practice words, play musical toys, pull herself up from the ground with Steve supporting her. She watched Evie eat mango and sweet potato in Steve’s lap. The observations were the same: attentive father, happy child, appropriate interaction.

Yohanny, the next supervisor, observed multiple visits at the Kittle House upstairs suite. She noted the same pattern — Evie comfortable, Steve patient, the interactions warm and age-appropriate.

Five supervisors. One finding. Every observer in the room arrived independently at the same conclusion: this father was not dangerous to his child. This child was not afraid of her father. The supervised visit system — designed to detect precisely this kind of risk — found no risk at all.

The reports said so.

Then the reports began to disappear from the court file.



On February 17, 2019, Evie arrived at the Kittle House for Visit 9. She was a bundle of energy. Milly was there. Abby, the nanny from San Francisco who knew Evie from before, was there. The room was warm and the toys were on the floor and the person she had been brought to see was sitting cross-legged on the carpet.

Then Evie surprised everyone.

She was standing near the coffee table, holding the edge, balancing the way toddlers balance when they are learning that the world can be traversed vertically. She let go.

One step. Two. Three.



Five-panel sequence of toddler Evie walking — pink striped dress, tights, white shoes, arms out for balance. Steve's arm reaching from the edge of the frame.

She walked across the room and fell into her father's arms.

No one from the Walsh family asked for the pictures. No one from the Walsh family asked how the visit went. No

one asked whether Evie had reached any milestones or whether Steve had been there to see them. A child took her first steps in the presence of her father and a court-appointed supervisor, and the family that controlled access to that child expressed no interest in that fact at all.



Four days later, Visit 10. February 21, 2019.

Evie was all smiles with her father. The photographs from that afternoon show the same pattern — Steve on the floor, Evie in his lap, toys scattered, the Cavalier spaniel nearby, the quiet contentment of a child with the parent she trusts.

At the end of the visit, Evie was handed over to Walsh Sr. for the drive back to the compound.

She became hysterical.

The supervisor observed the transfer and noted the difference. Evie calm with her father. Evie screaming at the sight of her grandfather. The contrast was not subtle and it was not ambiguous. The supervisor made a note: she would no longer hand Evie to Walsh Sr. at drop-off. From now on, she would walk the quarter-mile up the private road and hand Evie directly to her mother.

The supervisor's observation joined the growing file of reports that documented the same thing: this child preferred her father. This child was distressed by the people she was being returned to. The observation was not hidden or equivocal. It was written down, signed, and filed.

The court did not act on it.



On March 23, 2019, a new supervisor had been agreed upon — Franceska Anilus, a social worker from

Supervision Services. She arrived with Steve at the driveway leading to the Walsh compound for what was to be a scheduled visit.

A car followed them on the drive from the Kittle House.

Upon arriving at the gate, the car pulled in behind them. Walsh Sr. got out. He was shaking. His face was red.

"You are blocking my driveway," he said.

"We are here for a visit. This is a court-appointed supervisor."

"We didn't agree... we didn't get to meet the supervisor."

"Is someone going to bring Evie out? Are you denying the visit?"

"Yes. Yes, we are denying the visit."

No one else came down from the estate nearly a quarter-mile up the private road. No one appeared at a window or stepped outside. Walsh Sr. had been waiting at the gate. He got back in his car and backed up so Steve and the supervisor could leave.

"Well that was interesting," Steve said to the supervisor, gently shaking his head. Franceska did not laugh.

She wrote her report to the court. A police report was filed. The officer told Steve he had warned Walsh Sr. not to be present at future pickups and dropoffs.

Walsh Sr.'s response was to demand that his daughter file a Temporary Order of Protection against Steve — though she had not been present and was almost a quarter-mile away, her filing described events she had not witnessed, written in language her father provided. The court granted a temporary order. No hearing was ever held. Walsh Sr. refused to appear and corroborate the claims. The matter was left to expire.

But the visits stopped.



Tara cancelled the next two visits, citing Evie's health issues — uncontrollable diarrhea, she told the court. Steve called Evie's doctor directly. The doctor had found no evidence of anything concerning. Evie was happy and active at the appointment. He had given her a probiotic and sent her home. The note he provided was at the grandmother's request. He said a visit with her father would have been fine.

When Visit 14 finally occurred on March 29, Evie arrived very hungry and very tired. She had not been fed or napped before the visit. She had a strange raised rash under her chin. Steve changed her twice and noted that there was no evidence of the diarrhea that had supposedly cancelled two previous visits. She demolished the food he had prepared — the organic vegetable meals, part of a banana, and still wanted more.

After eating, they read books. Then she got very sleepy and fell asleep in his arms. He held her and let her sleep — the kind of ordinary act that, under the circumstances, was not ordinary at all. A father holding a sleeping child he was allowed to see for two hours at a time, three times a week, under observation, in a rented house near the compound where his daughter lived without him.

Two days later, Visit 15. March 31, 2019. Evie arrived at the Kittle House needing a diaper change. Under the elastic of her diaper on her upper right thigh were two dark bruises that looked like pinch marks. Further down her leg, on her right shin, were four symmetrical bruises, each about the width of a small rod. They were fresh. The supervisor noted them in her report and a note was forwarded to Steve's attorneys.

The bruises had not been there the day before.

The Walsh family allowed no further visits until September.



Five months. April through August 2019. No visits. No phone calls. No FaceTime. No photographs. No information about his daughter's health, education, development, or daily life. Three thousand miles between San Francisco and Chappaqua, and on neither end of that distance was there any mechanism to compel the family that controlled access to a child to provide that access to her father.

The delay — though delay implies something temporary, something that will resolve, and nothing about this arrangement was designed to resolve — was the weapon. Every week without a visit was a week in which a toddler's memory of her father faded. Every month was a month in which the Walsh household became more normal to Evie and the man who sang to her on the floor of a hotel room became less real. The family did not need to win a hearing. They needed to prevent one from happening long enough for absence to do what no court order could — make the father a stranger to his own child.

The system that had produced five supervisors and sixteen visits and a unanimous finding that Steve was a safe and attentive father now produced nothing at all. The supervision reports sat in a file. The observations of five professionals — each of whom had independently concluded that this father posed no risk to his child — changed nothing about the father's access to that child.

January 25, 2020 at 2:11 PM
 To: S Grant Russell sgrussell@pm.me
 Cc: Jennifer Jackman jmj@mzw-law.com

I just wanted to let you know I reached out to Delia regarding supervisor and she is unable to do it. I believe you also owe her money.

I have reached out to find other resources and will let you know on any updates. In the meantime, I would suggest seeing her at the YMCA. I can bring her as many afternoons as my schedule allows during the week/weekends.

Once you let me know if you plan to come to see her, I am happy to will write out an email of the exact dates and time I will adhere to. I will also be as flexible as possible given you have not seen her for six months.

Vital Branding
 www.vtlbranding.com

On Feb 24, 2020, at 9:40 PM, S Grant Russell <sgrussell@pm.me> wrote:

I am open any signed written proposal you and Jennifer agree on. When you both come to an agreement in terms of times locations and options etc. you agree on just send over.

If you only will allow the YMCA and are not open to any mutually agreed licensed supervisor available to support visits say that in your proposal. I'd suggest that you use the Judge's words, however. "Any supervisor not objected to by either party or the YMCA."

I am sure I will be fine with whatever you agree on though. Let me know when you have something executed.

Steve

*Email exchange between Tara Walsh and Steve Russell,
 February 2020. Tara writes that Delia Farquharson is
 unable to supervise and that Steve also owes her money.
 Steve replies that he is open to any signed written
 proposal.*

Farquharson — the corrupted supervisor from B25 — was now “unable” to do it. Tara suggested the YMCA. Steve agreed to anything. The visits never resumed.



On February 6, 2020, the case came before Judge Nilda Morales-Horowitz at White Plains Family Court. In 2005, the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct had formally censured Morales-Horowitz for interceding on behalf of friends in pending cases — leaving voicemails for other judges’ court attorneys, telling court personnel that litigants were her friends and “nice people.” A dissenting commissioner had recommended her removal from the bench. She was re-elected instead. Now she was the fourth judge on the case — Gordon-Oliver had recused herself after appointing Farquharson and admitting she wanted Steve to die on his own sword. Horowitz had inherited a

file that contained sixteen visits, five supervisors, and a unanimous professional finding that was never contested.

Steve was not present. His fiancée had surgery; he had booked a flight that landed at JFK at 3 p.m. for a 2:30 hearing. The court noted that anyone who lands at JFK is not going anywhere for three hours.

His attorney, Max DiFabio, tried to explain the supervisor situation: "They have had a problem with each and every supervisor, including the last one, Claudette LaMelle, which Mr. Guttridge unilaterally fired."

The court's response: "It happens once, it happens twice. Let's go three times. Five times?"

DiFabio: "My client had no problem with the supervisors."

The court awarded Tara sole legal and physical custody. It issued a five-year order of protection — at a visitation conference, not a hearing. No testimony was taken. No supervisor reports were reviewed. No evidence was heard regarding the sixteen visits and what the five supervisors had observed.

Then the court turned to Tara and offered advice about the father she had just been given sole control over.

"The best way to do that is you need to flood him with information. Information is not a luxury, because then he can't send an attorney here and say I don't know this, I don't know that. You can take out your file and show, yes, you do. Here are the emails. Here are the certified mail. Here are the carrier pigeons that I sent."

Carrier pigeons. The court was instructing Tara Walsh — who had blocked visits for five months, cancelled visits citing fabricated health issues, directed Walsh Sr. to deny court-ordered access, arranged for a corrupted supervisor to be the first observer, and met privately with that supervisor before any visit occurred — to flood Steve with information.

The court had five supervisor reports in its file. Each one said the same thing. Each one had been produced by a professional with no stake in the outcome, no prior relationship with either party, and no reason to misrepresent what she observed.

Five supervisors. One finding. Sole custody to the mother.

The carrier pigeons never arrived.



The Bruises

March–April 2019

During Visit 15, Steve and two other adults discover bruises on Evie consistent with deliberate injury. Both parents report the bruises as concerning. Tara tells the Attorney for the Child. Steve tells his attorneys, and then the police. Within ten days, the story migrates three times — from concerning to normal to nonexistent — and the court accepts the final version. Months later, Tara’s own attorney recuses from the case.

Two days before Visit 15, Steve emailed the entire legal team — six attorneys, the Attorney for the Child, and the forensic evaluator. The subject was visits cancelled and a conversation with Evie’s doctors. He had spoken to Evie’s care provider and gone through her chart. Evie had no fever, no signs of illness, no signs of dehydration. She was alert, happy, and active. The diagnosis of a viral infection had been made purely on Grandma’s word, and a probiotic was prescribed despite the absence of any medical indication. Steve put the concern plainly: Tara’s mother’s behavior was consistent with Munchausen by Proxy.

From: Steve Russell sgrussell@pm.me
Subject: Re: Visits Cancelled & Convo with Evie Docs
Date: March 29, 2019 at 5:27 PM
To: Jennifer Jackman jmj@mzw-law.com, Jason Advocate jason@advocatelp.com, Ruth Deget Rdeget@enensteinlaw.com
Cc: Waller, Brian Brian.Waller@thompsonhine.com, Chesnut Katherine katherine@advocatelp.com, paul hyrowitz paulhymowitz@gmail.com

I spoke to Evie's care provider and went through her chart and even spoke to the RN who was primarily responsible for Evie's sole visit yesterday. There has been no follow up.

Evie had no fever, no signs of illness, no signs of dehydration. She was alert, happy, and active. Tara was not present at the apt, Evie was prescribed a probiotic and fluids, despite the absence of dehydration.

The note was provided without much thought, and by simply providing fluids and a probiotic pack once a day, my visit would not have been an issue.

Grandma said that Evie was having diarrhea 5 times a day. The diagnosis of a viral infection was made purely based on Grandma's statement and the absence of any obvious symptoms...sometimes a viral infection of the gut bacteria specifically can cause asymptomatic diarrhea but no direct signs of this were noted. It was a diagnosis of exclusion.

It is likely true that Tara and Grandma are simply lying or exaggerating a relatively benign situation to avoid visits, but a much more serious possibility exists.

Tara drugged me. Her mom's behavior with Tara as a child is consistent with Munchausen by Proxy and the previous supervisors noted strange rashes and the fact that Evie had not napped or eaten as causes for grumpiness at previous visits. Tara is a BPD w/ sociopathic traits according to her Doctor in SF and my understanding is that her mind works differently than a normal person especially when she feels cornered.

We would be negligent to ignore the very real possibility that Tara gave Evie a diuretic or engaged in some other activity she saw as only lightly or temporarily harmful to Evie, but she rationalized as being necessary to deny visits. That is how she rationalized drugging me.

My daughter's health is my first priority.

Steve

Email from Steve Russell to Jennifer Jackman and legal team, March 29, 2019. Subject: Visits Cancelled and Convo with Evie Docs. Steve reports Evie had no fever, no illness, no dehydration. Doctor prescribed probiotic based solely on Grandma's statement. Steve writes: Tara drugged me. Her mom's behavior consistent with Munchausen by Proxy.

No one responded to the Munchausen concern. The visits continued.



Evie arrived for Visit 15 on Sunday, March 31, 2019, at the Crabtree Kittle House in Chappaqua. She arrived the way she always arrived — unfed, without a nap, mirroring the energy of the handoff.

Four adults were present. Steve. Talia Kleiman, the nanny. Franceska Christina Anilus, the court-appointed supervisor from Supervision Services. Kelly, in the next room. They had learned to prepare. They changed Evie.

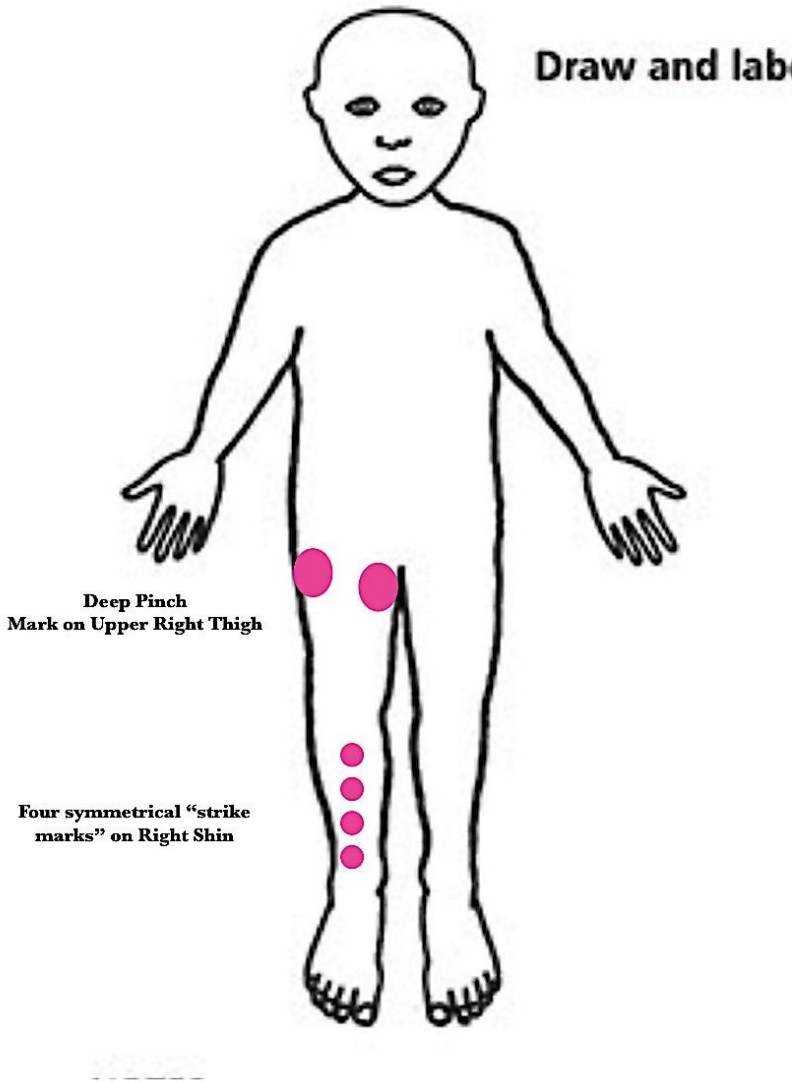
They gave her something to eat — a little fruit, a sugar babyfood packet. She calmed down almost immediately.

It was during the diaper change that they saw the bruises.

Just where the diaper line met her upper right thigh were two deep marks. They looked like pinch bruises — finger-width apart, the bruise where a thumb would be larger than the other. Further down, on her right shin, were four symmetrical bruises — evenly spaced, same width, the kind of marks left by a small object applied four times to the same area.

Steve noticed them. Talia noticed them. Franceska noticed them. Three adults, independently, looking at the same marks on the same child.

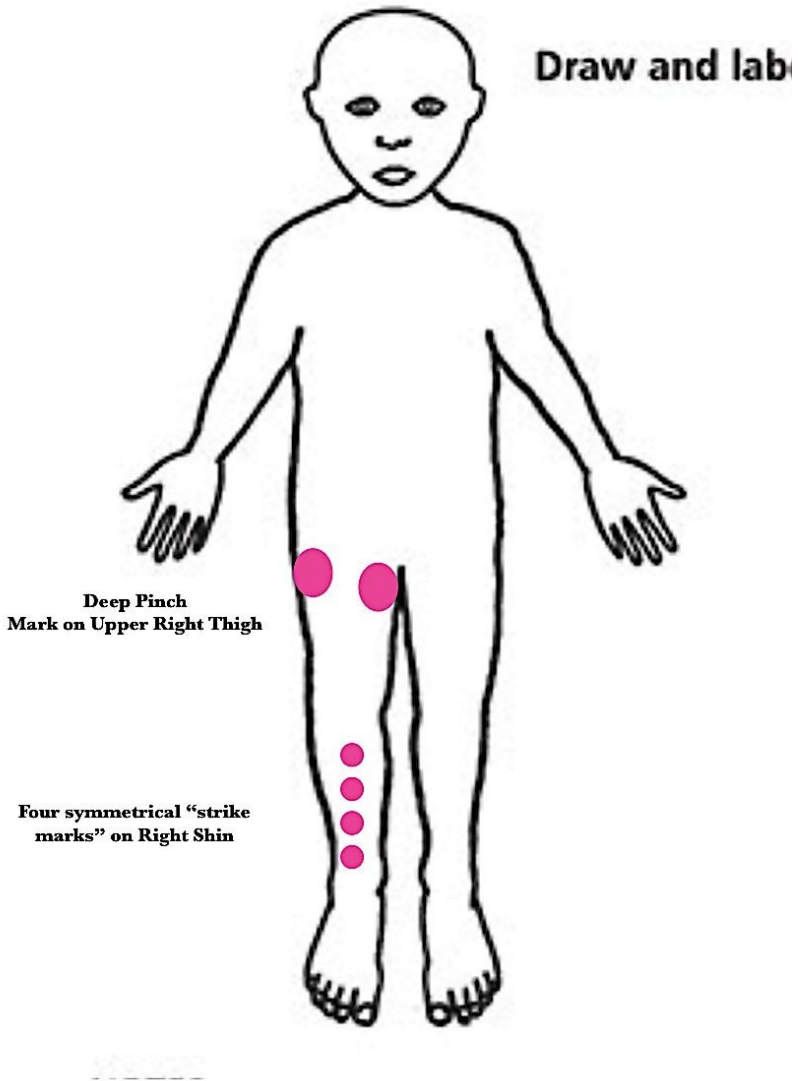
Franceska's supervisor report for March 31 noted one concern during the visit: the two bruises Evie arrived with. Her assessment: low level of risk and no safety factors during the visit itself — the only issue were the injuries the child carried through the door.



Contemporaneous body diagram of a child's outline. Two pink dots on upper right thigh labeled 'Deep Pinch Mark on Upper Right Thigh.' Four pink dots in a vertical line on the right shin labeled 'Four symmetrical strike marks on Right Shin.' Created at the time of Visit 15, March 31, 2019.

Talia wrote her own account. She had acted as nanny on both March 30 and March 31. On March 30, during the diaper change, she had observed a raised, red, irritated rash on Evie's chin, hidden in her baby fat. Both she and the supervisor noticed and discussed the rash and the hunger. On March 31, she observed a bruise on Evie's left shin as Steve was changing her diaper. The day before, as she changed Evie herself, it was not there. It was very visible now. The supervisor made a note of it and said she had to make a report. Steve mentioned he would follow up and give Evie a bath the next time to check for any other areas.

THE BRUISES



Email from Talia Kleiman to Kelly Turnure. Subject: Visits with Evie 3/30 and 3/31. Talia describes observing a bruise on Evie’s left shin during the diaper change on March 31 that was not visible the day before. Also describes Walsh Sr. pulling up at the driveway after the supervisor left with Evie, exiting his car with a rude attitude toward Steve at approximately 5:30 PM on Sunday. Notes Steve Russell remained calm throughout.

At 3:28 PM that afternoon — during the visit — Steve emailed his attorneys. He described the bruise on the upper leg as looking like someone had pinched her. He described the bruise on her shin as having an odd pattern, consistent with being struck two to four times with a stick or rod. He noted that the supervisor had documented the injuries.

They contacted Jennifer Jackman, the Attorney for the Child. They photographed the bruises. They documented what they saw. Then they focused on the visit. Evie bounced back after a nap and some food. She was exhausted and starving and returned to her happy self after rest. She did not know what the marks on her body meant.

Then they had to give her back.

Then they had to give her back.

Steve stood in the parking lot after the supervisor walked Evie up the driveway. The pinch mark was still on her thigh. The four strikes were still on her shin. He had followed the process — reported to his attorney, to the AFC, to the police. The process would now follow itself back to the house at the top of the driveway, the one with the electronic gate, the one where the bruises had appeared and the explanations had not. What did it mean to do everything right and still hand your daughter back to the place that hurt her?

Where is the father in all of this? Not the litigant. Not the reporter of concerns. The man who held his daughter's leg and saw the marks and felt something the body diagram could not record — the vertigo of documentation as the only available form of love. He could photograph the bruise. He could not hold the child.



At the drop-off, the court-appointed supervisor walked Evie on foot up the long driveway toward the Walsh compound. As soon as she disappeared from sight, a car pulled in behind Steve's, blocking him in.

Steve Walsh Sr. got out. He was shaking, his face red. He had been warned by police on two prior occasions not to be present at pickups or drop-offs. He strode toward Steve's window.

A few steps away, he stopped. Talia was sitting in the passenger seat — small, low, nearly invisible. Walsh had not expected a witness.

"You — you shouldn't be blocking my driveway," he stammered, already retreating toward his car. His two youngest daughters sat in matching outfits in the back seat.

"And you aren't supposed to be here at all," Steve said.

"I — uh — was taking the girls home from school," Walsh said, now at the door to his own vehicle.

It was Sunday.

The nanny would write a letter to the court about the incident. In her statement, Talia documented the confrontation precisely: Walsh Sr. pulled up at the top of the driveway after the supervisor headed toward the house with Evie, so the supervisor was not there to see it. He exited his car with a rude attitude. He claimed he was bringing his kids back home from school — on a Sunday, at 5:30 in the evening. Steve Russell did not respond. He sat in the car and waited for the supervisor to return. When she came back, she asked if the man at the driveway had been Tara's father. Steve confirmed. They drove off the property. Throughout the entire interaction, Talia noted, Steve Russell remained calm.

The same day the bruises were discovered on Evie's body, the patriarch of the family confronted the man who found them.



Steve called the police.

The Chappaqua police responded. They went to the Walsh household. The Walsh grandparents — Steve and Maura Walsh — told the responding officer the bruises were normal. Kids get bruises.

Detective Ragni would later confirm in writing that bruising and a rash were observed on Evelyn. But he determined the information did not reach the level of criminality.

Both parents had reported the injuries as concerning. The grandparents had not.



A week passed. Steve learned something that reframed everything. Tara had also reported the bruises to Jennifer Jackman — the Attorney for the Child — the same day Steve had. Tara told Jackman that Evie returned from a visit with a big bruise on her shin that was not there when she left for the visit.

Tara was pointing at Steve. She was telling the AFC that the bruises appeared during the visit — that the injuries happened in Steve's care.

There was a problem with that story. The bruises had been discovered and documented within minutes of Evie's arrival, before the visit began. Franceska documented them. Talia documented them. Steve emailed his attorneys about them at 3:28 PM, during the visit. Three adults had already recorded the injuries by the time Tara called Jackman to report them as post-visit.

your words not mine. In fact, they do in fact have availability to schedule the visits during the morning because most of their clients are older and require afternoon visits. SVE indicated that they wouldn't accommodate four hour visits four days per week. However, one of the main concerns is that visits over two – three consecutive hours are not recommended because they are difficult to supervise because the supervisor may need to leave the room to go to the bathroom which would leave the parent and the child unsupervised if even for a moment.

I would implore to include Tara in the nanny search from the beginning. Any search conducted unilaterally by Steve or anyone on his behalf is going to be responded to with suspicion.

Mr. Snyder's email was inappropriate. There are way too many people involved in this matter giving their unsolicited opinions. It is not helpful and while not tantamount to disrupting the progress certainly created an unnecessary distraction.

With respect to "bruises", I advised you that Tara reported to me that Evie returned from a visit with her father on Sunday, March 31 with a big bruise on her shin that was not there when she left for the visit. I told Ms. Walsh that it wasn't unusual for a child Evie's age to sustain bruises on her legs now that she is walking. Ms. Walsh did not raise the issue again. There is no "injury" to Evie's neck. The child has a rash on her neck that is referred to as a "drool rash" which you can imagine occurs when the child drools excessively and the saliva collects in the folds of the neck and causes irritation. This is not uncommon in children of Evie's age especially when teething. I believe that Ms. Walsh has responded to and treated this issue appropriately. As I stated, I have a release and have requested the child's medical records but there is no indication that Evie is not being properly cared for.

Jennifer M. Jackman, Esq.

Partner

Email from Jennifer M. Jackman, Attorney for the Child, April 16, 2019. Jackman puts the word bruises in scare quotes. Writes that Tara reported Evie returned from a visit with a big bruise on her shin that was not there when she left. Jackman told Tara it was not unusual for a child Evie's age. Says there is no injury to the neck — only a drool rash. Concludes: there is no indication that Evie is not being properly cared for.

Jackman's response arrived on April 16. She addressed only the shin bruise. She told Tara it was not unusual for a child Evie's age to sustain bruises on her legs now that she was walking. Tara did not raise the issue again. There was no "injury" to Evie's neck — only a drool rash, which Jackman explained was common in teething children. Her conclusion: there was no indication that Evie was not being properly cared for. The double negative is worth pausing on. Not that the child was being properly cared for — that would require a finding. Only that there was no indication she was not. The sentence protects itself from its own conclusion the way the scare quotes protected the writer from the bruises.

The pinch bruise on the upper right thigh — the deep mark at the diaper line, the one that looked like someone had grabbed a toddler's leg between their thumb and forefinger — was not addressed. The four symmetrical strike marks on the shin were not addressed. Three adults had documented the injuries. The Attorney for the Child responded to one of them and put the word in quotation marks.



Then the story moved again.

On April 10, 2019 — ten days after the visit — Tara's attorney John C. Guttridge wrote to the court. Guttridge was a partner at Guttridge & Cambareri, a firm with documented financial ties to judicial campaigns in Westchester County — the ecosystem that appointed the judges who appointed the supervisors who wrote the reports that Guttridge was now contradicting.

John C. Guttridge to Jason Advocate and Larry Carlin
Re: Walsh v. Russell, File No. 154703

Russell filed a police report claiming their daughter was being abused, reporting bruises as if she were

pinched, red marks around her neck, and diarrhoea. Both these statements are utterly untrue, and Mr. Russell fully aware of same. This is the third false police report Russell has made against the family in less than one month. There are signs of real instability in Russell's manner. Russell must cease and desist from filing false police reports.

The letter stated that the Chappaqua police had come to the Walsh house. That Russell had filed a report claiming their daughter was being abused — that she had bruises as if she were “pinched,” red marks around her neck, and diarrhoea. Guttridge called both statements utterly untrue, and Russell fully aware of same. He called the police report retaliation. He called it the third false police report Russell had made against the family in less than one month. He described signs of real instability in Russell's manner — instability, in the letter's usage, meaning the behavior of a father who photographs his daughter's bruises and reports them to the police, which is to say the behavior the system had instructed him to perform. He demanded Russell cease and desist from filing false police reports or he would seek court intervention.

No evidence was offered to support Guttridge's claims. No medical examination was ordered. No investigation was opened. The supervisor's documentation of the bruises, the photographs, the body diagram, the police report, the contemporaneous accounts from three adults, the nanny's written statement, Steve's same-day email to his attorneys — all of it existed. None of it was weighed against an attorney's assertion on letterhead.

The documentation protocol had been followed. The concern had been reported by both parents. The system that had been designed to protect a child in exactly this situation received exactly this information and responded with silence.



Ten days. That is how long it took for the story to migrate.

On March 31, the bruises were concerning. Both parents said so. Tara reported them to the Attorney for the Child. Steve reported them to his attorney, to Jackman, and to the police.

Within a week, the Walsh grandparents told the responding officer the bruises were normal. The Attorney for the Child told Tara the shin bruise was not unusual for a walking child.

On April 10, Tara's attorney wrote the court that there were no bruises at all — and no history of abuse at the Walsh household. He called Steve a liar. He called the police report false.

Concerning. Normal. Nonexistent.

The court accepted the final version.



Months later, after Steve's attorney laid out the full pattern — the denial of visits, the family history, the bruises his own client had reported as concerning and then denied — John Guttridge recused himself from the case. He was one of six attorneys who would ultimately refuse to continue representing Tara Walsh.

The recusal is a fact, not a conclusion. What it means — whether Guttridge discovered he had been used to cover up what the bruises actually represented, or whether the case simply became untenable for other reasons — is not stated in the record. But the letter he signed on April 10 called the bruise report utterly untrue. The body diagram documented a deep pinch mark and four symmetrical strike marks. The supervisor's report confirmed the injuries on arrival. The nanny confirmed the bruises were

not there the day before. Both parents confirmed concern. Guttridge's letter contradicted all of them.

He did not continue.



One generation earlier, in May 2010, Brienne Walsh had published a blog post describing her mother's discipline method. The softer Maura's voice got, the angrier she was. Once you could not hear her at all, she was going to take you into a corner and dig her nails into your forearm.

In March 2019, three adults found a deep pinch mark on a toddler's upper right thigh — just where the diaper line met her leg, finger-width apart, the mark where a thumb would be larger than the other. The same signature. The same family. One generation later.

The body diagram does not argue. It marks two locations on an outline of a child's body: a deep pinch mark and four symmetrical strike marks. The outline has no expression. It holds no opinion. It simply records where the injuries were, on a body too small to explain them, in a system too broken to see them.



The Ambush

September 21, 2019

The last supervised visit ends at dusk. At the gate, a blacked-out SUV. Two men in camouflage. The supervisor who documents what she saw is removed from the case. The judge recuses herself without comment. Steve never sees his daughter again.

Six supervisors had been removed from the case. Four supervisory organizations had been rejected. More than eight registered alternatives had been proposed by Steve's attorney and refused by Tara's without comment. For five months — from March to September 2019 — Steve had not seen his daughter.

Each of the six who preceded LaMelle shared one trait: they had documented that visits were going well. The pattern was not complicated. Observe, document, remove. Observation was the offense.

The court order appointing Claudette LaMelle was signed on January 30, 2019, by Judge Arlene Gordon-Oliver. Nine provisions. Provision four read: "Neither Petitioner nor her father, Stephen Walsh, shall be present at pick-ups or drop-offs." Provision nine: "Counsel for the

parties are not permitted to speak directly to the supervisor unless all counsel are present and copied.”

Courts do not name grandparents in supervised visitation orders as a matter of course. That Provision 4 named Stephen Walsh individually — barring his presence at exchanges — meant the court had received documentation of his conduct before the ink was dry.

The Court having searched the statewide registry of orders of protection, the sex offender registry and the Family Court's child protective records, and having notified the attorneys for the parties and the Child of the results of these searches, and the Court having considered and relied upon the following results of these searches in making this interim decision:

NOW, it is hereby

ORDERED that,

- 1) Respondent/Father shall have supervised visitation with the subject Child (Evelyn Grace Walsh - DOB: 01/27/2018) to be supervised by Claudette E. LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW;
- 2) Respondent shall have visitation with the subject Child with each visit being up to a maximum of four (4) hours per day, four (4) days per week, as agreed and arranged with the Supervisor;
- 3) All exchanges for the supervised visits shall occur in a public place as agreed and arranged with the Supervisor, Ms. LaMelle;
- 4) Neither Petitioner nor her father, Stephen Walsh, shall be present at pick-ups or drop-offs. If Respondent personally picks up or drops off the subject Child, the Supervisor shall be present. Petitioner's mother or any other suitable person, may be present at pick-ups or drop-offs.
- 5) If the Supervisor deems it appropriate, Respondent is permitted to have visitations at 1) the Kittle House Inn located at 11 Kittle Road, Chappaqua, NY 10514, 2) Respondent's home, or 3) any location requested by Respondent;
- 6) Respondent is permitted to have a nanny present at all visitations;
- 7) Paul Hymowitz, PhD may be present during visits to observe the visits if he so requests;
- 8) Intake protocol is to be determined by the supervisor;
- 9) Counsel for the parties are not permitted to speak directly to the supervisor unless all counsel are present and copied;

Court order dated January 30, 2019 establishing supervised visitation with Claudette E. LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW. Nine provisions including: visits up to four hours, four times per week; exchanges in public place; neither Petitioner nor her father Stephen Walsh present at pick-ups or drop-offs; counsel may not speak to supervisor without all counsel present.

