

Letter sent to Robert and Jo Ann Madison by Tianna Bartoletta

September 17, 2012

Robert and Jo Ann,

I do not want a relationship with you. As a twenty-seven year old adult woman my reasons are my own. However, as evident by your recent actions I am aware that you neither respect my wishes or believe that it is possible that I do not want to have anything to do with you. Jo Ann you know what you did, and Robert you know what you have allowed to take place. Both of you will have to live with yourselves. I have the right as an adult to decide with whom I have a relationship. Your birthing me does not give you the right to demand a relationship, it does not give you the right to force me to reconcile a relationship that I have told you repeatedly I do not want. In the court of law, Robert Lee Madison and Jo Ann Madison sued Tianna Tashelle Madison. We are three individual adults, you are able to legally sue me because I am an adult. The docket does not read: Parents v. Daughter, in reality you suspended those parental obligations you claimed to have showered me with over the past decade to file this lawsuit against me. I have been told that you were quoted as saying this lawsuit serves as a "wake up call" and your attorney was also quoted as saying that I need to realize "the importance of having a relationship with her parents." It is my understanding that you want to force me to have a relationship with you. It is this exact domineering, controlling behavior I am permanently separating myself from.

It is fact that after I stopped communicating with you in March I became a lot happier

and free. I knew that my phone would not ring with your unnecessary and inappropriate probes into my adult life. The truth is over the past seven years you have given me nothing but your opinion. I never took money from you that I did not have to pay back and did. I owe you nothing and if I had indeed gotten \$100,000 worth of support (as stated by you in one of your interviews) I am positive I would not have needed to file bankruptcy, and I would not have lost my car. Yet, you alleged in that very same interview that that money was spent on my “junk food cravings.”

Your implications that our relationship was perfect before I met my husband is preposterous. I have therapists: Dr. Joe Whitney, Dr. Tracy Shaw, Northside Psychological Services, Dr. Portenga, and Mr. Hassan LMHC that I have seen over the past seven years that with my permission can make available my patient files and share in meticulous detail what my relationship with the two of you was like and the emotional and sometimes physical toll it took on me starting from the fall of 2003 when I left home for college.

You had a role in our lives if you can remember. John and I took you both out to dinner, we had you over for the holidays, spent New Year’s Eve day with you at the Italian Market, and we took you to a hockey game. Robert, both John and I kept you posted on my progress during training and John himself paid for you to come to the Arkansas meet, he drove 3 hours roundtrip to pick you up, and he left you his rental car so that you could get back to the airport. The three of you kept in touch when I had to fly to Birmingham, England for a competition and again we did our best to ensure

you had an enjoyable time in Albuquerque for nationals. I am unsure why it escapes you that it was John who put you (Jo Ann) and I on the phone together to try to mend our relationship back in February the day of the Boston competition. Every step of the way we endured your opinions and criticisms including an email you submitted in an automated form on my personal website demanding we explain our plans for the site. We still have the email.

So I asked both of you to back off in March and to not come to Indoor World Championships. You both told me you respected what I was saying, that you would honor my wishes, and that you would treat me as an adult. I hung up the phone feeling confident that as my parents you realized that I was in the best place I had ever been and that your meddling was out of line. However, once we were settled in Istanbul I got a text from you that said, "We're here" and when I voiced my disbelief that you lied to me and came anyway your response was, "You won't even know we're here." It was at this point I realized you would never respect me and I decided that it was best for me to be rid of my toxic relationship with you. I cannot force you to respect me or treat me as an adult, and because I am able to recognize the things I can and cannot control I put my efforts into what I am able to control. I can control what I allow myself to be susceptible to and because I am an adult I can make this informed decision. I will not have a relationship with you. I sent you an email in March outlining this thought process. I changed my phone number and deactivated the email account from which the message was sent. The fact that you did not take me seriously only reiterates the struggle I have been having with you two for my entire

adult life.

Knowing we had not spoken since March you entertained interview requests, attended the Olympic Trials, held a rally in Ely Square, and attended the Olympic Games. What I am most embarrassed about is that the two of you accepted money from the struggling people of Elyria and other places to attend the Games under the illusion that you two had been so busy supporting me over the last seven years that you could not afford to go to the Games and needed their help to come be with me, knowing you had had no contact with me. You were quoted as saying I could not be in attendance at the rally because I was already in Europe training and I was not. I was at home in Tampa, Florida. I learned about the plans for the rally through google alerts. I called Mayor Brinda myself and asked if I was able to write a letter to the Elyrians thanking them for their support. I was not invited to my own rally? You may not have my contact information but you have John's. You told the people of Elyria that you would personally deliver the banner to me in London where I would have never gotten it. Instead, I arranged for the banner to be delivered to my home. You told Elyrians that I would be returning home after the Games knowing that I have told you repeatedly I wanted nothing to do with you. You lied to them.

