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PARANOIA AND PARANOID PERSONALITIES: 
A PRACTICAL POLICE PROBLEM

J. A. LARSON AND A. WALKER1

Police and judiciary officials are repeatedly being confronted with individuals exhibiting more or less the behavior reactions that are evidently the stigmata of paranoia. These reactions may be accompanied by a peculiar "paranoid personality" on the one hand, in which an individual becomes a pest of the community and police by chronically causing complaints with little or no foundation, and the individual with systematic delusions with which may be present other types of mental aberration. Here belongs the killing type with intermediate threatening types and those due to traumatic and toxic factors.

The problem is a grave one since the causative factors are often latent. That the situation is serious can be seen from the frequency of the occurrence of these types among habitual offenders. Glueck estimated that the percentage of the middle-of-the-road or psychopathic inferiors belonging to the habitual anti-social group was 18.9 per cent. The paranoid type forms a large percentage of this group.

The recognition and differentiation of these various types will not only stop a great deal of unnecessary work but may save property and life, since the chronic kicker, if unchecked, may develop into the killing type. The reason that so many of these individuals advance to the threatening of life and to murder is to be sought in the failure to recognize and differentiate. This failure arises from the faulty training of all those officials who may come in contact with the individual. Since complainants themselves, defendants, witnesses, jurors and others involved are not exempt from paranoid tendencies it is only natural that the true factors underlying the case remain hidden.

If the police officer has been well trained in the handling of this type of case he at once recognizes the chronic kicker and knows how much importance to attach to his activities. Again he will be able to detect the delusional syndrome and, recognizing the menace to society, will either have him committed to an institution or will watch him carefully. Even if the officer possesses the necessary qualifications he is at once confronted by three important obstacles. The first is the usual opposition of the district attorney's office (the members of

1Bureau of Research, Berkeley, California, Police Department.
which are seldom trained in even the rudiments of abnormal behavior), and the officer is fortunate if the affidavit is issued. If the defendant is threatening to kill someone or has made the attempt, then no difficulty is experienced; but if the psychosis has not yet proceeded to that stage in which the delusional complex is focussed upon one or several individuals, then no co-operation is forthcoming. The officer is then forced to abandon his prisoner knowing that in all probability some day someone may be attacked or killed.

Assuming that the officer has succeeded in obtaining the affidavit of insanity his next obstacle may be the lunacy commission. In some cases the lunacy commission is composed of third-rate practitioners who are failures in the general field and because of friendship with the presiding judge are assured of an easy fee on the commission. In one instance, on a case in which the patient was alleged to have attempted the lives of four persons, an official commiserated one of the writers before the trial with the remark, "You are sure out of luck this morning, for between the judge and his two doctors, whom I would not trust to care for a cat, you have no chance with this case." His prediction was correct, for there were too many witnesses for the judge to consider, in his opinion, and the patient was released. It is interesting to note that one of these doctors told me later that the patient was certainly insane and possessed all of the stigmata of degeneration, but "I had to declare him sane because not enough evidence was presented" (?).

If the doctors are trained psychiatrists, which is seldom the case, the judge again can undo the case, for the jurist is usually elected and either by experience or training seldom, if ever, fit to preside. One highly esteemed popular jurist sternly admonished the witnesses to introduce no further "romances" as evidence. The alleged romance was a story by a witness of an attempt to commit suicide. The patient, however, was allowed to give his version and that version was accepted.

Aside from the variables presented by the lack of training in the district attorney's office and among the personnel of the lunacy commission, the arresting officer has still another impediment which may ruin his strongest case. The patient, although committed, may demand a jury trial and it is very rare that the insane, and especially the paranoid, is convicted by a jury.

The treatment of the offender who has criminal tendencies is much more difficult, as there is no adequate procedure for such types. They are given prison terms and emerge with an accentuated grudge against society and their "persecutors."
Paranoia has been defined as a psychosis which is constituted essentially of a disturbance that is mainly intellectual, and through which the personality undergoes a slow transformation in its relation to the outer world. Derivatively the term means "beyond the mind."

According to Specht the fundamental emotions in paranoia are those of a primitive character, such as suspicion, pride, and fear of injury and destruction, desire of exaltation and aggrandizement of one's ego. Therein lies the reason of the egocentric attitude of the paranoid subject. The fundamental emotions that prepare the ground for paranoidal delirious ideas are attributes of man in his social aspect—suspicion, ambition, love. These emotions tend to give the three classical forms of paranoia: the persecutory, the ambitious or proud, and the erotic. Someone has aptly said that "the paranoidal individual is a weak person who by his mode of thinking and feeling is driven into a world of chimeras, on which he expends all the powers of his logic, and from which he is incapable of drawing back, and so reconciling himself with reality."

"True paranoia is a constitutional malady that has its foundation in an anomalous psychopathic structure, generally developmental, and it is evolved in many cases through a fixed channel, with a certain succession of stages, which in their historic totality give to the paranoidal subject an aspect that is perfectly recognizable" (Bianchi). On the other hand, some psychiatrists allege that there is no true paranoia, but only, paranoid types.

According to some authorities paranoia manifests itself in early life by anomalies of character which can be summarized in the words: "Conceit and suspicion." The onset of this disease may be slow, gradual, or rapid. Some fundamental features of paranoia are:

1. The immutability of the basic fixed idea.
2. The absolute faith which the patient has in his delusions.
3. The apparent logic of the delusional system.
4. The promptness and intensity of the reactions.
5. The absence or at least extreme rarity of hallucinations and the presence of numerous false interpretations.
6. The absence of mental deterioration regardless of the length of time that the disease has lasted.

In ascending order of importance and danger to the community the evolution of the syndrome may be considered, commencing with the "paranoid personality." This is the "paranoid personality" aptly described by Adler.2 "Under this heading are grouped all indi-

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2Mental Hygiene, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan., 1917, pp. 21.
individuals who have shown by their conduct that their relation to the world is entirely egocentric. No matter what they experience, no matter what they desire, their own ego is in the center of the plot and dominates everything. This may be associated with a variety of emotional reactions so that the resulting picture is a varied one. It includes individuals who are convinced of their own ability. They are always ready to undertake new schemes, they are usually working for the betterment of the rest of the world and claim all sorts of altruistic motives, and even may be altruistic to some extent, seeking merely the satisfaction of being in the limelight. Or the emotion may be one of depression. In this case the individuals are contentious, surly, suspicious, claim abuse, and ill-treatment. They recognize nothing that is done for them, appreciate no favors, etc."

