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# CHAPPAQUA POISON

*A Documentary Record*

## EVIDENCE EDITION

Prepared for Filing as a Court Exhibit

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By Stephen Russell

Author and Plaintiff / Petitioner

This document is the Evidence Edition of ChappaquaPoison: A Documentary Record, a published account compiled from contemporaneous documentary evidence including authenticated text messages, court transcripts, sworn declarations, deposition testimony, forensic reports, photographs, and official court filings. The underlying evidence was produced in discovery in Russell v. Walsh, No. CGC-18-570137 (S.F. Sup. Ct.), and includes materials from the court records of multiple related proceedings.

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This Evidence Edition is formatted in a compact 4-up layout (four book pages per sheet) for court filing purposes. The full-size version is available at [chappaquapoison.com](http://chappaquapoison.com) and through the publisher.

### Related Proceedings

Russell v. Westchester Family Court et al., No. \_\_\_\_-cv-\_\_\_\_ (S.D.N.Y.) (Complaint 3A)

Russell v. Chappaqua et al., No. \_\_\_\_-cv-\_\_\_\_ (S.D.N.Y.) (Complaint 3B)

Russell v. Schauer, Index No. \_\_\_\_ (Westchester Sup. Ct.) (Article 78 Petition)

Russell v. Walsh, No. CGC-18-570137 (S.F. Sup. Ct.) (Battery — \$332,080.74 Judgment)

Russell v. Walsh, Index No. 55523/2023 (Westchester Sup. Ct.) (Domesticated Judgment)

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PROLOGUE

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.

LaMelle 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?"

LaMelle 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. LaMelle 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.

LaMelle 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.



## THE FOOL

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 FOOL

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.

## THE GIRL ON THE BOAT

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.

He offered her a drink from the cooler.

She shook her head.

#### THE GIRL ON THE BOAT

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 professional purses 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.

*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

## THE BITE

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

THE BITE

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.

TARA KNOLL

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## 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.

TARA KNOLL



*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 or perhaps pork, that had been microwaved or underprepared to the point of being almost inedible. Pale, unseasoned, uncertain.



TARA KNOLL

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.

*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.

✽

inside, several switches had been moved.  
He went back inside, found a flashlight, and began  
In the hallway he saw the first hole in the wall.

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## NOTHING STOLEN

you have accepted that someone can enter your home, cut  
your power, and leave.

\*~\*

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.

\*~\*

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THE ILLNESS

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.

## THE ILLNESS

after Steve described the symptoms that didn't fit a single diagnosis. The tests were running.

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.

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

## THE WINE BOTTLE

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.

THE ULTRASOUND

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## 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

THE ULTRASOUND

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.

Tara called and asked Steve to come to New York.

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THE BROOKLYN APARTMENT

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.

*Tara Walsh to Dr. Gopal, May 22, 2018*

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NO.  
The questions continued. Standard intake. The kind of  
designed to determine whether a

THE BROOKLYN APARTMENT

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

## THE BUILDER

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

*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. Legacy Protection was not a security firm in the conventional sense but a network of former intelligence and law-enforcement operatives who specialized in corporate investigations and family-adjacent operations. 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.

## THE BUILDER

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. The horses shifted their weight at the fence, the leather of their harnesses creaking softly, and the dry

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

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,

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

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.

*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

JANUARY 27, 2018

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

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.

*Drugging Summary to Kelly Turnure*



THE PAINTER OF COTTAGES

Steve’s 205,308 stock options were now worth real money. On paper. In early April, his financial advisor contacted Ring to exercise the options. Ring’s general counsel, Leila Rouhi, refused. The options, she wrote, had been forfeited — thirty days after Steve’s offer to resign from the board on October 31, 2016.

This was the same Leila Rouhi who, on November 3, 2017 — more than a year after the board resignation — had emailed Steve to “send the patent stuff.” He had complied, executing the patent assignments in March 2018, weeks before the Amazon acquisition closed. He had done so believing what Ring’s conduct had represented: that he was still earning option rights for his ongoing service.

Ring had asked for his patents. Ring had gotten his patents. Then Ring said the options were gone.

The transmittal documents from Amazon required a general release of all claims. Sign here, release everything, and you get paid. Steve’s advisors asked for a carve-out — a way to preserve his claims while accepting the acquisition payout.

Ring’s outside counsel, Roxana Azizi, wrote back: “The transmittal documentation is required by the merger agreement and cannot be modified. Even if the documents could be modified, we are not willing to carve out or exclude any claims.”

Sign everything.

Or get nothing.

He didn’t sign.

On July 6, 2018, Steve wrote Jamie a short email.

“J — 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 for which there is now a criminal investigation underway in SF.”



## THE MORNING AFTER

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. He held the phone up to a light fixture and pressed record, watching through the screen as the gas emerged visible from the gaps, the evidence rendering itself in real time.

[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.

*Gas from Light Fixture, Brooklyn Apartment, January 2018*



## THE SHERATON

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]



THE SHERATON

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

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

## THE JET

She asked Jesse what he thought of sending Steve these rules — the same conditions she had typed into the message thread two days before the “pretending” calculation she sent Matan.

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 told Matan the economic truth beneath the Rules List. Steve was “trying to blackmail me to move to sf.” Her father had told her the baby was her idea and her problem. Child support would get her roughly two thousand dollars a month — not enough. The calculation she had been assembling across the message threads arrived at its conclusion: “I’m better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can — then leaving him for good.” Matan’s response was a single line: “Okay, have a fun 40 yrs.”

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 [sic] bad when I say I want to leave.”



ChappaquaPoison: A Documentary Record and Hasidic Edition	Francisco']
	Walsh — 3 hours later: That's a lie, doesn't scare me
	and has nothing to do with Evie.
	Steve, to someone else:

PART III

THE HOUSEHOLD



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

SAVE THIS. I'VE GOT HIM

childhood had broken something that the fighting could not repair.

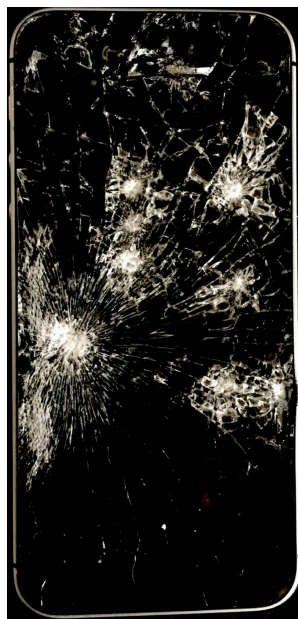
But here, in North Beach, three thousand miles from Chappaqua, with a baby and a nanny and a grandmother who cooked dinner, here the broken thing was quieter. Tara held Evie without the particular tension that Steve had learned to read as the presence of her parents in her nervous system. She slept.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

Faedda had trained in Italy, at the Lucio Bini Center in Cagliari and later in Rome, a clinic named after the physician who co-invented electroconvulsive therapy in 1938, the treatment that runs current through the brain to interrupt what the brain is doing. He came to America and trained at Harvard's McLean Hospital, then founded his own Lucio Bini Center in New York. He had written a book called *Parenting a Bipolar Child*, a guide to the diagnosis and medication of children as young as six for a disorder that most of his colleagues believed did not manifest before adulthood. He was a fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He had seventy peer-reviewed publications. He was, by every institutional measure, one of the foremost experts in the world on medicating children for mood disorders.

He had diagnosed Tara at sixteen. The prescription history that began in his office ran through Maura, one presenting parent, one psychiatrist, and a child whose emotional development was being managed with the same medications her mother would later teach her to administer to someone else. Ritalin at twelve. Tegretol at

SAVE THIS. I'VE GOT HIM



*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

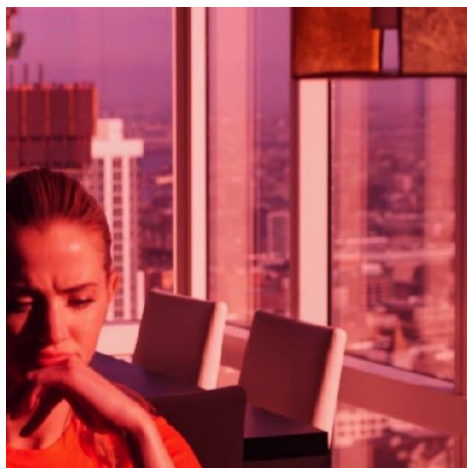
SAVE THIS. I'VE GOT HIM

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.

\*~\*

THE LEANING TOWER

Francisco was being stabilized at enormous cost by the remedy that would have been trivially cheap at the beginning, 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

THE LEANING TOWER

box or a thick envelope, the kind that a secretary weighs before deciding whether to carry it or wheel it. The person who receives it knows, from the weight alone, that someone has spent a great deal of time organizing what happened to them into a form the institution can process. What the institution does with the weight is another matter. The demand letter sat in SFPD's files. The supplemental memorandum sat beside it. The evidence binder sat beneath both. Nearly five hundred pages of organized, indexed, cross-referenced documentation of a crime, waiting to be read by the institution whose job it was to read it.

