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Comments about Judge Page included: “Does not listen to reason when it comes to fathers.” “Not doing anything to mothers who stop visitation.” “Did not know how to calculate the amount of child support.” “Won’t let (a relative) see his daughter since 1994.” “Not once since Page got involved in [the] case have we even seen (my nieces).”

From the boyfriend of the daughter of a divorced father: “[She] is afraid of Judge Page even though she never met him.” From a paternal grandmother: “Judge Page needs to be in a mental hospital for what he did.”

From a former police chief: “Page was soft on young criminals and always lets dangerous kids back on the street.” From a Camden city resident: “He puts the wrong kids in jail. Most times the drug dealers are let go back on the street. The good kids go to the shelter.”

“Page is a friend of drug dealers and baby killers because he does not punish them and lets them back on the street.” “Killers and drug dealers go free.”

In the newspaper how Judge Page said he would be proud of a daughter who killed her baby. This judge must be crazy.” “Unprepared, confused, and had a difficult time focusing on the matters in (the) case.” “Does nothing to lawyers who lie.” “A disgrace to the entire legal system and to the judiciary.” “Deserves to be voted the worst judge in the United States.” “Not a nice man to anybody.” “Page didn’t care.”

These comments don’t surprise FACE. According to a May, 1998 New Jersey Monthly magazine article, Page’s parents divorced in the 1950s when he was eleven years old, and he was raised in a maternal matriarchy. He doesn’t recognize the value of fathers to children because, at this crucial time in his own life, he didn’t have one. He thinks “I grew up okay without a father, and your kids can too.”

Marie White Bell of Burlington County took second place. Some comments about Judge Bell: “I flew (my family) here for (a hearing). The first day the judge heard … the mother and … (maternal grand)mother, both of whom live in Burlington County. I was not allowed to say anything, nor any of my witnesses, who came from (distant places). And the second day was canceled. Then it took another year to get a hearing scheduled for custody.”

“Would you believe the last day of my custody trial was (six months ago) and Judge Bell has still not made a decision. Does anyone have any idea what I can do to force Judge Bell to make a decision?”

“I presented evidence against my ex-wife interfering with my custodial time and that she was inflicting Parental Alienation Syndrome on my child. Evidence of contempt of court by ex-wife was ignored.”

From a long list supplied by a paternal grandmother: “Makes decisions that are biased by gender.” “Does not read in the newspaper how Judge Page said he would be proud of a daughter who killed her baby. This judge must be crazy.”

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Are fathers getting a fair shake from the child-support system? No. The system is criminalizing honest fathers and demoralizing their children.

by Stephen Baskerville

A 41-year-old welder from Milford, N.H., recently received what some are calling a death sentence for losing his job. That is not how the charges against him read of course, nor could they, because he was never charged with or tried for any crime.

Brian Armstrong was a father who lost his job and allegedly fell behind on child support. Though actively looking for work, he was jailed January 11th. One week later he was dead, apparently the victim of a beating by corrections officers. No one alleges Armstrong did anything to provoke the beating. Another inmate saw him taken to a room with a “restraining chair” and then heard screaming for 15 minutes before seeing Armstrong dragged away. Medical workers told his mother that his body was covered with bruises and that he died of a massive head injury, though more than two months later she is unable to get a death certificate with an official cause of death. "I feel there is something very remiss," Armstrong’s mother told me.

How typical was Armstrong’s punishment? We do not know. Some fathers’ groups have alleged police beatings in the past but have been unable to document their claims. Other allegations of prisoner mistreatment have been directed at the Hillsborough County, N.H., facility, where Armstrong was being held, and it is under investigation. But the victim of the worst brutality appears to be Armstrong -- a father convicted of nothing. Was he beaten up because he was a “deadbeat dad,” a member of a class of officially designated villains? No other group can have their constitutional rights simply set aside. No other group can be demonized in the mass media by their own government and their highest leaders with no right to reply in their own defense.

Fatal beatings of fathers are probably not widespread in U.S. jails, but the

FACE IS A SELF-HELP GROUP. WE ARE NOT LAWYERS. WE DO NOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE. WE CAN NOT AND DO NOT REPRESENT ANYONE IN COURT. IF YOU FIND A COMPETENT, Capable lawyer who fully understands your and your children's rights, who is willing and able to tenaciously fight to secure those rights, who completely understands the facts in your case, and who you can afford to pay, you should hire that lawyer and seek that lawyer's advice. If you can not find or afford to pay such a lawyer, we urge you to seek all available resources to aid yourself in securing these rights.
by Gary Ewing and Joe Sargent

Did you know that across America every day fathers are being eliminated without cause from their children's lives by family court judges? Every day in family court fathers are separated from their children simply because mom and dad are no longer together.

Judges often allow the "custodial" parent (usually the mother) to relocate the children to another state, leaving the "noncustodial" parent alienated from the children with little or no meaningful parental contact. Parenting time (visitation) orders can be ignored by the custodial parent without any penalty, leaving the noncustodial parent with no contact with his children and no legal recourse. Since parenting time orders are ignored by the police and the court, fathers often go months, or even years, without any contact with their children.

Despite what you may read in the newspaper about the court's fairness to both parents, the court and the politicians are only concerned with enforcing "child support," a euphemistic word for extortion of inordinate sums of money. Child support is the only thing enforceable in all family court orders. Once this is established, parenting time is YOUR PROBLEM. "The best interest of the child" really means "in the interest of the state." If this happened anywhere else in the world, most people would call it "oppression," "imputation" and "racketeering."

If you are a concerned father who loves his children (as most are), and you fight the system, family court will try to completely eliminate you. When you fight for your children -- not the judges' children or the politicians' children; YOUR children -- you will be labeled a troublemaker, a problem, or a pain in the a*s. In family court, the judges will try to silence you by increasing your child support. They call this "imputing income." Once this happens, and a father can't pay this imputed child support, he is labeled a "deadbeat" and is now a criminal. Despite the father being ready, willing and able to take on all the parental obligations and responsibilities in his child's life, such as providing love and affection, nurturing the child, caring for the child while the other parent works, etc., these issues are not addressed. The court is only interested in "how can we steal daddy's money."

