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Parental abduction from the perspective of the victims: Implications for counselors

Mary Jo L. Gibbs
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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PARENTAL ABDUCTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE VICTIMS:

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELORS

by

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Bachelor of Arts
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology
Department of Educational Psychology
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Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2009
UMI Number: 3383976

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The Dissertation prepared by
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Entitled

Parental Abduction from the Perspective of the Victims:
Implications for Counselors

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Parental Abduction from the Perspective of the Victims: Implications for Counselors

By

Mary Jo L. Gibbs

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Professor of Educational Psychology
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This is a descriptive study that examined parental abductions from the perspective of the abductee. The results will help counseling professionals better to understand the psychological consequences of parental abduction, coping mechanisms that were used by the abducted children and counseling techniques and strategies that helped the children through this difficult time and after being returned to the left-behind parent.

A 32 multiple choice and short answer questionnaire was developed for this study. The survey consists of 12 closed answer (Yes or No) questions, three open ended questions, and seventeen demographic questions. The questionnaire was given through a phone interview which took approximately 20-60 minutes depending on the participants’ responses. The instrument began with closed answer personal questions about the
participants’ parental abduction, then it asked three open ended personal questions about the parental abduction and ended with demographics of the participant and the parent who abducted the child. The participants were contacted through a social services professional in the field who worked with abducted children. The researcher then called the potential participant and began with the informed consent, if the individual still wished to participate in the study the researcher continued with the survey.

When the surveys were completed, the researcher first transcribed the interviews for the most accurate recording of the data. The researcher then tallied the results for each item and some items were compared to gain knowledge in parental abductions regarding possible consequences of the abduction.

A total of thirteen people participated in the study. Some of the side effects of parental abduction include loss of trust in the opposite sex, trouble making and keeping good friends, things around them feeling dreamlike, trouble recalling important aspects of the abduction, and trouble sleeping and concentrating since the abduction. Coping mechanisms were also looked at in the study. They include: using arts and reading to escape, talking to people about the abduction and process the event. The most helpful part of counseling for the participants was to talk, process the situation and their feelings about the abduction.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This accomplishment would not have been possible if not for some very important people in my life who have stood by me through it all. I would like to take the time to acknowledge those people that have made a difference to me.

First I would like to thank my family. To my mother, the strongest women I have ever met who gave me the inspiration to be everything and anything I wanted to be. For your guidance and love I will be forever grateful. You have truly made me the person I have become today. To my big sister, Julie, who I have always looked up to for support, went to in times of need and laughed with when things were great. Thank you for always being there and taking the time to help me out. To my Grandma and Grandpa, your love and support through my life has given me the comfort to know I am loved and the strength to accomplish my dreams. I thank you both from the bottom of my heart for being such wonderful Grandparents. You put the “grand” in Grandparents.

To my husband, Chad, who is new to my life and I would be lost without. Thank you for pushing me when I was ready to give up and inspiring me to go on and see the positive through all the chaos, but most importantly thank you for loving me. I am so grateful that I have found such a wonderful and caring person who wants to spend the rest of his life with me.

To my aunts, uncles and cousins who have always been a huge support system for me. Uncle Johnny, Aunt Pam, Stanley, Aunt Helen, Uncle Tom, Adrianne, Jennifer, Aunt Cathy, Uncle Roger, Scott and Mike thank you for being a wonderful family.
To my new family, Jeff, Suzette, Carissa, Brian and Aiden, thank you for accepting me into your family and making me feel welcomed. I appreciated your support these past few years.

Dr. Paul Jones thank you for all the years of encouragement and support and for always believing in me, from my Master’s to my Ph. D. You have been the rock and the stability in these many years at UNLV. I always felt comfortable talking to you and you always had comforting and supportive words to say. Thank you for all the time you have put in to not only my education, but me as a person. For this I am forever thankful. To my committee: Dr. Shannon Smith, Dr. Pamela Staples and Dr. Gerald Weeks. Shannon thank you for making me see the other points of view in situations and thinking about things from a different perspective. Thank you for all your time, hard work and advice during my dissertation process. Dr. Staples, you are an inspiration. Thank you for all the years for both my Master’s and Ph.D. I have learned a lot from your counseling skills to your comforting and friendly ways. Dr. Weeks, thank you for your time and consideration with me. Your MFT classes were engaging and you have a wonderful way of challenging students and truly making class enjoyable. To two more of my professors who I have learned so much from and will truly miss: Dr. Randy Astramovich and Dr. Wendy Hoskins, thanks for being who you are and making such a wonderful impression on students. To all my professors, thank you for teaching and guiding me and setting such a great example for me as an instructor.

Thank you to the wonderful ladies who have been with me through this entire process and who I am privileged to call my friends: Katrina, Priscilla, Terry, Jennifer and Judi. You all mean the world to me and I would not have wanted to go through such a
program with anyone else. Each of you is unique and special and will bring a great deal to the counseling profession. Thank you my friends, for your support and kind words whenever needed.

A very special thank you goes out to the participants of my study, who took the time to tell me their story. Thank you for your help and I hope this study paints an accurate picture of your stories and will help further the research on parental abduction.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research was a descriptive inquiry that examined parental abductions from the perspective of the abductee. The examination included the investigation of psychological consequences of parental abduction, coping mechanisms utilized by abducted children, and counseling techniques used in therapy that helped or aided victims of parental abductions. The objective of this study was to gain information that would be useful to counselors when working with children and families that experienced a form of parental abduction.

Statement of the Problem

Working with victims of criminal offenses involving family members can be especially challenging to counselors and other mental health professionals. These offenses are often complicated in nature, and it can be difficult, even for trained professionals, to understand why a family member would hurt someone that he or she is supposed to care about and love. Domestic violence and child abuse are two such offenses that illustrate the violence and suffering that can be inflicted on family members by another member of the family. The private environments in which they occur add to the difficulty in understanding. Typically, after a divorce, both domestic violence and child abuse diminish since the arguing family members are not in contact with or around

There is, however, a criminal offense involving families in which divorce has an opposite effect - parental abduction. Mothers and fathers face an increasing chance that their children may be abducted by the other parent who loses, or fears, losing custody of the children after or immediately before a breakup or divorce (Agopian, 1981; Greif & Hegar, 1993, 1994; Hegar & Greif, 1991; Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist, & Girdner, 2000; Plass, Finkelhor, & Hotaling, 1997; Spilman, 2006).

Parental kidnapping occurs when one parent purposefully denies the other parent access to a child. It can also be referred to as parental abduction (Agopian, 1981; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Spilman, 2006). A national study conducted in 1999 and published in 2002 by Hammer, Finkelhor and Sedlak, the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, estimates that parental kidnappings occurred 203,900 times each year.

The majority of those cases, about 90%, were short-term and resolved within a week (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). Of the 203,900 children estimated as missing due to a family abduction, 6,300 were missing for less than an hour, 33,600 were missing between 1-6 hours, 7,500 were missing between 7-24 hours, 46,600 were missing between 24 hours and a week, and 48,000 were missing for 1 week to less than a month. The remainder, approximately 10% of the abductions, sometimes last for months or years with harm to the abducted child and/or the searching parent (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Hegar & Greif, 1991; Spilman, 2006).
Parental kidnapping often coincides with a family breakup, but it may also occur years after a divorce. Factors often include parental stress related to custody issues, child support, and visitation arrangements. The abducting parent will take the child and go into hiding. This eliminates further negotiation between parents and also puts the child at physical risk (Hegar & Greif, 1991).

Trends in divorce rates indicate that family abduction is a continuing problem. Divorce rates have tripled since the 1960s, and recent estimates state 10 million children live with a parent who is either separated or divorced. A report by the Polly Klass Foundation (2004) suggested a growing prevalence of parental kidnapping. In the 1990s and early 2000s, divorce rates were drastically increasing every year. It was assumed that 43% to 44% of marriages would end in a formal divorce in the 2000s (Schoen & Standish 2001; Schoen & Canudas-Romo, 2006). However, recent statistics show a small decline in divorce rates. For example, in 2008 3.5 people out of 1000 got a divorce, in 2007 3.6 people out of 1000 got a divorce and in 2006 3.7 people out of 1000 got a divorce. These statistics are the lowest rates since the 1970s and they are also down from 4.2 per 1000 people in 2000 and 4.7 per 1000 people in 1990. In 2006, 38% of marriages ended in a divorce (National Center for Health Statistics, 2008). In 1997 it was estimated that more than a million children would experience a parental divorce each year. Even though the statistics for divorce are declining, children are still at risk due to custody battles between parents. These types of battles place children at high risk for being abducted by a parent.

The Polly Klass Foundation (2004) reported that approximately 70% of law enforcement agencies do not have a protocol to follow when there is a family abduction. Often cases are put on hold until the agency can determine how to go about the
investigation. In addition, some cases are dismissed due to the matter being a civil problem.

Added to this growing problem is the lack of knowledge that the public has on this matter. Eighty percent of Americans are not aware of how significant parental abduction can be for the family and the child abducted. The public considers stranger abductions to be more of a threat or equally dangerous as parental abductions even though there are approximately 1,773 family abductions for each one stranger abduction in the United States of America (Polly Klass Foundation, 2004).

Since the public does not feel parental abductions are a threat to society and children in the United States, there is likely to be less support for the professionals that are working diligently to find these children and stop parental abduction. Without the support and knowledge from the general public, it will be more difficult to fight this form of criminal victimization.

Hegar and Greif (1991) point out that parental kidnapping is one of the most traumatic events that tear families apart (Grief & Hegar, 1994; Spilman, 2006). Parental kidnapping disrupts the normal orderly process of custody decisions for a child following a divorce or breakup. The abducting parent uses a "self-help" solution to resolve her custody issues which creates mayhem for the abducted child and the other parent. This method can also aggravate the legal process that was created and designed to provide order and stability for children after their parents’ marriages end in a divorce (Agopian, 1981; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Spilman, 2006).
Purpose of the Research

Counselors need to know more about the consequences of parental kidnapping and the coping skills used by children and families when an abduction occurs. The purpose of this research project was to describe the abductees’ experiences of parental kidnapping and the consequences of parental kidnapping by looking at psychological consequences, coping mechanisms, and counseling techniques used to assist the abductees. The data gathered through this research provides counselors with information to enhance their understanding of the participants experience as a result of parental abductions.

A literature review revealed that the majority of studies conducted on parental abduction utilized the parents of the abducted children as subjects/participants, and not the children themselves. This trend was noted in the early research beginning with Agopian (1980) and continued for the next several decades (Hegar & Greif, 1991; Grief & Hegar, 1993-1994; Plass, Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1997; Johnston, Girdner & Sagatun-Edwards, 1999; Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist & Girdner, 2000; Carmody & Plass, 2000; Seschak, Finkelhor, Haller, & Schultz, 2002). Since most of the research conducted thus far utilized only the parents or guardians subjects/participants, there is a need to understand the perspective of children and how they felt and coped through this difficult experience.

Preliminary research regarding parental abduction utilized the caregiver or parent of an abducted child to obtain information regarding the child’s abduction. Agopian (1980) conducted a study using Los Angeles court records (a total of 91 parents) for data pertaining to parental abductions. In a later study when investigating missing children

Risk factors were also considered in parental abduction cases, but again the information was based on interviews or surveys with parents or caretakers. Grief and Hegar (1993) conducted a survey with 368 parents and three grandparents and discovered information regarding types of parental abduction. Another study by Greif and Hegar (1994) involved an interview with parents to learn about their experiences and reasons behind the abductions. Reasons for the abductions noted in this study included fear for the child's safety, unhappiness with the court decision concerning custody and visitation, reaction to the other parent's abduction-related threats and actions and anger from the situation at hand.

Hegar and Greif (1994) looked at parental abduction from interracial and cross-cultural marriages. Results from this study showed that interracial and Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriages were significantly more likely to involve a history of domestic violence in which the abductor was the perpetrator. Couples with different racial or ethnic backgrounds had rates of violence of 66% compared to 51% for all other couples. This inconsistent level of violence was not found with cross-cultural marriages; however, both groups of respondents were significantly more likely than non-intermarried couples to have asked for help with family problems, but not for personal issues like substance abuse or depression. These findings about spousal abuse and history of family problems propose a high level of conflict within the interracial/interethnic marriages.

Studies were also conducted looking at reports and previous cases to examine what some of the risk factors may be pertaining to parental abductions. Johnston, Girdner
and Sagatun-Edwards (1999) conducted a study comparing parents in abducting families with parents in litigating custody families. They concluded that parental abduction of children depends on demographics, family dynamics, and psychological factors contributing to the risk of abduction. Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist and Girdner (2000) looked at 634 abduction cases in California. They concluded that the mothers who abducted their children were more apt to take the children when they or the children were victims of abuse. On the other hand the fathers who abducted the children were more likely to take the children when they were the abusers.

The data obtained from two national studies, the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children (1990) (NISMART) and the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children (2002) (NISMART-2) are used in many researchers' studies however, the data for the NISMART and NISMART-2 was also obtained through interviews of caregivers or a parent of the abducted child. Plass, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1997) looked at risk factors for family abductions, including demographics and family interaction characteristics using the data from the NISMART. Carmody and Plass (2000) used data from the NISMART-2 to conclude information regarding the perpetrator of child abductions. Sedlak, Finkelhor, Haller and Schultz (2002) interviewed the caregiver or parent of the child that was abducted to gain information on the NISMART-2.

Valuable information was obtained regarding parental abductions through these studies, but it is important to note that information also needs to be obtained through the victims themselves to help advance the research of this topic. The data from previous studies from parents and caregivers can be combined with new studies directly
interviewing or researching the victim to help with future parental abduction victims and their recovery.

Psychological consequences of parental abduction have been identified through the eyes of the parents or guardians from observing the children, but not actually interviewing them. A wide range of reactions to the abduction by the abducted child have been reported. These reactions include rage, severe fright, bed-wetting, psychological regression, anxiety, depression, and withdrawal. Children who are abducted may experience anger towards both parents: one for abducting them and the other for not finding them sooner. Greif and Hegar (1992) suggest that the symptoms of some abducted children are indicative of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. In some cases, physical and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, has been noticed (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1991). Sagatun and Barrett (1990) concluded that the recovered children can suffer from traumatization and extreme fright and a fear of the abductor.

According to Grief and Barnstone (1999), children who have been abducted for longer periods of time appear to have more severe difficulties than those children that are missing for shorter periods of time. Tedisco and Paludi (1996) and Bryant (1992) concluded that children who are abducted lose trust in their world and feel emotionally abandoned by the adults in their lives who are important to their protection and recovery. In addition, they succumb to alienation, embarrassment, humiliation, powerlessness, regression, self-blame, self-hate and shame. Abrahms (1983) concluded that the psychological impact of being abducted by a parent and then living with that parent is stressful.
Children often experience grief over the loss of a parent, fear, confusion about the divorce and their role in it, guilt for not calling the other parent, and hatred for the parents. Grief (2000) conducted a study to determine the long-term impact on the children of abduction by a parent. Through contact with the parent, Grief followed children for a decade and discovered that visitation is still supervised according to 10% of the respondents, 20% of parents worry to a great extent that their child will turn out like the abductor while 50% are occasionally worried about their child turning out like the abductor. Grief stressed that it was difficult for the respondents to find knowledgeable mental health practitioners. The children also have trouble with intimate relationships.

Agopian (1984) researched the effects of abduction on five children by surveying parents. He determined that even though all the parents reported that their child experienced some trauma, the amount and degree of the trauma varied. The children that were reported to be abducted for longer periods of time reported more severe trauma. The long term abductions changed the way the children lived as they were hidden, instructed to lie, isolated from peers, and subjected to frequent changes in residence.

According to the DSM-IV-TR (2000) Posttraumatic Stress Disorder occurs when a person has been exposed to a traumatic event. Both of the following must be present: (1) “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious illness, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others” and (2) “the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror”.

Some determinants for diagnosis of PTSD include recurring and intrusive disturbing recollections of the event, such as images or thoughts, disturbing remembrance
in dreams, feeling as if the event is recurring, and psychological distress or reactivity when exposed to internal or external cues that symbolize the event (DSM-IV-R, 2000).

Symptoms include difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hyper-vigilance, and exaggerated startle response. In order to diagnose PTSD the duration of the disturbance must be more than a month and it must cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social or occupational areas of functioning.

According the National Center for PTSD (Friedman, M., 2009) a person may be scared or feel that they have no control over the situation. Some examples of life threatening events include: combat or military exposure, child sexual and physical abuse, terrorist attacks, sexual or physical assault, serious accidents and natural disasters. Children can also experience PTSD. Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder can be frightening. They can disrupt a person’s life and make it difficult for someone to complete everyday tasks. Sometimes it can just be hard to get through the day. The symptoms can start soon after the traumatic event, but they may not happen until months or even years after the event. These include reliving the event, avoidance, numbing and feeling keyed up. Since a parental abduction can be a very serious and often a traumatic event, it is very possible that children who have experienced a parental abduction can show the same signs and symptoms attributed to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. If PTSD symptoms are evident a counselor must take this into consideration and treat the symptoms accordingly and work with the child through the abduction experience and the PTSD symptoms.
A study by Terr (1983) involved working with the children who were the victims of parental abduction. Terr worked with eighteen children and conducted psychiatric exams on eight children who had been abducted and recovered and ten children who were objects of unsuccessful attempts of kidnapping. Sixteen of the children suffered in some form from the experience according to Terr. Some reacted with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder or with severe fright, rage at the searching parent and rejection of the abductor.

In conclusion, there have been numerous studies on the topic of parental abductions; however, most of the research has utilized only the parents as informant subjects, and not the abducted children. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature and current understandings of the experience of parentally abducted children. More specifically, research is lacking in basic knowledge and understanding of how these children cope with such events. Further, little information is available to counselors about what is therapeutically beneficial to these children when undergoing therapy. In order to better understand what children who are abducted by a parent go through it is imperative to get information directly from the victims. It is important to find out their personal experiences, their coping skills during and after the abduction and the side effects that are related to being a child who was abducted by a parent. Gathering this information from victims who are now adults will add the perspective of experience to descriptions of the effects.

Scope of the Proposed Study

A review of literature on parental abduction revealed that little research is available regarding the experience of parental abduction and the consequences from the
child's perspective. Research based on parent's reports of the effects on children, however, suggests that there are risk factors and psychological consequences for the abducted children.

The rationale for this research was that interviewing the abductees allows for further insights into the personal experiences of the parental abducted child. By learning first hand about the impact and experiences of parental abduction from the victims, counselors will be better able to know the consequences that can occur and will be more prepared to help the victims when most needed and most beneficial. In addition, the survey can give researchers and counselors information on what helped parentally abducted children, what did not help them and how they are coping years after the abduction.

This descriptive survey study reports the experiences of a sample of adults who were child victims of parental abduction. It focuses on counseling techniques and strategies and coping mechanisms that were helpful in the recovery of the victim from parental abduction. Emphasis was placed in coping over time (during and after the abduction), support from counselors and techniques used in counseling, posttraumatic stress symptoms and current family and friend relationships. It is hoped that this study will clarify themes in counseling strategies and techniques to better help future victims cope with the aftermath of being recovered after a parental abduction and these themes will inform future research and clinical interventions in regards to parental abduction.
Definition of Terms

The following words are terms and definitions that were used in this study. It is crucial to understand and have a precise meaning of the terms to better comprehend the meaning, procedures and results of the study.

Child abduction or child kidnapping. These terms are used interchangeably. Abduction is the more generic term and is used when a child is taken against his or her will, regardless of the relationship between the child and the perpetrator.

