

FINAL RATINGS AND CLASSIFICATIONS FOR CASE SAMPLE

Judge: Helen Deane Dozier **Date:** June 18, 2009 **Sex/Approx Age of Speaker:** F/unknown
HDDC code: Example 2

SUMMARY: EXPERIENCES

Scales Scored for Experience	Mother	Father	Other Person	
Rejecting	6.0	3.5		
Involving/Reversing	(4.0)	5.5		
Pressure to Achieve	1.0	CR		
Neglecting	8.0	6.5		
Loving	1.0	3.5		

Experiences Present /Absent	Mother	Father	Other Person	
Abuse sexual (yes or no)	no	no		
Abuse physical (yes or no)	no	yes		
Other abuse/extreme events (give type if you believe qualifying)	possible sexual abuse, but not identifiable			

Does speaker have children? no If no, is speaker asked about imagined children? yes

SUMMARY: STATE OF MIND

Scales for States of Mind Respecting the Parents (or other persons)				
	Mother	Father	Other Person	
Idealizing	1.0	6.5		
Involving Anger	5.0	1.0		
Derogation	6.0	1.0		

Scales for Overall States of Mind	
Overall Derogation of Attachment	6.0
Insistence on Lack of Recall	(3.0)
Metacognitive Processes	1.0
Passivity of Thought Processes	1.0
Fear of Loss	(2.0)

Highest Score - Unresolved Loss (asterisk if occurred during last year)	NA
Highest Score for Unresolved Trauma	7.0
Overall "U" score (highest of two above)	7.0
Highest Estimated Score - "Other" Trauma (name trauma, place in parentheses)	*NI

Coherence of Transcript	2.0
Coherence of Mind	2.0

Coder's notes:

See attached notes.

*NI for "Other Trauma":
 Subject alludes to some sort of abuse by someone other than her parents, but is not questioned about it.

CLASSIFICATION: U / CC / Ds2 / Ds3 / E2

Coder's Notes

Overview: U / CC / Ds2 / Ds3 / E2

Subject is Unresolved regarding father's physical abuse, and shows mostly dismissive derogation (Ds2) regarding the relationship with her mother while being highly idealizing of the father (Ds3). However, the transcript also contains indications of current preoccupation regarding childhood attachment relationships, which is an opposing strategy to the dismissive one, so that CC for "Cannot Classify" becomes the correct classification preceding the Ds2.

This transcript is difficult to score with precision because interviewer does not sufficiently probe for childhood memories. After the initial request to provide adjectives for the relationship with the mother "as a young child," the subject slips into present tense on the second adjective and stays there. The interviewer should have reminded her at some point that childhood memories (ages 5 to 12 or even earlier) are being asked, and also prompted for a specific instance to support each adjective, even probing a second time if necessary, (such as saying, "Well that description gives me a general idea of what you meant by 'distant,' but can you come up with a particular time when something was going on that made you feel that way?") Subject cannot be faulted for staying in present tense regarding discussion about father because the probe was for "adjectives to describe your dad" rather than "adjectives to describe your relationship with your father in early childhood," as AAI protocol prescribes. The first slip into the present tense regarding the support for adjectives about the mother is an indication of some preoccupation with current entanglement mixed with a certain anger regarding the relationship with the mother, but beyond that, it's difficult to know whether childhood memories are present and what the narrative recounting them might have revealed. However, the subject does reveal much about her state of mind regarding attachment figures through careful analysis of the narrative, and the integrity of the interview is sufficient for classification purposes.

It is interesting to note that the subject seems totally forgiving of (or overlooks) father's abusive and frightening behavior toward her half-sisters (even saying on p. 3 that "he was forced into that role"), yet reveals anger at her mother for standing passively by and not doing anything to stop it. In the initial discussion on p. 1, the subject mentions that she may have felt closer to her father because she was his only biological child, and her three older half-sisters were adopted by him, so this revelation may explain the closeness that was validated when her father took out his anger toward her sisters but not toward her, and the father even confided in the subject at times and was comforted by the subject (father involving behavior). The subject reveals on p. 6 that she felt ignored compared to her sisters and says "there was never time for me," that "I was very much not seen in the family." In another clear instance of "present invades past" (p. 6, when asked if she ever felt rejected by parents as a child), she says that even today, in the company of her parents she is "really in the background" when her sisters are around, "like I always was as a child." The severely neglecting behavior of the mother (to the extent of being rejecting) suggests a reason the subject might have craved the feeling of closeness with her father to the point of overlooking the abuse of her sisters, even though there's little indication the father showed her any true affection or went much beyond tolerating her presence. The later mentions that she always felt she was in the background add support to the idea that she was largely neglected by both parents.

