

PSYCHIATRY

Swindlers Analyzed

➤ A SWINDLER, no matter how fantastic the personality, wealth, titles and distinctions he has invented for himself, is not usually mentally deranged, Dr. Edward Podolsky of Brooklyn, N. Y., a psychiatrist, has concluded from a long series of studies.

The swindler, he says, is what a psychiatrist would call a psychopathic personality, or sociopath. He is suffering from a character disorder. He is morally deficient in all social values that make for effective and socially useful living.

As a rule the swindler is successful because he can read the mind of his victim, Dr. Podolsky reported in the *Medical Annals of the District of Columbia*, 29:392, 1960. The swindler feels confident of his ability to influence his victim's thinking. This is accomplished by dimming the common sense and judgment of the victim.

The swindler arouses and stimulates the greed of his dupe with such consummate skill that the victim's conscience, logic, common sense and judgment are completely overwhelmed.

Thus the swindler is able to gain control of the conscience of the victim. He takes advantage of the fact that there is a little bit of greed in everyone's character and almost everyone is on the lookout for a big financial scoop, a quick and easy profit.

After a swindle it is the victim, not the

swindler, who is likely to have a feeling of guilt. This realization that they themselves are not free from guilt keeps many victims from complaining to the authorities. The swindler can then pursue his career with very little interference.

A long series of studies of the behavior of swindlers have revealed to psychiatrists some of the elements that are part of the psychic constitution of the swindler:

1. Inability to postpone. When the swindler wants something, he wants it without delay. He does not stop to consider consequences and so is not deterred by what might deter the normal person.

2. Ineffective consideration of consequences.

3. Insufficient learning from experience.

4. Disproportionate responsiveness.

5. Emotions very often dominate intellect. In this way, as in others, he is immature.

6. Devaluation of reality.

7. Disregard for truth.

8. Insufficient social valuation.

The swindler is more self-centered than the normal individual. His mental processes appear to behave in a less mature fashion than others. He has a total disregard for others. The swindler is completely absorbed in the immediacy of his activities.

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ROCKETS AND MISSILES

Mice and Men in Space

➤ NEITHER MICE, monkeys, nor men will be rushed into outer space by the United States.

An animal will not be launched in Discoverer XV, despite earlier reports that it would house a monkey, the Air Research and Development Command reported to SCIENCE SERVICE.

Discoverer XV, like the Discoverer XIV, will contain only advanced engineering tests giving complete, recorded data on the pattern and behavior of its round-trip excursion into space and back—if successfully recovered. It will contain no living organisms.

Lt. Gen. Bernard Schriever has said that continued successes with the Discoverer series probably will be followed with an attempt at an orbital launch and recovery of a tiny spider monkey in the space capsule. The Discoverer capsule will not hold a much larger animal.

Three small, long-gone black and brown mice were part of the first U. S. attempt to orbit and recover animals from outer space. They were launched in an early Discoverer satellite, Discoverer III; and though separated from the vehicle, they did not find their way back home.

The Air Force still is breeding these dark-haired "moustronauts" for future space experiments. They are preferred over the more commonly used white mice because

the dark coloring will reveal effects of radiation by bleaching or graying the hairs. These effects would not be detectable on the white mice.

Whether mice or monkeys go up in future Discoverer launches, they will, if recovered, reveal important physiological responses to the stresses of space important for future manned flights. U. S. manned flight is under National Aeronautic and Space Administration's Project Mercury.

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PALEOBOTANY

Origin Theories May Be Upset by Liverwort

➤ THE STONE REMAINS of a little liverwort, one of the world's most common plants, may upset scientists' theories about how long life has existed on earth. Discovered in the Catskill Mountains by graduate student Francis M. Hueber working under Prof. Harlan P. Banks of the New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y., the fossil was found to date back 330,000,000 years to the Age of the Fishes.

The discoverers believe that since the plant must have been evolving for millions of years before it reached the development shown in the fossil, liverworts may have existed as far back as the Cambrian Age.

This would mean that land plants and perhaps life itself have a longer history on earth than scientists have thought.

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GEOPHYSICS

French Nuclear Test Detected in U. S.

➤ THE RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS from the test explosion of an atomic device by the French Government in the Sahara Desert last February was detected in the United States about two weeks later, two U. S. Naval Research Laboratory scientists report.

The atomic debris from the French nuclear test was blown in an easterly direction three-quarters of the way around the world before it was found through analysis of air samples taken at several stations along the 80th meridian west.

The atomic device fired on Feb. 13 made France the fourth nation to join the nuclear weapons club, the exclusive group to which only the U. S., Russia and Great Britain formerly belonged.

The Sahara explosion brought to reality one long-dreaded nightmare of scientific and diplomatic experts—the predicted possession of nuclear weapons by other than the three great powers. Since shortly after World War II, this has been considered the "N'th country problem," the "N" representing an unknown number.

Drs. R. L. Patterson Jr. and L. B. Lockhart Jr., of the U. S. Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D. C., found from their air filter analysis that the radioactive debris from the French nuclear test spread from a few degrees south of the equator to just above 25 degrees north latitude by the time it reached the 80th meridian.

The second atomic test, which was much smaller, was not detected at the 80th meridian stations, they report in *Science*, 132:474, 1960. The stations are located at Miraflores in the Panama Canal Zone, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Miami, Fla., and Guayaquil, Ecuador.

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PHYSICS

Collision of Shock Waves 80 Times Sound's Speed

See Front Cover

➤ THE COLLISION of two shock waves, both traveling 80 times faster than sound at the time of impact, illuminates the shock tube seen on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER.

The shock waves, one triggered at the left end of the tube and the other at the right, moved towards the center of the tube at initial velocities about 300 times the speed of sound.

The waves collided at a point between the two rings midway down the tube. By the time they reached each other the shocks had slowed to 80 times the speed of sound.

The shock tube was built by Boeing Scientific Research Laboratories.

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