

The US Courts' Theft of Childhood

The US courts refused to recognize me as a human being capable of articulating my own thoughts, nor does it recognize other children as such. For this reason, I was forced to spend nearly two years of my life with my father, a man who physically and emotionally abused me and the people I loved. After forcibly being placed in residence with this abusive megalomaniac my siblings and I were informed we would be flying to a "reunification program" (Family Bridges) in California; none of us had ever been on a plane before. We were told because of the court order and the restrictions of our programs we were not allowed to contact our mother for ninety days, it would be a year until we were allowed to talk to her again. Once in the Family Bridges program my siblings and I were made to watch propaganda videos in which blame of intentional parental alienation was obviously intended to be pinned on our mother. At various times throughout the programs we were told repeatedly that any attempt to contact our mother or noncompliance with the program would result in the imprisonment of our mother and/or the separation of us four siblings and placing us in the foster care system. The Family Bridges program uses terrified children and involuntary compliance to extort money from unfortunate families caught in a corrupt legal system.

One of my deep seeded memories that I unfortunately will never be able to forget came on the last day of the program. At the beginning of the program Ed Oakland informed us that the program would take five days to complete but if we were noncompliant and were unable to finish in those five days we would take up to three more days to make sure all the material was covered. On the fifth day we were supposed to tell Raphael (our father) something he did that we appreciated. Imagine being physically attacked and emotionally berated by someone for your entire life then be forced to thank them. My younger brother Josh understandably had an extremely hard time going through with this exercise and started crying hysterically and hyperventilating. When this happened there was absolutely no compassion from Oakland or any of the rest of those administrating the program, instead it was only met with the cold voice of Oakland informing us that if we were unable to complete this exercise it would delay in us being able to contact our mother again. Josh sputtered an attempt at forming words through his hysterical tears but was unable to form a sentence. Oakland refused to acknowledge his attempt on the grounds that he never actually said something he appreciated that Raphael did. Seeing Josh's obvious attempt my sister Laura and I tried to work out a compromise. Laura tried to calm Josh down while I went out into the hall to speak with Oakland privately. I asked Oakland that if Josh were unable to tell Raphael something he appreciated on that day if we could just be finished for that day and reconvene the following day and try again, since at the beginning of the program we were told we had three more days anyway. Without hesitation or the slightest bit of consideration Oakland bluntly replied "No I want to finish today" with no explanation given for his decision. We went back into the room and Oakland and the Rands spent half an hour forcing a crying twelve-year-old to tell a man that abused him for years something he appreciated about him. There is nothing else that can sum up the nature of these programs better than this. They are uncaring and greed filled organizations willing to cause any amount of trauma necessary to fill their wallets.

My childhood was spent counting down the days until I turned eighteen, so I would finally be recognized as a human being. Children should be allowed to love their childhood and revel in their years before adult responsibilities. How many children have we robbed of this right through our failure to correct these wrongs in our legal system? Our constitution provides everyone the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This right did not apply to me until I turned eighteen. Will you help make sure other children do not suffer at the hands of injustice? As stated by Edmund Burke “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing.” Please bring Fernando home.