

SPECIAL REPORT:

“THIS NEVER ENDS FOR HIM”

by Elizabeth Hewitt

Editor's note: VTDigger does not publish the names of alleged child sexual abuse victims or their families and has used pseudonyms to protect the identities of the parents, partners and child in this story. This story draws on court documents, investigation material and correspondence.

The 6-year-old boy knelt at the coffee table and drew on a piece of paper while a Vermont State Police investigator wearing a suit asked him questions. A social worker with the Department for Children and Families sat nearby in silence.

“I told you already,” the boy said. “He opens up my butt cheeks and he puts a tail in when he wants to dress me up as something, in the water like a fish or something or something hairy.”

The officer asked for more information, and the boy talked about costumes. He said he’s also dressed as a werewolf, a dog, a wolf.

“Tell me more about putting a tail in your butt cheeks,” the trooper said a moment later.

“It’s normally a plastic thing and they roll down my pants and they just do it. They just do this and they put it in,” the boy said. He talked about the pajama pants he got for Christmas. Sometimes there was a hole in the pants, which he said he learned to sew closed.

A few minutes later, the officer asked the boy to talk more about what he called the “tail.” “Well, does it touch your skin or does it just touch your clothes?” he asked.

“Skin,” the boy said.

“OK,” the trooper said.

“Inside,” the child added.

“Inside?” the trooper asked. “Tell me what you mean by inside.”

“Inside my butt. Inside my skin.”

'YOUR SON HASN'T BEEN SEXUALLY MOLESTED'

A little over an hour later, the trooper and social worker sat in the room again, this time without the child. The boy’s father, Frank, and stepmother, Stacey, both visibly agitated, sat down.

“This may be hard to hear, but in my opinion it’s good news — we have no indication that he has been sexually molested,” the officer said.

“Say that again, I’m sorry,” Stacey said.

“We have no indication that he has been sexually molested,” the officer repeated.

The officer told the couple that the boy, Thomas, did not repeat the details Frank and Stacey told police he had said about his weekend visits to his mother’s house and his interactions with his mother’s boyfriend, Bob.

“He said nothing to us about someone purposefully opening up his buttocks and shoving something up there,” the officer told the couple, even though a taped interview with Thomas shows he did describe an object “inside my butt.”

In the hour and 15-minute interval between the interview with Thomas and the conversation with his father and stepmother, the officer and a child services worker had discussed the case with a third officer, who watched the interview via video. The three officials determined that no abuse had occurred.

“Is there some weird, strange stuff potentially going on? Is he doing some weird things?” the officer told the couple. “Yeah, but you have three of us here that have been doing this for a very long time, and my understanding of weird things ... we don’t see anything that’s been going on sexually, which — that’s the good news, folks, your son hasn’t been sexually molested that we can see.”

CASE REMAINS UNRESOLVED

Thomas’ father, Frank, immediately obtained a temporary relief from abuse order blocking the mother’s weekend custody of the boy.

Nearly four years later, Frank still believes that Thomas, now 10, was sexually abused by his mother, Mona, and her boyfriend. Some mental health experts have written reports in support of the boy’s allegation.

Meanwhile, Frank says the case was never thoroughly investigated — beginning with that first interview.

While investigators from multiple law enforcement agencies have looked into the allegations, prosecutors never brought charges. Neither DCF nor family court ever substantiated the report of sexual abuse. After hearing the evidence, a family court judge determined that the allegations are untrue.

The case remains unresolved legally and has roiled in the court system. Since the allegations in 2012, the case has gone to trial in family court three times. It's gone to the Vermont Supreme Court once. It's the subject of a civil lawsuit.

The court has ordered multiple times that the child engage in therapy to reunify with his mother, Mona. But he has not been in her care since he told his father and stepmother about the "tail."

The last time Mona saw Thomas was in two supervised therapy sessions in June 2013.

