



December 22, 2025—84 pounds. I'm embarrassed to admit how much that number means to me.

How Cruelty Ignited an Eating Disorder

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There are ways a life can be undone that feel dramatic from the outside — catastrophes that announce themselves, moments that divide time cleanly into before and after. The kind of suffering that arrives with sound effects. Sirens. Collisions. An event people recognize instantly and know how to name.

What happened to me did not look like that.

It looked, instead, like endurance. It looked like adapting, again and again, to conditions that never stabilized. It looked like learning — slowly, unwillingly — how much a human nervous system can absorb before it begins to fail, and then discovering that failure does not always look like collapse. Sometimes it looks like function carried far past its limits. Sometimes it looks like staying upright so convincingly that no one notices the cost until the damage has already set in.

That is what happened to me.

For most of my adult life, food had been unremarkable. I did not diet, did not track numbers, did not experience my body as something that needed management. My weight hovered around 120 pounds without effort or thought. I ate when I was hungry, stopped when I was full, and derived uncomplicated pleasure from meals. There was no drama there, no hidden ideology. Food was simply part of the background of a functioning life.

What changed was not my relationship to food. What changed was my relationship to safety.

During my paternity court case against former *Bachelor* star Clayton Echard in 2023, an online group calling itself “Justice for Clayton” formed and fastened itself to my life with a level of fixation that is difficult to convey without sounding unbelievable. It was obsession — sustained attention sharpened into punishment. My life became a kind of public ledger onto which strangers projected certainty, grievance, and moral authority.

Every aspect of me was treated as material: my mental health, my past, my family, my finances, my face, my body. Context was stripped away. Fragments were repackaged as content and circulated for engagement, narrated with the confidence of people convinced they were acting in the service of something righteous. The most severe interpretations traveled fastest. The cruelest framing drew the largest audience for the content creators covering the case.

I had never met these people. I had never harmed them. Yet they spoke about me with the certainty and contempt typically reserved for someone convicted of murder — someone society has already decided is undeserving of empathy or nuance. Proportion disappeared. Context disappeared. Over time, slurs replaced my name. Being called a “c***” became so routine that it ceased to function as an insult and instead became a category, a linguistic shortcut that eliminated the need to recognize me as a person at all.

Through repetition, the extraordinary became ordinary: dehumanization normalized for those delivering it, and inescapable for the person receiving it.

There was no off switch. No neutral space where I could exist without being watched, interpreted, or repurposed. Over time, my body learned what my mind was slower to articulate: that the world I was moving through had become unpredictable and hostile. I was never fully at rest. I was always bracing.

It was under those conditions that my relationship with food began to shift, not as an intention, but as an adaptation.

My body was searching for something — anything — that still obeyed rules. In a life governed by accusation and volatility, food became one of the few remaining places where cause and effect still held. Eat or don’t. Hunger responded. Abstention produced quiet. There was no audience, no commentary, no moral jury.

At first, the change felt like relief. I was not trying to lose weight. I was not trying to disappear. I was trying — without language for it — to reduce the internal noise of living under constant scrutiny. Restriction did not feel punitive. It felt clarifying. A small, private place where the rules did not change and no one else got a vote.

That is how anorexia entered my life: not as a wish to vanish, but as a body’s response to prolonged threat. Not as pathology at the outset, but as logic under duress. A system doing what systems do when safety is withdrawn — conserving energy, narrowing focus, searching for predictability wherever it can still be found.

What I did not understand then was that this sense of control was an illusion — a mirage that would eventually strand me in a place far more dangerous than the one I was trying to escape.

Then, in May 2025, I was indicted on charges related to the paternity case.

The indictment did not merely add pressure to a situation already strained beyond reason; it dismantled the last remaining structure holding me upright. Until that moment, I had never been in trouble of any kind — not even a school detention. Overnight, my life was reclassified. My body, my history, my words were now broadcast to a much broader audience, and they were filtered through the language and gravity of the criminal legal system.

Strangers watched in real time as proceedings were livestreamed, clipped, narrated, and monetized. The most severe interpretations drew the most attention. The cruelest commentary generated the highest engagement. Empathy did not disappear so much as it became economically inefficient for the content creators covering the case.

