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PRCM 2500

Individual Case Study 2

The Fall of Phoebe Jonchuck

Everyone that knew John Jonchuck knew he was a violent man full of hatred, but all those people never thought he do the actions that took place on January 7, 2015. To start the day of the accident Jonchuck and his daughter go visit a lawyer to get custody of Phoebe, Jonchuck's 5-year-old daughter. When they arrive Jonchuck pulls out his Swedish Bible that his stepmom gave him, which he had become obsessed with over the past month. Before the Bible he believed in demons and not God. Jonchuck tells the lawyer to read the Bible because she is God, but she could not read the Bible because she did not speak the language and is not God. When the lawyer does not read the Bible he responds by saying never mind I am God. He then goes on to babbling about wanting to be Baptized. The lawyer would try to make him focus back on the case with his daughter Jonchuck responded by saying, "Don't worry about filing the paperwork. None of this is going to matter tomorrow." Him and Phoebe leave and the lawyers calls the cops. They then go to three different churches that day wanting to get Baptized. Jonchuck telling all the priest, "I am the pope" and then corrects himself by saying "I know I am not" the pope. He then says he is possessed and asked the priest to perform an exorcism. Lastly asked the priest how many people had jumped off the Skyway bridge. Cops then show up to the scene from the lawyers call and they do nothing. Later

that night Jonchuck removes his daughter from her bed puts her in the car and starts driving 100 mph towards the Sunshine Skyway bridge. He stops on the bridge gets out of his car. A cop hollers at Jonchuck to stop but he does not. He grabs his daughter and held her over the guardrail, six stories up from cold, dark water and let's go of her. Jonchuck was a very violent child and has been violent towards his mom and his wife. Phoebe had watched him grab her Maw Maw and drag her down the stairs and punch her in the face. The 5-year-old girl watched her dad pour hot coffee on her mom, throw a concrete block at her, try to strangle her with Christmas lights, and chase her with a knife. Even though, all these actions took place and many more the Florida Department of Children and Families did nothing. Time after time they were called by family members and friends but nothing was done (DeGregory). In the report on Phoebe's death the DCF said, "though there was a well-documented history of concerns related to this family, there was nothing in the preceding several years that could have reasonably been interpreted as predictive of such an event (Sullivan/Samson)." Phoebe never had the same caseworker throughout all of this mess. Leaving not one solid person understanding what was exactly going on. Child protection investigators came and visited Phoebe five times, but she was left with her dad each time. In the past five years 500 children in Florida have been killed under the care of their parents when investigators had already checked on them. One-fourth of these were children that the DCF knew about and almost half of them had parents that had been reported to the DCF as children. DCF has been understaffed for years (DeGregory). The DCF have ignored accident after accident, but this case with Phoebe has caused them to open their eyes. I

think that the DCF should have been more open to learning about what was actually happening and taking place in Phoebe's life. The changes that were made after the death of Phoebe should have already been taking place. The investigators ignored a lot of things that should have been red flags. Phoebe's family knew how much of a safety risk that Jonchuck was and should have removed Phoebe from the situation even if that took getting the authorities involved. As far as from a public relation practitioner standpoint for the DCF I think they handle it as well as they could. They addressed that they did fail Phoebe and have failed other children in the past. Mike Carroll, leader of the DCF, has spoken and said that new employees were hired to stop letting cases slip through the cracks. Also, has launched a website where all the child fatalities will be recorded (DeGregory). The day after Phoebe's death the DCF added new questions for the hotline counselors to help disguise the severity of the call for help (Sullivan/Samson). Making the updates and changes and owning up to the systems mistakes was the right and honest route to take. If I was the practitioner for this incident. I would make sure everyone involved would be transparent. Tell the people at DCF there needs to be actions to take place to build themselves back up like job training and the things that they did to improve the hotline and hire workers. Their job is to help children in situations they cannot help themselves so I would make sure that everyone at DCF were working towards bettering the company along with bettering their image.

References:

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