

SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION

Stephen Davis Was There For My Family When We Needed Him Most. Years Later, He Became Our Biggest Threat.

The story of how I built a publishing company, watched a man I trusted become someone unrecognizable, and what my family has paid for that trust.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — My grandfather, Robert Eldredge Sr., was an ethical businessman. He built many great companies that changed lives for the better. One of those companies was Choice Publications [a Florida LLC]. When he passed away, the company passed down to my mother.

It was an inheritance, one which we as his family were called to honor.

In November of 2020, that family, my own, was called to its most terrible trial: A car accident, in which both my brothers were struck with terrible head injuries. One of these brothers suffered a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) and spent years in agonizing recovery. He came into my room one day and told me he wanted to write a book about his experience, that if just one person was changed for the better by what he went through, it would all be worth it. He asked if I would help him publish it.

This brought me to Choice. This was the kind of book my grandfather's company was born to publish. I said yes. I was given the company's name and its legacy to publish this title. I understood the responsibility of what I was holding – the account of an intimate and vulnerable recovery, a journey through pain and sorrow to restoration and fulfillment.

Stephen Davis was there to witness all of it.

The Man He Was

The November 2020 car accident was the asteroid-strike of our lives. But Stephen Davis — a firefighter comrade of my father's — stepped in to help us without being asked. Before my brothers came home from the hospital, he rallied our neighborhood around us, getting people to bring in food, supplies, and all the support we needed. He showed up when it mattered. He put others before *himself*.

That is the man I knew and trusted.

I want to say that clearly, because what I have to say next is all the more painful, and so that this piece of writing will not be mistaken for a simple protest of petty grievances.

Stephen Davis was my mentor. The next books I published through Choice Publications were his, *Alone in the Fire* and *Passing Down the Legacy Journal*. The former book I thought was my chance to rally around him in his own time of need. Stephen was generous, bold, and encouraging. It was a pleasure to work with him. And when he came to me with the idea of starting a new, separate company together, I was beyond excited.

What We Formed Together — And Who Built It

A brand-new publishing company, with \$50,000 behind it, with access to a network of high-profile people and under the protection of someone I trusted — how could I say no?

In the fall of 2024, Davis and I formalized a partnership. Choice Press LLC was incorporated in Wyoming. Davis held 60% membership interest; I held 40%, with a dedicated track to 51%. Davis told me he wanted the new company to ultimately be mine, and that he wanted me to earn my way to that majority ownership stake. He contributed the initial capital. I contributed everything else.

I want to be direct about this: Davis was minimally involved in the company's day-to-day operations. The ideas, the publishing, the production, the author stewardship — that was my work, built on what I had developed previously and through my graduate school training. I did not arrive at Choice Press LLC as a student. I arrived as a practitioner and a professional.

I believed we were doing good. We developed empathetic author relationships. We stewarded their voices carefully onto the page. We donated to charity and even helped produce an empowering comic book created by the teenage son of Goliath Ventures CEO Christopher Delgado — a project designed to raise autism awareness. I believed in the mission.

I am telling you this because I need you to understand what it felt like when the other asteroid struck.

The Revelations

In November 2025, published reporting identified Davis as Director of Administration at Goliath Ventures Inc. Federal prosecutors would later allege that Goliath operated a \$328 million Ponzi scheme. On Feb. 24, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice arrested Christopher Delgado on wire fraud and money laundering charges. That arrest is a matter of public federal record.

When I asked Davis directly whether allegations were true, he told me via text message: "You're good dude. It's all bs." He urged me to help him contact a major business publication to "get ahead of it."

I declined.

What I learned in the weeks and months that followed I cannot unlearn. I thought back on my family's previous interactions with Davis — and my own — with newly awakened eyes:

Davis had solicited my brother — the same man whose recovery story I had published, who had trusted Davis as I had — into Goliath Ventures. He had solicited my parents, including my father, a fellow firefighter who served alongside Davis and trusted him with his life.

They sustained financial harm.

Davis had also approached my wife and me, as well as my other brother, a United States Marine who had received a financial settlement following the same 2020 accident. That money represented something irreplaceable.

Amber and I declined to invest in Goliath Ventures. I am grateful every day that we did.

I am not asserting that Davis has been charged with a crime. I do not know what Davis knew, or knows, about the legitimacy of the federal investigation. What I am saying is that the man we trusted like family actively sought to draw that family into a venture that federal prosecutors describe as a fraud — and that when I asked him directly whether that venture was legitimate, he told me it was.

I believe Davis was, at one point, a genuinely good man. I believe his association with and loyalty to Goliath Ventures changed him in ways I cannot fully account for or understand. That is my opinion, and I harbor it with sorrow much more than anger.

