

SUICIDE

The Destruction of America's Army

by

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PART I

AMERICA'S ARMY

CHAPTER 1

MURDER, TREASON and DISHONOR in the 82nd Airborne Division

**“Wrong must not win by technicalities”
Aeschylus, 458 B.C.**

BMNT - 0600 Hours
27 October, 1995
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

The Beginning of Morning Nautical Twilight (BMNT) is the military acronym for the symphony of visual cues - the indigo to purple to light blue aura - which presages sunrise. To civilians BMNT is "the dawn's early light" immortalized by Francis Scott Key in the Star-Spangled Banner. To soldiers it is associated with death; curious that it should be both - the poet's favorite reference to the dispelling gloom of darkness heralding the rebirth of a new day - and the deadliest time of the day in military perspective. That is so because pre-dawn attacks characterize the most ruthless and effective of military attackers; usually conducted under duress against a more numerous, less disciplined foe - often in an assumed safe zone, or non-combat rear area. Indeed, such actions established and constituted the very concept of historical surprise as a desperate, last ditch measure to level the playing field in the face of overwhelming and often tyrannical aggression. In that regard, BMNT is at once the light of resurrection and the reluctant shadow of doom; the shades of gray transmutation between celestial good and evil - the classical time to strike the arrogant, the physically superior, the wicked.

In accord with Army doctrine emphasizing surprise, it was during BMNT that the first sniper shot snapped across the parade ground at Fort Bragg on that Friday in October, a short time after First Call at 0500. Zipping through the air at some 1200 feet per second, the .22 caliber CCI Stinger lead bullet (about the size of a pencil eraser and weighing less than a fraction of an ounce at 60 grains) perforated the body of Chief Warrant Officer Abraham Castillo.

The instantaneous process, if viewed in slow motion, would reveal the extrusion of elastic human skin inward some 1.5 inches before slicing through it; followed by the bullet's impact against water-laden muscle and denser bone whose combined resistance shattered the hot lead into countless slivers and shards. The cavity torn into human flesh is typically the size of a child's fist and from three to six inches deep; in others instances it might form a neat, pencil-thin hole, through and through.

In clinical terms CWO Castillo's flesh, blood and bone were momentarily accelerated to the speed of the bullet fragments, before tearing asunder to evidence severe trauma. Conversely, in shooter terms, the bullet "lost its integrity and disintegrated, thereby imparting its energy to the target." In this case, that would have been calculable by the formula $E = MV^2$ (energy equals mass times velocity squared) or about 120 foot pounds of force; 120 pounds concentrated on a point, one fifth of an inch wide through the distance of one foot, effected in less than a second; far more than enough

directed energy for the shot that struck CWO `Castillo, to instantly render him paralyzed. That is so because, of the finely-tuned balance required to maintain homeostasis in the human body envelope; that precise and exquisite synchronicity of respiration, temperature, circulation and involuntary reflex that constitute life.

Several successive shots then wounded Staff Sergeant Matthew Lewis, Staff Sergeant Robert Kreager, Major Guy Lofaro and fourteen more soldiers in the same manner; all were victims to the previous equation and the immutable laws of physics versus fragile homeostasis. Confusion, uncertainty and disbelief suspended the objects of the dawn raid in the kill zone for critical seconds. Then the snap and pop of the small Ruger 10/22 "squirrel" rifle converted to the more apparently recognizable crack-and-thump of a high-velocity, assault rifle. The milling but inert Brigade of combat soldiers evidenced the stupor traditionally attendant to BMNT attacks; they were unwilling to break orderly ranks, unused to the sound of live fire on main-post, incapable of comprehending military violence in official peacetime, or frozen by fear despite their symbolic rank and wartime service awards.

In less than 15 seconds, all of those conflicting senses and inertia were universally eradicated by a sound they all knew was the super-lethal bark of an M-16 spitting staccato fire into their midst. In response, the cream of America's Army, the amassed Second Brigade, of the 82nd Airborne Division - some 1,300 paratroopers - cracked. The bulk of the hardcore Brigade simply ran away despite asinine and nonsensical orders to "stand fast - rock steady - stand fast." Most of the unarmed, unprepared troops fled in instinctive panic, although some valiantly attended or shielded the wounded, while a courageous few counter-attacked in empty-handed desperation. The scene was an attacker's dream, and a surprised commander's worst nightmare; unarmed and demoralized troops scattering and routed by a small but terribly effective, and as yet unseen, unidentified and prevailing enemy.

To the victims it appeared that multiple concealed snipers were firing from a nearby wooded area, or possibly it was a lone gunman moving along the tree-line to prevent being located. When Captain Stephen Badger infiltrated the tree-line he was killed instantly by one shot to the fore-head. The macabre physics calculation of such a wound foretold only one possible outcome. The full metal copper-jacketed .223 caliber/5.56mm lead Spitzer bullet weighing 55 grains and traveling at 3,240 feet per second impacting a human head is catastrophic; it is the collision of 1280 foot pounds of red-hot metallic energy against a primarily blood-soaked and gelatin filled, cranial orb of some twelve-pounds. Indeed, the bullet is so fast that it drills a very small entry hole, slightly smaller than itself, or about .220 inches. The thin bone is beveled on the inside, while the bullet mushrooms to twice its original diameter forming a razor-sharp

flower. If still intact, the bullet may tumble end over end, or turn sideways, or it may disintegrate altogether. Under the best of circumstances from the point of view of the target, the entire mass plus bullet and fragments rips and gushes out the opposite side of the skull leaving a hole the size of man's fist. However, from the point of view of the shooter, in the optimal ballistic case the bullet may develop perfect hydro-static shock in the wound cavity, thereby accelerating the tender brain tissue and blood to hyper-velocity, literally creating a liquid bomb, much like an exploding watermelon. Similar effects have been produced in lung, stomach and even flesh wounds by the hyper-velocity M-16 which has earned it a gruesome reputation among soldiers along with a mumbo-jumbo mythology of bullets tumbling or gyrating in flight. The energy imparted is actually three times that of the government model 1911 .45 caliber pistol renowned for its man-stopping power; although the M-16 "varmint" bullet is only half the diameter and one-fifth of the weight it is moving at three times the speed of the terrible .45!

As the sniper's M-16 cracked again and again, two more soldiers went down with wounds and then, just as suddenly as it had begun, the dawn raid at Towle Stadium on Ardennes Street was over. Several friendly Green Berets that had been jogging on an adjacent road had infiltrated from behind the attacker's position. Unarmed, but undaunted, they conducted a textbook assault, against an unknown hostile force and managed to quickly overwhelm the sniper with their bare-hands, without suffering any casualties. After disarming and subduing the shooter with violent and vengeful blows to the head, face and body with his own rifle, they were stunned to hear him beg to be killed. Their shock evolved further to dismay caused not by the attack, not by the anger of a captured terrorist, not by the visage of a classic enemy soldier, but by an incomprehensible realization; the shooter was one of their own!

