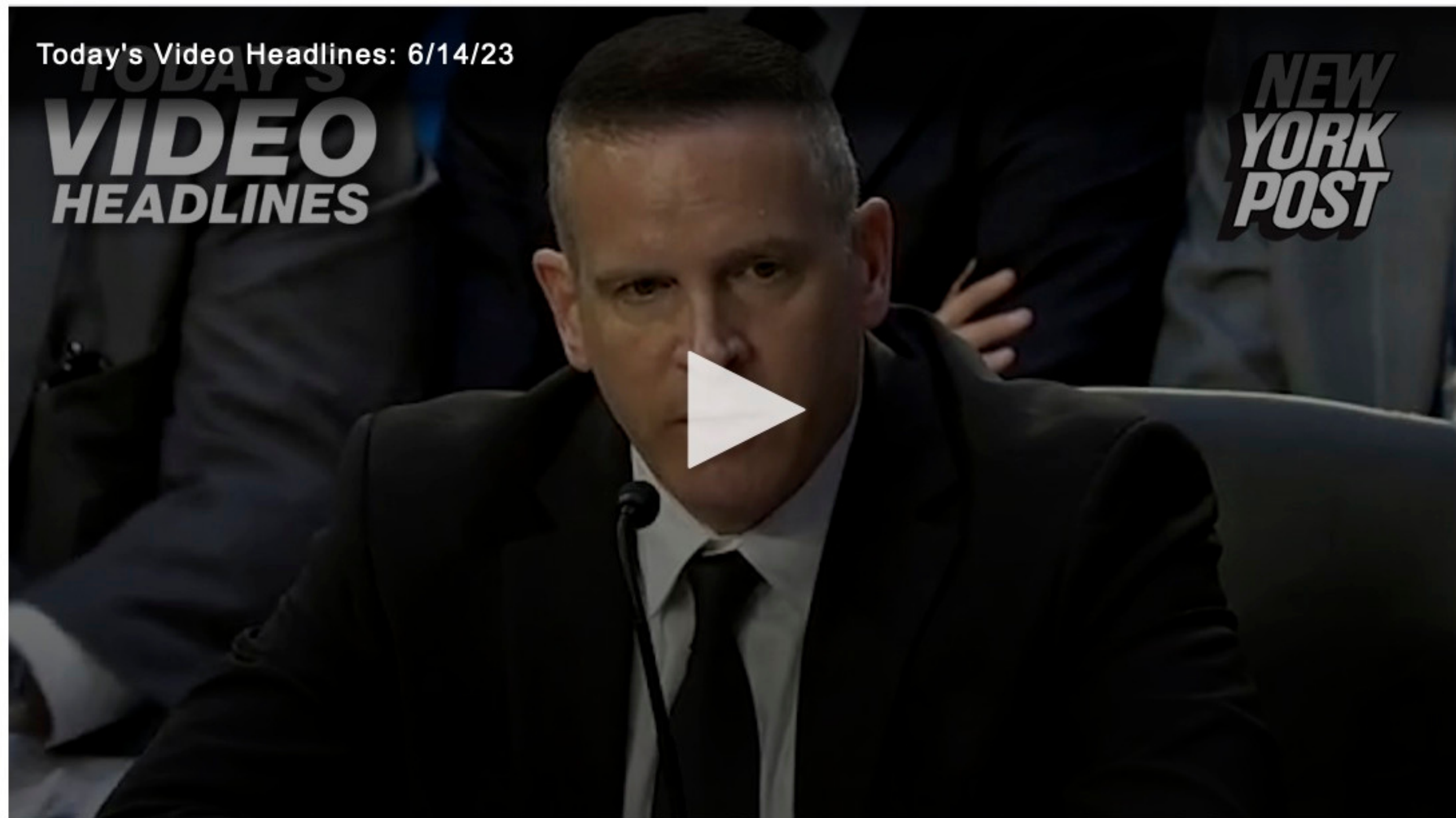




## NY mom's assisted-suicide note blames 'predatory' courts that took her kids

By [Jenn Hoffman](#)

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Catherine Kassenoff faced off against hardened criminals and gang members as a federal prosecutor, and beat breast cancer twice, but said the broken New York family court system would be what killed her.

In a letter [posted to Facebook](#) on May 27, the Westchester, NY, mother of three announced she was scheduled to die by assisted suicide in Switzerland later that day.

"It is with a profound heartbreak ... that I am writing my last post ever. Today, I will be ending my own life ... In the last four years of my life I have woken up every day to a nightmare like no other," she wrote in her public suicide note.

