

1946

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Recommended Citation

Benjamin Karpman, From the Autobiography of a Bandit: Toward the Psychogenesis of So-Called Psychopathic Behavior, 36 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 305 (1945-1946)

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FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BANDIT: TOWARD THE PSYCHOGENESIS OF SO-CALLED PSYCHOPATHIC BEHAVIOR

Benjamin Karpman

DR. KARPMAN has been associated with St. Elizabeth's Hospital for twenty-five years as a Senior Medical Officer and Psychotherapist. He was Professor and Head of Psychiatry at Howard University Medical School from 1921 to 1941 and has published numerous studies on the psychogenetic aspects of neuroses and criminality. He is author of a volume on *The Individual Criminal* and of a series of studies, *Case Studies in the Psychopathology of Crime*. Two volumes have been published. Volumes III and IV will appear early in 1946.

This study concerns a brigand, whose spectacular exploits were the front page news of about a quarter of a century ago. The man has been examined by a number of psychiatrists, and was always diagnosed as a constitutional psychopath. Dr. Karpman studied the man intimately and came to the conclusion that he was dealing with a type of neurosis in which hostility has outweighed love because of denial of the latter. It is this hostility that led the man to a variety of criminal acts. He thinks that criminality, regardless of its severity and seeming permanence, may be a mental condition rather than a constitutionally determined form of behavior.—EDITOR.

That deep-seated emotional factors play a large role in the genesis of criminal behavior has been gaining slow but steady recognition through numerous case studies of individual criminals. Situations of rejection, denial and privation; frustration and emotional insecurity; motives of revenge, rivalry, aggressiveness and hostility, etc., have all been found to be fruitful sources of anti-social behavior. Among these, I should like to submit for present consideration a discussion of the life of a criminal individual whose most outstanding feature of behavior was daring exploits and almost unbridled aggressiveness, combined with an extreme bitter hatred against society and all authority. The study of this material provides us with insight into the role of misguided aggression and its ramifications as a causative factor in crime.

The individual in question is Jerry Briggs, a 43-year-old, white male, married, who was admitted to St. Elizabeth's Hospital from the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia, with the information that he was "a desperate and cunning criminal," and who has a colorful criminal history involving several daring hold-ups and escapes.

PART ONE: THE CASE: BIOGRAPHIC DATA

I. Family History

The paternal heredity appears to be negative but maternal heredity is rather heavily tainted.

The patient's *father* was a hard-working, good-hearted man but quick-tempered. He had only a meager education. He was

a good farmer but a poor business man, and his misfortunes in life resulted from poor business ventures after he had given up farming at the insistence of his wife, who had inherited money.

The patient's *mother* was a university graduate with inherited money and social ambitions. She is described as vain, sarcastic, jealous, and generally disliked by her acquaintances. After the age of forty-five, she took up Spiritualism, attended many seances and imagined that she was clairvoyant and clairaudient. Her husband had her declared incompetent and threatened to have her committed to an "asylum." For a while she developed delusions of poisoning directed exclusively against her husband. She smoked about fifty strong cigars a week, and spent hours in her room conversing with spirits. She died at the age of sixty from "softening of the brain."

Siblings: Patient is one of seven children of whom only two (himself and his sister) are living. Male twins died at birth, one boy died of diphtheria, and two boys died of pneumonia. The surviving sister was the only girl. She is about two years older than the patient. They never got along well together, and the patient has not heard of her for ten years.

It will thus be observed that from the maternal grandfather, there proceeded a definite hereditary taint which manifested itself in the patient's mother as mental disease, while two maternal aunts died of tuberculosis and cancer, respectively.

Family Interrelationship: The family life was not harmonious. The mother said the father "had a million dollar physique and a dime's worth of brains," while the father stated that his domestic trouble was the result of his wife's money and her sarcasm. Educational discrepancy and the fact that the wife had money appear to have been a source of constant friction. Patient says, "They quarreled continually and said bitter things to each other, yet I never knew father to strike her." He also says that when his mother inherited money she became indifferent to her children, and didn't seem to care whether they got along in school or not. "If we asked her to help us with our arithmetic, she usually said that was what the teacher got paid for." The mother was partial to the sister. Patient says, "I know that mother favored Vera and this made me revengeful. Because of this feeling, I did lots of little things to purposely provoke mother."

II. Personal History

The patient's first seven years were spent on his father's farm and were apparently fairly happy and uneventful ones. Then the family moved to a city in another state and his father's mining interests took him away from home a great part of the time, and the patient's subsequent development became

more and more a continuing conflict with his mother. It was definitely out of this conflict that his criminal behavior grew.

Early Thefts: When the patient was eight or nine years old, he stole a small coin from his grandmother. He doesn't remember why but says, "it could not have been for revenge because grandmother was the kindest of women and I loved her." When his sister wanted to know where he got the money, he told her, and she promptly relayed the information to his mother, who whipped him and made him apologize to his grandmother. He says, "Having to admit my theft to her was what hurt me. The fact remains that I never repeated the offense of stealing from her." He also makes the highly significant statement that his sister's broadcast "cured me of ever telling anybody when I did wrong. From then on I didn't trust either sister or mother."

After he started in public school he became a leader among the boys on account of his athletic and fistic prowess, but he discovered that some of his companions were given spending money by their parents, whereas his mother refused to give him any. Because he could not maintain his prestige among his companions without standing his share of the expense, he began systematic petty thieving. He stole grain sacks from the neighbors' barns and sold them, and also stole garden hose which he sold to a junk dealer. On a couple of occasions he sold his mother's garden hose. He also stole small change from her whenever he could. He would put small change in her pocketbook and take a larger piece of money, and says, "If she accused me of taking a quarter, I would show her the fifty-cent piece and tell her I didn't need her small change, I had plenty. She couldn't understand how I had more than she had missed. I got away with it a number of times before she finally got wise to what I was doing."