In fact, the Brigade had been fired upon, had suffered death and mutilation, and had endured ignominy and fear - at the hands of a fellow paratrooper. The shooter was a non-commissioned officer, and NCO from the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the All-American Division, Sergeant William J. Kreutzer. Yet, having executed carnage in his self-proclaimed "one and only chance to make my last stand" he had reverted to a tearful and suddenly contemptible state of helplessness; he expressed a proclivity to die that was patently and genuinely suicidal. Immediately after his capture he recalls,

"I felt betrayed by GOD...my strength left me...I felt powerless against THEM...I couldn't even struggle...I told THEM to kill me...instead THEY kicked and hit me...in the face...with my own rifle...GOD shouldn't have let me down that way...should at least have let me...be blown away."

Although I was thankfully not present at that scene, I recalled meeting Sgt Kreutzer briefly during my visit to Fort Bragg in early 1995. The encounter was neither official nor substantive, just a casual encounter at the Post Exchange shopping center where he impressed me as a smart, hard-charging young Buck Sergeant spending his own money to purchase supplies for his squad. In short, he couldn't have been more well-mannered, professional, or commendable.

In stark contrast, the full-color, and full-cover front-page headlines in the Army Times newspaper wailed, "MURDER AT FORT BRAGG." At the time, to me as a serving officer of combat arms, no set of facts or circumstances to such an incident could ever hope to neither mitigate nor reasonably explain such an appalling act by a soldier, and none seemed apparent in this case except outright criminal guilt of premeditated murder, however insane. But, the contrast between Kreutzer's persona, and the murderous incident rankled, leaving me with a distinctly unsettled feeling, a queasy portent of a more sinister reality yet hidden. It may have been the incredulity of the event or the incongruity of the act versus my impression of Sgt. Kreutzer, or it may have related subliminally to the purpose of my trip to Fort Bragg in 1995. In fact, during my visit with Major General William Garrison, the Commanding General of the John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare, I reported my personal experiences and observations with regard to unofficial, vigilante-type, misconduct and conditions that appeared to contribute to suicides in the Special Forces Community. At the time, I was too busy to pursue my visceral reactions to Kreutzer's shooting more fully, as I was concluding a tour at West Point as Deputy Director of Operations, Plans and Security, and was anticipating a tour in Bosnia with Task Force Eagle.

However, a year and a half later, aware that Kreutzer had been tried, convicted and sentenced to death I wrote to him on Death Row at the Army Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth and inquired as to his motivations and objectives. He passed on my inquiry to his father, who in turn contacted Todd Richissin, a Staff Writer for the Raleigh News Observer in Charlotte. Richissin then called me and offered to FEDEX me a copy of his article on the incident. When it arrived the next day I opened the package and unfolded the newspaper from Raleigh to reveal shocking headlines extensively supported by a total of three full pages of detailed research, documents and photos.

NOBODY LISTENED

"NOBODY LISTENED" was the insightful title of Todd Richissin's comprehensive investigative article in the March 9th, 1997 issue of the Sunday edition of the Raleigh News and Observer. The subtitles elaborate: **"A SOLDIER WARNS OF HIS VIOLENT INTENTIONS - Sgt.**

Kreutzer's lethal shooting spree might not have occurred had the Army followed its rules. Not a bad summary and a damning analysis with regard to the leadership of the Army's premier and showcase division, the celebrated 82nd Airborne, "All-Americans."

As I read the sorry it was obvious that Mr. Richissin had authored a thorough, objective and subjective analysis of the prelude and results of the General Court Martial of Sergeant William J. Kreutzer, his dishonorable discharge and confinement to Fort Leavenworth Disciplinary Barracks and his sentence of death. Based on apparent fact and legal theory, a just outcome given the butcher's bill inflicted on his fellow soldiers by Kreutzer: killing a Major and wounding 19 other officers, non-commissioned officers and troops by shooting at a Brigade PT formation with high-velocity rifles from a concealed sniper position. Objectively, swift and sure justice appears to have been served...an eye for an eye...a life for a life. Subjectively - especially just considering the crime as a military ambush, by a military non-commissioned officer against his superior and subordinate military officers and men, in the performance of their military duties on a military base.

In other times and places, such attacks have qualified as treason. Read Article III, Section 3. Of the U.S. Constitution:

"Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort."

Arguably such an armed attack by an American Sergeant was a warlike act, and generally served to aid and comfort America's enemies. One could make the case that Kreutzer's obviously felonious criminal sniper attack was also treasonous in character, if not intent. In any case, no worse fate could befall any soldier, anywhere than to be murdered by his comrade in cold-blood. But murder, has many sinister forms.

Subjectively, the story is more tragic still. In fact, the Raleigh News Observer and its insightful reporter deserve to be commended for their perspicacity and courage in specifying contributing factors, and focusing criticism on the Army leadership, in such a tragic case, with an obviously heinous perpetrator who was reputed to have been observably crazy for a long time. Essentially, Richissin posits that this, "shooting spree MAY NOT have occurred if the Army had followed its rules." AMEN? Not quite.

That would be safely correct, in so far as it goes; however, I would go much farther to express the full truth of this case. **Indeed, the shooting WOULD NOT and COULD NOT have happened had the Army medically or unfavorably discharged trooper Kreutzer based on his reportedly suicidal or pathological psychological behavior.** But, my intuition is that justice in this case was at once a critical

millimeter and is still yet a full mile short of the full truth. In my reluctant judgment in 1997, the real crime was unacknowledged if not undiscovered, and further impartial investigation would point the way to a graver injustice thereby revealing the first victim, and identify the truly guilty. Despite a unanimous conviction, the fact case unearthed by Todd Richissin's investigation in 1995 raised many more alarming questions in my mind than it answered. A few of the questions and lines of critical reasoning that every competent military and legal professional would recognize at first glance serve to frame both this incident and this opening chapter:

QUESTION 1: Why would the Army enlist a recruit with a "serious, long-standing "schizotypal personality disorder" characterized by social isolation, anger, obsessive ness and pre-occupation with weapons"? No effective medical screening?

QUESTION 2: Why wasn't such a serious disorder detected under the stress and intense scrutiny attendant to basic, advanced and airborne infantry training? Why did he self-select out of Ranger training?

QUESTION 3: What event or circumstances transitioned Kreutzer from a model soldier to a problem soldier in the eyes of his comrades and himself? Did he, or did they, not receive timely and effective leadership counseling?

QUESTION 4: If Kreutzer didn't "fit in" with his comrades because of his positive character traits (he did not smoke, drink alcohol, or abuse drugs) and because he attained high academic grades and superior marksmanship scores - what does that say of the character of his comrades, and the Army?

QUESTION 5: If other troops actually bragged about stringing wire at neck-height at night to entrap or garrote Kreutzer on his way to the latrine, (a technique that has been taught and used by guerillas and commandos to strangle or decapitate enemy troops), and such practices severely injured or frightened Kreutzer, would it not justify violence by him in self-defense? Would such life-threatening acts be justification for his "social isolation, anger and paranoia"?

QUESTION 6: How can there be any validity or credit given to the concept that the hazing, practical jokes, pranks, property thefts and threats to kill inflicted on Kreutzer by his so-called comrades would have stopped, if he had replied in kind? Indeed were his so-called threats of homicide desperate attempts to fit-in? Were his attempts to act tough and fit the mold of an airborne killer (in accord with the popular slogans "a lean-mean-killing-machine" or "kill them all and let God sort them out") either overblown or insufficient, and ultimately rejected?

