

Newsletter — Summer, 2022

Editor: Stephen Davis



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✚ **1. FEATURE: Part 2 of the interview with the creators of a new film: *Spare the Child***



Spare the Child is a new 30-minute documentary about the negative impact of corporal punishment on the children. The *Alliance* provided financial support for the production of this film, and not long ago, I (SD) met with Andie Morganlander (ANDIE), who is the creative producer of the film, and Josh Overbay (JOSH), who is the director of the film. (They are husband and wife.) This is Part Two of that interview....

SD: Talk to me about the title. Who came up with that?

ANDIE: That was me, and I think I remember where we were.

JOSH: We were all brainstorming. We were up in between Bergen and Trenton, in New Jersey.

ANDIE: We were. It was in Trenton. Of course, there's this verse everyone wants to quote that isn't actually in the Bible: "Spare the rod, spoil the child," which is talked about a lot in the film. We wanted to say "Consider the kids" — consider the children as humans that have their own feelings and voice and perspective that we shouldn't dominate or have power over just because we can. Then we immediately thought of Dr. Stacey Patton and "Spare the Kids." So, we actually reached out to Dr. Patton pretty quickly just to double check to make sure that "Spare the Child" felt different enough that she was OK with us using it. And she gave us her stamp of approval via email.

SD: So, what plans do you have for the film? Will you submit it to Sundance? Or Cannes? Or similar festivals?

JOSH: Well, it's unfortunate because I think the format of the film and the length makes it problematic for a lot of these festivals. The length itself is like 29 minutes, and there's an unspoken rule that you don't make 20- to 40-minute films. There's the short-film market under 20 minutes, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the American Film Institute and the British Film Institute deem it to be a feature film if it runs for more than 40 minutes. But there's no market for anything in between — a film of 30 minutes, for example. And we knew this very well as we were making it. But I felt like, to make it any shorter, we would be missing important pieces in the stories. So, I made it as tight as I thought we could; and then after that, I just trusted that if it wasn't able to get into festivals because of the length, then it would find another home.

And what's been so surprising is how — through a lot of other advocacy organizations, like Prevent Child Abuse America and the U.S. Alliance to End the Hitting of Children — we've had interest from lots of hospitals and other places where there's training around trauma. Over the past year and a half, we've had many screenings where we've been able to travel all over the world



Josh Overbay

virtually with Zoom. COVID-19 had come along and everyone was online as a result which really expanded our audience in ways I don't think we expected. Because, you know, with festivals, you're limited to whoever is sitting there at the time, which unless it's like a national big brand, it's not usually that many people. Most often the impacts are really minimal. But we've been able to connect directly with folks who are already doing this work and hopefully showing them how this documentary can become a tool, something that can also help them do what they do.

ANDIE: And in addition to it playing in places nationally and internationally so far, right now we're trying to get it on a streaming service online. We have a list of three or four streaming services that are dedicated to documentaries.

SD: You might want to try [Curiositystream.com](https://www.curiositystream.com).

ANDIE: I don't know if that's one of the ones, but we should definitely look at that. Absolutely. Yeah.

SD: And maybe someone reading this has a good idea or a contact that might help land a distributor or a streaming service.

JOSH: Yeah. And then after that, we're hoping in the future to adapt it into a feature film. We're not on that path quite yet. We were going to try to get the short version up and streaming first so that anyone can basically pay and stream it any time they want with any audience they want. But our next step after that, I think, is going to start conceptualizing what the full-length feature version could look like? How would it be the most impactful? And what can we include in this feature that will really help round it out since the short was just interview driven? I think the feature could be a lot more expansive in how it looks and talks about corporal punishment, and those would be the questions that we would start having.

SD: You've also got U.S. Rep. McEachin's H.R. 8460 that you could follow on its progress through Congress. And you could also interview Dr. Christian Pfeiffer about the process they went through in Germany to outlaw corporal punishment in both the homes and schools. But back to the present... I'm sure someone reading this is going to want to actually see the film. How would they go about that today?

ANDIE: Right now, the video is not available to the general public. The most immediate way would be to reach out to us at Justice Film Collective: JusticeFilmCollective@gmail.com. Send us an email telling us you want to view the film and we'll tell you how you can do it. We're going to try to get it up on a streaming service, hopefully within the next couple of months. But right now all we can do is give you a link to watch it — and you'll be part of an exclusive group. We'd also appreciate sending us a review after you watch. That's JusticeFilmCollective@gmail.com.