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 SVU offices were on the second or third floor of a building downtown — a conference room off the waiting area, the walls covered with domestic violence resources, hotline numbers, safety planning pamphlets, the printed materials that accumulate in a place where the work is documenting what one person does to another. Steve sat in a room whose walls were papered with resources for people in his exact situation, across a table from a man who would not treat him as one of them.

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 NIACIN FLUSH

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 feeling of it accelerating—the awareness of his own heartbeat as a thing inside his chest, rapid and unbidden—registered as panic.

The sensation was intense — not painful exactly, but overwhelming in the way that a physiological reaction is

THE NIACIN FLUSH

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

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. He was a security guard trained in threat assessment, trained to read rooms for what they contained beneath the surface, and what he was hearing was a woman admitting to a crime while simultaneously denying responsibility for it, shifting the admission across the room in real time. His job, in that moment, was to witness. His job was to be present. His job was to allow the woman to speak and the man beside him to hear it and to document, without interrupting, the architecture of her answer.

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 moved through the kitchen methodically — the juice cartons, the water bottles, the wine bottles, the fruit left on the counter,



SHE ASKED ME TO PUT DRUGS IN YOUR WINE

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

hours, sometimes the full day rolling into the night, as if her presence in the apartment had become the thing that

"YOU ALMOST MADE ME ABANDON OUR DAUGHTER"

| *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 was a man who carried his profession in his body — the posture of someone trained to observe, to hold still, to let events resolve themselves enough to be seen clearly. 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 was standing in the doorway when Steve backed out of the master bedroom, and what he saw was a retired police officer's reading of a room: the geometry of it, who was pressing and who was retreating, what the physics of the moment meant.

He saw Steve backpedaling out of the master bedroom. Tara was pushing him. She pushed his shoulder. She

"YOU ALMOST MADE ME ABANDON OUR DAUGHTER"

The version the Westchester court heard. The retired police officer who watched from the doorway was not in the room.

*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."

"YOU ALMOST MADE ME ABANDON OUR DAUGHTER"

way the eyes wanted to stop moving, to hold the sentence in place. The body reading what the sentence meant before the conscious mind could catch up.

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

## THE UBER

jurisdiction. She was asking Jesse to be her extraction team before the arrival had even begun.

To Matan, the night before the jet left Teterboro, she was more direct. “Maybe you can kidnap me and Evie so we don’t have to leave.” It was 11:36 on a Friday night. Followed immediately by: “I really don’t want to I just can’t do it on my own.” The voice in that text was not the calculating register of the Rules List or the “pretending” calculation she had sent Matan two weeks earlier. It was something underneath both — a woman who did not want to execute the plan she had built, who wished someone would stop her. Matan did not respond. 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

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

## THE UBER

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

intention to come back.

ChappaquaPoison: A Documentary

Sections, Evidence Edition  
had written “works for us,” who  
had shown the security team a round-trip ticket and asked

Book pp. 201–204

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## PART V

# THE COURTS

203



CRABTREE'S KITTLE HOUSE

was stone and timber, two centuries old, set back on six acres at the end of Kittle Road where the pavement gave way to gravel and the properties stopped explaining themselves. 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.

Steve arrived before the arranged time. Abby was with him. The stipulation was straightforward: the grandparents would bring Evie to the inn, Abby would receive her, and Steve would have three hours of supervised contact.

Three months. She had been six months old the last time he held her. In three months an infant learns to sit unsupported, to track movement with intention, to respond to a voice — or to stop responding to a voice she hasn't heard since June. He did not know which version of his daughter would arrive in that parking lot. He knew only that every step between the Uber on Mission Street and this gravel lot in Chappaqua — the emergency orders, the flights, the attorneys, the grandfather who came to a law office to say the word *harassment* — had produced this: a father standing outside a country inn, permitted to hold his daughter for a window of time determined by a court in a state she hadn't lived in three months ago.

The car pulled in. The grandparents brought her out.

She was bigger. Nine months. The face had changed the way infant faces change across a quarter-year — cheeks wider, eyes tracking with a steadiness that hadn't been there in June. Steve took her from Abby and held her and she studied him with the particular attention of a child encountering something she almost remembers.

He used an hour and a half of the three hours available. He was learning the unwritten arithmetic of supervised contact — that a father who stays the full time looks desperate, and desperation is a word that appears in

## CRABTREE'S KITTLE HOUSE



*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. He had moved the car to the

## CRABTREE'S KITTLE HOUSE

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 court 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.

❄️

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

abuse evaluation of the father — the man who had been drugged — and assigned it to Raymond Griffin, a credentialed counselor from White Plains whose name appeared on the court’s roster of available evaluators the way Farquharson’s had: immediately, without question, as if the roster had been waiting for the call.

The court was now paying this woman, Columbia-educated, trauma specialist, foster care director, elected official, integrity-promising mayoral candidate, two hundred and fifty dollars per hour to supervise a father’s contact with his daughter. Typical court-appointed supervisors in Westchester County charged approximately seventy-five 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.

Steve walked in and saw three women in the room. The space was a sitting area — couches, a table, the kind of neutral location a court might designate for a neutral observer to do neutral work. Farquharson was seated at a table with papers arranged in front of her, a legal pad, a pen, the apparatus of documentation ready before Steve arrived. Tara was across from her, leaning forward, mid-sentence, speaking with the ease of someone who had

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

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. Her campaign materials were public. Her promise of integrity was public. Her billing rate was three times the county average. None of this was hidden, and none of it was examined.



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:

## SIXTEEN VISITS

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.

SIXTEEN VISITS



*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.

SIXTEEN VISITS

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 rhythm of the visits shifted in that moment — no longer the pattern of observation and documentation, but something accelerating, something that had turned from process to consequence.

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



THE BRUISES

## 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.

## THE BRUISES

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

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. What does criminality mean in a context where the supervisor's report documents the bruises, the body diagram marks their locations, the police have been called, and a detective's professional judgment is that none of it crosses the threshold he is empowered to recognize?

Both parents had reported the injuries as concerning. The grandparents had not.

Two years later, under oath at her deposition in the California civil case, Maura Walsh would invoke the same authority she had claimed at the dinner table in Chappaqua, the authority of a woman who had spent decades managing bodies and deciding what was wrong with them. "I have a training as a registered nurse," she testified, "and I know when someone's psychotic and when they're not." She testified that Steve "was in the apartment taking it apart because he said there were Russian spies in the ceilings and CIA operatives in the

when she left). Jackson 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 she is not being properly cared for.

THE BRUISES

He was, in other words, the man the system produced. And the letter he was about to write, calling the bruise documentation “utterly untrue” without offering evidence, calling the police report “false,” describing the father’s behavior as “signs of real instability”, would be accepted by the court without examination, in the way that letters from men the system has produced are accepted by the system that produced them.

[ATTORNEY CORRESPONDENCE — APRIL 10, 2019 — GUTTRIDGE & CAMBARERI]

**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.

Ten days. Concerning became normal became nonexistent.

*Guttridge Letter — Cease and Desist, April 2019*

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

THE AMBUSH

## 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

moment for her to recognize who he was. Steve also had the dog, Milly, which Evie recognized. She became more comfortable with him.

## THE AMBUSH

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.

[SWORN DECLARATION — 2019-09-25 — SWORN UNDER OATH]

“I hastily retreated to my car very rattled with ‘Evie’, placed her on the passenger front seat and drove quickly toward the gate which was opening. At this point Mr. Russell had exited the vehicle and was standing by the main road when I passed the Walsh gate onto their private road.”

Claudette LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW — Sworn Affidavit, September 25, 2019

*LaMelle Sworn Affidavit — September 25, 2019*

## THE AMBUSH

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.

Two years later, Brendan would sit for a deposition in the California civil case. The man who had worn camouflage in a dark car at his sister's supervised visitation drop-off, the man who had dialed 911 to report his own ambush as someone else's trespass, told the deposing attorney: "Well, I can't answer. I don't know who you're referring to unless you can pronounce the name properly." When she persisted: "That was not a compliment in case you were confused." He accused the court reporter of "making faces" and "rolling her eyes." His own attorney told him to stop smiling, six times. The cruelty was the same in both scenes. In the dark car it was physical — the camouflage, the bats, the positioning. Under oath it was procedural — the condescension, the corrections, the accusation that the woman recording his words was performing for the room.

