

WORCESTER STATE HOSPITAL
Office of the Chaplain

ZUIDEMA, ALBERT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Age 33; height 5' 3", wt. 145 lbs.; born in Holland; race, Dutch; religion, Protestant; education, 6th grade; civil condition, married; children, one; physical findings, negative; intelligence rating, average.

REASON FOR COMMITMENT

Committed December 28, 1929. He had been taken to jail for attacking the wife of his employer with an axe. When questioned in jail about what he had done he seemed unable to reply; he had collapsed and had to be carried to the jail. He was sent here immediately on ten day papers. On admission here, while he was being bathed, he attempted to drown himself in the tub, and, that failing, to choke himself on half a cake of soap which he bit off. On January 10, 1930, he was diagnosed as Not Insane and sent back to court. There he again broke down, became rigid, rolled his eyes, could hardly speak. He was returned to this hospital and on January 24, 1930, was diagnosed, Undiagnosed Psychosis.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Heredity and Early Influences

Patient was brought up in a family of Dutch immigrants and was the seventh of thirteen children. The father was a farmer and brought his family to this country in 1909 when the patient was thirteen years old. The economic status was marginal. Of the siblings, three are dead, only one of these dying in infancy; one died at 23 of childbirth, another at 21 of rheumatism.

The entire family has the reputation of trying to escape rather than face difficulty. The patient claims that he was always considered the most easily frightened of the family and that his brothers and sisters used to amuse themselves by frightening him. When automobiles were still novel he feared to walk on the road. In routine work, however, both he and the other members of the family have done well.

The birth conditions of the patient were normal, but he was not weaned until he was two years old. He enjoyed play with other children but took no initiative in it and seemed to enjoy seclusion more. He had no noticeable preference for either girls or boys. School was pleasant for him but he had to leave at the age of fourteen in order to help with the farm. He is said to have done well in school.

Vocational Adjustments

Patient has never stayed at one job more than about two years. He once said that he believed in moving on when he saw trouble approaching, and that he never bore any hard feelings toward those who made it necessary for him to change a job. He is said to have been a faithful and hard worker, never quarrelsome. He has nearly always done farm work but for a while was an attendant in Grafton State Hospital and for a while in a foundry. The reason for the reduction of his wages in this last job seems to have been that his employer did not need as much help as earlier in the season. Patient seems to have required the support of his wife to assert his rights in the transaction since it was she who made him refuse the last offer.

Social Adjustments

Patient seems to have had only one close friends, his wife. However, he has always felt lonely and depressed when he did not feel himself part of a family circle, not necessarily his own. Twice when he had to live alone in a new community he has made half-hearted attempts at suicide. Yet he is known more for seclusiveness than for sociability. Since he has been here he has been very easy to approach and anxious to be friendly with patients and others. He does not take the initiative in making acquaintances but he responds well.

He is a Protestant but has not had much faith in religion. At one time during a period of agitation he became remorseful over the fact that he had not attended church more regularly.

Sex Adjustments

The patient's family gave him no instruction about sex. Before marriage he masturbated and worried about it some. He also had visited prostitutes on several occasions but seemed to think it normal for men of his age and civil condition to do so.

On July 9, 1926 he married Eleanor Holmes of Wilkinsville. The marriage has been a happy one in all ways. She has had one miscarriage, and two weeks before the onset of the patient's present disorder bore him a son. She apparently is a much more aggressive person than he.

HISTORY OF THE PRESENT ILLNESS

In March of 1929, patient hired out to a Mr. Boria, a farmer, for \$75. a month with room, bread, milk and wood. On Thanksgiving day Doria reduced the salary to \$60. and about Christmas told the patient he was going to reduce it to \$40. a month. December 26, 1929, the patient gave up the job and secured another. Boria refused to pay him until he had moved out and he could not move because he had no money. Meanwhile his wife and child were suffering from want of heat and food. Saturday, the 28th, patient had only \$1.50 left. He went to get some wood to heat his tenement, regarding the wood as part of his pay. He made three trips but on the third was stopped by Mrs. Boria who stood between him and the door yelling at him. Finally, he says, she jumped at him and he became possessed of a "devil", took the axe and struck her with it several times. When he was admitted here he had several deep scratches on his face. He refused to relinquish the axe until his wife said calmly, "Give the man the axe". He and the sheriff arranged the removal of his wife and baby to the home of her father, made apologies to Mrs. Boria while she lay on a couch awaiting removal to the hospital, then was taken to jail. When he saw the prison door he completely collapsed and had to be carried in by two men. Because of his deep depression he was brought here for observation. On admission he tried to drown himself and to choke himself on half a bar of soap so was given paraldehyde and put in cold packs. He very soon calmed down and promised to be quiet if they would take him out of packs. For about 48 hours he was watched by a special attendant, then was allowed about the ward until discharged to the court on January 10, 1930. The same day he was brought back deeply depressed. During all his depressions his wife and his baby have been his principle concern.

