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Ethical dilemma# 3

The case reveals that a registered sex offender molested and murdered a 9-years old girl at a shopping mall. However, the criminal record of the offender indicates that he had not committed any violence. There is no other suspect with the same means, opportunity, and motives. As little physical evidence exists that could prove him guilty it is important to undertake a critical investigation. The postmortem reports confirm that the suspect has murdered the girl because of his fingerprints match. Now the decision of telling the criminal that he lost his change of confessing faces an ethical dilemma. The ethical issues that arise in the current scenario are; presenting information and facts to the prosecutor, denying or accepting offender’s right to confession.

The relevant values of the current case involve judgment of desirability and worth. Pollock states, “values are defined as elements of desirability, worth or importance” (Pollock, 2006, pp. 11). Honesty remains one of the central value in investigating such cases. As an investigator, I would focus on fulfilling my ethical duty that emphasizes on values of honesty and worth. The judgment of desirability stresses on considering ethics associated with the offender and the victim. It is not appropriate to think about the offender only because he was responsible for the murder of a young girl. I would consider these values for fulfilling my role as a homicide investigator and avoid dishonesty. This is because morality relies on absolute principles and promotes honesty and integrity. The registered sex offender accepts to confess so it would be unfair to hide it from the prosecutor.

It is important to identify moral dilemmas before resolving them. Moral dilemma leads to a situation where an individual has to choose among alternatives. I will compare both outcomes associated with the scenario for reaching the right decision. During my internship I would have to prove my competency of resolving moral dilemmas so I will make a thorough analysis of the situation. The first thing that would consider is that if the lesser crime will be effective for correcting the offender or will it encourage him towards future crimes. It is also important to consider that he only confessed when reports confirmed his fingerprints. The offender accepts his crime when I tell him that he is facing a death penalty. This indicates that he was not ready to modify his behavior and attempted to conceal his offense. The second important thing is to focus on how the death penalty will affect the offender.

It is crucial to identify the most immediate ethical issue faced by the investigator. I will consider the outcomes of each decision such as the implications of confession and the death penalty. In such a situation, I will recognize choosing between these two courses of actions as immediate ethical issues requiring resolution. To deal with the conflicting situations I will assess the behavior of the offender and his role in the investigation. He denied murder and accepted it only when I told him about the death penalty. This indicates that he was trying to deceive the investigator. The second ethical issue in the present scenario is to determine if it is ethical to inform the prosecutor about the offender's decision of confessing.

The most relevant ethical system applicable in the present scenario is utilitarianism. It explains that the ethical course of action would be that leads to the benefit of the greater number. This emphasizes on taking the decision that is in the best interest of the masses. According to this philosophy, it will also be appropriate to cause suffering to few for the advantage of the larger population. I will use this philosophy for determining the right course of action. Although the offender is ready to confess and qualify for the lesser crime, but he still is capable of harming other girls and society. This explains that it is important to punish the offender and act for saving the larger numbers. I think that the offender is guilty of murder, so it is not reasonable to trust him. According to this philosophy leaving a criminal unpunished is unethical because it risks the lives of a larger population.

The ethical system of formalism is also applicable in the current case. Ethical formalism explains that one should emphasize on the needs of people that are needed to be addressed. As the young girl lost her life so it is important to take actions that will save many girls from murder. On the other side formalism also emphasize on addressing the needs of the offender. This suggests that it would be moral to inform the prosecutor about the offender's request for confessing. Denying him of such request will be unethical because it is high right to claim for a lesser crime. Keeping in view the ethical formalism I would inform the prosecutor about the offender's intentions of confessing. Refusing him of such right will be immoral.

The application of the utilitarianism and ethical formalism states that information the prosecutor about the offender's confession is the moral and right decision. Utilitarianism also states that one should choose the right action. This indicates that staying honest is a right and morally just decision. By denying the offender of confessing and concealing it from the prosecutor will make me dishonest and unethical. I will tell the truth and forward the request of the criminal.

References

Pollock, J. M. (2006). *Ethical Dilemmas and Decisions in Criminal Justice.* Cengage Learning.