The mother has said her son was brainwashed by his father and stepmother in an attempt to sever her relationship with Thomas. She has said she believes that Frank and Stacey encouraged the boy to harbor false memories of sexual assault. Some mental health experts and the family court judge raised the possibility of parental alienation — a process through which a parent psychologically manipulates a child to turn against another family member. Mona is now suing the couple for \$12 million, accusing them of interfering in her relationship with her son and inflicting emotional distress.

'THESE ARE ALWAYS COMPLICATED MATTERS'

Thomas' case is unusual in some ways. It has stretched on for years. Great sums of money are involved. The allegations are particularly egregious.

But in other ways, the case could be considered emblematic. The kinds of questions Thomas' accounts have raised, experts say, are consistent with those often brought up in child rape cases. Judges and the mother's attorneys have pointed to the inconsistency of the boy's stories, the expansion of his allegations over time, and the motives of the adults in the case as evidence that the allegations are false.

[Studies in the United States](#) have estimated 1 out of every 4 girls and 1 out of every 6 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. In the course of a single year, 1 out of 12 children are sexually victimized in some way.

However, allegations of abuse from children are often murky — nonlinear or even nonverbal — and difficult to investigate.

False allegations do happen. [Studies show](#) they are rare, but they tend to be more common in instances where custody is at stake.

In Vermont, the Department for Children and Families accepted 1,204 reports of child sexual abuse for investigation in 2014. That year, the department substantiated 365 reports of sexual abuse — each of which could involve multiple children.

Sara Kobylenski, who currently works as executive director of Upper Valley Haven, a social services nonprofit in White River Junction, has worked as a social worker and in family services for nearly 50 years in several states, including Vermont. She said cases involving allegations of child neglect, abuse and sexual misconduct can be exceptionally difficult to “sort through what is really

happening.”

“These are always, always, always complicated matters when you have both a child’s needs and safety in the situation and you have the needs and agendas of adults in the situation,” Kobylenski said.

How children relay the information adds to the confusion. Interviews must be done very carefully and in such a way that the questions don’t suggest answers to children, she said.

“It’s that issue of the ways of knowing that is so, so difficult when it comes to children and their well-being, and when it comes to families and their vested interests,” Kobylenski said.

The state’s ability to balance the competing interests of a child’s well-being and the interests of the parents is, in Kobylenski’s view, “incredibly inconsistent.”

While a bureaucracy can manage certain processes very well, such as issuing driver’s licenses, complex child protection cases require more nuanced forms of communication, Kobylenski said.

Jennifer Poehlmann, of the Vermont Children’s Alliance, said cases involving child abuse allegations often raise questions about the credibility of children. Poehlmann is not involved in Thomas’ case. The group she heads works throughout the state to provide resources to law enforcement and DCF in conducting forensic interviews and assisting in other ways.

“I do believe that these cases are much more problematic to bring forward, because the average person questions whether a child is more suggestible than another person,” Poehlmann said.

When interviews with children are done well, the child can be a

very reliable resource, she said.

Poehlmann said it is “sadly, reality” that questions about credibility and parental agendas come up in cases.

The state, on the whole, does a good job, Poehlmann said, of handling cases involving child sexual abuse allegations, although there are some regional discrepancies in how cases are handled, based on local law enforcement and available resources.

VTDigger spoke with half a dozen other professionals in the child protection system who asked not to be identified for this story. They said child sexual abuse can be particularly difficult to prosecute because it is often challenging to find enough evidence to meet the legal standard: beyond a reasonable doubt.

Vermont experts and officials disagree about the effectiveness of state and local investigations into child sex abuse allegations. Some say such cases are thoroughly investigated and the burden of proof for substantiation of abuse under Department for Children and Families rules is easy to meet.

Other experts raised concerns about the variability in investigative methodology and the treatment of cases in different regions of the state.

A TEMPORARY RELIEF FROM ABUSE ORDER

Thomas' biological father and mother never married. He was born shortly before their on-again, off-again relationship ended in February 2006.

