

DVD Project Spring 2007

A documentary to raise
awareness and educate
professionals and lay people
about Parental Alienation and
Parental Alienation Syndrome

Executive Summary

This prospectus describes a project to produce a documentary and educational content on DVD format to raise awareness and educate professionals and lay people about Parental Alienation and Parental Alienation Syndrome.

In November 2006, we were successful in raising \$15,000 which enabled us to take a crew to the Children's Rights Counsel in Washington D.C. We were able to interview 21 experts in the field and have 15 hours of tape for our project.

We are presently working on a trailer to visually describe our project.

We are seeking further funding to support the development of Stop Parental Alienation of Children.

We are seeking funding to support the project.

STOP PARENT ALIENATION OF CHILDREN

Prospectus

Introduction

When parents separate or divorce, children are vulnerable to becoming victims of the strong emotions and inappropriate behaviors of their parents. Angry parents often do not have adequate boundaries to shield their children from being exposed to the negative feelings they have for each other. During these difficult times, the relationship between the child and both parents needs to be protected and nurtured, not destroyed and torn apart as children want and need two emotionally healthy and loving parents to take care of them.

Three of the more harmful behaviors that are commonly seen in family break-ups that have the most devastating effects on a child's emotional well-being are: aggression between the separating parents in front of the child; significant time away from a nurturing parent; and negative conditioning or disparaging remarks made directly to the child about the other parent or where the child can hear them.

The first condones aggression as an acceptable form of conduct in the eyes of the child, the second creates "issues of loss, and the third emotionally programs the child to dislike a parent and to take sides against that parent. The third issue is called parental alienation (PA), which can turn into a severe form of emotional abuse of the child. Parental Alienation is the primary focus of our project.

A mild form of parental alienation occurs any time a parent speaks badly about a child's other parent to the child or in the presence of a child. Most parents eventually resolve their angry emotions; learn to solve problems with the other parent so that the child can be shared between them peacefully.

In some cases, parents do not resolve their conflict but escalate it. This is the moderate form of parental alienation, as the child is bombarded with angry diatribes about the other parent. The child is kept in the middle of the adult conflict and is forced to agree with the offending parent and to express a disdain for the targeted parent. The child is placed in a no-win situation of not being able to please either parent.

In the most severe cases, a child is not able to withstand the obsessed parent's brainwashing to turn them against the other parent and becomes aligned with the offending parent. This is called Parent Alienation Syndrome (PAS), a severe situation where a child no longer has any attachment or feelings for the healthier parent or that parent's extended family and friends. The people who love them and would provide for them a nurturing and healthy family life are eliminated. Once the cutting out of a parent has occurred - called a "parentectomy" - the child is left under the full care of the most disturbed and dysfunctional parent. These tragedies are played out in our family law courts daily.

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Introduction (continued)

PA/PAS cases have the characteristic of being complicated along two fronts: Combative parents duel with conflicting stories of “he said”/“she said,” making it very difficult to determine who is telling the truth. Brainwashed children may support the side of the offending parent which can be convincing to the untrained eye. As the target parents argue their position, they can often seem defensive even if they are telling the truth.

Lawyers, therapists, evaluators and judges are called in to sort through these family minefields. The opportunity to escalate the situation rather than improve upon it lies in the enormous difficulties of figuring out not only who is telling the truth, but what to do.

Manipulative adults impose their feelings on the child, forcing the child to adopt their sentiments. As a result, the brainwashed children lose their own sense of reason and their ability to express their own choice in the matter. For children, this dangerous manipulation of the mind, if unchecked, becomes the incubator of their own future psychological problems. By removing the alienated adult, a healthy stabilizing influence is removed from the family equation.

“Parentectomy” is a term coined by psychiatrist Dr. Frank Williams to refer to cutting a parent out of a child’s life.

“PAS is one of the most severe forms of child abuse and neglect because the child’s mind and will have been taken away from them. These children will not become self-determined, mentally healthy or socially functional adults.”

Jayne A. Major, Ph.D.
Founder
BREAKTHROUGH
PARENTING SERVICES

STOP PARENT ALIENATION OF CHILDREN

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Our Project

We propose making a difference in the outcome of Parental Alienation and Parental Alienation Syndrome (PA/PAS) cases by developing a documentary-style film and supplementary educational material that will educate professionals and lay people in how to recognize PA/PAS cases. We will show parents what strategies work best in helping them protect their children.

