

1948

Psychiatric Study of William Heirens

Foster Kennedy

Harry R. Hoffman

William H. Haines

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Foster Kennedy, Harry R. Hoffman, William H. Haines, Psychiatric Study of William Heirens, 38 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 311 (1947-1948)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

PSYCHIATRIC STUDY OF WILLIAM HEIRENS

Foster Kennedy, Harry R. Hoffman and William H. Haines

Foster Kennedy, M. D., is a graduate of the Royal University of Ireland, Faculty of Medicine, Dublin 1906. He is Professor of Clinical Medicine (Neurology) Cornell University, and Director of Neurological Service—Bellevue Hospital, New York City.

Harry R. Hoffman, M. D., graduated from Rush Medical College in 1910. He was Director of the Behavior Clinic, Criminal Court of Cook County 1931-1941. He is State Alienist, Department of Public Welfare, State of Illinois since 1941 and also Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry (Rush) University of Illinois.

William Henry Haines, M. D., graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Medicine in 1932. Since 1941 he has been Director of the Behavior Clinic, Criminal Court of Cook County. He is Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry (Rush) University of Illinois.—EDITOR.

William Heirens was a 17-year-old University of Chicago student. On June 26, 1946 he was intercepted while making his getaway after an attempt at burglary in Chicago's north side. Prior to his arrest there had been many unsolved burglaries and atrocious murders. Among these was the murder of 6-year-old Suzanne Degnan, whose body was found dismembered in the city's sewers.

After his arrest he feigned insanity for a few days, then made a confession which he denied the following day, and admitted subsequently.

Prior to his trial a psychiatric examination was requested by his attorneys, John, Malachy, and David Coghlan, Alvin Hansen and Roland Towle; and by William J. Touhy, State's Attorney of Cook County. Dr. Harry R. Hoffman and Dr. William H. Haines were selected. Later a third member, Dr. Foster Kennedy of New York City, was invited to collaborate in the examination and he agreed. It was felt that since Dr. Haines and Dr. Hoffman represented government agencies, the services of a neutral out-of-state psychiatrist should be obtained.

The doctors were given permission to make any report that they saw fit, either singly or jointly, regarding Heirens' mental status. They were all agreed that he was legally sane and they wrote a detailed joint report which was submitted to His Honor Judge Harold G. Ward, Chief Justice of the Criminal Court, September 3, 1946. This report, unabridged, is as follows:

William Heirens was examined pursuant to an order of the Honorable Harold G. Ward, Chief Justice of the Criminal Court of Cook County. This order was entered after a conference between the State's Attorney and the Counsel for the defense. We were asked to make a comprehensive report. To this end we

were instructed to obtain all necessary expert advice, and we were provided by both prosecution and defense with all documents pertinent to the case in their possession.

This patient, in our opinion, is not suffering from any psychosis, nor is he mentally retarded; he has average intelligence. He has a deep sexual perversion and is emotionally insensitive and unstable. He has sufficient intelligence to understand the nature and object of the proceedings against him. He rightly comprehends his own position in regard to these proceedings and has sufficient mind to conduct his defense in a rational and reasonable manner. He has repeatedly stated to us that he has always been aware of the nature and purpose of his acts, which acts are the basis of the present proceedings against him.

Our study has included a careful survey by the social service department of the patient's early life and environment. We have interviewed the patient's parents and his roommate at the university. We have read the patient's statements to the State's Attorney regarding his acts charged in the indictments against him. We have spent about five or six hours a day with him since the 12th of August in close investigation, singly or together, with the presence of a stenographer and without. These investigations were conducted privately in the quiet of the chapel of the Cook County Jail.

In addition, he was submitted to a series of carefully selected and conducted psychological tests calculated to reveal trends, both conscious and underlying consciousness. The quality of intellect was carefully tested and he was found to have an Intelligence Quotient of 110, an average figure. The Rorschach test was used and failed to reveal any psychosis.

At the Illinois Neuropsychiatric Institute several electroencephalographic tracings were taken and found completely normal. X-ray studies of skull and spinal column were normal. The Basal Metabolic rate was normal. A complete blood study, insulin tolerance and urine test proved normal. The spinal fluid was normal, as were also the Wasserman and Kahn tests on the blood.

We have examined his notebooks made during the past three years, and have studied the postmortem reports of the murders.

Social History

The patient is 17.5 years old, white, born in Evanston, Ill., of native-born parents of Luxemburg descent. The family history, as given, is negative as to insanity, epilepsy, alcoholism

or mental defectiveness. The father grew up in floral business with his father, and opened a store and conservatory of his own soon after marriage. Flower arrangements were his specialty. The family occupied a flat in connection with the store. With the depression, the business failed and although several attempts were made to re-establish themselves in different locations, none was successful. After a period of irregular employment, the father secured work on the police force of Carnegie Steel Company, about eight years ago, and has now worked up to a position of special investigator. In addition, he works several evenings on the Lincolnwood Village Police Force. The mother has worked much of the time since marriage, both to supplement the income and because she enjoyed it, working in their own and other florist shops, in a bakery as a fancy pastry maker, and more recently designing and executing custom made clothes. The mother handles the family finances. The patient expressed some concern over his mother's work, feeling it was done to pay his school tuition, but she preferred to do it and to employ someone to do the housecleaning, etc.

The patient is the older of two brothers. Family religion is Roman Catholic. Early in the pregnancy of patient, the mother feared she would miscarry. Labor was long (62 hours) and delivery difficult with high forceps employed. The patient weighed eight pounds and five ounces and was 24 inches long at birth. Breast feedings were inadequate and extremely painful to the mother so that bottle feedings were supplemented almost from the beginning. Weaning from the breast was completed by age of one month. He presented a feeding problem from the beginning—he “vomited in a gush”—after every feeding and was sickly and severely underweight for the first three months. Thereafter under different care and diet he began to gain weight. Teething presented no problem. The ages of walking and talking are unknown; the mother reports “the usual age.” The mother reported that toilet training was completed early; after eight months there was no nocturnal wetting and by one year, daytime bladder and bowel control had been established. No relapses were reported.

At seven months, while unattended, he fell from his buggy to a cement basement areaway 12 feet below and injured his head. He was not unconscious when his mother found him. At age eight or nine he fell from a trapeze and sustained a compound fracture of the bones of the right arm necessitating an open reduction. When about 12, he fell down some cement stairs at school, cutting his head over the eye. Patient fainted then. At

the age of eight, he had a tonsillectomy with severe hemorrhage and some complications. He also had chicken pox and measles as a child. In the summer of 1942 and again in the spring of 1946, he complained of severe headaches. Otherwise, health history is negative.

He was a solitary child and youth, sensitive and difficult to know. Apparently no one ever had a close or confidential relationship with him; certainly his parents did not. As a child he was with his brother a good deal and had to fight his battles for him. He never had any real friends and preferred to be alone. In the 7th and 8th grades excessive day dreaming was reported. He had some mechanical interests and considerable skill, according to the parents, repairing electric motors, repairing or making radios from old parts. He was interested in collecting and recently had a considerable coin collection. Very early he was eager to earn his own money—worked delivering orders for a food store the summer he was 12, delivered for a liquor store the summer he was 14, and worked in the steel mills with his father the summer of 1944 and 1945. He was very frugal with his money, spent little on himself—just saved it. His only “splurge” was in gifts for the family. He bought expensive presents out of proportion to his earnings. Very early he learned not to whimper or cry when hurt and could endure considerable physical pain.

He attended public school kindergarten for a few months at age five and entered parochial school at six. He attended three parochial elementary schools, as the family moved, and graduated from 8th grade (receiving his diploma in absentia since he was then in the Juvenile Detention Home) at age of 13.

