



February 10, 2017

Judge Douglas Hoffman
New York County Family Court
60 Lafayette Street
New York -- NY 10013

Dear Judge Hoffman:

I am a journalist and filmmaker covering the family court system and the Scollar v Hoffman case, over which you are presiding. I am also a civil rights activist, and president of the New York chapter of the Families Civil Liberties Union. Writing to you as a journalist, I have three questions for you, which I would like to give you a chance to answer.

1. I was present in your courtroom today at a 'pre-trial hearing' on the Scollar v Altman case. I witnessed your court-appointed 'attorney for the child', Mr. Philip Schiff, advise you that his client, the subject child, had expressly told him that she feared and mistrusted Dr. Sara Weiss, the forensic evaluator, whom you wanted to appoint in this matter. On the basis of his conversations with the subject-child, Mr. Schiff then expressly stated his own objection to Dr. Weiss. Both parties, Ms Altman and Ms Scollar, then expressed their consent to waive the forensic process. Ms Altman went further and expressed deep concern about the danger posed by Dr. Weiss to her daughter's emotional health. Mr Schiff again warned about the financial damage on the family if you were to appoint Dr. Weiss, who charges a whopping \$425 an hour for her services. Despite these warnings, you then issued a ruling appointing Dr. Weiss to begin a lengthy, invasive and financially crippling process of forensic evaluation, which will include Dr. Weiss once again interrogating the subject-child. On what basis did you make this ruling? If the AFC clearly stated that the appointment of Dr Weiss was not in the best interests of the child, and that such a step was against the child's own wishes, why did you ignore him and the child?

2. Do you or your court have any professional, personal or business relationship with Dr. Weiss, or her business, Heartland Psychological Services P.C?

3. Please clarify whether you share the view of your predecessor in this matter, Judge Sosa Lintner, that, in matters concerning custody of children, "biology does not matter."

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring that this matter is covered truthfully.

Very truly yours,

Sebastian Doggart, President
Families Civil Liberties Union -- NY

Families Civil Liberties Union – The National Voice of Families

The Power to Prevail.

The Power for Actionable Change.

The Power to Bring Civility to Families and Children.

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