Catherine, 54 and an attorney who [once served as special counsel to New York Governor Kathy Hochul](#), wrote that she'd recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer — but blamed her decision to die then, and by assisted suicide, on ongoing alleged abuse by her ex-husband and a messy custody battle.

A Westchester family court decision had cut her off from contact with her three daughters, ages 9, 12, and 13.

Despite having no criminal history, mental health issues, or history of substance misuse, Catherine claimed, the court took her home, her dogs, and her life savings and continued to deny her visits with her children.



Catherine Kassenoff, a New York attorney who once worked for Gov. Kathy Hochul, posted a letter on Facebook May 27, saying she was scheduled to die by assisted suicide in Switzerland.

Jessie Watford Photography



Catherine posted: "I cannot survive this torment and the grief that comes from such a prolonged separation from my children." She also alleged abuse by her ex-husband, Allan Kassenoff.

Jessie Watford Photography

"I cannot survive this torment and the grief that comes from such a prolonged separation from my children," she wrote. "The court system did this to me ... It is a predatory system that functions in darkness — through 'gag orders' like the one in my case, through a publicly-inaccessible docket, through a closed courtroom, and through ex parte 'temporary' orders that are in place for years."

Friends who saw Catherine's alarming social media post say they reached out immediately.

In May 27 text messages seen by The Post, Catherine's friend and colleague Jonathan Davidoff pleaded with her not to go through with the suicide, to which she replied "Can't put

my kids through this any longer Jonathan. Please fight the fight I cannot.”

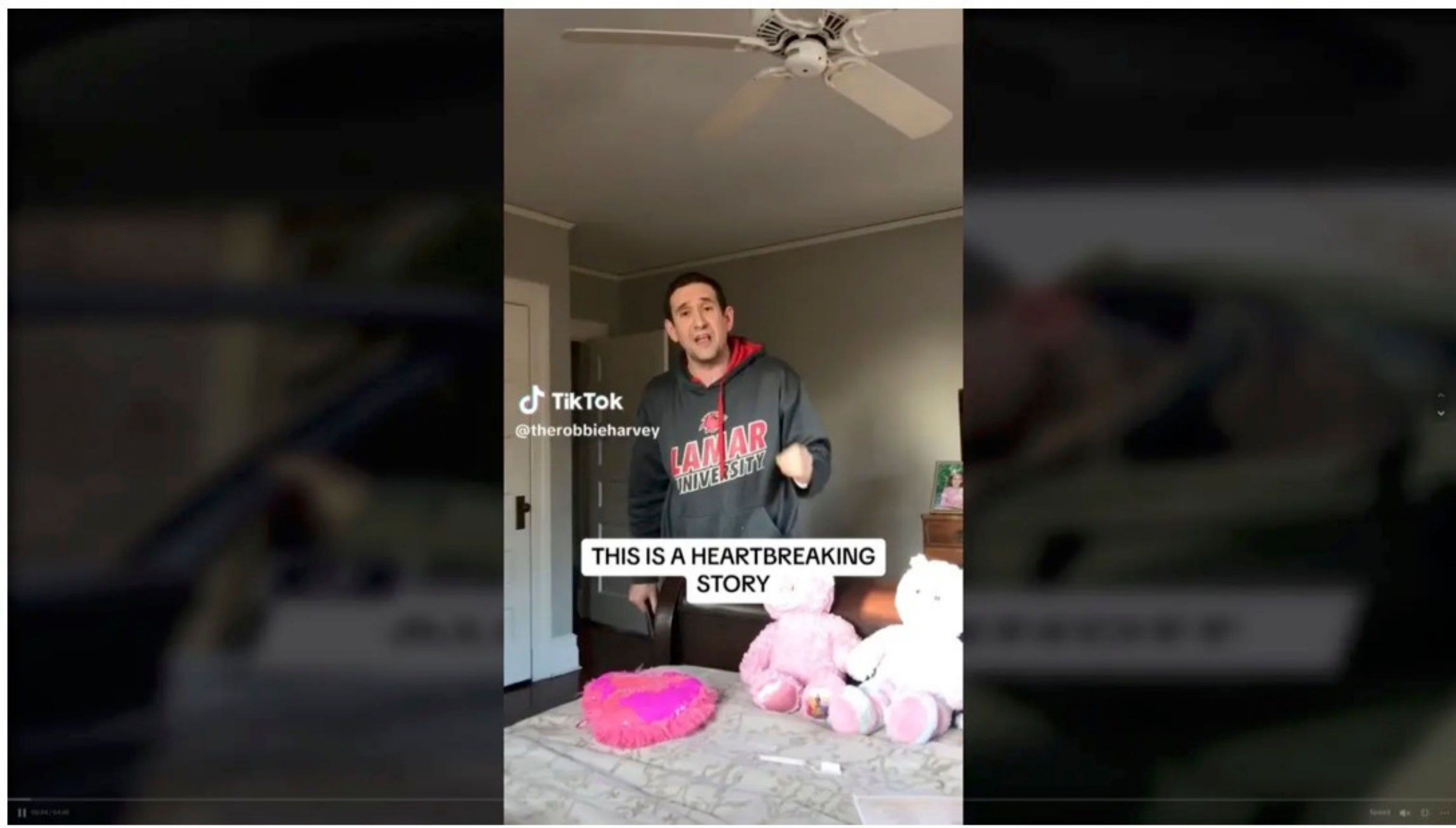
Cobie Jane, a friend and a mother also fighting the family court system after being cut off from her children in 2018, described Catherine as “laser-focused on how to support her children.” Friends of Catherine said the former couple’s problems started well before the divorce proceedings began.