The order the Walsh family would violate three ways in a single evening.

Around September 18th, LaMelle received a phone call from Steve informing her she had been appointed. She told him she was not aware of the appointment and had received no court order. The next day, Tara texted LaMelle — informing her that at a recent court appearance she had been appointed. LaMelle told her she could not start supervision until she received the order. They agreed to meet in White Plains, near the fountain.

LaMelle met Tara and Evie at a Starbucks. They walked to Barnes & Noble on Main Street. Tara provided what LaMelle would later describe in her sworn report as “a very brief overview of why supervision was needed/requested.” At this point LaMelle still did not have a copy of the order or any specifics from the attorneys. Tara had gotten to LaMelle first.

They tentatively agreed on three dates and times. The first: Saturday, September 21, from 4:00 to 7:30 PM.



LaMelle arrived at the Walsh compound at 3:45 PM and was permitted through the large electronic iron gate at the bottom of the driveway. The drive climbed a quarter mile through wooded hillside to the compound at the top. A gentleman came outside to inquire about her purpose on the property. She asked for Tara and was told she wasn't there. LaMelle returned to her car to call. The gentleman

identified himself as Mr. Walsh — the maternal grandfather — and escorted her inside. She was introduced to Mrs. Walsh and an older sister. They explained that Tara and Evie were out and would be returning shortly.

Tara and Evie came through the door around 4:10, explaining they had been to a party in Harlem. Tara changed Evie's pants, repacked her to-go bag, and they departed to meet Steve at the Kittle House, a short drive away.

Evie was a little distressed when they arrived. She had not seen her father for quite some time and it took a moment for her to recognize who he was. Steve also had the dog, Milly, which Evie recognized. She became more comfortable as he spoke to her.

They headed for the visit and both father and daughter seemed to have a happy time. Steve had toys, food, water, and milk. Evie moved easily between the toys, her father's lap, and Milly, who found a place on the couch. Steve washed Evie's hands and face, changed her diaper and clothes. They departed by 7:00 PM.

By seven the September light was going. The canopy along these roads was still full — it would not thin for another six weeks — and beneath it the darkness was total.

Steve and Evie took their seats in the back of LaMelle's car and they arrived back at the Kittle House. Steve initially asked to be left there. But when he exited the car, Evie became upset.

LaMelle told him to accompany her to the drop-off. It had gotten dark and the area had no streetlights.

Steve had informed LaMelle about the order of protection that precluded him from entering the Walsh property. He asked that she drop him off at the road, away from the house, to avoid any risk of confrontation. She agreed.



As they approached the Walsh residence, a traffic issue made access to the street difficult. LaMelle entered Whippoorwill Street and let Steve out on the public road — the street that connects two adjoining properties to the main road. They pulled just off the road at the turnout area, parked, and stopped a ways from the gate leading to the Walsh home.

Both of them noticed a car parked on the grass among the bushes.

LaMelle saw it first as a shape. A dark car parked behind the bushes on the right side with blacked-out windows and no lights on. She and Steve thought it was the Walshes, there to pick up Evie, as had been the previous arrangement.

She stopped the car. Got out. Steve unbuckled Evie, collected her, and handed her to LaMelle. She started toward the vehicle.

As she walked toward it, someone yelled out the window.

“Who are you?”

LaMelle thought it was the grandfather, meeting her to collect Evie. She approached the car. The window was slightly lowered and she was only able to see the person’s face from the nose up. She noticed there was another man in the passenger seat as well. The person didn’t declare who they were and only asked who was in the car with her.

She immediately stepped back, still carrying Evie and her to-go bag.

Caught off guard, she replied “my husband” — out of fear.

Both men were wearing dark clothing and still didn’t declare who they were or why they were questioning her. Their voices were becoming more aggressive and menacing with each question and she was becoming more

alarmed. She was standing in the road, carrying a toddler, her bag, and two strangers were becoming verbally intimidating.

The front passenger seat — not a car seat, not the back. She put a two-year-old on the front seat of a moving car because that was how fast she needed to leave.

Steve was standing by the road when LaMelle's taillights disappeared up the long private drive toward the Walsh estate. The gate closed behind her. Everything went dark.

Everything went dark.

Above him the wind moved through trees that still held their summer leaves. The same sound the Algonquin had named when they named this place.

She had fallen asleep against him in the back seat. He had handed her to the supervisor and the supervisor had carried her through the gate and the gate had closed. Five months since the last visit. Three hours of toys and milk and diaper changes and the particular happiness of a toddler who recognizes the person holding her. And now a dark road and a closed gate and the knowledge that every time he sees his daughter, someone decides whether he will see her again.

His eyes adjusted. The dashboard lights of the SUV cast a pale glow. He pulled out his phone, turned on the flashlight, and started walking toward the car.

Two young men. Through the dirty windshield: one in a camouflage cap and grey Nike t-shirt, the other visible only as a shape behind him. Pushed down between their legs were what looked to be baseball bats.

It was Brendan Walsh — Tara's brother, the one the family called Stuprendan, the one who had started a blog where he chronicled shootings and suicides, who rushed to crime scenes with a press badge and started taking pictures — and Brian Meenan, Tara's cousin.

The younger Meenan went pale as Steve approached the car gripping his phone. Between Meenan's knees, just barely visible, he held something that looked like a bat with both hands. Brendan pulled out his own phone and dialed 911.

Steve photographed the two men and their license plate. Then he waited.

LaMelle returned Evie to Tara at the compound, gave her a very brief update of the visit, and left for home. Steve was waiting in the roadway where she had left him.

He asked if she was all right.

She told him that she had never experienced such sheer fright as what she had just gone through. Later she would write: "As a Black woman I was rightfully unnerved by the confrontation which had just occurred by two unknown white men sitting in a darkened car screaming threatening questions from inside the car at me."

Four days later she put this into a sworn affidavit. Most supervisors would have moved on to the next case. LaMelle wrote it down.

That evening, Tara texted LaMelle asking who else was in the car and that Mr. Russell was not to be on the property.

LaMelle was too anxious from the encounter to respond.



On Monday morning, September 23rd, LaMelle received a call from John Guttridge, Tara's attorney. He informed her that his client had complained about her supervision of the visit and about having Steve in the car when she returned Evie.

LaMelle attempted to explain that Steve had not entered the property and was left off on the public street.

Guttridge took exception to that explanation and informed her that she was removed from the case because she had violated the court order.

LaMelle attempted to explain that the order didn't specify Steve could not be in the car.

She ended the call.

On Tuesday afternoon, September 24th, LaMelle received a call from Detective Bruno of the Chappaqua Police Department seeking her statement regarding the incident from the previous Saturday evening. She provided him with the same account she would file as a sworn affidavit.

The responding officer told Steve he had warned Brendan Walsh not to be at future pickups and drop-offs. But in discovery in the San Francisco Battery Case, text messages would show that Brendan became furious after talking to the police. He was not going to allow any more visits. He asked his sister to file a response.

In March, an officer had documented Walsh Sr. following Steve's car on Bedford Road in a silver SUV. Steve's tires had been found deflated on two separate occasions. Walsh told the officer it was coincidental. The officer warned him to stop. He did not stop.

Tara filed a Temporary Order of Protection on March 27, 2019, claiming she had witnessed an incident that she was not present to witness — she was approximately a quarter mile away at the family compound. She wrote what Brendan told her.

The court order had been violated three ways in a single evening: family members present at the drop-off, counsel contacting the supervisor without opposing counsel present, and the supervisor removed without court approval. The only consequence fell on the supervisor who documented what she saw. And the father.



The visits stopped.

Guttridge, Tara's attorney, eventually discovered what he had been used to cover up. Months earlier he had written a letter to the court claiming there were "no bruises" on Evie and "no history of abuse" at the Walsh household — claims that were provably false. When he realized he had been used to facilitate a cover-up of deliberate child abuse, he recused himself from the case.

Judge Gordon-Oliver recused herself without comment. The stated reason, disclosed later through counsel: "issues relating to cronyism in the Westchester Court for which my client is a registered whistleblower." She recused not just from Steve's case but from all of attorney DiFabio's cases — eliminating roughly a third of his Westchester family court practice.

Her replacement, Judge Morales-Horowitz, eventually recused as well. Then the third and final judge in Westchester. With only three family court judges in the county, there were no judges left. The case was transferred to Yonkers.

Gordon-Oliver was the first judge to recuse. She would not be the last.

LaMelle had not looked away. She had walked toward a dark car carrying a child, been screamed at by two men she did not know, filed a sworn affidavit, and cooperated with police. For this she was removed from the case by phone.



Years later, at the Battery trial in San Francisco, Tara would be asked about the events of September 21, 2019. Her testimony, under oath:

"Apparently, he was hiding in the van, like somehow — I'm not exactly sure — but my brother and cousin saw him at the end of the driveway."

1 apparently, he was hiding in the van, like somehow -- I'm not
 2 exactly sure -- but my brother and cousin saw him at the end of
 3 the driveway.

4 MR. ADVOCATE: Objection, Judge, this is all
 5 hearsay.

6 THE COURT: Sustained.

7 THE WITNESS: Okay. Whatever, yeah.

8 BY MR. WEDDLE:

9 Q But it's your understanding that Mr. Russell, despite
 10 having an Order of Protection prohibiting him from doing so,
 11 appeared at your parents' house, right?

12 MR. ADVOCATE: This is just another backdoor of
 13 getting the hearsay in, and I object.

14 MR. WEDDLE: I asked for her understanding,
 15 Judge.

16 MR. ADVOCATE: It's all based on hearsay. Lack
 17 of foundation.

18 MR. WEDDLE: Oh, okay. That's fair.

19 BY MR. WEDDLE:

20 Q Where were you living in September of 2018?

21 A 2019.

22 Q I'm sorry, 2019.

23 A I was living at my parents' house on (inaudible)
 24 Road, in Chappaqua.

25 Q Okay. And were you home that evening when Evie

(A) Aarons Court Reporting
 914-621-7271

Trial transcript page from Walsh v. Russell, January 5, 2022. Tara testifying: 'apparently, he was hiding in the van, like somehow — I'm not exactly sure — but my brother and cousin saw him at the end of the driveway.'

The father who had been dropped off on a public road by a court-appointed supervisor, per court order, while

returning his daughter after a supervised visit — reframed as a man hiding in a van.

He was not hiding in a van. He was sitting in the back seat of a court-appointed supervisor's car with his daughter on his lap, being driven to a drop-off that the court had ordered. The supervisor asked him to accompany her because Evie cried when he tried to leave and the area had no streetlights. He asked to be left on the public road — fifty feet from the gate — to avoid any risk of confrontation.

Two men in dark clothing were waiting in a car parked among the bushes with the lights off and what appeared to be baseball bats between their legs. The court order said the family was not to be present at drop-offs. No one on the Walsh side faced any consequence for the ambush, the intimidation of the supervisor, the false 911 call, or the violation of three provisions of the court order.

The only people who were punished were the supervisor who documented what she saw and the father who stood between the dark car and his sleeping daughter.

September 21, 2019 was the last time Steve saw Evie.

He did not know it was the last time. That is the particular cruelty of last times — they do not announce themselves. If he had known, would he have held the weight of her sleeping body against his chest for one more second before handing her to the woman who would carry her through the gate? He did not know. He handed her over and stood in the dark and started walking.



THE AMBUSH

PART VI

THE PATTERN

29

The Memo

2019

Steve files a detailed memorandum describing the ambush, the supervision manipulation, and the historical abuse inside the Walsh household. The court destabilizes. The judge recuses. The case is reassigned.

He put it all in one document.

Not a motion — not yet. A memorandum. The legal equivalent of a person standing in a room and saying: look at this. The format was procedural. The content was not. The memorandum described the Walsh household in the language of evidence, organized by incident, dated where possible, sourced from the family's own writing where their own writing existed.

The ambush at the driveway — Brendan Walsh and Brian Meenan positioned in camouflage at the only exit from Tara Knoll, the visit supervisor standing beside Steve in the dark, the emergency dispatch recording that preserved the moment when a custody exchange became something else. The pattern of supervision manipulation — Deliah Farquharson's private meetings with Tara and Maura, the escalating restrictions applied to the father, the reports about bruises that appeared on Evie during

Walsh-supervised time and then disappeared from the supervisory record. The medication architecture — the family’s multigenerational system of psychiatric diagnosis, covert administration, and institutional cover.

And the Walsh household itself.

Steve’s attorneys drew from Brienne Walsh’s own words. The blog — A Brie Grows in Brooklyn — had been public for years. Brienne had written about the family in long, detailed, unsparing paragraphs. She had named the dysfunction she grew up in. She had documented harm that the family would later deny under oath. “We were hit.” “My mother sometimes punched me, stopped feeding me.” “My sister called CPS 35 times.” These were not allegations from an adversary. They were admissions from inside the household, published by a family member, on a lifestyle blog, in her own voice.

[COURT FILING — 2019 — WALSH ABUSE MOTION — NY FAMILY COURT, FILE 154703]

Comprehensive filing documenting the Walsh family abuse pattern — including evidence of poisoning, physical abuse, custody manipulation, and the multigenerational medication system. The motion draws on Brienne Walsh’s blog admissions, deposition testimony, and documented incidents across years.

The memorandum that asked the court to look at the family its orders were protecting. NY Family Court filing.

PDF_WALSH_ABUSE_MOTION_02 — Walsh Abuse Motion with Exhibits, 2019

The memorandum placed these facts in order and let the order speak. It did so inside a legal proceeding, under a case number, before a judge — Judge Gordon-Oliver, who had been assigned the case after the jurisdiction fight, who had given Steve the choice between challenging New York’s authority over his daughter and seeing her

immediately, who had watched him choose Evie and enter the system that would trap him.

The memorandum asked the court to look at the family its orders were protecting.



The court did not look.

Judge Gordon-Oliver recused herself. The recusal came shortly after the filing. The reason was not made public. The mechanism was pure procedure — a form filed, a case number reassigned, a new judge's name entered into the system. No hearing on the memorandum's contents. No findings. No order directing investigation. The abuse allegations documented in the filing — sourced from the family's own admissions, supported by deposition testimony, corroborated by the supervisory record — entered the court system and produced not adjudication but departure.

The case was reassigned to Judge Horowitz.

Before the recusal, Walsh Sr. had written to Gordon-Oliver directly. The letter — addressed "Dear Judge Gordon-Oliver," typed single-spaced, the format of a man accustomed to addressing authority as a peer — described a process server arriving at his home on a Friday afternoon. His wife had been in the kitchen. She turned around to find a man on the back deck. She was frightened, the letter noted, and with their granddaughter Evelyn in her arms. Walsh Sr. characterized the subpoena as "yet another effort to harass and threaten my family" — though *family*, in the letter's usage, meant something closer to *perimeter*: a boundary to be defended against legal process, not a household to be examined under oath. He asked the judge to require Steve Russell to seek court permission before issuing further subpoenas — to make the instruments of discovery subject to the approval of the

family being discovered. He added, near the bottom, that he had been hospitalized over the weekend and was unable to attend court on Tuesday. The man who had positioned two men in camouflage at a custody exchange, who had denied a court-ordered visit at his own gate while shaking and red-faced, who had followed Steve's car and blocked his exit on a Sunday evening while claiming to be returning from school, was writing to a judge to describe himself as the one being harassed.

Gordon-Oliver had been the judge longest. She had seen the jurisdiction dispute. She had watched the supervision system operate. She had the memorandum in front of her — the ambush, the manipulation, the abuse, Brienne's own words.

She filed a recusal. The reason was not made public. The case was reassigned to Judge Horowitz. The folder grew thicker. The new judge's familiarity with what was inside it started at zero.



Claudette LaMelle — the supervisor who had documented the ambush, who had witnessed the men in camouflage, who had written down what she observed and filed it the way supervisors are supposed to file things — was removed from the case.

Her removal was not announced as punishment. It did not need to be. The system did not argue with LaMelle's documentation. It did not dispute what she had seen. It simply removed the person who had seen it and continued without her.

The visitation system collapsed.

Steve was in a rented house in Westchester. Evie was at Tara Knoll, behind the hedgerows, inside the compound, inside the family system the memorandum had described. The distance between them was a few minutes'

walk. The institutional distance — measured in case reassignments, supervisor removals, and unexamined filings — was infinite.



What the memorandum revealed, beyond the Walsh household, was the architecture of the trap itself.

[iMessage — Linda Russell — July 2018]

July 2018

Tara: Steve sent an agreement today. I could move back to Brooklyn. I told my family and now they have all joined up to say they will take legal action against Steve and I for custody of Evie if we leave.

QUOTE-TARA-FAMILY-CUSTODY-THREAT — Tara Walsh to Linda Russell, July 2018

The message was sent to Steve's mother. Tara was telling Linda what happened when settlement became possible — when Steve offered a path back to Brooklyn, back to proximity, back to something that might have looked like resolution. The Walsh parents responded not by allowing their daughter to settle but by threatening to take custody from her if she did. The scheme's continuation was not Tara's free choice. It was enforced by the family system that created her.

This was the detail the memorandum tried to make visible. Not just the trap around Steve — the trap around Tara. The family system that produced her methods was now enforcing her compliance. The woman who poisoned Steve's wine was also the daughter whose parents threatened to take her child if she settled. Gordon-Oliver had the memorandum. Horowitz would inherit the file without it ever being heard.



Months later, a text message between Steve and Sergeant Caraway of SFPD's Special Victims Unit would reveal how far the court's reach extended. Caraway — who had received five hundred pages of evidence documenting the poisoning, who had the jurisdiction, who had the case number — explained why the criminal investigation had stalled. The case, he wrote, was never reopened. The underlying issues made it difficult to prosecute. And then the sentence that connected the family court's procedural maneuvers to the criminal case's death: he had been provided a court order by a party of this investigation.

Not by a judge. By a party. Someone involved in the custody case had handed a family court order to a police sergeant to explain why the criminal case should not proceed. The wall between the two court systems — family and criminal, New York and California, procedural and evidentiary — was not as high as the architecture suggested. Orders obtained without hearings in a family court in Westchester were reaching a police sergeant in San Francisco, and the police sergeant was accepting them as reasons not to act.

The memorandum Steve filed had described the household. The court's response described the system. Gordon-Oliver's recusal, LaMelle's removal, Horowitz's inheritance of a case he had no context for, and a family court order crossing state lines to kill a criminal investigation — each was individually explicable. Taken together, they were the institutional equivalent of the Walsh family's own pattern: receive evidence of harm, rearrange the personnel, continue as before.

Steve sat in Westchester with the memorandum filed and the judge gone and the supervisor removed and his daughter behind the hedgerows at Tara Knoll. The filing

sat in the system. The system did what systems do with documents that describe what no one wants to examine.

It filed them.



30

Aunt K

2017-2021

Kelly Turnure is known through the record. She built the blog, compiled the evidence books, and wrote letters to three judges in three months. She helped Steve win the Ring case. She met Evie and became Aunt K. The system that ignored justice also ignored her. She lost a baby to Chappaqua poison.

Kelly Turnure is known through the record.

Not through the private details of a relationship — how two people met, what they said to each other in the early weeks, the particular quality of a reconnection after time apart. Those things happened. They belong to the people who lived them. What belongs to the record is what Kelly built, what she wrote, and what the system cost her.



In May 2021, a website appeared. StevieLovesEvie.com. 146 posts. The About page carried a byline: “by Aunt K.”

"This website was created by Kelly Turnure (Aunt K) with the help of many individuals connected to Evie's case." Subscription price: \$127 per year. January 27 is Evie's birthday.

Kelly put herself through college as a waitress in San Francisco. She had worked in banking and investment management. She had taken an opportunity to move to East Africa to work on a project she found interesting and important. She was not from the world of family court or custody litigation or forensic evidence indexing.

She entered it anyway.

She read every court document, every email, every piece of evidence. She built the blog from primary sources — not summaries, not secondhand accounts, but the actual filings and transcripts and text messages produced in discovery. She organized the evidence into four hardbound volumes — *The Beginning*, *The Drugging*, *The Courts*, *The Evidence and the Lies* — with photographs, timelines, and cross-referenced exhibits. Four hundred images arranged so that a father reading to his daughter on one page faced a lethal-dose search on the next. She sent Steve notes on the book drafts — which slides needed which evidence, where Tara's own texts should be inserted, which testimony to include. She was building an archive before anyone called it that.

The blog organized the case into series: The Crime, The Courts, The Abuse, The Coverup. Each series drew from the same evidence that would later be presented at trial. Kelly compiled what no single court file contained — the complete picture, drawn from two states, four judges, six attorneys, and five years of proceedings.

She signed her posts "Aunt K." A rainbow heart in cursive on a black background.



Before the blog, before the books, Kelly helped Steve fight Ring.

In February 2018, Amazon acquired Ring for more than a billion dollars. Jamie Siminoff personally netted roughly three hundred million. Steve's 205,308 stock options — earned during the years he had served as interim CTO, recruited the Ukraine team, brought in Kleiner Perkins, and co-invented the technology — were now worth real money. Ring's general counsel wrote that the options had expired. The transmittal documents required a general release of all claims. Sign everything or get nothing.

Steve didn't sign.

On November 1, 2018, he filed a complaint in Los Angeles Superior Court. *Russell v. Ring LLC and Jamie Siminoff*. Fourteen counts. Kelly helped organize the case, helped Steve see it through to settlement in February 2019. Winning anything against Amazon was itself a thing.

It was the first legal win. It would not be the last.



She met Evie during one of the visits that occurred before the system collapsed entirely. The meeting was quiet. Kelly sat on the floor. She did not try to hold Evie. She did not try to be anything. She spoke in a calm, steady voice and let the child come to her at the child's pace.

Evie came.

The name emerged the way children's names for people emerge — organically, without announcement. K. Aunt K. The kind of name a child gives to someone who has become part of her world.

For a brief period, something like a family formed — though the system would not have recognized the word, since Kelly had no legal standing in the case, no party designation, no right to be heard, and the family court's vocabulary did not contain a term for the person who built

the evidentiary record that the parties' own attorneys had not. Steve, Kelly, and Evie — in rented houses and restaurants and the small domestic moments that are not dramatic enough for court filings but are the actual substance of a life. Feeding a child. Watching a child play. Sitting on a couch while a toddler sleeps between two adults and the room is quiet and the quiet is enough.



Then the system did what the system does.

In February 2021, Kelly wrote to Judge Furman at Westchester Family Court. On her own letterhead. KELLY O. TURNURE.

[LETTER TO COURT — FEBRUARY 23, 2021 — KELLY O. TURNURE]

Kelly Turnure's letter to Hon. Esther Furman, Westchester Family Court. CC: Jennifer Jackman, Tara Walsh, Max DiFabio, Jason Advocate, Stephen Russell.

"We share a Ford. We recently bought a pop-up camper because we like to be outdoors. I've never flown in a private jet, nor do I expect to. It's a lovely life, even in these difficult times. But, it is not what Ms. Walsh describes."

Kelly told the judge who they actually were. A Ford. A pop-up camper. Not the extravagance Walsh described.

CORR-TURNURE-FURMAN — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Esther Furman, February 23, 2021

She told the judge who they actually were. Not the people Tara had described to the court — the extravagant lifestyle, the private jets, the hidden wealth. A Ford. A pop-up camper. A waitress who had put herself through college. She corrected the record because no one else was going to correct it, and the court was making decisions based on a version of reality that did not exist.

A month later, she wrote to Judge Davidson. The letter was longer. She described reading every court document, every email, every piece of evidence. She called the case what it was: one of the most egregious miscarriages of justice she had ever seen or heard. She noted that three judges had recused themselves, six attorneys had withdrawn or been fired, and nearly three years had passed without a hearing.

Six weeks after that, she wrote to Judge Egitto. This letter was different. Something had happened between the Davidson letter and the Egitto letter. Steve had requested to appear by phone at a visitation conference because Kelly was recovering from a medical procedure under anesthesia. The court denied the request at 5:30 PM the night before — after it would have been possible to fly in from California. No request was made for documentation of the medical procedure. No accommodation was offered.

Steve left Kelly in recovery and flew to New York for what became the default that gave Tara sole custody.

[LETTER TO COURT — MAY 10, 2021 — KELLY O. TURNURE]

Kelly Turnure's letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, AJSC, Dutchess Family Court. Re: the Matter of Russell v. Walsh (Docket# 154703).

"After nearly three years it's become an awful version of Groundhog's Day." Kelly documented what the courts would not: that Raymond Griffin was a fraud, that Walsh had defaulted twice on actual hearings, that the system was producing injustice through procedural exhaustion.

After nearly three years it's become an awful version of Groundhog's Day.

CORR-TURNURE-EGITTO — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, May 10, 2021

Furman, Davidson, Egitto. Each letter on her own letterhead. Each letter laying out the facts with the directness of someone who had read the entire record and

could not understand how the people responsible for adjudicating it had not. She identified Griffin as a fraud before anyone else did publicly. She documented the Tale of Two Defaults — Walsh failing to appear for actual hearings while the court entered a default against Steve at a scheduling conference.

She had told Steve once: “Your problem is that you don’t act like a victim.” She meant the precision. The organized binders. The cross-referenced exhibits. The way he entered a courtroom with the evidence assembled and the argument prepared. The system was not built for people who arrived armed. It was built for people who arrived broken.

None of the letters changed anything.

The system that ignored justice also ignored her.



Kelly is known through the record. Through 146 blog posts signed “Aunt K.” Through hardbound evidence books with cross-referenced exhibits. Through three letters to three judges that were filed and forgotten. Through book notes sent at 7 PM on a Monday, organizing the evidence into something a reader could follow. Through a photograph on the blog — Steve and Evie at two years old — with a caption that said everything the letters could not.

She entered a damaged situation and tried to make the truth visible. She believed that if people could just see the evidence, they would do the right thing. She built the infrastructure for them to see it.

Most of them chose not to look.

What the system took from Kelly cannot be measured in legal outcomes or judicial decisions. It is measured in the distance between the life she entered and the life the system produced. She came into a story about a father and a daughter. She stayed through the poisoning, through the

litigation, through the institutional failures, through
letters to judges who would not read them.

She lost a baby to Chappaqua poison.

That is enough.



31

The Reno Bottle

December 2019

They open a bottle of wine from the Potrero Hill years. Both become extremely ill. Kelly is pregnant. She loses the baby. Testing reveals mycophenolic acid — an immunosuppressant used for organ transplants — at seven times the normal range. Kelly's levels spike at fourteen times normal, then fall to zero. A single acute poisoning from a bottle that had been sitting on a shelf for months, waiting.

They were trying to start over.

Reno was the kind of place a person goes when they want to be somewhere that is not the place they are leaving. Not beautiful in the way San Francisco is beautiful — not hills and fog and the architectural assertion of a city that knows it matters. Reno was flat and bright and surrounded by desert and mountains and the particular emptiness of a place where no one is watching.

Steve had set up a bug-out apartment earlier during the security period — a physical Plan B stocked with the things a person needs if they leave quickly. The apartment was a loft in a newly built complex on 3rd Street — a pool, a Korean restaurant on the ground floor, a small organic

grocery with what turned out to be the best meat counter Steve had found in any city he had lived in. Dan had furnished it from outlet stores and Costco: a big ottoman, a glass table, shelves that Steve filled with his own books. Board games stacked in a closet. Tall windows. It was, Kelly said, cute. It felt like an adventure. The liquor cabinet from the house on Vermont Street sat against the wall, carried across state lines the way furniture is carried, as proof that a previous life existed.

Kelly was pregnant.

The pregnancy was early — new enough to be a possibility more than a certainty, the weeks when the body is doing something extraordinary and the mind is catching up. They had not told people yet. The knowledge existed between them like a held breath.



Around Christmas, one evening, they opened a bottle of wine.

The bottle was from the Potrero Hill years. A red — the kind that accumulates in a person's collection and gets carried from apartment to apartment because it is not special enough to open on a special occasion but too good to throw away. It had been in the liquor cabinet. It had made the trip from San Francisco to Reno. It had been sitting on a shelf in the bug-out apartment for months.

They had picked up food from the grocery downstairs. Steve was grilling it in a pan that was too small and too thin — the kind that comes with a furnished apartment — with too much butter to compensate for the surface. The bottles from the liquor cabinet sat on the high-top counter that served, with two stools, as their dining room.

They drank it.

Within hours, both of them were extremely ill.

Not wine-sick. Not the headache of too much tannin or the sluggishness of too much alcohol. This was systemic — nausea, dizziness, a violent wrongness that was severe and specific and identical in both of them. The same onset. The same progression. The same symptoms arriving simultaneously in two people who had shared one bottle.

Kelly lost the baby.

The miscarriage happened in the days that followed. The pregnancy that had been a held breath released, and what was left was the absence of what had been forming and the specific grief of a loss that is biological and personal and impossible to describe to anyone who has not experienced it.

Steve held Kelly through it.

Steve held Kelly through it.

He did not know what to say. The pregnancy had existed between them for weeks as a held breath, a private certainty, and now the breath released into a grief that was biological and specific and caused by someone who was not in the room. Kelly had not been the target. She had opened a bottle of wine in a kitchen in Reno — the most ordinary act — and the bottle had done what it was made to do. Had Tara known the wine would eventually be opened by whoever came next? Had she cared? Or had the bottle simply sat on its shelf with the patience of something that does not need to be aimed?



Before the lab results. Before the science confirmed what his body already knew. Steve sat with the loss the way a person sits with a loss that has no process — no filing, no court date, no evidence index. Just the fact that Kelly was in the next room and the pregnancy was gone and the bottle was empty on the counter. The apartment was quiet. Kelly was not sleeping — she occupied the specific silence

of a body that has lost what it was building, a silence Steve recognized, because his own body had been failing for years without his understanding why, and now Kelly's had failed in a single evening.

He had the wine tested.

The laboratory report arrived in January 2020. The result was not ambiguous.

**[LABORATORY REPORT — JANUARY 2020 — FORENSIC
LABORATORY ANALYSIS]**

Laboratory analysis of a wine sample from Steve's Reno residence detected Mycophenolic Acid at a concentration of 349.87 ng/g creatinine. The reference range is 5 to 50 ng/g. Steve's level was approximately seven times the upper bound of normal.

349.87 ng/g. Reference range: 5 to 50. Seven times the upper bound of normal.

LAB-MYCOPHENOLIC-ACID — Wine Sample Analysis,
January 2020

Three hundred forty-nine point eight seven nanograms per gram. Reference range: five to fifty. Seven times the upper limit.

The reference range on the laboratory report — five to fifty nanograms per gram — was established for transplant patients. Bodies expected to contain mycophenolic acid. Bodies whose physicians prescribed it, whose levels were monitored at regular intervals to prevent rejection or toxicity. The range assumes a patient. The form does not contain a field for a body that has no transplant, no prescription, and no medical reason to carry the substance at any concentration, let alone seven times the expected ceiling. The report confirms the presence and the quantity. What it cannot say — what no laboratory form is designed to say — is how it got there.

Mycophenolic acid is an immunosuppressant — the active metabolite of mycophenolate mofetil, marketed as

CellCept, prescribed to transplant recipients to prevent their bodies from rejecting a new organ. It works by stopping immune cells from multiplying. T lymphocytes, B lymphocytes — the cells that recognize and fight infection — are prevented from proliferating. In a transplant patient, this suppression is the treatment. In a person who has not received a transplant, the same mechanism disarms the immune system against everything it encounters.

Steve had not received an organ transplant. He had no prescription for mycophenolate or any immunosuppressant. Mycophenolic acid does not occur naturally in food, water, or the environment at detectable levels. It does not appear in wine through fermentation, aging, or storage. Its presence in a bottle at seven times the reference range is not an artifact. It is not contamination. It is not a false positive.

It is a poison.

[TOXICOLOGY EVIDENCE — 2020 — MEDICAL/TOXICOLOGY RECORDS]

Mycophenolic acid produces immunosuppression — persistent infections, impaired wound healing, systemic inflammation, chronic fatigue. The clinical presentation mirrors autoimmune illness and chronic fatigue syndrome. In a person not known to be taking the drug, the symptoms would be attributed to other causes. In a person whose partner was managing their medications, the symptoms would be invisible.

The clinical presentation mirrors autoimmune illness. In a person whose partner was managing their medications, the symptoms would be invisible.

F-033 — Mycophenolic Acid, Toxicology and Clinical Profile

Mycophenolic acid is also an antiproliferative — it prevents cells from dividing. In an early pregnancy, where the embryo is the most rapidly dividing tissue in the body,

the drug does not distinguish between immune cells and the cells that are becoming a child. Clinical literature reports miscarriage rates approaching fifty percent in first-trimester exposures.

