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NICKI SWIFT

The One Thing That Hurt Bethenny Frankel The Most In Her Divorce

BY EFFIE ORFANIDES

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Bethenny Frankel married Jason Hoppy on March 28, 2010, and welcomed a daughter they named Bryn just two months later. In 2012, Frankel and Hoppy split, and things turned ugly relatively quickly, as a lengthy custody battle over Bryn ensued, according to *Us Weekly*. Frankel and Hoppy battled it out in court for years and, at one point, things got so bad that Hoppy was arrested and charged with harassment and stalking Frankel, according to *People*. The charges came after Frankel accused Hoppy of threatening her at Bryn's school in January 2017, and he was subsequently arrested. He agreed to a plea deal, under the terms that he was to stay away from Frankel for six months in order to have the charges dismissed, according to *Page Six*, a stipulation that prolonged the divorce proceedings.

Bethenny Frankel married Jason Hoppy on March 28, 2010, and welcomed a daughter they named Bryn just two months later. In 2012, Frankel and Hoppy split, and things turned ugly relatively quickly, as a lengthy custody battle over Bryn ensued, according to Us Weekly. Frankel and Hoppy battled it out in court for years and, at one point, things got so bad that Hoppy was arrested and charged with harassment and stalking Frankel, according to People. The charges came after Frankel accused Hoppy of threatening her at Bryn's school in January 2017, and he was subsequently arrested. He agreed to a plea deal, under the terms that he was to stay away from Frankel for six months in order to have the charges dismissed, according to Page Six, a stipulation that prolonged the divorce proceedings.

"We are pleased but not at all surprised that the charges were dismissed. It's clear from the trajectory of this case that her claims were not substantiated or credited, and the motive was questioned. Mr. Hoppy looks forward to moving on with his life and his daughter," his attorney, Alex Spiro, said at the time in a statement to People.

Hoppy and Frankel's divorce battle continued for three more years, and the former couple remained legally married until January 2021, when their divorce was finalized, according to Page Six. However, one thing may have hurt Frankel the most in her divorce proceedings. Read on to find out what that was.

Bethenny Frankel's mistake came in 2014, attorney says

In 2014, about two years after Bethenny Frankel first filed for divorce from Jason Hoppy, she went to court seeking sole physical custody of her daughter, Bryn, according to ABC News. However, as things got even more tense between Frankel and Hoppy, the Skinnygirl founder decided to enter into a joint custody agreement with Hoppy, according to E! News. This may have been where things went south for Frankel, according to attorney **Martha Cohen Stine, partner at Cohen Stine Kapoor LLP**. Nicki Swift caught up with Stine to discuss this in depth.



Martha Cohen Stine, of Cohen Stine Kapoor, celebrity divorce attorneys

"Looking back over the legal proceedings that spanned an eight-year period, in my opinion, one decision that Bethenny made that hurt her and that she later came to regret, was her decision not to finish the first custody trial that started in 2014. Instead of completing the trial — a lengthy, stressful, and expensive process — and hoping the judge would see things her way and award her sole physical custody and sole decision making, she called off the proceedings, and entered into a joint custody agreement with Jason," **Stine** told Nicki Swift.

However, things were too volatile between the two exes, and **Stine** feels that a joint custody agreement just was "not going to work." **Stine** told Nicki Swift that joint custody "really only works [when] the parties are amicable, get along well, and are able to co-parent cooperatively." That clearly had not been the case here.

Things between Bethenny Frankel and Jason Hoppy got messier in 2017



Ray Tamarra/Getty Images

Martha Cohen Stine told Nicki Swift that Bethenny Frankel and Jason Hoppy's custody battle only got more tense after Hoppy's 2017 arrest, mainly because Frankel had to modify the joint custody agreement. At that time, Stine explained that Frankel "was forced to go back to court and ask for a modification of the joint custodial arrangements" so that she could obtain "sole custody of Bryn and sole decision making." Thus, a second custody trial was born, **Stine** explained.

"In that second custody trial, in order to prevail, Bethenny would have needed to prove that circumstances had changed since the date of the first agreement, that Jason's hostility was clear, that he was unable to cooperatively co-parent with her, that they were unable to make joint decisions, and that joint custody was harmful to the best interests of the child. She would have needed to show that her own parenting judgment was excellent and that she could foster a relationship between Bryn and the father," she continued.

Bethenny Frankel and Jason Hoppy's divorce was finalized in 2021

Had Bethenny Frankel obtained sole custody of Bryn in 2014, rather than agreeing to joint custody with Jason Hoppy, she wouldn't have had to make that modification in 2017. Lawyer **Martha Cohen Stine** told Nicki Swift that, as she understands it, the second trial was "settled before completion and that a final settlement agreement was reached on all issues," adding that, while the terms of the settlement have were not made public, Bryn is older now, so the child's wishes would be taken into consideration." Bryn was 7-years-old at the time of the modification.

According to Page Six, a judge signed off on Frankel and Hoppy's divorce on January 20, eight years after Frankel first filed. Based on a statement that Hoppy's lawyer gave to People, it sounds like the former couple agreed on joint custody after all. "My client is delighted that this custody battle has been resolved; that his co-parenting status has been acknowledged; that the parties' child will have the benefit of being raised by both parents; and most importantly, that his daughter will no longer be at the mercy of a high-profile courtroom battle," the statement read.

Frankel is now engaged to her boyfriend Paul Bernon. According to People, the two started dating in 2018, and, despite a brief split in 2020, Frankel said yes to his proposal — and to a stunning engagement ring.

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