Death threats followed — more than a dozen of them.

It was at that point that bulimia emerged.

From the outside, bulimia is still often misunderstood as vanity — thinness as aspiration, attention as motive. That misconception is one of the reasons it is so easily dismissed. For me, it had nothing to do with appearance. It began because I had lost control of everything that made life feel livable, and my mind seized on the one decision that still felt available: I could eat, and then I could undo it. Or not.

What I didn't know when it started was how quickly it would become clear that there was no right decision, only different kinds of punishment.

If I purged, I felt as though I had crossed a line with myself, as though I had become someone I didn't recognize — someone willing to do something degrading in secret just to survive the next hour. Purging is not cinematic; it is physical and humiliating and unbelievably lonely. It is knowing exactly what you are doing, hating yourself for doing it, and doing it anyway because the alternative feels even more intolerable.

And if I didn't purge, the guilt mutated into panic, into a suffocating certainty that I had "lost control" again, that I had failed at the one remaining thing I was still supposed to be able to manage.

The day became a no-win equation.

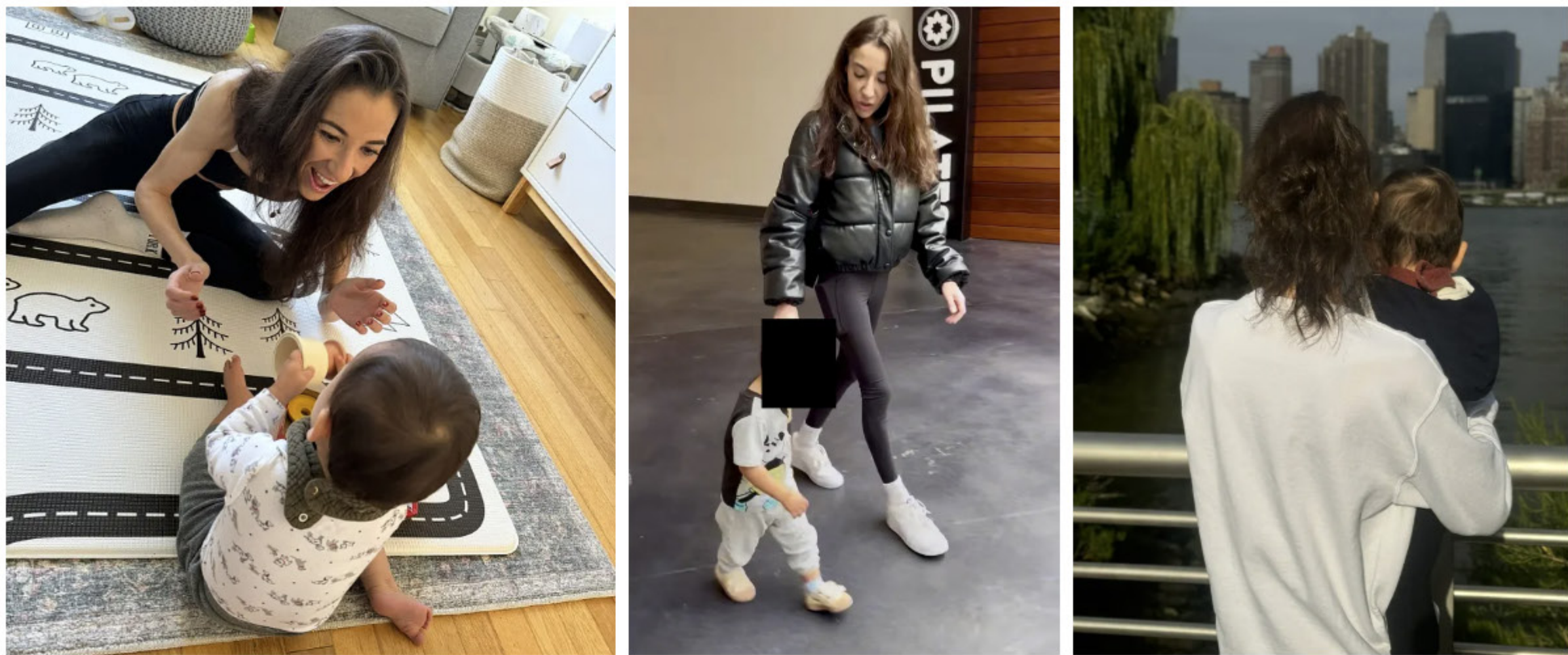
Then came the superseding indictment in November 2025, and with that, the disorder changed its shape again as the illusion of choice disappeared entirely.