A test was performed on Kelly.

Her first result showed mycophenolic acid at fourteen times the normal range. Her second test — taken after clearance — showed zero. The sequence was consistent with a single acute poisoning event followed by metabolic clearance. Not chronic environmental exposure. Not dietary contamination. Not anything that accumulates over time. A spike and then nothing. One bottle. One evening. One exposure.

The pattern told its own story. Two people drink the same wine. Both become severely ill within hours. One loses a pregnancy. Laboratory testing confirms an immunosuppressant drug at concentrations that can only be explained by deliberate introduction. The second test confirms clearance — proving the exposure was singular, not environmental.

The wine was the source. The wine had been poisoned before Steve left San Francisco. The poison had been sitting on a shelf in a bug-out apartment in Reno for months, carried across state lines inside a bottle that looked like every other bottle, waiting for the evening someone decided to open it.



Steve sat in the apartment and looked at the laboratory report.

This was the fourth discovery.

The first had been the lithium test in March 2017 — a number on a lab report, 1.1 micrograms per milligram where the reference range topped at 0.18. Six times normal. A data point without a story, a fact that existed in

the space between what was happening and what anyone was willing to believe was happening.

The second had been the Brooklyn night in 2017 — the dissociative fog after taking the same Adderall he had taken for years. The tamper screws at eleven o'clock when he left. Not at eleven o'clock when he returned. No test run. No sample preserved. The Brooklyn episode lived in the space between what Steve experienced and what could be proven.

The third had been Abby Tedla's confession in the kitchen — her brother in the FBI had told her to tell Steve what she knew. Tara had been putting Seroquel in his wine. She had asked Abby to help. She had asked Bryan to help. And then the Seroquel appeared in Steve's bloodstream — January 2018, detected, confirmed.

Now the fourth. Mycophenolic acid. Seven times normal. In a bottle from the years when Steve was sick and no one could explain why.

[EMAIL — 2019-11-14 — EMAIL ARCHIVE]

Steve to Kelly, forwarding his November 13 email to DiFabio and Jackman: "Tara is a criminal who drugged and abused me and continues to coordinate with conmen under FBI indictment. She and her boyfriend attempted to extort me and both Kelly and I have been sent to hospital after break-ins, druggings and attacks. She not only drugged me with Lithium and Seroquel for over a year, but also with Mycophenolic Acid an immunosuppressant and LSD." Steve names the full substance inventory to his attorneys: Lithium, Seroquel, Mycophenolic Acid, and LSD.

EMAIL_9755 — Steve Russell to Kelly Turnure,
Forwarded Email, November 14, 2019

Four substances across four years. Lithium. Seroquel. Mycophenolic acid. Suspected hallucinogens. Each showing the same signature: acute spike, followed by

clearance. Each consistent with covert administration. Each producing symptoms — fatigue, confusion, immune suppression, dissociation — that were attributed to other causes by physicians who did not know to test for what they were not looking for.

He had not been sick. He had been poisoned.

The immunosuppressant explained the years when his body could not fight infection, when his immune system produced the constellation of symptoms that three doctors had attributed to Lyme disease, chronic fatigue, babesia. The symptoms arrived when he was home and departed when he traveled. His clarity returned in hotels and airports and other people's offices, and vanished again each evening in the apartment on Vermont Street.



Steve put the laboratory report on the counter.

Kelly was in the next room. She had lost a pregnancy to the same bottle. The same substance that had been suppressing Steve's immune system for years had now taken something from her — something that could not be measured in nanograms per gram, that did not appear on laboratory reports, that existed only in the space between what had been forming and what would never form.

The mountains outside the window were dark. The desert was dark. Reno's lights blinked in the distance like a city pretending it did not know it existed.

The wine bottle was empty.

The bottle had carried the scheme across state lines and across years. Tara had poisoned the wine in San Francisco — before the custody fight, before the supervised visits, before the ambush, before the bruises, before the five court-appointed supervisors and the six recused attorneys and the three recused judges. She had poisoned it and then Steve had packed it into the liquor

cabinet and carried it to Reno and set it on a shelf where it waited. Not for him. For whoever opened it.

Kelly opened it. And lost a child.

The Reno bottle was the fourth discovery but it was also the first proof that the poisoning was not improvised. It was infrastructure. A bottle poisoned months or years before it would be consumed, stored among other bottles, indistinguishable, patient. The scheme did not require Tara's presence — though presence is not quite the right word, because it implies distance, and the poison was always present, sitting on a shelf in a room where Steve and Kelly read books and played board games and grilled dinner in a pan that was too small. It only required her preparation. The poison worked on its own schedule — whenever someone decided to open a particular bottle on a particular evening in a place three hundred miles from where the crime was committed.

The distance between the crime and its consequence was the design.



THE RENO BOTTLE

PART VII

THE COURTS II

Five O'Clock

February 6, 2020

Kelly undergoes surgery. Steve's attorneys request remote appearance at a visitation conference. At five o'clock the evening before, the court denies the request. He boards an overnight flight. When he arrives, Judge Horowitz has already entered a default — granting permanent custody and a five-year order of protection at what was scheduled as a status conference. Fourteen months later, his motion to vacate is still pending when the third judge recuses.

After Judge Gordon-Oliver recused herself from all of attorney DiFabio's cases — eliminating roughly a third of his Westchester family court practice — the case was reassigned to Judge Nilda Morales-Horowitz.

A visitation conference was scheduled for February 6, 2020. The purpose was procedural — scheduling, status, the bureaucratic machinery of a custody case that had stalled since the last supervisor was removed in September 2019. Steve had not seen Evie since the ambush at Tara Knoll. Five months of silence, and a conference to discuss what came next.



In late January, Kelly required emergency surgery in San Francisco. The procedure necessitated general anesthesia and sedation. It was not elective in the way a surgery is described as elective when the alternative is worse. Steve was with her — in the particular posture of a person who stays beside a hospital bed because the person in the bed is more important than whatever is on the other side of the door.

On January 24, DiFabio wrote to the court. The letter was straightforward: Steve's fiancée was recovering from surgery in California. He requested permission to appear by telephone at the February 6 conference. The letter also noted a second concern — the spread of COVID-19 in the San Francisco Bay Area, the travel advisories that were beginning to discourage cross-country flights.

The court did not respond.

On February 4 — two days before the conference — DiFabio sent a follow-up. Still no response. The letter asked, for the second time, to confirm that Steve would be permitted to appear by phone at a scheduling conference three thousand miles away.

[SWORN AFFIDAVIT — 2021-01-12 — SWORN UNDER OATH]

"In the late afternoon of February 5, 2020 — the afternoon prior to the February 6, 2020 conference — the Court informed us that it was denying my request to appear by telephone and was requiring in-person attendance."

Five o'clock the evening before. The denial, the overnight flight, the landing in New York to find the conference already over.

, Five o'clock the evening before. The denial, the overnight flight, the landing in New York to find the conference already over.

LEGAL-RUSSELL-AFFIDAVIT-DEFAULT — Affidavit of Stephen Grant Russell, January 12, 2021

Five o'clock. The evening before.

The denial arrived at the hour when flights become scarce and plans become impossible and the space between a person and a courthouse three thousand miles away becomes a matter of airline schedules and arithmetic. San Francisco to New York. Red-eye availability. Court calendar. Landing time minus transit time minus the distance between JFK and White Plains.

Steve booked the only available flight — 6:20 a.m. the next morning. He left Kelly in the hospital. He drove to the airport in the dark. He flew through the night, sitting in a pressurized cabin, watching the continent pass below, calculating whether a man who left San Francisco at dawn could reach a courthouse in Westchester by the time the clerk called the case.



He could not.

DiFabio appeared at the conference on Steve's behalf. He explained the circumstances — the surgery, the January 24 letter, the twelve days of silence, the five o'clock denial, the overnight flight, the landing time. He told the court that Steve was in the air. He told the court that Steve was represented. He told the court that Steve was willing and able to appear by phone and that, given a brief continuance, he would be there in person.

Judge Horowitz entered a default.

The word means absence. It means: the party did not appear. It does not mean: the party's attorney appeared and explained that his client was on an airplane because the court denied his phone request twelve hours earlier. It does not mean: the party's fiancée is recovering from surgery and he left her bedside to fly through the night. It does not mean: the party sent two letters requesting

accommodation and received no response for twelve days. Default means the record says he was not there. And the record does not hold the reasons.

What happened next was not a scheduling conference.

[COURT ORDER — 2020-02-06 — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT]

On the finding of default, Judge Morales-Horowitz entered a permanent order of protection against Steve — a five-year restraining order — and granted Tara sole legal and physical custody of Evie. The court released Tara from the requirement of a mental health examination that Gordon-Oliver had ordered. It reversed Gordon-Oliver's determination that Tara should remain confined to her family's Chappaqua compound for Evie's safety. The final order was drafted by Tara's attorney, signed without edit, and given to Tara ex parte. To this date it has never been provided to Steve.

A visitation conference converted into permanent orders. Custody, protection, mental health evaluation — all entered without hearing.

, A visitation conference converted into permanent orders. Custody, protection, mental health evaluation — all entered without hearing.

B-4_014 — Temporary Order of Protection, Entered on Default, February 6, 2020

A visitation conference — a scheduling matter, a procedural checkpoint — had been converted into a ruling on the merits of every pending petition. Permanent custody. Permanent protection order. Release from mental health evaluation. Reversal of the prior judge's safety conditions. All of it entered in the absence of the party whose daughter was being permanently removed, whose attorney was present and objecting, whose airplane was at that moment descending over the eastern seaboard.

Steve landed in New York in the early morning. He went to the courthouse.

The conference was over.



He filed a motion to vacate the default on January 12, 2021 — eleven months later, after assembling the record: the two letters to the court, the court's denial, the flight confirmation, the surgical records, Kelly's testimony. His affidavit was fourteen pages. It described the January 24 request, the twelve days of silence, the five o'clock denial, the overnight flight, the meritorious defenses — the California restraining order against Tara, her sworn admission to drugging him, the sixteen supervised visits, the five supervisors' consistent findings.

The motion argued what the record showed: Steve's absence was not willful. His attorney had appeared. The conference was not a hearing. The orders were entered without testimony, without evidence, without argument. There was no default — there was a manufactured absence, converted into a permanent disposition.

[COURT ORDER — 2021-03-10 — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT]

Judge Wayne A. Humphrey — the third judge assigned after Gordon-Oliver and Horowitz — signed an order scheduling the motion to reargue, vacate default, and stay enforcement. Responsive papers due March 26, 2021. Reply papers due April 2, 2021.

The motion to vacate. Filed with the third judge.
Decided by none of them.

, The motion to vacate. Filed with the third judge.
Decided by none of them.

B-7_020 – Order Setting Motion Schedule, March 10, 2021

The motion was transferred to Judge Humphrey. Tara was given until March 26 to respond. Reply papers were due April 2.

On April 6, 2021, Humphrey recused himself — not from the default motion but from all matters involving DiFabio, citing what he described as a pattern of “disrespectful, discourteous, and borderline unethical” behavior by counsel. Humphrey’s decision and order ran two pages. One paragraph was devoted to the recusal. The rest was an itemized criticism of DiFabio’s courtroom demeanor — appearing in a bathrobe on a virtual conference, being hostile to chamber staff, engaging in “questionable and unproductive litigation tactics.”

The motion to vacate the default went with him.

Three judges. Three recusals. The case transferred again — to Yonkers, to Judge Schauer, who would build the next set of orders on the foundation Horowitz had laid. Each departure reset the clock. Each new judge inherited a record that began with the words: default. The reasons — the surgery, the letters, the flight — were in a motion that no judge had yet decided.

Evie turned three during the recusals. She turned three in the Walsh compound, in the household where Brienne had described being hit, where a grandmother’s nails had left marks on forearms a generation earlier. Steve did not send a gift. He did not know if a gift would reach her. He did not know what she liked now — which books, which toys, which foods. The girl who had taken her first steps during Visit 9 was walking and talking and becoming a person in a house he was not allowed to enter, while three judges in sequence decided they could not decide.



Kelly wrote letters.

Not to Steve’s attorney. Not to the opposing counsel. To the judges themselves.

In February 2021 she wrote to Judge Furman, who was handling interim support. She described their actual life —

a shared Ford, a pop-up camper, the modest reality behind the Walsh family's portrait of extravagance. She described what the default had cost: permanent custody to a woman who had been caught drugging Steve, who had been ordered confined to her family's compound, who had been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder with sociopathic tendencies by a forensic psychologist recommended by her own doctor. All of it reversed at a conference Steve's attorney attended and Steve tried to attend.

In March she wrote to Judge Davidson at the New York Judicial Conduct Commission. In May she wrote to Judge Egitto, the Supervising Judge for Family Courts in the Ninth Judicial District.

[CORRESPONDENCE — 2021-05-10 — KELLY O. TURNURE]

"Hon. Morales-Horowitz would grant Ms. Walsh full custody, release her from the requirements of a mental health examination, reverse Hon. Gordon-Oliver's determination that Ms. Walsh should be confined to her family home and issued a 5 year permanent restraining order against Steve 'on default' because he was not physically present at a visitation conference, but represented and available by phone in February 2020 as COVID began. The 'final order' drafted by Ms. Walsh's now recused attorney Jonathan Guttridge was signed, without edit, and given to Ms. Walsh ex-parte and to this date has never been provided to Steve."

After nearly three years it's become an awful version of Groundhog's Day.

, After nearly three years it's become an awful version of Groundhog's Day.

Ex0_01 — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, May 10, 2021

Kelly's letter to Egitto ran four pages. She described six attorneys recusing over ethical issues. Three judges recusing. The Horowitz default. The Humphrey recusal.

She called it what it was: “an awful version of Groundhog’s Day.” Each new attorney or judge was a reset. Each reset erased the context that the previous judge had accumulated. The system’s weakness was not corruption — it was rotation. The door kept revolving, and each time it turned, the person inside had to start again.

She described a second default — Tara’s. On March 10, 2021, Tara had failed to appear at an actual hearing. Her attorney had not appeared. She had been properly served. Judge Humphrey rescheduled. On March 24, Tara defaulted again. Same hearing. Same proper service. Same absence.

Two defaults. One manufactured by the system to produce a permanent custody order against a represented father. One genuine, by the mother, twice, on the same matter — rescheduled without consequence.



Judge Egitto’s office responded on May 12, 2021.

[CORRESPONDENCE — 2021-05-12 — CHAMBERS OF HON. JOSEPH A. EGITTO]

“Mr. Russell and/or his attorney may make arrangements with the clerk’s office to review the contents of the Court’s file for his case. Mr. Russell is encouraged to speak with his attorney about his rights and responsibilities in his proceedings; including, but not limited to, the means by which to reopen a default judgement and the filing of an appeal.”

The system’s answer to six recused attorneys and three recused judges: speak with your attorney.

, The system’s answer to six recused attorneys and three recused judges: speak with your attorney.

LEGAL-EGITTO-RESPONSE – Chambers of Hon. Joseph A. Egitto, May 12, 2021

The Supervising Judge's office did not address the six recused attorneys. Did not address the three recused judges. Did not address the default entered over a represented party's objection at a scheduling conference. Did not address the twelve days of silence before the five o'clock denial. Did not address the surgery, the flight, the two letters.

The response was three paragraphs. The first noted that "Judge Egitto strives to insure that all litigants receive from court personnel, the respect, fairness and attention to which they are entitled." The second declined to discuss the case due to confidentiality. The third suggested Steve speak with his attorney.

Steve had an attorney. His attorney had appeared at the conference. His attorney had explained the circumstances. His attorney had filed the motion to vacate. The motion had been transferred to a judge who recused himself before deciding it. The suggestion to speak with his attorney was the system's final word on a default that had removed a father from his daughter's life — a father whose attorney had been in the courtroom the entire time.



A visitation conference became a permanent custody order. A twelve-day silence became a five o'clock denial. A five o'clock denial became an overnight flight. An overnight flight became a default. A default became a five-year order of protection. A scheduling matter became a final disposition on every pending petition — custody, visitation, protection, mental health evaluation — entered without hearing, without testimony, without evidence, without the presence of the person it most affected, in the presence of the attorney it least concerned.

The foundation was laid. Every order in the file now traced back to a conference room in White Plains on the

morning of February 6, 2020, when a man was in the air and a court decided he was absent.

Kelly had called it a tale of two defaults. One father, represented, available by phone, flying through the night — defaulted. One mother, unrepresented, unexcused, absent twice on the same matter — rescheduled.

The system did not see the asymmetry. The system does not look at itself.



Two Defaults

2020-2021

Steve seeks a Temporary Order of Protection in New York. The TOP is granted. At the evidentiary hearing, Tara and her attorneys fail to appear. Twice. The court absorbs the absence. Judge Humphreys recuses himself — trashing Steve's attorney on the way out. Kelly checks the tires before every trip.

The Temporary Order of Protection was granted at the first hearing.

The application was filed in Westchester County Family Court. The court issued the TOP.

[COURT ORDER — 2020 — WESTCHESTER COUNTY FAMILY COURT — FILE NO. 154703]

Temporary Order of Protection issued in the matter of Tara Walsh (Petitioner/Respondent) against Stephen G. Russell (Respondent/Petitioner). Extended Order under Docket Nos.

V/F641-18/19F/19G/19H/20M/21O. The TOP

established protective conditions while the court scheduled a full evidentiary hearing to determine whether a permanent order was warranted.

The TOP was granted. The evidentiary hearing was scheduled. The other side never showed up.

A full evidentiary hearing was scheduled. Steve's legal team prepared. Max Di Fabio, who had taken over from the string of prior attorneys, assembled witnesses and organized exhibits. The case for a permanent order was built from the same evidence that had persuaded the California court — supplemented by everything that had happened since: the Reno bottle, the bruise fabrication, the Guttridge letter, the two defaults on the kidnapping case.

The hearing date arrived.

Tara and her attorneys did not appear.

The courtroom had the particular quality of a room arranged for a proceeding that is not going to happen — the tables set, the files prepared, the clerk waiting, the judge on the bench, and the opposing chairs empty. A default was entered. The hearing was rescheduled.

The second hearing date arrived.

Tara and her attorneys did not appear.

A second default. The same empty chairs. The same clerk recording the absence. The same quiet courtroom absorbing the fact that the person accused of poisoning, of bruise fabrication, of custody manipulation, of fleeing jurisdiction — had simply chosen not to engage with the process designed to evaluate those accusations.

Steve's default had been manufactured through a five o'clock denial and an overnight flight. He had appeared — just barely too late. Tara's defaults came from not showing up at all.

His default had resulted in a custody ruling.

Her defaults resulted in a recusal.



Judge Wayne Humphreys — the judge handling the TOP proceeding — recused himself on April 6, 2021. The motion had come from Steve’s side. Di Fabio had filed it, arguing that the judge had displayed “persistent hostility and personal animus” toward counsel.

The court’s Decision and Order granted the recusal. But the order itself was a weapon — while removing himself from the case, Judge Humphreys used the decision to attack Di Fabio’s conduct. The judge wrote that counsel had “displayed a pattern of behavior that the undersigned has found to be disrespectful, discourteous, and borderline unethical.” That counsel had appeared for a virtual conference “in a bathrobe.” That counsel had conducted himself “in a disrespectful and hostile fashion toward chamber staff.” That the court had been forced to “admonish counsel on several occasions.”

[DECISION AND ORDER — APRIL 6, 2021 — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT — FILE NO. 154703]

The judge granted the recusal — and used the order to trash the attorney who asked for it.

The judge granted the recusal — and used the order to trash the attorney who asked for it.

LEGAL-HUMPHREY-RECUSAL — Decision and Order, Judge Wayne A. Humphrey, April 6, 2021

The recusal was granted. The criticism was preserved in the permanent record. The next judge assigned to the case would inherit a file that now included not just the poisoning evidence and the double default — but a judicial opinion describing the petitioner’s attorney as borderline unethical.

Two judges gone. Tara’s defaults absorbed. The Temporary Order of Protection remained in place. The permanent hearing had not occurred.

Somewhere in Chappaqua, behind the electronic gate, Evie was learning to speak in full sentences. She was

learning colors and animals and the names of the people around her. She was not learning her father's name. The procedural machinery that surrounded her — the recusals, the defaults, the orders — had the effect of erasure. Each month without contact was a month in which the child's memory of her father dimmed, and the family that controlled her access did not need to do anything active to achieve it. They only needed the system to keep turning.



Kelly drove with Steve to the Westchester courthouse for these hearings.

She had been writing up every visit — every observation, every detail of what she witnessed during supervised time with Evie. She wrote letters to the judicial review board. She documented patterns. She sent the documentation into the system and the system did not respond. She wrote more. She sent more. The silence on the other end was not the silence of consideration. It was the silence of a machine that does not have an input for what she was sending.

On the morning of one hearing, they walked to the car and found both front tires deflated. Not punctured — deflated, the valve stems depressed. They were in Westchester in January. The roads were icy. If they had driven onto the Saw Mill River Parkway at speed, the car would have pulled and they could have been seriously hurt.

It happened twice. Both times the morning of a court appearance.

Kelly checked the tires now before every trip to the courthouse. She added it to the list of things she did — the visit write-ups, the letters, the tire checks — the small accumulating labor of someone who cared about something a system had decided not to care about.

The case file grew thicker. The number of judges who had handled it grew longer. The distance between Evie and her father remained the same.



Four Discoveries

2017-2020

The four poisoning discoveries placed side by side. Lithium in March 2017 — six times normal, no prescription. The Brooklyn night — dissociation, tampered medication, no sample preserved. Abby Tedla's confession — "she did it all the time." The Reno bottle — mycophenolic acid at seven times the upper bound, in wine that had been sitting on a shelf for years. What looked like separate incidents becomes a single line drawn across four years and four substances.

Steve sat in the apartment in Reno and looked at the laboratory report.

Three hundred forty-nine point eight seven nanograms per gram. Reference range: five to fifty. Mycophenolic acid — an immunosuppressant prescribed to prevent organ rejection after kidney, heart, and liver transplants. He had not received an organ transplant. He had no prescription for mycophenolate or any immunosuppressant. The substance was in a bottle of wine that had been sitting on a shelf for months, carried from San Francisco in a liquor cabinet because that is what a person does when they leave — they bring the furniture.

It was January 2020. Kelly had lost the baby. The wine was from the Potrero Hill years.

He had been here before. Not in Reno — in this particular room of the mind, the room where a piece of information arrives and rearranges everything that preceded it. He had been in this room three times already. Each time, the information was different. Each time, the rearrangement reached further back.

This was the fourth discovery. And from where he sat, he could see all four of them now — lined up across four years like data points on a graph whose axis he had not known existed until the line became impossible to ignore.



The First Discovery

March 2017. San Francisco.

Steve had been sick for months. The symptoms were diffuse and resistant to explanation — fatigue that did not lift with rest, infections that cycled without resolving, an immune system that seemed to be operating at half capacity. He saw physicians. They tested for Lyme disease, for babesia, for the particular constellation of chronic conditions that cluster around immune suppression without an obvious cause. Nothing fit. The illness was real but refused to announce itself.

A naturopathic physician ordered a comprehensive metals panel through Doctor's Data, a clinical laboratory in St. Charles, Illinois. The specimen was collected on March 9, 2017. The results arrived on March 15.

| [LABORATORY REPORT — MARCH 2017 — DOCTOR'S DATA, INC.]

Essential Elements, Urine. Patient: Stephen Russell.
 Age: 43. Specimen collected: 03/09/2017. Method:
 ISE; Na, K Spectrophotometry; ICP-MS.

Lithium at 6.1x reference range. No prescription. No
 psychiatrist. No explanation — yet.

ExI_02 — Doctor's Data Essential Elements Panel,
 March 2017

One point one micrograms per milligram. The reference range topped at 0.18. Six times normal.

Lithium is a mood stabilizer prescribed for bipolar disorder, mania, and certain depressive conditions. At therapeutic doses it suppresses the amplitude of mood swings. At elevated doses it causes fatigue, tremor, confusion, nausea, impaired concentration, thyroid dysfunction. At sustained elevated doses it damages the kidneys. Steve had no prescription for lithium. No psychiatrist had recommended it. No physician had administered it.

The number sat on the laboratory report — a fact without an explanation. In March 2017, Steve did not know what to do with it. He was sick. The report showed an anomaly. A naturopathic physician might attribute elevated lithium to environmental exposure, contaminated supplements, mineral imbalance. The number did not yet tell a story. It was a data point in a picture that had not assembled.

He filed the report.



The Second Discovery

Later in 2017. Brooklyn.

Steve took his regular Adderall — the same medication, at the same dose, from the same prescription he had been taking for years. What followed was not the familiar stimulant effect. It was a dissociative fog — a pharmacological wrongness, the particular sensation of a substance doing something the substance is not supposed to do. The wrong drug in the right bottle, or the right drug contaminated with the wrong thing.

He noticed the tamper screws on the medication bottle. When he had left the apartment, they were at eleven o'clock. When he returned, they were not.

No test was run. No sample was preserved. The Brooklyn night existed in the space between what Steve experienced and what could be proven — a pharmacological event without a toxicological record, a felt truth with no laboratory confirmation. The first discovery had been a number without a story. The second was a story without a number.

Two incidents. One documented, one not. No connection visible between them unless a person already knew what connected them.



The Third Discovery

2018. The apartment on Vermont Street, San Francisco.

Abrehet Tedla — Abby — had been Evie's nanny since March 2018. She lived with Steve and Tara in the apartment at 301 Mission Street. She worked eighteen to twenty-two hours a day, seven days a week, because Tara's medication prevented her from caring for Evie at night and often during the day. Abby loved Evie. She

described her as the happiest baby she had ever seen in her life.

What Abby saw in that apartment she put under oath.

[SWORN DECLARATION — JULY 9, 2018 — SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO]

Declaration of Abrehet Tedla, Case No. FTP-18-377425, filed July 10, 2018.

She did it all the time. Witnessed. Sworn. Filed.

LEGAL-TEDLA-DECLARATION – Declaration of Abrehet Tedla, Filed July 10, 2018

At least two occasions witnessed. “Did it all the time” — Tara’s own words to the nanny and Dan Ochoa, the property manager. Abby threw away the leftover food in the house. She told Bryan Crutcher — Steve’s security consultant, the retired SFPD officer — to tell Steve not to drink anything. That was the only time she threw away food. She was not otherwise concerned for her own safety. She was concerned for his.

After Abby told Steve about the drugging, Tara fired her. Then called her back the same night — because, Abby testified, she could not take care of Evie by herself. When Abby told Steve what she had seen, Tara yelled: “I hate that fucking nanny.”

And then Tara said the thing that explained everything.

[WITNESSED STATEMENT — 2018 — WITNESSED BY LINDA RUSSELL AND ABREHET TEDLA]

After Tedla disclosed the drugging to Steve, Tara said to him in the kitchen: “I thought if you were crazy too, we could all be together.”

After Tedla disclosed the drugging to Steve, Tara said to him in the kitchen: “I thought if you were crazy too, we could all be together.”

The statement was witnessed by Steve’s mother, Linda Russell, and by Abrehet Tedla.

The architecture of the scheme in one sentence.
 Witnessed by Linda Russell and Abrehet Tedla.

QUOTE-TARA-CRAZY-TOO-TOGETHER – Tara Walsh, Kitchen
 Statement, 2018

If you were crazy too.

The sentence contained the architecture of the entire scheme. Not rage. Not impulse. A theory of the relationship — that if Steve’s brain could be made to malfunction in the same way Tara’s brain malfunctioned, they would be equal. That the distance between them — his stability, her instability — could be closed pharmaceutically. That a person could be poisoned into companionship.

The third discovery was not a laboratory report. It was a confession — partial, qualified, witnessed, sworn. Abby saw the drugs go into the wine. She saw Steve lose consciousness. She heard Tara say she did it all the time. And she heard the reason: not to harm him, in Tara’s telling, but to make him like her.



The Fourth Discovery

December 2019. Reno.

A bottle of wine from the Potrero Hill years. Carried from San Francisco in the liquor cabinet. Sitting on a shelf in the bug-out apartment for months. Steve and Kelly opened it one evening around Christmas. Kelly was pregnant.

Within hours, both were severely ill. Not wine-sick — systemically wrong. The same onset. The same

progression. The same symptoms arriving simultaneously in two people who shared one bottle.

Kelly lost the baby.

Steve sat with the report and thought about Tara's miscarriages.

She had always been having miscarriages. Claims of pregnancy that arrived at the precise moment when distance had become comfortable, then ended in loss. Novelty pregnancy tests found in the apartment by the dozen. An iMessage to a friend about a miscarriage wish. An appeal to Steve months after the breakup, opening with the emotional weight of a shared miscarriage before pivoting to conditions and demands. He had stopped believing the pregnancies were real long before he understood why they might not be.

Now he looked at the laboratory report and thought about mycophenolic acid. An immunosuppressant. Among its documented effects: pregnancy loss. The question formed itself. Had Tara's miscarriages been real — and if so, had she been exposed to the same substances she was putting in his wine? Had she been a victim of her own supply, or someone else's? Or had she known exactly what these drugs did to a body and performed the miscarriages as leverage, invoking a loss she understood pharmacologically?

Or — and Steve let the thought exist without deciding whether it was true — had she known that a bottle of wine laced with an immunosuppressant would eventually be opened by whoever came next? Was this the sweetest revenge, the kind Tara had described in texts to friends? Not impulsive. Not reckless. A bottle that waited.

The report did not answer the question. The report only confirmed that the drug in the bottle on the shelf in Reno — the bottle Tara had prepared before leaving San Francisco — was a drug that ends pregnancies. And that it had ended Kelly's.

Steve had the wine tested.

**[LABORATORY REPORT — JANUARY 2020 — FORENSIC
LABORATORY ANALYSIS]**

Laboratory analysis of a wine sample from Steve's Reno residence detected Mycophenolic Acid at a concentration of 349.87 ng/g creatinine. The reference range is 5 to 50 ng/g. Steve's level was approximately seven times the upper bound of normal.

Seven times normal in the wine. Fourteen times normal in Kelly's blood. Zero on retest. One bottle. One evening.

LAB-MYCOPHENOLIC-ACID — Wine Sample and Blood
Analysis, January 2020

Mycophenolic acid. An immunosuppressant. Prescribed for organ transplant recipients to prevent rejection. It works by suppressing T and B lymphocyte proliferation — the immune system's frontline soldiers. At sustained doses, it produces persistent infections, impaired wound healing, chronic fatigue, systemic inflammation. The clinical presentation mirrors autoimmune illness, chronic fatigue syndrome, the kind of diffuse malaise that sends a person from doctor to doctor without resolution.

Steve had no transplant. No prescription. Mycophenolic acid does not occur in wine through fermentation, aging, or storage. It does not appear in the environment at detectable levels. Its presence in a bottle at seven times the reference range was not contamination or artifact. It was introduced.



The Line

Four discoveries. Four years. The picture that assembled from where Steve sat in Reno was not a picture of four separate events. It was a picture of one event — sustained, systematic, pharmaceutical — viewed from four different angles at four different moments.

The lithium in March 2017 explained the illness. The fatigue, the immune dysfunction, the symptoms that three physicians attributed to Lyme disease or babesia or chronic fatigue — all of them consistent with chronic lithium exposure. The symptoms appeared when Steve was home and departed when he traveled. His clarity returned in hotels and airports and other people's offices and vanished again each evening in the apartment on Vermont Street.

The Brooklyn night explained the method. Not just the wine — any vessel, any substance, any medication left unattended. The tamper screws at the wrong angle. The wrong pharmacological effect from a familiar drug.

Abby Tedla's confession explained the scope. Not twice. Not occasionally. "All the time." A nanny who witnessed it, was asked to participate, refused, and was fired for it. And then Tara's own words — the logic of the scheme laid bare in a single sentence.

The Reno bottle explained the infrastructure. A bottle poisoned months or years before it would be consumed. Stored among other bottles. Indistinguishable. Patient. The scheme did not require Tara's presence. It only required her preparation.

On January 30, 2020 — the same month the Reno lab results came back — Tara sent an email to Steve's attorneys in the California civil case. She was writing about settlement. She wrote it herself, in her own words.

[EMAIL — JANUARY 30, 2020 — TARA WALSH TO COUNSEL FOR STEPHEN RUSSELL]

"I did no wrong to your client and he knows that.
There is no cause or reason I would want to harm him

— in fact only the exact opposite. The two times I have openly admitted to putting Seroquel in his wine, Steve was not even working.”

The two times I have openly admitted. Written to lawyers. Preserved in a legal file. Read to a jury.

ExEMAIL_SEROQUEL_ADMISSION — Tara Walsh to Opposing Counsel, January 30, 2020

“The two times I have openly admitted to putting Seroquel in his wine.”

The sentence performed its own contradiction. “I did no wrong” — followed immediately by an acknowledgment that she had, at minimum, twice admitted to administering a prescription antipsychotic to another person without their knowledge. Not a denial. A reframing. The drugging recast as care, the admission recast as openness, the crime recast as something Steve should have understood and forgiven because he “was not even working.” The email was written to lawyers. It was preserved in a legal file. It would be read to a jury.



