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The article titled “4-year-old homicide victim was bound by tape, frequently kept naked in basement, courts say” involved a crime committed in Hamlet, Indiana where a child was found unresponsive by police on October 11, 2021. The 4-year old boy was naked and bruised with red marks on his face. An autopsy revealed that the child died “from blunt force trauma to the head, which caused a massive subdural hematoma” (Ortiz and Reese, 2021). After investigating by police, both of the victim’s parents were taken into custody. According to the Laporte County Sheriff’s Office Jailtracker, the father of the victim was charged with murder, 2 felony cases of neglect of a dependent, cruelty to an animal, and resisting law enforcement. The mother was charged with neglect of a dependent resulting in death, neglect of a dependent, cruelty to an animal, and failure to make a report. (Laporte County Sheriff). The abuse on the minor child was ongoing as child services was involved with the said victim and his parents since 2017 (Ortiz and Reese 2021). Since his birth, the victim was raised by his cousin up until recently when a court order required the victim to return to his parent’s care. The mother of the victim was the one to report the incident to authorities, saying that the father had lost control and hurt the child. It was also reported that the child was often beaten, starved, and locked in a basement for days by his own parents.

A crime of this magnitude impacts many people on different levels and for different reasons. Most importantly, the victim is now deceased but prior to this he suffered neglect and abuse. He was the most negatively- impacted because he suffered psychological, physical and emotional trauma at the hands of his parents. The defendants themselves now are impacted as they will eventually realize that what they did was vile. As a result, they face many years in prison. At the time of the incident, the mother reported not being home because she was delivering another child (Ortiz and Reese, 2021). The mother, now in custody, faces the shame of bringing another being into this world without ever being capable to taking care of the ones she already had. She will lose custody of her children and the life she once knew will never be again. The immediate family of the victim and his parents are also impacted, feeling helplessness, despair, and guilt for not being able to foresee this incident or prevent it. The one to most suffer the loss of this child would be Jenna Hullett, the victim’s cousin who raised him since birth and provided for the child. She blames DCS for “failing to protect Judah” and calls for “awareness… justice” (Ortiz and Reese, 2021). She was forced to give up being the caregiver of this child and consequently within months, the tragedy occurred. She likely continues to be impacted the most because law enforcement and DCS did not act on time to prevent this tragedy from occurring, regardless of the parent’s criminal history (Ortiz and Reese, 2021). Other individuals impacted by this crime are the three other children found in the home when the victim was found unresponsive. These children witnessed the abuse and might have also been abused themselves. The impact of suffering abuse and being separated from their parents will traumatize them similarly to the trauma of the main victim in the case. Exposure to this type of violence may inhibit their ability to parent and handle emotions.

Personally, I have a lot of concerns related to this crime. The tragedy cannot be reversed, and the life of this innocent child is now lost, but it is important to address the ability to prevent these tragedies from occuring in the future. It makes me sick to think that the victim’s parents now brought another child into this world. I feel angry thinking that this new life will likely have similar fate as their deceased brother. Whether in the hands of his parents (if released from prison) or in foster care, the child will likely bear psychological and physical trauma. It angers me to know that this crime is common in our society. From work experience, I see child neglect and abuse defendants daily, and it makes me furious to know that DCS cases are not properly handled by investigators. It is comforting to know that the parents are both in custody. My only hope is that justice occurs, and they receive the appropriate sentencing for the crime they committed. I also hope that they receive the appropriate intervention, so they do not repeat the story if they ever see life out of a cell.

Laporte County Sheriff. “Jailtracker.” *Laporte County Jail*, Laporte County Sheriff, 24 Oct. 2021, https://omsweb.public-safety-cloud.com/jtclientweb/jailtracker/index/Laporte\_County\_IN.

Ortiz, Anna, and Reese, Sarah. “4-Year-Old Homicide Victim Was Bound by Tape, Frequently Kept Naked in Basement, Courts Say.” *Nwitimes.com*, The Times, 14 Oct. 2021, https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/4-year-old-homicide-victim-was-bound-by-tape-frequently-kept-naked-in-basement-courts/article\_1db63592-6d39-5353-a957-28d926516621.html.