Under this category the police are confronted by the chronic kickers and the habitual criminal. An excellent description of the evolution of the syndrome in the individual is furnished by White's "Outlines of Psychiatry": The disease may be divided into three stages, named in accordance with their most characteristic symptoms. First, the hypochondriacal or stage of subjective analysis. Second, the stage of persecution. Third, the stage of transformation of personality.

In the first stage the symptoms are very marked manifestations of self-analysis. The patient becomes wrapped up in his own thoughts and is very uncommunicative, entertains unusual feelings, such as headaches, dizziness, insomnia, all of which he fails to understand, but constantly worries about. These are very correctly and adequately called hypochondriacal ideas. The condition is associated with marked emotional depression. The patient soon begins to notice that people act differently toward him; when he goes into a room someone gets up and walks out, people on the street spit at him as he passes by, his employer has failed to say "good morning" to him lately, people standing about are talking about him and making disparaging remarks. Everything that occurs about him is interpreted as having some relation to himself. His whole behavior becomes modified by his egocentric ideas of reference.

With these questions becoming obsessions the second stage of the disease is ushered in by delusions of persecution. This is the patient's answer to all these questions by finding, as he believes, that their explanation lies in the operation of some malign influence. Hallucinations are likely to appear at this stage. Heretofore the patient thought that he heard the remarks passed by people on the street, but now he actually hears them saying grossly insulting things to and
about him. The delusion of persecution, reinforced by the auditory hallucinations, from now on occupies more and more the focus of consciousness. It becomes more and more definite and is recognized as an attempt on the part of the secret societies, religious organizations, or some foreign government either to kill or abduct him. The agents of the society are always near him and he suffers many annoyances from their machinations. They put poison in his food, inject poisonous vapors into his sleeping room at night, send electric currents through his body, and bawl insults into his ears.

The delusions are now definite; they are dwelt on to the exclusion of everything else and everything in life; every conscious experience falls into some reaction with the central thought. At first the patient flees from his imaginary persecutors, going from place to place in his endeavors to escape their malign influence. After keeping this up for a time he finds flight futile and sets about to defend himself, getting up all sorts of elaborate apparatus and many ingenious devices to accomplish this end. Typically, the keyholes and cracks around the doors are stuffed to keep “them” from injecting noxious vapors into his bedroom. The bed may be insulated to protect him from electric currents. The food is carefully tasted and many times rejected as poisoned. Finally, all means failing, he is driven in sheer desperation to attack his supposed enemies. Magnan speaks of these three stages by saying that at first he flees, then defends himself, and finally, all other means failing, attacks.

During this period of persecution the patient speaks of his persecutors as “they.” He is no more specific than this, but finally he may learn who is at the bottom of his difficulties and it is at this time that he becomes a dangerous lunatic. He is a member of the most dangerous class of psychopaths with which we have to deal, and is doubly so because he retains his intellectual faculties.

The safety of the community rests upon the ability of the officials to detect, differentiate and follow the proper procedure whenever the above syndrome manifests itself. The officer is often enabled to follow all of the steps in the evolution of the same individual from the chronic kicker to the dangerous lunatic. From the time that the individual is first detected the officer can commence accumulating evidence with which later to swear to the necessary affidavit. Failing in obtaining the affidavit, he can at least watch the individual and is better able to handle the subsequent complaints.

Some of the manifestations usually found in the police reports are:

1. Litigious or chronic kickers.
2. Filial.
3. Amorous.
5. Hallucinatory (rare).
8. Persecutory.

Since true paranoia is rare in the cases to be described the causative factors will be stated wherever possible, as—

1. Traumatic origin.
2. Senile deterioration.
3. Alcoholic, chronic and acute.
4. Dementia praecox.
5. Epileptic.
6. Toxic—
   a. Drugs.
   b. Syphilis.
   c. Endocrine disturbances.
   d. Physiological anomalies, puberty, pregnancy, menstruation, menopause, etc.

Otherwise the etiological factors are obscure.

In the following pages a few typical and suggestive cases will be briefly described outlining the nature of the complaints, the procedure which was actually followed. The cases will be discussed in ascending order of importance ranging from the chronic kicker to the killer.

In our files there are hundreds of reports of chronic kickers which have little, if any, foundation. As typical of these individuals the following record is suggestive. Mrs. ..........., a prominent club woman and an individual of some means, has sent in many complaints during the past eight years, many of which have not been recorded since they were given verbally to an officer or through some other person. A very incomplete list of her complaints is as follows:

10-29-21—Complained that a dog upset a garbage can.
4-20-15—Complained that a boy insulted a girl.
9-25-15—Complained of an unlicensed dog running loose.
2-1-16—Complained that a man was acting suspiciously.
3-9-18—Complained that a man was acting suspiciously.
3-35-18—Complained that a man was speeding.
7-9-18—Complained that boys were shooting an air-gun
10-10-18—Complained that an old lady had wandered away.
10-31-18—Complained of a suspicious character.
5-21-20—Complained of a boy with muffler loose.
That brings her record up to date and she will probably have another complaint before the end of the month. Owing to the absence of many of her complaints the attempt to ascertain any possible periodicity or correlation between complaints and a physiological cycle was unsuccessful. In every suspicious character investigated there was no foundation for the report. She often comes into the station with a lengthy complaint and, as usual, there was no cause for the story. There is no cure for this type. However, the moment the type is recognized the complainant can be watched as she progresses into a more advanced state, which is inevitable. (See note at conclusion of this article.)

The foregoing case represents the chronic kicker with simple paranoid tendencies. In the following case this condition is complicated with a deterioration due to senile dementia.
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For several years past a man has been calling up the station with petty complaints. In this man it has been possible to trace the gradual progression of the paranoid syndrome. At first the neighbors' roosters and live stock annoyed him. Later he was annoyed by dogs and there are several complaints of poisoned animals of which he is probably the killer. A brief outline of some of his activities is as follows:

No...—Complained in regard to neighbors dumping rubbish.
No...—Complained of poisoned grain in yard.
No...—Complained about neighbors' chickens.
No...—Responsible for killing birds.
No...—Complained of chickens and doves too close to the house.

