

Chaim Steinberger

From: "Attorney Chaim Steinberger" <csteinberger@mindspring.com>
To: <PASparents@yahoogroups.com>
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Subject: Judge Ross jails mother, cites Steinberger' article, Father? What Father? in NYLJ decision 6/22/10 at 17 col. 3 (b)

In a decision published in the NYLJ Justice Robert A. Ross sentenced a mother to six weekends in jail for her continued undermining of the father's relationship to the children. *Lauren R. vs. Ted R.* (NYLJ, 6/2/2010 at 17 col. 3)(Supreme Court, Nassau County). In his decision, Justice Ross cites my article, *Father? What Father? Parental Alienation and its Effects on Children*, NYSBA Family Law Review (Spr. 2006).

In that case, Justice Ross found that the mother tried to replace the father with her new husband, vilified him to the children, and falsely (and without any "semblance of good faith") accused him of sexual abuse. Her actions turned the "joint custodial arrangement into a farce," and her "alienating conduct" was "as daunting as it was indefensible." The Court, therefore, found her to be in contempt of Court (for violating the Judgment of Divorce and its incorporated Stipulation of Settlement), and sentenced her to six weekends in a Nassau County jail.

In addition, the Court found that the mother:

castigated the children any time they expressed a desire to spend time with their father;

scheduled theater tickets, family events and social activities during the father's visitation time;

enlisted the children and converted them into agents by having them make her demands upon the father;

relegated the father to waiting endlessly at the bottom of her long driveway (even when the children would have to drag their heavy bags in a torrential rain);

disparaged the father in front of the children by calling him a "deadbeat," "loser," "scumbag," "f-----g asshole," and telling him, "We all hope you die from cancer," and "Judge Ross will not be around forever, d_____";

A particularly poignant incident, recounted by the Court, occurred when the father testified about how the mother prevented him from exercising his parenting-time rights during *Hannukah*, 2007. The decision states:

I [the Court] observed the [mother] smirk in the courtroom as [the father] emotionally related how he was deprived of spending Hanukkah with his children, and was relegated to lighting a menorah and watching his daughters open their grandparents' presents in the back of his truck at the base of [the mother's] driveway on a December evening.

In support of the proposition that "[p]rotraction or delay in parental alienation cases often serve to reinforce the offending conduct and potentially undermine any remediation that a court could fashion," the Court cites my article, *Father? What Father? Parental Alienation and its Effects on Children*, NYSBA Family Law Review (Spr. 2006).

Chaim

Attorney Chaim Steinberger
(csteinberger@mindspring.com)

CHAIM STEINBERGER, P.C.
<http://www.theNewYorkDivorceLawyers.com>
331 Madison Avenue, 2nd Floor (@ 43rd Street)
New York, NY 10017
(212) 964-6100
fax (212) 500-7559

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