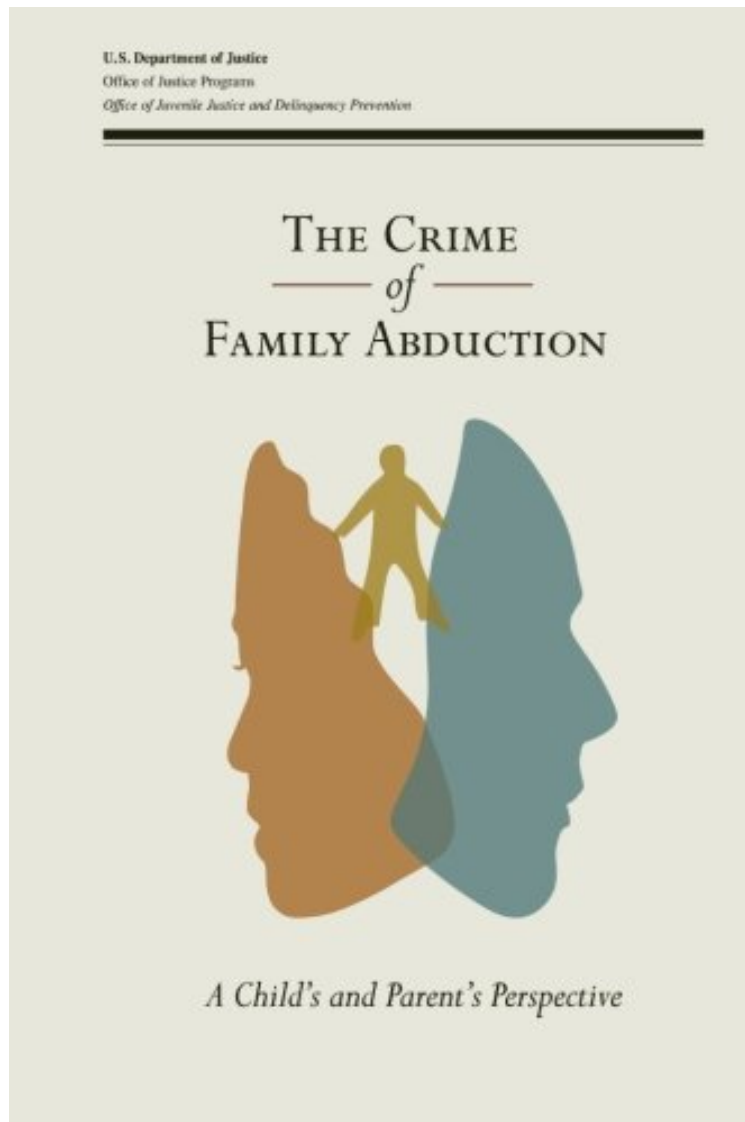


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The Crime of Family Abduction: A Child's and Parent's Perspective

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention : **The Crime of Family Abduction: A Child's and Parent's Perspective** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Crime of Family Abduction: A Child's and Parent's Perspective:

The abduction of a child by another family member is one of the most devastating crises that a parent could ever

encounter. The impact on the abducted child is also traumatic, as he or she grapples with a host of feelings, above all, a sense of betrayal and loss of trust. Nor are these the only persons harmed by family abduction. Brothers and sisters, grandparents, and other extended family, as well as friends are also impacted. It is for these victims that *The Crime of Family Abduction: A Childs and Parents Perspective* was written with the help of individuals with intimate knowledge of this crime. Protecting the well-being of children and their families lies at the very heart of the mission of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. We offer this resource in the hope that it will help victims and their families in coping with the aftermath of family abduction a crime in every sense of the word. For when we minimize the criminal nature of any abduction, we maximize the trauma experienced by its victims. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that as many as 200,000 children are victims of family abduction each year. Although the majority of abducted children are taken not by a stranger, but by a parent or family member, the issue of family abduction remains laden with misconception and myth. Serious missing-child cases that have devastating effects on the child are too often seen as divorce and custody matters, something private that the public and law enforcement should not concern themselves with. The truth is that family abduction can be as physically dangerous and even deadly for the child victims as any other form of child abduction. Most often, however, the worst damage is imperceptible to the eye, occurring deep within the child, leaving traces that may last a lifetime. This publication offers insights into what it means to be abducted by a family member. Written from the perspective of the child and searching parent, it is designed to help you, the reader, understand the unique characteristics of family abduction and the nightmare that they have experienced. Although the individual circumstances surrounding the authors cases show the multifaceted diversity of family abduction, the one thing they have in common is that they were all missing child cases. The child victims in these cases were concealed by their abductor, hidden not just from their searching family, friends, schools, and community but also from the justice and child protection systems. The six primary contributors to this document four adults who were victims of family abduction as children and two searching parents are active in the missing child community. The former abducted child contributors are members of Take Root, an organization composed of former abducted children that provides peer support and advocates on behalf of child victims. The parent contributors are either members of Team HOPE (Help Offering Parents Empowerment), a support network for parents of missing children, or active with nonprofit organizations that work around the issue of missing children. Misperceptions about family abduction can potentially cause further trauma to the abducted child. These misperceptions can also lead to an increase in the incidence and duration of family abductions. We hope that sharing these stories will provide a new understanding of the devastating psychological harm and physical dangers that children who are abducted and concealed by family members often face. Our objective is to increase understanding of the crime of family abduction and empower the reader to thoughtfully assist in the immediate and long-term recovery of a child. Whether you are the searching parent, an abducted or former abducted child, a family member, a professional responder, a neighbor, a teacher, or an advocate, you can begin to comprehend what is happening and why a child-centered response, as outlined throughout this book, is so important.