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 MEMO

## 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.

He was in a rented house in Westchester in the winter of 2019 — close enough to Tara Knoll that the drive took minutes, far enough from the hedgerows that the proximity was purely institutional. Evie was one, approaching two. She was behind the gate, inside the compound, inside the family the memorandum would describe. The house was small, the light filtered through bare trees, the season one of waiting. Steve sat at a table for hours — the exact hours are not recorded, only that he did not sleep much and that the pages accumulated — assembling the filing the way Kelly would later assemble the blog and the evidence volumes and the letters to judges: piece by piece, exhibit by exhibit, the labor of making a record when every institution designated to receive it had declined to look. The memorandum would run to nearly five hundred pages. He believed that if he



THE MEMO

DiFiore. The network was not hidden. It was a network that did not believe it needed to be hidden.

This was the judge who now inherited Steve Russell's case.

Walsh Sr. had been the man at the dinner table — shaking hands firmly, asking about technology in the way someone asks about a field they do not work in but want you to know they could have. This was Drexel Burnham Lambert's man — the firm that invented the junk bond, made Milken the highest-paid man in America, and then dissolved in the largest securities fraud prosecution of its era. An SEC enforcement action in 1993 had carried Walsh's name alongside colleagues whose careers ended in federal courtrooms. Those men had fallen. Walsh had not.

He had moved to Chappaqua, bought seven acres behind hedgerows, and written a book — a tell-all about the Bronx and the climb from nothing, a book that named people from the old neighborhood who preferred not to be named. The neighborhood had read early. The old friends had called. The book disappeared. What remained was a public record: the fine (\$400,433.55, April 26, 1993), the censure, the colleagues' indictments, the fact that Walsh had survived. He kept the SEC action in the same place he kept everything — in a public record he expected no one at his dinner table would ever consult.

He had been punished once, in federal court, for the crime of naming names. He had survived by keeping quiet. He had left Wall Street for Chappaqua. He had built a perimeter and defended it.

Now, in 2019, he was writing to a judge to silence someone else.

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

## THE MEMO

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 jurisdictions, 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 institution. 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.



A U N T K

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 visits 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.

A U N T K

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 case 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.

✱  
✱✱

served, with two stools, as their dining room.  
They drank it.  
Within hours, the Edition them were extremely ill.

THE RENO BOTTLE



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.

The days that followed had no structure. Kelly slept and woke and slept again. Steve cleaned the apartment the way a person cleans when there is nothing else to do with their hands — the counters, the stove, the pan that was too small and too thin. He did not move the bottle. He could not have said why. It sat on the counter among the other bottles from the liquor cabinet, its label no different from theirs. The knowledge that it was different lived in his body the way the illness itself had lived — certain, unnamed, occupying a place no amount of cleaning could reach.

He had himself tested.

The laboratory report arrived in July 2019. The result was not ambiguous.

[LABORATORY REPORT — JULY 2019 — FORENSIC LABORATORY ANALYSIS]

Urine mycotoxin panel from Steve’s testing detected Mycophenolic Acid at a concentration of 649.87 ng/g creatinine. The reference range is 5 to 50 ng/g. Steve’s level was approximately thirteen times the upper bound of normal.  
649.87 ng/g. Reference range: 5 to 50. Thirteen times the upper bound of normal.

THE RENO BOTTLE

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.

*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.

FIVE O'CLOCK

## Five O'Clock

*February 6, 2020*

*Kelly undergoes surgery days before the hearing. Steve's attorneys request remote appearance at a visitation conference. At the last minute — the afternoon before — the court denies the request. Steve 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. She inherited it with no context — no prior docket history, no familiarity with the jurisdiction disputes, the supervised visits, the ambush at the driveway.

A visitation conference was scheduled for February 6, 2020. The custody case 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.

FIVE O'CLOCK

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.



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.



FIVE O'CLOCK

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.

*Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Joseph Egitto, May 10, 2021*

## TWO DEFAULTS

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.

*Temporary Order of Protection, Westchester Family Court*

On January 26, 2021, months before the evidentiary hearing would be reached, the parties appeared for the first time before Judge Wayne A. Humphrey in Part 2 of the Westchester Family Court. The proceeding was virtual. Steve was at his desk in Novato. Tara was somewhere in Chappaqua. DiFabio was in his office. Humphrey was on the bench in White Plains. The Court Officer put them on the record.

The judge began by telling counsel he had done a deep dive in the file the day before.

“I don’t see it in there anywhere,” Humphrey said, when DiFabio tried to explain that an order of confidentiality for Steve’s address had been filed under the prior judge. Whether the document existed or not, it was not in the file Humphrey had read. The judge directed Steve to put his address on the record.

Steve asked to keep it confidential. He cited the permanent restraining order against Tara that the San Francisco court had issued — the order that was the reason he was in California at all, the order that named Tara as the person he needed protection from, the order whose whole purpose was to keep his presence in that town on that street in that house private from the woman he had been poisoned by.

The judge was not persuaded.

“Sir, I’m in New York. I’m not in California. Please put your name and your address on the record, sir.”

Steve understood that the judge was stating a fact about geography and a fact about jurisdiction at the same time. He understood that the judge was telling him that a

and named Rotblitz as precedent. Three months later, Tara and her attorneys failed to appear — twice — and the rule was not applied.

TWO DEFAULTS

was not applied. No judgment was issued. The petitions were not dismissed. The hearings were rescheduled.

Steve understood, sitting in the courtroom on each of those empty mornings, that the mechanism was not a matter of interpretation and it was not the work of an unstated assumption. The rule had been stated. The same judge who had stated it chose not to apply it. The word “default” was available in both directions, and the court used it in one. His default had resulted in a custody ruling. Her defaults resulted in a rescheduling. The court had one definition of absence for the father and another for the mother, and the document establishing that the definitions were the same had been filed three months earlier in the same courtroom by the same judge.



Judge Wayne Humphrey, the judge handling the TOP proceeding, recused himself on April 6, 2021. The motion had come from Steve’s side. DiFabio had filed it, arguing that the judge had displayed “persistent hostility and personal animus” toward counsel.

The recusal was granted — and the order itself became an attack on the attorney who had pushed too hard.

[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.  
*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

a fraudulent foundation. The court's position was that examining its own instrument would be too burdensome.

TWO DEFAULTS

rotated, defaults accumulated, and the hearing never occurred.

✱

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.

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

He filed the report.

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### 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.

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### The Third Discovery

## FOUR DISCOVERIES

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 himself tested.

[LABORATORY REPORT — JULY 2019 — FORENSIC LABORATORY ANALYSIS]  
Urine mycotoxin panel from Steve's testing detected Mycophenolic Acid at a concentration of 649.87 ng/g creatinine. The reference range is 5 to 50 ng/g. Steve's level was approximately thirteen times the upper bound of normal.  
Thirteen times the reference range in Steve's urine.  
Fourteen times normal in Kelly's blood. Zero on retest. One bottle. One evening.  
*Urine Mycotoxin Panel and Blood Analysis, July 2019*

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 at thirteen

FOUR DISCOVERIES

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 — video cameras watching parking lots, hotel lobbies, retail floors, airports, banks, transit hubs. 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. Evie had been alive for the entire span. She had been in the apartment when the wine was poured, in the household when the nanny saw it happen, in the compound now while the lab reports accumulated in a folder her father was not allowed to show a judge.

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

## EQUAL THREATS

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.

*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.

Steve answered from the record.

"There never have been in the past, Your Honor."

"I've never seen consequences."



EQUAL THREATS

transferred to the grandparents. Only one party in the mutual arrangement could not afford to end the case.

August 27, 2021. The courtroom at 131 Warburton Avenue was smaller than the ones in White Plains — lower ceiling, closer walls, the bench and the counsel table near enough that a judge did not need to raise her voice to fill the room. The fluorescent lights hummed at a frequency you stopped noticing after ten minutes. Security screening at the building entrance, the elevator to the third floor, the hallway where the children's center shared the corridor with the courtrooms. Schauer's bench occupied the front wall. Steve stood at the counsel table without an attorney beside him.

The 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." Christopher Weddle had been practicing family law in Westchester for twenty-nine years. He was a member of the 18B panel — the same panel Cambareri screened — and would later become a Support Magistrate at the very courthouse where he now stood as counsel. He lived in Chappaqua. 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."

EQUAL THREATS

ever seen, in a courtroom where the only acceptable form of participation was silence.

Kelly walked out of the Yonkers courthouse that afternoon. She carried the legal pad she brought to every hearing — the notes she would type into a letter that evening, addressed to yet another judge, CC’d to yet another supervising justice, with the same evidence attached that every previous letter had attached and every previous recipient had declined to examine. Four judges. Four courtrooms. The same outcome: nothing changed for Evie.

\*~\*

GRANDMA'S LETTER

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 early in the morning. The child arrived the way she would arrive at every visit — unfed, tired, the residue of a household that treated the transfer as an inconvenience rather than an obligation. Linda fed her. They went to the park. They went to the beach. Evie found a crab and crouched over it with the focused intensity of a five-year-old encountering something alive and small and unafraid of her. 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.

