

Crime Tests for Kids

By Jack Nelson
Times-Post Service

New York

Dr. Arnold A. Hutschnecker, who specializes in telling people how to be happy, has had some unhappy moments himself since he recommended that the Government begin mass testing the 6-to-8 year olds to determine criminal-behavior tendencies.

His proposal, which suggested treatment camps for the severely disturbed, the young hard-core criminal, created a mild sensation after the press reported it recently. It was sharply criticized by professional organizations, ridiculed by some attacks as smacking of racism and fascism, and eventually rejected by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Hutschnecker, who says his idea sprang from a study suggested by President Nixon, was "shocked" by the reaction.

"When a London paper called and the BBC (British Broadcasting Corp.) called, I didn't know what had happened," said the softspoken, diminutive native of Austria. "I was bewildered as I could see. The news reports of my name came close to a smear. I wasn't just talking about black children and not just ghetto children, but all children — the total population could be tested."

CRIME

Hutschnecker, 71, who treated President Nixon in the 1950s when Mr. Nixon was Vice President, said his proposal resulted from "a very personal request from the President that I study the Milton Eisenhower commission report on crime and make some recommendations."

"Actually, I had talked to the President about setting up a Department of Peace and suggestion Hutschnecker first made in a Look magazine article, July 15, 1969), said the physician, "and he knew I was very unhappy about the war. But there wasn't much chance of setting up such a department so I said, 'Why don't you take a look at the Eisenhower report on crime?' That's how I

As a physician, Hutschnecker practiced internal medicine for many years, but in the 1950s began practicing psychosomatic medicine—that is, counseling patients on emotional problems related to physical ills. In his Look article, Hutschnecker wrote that he saw Mr. Nixon when he was Vice-President for physical checkups which showed "no evidence of any illness."

HUMANE

In a lengthy interview in his plush Park avenue office here, Hutschnecker defended his proposal "as very sound, healthy and humane" and said he conducted his study as an unpaid consultant to the National Institute of Mental Health.

"Whoever is a critic of it," he said, "I would ask, 'What better idea do you have?'"

"I have had no communication with anyone in the government about the report since I sent it in. HEW has destroyed a great plan which would benefit the child and the family — and society would benefit from it."

Hutschnecker said he had been avoiding newsmen since the HEW rejected his plan, but agreed to an interview by a Los Angeles Times reporter because "HEW has released information in a distorted way and I see no choice but to answer it—this is not an accidental smear, but a plan to destroy me for reasons I can only speculate." He declined to speculate on the reasons.

LEAKED

Actually, HEW did not release the report. Copies of it were leaked to the press by someone who identified himself as "an interested black HEW employe." Also leaked was a copy of a Dec. 30, 1969 memo from presidential aide John D. Erlichman to HEW Secretary Robert Finch saying "The President asks your opinion as to the advisability of setting up pilot projects embodying some of these approaches."

The Hutschnecker proposal mentioned that studies are in existence which indicate criminal tendencies can be predicted "in nine out of ten cases even at the age of six" and he suggested that Rorschach or Sheldon-Glueck prediction tests might be

"We would narrow down the tests which would give us the best results at the least cost," Hutschnecker said in the interview. "We would start with the younger children. We might use the structure of values test where you use 18 pictures and get the children's response to what they like the most and dislike the most. Frankly, I don't understand it, but more research is needed anyway to determine the best test."

DOUBTFUL

After three leading professional organizations criticized his proposal, saying that such tests would be of doubtful predictive value and pointing out that Hutschnecker was not a psychiatrist, HEW recommended it be rejected and the White House indicated agreement.

"The only chance now is to do it on a small scale with private funds," said Hutschnecker, "but that would become selective — just what I wanted to prevent. I think all children should be tested."

Had it not been for Hutschnecker's relationship with the President, the proposal probably would not have drawn so much attention. However, Hutschnecker, who came to this country from Berlin in 1936, has gained a measure of fame on his own by writing about psychosomatic illness.

His book, "The Will to Live," first published in 1951 by Prentice Hall, Inc., has seen 15 printings and been translated into many foreign languages. The most recent paperback reprint (1968) carries endorsements from medical and psychiatric journals.

HATE

He also wrote, "Love and Hate in Human Nature," published in 1954, and he has written, "The Will to Happiness," to be published soon by Simon and Schuster.

Hutschnecker, a 1925 graduate of Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, began practicing internal medicine in New York in 1936. He says that following the publication of "The Will to Live," his medical practice "dwindled down and I began to concentrate on psychosomatic medicine because people would

wanted to see me for what I had written. I would say 'You have a good family doctor,' but they just wanted to talk to me."

Hutschnecker explained that while he did not administer electric shock treatments or use some of the other therapeutic techniques of psychiatrists, he began to attract many patients with emotional problems.

"I began to get the cases psychiatrists didn't want, that's how I really got into it," he said.

ARTICLE

In his Look article, Hutschnecker wrote that while he had treated Mr. Nixon when he was Vice-President, "I was still engaged in the practice of internal medicine. Naturally, no specific diagnosis can be given now. What I as a physician am allowed to say is that Mr. Nixon came for physical checkups, none of which showed evidence of any illness. Because of rumors that the Vice-President was seeing a New York psychiatrist, we had come to an understanding, years before the 1960 elections, that we should discontinue our doctor-patient relationship."

Hutschnecker wrote, "During the entire period that I treated Mr. Nixon, I detected no sign of mental illness in him. As I came to know him over the years, we developed a trusting professional as well as amicable personal relationship. There was mutual respect and trust. He always impressed me as man with superior intellect and keen perception. He was an intense listener, and he would ask questions aimed directly at the heart of the matter. We became friends and, as such, we discussed many subjects in an open and relaxed manner."

Despite the HEW's unceremonious dumping of his plan, Hutschnecker still feels he has the confidence of President Nixon, who he said he still sees, but as a friend, not as a physician.

"Obviously President Nixon has enjoyed my way of thinking or he would not have been meeting with me," said Hutschnecker.

SEE 11 APR, 2 OCT 70; 6 FEB 73