

U.S. GOVERNMENT ARRESTS BRAZILIAN-AMERICAN GRANDPARENTS OF AMERICAN CHILD ABDUCTED TO BRAZIL IN 2013

Grandparents of Nico Brann, Age 8, of Houston, Texas, detained on criminal complaint for international parental kidnapping and conspiracy.

Miami – Early this morning, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Carlos Guimarães, President of ED&F Man Brasil, a commodities trading firm headquartered in London, United Kingdom, and his wife Jemima Guimarães as they landed at Miami International Airport. A press release and the written complaint itself will be made public by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Houston, Texas shortly. Mr. and Mrs. Guimarães will be presented at 1:30 pm in a public hearing before U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge John O'Sullivan for their initial appearance.

Commenting on his former parents-in-laws' arrest, Chris Brann said "I am very sorry it has come to this. All I ever wanted – and all I still want – is for my son Nico to have equal access to both his loving parents. If Nico is immediately returned to Houston, I am prepared to ask the U.S. Attorney's Office to be lenient in how it handles Carlos and Jemima's cases."

Brann's attorney Jared Genser added "Chris Brann has lived in hell for the last five years as a loving father unjustly denied access to his sweet and wonderful son. I hope that the Guimarães family understands now that there could be serious consequences for their actions and that their only hope for leniency must begin with returning Nico to Houston."

On July 1, 2013, Chris's now ex-wife Marcelle traveled from Houston to Salvador, Brazil, for her brother's wedding. Having joint custody of Nico, she had promised a Texas family court that she would return. Unbeknownst to Chris, she had been planning to abduct Nico and immediately filed for sole custody of her son in Brazil and in a few short weeks when he learned she would not return, his living nightmare began. Carlos Guimarães used resources of his company to facilitate the abduction. Despite being advised of his actions, the company's headquarters failed to respond to a request for help. And Jemima Guimarães used the resources of the primary school that she founded to forge documents filed in Federal District Court in Brazil, actions which are already under investigation by the Brazil Prosecutor General's Office.

Both the Government of Brazil and the Government of the United States agree that Nico Brann was illegally taken from the United States in violation of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Ten independent experts have concluded that Chris is an excellent father, including the court-appointed psychologist in Brazil and Brazil Federal Judge Arali Maciel Duarte. Yet inexplicably, and even with Brazil Attorney General's Office appearing on Chris' side in court, the trial court and appeals courts in Brazil refused to return Nico to the United States. And Chris has had less than two percent physical custody of Nico since the abduction.

Despite the enormous challenges, Chris has fought relentlessly for the return of his son. He led an effort with other left-behind parents whose children were abducted to Brazil to engage Secretary Kerry on Brazil's persistent refusal to return abducted children. He published opeds in

the *Washington Post* and *Huffington Post*. He testified before the U.S. Congress about his son's case. And he held a press conference at the National Press Club with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Michele Thoren Bond, among others. He also traveled repeatedly to both Washington and Brasilia to advocate for his son's return.

Brann is especially grateful for the extraordinary support that Congressman Chris Smith, author of the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention Act, has given to him and other left-behind parents. "There are some 1,000 left-behind parents like me, whose children have been illegally abducted abroad by their other parent. I hope these arrests today strikes fear into the hearts of all these abductors and dissuades others from going down a similar path. Without the support of Congressman Smith, who has been relentless in his support for left-behind parents, none of us would have any hope," Brann added.

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Contact:

Jared Genser
jgenser@perseus-strategies.com
+1 202 320 4135