The Questions

Steve put the laboratory reports side by side.

Four substances across four years. Lithium in 2017 — detected in a metals panel, six times normal. Seroquel — witnessed by Tedla, admitted by Tara, confirmed in Steve’s bloodstream in January 2018. Mycophenolic acid in 2019 — seven times normal in a bottle of wine, fourteen times normal in Kelly’s blood, zero on retest. And the Brooklyn night — suspected hallucinogenic contamination, never confirmed, never disproven.

Each substance produced symptoms that were attributed to other causes by physicians who did not know to test for what they were not looking for. Each exposure showed the same signature: acute spike, metabolic clearance, normal readings between exposures. Not chronic environmental contamination. Not dietary. Not accidental. Deliberate administration followed by the body's natural clearance — a pattern visible only in retrospect, only when the data points were placed next to each other.

The questions that remained were the questions the record could not answer. Who supplied the mycophenolic acid? A transplant immunosuppressant is not available over the counter. It requires a prescription. Whose prescription? How was it introduced into the wine — before the cork, through injection, by reconstitution? When did the poisoning begin — with the lithium in 2017, or earlier, in the Brooklyn years, before any test was run?

And the hardest question: how long would it have continued if Steve had not left?

The record held the evidence. The record held the lab reports, the sworn declarations, the admissions, the email to opposing counsel. What the record did not hold was the full duration of the scheme, because the scheme was designed to be invisible — to produce symptoms indistinguishable from illness, to operate inside the life of a person who trusted the person operating it, to be discovered only by accident or by the particular stubbornness of a man who kept every document, tested every anomaly, and refused to accept an explanation that did not match what his body was telling him.

Steve had spent a decade at 3VR building systems that turned surveillance footage into searchable data — cameras watching parking lots and hotel lobbies and retail floors, software that could find a face in ten thousand hours of video. The company's premise was that the world

was full of information that became evidence only when someone organized it and looked.

He had turned that instinct inward. Not cameras this time — lab orders, blood draws, chain-of-custody protocols, the particular discipline of a man who had learned that the difference between what happened and what could be proven was documentation. The four discoveries existed because he documented each one. The lithium test he filed. The Brooklyn night he remembered. The Tedla confession he preserved in a sworn declaration. The Reno wine he sent to a laboratory.

The picture had assembled. Four points on a line. The line ran from 2017 to 2019 and possibly further in both directions, into years when no one was testing because no one was looking.

The laboratory reports sat on the counter beside the sworn declarations beside the email to opposing counsel. The line. The substances. The admissions. The picture assembled itself in an apartment in Reno in January 2020, beside a woman who had lost a pregnancy to a bottle of wine that had been poisoned before either of them knew it existed.

The evidence had always been there. It just needed someone to put the pieces next to each other.



The Mutual Order

May 19, 2021

The case passes to a fourth judge. Schauer vacates the Horowitz default and issues two temporary orders of protection — one against each party. The poisoner and the poisoned are treated as symmetrical threats. Steve tells the court a permanent temporary order does not give him a chance to face his accuser. The court tells him he is muddying the record.

Judge Wayne A. Humphrey granted the motion to recuse on April 6, 2021. He was the third judge assigned to File No. 154703.

Gordon-Oliver had been first. She issued the initial court orders, appointed supervisors, established the custody framework — then recused herself when the cronyism complaints surfaced. Morales-Horowitz had been second. She entered a default on a manufactured absence — denied Steve’s remote appearance request at five o’clock the evening before, then defaulted him when he could not fly from California to New York overnight — and built permanent orders on that default. Humphrey was third. DiFabio, Steve’s attorney, moved for recusal on grounds of persistent hostility.

Humphrey granted it. But the order he signed on his way out was not a quiet exit.

[COURT ORDER — 2021-04-06 — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT]

The recusal order grants the motion and punishes the attorney for filing it. Humphrey removed himself not just from Steve's case but from every case DiFabio had before him — destroying a third of his Westchester practice in a single paragraph.

The recusal order grants the motion and punishes the attorney for filing it.

LEGAL-HUMPHREY-RECUSAL — Humphrey Recusal Order,
April 6, 2021

The order acknowledged that DiFabio perceived “persistent hostility and personal animus” and granted the motion on that basis. Then it spent two paragraphs detailing what the judge thought of the attorney who had asked him to step aside: “disrespectful, discourteous, and borderline unethical.” Appearing in a bathrobe on a virtual conference. Attempting to abandon clients. Conducting himself in a hostile fashion toward chamber staff. The recusal was granted — and the cost was extracted in the written record.

Humphrey did not recuse only from Steve's case. He recused from every case involving DiFabio. All matters, present and future. The order eliminated roughly a third of DiFabio's Westchester Family Court practice in a single paragraph.

The pattern held. Anyone who pushed back on the system paid for it. DiFabio had seen something — the manufactured default, the secret orders, the procedural framework that always tilted one direction — and he had named it. The system granted his request and punished him for making it.

Three judges. Three recusals. Only three family court judges sat in Westchester County. The case was transferred to Yonkers.



The Yonkers Family Court occupied the third floor of a municipal building on Warburton Avenue — a branch courthouse, twelve miles south of White Plains, with three courtrooms and a children’s center and the particular atmosphere of a facility that processes custody disputes at volume.

Judge Michelle I. Schauer assumed control of File No. 154703 in May 2021.

The case file that arrived at her chambers contained everything the three prior judges had declined to resolve. Schauer was the fourth. She would be the last.

[COURT ORDER — 2021-05-19 — YONKERS FAMILY COURT]

Temporary Order of Protection issued May 19, 2021. Stephen Grant Russell ordered to: stay away from Tara Katelyn Walsh, her home, her place of employment; refrain from communication by mail, telephone, email, voicemail, or other electronic means; refrain from assault, stalking, harassment, menacing, reckless endangerment, strangulation, criminal obstruction of breathing, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, sexual abuse, intimidation, threats, identity theft, grand larceny, coercion. “YOUR FAILURE TO OBEY THIS ORDER MAY SUBJECT YOU TO MANDATORY ARREST AND CRIMINAL PROSECUTION, WHICH MAY RESULT IN YOUR INCARCERATION FOR UP TO SEVEN YEARS.”

Seven years incarceration threatened. The person restrained was the person who had been poisoned.

ExTR_09 — Schauer Temporary Order of Protection, May 19, 2021

On her first appearance date, Schauer issued a Temporary Order of Protection against Steve. The boilerplate language threatened seven years of incarceration. Stay away from Tara. No communication. No contact. The order carried the weight of criminal enforcement and the precision of a form completed in minutes.

The language was identical to every temporary order issued by this court. The facts underlying it were not. The person restrained was the person who had been poisoned.



Twelve days later, on June 1, 2021, Schauer convened her first full hearing on the case. The supervised visits that had been ordered for Steve's mother, Linda Russell, had not occurred. The parties had failed to agree on a schedule. The court had been open for an hour and a half, and the conference had produced nothing.

DiFabio proposed three visits per week — Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday — starting at two hours, escalating to eight. Steve's mother would supervise. Steve would have FaceTime access, facilitated by an independent monitor, with an eye toward his own visits beginning in the third week.

Weddle, Tara's attorney, countered with alternating weekends, three hours Saturday and Sunday. He asked that Tara be present at the beginning of each visit. He asked that Steve not be physically present for any visit. He noted that the Walsh grandparents were unwilling to help facilitate transfers. The reason: they were tired of being sued by Steve.

Then DiFabio said something that stopped the hearing.

Steve's mother had made the drive. She had driven six and a half hours from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, arrived at the Walsh compound, and been told to leave. The Walshes had spoken to her directly.

[HEARING TRANSCRIPT — 2021-06-01 — YONKERS FAMILY COURT]

MR. RUSSELL: "You should know that the Walshes spoke to my mother and very strongly stated they would never allow the visits to happen. And even went so far to say that any orders from this Court would be put in the trash, so it was very, very tough and very clear." THE COURT: "That's something that can easily be dealt with, if that's what happens. There are consequences for violating court orders, but let's — let's not go down that [path]."

Court orders in the trash. Schauer acknowledged the threat and moved on.

ExTR_10_03 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, June 1, 2021

Court orders in the trash. Schauer acknowledged the threat and moved on. There would be consequences, she said, if that's what happened. No further inquiry. No follow-up order. No enforcement mechanism.

The hearing continued for another forty-five minutes. The parties could not agree on a day of the week, the number of hours, the transfer location, or who would be present. Schauer grew impatient. She told the room that if they could not reach agreement, she would impose a schedule herself: one that would inconvenience everyone. She meant it. She issued the order on the record: one visit per week, every Thursday, 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Grandmother picks up Evie from Tara, keeps her for the day, returns her by end of day. No tape recording. No public dissemination of photographs or video. Steve would not be physically present. Transfers at the Kittle House, within the town of New Castle.

One day a week for a grandmother who had driven thirteen hours round trip to be offered twenty minutes.

Steve mentioned, almost as an aside, that the Battery trial in San Francisco was starting in one week — June 7th or 8th. Two court systems, three thousand miles apart, processing the same set of facts simultaneously. In

California, a jury was about to hear evidence of poisoning, battery, and fraud. In New York, the court was negotiating whether a grandmother could spend eight hours with the child whose father had been poisoned.

Schauer's style was immediately clear. She took control. She overrode both parties. She issued orders quickly and with confidence. What she did not do was examine the substance beneath the procedure. The Walsh family's stated intention to ignore court orders was acknowledged and set aside. The poisoning evidence sitting in the case file was not mentioned. The case moved forward on the assumption that what mattered was scheduling, not the facts that had brought the parties before her.



Schauer did two things in the months that followed.

She vacated the Horowitz default. The order that had been entered when Steve arrived at a closed door — the default built on a remote appearance denied at five o'clock, the overnight flight that was impossible — was undone. On consent, with Walsh's attorney agreeing, the procedural defect was acknowledged and removed. The permanent Order of Protection and the custody order that had rested on that default were vacated.

But in vacating the default, Schauer reinstated the interim custody order giving Tara sole legal and physical custody. The procedural error was corrected. The custody arrangement remained identical. Schauer acknowledged the arrangement in her own words: "When in the very beginning of this case I vacated the Order of Custody which was issued on default against Mr. Russell, I probably should have said that the interim Order of Custody giving Ms. Walsh sole legal and physical custody was reinstated."

The default was removed from the record. The custody order survived the surgery.

The second thing Schauer did was not grant Steve's order of protection.

The California DVRO existed. Two defaults by Tara in the New York proceedings existed — she had failed to appear twice, and no consequence followed. The poisoning evidence existed. The laboratory reports existed. The evidentiary record supported a protective order.

Instead Schauer issued a second Temporary Order of Protection — this one on behalf of Steve against Tara. Now there were two. One against each party. Symmetrical restrictions. Each side restrained equally.

A Temporary Order of Protection is issued on petition. No hearing. No testimony. No finding of fact. It continues until the court schedules a final hearing to determine whether the evidence supports a permanent order — or, in the absence of that hearing, it continues without end. The mutual arrangement required no determination that either party had harmed the other. It required only petitions and the court's decision not to schedule the proceeding that would have examined them.

At the August 27, 2021 hearing, when the procedural confusion had consumed more than an hour of argument and counterargument, Schauer's attorney for the opposing side described the arrangement and the court confirmed it:

"As far as I know, each party has a Temporary Order of Protection against the other."

"That's correct."

[HEARING TRANSCRIPT — 2021-08-27 — YONKERS FAMILY COURT]

"You both have Temporary Orders of Protection, so you're both protected and we'll have a hearing at an appropriate time." Steve responds: "A permanent Temporary Order of Protection does not give me a chance to face my accuser." The court tells him to

listen to the questions and answer what is asked. The hearing has consumed over an hour discussing “issues that don’t even relate to the merits of this case.” Schauer: “Every time we come into court, I’m dealing with new petitions that you’ve filed.” “Your time to appeal has expired.” “Scattered gunshot and it’s not organized and it’s not helpful to me as a judge.”

A permanent Temporary Order of Protection does not give me a chance to face my accuser.

ExTR_01 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, August 27, 2021

Steve told the court: “A permanent Temporary Order of Protection does not give me a chance to face my accuser.”

The court told him he was going down irrelevant paths.

The mutual arrangement treated the two sides as equivalent threats. The person who had been poisoned with lithium, quetiapine, and mycophenolic acid and the person who had administered those substances were restrained from contacting each other on identical terms. The symmetry was the court’s answer to asymmetry. Walsh Sr. had told Tara what settling would cost — Evie, transferred to the grandparents. Only one party in the mutual arrangement could not afford to end the case.



The August 27 hearing was a procedural marathon. Over an hour of appearances, motions, clarifications about which petitions were pending, which orders had been vacated, which dockets were active. Weddle, Tara’s attorney, said at one point: “When we started this conference, I thought I knew what was going on and now procedurally I’m lost.” He had been practicing family law in Westchester for years. The file had defeated even the people who were winning.

The court was not lost. The court knew exactly what it wanted to address and resented being asked to address anything else.

Steve attempted to explain the complex procedural history — the two final orders Horowitz had issued, one secretly given to Walsh *ex parte*, the Motion to Vacate that was “deliberately written” to address one order while preserving the other. Schauer cut him off.

“I know what I need to know.”

“You’re muddying the record.”

“Scattered gunshot.”

“It’s not organized and it’s not helpful to me as a judge to understand exactly what you’re trying to do.”

“I strongly encourage you to get an attorney.”

Steve had an attorney. DiFabio was present — the same attorney who had stood beside him at the June 1 hearing, who had filed the recusal motion that triggered Humphrey’s retaliatory order. But Humphrey’s blanket recusal had eliminated roughly a third of DiFabio’s Westchester practice. Every case, present and future. The financial damage cascaded through the summer. By August, DiFabio could no longer service Steve’s representation at the level the case required. He transitioned to representing Linda Russell — Steve’s mother — and Steve was left to address the court himself, navigating a file the judge described as the largest she had ever seen, without counsel, because the previous judge had punished his attorney for filing a motion the court had granted.

Schauer’s rhetoric carried a particular quality. She was not interested in whether what Steve was saying was true. She was interested in whether he was saying it correctly — in the right form, at the right time, in the right sequence, with the right deference. When he said something accurate but procedurally inconvenient, it was “muddying the record.” When he tried to address the substance

beneath the procedure, he was “going down paths that are irrelevant.”

“Scattered gunshot.” The court’s preferred metaphor. The image belongs to hunting — a shotgun that disperses pellets because it cannot aim. What the metaphor described was a pro se litigant filing motions across multiple docket numbers because the procedural history demanded it: the default had generated separate orders, the vacatur had spawned new proceedings, the mutual TOPs sat on a docket of their own. The scatter was the record’s architecture, not the litigant’s — though the court, which had inherited a file assembled by four judges in three courthouses across three years, read the record’s incoherence as the litigant’s disorganization and prescribed the cure of an attorney it had made impossible for him to retain.

The court measured participation in obedience.



At the same hearing, the Attorney for the Child was relieved.

Jennifer Jackman had been the AFC since the case began in Westchester. She had been present at the June 1 hearing eight weeks earlier, recommending weekend visits as a starting point, speaking in the measured cadences of a professional managing a difficult case. She had been present when the bruises were documented and when Guttridge wrote his letter denying any bruises existed. She had dismissed the pinch marks on Evie with scare quotes and declined to investigate Steve’s poisoning reports. She had received his correspondence about the laboratory evidence. She had watched four judges cycle through the case and done nothing to alter the trajectory.

On August 27, 2021, Jackman filed an Order to Show Cause to be relieved as AFC. No explanation was offered.

No final report. No account of what she had observed across three years and four judges. The court granted it on consent.

"You are relieved, Ms. Jackman."

"Thank you, Your Honor. May I be excused?"

Five sentences. The woman who had been charged with representing a child's interests through a poisoning case, a custody dispute, an ambush, and the discovery of bruises excused herself without documenting any of it. The silence was itself a form of the Pontius Pilate pattern — not washing her hands of the evidence, but walking out of the room where the evidence sat.

That left the case without an attorney for the child. The court noted that "limited progress" could be made until a new one was appointed.



The case had been reset. The procedural error was undone. But the reset did not return the visits that had been lost. It did not address the poisoning. It did not examine the supervision manipulation or the ambush or the bruises or the disappeared reports. It did not give Steve a hearing on the temporary order that restrained him. It corrected procedure and left everything else exactly where it had been.

The case had been reset. The clock returned to zero. Evie was five now. Every procedural reset consumed months. Every month was time that could not be recovered. The file got thicker. The child got older. And each new judge started from scratch with a case she described as the largest she had ever seen, in a courtroom where the only acceptable form of participation was silence.

Kelly had watched all of it. She had watched Gordon-Oliver recuse. She had watched Horowitz enter a default

on a manufactured absence. She had watched Humphrey recuse after attacking DiFabio in the written order. Now she watched Schauer vacate the default, issue mutual orders, and tell Steve his attempts to address the substance of his case were “scattered gunshot.”

Four judges. Not the same rulings, but the same outcome: nothing changed for Evie. The file was reassigned. The mutual orders were issued. And the case continued.



Grandma's Letter

May-August 2021

Steve asks the court to let his mother visit Evie instead. Linda Russell — a retired nurse who raised two sons who attended Stanford — drives thirteen hours round trip to Chappaqua. Walsh Sr. turns her away at the door. She persists. She gets the visits. She writes a letter to Judge Schauer documenting what she sees. Kelly publishes it on StevieLovesEvie.com.

Steve asked the court for something different.

Every path to his daughter had been closed. He asked the court to allow his mother to visit instead.

Linda Russell was a retired nurse from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. She had raised two sons who attended Stanford. She was not a party to any litigation. She was not the subject of any court order. She was a grandmother who wanted to see her granddaughter.

The court granted it. Schauer ordered visitation — three remote visits per week for Steve and in-person visits for Linda. It was the first time a Westchester judge had ordered visitation for Evie's paternal family since September 2019.



Linda hit the road. The drive from Punxsutawney to Chappaqua was just over six hours each way.

On her first trip, she arrived at the Walsh compound and was met by Stephen Walsh Sr. He informed her that she could not see Evie. He required two weeks' notice. He told her the court order did not affect him and his wife. They were the primary caregivers. Evie lived with them.

Linda asked if they could have lunch or dinner while she was in town. They were adults. They should be able to find time to talk.

Walsh Sr. said no. He would call her if he ever needed to talk to her.

[BLOG POST — 2021-05-24 — STEVIELOVESEVIE.COM]

Kelly's account: "Grandma Linda drives thirteen hours trying to see Evie; Grumpa tells her to turn around, doesn't need to follow court orders." Linda arrived in Chappaqua, rented a hotel room. Tara went silent. When Linda called Walsh Sr., he picked up: "You can't just drop in unannounced. Grumpa and I need two weeks notice. I don't care what the court order says." He refused lunch. He refused dinner. He would call her if he ever needed to. Half a mile away, Linda had set up a baby paradise with videos of Evie and Daddy ready to play on the TV. Everything got packed up and Grandma Linda headed home. Another six-and-a-half-hour drive.

Six and a half hours each way. Walsh Sr. told her to turn around. She didn't.

SLE-008 — StevieLovesEvie, "Grandma Linda Drives Thirteen Hours"

Tara offered an alternative. Linda could drive back that same day — another thirteen hours round trip — and see Evie for twenty minutes. She delivered the offer from the

house where she and Evie lived — her father's property, on her father's schedule.

The message was clear. The court had ordered visitation. The Walsh family had decided what visitation meant.

Linda did not stop. She drove to Chappaqua four times in a single month. She kept calling. She kept showing up. And eventually, the visits happened.



The visit that mattered most lasted eight hours.

Linda picked up Evie from the Walsh compound. They went to the park. They went to the beach. Evie found a crab. She did not want to leave. She said no when Tara called early to pick her up. For eight hours, a grandmother and a granddaughter did what grandmothers and granddaughters do — they played, they ate, they walked, they explored. The extraordinary thing about the visit was how ordinary it was.

Steve watched the entire visit through an iPad. He was three thousand miles away, in California, where the court orders and the geography of the case had placed him. He could see his daughter. He could hear her. He could not hold her. He watched his mother do what he could not — sit with Evie on a bench, hand her a sandwich, point at the water.

What Linda saw during the visit was not ordinary.

Evie arrived unfed. She was tired. She was crying. Walsh Sr. attributed the crying to Evie not wanting to see her grandmother. The actual cause, Linda observed, was that the child had not been fed.

Evie was not potty trained. She was five. Linda made significant progress in a single day — progress that should have been made a year earlier.

Her shoes were too small. She was not getting regular exercise. She had a facial injury. Walsh said she had fallen.

Linda noticed the frequency of injuries, sickness, and allergies. She noticed that Walsh did not provide diapers or a car seat, claiming fear that Steve would “bug” the car seat. Linda purchased one herself.

She noticed what Evie said when no one was managing the conversation.

“Is Daddy sick?”

“Doesn’t Daddy miss me?”

Tara had told Evie that her father was at the hotel but was not allowed to see her. The child believed her father was nearby and choosing not to come. She was constructing explanations for his absence — sickness, disinterest — because no one had given her a true one.



Linda wrote a letter.

It was addressed to the Honorable Michelle I. Schauer, Westchester Family Court, Yonkers. It was not written by an attorney. It was not drafted in legal language. It was written by a nurse and a grandmother who had driven thirteen hours to see a child who arrived hungry and left asking about her father.

[CORRESPONDENCE — 2021-08 — FILED WITH WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT]

Linda Russell’s letter to Judge Schauer documented four visits to Chappaqua in one month. Walsh Sr. refusing the first visit: “I don’t care what the court order says.” Evie arriving unfed, tired, crying. Not potty trained at five. Shoes too small. Face injury attributed to a fall. No car seat provided. Evie asking: “Is Daddy sick?” “Doesn’t Daddy miss me?” Tara telling Evie that Dad was at the hotel but not allowed to see her. The letter concludes: “Why has no one asked to see the visit photographs or reports? You

went to law school for this?" Signed with a postscript: "This is my letter. I talked and got help typing what I said."

This is my letter. I talked and got help typing what I said.

F-060 — Linda Russell's Letter to Judge Schauer,
August 2021

The letter asked the court questions that no attorney had asked. Why had no one examined the visit photographs? Why had no one reviewed the reports? Why did a father have supervised FaceTime? What had the court done with the evidence it had been given?

It ended with a postscript: "This is my letter. I talked and got help typing what I said."

She had driven more than a thousand miles in a month to see a granddaughter who was hungry when she arrived and crying when she left. She wrote down what she saw because someone had to write it down.

No responsive judicial action appears in the docket.



Kelly published the letter on StevieLovesEvie.com.

The blog that Kelly had been building — the careful, systematic documentation of everything the court had refused to look at — now contained a grandmother's firsthand account of what she found when she arrived at the Walsh compound with a court order and a car seat she had bought herself.

A nurse's clinical observations, in her own words, sat inside a record that already contained bruise photographs, supervisor reports, and court filings the system had produced and declined to examine.



In his deposition, Walsh Sr. was asked about the period when Steve had begged him to come to San Francisco — when Tara was in crisis, when Steve needed help, when the situation was deteriorating and Steve was calling the Walsh family asking them to intervene.

Walsh Sr. was asked why he did not fly to San Francisco.

His answer, under oath: “Flying six hours is not something you just do.”

A grandmother drove thirteen.



Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

November 5, 2021

Jennifer Jackman resigns as Attorney for the Child without explanation. Her replacement files a motion to suppress all blog content. A visitation conference is converted into a gag order hearing. Steve is declared in default. Judge Schauer orders the blog removed — every post, every photograph, every grandmother's letter. The words are precise. Erase. Deactivate. Delete.

Jennifer Jackman had asked to be relieved on August 27, 2021. Whatever she had seen across three years and four judges, she carried it with her when she left.

[HEARING TRANSCRIPT — 2021-08-27 — YONKERS FAMILY COURT]

THE COURT: "So Ms. Jackman's Order to Show Cause is granted on consent. You are relieved, Ms. Jackman." MS. JACKMAN: "Thank you, Your Honor. May I be excused?" THE COURT: "That leaves us without an attorney for the child, so there will be limited progress we can make with today's proceeding until I assign a new attorney to represent the child."

Five sentences. The woman charged with representing a child's interests excused herself without documenting any of it.

ExTR_01 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, August 27, 2021

DiFabio did not object. Weddle did not object. The court granted the motion on consent in a single exchange. Five sentences and Jackman was gone.

The case now had no attorney for the child. Schauer noted that limited progress could be made until a replacement was assigned.



Donna Genovese was appointed.

In October 2021, Genovese filed two Orders to Show Cause — one directed at Steve, one at Linda Russell. The relief sought was specific: prohibit all postings about the case, and delete all existing blog content. StevieLovesEvie.com. ChappaquaPoison. Everything Kelly had built. Everything Linda had written. Every photograph, every court document excerpt, every blog post documenting what the institutions had refused to examine.

The motion was not filed by Tara. It was not filed by Tara's attorney. It was filed by the Attorney for the Child — the person appointed to represent Evie's interests.

Steve was served. The hearing was set for November 5, 2021, at 3:30 PM in Yonkers.



November 5, 2021. 131 Warburton Avenue, Third Floor.

The proceeding opened at 3:38 PM. Weddle appeared for Tara. DiFabio appeared for Linda, who was present in

court — she had driven from Punxsutawney again. Genovese appeared for the child. Tara was present and sworn in. Linda was present and sworn in.

Steve was not present.

The court opened the hearing by stating exactly what it was about.

“We are here today with respect to the attorney for the child’s Order to Show Cause that is seeking to prohibit the respondent father from posting, among other things, blogs and things on the internet.”

[HEARING TRANSCRIPT — 2021-11-05 — YONKERS FAMILY COURT — SWORN PROCEEDING]

THE COURT: “We are here today with respect to the attorney for the child’s Order to Show Cause that is seeking to prohibit the respondent father from posting, among other things, blogs and things on the internet.” The court notes Steve has not appeared:

“Mr. Russell has not appeared in court in quite some time.” DiFabio, representing Linda, consents: “We’ll consent to the relief... With respect to any prohibitions on her posting, we consent to that.”

Genovese: “This Chappaqua Poison website continues. And in fact it addresses the gag order of the Court.” The hearing, which was on the calendar as a visitation conference for Linda Russell’s access to Evie, has been converted — in real time — into a suppression proceeding.

A visitation conference converted — in real time — into a suppression proceeding.

ExTR_02 — Schauer Hearing Transcript, November 5, 2021

The hearing was on the calendar as numbers three through ten — multiple dockets consolidated. Among them was the matter of Linda Russell’s visitation. A scheduling conference. The kind of proceeding where attorneys negotiate dates and parameters for a grandmother to see her granddaughter.

It did not remain a scheduling conference.

Genovese told the court that the Chappaqua Poison website continued. That as recently as the night before, new content had appeared. That the blog addressed the court's own proceedings. The concern was not about Evie's safety. The concern was that the documentation existed. The suppression protected the compound — not just Tara, but the family whose own history the blog had begun to expose.

DiFabio, representing Linda, told the court he would consent to posting restrictions on his client's behalf. He acknowledged service. He said he would not make the legal arguments he believed existed. He consented to the relief.

The court waited eleven minutes for Steve.

At 3:41 PM — eleven minutes after the scheduled start time — Schauer noted that Steve “has not appeared in court in quite some time. Normally I would give a party a fair amount of time to appear, but I think we'll proceed.”

At 4:30 PM, less than an hour after the hearing opened, the court declared Steve in default.

“At this point, it's 4:30. It's clear that Mr. Russell's not appearing so both of those Orders to Show Cause are granted, and you may submit the orders on notice.”

Both orders. The one against Steve. The one against Linda. Granted.



The language of the order was precise.

The court directed the removal of existing blog content. Not a modification. Not a redaction of specific identifying information. Not a tailored restriction addressing particular posts that might affect the child. A blanket directive.

Erase. Deactivate. Delete.

The three words carried the weight of institutional authority directed at the act of documentation itself. The blog that contained a grandmother's letter about a hungry child. The blog that contained photographs of bruises. The blog that contained court filings that the court system had produced and the court system now wanted removed from public view. The blog that contained Kelly's careful, systematic, chronological account of what every institution had declined to examine.

Schauer made the consequences explicit during the portion of the hearing that addressed Linda's visitation.

"If there is a visit and one sliver of what happens at that visit gets posted online, that's the end. There's no more chances."

"If there's one tiny bit of something that winds up online that can be traced back to her visit, it's over. It is over."

The grandmother who had driven thirteen hours, who had been turned away at the Walsh compound, who had bought her own car seat because the Walsh family claimed Steve would bug the one they had — this grandmother could visit Evie, conditionally, provided nothing she observed ever reached the public record. The price of access was silence.



The order raised a constitutional question the court did not address in the hearing.

A prior restraint on speech — a court order prohibiting publication before it occurs — carries the heaviest burden in First Amendment law. The standard requires demonstration that the speech would produce a clear and present danger of a serious, substantive evil that rises far above public inconvenience, annoyance, or unrest. The

restraint must be tailored as precisely as possible to the exact needs of the case.

The November 5 order was not tailored. It was total. Erase everything. Delete everything. And it was entered on default — against a party who was not present to argue that the speech being suppressed was documentation of harm to a child, not the cause of harm to a child.

In November 2021, the order was in effect. The blog was ordered taken down. The documentation was ordered erased.

And the court scheduled the inquest. January 5, 2022. In person. A half day.

The court had read the blog. The court had seen the letter. And the court's answer to a grandmother's question — "You went to law school for this?" — was to order the question erased.



Bora Bora

January 5, 2022

*His attorney was in the courtroom. He was not.
The phone rang after. The voice on the other end
sounded beaten. 'Well, that didn't go well.' The
orders were final.*

Kelly had left.

Not all at once. The leaving had been slow — a withdrawal Steve could feel but couldn't stop. She had driven with him to every hearing. She had checked the tires every morning because twice they had been deflated in the night. She had built a blog documenting everything and a court had ordered it erased. She had been poisoned by a bottle of wine. She had lost a baby.

She left because staying meant becoming another thing that Tara and the Walshes had broken.

The last virtual visit with Evie had come and gone. The gag orders were tightening — first the restrictions after Grandma's letter, then the formalizations, each version more specific than the last.

The house in Reno sat at the edge of the desert — high ground, a cliff face looking out over nothing in particular. Steve stood on the property and tried to see what was in

front of him. The defaults. The gag orders. The blog under siege. Kelly gone. The wine bottle that had killed her pregnancy because he'd been too stubborn to leave his old life behind.

His mother had stopped visiting.

Linda had been the steady one — the woman who flew to San Francisco when Evie was born, who slept on the couch, who cooked meals and held the baby and did not ask questions that would require answers she couldn't absorb. But there is a limit to what a mother can watch. She told Steve he needed to go to rehab. She told him the Adderall, the obsession with the case, the late nights with the camera feeds and the court filings — she told him he needed to stop. She said she wanted to move on. She said it the way people say it when they have decided that the person they love has become the problem.

Steve offered to go.

He called Tara. He called his mother. He said: tell me what to do and I'll do it. If rehab is what it takes, I'll go. Just tell me what it looks like. Just tell me the path forward.

His mother wanted healing. She wanted her son back.

Tara wanted something else.

What Tara wanted was not settlement. Not treatment. Not recovery. What Tara wanted was admission — a formal declaration that Steve was sick, that the documentation was psychosis, that the cameras and the lab reports and the recordings were symptoms rather than evidence. The Munchausen arc had never been about healing. It was about comparison: the sick person measured against the well one. The unstable father weighed against the stable mother. Every institution that had encountered Steve — the hospitals, the courts, the evaluators — had been offered this frame: here is a man who is unwell, here are the artifacts of his unwellness, here is the family that is trying to help.

The cure was the weapon. Admit, and the admission becomes the record. Go to rehab, and the rehab becomes the diagnosis. The Walshes had manufactured a sickness and now they were offering the treatment, and the treatment was the final piece of the architecture: a man who had voluntarily declared himself impaired. Walsh Sr. had told Tara the cost of settling: Evie goes to the grandparents. The case was not hers to end.

Steve stood on the cliff edge in Reno.

The people around him — his mother, his friends, Kelly before she left — wanted him to take treatment. The Walshes wanted him to take treatment too. Both were offering the same cure, which meant accepting the same diagnosis: that Steve was the problem and the solution was his admission.

He needed to go somewhere.

It was the middle of COVID and it was impossible to go anywhere.

He found a Johnson & Johnson appointment — the single-dose vaccine, the one Dave Chappelle had gotten — and drove to get it. He filled out the entry paperwork for French Polynesia. He called around until he found someone to take Millie, his dog. Loretta Pendeza agreed.

The flight left LAX at midnight.

Bora Bora is directly south of Los Angeles — same time zone, no jet lag. You fall asleep over the Pacific and wake up in the South Pacific. The plane descended toward a runway on a motu, a flat strip of coral island barely above the waterline. A boat was waiting at the airport dock.