There is an incentive for this racketeering. For every dollar of support collected by the state, the Federal government kicks in sixty-six cents of taxpayers' money to subsidize the child support collection bureaucracy. There is no accountability for how the state spends this windfall.

Then, of course, lets not forget the ultimate outrage to "put daddy in his place" -- false allegations of physical abuse and sexual abuse. Nothing works better to get rid of daddy than these false allegations. Once they begin, fathers can say goodbye to Jack and Jill. These fathers must have "supervised" time with their own children because they are now "a threat." He is not required to be supervised with any of the other children he comes in contact with, only his own. Anybody except dad is allowed to be a part of your child's life.

After the allegations, expect the "investigation." It will last anywhere from eighteen months to three years, causing fathers to further lose out on seeing their children. The investigation will be managed by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Your case worker will have a case load of 300 families. If you are lucky, the case worker won't have too thick of an accent, so you will be able to understand what he is talking about -- that is if he will talk to you at all. To him, your problems aren't his problem.

Neither DYFS nor the court will believe anything dad says about mom because, after all, he's a deadbeat. (When I showed the judge photographs of my children's mother's home, his reply was "Sir, surely you don't expect me to believe that this woman actually lives in all this filth."

Family court places the father in an impossible situation when it comes to parenting time. Supervised at the police station or in the courthouse (where the supervision is paid for by "good old dad"), no overnight, no holidays. Fathers must drive long distances to have limited time with their children. No phone calls. Fathers are not allowed to know the whereabouts of their children. No day care information. No school information. No vacation information. Fathers don't even know where their children live.

The court's objective is to discourage the father, causing him to give up on his children. Once that happens, he is no longer a problem for the system to deal with. The only problem is that they have scarred the children, and this is unconscionable.

So, I ask you, do you think this is fair? All of this happen to caring, loving fathers every day. Is this public policy "in the best interest of the child?" Who can say that having a father in his or her life is not in the best interest of a child?

People like you and I must change the public's perception of fathers. We must not allow fathers to be seen as just "paychecks" and sperm donors without parental feelings. All children have a God given right to have their fathers involved in their lives. No court, no judge, no feminist organization, no political trend has any moral right to interfere with a father's God given right.

Judges and politicians just want fathers to "pay up and shut up." The more you fight for your children, the more the system will block you. Your crime, you may ask? Being a father.
In the new Child Support Report, the official newsletter of the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), it was announced that a new program is underway, which some humanitarian groups in Washington have dubbed, "Starving Dads for Dollars". This program prevents poor fathers from receiving food stamps. In addition to extorting money from relatives and friends of fathers who cannot afford to pay child support, OCSE expects to save $25 million in costs to the food-stamp program by kicking poor fathers off of the program if they cannot afford to pay child support.

There are many problems with this new federal policy of which one is that many fathers who qualify for food stamps are the custodial parents of their children. They owe child support already in many states for Medicaid received by the mother while pregnant, for birth, and care of the neonate. Gender is important because mothers are not held liable for pregnancy costs by law if poor, a big loophole.

The increase in father-headed single-parent households with children under 18 living in poverty is no small problem. The increase has been dramatic according to Census figures. Whereas in 1975 there were 65,000 of these families, there were 412,000 in 1996, and there are even more today.

In Oklahoma, soon poor custodial parent dads will also find themselves hungry because they are classified as deadbeat because they are dead broke. Senate Bill 1336 by Senator Bernest Cain will do just this by making fathers responsible for prenatal and birthing costs, and it already passed out of the Senate Judiciary committee unopposed.

Oklahoma will be just like other states that will now be able to starve custodial parent fathers who are unfortunate enough to be poor and have custody of their children.

You think there are other alternatives available for these dads? Well it gets worse. Currently, all 50 states are required by OCSE to confiscate hunting and fishing licenses from fathers who cannot afford to pay child support to make sure that they cannot legally hunt or catch food to eat. This new program will close some of the loopholes that allow these deadbeat and dead broke dads to continue to eat and feed their children.

In conjunction with this effort, OCSE is pushing to lower the $5000 child support arrears threshold for passport revocation to $2500. Officials are optimistic that lowering the threshold will halt the flood of poor fathers trying to escape to countries that might allow them to eat.

Other new programs have also been announced such as President Clinton's initiative to allow poor mothers to drive expensive cars and still receive food stamps. This is already the law in Oklahoma. Officials denied that the President's new initiative would in any way dampen the agency's efforts to publicly humiliate poor fathers by putting pink and blue boots on their cars, with big stickers on the windshield labeling them as deadbeat dads. "It's just like putting these deadbeat dads in stocks in the public square," said one commentator. Now not only can these poor dads not eat, but they cannot work either.

Under the Clinton administration, OCSE's budget has more than doubled, going from $2 billion to over $4 billion per year.

Yet, when asked why OCSE keeps adding more penalties to a program that has failed to increase child support collections in welfare cases by more than 1% since 1975 (hint: research shows the dads are as poor as the moms), it was quickly pointed out that all the benefits of its programs have not been fully appreciated. For instance, in Los Angeles County alone in 1998, OCSE was getting child support orders in place against nearly 4000 men per year for children that were not theirs. We do that too in Oklahoma.

And by the way...more and more mothers are finding themselves in the same boat as fathers. Maybe it is time to evaluate these tax policies that flow from Washington, D.C.

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Dr. Gregory J. Palumbo is Executive Director of Oklahomans for Families Alliance in Oklahoma City.
The POWER of Court Watching

by Jeff Golden

After having been a good citizen all his life, family court has stripped a father of his home, his car, his bank account, and his children. He is in a state of disbelief, but he still has faith in the American system of justice. His ex-wife has not had his name removed from the title of the car she was awarded, and now she is withholding the children at his parenting time.

