

The Case of Mr. Jimenez

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Mr. Jimenez is a 40-year-old Hispanic male who is currently on trial for first degree murder. He has been in jail for about 11 years. He is illiterate both in his native Spanish as well as English. Mr. Jimenez has also used drugs such as cocaine and Valium extensively. He was tested in prison for 8 hours and given a battery of tests in Spanish. He does not seem to understand others very well, thus his inability to participate in his defense at the trial.

Mr. Jimenez was born in Puerto Rico, the youngest of 10 children. At the age of 1, he lost his father. His mother then had to work to support the family. Five of his siblings died as infants. Two others died, one of an overdose of heroin and the other of high blood pressure. Two of his brothers are currently in jail for dealing drugs, and his sister is the only immediate family member not dead or incarcerated.

As a child, Mr. Jimenez was not provided with much. His house had no gas, water, plumbing, or electricity. He went to school on a regular basis and did very poorly. He got into a lot of fights and claims he was hit several times in the head with a loss of consciousness. At the age of 14 and in the 3rd grade, Mr. Jimenez decided to quit school. He says he was "too big" and could not learn.

Mr. Jimenez worked in the sugarcane fields for about a year. Soon thereafter, he came to the United States and found work as a candle maker. He claims it was the best job he ever had. He also made tables for about a year. He then lost his job and began to experiment with drugs.

Mr. Jimenez began to sell drugs as a means of using them. His drugs of choice were Valium, cocaine, and heroin. He preferred Valium to the other two because he felt "good" when he used it, usually 10 to 30 pills per day. He also used cocaine frequently and had been doing heavy drugs for approximately 3 years. As a consequence of his heavy drug use, Mr. Jimenez's wife left him after 3 years of marriage. He has a 20-year-old son, a 16-year-old daughter, and a 16-year-old son from an affair he had in Puerto Rico.

Presently, Mr. Jimenez sits in his cell 23 hours a day. There are no English classes offered, and his inability to read and understand English is a major obstacle, preventing him to grasp the cognitive challenges associated with the legal system as well as standard psychotherapy. He does, however, see a psychiatrist once a month regarding his sleep medication.

Neuropsychological testing was given, and Mr. Jimenez could barely recite the alphabet and could only count up to 50. Therefore, validity of other psychological tests administered was probably not achieved. In general, however, the minimal amount of neurological and related information collected suggests significant problems, including, but not limited to,

