



**Selection of Medical & Psychiatric documents
relating to Peter Thomas Anthony Manuel
located on Scottish Government file HH60/703/1**

(Part 3)

First report of Medical Commissioners, HB Craigie and Laura MD Mill, on Peter Manuel, undated. Provides summary of previous medical and psychiatric reports and accounts of further examination on 26 June 1958.
(NAS reference HH60/703/1/184-195)

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First report of
Medical Commission 184

PETER THOMAS ANTHONY MANUEL

We examined Peter Thomas Anthony Manuel at H.M. Prison, Barlinnie, on June 26, 1958.

Before we visited the Prison we had read records relating to his previous offences and to his periods of stay in various Approved Schools, Borstal Institutions and Prisons; and the medical and psychiatric reports on his case by Professor Ferguson Rodger, Dr Angus MacNiven, Dr Hunter Gillies and Dr Anderson.

During the course of our visit to the Prison we interviewed the Governor, Mr Anderson: the Medical Officer, Dr Anderson: the Chaplain, Father Smith: and six Prison Officers who have some special knowledge of Manuel's character and behaviour both in Barlinnie and in Peterhead. We also read the recent day and night reports made by the Prison Officers on supervisory duty over the prisoner since sentence was passed.

Previous
Medical
History

The parents have stated that there is no history of mental illness known to them in their family. They have said that they have never noticed any signs of mental disorder in their son. Manuel's sister has said that she thought he was a "psychopath" because he was always indifferent to other people's opinions and on one occasion she said that he had a "split mind".

His birth and childhood are said to have been normal. He is said never to have had fits.

There are three items of possible importance in his medical history. In 1943 or 1944 he was struck on the head by a fragment of a flying bomb - the fragment was removed surgically in hospital. In 1944 he suffered a severe electric shock which rendered him unconscious. He said that following this he had on three occasions suffered from a lapse of memory. There was no suggestion - even by himself - that he had suffered any permanent ill-effects from the bomb fragment or from the electric shock. Enquiry by one of the psychiatrists who examined him before his trial did not elicit confirmation of the claim to lapses of memory - although it was considered possible that these might have occurred. Neurological examinations (including electroencephalography) were carried out on more than one occasion by Dr. J. B. Gaylor, Consultant Neurologist, who was of the opinion that the results of the examinations did not indicate an epileptic or any other pathological state of the brain or any morbid neurological condition.

Personal
History

This has been taken from medical reports and from a study of the Scottish Home Department's files covering the years Manuel spent in approved schools, Borstal and Peterhead and Barlinnie Prisons.

He was born in New York on 15/3/27, the second of three children. His parents had emigrated from Lanarkshire to New York, leaving the elder son with his grandmother. The family returned to this country when Manuel was five years old, and lived first in Motherwell and then in Coventry. They returned to Lanarkshire in 1940 when Manuel was 13 and was in an approved school. He attended school at Motherwell and later at Coventry where he passed an examination gaining him a place at King Henry VIII Grammar School. Very soon thereafter he was put on probation for a year

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and in 1939, at the age of 12½, was sent to an approved school. From that time onwards he was continuously in approved schools (four) and Borstal and did not return home until his discharge from Borstal on licence in 1945 at the age of 18. He appears to have been fond of his parents and especially fond of his sister, Theresa. His elder brother, James, is described as a "petty criminal" and is a news vendor. His sister is a certificated mental nurse.

When in approved schools Manuel absconded frequently and on these occasions usually engaged in housebreaking. The following are extracts from reports on him during these years (from 12½ to 16):-

"Frequently absconded and charged with housebreaking offences. While actually with us was well behaved and appeared happy and contented. Teachers speak well of his work and he seems to enjoy recreation and games."

"Certificate of unruly character".

"During one of his abscondings on 10/10/41, he was caught by the police, having broken into a house a few doors from the school and stolen a handbag. The lady of the house saw him coming from her bedroom with an axe in his hand. As a result she had a nervous breakdown."

"His escapades have alarmed the district".

"On 10/6/42 absconded and was charged with three cases of breaking and entering and stealing and one of malicious bodily harm by striking a woman, who was asleep in bed, on the head, causing concussion and haemorrhage. The woman was in hospital for some time. He pled guilty but could give no explanation."

