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1. Briefly the theme or main idea of the movie The primary focuses of this movie, “ When Kids Get Life” (pbs. org) are the stories of individual adolescents who have committed heinous crimes against humanity and are serving life sentences in Colorado state prisons. Currently, serving life sentences 45 juveniles in the state of Colorado because they committed murder. Children are often the subjects of parental abuse, as it is easy for parents to abuse their children because children often will not report it. The children feel as though no matter how bad the abuse is, the child’s parents are still the caregivers of the child.

2. Explain how some of the leading concepts from our class so far that were discussed and informed in the movie.

In Jacob Ind’s case, it began with the sexual abuse from which he reacted by cutting himself. In the criminal justice system, filicide is often reacted to and sentenced less harshly than parricide. Juveniles were often treated with more tolerance as being allowed to commit a crime, as they are more likely to be rehabilitated than an adult is. In the state of Colorado, age is irrelevant when it comes to first-degree murder.

Contrary to Jacob Ind, Erik Jensen and Nathan Ybanez were both sentenced to life without parole. Ybanez was the boy who actually committed the murder of his mother, whereas Jensen was only involved in helping covering up the crime. Yet, in Colorado, there are no differentiations between actual parricide and merely being implicated in the crime’s cover up. At one point,

Ybanez's mother inadvertently admitted to issues at home. Ybanez's mother told Jensen's mother that she was 'afraid' that her husband would hurt Nathan. It eventually came out that the problems in the Ybanez household were Nathan's involvement in an incestuous relationship with his mother. Trevor Jones had accidentally murdered Matt Foley through a scheme of selling Matt a gun, but keeping the money and the gun then disappearing. Matt either would not have the opportunity for recompense, as the sale of a firearm from or to a juvenile is illegal. Jones was charged with armed robbery and felony murder, although the murder was an accident. Ultimately, Jones committed reckless manslaughter, but was charged with felony murder because of the robbery charge. Teens are more often charged with felony murder than adults, as juveniles more often associate and commit crimes in groups, whereas adults more often perpetrate crimes singly.

Andrew Medina was also charged with felony murder at 15 when he and two friends tried to carjack Kristopher Lohrmeyer. He saw his sentence as not being able to eat at McDonald's again, play with his brother again, simple things that adults do not look at. The claim against Andrew was that he was part of a gang, thusly sent to Colorado's Supermax prison. Only the most dangerous, violent, predatory and incorrigible people go to Supermax.

There are currently 2, 225 kids nationwide that are serving life sentences in prison without the possibility of parole. Often, these juveniles are charged and sentenced because there is not enough staff to protect them, not enough money to defend them or that their stories of abuse or accidental homicide are not believable enough. Colorado state legislature claims that a teen is unable to plan, focus or deliberate yet they are capable of committing

murder and given a life sentence without the possibility of parole.

4. Rate these movie making elements by number: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) - explain your score for each

- based on social scientific research - sound logic - factual
- choice of characters in the movie
- information you did not already know

Ratings for this movie based on social scientific research I give a 1 (poor).

Although there are some interesting elements to the reasoning behind the crimes, particularly the parricides, there is no logical scientific explanations for them. The choice of characters I would give a 4 (very good), because the movie portrayed parricide implicated by abuse, as well as accidental homicides that were charged as felony murders. Information I did not already know I would give a 2 (fair). The only bit of information I did not already know was Colorado state legislature's claim of the adolescent's inability to plan, focus or deliberate.

5. Explain what was good/informative about the movie and what could have been done better.

Overall, the movie was good, as the information of the potential of parricide was covered to some depth. Accidental deaths occur frequently, often via firearm usage. The social construct of the legislative body of the U. S. needs some work, as the focus of adolescent crimes is not to rehabilitate, but to get vengeance. It would have been beneficial if the movie had gone deeper into the psychological reasons behind the parricides, the social reasons for sending children to prison for life and the efficacy of the felony murder legislation. Although it is not unconstitutional, it still allows for a wide variety

of accidental deaths to be punished similarly to a serial murderer.

6. What was the lesson being taught by this movie?

The lesson being taught here is murder is murder, regardless of the motive or actions by which it takes place, or the age of the perpetrator. Just being in the same place can make one complicit, thus able to be charged with murder.

7. Would you recommend this movie to others - why or why not?

I would recommend this movie to those who are interested in learning the basics of parricide and a bit of the inconsistencies within the juvenile justice system, but would not recommend it to someone with a higher education and understanding of adolescent behavior.

Bikel, Ofra (Producer). (2007, May 8). When Kids Get Life. Podcast retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/whenkidsgetlife/view/>