Release of Insanity Acquittees

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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, 1966)
- 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 Catathymic 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."