

"The News Segment"

By:

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Pre-trial publicity can have a tremendous impact on anyone who has been charged with a crime. The adverse affects of bad publicity can even last a lifetime. What I'll be sharing, are my experiences, of just how detrimental just one news segment has affected me. This 5 minute news segment was orchestrated by one of my former psychiatrists whom I sought treatment from 3 years prior to my 1994 crime. The content of this news segment has infuriated me for years, and still troubles me to this day.

I had been in pre-trial for over a year when I first learned I had been on national television. My court appointed lawyer called the Hilo, Hawaii jail I was housed

at, and frantically asked, "did you see it, did you see it?" After he calmed down, he explained that my former doctor, Robert DeVito, from the Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Illinois, had done a news segment that featured me. Apparently Dr. DeVito showed my photograph, and the photos of 2 other former patients while being interviewed on CBS. Dr. DeVito explained that the 3 of us shown, had been former patients on his psychiatric ward who voluntarily participated in a serial killer research study in 1991, with approx. 15 other patients from the ward. He explained that 7 of his participants were profiled as potential serial killers, and the 3 of us shown were among them, and since leaving his hospital, have now killed someone in the similar manner we sought treatment for. The news segment concluded with Dr. DeVito claiming that if released, we would kill again and again.

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I soon understood why my lawyer had been so frantic. That inflammatory news segment had just become "our" worst nightmare.

My mom had passed away 6 months prior to the airing of that news segment. Since I was in Hawaii, and pre-trial, I couldn't attend her memorial services. My family was asked many questions about my absence, and instead of explaining I was in jail, they merely said I couldn't make it home from Hawaii (to Illinois).

6 months later however, after the news segment aired, my family had a barrage of inquiries from people who saw my photo on that CBS news clip. Many of my friends and family members wanted nothing more to do with me after this chilling news segment aired.

I had just been evaluated for an extreme mental and emotional disturbance defense when this news segment aired. The doctor evaluating

me for this was in support of that defense, but my court appointed attorney was so shaken by the news segment, he became reluctant to use this viable defense. Even my sister, who the court approved to be used as an expert witness, was now uncomfortable supporting a defense that may lead to only a 10 year manslaughter sentence. For all the wrong reasons, I ultimately accepted a plea bargain for 2nd degree murder. I then had to face a paroling Authority that is made up of lay people who would determine the number of years I'd serve.

The prosecutor in my case could not contain her enthusiasm to use the content of this news segment against me. She broke a protective order prohibiting the information, breached my plea deal, and used inadmissible hearsay from Dr. DeVito, to make sure I would never get released from prison.

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For almost 20 years my minimum term of incarceration was set at 70 years. In 2015, I finally proved the 70 year minimum was unlawful, and it was reduced to 50 years. I honestly feel the Hawaii Paroling Authority has no intention on ever paroling me, due to Dr. DeVito and his inflammatory news segment.

Dr. DeVito passed away in 2020. A friend of mine sent me Dr. DeVito's lengthy obituary. One line that especially infuriates me reads, "Throughout his career, Bob embraced the challenging clients others shunned, most notably in forensic settings, where he founded a national study group on "pre-serial killers" and consulted with FBI profilers to intervene with dangerous individuals before they committed serious crimes."

In 1988 Dr. DeVito was even named Psychiatrist of the year by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

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I have spent countless hours pondering the audacity Dr. DeVito had, doing a news segment about his research and profiling skills. As his former patient who voluntarily sought treatment on his psych. ward, I feel betrayed, exploited, and prejudiced against. The most painful aspect, is that after I had been profiled as a potential serial killer, I had begged Dr. DeVito to help me. I was willing to undergo any kind of treatment regiment to help assure that I control any dangerous behaviors I exhibited. But I was told he had no treatment, and when my insurance had run out, I found myself transferred to the Elgin State Psychiatric Hospital. Dr. DeVito gave the recommendation that I take the Sex Offender Treatment Program at Elgin. Although I wanted to take that program, the doctor at Elgin said no, claiming it was only for convicted sex offenders.