JOSH: We've been waiting for it to be put up onto some sort of service rather than just releasing it for free. Basically half the funds that we are recouping from screening the film have gone to the on-screen collaborators: Archer, Destiny, and Darrell. The other half, we're saving to work on the feature, which is why we haven't released it for free yet.



Andie Morganlander

ANDIE: And obviously, you know, we're hoping that the distribution platform will also broaden our audience because at this point, we're limited to the folks we know or the organizations that we're already connected to, which is great. But you know, this is the kind of topic that we just want to continue to expand and expand and expand and expand in terms of the reach.

SD: What could someone do to help support what you're doing right now?

ANDIE: We're going to need a lot of community support. Reaching out to us would be a great first step at Justice Film Collective at gmail.com. For example, the hope of moving into a longer feature format is not just that it'll be longer, but that it will get us into more distribution opportunities and a wider audience. So, before we make the feature, we're hoping to have some working groups to get feedback from professionals that advocate to end corporal punishment and for peaceful parenting so that we can get some community feedback

on what would make sense to focus on in the film. If anyone is interested in being part of those groups, they can reach out to us as well. And we're really happy to dialogue with anybody about any ideas they may have for getting this film distributed and the feature film made.

JOSH: That would be great. Yeah, absolutely. And the goal of the feature is to really make it as engaging for as many people as possible and also include multiple forms of connecting to the viewer. The primary way that we did that in the short was through interviews where they're looking right through the lens at the viewer. But with the feature, we're definitely going to expand to interview lots of experts, getting some science very clearly in there, and also trying to really explore both sides of the conversation. For example, at least in terms of the statistics, it seems that religion, more than any other demographic factor, is the one that impacts families the most in terms of the likelihood of spanking their kids or not.

SD: More so than race or cultural ethnicity?

JOSH: According to one study out of UT Austin, race was not as much of a factor as religion, and religion was much more of a clear predictor for corporal punishment.

SD: I did a lot of work for Dr. Christian Pfeiffer in Germany, who was charged by the German government with finding out the root cause of violent behavior. He did a lot of surveys interviewing a lot of violent criminals in prison, and what these violent criminals had in common was that they all suffered corporal punishment as a child. That, of course, led to Germany outlawing corporal punishment and a remarkable drop in the rate of violence. I think that there's a massive impact from the results of corporal punishment as a child that we haven't yet even explored thoroughly.

JOSH: There are so many possible symptoms from this. In the documentary, I tried to list as many things that I could find in the science. But you never know how violence as a child is going

to manifest. For me, it did not show up with me being violent to other people, but it started showing up when I developed some really bizarre OCD, and that was what ended up getting me to a new therapist. And then beneath the OCD was the corporal punishment. So, what if we were able to shift the conversation and the cultural expectations around parenting, with a focus more on children's rights?

SD: Any thoughts you'd like to leave us with?

ANDIE: You know, it's ultimately in the parents' best interest to not spank because it's ineffective. It teaches kids to lie, to cheat, to hide, et cetera. Or there's a backfire, which creates ultimately more internal violence towards the parents. So, aside from how children receive it, which is obviously terribly, it's in the best interest of the parent to parent better by finding methods that enable them to be more effective as parents. I mean, all parents should be interested in that. But hitting kids? It just doesn't work.

JOSH: If I'm a person that proclaims to want to stop violence in the world, to want to end white supremacy, then we have to look at what violence has happened to us throughout our lives that makes us feel like it's the right thing to be violent externally or internally to ourselves. We simply can't undo those patterns of violence until we're real about what violence has happened to us. And corporal punishment is a part of that violence. It's not separate. It's a part of that violence. We put out what we've learned as kids. And so we just hope that we can have a part in calling corporal punishment what it is, which is violence and abuse towards kids, and hopefully paving the way to a world that's more loving and just for people of all ages.

(If you missed Part One of this interview, you can read it in the Spring 2022 issue of this newsletter, available [here](#).)

2. Recent study confirms that corporal punishment plays a fundamental role in creating mass school shooters

The headline in [Politico](#) (05/27/22) reads:

Two Professors Found What Creates a Mass Shooter. Will Politicians Pay Attention?