He also stole dogs and held them until a reward was offered, which he would then collect, and he stole several bicycles and sold them. His father then gave him a weekly allowance, but his mother would not allow him to spend it as he chose. He resented this and continued to steal from his mother whenever he could. He makes the following statement:

"There may have been a revenge motivating me also, because I didn't hesitate to cause her expense in other ways. I often broke dishes and stopped up the pipes several times, knowing that it would cause her expense. When I had change in my pocket, I do not think I stole from anybody except mother. At nine or ten years of age a boy is not capable of reasoning out the consequences of his acts, therefore, I blame my mother for those early thefts. If she had taken me to a competent psychoanalyst at that time, he no doubt would have discovered my mechanical bent and directed me along those lines. In that way I would have missed the reform school and also missed laying the foundation of a criminal career." (P. 669.)

He attributes his first experience in shop-lifting to the fact that his mother refused him fifty cents with which to purchase something that he wanted in a store. He repeated the shop-lifting in several stores near his home, was caught and threatened with reform school. His mother was also threatened with prosecution for neglect of her duty.

Reformatory and First Burglary: The mother's handling of this situation was to take her son to Juvenile Court, and have him declared incorrigible, and committed to a reformatory. He was there for about a year, then returned home to discover that he was stigmatized and avoided by all the "nice" children in the neighborhood. His parents were in the midst of financial difficulties and his mother was about to give birth to twins. He read law in his uncle's office and says that he read "criminal law exclusively, especially the law that covered burglary." On this point he says, "I had the burglary bug in my head and was watching for an opportunity to try out the burglary knowledge I had acquired in the reformatory."

He tells us that he knew nothing about burglary until he talked to several burglars in the reformatory, but that after talking with them he became particularly interested in jewelry burglary. He accordingly decided to rob a jewelry store and broached the subject to a friend who at first agreed to join him and afterwards backed out; so he decided to rob the store by himself, and secured about thirty watches in addition to some small rings and other small jewelry. The friend in whom he had confided, however, demanded a share of the loot, and as a result of his compliance with this demand he was arrested a few days later and sentenced to two years in another reformatory.

III. Criminal History

Second Reformatory: At the second reformatory he served 21 months and was then discharged. While there he made one attempt to escape at which he was caught. The second attempt was successful but had an unusual termination. After running away with another boy, they began to discuss the effect their action would have on the superintendent, who was an advocate of the honor principle and had frequently allowed them to go with other members of a football team to a neighboring town. Accordingly, they decided to return and offer to take their punishment. The superintendent was "so well pleased with the turn of events that he assured us that we wouldn't be punished."

Army Desertions, Gun-Running and Jewelry Store Robbery: Upon his discharge he rejoined his parents, who had moved to another state; worked for awhile as a blacksmith and then en-

listed in the Army. There he first learned to gamble, then to cheat, and after being twice caught cheating he deserted. He later re-enlisted under an assumed name and went to the Philippines. Gambling and amateur boxing occupied a good deal of his time. Cheating made him so unpopular that he again deserted upon his return to the States.

He then went to work as a miner, but in 1907 he began running guns and ammunition into Mexico for the Madero revolutionists, was captured, tried and sentenced to death; but overpowered a sentry and escaped.

Returning to the States, he became a professional boxer and followed the business for over two years.

In Denver, in 1910, he pawned jewelry to pay his training expenses for a fight, and when the fight was called off found himself "broke and disgusted." Unsuccessful attempts to borrow from acquaintances or to borrow additional money on his pledges with pawnbrokers were the prelude to a jewelry store robbery which he tells about as follows:

"I don't know why I did it, because I could have arranged a fight within a few days that would have made expense money anyhow, but I was disgusted and did not care what happened. Being in that frame of mind, I was probably dangerous both to myself and my associates. Instead of trying to arrange a fight and make money in a legitimate way, which I could have done very easily, I resorted to robbery. I walked into a jewelry store and asked to be shown some diamond rings. The clerk set a tray containing mounted stones before me and I took the tray and all, and 'took it on the lam.' I ran outside through the front entrance, turned into an alley, escaped and caught a freight train for Colorado Springs. I felt pretty well satisfied with myself. I had gotten even with the pawnbrokers, and had several thousand dollars in stones besides.

"I pawned one stone and then went to El Paso, Texas. There I pawned five or six more stones and then went on to San Francisco. This all happened in the early spring of 1911, and this is the first time I have ever told it. That jewelry robbery is still an unsolved crime. I was never questioned about the robbery." (pp. 702-703)

A period of gambling preceded his next criminal adventure, and in this connection he makes the following observation:

"Gambling and crime are the Siamese twins of the underworld. Where you find one you find the other. As long as a gambler has money he will stick to his gambling, but when he goes broke, he will almost invariably resort to theft. Gamblers rarely resort to crimes of violence. They are usually forgers, swindlers, or sneak-thieves.

"Successful crime results in gambling, and unsuccessful gambling results in crime." (p. 703)

First Prison Sentence: But the next venture did not turn out so well. He again robbed a jewelry store, but was knocked down by a policeman and ended up with a five-year sentence to San Quentin Prison. There he took up the study of elec-

tricity. Following his release, he decided to go "straight" and secured electrical work at a Navy Yard, then married, became a father, and went into business for himself.

