

Document Citation

Title	Science, medicine and torture
Author(s)	Allan Francovich
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	treatment
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	12
Subjects	
Film Subjects	

SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND TORTURE

Introduction

A hand touches a child's forehead. It is the child's mother trying to see whether the child is feverish. A doctor's hand holding a frail wrist feels for a pulse, finds it, times the beats. The child opens its eyes and sees doctor and mother and feels safe.

A hand touches an adult forehead. The camera tilts down. The eyes are closed. The hand opens the eyelids. The eyes are full of death. The doctor's voice says, "It is no use continuing. This woman is dead." We pull out and see the doctor. Around him a team of torturers with their instruments: an iron bed, a generator and wires, a syringe, a knife, ropes, sacks.

There are two things a human child remembers: a mother's touch and, when sick, a doctor's care. But then Medea ate her children and as for doctors... ?

Jacobo Timmerman journalist tortured in Argentina:

"He took my arm and very smoothly said: "You know Jacobo that we doctors have many secrets. You see here: this blue is one of your arteries and I can inject here. You know that we have some substances that make you talk but it is always so painful because it affects your brain; so why can't you just talk and we can be friends."

Cesar Joya Martinez, member of a Salvadoran Death Squad:

"The lieutenant said: 'Stick the dagger in his lung and twist it and turn it so Elvis the interrogator can question him as he is dying. And don't worry. I have brought things to inject into him - sulphuric acid. I have it here, and other things.' Afterwards Corporal Moreno Escobar cut his throat across the jugular vein."

There are international laws and conventions including the Geneva Convention against torture, the Tokyo Declaration, the Madrid Declaration. Article 5 of the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights prohibits torture yet it is a practice that has never ceased. In the West it has been encouraged secretly and done for reasons of state. When the United States Constitution was written, the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination was inserted precisely so as to preclude the legal use of confessions obtained through torture. But as regimes try to politically survive against their own people in the secret jail cells scientifically designed methods of torture are practiced with doctors and scientists present.

Veronica De Negri, book keeper tortured in Chile:

"They put a hood on me but through the slit at the bottom I could see their hands and feet as they cut me with razor blades and attached the electrodes. A doctor is there with you. And they monitor you... take your pulse to see how much you can take - like the doctors at the concentration camps."

THE SERIES

The first part

of this three part series - an hour film - will look at torture as done in the classical way , the biblically endorsed way, as retribution, the infliction of bodily injury, legally sanctioned, measured codified pain, as it is done in the Muslim world " an eye for an eye." Except that now there is a doctor present to measure the pain intending to keep it to what was prescribed , preserving life, if the sentence is not execution.

The second part

is the incredible modern secret history of doctors and torture based on close to a thousand pages of documents principally from the CIA. It would be difficult to do justice to this sordid history in less than 90 minutes.

The third part

- the relationship between a torturer, the supervisor of torture and the powerless victim is, in the end, a relationship between masters and slaves. This last part necessarily has to be an inner drama, getting inside the head of a doctor who tortures, getting inside the head of a torturer and of the tortured, has to be written as a drama and acted out.

There is an extraordinary photo of Doctor Dolcey Brito a Latin American doctor involved in torture dancing in a disco in Sao Paulo , Brazil. A flaccid looking ugly man with all the charisma of a nerd. This man had power of life and death over hundreds of people who had to be broken because they had some daring , some rebellion, some anger, some compassion in them.

And there is the incredible story of Argentine Naval Lieutenant Astiz handsome and blond, a brutal torturer captured by the Royal Marines on South Georgia Island during the Falklands war. His only real combat, a brief desultory fifteen minute firefight. A woman Astiz tortured and raped subsequently became his lover.

There are other cases like that. Why does that happen? What makes that happen? How do you come back to life when you have been violated in every way? Do you ever really live again?

Each part of the triptych should shed light on the other parts. Each part should take a different form.

Outline of Part One

Judicial Punishment and Torture

Today in some parts of the Moslem world - Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Pakistan, and Iran - in the desire to recover a lost identity, a sense of purpose, there has been a return to religious law, to the Sharia, punishing transgressions through a code of officially sanctioned pain often through public punishments, the amputation of limbs, whippings, beheadings, the stoning of adulterers. Last week, the newspapers reported that a British supervisor at a Riyadh hospital was sentenced to 50 strokes of the cane for "swearing". But in this "barbarous" world, there are concessions to science and humaneness.

Doctors are present when the punishment is inflicted to seal the arteries, pace and time the lashes of the whip or cane. Western doctors including British doctors and doctors trained in Britain, Western Europe and the United States have overseen judicial torture. The reports they prepare on the best most efficient methods always end up in the files of western secret services.

