

Dottie Sandusky: The "Happy Valley" Documentary is Pure Fiction

Three years ago this week, my husband, Jerry Sandusky, was arrested and Joe Paterno was fired. Incredibly, the media's version of that story is still being told today.

Recently, I was sent a copy of the movie "Happy Valley" (via email by documentary filmmaker John Ziegler who has studied this story for almost three years but had nothing to do with this film's production), which is scheduled for release later this month.

It purports to be the story of how my husband Jerry was protected from being found to be a supposed pedophile by the alleged football-crazed culture of State College. It "stars" my adopted son Matt Davidson (though, strangely, in the film he still uses his adopted name of Sandusky) and his attorney Andrew Shubin.

As I watched it, I honestly didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but I did know that almost none of this "documentary" is based in the truth.

I am aware that few people want to believe me and my other children when we say that Jerry is not a pedophile and that he did not commit the horrible crimes for which he was convicted (and given a virtual life sentence in prison). However, this doesn't mean that, when appropriate, I don't have a moral responsibility to at least set the record straight.

When Matt suddenly decided in the middle of Jerry's trial to turn from being his most ardent defender to being an accuser, it was perhaps our worst moment in this entire nightmare. Not because of the profound implications it would have on Jerry's defense (since Matt had sat next to me in the courtroom on the first day, this meant that Jerry effectively couldn't take the stand because then Matt could be called as a prosecution witness and surely at least one juror would make that toxic connection), but because we truly loved Matt and his children.

We had taken Matt into our home and out of a natural family climate he says was one of physical abuse. We legally adopted him when, after he asked us to do so, he turned 18. To even think that Matt could make these horrific claims, which our whole family knew to be untrue, was simply heartbreaking.

Unfortunately, the movie "Happy Valley" presents a vastly different and highly misleading narrative about what happened. They never tell you that Matt was adopted at 18 (well after he now says his abuse ended) and through the use of photos of Matt as a child and some bizarre conspiracy weaving from his attorney, the strong impression is left that we somehow used the courts to steal Matt from his natural mother so that Jerry could abuse him.

That is simply absurd.

I found it remarkable how many important facts are left out of the movie which could have provided the viewer with at least the chance to figure out what really happened here.

For instance, it is never mentioned that:

Matt testified under oath to the grand jury unambiguously that he was never abused by Jerry and he didn't believe he was capable of abusing anyone.

Matt went to court against his ex-wife so that his children could see Jerry at home after he was arrested.

In the movie, Matt completely contradicts the story he later told Oprah Winfrey (which was that he suddenly remembered his abuse during the trial) by saying that he came forward to stop "lying" and being a "coward."

Matt (as well as his lawyer Andrew Shubin) has been paid millions of dollars by Penn State even though the university had no knowledge of his allegations, his claim was never adjudicated in court, and the statute of limitations had already passed.

None of our other five children believes Matt and none of them, or any of our many foster children, has taken the golden opportunity to pursue a financial claim in this case.

Matt was cited to the police (after being seen on television standing behind Jerry well after his arrest), by the person who Matt first sold one of Jerry's stolen national championship rings.

The film also allows Matt's lawyer (who also represents the so-called "Mike McQueary Victim" who never testified and who, strangely, is not even mentioned in the movie), to slander the entire State College community. Several times Shubin claims, without evidence or logic, that it was our town's love of football which allowed Jerry to go on abusing boys for so long before he was finally stopped.

How come no one ever considers that maybe it took so incredibly long to "stop" Jerry because there was no evidence any crimes had occurred because he simply wasn't committing any? Do people really think that highly respected people like Joe Paterno and Graham Spanier (who didn't even really know Jerry) would put kids at grave risk to protect someone who was no longer even part of the football program?!

How does anyone come up with this crazy idea? If it wasn't so incredibly sad and so many innocent people hadn't been hurt by this baseless allegation, it might actually be humorous.

But, of course, none of this is remotely funny. I understand that people have largely made up their minds about what happened here, but that doesn't make that view true. I know what is true and I know that, contrary to apparent popular belief, I am not delusional.

The full and real story of this tragedy has yet to be properly told. Unfortunately, the movie “Happy Valley” doesn’t come close to fixing that. Instead, it only further exacerbates the media-created myth which has caused so much injustice for so many good people.

Dottie asks those interested in more information on the case to visit www.FramingPaterno.com