He issued the following circular:

AN OUTRAGE TO DECENCY

DANGER

In war and in the manufacture of dynamite, there is danger of life but statistics show that the fatalities from such sources are one-fourth only what they are from epidemics and disease.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
California's University City? Berkeley, Is Now Held by the Throat by Just Such Menacing Conditions

I give this alarm to those who have some sons and daughters attending the State University, that they may know the conditions prevailing here, which are: The maintenance of filthy impounding and breeding corrals all over the city within forty feet of where food is kept and meals are served in various dining rooms. These corrals are also within fifty to one hundred feet of wells from which water is supplied for numerous families.

With this dangerous menacing condition you should be acquainted—hence this circular to advise you.

Last summer an epidemic of disease started in the schools of Berkeley and was so alarming that the doctors immediately closed all the schools and told the children to go to the country where they could get fresh air and pure water. Should this reoccur, as it is liable to any day or hour, the condition may be such that it will sweep thousands to their graves, of not only innocent school children but cause closing of the State University and the death perhaps of many of its pupils.

I am a Civil War veteran who went through twenty-two battles and a term in Andersonville Prison in 1864 from which I escaped. I will send gratis to anyone the story of my escape from that inferno.

No...—Poison was thrown into his yard.
No...—Dead rats found in lot.
No...—Complained of the dumping of tin cans by the neighbors.
No...—Another complaint concerning tin cans.
No. — Two notes signed "K. K. K." in regard to blowing up the post office and threatening this man. Handwriting identical with that of R.

No. — Complained of a cement mixer in front of his house.

No. — Complained of noisy dogs.

No. — Request came for an officer to investigate the killing of pet dogs in R.'s vicinity. The officer found that several had met the fate of death by poison, probably potassium cyanide to judge by the rapidity of action. One suspect was brought in but readily cleared, but he felt he was able to inform us about the person responsible. The officer had his ideas, so the two wrote the name of the candidate on separate sheets and compared them, finding that they both suspected the same man. Such notes as the following had been sent to the owners of the dogs and the writing was checked as having come from this man. "Get rid of your yelping dog at once or the student's society will do so. Every yelp annoys students in their studies. THE DOGS MUST GO. Signed Students Society." Although typed, these notes were easily traced to a machine owned by R. These and other complaints made by this man himself came in with surprising frequency.

This characterization is correct and draws attention to the egocentricity of this man's reaction to his environment. In this case, owing to the fact that the officers handling the case recognized the symptoms, they were able to clear up many complaints which otherwise would have been impossible. The prognosis is unfavorable and all that can be done is to watch this man and accumulate evidence with which to commit him.

There are many cases of persons who because of their paranoid personality become police pests. They are typical representatives of the middle-of-the-road group. They cannot be placed in an institution because they seldom become dangerous, and yet by their delusional ideas are a menace to the happiness and welfare of the community. A woman in this class is especially troublesome, for she may wreck homes by stories of alleged affairs with the husbands, or by her letters, somewhat of the "poison-pen" type. Such a case is represented by the following record: A Mrs. . . . . . . . . . has been complaining to the department for the past few years. In addition to a few of the complaints which are listed here she has written several hundreds of letters to the chief with various complaints. Besides her own complaints there are those from other people complaining about her activities. A complete enumeration of all of the complaints concerning her together with her letters would cover three or four hundred pages.
Not only is this woman a chronic kicker, but she is dangerous to the community because she has made several attempts to break up the homes of respectable married men. In every case she alone was to blame and her accusations were wholly false. The following excerpt from the officer's report is typical: "I interviewed Mrs. C. regarding the complaint. She was of the opinion that R. was trying to inveigle J. E. into marrying her or at least to support her (R. is a paranoid person concerned)." R. when interviewed stated the following, which is typical of her false accusations: "Mr. J. is a vampire who preys upon women and then tries to shirk his responsibility. He . . . and insisted on my going with him. Several times he has stood out in the rain in a cotton suit waiting for me. I liked him until he got to be such a bore. On one occasion he stayed in my room till five o'clock in the morning and I thought my child's father had heard about it and cut off my allowance, and I told him so and that is what scared him, as he thought that he might have to help to support me . . . I used his name because he had kissed me and I had kissed him in a way that made him my husband by virtue of such a kiss. Whenever anyone kisses another in a way that they would not kiss their mother or child they become married in my estimation, but of course not according to the conventional customs and forms.

"Some day I shall go into court and show up some of these 'males' that pretend to be men. . . ."

R. was brought to the station to tell her story and before she had finished her mother came in and kept interfering. To quote the officer again: "Another case of tainted blood. In my opinion R. could not be committed as insane. She is a psychopath. She is a borderline type between the sane and insane. She has a very unstable mental make-up. She seems to be abnormally developed sexually without the powers of inhibition to control this instinct. She may reach a collapse or breaking point and become insane. Her ideals of morals are not in keeping with the customs of the country."

A prominent physician stated as follows concerning her: "....... is an overdeveloped sexual freak. She is of peculiar psychopathic make-up. She is somewhat hysterical. When she was my stenographer she used to crawl up to me so closely that I would have to ask her to sit on the other side of the table. I have been afraid that she might try to implicate me in some way. In order to protect myself I have been saving her literature. . . ."

The following excerpts from two of her letters are suggestive: "I must add that I regret having judged Mr. ......... as I did. I
know that one thing necessary to real progress is 'Judge not.' It seems to me that God knew exactly what he was about when he said, 'Judge not,' and that if we break the least of God's commandments we break them all. . . .”

