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Kidnappings of Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight get the 'instamentary' treatment on Investigation Discovery

18 comments

By Mark Dawidziak, The Plain Dealer
on May 31, 2013 at 8:41 PM, updated June 01, 2013 at 1:49 PM

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Ariel Castro's Seymour Ave. home in Cleveland, protected by a fence surrounding the property, as photographed Wednesday, May 15, 2013.

Marvin Fong, The Plain Dealer

Investigation Discovery has scheduled an hour special about the kidnappings of Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight. Airing about a month after the three women were rescued from suspect Ariel Castro's Seymour Avenue home, "House of Horrors: Kidnapped in Cleveland" will premiere at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 5.

A cable channel specializing in true-crime programming, Investigation Discovery bills "House of Horrors" as one of its "instamentaries" -- quick turnaround specials about breaking news stories. The three women were rescued after a decade of captivity when Berry made a 911 call on May 6.

An Investigation Discovery press release describes "House of Horrors": "When police arrived at the home where Berry had been held captive, the scene was one out of a horror movie and something that would leave even the most seasoned investigators shaken. Investigation Discovery explores the developments in the case so far . . . The one-hour documentary explores how one man kept them captive for so long, and delves into what happened to Amanda Berry, Michelle Knight, and Georgina 'Gina' DeJesus while examining the long term psychological challenges survivors of such traumatic experiences face."

The special also will feature experts attempting "to dissect the psychological dichotomy of suspect Ariel Castro, as friends and

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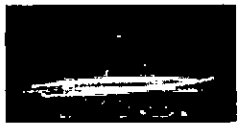

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neighbors of Castro describe their personal experiences with him over the years, including even having been in the house while the women were chained up in the basement."

"House of Horrors" is a co-production between Investigation Discovery and Britain's Channel 5 network. A version already has aired in the United Kingdom under the title "Ohio Slave Girls."

"Following the success of our recent 'instamentaries' on Jodi Arias and Oscar Pistorius, ID turns its investigative focus to a story that has shaken the world and continues to capture our attention even weeks later," Henry Schleiff, president of Investigation Discovery, was quoted saying in Friday's press release. "Investigation Discovery is the definitive home for in-depth documentaries on cases making headlines today, and 'House of Horrors' gives viewers a comprehensive look at a tragic – and eventually, heroic – story even as it continues to develop."

Executive producers are Guy Davies and Diana Sperrazza.

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j jedl

The PD article is fine. What you worry about is misinformation and unsubstantiated "facts" from endeavors like these on US cable TV and apparently even more mainstream TV in the UK. The UK title "Ohio Slave Girls"--is a definite attempt to induce viewership via a salacious content promise.. Probably effective too. It is okay to dissect this situation publicly on crime TV, you just deep down do not wish the 3 young women any more publicity, that will harm them anymore than they already have been. I prefer "Ohio Survivors" as commented by RusticSage on this thread.

5 Hours Ago · Reply

Fiona Fernandes

I find even this headlinge tactless and heartless. "treatment" a word seems out of place. I read another article lately it read "Ohio shocker: A tale of rape, torture and apathy" probably the writer was not a jew.

23 Hours Ago · Reply

RusticSage

My apologies... I was referring to the United Kingdoms documentary listed in this article and titled "Ohio Slave Girls."

Yesterday · Reply

RusticSage

I seriously doubt that this documentary was created with the permission of the survivors, but it's possible I'm wrong. One reason we have not heard new information in recent weeks is because of the investigation and upcoming trial (if Castro indeed does plead not guilty).
I think it was very tactless for the United Kingdom to title the show as they did; they could have come up with a better, less demeaning name for it. These women have been through enough without having to relive the horrors they lived through simply because inquiring minds want to know. These women are not and were not Ohio Slave Girls! They were victims of a very disturbed and evil man. They are Ohio SURVIVORS!