Marriage, Gambling and Mail Robbery: After being happily married for four years, patient went to Tia Juana while his wife was paying a visit to her mother, and there he reverted suddenly to gambling and lost \$6500 in twelve days. He then staged a mail robbery after the following fashion. He observed a bank messenger in the San Diego Post Office registering a shipment of currency. He blackened his face and hands to impersonate a negro and caught the rear of the mail truck as it left the post office, held up the driver and got away with the mail sack containing \$130,000 in cash and securities. While he was burying his loot, he was observed by a fifteen-year-old boy who tipped off the police. He was apprehended and sentenced to twenty-five years in the Federal Prison on McNeil's Island.

Escape and Criminal Interlude: While on his way to prison, the patient escaped by grabbing an officer's pistol and forcing him to release him. This escape was effected in July, 1921 and it was nearly a year before he was recaptured. The escape was effected in Portland, Oregon, and his movements immediately thereafter are described as follows:

"When I left the train at Portland, I walked about thirty miles down the Columbia River toward Astoria, and then stole a motorboat and drove it to Astoria. From Astoria I made my way north to Vancouver, British Columbia (in Canada).

"I did not feel that I had been treated fairly when I was given twenty-five years in prison, therefore, I made up my mind to 'shoot it out' with anybody who tried to arrest me. I am glad now that nobody tried to arrest me because somebody would have got hurt if they had. It might have been me, but that would have been all right because I preferred death to serving twenty-five years in a prison. A man under a twenty-five year sentence is practically buried alive, and I preferred to be buried dead." (p. 721)

Knowing that the authorities were looking for him in Canada, he returned to the United States and secured work as a welder, and later as an instructor in an Automotive school. He then met a post office inspector on the street, intimidated him by some gun play, and sought refuge in a hospital for two weeks as a patient suffering from rheumatism. He went to another town and engaged in the activity described in the following language:

"On my fourth day in——— I saw a registered sack handed to a Post Office clerk, together with the record sheet for him to sign. I knew that there was a currency shipment involved, and I quickly decided to get into his machine with him and force him to drive where I told him to. He took the sack and threw it into his machine and then returned to the platform. When he was out of sight I walked over and took the sack out of his machine and walked away

with it. I expected a 'rumble' anytime and actually listened for somebody to say, 'Hey you, where are you going with that sack?' Nobody paid any attention to me, and I walked into an old building and cut the sack open. It contained two packages of currency which totaled \$55,000." (p. 724)

He then went to Nevada where he intended to lay low until he could make plans for sailing for Australia, but in another gambling affair he lost all of his money. Pawning some of his jewelry, he left for California, where he obtained a mail-car key from an empty car in the railroad yards in a certain town, entered a sealed car when the train stopped, obtained a registered sack containing \$165,000 in currency and securities, made his getaway, and was never convicted of the robbery, although the federal authorities suspected that he was responsible for it.

Recapture: While visiting his wife, the house was surrounded by officers, but he made good his escape in the darkness. He staged another mail robbery, kicked a registered mail sack off a moving train in the darkness but was unable to find it afterwards. He couldn't start the automobile he had waiting for him and was obliged to abandon it. He then discovered that he was surrounded by a cordon of State police and escaped capture once again in the darkness by imitating a hog. Then, taking advantage of an automobile accident on the highway, he posed as one of the party, pretended to be injured, and accompanied a rescue party to a hospital where he eluded them but was captured a couple of nights later while sitting in a poker game in the back room of a cigar store.

While he was in jail at San Francisco he "secured a pistol from an inmate who did not have nerve enough to use it himself" and en route to McNeil's Island he held up his guards, forced them to turn over the keys to his handcuffs and took \$120.00 from them. He was captured eight days later and taken on to McNeil's Island.

Second Escape: At this point the patient's story ends, and we must rely on official records for the rest of the information. From then on we get the following:

"He escaped from McNeil's Island on October 8, 1922, suffering gunshot wounds through both legs while doing so. Two other convicts attempted to accompany him in the escape. One was killed outright and one was badly wounded and captured, but the patient succeeded in escaping and did not obtain medical attention for his wounds until six days later. As a result of his wounds he was incapacitated for twenty days. He started for California on November 2, 1922, by motorcycle, and arrived at his home three days later. He visited his family for a while and then went to Mexico.

"He remained there two months and then he returned to Arizona where on January 2, 1923, he attempted to rob a mail train at Phoenix and was knocked in the head by a mail clerk and was captured. He claimed that he had about twelve hundred dollars cash

on his person when he was captured, and because of the anxiousness of the Arizona lawyers to get hold of this money, the patient was persuaded to turn the money over to them and stand trial with the plea of insanity. The first trial resulted in a hung jury, eleven to one for acquittal on the grounds of insanity." (p. 642.)

IV. Prison and Hospital History

Patient's prison life has been a stormy one. From the beginning he appears to have been unwilling or unable to adapt himself to prison routine. It began with minor violence into accompanying disobedience and violence. On one occasion he became threatening to the prison physician when the latter refused to recommend an operation on him for the purpose of curing his criminal tendencies. Because of the fact that this patient believed that an earlier injury to the skull might be the cause of his criminal behavior, a number of X-rays were made, but the reports were conflicting. In the course of confinement patient went on a hunger strike. Of the three years and ten months spent at Leavenworth, over two years were spent in solitary confinement. Transferred to Atlanta, he made several attempts to escape for which reason he was put in permanent isolation. Again, he went on a hunger strike stating he would die if not given more freedom; threatened suicide if put to forced feeding. After many months of struggling to confine this patient, the authorities gave it up and transferred him to St. Elizabeth's Hospital, though it was believed that he was not psychotic, but behaved as he did to gain the desired end. The examination at the hospital failed to reveal the presence of a psychosis. The worst that could be elicited was a marked projection reaction directed mainly against the warden.