Parental abduction or parental kidnapping. These terms are used interchangeably. This is when a child is taken against his or her will and the person who takes the child is a parent.

Missing child. This term refers to the child that has been abducted by one of his or her parents. This term is sometimes interchangeable with the term victim or abductee.

Victim. The victim in this study is the child that was abducted by a parent. The terms missing child or abductee are used interchangeably.

Abductee. This term refers to the child that was abducted by a parent. It can be used to mean the same as the term missing child and victim in this study.

Perpetrator. This term refers to the abducting parent. The perpetrator is the parent that took the child away from the other parent without legal permission. Sometimes a child is taken by force and usually the child is taken when they are in the custody of the perpetrator. This term can also be used interchangeably with the terms abducting parent or abductor.

Left-behind parent. This term refers to the parent that is searching for his child and was left-behind to do so. Often this parent has custody or is about to receive custody
of the child. This term means the same as the term *searching parent* and can be used interchangeably.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of parentally abducted children, including side effects/consequences of being abducted?

2. How did parentally abducted children cope with their abductions, what coping techniques were used and what coping skills do they report as being “most helpful?”

3. What do parentally abducted children report as being “most helpful” as a result of participating in counseling?

Significance of the Problem

This study is important since parental abduction continues to be a serious problem due to the amount of parents who obtain a divorce each year. Parents often fear the chance of losing a child due to a divorce or breakup, and therefore may use the self-help fix of abducting their own child to deal with the situation.

There appear to be consequences to parental abduction, but previous research has looked at the consequences and side effects almost exclusively by interviewing parents and guardians of the abducted children. Little research has been conducted with the children themselves. There is a need to determine what the side effects are of parental abduction according to the victims themselves are. This study interviewed parentally abducted children who are now in adulthood and asked about possible side effects,
coping mechanisms and counseling techniques that helped them get through the abduction. This study’s results will add to the already existing research conducted by past researchers on parental abduction by including the personal experiences of abducted children.

Limitations to the Study

There were limitations in this study, including being able to access only a small sample of people who were abducted by a parent as a child and who were willing to participate in this study. The researcher had a very difficult time recruiting participants for this study due to the sensitivity of the topic. She found more people who were abducted by a parent who were afraid to talk than those that wanted to talk. This study is based only on the experiences of those that were willing to participate.

Another limitation is that the design required asking participants to remember things about an abduction that occurred many years ago. Their recollection of the event may not be entirely accurate due to memory loss or the possibility of blocking traumatic memories.

Participants were self-reporting their experiences. These self reports may or may not provide completely accurate accounts of the event because of reluctance to disclose and/or tendency to skew the information to be presented in the most positive light.
Organization

A literature review was conducted and the results of that review are provided in Chapter 2. These results include the background and prevalence of parental abduction, risk factors involved with parental abduction, the psychological consequences associated with parental abduction and ideas for further research. Chapter 3 consists of the methods that were be used in the study, the selection of participants, material and procedures used for the study and the questions used in the interview/questionnaire. Chapter 4 reports the responses of the participants in the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results, including implications for counselors when working with children who were parentally abducted and concludes with suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework for this study recognizes that counseling services do not occur in a vacuum and instead are integrally related to key constructs in human growth and development. Self-regulation, problem solving, cognition, motivation, and self-efficacy are among the factors that influence human learning and development and thus are implicit in the delivery of counseling services. Self-regulation includes consideration of the development of management skills related to learning and personal health (Zimmerman, 2001). Problem solving has been defined as a higher-order cognitive process that requires the modulation and control of fundamental skills related to proceeding from a given state to a desired goal state (Mayer, 1992). Cognition, in the broadest sense, involves the emergent development of knowledge and concepts that culminate in both thought and action (Ellis & Hunt, 1993; Goldstein, 1996). Motivation directs behavior toward particular goals, leads to increased or decreased effort and energy and persistence, enhances cognitive processing, and can ultimately lead to improved performance in all aspects of life (Ormrod, 2003). Self-efficacy is the impression that one has the capability of performing in a particular manner or achieving certain goals, the belief that one has the capabilities to execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1995).
Factors such as these form the general context for this study. It is reasonable to assume that the experience of being a victim of a traumatic event such as a parental abduction could have an impact on age-appropriate development on any or all of these key learning constructs. A parental abduction could impair the development of capabilities to self-monitor and self-regulate behaviors and feelings, limiting the ability to use cognition for effective problem solving. This could negatively impact the abductee’s motivation. It could result in reduced feelings of self-efficacy. Unfortunately, little is known about the specifics of the abductee’s experience, particularly from the perspective of the victim. This study was designed to provide information about this experience. The objective was that this knowledge will enhance the capability for counselors to provide developmentally appropriate services to clients who have experienced parental abduction, services that recognize the unique life experiences of those clients.

Introduction to the Review of Literature

This chapter examines previous research pertaining to parental abduction and highlights information about the background and prevalence, risk factors, and psychological consequences of parental abduction. This chapter also addresses gaps in the research on parental abduction and recommendations to enhance future research on parental abduction. There have been many studies conducted about parental abduction interviewing the parents of the abducted child, both the left-behind parent and the abductor. However, there has apparently been little research based on interviewing the children who were abducted, and no reported studies based on interviews with abductees conducted years after their return.
Background and Prevalence of Parental Abduction

One of the most intricate forms of criminal behavior is that which involves offenses of the family. They are difficult to understand due to the close relationship of the parties involved, the private environment in which they are perpetrated, and the various types of motivations that induce them. Domestic violence and child abuse are crimes that depict the distinctive nature of violence and suffering inflicted by family members. Generally with divorce these more visible types of violence end. However, a new type of family crime is growing rapidly as a repercussion of divorce. Parents who are divorced face an increased chance that their child might be abducted by the other parent who loses custody of the child after a breakup or divorce (Agopian, 1981; Greif & Hager, 1993, 1994; Hegar & Greif, 1991; Spilman, 2006).

When one parent purposefully denies another parent access to a child, this is called "parental kidnapping" or abduction (Agopian, 1981; Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002, Spilman, 2006). Parental abduction has been estimated to occur 203,900 times annually according to the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children that was conducted in 1999 and published in 2002 (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). The majority of these cases, about 90%, are short-term abductions that are resolved within one week, although some last for months or years. A result of any of these abductions is a presence of significant hardships for the abducted child and the searching parent (Agopian, 1981; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Hegar & Greif, 1991; Spilman, 2006). Kidnapping appears to be more likely to occur soon after the breakup of the family. However, it may occur years after a divorce. This typically happens when parents and children are struggling with
custody issues, child support payments, and visitation arrangements. The abductor will take the child and then go into hiding thereby pre-empting further negotiation and putting the child at emotional and physical risk. Kidnapping is so powerful that it tears at a family like no other family event (Hegar & Greif, 1991).

Parental abduction disrupts the orderly process of custody decisions for a child following a divorce or breakup. This is a “self-help” method of resolving a custody dispute that creates havoc for the abducted child and suffering for the left-behind parent. It also frustrates the legal process which is designed to provide order and stability for children after their parents’ marriage ends in a divorce (Agopian, 1981; Greif & Hegar, 1993, 1994; Hegar & Greif, 1991; Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist, & Girdner, 2001; Spilman, 2006).

Hegar and Greif (1991) examined a national sample of 371 parents who sought help from missing children’s organizations. The researchers provided a profile of families where a child was abducted by one of the parents. The abductors were described as less educated and less likely to be employed than the parents who were searching for their children. In this study three-fourths of the children who were abducted were under the age of seven. Most of the abductions involved a single child. The majority of the abducting parents were male. The mothers whose children were abducted by the fathers reported more violence in their marriages, more fault related reasons for divorce, and more force used in the abduction - as opposed to the fathers whose children were abducted by the mothers. Most parents whose children were abducted were worried about the possibility of a child being abducted before it occurred. The abductions generally occurred while in the care of the abductor. In addition many of the respondents reported
that the abduction took place with the intent to hurt them or to show the abductor’s anger. Some respondents reported that the abduction probably took place because the abductor was motivated by a desire to be with, protect, or to have contact with the child (Hegar & Greif, 1991).

One of the most comprehensive studies researching the abduction of children was the second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children (NISMART-2). It utilized a random sample of 16,111 adult caregivers in the United States interviewed in 1999 and reported in findings in 2002 (Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer, & Schultz, 2002). Findings related to family-only abductions estimated that nationally there were approximately 56,500 abductions reported to authorities by family caregivers and 57% of the abductors were the child’s father, the child’s step-father or the mother’s boyfriend. One quarter of the abductors was the child’s mother (Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer, & Schultz, 2002).

Carmody and Plass (2000) examined gender in regards to the role of the offender. Data from the NISMART was used to compare family abductions perpetrated by men and women. The comparisons focused on the incidence, outcomes and institutional responses to the abductions. In addition, other characteristics included the relationship between the abductor and the child, harm to the child, the use of concealment, and the characteristics of abductors and child. Results indicated that women perpetrated approximately one third of the abductions. A female perpetrated abduction was more likely to involve concealment of the child, and was of longer duration. Two of the most notable findings in this study in regards to perpetrator gender are that while men are more likely to abduct than women, female perpetrated events show evidence of being more
serious than the abductions committed by males. The study revealed that female
perpetrated events lasted longer, were more likely to result in harm to the child, and were
more likely to involve concealment of the child - although the majority of all family
abductions were committed by males.

Agopian (1980) conducted a study involving 91 searching parents that had 130
children. He used information from the Los Angeles County court records of cases
screened for prosecution in the 1970s. Agopian made several reports on the data. First, he
reported that the children were usually abducted individually, they tended to be
Caucasian children, male and female children were equal targets, and that they were
typically between the ages of three and five years old. Out of all the cases, half of the
cases were closed due to the children already being recovered by the time of the research.
In addition, twice as many of the abductors were the fathers than the mothers

An additional problem related to parental abduction is that the general public
appears to be naive to the realities of the matter. A study conducted by Harris Interactive,
Inc. for the Polly Klass Foundation (2004) found that four out of five people in their
sample immensely misjudge the risk of family abductions. Participants deemed stranger
abduction to be more dangerous than or equally as dangerous as family abductions.
However, the most recent federal data indicates that in 1999, approximately 1,773 family
abductions occurred for every stereotypical stranger abduction. Eighty-one percent of
participants in the Harris study miscalculated the percentage of children abducted by a
family member out of all child kidnappings in the United States by underestimating how
many family abductions actually occur. However, the most recent federal data indicates
that in 1999, 78 percent of all abducted children were taken by a family member. After

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being educated about the invasive nature of the problem and the emotional damage family abduction can cause, 83 percent of the Harris sample expressed support for federal funding of law enforcement training on family abductions. In addition, 81 percent supported prevention education among parents and families (Polly Klass Foundation, 2004).

Risk Factors

Grief and Hegar (1993) discuss the presence of family violence in cases of parental abduction. Their survey of 368 parents and three grand-parents in 45 states and 6 countries is one of the most frequently cited in literature. Grief and Hegar suggested that there are five types of parental abduction, two of which seem to include abductors or left-behind parents who were violent towards their partners: (1) abduction by a violent visitor, (2) abduction by a non-violent visitor, (3) abduction by a non-violent shared custodian, (4) abduction by a violent shared custodian, and (5) abduction by a sole custodian. In particular, the bulk (54%) of all the marriages in which the abductions occurred engaged parent-to-parent domestic violence, and 30% of the left-behind parents either confessed to being violent toward other family members or had been accused of violence.

Grief and Hegar (1994) examined reasons for parental abductions, including reasons for going into hiding. Interviews were conducted with 17 parents, nine fathers and eight mothers. They concluded that the reasons for the abductions tended to revolve around a fear for the child’s safety, unhappiness with the court decision concerning
custody and visitation, reaction to the other parent’s abduction-related threats and actions, and anger.

Grief and Hegar (1994) also investigated parental abduction of children from interracial and cross-cultural marriages, considering the possible importance of differing assumptions about intimate relationships and the upbringing of children that may cause marital disruption, struggles over children and possibly child abduction by one parent. The results suggest an over-representation of cross-cultural and interracial marriages among families who have or are experiencing parental abduction (4.3% higher). The respondents of the parents who were left behind in the abduction revealed that 43% were divorced from the abductor when the children were taken and another 27% were separated. In 17% of the cases children were abducted in intact marriages and in 12% from cases where the parents were living together. The most common custody arrangement was sole custody for the parent that was left behind (51%) while 29% shared custody either during marriage or after separation. Mothers whose children were abducted made up 55% of the respondents, while fathers made up 45% of the total sample of 371. In a few ways, intermarried couples did differ from those sharing the same race, ethnicity or national culture. Interracial and Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriages appeared to involve domestic violence in which the abductor was the perpetrator. For couples with different racial or ethnic backgrounds the rate of violence was 66% which is more than the 51% compared to other couples. This level of violence was not found in cross-cultural (international) marriages. Intermarried respondents were more likely than non-intermarried parents to have looked for help for family problems as opposed to looking for help for personal difficulties such as substance abuse or depression. Also
found in the study was that abductors from cross-cultural marriages were more involved in child care than the other abductors. In the areas of physical care and supervision the abductors who were married to someone from a different nationality were reported to have been significantly more involved with their children than other abductors. One final important finding is that parents whose marriages had been cross-cultural were more likely to have worried about the possibility of their child being abducted (Greif & Hegar, 1994).

Plass, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1997) examined risk factors involved in family abduction, including demographics and family interaction characteristics. It addressed three methodology difficulties the authors believed to be problematic in the arena of family abduction. These problems are (a) failure to use appropriate comparison groups, (b) focus on only the most severe cases of abduction - without consideration of the full spectrum of these events, and finally (c) the use of data drawn only from “reported” sources (police, court, or missing children agency reports). The authors concluded that race, age of the children, family size, and incidence of violence in the family all appeared to be a factor in the risk of experiencing a family abduction situation. In addition, recent divorce or separation also appears to play a factor in the risk of the seriousness of the case of family abduction.

Johnston, Girdner and Sagatun-Edwards (1999) compared parents in abducting families with litigating custody families. The findings suggested that parental abduction of children is “multidetermined.” That is to say, it depends on demographics, family dynamics, and psychological factors which contribute to the total risk for abduction. Both samples of parents had high levels of anger with, and distrust for one another, and
showed an inability to cooperate over the care of their children; in addition, the majority alleged domestic violence. These parents also showed elevated levels of psychological distress and symptoms compared to typical population parents on many of the psychological indices. There were, however, several ways that abducting families were more clearly distinguished than litigating families. Children in the abducting families appeared to be younger or if they were older children they appeared to be vulnerable to influence. The parents, especially abducting mothers, in abducting families displayed concern about child abuse and neglect. They perceived themselves as rescuing or protecting their children from neglectful, endangering or criminal environments. The parents of abducting families primarily were of lower socioeconomic status. The study found that abducting parents were more likely to be unemployed, to have low incomes, few occupational skills, and to be poorly educated. More parents in abducting families than the litigating families were of a cultural minority status. Couples who had a brief or transient relationship or were unmarried were more likely to be apart of the abducting family that the litigating family. In addition, the abducting families more often than the litigating families demonstrated disrespect for authority and the law.

Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist and Girdner (2000) examined 634 abduction cases in two California counties. They found that the mothers who abducted their children were more apt to take the children when they or the children were victims of abuse. On the other hand, the fathers who abducted were more likely to take the children when they were the abusers. They also found that mothers were more probable to have the children placed with them at the termination of the case -regardless of their role in the abduction (Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomquist & Girdner, 2000).
Abducted children experience a wide range of reactions to the abduction, including rage, severe fright, bed-wetting, psychological regression, anxiety, depression and withdrawal (Greif & Barnstone, 1999; Greif & Hegar, 1992; Sagatun & Barrett, 1990). Sometimes children are told to avoid authority figures, and to underachieve at school so that they are not noticed and do not attract attention. Children who are abducted may experience anger at both parents, one for abducting them and the other for not finding them sooner. In addition, Greif and Hegar (1992) have observed Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in these children. In a minority of cases, physical and sexual abuse as well as neglect has been noted (Finklehor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1991).

Negative effects of abduction can even be seen many years after recovering the child from the abductor (Greif, 1998). Sagatun and Barrett (1990) researched 43 abducted and recovered children, and observed that the children can suffer from traumatization and extreme fright and a fear of the abductor. In addition, Terr (1983) stated that out of 18 children in her study 16 suffered from the experience, which ranged from Posttraumatic Stress syndrome, fright, anger at the recovering parent, and rejection of the abductor. Children who are missing for longer periods of time appear to have even more severe difficulties with adjustment than those who are missing for shorter periods of time however, the authors did not give examples of the types of difficulties these children go through (Greif & Barnstone, 1999).

Children who are abducted by a parent, similar to those who are abducted by a stranger, may lose trust in their world and feel emotionally abandoned by the adults. They mainly lose trust in their parents, who are most important to their protection and
recovery. In addition, they are also driven further into “regression, alienation, powerlessness, shame, embarrassment, humiliation, self-blame, and self-hate” (Bryant, 1992; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

Children who are abducted by non-custodial parents are generally told that the other parent is unfit, dead, and/or will kill them if they return. They also might be told that the other parent has a new family and is not interested in having them return to their family. Abrahms (1983) concluded that it is not easy for children who are abducted by a parent to adjust. The psychological impact of being abducted by a parent and living with the other parent is stressful. Often the children experience fear, grief over the loss of the other parent, confusion about the divorce and their role in it, guilt for not calling the other parent, and hatred for the parents. As with children and adolescents who are runaways or abducted by strangers, children who are abducted by a parent suffer long-term emotional and physical stress-related symptoms (Abrahms, 1983). The children view themselves as pawns between their fighting parents. They have little opportunity to develop a sense of trust. Often they are physically or sexually abused. Therefore, children who are abducted by a parent view the world in general as a hostile place where people cannot be trusted and where they are only seen as worthy if they are useful to someone else (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

People who are in the high-risk group for family abduction include families going through custody disputes and divorce proceedings. Divorce rates have tripled since 1960 however; recent research suggests a small decline in divorce rates. Today 10 million children live with a parent who is separated or divorced. Roughly 70 percent of law enforcement agencies do not have a distinguished protocol or guidelines for family
abduction. Investigations often freeze while agencies try to figure out how to handle the case. Some cases are dismissed altogether as civil matters. Now psychologists define family abduction as a form of child endangerment (Polly Klass Foundation, 2004). When children are taken from a comfortable or familiar setting and away from loved ones, the abducted child is forced into a fugitive’s lifestyle and taught to evade and doubt authority figures. Even after reunification, abducted children have difficulties establishing trusting relationships with other people.

Plass, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1996) used data from a national survey NISMART to examine factors that were associated with two specific outcomes of family abduction events: duration of the episode and the likelihood of emotional trauma to the children abducted. They concluded that the length of time that it takes to resolve a family abduction case and the likelihood of emotional trauma to the abducted child are related to each other – both logically and statistically. The longer the duration of the abduction is associated with an increased risk of emotional trauma. These are both indicators of more serious events and should receive special attention from police and court officers. Another common factor that seems to be related to both duration and the likelihood of mental harm is when the perpetrator displays behaviors that are threatening. If a perpetrator makes statements that are a specific threat to affect the custody outcomes the case usually takes longer to resolve, thus resulting in a longer abduction period. In addition, their findings suggest that duration and emotional trauma will be more effected by the circumstances of the event rather than by the characteristics of the participants.