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

ERASE, DEACTIVATE, AND DELETE

## 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. She had been the Attorney for the Child since the case arrived in Westchester — across four judges, three courthouses, the bruises, the ambush, the defaults, the revolving supervisors. She had seen the laboratory reports. She had received Steve's correspondence about the poisoning evidence. She had watched the case file grow into the largest Schauer had ever encountered.

[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

ERASE, DEACTIVATE, AND DELETE

proceeding where attorneys negotiate dates and parameters for a grandmother to see her granddaughter.

The court officer swore in the parties. Tara stood, raised her right hand, and when asked for her name and address for the record, gave her name and said her address was confidential. The court officer turned to Linda. Linda stood, raised her right hand, and when asked for her name and address, said: Linda Russell, 407 East Mohoning Street, Apartment 425, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, 15767. The woman who had driven six and a half hours gave the court her apartment number. The woman who lived twenty minutes away gave the court nothing.

Both were sworn. Both were seated. The court opened the hearing.

DiFabio spoke next. He acknowledged service of the order to show cause. And then he said what he had come to say.

“I’m not going to — I’m going to — I’m not going to make the legal arguments that I think the order’s in effect. Notwithstanding that, we’ll consent to the relief.”

The stammer mattered. DiFabio knew the legal arguments existed — prior restraint, the constitutional weight of suppressing speech before it occurs. He was telling the court, in the same sentence, that the arguments were there and that he would not make them. He was consenting to the relief. His client was sitting in the gallery.

The court noted that Steve had not appeared. It was 3:41 — eleven minutes past the scheduled start. “Normally I would give a party a fair amount of time to appear, but I think we’ll proceed.”

What followed was Tara’s financial disclosure. Weddle told the court that Tara had depleted her life savings — \$120,000 — paying for private counsel. Her income was roughly \$40,000 a year. The court pointed out that with

ERASE, DEACTIVATE, AND DELETE

"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 grandmother who was sitting in the room, who had driven from Punxsutawney, whose attorney had consented on her behalf — her order was granted too. She was present. She had spoken three times. She had agreed. And she was defaulted alongside the person who was absent.

✱

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.

StevieLovesEvie had been built by Kelly Turnure — Steve's partner, a woman with no custody claim, no legal standing, no obligation to any of it — over months of careful, systematic work. One hundred and forty-six blog posts, organized into four hardbound volumes on a shelf in Steve's house. The blog contained nanny incident reports from the period when Evie was in the Walshes' care. It contained photographs of bruises on a child's body. It contained Kelly's written accounts of supervised visits — what Evie said, what Evie ate, whether Evie seemed afraid. It contained court filings that the court system had generated and that the court system now wanted removed from public view. It contained a grandmother's letters to judges.

## B O R A B O R A

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.

watched from the deck of his bungalow. The reflections doubled everything, each burst of color appearing twice, rubbed everything, each

B O R A B O R A

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.  
*Default/Inquest Hearing Transcript, January 5, 2022*

The phone rang in the bungalow.

Steve picked it up from the desk where it had been charging, the screen bright with a call from Advocate’s office, the afternoon sun through the floor panel casting the lagoon in sharp relief below. Behind him through the window, the lagoon held the late afternoon light. 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.



ORDERS AS WEAPONS

## 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

ORDERS AS WEAPONS



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.

The SVU office was on the second or third floor of a building downtown. The walls in the waiting area were covered with domestic violence resources — hotline numbers, safety planning pamphlets, instructions for survivors. The materials were there because the work of the unit involved documenting harm done by one person to another. Someone had designed this space to help people who had been poisoned, controlled, isolated. A conference room off the waiting area. This was where the investigation into the poisoning of Steve Russell had a case number and a detective assigned to it. And this was where a family member would walk in carrying a court order from three thousand miles away, placing it on a desk in a room built to protect people from exactly what the document was designed to conceal.

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.”

Steve read the text. A family member of the woman being investigated for poisoning had walked into a building whose walls were covered with domestic violence resources and handed the detective a piece of paper from a family court three thousand miles away. The last institutional channel that might have examined the

PART VIII

**THE TRIAL**

stopped feeding me, sometimes locked me out.  
*Brienne Walsh, ABrieGrowsInBrooklyn, August 2019*

WE WERE HIT

\*  
\*  
\*

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.

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\*

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.

[DOCUMENT]

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.

WE WERE HIT

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.



LESS THAN GENUINE

times, then said he had already answered. It was not obstruction through silence. It was obstruction through performance — a man making the process of questioning him so unpleasant that the questioner would stop.

Then Moore entered the record.

“I’ve made many depositions. And I can tell you haven’t. So let’s move on and we’ll see how you stumble through this.”

When Llaguno attempted to make her objections for the record, the standard practice in any deposition, the practice Moore himself exercised freely, Moore interrupted her. “So, no, no, no, no. I’m making a record. Just shut up. Shut up. I’m making a record.” Then: “I’m not listening to you. I’m making a record.”

He told Brendan to stop smiling approximately six times across the deposition, the instruction itself revealing what the transcript could not show. When confronted with evidence, Brendan smiled. Moore did not tell him to stop because it was inappropriate. He told him to stop because the video was running.

There was one moment the preparation could not reach. Brendan’s own text message, read into the record by Llaguno: “Mr. Russell did not attack any of the Walsh family.” The text had been sent to Brienne. It directly contradicted Tara’s assault allegations, the allegations that had produced the restraining order, that had been used to block visitation, that had justified years of court proceedings. It was Brendan’s own words in Brendan’s own message, and when Llaguno read it into the record, neither Brendan nor Moore objected. There was nothing to object to. The text said what it said.

[ . . . ]



Moore was Walsh Sr.’s cowardice made operational.

toddler. Four adults would testify in the rooms below her and across the driveway over the course of three days, and none of them would mention her by name except as a case caption. The girl in the attic had not seen her father since she was one and a half. She was learning to talk in full sentences. She had nine more years ahead of her in that compound before she would have any say in whether the women testifying in the rooms below her told the truth or lied.

$$\begin{bmatrix} . & . & . \\ . & . & . \end{bmatrix}$$

Three days later, on April 26, 2021, at 12:03 PM, Walsh Sr. was sworn in. He was alone at 394 Whippoorwill Road, sitting in front of a Chromebook with no other programs open and no documents in front of him. No documents, though the subpoena had requested them. No search, though six years of emails and text messages sat in the device in his hands.

His first question was not about the case. It was about whether Steve was watching. "Is Stephen Russell participating? Is he in your office, by any chance?" Llaguno told him no. "So he's not — he's not tuned in anywhere?" No. "I — I'm sure he's on right now, but whatever." The man who had evaded three sheriff's deputies to avoid being served was now, under oath, performing the same vigilance in a different register: not hiding from the process but scanning the room for the person the process concerned.

His stutter had a seismographic quality. In ordinary conversation, questions about his career, his address, his family's general circumstances, the stutter was minimal, a tic, barely noticeable. As questions approached the drugging, the coordination, the departure from San

LESS THAN GENUINE

[ . . . ]  
[ . . . ]



Matan Gavish was deposed first, on April 20, 2021, chronologically before the other three, though placed last here because his deposition contained the one moment that the family’s coordination could not survive.

Moore opened the deposition by identifying himself as counsel “for Matan solely.” Tara identified herself as a “pro se litigant representing myself.” The distinction mattered: if Moore represented only Gavish, his obstructive behavior served Gavish’s interests. If he represented the Walsh family, his presence at Gavish’s deposition was a conflict. Tara’s status as a pro se litigant meant she had no attorney present and no authority to make evidentiary objections.

Later in the deposition, Tara slipped. Moore was her attorney too. The careful framing of the opening, “for Matan solely,” “pro se,” collapsed. They tag-teamed Llaguno’s questions, Moore objecting and Tara adding her own interruptions, the pro se litigant and the attorney she claimed not to have working in coordination that the opening statements had been designed to deny.

But the slip that mattered was not Tara’s. It was Gavish’s.

Llaguno asked whether Walsh had told Gavish that anyone had helped her put drugs in Steve’s drink. Gavish began to answer, stopped, corrected himself, then continued:

“So I think the nanny and some of Steve’s security were aware of it.”

Llaguno asked him to clarify. Walsh explained this to him?



## THE KIDNAPPING CASE

accountability for the taking of Evie Russell from her father in the state of California.

The case would accumulate eighty-nine entries in its register of actions over the next four years. It would never reach trial.



Six weeks after the complaint was filed, on January 14, 2021, Officer Christopher Barnett of the Westchester County Sheriff's Office arrived at 394 Whippoorwill Road, Chappaqua. The electronic gate was at the bottom. The driveway climbed a quarter mile through woods to the compound at the top.