Custody of the boy had long been contested between his birth

parents. Twice his father and mother went to court to argue over custodial arrangements. Twice they had argued their case in front of the Vermont Supreme Court.

Under the arrangement settled in 2011, Thomas' father was granted custody. The boy lived with his father, Frank, and Frank's wife, Stacey. Thomas called Stacey "Mom."

Three weekends out of every month, Thomas stayed with his birth mother, Mona, at her house in Chittenden County. Some weekends, Mona's boyfriend, Bob, visited from Canada.

On weekends with Mona, Thomas would go skiing and hiking with his mother. But relations between Mona and Frank had been strained. Pickups and drop-offs were often hostile interactions. Police were occasionally involved, according to court papers.

On May 2, 2012, Frank and Stacey took Thomas out fishing on a nearby pond, according to Frank's statement to a judge.

The trio was out in a boat when Thomas caught a whiff of the bait and said, "That smells like Bob's armpit." Upon questioning from his father, Thomas first told the story about Bob, his mother and "tails."

They returned to shore, contacted police and set up an interview with the Department for Children and Families for May 4.

Vermont State Trooper Todd Wilkins and DCF worker Michelle West interviewed Thomas that day. In interviews, investigators try to hear the child's disclosures without asking leading or suggestive questions. They attempt to interview children in such a way that the child is not trying to interpret the question to get to a "right" answer.

Many of the details the 6-year-old described were confusing to follow.

Over the course of two 40-minute sessions, the adults spoke with Thomas about pet dogs at his father's house and about making "Angry Bird" Easter eggs at Mona's house.

Thomas told them that Bob brought an art studio in his van. Bob and Mona would dress him up in animal costumes, he said. He said sometimes they tied him down with duct tape and rope. But he was unclear where that happened.

He said Bob and Mona put tails in when he was asleep. He said the tails were put inside his skin. But he also said they were in his pajama pants, that there was a hole in his pajamas and they taught him to sew.

After speaking with the child, the investigators told Frank and Stacey that authorities had "zero indication" Thomas had been sexually molested. There would be an investigation, Trooper Wilkins said, but based on the information they had from Thomas at that time, they could not arrest Mona or Bob or obtain a search warrant for Mona's home.

That afternoon Thomas was supposed to go to his mother's house. When law enforcement didn't take action, Frank and Stacey immediately went to the courthouse, where they were granted a temporary relief from abuse order to prevent Thomas from going to Mona's. To date, Thomas has never returned to his mother's home.

A Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center nurse practitioner who examined Thomas five days after the police interview did not find evidence that confirmed or refuted sexual abuse. According to the report, Thomas wasn't questioned about sexual abuse and didn't say

anything that particularly indicated sexual abuse. But he did describe being tied up with duct tape and rope.

“In the context of his clinic visit today he made a spontaneous disclosure of being bound and gagged on a recurrent basis. (Thomas) displayed some behaviors today during the exam and also during his time with the Child Life Specialist which are consistent with emotional discomfort,” the evaluator wrote in the report.

“Concern for the possibility of abuse in this instance would be fairly high,” the report continues. “A full investigation is warranted.”

According to a 2013 order written by family court Judge Nancy Corsones, Thomas has said that Bob and Mona tied him up, used duct tape across his mouth, and penetrated him anally and orally with “tails,” “sausages” and “hairy hotdogs.”

THE INVESTIGATIONS

Because the alleged abuse occurred in Chittenden County, outside the county where Thomas primarily lived, the investigation fell under the jurisdiction of the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations, or CUSI — a team of officers from state and local law enforcement agencies assigned to complex cases such as those involving children and sexual abuse. CUSI is part of the Chittenden County state’s attorney’s office.

The lead investigator on the case, Morgan Lawton, was not present for the first interview with Thomas in May 2012.

CUSI completed an investigation in the summer of 2012 and did not find evidence to press charges against Mona or Bob.