In Pakistan, in fact, the use of corporal punishment was instituted under English rule. But in 1990, and 1991, President Khan promulgated Ordinances authorizing the severance of limbs under medical supervision.

In Saudi Arabia the secret and religious police also torture but it has only become an issue when Americans such as Jim Smrkovski , an English teacher tortured in 1985 by the secret police, or electrical engineer Scott Nelson, whose knees were broken because he was a "trouble maker ", are affected. And even then because of the financial power of the Saudis the issue quickly disappears from public view .

The rational scientific West views these practices as barbaric. But in the Middle Ages the same sorts of punishments were imposed in Europe along with torture in all its forms, using specialized instruments.

OUTLINE OF PART TWO

Beauty and the Beast

The beauty was Richard Helms, DDCI then DCI, Director of Central Intelligence, dapper, the elegant long fingered hands wrung out of the sleeves of a rack of sharply cut suits, the hair brillantined, the manner debonair.

The beast was Doctor Sidney Gottlieb MD, AMA, club-footed folkdancer who humbly learnt the footing of the folkways and mores of the world as he travelled for the CIA testing poisons and toxins and collating ways of drugging and questioning.

Dr. Karl Brandt the personal physician to Adolf Hitler believed that any medical experiment could be justified if the reason for doing it was important enough. The beauty and the beast in our story agreed with Herr Brandt. After all there was the Cold War. Their mission was the salvation of the world.

From 1950 until 1975 through projects code named BLUEBIRD, then ARTICHOKE, finally expanding into a program named MK ULTRA. The CIA under Dr. Gottlieb conducted medical experiments on unwitting subjects. The purpose of these experiments was to create methods of successfully interrogating captives, and to program human actions imperceptibly using a human subject as a surrogate, controlled active agent.

What actions would the surrogates or Manchurian candidates undertake? A CIA document describes the expected result of the psychic conditioning. "He is indeed aware of precepts of right and wrong but if given an assignment which may be morally wrong in the eyes of the world, but necessary because his case officer ordered him to carry it out, then it is a right, and he will dutifully undertake appropriate action for its execution with no pangs of conscience."

In another document an unidentified CIA officer enthused, "Let's get into the technology of assassination."

The CIA programme

of experimentation began only after a thorough review of the experiments conducted by Nazi doctors including Josef Mengele at Dachau. When Helms was just an underling to powerful CIA director Allen Dulles, he wrote that "qualified competent individuals in the field of pharmacological, physiological, psychiatric and other biological sciences are most reluctant to enter into signed agreements of any sort since such a connection would jeopardize their professional reputations."

Orlando Tardencilla tortured in Salvador:

"The hood fell off and I could see there was an American there. They injected me and I could feel I was dying a bit at a time... I knew I was dying and I was feeling myself die. It was as if I was slowly strangling, watching my life drain out of me, and then they brought me back."

CIA recruitment

Not many may have signed their names to a piece of paper, but Gottlieb also succeeded in recruiting and paying doctors from some of the most prestigious medical schools and institutions in the country to do the dirty work. Adolf Berle, instrumental in establishing one of the covers for the experiments, The Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology at the Cornell Medical School in upstate New York, wrote, "I am frightened about this one... if the scientists do what they have laid out for themselves, men will become manageable ants."

One of the doctors evaluating the Dachau experiments had questioned the motivation behind some of the concentration camp experiments because they verged on the sadistic. He did not think there was enough science. He thought there was too much Germanic pleasure.

The pragmatic CIA hoped for more bang and less sadism. It also evaluated and built on experiments conducted by the Japanese during the war, the notorious unit 731. Several members of the unit were first judged as War Criminals, then pardoned in 1947. At least one went on to become the head of a powerful Japanese pharmaceutical company. Unit 731 injected prisoners of war including American and British with deadly diseases and watched them die. In another well documented experiment, Japanese surgeons operated on captured American bomber pilots removing healthy organ after organ to see at what point the prisoners went into irreversible death trauma.

The list of medical institutions participating in MKULTRA is long and distinguished: the Universities of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Utah, Washington Medical Schools, Baylor University controlled by the American Baptists, Tulane, Louisiana State University, and John Hopkins, one of the best medical schools in the United States.

At Princeton Dr. Jack A. Vernon studied sensory deprivation on various facets of human behavior.

The society's helpless and powerless were used as guinea pigs. For instance experiments were conducted on inmates at the Ionia Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Michigan without the knowledge of the subjects.