He wants to return to court to right the wrongs, but he can no longer afford to pay his lawyer. He decides to try it pro se (representing himself). He picks up a "pro se kit" at the courthouse, carefully follows all the instructions, and files and serves his papers.

His day in court arrives. He impatiently waits for his turn to present his case. He sits there while the judge hears all the other cases. Finally, only the father, his ex-wife's lawyer and a few court employees remain in the courtroom. (The ex-wife isn't even there.)

The judge calls his case. He and the lawyer sit at the counsel tables. One of the guards hovers menacingly behind him. The judge asks him to state his name, then says "I've read your papers," and invites his ex-wife's lawyer to respond.

The lawyer goes into a dissertation on how the father's complaints are without merit. It is full of lies and distortions. He raises issues that weren't in the papers. The father waves his hand and tries to tell his side of the story. The judge gruffly says "keep quiet, Mr. Jones!"

When the ex-wife's lawyer is finished, the father still isn't allowed to say anything. The judge renders his decision. He should have brought an audience. If you were going to commit a crime or otherwise behave improperly, you wouldn't do it in public. You would try to make sure there were no witnesses. The same thing applies to a judge. If he is going to break the rules or act improperly, he doesn't want a lot of people watching.

Also, while women are damsels in distress, the court thinks of men as dangerous rogue wolves and "loners." That's why the guards were hanging around. Their job is to pounce on the guy when he leaps over the bench and wraps the his hands around the judge's neck, or pulls out his Uzi and starts spraying bullets.

Third, the father hadn't done any homework. Oh, yes, he may have watched Perry Mason or Matlock re-runs on TV a few times, so he thought he knew what goes on in a courtroom. He may even have once defended himself for a traffic violation, but he didn't find out how "women's court" works.

Fourth, he didn't know that the judge and the lawyer are buddies. No, there was probably no overt conflict of interest (although they might have been former business partners, or golfing buddies, or, in one actual case, neighbors and former political running mates), but they do know each other, or at least they are acquaintances. The lawyer is in that courthouse, presenting cases to that judge every day.

And last, he didn't know the rules. If he had never played poker, and he went to a casino and sat down at a poker table and put his life savings on the table, he might win, but more likely he would lose it all before he mastered the game. If he had first read a book on poker, he might do a little better. If he spent some time watching others play, he would do better still. If he attended poker school, he would do even better.

What could this father have done differently? Court watching! What's that?

Court watching is sitting in the courtroom and observing what goes on. Why would I want to do that? Because, since you are not a lawyer and you never went to law school, for you court watching is "Law School 101." You will observe other cases and find out what are the judge's "hot buttons" (what he likes and dislikes). You will learn what arguments lawyers are making in other cases that you might be able to apply to your own. You will see what mistakes other pro se litigants make and how the judge treats (or mistreats) them. You will learn precedent cases, points of law and rules of court and how they are applied.

How did we learn the power of court watching? Shortly after FACE was founded, a member was in a position very similar to that of the father in the example at the beginning of this article. He had run out of money for lawyers. He was going back to court pro se over and over, but was getting nowhere. He did notice, though, that the judge was always hearing his case last and, with no witnesses present, was more disrespectful to him than to people in cases heard earlier in the day.

He asked some fellow FACE members to come with him to his next motion hearing to provide moral support, and so he wouldn't be talking to an empty courtroom. When most of the cases had already been heard, the judge was shuffling through some papers on his desk and looking around the courtroom. He said "I only have three cases left to be heard, and there appear to be too many people here."

No one said anything. After a long pause, the judge asked "Does anyone want to tell me what they're doing here?"

One of the court watchers stood and said "We are here to observe the Smith case. We want to see if Mr. Smith's rights will be violated today."

Another long pause, then the judge said "Alright, I'll hear the Smith case next."

Mr. Smith didn't do much better in court that day than he had in the past, but he did notice that there was a 180 degree shift in the judge's attitude toward him. He decided right then to never again go to court alone. Why did this happen? Remember the "rogue wolf" theory? The judge learned that day that Mr. Smith is not a lone wolf. He is a member of a community. He has supporters who are interested in his and his children's welfare and the outcome of his case.

Other similarly situated FACE members wanted -- needed! -- to be pro se, but didn't have the confidence to do it. We began a formal court watching program. When a pro se FACE member went to court, as many of us as we could would go along with him. We wanted the judge to know who we were and that we were observing him, so we all wore our FACE buttons.

We also wanted the judge to know who we were there for, so instead of remaining seated all around the courtroom, when our member's case was called we all moved forward and sat as close behind him as we could. We provided moral support for the guy whose case was being heard that day, and encouragement for the court watchers who also wanted to become pro se.

People who had never represented themselves in court would sit next to more experienced pro se litigators, who would explain what was going on and point out key events. All of the FACE court watchers brought paper and pencils with them, and took notes on all of the cases. Later, they would exchange information and discuss what they observed. They would brief the FACE literate, telling him what he did right and what needed improvement for next time.

We bought copies of the Rules of Court and studied them. Sometimes we would observe the judge blatantly violating the rules or otherwise acting improperly. When we did, we would either write to the judge and give him an opportunity to correct his mistake, or we would all send complaints to the Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct.

We knew we were being effective when lawyers began complaining about us being there "to intimidate the judge." This is the most ominous thing I ever heard. The judges have the sheriff's officers, the metal detectors at the front door, the handcuffs, the jail cells, the power to sign the court orders. How could we possibly intimidate them?

We weren't there to intimidate anyone. We were just
citizens observing the judicial process in action. The judge and other court employees are "public servants." We are the public. We just want to see how our servants are doing their jobs.

Sometimes judges tried to eject us from the courtroom. Sometimes, when a FACE member's case was scheduled, the judge would have the bailiff lock the courtroom door before all the court watchers were inside. It was not the judge's courtroom; it was the people's courtroom. Our taxes paid for the courtroom and everything in it. Although there are some instances when a judge is permitted to close a courtroom (i.e., cases involving the welfare of a child -- abuse, termination of parental rights, etc.), courtrooms and what happens inside them are open to the public.