V. Sex Life

The patient's own material includes many details of his sex life. His first sexual experience resulted from curiosity and was prompted by the suggestion of a little girl that they "try it" after he had heard older boys discussing sex. He says, "I didn't get any physical satisfaction because of my youth, but I did want to boast to my boy friends that I had had sex experience also, and thus impress them." But the little girl's mother told the patient's mother, who told the little girl's father to give the patient a whipping (his own father being absent at the time). This, of course, increased his resentment against his mother.

With two older boys he then had sexual experience with a small Negro girl. He subsequently told his father about this, who merely laughed and cautioned him to be careful not to get caught. The development of sexual interest, therefore, was

along normal lines, and it appears that if the patient's criminality had not forced him into a prison environment, he might never have experienced any deviation from normal sexual channels. Even as it was, such deviations do not appear to have affected his subsequent sexual behavior and such abnormal practices as he has engaged in were purely substitutional in character and accepted at the time for lack of anything better.

At his first reformatory he saw sodomy being practiced the first night he was there and for the first time. He says, "I had never heard of sodomy before I went there, but I knew all about it before I left." Later on, referring to prison experiences, he says:

"Personally, the only reason I practiced sodomy in prison was to satisfy my egotism or my feeling of superiority. I could and did get more physical satisfaction through masturbation than I did by sodomy, yet the feeling of superiority I got partly compensated for the lack of physical pleasure." (p. 681)

During his first Army experience he had protracted relations, including social ones, with a professional prostitute concerning whom he says, "Almost before I knew it I was her pimp taking money from her." They "enjoyed many months of companionship" during which he "cheated on her occasionally." His sex life while in the Philippines, he says, was "like that of most soldiers" adding, "We took it where we found it."

When he was working as a miner in Arizona, he says that he spent most of his leisure time "chasing women and gambling," and adds: "I didn't have much trouble persuading women to think the way I did regarding sex." He also says that he devoted most of his time to married women, stating by way of explanation that "An old shoe is more comfortable than a new one that is not broken in."

In Mexico he bought a peon girl and lived with her for three months, at the end of which time she became pregnant and he abandoned her after making some provision with a priest to look after her during childbirth.

In San Quentin prison he reverted to homosexual practice because as he tells us, "the sex urge in prison is very acute." For six or eight months he had a cellmate on whom he practiced sodomy "on an average of about four times a week." He says in this connection, "My sex instinct was always strong and I rarely turned down an opportunity to satisfy it, either in or out of prison. I never enjoyed degeneracy except in prison, yet I am not ashamed of my prison experiences, as I believe any normal man will satisfy his sex desires when and where he can, either in or out of prison." He also had considerable experience in prison with passive fellatio.

After his release from prison, he lived for eighteen months

with a married woman who was separated from her husband.

In 1917 he married, and his narrative material contains no further allusions to sex but indicates that his married life was entirely satisfactory.

It thus appears that there is nothing in the patient's history to indicate the presence of what we might term a sexual problem. The homosexual history is one of facultative or pseudo-homosexuality, which is exclusively environmental. Towards his various women he exhibits all the purely temporary interest or emotional indifference of the typical male, and this passes over into the one-woman interest of the typical husband and father. Whatever abnormal emotional and social reactions are responsible for the patient's behavior, they do not appear to be related to sex as such.

VI. Discussion

Mother Hatred: In this case we have first of all an emotional factor which has been found to exist in more than one individual subsequently labeled criminal; and the factor is parent hatred. Our patient has no respect for his mother, and her partiality toward his sister caused him to develop revengeful feelings toward her. This development might have been offset to a considerable degree by the presence of the father, but the latter was absent from home during the most important years of the patient's childhood, and he came more and more under the unwise and indifferent supervision of his mother, with the result that his feelings of revenge toward her grew and flourished without restraint. Her unwise administration culminated in having him committed to a reformatory, and from his recital of his sufferings there we can only judge of the depth of his bitter resentment against her. It is not impossible that the intensity of this mother-hatred lies at the root of the emotional drive which has precipitated him into one crime after the other throughout his life.

Heredity: There can be little doubt that there is a strong hereditary factor in this case also. The mother's extreme social vanity, her indifference toward her children, her continual disposition to quarrel with her husband, for whose financial misfortunes her own vanity and want of judgment were largely responsible, her later delusional and hallucinatory episodes, and her death from "softening of the brain," all paint a picture of developing psychosis. We observe also the presence of tuberculosis and cancer in her sisters, while the deaths of five of her children (two of them at birth) are additional indications of a defective strain in the hereditary picture. The vague history of the maternal grandfather, who was avaricious, a lib-

ertine, and a morphine addict, has already prepared us for trouble in the succeeding generation. The account of the patient's sister—the only other surviving child—is not promising, although we know little about her later development. The mother inculcated in her ideas of social and financial superiority, but otherwise failed to give her adequate parental supervision. She was allowed to quit school at the age of fifteen. She married a man twice her age—who divorced her five years later, and gave birth to a child who was later committed to a home for the feeble-minded.