Walsh Sr. was served at 6:54 PM on January 15. The return described him: male, approximately fifty to fifty-five years of age, one hundred and seventy-five pounds, five feet ten inches, white, grey hair.

When Officer Barnett asked about Maura and Tara, Walsh Sr. told him they no longer lived at the given address. He would not provide a forwarding address.



The sheriff's return came back: Maura Walsh — NOT SERVED. Tara Walsh — NOT SERVED.

Both lived there. Maura would testify under oath three months later that her address was the family home. Tara would list the family home as her address on a Proof of Service filed in the battery case in March 2022. The court would serve Tara the jury verdict at the family home. Tara would give the family home as her address at trial. A photograph existed of Maura being served legal documents at her tennis club in Chappaqua, the same town, the same woman, sitting with a leather bag and a face mask, not hiding.

There exists a photograph. Maura Walsh, sitting at her tennis club in Chappaqua, wearing a face mask, a leather bag beside her, being handed legal documents by a

401

THE KIDNAPPING CASE

 **WESTCHESTER COUNTY**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
SHERIFF'S CIVIL UNIT  
THOMAS A. GLEASON  
COMMISSIONER - SHERIFF 

---

1 TO DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD -- ROOM L217 -- WHITE PLAINS -- NEW YORK -- 10601

LAW OFFICES OF HOOK & HOOK  
436 EAST OAKVIEW DRIVE  
SUITE 101  
WAYNESBURG, PA 15370


1/15/2021  
ATTORNEY FILE:  
SHERIFF FILE: 21000014

RE: STEPHEN G RUSSELL, v. STEPHEN WALSH, MAURA WALSH, TARA WALSH

**Process returned herewith (for reason checked below)**

☒ Subject moved. Left no forwarding address.  
☐ We had insufficient time for service. Please re-date and return.  
☐ Not known at address given.  
☐ No such number or street address.  
☐ No longer employed at given location.  
☐ Has mail and telephone privileges only at address given.  
☐ Reported out-of-town.  
☐ Vacant at address.  
☐ Please furnish us with better residence / business address.  
☐ Not deliverable - address is a P.O. Box.  
☐ Numerous attempts made at service. We were unable to make contact.  
☐ Out of business.  
☐ Different business at location.  
☐ Returned by request.  
☐ Not listed in Building Directory - No apartment given.  
☐ Evading Service.  
☐ Unable to gain entry at business or residence address.  
☐ Employer does not allow service or process upon employees.  
☐ No accounts in name given.  
☐ Account balance is below minimum required for levy/Funds are exempt from levy.  
☐ Account balance is zero or overdrawn.  
☐ Account in multiple names - Turnover order needed.  
☐ No reply to demand made on.  
☐ Execution expired - no leviable assets.  
☐ Judgment unsatisfied.  
☐ Case Closed.  
☐ See Remarks.

Remarks: Stephen Walsh was served, however he stated the both Maura and Tara Walsh no longer lived at the given address. Walsh also stated he would not provide me with their current address.

Sincerely,   
Police Officer: Christopher Barnett

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TELEPHONE: (914) 995-3263 FAX: (914) 995-4295 WEBSITE: WESTCHESTERCO.NY.GOV/YS

Westchester County Sheriff's Certificate of Attempted Service, dated January 15, 2021. Officer Christopher Barnett certifies attempted service at 394 Whipoorwill Road, Chappaqua. Checkbox marked: Subject moved, left no forwarding address. Remarks: Stephen Walsh was served, however he stated that both Maura and Tara Walsh no longer lived at the given address. Walsh also stated he would not provide me with their current address.

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*Facilitate transportation from the airport.* The word “facilitate,” an institutional verb, a project manager’s verb, deployed by a man who told his daughter to get out of an Uber, whose family coordinated a vacation ruse,

THE KIDNAPPING CASE

The court found Walsh Sr.’s communications with Russell constituted “vague communications” that did not demonstrate “any sort of fraudulent conspiracy.”

Walsh Sr. was “not strictly liable for his adult daughter’s decision to leave California.”

Jurisdictional discovery denied. Walsh Sr. dismissed from the case.

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Walsh Sr. was no longer a party to the kidnapping case. But the attorneys on the case he had left kept disappearing.

On October 26, 2021, Michaela G. Davies of Robison, Sharp, Sullivan & Brust, a firm in Reno, Nevada, eleven hundred miles from the Walsh compound and three thousand from the San Francisco courthouse, substituted as Steve’s counsel. She was the attorney who actually did the work.

In March 2022, Davies filed an OSC declaration that assembled the entire service evasion into a single document. She cited the sheriff’s return, then dismantled it: Walsh Sr. told the sheriff Maura and Tara didn’t live there, but Maura testified under oath three months later that her address was 394 Whippoorwill Road. Tara filed a Proof of Service in the battery case listing the family home. The court served Tara the jury verdict at the family home. Tara gave the family home as her address at trial. Tara acknowledged the kidnapping case itself in her JNOV declaration, calling it “a separate lawsuit suing my parents and I in San Francisco,” which meant she knew about the case, knew about the complaint, and chose not to respond. Davies filed POS-040 proving certified mail and email service to Maura and Tara at addresses they demonstrably used. Her conclusion: “It cannot be reasonably disputed that Tara and Maura have intentionally and improperly

THE KIDNAPPING CASE

compound. He went three times. Each time, no answer. On the third visit, Tara texted Steve a photograph of the process server standing at her front door. She was inside. She could see him. She photographed him through the door and sent the image to the man whose lawsuit she was avoiding, asking if he was trying to serve her.

She knew the complaint existed. She knew the process server was at her door. She photographed him through the door — a woman who had once photographed a middle finger in a bathroom mirror, who had texted gun selfies to friends, who documented everything she found entertaining, and sent the image to the man whose lawsuit she was avoiding. And the court maintained she had not been served.

The institutional architecture that exists to ensure procedural fairness instead ensured procedural failure for the litigant who had no attorney because the man who was no longer a party kept threatening them.

On August 5, 2025, the case was dismissed. The court cited failure to serve within three years.

In a case where the defendants appeared. Where Walsh Sr. filed a twenty-seven-page declaration with sworn statements. Where Davies filed POS-040 proving certified mail and email service to all three defendants. Where Tara acknowledged the kidnapping case in her own JNOV declaration, calling it “a separate lawsuit suing my parents and I in San Francisco.” Where twelve separate pieces of evidence proved the defendants lived at the address their father said they did not live at.

Failure to serve within three years.

Steve filed four organized pro se motion packets in August: sanctions, motion to vacate, ex parte application, and a default prove-up seeking fifty million in general damages and fifteen million in special damages. Rejected post-dismissal for “titling and combining” issues.

THE KIDNAPPING CASE

to produce the same result: one family gets the benefit of every procedural doubt, and the other gets sanctioned four hundred dollars at a time.

Walsh Sr. watches from Chappaqua. Successfully quashed. No longer a party. But still the voice on the voicemail. Still the man at the top of the driveway who told the sheriff his family didn't live where they all live. Still funding the attorneys who destroy the attorneys, then withdrawing from the cases he has emptied.

The case that named the family — not just Tara, but the parents, the system, the coordination — dies not from a ruling on its merits but from the procedural weight accumulated on a pro se litigant whose attorneys keep leaving because the man who left the case first keeps threatening them.

The child visible through the storm door in February 2021 — at three, in Tara's arms — was six years old when the third default rejection came in December 2024. She was behind the gate. The three-year-old who retreated from view is now six, in first grade somewhere in Westchester. The same compound, the same driveway, the same door. The year the case was dismissed, she was going to school and coming home. The year the jury rendered its verdict, she was seven. The case that would have named her family had lost her childhood accumulating procedural rejections. Not to a ruling. To a clerk's error on complaint dates.

In ten months, a jury will hear the evidence this case never reached. But the jury's verdict will apply only to Tara, the person who carried out the scheme. The parents who conceived it, funded it, directed it, and destroyed every attorney who tried to hold them accountable will not be named in the verdict. They will not be named in any verdict. That is what the eighty-nine entries accomplished. Not innocence. Absence.

THE REMNANT



The Appellate Division issued its decision on March 22, 2023.

[DOCUMENT]

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.

*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 REMNANT

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 reversal was published at 214 A.D.3d 890 — volume 214, page 890, the specific address where the case would live in every law library in the State of New York. The citation was permanent. Any lawyer in any New York court who wanted to look up the precedent on default and speech restriction would find it there, printed and shelved and indexed. The Appellate Division’s eighteen pages would sit on the shelf next to every other precedent. It would be available on Westlaw and Lexis. It would be citable. It would be binding on lower courts. The case that Schauer’s order had tried to erase — had directed erased from blogs, deleted from existence — now existed in a form that erasing was impossible. Published precedent. The permanent record. The place where the institutional architecture keeps what it cannot kill.

