**KEY NOTES FROM**

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Rex Mitchell, Ph.D., last modified 7/17/18

COVER SUMMARY

This is not normal. Since the start of Donald Trump's presidential run, one question has quietly but urgently permeated the observations of concerned citizens: What is wrong with him? Constrained by the American Psychiatric Association's "Goldwater rule," which inhibits mental health professionals from diagnosing public figures they have not personally examined, many of those qualified to answer this question have shied away from discussing the issue at all. The public has thus been left to wonder whether he is mad, bad, or both.

In The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump, twenty-seven psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health experts argue that, in Mr. Trump's case, their moral and civic "duty to warn" America supersedes professional neutrality. They then explore Trump's symptoms and potentially relevant diagnoses to find a complex, if also dangerously mad, man.

Philip Zimbardo and Rosemary Sword, for instance, explain Trump's impulsivity in terms of "unbridled and extreme present hedonism." Craig Malkin writes on pathological narcissism and politics as a lethal mix. Gail Sheehy, on a lack of trust that exceeds paranoia. Lance Dodes, on sociopathy. Robert Jay Lifton, on the "malignant normality" that can set into everyday life if psychiatrists do not speak up.

His madness is catching, too. From the trauma people have experienced under the Trump administration to the cult-like characteristics of his followers, he has created unprecedented mental health consequences across our nation and beyond.

It's not in our heads. It's in his.

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https://us.macmillan.com/static/duty-to-warn-conference-transcript.pdf

FOREWORD: Our Witness to Malignant Normality

*Robert Jay Lifton, M.D.*

(xv) Our situation as American psychological professionals can be summed up in just two ideas—we can call them themes or even concepts: first, what I call *malignant normality*, which has to do with the social actuality with which we are presented as normal, all-encompassing, and unalterable; and second, our potential and crucial sense of ourselves as *witnessing professionals*.

Concerning malignant normality, we start with an assumption that all societies, at various levels of consciousness, put forward ways of viewing, thinking, and behaving that are considered desirable or "normal." Yet, these criteria for normality can be much affected by the political and military currents of a particular era. Such requirements may be fairly benign, but they can also be destructive to the point of evil...

(xviii) But professionals don't have to serve these forms of malignant normality [Nazi doctors, Auschwitz, CIA torture protocol]. We are capable of using our knowledge and technical skills to expose such normality, to bear witness to its malignance—to become witnessing professionals.

We need to avoid uncritical acceptance of this new version of malignant normality and, instead, bring our knowledge and experience to exposing it for what it is. This requires us to be disciplined about what we believe we know, while refraining from holding forth on what we do not know. It also requires us to recognize the urgency of the situation in which the most powerful man in the world is also the bearer of profound instability and untruth. As psychological professionals, we act with ethical passion in our efforts to reveal what is most dangerous and what, in contrast, might be life-affirming in the face of the malignant normality that surrounds us.

Finally, there is the issue of our ethical behavior. We talk a lot about our professional ethics having to do with our responsibility to patients and to the overall standards of our discipline. This concern with professional ethics matters a great deal.

But I am suggesting something more, a larger concept of professional ethics that we don't often discuss: including who we work for and with, and how our work either affirms or questions the directions of the larger society. And, in our present situation, how we deal with the malignant normality that faces us. This larger ethical model applies to members of other professions who may have their own "duty to warn."

...We can take the larger ethical view of the activist witnessing professional. Bandy Lee took that perspective when organizing the Yale conference on professional responsibility, and the participants affirmed it. This does not make us saviors of our threatened society, but it does help us bring our experience and knowledge to bear on what threatens us and what might renew us.

A line from the American poet Theodore Roethke brings eloquence to what I have been trying to say: "In a dark time, the eye begins to see."

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PROLOGUE: Professions and Politics

*Judith Lewis Herman, M.D. & Bandy X. Lee, M.D., M.Div.*

(1) Soon after the presidential election of 2016, alarmed by the apparent mental instability of the president-elect, we both separate circulated letters among some of our professional colleagues, expressing our concern. Most of them declined to sign. A number of people admitted they were afraid of some undefined form of governmental retaliation, so quickly had a climate of fear taken hold...

(5) If the ethics of our practice stipulate that the health of our patient and the safety of the public be paramount, then we should not leave our norms at the door when entering the political sphere. Otherwise, a rule originally conceived to protect our profession from scandal might itself become a source of scandal. For this very reason, the "reaffirmation" of the Goldwater rule in a separate statement by the American Psychiatric Association (2017) barely two months into the new administration seems questionable to us...

A psychiatrist who disregards the basic procedures of diagnosis and treatment and acts without discretion deserves reprimand. However, the public trust is also violated if the profession fails in its duty to alert the public when a person who holds the power of life and death over us all shows signs of clear, dangerous mental impairment. We should pause if professionals are asked to remain silent when they have seen enough evidence to sound an alarm in every other situation. When it comes to dangerousness, should not the president of a democracy, as First Citizen, be subject to the same standards of practice as the rest of the citizenry?

Assessing dangerousness is different from making a diagnosis: it is dependent on the situation, not the person. Signs of likely dangerousness due to mental disorder can become apparent without a full diagnostic interview and can be detected from a distance, and one is expected to err, if at all, on the side of safety when the risk of inaction is too great ...and the threshold is even lower if the individual has access to weapons (not to mention nuclear weapons).

...(6) Only in an emergency should a physician breach the trust of confidentiality and intervene without consent, and only in an emergency should a physician breach the Goldwater rule. We believe that such an emergency now exists.

(7) It doesn't take a psychiatrist to notice that our president is mentally compromised. Members of the press have come up with their own diagnostic nomenclature, calling the president a "mad king," a "nut job," etc ...By speaking out as mental health professionals, we lend support and dignity to our fellow citizens who are justifiably alarmed by the president's furious tirades, conspiracy fantasies, aversion to facts, and attraction to violence. We can offer a hand in helping the public understand behaviors that are unusual and alarming but that can all too easily be rationalized and normalized.

An important and relevant question that the public has been asking is this: Is the man simply crazy, or is he crazy like a fox? Is he mentally compromised or simply vile? When he lies, does he know he is lying, or does he believe his own lies? When he makes wild accusations, is he truly paranoid, or is he consciously and cunningly trying to deflect attention from his misdeeds?

We believe that we can help answer these questions by emphasizing that the two propositions are not mutually exclusive. A man can be both evil and mentally compromised —which is a more frightening proposition. Power not only corrupts but also magnifies existing psychopathologies, even as it creates new ones. Fostered by the flattery of underlings and the chants of crowds, a political leader's grandiosity may morph into grotesque delusions of grandeur. Sociopathic traits may be amplified as the leader discovers that he can violate the norms of civil society and even commit crimes with impunity. And the leader who rules through fear, lies, and betrayal may become increasingly isolated and paranoid, as the loyalty of even his closest confidants must forever be suspect...

(8) We submit that by paying attention to the president's mental state as well as his actions, we are better informed to assess his dangerousness. Delusional levels of grandiosity, impulsivity, and the compulsions of mental impairment, when combined with an authoritarian cult of personality and contempt for the rule of law, are a toxic mix.

There are those who still hold out hope that this president can be prevailed upon to listen to reason and curb his erratic behavior. Our professional experience would suggest otherwise; witness the numerous submissions we have received for this volume while organizing a Yale conference in April 2017 entitled "Does Professional Responsibility Include a Duty to Warn?" Collectively with our coauthors, we warn that anyone as mentally unstable as Mr. Trump simply should not be entrusted with the life-and-death powers of the presidency.

*Judith Lewis Herman, M.D., is Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. She is a renowned expert in the traumas of interpersonal violence and author of the now-classic Trauma and Recovery. She is a cofounder of the Victims of Violence Program in the Department of Psychiatry at Cambridge Health Alliance, a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, and the recipient of numerous awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.*

INTRODUCTION: Our Duty to Warn

*Bandy X. Lee, M.D., M.Div.*

(11) Possibly the oddest experience in my career as a psychiatrist has been to find that the only people not allowed to speak about an issue are those who know the most about it. Hence, truth is suppressed. Yet, what if that truth, furthermore, harbored dangers of such magnitude that it could be the key to future human survival? How can I, as a medical and mental health professional, remain a bystander in the face of one of the greatest emergencies of our time, when I have been called to step in everywhere else? How can we, as trained professionals in this very area, be content to keep silent, against every other principle we practice by, because of a decree handed down from above?

