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## FELONIOUS ASSAULT REVEALED AS A SYMPTOM OF ABNORMAL SEXUALITY

A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Psychopathic Behavior

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Benjamin Karpman, M.D.

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Dr. Karpman has been associated with St. Elizabeth's Hospital for twenty-seven 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 a series of studies, "Case Studies in the Psychopathology of Crime." Two volumes have been published, Volumes III and IV are to appear shortly.

The present study concerns an adolescent boy who was arrested on a charge of having made an unprovoked assault on a young girl by stabbing her in the neck with a knife. He did not know the girl. A study of the case revealed that this adolescent carried a terrific hatred against women, the attack being an expression of it; a "Jack the Ripper" in the making. Further study revealed a thoroughly abnormal sex life, predicated on a complicated sadistic neurotic structure of which the attack was an overt motor experience. Though under the circumstances, psychotherapy with him was not completed, it was entirely beneficial to the extent that these phantasies have all disappeared and he is giving thought to intention of marriage.—EDITOR.

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While there is no doubt about the unanimity of opinions existing between the professions of law and psychiatry as concerning many aspects of crime, there is an equally wide divergence. This divergence pertains to some fundamental issues: the problem of classification, the problem of causation, the problem of treatment, and the position of the criminal in the problem of crime.

Conventionally, law divides crime into three chief groups, namely those against property, those against the person, and those against morals. There may be a combination of these, as when murder is committed in the course of robbery, or mayhem in the course of sexual assault. This is essentially a classification based on direction of crime, the person or the object against whom crime is committed, ignoring the source of crime. Psychiatry, however, is able to submit data which shows that the legal classification of crime has no basis in reality and that criminals should be classified and charged on the basis of *motivation* rather than behavior. Thus charged, it will not come as a surprise that what appears to be on the surface as predatory crime, may turn out to have a motivation that is entirely not predatory. Equally, that a crime having for its seeming intent an assault on the person, may turn out to be a sexual crime.

A little reflection will show how inadequate and limited the current legal view is. Two persons are arrested; both are charged with the identical offense — the theft of some jewelry. The first person promptly disposes of his loot and is making immediate use of the money, the need of which, in fact, originally prompted him to commit the theft. The other adds this jewelry to his other jewels of which he had by now acquired quite a collection. The jewelry has no monetary value to him at all in the sense it has to the first man, but only an emotional symbolic value, whose significance goes back to his early childhood when his mother used to bedeck herself with jewels when she would go out for an evening. In terms of law, the two crimes are identical, but, in truth, are they? One is obviously predatory; the other is psychic and emotional. Should they be treated alike? Few will doubt that they ought to be treated differently because of difference in basic motivations.

Or let us take an open public meeting given to the discussion of the O.P.A. problem. Two people from the audience, each entirely independent of the other, express themselves strongly against the O.P.A. It is later learned that one did so because he has large investments in certain industrial enterprises which he thought would benefit by the abolition of the O.P.A. The other one has no such interests but is moved entirely by, to him, the very honest conviction that the O.P.A. imposes limitations on postwar recovery. Should these two men be regarded in the same light? Hardly! They should be regarded in terms of their basic motives.

A *classification* of crime, therefore, so it seems to us, should be based not on the deed as such, but on the causation back of it. Thus, in the light of the above mentioned examples, crimes could be classified as predatory and emotional, or to use a more technical terminology, as psychopathic and psychoneurotic. These, in turn, could be broken up into further subdivisions.

In terms of source or *causation*, the law is mainly concerned with overt behavior, with immediate intent and but little with motivation, and with immediate motivation at that. Murder is murder, though it recognizes the degree of justifiability as in terms of murder or first-degree, second degree, or homicide and justifiable homicide. Psychiatry, however, has already shown by the presentation of explicit clinical material that criminal behavior often takes its origin in the long past of the individual and that the instant criminality is but the end result of a long chain of events which had their roots in early life situations. The importance of considering *motivation* of criminal behavior rather than behavior as such, lies in the fact that the treatment must differ according to underlying motivation.

As concerning *treatment* of crime and the relation between crime and the criminal, the law regards punishment as a central point of attack, maintaining the belief that punishment is the ideal, indeed the only method that will redeem the criminal, and deter him and others as well, from further commission of crimes. And as the law considers primarily the crime, it takes very little, if any, consideration of the criminal as an individual.

It must be admitted, however, that the above approach to treatment of crime has proven wholly inadequate to cope with the situation. Apparently and against all reason and common sense, punishment, however severe, has failed to ameliorate the crime situation. Indeed, it looks as if the greater the punishment, the greater are the chances for recurrence of crime. In the light of studies available, it is entirely proper and logical to consider the criminal as a sick person, crime as a disease at the psycho-social level, a symptom of mental aberration and emotional distortion. Further, we must view crime as not something detachable or independent of the criminal, but entirely a part and parcel of him. Psychiatry views the criminal as the central and crucial part of the criminal activity and attempts to correlate the crime to the criminal, emphasizing the doer and not the deed. The criminal too, is considered not in his present cross-sectional behavior, but in the light of the total development of personality. Therefore, it submits that perhaps punishment is a crime committed by the state against the criminal; that it is better that we get away from the idea of punishment, especially of punishment fitting the crime, for evidently it does not solve the problem; and to speak of treatment instead of punishment, and of the treatment that will specifically fit the criminal, just as a specific vaccine fits one disease and not another. No sensible physician would think of punishing a typhoid carrier for having infected others, but instead would quarantine him until he is free of the germ. If lawyers are to be physicians of society, criminals should not be given sentences, but provided with treatment and care that may be short or long depending on the individual case.

