

JEFFREY W. REICHERT

\* IN THE

PETITIONER

\* CIRCUIT COURT

V.

\* FOR

GRANT L. REICHERT

\* BALTIMORE COUNTY

RESPONDENT

\* CASE NO.:

\* \* \* \* \*

**PETITION FOR EMANCIPATION OF MINOR BY PARENT**

The Petitioner, (“Petitioner” or “Father”), by and through his attorneys, Alexis Sisolak, Esquire, and the Law Offices of James E. Crawford, Jr., and Associates, LLC files this Petition for Emancipation of Minor by Parent (“Petition”) and states as follows:

1. The Petitioner is an adult citizen and has been a resident of Virginia for more than six (6) months prior to the filing of this Petition.
2. The Petitioner is the legal guardian and the Father of Respondent, Grant Lyle Reichert (“Respondent”).
3. The Respondent is a minor and a resident of Baltimore County, Maryland, thus allowing this Court to have proper jurisdiction over this matter.
4. Prior to residing at this address, Respondent lived at 3812 Bruce Road, Chesapeake, VA 23321, with Petitioner from June 2021 through February 2, 2022. Since then, Respondent has never wavered in his desire to move back to Virginia.

5. The Respondent currently resides with his Mother, Sarah Hornbeck, and her boyfriend, John Michel, at 3735 Clarks Point Rd., Middle River, Maryland 21220. Mr. Michel owns the house and pays for all the bills for the Respondent.
6. The Respondent was born on November 7, 2009.
7. The Respondent is fifteen (15) years and one (1) month of age.
8. The Respondent, for the past five (5) years of his life been in the middle of an extremely contentious custody dispute between his parents, where each parent has filed multiple custody modifications and Protective Orders against the other, essentially placing him squarely in the middle of warring factions.
9. The Respondent is experiencing extreme emotional and mental mistreatment from his mother and John Michel which he will not have to experience upon emancipation. He has been under such trauma since February 2, 2022.
10. The Petitioner avers that Respondent will be able to provide himself with a place to live independently. The property where the Respondent will reside at is 3824 Bruce Road, Chesapeake, Virginia 23321. There will be no living expenses required to be paid for Respondent to reside there.
11. Because of the minimal living expenses required, the Petitioner avers that Respondent will be able to support himself financially through his sale of goods on the property via internet commerce, selling fishing bait and lawn

maintenance on the property, which the minor child has made substantial sums doing in the past.

12. The Petitioner avers that Respondent will be able to complete high school through his own effort and the help of his four (4) adult neighbors (all responsible parents and grandparents)- all living within 300 yards of his residence-who have all been involved in the minor child's life throughout most of his upbringing and own the residence he will live in.

13. The Petitioner avers that the school where Respondent is attending and participating in sports will be within walking distance to Respondent's residence. If he chooses to attend a school further away, the 4 adults will assist in transportation and in eleven (11) months when Respondent is eligible to obtain a Virginia Driver's License he will have his own vehicle which is already paid for.

14. The Petitioner avers that Respondent is mature enough to make decisions for himself and has considered judgment to do so.

15. Respondent has been clear in his desire **not** to live with his mother and her mistreatment of Respondent is well-documented. See Exhibit 1 the February 21, 2024 CPS Report.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Respondent states to the investigator in relevant part that "I can't stress this enough. I miss my dad. I haven't had a normal conversation with him since last November. I can't do anything... My dad's my hero. He raised me till I was twelve He's raised me, and I want to be with him. I feels like I was stripped away from it I still want to go to school in Virginia, and I talk with my friends from there It feels like my future's getting thrown out and it's out of my control." Grant said that the last time he talked to a judge was 2/2/21, which was the last time he saw his father. He said the courts did not allow him to say goodbye; he said it made him feel "sad", adding "Just to think about what I could be doing right now as a kid... I had it all Now it feels like it's just gone. They won't even tell me [what's going on]. It feels like they're destroying me just to get back at him. No one tells me

16. The Respondent has been featured on Youtube videos regarding his desire to not live with his mother, and the custody court's refusal to hear the Respondent's preference.<sup>2</sup>
17. In June 2023 CPS there was a CPS Report where Respondent said he was going to kill himself. Petitioner has been repeatedly denied a copy of this CPS report upon request.
18. Multiple Protective Orders have been sought on Respondent's behalf or by Respondent himself in August 2020, October 2020, July 2021, December 2021, October 2023, and December 2023. See Exhibits 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, the Protective Order Petitions.
19. The Protective Order Respondent sought against John Michel in December of 2021 was granted.
20. Respondent has tried to run away two (2) times in the past fifteen (15) months due to his mother's and John Michel's mistreatment.