I am not speaking of the long-standing "Goldwater rule," which is discussed in many places throughout this book and is a norm of ordinary practice I happen to agree with. I am rather speaking of its radical expansion, beyond the status we confer to any other rule, barely two months into the very presidency that has made it controversial. This occurred on March 16, 2017, when our professional organization essentially placed a gag order on all psychiatrists (American Psychiatric Association 2017), and by extension all mental health professionals. I am also speaking of its defect, whereby it does not have a countervailing rule, as does the rest of professional ethics, that directs what to do when the risk of harm from remaining silent outweighs the damage that could result from speaking about a public figure—which, in this case, could even be the greatest possible harm. Authors in this volume have been asked to respect the Goldwater rule and not to breach it unnecessarily, but I in turn respect their choices wherever their conscience has prompted them to take the professionally and socially radical step to help protect the public. Therefore, it would be accurate to state that, while we respect the rule, we deem it subordinate to the single most important principle that guides our professional conduct: that we hold our responsibility to human life and well-being as paramount.

(12) My reasons for compiling this compendium are the same as my reasons for organizing the Yale conference by the title, "Does Professional Responsibility Include a Duty to Warn?": the issue merits discussion, not silence, and the public deserves education, not further darkness. Over the course of preparing the conference, the number of prominent voices in the field coming forth to speak out on the topic astonished me... [For example] Dr. Gartner [author of one paper in this compendium] is the initiator of an online petition, now with 55,000 signatures, and cofounded the national coalition, “Duty to Warn,” of (as of this writing) 1700 mental health professionals.

**A Compendium of Expertise**

(15) This volume consists of three parts, the first being devoted to describing Mr. Trump, with an understanding that no definitive diagnoses will be possible. In "Unbridled and Extreme Present Hedonism," Zimbardo and Sword discuss how the Leader of the Free World has proven himself unfit for duty by his extreme ties to the present moment, without much thought for the consequences of his actions or for the future. In "Pathological Narcissism and Politics," Malkin explains that narcissism happens on a scale, and that pathological levels in a leader can spiral into psychosis and imperil the safety of his country through paranoia, impaired judgment, volatile decision making, and behavior called gaslighting. In "I Wrote The Art of the Deal with Trump," Schwartz reveals how what he observed during the year he spent with Trump to write that book could have predicted his presidency of "black hole-level" low self-worth, fact-free, self-justification, and a compulsion to go to war with the world.

(16) In "Trump's Trust Deficit Is the Core Problem," Sheehy highlights the notion that beneath the grandiose behavior of every narcissist lies the pit of fragile self-esteem; more than anything, Trump lacks trust in himself, which may lead him to take drastic actions to prove himself to himself and to the world. In "Sociopathy," Dodes shows that someone who cons others, lies, cheats, and manipulates to get what he wants, and who doesn't care whom he hurts, may be not just repetitively immoral but also severely impaired, as sociopaths lack a central human characteristic, empathy. In "Donald Trump Is: (A) Bad, (B), Mad, (C) All of the Above," Gartner emphasizes the complexity of Trump's presentation, in that he shows signs of being "bad" as well as "mad," but also with a hypomanic temperament that generates whirlwinds of activity and a constant need for stimulation.

In "Why 'Crazy Like a Fox' versus 'Crazy Like a Crazy' Really Matters," Tansey shows that Trump's nearly outrageous lies may be explained by delusional disorder, about which Tansey invites the reader to make the call; even more frightening are Trump's attraction to brutal tyrants and also the prospect of nuclear war. In "Cognitive Impairment, Dementia, and POTUS," Reiss writes that a current vulnerability in our political system is that it sets no intellectual or cognitive standards for being president, despite the job's inherently requiring cognitive clarity; this lack of clarity can be even more serious if combined with other psychiatric disorders. In "Donald J. Trump, Alleged Incapacitated Person," Herb explains how, as a guardianship attorney (in contrast to a mental health professional), he is required to come to a preliminary conclusion about mental incapacity before filing a petition, which he does in his essay, while reflecting on the Electoral College and the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The second part of the book addresses the dilemmas that mental health professionals face in observing what they do and speaking out when they feel they must. In "Should Psychiatrists Refrain from Commenting on Trump's Psychology?" Glass argues against a technicality that would yield a simple yes-or-no answer to the Goldwater rule; instead, he advocates for a conscientious voicing of hazardous patterns, noting that the presence of mental illness is not as relevant as that of reliable functionality. In "On Seeing What You See and Saying What You Know," Friedman notes that technological advances that allow assessment and treatment from a distance, especially in underserved areas, have changed the clinician's comfort level with remote evaluations, even when detecting a totalitarian mind-set or a multidimensional threat to the world. In "The Issue Is Dangerousness, Not Mental Illness," Gilligan discusses the ethics of not diagnosing a public figure versus the duty to warn potential victims of danger; when invoking the latter, he emphasizes, what matters is not whether a person is mentally ill but whether he is dangerous, which is possible to assess from a distance.

(17) In "A Clinical Case for the Dangerousness of Donald J. Trump," Jhueck notes that the United States legally confers mental health professionals and physicians considerable power to detain people against their will if they pose a danger due to likely mental illness—and Trump more than meets the requisite criteria. In "Health, Risk, and the Duty to Protect the Community," Covitz offers an ancient reference and two fables to illustrate just how unusual the mental health profession's response is to a dangerous president, as we do not to speak up in ways that would be unthinkable for our role with other members of society. In "New Opportunities for Therapy in the Age of Trump," Doherty claims that the Trump era has ruptured the boundary between the personal and the public, and while clients and therapists are equally distressed, integrating our roles as therapists and citizens might help us better help clients.

The book's third part speaks to the societal effects Mr. Trump has had, represents, and could cause in the future. In "Trauma, Time, Truth, and Trump," Teng points out the irony of seeing, as a trauma therapist, all the signs of traumatization and retraumatization from a peaceful election; she traces the sources of the president's sudden military actions, his generation of crises, his shaken notions of truth and facts, and his role in reminding patients of an aggressive abuser. In "Trump Anxiety Disorder," Panning describes a unique post election anxiety syndrome that has emerged as a result of the Trump presidency and the task that many therapists face with helping clients manage the stress of trying to "normalize" behavior that they do not feel is normal for a president. In her essay "In Relationship with an Abusive President," West illustrates the dynamics of "other blaming" in individuals who have feelings of low self-worth and hence poor shame tolerance, which lead to vindictive anger, lack of accountability, dishonesty, lack of empathy, and attention-seeking, of which Trump is an extreme example.

(18) In "Trump's Daddy Issues," Wruble draws on his own personal experiences, especially his relationship with his strong and successful father, to demonstrate what a therapist does routinely: uses self-knowledge as an instrument for evaluating and "knowing" the other, even in this case, where the other is the president and his followers. In "Birtherism and the Deployment of the Trumpian Mind-Set," Kessler portrays the broader background from which "birtherism" began and how, by entering into the political fray by championing this fringe sentiment, Trump amplifies and exacerbates a national "symptom" of bigotry and division in ways that are dangerous to the nation's core principles. In "Trump and the American Collective Psyche," Singer draws a connection between Trump's personal narcissism and the American group psyche, not through a political analysis but through group psychology—the joining of group self-identity with violent, hateful defenses is as much about us as about Trump.

In "Who Goes Trump?" Mika explains how tyrannies are "toxic triangles," as political scientists call them, necessitating that the tyrant, his supporters, and the society at large bind around narcissism; while the three factors animate for a while, the characteristic oppression, dehumanization, and violence inevitably bring on downfall. In "The Loneliness of Fateful Decisions," Fisher recounts the Cuban Missile Crisis and notes how, even though President Kennedy surrounded himself with the "best and the brightest," they disagreed greatly, leaving him alone to make the decisions—which illustrates how the future of our country and the world hang on a president's mental clarity. In "He's Got the World in His Hands and His Finger on the Trigger," Gartrell and Mosbacher note how, while military personnel must undergo rigorous evaluations to assess their mental and medical fitness for duty, there is no such requirement for their commander in chief; they propose a nonpartisan panel of neuropsychiatrists for annual screening.

