

Case of A.

Questions/specification for new psychological report

1 We propose to commission a report because

- 1.1 A. continues to suffer from the clinical condition of post traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.), and this shows that she must have been suffering from it throughout her police interviews, the preparation of her defence, and her trial;
- 1.2 we expect to obtain fresh evidence concerning A.'s condition when she was in police custody, from the staff who looked after her there, and to make use of the custody records which states clearly how distressed she was;
- 1.3 we believe that the problems experienced by A. in her life before the start of the chain of events which led to the death of B., have not been sufficiently taken into account or explained in previous psychological examinations;
- 1.4 we think that a more detailed and precise clarification of what she was feeling and capable of doing in the day before the death of her father and in the following days, would contribute to an understanding of why she acted as she did; and
- 1.5 we think that P.T.S.D. was triggered by evidence given at her trial, preventing her from instructing counsel in general, and in particular on a number of important points that came up in the course of the prosecution case.

2 We would ask a psychologist who is experienced in examining women who are suffering from P.T.S.D. to interview A. and to review the previous psychological reports and all other records relevant to an assessment of her mental health and her behaviour, including her custody and police interview records, and any health records and relevant social services records that can be obtained, in order to assess

- 2.1 whether, and to what extent, A. is now suffering from P.T.S.D.;
- 2.2 whether, and to what extent, she was suffering from it at the time of her arrest and her trial;
- 2.3 whether she was suffering from acute stress disorder before and during the death of B. (and to clarify the causes and symptoms of acute stress disorder and P.T.S.D., and how these are related); and
- 2.4 by setting her behaviour at the time leading up to her B.'s death in the context of her psychological and physical resources, following her earlier traumatic experiences and other problems and difficulties she has experienced in her life, how she would have been able to cope with or respond to the actions of Mr C. (the man who actually killed B.).

3 We hope to be able to answer the following questions.

- 3.1 Assuming that A. is suffering from P.T.S.D. now, and given her history, can it be inferred that she would have been incapable of acting other than how she says she acted in the hours before and during the death of B., and subsequently, up to the time when she told the police what had happened?
- 3.2 Would she have been incapable of giving a clear or reliable account of what had happened, and in particular her role in it, during the police interviews, and especially in the final moments of the last interview, which was clearly the most important part of the interviews?
- 3.3 In the circumstances of A.'s mental and physical condition at the time of the police interviews, could the interviews be regarded as oppressive?

3.4 Was she suffering from P.T.S.D. during her trial so acutely that she was not competent to instruct her lawyers, perhaps being incapable of hearing and understanding some of the evidence?

3.5 Was she suffering from P.T.S.D. during her trial so acutely that she was not able to give a good account of herself and her conduct when giving evidence?