

**THE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK
OF PARENTAL ALIENATION
SYNDROME**

Publication Number 1108

*AMERICAN SERIES
IN
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND LAW*

Edited by

RALPH SLOVENKO, B.E., LL.B., M.A., PH.D.

*Professor of Law and Psychiatry
Wayne State University Law School
Detroit Michigan*

THE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

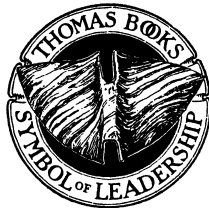
Conceptual, Clinical and Legal
Considerations

Edited by

RICHARD A. GARDNER, M.D.

S. RICHARD SAUBER, Ph.D.

DEMOSTHENES LORANDOS, Ph.D., J.D.



CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

Published and Distributed Throughout the World by

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
2600 South First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

This book is protected by copyright. No part of
it may be reproduced in any manner without written
permission from the publisher. All rights reserved.

© 2006 by CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.

ISBN 0-398-07647-2 (hard)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2006040449

*With THOMAS BOOKS careful attention is given to all details of manufacturing
and design. It is the Publisher's desire to present books that are satisfactory as to their
physical qualities and artistic possibilities and appropriate for their particular use.
THOMAS BOOKS will be true to those laws of quality that assure a good name
and good will.*

*Printed in the United States of America
UB-R-3*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The international handbook of parental alienation syndrome / edited by Richard A.
Gardner, S. Richard Sauber, Demosthenes Lorandos.

p. cm. -- (American series in behavioral science and law)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-398-07647-2

1. Parental alienation syndrome--Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Gardner, Richard
A. II. Sauber, S. Richard. III. Lorandos, Demosthenes, 1946-IV. Series.

RJ506.P27I58 2006

618.92'89--dc22

2006040449

DEDICATED TO RICHARD A. GARDNER, M.D.

Sir Isaac Newton said, “If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.” In the study of alienated children there is one man upon whose shoulders everyone stands. Anyone who studies, writes about, or seeks to understand the phenomenon of alienated children cannot do so without paying homage to Dr. Richard A. Gardner.

Dr. Gardner passed away on May 25, 2003. To say that he was a man of great achievements is an understatement. Most psychiatrists would be content to have a thriving clinical practice. Some have one or two published articles to their credit. The more ambitious have written more articles, perhaps even a book or two. The highest achievers have an impressive output of five or ten books at most.

Dr. Gardner wrote more than 130 articles that were judged by panels of expert reviewers to be worthy of publication in scholarly journals. He wrote 40 books. His contributions to the field of general psychotherapy with children, psychotherapy with children of divorce, and custody evaluations, are considered classic works in the field and are cited often in the professional literature and in psychotherapy textbooks. One indication of Gardner’s stature among his colleagues is that he was invited to contribute several chapters to the standard reference work in his field, the *Basic Handbook of Child Psychiatry*, whose Board of Editors includes many of the world’s leading experts in child psychiatry. Most authors are flattered to be invited to contribute only one chapter.

Gardner wrote the first self-help book for children of divorce. It was lauded by *Time* magazine, excerpted in the *Sunday New York Times Magazine*, and is currently in its 28th printing. He devised a therapeutic technique, mutual storytelling, that is included in child psychiatry curriculums and listed as one of 35 significant events in the history of play therapy, along with contributions from luminaries such as Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and Jean Piaget. In addition, he originated an entire therapeutic modality with his introduction of the first therapeutic board game for use in psychotherapy with children. The use of such games has since become standard in child psychotherapy with many games following Gardner’s lead. One noted expert in psychotherapy called Gardner’s creation “one of the most popular therapeutic games available” and a Website for therapeutic resources claimed that, “Most child therapists consider it an indispensable part of their playroom

equipment.” Gardner’s books and therapeutic games have been translated into nine languages. The American Psychological Association, in addition to citing three of Gardner’s books in a highly selective list of references pertinent to child custody evaluations, honored him by selecting him as one among only a few professionals included in a series of training videotapes by “distinguished psychotherapists.”

For most of his professional career, Dr. Gardner enjoyed the reputation and stature appropriate to a man of his achievements and innovations. Then he wrote about Parental Alienation Syndrome and about sex abuse allegations. He was one of the first to say publicly that sometimes children do lie and that we should not automatically accept all allegations of abuse as true. As a result of this work, Dr. Gardner was attacked, smeared, and vilified. In their attempt to alienate audiences from Dr. Gardner’s work, his critics used the same tactics as do parents who demonize a parent or grandparent in an effort to poison children’s affection and respect.