The Fracture of Us

I once witnessed Davis, during a sales call, encourage a prospective client — a man who described himself as having very little and who was supporting a wife and child on a small income — to consider leveraging his home equity to fund our publishing services. I raised this concern with Davis directly. The response I received did not reassure me.

I believed that solicitation was not ethical, and I believed the association between Choice Press LLC and Goliath Ventures Inc. was not ethical. My grandfather was an ethical businessman. How could I continue in this partnership?

In early 2026, I submitted a formal withdrawal memorandum stating my intent to depart from Choice Press LLC. I offered an orderly wind-down of our business relationship, to finish out every author contract to the same degree of professionalism I always give. I expected a gentle and understanding response.

What followed instead was a months-long escalation of shifting financial demands, retroactive compensation disputes, and threatening legal pressure. Davis unilaterally froze company payments to me. He demanded personal financial and phone records that had no legitimate bearing on company operations. He accused me of misappropriating company funds. He invoked provisions of our operating agreement in ways that, in my opinion and in the opinion of my legal counsel, directly contradicted Wyoming limited liability company law.

I documented everything.

The Dissociation

On March 13, 2026, I formally dissociated from Choice Press LLC pursuant to Wyoming law. Despite what I experienced as intense and escalating pressure from Davis, I prepared a complete operational handoff — all author project files, vendor contacts, platform credentials, outstanding receivables, and production documentation. I shipped Davis's own books back to him, carefully packed, with tracking numbers provided. I fulfilled every obligation I had to the company and every author in my care.

In the weeks after my departure, multiple clients the company had served also departed. I did not solicit them. I did not influence their choices.

I will let that speak for itself.

What Has Happened Since

My wife Amber and I wanted to move on. We traveled to pursue new, regular employment — an opportunity that represented stability and a genuine fresh start. We were prepared to leave all of this behind us.

Davis, in my opinion, made that impossible.

Since my dissociation, Davis has made statements to people in my professional network that I believe to be false and defamatory — including allegations of financial misconduct that I categorically deny and for which no credible evidence exists. My wife received direct personal contact from Davis in deliberate circumvention of the formal correspondence channel my attorney and I had established. Certified mail arrived at our personal home address on letterhead bearing a company name that does not correspond to any registered legal entity, and which bears a close resemblance to the separately incorporated Choice Publications — my grandfather's company.

An Instagram account I believe to be associated with Davis began monitoring my personal profile and my wife's. I have documented this.

I am aware that Davis had presented at least one individual with a publishing rights exit agreement containing a provision that would have barred that person from working in any capacity with me — by name, despite the fact that there is no non-compete agreement in the Choice Press LLC Operating Agreement. I regard this, in my opinion, as an attempt at tortious interference with my professional relationships.

On April 21, 2026, I appeared in El Paso County District Court to seek a civil protection order. The *ex parte* request was not granted that day, but the judge stated on the record that she believes I have a strong basis for a civil suit. The formal motion — Case No. 26C01482 — was accepted for filing.

Most recently, Davis retained legal counsel — Hagood & Hagood, PLLC — who delivered a formal demand letter asserting claims that, in my opinion and the opinion of my counsel, have no legitimate legal foundation. I note this not as a complaint, but as documentation: this is the *pattern*.

Why I Am Speaking Out

I am not writing this as a victim.

I am writing this as someone who built something real, who honored every commitment, and who watched a man he trusted dismantle what they built together — in my opinion, out of self-preservation and misdirected loyalty.

I am writing this because I know there are others. I have watched people place their trust in Stephen Davis — their savings, their pensions, their stories, their futures — and I have watched what happened next. If this account helps even one person make a more informed decision, it is worth the risk of telling it. My brother taught me that.

Stephen Davis was once there for my family when we needed a hero. He helped carry us through something devastating. The pain of what he has apparently become, and of how he has treated us since, is something I do not have adequate words for.

My brother — the same man Davis had once rallied a neighborhood to support — contacted Davis professionally and gently, asking for his traumatically-earned accident settlement money back. Davis responded in writing. I have seen that message with my own eyes. His words were: "Let me be clear, you knew exactly what you were getting into when you invested."

Later, Davis spoke with me directly. In my recollection of that conversation, he described my brother's request as an annoyance — that my brother had frustrated him simply by asking for *help*.

My brother's response, in contrast, was simple. He said: "I hope he will be Chief Stephen Davis again one day."

I hope that too.

— Joseph Christian Lawrence is a poet and graduate of the George Washington University Master of Publishing Studies program. He and his wife, Amber Lawrence, reside in Colorado. He may be reached through his legal counsel.

A note on sources: All factual assertions in this account are drawn from contemporaneous documentation including email correspondence, text message records, legal filings, court documents and the public federal record of the U.S. Department of Justice's prosecution of Goliath Ventures Inc. The author retains copies of all referenced materials.