(19) A Disclaimer

In spite of its title, I would like to emphasize that the main point of this book is not about Mr. Trump. It is about the larger context that has given rise to his presidency, and the greater population that he affects by virtue of his position. The ascendancy of an individual with such impairments speaks to our general state of health and well-being as a nation, and to how we can respond: we can either improve it or further impair it. Mental disorder does not distinguish between political parties, and as professionals devoted to promoting mental health, including public mental health, our duty should be clear: to steer patients and the public on a path toward health so that genuine discussions of political choice, unimpeded by emotional compulsion or defense, can occur. Embracing our "duty to warn," as our professional training and ethics lead us to do at times of danger, therefore involves not only sounding an alarm but continually educating and engaging in dialogue our fellow human beings, as this compilation aspires to do.

UNBRIDLED AND EXTREME PRESENT HEDONISM:

How the Leader of the Free World Has Proven Time

And Again He Is Unfit for Duty

*Philip Zimbardo & Rosemary Sword*

(27) It doesn’t take a mental health professional to determine that these behaviors ...indicated that this person’s main focus was self-interest, and were incongruent with one important character trait the American people have come to appreciate in their president – at least up until November 2016: *stability.*

[32-36: examples of Trump’s extreme present hedonistic quotes, under these headings]:

Dehumanization, Lying, Misogyny, Paranoia, Racism, Self-Aggrandizement

(36) Trump also exhibits two generally known personality traits that, when combined with extreme present hedonism, amplify our concern: narcissism and bullying behavior. In order to help readers understand the complexities of narcissists and bullies, how these two characteristics dovetail with extreme present hedonism, and demonstrate how the president displays these predispositions, we've condensed years of study on these two subjects.

**The Narcissistic Personality**

*I alone can fix it.*

- Donald Trump, Republican National Convention, July 2016

In the early 1900s, Sigmund Freud introduced narcissism as part of his psychoanalytic theory... By 1968, the condition had evolved into the diagnosis of *narcissistic personality disorder*. Narcissistic people are out of balance in that they think very highly of themselves while simultaneously thinking very lowly of all those whom they consider their inferiors, which is mostly everybody. Narcissists are emotional, dramatic, and can lack compassion and empathy, as those traits are about feeling for others.

What follows are some of the symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder. (Note that because this is about narcissists, we use the term you.)

• Believing that you're better than others: This is across the board in your world; you look down your nose at other people.

• Fantasizing about power, success, and attractiveness: You are a superhero, among the most successful in your field; you could grace the cover of GQ or Glamour magazine, and you don't realize this is all in your mind.

• Exaggerating your achievements or talents: Your ninth-place showing in the golf tournament becomes first place to those who weren't there and, if you're brazen enough, even to those who were. Although you plunked poorly on a guitar in high school before you lost interest in the instrument, you tell others you took lessons from Carlos Santana.

• Expecting constant praise and admiration: You want others to acknowledge when you do anything and everything, even if it's taking out the garbage.

• Believing that you're special and acting accordingly: You believe you are God's gift to women/men/your field/the world, and that you deserve to be treated as such by everyone. They just don't know this.

• Failing to recognize other people's emotions and feelings: You don't understand why people get upset with you for telling it the way you think it is or what you think they did wrong.

• Expecting others to go along with your ideas and plans: There is only one way and that's your way, so you get upset when others share their thoughts or plans because surely theirs aren't as good as yours.

• (38) Taking advantage of others: You take your parent's/friend's car/ tools/credit card/clothing without asking, or cut in line in front of an elderly person, or expect something much more significant in return for doing a small favor. "What's the big deal?"

• Expressing disdain for those whom you feel to be inferior: "That homeless person isn't even wearing a coat or shoes in freezing weather. What an idiot!"

• Being jealous of others: You, and not so-and-so, deserved the award/trophy/praise and recognition. Also, if you think someone is more attractive/intelligent/clever or has a more prestigious car/ significant other/house, you hate and curse him.

• Believing that others are jealous of you: You believe everybody wants to be you.

• Having trouble keeping healthy relationships: Your family and friends don't understand you, so you don't stay in touch with them anymore. You lose interest in your romantic relationships each time someone better comes along; you have recurring unsatisfying affairs.

• Setting unrealistic goals: You believe that one day you will be a CEO/president/great musician/artist/best-selling author, marry a movie star, or have Bill Gates's billions.

• Being easily hurt and rejected: You don't understand why people purposefully hurt your feelings, and either it takes a long time for you to get over it or you don't ever get over it.

• Having a fragile self-esteem: Underneath it all, you are just a delicate person, which makes you special, and you don't understand why people don't see this about you.

• Appearing tough-minded or unemotional: Read: You act like Mr. Spock.

(39)While some of these symptoms may come across as simply elevated personal confidence or high self-esteem, they're different in people who have a healthy dose of confidence and self-esteem because whereas these people don't value themselves more than they value others, the narcissist looks down on others from his lofty pedestal. The narcissistic personality frequently appears to be a conceited, pompous braggart who dominates conversations and has a sense of entitlement. He wants the best of whatever is available, and when he doesn't get his way, he may become annoyed or angry. He becomes Mr. or Ms. Petulant in action.

Interestingly, what lies underneath this personality type is often very low self-esteem. Narcissists can't handle criticism of any kind, and will belittle others or become enraged or condescending to make themselves feel better when they perceive they are being criticized. It's not unusual for a narcissistic personality to be blind to his own behavior because it doesn't fit his view of his perfect and dominant self. But a narcissistic personality can spot one of his kind a mile away, and will either put down or generally avoid that other mindless competing narcissist.

Unfortunately, narcissistic people may find their relationships falling apart. After a while, folks don't want to be around them; all their relationships (personal, work, or school) become problems. Sometimes their finances are troublesome, too, because it's hard to keep up their image without expensive accoutrements.

**The Bully Personality**

*I hope Corrupt Hillary Clinton chooses Goofy Elizabeth Warren as her running mate. I will defeat them both*. - Donald Trump, Twitter, May 6, 2016

(40) Bullying is defined as systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more people... Research indicates that some bullies may suffer from narcissistic personality disorder.

(44) **A Scary Venn Diagram**

In Donald Trump, we have a frightening Venn diagram consisting of three circles: the first is extreme present hedonism; the second, narcissism; and the third, bullying behavior. These three circles overlap in the middle to create an impulsive, immature, incompetent person who, when in the position of ultimate power, easily slides into the role of tyrant, complete with family members sitting at his proverbial "ruling table." Like a fledgling dictator, he plants psychological seeds of treachery in sections of our population that reinforce already negative attitudes.

(46) In line with the principles of *Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California* 17 Cal. 3d 425 (1976), known as the "Tarasoff doctrine," it is the responsibility of mental health professionals to warn the citizens of the United States and the people of the world of the potentially devastating effects of such an extreme present-hedonistic world leader, one with enormous power at his disposal. On the whole, mental health professionals have failed in their duty to warn, in a timely manner, not only the public but also government officials about the dangers of President Donald Trump...

(47) When an individual is psychologically unbalanced, everything can teeter and fall apart if change does not occur. We wonder how far-reaching, in our society over time, the effects of our unbalanced president's actions will be and how they will continue to affect us as individuals, communities, a nation, and a planet. We believe that Donald Trump is the most dangerous man in the world, a powerful leader of a powerful nation who can order missiles fired at another nation because of his (or a family member's) personal distress at seeing sad scenes of people having been gassed to death. We shudder to imagine what actions might be taken in broader lethal confrontations with his personal and political enemies.

We are gravely concerned about Trump's abrupt, capricious 180-degree shifts and how these displays of instability have the potential to be unconscionably dangerous to the point of causing catastrophe, and not only for the citizens of the United States...

We as individuals don't have to follow our nation's leader down a path headed in the wrong direction—off a cliff and into a pit of past mistakes. We can stand where we are at this moment in history and face forward, into a brighter future that we create. We can start by looking for the good in one another and for the common ground we share.

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I WROTE THE ART OF THE DEALWITH DONALD TRUMP

His Self-Sabotage Is Rooted in His Past

*Tony Schwartz*

(69) Why does President Trump behave in the dangerous and seemingly self-destructive ways he does?

Three decades ago, I spent nearly a year hanging around Trump to write his first book, *The Art of the Deal*, and got to know him very well. I spent hundreds of hours listening to him, watching him in action, and interviewing him about his life. To me, none of what he has said or done over the past four months as president comes as a surprise. The way he has behaved over the past two weeks—firing FBI director James B. Comey, undercutting his own aides as they tried to explain the decision, disclosing sensitive information to Russian officials, and railing about it all on Twitter—is also entirely predictable.

Early on, I recognized that Trump's sense of self-worth is forever at risk. When he feels aggrieved, he reacts impulsively and defensively, constructing a self-justifying story that doesn't depend on facts and always directs the blame to others...