In June, 1942, he was first apprehended by the police trying to break into a basement storeroom. Subsequently he admitted nine burglaries within the preceding six months. Following the Juvenile Court hearing, he was committed to Gibault School for Boys and remained there from July 5, 1942 to June 4, 1943. Except for an attempt to run home three weeks after commitment, he presented no discipline problem and exteriorly was a conformist according to report received. He was obedient and co-operative, with a good attitude toward authority. He completed his first year of high school here with scholastic averages all in the 80's. He was quiet and serious, “definitely an introvert,” and would often be found away from campus completely alone. He had few friends and preferred to be by himself. He was not interested in athletics; team games especially did not appeal to him. He expressed a good attitude toward religious

obligations, frequently took Holy Communion, went to confession less regularly at school than lately. He did not want to know anyone intimately.

Two months after his return from Gibault, he was again arrested, charged with burglary. In Juvenile Court the case was heard before a visiting Judge who acceded to the family's wishes. The patient was placed on probation to go to St. Bede's Academy at Peru, Illinois, where he remained from September, 1943 to May 27, 1945, but was at home for summer vacation in 1944 and 1945. He completed 2nd and 3rd years of high school there. This school report showed grades of "A" and "B" in all subjects for his sophomore year, from "A" to "F" (English) in junior year. His adjustment was good, no discipline problem. He had no confidential relationship with anyone and preferred to be alone. Probation was terminated January 19, 1945.

In September, 1945 he entered the University of Chicago, after taking placement tests, and remained there until his apprehension in the summer quarter of 1946. His scholastic record there was average and below. He had many absences from academic and physical education classes. According to the mother, he was active in the Calvert Club (a Catholic organization, social and religious). He seemed to have at least a superficial relationship with a few students and finally began to have a few "dates" with girls, though with no close friends.

According to the parents, the patient never displayed any of the usual sexual curiosity as a child nor displayed any jealousy of his brother three years younger. No sex instructions were given by the parents. At the age of about 13, there was an incident of sex play which patient witnessed in the boys' toilet at school and reported to his mother, at which time he was warned about venereal disease. This was a few months before the first known burglary. The parents were unaware of his delinquencies until after he was apprehended, but since his earlier court appearance have been constantly fearful of a repetition, though trying to trust him.

Physical Examination

The patient was carefully examined physically. He is a well built young man weighing 159 pounds. There were no deformities excepting a scar on right forearm, the result of a compound fracture when aged about ten. No evidence was found of any structural abnormality in the central, autonomic or peripheral nervous systems. The hands were moist and over-cold and with-

out tremor. There was a remarkable reduction to the perception of pin pricks, however strong, as "pain." This was present all over the body with the exception of the glans penis. Sharp pin pricks inside the nose on the mucous membrane and the soles of the feet was denied as being painful and no motion of withdrawal was made there or elsewhere. This was also true as regards the mucous membrane of the lip and the scrotum and body of the penis. A sharp needle could be pressed more than four millimeters under the nails without inducing pain or defense withdrawal movements. As the sensory examination proceeded, this "analgesic cloak" deepened in quality under suggestion, so that below a sharp circle round both arms level with the upper edge of the anterior wall of the armpits he became unable to feel pin prick as other than "not blunt." The corneal reflexes at first were greatly reduced, and at the close of this examination had disappeared so that it became possible to tap the eyeballs with a closed safety pin without his winking or giving any motor sign of sensation. Deep pain produced by pressure on calf muscles and Achilles tendons and the testes was also reduced. As regards his ability to perceive light touch, he missed two out of three stimulations in scattered distribution over the body. The perception of vibration and the other forms of sensation were normal. The visual fields were found to narrow progressively as the test continued, so that they became finally almost pin-point. This phenomenon is known as "a spiral" or "helicoid" visual field, and is a positive objective indication of profound hysteria.

This striking reduction of power to appreciate painful stimulation as such, together with its remarkable deepening as the result of suggestion, is to us a clear proof of the patient's hysterical personality.

The blood pressure, heart, lungs and abdomen were normal. He is powerfully built with fine muscular development; he excelled in wrestling.

Psychiatric Examination

The psychiatric interviews, to which allusion has already been made, consisted in quiet, persistent questioning, while noting the answer and its emotional accompaniment. He was informed of his constitutional rights and in reply promised his full co-operation. His statements to the State's Attorney are on record and indeed have been published. The patient was, of course, taken over every point of these. We shall try here not to repeat that information but to give enough of our great mass of material to

display new evidence and new viewpoints on the dynamic forces at work in this patient.

We propose now to give as briefly as possible an account of the significant actions and emotional reactions of this patient in so far as they could be discovered. When quotation marks are used, the quotations will be the patient's own words, or question and answer.

When aged nine, the patient began to be interested in "the feeling and color" and then "the stealing" of women's underclothing. He began to take these at first from clothes lines, then from basements, and later from strange houses, the doors of which he found open or ajar. Dresses or other articles of women's apparel made no appeal to him nor was he interested in the undergarments of his immediate family. Having secured a pair of women's panties or drawers, he would take it to a basement or home, put it on, experience excitement and sexual completion. Most garments he then threw away, some he replaced, and some he hoarded in his grandmother's attic.

We believed it important, if possible, by objective evidence to prove the truth of his statement of fetishism. An investigation brought to light, in the spot he had described, "a cardboard box" containing some forty pairs of women's old, used panties and drawers, mostly made of rayon and brightly colored.

When 12 or 13 years of age, he secured the desired garments by going into houses through windows. This furnished more excitement. After three such expeditions, he took objects ("guns or money") other than underclothes; a change which was again an added stimulation. "It seemed sort of foolish to break in and not take anything." When he had thus changed his objective, the interest in underclothes largely evaporated and was replaced by the excitement experienced on "making an entrance" through the window. Often he would struggle against his desire to leave his room at night, but the following dialogue shows this part of the picture better than we can describe it:

- "Q. Do you know when you get up from your room to go out, when you have surrendered to the urge to go out, what you are going out for?
- A. Yes, they always were burglaries.
- Q. Would you prowl around the streets in a state of suppressed sexual excitement looking for an entrance?
- A. It wasn't that way. Maybe it's not excitement. It feels like it's further away in the distance. You don't seem to have any feeling of anything.
- Q. When you saw the window you made a decision? You went into a state of sexual excitement?
- A. Yes, there was sexual excitement. I always had an erection.

- Q. You told me the erection was sufficiently complete to interfere with your bodily movements. An emission never occurred before you went into the window?
- A. No, I am quite sure.
- Q. It was the act of going through the window?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Sometimes you had an emission and sometimes not, but I think you must pretty often have had an emission; otherwise, you would have done more burglaries?
- A. Sometimes there were oodles of them done a night; sometimes four a night.
- Q. You wouldn't have an emission on each of the four?
- A. No.
- Q. But you did before the four were completed?
- A. Most likely.
- Q. Did you get any sexual excitement out of taking loot in the suitcase?
- A. No.
- Q. It was just going into the window?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What you had taken out of the houses would not give you any pleasure afterwards?
- A. No, it gave me a sense of depression.
- Q. It wasn't exactly depression when you went further, and killed?
- A. I had no feeling of having done it. Things were so vague.
- Q. I object to your general statement that 'things were so vague'. You are not using the right term. Maybe they were 'different' but not 'vague'. For instance, in the Degnan case, you were able to see there was somebody sleeping on the right hand side by your flash light. You saw that somebody sitting up and that she had long hair, and you were able to see that somebody begin to talk and you answered. You also saw that the door on the other side of the room was shut.
- A. I didn't answer— (the child)
- Q. You took the child and went out the window. Your word 'vague' is wrong. You were in an unusual condition but not 'vague'.
- Q. You say you never had any fear of being shot when coming through a window. Did the thought that someone might shoot first ever come into your mind?
- A. No.
- Q. On three occasions you were surprised by people seeing you and you immediately killed. Why did you do that?
- A. It was the noise that set me off, I believe. I must have been in a high tension and the least bit of noise would disturb me in that manner.
- Q. Are you sensitive to noise?
- A. No, I wouldn't say that I was.
- Q. When people are surprised doing something they should not be doing, their usual action is to retreat. When you saw the child . . . talking, why didn't you turn tail and go out?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Did you have any conscious thoughts when the child spoke to you?
- A. No.