The lagoon opened up around the boat. Mount Otemanu rose from the center of the island — the remnant of an extinct volcano, dark basalt ridges covered in green, rising seven hundred meters straight out of the water. The lagoon shifted color with depth: dark indigo where the reef fell away, pale turquoise over sand, a green so bright it looked artificial where the shallows caught the sun. The

boat crossed the lagoon toward the Four Seasons on the far side.

The resort sat on a motu of its own. Overwater bungalows extended in rows from the shore, each one a wooden structure on stilts above the lagoon, spaced further apart than felt necessary — the privacy of distance. Steve's room was one of these. Teak floors. A deck over the water. The lagoon visible through the glass panel in the floor.

Mount Otemanu was directly ahead.

He swam every day.

The resort had a lagoon sanctuary — a marine preserve stocked with parrotfish and butterfly fish and spotted puffers and things he could not name. The lagoon shifted color with depth. Mount Otemanu rose from the center of the island. He swam in the lagoon the way a person swims when there is nothing else to do. He rented a jet ski. He took a scooter around the island. He ate the local fish. The days moved.

A group of guests took a sailboat out. He went. Halle Berry showed up at the pool. A dental surgeon from Texas became company. The light on the water. The sound of water.

His body changed.

The neurological symptoms that had arrived in Potrero Hill and followed him through Brooklyn and the Sheraton and three years of specialists — they left. In six weeks they were gone. Not gradually. The way a sound leaves a room when the source is turned off.

On New Year's Eve there were fireworks over the water. The resort launched them from the lagoon and the light and the smoke drifted across the surface. Steve watched from the deck of his bungalow. The reflections doubled everything — each burst of color appearing twice, once in the air and once on the water, and the smoke hung between them.

It was the most beautiful thing he had seen in a long time.

January 5, 2022.

The Four Seasons in Bora Bora advertised the fastest internet connection on the island. Steve had set up his laptop and his phone in the bungalow that morning. He knew the inquest was scheduled for 9:30 Eastern — 6:30 in Bora Bora, which shared a time zone with Los Angeles. He had the connection. He had the camera. Behind him, through the window, the lagoon extended to Mount Otemanu — the volcano centered in the frame like something from a postcard. It would have been funny. A man appearing by video from an overwater bungalow in the South Pacific to defend custody of his daughter in Westchester County Family Court.

He knew he could not be defaulted as long as his attorney was present. Schauer had already ruled on it. Jason Advocate was in the courtroom. Steve was available remotely.

The court would not allow it.

Westchester County Family Court. The inquest had been scheduled for 9:30 in the morning, in person, and Jason Advocate was there at the counsel table doing the work an attorney does — raising objections, conducting cross-examination, putting arguments on the record.

An inquest is what happens when one side has been deemed absent. But Steve was not absent. He was represented by counsel. His attorney was in the room. The transcript would record Advocate's voice on every page — his objections, his cross-examination, his participation in every phase of the proceeding.

The proceeding moved forward anyway.

Walsh testified. Genovese spoke. The evidence that had accumulated across six years of filings — the laboratory reports, the poisoning documentation, the supervisor accounts, the bruises, the ambush, the Walsh Abuse

Memo, Brienne's published writings, Abby Tedla's confession — all of it existed in the court file. All of it was available.

The court did not allow Advocate to ask Tara about her mental illness or her medication.

[HEARING TRANSCRIPT — 2022-01-05 — WESTCHESTER FAMILY COURT — INQUEST]

Official transcript of the January 5, 2022 inquest before Judge Schauer. The proceeding treated Steve as absent while his attorney was present, objecting, and cross-examining. The transcript records Advocate's voice on every page — and the court's refusal to allow him to question Tara about her mental illness or medication history.

His attorney was in the courtroom. The court treated Steve as absent anyway.

ExTR_10 — Default/Inquest Hearing Transcript,
January 5, 2022

The phone rang in the bungalow.

The voice on the other end sounded beaten.

Well, that didn't go well.

Steve was not surprised. Or perhaps he was — not that the court had ruled against him but that the court had gone as far as it had. Sole custody awarded to the other parent.

<

An order requiring that existing postings, blogs, and likenesses be erased, deactivated, and deleted.

A restraining order on recording visits.

The orders established limits on contact that made seeing his daughter functionally impossible without the Walsh family's cooperation — cooperation they had no reason to provide.

Four poisoning discoveries. Sixteen supervised visits where six supervisors found him competent and the child bonded to him. Photographs of bruises on a toddler. A

memorandum documenting abuse from within the Walsh household itself, supported by the household's own member's published writings. A nanny's sworn account. Lab results showing mycophenolic acid.

None of it had been tested the way evidence is tested in a full trial.

Judge Schauer had vacated the Horowitz default. She had recognized it as procedurally defective — a permanent order entered without hearing. Then she scheduled an inquest, entered a second default, and produced orders that reached the same destination through a different procedural route.

After the call, Steve probably walked to the pool and ordered a piña colada.

The lagoon was still there. The volcano was still there. The fish in the sanctuary did not know about Westchester County Family Court. The water was the same temperature it had been that morning and the morning before and every morning since he had arrived.

He had time to think. He had nothing but time.

The thinking arrived the way it arrives when you are healthy and alone and the war has paused and there is nothing to do except sit with what happened.

Not as a list. Not as the analysis he would have offered a courtroom. As the kind of inventory that fills the space when the body is quiet and the mind has nowhere left to go.

Everything that led to this moment.

He had misread Tara. He had stayed past the confessions and the retractions and the next version because staying felt like loyalty and leaving felt like failure. He had watched her crush pills at the kitchen counter and told himself it was illness and illness could be treated. Maybe if he had left sooner. Maybe if he had not needed the picture to hold together so badly.

He had trusted the Walshes. The compound, the grandfather's name, the family filling the table — he had accepted the presentation because the alternative required admitting the foundation could not hold. Maybe if he had seen the coordination sooner. Maybe if Walsh Sr.'s authority had registered as something other than the natural order of a family with property.

He had led with the argument. The statute, the precedent, the procedural deficiency. Certain in every room he entered. Maybe if he had arrived wounded instead of armed. Maybe if the precision that made him right had not also made him impossible to help.

He had driven the helpers away. They called and he gave them depositions. They offered presence and he demanded comprehension. Maybe if he had let people be present without requiring them to understand the full architecture of what was happening to him.

He had not filed criminal charges when the window was open. Maybe if he had endured being called vindictive. Maybe if the criminal investigation had existed, Westchester could not have treated the drugging as trivial.

He had agreed to the ruse. Exhaustion as the mechanism of consent. Maybe if he had fought one more round instead of accepting the arrangement that promised a pause in the war.

Maybe. Maybe. Maybe.

And then the thinking turned outward.

Maybe if the first judge had not denied the phone appearance at five o'clock on a Friday. Maybe if the second judge had examined the evidence instead of scheduling an inquest. Maybe if any of the six supervisors who found him competent and the child bonded had been permitted to testify to that finding. Maybe if the family court had treated four poisoning discoveries and a sworn nanny account and laboratory results showing

mycophenolic acid as something that required a hearing rather than a default. Maybe if anyone — any attorney, any evaluator, any officer of any court — had said: this evidence exists, and someone needs to look at it.

Every hand that washed itself was a hand that could have intervened. Every system that declined to examine the evidence was a system that required him to navigate perfectly — and then punished him when his navigation was imperfect.

The lagoon held its color. The fish in the sanctuary below. The bungalow was quiet.

Steve sat with the phone in the bungalow. The thinking continued until there was nothing left to think and the question remained: what happens next.

The volcano was centered in the frame. The lagoon held its color. The fish did not know about Westchester County Family Court.



Orders as Weapons

November 2021

The court orders leave the courthouse. Tara and the Walsh family circulate them to employers, friends, and journalists — presenting them as proof Steve is dangerous. Reporter Michaelanne Petrella receives a direct threat seventeen days before the gag order exists. Walsh Sr. threatens Steve's attorney by voicemail. The SFPD detective investigating the poisoning is neutralized by a court order hand-delivered by a party to the case.

The orders left the courthouse.

The orders were circulated — to employers, to friends, to journalists, to service providers, to anyone in Steve's professional or personal orbit. The circulation was not informational. The orders were presented as proof that Steve was dangerous.

The story Tara told every institution was the same: there was a hearing. He lost.

There was no hearing. The orders had been entered on default — on manufactured absences, on motions granted without opposition because the opposition was three thousand miles away. The documents carried the authority of a court's determination without the proceeding that

would have produced one — or rather, the proceeding had produced them, but the proceeding was default, which is to say the proceeding was absence, and the documents derived their power from the very failure of the system to conduct the hearing that would have tested them. The people who received copies did not read them the way lawyers read them. They read them the way the Walsh family intended: as confirmation that Steve was what the family said he was.



The reach extended into journalism.

Michaelanne Petrella was a reporter. She had started a podcast — ChappaquaPoison — and a website covering the case. She had examined documents. She had spoken to sources. She had done what journalists do when a story involves institutional failure and the failure is documented: she followed the documentation.

Petrella was not a bureaucrat with a press badge. She was a journalist who entered the story skeptical, examined the evidence, and concluded that the evidence supported reporting. She was funny. She was thorough — the kind of thorough that involved reading the toxicology reports and the deposition transcripts and the court filings before forming a conclusion, not after. She animated court documents and used third-party validation to tell a story that the court system had tried to keep behind sealed doors.

**[AUTHOR INTERVIEW — PRIMARY SOURCE — INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPT]**

Steve on Petrella: “I fell in love with her. She was so competent and so smart and so sincere.” The interview describes Petrella entering the story as a skeptic — a journalist who needed to see the evidence before committing to a narrative. She examined the

court filings, the toxicology reports, the deposition testimony. She built the ChappaquaPoison podcast and website from primary sources. Her reporting was the most comprehensive independent examination of the case's evidentiary record.

I fell in love with her. She was so competent and so smart and so sincere.

INT-003-004 — Author Interview, Petrella

On November 16, 2021, Tara sent Petrella an email.

The email named Petrella's sister. It attached a restraining order. It said: "You are putting yourself in harm's way."

November 16, 2021 was seventeen days before the gag order was formally entered. The court had not yet issued its directive to erase, deactivate, and delete. But Tara was already using a court order — a document obtained in a proceeding without a hearing — as a weapon against a journalist. The order was not yet a speech restriction. She wielded it as one.

The threat was specific. It was personal. It named a family member. It was the kind of communication a reporter receives when the subject of a story has decided that the story should not exist — not through legal channels, not through a correction or a complaint, but through the direct method of making the reporter afraid.

Petrella sold back the rights to the podcast. Whether the threat was Tara's initiative or her father's instruction, it carried the family's methodology — naming a relative, attaching a court order, making the consequence personal.

The pattern held. LaMelle had documented what she saw and was removed from the case. DiFabio had pushed back on the court and lost a third of his practice. Guttridge had discovered he was used to cover up child abuse and recused himself. Petrella had reported on the evidence and was threatened into silence. Anyone who looked at the

case and documented what they found was attacked. Anyone who looked away was left in place.



The voicemail was recorded. The audio file survived.

[VOICEMAIL RECORDING — 2019-06 — AUDIO EVIDENCE — FILED WITH COURT]

Stephen Walsh Sr. to Steve's attorney, by voicemail:
 "If you're desperate enough for fees to work this thing and it causes any kind of anguish to my family, I will be sure to go after your license. Okay? Because you have a responsibility to be ethical, you have a responsibility to follow the law, and you're not doing either in this case."

If you're desperate enough for fees to work this thing, I will be sure to go after your license.

Ex00_01 — Walsh Sr. Voicemail to Counsel

Walsh Sr. did not threaten Steve. He threatened Steve's attorney. The distinction mattered. An attorney can absorb a threat from a litigant's family member — it is unpleasant but survivable. An attorney cannot easily absorb a threat to his license from a wealthy family patriarch who has demonstrated the willingness and resources to follow through. The voicemail was a message about what it would cost to represent Steve Russell in Westchester County.

The word Walsh Sr. used for Steve was "nutcase." The framing was consistent. The person who had been poisoned was mentally ill. The person documenting the poisoning was acting irrationally. The attorney representing the person was unethical. Everyone involved in telling the story was defective, and the defect explained why the story should not be told.



The orders reached further than journalism and legal counsel.

In San Francisco, Sergeant Caraway of the SFPD Special Victims Unit had been investigating the poisoning case. Caraway was the detective who had received the toxicology reports, who had interviewed witnesses, who had been building a criminal case against Tara Walsh based on the lithium and quetiapine evidence.

Caraway texted Steve. The case was never reopened. There were “underlying issues discovered during investigations” that made it “difficult to prosecute.” And the critical detail: “I never spoke to judge. I was provided court order by a party of this investigation.”

A court order from Westchester — obtained without a hearing, built on defaults from manufactured absences — had been hand-delivered to the San Francisco detective investigating a poisoning. Not by the court. Not through official channels. By a party to the case. The criminal investigation was neutralized not by its own merits but by a document from a family court three thousand miles away, carried there by the family the investigation targeted.

The orders that had been issued to resolve a custody dispute were functioning as instruments of control — each deployment reinforcing the last, each recipient becoming another node in a network that treated the orders as evidence of adjudication rather than evidence of default. The journalist who received a copy saw a court’s decision. The detective who received a copy saw a legal determination. The attorney who received the voicemail understood that the family behind the order had the resources to enforce it. Inside the courthouse the orders were documents with specific, limited meaning. Outside the courthouse they were ammunition — circulated to damage Steve’s reputation, to isolate him from professional contacts, to warn journalists that reporting

would have consequences, to threaten attorneys that representation would cost them their licenses, and to kill a criminal investigation by providing the detective with a piece of paper that suggested the matter had already been adjudicated.

It had not been adjudicated. It had been defaulted.



The family court system had produced documents. The documents were supposed to protect a child. Instead they were being used to protect the people the documents should have scrutinized — to silence reporters, to neutralize investigators, to threaten lawyers, to control the public narrative about a case in which a woman had poisoned her partner and taken his daughter.

Every order the system produced became another tool in the scheme. Every default became evidence of Steve's instability. Every piece of paper the court generated — without hearings, without evidence, without the other side present — was carried out of the courthouse and deployed against anyone who tried to tell the truth.

The court had ordered the blog erased. The family was already erasing everything else.



ORDERS AS WEAPONS

PART VIII

THE TRIAL

We Were Hit

September 29, 2020

Brienne Walsh had been writing about the household for years — on the internet, in the open. Her deposition was taken on September 29, 2020. Under oath, she confirmed the abuse. She confirmed the CPS calls. The family screamed at her for testifying. Her testimony was admitted at trial without objection.

Brienne Walsh had been writing about the family for years.

Not in memoranda. Not in court filings. On a blog — A Brie Grows in Brooklyn — where she published the kind of detailed, unsoftened prose that arrives when a person processes the world by describing it. The blog's subtitle read: "Mabel's not crazy... she's unusual." It ran on Tumblr. The audience was small. The content was personal in the way that public writing becomes personal when the writer cannot distinguish between processing and confessing.

She wrote about her childhood the way she had experienced it. The dynamics. The expectations. The internal rules that governed a family that appeared one way from the outside and operated differently from the inside. She wrote about her mother.

The blog occupied a particular kind of evidentiary space — though no one recognized it as evidentiary at the time. It was a lifestyle blog on Tumblr, positioned between recipes and Brooklyn motherhood dispatches and reflections on art criticism. Its header featured stained glass. The admissions of abuse appeared in the same register as the rest of the writing, at the same pace, formatted the same way, which is what made them different from any declaration or affidavit or statement to police. A person filing a legal document knows the words will be weighed in an adversarial proceeding. A person writing a blog post at midnight is processing her own life. And the processing, because it was honest in the way that public writing sometimes accidentally is, produced detail more specific and more damning than any document Steve’s attorneys had yet obtained through formal discovery.



The blog posts spanned years before the custody case existed — before Steve, before Evie, before any court filing connected to the events this story describes. They were Brienne’s record of Brienne’s childhood.

In August 2019, she wrote about Maura’s discipline.

□

“When I was younger, if I told my mom that I was angry at her, she sometimes punched me, she sometimes stopped feeding me, she sometimes locked me out.” — Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, August 2019.

My mother sometimes punched me, sometimes stopped feeding me, sometimes locked me out.

SLE-042 — Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, August 2019

Other posts went further back. The great-grandmother had hit Maura's mother with a belt, blinding her in one eye. Brienne's father would come into their room at night if they couldn't sleep. She wet the bed until she was sixteen. The discipline method had a lineage that extended generations before the house at Tara Knoll was built and the hedgerows were planted and the long driveway was paved.

In a different post, from 2010 — eight years before the custody case began — Brienne described Maura's technique with specificity that a child would retain.

□

"The softer her voice gets, the more angry you know she's getting. Once you can't hear her anymore, you know that she is going to take you into a corner and dig her nails into your forearm. 'You have five minutes.'" — Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, May 9, 2010.

The softer her voice gets, the more angry you know she's getting. You have five minutes.

ExQQ_06 — Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, May 9, 2010

The post was written in 2010. A "Deep Pinch Mark on Upper Right Thigh" was documented on Evie and sent to the Attorney for the Child, Jennifer Jackman, in 2019. Nine years apart. Two generations. The same method.

Brienne had also written about the adopted sisters who were forced to dress alike, one of whom ran away to Savannah. She wrote about her father's temper. She wrote that the family doctor had diagnosed her as Bipolar II after hearing her family history — and she wasn't sure the diagnosis was real, or just what happens when a doctor hears the Walsh name and reaches for the nearest label.

She wrote all of this in the open, on the internet, for years.



In October 2019, Tara threatened to sue.

The email subject line was “It’s Time to Talk.” Tara told Brienne that writing about the family made her look unstable. The threat was specific: defamation. Brienne and her husband Caleb relocated to Savannah, Georgia. The distance was the point.

But the blog survived. The posts were archived. The words Brienne had written in 2010 and 2018 and 2019 — about the hitting, the nail-digging, the bed-wetting, the father’s nighttime visits, the punching, the withholding of food — existed in a format that could not be recalled by a family that had recalled everything else.



The first deposition subpoena was served on May 13, 2019.

Brienne did not appear.

At 10:44 a.m., the attorney for the plaintiff — Ned Gelhaar of Enenstein Pham & Glass — began the proceeding at 711 Third Avenue, 17th floor, New York. A court reporter was present. The deponent’s chair was empty.

At 10:45, Gelhaar stated for the record that Ms. Walsh had not attended. He terminated the deposition for the day.



Statement taken on the record, May 13, 2019, at 711 Third Avenue, New York. Attorney Ned M. Gelhaar of Enenstein Pham & Glass, representing Stephen Russell, noted for the record that deponent Brienne Walsh had not attended. Deposition terminated at 10:45 a.m.

The Walsh family told her to throw out the subpoena. The deponent's chair was empty.

ExQQ_04 — Brienne Walsh Deposition, No-Show, May 13, 2019

The Walsh family had told Brienne to throw out the paperwork and ignore the subpoena. In a blog post from January 2020, she described the family's reaction.

□

Brienne described how the family screamed at her for agreeing to testify. Walsh Sr. — “Grumpa” — demanded that the subpoenas be thrown out. The blog title: “Families Are Worse Than Lawyers.”

Grumpa demanded the subpoenas be thrown out. Brienne came back anyway.

SLE-028 — StevieLovesEvie, "Families Are Worse Than Lawyers"

The family that had deployed in formation at driveways and courthouses across two states — the family that had coordinated vacation ruses and camouflage ambushes and false police reports — responded to the subpoena the way it responded to every document that threatened the narrative: it ordered the document destroyed.

Brienne had not set out to be a witness — except that writing about what happened to her, in public, under her own name, was testimony whether or not a court had administered an oath. The family's response followed the pattern it had applied to every person who made the household's interior life visible: threaten, relocate, silence. The mechanism did not distinguish between a hostile litigant and a daughter describing her own childhood. It recognized only the act of making the interior visible, and it responded to that act the way it always responded — by attempting to make the person who spoke disappear.

Brienne did not comply. She came back.



On September 29, 2020, Brienne Walsh was deposed via Zoom in connection with the California civil battery case. Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137.

She sat in front of a camera and answered questions under oath. She confirmed her abusive childhood in the Walsh household. She confirmed the physical discipline. She was asked about CPS — Child Protective Services — and the calls that had been made on the Walsh parents. Tara’s own attorney, during questioning, referenced the calls. Brienne acknowledged them. Numerous calls, she said, though she could not recall the exact number.

□

In her sworn deposition on September 29, 2020, Brienne Walsh confirmed her abusive childhood under oath and acknowledged “numerous CPS calls” on the Walsh parents — confirmed by Tara’s own attorney during questioning. The Walsh family “yelled at their daughter, Brienne, for attending her own deposition.”

Under oath, she confirmed the abuse. The family yelled at her for attending her own deposition.

ExSS_10 — Brienne Walsh Sworn Deposition, September 29, 2020

The deposition line was simple, when it finally came.

Three words. Under oath. In a deposition transcript that would become part of the civil litigation record in California — not the family court record in Westchester, where documents disappeared and supervisors were removed, but the civil record, where depositions are preserved and transcripts are filed and the rules of evidence apply.

“We were hit.”



The family yelled at Brienne for attending her own deposition.

The same family that had told her to throw out the subpoena — the same family that had threatened her with a defamation lawsuit, that had driven her to Savannah, that had responded to every piece of inconvenient documentation by attempting to destroy it — screamed at their own daughter for answering questions under oath about things that had happened to her in their house.

The subpoena was ordered discarded. The deponent was pressured not to attend. When she attended anyway, the family retaliated. But the blog had survived. The deposition had been taken. Brienne’s words — the blog posts from 2010, the deposition from 2020 — could not be recalled.



At the California trial in February 2022, Brienne’s deposition was read to the jury.

Tara did not object.

The testimony describing violence in the household where Evie was living — the household Tara had moved into, the household the New York family courts had awarded sole custody to protect — entered the trial record unchallenged. The defendant’s own sister’s account of the defendant’s own family was admitted without a word.

The jury now had the testimony of a Walsh describing the Walsh household. They had a nanny’s account of the drugging. They had the text messages. They had the laboratory reports. And they had the defendant’s silence —

the absence of any objection to testimony that, if inaccurate, could have been challenged.

The silence was the confirmation.



The family court in Westchester had access to the same record. Brienne's blog posts were public. The deposition was filed. The "numerous CPS calls" on the Walsh parents were acknowledged by Tara's own attorney. The pinch mark on Evie's thigh had been documented and sent to the Attorney for the Child.

The California jury heard the evidence and reached a verdict. The Westchester family court had the evidence and did not look.



The Appellate Reversal

March 22, 2023

The Appellate Division, Second Department rules: the default did not occur. The blanket deletion order was not tailored as precisely as possible to the exact needs of the case. 214 A.D.3d 890. Two holdings that dismantle the foundation. The Family Court does not act.

The case was captioned *Matter of Walsh v. Russell*. Docket Numbers V-7641-18 and O-12635-19. Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department. Justices Barros, Miller, Genovesi, and Wan.

Steve's attorney was Jason A. Advocate, of Advocate, LLP. Tara's attorney was Christopher S. Weddle. The Attorney for the Child was Donna M. Genovese.

The appeal was from the order of the Family Court, Westchester County, dated February 2, 2022 — the order signed by Judge Michelle I. Schauer, who in a separate case had been accused of retaliating against a disabled father for asserting his federal rights. The Second Circuit had ruled that the court system violated the ADA in that case. The judge who issued Steve's gag order had already been accused of punishing a father who challenged the system.



The procedural history was this.

In July 2018, Tara commenced a custody proceeding seeking sole legal and physical custody of the child. She subsequently commenced a family offense proceeding against Steve. In October 2021, the Attorney for the Child moved to prohibit Steve from posting, uploading blogs, and displaying likenesses of the child regarding the proceedings — and from disparaging the child’s relatives in any and all public forums. The motion also sought to direct Steve to erase, deactivate, and delete all existing postings, blogs, and likenesses of the child.

Steve failed to oppose the AFC’s motion. He failed to appear on the return date.

On December 3, 2021, the Family Court granted the AFC’s motion upon the father’s default. A default in family court operates as a forfeiture: if a party does not respond, the court treats the silence as consent and grants whatever the opposing side requested. The mechanism exists to keep cases moving. It was never designed as a tool for obtaining speech restrictions with constitutional implications — but design and use are not the same thing.

In January 2022, the Family Court held a hearing on the mother’s petitions. Steve did not appear in person at the hearing. But his attorney appeared on his behalf. His attorney made objections. His attorney cross-examined the mother.

On February 2, 2022, the Family Court entered an order that granted the custody petition, awarded Tara sole legal and physical custody, and prohibited Steve from posting, uploading blogs, or displaying likenesses of the child regarding the proceedings. The order directed Steve to erase, deactivate, and delete “any existing blogs and likenesses.”

Steve appealed.



The Appellate Division issued its decision on March 22, 2023.



Matter of Walsh v. Russell, 214 A.D.3d 890 (2d Dep't 2023). Docket Nos. 2022-02838, V-7641-18, O-12635-19. The Appellate Division, Second Department, modified the Family Court order of February 2, 2022 (Schauer, J.). Two holdings: (1) the order was not entered upon the father's default — his counsel appeared and participated in the hearing; (2) the blanket provision directing the father to erase, deactivate, and delete "any existing blogs and likenesses" was struck as not "tailored as precisely as possible to the exact needs of the case."

Two holdings. The default did not occur. The blanket deletion order was unconstitutional.

B-12 — Matter of Walsh v. Russell, 214 A.D.3d 890 (2d Dep't 2023)

Two holdings. Each dismantled a piece of the structure the Family Court had built.



The first holding addressed the default.

Tara and the Attorney for the Child had argued that the order was entered on Steve's default — that he had failed to appear and therefore waived his right to challenge it. The Appellate Division disagreed.

The court found that although Steve failed to appear in person at the January 2022 hearing, his counsel appeared on his behalf and participated in the hearing. His counsel made objections. His counsel cross-examined the mother. The order was not entered upon the father's default.

The precedent was clear. When an attorney appears on behalf of a party, makes objections, and participates in cross-examination, the party is not in default. The court cited *Matter of N. [Fania D.-Alice T.]*, 108 A.D.3d 551, and *Matter of Newman v. Newman*, 72 A.D.3d 973. The law was not ambiguous.

The Family Court had declared a default. The Appellate Division said the default did not occur.

The sentence is worth examining for what it does not say. The court did not rule that the default was improper, or excessive, or subject to reconsideration. It ruled that the default did not occur — that the event the lower court treated as having happened was an event that had not taken place. His attorney was present. His attorney spoke. His attorney questioned the opposing party under oath. In the law's framework, these actions constituted appearance, and appearance is the antonym of default. The Family Court had constructed an absence where a presence had been standing, had built an order on that constructed absence, and the Appellate Division, sixteen months later, observed that the absence was not there. The lower court had not erred, exactly — to err implies a miscalculation, and what the lower court did was not miscalculate but misclassify, placing an attorney's active participation in a category the law reserves for empty chairs.



The second holding addressed the speech restrictions.

The Appellate Division applied the constitutional standard for prior restraint. A prior restraint on speech is a judicial order that suppresses speech on the basis of its content and in advance of its actual expression. The party seeking such restraint bears a heavy burden of demonstrating justification for its imposition. The

restrained speech must be likely to produce a clear and present danger of a serious substantive evil that rises far above public inconvenience, annoyance, or unrest. And an order imposing a prior restraint must be tailored as precisely as possible to the exact needs of the case. The standard exists because the First Amendment treats government suppression of speech as presumptively unconstitutional — the burden falls not on the speaker to justify speaking but on the government to justify silencing.

The Family Court's order had directed Steve to erase, deactivate, and delete "any existing blogs and likenesses." The Appellate Division found that this provision was not tailored as precisely as possible to the exact needs of the case. The restriction required the deletion of all existing blogs and likenesses — regardless of whether the blogs or likenesses related to the child, the mother, the mother's family, or the proceedings. The order was overbroad.

The court modified the order. It substituted a narrower provision: Steve was directed to erase and delete existing blogs that referenced the proceedings or disparaged the child's relatives, and likenesses of the child posted in connection with such blogs. The remaining restrictions — on posting about the proceedings or disparaging the child's relatives — were affirmed as narrowly tailored.

The blanket erasure order was gone. The words "any existing blogs and likenesses" — the words that had been weaponized against journalists, circulated to employers, delivered to Michaelanne Petrella seventeen days before the order was even entered — had been struck by the appellate court as constitutionally deficient.



Steve was in a room when the decision arrived.

He read it. The language was technical — modification, substitution, affirmance in part — but the substance was

not. The default that the Family Court had relied upon did not exist. The blanket deletion order was unconstitutional. Two holdings, each removing a piece of the foundation on which the custody order and the gag order had been built.

Evie was six years old. She had been living in the Walsh household — the household Brienne had described under oath, the household where CPS had been called, the household where a California jury had found the mother liable for battery with malice — for the entire duration of the appellate process. She was in first grade. She had lost her baby teeth. She had started reading. Every milestone Steve had missed was a milestone the system's delay had taken from him — not through a single act but through the accumulation of recusals and reassignments and the particular patience of a process designed to outlast the people inside it.



The Appellate Division had removed the foundation. The default the Family Court had entered on December 3, 2021, did not exist as a matter of law. The blanket speech order the Family Court had issued on February 2, 2022, exceeded constitutional limits.

The Family Court did not modify its custody orders in response to the appellate decision. The reversal was published, indexed at 214 A.D.3d 890, entered into the body of law that lower courts are obligated to follow. And the court that had issued the orders the appellate panel found deficient treated the published reversal the way the institutional architecture of Westchester County had treated every other piece of documented evidence in this case — by continuing as if the document did not exist.

The custody order remained in effect. The child remained in New York. The rulings existed in the appellate record — indexed, published at 214 A.D.3d 890, available

to any court that chose to examine them — and the Family Court that had issued the underlying orders did not act.

The remaining options were mapped: a motion in Family Court, a federal action, or both. Each path required time and the endurance of a person who had already spent years inside a legal system that responded to documented wrongdoing with procedural delay.



Two appellate courts had now ruled.

In California, the First Appellate District had affirmed the jury verdict. The battery finding was permanent. The determination that Tara Walsh had committed battery with fraud and malice was embedded in the civil record — indexed, final, affirmed on appeal.

In New York, the Second Department had struck down the gag order and found that the default did not occur. The orders that had been built on that default — the custody arrangement, the speech restrictions, the deletion requirement — rested on a foundation the appellate court said was not there.

Both records existed simultaneously. The California record said Steve had been battered. The New York record said the Family Court's order was constitutionally infirm and procedurally deficient. And in the space between those two records — in the gap between what the appellate courts had found and what had changed as a result — the custody order remained. The child remained in the household.

The appellate courts had spoken. The Family Court had not listened.

Being right in two jurisdictions is not the same as being restored in one.



What Twelve People Saw

February 16, 2022

The civil battery case reaches trial in San Francisco Superior Court. A different courtroom. Twelve neutral citizens. Abby Tedla testifies. Brienne's deposition is admitted without objection. The jury hears the full story for the first time.

Kelly came back.

They were not together — she had left before Bora Bora, before the inquest, before the gag order was formalized. But the battery case had a trial date now, and when it became clear that Steve might not go without her, she came back. Not as a partner. As a person who understood what had happened and was not willing to let him face a courtroom alone.

They stayed at the Proper Hotel, down the street from the courthouse. The only room left had bunk beds — a tiny space above the Tenderloin that was not what either of them would have chosen. Two people navigating the wreckage of a custody war, sleeping in bunk beds in downtown San Francisco. The rooftop bar overlooked a city that had not figured out what to do with its most damaged residents. Hotel guests could walk straight up.

They had a fifteen-dollar hot dog that was surprisingly good.

Sometimes Steve wanted to scream at the sky too.



The courtroom was different.

For years the conflict had unfolded in family courts — proceedings where a judge sits alone, where there is no jury, where the rules of evidence are relaxed, where the atmosphere is one of administrative management rather than adversarial examination. Visitation conferences. Scheduling matters. Defaults entered at five o'clock. Orders built on orders built on a default — a proceeding where the absent party's silence had been treated as consent.

Department 504 of the San Francisco Superior Court was a civil trial courtroom. The Honorable Garrett L. Wong presiding. Twelve chairs in the jury box. A witness stand. Counsel tables arranged for presentation and cross-examination. A room built for a proceeding where evidence is tested and the fact-finders are citizens with no stake in the outcome. For the first time in four years of litigation, the people deciding the case had no institutional relationship to the people being judged — no shared jurisdictions, no professional dependencies, no reason to credit the Walsh family's position beyond whatever the evidence compelled them to credit.

Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137. Stephen Russell, appearing by attorney Brian D. Waller of Peckar & Abramson, P.C. Tara Walsh, appearing in *propria persona*.

She was representing herself.