Because PA/PAS cases have the characteristic of being so complicated with wildly conflicting stories, it becomes very difficult to know who is telling the truth. Lawyers, therapists, evaluators and judges are appealed to for help in sorting out what to do about what is now a seriously broken family system. The opportunity to exacerbate the situation, rather than improve upon it, lies in the enormous difficulties of deciding what to do so that children are protected from one of the most heinous forms of child abuse and neglect known.

There are numerous articles and books written on the subject of PA/PAS as it has become highly controversial in family law courts. We believe that a DVD on the subject would be an important new way of delivering a lot of information in an easy to understand and comprehensive way. Our motto is "When people know better, they do better." Our DVD will provide an understanding PA/PAS, describe what strategies work best in PA/PAS cases and highlight the mental health issues involving PA/PAS cases. We will also provide insights into the various resources that are available for individuals seeking to learn more.

There is a wide audience for the material we will produce which will include:

- Parents
- Families and friends
- Mental health professionals, including therapists (MFT)
- Clinical psychologists
- Custody evaluators
- Social workers (LCSW)
- Legal professionals, such as family law attorneys, judiciary and the police

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Treatment

Recently, other explorations on the subject have publicly aired and have raised a debate. Our project is the first that goes further by both educating and guiding the listener on the causes and consequences of PA, as well as the latest thinking in intervention strategies. As the devastating nature of PA is laid before them, viewers will become captivated and eager for information. As the production plays out, they will be able to move forward and join the informed in the battle to tackle this huge, but little understood problem.

Presented on the medium of DVD, our production will combine perspectives from professionals involved in the issue of PA, real stories from victims of PA and true-to-life dramatizations illustrating how PA works. Together, these perspectives will piece together the story that PA is a very real and disturbing issue in family separations that has not been adequately understood or addressed.

The viewer will be presented with a portal into the lives of real, everyday people, who live day-to-day with the issues of PA/PAS. Through the eyes of the camera we will see parents, who deserve to be with their children, open up and talk about the losses in their lives. We will hear how these parents have had their children turn against them and how they have become further isolated through their efforts to tell the truth and help their child. We will hear stories from adults who, as children, were forced to turn against a parent who loved them - the parent they desperately needed the most.

Experts, providing a clinical interpretation of the subject matter, will tell of the magnitude of the problem and how frequently it is neither understood nor correctly interpreted. Professionals such as judges, attorneys and custody evaluators will talk of the issues faced every day in our family law courts and how ignorance and a lack of general awareness in the field of PA/PAS is skewing custody decisions in favor of a mentally abusive parent at the detriment of a helpless child and their emotionally healthy parent.

A balanced perspective reflecting both sides of the debate will enable the viewer to decide for themselves whether this is "junk science" or a real problem; a form of child abuse that is often disregarded and overlooked. The DVD format will also allow us to include additional material aimed at specific audiences that will go into richer detail into the root causes and prevailing issues, offering the context from which to better identify, understand and deal with the issues of PA/PAS.

We will provide information on intervention strategies that will help families protect their children and arrive at the best possible resolution of their conflict. We will also help individuals impacted by PAS understand the mental health disorders that are most commonly found in PAS cases. Further interview footage will provide a thorough perspective of various points of view regarding PA/PAS. Augmented with content presented with academic credibility, delivered by the most renowned and leading professionals in the field, the viewer will be provided with the understanding and tools to take on the challenge of stopping parental alienation.

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Who Are We?

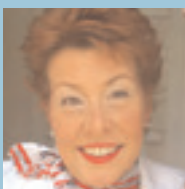
Stop Parent Alienation of Children is a non-profit company that exists under the umbrella of Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc.

We have assembled a team of renowned experts on the subject of PA/PAS and a professional production team lead by a director that has both excellent creative talents and personal context of our subject matter from which to shape the product.

Professionals



Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., is the founder of Breakthrough Parenting Services, Inc., a non-profit 501 (c) 3 agency that specializes in parent education classes and counseling for parents involved in family law issues. Often these individuals are litigating their cases and have PA/PAS issues. Dr. Major has taught these classes for 23 years. She has written numerous articles on PA/PAS and has published six books on how to have a healthy family.



Nicole Gilbert, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist who practices in Los Angeles, California. For over ten years, Dr. Gilbert has specialized in issues of divorce, child custody, and high conflict families and has served as an expert witness in these matters. She also specializes in parental alienation, relocation and parental child abduction cases. Dr. Gilbert is the recipient of an Award of Merit from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for her commitment to the protection of children and her expertise in the Hague Convention for the Civil Rights of the Child.



Dr. Michael Bone is a psychotherapist in the State of Florida and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. His private practice includes individual, group, and family counseling – as well as, but not limited to, court-ordered evaluations. In the last ten years, Dr. Bone's interest has become more focused on the growing problem of divorce and its effects on children. Dr. Bone served as fellow member of the Professional and Scientific Advisory Committee of the Parental Alienation Research Foundation in Washington D.C. He has served as an expert witness on Parental Alienation and Parental Alienation Syndrome, being appointed by courts in many states.

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Professionals (continued)



Demosthenes Lorandos, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who has been called upon as an expert evaluator in family law litigation throughout the United States. As an attorney, he has conducted several high-profile child custody cases in numerous jurisdictions. He is a well-known authority on Parental Alienation Syndrome, and is one of three editors of the new *International Handbook of Parental Alienation Syndrome* (Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd.).



Steve S. Sommer, M.D., Ph.D., is a molecular and clinical geneticist who chairs the Department of Molecular Genetics and the Department of Molecular Diagnosis at City of Hope National Medical Center. His research interests include the genetics of autism and other psychiatric disease. Dr. Sommer has more than 250 peer-reviewed publications. He co-discovered the first gene unequivocally implicated in autism. His clinical diagnostic laboratory was the world pioneer in providing clinical DNA testing for mutations in this gene, which may be defective in 3–4% of families with autism. Dr. Sommer brings his research and academic background to a personal interest in PAS initiated by tragic experiences within his extended family. He currently is writing a textbook on PAS.



Douglas Darnall, Ph.D., is a psychologist licensed in the state of Ohio and Clinic Director for PsyCare, having six (6) outpatient psychiatric clinics accredited by the Joint Commission on Healthcare Organizations and the Ohio Department of Mental Health. He has conducted over 850 evaluations involving custody, contempt charges, and parental alienation in 11 states. He authored “*Divorced Casualties: Protecting Your Children from Parental Alienation*,” (1998, Taylor Publishing Company), now in its fifth printing. He has co-authored and published in the *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* and has two peer review articles currently being considered for publication, in addition to his articles in the *North Dakota Law Review*: an article titled “*Parental Alienation: Not in your Children’s Best Interest.*” He has conducted workshops and presentations for the Missouri State Bar Association, North Dakota Bar Association, Trumbull and Mahoning County Bar Association, Family Division of the Cuyahoga County Bar Association, and various professional organizations including The International Family Therapy Association, Children’s Rights Counsel, Lorimen, Specialized Training and The Association of Family and Reconciliation Courts.

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Professionals (continued)



Richard Sauber, Ph.D., is a forensic clinical and family psychologist with offices in Boca Raton and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and he consults/evaluates/testifies in cases nationally. He holds Diplomates in Clinical and Family psychology with the American Board of Professional Psychology. Dr. Sauber was Harvard trained and he formerly was Professor of Psychology in the Departments of Psychiatry at Brown, Penn, and Columbia University Medical Schools. He is author/editor of 11 books and since 1976, he has been the Editor-in- Chief of the American Journal of Family Therapy. His most recent text is co-edited with Richard Gardner and Demosthenes Lorandos: "The International Handbook of Parental Alienation Syndrome: Conceptual, Clinical, and Legal Considerations." He had worked with Dr. Gardner since 1991, first meeting as lecturers at the conference of the Children's Rights Council in Washington, D.C.



Sid Brown, Ph.D., has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the Wright Institute in Los Angeles. He specializes in family relations and divorce counseling. He is a child custody evaluator and does critical analysis of completed child custody evaluations, mediation, individual psychotherapy, research, and writing. He further specializes in domestic violence issues and parent alienation.