The Family Court did not modify its custody orders in response to the appellate decision. 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

## WHAT TWELVE PEOPLE SAW

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. Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137: Stephen Russell, appearing by attorney Brian D. Waller of Peckar & Abramson, P.C., counsel table on the left; Tara Walsh, representing herself, pro se, at the defense table on the right, no attorney at her side. 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.

She was representing herself.



## WHAT TWELVE PEOPLE SAW

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 filings 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.

## [DOCUMENT]

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.

*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

WHAT THE JURY FOUND

## 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.

Department 504 of the San Francisco Superior Court, Judge Garrett L. Wong presiding. February 2022. Steve sat at the plaintiff’s table with his attorney, Brian Waller of Peckar & Abramson. Tara sat at the defense table alone — she had represented herself through the five-day trial. Kelly sat in the gallery behind Steve, where she had sat in every courtroom since Westchester. This was not a Westchester courtroom. There were no rotating judges, no defaults entered in absence, no supervisors appointed by name. There were twelve strangers in a jury box who had been asked to weigh the evidence and return a verdict.

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

## WHAT THE JURY FOUND

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.

Evie had been born on January 27, 2018. She had turned four less than a month before the verdict. She was in Chappaqua, behind the gate, in the compound with five buildings and the electronic lock. The last time she had

## AFFIRMED

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

AFFIRMED

Domestication affidavit filed under the Full Faith and Credit Clause, bringing the California jury verdict into New York. The judgment from San Francisco Superior Court — battery, fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress, domestic violence with a finding of malice — was now registered and enforceable in Westchester County. The same jurisdiction whose family courts had treated Steve as the threat now carried a judgment identifying Tara as the adjudicated aggressor.

The same jurisdiction whose family courts treated Steve as the threat now carried a judgment identifying Tara as the adjudicated aggressor.

*Domestication of California Judgment, Westchester County, Index No. 55523/2023*

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 RECORD IS OPEN

## [DOCUMENT]

Post 5 of 146: “The Gag Order: Westchester Court orders Dad’s blogs erased, deactivated and deleted on default.” The Hon. Michelle I. Schauer granted the order without opposition papers — Russell, representing himself pro se, did not appear. The order did not address, nor was it issued in response to, any finding of falsehood in the blog’s content.

The gag order. Westchester Court orders Dad’s blogs erased, deactivated and deleted on default.

*StevieLovesEvie Blog Archive, November 5, 2021*

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 RECORD IS OPEN

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 had been appointed by the court as a CASAC, a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor, to prepare the forensic evaluation that would govern custody. In a case involving multiple poisoning

THE TRAP

## The Trap

2025

*The mechanism that has operated across forty-seven chapters is named. A sleeping photograph sent at midnight with conditions attached. A court system that makes silence mandatory. A gate in the dark where the setup is the ambush.*

*A campaign of conditioned photos and impossible terms. Three layers of the same grammar — court-built, physical, ambient — each converting fatherhood into evidence against the father.*

The photo arrived at 10:47 PM on a Sunday in October. Evie in red pajamas, asleep on a couch, her face half-buried in a pillow. Beneath the image, a message: *This is your child. When you harass and abuse her mother, it affects her. Stop trying to pull strings. Leave us alone and pay support.*

The conditions were attached to the child's sleeping face the way a price tag is attached to a thing for sale. Respond to the photo and you have accepted the conditions. Ignore the photo and you are the absent father. Challenge the conditions and you need to *get help before you lose every last thread of reality.*



THE TRAP

At Visit 11, Walsh Sr. denied Steve access at the compound door. At Visit 12, Tara filed a Temporary Order of Protection based on events she had not witnessed — she was a quarter mile away at the compound while her father turned Steve away at the gate. At Visit 13, Judge Morales-Horowitz issued a five-year order of protection on default, at a visitation conference, not a hearing, as the pandemic began. Steve’s attorney was present. Steve was available by phone. The court record shows the order. The court record does not show a hearing, because there was no hearing.

Three forced choices stacked in sequence: attempt the visit and be blocked at the door, document the denial and face a retaliatory filing, wait for the court and watch it issue a five-year order without a hearing. Each step punished the step before it. The legal system did not merely fail to protect Steve. It constructed the conditions of his entrapment — order by order, recusal by recusal, default by default — until the court itself became the instrument through which fatherhood was made impossible.



The trap was not confined to courtrooms. It operated in physical space — at gates, in driveways, on dark roads in Westchester — where the setup was deliberate but the participants could claim coincidence, self-defense, or confusion.

The court order appointing the seventh supervisor — Claudette LaMelle — named Walsh Sr. individually in Provision 4: *Neither Petitioner nor her father, Stephen Walsh, shall be present at pick-ups or drop-offs.* Courts do not name grandparents in supervised visitation orders as a matter of course. That the order named him meant the court already had documentation of his conduct. The

## THE TRAP

architect in a single sentence. Silence for access. Surrender for presence. The architect did not disguise the exchange. She named it.

Steve asked if Evie could text him. The answer was no — something about Steve Jobs and iPhones, the deflection dressed as an explanation. Direct contact between father and daughter was not permitted. But: *I'll do anything for you to see her*. Anything, provided the conditions were met. Which meant not anything. Which meant the one thing.

On July 21, a single message arrived that contained the entire grammar in miniature: pathologization of Steve's concerns, prohibition on court involvement, financial framing, conditional access to Evie, and gratitude for support payments — all in one paragraph, sent as though it were a casual update. The trap did not need a conspiracy. It needed only a phone and a person who had learned that every register of communication could be converted into leverage simultaneously.

The photos arrived between the conditions. Evie drinking from a cup. Evie with a newborn sibling Steve had never been told existed. Evie asleep in red pajamas. Each image a reminder of what was being withheld — and what could be provided, temporarily, if the terms were met.

When Steve declined the terms, the trap converted his refusal into character evidence. *You're nothing more than a sperm donor. Evie doesn't even know a "brother" exists, and she certainly never will. Get help before you lose every last thread of reality*. The father who would not pay for access to his daughter became the father who did not want his daughter. The father who challenged the conditions became the father who needed psychiatric help. The father who documented the pattern became the father who was harassing the mother.

## THE COWARD

That the man from San Francisco was unstable. That the courts had confirmed it. That a grandfather who keeps a dangerous person away from his grandchild is not a coward but a guardian. Under oath he went further: he said he took Tara's own claims with a grain of salt, that he was disappointed and angry with her for going to San Francisco in the first place, that he was not going to allow her to play the victim. He saw through the narrative. He used it anyway. The coward's clarity is not the absence of insight. It is insight deployed only where deploying it costs nothing.

What he cannot do is remain in a room where the cost of what he has permitted is about to arrive.



At Visit 15, a Sunday in 2019, Walsh Sr. followed Steve's car up Bedford Road and blocked access to the compound. He exited his vehicle, red-faced and shaking, and told Steve he was taking the girls home from school. It was Sunday. There were no girls to take home. But when he noticed the nanny in the passenger seat — Talia, a witness who could document what she saw — he stopped. He got back in his car. He left.

The man who had confronted a father in a public roadway could not hold his position in the presence of a witness who might write it down.

On the night of September 21, the compound's electronic gate opened for the supervised visit and closed behind the court-appointed supervisor. Walsh Sr. was inside the house. His son was in a blacked-out car parked among the bushes at the bottom of the driveway with what appeared to be a bat between his legs. His compound. His gate. His son. His absence from the car was not incidental. It was the design.

THE COWARD

One father bears the cost in his own name. The other has never borne a cost in his own name in the entire record of this case — not in a courtroom, not at a deposition, not at a gate, not at a door.

A child does not need a father who never fears. A child needs a father who does not make his fear her inheritance.



THE DEMAND

[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.  
*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.

FOR EVIE

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 thirteen 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 texts still arrive. Photographs of Evie with conditions attached. The trap did not end when the courts corrected themselves. It moved to a place where no court could see it.

\*~\*

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FOR EVIE

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BACK COVER

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 thirteen 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 family court that was supposed to protect the child has not acted on the verdict.



**First Appearance:** Ch. 2 — The Girl on the Boat

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## APPENDIX A: CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Brienne is the story's most structurally important plant-payoff character AND its most complex Pontius Pilate figure.***First Appearance:** Ch. 4 — 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:** Ch. 17 — Save This, I've Got Him**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:** Ch. 23 — 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 machine's self-portrait — the judge whose backstory reveals how the system selects and rewards its instruments.***First Appearance:** Ch. 28 — The Memo (case reassigned after Gordon-Oliver recuses).**JUDGE SCHAUER****Role:** Third custody judge. Issues the gag order and conducts the inquest.