FILED: WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK 10/05/2022 10:52 AM

INDEX NO. 55523/2023

NYSCEF DOC. NO. 1

RECEIVED NYSCEF: 01/13/2023

FILED
Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco

AUG 11 2022

CLERK OF THE COURT
BY: *[Signature]* Deputy Clerk

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

9	STEPHEN RUSSELL, an individual,	)	
10	Plaintiff,	)	Case No. CGC-18-570137
11	vs.	)	SECOND AMENDED JUDGMENT
12	TARA WALSH, an individual; and	)	ON JURY VERDICT
13	DOES 1 to 20,	)	
14	Defendants.	)	
15	TARA WALSH, an individual,	)	
16	Cross-Complainant,	)	
17	vs.	)	
18	STEPHEN RUSSELL, an individual, and	)	
19	DOES 1-10,	)	
20	Cross-Defendant.	)	

21 Plaintiff/Cross-Defendant Stephen Russell's ("Russell") main action against
22 Defendant/Cross-Complainant Tara Walsh, in *pro per* ("Walsh"), came on regularly for trial on

23 1
24 Second Amended Judgment on Jury Verdict
25 *Russell v. Walsh, et al.*, San Francisco Superior Court Case No. CGC-18-570137

2 of 15

Verdict Forms cover page, Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137, Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco, Unlimited Jurisdiction. Filed February 22, 2022.

Twelve people were selected through voir dire and took their seats. Steve sat at the counsel table and looked at the jury box and saw something he had not seen in any

courtroom since the case began: neutral observers. Not a judge assigned by a system the Walsh family had navigated for decades. Not a supervisor who had been removed after documenting inconvenient observations. Not an attorney for the child who had placed scare quotes around the word bruises. Twelve people from San Francisco with no connection to Chappaqua, no connection to Westchester, no connection to anyone in either family.

For the first time, the evidence would be examined by people whose only obligation was to listen.



The gallery was nearly empty.

No one from Steve's family had come. No one from Tara's family had come. The Walsh family — the family that had deployed in formation at driveways and courthouses across two states, that had parked a blacked-out SUV among the bushes at a supervised visitation drop-off, that had coordinated vacation ruses and false police reports and unilateral supervisor removals — had not sent a single person to sit behind Tara in the room where the evidence would finally be tested.

The only person in the gallery for Tara was her friend Rashmi.

Steve looked at the empty seats behind Tara and said it out loud, to no one in particular: "No one is here to help Tara. Some family. Why would they do this to her. It's like they want her to fail."

Kelly was there. She sat behind Steve. She had returned in order to sit in a courtroom gallery and watch the system work for once.



The trial lasted five days.

The jury heard the story without the fragmentation of years of custody procedure and visitation conferences. They heard it in the order it happened, with documents projected on a screen and witnesses on a stand and the timeline unfolding the way timelines unfold when they are not managed by courts whose primary interest is disposition.

Abby Tedla took the stand.

The nanny who had approached Steve in the kitchen of the North Beach townhouse — who had said “this will probably get me fired” and then told him what she had seen — now told a courtroom. Under oath. On the record. The same account she had given in the kitchen, but now in the language of testimony, with a court reporter recording every word and twelve strangers listening.

She described what she had witnessed: Tara standing in the kitchen with the medication out beside Steve’s glass. Asked what she was doing, Tara had answered, “To calm him down.” Tara putting drugs in Steve’s wine. The requests for help — asking Abby, asking Bryan Crutcher. Not once. Multiple times, over months. The way the drugging was presented as something that was simply done, a management technique applied to a person who did not know it was being applied.

The jury listened to a woman describe a request that had been asked of her repeatedly, and her refusal, and the courage that refusal required, and the fact that the drugging continued after she refused because Tara did not need help. She had never needed help. She had been doing it alone the entire time.



The text messages were introduced.

The messages exchanged during the years of the marriage and the custody fight — the communications that showed what was said in private, the language people use when they believe they are speaking only to each other. The messages were projected on a screen. The jury read them.

The communications showed what the flings could not: the tone, the intent, the distance between what was presented to courts and what was said in confidence. Messages about the drugging. Messages about the scheme. Messages that did not require interpretation because they said what they said.



Brienne Walsh's deposition was read to the jury.



Brienne Walsh's deposition described the household where the child was living: the physical discipline, the family dynamics, the internal rules. The testimony of a Walsh — describing violence inside the Walsh household — was admitted at trial without objection from Tara's side. The words entered the civil record the way uncontested evidence enters any record: as fact.

Tara's own sister's testimony. Admitted without a word.

ExQQ_06 — Brienne Walsh Deposition, Admitted at Trial Without Objection

Without objection.

Tara heard the deposition testimony describing violence in the household where her daughter was living — the household Tara had moved into, the household the New York family courts had awarded sole custody to

protect — and chose not to challenge the account. Her own sister's testimony entered the trial record unchallenged.

The jury now had the testimony of a Walsh describing the household. They had a nanny's account of the drugging. They had the text messages. They had the laboratory reports — lithium at six times the reference range, mycophenolic acid at seven times the upper bound, quetiapine confirmed in blood. They had Steve's testimony: the symptoms that would occur when Tara was in San Francisco and abate when she returned to New York.



Tara testified.

She had requested a continuance at the start of trial, telling the court she was not mentally fit to proceed. But by the time she made the request, the jury had already been sworn and she had already delivered an opening statement in *propria persona*. The court observed that she had withstood examination by opposing counsel and appeared to understand the proceedings. The court offered to let her present a note from her psychiatrist. She never did.

The trial continued.

Under cross-examination, the jury watched a woman try to construct a denial of something her own devices had recorded. On September 30, 2017, a device linked to Tara's account had searched for the lethal dose of Seroquel on a website called healthsofa.com. At trial, she was asked about the search.



Tara Walsh, testifying under oath about the internet search for the lethal dose of Seroquel found on her

device: “I would not consider that I would do this, but I definitely recognize that I did not do this, no.”

I would not consider that I would do this, but I definitely recognize that I did not do this, no.

ExTR_19d – Tara Walsh, Trial Testimony, February 2022

The syntax was labored — though labored implies effort, and what the jury heard was not effort but collapse, a sentence trying to hold two contradictory positions and failing to hold either. Not a denial but a construction — layered, recursive, built to hold two contradictory positions at once. She would not consider it. But she recognizes she did not do it. The sentence does not say she didn’t search. It says she would not consider that she would, and she recognizes that she didn’t. The jury heard the difference.

The defense presented no contrary medical or toxicological evidence. No expert to explain the lithium. No expert to explain the mycophenolic acid. No toxicologist to challenge the lab results. The nanny’s testimony was uncontradicted. The text messages were uncontradicted. The deposition was uncontradicted. Tara’s own admissions — that she had placed Seroquel in Steve’s wine without his knowledge or consent — were in the record from the DVRO hearing and from her sworn DV-120 response.



At some point during the proceedings, Rashmi — the one friend who had come, the one person in the gallery for Tara — reached over and said it directly.

“We should stop.”

Tara did not stop.

The family that had built the defense architecture had not come. The friend who had come wanted out. And the woman at the center of both — representing herself, without counsel, without family, without the institutional scaffolding that had protected her in every prior proceeding — continued.



The evidence was in the room. The jury was in the room. The story that had been compressed and fragmented and procedurally managed for years was, for the first time, whole. Not filtered through a family court judge's discretion. Not managed by a supervisor who could be removed. Not buried by a gag order whose constitutional authority had never been tested in an adversarial proceeding.

Twelve people had heard it. They retired to deliberate. *They retired to deliberate.*

Steve walked out of the courtroom and stood in the hallway. Kelly was there. After years of proceedings where the evidence was managed rather than tested — the judges who recused, the supervisors who were removed, the AFC who placed the word *bruises* in quotation marks — the question of what happened had finally been placed in the hands of people who had no reason to look away. Would it matter? Would twelve strangers do what the institutions had refused to? He did not know. He only knew that for the first time, someone had heard the whole story. Whether they believed it was another question. Whether believing it would change anything for Evie was the question he could not ask out loud.



What the Jury Found

February 22, 2022

The verdict: battery, fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress, domestic violence — with a finding of malice. Eleven to one. Approximately three hundred thousand dollars. The vote was not close.

The jury deliberated over a long weekend.

Twelve people sat in a room with the evidence. The testimony. The documents. The text messages projected on a screen. A nanny's account of a request that had been made repeatedly, over months, to drug a man's wine without his knowledge. A deposition from a sister — from inside the family — describing a household where children were hit. Laboratory reports showing substances in a man's body that no doctor had prescribed. And the defendant's own words, under oath, constructing a denial that collapsed under the weight of what her own devices had recorded.

They returned on Tuesday, February 22, 2022.



The presiding juror signed five verdict forms.

FILED: WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK 10/05/2022 10:52 AM
 NYSCEF DOC. NO. 1

INDEX NO. 55523/2023
 RECEIVED NYSCEF: 01/13/2023

February 16, 2022, in Department 504 of the Superior Court, the Hon. Garrett L. Wong presiding; Russell, appearing by attorney Brian D. Waller, Peckar & Abramson, P.C.; and Walsh appearing in *propria persona*.

A jury of persons was regularly impaneled and sworn. Witnesses were sworn and testified. After hearing the evidence and arguments of counsel, the jury was duly instructed by the Court and the cause was submitted to the jury. The jury deliberated and thereafter returned into court with its verdict as follows:

Russell is entitled to judgment against Walsh in the amount of \$325,000.00, consisting of past economic loss in the amount of \$185,000.00, past noneconomic loss, including physical pain/mental suffering in the amount of \$90,000.00, and punitive damages in the amount of \$50,000.00.

On April 15, 2022, the Court granted Walsh on her motion under Code of Civil Procedure section 629(a), a partial JNOV in Walsh's favor regarding the \$50,000.00 award of punitive damages and reduced the verdict by that amount.

On April 15, 2022, the Court denied Walsh's motion to strike costs and awarded Russell, as prevailing party, an award of costs in the amount of \$6,607.82 under Code of Civil Procedure section 1033.5 *et seq.*

Upon further consideration, the Court revises the award of costs from \$6,607.82 to \$5,275.87 because expenses of \$1,331.95 that were attributed to a court reporter's Real Time feed are not allowable by statute.

It appearing by reason of said verdict that: Russell is entitled to judgment against Walsh on Russell's main action; and

Walsh's Cross-Complaint against Russell was dismissed, with prejudice, on April 14, 2021.

On July 7, 2022, the Court granted Russell's motion for judgment of dismissal granting

2
 Second Amended Judgment on Jury Verdict
Russell v. Walsh, et al., San Francisco Superior Court Case No. CGC-18-570137

Jury verdict form VF-1301 (Battery — Self-Defense/Defense of Others at Issue). Handwritten answers: (1) Did Walsh touch Russell with intent to harm or offend? YES. (2) Did Russell consent? NO. (3) Was Russell harmed or offended? YES. (4) Would a reasonable person have been offended? YES. (5) Did Walsh reasonably believe Russell was going to harm her?

*NO. Damages: \$185,000 past economic loss, \$90,000
past noneconomic loss. Signed by Presiding Juror, dated
02/22/2022.*

The first form addressed battery. The jury answered six questions.

Did Tara Walsh touch Stephen Russell, or cause him to be touched, with the intent to harm or offend? Yes. Did Stephen Russell consent to be touched? No. Was Stephen Russell harmed or offended by Tara Walsh's conduct? Yes. Would a reasonable person in Stephen Russell's situation have been offended by the touching? Yes.

Question five asked whether Tara Walsh reasonably believed that Stephen Russell was going to harm her. The answer was no. The self-defense claim — the claim that had structured Tara's narrative across two states and multiple years, the premise on which restraining orders had been obtained and court orders weaponized and a gag order imposed — was rejected by the people who had heard the evidence.



The second form addressed intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Was Tara Walsh exercising her legal rights or protecting her economic interests? No. Was her conduct outrageous? Yes. Did she intend to cause Stephen Russell emotional distress, or act with reckless disregard of the probability that he would suffer emotional distress as a result of her conduct? Yes. Did Stephen Russell suffer severe emotional distress? Yes. Was Tara Walsh's conduct a substantial factor in causing that distress? Yes.

The word "outrageous" has a legal definition. Conduct so extreme as to exceed all bounds of that usually tolerated in a civilized community. The jury heard five days

of evidence and concluded that what Tara Walsh had done exceeded those bounds.



The damages were awarded.

Past economic loss: one hundred eighty-five thousand dollars. Past noneconomic loss — physical pain and mental suffering: ninety thousand dollars. Punitive damages: fifty thousand dollars. Total: three hundred twenty-five thousand dollars.

The punitive damages required a separate finding. The jury had to determine, by clear and convincing evidence, that Walsh had acted with malice. Malice — the legal definition requires intent. Not negligence. Not the product of a marriage falling apart. Not a mistake made under stress. The jury had seen the texts, heard the testimony, read the laboratory results. They found malice.

The vote was eleven to one.

Eleven to one.

The number moved through Steve before the language did. Years of family court proceedings — the defaults, the recusals, the orders entered without hearings — and now a number. Not a judge's discretion. Not a supervisor's recommendation. The considered judgment of eleven people who had sat through five days of evidence and decided, independently, that what he had been saying since the kitchen in North Beach was true. He waited for the feeling he had imagined — vindication, relief, the lifting of a weight. What arrived instead was quieter: the recognition that it should not have taken this long for someone to look. Kelly was behind him. He did not turn around. The verdict confirmed what had happened, and confirming it made the weight heavier, not lighter — because now it was real in a room full of strangers, and

real was what he had been asking for, and real was not the same as fixed.



During the trial, one juror had appeared especially engaged. He sat forward, took notes, made eye contact with witnesses. He mentioned having two sons in law enforcement. He seemed, by every observable measure, to be carefully weighing the evidence.

When the verdict was returned after the long weekend, the same juror avoided eye contact. He kept his head down. He left the courtroom immediately.

The other eleven jurors stayed. Several spoke with the attorneys and with Steve and Kelly. They said what people say when they have heard something that disturbed them and feel the weight of having been asked to render judgment on it.

The holdout juror was gone.



After the verdict, the court entered judgment. The punitive damages of fifty thousand dollars were later removed on a motion for judgment notwithstanding the verdict. The remaining damages — two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars — stood. With costs on the main action and costs on the dismissed cross-complaint, the total judgment came to three hundred thirty-two thousand eighty dollars and seventy-four cents. Interest at ten percent per annum from the date of entry.

Walsh's cross-complaint against Russell had been dismissed with prejudice on April 14, 2021 — before the trial even began. The court awarded Russell costs as the prevailing party on both the main action and the cross-complaint.



The verdict established what twelve people concluded after hearing the evidence.

Battery. The touching was intentional, unconsented, harmful. A reasonable person would have been offended. The claim of self-defense was rejected.

Intentional infliction of emotional distress. The conduct was outrageous. The distress was severe. Walsh acted with reckless disregard.

Domestic violence. Under California Civil Code section 1708.6, the abuse was committed by a person in a relationship with the plaintiff. The injury resulted from that abuse.

Malice. Eleven to one.

The language was legal but the meaning was not. A jury had determined that what Steve had described — across years of filings and proceedings and supervised visits and institutional failures — was not paranoia, not exaggeration, not the distortion of a bitter custody fight. It was what he said it was.

The California civil court had done what the New York family courts had not. It had examined the evidence and reached a conclusion.

One legal system had compensated. The other still had the child.



Affirmed

September 15, 2023

Tara appeals the battery verdict. Three arguments. The appellate court finds none of them persuasive. The jury's findings survive review. The judgment is domesticated in the same county where the family court orders remain in effect.

Tara appealed.

The trial record was assembled and transmitted to the California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four. Case No. A165356. The briefs were filed. The arguments were made. Walsh raised three.



The first argument: the trial court erred in refusing to continue the trial when Walsh told the court she was having mental health issues.

The appellate court disagreed. When Walsh first made the request for a continuance, the jury had already been sworn and she had already delivered an opening statement in propria persona. The trial court observed

that Walsh had withstood examination by opposing counsel and appeared to understand the nature of the proceedings. The court told her directly: it was not precluding her from presenting a psychiatrist's note, but if she wished to continue the case, the court would require good cause. Walsh never provided the note. She never established good cause. She had represented herself through voir dire, through opening statements, through direct examination. The court concluded she was able to proceed.

The appellate court found no abuse of discretion.



The second argument: the evidence was insufficient to support the jury's verdict on all three torts — battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and domestic violence.

The appellate court found this claim waived.

When challenging the sufficiency of evidence on appeal, the appellant's burden is to set forth in her brief all the material evidence on the point — not merely her own evidence. Walsh's opening brief summarized only her own testimony. It neglected Russell's testimony — which described symptoms he experienced, how those symptoms would abate in Walsh's absence, a blood test that revealed high levels of lithium in his body, and the statements of a nanny who had witnessed Walsh drugging his wine. By failing to set forth all the material evidence pertaining to battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and domestic violence, Walsh's claims were deemed waived.

She had told only her side of a story the jury had already heard in full. Not that the brief had fabricated — it had omitted, which in appellate review carries the same weight, because the court is entitled to treat what the

appellant declines to mention as what the appellant cannot contest.



The appellate court then addressed the merits anyway.

Even if Walsh's claims were not waived, the court found, substantial evidence supported the jury's verdict on all three torts.

On battery: Walsh admitted to drugging Russell's wine and placing it near him, intending that he ingest the drug. Russell explained the sensations he experienced — the abnormal symptoms, the panic upon realizing he had been drugged, the subsequent withdrawal and neuropathy. The jury could reasonably find that Walsh intentionally did an act which resulted in harmful or offensive contact with Russell's person.

Walsh argued self-defense. The appellate court noted that self-defense requires the defendant to have reasonably believed, in view of all the circumstances, that the plaintiff was going to harm her. Russell testified that he never physically harmed Walsh or threatened her with physical harm. The jury apparently resolved the question of credibility against Walsh.

Walsh argued consent — that Russell had impliedly consented to being drugged. She cited two cases involving medical consent forms. The appellate court found neither case relevant. Those cases involved doctors and signed consent forms — professionals in a clinical setting, the patient informed, the document executed with a pen. This case involved a woman putting drugs in a man's wine without telling him. That the defense could locate no authority closer to the facts than a signed medical waiver said something the brief itself did not say: there is no body of case law recognizing implied consent to being covertly

poisoned by an intimate partner, because no court has been asked to find that such consent exists.

On intentional infliction of emotional distress: Walsh's extreme and outrageous conduct consisted of drugging Russell's wine without his knowledge or consent. Her reckless disregard for the probability of causing emotional distress could be inferred from the fact that she accompanied Russell to the emergency room on one of his trips for a toxicology report when he suspected he had been drugged. She knew he was in distress. She later drugged him again.

On domestic violence: Walsh did not contest that she and Russell had the requisite relationship. The injury finding was supported by the evidence that Walsh placed Russell in reasonable apprehension of imminent serious bodily injury by inducing the panic he experienced upon noticing he had been drugged — panic that resulted in symptoms including withdrawal and neuropathy.

The court's conclusion was a single sentence: "Finding none of these arguments persuasive, we affirm the judgment." Russell was entitled to recover his costs on appeal.

The opinion was filed September 15, 2023. Justice Goldman wrote for the court. Justice Streeter and Justice Hiramoto concurred. The case name on the filing read *Walsh v. Russell* — the appellant listed first, as appellate convention requires.



The judgment was then exemplified and domesticated in Westchester County Supreme Court under Index No. 55523/2023. Full Faith and Credit. The Constitution requires it. A judgment entered in one state must be recognized and enforced by another.

The California finding — that the woman who held sole custody of Steve's daughter had been adjudicated liable for battery with malice, for domestic violence, for intentional infliction of emotional distress — was now enforceable in the same county where the family court orders remained in effect. The same county where a gag order had been entered and then struck down. The same county where three judges had recused themselves. The same county where a default at five o'clock had produced a custody order that the appellate court later said rested on a proceeding that never occurred.

Two court systems. Two states. Two appellate courts.

In California, the battery verdict was final. The jury's determination that Tara Walsh had committed battery with fraud and malice was embedded in the civil record — indexed, permanent, affirmed on appeal.

In New York, the Appellate Division had struck down the gag order as unconstitutional and found that the default did not occur.

Both records existed simultaneously. The California record said Steve had been battered. The New York record said the orders built on the default were constitutionally infirm. And in the space between those two records — in the gap between what the courts had found and what had changed as a result — the custody order remained. The child remained in New York.

The battery verdict was final. The custody situation was unchanged.

Evie was seven. She had never seen a courtroom. She did not know that two appellate courts in two states had reviewed the facts of her life and reached conclusions about the people who raised her. She knew only what the people around her told her, and the people around her were the people the courts had found liable, and the courts that found them liable could not reach her.

Being right is not the same as being restored.

AFFIRMED



AFFIRMED

PART IX

THE RECORD

The Record Is Open

2023-2026

After the verdict, after the appeal, the story becomes what institutions could not hold — a permanent archive. Five independent archives survived every silencing attempt. The court record confirmed the scheme. The Appellate Division struck the gag order. And in December 2025, a motion arrived in Westchester County Family Court asking a single question — were the orders that govern a child's life ever lawfully entered?

The record exists.

It exists in four hardbound books — red covers, spine-stamped — on a shelf in a house in Nevada. Each book holds photographs, text messages, court filings, and deposition testimony arranged with deliberate juxtaposition. A father feeding his daughter on one page. A lethal dose search on the next. The arrangement is the argument.

It exists in 146 blog posts written by a woman who signed her name Aunt K — systematic, disciplined, building the case one post at a time — under a website called StevieLovesEvie, before a Westchester Family

Court judge ordered every word erased, deactivated, and deleted.

It exists in a 4.7-gigabyte iMessage database recovered from a device backup. Timestamps accurate to the second. The scheme speaking to itself in two registers — what Tara said to Steve, and what she said to everyone else. The gap between those registers is the core evidence of fraud.

It exists in a journalist's podcast — twelve episodes, animated recreations drawn within the constraints of court orders she did not yet know would be used against her — before a woman named her sister and told her she was putting herself in harm's way. Seventeen days before the gag order was entered.

It exists in 19 case folders across two states. 432,000 files. Trial transcripts and deposition testimony, toxicology reports and police records, the Second Amended Judgment on Jury Verdict — Case No. CGC-18-570137, San Francisco Superior Court — totaling \$332,080.74.

Intentional battery. Domestic violence. Intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Findings of malice, oppression, and fraud.

Total judgment: **\$332,080.74** with 10% interest.

Affirmed on appeal, September 15, 2023.

Affirmed on appeal. Domesticated in New York.



The archive was never intended to be this large.

In the beginning, the documentation instinct was professional. 3VR built surveillance systems for banks and airports and transit authorities. The instinct was to record what was real and let the recording speak. When that instinct turned inward — toward Steve's own household, his own body, symptoms that no diagnosis could explain — it produced the same output. Photographs. Timestamps. Chain of custody.

Kelly inherited the instinct. She built the books. She wrote the blog. She treated the evidence the way she had been trained — if people could just see it, they would do the right thing.

People could see it. Most of them chose not to.

Supervisor reports disappeared from court files. A judge recused rather than adjudicated. Another judge entered orders she acknowledged were not the product of a hearing. The Attorney for the Child filed an Order to Show Cause requesting the father's blogs be erased. A forensic evaluator whose report governed custody determinations was found to have submitted falsified documentation to the state. Supervisors who documented positive visits were removed. Supervisors who documented nothing were retained.

The archive exists because those institutions failed. It gathered together what they would not hold.



The verdict did not change the custody arrangement.

The California Court of Appeal affirmed the judgment on September 15, 2023. The judgment was domesticated in Westchester County. A San Francisco jury had heard six days of testimony, reviewed text messages, listened to audio recordings, read sworn declarations, and found Tara Walsh liable for intentional battery with malice, oppression, and fraud.

The Westchester Family Court orders remained in place.

The Appellate Division, Second Department, had already struck the blanket deletion provision of the gag order — ruling it unconstitutional, a prior restraint that failed the standard requiring a restriction be “tailored as precisely as possible.” The court had found that no default

occurred — the father’s counsel appeared, made objections, cross-examined.

The Family Court orders remained in place.

Between the jury verdict and the appellate ruling, the full evidentiary record had established: the petitioner admitted under oath she lied about the trip to New York and had no intention to come back. She admitted the residency was unauthorized and in violation of existing California court orders. She recanted the sole emergency predicate — the death threat — in a letter to the Chappaqua Police Department. The forensic evaluator whose report governed custody surrendered his license for fraud.

The Family Court orders remained in place.



Then the record was altered.

On February 3, 2026, a support hearing was held before Magistrate Bowman in Westchester County. Steve attended with his attorney. When Bowman reviewed the court’s internal file, what she found did not match the appellate ruling.

The court’s computer system now reflected the custody orders as having been entered “after a hearing.” Not on default. There had been no new order, no rehearing, no formal vacatur and re-entry. The records had been changed without any judicial process. No motion had been filed requesting the change. No order had been entered authorizing it. The alteration had the quality of a correction to a clerical error — except that what it corrected was not an error but a finding.

The Appellate Division had ruled: “Initially, contrary to the contention of the mother and the attorney for the child, the order appealed from was not entered upon the father’s default.”

The presiding judge had stated, in substance, that the proceeding was “not a hearing.”

And the court’s internal system now said: after hearing.

Three mutually exclusive characterizations of the same judicial event. None of them could simultaneously be true — though *true*, in a system where a database field can be rewritten without a hearing, had come to mean only what someone with access chose to enter.



In December 2025, a motion had arrived at the Westchester County Family Court.

Respondent Stephen Grant Russell, by his attorneys Hugh Jasne, Esq. and Dan Florio Jr., Esq. of Jasne & Florio LLP, respectfully moved for an order vacating all prior orders in the matter.

CPLR §§ 5015(a)(3), (a)(4); FCA §§ 434, 446, 842; DRL § 75-i; DRL § 240; U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV.

Six independently dispositive grounds.

Filed by Hugh Jasne, Esq. and Dan Florio Jr., Esq., Jasne & Florio LLP.

The motion did not ask the court to decide who was the better parent. It did not seek to relitigate the best interests of the child. It presented the court with six independently dispositive grounds — each sufficient on its own — for why the orders governing Evie’s life were void as a matter of law.

No default occurred. The Appellate Division said so. The father’s counsel appeared, made objections, cross-examined. That is not a default under any definition recognized by New York law.

No hearing occurred. The presiding judge said so. Under Family Court Act sections 434, 446, and 842, custody and protection orders require an evidentiary hearing. No testimony was subjected to

cross-examination. No witnesses were called. No exhibits were admitted with foundation.

No jurisdiction was established. California was the child's home state with active custody proceedings. New York seized jurisdiction without making home-state findings and without communicating with the California court — a mandatory requirement under DRL section 75-i.

The emergency predicate was formally recanted. The sole basis for emergency jurisdiction was an allegation that Steve had threatened to kill Tara and Evie with a firearm. In November 2020, Tara wrote to the Chappaqua Police Department: "Mr. Stephen Russell never made a threat to kill myself or our daughter Evelyn. I would like to withdraw any complaints regarding this to the police department."

The forensic foundation was fraudulent. P. Raymond Griffin — the court-appointed chemical evaluator whose report governed custody — had his credential revoked for grossly negligent handling of toxicology testing, inaccurate documentation, and submitting falsified documentation to the state. He surrendered his license on August 23, 2019.

The orders were retroactively reclassified. Without any new order, rehearing, or notice, the court's internal records were changed from "default" to "after hearing." The records now contradicted both the appellate ruling and the presiding judge's own statement.



The motion's preliminary statement said what the archive had been saying for eight years:

"The Respondent does not ask this Court to relitigate the 'best interests of the child.' He asks this Court to recognize that the orders governing his daughter's life were never lawfully entered in the first place."

Critically, vacatur would not disrupt Evie's day-to-day life. She would remain in her current home, attend her current school, maintain her current routines. What would change is the legal foundation underlying those arrangements — reset from a void, fraud-tainted posture to one that could be adjudicated lawfully, with due process, on a proper evidentiary record.

The child's daily life would not be disrupted. The legal fiction propping up that life would be replaced with lawful authority.



The archive is not a repository. It is a witness.

Five independent archives survived every silencing attempt: the Backup, the Books, the Blog, the Podcast, the Court Record. Each has an origin story, a silencing attempt, and a survival story. Each carries a voice — Kelly's systematic love, Tara's scheme speaking to itself, Brienne's imperfect testimony, Petrella's journalism, and the institutional authority of the court record at both its worst and its best.

Together they hold what no single institution was willing to hold: the complete documentary record of a coordinated scheme — covert pharmaceutical poisoning, fabrication of a psychiatric narrative, organized institutionalization attempts, coordinated isolation, financial manipulation, and narrative amplification through institutions — confirmed by a jury of twelve, affirmed on appeal, and still, in the Family Court that produced the orders governing a child's life, unexamined.

The record is open. Anyone can read it.



46

The Demand

2025

After the verdict and the appeal, Tara communicates a new condition — drop the judgment, put money in escrow, stop filing court actions, and show respect to the Walsh family.

Contact with Evie becomes conditional on surrendering the legal outcome twelve strangers confirmed. When Steve declines, Tara dismisses the jury's findings as lies and tells him there is nothing left to discuss. The scheme adapts.

The verdict had been returned. The appeal had been exhausted. The judgment was final.

And then the terms arrived.

They came through the same channel they had always come through — text messages, direct, outside the formal legal system, in the space where the real conditions were set.

The first condition: money. Put funds in escrow that Tara could use for lawyers before Steve could see Evie. If he agreed not to sue her everywhere after that, he would get the money back.

Saturday, August 30, 2025

Tara: You put money in some escrow that I can use for lawyers before you see Evie. If you don't start suing me everywhere after that, then you get the money.

Ex00_54 – Tara Walsh Extortion Text, August 30, 2025

The second condition: stop filing court actions. Tara stated she was afraid that if Steve saw Evie, he would start court actions again. She could not afford another round — financially, mentally, physically. The condition was explicit: assure me you will not file court actions. Only then could they discuss a visit.

The third condition: show respect to the Walsh family. Drop the judgment. The judgment that twelve strangers had returned after hearing the evidence — battery, domestic violence, malice, fraud — must be abandoned as the price of contact with his daughter.

Steve did not accept the terms. He offered something else. He told Tara he would say whatever she wanted him to say — tell me what you'd like me to admit to, and I will say it — if it meant seeing Evie. The offer was rejected.



Tara's response to the jury verdict arrived in the same text thread.

August 4, 2025: "Ok I'm done. If you think a jury's version of hearing your lies is the truth, there is nothing left to discuss."

A jury's version. As though the verdict were an opinion rather than a finding. As though twelve strangers who heard six days of testimony, reviewed text messages and audio recordings and sworn declarations, deliberated over a long weekend, and returned findings on five verdict forms had merely chosen a version.

The jury had found: intentional battery — yes. Harmful or offensive contact — yes. Self-defense — no. Domestic violence — yes. Intentional infliction of emotional distress — yes. Outrageous conduct — yes. Reckless disregard — yes. Malice, oppression, and fraud — yes, eleven to one.

If you think a jury's version of hearing your lies is the truth. The sentence is a mirror. The scheme's logic — that reality is a matter of presentation, that the person who controls the narrative controls what happened — running headlong into the one institution that required all parties to present all the evidence and let twelve neutral strangers decide.

There was nothing left to discuss.



In the same months, a different set of conditions was materializing.

A forged court filing appeared in Steve's name — a document he did not sign, submitted to a court he was not aware of receiving it. Bank accounts were frozen on irregular documents. Third parties associated with Tara and the Walsh family engaged in threats aimed at Steve's retained counsel, including efforts to intimidate and delicense his attorneys. Directed cyberattacks. Mass spam sign-ups. His family was displaced from their Nevada home after threats, vandalism, and a fire on the property.

The methods had left the courtroom. What had operated through family court for years — the removal of inconvenient witnesses, the silencing of documentation, the targeting of anyone who saw — now operated through the broader legal and financial system.



The text messages from August 2025 also revealed something Tara had not intended to reveal.

[iMessage — Walsh — August 2025]

August 2025

Tara: Evie was begging to be able to see you last night. Pretty heartbreaking. I don't know what to do.

F-053 — Tara Walsh Text, August 2025

Evie was begging to be able to see her father.

The child's own desire was not in question. Tara acknowledged it. Described it as heartbreaking. And in the same thread, conditioned any contact on financial payment, surrender of the judgment, and a promise not to seek legal relief.

In another message, Tara told Evie that her father was "trying to take our house." The child who was begging to see her father was being told a story about him that bore no relationship to what the evidence showed.



Tara later admitted to police that she was "not a victim of any crime" — contradicting the sworn filings that had formed the basis of the court orders.

Steve Walsh and Maura Walsh said nothing publicly. The broader institutions involved remained silent. The Family Court had received the motion to vacate. The six grounds were before it. The record was complete.

The demand remained on the table: drop the judgment, pay the money, stop the court actions, and show the Walsh family respect.

The judgment remained in the record.

The child remained in Chappaqua.

And the question — the question that had been present since a young woman threw a wine bottle in a San Francisco apartment and a man speed-dialed his brother as a witness — was the same question it had always been.

