

Release of Insanity Acquittes

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Myths About Insanity

- **Insanity is common**
- **Beat the rap**
- **No cost for raising NGRI**

Juror Attitudes

- **Only 1/3 believe it is wrong to punish the insane** (Hans, 1986)
- **Most believe if meds refused, defendant is blameworthy** (Finkel, 1995)

Release of Patients After Violence

- **Nature of the offense**
- **Person's behavior in the facility**
- **Time elapsed since the violent act**
- **Insight to seek help for symptoms**
- **Quickness of onset of psychosis**

Increasing Levels of Responsibility

- **Less structured ward**
- **Unsupervised community passes**
- **Increased duration of passes**
- **Random drug and alcohol tests**

Hospital Passes

- **Off locked ward with staff**
- **Off locked ward alone**
- **Off grounds with family**
- **Off grounds alone**

Release After Violence

- **Assess illness pattern.**
- **Is prior victim dead?**
- **Return to same context?**
- **Relation to sexual drive.**

None are known to be good until they have opportunity to be bad.

Benjamin Whichote, 1753

Wertham's Cathartic Crisis

- **Inner situation leads to extreme emotional tension**
- **The patient holds an outer situation responsible for the inner tension**
- **Suddenly, a violent act against another or himself is seen as the only way out**
- **Removal of the tension after the violence**

Release After Violence

- **Suicide potential**
- **Family and support system**
- **Risk of non-compliance**

Antipsychotics and Violence

- **Only 4% of schizophrenic murderers were taking their antipsychotics**
- **Compliant acquittees – 36% readmitted**
- **Non-compliant – 92% readmitted**

Release After Violence

- **Risk of substance abuse**
- **Quality of aftercare**
- **Faking good for release**
- **Psychotic and antisocial**

True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information.

Winston Churchill



**Canst though not minister to a mind diseas'd;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?**

"To die by other hands more merciless than mine. No; I who gave them life will give them death. Oh, now no cowardice, no thought how young they are, how dear they are, how when they were first born -- One moment, one short moment-- then forever sorrow."