

Chairman ICHORD. Thank you.
You are invited to proceed as you wish, Dr. Harris.

STATEMENT OF DR. F. GENTRY HARRIS

(The following represents private opinion and not necessarily that of the U.S. Public Health Service.)

Dr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think my task here today is to try to convey to you some aspects of psychiatry, as I have come to see them, in the public interest, particularly with regard to the increasing waves and varieties of terrorism and violence which we see about us.

Aware of your primary interest in legislation, I must nevertheless ask your indulgence in first trying to give a picture of what is involved in the view from where I stand. I hope it will be relevant to your concerns in creating appropriate legislation, and I will offer some specific recommendations at the end.

Let me begin with a personal experience.

One day in the fall of 1969, at the height of the Zodiac killings in the San Francisco area, I was riding home with a colleague. We were speculating about the Zodiac killer, and impressed by the solipsistic, bizarre, horrible, and revolting nature of his behavior, and yet mindful of what seemed to us to be his seeking for attachment to things, in his insistence on publicity and acknowledgement for his crimes. We could not explain these matters.

In this dilemma, I made a prediction to my friend; that sooner or later we would begin to see the perpetration of similar acts, only they would not be so isolated and solipsistic. They would be committed ostensibly in the interest of socially approved causes. I cited two areas of concern at that time: environmental quality and conservation issues on the one hand, and business and industrial exploitation on the other.

At once, after making this prediction, I withdrew it. I said, No, this could not be; it would take reasonably normal persons to do it, and such persons would not be able to commit such acts.

I was wrong in withdrawing my prediction. A year later we had the Frazer killings of the Ohta family and secretary in Santa Cruz. The note the killer left was this:

Today World War III will begin as brought to you by the people of the Free Universe. From this day forward anyone and/or company of persons who misuses the natural environment or destroys same will suffer the penalty of death by the people of the Free Universe. I and my comrades from this day forth will fight until death for freedom, against anything or anyone who does not support natural life on this planet, materialism must die or mankind will stop. (Signed) Knight of Wands, Knight of Cups, Knight of Pentacles, Knight of Swords.

Now, I am not a Nostradamus. There was nothing esoteric about my prediction. I simply keep up fairly well with what is going on in the world; and I also have considerable experience with psychiatric patients and those who deal with them (and, I might add, in ways which I don't always consider to be following the conventional theoretical "party line" of my own profession).

The flaw in my approach on this occasion was my idealistic scepticism, which interferes sometimes with a proclivity to trust my own guts.

I don't think for a minute that the social-political-economic concerns which Frazer cited in his note had any direct, causative bearing on what he did. They were simply at hand as convenient rationalizations.

By no means, however, do I wish to imply that these issues are unimportant in the context. Though they are not the makings of his acts, they may be precipitants, just the amplification needed to set him off. Or they may be just the kind of concerns to inspire others no less inclined to deranged or self-styled "corrective measures" according to their limited versions of "how things are" and of "how they ought to be". Such matters may be primitive in the extreme, but I wager none of us is entirely free of them. Thus they are subject to our understanding, and there are messages in their connections.

Peculiar things like this don't just happen. They are explainable. Another of my friends, Walker Percy, a novelist, related to me not long ago a striking experience. Shortly after the incident of the sniper atop the Howard Johnson motel in New Orleans he received a phone call late one night from a New York Times correspondent:

Are you Dr. Walker Percy?

Yes.

The author of "Love In The Ruins"?

Yes.

Where it begins with a sniper atop the Howard Johnson motel in New Orleans? . . .

Walker had finished the novel some 1½ years before. He had never thought of the connection. Uncanny! There probably was no connection, in the ordinary, causative sense of the term. It is just that there are plenty of bridges between fantasies, whoever, whatever, or wherever we may be in the maelstrom that surrounds us.

This may be one crux of the matter. I will say more about it presently. But for the moment let us pause at the question: What kinds of persons become so overwhelmingly absorbed in their fantasies or delusions as to seek to translate them into realities—that is, actualize them—and under what circumstances?

