



HUDA MUN'25

MSCC: Missouri State
Criminal Court Study Guide

Study Guide

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Overview

This Special Committee will simulate the case of State of Missouri v. Gypsy Rose Blanchard & Nicholas Godejohn. In reality, the two defendants were charged separately, and Gypsy took a plea deal avoiding trial; however, this moot court will explore an alternate history where neither defendant took a plea deal and were tried together.

The delegates will become the Prosecution, Defense and Jury. They will have to explore and debate on important issues like culpability, coercion, and mental illness within the context of the legal system.

Timeline

October 2005 - Gypsy Rose's mother, nick-named Dee Dee, frequently argued with her family, especially her own mother, over what she believed was necessary care for her daughter, Gypsy Rose. Following Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans area, Dee Dee and Gypsy move to a home in Aurora, Missouri. Dee Dee claims that Gypsy's medical records were destroyed during the hurricane.

Dee Dee also claims that Gypsy was already diagnosed with multiple serious medical conditions including Leukemia, Muscular Dystrophy, Epilepsy, and so on. Dee Dee was completely convinced that her daughter was ill. In fact, according to Gypsy's dad, Rod Blanchard, Dee Dee started taking her daughter to the doctor at just 3 months old, convinced that she had trouble breathing in her sleep (sleep apnea).

2007 - Neurologist Dr. Bernardo Flasterstein examines Gypsy and finds no evidence of any conditions her mother claims. In a letter sent to Gypsy's primary care physician he states, "I believe that the mother suffers from Munchausen by proxy.

March 2008 - Dee Dee accepts various charity donations and support from non-profit organizations and her community, including a house built in Springfield, Missouri, free trips, and large sums of money. At the time, Gypsy used a wheelchair, relied on oxygen tanks, and was fed through a feeding tube. As a result, the house was

equipped with accessibility features like ramps and stocked with cabinets full of medications. One of these was Tegretol, prescribed for her epilepsy: a diagnosis that ultimately led to the fall of all Gypsy's teeth.

2009 - A doctor alerts authorities after he "could not find any symptoms that support what Dee Dee alleges to be wrong with her daughter."

2011 - Gypsy attempts to flee her home with a man she met at a convention. Dee Dee catches her, and according to Gypsy, destroys her phone and laptop, chains her to a bed, and places bells on all the doors.

October 2012 - Gypsy meets a man called Nicholas Godejohn through a Christian dating site. Their chats range from "PG-rated fairy tale declarations of love to X-rated messages." During their first ever video call, Gypsy, though nervous, confides in Nick; she reveals the truth about her condition. Nick becomes the first person she ever tells that she doesn't actually need a wheelchair and is fully capable of walking.

October 2014 - Using a secret Facebook account, Gypsy tells a friend that she is in love with Nick. Their online relationship lasts for about three years. Throughout that time, Gypsy frequently expresses to Nick her desire to escape her mother's control and how she would describe him as "overprotective." As their dynamic grows, Gypsy asks Nick, "Would you kill my mother for me?" and at one point, he accepts it, saying he would do it if that's what it takes to save her.

March 2015 - Dressed as Cinderella and Prince Charming respectively, Gypsy and Nicholas, having traveled from where he lived in Wisconsin, meet for the first time at a Springfield movie theater.

June 9, 2015 - Nicholas arrives where Gypsy lives and checks into a hotel room while Dee Dee goes to a doctor's appointment. He then meets Gypsy in her mother's home and she gives him duct tape, a knife, and gloves. When Dee Dee gets back home and goes to her room, Gypsy hides in the bathroom as Nicholas goes and stabs Dee Dee 17 times, killing her. The couple remains in the house for a while before heading to Godejohn's hotel room. Before leaving, they crank up the air conditioning, leaving the house freezing cold. They then mail the murder weapon to Wisconsin before making the trip themselves.

June 14, 2015 - A post on the “Dee Gyp Blancharde” Facebook page reads “That B*tch is dead.” followed by another graphic and violent comment written by Nicholas. After authorities were alerted, Dee Dee, 48, was found with fatal stab wounds; police say she died a few days earlier. Gypsy, 23, was nowhere to be found, with her wheelchair left behind.

June 15, 2015 - Police trace the post made on Dee Dee’s account to Nicholas’s home in Wisconsin. Nicholas, 26, surrenders. Gypsy is found unharmed, able to walk, and is later arrested.

Nicholas confesses that he stabbed Dee Dee and names Gypsy as his accomplice. Gypsy initially denies all involvement. They are later both charged.

Character Profiles

I. Claudine “Dee Dee” Blanchard

Status: Deceased (Victim)

Alleged Role: Long-term Abuser of the Primary Defendant

Mental Background

She was suspected of Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (FDIA)

This is a condition where a caregiver fakes or causes illness in another person to gain attention and sympathy.

She claimed Gypsy had cancer, brain damage, and other conditions. She also kept Gypsy away from her father and other people,



controlled her diet, communication, and daily life, likely making Gypsy believe she was actually sick.

In terms of public image, she was seen by the community as a selfless and loving mother. She received many charity donations, free trips, and housing. She lied to doctors and used fake documents to support her story.

Relevance:

Although she is the direct victim of this crime, Dee Dee's years of abuse and psychological manipulation are central to understanding the mental state and motivation of both defendants. This committee must consider whether, and to what degree, her actions mitigate the guilt or intention behind her murder.

Questions To Be Answered (1):

1. How much did Dee Dee's behavior affect Gypsy's ability to act freely and rationally?
2. Should her role as an abuser influence how the defendants are judged?
3. Does her abuse mitigate the defendants' culpability in her death?