Lawton, the CUSI investigator, however, never spoke with Thomas, nor did she talk with the people Thomas had told about the alleged abuse: not the child's father, his pediatrician, his first grade and kindergarten teachers, the school principal or the school counselor, according to Frank's attorney.

In a May 2013 letter to the Chittenden County state's attorney TJ Donovan, a lawyer for Frank and Stacey raised concerns about the thoroughness of the investigation.

"Given (Thomas') spontaneous reporting of significant and prolonged sexual abuse, together with the detail offered, I have been at a loss to determine why the matter was not handled as a criminal investigation," Frank's attorney told Donovan. "Perhaps the initial evaluators perceived this as a custody battle in which one parent was attempting to get an advantage on the other."

Mental health providers and evaluators consistently point, he said, "to a pattern in which the child is providing detail which would be at odds with his developmental stage." Under the circumstances, he said, "the chance of fabrication appeared to be slim."

"All in all, it appears that this matter has never been treated as a criminal matter," the attorney wrote to Donovan. "A significant amount of time has gone by, and I appreciate your willingness to at least evaluate the situation for criminal investigation. If the reports are accurate, it appears that not only has this child been a victim of systematic sexual abuse, but that others are at risk."

Donovan told VTDigger last week the investigation into Thomas' allegations is closed in Chittenden County. He never filed criminal charges because of "insufficient evidence," he said.

"You follow the facts, and you follow the evidence, and you make a

determination based on that,” Donovan said.

There is no potential to reopen the case in Chittenden County, he said.

A number of other agencies have been involved in looking into the claims in some way — including the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement.

Bob, who lived in Canada, did not come to Vermont to be interviewed by law enforcement, nor to testify in family court about the allegations. According to the court, his lawyers advised him that there was a possibility the Department of Homeland Security would detain him at the border because of the case.

In January 2013, Stacey, Thomas’ stepmother, drove with Thomas to the city where Bob lived. She stopped in at the police department and asked law enforcement there to investigate. But Canadian authorities did not take up the case.

“At 14:40 hours, I advised (Stacey) that I had spoken to Vermont authorities and that we would not be taking any further action. ... She expressed significant dissatisfaction with that,” a report from the police department states.

To win a case in criminal court, prosecutors need to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the abuse — a high standard to meet.

In Thomas’ case, although multiple law enforcement agencies have been involved, no arrests have been made. No charges have been filed.

Meanwhile, investigators in the child protection system considered

the case as well. DCF is required by Vermont law to investigate allegations that involve sexual assault of a child by an adult.

DCF investigators have a lower standard to meet than prosecutors. If they find evidence of abuse that would convince a reasonable person, then the report is considered substantiated.

If the report is substantiated, the abuser's information is entered into the state's child protection registry, a database that stores information about all instances where neglect or abuse is substantiated.

But even under this lower standard, like law enforcement, DCF investigators did not substantiate Thomas' allegations against his mother and her boyfriend.

Despite the lack of substantiation or criminal charges, Frank and Stacey continued to believe Thomas, according to court papers.

COURT: THOMAS' STATEMENTS 'NOT SHOWN TO BE TRUE'

Thomas' allegations became the subject of a trial in family court — on the same docket that had been open since 2008 when his father and mother disputed who should get custody.

The first trial took place over four days in September 2012, nearly five months after the temporary relief from abuse order blocked a previous weekend custody arrangement.

Investigators from CUSI and DCF testified, along with Thomas' family members. Notably absent was Bob, Mona's boyfriend and the prime subject of Thomas' allegations.

Thomas testified during the hearing, but his statements, according to Judge Nancy Corsones, were only “marginally consistent” with the secondhand statements Thomas allegedly told others that were entered into the trial record. He denied being dressed up in costumes and did not indicate that penetration had occurred, the judge wrote in court papers.

Corsones, who was the same judge who had presided over the family’s previous proceedings, denied Frank’s request for a restraining order. He failed to meet the burden of proof necessary to show that the child had been abused, she said. Instead, she wrote, the disclosures about abuse pointed to the troubled relationships between Thomas’ parental figures.