When we were improperly barred from court, we would complain to the assignment judge. A phone call would be made, and the courtroom would be reopened to us. Later we learned to avoid this problem by having all the court watchers enter the courtroom before our guy goes in.

Since New Jersey judges are appointed (rather than elected), we were also able to use the information we gathered while court watching in another way. After an initial seven year term, judges go through a "confirmation" process to become "tenured" (appointed a judge until age seventy). Because we had observed and taken notes on the tenured judges so often, we developed a database of judges' improprieties. When judges' confirmation hearings were held, we would notify the litigants whose rights were violated, and go to Trenton with them to testify against reappointment.

Court watching is your most important resource. Often, people say "I can't go court watching. I can't afford to take the time off of work." Wrong! Actually, you can't afford not to take time off of work. Consider it an investment in your and your children's future.

Fridays are "motion days" in New Jersey family courts. Usually, all motions are heard in the morning. Let's say, for example, that you net $500 a week, you pay $150 a week in child support, and your youngest child is three years old. If you arrange to take off ten Friday mornings to court watch, it will cost you $500. (One half of $100 per day is $50; multiplied by ten Fridays equals $500.) You will be paying child support for at least another fifteen years. If you learn something that you can use to reduce your child support by only $10, you will save at least $7,800 before your last child is emancipated! That will go a long way toward your child's college education.

If you learn how to effectively oppose your ex-wife's counsel fees, she will have to pay her own lawyer. If you do this a few times, she will learn that it is very expensive for her to continually litigate in court, and it is less expensive and far less stressful to just resolve issues between yourselves.

Some people ask "Can I just go into any courtroom, sit down, and watch what's going on?" Remember the 1962 movie "To Kill A Mockingbird"? It stars Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch, a lawyer appointed to defend Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman in Alabama in 1932. Before the trial, the townspeople spent most of their time sitting on park benches in the public square, but during the trial, they all fled into the courthouse and packed the courtroom. There was no TV in the 1960s so, when there was a trial, that was their entertainment.

There is a tradition of open, public courtrooms in America, and we consider countries where trials are held in secret to be repressive. It's your courtroom. You own it; the judge doesn't. Your taxes paid for it. Go in and see what your tax dollars are buying.

"What if the guard asks me what I'm doing there?" Just tell him "I'm a citizen, observing the judicial process in action." If he gives you a hard time or tries to exclude you, complain to the assignment judge and file a complaint against him with the sheriff.

"Can I bring anyone with me?" Yes! In fact, never go to court alone. Bring as many people as you can. Bring your mother, your father, your sister, your brother, your elderly Aunt Millie, your retired Great-Uncle Joe. "Try to all sit together. Make the judge know you are a member of a community, and that people care about you and your children's welfare. If the judge acts improperly or treats you unfairly, they can all send letters to the Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct.

"Won't the judge be annoyed with me being there so often?" Maybe, but are you satisfied with how he has treated you without you being there? If you read this far, you're probably not. The judge's job is to dispense justice fairly. If he had done that, you would have no need to come back. Make him do his job properly. If he gets really annoyed, all he has to do is decide the case in your favor, and he'll never see you again.

Now, my favorite court watching success story: John Doe joined FACE shortly after his divorce. There were some issues that had not been fully resolved in the final order, and he wanted to file a motion. We helped him write his papers, told him how to file them, and invited him to come court watching with us. He could see the benefits of court watching, but was uneasy about being seen in court with FACE members.

A few days after filing his papers, John phoned the court and asked to which judge his motion had been assigned. For the next four Friday mornings, he observed in that judge's courtroom.

For the first two weeks, John arrived at 9:00 AM and observed all the motions heard that day. He took notes on all the cases. When all the motions had been heard, he left and went back to work. He didn't understand all of what he observed, so he asked us about it.

On the third Friday, something strange happened. About three quarters of the way through the cases, the judge asked everyone in the room for which case they were there. When John was asked, he said "I filed a pro se motion that I am going to hear in two weeks. I'm not a lawyer, and I don't understand everything that's going on here, so I'm here observing to prepare for my own motion."

All judges are egotists, and this judge was no exception. He was pleased to see a mere mortal pro se litigant worshiping at his feet. He said "Well, we're very glad to have you here. You are, of course, welcome to observe. If there's anything you don't understand, feel free to ask my staff about it." John sat through the rest of the cases that day, then left.

When John was there the next week, about half way through the motions the judge made eye contact with him. The judge gave him a nod and a little smile, and John nodded back to his face. They were now "acquaintances." They nodded "hello" when they saw each other.

John Doe's motion was heard the next week. This was his first time in court as a pro se litigant, and he won on every issue!

In recent years, FACE members have become complacent about court watching. When we were very actively court watching, we had a "court watching coordinator who kept track of scheduled court dates, memoners available to court watch for others, and members who have court watched in the past. The coordinator would make sure observers were present at every pro se hearing. We need someone to volunteer for that job again today. With internet and email capability, it will now be even easier to communicate. To volunteer for this job, phone the FACE hotline at 856-786- FACE, or email info@facenj.org.

If you are a FACE member who would like court watchers at your hearing, let us know what the issues are, and when and where it will be heard. Remember, court watching is an educational process for everyone involved -- the litigants, the court watchers, the judge, the lawyers. If you don't have an interest in or time available for court watching for your fellow FACE members, don't be disappointed if they don't come to court for you.
by Michael Moore, producer/director of the
1989 documentary film "Roger & Me"

March 31, 2000

Dear Elian,

Please forgive me for writing to you in
English. Three semesters of Spanish, and I
can't remember a thing!

Also, please forgive us Americans for
standing back and allowing the child abuse
you are now experiencing. Normally, in this
country, we arrest adults who put children
good care whenever you needed it, an excellent
education in one of the few countries that
has 100% literacy, and a better chance of
own political agenda.

