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## VICTIMS OF A VICTIM.

*Flora Rheta Schreiber interviewed by Vivian Milroy about Joseph Kallinger, the psychotic murderer analysed in her book.*

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*Vivian: I think the first thing I really wanted to say was it is an exciting and gripping story but from the psychological point of view it seems very obvious. We all know that deprived children tend to be delinquent and deprived children who are abused, even more delinquent. So is there any message for ordinary people who are very slightly deprived or very slightly abused?*

**Flora:** Well, actually, what we are dealing with here is not economic deprivation, but emotional deprivation of a very extraordinary type. Joseph Kallinger was abandoned by his natural mother after ten days and was put into institutional care. By the time his foster parents took him home, he was 22 months old and at that time he had had four different environments and four different patterns of child care. I think the importance of this pattern is the denial of love and caring, the denial of play. All these things they get so important beyond the actual physical abuse. I don't think the physical abuse really was the issue here, I think the milieu of emotional deprivation and then the specific incidents involving knives, created a pattern which dictated the form and shape of the later crimes. He was a late bloomer as a person who commits crimes; he was 38 years old. But the psychosis was growing and the psychosis was formed and shaped by the specific incident that led to restitutional fantasies and the avenging of the lost sexuality power. He had been denied both the power in sex and also his power as an individual working in a social milieu. All this becomes a very interesting concatenation.

Now, we have discovered that many of the serial killers as Henry Lucas in Texas and others have similarly been abused children, but the details are quite different. So you can say not every abused child becomes a killer, thank Heavens, but we do know that most killers, that is certainly most psychotic killers, have been abused children. And it seems to me that crime prevention begins in the nursery and what we have in the Kallinger story is a complete affirmation of Freud's theories about the need for the integration of the erotic and aggressive drives. In this child you have the raw materials that we all have, untempered by the love, affection, caring that most of us get in some measure. So that this becomes, it seems to me, a very important case study. I think of the book as other than a case study, I think

it has narrative power. But on the level of case study I think it's significant; it is very important. In the Arieti/Schreiber article which was published before this book and which dealt with the Kallinger case, we indicate that possibly this kind of pattern has a good deal to say about the development of a Hitler and others, that it is the raw material of much beyond a particular case. So that is the answer to that particular question.

*V.: I was interested very much in your work in subpersonalities. This is something in the humanistic psychology movement we deal with, largely in a therapeutic sense and you probably know Assagioli did quite a bit of subpersonality work in his psychosynthesis. What I'm trying to do is try to get an extrapolation from the extreme, Kallinger, to the ordinary. Is there any kind of message from this - from the subpersonality aspect of it - for the ordinary functioning of ordinary people?*

**F.:** Well, I think it sounds silly to say proper nurturing is predictive of future mental health; but it is and I am convinced that if he had been . . . had had a normal childhood or comparatively normal childhood, he would have been a very different kind of person. He had a lot of human potentiality - as a poet, as an actor, as just a person of a good mind and good ability and so on and it seems to me for the so-called average person the quality in the nursery, the kind of care is the means of emphasizing the individual barriers of the human being and the self. The self is given a chance for development in terms of self realisation - in particular skills and aptitudes. The realisation of being an integrated, healthy, well-functioning person, becomes a difference between the mental health that leads to self-realisation and the lack of mental health in this case which actually led to serious psychosis.

*V.: And back again to subpersonalities which we all have, and we have good subpersonalities and bad subpersonalities. Is there anything to learn in the way you or he dealt with deals with subpersonalities, How do you deal with your subpersonalities; what are your subpersonalities?*

**F.:** Well there are many. I don't think in terms of good and bad, I think that is an archaic concept. I think I am a relativist, philosophically. Some things become constructive, creative, valuable; some part of the self leads to that; other parts of the self obstruct the path. But I don't think of good and evil; I really don't, I think they are erroneous stereotypes imposed by an unthinking society.

*V.: In fact, I would totally agree with you, I say there is no such thing as good and bad. There is just a) leads to b) and if you want b) don't do a).*

**F.:** Yes, it is cause and effect. Action and re-action.

**V.:** *Nevertheless, although we think there is no good and bad, it seems to me that it is more life enhancing not to stick knives up little boys' rectums and more life enhancing to feel good, warm feelings towards other people.*