- Q. Of what you would do?
 A. There was no deliberation at all.
 Q. You just went over and strangled her?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Tell me, you didn't make any effort to take the bodies of the other two murders away?
 A. No.
 Q. Why did you take the child away?
 A. I don't know that. I'm cooperating . . . to find out.
 Q. You remember going out the window with the child?
 A. Yes.
 Q. And you carried the child with that extra strength you feel yourself possessed of at these times down the ladder and quite a long distance. You set the child down somewhere before you got to the basement?
 A. I don't know. It is just like a floor with holes in it. I've tried to look through the holes to see what is down below. (Patient is referring to his memory here, its blocks and spaces.) There is just not enough holes to find out."

This dialogue has been selected out of many such to show something of the patient's emotional condition while in action. His phrase "sexual excitement" was expanded: "I nearly always have to urinate or have a bowel movement—it always preceded the urge; when I first noticed it, I was in the basement and I had a bowel movement."

- "Q. When did the headaches come into the picture?
 A. When I tried to resist the urge to get outside and burglarize. It seemed as though I was in a dream. I did not have any feeling. It was like walking through darkness and pushing a mist aside."

Often when sexual completion occurred in the entered room it was accompanied or preceded by defecation or urination, or both. He would leave the consequences in the room or would find them later in his own clothes. After an emission, he would always leave the entered house without taking anything away with him. After assaulting Miss Peterson, he had an orgasm and without striking her again he left and returned to his room at the University. He later returned to the Peterson apartment, administered first aid, and tried by telephone to get help for her.

- "Q. When you had an emission you always felt you had done wrong?
 A. Yes. In fact, that was the only time.

We believe, from other statements, by this remark he meant that only immediately after orgasm did he suffer from the pang of conscience. This compelling "urge" had clearly a dynamic sexual origin, and the emptying of bowel and bladder was due to an overflow spinal reflex; so we asked him had he never relieved this tension by manual manipulation. On one occasion he indignantly denied even the attempt despite all his experience

with underclothes, occurring as often as four times a week. Later he said he tried this method twice without success. In the same manner, he at first denied ever having attempted any sex play with girls. Two days later with one of his rare shows of emotion he said, looking much ashamed, that twice, later correcting himself to eight times, he had touched girls "on the breasts" and then pressed "on the leg". Always having done this, he would immediately burst into tears and "be upset and unable to sleep". It should be noticed that no uncomfortable emotions followed either burglaries or murders. He forcibly denied ever having made any more intimate advances, except that he "kissed them" sometimes. "They wanted to kiss; I didn't."

It was clear that normal sex stimulation and experience were unpleasant, indeed "repulsive", to him, and these efforts after them created in him a negative emotional state. He found them improper in the conduct of others; he never spoke of them except in condemnation, as for example of the young men in the University who had brought a girl into their rooms at night.

He was interested in books on sex and crime. The following excerpts are statements he made to us:

"Q. What subjects are you interested in?

A. I am interested in psychology as far as that goes.

Q. Can you remember anything about Lombroso?

A. No.

Q. Do you know what his contributions were?

A. Well, he dwelt on the cranium, capacity of head.

Q. Didn't he dwell upon the physical make-up of the so-called criminal? The facial expression? Did you ever look in the mirror and think you might have a criminal face? You didn't think very much about it?

A. No.

Q. You don't think there is anything about you different from the average boy 13 to 17?

A. Just going out nights, that's all.

Q. And you couldn't account for your behavior?

A. No, excepting —

Q. In what way?

A. Couldn't account for it in any way. There was no reason for going out at all.

Q. You account for it with euphemisms. You couldn't account for it, and you didn't seek any advice in any way?

A. I sought advice by reading.

Q. What did you read about?

A. Nothing special about my case.

Q. What did you read?

A. Around the subject of masochism, fetishism, sadism, flagellation.

Q. Where did you read about this?

A. In books. I think Kraft-Ebbing mostly.

Q. And what else?

- A. In Dreams—Freud—read some parts of that, and that's practically all.
- Q. You once said you couldn't read Freud; it was so dirty.
- A. I didn't read it because it was against the principles of the Catholic Church.
- Q. What do you mean by dirty?
- A. Did I say that?
- Q. I think you did; it was transcribed. What did you mean by dirty?
- A. It has to do with sex.
- Q. Sex between the sexes?
- A. No, not particularly.
- Q. Sex between man and woman?
- A. No, his whole theory is based on sex.
- Q. Bill, before we leave, may I ask you one parting question, and I assume you are honest: If you had to choose between sex, burglaries and murder, which would be the most obnoxious to you?
- A. 'Sex' and murder.
- Q. And suppose you had to choose between 'sex' and murder, which would be the more obnoxious to you?
- A. Murder.
- Q. Yet, after murder you did not burst into tears and become emotionally upset, and after a very small amount of sex play you *were* emotionally upset. Don't you think you are not giving the right answer?
- A. They're the right answers.
- Q. The right answers are that you hate sex more than burglary?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You hate sex more than burglary and you hate murder more than sex? But, Bill, this is factual. Now, you tell us, quite honestly, after touching the breasts of some girl and the thighs of some girls, you cried, went home and had a great deal of chagrin and remorse, didn't you? After the murder of the Brown girl, the Degnan girl and the Ross girl, did you cry? After the Degnan girl, you went home and had two breakfasts, attended all classes without any pangs of remorse?
- A. No, no pangs of remorse.
- Q. After the Brown affair?
- A. No.
- Q. So the sex concept to you is more important than the destroying of individuals?
- A. No.
- Q. Was it worse than burglary?
- A. Yes, it was worse than burglary.
- Q. Was it worse than carrying a loaded weapon?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was masturbation a more serious thing to you than carrying a loaded revolver?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was masturbation worse than burglary?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was masturbation worse than murder?
- A. No.

- Q. But you show no remorse whatsoever in recalling, recounting these quite accurately, isn't that true, Bill?
- A. Just after going through this for a couple of months.
- Q. But you calmly told your mother and dad, in the presence of counsel, practically what you told us, son, isn't that true? You showed not much emotion, feeling, isn't that true?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But you wouldn't sit down and talk to your mother and dad about things sexually?
- A. No.
- Q. You wouldn't talk to your mother and dad about the fact that you had felt the breasts of a girl, would you?
- A. No.
- Q. Why not?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Bill, when doctor asked you the question, which was worse sex or murder, you answered no. In watching you, you nodded your head in the affirmative, and then said no.
- A. Just said no.
- Q. There was a nod of the head, yes.
- A. I always do that, if you watch me. I nod my head when I talk, whether it is yes or no.

In observing the patient, he was noted not to nod his head in speaking. We believe that William Heirens nodded his head to indicate that subjectively he felt sex was worse than murder, but in verbalizing stated murder. It is not true that he makes affirmative motions in speaking as he alleges.

- "Q. Were you responsible when you took panties at the ages of 9 to 11 or so?
- A. Yes, I suppose so.
- Q. What is responsibility? Could you define it in your own words?
- A. You have to make amends.
- Q. Were you responsible for burglaries?
- A. Yes, I believe I am just as responsible as any.
- Q. You knew what you were doing?
- A. Even if I don't want to do it, I still do it, and it's done.
- Q. How about the murders?
- A. Whether it's my imagination or not, I seem to be blaming everything on George. It seems so real.
- Q. That was a good outlet to give you peace of mind. It gave you a good deal of peace of mind by having George in the picture?
- A. Yes."