You are only six, so I know you can't
understand what all of the politics are
about. That's okay. Some day, you will. In
time, you'll read how these former Cubans,
who are abusing you, instead of staying in
Cuba and fighting for freedom like our
country they and the third cousins-once
aren't blood-related, but, let's face it, in our
country they and the third cousins-once
removed are usually not sitting at the
Thanksgiving table and are only rarely heard
from usually when they need bail money or
part of the inheritance. But in our country,
no "relative" replaces the parent. A brother,
cousin or "great-uncle" who holds a child
against the will of the parent is committing
a major crime.

You must really miss your daddy! I hear
he's coming soon. Those "relatives" are trying
to prevent him from being with you. I
know, that doesn't feel like love, does it?

Please don't take it personally. They do
love you. They love having you to toss around
in front of the TV cameras so they can
further their own political agenda.

What did we do?
Something stupid! We fought their fight
for them! We based our entire foreign
policy in this hemisphere on one thing --
eliminating Castro. We tried to assassinate
him. We sent "troops" to invade at the Bay
of Pigs. We prevented medicine and food
from being shipped to Cuba. When I was
nearly your age, we almost blew up the
world over Cuba and Castro. Can you
believe that? We had become as insane as
those ex-Cubans in Miami!

And we've stayed that way for forty
years. We're still wacked-out over Cuba.
Last year, we fined an American citizen
$10,000 because he went down to Cuba to
tune pianos! It's illegal in this "free" country
to travel there. Loopy, huh? We've been
driven crazy cause that we still can't get rid
of Fidel Castro. He's out-lived nine of our
presidents!

We have allowed these ex-Cubans with
the yellow stripe down their backs to
operate numerous terrorist missions from
South Florida. These same ex-Cubans were
the ones who broke into a place called
Watergate (that eventually brought down a
president). They don't give your mother custody.

I pray you'll be playing catch soon with
your wonderful, loving daddy on a Cuban
diamond. By the time you're 18, long after Castro and the Bushes and all this
trouble is gone, maybe you can come back
to America on your own free will.

Yours,
Michael Moore
MMFlint@aol.com
http://www.michaelmoore.com

A Letter of Apology to Elian Gonzalez

I am the father of a 6-year-old girl and the notion that I would be
separated from my daughter for no reason of my own is something that I find
really disturbing and almost inconceivable.

— Deputy U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder speaking about Elian Gonzalez in an interview with Israel
Bulldens of America/VOX TV, broadcast April 6, 2000.
"Are Fathers Getting a Fair Shake from the Child Support System?" Continued from page 1

Armstrong case illustrates that something is seriously wrong with the punitive measures taken against parents who have fallen victim to the divorce machinery.

Another fatality that recently has come to light exemplifies a much more common form of "death sentence" routinely meted out to fathers. In March, Darrin White of Prince George, British Columbia, was denied all contact with three of his children, evicted from his home and ordered to pay $2,071 a month out of his $2,200 monthly salary for child and spousal support. White also was required to pay double court costs for a divorce that, according to his family, he never sought or agreed to. In fact, the judgment was even more severe, since White paid an additional $439 to support a fourth child from a previous marriage. According to sources close to White's family, the stress of losing his children rendered him medically unfit for his job as a locomotive engineer, leaving him $950 a month in disability pay. In March, White hanged himself from a tree near his home. No evidence of any wrongdoing was ever presented against him.

The fate of White is increasingly common. "There is nothing unusual about this judgment," the Vancouver Sun quotes former British Columbia Supreme Court Judge Lloyd McKenzie, who pointed out that the judge in White's case applied standardized guidelines for spousal and child support. Essentially the same guidelines are used in the United States and many other countries, with similar consequences. In Britain a group called the National Association for Child Support Action has published a "Book of the Dead" chronicling 55 cases where the official court coroner concluded fathers were driven to suicide because of judgments from divorce courts and hounding by child-support agencies. According to Health Canada statistics, suicide among younger men has risen dramatically along with the divorce rate and about 80 percent of suicides in Canada are male.

The courts that issue these draconian sentences are not criminal courts. They are "family courts," infamous bureaucratic tribunals once characterized by Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas as "kangaroo" courts. They largely are immune from constitutional protections of due process and have almost unlimited powers to destroy families and lives, usually of citizens who have done nothing legally wrong.

Armstrong did not "abandon" his children, as President Clinton likes to say of the deadbeat-dad class. He merely lost his job. "That didn't mean he didn't love his son. He saw his son. He called him every week," according to Armstrong's former wife. "I'm having a hard time. My son's having a hard time right now," she told the Manchester Union-Leader.

How is it possible in the United States for a citizen to be jailed for anything but a crime? How can citizens charged with no wrongdoing lose their children and be forced to pay charges that are clearly beyond their means and then punished as criminals when they inevitably fall short?

The dirty secret of the divorce industry is that child support has little to do with supporting children and everything to do with increasing the power of adults: judges, lawyers, district attorneys, social workers, bureaucratic police and many others who have a vested interest in separating as many children as possible from their fathers. By then setting child support, alimony, court-ordered attorneys' fees and other arbitrary charges at levels that are impossible to pay, and bringing the full force of the state to bear on those who fail to pay them, the divorce industry has created a perpetual-motion machine that thrives and grows by destroying fathers and families. Here we have a textbook example of bureaucratic aggravated extortion: With each plundered father comes the demand for more courts, more lawyers, more bureaucracy, more plundshot police and private collection agencies to pursue him and to plunder more fathers and turn them also into impecunious deadbeats.

Like so much political chicanery today, all this is conducted in the name of children. Yet they are in fact its greatest victims, cynically exploited in a game of power played by grown-ups.