None of this stopped Dr. Gardner. He set an inspiring example of a talented and courageous man willing to walk new and difficult paths and defend unpopular stands with conviction, strength, and integrity. I am reminded of the words of Theodore Roosevelt:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; . . . who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

No one ever accused Richard Gardner of being timid. He was in the arena his entire professional life, to the very end passionately, eagerly, and tirelessly sharing his knowledge and insights. I spoke to him two nights before his death. His terrible pain did not keep him from expressing great enthusiasm and excitement about his latest project. For those of us who remain in the arena, Dr. Gardner’s legacy will be an inspiration for years to come.

For all these reasons, we dedicate this volume to Dr. Gardner’s memory in recognition of his unparalleled contributions to the welfare of children throughout the world.

Richard A. Warshak, Ph.D.

CONTRIBUTORS

Walter Andritzky, Dr. Phil. Dipl.-Psychologist, Dipl.-Sociologist, is a former faculty member of the University of Düsseldorf, Institute of Medical Psychology and of the University of Cologne, Department of Sociology of the Handicapped. Currently, he is a practicing clinical and forensic psychologist in Germany.

Richard B. Austin, Jr., Ph.D., clinical and forensic psychologist, has presented on parental alienation syndrome issues at national meetings, and testified in PAS cases in Texas, Washington D.C., North Carolina, Oregon, and Paris, France. He consulted as an expert to the Texas Legislature Committee providing standards for sexual abuse evaluation.

Eduard Bakalář, Ph.D., earned a degree in psychology from Charles University, Prague and worked for the psychiatric department for children and adults. Since 1967, he has been a court expert in child custody disputes, and since 1992 he has been the head of Consultancy for Fathers. He publishes articles and books on divorce/custody/fathers.

R. Christopher Barden, Ph.D., J.D., LP, has been introduced as “the only licensed psychologist and attorney in America to receive two national research awards in psychology and a law degree with honors from Harvard Law School.” He is President of the National Association for Consumer Protection in Mental Health Practices.

William Bernet, M.D., is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, and Director of the Division of Forensic Psychiatry. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, Dr. Bernet is a distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and a fellow of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Sandra S. Berns, Ph.D., is a professor of law at Griffith University in Brisbane, Queensland. She holds a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley and an LL.B. and Ph.D. from the University of Tasmania. She is the author of four books (one co-authored) and numerous academic articles.

Barry Bricklin, Ph.D., served on the faculties of Jefferson Medical College, Hahnemann University and Widener University. Author of dozens of books, book chapters, and articles on custody, two of his tests are the most widely used in the nation. He was recently invited to teach in China, Australia and Canada.

Barry Brody, Ph.D., is a marriage and family therapist with more than 30 years' clinical experience. Dr. Brody maintains a private practice in Florida, and is the director of Forensic Family Services, Inc. Dr. Brody has testified as an expert witness regarding child custody issues and parental alienation syndrome in particular.

Janelle Burrill, Ph.D., J.D., B.C.D., is an appointed child custody mediator and evaluator for numerous courts in northern California. She received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, having written her dissertation on parental alienation syndrome. She serves as a special master and is an expert in child psychotherapy, custody evaluation, and mediation.

Glenn F. Cartwright, Ph.D., is a psychologist and professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education at McGill University in Montreal. He is a fellow of both the American and the World Associations for Social Psychiatry.

Gail Elliot, Ph.D., conducts research in child development and family systems. She is Vice Chair of the *Professional Academy of Custody Evaluators*. With Dr. Barry Bricklin, she has published several journal articles, book chapters and child custody tests, as well as many of her own assessment tools.

Craig A. Everett, Ph.D., is the director of the Arizona Institute for Family Therapy and Editor of the *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*. He is a past president of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and a former professor and director of graduate programs at Florida State University and Auburn University.

Richard A. Gardner, M.D. (1931–2003) coined the term and developed the theory, practice, the diagnosis and treatment for *the parental alienation syndrome*. He was Clinical Professor of Child Psychiatry at Columbia University. Recognized for his innovative contributions to child psychiatry, he wrote more than 40 books and 250 articles.

