

The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez Reaction Paper

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The story of Gabriel Fernandez is one of the most upsetting, eye opening and shocking stories that has ever been told. The documentary was emotional to watch due to the horrific and graphic acts committed by certain individuals that led to the death of Gabriel Fernandez. Young Gabriel may no longer be here but his story will always live on and help shed a light into the failings of the system including family and child protection services.

There is no excuse on why and how Gabriel's mother treated her son so harshly. I believe that she is a evil, a terrible mother and needs to be held accountable for causing the death of her son. While of course there are always going to be certain excuses people may use to explain her behavior, she is still responsible for ensuring the safety of her children. While mental health may play a role, she could have gotten the help she needed and not taken it out on her children. She failed her family and as a person she is a horrible human being. There is no reason why a child needs to be shot in the face by a bb gun in the hands of his mother, anyone that does something so harsh like that deserves punishment. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society and as adults and parents we are responsible for ensuring a safe and trustworthy environment for them. Gabriel's mother did not do that, and she is rightfully deserving of her punishment in prison. I hope and pray that she finds God's grace and forgiveness and gets the help that she desperately needs both mentally and spiritually..

Gabriel's step-father is also to be held accountable for his actions. While I do not believe in the death penalty, I am in agreement that he deserves to be in prison for life. The step-father may have been manipulated by Gabriel's mother and have a low self-esteem, but at the end of the day there is still no excuse in killing a child. Gabriel may have represented something deeper or triggered something to his step-father which may be a reason why he was treated so harshly. The fact that Gabriel's step-father showed very little emotion during the trial helped display that he

may have very little remorse for the way he treated Gabriel. We are all held responsible for our actions in life and as adults we can not blame or point the figure on why and how things happened. Gabriel's step-father had a choice, to leave or stay Gabriel's mother, he chose to stay and abuse Gabriel to the point of death. There is no excuse, he is an adult and is pure evil in causing the torture done to Gabriel. Gabriel's blood is in his hands and he must pay the punishment.

Unfortunately a lot of people failed Gabriel Fernandez. From therapists to his mother and step-father there were many people responsible for what happened. His teacher did the best she could to report and yet the social workers failed to do their job and protect Gabriel. The social workers knew there were reports of abuse but yet did not take the reports seriously and did remove Gabriel from the home of his abusers which led to his mother and step-father killing him. The social workers could have done their job more effectively such as ensuring Gabriel's safety and have taken this case more seriously. The social workers did not communicate well with collaterals such as Gabriel's teacher which could have helped bring more clarity to the seriousness of the abuse taken place prior to his death. They believed Gabriel's mother who was his abuser. While some social workers may have been more new to the field, there is still no excuse, ask for help from colleagues and supervisors.

While this case could have been scary at times, if I was his therapist I would have done things differently. Utilizing proper supervision when needing additional help and support on what to do could have help provide guidance. Ensuring Gabriel's safety is the most important thing, I would have spoken to his teacher to see the concerns she has been noticing not ignoring nor not responding her calls. A thorough risk assessment should be the first step in the assessment and the main goal for the counselor in a situation like this (Jackson-Cherry & Erford,

2017). I would have removed Gabriel and his siblings from the house, there is no reason why this should have happened the way it did when there was social workers already aware of the situation.

The emotions that this documentary brought me was intense. Seeing real life pictures of the abuse broke my heart. No child should ever go through something like this. Anger was also a common emotion I experienced on how this happened. The system failed Gabriel and it makes me so upset and angry. I also gained a new perspective on the importance of helping children and ensuring their safety.

## References

Jackson-Cherry, L.R. & Erford, B.T. (2017). *Crisis Assessment, Intervention and Prevention* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Pearson