In a previous study (this journal, Jan.-Feb. 1946), I have shown by the presentation of pertinent clinical material that the causation of crime went back into the childhood of the individual; that motivations for criminal behavior were psychic and emotional, and that psychotherapy was fully effective where punishment and segregation completely failed. In the present study an attempt is made to show that what appears to have been a crime against person turned out to be in fact a crime

with a sexual motivation; and again, that psychotherapy was beneficial, and saved a citizen for the community:

### *The Case*

This is the story of an eighteen year old boy who was arrested for stabbing a girl in the neck in a moving picture theater. He didn't know the girl and had never seen her before. To all appearances the assault was purposeless and without any motivation. Arrested, and transferred shortly after to a mental hospital, it was there at first believed that the assault had taken place during a period of amnesia and that the boy had not actually known what he was doing. We shall see, however, that this supposition was altogether wrong; that the assault was deliberate and premeditated, but that the identity of his victim had nothing to do with it; that she was selected blindly merely because she was a girl — not any particular girl. Her role in the episode was similar to that of an innocent bystander who gets hurt in a freak accident. She simply happened to be the girl who was sitting in front of this boy when he decided to pull off his little stabbing act. We shall see, however, that the act itself had a motive; that it grew out of faulty reasoning and defective judgment, in itself the result of a widely ramifying neurosis; and that it was the culmination of a period of unhappiness in the boy's home for which his father was primarily responsible. As a matter of fact, the father was crazier than the son, and not long after the latter's commitment to the hospital, was himself committed to the same institution suffering from an alcoholic psychosis.

### *Background*

We shall call our boy Thomas Tessman. After he had been hospitalized for a year, he was discharged into the custody of his mother who had moved to another city. A year of defective occupational adjustment followed, during part of which he "bummed" his way over a fair section of the country and was several times arrested for vagrancy. Then he found himself once more in the neighborhood of the hospital and more or less deliberately brought about his second admission by faking insanity. His second admission lasted about eight months during which time he cooperated readily with the hospital psychotherapist, but left the hospital without having completed the treatment. He later enlisted in the Army and lost a leg in the war. We shall see that we are concerned here with a most peculiar case of sexual maladjustment. The story of his sexual phantasies reads like a horror movie.

*The Family:* Nothing is known of his heredity back of his parents. His father was an auto mechanic and was heavily alco-

holic. He was an extremely domineering, irritable and unreasonable type of person. None of his children had any affection for him, and all of them feared him. The patient hated him thoroughly, and said, "I often used to plan to stab him to death in his sleep, but lost my nerve because I was afraid he would wake up and stop me." Tom's mother was a devout Catholic and tried to bring the children up in accordance with her religious teachings, but she was thoroughly cowed by her husband, as were all of the children. There were five children altogether, of whom Tom was the second. His older sister was a student nurse in a hospital. He had two younger brothers, and the youngest child was a girl. Tom said, "About the only thing we ever did together was quarrel."

*Personal History:* Birth and early development were normal. There is a history of an acute attack of mastoiditis at the age of thirteen from which, however, he recovered without an operation.

He started in school at the age of six, and at the age of sixteen, when he was in the eighth grade his father forced him to quit two months before he would have graduated. He often had to repeat classes because of the family's frequent change of residence, but he claimed that he never actually failed in a class. During his last few months in school he did extremely poor work because he was constantly being antagonized by his father, who insisted that he quit and go to work. He got a job as a messenger boy, but was obliged to quit after a few weeks because of illness. His father insisted that the illness was faked; told the patient that he was just a bum and always would be; and told him to get out and not to come back until he had a job.

*Circumstances Preceding the Stabbing:* Several nights before the incident which led to his arrest he had a particularly unpleasant scene with his father who would not allow him to eat his dinner, saying that he had no right to it since he hadn't worked for it; told him that he was no good; that he didn't want to work; and that he would probably turn out to be "a public enemy." The next day Tom left home to look for work and never returned. For two nights he slept in the parks. He bought himself a kitchen knife with which to cut bread and to spread jam on it, and on the third day he went into a moving picture theatre with this knife on his person. He said that he had been wandering around spending all his money after he left home and didn't know how he would live after it ran out, so he decided to do something to go to jail. "At first I didn't know what to do, and then I decided that if I was going to jail

I might as well get some fun out of it, so I decided to stab a girl."

But why stab a girl? We shall learn that the answer to this question belongs to a consideration of the patient's peculiar sex life and his strange attitude toward women. He said that he didn't experience any sexual excitement either before or at the time of the stabbing, and we shall find that at that time he did not actually know what sexual excitement was. Nevertheless, the assault in the moving picture theatre comes definitely under the heading of sex crimes. But Tom said, "I didn't even get any fun out of it because I was too scared."

He tells us: "I went into the theatre with the intention of stabbing some girl and I sat through the show once before I tried anything." After he had selected a girl, he sat behind her and took the knife out of his pocket, but had to try several times to get his nerve up. Finally, he says: "I grabbed the knife tight and swung it and hit her in the neck. The shock to my hand and her crying scared me." He got up and ran out of the theatre and went to another.

*Hospitalization and Freedom:* Not much of the true story came out during his first hospital residence. The "amnesia" theory was accepted by most of the physicians. He himself maintained at first that he could remember nothing about the stabbing, but afterwards he repudiated this entirely.