Additional information about child abduction comes from research by Senior, Gladstone, and Nurcombe (1982) and Schetky and Haller (1983). They offer case
examples of abducted children, most involved short abductions and a history of custody battles and parental hostility. Symptoms of the children include: bedwetting and thumb-sucking, regression, anxiety, depression and withdrawal. Reactions to the abductions were still present even two years after the abductions and were even more evident on the anniversaries of particular events.

Greif (2000) examined the long-term impact on the children of abduction by a parent. Grief followed children for a decade through contact with the parent who recovered them - previously kidnapped by one of their parents and hidden for an average of 2.7 years. Greif hypothesized that children who were now late teens and young adults would be progressing satisfactorily into young adulthood and that relationships with their parents would not be problematic. Greif reported that 10% of the respondents in this study indicated that visitation is still supervised. Twenty percent of the recovering parents worry “to a great extent” that their child will turn out like the abductor, while 50% were occasionally worried that their child will turn out like the abductor. Also, 8% of the respondents said that their child would rather live with the abductor. Greif stressed that it was difficult for the respondents to find knowledgeable mental health practitioners. A troublesome area for children who have been abducted revolves around intimate relationships. Half of the parents responded that their children have more difficulty than their peers, 36% report they have the same difficulty as their peers and 14% report that they have less difficulty than their peers. In addition, it was reported that the abduction experience significantly bothers some of the parents still. The parents were presented with a list of reactions and they had to state if they reacted this way within the last six months because of the abduction. Forty percent of the parents responded that they still
experience rage on an average of 10 years after the abduction. The rage may be present with revenge, depression or anxiety. There were additional concerns revolving around the children’s emotional and physical health. Twenty-five percent of the parents described their children as self-destructive and between 25% and 40% of the children still remain troubled.

In 1984, Agopian examined the effects of the abduction on five children ranging from ages six to eleven and who were missing for periods ranging from six months to 42 months. He determined that even though all parents reported some trauma, the degree of trauma varied greatly. Children who were missing for short periods and were treated well did not have an especially traumatic reaction. The children who were abducted longer reported more traumatic reactions due to the time allowed for children to establish a greater bond with their abductors and forget about their searching parents. The long term abductions changed the way the children lives used to be since they were hidden, instructed to lie, isolated from peers, and subjected to frequent changes of residence. In addition, older children reported being angry with both parents: the one parent for abducting them and the other for not recovering them sooner.

In the period between 1976 and 1982, Terr (1983) completed psychiatric examinations on eight children who had been abducted and recovered and ten who had been the objects of unsuccessful attempts to kidnap. Terr reported that 16 of the children suffered in some way from the experience. Some reacted with Posttraumatic Stress syndrome or with severe fright (11 out of 18 children), rage at the searching parent (7 out of 18 children), rejection of the abductor (9 out of 18 children), and the effects of mental indoctrination (7 out of 18 children). Nine of the children wanted no further contact with
the parent that abducted. The two children who exhibited no direct psychiatric effects from their successful abduction maintained phone contact and visitation with the searching parent while with the other parent and were also told the truth about the abduction. This is very rare in these situations.

Need for Further Research

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of parental abduction from the perspective of a parent or caregiver of the abducted child. Several of the studies examined the history and prevalence of parental abductions. Others looked at risk factors that are involved with these abductions. Still others examined the psychological consequences on the children who are abducted and their families. For the most part, researchers have asked the parents “What happened?” and “What are the effects on the child?”

Only interviewing parents or guardians leaves a significant limitation in the available information about the impact of abduction. For example, a parent may know her child very well and may be able to see the consequences of the parental abduction, but may not really know how the child feels and what the child went through during the abduction - nor if counseling worked for the child and how the child is really coping years after the abduction when he is well into adulthood. It is possible that parents may not be able to answer these questions accurately or without bias. Research is needed in which the children themselves are asked about the consequences, coping skills used, counseling techniques and so forth to truly find out about their experience and add to the current research that has already been conducted with the parents and guardians.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Previous studies have identified characteristics of children who were abducted by a parent, but typically through the perspective of parents whose children have been abducted. Only one of the studies used interviews with adults who had been parentally abducted when they were children, but the researcher did not conduct his own interviews with the participants for this study. Greif (2003) used previous research he had from interviewing the parents of child who were abducted and discussions from a conference that the National Center for Missing and Exploited children held in 2002 to “draw inferences about the types of issues that adults with similar backgrounds may be experiencing.” He did not actually interview the victims themselves and used a conference to gain additional information for his research. Therefore, the previous research study is not comparable to this research study when describing the experiences of the abductees.

Hegar and Greif (1991) described abductors as less educated and less likely to be employed than the parents who were searching for their children. They also identified abductors as more likely to be male. In addition, Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer and Schultz (2002) estimated that 57% of the abductors in their study were the child’s father, step-father or mother’s boyfriend. Carmody and Plass (2000) concluded that female perpetrated abductions were often more serious because they lasted longer, were more
likely to result in harm to the child, and were more likely to involve concealment of the child. Plass, Finkelhor and Hotaling (1997) concluded that race, age of the children, family size and incidence of the violence in the family all appear to be a factor in the risk of experiencing a family abduction situation.

In addition to those factors, recent divorce or separation appears to be a related risk of the seriousness of the case of family abduction. Johnston, Sagatun-Edwards, Bloomsquist and Girdner (2000) found that mothers who abduct their children were more likely to take the children when they or the children were victims of abuse. On the other hand, the fathers were more likely to take the children if they were the abusers (Johnston et al., 2000).

Characteristics have also been identified about the children who were abducted. Hegar and Greif (1991) reported that three-fourths of the children in their study were under the age of seven and that two-thirds of the abductions involved a single-child abduction. In addition, a study by Agopian (1980) 64% (58 cases) involved a single-child abduction. Agopian also concluded that the children tended to be Caucasian children, the male and female children were equal targets, and typically between the ages of three and five.

There have been many psychological consequences on the children as reported by the parents of the abducted children. There consequences include rage, severe fright, bed-wetting, psychological regression, anxiety, depression and withdrawal (Senior, Gladstone, & Nurcombe, 1982; Schetky & Haller, 1983). Greif and Hegar (1992) observed Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the abducted children they studied. Finklehor, Hotaling and Sedlak (1991) reported a small proportion (less than five percent) of the
abductees experienced physical or sexual abuse as well as neglect. Children who have been abducted lose trust in the world and feel emotionally abandoned by the adults who were supposed to protect them. This drives them further into other consequences such as regression, alienation, powerlessness, shame, embarrassment, humiliation, self-blame and self-hate (Tedisco & Paludi; Bryant, 1992).

Prior studies have focused on characteristics of the parents whose children were abducted and characteristics of their children through the viewpoint of the parents. The purpose of the current study was to add to the information obtained in the prior studies by examining parental abductions from the perspective of the abductees now in adulthood.

Social services professionals and agencies used in this study were found during an Internet search for agencies that work with family abduction. A list of at least one social services professional was found for each state, for some states more agencies were found (See Appendix I). The majority of agencies are from three web sites that the researcher found online to be credible in their efforts to help families of abducted children and in the locating of abducted children. Each of these three will be described in detail. The first web site was the web site of the Polly Klass Kids Foundation. The Polly Klass Kids Foundation had an Amber Alert Contact list along with information pertaining to state missing children clearinghouses and child locator non-profit organizations. The second web site was for the Association of Missing and Exploited Children’s Organizations (AMECO). AMECO provides lists of AMECO Non-Profits agencies that work with children who have been abducted. The third web site was the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children which also provided a list of missing child clearinghouse
programs throughout the country. The different contacts and names were compiled into one list using information from these web sites.

For this study, the researcher chose the web site BeyondMissing due to the web site’s credibility since it was originally funded by a U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Program grant and relationship with professionals in the missing children field. Beyond Missing is an organization that is dedicated to protecting America’s children. They are a nonprofit public benefit corporation founded by Marc Klaas on June 8, 2001. Marc Klaas tracked a powerful child safety program for the nation’s children due to the kidnap and murder of his twelve year old daughter Polly. Marc Klaas supplies the vision and the everyday leadership for the organization. Beyond Missing provides law enforcement agencies with a secure, internet based system to generate and allocate missing child flyers to law enforcement, the media, and public and private beneficiaries. There is no cost to agencies who utilize this service and there is no hardware or software necessary to use this service.

The second organization, the Association of Missing and Exploited Children’s Organizations (AMECO), was chosen as a credible organization due to its service of members who work hand in hand with children who have been abducted. AMECO is an organization of member organizations in both the United States and Canada that offer services to families who have a missing or exploited child. AMECO’s mission “as an international association of nonprofit organizations, is to provide a voice on issues related to missing and exploited children and their families and to nurture credible, ethical and effective nonprofit member organizations.” AMECO member organizations assist families in their search for a missing child. If a child was taken or forced away by a
family member, non-family member, adult or juvenile, AMECO member agencies
support families in the recovery of their child. Also, they help families if their child or
teens runs away, knowing that it is vital to recover the child or teen and return them to a
secure place. AMECO also assists families with online exploitation resources, services
and reporting information, if needed. Many of their members can also offer personal and
online safety data that can inform the public to prevent additional crimes.

AMECO was founded in 1994 by a group of nonprofit organizations that wanted
to work together to complete three tasks. (1) They wanted to join their efforts in
influencing the policies and services for missing and exploited children (2) They wanted
to raise awareness among the public of the work of the nonprofit organizations (3) They
wanted to generate a way for the public to distinguish between reputable organizations
and those created simply as a fundraising vehicle to take advantage of people who desire
to contribute to missing children organizations. There have been times previous to the
development of AMECO, that other organizations used unethical fundraising techniques
for missing and exploited children by offering little if any services. The donations
received by these organizations were sometimes used unethically and therefore, have
contaminated the entire group of nonprofit organizations. By being an AMECO member
an organization is validating the integrity and professionalism of the member
organizations.

The third organization, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
(NCMEC), was also chosen as a credible web site and organization. The National Center
for Missing and Exploited Children’s mission is “to help prevent child abduction and
sexual exploitation; help find missing children; and assist victims of child abduction and
sexual exploitation, their families and the professionals who serve them.” NCMEC was established in 1984 as a private, nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization “to provide services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered and sexually exploited children.”

NCMEC has many services and programs to help families of abducted and exploited children and professionals who work to help find abducted and exploited children. It serves as the national resource center and information clearinghouse for missing and exploited children. NCMEC operates a national 24-hour toll free hotline to take reports of missing children and receive leads about ongoing cases. It also operates the cyber tip line that the public electronic service providers may use to report Internet-related child sexual exploitation. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children also provides information about services and Federal programs for missing and exploited children. It coordinates public and private programs that locate, recover and reunite missing children with their families. It provides technical assistance and training to individuals and law-enforcement agencies in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and treatment of cases involving missing and exploited children. In addition, it provides assistance to families and law enforcement agencies in locating and recovering missing and exploited children, both nationally and internationally. With the use of public record databases it provides analytical and technical support to law enforcement agencies in locating and recovering missing and exploited children and their abductors. The NCMEC also tracks the incidence of attempted child abductions. It also developed and disseminated programs and information about Internet safety.
Participants

The participants in this study were adults previously abducted by a parent as a child. The first step of this study was to attempt to contact at least one social services professional in every state in the United States who works with abducted children and to talk to them about the study. A list of agencies who work with the families of abduction was compiled by gathering information on the Internet pertaining to Amber Alert calls and contacts, state missing children clearinghouses and child locator non-profit organizations (See Appendix I). The researcher called or e-mailed each social services professional to see if they would contact individuals they had previously worked with and ask them to participate in the study. The individuals who were contacted and who agreed to participate provided a preferred telephone number or e-mail to the social services professional, which then, with no other identifying information, was provided to the researcher to ensure confidentiality. The researcher then called the potential participant and began the conversation by presenting the informed consent. Then the individual decided if he or she wanted to continue in the research study or if requested by the participant, a more convenient time for a phone call was arranged. At the end of the survey the researcher used snowball sampling and asked the participant if he or she knew of any other abductees who might like to help out in the study (Creswell, 2005). In addition, the researcher continued to contact professionals at the agencies from initial contact list.
Rationale for Use of Survey Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey design and is a descriptive study (Gay & Airasian, 2000). The means for obtaining data was through an interview using a survey/questionnaire with past victims of parental abduction who are now adults. A survey was chosen for this particular study for several reasons. According to Alrack and Settle (1995), surveys are used because they offer many advantages to those that are seeking information. The first reason a survey was chosen for this study was the flexibility and versatility offered by this tool. Surveys can be designed to measure simple things like a respondent’s physical or demographic characteristics or something more complex like a respondent’s attitudes or preferences. Surveys can cover only one aspect of a respondent’s mentality or situation or they can cover dozens or hundreds of questions about almost every aspect of a respondent’s lives. Surveys can be designed to capture the respondent’s personal history, their present life circumstances, their intentions and expectations for the future or the entire scope of the time spectrum (Alrack & Settle, 1995; Elmes, Kantowitz, & Roediger, 2000; Newman & McNeil, 1998).

Survey data can be collected by personal interview, telephone interview, direct mail or e-mail. Respondents can be reached with only visual contact, only audible stimuli, or both. They can be reached in their homes, at work, while shopping, or even during their recreation. They can be presented with a response task that requires only a few seconds or one that takes an hour or more. Survey research is not confined to a single mode of inquiry (Alrack & Settle, 1995; Elmes, Kantowitz, & Roediger, 2000; Newman & McNeil, 1998).
Instrumentation

A 32 item multiple-choice and short answer questionnaire was developed for this study to gain insight and a better understanding of the aftermath and consequences of parental abduction to help future victims. The questionnaire items included 15 items about the experiences of parentally abducted children and 17 items pertaining to the demographics of the abduction. The questionnaire items were selected based on findings from previous research that showed possible side effects of parental abduction to include, PTSD, trust issues, friendship problems, and family troubles. The questionnaire items were developed to obtain information regarding potential consequences from the perspective of the victim of the abduction. A pilot study was not utilized for this study due to the sensitivity of the topic and the limited number of participants available to the researcher at the time of investigation. Instead, the questionnaire was reviewed for relevance by other counselors and supervisors of this study. The phone interview allowed participants to ask questions when needed. The phone interview took no more than 20-60 minutes for each respondent to complete. The survey began with 12 questionnaire items pertaining to the abduction and side effects of the abduction (e.g., married or not, relationship length, children, trust issues, friend issues, support groups, counselor and counseling related questions). The survey then had 3 open ended questionnaire items.

1. What did you do to help you get by when things got bad for you during your abduction?

2. What did you do to help you get by after you were reunited with your family?
3. If you participated in counseling, what do you feel was the most helpful part of counseling for you?

The survey ended with the demographics for the study. These questionnaire items pertain to each participant's background and history of abduction (e.g. male or female, age, age of abduction, age of abductor, educational background, educational background of abductor, employment, abductor employed at time of abduction etc.) A copy of the survey is in Appendix II.

Data Collection Procedure

When the surveys were completed, the researcher first transcribed the interviews for the most accurate recording of the data. The researcher then tallied the results for each item and some items were compared to gain knowledge in parental abductions regarding possible consequences of the abduction. The responses to the survey were tallied according to each of the research questions. For the closed ended items in the interview which pertained to research question one, the researcher simply counted the number of participants who answered yes or no. If the participants responded with more than a yes or no response the researcher noted the additional comments by the participant after the yes or no response.

The open-ended questions were analyzed by searching for key terms and concepts used by different participants when answering questionnaire items related to research questions two and three. When a common term was found in answers to the interviews, the researcher grouped these similar answers together in separate categories. The data are
reported in chapter four of this document as well as in a graph depicting all the results to the items.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items that Address Research Question 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **What are the experiences of parentally abducted children, including side effects/consequences of being abducted?** | Do you feel it is difficult for you to trust the opposite sex after your abduction?  
Do you feel it is difficult for you to make friends after the abduction?  
Do you consider yourself to have many close friends?  
Did you go to any support groups after your abduction?  
Were you prescribed any medication for the abduction?  
Are you currently on any medication for the abduction?  
Did you receive counseling after your abduction?  
After your abduction, did things around you ever feel dreamlike or unreal?  
Have you been unable to recall important aspects of your abduction?  
Do you feel very upset when you are reminded of the abduction?  
Have you had trouble sleeping since your abduction?  
Have you had trouble concentrating since your abduction?  
At the time of your abduction, how old were you?  
  - Under 2  
  - 2-5  
  - 6-10  
  - 10-15  
  - Over 15  
How long were you abducted for?  
Was your name changed during your abduction? If yes are you currently using your birth name or the name you were given during your abduction? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 2</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items that Address Research Question 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **How did parentally abducted children cope with their abductions, what coping techniques were used and what coping skills do they report as being “most helpful?”** | What did you do to help you get by when things got bad for you during your abduction?  
What did you do to help you get by after you were reunited with your family? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 3</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item that Addresses Research Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do parentally abducted children report as being “most helpful” as a result of participating in counseling?</strong></td>
<td>If you participated in counseling, what do you feel was the most helpful part of counseling for you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

This study used a 32 questionnaire, which included 15 items about the experiences of parentally abducted children and 17 items pertaining to the demographics of the abduction, as a structured interview to examine the experiences of parentally abducted children who were now in adulthood. To recruit participants, the researcher used the help of professionals who work with families of abducted children. These professionals were found through three organizations web sites: the Polly Klass Foundation, the Association of Missing and Exploited Children’s Organizations and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The researcher contacted these professionals to see if they could help recruit participants for the study. If a professional was willing to help they then called potential participants and asked if they would be interested in participating in the study. If a participant agreed, the professional then gave the researcher contact information for the participant. The researcher then called the participant and went over the informed consent. If the participant was still willing to participate, either the interview continued at the time with the questionnaire or at a more convenient time which was set up during the initial phone call. After all the interviews were conducted, the researcher then analyzed the data looking for common trends, side effects, coping mechanisms and implications for counselors.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe the consequences of parental abduction on the child that was abducted. The information about effects of the abduction was obtained using a 32-item multiple choice and short answer questionnaire administered in a phone interview to adults who had experienced abduction as children. The questionnaire consisted of 12 closed answer (Yes or No) items, three open ended items about the experiences of parentally abducted children and 17 demographic items about the participants and their abductor.

The phone interviews ranged from 20 to 60 minutes; the typical time length was 25-30 minutes. The interview began with the closed answer items about the participant’s parental abduction, followed by the three open ended personal questions about the parental abduction and ended with gathering of demographic information about the participant and the parent who abducted the child.

The participants were contacted through a social services professional who worked with abducted children. The procedure began with contact made by the researcher to the social service professional. If the social services professional agreed to help with the study, the social services professional contacted potential participants to see if they were interested in participation. Participants who were interested in helping with
the study provided a telephone number and/or e-mail address to the social services professional who then forwarded the contact information to the researcher.

The researcher then directly contacted the potential participant and reviewed the informed consent. If the individual remained willing to participate, the researcher conducted the questionnaire-based interview or scheduled a more convenient time with the participant.

The obtained data was analyzed seeking trends, identifying coping mechanisms, and using other information obtained in the interview to expand the knowledge base regarding experiences of parentally abducted children.

Demographic Questions

Specific demographic questions about the participant and their abductor were asked during the interview. The demographic information provided a context for the information obtained during the interview about the participant, abductor and the abduction.

