

Date: Dec. 7, 2007

Introduction: I get a surprise call from my daughter. We hadn't talked all summer. I started recording about 1 minute into the conversation.

Highlighted are my concerns, and my proof that I am doing what's right for her.

Me: they want me to do. I tried to be able to get you from school, right? (injection of buzz) I talked to your principal, everything. They wouldn't let me stop your mom.

Child: I'm in a new school (almost inaudible, from the buzz)

Me: I've been to your new school. What's it like?

Child: Um, well, it's really big and there's lots of kids going to it.

Me: yeah...

Child: _____ Village Public School.

Me: have you made any friends yet?

Child: yeah, a whole bunch.

Me Yeah?! Excellent!

Child: and I'm already taking the bus. (Warming up to me about now)

Me yeah? that's good. That's good. Well, I, I (stuttering) you know I wanna be with you, you know that right?

Child: umm. (inaudible response)

Me: but I gotta do it the right way. Your mom's (stuttering) mom's not, she's not budging.

Child: ok.

Me: I don't know why she don't want you to be with me, but, you want to be with me?

Child: yeah.

Me: yeah, I don't know, but it's not because I don't want to be with you, you know that right?

Child: yeah, (barely audible response from buzz)

Me: that was my biggest fear, that's when I think, ah man, she's...your mom's telling you all these lies, and stuff like that. You may start, one day, start to think that, but that's not...

Child: **Um, well, Derek's (sitter) outside, and he has a phone and he doesn't know that we're on the phone...**

Me: yeah...

Child: **Um, he. He, um (nervous) he can pick up and hear us, so...**

Me: ok.

Child: **I'm a little scared...(inaudible, but explaining that she's not allowed to call me)...I don't want him to hear us talking.**

Me: I know, ok. See how smart you are?

Child: yeah.

Me: See how smart you are? (she laughs) do you wanna hang up now? (inaudible) Do you, ah, have any chance to call me any other time?

Child: (barely audible) I might be having a sleep over tonight.. so, I can call you this night?

Me: I've got to work tonight and where I work, it's kinda loud.. too hard for me to talk. But it's so good to hear your voice.

Child (laughs) **I haven't talked to you in a long long time.**

Me: I know. I know. Well, I wonder if Derek knows how long you have been without me. do you think he knows?

Child: yeah., I think.

Me: and he's on mom's side, huh?

Child: **yeah, so he wouldn't let me.**

Me: how can he be...(break in conversation from buzz)

Me: ...(return of recording) so, would he want to be separated from his daughter? (referring to Derek)

Child: no way.

Me: no, no, and you know, and, and, (stuttering to find the words) you think he would understand, and maybe understand that you wanna call me.

Child: yeah.

Me: I don't know babe. I can't explain some people. I just don't know how to work with them. They just don't understand that you and me, we just want to be together.

Child: yeah.

Me: I got you some great Christmas presents. (her giggling) so, one day whenever I get back together, and it will be soon, ok? It'll be soon. Umm...

Child: **I can't wait till I get older, when I get old enough that I can live on my own. I wish I could just, like grow up really really fast so I can be with you.**

Me: (sigh)

Child: **so I can get away from mom and see you once more.**

Me: well, yeah...(I don't know what to say) soon...I'm working on soon. I'm trying to get at least back to I get to see you again, because we have to see each other,

Child: ok.

Me: we just do. You need some fun (inaudible response) it sounds like you're not having fun at all, and you need to have fun.

Child: um, hum. (agreeing). Like, like this is like the first time I've seen Julia (Derek's daughter and child's best friend) in a month.

Me: oh, are you serious?

Child: Yeah.

Me: wow. Well, they may think why, you know, they won't ahh...(don't know what to say) I don't know. I don't understand your mom. You know, here you are with Julia, and you could be with me.

Child: yeah,
Me: You could be with me all this weekend.
Child: yeah.
Me: this weekend is supposed to be my weekend with you.
Child: **I wish I was with you instead of Julia.**
Me: I know.
Child: **if I had a choice, if I had a choice to be with you or mom, I would definitely choose you.**
Me: (sigh) and you know what, I don't want it to be that way that you would have to choose one or the other. Why can't you have both?
Child: yeah.
Me: you're supposed to have 2 birthdays, 2 christmases...that's the plus of being separated and having your parents divorce. (child laughs) that's the good part, that's the only good part, and now you...
Child: yeah, that you both...you do have both of your parents, but..
Mike: yeah,
Lore: your parents are happy too.
Me: yeah. You know, and you should see me, and you should see her. It doesn't have to be, you know, one or the other.
Child: yeah.
Me: but ugh, (gasps) see, if you were with me I would let you see your mom. I wouldn't have a problem with it. (sighs) but your mom...I just don't know how to explain her.
Child: **I wish you had full custody of me, instead of her.**
Me: well, that's where I'm going. That's where I'm going. I'm hoping that one day, I can't do it now. They just won't let me, but.
Child: **I'm trying to do as much as I can.,,**
Me: I know, I know,
Child: **I'm asking every day (to see or contact me)**
Me: well, just don't forget about me, that's all. Just, don't forget about me. oh, you're so amazing
Child: **I'll try and talk to you as much as I can.**
Me: yeah, well you know what I'm gonna try and do? I'm gonna try and call back, so don't you pick up the phone, or you or Julia, alright?
Child: why?
Me: I wanna talk to Derek. Ok? So I'm ...
Child: (distressed) but he'll get mad at you. And I don't want him to be ..
Me: Ok, ok, I won't call. I won't call, I won't call and talk to him then. Ok? I understand.
Child: why don't you just call, I'll pick up. Ok? If anyone calls I'll pick up
Me: no, no, no, I don't want you to get in trouble with Derek, if he can listen, you know.
Child: I won't.
Me: All you're doing is what you want to do, and that's call your dad. It shouldn't be a crime, but your mom is really hard to work with...oh, man, so I can't do anything wrong. You know what I mean?
Child: yeah.
Me: If I do one thing wrong, then they won't let you ever see me again. That means, they tell me the way I have to do it, and I have to do it that way.. if I do anything like show up at the school and try and get you, (sighs) they're gonna call me crazy, then they won't let you be with me. remember it's like that movie (referring to the movie "Sam I Am")
Child: yeah.
Me: remember that movie, where she loved her dad so much, and they thought the dad couldn't take care of her?
Child: yeah.
Me: and they wanted to take her away...well, that's what's happening, but in real life, right here, right with you and me (sighs)
Child: (inaudible)
Me: I know. Well, I never wanted any of this.. I just wanted to keep being your dad. I love you so much babe. You know that.
Child: I love you.
Me: yeah, if you're gonna get in trouble, we should hang up now though.
Child: ok (sighs).
Me: but I'd talk to you for all night if I could.
Child: (inaudible)
Me: I'd ask you a zillion questions. I wanna know all your new friends' names, what you like to so at school, and how your new teachers are, and is the new school..
Child: I wish we had at least one night together.
Me: I know, I know...
Child: well, I think Derek's coming in so...(anxious)
Me: I love you, I love you, I love you , I love you (as fast as I could say them)
Child: I love you, I love you, (over top m words) Bye.
Me: Ok, bye. (we both hang up)

And that would be the last I would hear from her for quite some time.