When he went to live with his mother after his first discharge from the hospital, he got a job as an errand boy in a drugstore, but only kept it three days. He took five dollars of his employer's money and spent it for food and movies. When his funds were exhausted, he went home. On several occasions he stole money from his mother and would go to the movies early in the morning and make the rounds of the picture shows as long as any of them remained open. He got another job in a grocery store for a month, but a strike caused him to lose it and after that he did no regular work. He would get money from his mother for lunch and carfare and spend it on candy and movies, telling her at night of the places he had been to look for work. He had read about them in "help-wanted" columns in the newspaper, that was all. The following spring he had a few temporary jobs, usually leaving each one with several dollars of his employer's money. Then he started out on his period of "bumming." He traveled through New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Missouri and Virginia. Sometimes he did a little work for a few days. In three cities he was picked up for vagrancy and jailed for short periods. Finally, he returned to the neighborhood of the hospital, went to the hospital movies

and slept in the nearby woods. When a cold spell rendered him uncomfortable and unable to sleep, he put on an insanity act in front of a policeman and eventually found himself in the hospital again. He said: "I was tired of trying to get along on the outside, and I didn't think it was worth the trouble to stay out, so I decided to come in here and tell them what I hadn't told them before. If they could do something about it, all right, and if they couldn't, too bad."

What he "hadn't told them before" was the true story of his most unusual sex life, and when we come to consider this, we see that the assault in the theatre, crazy and purposeless as it was, nevertheless had a definitely sexual coloring and was the outgrowth of the patient's arrested sexual development and his peculiar phantasy life.

### *Sex Life*

This boy had never masturbated and had never experienced orgasm. He had had infrequent nocturnal omissions, but they were not accompanied by any feeling of pleasure. He said that it was just like urinating. But from an early age he had been preoccupied with his penis and had "wanted to hurt it." He tied strings around it and forced foreign objects into it — pins and toothpicks and on one occasion a needle. The needle episode necessitated his being taken to a hospital where an operation was performed, and the needle and two toothpicks were removed from the urethra. He says, "This taught me a good lesson," and thereafter he stopped this strange practice for fear of injuring himself. In this connection he says:

"The idea was always to hurt it . . . I never thought about anything in particular when I did it. I just did it by instinct . . . I wanted to hurt or punish myself, why or what for, I don't know. I don't know where I got the ideas about sticking things into my penis or any of the rest that I did."

He would also take his clothes off when he was alone in the house and run about naked, and sometimes he went out in the woods, took off his clothes and climbed trees. Once at a bathing beach he waded into the water up to his neck, took off his bathing suit and walked about in the water naked.

He had had no sexual education of any kind and had never been curious about sex. He says that when he came to the hospital, "I wished I knew more about sex than I did, so I would understand what they were talking about."

He then goes on to tell about his peculiar attitude toward women. When he was about thirteen he would "take a pencil and block out clothes on pictures of women in magazines so they would look as if they were naked." He did this "because I wanted to humiliate them." He got hold of a china doll and "would tie a string around her neck or knock her around and



hit her, and I used to put a stick in the ground and tie her to it and pile paper and small sticks and burn her, or build a large fire and throw her in . . . Sometimes I would bury her 'alive.'" He also enjoyed putting newspaper pictures of women in the fire and watching them burn.

Gradually he developed a growing hatred for women and from that he proceeded to cultivate phantasies of torturing them. He says, "It may have been because I enjoyed torturing the pictures of them that I changed from hating women to wanting to torture them." He knew of no logical reason for hating women. It was "just a feeling that I have had for some time." At first it included all women except the ones that he knew well. He thinks that at first he hated both men and women and later it changed to just women. Later "it changed from all women to only good looking ones; and then it changed to "only good looking *young* ones." He says:

"One thing I've noticed is that the longer I had the feeling the more particular I got; and also I never felt like that about any one I have ever known. I used to walk the streets at night looking for someone to kill, but I very seldom saw anyone that I wanted to kill. The few times that I did see someone like that, either the person was with somebody or I lost my nerve. Even with the girl in the movies that I did stab, I had a job getting up my nerve to do the act. When I saw her in court, I realized that if I had seen her in the light I wouldn't have picked her."

Then he adds, very significantly: "I think it just takes the place of the feeling other men have of wanting a woman. I never have had that feeling."

His sadistic phantasies followed a strictly heterosexual path. He never entertained any thoughts of torturing men. Asked to tell about "walking the streets at night looking for someone to kill," he said that he was looking for a *woman* to kill. He had no place to torture one, so he thought that the next best thing would be to kill her outright. "It wouldn't be as much fun as torturing, but it would have to do until I was able to get a place to take her for torture."

His phantasies were never accompanied by any localized sexual excitement. He never experienced erection or emission at such times. His excitement, which he did not associate with sex, was fed by the movies of the period, and he refers to a number of these in which the heroine was in great peril but was rescued in the nick of time; and he used to think up ways in which he could have caused the "accidental" death of the girl if he had been working on the pictures when they were being made. The witnessing of these pictures was certainly accompanied by the *equivalent* of sexual excitement, but such excitement represented aim-inhibited sex. He was preoccupied

with the idea of the hatred of woman, and his desire to torture her and to kill her; yet she remained throughout an *unconscious* sexual object. He did not repudiate or reject her; his interest in her and his hatred of her were positive factors. At no time did he exhibit any of the negative attitude of the homosexual; he was never indifferent to women. On the other hand, he definitely was indifferent to men. His sexual interest, therefore, remained normal insofar as its object was concerned, but it was conditioned by a fantastic sadism.

He "never wanted to have intercourse with a girl, just to torture her," but he exercised the same particularity in object choice that might be expected in anyone with a definitely heterosexual aim. He realizes something of this himself when he says:

"Torturing a girl would give me the same satisfaction as having intercourse with her would give another fellow; but while most fellows take anything they can get, I'm fussy about the ones I want to torture. They have to be good-looking and young . . . I could never have intercourse with a girl who wanted me to or who was willing if I wanted to. I couldn't do it. Having intercourse with a girl for the fun of it never appealed to me at all. With me, it is just another way of torturing women."

He rules out the idea of sexual excitement from the situation, however, because "I figure sexual excitement must have some connection with the penis, and I have never been excited by any connection with my penis."

