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The masked reason for criminal or illogical behaviour often overlooked in criminal and civil high profile cases

Neuropsychology is often viewed as a specialized field and although some physiological- and biological modules may be included in the training of a forensic psychologists and other psychology groupings this may not be sufficient to provide students with the tools to excel in forensic psychology and in the court. As an expert witness, it is the duty of the expert to be impartial, to assist the court, to have expertise in regard to the testimony given, to make sure that he/she is adequately qualified and opinions should be well-researched and thorough (Lord Woof, 1996; Justice Wall Hamilton, 2000, Butler-Sloss, 2002). This presentation demonstrates by means of two case studies the importance of the Forensic Psychologist being well trained in neuropsychology. The first case is of an orthopaedic surgeon who was charged with rape of one patient and indecent behavior towards other patients. The second case is of a high profile, highly educated woman who alleged that she was gang-raped and then made a case against the South African Police that they were negligent and therefore she was traumatized. She alleged that she was not traumatized as such by therapists but by the actions of the police officers. In the case of the orthopaedic surgeon, nobody could explain why he suddenly displayed such behavior. In the case of the woman, her behavior was illogical at times regardless of her apparent high functioning lifestyle. The hidden common denominator was only found during extensive evaluation. The case studies will be presented in terms of the method of evaluation, findings and outcome of the case.

Biography

Louise Olivier completed her PhD at the University of Pretoria after qualifying as a Clinical and Counselling Psychologist at the University of Johannesburg and North-West University. Her expertise lies in forensic psychology, neuropsychology, sex and couple's therapy, clinical psychology and human-animal interaction. She is trained in Ericksonian- and Ego-State therapy and Medical Hypnoanalysis. She trained internationally in the USA, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy. She is presently on the Board of the Psychological Society of South Africa and has been President of the Society twice. She is also a member of the committees of the Health Professions Council of South Africa for Neuropsychology and Forensic Psychology. In 2009 she was awarded the prestigious Alumni award from the University of Pretoria for her contribution nationally and internationally in Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology. She is the author of several books and many research papers.

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