

## **A Drugged Child Horror Story**

**From CrazyRn**

**7-7-3**

If a stranger on the street came up to me and my child with a package of cocaine and offered to give my child a free month's supply, I'd have him arrested. AFTER I beat the living mess out of him. How DARE someone I don't know offer dangerous, mind altering drugs to my child with me standing right there?

Yet I sat there in that school psychologist's office when my son was a mere five years old listening to this woman I'd never met before tell me my son had Attention Deficit Disorder and needed to be put on Ritalin so that he could concentrate more in class, stop fidgeting and disrupting.

I sat forward in my seat, a confused look on my face. Fidgeting? Disrupting? Lack of concentration? I voiced my concern to the psychologist that there was a health problem with my son, that two years earlier he and our family had suffered through a severe toxic poisoning of carbon monoxide for almost three months that left everyone dazed for some time afterwards. Perhaps, I told her, he was simply having after effects of the poisoning and wasn't quite himself yet. I'd already heard from a neurologist that toxic poisoning can cause possible brain damage, concentration difficulties and irritability. Could that not be a possibility? Definitely not, she stated. She had observed Daniel in class many times and he had all the classic signs of ADHD, and was certain it was Daniel's difficulty. She said that she had spoken with the teacher and the teacher agreed with her. No, she said, Daniel needed to be put on Ritalin to control his outbursts and concentration problems.

She gave me a form she had filled out showing a long list of symptoms, each with a nasty little checkmark beside it that she had filled out and signed while observing Daniel, and I was to give it to the pediatrician when asking for my son to be put on the medication.

Still skeptical, I didn't make an appointment for my son right away. I saw no signs of ADHD at home. Yes, he had a temper, but what child doesn't? Yes, he fought with his brother and sisters. But what child doesn't? He could sit and watch an entire thirty minutes of cartoons on Sunday, he could sit and look at a comic book about Spiderman for over twenty minutes and not make a peep. My son? ADHD?? Not in this lifetime, I remember thinking.

Two weeks later, the school psychologist called me at home asking me if I'd had a chance to get to the pediatrician. I told her I was still thinking about my options.

To this day, I can remember the chill down the back of my neck when the next words out of her mouth were a stern "Now, Mrs. Rosecrans, refusing to cooperate with the school system is not benefiting you or your son. We may have to move him to a Special Education class if you're not willing to put his education first, and in some states that's considered child abuse." I gripped the phone hard. The mere words "child abuse" brought on visuals of social service workers poking through my house, asking me millions of questions about how I fed the children, how I disciplined the children, forcing me and my husband to take parenting classes, and the possibility that they could even yank my child out of my home. I'd seen it happen to

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others. I'd heard the horror stories at Head Start a year earlier from other parents who dared go against the school. I was TERRIFIED. Just the mere thought of my little boy's face laying on a bed in some foster home crying because Mommy wasn't there filled my eyes with tears instantly.

I choked out quietly that I would speak to the pediatrician as soon as possible. Satisfied, the psychologist let me go. I sent a letter to the school the very next morning confirming that I would do as I was asked and take Daniel to the pediatrician for a checkup and possible medication.

Once again, though, a few days later, the horrors of pumping my child with medications without a full research into other possibilities scared me worse. So I began my own research into brain injury due to toxic poisonings, near drownings and asphyxiation. Sure enough, my son had symptoms related to brain injury, and we already suspected his father had possible brain injury as well.

Not even two weeks after the call, I got a letter from my son's teacher, stating that she had received my note about taking my son to the doctor and seeking advice on medications, and that she had not heard anything about it yet and needed to know more. I felt pushed again. I called my son's teacher, who told me that since the school psychologist who was trained to recognize ADHD stated Daniel was definitely an ADHD child, he simply had to be placed on medication that would CERTAINLY help him and help his grades or be placed in a special education class.

Again, I felt severely pressured, the undertones being "OR WE'RE GOING TO REPORT YOU". So I made an appointment with my son's pediatrician. Without so much as five minutes alone with my son, she handed me a prescription for Ritalin, smiled, and told me to contact her in two weeks to give an update on his progress. Then she simply left the room.

