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Born and Breed to Assault

Overview of the Article

A 24-year old undisclosed man is being tried for both assault and sexual assault. In September 2014 he first assaulted his 4-week-old son, in a moment of frustration he flipped his child by his ankles. As a result of this, his son broke both of his ankles and originally denied any involvement in the incident but later confessed to the police. During the time between the incidents, he split with his first partner and went on to marry another woman who had a 5-year-old daughter. While waiting for his trial for the first incident he was caught sexually abusing his 5-year-old step-daughter. He would tell the girl to keep their interactions a secret and he was only caught when his partner found a video on his cell phone in which the girl was performing oral sex on the man. As per the crown based on how he interacted with his step-daughter in the video this was likely not the first time the act was performed. It was also stated that he likely groomed her and told her what they were doing was complete. The man is currently looking at 3.5 years to 6 years in jail

Relevance to the Class

The criminal's biological father was jailed for sexual assaults when he was a teenager and when his mother remarried his stepfather also emotionally and physically abused both him and his mother. He was also sexually abused by another family member at the age of 12. I feel that the best theory to describe this man's behaviour is the Social Learning Theory which states

“delinquent behaviour is learned through the same psychological process as any other behaviour” (Adler, Mueller, Laufer, Grekul, 2012, p.87). In this case, the convicted man learned his behaviours through observation and direct experience. Although physical punishment can deter this kind of behaviour in this case the criminal adopted the behaviour from his fathers and his family member. The instigator that most likely impacted this man is Modelling instigators. Modelling Instigators are “violent or aggressive acts behaviours observed in others” (Adler, Mueller, Laufer, Grekul, 2012, p.89). Watching his mother get assaulted by his fathers as well as being assaulted himself likely led him to believe the violence was normal and necessary. The constant violence and trauma he experienced led him to adopt this behaviour. As a result of all that he has been through he also likely he has mental issues too that contributed to his actions but that still doesn’t justify his actions. Because of these reasons and his rough childhood, I don’t believe the assault and sexual assault on his children occurred due to some other reasons common reasons that lead someone to commit child abuse like stress, the inability to cope with responsibilities or financial struggles.

References

- Helmer, A. (2019, January 17). 'Monster'guilty of child assaults; six-year prison term urged for man who broke infant son's ankles and sexually assaulted five-year-old stepdaughter. *The Ottawa Citizen* Retrieved from <https://ottawacitizen.com/>
- Adler, F., Laufer, W. S., Mueller, G. O., & Grekul, J. (2012). *Criminology: Second Edition*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited.