

DeAngelo Bennett

- DeAngelo is a 9 year old male. He is in the 4th grade and is on grade level. He is an average student with no history of serious behavior or academic problems.
- DeAngelo lives with his mother, Andrea Bennett, and 4 year old brother Anthony in an apartment. His mother is 29 years old and an administrative assistant at a local manufacturing plant where she has worked for 7 years. DeAngelo's parents were never married and never lived together. His father moved out of town when DeAngelo was 2 years old. Biological father now lives in another city approximately 300 miles away. DeAngelo has had little contact with his father over the years, seeing him approximately one time per year and speaking with him on the telephone a few times a year.
- DeAngelo's uncle, Marcus (mother's older brother), was the primary male figure in DeAngelo's life since birth. Uncle Marcus worked in the same manufacturing plant as DeAngelo's mother. DeAngelo was very close to Uncle Marcus and very much looked up to him.
- A little less than 2 years ago, Uncle Marcus was shot and killed while walking down the street from his home to go to the store. Police have never caught the shooter and believe Marcus was killed in a case of mistaken identity.
- Marcus' death shocked the whole family which included Marcus' (and Andrea's) mother and father, and two other siblings and their families. All live in the same town.
- Marcus was buried in the local church cemetery and a traditional funeral was held. Much of the community came out to mourn his death. There was considerable anger in the community over the senseless killing.
- Since his uncle's death, DeAngelo has continued to grieve for his uncle. He frequently talks about his uncle and how much he misses him and the things they used to do. He has periodic nightmares about his uncle getting shot and says he can see it "in his mind." He has become progressively more reclusive and withdrawn from friends and family. His mother says he seems sad all the time, not interested in things he used to do, and watches TV all the time. His grades have gone down, though he is still passing.
- Recently, DeAngelo got into a fight with another boy at school. He punched the boy several times and seemed out of control when the teachers tried to intervene. His mother was called to the school for a conference where she was informed that DeAngelo was irritable much of the time, had become disrespectful to the teachers, was being more physically aggressive with other children, and was refusing to do his work. The teachers suggested he may need medication to help with his disruptive behavior.
- At the first interview, DeAngelo reported no history of abuse or other exposure to serious violence. When asked about his uncle's death, he began to cry. He stated he missed his uncle and screamed that he "wanted to kill" whoever had shot him. When asked if he was afraid he too might be killed like his uncle, Marcus replied that when he got old enough, he was going to get a gun and shoot anyone who came at him. DeAngelo stated that if he had been with his uncle he would have shot whoever was shooting at his uncle and scared them away.
- DeAngelo remembers the funeral, but did not understand what everything was about. He remembers the casket, which was closed, and it scared him. He remembers the cemetery and the hole in the ground. He stated said his mother said his uncle was in Heaven and that DeAngelo would see him again there. He said sometimes he wishes he could die so he could see his uncle.
- Mother expressed strong concerns for DeAngelo and seemed genuinely at a loss as to how to help him. She reported that the whole family missed her brother, but that they had moved on. They were angry that no one had ever been caught for the murder. But, she reported, they were not afraid and had not altered their daily life.
- Mother and DeAngelo appear to have a good relationship. Mother has a high school education and seems to use appropriate parenting techniques. She does spank DeAngelo when he misbehaves.