

# The Persecution and Assassination of Draft-age Men

as Performed by the Inmates of Fort Wayne Under the Direction of Medical Officer Capt.  
Floyd

E.Z. Ryder

1970

About 400 men a day take their Pre-Induction Physical at the Fort Wayne Armed Forces Entrance & Examining Station (AFEES) at 6300 W. Jefferson Avenue. The physical is usually the final step in the Selective Service system prior to induction.

For most men this is it. They are 1-A. If they pass the physical, they go into the Army or face prison for draft refusal.

The *Fifth Estate* recently interviewed SP.4 Jerry Brown, an enlisted man who has served 19 months as a medical technician at the Ft. Wayne AFEES.

Realizing the critical importance of the physical to his-civilian brothers coming through the line, Jerry has fought a lonely battle with the brass and the lifers at Ft. Wayne trying to force them to adhere to whatever meager standards exist within the army regulations for screening registrants. The Doctor-Captains and lifers that run the place systematically violate rule after rule in their haste to process successfully more cannon fodder. They are contemptuous and often brutal towards registrants and enlisted men.

Most registrants have reached this stage because they have been victimized by the class and racial bias that characterizes the draft system — as it does all American institutions. The poor, because of their poverty, or race, or both, cannot avail themselves of the deferments utilized by upper and middle class men.

They don't go to college so they can't get a student deferment. Their jobs, if any, are never considered essential enough for an occupational deferment. They don't have the pull to get into the lily-white, middle-class National Guard and Reserve Units.

They don't have the sophistication to apply for Conscientious Objector status. Racial minorities can't get into the deferable apprenticeship programs. Hardship deferments are notoriously tough to get out of draft boards. And above all, the poor know little about counseling services and can't afford lawyers.

So at their physical examination the poor stand bare of both clothes and privilege. But there is no naked equality with their middle-class brothers even at this point. The privileged continue to be so cause that's the way things are.

Anyone with medical documentation of his ills in his file or in his hand will get special separate attention for that particular claim, as long as it is arguably within the long list of medical disqualifications. But the poor don't usually have such letters. They can't afford private doctors and typically don't seek treatment at all for such deferable conditions as allergies, bronchitis, ulcers, flat feet, hypertension, crooked teeth and a hundred other ailments assiduously policed by middle-class mothers.

If they are treated, it is at an overworked public hospital or clinic that requires repeated demands and months of waiting before it releases record's. All that is left between them and Indochina is the standard army physical and this turns out to be damned little.

Brown's attempts to point out individual or generalized abuses have been answered with hostility, harassment and physical threats. Recently, after receiving a clearly illegal order to suspend hearing tests altogether, Brown took his complaint to the Commander of the base, Major Clyde Edwards.

Edwards, like his predecessor, Major Dale Prieser, is a lifetime combat officer, not particularly gross by Army standards, but medically untrained and just trying to be cool in a pork-chop stateside assignment before getting called back to Viet Nam in a few months. He tends to leave the day-to-day supervision to his gung-ho Medical Officer, Captain Floyd.

Brown's detailed presentation of the Captain's rank abuses so shook the Major that he ordered an immediate tightening of all procedures on Friday, April 24. Some of the worst violations were corrected but, as Brown has predicted, these are beginning to slide back, one by one.

Furthermore, the harassment and threats against Brown have increased. A Sgt. Burton has threatened to throw Brown down the stairs and a Captain Selitsky requires him to snap to attention anytime they meet and say "Good Morning, Sir" etc.

Brown has asked the Fifth Estate to expose this situation for three reasons: First of all, to create pressure on the AFEES to at least follow their own rules, and thereby screen some disabled registrants for whom mere basic training might mean serious injury or death.

Secondly, to fight back and protect himself, through press exposure, from a quiet railroad job engineered by the brass. Thirdly, to help organize other enlisted men (EM) at the base by setting an example of fighting back and speaking out to protect their rights and those of their brothers.

Here then are the stages of the Army Physical that are supposed to screen out registrants with any one of the 277 types of disqualifying conditions (not to mention an equal number of sub-categories).

Station No. 1 — Checking clothes & getting forms

Station No. 2 — Serology

This is the blood test. It is supervised by a civilian sadist by the name of Bole-slaw Mucha. The regulations provide that a blood sample be taken from the registrant with the aid of a tourniquet and with the registrant seated, during and after the test. Mucha's practice has been to line up about 150 registrants, all standing, and to bleed them without a tourniquet.

He takes pleasure in jabbing 8 or 9 times into the arms of those who mouth off or whose looks he does not like. Of the 150 who line up each time, a few will pass out and fall to the floor, some striking their heads heavily. Often men have letters from their doctors warning against submission to such tests because of phobias about blood or needles. The test is always administered, forcibly if necessary.