The Trump I first met in 1985 had lived nearly all his life in survival mode. By his own description, his father, Fred, was relentlessly demanding, difficult, and driven...

(70) To survive, I concluded from our conversations, Trump felt compelled to go to war with the world. It was a binary, zero-sum choice for him: You either dominated or you submitted. You either created and exploited fear, or you succumbed to it—as he thought his older brother had. This narrow, defensive outlook took hold at a very early age, and it never evolved... His development essentially ended in early childhood.

Instead, Trump grew up fighting for his life and taking no prisoners. In countless conversations, he made clear to me that he treated every encounter as a contest he had to win, because the only other option from his perspective was to lose, and that was the equivalent of obliteration. Many of the deals in *The Art of the Deal* were massive failures... but Trump had me describe each of them as a huge success.

(71) What's clear is that he has spent his life seeking to dominate others, whatever that requires and whatever collateral damage it creates along the way... I never sensed from Trump any guilt or contrition about anything he'd done, and he certainly never shared any misgivings publicly.

Trump was equally clear with me that he didn't value—nor even necessarily recognize—the qualities that tend to emerge as people grow more secure, such as empathy, generosity, reflectiveness, the capacity to delay gratification, or, above all, a conscience, an inner sense of right and wrong. Trump simply didn't traffic in emotions or interest in others. The life he lived was all transactional, all the time. Having never expanded his emotional, intellectual, or moral universe, he has his story down, and he's sticking to it.

A key part of that story is that facts are whatever Trump deems them to be on any given day. When he is challenged, he instinctively doubles down—even when what he has just said is demonstrably false... His aim is never accuracy; it's domination.

The Trump I got to know had no deep ideological beliefs, nor any passionate feeling about anything but his immediate self-interest. He derives his sense of significance from conquests and accomplishments... But the reassurance he got from even his biggest achievements was always ephemeral and unreliable—and that appears to include being elected president...

(72) From the very first time I interviewed him in his office in Trump Tower in 1985, the image I had of Trump was that of a black hole. Whatever goes in quickly disappears without a trace. Nothing sustains. It's forever uncertain when someone or something will throw Trump off his precarious perch—when his sense of equilibrium will be threatened and he'll feel an overwhelming compulsion to restore it. Beneath his bluff exterior, I always sensed a hurt, incredibly vulnerable little boy who just wanted to be loved.

What Trump craves most deeply is the adulation he has found so fleeting. This goes a long way toward explaining his need for control and why he simply couldn't abide Comey, who reportedly refused to accede to Trump's demand for loyalty and whose continuing investigation into Russian interference in the election campaign last year threatens to bring down his presidency. Trump's need for unquestioning praise and flattery also helps to explain his hostility to democracy and to a free press—both of which thrive on open dissent.

As we have seen countless times during the campaign and since the election, Trump can devolve into survival mode on a moment's notice.... He reacts rather than reflects, and damn the consequences. This is what makes his access to the nuclear codes so dangerous and frightening...

(73) Even 30 years later, I vividly remember the ominous feeling when Trump got angry about some perceived slight. Everyone around him knew that you were best off keeping your distance at those times, or, if that wasn't possible, that you should resist disagreeing with him in any way.

In the hundreds of Trump's phone calls I listened in on with his consent, and the dozens of meetings I attended with him, I can never remember anyone disagreeing with him about anything. The same climate of fear and paranoia appears to have taken root in his White House.

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SOCIOPATHY

*Lance Dodes, M.D.*

(83) "Crazy like a fox or just crazy?" This question has surrounded Donald Trump since his campaign for president. The question is whether a person who is repetitively immoral—who cons others, lies, cheats, and manipulates to get what he wants, doesn't care whom he hurts just as long as he is gratifying himself—whether such a person's indifference to the feelings of others for personal gain is just being clever: crazy like a fox. Or are these actions a sign of something much more serious? Could they be expressions of significant mental derangement?

The answer to that question is emphatically, "Yes." To understand why, it's necessary to understand the psychological condition called "sociopathy," and why sociopathy is such a severe disturbance.

Caring for others and trying not to harm them is a fundamental quality of not just humans, but many mammals. Normal people, as well as normal wolves, dolphins, and elephants, appreciate when another of their species is in pain or danger and, unless fighting over territory or sexual partners, react to protect one another. Such caring and cooperation has major survival value for any species, and its clear evolutionary advantages have made these qualities basic across much of the animal kingdom. In humans, the ability to sense the feelings of one another, care about one another, and try to avoid harming one another even to the extent of placing ourselves at a disadvantage (think of animals that will stand all together to protect against a threat) is called empathy. It is a characteristic of all people no matter what individual emotional conflicts and issues they have. Unless they are sociopaths.

(84) The failure of normal empathy is central to sociopathy, which is marked by an absence of guilt, intentional manipulation, and controlling or even sadistically harming others for personal power or gratification. People with sociopathic traits have a flaw in the basic nature of human beings. Far from being clever like a fox, they are lacking an essential part of being human. This is why sociopathy is among the most severe mental disturbances.

Yet, we are a culture that admires external success in wealth and power, regardless of how it is achieved. People with sociopathic qualities who are able to achieve high status and power precisely because of their manipulations and cheating are, therefore, sometimes seen as not only psychologically healthy, but superior. This contributes to the confusion: "How crazy can someone be who is so successful?" It has even been said that Mr. Trump couldn't possibly have serious mental problems because he got to be president.

Indeed, there are generally two life paths for people with severe sociopathy. Those who are unskilled at manipulating and hurting others, who are not careful in choosing their victims, who are unable to act charming well enough to fool people, have lives that often end in failure. They are identified as criminals or lose civil court battles to those they've cheated, or are unable to threaten their way back to positions of power. But those who are good at manipulation, at appearing charming and caring, at concealing their immoral or illegal behavior, and can bully their way to the top, do not end up as outcasts or in prison. There is a term for these people: "successful sociopaths." They are the ones who most fool others into thinking they are "crazy like a fox." Even their characteristic rages may appear almost normal. Instead of having a visible tantrum, they may simply fire people, or sue them. As their power increases, their ability to disguise their mental disturbance may also increase, concealed behind a wall of underlings who do the dirty work, or armies of lawyers who threaten those who are currently seen as the enemy/ What is important to understand is that their success is on the outside. They are no different from those who are less skilled at concealing their lack of empathy, even if they require an expert to recognize them. They are still severely emotionally ill.

**Diagnostic Labels**

The word "sociopathy" is sometimes used interchangeably with "psychopathy," though some have defined the words a bit differently. Sociopathy is also a major aspect of the term, "malignant narcissism and is roughly synonymous with the official DSM psychiatric diagnostic term, "antisocial personality disorder." All refer to a disturbance in an individual’s entire emotional makeup (hence the term "personality" disorder in the DSM)...

(86) Without being concerned about a formal diagnostic label, it's useful to consider the traits of antisocial personality disorder as defined in the current DSM:

A pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others, occurring since age 15 years, as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

1. Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors;

2. Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying . . . or conning others for personal profit or pleasure;

3. Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead;

4. Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults;

5. Reckless disregard for safety of self or others;

6. Consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations;

7. Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another;

8. Evidence of conduct disorder [impulsive, aggressive, callous, or deceitful behavior that is persistent and difficult to deter with threats or punishment] with onset before age 15 years.

(87) [People with sociopathy] do not tolerate disappointments; instead, they fly into rages and claim that the upsetting reality isn’t real. They make up an alternative reality and insist that it is true. This is the definition of a delusion. When it is told to others, it is basically a lie.

(89) The pathological emotional problems in sociopathy make one another worse. An inability to have a consistent realistic view of the world, or to maintain emotionally genuine relationships, leads to more paranoia. The weakness in impulse control which arises from enraged reactions to imagined slights and produces reckless, destructive behavior, leads to a greater need to deny criticism with more lies to tell oneself and everyone else, and an increasing distance from reality. The more a sociopath needs to scapegoat others the more he genuinely hates them, making him even more aggressive and sadistic. Life is devoted to endless destruction in the service of an endless quest for power and admiration, unmitigated by basic empathy or guilt.

**Donald Trump**

Because Mr. Trump has been a very public figure for many years, and because we have been able to hear from many who have known him for a long time, we are in an excellent position to know his behaviors—his speech and actions—which are precisely the basis for making an assessment of his dangerousness, whether we assess him using the official DSM criteria for antisocial personality disorder (APD), as below, or whether we apply our knowledge of malignant narcissism, both of which include the signs and symptoms of sociopathy. Let us consider these in turn.