Homosexual advances were made to him on a number of occasions, and he once submitted to passive pederasty and several times to passive fellatio, but without any interest or feeling. Some fellow who offered to share a room with him for the night performed pederasty on him, but "the only thing I thought about it was that some people could be awfully foolish over the dumbest things." The experiments with fellatio were failures from the viewpoint of his active partner because he was incapable of either erection or emission. The only time he ever experienced erection was in his sleep, when he supposed he had a wet dream "because there usually is in such cases." He couldn't recall any dream, however, and the emission "felt just like urinating; as a matter of fact, that's what I thought it was." This "all happened before I had ever heard of wet dreams."

After he had been in the hospital for some time, he decided to tell the psychotherapist "about an experiment that I have tried." It developed that this "experiment" was simply no more than an attempt to produce erection and emission by masturbation. This represented repeated attempts over a considerable period of time. For a while he thought that he would

give up trying, but finally "I began getting the feel of it, not much at first, then more and more every time I tried it, until at last I have found out what it is all about." And with the successful culmination of this "experiment" the patient began to lose interest in his phantasies and dreams of torture, and said, "It's a little too soon yet, but I think I have lost all interest in dreams of that kind."

It would be interesting to know the subsequent evolution of his sex life after he left the hospital and after his war experiences, but the only information on the subject is conveyed in a brief letter in which he stated, "I really get along very well with the gals now, too well sometimes." He added that he was "not married yet," which seemed to imply that the idea of marriage was not outside the limits of probability. Thus we see that the sadistic phantasies and the hatred of women which lay behind his assault on the girl in the theatre were a kind of short-circuited sexual energy. When he became capable of experiencing localized sexual excitement, these phantasies gradually disappeared.

### *Dream Life*

The limitations of this paper do not permit any exhaustive discussion of this patient's dreams or phantasies; far more of them are phantasies than dreams. In considering them we are confronted with a number of problems which do not ordinarily exist in connection with dream analysis. In the first place, there is no clear line of demarkation between dream and phantasy. While he speaks of some of his dreams as "day" and of some of them as "night" dreams, indicating that the "day" dreams are phantasies and the "night" dreams are experienced during sleep, there is more than a little suspicion that a majority of the so-called night dreams are also merely phantasies which were experienced after dark and are not really "dreams" as that term is ordinarily understood.

Secondly, these "dreams" are so monotonously alike that their repetition *in toto* would tax the patience of any reader, and it therefore becomes necessary to summarize rather than to record them, giving only a sufficient number of concrete examples to illustrate their prevailing trend.

Out of ninety recorded dreams (or phantasies), eighty-three are sadistic and related to the idea of torturing women. The exceptions occurred after the patient had begun to lose interest in this all-absorbing theme and when the sadistic phantasies were well on their way toward dissolution. Many of the dreams show clearly the influence of the "horror" movie.

First of all, he reported a number of "past" dreams most of which were similar to the dreams and/or phantasies later re-

corded. One of the exceptions to this classification, however, reads as follows:

"I was on some kind of a large iron frame-work of a box. I was on one side at about the middle of it, and I was trying to climb to the top, but no matter how hard I climbed, the box would increase in size, so that I always stayed in the middle. I kept that up all through the dream."

This is a dream of frustration, not unlike those which we frequently encounter among prisoners. When we remember the seemingly hopeless conditions that existed in the patient's home, where he was subjected to the continual disparagement and anti-social suggestions of his psychotic father, we are not at all surprised to encounter a dream of this character. And this leads us to wonder to what extent the elaborate "movie" imagery of the interminable array of sadistic dreams is not also, in part at least, a compensatory mechanism whereby the patient exercised undisputed power and at the same time satisfied a deeply submerged hatred. Why this hatred, which is certainly a hatred of his father, became displaced upon women and fused with his inhibited sexual development, is one of the mysteries of this most unusual case.

Turning now to the recorded dreams and/or phantasies, we find the opening theme of this patient's sadistic symphony repeated *ad nauseum* — "I got a girl and stripped her." Female nudity plays an important and seemingly indispensable role in all of his phantasy formation. Stripping his victim is clearly the first requisite for the enjoyment of his sadistic orgy. Presumably it is the first step in heaping indignity and humiliation upon the girl, but it is also apparent that complete nudity of itself plays an important part in his thoughts of women. His repertoire of scenes of torture is fiendish and diabolical, but at the same time so fantastic and theatrical that one cannot take it seriously. It must be recognized as an absurd, but morbid, phantasy game. Any attempt to enact any of these — even assuming that such an attempt were possible — would be attended with the same psychological reaction which he experienced in the moving picture — "I didn't get any fun out of it because I was too scared."

In connection with one of the later day dreams, he makes the following significant statement:

"Then all of a sudden I realized that I was having one of my dreams, and I stopped it . . . Probably the reason why I haven't had any dreams lately . . . is because they are mostly day-dreams and I can stop day-dreams by not wanting to have them; and, as in the case of this dream, if I happen to have one, I can stop it as soon as I notice what I'm doing, which I think is a good sign, not only because I can stop it, but also because I can realize while having a dream that I should stop it."

This phantasy game, therefore, at least insofar as the day-dreams are concerned — and we submit that a majority of his recorded dreams are, in effect, day-dreams — is at all times under the control of his will and is indulged in consciously as an entertaining pastime and recognized as belonging to the world of make-believe.

The fertility of his imagination is remarkable. Edgar Allan Poe was a piker compared with this patient when it comes to envisioning scenes of horror. Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff are tame beside this exponent of atrocity. Let us now consider some of the ways and means he employed in these horrible and grotesque phantasies of tortured women.