The question was not about evidence. There was evidence.

The question was not about the legal system. Two legal systems had now spoken.

The question was about a child who was begging to see her father, and what the people who controlled her access were willing to demand in exchange.



47

For Evie

present

*Afterword. A house in the United States. A room
that is ready. A brother who knows her name.
The door is open.*

A house on a quiet street.

The kind of street where the trees have been there longer than the houses and the sidewalks crack where the roots push through. The house is three stories. Clean but not immaculate. Shoes by the door. Mail on the counter. The afternoon light comes through the front windows at an angle that changes with the season.

A baby is crying upstairs.



Steve takes the stairs two at a time — the same stride he used in Moscow, in the airport corridors where he became mayor of the departure lounge, in the years when walking fast through unfamiliar places was just how he moved through the world. The stride has not changed. The world has.

Simon is seven months old. He has his father's eyes and his mother's composure. When Steve lifts him from the crib, the crying stops — the way it stops for babies who recognize the heartbeat against their ear. The house returns to its ordinary sounds: something in the kitchen, the creak of a floor, the particular quality of silence that is not silence but the absence of distress.

Kelly is downstairs. She came back for the trial, stayed through the verdict and the appeal, and has been part of the years that followed the years this story covers. She knows the names and dates and exhibit numbers the way a person knows the geography of a country they have lived in but did not choose. She built the books. She wrote the blog. She lost a baby to a bottle of wine that reached forward from a kitchen in San Francisco. She stayed.



On the walls are photographs.

Some are of Evie. She is younger in these photographs than she is now — a toddler, a baby, the child who took her first steps during a supervised visit at Crabtree's Kittle House and who cried every time she was carried away. The photographs are from the visits. They are the images a father keeps when the visits are all he has.

Some photographs are older. Steve in San Francisco. Steve in Moscow. The years before the story began, when walking fast through unfamiliar places was adventure rather than escape.

[BLOG ARCHIVE — 2019-03-31 — STEVIELOVESEVIE BLOG]

"Evie arrived for Visit 15, Part 1, with strange bruises on her right leg." Post 55 of 146. March 31, 2019. Kelly documented the bruises minutes into the visit — the ones the supervisor noted, the ones the grandparents called normal, the ones the attorney's

letter said did not exist. The blog post survives. The bruises are in the record.

Evie arrived with strange bruises on her right leg. The blog post survives. The bruises are in the record.

SLE-054 – StevieLovesEvie, Visit 15, Part 1, March 31, 2019

The shelves in the study hold thick binders and hardbound books. Among them: the four StevieLovesEvie volumes — red covers, spine-stamped. Transcripts. Court filings. The motion to vacate. Letters and testimony. The laboratory reports showing lithium at six times the reference range, mycophenolic acid at seven times the upper bound. The appellate decisions. The verdict forms.

The archive is physical here. Boxes and shelves. The weight of paper and binding and the particular density of a record that exists not just as data but as objects that take up space in a room in a house where a family lives.



The courts said many things.

Some rulings were reversed. Some were not. A jury heard the evidence and returned a verdict — battery, domestic violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, malice, oppression, fraud. An appellate court affirmed it. Another appellate court struck a gag order and found no default had occurred. A third motion asked whether the orders governing a child's life were ever lawfully entered.

People moved on. Some were promoted. Christopher Weddle, who replaced Guttridge as Tara's attorney, was appointed a Support Magistrate at Westchester Family Court. That happens.



The house is not quiet. A baby lives here. A woman lives here. Dinner gets cooked. Laundry piles up. The ordinary architecture of a household that functions — the kind of household Steve once imagined in a second bedroom in Brooklyn, the kind of household that was supposed to include Evie.

But there is also another room.

A bedroom upstairs. Books on the shelves — the books a girl her age would read. Board games in the closet. Photographs on the wall. The room has been ready for years.

The room has been ready for years.

Steve stands in the doorway sometimes. Not often — not as a ritual or a performance of grief, just occasionally, the way a person pauses at a threshold. The books are the right books for a girl her age. He updates them as she grows, although he has not seen her grow — the titles change from picture books to chapter books based on age ranges printed on spines, not on watching a daughter discover what she loves to read. He does not know what she loves. He knows what a girl her age might love. The room is ready for a child he remembers as a toddler and imagines as a girl and has never watched become either.

Sometimes he tries to imagine what she would think of the books he chose. Whether the titles are right. Whether the room itself — prepared by a father she cannot remember clearly, filled with the wrong right things — would feel like hers or like a stranger's idea of hers. He does not resolve the thought. He closes the door partway and walks downstairs.

Across the yard there is a small guest house. If Evie is older when she comes.



Evie may someday ask questions.

She may ask: are you sick?

She may ask: why didn't you come back?

She may ask: they told me you started another family.

The answers are in the record. Every document, every timestamp, every laboratory report and deposition transcript and jury verdict form. The record shows what happened. The record shows who did what and when and what institutions knew and what they chose.

But the answers Evie would need are simpler than the record.

Steve is not sick. Something that made him sick lived in a house in Chappaqua. And when he went there, Evie became sick too — bruises that appeared between visits, supervisors who were removed for documenting what they saw, a forensic evaluator who lost his license for fraud. So he stopped going. Not because he stopped loving her. Because he refused to make her sick again.

He did not start another family to replace her. He started a family because the years kept passing and the door to Chappaqua stayed shut and the alternative was to stop living until the door opened. Simon is not a replacement. He is a brother.



[iMessage — Walsh — August 2025]

August 2025

Tara: Evie was begging to be able to see you last night. Pretty heartbreaking. I don't know what to do.

F-053 — Tara Walsh Text, August 2025

Evie was begging to see him.

Her mother said so. In a text message. In the same thread where she conditioned contact on money and silence and the abandonment of a jury verdict.

The child's desire is not in question. It has never been in question. What is in question — what has always been in question — is whether the people who control her access will permit what the child herself is asking for.



Some people in this story told the truth and lost. Some played the game and prospered. That also happens.

Steve chose something else. He left the record. He told the truth where it could not be erased — in sworn declarations and deposition testimony, in a blog and a podcast and four hardbound books, in a motion to vacate and a jury verdict and an appellate decision and the iMessage database that preserved every timestamp of every lie. He built the archive the way he had built surveillance systems — methodically, redundantly, with the same instinct that had always governed his work: record what is real, and let the recording speak.

And he waited.



Somewhere in the United States a house stands.

The lights are on. A baby sleeps in a room down the hall. A woman who built the books and stayed through the worst of it is reading in the next room. The binders on the shelves hold the weight of eight years.

A room is ready.

A brother who knows her name lives there.

Her father is still there.

The door is open.

People always tell you what they fear.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW

The system that failed Evie did not dismantle itself. The people who built it were promoted. The people who tried to help were destroyed. A jury spoke. An appellate court corrected. A family court declined. What remains is the federal docket — where the system itself is the defendant and the record is the evidence.

The system that failed Evie did not dismantle itself.

Christopher Weddle, who replaced Guttridge as Tara's attorney after Guttridge discovered the role he had been used to play, was appointed a Support Magistrate at Westchester Family Court. Paul Hymowitz, the forensic evaluator whose report recommended against Steve and whose license was later surrendered amid fraud allegations, left the state. Jennifer Jackman, who placed the word *bruises* in quotation marks, continued practicing family law.

The people who tried to help were punished. Claudette LaMelle was removed from the case for documenting what she saw. Michaelanne Petrella was threatened for reporting it. Anthony DiFabio lost a third of his Westchester practice when a judge recused from all his cases. Brienne Walsh fled to Savannah. The pattern held across years and jurisdictions: anyone who looked was destroyed. Anyone who looked away was left in place.



A jury in San Francisco heard the evidence and returned a verdict: battery, domestic violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress. Malice. Eleven to one.

An appellate court in New York examined the family court record and found that the default — the proceeding on which every subsequent order depended — had never occurred.

Neither changed anything for Evie.

The verdict established liability. The appellate decision exposed the structural failure. But the child remained where the broken orders had placed her — in a household the jury's evidence described, under the authority of a court system the appellate panel had corrected on paper. The correction was procedural. The child was physical. The distance between the two is measured in years a father does not get back.



Steve filed a Motion to Vacate in Westchester Family Court — asking the court to undo what its own appellate division had found was never lawfully done. The family court declined. The ex parte orders — the ones entered without a hearing, the ones the appellate court had already called constitutionally deficient — remained in place. The system that had separated a father from his daughter based on a proceeding that never occurred was given the opportunity to correct itself, and chose not to.

That left federal court.

The federal civil rights complaint names what the state courts would not — the structural failures that entered defaults without hearings, imposed gag orders without constitutional basis, and removed every supervisor, attorney, and evaluator who documented inconvenient

facts. The coordinated private and state actors who used the family court system as a weapon — not to protect a child, but to erase a father from her life.

This book is attached as an exhibit. It sits on the federal docket under litigation privilege — permanent, public, and beyond the reach of any gag order or takedown demand or letter from an attorney threatening harm. The record that was built across eight years in five archives now exists in the one place where it cannot be silenced: the federal court system of the United States.



Steve lives with his partner and their son. The archive sits on shelves in the living room — thick binders, hardbound evidence books, court transcripts, the physical record of everything that happened. It is not hidden. It is not locked away. It is part of the furniture of a house where a family lives.

Evie has a brother who knows her name. She has a room with books on the shelves that change as she grows — updated by a father who has not seen her grow, who chooses the titles by the age printed on the spine rather than by watching a daughter discover what she loves. She has a father who built an archive because he believed that if someone could just see the evidence, they would do the right thing.

He cannot fight Chappaqua alone. The record can.
The door is open.



BACK COVER

The back cover text for Chappaqua Poison.

A man moves in with a woman from one of the wealthiest families in Chappaqua, New York. Within a year, he is sick with an illness no doctor can name. Within two, his nanny tells him his partner has been putting drugs in his wine. Within three, his daughter is taken across the country. Within four, a court orders him to erase his own record of what happened.

The laboratory results show lithium at six times the reference range. Seroquel in his blood. Mycophenolic acid — a kidney transplant drug he was never prescribed — at seven times the upper bound. Four discoveries. Three substances. Three laboratories. Three years.

Every person who saw something and reported it was removed from the case.

The nanny who disclosed the drugging was fired. The court supervisor who documented an armed ambush at the family compound was reassigned. The father's custody was terminated by a default the appellate court later ruled never occurred.

A jury in San Francisco heard the evidence. Eleven of twelve found the mother liable for battery, fraud, and malice.

The child is still in Chappaqua.

Chappaqua Poison is a father's record — built from sworn declarations, timestamped text messages, laboratory reports, court transcripts, and the testimony of people who told the truth and lost their roles for telling it.

The evidence is in the record. The record is open.



APPENDIX A

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The principal individuals who appear in this story, their roles, and what the reader learns about each.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

STEVE RUSSELL (The Narrator / "The Fool")

Role: Father of Evie. Former tech entrepreneur (3VR/Uber era). The story's narrator and subject.

Steve's job in the story is to be the fool who builds — the person whose professional instinct (surveillance, documentation, structure) becomes his survival tool, but whose emotional openness is the vulnerability the scheme exploits.

First Appearance: Preface — The Fool

TARA WALSH (The Respondent)

Role: Mother of Evie. Steve's former partner. Found liable for battery, domestic violence, malice, and fraud by a California jury. The story's antagonist — but never a cartoon. Her scheme worked because it was designed to work, because she is intelligent and plausible and because the institutions she weaponized were built to be weaponized.

Tara's job in the story is to be the system's native speaker — the person who understands intuitively how institutions read situations and who constructs the inputs they expect.

First Appearance: B02 — The Girl on the Boat

EVIE

Role: Steve and Tara's daughter. The emotional center of the story. The reason the archive exists. The person who never speaks but whose body tells the truth.

Evie's job in the story is to be the stakes — the person whose body communicates what institutions refuse to hear, and whose absence at the end is the weight the reader carries out of the story.

First Appearance: B08 — The Pregnancy Claim (first ultrasound)

KELLY TURNURE ("Aunt K" / StevieLovesEvie)

Role: Steve's partner after Tara. Mother of Simon. Creator of StevieLovesEvie.com and the evidence books.

Kelly's job in the story is to be the person who enters the damaged landscape and makes parts of it livable — not by fixing what was broken but by being steady in the places that were not broken yet.

First Appearance: B08 — The Pregnancy Claim (meets Steve at The Battery). Full introduction B30 (B29).

STEPHEN WALSH SR. ("Steve Walsh" / "Grumpa")

Role: Tara's father. Head of the Walsh family. The operational controller who never appears in a courtroom but whose voice, presence, and silence shape every phase of the conflict.

Walsh Sr.'s job in the story is to be the architect who is never in the room when the damage happens.

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll (Easter dinner)

MAURA WALSH ("Grimma")

Role: Tara's mother. The emotional enforcer.

Maura's job in the story is to embody the physical violence the institutional framework conceals — and to establish that the method is multigenerational.

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll (Easter dinner)

BRIENNE WALSH

Role: Tara's older sister (Brendan Walsh's partner). Author of "A Brie Grows in Brooklyn" blog. Citizen journalist (Citywide

911). The Walsh who confirms what Steve describes — from inside.

Brienne is the story's most structurally important plant-payoff character AND its most complex Pontius Pilate figure.

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll (met by Steve first, then observed at Easter dinner)

ABBY (ABREHET) TEDLA

Role: Nanny for Evie. Full name: Abrehet Asmelash Tedla. Key witness to the drugging. Her brother is in the FBI.

Abby's job in the story is to be the conscience with consequences — the person who tells the truth knowing it will cost her, and whose 40 speech units (the largest institutional voice in the archive) provide the evidentiary foundation the jury ultimately relies on.

First Appearance: B18 — North Beach

LEGAL FIGURES

JUDGE GORDON-OLIVER

Role: First custody judge. Gives Steve the jurisdiction ultimatum. Recuses after the Walsh Abuse Memo.

Gordon-Oliver's job in the story is to be the door — the person who forces the choice (jurisdiction or daughter?) that traps Steve inside the New York system, then exits.

First Appearance: B24 — Crabtree's Kittle House

JUDGE HOROWITZ

Role: Second custody judge. Enters the default against Steve.

Horowitz's job in the story is to be the instrument — the judge whose manufactured default (denying remote appearance at 5 PM, entering default before Steve lands) becomes the foundation every subsequent ruling builds on.

First Appearance: B29 — The Walsh Abuse Memo (case reassigned after Gordon-Oliver recuses)

JUDGE SCHAUER (SCHUR)

Role: Third custody judge. Issues the gag order and conducts the inquest.

Schauer's job in the story is to be the builder on bad foundations — the judge who constructs the most consequential orders (gag order, speech restrictions, custody consolidation) on top of Horowitz's default, which the appellate court will later rule never happened.

First Appearance: B35 — The Reset

JUDGE HUMPHREYS

Role: Handles the restraining order proceeding. Recuses after two defaults by Tara's side.

Humphreys's job in the story is to embody the default asymmetry — the structural thesis of the Pontius Pilate pattern.

First Appearance: B33 — The Double Default

DELIAH FARQUHARSON

Role: Court-appointed visit supervisor. Democratic mayoral candidate for Mount Vernon. Claims “special relationship with the judge.”

Farquharson's job in the story is to be the captured gatekeeper — the person who controls Steve's access to Evie and whose allegiance is already compromised before the first visit begins.

First Appearance: B24 — Crabtree's Kittle House (appointed)

CLAUDETTE LAMELLE

Role: Visit supervisor who documents the ambush. Then removed from the case.

LaMelle's job in the story is to prove the Disappearing Record pattern in a single beat: document → removed.

First Appearance: B28 — The Ambush

STACEY POOLE

Role: Steve's attorney during the airport crisis.

Poole is a mechanism character — she translates Steve's builder instinct into legal structure during the airport crisis.

First Appearance: B23 — The Airport

JASON ADVOCATE

Role: Steve's attorney at the inquest. The voice in the courtroom the court later claimed was absent.

Advocate's job in the story is to be the proof that the system's description of reality does not match reality.

First Appearance: B38 — The Inquest (B37)

DONNA GENOVESE

Role: Replacement Attorney for the Child after Jackman resigns. Present at the inquest.

Genovese's job in the story is to be the institutional voice that renames what is happening.

First Appearance: B37 — Erase, Deactivate, and Delete (B36, replacing Jackman)

JENNIFER JACKMAN

Role: Original Attorney for the Child. Resigns unexpectedly.

Jackman's job in the story is to be the silence — the departure that speaks without speaking.

First Appearance: B27 — The Bruises (bruise response email)

MICHAELANE PETRELLA

Role: Reporter investigating the case. Threatened.

Petrella's job in the story is to prove that the suppression extends beyond the courtroom — that the Walsh family's reach targets not just Steve but anyone in the documentation ecosystem.

First Appearance: B39 — The Orders as Weapons (B38)

RAYMOND GRIFFIN (Fake Substance Abuse Expert) — *Added Session 18*

Role: Court-appointed substance abuse evaluator in the Westchester custody case. His credentials and methods were later questioned.

Griffin's job in the story is to be the institutional laundering mechanism — the "expert" whose evaluation transforms the court's preexisting conclusion into the appearance of clinical judgment.

First Appearance: B25 — The Special (court-appointed)

SGT. BRENDAN CARAWAY — SFPD SVU — *Added Session 18*

Role: San Francisco Police Department Special Victims Unit sergeant. Received Steve’s 83-page supplemental memorandum documenting the poisoning. Then was “provided court order by a party of the case” and went silent.

Caraway's job in the story is to be the Pontius Pilate pattern at the law enforcement level — the investigator who had the evidence, had the jurisdiction, and was neutralized not by lack of proof but by a court order weaponized outside the court that issued it.

First Appearance: B19 — Leaning Tower (referenced as SFPD contact)

DR. GOPAL (Steve's Psychiatrist) — *Added Session 18*

Role: Steve Russell’s psychiatrist. Diagnosed Tara’s BPD as iatrogenic — caused by the treatment itself. The person who said “You shouldn’t be here” at the hospital (B10).

Gopal's job in the story is to be the clinical voice that names what happened — both to Steve (the poisoning) and to Tara (the developmental injury).

First Appearance: B10 — You Shouldn’t Be Here

DR. GIANNI FAEDDA (Childhood Psychiatrist) — *Added Session 18*

Role: Child psychiatrist and bipolar specialist who treated all the Walsh children. Author of *Parenting a Bipolar Child*. Ran drug trials. The single-doctor pipeline through which Maura routed all her children’s psychiatric care.

Faedda's job in the story is to be the institutional origin of the medication system — the professional partner who validated Maura's framing and prescribed the medications she then administered covertly.

First Appearance: Not directly named in posts. Referenced in Maura Walsh’s CHARACTERS.md entry and Tara’s iatrogenic origin.

DR. UMA LERNER (SF Psychiatrist) — *Added Session 18*

Role: Tara's new psychiatrist in San Francisco, replacing Dr. Rhodes after the Isolation Maneuver.

Lerner's job in the story is to be the clean slate — the clinician who receives Tara without clinical history, after the Isolation Maneuver severed Dr.

First Appearance: Referenced in MSG-RHODES-003 (the Isolation Maneuver) and B18 (North Beach).

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

CHRIS OCHOA

Role: Friend of Steve's. The connector. Introduces Steve to Tara on the boat. Present during the Brooklyn night.

Chris's job in the story is to be the connector whose presence bookends the pattern: he introduces Steve to Tara (B02), he is present during the Brooklyn night when things go wrong (B10), and his brother Dan O.

First Appearance: B02 — The Girl on the Boat

BRENDAN WALSH

Role: Tara's younger brother. The family's physical enforcer.

Brendan's job in the story is to embody the escalation — the 23-post transformation from family dinner guest (B04) to camouflage ambush (B28) that tells the reader the Walsh system has moved from institutional manipulation to physical threat.

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll

MICHAEL WALSH

Role: Tara's brother with a disability.

Michael's job in the story is atmospheric — his one scene (counting change at the Easter table, fiancée who is his special education teacher) tells the reader more about the Walsh family than any paragraph of exposition could.

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll

KIARA AND MARAIAH WALSH

Role: Tara's adopted Korean sisters.

*Kiara and Maraiah's job in the story is to extend the Walsh family's performance aesthetic (three years apart but dressed identically — control expressed through visual uniformity) and to be **victims-turned-links** in the medication chain.*

First Appearance: B04 — Tara Knoll

LINDA RUSSELL

Role: Steve's mother. A nurse who raised two Stanford-educated sons.

Linda's job in the story is to be the proxy — the person Steve sends when he cannot go himself.

First Appearance: B18 — North Beach (living in the house)

SIMON

Role: Steve and Kelly's son. Evie's half-brother.

Simon's job in the story is to be the structural echo of the Reno loss — the life that was taken is also the life that returns.

First Appearance: B47 — For Evie

MATAN GAVISH (The Real Register)

Role: Tara's boyfriend/intimate during the scheme period. The person who receives the scheme's real voice. Like Jesse, in love with Tara. Unlike Jesse, Matan receives not the performed version but the operational truth — the financial calculation, the violence prediction, the neonatal admission, and the desperation beneath the plan.

Matan's job in the story is to be the scheme's mirror — the register where Tara speaks without performance.

First Appearance: B02-B03 (Hamptons context), B20 (abuse journal/"Listen. Save"). MSG-MATAN archive: Dec 19 2017 - Mar 6 2018.

DON ACKERMAN

Role: Returns a box of evidence with important items missing.

Ackerman's job in the story is to be the first instance of the Disappearing Record pattern — evidence returned with items missing, at a highway rest stop.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton

SEAN SNYDER

Role: Steve's financial advisor. Invites him to the wine-and-art event where the niacin flush occurs.

Snyder is a setting character — his invitation creates the social context for the niacin flush scene.

First Appearance: B20 — The Niacin Flush

GEORGE (Security Advisor)

Role: Persuades Steve not to buy the Presidio Heights house. The decision leads to Millennium Tower — the building already sinking.

George is a pivot character — his security advice redirects Steve to Millennium Tower, the building already sinking.

First Appearance: B19 — The Leaning Tower

JAMIE SIMINOFF (Ring / Bot Home Automation)

Role: Founder and CEO of Ring. Steve's business partner turned adversary. The man who built the billion-dollar company Steve helped create, then refused to honor the agreements that built it.

Jamie is Steve's professional mirror — both are inventors, builders, men who create things from nothing.

First Appearance: B03 — The Girl on the Boat (planted — “a guy named Jamie Siminoff,” Shark Tank, “the kind of handshake arrangement that happened constantly”).

BRYAN CRUTCHER

Role: Security / Retired SFPD — The Intervention

First Appearance: B10 (referenced), B23 (major action)

ALBERT TIMEN (Six Points Security, NJ)

Role: Israeli security contact who picks Steve up after the Brooklyn expulsion and drives him to the Motel 6. Runs Six Points Security out of New Jersey. Carries a gold card — law

enforcement fraternal credential for police donations/affiliations.

First point of contact in the post-Brooklyn security sequence.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton

NIR MAMAN (CT707 Israeli Krav Systems)

Role: Second-wave security contractor who replaces the Ackerman apparatus after the co-optation is discovered. Runs CT707, a tactical security outfit built around Krav Maga. Takes Steve to The Expendables (law enforcement motorcycle club in NJ). Hires round-the-clock security. Makes everyone sign NDAs.

Maman appears as the cavalry — the competent replacement after the Ackerman betrayal.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton

JOE PRENDERGAST

Role: Employee of Don Ackerman's security firm. From Walsh Sr.'s hometown — the connection is geographic loyalty, not coincidence. Filed reports on Steve's behavior that became the basis for the 5150 attempt.

The Prendergast Declaration (July 26, 2019) is a dual-purpose document: it reads as an indictment of Steve ("very strange behavior).

First Appearance: B11 — Eleven O'Clock (as unnamed operative alongside Walsh Sr. at hospital); named in B15 — The Sheraton

MOE CANAL (Former NY Detective)

Role: Former New York detective present during the Sheraton security period. Pulls Steve aside and delivers the warning: "Don't trust anyone."

Canal's warning functions like Tom LaFreniere's "don't worry about it" — a conclusion delivered without supporting evidence, expecting the listener to understand that the conclusion IS the evidence.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton

GEORGE AKKELQUIST

Role: Member of Nir Maman's replacement security team. Present at the Sheraton debrief where the full scope of the Ackerman co-optation is revealed.

Part of the new team that replaces the compromised Ackerman apparatus.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton (debrief scene)

RYAN MICHELETTI (Shield Corps Security)

Role: Member of Nir Maman's replacement security team. Runs Shield Corps Security. Authored a letter documenting a surveillance device found in an electrical outlet.

Part of the new team.

First Appearance: B15 — The Sheraton (debrief scene)

FBI SPECIAL AGENT PHALEN

Role: Steve's FBI contact regarding the surveillance and break-in at Potrero Hill.

Phalen represents Steve's instinct to bring institutional resources to a problem that will resist institutional solutions — the Builder vs System theme in its earliest form.

First Appearance: B06 — The Illness

TOM LAFANIER

Role: Private security, introduced during the illness investigation period.

Setting character.

First Appearance: B06 — The Illness

SAOIRA

Role: Tara's friend who accompanies her on the private jet to San Francisco.

Setting character.

First Appearance: B17 — The Jet

RASHMI NARENDRA (Tara's Friend)

Role: Tara's close friend. The seventh register of the scheme. The only person who appears in the gallery on Tara's side

during the California battery trial — and the one who tries to stop it.

Rashmi's job in the story is double: she is both the scheme's seventh register and its conscience.

First Appearance: B42 — What Twelve People Saw. MSG-RASHMI archive: Mar 2017 – Mar 2018.

TALIA KLEIMAN (The Nanny / The Witness in the Car) — *Added Session 27*

Role: Nanny present at Visits 14 and 15 (March 30–31, 2019). Independent witness to bruise discovery and Walsh Sr. driveway confrontation.

Talia's job in the story is to be the neutral witness whose documentation the system ignores.

First Appearance: B27 — The Bruises

JESSE OZERI (The Man in Love / The Truth-Teller)

Role: Tara's close friend, Tara Knoll handbag business partner (father's import/export), filmmaker/videographer (WeWork LGBTQ documentary series, Mickey Rourke production assistant). In love with Tara throughout the story. Like Matan.

Jesse's job in the story is to be the person who loves Tara and sees through her simultaneously — the truth-teller whose clarity is powered by personal pain.

First Appearance: B02 — The Girl on the Boat ("bags were manufactured in China through a contact her friend Jesse Ozeri had. Ozeri's father was in import and export.")

DR. RHODES (Tara's Psychiatrist)

Role: Tara's psychiatrist during the pregnancy and post-birth period. The institutional anchor of the medication architecture.

Dr.

First Appearance: B10 — You Shouldn't Be Here (referenced). MSG-RHODES archive: Dec 21 2017 – Mar 7 2018.

RITA MERCANTEL MHC (Tara's Therapist)

Role: Tara's therapist (Mental Health Counselor). The victimhood narrative channel — the sixth register of the scheme.

Rita's job in the story is to be the therapeutic anchor of the victimhood narrative — the person to whom Tara performed the role of abused partner while simultaneously planning the scheme across other channels.

First Appearance: Not directly named in published posts. MSG-RITA archive: Mar 25 2017 – Mar 7 2018.

ADEO RESSI

Role: Tech figure at The Battery whose behavior with Kelly prompts Steve to intervene — the intervention that becomes a relationship.

Ressi's job is to be Chris Ochoa's structural counterpart: both men occasion an introduction between Steve and a woman, but the quality of what follows tells you how Steve has changed.

First Appearance: B30 — Kelly

MICHAELANNE PETRELLA

Role: Health information researcher, LymeZero collaborator, journalist, podcaster ("Chappaqua Poison"). Received a direct threat from Tara — naming her sister, attaching a court order that didn't yet legally exist as a gag order.

Petrella's job in the story is to embody a 32-post arc from collaborator to witness to silenced journalist.

First Appearance: B06 — The Illness (as LymeZero collaborator)

RILEY

Role: Tara's Chihuahua. The story's first physical harbinger.

Riley's job in the story is to be the opening image that contains the entire pattern in miniature.

First Appearance: B02 — The Girl on the Boat

DR. GIANNI FAEDDA (The Family Psychiatrist / The Diagnostic Infrastructure)

Role: Child psychiatrist who treated all Walsh children. Founded the Lucio Bini Mood Disorders Center of New York (1992). Trained at Harvard's McLean Hospital. Former Director of Research, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Co-chaired the

International Society for Bipolar Disorder's Taskforce on "Prodromes of Bipolar Disorders." Principal Investigator on clinical trials of ziprasidone (antipsychotic) in children and adolescents with bipolar I disorder. Author: *Parenting a Bipolar Child: What to Do and Why*.

Faедda's role in the story is not as a villain but as infrastructure.

INSTITUTIONS AS CHARACTERS

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION RULES

BRIAN D. WALLER (Steve's Trial Attorney)

Role: Attorney who represented Stephen Russell in the civil battery trial. Peckar & Abramson, P.C.

First Appearance: B42 — What Twelve People Saw.

HON. GARRETT L. WONG (Trial Judge)

Role: Judge presiding over the civil battery trial. San Francisco Superior Court, Department 504.

First Appearance: B42 — What Twelve People Saw.

HUGH JASNE, ESQ. (Jasne & Florio LLP)

Role: Steve's attorney for the Motion to Vacate in Westchester Family Court.

First Appearance: B45 — The Record Is Open.

DAN FLORIO JR., ESQ. (Jasne & Florio LLP)

Role: Steve's co-counsel for the Motion to Vacate.

First Appearance: B45 — The Record Is Open.

MAGISTRATE BOWMAN (Westchester Family Court)

Role: Support Magistrate who presided over the February 3, 2026 hearing that revealed the record reclassification.

First Appearance: B45 — The Record Is Open.

**CHRISTOPHER WEDDLE (Tara's Attorney →
Support Magistrate)**

Role: Attorney who replaced Guttridge as Tara's counsel in the Westchester proceedings. Later appointed Support Magistrate at Westchester Family Court.

First Appearance: B46 — The Demand (mentioned in passing).

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE

Key dates from the documentary record, organized chronologically. 750 dated evidence items.