*Lack of Empathy for Others; Lack of Remorse; Lying and Cheating*

Mr. Trump's mocking the disability of a handicapped reporter, unconcern for the safety of protesters at a rally ("Get rid of them!"), sexually assaulting women, threatening physical harm to his opponent in the election (alluding to gun owners eliminating her), repeatedly verbally attacking a family who lost their son fighting for the country, personally degrading people who criticize him (calling them insulting names, as he did in both the Republican primaries and the general election), a history of cheating people he's hired by not paying them what he owes, creating the now forced-to-disband Trump University, targeting and terrifying minority groups, all provide overwhelming evidence of profound sociopathic traits, which are far more important than trying to assign any specific diagnostic label.

(90) *Loss of Reality*

Mr. Trump's insistence on the truth of matters proven to be untrue ("alternative facts") is well-known. His insistence has occurred both repeatedly and over a long time, even when such denial is not in his interest and it would be better for him to acknowledge that he spoke in error. He has falsely claimed that President Obama is not an American and that he wiretapped Mr. Trump's building, that his own loss in the vote total of the general election was caused by illegal aliens, that he had the largest inauguration crowd in history, etc. Together, these show a persistent loss of reality.

*Rage Reactions and Impulsivity*

Mr. Trump's rages have been reported on multiple occasions in the press, leading to sudden decisions and actions. He fired and subsequently threatened the director of the FBI after hearing him testify in unwanted ways before Congress, launched more than 50 missiles within 72 hours of seeing a disturbing image on the news—reversing his stated Middle East policy, precipitously violated diplomatic norms, creating international tensions (as with reports of threatening to invade Mexico, hanging up on the prime minister of Australia, antagonizing Germany, France, Greece, and others), issued illegal executive orders, apparently without vetting them with knowledgeable attorneys, and so on.

(91) **Conclusion**

Donald Trump's speech and behavior show that he has severe sociopathic traits. The significance of this cannot be overstated. While there have surely been American presidents who could be said to be narcissistic, none have shown sociopathic qualities to the degree seen in Mr. Trump. Correspondingly, none have been so definitively and so obviously dangerous.

Democracy requires respect and protection for multiple points of view, concepts that are incompatible with sociopathy. The need to be seen as superior, when coupled with lack of empathy or remorse for harming other people, are in fact the signature characteristics of tyrants, who seek the control and destruction of all who oppose them, as well as loyalty to themselves instead of to the country they lead.

The paranoia of severe sociopathy creates a profound risk of war, since heads of other nations will inevitably disagree with or challenge the sociopathic leader, who will experience the disagreement as a personal attack, leading to rage reactions and impulsive action to destroy this "enemy." A common historical example is the creation, by sociopathic leaders, of an international incident to have an excuse to seize more power (suspend constitutional rights, impose martial law, and discriminate against minority groups). Because such leaders will lie to others in government and to their citizens, those who would check the sociopath's power find it difficult to contradict his claims and actions with facts. Would-be tyrants also typically devalue a free press, undermining journalists' ability to inform and resist the move toward war and away from democracy.

Mr. Trump's sociopathic characteristics are undeniable. They create a profound danger for America's democracy and safety. Over time these characteristics will only become worse, either because Mr. Trump will succeed in gaining more power and more grandiosity with less grasp on reality, or because he will engender more criticism producing more paranoia, more lies, and more enraged destruction.

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DONALD TRUMP IS: A) BAD, B) MAD, C) ALL OF THE ABOVE

*John D. Gartner, Ph.D.*

(93) Donald Trump is so visibly psychologically impaired that it is obvious even to a layman that “something is wrong with him.” Still, putting a name to that disturbance has been a challenge... There are *a lot* of things wrong with him – and together, they are a scary witch’s brew...

(94) I will argue that Trump can be both evil *and* crazy, and that unless we see how these two components work together, we will never truly understand him. Nor will we recognize how much danger we are in.

(94) **Bad: Malignant Narcissism**

“The quintessence of evil” was how Erich Fromm described *malignant narcissism,* a term he introduced in the 1960s... Kernberg defined the syndrome as having four components: (1) narcissistic personality disorder, (2) antisocial behavior, (3) parnoid traits, and (4) sadism.

(97) When you combine these three ingredients, narcissism, antisocial traits, and paranoia, you get a leader who feels omnipotent, omniscient, and entitled to total power; and who rages at being persecuted by imaginary enemies. ...With such a leader, all who are not part of the in-group or who fail to kiss the leader’s ring are enemies who must be destroyed.

(99) **Mad**

Success emboldens malignant narcissists to become even more grandiose, reckless, and aggressive. ...Why can’t he just stop being mentally ill? Why? Because his illness is not a ruse. It can’t just be turned off when it’s convenient.

(106) His speech patterns are like something straight out of a psychiatric textbook. Manics display something called "flight of ideas." It's a formal thought disorder in which ideas tumble forth through a disordered chain of associations. One word sparks another, which sparks another, and they're off to the races. As one trained psychiatrist said to me, compare Donald Trump's speaking patterns to a Robin Williams monologue, but with insults instead of jokes.

(107) Let's put these two moving parts together, bad and mad. Trump is a profoundly evil man exhibiting malignant narcissism. His worsening hypomania is making him increasingly more irrational, grandiose, paranoid, aggressive, irritable, and impulsive. Trump is bad, mad, and getting worse. He evinces the most destructive and dangerous collection of psychiatric symptoms possible for a leader. The worst-case scenario is now our reality.

Often as therapists we are called on to help our patients see that their life circumstances are not as catastrophic as they might feel. In the case of Trump, however, our job is the opposite: to warn the public that the election of Donald Trump is a true emergency, and that the consequences most likely will be catastrophic.

It's a catastrophe that might have been avoided if we in the mental health community had told the public the truth, instead of allowing ourselves to be gagged by the Goldwater rule. "See something, say nothing" appears to be the APA's motto when it comes to national security. History will not be kind to a profession that aided the rise of an American Hitler through its silence.

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WHY “CRAZY LIKE A FOX” VERSUS “CRAZY LIKE A CRAZY” REALLY MATTERS:

Delusional Disorder, Admiration of Brutal Dictators,

the Nuclear Codes, and Trump

*Michael J. Tansey, Ph.D.*

(110) Since becoming president, Donald Trump has made increasingly staggering statements contradicted by irrefutable evidence to the contrary ...such that we have no choice but to consider whether his psychological disturbance s far more severe than what has widely been proposed as *merely* narcissistic personality disorder, *merely* antisocial personality disorder, or *merely* pathological lying.

[110-113 Tansey argues that Trump fits the criteria for Delusional Disorder

[115-121 Tansey discusses Trump’s admiration for brutal dictators, including:] Kim Jong-un of North Korea, Bashar al-Assad of Syris, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, and especially Vladmir Putin.]

(121) Although there are several areas in which DT’s particular version of personality disorder is vital to understand, none is more compelling or terrifying than his control of the nuclear codes...

Because of this very real existential threat, it is absolutely urgent that we comprehend the titanic differences between a president who is merely “crazy lie a fox” (shrewd, calculating, and convinced that the truth is spoken only when it happens to coincide with his purposes) versus what I have termed “crazy like a crazy” (possessing well-hidden, core grandiose and paranoid delusions that are disconnected from factual reality).

[122-123 Tansey outlines the behavior of Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis]

(123) The "crazy like a fox" characterization of DT needs little explanation. The phrase describes someone who may appear "crazy" (e.g., erratic, irrational, impulsive) on the surface, but whose seemingly crazy external behavior is a cleverly designed strategy to mislead, distract, and deceive others into responding in precisely the manner that is secretly desired. This is indeed one aspect of DT's behavior. Someone who is "crazy like a fox," during that given moment, is actually the exact opposite of crazy. When insisting that the Fake Media created the feud between him and the intelligence community, such a person would fail a reliable lie detector test because he would know he was lying...

(124) When insisting that the Fake Media created the feud between him and the intelligence community, DT would unequivocally have passed a lie detector test because he believed the delusion was actually true. "Crazy like a fox" defines a person whose apparent external irrationality masks underlying rational thinking. "Crazy like a crazy" characterizes a person whose apparent external rationality masks underlying irrational thinking.