The patient denied having been troubled by morbid or unhappy dreams. He says he is a sound sleeper; dreams only occasionally. He never "dreamed of women", but in the beginning "dreamed of women's underwear. They were laid out nicely in drawers. In my last wet dream there was a picture of going through windows. It was usually along that line." He has had no "wet dreams" in the two months in jail and states that such absence has not occurred since puberty. Also, he has

had no "urge" whatever in jail to go out for burglary—there has been no such emotion to struggle with:

"Q. I suspect the very knowledge that you can't leave here has freed you from the need of decision.

A. I think I could get out but it would be hard to get back in.

Q. You think you could get out?

A. (Nods in affirmative, smiling) I've been here two months; I should know."

The patient struggled often against the "urge" to go out to seek excitement:

"Q. How did you repress it?

A. I would just put my hand on the table, then the headache would get too strong and I thought if I could just get out it would help. I had to get into any old thing. When I got these urges I would take out plans and draw how to get into certain places. I would burn up the plans; sometimes they helped. I was playing a game with myself. I would draw up plans and then burn them or tear them up. I must have drawn about 500 plans on how to enter a house or rob a train or things of that sort."

In his room, as has been already said, the urge to go out was often ushered in by a desire to go to stool. Although he knows the urge to go out could often be abolished by satisfying this desire he often neglected to do so and, accepting the "urge", went out any way. At no time, despite his struggling, sometimes strongly and sometimes not at all, did he ever seek help from anyone. He told no one. The early peccadilloes in fetishism were confessed to the priest, but the burglaries and the murders never. He sought no help from the church, his family, medicine, nor even from a charlatan. "I'd no confidence that they would not have me arrested and also that they would help me."

"Q. Have you really had no confidence in anybody all your life?

A. No.

Q. ——— But you had these "urges" for years before you committed the murders and you did nothing about it?

A. No, I never went to anybody about it.

Q. Would you tell how you resisted these thoughts?

A. On one occasion, I took off my clothes and thought if I did that I would not be able to get out. I would get ready for bed. I resisted for about two hours. I tore sheets out of place and went into a sweat. My roommate came back from the Calvert Club, and he asked me what was wrong, and I told him I had been drinking. I had to give him some excuse. I told him to go outside until I could get things fixed up. I put on my clothes and went out. I told him I was going out for a walk. I went out and burglarized that night.

Q. Tell about the bathroom incident?

A. I had locked my clothes in the closet and put the key in the wash

room. I got in bed and then the urge came on. I just stayed in bed and tried to talk him out of it but it did not work.

- Q. How many times did you do this? That is, lock your clothes in the closet?
- A. About three times. It was about Christmas time once that I had locked the door and that time there were people out in the corridor. I did not want them to see me go out and I went out of the window into the gutter and went down the fire escape. At that time when I would come in there would be snow on my feet.
- Q. Would you be wearing shoes and stockings?
- A. No, just slippers.
- Q. You never froze yourself?
- A. No, I had no sensations about the weather.
- Q. Tell how you masturbated?
- A. I never masturbated.
- Q. Tell how many times you had sexual intercourse with women?
- A. Never.
- Q. How many times have men approached you sexually?
- A. None.
- Q. Have you ever approached anyone?
- A. Never.
- Q. You never attempted to rape anyone?
- A. No.
- Q. How about this H.X.?
- A. He was of that type.
- Q. What type?
- A. Homosexual.
- Q. Did he ever make any advances to you?
- A. He would kid around about it. There were quite a few fellows like that at the University of Chicago. There was a fellow named Y.Z.
- Q. Did he ever make any advances to you?
- A. No."

In another conversation:

- "Q. Did the urges still persist?
- A. Yes, very many of them.
- Q. About how many?
- A. I would estimate about 300 houses.
- Q. Over the entire period?
- A. Yes.
- Q. These were all over the city?
- A. On the lake front, chiefly on the North and South side.
- Q. When did you do these jobs, at night?
- A. Yes, because I was occupied all day with my classes. The urges usually came on when I sat down to study. I would get the urge and I would just have to get up and go out. Many's the time I tried to stop but I just could not.
- Q. How did you try to stop?
- A. Many's the time I locked the door to my closet, would take off my clothes, put on a bathrobe and study that way. I would take the key and put it out in the washroom so that I could not get

my clothes. Sometimes that would work and other times it would not.

Q. Did you ever go out in your bathrobe?

A. I think on North Ellis a couple of times.

Q. Was that in the winter?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have shoes or slippers on?

A. Just slippers.

Q. Did you get anything?

A. One time when I went out there were a lot of fellows in the hall. I lived on the top floor and I could not get out. There was a gutter outside my window; the roof slanted down; I walked along the gutter, got down the side of the building and went down the fire escape.

Q. Were you fully clothed?

A. No, just my bathrobe.

Q. Even with the closet door locked and only your bathrobe on, you had the urge?

A. Yes, I tried that about four times and it did no good.

Q. That was in the fall of 1945 and the winter of 1946?

A. Yes.

Q. The Degnan case was when?

A. Brown was before that.

Q. When was that?

A. I do not know on what day. It was cold.

Q. Was it cold?

A. At that time I don't know whether it was cold or not."

A reference has been made earlier to a mysterious individual named "George", whom the patient invokes from time to time as having responsibility for the patient's crimes. Some excerpts follow from our conversation on this subject:

"Q. Going back to George, how frequently did he bob up?

A. He was just a realization of mine. I just stuck him in for no good reason. Before he seemed real to me. At Gibault things were so vague when I went out on burglary, it seemed to me that George was doing it. He seemed to be real. I cannot introduce him to anybody but he is there.

Q. Does he seem real to you now?

A. Yes, he does.

Q. Can you give us an illustration of the kind of conversation you might have had with him in the quiet of your room?

A. Usually when I had to get out I would ask him where he was going. We would talk back and forth that way. He would say, down to the lake, and I would say, what are you going to do there? He said he would get some things. I would ask him why he was going and he said, because he wants to. It would be just that way. I would argue with him to stay and then I would get a headache. I would argue in every way possible with him but he always wanted to get out.

Q. Did you ever talk to him about sexual matters?

A. No.

- Q. Was the conversation about burglary?
A. No.
- Q. Did you ever talk to him about George Murman?
A. I was confused when asking about names. I knew I had to give him a last name so the last name I gave him was M. S.
- Q. Why M. S.?
A. Because when I wrote a letter to myself I felt he should have a last name. I just put down any old initials.
- Q. Then the idea of the burglary was not the gain?
A. No. I don't want you to laugh. It seems so darn real to me. Previous to this, I had given the whole matter a name. I just had a faint memory of these things, as to temperature or color of things. When I would go out it would make no difference to me if I had a summer suit on with freezing weather. I could not feel any temperature. I gave it the name of George.
- Q. When did that bob up?
A. While I was working in the liquor store.
- Q. What was the last name?
A. I had never given him a last name. I thought when Mr. Touhy questioned me I would give it to him as material so Touhy would go looking for him.
- Q. And get him off you?
A. It sort of relieved me. It seemed so real to me I did it that way.
- Q. How did it seem real to you?
A. When I went out I had some vague ideas of what I would do. I took him as a benefactor for money or anything else I would take. If I did not throw the things away and have them in the morning, I would look them over and take out what I wanted and I attributed this to George. It was just a little game I was playing.
- Q. You never mentioned the name of Murman?
A. I would write letters to myself. I would talk to him. When I wanted to get out he would ask me where I was going, why I was going out, what time I would be back and things of that nature. I begged him to stay. I had a headache almost all the time I was doing that. I was just stimulated to get out. One of the letters I had written was to George M. S. I figured if I could send him to Mexico, if I could send him away;
- Q. Did you do better if he was away?
A. I could never get him away.
- Q. Did you write letters to George when at St. Bede's?
A. Yes, when I was drawing on the plans. (for crime)
- Q. Did you write letters to George at the University?
A. Yes.
-
- Q. When did you put the knife in your pocket?
A. When I got dressed again at the University. I put it in the pocket of a long leather coat.
- Q. What kind of a gun were you carrying?
A. A .32.
- Q. What did you carry the gun for?
A. Because I had been out that way before. In these arguments with George he would tell me to carry a gun.