"Has had considerable punishment. The Headmaster does not think more of it will reform him."

"He is intelligent. For five months he was good and it was thought he had turned the corner, but he broke down again and is looked upon as rather a danger to the neighbourhood." The Headmaster referred to "this tragic case".

At the age of 15 he was charged with indecently assaulting the wife of one of the school staff. He knocked her on the head with a stick and attempted to rape her. He dragged her 140 yards to a wood, where most of her clothing was

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removed. Later she was found wandering by a neighbour in a semi-conscious state. The injury to her head required eight stitches and her nose and shoulder bone were said to be broken. Manuel pled guilty to robbery with violence. He was also charged with housebreaking and "wanton damage of an unbelievable nature to the contents of a room, including malicious cutting of bedding and clothing and destroying of foodstuffs".

He was removed to Leeds Prison for a month. At this stage, his father asked if he could be transferred to an approved school in Scotland. He was, however, sent to Borstal in England for two years. In Borstal he again frequently absconded. He was described on different occasions in the following terms:-

"A foolish irresponsible child who was a great nuisance locally".

"The world's worst liar and does not know it".

"Likes to hear himself talk".

"A slippery customer".

"Still just 'Manuel' and is always ready for mischief. Nevertheless has many likeable qualities."

"I still feel the full period of Borstal will not have a lasting effect."

He was discharged on licence on 14/3/45 and went home to Lanarkshire. Later that month, he was sentenced to one year for housebreaking. In March, 1946 he was sentenced to eight years for rape and served this sentence in Peterhead Prison. In 1955 he was charged with indecent assault, but the charge was "not proven". He conducted his own defence. This episode followed the breaking off of his intended marriage to a bus conductress who refused to marry him on the grounds that he would not go to Church - they had both been brought up as Roman Catholics. In October, 1956 he was sentenced to 18 months for housebreaking, serving this sentence in Barlinnie.

The Scottish Home Department file covering his time in Peterhead Prison contains several of his letters home, which were suppressed for one reason or another. In one letter he refers to "McKenzie" (a member of the Lanarkshire police). "He is going to get it. Next time you see him remind him that he has a wife and kids. He will understand."

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"I am at present categorised as an atheist. I wish to become a Roman Catholic." Some of the letters expressed resentment about his sentence and had a somewhat grandiose tone; "I intend to institute proceedings against the Crown when I am liberated. The evidence used to convict me at my trial I know to be false. I have no money or friends so I myself will have to be my own ambassador. I will need to be able to quote fluently law and procedure." He asked for "law books on the subject of perjury, false arrest and conviction on prejudiced evidence".

In 1950, in a fit of temper, he threw a load of dishes over the gallery and then smashed thirty panes of glass in the windows. He threatened two prison officers with broken bits of glass.

The Governor reported that the prisoner had cut himself off from other prisoners (following disciplinary action) and wondered whether he should be seen again by a psychiatrist. He had been seen by Dr. G. E. Swinney on 16/10/51 who reported "He is an aggressive psychopath. It is doubtful whether, even at the beginning of his sentence, any constructive work could have been done with him."

Comments of the Governor included:-

"The prisoner is no fool and an absolute pest".

"Another attempt by this very unpleasant type of prisoner to cause trouble".

Manuel's work record is poor because of the time spent in prison. He worked as a checker with British Railways for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years and is said to have been discharged when it became known he had been in prison. He worked as a labourer with the Scottish Gas Board for some time until he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Since coming out of prison on 30/11/57 he had not worked.

He was sexually promiscuous. He was quite a heavy drinker but alcohol does not figure as largely in his history as might have been expected.