QUESTION 7: What was it about losing a spare barrel for an M-60 machine-gun (a non-lethal, non-reportable and non-firing part of a weapon) that resulted in a temporary administrative letter of

reprimand, that caused Airborne Infantry Sergeant Kreutzer to "cry to other soldiers."

QUESTION 8: Why would he express repentance or contrition to his fellow soldiers, if he was such an inevitable threat to them?

QUESTION 9: Why did Kreutzer's ostensible professional comrades not emphasize and reinforce his substantive abilities instead of his superficial physical peculiarities; did they extend appropriate recognition for his capabilities as a college graduate and military history buff in an Army obsessed with high-technology, and out-thinking the enemy, versus brute force?

QUESTION 10: What forces were at work within the 82nd Airborne that would encourage his comrades to "haze" Kreutzer; a soldier that had volunteered to go in harm's way and perform his duty with them on the "frontiers of freedom" in the Sinai?

QUESTION 11: Why would responsible military leadership, promote an allegedly suicidal or "crazy" soldier obsessed with weapons to supervise the heavy weapons squad, maintain all the unit's keys and key controls, plus a "Haunted House" for dependent children?

QUESTION 12: Why is a fascination or expertise with firearms on the part of an Airborne Infantry Sergeant, considered to be a symptom of psychological deviousness, criminal or suicidal intent? Doesn't the Army spend billions of acquisition, training and personnel dollars to achieve intense interest and expertise with weapons?

QUESTION 13: Why didn't Major Fong initially refer Kreutzer to an accredited clinical facility or discuss Kreutzer's threats with the Commander, Chaplain, or clinic in person, if that soldier was truly evidencing suicidal or psychopathic tendencies?

QUESTION 14: What conditions convinced Major Fong that Kreutzer was doing fine, and to close the case, with a disposition of "Return to Duty" in 1994?

QUESTION 15: Why didn't the Chaplain, or the Psychiatrist at Womack Army Hospital, or the "superiors" Kreutzer contacted respond with concern, compassion, ruthless efficiency, or even idle curiosity to Kreutzer's numerous appeals for help?

QUESTION 16: If Kreutzer was either crazy or criminally irresponsible, why and how would he be so capable of deliberate, responsible, and rational verbal and written appeals to so many appropriate authorities?

QUESTION 17: If Kreutzer was that crazy, schizoid, and out of control why did he contact his closest soldier buddy in a last ditch attempt to be talked out of acting to end his misery at its source?

QUESTION 18: What was the real source of Kreutzer's pain and self-hate? Was it internal to him and extended out? Or was it directed at him personally from external sources which he internalized, and then finally retaliated against? What circumstances brought these forces to an explosive culmination on that fateful day?

QUESTION 19: Why would Kreutzer's First Sergeant participate in

a macabre challenge to the courage and manhood of one of his own combat troops?

QUESTION 20: Where was the company commander throughout all of this, and what was his attitude or contributing actions?

QUESTION 21: How could Bill Kreutzer be sane enough to be admitted and graduate from the University of Maryland, sane at enlistment in 1992, become "Crazy Kreutzer" in 1993, then be doing fine in 1994, suddenly to be converted into a homicidal mass murdering lunatic who begged to be killed by his victims in 1995, then miraculously become sane enough to stand trial in 1996 for pre-meditated murder and plead guilty with no mitigating circumstances such as serious and long-standing pre-existing mental health, all followed by a history of incarceration as an apparently normal person despite being under the severe stress of condemnation on death row in 1997?

QUESTION 22: Continuing in the above vein, why did Kreutzer beg to be killed during the attack, but consider that committing suicide would have been cowardly? Why would he want a military death, but not fear death?

QUESTION 23: Why would he want to inflict "carnage" but be "satisfied by seeing the Brigade run away?"

QUESTION 24: Why are the (pre-incident and post-incident) descriptions of his personality, physical characteristics and emotional character by certain Army sources so contrary to how his family, friends, teachers, photos and official records depict him?

QUESTION 25: What forces or events caused the life-long good and positive in him to have mysteriously become exceptionally negative, and predictably diabolical?

THE \$64,000 QUESTION behind the QUESTIONS: Finally, why and how could the blame for this long-running, far-reaching episode consistently have been attributed so quickly and absolutely to one lonely, besieged soldier, Sgt. William J. Kreutzer of Clinton, Maryland?

The scope and complexity of it all made me wonder - had that unjust circumstance, become its own cause, effect, and justification? The weight of those obvious questions caused me to get involved in Kreutzer's case to determine how or even - IF - the Army might have actually contributed to or propagated these circumstances.

Considering that I was already deep into investigating the alarming phenomenon of soldier suicides and Kreutzer was also on record as making suicidal statements, I decided to take the time to investigate Kreutzer's case personally and informally. As a general civic proposition, I believe it is the responsibility every capable military officer and citizen to insist on a full determination of the real causes for the kinds of demonstrative acts of terror and murder manifested by our fellow citizen-soldier, young Billy Kreutzer on

the All-American Division's parade field in October of 1995. The failure of individuals of all professions and means to hold our institutions accountable at every level always invites those bureaucratic systems to develop perverse systems and promote systemic abuses of individuals.

The Real Crime

Neither Sgt Kreutzer nor his defense team - then or now - have ever contested that he was the shooter and intended to kill; on the 11th of June 1996, a General Court Martial convicted him of the premeditated murder of Major Stephen Badger and the attempted murder of 18 other soldiers for which capitol verdict a board constituted of five Officers and seven Non-Commissioned Officers unanimously sentenced him to death by lethal injection.

Yet, in his own legally insufficient defense he did nonetheless utter uncomplicated and non-conniving words that alone should have raised some of the questions above as to his sanity, credibility, motives, culpability and capability:

"I wanted to send a message to the chain-of-command that had forgotten the welfare of the common soldier."

With Kreutzer's unaddressed deadly message and the above web of 25 or more inter-related questions topped by the one larger, derivative question in mind, I came firmly to believe that the real crime scenario has unfolded over a period of many years. Beginning with Kreutzer's enlistment in February 1992 at age 23, through the shooting incident on October 27, 1995, it has extended and continued in various forms beyond his conviction in 1996 to this writing in 2005 - going on 13 years.

In my hypothetical scenario - based on profound years of disturbing experiences I encountered long before the Kreutzer case - I pictured a quiet, responsible soldier, personally competent in his professional duties and whose leisure time is spent reading military history and providing excellent commentary on guided tours for his family and friends at Gettysburg National Battlefield and Edgewater Arsenal Museum. No booze, no whores, no heavy metal acid rock, no sexual harassment, no racial extremism, no gang'sta rap, no financial irresponsibility, no violence, and no desire to be either a bully, or a clown.