Physical Abuse: The bar for identifying physical abuse is higher if the subject is “witness to abuse” rather than a recipient. The father’s angry rages were apparently directed mostly or completely toward her sisters, but was so frightening to the subject that she says she became afraid to express emotions, always tried to keep a low profile, and even currently (at the time of the interview) is still afraid to show emotion (one sign of a continuing unresolved state). Being a witness to frightening rages directed toward others is sufficient for identification of abuse on the AAI, and the frightening nature of the father’s behavior adds to the strength of the argument for identifying physical abuse in this interview.

Scoring Unresolved/Disorganized behavior for this abuse revolves mostly around the subject’s quite striking reluctance to name it or to associate her father with it. Note, in these passages below, that the subject alludes to the abuse without associating it with her father at first, referring to it in obscure ways as “it” or “that” or “the yelling” or “I knew what that meant”:

- p. 4 ...”my three older sisters made a ton of mistakes and I saw what that meant. And I wasn’t gonna do that or put myself in the position of being yelled at or being disciplined like they were.”
- p. 5, Subject says “It’s kind of like when there was yelling in the house. That scared me so I didn’t ever want to do anything or say anything wrong so I wasn’t ever in that situation. So the only emotion that I ever saw in the house was the yelling and the anger and I didn’t want to deal with that ‘cause that was scary.”
- At this point in the interview, the subject has not mentioned the father in connection with “the yelling,” but later on p. 5, when asked if the parents were every threatening, she says “they” never threatened her, but were threatening toward her sisters, then upon further questioning, transitions inappropriately to “he,” without first saying it was her father who was threatening, and repeatedly refers to the abuse as “it,” while finally admitting that she came to realize her father, who had been her safe haven, was no longer safe, and she would hide from him. Then she continues to say she would get away from “it,” wished “it” would stop, and that she would hide under the covers or go outside, and that she was “scared to death.”
- p. 7, after claiming that she didn’t feel anything about her mother having a role of being caretaker of the house and her father being disciplinarian (both a dismissive statement and an X-quality statement since she has already indicated she had plenty of feelings about those roles), she says, “Because when things started happening that needed discipline, I disappeared. So I didn’t stick around to see it.” (First, a very contorted sentence to avoid mentioning her father as perpetrator of the abuse, then two obscure references to the abuse that are further refusals to name it.)

Possible Other Trauma: p. 5. When asked for a memory regarding emotional upset, subject alludes mysteriously to “the whole abuse thing,” saying there was a time she was “really scared and confused and didn’t know where to turn or how to handle the situation.” She is obviously not referring to her father’s abuse of her sisters because she then goes on to say her parents weren’t home. “So I never told them and they – they didn’t know and they didn’t notice.” If the interviewer had no previous knowledge of any abuse (that fact can’t be ascertained here), then this mention of it would be quite strange and would indicate disorganization surrounding whatever the abuse was. However, the passage is not sufficient to identify if there was abuse (I suspect sexual or physical abuse by someone outside the immediate family) or whether the subject remains unresolved about it, thus the NI on the “Other Trauma” score.

Dismissive Transcript:

- Self is described as having positive features of being strong, independent.
- Overall interview responses appear abstract, remote from memories, feelings (but in some places, the transcript also exhibits more E-like entanglement with feelings.)
- Endorsement of negative aspects of father's behavior (subject says he was forced into the role of abusive disciplinarian.)
- Minimizing or downplaying descriptions of negative experiences, mentioning and withdrawing the father's negative behavior and the effects of the neglect and the abuse.

Regarding Ds2: Subject's support for the all-negative adjectives regarding her mother on p. 2 are basically a string of derogating comments, phrased sarcastically and made as statements of fact with little attempt to back them up with discussion. The few attempts she does make during the interview to support her statements have an undercurrent of an E-like anger toward her mother's current behavior.

Father Idealization (Ds3): The subject supports her four out of five positive adjectives with glowing generalities, and the only negative adjective, "disciplinarian," is hedged and equivocated. Her description is later belied by little evidence of any true affection or caring from the father, an indication of involving more than attentive behavior from him, but especially, by evidence that the subject actually greatly feared her father. Again, it would've been helpful to ask for adjectives to describe the childhood relationship with the father and specific memories in order to ascertain if the father did anything to make this subject feel loved or feel special, but her voluntary narratives suggests only that he tolerated her company, indicating an acceptance of her presence while being aggressive toward her half-sisters.

