October 15 through March 15 - Overview with examples

On Friday October 15th, my wife went out, and for the first time during our marriage, stayed out overnight without notice or discussion, returning in the early afternoon of the 16th. On October 16th, she waited until our two and a half year old son Elijah was in bed before going out, this time coming home in the early morning hours. This began a period, still ongoing, in which Laurie was either not at home at all, or only at home for a bare minimum of time, often only enough to sleep and get ready to go out again. Prior to that point, with a few notable exceptions, raising Elijah had been a cooperative effort.

Below are some specific dates when Laurie was away from the house, not able to care for Elijah when he got up in the morning, and in many cases gone before he went to sleep. There is another date I’m not yet sure of, when Bob Saget was scheduled to appear but there was a snow-storm so bad that Laurie wouldn’t drive instead, she walked to the bus in the snowstorm and came home a couple of days later. There is also another time when a friend was in the hospital when Laurie was gone at least a day. This adds up to at least a dozen times in the past 5 months where Laurie has been gone from the household overnight.

* 10/15/11 - Left for the night after putting Eli to bed
* 10/31/11 - Left for the night after taking Eli trick-or-treating
* 11/23-26/11 - Stayed at a friends over Thanksgiving
* 12/25/11 - Here for Christmas with Eli, then out for the night
* 12/31/11- Out overnight for new years
* 1/712 - Out overnight for her birthday
* 2/14/12 - Out overnight for Valentines day
* 3/10/12 - Out all night, then out all day for “breakfast”
* 3/21/12 - Out all night, missed work the next day, home after 2:00pm

In October 2011, when this started, I had been out of work for over two years, helping to care for Elijah since his birth, but I had a new role starting the following Monday, back at Microsoft as a consultant for XBox Operations. For the better part of the previous two and a half years, I had been up nearly every morning with Elijah, while his mother often slept until 10:00am or later, and was often not “ready for the day” until early afternoon.

The generalities of these statements may be verified by my mother who lived with us at the time. While she cannot state specific dates and times, she is compelling in her belief that Laurie abandoned Elijah in mid-October.

March 1 through March 15 - Example behavior

This is a daily calendar for the past two weeks, focused on Laurie’s comings and goings.

03/01/2012 - I take Elijah to daycare around 10:00am, help Marian get ready for her trip, and then pick him back up later in the day. After feeding and bathing him, I put Elijah to bed around 9:30pm. Laurie gets in sometime after midnight.

03/02/2012 - Since I'm taking Marian to the airport, Laurie gets up around 8:00am. Eli and I have already been up since 6:00am. I take Marian to the airport, get home, Laurie starts to fight then takes Eli out for a while. Laurie is home then gone again by 8:00pm.

03/03/2012 - Elijah is up at 7:30am, calling for me even though he is sleeping with his mother and I am sleeping upstairs. I make him scrambled eggs for breakfast, we play, he rides his police car. Laurie gets up around 10:00am, gives him an ice-cream sandwich, makes herself some coffee, and gets in the bathroom. I feed Elijah a chicken salad sandwich around 11:30am and he sits and watches TV while I study. At 2:00pm, Laurie takes Eli to her folks house, she returns around 9:00pm, he is still awake, hasn't napped, but had dinner. Laurie heads out over-night, saying she will be back early, around 11:00am. I change Elijah into his pajamas, hang out with him awhile, and get him to bed in the downstairs bedroom. When I'm ready for bed, around midnight, I get Elijah and bring him to bed with me, upstairs.

03/04/2012 - Elijah and I get up a little before 7:00am. He is upset to be in "Marian's bed" but wants pancakes, and soon forgets. First, I make some coffee and change Elijah, then I'm making pancakes and bacon by 7:30am. Eli isn't really hungry, and instead, he "hides" for a while, all the while telling me where to look for him, then he wants to watch more BusyTown Mysteries. He is watching way too much TV and we need to get on a better schedule so that I'm not always waiting for Laurie to take him "somewhere special" for a couple of hours. Eli eventually eats a piece of bacon and a pancake. Yesterday was a good eating day, today may not be. Maybe, maybe not.

03/05/2012 - I put Eli down at 9:00pm, he sleeps in the same room as Laurie. Laurie gets home from the concert sometime after I went to bed at 11:00pm. At 6:50am, Eli calls "Daddy" from downstairs, then it's quiet for 5 minutes and he calls "Daddy" again. This time I get him. He wants to shave, and he wants Macaroni and Cheese. I make him fresh Mac and Cheese, and help him with his shaving (it's a plastic razor and soap shaving cream). Laurie gets up around 8:30am, plays with Eli for a half and hour and then goes into the bathroom to get ready for work. Eli and I fool around a while longer and I get him to daycare around 10:00am. At 2:30pm, Laurie texts asking whether I was picking him up or not. I say I thought she was, but that I will. Around 4:00pm, Laurie texts to say it would be great if I pick him up, I get Eli around 5:30, take him home, play with him, feed him (yes, pizza again), give him a bath. He's fussy and doesn't go down until around 10:00pm. Laurie isn't home when I go to bed at 11:00pm.