Ergo, he is a 'misfit" to be ridiculed by his own comrades; eventually physically, verbally attacked for failing to participate in their aberrant "social" activities. He is relentlessly mocked, scorned and humiliated in public and in formations as crazy, or an

anti-social loner, or a nut. His likeness is the subject of cartoons on bulletin boards, and his property is vandalized. His personal gear, which is a soldier's identity and represents his sacred death-dealing or life-giving capability, is trashed or pilfered or sabotaged; the loss of his equipment could cost him his life, and further injures his reputation. After several months of escalation, the shamed soldier appeals to his sergeants, who have been tacit witnesses to the group gang-bang and who do feel somewhat guilty, but naturally they don't want to go against the grain of the majority of troops. One extraordinary NCO calls all the rest together and demands that, "...THIS stops right now." He is ignored.

The weaker troops now join in, and the more aggressive are unrestrained. Incidents involve threats with knives and firearms, trip-wires, trip-flares, booby traps, explosives including hand-grenade and artillery simulators, tear gas or pepper spray, excrement or vomit, and occur at all hours and places to target the victim's intimate belongings and person by incorporating his food, clothing and bed while he is asleep.

The blatant and public nature of this arrogant campaign of personalized terror brings the matter indirectly to the attention of the officers and the commander. The shave-tail Lieutenants are eager to win the fellow-ship of the Sergeants, who themselves solicit the approval of the tougher troops; the majority join in deprecating the seemingly weaker oddball. The Captain Company commander, too busy to play games, is both amused at the expressions of swaggering elitism, and bemused by the isolation of one of his troops. All, including Kreutzer, now marvel at their role in "the system" in action, theoretically purging itself of all but the best: men-at-war and all that, HOOHAH! Yet, all save the victim sublimely happy that they are not the victim; just as George Orwell illustrated in his novel "1984."

By now, the targeted young Sergeant will have been doing a daily tap-dance on a barbed-wire tight-rope along a minefield engineered by his entire unit; he loses his temper, screams at his superiors and that frenzied, impulsive cry for help finally registers on the radar screens, albeit more as angry insubordination than as justifiable complaint. The command initiates a minor administrative punishment to the victim. The persecution has now metamorphosed significantly as the full weight of the administration has unwittingly joined the informal harassment; the mob has now obtained official sanction. That sanction may be accelerated by a happenstance event that supports the pack's "professional" motivation; the victim loses a sensitive item related to the sanctity of the military mission, usually a weapon or code book. If this occurs during a field exercise, inspection, or readiness test, the incident will often be blown out of all proportion. The effect is inevitable; it causes the victim to tearfully and symbolically prostrate himself on the mercy of his comrades. Of course, his plea for mercy and understanding is denied

and rejected, even scorned.

Eventually, the victimized American soldier can no longer cope with the constant attacks, in conjunction with official command rejection; he looks to special staff officers, the medical service corps, the chaplain, social workers, friends or unofficial ombudsman. Usually, these are the most liberal and least warlike of all troops; a lot like the victim in fact. Read as: the most likely to want to avoid conflict with the commander or the accepted body of troops. They may listen to the victim, but he is incapable of directly blaming others or of adequately describing the situation, or they simply cannot comprehend the nature of what he has been subjected to. Of course, victims of a hazing campaign (just like a rape or incest victim) are more prone to cover-up or conceal the acts they have suffered out of shame or assumed self-guilt. In any case, the medical, complaint resolution and counseling personnel don't want to put themselves in his shoes and go against the prevailing tide, or they simply don't want to stir-the-shit; they opt out or join the crowd, declaring that the victim "does not have adequate coping mechanisms." The safety net folks bounce the victim back into the control of the victimizers, and then they may even join the pack.

The terminal phase is now in effect; the howling pack is unleashed, and the WITCH HUNT is on. The victim is completely ostracized and may be ritually burned in effigy; in most cases he is with malice and forethought put into a cataclysmic scenario from which he cannot escape. The victim has no salvation. Unable to escape the aggressions of terroristic individuals, the merciless group and the impervious system, he usually elects to kill himself; destroying his body as the perceived source of his pain and anguish. Less frequently, but maybe more spectacularly he cracks spontaneously and murders his tormentor, or on occasion targeting the larger system or unit.

After all is said and done, the moronic rumor monster would then pontificate, "he few good friends...he was quiet...he is strange...he was crazy." Most especially in Kreutzer's case, who could argue that at the instant of the shooting he was not temporarily insane? But, how and why did he come to be so?

The First Victim

The answer to that question leads right back to the hypothetical scenario above. It seems to me that in the fore-going manner, United States Army Sergeant William J. Kreutzer, of A Company, 4th Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps, was the first victim in this long-running, felonious crime by an institutionalized gang of soldier thugs, criminal experts and high-ranking miscreants in uniform. That is my duly considered opinion. Is it justified?

Readily available and extensive evidence exists that Sgt. Kreutzer was seeking "mental health" help and leadership counseling for what he described in clear, concise, and rational language as "I am pre-occupied with violent feelings/thoughts" and " I feel a great deal of anger and hatred." Why would he, as a loyal citizen and faithful soldier, feel that way? Furthermore, if he was a determined criminal or merely lunatic, why would he bother to so meticulously inform every relevant authority of his pending homicide? Or, if he was a deranged lunatic who just snapped "without any indication" or warning, how could he have so assiduously and patiently have informed his superiors verbally and in writing years beforehand? How in fact, was he able to spell it out, in such precise, concise and legible hand-writing?

That is because, as the same evidence demonstrates, he was the subject of group and individual threats of violence, harassment, and discrimination. Interestingly, such intense and multi-faceted activities in the general population are the object of intense interest and are sanctioned as stalking, harassment, and discrimination, or as hate crimes in addition to various statute code violations. Many capital defendants in such cases have been charged with lesser offenses, medically committed, or acquitted.

However this case ends, and if it had ended in Private Kreutzer's execution he will again have been victimized by the system that created him; a system that developed patriotic mythology and pro-Army propaganda - a system that enlisted him, that provoked him, that failed to sustain his fervent pleas for assistance and relief, that failed to protect him from unlawful aggression and that dishonorably blamed him for it's own failings in character, ethics, teamwork, and moral leadership.

Following the criminal victimization of Sergeant Billy Kreutzer, his murderous compensatory actions claimed other apparently blameless victims in the persons that he shot at random in the massed Brigade formation.

"I had the Colonel (Brigade Commander, John Scroggins) in my sights...I don't know why I didn't shoot him?"

Is it because to him at that point they represented a faceless lynch mob that had been tormenting him?

"I was thinking carnage...after I saw the Brigade run away, the rage, it ALL left me, I felt the message had been sent ...I begged them to kill me...I didn't care...I just wanted IT to end...all that was left, was for the Military Police to shoot me."

Beyond Kreutzer's personal anguish about "IT" - without a doubt

Major Stephen Badger was the most significantly innocent victim of them all. Yet, his spouse has written Kreutzer, and visited his family, to express her empathy and sympathy. Diane Badger stunned and even outraged certain soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division when she demonstratively gave Kreutzer the Badger family Bible (Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ). It was annotated, and accompanied with a letter dated May 2nd, 1996,

"Dear Billy, I am so sorry for what you are going through now. Your heavenly father loves you very much and is mindful of what you are going through...This is my most treasured possession. It has had a tremendous impact on mine and Steve's life. My prayer is that you will feel the spirit of the Lord and know that it is true. With a Christ-like Love. Dianne Badger."