Yesterday · Reply

Only in Cuyahoga

I see this as a positive , for future educational tactics that could possibly be used to help prevent this from happening from others. What to look for, what to listen for, and what not to take litely. Also, I can only hope they ,(The Woman), were paid something for the airing of this story. Rights, I would assume would come into play, as with everything else dramatic in real life expeditures are paid for with monies, entitlements and benefits, which should be included here.

2 Days Ago · Reply

badger937

They will not make anything from this. More opportunists. Leave them alone.

Yesterday · Reply

reader73

Just like how they will get nothing from Charles Ramsey as he parades around telling his "story"

Yesterday

---

badger937

Christ, can't the PD give it a rest? Mark writes about Entertainment.

2 Days Ago · Reply

give it a rest

that's what it is to the pd. They have no investigative journalism. It like doing 8 articles on what gee said 5 months ago and calling it sports.

2 Days Ago · Reply

---

republicans just don't get it

another cable channel i've never heard of.

2 Days Ago · Reply

HegelReturns

Perhaps, the show will also investigate who really rescued Amanda Berry and her daughter-- Angel Cordero and/or Charles Ramsey.

2 Days Ago · Reply

republicans just don't get it

no one rescued the girls, the neighbors had no clue they were locked in there. castro was sloppy and left the door unlocked, he regrets that mistake.

RusticSage likes this.

2 Days Ago · Reply

jn32458

Actually this is a basic question, knowing that this house was in tax trouble, ergo money problems for Castro, just what was this sadistic creep, going to do to these girls? It's sickeningly frightening. I know people who actively discussed this weeks ago--just after the escape. They looked up the property address on the county tax record.. By the way I doubt he was intentionally leaving this door open so the girls could flee... Amanda Berry is the hero of this escape story. All 3 girls are heroes for surviving..

RusticSage and HegelReturns like this.

2 Days Ago

C-townFan

Any Freudians out there? Perhaps AC forgetting to lock the door was a "Freudian slip"? I believe one of his brothers alluded to that idea in an interview.

2 Days Ago

NEOTruthSayer

I hope that these tv shows are not exploitive of Berry, DeJesus and Knight. They have been through enough already. Give them their peace and let them recover from this awful tragedy and move on to a safe and prosperous life.

RusticSage likes this.

2 Days Ago · Reply

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Ohio abductions: Time to be a little more humane...

Last Updated: Monday, May 13, 2013, 17:53

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The residents of Seymor Avenue, one of Cleveland's oldest neighbourhoods – Tremont in the US, woke up to the noises of police cars and sirens and a buzzing crowd on May 6, 2013. Shock ripped through the cluster of houses in the area when they realized that one of their 'nice' neighbours, 52-year-old Ariel Castro - a school bus driver - had held three women in his house for over a decade right under their noses.

As in the majority of cases, the three women victims –Michelle Knight, Amanda Berry and Georgina DeJesus - were known to the accused who had kidnapped them on the pretext of giving them a lift.

Knight was only 19 years old when she was kidnapped in 2002 while Berry was on the eve of her 17th birthday when she was abducted on the way back home from her workplace in 2003. DeJesus, a friend of Castro's daughter, was merely 14 when she went missing while walking home from school after parting ways with his daughter.

Abducted in their teens, the three were repeatedly chained, raped and sexually abused in the house. Repeated rapes led to Castro fathering a child with Berry.

After being freed, the victims revealed tales of horror that they went through during their captivity. Knight told the police that she suffered five forced miscarriages after Castro hit her in the stomach and starved her for days to kill the babies.

Initially, the victims were kept chained in the basement but were later allowed to live in the second floor of the house. The torture continued for over a span of 10 years until one of the neighbours heard Berry's cry for help through the crack of the door which led to the rescue of Berry, her daughter and the two other captives.

The chance freedom in this case has raised concerns regarding the mindset of our modern society. How could it happen that the buzzing neighbourhood had no clue about the tortures that were going on right next door?

