

**Witness Statement for the Presbytery of the Southeast, Orthodox Presbyterian Church**  
**Submitted to investigative committee, Michael Cloy, chair**  
**9/19/25**

**Stephanie Chernyavskiy**

**Rev. Dr. Timothy R. LeCroy**

NOTE FROM DR. LECROY: Mrs. Chernyavskiy has worked diligently over many hours to produce these materials. I have helped her with editing and organization alone. The four main documents are:

1. Stephanie Statement (this document you are reading)
2. Allegations against Jay Bennet
3. Allegations against Seth Long
4. List of supporting witnesses with known contact information

There is a folder with the primary evidence noted in the two statements of allegations (2 and 3 above). That folder also contains a few other important pieces of evidence, including the police interviews of Mr. and Mrs. Long. The other folder has many pieces of evidence to corroborate and support Mrs. Chernyavskiy's claims.

If you would like any further information, please reach out to me at [pastor.tim.lecroy@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.tim.lecroy@gmail.com) and I will be happy to work with Mrs. Chernyavskiy to assist you.

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I, Stephanie Nichole Chernyavskiy, have written this statement of my own free will and attest it to be the truth.

In November of 2011, I was a 19 year old student attending a vocational training school for visually impaired persons in Louisville, KY to prepare me for the possibility of increasing or even total vision loss due to an ophthalmological disease.<sup>1</sup> I was attending the school independently and was not under a guardianship order or some other court ordered restrictions on my ability to make decisions for myself. While attending the school I began secretly dating a man named Ilya Chernyavskiy, a medical student at the University of Louisville. We quickly fell in love and became engaged and engaged in sinful premarital intimacy twice during our relationship. I hid the relationship from my parents because we weren't supposed to date but mostly because they would not approve of him because he was catholic. Our communications were via an email

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<sup>1</sup> The legal age of majority in Kentucky is 18 unless the person has a designated disability ([1994 statute 2.015 Age of majority](#)). Stephanie's parents admitted in a police interview (included in the evidence folder) that they had no conservatorship over Stephanie and that she was not a minor when the kidnapping occurred.

account I made during a computer and assisted technology device training class and a joint social media account that a friend at the center had helped me to create. This social media program was much like the beginning stages of Facebook that allowed for instant messaging on the platform in a form of "chat". I also had a small old flip phone that did not have a working camera (cell phones were still very very limited in those days and mine was on a preloaded "minute" system). We also would go out for date nights when both our busy schedules allowed for it. Often this was for walks in the park and to the University of Louisville or the local Qdoba restaurant. The emails and social media communications were sent in the computer lab in the dormitories that were monitored by an RA and video surveillance. (I would have been caught if I tried to send anything explicit- this is important for later refutation of lies by my parents and Jay Bennet).

On Friday, November 4, 2011, I was in my last class of the day when my parents called my phone saying they were minutes away and telling me to pack a bag because there was a family emergency. They refused to tell me what the emergency was and insisted I be hasty in packing. I had to get special permission to leave the classroom early and I called Ilya and told him I was scared by their behaviour and asked him to come to the school to mediate. He agreed and left as quickly as he could. I also called my best friend and school mate Ashely and told her I was scared and didn't want to leave. She told me to stay on the phone with her and not to let them take me. I kept her on the phone on a live phone call. By the time I got down to my dormitory room my mother was standing outside the door and hissing at me as to why I wasn't packed and ready yet. Inside the dorm room I told her I didn't want to go and I tried to stall by going into the bathroom and other methods of stalling hoping that Ilya would get to me in time. I closed the bathroom door and my mother started hitting the door telling me to come out and she realized I was on the phone. She came into the bathroom and tore the phone from my hands. She pulled me out to the van (there weren't any students in the other dorms because the last class of the day was still happening).

Contrary to what my parents claim, I was not waiting on the sidewalk with all my things. They are lying. Contrary to what my parents claim, they did not have all the children with them in the van, it was only the two youngest who would be incapable of understanding or helping me. Contrary to what my parents claim, my mother did forcibly put me into the van and sit on the side close to the door so that I could not open the door and leave. They refused to let me out. They refused to tell me what the emergency was until further down the road. When they did tell me that *I was the emergency* because I was dating, I demanded to be taken back or let out and they refused. They demanded I tell them private graphic details of my relationship with Ilya including sexual details. I refused and mom said, "that's ok we already know" and she reached down and pulled out a stack of emails that she had printed off from my email account. I do not know how they hacked into my email account because contrary to what they claim they did not have the passwords and I had changed the passwords to my social media account and Ilya and I had merged our accounts into one. ( I do have evidence of this in emails from them). I wonder if they realize that by hacking into mine they also committed a felony crime by hacking into Ilya's account.