Subsequent to my prediction in 1969 I became heavily involved with Dr. David Hubbard and others in the phenomenon of skyjacking. I learned a great deal about answers to the question I have just raised.

All of the skyjackers studied so far, about 60, have been seriously deranged or maladapted, and most of them turned out to have acted in classifiably characteristic ways. I must say here that I do not wish this way of putting the matter to reflect on the question of skyjackers' responsibility for their acts.

I must also add that there may be skyjackers who are exceptions to the above characterization—but we have not had access to them, particularly those who may have been genuinely politically motivated—Active negotiations were under way with Israel to interview the Lod Airport Japanese skyjacker when, unfortunately, the Israeli-Arab war broke out—but so far we have not found political motivation to be the basic ingredient in the acts of these individuals. Moreover, there is no reason to assume that even genuine political motivation guarantees mental normality.

From these studies we predicted a good deal about the evolution of skyjacking and what actually took place later. For example, after Hubbard discovered a connection between manned space shots and skyjacking, for a while we could tell you approximately when the

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next batch of skyjackings was going to occur. The mutation of extortioning jumper-jacking was also predicted as well as the eventual hookup between the ordinary skyjacker type and the identified ordinary criminal type.

Of much help to our orientation was my intensive study, still continuing, of a schizophrenic South American man who had his first psychotic break while watching the first moon walk on TV.

This is a man who suffers from marked imbalance and lability in the functioning of his inner ears, which is the vestibular system—nothing to do with hearing. That is, he cannot process the stimulation of gravity in a normal manner. His whole life has been an utter failure. He barely earns a living. He is obsessed and distressed with murderous fantasies, is fascinated with flying, and feels that man has raped the moon, and that there is going to be a great earthquake. When his anger is mobilized in my office, he feels the room shake, he gets dizzy, and his head aches. He is, in many respects, not unlike a typical skyjacker. We don't understand all of what is going on here—yet. Dave Hubbard earlier discovered clinical evidence of abnormal vestibular functioning in many skyjackers and bank robbers. We want to look into this and related matters very carefully and thoroughly.

During all of these efforts we became aware of other connections, such as a rough inverse relationship between skyjacking and kidnaping/hostage-taking. When one was on the increase, the other tended to decrease in frequency. And finally they interbred, so that we had instances of hostage-holding and skyjacking combined.

We do not consider these relationships to be stable. They change and evolve. But we have not had enough support in our studies to figure out whether there are identifiable general trends or patterns, much less support for what conceivably might be done about them based on knowledge so gained.

So far there has not been one single move on the part of any Federal agency to take up the matter of what we are dealing with in terms of the individuals involved, as either perpetrators or victims. Every official approach has been a procrustean effort to fit matters to an existing and obviously inadequate structure. Failure after failure has resulted, as history attests. The standard ideology evidently has such strong roots that even the public suffers a certain deception. The public thinks the present airport security measures have reduced the incidence of skyjacking. The incidence was decreasing long before, for reasons not yet entirely clear, but probably having more to do with a period of general social and political tranquility and removal of havens. Security measures were a Johnny-come-lately to take up the credit. And how many have ridden, and are still riding, on this bandwagon?

Not long ago I ran a little experiment. I asked 36 intelligent, well-informed people to tell me the significance, for this country and for us, as Americans, of the recent Rome-Athens skyjacking. All felt that as far as this country is concerned the problem of skyjacking had been licked, discouraged largely by present security measures. Only one person in the 36 could tell me that 14 Americans lost their lives and a 707 Pan American jet was destroyed in that one incident. The others received my revelation of the facts with incredulity—though they recalled having been aware of them through the news media.

Startling? Yes; but we are quite used to this state of affairs. It is true that we haven't had any major or tragic skyjackings in this country in a fairly long time. But looking back over the graph history of the phenomenon there are even longer stretches of low incidence or complete absence. We predict that we have not seen the last of the matter; that maybe we have yet to face the really horrendous variety experienced in some foreign countries. Or maybe kidnaping has taken its place, at least for a while.

