

REALITY QUEST

Volume One

October 10, 1994

Issue XXXXI

...CONTINUED...

I would never charge my father with child abuse. We were beat, but not abused. Parents who beat their kids usually can be helped in ways which benefit our society instead of hindering it. I don't believe a parent should have his or her children taken away and then spend time in jail for punishing their child the only way they know how. Love and good, selfless therapy should be initiated by our society to help parents find alternative ways to discipline their children. The truth is, children are the most selfish, abusive, and belligerent creatures that exist. We must help the adult, who is only an adult by age, learn not to be as a child, before we can expect the adult to teach the child to be an adult.

What we have is a bunch of kids running around accusing older kids of treating them the same way these younger kids treat everyone else.

The philistine, power hungry attorneys, judges, law enforcement officers, social workers, and therapists need to grow up before you can expect anyone who you accuse with your McCarthyism tactics to act like an adult. I believe that most of these Philistines (A Philistine is defined as one who puts more importance on possessions, money and the pursuit of these things, rather than justice,) mean well, but as long as money guides their actions, only the poor will ever reach adulthood and the rich will forever remain children. This, because the poor must learn from heartache and experience while the rich hide behind their money which buys them their attorney, judge, and therapist, which in reality, is their abusive parent.

(end of *Reality Quest* article)

It should be quite obvious to the reader why the Ladenburgs and their "legal guides" needed to manipulate Brittany into saying things about Jackie and me, and making false accusations based on the manipulating questions they posed to her, that they felt were necessary to justify their miscarriage of justice.

The last time I saw Brittany in June of 1993, she denies having said any of the things the authorities report her as saying. What is even more confusing to me, is why none of these police reports on how Jackie and I supposedly treated our children were used in court to try and convince the judge that the children would be better off by being Ladenburgs. The answer: the Ladenburgs and their attorney knew the reports were blatant lies and fabrications sought by an attorney and his clients using the justice system by trying to keep from being sued for legal malpractice.

When I had Paula on the stand during the hearing for visitation in July of 1993, I asked her if she thought I was an abusive parent and if she ever saw me abuse our children. She denied that I ever abused any of the children.

Did Brittany see a blue dress or a red dress? When she was seven years old, scared, and unsure what was going on, and afraid of getting in trouble, she was convinced she saw a red one. But I have no doubts that Brittany to this day, knew the dress was blue all along.

CHAPTER TEN

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

After the worker from the Department of Family Services told us that she was going to authorize the Sheriff's department to take Brittany and Joshua and place them in foster care, Jackie and I left the sheriff's department in Hamilton devastated.

Jackie has never felt, nor will she ever feel the pain and sorrow that she felt that night. She cried the entire night. I was unable to comfort this woman who had just been accused of abusing the children she had nurtured and cared for for four years.

Jackie has never abused any child, nor is she capable of doing so. Ever one that knows Jackie, knows what a wonderful, selfless, woman she is. Never have I met a woman like her, and I doubt very many of her caliber exist.

Though our religious views might have seemed unorthodox at the time, everyone that knew us envied our family and lifestyle as much as many admire the lifestyles of the Amish and Mennonite peoples. In fact, we lived so much like the Amish people, that most would refer to us as such, and therefore, I named my company, "Amish Labor Service."

After returning to our home, I began to see that we had no hope in obtaining justice dealing with the small town legal system of Hamilton, Montana. Jeff Langton, Oleson's counterpart in Hamilton, was a well known, successful attorney who had the same type of comradery with the legal system in Ravalli county as Oleson did in Flathead county.

Police records and court records will show that on the same day that I was up for my first bail hearing in a Ravalli county court, Jeff Langton was representing a client who had been arrested for getting in a fight in a bar, driving all the way to his house to get his gun to kill the guy he fought with, driving back to the bar with his gun but luckily being intercepted by Ravalli county sheriffs who arrested him before he killed anyone. Langton got the guy released on his own recognizance, as the judge raised my bail to \$75,000 when I was all ready out on a \$20,000 bond issued in Salt Lake County, Utah, where I had recently left in order to turn myself into Ravalli County authorities, so they wouldn't have to extradite me.

Obviously, if Langton had this kind of clout with the court, I made the right decision on the night of June 13, 1991, when I decided to take my children and family and run to Utah where my original divorce had been decreed.

Brittany and Joshua were placed in a foster home for the night. Of course, this was exactly what Oleson and the Ladenburgs had in mind. This would give him the small amount of time he needed to secure a judge's signature in the jurisdiction where he was, 150 miles away, to take the kids away from me.

I had no idea what Oleson was doing. All I knew was that we were getting railroaded by a corrupt legal system.