- Q. Could you hear George's voice?
A. Yes.
- Q. Did you ever talk to him?
A. Yes.
- Q. Did you ever have a mental picture of what George looked like?
A. Only in wet dreams.
- Q. What kind of an individual is he?
A. He is about six feet tall, combs his hair straight back and slicks it down with oil.
- Q. What color eyes?
A. Red.
- Q. Does he have a loud voice when he speaks to you?
A. It is just like a clear echo, like if you were down in a canyon. In the dreams I would see him. In some of the dreams he drove a brown, convertible coupe. He would go up and down the sides of houses in that coupe.
- Q. That fellow George is almost of the same description as yourself?
A. He was not the same; there were a lot of things that were different. It would seem that he would float when he went anywhere. His head would not move, he would go in a straight line.
- Q. Did George speak to you that Sunday night?
A. That Sunday night he had already talked to me. I asked George where he was going and he said he wanted to go out. I had hardly any talk with him.
- Q. Then you went out, got on the "L" and went to sleep?
A. Yes, I awoke at Lawrence Avenue. After looking around I got off at Thorndale.
- Q. What time was that?
A. About 2:30 A.M.
-
- Q. Is it not true that you behaved that way before George came into the picture?
A. I gave him a name after I came out of Gibault. He came into the picture before I started to burglarize in 1942. In the beginning I always tried to resist and after that I tried to talk to him, and later on developed writing to him.
- Q. Would you write to him things that would be lengthy?
A. Quite lengthy.
- Q. How long did you keep them?
A. Until I read them again and then I would burn them.
- Q. Where did you burn them?
A. In my room. When I tried to resist him, I would get a headache. It seemed like my head was a balloon filled with water. When I would lay it down it would fill the balloon and I would get a pain.
- Q. When you wrote to George, how did you address the communication?
A. I would write to George and sometimes I would write it to myself.
- Q. Give us a typical example?
A. When I had written to myself, I would address it to Dear Bill.
- Q. You wrote to George and George wrote to you? Give us an explanation?
A. He wrote about burglary. He would say that the best way to bur-

- glarize was to go in windows. He would give names of people like Mike, Joe and Harry.
- Q. What else would he write?
- A. He would write about things in South America, about smuggling, and all along the lines of robbery what he would think of.
- Q. Did he ever write to you about murder?
- A. No.
- Q. How did you write to him?
- A. I would say Dear George. On an occasion after the Degnan case, I asked him in a letter if he did it or not.
- Q. Did you get a reply?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you ever in your letters to George discuss sexual things?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you ever discuss women?
- A. No. Sometimes in the letters I would ask him for things I needed at school. I would ask him if I could borrow money from him.
- Q. Anything else?
- A. When this urge would come out, I would tell him there would be a letter in the drawer for him. Sometimes he would answer after I wrote and then when I would read it, it would all seem new to me. I don't remember writing the answer and would not know I had written what was written.
- Q. Did you at any time sell anything that you had taken in burglaries?
- A. A girl friend asked me for some nylons and I said I had a pair. She said, how much would you sell them for, and I said for about a dollar. I wrote George about that.
- Q. Did he reply to that?
- A. He replied in such a way that I got the nylons.
- Q. How many did you get?
- A. I got about five dozen of different sizes.
- Q. What did you do with the bonds?
- A. I had them in packages in my room. I wrote to George and he told me to leave them in lockers.
- Q. Where?
- A. Down at Randolph through the subway, and I also left some in the Howard Street lockers.
- Q. Are they still there?
- A. No, the police got them. I tried in every way to get rid of them. I still believe yet that I didn't do it. I don't know why I'm kept in here. I don't understand it.
- Q. Following the Degnan affair, you went on burglarizing?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you on the next night?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What do you think we should do with you?
- A. I don't care. I made a pact with George if I ever got caught through him that I would kill myself and kill him too. I thought that would scare him away but it never did.
- Q. Did you ever figure out how you would kill yourself? How would you kill George?
- A. If I killed myself, he would go too.

- Q. Is he the same individual?
 A. I cannot introduce him to anyone.
- Q. Did you think when George came into the picture that you had lost your mind?
 A. No.
- Q. You don't think now or at any time that you have been insane?
 A. No.
- Q. How do you account for your behavior?
 A. I just took it for somebody else, that's all.
- Q. People who are that way come to me, a doctor, that something is polluting their mind. That never came into your head?
 A. Unless there was the fear of being put away.
- Q. That is a common fear. You had no fear if you went and said you had these urges that there was something you could be put away for?
 A. No.
-
- Q. When you had an emission, you always felt you had done wrong?
 A. Yes.
- Q. In fact, then was the only time? (you felt you had done wrong)
 A. Yes, I felt I'd done wrong. I knew George was doing it, and he was me, but he was real. I can't introduce him to anyone or show him. That's why it seems unreal.
- Q. He is part of you?
 A. He has to be part of me. . . .
- Q. Of course, you are not answering my question by asking me another question. Your question does not relate to mine. You say that if you had gone to a doctor—or anybody—I will say a doctor because I think that would have been better—and told him of these offenses you have committed—the Degnan matter—he would be under no obligation to have you arrested? He would be under an obligation to have you arrested. But that's not the point. The point is that you have had those urges for years before you committed the murders and you did nothing about it.
 A. No, I never went to anybody about it. (about the urges)
- Q. All you did was to invent George; and that's all.
 A. Invent George, and other means.
- Q. Yes, I know. You got a roommate once for a while, and you worked with your father for a while, but I mean that you never took a chance on confiding in anybody?
 A. That's right.
- Q. So you found a device entirely within your own fantasy for accounting for your actions to yourself, and at the same time enabling you to continue? You really never took the risk of being stopped?
 A. No.
- Q. You really invented somebody on whom you could always cast the blame, and as I told you, you are not playing solitaire in that. We all have the good and bad in us, only we have to make a choice every day which side we are going to yield to.
- Q. In the last note you wrote, 'Catch me before I kill again; I cannot help myself,' what could you not help yourself from doing?

- A. From the murders. That was 'George' and I could not help what I was doing, and he was myself."

These conversations regarding "George", in our opinion, reveal a power for hysterical fantasy to be expected in a hysterical individual passing through long sustained emotional conflict. By hysteria we mean a condition produced by suggestion in an individual suffering from deep division in his emotional life. It is to be noted that in 1942 he went twice, just before George's invention, to see the movie, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", which "made a great impression" upon him. When asked, in his psychological examination, the name of his favorite movie, he said at once this title which was partially written down when he asked to change to, of all possible others, "Robin Hood". Only rarely did the patient for short periods lack insight into the true nature of the device he had constructed whereby he could account to himself for his actions, and at the same time enable him to continue doing them while he led otherwise an exemplary life and could continue his religious observances.

