Teenage aggression and parricide: a clinical presentation.

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- "Parent abuse is any act that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage *to gain power and control* over a parent" (Cottrell 2001)
- 'Parricide' Killing of both parents (or close family members) v 'Matricide or Patricide'
- Rare (1-4%) of all homicides. Majority involve males, sons to fathers but shifting trend towards female perpetrators.
- Majority involve conflicted relationships and intense arguments.
- Children more likely to <u>plan assault instrumentally</u>
- Adults target a single parent, adolescents target both parents

• Question:

Does

Child intra-familiar (sibling/parent) violence

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Parenticide

constitute a spectrum

or

Maudsley FCAMHS OPD 2000 -2020

- 20% cases referred to FCAMHS include parent abuse
 - ? % general CAMHS
- Perpetrators— male predominance (girls under-reported?)
- Victims predominantly mothers

Single parent families

• All socio-economic groups – presentation may vary, but underlying parent –adolescent dynamics similar

Exposure to domestic violence common, but not always present

An example of sub-pathways: CU traits

Callous – unemotional style

- Lacking empathy
- Lacking guilt
- Unkind
- Predatory aggression



Film – The bad seed

Case example. AA

- Public school boy (financially privileged), aged 16
- Ref by CAMHS family therapist SS threats to kill mother
- Mother single parent
- Father left mother and two younger sibs after birth of third child
 - disinterested in his children (CU traits??)

- Family lived with grandparents until G Fathers death 4 years ago –
 G Mo now has dementia
- AA, one of two "bad boys" (just involving graffiti), in otherwise pro-social peer groups.
- AA's gradual increase in oppositionality, led to CAMHS referral: When mother attempts interventions i.e. sets limits; SS responds by arguing, destruction of property, punching mother, verbal denigration "cunt hoar", locks mother out of house, starts to assault younger brother, spits in sisters face
- <u>AA subsequently threatens to kill his mother</u> after mother calls police and he stays in police cell. Referred to FCAMHS.

F CAMHS Intervention

- Practice informed by Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) within a criminal justice framework – problem identification, targeting, intervention and monitoring, feedback.
- Engagement with (professional) network education, SSD, CJS
 information sharing, planning and risk management plan agreeing lead agency
- "One Stop Shop"

- Target maternal shame / social isolation... encourage social networks
- Zero tolerance for violence contract (include police)
- Life line (telephone) for parent, text and email.
- Monitor
- On-going risk assessment / risk management 6/12
- Out-come no re-referral over following 2 years

Case example BB

- **BB.** (Hammer boy) 16 ½ yr boy remanded in custody who assaulted mother, charged with S18 GBH (solicitor referral)
- Witness statement: Mother "1.30pm asleep on bed, my son came into my room and <u>started attacking me with a hammer</u>, I do not wish to prosecute my son for what he did."
- Mother waits until older son comes home and calls ambulance
- Defensive wounds x 2 fractured R hand and R index finger fracture + <u>R sided skull fracture</u>.
- Mother concludes 'I feel my son made a mistake and he did not know what he was doing"

• Assessment clinical psychologist; 'diagnosis of Aspergers unlikely.'.

• Pre-cons x2:

Stole lap top from school = Warning.

Took cosh to school to frighten boys who had been bullying him. = Referral order.

- BB youngest of 3 sibs born in UK of immigrant parents, his closest relationships are with his brothers
- No concerns re early development
- HO of parental discord and neglect, mother has "mental illness"

Personal history

- Father, who had been close and supportive towards BB, had unexpected death by heart attack 2 years previously. BB upset but showed little emotion and did not join mourning with family.
- Mother v over-protective, BB not permitted to play out with friends or other family members until BB asserts his independence.
- Primary school; BB <u>victim of bullying</u> (name calling / according to brother, received bruises) and <u>subsequent school refusal</u> Also poor attendance at secondary school.
- Brothers report that BB does not mix easily with peers and has little motivation to form friendships, hobbies or interests.
- BB says his childhood was "troubled" and he had wished for "a normal mum"
- BB says mother would often hit with a wooden stick, when younger, on his legs or arms

- BB reports re offence: Had been listening to music with violent lyrics, thinking that life was boring. Thought came to him that if he attacked his mother he would go to prison. A good alternative to his current life.
- In terms of severity, BB says attack "wasn't a big thing", he acknowledges it was "bad" but also that "doing something else would have taken too long"
- He claimed that he had planned to hand himself in to the police (he did not) and denied having intended to kill his mother.
- Diagnosis: conduct disorder or emerging personality.

Case example CC

CC 14 ½ year old boy. Referred to F CAMHS from police station.

CC claims that he was in bed at home when woken up at about 1am by a hooded masked man in dark clothing kneeling by his bed with a gun to his head. Told to hit his younger brother, who was asleep, with shovel so that he would not recognise his face. Describes blood everywhere and his brother making groaning sounds.

CC states he was then told to go downstairs, remove fire alarms, put alarms in a Nike bag and set fire to the house using his fathers shirts which he did. CC says he was then told to leave house, bury the bag in a local park and told to kneel and not look up. CC then runs off to friends house, where he arrives in dishevelled state.

The house fire subsequently kills his younger sister, his parents escape and his severely injured brother is rescued by the fire service

• CC is arrested and cautioned .On way to police station CC appears relaxed, asks about the police having guns and says he hopes brother is alright as they are "really close". CC seemed happy to be arrested



• CC charged with arson, murder and wounding which after initial denial, over time he admits to. He remains emotionally detached.

• Written plan left at house entitled:

'Operation New Life', states "Kill family and get adopted by new wealthy family".

CC Life sentence with 15 year minimum tariff.

- Subsequently transferred to Broadmoor Hospital.
- Treated for epilepsy and bipolar disorder. Changed his name to 'Dante'
- Aged 25 years, at a time when he had been struggling to deal with insomnia, depression and anxiety leading up to the anniversary of his sister's death, Dante took a fatal overdose of prescribed anti-psychotic medication

Dear Priminister

I am a child of 14 by the name of Dante.

I am a British citizen and a murderer. My

Case is complicated and i myself know not

of why nor do i remember what i did. My

life holds nothing worth be alive for, i have

no present or future and i do not wish i

had a past. So with what i have left i

wish to make use of. I am willing and want

to give my to biological weapons

production where I could be a test subject. Do

not through this piece of paper orway and

say it makes no sense

Final note to his family

I do no	t leave k	recourse of	sadness	fear, d	esperation	r or any
such negat	vies, but	with light,	hope, a	new ser	rse of love	e and the
s ahead of	ne that	shall hop	refully all	ow dawn	to rise	again. L
you all te	ye well,	may your	lives be	ful of	light, i	shall niss
all.		0 0	L	<u> </u>	0	1/10 2
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Son and bro	the for a	time, bles	sed be		1-3	<u> </u>
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					1 1 1	1000
	s whead of you all fe all.	s whead of me that you all Paye well, all.	soch negatives, but with light, so whead of me that shall hop you all Paye well, may your all. Son and brother for a time, bles	such negatives, but with light, hope, a school of me that shall hopefully all you all Page well, may your lives be all.	such negatives, but with light, hope, a new sers ahead of me that shall hopefully allow dawn you all Page well, many your lives be full of all. Son and brother for a time, blessed be Da	

P.S

Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* follows

Dante, imagined as a <u>Templar Knight from the</u> <u>Crusades</u>, who, guided by the spirit of the

poet Virgil, must fight through the nine Circles

of Hell to rescue his wife Beatrice from the

clutches of Lucifer himself.