Participant Demographics

A total of thirteen people participated in the study. Information about the participants is provided in Table 2. Six of the participants were males; seven were females. Four of the participants were between the ages of 19-29, seven of the participants were between the ages of 30-39 and two participants were between the ages of 40-49. Four of the participants completed high school, eight participants had a college undergraduate degree and one participant had a graduate degree. Ten participants were
employed in various occupations at the time of the study. Three of the thirteen
participants were not employed; two of the three were in college. Ten out of the thirteen
participants were married or in a relationship at the time of the study. Three of the
participants disclosed that they were in their second marriage. One participant reported
having a common law marriage. The years of marriage or being in a relationship for the
participants ranged in length from one and half years to 12 years. Three out of the
thirteen participants were not married at the time of the study. Five of the participants
had children, one participant had a step-child and seven of the participants did not have
children at the time of the study.

Table 2 Demographics of Abductees

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages: 19-29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages: 30-39</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages: 40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Completed High School</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: College Undergraduate Degree</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Graduate Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed: Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed: No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/Relationship</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Marriage</td>
<td>1½ - 12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children: Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children: No</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abductor Demographics

According to the abductees’ responses, three of the abductors were between the ages of 19-29, seven were between the ages of 30-39 and three were between the ages of 40-49. Three of the abductors had a primary school education (1-8th grade). Six of the abductors completed high school. Two of the abductors had an undergraduate college degree and two had a post-graduate degree. At the time of the abduction, ten of the abductors were employed while three were not employed. The ten participants with jobs worked in various professions. Out of the thirteen participants, twelve of them were abducted by their father and one was abducted by his mother. Twelve participants do not believe their abducting parent had a criminal record before the abduction. Information about the abductors is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Demographics of Abductors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-29</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Undergraduate Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed at the time of abduction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mother of the child | 1 |
| Father of the child | 12 |
Research Question 1

What are the experiences of parentally abducted children, including the reported effects and consequences of being abducted?

This section addresses the fifteen questionnaire items that were that address the first research question, the experiences and consequences of being abducted. These comprise the majority of the items from the questionnaire; the other two research questions are addressed with open-ended questions.

The first item in the questionnaire asked the participants if they felt that it has been difficult for them to trust the opposite sex after their abduction. Participants’ perceptions on difficulty in trusting the opposite sex as a result of being parentally abducted were mixed, a little more than half reported some sort of effect. Six of the thirteen participants responded that it is difficult for them to trust the opposite sex since their abduction. Two out of thirteen participants said that initially it was difficult for them to trust the opposite sex after their abduction and five out of twelve participants said it is not difficult for them to trust the opposite sex since their abduction.

The second questionnaire item associated with research question number one asked the participants if they feel it is difficult to make friends after their abduction. The participants’ feelings varied on this item with a little less than half reporting difficulty at some time with making friends. Two out of thirteen participants said it is difficult for them to make friends since their abduction. Two out of thirteen said that initially it was difficult for them to make friends after their abduction, but they do not currently have
trouble making friends. One participant answered this question with both a yes and no answer. Participant number one said:

Yes and no, it’s easy to make friends cause it’s a social survival instinct, but
having that person know who you really are and not the character you created is a
different thing.

Eight out of thirteen participants said that it is not difficult for them to make friends after their abduction.

The third questionnaire item asked the participants if they consider themselves to have many close friends. Participants’ perceptions about having close friends were mixed, about half said that they do have close friends and the other half said that they do not. Seven of the thirteen participants consider themselves as not having many close friends. Six out of thirteen participants consider themselves to have many close friends. Participant number four stated:

I would say I have very trustworthy friends and I have more than 8, so if you define that as a lot…I would say that is a lot of friends.

The fourth questionnaire item asked the participants if they went to any support groups after their abduction. None of the participants reported participating in support groups after their abduction. This may be due to a factor one participant mentioned, support groups did not exist at the time of their return from the abduction.

The next questionnaire item asked the participants if they were prescribed any medication for symptoms or problems associated with the abduction. The majority, nine of the thirteen, participants stated that they were not prescribed medication as a result of the abduction. One participant was prescribed medication for problems that occurred
later, but were attributed to the experience of the abduction when in her early adult years she experienced a psychotic break and was hospitalized for three months. Two participants were prescribed medication for depression several years later after the abduction, which they consider to be connected to the abduction. One participant felt that falling into severe depression for which he was prescribed medication for about four years after the abduction was indirectly related to the abduction. Participant number four stated:

No, but indirectly related to it I think it was about 4 years later I fell into severe depression which the counselors and psychologists determined it was related to my abduction and I did take anti-depressants for about a span of 1 ½ to 2 years.

The sixth questionnaire item asked the participants if they were currently taking any medication as a result of the abduction. Most of the participants reported that they were not currently taking medication as a result of their abduction. Eleven out of thirteen participants were not currently on any medication. Two out of thirteen participants were currently on medication as a result of consequences they attributed to their abduction, one for PTSD and one for depression. Participant number five stated, “Yes, depression. I guess resulting from the abduction” and participant number one stated: “Yes, for PTSD in general.”

The next questionnaire item asked if the participants received any counseling after their abduction. The majority of the participants reported that they did receive counseling after their abduction; however, a few did not for various reasons. Three out of thirteen participants did not receive counseling after their abduction. Ten out of thirteen participants did receive counseling after their abduction. One participant said he received
counseling 40 years after the abduction, another participant said he received counseling initially after the abduction for a few months and not until later when signs of depression started showing, and another said that she received counseling two years ago for about a year.

The eighth questionnaire item asked the participants if things around them ever felt dreamlike or unreal. The majority of participants felt that things around them had felt dreamlike or unreal. Four out of thirteen participants said that after their abduction, things around them did not feel dreamlike or unreal. However, nine out of thirteen participants did say that things around them did feel dreamlike or unreal after their abduction. One participant said that it had felt dreamlike or unreal to her especially immediately after her return. Participant number six stated:

Immediately after, when the whole house was surrounded, going out to the front yard to the van, yes. It’s not happening to me. You are watching this happen to somebody. It’s frightening. You are a small child and the house has been surrounded by police men and you have no idea why.

Participant number four stated it was “surreal” for her:

... especially immediately after when I returned it did. It was sort of surreal for me to be out of that environment, yes.

The question about dream-like feelings, along with some of the following questions, was asked to determine if PTSD might be a factor with parentally abducted children.

The ninth questionnaire item asked the participants if they have ever been unable to recall important aspects of their abduction. This question was developed to see if parentally abducted children experience symptoms associated with PTSD. There were
mixed feelings from the participants about being able to recall important aspects of their abduction, a little more than half reported that they are unable to recall important aspects of their abduction. Eight out of thirteen participants said that they are unable to recall important aspects of their abduction. One of those eight said that he cannot remember anything about the abduction. Two of those eight mentioned that they were very young when they were abducted, which could be why they do not remember anything about the abduction. Five out of thirteen said that they are able to recall important aspects of their abduction. Participant number one said that he can only remember the abduction. He does not remember anything before the abduction and has trouble remembering his life in general, he stated:

No, I'm only able to remember the abduction. I remember little about my life in general except for the abduction years. I have a hard time going wow that's right I actually did that, nothing before the abduction.

The tenth questionnaire item asked the participants if they feel very upset when they are reminded of the abduction. The majority of the participants, ten of the thirteen, did not feel very upset when reminded of the abduction. Participant number seven said he is "in between" on that question, and reported that he gets a little upset, but not very upset. Two out of thirteen said they do get upset when reminded of the abduction. Participant number one stated:

Yes, I can be. If I am caught by surprise it can be really, really hard. If I gear myself up like this right now because I knew I had to talk to you, I have been waiting for this phone call then I am ok with it.
He also mentioned that he needs to prepare himself ahead of time when he is going to talk about the abduction. People with PTSD often get “very upset” when reminded of the trauma, this question was developed to determine if there is a link with PTSD and parentally abducted children.

The next questionnaire items asked the participants if they have had trouble sleeping since their abduction. This question was developed to see if there is a connection with the side effect of PTSD of sleeping problems and parentally abducted children. Participants reported mixed feelings about trouble sleeping since their abduction; a little more than half have had trouble sleeping. Seven out of thirteen participants said that they did have trouble sleeping since their abduction. Out of those seven participants, one said he still is having trouble sleeping and one said he had trouble sleeping as a child, but he does not have trouble anymore. Participant number three stated:

I had trouble sleeping for decades and I don’t know if this is the way it works but I took Ambien for probably 6 months and for some reason when I was through with that I slept much better.

Six out of thirteen said that they did not have trouble sleeping since their abduction.

The twelfth questionnaire item associated with research question number one asked the participants if they have had trouble concentrating since their abduction. A little more than half of the participants, seven of the thirteen, reported having had trouble concentrating since their abduction. Of those seven participants, one said that he was diagnosed with ADHD. Participant number one said on the matter:

Yes, I was diagnosed with ADHD at 25. I take Strattera now and basically it goes back to the abduction deal... that’s where it started from, but really it’s always
been the depression, so I do take medication for depression and medication for ADHD.

One participant said he had trouble concentrating as a child but not anymore. One participant also mentioned that he is afraid of the dark. Six out of thirteen participants said that they do not have difficulty concentrating since their abduction. People diagnosed with PTSD often have trouble concentrating. This question was developed to see if there is a connection between PTSD and concentrating and parentally abducted children.

Three of the demographics items also informed the first research question. The first asked the participants what age they were when they were abducted. Two were under two years of age. Three were between the ages of 2 and 5 years old. Seven of the participants were between the ages of 6-10 years old and one was between the ages of 10-15 years old.

Another demographic item asked the participants about the length of their abduction. In addition to the ages varying, the length of the participants also varied greatly. The lengths of abduction were reported as follows: "a few days extra over the Christmas holiday," 5-6 months, 6 months, close to 2 years, 2 years, 2 years and three weeks, 2 and a half years, 2 years and 9 months, 3 years-2 months and 17 days, 3 and a half years, 5 and a half years, 18 years and 31 years.

Participants were also asked if their birth names were changed during the abduction and if so are they using their birth names currently or changed name. Birth names are sometimes changed when a parent is hiding a child from another parent (Greif, 2003; Sagatun & Barrett, 1990). Participants reported that a little over half of their
names, seven out of thirteen, were not changed during their abduction. Six of the participants’ names were changed during the abduction. One participant used nicknames for awhile and at one point used a legal usage name. One participant used another name while still in the United States, but when they were living in another country used her real name. One participant would use another name when flying somewhere. Out of those six participants whose names were changed all are currently using their birth names. Table 4 provides detail of the participant’s responses to the questionnaire interview items associated with research question one.

Table 4 Responses to Research Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initially yes, but not currently</th>
<th>Both yes and no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty trusting the opposite sex</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty to make friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many close friends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed Medication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently on Medication</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Counseling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreamlike or unreal feelings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to recall important aspects</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel very upset when reminded of</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble Sleeping</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2

How did parentally abducted children cope with the abductions, what coping techniques were used and what coping skills do they report as being most helpful?

Two open ended items during the interview addressed the research question about coping mechanisms used by the child during and after his abduction. One question was asked pertaining to coping mechanisms used during the abduction and one question was asked pertaining to coping mechanisms used after the abduction.

The first asked the participants what they did to help them get by when things were bad for them during their abduction. The different coping techniques varied from going inward or to a dreamlike world to not doing anything because they were not aware that anything was wrong.

Two of the participants mentioned that they went inward and closed people off. Participant number one reported that he did not talk a lot. He stated:

I went inward. I imagined. I closed people off. I seen them the way I wanted to see them…That’s the only way I know how to describe it, very artistic…I didn’t
talk a lot. I was very quiet and when I did talk after I was returned my speech was
so rapid and so distorted I usually was very, very quiet because when I opened my
mouth I was speaking like a paragraph at a time.

Participant number seven reported that he “went off into a dreamlike world, stuff like
that. I am kinda an introverted person so it wasn’t as bad I guess.”

Two different participants reported that being with their siblings served as a way
to help them cope during the abduction. Participant number five said that she clung to her
sister when things were difficult. Her sister was older so she felt comfortable with her.
Participant number eleven reiterated this coping mechanism by stating:

I suppose it was just that I was with my sister, so I think that the two of us were
just there for each other and I don’t think we quite understood what was
happening so I don’t think we even really knew to be that upset but if we did ever
feel like we were missing our mom or missing something I think we were there
for each other and that is probably what helped.

One participant reported that to get by he applied himself in whatever he was
doing. Participant number four stated:

I wasn’t really provided the opportunity to talk to people. I think I just really
applied myself in whatever I was doing, working hard. I was a student. I was very
young, between the ages of 11 and 14, so I excelled within school in an
environment that I had never really performed too well in before and I was also in
another country… I spent a lot of time focusing on my day to day tasks. Like I
said I mentally sort of based on the situation I was in. I was obviously restricted to
saying things to people but I also restricted myself from saying things. There was
a lot of fear that my father, he was the one that abducted my sisters and I, would find out and then therefore there would be repercussions.

Other participants also reported their father being a big impact on how they coped during the abduction. One participant reported that his father used alienation very well. Participant number three stated:

My father abducted me at two. He told me the first time about it when I was 8 years old. My father used alienation well enough that it made me not want to find my mother. I was raised in a very strict religious environment and he told me she was demonized so it really shut me off.

Participant number ten said she knew it was wrong that her father took her, but her dad kept her very busy that she never really knew she was abducted. When she would ask about her mother, her father would distract her and “brainwash” her into not asking anymore.

Several participants said that they did not use coping techniques during the abduction for different reasons. Participant number two’s life stayed pretty normal during the abduction. Many parts of her life remained the same, same school, same teacher, knew the same people, aunt was there so she really didn’t need a coping mechanism.

Participant number six who was kept a few days after her “Christmas” holiday stated:

Under the circumstances we were not aware that we were being abducted. We were spending time with our father. It was a holiday and we were just spending extra time that we didn’t normally get.

A different participant reported that there really wasn’t anything bad during the abduction. Participant number eight stated:
When you are with a parent you don’t really feel like anything is really that wrong. If I was with a stranger it would have been completely different, but I was with my mother. She was very, very well to do so we traveled to the best places all over the world. We stayed in luxurious places. Nothing was wrong until we were found and then the national and international media came upon us.

Two final participants reported that since they were so young, one was two years old and one was 10.5 months old, they really do not know what they did or did not do. However, participant number twelve did report that:

I was two so I really don’t know what I did or didn’t do. I know I was talking before I was abducted and when I came back I wasn’t talking. I guess that is something that I did. Anything that I would have done would have been subconscious.

The second open ended item asked the participants what they did to help them get by after they were reunited with their family. Many of the participants reported that it was more difficult for them to cope after the abduction. When they were reunited with their families they found out the truth and the truth hurt. To find out that the parent you trusted and was living with was lying to you was difficult. Common coping topics that were found with a parental abduction after reunited with family members were going inward, using arts and reading/writing activities and talking to people about what happened.

Some participants went inward or self-reflected after their abduction similar to what some participants did during their abduction. A few participants, during their time of inward reflection and isolation, utilized art as a way to cope. Participant number one reported:
I drew very inward, very quick. That’s how I dealt with it. I learned to manipulate my surroundings to help myself. I read a lot of comic books and I wrote a lot of short stories and you know things like that.

Participant number five spent a lot of time by himself. He stated:

You know mostly just trying to be away from everybody. I picked up a couple of hobbies. I tried to get engulfed in some arts, music, arts, and painting and stuff like that.

Participant number six used inward reflection to see that it was not their fault, which took a lot of time and personal struggle to get through. Another person used writing as a coping mechanism. Participant number three stated:

I wrote a studies play about finding my mother and then I wrote the book which the book was a little damaging. It was very difficult writing the book.

Many participants stated that talking about what happened was beneficial to their coping after the abduction. One participant said it was helpful for him to talk to people that were older than he was. Participant number four stated:

I already had some other adults that I had kind of known and had a good rapport with before I had left or been abducted and also talking to counselors. Especially confronting the issue and just being honest with myself about some of the problems and the certain latent feelings regarding the abduction, betrayal, abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, ostracism. It was really a matter of actually like vocalizing you know my problems to others and hearing their perspective. And obviously no one I met had been in the same situation. Yeah so I think talking
about it and sort of trying to figure it out with other people was the primary method I used to deal with it.

Participant number seven reported that after he pushed everything down, the way he coped was to talk about everything. He talked about it and came to terms with it. After he started talking about it, he started learning about how he felt. He would talk to other people and get their responses which helped him identify with himself. Another participant said that they were very young when they were abducted. Participant number eleven stated:

My mom was very good about talking about things with us, when I was younger we talked about it a lot. I think having a great home environment with my mom definitely helped because we were so young we couldn’t exactly know what was going on but we knew we were happy and we knew we were healthy with her. We knew we were loved.

Participant number two reported that she used self-talk to help her get by. She stated:

That was the difficulty that I had, you know the reunification process with my mom. Even though I was a child I had to tell myself mentally that I was back with my mom, everything was ok and I didn’t have to worry about anything anymore. I didn’t have to worry about what my dad was saying about my mom and the lies that he had made up, what had happened. So I guess that is how I coped with it myself, self-talk.

Another way a few participants coped with their situation after they were reunited with their families was to establish friendships. Participant number four reported that he had to re-establish the friendships he had that suddenly disappeared. Participant number
thirteen said that since she was in elementary school she had a lot of friends so that was helpful. Participant number nine reported on meeting his mother:

   It was just like meeting a new person (mother) and just to know each other and it wasn’t anything hard to do. It was just you know normal. It was just like meeting a new person, forming friendships. It was like meeting a stranger and getting to know them.

   One participant felt that what helped her cope was to end the relationship that still existed between her and her father. Participant number twelve stated:

   I guess I was still legally obligated to see my father who kidnapped me. I saw him for I think several years, I was there every other weekend and he got remarried and the last time I spoke to my father was June 17, 2005. He was the same type of person that would kidnap someone and he was not supportive. He was not somebody that I wanted to be around.

Getting back into the routine of things helped another participant. Participant number eight stated:

   It took a long period of time to get back to normal life, besides the counseling, getting back into the everyday kinds of things, going back to school. I went back to the same exact class that I had left from so I had the same friends that I had grown up with, getting back into the every day thing. And that being over a year or two gradually eased me back into my life.

   Participant number six reported that spending time with the left-behind family members was very helpful. Also she reported that they went to counseling for awhile so they were able to talk about things and get through them with counseling. She also did a
lot of crying because other things were going on with her family and that was a lot for a child to handle.

Participant number thirteen said that when she returned home school kept her very busy. Also she had a close knit family unit, so her mom, brother and she were close and had a lot of family time together.

Finally, participant number ten said the way she coped with her situation after the abduction is that she had a psychotic break. She attributes the psychosis to saving her life. She stated:

Well I had a psychotic break that was my coping mechanism. The psychosis is what actually saved my life because if I hadn’t I would have continued to suppress feelings. Cause the feelings were buried for so long plus my dad was sexually abusive with me and you know emotionally abusive and so all those feelings didn’t surface until I was through with college and out on my own and stuff started to come into focus and what really happened and I couldn’t handle all the information at once so I had a psychosis. I had a psychotic break and ended up in the hospital for three months.

The following are the participant’s responses to open ended question 1 and open ended question 2.

What did you do to help you get by when things got bad for you during your abduction?

