

The Lake Assignment
N433
Justin Pranada

1. Do you think that investigators (DCFS/police) made assumptions based on the social status of Amanda and Maurice?

I am not quite sure if the investigators made assumptions based on Amanda and Maurice's social status. Yes, they had financial problems, and a lot of the statements made by the investigators who interrogated the two individuals made a lot of sense. It is easy to get your emotions involved when figuring out who did what. We cannot make assumptions that Maurice and Amanda murdered the three children based on their social status. Social status is one of many causative factors, but it is not THE causative factor that helped the couple decide that they would murder the children.

2. Based on your knowledge of psychotropic medications, do you think it was appropriate for investigators to interrogate Amanda after she received 3 different medications while admitted in an inpatient psych unit? (this occurs around 11 mins in).

It depends on what psychotropic medications the doctors gave to Amanda. We have not been told what the psychotropic medications are for. Regardless, I do believe that it was inappropriate for investigators to interview Amanda while she is medicated. Unless the drugs have prophylactic properties like maintaining a consistent mental state like bipolar medications, then I believe in that situation, interviewing Amanda would have been appropriate.

3. Based on Maurice's testimony (about 15 mins in) regarding his behavior with Amanda's children, do you think he was acting maliciously or using poor judgment during the day of the accident?

Considering all the factors, I do not think Maurice was acting maliciously. The statements from his past relationships with different women suggested that he was mostly close with their children. He treated them playfully and in a teasing manner. He stated that he is not in love with Amanda and cheated on her consistently. If the intent was to do harm to Amanda's kids so that "they can start a life" together in St. Louis, he most likely would not state that he is not in love with Amanda or cheat on her. I believe that Maurice's actions were caused by poor judgment and lack of critical thinking. I don't think he would go as far as killing the children of a woman he is only with because he "has nowhere else to go."

4. Do you think there was a racial bias that impacted Maurice's sentence more than Amanda's?

Considering our society's current situation today, I would not be surprised if there was bias involved. The judge from Bloomington who was called seemed like he was praising Amanda while he was talking about her. He was all about, "she was pleasant and very nice," and "even though she's not very well educated, she was a hard worker." If this was a planned murder, Amanda and Maurice both have equal parts in this. If she was not a part of this at all and she was a victim of the event, then she would be giving Maurice up. Yes, she admitted that Maurice wanted to hurt her kids at one point, but we have to consider that at the beginning of the podcast, both Amanda and Maurice claimed that the event was "a terrible accident."

5. Since Amanda was convicted of child endangerment, do you think she has the right to have additional children after serving her time in prison?

No, I do not think that Amanda Hamm should be allowed to have additional children in the future. She already had three and managed to put their lives in danger. All three children are now dead because she was unfit to be a mother. Although there is no definitive way of preventing Amanda from having children sometime in the future, I believe she is unsuitable for the role.

6. Do you think the hospital staff had the right to notify DCFS that Amanda Hamm had more children? What about the father's rights?

I do believe that the hospital staff had the right to notify DCFS about Amanda having more children. As nurses, we are mandated reporters, meaning if our main priority is to the patient. Amanda having a history and spending five years in prison for child endangerment, is a factor to be considered. We do not want a repeat of what happened in 2003. DCFS taking custody of the children was appropriate. I believe that the father should be given a chance to fight for custody of his children because he does not have Amanda's history.

7. What is your opinion on "anticipatory neglect" in this case? Do you think that the courts ruled in the benefit of the Hamm-Ware children in this case?

I believe that the court made the right decision for anticipatory neglect in this case. Three children were already put in harm's way and cost them their lives a decade and a half ago under Amanda's care. The court is just being cautious this time around because of Amanda's history. Children who grow up in an environment of neglect and abuse tend to grow up with negative health outcomes (Barczyk et al., 2020). I do believe

that the court rule will end up benefiting the children. Knowing causative factors will be the deciding factor for implementing proper interventions in minimizing child neglect (Barczyk et al., 2020). The children may not understand why they are in this position, they may group up comparing themselves to the traditional healthy families of their peers, but they will have a better future in the end.

References

- Alexander, J. (2019). Episode 117: The lake. *Criminal*. <https://thisiscriminal.com/episode-117-the-lake-6-21-2019/>
- Barczyk, A. N., Jones, K., Duzinski, S. V., & Lawson, K. A. (2020). Predictors of childhood injury in children reported to child protective services. *Journal of Trauma Nursing: The Official Journal of the Society of Trauma Nurses*, 27(5), 283-291. <https://ezproxy.lakeviewcol.edu:2097/10.1097/JTN.0000000000000530>