Dr. Albert Gibbs, is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in family law, with more than 25 years of experience conducting custody evaluations and forensic assessments. He is the founder and director of Co-Parents Solutions, which offers divorce and co-parent education classes, and solution-focused counseling for divorced and separated parents and their children. Dr. Gibbs was appointed a Child Custody Evaluator and Expert Witness by Los Angeles County Superior Court judges in 1994. He has served as Director of Clinical Training and Family Therapy at the Julia Ann Singer Center in West Los Angeles, Senior Staff Psychologist and clinical supervisor at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and was a charter member of their Divorce and Custody Program. He has taught as an Associate Professor at the California School of Professional Psychology and the Wright Institute. He has presented at several training programs, conferences and colloquia, including the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Beverly Hills Bar Association, San Fernando Valley Bar Association, and the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

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Professionals (continued)



Catherine MacWillie is the Chief Executive Officer of Custody Calculations, Calendars and Orders, a web-based internet service providing services to family law attorneys, court, therapists, evaluators, mediators, individuals, mothers' and fathers' rights groups, to name a few. Catherine began her work when, as a police officer, she noticed the correlation between crime statistics – such as homicides, suicides, kidnaps, abductions, child abuse, domestic violence and many other crimes – as they relate to family law. Soon to retire from the LAPD after 23 years of service, she is actively involved in the other issues related to family law that impact divorce, such as parental alienation of children.



Carl Esposti, President of Stop Parent Alienation of Children, is leading the executive oversight of our project. Mr. Esposti, a Partner in a leading global management consultancy and a single father brings both business acumen and leadership to the project, as well as personal experience of family separation involving a young child.



Graemm Bridget McGavin grew up in the entertainment industry as the daughter of and actor. She has experience behind the scenes at both talent and literary agencies and has worked in many aspects of production, having shot and directed several short documentaries. Ms. McGavin brings first-hand knowledge to the parental alienation documentary project. As a child, she survived the bitterly contested, high-profile divorce of her own parents. She has been active in many non-profit organizations, such as Heal the Bay, Earth Communications Office, The Entertainment Industries Council, Algalita.org, Surfrider, Global Coral Reef Alliance, and currently sits on the Board of Breakthrough Parenting Services.

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Production Approach

The budget reflects 15 days of pre-production (planning and coordinating) followed by 15 days of principal photography of experts/professionals, victims of PAS and dramatizations based on real-life situations using up to eight (8) principal actors.

The 15-day shoot will take place with the director, producer, coordinator, director of photography and a small crew shooting on high definition video.

Travel costs are included to allow for experts/professionals outside of Los Angeles to be interviewed either in Los Angeles or at their location.

Once the shoot is complete, the editor will take up to 30 days to edit the main 60-minute piece and the three 20-minute educational supplements.

We have planned an additional 10 days to finish the project with title design, visual effects, music, and mastering. The producer, coordinator, and director will see the production through from its inception to final delivery.

Marketing and Distribution

The first hour of the DVD will be broadcast quality, which we expect will be aired on a public broadcast station. We will approach KCET and the Discovery Channel. We will establish an important presence on the internet, where people will have easy access to purchase the DVD. We see a huge potential for on-line education for continuing education credits for psychologists and lawyers.

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Seeking Support

Our approach is aimed at producing content that will reach a wide audience that are involved day-to-day with the subject of PA/PAS or interested parties wanting to learn more about the potential psychological impacts on parents and children when families separate.

We will distribute our production through many channels within the professional community and to parents and individuals wanting to learn more about the subject.

To reach the widest audience possible, we will make donations of the product as well as sell the DVD through various web sites and other channels that have a well-regarded reputation for distributing quality information on related subject matter.

The project has been fueled to date by generous donations of time and expertise from a group of professionals, creative talents and parents who have been interested in turning this vision into a reality.

We recognize that to produce a successful, high-quality and rich product, we need to recruit the support of experts in the field, retain a team of production professionals and deliver a product that is highly professional in its presentation and content. For this we need funding.

Funding

We have built a budget for the project that requires \$250,000 in funding. As the project is a not-for-profit initiative, we require charitable donations from individuals or entities that wish to support the cause. Any under spend against budget or revenue proceeds from the sale of the DVD will be re-invested in further PA/PAS projects.

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