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anything, and I'm just left in the dark. I just want to go home." Grant said that the only thing he has been told about why he has not been able to see his father, was because his father would not let him see his mother. He said that when he was first taken by his mom, the court issued a 90 day no contact order where he could not speak to his father. This Worker asked him the miracle question ("If you could wake up tomorrow and everything was perfect, tell me what that would look like.") Grant responded by saying: "I would go back to my dad From there I would try to pick up where I left off [going to school in Virginia]. I would start by playing football with the local high schools. I would go fishing I would ride my jetski around and go fishing and sell fish. [Dad] said if I ever came back I could get a dirt bike and a boat. Basically a kid's paradise." Grant said he would not want to cut off contact with his mother, but he said he wants to back to his father's home. Grant said that his education is important to him, and that going to school back in Virginia would be beneficial for his education and his extracurriculars. He feels that having to live with his mother stripped him away from that, and finds that the fact that he lost his opportunities due to a custody dispute is "absurd".

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcz5QX\\_UA-g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcz5QX_UA-g) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxaMm1eGj18>

21. Respondent attempted to run away and called the police for assistance at the end of May in 2023, when his mother and John Michel were drinking and engaging in verbal abuse and physical intimidation. Upon being returned to his mother by the police (due to Petitioner having no legal custody) his mother responded by immediately taking away Respondent's cell phone, contrary to prior Court Order.
22. Following Respondent's attempt to run away in May of 2023, Baltimore County DSS was contacted and opened an investigation during which they interviewed Respondent at his school, however, Respondent's mother was informed of the interview and what Respondent said during that interview and Respondent's mother and John Michel forced Respondent, with physical force, into a vehicle and took him to a secluded cabin in Upstate New York with no electricity or cellular service where Respondent was kept in isolation with his mother's father, Richard Hornbeck, for two (2) weeks.
23. Petitioner had no contact with Respondent during the two (2) weeks Respondent was kept in isolation and did not know where Respondent was until law enforcement from two (2) different States were able to locate the Respondent.
24. After Respondent was kept in isolation for two (2) weeks with Richard Hornbeck, Respondent was sent to an overnight camp in Northern Maine for the rest of summer.

25. Based on the foregoing events, Respondent has taken the position that Respondent's mother and John Michel have falsely imprisoned the Respondent.
26. During Respondent's time at overnight camp his only way of communicating with Petitioner was via email, which Respondent did.
27. Petitioner responded to emails received from Respondent under the guidance and counsel of Petitioner's therapist and offering love and support to Respondent.
28. Respondent's mother found the emails between Respondent and Petitioner that Respondent sent , and she filed Contempt Motions against Petitioner making false allegations that Petitioner told Respondent to "beat her up" and requesting Petitioner be put in prison.
29. As a result of the Contempt Motions filed by Respondent's mother, Petitioner was found in Contempt due to informing the Respondent of his intent to file for a Modification of Custody, thereby involving the Respondent in Custody Proceedings, and as a result Petitioner was only allowed supervised phone calls with Respondent, to be supervised by Petitioner's mother, Carolyn Reichert, a retired elementary school principal with degrees in child psychology.
30. After Petitioner's mother supervised numerous phone calls without incident, as a mandatory reporter she called the Baltimore County Police to do a wellness check on Respondent and called Baltimore County DSS to

report child abuse based on what she heard from Respondent about the way that Respondent's mother and John Michel were treating the Respondent at the end of October in 2023.

31. Immediately after Petitioner's mother contacted the authorities, Respondent's mother took Respondent's phone from him and prevented him from having any further phone calls with Petitioner until December 19, 2023, when Respondent spoke with Petitioner on the phone and Respondent's mother and John Michel recorded the call to use against Respondent and Petitioner in violation of the prior Court Order.
32. Respondent's mother has continued to interfere, take cell phones away from Respondent, and listen in on or audio record Respondent's phone calls against Respondent's wishes and in violation of Court Orders.
33. Based on the foregoing events and with support of the above stated witnesses, Respondent has taken the position that he was neglected by his mother and John Michel.
34. Respondent has tried to run away two (2) times in the past fifteen (15) months due to his mother's and John Michel's mistreatment.
35. Respondent sent a birthday card/present to Petitioner through a friend at school in April 2024 stating his desire get away from John Michel, his mother's live-in boyfriend. See Exhibit 8.
36. Respondent has tried to "sneak" contact with Petitioner in various apps. See Exhibit 9, communications records.

