



111 ***Jus Primae Noctis*: Psychological Analysis of a Perpetrator's Strategy and Behavior**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a general understanding of the peculiar behaviors found in one intra-familial perpetrator of child sexual abuse, evaluated in a rural area of south Italy.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing insight into the psychological evaluation of a perpetrator's role in intra-familial incest and sexual aggression. The goal of the present work is to highlight a peculiar strategy employed by the offender who used an unbelievable connection between myth, ritualism, magic, and other cultural traditions to induce his young daughter into a sexual relationship with him. The study of social background factors, coupled with the mental subterfuge used by sexual abusers, requires a rigorous scientific approach and should be studied case by case in order to gain valid information regarding the internal psychological world of such offenders.

The *jus primae noctis* (law of the first night/*droit du seigneur*) was, in the late European Medieval period, a widespread popular belief in an ancient privilege of the lord of a manor to share the bed with his peasants' newlywed brides on their wedding nights.

Father-daughter incest is the most traumatic type of childhood abuse; independent surveys estimate a rise in it although, in Italy as elsewhere, data collection methods and the reluctance of victims to disclose abuse contribute to an underestimation of such crimes.

Hence, incest is not only a subtype of sexual child abuse. As well as *Jus Primae Noctis* represents a symbolic gesture of male power display, coercive social dominance provided by the father who uses his power position against his child who has very limited power.

This is a case presentation of an incest victim who was raped by her father during a four-year period. She was 16 years old when she first disclosed the abuse with the help of her boyfriend. The authors were introduced to this case via a court-ordered evaluation of the 17-year-old victim for competency to testify in a courtroom. The Forensic Psychiatric team at the University of Bari is routinely consulted in a wide variety of child abuse and neglect cases, which include the examination of the perpetrator for diminished capacity and criminal responsibility, as well as the victim's competency to testify against him.

This case occurred in Calabria, a region located in southwest Italy, where many rural areas are strongly influenced by popular beliefs, myths, superstitions, and cultural traditions.

Her father first sexually approached the victim when she was twelve years old, in a moment in which he shifted roles from being a protector to becoming a seducer. It is important to note that anyone's first sexual experience may represent a way of coming to know their own sexuality, as well as a means of breaking away from the family context. For this reason the victim's father was worried about possible future sexual intercourse with a boyfriend, so he convinced his daughter that it was normal to have her first sexual intercourse with her own father, in order to affirm his sexual supremacy over her. He felt that he had to teach her something about the male sex and began showing her stories and drawings depicting genitals and sexual acts, followed by fondling and genital touching. The mother and brother were not aware of the abuse. The father often drugged his wife with sleeping pills in order to avoid being discovered while having sexual relations with their daughter. The perpetrator had vaginal, oral, and anal intercourse with the young daughter whenever the mother was knocked-out.

At times he watched pornography and afterward forced the girl into sodomy. At the age of 14, she spurned the father's sexual advances. He convinced her that this behavior was a consequence of "the evil eye," and called a black magician who persuaded the daughter to endure anal sexual acts with her father and drink his seminal fluid in order to eliminate this malaise.

The perpetrator's strategy in father-daughter incest, as illustrated in this case report, is rarely reported and evaluated in connection with the context in which it occurred.

The reporting of similar cases will likely promote further psychological enlightenment and understanding of this type of abuse.

Incest, Child Abuse, *Jus Primae Noctis*