Again, more questions arise. What exactly did Mrs. Badger see in this affair that aroused her compassion for the murderer of her spouse and the husband of her children? What did she see, and what did she convey to the Court-Martial, that the Army Counsel and Judge knowingly withheld from the jury? These were the concerns foremost in my mind when I contacted Billy Kreutzer on Death Row on the 14th of March, 1997. He wrote me back on the 3rd and again on the 11th of April 1997, and later we also spoke on the telephone. Frankly, I was not at all surprised to hear in him the measured and harmonious voice of a reasonable and rational human being. No anger, no hate, no scatological or aberrant thoughts or behavior; only peace understanding and resignation. Human voices have that instant capability to convey and represent an audio impression of a man's soul, his essential character.

In other words, Billy Kreutzer was happier and more at peace with the world on Death Row, in the most austere prison in America, then he had been in the 4th Battalion of the 325th Infantry Regiment, of the famous 82nd Airborne Division in October of 1995! In subsequent telephonic discussions he confirmed some of my suspicions, and withdrew or remained silent on others. Most tellingly, he recounted for me the truth behind the incident that had resulted in his written reprimand, and which had significantly escalated the witch-hunt. He did so in a very well-written letter free of any spelling and grammatical errors. As I had suspected the truth was damning.

In late 1995, his company underwent a ten-day Exercise Evaluation (EXEVAL) from late September to early October 1995. Billy had been promoted to Sergeant and squad leader the previous March and was assigned as leader of the weapons squad in May. He reports leadership problems arising from personnel turbulence, shortness of manpower, and the poor quality of his squad's aging M-60 machine-guns. He complained that he had been issued 23-pound clubs which to his

embarrassment often went "clink" when he attempted to provide important suppressive fire for his platoon. He did not fault his gunners who he describes as good, solid troopers, doing the best possible job with what they had available and who performed well by putting accurate fire on the target when the guns worked.

He recounts numerous broken parts (roller cams, extractor, firing pins, ejectors, etc.) which although he was not an armorer, he was able to repair because of his extensive study and on-the-job training in weaponry. He felt that the impact of his responsibility in conjunction with his good men and their hard work was not extraordinary, but made him look better than he actually was. Prior to the final phase of the EXEVAL his squad stood out above the line infantry squads who slept or chilled-out while his men pulled maintenance or perimeter security. In my experience such circumstances result in envy that spawns a backlash or leveling effort among military units.

Not surprisingly, on the last day of the EXEVAL, he noticed that "the problems began." This was the day he would be reprimanded for losing a bag that contained a spare machine-gun barrel, plus aiming pintle and cleaning rods. Those items are not serial numbered and are non-lethal, they are not weapons. Yet, because his platoon was halted when he dutifully discovered the bag missing, he was accused of imperiling a combat-ready evaluation, and incurring a possible re-run for the entire unit. That drastic evaluation did not transpire, and in fact, he personally found and recovered the missing spare barrel by the daylight of that morning.

Moreover, he was able to find it by reconstructing how it may have fallen off his rucksack. That reconstruction is to his credit, and not detriment, by any interpretation. On the last day of the EXEVAL, the culminating event was a 10 kilometer forced march through swampy woods at night. At that critical time he received a brand new soldier, who arrived in the field without insect repellent. Sergeant Kreutzer gave the man his own protective spray and proceeded to fill in as ammo bearer for a missing man. On the march, the new guy promptly suffered a serious allergic reaction to the Army's GI Issue bug juice, becoming very seriously ill and requiring the column to halt and call-up the medic. Sergeant Kreutzer then took the weakened soldier's squad gear (the heavy spare-barrel bag of an assistant machine-gunner) in addition to his own rucksack, weapon, extra ammo cans and body armor. My guess is in addition to the standard infantry load of 75 pounds Billy Kreutzer, demonstrating superior leadership by example, took on and humped another 40 pounds until the new guy recovered. A voluntary total of 115 pounds or so while slogging around in the muck, and he was the squad leader.

During the transfer, the woozy trooper hastily attached the spare barrel bag to his squad leader's rucksack without a security tie-down (or dummy cord). Sergeant Kreutzer admittedly did not notice

that the bag was not securely fastened to him as they were on the march in water under pitch-black conditions. In summary though, his overall actions, in so far as they contributed to this minor and not unusual training event in airborne infantry operations was far more commendable than negligent. Ironically, the sum total of the actions involved were in fact the very purpose of the EXEVAL; to develop leadership, tactical marching skills, securing and recovering equipment, effecting medical aid, and building teamwork. While those purposes seem to have gotten lost by some, the truth behind the EXEVAL incident does serve to refute and highlight the lamentable persecution of a dutiful young trooper, as he waits his officially ordained death in Leavenworth, Kansas.

On the drive to his parent's home in Clinton, Maryland, I became aware that the Kreutzer family home, his school and formative years were situated in Middle America; not the geographical heartland, but certainly part of the traditional "center" of America.

As I sat in the sniper's family living room, I was struck by the realization that it might well have been that of my own my parents in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Neat, clean and unpretentious, expressing a colonial style using natural colors and fabrics, it is a small but comfy brick tract house built after World War II on the GI Bill. Ordinary domestic cars in the driveway, good grooming, gentle manners, flowers, pets, a flag, Ethan Allen furniture, and Civil War books round out and verify the family's American heritage.

Former policeman William Kreutzer senior is a big, strong, soft-spoken man without a hint of effeminate, antagonistic or radical tendencies. He carefully introduced his attractive and articulate wife, Katherine to me so that she would not become alarmed or upset by yet another imposing stranger investigating her precious son. Not once during my visit of several hours were there any fake tears nor *fas paux* or *paux pas*; no acting, no unpleasantness, no rancor, nor hatred - understandable concern, fear, suffering, and remorse notwithstanding. Billy's two married with children sisters doted on him, and his younger brother is a handsome, intelligent, considerate man who looks much like him.

Unwavering eyeball-to-eyeball, the elder Kreutzer assured me "mano-el-mano" that his son was neither a ticking time-bomb, nor a lone-wolf wacko in his youth. He said, "Everybody Billy ever worked for told me that they wished all their kids were like Billy." He also admitted to being surprised at one point by his son's physical strength, and his erudite ability to paint word-pictures for the family and friends during their visits to the battlefields at Gettysburg. He remembers with pride his son's ability to cite verbatim the technical criteria of tanks and weapons on display at the Edgewood Arsenal where the father had taken his boy to introduce him to the traditions of America's Army. His father also recalled the very close and enduring friendships that Billy had formed in the neighborhood

and among personnel of the regular Air Force, as well as local veterans. Specifically, he spoke admiringly of Air Force Major Michael Shipsey, who frequently stayed over with the family and who introduced Billy to table-top "war games" with other airmen at Andrews Air Force Base. He named one of Billy's closest companions, as Chris Miskimmon, now a Colorado policeman who still maintains a long distance friendship. The father cited the empathy of Army Specialist Burl Mays, a friend and subordinate of Billy's at Fort Bragg who still respects him after the shooting. He spoke of the Pauling family up the street, whose children frequently slept over, and whose one boy, Billy's best friend, became a surrogate son to the Kreutzer family; their father is a retired Navy Captain. Remarkably, several of those veteran officers showed up for Billy's court-martial in uniform and waited for three days to testify on his behalf without being called by the defense!

