

I have not seen my daughter Madison—Maddie—for nearly 700 days. The last time I held her was October of 2023.

Before family court intervened, I had full custody of Maddie. My ex-husband, Jarod, owed more than \$50,000 in back child support when he filed a false emergency order. The judge who approved it had only been on the bench for one month, and openly admitted he had not reviewed the history of our case. Still, he granted the order. There was no clear or convincing evidence Maddie was unsafe in my care—CPS had never found abuse. In fact, the very month she was taken, Maddie was student of the month.

When Maddie was briefly returned to me, she told me she was forced to sleep in the same bed as her father in a one-room studio, where another man and his 9-year-old daughter also slept. That apartment had hypodermic needles within arm's reach, trash, and alcohol bottles everywhere. I have photos. Another mother filed for emergency removal of her own child from that same apartment. Her case was heard by a judge with over 20 years of experience, and her petition was granted.

But when I filed with the exact same evidence, mine was denied. CPS even testified for my abuser, saying they saw no problem with a child sleeping with her father. By the time they arrived, the apartment had been cleaned up.

I then took Maddie to a well-known licensed therapist, where Maddie herself disclosed abuse by her father. The therapist documented those concerns in writing for the court. Still—nothing was done.

My attorney promised to file a stronger emergency order—he never did. Instead, I was left accused of custodial interference, and my abuser used that to get a no-contact order.

Because of this broken system, I have not seen my child in nearly two years. Family court failed us. CPS failed us. And my daughter is still sleeping in that same dangerous environment today.

Thank you.

Lauren Ryan