The entire drive home I never stopped telling them to take me back. They stopped in Hazard at the Walmart and dad sent mom in for pregnancy tests. I wanted to run but dad said if I did he would spank me in the parking lot. I wonder if he knows that is terroristic threatening, and assault and battery when your daughter is an adult like I was. We drove the rest of the way home and the night was spent being interrogated until the early morning hours.

Sunday, I was forced by my father Seth long to sit down with Jay Bennet, Hank Belfield and himself while they urged me to repent of the sinful relationship with a catholic. This happened after evening worship. When the meeting was over and I refused to break off the relationship and I requested to be taken back to school, Jay shook dad's hand and said "have a safe trip brother, we are praying." I found this odd since the trip home was fifteen minutes and very normal...not something requiring prayers.

They forced me to see a therapist of their choosing in Tennessee. She was also the therapist they forced us to speak to in regards to the sexual abuse from the neighbor. The therapist's name was "Mrs. Polly" (Yarling). Ironically the neighbor who had molested and sexually abused us years before was also named Ms. Polly. One would think having a social work background as she claims, that my mother would have seen the trauma angle this presented and continued to present as they forced me to speak to her about my relationship with Ilya. Unfortunately that connection never seemed to be made by my parents regardless of my attempt to bring it to their attention. It is also important to note that they proudly admit they "wanted her (me) to speak with the therapist and said, 'You're going to speak to the therapist and we will decide after that.'" NO. I was an adult of legal age to make my own decisions. You CANNOT force an adult off the streets to go see a therapist of your choosing. It's illegal. It is felony kidnapping and since they took me across state lines it is FEDERAL felony kidnapping. It's also important to note that I had a very good relationship with a biblical counselor and social worker who had 30+ years experience counseling blind and visually impaired people at the school. I was working with him during my time at the school and he was incredibly helpful. His notes state that I was adjusting well under his counseling and he encouraged more independence from me including staying at the school and not going home to my parents as often to prepare for college etc. I had a rapport with him and had trust in him as a counselor. He was incredibly helpful to me in dealing with depression and anxiety related to vision loss and navigating the world around me. This contrasts starkly with that forced "counseling" with the therapist my parents chose. After that "counseling" session, according to my parents in their statement to police, "there were no issues/struggles/concerns."

The next day (Wednesday the 9th), in the early morning hours completely unknown to me my father again hacked into my email and sent from my account to Ilya a scathing email full of slander wherein he also calls me a whore (I still have the email). I had no access to my email as my only way of using a computer was with a screen reader program that was on the computers at the school and my cellphone which was not "smart" back then had been taken from me. I had no knowledge of this email being sent and I did not consent to it being sent. My father made sure to sign the email at the end.

The next day (Thursday) my father took me to North Carolina and did so by locking the back doors of the Camry with the child locks. He did not tell me where he was taking me and I did not consent to that trip. The following Sunday he informed me I would be left with the Beldens and that I would not be returning home with him and I would not be going back to the school. I had no way to contact anyone for help because the Beldens kept their phones in Sara's room at night and I was forced to sleep on a small futon outside John Belden's door. Witnesses will also testify that I was kept from phones when visiting other households and they were told not to let me use phones. During this time in NC Jay Bennet made several calls to the Belden residence urging me to repent via phone calls and refusing to allow me return to the school and "my sin." During this time that I refer to as imprisonment, I was forced to take a pregnancy test in front of Sara with John outside the door with orders to spank me if I refused. Sara told me the test was a dye run and so it meant negative. I had a miscarriage in the barn bathroom down the road from their house alone. I know it was a miscarriage having now had more children and loss since then.

By June 2012 I had made several friends and felt like I might be able to ask one of them for help escaping soon. Jay Bennet told me that a sign to the church that I was truly repentant would be to take vows of membership at Trinity OPC in Wilmington, NC. I agreed because I wanted every opportunity to escape and thought it might lessen the constraints of being guarded so much which would afford me a chance to escape.