37. Respondent has reached out over email indicating that he wishes to speak to his father, but his mother will not let him or is monitoring him. See Exhibit 10.
38. Respondent has been told by John Michel and others that if he “calls his dad [Petitioner], his dad will go to jail”. This is particularly traumatizing since Respondent’s mother has filed twenty-six (26) false criminal charges in July 2020, resulting in Petitioner being violently arrested multiple times in front of Respondent, causing him severe and pronounced distress, making Respondent extremely fearful of his mother and scared to take any against her opinions while in her home. All of the charges were filed falsely and were either dropped or dismissed.
39. Even though Respondent knows he is legally ordered to, and has a desire to speak to Petitioner, Respondent is not permitted to speak to Petitioner or contact him in any way and when he makes attempts, he is ridiculed and threatened with legal action against Petitioner by both his mother and John Michel. His mother and John Michel physically intimidated him in an attempt to listen to the calls on speaker phone and record them.
40. Respondent’s mother has maliciously taken and destroyed two (2) of his mobile phones that she did not pay for, effectively stealing and destroying his property.



41. A CPS report was made by Respondent to Baltimore County CPS in May 2023, but nothing was done and, despite numerous requests by Petitioner, CPS has heretofore failed to produce any record of investigation.
42. Another CPS report was made by the minor child's grandmother in October 2023. See Exhibit 11. Affidavit forthcoming
43. Baltimore County District Court ordered CPS to investigate the abuse the minor child was claiming in the December 2023 Protective Order proceeding within 30 days. CPS did not begin their investigation until February 2024. See Exhibit 1, the CPS investigation result.
44. In February 2024, the interview was not done in person, it was done over Zoom for 20 minutes, while the alleged abuser (his mother) was sitting in the next room- violating all rules and laws associated with this situation.
45. The Petitioner avers that it is appropriate to give Respondent the power to make his own decisions.
46. Despite Respondent's multiple claims and attempts at getting relief from the mistreatment, he has not been able to get long term relief by any other means and emancipation is thus, his only other option.
47. All more restrictive means, including those through the family court system have been exhausted and have not allowed the Respondent to speak for himself.

48. The Petitioner avers that he does not wish to abandon Respondent and would continue to be available to his son as a resource even after emancipation.

49. The Petitioner avers that Respondent has been diagnosed with mental health disorders including anxiety, depression, and PTSD and has been recommended by the Court to receive weekly court-ordered therapy and medical treatment in June 2021, September 2021, December 2021, February 2022. See Exhibits 12<sup>3</sup>, 13<sup>4</sup>, 14<sup>5</sup>, and 16<sup>6</sup>, transcripts regarding therapy.

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<sup>3</sup> On June 7, 2021 the Judge addressed therapy for the Respondent on Page 151 Line 1 – 2 “clearly, that everyone needs reunification and therapy when discussing whether the Court would hear from the Minor Child and on Page 236 Line 4 “I’m hoping that therapy will begin.”

<sup>4</sup> On September 2, 2021 the judge addressed therapy for the Respondent on Page 81 Line 1 – 17 stating that reunification therapy and psychiatry begin because the Judge found “it’s important, I think, that that start happening.” Again on Page 81 Line 14 – 17 “But the hearing sheet should say that it’s on Ms. Hornbeck’s responsibility to try to start scheduling both the reunification and psychiatrist as soon as possible because they’re both in Maryland, okay?” And also on Page 148 Line 15 – 18 “Therapy shall be in Maryland. That Mom will try to do it at times when she has the child. If the times are not available, she’ll try to do it remotely or as close as possible to her times with the child.” And further on Page 155 Line 13 – 17 “Plaintiff is to make best efforts to reschedule reunification therapy with Dr. Vernon, and therapist appointments with Martin Schnuit, during the times the minor child is with the Mother. Therapy should be in Maryland. If times are not available with therapist while minor child is with Mother, Mother shall try to establish either remote appointments or appointments as close in time to Mother’s time with the minor child as possible. A Best Interest Attorney is also recommended by the Judge on Page 54 Line 2 – 6 “I mean it’s certainly irregular that you have a court order for a best interest attorney to do something and then nobody pays him and he’s gone, so that needs to be addressed. It is clear that the Respondent has not been properly heard and has not been properly cared for, even when expressly ordered by the Court.

<sup>5</sup> On December 14, 2021 the Judge addressed therapy for the Respondent on Page 20 Line 15 – 16 The Court took note that it previously ordered reunification therapy and received confirmation that it had in fact started but this was not maintained.

<sup>6</sup> On February 2, 2022 the Judge addressed therapy for the Respondent on Page 104 Line 2 – 5 The Court directs the child’s therapist, Andy Smith, to communicate with mom at mom’s request. And again addresses the need on Page 174 Line 3 – 7 “I believe at this point in time it’s in Grant’s best interest to have one opportunity to be alone with his mother and without his father for the 90 days they’ve proposed and get him into therapy and just try this one time to develop a relationship.”