After everything I have had to overcome in my life, including the distractions you were for me this season, I was able to still compete to the best of my ability, and bring home a medal. Your call to the USOC telling them that you "had critical information that could affect the 4x100m relay" forced me to take a day away from training in

London before my competition to meet with the officials who suddenly began to question the status of my participation in the Games. I was not able to take advantage of the full Olympic experience because we could not safely go to the Proctor and Gamble House, the USA House, or the Visa House because we would run into the two of you who were taking full advantage of the benefits you could get out of being my parents. I asked you repeatedly to leave me alone. You have proven to be disrespectful, unpredictable, and volatile. I cannot return to Ohio and give back to my community because I fear for my safety. I have no way of knowing what you two will do next, or at what lengths you will go for your demands. The problem is that you believe that as my biological parents you have been endowed with certain legal rights to the parent-child relationship. You are mistaken. You have no rights to me. Moreover, I am not legally obligated to have anything to do with you.

Robert in one of your interviews quotes scripture about a parent's role in raising a child. You explained to the world that we were raised to read the word and to love people. I know that Colossians 3:21 says that parents are not to provoke their children lest they get discouraged. Your erroneous behavior does not discourage me as I am not a child. But you have gone out of your way to provoke me by following me unwelcome around the world and now by suing me and making public the very thing you did not want made public. Frankly, I am trying to appeal to you on an intellectual level to make it clear that you neither legally or biblically have any right to exert the kind of control over me that you are trying to exercise. Yet you fail to realize that your continued efforts to do so only reiterate and validate my position that you two are not

people I want in my life.

I have no feelings for either of you. I have no respect for you as people. You have not earned it. I am not angry with you but I feel sorry for you. It saddens me that you have attempted to rewrite my life's story and the reality of this past year to your benefit.

John and I know the truth and do not need to drag you into the court of law or public opinion for self validation.

In every interview we focused on the positive changes we made to make this run. I spoke of my hardships only within the context that all people need to be encouraged that they can overcome some seemingly impossible situations. Your absence in my life was reflected in your absence from my interviews. You will not find one interview in which I spoke of you--not negatively, positively, or indifferently. Once I took a stand and removed myself from within your reach I blossomed. I have become the woman I have always wanted to be. Robert I will never forget overhearing your conversation with John when you called him in Portland after the Olympic Trials. I heard you say without hesitation or fumbling that you wanted nothing to do with me and that you did not like or approve the woman I have become.

Who have I become? I know who I used to be. I used to be irresponsible. I made unhealthy decisions in my relationships of the past. I used to be a liar, constantly lying to myself about who I was and where I was headed in life. I used to be lazy and passive on the track. I used to live with a sense of entitlement instead of having a strong work ethic. I used to allow so-called friends and family members to guilt me into doing things I did not want to do.

What have I become? I have become disciplined. I have become a business woman. I have cleaned up my credit. I have learned financial responsibility. I have finally launched the program for girls I had been working on. I have become an Olympian. I have become a World Record holder. I have become respected within my profession. I have become a loving and supportive wife. I have become a woman who plans for everything. I have become one of the World's most consistent sprinters. I have become an adult who asserts and stands up for herself. What exactly is there not to approve of?

I did indeed request documentation from you about my finances. It never made sense to me how I could have two full scholarships to the University of Tennessee, attend for only two years and walk away with student loans totaling almost \$35,000. I have the right to ask for documentation of how the money was spent especially since I am the one left with the responsibility to pay it back. It was no surprise to you that I had suspicions about your management of my money. I went from being the highest paid long jumper, at a base salary of \$80,000 a year but including my bonuses from year one (2006) and two (2007) totaled over a half million dollars and by year three (2008) although I still had my base salary of \$80,000 I had fallen behind on my mortgage and car payments. In year four (2009) I was reduced by my sponsor to \$60,000 and in the same calendar year was dropped from the contract entirely and was forced into bankruptcy. Any one who has gone through what I have gone through financially would ask questions.

Especially if they were not the one in control of the account. I requested the documentation because I have the right to see where the money went. I came to you with this request privately through an attorney whom I thought would command more respect than you would afford me. I did not accuse you, I asked logical questions that deserved answers. Instead of answering these questions and supporting your answers with the documents I requested you decided it best call me delusional and go public by way of the media and social networking sites about how supportive and generous you two have been over the years.

It is a shame that you cannot stop yourselves from carrying on this charade. You do not realize that you are continuing to negatively effect my life. You are in reality diminishing my future earning power as you are responsible for over 120 articles that feature my name in negative headlines. It is embarrassing to watch you bury yourselves in your hometown and in the court of public opinion. For what? Money? I filed bankruptcy and could not afford it. You helped me with one payment and demanded I pay it back so I did. I worked at the Apple Store, The Body Shop, and The Family Christian Bookstore simultaneously to support myself while trying to train. I finally signed a new sponsorship deal for \$20,000. I kept fighting to survive. You extended me zero financial support. Your disapproval of the way I was living was the only thing you afforded me. You offered me no way out of my situation and no resources to help me get back on my feet. For example, when my tire blew I called you because I had NO money in the bank. I asked you to buy me one tire although all four were bald. Before you wired the money to me you made it clear that because you

two had not gotten me a birthday present the month before this would count as that.