Corsones wrote that she did not think Thomas was deliberately “lying” when he claimed he had been assaulted. She concluded he was “making extraordinarily serious and very negative statements about mom because he doesn’t have any further ability to cope with mother’s evident hatred of father, and he wants it to stop.”

She ordered a forensic psychological evaluation to focus on reunifying Thomas and his mother, who at that point had not been in contact in five months. The process would take time and therapeutic effort, the judge wrote.

Since then, custody of the child has been the subject of additional trials. Partway through a second trial, the following summer, the proceedings were interrupted when Thomas made a new spontaneous disclosure to his court-appointed attorney, Peg Flory, who also serves as a state senator.

According to court papers, Flory picked up Thomas, then 7 years old, from a therapy appointment. As they were walking from the building, Thomas talked about “grappling” in his karate class.

Flory asked what “grappling” was. Thomas replied, “That’s when you pin someone down like Bob used to do to me.”

Flory pressed for more detail. Thomas replied, “He puts his knees on my arms. That’s when they would put the mask on me and I would have to taste the hairy hotdog.”

Flory asked: “Is this for real or are you pulling my leg?”

Thomas answered: “This is for real.” The trial resumed in September, with Flory taking the stand as a witness.

In the meantime, Mona and her boyfriend, Bob, had broken off their relationship. Bob still had not traveled to Vermont to testify. Mona had introduced a motion to allow him to testify by phone, but the judge denied it.

Thomas’ new disclosures to Flory did not sway Corsones in her evaluation of the situation. Thomas did not repeat the statements in an interview with law enforcement.

Corsones rejected a motion to have the child testify again.

Mona had “the right to finality” on the matter, Corsones wrote.

“She has already defended against father’s allegations that she abused her child, and she has prevailed in that aspect of the litigation,” the judge wrote. “Neither the record nor concepts of fair play and substantial justice support giving father another chance to prove that she abused the child. The court remained firm in its assessment that Thomas’ statements hadn’t been shown to be true.”

After that trial, Corsones issued an order directing Thomas to take part in reunification therapy.

“The court will never be able to answer with certainty why this otherwise happy and intelligent child has said what he has said,” Corsones wrote, noting that the evidence did not meet the burden of proof to substantiate abuse. “The allegations were not proven by a preponderance of the credible evidence, there was no probable cause found to believe that the allegations are in fact true, and as such, the statements were not put to the criminal standard of beyond a reasonable doubt.”

In her order, Corsones wrote that all three adults contributed to the situation.

“The alienation between (Thomas) and his mother exists due in large part to the thoughts and actions of all three adults,” Corsones wrote.

Mona, Thomas’ mother, had at times expressed strong animosity toward Frank and Stacey in Thomas’ presence. Corsones referenced websites where Mona had posted personal information, including detailed financial statements, about the couple.

Meanwhile, Corsones wrote that she believed Stacey and Frank encouraged Thomas’ disclosures of abuse — which had intensified and included a strong belief that his mother wanted to kill him.

After a third trial, which took place in December 2014, Corsones was more resolute than ever in her assertion that the abuse Thomas claimed had never occurred. Moreover, she wrote that she believed that Frank and, primarily, Stacey alienated Thomas from his mother by remaining so staunch in their belief that he was abused.

“It is very clear to the court that father and stepmother are waging war against mother, and are making allegations of abuse which are not true,” Corsones wrote. She went on to say that the child’s father

and stepmother “indoctrinated” Thomas to believe his mother abused him and was trying to kill him.

“It is difficult to imagine a more complete destruction of a parent-child relationship based on false allegations of abuse,” Corsones wrote. She went on to allude to the concept of parental alienation. “Whether the experts label this alienation or not, father and stepmother have clearly destroyed (Thomas’) formerly good relationship with his mother.”

On the advice of therapists who worked with Thomas — and who warned that removing him from his father’s home could put him at risk of depression or even suicide — Corsones continued his father’s sole custody for the time being.

