



PSYCHIATRIC REPORT - IN CONFIDENCE

JULIAN KNTGHT - DATE OF BIRTH; 4/3/68

People//TM/

I have prepared this report at the request of the Adult Parole Board. The report is based on my examinations of Mr Knight on the 29 August and the 5 September 1997. In addition I had access to a range of documents and reports including the remarks of the sentencing Judge, His Honour Mr Justice Hampel, psychiatric and psychological reports prepared at the time of the trial including that of Dr Byrne dated 26 October 1988, Dr Currie dated 15 September 1987, Mr Hart, a clinical psychologist dated 28 November 1988 and notes by Dr Grigor and Dr Bartholomew. The reports prepared for the Board by the Community Correctional Services on the 30 July 1997 by Ms Pavlakis was also available. Mr Knight supplied me with a letter he had prepared for Mr Justice Hampel setting out his views of his current situation.

Mr Knight after some initial and understandable suspiciousness was fully cooperative in our interviews. Mr Knight is an articulate man of good intelligence well able to express himself.

The issue of what type of mental disorder, if any, Mr Knight suffered was considered in detail in the weeks and months following the Hoddle Street massacre. The balance of opinion at that time was that he did not suffer from a severe mental disorder, but was an immature young man with a disordered personality. The possibility was raised by two of the psychiatrists that Mr Knight might be in the early, or prodromal, phase of an illness of a schizophrenic type. The passage of the years has made it clear that Mr Knight was not in the early stages of such a psychotic illness. He has shown no evidence of developing an illness either of a schizophrenic type or one characterised by severe depression or mania. The nature of Mr Knight's confinement and the reality of his situation as engendered marked suspiciousness and sensitivity, particularly with regard to perceived attempts to discomfort or endanger him. Though on occasion the suspiciousness may be ill founded and the fears exaggerated, there is enough reality to the threats and harassment for Mr Knight's state of mind, in this regard, to be considered understandable if not always entirely rational. In short despite a decade of confinement in a high security context, Mr Knight has not developed any signs or symptoms of a major mental illness.

Mr Knight's physical health is currently seriously impaired by Crohns disease for which he is receiving daily medication. The disease which effects the small intestine disrupting normal digestive processes has resulted in Mr Knight losing some 20 kilos in weight. At the time I examined him, though obviously under weight, he had regained nearly 10 kilograms of the initial weight loss. It would appear that his Crohns disease is currently in partial remission, but the natural history of this condition is for recurrences which in some individuals become progressively more serious. Progression of the disease is nearly certain with most sufferers requiring surgery to remove more severely effected areas of bowel. Though overall life expectancy in this condition is shortened to some degree the majority of patients can give a normal life, albeit punctuated by periods of distressing symptoms and occasional surgery. Some of the newer treatments offer a hope of better long term control of the disease using medication.

Mr Knight's personality attracted a range of comments in those who assessed him following the massacre. There was general agreement that he was immature, even for someone who was at the time still in their teens. A variety of other labels were applied including anti-social, narcissistic and hysterical.

On current assessment one of the more obvious aspects of Mr Knight's personality is the highly organised, not to say obsessive, manner in which he functions on a day to day basis. He reports that he has always been a well organised individual placing a high valuation on having things "neat and tidy". He acknowledged that there is "a bit of the obsessive about me" and that all his possessions are carefully organised with "a place for everything and everything in its place". In part this high level of commitment to organisation reflects Mr Knight's ongoing identification with all things military (or at least his construction of what constitutes the essence of the military). The obsessional traits do not reach a degree where they disrupt Mr Knight's function and there are no obvious rituals or associated phobias. It may well be that the absorption into controlling his immediate environment and the pride he can take in maintaining structure and discipline within the circumstances of his confinement constitute an adaptive response to his current reality. It is of note that one way in which Mr Knight copes with the intrusions and restrictions constantly placed on his existence by being in a high security correctional establishment is to take an intense and detailed interest in every aspect of correctional service functioning, and in particular the rules and regulations which in theory are supposed to govern that activity.

