High Profile Juvenile Delinquency Case

Name

Affiliation

Date

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A high profile juvenile delinquency case took place in Thornton, Colorado in the year 2017, when a teenager killed his stepsister. The culprit who was arrested in 2017, has now been sentenced to life in prison in 2019. This is a high profile juvenile delinquency case because of the fact that the teenager was tried in the court as an adult and not as a minor. The social conditions, as well as the personal characteristics, played an important role in influencing the juvenile to commit the crime. The theory of victimization which is applicable to the scenario is the routine activities theory, shedding light on the vulnerability of the victim as well as the opportunities to the criminal. The high profile juvenile delinquency case is one of its kind because of the social condition, personal characteristics and the verdict of the case.

The criminal offense took place in Thornton, Colorado on 7th of June, 2017 when a fifteen years old boy, named Aidan Zellmer, killed his ten years old stepsister, named Kiaya Campbell. The offender killed the victim after raping and beating her. He not killed the young child but also dumped her body near the house of her biological father. When the child was reported as missing, he gave the statement that he lost her while trying to escape the rainstorm on the night she went missing. The dead body of the victim was found two days later, and Zellmer was arrested. The dead body of the victim had the marks of the assault and depicted the brutality of the victim who was only fifteen years old. When he was tried in court, he pleaded guilty, which saved the family from the pain and suffering of the trail. The judge of the case remarked that the details of the case, scene, and other elements included had highlighted the fact that it was not a sudden happening, which took place without the realization of the offender. However, it was a deliberate act of brutality at the hands of the offender, who actually wanted to kill the victim and tried his best by utilizing the available means to do so. Moreover, he remarked that the offender could not be tried as a minor because of the fact that it was a deliberate attempt when the offender was aware of the circumstances of his action and he actually wanted to take the life of a young child. After spending two years in the juvenile detention, the criminal has now been sent to the adult prison, after being sentenced to life in prison. He will get the chance to parole after spending forty years in prison (Brighton, 2019).

The social condition which would have influenced the juvenile to commit the crime includes the fact that the mother of the victim was in a relationship with the father of the criminal. In addition to it, the victim used to live at the home of the criminal with her mother, instead of living with her biological father, while the criminal was living with his father and not mother. The relation of the victim’s mother with his father may have been the source of his grudge towards the young child, although it has not been proved. Another social condition which could have influenced the happening is that the victim was not in the protection of her parents, which provided a chance to the criminal to victimize her (Mail Online, 2019).

The personal characteristics of Zellmer were not identified to be unusual, and he was an ordinary teenager like all the other teenagers of his age. However, not being able to see an expected relationship between his parents may have influenced his hate or grudge towards the victim. One of the aspects of his personality which was depicted through his social media account was that he was interested in the crime and horror movies, which may have influenced him as well. The background and personality information of the criminal has not been shared by the officials, who also did not reveal his name initially. So, the researchers can only try to assess the personality of the criminal from the limited available information about him. The criminal was the trusted guardian of the victim at the time of the criminal happening and the brutality depicted by him is quite shocking not only for their family but also for the whole society (Geanous, 2019).

The theory of victimization which can help to explore the scenario is the routine activities theory, which is also termed as routine activity theory. According to the routine activities theory, three variables of routine activities play an important role in the victimization scenario, which consists of a suitable target, capable guardian, and motivated offender. In the case of Zellmer, the suitable target was present in the form of his stepsister. Moreover, the capable guardian was also absent in the scenario in the way both of the kids were living with one step parents at the time. The little girl was living with his stepfather, who was the biological father of the boy. Biological parents of the girl were not present to ensure her safety as they trusted the criminal; however, he made the young girl the victim of his frustration who actually was the motivated offender. H probably as troubled due to the relationship of his parents and victimized the young girl, when he was not able to show his anger through a proper channel (Culatta, Clay-Warner, Boyle, & Oshri, 2017). The girl was innocent and was not victimized due to any of her fault or incapability; however, the circumstances around her provided the opportunity to the victim to assault and killed her. He was the guardian of the girl at the time of the crime scene; however, his frustration and motivation to commit the crime did not let him act according to his role and responsibility. The routine activity theory of victimization highlights the fact that the presence of one variable out of the three becomes the source of a criminal happening and victimization of some individual. While in the case of Campbell, all of the variables turned in favor of the criminal and he was able to achieve his motive of killing the young girl, after sexually assaulting her.

The latest high profile juvenile delinquency case of Zellmer highlights the fact that the social conditions and personality characteristics of the criminal influenced his criminal actions. In addition to it, the routine activities theory of victimization highlights the fact that the little girl was vulnerable to victimization because she was the suitable target for the criminal, who did not have the capable guardian at that moment and the criminal was also motivated offender. The judges treated him as an adult offender, instead of as a minor because of the fact that he had deliberately planned and killed the girl by utilizing all his efforts and did not accidentally committed the crime. The criminal has received the sentence of life in prison which cannot ring the girl back to life; however, served the justice to her parents in the least possible ways.

References

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