SEVERE PHYSICAL ABUSE
OR CHILD TORTURE
A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME HAS
JUST AS MANY THORNS

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The word torture makes one think of war crimes, sadistic treatment of a hostage, or interrogation of a prisoner by a covert entity. Often however, children are victims of torture though as a rule, this term is used infrequently. The term “torture” is not just a legal term but readily available as a medical diagnosis or as a description of severe physical or emotional abuse.
DEFINITION OF TORTURE

- Any act by which severe pain and suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as...punishing [him] ...when such pain or suffering is inflicted by [a] person acting in an official capacity. (Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, United Nations 1984) Allasio & Fischer (1998)
WHY TORTURE A CHILD?

- First, an offender wishes to break down an individual, both physically and mentally.

- Second, the objective is to spread fear throughout the group (other children or youth) that have a close association with the primary victim.
CLASSIFICATION OF TORTURE

- Physical - beatings, crushing injuries, shaking, blunt force head trauma, penetration injuries, asphyxiation by covering a child’s mouth face with plastic, submerging a child in a fluid, or by hanging a victim, burning, electrical shock to include stun guns, cattle prods, and restraints with handcuffs, shackles, wires or ropes as well as seclusion in a small place for prolonged periods leading to sensory deficits.
CLASSIFICATION OF TORTURE

- Mental – acts such as restraint and extreme deprivation of food, external stimuli or ability to ambulate as is often seen in false imprisonment, forced ingestions of highly aversive materials particularly excrement, intentional terrorizing as would be seen by exposure to violent abuse of a loved one or pet, or extremely frightening scenes for a child such as a near death experience.
NORTH CAROLINA VLYNN PADDocks

Deprivation of external stimuli or ability to ambulate.
## David

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rituals</th>
<th>Sadistic</th>
<th>Torture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent beatings</td>
<td>Ingestion of vomitus on his birthday</td>
<td>Starvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sitting with no outside activities</td>
<td>Fan when wet in his bed in the winter</td>
<td>Forced immobility in a bedridden state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebounder</td>
<td>Eat food on floor and allow animals to eat</td>
<td>Bowel control (diapers, and no permission for stooling)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASSIFICATION OF TORTURE

- Sexual – abuse which entails rape, sodomy, fellatio, pornographic victimization, forced sexual contact with another child, genital or anal painful trauma as is experienced in female genital mutilation, attempted or completed castration, testicular trauma, or other forms of severe sexual abuse. It is relatively common for victims to experience all three forms of torture during a single event.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent beatings</td>
<td>Trembling, strip and sit in front of fan</td>
<td>Binding with duct tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sitting with no outside activities</td>
<td>Walking around with feces in bag around her neck and then ingestion</td>
<td>Water in face while mouth duct taped, near drowning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;That will be something for Hannah to tell her kids about&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Wouldn’t that be hard to explain to the ambulance&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;[laughing]&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebounder</td>
<td>Soap in eyes</td>
<td>Starvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hand on electric fence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall from the bed when expected to get caught</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HOW DOES ONE HIDE TORTURE?

- Physical beatings are inflicted with skin protection such as padding over the clothes or using an instrument that cause less visible trauma such as boxing gloves, PVC pipe, etc. Offenders will keep the child at home until bruises have resolved.
- Duct tape restraints with mouth occlusion
- Strangulation to near unconsciousness, then release with wide object such as upper arm or suffocation with a pillow or plastic wrap.
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<tr>
<td>Recurrent beatings</td>
<td>Rebounder for long hours breaking only for bathroom and drink</td>
<td>Entombment with extreme bondage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sitting with no outside activities</td>
<td>Forced ingestion of feces</td>
<td>Duct tape wrapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebounder</td>
<td>Water intoxication</td>
<td>Starvation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRANGULATION

- Suspension may cause nerve damage by direct mechanical compression of a nerve which may occur when a victim is suspended by the wrists or the ankles.
- Second mechanism of injury is axonal damage from forced traction. This occurs when a victim is suspended by the head and neck –causing damage to the brachial plexus or in a hanging technique.
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<tr>
<td>Repeated beatings</td>
<td>Isolation in the puppet house</td>
<td>Binding of hands, face leaving only his eyes with duct tape, standing for hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sitting</td>
<td>Forced ingestion of feces</td>
<td>Extreme bondage and being placed under a couch and a bed, alone in an attic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebounder</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Slow Suffocation to Death</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEUROLOGICAL OUTCOMES

- Research in adults reveal that 75% of torture victims report at least one neurological symptom and 64% of the patients studied continued experiencing at least one symptom chronically.
- In another study, 86% of the victims complained of neurological symptoms during the medical evaluation.
NEUROLOGICAL OUTCOMES IN SURVIVORS

- Headaches—most common
- Vertigo
- Loss of consciousness
- Dizziness
- Head trauma is frequent during torture with beatings to the head occurring in as many as 73% of adult torture victims
- Paresthesias
- Seizures
PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

- PTSD is the most common outcome. PTSD occurs in the general population at 1-9% frequency but in sexual assault victims 47% and 22% of non-sexual assault victims.
- Female trauma victims who have been incarcerated report PTSD at 81%.
- An international study of victims from 6 countries revealed PTSD at a prevalence of 69-92%.
“IN THE MORNING, I’D LET HER OUT OF HER ROOM”

Mother’s response to the question of what time does her 3-year-old daughter wake up in the morning;
The younger the age at which trauma and torture occurs and the longer its duration, the more likely children are to have long-term problems with anger regulation, anxiety and sexual impulses.

The affect responses to stressors leads to withdrawal and numbness, as well as intermittent excessive responses to traumatic reminders.
STARVATION & TORTURE

SOMETIMES A PRE-MEDITATED FORM OF CHILD HOMICIDE

SOMETIMES SEVERE NEGLECT
MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

- In addition to PTSD, anxiety, depression and symptoms that may meet the criteria for bipolar disorder, patients also demonstrate cognitive deficits and distractibility.
- Insomnia is an extremely common problem.
- Chronic organic psychosyndrome may occur with cognitive deficits, sleep disturbance, psychological lability and vegetative symptoms.
“I THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD KILL ME BY THE THIRD DAY OF BEATINGS”
THE RISK TO CARE PROVIDERS AND INVESTIGATORS

• A real concern for those who have to elicit information on events in a child’s life who has experienced torture is that of vicarious traumatization.

• In addition, investigators who experience an unsatisfactory resolution to the criminal process involving the torture of a child (downward plea bargains etc.) experience a mixture of anger, disappointment and a persistent sense of frustration.
PROSECUTION STRATEGIES

- Focus on the motive of the offender as well as the acts and highlight how carefully they were orchestrated.
- Mention the efforts that an offender took to disguise his/her behaviors.
- Help jurors understand not only the pain and suffering but especially for a child, the fearfulness.
TOTAL NUMBER INJURIES
44 INJURIES
WITH
10 FRACTURED BONES
THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

- Recognize when torture becomes the appropriate label for a specific form of child abuse
- Empathize with victims who are imprisoned and who are victims of bondage
- Make the true nature of the crime clear to the public, the judge and the jury.