I talked to our neighbors, my boss, and all those who knew us and told them what had happened. They were astounded and were determined to help us get our kids back and escape the abuse of the "small town justice" which many of them had experienced in the past.

My boss, Shane Morris, provided me with his brand new truck, (L-8AGAIN), money, and a big hug. The Kreis family and others, offered us support in taking care of our land and farm animals until we could find justice somewhere else.

The next morning I planned to call the Department of Family Services and ask to take some clothes to Brittany and Joshua and assure the kids that everything would be all right. Kathy Ostrander spoke with me about 10:00 A.M., and told me she would try to arrange something and call me back to let me know when I could bring the clothes.

We waited desperately for her call. The call came about 1:00 P.M., Kathy Ostrander advised me that she had received an order from the County Attorney's office instructing her to turn the children over to Paula pursuant to a judge's order. "What!" I exclaimed. I caught myself quickly before I lost any composure and said very sincerely, "Well, I guess your department knows what is best for the kids, so we will cooperate." "But, please, please set up a time that we can say good-bye to the children and give them some clothes to wear." Ostrander said she would set something up and call me back.

When I hung up that phone, I was more determined than ever to get my family out of Montana. "How in the hell," I yelled out, "can a Judge sign an order to take away my children without talking to me and getting my side of the story?" However Oleson did this, I didn't care. I was going to take my children and run for justice.

When our neighbors and friends heard what had happened, no preacher in the land could bear to hear the words that left their lips. If only we could again, elect attorneys and judges, and their true actions known, Montana would have all new ones after the next election.

Ostrander called back and told us we could come and say goodbye to the children at 2:00 P.M.. It was already 1:30, so Jackie and I threw a few things in a bag, said good-bye to our friends and left for Hamilton in our 1974 Mustang.

My mind was going 100 miles an hour as we drove the 25 miles to Hamilton. As fast as a computer, I thought about what I was going to do when I entered the Department of Family Services. I

decided that I would stay calm and follow my instincts, something which one police officer later commented where "*some of the best criminal escape instincts*" he had ever known. I figured that if what had just taken place was any indication of the thinking mentality of the law enforcement of Ravalli county, it wouldn't be too tough for me to outsmart them.

When we reached Hamilton, I went to our bank and closed our account taking all the money we had.

We proceeded to the Department of Family Services where I met Kathy Ostrander in the front lobby. Luckily, Brandon, who was three at the time, had fallen asleep in the back seat of our car, so Jackie stayed with him and Caleb, who was one year old.

I smiled at Ms. Ostrander and held up the bag of clothes I had brought to give to the kids. Little did she know that the only clothes in the bag were a few sets of underwear Jackie had put in there for our escape. I put on my charm and could see the confused expression on Ostrander's face as she probably wondered why such a kind man would marry such an abusive woman that would take advantage of my children. I didn't care what she was thinking, I had her where I wanted her.

I entered the room where Brittany and Joshua were. Both were crying and Joshua ran and clutched on to me and said, "Daddy, I don't want to go with Paula!" That little boy clutched on to my arm as if he was drowning in water. Brittany buried her head in her arms and cried. I asked her what was wrong and she responded, "I want to go live with Paula." What ever was going through that little girl's mind, I'll probably never know. Paula had somehow manipulated the poor thing to the point that she became confused as to what really was taking place.

I put my arms around Brittany and she immediately turned toward me and hugged me and wept. I was confused. What was the cause of her confusion? Why did she say she wanted to live with Paula and why couldn't she look me in the eyes. For a good moment I held Brittany as she cried. I comforted her by telling her that she was going to live with Paula, but that Jackie and her little brothers wanted to say good-bye to her. She calmed down and put her hand in mine as I arose from the table at which we were sitting.

I told Ostrander, who appeared teary-eyed herself, that Jackie was out in the car with the sleeping children. I took Brittany by one hand and Joshua, who had never let go of me for a moment, by the other and was heading out to the car to say good-bye to Jackie, when I made a decision which almost brought me to uncontrollable sobs.

I looked at Brittany and saw the little girl I had raise by myself since she was two years old. I saw the little one who had asked me the many questions which any little girl would want her father to answer. I saw the little hand that held mine as we went on many father/daughter walks alone. For just a moment, I was back on that motorcycle with Brittany sitting in front of me, smelling the innocence of her clean, blonde hair as it lashed tenderly at my face by the oncoming wind. "I'm going to miss you sweetheart," I thought to myself.

Not knowing what the consequences would be, I decided not to take Brittany with me, but let her go with Paula. I left her in the Department of Family Services by saying, "Brittany, you wait here and Joshua and I will go get Jackie and your brothers and we'll come back in and say good-bye."

I left the building with Joshua at my side and Kathy Ostrander about four paces behind me. When Jackie saw Joshua, both of them wept profusely as they held each other tightly. I looked at Ostrander and said, "This is bull-shit!" as I put Joshua in the car and shut the door.