What were the substances of interest? Chemicals which would "inactivate or permanently destroy specific portions of the nervous system." Like ethylene oxides which produce temporary loss of function of the spinal cord, and methadol compounds which produce extended 36 to 48 hour loss of consciousness and reversible paralysis. It was suggested that Bulbocapnine, which induces catatonia or stupor, should be tested on prisoners of war or in a prison .

Even lifesaving drugs like insulin were found to be useful. Its injection in non-diabetic patients was found to induce coma and death. The death squads in Argentina and Central America have used insulin injections.

The CIA has never released documents reporting on the many trips Gottleib took to other countries. He frequently went to the Middle and Far East. Scientific methods of torture as against the standard "inhumane" crude beatings, a combination of physical pain and disorienting or incapacitating drugs administered under medical supervision began to appear and will be continue in use in Iran and in Salvador, in Lebanon and in Argentina, in Pakistan and in Chile, in Vietnam, in South Africa, in Northern Ireland.

It was used until very recently in the United States in the questioning of defectors from Eastern European or the Russian secret services. However, no Secret Service will ever willingly release the complete written documentation, so it is only indirectly that a full picture of horror emerges... through the testimony of victims or by tracing the movements of certain key figures.

In the 1960s, one of Gottleib's associates, John Gittinger, was sent to Uruguay to work with the Uruguayan Secret Police under John Cassidy, the CIA chief of Station. Gradually, as the secret police targeted the clandestine Tupamaro organization, torture and drugs including psychotropic substances such as LSD and Mescaline were used together under medical supervision, in what were partly experiments and partly interrogations.

Doctors from every country in Latin America were trained in how to oversee torture bringing people to the brink of death and then back again. The training was often done at the School of the Americas, originally located in Panama.

In Uruguay the programs were largely conducted in a prison called La Libertad (Liberty) and were considered so successful that in the next twenty years every key figure in the Latin American death squads or other clandestine military or police structures underwent training in Uruguay.

We have identified torturers, people who were tortured, and doctors who supervised torture in Uruguay and in the rest of Latin America. It is by talking to them that the practical application of twenty years of medical experiments can be reconstructed. Nothing of this will ever emerge from CIA documents because the papers either never officially existed or have already been shredded.

In every civilization, in the West formalized through the Hippocratic oath, the relationship between medical doctor and patient, the alleviation of pain, the curing of mental and bodily illness is nurturing and protective, a form of love. Projects BLUEBIRD and ARTICHOKE put corruption into the heart of medicine.

In one experiment conducted with CIA funding in Canada aimed at modifying "neurotic" behavior, a Toronto reporter writing in the Family Sunday newspaper magazine, describes a recorded voice repeating over and over again, " I love you. I love you" until the effect becomes maddening and the drugged or electroshocked patient breaks down.

Last month, the Canadian government, 17 years after the experiments officially ended, finally authorized payments of \$100,000 each to the 80 surviving subjects. Both American and Canadian governments disclaimed any responsibility even though there are thousands of pages of documents showing that both governments funded the work.

Canadian doctor Ewen Cameron, the man in charge of this particular series of experiments, had been a Canadian observer at the Nuremberg War Trials. There are photographs of him at Nuremberg. He became a close personal friend of CIA Director Allen Dulles. While doing these experiments in brain washing on patients, he was Mrs. Dulles ' personal psychiatrist.

Dr. Cameron wore tweed jackets, smoked a pipe, was sober and taciturn. He supervised other experiments in which an ice-pick was inserted through the orbital cavity into the brain to induce amnesia or patients were put into deep sleep and given violent electroshocks. He never suggested either form of treatment for Mrs. Dulles as she hovered on the edge of a nervous breakdown trying to forget her husband's constant infidelities.

These things were practiced in the torture chambers of the world. The doctors who supervised the work went home every day to their wives and children.

Dr. Gottlieb lives in Maryland and still folkdances on his club foot. Perhaps he even knows the steps of the Tarantella in Calabria called the mad man's dance because the movements are like those of a seizure.

The Beast's errand boy, John Gittinger, lives in Oklahoma. The Beauty in our story, the elegant Richard Helms with the long fingers of a pianist, gives dinner parties in his Georgetown home. He just appeared in a six part BBC documentary on the CIA. Although not asked about MKULTRA, he told the producers he had no regrets about anything.

CIA documents show that at one point as Deputy Director, when asked if- the program should be expanded, Helms had said that there was no criteria to evaluate the morality of MKULTRA , that there was reason to further hide it, but not to cancel it.

In Toronto, Canada, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in Copenhagen, in Minneapolis, in London, there are centers for treating the victims of torture. Each center might be able to treat 200 people a year. At that rate it would take more than 50 years to treat the estimated number of people tortured since the end of the Second World War.

