

Andrea yates essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Andrea Yates was born on July 2, 1964. In high school she graduated as valedictorian and moved onto college where she graduated with a nursing degree and preceded to become a registered nurse. It wasn't until after Andrea met her husband, Rusty Yates, and had her first of five children that she started to show signs and eventually be diagnosed with major depression and psychotic features. Major depression is defined as a person who " has a history of one or more depressive episodes and no history of manic or hypomanic episodes. Symptoms often interfere with the person's social or occupational functioning and in some cases may include psychotic features". (Vaccarolis 327) Psychotic features are " breaks with reality (such as hallucinations, delusions)" (Vaccarolis 329) Andrea Yates was diagnosed with depression with suicide risk in June 1999, and also again in July 1999 (Texas v.

Yates), after attempting suicide. The development started with her family history, which suggests a predisposition to certain mental disorders. Andrea Yates's two brothers were diagnosed with major depression. Her father had a history of depression and there was also a family history of bipolar disorder. It wasn't until Andrea had her second child that she started to become depressed. She and her husband decided it would be best for the children to be home schooled so Andrea quit her job, and it was that decision that led to her feel isolated.

When the family moved to Florida they left their house and moved into a travel trailer. There Andrea got pregnant but ended up miscarrying. She did get pregnant again and had the child in Florida and so they decided to move back home to Texas where Andrea got pregnant again with their fourth child.

Her husband decided he wanted to “live light” so instead of buying a home he purchased a renovated bus.

Which became their permanent home. (Montaldo) Because Andrea's living conditions were so tight she began to experience her mental breakdown. There were six people living in a renovated bus, Andrea had no time to herself because all of them were home schooled and she didn't even have space to breathe, it drove her insane. In 1999 Andrea was caring for her father who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and the effects of a heart attack and on top of that, raising four kids pretty much by herself. Andrea attempted suicide twice the year of 1999. Once after the birth of her fourth child, she overdosed on 40 sleeping pills which had belonged to her father.

According to her medical records, when she was admitted in June 1999 she was mute, had a flat affect wasn't eating, was suspicious of others, and was scratching at her head to a point where she developed a bald spot. She picked at her scalp because she believed, “the number of the Antichrist, 666, was imprinted on her scalp”. (Texas v. Yates) With her second attempt she held a knife to her throat saying that she heard voices that told her to “get a knife”. (McLellan) She stated, “I had a fear I would hurt somebody..

there was a voice, then an image of the knife.. I had a vision in my mind, get a knife, get a knife.. I had a vision of this person being stabbed..

the aftereffects.. ” (Texas v. Yates) After the first episode Andrea was diagnosed with major depressive disorder and admitted to a Psychiatric Unit where she refused to take medication. Andrea's Psychiatrist then diagnosed

her as severely depressed and essentially non-verbal. She then quit breast feeding and was prescribed Zoloft.

Soon after her discharge she was seen by a different psychiatrist who switched her to Zyprexa and Andrea just flushed the pills down the toilet. After the second episode Andrea was treated with an injection of different drugs including Haldol, an anti-psychotic drug. After Andrea was released her out-patient doctor switched her to Ativan, which she did not take. Because Haldol worked she was released but prescribed Haldol and was strongly advised not to get pregnant again because it was a good possibility that it would trigger more psychotic episodes.

Zoloft is a "selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitor commonly prescribed as an antidepressant. Zoloft affects chemicals in the brain that may become unbalanced and cause depression, panic, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorders. It is used to treat depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and premenstrual dysphoric disorder". (Cerner) "Depressive symptoms are the result of a biochemical imbalance in the brain, a disturbance in the brain's chemical messengers called neurotransmitters.

Zoloft acts on the neurotransmitter serotonin, allowing electrical messages to be processed more smoothly and efficiently. This helps relieve symptoms of depression. Zyprexa is an antipsychotic medication. Zyprexa works to reduce symptoms of schizophrenia by blocking various serotonin and dopamine receptors. It blocks the serotonin receptors more potently than dopamine.

Ativan is a sedative medication generally used to treat anxiety. Ativan works by increasing the activity of a neurotransmitter called gamma-aminobutyric acid which inhibits the nervous system, reducing the states of mental and physical overexcitement". (Stringer) Haldol is used to treat psychotic disorders. This drug controls symptoms by blocking or lessening the effects of dopamine in the brain. (Cline) Andrea, not following what the doctor had advised, got pregnant again with her fifth and last child and went off her medication. She was doing okay but then her father died in 2001.

Andrea stopped talking, drinking liquids, nursing her newborn, and began to pull at her hair and started mutilating herself. She also believed that video cameras were watching her, and that television characters were speaking to her. (McLellan) Andrea went to a different hospital where she was briefly treated with Haldol but the psychiatrist stop treatment because he believed Andrea was not psychotic. She was released and she again returned in May but the psychiatrist told her to " think positive thoughts" and to see a psychologist. The outcome of Andrea Yates's case was tragic. She had a destructive hereditary mental illness that consumed her life to the point where she ended up killing her children.

It was Andrea's mental illness that led her to kill her children, do to her belief that Satan was corrupting them. She has no emotion, no feeling. After she killed her children she wanted to die because she believed that would destroy Satan. It was Andrea's oppressive marriage, repeated childbirths and poor management of her illness by doctors that her disease went on for so long and ended up killing people. Her disease may have been hereditary but

there are so many medications that she took that if it was taken properly would have helped.

The Haldol helped tremendously but she took herself off of it. If the doctors kept her in a hospital where she could be monitored instead of always sending her home after a few days she might have been able to beat this. Instead her terrible illness ruined her life and the lives of her five children. Andrea is still in a mental hospital where she will be treated and live for the rest of her life.