“To whom it may concern:

“The writer's small daughter took the three . . . . . children to the playground in the back yard of the B. police court, where Viola was disgustingly attacked by boys much larger than she was when my ten-year-old daughter came to the rescue, and was viciously slapped for doing so; and then these criminals in the making, there in the back yard of the police court, wilfully pushed Viola off the slide, which caused her arm to be broken. Officers in the police department were told about this not an accident, when they rushed out and picked up Viola, at which moment J., my small daughter, said: 'I am caring for Viola and will you wait until I can get her two sisters out of the sand box so that I can go with her to the hospital.' Viola was crying for them to stay with her. A woman in charge of the playground said that they would wait, but when she had gotten the children she found that Viola had been taken to the hospital, when J. picked up the two-year-old child and ran to the hospital. . . . Of course, as soon as she got there she told the authorities where Viola lives, but did not spell the name . . . and more than I am. After all the rushing I understand that Viola was permitted to lie in agony until her parents were gotten in touch with (in the meantime she had been given what treatment was necessary, which the letter writer overlooked), as the doctor would not make the X-rays, etc., until he knew that he would be paid. Mr. M., one of the officers who picked up Viola, said that J. had said that she would tell the parents about her being in the hospital and that as she did not she was careless. What selfish stupidity leaving a frightened ten-year-old child with two other frightened, crying babies to care for—along with Viola crying incessantly for her—to do an important thing, when they must have known that Viola would have been improperly cared for for mercenary reasons until her parents were gotten in touch with and known to be good for the hospital bill, etc. However, as a matter of fact, J. did the human, kind and surely childlike thing when she followed her little charge on foot with her two-year-old baby sister in her arms and got the "Message to García"; in other words, she caused Viola some comfort; and as she was without money and on foot, got to the hospital much quicker than V.'s name and where she lived than she could have gotten to V., several
times further away home than the hospital, with news of her being in
the hospital with a broken arm. It's 2 a.m. and I'll finish this later.

"I said in no uncertain terms that I would see that the hard-working
parents of Viola got justice if had to walk the streets of B. with
a petition, as I did for prohibition and as I shall as soon as I have time
doing my bit towards establishing the single standard of morals when
it will be fully possible to enforce the prohibition law. What joy then.
I reckon policeman X meant what he said when he said that he would
put me in jail if I made this or other threat. Piffle, that's nothing. I
think that statistics show that on an average of 85,000 are murdered
here in the U.S. each year and some bootleggers and profiteers, thieves,
etc., have said I will disappear if I don't lay off fighting them; but
somehow I am not afraid, but sad, and feel like saying with Jesus,
'Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.'"

Again quoting from an officer's report about the same incident:
"On this date Mrs. ....... and Mrs. ....... came in and asked for the
chief. The chief was not in and they then told the object of the visit—
to 'raze' the police department and two officers. During the course of
the conversation it was apparent that Mrs. ....... had so far lost
control of herself that she did not care what she said. She made con-
tinued threats of 'getting' the police department; what she was going
to publish about what she knew of them; that they were no gentlemen;
and that she was going to have justice done. .... Further, she
accused officer X of grinning at her while he was sitting at the desk.
.... Later learned the identity of this woman, who is much men-
tioned in our files."

The characterization of "police pest" well fits the activities of this
individual. Out of the collection of hundreds of letters written by her,
as well as the complaints concerning her, the above items are fairly
typical.

The next type of paranoid personality appearing as an important
problem is that of the habitual criminal with the paranoid taint. In
brief, one such case originated with the theft of a bicycle. The thief
was sentenced to fifteen days in jail. He was so embittered that he
was going to make society pay and he committed another theft and
was again sentenced. When he was released he burglarized some
homes and was sent to jail for a longer term. His antipathy and
grudge towards society continually increased and while in confinement
he planned his next depredation. While riding on the street cars this
man sees people with more wealth than he has and he plans to get
some of it by thievery and burglary. At the present time he is in the
state penitentiary and states that when he gets out he will get even more than ever and make the community pay for all that he has suffered. His case is an apt illustration of the inadequacy of the present procedure. It is only a question of time when he will again become a menace to the community. The only sane solution is in the direction suggested by Dr. Herman Adler with his chancery court and experts.

The first type of paranoid personality to become dangerous is the paranoiac of the threatening sort. The following case is that of a Greek who for a long time suffered from a persecutory syndrome. The picture is somewhat confused on account of the patient's addiction to alcohol, but in this individual it was a secondary factor.

Five previous reports indicate that this man had been brought in here several times for getting drunk and becoming very noisy. Whenever he gets a few drinks in him he wants to gather a crowd and make speeches. To realize this he gets up on a garbage can on the street and becomes very offensive and noisy. This last time he was picked up on the porch in the rear of a printing establishment acting in an insane and noisy manner. He was locked up about 12:30 p.m. and about 7 a.m. became violent, wrecking the toilet in the cell. He tore up the drain pipe and threw pieces of the seat through windows into the squad room. He menaced anyone who came near him, wielding the drain pipe. He was overpowered and taken to the emergency hospital and subsequently committed to an asylum.

This man had delusions at times when he was not drunk consisting in a belief that there were six dead negroes in the rear of the house in which he lived. At stated times they would get up and do a dance and then lie down again. At these times he grabbed an alarm clock and ran into the street waving the clock at the street car and shouting that there were six dead negroes in his house. We were unable to determine the origin of this delusion.

While in the asylum this man was a cook and one day killed a man whom he did not like. He was later castrated and liberated. As yet he has done no further harm, but he is a constant menace.

It is of the utmost importance that the paranoid individual be stopped before his delusional system becomes focussed upon a group or a single individual. In order to do this the cooperation of the officer, and the courts, and the elimination of the jury are imperative. The officer may perceive that the individual is dangerous and should be segregated, but if he has not the proper support the individual may be freed and turned loose more dangerous than ever. In the following case, which is typical, the officer and the lunacy commission
did their part, but on account of a jury trial, the attitude of the district attorney, and the judge of the court the man was released within a few months without the decisive settlement of his case. Although the officer had collected added evidence with which the case might have been won regardless of the ignorance of the jury, he was told to do nothing further since the hospital had turned the man loose. The result of such action, as well as the fulfillment of the prediction of the first arresting officer, may be seen in the following case. Excerpts from the officer’s report:

“A few nights ago Sergeant ........ asked me if I would see if I could get any coherent statement out of a Mr. ........ It seems that this man had complained to the sergeant that a watch had been stolen from him at the time of his father’s funeral. An officer had been detailed to investigate the alleged theft, but only secured a mass of contradictions and a series of absurd statements.