" I swear by Apollo Physician , " so begins the Hippocratic oath. " I will keep my patients from harm and injustice." " Whatever houses I may visit , I will come for the benefit of the sick... . " All Doctors take this or some other similar oath.

In 1945 at Nuremberg and in Tokyo German and Japanese Doctors were tried and sentenced for misusing medicine . At Dachau experiments had been conducted on camp inmates and prisoners of war resulting in their deaths. Josef Mengele the mastermind of the experiments escaped capture and prosecution. Other doctors involved were judged and sentenced as war criminals.

In Tokyo Professor Ishiyama Fukujiro on May, 17, 23 and 29 , 1945 had operated on captured U.S. pilots , in one case extracting the lungs then cutting an artery and watching the blood drain into the chest cavity. On another prisoner Ishiyama cut out five ribs, and then the stomach watching the prisoner die. These were experiments which had as their aim determining at which point death trauma became irreversible. This very simple bit of information is of great use to an interrogator. The purpose of interrogation is after all not to kill the prisoner but to get information from him and death is defeat if it occurs before the extraction of the information.

By 1947 the men involved in the infamous Japanese Unit 731 had been discretely pardoned . A young American Army officer Alexander Haig attached to General Douglas MacArthur's staff had involved himself in securing the release of the key figures in Unit 731. Other intelligence officers attached to the occupying army were already evaluating the experimental results to see what there was there that could be used.

In Nuremberg during the Nuremberg War Crimes trials two other men who would have careers as distinguished as Alexander Haig's would meet for the first time. Allen Dulles had been an American Master spy during the War. Dr. Ewen Cameron had founded the World Psychiatric Association in 1938 and had been asked to come to Nuremberg to assess the sanity of Rudolf Hess. These two men would be two of the many who would involve themselves over the next 30 years in a top secret CIA program where doctors from the United States and the rest of the world would try to create better methods of interrogation and torture.

One of the CIA evaluators of the Dachau experiments had written , " It was a real horror story, but we learnt what humans were capable off. There were some experiments in pain, but they were so mixed up with sadism as not to be useful. How the victim coped was very interesting."

Both Cameron and Dulles were sons of Presbyterian Ministers and they each in their own way subscribed to a dictum that Cameron actually wrote out in one of his papers that the , " heart's ultimate desire , our age old objective was control over our world."

Allen Dulles became head of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1950. That year the Sunday Magazine of a Miami, Florida newspaper introduced a new word into the vocabulary, " brain -washing." The man who wrote the article was a CIA operative. He used his journalistic activities as a cover.

In 1950 the United Nations forces under United States command were involved in one of the first of many police actions. There was fear in the land and soon mixed with fear there was to be disbelief. American prisoners of war captured in the first battles in Korea were making anti-American statements. How could that have happened? They could not have been persuaded by argument .The United States was the best in everything , the center of all the good in the universe. Obviously they had been "brainwashed". They had been made into controllable vegetables. The United States had to master , had to start using these same evil techniques to snatch the enemies' minds from them.

That would be the justification for creating a research program. But CIA documents show that already in 1950 the CIA knew the American prisoners had not been turned because of brutalization or some secret drug. The Chinese had used group dynamics and persuasion. The CIA's intention was to use these new techniques drugs, electroshock, psycho surgery , ultrasonics, sensory deprivation offensively to break people.

In fact in 1950 Allen Dulles and some of the CIA scientists flew to Japan. Four suspected Japanese double agents were submitted to a combination of drugs and torture and then they were terminated, taken in an aircraft and dumped into the sea. The program was just beginning so the methods used were rudimentary. North Korean POWs were subjected to similar treatment .

By 1950 the German and Japanese war time experiments had been thoroughly evaluated and studied . The time had come to refine them. The CIA program was very, very secret. It had to be kept secret because the people who were now funding and doing the medical experiments on prisoners of war, criminals and political prisoners, on helpless mental patients and even on healthy citizens of the United States - they were given chemical substances without their permission or knowledge - had earlier judged enemy nations

and had created the Nuremberg code in order to stop future atrocities. What they were now going to do was according to the Nuremberg code they themselves had written a crime against humanity .

Allen Dulles wrote up the criteria for choosing those whom he wanted involved in the CIA program known first as Bluebird, then Artichoke and finally as MKULTRA . " Each person's ethics must be such that he would be completely co-operative in any phase of our program regardless of how revolutionary it may be.'"

There would have to be deniability at every level .As much of the work as possible would be done overseas or with prisoners and mental patients. Neither were in a position to object or even to know what they had been subjected to.

