

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 captures a moment that marks one of the lowest points in my life, a moment of sheer desperation. It was early January 2008, and after spending some time with my sons, I was confronted with the crushing realization that I might never see them again. The security guard, who had previously worked for me but was now working for Kevin, arrived to pick up my children at the end of the visit. He first placed Preston in the car, and as he came to take Jayden, an overwhelming fear gripped me. My mind raced with the thought that if I gave them back, I might never see them again. The ongoing custody battle, the constant power struggle, had led me to believe that if I returned my children, I would lose them permanently. I was paralyzed with fear, and in that moment, I ran into the bathroom with Jayden, locking the door behind me. My maternal instinct kicked in, and I simply could not let go of him. The thought of being separated from my kids was unbearable, and I was willing to do anything to hold on to them for just a little while longer.

My friend, who was there with me, tried to calm me down, assuring me that the security guard would wait. But no reassurance could ease the dread and panic that consumed me as I held Jayden in my arms. I cried uncontrollably, but even in my desperation, there was no one there to offer any comfort. Instead of being met with compassion, the situation escalated quickly. Without warning, a SWAT team burst into the bathroom, storming in as if I had done something criminal. They restrained me on the spot, as if my fear of losing my children made me a threat. The sight of the SWAT team, the force used to take my child from me, was an image I would never forget. I looked at my friend in disbelief and said, "But you said he would wait...?" I could not comprehend why, in my moment of panic and vulnerability, I was being treated like a criminal. My plea for just a little more time with my children was met with force and aggression, not understanding or empathy.

The consequences of that moment were swift and harsh. After Jayden was taken from me, I was strapped to a gurney and transported to the hospital, where I was held for a seventy-two-hour evaluation. While I was eventually released before the 72 hours were up, the emotional damage from the experience was profound. The way I was treated—restrained, controlled, and forcibly removed from my own home—was an experience that left a lasting scar. The paparazzi, who were relentless in their pursuit of every moment of my life, only exacerbated the mental and emotional strain I was already under. As if things weren't difficult enough, the media's hounding made me feel even more trapped and isolated. I was constantly in the public eye, criticized and scrutinized, as if my every move was being watched, and it seemed like I could do no right. The culmination of all this pressure came during the custody hearing, where I was told that my fear and panic had resulted in even less time with my children. Instead of understanding the deep, instinctual need I had to protect my children, my actions were framed as detrimental. I was punished for being scared, for showing vulnerability, for not being able to maintain control in a system that had already stripped me of everything else. In the end, the system seemed to be designed to punish me for my emotional reactions rather than help me heal. My desperation to hold on to my family was turned against me, further deepening my sense of helplessness and loss.