Fearing reprisal by Child Protective, and after an assurance from my son's pediatrician that Ritalin was prescribed daily for thousands of children all over the United States, I reluctantly asked my baby to put medication in his mouth and tiny body that was made from a derivative of cocaine. No information from the doctor about side effects, nor from the pharmacist. Just a cold piece of paper that read like scientific reports not meant for lay people to understand. Well..that and the words "Effectiveness in children under the age of 18 has not been established".

Yeah, that one got me scared, but not as scared as having my son yanked from me. The first two weeks, my son was a zombie. Just what they wanted, a quiet, compliant child. But there was no warmth there anymore. No heart. No fire. He didn't even seem like my son anymore. After that, the symptoms came back, this time with a vengeance. Another drug, Adderal, was added. Then another, Clonidine. Then the Ritalin was discontinued, and Wellbutrin added. Adderal removed, Xyprexa added.

It seemed that the more medicine they used, the worse he got. OH he'd be fine for a few weeks. But then it was like uncaging a monster. He started screaming. Waking up in the middle of the night hearing "voices". Psychotic episodes began to get more frequent. He had intense rage episodes brought on by nothing, destroying furniture and trying to kill himself and others.

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Finally, I removed my son from all medications. During the withdrawal, my son got worse. His father was going through the same thing, and suddenly I have a knock on my door from Social Services, stating my son has reported being belted by his father and that my son is not on medications as he is supposed to be. OH MY LORD, I thought, I'VE BEEN REPORTED FOR CHILD ABUSE!!!

A check of everything from our bedrooms, our bathrooms, even to our closets and refrigerators left them satisfied that my kids were at least healthy and happy, but they were concerned about the medicine situation. I told the workers that I felt my son was being harmed by it. They said I needed counseling and that they would be back in touch.

Fearing the worse, I packed up my two boys and left the state. Situations had already gotten so bad between their father and I we could no longer hold a decent conversation without either him or our son losing their temper and going into a rage. There was no more marriage. All my energy had been focused on a child who was threatening death and a husband that fed off my son's anger with his own.

Once I got to New Mexico, and my son off the drugs, he seemed to calm some. Even start showing signs of the sweet, funny, delightful little boy I knew I'd given birth to. After a month or so, it became obvious to me that my marriage was over. I wanted my two girls who I had left in New York with their father and grandmother to be with me. So a nasty custody battle ensued, with Child Protective, this time in New Mexico, combing every inch of my house to assure the children were safe.

Daniel again started having difficulties in school, unable to concentrate, and fidgety. Again, the same nightmare. Yet this school system was contacted by Child Protective in NY who advised them that my son should have been on medications, and again I was immediately pushed into drugging my son.

The strain was simply too much for the little fellow and he ended up in a psychiatric hospital for a few weeks to gain control of his emotions, brought on I suspected, by the new drug they had him on. SEREQUEL, a wonder drug, I was told.

Since my son was in the hospital and I was unable to attend the child custody hearing in New York, I lost custody of my precious babies. Their father, accused of child abuse by me and by Child Protective, was given custody of my children simply because I could not be there due to my son's emergency hospitalization by a judge who never met me, never heard my side, and never gave me a chance to reschedule.

Five agonizing months later, I was given custody back of my children due to their father's inability to control Daniel and happily took them back to New Mexico.

Once I got my son back to New Mexico, I found out another psychiatrist had agreed my son was ADHD and had put him on Tegretol and Clonipine.

I immediately removed the medicine and it brought out rage episodes while my son was detoxing from its effects. By this time, my son had several "labels" by different doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists. The main one being ADHD. They added Bipolar, ODD, IDS, and even Learning Disorder, completely ignoring my pleas that the child be checking for brain injury

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due to the carbon monoxide poisoning. They all seemed certain that my son was indeed ADHD and no one wanted to buck the trend.