**F.:** I know, but when you consider the genesis of this, when this child, little Joe, now an adolescent at the age of 13 goes on a busride, has a lip-knife in his pocket, the knife of his childhood that has been used upon him and has filled his environment, he goes out to find a kid to castrate, sees this boy from the bus window, he gets off the bus, he lures the boy to the creek and is about to castrate him with that knife, doing to others as has been symbolically done to him. In the "bird" scene he's been told that the surgeon during the hernia operation removed the demon from his "bird" and therefore he'll always be a good boy and a good man e.g. an impotent man, and impotent in his thinking in terms of power in a social situation, and sexual power. Now he goes out and he's going to be all powerful, to do what the surgeon did, castrate somebody, he doesn't care who. And he finds this boy, sees him from the bus window, takes him down to the creek, orders him to drop his pants and so on and then **runs away**. He runs away at 13 but he doesn't run away at 38. During that period we had the full development of the psychosis with this hallucinatory and illusional system and now with the illusion and the hallucinations, he doesn't run away. He's there because now wrong has become right: this is God inspired; God ordered - and not to do this is to do wrong. So you have a clear case of insanity according to McNaghtan. But anyway it took all those years 13 to 38 with a full ripening of a full delusional and hallucinatory system for him to be able to commit the crimes that on a level of vengeance he had wanted to commit since he was 13.

This isn't just nasty or depraved because though his act is an act of depravity, the motivation is not depravity. We are not dealing with that; we are dealing with self realisation in the most tragic way. What he was denied, he is going to deny to others. He was castrated symbolically, and now he is going to castrate the whole world in the delusional idea that God has ordered him, God as an actual physical visual hallucination. But the delusion is that God has ordered him to exterminate mankind. Every man, woman, child on the planet Earth, and at the end of all this he kills his own family and then his son Michael who is his chief lieutenant second in command, and finally himself. By killing himself he achieves a glorious suicide, reaches his apotheosis and now **is** God.

**V.:** *From the therapeutic point of view, it seems to me he had incredibly improved in his functioning through the long period of talking to you.*

**F.:** Yes, I think he did.

*V.: Was he anywhere near being capable of being allowed to live a normal life at the end of it?*

**F.:** Well, we really don't have the end of it yet, I'm still talking to him every day.

*V.: You're still going on?*

**F.:** And I see him once a month. I think he is infinitely better because he has experienced a human closeness which he never had before. A human closeness not only with me, but with many of my friends who have become interested in him. And then with the publication of the book, many readers have written to us. Some of whom have carried on an ongoing correspondence - one of them, a very able distinguished woman wrote to him and said 'the universe owes you an apology and I want to help'. She really wants to; she would like very much to fight for his restoration, ultimately to the world but also to some kind of private care. It's going to be very much better. He is better, but one of the great ironies is were he actually to be cured, at least he has not attained that, his hallucinations and delusions are controlled by psychotropic drug Narvane. He's had some psychotherapy and he's had what amounts to the equivalent of psychotherapy although I am not a psychiatrist. And now he has this supporting group, the irony is that legally if he were 'to be cured', he would simply be returned to prison rather than the State Hospital where he has been since May 18th, 1978. That I think is a very tragic consequence. It would be for Joe Kallinger or for anyone else, if you are under prison sentence and his sentences are way beyond his natural life. It's a Catch 22 situation: if you are cured, or if you are so much better that you could take your place in society, you can't because to be cured means you are returned to prison. Now had this been a series of intelligence trials, in each of them he would have been found not guilty by reason of insanity; there is no question but that he is a paranoid schizophrenic and the crimes are inseparable from his psychosis. But of course, the Courts pay no attention to that. Three juries by implication found him sane and of course at that time there wasn't the evidence that I have gathered through these six years of very intensive work, psychologically probing, probing in documents and so forth, and having support of some of the doctors, Silvano Arieti, a leading authority in psychiatry, confirmed by Doctor Louis Robbins and so on. And I felt that when all the data was in, if he ever were tried again, it would be a foregone conclusion, that he would be found 'not guilty' by reason of insanity. To my dismay, and my horror, as a result of *The Shoemaker*, the publication of *The Shoemaker*, for the first time in legal and publishing history, a book became the sole basis to put a charge and he was charged with murder, charged with the murder of José, the murder described in the

chapter called "The Test of Strength" and the murder of Joseph junior, Joseph's own son, described in the chapter called "The Last Song". Joe Kallinger is charged with the murder of these two boys, on the sole basis of the book.

At the preliminary hearing, the prosecuting attorney read from those chapters, and dealt only with the facts, thoroughly ignoring the psychological interpretation and the inner experience. At the end of the chapter, dealing with the death of Joey, I had something about now he was on the road to Godhood, because this was the divine mission - well that was cut out. The only thing read at the preliminary hearing were the gory facts. Then at the trial which took place last January 1984 the book was not admitted into evidence; I was not permitted to testify. It was hearsay for me to testify or hearsay for the book to be admitted into evidence, but it was **not** hearsay for the book to be used to charge him. The case is now on appeal.