On Father's day 2012 (June 17) I was brought back to my parents home to live. They refused to let me go back to the school and continue my education there. This return to Kentucky cut me off from the network in NC that I had spent many many months of hard work cultivating so I could escape the Beldons and my parents. They claim I wanted to stay in NC because I "liked it there." The truth is that I wanted to stay in NC because I felt I was very close to being able to escape and being taken to my parents home cut me off from every connection I had worked so very hard to make. Being taken back to my parents home meant having no friends and a very treacherous walk out of a holler road as opposed to the straight farm roads of NC. They claim I LIKED it in NC. The truth is that it was better than home with my parents but my ultimate goal always was to find an escape and get back to Ilya.

Unknown to me was that the entire time Ilya sent me emails every day and he never stopped loving me. He never stopped believing that God would provide a way. I was never allowed to access that email and Sara deleted the account from her computer one day as a "step in repentance" and made a new email. When I finally escaped, Ilya forwarded all the emails to me and I have since read them. He truly loved and adored me.

My parents kept me in their home for over four more years. During that time they told me I should go to a young singles event at Machen where I met a man they approved of as a way to show repentance and that I had "moved on." I tried to express concerns about him a few times and was asked if perhaps I wasn't truly "repentant" of Ilya. The man they approved of was incredibly abusive and I have extensive evidence of graphic abuse marks on my body. I did not want to marry this man but I was very afraid of both him and my parents, so I agreed to the

engagement. Eventually they allowed me to get a phone but it was monitored via searches and an app. Out of desperation I sent Ilya a text and he said he never stopped loving me and told me about the emails. I told him about NC and everything I had been through. We began to carefully watch for a chance for me to escape. My sister had run away in the middle of the night with a man the year before and I didn't know if I could physically escape my father's hold if he held me back. I have emails from this time detailing how we were waiting for an opportunity.

On February 16, 2015 my father went into work and it left me home alone. Ilya drove down early in the morning even though there was blizzard conditions and snow and ice on the roads. I threw my stuff into trash bags and we threw them into his car and left. I left a letter and the engagement ring on the table so I wouldn't be accused of stealing the ring. The trip to Louisville was full of messages from dad and others demanding I come back and dad saying horrible things to me. There was no concern for my safety and only harsh condemnations from him. When we got to Ilya's apartment he helped me inside and wiped down the car seat which I had bled on from the abuse from Chris. He also helped me to ice and bandage other wounds on my body from Chris. These were documented in photographs he had helped me to take while still at my parents home and they were stored on the computer (this is significant because Jay and dad forced me to repent of having lewd photographs on my computer and emails after dad hacked into my email after I left).<sup>2</sup>

The next several months were full of attempts by Jay to contact me even though I asked to not be contacted. I considered a no contact order. They also began censure via church discipline. Every letter was sent either well outside the time frame for appeal or so close to the appeal time frame of ten days that by the time I could find someone to read it (my screen reader could not read them) the deadline would be passed. Some of the letters were sent a month and a half later. I still have these and they are in the evidence folder with the timestamps and dates. I was also denied the opportunity to refer my case to a session who might not be so closely emotionally invested, even though I requested it, because Jay said he felt they were uniquely equipped to deal with me. Jay Bennet also told me on several different occasions and in a letter to my session that he would absolve me of my guilt and sin. I feel that this is heresy and heinous spiritual abuse. I have these preserved in the evidence folder. Jay Bennet also benefited from my captivity when I was forced to clean his house during his wife's absence. He recently tried to delete the post bragging about it after being confronted but I have a screenshot of it in the evidence folder. When questioned by police about it, my parents flagrantly lied (also in the evidence folder).

Jay Bennet recently slandered me after a presbytery meeting during which time he made the statement that in 2011 I was "soliciting men for sex" I never did this and the impression it gives is that I was engaged in prostitution which is slander. My parents and others have made many false claims all along claiming that I was somehow unsafe with Ilya and going as far as creating false scenarios like "being given dreamy tea" which they translate to date rape drugs for sex. In reality I'm actually so allergic to opioids and narcotics that I go into anaphylaxis. This is well

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<sup>2</sup> This is evidenced in the letter Jay sent to her session. See the complaint for a summary of evidence in the primary evidence folder.

documented in my medical records. I also never said anything of the sort about him giving me tea to relax me. To be quite blunt, even if I was a drug addict on the street shooting up hard drugs you cannot just yank somebody off the streets for that. There is a legal process; anything else is kidnapping.