State of Mind at the time the Crimes were committed

Our views on Manuel's state of mind at the time the crimes were committed have had to be based on his history and on the reports by the

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psychiatrists who examined him before his trial, and we have carefully considered all of these. In our view, Manuel could properly be described as abnormal and many of the crimes committed had abnormal aspects. We consider that he could be classed as a "psychopath". In our report on John William Gordon, whom we examined on 11/3/55, we said "many of the features in Gordon's case are suggestive of psychopathic personality, e.g., the long criminal record, the emotional immaturity, the self-dramatization and theatricality of his actions, his general grandiose attitude". All these could equally be applied to Manuel. We do not suggest that Manuel's abnormality was of a kind or degree amounting to ~~an~~ aberration or weakness of mind, some form of unsoundness, a state of mind bearing on although not amounting to insanity~~s~~.

We have been particularly impressed by the terms of the report, dated 28th March, 1958, written by Dr. Angus MacNiven after he had examined Manuel on five different occasions and after he had also interviewed his parents and sister. We would accept the views and conclusions expressed by Dr. MacNiven under the heading "Opinion" and we do not think any useful purpose would be served by our adding to them.

We do not think that Manuel's responsibility was diminished at the time the crimes were committed.

We have said that Manuel could properly be described as abnormal. The reports from all sources which we have read combine to show that Manuel saw himself as an attractive and clever personality, and came to have an exaggerated idea of his abilities and an overweening vanity. He courted the limelight and his ruthless egotism reacted badly and often violently to frustration and authority. He never developed an adult sense of responsibility and remained emotionally immature and unable to form satisfactory personal relationships. His morbidly inflated 'Ego' was built upon a personality which was fundamentally inadequate. He might therefore be expected to "crumble" following his sentence and the failure of his Appeal with the consequent inevitable collapse of his self-confidence.

Interviews
in H.M.
Prison
Barlinnie

The Governor, Mr Anderson, told us that until Friday last, June 20, Manuel had, with one relatively minor exception, conducted himself normally. The exception related to a brief period before the trial when, following a grievance arising from a ruling given by the Procurator Fiscal that he must not discuss his case with his parents, he went on hunger strike for a day or two. He had been agreeable, pleasant, sociable and complacent, but he seemed, however, lacking, in view of the circumstances, in normal emotions; indeed his complacency worried the Governor, who felt that "we will suffer for this later". He had taken the verdict at the trial and the sentence with seeming equanimity and had remained self-assured and jaunty in manner. On the evening of Wednesday, June 18, he had been visited by his mother and had conversed rationally with her during the interview.

On Friday, June 20, his appearance and behaviour changed completely. The Counsel conducting his appeal was due to see him for the first time during that afternoon, but shortly before he arrived Manuel was seen to be lying on his back twitching his limbs and frothing at the mouth. He received immediate medical attention and his stomach was washed out. No evidence of any toxic substance was found then and a subsequent analysis of the stomach contents revealed no disinfectant, drugs or soap. No physical cause was found for his symptoms.

Since this episode the prisoner has not spoken either spontaneously or in reply to questions. At first he refused food, but during the last few days he has taken milk and tea. He spends much of his time, so we were told, crouching on his bed with his legs crossed "tailor-wise". He frequently contorts his face, his arms and legs twitch and he takes no apparent interest in his surroundings. He has developed a shuffling gait and his muscular movements are clumsy and abnormal. When told on the Friday evening that his mother wished to see him he made no response (and in consequence was not visited). He is sleeping well.

The Governor told us that the prisoner's present state and behaviour presented considerable practical difficulties both for him and for his staff. For example, they could not be sure as to how far he heard or comprehended important information that it might be necessary to give him.

/ Chief Officer Kinghorn

Chief Officer Kinghorn told us that at Peterhead Prison Manuel was a difficult and unco-operative prisoner. He was "bumptious always superior in his attitude, egotistical a very obnoxious man". He exhibited frequent temper tantrums during which he would smash and break anything within reach. At other times he would become sullen and unsociable for a time. Mr Kinghorn said that he had not seen him display such markedly abnormal behaviour in Peterhead as he was exhibiting now.

Principal Officer Brodie had frequently witnessed Manuel's aggressive outbursts at Peterhead during which he had threatened and assaulted prison officers, smashed windows and crockery, etc. He had observed "sulky moods" and he was not surprised in the light of his previous knowledge of his behaviour to see him in his present condition.