II. Gypsy Rose Blanchard

Status: Co-Defendant

Charge: Second-Degree Murder & Conspiracy

Mental and Emotional Background :

Gypsy Rose grows up believing she is sick and physically disabled. She is told she has conditions like leukemia, muscular dystrophy, and brain damage. As a result, she uses a wheelchair, takes unnecessary medications, and undergoes repeated medical procedures.



She receives no formal education beyond second grade and is raised in near-total isolation. Her mother prevents her from forming friendships, accessing information, or making independent decisions.

She becomes emotionally dependent and socially unaware, with limited understanding of the outside world.

She experiences **long-term emotional, physical, and medical abuse**, primarily at the hands of her mother. Her worldview is shaped entirely by the reality Dee Dee creates for her.

Discovery of the Truth

Over time, Gypsy secretly gains access to the internet. She begins researching her medical conditions and realizes that many of her supposed diagnoses do not add up. She discovers that she is not terminally ill, and that she is much older than her mother has told her.

As she processes this truth, she starts to question her entire life. In 2012, she meets Nicholas Godejohn through an online Christian dating site. Their relationship quickly becomes secretive, intense, and emotionally charged. It also becomes a channel through which she begins to plan her escape.

Questions To Be Answered (2):

1. Does long-term abuse justify or lessen the severity of a violent crime?
2. Can someone who has been psychologically controlled their entire life be considered fully responsible for planning a murder?
3. Should the justice system treat victims of coercive abuse differently when they become perpetrators?

III. Nicholas Paul Godejohn

Status: Co-defendant

Charge: First-Degree Murder & Conspiracy

Mental & Social Background

Nicholas Godejohn is diagnosed with **autism spectrum disorder**, a condition that affects his cognitive processing, emotional regulation, and ability to understand social cues.



He has a documented history of **developmental delays** and difficulty distinguishing between fantasy and reality.

Throughout his life, Nicholas has struggled with **social isolation** and emotional immaturity. He is described as **easily manipulated** and highly suggestible, particularly in emotionally intense relationships. His family background includes reports of overdependence and minimal outside relationships, and he is known to have been largely homebound and lacking professional psychological intervention despite his condition.

Nicholas has no prior history of violent crime. However, he reportedly holds strong beliefs in loyalty and protection, which he projects onto his relationship with Gypsy.

He believes he is **rescuing her** from an abusive household. According to his own statements, he sees the murder not as a crime but as an act of heroism, something he believes Gypsy needs and wants from him.

Relationship with Gypsy

Nicholas meets Gypsy online in 2012 through a Christian dating site.

Their relationship involves online communication, roleplay involving alternate personalities, and shared fantasies, including violent and sexual themes. Nicholas adopts the role of Gypsy's "protector," referring to himself as a "**dark alter ego**" created to shield her from harm.

Over time, Nicholas becomes deeply invested in Gypsy's emotional needs and follows her lead in their private discussions. According to records, **Nicholas agrees to kill Dee Dee Blanchard only after Gypsy repeatedly expresses fear and a desire to escape.**

He travels by bus from Wisconsin to Missouri, brings the murder weapon, and carries out the stabbing while Gypsy hides in the bathroom. He then flees with her and is later arrested after the pair are tracked down through Facebook.

Questions To Be Answered (3):

1. Can emotional dependence and neurodevelopmental disorders reduce accountability in cases of premeditated murder?
2. Was Nicholas acting out of personal agency, or was he primarily a tool in someone else's plan?
3. How should the justice system respond when a person with cognitive impairments commits a violent act out of perceived loyalty or love?

Preliminary Hearing

Purpose of Hearing: A judge determines sufficient probable cause for the charges to proceed to trial.

Events of Hearing: -

- Prosecution: Submits key evidence like Autopsy report, interrogation transcript and the knife & glove recovered from the scene of the crime.
- Defense: Challenges the prosecution's exhibits and submits psychiatric evaluations of Nicholas Godejohn, along with a therapy session transcript of Gypsy Blanchard.

Result of Hearing: Judge rules sufficient probable cause for both defendants to stand trial, and grants no bail.

Arraignment

Formal Charges read aloud: -

- Nicholas Godejohn: First-Degree-Murder & Conspiracy
- Gypsy Rose Blanchard: Second-Degree Murder & Conspiracy

Plea Entry:

- Nicholas Godejohn pleads Not Guilty
- Gypsy Rose Blanchard pleads Not Guilty

Charges Explained

First-Degree-Murder

Definition:

- Knowingly causes the death of another person with premeditation.

Burden of Proof (on Prosecution):

- Defendant knowingly caused a death.
- Act was done after planning/deliberation.
- Act was not justified (e.g., not self-defense).

Sentencing:

- Mandatory sentence of life imprisonment without parole or death penalty.
- No lesser included offense automatically considered unless requested.

Second-Degree Murder

Definition:

- Knowingly causes death without premeditation, or
- Causes death while committing or attempting a felony (i.e., felony murder rule).

Burden of Proof (on Prosecution):

- Defendant knowingly killed another OR –

- Death occurred as a result of a felony (e.g., armed robbery, burglary).
- No need to prove premeditation.

Sentencing:

- 10–30 years or life imprisonment (parole eligibility possible).
- Lesser punishment than first-degree murder.

Conspiracy

Definition:

An agreement between two or more persons to commit a felony, and one overt act is taken to further the plan.

Burden of Proof:

- Agreement between defendant(s) to commit a felony. Intent to follow through.
- At least one party committed an overt act toward carrying it out (e.g., purchasing a weapon, traveling to the crime scene).

Sentencing:

- Class B felony if conspiracy is to commit a Class A felony (like murder).
- Punishable by 5–15 years in prison

Sources, Documentaries & Further Reading

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- Gypsy Rose: Life After Lock Up
- The Prison Confessions of Gypsy Rose Blanchard
- Gypsy's Revenge

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