Lone Wolf: The patient's disposition to always play the role of the lone wolf is also undoubtedly traceable to his early reaction to his mother and his sister. He says, "I soon learned that I couldn't expect an even break from mother," (p. 13) and it was his sister who told his mother about his first theft, apropos of which he says: "Viola's broadcast cured me of ever telling anybody when I did wrong." "From then on I didn't trust either sister or mother." (P. 20) The impression thus made and the "cure" thus effected were evidently lasting, for it does not appear that in his subsequent criminal activity he either ever confided in anyone else or enlisted the services of anyone else. This is not quite true, however, for in the case of his first major theft he did confide his purposes to another boy who first agreed to join him and then backed out. The aftermath of that is described as follows:

"A few days after the robbery my friend with whom I had discussed my plans, came to me and demanded a share of the loot. At first, I denied having committed the robbery but when he threatened to tell on me, I agreed to give him part of the loot if he would keep still about it. I think, I gave him five watches and some rings. Several days later another boy came to me and said he had been told about it and he wanted some of the loot also. I was afraid to refuse him for fear he would tell on me, so I gave him five or six watches and some rings. A few days later the marshal arrested me and took me to jail. When I entered the jail the first man I saw was this last boy. He told me our 'friend' had told on both of us and he had been arrested that morning. The next day the prosecuting attorney told me he knew all about it and he scared me into confessing and telling where the loot was hidden. The other boy and I stayed in jail about two weeks and he was then brought to trial for concealing stolen property.

"He was eighteen or nineteen years old and had been in trouble before, so he told me to deny having given him any watches if I was called as a witness against him. The prosecuting attorney expected to put me on the stand and have me repeat my confession and convict my friend. Instead, I took the stand and swore that I had not given him any watches at all. The judge then dismissed the case against him. The first boy was never brought to trial.

"Upon my plea of guilty, the judge sentenced me to two years in the Reform School. I went to my second Reformatory two days later in the custody of the Sheriff.

"While in jail awaiting transfer, I did not see anybody I know, except the officers. None of my friends assisted me or communicated with me in any way, except father. He saw me the night before I left. That experience taught me not to expect much from former friends when you are in trouble." (pp. 676-677)

The experience certainly must have reenforced the impression previously made by his mother and sister, and have correspondingly strengthened his determination to trust no one but himself in his future attempts to gain unlawful ends. This same attitude is apparent in his relations with women, whom he could "love and leave" with little compunction, until he finally found one whom he chose to marry and to whom his fidelity was in marked contrast to his earlier career of general promiscuity.

Gambling and Cheating: That his treatment at the hands of brutal and stupid guards in two reformatories should have served only to deepen and solidify his feelings of revenge is a commonplace fact which we accept readily in the light of experience with a majority of criminal cases. Social ostracism following his release from the first reformatory had also played its part in increasing his revengeful feelings, albeit unconsciously. It is not suprising, therefore, to find him in the Army seeking a low social level, consorting with a professional prostitute, even becoming her pimp, and gambling at every opportunity. What seems inexplicable, however, is the history of his cheating. He himself says, "It is an unwritten law in the Army not to cheat a fellow soldier." Certainly he knew this before he began, and his behavior cannot be traced to ignorance. Yet, we find him twice compelled to desert because of the extreme unpopularity which he incurred among his fellows on account of his cheating. What motivated such activity? Was it the unconscious desire for revenge at all costs, or the unconscious desire for apparent superiority at all costs, or a combination of both? Following his second Army enlistment he acquired some social prestige as a boxer, then deliberately sacrificed it to his urge to cheat. In this connection he says:

"After being reinstated in the games I played fair quite some time, but I couldn't win. After several months of that, I again began cheating although I knew the penalty would be ostracism. I don't know yet why I did it, unless the reason was that I was a plain damn fool." (p. 686)

Perhaps the key to this enigma is to be found in the phrase, "but I couldn't win." Was it necessary for him to win at any cost, or to convince himself that he could? As far as that goes, he must have known, later on, that he "couldn't win" when he robbed jewelry stores and held up mail trains (although as a matter of fact he did win on at least two occasions), but something that transcended knowledge drove him on to perpetuate

crimes, the only result of which could be total loss. Is the key to this to be found in thwarted revenge or in misdirected ego; or is it a combination of the two?

Sadism: Not only the desire to win but an unconscious sadistic impulse may have lain behind this cheating, which otherwise seems to be so out of character, the sadistic impulse being a further extension of the revenge motive so early occasioned by his mother's neglect of him and her lack of affection for him. When cheating finally drove him out of the Army, it is perhaps significant that he turned to pugilistic activity, and that in the ring he became notably ferocious. Connected with this sadistic inclination there was very possibly also a certain echo of the active homosexuality which he had practiced in two reformatories. While his narrative gives us the impression that his sexual desires were normally and adequately satisfied during his Army life and afterwards, we cannot forget this phase of his existence had been preceded by a fairly long period of active homosexual satisfaction. Overcoming other men at cards and pounding them savagely during prize fights may very well have satisfied an unconscious urge consisting of mingled homosexuality and sadism.

Head Injury: Following his second desertion from the Army, he became a miner, and while working in the mines he sustained a head injury. Later on he sought to capitalize on this in his attempt to secure some mitigation of his prison sentence, and proclaimed it to be the cause of his criminality; but the reports on X-Ray examinations did not supply the necessary corroboration of his claim, and it seems reasonable to suppose that his behavior is mainly traceable to early psychological factors rather than to a later physical one. Besides, his criminal tendencies had been pretty well evidenced long before anything happened to his head. He cannot blame the robbery of two jewelry stores and his cheating at cards on a head injury, no matter how hard he may try to make it responsible for his later mail hold-ups.

