

Kidnapping in The United States

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Introduction

Kidnapping can be defined as holding someone against his or her will in order to get money in return. It is not something that one has not heard of or is not familiar with. It is one of the things that the security apparatus of the USA is working to overcome. Kidnapping may occur when an individual is not shifted to another area but rather confined against his or her will in a certain space. It is one of the things that is prohibited by both state and federal laws. It is a threat that reflects the breakdown in the mechanism of social control in society (Morewitz, 2016). Although kidnapping is a crime that frequently receives greater attention from the media, it's very rare that abduction is caused by a stranger. Courts have recognized this crime as a crime in which a person is confined to her or his house without the ability to leave. Most of the cases of kidnapping in the USA are related to parental kidnapping, where one of the parents kidnaps his or her own child while in the proceedings of divorce. Other cases are related to adult kidnapping, where one would kidnap an adult who is in possession of a property or competing for a high source.

Some of the states added an additional requirement that the perpetrator of the kidnapping act has a strong unlawful motive for the crime, which includes ransom or extortion, and to avoid an ongoing legal issue. Parental kidnapping is one of the issues of special concern in most states of the USA since the parents are in ongoing divorce proceedings or child custody issues to take the child to another state without the permission of all the parties involved in the matter. In order to reduce this problem, many states of the USA have now enacted statutes that will adopt (the UCCJA) Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act and the (PKPA) Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, which will provide guidance related to which state has jurisdiction over custodial disputes.

Statistics

According to the (NISMART) National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway children report that shows that every year 2100 children reported missing in the USA, this means there has been child reported missing every 41 seconds. According to the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) missing person file, there are more than 88,040 active missing persons, and most of the missing persons are of age less than 18 years old. In around 800 of NISMART reported cases, the child was not, in fact, missing. Those were cases of miscommunication.

It has also been estimated that, on average, 33 children were kidnapped by a non-family member. Before being released, most of these children were sexually assaulted. Over 150 kids per day were abducted by their parents. Runaways and throwaways are reported by over 1000 kids per day.

Runaways and throwaways pose a high challenge to the authorities as they have left their houses of their own will, and it is likely that they will be prime targets of Human traffickers (NISMART, 2018). There are three distinct types of kidnapping based on the identity of the perpetrator: Family kidnapping, kidnapping by a stranger, and kidnapping by an acquaintance of the victim (Lampinen, 2017).

An OJJDP analysis of 1,214 juvenile kidnappings reported to the 1997 National Incident-Based Reporting System by jurisdictions in 12 states—not a current nationwide FBI estimate—classified 49% as family kidnappings, 27% as acquaintance kidnappings and 24% as stranger kidnappings. In 80% of kidnappings by a stranger, the first interaction between the kidnapper and the victim occurs within a quarter-mile radius of the victim's house. About 70% of the abduction of nonfamily kidnappings are females. High-potential kidnappers grab their victims from the street and lure them into their vehicles. Family kidnapping involves a higher percentage of perpetrators (Mostly Females) than any other type of kidnapping; the victims in these cases are small kids aged less than six years old. These types of criminal acts mostly originate at home.

Strain Theory

The strain theory of sociology is a theory that best explains the occurrence of kidnapping. Poverty and unemployment are two of the main causes of being involved in this act of violence. A theory explains that [people commit crimes](#) in order to relieve themselves of stress. Stress could be related to financial problems or could be related to not being accepted in society. A theory explains that people can indulge in violent activities to get revenge against those who have wronged them. Most of the time, to get relief from the frustration, people commit the crime. For some people, it is the best solution to release your stress.

Robert Agnew Strain Theory 1992

According to Robert Agnew's 1992 Strain theory, there are two main categories of strain that contribute to crime. One is the category where others prevent you from achieving your goals, and the other is those who take things that are valuable to you. Strain may appear to result from not achieving your goal. Agnew has explained that three goals, specifically when not achieved by a person, induce him or her in criminal activities. That three goals are money, status, and respect (Slocum & Agnew, 2017). Money is one of the central goals in the USA. All people in the USA are putting their best efforts into making a lot of money. Money is necessary for buying luxurious things.

For poor people, it is very hard to make a lot of money by working hard. This creates strain, which haunts them continuously. So they try to find a way from where they could make a lot of money within days or so. Many criminals said that they engaged in these activities to get money, which they were unable to find in the right way. Circumstances and stressful events make one feel bad; this

ultimately results in creating pressure to take corrective actions. This is true for Anger and Frustration, which trigger one's desire for revenge.

Interventions

There are multiple interventions to cater to the kidnapping issue. For family child abduction, one should respect the other parent's visitation and custodial rights and should attempt to maintain and build a healthy, friendly relationship with one spouse. This will help to reduce the highest percentage involved in kidnapping to a lower level.

Job Creation

Creating jobs for the citizens of every country, most importantly the youth will help to reduce the level of crime and promote to fight against it. When people are gainfully employed they will no longer need to commit crimes. As unemployment is one of the key factors for committing kidnapping.

Serious Punishment

When the government treats harshly whoever involved in the crime, it is more likely to happen that crime rate will start declining. The mild punishment only encourages the criminal.

Treatment in Prison

There should be a council that is composed of psychologists, which will counsel those who are in prison and serving their sentence for kidnapping crime. Counseling will resolve all the mental issues they have regarding stress or anything. Counseling will help them become a better person and will help them not to indulge in such crimes again. Mostly, the reason behind committing this crime is related to financial instability; poor people do not get enough money to feed their families, and they take the wrong paths to make a lot of money.

Conclusion

Kidnapping is one of the serious problems faced by the State and the federal government. Most of the cases of kidnapping are related to parental kidnapping, as mentioned previously, 49%. Although the government is taking serious measures to get rid of this situation, it is not entirely possible to eliminate it 100% from society. Creating job opportunities and giving serious punishments to the kidnappers will result in the reduction of this crime.

References

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