

## Clear View Sanitarium -- Part III

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New management brings sweeping changes. I became aware that humans do not like change and resist it fiercely. For example, the ward attendants worked 12-hour shifts. When I changed the work schedule to regular eight-hour shifts, with the same salary, the night crew grumbled and sent a small committee to convince me I was disrupting a successful system. I told the committee that we would try the eight-hour shift for six weeks. If they were still dissatisfied I would consider a revision. The committee agreed and the subject was never mentioned again. I'm confident that none of them would have returned to a 12-hour shift, even at gun point.

I believe that no mental patient has an ordinary history. The first new patient to be admitted to Clear View under the new directorship was indubitably extraordinary.

To explain, I must return to 1940. For the first time I was asked to speak to a chiropractic society. The meeting to which I was invited was in a neighboring state scheduled for the 15th of December. It had already snowed several times so far that year, which led me to decide a train was a better guarantee of arriving on time than driving two-lane highways in bad weather.

Dr. A---, the secretary of the society that had invited me, met me at the station of a town of about 2,200 persons. He showed a very nervous young man a great deal of kindness and consideration that day. I had arrived several hours before the meeting, so he spent the time with me. He took me to his office where we could talk. Coming from the pristine halls of Palmer, I was shocked. This very likable fellow had an office full of treating devices, devices which I had been taught were anathema to straight chiropractors. At the same time I was fascinated by these "sinful" instruments and asked him innumerable questions about their use. I was beginning to recover from the initial shock when he gave me another surprise. He opened the door of his treatment room into an optometrist's office. He invited me in and explained he was also an optometrist. I had a little difficulty in working that revelation into my concept of what a chiropractor should be. I found Dr. A--- to be a modest, soft-spoken gentleman who, in an unpretentious way, revealed himself to be a well-read and knowledgeable man. The time passed quickly and my zero hour had arrived. We set out for the hotel, our meeting place, walking past store fronts and buildings that had probably changed very little in the past twenty-five years. When we arrived I found that a portion of the dining room had been set aside for our meeting, but I was unable to determine just where our people sat or where the regular guests sat. There was no definite line of demarcation. It was a little unnerving to contemplate addressing people who might arise during the lecture and leave.

After lunch I was introduced and led to a corner of the dining room beside a large decorated Christmas tree. I was left standing there without a lectern or any other piece on which I could place my notes. Adding to my discomfiture, in order to be seen by half of our group, I had to lean forward to look around the tree.

My topic was "Chiropractic and the Mental Disorders." I tried very hard to impress the audience but I felt I lost them in the beginning. I was floundering about when I spotted a face I knew. He had brought a disturbed and psychotic young man to the sanitarium about six months previously. I had been assigned that young man and luckily he made an exceptionally satisfactory recovery with

prolonged benefits to the sanitarium. I asked the doctor if he would give a brief summary of that case with a comment on the boy's present condition. The patient had been a popular high school athlete whose sudden mental illness startled the entire county. When the doctor convinced his parents that he should be treated at Clear View, a wave of criticism arose against the doctor and the young man's family. However, after a few months when the boy returned home, without his previous symptoms and strange behavior, the doctor had become a hero. It was a very lucky thing for me that he had come to the meeting. At the finish of his story, I discarded my prepared lecture to present a series of case histories. This change saved the day for me, and my audience enjoyed what they wanted all along.

Then in September of 1951, I received a call from Dr. A---. He informed me that his sister was in desperate need of care and would I accept her. Of course I would. Dr. A---- arrived with his sister the following day. He had just returned from New York the day before where he had gone to find his sister and bring her back. She had disappeared two years before and had been listed as a missing person, and no trace of her was found until he hired a private investigator who knew how to find those who vanished without a trace. He discovered her in Harlem, in a commune of Father Divine. His sister, Mildred, had given all of her worldly goods to Father Divine for the privilege of living in a community house where she performed menial duties for her keep. (Father Divine was a phenomenon of the 1940's and 1950's. His mode of operation was similar to present day gurus and media ministers who accept the wealth of their followers in exchange for their blessings.) Mildred had developed a severe depression which was, according to Father Divine, disturbing the heavenly commune. When Dr. A---- went to see his sister, there was no resistance to taking her away, which he did gladly and quickly.

During the weeks that followed, Mildred told me many interesting stories of her life under the benign protection of Father Divine who was a short, fat, energetic black man who owned a fleet of Cadillacs and Rolls Royces. His apartment house was a bastion guarded by uniformed security men who kept everyone away unless they had been called into Father Divine's presence. It was a strange inconsistency that such an elaborate security system was needed to protect a man who, when he preached to a screaming, wildly cheering congregation, claimed that he did not represent God -- he was God.

After four months at Clear View, Mildred was much more content and cheerful. Finally, she asked to go home with her brother. Dr. A---- had made a dozen or more trips to see her, watching her progress, anxiously. She appeared to be a thoroughly changed woman by the time she left. But Mildred was unable to take up her life where she had left off before her life with Father Divine. She gradually became more depressed again. Then one day she disappeared. Dr. A---- called the investigator who had originally found her and asked him to confirm that she was back in the commune. The investigator reported after a few days, that was exactly where she was. Dr. A---- never saw her again but he did obtain regular reports from the investigator who reported she was content and free of obvious depression.

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