The girls in these dreams (usually there is only one, but occasionally there are several) are tied to trees and killed with stones and darts; held under water until they drown; swung around his head and thrown a great distance (a method requiring superhuman strength); burned alive and buried alive; crushed by heavy weights; split in two with a sword (more superhuman strength); devoured by wild animals; smeared with molasses and eaten alive by ants (this is borrowed from a moving picture episode); burned with acid; trampled to death by the hero (?) wearing spiked shoes; cut in two by a swinging knife (see Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum"); locked in a burning house and smothered by heat and smoke; buried waist-deep (or sometimes neck-deep) in hardening concrete and starved to death; electrocuted (slowly); blown up by a bomb (with a long fuse); kicked to death; cut to pieces by knives (operated by a motor); suspended between two trees and used as a human punching bag; eaten by rats; scalded; shot with a bow and arrow (in many places); stung to death by hornets; skinned alive; frozen to death in barrels of ice water; killed by having knives thrown at them ("like they do in knife-throwing acts"); suspended by hands and feet from the ceiling and used as a human swing; whipped to death; clubbed to death; and tortured and killed in an infinite combination of these violent means.

Only a few choice concrete examples of these extravagant torture dreams and/or phantasies can be quoted here.

Dream No. 3 reads:

"I had a girl in a small room and I stripped her and stood facing her right side, then I locked my arms around her so that my right forearm was against her left side and my left hand ahold of my right wrist, and I squeezed until her ribs broke. Then I dropped her and went away."

He says that he had this dream with numerous variations and that sometimes he would have sexual intercourse with the girl while he was squeezing her to death. The superhuman

strength motif appears here, as it does in a number of the dreams, indicating a strong compensatory element predicated upon inferiority. In the dreams in which he assaults the girl sexually we must remember that, to him, this is merely an added indignity and humiliation. He does not conceive of it as being pleasurable to him, for he has not yet learned what sexual pleasure is. There are a number of dreams in which the phrase "and raped her" occurs. Frequently it reads "stripped her and raped her," indicating perhaps that both the stripping and the raping are merely means of exhibiting his contempt for her and his power over her.

Dream No. 13, contains a rather unusual device for disposing of his victims. This time there are two of them. The dream reads:

"I got two girls and stripped them and tied them around a wheel with their backs to the rim, and then I rolled them through a bed of hot ashes so that they got burned. I kept rolling them in and out of the coals until they died."

As the dreams are recorded, one gets the impression that he is able to accomplish all of his remarkable feats unaided. There is nothing unusual about this, of course, for in phantasy all things are possible. Later on, however, he tells us that some of his phantasies assume the presence of a trained corps of assistants.

"I'd get a big house out in the country and build sound-proof cellars in it that I could keep the girls in while I tortured them. I'd also have several houses in different cities so that I could have a wide range to operate in, but the big house would be my headquarters. Then I would hire a small army of men to work for me. Some I would detail to kidnap the girls; others would be the guards; and others would be a help to me whenever I thought of a plan of torture that I couldn't do all by myself. I would have chains in all the cellars, so that I could chain the girls to the walls; and I would keep the chains as full as possible all the time, so that the girls could watch me torture the other girls and get an idea of what was coming for them."

The following dream is typical of many (No. 22):

"I got a girl into a room and stripped her and tied her hands and feet together behind her back and I took a long knife and cut lines all up and down her stomach and legs. Then I took a red hot poker and ran it through the cuts slowly so that the burns would leave permanent scars, and then I let her go."

Cutting slits in his victims from one part of their anatomy to another and making human maps of them is one of his favorite pastimes. Sometimes the cuts are reinforced by a hot poker, as in the dream just quoted, and sometimes he pours acid into them. And frequently, when he has thus scarred his victim, he lets her go. In connection with one dream he says, "I left her to live the rest of her life with those scars." But in only one of the dreams does he scar his victim's face. In all

the others the scars are made on her body. Why doesn't he leave scars which will show when the girl is fully dressed? Does he think of her going around the rest of her life nude? Or does he only think of her thereafter as being rendered ineligible for sexual approaches? Was his first picture of woman associated with nudity and disfigurement? And if so, whence was that picture derived?

Day-Dream No. 74 is a pluralistic affair. Not only does he use five girls, but he matches them with five men.

"I got about five girls in a room and stripped them and tied each to a different post. Then I went out and got some 'bums' and brought them in and stripped them and tied them to the girls face to face. I tied their wrists together and their ankles. Then I untied the girls from the posts and laid them down on the floor with the men on top so that they could — the girls. I went out and left them over night. I kept them that way for a few months by feeding them once a day. Then after a while I got tired of feeding them, so for a few weeks I just fed the girls so that the bums starved to death and started to decay still tied to the girls. When the bums were all dead, I took the girls with the bodies tied to them out to a vacant lot and left them there to be found by the first person who crossed the lot."

This is the first time that he introduces men into the phantasy, and these he also strips, but apparently their only purpose is to further the humiliation and discomfort of the girls. It will be noted that he does not remain to witness the sexual intercourse between the couples. "I went out and left them over night."

Three of the comparatively early dreams involve cannibalism. Dream No. 6 reads:

"I had a girl in a large room and I stripped her and tied her to a beam and slowly roasted her over a fire, and then while she was still roasting I would cut off slices of her and eat them."

Whence the cannibalistic impulse and what purpose does it serve? It does not seem to be consistent with contempt, but suggests some unconscious erotic motive. Is it an exaggerated idea of complete possession? This phase of his dream, however, did not last long.

Toward the end of his hospital residence, when the sadistic phantasies had begun to disappear, he recorded a few dreams which were unmistakably the products of sleep and much like those which we regularly find in the cases of other patients. Some of these depicted his restlessness under hospital restraint, and one or two of them were not unlike the early dream of frustration which we quoted a while ago and which we said resembled the dreams of prisoners.