We would like to study the individuals who commit such crimes. But so far, other than the efforts of a relatively small group of people widely scattered over the United States, which I have alluded to, fragmentation has characterized all approaches to the problem. Communication has been poor, agencies have competed and sabotaged, well-wishers have been plentiful, much waste of effort to get access to subjects and financial support for their study has resulted, and time keeps moving on as an ingredient to further evolution of the problem. Under these circumstances it is impossible to develop a comprehensive view.

I have spoken of the study of the individuals who commit such acts as we are considering. We have reason to think that most of them are seriously "crazy"—I use that in its common-sense meaning—though still legally responsible. This, however, is only half the picture. The other half is the victims and the contexts of their acts. How we react and what we do about violence and terrorism, as well as the existing structures in which we try to deal with them, are extremely important.

We know, for example, that it is dangerous for a man to challenge a male skyjacker; a stewardess can handle him with much less risk. We question the wisdom of a mandatory death penalty, and the wisdom of readily acceding to terrorist demands such as paying ransom or releasing prisoners. We are alarmed at the routine use of force—counterviolence—and its predictable consequences. We recognize serious limitations in the criminal justice system, and the rather narrow interests for which it is structured. We are amazed at some of the conduct of the news media, as well as at the naivete of some of the negotiation that goes on with terrorists. We are concerned about the public images and myths that build up about these phenomena—the hero-worship, the "Robin Hood complex." And so forth. Much of what goes on is like using gasoline to put out a fire. We need what might be called a "victimology."

Now we have a concept that draws the two sides of our picture together. It is called the proconscious. Let me briefly explain. The prefix, *pro*, has the sense "instead of." The proconscious is a set of fantasies which guide conduct automatically and continuously. The conduct makes sense and has the superficial appearance of being intelligently directed. It has this appearance, however, only so far as it can be rationalized, in the pejorative sense of that term, by both the individual concerned and the public or audience which witnesses and endures it.

It is this collusion between the individual and context which promotes a proconscious system in perpetuo. The combination of Hitler and the Germany in which he operated is a prime and striking example of such a system. But there are many lesser examples.

The contribution of society and its institutions is of course an enormous problem, but on the face of it more easily understandable than what underlies the individual psychopathology. I have suggested there might be common denominators in abnormalities of the vestibular system, of the inner ear system. If so, they could put the afflicted individual at an enormous disadvantage in his psychological and social development, and ultimately in his attitude toward society and its institutions. He becomes vulnerable. It could be the beginning of a pseudo or surrogate personality with a proclivity for preconscious fantasies or delusions which will be translated into action as soon as opportunity offers.

If we knew much more than we do now about these matters, the knowledge could be used to better inform the public and the news media, thereby reducing some of their dangerous reactivity and tendencies. Such knowledge could be used in formulating policy and legislation, and in creating institutional structures more fitting to the problems. More particularly, it could be used in developing training programs for those persons directly involved in and with violence and terrorism. The reduction in destructive outcomes alone would have a salutary effect.

Before leaving these matters, I would like to call your attention to four areas of concern, which are often confused. They are *prevention*, *control*, *management*, and *disposition*. They were developed from our experience with skyjacking. With suitable modification they can be applied to other phenomena. I will give them in their original form, as they relate to skyjacking:

1. *Prevention* is any one of, or the aggregate group of activities of a society which limits the creation of the impulse to commit the act of skyjacking, insofar as these activities do not occur on airport property. By way of illustration, this would be the diplomatic procedure of a nation in relationship to its neighbors to prevent sanctuary, or the society's unwillingness to contribute to the crime through the payment of ransom and supplying parachutes, or the unwillingness of the society to incite the crime through the feeding of suicidal appetites or urges for notoriety, as well as the creation of the mythical "skyjacker" as an expression of the aggregate public discontent. Thus prevention relates to broad social techniques or strategies.

2. *Control* is the collection of airport-related police techniques which involve efforts to detect the potential offender or to produce fear in him so that he does not go through with a planned act. To date these methods include the "profile," uniformed guards, personal search and magnetometers. These methods are not called into use until prevention has failed as demonstrated by the presence of the individual in the airport. They are in connection with his control prior to the manifest act in which he becomes self-declared in his intent. Thus where prevention is accomplished primarily by social policies, control is accomplished by technical, often police, methodologies.