Dr Byrne in his original assessment referred to Mr Knight being self centred and others commented on this aspect of his personality at the time. Being self centred, egotistical and to some degree blind to the interests of others around you does not constitute an unusual constellation amongst teenagers. It was however considered to be even more marked in Mr Knight than in those of a similar age and developmental stage. Long term incarceration, which effectively leaves the individual solitary and thrown back on themselves and their own resources for day to day survival, cannot but accentuate any preexisting tendencies to self absorption and egoism. The very nature of Mr Knight's confinement over the last decade is likely to have accentuated this aspect of his personality rather than ameliorating it. The nature of Mr Knight's offence which makes him the object of intense, but wholly negative attention from the wider community and to some degree alienates him from those he is likely to come into contact with inside the prison, is likely to further accentuate his sense of both specialness and separateness. Currently for Mr Knight there is very little shared social world in which he has any opportunity to participate.

Mr Knight has on various occasions been referred to as aloof and arrogant. This fits within the evaluations of him as self absorbed, narcissistic etc. Mr Knight is a man of good intellectual abilities confined to an environment where he can, with some justification, sustain his belief in being the intellectual superior of most of those to whom he comes in contact. To be fair to him he did recognise that there were many individuals who were his equal or his better intellectually, but that they were in short supply within the confines of one of Her Majesty's prisons. The uniqueness of Mr Knight's situation, the dreadful uniqueness of his crime and the uniqueness engendered by being managed with only limited interaction with other human beings are all likely to accentuate rather than ameliorate any pre-existing

narcissistic traits. To Mr Knight's credit he does attempt to maintain correspondence with a number of people outside of the prison. His academic studies have also enabled him, at least by proxy, to sustain contact with a wider aspect of the social world.

Mr Knight continues to be invested in an image of himself as part of the military and martial world. Even his academic studies centred on strategic and defence studies. Given the nature of Mr Knight's offence the continuing preoccupation with things military and with himself as a soldier cannot but raise concerns. In fairness to Mr Knight his psychological and emotional survival have to date probably owed much to his self image as a disciplined soldier surviving in a hostile environment. No alternative structures, personal or intellectual, have been available to replace, for Mr Knight, the sustaining imagery of the military.

Opinion

Mr Knight has spent a decade within the prison system and at the very least faces another 17 years of confinement. In his sentencing remarks Mr Justice Hampel draw attention to the-role of personality factors and to the fascination with notions of the military and with guns. A serious personality disorder was considered to have played a part in the tragedy. In the intervening years, in my opinion, there is evidence that Mr Knight has matured and a number of the aspects of his then personality have been replaced by more adult ways of understanding and responding to the world. The nature of his confinement and the reality of his situation have however conspired to sustain and possibly even to exacerbate, other aspects of his personality pointed to by the experts at the time as having contributed to the offending. It is difficult to see how Mr Knight could become less self absorbed in an environment which is so isolating and which offers him so little opportunity to interact and test himself, in a positive manner, against, and with, his fellow human beings. Similarly the absorption with the military and the martial is unlikely to recede unless Mr Knight has the opportunity of developing alternative interests and alternative capacities into which he can invest his self image. In my view given his intelligence education may offer the only opportunities for bringing about such change. The correctional services have encouraged to some extent Mr Knight's engagement in educational and intellectual pursuits, but far more could be done in this regard. I was upset to learn that Mr Knight has only limited access to the library. The educational inputs and available encouragement to pursue more demanding and less asinine topics than his constant diet of the military is unfortunate. If his educational interests could be broadened, encouraged and brought to some effective fruition he may become less narrowly focussed on the military and on himself. (I would not however recommend, let alone encourage, any censorship of his reading or study).

It is a challenge to consider how Mr Knight may gradually be brought back into more effective social interaction with his fellow human beings. It is not of benefit to Mr Knight, nor of benefit to those whose job it is to care for him, let alone of benefit to a society to which he may conceivably return that he be caged alone for long periods. The conditions of his continuing confinement do need to be constantly reviewed to maximise effective interaction with those for whom hopefully Mr Knight will develop some regard and respect. This in my

view involves increased interaction with fellow prisoners and with staff members and hopefully with educators. Many years of confinement lie ahead of Mr Knight and it is important that what occurs in those years ameliorates rather than exacerbates the factors identified by the experts and by the sentencing Judge as having contributed to the tragedy at Hoddle Street.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mullen', enclosed within a faint, hand-drawn oval border.

PAUL E MULLEN
MB BS, DSc., FRANZCP, FRC Psych
PROFESSOR OF FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY, MONASH UNIVERSITY
DIRECTOR OF VICTORIAN FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY SERVICES

25 September 1997