Even if the regulations are followed, none of the 15 sub-categories disqualifying blood diseases listed are tested for after the sample is taken. The only test authorized is that for syphilis. In fact, no test is made at all. The blood is often immediately thrown away without testing and a rubber stamp indicating "Negative" is used on all forms. Tests were conducted briefly after the April 24 shakeup, but as of May 6, they have again been dispensed with.

Station No. 3 — Doctor's Interview

At this station a doctor is supposed to review the man's papers and question him about all ailments he has checked off on his history. He is also supposed to inquire generally about his health.

The average length of time for each interview is two minutes. Some doctors do not even talk to the registrant. There is no privacy. The atmosphere is intimidating and operates to discourage comments by the registrant, particularly about psychological problems.

If the registrant insists on a complaint, he is given a form to be completed and returned by a private physician within 30 days. If the registrant can't afford a doctor, that is tough shit—he passes.

Station No. 4 — X-Ray

The check here is for T.B. and curvature of the spine. Almost nobody is disqualified here. If a registrant has a doctor's letter indicating he cannot tolerate further X-Ray exposure, he is still required by the Army doctor to submit to the X-Ray.

Station No. 5 — Height & Weight

The height measuring device is all bent out of shape and the technicians can, and do, fudge an inch or a pound either way if necessary to prevent disqualification for weight or height requirements. Captain Floyd previously used

a wall chart to line men up and measure their height en masse, in total contravention of the rules. This resulted in gross inaccuracies.

#### Station No. 6 — Urinalysis

An Ames Urine Stick is supposed to be held in the specimen 10 seconds to check for albumin and glucose. It is typically dipped in and out and the registrant's file rubber stamped. The glucose doesn't register and diabetics are passed through. The test is correct now because Brown's at this station. Even when correctly administered, the test only accounts for two of the 14 possible urinary problems.

#### Station No. 7 — Visual Acuity

Only distant visual acuity is checked. The 20/20 line is blacked out. Only the 20/25 line is left open. But 20/20 measurements are recorded. This makes a great difference regarding the type of duty a guy will get after induction. Men are run thru so fast that a man with a glass eye once wasn't caught till the final administrative stages of the physical.

#### Station No. 8, 9 & 11 — Ophthalmometry

Orthopedics and hernia testing are not badly done except for the terrific speed that men are run through, resulting, inevitably, in frequent failure to catch a defect. If a doctor is not available, the hernia test often is bypassed altogether.

#### Station No. 10 — Heart & Lungs

The stethoscope is supposed to be held at three places on the chest for three breaths. It is not. The doctor bounces his scope off registrants like he was touching his fingers to a hot iron. Hundreds are processed in minutes. Registrants who were medical students have purposely held their breath during this test and were not detected. Asthmatics are regularly passed through.

#### Station No. 12 — Hearing

A Rudmose sealed-booth test is required. It was systematically skipped and an old fixed frequency machine was used, turned up to 60 decibels. If a man heard the sound he was recorded passed on all frequencies and volumes. Brown was able to get this straightened out, over Floyd's objections and threats, for the time being.

#### Station No. 13 — Blood Pressure

Of the three men checking blood pressure, invariably one doesn't know what he is doing and marks all his subjects 120/80-passed. Color-blindness is also supposed to be checked through a showing of 14 color plates. Typically only one is shown.

#### Doctor's Review & Defect Check

The doctors are supposed to evaluate the findings according to a point system to determine qualifications and profile. Brown regularly checks out their findings. He indicates they fuck up, to the registrant's detriment, about 12 out of 100 forms. Once when an enlisted man tried to correct a doctor, he was assaulted by the doctor, a Captain Thomas, in front of witnesses. The doctor got a reprimand and the E.M. was re-assigned to Germany. Had the E.M. committed the assault, he'd have faced a lot of stockade time.

So there it is. Men with serious medical problems are getting shuffled through to face possible serious injury or death in training. Others will go in and avoid injury but should have avoided the draft altogether. Sometimes Senator Hart's office will respond to a plea to correct a gross oversight but only public outcry will effect serious reform.

Brown indicates that whenever an outside inspection comes through, the procedures are tightened just so long as it takes the inspection team to go through. They are not down the stairs before the cattle show resumes business as usual.

Jerry has requested that his name be used in this article. He realizes the dangers involved, but wishes to strengthen the credibility of these allegations by such identification.

Also, as long as there is publicity he feels they can't come down on him for demanding enforcement of Army regulations.

He now hopes to organize an anti-war enlisted man's group among the 60 or so E.M.'s at the base. Right on, Jerry!

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