- I went inward. I imagined. I closed people off. I seen them the way I wanted to see them. I went very inward. That’s the only way I know how to describe it. Very artistic. I used to slap myself in the face during the abduction. I would also have night terrors after I was awake I was still caught in my dream. Actually the
night terrors were severe. I would wake up and my body would feel weird like you were caught in this really weird dream and my dad would have to hold me down and he was praying. The man was very religious. And it was like I was caught in this dream for like 30 minutes like I was having a seizure. So I experienced a lot of that. I was very inward. I didn’t talk a lot. I was very quiet and when I did talk after I was returned my speech was so rapid and so distorted I usually was very, very quiet because when I opened my mouth I was speaking like a paragraph at a time…so does that answer your question? (participant 1 - male)

- Well, ok part of my life remained normal. I stayed in the same school, had the same teachers, knew the same people and I was with my aunt so I got to see my grandparents, my dad’s parents so that was some part of normal part of my life. I wasn’t taken to another state or another country. But I don’t think there was anything that I did that I just …I don’t have anything that I can think of (participant 2 - female).

- My father abducted me at two he told me the first time about it when I was 8 years old. My father used alienation well enough that it made me not want to find my mother. I was raised in a very strict religious environment and he told me she was demonized so it really shut me off (participant 3 - male).

- I wasn’t really provided the opportunity to talk to people. I think I just really applied myself in whatever I was doing. Working hard. I was a student I was very young between the ages of 11 and 14 so I excelled within school in an environment that I had never really performed too well in before and I was also in
another country, Mexico and I didn’t speak the language when I was taken there. So what do you call it? I spent a lot of time focusing on my day to day tasks. Like I said I mentally sort of based on the situation I was in I was obviously restricted to saying things to people but I also restricted myself from saying things. There was a lot of fear that my father he was the one that abducted my sisters and I would find out and then therefore would be repercussions (participant 4 - male).

- During it I really clinged to my sister at the time. She is older (participant 5 - male).

- Under the circumstances we were not aware that we were being abducted. We were spending time with our father. It was a holiday and we were just spending extra time that we didn’t normally get (participant 6 - female).

- Went off into a dreamlike world, stuff like that. I am kinda an introverted person so it wasn’t as bad I guess (participant 7 – male).

- During my abduction, well it wasn’t really that bad during my abduction. When you are with a parent you don’t really fell like anything is really that wrong. If I was with a stranger it would have been completely different, but I was with my mother. She was very, very well to do so we traveled to the best places all over the world. We stayed in luxurious places. Nothing was wrong until we were found and then the national and international media came upon us. I was taken away from my mother and I was not returned to my father. Actually we were in limbo, my younger brother and myself, we were put into a shelter for children during a two week period of time when the 1980 parental kidnapping act came into effect.
because of our case. During those two weeks Jimmy Carter passed that law based
on our case. So nothing was wrong until we were found (participant 8 - male).

- Things never got bad for me during it so I never did anything (participant 9 -
  female).

- Well, my father took me when I was 6, he took me off of a playground. Can you
  ask the question again? Repeated question. Well I knew it was wrong. I knew
  something was not right, but I think my dad had me in a constant state of
  busyness so I never knew that I was abducted. So what did I do...I mean there
  were moments in time where I did ask about my mother. I said where is my
  mother. You know and I think my dad would distract me and he would be
  brainwashing me so it would be very difficult for me to know (participant 10 -
  female).

- I really don’t remember much because I was young. I hope I am worth
  interviewing. But I suppose it was just that I was with my sister, so I think that the
  two of us were just there for each other and I don’t think we quite understood
  what was happening so I don’t think we even really knew to be that upset but if
  we did ever fell like we were missing our mom or missing something I think we
  were there for each other and that is probably what helped (participant 11 -
  female).

- I was two so I really don’t know what I did or didn’t do. I know I was talking
  before I was abducted and when I came back I wasn’t talking. I guess that is
  something that I did. Anything that I would have done would have been
  subconscious (participant 12 - female).
I was too young to remember what I did (participant 13 - female).

What did you do to help you get by after you were reunited with your family?

- I went more inward. Part of that was when we were reunited we ended up with my grandparents in Orville, CA and they are very rich, extremely rich. And so it was weird going from this other environment to this new environment. My mother was living in Tracy, CA and we had gone there and over the years her life had kinda deteriorated. I suspect a lot of drugs were involved. I remember walking into her home, or our home for the first time and at first her husband was like good to see you boy go get me a beer. So I drew very inward, very quick. That’s how I dealt with it. I learned to manipulate my surroundings to help myself. I read a lot of comic books and I wrote a lot of short stories and you know things like that (participant 1 - male).

- That was the difficulty that I had, you know the reunification process with my mom. Even though I was a child I had to tell myself mentally that I was back with my mom, everything was ok and I didn’t have to worry about anything anymore. I didn’t have to worry about what my dad was saying about my mom and the lies that he had made up, what had happened. So I guess that is how I coped with it myself. Self-talk (participant 2 - female).

- I wrote for one thing. I wrote a studies play about finding my mother and then I wrote the book which the book was a little damaging. It was very difficult writing the book. That definitely put me on medication (participant 3 - male).

- Well I think it was a good combination of re-establishing some of those friendships that suddenly disappeared and talking to people who were older than
me. I already had some other adults that I had kind of known and had a good rapport with before I had left or I had been abducted and also talking to counselors. Especially confronting the issue and just being honest with myself about some of the problems and the certain latent feelings regarding the abduction, betrayal, abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, ostracism. It was really a matter of actually like vocalizing you know my problems to others and hearing their perspective. And obviously no one I met had been in the same situation. Yeah so I think talking about it and sort of trying to figure it out with other people was the primary method I used to deal with it (participant 4 - male).

- Spent a lot of time by myself. You know mostly just trying to be away from everybody. I picked up a couple of hobbies, I tried to get engulfed in some arts, music, arts, and painting and stuff like that (participant 5 - male).

- It was really hard, after that it was really hard for us because we didn’t know and understand why we were not seeing our father and what was going on with our family we didn’t get, legal guardianship was given to out aunt and uncle cause our mother was, I don’t even know that situation. Well we had each other, me and my brothers. We just spent time together you know. We did have counseling for awhile so that was something we talked to a counselor which really helped us get through a lot of it but I know with everything that happened with that and our family I know I did a lot of crying because it was upsetting as a child. And of course you know when you are little people make jokes about your mamma this or your daddy that and you know that always hit hard because in my eyes I didn’t have a mom and dad they were both gone. So that was really difficult so I think
with the counseling and a lot of...what is the word I am looking for? Inward reflection I guess and also with it felt like it was something we did wrong, but as you get older you know it wasn’t us and it wasn’t our responsibility to make these decisions and I guess it has just been a personal struggle you know. And like I said the counseling as children helped but that is really it (participant 6 - female).

- After I was reunited with my mother I just talked, the way I coped with everything is I talked. I mean at first I pushed everything down. Then I talked about it and as I talked about it I came to terms with it you know? I did push it down for a long time and once I started talking about it I started learning about how I felt you know what I mean? I would get other people’s responses to things that happened and it helped I guess identify I don’t know if you understand what I am saying (participant 7 - male).

- It took a long period of time to get back to normal life. Besides the counseling getting back into the everyday kinds of things, going back to school. I went back to the same exact class that I had left from so I had the same friends that I had grown up with, getting back into the every day thing. And that being over a year or two gradually eased me back into my life (participant 8 – male).

- I dunno it was just like meeting a new person (mother) and just to know each other and it wasn’t anything hard to do. It was just you know normal. I: I am a little confused just going back to your family was fine? It was just like meeting a new person, forming friendships. It was like meeting a stranger and getting to know them (participant 9 - female).
• Well when I was reunited...it’s a long story but at 12 years old my mother did find me but we were out of the country. My dad took me to Wales. It was an international abduction. So at the time there were no Hague laws cause I am 41. There was none of that. I am having a hard time concentrating here. What is the question again? Well I had a psychotic break that was my coping mechanism. The psychosis is what actually saved my life because if I hadn’t I would have continued to suppress feelings. Cause the feelings were buried for so long plus my dad was sexually abusive with me and you know emotionally abusive and so all those feelings didn’t surface until I was through with college and out on my own and stuff started to come into focus and what really happened and I couldn’t handle all the information at once so I had a psychosis. I had a psychotic break and ended up in the hospital for three months (participant 10 - female).

• I know when we were younger my mom and both of us all went to counseling. And my mom was very good about talking about things with us, when I was younger we talked about it a lot. I had I think having a great home environment with my mom definitely helped because we were so young we couldn’t exactly know what was going on but we knew we were happy and we knew we were healthy with her. We knew we loved (participant 11 - female).

• I think it took awhile for me to start talking with my mom. And I guess I was still legally obligated to see my father who kidnapped me. I saw him for I think several years, I was there every other weekend and he got remarried and the last time I spoke to my father was June 17, 2005. He was the same type of person that would kidnap someone and he was not supportive. He was not somebody that I
wanted to be around so... I: so you feel cutting off that connection helped you? Yeah, I didn’t just cut it off I wrote him a really nasty letter. You know how in counseling they tell you to write a letter but you don’t send it? I: Yeah Well I sent it (participant 12 - female).

- When I returned home school kept me very busy. The best thing for me was a close nit family unit. My mom and my brother and I am very close and being young in elementary school I had a lot of friends and a lot of family time was the best thing for me (participant 13 - female).

Research Question 3
What do parentally abducted children report as being most helpful as a result of participating in counseling?

One open ended item addressed the research question of what was the most helpful thing for parentally abducted children as a result of participating in counseling. This open ended item asked the participants if they participated in counseling and what they feel was the most helpful part of counseling for them. Although three participants did not receive any counseling, the other participants did, with mixed feelings. Of the three that did not receive counseling, one person did not receive counseling because his mother did not want him to receive counseling. He did however, see a school counselor a few times, but when his mother found out he saw the school counselor he would get in trouble and would not be able to go back. Of those few times he did see the school counselor he liked that the counselor did not come straight out and talk to him about the presenting problem, but talked about other things that were less personal first.
Of the participants that did receive counseling, the most important aspect that helped them through their situation was to talk about it. Although each person talked about their story with their counselor in different ways it was beneficial for them to talk about the situation and process it. One counselor told the child another way to think about the situation that he had not thought about before. Participant number three stated:

He asked me “I wonder what happened to your dad that made him do what he did?” and made me think that maybe my father was a victim of something else, not that it gives him the right but maybe he wasn’t just a jerk that maybe he went through bad things too to do what he did, I guess. Not saying that what he did was correct but maybe make me think he can make a bad mistake.

Participant number thirteen reported it was helpful to just have someone to talk to. She stated:

I think as a little child I probably thought it was a little weird at first like every little kid, but it was good and I realized later on that it was just good to talk about some things. Counselors can always pin point things that you do not even realize that you were thinking about as a child too. So I think having that outside of my family was good as well.

Another participant went to a number of counselors over the years because her mother did not feel that some of them were effective. Participant number four stated:

There was an engagement with me in terms of my thoughts on things. And it really allowed me to bring to the surface what my feelings were on some things and to really like reconstruct them and consider what was really going on there. And to accept what happened, but it was sort of having a dialogue and being able
to talk about it. Not necessarily having someone pontificate to me or tell me you know this is the way things are and you have to deal with it this way, but you know just having the open dialogue. You know just slowly approaching the issue and then asking me to you know really like consider the impact it had on me and what I did like about it, what I did like about the experience and what I didn’t.

Participant number eight said that the consistency was helpful. Knowing that you are going to see your counselor twice a week every week was very beneficial. He was able to discuss his experiences, try to understand his experiences, and to try and grasp where he was then and where he was trying to go with all of it. That has been a lifelong venture for him. Being able to speak to others and help others in similar situations is helpful. It is all part of it; it is webbed together for this person.

One more participant said that coming to terms with the situation, really coming to terms with the issue of parental alienation helped her cope. Participant number ten stated:

Really going through everything instinctively I really already knew something was wrong but never got to acknowledge any of that but got to finally acknowledge it through counseling through my psychotherapy which I was in for ten years. I never skipped a day. I was always very diligent about my mental health and my sanity. It was devastating to go through what I had to go through and realize that my dad had really you know hid so much from me.

An additional participant reported that processing things was very beneficial because as a kid things can be very overwhelming. Participant number eleven stated:
Kind of knowing what adults said and what everyone’s point of view is on what happened and just reassuring that you know ... we were safe was important cause you knowing it wasn’t going to happen again I think was very important. That helped.

A different participant went to several counselors and did not like any of them, but then she finally found a counselor that she liked. Participant number twelve stated:

I think the most helpful part is that she didn’t tell me what I wanted to hear, she told me what I needed to hear. Because when doing that it really felt like she was listening and she made me very comfortable. I am one who likes to sit in the fetal position on a couch or something. I like to be covered up and so she always made sure that I could sit comfortably and be comfortable in her office. When things got to be too much she would end a session early or we would discuss something less serious. I guess I really felt that she listened and she made sure I was comfortable. She learned enough about me to know when I was comfortable.”

However, some of the participants did not feel that the counseling they received was beneficial. Participant number six stated:

I think talking about it helped but I think sometimes with counseling they are there to listen but they are not really there to help you cope. I think that is where we really needed it. It wasn’t just the talking about it and what upset us because when you get older and talking about it you learn to cope with it when you are an adult and sometimes just talking about it made you feel better but then there are times when you are a child you don’t know how to cope with that and you don’t understand why it upset you and why things happened the way they did and I
think as a child psychologist helping the children deal with it is something that really needs to take place and it really didn’t for me. We mainly just went in and talked. That is all we did.

Participant number seven did not feel that his counseling was effective because it was short-term and it would have been more beneficial if it was longer and more consistent. He stayed with his dad after the abduction and his dad took him to counseling to see why he was causing a problem. The counseling was never for the abduction itself, but for his behavior.

The following are the participant’s responses to open ended question 3.

If you participated in counseling, what do you feel was the most helpful part of counseling?

- Didn’t participate in counseling. There was a couple of times when my mother got me back it was like a year later. We kept moving back and forth cause my mother was fighting and they would split up and get back together and split up, back and forth, back and forth. I think in that one year I had gone to like five schools, back in Tracy again and the school put me in counseling. And my mother got mad and she smacked me in the face and she said like how dare you, don’t tell them anything. You are just trying to ruin my life and poor me. And when I was in high school we ended up in Kent Washington then and at that point I started to create this whole thing like I’m from Ireland I don’t know what I was and I am being very bloody blank point right now with how I was back then. And the school noticed that I had a lot of psychological issues and wanted to make me a ward of the state cause my mother couldn’t even agree on us. The day before I turned 17
she sent me back to my dad’s and then withdrew my brother and my half brother out of school and at that time we started to be home schooled. So I missed the whole counseling thing because if I got counseling my mother would say it’s really bad for her and really bad for her and I caught hell. I: You participated in school counseling or you went once and she told you not to go again? I would have gone like three or four times and she would find out. They would send a letter and she would get mad. I did see a speech therapist growing up quite a bit because of my speech and I was in seattle, wash and my counselor was from England and she lived in Canada for a long time and she had this very stiff lip approach to speaking and so for a number of years after that, I tend to mimic people really bad which is really kind of funny, and I had this kind of Canadian style accent. I kind of learned to control the way I talked.... So it was kind of a joke that at counseling I learned how to talk like a Canadian. That was the most I got from counseling. I: And they pulled you out or you went on your own? They pulled me out. It is kind of funny. I look at this thing as an adult and counseling with kinds and I see a lot of the techniques they used on me. They did what do you call it…you think you are there for something else but in actuality you are there for something completely different (participant 1 - male).

- Didn’t participate. Don’t remember speaking to a school counselor. Remember talking to the judge about it. But I don’t remember talking to anyone that was an actual counselor that I got to say my feelings to or my experience or anything like that (participant 2 - female).
• The counselor told me another way to think about it that I hadn’t thought about. He asked me “I wonder what happened to your dad that made him do what he did?” and made me think that maybe my father was a victim of something else not that it gives him the right but maybe he wasn’t just a jerk that maybe he went through bad things too to do what he did I guess. Not saying that what he did was correct but maybe make me think he can make a bad mistake. And another therapist taught me how to get through the stress. I: and what was that technique? He was taking me out of the emotional and into the mental. You probably know the technique when you say if this happens what is the worst thing that can happen? Worst case scenario thing (participant 3 - male).

• I went to a number of different ones over the years because my mom didn’t feel that some were that effective and also because my mom and I had some trouble so we saw a counselor together. I think the best sort of technique used…and it is the prevailing school of thought right now at least that is what I have heard it wasn’t necessarily the psychologist or psychiatrist giving me advice as to what I should do with my life. There was an engagement with me in terms of my thoughts on things. And it really allowed me to bring to the surface what my feelings were on some things and to really like reconstruct them and consider what was really going on there. And to accept what happened, but it was sort of having a dialogue and being able to talk about it. Not necessarily having someone pontificate to me or tell me you know this is the way things are and you have to deal with it this way, but you know just having the open dialogue. You know just slowly approaching the issue and then asking me to you know really like consider the im-
pact it had on me and what I did like about it, what I did like about the experience and what I didn’t. I mean I didn’t hate everything. The whole thing wasn’t horrible, much of it was but there were certainly very much some positive aspects to my experience. And trying to see it in that light, not just the negative but also the positive (participant 4 – male).

- N/A (no counseling – participant 5 – male).

- Well our counseling it was me and my brothers, my two brothers we did go. We all met with the doctor and I even remember her name. because we thought it was a funny name. We all met individually. We never met as a group, the three of us together. it was all individual. I think talking about it helped but I think sometimes with counseling they are there to listen but they are not really there to help you cope. I think that is where we really needed it. It wasn’t just the talking about it and what upset us because when you get older and talking about it you learn to cope with it when you are an adult and sometimes just talking about it made you feel better but then there are times when you are a child you don’t know how to cope with that and you don’t understand why it upset you and why things happened the way they did and I think as a child psychologist helping the children deal with it is something that really needs to take place and it really didn’t for me. We mainly just went in and talked. That is all we did. My brother he called her the “talk doctor”, he was smaller so that is what he called her. You know cause that is all we did. We would just sit there and talk (participant 6 - female).

- The counseling I participated in wasn’t effectual. It was short term. I: you didn’t feel it helped you at all? No, not really. What he did was, I was probably about 12
and the abduction occurred when I was 7. We were on the run for a few years, I
don't know if you read the book. I: just to clarify you did have counseling but you
felt it was non-effective. Right, well it was short term. Well my dad took me to
counseling, why I had counseling was to see why I was causing problems. Being
reactive, you know. A rebel you know and how he could fix it. The counselor you
know he gave me some tests, he gave the rosharch and he gave some other tests
but he really didn’t go into it enough and we really didn’t see him enough. I: so
you saw the counselor when you were with your dad not when you were with
your mom, not afterwards or was it during the abduction? No I was never with my
mom. We saw her, me and my sister and then I didn’t see her for like two years,
two and a half years. Then I saw her again and I was kinda made to think a differ­
ent way towards her. And I stayed with my dad and she was poor and my dad was
poor and we didn’t have any money. So I never really got back with my mom and
then I re-met her when I was like 15 and then developed a good relationship since
then but she passed away a few years ago (participant 7 - male).

• The consistency. I: can you elaborate on that a little bit? I went to counseling
twice a week for a period of one or two years and it became a consistent to where
I got to discuss my experiences, try to understand my experiences, try to grasp
where I was then and where I was trying to go with all of this. And that has been a
lifelong venture for me. The book was part of that, speaking to others and helping
others in similar situations. That is all part of it. So kinda it is all webbed together
(participant 8 - male).
• Oh God… I have no idea. I don’t even remember it. I was like 7..8. Honestly I would have to say if I remember anything about it at all just talking about it was probably… but see I have to explain this to you everything that happened to me there was no negative impact for me. There wasn’t anything super emotional. It didn’t change my life. To me it was a positive thing and I had a great childhood. So I look at this a lot different than my brother and lots of other people (participant 9 - female).