“This man conversed with me, believing that I would take his case up with the Secret Service of the United States. After looking about to see that no one was listening he drew his chair close to mine and whispered a story which exhibited a marked delusional syndrome. In brief his story was that he was the victim of a conspiracy in which the Masons, Catholics, the Kaiser, and others were combined against him. He further stated that these different organizations thought that he was Lucifer or God and had the power of creation. The purpose of the various conspiracies was to obtain this power from him. With that end in view the Kaiser started the war and had the United States join in so that he would eventually be captured. Again at the recent Shriners’ convention a conspiracy was initiated for the purpose of his abduction. He stated that he had been threatened many times as well as poisoned through milk and vegetables. He even became specific, stating that some years ago a foreman was sent by the conspirators to kill him, but he had a gun with him at the time and frightened the fellow away. His success in thwarting these conspiracies was due to his ability in handling firearms. On one occasion two men followed him, but he frightened them away. On account of these alleged dangers he wanted a permit to carry firearms. He mentioned incidentally that he had attempted to secure such a permit from this department over a year ago, but had failed. He therefore inferred that the police were either afraid to handle his case or were involved in the conspiracy.

“He had been troubled with this delusional system since childhood (thus suggesting dementia praecox with a paranoidal superimposition). He explained many of his beliefs in astrological terms and he con-
structed an elaborate chart in which he showed that the various conspirators had derived their belief in his powers of creation because he was born under the sign of Lucifer. From that time up to the present these agencies were constantly upon his trail and the culmination was reached when the Masons stole his watch and buried it in the body of his father (according to their ancient custom, as he alleged). He was very emphatic as to his opinion concerning the watch.

"He very mysteriously produced a card and said that it was a clue which if properly followed would lead to some of the conspirators. The card in question was sent with flowers by sympathetic neighbors because of the death of his father. The card merely contained the signature of a friend and there was absolutely nothing unusual about it. However, F. pointed out that one of the letters was symbolical of an astrological deity who presided over the genitals. He thought that this card was sent as a warning and that the sender might know something about the watch. He said that he had questioned the woman who had sent the card, but could obtain no satisfaction. As a matter of fact, he frightened the woman by his manner and questions and she thought that he was insane.

"In addition to these astrological delusions he believed in reincarnation. Thus W. Harding—Micah; A. Vollmer—Pontius Pilate; his father—Ramese I, King David, Shakespeare; one of his brothers—Ramese II, Satan, King James, the 'Lamb of Tennessee'; another brother—Moses, Richelieu; as for himself he was Lucifer, Job.

"Some of his other ideas (all these as well as the foregoing were written out for me and later submitted as evidence) were as follows: Death Valley is the result of poison gas (from some war); Noah sailed from the top of a mountain in Tennessee (sea caused by a disregard of the Ten Commandments); the worship of Jesus is a concoction of Satan. He showed me an article which he had sent to a minister. 'In this letter he attacked abusively different denominations. This letter was interestingly made use of in a later trial by jury, as one attorney used excerpts from it to show evidences of insanity, and the attorney for the defendant used other sections to demonstrate his excellent command of language, coherence and clear thinking. This is of course typical of this sort of individual, but this fact was the only one which the letter was not used to demonstrate to the court.'

The next report was written by the same officer and reads: "After interviewing the above for several days I found that he was suffering from paranoidal delusions with a possible precox coloration (as he had had these ideas since adolescence). From what he said he is a
menace to society in his present condition. I obtained an affidavit of insanity and he was committed to a state hospital by the judge. . . ."

In the jury trial which followed, as F. had secured the services of an attorney and had been instructed as to his rights, the foregoing evidence was submitted. In spite of his statements to the jury, which were the same as his statements to the officer, there was a lock in the jury, seven to five. In this trial the attitude of the attorneys was very interesting. The attorney for the defendant, afterwards candidate for District Attorney, told one of the officers that the defendant was insane and that he would not have put him on the stand if he had not been compelled to do so. In spite of the evidence submitted shortly before the trial, the deputy from the District Attorney’s office bemoaned his luck to the officer, saying, “This is a heck of a case,” and other remarks to the effect that the defendant would probably get out, the evidence was slim, the defendant in such cases always got out, etc.

Shortly after the first jury trial he was released from the asylum. After he had been out for some three or four days he attempted to secure a permit to carry firearms in a neighboring city, and was refused. He then wrote the following letter to the Admiral of the Navy:

“Dear Sir—In my call to see you morning of . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Attached please find a chart or star map, which may be more or less self-explanatory to you, as the science involved has been much studied in the past, and also much misused.

“Due to the time circumstances of my birth, and appending reasons, I have been personally subjected to intermittent and varying unpleasant attentions upon the part of secret orders, evidently intended to compel or persuade my allegiance from the United States government. Due to the same reasons there was a very clever attempt at my abduction by the German imperial government in July, 1908, at Galveston, Texas, which I sidestepped and foiled. (So far as I know their agents have caused me no further annoyance.)

“I have declared openly and in writing, as my privilege as an American citizen, against the existence of secret orders within the United States as well as against the principle that any church should have any direct power over the government. Also have declared myself against the worship of any or special human being, due to my study of history, knowledge of facts, and natural laws involved. Especially that idolatry is a prolific cause of insanity to a greater or less degree in thousands of cases. My stand upon these matters has no doubt excited further animosity against me by those who hold the opposite view, to say nothing of those lunatics who believe that the
'reincarnated Lucifer archangel' should be spiked to the cross as a necessary religious ceremony.

"Should you have some knowledge and understanding of these and related matters I request due authority be given to procure from a federal judge a permit to carry weapons of self-defense and also such certificates as will grant me immunity from arrest and annoyance upon clever technical charges which are but further evidence of the conspiracy against me. I of course desire no permit to commit crime. Furthermore, due to the danger of both poison and mutilation when a political prisoner, I request from you immediate assistance from the U. S. Marines (in ancient times in the land of Uz called Nimrod's Drs.D) should I be able to get word to you in case of further arrest upon some fool charge or the age-old, ridiculous foolishness upon the part of the Masonic order or the Roman Catholic Church to try in court or otherwise the 'Creator' in human form.

"Being an American citizen, I desire no asylum of safety, but desire the privilege of self-defense within the domain of the United States government as a matter of right and common sense."