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APPENDIX A: CAST OF CHARACTERS

**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. Rhodes's contact with Brienne (the one family member who might have told the truth).*

**First Appearance:** Referenced in MSG-RHODES-003 (the Isolation Maneuver) and Ch. 17 (Save This, I've Got Him).

**FRANK S. MOORE (Deposition Attorney)**

**Role:** Attorney retained by Walsh Sr. to represent the family at the four California civil case depositions (April 2021). The seventh attorney in the Walsh rotation — and the only one who didn't resign.

*Moore's job in the story is to be Walsh Sr.'s aggression made institutional.*

**First Appearance:** Ch. 40 — The Depositions

**JOY LLAGUNO (Deposing Attorney)**

**Role:** Attorney representing Steve in the California battery case who conducted the four Walsh family depositions in April 2021. Deposing counsel.

*Llaguno's job in the story is to be the professional persistence against coordinated obstruction.*

**First Appearance:** Ch. 40 — The Depositions

**MICHAELA G. DAVIES / RSSB LAW (Kidnapping Case Attorney)**

**Role:** Attorney at Robison, Sharp, Sullivan & Brust (Reno, NV) who represented Steve in the kidnapping case from October 2021 to May 2022. The attorney who actually assembled the evidence proving service evasion.

*Davies's job in the story is to be the competent attorney destroyed by the pattern.*

**First Appearance:** Ch. 41 — The Kidnapping Case

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

APPENDIX A: CAST OF CHARACTERS

*First point of contact in the post-Brooklyn security sequence.*

**First Appearance:** Ch. 14 — 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:** Ch. 14 — 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. Irrational. Delusional.”) AND as evidence of drugging impairment — the symptoms Prendergast described are consistent with someone being poisoned. The “report” was never a formal investigation document — just an email saying Steve was acting crazy — but it was weaponized: slid under Dr. Gopal’s door, possibly given to a juror who changed her vote. The Prendergast report travels through the case like the Westchester fake orders, appearing wherever it can do the most damage.*

**First Appearance:** Ch. 11 — Eleven O’Clock (as unnamed operative alongside Walsh Sr. at hospital); named in Ch. 14 — 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*

**RITA MERCANTEL MHC (Tara's Therapist)**

APPENDIX A: CAST OF 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:** Ch. 43 — 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:** Ch. 43 — 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:** Ch. 46 — The Record Is Open.

**DAN FLORIO JR., ESQ. (Jasne & Florio LLP)**

**Role:** Steve's co-counsel for the Motion to Vacate.

**First Appearance:** Ch. 46 — 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:** Ch. 46 — 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:** Ch. 49 — The Demand (mentioned in passing).

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

- Ch. 24: A Special Relationship
  - Ch. 4: Tara Knoll
  - Ch. 13: The Morning After
  - Ch. 14: The Sheraton
- March 26, 2017**
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- March 28, 2017**
- Ch. 6: The Illness
- May 2017
- May 2017**
- Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat
- May 4, 2017**
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- May 10, 2017**
- Ch. 8: The Ultrasound
- May 14, 2017**
- Ch. 8: The Ultrasound
- May 23, 2017**
- Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment
- May 27, 2017**
- Ch. 8: The Ultrasound
- June 2017
- June 30, 2017**
- Ch. 19: The Niacin Flush
  - Ch. 23: Crabtree's Kittle House
- September 2017
- September 22, 2017**
- Ch. 10: The Builder
- September 30, 2017**
- Ch. 19: The Niacin Flush
- October 2017
- October 2017**
- Ch. 5: Nothing Stolen
  - Ch. 11: Eleven O'Clock
- December 2017
- December 2017**
- Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat
- December 19, 2017**
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- December 21, 2017**

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

- Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment
- Ch. 18: The Leaning Tower
- Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal
- Ch. 8: The Ultrasound
- Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter
- May 22, 2018
- Ch. 16: The Jet
- Ch. 19: The Niacin Flush
- June 2018
- June 2018
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- Ch. 28: The Memo
- Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons
- June 6, 2018
- Ch. 49: The Demand
- June 7, 2018
- Ch. 3: The Bite
- Ch. 28: The Memo
- Ch. 45: Affirmed
- June 8, 2018
- Ch. 23: Crabtree's Kittle House
- Ch. 25: Sixteen Visits
- June 9, 2018
- Ch. 14: The Sheraton
- Ch. 23: Crabtree's Kittle House
- June 10, 2018
- Ch. 14: The Sheraton
- June 12, 2018
- Ch. 49: The Demand
- June 15, 2018
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- Ch. 16: The Jet
- Ch. 19: The Niacin Flush
- June 20, 2018
- Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment
- June 22, 2018
- Ch. 49: The Demand
- July 2018
- July 2018
- Ch. 28: The Memo
- Ch. 23: Crabtree's Kittle House
- July 2, 2018
- Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

February 19, 2019

• Ch. 16: The Jet

• Ch. 10: The Builder

February 25, 2019

• Ch. 21: “You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter”

February 26, 2019

• Ch. 25: Sixteen Visits

February 27, 2019

• Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons

March 2019

March 2019

• Ch. 26: The Bruises

March 1, 2019

• Ch. 31: Five O’Clock

March 4, 2019

• Ch. 10: The Builder

March 5, 2019

• Ch. 21: “You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter”

March 7, 2019

• Ch. 7: The Wine Bottle

• Ch. 16: The Jet

• Ch. 24: A Special Relationship

• Ch. 28: The Memo

March 8, 2019

• Ch. 16: The Jet

March 11, 2019

• Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons

• Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

• Ch. 25: Sixteen Visits

March 13, 2019

• Ch. 5: Nothing Stolen

• Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons

• Ch. 43: What Twelve People Saw

March 21, 2019

• Ch. 24: A Special Relationship

March 23, 2019

• Ch. 25: Sixteen Visits

• Ch. 24: A Special Relationship

• Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

March 25, 2019

• Ch. 21: “You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter”

March 27, 2019

- Ch. 2: The Girl on the Boat
- Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
- Ch. 46: The Record Is Open

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

- Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- December 2019**
- December 5, 2019**
  - Ch. 29: Aunt K
- December 10, 2019**
  - Ch. 16: The Jet
  - Ch. 24: A Special Relationship
- December 16, 2019**
  - Ch. 23: Crabtree's Kittle House
- December 18, 2019**
  - Ch. 33: Four Discoveries
  - Ch. 16: The Jet
- 2 0 2 0**
- January 2020**
- January 3, 2020**
  - Ch. 32: Two Defaults
  - Ch. 39: We Were Hit
- January 8, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
  - Ch. 32: Two Defaults
- January 18, 2020**
  - Ch. 39: We Were Hit
- January 24, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- January 27, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- February 2020**
- February 2020**
  - Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- February 5, 2020**
  - Ch. 29: Aunt K
- February 6, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- February 18, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock
- February 24, 2020**
  - Ch. 31: Five O'Clock



April 2021  
April 6, 2021

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

• Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons

• Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

June 9, 2021

• Ch. 4: Tara Knoll

June 10, 2021

• Ch. 3: The Bite

July 2021

July 8, 2021

• Ch. 37: Bora Bora

July 27, 2021

• Ch. 21: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter"

August 2021

August 2, 2021

• Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter

August 6, 2021

• Ch. 16: The Jet

August 16, 2021

• Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter

August 27, 2021

• Ch. 3: The Bite

• Ch. 16: The Jet

• Ch. 32: Two Defaults

• Ch. 33: Four Discoveries

• Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

October 2021

October 1, 2021

• Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter

October 2, 2021

• Ch. 33: Four Discoveries

October 4, 2021

• Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter

October 12, 2021

• Ch. 30: The Reno Bottle

October 14, 2021

• Ch. 36: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete

• Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

October 15, 2021

• Ch. 16: The Jet

• Ch. 35: Grandma's Letter

• Ch. 39: We Were Hit

October 21, 2021

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

- Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

2026

January 2026

January 13, 2026

- Ch. 16: The Jet
- Ch. 38: The Orders as Weapons

January 29, 2026

- Ch. 12: January 27, 2018

February 2026

February 2026

- Ch. 16: The Jet
- Ch. 8: The Ultrasound
- Ch. 12: January 27, 2018
- Ch. 6: The Illness
- Ch. 9: The Brooklyn Apartment

February 3, 2026

- Ch. 31: Five O’Clock
- Ch. 43: What Twelve People Saw

February 10, 2026

- Ch. 49: The Demand

February 13, 2026

- Ch. 43: What Twelve People Saw
- Ch. 28: The Memo

February 15, 2026

- Ch. 10: The Builder
- Ch. 39: We Were Hit
- Ch. 42: The Appellate Reversal

February 17, 2026

- Ch. 12: January 27, 2018

kick. Steve was calm, nothing aggressive.  
**Tara Walsh, Inquest Hearing, January 5, 2022** — Ch. 22: "You Almost Made Me Abandon Our Daughter" — *The version the Westchester court heard. The retired judge was not in the room.*  
**Tara Walsh text to Steve Russell, May 2018** — Ch. 22: "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.*

