

TABLE 1
Some Characteristics of 13 Amphetamine Abusers Who Committed Homicide

CASE NUMBER	AGE	AMPHETAMINE USE	USE OF OTHER DRUGS	PRIMARY CONDITION DURING HOMICIDE	SCHIZOPHRENIC AFTER WITHDRAWAL
1	27	Acute	None	Paranoid	No
2	26	Chronic	None	Paranoid	No
3	32	Chronic/acute	None	Emotionally labile	No
4	22	Chronic	Barbiturates and heroin	Panic (during robbery)	No
5	27	Chronic/acute	Alcohol	Impulsive	No
6	30	Chronic	Alcohol	Paranoid	No
7	25	Acute	Alcohol	Impulsive	No
8	42	Acute	None	Paranoid	No
9	20	Chronic	LSD	Paranoid	Yes
10	21	Chronic	LSD	Panic (during robbery)	Yes
11	18	Chronic/acute	LSD	Impulsive/paranoid	Yes
12	22	Chronic	Infrequent	Paranoid	Yes
13	23	Chronic	LSD	Paranoid	Yes

I was fantastically jealous if he even mentioned another woman. First, I would tell him he had to leave me alone; then I would play games by following him to see if he was meeting another woman. I would rifle his wallet and car for letters or clues. Then I would try to irritate him or flirt with others to make him jealous."

Mrs. C was in this type of emotionally labile state at the time of the shooting. "I hadn't slept for four days, was constantly active, and was taking pills like a chicken with its head cut off." (She was taking 600-1200 mg. per day.) Just before the incident, she told her paramour that she was going to leave for good. Teasingly, he said that he would bring his new girl friend by. "I was wild inside like a caged animal, but calmly told him that he never would. He asked how I would stop him and I told him I'd kill him and I did."

At the time of the interview, 13 months after the shooting, Mrs. C was completely lucid, without any psychotic manifestations. Both the interview and psychological testing revealed a woman with low impulse control, especially in regard to anger. There was a preoccupation and warm concern about her family and children. Mrs. C had been described by most interviewers as an outgoing, gregarious woman who was rather engaging in her conversation.

Factors Leading to Violence

Because amphetamine abuse in the four cases I examined appeared to be directly related to the induction of violence, I sent letters to six forensic psychiatrists asking if they had examined people with similar histories. It proved difficult to find such cases. Only nine additional cases were reported by these six psychiatrists (see table 1). The rest of this report is based on histories from these 13 cases but it is complemented by a larger background of information from

similar cases involving assault, rape, kidnapping, attempted homicide, and "near misses."

A review of the histories of these 13 persons who committed homicide after taking amphetamines makes it abundantly evident that many other variables were involved in the evolution of behavior leading to the violent act. Probably, the most important of these are: 1) predisposing personality, 2) environmental conditions, and 3) the use of other drugs. The most pronounced environmental factors leading to violence were found in those who were actively involved in the drug subculture. The concomitant use of other drugs, especially sedatives and alcohol, with their known capacity to lower impulse control, was indeed pertinent.

Perhaps the most interesting variable, but the one that is most difficult to assess, is personality predisposition, especially in cases where the individual is judged to be psychotic after withdrawal of amphetamines. In the three cases described above, neither involvement in the drug subculture nor concomitant use of other drugs was a factor. These three were not judged to be psychotic after the withdrawal of amphetamines, but predisposing personality was a definite factor, especially in the second and third cases. Both Mr. B and Mrs. C were quite impulsive and aggressive, even after the withdrawal of amphetamines.

Two others among the 13 included in this review were noted to have similar impulsive personalities. Five of the 13 were judged, by the original examining psychiatrist, to be schizophrenic after complete withdrawal of amphetamines. In three of these five persons, it was evident from the histories that am-