This letter was referred back to the officer who had been handling the case and he called up the district attorney's office to submit it as evidence in the next trial. To quote from his report: "Instead of a retrial the attorney told me tonight that F. had been turned loose. He stated that this was because the authorities had decided that he was insane, 'but harmless.' I must beg to disagree with them and with those who turned him loose, the responsibility of whatever may result will rest, for we of the police department have done our part.

"The following facts, taken from previous reports, tend to show that, instead of being harmless, F. has and exhibits the symptoms of a dangerous paranoiacal individual, and when he does break loose it will then be too late to undo the damage except to commit him to another asylum." He then goes on to mention the different delusions and also added that while being conducted to the hospital F. thought that he was going to see one of his persecutors and made the statement that he wished that he had "a good old forty-one." At another period he visited the shop and attempted to purchase a revolver.

Following the writing of this report a statement of the case was given to the papers and the community was warned against this individual. F. then moved to a neighboring city and some few weeks later the following article attested to the correctness of the officer's prophecy:
MAN RUNS AMUCK, SHOOTS UP DEPOT

Mechanic Fires at Policeman, Is Overpowered and Held for Investigation

While a score of persons, waiting for a train at the Sixteenth street depot looked on, F. ran amuck, flourishing a pistol and fired at a policeman. He was overpowered after a desperate struggle, and taken to the city prison, where he is being held under investigation.

According to the police, F. was recently discharged from the asylum at A.

F., as a mechanic at the plant of the U. C. company, threw his companions in the machine shop into terror early today, when he drew two large automatic pistols from his pockets and laid them on his work bench. Workers telephoned the office, and R., the employment manager, and L., the plant's fire marshal, approached F.

R. had the man come outside under the pretense of giving him another job, and then told him he was discharged. He left the factory immediately and walked in the direction of the station. L. and R. followed.

At the Sixteenth street station he went to the elevated track where the electric trains pass. R. and L. met Patrolman G. of the police department and reported the fact that the man was believed to be demented and armed.

When G. approached to take him into custody, F. drew one of his pistols and fired at the officer. The bullet missed and the two men closed. The insane man's pistol jammed and he was unable to fire again, and he and the officer struggled for several minutes.

Finally R. and L. went to the officer's assistance and F. was overpowered. He was taken to the city hall, where the other pistol and 35 rounds of ammunition were found in his possession.

If it had not been for the fact that F.'s employer had attended the preliminary hearing and carefully watched him, F. would not have been arrested and there might have been further casualties.

Following this outbreak F. was given another trial before a different insanity commission. To quote from the last report of the officer who was again called to the trial: "F. was again committed to an asylum this morning. Before the trial was over the defendant busied himself with filling in a form for a jury trial. This man presents the usual classical syndrome of paranoia. Since his release from .......... he has written to Chief Justice Taft and other judges for permits to carry a gun. He also wrote a letter to his brother which would convince any jury that there was something wrong with him. In addition, as F. could not secure the necessary permission, he drew up what he termed the 'Bill of Rights' which he used as his authority. When asked why he carried a gun he said that the 'Bill of Rights' drawn up by himself gave the requisite sanction. He said that the laws of the state were unconstitutional and demanded that the judge
see the judge of the Supreme Court of the United States for a decision. He admitted an unsuccessful attempt to secure a permit for a gun from Oakland.

"When asked to explain the incident in .......... he said that his employers were in collusion with the officer who arrested him in what he termed a "daylight robbery" to get his gun. He shot in order to defend himself.

"It is interesting to note that his witnesses have always turned against him. Thus in the first trial F. had called in his employer to testify in his behalf, but after listening to the statements of F., he thought that commitment would be the best procedure. Again at the last trial the judge held up the trial because F. demanded that the train crew be summoned as witnesses. The crew testified against him, and F. reprimanded them for leaving the train while on duty.

"During the last hearing F. demanded to be tried by the legal test of insanity and then refused to answer any questions not on the printed form or to explain any of his letters or statements, saying that 'a man cannot be compelled to give evidence against himself.'

"It is very unfortunate that the state might have to go to the expense of another jury trial for a man who has been committed to two different institutions by two different examining boards and by two different sets of witnesses. However, if twelve good and true jurors find this man sane, we may be able to try him for attempted murder; that is, if a jury decides that it is murder or attempted murder to shoot at a policeman. (F. had 35 rounds of ammunition and two automatics upon him at the time of his arrest.)

"However, if the police had had efficient co-operation in his particular case, this man's recent outbreak with results so nearly disastrous would have been prevented. The result of defective procedure, inefficiency, and lack of understanding in the first instance was that the police had to pick him up again and not without considerable danger to the arresting officer. Of course now that F. has run amuck and has been put where he belongs, there seems still to be no appreciation on the part of the general public and some of the official personnel of the factors which made it possible to predict this, and it is impossible to convince the average insanity board of the danger of such men left at large."

Unfortunately a man of F.'s type does not carry a gun for his attorney and others involved in his release, but he carries it for the police officers who originally arrested him and recognized his condition and may be forced to arrest him a second time. This case was de-
scribed in detail to show how in spite of the absurd character of the actions and delusions of F. this man caused the community the expense of two hearings, a jury trial, and nearly committed murder.

There are several types with definite paranoid symptoms in which the paranoid complex is superimposed upon a definite structure. The etiology may be simple or complex. Some of the more important factors are toxie conditions, including alcohol; endocrine disturbances; anomalies in physiological epochs as puberty, pregnancy, menopause; senile deterioration; trauma, epilepsy, etc.

A picture of the chronic accusatory, fighting, suicidal and killing type with the causative factor being alcoholic deterioration is presented in a Mr. W.

After troubling this department for years with his conduct and delusions of persecutions he was tried but acquitted by a jury. At the conclusion of his trial he showed the arresting officer where mistakes had been made in his trial and how he could have been convicted. Whenever in confinement he complained of his enemies attempting to castrate him by wireless and poison vapors. When on the street he was troubled by the exhausts of automobiles in the noise of which he heard voices threatening his life.

Mr. W. accused his wife and daughter of immoral conduct. He made the remark that this man Y. would never eat his Christmas dinner. On one occasion he went to the establishment where Y. worked and engaged in a scuffle with him over the alleged charges. Mr. W. exhibited books stating that Mr. W. read and studied them. They were books on spiritualism and mind power.