• Coming to terms with everything. I mean really going through parental alienation syndrome. You know really tackling although we didn’t really go through the clinical name of what that meant but just really going through everything instinctively I really already knew something was wrong but never got to acknowledge any of that but got to finally acknowledge it through counseling through my psychotherapy which I was in for ten years. I never skipped a day. I was always very diligent about my mental health and my sanity. It was devastating to go through what I had to go through and realize that my dad had really you know hid so much from me (participant 10 - female).

• I think it was just kind of processing things because I think it can be overwhelming for a kid and kind of knowing what adults said and what everyone’s point of view is on what happened and just reassuring that you know I know for my sister too I know she was much younger than me and I think she had a different experience than I did. Knowing that we were safe was important cause you knowing it wasn’t going to happen again I think was very important. That helped (participant 11 - female).
• Well I went to several counselors and I didn’t like any of them. But I finally found a counselor that I liked and I think the most helpful part is that she didn’t tell me what I wanted to hear, she told me what I needed to hear. Because when doing that it really felt like she was listening. And she made me very comfortable. I am one who likes to sit in the fetal position on a coach or something. I like to be covered up and so she always made sure that I could sit comfortably and be comfortable in her office. When things got to be too much she would end a session early or we would discuss something less serious. I guess I really felt that she listened and she made sure I was comfortable. She learned enough about me to know when I was comfortable (participant 12 – female).

• Ummm...let me see. I would say just having someone to talk to. I think as a little child I probably thought it was a little weird at first like every little kid, but it was good and I realized later on that it was just good to talk about some things. Counselors can always pin point things that you do even realize that you were thinking about as a child too. So I think having that outside of my family was good as well (participant 13 - female).

Summary of Responses of the Parentally Abducted Children

A “modal” abductee based on the information in this study was abducted by her father between the ages of 6-10 years old. Trust at some time after her abduction would have been an issue for her. However, making and keeping many good friends would not be an issue for her. She would not have received any help from support groups but she would have received counseling for the abduction. She would not currently be on any
medication for side effects from the abduction, nor would she be prescribed any medication for side effects from the abduction. She would show signs of PTSD; for examples, things around her would feel dreamlike or unreal, she would be unable to recall important aspects of the abduction, and she would also have trouble sleeping and concentrating. However, she would not get very upset when reminded of the abduction. During the abduction, to help her cope she would have used arts and reading as a way to escape. She might have gone inward to get away from the reality of her circumstances. After the abduction to help her cope, again she would have used art and reading and writing as a way to cope. She also would have talked to people to help her get by, such as friends, family members and counselors. The most important aspect of counseling would be to talk about the situation she was in, deal with her feelings and process the whole event.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Research Problem and Methodology

This descriptive study examined parental abductions from the perspective of the abductee. The intent of the study was to gain information that would be beneficial to counseling professionals who work with children and families who have experienced a form of parental abduction. The objective was to obtain results that would help counseling professionals better understand the psychological consequences of parental abduction, coping mechanisms that were used by the abducted children and counseling techniques and strategies that helped the children through this difficult time and after being returned to the left-behind parent.

A literature review on the general topic of parental abduction found that most previous studies on parental abduction utilized the parents of the abducted children to gain information and not the children themselves. This trend was noticed early with Agopian (1980) and has continued (Sedlak, Finkelhor, Haller & Schultz 2002). Since the majority of research conducted on parental abduction used only the parents or guardians, there was a need to understand the experiences of the children and how they felt and coped through this difficult time in their words. Beginning to close this gap in the literature was a goal of this study.
A 32 multiple choice and short answer questionnaire was developed for this study. The instrument began with 12 closed answer personal questions about the participants' parental abduction, followed by three open ended personal questions about the parental abduction and how they coped during and after the abduction and what counseling techniques were beneficial to the participant. The survey ended with 17 items pertaining to the demographics of the participant and the parent who abducted the child.

The questionnaire-based interview was conducted by phone and lasted between 20 and 60 minutes depending on the participant. Service providers that work with families of abducted children were identified through three web sites that had databases of agencies. The three websites were AMECO, NCMEC, and the Polly Klass Foundation. The researcher compiled a list of social services agencies with at least one agency for each state with the information from the three databases. After the list was compiled, contact was made by the researcher to the professional about the study, if the professional was willing to help out with the study the professional contacted potential participants to see if they were interested in helping with the study. If a participant was willing to participate only a telephone number or e-mail was given to the researcher. The researcher then called the potential participant and began the interview with the informed consent, if the individual was still willing to participate, the researcher continued with the survey or set up a more convenient time for the participant.

When the researcher was finished conducting interviews, the obtained data was then analyzed seeking trends, identifying coping mechanisms, and using other information obtained in the interview to expand the knowledge base regarding experiences of parentally abducted children. The scores of the survey were tallied up
according to the research questions. For the closed-ended questions, the researcher simply tallied up the responses that were reported by the participants for each of the 12 items. The closed-ended questions were then analyzed looking for common terms that each participant used when answering the questions. When a common term was identified the researcher categorized those results together in the results section of the study and in a table listing all of the participants’ responses to each question.

Summary of the Results

Experiences, Reported Effects and Consequences of Parental Abduction

The first research question used several questionnaire items to elicit information about the participants’ memories of the experience of being abducted. Participants had mixed perceptions on several topics addressed in the study; these include trusting the opposite sex, being able to make friends, having close friends, being able to recall important aspect of the abductions, and having trouble sleeping and concentrating since the abduction. These topics which brought up mixed feelings for the participants resulted in close to half of the participants agreeing or disagreeing with each question.

In addition to these responses, the majority of participants were not prescribed medication as a result of the abduction nor were they on medication currently as a result of the abduction. The majority of participants did receive some sort of counseling after their abduction. At times, the majority of participants said that things around them did feel dreamlike or unreal. The majority of participants did not report feeling upset when reminded of the abduction. Two of the participants reported that they feel upset when reminded of the abduction. One person reported that he is “in between”; he doesn’t feel
“very” upset but a “little upset.” None of the participants reported participating in support groups after their abduction.

Coping with Abduction

The second research question solicited information about what participants remembered about how they coped with the experience of being abducted. Trends were found in how parentally abducted children cope with their situation and feelings during and after the abduction. During the abduction, many of the participants used different types of coping mechanisms to help them get through tough times. The different coping techniques varied from “going inward” or to a dreamlike world, applying themselves in whatever they did, getting support from a sibling that was also abducted, to not doing anything because they were not aware that anything was wrong. This not knowing was mostly because the children were too young and in one case the children just thought they were spending a few extra days with their father.

Several of the participants pointed out that it was more difficult for them to cope after the abduction than it was during the abduction since they were after all with a family member. When they were reunited with their families they found out the truth and to find out that the parent you trusted and was living with was lying to you was difficult. Common themes that were found with coping with a parental abduction after reunited with family members were going inward, using arts and reading/writing activities, talking to people about what happened, using self talk, forming friendships, and being around family and friends that cared about them.
Counseling Services Provided for Parentally Abducted Children

The third research question was focused on identifying specific counseling techniques that abductees felt were most helpful to them. Counseling was for the most part reported as being a beneficial factor for most of the participants. Two of the participants did not feel counseling was beneficial to them; one said it was not beneficial because all they did was talk and the other said that it was not beneficial because it was too short term. Of the participants that did receive counseling the most important aspect that helped them through their situation was to talk about it. Even though each person talked about their story with their counselor in different ways it was valuable to them since they were able to talk about and process the situation. Many of the participants mentioned that actually talking about their situation and what happened to them was hard but helped them to cope with their experience. Being able to talk about what they liked and disliked, what they wanted to achieve from counseling, the consistency, to process everything and to come to terms with everything were some of the comments the participants stated was helpful for them when in counseling.

Discussion

Previous literature utilizing the parents of the abducted children reported a wide range of psychological consequences. Rage, severe fright, bed-wetting, psychological regression, anxiety, depression and withdrawal were reported in studies by Greif and Barnstone (1999), Greif and Hegar (1992) and Sagatun and Barrett (1990). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder was seen by Greif and Hegar (1992) and Terr (1983). In addition, studies
also reported children losing trust in the world (Bryant, 1992; Tedisco & Paludi, 1996) and having little opportunity to develop a sense of trust (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

Similar consequences were also found in this current study. Participants also reported regressing, going inward, and withdrawing from their surroundings. A couple participants reported being diagnosed with depression. Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder were also reported such as: things feeling dreamlike or unreal, being unable to remember important aspects of the event, getting very upset when reminded of the abduction, and having trouble sleeping and concentrating. One participant reported being already diagnosed with PTSD. In addition, several participants reported having difficulty trusting the opposite sex since their abduction. These consequences reported can aid counselors when working with victims of parental abduction.

The design of this study did not allow for detailed analysis of gender differences in response to being abducted. However, the impression of the researcher is that coping appeared to be more difficult for the males than the females who participated in the study. Males reported having more trust issues with the opposite sex, more males reported feelings of being in a dreamlike world, more males reported having trouble sleeping and two male participants are still currently on medication for the abduction.

The results of this study suggest that counselors need to stick to the basics when working with children or with adults who waited to receive counseling until long after their abduction experience. They need to build a good foundation with the client, working on the relationship between the client and counselor, ensuring that the client is comfortable at all times and keeping in mind sensitive and difficult issues to talk about. After the foundation is built, then the client and counselor can go deeper into the issues
and problems the client is experiencing. If the client is having difficulty discussing an issue, the counselor should consider this by trying a different approach to the situation or coming back to the issue at a different time. This will help with the comfort of the client. These results do not suggest an advantage of any particular theoretical orientation of the counselor. It appears to be more important that the counselor shows he or she cares and is there to help the client and work through their issues together. The client may be in counseling for many years depending on the severity of the consequences the client had to the abduction.

While the recommendations in the preceding paragraph would apply to all counseling situations and problems, there are some special concerns for victims of parental abduction that warrant consideration based on the responses of these participants. Counselors need to remember that there can be severe consequences that can be attributed to the abduction. Such consequences can be trust issues, sleep disorders, anxiety or concentrating (ADD) disorders, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and depression. When working with the client it would be helpful to be alert for such consequences and treat them accordingly.

Knowing about coping mechanisms used by parentally abducted children during and after the abduction can help the counselor to better understand the experience and to identify techniques that may be especially helpful to get through the consequences of parental abduction. The results of this study suggest that coping mechanisms include: reverting inward, applying self to activities, being with siblings that were also abducted, using art, using writing, talking to family and friends, and using self-talk skills.
Effective counseling techniques used with these participants include: talking about abduction and feelings, talking to someone other than a family member, coming to terms with the situation, to accept what happened through counseling, and processing everything.

These findings may be beneficial to the counseling field, especially for counselors who work with parentally abducted children. It is often difficult to reach a child who has been through a traumatic event and also one that has lost trust in their world. By knowing counseling strategies that have been helpful to other children who were abducted, counselors have a foundation to work with these children and help them through their circumstances. When a counselor knows what is important to a client and what helps to comfort them, the counselor is at an advantage to gain the trust of the client and build on the counselor-client relationship that is so important in every counseling situation. The findings from this current study can help with the relationship and bond between the client and counselor and as a result, help a parentally abducted child cope with their circumstances and deal with their consequences to the abduction.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further researchers may want to look at side effects and consequences that effect females and males differently. A larger sample size would be needed to compare the differences between the side effects for males and females. For example, do females or males have more difficulty building relationships? Do female parentally abducted children use the same coping strategies as male parentally abducted children? Are there
gender differences in length of recovery time or extent of recovery? Are there gender differences in preference for counseling techniques?

In addition, researchers may want to investigate the possible impact of longevity of the abduction and the side effects according to the children who were abducted, not their parents or guardians. While it would appear plausible that the longer the abduction, the more severe the consequences, that has not been studied. Researchers may also want to investigate the possibility that duration of the abduction could have an impact on preferred counseling technique.

A replication of this study with a different group of participants would also be valuable. The selection of participants for this study was intended to identify a representative group of participants, but an additional study is needed to verify if this goal was achieved.

A qualitative case study could be beneficial here as a follow up study. A case study is a thorough assessment of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event. The researcher can use a case study to conduct a life history case study. In this case study, the researcher would conduct extensive interviews with a child who was parentally abducted for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative. The researcher would use the participant as a vehicle to understand aspects and experiences of parentally abducted children (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This in-depth look into parental abduction through a qualitative study could help to expand on the past and current research that has been conducted on and about parentally abducted children.

In addition to the above, a variety of additional inquiries building on the foundation provided in this study are suggested by the information obtained in this study.
This appears to be one of the first studies providing information about parental abduction with the voice of the abductee.

Limitations

There were limitations in this study, including the size of the participant sample. The researcher was only able to access a small sample of people who were abducted by a parent as a child and who were willing to participate in this study. Due to the sensitivity of the topic the researcher had a very difficult time recruiting participants for this study. More people who were abducted by a parent who were afraid or otherwise unwilling to talk were found by the agencies than those that wanted to talk. This study is based only on the experiences of those that were willing to participate.

A second limitation to this study is that the design required participants to remember certain aspects about an abduction that occurred many years ago. Recalling aspects of the event may not be entirely precise due to memory loss or the possibility of blocking traumatic memories. One participant mentioned that she could not remember which counseling techniques were used, this could be due to the time between the event and the interview.

Another limitation is that the participants were self-reporting their experiences. When using self reports, accounts of the event may not be entirely accurate because of reluctance to disclose and/or tendency to skew the information to be presented in the most positive light. The researcher did not see this outright with this study, but it still can be a possibility.
An additional limitation is that there were both open-ended questions used and closed-ended questions used. While the open-ended questions allowed the participants to go into more detail about their experiences the closed ended questions did not. However, even though a question was a closed-ended question some of the participants chose to state more information than required.

A final limitation to this study is that the wording to an item on the questionnaire may have caused confusion to the participant or the responses could have been distorted due to the wording. The question that stated “Do you feel it is difficult for you to trust the opposite sex after your abduction?” should have been phrased to be inclusive of same sex relationships.

Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that there are many consequences to parental abduction. Some consequences impede the growth and development of the child. These children stated that they had trouble sleeping and concentrating and they sometimes felt like they were in a dreamlike world which in turn could be a possibility to impeding the capabilities of self-monitoring and self-regulating their own behavior and feelings. In addition this may also hamper the use of cognition for effective problem solving strategies. For example, cognitive distortion is associated with the experience trauma (Owens & Chard, 2006). They found cognitive impairments with domestic violence, natural disasters and severe transportation accidents. Different history experiences different trauma distortions.
Some of the participants in the current study mentioned regressing or going inward during and after the abduction. In addition they mentioned sometimes having trouble making and keeping friends. As a child and an adult of parental abduction these consequences could hinder one’s self-efficacy and as a result hinder one’s motivation for achieving tasks and goal setting for life’s everyday events. However, to truly tie the results about the consequences from this study and how they impact age-appropriate development, there is a need for further research on these constructs and parental abduction.
### APPENDIX I

AGENCIES FOR MISSING CHILDREN STATE BY STATE

1 = Amber Alert Contact  
2 = State Missing Children Clearinghouses  
3 = Child Locator Non-Profit Organizations  
4 = AMECO Non-Profit