Unconscious Mechanisms: But his history presents an even more inexplicable feature than that represented by the cheating of his comrades in arms. Why, after a period of imprisonment, a period of being on parole, and a four-year period of apparently satisfactory married life during which he pursued the ways of an honest and upright citizen, did he suddenly succumb to another fit of gambling fever from which dated his whole subsequent career of reckless daring and desperate crime, culminating in what amounted to life imprisonment? This would seem to be explainable only by the presence of some unconscious, unresolved emotional conflict for which his casual

visit to a gambling casino was as incidental as the presence of a lighted match near a pile of gunpowder. In twelve days he gambled away \$6,500; tried to recoup his losses by holding up a mail truck (which he accomplished successfully); and found himself facing a twenty-five year prison sentence as the result of having been observed by a small boy while he was burying his loot. That was the beginning of the end, and his subsequent behavior is simply that of a desperate man playing a losing game with prison officials and officers of the law.

A possible explanation of this seemingly inexplicable fact does occur to us, however. There is a relation between gambling and inhibited impulses. In prison, for a period of several years, the patient had been conditioned to homosexuality. It is altogether possible that unconscious homosexual pressure drew him to the gambling casino. Presumably homosexuality was a thing which he desired to forget, because it ran counter to all the social currents with which he had been in harmony since his marriage. If a homosexual urge still existed within him—as an unconscious echo from his prison days—it was also something which he was unwilling to acknowledge. The excitement of the gaming table may have provided the necessary disguise for this recurring urge. (Winning at cards, overcoming his companions in a game, may have signified the equivalent of an active homosexual relation. And was it the guilt occasioned by this unconscious desire which was responsible for his failing to win?) Does this explain some of the self-disgust with which he emerged from this frenzied period? Was it not only the loss of his money but his unconscious realization of having reverted to a former despised level which constituted a partial cause of his bitter psychic reaction?

The patient does record a distinct personality change of about three years duration which he says followed upon his head injury in the mines. He has no explanation for it and inferentially attributes it to the injury. He says that before his injury he was peaceable and easy to get along with, but that afterwards he was just the opposite and that in the prize ring he became "a savage fighter" and was referred to by the newspapers as "the assassin of the ring." He says that his father was surprised when he first saw him in action and subsequently sought an explanation for the change in him, but that he could give no satisfactory explanation; all he knows is that "when the fight started I just seemed to take on a different personality."

Whether the head injury actually had anything to do with this personality change we cannot say. Perhaps it was only another recurring manifestation of the psychological conflict which had caused him to resort to cheating while in the Army.

Concerning the motive for his subsequent robbery in Denver (the one about which he "was never questioned") he is himself at a loss to explain why he resorted to such means at that time. He says: "Instead of trying to arrange a fight and make money in a legitimate way, which I could have done very easily, I resorted to robbery . . . I would like to know *why* myself." Presumably we are again concerned with an unconscious psychological urge . . . the desire for vengeance or the desire for a manifestation of superiority or a combination of the two.

At the preliminary conference at St. Elizabeth's, one physician quoted the patient as saying that he "indulged in the criminal offenses only when disgusted and fed up on the world." This statement savors of rationalization; but it may be an expression of the periodic recurrence of the unconscious hatred which constituted at least the major part of the emotional drive that lay behind the patient's aggressive and anti-social behavior. We have nothing to indicate that he was "disgusted and fed up on the world" when he went on a vacation and lost \$6,500 in twelve days of gambling, although the quotation may very well describe his feelings at the end of that period. The gambling losses furnished the conscious excuse for the hold-up which followed. Is it possible that by throwing himself into reckless gambling he was unconsciously creating that excuse because the deeper revenge motive demanded satisfaction through some anti-social channel?

Compensatory Activity: An interesting observation with respect to his leadership of his boy companions after he had first learned to fight is expressed by the patient in the following language:

"I believe my leadership aspirations were a result of a superiority complex. I am sure it was not an inferiority complex because I always had confidence in myself. In fact, I thought I was a big frog in a little pond.

"I do not know whether leadership was compensation for deprivation at home or not, but I do know that I had to 'watch my step' while I was around mother. I was more or less suppressed at home, and being full of energy, I had to have an outlet for it; therefore, I spent my energy in gang activities.

"As for prestige, I enjoyed the prestige that gang leadership gave me; and to be honest about it, I still enjoy prestige in most any endeavor. I would rather have a bad reputation than none at all." (p. 668)

This is also a rather typical psychopathic reaction, and it may also be tied up, in this case as well as in others, with the initial mother hatred. It is as though the frustration of the fundamental love interest calls for a vengeance which can only be accomplished by an exaggerated projection of the ego.

Denied an external outlet, the ego had to fall on itself. The individual's unconscious thought seems to be that he can only compensate for his initial loss by securing possession of "the bubble, reputation" which at times he is willing to seek, like Shakespeare's soldier, "even in the cannon's mouth," but at other times is willing to seek anywhere, regardless of social considerations, in which case, like our patient, he "would rather have a bad reputation than none at all."