Stunned, Ostrander told me that the police were going to arrest me if I took Joshua. "Well, wish them good-luck," I said as I gave her a very vindictive smile and drove off.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE GREAT ESCAPE

I calmly drove through downtown Hamilton and took the back roads leading to Corvallis where Shane Morris lived. While in route to my boss' farm, Joshua said, "I hate Brittany!" "Why,?" I asked, being very surprised at his comment. "Because she lied about you and Mom (Jackie)." Not really understanding what he meant by this, I didn't push the issue. Joshua was very happy to be with his father and the only family he had known since birth. He said he hated Paula and Carl for trying to take him away. I assured Joshua that Paula and Carl would never take him away from his dad again. I assured him of this, trusting

that I one day justice would be served for what had happened to our family. I never realized that the promise I made to my little boy would turn out to be a broken one which would emotionally affect him for the rest of his life.

We drove to my boss' farm where he had "L-8AGAIN" gassed up and ready to go. We squealed to a stop in his driveway. He traded me sets of keys, helped put the kids in the front cab, gave me a hug with tears in his eyes, and said, "Good-luck, Chris. May God be with you and your family!" He waved and shook his head as I yelled out the window that we would leave his truck somewhere where he could come and get it.

I hid Jackie and the kids behind the seat of the extended cab of the truck. I took off my shirt and pulled down my bib-overalls which I always wore, so as to be less recognizable. Our plans were to go North to Missoula, Montana, where we were going to buy a used car and leave "L-8AGAIN". I took a county road which ran adjacent to the highway which went to Missoula. As we were proceeding, I could hear many sirens on the nearby highway racing towards Victor, where our land was located. I bypassed Victor on back roads and eventually made it to Missoula.

We arrived in Missoula at one of the worst times possible for finding a motel room where we were going to rest, change our clothes, buy a car and plan our next move.

The local University was holding its commencement services and all the relatives of the students were visiting and staying in the local motels. We drove to three motels with no success. Finally I found one that didn't have a room available, but had a sister-motel down the street where they had made arrangements to send their overflow. I asked the clerk if she would call the motel and see if she could get us a room. The clerk made the call, found out that there was a room available, and asked me what my name was to secure a room. There I was, hadn't slept for 36 hours, unshaven in a pair of bib-overalls. "Tell them to save it for Dan, a farmer," I said meaning for the clerk to let them know they could recognize me by my appearance as a farmer. (I always enjoyed having fun in unpleasant situations, so I was not going to stop at this most unpleasant time.) The clerk gave us directions to the motel and we left.

When we arrived at the motel, I went to the clerk and told her I had been to the other motel and they had sent me here for a room. "Oh, you must be Dan Farmer," she courteously responded. "Yea," I sheepishly responded, "I'm him." The clerk smiled, registered me in a room, and handed me the key.

We were most fortunate, as one might conclude later, that the motel where we were staying had a front door and a back door. We parked "L-8AGAIN" in the front area, planning to park our new, "used" car in the back. We went to the room and collapsed for a moment on the bed. Jackie was extremely tired and the kids were rambunctious as ever, thinking what an exciting vacation they were on.

I went to a nearby store and bought us some sweat clothes to wear, some food for the kids, something to shave with, and some scissors so Jackie could cut my hair. When I got back to the room, I could see the strain the ordeal was having on Jackie. At that moment, I felt sorry I had brought her into this situation.

Jackie was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and lived in the same house all her life until she married me. Her father is a successful pharmacist and her mother worked as an office manager for a dentist where Jackie also worked as a dental assistant for many years before marrying me. Jackie was loved by all who knew her. She was her parent's favorite because of her love for others and her ability to cook. How she ended up in a Montana motel room running from the law after such a normal, peaceful childhood, is another story in itself.

Nevertheless, Jackie was at my side. She knew the lies against her were malicious and wrong, so she was intent on seeking justice with me. There is no way that I could have convinced her to leave me and let me run by myself. She was my partner and remained so until the end.

I looked in the local paper and found a car for sale that we could afford. I called the guy and told him that our car had broken down and we were staying in a motel. I said that we needed the car as soon as possible, but had no way to come and get it at his house. I must have been pretty convincing, because the guy was a college professor who felt leery about selling a car to someone staying at a motel, fearing that perhaps it was a set up to steal his car. Whatever his justification for doing so, he showed up with the car and his wife.

Once he met us, his fears subsided and I proceeded to concoct a story to try to get him to let us use his licence plates until we got to Idaho, where I told him we lived and would immediately send them back to him. He didn't feel good about this and refused to let us keep his plates. He obviously watched the

CONTINUED