Even friends and family members who had visited the house in those years couldn't read the subtle signs. The visitors, including the daughter of Castro, had claimed that no unusual activity seemed to be going on in the house even though she was deterred by her father from visiting her childhood room in which one of the victims was confined.

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DAY IN PICS

Day in Pics: 3rd June

Did Castro's insistence on keeping the house locked all the time to the extent of locking the basement, attic and garage and mostly entertaining the visitors in the outside area raised no suspicion?

And this was on a street where cars drove by through the day; children rode around on their bicycles and neighbours stopped by to greet each other. How did no one suspect anything unusual in the 2207 Seymour Avenue in which the three women were living their worst nightmare?

Witnesses have claimed about sightings of a little girl (Castro's daughter from Berry) in the attic and a woman looking from the window, but everyone seemed to believe that 'the nice man' living next door lived alone and could hardly be the monster that he is.

In today's times, one hardly pays attention to what is happening around them because we are so involved in our lives or scared to intrude on other person's privacy. Majority of us do not even know who our neighbours are, least alone interact with them.

To draw a line and not be imposing is one thing but ignoring blatant signs is downright indifference.

Despite the obvious signs around them, the neighbours, friends and the family chose to ignore their hunch and call the police.

Even the police, who went to Castro's house to investigate his involvement in an incident in which he had left a small boy in school bus, found nothing amiss when no one answered the door. He was absolved of the charges later.

The case is eerily similar to the horrific captivity, rape and physical torture of Elisabeth Fritzl in Austria who was locked in the basement of her house for 24 years by her father Joseph Fritzl. He fathered seven children with her.

The sexual abuse of Elisabeth Fritzl began when she was merely 11 years old. When she was 18 years old, her father lured her into the basement of the house on some pretext. She was confined there for the next 24 years.

The basement was constructed in the very house where Joseph Fritzl lived with his wife and later three children he fathered with Elisabeth. But it was only after over two decades of confinement and chance freedom of Elisabeth that the shell-shocked mother even realized that all this time, her daughter was living in the very same house.

But weren't the signs already there with Joseph Fritzl working away for entire night in the basement and no one was allowed to disturb him when he was in the basement for anything.

One of the tenants in the house grew suspicious and even asked Joseph Fritzl about the noises coming from the basement but an excuse that the noises were coming from the heating system seemed to put his mind to rest.

All of us get subtle hints and a gut feeling when something is not right. However, sadly, most of us choose to overlook it. All we need to do is follow our sixth sense and take a step to prevent such ghastly and barbaric incidents. This does not mean that one gets paranoid and starts looking at everything and everyone suspiciously but such incidents make it imperative that we heed to our gut instincts, be a little more attentive to our surroundings and most importantly be a little more humane.

No one can erase the sufferings and give back the moments that these victims have lost. However, we can only hope that the healing can begin for the victims and the moments that has been brutally snatched from them, could be salvaged again to ensure they have happier times in the future.
(The views expressed by the author are personal)

Anuj Aggarwal - Delhi
impressive reporting...everytime u think u have seen the creepiest of the creepiest...u lift a rock and come across this ariel castro guy who was virtually living two lives...thanks to charles ramsey for saving the girls..
Reply

Virmani Dosa - Delhi

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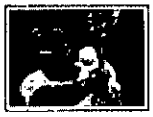
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a guy in noida (delhi ncr) kidnapped, raped, killed and ate his victims and nobody cared for ages, and now people may not even remember. every criminal is a representative of the society to which he belongs.

Reply

R.D.Nimesh - India

we should be very careful about the conduct of our neighbourer. any abnormal behaviour and suspecious activity should immediately be reported to police .we should always be ready to serve the sociaty.we have some liability towards society in which we live otherwise people like arial castro will make the society a hell where anybody may be victim of these rascals and none would come to rescue.