Of course, needless to say, he was found guilty of both murders, murder in the first degree in each case, and on November 1st, 1984 just this very month, he was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences. This - you talk of books not having consequences - this book has had very serious consequences, historical consequences. And as far I am concerned personally, deeply, frustrating, humiliating and exasperating consequences.

*V.: Did he hold it against you? Did he find **you** guilty for . . . having published it?*

**F.:** No, he hasn't. I hold myself guilty. However, he did tell me and he told me in an extraordinary way. It wasn't sitting down quietly and saying 'Ah well I've reached the point where I think you ought to know so and so'. I had known him for over a year and this revelation - I call them revelations rather than confessions - took place in Camden County jail in the infirmary where we had our discussions. And he described both murders but in describing them he was telling himself as well as me. Through a process of schizophrenic dissociation he had buried both murders, and it was only this daily, daily talking with me that began to bring it to the surface. Long before he had said "Joe must have died by drowning because of the autopsy report and so forth. But this memory of his and Michael's involvement came only in the course of talking with me and it was one of the weirdest experiences of my entire life. We were in this empty infirmary of Camden County jail and Joe told me about the murder of Joey. And he did not **tell** me, he re-enacted. It was a kinaesthetic experience. They had dropped Joey in the water chained to a ladder. Joe got up - there happened to be a

ladder in the room - he got up, grabbed that ladder! "I'm here - Michael is there", and he went through it step by step. It was as if I were present at that murder. It was dreadful.

The Court wasn't interested in my testimony. And each of the murders stemmed from the castration complex. The first was that of José Collazo and they . . . , Joe took the tip of the dead boy's penis and carried it in a plastic bag as a trophy, in furtherance of his divine mission of killing through the destruction of sexual organs. With Joey, he tried to castrate Joey on a scaffold, but couldn't do it and finally resorted to the drowning. But the motivation is still castration.

Then in January of 1975, six months after the murder of the two boys, those murders took place within 3 weeks of each other, and then there was a hiatus of six months, and this young nurse Maria Fasching was murdered. She was murdered through an episode that is directly related to the "bird" incident. Joe Kallinger had taken one of the hostages of the house down to the boiler room and had prepared him for castration. Then he brought this young nurse down for no particular reason except that she was closest to the basement door. He took her down and asked her, told her she was there to chew off this man's penis, 'you do that or I'll kill you' said Joe Kallinger, and Maria replied 'kill me, I don't want to live!' He said to me, much later of course, 'she commanded her own death'. Well, of course, she didn't command her own death as I later explained to him. What she was saying was 'OK kill me, I'd rather die than do that', but he took her quite literally. Of course she was going to die anyway; everybody in the world was going to die and everybody in their house was going to die, and he slashed her with a hunting knife. At any rate all three murders were connected with that symbolic castration, that took place when Joseph was 6 years and 9 months old and was constantly repeated particularly during his adolescence.

**V.:** *You say you spent hours and hours listening to him, trying to empathize with his point of view, well this is pure Rogerian client centred therapy. What other therapies did he have?*

**F.:** Dr. Ralph Davis, the clinical psychologist, worked with him for several years and that was a therapy which was mainly dealing with the psychoanalytic process.

**V.:** *Straight Freudian?*

**F.:** I would think so. And that was several years and then Doctor Marcella Shields took over after Davis left and she did not work on that basis; she worked on a more external basis of just having him adjusted to the milieu he

was in. Then she left and then the third therapist was Dr. Riefus who put him on to a drug regime.

**V.:** *He's a man who has committed most horrifying, scarifying crimes. The whole thing has been written up by you and in fact psychologically explained so that in fact he seems a victim - which seems to be a justifiable point of view. Nevertheless he is the man who has done these horrible things; you have spent an enormous amount of time in fairly close contact with him. Do you like him as a person?*

**F.:** Very much. Actually I am very deeply fond of him and I am very very much concerned about him because to me this is a tremendous loss of his life, and his victims are victims of a victim and I am trying desperately to give him some life within the framework of non life. I have been instrumental in the writing of his poetry; he's working on a novel! There is an intimate creative relationship and I have tried with kindness and affection to restore some of the elements of the loveless childhood and I very often see him as a little boy because that's how he acts: I don't mean in a silly sense but **his** dependency is that of a little boy.

**The Shoemaker, Anatomy of a Psychotic 2.50. Penguin. 1984.**

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**Joseph Kallinger and Flora Rheta Schreiber during one of their many sessions in a Farview Conference Room.**