Finally worn out from fighting Child Protective and school systems in two states, I felt myself wearing down, near to collapse. I moved me and my four children across country to Atlanta, Georgia to be with my mom and get her help. I had figured that if I said NOTHING to the schools, simply put my son in the age appropriate classes and show him security, love and affection, he'd do much better. I'd also made a promise to myself to find the best neurologist in the area and get his brain checked for damage.

When the records arrived from the other state, my son was instantly labeled "ADHD" by the school system, yanked from his normal class and put in Special Education. Once again Child Protective from THIS state came out to the house to demand I let them investigate to make sure the family was safe. They demanded I follow the instructions of the school psychiatrist and put my son on Zoloft, Risperdal and Adderal to control his outbursts, lack of concentration and his ADHD. I felt so defeated. So abused by three states and their systems put in place to PROTECT families and children.

Despite everything I had to go through in the last three years, losing my home, losing my security, having to support four children on my own financially and emotionally, despite having no social life and no one to turn to, I was still considering an unfit mother and under Child Protection once again in a third state, pushing me to medicate my son.

After three more emergency hospitalizations, four different medications including Depakote, Clonidine and Neurontin, trying to convince dozens of teachers, psychiatrists and psychologists that my son had possible brain injury and NOT ADHD, after losing every dime I had taking care of four children with no child support, after months of research into brain injured children, I gave up. I knew I had to move my children back to the State of New York where my ex husband would be forced to help me take care of their financial needs, their health needs, and their emotional needs. So back to NY we went.

Immediately, I was placed back on Child Protective with the local county. Almost as fast, my son again started having psychotic episodes that forced hospitalizations, one in a hospital over 80 miles away due to, I was convinced, OVERMEDICATION.

I continued my research into brain injury and made my thoughts known to the psychiatrist on staff at the hospital my son was taken to, who dismissed it as ridiculous. At that center, he was abused, forced to wipe with shower curtains, locked in time out rooms until he wet his pants, given shots of Thorazine along with doses of Benedryl by an undertrained staff to shut him up. After my complaints went unnoticed, I complained to the Office of Mental Health, who did a surprise inspection on the site, and found all the atrocities I and other parents had complained about and immediately forced the center to stop accepting children until the difficulties were resolved.

Three weeks of living hell for my baby, who by this time had been poked, prodded, examined and stolen from his mommy and siblings over seven times. A child who now longer trusted or wanted to comply with staff. Placed on Serequel and Neurontin, he became a zombie again.

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Seeing my son on a visit that day suddenly made me ANGRY. AND I MEAN I GOT MAD. I suddenly found myself demanding my son be given more attention. Demanding I get to talk to my son more often. Demanding to see his records, to which I was denied three times by the staff. Demanding that he be given a brain scan to test for injury before upping the dosage on his medication. To this day, I still have a recording of the doctor telling me that a brain scan would never be done at that facility and I should check into another venue for that, yet refused to decrease my son's medication for it. I was even told by the staff social worker that Daniel's problems were EMOTIONAL, caused by parents that were divorced, a mother that drug them across country three times, and a dysfunctional family life. I sure chewed her butt out that day, let me tell you. It felt GOOD.

Then the hospital threw my son out after three weeks because I was getting PUSHY. They claim the insurance company refused to pay for any further treatment, but the insurance company denied their statements, saying their own social worker had called to cancel Daniel's treatment.

Three weeks after I weaned my son of yet another drug cocktail, he began symptoms of withdrawal, became violent. He was taken from me again and put in a hospital over 3 hours away. My heart still breaks everytime I imagine that boy's horror in that long ambulance drive taking him away from mommy again.

There, the doctor listened to what I had to say about possible brain damage causing difficulties and medications causing symptoms to worsen. I even mentioned Dr. Gary Sach's report concerning the "kindling effect" of medications being stronger and stronger until a raging fire spewed that was nearly uncontrollable.

He was sympathetic, but uninterested. He placed my son on Zoloft and a week later, I had him back. And again, the same pattern. Once again, back in my arms, I knew that medication was not working for my son.