But she ordered that by his 11th birthday, Thomas must resume a course of reunification therapy with the goal of re-establishing regular contact with Mona. Thomas will turn 11 this year.

Corsones concluded the order by directing Frank and Stacey to cover the costs of legal and therapeutic services.

“Mother will not have to pay for what has been done to her,” Corsones wrote. “It is simply unfair and unjust.”

'THIS NEVER ENDS FOR HIM'

Much of the family court case, which was tried in Rutland, has relied on evidence provided by therapists, some of whom were ordered to evaluate the boy as part of a plan to reunify him with his mother.

Dr. David Rettew, a researcher at the University of Vermont who

is not involved with Thomas' case, said that in most therapeutic settings, therapists accept reports from their clients. They are not trying to get the details and facts about whether abuse occurred.

"We generally leave the detective work to other people," Rettew said.

Therapists are mandated reporters, meaning they're required to notify child protective services if they suspect a child has been subject to, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. But ultimately, he said, the therapist is trying to work with the client to help restore his or her well-being.

Therapists, Rettew said, "really do not see their job as trying to figure out exactly what happened."

There are outlier situations where therapists may be called on to dig into the facts for a forensic evaluation. Those appointments are different, though, he said, noting that the client in that case is the court rather than the patient.

Medical opinions on the validity of Thomas' claims are divided.

Dr. Craig Knapp performed the court-ordered forensic evaluation in the spring of 2013, which the judge had stipulated must be oriented toward reunifying Thomas with his mother.

In the course of several months of work, Knapp facilitated two in-person meetings between Thomas and his mother. Before the meetings, Knapp reported to the court, Thomas was angry and upset.

However, according to the therapist, the initial 20-minute session together was positive. The two played games and played with

Mona's dog.

Knapp presented a 98-page evaluation to the court. Knapp told the court he believed that Frank and Stacey's negative opinions of Mona were in part driving Thomas' descriptions of abuse at his mother's hand.

“(Thomas) is fully aware of the intensity of the feelings of dad and stepmom towards mom. I am fully convinced that that has impacted the elaboration of (Thomas') disclosures,” Knapp said in the report, which was quoted in Judge Corsones' order.

The therapist wrote that the three parents were contributing to a situation that could be harmful for Thomas' health in the long run.

“What is ironic as well as tragic is that in the process of trying to protect (Thomas) (or in [Mona's] case, trying to re-establish a relationship with him) the manner in which they have responded to him, as well as to each other, may be causing him harm, not only now, but in the future as well,” Knapp wrote in his report, also quoted in Corsones' October 2013 order.

In 2014, Thomas participated in court-ordered therapy geared toward reunifying him with his mother, though without meeting with her in person.

The two therapists who worked with him reported after seven weeks that they believed he had been traumatized by the court process, which had been going on for more than two years.

At the conclusion of the therapy, Thomas was 9 years old. The therapists said they believed that Thomas' father and stepmother were defying instructions to avoid discussing the case in his presence at home. They concluded that “this never ends for him.”

But other therapists who have worked with Thomas give more credence to his stories.

Days after Thomas first told stories of abuse to Frank and Stacey, his father and stepmother took him to meet therapist Kim Moyer, according to a report from the therapist.

In the course of Moyer's visit with the child, Thomas relayed stories similar to those he had already told his father and stepmother. Moyer recorded the allegations in an 11-page report dated Sept. 4, 2012.

"I have no concerns that this child is psychotic or displays a thought disorder. I also have no indication that what he tells me is reported in a robotic, rehearsed or coerced manner," Moyer wrote.

Years later, after the judge's third order in February 2015, Thomas began meeting with Dr. Bambi Rattner, a trauma therapist in Massachusetts. Rattner specializes in eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, a type of therapy devised in the 1980s that is used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Rattner's report, completed in June, summarized nine full days of treatment with Thomas. She came down firmly on the belief that the abuse Thomas spoke of did occur.