Mr. W. came to the station and stated that he was sure that Y. was trying to get him out of the way and that he was in the bunch that had him in a mental telepathic field. W. says that he has taken up the case with the district attorney who promised him a grand jury investigation in June (instead of issuing an affidavit for insanity).

Mr. W. later instituted a $10,000 damage suit against certain persons, claiming that occult influence, hypnotism, and mesmerism had been used against his. He claims that a Miss ......... used occult influence in inducing his aged father to marry her in order to get his money away from W. He stated that this woman and several other people had conspired to entice the aged father away, to drive him (W.) from his home and cause him to be tried for insanity.

As was to be expected, between his litigious and persecutional tendencies fostered by alcohol, he steadily became worse and was finally again tried and committed to an institution.
Of course the jury in this case undid all of the work of the arresting officer because they were quite unable to evaluate the symptoms.

An excellent case in which the determinative factor is of toxic origin due to an upset of physiological function is that of Mrs. M. Her trouble in all probability was caused by the menopause with a marked delusional complex. This case is fairly typical of the manner in which the police are called in answer to complaints and in which the routine investigation should speedily unravel the real trouble, especially as the calls become more frequent. The following résumé covers a period of several years when the calls were almost periodic in nature.

On .......... Mrs. ...... reported that suspicious persons were snooping around her house and yard. Previous to this Mrs. ...... had a U. S. secret service man watch her neighbors in regard to alleged pro-German activities. His findings were that there were no grounds for such accusations as she had made and that they were only the result of her imagination. She stated that there were people prowling around her yard at night and that this had been going on for some time. Officers were sent to her house on hurry calls on various occasions only to find that she had shot at alleged "trespassers" who had got in her house through windows and had ransacked the place and stolen things. She often saw strange persons hanging around the house and declared that she was going to shoot the next one who comes into the yard. One night she heard a barricade she had put in front of a door fall and two men walking around the house. She stood at the head of the stairs for over an hour watching for the two men to appear, but, as they did not, she fired two shots in their general direction and then went downstairs and fired three or four more to warn the neighborhood. As a matter of fact at this time only two shells were found. She stated that the burglars found some scraps of baby ribbon and had decorated her picture with it and had put it on the table. Mrs. ...... then made the following significant statements:

That these acts have been going on for some time and that someone is heckling her. This person has the confederates who listen in on the telephone when she calls the station and warn the person away. She stated that every phone in the United States was being listened in by someone she does not know. She had phoned many times to the police, but we could not do anything for her because this group of people had control. She said that we could get these persons if we wanted to and that this thing had gone so far that she had arrived at the limit of her patience. She said that she was not afraid, but mad, and would not tolerate it any longer. She also stated that if the police
did not stop these persecutions she would go to the mayor, and if he
wouldn’t help, to the governor and get the militia out, and if he
wouldn’t help, to the President of the United States and his little
cabinet. She said that she would shoot the next person, officers in-
cluded, who came into her yard. When advised to be careful she
ridiculed the law and said that she would never be arrested, as there
were plenty of Americans in the city and that the soldiers would back
her up if she killed someone in her yard and she could have one thou-
sand white Americans to her aid.

When arrested by uniformed officers she protested, screaming that
she was being chloroformed and she even attempted to run.

At her trial her neighbors testified that on account of her notions
of persecution and the freedom with which she handled a gun they
were afraid to pass her house at night, and that two of the people
nearby had narrowly missed being shot on one occasion. They all
testified that they had heard bullets whizzing through the trees in front
of their houses. She herself told the judge that she had fired more
than a dozen times and that she was continually being persecuted and
couldn’t sleep at night. She told him that on one occasion a man had
hidden himself in a packing case in her basement and that in the morn-
ing she had heard him run across the floor.

Fortunately her attorney dissuaded her from a jury trial and she
was committed. If the investigating officers had not recognized the
delusional complex and acted accordingly, someone might have been
killed.

Instead of an onset through a derangement in physiological func-
tioning the personality may become changed by endocrine disorders as
post-operative factors. In the case to be described a woman, as the
result of the removal of her ovaries, developed paranoidal delusions
with a religious tinge. She became a chronic pest at the university
and the police department.

This case involved a woman about fifty years. She was laboring
under the delusion that a syndicate of five persons was attempting to
kill her through the agency of various electrical vapors. “Electro-
chemical” devices were also used. She described her ideas as to the
modus operandi of the “principals of the greatest crime in the present
century.” The personnel consisted of five influential persons, artists,
authors and business men who were determined on her death as she
“had too much on them.” They had listened to her conversation while
she was in bed with her husband, using for this a dictaphone or tele-
phone, she was not quite sure which. Their chief agents in causing
her destruction were electrical waves and currents. There was a constant escape of electrical currents from the holes in telephone poles and this was taken in hand by her enemies and directed against her. They also used light and heat rays. These influences were constantly at work poisoning her and she carried test tubes filled with the poisonous exudate from her mouth and nose. One lung had been practically destroyed by this means. She complained of concentration of light rays from one corner of the room and placed a folded paper over her head as a partial screen from the acid nature of the rays. She was constantly surrounded by electrical particles which got up her sleeve by suction. The rest of us were not harmed, as we were not sensitized to them as she is and as yet we have not incurred the wrath of the persons capable of using this means to destroy whomsoever they choose. The only reason she had not been destroyed up to this time was through the intervention of divine influences. She also wore cotton in her ears and nostrils, but these when taken out were filled with greenish-yellow acid. She had found that sheet lead exercises a benign influence, but will become perforated in time, although better than one-quarter inch cork. She carried a sheet of this lead in her handbag at all times. She has tried to analyze the poisons entering her body by catching the exudate in test tubes. She demonstrated this to some students by taking the test tubes and making some passes in the air. The poisons formed all sorts of designs in the test tubes, and also on her summer hats and even on the shoes she had worn when examined. She wanted to consult a chemist, detective and sanitary officer, so we took her to the receiving hospital after securing the necessary papers.

At her trial the next morning she was discharged on her promise to keep out of B. Later, on another complaint she was committed to an institution.

