

## CASE STUDY

### JAVIER

Javier was born in an inner-city area in El Paso, Texas. Due to the lack of affordable prenatal and postnatal health care, his mother was largely on her own in taking steps to prevent developmental complications. She neglected to take any prenatal vitamins, and she did not have regular medical checkups to monitor the pregnancy. She gave birth prematurely, in the 34th week (the normal length of gestation is about 40 weeks). Everything seemed to go fine in the delivery, but as Javier grew he displayed many unusual physical features, including small, low-seated ears; a relatively large third toe and webbing between all his toes; a curved "pinky" finger; a cleft lip; and close-set eyes.

He had a relatively good home environment and a healthy diet, and he received constant attention and support from his mother and father. As he grew, he developed an athletic, muscular build. Even early on, his father noticed how athletic Javier was and signed him up for many local and school sports activities (e.g., soccer, football), where he excelled. However, his academic performance was problematic. In elementary and middle school, he performed better than average in math, but his verbal scores were low. Javier did well enough to advance to high school, where he became an outstanding linebacker on the school's football team.

Still, his verbal scores and grades were very low, and he became frustrated when writing papers and taking higher-level essay exams in high school, which greatly reduced his grade point average. Javier realized that his chances for getting a college scholarship were low, and he began to hang out more with his best friends, also standouts on the team, who

had said they could make some money burglarizing homes they knew were unoccupied. He participated in more than a dozen of these crimes before he was caught and arrested, which further harmed his chances of getting a college scholarship, especially since he was kicked off the football team.

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However, because Javier got caught only once, he was placed on probation and successfully completed it. He realized he should not commit such crimes in the future and cleaned up his act. While he never received any scholarships, upon graduation from high school, he got a job offer from his father's friend to work at a local automotive factory, which paid double the hourly minimum wage. So he took the job, and after a few years his good performance earned him a promotion. Ultimately, Javier outgrew his offending behavior streak, got married, and had two children, and he is now living happily with his family in a modest but nice house that he owns.

We discuss Javier again at the end of this chapter, where we apply some of the key theoretical concepts and propositions that specifically pertain to his experience. We also discuss some of the criticisms of these theories that do not seem to fit Javier's situation.

### THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Do you think Javier's body type played a part in whom he hung out with?
2. How effective do you think probation and other diversion programs are for dealing with cases such as Javier?