Rattner wrote that it is typical in cases of extensive abuse for the victim to remember additional details of abuse later.

She documented dozens of memories that Thomas relayed during therapy sessions. Thomas told her about being restrained with rope by his mother and her boyfriend. Bob "tied it. ... He was better at tying. ... (Mona) was horrible. ... Red rag ... brown rope. ... Really groggy but awake ..."

Thomas also told the therapist about instances when he remembered his mother being violent toward a pet cat and a pet hamster. He told her about times when Bob and Mona used knives with him.

“Based on a convergence of evidence from multiple sources, it is my professional opinion to a high degree of psychological certainty that (Thomas) has been repeatedly and severely sexually, physically, and emotionally abused,” Rattner wrote.

Mona and her lawyers objected to Rattner’s report about Thomas being entered in the civil court case. They say the report was submitted improperly and that it was hearsay.

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Sarah West

2 months 5 days ago

I’m absolutely appalled that the courts would push for re-unification between the boy and his mother. The child himself has made it clear that the mother has repeatedly neglected his safety; whether or not she took part in the actual physical assault, she was witness to it and played part. I feel terrible for children like Thomas who, when they do speak out, are not believed. It is just as horrible that the courts are blaming the parents – ‘a custody battle,’ when the Father only began ‘crusading’ for his son, after the son disclosed stories of absolute horror. Thank... [Read more »](#)

1  |  Reply

Craig Miller

2 months 4 days ago 

Thank you posting this well written and objective report. Sadly, it points out how the judges in high conflict custody cases lack the appropriate skill sets and training to properly intervene in a timely manner. One only needs to look back over the past 3 – 4 years and you will find other cases when children have been victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse and the judges frequently make bad calls, resulting in further harm to them, some with tragic consequences. If Vermont truly wants to get serious about preventing this abuse they need to a) better train their... [Read more »](#)

0  |  Reply

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Fred Woogmaster

2 months 2 days ago 

A free standing Family Court, based on the structural model of the Environmental Court, with specifically selected and trained Judges who rotate only through the Family Court system would improve the quality of justice in Family Court.

The judicial rotation, as we now have it, places some horribly deficient judges in Family Court, charged with making decisions on matters that are foreign to them. Some judges are excellent in Family Court.

6  |  Reply

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Adrienne Raymond

1 month 3 days ago 

I must point out that Judge Nancy Corsones is a very able Family Court judge with much experience. The “facts” in this case appear so muddled by parental arguing and posturing it would take Salomon to make a more reasoned judgement. The court system nor DCF can truly determine the truth in these cases and it is always the child that suffers the most.

0  |  Reply

Taylor Dobbs

2 months 4 days ago 

Truly great journalism. These stories need to be told, and Lizzy did an amazing job with this one.

2  |  Reply

Bonnie Caie

2 months 23 hours ago 

It appears from reading this report, that the child’s safe environment lies with the father and stepmother who are legally married and living respectable lives. When the child is no longer vulnerable (when an adult) he can spend time with his biological mother, and perhaps forgiveness for her allowing her son to have the biological Mom’s predator boyfriend on the scene will no longer be a part of the picture. This is a revolting story where a child becomes the victim of the height of evil.

0  |  Reply

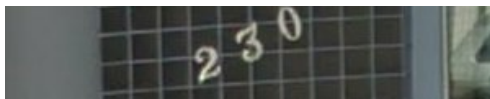
Ann Zuccardy

1 month 24 days ago 

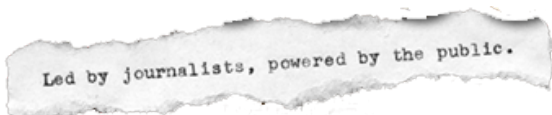
I’ve actually read the Supreme Court decision and associated docs, all are which available online. I don’t believe this story fairly represents the spirit of those documents. I believe many people here are making judgments without knowing all the facts.

6  |  Reply

Thanks for reporting an error with the story, "

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