

SPARE THE ROD?

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 24 April 2013 00:00



Okay y'all, it's been a little over two weeks since the Internet and various social media sites were set ablaze with a video showing a father, Greg Horn, allegedly whipping his two daughters with an electric cord because the girls posted a video of themselves 'Twerking' on Facebook.

'Twerking' is a sexually-suggestive dance move, mostly found in the hip-hop culture, that mimics the moves of a stripper, whereby a person places an emphasis on gyrating and shaking their hips and butt. The '**Twerk Team**', a group founded in 2005 by two African American girls from Atlanta, Georgia, began posting 'Twerk' videos on YouTube in 2009, which have become increasingly popular. As of December 2012 their YouTube channel had a total of more than 74 million views and more than 250,000 subscribers. Their Twitter account has about 115,000 followers.

The video of Horn was originally posted on the infamous World Star Hip Hop website and immediately went viral, collecting some two million views worldwide.

Horn's daughters, ages 12 and 14, can be heard on the video screaming, while being whipped in the corner. According to the police report, one of the girls had "visible welts on both legs in the thigh area with open wounds." Police in Dayton, Ohio, where Horn and his daughters live, arrested the 35-year-old dad on charges of child abuse and corporal punishment. Under Ohio law, an "abused child" is defined as one who "exhibits evidence of any physical or mental injury or death, inflicted other than by accidental means."

Now, this isn't the first time that a video was posted online concerning a parent disciplining their child. Remember last year, when a 2004 secretly-recorded video showed Texas judge William Adams whipping his daughter with a belt in her bedroom? The video went viral and caused a

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similar uproar that led to the temporary dismissal of Adams as a family law judge. He was later reinstated.

Then there was the incident involving Georgia mega church founder and leader, Creflo Dollar, who was arrested last year on charges of simple battery, family violence and child cruelty. According to the police report, Dollar's 15-year-old daughter said he "put his hands around her throat and began to choke her...then slammed her to the ground, punched her and beat her with his shoe." Dollar adamantly denied that he never choked or punched his daughter, stating that "a family conversation with our youngest daughter got emotional...and things escalated from there." His daughter told police the argument was over whether she could go to a party the next night.

There are many mixed views on the issue of corporal punishment of children by their parents. For many people, they believe that Horn, Adams and Dollar went overboard in the discipline of their children. Others believe that parents have a responsibility to discipline their children to ensure they don't venture down wrong paths.

Now I come from the old school way of child-rearing and a disciplinary focus. My parents and grandparents never subscribed to a method of discipline that included time-outs, taking away my electronic devices, sending me to my room or making me stand in the corner. Truth be told, I got my butt whipped; and honestly, I don't think my parents did it enough. See, my grandparents primarily raised me, because my parents worked long hours and weren't able to pick me up from school. Because I grew up as an only child, I would venture to say that my mother spoiled me and my daddy wasn't always at home to provide the discipline when I would get out of line.

My grandparents though.....they didn't play and wouldn't tolerate any mess from me. Knowing that I had the potential of getting whipped with a switch, a belt, a shoe, or any other object, not only put the fear of God in me, but it also gave me a healthy respect for authority. Looking back on my life, I will never or could never deem the discipline that my grandparents provided as child abuse. I know that my grandparents loved me and wanted to make sure that I knew that wrong behavior has its consequences.

I would never advocate for child abuse, but no one has truly ever given me a defining example that I could buy into, that would help change my view and prove that what Horn, Adams and Dollar did should be considered child abuse. I will admit that Horn does appear to swing the electric cord in anger, but I don't see it as being done out of evil intent or because he wants to

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abuse those girls. Truthfully, the video of the incident should never have been recorded or posted on social media, but if it hadn't, I wouldn't have had an opportunity to talk about it with you this week.

I agree that Horn should have allowed his anger to subside before disciplining his children, but I don't see his actions as abusive beyond a father trying his best to raise his daughters the right way. True child abuse that involves torture, sexual abuse, hate and evil intent should be dealt with. We as a culture need to define what the difference is between a father or mother wanting to protect a child from making wrong decisions and going down the wrong road and seeking to seriously harm a child.

We need to be real careful before we harshly judge the actions of Horn, because I am sure you wouldn't want to find out that your lack of discipline in your child's life is the reason they are dancing at your favorite strip club, selling drugs or about to do 45 years for a crime they could have avoided committing.

Spare the rod? I say, heck no!

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