Returning to our historical examples of nuclear emergencies, is there anyone who could possibly believe DT would have shown Brzezinski's grace under pressure had he himself received that 3:00 a.m. call? If, indeed, Trump harbors grandiose and paranoid delusions (for which there is mounting evidence), he would have launched missiles faster than he fires off paranoid tweets on a Saturday morning.

Given the thirteen days of excruciating tension during the very real nuclear threat of the Cuban Missile Crisis, is there anyone who possibly believes that DT could have demonstrated JFK's composure, wisdom, and judgment, especially in the face of unanimous pressure from his military advisers? If DT were indeed merely "crazy like a fox," it would still be a huge stretch—but, increasingly, that appears not to be the case.

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SHOULD PSYCHIATRISTS REFRAIN FROM

COMMENTING ON TRUMP’S PSYCHOLOGY?

*Leonard L. Glass, M.D., M.P.H.*

(152) You might think the answer is obvious, but it isn’t.

(155) **Why I Choose to Speak Out**

These are frightening times. The current occupant of the White House is widely perceived as erratic and vindictive. Yet, those very elements of his character may well have endeared him to his base. He speaks without hesitation or reflection, and repudiates "political correctness." That convinces some that he is authentic, saying things that they've felt but have feared to say out loud. He appears to be easily moved to anger and heedless retaliation. That, too, could be appealing to people who feel powerless and oppressed by an economic system and the societal changes that haven't preserved their status or allowed them to fulfill their dreams and potential...

(156) **The Essentially Dangerous Nature of Donald Trump as Commander in Chief**

What I and many others discern in Mr. Trump's behavior and speech is a pattern of impulsivity that leads to vengeful attacks on those who challenge him. He doesn't seem to pause to consider the validity offacts and perspectives that are unfamiliar or displeasing to him. He presents himself as "knowing more than the generals" and having "great" plans that are sure to succeed: "You will be sick of winning," he has said. This combination of overconfidence and rash reactions may have been an asset in the world of real estate deals, where the stakes are financial, personal, and presumably recoverable. But "shooting from the hip" without feeling the need to obtain a genuine understanding of complex matters has much graver consequences when the safety of the nation and the global environment are on the line.

(157) Viewed from a mental health perspective, a person who constantly extols his abilities and feels driven to diminish and ridicule others (and here I am not speaking of political campaigning, where promoting oneself vis-à-vis one's opponents is part of the game) often arises from profound insecurity, the very opposite of the supreme confidence that is being projected.

This may seem contradictory, that someone who has succeeded in one realm of life will keep insisting that he is masterful in unrelated areas, areas where he has, in fact, no demonstrated competence, but it soothes such a person's inner doubts and, simultaneously, may appeal mightily to those who crave an all-powerful ally.

This impulsivity, the need to support an insupportably inflated image of oneself, added to a profound inability to acknowledge what one doesn't know, all augur profound psychological interference with the rational and considered exercise of power. We need to understand this, all the more so because it is the very awareness that Mr. Trump himself and his acolytes feel they mustn't acknowledge to themselves and us, the people whose safety he is entrusted to protect. Our understanding that this is a recognizable personality style that predictably impedes reliable judgment and a sound, considered response to crises allows us to take appropriate action within the law to contain and limit the damage that we can clearly envision and, collectively, must try to prevent.

(158) **Is Donald Trump Mentally III?**

In my opinion, this is decidedly not the question to be addressed, for two reasons: First, mental illness per se is not incompatible with reliably functioning at a high level, e.g., Abraham Lincoln (depression), Winston Churchill (bipolar disorder). Second, without a bona fide psychiatric examination, any speculation about a definitive diagnosis can be seen (and sometimes be) just that, speculation. To compound matters, it's counterproductive because of its irrelevance (see my first point) and because the uncertain conclusions facilitate the easy dismissal of genuine, observable, and profound impediments in Mr. Trump's capacity to deal thoughtfully and reliably with the complex and grave responsibilities of being a reliable president and commander in chief.

To put it another way, operationally and day to day, we don't know and can't tell if Mr. Trump knows that what he is saying is demonstrably not true. What we do know is that he can't be relied upon to recognize having been wrong; nor does he seem to able to learn from experience such that he could avoid repeating the same untruth or another the next day, possessed as he appears to be of the same absolute conviction that characterized his previous error.

**Conclusion**

Donald Trump's presidency confronts the psychiatric profession and, much more important, our country with the challenge of dealing with an elected leader whose psychological style (marked by impulsivity, insistence on his own infallibility, vengeful retaliation, and unwarranted certainty in uncertain circumstances) is a profound impediment to sound decision making and presages the erratic and ill-considered exercise of enormous power.

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ON SEEING WHAT YOU SEE AND

SAYING WHAT YOU KNOW

A Psychiatrist's Responsibility

*Henry T. Friedman, M.D.*

(161) Can experienced psychiatrists well trained in both psychiatry and psychoanalysis and seasoned by decades of clinical work actually turn off their powers of observation? And if they could, why would they choose to do so? As important, why should the public be deprived of our expertise? These are relevant and necessary questions to ask before exploring the question of how to process the experience of being exposed to President Donald Trump in the media. Such a series of questions and concerns would be entirely unnecessary were it not for the position taken by the American Psychiatric Association that insists it is unethical for psychiatrists to comment on or diagnose a public figure such as President Trump unless you have seen him in your office. There is a certain irony in this position because if, as a psychiatrist, you examined him in person, you would be prohibited, by ethical standards of confidentiality, from revealing anything about his diagnosis without his permission to do so, even if you had concluded that he was in some way unfit for office.

The American Psychiatric Association came to the Goldwater rule after Fact Magazine had surveyed psychiatrists, asking them to diagnose Barry Goldwater, who was running for the presidency against Lyndon Johnson in 1964... Goldwater successfully sued the magazine for libel [leading to] the APA’s adoption of the Goldwater rule... the APA Ethics Committee decided, without polling the members, to double down on the Goldwater rule by extending it beyond the realm of diagnosis to include any and all comments on the mental functioning of ... any president or prominent public figure.

(165) What tended to get lost even in the process of securing the nomination was his ability to make things up and, at the same time, to believe them himself. Trump managed a variation on Descartes's "I think, therefore I am": "I think it, therefore it is." This reckless relationship to reality on Trump's part has continued to represent a reliably occurring part of his character; no fact that he believes to be true, often after reading it on some alt-right website, is fact-checked or questioned. This form of grandiosity is part of the paranoia that clearly dominates Trump's thinking.

Am I making a diagnosis of President Trump? Well, yes and no—and even maybe—but whatever it is I am doing, there is one thing that I am refusing to do: to deny what I am hearing and seeing coming from Trump himself on the TV news and in the printed reliable press...

(166) A paranoid, hypersensitive, grandiose, ill-informed leader such as Donald Trump, who has surrounded himself with a Cabinet and a set of advisers who either are unable to bring him out of his paranoid suspicions and insistences or, worse, identify with his positions, represents a multidimensional threat to our country and the world. The most common concern I hear from my patients is that Trump's impulsivity will result in a nuclear war with North Korea. The intensity of this concern tends to mask an awareness of what has already begun in the United States, namely, an erosion of the just and decent society that has been evolving since FDR's New Deal...

This brings us to the question of analyzing President Trump from a distance; is it possible, is it ethical, and who is to decide this issue?

...(167) Because of the unlikely possibility that Trump could form a significant attachment to a therapist, we need to see him as a fit subject for descriptive reflection rather than treatment of any kind; we need to believe what we see in all that he reveals to us without hesitation or inhibition...

Whatever Trump thinks at the moment is translated into tweets or speech with no regard for linking his idea with any previously stated idea or with any context that should be obviously relevant to what he is now asserting. He may be beyond the scope of even the most broadly defined idea of applied psychoanalysis, but what he does gives us ample access to is his characteristic style of responding to others who oppose him. His critics often treat him as if he were childish... The problem with such an approach is that it is... incorrect in that it grossly underestimates the importance of Trump's adult paranoid character with its belief in an apocalyptic vision of a weak, diminished United States that only he can save from the liberal Democrats who oppose his authority... Character formation of the paranoid typology becomes so autonomous that, once it has solidified, it is practically meaningless to try to find an explanation for its existence in a particular individual.

