

Firing Brings Murder, Witnessed by Children

A horrifying example of what can go wrong after an emotionally unstable employee is fired has resulted in a young man being jailed for life.

Jackie Marshall, a 57-year-old grandmother who worked at a McDonald's restaurant in Chichester, England, was beaten and stabbed to death in front of horrified customers, including children attending a birthday party.

Her killer was 21-year-old Shane Freer, a former employee who had been fired following an earlier incident at the restaurant. Freer had struck a young girl who had lobbed pieces of carrot and wet napkin at him.

Freer was suspended with pay and soon fired for gross misconduct. Although Marshall did not fire Freer, he believed his termination was her doing. Upon hearing his job was gone, he broke into tears and then said of Marshall, "I'll kill her."

True to his word, he purchased an eight-inch hunting knife, returned to the restaurant and stabbed Marshall multiple times. She died two hours later in hospital.

Freer later told police, "I had to kill her; she got me fired."

Court heard Freer is mentally ill and cannot appreciate how others feel. He believes his extreme actions are totally justifiable and told doctors he enjoyed violence and may kill again. The court found him guilty of manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility and sentenced him to life in prison at a secure psychiatric unit.

Marshall's husband, Eddie, said his late wife was the type of person who would lead a conga line in the silliest dress imaginable. She enjoyed watching children who frequented McDonald's over the years grow up, and took great interest in what

they did with their lives.

This tragic case carries an important message for supervisors who might have to fire an employee who seems unstable and could be violent.

Following are some tips for letting such a person go:

- Don't do it alone. Ensure there are several other managers present so the person being terminated does not target one person as having done this to him/her.
- Give the person a chance to vent. Don't cut the employee off. If the person threatens violence, report any concerns to police.
- Some companies pick up the tab for a terminated employee to see a counselor. However, this offer should never be pushed on a distraught employee.