Editor's Introduction: The Isaac Ray Award Symposium

Throughout history man has concerned himself with myriad issues which today we might include within the broad purvey of forensic psychiatry, or – more accurately put, I believe – the field of psychiatry and law. But perhaps we might say that our present-day inspiration comes from the momentum of the nineteenth century as personified by Isaac Ray, an American born and trained physician who wrote *A Treatise on The Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity* in 1838. His modern discussion and formulation of the insanity defense is legendary and controversial, and the fascination with this complex and almost insoluble issue is reflected in the continued preoccupation of philosophers, psychiatrists, politicians, and lawyers to this day.

Dr. Ray did not limit himself to a single theme, and his lessons as well as his interests are still pertinent today. Over many years he concerned himself with the rights as well as the medical treatment of the mentally ill, with the laws of commitment and with the moral right to treatment, with the relationship between criminality and insanity, with alcoholism as an illness, and with social issues such as the proper care and rights of the indigent. He was concerned with distinctions to be made between competency for civil issues and competency in criminal matters, and with the responsibility of the medical expert. A reformer with passion, and a profoundly committed man, Dr. Ray wrote and argued stubbornly and vociferously with brilliant intellect and wide scholarship. He took on judges, lawyers, legislators and physicians, using legal language and concepts where needed for outspokenly medical and humane purposes.

In 1844, while superintendent of the State Hospital for the Insane at Augusta, Maine, Dr. Ray helped to found the Association of Medical Superintendents of the American Institutions for the Insane, which later became the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Ray was its fourth president. Around 1924, another president of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. William Alanson White, established a committee to study the relationship of psychiatry to law. Karl Menninger chaired this committee and was a member of it for many years, as were Gregory Zilboorg and Winfred Overholser. In 1951, largely through the efforts of Dr. Zilboorg with Dr. Overholser, the Isaac Ray Award was established.

The purpose of the Isaac Ray Award has been to increase cooperation between the practitioners of law and psychiatry and to promote better understanding of common problems shared by these two professions. The Award is to be given to a psychiatrist, lawyer, or other professional in the field of human behavior who has made outstanding contributions to forensic psychiatry or to the psychiatric aspects of jurisprudence. Recipients of the Award are selected by the Award Board and recommended to the Board of

Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association. The recipients are required to give a series of lectures, and to publish this work.

Over the twenty-six years of its existence the Award has been given nineteen times, and the list of winners, with the titles of their lectures or publications, can be found following these comments. Unfortunately, the original generous contribution of the Aquinas Fund of Philadelphia, which supported the Award, was depleted by the late nineteen-sixties. In 1973, under the patient and dedicated stewardship of John K. Torrens, then Chairman of the Award Board, a bequest to the American Psychiatric Association made in memory of Margaret Sutermeister by her mother, Bertha Sutermeister, was assigned by the Board of Trustees to the Award. Thus, in 1975, the Award was renewed.

The burgeoning interest in psychiatry and law had led in 1969 to the formation of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, and to the establishment of its Bulletin under the editorship of Herbert E. Thomas, M.D., also a member of the Isaac Ray Award Board. As we approached the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Award we felt compelled to celebrate, and Dr. Thomas graciously invited us to present an Isaac Ray Issue of the Bulletin. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to publish this collection, and I want to express my personal gratitude to Dr. Thomas for his interest, encouragement and guidance.

All of the living winners of the Isaac Ray Award were invited to submit new material for publication on *any* subject which interested them. Of the thirteen, four were unable to contribute because of the press of time or age. Professor Sheldon Glueck, in writing to decline, commented on an increased interest in law schools in the role of psychiatry and psychiatric social work. He notes that his recent interests have dealt more with dramatic writing than with scientific, but that he has managed to bring the role of psychiatry into his musical play, *Mr. Littlefellow,* a satire on disarmament congresses. Judge Biggs, at 82, has not been writing, but hopes that his interest in psychiatry and law remains "as keen as ever." Professor Wiehofen writes from New Mexico that, although retired, he has been teaching a seminar in law and medicine, was a president of the New Mexico Council on Crime and Delinquency, in 1972 co-authored a book on *Clinical Law Training: Interviewing and Counseling,* and had a role in the formulation of New Mexico's Mental Health Code in 1977. Some retirement!

The nine contributors will speak for themselves. Their interests range, but generally not too far from their original themes. There is a special concern with issues related to insanity, criminality, and prisoners, a preoccupation which raises profound questions as to why this remains not just a societal obsession, but a professional one as well. In general, you will be asked over and over again to challenge entrenched concepts, to consider the role of psychiatry, and to consider the lessons, presumptions, and possible mistakes of psychiatric history.

I think that Isaac Ray could not have asked for anything more than that we listen carefully to these messages, that we take up the cudgels and continue the challenges, that we define and refine our own appropriate areas of expertise in psychiatry and at the interface of psychiatry and the law, and that we broaden our concerns as human beings. This will require the vigor

and dedication not just of Isaac Ray, but of those extraordinary men and women who have received the Isaac Ray Award.

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