Father Arrested For Abuse, Neglect And Aggravated Assault On His Children

Detectives with the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office Special Victim’s Unit arrested a Mesa father for repeatedly abusing and neglecting his children. Giammoda Lewis Miller, 37, was taken into custody May 2, 2018 and booked into Maricopa County’s 4th Avenue Jail. He faces 24 felony charges including aggravated assault and child abuse. Miller’s wife, Rafaela Miller, 35, faces similar charges for her part in the abuse, pending the outcome of the open investigation.

Yesterday’s arrest comes after an investigation that began on April 9, when investigators from the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) were alerted by staff at one of the victim’s schools about the potential abuse.

“Reporting acts of child abuse is the responsibility of every one of us,” said Sheriff Paul Penzone. “The sooner authorities learn about violent and neglectful behavior toward children, the sooner we can guarantee their safety.”

The victims in this case are Giammoda’s 12 and 14-year-old biological children, who are the step-children of Rafaela. The couple has four other children together. All six have been removed from the home by DCS.

Forensic interviews of the victims described incidents of being beaten with belts, a wooden paddle; being burned with lighters and incense; being threatened with a butcher knife and a Taser type device and having food withheld. The physical and emotional abuses were reported to have taken place over the past three years.

MCSO detectives served a search warrant on the Miller’s Mesa apartment which uncovered evidence that corroborates the accusations of the victims. According to MCSO investigators, Giammoda made statements and admissions regarding the abuse and neglect after he was arrested, describing his actions as “normal progressive discipline.”