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Had Dr. DeVito been the first doctor to treat the troubled mindset and behaviors I sought treatment for, the sting of his news segment may not be so great for me. But I gave up a promising Naval career in order to get out of the Navy, to seek the help I felt I needed. I went to the Hines Veterans Hospital out-patient clinic for 1 1/2 years of counseling. My VA therapist told me repeatedly that I need much more treatment than the VA offered.

I had attended out-patient treatment at the Alexian Brother's "Samaritan House" in Elk Grove, Illinois. I was making progress there until a misunderstanding from another patient, forced me into an ambulance, rushed to the hospital, and having my stomach pumped, all against my will. I never returned to that facility after that.

My attempts at in-patient treatment were no better. The

first place I tried was a small Catholic hospital call Loretto Hospital in Chicago. After being heavily medicated for 3 weeks on their psych. ward, a male nurse's aide who read my chart, crawled into bed with me one night and wanted sex. The next morning I questioned myself, wondering, "did that really happen?" The feces ring around the front of my pajama bottoms confirmed that event, and my family had me yanked out of there the next day.

I spent 5 weeks at the Rush Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago. The doctors had me on several strong psych. meds, but a male nurse kept persuaded me I didn't need them, so I foolishly didn't follow thru on taking those medications after my discharge. I soon found myself back at the Hines VA, begging for help. It was

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the VA psychiatrist who referred me to the Loyola University medical Center, and Dr. devito. By the time Dr. devito met me, I was feeling desperate to overcome my dangerous mindset and unhealthy behaviors. Why this doctor didn't assure I got the proper treatment baffles me?

In 1997 Dr. devito wrote to me. He wanted to continue his research on me, and felt I could make a significant contribution. He planned to bring a fellow colleague to the prison and conduct a series of biochemical treatments matching my chemistry. I was encouraged to get moved closer to Illinois so it would be easier for Dr. devito to conduct these tests. But ironically, the Department of Public Safety in Hawaii refused to transfer me to the private prisons other Hawaii inmates were going to in the mainland, because the DPS

felt I needed treatment before being moved to the mainland, where I would have a cellmate. The State of Hawaii claims to have no treatment for my mental health needs, and kept me single celled for 7 years in a small 6 man unit that offered no workline, programs, or contact visiting with visitors. I was however, approved to have Dr. DeVito and his colleague come to the Halawa prison in Hawaii to provide "treatment". Dr. DeVito and his colleague never came, and I never heard from him again after that.

I have never had the chance to view this news segment that has wreaked such havoc and evoked so many emotions. Having the news media depict a criminal defendant in a negative light, seems to be the unfortunate consequences of committing a crime, or even being charged with any wrongdoing. In my

situation, it was a former doctor who first, profiled me, neglected to help me, waited for me to eventually kill someone, then exploit me, find me guilty of my crime before I was convicted, and then offer chilling inflammatory comments of how I would kill again if released. Then providing hope for treatment after my crime, and once again failing to follow through. These are just some of the personal issues I face in prison whenever I think of that news segment. I know I need to let go and move on, but it is very difficult for me to do.

Although I feel I've fallen thru the cracks of psychology and have been wronged, and even misjudged, I am hopeful of my own prognosis. I know I'm not that monster Dr. DeVito depicted me to be, nor would I ever become that monster.

Because of my faith in God, and my good conscience, I had taken full responsibility for my actions, and turned myself

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into the police within hours of my crime. I fully cooperated with the police, and made efforts to show my sincere remorse to my victim's family. After 28 of incarceration, I continue to learn and understand how my poor life choices, such as consuming alcohol, had contributed to my crime. I realize my mindset and behaviors in the past, made me a potentially dangerous person, and that I should have taken greater care of my mental well-being.

God willing, if I am ever released from prison, I know I will live a healthy, productive life. I am freed from all the self destructive bondage, and addictive lifestyle I once lived. I refuse to let pre-trial publicity consume me, or ever define me. After all, it was, only just one news segment.

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