Suicide Talk and Tests

He made, after his arrest, several feeble, theatrical, puerile gestures towards suicide. The original letters to his mother and father were given to us. These have been released to the daily press so we will not discuss them. He repeatedly stated he would commit suicide in order to do away with George. However, at the time of his apprehension, he stated:

- "A. I went into a room in an apartment building. I think it was Morse Avenue. I got chased from there.
- Q. By whom?
- A. By two men. At the time I had the power of George I could run faster than anyone. I should have kept on running. I went into a back alley and upstairs and asked a lady for a drink of water.
- Q. What did you tell her?
- A. I said I had a heart attack. Then I came to myself, realized what had happened, and then the police started coming.
- Q. Were they in uniform?
- A. No. Then I took a gun out and put it to my head.
- Q. Did you pull the trigger?
- A. I don't know if I did or not. I pointed the gun at the policemen.
- Q. Then what happened?
- A. He just shot.
- Q. Did he miss?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many times did he shoot?
- A. Three or four times. Then I jumped on top of him.
- Q. You had to come downstairs?
- "

- A. I jumped down the stairs. It was only three or four stairs. He was coming up and fell backwards.
- Q. You were on top of the police officer?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Where was the gun?
- A. I threw it when I jumped. I just had him down and I thought somebody would shoot, but instead I got the flower pots.
- Q. How many.
- A. I can remember two."

In the jail, he collected cigarette stubs, aspirins, pennies and small pieces of soap which he repeatedly stated were his plans for suicide.

Leadership

There is in this young man an immense egocentricity. Despite his continuing failures to rule himself he has no anxiety, fears or lack of confidence in his abilities and powers. His reading revolves around the power-principle: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and even Spinoza, of which he grasped nothing. Pictures of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels are in his scrap books and his favorite studies show a sketchy intellectual interest in "mass psychology." He writes in his notebook at school:

"Just who am I? I begin to wonder after all I could be human as the rest are but to myself, I would laugh at such a thought. O these seem so much more superior. In plain words I think I'm a worm. It's fun being a worm though, I like it; insignificant and obsolete. That's just what I need. Maybe if I'm all wrong in writing this. Probable I'll change my attitude soon. It's odd but I begin to like my habits now. Probable just a passing phase. I'll most likely hate myself when I do things disagreeable to myself.

I wonder why I can't run the world. It seems only great men have that choice. It's funny but I don't understand why I haven't the same equal chance. I guess they probable know just where to start & I don't. Wouldn't it be great to have that much power. Men sacrifice their lives for it. There must be an easier and faster way to gain control.

Why am I thinking these things. It's all nonsense. Probable never ever entered another mind. You've got a good imagination, Bill, but I doubt whether you'll get far with it. So far it's gotten you into trouble. Real trouble. Well, I guess that's life for you.

Why the fish did I ever go out for football. I detest the game and yet I go in for the sport. That's some sign of you loosing your head. In about three years you'll probable end up in a coo-coo house. . . .

Whoever got the idea that I could go great things and so sent me to school. It's sure a mystery. Maybe if I come down to earth I'll learn sum'min. . . .

You god dammed nincompoop. Why the hell do you live is all I can wonder. Your one of the most unworthy persons I've understood to be able to live. Your sure not following your golden rules for control. In fact you've been standing still for the last two weeks."

Great News 7:20 Sept. 26 '45

"I'm now shaking with excitement. My hopes and prayers have been answered in one of my biggest chances in life. I can only use my chance to the best advantage. The University of Chicago has accepted me into its enrollment. This is my first chance at showing how good I am to society and I intend to show even better signs. Tonight I feel as if the world were mine. All I have to do now is pray, giving thanks and vowing to do my best as humanly possible."

"Plot VII

Considering my present college status, considering my inability to control society, considering that I am loosing my moral code slightly; I hereby intend to change my whole way of living. Since I have devoted more time to psychology it should be easy. My plan described in this plot should be carried out fully. I shall attack human nature to my fullest extent."

At times he discusses Hitler:

- Q. In one of your books at the University of Chicago, you had a picture of Hitler inside the cover?
- A. That is right.
- Q. How long did you have that picture there?
- A. About 5 or 6 months.
- Q. Why Hitler's picture?
- A. No special reason at all.
- Q. But the war was on and Hitler was a public enemy and was against everything Bill Heirens stood for. He was against the church, he was against human privileges. Now, how do you account for that?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Did you have any pictures of any other individuals?
- A. Yes, Goering.
- Q. Goebbels?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Hess?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How did you explain that to people if they saw them?
- A. I don't know. It would be a joke to people if they saw it.
- Q. It would not be any joke. I would not hesitate to fire anybody if I saw he had things like that. What else did you have in your scrapbook?
- A. Pictures of my friends.
- Q. What does Hitler stand for?
- A. Nazism.
- Q. What else?
- A. He persecuted the Jews and the Catholics.
- Q. How did you feel toward the Jews?
- A. I had nothing against them.
- Q. In the homes on the north side, did the Jewish question ever enter your mind?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you feel they had more money than the others?
- A. Almost all the homes along the lake front were occupied by Jewish people. That is the only thing I associated with them.

- Q. Then you did not feel that the Jews had more money than the others?
- A. No. There was one incident that Joe knows about. When I was writing, this urge to go out came on. I took to drinking and writing at the same time. I would drink and write and then I wouldn't know what I had written. There were four pages of writing that was not legible.
- Q. Was the reason you drank to get rid of the urge?
- A. It made me sick and I did not drink again.
- Q. When we talk about mass psychology we are thinking of the psychology of the mass of people, how that mass thinks—a mass thinks a little different from an individual who is composed of the mass. That's what you were interested in?
- A. Both.
- Q. There is a note in one of your books that I was struck by: 'Am I not the leader of the world?' Of course, you didn't expect to be the leader of the world at that time, but you had a sense of leadership, didn't you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You wanted to sway countries?
- A. Not especially.
- Q. Well, if you don't want to sway countries—it could not be done immediately. But you would like to sway crowds, wouldn't you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And after you swayed crowds you would like to sway cities?
- A. You can dig all that up."

The patient, as has been seen, had no emotional disturbance whatsoever after the completion of each of these murders:

(Brown murder)

- "A. The dog barked and the lady started up hollering.
- Q. Was she fully clothed?
- A. No, she had on a night gown. She jumped up and hollered. Then I took the knife and stabbed her.
- Q. Where?
- A. Through the throat.
- Q. Why?
- A. Just to keep her quiet. Going in I had an erection. When I realized what was going on, I was in the living room sitting in a chair.
- Q. Where was the knife?
- A. ———The knife was at the end of the bed. I took the knife real quickly and washed it off.
- Q. Did you read about it in the paper?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How did you feel when you read about it?
- A. Just like anything else in the paper. It did not bother me.
- Q. Feel any remorse?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you read about the whole act?
- A. No, just the beginning; then I got tired.

(Ross murder)

- Q. Did she scream?
 A. Yes, she screamed.
 Q. How many times did you cut her?
 A. I just stabbed her once.
 Q. What did you do that day?
 A. I went to a show down town.
 Q. Did you read the paper?
 A. Not then, the next day I did.
 Q. Did it bother you the next day?
 A. No.
 Q. What did you do next day?
 A. I went back to work.
- Q. How do you feel when you think back toward the Brown girl and the Degan girl?
 A. (Shrugs his shoulders) I don't know.
 Q. And the Ross girl?
 A. Nothing at all.
 Q. No emotion, no feeling that you have done wrong?
 A. No.
 Q. Do you feel that you have done wrong now?
 A. I do, yes—I'm in here, but I don't feel anything about the whole matter. I never did.
 Q. But when it was done you did?
 A. I had a realization of what had happened.
 Q. But no feeling any more than chewing a piece of chewing gum.
 A. No.
 Q. Did you ever shed any tears on this?
 A. No.
 Q. Ever think of your parents, the grief that may come to them?
 A. No.
 Q. Or your brother?
 A. No.
 Q. Or the church?
 A. No.

The laboratory reports of the various tests taken at the Illinois Neuropsychiatric Institute are, as follows:

The basal metabolism rate was —10% at which time

The pulse was 80, and

The blood pressure 125/80.

The urine examination revealed a PH of 6 with no sugar, albumin, cells or casts.