I began purging everything. Not selectively. Not strategically. *Everything*. What began as an attempt to feel less powerful became proof that I no longer had any power at all. There were no decisions left — only reflex. Eat, erase. Eat, erase.

Bingeing followed, quietly, almost as permission. If the ending was already written, I could at least have the taste. I could eat fully, desperately — knowing I would undo it — and then do it again. Hunger was no longer the enemy. Fullness was not the goal. The goal was the brief silence afterward.



My sister would lose the one person she never has to explain herself to — the shared memory, the shorthand, the voice that can say, *No, you're not crazy. I was there too.* She would lose the rituals that carried us from childhood into adulthood: sister nights, long conversations that made the day feel survivable again, the daily Zoom workouts where we count reps wrong and laugh at the same moments every time.



I want my nephews to know me in the present tense.

My nephews are so little that if I disappeared from their lives now, they wouldn't lose me the way adults lose someone. They wouldn't even have the chance to miss me. I would be gone before I ever had the chance to exist in their memory at all.

They would grow up with my name already living in the past tense. The kind of name that makes a room go quiet for a second. The kind that gets said carefully, gently, like it might break something if it's spoken too loudly. "*She loved you so much,*" someone would say — and that would be true. But it would also be devastatingly incomplete.

They would be given pieces of me and told to assemble a person. A photograph where I'm holding them before they knew to look at the camera. The same memories brought out again and again, because there will never be new ones to add. A laugh someone tries to recreate and can't quite get right. I would become something abstract — a presence without weight, a love without a body attached to it.

I am acutely aware of this. It is why, in recent months, I have been quietly creating proof of myself — small, ordinary evidence — so the people I love will still have the texture of me if this illness keeps taking more than it has any right to take.

I take photographs when nothing special is happening, because those are the moments that vanish first. I record videos on purpose — saying their names, laughing, talking directly to them — so my voice doesn't become something they have to imagine. I write cards for no occasion at all, leaving behind my handwriting, my phrasing, the unmistakable fact of me.

These are not gestures of surrender — it's the opposite. They are the actions of someone who understands, slowly and unwillingly, that wanting to stay and being able to stay are not always the same thing — and who cannot bear the thought that the people left behind might ever doubt how hard she tried, or how fiercely she loved them, even as she was losing control of the body meant to carry her through this life.

And the truth is, the instinct to stay until the end is not new to me. I've practiced it for decades.

I have rescued nearly twenty senior, special-needs dogs, many of them hospice. I have held them as they died — cheek pressed into their fur, hands on their ribs — trying to memorize the exact feeling of them while they were still alive. People do not line up for animals like that. They do not want the medication schedules, the accidents, the nights when panic arrives without warning, the moment you realize you are the last comfort a body will ever feel. They do not want to know the ending in advance.

What frightened me was the idea of anyone facing it alone — of a life ending without someone there to witness it, to stay, to love it all the way through. Even in this last year, while my own life was coming apart, I pulled two medically fragile seniors off the county euthanasia list. Those were the two best decisions I made all year.

It doesn't stop with the dogs. It's also why there are older horses in my backyard — the ones people stop paying attention to once they can't be ridden, shown, or turned into proof of anything. Some came to me within hours of being sent to slaughter. Others have been with me for more than a decade. Many are in their late twenties now: gray around the eyes, stiff when they first stand, slower every year — and still lifting their heads the second they hear my voice.

I know their habits the way you know a person you've lived beside for years — which one needs time before he moves, which one won't take his medication unless it's given just so, which one freezes if you rush him and settles if you wait. They know me, too. My steps. My timing.