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<td>Colorado Bureau of Investigation Crime Information Center</td>
<td>303-239-4251 <a href="mailto:Kris-tina.Bomba@cdps.state.co.us">Kris-tina.Bomba@cdps.state.co.us</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Missing Children’s Task Force Executive Director – David Rogers</td>
<td>720-641-6432 <a href="mailto:childfinders@qwest.net">childfinders@qwest.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Connecticut State Police</td>
<td>Lt. Wayne Rioux 860-685-8032 <a href="mailto:wayne.rioux@po.state.ct.us">wayne.rioux@po.state.ct.us</a> new person: Master SG. Freeman</td>
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1 = Amber Alert Contact  2 = State Missing Children Clearinghouses  
3 = Child Locator Non-Profit Organizations  4 = AMECO Non-Profit
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<td>The Paul and Lisa Inc (Sexual Exploitation)</td>
<td>860-767-7660 <a href="mailto:paulandlisaprogram@snet.net">paulandlisaprogram@snet.net</a></td>
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<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Delaware State Police</td>
<td>Lt. Joseph Aviola 302-834-2620 ext 234 <a href="mailto:joseph.aviola@state.de.us">joseph.aviola@state.de.us</a></td>
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<td>Delaware State Police Bureau of Investigation</td>
<td>302-739-5883</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Florida Department of Law Enforcement</td>
<td>1-888-356-4774</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Florida Department of Law Enforcement Missing Children Information</td>
<td>904-488-5224 800-342-0821</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Child Watch of North America Inc</td>
<td>407-363-9313 (Out of service) Don Wood? 407-290-5100 <a href="mailto:info@childwatch.org">info@childwatch.org</a> <a href="http://www.childwatch.org">www.childwatch.org</a> 888-childwatch <a href="mailto:dwood@childwatch.org">dwood@childwatch.org</a></td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>A Child is Missing Sherry Friedlander - ED</td>
<td>954-763-1288 Hotline 888-USA-ACIM <a href="mailto:info@achildismissing.org">info@achildismissing.org</a> <a href="mailto:toddd@acgildismissing.org">toddd@acgildismissing.org</a></td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Jimmy Ryce Center Inc (FOR SEXUAL PREDATORS)</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Missing Children Center Inc Joan Thompson - ED</td>
<td>407-327-4403 <a href="mailto:missingchildren@cfl.rr.com">missingchildren@cfl.rr.com</a></td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Voice for the Children Inc</td>
<td>561-833-0290 <a href="mailto:voice4@flinet.com">voice4@flinet.com</a> <a href="http://www.voiceforthechildreninc.org">www.voiceforthechildreninc.org</a> 1800 28helpme</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>Child Protection Education of America, Inc Hilary Sessions - ED</td>
<td>813-626-3001 866-USA-child <a href="mailto:hilary@find-missing-children.org">hilary@find-missing-children.org</a></td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Georgia Bureau of Investigation</td>
<td>Vicki Metz 404-244-2550 <a href="mailto:Vicki.metz@gbi.state.ga.us">Vicki.metz@gbi.state.ga.us</a></td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Georgia Bureau of Investigation Intelligence Unit</td>
<td>404-244-2554 800-282-6564</td>
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<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>208-884-7154 888-777-3922</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:idmpc@isp.idaho.gov">idmpc@isp.idaho.gov</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eloise M. Skinner - Manager</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Illinois State Police</td>
<td>Cinda Lubich 800-843-5763</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lubichc@isp.state.il.us">lubichc@isp.state.il.us</a></td>
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<td>217-782-6053 800-843-5763</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iowaamberalert.com">http://www.iowaamberalert.com</a> Missing persons clearinghouse</td>
<td>Clearinghouse <a href="mailto:mpicinfo@dps.state.ia.us">mpicinfo@dps.state.ia.us</a> 515-725=6036 1800-346-5507</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Iowa Department of Public Safety Division of Criminal Investigation</td>
<td>515-281-5138 800-346-5507</td>
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<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Kansas Attorney General’s Office</td>
<td>785-296-2215 <a href="mailto:GENERAL@ksag.org">GENERAL@ksag.org</a></td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Exploited Children’s Help Organization Lucy Lee - ED</td>
<td>502-636-3670</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Louisiana State Police Amber alert Contact: Sgt. Julie Lewis</td>
<td>225-925-6325</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Julie.Lewis@dps.la.gov">Julie.Lewis@dps.la.gov</a></td>
<td>(318) 345-2810</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Louisiana Department of Health and Human Services Louisiana Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children</td>
<td>504-342-4011 225-342-8631 <a href="mailto:74431.142@compuserve.com">74431.142@compuserve.com</a></td>
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<td>Maine</td>
<td>Maine State Police Criminal Investigation Division</td>
<td>207-624-7097 800-452-4664 <a href="mailto:Stephen.McCausland@maine.gov">Stephen.McCausland@maine.gov</a></td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland Center for Missing Children</td>
<td>Carla Proudfoot 800-637-5437</td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland Center for Missing Children Maryland State Police</td>
<td>410-290-0780 800-637-5437</td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Missing and Exploited Children Association</td>
<td>410-667-0718 Hotline 888-755-MEGA <a href="mailto:taavonjm@erols.com">taavonjm@erols.com</a></td>
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<td>Missing and Exploited Children’s Association (MECA)</td>
<td>410-560-0334 <a href="mailto:marylandmissing@yahoo.com">marylandmissing@yahoo.com</a> 410-321-1184 <a href="mailto:derekpm@mecamd.com">derekpm@mecamd.com</a></td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Massachusetts State Police Missing Persons Unit</td>
<td>617-727-8972 800-622-5999</td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Molly Bish Foundation</td>
<td>413-436-5529 <a href="mailto:Mbish0751@aol.com">Mbish0751@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Rad Kids: Personal Empowerment Safety Education</td>
<td>508-430-2080 866-430-2080 <a href="mailto:radKIDS@radKIDS.org">radKIDS@radKIDS.org</a></td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Sgt. Greg Jones 517-333-4017 Information: (517) 332-2521</td>
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<td>Missing Children’s Network of Michigan</td>
<td>810-984-2911 <a href="mailto:mcnmi@i2k.com">mcnmi@i2k.com</a></td>
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<td>Minnesota Crime Alert Network</td>
<td>651-642-0779</td>
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<td>Minnesota State Clearinghouse Bureau of Criminal Apprehension</td>
<td>612-642-0610</td>
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<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Missing Children – Minnesota Inc</td>
<td>612-334-9449 Hotline 888-786-9355 <a href="mailto:watsonmcm@aol.com">watsonmcm@aol.com</a> <a href="mailto:mssngchild@aol.com">mssngchild@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Parental Abduction Child Recovery Team</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@parentalabduction.org">info@parentalabduction.org</a></td>
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<td>Jacob Wetterling Foundation</td>
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<td>Major Larry Waggoner</td>
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<td>Nebraska State Patrol Criminal Record and Identification Division</td>
<td>402-479-4019</td>
<td>402-479-4938</td>
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<td>Missing Youth Foundation</td>
<td>402-289-4401 <a href="mailto:info@missingyouth.com">info@missingyouth.com</a></td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>State of Nevada Office of the Attorney General</td>
<td>Rene Hulse 702-486-3107 <a href="mailto:rhulse@ag.state.nv.us">rhulse@ag.state.nv.us</a></td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>Nevada Child Seekers Inc</td>
<td>702-458-7009 Stephanie (<a href="mailto:Stephanie@nevadachildseekers.org">Stephanie@nevadachildseekers.org</a>) Stephanie Parker - ED</td>
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<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>New Hampshire State Police</td>
<td>Trooper First Class Robert Estabrook 603-271-2663 <a href="mailto:bestabrook@safety.state.nh.us">bestabrook@safety.state.nh.us</a> <a href="mailto:missingpersons@safety.state.nh.us">missingpersons@safety.state.nh.us</a>.</td>
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<td>New Hampshire State Police</td>
<td>603-271-2663 800-852-3411</td>
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<td>New Jersey</td>
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<td>609-882-2000 ext 2894</td>
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<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>New Mexico Department of Public Safety</td>
<td>505-827-9187 <a href="mailto:peter.olson@state.nm.us">peter.olson@state.nm.us</a></td>
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<td>New York State Police</td>
<td>518-457-8678 <a href="mailto:missingchildren@dcjs.state.ny.us">missingchildren@dcjs.state.ny.us</a> <a href="mailto:Ken-Buniak@dcjs.state.ny.us">Ken-Buniak@dcjs.state.ny.us</a></td>
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<td>New York</td>
<td>Child Find of America Inc</td>
<td>Hotline 800-A-WAY-OUT Hotline 800-I-AM-LOST <a href="mailto:Dlinder351@aol.com">Dlinder351@aol.com</a> informa-</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tion@childfindofamerica.org">tion@childfindofamerica.org</a> <a href="http://www.childfindofamerica.org">www.childfindofamerica.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>The Center for HOPE J. Douglas Lyall – ED</td>
<td>518-884-8761 <a href="mailto:jdlmary@hope4themissing.org">jdlmary@hope4themissing.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina Center for Missing Persons</td>
<td>Perry F. Stewart 800-522-5437 <a href="mailto:pestewart@ncjle.org">pestewart@ncjle.org</a></td>
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<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>North Dakota State Patrol</td>
<td>701-328-2455 <a href="mailto:ndhpinfo@nd.gov">ndhpinfo@nd.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse/State of Ohio Attorney General’s Office</td>
<td>Terri Peaks 800-325-5604</td>
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<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Office of Governor Brad Henry</td>
<td>Matthew McBee 405-521-2342 <a href="mailto:matthew.mcbee@gov.state.ok.us">matthew.mcbee@gov.state.ok.us</a></td>
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<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation Office of the Attorney General</td>
<td>405-848-6724</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Oregon State Police – Bureau of Investigation</td>
<td>Major Gregory Willeford 503-378-3725 ext 4103 <a href="mailto:Greg.willeford@state.or.us">Greg.willeford@state.or.us</a></td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Oregon State Police Missing Children Clearinghouse</td>
<td>503-378-3720 ext 4412 800-282-7155 <a href="mailto:judy.hayes@state.or.us">judy.hayes@state.or.us</a></td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>Tommy Foundation Victoria Kelly – ED</td>
<td>888-994-5437 <a href="mailto:tommyfoundation@yahoo.com">tommyfoundation@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>National Missing Children’s Locate Center</td>
<td>503-257-1308 Hotline 800-999-7846 <a href="mailto:nmlc@myexcelsightings.com">nmlc@myexcelsightings.com</a></td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Pennsylvania State Police</td>
<td>Corporal Howard W. Sheppard 717-783-0960</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>American association for Lost Children</td>
<td>800-375-5683 724-537-6970 <a href="mailto:aaflc@verizon.net">aaflc@verizon.net</a> <a href="http://www.AAFLC.org">www.AAFLC.org</a></td>
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<td>717-783-5524</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Children's Rights of Pennsylvania Inc</td>
<td>610-437-2971 <a href="mailto:tomw@iwon.com">tomw@iwon.com</a> Thomas Watts</td>
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<td>401-444-1125</td>
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<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>South Carolina Law Enforcement Division</td>
<td>Lt. Teresa Woods 803-896-7008 <a href="mailto:twoods@mail.sled.state.sc.us">twoods@mail.sled.state.sc.us</a></td>
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<td>Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Criminal Intelligence Unit</td>
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<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Commission on Missing and Exploited Children</td>
<td>901-528-8441 called 901-405-8441 <a href="mailto:comecc@netten.net">comecc@netten.net</a> <a href="mailto:comecc@comec.org">comecc@comec.org</a> <a href="http://www.comec.org">www.comec.org</a></td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas Department of Public Safety</td>
<td>Sam Allen 512-424-2208 <a href="mailto:sam.allen@txdps.state.tx.us">sam.allen@txdps.state.tx.us</a></td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas Department of Public Safety Criminal Intelligence Service</td>
<td>512-465-2814 800-346-3243</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>National Missing Children’s Center</td>
<td>281-351-KIDS 800-832-3773</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Heidi Search Center Inc Kate Kohl - ED</td>
<td>210-650-0428 Hotline 800-547-4435 Kate (VERY HELPFUL) <a href="mailto:heidisearchcenter@yahoo.com">heidisearchcenter@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Child Search Ministries</td>
<td>800-316-4673 <a href="mailto:childsearch@childsearch.org">childsearch@childsearch.org</a></td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Gabriel’s Gifts Missing Children’s Organization</td>
<td>713-314-3673 713-314-3644 <a href="mailto:balberts@tcftm.org">balberts@tcftm.org</a> Beth Alberts – CEO Melissa Hulin Turnquist <a href="mailto:mtturnquist@tcftm.org">mtturnquist@tcftm.org</a></td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Laura Recovery Center Robert Walcutt – ED</td>
<td>281-482-5723 <a href="mailto:info@lrf.net">info@lrf.net</a> <a href="http://www.lrf.org">www.lrf.org</a></td>
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<td>The Rachel Foundation Bob Hoch – ED</td>
<td>830-864-4460 <a href="mailto:info@rachelfoundation.org">info@rachelfoundation.org</a> <a href="http://www.rachelfoundation.org">www.rachelfoundation.org</a> <a href="mailto:bob-hoch@rachelfoundation.org">bob-hoch@rachelfoundation.org</a></td>
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<td>State of Utah Office of the Attorney General</td>
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<td>Utah Department of Public Safety Bureau of Criminal Investigation</td>
<td>888-770-6477</td>
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<td>Major Robert White 802-244-8727</td>
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<td>Lt. Patrick D. Fagan III 804-674-2023 <a href="mailto:pfagan@vsp.state.va.us">pfagan@vsp.state.va.us</a> <a href="mailto:pete.fagan@vsp.virginia.gov">pete.fagan@vsp.virginia.gov</a></td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
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<td>804-674-2026 800-822-4453</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
<td>Washington State Patrol</td>
<td>Capt. Fred Fakkema 360-753-5299 <a href="mailto:randy.drake@wsp.wa.gov">randy.drake@wsp.wa.gov</a> Lt. Randy Drake</td>
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| Washington    | Washington State Patrol Missing Children’s Clearinghouse | 206-753-3960  
                 |                                                 | 800-543-5678                                                          |   |   |   |   |
| Washington    | Operation Lookout/National Center for Missing Youth  
                 | Melody Gibson – ED                                            | 425-771-SEEK (7335)  
                 |                                                 | Hotline 800-LOOKOUT  
                 |                                                 | lookour-  
                 |                                                 | fyi@operationlookout.org  
                 |                                                 | casework4@operationlookout.org  
                 |                                                 | www.operationlookout.org     | X | X |   |   |
| West Virginia | West Virginia State Police                      |                                                                        |   |   |   |   |
| West Virginia | West Virginia State Police Missing Children’s Clearinghouse | 800-353-0927                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| Wisconsin     | Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children | wimissingkids@doj.state.wi                                         |   |   |   |   |
| Wisconsin     | Youth Educated in Safety Inc  
                 | Jay Breyer - ED                                                | 414-734-5335 (920-734-  
                 |                                                 | 5335)  
                 |                                                 | Hotline 800-272-7715  
                 |                                                 | Yes3124@aol.com  
                 |                                                 | www.yeswi.org                                                                 | X | X |   |   |
| Wyoming       | Wyoming Office of the Attorney General Division of Criminal  
                 | Investigation                                                   | Tim Olson  
                 |                                                 | 307-777-7537                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| Wyoming       | Christian Lamb Foundation  
                 | Eric Lampman - ED                                              | 307-754-9261  
                 |                                                 | Hotline 800-651-5262  
                 |                                                 | clamb@wavecom.net  
                 |                                                 | ericlamp@hotmail.com  
                 |                                                 | clambfoundation@sbcglobal.net  
                 |                                                 | www.clamp.org                                                                 | X | X |   |   |
| National      | Polly Klaas Foundation  
                 | Bob DeLeo - ED                                                 | 1-800-587-4357                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| National      | National Center for Missing and Exploited Children | 703-274-3900  
                 |                                                 | www.ncmec.org  
                 |                                                 | 800-the-lost                                                          |   |   |   |   |
| Tustin NCMEC  | NCMEC                                           | 714-508-0150                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| National      | The Association of Missing and Exploited Children’s Organizations (AMECO)  
                 | AMECO – ED – Wendy Joiley-Kabi                                 | 781-878-3033  
                 |                                                 | www.amecoinc.org  
                 |                                                 | 703-838-8379  
                 |                                                 | wendy@amecoinc.org                                                                 |   |   | X |   |
| National      | TEAM HOPE                                       | 1-866-305-hope  
                 |                                                 | www.teamhope.org                                                      |   |   |   |   |

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APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE
Yes/No Question (Closed Questions)

1. Do you feel it is difficult for you to trust the opposite sex after your abduction?
2. Do you feel it is difficult for you to make friends after the abduction?
3. Do you consider yourself to have many close friends?
4. Did you go to any support groups after your abduction?
5. Were you prescribed any medication for the abduction?
6. Are you currently on any medication for the abduction?
7. Did you receive counseling after your abduction?
8. After your abduction, did things around you ever feel dreamlike or unreal?
9. Have you been unable to recall important aspects of your abduction?
10. Do you feel very upset when you are reminded of the abduction?
11. Have you had trouble sleeping since your abduction?
12. Have you had trouble concentrating since your abduction?

Open ended Questions:
1. What did you do to help you get by when things got bad for you during your abduction?
2. What did you do to help you get by after you were reunited with your family?
3. If you participated in counseling, what do you feel was the most helpful part of counseling for you?

Demographics

1. What gender are you? Male or Female

2. How old are you now?
   a. 19-29
   b. 30-39
   c. 40-49
   d. Over 50

3. What is your educational background?
   a. Primary school 1-8th grade
   b. Completed high school
   c. College/undergraduate degree
   d. Post graduate degree
   e. Other/specify ________

4. Are you employed currently?

5. If you are working, what kind of work are you doing?

6. Are you married? In a relationship?

7. If you are in a relationship how long?

8. Do you have any children? If yes how many and how old are they?
Questions about your abductor:

9. How old do you believe your abductor was when she/he took you?
   a. 0-18
   b. 19-29
   c. 30-39
   d. 40-49
   e. Over 50

10. What level of education do you believe your abductor completed at the time of your abduction?
    a. Primary school 1-8th grade
    b. Completed high school
    c. College/undergraduate degree
    d. Post graduate degree
    e. Other/specify __________

11. At the time of the abduction do you believe your abductor was employed?

12. If you believe she/he was employed what type of work do you believe was his/her occupation?

13. Was the abductor your mother or your father?

14. Do you believe that your abductor had a criminal record before he/she took you?

What are the Experiences of Parental Abducted Children?

15. At the time of your abduction, how old were you?
    a. Under 2
b. 2-5

c. 6-10

d. 10-15

e. Over 15

16. How long were you abducted for?

17. Was your name changed during your abduction? If yes are you currently using your birth name or the name you were given during your abduction?
APPENDIX III

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES FROM QUESTIONNAIRE
Yes/No Question (Closed Questions)

1. Do you feel it is difficult for you to trust the opposite sex after your abduction?
   - Yes: 6
   - No: 5
   - Initially yes, but not currently: 2

2. Do you feel it is difficult for you to make friends after the abduction?
   - Yes: 2
   - No: 8
   - Initially yes, but not currently: 2
   - Both yes and no: 1

3. Do you consider yourself to have many close friends?
   - Yes: 6
   - No: 7

4. Did you go to any support groups after your abduction?
   - Yes: 0
   - No: 13

5. Were you prescribed any medication for the abduction?
   - Yes: 4
   - No: 9

6. Are you currently on any medication for the abduction?
   - Yes: 2
   - No: 11
7. Did you receive counseling after your abduction?
   - Yes: 10
   - No: 3

8. After your abduction, did things around you ever feel dreamlike or unreal?
   - Yes: 9
   - No: 4

9. Have you been unable to recall important aspects of your abduction?
   - Yes: 8
   - No: 5

10. Do you feel very upset when you are reminded of the abduction?
    - Yes: 2
    - No: 10
    - Both yes and no: 1

11. Have you had trouble sleeping since your abduction?
    - Yes: 7
    - No: 6

12. Have you had trouble concentrating since your abduction?
    - Yes: 7
    - No: 6

Open ended Questions:

1. What did you do to help you get by when things got bad for you during your abduction?

   1) I went inward. I imagined. I closed people off. I seen them the way I wanted to see them. I went very inward. That’s the only way I know how to describe it.

      Very artistic. I used to slap myself in the face during the abduction. I would also have night terrors after I was awake I was still caught in my dream. Actually the
night terrors were severe. I would wake up and my body would feel weird like you were caught in this really weird dream and my dad would have to hold me down and he was praying. The man was very religious. And it was like I was caught in this dream for like 30 minutes like I was having a seizure. So I experienced a lot of that. I was very inward. I didn’t talk a lot. I was very quiet and when I did talk after I was returned my speech was so rapid and so distorted I usually was very, very quiet because when I opened my mouth I was speaking like a paragraph at a time...so does that answer your question?

2) Well, ok part of my life remained normal. I stayed in the same school, had the same teachers, knew the same people and I was with my aunt so I got to see my grandparents, my dad’s parents so that was some part of normal part of my life. I wasn’t taken to another state or another country. But I don’t think there was anything that I did that I just...I don’t have anything that I can think of.

3) My father abducted me at two he told me the first time about it when I was 8 years old. My father used alienation well enough that it made me not want to find my mother. I was raised in a very strict religious environment and he told me she was demonized so it really shut me off.

4) I wasn’t really provided the opportunity to talk to people. I think I just really applied myself in whatever I was doing. Working hard. I was a student I was very young between the ages of 11 and 14 so I excelled within school in an environment that I had never really performed too well in before and I was also in another country, Mexico and I didn’t speak the language when I was taken there. So what do you call it? I spent a lot of time focusing on my day to day tasks. Like
I said I mentally sort of based on the situation I was in I was obviously restricted to saying things to people but I also restricted myself from saying things. There was a lot of fear that my father he was the one that abducted my sisters and I would find out and then therefore would be repercussions.

5) During it I really clinged to my sister at the time. She is older.

6) Under the circumstances we were not aware that we were being abducted. We were spending time with our father. It was a holiday and we were just spending extra time that we didn’t normally get.

7) Went off into a dreamlike world, stuff like that. I am kinda an introverted person so it wasn’t as bad I guess.

8) During my abduction, well it wasn’t really that bad during my abduction. When you are with a parent you don’t really fell like anything is really that wrong. If I was with a stranger it would have been completely different, but I was with my mother. She was very, very well to do so we traveled to the best places all over the world. We stayed in luxurious places. Nothing was wrong until we were found and then the national and international media came upon us. I was taken away from my mother and I was not returned to my father. Actually we were in limbo, my younger brother and myself, we were put into a shelter for children during a two week period of time when the 1980 parental kidnapping act came into effect because of our case. During those two weeks Jimmy Carter passed that law based on our case. So nothing was wrong until we were found.

9) Things never got bad for me during it so I never did anything.
10) Well, my father took me when I was 6, he took me off of a playground. Can you ask the question again? Repeated question. Well I knew it was wrong. I knew something was not right, but I think my dad had me in a constant state of busyness so I never knew that I was abducted. So what did I do...I mean there were moments in time where I did ask about my mother. I said where is my mother. You know and I think my dad would distract me and he would be brainwashing me so it would be very difficult for me to know.

