



Family Law

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LAWYER

Q

I heard the news about these little girls aged five and two which the RCMP in Cochrane, Alberta state were taken by their aunt and grandmother. What is the story?

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7696224/cochrane-rcmp-child-abduction/>;
<https://strathmorenow.com/stories/search-continues-for-cochrane-area-toddlers>

A

The RCMP believe that Leonine O'Driscoll-Zak (5) and Wyatt O'Driscoll-Zak (2) have been abducted on March 13, 2021 by their grandmother Theresa O'Driscoll (68) and their aunt Alison O'Driscoll (38).

The father, Colin Zak and the mother, Jacqueline O'Driscoll-Zak have been involved in a high conflict parenting dispute, and Justice Price found that the mother had breached two previous parenting orders by unilaterally terminating Dad's access. He also found that the mother had alienated the children from the father and ordered family reunification counselling between Dad and the children. The judge granted primary care of the children to Dad, with joint decision-making.

This did not sit well with Mom, who initiated a flurry of appeals and allegations of bias, which were

ultimately rejected by the Alberta Court of Appeal on December 4, 2020 [Zak v Zak, 2020 ABCA 431].

What happened next? The children's grandmother and aunt abducted the children. Sadly, as of April 7, 2021 the Serious Crimes Branch of the RCMP is still searching for them.

This is a lesson about what not to do; the parties have spent at least \$80,000 each on this litigation, money which they could have used for their children's education. The children have been traumatized by their parent's conflict. Better for everyone to have compromised with a Separation Agreement with Family Lawyers.

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