Entangled/Preoccupied:

- Present invades past (p. 2), after initial probe for adjectives describing childhood relationship with mother, subject slips into present tense and pretty much stays there for the remainder of the discussion of adjectives. More instances of "present invades past" are on pages 3, 4 and 6, indicating ongoing entanglement in the relationship with the parents.
- The anger regarding relationship with mother goes beyond the continuing derogating comments she makes whenever asked about the relationship. However, the primary attachment strategy of the interview is dismissive.
- Identity or 'sense of self' tied to early or present experience with the parents, and to fearful experiences.
- Unbalanced, blaming mother to excess and overlooking father's abuse

Secure/Autonomous (F) qualities:

- p. 5, subject notes effects of fear regarding her father's abuse, and notes setbacks from her childhood experiences (she never learned how to express emotion).
- p. 6, asked if she ever felt rejected as a child, subject says, "I wouldn't say rejected, but I would say neglected," showing F-like balance and F-like autonomy in taking charge of the interview question and rephrasing it in her response.

- p. 6, Subject acknowledges that she is beginning to see that her father was not all she thought he was growing up. However, the subject comes to this admission very slowly after showing considerable denial about the father's behavior throughout the earlier part of the interview, calling him on two occasions a "teddy bear" that she could "fall into him" for comfort (on p. 3, she says it seems he *is* a teddy bear, present tense). Also, the transcript reveals that the subject has always been aware of the father's behavior but chose not to think about it or to see it, so this statement that she is just now learning of it, while positive because it indicates she's trying to see him for what he is, also indicates continuing denial that she has always known about him.

Mother Neglect: p. 1, subject remembers "Mom always being in the kitchen and not really paying attention to anyone or anything...And if she wasn't there, she was in her chair watching TV and not really interacting with anybody....she was home, but I didn't really care. Because it seemed like she didn't really care." The subject's perception that her mother didn't seem to care goes beyond an indication of severely neglecting behavior by the mother to become also rejecting behavior.

Father Involving:

- p. 4, subject says she "felt bad" for her father, "kind of felt like he was lonely, so I'd comfort him as much as he might seemingly be comforting me."
- p. 6, subject says, "I continue to act the way I did as a child...that I always have to take care of everybody else to be sure they're okay," indicating that both her parents encouraged this behavior subtly or overtly, and is also a Ds-like statement describing the self as strong and independent.

Interviewing suggestion: p. 4 – If the subject cannot remember any separation from parents on her own (which would be the best memories to learn about), the interviewer could suggest a few typical separations that some people have regarding childhood, such as the first day of school, going away to a summer camp, or staying with a babysitter. This subject does have a memory of going away to college, but childhood memories of separation are what we need to learn about.

Also see discussion under "Overview" above regarding the importance of asking for adjectives for the *childhood* relationship with parents (as opposed to the current relationship, which comes later in the interview), and the importance of probing for specific memories, if they are present and if the subject is willing to dredge them up and talk about them.

Transcribing suggestions: Transcribing of these interviews is a valued service, and your efforts to transcribe them with care are one important key to accurate scoring. Be super careful to obtain a transcription that is as typo-free as possible, especially in discussions of loss or abuse, or in other parts of the interview that are critical for determining the facts or the subject's state of mind. It's easy to overlook typos in reviewing a transcript before turning it in, (our eyes tend to see what we think should be there) but it's important to be even more careful than you might in certain other transcribing tasks. An apparent typo on p. 5 in the only real discussion of the father's abusive behavior of the sisters could have turned out to be critical in determining physical abuse, for example. The subject says her father "would like, pin them down on the floor and him 'em or pin 'em against the wall, and you know, be up in their face."

Subject apparently means “hit ‘em,” but she could be saying “hem ‘em” up against the wall. Hitting a child would be more indicative of abuse by AAI standards and more frightening to the witness than holding them against the wall.

And a request that has no relevance to this particular transcript, but in general, if the subject says something that might look like a typo but is actually what the subject really said, please add “(sic)” afterward (Latin for “thus” or “so”) to indicate that it is not a typo and is transcribed correctly.

Also, please add page numbers and line numbers when printing out the transcripts to make it easy to refer to particular passages. Thank you!

—END—