11) I really don't remember much because I was young. I hope I am worth interviewing. But I suppose it was just that I was with my sister, so I think that the two of us were just there for each other and I don't think we quite understood what was happening so I don't think we even really knew to be that upset but if we did ever fell like we were missing our mom or missing something I think we were there for each other and that is probably what helped.

12) I was two so I really don't know what I did or didn't do. I know I was talking before I was abducted and when I came back I wasn't talking. I guess that is something that I did. Anything that I would have done would have been subconscious.

13) I was too young to remember what I did.

2. What did you do to help you get by after you were reunited with your family?

1) I went more inward. Part of that was when we were reunited we ended up with my grandparents in Orville, CA and they are very rich, extremely rich. And so it was weird going from this other environment to this new environment. My
mother was living in Tracy, CA and we had gone there and over the years her life had kinda deteriorated. I suspect a lot of drugs were involved. I remember walking into her home, or our home for the first time and at first her husband was like good to see you boy go get me a beer. So I drew very inward, very quick. That’s how I dealt with it. I learned to manipulate my surroundings to help myself. I read a lot of comic books and I wrote a lot of short stories and you know things like that.

2) That was the difficulty that I had, you know the reunification process with my mom. Even though I was a child I had to tell myself mentally that I was back with my mom, everything was ok and I didn’t have to worry about anything anymore. I didn’t have to worry about what my dad was saying about my mom and the lies that he had made up, what had happened. So I guess that is how I coped with it myself. Self-talk.

3) I wrote for one thing. I wrote a studies play about finding my mother and then I wrote the book which the book was a little damaging. It was very difficult writing the book. That definitely put me on medication.

4) Well I think it was a good combination of re-establishing some of those friendships that suddenly disappeared and talking to people who were older than me. I already had some other adults that I had kind of known and had a good rapport with before I had left or I had been abducted and also talking to counselors. Especially confronting the issue and just being honest with myself about some of the problems and the certain latent feelings regarding the abduction, betrayal, abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, ostracism. It was really
a matter of actually like vocalizing you know my problems to others and hearing their perspective. And obviously no one I met had been in the same situation. Yeah so I think talking about it and sort of trying to figure it out with other people was the primary method I used to deal with it.

5) Spent a lot of time by myself. You know mostly just trying to be away from everybody. I picked up a couple of hobbies, I tried to get engulfed in some arts, music, arts, and painting and stuff like that.

6) It was really hard, after that it was really hard for us because we didn’t know and understand why we were not seeing our father and what was going on with our family we didn’t get, legal guardianship was given to our aunt and uncle cause our mother was, I don’t even know that situation. Well we had each other, me and my brothers. We just spent time together you know. We did have counseling for awhile so that was something we talked to a counselor which really helped us get through a lot of it but I know with everything that happened with that and our family I know I did a lot of crying because it was upsetting as a child. And of course you know when you are little people make jokes about your mamma this or your daddy that and you know that always hit hard because in my eyes I didn’t have a mom and dad they were both gone. So that was really difficult so I think with the counseling and a lot of...what is the word I am looking for? Inward reflection I guess and also with it felt like it was something we did wrong, but as you get older you know it wasn’t us and it wasn’t our responsibility to make these decisions and I guess it has just been a personal struggle you know. And like I said the counseling as children helped but that is really it.
7) After I was reunited with my mother I just talked, the way I coped with everything is I talked. I mean at first I pushed everything down. Then I talked about it and as I talked about it I came to terms with it you know? I did push it down for a long time and once I started talking about it I started learning about how I felt you know what I mean? I would get other people’s responses to things that happened and it helped I guess identify I don’t know if you understand what I am saying.

8) It took a long period of time to get back to normal life. Besides the counseling getting back into the everyday kinds of things, going back to school. I went back to the same exact class that I had left from so I had the same friends that I had grown up with, getting back into the every day thing. And that being over a year or two gradually eased me back into my life.

9) I dunno it was just like meeting a new person (mother) and just to know each other and it wasn’t anything hard to do. It was just you know normal. I: I am a little confused just going back to your family was fine? It was just like meeting a new person, forming friendships. It was like meeting a stranger and getting to know them.

10) Well when I was reunited… it’s a long story but at 12 years old my mother did find me but we were out of the country. My dad took me to Wales. It was an international abduction. So at the time there were no Hague laws cause I am 41. There was none of that. I am having a hard time concentrating here. What is the question again? Well I had a psychotic break that was my coping mechanism. The psychosis is what actually saved my life because if I hadn’t I would have
continued to suppress feelings. Cause the feelings were buried for so long plus my dad was sexually abusive with me and you know emotionally abusive and so all those feelings didn’t surface until I was through with college and out on my own and stuff started to come into focus and what really happened and I couldn’t handle all the information at once so I had a psychosis. I had a psychotic break and ended up in the hospital for three months.

11) I know when we were younger my mom and both of us all went to counseling. And my mom was very good about talking about things with us, when I was younger we talked about it a lot. I had I think having a great home environment with my mom definitely helped because we were so young we couldn’t exactly know what was going on but we knew we were happy and we knew we were healthy with her. We knew we loved.

12) I think it took awhile for me to start talking with my mom. And I guess I was still legally obligated to see my father who kidnapped me. I saw him for I think several years, I was there every other weekend and he got remarried and the last time I spoke to my father was June 17, 2005. He was the same type of person that would kidnap someone and he was not supportive. He was not somebody that I wanted to be around so… I: so you feel cutting off that connection helped you? Yeah, I didn’t just cut it off I wrote him a really nasty letter. You know how in counseling they tell you to write a letter but you don’t send it? I: Yeah Well I sent it.

13) When I returned home school kept me very busy. The best thing for me was a close nit family unit. My mom and my brother and I am very close and being
young in elementary school I had a lot of friends and a lot of family time was the best thing for me.

3. If you participated in counseling, what do you feel was the most helpful part of counseling for you?

1) Didn’t participate in counseling. There was a couple of times when my mother got me back it was like a year later. We kept moving back and forth cause my mother was fighting and they would split up and get back together and split up, back and forth, back and forth. I think in that one year I had gone to like five schools, back in Tracy again and the school put me in counseling. And my mother got mad and she smacked me in the face and she said like how dare you, don’t tell them anything. You are just trying to ruin my life and poor me. And when I was in high school we ended up in Kent Washington then and at that point I started to create this whole thing like I’m from Ireland I don’t know what I was and I am being very bloody blank point right now with how I was back then. And the school noticed that I had a lot of psychological issues and wanted to make me a ward of the state cause my mother couldn’t even agree on us. The day before I turned 17 she sent me back to my dad’s and then withdrew my brother and my half brother out of school and at that time we started to be home schooled. So I missed the whole counseling thing because if I got counseling my mother would say it’s really bad for her and really bad for her and I caught hell. I: You participated in school counseling or you went once and she told you not to go again? I would have gone like three or four times and she would find out. They would send a letter and she would get mad. I did see a speech therapist growing up quite a bit
because of my speech and I was in seattle, wash and my counselor was from England and she lived in Canada for a long time and she had this very stiff lip approach to speaking and so for a number of years after that, I tend to mimic people really bad which is really kind of funny, and I had this kind of Canadian style accent. I kind of learned to control the way I talked.... So it was kind of a joke that at counseling I learned how to talk like a Canadian. That was the most I got from counseling. I: And they pulled you out or you went on your own? They pulled me out. It is kind of funny. I look at this thing as an adult and counseling with kinds and I see a lot of the techniques they used on me. They did what do you call it...you think you are there for something else but in actuality you are there for something completely different.

2) Didn’t participate. Don’t remember speaking to a school counselor. Remember talking to the judge about it. But I don’t remember talking to anyone that was an actual counselor that I got to say my feelings to or my experience or anything like that.

3) The counselor told me another way to think about it that I hadn’t thought about. He asked me “I wonder what happened to your dad that made him do what he did?” and made me think that maybe my father was a victim of something else not that it gives him the right but maybe he wasn’t just a jerk that maybe he went through bad things too to do what he did I guess. Not saying that what he did was correct but maybe make me think he can make a bad mistake. And another therapist taught me how to get through the stress. I: and what was that technique? He was taking me out of the emotional and into the mental. You probably know
the technique when you say if this happens what is the worst thing that can happen? Worst case scenario thing.

4) I went to a number of different ones over the years because my mom didn’t feel that some were that effective and also because my mom and I had some trouble so we saw a counselor together. I think the best sort of technique used…and it is the prevailing school of thought right now at least that is what I have heard it wasn’t necessarily the psychologist or psychiatrist giving me advice as to what I should do with my life. There was an engagement with me in terms of my thoughts on things. And it really allowed me to bring to the surface what my feelings were on some things and to really like reconstruct them and consider what was really going on there. And to accept what happened, but it was sort of having a dialogue and being able to talk about it. Not necessarily having someone pontificate to me or tell me you know this is the way things are and you have to deal with it this way, but you know just having the open dialogue. You know just slowly approaching the issue and then asking me to you know really like consider the impact it had on me and what I did like about it, what I did like about the experience and what I didn’t. I mean I didn’t hate everything. The whole thing wasn’t horrible, much of it was but there were certainly very much some positive aspects to my experience. And trying to see it in that light, not just the negative but also the positive.

5) N/A (no counseling)

6) Well our counseling it was me and my brothers, my two brothers we did go. We all met with the doctor and I even remember her name. because we thought it was
a funny name. We all met individually. We never met as a group, the three of us together. It was all individual. I think talking about it helped but I think sometimes with counseling they are there to listen but they are not really there to help you cope. I think that is where we really needed it. It wasn’t just the talking about it and what upset us because when you get older and talking about it you learn to cope with it when you are an adult and sometimes just talking about it made you feel better but then there are times when you are a child you don’t know how to cope with that and you don’t understand why it upset you and why things happened the way they did and I think as a child psychologist helping the children deal with it is something that really needs to take place and it really didn’t for me. We mainly just went in and talked. That is all we did. My brother he called her the “talk doctor”, he was smaller so that is what he called her. You know cause that is all we did. We would just sit there and talk.

7) The counseling I participated in wasn’t effectual. It was short term. I: you didn’t feel it helped you at all? No, not really. What he did was, I was probably about 12 and the abduction occurred when I was 7. We were on the run for a few years, I don’t know if you read the book. I: just to clarify you did have counseling but you felt it was non-effective. Right, well it was short term. Well my dad took me to counseling, why I had counseling was to see why I was causing problems. Being reactive, you know. A rebel you know and how he could fix it. The counselor you know he gave me some tests, he gave the rosharch and he gave some other tests but he really didn’t go into it enough and we really didn’t see him enough. I: so you saw the counselor when you were with your dad not when you were with
your mom, not afterwards or was it during the abduction? No I was never with my mom. We saw her, me and my sister and then I didn’t see her for like two years, two and a half years. Then I saw her again and I was kinda made to think a different way towards her. And I stayed with my dad and she was poor and my dad was poor and we didn’t have any money. So I never really got back with my mom and then I re-met her when I was like 15 and then developed a good relationship since then but she passed away a few years ago.

8) The consistency. I: can you elaborate on that a little bit? I went to counseling twice a week for a period of one or two years and it became a consistent to where I got to discuss my experiences, try to understand my experiences, try to grasp where I was then and where I was trying to go with all of this. And that has been a lifelong venture for me. The book was part of that, speaking to others and helping others in similar situations. That is all part of it. So kinda it is all webbed together.

9) Oh God... I have no idea. I don’t even remember it. I was like 7..8. Honestly I would have to say if I remember anything about it at all just talking about it was probably... but see I have to explain this to you everything that happened to me there was no negative impact for me. There wasn’t anything super emotional. It didn’t change my life. To me it was a positive thing and I had a great childhood. So I look at this a lot different than my brother and lots of other people.

10) Coming to terms with everything. I mean really going through parental alienation syndrome. You know really tackling although we didn’t really go through the clinical name of what that meant but just really going through everything instinctively I really already knew something was wrong but never got to
acknowledge any of that but got to finally acknowledge it through counseling through my psychotherapy which I was in for ten years. I never skipped a day. I was always very diligent about my mental health and my sanity. It was devastating to go through what I had to go through and realize that my dad had really you know hid so much from me.

11) I think it was just kind of processing things because I think it can be overwhelming for a kid and kind of knowing what adults said and what everyone’s point of view is on what happened and just reassuring that you know I know for my sister too I know she was much younger than me and I think she had a different experience than I did. Knowing that we were safe was important cause you knowing it wasn’t going to happen again I think was very important. That helped.

12) Well I went to several counselors and I didn’t like any of them. But I finally found a counselor that I liked and I think the most helpful part is that she didn’t tell me what I wanted to hear, she told me what I needed to hear. Because when doing that it really felt like she was listening. And she made me very comfortable. I am one who likes to sit in the fetal position on a coach or something. I like to be covered up and so she always made sure that I could sit comfortably and be comfortable in her office. When things got to be too much she would end a session early or we would discuss something less serious. I guess I really felt that she listened and she made sure I was comfortable. She learned enough about me to know when I was comfortable.
13) Ummm...let me see. I would say just having someone to talk to. I think as a little child I probably thought it was a little weird at first like every little kid, but it was good and I realized later on that it was just good to talk about some things. Counselors can always pin point things that you do even realize that you were thinking about as a child too. So I think having that outside of my family was good as well.

Demographics

1. What gender are you? Male or Female
   1) Male (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8)
   2) Female (2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

2. How old are you now?
   a. 0-18
   b. 19-29 (4, 11, 12, 13)
   c. 30-39 (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
   d. 40-49 (3, 10)
   e. Over 50

3. What is your educational background?
   a. Primary school 1-8th grade
   b. Completed high school/some college (3, 5, 9, 12)
   c. College/undergraduate degree (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13)
   d. Post graduate degree (4)
4. Are you employed currently?
   1) Disability from VA and work in the guard and going to school, was law enforcement and sports photographer
   2) Yes
   3) Yes, P/T
   4) No working on master’s right now
   5) Yes
   6) Yes
   7) No
   8) Yes
   9) Yes
   10) Yes
   11) Yes
   12) Yes
   13) No student

5. If you are working, what kind of work are you doing?
   1) Guard and student
   2) Legal assistant
   3) conferences/speak and sell books
   4) student
5) Manager at a cafe
6) Work for an electrical wiring systems co – project coordinator
7) N/A
8) Self-employed, real estate
9) Project manager for housing development
10) Singer/Songwriter
11) Fashion Industry
12) Own a Health and wellness company, clerical and graphic arts and regular arts
13) N/A

6. Are you married? In a relationship?
   1) married, divorced and re-married
   2) yes, married (2nd marriage)
   3) Yes, married
   4) No
   5) Yes
   6) Yes, Married
   7) Yes, married
   8) No
   9) Yes, by common law
   10) Yes, married
   11) Yes, in a relationship
   12) No, just ended a relationship
13) Yes, engaged

7. If you are in a relationship how long?

1) 4 years

2) 2 years in February, 2nd marriage, first husband passed away. Married to 1st almost four years.

3) 10 years, about to end

4) N/A

5) 11 years in July

6) 1 ½ years (2nd marriage)

7) 12 years

8) N/A

9) 7 years

10) 3 years

11) 2 ½ years

12) N/A

13) 3 and a half years

8. Do you have any children? If yes how many and how old are they?

1) yes, 11 and 7

2) no

3) yes, daughter 23 and son 3

4) no
5) Yes, 9 year old boy and 5 year old girl

6) Yes, son 12

7) Yes, two ages 7 and 4

8) No

9) No, 12 year old stepson

10) No

11) No

12) No

13) No

Questions about your abductor:

9. How old do you believe your abductor was when she/he took you?
   a. 0-18
   b. 19-29 (3, 7, 9)
   c. 30-39 (1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13)
   d. 40-49 (2, 4, 11)
   e. Over 50

10. What level of education do you believe your abductor completed at the time of your abduction?
   a. Primary school 1-8th grade (1, 5, 12)
   b. Completed high school (3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13)
   c. College/undergraduate degree (8, 11)
11. At the time of the abduction do you believe your abductor was employed?

1) Yes
2) Yes
3) Yes
4) No
5) Yes
6) Yes
7) Yes
8) No
9) Yes
10) Yes
11) Yes, I believe so
12) No, unemployed
13) Yes

12. If you believe she/he was employed what type of work do you believe was his/her occupation?

1) Head foreman for construction company in California
2) Oil field industry
3) TV technician
4) N/A
5) Construction for grandfather
6) Steel worker
7) Auto body work/painting
8) N/A
9) Car business/body work
10) Hair Stylist
11) I am not for sure, I believe he was an artist and I do not know if he had another job
12) N/A
13) Personal insurance

13. Was the abductor your mother or your father?
   1) Mother (8)
   2) father (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

14. Do you believe that your abductor had a criminal record before he/she took you?
   1) Yes (4)
   2) No (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

What are the Experiences of Parental Abducted Children?

15. At the time of your abduction, how old were you?
   a. Under 2 (12, 13)
b. 2-5 (3, 5, 11)
c. 6-10 (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
d. 10-15 (4)
e. Over 15

16. How long were you abducted for?

1) 3 years, 2 months and 17 days
2) 5-6 months
3) 31 years
4) 2 years and 9 months
5) 3 ½ almost 4 years
6) 3 extra days over the Christmas holiday
7) 2 and a half years
8) 2 years and 3 weeks
9) 2 years
10) 18 years
11) Close to 2 years
12) 6 months
13) 5 and a half years

17. Was your name changed during your abduction? If yes are you currently using your birth name or the name you were given during your abduction?
1) Yes, birth name. Used nicknames for awhile. Used legal usage name in California. Always looking for a new identity. I use my own name now. I am very angry in some ways to have the name of the person who abducted me now that I know what was really done.

2) No

3) No

4) Just when they were in Hawaii going to Mexico, used real name in Mexico

5) No I don’t think so

6) No, still had fathers last name until married

7) Yes, using birth name. I went back to my real name after. We only kept the fake names for 2 years.

8) Yes several times. Using birth name now.

9) Yes, but only when we would fly somewhere we would use an alias.

10) No

11) Yes, unofficially changed. Use birth name now. Changed last name from dad’s to mother’s years later (11 or 12 years old then).

12) No, not that I know of.

13) No
APPENDIX IV

INFORMED CONSENT

(Telephone Presentation of Informed Consent)

Hello, my name is Mary Jo Wagner. I received your phone number from (name of social services professional) as someone who might be interested in helping with my research study. Have I reached the person (s)he suggested?

(If Yes, then:)

I am a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and my study is about experiences of persons who were parentally abducted when they were children. In the study, I'll be asking you some questions about your experiences. But before that begins, I have some general information about the study that may help you to decide if you want to continue.

The questions will take about half an hour to forty five minutes for us to go through them together. Participating will not cost you anything, but I also can't provide any compensation for your time other than knowing that the information may help others in the future.

I need to inform you that there are risks involved with every research study. There may be times during the interview that you feel uncomfortable about a certain question. If this happens you can choose to not answer that question.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Paul Jones at 702-895-3937. Or, you could also call the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.

You can choose not to participate in this study before we begin or you can stop at any time and request that nothing you've said can be included in the study. And, you can ask questions at any time before, during or after the study.

The information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential and no reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. The records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after the completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed. Also, to help with the accuracy of the survey interview I am asking if it would be alright to audio tape the interview?
When we are finished, I will also want to ask you if you know others who could help in this study.

If you do know someone else who could help with this study, I will ask you then to contact them and ask if it would be okay for you to give me their phone number. If the answer is yes, you would then let me know.

Do you have any questions?

Are you ready to begin?
REFERENCES


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