

## John Oleynick III

The Miracle of Fatima musical is where it is today because of the unending, at times exhaustive work of my son John. In 1999, we had several Equity workshops and then our first full production opened in 2000 at The Merten's Theater on the campus of the University of Bridgeport, in Bridgeport, CT. We sold 11,00 tickets for 14 shows in a 950-seat theater. In 2001 we had a black box 6 week run in Hartford then took a break.

April 22nd, 2002, at the age of 26, John shared with me that he had been sexually abused by a priest all while attending Notre Dame High School. (not by a priest on faculty) He became part of the lawsuit against the Bridgeport Diocese. We were scheduled to speak to a Youth Group in Rhode Island on Sunday the 26th, however, only I made the presentation. At that event, Fr. John, a Franciscan Friar listened as I shared privately, my story of clergy abuse and that of my son and our Fatima journey. With one phone call from him to a man he had met only weeks resulted in the total funding of the creation of the soundtrack of the show.

September 2002. We began selling the CD. John sat in front of the computer compiling lists, creating Facebook ads, taking orders, packaging, and making trips to the post office to mail them out.

January 2003. We planned a 6-month tour, we held auditions, reviewed videos, and finally cast the show. John and his then girlfriend Eva Roman (a true Angel) were totally committed to the project, working countless hours behind the scenes. John took on group sales. I'd listen from my office as he spoke to principals of Catholic elementary and high schools with such ease and confidence. To date no one has sold more tickets in a single call than John, no one has broken the 348 tickets sold to one school.

May 2003. We began the tour ending in October. I can't remember how many locations we played or how many times we loaded and unloaded a 16-ft. truck filled with the set, props, costumes...everything to make the "miracle" happen. John assembled the set, set up the sound, lights, microphoned the cast and ran it all with one or two assistants. Eva handled the box office and was the stage manager. God love them!

December 23rd of 2003. John, was awarded a significant amount of money from the lawsuit. Less than 2 weeks later he made his first attempt at taking his life, landing him in the hospital for 30 days. It was unbearable for all to watch his suffering with depression and struggles with addiction - self-medicating to feel nothing.

June 2004. We set up shop with our creative team, and business officer in tow in Fatima, Portugal, and went through it all over again. John and Eva were in the heart of it all.

July 2006. John, now living in Georgia with Eva, helped to build the website, shopping cart etc. to sell the CD.

September 2009, after the show was produced and filmed while at the National Theatre in the Dominican Republic we did another marketing and sales campaign.

March 2010. John and Eva moved to Fatima for 8 months to show the film at a small venue. All through this time, John was struggling with depression, and at times addiction which he tried to hide from us. He so wanted to have a full life, but it always seemed to escape him.

May 2014. John and Eva ended their relationship and he returned to Connecticut to live with my husband Chris Blair and I, arriving on May 13th. He and I talked at length about opening the show again. We even began working on a screenplay adaptation. We spent countless hours talking, laughing, sharing ideas, however, his struggle with depression and addiction often got in the way.

February 2015. I was diagnosed with breast cancer, began chemotherapy and had one complication and hospitalization after another. He did his best to support me, taking me to scans, procedures, chemo, even to the salon to try on wigs. He held me in his arms, as I wept so did he, whispering his promise to stay at my side through it all no matter what, however, I saw the impact my declining health had on him.

February 17th, 2016. No matter the number of hospitalizations, or rehabs, therapists, meds, or family support...tough love, soft love ...we lost John. He took the required amount of heroin and other drugs to end his life. He was 39 years old. My anger and rage grew so huge that I threw everything Fatima away, vowing never to enter a church again, never to sing one song from the show. And then...

May 2017. John's voice, his smile, his laughter filled my thoughts and little "no such thing as coincidence" things began happening. And then on his birthday, June 14th, 2017, the United Nations statue of Our Lady of Fatima was brought to Saint Ann's Church by Her custodian, Judy Studer. I had met Judy five years previously through Joan Alix another devotee of Our Lady of Fatima. Saint Ann's is a mere mile from my house.

June 17th, 2017. I attended my first meeting for survivors of clergy abuse that was formed by Bishop Frank Caggiano of the Bridgeport Diocese. How blessed am I to have met this man three years earlier, for when I shared my own story of clergy abuse and that of my son, tears welled up in his eyes and his only words were "I am so sorry". It was Bishop Caggiano's doing that a Survivor Support group was formed, the first official meeting was March 3, 2016. John and I had planned to attend, but that wasn't to be.

July 2017. The anger and rage has lifted and once again I have been led to share the message of Fatima. So here I am, preparing to mount the Miracle of Fatima musical this May and I've returned to my spiritual home. This time John's presence is light, joyous, and radiant from above. I feel him around me all the time. I know without a doubt that Our Lady gathered him into Her arms and took him to Her son when John took his last breath on earth. And I know without a doubt that John asked Her to visit me at Saint Ann's to let me know that I have work to do and I cannot stop now. John you are loved and missed immensely but I am so grateful that you are at peace and still my right hand on this journey of sharing the message of Fatima.