Reply

Nikhil Patel - Pune

if in a country where the police system is considerably good, such an incident can happen, then in india, where all the systems are controlled by the rich and powerful - these incidents won't come to light and are rampant.
that guy did not kill them, here they kill and bury and who knows what else?

Reply

Shaheen - Karachi, Pakistan

we unfortunately choose to ignore intuition or read it incorrectly, the other thing is with its side effects.

Reply

SUNEET RAAN - INDIA

we must always remain careful about such type of doubtful activities around us and take necessary action timely, it could be saved someone life.

Reply

Shahin Badsha - Mumbai

intuition is generally correct and true, we unfortunately choose to ignore it or read it incorrectly. the other thing is with its side effects its better to be inquisitive so that a wrong can always be caught at the same time a genuine person could atleast forgive us for being snoopy as its in best interest that one is pursuing it.

Reply

KSHITISH DASH - ANGUL

every body is in race which has no destination. no time for self or others.only time for competing with some body or for some thing. who cares for neighbours? humanity confined to books and timed out. we all are beasts of our dream which is giving nothing at end. no moral teacing at school is the reason.

Reply

Yanvi Mishra - India

it's really disturbing to know of such hideous crimes that happen in our surroundings and we are completely ignorant about them...
even if we get the smallest hint we simply ignore till the very extent when we feel its none of our bussiness whats going on next door...
be it domestic violence or such instances which shake the very foundation of humanity...
its high time that we change the route of our thoughts and pay attention to whats going on around...!!
otherwise who knows someday we'd b facing such a problem and just 'coz we were ignorant to the issues around us.. we'd b hoping no help.. or such chance freedom...!

Reply

GAURAV TOMER - DEHRADUN

really ridicolus i don't know why human have loss their values regrading women..

Reply

Asif - Dubai
you are right yanvi...
Reply

J CHINOY - Pune
your absolutely spot on when you say we don't care if there is domestic violence going on in our neighbour's house because we feel we would be intruding on their privacy! in fact, such cases should be reported immediately so the victim can be saved from further torture and the abuser get his/her dues.
Reply

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Slip Copy, 2010 WL 4056123 (Ohio App. 9 Dist.), 2010 -Ohio- 5064
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CHECK OHIO SUPREME COURT RULES FOR REPORTING OF OPINIONS AND WEIGHT OF LEGAL AUTHORITY.

Court of Appeals of Ohio,
Ninth District, Lorain County.
STATE of Ohio, Appellee
v.
Michael J. MONTELEONE, Appellant.

No. 10CA009751.
Decided Oct. 18, 2010.

West KeySummary**Automobiles 48A** ⚿**359.6**

48A Automobiles
48AVII Offenses
48AVII(C) Sentence and Punishment
48Ak359.3 Driving While Intoxicated
48Ak359.6 k. Repeat Offenders. Most Cited Cases

Defendant's prior determination of guilt subjected him to enhanced penalties for multiple driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) charges, even if there was no judgment of conviction. The defendant was arrested for a third DUI charge in six years and pled guilty to the offense, subjecting him to enhanced penalties. Defendant argued his two previous judgment entries did not constitute a valid judgment of conviction. But, the legislature intended the penalties to be enhanced if guilt was previously determined and did not include sentencing upon that determination. R.C. §§ 4511.19(G)(1)(c), 4511.19(A)(1)(a); Rules Crim.Proc., Rule 32(C).

Appeal from Judgment Entered in the Oberlin Municipal Court, County of Lorain, Ohio, Case No. 09TRC02209.
Kenneth M. Lieux, Attorney at Law, for Appellant.

Michelle Nedwick, Prosecuting Attorney, for Appellee.

BELFANCE, Judge.

***1** {¶ 1} Defendant-Appellant Michael Monteleone appeals from the ruling of the Oberlin Municipal Court which denied his motion to strike prior convictions for enhancement purposes. For the reasons set forth below, we affirm.