Daniel J. Gottlieb, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist and family therapist, is Associate Director of the Israeli Institute for Systemic Studies, Family and Personal Change, Herzliya, Israel. He serves as a court-appointed expert in child custody and adoption cases. He has published several papers on forensic psychology in the Hebrew literature.

Tony Hobbs, J.P., L.L.M., is a researcher in family law and teaches at Keele University, England. He is a chartered clinical and counseling psychologist, associate fellow of the British Psychological Society, and a lay magistrate. His favorite pastime is playing with his own family, and he is eternally grateful that they are not afflicted by PAS.

Ursula Kodjoe, M.A., is a psychologist, family therapist and mediator in Germany. She serves as a court-appointed representative for children in parental alienation cases. She has authored and delivered seminars [regarding conflict resolution, visitation models and reorganization of post-divorce families] for members of child care institutions, lawyers, therapists, and teachers.

Leona M. Kopetski, M.S.S.W., founded a private clinic for divorced families in Colorado and utilized a team model for custody evaluations, which became the standard for the state. The early alienation cases, encountered in the 1970s, prompted her to develop a paradigm for helping children maintain relationships with both parents.

Annelie Künneth, M.A., earned her magistra artium at Hagen University for her scientific work concerning the social-psychological aspects of parental alienation syndrome. She earned an honorary judgeship at the law court in Hof, Germany, and has worked at the Franconia Rehabilitation Clinic in Bad Steben, Germany since 1982.

Werner Leitner, Ph.D., is an expert in family court and a psychotherapist in Küps-Theisenort, Germany. He teaches developmental psychology at Leipzig University and has taught at Dresden University in the Institute of Pedagogical and Developmental Psychology. For ten years he served as an educational scientist at Bamberg University and Giessen University.

Jeffery M. Leving, J.D., received his Juris Doctor from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. He concentrates on matrimonial law and fathers rights. He is co-author of the Illinois Joint Custody law, author of the book *Fathers' Rights*, and serves as an expert on government panels and local and network television and radio programs.

David L. Levy, J.D., is President of the Children's Rights Council, a national child advocacy organization based in the Washington, D.C. area. CRC has existed since 1985, and has chapters in 32 U.S. states, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, and Sierra Leone. Levy has contributed as an editor in this area as well.

Demosthenes Lorandos, Ph.D., J.D., is a clinical psychologist and attorney. He is a member of the State Bar of Michigan, California, New York, and the United States Supreme Court. He has written two law and science books with psychologist Terence Campbell. Currently, he is completing his third training text for lawyers and judges.

Ludwig F. Lowenstein, M.A., Ph.D., obtained his M.A. and Doctorate in Psychology and Education at University of London. His background includes work in mental hospitals, child guidance clinics, and residential care centers for maladjusted adolescents. He has been an examiner for more than 40 years. His appointments include being a chief psychologist for the county of Hampshire.

Jayne A. Major, Ph.D., is the author of *Breakthrough Parenting: A Revolutionary New Way to Raise Children*. She specializes in educational programs for high-risk, in-crisis families. She teaches, consults, and appears as an expert witness in child custody disputes. Dr. Major is the founder of Breakthrough Parenting, Inc.

Deirdre Rand, Ph.D., is a forensic psychologist who specializes in Munchausen syndrome by proxy and other complex forms of child abuse. She is known for her two part review, "The Spectrum of Parental Alienation Syndrome." Dr. Rand and Dr. Randy Rand collaborated with Leona Kopetski on a follow-up study on interventions.

Randy Rand, Ed.D., is the clinical director for The Rachel Foundation, providing reintegration services for parent abducted and severely alienated children and their families. He is also the developer of Behavioral Personnel Assessment Devices (B-PAD), which is used by police and public safety departments throughout the United States and Canada.

S. Richard Sauber, Ph.D., holds Diplomates in Clinical and Family Psychology, ABPP. He was professor of psychology in the departments of psychiatry at the medical schools of Brown, Penn and Columbia. Trained at Harvard, he has written/edited 16 books and is the Editor of *The American Journal of Family Therapy*.

Lena Hellblom Sjögren, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and practices as an investigative psychologist in family and criminal courts. She has investigated PAS cases and worked to educate legal professionals since her first published work about PAS in 1997 and investigation of reliability in sexual criminal cases.