Further rounding-out the father's respectful snapshot of his son after her arrival home from work, Billy's mother recounted his last visit, two weeks before the shooting destroyed their peaceful world. She spoke not of local gangs, neither of drugs nor the police, not of obscene Rap music or of drunken, loutish behavior or any such contemporary concerns about an aggressive Buck Sergeant on military furlough. Unlike many Army mothers, she did not need to speak of these things because her son Billy had been a kind and gentle family man.

She spoke instead of a father-son canoe trip and family picnic amid the golden hue and falling leaves of autumn. No telltale clues hinting of murder, nor lunacy; absolutely nothing weird, menacing, or malignant about her boy. Unlike the text-book profile of serial mass murderers Billy Kreutzer's childhood was absent three key indicators: no bed-wetting, no arson, and no cruelty to animals or children. He was also not molested, not mentally nor physically impaired, nor disfigured or unkempt and unattractive, nor abandoned or split between two divorced or feuding and violent parents.

In short, the parental conditions, family environment, and personal traits that spawned and shaped Billy Kreutzer were absent every, and all, of the indicators associated with criminality, lunacy or extremism.

My next sojourn was less than two miles away, to Surratsville High School where Billy graduated in 1987. The adults there speak guardedly of "the Kreutzer shooting" whether or not they were on the job when Billy attended. The paper-shuffling and distracted administrative office staff helped me locate Billy's yearbook edited by Ruth Kessler, the "Boomerang" in commemoration of "The Class to Beat."

Flipping to page 68 I found William J. Kreutzer, Jr. between Mary Beth Kline and Shana Latham. His photo was attractive, serious, proud, well-groomed, well-dressed in a tuxedo, and thoroughly normal. Having read the Army accounts of him being awkward and clumsy or oafish, I

was surprised by his slender, well-proportioned, and alert visage. The curt annotation read:

"Bill likes family, friends, money. Float 12. Honor Society 11, 12. Wrestling 12. Video Club 12."

That was it - eleven words and five numbers. No arrogance, no faddishness, no boasts and no grandiose ambitions. Two concise lines of achievement versus the entire rest of that page of students, and almost all the rest of the multi-cultural class, whose self-descriptions ran in columns of from two to four inches of adolescent bombast, love testimonials and gushing groupies. Yet, in his own concise words Billy's achievements reflected honor, academic achievement, competition, teamwork, and school spirit. As a former high-school wrestler, and Tae Kwon Do expert, I noted that his participation in Varsity wrestling evidenced courage in adversarial, one-on-one athletics requiring strength, speed, and agility.

In the meantime, the school administrators had located several teachers who knew Billy personally. Economics teacher Jim St. Ledger described him as, ***"real quiet...a student who was a real bright and passive kid...NEVER a discipline problem."*** When pressed for a qualifier, he stated flat out, ***"I can't say one bad thing about him, which is a lot more than I can say for most of my students."*** When pressed further, he conceded that he had never suspected nor detected any lurking demons and that Billy was, ***"never a bully nor was he ever bullied by the other students."***

History teacher Marie Grouby, took me to bright and airy room 201 where she remembered teaching Billy as a very bright, quiet, cooperative and thoroughly enjoyable boy. Marie also recounted how the Army's agents had descended on the school in the fall of 1996 in an attempt to dig-up corroborating information to support their crazy Billy theories. She also recounted how subsequent to the shooting the teachers had gotten together informally and discussed their views that Billy had never demonstrated any weird behavior. That gave rise to the second ironic note of my visit when she detailed how the school's psychology teacher, had subtly implied that she had been suspicious of Billy's quiet demeanor. Frankly, suspiciousness of a quiet demeanor speaks more ill of that soldier's accusers than of him. This is especially applicable in the Prince George's County school zone which is increasingly beset by gang involvement, accompanied by violence, and obscene assaults against teachers.

When I prodded Marie to determine the strength and depth of her convictions, she stated in powerful tones,

"Colonel, I'm telling you and I'm telling you there has to be something more to it! A deeper reason! The whole thing is totally bizarre. That boy snapped for a reason. I've had

kids so darned mean I would expect anything. Billy was not one of those bad kids, the whole thing reminds me of the movie A FEW GOOD MEN and THE HAZING PROBLEMS AT ANNAPOLIS."

Marie ended by assuring me that she would write Billy and testify if necessary, since he was a product of her school.

As a final testimonial, the schools' beloved and deceased wrestling coach Charlie Wright reportedly stated in 1987 that he been pleasantly surprised by Billy's performance. In fact, he declared that he wished Billy would have come out for the team as a freshman. Billy also displayed team spirit and acceptance by some fifty of his most popular peers by participating on the biggest event of the year, the design and building of the school's homecoming float. So much for the Army's lone-wolf wacko theory!

Seemingly trivial, but noteworthy also was the fact that although some 20% of the senior class required eyeglasses or contact lenses, Billy was one of only three kids wearing his in the yearbook photo. So much for his alleged easily "wounded narcissism" or "paranoia" that made him vulnerable to peer "teasing." This fine point is especially revealing. If he was so damned vain or fragile why not shed the glasses like the majority of his classmates? This is the kind of clue that is particularly important because it is circumstantial evidence of long-standing routine behavior and therefore is not susceptible to being lied about, staged or faked.

The Army's pre-trial clinical analysis, signed by Major C.J. Diebold, M.D., the Chief of Forensic Psychiatry Service and President of the Sanity Board depicts him as suffering from:

*"Axis I -1. Major Depression, single episode, mild (296.21)
2. Dysthymic Disorder, early onset (300.4)*

*"Axis II -Personality Disorder Not Otherwise Specified
9301.9) with Narcissistic and Paranoid Traits."*

The Sanity Board further stipulated that Sgt Kreutzer was:
"To a reasonable degree of medical certainty the accused, at the time of the alleged criminal conduct, was able to appreciate the nature and quality or wrongfulness of his conduct."

Finally the Army Sanity Board certified that:

"The intelligence level of accused as per the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R) indicates a full scale IQ of 11, placing him in the average to high average range of intelligence."

The Sanity Board, in establishing most of its key points about Sgt. Kreutzer (high intelligence, responsibility, knowledge of right from wrong and sanity) had not contradicted the Surratsville High School yearbook testimonial, which was in fact a self-portrait of Bill Kreutzer, by Bill Kreutzer. With regard to the board's interpretation of "narcism" the evidence indicates that if Billy had manifested inordinate self-love, he had developed it after he entered the Army. But, even allowing the clinical observation some credence, was it a function of self-admiration, or self-preservation? In other words, was Billy's narcissism, really a survival reaction on the part of an individual who was suffering under a relentless campaign of group hate? If so, it would be to his credit that he was actually able to maintain his self-respect and dignity, rather than let his persecution develop into self-hate, and ultimately suicide. Unfortunately, for all the victims in this case, that group hatred, unlike so many other instances of mob persecution, was redirected right back at the group. No doubt the "Depression single episode, mild" the board noted might have been the reasonably expected and obviously temporary result of the incident, the trial, the death sentence and his incarceration on Death Row. What normal person would not be depressed or turn inward to himself? Again that formal clinical Amy medical prognosis underscores Kreutzer's normality - not his insanity or any other psychotic pre-condition.

