

Spanking Controversies In The News

By **Alexander Baron** - Apr 11, 2015



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Once upon a time, schools were orderly places, primarily because a pupil who got out of hand could be given “six of the best”. The cane, spanking and other forms of corporal punishment were outlawed in UK schools **back in the 1980s**, and there have been increasing problems with maintaining discipline. Whether or not the two issues are related remains to be seen, certainly the **murder of a teacher** by a 15 year old in April last year can hardly be blamed on a mere lack of classroom discipline, but there are real issues here.

Last month, an 83 year old former headmaster of a special needs school committed suicide after he was convicted on 15 counts of indecent assault dating back to the 1970s. David Tuohy was said to have been **obsessed with spanking**. In spite of his conviction, it remains

to be seen if this was a genuine case of a pervert schoolmaster being brought to book decades on, as with the case of **Fred Talbot**, or yet another miscarriage of justice effected in the wake of the *Operation Yewtree* witch-hunt that **ensnared Rolf Harris**, among others.

While corporal punishment may be banned in UK schools, in some countries, people still have the right to discipline their own kids. One person who said he will not exercise that right is Chris Brown; he told the *Hollywood Life* website that spanking is barbaric. Obviously he's had a change of heart **since 2009!**

However Chris Brown chooses to raise his daughter, Arizona man David Halley appears to have meted out a bit too much discipline by spanking his daughter repeatedly over a two week period; perhaps the word spanking is not entirely appropriate because he is said to have used a leather belt on her legs while his wife held her. At any rate, he has **now been charged**.

Finally, an article in the *Yuma Sun*, also in Arizona, offers what purports to be an academic take on spanking. According to **Dawn Whinnery**, a multi-nation study of seven thousand families concluded that spanking does correct children's misbehavior, but is no more effective than explaining, time outs, or taking away privileges. It is also said to be linked to violence in later life, among other things.

As with all such studies, it remains to be seen how reliable are the purported associations. Leaving that aside, what does appear to be beyond dispute is that black Americans resort to spanking their kids more than white ones. Whatever the reasons for this, cultural or other, it seems wise to leave parental discipline to parents rather than to the state, unless as in the case of David Halley that parent or guardian goes too far.

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