BACKGROUND

{¶ 2} Monteleone pled no contest to one count of driving under the influence of alcohol in violation of R.C. 4511.19(A)(1)(a). As this was arguably Monteleone's third similar offense in the past six years, Monteleone faced stiffer penalties at the time of sentencing. See R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c). After being found guilty by the court, but prior to sentencing, Monteleone moved to strike two prior convictions, asserting that they could not be used to enhance his sentence. The trial court held a hearing on the matter. The State submitted a Law Enforcement Automated Data System ("LEADS") printout to demonstrate Monteleone's prior convictions. Monteleone submitted copies of judgment entries from the two prior cases and argued that the convictions could not be used to enhance his sentence as the two judgment entries did not comply with Crim. R. 32(C) and were therefore not valid judgments of conviction. The trial court denied Monteleone's motion and sentenced him to one hundred eighty days in jail with one hundred fifty days suspended. Monteleone has appealed, raising a single assignment of error for our review.

PRIOR CONVICTIONS

{¶ 3} Essentially Monteleone argues in his sole assignment of error that his prior convictions were not judgments of conviction as contemplated by Crim. R. 32(C) and thus, those convictions could not constitute prior convictions for enhancement purposes under R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c).

{¶ 4} We begin by noting that while the existence of two prior convictions in this case would increase the penalty Monteleone faced at sentencing for his third offense, it did not elevate the degree of the offense. See R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(a), (c) (both a first offense and third offense under the statute are first-degree misdemeanors). The Supreme Court of Ohio has held that in such cases "the prior conviction is not an essential element of the subsequent offense, and need not be alleged in the indictment or proved as a matter of fact." *State v. Allen* (1987), 29 Ohio St.3d 53, 506 N.E.2d 199, paragraph one of the syllabus. Instead, the prior conviction is "strictly a sentencing

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consideration for the court." *Id.* at 55, 506 N.E.2d 199.

{¶ 5} In the instant matter, at the hearing on Monteleone's motion, the State submitted a copy of a LEADS report. Monteleone does not challenge the State's use of this evidence to establish Monteleone's convictions. Nonetheless, to rebut the State's evidence, Monteleone submitted certified copies of judgment entries from the two prior cases. He asserts the judgment entries he submitted do not satisfy all the elements of Crim.R. 32(C)(1) and thus, do not constitute judgments of conviction. Therefore, Monteleone maintains that his sentence could not be enhanced.

***2** {¶ 6} Thus, this Court is confronted with the narrow question of whether the language in R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c) contemplates that convictions used to enhance an offender's sentence are judgments of convictions as provided by Crim.R. 32(C). Based upon the plain language of the statute, and the Supreme Court's prior discussion of a similar issue, we conclude that the legislature did not intend such a result.

{¶ 7} We acknowledge that the Supreme Court has recently clarified that "for purposes of R.C. 2941.25, a 'conviction' consists of a guilty verdict *and* the imposition of a sentence or penalty." (Emphasis in original.) *State v. Whitfield,* 124 Ohio St.3d 319, 922 N.E.2d 182, 2010-Ohio-2, at ¶ 12. Nonetheless, in so doing, the Court noted that in certain instances, specific statutory language might require a different definition of the term. *Id.* at ¶ 13, 922 N.E.2d 182.

{¶ 8} R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c) provides that "an offender who, within six years of the offense, previously has been ***convicted of or pleaded guilty*** **to** two violations of division (A) or (B) of this section or other equivalent offenses is guilty of a misdemeanor[ ]" and is subject to enhanced penalties. (Emphasis added.) The statute does not mention judgment of conviction. Instead the statute states that the offender has previously been "**convicted** of *or* **pleaded guilty to**" violations of the statute or related offenses. *Id.* Thus, based upon the plain language of the statute, evidence of a prior guilty plea is sufficient to enhance the offense. It therefore seems unlikely that the legislature intended its separate and additional use of the word "convicted" to require evidence to establish all the elements of Crim.R. 32(C) if an offender did not plead guilty to an offense, but instead pled **no contest** or was found guilty by the court or a jury.