Principal Officer McDonald is in charge of the section of the prison in which Manuel is at present confined. He said that the muscular twitchings and the facial contortions were definitely more pronounced when some senior officer or important official entered the cell (but another prison officer did not confirm this). At Peterhead he had seen Manuel during his sullen and quiet periods; they were much less marked than his present attitude and during them he would ask for and often read books.

Prison Officers Willox and Kelly are engaged on supervisory duties in the condemned cell - last week on night duty, this week during the morning and afternoon. On the night of Thursday, June 19, they found Manuel quite normal in appearance and they were surprised to see the change that was evident when they arrived on duty on the night of the 20th. These Officers described his peculiar method of smoking during the last five days and of drinking. He holds a cup in an awkward manner between the palms of his hands and then lifts it to his mouth. Cigarettes have to be lit for him and later put out; he holds them in a peculiar fashion, the fingers of his hand extended, the cigarette pointed inwards towards the palm. Since the 20th June he had never to their knowledge spoken, but in their view he knew what was being said and what was going on around him.

Prison Officer Milne, another Officer engaged on supervisory duties, gave us a similar account to that detailed above. There was, he told us,

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no incontinence and full control over bowel and bladder movements.

Dr Anderson, whose medical reports are contained in the file, had found him "pleasant, polite and personable". He had noted him as "an astute man who knew his own mind". There was evidence that he could be a heavy drinker on occasion, but he was not an alcoholic in the ordinary accepted sense.

We were informed that Manuel, who had read quite widely on a variety of subjects, had on at least one occasion read (or had access to) a book on psychiatry lent to him by his sister, the mental nurse. Intellectually he was regarded as being "far above" the general run of criminals - or at least of those criminals found in prisons.

Father Smith said that since Friday (the 20th) he had found the prisoner a completely changed man. Previously he had been bright and pleasant. If he had not known of his record he would have regarded him as a "nice lad who could conduct himself well in any company". He had shown quite a normal interest on what was going on, e.g. in sport. He had been keenly interested in the progress of his trial, but had shown a rather surprising lack of interest in the progress of his appeal. Now he had deteriorated in appearance. He "lay twitching", never speaking but occasionally muttering to himself - this morning Father Smith thought he could distinguish the mumbled word "fight". When offered he would accept a cigarette, smoking it in the awkward manner described above. He seemed oblivious of his surroundings.

Father Smith said that to him Manuel now looked the typical picture of a madman. He had heard that he was an actor, but "if he is acting now he is a terrific actor".

On June 23 he was examined by Dr Anderson, Dr Boyd and Dr Inch at Barlinnie. These doctors found no signs of organic disease either in his nervous system or elsewhere. He was completely unco-operative and refused to speak or to answer their questions. They formed the opinion that he was not at present suffering from any certifiable mental disorder and that his behaviour was indicative of a hysterical reaction to his present situation. They regarded him as fit to appear in court.

/ Interview

Interview
with Manuel

We interviewed the prisoner with two Prison Officers in attendance; Dr Anderson was also present. We told him, i.e. Manuel, who we were and explained the object of our visit. One of us (H.B.C.) deliberately withdrew for a few minutes with Dr Anderson in case he might choose to speak to Dr Laura Mill rather than to us, but he did not do so. Our interview lasted thirty minutes.

Throughout the interview he was silent and unco-operative. He did not speak of his own accord and did not reply to questions. He did not look at us directly and he displayed no apparent awareness of our entry into the room or of our presence. At frequent intervals his arms and legs twitched. He constantly grimaced or contorted his facial muscles. He moved his arms across his face in a clumsy and unco-ordinated manner, frequently pulling at or rubbing his nose or his ears. He gazed into the corners of the room and at the ceiling - but never at us. Frequently he shook his head in a jerky fashion; at times he would open and close his mouth in what might be described as a half yawn. On one or two occasions he muttered unintelligibly to himself. At our suggestion he was given a cigarette. He smoked it in the manner described already and eventually one of the prison officers removed it from his hand to prevent him from burning his palm. After thirty minutes the interview was terminated as it was evident that on this occasion no further progress would be made by continuing it. The prisoner left the room and returned to his cell (escorted by the prison officers) with a peculiar shambling and shuffling gait.