"My dad was abused by the justice system," writes White's eldest daughter, who is 14. "My dad was a very good father and wanted the best for all four of his children. All of us children were his life. He wanted everything he could possibly give to his children and what he couldn't. The most important thing he gave his children were his love, and being there for them. He loved all of his kids equally, and with all his heart. He was a kind man who fought a good fight but no matter what he did or said he could never win with this system. Things need to change for all fathers going through this same thing. We need to help; too many kids go without a father because of this; too many kids are hurt."

The story of White's suicide has been carried on the front pages of several Canadian dailies, and two members of Canada's Parliament have issued urgent calls for changes in the law. Similar cases here in the United States receive no attention from the national press or politicians, and Armstrong's death hardly has been noticed outside New Hampshire. Had he died at the hands of jailers in China or Turkey or Iran, or had he been jailed for any other cause, we would have expected protests from civil-liberties and human-rights organizations. But because he was a father who was alleged (but never proved) to be behind on his child support, he likely will be forgotten as one more deadbeat.

We should not be entirely surprised that a system of involuntary divorce and forced separation of parents from their children has led us down the path of government-sponsored death. When we grant the power to commandeer the coercive apparatus of the state -- courts, police and jails -- to punish family members for hurt feelings or ordinary family differences, we are engaged in a very deadly business indeed. We have constructed a highly invasive government machinery to administer a punitive regime against forcibly divorced parents: Their movements are controlled; their private lives are monitored; they are interrogated behind closed doors; their homes are entered; their personal papers are examined; they are placed under restraining orders; their children are used as informers against them; their savings are confiscated and their wages attached; and their names are entered on various government registers -- all before they have been charged with any crime. The government knows that by taking a man's children it has created an outlaw.

What we are seeing today is nothing less than the criminalization of fatherhood: Fathers turned into criminals not by anything they have done but by the power of the state to seize control of their children and use them as tools and weapons to further increase government power. Alarmingly, this presumption of guilt is rapidly being extended to the rest of us.

The child-support enforcement office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is compiling information not only on fathers who owe child support but on all citizens. The rationale is that the child-support system renders us all potential criminals against whom preemptive enforcement measures must be initiated now in anticipation of our likely future criminality. "Some people have argued that the state should only collect the names of child-support obligors, not the general population," notes Teresa A. Myers of the National Council of State Legislatures. "But this argument ignores the primary reason for collecting the names," she explains with chilling directness: "At one point or another, many people will either be obligated to pay or eligible to receive child support."

Some see the government's destruction of the family as the logical culmination of the "nanny state" -- the state that attends to all our wants and protects us from ourselves and so gradually makes families and parents seem unnecessary. But a more accurate designation right now may be the "paternal state," the state as surrogate father that provides and protects, and sets out to eliminate its rivals. The divorce industry is the most dangerous violator of constitutional rights in America today and the most destructive institution of our families and social order. It is time for a congressional investigation.

Originally published in Insight Magazine, Baskerville is a professor of political science at Howard University in Washington and serves as spokesman for Men, Fathers and Children International.
allow the father nor the father's attorney to have an equal say in court." "Is very disrespectful to
the mothers and doesn't practice what she preaches about not turning the children against Dad.
the perpetrator - [mother] put a... gun to father's neck.
Edward V. Torak of Bergen County came in third. Comments about Judge Torak:
"Too much subjectivity and not enough objectivity." "Cheaper the low brow." "Gender
biased, politically correct." "Disrespectful to the defendant and his attorney."
Diane B. Cohen of Cumberland County is fourth. One respondent said "Gives everything to
the mothers and doesn't practice what she preaches about not turning the children against Dad."
It comes as no surprise that Diane Cohen made the "Top 10 Worst Judges" list even though
she sits in remote little Cumberland County following her recent transfer from even smaller Salem
County, the most sparsely populated county in the state. Prior to becoming a judge, Diane Cohen had
a very lucrative matrimonial law practice in Camden County. She couldn’t become a judge there
because her former law partner, state Senator John Adler, used "Senatorial courtesy" to block her
nomination. Instead, she lied about her residence, claiming that she lived in Mountcreek, a sleepy
little village on the Delaware Bay, far from her Haddonfield law practice. Another matrimonial lawyer
and her buddy in the next county, Senator Ray Zone, nominated her for a judgeship.
The Senate Judiciary Committee learned of her deceit, and refused to confirm her appointment
(even though Zone is a ember of the committee). Zone then called in all his political I.O.U.s, and got
her approved on the senate floor on the last day of the legislative session in January, 1998. By a
remarkable coincidence, Cohen was sworn in as a judge on her sixtieth birthday, the last day that she
could still qualify for a full pension at the mandatory retirement age of seventy.
Because the difference in the number of nominations for each of them is statistically insignificant,
there is a six way tie for fifth place: Robert E. Francis of Gloucester County, James P. Mulvihill and
James F. Mulvihill of Middlesex County, Joseph M. Nardi, Jr. of Camden County, Vincent D. Segal of
Atlantic County, and John Tomasello of Gloucester County. Comments on each of them include:
Francis: "Lacks basic knowledge; no backbone; Mommy’s boy."
Mulvihill: "His inconsistent decisions ... wreak havoc on ... innocent and very vulnerable
children." "[Because of his actions in a case, he was] ordered to attend anger management
classes."
Nardi: "Failed to rule on a motion still pending since 1998."
Segal: "Makes snap decisions, then spends the rest of the time looking for ways to justify them,
ingnoring all opposing evidence."
Tomasello: "Hates women who don’t have custody."
Fortunately for the people of New Jersey, almost half of the "Top 10 Worst Judges" are not
yet tenured. We will have an opportunity to testify against their reappointments at Senate
Judiciary Committee hearings at the end of their initial seven year terms.

Fathers’ and Children’s Equality, Inc.

Mission Statement

Father's and Children's Equality is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) children's advocacy organization, and a self-help, educational and support group for non-custodial parents and
their families.

Our Mission is to:

- minimize the emotional upheaval experienced by children during and after parental separation,
- promote every child's Civil Right to equal access to both parents and extended families
- regardless of the parent's marital status, and
- end the adversarial process in divorce and custody matters.

