

Jenny McCarthy Must Get Her Stories Straight!

By David N. Brown.

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Currently, Jenny McCarthy is the leading representative of the idea of “vaccine-caused autism”. However, she has not provided a consistent account of how and when her son came to be diagnosed.

Story 1: Oprah interview September 18, 2007

(R)ight before my son got the MMR shot, I said to the doctor, “I have a very bad feeling about this shot. *This is the autism shot, isn't it?*” (*italics added*)... The nurse gave Evan that shot. And I remember going, “Oh god, no!” And soon thereafter I noticed a change.

Critical summary:

Jenny was aware of autism before her son was vaccinated (ca. 12 months) but had not considered the possibility that he was autistic.

She accepted Wakefield's falsified MMR study at face value, even after its very visible refutation.

Because of Wakefield's hoax, she felt extreme anxiety about the MMR vaccine.

She perceived a change in her son through his second year of life, but could not necessarily point to a specific change in his behavior.

Story 2: CNN post September 24 2007 (www.cnn.com/2007/US/09/24/jenny.autism/index.html)

I didn't know what was going on with my son Evan. One day he was a completely healthy *2-year-old* (*italics added*) and the next he kept having life-threatening seizures.

Countless doctors and hospitals couldn't get to the bottom of it, and no one could figure out the right diagnosis. We continued trying different anti-seizure medicines, but they either made Evan act psychotic or like a zombie. Finally, I got an appointment to see the best pediatric neurologist in Los Angeles.

I was beyond nervous in the doctor's office. My heart was beating so loudly that I bet Evan thought it was a drum in the next room.

When the door opened and a sweet older man walked in, I immediately felt good. I started telling him about all the seizure activity and what had been said so far about Evan. He listened closely but had his eyes on Evan the whole time. I could tell he was evaluating Evan and his bizarre behavior.

He asked me a couple of questions and seemed very peaceful about the whole thing. I was starting to feel more relaxed as he played with Evan, and then he stood up and opened his office door and told his secretary to cancel his next appointment. I thought to myself, "Wow, he must really like us. This is some big VIP treatment."

He closed the door and pulled his chair up close to mine and put his hand on my hand. He looked at me with sorrowful eyes and said, "I'm sorry, your son has autism."

I just stared at the doctor while remembering all the signs that led up to this moment. I felt each membrane and vein in my heart shattering into a million pieces. Nothing prepared me for this. I couldn't breathe. I wanted it gone. I had been through so much with seizures and psychotic reactions to

meds. I looked at the doctor with pleading, tearful eyes, "This can't be. He is very loving and sweet and not anything like 'Rain Man.' "

"Every child is different," he said. "Some aren't as severe as others."

"I don't understand. How can this be? How can you tell just in a few minutes?"

He looked at me and then pointed to what Evan had made in the corner. Evan had taken those ear cones they use to look inside your ears and made the most perfect row lined up across the room.

"Does he line toys up at home instead of playing with them?" he asked.

"Yes, but don't all kids do that?"

"Nope, not all," he said. "And they all don't flap their arms like that either."

I looked at Evan and saw that he was "flapping his wings." I said, "Oh no, he just does that when he gets excited."

"That is called a stim," he said.

"A what?"

"A stim. Self-stimulatory behaviors. It's an autistic trait," he said.

I looked at Evan and saw him flapping and once again had my heart shattered. I had always looked at it like an adorable Evan characteristic, so cute and unique that I even called him my little bird.

I almost felt betrayed, like I didn't know this child standing in front of me. Everything I thought was cute was a sign of autism and I felt tricked. I guess the doctor sensed this from me because he turned my head back toward him and said, "He is still the same boy you came in here with."

No, in my eyes he wasn't. This was not Evan. Evan was locked inside this label, and I didn't know if I would ever get to know who Evan really was. All the behaviors I had thought were personality traits were autism characteristics, and that's all I had. Where was my son, and how the hell do I get him back?

Critical summary:

Her son was diagnosed after age 2

Evan seemed "normal" (by her perception) until ca. 24 months.

Jenny had little knowledge of autism before her son was diagnosed.

Even before diagnosis, she had consciously compared her son to what she thought autism is like.

She had previously observed autistic behaviors in her son without perceiving a change in him.

Awareness of the autism diagnosis changed her perception of her son's passed and present behaviors.

Ironically, neither story is consistent with a change from "normal" to diagnosably autistic at any specific time. Therefore, from all that may be known by her accounts, he could have been manifesting autistic characteristics virtually from birth. This is, indeed, the one point on which her stories can be reconciled. On other important particulars- when she learned about autism, when she became concerned about her son's behavior and whether she thought her son might be autistic before he was diagnosed and/or received MMR- her stories are wildly contradictory. On the last question, I will not hesitate to answer forcefully for her: No matter what she may say, or think she remembers now, or even have consciously thought at the time, she *did* see evidence of autism in her son, and she *knew* and

(probably) *feared* that he might be autistic, long before the MMR shot. Therefore, all her claims that vaccination “changed” her son are invalid. Until she either admits this, or at least agrees to keep her personal suspicions separate from her public discourse, she cannot be a constructive presence in the autism community.

In closing, I will share a thought on history:

The usual cry of the skeptic is that history is written by the victors.

But, maybe the greatest problem is that history is written after the fact.

David N. Brown is a semipro author, diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome as an adult. Previous works include the novels *The Worlds of Naughtenny Moore*, *Walking Dead* and *Aliens Vs Exotroopers*, and the autism articles “Escape and Evasion” and “Folklore Analysis of the Vaccine-autism Scare.”