

Pre-Admission Family Consultation  
James Riva, Jr.  
June 5, 1974

Mr and Mrs James Riva, the identified patient James, Jr., age 17, and brother Peter, age 15, attended a family meeting at the recommendation of Dr. Robert Hopkins after father had requested son's admission to McLean. Originally the patient's therapist, Dr. Jeffrey Green of the Brockton Drug Center, had referred the patient to the Beth Israel for an inpatient evaluation. The patient was supposedly scheduled there for an admission on 6/3/74. However, when no bed was available, Ms. Judith Tovin social worker at Beth Israel, contacted Ms. Tikvah Portnoi of the Children's Center, who referred the case to the adult service.

At the beginning of the session, Jim was very sullen and both mother and Peter were the vocal members of the group. However, towards the end of the session, Jim began to open up and talk about himself and his relationship with his mother and at the very end father became a very active participant. Both of the brothers accused mother of being "crazy" in that she has beaten them for many years as she experiences "frequent temper tantrums". Mother tends to minimize these temper outbursts and denies having beaten the children. Father more or less corroborates the boys accusations and admits that he beat them using his belt as a strap and only stopped this practice about a year and a half ago. At that time he was being used as mother's tool for carrying out her erratic efforts at discipline.

Jim dates his troubles to the 6th grade although mother says that even in kindergarten there were complaints about his behavior in that he couldn't sit still and in the first grade he was sent to the guidance counselor. Jim admits to having taken a variety of drugs for the past several years but states that for the past three weeks he has stopped this practice and became a vegetarian. However, he has not been able to stop himself from stealing which he has also been doing for several years and it is because of his inability to control this impulse that he is seeking help. Jim has stolen a variety of things. In March, 1974, he stole pills from a doctor's office in Plymouth and at that time he was expelled from the Plymouth school system. He had been living with a maternal aunt there since July, 1973, when he ran away from home. Since returning to the Marshfield schools where he is supposedly in his junior year, he has taken tape recorders, a watch, etc., all of which are still at home as he is afraid to return them as he is worried he



would be expelled. In May, 1974, Jim and his brother, Peter, were both charged with stealing a small boat and breaking and entering a shed. Then on 6/2/74 Jim was caught stealing smoke bombs from behind the police station and currently both he and Peter have court charges pending for July 24, 1974.

Peter minimized his own stealing habits and infers that he just does this to be one of the boys. Last week he stole some car speakers from Bradley's and since then has been restricted by the police from going to the Hanover Mall. He admits to heavy drug use especially marijuana. He acknowledged that the first two semesters of school he was "stoned" every day and, therefore, unable to function in school. However, he recently cut this practice out although he still smokes grass on weekends. Both boys have also taken barbiturates and LSD and insinuate that mother has taken amphetamines in an effort to control her weight problem.

All seemed to agree that Jim's behavior has been very erratic and he is subject to mood swings.

In 1970 the patient's parents separated for three months when father moved out of the house. At that time divorce proceedings were instituted and the court recommended marital counseling for the parents. They went to a court clinic for about six weeks and then reconciled. Later on, when Jim was seeing Dr. Jeffrey Green, he referred them to a family counseling service but father claims that the social worker suggested he might like a different therapist as the sessions were not useful. These were the only two abortive efforts that the couple made for treatment. Both Jim and Peter have seen Dr. Jeffrey Green at the Brockton Drug Center off and on. Jim terminated with Dr. Green when he ran away to Plymouth. There he was supposed to see Dr. Keville at Plymouth Mental Health Center but he never followed through.

During the course of the session, mother reported that Jim was worried about father being a homosexual. This was quite a surprise to Peter. Peter admitted that he himself had problems communicating with father but he never thought the father was homosexual. Father minimizes any sexual problems but Jim did not seem reassured about this worry. The parents' sex life was not explored. Apparently the routine is that father leaves early in the morning and comes home about 6 or 7 o'clock. He works as an electrical contractor.

Mother teaches school and when she returns takes a nap in the afternoon. She then usually sees various girl friends and has dramatic interests. Father says that mother is frequently out till 3 a.m. and, therefore, is so tired when she comes home after school.

PLANS FOR ADMISSION

Although initially quite resistant, Jim seems quite eager to come to the hospital especially after seeing the Admission ward. He acknowledged his inability to control his impulse to steal but denies his other problems mentioned such as his becoming overly excited, his useless projects, his religion and food kicks, etc. Peter on his part is uncertain that Jim should come in the hospital as he is unsure as to just who is crazy in the family and would like that to be determined. Both parents want Jim in the hospital as the situation is out of control at home. All the members of the family have agreed to follow our recommendations and participate in Jim's treatment program as recommended here. They were told that the length of stay would depend on the initial evaluation here but that in all likelihood, regardless of how long Jim stayed in the hospital, the entire family should be involved in continued treatment.



Golda M. Edinburg, ACSW