03/06/2012 - Eli doesn't get up until around 8:00am. He wants to watch TV. He slept downstairs with his mom, but she isn't up. I help him with the TV and then he wants eggs. I make him two scrambled eggs, but he doesn't eat them, or anything else. He drinks some juice. I drop him to daycare around 10:00am. Laurie gets up around noon and asks about Eli, when I say he's in daycare she says she was going to leave me a note to keep him home, since she wasn't working. I point out that at noon, that isn't looking like it would have been a good idea. I pick Eli up from daycare around 6:00pm and take him home. Around 6:30pm, Laurie sneaks out the door for an appointment.

03/07/2012 - It's Laurie's day off and she sleeps in again. Eli and I are up at about 6:00am. He is hungry today and we have eggs and bacon. Then we run around the house for a while "get me daddy", and Eli watches Busy Town for a while. Laurie gets up around 10:00am, gets in the shower, she has some stuff going on and even though she is ready to go around 2:00pm, she doesn't spend much time with Eli and is off and out until around midnight.

03/08/2012 - Eli and I get up around 7:00am and I get Eli to daycare. Laurie is getting ready for work, and since she is up late, she hurries and barely acknowledges Eli. I get a message later in the day asking if I was going to pick up Eli, after some back and forth, I do pick him up, and we don't see his mother until sometime after dinner, maybe 8:00pm. Laurie puts Eli to bed, somewhat of a rarity at this point, and then leaves.

03/09/2012 - Eli slept with me last night again. Laurie put him to bed, but when she wasn't home by midnight, he was back upstairs. Laurie said last night that she would "Have Eli all day Friday", instead, she was up for a while early, but then went back to bed, or just back downstairs until 10:00am, got some coffee, and then went back downstairs to get ready. She took Eli out around 2:00pm, and was back around 6:00pm, and then gone again at around 7:00pm. She got back in sometime after 11:00pm, by which time Eli and I were in bed upstairs.

03/10/2012 - Elijah and I get up around 7:00am, Laurie is up around 8:00am and baking cookies a little later. She is in a pretty good mood and patient with Eli. I leave around 11:00am for IKEA and HomeDepot. When I get back around 4:00pm they are out, headed to Laurie's folks for a while. Laurie returns with Eli around 9:00pm, he is wound up but funny. Laurie leaves again around 9:30pm. I get Eli to be around 10:00pm and follow him around 11:00. We haven't heard his mother come home.

03/11/2012 - Laurie stayed out all night, then went to "breakfast" with friends. She got home around 8:00pm, spent some time with Eli, then can't get him down for bed. At about 10:00pm he comes up and asks if I'm ready for bed, I tell him yes and we go to bed for the night.

03/12/2012 - Eli and I are up at around 7:00am, Laurie gets up around 8:00am, spends a little while with Eli in the living room, and is down getting ready for work by 8:30 or so. I play with Eli for a while, then he watches Caillou while I get ready and I have him to daycare around 10:00am. Laurie calls later in the day and we have some disagreement and Laurie is out until 10:00pm, by which time Eli and I are asleep. She wakes us anyway, tries to get Eli to go to bed with her, and Eli and I are finally back in bed around 11:00pm.

03/13/2012 - Laurie is up late, not much time for Eli before work. Laurie works late and gets home around 7:30 with Chinese food and a big bag of lollipops. Eli doesn't like the chinese food, which seems to bug Laurie and she leaves around 8:30pm. She wakes me up around 3:30am when she comes home(?). She is calling the dogs, and in my room briefly.

03/14/2012 - Eli and I are up around 7:30am. Laurie is up before 8:30, spends some time with Eli, talks on the phone with the credit card company, asks me why I'm packing (Marian's stuff). Laurie goes downstairs by 10:00am, comes up around 1:30pm, makes Eli a roast beef sandwich, then leaves for the Dr. Laurie is home around 7:30PM, make spaghetti (sp) in record time, and we all sit down to eat. The spaghetti is pretty good, but Eli doesn't eat any, which upsets Laurie who is fighting with me anyway. At 9:15pm, Laurie asks Eli if he is ready for bed. Eli says "We aren't ready yet." Laurie gets really mad and leaves. Eli and I are in bed around 10:00 pm, not sure when mom came home.

03/15/2012 - Laurie is up early, but doesn’t have much time for Elijah even though she doesn’t work until early afternoon. From 8:30am to 12:30pm, she is “getting ready”. On her way out the door, she makes Eli a sandwich he doesn’t eat. It’s my birthday and Laurie isn’t planning on coming home early.