The blood picture revealed a hemoglobin of 16.6 gm.,

The color index was .89

The red cells were 5,690,000.

The white cells were 5,650.

The differential count revealed 27% lymphocytes, 7% monocytes, 66% neutrocytes.

The blood serology was negative, in the Kahn and Wassermann tests.

The insulin tolerance test is reported within normal limits.

The report of the electroencephalogram is as follows:

Low voltage electroencephalogram with some 9-11 per second activity. No focal abnormality. No seizure discharges. Big build-up with over-ventilation.

Normal E.E.G. for age. No evidence of damage or epileptiform activity in the accessible cortex.

The spinal serology was normal.

An x-ray of the skull reveals a skull of normal configuration and density.

The vascular markings are normal. The pineal body is not calcified.

The sella turcica is normal in size and configuration. There is no evidence of fracture or other pathology. The frontal sinuses are heavily calcified, though reasonably well pneumatized. The impression is a normal skull.

X-rays of the lateral, anterior and posterior positions of the spine revealed no evidence of trauma or disease in the cervical, thoracic or lumbar spine.

The flat plate of the abdomen revealed no foreign bodies.

Psychologist's Report

William Heirens was submitted to a series of carefully selected and conducted psychological tests, calculated to reveal trends, both conscious and underlying consciousness.

The quality of intellect was carefully tested and he was found to have an intelligence quotient of 110- an average figure. He was cooperative, readily understood instructions, attempted all items offered, and answered questions freely.

On none of the psychological tests was there any indication of a psychosis or of malingering.

On personality questionnaires he was found to be outgoing and dominant with a lack of self-consciousness or feelings of inferiority. It must be remembered, however, that these questionnaires represent the subject's own evaluation of himself and may not necessarily conform with his actual behavior.

An evaluation of all the psychological techniques used indicated a definite emotional insensitivity and instability severe enough to be considered abnormal, as well as a blunting of moral concepts.

The majority of tests tend to suggest hysteria.

We regret the lengthiness of this report; it represents, however, only a fraction of our total material. We believe that it conveys the reasons for the opinion expressed at the beginning of our statement: that William Heirens is not suffering from any psychosis nor mental retardation; that he has a deep sexual perversion and is as emotionally insensitive within, as he is incapable of feeling pain without. He is unstable, and hysterically unpredictable, and most of his actions can be swayed from time to time by the suggestions coming from his environment.

APPENDIX

There are references in the preceding pages to certain of William Heirens' letters that had been intercepted. They are reproduced here. Original spellings, constructions and interlinings are retained. Words and sentences that are printed in parentheses were partially erased by drawing lines through them in the original writing.

Dear mom & dad,

Things aren't turning out the way I planned. I didn't think of the present happenings to come about. I'de better start from the beginning & tell you everything. [Long ago when we lived on Loyola Avenue & had the store at 1257 Loyola I started my terrible practice. I think you

It was stealing but not normal stealing know what that was. If not I'll merely say underclothing & it should refresh things. From that sort of stealing I developed into the field of burgalry. I'de say the first time was in the fall of '41. I don't know what brought it about but what I know of the fact I told the lawyers. I realized after I was caught what bad I committed. My sorrow that I felt toward you was inbarable. You stuck by me & helped me along. The judge sentenced me to Gibault where I was at my best for a long time but I missed home very much & began to think you didn't care about me anymore so my mind again wandered in the wrong direction. After I came home I was as bad as when I left. Thus I started in on the same thing with some knowledge I picked up at Gibault.]

If I would have thought of you none of this would have happened but as things went I got caught again. Maybe it was by the grace of God that I did since it woke me up to what was going on. The Judge was hard on me this time too. He sent me to St. Bede where everything went alright for a little while & then my mind changed to wrong. I tried for your sake mom & dad & I succeeded for a year & a half but it seems my mind couldn't be controled like that. It wandered along lines that I had previously forbidden to enter my mind. I lost all control of myself & started to plan burgalries. Then news came that I passed my test at the University of Chicago & I prayed to God in thanks for the favor he had done & made a vow for yours & Gods sake to mend my ways. I knew there was something wrong with me to do such things so I tried to find out why & I finally came on a solution. Everytime I committed a burgalry I had an erection & sometimes a discharge just on Loyola

as I did when I stole (underclothing) I therefore thought It must be something to do with sex so I deduced that the best way to overcome it was to get at the source which I did by dating girls. I found them repulsive but I was determined to overcome this. My burgalries were very frequent at that time & usually when I went out I committed more than one a night. But soon after Christmas when I started to go with Joan I began to let up on burgalries & I decided I was winning but I still made infrequent burgalries. I knew I was winning. Yet I had not overcome it. During the burgalries I had an excretion either way in the place I burgalarized so I decided to elevate any chances of more burgalries would be to go to the bathroom frequently before night & the urge I couldn't control would come on again. This also helped but not sufficiently. Joan was converting me away from my crime but not

sufficiently. We never went further than necking & maybe that's the reason. Some houses I broke into I merely excreted in & left so I should say my total burglarries were vast considering the amount of things I stole & threw away.

& did not steal

I was caught in one of the acts in an apartment building by a lady & a man. The man chased me & coming down the stairs my erection went down & I came to consider my danger. I got away by using the gun I had but if they challenged my intentions to shoot I could not have. I knew what I had done & was fearful of being caught & what you would again have to go through. I reflected the danger & ran away to the back porch of a store nearby. Where I was cornered & I was very thoughtful at that time. A policeman came up after me & I knew it was all over. I thought of shooting myself through my head with the 22 but I thought that it might not be sufficient to kill me. The policeman tried to shoot me as I came down to give up but the bullets only fell out the end of the gun because I seen the end of one laying on the floor. So I fought with him thinking someone else would come with a bigger gun & kill me but nobody did only a guy with flower pots. I thought he had a gun & didn't even look to see him shoot which I was sure he would do. I got fooled. When I woke up I was in Edgewater hospital. There I was having my head sewed up but I didn't revive because I thought I could find some other way to kill myself. I layed quite & thought. In the hospital I devised a plan to fight & I did to my best knowing they would have to give me something to quite me down. If they gave me an injection I intended to break the needle in my arm so that the point would go to my heart & end it all but they all held me to tight. I tried latter to gouge my eyes out in the hope they wouldn't notice it till I was dead but that failed because they were watching me just like when I tried to reopen the wounds in my head to bleed to death. Then I thought of starving myself & I succeeded for some time. Then a guy came to take finger prints & said I was a suspect in the Degan case. I had read a lot about it in the papers & I then began to think of it. First I knew I must convince myself I did it & I finally by repeation in my mind & verbally I had completed it. I then planned other things to lead to my conviction & eventually the electric chair. I was too nervous when they used the truth serum for it to have any effect but when they started to question me I decided to play along & so I wanted to agravate them against me so I blamed it all on George M. S. of whom I had composed a note concerning. That all worked very well but I think I should have told them I did it in the truth serum. Later on they gave me a spinal injection which was terrible & I realise now was un-called for. An hour after the spinal they took me out for questioning of which I could not convict myself of in any way because I couldn't think since the headache was so great. Later on things began to be better & I decided again to help Mr. Touhy out. My finger print as they say had been found on the note but it would undoubtedly later be proved to be not mine. Therefore I substantiated more evidence for them. Therefore I called Mr. Touhy, Crowley & a court reporter to give a fake confession, primarily to get them angry & also to do something else. My chance came when they asked me to write the ransom note. They didn't know it themselves but I remembered everything in it from an article the Daily News printed about this writing. I tried

to duplicate everything that I could to incriminate myself but on the letters I slipped up. I couldn't make that figure "and" because I didn't know which way the curve went but I duplicated quite a few things I knew were wrong primarily the spelling & the coma since I knew I could not possible duplicate the very same document. I was satisfied with what I had done & when Crowley came in this morning to tell me the mistakes I agravated him more by telling him to bring a dictionary. That really clinched things I thought but I seemed to fail when I spoke to my lawyers they told me they couldn't convict me on that. I had previously told the lawyers I did it to get them against me & make them fearful of loosing the case in such a way that I could be sure of killing myself & not causing anyone anymore grief. Then the police later said they had fingerprints of mine in the Brown killing so I thought here is another chance & tried remembered another murder I had read much about & could confess to that was the Ross killing. So I told my lawyers all I could thinking they would give it away. Then to my satisfaction everything was going fine until they started to dicker on the case. I knew Touhy would except because he didn't have enough evidence so I've been brought up to the present time.