{¶ 9} When analyzing substantially similar language in a different statute, the Supreme Court of Ohio noted that "the General Assembly placed 'convicted' on equal footing with a guilty plea[.]" *State ex rel. Watkins v. Fiorenzo* (1994), 71 Ohio St.3d 259, 260, 643 N.E.2d 521. The Court thus concluded that "the plain language of [the statute] requires only a plea of guilty to invoke the sanction [ ]. Therefore, we believe the word 'convicted' as used in [the statute] logically refers only to a determination of guilt and does not include sentencing upon that determination." *Id.*

{¶ 10} In light of the Supreme Court's prior consideration of similar language, we conclude that to constitute a prior conviction under R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c), a prior determination of guilt is what is contemplated by the statute and not a judgment of conviction. We cannot say that the trial court erred in denying Monteleone's motion where the evidence of Monteleone's two prior convictions established two prior determinations of guilt as contemplated by R.C. 4511.19(G)(1)(c). Monteleone's sole assignment of error is overruled.

CONCLUSION

***3** {¶ 11} In light of the foregoing, we affirm the judgment of Oberlin Municipal Court.

Judgment affirmed.

There were reasonable grounds for this appeal.

We order that a special mandate issue out of this Court, directing the Oberlin Municipal Court, County of Lorain, State of Ohio, to carry this judgment into execution. A certified copy of this journal entry shall constitute the mandate, pursuant to App.R. 27.

Immediately upon the filing hereof, this document shall constitute the journal entry of judgment, and it shall be file stamped by the Clerk of the Court of Appeals at which time the period for review shall begin to run. App.R. 22(E). The Clerk of the Court of Appeals is instructed to mail a notice of entry of this judgment to the parties and to make a notation of the mailing in the docket, pursuant to App.R. 30.

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Costs taxed to Appellant.

DICKINSON, P.J., concurs.
CARR, J., concurs, saying:

{¶ 12} I agree that, by the plain language of the statute, the legislature intended for the imposition of enhanced penalties whenever a defendant has previously pleaded guilty or been found guilty of prior violations of R.C. 4511.19(A) or (B). The common meaning of the term "convicted" is that a defendant has been found (or admitted he is) guilty of a crime. The term "judgment of conviction" is a judicially created concept developed for purposes of determining finality and, therefore, reviewability of a criminal defendant's case. A reviewing court requires that a judgment of conviction comply with Crim.R. 32(C) for purposes of finality. These are judicial mandates necessary to invoke the jurisdiction of the reviewing court, not requirements imposed by the legislature to allow for enhanced penalties for repeat offenders.

Ohio App. 9 Dist.,2010.
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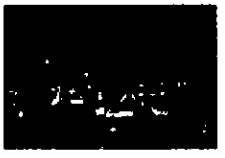
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NATION

Cleveland 'Hero' Charles Ramsey Gets a Professional Speaking Deal

By Ollie John | June 03, 2013 | 2

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Charles Ramsey, the man who gained global recognition after he helped rescue three women who were allegedly held prisoner for a decade in a Cleveland home, has signed a deal to join the celebrity speaking circuit where he could earn as much as $10,000 per appearance.

"Charles' story touched my heart," said Bruce Merrin, head of the Las Vegas speakers bureau that Ramsey signed with, in a statement. Merrin says that he decided to approach Ramsey after seeing him tell his story on CNN. "Charles Ramsey is a true hero to me. I admire and respect him," Merrin added.

MATT SULLIVAN / REUTERS

Workers unload materials at Ariel Castro's home in Cleveland, Ohio, May 10, 2013.

(**MORE:** 'I'm Free Now': The 911 Call That Led to Cleveland's Dramatic Escape)

Ramsey's rise to fame began on May 6, when he related on TV news how he helped rescue Amanda Berry – last been seen in