3. *Management* focuses on the collection of attitudes, chiefly those of the operating air crew after the manifest intent is made clear through the act of self-declaration; that is, after the failure of both prevention and control. In this situation the content is no longer latent; it is overt and immediate and it is played out against the dramatic background of passengers, crew, skyjacker or skyjackers, and aircraft. It is divorced from application of the methods of preven-

tion and control and has become an acute human event. Successful management is directly related to the application of interpersonal relationships between the crew and the skyjacker through the deliberate management of human and environmental factors known to the crew, while at the same moment avoiding those common distortions of interpersonal factors known to be true of mob interaction.

4. *Disposition*, the final area of concern, is that collection of legal and/or medical-psychiatric operations which have to do with the disposition and treatment of the offender after he is apprehended or gives himself up, and is convicted or acquitted. Questions of diagnosis, responsibility, extenuating circumstances, et cetera, apply here. Considerations of the social nature of the event in relation to individual motivation (pathological or not) should figure in the disposition as well as specific therapy that might be applied. Any common physical anomalies that might be discovered to be specifically related to aberrant behavior—such as vestibulo-gravity system disturbances, as we call them—would also fall in this area of concern.

What is interesting is the relationships between the various areas. But particularly important to note is that what is done—or not done—in the areas of control, of management, and of disposition all reflect on *prevention*—the ultimate desideratum.

I now wish to make some recommendations, based on what I have said, for your consideration. I will proceed without any clear idea of what is possible.

I may best divide these recommendations into those for the short term and those for the long term. A good deal of expertise has already been developed, though I hasten to add, not nearly enough. Much of it is still hypothetical, though appealing to commonsense when the rationale and certain facts are displayed. Hence, with adequate funding, appropriate members of our informal consortium and other interested parties could be called together, and could work out, in a relatively short time, an interim set of coherent recommendations for your use. For this we would want the on-hand assistance and advice of an appropriate congressional representative in order to assure practicality in the work.

This should be backed up with a long term and continuing commitment and effort consisting of the following:

1. Adequate funding for the various studies indicated, many of which are already identified, involving various disciplines and inter-disciplines.

2. Arrangements for and assurance of access to subjects from the moment of apprehension and through all stages to final disposition. Along with this there must be protection for all investigators and data against bias and partisanship, for example, the prosecution and the defense, in the interests of scientific objectivity.

3. Facilitation of contact and collaboration with appropriate representatives of foreign governments and scholars of foreign countries.

4. Coordination and cooperation between different Federal agencies, and between these and the research consortium.

5. Formation of an emergency multidisciplinary team with a control center, which could respond on short notice to observe and advise, if requested, on major incidents. Much valuable material for further study could be generated by this means.

It is further recommended that the consortium of investigators continue to operate much as it has in the past, with open membership and the usual scholarly commitments. Various recognized authorities in various parts of the country could take charge of specific areas of study. They would operate in a mutually agreed-upon structure of superordinate responsibilities and administrative assistance, and in a framework of definite tasks and goals under reasonable time limitations.

The main thing we want is the opportunity and adequate support to study the problems before us, as a foundation for trying to ameliorate or resolve them. We feel that there has been altogether too much speculation and "thinking" about the matter, too many ad hoc things done that don't work. I am reminded of Wilhelm Roentgen's reply when someone asked him what he thought when he came upon the first evidence of X-rays. He said: "I did not think. I investigated."

I have of course left out enormously more than I have said. But I hope I have given you at least a feel of where I and many of my colleagues stand on the problem this committee—and all of us—face. And I thank you for giving me this opportunity to express myself.

While this statement was being written we have had another major kidnaping, Editor Reg Murphy of the Atlanta Constitution, and another skyjacking involving the death of three persons and the serious injury of a fourth. The kidnaper has all the appearance of being mentally disturbed. Editor Murphy, himself, felt the man was "sick" and also politically naive. The skyjacker¹ shot himself, but beyond this we won't have a chance to know much more about him, except what you are reading in the newspapers today.