January 24, 1930, he was given the label Undiagnosed Psychosis and committed. Since this time he has been on various wards including parole wards. Often the recalling of his attack on Mrs. Boria will precipitate deep depression. June 10, 1930 while he was working in the kitchen after a talk with some of the doctors in which, he says, they called him a coward, he attempted twice to stab himself with an ice-pick but struck a rib both times. When asked why he had done it he said it was that he felt like a traitor to his country, to his wife, and to his child, that he would be doing them all good if he could put himself out of the way. He feels that his wife should have a chance to remarry since he is going to be imprisoned all his life and that she cannot as long as he is alive. A few days after the incident he claimed that he was glad he had made the attempt since he had learned more about himself and did not fear himself so much. Now he is working on the farm and is in fairly good spirits. He can sometimes talk over his attempts at suicide and laugh at the foolishness of them. He has said that he has never really wanted to kill himself.

At no time have any hallucinations or delusions been elicited. He has been perfectly oriented at all times. Twice before he was married, during lonely spells, he thought of suicide. The first time he asked a neighbor to hide a gun

that was hanging in a barn, fearing he would be tempted to use it. The second time he bought a gun himself but became paralysed when he tried to pull the trigger.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PSYCHOSIS

Field of Attention

The field of attention is not narrowed and he responds to external stimuli.

Mood

His mood is usually somewhere between complacent and cheerful, but he is easily thrown into deep depression.

Intellectual Functions

Orientation perfect; memory good; coherence of thinking normal.

General Behavior

Neat, hard-working, when idle is usually to be found strolling with hands in pockets. He has exhibited no strange mannerisms or bizarre behavior since he has been here.

Social Attitude

Co-operative; submissive; seclusive unless sought out; self-accusatory; responsive to environment. Will do any kind of work, does it with interest, efficiency, and steadiness.

Uses leisure time to read, talk, or think of his troubles. When he expects his wife to come to see him he gets despondent if she is late then goes to extreme of cheerfulness when she arrives.

Content of Thought

Philosophy of Life and Eschatology

Patient's chief aim in life is to give his wife and child a good home and plenty of comfort. He wants most to understand himself and find out why he does "these things".

Self-Importance

No ideas of grandeur.

Symbolism and Hidden Meanings

None elicited.

Anxiety

Patient is definitely anxious about whether he is to spend the rest of his life in such institutions as this. His concern is due to his regard for his wife and child.

Incapacitation

None.

Erotic Interests

None.

Religious Concern

Much religious concern. He repeatedly asked the Chaplain to pray with him and had a marked sense of guilt and felt that he was being punished for his sins and for not going to church more.

Persecutory Trends

The only time at which this man has projected his difficulties was when he said that a devil seemed to make him pick up the axe and attack Mrs. Boria.

DIAGNOSTIC IMPRESSIONLife Situation

A temporary situational maladjustment in the case of a well-meaning young man of somewhat limited intellectual equipment. There is nothing in his record to indicate anti-social tendencies or serious inner conflict. He is happily married, has a young son and his wife has been very loyal to him since the trouble began. He has a good work record. While his work as a hired man has given him no opportunity for creative self-expression, there is no evidence of discontent on his part. The trouble arose out of a situation likely to produce high tension in any man. His wife had just given birth to a boy, their first-born. And just at this time his employer saw fit to give him a second cut in pay. He and his wife decided to move and made arrangements to do so, but they encountered a second difficulty. They have no money to pay the truck-driver who is to move them and the employer will not pay them until they are out of the house. Meanwhile they need food and fuel. When he goes down to the woodshed for an arm-load of wood in accordance with previous practice, the landlord's wife intervenes and orders him out. He happens to have an axe in his hands and he loses his temper and strikes her with it. It is however to be noted that he does not seriously injure her with it.

Reaction Pattern

The reaction pattern is merely that of emotional explosion in a man who was already tense because of the tremendous experience involved in the birth of his first child. Following his arrest and the publicity and humiliation which followed the reaction was that of panic which reached the point of psychosis.

Mental Level

There is no evidence of deep regression. There are no bizarre ideas, delusions or hallucinations.

Clinical Label

For purposes of commitment this case was classified as "Undiagnosed Psychosis. There was no ever disagreement as to whether it was actually a psychosis. Some favored calling it "Situational Psychosis."

Prognosis

The constructive and destructive factors may be balanced up as follows:

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Liabilities</u>
Good work record	Exaggerated fear and self-pity
Loyalty to wife and her loyalty to him	
Honest attempt to face situation and true appreciation of its seriousness	
Support of community opinion.	

The forces making for rehabilitation seem much the stronger.

Treatment

The plan of treatment decided upon was to keep him in the hospital for a number of months until people outside had had a chance to forget or to feel that he had been sufficiently punished, and then with the help of his family to give him a new start in a new locality. Occupational therapy and friendly guidance in the hospital were to help him in regaining courage and composure. It was felt that he ought to make as good an adjustment outside as he had before.