50. The Respondent was also ordered to have a Best Interest Attorney during the proceedings and expressed a strong interest in having Nikola Sybblis who was the appointed BIA for the Baltimore City case, which lasted ten (10) years, and assisted in finalizing (and was a signatory) to the Final Consent Order that was supposed to end all litigation between the parties by way of a mandatory mediation clause.
51. After only eight (8) months Respondent's mother filed for a Modification of Custody and the parties were right back in court.
52. Ms. Sybliss would have been the obvious choice to serve as BIA since she had the entire prior ten (10) year period already in her purview and only eight (8) months had lapsed.
53. Respondent had met and was comfortable with Ms. Sybliss, but the Court then elected to appoint a Best Interest Attorney of their own choosing and refused to hear from Respondent on the matter at all.
54. Despite these court orders, the only record of Respondent's therapy treatment was when Respondent lived in Virginia with the Petitioner and ended in February 2022. See Exhibit 17.
55. This extreme disregard for his serious medical condition by Respondent's Mother is not only depriving him of his much-needed care, but his current living situation is only exasperating his mental disability.

56. That the failure to provide necessary medical treatment for a diagnosed mental health condition is a violation of the Respondent's ADA rights that the Respondent's mother continues to perpetrate against him.
57. Petitioner is unable to provide for this treatment at this time as he does not have legal custody of the minor child and has not been able to have substantive access over the last three years, nor has he had any access to the Respondent's medical records in that time.
58. Thus, through emancipation, the Respondent will be able to seek his own medical treatment and therapy.
59. The Petitioner avers that Respondent's Mother has been alienating Respondent from the Petitioner. Respondent has not been able to access Petitioner for the past three (3) years. Thus, emancipating Respondent will prevent further alienation and allow Respondent to reconnect with Petitioner if he so desires.
60. The Petitioner avers that Respondent's Mother and her live-in boyfriend have been abusing Respondent. Thus, emancipating Respondent will prevent further abuse.
61. The Petitioner avers that Respondent's Mother has been neglecting Respondent. Thus, emancipating Respondent will prevent further neglect.
62. There are no other persons who have an interest in the physical and legal custody of the Respondent besides Petitioner and the Respondent's mother at this time.

63. Respondent expressed his desire to emancipate as recently as October 2024, when he told his fraternal grandmother that “he only has to wait until he is 16”, and then he can leave and move back to Virginia.
64. For the above reasons, Petitioner wishes to voluntarily relinquish all his parental rights over Respondent, per *Holly v. Maryland Auto. Ins. Fund.*, 349 A.2d 670, 29 Md. App. 498 (1975).
65. For the above reasons, Petitioner files this Petition for Emancipation on his son’s behalf to involuntarily extinguish all of Respondent’s mother’s parental rights over Respondent and grant Respondent the ability to be free from the control of both his parents, per *Holly v. Maryland Auto. Ins. Fund.*, 349 A.2d 670, 29 Md. App. 498 (1975).
66. Respondent would be free to engage with and access his parents of his own volition and to form any relationship he wished if he were to be emancipated.
67. The Petitioner understands the ramifications of the Respondent becoming legally emancipated from the Petitioner’s parental rights.
68. No court has been willing to hear from Respondent regarding his needs and desires since November 2023, this petition is filed on Respondent’s behalf as a last resort to ensure the Respondent is able to have his needs met even if he will need to meet them himself.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Petitioner has been forced to file a federal suit to address the custody court’s refusal to adequately address the minor child’s or Petitioner’s medical needs. Brennan McCarthy is also a Defendant in this suit. The suit name is Reichert v. Hornbeck, et al ; 1:24-cv-01865.

**WHEREFORE**, the Petitioner, Jeffrey W. Reichert, hereby requests that this Honorable Court:

- A. **GRANT** the Petition for Emancipation of Minor by Parent; and
- B. **ORDER** that the Respondent, Grant L. Reichert, be legally emancipated from his Father and legal guardian, Jeffrey W. Reichert, based on a voluntary relinquishment of parental rights by the Petitioner; and
- C. **ORDER** that a hearing be held on the emancipation of Respondent; and
- D. **ORDER** that the Respondent, Grant L. Reichert, be legally emancipated from his Mother and legal guardian, Sarah Hornbeck, based on the claims by Respondent; and
- E. **ORDER** any such other and further relief as the nature of this cause requires.

I HEREBY DECLARE OR AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF.

*Jeff Reichert*

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Jeffrey W. Reichert, Petitioner

Respectfully submitted,

*Alexis Sisolak*

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Alexis Sisolak, Esquire

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