(168) Ultimately, the response to the Trump administration will have to come from the electorate. All the policies that he wants to promote may not in themselves be absolutely ruinous to our country. The poor and disenfranchised will undoubtedly suffer, but the real danger will be from the president's paranoid character, which will continue to be present and active for as long as he is in office. Perhaps the observations of this psychiatrist-psychoanalyst, and of others in the mental health field, will help clarify why the threat of President Trump exceeds the issue of his policies, and resides instead in his core paranoid personality... They should be prepared to witness many more situations in which Trump feels betrayed and turns on those who have previously served him. Paranoids are always finding betrayal in those surrounding them, and react with retaliatory anger... Psychiatric knowledge and terminology will save reporters and the public from remaining confused and attempting to find explanations of behavior that could easily be understood if Trump's paranoid character were always kept in mind. This is the only way to ensure the preservation and viability of our democracy and our national security.

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THE ISSUE IS DANGEROUSNESS, NOT MENTAL ILLNESS

*James Gilligan, M.D.*

(170) Psychiatrists in America today have been told by two different official organizations that they have two diametrically opposite professional obligations, and that if they violate either one, they are behaving unethically. The first says they have an obligation to remain silent about their evaluation of anyone if that person has not given them permission to speak about it publicly. The second says they have an obligation to speak out and inform others if they believe that person may be dangerous to them, even if he has not given them permission to do so. The first standard is the Goldwater rule of 1973, which prohibits psychiatrists from offering a professional opinion in public about the mental health of anyone whom they have not personally examined. The second is the Tarasoff decision, which in 1976 ruled that psychiatrists have a positive obligation to speak out publicly when they have determined, or should have determined, that an individual is dangerous to another person or persons, in order both to warn the potential victim(s) of the danger they are in and to set in motion a set of procedures that will help protect the potential victim(s).

From both an ethical and a legal standpoint, the second of those two rulings trumps the first...

(171) we have a positive obligation to warn the public when we have reason to believe, based on our research with the most dangerous people our society produces, that a public figure, by virtue of the actions he takes, represents a danger to the public health – whether or not he is mentally ill...

(172) The issue that we are raising is not whether Trump is mentally ill. It is whether he is dangerous. Dangerousness is not a psychiatric diagnosis. One does not have to be "mentally ill," as both law and psychiatry define it, in order to be dangerous. In fact, most mentally ill people do not commit serious violence, and most violence is committed by people who are not mentally ill. The association between violence and mental illness is very tenuous at best...

President Trump may or may not meet the criteria for any of the diagnoses of mental disorders defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, or for many of them, but that is not relevant to the issue we are raising here.

Also, the most reliable data for assessing dangerousness often do not require, and are often not attainable from, interviewing the individuals about whom we are forming an opinion. Such individuals often (though not always) deny, minimize, or attempt to conceal the very facts that identify them as being dangerous... in Trump's case, we also have many public records, tape recordings, videotapes, and his own public speeches, interviews, and "tweets" of his numerous threats of violence, incitements to violence, and boasts of violence that he himself acknowledges having committed repeatedly and habitually.

(173) Sometimes a person's dangerousness is so obvious that one does not need professional training in either psychiatry or criminology to recognize it. One does not need to have had fifty years of professional experience in assessing the dangerousness of violent criminals to recognize the dangerousness of a president who:

• Asks what the point of having thermonuclear weapons is if we cannot use them.

• Urges our government to use torture or worse against our prisoners of war.

• Urged that five innocent African American youths be given the death penalty for a sexual assault even years after it had been proven beyond a reasonable doubt to have been committed by someone else.

• Boasts about his ability to get away with sexually assaulting women because of his celebrity and power.

• Urges his followers at political rallies to punch protesters in the face and beat them up so badly that they have to be taken out on stretchers.

• Suggests that his followers could always assassinate his political rival, Hillary Clinton, if she were elected president or, at the very least, throw her in prison.

• Believes he can always get away with whatever violence he does commit. He said, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose voters"

And so on and on and on—in an endless stream of threats of violence, boasts of violence, and incitements to violence.

(175) While Trump has not yet succeeded in undoing the rule of law to such a degree as to become a dictator, it is clear that he speaks the language of dictatorship. Only dictators assassinate or imprison their personal political rivals and opponents.

(177) One implication of this is that we need to identify the potential causes of injury and illness before they have harmed any given population of potential victims as severely or extensively as they would if allowed to go unchecked...

(177) The United States has been blessed with a little over two centuries of democracy. That is actually a rather short period in comparison with the millennia of monarchy. However, it is long enough to have made most of us complacent, and perhaps overconfident, with respect to the stability of our democracy. In fact, if we are prone to making a mistake in this regard, we are far more likely to underestimate the fragility of democracy than we are to become unnecessarily alarmist about it.

Here again, it is the behavioral scientists who have studied violence... who owe it to the public to share what we have learned before we experience the epidemic of violence that would be unleashed by the collapse or undermining of the rule of law, the system of checks and balances, the freedom of the press, the independence and authority of the judiciary, the respect for facts, the unacceptability of deliberate lying, the prohibition on conflicts between a political leader's private interests and the public interest, and the even stronger prohibition on physically assaulting one's political rivals or opponents and threatening to imprison or even assassinate them—in other words, dictatorship—all of which have been characteristic of Donald Trump's public statements throughout his electoral campaign and presidency...

(178) If we are silent about the numerous ways in which Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened violence, incited violence, or boasted about his own violence, we are passively supporting and enabling the dangerous and naive mistake of treating him as if he were a "normal" president or a "normal" political leader. He is not, and it is our duty to say so, and to say it publicly. He is unprecedentedly and abnormally dangerous...

(179) In fact, Trump's dangerousness is so obvious that he might be said to have preempted the role other people might otherwise have to play in warning the public as to how dangerous he is. For, in his many public statements on that subject, he himself has warned us about how dangerous he is far more clearly and eloquently than we have been able to do, or need to do. Our role here is not so much to warn the public ourselves, but merely to heed the warnings Trump himself has already given us, and to remind the public about them.

In that regard, one final clarification is in order. Trump is now the most powerful head of state in the world, and one of the most impulsive, arrogant, ignorant, disorganized, chaotic, nihilistic, self-contradictory, self-important, and self-serving. He has his finger on the triggers of a thousand or more of the most powerful thermonuclear weapons in the world. That means he could kill more people in a few seconds than any dictator in past history has been able to kill during his entire years in power. Indeed, by virtue of his office, Trump has the power to reduce the unprecedentedly destructive world wars and genocides of the twentieth century to minor footnotes in the history of human violence. To say merely that he is "dangerous" is debatable only in the sense that it may be too much of an understatement. If he even took a step in this direction, we will not be able to say that he did not warn us—loudly, clearly, and repeatedly. In that case, the fault will not be his alone. It will also be ours.

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A CLINICAL CASE FOR THE DANGEROUSNESS OF DONALD J. TRUMP

*Diane Jhueck, L.M.H.C., D.M.H.P.*

(181) Mental illness in a U.S. president is not necessarily something that is dangerous for the citizenry he or she governs. A comprehensive study of all thirty-seven U.S. presidents up to 1974 determined that nearly half of them had a diagnosable mental illness, including depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. Notably, however, personality disorders were not included in this study, even though they can be just as debilitating. This addition would most certainly have increased the number of presidents with mental illness to something well past 50 percent. Yet, psychiatric illness alone in a president is not what causes grave concern. A second and crucial part of the equation is: Is the president dangerous by reason of mental illness?

...(182) People holding high political office inevitably cause some form of harm, whether they intend to or not. Leaders must often select what they think are the best options from a list of bad ones in areas as complex as military policy, the allocation of limited resources, or the line between safety nets and deregulation. When an individual in high office makes decisions, some people may be hurt in some way because of the sheer magnitude of that individual's power. A good leader will attempt, to the extent he or she can, to minimize that harm and to comfort those impacted, but damage is still unavoidable. This remains an unfortunate effect of governing large groups of people. This is also the very reason it is more, not less, important that the leader of the United States be mentally and emotionally stable. As president, Donald J. Trump has control over our executive branch and its agencies; is commander in chief of our military; has unilateral authority to fire nuclear weapons (which the secretary of defense authenticates but cannot veto). For the leader of the free world, inappropriate words alone may create a snowball effect that ultimately results in devastating harm to others...

(183) The president, in a position of great power and making critical decisions, should theoretically meet higher standards of mental stability. Also, having access to a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying the world many times over, he should be of lower risk of violence than the average citizen...

There is a preponderance of information in the public record regarding Donald J. Trump's aberrant behavior. The following list of incidents is neither all-inclusive nor deeply analytical. Each topic is a potential theme for an entire book in its own right. The intent here is to isolate enough indicators of record to reach a reasoned conclusion about whether President Trump's patterns of behavior indicates a clinically relevant "danger to others."