Then we have the Vermeer painting which was stolen the other day. Today I learn the person or persons who stole it are asking the curious figure of \$1.1 million to feed the poor and hungry in Granada.

I am preparing an addendum which I think is relevant and which I will submit to the committee.²

Chairman ICHORD. Thank you very much, Doctor, for a very comprehensive statement. I am sure the members of the committee do have several questions. We will proceed under the 5-minute rule. The Chair will avail himself of 5 minutes at this time.

Doctor, to put your testimony in proper perspective, most of your statement deals with the specific subject of skyjacking, and I take it most of your study in the field, as a member of the study team to which you alluded, has dealt with skyjacking?

Dr. HARRIS. Right.

Chairman ICHORD. Have you had the opportunity to study to any great degree terrorist activity outside skyjacking?

Dr. HARRIS. Not so far. We have a great deal of evidence that indicates there are many common denominators in most terrorist crimes. We don't see any real difference, for instance, except for a few superficial details, between the conduct of skyjackers and kidnapers, particularly the recent varieties.

Chairman ICHORD. Now, you commented in your statement that you had made approximately 60 case studies of individuals involved in skyjacking. When you conduct a case study, is that a matter of having the opportunity to personally interview and question them?

¹ Samuel Byck.

² See the appendix, pp. 3061-3063.

Dr. HARRIS. Yes; and by far the vast majority of those studies have been very extensive.

Chairman ICHORD. How many skyjackings approximately have we had in the United States? Do you have any idea?

Dr. HARRIS. I think that it may be in the neighborhood of some 300 worldwide, about half in this country. I don't have the exact figures.

Chairman ICHORD. So, you have made a study of 60. You stated in all 60 cases you found evidence of serious mental derangement, abnormal adaptation, but you have never found political motivations to be a basic ingredient in those acts of the 60 individuals.

I understand that some of the skyjackings have been created with real or at least alleged political motivation, but you have never had the opportunity to examine any of those cases?

Dr. HARRIS. We have had the opportunity to examine some cases which were alleged to be political, and they turn out to be rather naive from any political standpoint.

I think Dave Hubbard cites one case in particular, a woman, whose name I forget offhand, who committed a skyjacking in Chicago a few years ago. That came near to being what we might call a genuinely politically motivated skyjacking. But that would be the only exception. I don't know the details of that case.

Chairman ICHORD. A great many of the skyjackings have resulted in planes being flown to the nation of Cuba. I have not had the opportunity of following each and every skyjacking, but I understand, however, that many of the skyjackers have been permitted to remain in Cuba; not all of them have been returned. Is that correct?

Dr. HARRIS. Yes, that is correct.

Chairman ICHORD. But, of course, you have not made any case studies of the individuals who had stayed in Cuba.

Dr. HARRIS. We have not gotten to Cuba, although we have made many attempts to do so.

Chairman ICHORD. You state on page 7 that your group questioned the wisdom of a mandatory death penalty, and personally I think I would agree with your conclusion, questioning the wisdom of a mandatory death penalty. I think we have to consider this conclusion in light of the Supreme Court decision.

Let me ask you this question: Would you at the same time question the wisdom of prohibiting a discretionary death penalty?

Dr. HARRIS. In general, or as related to this specific problem?

Chairman ICHORD. I will restrict it to the specific problem of skyjacking. Do you question the wisdom of prohibiting a discretionary death penalty?

Dr. HARRIS. I would say offhand, yes; I would question the wisdom of prohibiting the death penalty.

Chairman ICHORD. The Supreme Court decision did not outlaw the death penalty as cruel and inhuman punishment. It did hold that the discretionary death penalty, being in the hands of the jury or the judge, does violate the 14th amendment. Personally, as one who has had some experience in the field of law enforcement, in the courts, particularly from the defense side, I must say that we encounter real difficulty when we mandate a death penalty for a specific crime, because this takes away the consideration by the jury of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the commission of the particular crime.

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