Yet this time I was under Social Services scrutiny almost daily, demanding to know whether or not I was giving my son the medication the doctor had prescribed. By this time, though, years of over-medication had brought on psychotic episodes and dangerous outbursts.

I contacted Kids Peace in Romulus, NY, who agreed to accept the child to help me straighten out the medication difficulties, help me get a brain scan to determine if it was medical or emotional, and give my son needed counseling and assistance in controlling himself. Seemed like a WONDERFUL setup. Finally, somebody willing to help me. A facility willing to listen to ME. The only difficulty was that all entrants had to be under foster care through Social Services.

Breaking my heart badly, I broke down and asked the local Social Services to temporarily take custody of my son so that he could be placed in this residential treatment center to help him detoxify and learn the real cause of his troubles.

Over 80 miles away, we drove with our son, all of us crying, and placed our baby in these people's 24 hour care. At first, everything was great. For three weeks he liked being secure, but the psychiatrist took him off all other medications and immediately put him on Zoloft and

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Risperdal. I spoke with the psychiatrist about my concerns of medications and why we couldn't try brain scans and therapy.

What a SEVERELY different attitude I got from the day I signed my son over to these people. Suddenly once again I was told to mind my own business. That I was a mere mother, not educated in medicine or children's therapies. I was told that they needed to stabilize him first, then brain scans would come later.

Heartbroken, and basically told "dont call us, we'll call you", cut off from my son except for two fifteen minute calls a week and two visits for a few hours twice a month, I became determined to find out for myself my rights. I put my full soul and heart into research.

For four months, I spent hours on the computer reading anything I could about medications, ADHD, Bipolar, therapy, brain injury and even parental rights. I started getting MADDER. The fight came back. The determination to be a part of my son's therapy and treatment went to front burner.

Again, I was met with extreme prejudice. Met with barriers and statements to stop being so pushy and let them do their jobs. My son got physically abused and sexually abused at the site. The psychiatrist REFUSED to remove the Risperdal from my son, but reluctantly removed the Zoloft after I threatened to drive to the site, find him in his office and sit on him and force him to read pamphlets stating Zoloft was NOT meant for children. I was SERIOUS, too, lemme tell you. That tone came through the phone CLEARLY. After all, THIS IS MY son. NOT Child Protective's. NOT Kids Peace.

After the Zoloft was removed, he showed a remarkable difference. It was like night and day. He was suddenly able to participate in groups more often, enjoying things like reading and TV again, and even laughing more. To further enforce my rights, I demanded more visitation rights. Demanded more phone calls. I refused to back down. Daniel started getting Excellents and Goods instead of Poor and Failing's. I also arranged for my son to be taken to Syracuse for a proper brain scan thanks to my ex husband's insurance on my son.

HALLELUIAH, we finally had the proof we needed. My son was INDEED brain injured as I'd been SCREAMING about to Child Protective, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, nosy social workers, undertrained overworked teachers, neighbors and bus monitors. I was yelling it to ANYONE that would listen. He was NOT ADHD, OR Bipolar.

I IMMEDIATELY demanded my son be taken OFF all medications and rely only on therapy and ways to help him. The new staff psychiatrist refused, stating she needed a full neuropsychiatric workup to prove he didn't have ADHD. So I set up a full battery of tests through Dr. Thomas Griffiths of Syracuse, an expert in brain injury.

Sure enough, my son's tests proved that he simply could not ingest information as quickly as other children due to brain injury, could not retain that information as easily, and would get frustrated because he was a gifted child who knew something was wrong.

BINGO. THE PROOF I NEEDED. MY SON WAS NOT ADHD, or BIPOLAR. I HAPPILY and personally presented that proof to Child Protective, the staff at Kids Peace (who by now resented my interference with their program, resented my pushiness to be involved with my son's

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treatment, and resented my stern warnings that I would no longer be treated like a second class citizen.) to neighbors, to anyone in three states that had EVER given me static about being a lowly mother. I was certain that now I would finally get the right treatment for my son.