John took one look at my tires and replaced all of them.

Again, you are just not people I want or need in my life. You were in my life the way you wanted to be for the past six years? Can you think of any positive thing that transpired in my life during that time?

2006- I moved to Los Angeles (paid for by Nike) and suffered a knee injury in Europe.

2007- I had knee surgery. You were not present at the surgery nor were you involved in my recovery. I moved in with Jackie Joyner Kersee who oversaw my rehabilitation. You did not visit me in St. Louis during this time. I made the world championship team on a bye as the reigning world champion and placed tenth.

2008- I could no longer afford my condo. I did not make the Olympic team for the second time and I met with a new coach and made my own arrangements to move to Florida.

2009- I was dropped from my contract. Failed to make the World Championship team. Filed for Bankruptcy. Lost my home in foreclosure. Fired my coach who tried to take advantage of me. Lost my car to bank repossession. While writing a thesis for my honors degree I realized I could not afford my tuition and survive so I left school. Worked at the family book store as many hours per week as they had available at an hourly pay barely about minimum wage.

2010- I trained myself through the fall because I could not afford to pay a coach. Got a nearly full-time job at Apple and a part time job at The Body Shop while continuing to train.

2011- I tore both hamstrings because I could not afford treatment. I did not qualify for indoor or outdoor nationals. Decided track was over. Reapplied for school. Called and hired a new coach who would make me decent enough to make enough money to cover tuition. Moved in with my little sister because I could not afford my own place. Sponsor spent my coaching money so I couldn't afford to pay my coach for three months. You remember that conversation? I was livid. John met with the coach and paid him for me. John and I had just met.

Now, since I have severed our ties, the list of positive happenings outweigh any negative events by far. Additionally, from my perspective the negative things that I have experienced since the onset of the new year had you at their centers. I have otherwise had the perfect track season and the fairytale romantic relationship. I do not want you in my life. I do not need your opinions and I do not need your approval.

I do reserve the right to file a lawsuit against you for fiduciary negligence. A thorough review of my mortgage and other housing documents would show that you cosigned for the loan at its purchase and removed your name from the documents before its foreclosure. That is not a false accusation Jo Ann, that is a true event that can be

proved. Somehow it never occurred to you that if suing you was something I wanted to do it would have been done back in March when I told you I was considering it. I do not need to drag you to court because I know the truth about you and the role you truly play in my life. I am able to sleep at night, laugh, smile, and continue to be active in my community because I know the truth.

The only thing left for me to do to ensure that I can continue on my life's positive trajectory is to make you realize that I want nothing to do with you. For what I hope is the last time I am telling you that I understand that you are my biological parents. I understand that you are possibly operating under some misguided belief that societal norms give you the right to force me to have a relationship with you as my parents. I understand that you may think that since you raised me as a Christian there are certain biblical expectations children have to their parents. Understand this Robert and Jo Ann, none of those rationales mean a thing to me. I simply will not have you in my life.

What I want is for Robert Lee Madison and Jo Ann Madison to finally leave me alone. I do not want to have any contact with either of you. Not indirectly by attending events you are aware of my participation in, showing up at my home or office, or using family members that I am in contact with to deliver messages for you. This includes contacting John Joseph Bartoletta.

Neither of you shall profit off of my name, career, or personal effects. You cannot

donate my belongings to charity, auction them off for your fundraising efforts, sell my belongings for any reason, accept awards on my behalf, or host community events such as the Hometown Rally held recently. Robert, you cannot further your coaching career posturing yourself as if you had some direct involvement in my turnaround this season.

Additionally, to ensure that profiteering off of my belongings does not take place I want everything at 351 Oakdale Circle Elyria, Ohio 44035 returned to me by mail to my attorney's office. For clarification, my belongings include any paperwork (ie. tax forms, receipts, contracts, or other documents), sports memorabilia (medals, track spikes, awards, certificates), my books and journals, and my blankets, stuffed animals, or toys. For the items that do not fit neatly in the aforementioned categories use this criteria as a guideline: any item that has my name, likeness, or image imprinted, printed, embroidered, handwritten, or engraved on it belongs to me.

Lastly, but I believe most importantly, is my demand that you stop speaking to the media about all matters, issues, and events pertaining to me. You need not comment on the past, present, or speculate about my future. You will not further capitalize or take advantage of this current situation by writing a book, or booking speaking engagements. You will deny all future interview requests regarding myself or my career. You will not speak for me by committing me to events, or offering up your opinion on anything I am involved in. In return I will never speak of you. I am requesting we sign a nondisclosure agreement to this effect to make this request

legally binding.

As it stands my relationship with you was over in March and the continuation of this absurd battle with you over your role in my life needs to end. I am not a child, you cannot take me to court and demand custody of me. I am a happy and successful woman who is married to a supportive and loving man. I do not want to have a relationship with you now or ever. Stop this and grieve or come to terms with your perceived loss like most parents do, privately.

Tianna Madison