Contents of the text-messaging thread from October 25, 2011 to now

There is a significant history of events in an ongoing text message conversation which starts around October 25 and continues still. The thread accounts for many of the times away, if indirectly, and also demonstrates a pattern where Laurie increasingly does not pick Elijah up from daycare. Other highlights of the text conversations include:

* Laurie telling me more than once that she knows she needs to do better (at being a mother)
* Laurie wondering out loud what day it was. I’m not sure if it was Thursday and she thought it was Monday or vice-versa, but she was clearly confused
* Laurie thinking about suicide, although vague, it also indicates she’s thought about it more than once
* Laurie telling me on the 14th of March that she would take and pick up Elijah from daycare, saying that she *needed the practice* because I was leaving soon
* “Soft hand-offs” where Laurie will call saying she doesn’t want to / can’t pick up Elijah from daycare and says that if she doesn’t hear from me she will assume I will get him.

September 2010 through April 2011 - Surgeries and Infections

During the majority of the time between September 2010 and May/June 2011, it should be clear that Laurie was unable to be Elijah’s primary care-giver due to recovery from various surgical procedures and associated infections.

On or about August 2010, when I was due to go back to work after a year sabbatical to help raise our son for the first year, Laurie noticed that one of her breasts (augmented) was (noticeably) lower than the other (sagging) and she was concerned it was leaking.

After several discussions, Laurie decided on a doctor and told me the cost would be approximately $6500.00. At the same time, she told her parents she needed the surgery because one of her implants was leaking, and that she needed $10,000.00. She then used our money and her parents to schedule both a breast reduction/shaping and a “tummy tuck”. I later found out that the implant was not leaking.

The healing process was slow, originally expected to be 6 to 8 weeks, it dragged into December when it became clear that Laurie had contracted a staph infection which in turn required more healing. It is also worth noting that at times in this process, Laurie was taking a dozen or more Vicodin for the pain.

When the worst of it appeared over, Laurie suffered yet another staph infection which again took her focus from Elijah, this was in February and lasted until late into March. In April 2011, Laurie had her last breast surgery, an experimental surgery to move fat from various spots on her body to her breasts, for a “natural augmentation” and to cure some “rippling” from the original surgery. I don’t think Laurie is yet happy with the results, and in fact sought recourse from the Dr. and his practice.

April 2009 through October 2011 - Extended Infant Care Leave

I was concerned right away when we brought Eli home from the hospital because Laurie did not seem to want to breast-feed. Her milk was not “up” when she came home from the hospital and she did not make any real attempt to help it along, trying to use a breast-pump and some of the other suggestions sporadically.

Laurie had seen what breast-feeding had done to other women’s breasts, and I don’t think she wanted any part in it, it would have also meant staying off her medication for an extended period of time and Laurie appeared anxious to get back on her medication schedule. It was for this reason, along with a general feeling that Laurie wasn’t connecting, that drove my decision to quit work once Infant Care Leave ended, in September.

Laurie is by nature a late night person and we got into a schedule when Eli was very young and not sleeping through the night where Laurie would take care of him in the afternoon and evenings, including his “midnight” feeding, and I would get up with him in the morning, letting Laurie sleep in until 10:00am or later most mornings. Since Eli was on a bottle, there was no need for Laurie to breastfeed him, allowing her to sleep more and spend less time with Elijah.

This pattern of Laurie sleeping in each morning has continued to this day (3/16) where Elijah got up at 7:30 am, and as I write this at 8:24 am, his mother is still in bed. What has changed, is that Laurie’s behavior has otherwise been significantly worse since October 2011.

Strolling until Eli’s head was irregular and not wanting to get a helmet (at approx. 9 months)

Confrontation with Mari (Laurie’s manager at Salon Farouche in Redmond, driven by Yasmine (our day-care provider) and Laurie’s co-worker (can get her name)

(This happened in Feb. 2012)

I am also concerned that Laurie is reliant on several prescription medications, including Adderall or Ritalin, which are “speed like” and meant to help Laurie focus. Instead, they seem to cause her to be very tired in the mornings,very wound-up at night and generally rushed. Laurie is currently on, or has recently been prescribed, the following medication:

* Alprazolam (Xanax)
* Dextroamphetamine Sulfate (Adderall)
* Methylphenidate Hydrochloride (Ritalin)
* Bupropion Hydrochloride (Wellbutrin)
* Clonazepam (Klonopin)
* Minocycline
* Ciprofloxacin
* Accutane

Laurie has also had several minor fender-benders over the last several months and one night, when she was blocked into our garage, Laurie spent several hours frantically trying to maneuver her car out of an impossible space, doing thousands of dollars of damage to her car, the contents of the garage and the garage itself.