Our Goals are to:

- promote equal parental responsibility for children's nurturing,
- promote equal parental responsibility for children's financial needs,
- encourage alternatives to divorce,
- promote the position that children are not property,
- end parental alienation,
- eliminate profit motivation in custody disputes,
- provide positive parenting role models for separating families,
- prevent the use of false child abuse and/or spousal abuse allegations as leverage in
custody disputes,
- establish mandatory penalties for false allegations of child abuse and/or spousal abuse,
- promote equal treatment of Family Court litigants,
- enforce existing laws providing for gender equality in Family Court, and
- establish a shelter for displaced fathers and children.

Adopted September 27, 1993 by the Board of Directors
Revised January 18, 1996

"Worst Judges"

Methodology and Validity

FACE is sure there are many more New Jersey judges who deserve to be on the "Top 10 Worst Judges" list. The results of this survey are
heavily skewed toward South Jersey judges. The survey was published in
this newsletter. The majority of our readers are in South Jersey
(Telephone area codes 609 and 856), so most of the responses come
from that area.

FACE requested a brief statement in support of each nomination, but
made no effort to verify any of the supporting information provided.
Although there are other periodic surveys of judges (notably by
lawyers' journals), this is the only survey of litigants we know of. We
assumed our readers of confidentiality, but many were reluctant to
submit nominations because of fear of retaliation by the judges. We
believe this to be the major factor affecting the scientific validity of this
survey.

If past experience is any indication, we expect our opponents and the
court media to label us "disgruntled ex-litigants" for daring to complain
about mistreatment by judges. We strongly disagree. There are many
excellent judges in Family Court in New Jersey, but we have learned that
whenever we praise a good judge he or she is quickly removed
from Family Court.

There are several reasons for this. First, Family Court is the appointment
that new judges have to serve before they can move on to a
"real" court. The "Peter Principle" theorizes that, in an organization,
persons rise to their "level of incompetence" - they continue to be
promoted until they are promoted into a position for which they are
incompetent. Then, since their performance is mediocre, they receive
no more promotions. The very least competent judges are never
promoted out of family court.

Second, the best judges - the ones who were raised in healthy
families, respect family values, and have strong families of their own,
are disqualified by what they hear in Family Court, and take the first
opportunity to get out.

Third, if FACE identifies a judge as fair and just, he or she is
branded as "father-friendly," and is asked to transfer out. That leaves
only the least qualified judges in Family Court - the ones from dysfunc-
tional families, the ones who still believe in the "tender years doctrine"
and don't recognize the importance to children of two parents, the man
who never changed a diaper, and the women who engineered lousy
settlements in their own divorces.

For these reasons FACE will never publicly identify a good Family
Court judge. We will continue to build our database of information on
Family Court judges, and share our information with our membership.
Paternity: Who is Daddy?

Men's Health Network informs us that Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) data indicate that approximately 31% of men who request a paternity test during the IV-D agency child support establishment process are excluded as the father of the child.

In at least one jurisdiction, unwed fathers were given this information and encouraged to ask for a DNA test before agreeing to paternity. In that jurisdiction, the "failure" or "success" rate (depending on which side of the issue you are on) was 50%.

For those of you who believe this is strictly an unwed issue, studies indicate that many children from intact families face the same paternity dilemma -- with 14% to 20% (depending on the study) of children from intact homes not being "daddy's" kids. Data from those studies are in Men's Health Network's Washington, DC offices.

For more information on this issue, contact:
Men's Health Network, 202-543-MHN-1
www.menshealthnetwork.org
FACE MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of each month (except April and August):

FACE GENERAL MEETING
7:00-9:00PM
(OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)
Cherry Hill Free Public Library
Meeting Room A
1100 Kings Highway North
Cherry Hill, NJ
(856) 667-0300

This is FACE's monthly "business meeting," and is open to the public. We usually have a guest speaker, or present some other kind of program. Membership information is available, and this meeting is a good place to become familiar with FACE. We request that you do not discuss your own personal case at this meeting.

Second Tuesday of each month,
"MEETING AFTER THE MEETING"
9:00PM TO 11:00PM,
Diamond Diner
Eastbound Route 70 at Haddonfield Road, Cherry Hill, NJ,
(856) 665-0990

The library asks that we vacate the meeting room promptly at 9:00 PM so, immediately following the monthly General Meeting, please join us at the diner for coffee and informal conversation.

In months in which we do not meet at the library, this meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

SPECIAL PURPOSE MEETINGS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.
FACE members are welcome to attend and observe. Location may vary. For location, phone the FACE hotline in advance at 856-786-FACE.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committees appointed by the FACE Board of Directors may meet informally, or may have formal meetings. Meetings will be scheduled by the committee chairman. Contact the committee chairman for more information.

FACE CLASSES

FACE is planning a series of classes on topics of interest to noncustodial parents and family court litigants. Topics currently under consideration include:
-Parental Alienation Syndrome
-Pro Se Workshop — Nuts and Bolts of How to Represent Yourself
To learn more about attending these classes, or to suggest other class topics, contact Dave Cantera at (856) 778-0811.

FACE MEETING RULES:
1. No alcoholic beverages or other controlled substances are allowed at any FACE activities. If you have consumed or are under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances, please do not attend.
2. Workgroup meetings are usually held at FACE members’ private residences. Please extend to the hosts the courtesy of phoning in advance to let them know you plan to attend and get directions. Workgroup meetings may be canceled if no calls have been received 24 hours prior to the meeting.
3. Every effort will be made to accommodate children at FACE meetings, but be aware that issues discussed may be inappropriate for children.

