



***Attorney Jeffery M. Leving:
Bringing Attention to the Subject of Parental Alienation
2008 Bulldog Award Winner
Best Response to Breaking News***

Overview

Since March, 2007, Zapwater Communications has served as the public relations agency of record for the Law Office of Jeffery M. Leving. Jeffery Leving founded the firm serving as an advocate for fathers' rights focusing on representing men in divisive custody and divorce proceedings through Matrimonial and Family Law. Our media relations efforts have focused on publicizing Mr. Leving's legal victories, expertise on issues such as custody, divorce and parental alienation and his life-long advocacy on behalf of fathers and their rights.

Jeffery Leving has been consistently recognized for his leadership and legal knowledge on these issues. He was tapped by the Governor of Illinois to serve as Chairman of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood, a state commission focused on improving fathers' rights. He also serves as President Emeritus of the Fatherhood Educational Institute, a nationwide charity focused on promoting fathers' rights. He also received an award from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for his legal expertise in connection with the Elian Gonzalez case. He is the author of two groundbreaking books, "Father's Rights" (Basic books) and "Divorce Wars" (Harper Collins). Leving's experience includes co-authorship of the Joint Custody Law and testimony before both branches of the Illinois Legislature on Joint Custody, Grandparent's Visitation and Child Support Accountability bills. He has lectured locally and nationally on family law issues.

Breaking News

Jeffery Leving is one of the only divorce attorneys in the country who focuses solely on men's rights. As his publicists, we are always abreast of breaking news coverage that could source his legal expertise. Our golden opportunity came when Ireland Baldwin, the daughter of divorced celebrity couple Alec Baldwin and Kim Bassinger, failed to answer a pre-arranged phone call from her father. The resulting anger led to a voicemail message left on Ireland's answering machine in which Baldwin referred to her as a "thoughtless little pig" and repeated other extremities.

A tape of the voicemail message was purportedly leaked to the press by Kim Bassinger herself. The resulting media firestorm focused primarily on Baldwin's irresponsible

behavior as a father but also the psychological damage Bassinger may have caused by allowing the tape to be made public. Zapwater Communications immediately jumped on the opportunity to recommend Jeffery Leving as an expert source to review the case and inform audiences of Adult Parental Alienation; when one parent uses a child in a divorce as a pawn against their ex.

Within hours, our communications team drafted a pitch referring Leving as an expert source, which listed his experience representing fathers in custody disputes. The pitch was tailored to focus on the unique perspective Leving would bring to a legal debate. By the end of the day, as the media attention surrounding the incident grew, we had submitted our pitch via e-mail and telephone to all of the top producers of national news. That afternoon, a Zapwater Communications publicist received a phone call from a producer for the Fox News Channel news talk program, **Hannity and Colmes**. That evening, Jeffery Leving participated via satellite in a live, on-air debate about the Baldwin-Basinger dispute.

Zapwater Communications ensured that Leving was fully prepared for his media appearance. He was provided with the following talking points:

- This situation is not about two famous celebrities – Alec Baldwin and Kim Basinger – it is about protecting a child.
- Divorces are tough enough for children without intense media scrutiny. Now, Ireland has to deal with her personal struggle under the microscope of the paparazzi. What happens when she is asked at school, “why does your mom hate your dad so much?”
- I am outraged by the behavior of Kim Basinger or her people that they would put her child’s health and welfare on the backburner to score cheap points with her ex-husband. This is exactly the type of behavior that gives children life long scars.
- This also brings up a very real subject that doesn’t get the attention it deserves – until now. It’s called Adult Parental Alienation and occurs when one parent uses a child in a divorce as a pawn against their ex.
- Children are often victims in divorce proceedings. This case hopefully shines the spotlight on how using a child as a pawn only hurts the child.

Biggest Hit

Guided by Zapwater Communications’ expertise, Leving displayed excellent debate tactics and brought a fresh perspective to the media-intensive case while participating in the Hannity and Colmes interview. His appearance snowballed into a series of national television appearances including Court TV with Catherine Crier, CNN Headline News with Erica Hill, Inside Edition and MSNBC. Leving also served as a legal expert on top Chicago drive-time radio shows such as The Loop’s “Jonathan Brandmeier” show and the WLS-AM “Jerry Agar” show. In fact, Mr. Agar was impressed with the interview he invited Leving to cover the same topic on his New York show the following day

(WABC-New York). This media attention culminated into our best hit as Jeffery M. Leving served as a legal expert on NBC's The Today Show interviewed by Matt Lauer.