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

*being followed or menaced by Stephen Walsh and Tara's aunt, LaMelle Intimidation & Removal — Incident Summary*

**Attorney John Guttridge, Letter to Court, 2019** — Ch. 28: The Ambush — *Guttridge's letter to the court denied any bruises and any history of abuse at the Walsh household — after the court-appointed supervisor had documented concerning bruises on Evie minutes into a visit with Steve. When the Walshes told police "the bruises were normal — kids get bruises," and Guttridge wrote that the father had made the whole matter up, the cover-up required an attorney willing to put his name on it. Guttridge eventually discovered the role he had played. His replacement, Christopher Weddle, continued representing Tara — and was subsequently appointed as a Support Magistrate at Westchester Family Court. The attorney who discovered what he had been used to cover up. His replacement was appointed Support Magistrate.*

**Trial Testimony — Walsh v. Russell, January 2022** — Ch. 28: The Ambush — *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. Battery Trial Testimony — Walsh v. Russell, January 5, 2022*

**Walsh Abuse Motion with Exhibits, 2019** — Ch. 29: The Memo — *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.*

**StevieLovesEvie.com, About Page, May 11, 2021** — Ch. 30: 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. Aunt K built the archive before anyone called it that. Four hardbound volumes, five years of proceedings, one subscription price.*

**Kelly O. Turnure, Letter to Hon. Esther Furman, February 23, 2021** — Ch. 30: Aunt K — *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.*

**Urine Mycotoxin Panel, July 2019** — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle — *Urine mycotoxin panel from Steve's testing detected Mycophenolic Acid at a concentration of 649.87 ng/g creatinine. The reference range is 5 to 50 ng/g. Steve's level was approximately thirteen times the upper bound of normal. 649.87 ng/g. Reference range: 5 to 50. Thirteen times the upper bound of normal.*

**Mycophenolic Acid, Toxicology and Clinical Profile** — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle — *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.*

**Steve Russell to Kelly Turnure, Forwarded Email, November 14, 2019** — Ch. 31: The Reno Bottle — *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 connen 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.*

**Affidavit of Stephen Grant Russell, January 12, 2021** — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock — *"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.*

**Temporary Order of Protection, Entered on Default, February 6, 2020** — Ch. 32: Five O'Clock — *On the finding of default, Judge Morales-Harowitz entered a permanent order of protection against Steve — a five-year restraining order — and granted Tara*

Schauber Hearing Transcript, August 27, 2021 — Ch. 37: Erase, Deactivate, and Delete — 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

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

a subpoena to me, which is — doesn't border on ridiculous, it's more than ridiculous, it's absurd. And I can tell you this: if you're desperate enough for fees to work this thing and it causes any kind of anguish to my family, I will 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." Verbatim transcript from audio recording. Filed as Exhibit C to Motion for Reconsideration, October 2025. The voice that operated through intermediaries, now in the record.

**Matter of Walsh v. Russell, 214 A.D.3d 890 (2d Dept 2023)** — Ch. 43: The Remnant — Matter of Walsh v. Russell, 214 A.D.3d 890 (2d Dept 2023). Docket Nos. 2022-02838, V-7641-18, G-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.

**Brienne Walsh Deposition, Admitted at Trial Without Objection** — Ch. 44: What Twelve People Saw — 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.

**Tara Walsh, Trial Testimony, February 2022** — Ch. 44: What Twelve People Saw — 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."

**Second Amended Judgment on Jury Verdict, August 11, 2022** — Ch. 45: What the Jury Found — Second Amended Judgment on Jury Verdict, Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137, San Francisco Superior Court. Filed August 11, 2022. The jury found Walsh liable for battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and domestic violence under California Civil Code section 1708.6(a), with a finding of malice. On April 15, 2022, the court granted Walsh a partial judgment notwithstanding the verdict, removing the \$50,000 punitive damages award. The court denied Walsh's motion to strike costs. Walsh's cross-complaint against Russell was dismissed with prejudice. Total judgment: \$332,080.74, with interest at ten percent per annum. Battery, domestic violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress. Malice. \$332,080.74.

**Judgment, Russell v. Walsh, CGC-18-570137** — Ch. 46: Affirmed — The judgment entered in the civil docket of San Francisco Superior Court. Russell v. Walsh, Case No. CGC-18-570137. Total judgment: \$332,080.74. Interest at ten percent per annum from the date of entry. The judgment the appellate court affirmed. The judgment the appellate court affirmed. \$332,080.74 with interest.

**Domestication of California Judgment, Westchester County, Index No. 55523/2023** — Ch. 46: Affirmed — Domestication affidavit filed under the Full Faith and Credit Clause, bringing the California jury verdict into New York. The judgment from San Francisco Superior Court — battery, fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress, domestic violence with a finding of malice — was now registered and enforceable in Westchester County. The same jurisdiction whose family courts had treated Steve as the threat now carried a judgment identifying Tara as the adjudicated aggressor. The same jurisdiction whose family courts treated Steve as the threat now carried a judgment identifying Tara as the adjudicated aggressor.

**StevieLovesEvie Blog Archive, November 5, 2021** — Ch. 47: The Record Is Open — Post 5 of 146: The Gag Order. Westchester Court orders Dad's blogs erased, deactivated and deleted on default." The Hon. Michelle I. Schauer granted the order without opposition papers — Russell, representing himself pro se, did not appear. The order did not address, nor was it issued in response to, any finding of falsehood in the blog's content. The gag order. Westchester Court orders Dad's blogs erased, deactivated and deleted on default.

**StevieLovesEvie, Visit 15, Part 1, March 31, 2019** — Ch. 51: For Evie — "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

APPENDIX C: EVIDENCE INDEX

*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*

**Tara Walsh to Matan Gavish, February 20, 2018** — Ch. 16: Terms — *Tuesday, February 20, 2018 Tara: I'm better pretending I want to be with him and getting the most while I can- then leaving him for good.*

**Gavish iMessage Thread, March 2–3, 2018** — Ch. 17: The Jet — *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 — 11:20 PM: And no be rough with them Matan — 11:25 PM: Didn't they get all that last time? Tara: I don't know! You don't think of them like humans like me 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 —...*

**Jesse iMessage Thread, March 3, 2018** — Ch. 17: The Jet — *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: Be in 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*

**Walsh Sr. iMessage Thread, March 3–6, 2018** — Ch. 17: The Jet — *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!*

**iMessage Device Capture, March 2018** — Ch. 17: The Jet — *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.*

**Tara Walsh to Steve Russell, 2018** — Ch. 17: The Jet — *In hindsight. The word she used when the scheme required remorse instead of silence. Discovery — Russell Messages.*

**Tara Walsh to Jesse Ozeri, March 7, 2018, 2:36 AM** — Ch. 18: Save This, I've Got Him — *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*

**Tara Walsh to Linda Russell, July 2018** — Ch. 29: The Memo — *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.*

**Tara Walsh Extortion Text, August 30, 2025** — Ch. 50: The Demand — *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.*

**Tara Walsh Text, August 2025** — Ch. 50: The Demand — *August 2025 Tara: Evie was begging to be able to see you last night. Pretty heartbreaking. I don't know what to do.*

**Tara Walsh Text, August 2025** — Ch. 51: For Evie — *August 2025 Tara: Evie was begging to be able to see you last night. Pretty heartbreaking. I don't know what to do.*

## CERTIFICATION

This Evidence Edition contains the complete text of ChappaquaPoison: A Documentary Record as published at chappaquapoison.com, comprising 544 pages in book format, presented here in a 4-up layout across 136 sheets.

The documentary evidence referenced and reproduced in this work includes, but is not limited to:

- Authenticated iMessage conversations recovered from device backups (Bates WALSH\_003939–004200+)
- Official court transcripts from Westchester Family Court, San Francisco Superior Court, and related proceedings
- Sworn declarations and deposition testimony from multiple witnesses
- Forensic toxicology reports and medical records
- Court-filed documents including petitions, orders, and judgments
- Photographs and screenshots contemporaneously documenting events
- Law enforcement records including police reports and body camera footage
- Financial records including W-2s, tax returns, and judgment documentation

I, Stephen Russell, certify under penalty of perjury that this Evidence Edition is a true and complete copy of the published work ChappaquaPoison: A Documentary Record, that the evidence referenced herein is authentic and was obtained through lawful means including discovery, court proceedings, and personal records, and that this work constitutes my published account of the events described.

I further certify that the Trade Edition of this work, incorporating additional editorial development, is under contract for publication in Fall 2026, and that this Evidence Edition is submitted to preserve the complete documentary record in the court file.

Dated: April \_\_, 2026

Nashville, Tennessee

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Stephen Russell  
Plaintiff / Petitioner, Pro Se