My parents have also tried to claim I was somehow mentally deficient and incapable of choosing and discerning safe people due to RAD (reactive attachment disorder). Not only is this not true it is questionable whether I actually ever had RAD. I have records going all the way back to foster care that say I am well adjusted and no concerns etc. It was not until later when the adoption stipends were ending or decreasing and insurance came into question that suddenly there was a note handwritten from my mother asking "what words she needs to use," (in order for the amount to increase) and a handwritten note of "RAD?" beside it. No other mention of RAD occurs and no other diagnosis until much later when a psychologist states that I had been diagnosed as RAD in the past even though there is no record of it. In the psychological evaluation done by the psychologist at the Louisville school for the blind (every student receives an evaluation as standard protocol) the psychologist notes I have depression, anxiety, and possible OCD disorder. There is no diagnosis or mention of RAD even though he was given the records from former therapists.

I chose a man who has loved me selflessly and faithfully. Even when we were apart those four years and he didn't know if I was alive he still loved me and I had his heart. He risked his life to save me. My parents falsely claim he threatened to come armed, what he actually said (I have the email) is that he would risk his life and wear a bullet proof vest to save me. Ilya didn't have guns back then.

My parents also falsely claim they sent me to NC for my safety after a threatening phone call from Ilya around the 15th of November but that isn't true. They took me there the week before and the day after dad sent the threatening/slandering email to Ilya from my email account. My parents falsely claim they did this to save me, yet when I was suffering horrific abuse from the man they wanted me to marry they refused to hear it. They refused to hear a report that he had sexually molested his sisters when they were young and I was rebuked for it (see the evidence file).

When I escaped the messages were not of concern but condemnation. In 2011 there was no concern expressed to me for my safety; it was all about repentance for wanting to marry a catholic and someone they didn't approve of due to his religion. They claim the time in NC was for safety, but it was forced repentance and many people knew this. I spent the four years I was kept at home clawing desperately at attempts to gain their trust so that I could plan an escape. This included being forced to write things like "they had my best interest in mind." I had to fly under the radar, agree to marry Chris, and appease their concerns and distrusts, even saying I wanted to marry Chris, because I was afraid they would deem me unrepentant and send me away again and I would have to start all over again just like NC. I was also very afraid of Chris and being hurt if I said I didn't love him.

My parents claim everything was fine the last many years because we went to their house to visit. In reality I used those trips since 2019, the first trip down for Christmas, as an opportunity to scrape and dig for evidence. I have had to be very very cautious about alerting them to my efforts: looking for photos, journals, etc. Also, the reality is that we have never once left our children alone with them and have never stayed over at their house. I cannot stay there for more than a few hours at a time due to the traumatic memories and PTSD. Unless there was a snow storm we would drive down and back the same day. It's normally a four drive but with young kids it often ends up being almost double that.

I'd like to mention that as traumatic as the whole experience, kidnapping, and several years after was for me, I was not the only one traumatized and heartbroken. I had blind friends at the school who are dealing with PTSD to this day because of what they heard and wondering if they would disappear and what happened to me. Ilya from his emails, was heartbroken and torn and confused. He was traumatized himself. When he did call my father my father told him my safety was none of his concern anymore. Ilya wondered if that meant something more. Ilya prayed for me and loved me through it all. When I escaped he was there to deal with the memories and night terrors and the PTSD. He took me to doctors, psychologists, and stayed constant even when Jay Bennet and my father slandered him. He suffered greatly those years I was gone and we will never get them back.

Finally, my parents falsely claim that in 2009 myself and two other sisters were disciplined by the church for sexually abusing their biological children. In reality, we were disciplined while we were in therapy for PTSD due to sexual abuse and grooming by the neighbor and they didn't realize that one of the sisters had been forced by the neighbor to sexually abuse the biological children until months later. This is confirmed in their own timeline they gave to police although they falsely state in the interview that I abused their biological children. The fact of the matter is that they disciplined young girls who were in therapy for severe child sex abuse and PTSD. John Belden claims they would never do this and if they knew it was abuse that would have "changed everything," except the evidence and timeline shows they DID know it was abuse and it changed NOTHING. This is heinous. None of us deserved that discipline. We needed to heal. Children are incapable of consent let alone sins of "sexual immorality" when the reality was that they were being forced and abused by a pedophile! I promised my sister I would expose this. And I will never stop fighting to expose it.