You'd think so, right?: WRONG. The psychiatrist STILL refused to take my son off the Risperdal, even after a full team meeting I had to sit through and listen to her tell me and the full staff that what was WRONG with my son was emotional, that his parent's difficulties and divorce and instabilities were driving Daniel's emotions, listen to her state the 'wonderful benefits" of the Risperdal and how Daniel was doing SO much better on it. With Child Protective listening in on the phone, I firmly and angrily stated that not only did we have PROOF that Daniel was a brain injured child and NOT ADHD, we had PROOF that I'd downloaded and printed out showing the facts that certain medications actually bring ON psychotic episodes in children. CAUSED aggravations. I had PROOF that the medicine he was on wasn't even supposed to be USED by children under 18 and PROOF from Daniel's neuropsych reports that he simply couldn't function in a regular class and needed more one on one, and circumstantial proof that by removing the Zoloft, Daniel was responding better, not that the Risperdal was working better.

I laid in to each and every member on that staff that had given me a stone wall before I got that proof. The last six years of pain and feeling of uselessness came pouring out and I asserted my rights as my son's mother. THIS TIME, I knew, I would NOT BACK DOWN.

The psychiatrist held her ground. Risperdal was simply doing him good. The next thing I have to listen to is her psychologist partner, a Sigmund Freud wannabe who obviously did not have the research and background experience I had on the topics of toxic poisoning, brain injury and ADHD tell me that it was his professional opinion that my son's brain injury had nothing to do with his outburst, that he'd "studied" carbon poisoning online and found nothing to tie in Daniel's symptoms with the actual disease, and that he agreed with the psychiatrist, it was simply us as parents who failed our son by divorcing, by child abuse and by moving cross country and that he was going to turn over all the information to a doctor he knew in Upstate NY that was an expert.

I looked at this Bugs Bunny figure of a staff psychologist and smirked "Well..you know what? His DOCTOR seems to think he DOES have brain injury, and those little dark specks on his SPEC scan sure AIN'T SPIDERWEBS, are they."

Child Protective suddenly became compliant. They backed me at that meeting. So the psychiatrist agreed reluctantly to remove one milligram of the four my son was on for a month to see if it made a difference. Then she had the nerve to tell me that my son would defiantly show signs of withdrawal and was I prepared to increase the dosage to keep him from hurting himself or others? I looked at this woman with a disbelief in my eyes I'm sure she saw, shook my head sadly and said "Hun, what do you think WITHDRAWAL of drugs IS? OF COURSE he's going to have symptoms. Like ANY addiction, whether it's alcohol, nicotine or drugs. How ridiculous can you be?????"

With that, the meeting ended, and once I got home and had time to think, I called the psychiatrist who REFUSED to read medical reports, look at proof of brain injury or heed advice from another psychiatrist who specialized in brain injured children and left a rather harsh

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message, stating she had SIX WEEKS to wean my son from the Risperdal or I was coming in full barrel with a lawyer and a malpractice suit.

The very next day, I was called by Child Protective, who has now agreed to give me my son back, stating they agreed with me that I was right all along on my son's actual diagnosis. On that day, I sat on the floor, unable to answer, phone still in my hand, years of fighting, years of severe anger outbursts from a child over-medicated and not knowing why his little body was hurting so bad, missed weeks and weeks of not being able to hold my baby boy, and years of battling for my rights as the child's parent, nights and nights of holding a crying child because he didn't know what was happening, years of struggling just to make ends meet and constantly worrying about rent, utilities, food, years of research to finally prove my point all came flooding out, silent tears flowing down my cheeks as I'd finally, I'd FINALLY won. Or HAD I?

Just earlier that week, I had a note from my youngest boy's teacher, who stated my little clown could not and would not sit still in class, and perhaps could benefit from a drug like Ritalin. I busted out laughing, still holding the phone, not caring if Child Protective heard or not, and FRANKLY, my dear, I didn't give a damn.