In the 1980s and '90s, Dr. Christian Pfeiffer, a criminologist with the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony in Germany (Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen, KFN), surveyed violent criminals in prison and found they had a common denominator — they had suffered corporal punishment as a child. As a result, in 2000 Germany became the 9th country in the world to outlaw corporal punishment in homes and in schools. (You can read the full story [here](#).) Over [50 more countries](#) have followed suit in Europe, Asia, Central and South America and Africa (just not the United States or Canada), based in large part on Dr. Pfeiffer's research.

In 2018 *Jillian Peterson*, an associate professor of criminology at Hamline University (in Minnesota), and *James Densley*, a professor of criminal justice at Metro State University (also in Minnesota), began a new research project which has recently been published, called *The Violence Project: How to Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic*. Essentially, they got the same results in the U.S. that Dr. Pfeiffer had found in Germany....

They confirmed that in the U.S., “mass shooters overwhelmingly fit a certain profile.... There’s this really consistent pathway [a mass shooter takes.] *Early childhood trauma seems to be the foundation, whether violence in the home, sexual assault, parental suicides, or extreme bullying, which means it’s possible to identify and treat them before they commit violence.*”

Translation: corporal punishment has a fundamental role in creating mass school shooters. If we want to really address the underlying causes of these continuing tragedies, we have to go beyond the gun control arguments and change the violent childhood environment prevalent in our corporal punishment society.



POLITICO: Since you both spend much of your time studying mass shootings, I wonder if you had the same stunned and horrified reaction as the rest of us to the Uvalde [Texas] elementary school shooting [May 24, 2022]. Or were you somehow expecting this?

JILLIAN PETERSON: On some level, we were waiting because mass shootings are socially contagious and when one really big one happens [like Buffalo, NY], and gets a lot of media attention, we tend to see others follow. But this one was particularly gutting.

POLITICO: Are you saying there’s a link between the Buffalo and Uvalde shootings?

PETERSON: We don’t know for sure at this point, but our research would say that it’s likely.

POLITICO: I’ve heard many references over the last few weeks to “monsters” and “pure evil.” You’ve said this kind of language actually makes things worse. Why?

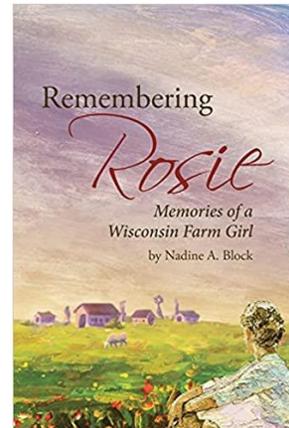
JAMES DENSLEY: If we explain this problem as “pure evil” or other labels like “terrorist attack” or “hate crime”, we feel better because it makes it seem like we’ve found the motive and solved the puzzle. But we haven’t solved anything. We’ve just explained the problem away. What this really problematic terminology does is prevent us from recognizing that mass shooters are us. This is hard for people to relate to because these individuals have done horrific, monstrous things. But three days earlier, that school shooter was somebody’s son, grandson, neighbor, colleague or classmate. We have to recognize them as the troubled human being earlier if we want to intervene before they become the monster.

PETERSON: The Buffalo shooter told his teacher that he was going to commit a murder-suicide after he graduated. People aren’t used to thinking that this kind of thing could be real because the people who do mass shootings are evil, psychopathic monsters and this is a kid in my class. There’s a disconnect.

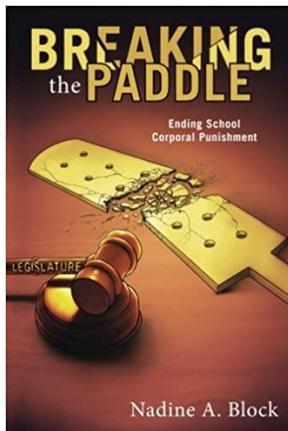
To read the entire article, go to [Politico](#).

✚ 3. Meet Nadine Block – Pioneering the way

Nadine Block spent her childhood on a Wisconsin dairy farm in the mid-twentieth century. Growing up on the homestead with her parents and siblings was often idyllic. Still, Block and her siblings experienced long hours of tedious and dangerous work. Educational opportunities were limited, and the Ludwig children's one-room school had poorly trained teachers and few books. There was no expectation of girls going on to higher education. Block's observations of her depressive mother, the drudgery of farm life, and the short, cruel lives of farm animals were driving forces that made her take a path less followed. During a time when going against the grain was difficult, Block's restlessness and desire to see a world outside her sheltered community catapulted her into a life that the blue-eyed, blond-haired farm girl never could have imagined. She recently detailed her childhood in her book, *Remembering Rosie: Memories of a Wisconsin Farm Girl* (available from [Amazon.com](#)).