In the instant case there was never any early opportunity to seek a desirable reputation. The patient's irresponsible and perhaps psychotic mother saw to that from the beginning. When she had him declared incorrigible and committed to a reformatory, she set the seal of "a bad reputation" upon him for a long time. It is true that, later in life, he not only found an opportunity to make a good reputation for himself in a small way, but even took advantage of it and lived an honest and honorable life for seven years. Could he then have received the benefit of psychoanalytic assistance, it is possible that he might have discharged the buried antipathic emotions which were his childhood heritage and continued on the pathway of normal citizenship. But he was sitting on an emotional powder-keg, and his accidental visit to a gambling casino supplied the match which ignited it. We must suppose that had this visit not taken place, some other equally fortuitous accident would have served the same purpose. The compensatory and revenge mechanisms were too strong within him to enable him to continue indefinitely in the way of peaceful obscurity. A reputation he had to have; he "would rather have a bad reputation than none at all"; and the reputation which he ultimately acquired was just about as bad as they come.

Father's Influence: We must modify that last statement, however, for at no time did the patient willfully take a human life; and on one occasion when he might have effected an escape by doing so, he surrendered rather than shoot a prison guard. To what must we attribute this exercise of restraint where killing is concerned? Does it come from the patient's childhood love and respect for his father? He did respect his father as much as he hated and despised his mother. Did his childhood reaction to his father keep him from becoming a murderer, just as his childhood reaction to his mother turned him into a gambler, a cheat, and a desperate thief?

Exaggerated Expression of Hatred: After the patient had been some time at St. Elizabeth's, he wrote the Superintendent a letter in which he dwelt at some length upon the intense hatred which he had developed for the wardens at Leavenworth and Atlanta. In this letter he said, "The intensity of my feeling for these two men is such that to be able to kill them

is at present the only desire of my mind . . . Never before have I given my thoughts to taking a human life; even in my career of crime. I have avoided the necessity of taking life; and at the time I was arrested had I been willing to kill for my freedom, I could have avoided arrest." And he added that the prospect of freedom of which he seems to have had some vague hope, "means to me only an opportunity to kill the two men who have caused me so much pain." (Letter of Nov. 7, 1929) These statements, however, must be taken with a great deal of salt. The purpose of the letter in question was to place responsibility for his actions on the head injury which he had suffered and to postulate the question of his own sanity, presumably with the hope that he might remain in a mental hospital rather than being returned to prison, although he never seems to have made up his mind which of the two he really wanted, and also to emphasize his willingness to submit to an operation, which he thought might cure him of his criminal tendencies. Consequently we must conclude that the extreme expression of hatred and of the desire to kill which he set forth in the letter was intentionally exaggerated; and we can hardly consider it as an exception to his inhibition against murder.

Final Comments: Granting a certain hereditary taint and allowing for the possible contributory influence of a head injury, it is still necessary to go to purely psychogenic sources for any satisfactory explanation of this man's unfortunate development. We can only conclude that had he known the advantage of a wise and loving mother and a harmonious home, he would have exerted himself to acquire educational advantages with which to help him express in a constructive manner his strong egoistic urge. He represents a powerful stream of energy woefully misdirected and cruelly wasted, while his personal tragedy and degradation is balanced by a corresponding loss of society.

The patient's entire career exemplifies the Shakespearian phrase, "Thus bad begins, the worst remains behind." His initial thefts were provoked by humiliation suffered at the hands of his short-sighted mother who would not give him spending money and who would not allow him to use in his own fashion the allowance which he received from his father. There was also the factor of refused love, introduced into the picture by the mother's obvious preference for the sister. This refused love and this humiliation conditioned him to hatred which found expression in stealing, although there were enough conscious economic reasons to enable him to rationalize his behavior. This humiliation and refused love also called for compensation which he found in gang leadership. He himself senses

this and speaks of it as a possible "compensation for deprivation at home." It also results in an exaggerated projection of the ego which undoubtedly caused him secretly to regard himself as an exceptional personality who, by reason of his very exceptionalness, had the right to do that which is forbidden. His intense reaction against arrest and imprisonment and his daring escapes may very well have been connected with this inner conviction. The restrictions and punishments which were accepted by the average individual as inevitable and a matter of course were vehemently rejected by him as though they were definitely "not for him." He overcomes a sentry and escapes a sentence of death by shooting; he makes a sensational escape from McNeil's Island; he overcomes and outsmarts detectives who are escorting him to prison; he makes a bold attempt to escape from the penitentiary at Atlanta; he stages a defiant hunger strike and secures his transfer to a mental hospital. All of these unusual activities bespeak a dynamic personality which must be reinforced by some deep-seated conviction of a unique destiny; and such a conviction—we might almost say delusion—can only be related to the compensatory mechanism which is so often found in neurosis, particularly in cases of kleptomania and allied compulsive behavior.

In fact, his jewelry robberies, in which he entered a store, asked to be shown diamonds, etc., and then ran out of the store with a whole tray of stones, were strikingly like kleptomania, and although perpetrated consciously and with malice aforethought, it is altogether probable that they were accompanied by many of the characteristics of kleptomaniac attacks — the emotional intoxication, and the separation between reality and phantasy in the field of awareness which made the whole transaction analogous to a dream state. At the same time, there was an unconscious emotional motivation. He tells us that he "was disgusted and didn't care what happened nor when it happened." We have no key to the immediate situation which set the antipathic emotions to work, but we recognize always a reversion to the original condition of hatred growing out of refused love which developed in him when an indifferent mother and an absent father made his life empty of interest except such interest as he could put into it by gang leadership and petty theft.