[184-192 examples]

(193) A substantive change in the level of his dangerousness came with his assumption of the role of leader of the free world. Although an argument can be made that, by taking this office, he has shaken the global political structure to the extent that the U.S. presidency is rapidly losing that standing. His narcissistic traits (manifesting in blatant lying, impulsive and compulsive decision making against rational interests, and immature relational abilities) are creating a leadership gap that other political actors may well seek to fill. Yet, it is impossible for him, through the lens of his mental dysfunction, to evaluate his actual presentation and impact.

As the ultimate representative of our nation, Donald J. Trump is normalizing previously outrageous behaviors, negatively impacting everyone from leaders of other nations to our own children. From the outset of his presidency, although clearly absent a mandate from the population he now governs, he has repeatedly declared himself "the greatest," or "tremendous," or "knowing more than anyone," and other statements consistent with narcissistic personality disorder, with regard to an "expectation of being viewed as superior without commensurate achievements." He exhibits extreme denial of any feedback that does not affirm his self-image and psychopathic tendencies, which affords him very limited ability to learn and effectively adjust to the requirements of the office of president. Rather, he consistently displays a revenge-oriented response to any such feedback. Holding this office at once feeds his grandiosity and claws at the fragile sense of self underneath it. His patterns of behavior while in the role of president of the United States have potentially dire impact on every individual living not only in this nation but across the entire globe. The earth itself is in peril, both from the urgent issues that are not being addressed while an unstable man sits in the Oval Office and by the new urgencies he creates. Mr. Trump is and has demonstrated himself to be a danger to others—not just one person or a few, but possibly to all others.

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WHO GOES TRUMP?

Tyranny as a Triumph of Narcissism

*Elizabeth Mika, M.A., L.C.P.C.*

(298) Tyrannies are three-legged beasts. They encroach upon our world in a steady creep more often than overcome it in a violent takeover, which may be one reason they are not always easy to spot before it is too late to do much about them. Their necessary components, those three wobbly legs, are: the tyrant, his supporters (the people), and the society at large that provides a ripe ground for the collusion between them. Political scientists call it "the toxic triangle."

The force binding all three is narcissism. It animates the beast while, paradoxically and not, eating it alive, bringing its downfall in due time. This force and its influences, which knit the beast into such a powerful and destructive entity, remain invisible to us for reasons that are clearly hinted at but somehow continue to evade our individual and collective comprehension. They make sure we don't recognize the tyranny's marching boots, which can be heard from miles away and months away, until they show up on our doorstep, and that's despite the fact that this very same process has repeated itself countless times in history.

(299) We have known who tyrants are and how tyrannies form since antiquity, and this knowledge has been supported by the ever-growing tragic evidence of the tyrannies' effects on humanity. Yet, despite making promises to ourselves and one another to "Never forget," we seem not to remember or not to know, always with devastating consequences. Our forgetting stems partly from miseducation and partly from denial. It gives us clues to the kind of work (psychological, social, political, and economic) that we must do if we are to avoid the self-destruction promised by tyrannies today. Let's take a look at tyranny's components and their interactions.

**The Tyrant**

Tyrants come in different shapes and sizes, and depending on perspective, various writers stress similarities or differences among them. This paper will not delve into those classifications but, rather, attempt to simplify and maybe even illuminate their most salient common features.

Although the terms dictator and tyrant are used interchangeably, it makes sense perhaps to stress that not all dictators are tyrants. Tyrants are dictators gone bad. A leader may start as a seemingly benevolent dictator but turn into a tyrant as his reign progresses, becoming ruthlessly destructive with time, something we have seen repeatedly in history.

All tyrants share several essential features: they are predominantly men with a specific character defect, narcissistic psychopathy (a.k.a. malignant narcissism). This defect manifests in a severely impaired or absent conscience and an insatiable drive for power and adulation that masks the conscience deficits. It forms the core of attraction between him and his followers, the essence of what is seen as his "charisma."

(304) **The Tyrant’s Supporters**

The tyrant’s narcissism is the main attractor of his followers, who project their hopes and dreams onto him. The more grandiose his sense of his own self and his promises to his fans, the greater their attraction and the stronger their support... (305) The people see in him their long-awaited savior and a father substitute

(310) **The Society**

Tyrants do not arise in a vacuum, just as tyranny does not spring on the world unannounced. It takes years of cultivation of special conditions in a society for a tyranny to take over. Those conditions invariably include a growing and unbearbly oppressive economic and social inequality ignored by the elites who benefit from it,... fear, moral confusion, and chaos that come from that deepening inequality; a breakdown of social norms; and growing disregard for the humanity of a large portion of the population and for higher values.

(315) The ease with which the tyrannical ideology spreads is always greater than we want to imagine. Our narcissistic blindness makes it impossible for us to believe that it could happen here and that we, too, could be as susceptible to it as any other human beings in history.

Tyranny feeds on the irrationality of narcissistic myths and magical thinking, even though its ideology may be disguised as hyperrationalism, as was the case with communism. In this, it very much resembles the narcissistically psychopathic character of the tyrant himself: solipsistic, withdrawn from reality, and full of grandiose and paranoid beliefs impervious to the corrective influences of objective facts.

These pathological factors ensure that eventually the tyrant's reign collapses. The inherent and violent irrationality, bereft of internal brakes that stem from a conscience, and unchecked by external forces, is the main reason tyrants and their regimes are doomed to fail. Their growing malignancy (corruption, aggression, and oppression) provokes opposition, which eventually brings the tyranny down, but not until its pillaging and violent reign create much human suffering. The reset of a society's mores that follows the tragic aftermath of a tyrannical rule usually leads to a greater appreciation for the importance of universal human values (equality,

justice, truth, and compassion), but if care is not taken to implement these values in consistent practice, our narcissistic tendencies creep in and lead to social disorder, making us susceptible to tyranny again. Given our growing potential for self-destruction, the stakes go up with every tyrannical turn.

**Conclusion**

(316) Narcissism is as much a character problem as it is an error in our thinking. Seeing oneself as "above" is the general attitude of a narcissist toward the world, and the error of the tyrant and his followers. This error appears to grip many so-called civilized human societies, and is especially pronounced in those where inequality grows despite any official sloganeering to the contrary. Our narcissism is what gives rise to inequality, and inequality fuels our narcissism. The resultant suffering and despair, along with a desire for revenge, are among the necessary conditions for the emergence of tyranny.

We are seeing a resurgence of tyrannical leaders around the globe, even in nations that supposedly have learned the lessons of tyrannies past in the most painful ways. It is a sign of our pressing need to reckon with our collective shadow.

If we as a species are to flourish and prosper, we need to understand that our urgent and necessary task is to transcend and dismantle our narcissism, both individual and collective.

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HE’S GOT THE WORLD IN HIS HANDS

AND HIS FINGER ON THE TRIGGER

The Twenty-Fifth Amendment Solution

*Nanette Gartrell, MD, & Dee Mosbacher, MD, Ph.D*

(343) In 1994, President Jimmy Carter lamented the fact that we have no way of ensuring that the person entrusted with the nuclear arsenal is mentally and physically capable of fulfilling that responsibility.

(345) At the end of November, [2016] our letter was sent to President Obama, stating that Mr. Trump’s “widely reported symptoms of mental instability – including grandiosity, impulsivity, hypersensitivity to slight or criticism, and an apparent inability to distinguish fantasy from reality – lead us to question his fitness for the immense responsibilities of the office.”

(346) Since being sworn in, Mr. Trump’s impulsive, belligerent, careless, and irresponsible behavior has become even more apparent: [nine examples in 346-348]

(348) Mr. Trump’s hostile, impulsive, provocative, suspicious, and erratic conduct poses a grave threat to our national security.

The Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution addresses presidential disability and succession. Section 4 of this amendment has never been invoked to evaluate whether a standing president is fit to serve. We call on Congress to act now within these provisions to create an independent, impartial panel of investigators to evaluate Mr. Trump's fitness to fulfill the duties of the presidency. We urge Congress to pass legislation to ensure that future presidential and vice-presidential candidates are evaluated by this professional panel before the general election, and that the sitting president and vice president be assessed on an annual basis. We also recommend that panel members receive all medical and mental health reports on the president and vice president, with the authorization to request any additional evaluations that the panel deems necessary.

Our specific recommendations are as follows [349-350]

(350) ***The world as we know it could cease to exist with a 3:00 a.m. nuclear tweet.***

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