**Week 5: Case Study**

Dr. Jones works in a state forensic psychiatric hospital where her primary duties include the evaluation of pretrial detainees. Her assessments typically call for an evaluation of the detainees’ competency to stand trial and/or whether they were responsible for their behavior at the time of the offense. Dr. Jones recently received a court order to evaluate detainee Smith, a 27-year-old male who has been charged with the beating death of his girlfriend’s three-year-old child. Dr. Jones has a four-year-old daughter. When Dr. Jones initially met with detainee Smith she concluded that he appeared to be responding to auditory hallucinations. When she tried to explain the purpose of the evaluation to detainee Smith, he responded in a tirade of cursing and proclamations that she was “the devil.” Dr. Jones continued to monitor detainee Smith over the next 30-days, observing his behavior, reading his mail, and listening to his phone conversations. She phoned detainee Smith’s court-appointed attorney, but had to leave a voice mail message. He did not return her call during the evaluation period. She obtained case information from the prosecuting attorney, which she used, in part, to write her report for the Court. Although detainee Smith continued to be hostile toward Dr. Jones and others, and he presented as genuinely psychotic much of the time, Dr. Jones did over-hear detainee Smith make comments concerning the murder of the three-year-old child. These statements included his reason for beating the child. Detainee Smith stated he killed the child because she would not stop crying.

After the 30-day evaluation period mandated by the Court, Dr. Jones prepared a thorough report which was sent to the Court, the defense attorney, and the prosecuting attorney. Dr. Jones opined in her report that detainee Smith was not competent to stand trial due to his current psychotic state. Dr. Jones also felt compelled to report his statement that he killed the child due to its continued crying. She thought this to be important, in case another evaluation was conducted, to determine detainee Smith’s criminal responsibility at the time of the offense.

After several months, Dr. Jones was subpoenaed by the prosecuting attorney to testify at detainee Smith’s trial and her report was entered as an exhibit by the prosecuting attorney. Dr. Jones also testified to detainee Smith’s statements about why he committed the alleged murder. Detainee Smith was subsequently convicted and sentenced to death for the first degree murder of the three-year-old child.