WORK GROUP MEETINGS

FACE has four workgroup meetings each month where we help members strategize how to handle their own cases. These meetings are held at FACE members' private residences. Please be courteous to the hosts by phoning in advance to let them know you plan to attend and get directions. Workgroup meetings may be canceled if no calls have been received 24 hours prior to the meeting. Non-members are usually welcome to observe at workgroup meetings, but some of our work with members may be confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mercer County Work Group</td>
<td>FACE General Meeting</td>
<td>Burlington County Work Group</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Camden County Work Group</td>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<td>Gloucester/Salem Work Group</td>
<td>Family Law Reform Political Action Committee</td>
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First Monday of each month, 7PM:
Mercer County
Hamilton Township, NJ
Contact: Charles Furberg
furberg@solcom
(609) 584-1887

First Thursday of each month, 7:00PM:
Burlington County
Mt. Laurel, NJ
Contact: Dave Cantera
(856) 778-0811

Third Monday of each month, 7PM:
Camden County
Collingswood, NJ
Contact: Ron Neely
(856) 854-5567

Fourth Tuesday of each month:
Gloucester/Salem County: Mullica Hill, NJ
Contact: Cliff Wenrick
(856) 223-0434

FAMILY LAW REFORM POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, 7:00PM
Prestige Diner, Route 33 (one mile east of NJ Turnpike, Exit 8), Heightsown, NJ (609) 443-1211

FLR-PAC is not a part of FACE. It is a separate, independent organization. FLR-PAC's membership is open to all persons concerned with family law reform. Although some of FACE's members, acting as individuals, or as members of FLR-PAC, may engage in lobbying or other political activities, FACE does not. FLR-PAC's meeting schedule is listed here only as convenience for individuals who may wish to become politically active.

About FACE
2nd Quarter 2000
Saturtfay, July 8, 2000, 11:00 AM
American Bar Association Millennium Convention
New York Hilton, 6th Ave. & 53rd St., New York, NY

To celebrate the millennium, the American Bar Association's annual meeting will be held in two cities -- first New York, then London from July 15th to 20th. That means that, in addition to New York's normal population of vermin and rodents, the city will be lousy with 15,000 extra lawyers from July 6th to 12th. The New York Hilton will be the meeting headquarters. The Family Law Section will be in the Crowne Plaza hotel from Friday, July 7th to Sunday, the 9th. (See their full schedule at www.abanet.org/annual/2000/home/html)

Participate in Americans for Legal Reform's demonstration against the American Bar Association on Saturday, July 8, 2000 beginning at 11:00 AM. They will have a sound system available. You may also want to conduct your own demonstration at the Crowne Plaza hotel.
Contact: Harvey, 516-487-1734, or www.americanslegalreform.com

Wednesday, July 19 to Saturday, July 22, 2000
Burlington County Farm Fair
Lamberton Greens, Lumberton, NJ

Volunteers are needed to staff FACE's booth at the Burlington County Farm Fair from 2:00 PM to 11:00 PM on Wednesday, and 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM on Thursday through Saturday. You need not stay for the whole day. We will organize volunteers in shifts. Let us know your availability. FACE will provide parking passes for volunteers.

Bring your children and enjoy the Fair before or after your volunteer shift. The Farm Fair has livestock shows, exhibitions and demonstrations, and wholesome amusements for the whole family.
Contact: Dave Cantera, 856-778-0112 or dcantera@facenj.org

Tuesday, August 8, 2000, 12:00 Noon to 1:30PM
National Child Support Protest
Camden County Hall of Justice, Camden, NJ

The "child support business" is a multi-billion dollar growth industry. It has created a bureaucracy that is rife with incompetence and errors, tramples on fathers' Civil Rights and right to be a parent, and doesn't benefit children. To call attention to this, the Washington, DC based American Coalition for Fathers and Children has organized a nationwide child support protest at over 140 locations around the country.

In conjunction with ACFC's demonstrations, FACE members and supporters will burn their child support orders in the plaza in front of the Camden County Hall of Justice.

Meet at the courthouse plaza at 11:30 AM. Bring your child support order (or a photocopy of it) to throw into the fire. FACE will supply handbills to give to passersby. Be prepared to be interviewed by the news media. Let us know in advance if you would like to be one of the speakers.
Contact: FACE Hotline (856) 786-FACE or info@facenj.org for further details. See ACFC's website at http://www.acfc.org/ for further information and locations.

November 2000
2nd Annual National Cry for Children
Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC

This will be an opportunity to network with fathers' and children's rights activists from all around the U.S. Exact date and details to follow.
Contact: Brad Ingram, 804-328-1647 or mbacon5@juno.com

FACE

Regular Membership $75.00 per year
Patron Membership $250.00 or more.

Amount enclosed $__________

[ ] New Membership
[ ] Renewal
[ ] Contribution

Credit Card #__________
Exp. date ________
Signature

Name
Address
City State Zip
Residence County
Phones: Home ( )
Work ( )
Other ( )
e-mail address

Are you registered to vote? Yes No
If not, are you eligible? Yes No I don't know

[ ] FACE may use my name as a supporter for legislative purposes

How many children do you have? ______
How many overnight per month do your children spend with you?

Date of birth of youngest ______

Jurisdiction of your case County State
Judge(s) __________
Mental health professional(s) involved in your case:
Name ____________________________
City State

Mail application and payment to: FACE
P.O. Box 2471
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077
Inside FACE
www.facenj.org

Worst Family Court Judge ..................1
Are Fathers Getting a Raw Deal? .............1
Acting President's Message ................2
Elusive Daddy ............................3
Starving Dads for Dollars ..................3
Power of Court Watchdog ..................4
Letter of Apology to Elias Gonzalez .........6
FACE Awards Banquet .....................9
FACE Meetings ..........................10
Action ..................................11
Join FACE ..............................11

FACE HOTLINE
856-786-FACE
Philadelphia .......... 215-335-4054
Delaware Valley ...... 610-668-4748
Bucks County .......... 215-FACE-464

"I consider ... one of the most pressing issues facing our nation
[to be] a perilous rise in fatherless families. Though our society is
only beginning to recognize it, the greatest family challenge of our era
is fatherlessness—male absence from family life."

—Dr. Louis Sullivan,
former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, January 9, 1992