

Transcript

hi my name is Manny Alvarez and I've been a Coline employee for over 20 years this video is for our clients our colleagues and the broader string instrument community i'm making this with a heavy heart and with a deep respect for those who have supported Colestein throughout the decades i want to be clear I'm limited in what I can say due to ongoing legal proceedings but everything I do share here is truthful this isn't speculation this is my lived experience filming this is incredibly difficult for me barry Coloulstein the man who was on paper the former owner was not just my boss he was a mentor he was like family and yet despite that connection he has taken actions that have put the company and many lives connected to it in serious jeopardy there's more to the story than what you have may have heard you may not realize it but when the media reports on a situation like this they sometimes give

just a few hours to respond i've been
giving 2 hours before a story goes live
not much time to explain or defend
yourself meanwhile the word allegedly is
tossed around and even though it's meant
to protect the press it doesn't protect
those of us affected it still causes
damage so I've reached a point where I
can't stay quiet i need to speak
honestly about what's been happening not
just for myself but for the legacy of
this company and the truth in 2019 I
believed I was being honored with the
opportunity to purchase the business and
carry forward its legacy but that dream
was short-lived just 2 months after the
sale Barry's wife a kind and beautiful
soul passed away unexpectedly he said
many times that he coped with his grief
by throwing himself even more into work
but what that looked like was him
continuing to act as if he still owned
the business he kept calling the shots
he refused to step back he continued
managing major sales communicating with
clients through his private accounts and

overriding me at every turn despite the contract stating I now owned the company I asked him again and again to allow the office and the staff to take over to follow through with what we had agreed on but instead I was met with yelling profanity threats and emotional abuse he told me if I didn't comply he'd destroy the company and he tried i found myself in a position where I had the title but none of the control i lived in fear not just for my own well-being but for the stability of everyone who worked there the work environment became toxic and mentally exhausting as I stepped further into leadership I discovered practices I couldn't condone professors pushing students towards higherpriced instruments to increase their own commissions instruments advertised as handcrafted by Barry Colestein that were actually made in other shops and documents signed using digital versions of my signature without my permission these were just ethical these weren't just ethical

concerns they were betrayals and I wasn't alone in noticing longtime staff began to leave barbara Hadim Barry's personal secretary of over 35 years left and later wrote a book the damage was rippling i confid it in people I trusted and respected figures in our community like Rufus and Doris Reed Nicholas Walker people I hoped that would help me navigate what had become an impossible situation but even that was hard many of these individuals had long histories with Barry and speaking up felt isolating a lot of rumors have swirled around our various locations Baldwin the mall New York City Florida but the reasons for those moves are simpler than they seem some were out of necessities others were attempts to escape the hostility and build something new every decision was made with survival in mind for the company for the instruments for the people who rely on both in 2024 Barry pushed to re negotiate our original agreement he wanted more money more control and an extension of the

payment timeline all while actively sabotaging the business he sold inventory to competitors talked down the company publicly and offered his services independently for free using company resources he told me more than once that he'd rather watch a company go down in flames than see it succeed in my hands despite everything I continued to pay him hundreds of thousands of dollars because I feared that what would happen if I didn't he made it clear if I complied he reward me with business if not he cut it off eventually I said no i drew the line and he retaliated on March 31st of 2025 we filed a counter suit one that exposes how Barry never truly gave up control acted in bad faith and damaged the business that he claimed to love just three hours later his own attorney filed another suit this time with two people that he was close with and ran to the press but I'm not staying silent anymore my voice which I've kept quiet for far too long is speaking up now i know the advice is to save it all

for court and we will we have documents
photos videos and testimonies that we
will show there but I'm also here to
tell my story because silence is what
allowed this abuse to continue i now see
that what he wanted was a scapegoat
someone to take the fall for anything
and everything from the past i didn't
know it then but I see it clearly now
there's more to share and I will i'll be
addressing rumors and blog posts and the
misinformation that's circulating but
for now I want to say this if you're
experiencing abuse manipulation or fear
in any part of your life speak up even
if you're scared even if they once
treated you kindly those nice moments
don't cancel out the control and damage
they're causing my attorney and I are
prepared to fight this in court and we
are confident that the truth will come
out in the meantime I ask for your
patience for your grace as we work to
find a new sense of normal to everyone
that I've ever met with and connected
with over the years thank you your

support has meant more than you know and
please when something doesn't feel right
when it seems like there's more to this
story trust that feeling you might be
closer to the truth than you realize
thank you for watching