

## **The Lake Assignment**

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

The investigators (DCFS/police) did not make assumptions based on the social status of Amanda and Maurice. Instead, it is believed that the investigators involved in this case are using and taking in all of the factors that could have potentially contributed to the death of three innocent children. Despite anyone's social or economic status, it is standard protocol to investigate what is believed to be a crime thoroughly. Although social status can play a factor in crimes, this crime is very much different. The police officers and DCFS are doing their job by merely ensuring the safety of future children that both individuals may encounter.

**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?**

Based on knowledge about psychotropic medications, it was not appropriate for investigators to interrogate Amanda after receiving three different medications while admitted to an inpatient psych unit. Many psychotropic drugs can affect one's level of consciousness and ability to make sound and informed decisions. Side effects range from psychotropic medications, one of which is drowsiness and restlessness. Instead, investigators should have interviewed Amanda when she was in a neutral state of mind. Taking into account one's medical and medication history is critical when interviewing someone. This way, it is ensured that the interviewee is within a sound state of mind. Nonetheless, Amanda was on three different medications. The three have the possibility of interacting with one another. To go on further, Amanda was in a mental health facility. This makes it safe to assume that her mental health at the time was not within normal limits for her. Amanda's statements on psychotropic medications differ from her previous seven interviews, where her story was consistent. This shows that the psychotropic medications could have altered her prescription of reality at the time of the interview.

**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?**

Based on Maurice's testimony regarding his behavior with Amanda's children, it is safe to conclude that he used poor judgment during the day of the accident. However, it is not safe to conclude that his behavior during the day of the accident was maliciously mattered. It was the poor judgment of Maurice to park his vehicle so close to the lake water. It was a poor judgment of Maurice not to attempt to save his children. Despite his claim that the door was locked, he could have potentially when back into the vehicle via the driver's side and attempt to get the children out that way. This, of course, is from the point of view where I am not in this situation, so it is also unfair for me to claim what could and could not have been done. I can attest that

many parents would say they would die or risk their lives if that meant they could save their children.

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

I do not think there was a racial bias that impacted Maurice's sentence more than Amanda's. I think Maurice was sentenced more because he was the driving factor to why the children died. I also believe that men get a harsher sentence than women do. I also think that the jury thought that Amanda played a minimal role in this, being that she was not the driver but instead the person who first dialed 911 in an attempt to save their children. From the interviews, it also appears as if Amanda is more emotional and tearful regarding the situation. Overall, I do not think race placed a factor into Maurice's sentence. I believe had it been a white male in his case; the sentencing would probably be the same. It was simply a sentence based on the law at the time in Illinois.

**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?**

Since Amanda was convicted of child endangerment, I do not think she has the right to have additional children after serving her time in prison if she has not undergone extensive rehabilitation and psychiatric evaluation. But for these two being completed, Amanda does not deserve custody or be within proximity to any child. She should also be closely monitored with the care of her children. If she can show the courts that she is estimated financially, mentally, and emotionally, she should be able to have additional children after serving time in prison. Changed behavior is something I strongly believe in. Some terms I would put in place for Amanda to have the right to have additional children after serving her time in prison would be extensive anger management classes, a life coach, agreeing to keep a stable income and housing, and attend many hours of parenting classes.

**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?**

The hospital deserved the right to notify DCFS that Amanda Hamm had more children. With her child endangerment charge, they have the right to be informed that she had made three more children since her conviction of endangering her three children prior. After all, the sole purpose and duty of DCFS are to protect potentially abused children and keep families safe. Since Amanda has a history of not protecting her children and keeping her family safe, it is the duty of DCFS to now ensure she is capable of doing so. In this case, I do not know the past history of the father or his intentions. However, if he has not prior convictions of child endangerment and is fully capable of meeting all three of his children's need then he should be allowed to have fully custody at the time. If he is also able to follow the law and not allow Amanda to be able to children unsupervised then there should be no reason as to why the father's rights are also being questioned.

**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?**

In this case, the anticipatory neglect is justifiable to ensure the safety of her now three young children. With this case, it is important to remember that although she has a full name change, it does not take away from the fact that she has a prior conviction (whether some view it as justifiable or not), of harming her children. Due to this, her behavior with her own children and children she comes into contact with should be closely monitored. Many things are taken into consideration when determining anticipatory neglect. Some of which are discussed within this article regarding child custody cases. Both authors go on to discuss that one's mental health, drug abuse, nature of the former actions, and the weight of any criminal charge are all taken into consideration (Zeanah & Humphreys, 2018). The court weighs in on the risk of the life of children in this case. It allows the court to take action prior to a life-threatening event occurring. In this particular case, it focused on Amanda's state of mind and her ability to be sound and safe in her decision with her now three children. According to the courts, they were in well condition physically when being taken away. It sounds from her emotionally and mentally decision, she is still making the same mistakes as she did prior. Her now husband, is consuming drugs and Amanda is still putting not only her children but herself in harm's way with her now husband being violent and short tempered. This proves Amanda is not capable of making sound decisions for herself so with this being said, there is no telling in her ability to then make sound decisions for three other innocent human beings. In this case, I do fully support the court as they ruled in the benefits of the Hamm-Ware children. It is important to rule in the benefits of the children and their safety and well-being despite the emotionally affect it may have on the parents.

**References**

Zeanah, C. H., & Humphreys, K. L. (2018). Child Abuse and Neglect. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 57(9), 637–644.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2018.06.007>