As an adult, Nadine has ceaselessly and successfully fought for children's rights for more than three decades. She was a teacher, a school psychologist, and the founder and director of a non-profit organization dedicated to ending corporal punishment of children through education and legal reform. She developed policies and directed legislative action on both state and national levels to ban corporal punishment of children in schools. In 1998, she initiated SpankOut Day April 30th to provide information about the effects of physical punishment of children and alternatives to its use. Thousands of parents have participated in informational events supported by SpankOut Day grants to nonprofit organizations over the years.



In 2009, she led a group of 50 statewide organizations in getting a ban on school corporal punishment in Ohio. In her second book, *Breaking the Paddle: Ending School Corporal punishment* (available on [Amazon.com](#)), Nadine details what it took to achieve that ban in Ohio.

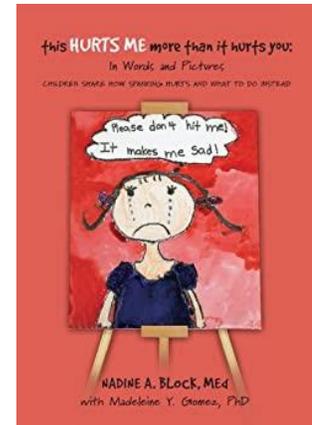
Nadine has received many awards and has been interviewed on Larry King Live, Hannity and Comb, ABC News, New York Times, USA Today, Good Morning America, BBC Channel 4, London, CBS 48 Hours, Redbook, Reuters Health Network, NBC Today, and by many other media sources.



But perhaps she is best known for her first book, *This Hurts Me More Than It Hurts You: In Words and Pictures, Children Share How Spanking Hurts and What To Do Instead* (also available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)).

In her retirement, Nadine continues to support ending corporal punishment of children through writing and personal contacts. Her commitment to ending all corporal punishment of children stems from a firm belief that children are entitled to the same freedom that all other citizens enjoy — to be free from physical assault.

Nadine has recently very generously donated \$20,000 to *The Alliance* earmarked specifically to find a way to prohibit corporal punishment in the 19 states that still allow it in public schools. We are very grateful to her for her dedication to the cause, for her passion to create safe and non-violent childhoods for more children in the U.S., and for her trust in *The Alliance* to get the job done. Nadine is truly a pioneer leading the way for the rest of us, putting her money where her mouth is. Please consider joining Nadine and help make her dream come true. Or if you want to personally thank Nadine for her lifetime of work and her generous donation, you can send her a message through her [website](#).



🚩 4. News from the Board of Directors of *The Alliance*

At the meeting of the Board of Directors on May 25th, 2022, further steps were taken to merge StopSpanking.org into the *Alliance*. The Board approved a resolution agreeing to take over responsibility for StopSpanking.org, along with a Memorandum of Understanding describing the broad outlines of the agreement that has been reached between StopSpanking.org and *The Alliance*.

There was also discussion to make it very clear that the recent donation from Nadine Block was to be used exclusively to ban corporal punishment in schools in the 19 remaining states that still paddle, or to help raise additional funds for that purpose.

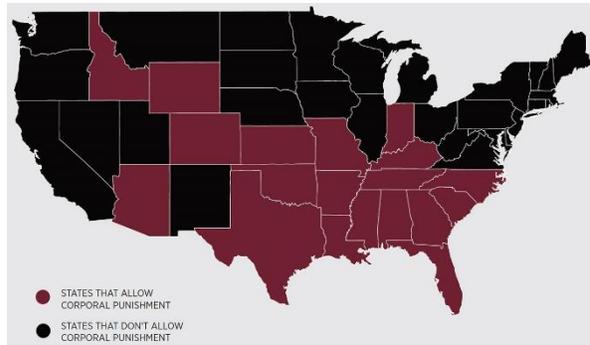
Then our new Executive Director, Sam Martin, gave a very thorough and impressive presentation of the fund-raising ideas and opportunities he sees for *The Alliance*.