I now realize my mistake & so having devised a way to end my life now I must tell you I did not do it. I say this in order to keep the Degnan family on the alert against the killer who will obviously seek the other daughter. Also so that the citizens of Chicago will be on their guard.

I'm taking all into consideration mom & dad & realise that I am a failure & a disgrace to the race. I've tried my best to overcome my fault but I've failed. I did tried to the best I can so I therefore must end my life. I know God will be with me & I have no fear. I'm in the state of grace & know I'll be alright. I've saved very many aspirins & I intend to take all 32 of them. I'm sorry very sorry but this is the best way. I owe you much, much. I'll see you mom & dad, Eternal love.

Bill

Dear mom & dad,

I love you both above all earthly things. I've never shown it have I by what has happened. Probable you think I'm not worth bothering about & I don't blame you. I'll relate parts of my past in hope that you'll understand.

When we lived at 1257 Loyola I started on my terrible & troubling habit. I was stealing but not normal stealing as you might remember. The lawyers have been told of that which is part of the partial truth I told them. That practice continued until the fall of 1942. I was not caught at it because it was not too much against society. In fall I developed the habit of burglary which lasted for almost a year before being caught. I got the same excitement out of it as my previous abnormal burglaries. Then I was sent to Gibault. It probable was a mistake on the judges part because it didn't help me any. I picked up more about burglary & I got great excitement just talking about it. At first at Gibault I felt very sorry. You'll never know how many nights I cried myself to sleep. I tried at first to turn my thoughts to studies but later I guess I just drifted back to the same ideas.

I was glad you stuck by me then. Nobody else did & nobody seemed

to want to help. You didn't leave me or talk against me as other people did. You've stood by me & I cannot forget that. I know I didn't deserve it.

When I left Gibault for home I came back worst than I started. I had plans & in the middle of the summer I went back to the same thing. I got great excitement out of it all. Then I was caught again. At Gibault, I learned very many things but it seemed none of them could stop me from stealing. I went to court again & the judge still didn't understand me so he took me away from you again. I wanted so much to go to the high school near home but I didn't have any choice. I was really homesick this time & just mopped around waiting for a chance to come home & see you but it was not frequent enough. I wanted to go to Niles high the next semester but you didn't want me to. I thought you didn't care for me then but that was a foolish thought.

Remember dad, when we went to work together during the summer. We'de get up early & go out to the car when the sun was just coming up. It sure was great. I guess I have the best father in the world. You would let me drive part of the way & I remember how you would be on pins and needles worrying about me hitting something. I thought that was funny that you should worry about me doing that. Yes, you are the greatest dad in the world. I remember when we'de go fishing real early in the morning. You & Jere always had a hard time getting me up. Then we would go down to the rocks on Lake Michigan & fish. Remember when we arrived it would still be dark & we'de get all the fish when the sun started to come up. I know I'll remember that. You were swell dad. There aren't many fathers that would do that much for their sun.

I started my second year at St. Bede with the money from the steel mills. I hated to go back I wanted the normal schooling being able to see you after school & getting around with regular guys. The last year at St. Bede my mind began to wander again as it did at Gibault. I had very few things to occupy it & I began to feel you didn't want me at home. I planned how I would do more burglaries. At that time I got a lot of excitement in planning such things. Then summer came again & I felt still that you didn't care about me so I wanted to get out on my own & prove that I was not a baby & I wanted to show you there was some good in me. I worked at the I. C. for a while & latter I seen that dad resented it & I felt I owed him so much & shouldn't cause him such resentment. Then I worked again at the steel mills. Later on I applied for the test at the University of Chicago. I knew if I passed it I would further convince you I wasn't so bad. All this time I didn't commit any crimes. I wanted to very much but I somehow kept from it. Then I went back again to St. Bede most against my will. Soon I received word from you that I had been accepted at the University.

I thanked God & promised him I'de be good & prove myself. God always understood me. He helped me get into the University. At times God was all I had to help me & I believed in him. I hoped & prayed he would help me. I knew he would & he did. But since that time things changed.

I had been ashamed to face people for what I had done previous to the time I entered the University. So I agreed with you to live there & save money by doing so. That was a very poor choice on my part &

I've regretted it since I was there. I had to wait for a chance to prove I was worthy of being around home more. I felt I could not face people. One morning early I got up to study. It was just before school started. I got the urge to commit burglaries then so I went out looking around. This is my first attempt at crime since I was last caught. I went into an apartment building on Drexel & 60th. I started at the top to work down as I did on previous burglaries through open doors. I went to the penthouse on the top floor where a lady was coming out of. I suppose to go to work. She scared me away for about an hour & a half. Then I came back & went through all the floors looking for open doors to steal purses from. I found none so I decided to burglarise the penthouse which I believed at the time to be empty. I went up & to make sure I knocked on the door. After a short time someone came but to my horrified eyes I seen a lady with blood dripping down all over her. She looked weak & I did not know what to do. I helped her to a chair & went to get a wet towel to wipe the blood off & give her first aid but I changed my mind.

Dear Joan,

I noticed your name in the New World last Sunday. When I think that mine might have been there with the rest it gives me a funny feeling & a hate for [yourself] myself that I cannot expressed. I hope the convention turns out alright. It looks like I won't have a date with you for that formal dance. I'm sorry about [everything] breaking it.

You'll never realize what I've been through. It all seems like a bad dream & I can't wake up. Every thing that the police can say to hurt me in any way they tell the newspapers. I want you to know that what is being said is not true. I never had anything to do with the Degan case or all those burglaries & assaults. It seems the police are trying to say I did everything bad in Chicago but it isn't true, not a bit of it. For example when they caught me they said I gave a big gun battle. Actually I tried to hand the gun to the policeman amidst his bullets coming at me & then they wonder why I struggled [with him] with his gun.

Quite a few times I spoke to you of knowing shady characters & now you can understand I wasn't telling a story. [I would hold things for George, he is one of my friends the best I thought.] But it's all water under the bridge now [& George is a very far ways from Chicago] & I know something will come up help my case.

You can help me very much if you remember all the nights you & that we went out together [the best you can remember].

Joan, I guess you know now that I never went out with many girls. I want you to know that I think very much of you, more than I ever did concerning girls. I couldn't avoid all the bother the police gave you even if I tried. It seems they poke their nose in everything. All I can do is wait for the truth to shine through to the public eye. I'll never forget you, Joan, No matter where you are I'll write & tell you what's happening.

I can't write concerning my case now, but I want you to know I'm not guilty & I'll soon be able to prove it. Almost all my waking moments I think of my proof, etc.

I'll write again soon. If you have time drop me a few words will you. I never know what's in the newspaper or how the public is thinking here but be careful what you write because they change words around & use them as evidents against me. So for safety sake don't write anything concerning my case to me.

Conclusion

William Heirens was arraigned in the Criminal Court of Cook County September 4, 1946. He pleaded guilty to 30 charges and received sentences on 24 burglaries of 1-year to life, to run concurrently; on 3 murders Natural Life, to run consecutively; 1 robbery 1-20 years to run consecutively; 1 burglary 1-life to run consecutively; 1 assault to commit murder 1-14 years to run consecutively.
