

Mountie trial victim shows signs of strength, psychologist says

RCMP officer and wife convicted in abuse of son in 'gut-wrenching' case

By Julie Ireton, [CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 22, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Nov 22, 2016 5:00 AM ET

Despite the intense trauma suffered by a young boy at the hands of his Mountie father and stepmother, observers who specialize in helping abuse victims say there's hope for the child's future.

- [Ottawa Mountie and his wife found guilty in 'gut-wrenching' case of child abuse](#)

On Monday, a 45-year-old RCMP officer, currently suspended from the force without pay, was found guilty of several charges in the abuse of his now 14-year-old son.

The man, who cannot be named due to a publication ban that protects the boy's identify, was found guilty of aggravated assault, sexual assault causing bodily harm, forcible confinement and failing to provide the necessities of life.

The child's 38-year-old stepmother was also found guilty of failing to provide the necessities of life and assault with a weapon.

The boy was 11 at the time of the abuse. He's now living under the care of protective services and is receiving psychological help.

Elisa Romano, a registered clinical psychologist, says certain elements of the boy's story show a strength of character that will help him heal.

Romano, who is also a professor of psychology at the University of Ottawa, specializes in the area of child abuse and neglect but was not personally involved in this case.

She noted during his ordeal the boy was able to run and seek help from a neighbour.

"He seemed to have maintained a willingness to fight for himself," said Romano. "I think that's a sign, that's a resilient quality."

'Gut-wrenching' case, says judge

The boy testified last year that his father restrained him in the basement with handcuffs, threatened him with a revolver and used a cross to "get demons out" of the boy.

Romano said the fact the boy testified also shows strength.

"Just being able to endure that and being able to then speak about it, I think shows hopefulness for this boy," she said.

"Certainly it doesn't mean it will be easy for him ... but he showed a number of resources that will need to be built on so that he can work through his trauma and go on to have everything he wants in life."

On Monday, Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert Maranger said in court, "that a parent could do the things that were done to [the victim] was gut-wrenching."

Last fall, in Maranger's courtroom, several videos were shown. The videos, seized from the father's phone, showed the boy naked, crying and restrained in the basement of his family's home.

People inside the courtroom wiped away tears and even the judge shielded his face during the final video.

Help needed quickly

In addressing the court on Monday, Maranger said "the fact that this starved, burned and battered 11 year old could somehow summon up the strength to escape his cruel captivity and later seemingly rise above it is a testament to the indomitability of the human spirit."

Rick Goodwin, a counsellor who treats male survivors of sexual and physical abuse, said he hopes this boy gets the help he will need.

"His development, his maturity, his coming to understanding himself is all going to be disturbed by these elements of childhood trauma ... physical, sexual, emotional neglect, whatever," said Goodwin, who is the founder of Men and Healing.

In his experience, it is all too common for adult men to come to his clinic decades after the abuse they've suffered, to subsequently be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, Goodwin said.

It's unnecessary to wait years for treatment and the system needs to help boys and young men heal sooner, he added.

After Monday's guilty verdicts the judge ordered the couple back into custody following a request by the Crown.

The pair will remain in custody as they await sentencing.