Discussion

Seven days ago a sudden transformation took place in this man's appearance and behaviour. Previously composed and self-assured, talkative and co-operative, he became listless, withdrawn and apathetic. He refused food, was completely unco-operative and developed peculiar mannerisms and clumsy unco-ordinated bizarre and at times grotesque muscular movements. Within a few hours the jaunty, superficially agreeable, self-confident and vain Manuel had changed into a shuffling wreck of a man, difficult to recognise as one and the same person and - to one observer at least - a "typical madman".

A sudden transformation of this nature might be due to various causes, e.g. to some organic lesion of the brain or nervous system or elsewhere; to

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gross mental disorder or psychosis such as schizophrenia or manic depressive psychosis or to hysteria. Alternatively, the symptoms might be consciously simulated. We have given careful consideration to each of these possible alternatives.

There is no evidence of any organic lesion and his physical condition appears, in fact, to be quite satisfactory (earlier electro-encephalographic recordings were within normal limits).

In our view his symptoms and the nature of their origin and onset do not conform to any recognisable or accepted form of mental illness. Although clearly an abnormal man (by any ordinary standards) with many of the characteristics usually accepted as being indicative of a psychopathic personality, he has never in the past shown evidence of mental illness or insanity. His sister is said to have stated that he suffered from a "split mind", but no satisfactory evidence has been produced so far as we know by his other relatives or associates or indeed by Miss Manuel herself in support of this statement.

The differentiation between hysterical symptoms resulting from an unconscious or sub-conscious reaction to a difficult or intolerable situation, and malingering or the conscious simulation of certain disabling symptoms, is often difficult and sometimes almost impossible. The motivation for the production of hysterical symptoms, although theoretically sub-conscious, may be so near to the surface that it becomes to some extent a matter of conjecture how far it is conscious and how far sub-conscious. In certain circumstances the differentiation may be thought in any case to be an unreal and artificial one.

In our opinion, and after careful consideration of all ^{the circumstances of} his case and previous information available to us, the symptoms that he now displays have been more consciously than sub-consciously developed.

Many prisoners believe that there are advantages to be gained by simulating insanity as a method, for example, of evading a prison sentence, and believe that it is not too difficult to mislead Medical Examiners. We have no doubt that Manuel - an astute and intelligent man as he was described to us - is well aware of these possibilities and that he might think

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that a convincing and suitably dramatic display of symptoms of mental disorder would be well within his capacity and could be of use to him.

We consider that he was able to understand the nature and purpose of our visit and our questions and we believe that his refusal to co-operate and to answer our questions was deliberate and purposive. Similarly, we believe that his mannerisms, his twitchings and his bizarre muscular movements and grimaces were consciously assumed.

Although, as we have just said, Manuel is not in our opinion suffering from a psychosis or even from a definite hysterical reaction, we would stress that the differentiation of these conditions, as pointed out by Henderson and Gillespie ~~and Henderson~~ in their text-book of psychiatry, is not easy and may often be very difficult. We would be glad of the opportunity of seeing him again, partly to observe his progress and partly to give him the opportunity once more of speaking to us. We would suggest that it would be helpful if we could be joined in this further examination by one of the three psychiatrists who examined him and reported upon his case before the trial, i.e. either by Professor Ferguson Rodger, by Dr Angus MacNiven or by Dr Hunter Gillies.

It is difficult to predict whether as time passes the prisoner's present symptoms may change in character. For example, whether they will become more dramatic in form. It is also not impossible that a genuine psychosis might develop.

Conclusions

From a study of the medical and other evidence places at our disposal

- (1) we find no evidence of mental deficiency;
- (2) we find no evidence that he was insane or suffering from an aberration of mind at the time that the murders took place;
- (3) although we believe him to be an abnormal man showing many of the traits usually acknowledged to be characteristic of psychopathic personality, we do not believe that these traits constitute in his case a psychopathic state of such a degree as to diminish responsibility for his actions.

As a result of our own examination

- (4) we do not believe that he is insane at the present time;
- (5) we consider that the symptoms he is at present displaying are consciously motivated.

HB Craipie.
 Laura R.D. Mill.