1984

September 1984

September 10, 1984

- B15: The Negotiation

1991

April 1991

April 14, 1991

- B30: The Reno Bottle

1993

April 1993

April 1993

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

1999

February 1999

February 22, 1999

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

2001

September 2001

September 15, 2001

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

2007

January 2007

2007

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

2008

January 2008

2008

- B05: The Break-In

2009

July 2009

July 1, 2009

- B31: The Default

2010

May 2010

May 6, 2010

- B04: Tara Knoll

May 9, 2010

- B06: The Illness

June 2010

June 2010

- B34: The Reset

2013

April 2013

April 28, 2013

- B48: The Questions

May 2013

May 10, 2013

- B11: The Security Detail

May 10, 2013

- B13: The Morning After

November 2013

November 12, 2013

- B25: The Visits

2014

January 2014

January 2014

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

April 2014

April 4, 2014

- B03: The Hamptons

October 2014

October 9, 2014

- B17: North Beach

2015

January 2015

2015

- B35: Grandma's Letter

February 2015

February 8, 2015

- B14: The Sheraton

May 2015

May 2015

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

May 2015

- B06: The Illness

May 2015

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

May 2015

- B48: The Questions

May 2015

- B48: The Questions

May 2015

- B48: The Questions

June 2015

June 29, 2015

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

July 2015

July 9, 2015

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

July 9, 2015

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

2016

January 2016

2016

- B39: Brienne's Account

March 2016

March 27, 2016

- B04: Tara Knoll

August 2016

August 2016

- B03_ring: B03_ring

September 2016

September 2016

- B15: The Negotiation

2017

January 2017

2017

- B05: The Break-In

January 1, 2017

- B30: The Reno Bottle

January 9, 2017

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

January 9, 2017

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

January 27, 2017

- B25: The Visits

January 27, 2017

- B22: The Airport

March 2017

March 2017

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

March 2017

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 9, 2017

- B19: The Niacin Flush

March 9, 2017

- B33: The Accumulation

March 9, 2017

- B06: The Illness

March 9, 2017

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 9, 2017

- B47: The Demand

March 24, 2017

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 24, 2017

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 24, 2017

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

March 24, 2017

- B11: The Security Detail

March 24, 2017

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

March 25, 2017

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 25, 2017

- B06: The Illness

March 25, 2017

- B24: The Special

March 25, 2017

- B04: Tara Knoll

March 25, 2017

- B13: The Morning After

March 25, 2017

- B15: The Negotiation

March 26, 2017

- B22: The Airport

March 28, 2017

- B06: The Illness

May 2017

May 2017

- B02_uber: B02_uber

May 4, 2017

- B22: The Airport

May 4, 2017

- B22: The Airport

May 10, 2017

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

May 14, 2017

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

May 23, 2017

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

May 27, 2017

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

June 2017

June 30, 2017

- B19: The Niacin Flush

June 30, 2017

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

September 2017

September 22, 2017

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

September 30, 2017

- B19: The Niacin Flush

October 2017

October 2017

- B05: The Break-In

October 2017

- B11: The Security Detail

December 2017

December 2017

- B02_uber: B02_uber

December 19, 2017

- B22: The Airport

December 21, 2017

- B14: The Sheraton

December 24, 2017

- B06: The Illness

December 24, 2017

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

December 24, 2017

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

December 27, 2017

- B39: Brienne's Account

December 30, 2017

- B06: The Illness

2018

January 2018

2018

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

2018

- B17: North Beach

January 1, 2018

- B22: The Airport

January 21, 2018

- B12: January 27, 2018

January 21, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

January 21, 2018

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

January 27, 2018

- B37: The Inquest

January 27, 2018

- B12: January 27, 2018

January 27, 2018

- B12: January 27, 2018

January 27, 2018

- B25: The Visits

January 27, 2018

- B25: The Visits

January 27, 2018

- B34: The Reset

January 27, 2018

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

January 27, 2018

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

January 27, 2018

- B22: The Airport

January 27, 2018

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

January 27, 2018

- B41: Void Orders

January 27, 2018

- B17: North Beach

January 27, 2018

- B17: North Beach

January 27, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

January 27, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

January 27, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

January 27, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

January 27, 2018

- B24: The Special

January 27, 2018

- B24: The Special

January 27, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

January 27, 2018

- B34: The Reset

January 27, 2018

- B34: The Reset

January 27, 2018

- B41: Void Orders

January 30, 2018

- B06: The Illness

February 2018

February 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

February 1, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

February 5, 2018

- B17: North Beach

February 5, 2018

- B12: January 27, 2018

February 5, 2018

- B13: The Morning After

February 5, 2018

- B17: North Beach

February 5, 2018

- B17: North Beach

February 5, 2018

- B17: North Beach

February 5, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

February 5, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

February 5, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

February 8, 2018

- B06: The Illness

February 11, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

February 11, 2018

- B05: The Break-In

February 11, 2018

- B16: The Jet

February 12, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

February 18, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

February 20, 2018

- B16: The Jet

February 20, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

February 21, 2018

- B16: The Jet

February 22, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

February 26, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

February 27, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

March 2018

March 1, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

March 2018

- B48: The Questions

March 1, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

March 2, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

March 3, 2018

- B03: The Hamptons

March 3, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

March 3, 2018

- B33: The Accumulation

March 3, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

March 4, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

March 6, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

March 6, 2018

- B48: The Questions

March 6, 2018

- B48: The Questions

March 6, 2018

- B48: The Questions

March 6, 2018

- B07: The Wine Bottle

March 9, 2018

- B06: The Illness

March 9, 2018

- B16: The Jet

March 16, 2018

- B12: January 27, 2018

March 18, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

March 22, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

March 22, 2018

- B24: The Special

March 22, 2018

- B48: The Questions

March 22, 2018

- B25: The Visits

March 22, 2018

- B27: The Ambush

March 22, 2018

- B27: The Ambush

March 22, 2018

- B27: The Ambush

March 22, 2018

- B27: The Ambush

April 2018

April 2018

- B17: North Beach

April 1, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

April 1, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

April 7, 2018

- B33: The Accumulation

April 23, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

April 23, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

April 23, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

May 2018

May 2018

- B22: The Airport

May 2018

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

May 5, 2018

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

May 14, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

May 15, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

May 15, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

May 15, 2018

- B48: The Questions

May 15, 2018

- B48: The Questions

May 15, 2018

- B31: The Default

May 15, 2018

- B48: The Questions

May 16, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

May 17, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

May 17, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

May 17, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

May 17, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

May 17, 2018

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

May 17, 2018

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

May 17, 2018

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

May 17, 2018

- B35: Grandma's Letter

May 22, 2018

- B16: The Jet

May 22, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

May 22, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

June 2018

June 2018

- B22: The Airport

June 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

June 2018

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

June 6, 2018

- B48: The Questions

June 7, 2018

- B03: The Hamptons

June 7, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

June 7, 2018

- B44: What the Jury Found

June 8, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

June 8, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

June 8, 2018

- B25: The Visits

June 8, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

June 9, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

June 9, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

June 9, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

June 10, 2018

- B14: The Sheraton

June 12, 2018

- B48: The Questions

June 12, 2018

- B48: The Questions

June 15, 2018

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

June 15, 2018

- B17: North Beach

June 15, 2018

- B19: The Niacin Flush

June 20, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

June 20, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

June 22, 2018

- B48: The Questions

July 2018

July 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

July 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

July 2, 2018

- B41: Void Orders

July 3, 2018

- B03: The Hamptons

July 3, 2018

- B06: The Illness

July 5, 2018

- B48: The Questions

July 5, 2018

- B48: The Questions

July 5, 2018

- B07: The Wine Bottle

July 6, 2018

- B42: The Jury

July 9, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

July 9, 2018

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

July 9, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 9, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 9, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 9, 2018

- B48: The Questions

July 9, 2018

- B48: The Questions

July 9, 2018

- B05: The Break-In

July 9, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

July 10, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 10, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 10, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 10, 2018

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

July 10, 2018

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

July 10, 2018

- B22: The Airport

July 10, 2018

- B22: The Airport

July 12, 2018

- B22: The Airport

July 16, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

July 16, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

July 17, 2018

- B15: The Negotiation

July 18, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 18, 2018

- B17: North Beach

July 26, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

July 26, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

August 2018**August 7, 2018**

- B48: The Questions

August 13, 2018

- B03: The Hamptons

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 16, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

August 27, 2018

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 27, 2018

- B04: Tara Knoll

August 29, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

August 29, 2018

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

August 29, 2018

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

August 29, 2018

- B42: The Jury

August 29, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

August 29, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

August 29, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

August 29, 2018

- B22: The Airport

August 29, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

August 29, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

September 2018

September 2018

- B48: The Questions

September 11, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

September 11, 2018

- B17: North Beach

September 11, 2018

- B22: The Airport

September 11, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

September 26, 2018

- B18: The Leaning Tower

September 26, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

September 26, 2018

- B03: The Hamptons

September 26, 2018

- B17: North Beach

September 26, 2018

- B17: North Beach

September 26, 2018

- B42: The Jury

September 26, 2018

- B42: The Jury

September 26, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

September 26, 2018

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

September 26, 2018

- B48: The Questions

September 28, 2018

- B47: The Demand

October 2018

October 5, 2018

- B25: The Visits

October 15, 2018

- B13: The Morning After

October 15, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

October 15, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

October 15, 2018

- B29: Aunt K

October 23, 2018

- B48: The Questions

October 23, 2018

- B48: The Questions

October 23, 2018

- B17: North Beach

October 23, 2018

- B17: North Beach

October 23, 2018

- B17: North Beach

October 23, 2018

- B17: North Beach

October 23, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

October 23, 2018

- B39: Brienne's Account

October 23, 2018

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

October 23, 2018

- B42: The Jury

October 23, 2018

- B42: The Jury

November 2018

November 1, 2018

- B11: The Security Detail

November 7, 2018

- B06: The Illness

November 29, 2018

- B24: The Special

November 29, 2018

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

November 29, 2018

- B17: North Beach

November 29, 2018

- B17: North Beach

November 29, 2018

- B17: North Beach

November 29, 2018

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

December 2018

December 31, 2018

- B24: The Special

2019

January 2019

2019

- B42: The Jury

January 8, 2019

- B17: North Beach

January 22, 2019

- B25: The Visits

January 23, 2019

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

January 30, 2019

- B17: North Beach

January 31, 2019

- B25: The Visits

January 31, 2019

- B25: The Visits

January 31, 2019

- B48: The Questions

January 31, 2019

- B48: The Questions

February 2019

February 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

February 4, 2019

- B11: The Security Detail

February 7, 2019

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

February 7, 2019

- B17: North Beach

February 7, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

February 7, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

February 8, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 8, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 8, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 8, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 10, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

February 11, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 11, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

February 11, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

February 19, 2019

- B17: North Beach

February 19, 2019

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

February 25, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

February 26, 2019

- B25: The Visits

February 27, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

March 2019

March 2019

- B26: The Bruises

March 1, 2019

- B31: The Default

March 4, 2019

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

March 5, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

March 7, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

March 7, 2019

- B17: North Beach

March 7, 2019

- B24: The Special

March 7, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

March 8, 2019

- B17: North Beach

March 11, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

March 11, 2019

- B41: Void Orders

March 11, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 13, 2019

- B05: The Break-In

March 13, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

March 13, 2019

- B42: The Jury

March 21, 2019

- B24: The Special

March 21, 2019

- B24: The Special

March 23, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 23, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 23, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 23, 2019

- B24: The Special

March 23, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 23, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 23, 2019

- B41: Void Orders

March 23, 2019

- B41: Void Orders

March 25, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

March 27, 2019

- B34: The Reset

March 27, 2019

- B06: The Illness

March 27, 2019

- B06: The Illness

March 27, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

March 27, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

March 27, 2019

- B34: The Reset

March 28, 2019

- B24: The Special

March 28, 2019

- B45: The Appeal

March 29, 2019

- B25: The Visits

March 29, 2019

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

March 29, 2019

- B48: The Questions

March 29, 2019

- B22: The Airport

March 29, 2019

- B45: The Appeal

March 29, 2019

- B49: For Evie

March 31, 2019

- B35: Grandma's Letter

April 2019

April 1, 2019

- B35: Grandma's Letter

April 3, 2019

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

April 3, 2019

- B25: The Visits

April 10, 2019

- B26: The Bruises

April 10, 2019

- B26: The Bruises

April 10, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

April 10, 2019

- B14: The Sheraton

April 11, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 11, 2019

- B26: The Bruises

April 15, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 15, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

April 16, 2019

- B26: The Bruises

April 24, 2019

- B06: The Illness

April 26, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

April 26, 2019

- B19: The Niacin Flush

April 26, 2019

- B19: The Niacin Flush

April 26, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

April 26, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

April 30, 2019

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

April 30, 2019

- B17: North Beach

April 30, 2019

- B17: North Beach

April 30, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

April 30, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 2019

May 2019

- B29: Aunt K

May 13, 2019

- B13: The Morning After

May 13, 2019

- B13: The Morning After

May 13, 2019

- B17: North Beach

May 13, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B39: Brienne's Account

May 13, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

May 13, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

May 13, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

May 13, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

May 13, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

May 13, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

May 14, 2019

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

May 31, 2019

- B31: The Default

June 2019

June 3, 2019

- B06: The Illness

June 3, 2019

- B17: North Beach

June 3, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

June 3, 2019

- B16: The Jet

June 4, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

July 2019

July 15, 2019

- B17: North Beach

July 15, 2019

- B17: North Beach

July 15, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

July 22, 2019

- B31: The Default

July 29, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

July 29, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

July 31, 2019

- B48: The Questions

August 2019

August 1, 2019

- B24: The Special

August 5, 2019

- B02: The Girl on the Boat

August 16, 2019

- B19: The Niacin Flush

August 16, 2019

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

August 16, 2019

- B46: The Record Is Open

August 20, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

September 2019

September 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

September 16, 2019

- B31: The Default

September 16, 2019

- B47: The Demand

September 16, 2019

- B17: North Beach

September 19, 2019

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

September 19, 2019

- B25: The Visits

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

September 19, 2019

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B27: The Ambush

September 19, 2019

- B30: The Reno Bottle

September 21, 2019

- B24: The Special

September 21, 2019

- B24: The Special

September 21, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

September 25, 2019

- B25: The Visits

September 25, 2019

- B25: The Visits

September 25, 2019

- B25: The Visits

October 2019

October 9, 2019

- B07: The Wine Bottle

October 11, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

October 15, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

October 15, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

October 15, 2019

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

October 25, 2019

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

October 31, 2019

- B34: The Reset

October 31, 2019

- B17: North Beach

November 2019

November 10, 2019

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

November 10, 2019

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

November 10, 2019

- B31: The Default

November 14, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 25, 2019

- B31: The Default

December 2019

December 5, 2019

- B29: Aunt K

December 10, 2019

- B17: North Beach

December 10, 2019

- B24: The Special

December 16, 2019

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

December 18, 2019

- B34: The Reset

December 18, 2019

- B17: North Beach

2020

January 2020

January 3, 2020

- B32: The Double Default

January 3, 2020

- B32: The Double Default

January 3, 2020

- B39: Brienne's Account

January 8, 2020

- B31: The Default

January 8, 2020

- B32: The Double Default

January 18, 2020

- B39: Brienne's Account

January 24, 2020

- B31: The Default

January 27, 2020

- B31: The Default

January 27, 2020

- B31: The Default

February 2020

February 2020

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

February 2020

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

February 2020

- B31: The Default

February 5, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

February 5, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

February 5, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

February 6, 2020

- B31: The Default

February 18, 2020

- B31: The Default

February 24, 2020

- B31: The Default

March 2020

March 1, 2020

- B48: The Questions

March 1, 2020

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

March 22, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

March 24, 2020

- B11: The Security Detail

March 24, 2020

- B11: The Security Detail

March 24, 2020

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

June 2020

June 1, 2020

- B07: The Wine Bottle

June 1, 2020

- B24: The Special

June 16, 2020

- B32: The Double Default

September 2020

September 2020

- B13: The Morning After

September 2020

- B13: The Morning After

September 17, 2020

- B31: The Default

September 26, 2020

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

September 26, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

September 26, 2020

- B29: Aunt K

September 28, 2020

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

September 28, 2020

- B07: The Wine Bottle

September 29, 2020

- B13: The Morning After

October 2020

October 2020

- B31: The Default

October 5, 2020

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

October 16, 2020

- B41: Void Orders

November 2020

November 12, 2020

- B22: The Airport

November 12, 2020

- B47: The Demand

November 23, 2020

- B42: The Jury

November 23, 2020

- B35: Grandma's Letter

December 2020

December 2, 2020

- B47: The Demand

December 2, 2020

- B47: The Demand

2021

January 2021

2021

- B17: North Beach

2021

- B30: The Reno Bottle

2021

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

January 18, 2021

- B45: The Appeal

January 20, 2021

- B15: The Negotiation

January 26, 2021

- B03: The Hamptons

January 26, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

January 27, 2021

- B32: The Double Default

February 2021

February 15, 2021

- B17: North Beach

March 2021

March 2, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

March 10, 2021

- B45: The Appeal

March 23, 2021

- B24: The Special

March 23, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

March 24, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

March 24, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

April 2021

April 6, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

April 6, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

April 20, 2021

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

April 20, 2021

- B14: The Sheraton

April 20, 2021

- B19: The Niacin Flush

April 23, 2021

- B27: The Ambush

April 23, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

April 26, 2021

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

April 26, 2021

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

April 26, 2021

- B12: January 27, 2018

April 26, 2021

- B17: North Beach

April 26, 2021

- B17: North Beach

April 26, 2021

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

April 26, 2021

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

April 26, 2021

- B25: The Visits

April 26, 2021

- B03: The Hamptons

April 26, 2021

- B14: The Sheraton

April 26, 2021

- B16: The Jet

April 26, 2021

- B16: The Jet

April 26, 2021

- B17: North Beach

April 26, 2021

- B17: North Beach

April 26, 2021

- B22: The Airport

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

April 26, 2021

- B48: The Questions

May 2021

May 1, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

May 11, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

May 11, 2021

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

May 12, 2021

- B07: The Wine Bottle

May 19, 2021

- B32: The Double Default

May 19, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

May 20, 2021

- B06: The Illness

May 24, 2021

- B42: The Jury

May 24, 2021

- B29: Aunt K

May 27, 2021

- B06: The Illness

May 31, 2021

- B04: Tara Knoll

June 2021

June 2021

- B37: The Inquest

June 1, 2021

- B34: The Reset

June 1, 2021

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

June 1, 2021

- B22: The Airport

June 1, 2021

- B34: The Reset

June 1, 2021

- B34: The Reset

June 9, 2021

- B04: Tara Knoll

June 10, 2021

- B03: The Hamptons

July 2021

July 8, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

July 8, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

July 27, 2021

- B22: The Airport

August 2021

August 2, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

August 6, 2021

- B17: North Beach

August 16, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

August 27, 2021

- B03: The Hamptons

August 27, 2021

- B17: North Beach

August 27, 2021

- B32: The Double Default

August 27, 2021

- B34: The Reset

August 27, 2021

- B41: Void Orders

August 27, 2021

- B41: Void Orders

October 2021

October 1, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

October 2, 2021

- B34: The Reset

October 4, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

October 12, 2021

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 12, 2021

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 12, 2021

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 14, 2021

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

October 14, 2021

- B41: Void Orders

October 15, 2021

- B17: North Beach

October 15, 2021

- B17: North Beach

October 15, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

October 15, 2021

- B39: Brienne's Account

October 21, 2021

- B39: Brienne's Account

November 2021

November 2021

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

November 2021

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

November 3, 2021

- B20: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

November 4, 2021

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

November 5, 2021

- B37: The Inquest

November 5, 2021

- B34: The Reset

November 5, 2021

- B34: The Reset

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

November 8, 2021

- B39: Brienne's Account

December 2021

December 3, 2021

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

December 9, 2021

- B35: Grandma's Letter

2022

January 2022

January 5, 2022

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

January 5, 2022

- B39: Brienne's Account

February 2022

February 2022

- B45: The Appeal

February 2022

- B46: The Record Is Open

February 2, 2022

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

February 2, 2022

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

February 2, 2022

- B41: Void Orders

February 14, 2022

- B42: The Jury

February 14, 2022

- B44: What the Jury Found

February 16, 2022

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

February 16, 2022

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

February 16, 2022

- B17: North Beach

February 16, 2022

- B17: North Beach

February 16, 2022

- B17: North Beach

February 16, 2022

- B33: The Accumulation

February 16, 2022

- B33: The Accumulation

February 16, 2022

- B39: Brienne's Account

February 16, 2022

- B39: Brienne's Account

February 16, 2022

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

February 16, 2022

- B43: What Twelve People Saw

February 16, 2022

- B45: The Appeal

February 17, 2022

- B17: North Beach

February 17, 2022

- B39: Brienne's Account

April 2022

April 12, 2022

- B04: Tara Knoll

April 12, 2022

- B24: The Special

April 15, 2022

- B42: The Jury

April 15, 2022

- B42: The Jury

April 15, 2022

- B42: The Jury

April 15, 2022

- B42: The Jury

April 15, 2022

- B42: The Jury

August 2022

August 11, 2022

- B42: The Jury

October 2022

October 5, 2022

- B42: The Jury

October 5, 2022

- B42: The Jury

2023

January 2023

January 13, 2023

- B46: The Record Is Open

January 13, 2023

- B46: The Record Is Open

March 2023

March 1, 2023

- B45: The Appeal

March 22, 2023

- B40: The Appellate Reversal

March 22, 2023

- B46: The Record Is Open

March 22, 2023

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

September 2023

September 15, 2023

- B45: The Appeal

September 15, 2023

- B45: The Appeal

September 16, 2023

- B45: The Appeal

2024

August 2024

August 2024

- B42: The Jury

August 2024

- B11: The Security Detail

December 2024

December 16, 2024

- B48: The Questions

2025

August 2025

August 4, 2025

- B16: The Jet

August 5, 2025

- B23: Crabtree's Kittle House

August 5, 2025

- B30: The Reno Bottle

August 5, 2025

- B42: The Jury

August 17, 2025

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 17, 2025

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 17, 2025

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 17, 2025

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 17, 2025

- B36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

August 30, 2025

- B42: The Jury

August 30, 2025

- B47: The Demand

September 2025**September 23, 2025**

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

October 2025**October 6, 2025**

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 6, 2025

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 6, 2025

- B30: The Reno Bottle

October 20, 2025

- B31: The Default

October 24, 2025

- B11: The Security Detail

October 24, 2025

- B21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

November 2025

November 1, 2025

- B35: Grandma's Letter

December 2025

December 18, 2025

- B16: The Jet

December 18, 2025

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

December 18, 2025

- B41: Void Orders

December 22, 2025

- B41: Void Orders

2026

January 2026

January 13, 2026

- B17: North Beach

January 13, 2026

- B38: The Orders as Weapons

January 29, 2026

- B12: January 27, 2018

February 2026

February 2026

- B17: North Beach

February 2026

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

February 2026

- B08: The Pregnancy Claim

February 2026

- B12: January 27, 2018

February 2026

- B06: The Illness

February 2026

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

February 2026

- B09: The Brooklyn Apartment

February 3, 2026

- B31: The Default

February 3, 2026

- B42: The Jury

February 10, 2026

- B48: The Questions

February 13, 2026

- B42: The Jury

February 13, 2026

- B28: The Walsh Abuse Memo

February 15, 2026

- B10: You Shouldn't Be Here

February 15, 2026

- B39: Brienne's Account

February 15, 2026

- B41: Void Orders

February 15, 2026

- B41: Void Orders

February 17, 2026

- B12: January 27, 2018

APPENDIX C

EVIDENCE INDEX

*All evidence exhibits referenced in this book,
organized by type and treatment category.*

Treatment A: Documentary Evidence (Court Records, Legal Filings, Correspondence)

SLE-129 – The handbag business. Tara Knoll: hidden compartments — Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat

SLE-131 – Mom and Dad meet on a boat on the Hudson River — Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat

ExQQ_06 – Brienne Walsh, "Another Uncomfortably Candid Post About Pregnancy" — Ch. 4: Tara Knoll

ExI_02 – LabCorp Heavy Metals Toxicology — Ch. 6: The Illness

Clip11 – Russell Deposition, Drugging Denials, pp. 31-36 — Ch. 10: The Builder

VID-012 – Gavish Deposition, BPD Knowledge — Ch. 10: The Builder

G-34 – Bryan Crutcher Declaration, July 2018 — Ch. 11: Eleven O'Clock

SLE-109 – Evie is born, January 27, 2018 — Ch. 12: January 27, 2018

EMAIL_9755 – Drugging Summary to Kelly Turnure — Ch. 12: January 27, 2018

D-31 – Russell Correspondence with Ackerman/Enenstein Security, 2018 — Ch. 14: The Morning After

Correspondence – 2018 – Email Record — Ch. 15: The Sheraton Sworn Declaration – July 10, 2018 – Court Filing — Ch. 15: The Sheraton

PDF_DEMAND_PROSECUTION – Eisner Gorin LLP, September 28, 2018 — Ch. 19: The Leaning Tower

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

QUOTE-GOOD-VICTIM — SFPD Special Victims Unit, 2018 — Ch. 19: The Leaning Tower
Laboratory Report — Scientific Analysis — Ch. 20: The Niacin Flush
QUOTE-TARA-CRAZY-TOO-TOGETHER — Tara Walsh, May 2018 — Ch. 21: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine
LEGAL-DVRO-TEDLA-NAMES-QUIET — Abrehet Tedla, DVRO Hearing, August 29, 2018 — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
LEGAL-DVRO-WILLIAMS-EYEWITNESS — Patrick Williams, DVRO Hearing, August 29, 2018 — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
LEGAL-INQUEST-VIOLENCE-ACCUSATION — Tara Walsh, Inquest Hearing, January 5, 2022 — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
SLE-094 — Tara Walsh text to Steve Russell, May 2018 — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
LEGAL-CRUTCHER-UBER-SFPD — Bryan F. Crutcher Declaration, July 9, 2018 — Ch. 23: The Uber
EB2_MASTER_019 — Ch. 24: Crabtree's Kittle House
EB2_MASTER_020 — Ch. 24: Crabtree's Kittle House
PDF_WALSH_ABUSE_MOTION_02 — Walsh Abuse Motion with Exhibits, 2019 — Ch. 29: The Memo
Blog Archive — May 11, 2021 — StevieLovesEvie.com — Ch. 30: Aunt K
CORR-TURNURE-FURMAN — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Esther Furman, February 23, 2021 — Ch. 30: Aunt K
CORR-TURNURE-EGITTO — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, May 10, 2021 — Ch. 30: Aunt K
LAB-MYCOPHENOLIC-ACID — Wine Sample Analysis, January 2020 — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle
F-033 — Mycophenolic Acid, Toxicology and Clinical Profile — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle
EMAIL_9755 — Steve Russell to Kelly Turnure, Forwarded Email, November 14, 2019 — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle
LEGAL-RUSSELL-AFFIDAVIT-DEFAULT — Affidavit of Stephen Grant Russell, January 12, 2021 — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock
B-4_014 — Temporary Order of Protection, Entered on Default, February 6, 2020 — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock
B-7_020 — Order Setting Motion Schedule, March 10, 2021 — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock
Ex0_01 — Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, May 10, 2021 — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock
LEGAL-EGITTO-RESPONSE — Chambers of Hon. Joseph A. Egitto, May 12, 2021 — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

B-4 – Temporary Order of Protection, Westchester Family Court – Ch. 33: Two Defaults
LEGAL-HUMPHREY-RECUSAL – Decision and Order, Judge Wayne A. Humphrey, April 6, 2021 – Ch. 33: Two Defaults
ExI_02 – Doctor's Data Essential Elements Panel, March 2017 – Ch. 34: Four Discoveries
LEGAL-TEDLA-DECLARATION – Declaration of Abrehet Tedla, Filed July 10, 2018 – Ch. 34: Four Discoveries
QUOTE-TARA-CRAZY-TOO-TOGETHER – Tara Walsh, Kitchen Statement, 2018 – Ch. 34: Four Discoveries
LAB-MYCOPHENOLIC-ACID – Wine Sample and Blood Analysis, January 2020 – Ch. 34: Four Discoveries
ExEMAIL_SEROQUEL_ADMISSION – Tara Walsh to Opposing Counsel, January 30, 2020 – Ch. 34: Four Discoveries
LEGAL-HUMPHREY-RECUSAL – Humphrey Recusal Order, April 6, 2021 – Ch. 35: The Mutual Order
ExTR_09 – Schauer Temporary Order of Protection, May 19, 2021 – Ch. 35: The Mutual Order
ExTR_10_03 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, June 1, 2021 – Ch. 35: The Mutual Order
ExTR_01 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, August 27, 2021 – Ch. 35: The Mutual Order
SLE-008 – StevieLovesEvie, "Grandma Linda Drives Thirteen Hours" – Ch. 36: Grandma's Letter
F-060 – Linda Russell's Letter to Judge Schauer, August 2021 – Ch. 36: Grandma's Letter
ExTR_01 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, August 27, 2021 – Ch. 37: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete
ExTR_02 – Schauer Hearing Transcript, November 5, 2021 – Ch. 37: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete
ExTR_10 – Default/Inquest Hearing Transcript, January 5, 2022 – Ch. 38: Bora Bora
INT-003-004 – Author Interview, Petrella – Ch. 39: Orders as Weapons
Ex00_01 – Walsh Sr. Voicemail to Counsel – Ch. 39: Orders as Weapons
SLE-042 – Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, August 2019 – Ch. 40: We Were Hit
ExQQ_06 – Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, May 9, 2010 – Ch. 40: We Were Hit
ExQQ_04 – Brienne Walsh Deposition, No-Show, May 13, 2019 – Ch. 40: We Were Hit
SLE-028 – StevieLovesEvie, "Families Are Worse Than Lawyers" – Ch. 40: We Were Hit
ExSS_10 – Brienne Walsh Sworn Deposition, September 29, 2020 – Ch. 40: We Were Hit

B-12 – Matter of Walsh v. Russell, 214 A.D.3d 890 (2d Dep't 2023) — Ch. 41: The Appellate Reversal
 ExQQ_06 – Brienne Walsh Deposition, Admitted at Trial Without Objection — Ch. 42: What Twelve People Saw
 ExTR_19d – Tara Walsh, Trial Testimony, February 2022 — Ch. 42: What Twelve People Saw
 SLE-054 – StevieLovesEvie, Visit 15, Part 1, March 31, 2019 — Ch. 47: For Evie

Treatment B: Photographic Evidence (Photographs, Scans, Medical Records)

Photograph — Ch. 1: The Fool
 Photograph — Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat
 Photograph — Ch. 3: The Bite
 Photograph — Ch. 4: Tara Knoll
 Photograph — Ch. 6: The Illness
 Photograph — Ch. 12: January 27, 2018
 Photograph — Ch. 18: Save This, I've Got Him
 Photograph — Ch. 18: Save This, I've Got Him
 Photograph — Ch. 19: The Leaning Tower
 Photograph — Ch. 21: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine
 Photograph — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
 Photograph — Ch. 23: The Uber
 EB2_MASTER_001 — Ch. 24: Crabtree's Kittle House
 Photograph — Ch. 25: A Special Relationship
 Photograph — Ch. 25: A Special Relationship
 Photograph — Ch. 25: A Special Relationship
 Photograph — Ch. 25: A Special Relationship
 Photograph — Ch. 25: A Special Relationship
 Photograph — Ch. 26: Sixteen Visits
 Photograph — Ch. 26: Sixteen Visits
 Photograph — Ch. 26: Sixteen Visits
 Photograph — Ch. 27: The Bruises
 Photograph — Ch. 27: The Bruises
 Photograph — Ch. 27: The Bruises
 Photograph — Ch. 27: The Bruises
 Photograph — Ch. 28: The Ambush
 Photograph — Ch. 28: The Ambush
 Photograph — Ch. 42: What Twelve People Saw

Photograph — Ch. 43: What the Jury Found

Treatment C: Communications (Text Messages, Chat, Email Exchanges)

D-7 — Tara Walsh to Zar, September 23, 2017 — Ch. 8: The Ultrasound

SCREENSHOT_TARA_FAKE_CRYING_ZAR — Tara Walsh to Zar, September 2017 — Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment

G-20 — Tara Walsh to Dr. Gopal, May 22, 2018 — Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment

MSG-MATAN-006 — Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish, February 20, 2018 — Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment

MSG-WALSHSR-002 — Tara Walsh to Walsh Sr., January 30 — February 2, 2018 — Ch. 10: The Builder

MSG-BRIENNE-013 — Tara Walsh to Brienne Walsh, January 26-27, 2018 — Ch. 11: Eleven O'Clock

MSG-BRIENNE-013 — Tara Walsh to Brienne Walsh, January 26, 2018 — Ch. 12: January 27, 2018

D-11 — Steve Russell to Steve Walsh, January 2018 — Ch. 14: The Morning After

SCREENSHOT_TARA_WALSH_HOUSEHOLD_ABUSE — Tara Walsh iMessages, February 2018 — Ch. 16: Terms

TEXT_TARA_JUL21_MISCARRIAGE_CONDITIONAL — Tara Walsh iMessage, July 21, 2018 — Ch. 16: Terms

MSG-MATAN-006 — Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish, February 20, 2018 — Ch. 16: Terms

MSG-JESSE-001 — Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, February 18, 2018 — Ch. 16: Terms

MSG-JESSE-001 — Jesse iMessage Thread, February 18, 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

MSG-MATAN-006 — Gavish iMessage Thread, February 20, 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

MSG-MATAN-005 — Gavish iMessage Thread, March 2-3, 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

MSG-JESSE-002 — Jesse iMessage Thread, March 3, 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

MSG-WALSHSR-003 — Walsh Sr. iMessage Thread, March 3-6, 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

SCREENSHOT_TARA_MY_LIFE_SF_TOP_TRAP — iMessage Device Capture, March 2018 — Ch. 17: The Jet

Text Message — 2018 — Discovery — Russell Messages — Ch. 17: The Jet

MSG-JESSE-008 — Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, March 7, 2018, 2:36 AM — Ch. 18: Save This, I've Got Him

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

LEGAL-DVRO-GOPAL-TEXT – Tara Walsh to Dr. Gopal, May 22, 2018, 12:20 AM – Ch. 21: She Asked Me to Put Drugs in Your Wine

MSG-JESSE-002 – Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, March 3, 2018 – Ch. 23: The Uber

MSG-MATAN-005 – Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish, March 2, 2018 – Ch. 23: The Uber

QUOTE-TARA-FAMILY-CUSTODY-THREAT – Tara Walsh to Linda Russell, July 2018 – Ch. 29: The Memo

Ex00_54 – Tara Walsh Extortion Text, August 30, 2025 – Ch. 46: The Demand

F-053 – Tara Walsh Text, August 2025 – Ch. 46: The Demand

F-053 – Tara Walsh Text, August 2025 – Ch. 47: For Evie

Treatment D: Audio / Video Evidence (Recordings, Voicemails, Surveillance)

ExMM_UBER_04 – Uber recording, June 4, 2018 – Ch. 7: The Wine Bottle

VIDEO_FAKE_CRYING – IMG_8074, September 2017 – Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment

ExMM_10 – Gas from Light Fixture, Brooklyn Apartment, January 2018 – Ch. 14: The Morning After

ExMM_UBER_04 – Uber Audio Recording, June 4, 2018 – Ch. 23: The Uber

Treatment E: Statistical / Analytical Evidence (Lab Results, Financial Records)

A-1 – Hair Elements Analysis, March 2017 – Ch. 6: The Illness
Laboratory Analysis – 2018 – Redwood Toxicology – Ch. 15: The Sheraton

DOCX_HYMOWITZ_DISCREPANCIES – Abuse Journal: Before and After Matan's Edits – Ch. 23: The Uber