That way of caring is what I am trying to build toward — taking what I have learned in my own backyard and extending it outward. I have been in the early stages of starting an animal rescue: the unglamorous, unfilmable work that does not flatter anyone and does not perform well online, because it is mostly pills, cleanup, and showing up again the next morning. A future spent doing that — pulling the animals no one wants, taking responsibility for lives other people scroll past — is my greatest wish, if I am lucky enough to live long enough to make it real.

My fear is that I will not get there.

My fear is a tragic outcome, but not the kind that makes a neat story. I worry that an eating disorder designed to thrive under pressure will finish what sustained public cruelty began, and that if my body ever gives out, the story will be told as though it were fate instead of force — something tragic but inevitable, as if nothing could have interrupted it.

That would be the final lie layered over all the others: the lie that this was simply “what happened” to me, rather than what was done to me, and what my body did in response to an environment that never stopped tightening its grip.

What is most cruelly misunderstood is the belief that persistence equals resistance — that if an illness remains, it must be because the person is not trying hard enough. I am trying. I am under medical care. I am working with professionals who understand exactly how serious this is and how narrow the margin has become. There is no denial here, no neglect, no attachment to being unwell. There is only a body that has been kept under threat for too long and has not yet been given the conditions required to recover.

Eating disorders respond to safety — actual safety. Without it, treatment is triage. You stabilize. You intervene. You buy time. You do not heal.

Peace would mean waking up without bracing. It would mean eating without calculating fallout — who might see, what might be said, how my body will be interpreted or used against me. It would mean a nervous system no longer locked into vigilance, no longer forced to treat ordinary existence as a threat.

With peace, recovery becomes possible.

Without it, every attempt at healing is uphill, against the same force that caused the collapse in the first place. You cannot recover a body while it is still being hunted. You cannot ask someone to get better while insisting they remain visible, discussed, graded, and punished in public.

That constant exposure doesn't just prevent healing — it shapes the story that gets told.

Since 2023, “Justice for Clayton” has dreamed of a documentary in which they are the protagonists — the people who exposed wrongdoing, brought someone to justice, and emerged vindicated.

But there is another ending to this story, one they do not account for.

If the pressure they have helped sustain continues — if the eating disorder I am now fighting overtakes me — then there is no version of that documentary that looks like a victory. A film that set out to celebrate “accountability” would instead have to reckon with the reality that sustained cruelty, public fixation, and relentless exposure did not produce “justice” at all.

They produced a death.

That would not be a story about truth, or righteousness, or a woman who “deserved it.” It would be a record of what happens when punishment becomes more gratifying than restraint — when a handful of \$4.99 SuperChats, a spike in views, the brief adrenaline rush of a like button lighting up or a subscriber count ticking higher becomes just tempting enough to eclipse empathy. When people forget, slowly and then all at once, what it feels like to be human.

In that story, the eating disorder doesn’t arrive as mystery or vanity. It arrives as consequence. Food becomes arithmetic. Hunger becomes the closest thing to quiet. Purging becomes a brief, brutal relief that hardens into compulsion and then into medical reality — not a performance, not a choice, but a body adapting to sustained, unwanted attention in an environment that never relented.

Some would call it tragic. Some would call it inevitable. Some would say it proves whatever they already believed. Others would insist they didn’t know it was this bad — even though I told them, even though they could see it, even though my body was already telling the story.

All of those explanations will arrive after the fact, carefully worded and self-protective, and all of them will be too late to matter.

The losses would not be shared equally.

For “Justice for Clayton” followers, it would be mourning the social media communities that would eventually go quiet— a server archived, a fixation replaced with a new case.

For the content creators who profited from this, it would be years spent litigating whether their sustained, knowing, and monetized conduct constitutes “intentional infliction of emotional distress”.

For my family, there would be absence, silence— and the plain, devastating truth that I was still trying to heal, still trying to build something good, when the world chose to keep watching instead of stopping.

And sitting inside that knowledge is the simplest, hardest truth of all: none of this ever needed to happen. And I never should have had to suffer this much just to earn the right to keep living.



These images were created and circulated by members of “Justice for Clayton.” They reflect a deliberate choice to render a real person grotesque, to turn visible illness into entertainment, and to continue even as the harm became unmistakable. I cannot comprehend choosing to spend one’s time this way — fully aware of the damage it would cause to another human being — and proceeding anyway.