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Eng 102

Just Mercy Chp. 6-10

“When the crime was committed, he was a child, a thirteen-year-old boy with a lot of problems, no supervision, and no help available. We are not children”. Chapters 6-10 of *Just Mercy* was filled with cases of young children being sentenced as adults. The quote I chose was about a young kid named Ian Manuel. In 1990 Ian was a part of a group with two older boys that were robbing a couple. One of the people in that couple was Debbie Baigre. During the robbery, Debbie had resisted and Ian shot her with a handgun that the older boys he was with had given him. The bullet Ian had shot ended up going through Debbie’s cheek which ended up shattering multiple teeth and causing severe damage to her jaw.

Reading through the rest of the chapter we see that Ian was convinced by his lawyer to plead guilty to the charges that he was facing since the charges didn’t have a chance for a life sentence which turned out to not be true for two of the three charges. Ian was sentenced to life with no parole and was sent to Apalachee Correctional Institution which was known as one of the toughest prisons in Florida. Since Ian was so small he was sent to solitary confinement to protect him from being in danger from the other inmates. Ian ended up spending 8 years straight in solitary confinement with only one phone call per month. In 1992 he reached out to Debbie Baigre, the victim of his crime, to apologize for what he did. Debbie was moved by his apology and they eventually connected regularly through his monthly phone calls.

Debbie was convinced that the punishment was too harsh and started reaching out to different officials to try to get his sentence reduced which led to the quote that I chose to cover. This part of the chapter stuck out to me because I believe it spoke into a lot of different areas that

we covered throughout the readings and in class. When it comes to serving justice, there are a lot of factors that should be fully taken into consideration than just the crime itself. Ian grew up in conditions that most adults would complain about. Adding on to that, his brain is nowhere near being fully developed to make clear thought out decisions that an adult would. At times we can look at things through our own lense of knowing better but what happens when it's someone who hasn't gotten a fair chance to learn about better? Saying all of this is not trying to take away from the crime that was committed but it was a call to look at the complete circumstances when we have cases of young kids. All of the cases throughout the story placed the weight of adulthood on children who were going through unspeakable circumstances. As adults and people that are meant to uphold the law and know better, when can we start to look at the complete picture to make change instead of acting on a single point that was shown.