



May 26, 2017

BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Sara Weiss  
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Dear Dr Weiss:

I am a journalist and film-maker covering the family court system and corruption and malpractice by forensic examiners routinely appointed by the New York family courts. I am currently a producer on a documentary film, entitled 'Erasing Family.' I am also a civil rights activist, and president of the New York chapter of the Families Civil Liberties Union. Writing to you in all three capacities, I have a number of questions for you, which I would appreciate your response on before we take further action:

1. We are documenting a case -- Allison Scollar vs Brook Altman -- where NY Family Court judge Douglas Hoffman has re-appointed you as a "forensic evaluator". You have already acted as a 'forensic evaluator' in this matter, charging this family \$25,000 in 2012. At a recent hearing, I witnessed the court-appointed 'attorney for the child', Mr. Philip Schiff Esq, advise Judge Hoffman that his client, H., the subject child, had expressly told him that she feared and mistrusted you. The ten-year-old girl, whom you interrogated five years ago, had called Mr Schiff, in tears, to say she did not want to have any further interaction with you. Mr Schiff reported that the child had implored him to keep you out of her life. On the basis of his conversations with the subject-child, Mr. Schiff then stated his own formal objection to your appointment. This is a highly unusual position for an attorney-for-the-child to take. Both mothers of the child, Ms Altman and Ms Scollar, then expressed their consent to waive the forensic process. Mr Schiff stood up again and warned about the financial damage on the family if the judge were to appoint you. This is because you charge a whopping \$500 an hour for your services. Despite these warnings, Judge Hoffman then issued a ruling, appointing you to begin a lengthy, invasive and financially crippling process of forensic evaluation, which will include you once again interrogating the subject-child. This ruling by Judge Hoffman is now the subject of two separate formal complaints to the New York Commission for Judicial Conduct, one by the FCLU and one by the Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts.

Given this information, are you still intending to take on this case?

If you are intending to proceed, how you can square that decision with the Hippocratic oath to which you are bound, since you know that the child sees you as a source of harm? And how you can justify accepting this job when runs contrary to the standards of the Ethics Office of the American Psychological Association and the New York Board of Psychology? Specifically, the NYS Rules of the Board of Regents stipulates that "*unprofessional conduct [for NY psychologists] shall include... willfully harassing, abusing or intimidating a patient.*" [§ 29.2.2]. Since the subject-

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child has made it clear on the record that she is intimidated by you, how can you proceed to further interrogate her?

2. How many referrals have you received in the last ten years from judges working within the NY Unified Court System? How much money have you earned as a result of those appointments?

3. Do you, or Heartland Psychological Services P.C., or any of your associates, have any professional, personal or business relationship with Judge Hoffman, or any other judges who have referred you to cases over which they preside? Have you ever donated to a judge's election campaign?

4. On what basis are you charging struggling families \$500 an hour for conducting a forensic evaluation? Are you really comfortable billing H's family \$50,000 for two reports that do not even include a custody recommendation? How does your depletion of this family's savings advance the best interests of the children you are supposed to be protecting?

Please let me know your answers to these questions at your earliest convenience. If I have not heard from you by June 1, I will take up this matter with the APA and the New York Board of Psychology directly.

Please also be advised that these enquiries are being made entirely of our own initiative. They have not been requested, or approved, by any of the parties in the matter.

If you wish to discuss this further, feel free to call or email me. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Sebastian Doggart  
President  
Families Civil Liberties Union -- NY

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