In **videos** that now have over 10 million views on TikTok, influencer **@therobbieharvey** **chronicles Allan’s alleged verbal and emotional abuse** toward Catherine and their daughters.

In one video Allan is heard shouting “I hate you” at Catherine. He also calls her a “fat, old loser.”

In another disturbing video, a young girl can be heard crying in the background as Allan says he refuses to take his daughter to school: “Take your daughter. I’m not taking her. She’s spoiled and I’m not taking her. She will be punished by not going today.”

He continues about his daughter: “I’m not dealing with her anymore. I will no longer take her to activities over the weekend. I will no longer do nice things for her. She will be treated the way everyone else is.”



Kassenoff calls Catherine a “fat, old loser” and refused to take their daughter to school because “she’s spoiled,” videos found on TikTok and Twitter show.

@therobbieharvey/TikTok

The Post has asked Allan’s lawyer for comment on the videos.

Catherine’s final Facebook message included a now-defunct Dropbox link that contained thousands of court filings and numerous legal documents, medical records, and videos, including the videos used in the TikToks.

She explained that the contents of these files prove she did nothing wrong and maintained that her children were taken away as a result of “unfair rulings” “a disgraced custody evaluator,” a money-motivated attorney for the children, and the court favoring the “monied party.”

Before her alleged death, Catherine was successful in proving some of her allegations about the dysfunctional court proceedings.



Catherine succeeded in proving some of her allegations about the family court's dysfunction before her death.

Jessie Watford Photography

She filed a complaint of misconduct against Marc T. Abrams, the custody evaluator who recommended that her ex-husband have sole custody of the girls, resulting in Abrams' removal from the Mental Health Professional Certification Committee, State of New York, Appellate Division, Supreme Court, First, and Second Judicial Departments as a mental health professional.

During the proceedings, photos surfaced of the judge presiding over the case officiating Abrams' wedding. Catherine called out this potential bias and conflict of interest, and Judge Lewis Lubell recused himself from the case.

Carol Most, the attorney for the children, was also dismissed from the case after Catherine sued her for misconduct.

The court also denied Most a large portion of the \$270,000 she billed the Kassenoffs for services.



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Despite all the new information in her favor, a new forensic evaluator, as Ms. reported, "rubber-stamped disgraced Abrams' old, erroneous report stating Catherine was manipulating her daughters."

As of May, Catherine was still unable to see her children.

In Catherine's parting statement, she wrote, "Their father has spent years and millions of dollars — over \$3 million — to eliminate me from our girls' lives ... He will never relent ... As long as I am alive and want to see them, they will be damaged over and over again with every attempt I make. What is the point of that? The last thing I want to do is make my own children suffer."



Although it is unknown exactly where in Switzerland Catherine went for her assisted suicide, clinics like Dignitas offer the service in apartments like the one above.

Allan issued a statement to The Post via his attorney Gus Dimopoulos. It reads, in part:

"At every stage of this four-year custody dispute, the court system has acted responsibly and thoroughly. Following a neutral forensic evaluator's assessment, the court ordered an immediate order granting their father sole legal and physical custody. The court also issued an urgent order of protection against Ms. Kassenoff eliminating unsupervised interactions with the children based on what they observed when they were with their mother ... While it is always difficult limiting a parent's access to their children, given the circumstances of this case, it was found to be in the best interest of the children to take these steps urgently. The children have been in our client's care for 3 ½ years and they are safe and healthy."

Greenberg Traurig, the law firm where Allan works as an attorney, issued a statement saying they're conducting an internal investigation while the father is taking a voluntary leave of absence to focus on his family.