The enduring portrait of Billy Kreutzer painted by his family, friends and teachers, and those officers and men who knew him best, stands in stark and irreconcilable contrast to the portrait of Billy Kreutzer concocted by the authorities of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. The difference between a portrait by realist Michelangelo, and a surrealist's macabre abstract comes to mind. Neither the parents, nor the school, nor the hometown yielded any predilection on the part of Billy Kreutzer to hatred, to anger, to murder, to act insanely, or to desire suicide. Zero, zip, zilch!

After our discussion his parents expressed gratitude for my perspective, which recast their understanding of the prelude to their son's actions in a new, albeit dreadful, light. They had gratefully "loaned" their precious son to the Army of the federal government to defend our Nation, only to have sinister forces, acting beyond legal authority but within the system, destroy their son; a young man, who had been a model of the all-American boy. Not surprisingly, despite very limited personal resources, in the face of the Army's vast resources, they intended to renew their fight for their son, and I wished them Godspeed.

How can the cost of this episode be measured? What is the footprint of this tragedy? No doubt it has forever robbed the lives of several unsuspecting families of joy and fulfillment; the Kreutzer's, the Badgers, and the Castillo's to be sure. It has certainly damaged the lives of all eighteen wounded and deprived

Steven Badger of his life. That total must be several hundred people. It has hopefully scared the hell out of scores of those responsible for the contributing factors and inaction. It has also sent a morbid chill through the collective consciousness of the military community. Behind the scenes, it has remorselessly ended or corrupted dozens of careers; it has also traumatized hundreds, demoralized thousands, and induced doubt in millions of Americans. As the appeals and final sentence are administered this corrosive process will continue, to include the expenditure of millions of tax-payer dollars - and all for what? For the conceit, gratification and "self-admiration" of an envious, "grapevine" of incompetent boys and men, who will ultimately be proven to have been lesser soldiers than Sgt. Bill Kreutzer?

Although the final analysis awaits the federal military appeals process, having been alerted by the first sensational media reports, fore-armed by Todd Richissin's investigation, and armed with my own first-hand observations my initial instincts have been confirmed. I suspect they will become conclusive. With that in mind, the openly vicious campaign against Billy Kreutzer, one of the airborne's own, was and continues to be nothing more nor less than the military version, of battered spouse syndrome, combined with the Gunsmoke Phenomenon. It was a lynching, pure and simple.

The Truly Guilty

In the case of the United States versus Sergeant William J. Kreutzer Jr., it would seem that the entire military reporting, leadership, grievance, counseling, medical screening, and justice system should have been standing in the dock, and should sit on death row, with the American soldier that they have so unfairly condemned.

Surely I expect that my judgment in this regard is to be contested. Accordingly, the circumstances further suggest one of three rational versions of truth and culpability to choose from:

VERSION A - THE ARMY STORY

The government of course assumes that its fact case is 100% correct and exclusive, so in 1997 the Army would have liked to believe and assert that pre-meditated murder and attempted murder were the only violations of the UCMJ or statute laws in this case. The convicted and condemned Private William J. Kreutzer remains, for whatever motive or judgment, the only culpable individual. This criminal betrayed his own soldiers. He became the enemy; the Army system served to validate his deleterious nicknames - he was "Crazy Kreutzer" and the "Silence of the Lambs" after all. This "system worked" mindset is the open and shut bias and the end rule that

precluded effective prevention and adjudication of this case.

VERSION B - The Raleigh News & Observer Investigation

To a limited extent, this unbiased concept acknowledges the conviction of Kreutzer in accordance with Version A. But, it more realistically and fairly incorporates serious violations of regulations by individuals and authorities of the 82nd Airborne Division which could have precluded the shooting: failure to acknowledge written requests for medical treatment by a service-member, gross negligence in assigning a suicidal soldier to sensitive or hazardous duty; failure to conduct a personnel security clearance assessment or review; failure to reassign an at-risk soldier at his own request; failure to properly realign duties commensurate with the unit's upcoming deployment to Bosnia (ORS versus a children's Halloween Haunted House); failure of the various command and staff elements to communicate with each other; failure of the Senior leadership to prevent a cover-up by self-interested local command authorities; failure of the Uniform Code of Military Justice to protect the rights of the accused and determine the truth in accord with the Constitution.

This is the core of the Richissin investigative theory. The hapless system failed to purge or protect itself from an aberrant, mentally-ill individual. Yet, acknowledging the credibility of Todd Richissin's investigation only leads to the next spectrum, if version A is that far wrong, what else is wrong? Again, more questions; taken altogether the multitude of unanswered questions in this case must lead to yet another possibility.

VERSION C - The Whole Truth and the Real Story

Ultimately, my hypothesis acknowledges the guilt of Kreutzer in the shooting incident, but in mitigation as an inevitable and predictable result of his victimization in a 2.5 year campaign of hazing, harassment, humiliation, and group tyranny. The original charge and sentence should have addressed culpability for murder under conditions of severely diminished capacity and induced duress.

The system not only failed to purge and protect itself, an aberration in the system, exploited and perpetrated by as yet unidentified conspirators, created the problem by victimizing Sergeant Kreutzer and thereby indirectly causing the death of Major Badger and the wounding 19 other All-American troopers. If any substantial part of the scenario in Version B or C is correct, a prompt and adequate retrial is the only credible option for the Army, the victims, the families, and the condemned soldier.

In conclusion, my frame of reference is privileged and speaks for itself; as a prior airborne infantry private, later commissioned with honors via Infantry OCS, qualified as a Green Beret officer during the Vietnam Era and recently graduated from the Army War College with selection for promotion to Colonel, USAR. To be sure, let there be no doubt, had I been present during Kreutzer's sniper attack I would have shot him without hesitation or ordered others to do so. During his apprehension, I too would have used brutal force, to include striking him violently in the face or body, as did the arresting Special Forces troops.

Yet, now in the aftermath of bloodshed, the facts implore empathy and direct scrutiny away from the first victim, away from the convicted soldier Kreutzer, to focus on the truly guilty. If the black and white of Version A. was the relevant fact case, I would be the very last person in the Army, indeed the world, to counsel leniency or compassion. Yet, the piercing spotlights of Richissin's Version B. suggest the Army has at best colored the truth, or worse thrown a black and white screen over it. Unfortunately, the full-color, panoramic image of Kreutzer and his unit is there for anyone with eyes to see and the moral courage to confront administrative tyranny; as a hypothetical model consider the plight of a caged and helpless dog, beaten remorselessly by a cruel master, that ultimately bit the hand that wielded the lash in an instinctive reaction to alleviate it's own suffering, fully expecting to die in the process. On a more personalized and less theoretical level the wave of current cases of battered and emotionally abused women who have murdered their offending spouses or the wave of U.S. Postal Service workers who have attacked their colleagues evidence that Kreutzer's actions have a human, topical precedent.

