

PARENTAL ALIENATION IN HIGH-CONFLICT CUSTODY DISPUTES

A Casebook of
Forensic Psychological Evaluation

STEVEN P. LINDENBERG



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HIGH-CONFLICT CUSTODY DISPUTES**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven P. Lindenberg, Ph.D., is a counselor, forensic evaluator, and consultant with nearly 50 years of experience in clinical assessment, forensic evaluation, and family systems intervention. He is the Founder of the Professional Alliance for Child-Centered Safety, an organization dedicated to protecting the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of children by addressing harmful practices, promoting family healing, and guiding reform through lived experience and evidence-based standards grounded in integrity, science, and child-first principles in family court practices.¹

Dr. Lindenberg has served as a court-appointed forensic evaluator in hundreds of contested custody proceedings across multiple jurisdictions, providing expert testimony and written evaluations to family courts, appellate tribunals, and interdisciplinary professional bodies. His forensic practice has encompassed a broad spectrum of clinical presentations, including parental alienation, Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another, traumatic brain injury sequelae, cross-cultural custody disputes, and court-ordered reunification therapy.

A recognized authority in the forensic assessment of parental alienation, Dr. Lindenberg developed the Lindenberg-Vesell Parental Alienation Survey (L-V PAS) in collaboration with colleague, Hillary Vesell, Esquire, providing practitioners with a structured behavioral instrument for the systematic quantification of alienating conduct. He subsequently developed the Lindenberg Model for Outpatient Reunification Therapy—a two-phase, court-coordinated clinical protocol for the treatment of moderate-to-severe parental alienation.

Dr. Lindenberg holds advanced training in psychological assessment, family systems theory, forensic methodology, family mediation, and collaborative divorce. He has provided professional consultation, supervision, and continuing education to mental health professionals, attorneys, and judicial officers throughout his career. He has contributed to the professional literature on forensic practice, parental alienation, and clinical ethics.

¹<https://PACCS.Global>

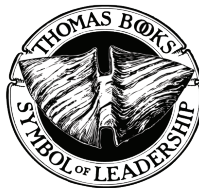
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*To Linda, my best friend and wife, without whose
support and love I would have accomplished little.*

PREFACE

This casebook emerged from years of practice at the intersection of counseling, forensic assessment, and family law. The cases collected here represent some of the most challenging, instructive, and consequential work that forensic allied mental health professionals are called upon to perform: the evaluation of families in crisis, where children's lives and futures are shaped by decisions made in courtrooms and consultation rooms alike.

Parental alienation—child abuse through the systematic undermining of a child's relationship with one parent by the other—is among the most damaging and contested phenomena in family court practice. It is an insidious form of child abuse that can result in a lifetime of trauma. Yet it is also among the most frequently misidentified, misunderstood, and mishandled. The cases in this volume have been selected from the author's almost 50 years of practice precisely because they resist easy categorization. Some involve clear alienating conduct backed by converging evidence from multiple sources. Others involve allegations that, upon careful examination, prove unsupported. Still others present layered cultural, psychiatric, and developmental complexity that defies simple clinical formulas.

The nine case studies assembled here have been arranged in order of increasing clinical complexity, beginning with foundational presentations of parental alienation dynamics and progressing through cases involving false allegations, appellate review, Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (FDIA), dual parental psychopathology, cross-cultural identity, second-opinion methodology, severe psychiatric impairment in a multicultural context, court-ordered reunification therapy, and culminating in a full presentation of the Lindenberg Model for Outpatient Reunification Therapy. Together, they form a curriculum in forensic practice—one grounded not in abstract principle but in the lived complexity of real families.

All cases have been fully anonymized to protect the privacy of all parties, including the minor children. The evaluations and reunification therapy described were conducted under court order in accordance with applicable ethical guidelines and professional standards. They are presented here for educational and clinical training purposes only.

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