His last recorded dream, No. 90, is worth quoting because of its encouraging therapeutic indications. It reads:

"I dreamt I had gone home and I was going to be in a room with my brothers. We each had separate beds and I was just getting into

mine when I thought, 'Gee, I forgot to bring "Gone With the Wind" home with me; I'd better look.' Then I saw a pile of books in the corner. I must have brought them with me. So I got out of bed and went over to the books and started looking through them and I kept getting more and more scared that I had left it, as each book turned out not to be it. Then when I had them all picked up I felt sure that I had lost it, when I saw another book on the floor and I said "That looks like it." I bent down to pick it up and it was it."

"Gone With the Wind" — a book which the patient had read — bears a definite relationship in this dream to his phantasies; and his eagerness to find the book depicts his effort to reassure himself that these absurd day-dreams are, in fact, "gone with the wind." It is prognostically significant and encouraging to note that he does find the book — he can bid goodbye to his childish phantasies.

### *The Total Picture*

This case presents an etiological mystery which is covered by the colloquial question, "How did he get that way?"

We must remember, in the first place, that we are dealing with a problem of adolescence, and in the second place, that we are concerned with a child who never had any sexual education. We are also dealing with what appears to be, at least in the beginning, a more or less shut-in personality. One of the suggested diagnoses, upon the patient's first admission, was: An Early Schizophrenic Reaction; another was: Psychopathic Personality. The material lends limited support to both theories. In discussing some of the aspects of his early life, the patient tells us that:

"My inability to talk to strangers may have helped to form my hatred of young women, because when I met people they had to talk to me first for a while or I would never get to know them. While boys and men and older women might take the trouble to get to know me, girls prefer to have the newcomers talk to them first, which I couldn't do; so while I got to know others, I never got to know any girl very well. So, naturally, I didn't have much use for them after a while."

Here we see the typical shyness and inability to adjust to association with others which are so frequently found in the schizoid make-up; and it also strengthens our supposition that the phantasies are mainly compensatory in character. He heightens this suspicion when he says:

"As far as going out with girls, I never wanted to and I never tried to. I suppose I could have if I had wanted to, as I know several boys and girls in school who were going out with each other; but I never wanted to go with them."

This, of course, is pure rationalization. "I never wanted to" is his excuse for the shyness and maladaptability which held



him back from trying to. "I wanted to, but never dared to try to," would be a more accurate statement of the situation.

These statements account for some of the tremendous sense of inferiority which is inevitably associated with his compensatory phantasy formation — a combination which we find so very frequently in the schizoid personality. But it does not tell us why his phantasy formation took the particular form it did; and in order to answer that question we require data which lies outside the field of the patient's conscious memory. We have already intimated, in connection with some of his recorded dreams, that the early parental situation must have been a determining factor in his peculiar phantasy trend. What infantile memories of misconceived parental relations has he forgotten? Knowing something of the character of his father; remembering the physician's impression of his mother as a woman thoroughly cowed and fearful of any self-assertion, we can readily imagine sexual relations between the parents which not only might be construed sadistically by a child, but which actually could have been more nearly sadistic than normal. He himself, however, remembers nothing of this, for in response to a question about any such early impressions of parental intercourse, he says:

"No, I can't remember ever having heard them engaged in sexual intercourse at any time. I've thought of it before, but I've never been able to recall hearing anything that could relate to sexual intercourse. I've even tried to think of something that I didn't particularly notice, not knowing what it was, but I can't think of anything like that either. But if they waited until they were in bed, then I would have been in bed and asleep long ago, so I wouldn't have heard anything they did."

But this does not satisfy us, for it is merely an attempt to recall conscious memories. There may be deeper unconscious ones which would tell a very different story, not only of hearing but also of seeing parental intercourse; memories fraught with such traumatic significance that they were too painful to be retained.

The patient himself speculates upon other contributing factors, and appears to be sincere in his search for some explanation of his peculiar development. He says:

"I have sometimes thought that if I had learned all about sex at the right time and in the right way, I might have forgotten all the other foolishness that I had in my head at the time, and things would have turned out differently, and I would never have had to come here."

No one can quarrel with the sound reasoning here expressed, but it does not explain the "foolishness that I had in my head at the time," in the absence of any real sexual knowledge. He

goes on to say that he was always "opposed to being kissed," and adds: "Mother has told me that even as a baby I always turned away when anyone tried to kiss me. And I know that as soon as I was able to, I told them not to kiss me. And I have never let anyone kiss me since I was old enough to stop them." (His mother has told the physician the same thing.) And he reasons that "it is usually women who try to kiss babies, and I think that it was being kissed when I couldn't stop it that made me hate women." The deduction doesn't sound logical, however. We are interested in knowing why he didn't like to be kissed (which, of course, he doesn't know himself), but there is no reason to suppose that that was what led to his hatred of women. He also speculates on whether "my quarrels with Kathryn might have started it when I was very young" (she is the older sister); but this does not help us any unless we could uncover evidence of an early incestuous interest in his sister which became sadistically colored — and we have no such evidence. There is one phase of this brother-sister situation, however, which is deserving of some attention. He says: "Being the oldest, there was a time when she could beat me in our fights. . . . When I finally got so I could beat her in a fight, she would tell Daddy and he would give me hell for fighting with a *girl*." Knowing how he hated his father, we can readily understand that "fighting with a girl" could have become in his mind a means of father defiance; and elaboration upon this theme of "fighting with a girl" could have played its part unconsciously in his fondness for the subsequent phantasies in which "fighting" was succeeded by torture.