Much later in a December 17th , 1963 Memorandum Richard Helms himself to head the CIA and a central figure from the beginning suggested that arrangements be made with police departments in American cities ,with prisons and prison hospitals and "with various intelligence and or security organizations having a continuing interrogation problem."

The record shows from 1950 onwards the CIA was able to arrange access to prisoners, mental patients and political dissidents.

On June 1, 1951 there was a first meeting at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Montreal. Montreal was chosen because Ewen Cameron had been running the Allan Institute attached to McGill University in Montreal for a number of years. He would become a key figure in the program. The Allan Center would play a central role. American laws were not in force in Canada. The participants discussed "menticide" . The British participant Henry Tizard stated that there would be no research done in England because he did not believe there was anything left to be discovered . Tizard believed the Medieval Inquisition had already found everything there was to know about questioning people in ways that led to confessions .

Nevertheless , despite Tizard's observations , there was at least one hospital in Britain which was involved ,Long Grove Hospital, Epsom, Surrey. And an Englishman Leonard Rubinstein who presently lives in London was the principal psychic technician at the Allan Institute.

There are levels of horror in this story .What was done in North America was horrific enough. That could be a first part of the series. In Montreal Dr. Cameron submitted patients to electroshock, sensory deprivation, lobotomies, and injected his psychiatric patients with large doses of drugs including LSD,

Mescaline and bulbocapnine. These are all methods that will subsequently be used in interrogations by security services that are advised by the CIA. In American prisons and mental institutions the same kinds of experiments were conducted. In some places for instance in Lexington , Kentucky prisoners were happy to become guinea pigs because they would be paid in drugs . In other places particularly mental institutions no one was consulted.The head of Bureau of Narcotics and the head of the National Institute of Health were aware of the program. They were told by the CIA if questioned to deny any knowledge.

But what was done in the United States was nothing compared to what was done abroad.

That could be part two. Overseas, experimental results would find practical applications.

In 1968 CIA Doctors were sent to Vietnam. At the Bien Hoa hospital they drilled into the brains of captured Vietnamese, inserted electrodes , shot current through and questioned the prisoners. Whatever minimal concerns might have existed about the survival of the experimental subjects in the United States, could be ignored in Vietnam . The CIA had constantly been looking for an opportunity to do terminal experiments. In one memorandum, there is a request for "bodies, lots of bodies ." The prisoners experimented on were later taken out by Green Berets and "terminated".

But even more terrible things occurred in Uruguay. Here the aim was to affect the behaviour of an entire country. Uruguayan and CIA doctors ran a prison at

La Libertad full of political prisoners. The prison was run as a behavior modification center. Drugs and torture were part of the procedure. So was sensory deprivation and breaking down all ability to anticipate what would happen next, what a prisoner could do, and what a prisoner could not do. The world was made

crazy, irrational, arbitrary. Each prisoner was made to feel totally powerless. These experiments were conducted under the guidance of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb and John Gittinger. Gottlieb had been head of ~~the program~~ the MK ULKTRA program since 1954. Gittinger went to Uruguay. for the first time in 1963. Doctors in Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala were taught to use the methods developed as a result of the Uruguayan experiments ,Other countries Iran, Nicaragua under Somoza, Israel, South Africa, Pakistan , South Korea would also learn to use these methods .

And there is a possible third part. A personal story, that of William Buckley. Buckley a good Irish American Catholic boy had risen through the ranks of the CIA to become chief of the CIA station in Beirut. Buckley was aware of the CIA's experimentation with drugs and pain. He in fact had been sent to see Dr. Cameron when the CIA decided to cease funding the mad doctor. Buckley went to retrieve the files so they could be destroyed. Later when some of Cameron's patients sued the Allan Institute and the American and Canadian governments, he again went to Montreal to monitor the progress of the suit and make sure nothing got out of hand

Later Buckley between overseas postings helped the CIA compile a study of which countries were using drugs and doctors in torture. This report was leaked by the CIA to human rights organizations including Amnesty. The information compiled was of course useful to the CIA but the report also was used to show the world that everyone was doing nasty things except the CIA .The Agency of course did not name itself. Buckley himself had had some personal experience. In the line of duty he had watched people tortured by doctors in Salvador when he had spent time there fighting the Salvadoran insurgency.

Then in 1984 Buckley 's invulnerability ended . He was kidnapped. in Beirut by Hezbollah. They had their own Iranian doctor. The doctor had drugs and syringes. The others had other instruments. Buckley was tortured. He was given injections The torturers recorded three video tapes of the torture sessions. The