

Running Head: Follow the Money in Family Court

Follow the Money:

A Research Project on Children in Family Court

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Across the nation, thousands of children who are victims of the broken family court system are being subjected to an institutional injustice that jeopardizes their well-being. Money, it seems, is the root of many corruptions occurring in family court cases which stems from judicial professionals and related specialists manipulating the course of the case with the intent on earning the most money. The result is multitudes of families that are left shattered; the abusive parent of a divorce receives full custody of the children, the other parent is left bankrupt, homeless, and childless after spending years in trial, children who don't want to go home for fear of being physically, sexually, or mentally abused, and many more horrendous crimes that are caused, not solved, by the family "justice" system. Taking a look at multiple family court cases reveals a pattern that explains why these cases bring families to financial ruin, why one parent or guardian receives preferential treatment from court assigned therapist, evaluators and mediators, and how children can be placed in the care of an abusive or otherwise negligent adult.

Using loopholes and under-the-table dealing, specialists in the field of the family court system have for years been able to drain families of their money which, aside from exacerbating the conflict between the parties, spells financial tragedy for part or all of the family. One way the system can pilfer money off a family is by drawing out a court case until the parties can come to an agreement or by manipulating evidence and even individuals¹ in order to cause confusion and further disagreement; in either situation, a case can be prolonged for months and even years (Russell, 2018). The longer a family is in court, the more they will have to pay for professionals such as therapists, mediators, investigators and attorneys. In regards to the individuals who are

¹ This practice occurs when a child is manipulated to be alienated from one of the parents to gain an upper hand in a child-custody dispute. Long term effects of this practice result in what is formerly known as Parent Alienation Syndrome (Gardner, 2010).

certified as the specialists previously mentioned, they are assured more than enough well-paying work when the judge, who has outside dealings with these individuals, gives a court order that requires use of the professionals' services at the expense of the family. One other method of taking financial advantage of a family is when unreasonable financial settlements can be imposed on one party of a family when the opposing side uses bribes to manipulate the actions of the judiciaries (Russell, 2018). Whichever method ill-intended parties or judiciary figures use to syphon money out of court families, the practice is, to say the least, unjust and unethical.

Arguably, the children are the individuals who suffer the most from the crimes committed by the family court system. All too often, children are pulled from a safe household and placed into hostile, negligent, and abusive environments because one of the parties trying to obtain child custody has cash to spare for bribing the judiciaries. Causes aside, being the child of divorced parents is difficult enough without having to spend years in court, being prodded by court-ordered therapists, mediators and investigators who have already been paid off, only to end up in a worse situation than they were originally (Valentine, Anderson, 1998). These children cannot be expected to succeed in such deprived environments and, in fact, they don't. Research shows that people who are convicted of mass murders often come from broken families. Such was the case with Nikolas Cruz who recently killed 17 people in a Florida school shooting (Griffin, et.al, 2018).

Following the money would indeed lead a curious, if not concerned, individual to the epicenter of the corruption occurring in the family justice system. That is precisely what organizations such as the California Protective Parents Association (CPPA), the Families Civil Liberties Union (FCLU), and the Center for Judicial Excellence (CJE) have been doing for years.

The CPPA, FCLU, and CJE have been working to protect vulnerable families in the court system in addition to educating the public through the press about judicial systematic failures and need for court reform (FCLU, 2018) (Russell, 2018) (Valentine, Anderson, 1998). Exposing the thousands of family court cases that resulted in the suffering of a child justifies why the need for reform is imperative. Family court cases are most commonly opened in the event of a rough divorce, though other common causes include reports of abuse to a child protection agency or in the event of a crime committed by one of the parents or guardians.

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