Then he remembers the nursery rhyme, "What are little girls made of?" and says his sister and his aunts used to repeat it in his presence "because it made me mad." "They used to go over and over it, and I would get so mad I wouldn't know what to do." It is probably unnecessary to repeat the rhyme.

"What are little girls made of?  
Sugar and spice and everything nice,  
That's what little girls are made of.  
What are little boys made of?  
Worms and snails and puppy dogs' tails,  
That's what little boys are made of."

One can see how, in a small way, this teasing might have contributed to the development of a sense of inferiority, with corresponding dislike of little girls; but it is inconceivable that one could jump from that to the elaborate and diabolical phantasies which we have described.

On one occasion he asks, "Could it be that it is my lack of sexual interest in women that causes me to dislike them?"

Now there he is "getting warmer," as they say in the game of

hunt-the-thimble; for of course we recognize that his intense hatred of women is the result of tremendous erotic pressure — blind erotic pressure — in reverse. Were this not the case, he would have become merely indifferent or anaesthetic to women, and might well have developed a homosexual direction. But, instead, he preserved his heterosexual interest in a disguised and aberrant form. No one not intensely interested in women could ever people his phantasies with them, as this boy has done.

He makes another rather interesting observation:

"Since I've been working with you, Doctor, I have spent more time trying to figure things out. And I have noticed that these dreams tire me out a lot. It almost seems as though I actually had done these things. I've been thinking that that may be what has made me so lazy, as I remember I used to be able to do fairly well when I was about five, six or seven years old. If that is the case, then maybe my trouble started earlier than I thought at first."

His dreams "tire him out a lot." They are definitely masturbatory substitutes. They use up sexual energy. Another evidence of the definitely sexual character of the phantasies is contained in his statement that "there doesn't seem to be much regularity in the way they come. . . . Sometimes I wouldn't have any for a long time. Then again I'll have a whole lot of them at one time." This corresponds very well to the ebb and flow of erotic interest.

He recognizes the essentially masturbatory character of his early attempts to injure his penis, for he says:

"I never have been able to figure out why I wanted to hurt it. I have since thought that it was a sort of attempt at masturbation, but at the time that I did these things I didn't know anything about sex or how it worked. I have often tried to think about it, but I don't know of any reason I could give for it. As a matter of fact, I used to wonder about it at the time. *I think that the pleasure came in anticipating the pain rather than in the actual pain.*" (Italics ours.)

The italicized sentence ties in with our suspicion that there may have been an early and subsequently forgotten impression of parental intercourse in terms of sadism and that his later attempts to injure himself were predicated on mother identification.

He also gives support to our suspicion that the majority of his recorded dreams are, in fact, conscious phantasies; and he throws a little more light on the part played in these phantasies by the struggles of his victims — something which he never mentions in connection with the recorded "dreams" themselves.

"As for the difference between day- and night-dreams, I don't know many. The main difference is that night-dreams occur when I am asleep and day-dreams when I am awake, and that night-dreams are like any other night-dreams and day-dreams are as though these

things happened inside my head and I could see them happen. . . . Of course, the girl has to have a good shape and a good complexion, or I wouldn't be interested in even torturing her. I won't take just any girl. She has to have looks. The idea in raping her would be to add to her torture, as it would be a combination of mental and physical torture. And the chief enjoyment that I get out of it is having her struggle to keep me off, and in overcoming her despite all she can do to stop me. If I started to do it and she didn't fight back, I wouldn't go through with it."

This shows how little we can rely on dream recordings without sufficient associative detail. We have observed that in the recorded day-dreams the girls seem to be as putty in his hands, but this apparently was not so. He simply failed to put in the "struggle" element. In another place, he says, "I usually tied her up so that she couldn't fight back, but sometimes I would hold her with my hands and let her try to fight back so she'd hate it the more."

And here again we have something which strengthens our suspicion of an originally sadistic concept of parental intercourse. "The chief enjoyment that I get out of it is having her struggle to keep me off, and in overcoming her despite all she can do to stop me." Didn't he actually see something of this sort in his own home as a child? We think so.

### *Psychopathic Personality?*

In view of the frequent mention of psychopathic personality in connection with this case, it is important to attempt an evaluation of the personality traits exhibited by the material at our disposal. It is easy enough to find facts from which a hasty label of psychopathic personality can be applied. He stabbed a girl in a theatre; he stole from his mother and from his employers; he wanted to be a criminal; he was lazy; he was several times jailed for vagrancy; he entertained gruesome phantasies of torturing women; and he wandered about the streets "looking for someone to kill." Certainly this list is highly suggestive of a psychopathic make-up.

But we must remember that more than fifty percent of this resulted from the poisonous suggestions of his own father. It was his father who put anti-social ideas into his head by predicting that he would be "a public enemy"; that he was "just a bum and always would be"; that "only dumbbells couldn't get a job," etc. What reaction could anyone expect in an already shy and shut-in personality to such psychologically criminal treatment? His father curtailed his ambition, destroyed his initiative, and blocked every path toward normal, constructive interest. The psychologist who examined him in the hospital on his first admission said that, "He thinks a good deal about what is going to happen to him and wonders whether

his father's constant warning that he would become a public enemy and that he would never be any good is not coming true." It seems apparent, therefore, that the patient's anti-social ideas are largely the result of suggestion, and partly the result of a tendency to follow the line of least resistance. They are the product of a warped and twisted viewpoint and not of an instinctively predatory disposition. In connection with the thefts of small sums of money from his mother and his various employers, he says:

"My idea was to have the police come and have me sent to jail. There I could meet some crooks and have a chance to join a gang and become a crook. It was the only way I could get to know them, and I wanted to get to know them so that I could get started in crime and be able to make money fast."