Barbara Sobal, J.D., is a graduate of N.Y.U. Law School and fellow of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. She has experience in more than 350 Hague Convention cases, and is a frequent lecturer, author, and television speaker. She has consultative status with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Wilfried von Boch-Galhau, M.D., specializes in psychiatry, neurology and psychotherapy. Practicing in Germany, he is a member of the interdisciplinary working group, "Counselling for Parents of Divorce and Separation." He was one of the organizing members of the international Parental Alienation Syndrome Conference in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2002.

Richard A. Warshak, Ph.D., is a clinical and research psychologist, Clinical Professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and author of a text on custody. He serves on the Editorial Board of Family Court Review, has published extensively on divorce, and consults with attorneys throughout the world.

FOREWORD

This is an important book and I am honored to write its Foreword. Richard A. Gardner, M.D. first described *parental alienation syndrome* (PAS) in his text, *The Parental Alienation Syndrome and the Differentiation Between Fabricated and Genuine Child Sex Abuse*, in 1987. Previously, he had used the terminology “the brainwashed child” as the “active program of vociferous condemnation” in his book, *Family Evaluation in Child Custody Litigation* (1982). He made reference to J.W. Duncan’s discussion of the “brainwashing parent” in 1978. Dr. Gardner was the founder and tireless articulator and advocate of the concept as well as of its diagnosis and treatment. I say “was” because of Dr. Gardner’s untimely death in May of 2003. Although most psychological concepts evoke little response, PAS has struck a cord in the professional and lay community, with most holding rather strong opinions about it.

Regardless of one’s position on PAS, it is hard to deny the far-reaching implications it has had in the five basic human service delivery systems (Cf. Sauber, 1983). Most notable and obvious has been its impact on family law and in family mental health. Besides these, PAS has had considerable impact on the criminal justice system in terms of petitions for domestic violence, restraining orders, false police reports filed, etc. Its impact on the social welfare system is commonly exemplified in state agencies or departments of child and family services which are called upon to differentiate child abuse and neglect from fabricated complaints, as well as to file reports to the civil court. It should be noted that such state agencies typically have their own mental health evaluators and anger managers who are called upon to fulfill these agencies’ legal mandate of “impartiality” and “protection.” Furthermore, the mental health system is directly involved in the evaluation and treatment aspects before, during, or after the discovery and identification of the PAS phenomenon. Other human service delivery systems described by the contributors to this book include health care and education. It should not be surprising that symptoms related to PAS are reported by health care providers such as pediatricians, gynecologists, internists and family practitioners. In addition, children’s and adolescent’s grades decline as family conflicts intensify and the minors internalize and act out their parents’ own power struggles. The point is that the impact and implications of PAS are immense.

Because of its far-reaching effects, it has now become incumbent on the mental health community to learn about PAS and how to diagnose and treat it. Despite its widespread harm to children and family members, confusion about PAS remains. For example, the terms “parental alienation” and “parental alienation syndrome” are mistakenly used synonymously. Similarly, controversy remains about PAS as mental health experts and family law attorneys debate its existence and the harmful effects that alienation has on the entire family. Accordingly, Dr. Gardner endeavored to further clarify and operationalize the terminology both in a seminal publication in the *American Journal of Family Therapy* (2002) as well as in this book. Without a doubt, this book represents the definitive statement of PAS to date and should be of inestimable value to the professional reader, particularly those in the mental health field.

It should be noted that the contributors to this remarkable handbook are distinguished leaders in this cutting edge, interdisciplinary field. Many of them have offered expert testimony in court. Many have lectured to the professional community at association meetings and conventions. All of these distinguished contributors have collaborated in producing this definitive text. This group of international experts has worked to provide important perspectives on several different clinical and forensic challenges regarding PAS. Needless to say, these challenges are inevitable in legal family systems because of the inherent adversarial and conflictual nature—regardless of one’s entry point or one’s view. No other single source that provides the depth and breadth of coverage of the topic than the clinically and forensically valuable chapters in this book.

Although Dr. Gardner’s name is typically associated with, and has even become synonymous with PAS, it is important to note that his life’s work and commitment were much broader. Indeed, Dr. Gardner’s primary passion was, above all else, to the health and well-being of all children. He was a giant among his peers in advocating for the humane care, treatment, and basic rights of children. With the great loss and unexpected passing of Dr. Gardner, the torch is now passed to others to continue to write, research, teach, testify and advocate for children in complex divorce situations. Although this book was not initially intended to be Dr. Gardner’s final contribution to the professional community, it serves as a fitting tribute and memorial to a courageous pioneer. It also serves to acknowledge the contributions of some of the many colleagues whom he mentored and collaborated with over the years.

Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D.
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
Medical College of Wisconsin

REFERENCES

- Duncan, J.W. (1978). Medical, psychological, and legal aspects of the child custody disputes. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 53, 463–468.
- Gardner, R.A. (1982). *Family evaluation in child custody litigation*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Creative Therapeutics.
- Gardner, R.A. (1985). Recent trends in divorce and litigation. *Academy Forum*, 29(2), 3–7.
- Gardner, R.A. (1987). *The parental alienation syndrome and the differentiation between fabricated and genuine child sex abuse*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Creative Therapeutics.
- Gardner, R.A. (2002). Parental alienation syndrome vs. parental alienation: Which diagnosis should be used in child custody litigation? *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 30(2), 101–123.
- Sauber, S. R. (1983). *The human services delivery system: Mental health, criminal justice, social welfare, education, and health services*. New York: Columbia University Press.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Foreword – Len Sperry</i>	xi
<i>Chapter</i>	
SECTION I – CONCEPTS	
1. INTRODUCTION	5
<i>Richard A. Gardner</i>	
2. PAS AS A FAMILY TRAGEDY: ROLES OF FAMILY MEMBERS, PROFESSIONALS, AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM	12
<i>S. Richard Sauber</i>	
3. THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME AND THE CORRUPTIVE POWER OF ANGER	33
<i>Richard A. Gardner</i>	
4. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE MILD, MODERATE, AND SEVERE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	49
<i>Janelle Burrill</i>	
5. PAS AS A CHILD AGAINST SELF	56
<i>Richard B. Austin, Jr.</i>	
6. INCIDENCE, GENDER, AND FALSE ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE: DATA ON 84 PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME CASES	65
<i>Leona M. Kopetski, Deirdre Conway Rand, and Randy Rand</i>	
7. PAS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: PROBLEMS IN RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT	71
<i>Tony Hobbs</i>	

8. PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME – AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	90
<i>Daniel S. Gottlieb</i>	
9. PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN GERMANY	108
<i>Werner Leitner and Annelie Künneth</i>	
10. RECOGNITION OF PAS IN AUSTRALIA	121
<i>Sandra S. Berns</i>	
11. PAS IN COMPULSORY PUBLIC CUSTODY CONFLICTS	131
<i>Lena Hellblom Sjögren</i>	
12. THE NEED FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS AND POLICY MAKERS TO RESPOND TO PAS: A NEGLECTED FORM OF CHILD ABUSE	153
<i>David L. Levy</i>	
13. FACTORS AFFECTING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE CHILD AND TARGET PARENT	163
<i>Deirdre Conway Rand and Randy Rand</i>	
SECTION II – CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
14. FUTURE PREDICTIONS ON THE FATE OF PAS CHILDREN: WHAT HATH ALIENATORS WROUGHT?	179
<i>Richard A. Gardner</i>	
15. THE ROLE OF MEDICAL REPORTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	195
<i>Walter Andritzky</i>	
16. THE MISDIAGNOSIS OF PAS	209
<i>Barry Brody</i>	
17. FAMILY THERAPY FOR PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERLOCKING PATHOLOGIES	228
<i>Craig A. Everett</i>	

18. SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD CUSTODY DISPUTES	242
<i>William Bernet</i>	
19. PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST-ASSISTED DETECTION OF PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	264
<i>Barry Bricklin and Gail Elliott</i>	
20. HELPING CLIENTS DEAL WITH PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	276
<i>Jayne A. Major</i>	
21. BEYOND PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME: RECONCILING THE ALIENATED CHILD AND THE LOST PARENT	286
<i>Glenn F. Cartwright</i>	
22. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AND TREATMENT OF THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	292
<i>Ludwig F. Lowenstein</i>	
23. WHAT MOTIVATES PARENTS TO INDOCTRINATE THEIR CHILDREN WITH PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME? A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC	302
<i>Eduard Bakalář</i>	
24. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF PAS INDOCTRINATION FOR ADULT CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND THE EFFECTS OF ALIENATION ON PARENTS	310
<i>Wilfred von Boch-Galhau and Ursula Kodjoe</i>	
25. RELUCTANCE TO VERIFY PAS AS A LEGITIMATE SYNDROME	323
<i>Janelle Burrill</i>	
SECTION III – LEGAL ISSUES	
26. PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME IN AMERICAN LAW	333
<i>Demosthenes Lorandos</i>	

27. SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PARENTAL ALIENATION: EXAMINING THE DISPUTES AND THE EVIDENCE	352
<i>Richard A. Warshak</i>	
28. CRITICISM OF PAS IN COURTS OF LAW: HOW TO DEAL WITH IT AND WHY IT OCCURS	372
<i>Barry Brody</i>	
29. COMMENTARY: PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME	378
<i>Leona M. Kopetski</i>	
30. THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME AND GENDER BIAS IN THE COURTS	391
<i>Jeffery M. Leving</i>	
31. PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME: DETRACTORS AND THE JUNK SCIENCE VACUUM	397
<i>Demosithenes Lorandos</i>	
32. PROTECTING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME AND FAMILY LAW REFORM	419
<i>R. Christopher Barden</i>	
33. PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME AND INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION: A MULTIGENERATIONAL SYNDROME	433
<i>Barbara Bevando Sobal</i>	
34. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF EXPERTS GIVING EVIDENCE TO COURTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: PAS AND THE EXPERTS' FAILURE TO COMPLY	439
<i>Tony Hobbs</i>	
<i>Index</i>	451

**THE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK
OF PARENTAL ALIENATION
SYNDROME**

Section I
CONCEPTS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

RICHARD A. GARDNER
May, 2003

Since the 1970s, we have witnessed a burgeoning of child-custody disputes unparalleled in history. This increase has primarily been the result of two recent developments in the realm of child-custody litigation: the replacement of the tender-years presumption with the best-interests-of-the-child presumption and the increasing popularity of the joint-custodial concept. The assumption was made that mothers, by virtue of the fact that they are female, are intrinsically superior to men as child-rearers. Accordingly, the father had to provide to the court compelling evidence of serious maternal deficiencies before the court would even consider assigning primary custodial status to the father. Under its replacement, the best-interests-of-the-child presumption, the courts were instructed to ignore gender in custodial considerations and evaluate only parenting capacity, especially factors that related to the best interests of the child. This change resulted in a burgeoning of custody litigation as fathers now found themselves with a greater opportunity to gain primary custodial status. Soon thereafter the joint-custodial concept became popular, eroding even further the time that custodial mothers were given with their children. Again, this change also brought about an increase and intensification of child-custody litigation.

PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

Definition of Parental Alienation Syndrome

In association with this burgeoning of child-custody litigation, we have witnessed a dramatic increase in the frequency of a disorder rarely seen previously, which I refer to as the parental alienation syndrome (PAS).

In this disorder we see not only programming (“brainwashing”) of the child by one parent to denigrate the other parent, but self-created contributions by the child in support of the alienating parent’s campaign of denigration against the alienated parent. Because of the child’s contribution I did not consider the terms *brainwashing*, *programming*, or other equivalent words to be applicable. Accordingly, in 1985, I introduced the term *parental alienation syndrome* to cover the *combination* of these two contributing factors (Gardner, 1985, 1986, 1987). In accordance with this use of the term I suggest this definition of the parental alienation syndrome:

The *parental alienation syndrome* (PAS) is a disorder that arises primarily in the context of child-custody disputes. Although the dispute is most often between the parents, it can arise in other types of conflicts over child custody, e.g., parent vs. stepparent, parent vs. grandparent, parent vs. relative, etc. Its primary manifestation is the child’s campaign of denigration against a parent, a campaign that has no justification against a good, loving parent. It results from the *combination* of a programming (brainwashing) parent’s indoctrinations and the child’s own contributions to the vilification of the target parent. When true parental abuse and/or neglect is present, the child’s animosity may be justified, and so the parental alienation syndrome explanation for the child’s hostility is not applicable. Inducing a parental alienation syndrome into a child is a form of emotional abuse because it can result in the attenuation and even destruction of the child’s bond with a good, loving parent. (Gardner, 1998)

Although PAS certainly existed prior to the 1980s, it was relatively uncommon, especially because, as mentioned, its ubiquity is primarily the result of the aforementioned recent developments regarding how the courts determine primary custodial parental status.