This case illustrates the weakness of some lunacy commissions and especially the fault here lay with the judge who presided over the first trial. In spite of the fact that the first officer handling the case had submitted statements signed by the defendant in which she had discussed her ideas in such a way that even a jury would have convicted her, the judge spent considerable time in persuading the woman to leave town. He finally persuaded her to promise that she would keep away from the jurisdiction of the B. police department if he would release her. This was indeed a sad spectacle when the presiding judge took the word of a psychopath with evidences of a definite
psychosis at the risk of the welfare of the community. The result was inevitable. In a short period of time the woman was in again.

As might be inferred, the combination of epilepsy with paranoid tendencies is a very disastrous one for the community. Some years ago an epileptic was committed to the penitentiary for the attempted murder of his wife. He should rather have been sent to the asylum; and his condition did not improve under confinement, but steadily grew worse. After serving the entire sentence allocated, because of his refractory behavior, he was released.

An inspector, recognizing his true condition, attempted to aid him and incidentally keep him under observation. The patient was unsuccessful in retaining positions, as he imagined that everyone was against him. While incarcerated he had suffered an injury to his leg and will be a cripple the remainder of his life. He was constantly brooding and could see no reason for living.

After having many epileptic attacks he became altogether incapable of keeping work and finally an attempt was made to commit him. He refused to go and had to be forcibly taken. In consequence of the usual crudeness of a lunacy commission the decision was that he was an "epileptic, not dangerous, and not insane." He was persuaded to go to the county jail for treatment for his leg. However, he resisted the efforts of four men to remove him from the ambulance and he was committed to the asylum by the physician.

In this case, thanks to the perspicacity of the trained officer, a dangerous type was recognized and sent to the asylum despite the judgment of the examining commission.

The foregoing cases are sufficient to illustrate some of the types which are of frequent occurrences in any community. At present there is no objective scientific method of disposing of these cases, but they must be left to the tender and abortive mercies of a jury.

The question of jury trial is too broad in its scope to be discussed here from an economical, sociological, or political standpoint, but we feel entirely within our rights to condemn it from a medical and criminological point of view, especially in cases such as those presented above.

When a man is ill twelve men are not picked from the street, and after seeing him (which means nothing to them) asked to vote on whether he has appendicitis or osteomyelitis. Why then should twelve men be picked from the street and asked to pass upon the mental health of an individual who is suffering from a mental ill. Very few laymen could diagnose appendicitis and prescribe treatment which
would be advantageous in removing the symptoms; similarly very few laymen can diagnose a psychosis appreciating the causative factors and understanding the course of the disease sufficiently to prescribe treatment. Yet this is just what we are trying to do when we allow a jury to decide the responsibility or mental acuity of alleged insane individuals brought before it.

As to the question of reformation Hoag, in speaking of the evils of jury trials, states (Crime, Abnormal Minds and the Law): “Apparently all this is very fully appreciated by many of those connected with the administration of the law, yet little effort is made to correct the situation. To be sure, now and then a group of individuals does make serious efforts for the establishment of more modern form of procedure. . . . There seems to be some explicit reasons why such a law becomes sidetracked in our legislative machinery and finally fails to pass. Among these reasons, the following seem to be the most important: (1) The opposition of certain influential criminal lawyers, who would be deprived of an opportunity for a certain kind of professional pre-eminence; (2) the opposition of certain sensational physicians, who are in effect professional witnesses, and who would lose the glamor and publicity of our present criminal court trials if statements were confined to an unobtrusive report to the trial judge; (3) the influence of certain judges of criminal courts who enjoy the publicity afforded by the present methods employed in criminal trials; and (4) the general indifference of the public at large towards anything that concerns insanity in any scientific sense, and its general lack of initiative in originating anything new in matters pertaining to criminal procedure.”

As a step in advance of our modern medieval methods we would recommend:

1. The modification of the law providing right of jury trial to insane individuals. A board of expert psychiatrists, etc., appointed by the state or other method should be substituted.

2. Of utmost importance is the requisite training necessary for the police officer. He must be able not only to recognize the patient or complainant’s condition, but he must be able to accumulate evidence with which to convince the examining board as to the patient’s condition.

3. More intelligent study by judiciary bodies of the behavior reactions of the insane with their interest focussed upon the cause of the aberration rather than the amount of material damage done to property. All our present laws are administered to avenge, rather than to repair or prevent damage done to property. Objects more worth
study are the questions: "Why was this done, and can it be prevented by proper health and prophylactic methods?"

4. The interjection of less emotional instability in trials and hearings.

5. That the district attorneys and judges to whom the duties of prosecution fall and to whom the duty of administering justice falls be made to undergo special educational curricula designed to give them a better understanding of the biological laws and precepts governing abnormal behavior. The post is important enough to warrant special educational considerations not accorded generally to members of the legal profession. This conclusion was arrived at because so many problems presented to district attorneys and judges are not legal problems primarily, but are medical and require special education to fully comprehend. A judge on the lunacy commission should have special training. The judges should be appointed and not elected. Black-slapping dumbbells (a very appropriate colloquism for many judges who serve on lunacy commissions) should be relegated to the garbage can and men trained in medical jurisprudence drafted for service. Also the judge should not have the power to appoint his friends as medical examiners on the board just because they either elected him or are involved in business transactions with him.

6. That an insanity commission composed of a judge (especially trained) and examining psychiatrists be the desideratum in fixing responsibility and subsequent treatment in cases such as the above. The doctors composing the commission should be trained psychiatrists and not the ordinary practicing physician who sees an easy fee. Patients should be placed in a psychopathic hospital for observation. This is theoretically possible, but seldom carried out. The physician's judgment is usually based upon the observations he makes during the few minutes of court procedure.

7. Criminal procedure should be amended so as to provide permanent detention of the habitual paranoid offender as well as other habitual types subject to the judgment of a board of medico-psychological experts.


Addendum: Since this article was written the condition of the woman described in the first case has become worse with indications of a progressive deterioration. During the past months she has been involved in a series of accusations against prominent officials in the community. In addition to making accusations in the newspapers she went to the district attorney demanding an investigation. When no prosecution was undertaken she directed her wrath against the district attorney's office. At the present time she is demanding that an investigation be initiated by the clubs of the community.