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Humanities 1100

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Cultural Event Review

My brother’s sentencing occurred on August 27, 2013 in the federal court building in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah. Since this was in a court building the people who I saw that spoke were the judge, both of the lawyers, and some of the spectators in the audience. The objects of the event I went to was to find mercy and justice in the act that my brother committed. When first doing this assignment and trying to decide what my cultural event would be I realized this is very much a cultural event. I have only had one other experience where I have watched someone be sentenced and that was the guy who robbed the bank I worked at three years ago. At first I was hesitant because this is a sensitive subject but I find it to be relative to what we are learning.

I feel that the cultural context of this event would be the fact that one of the various people in the audience was a reporter and it was in the news the very next day. People are interested and intrigued in what is happening in the lives of other people. They want to know what is happening with the people in their own culture and this was affected by that. I’m convinced that the nature of this crime was sentenced based on the opinion of the judge and how the people in our culture would take the sentencing and how they would react to him. There have always been courts, judges, and trials in our history. Things are done in a very specific order, you break the law you go before a judge and or jury and you are sentenced for that crime. By doing this it creates the historical cultural bind that we experience today. From my observation the point of view for each participant including but not limited to the judge the two lawyers and my brother would be, first the judge, he was there for the purpose finding justice for the victims by issuing a proper sentence for the defendant. In other words he was passing judgment. Second, the two lawyers, their point of view was arguing their sides. Third, my brother, his point of view was seeking forgiveness from the court and his victims as well as admitting his guilt without any justifications.

The social issue here is child abuse which also affects the participants attitudes because this is very frowned upon and it’s not a topic our culture likes to discuss and often times they shy away from the topic, avoiding it at all costs. I believe this factor alone affected the approach each participant had in this event, if my brother had been caught with drugs he wouldn’t have gotten as harsh of a sentence has he has gotten. Child abuse in the manner my brother is guilty of raises a major social issue because it affects the mental and emotional wellbeing of the children involved. In some cultures this wouldn’t be a philosophical issue, it is very much approved and normal. In some cultures people are marrying off their ten year old daughters, but in our culture the philosophy is such that sexual abuse of a child is viewed as inappropriate.

In conclusion to this event was not one that my family was pleased to hear but understand and accept that my brother did what he did and he must pay the piper. He was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison without the possibility of parole. He will have to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life, answer to a parole officer for the remainder of his life, and isn’t allowed to be near children alone. All of these things are set in place to help him grow and move toward a better life when he is released. He has lost the chance at being a father to his boys and his wife is divorcing him. All things that hurt and hinder the strength of a family, but what culture views as acceptable for him to live as because of what he has done. This relates to what we have been doing in class mostly because of religion, it can be argued that the United States has this philosophy or mind set of this issue because of western religion.