

The lake assignment

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

I believe that the investigators involved (DCFS/Police) made assumptions based on Amanda and Maurice's social status. I think that in any other case, the results/trial would have been different. For example, if the couple was married or middle/upper class, the investigators might not have jumped to conclusions. One of the investigators mentioned that Amanda "wasn't very knowledgeable". Many investigations are based on families' income level and even the family dynamic (whether the couple is married or not).

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?

The basic knowledge that I have on psychotropic medications is that they can alter neurotransmitters in the brain. When this occurs, you can become confused and out of it. If someone's brain is being altered, they wouldn't be able to give accurate information necessarily. Amanda was on three different types of psychotropic medications, so her brain would have been altered significantly. With that being said, she wouldn't have been in the right state of mind and may not have even known what was going on. If investigators were going to interrogate Amanda, she would have needed to be in the right state of mind. The information she gave was most likely not accurate.

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

In my opinion, Maurice did not seem "malicious" towards the children. He did odd things like "put them in the oven when it was off." That is something that wouldn't be typically construed as "playing" with children. I think that Maurice was using poor judgment. He was pretending to "drive into the water," which is how he ended up on a boat ramp. That is odd and raises concern. He did not attempt to save the children either, so I believe that poor judgment was occurring.

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

I do believe that there was a racial bias that impacted Maurice's sentence. Steve Skelton (an attorney in Bloomington, Illinois) represented Amanda Hamm. He stated that "The race and background of the defendant come into play". He mentioned that Maurice was black, unemployed, and living with his white girlfriend and her three children had an impact. I believe that if it were a white male who was in that position, there would have been less bias against

the male in the case. The male would have still been looked at, but not as harshly/closely. Maurice is serving life in prison, and Amanda only served five years.

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?

I do not think that Amanda should have been able to have any more children. Her three children passed away because of poor judgment and could have been 100% preventable. She served five years in prison, gets out, and begins a new life without dealing with the significant burden of losing her first three children. In any disease or condition of life, the risk factors of something occurring again is a previous occurrence. Since Amanda was convicted once already, it is more likely that it'll happen again. Other risk factors include "low income, low educational resources as well as difficult family conditions" (Liel et al., 2020). Another risk factor is also poor mental health. It was concluded that Amanda had not yet dealt with the implications of losing her first three children.

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

I think that the hospital had the right to notify DCFS that Amanda had more children. Amanda lost her first three children as a result of poor judgment, and because of this, I believe that she should not have had more children. As far as the father goes, I believe his rights should be limited because he has a history of abusing Amanda, drugs, and theft. Leo (the father) also failed a drug test. Drug and alcohol abuse are also risk factors for child abuse.

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 think that anticipatory neglect is a relevant topic. In many cases, if it happens once, it is likely to happen again. With that being said, in some cases, people/situations change. In this case, I believe that it was relevant. I believe that it was beneficial to the Hamm-Ware children in this case because the parents did not seem to have a stable relationship (Amanda reported domestic abuse), the parents were involved with alcohol and drugs, and Amanda had not yet dealt with her emotional trauma from her first three children's deaths. Amanda seemed to have poor judgment in choosing people to surround herself with, and that could have put her children in danger.

Source:

Liel, C., Ulrich, S. M., Lorenz, S., Eickhorst, A., Fluke, J., & Walper, S. (2020). Risk factors for child abuse, neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence in early childhood: Findings in a representative CROSS-SECTIONAL sample in Germany. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 106, 104487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104487>