We see here the phantasy element at work and also the compensatory factor. Asked if the desire to be a crook or a bank robber was based simply on the idea of getting money or if it involved a thrill apart from the money, he replied that "there have been times when I thought that I would go into it for the thrill alone." But he adds: "There is the fact that most of the thrill would come with success, and the knowledge that no matter how often I succeeded I would eventually lose." Now this is not psychopathic reasoning, but represents rather a normal damper on phantasy.

No psychopath would have furnished the cooperation which this patient did or have engaged in the self-examination which he did in an effort to discover the source of his "trouble." Had circumstances permitted the use of deeper psychoanalytic technique in this case, he might have gained a far more comprehensive understanding of that source than is obtained by the more conscious exploration and speculation covered by this discussion. All of his psychopathic traits are environmentally conditioned. Given a decent home, a sane and kind father, and a chance to complete an average education, it is altogether doubtful if we should have ever heard of any anti-social tendencies. It should be noted that between the first and second admissions, when he was traveling over a wide section of the country, his only conflict with the law was on charges of vagrancy. There is no record of any really criminal activity. Most of this boy's criminality was a matter of phantasy, like his sadism. He was simply an adolescent gone hay-wire, suffering from a combination of sexual ignorance, intolerable home influences, blind erotic pressure, and an equally blind effort to compensate for a tremendous sense of inferiority. He was an ignorant, bewildered, perplexed and bedeviled youth who was at all times more victimized than victimizer.

What he is like today we can only surmise from the alto-

gether inadequate information imparted by his letter. What he will be like tomorrow must depend largely upon the influences in his life today. But with his sadistic phantasies in the ash can, a true sexual understanding, the consciousness of having honorably served his country and having made a considerable sacrifice in that service, and with the fair degree of intelligence which he has exhibited, a satisfactory social adjustment in the future would seem to be a reasonable expectation.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

This case represents an adolescent youth, the second of five children, with an alcoholic, domineering, disagreeable father whom all the children feared and for whom none of them had any affection, while the patient himself entertained toward his father a most violent but unexpressed hatred. The mother was a religious woman who was thoroughly cowed and incapable of self-assertion.

The boy's father forced him to leave school before he had completed the eighth grade, nagged and bullied him about getting a job, called him a bum, prophesied that he would become "a public enemy," and finally forced him to leave home because he did not have employment.

The boy had no sexual education, had never experienced localized sexual excitement, and did not know anything about erection or emission except during sleep, and then without pleasure; but from an early age he was preoccupied with his penis and "wanted to hurt it"; insert foreign objects into it; and finally had to undergo an operation as the result of which a needle and two toothpicks were removed from the urethra. He developed an early hatred of women which progressed to a desire to torture them. After he had been turned out of his home, he thought that he would do something to go to jail and decided to stab a girl. He did this in a moving picture theatre with a kitchen knife that he had been using to cut bread and spread jam. Following his arrest, when no motive could be found for the assault (he had never seen the girl before), he was sent to a mental hospital where he remained for approximately one year, when he was discharged to the custody of his mother, the father in the meantime having been committed to the same hospital with an alcoholic psychosis.

The unsatisfactory occupational adjustment, marked by numerous thefts of small sums from his employers and several similar thefts from his mother, culminated in a period of "bumming" during which he traveled through a number of states and was several times jailed for vagrancy, but committed no crimes.

Returning to the neighborhood of the hospital, he brought about his second admission by faking insanity on the street. It was then discovered that he had a rich and varied phantasy life devoted almost exclusively to day-dreams in which he tortured women in an almost inexhaustible variety of ways. Many of these phantasies showed clearly the influence of the "horror" movie of his day, and all of them represented an equivalent of sexual excitement concerning the real nature of which he was still unaware. In these phantasies female nudity played a seemingly indispensable part, and they invariably began with the phrase, "I got a girl and stripped her," while in a number of them occurred the phrase "stripped her and raped her"; but the idea of sexual assault was always associated with that of the humiliation of his victim and not with any thought of his own sexual pleasure. A small number of these dreams and/or phantasies involved ideas of cannibalism in which he cut off slices of his victims and ate them. In some of the dreams his victims were finally turned loose after their bodies had been scarred by cuts made with a knife and reinforced by a hot poker or with acid. The phantasies combined his abnormal hatred of women with many methods of torture involving an exhibition of superhuman strength which was clearly indicative of a compensatory mechanism in which the idea of undisputed power over his victim represented the dominant theme.

During the patient's second hospitalization he made repeated masturbatory experiments over a considerable period of time in an attempt to produce an erection and emission, and finally succeeded in securing localized sexual excitement, and, as he says, "at last I found out what it is all about." Almost immediately thereafter his weird sadistic phantasies began to disappear, and when he left the hospital they were well on their way toward dissolution. His later dreams, which replaced these sadistic phantasies, were more nearly typical of those of the average neurotic and were concerned largely with the emotions of frustration, dissatisfaction with hospital confinement, etc., many of them being not unlike those frequently encountered among prisoners, and reflecting the emotions of hopelessness and defeat created in the boy by his father's tyranny and his unhappy home life.

He subsequently enlisted in the Army and lost a leg in the service of his country. When last heard from he said that he was able to get along all right with the girls and intimated that the contemplation of marriage was not outside the limits of probability.

The reason for his peculiar sexual maladjustment remains a mystery, but there is considerable justification for the suspicion

that it was rooted in repressed traumatic memories of sexual relations between his parents; while his apparently psychopathic tendencies were largely the result of the destructive suggestions implanted in his mind by his psychotic father.

The case demonstrates that what appeared on the surface as a crime against person turned out on further study and analysis to have been motivated by purely sexual motives, therefore really a sexual crime; and further that psychotherapy, though limited, has been beneficial to the extent that the patient was able to return to the community and resume normal life.

*Criminality Is a Disease and  
Criminals Can Be Cured.*