A Board of Directors' Subcommittee on Fundraising had also met on April 14th via ZOOM and presented this report: Present were members George Holden, Deb Sendek and Stephen Davis. A quorum was present. A number of different fundraising areas and ideas were discussed, with the Subcommittee ending up unanimously suggesting that the *Alliance* as a whole — and the majority of fundraising time and effort of our Executive Director — focus on the 19 states that still allow corporal punishment in schools through the development of a “State Affiliate Program” to give guidance as well as financial support to those individual states with the objective of passing legislation in each state banning corporal punishment in public schools. This State Affiliate Program should include soliciting donations from our Ambassadors as well as other individual and corporate lists both for the creation of the Program as well as disbursement directly to the states who achieve certain program targets along the way.

Further discussion of a State Affiliate Program included the intention NOT to tell the individual states what to do, but rather solicit their ideas and needs of a unique nature to allow the *Alliance* to assist each state as its particular situation evolves.

There are 135 countries in the world who so far have prohibited corporal punishment in schools. Here are the 19 United States who still allow it....

Alabama
Arizona
Arkansas
Colorado
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Indiana
Kansas
Kentucky



Louisiana
Mississippi
Missouri
North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Wyoming

SO TAKE ACTION NOW !!!

5. No Hit Zones

We encourage all family homes, schools and universities, hospitals, religious institutions, communities—anyone who is committed to non-violent discipline—to become a No-Hit Zone. This means no adult shall hit a child, no child shall hit another child, no adult shall hit another adult, and no child shall hit an adult. For more information and the steps to take, visit the No Hit Zone website: <https://nohitzone.com/>



You can also become a No-Hit Zone advocate as an individual or organization and display this gold seal on your email and website: <https://nohitzone.com/become-a-certified-advocate/>

✚ 6. Become an Alliance Ambassador for Children



AN ALLIANCE AMBASSADOR...

- defends the right of children to be free from all forms of violence, especially in their home
- encourages adults to defend a child's right to equal protection under the law from assault
- encourages community leaders to end the practice of corporal punishment

The *Alliance* is committed to ending all hitting of children and youth in all places (i.e., schools and homes). By joining, you are indicating your support to this cause. When you join, you become a lifetime ambassador for the organization and the movement. You do not need to rejoin the organization each year, though we will gladly accept new donations! We will keep you informed through quarterly newsletters.

For more information, watch this [1-minute YouTube video](#) and then go [here](#).

✚ 7. How to have Amazon.com donate to the U.S. Alliance to End the Hitting of Children

Did you know that Amazon.com will donate .5% of every purchase you make to the *Alliance*? All you have to do is ask them to (instructions below) and then make sure you shop at [SMILE.amazon.com](#) from now on. ([smile.amazon.com](#) is the same catalog of products and services at the same price as [amazon.com](#))

That's right. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. From time to time, Amazon may offer special, limited time promotions that increase the donation amount on one or more products or services or provide for additional donations to charitable organizations. And they have donated more than \$334 MILLION to U.S. charitable organizations in the last decade. For more details, click [here](#).

To start Amazon supporting the *Alliance* is as easy as A-B-C. All you have to do is:

A. Instead of going to [amazon.com](#) to make purchases, go to [smile.amazon.com](#).

B. Choose the charity you want to support. (Be sure to choose the US Alliance to End the Hitting of Children.)

C. You're all set. From now on, every purchase you make that qualifies will generate a donation that AmazonSmile Foundation will automatically send to us — AS LONG AS YOU PURCHASE USING [SMILE.AMAZON.COM](https://www.amazon.com/smile). (The price of what you buy is the same as you would pay on regular amazon.com, so basically, it's free money Amazon will send us!)

8. Letters to the Editor/Share news

As the new editor of this newsletter, I want to encourage all readers to send me their comments, questions, concerns, suggestions, etc. and I will post the appropriate ones in this space in future editions of the newsletter. You can email them to me at sdavis@endhitting.org.

Do you have news to share?

Our newsletter exists to inform and link partners, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, experts, and individuals fighting to end the hitting of children. To do this, we need information from those who know it best: our partners. Email sdavis@endhitting.org with content submissions, including case studies, recently released reports, data and evidence, and any other exciting updates you want to share with the U.S. Alliance community.



PLEASE VISIT WWW.ENDHITTING.ORG