The indifferent and neglectful mother and the absent and preoccupied father plus the favored and tattle-tale sister created a home situation fraught with emotional insecurity, to which was added the element of actual economic insecurity occasioned by the lack of spending money with which to do things that other boys were doing. With this increasing emotional insecurity there grew up an attitude of hostility, directed at first

against the mother and the sister but extending later to the whole environment, upon which the patient projected the "hated out of refused love" which had been nourished so effectively by the mother's attitude toward him. This hostility was abundantly fed in the first reformatory—to which, it must be remembered, his mother had him committed as an incorrigible — by the crime-school teaching of the other inmates; and it received a still further impetus when he came home and discovered that the better class of boys and girls in the community would have nothing to do with him. It took the form of positive aggression when he perpetrated his first robbery of a jewelry store, and afterwards his ego was fed the insidious poison of criminal adulation when, in the second reformatory, he found himself being looked up to as an expert thief.

His enlistment in the Army was practically engineered by his father, who feared further family disgrace on account of his son's criminal history; and the patient's consciousness of this fact must have been accompanied by many secret feelings of resentment and mounting hostility, his reaction to which probably had a great deal to do with the gambling and cheating which resulted in two desertions, both of them practically invited by his official superiors.

While it seems to be generally agreed that the head injury which he suffered in the coal mines did not cause any organic change in him, presumably it did add fuel to the already hostile fire; and his experience as a smuggler, culminating in a death sentence and his eleventh-hour escape, certainly had no alleviating effect. It was after this that he entered upon his career of professional boxing in connection with which he displayed such sadistic fury in the ring; and this period ended with the two jewelry robberies, the first successful, the second earning his five-year term in prison. It was there that he became thoroughly conditioned to homosexuality, but this hostility appears to have been, for the first time, a bit mitigated by his absorption in the study of electricity. When he left prison he made good use of the knowledge he had obtained there, and his discharge was followed by a return to heterosexuality and still later by the interlude of marriage, fatherhood, domesticity and good citizenship, during which interlude his hostile and aggressive tendencies appear to have been largely in abeyance, or perhaps sublimated by the activities of private business. We simply do not have a detailed or an altogether reliable account of this period and must perforce accept the patient's references to it at face value.

It seems probable, however, that these references are substantially true and that, for the first time in his life, he was comparatively happy and contented. But it was apparently too

late for happiness to offset and cancel the scars of the preceding years. Nor does it seem likely that his routine life as a small businessman was sufficient to furnish the requisite compensatory element which he craved. It is more likely that when he sent his wife home on a visit in 1920 and decided to take a vacation himself he had already begun to tire of the simple life and was craving the excitement demanded by unconscious homosexual pressure, unconscious sadism, and unconscious aggressive tendencies designed to supply a greater egoistic gratification than he had theretofore experienced, this greater egoistic gratification being, of course, one of the principal demands of the resurrected unconscious hatred fostered in childhood and youth. The gambling debauch took care of these unconscious drives—or at least served to revive them thoroughly—and when it was over he was disgusted with himself and the world, consciously because he had squandered his money, but unconsciously because he had revelled in anti-social phantasies until he was no longer in command of his impulses or in harmony with his erstwhile domestic existence.

The mail robbery which followed was consciously designed to recoup his gambling losses, but unconsciously it was an expression of the struggle for power dictated by his ego and backed up by his resurrected hatred of his mother in the first place and of society in the second, the hatred of society being merely a projection of the original hatred of his mother. His subsequent daring holdups and equally daring escapes were no more than a continuation of that egoistic struggle for power which involved a superstitious belief in fate or luck or destiny which is the character of scientific or literary genius, and which directed toward aesthetic or social ends, would have resulted in outstanding artistic or scientific accomplishment—or in the final recognition of defeat expressed by suicide. (In this connection it is interesting to observe that our patient actually did commit suicide a few years after he was finally released from prison.) His sensational fight against capture and confinement represented the last stages of this egoistic struggle. He literally burned his candle at both ends until he was worn out.

VII. Summary and Conclusions

A case is presented of a famous bandit whose daring exploits have at one time attracted nation-wide attention because of the boldness and great ingenuity used in carrying out his criminal plans and the resourcefulness in escaping numerous times from prisons. A psychogenetic study of the case revealed the operation of a number of emotional factors, foremost among which was extreme maternal rejection with concomitant feel-

ings of denial, privation, emotional insecurity and hostility, which haunted him all his life. As a balancing compensation for this, he became a gang leader and sought to defend himself against insecurity by trying to make himself independent financially by criminal means. The aggressiveness and hostility he carried against all authority was a projection of his original hostility against his mother for rejection.

Though the psychotherapeutic treatment was relatively brief, since he was with us but a few months, it was sufficient to neutralize the hostility and aggression by providing him for the first time in his life with a sympathetic and an adequate outlet. Thereafter, on being transferred back to prison, he became a model prisoner to the point that although he had a number of twenty-five year sentences against him, he was finally paroled for excellent behavior. The original hostility and aggressiveness having been neutralized already, he found himself, on discharge, unable to indulge any more in criminal exploits, nor with the criminal past behind him, was he able to adapt himself to civil life. Some years later, after discharge from prison, he committed suicide.

The lesson carried by this case is that unrequited antipathic emotions if continued for a long time, may so condition the individual as to generate criminal trends. Had the community in which our subject lived as a boy, had a mental hygiene organization, the boy may have been spared the anguish that goes with rejection and unrequited hostility. Perhaps, had his great energy been directed into constructive normal channels, he might well have become a useful citizen.

The case further shows that although by all criteria commonly used, this individual has throughout been labeled psychopathic personality, a more careful analysis of his life reveals him to be but a case of neurosis in which, instead of the distortion of the generous emotions, we find the intrusion of strong hate reactions which provided the stimulus for continuous criminality.