No doubt such rationalizations will seem way too much like fuzzy-headed, civilian, liberal and touchy-feely or psycho-babble concepts to apply to the vaunted airborne fraternity. Thankfully the unwritten, but universal Code of the Warrior does provide another example to justify shooting at friendly troops. The general justification applies if they are acting in an unfriendly, threatening or deadly manner. For example, if a U.S. Air Force aircraft is firing on an American or allied infantry position the ground troops are justified in returning fire if they have exhausted reasonable alternatives. Big surprise; no permission is required to save one's own life in desperation from deadly friendly fires (which incidentally claimed some 2% of USA WWII casualties and are increasing to more than 10% during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and up to 40% today) so this example is no academic exercise.

Applying this rational to Kreutzer's case is illuminating; he perceived his life to be at an end, the threat was an insidious version of friendly fire, a living death by a thousand psychological cuts, and he responded in desperation. Does that seem like a grotesque

application of the right to self-defense? Quite right - but, so was the unremittingly cruel assault on an individual soldier by his supposed comrades and fellow soldiers. In my estimation he was a model young sergeant who was fundamentally idealistic as well as ambitious, compassionate as well as courageous, working hard to make a difference in the world. He had been promoted ahead of others who resented his education, intelligence and discipline versus their own thug-like braggadocio. Although his career ambition has been extinguished, he retains most of the above qualities and a feeling of sublime satisfaction with his fate as being in the hands of God. He doesn't seem motivated by or considerate of subterfuge, nor malevolence, nor malice. On the contrary he clearly telegraphed and communicated his intentions over a period of years and appears to think and use his head rather than just being headstrong or selfishly impulsive. I found no manifestation of "me first" about him at all. Unlike his persecutors, unlike his prosecutors, and unlike the demon they would make of him, Billy Kreutzer was and still is a talented and humble optimist in the face of death and dishonor. Nobody listened to him, because the persons he was appealing to were all part of the mob, part of the system that had attacked him, and he is at peace with that disgraceful truth.

Ostensibly, this incident should have led to a thorough investigation of such circumstances, but as Todd Richissin illustrated at the time, the All-American Division failed to implement any effective changes. The half-hearted attempts to provide survivor and unit counseling immediately subsequent to the shooting were shouted down with contempt and resentment by unit officers,

"We don't need any outside help...We're the Airborne and we take care of our own."

Amen. The All-Americans sure "took care of" Airborne trooper Billy Kreutzer without any outside help!

On the 13th of April, I received a letter dated the 11th of April 11, from Billy Kreutzer wherein he encouraged me to contact his former subordinates and fellow soldiers. The first impression his friends list conveys is that he had good relations with his squad, his platoon leader, and his platoon sergeant who was a British exchange NCO (Color Sergeant David Wakelin) and still does maintain contact with them. He appears to trust the judgment of these soldiers, despite his own actions, which had imperiled both their safety, and careers. Being thus unafraid and unsuspecting of the obviously varied and potentially hostile opinions of these men, under the circumstances, directly refutes the "paranoiac tendencies" and "narcissistic behavior" ascribed to him by the Army after the incident.

It also negates the pre-shooting determination by Major Fong that Kreutzer did not have sufficient coping mechanisms. In reality,

Kreutzer coped by communicating directly and eloquently with those of his fellow soldiers, and his chain of command who were most reasonable, and responsible. Specifically, this included his chain of command and when that didn't work he went to the special staff such as the Chaplain, the Medical Clinic, and of course, Major Fong. Unfortunately, they didn't respond effectively, because they couldn't cope with the complex and inter-related pervasive problems caused by the hypocritical Army policies evidenced by Sergeant Kreutzer's complaints. It should be no revelation to anyone that it is too easy to blame the messenger of bad tidings in the Army - then to confront root causes - and without knowing it Sgt Kreutzer's honest reports put him in the typical whistle-blower profile of a social misfit with emotional instability, or mental impairment.

In historically bad armies it has always been much easier to isolate and destroy one lone soldier who was trying to do the right thing, than to rectify institutional malaise; besides it helps to cull the pack of upstarts or mavericks and cross-levels competition among mediocrities who are always seeking the protection of the normative group.

Witness the observations and comments of former Army Specialist Fourth Class Burl Mays, an infantry paratrooper of Kreutzer's weapons squad, now making a living in Oklahoma City:

"Sergeant Kreutzer was great...a great NCO...he was an exceptional squad leader...but they drove Sergeant Kreutzer crazy! I mean he...yeah he may seem to have cracked...but he was in total control of himself, he wasn't really crazy. He did not deserve to be called Crazy Kreutzer or any of that bullshit! I told them that at the Article 32 Hearing, but they never called me at the Court Martial?"

So much for the Army's one-lone-nut theory! Former trooper Mays then described his experiences with the vaunted 2nd Brigade, the Golden Falcons of the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg:

"Our usual duty-day after First Call at 0500 was from 0600 to 2100 hours which means a 0430 wake-up after only five hours of sleep including most Saturdays and some Sundays. They were killing us with unnecessary work...with make-believe bullshit! All the officers just wanted to prove they were the best. Our Company and the Battalion were firing Sergeant E-5's who had just graduated from Ranger School, everybody seemed to be trying to outdo and undercut and shit on everybody else! Except for Bill, he really tried to help his soldiers. They wouldn't ask him to go out, or go drinking, or go party - but the rest of the Company would always ask him for help, or a ride, or when they needed

something, needed some equipment. He was usually the first up in the barracks in the morning. No, I didn't ever see anyone openly harass or humiliate Bill, but now I see how they screwed him behind his back, cut him off."

Burl Mays, evidencing grave regrets then recounted his ordeal of being in the kill zone of an ambush executed by his own squad leader. He readily admits to feelings of personal betrayal, but has accepted Kreutzer's voluntary and explicit apology, that he might have come to harm during the shooting:

"The night before the shooting, Bill called me and told me what he intended to do. Recognizing serious trouble I notified our First Sergeant, (Timothy Lindsey) immediately the next morning prior to the Brigade PT formation. Bill had previously given me the keys to his room and our alert bags so the First Sergeant ordered me to go there to check up on him. When I entered the room his bed had not been slept in, and there was an official Last Will and Testament worksheet from the legal assistance center on his desk. The First Sergeant then ordered me into the PT formation, but I stood off to the side and warned other guys. Some were apprehensive like me, but most just laughed it off."

The shadows of BMNT were further obfuscated that morning by a dense fog that clung to the ground over the athletic field until 0630 hours. Strangely, as if confirming prior knowledge, the formation had been reversed so as to place the Command Group on the opposite side of the formation from Kreutzer's position in the tree-line. Burl also noted that several of the Brigade Commander's staff officers were furtively hiding, or observing alongside both sides of a speakers stand in teams of three, as if forming a small ready reaction force, which was not their usual station. As further confirmation that the 2nd Brigade's leaders had been warned of the impending attack, when the first of twenty small-caliber rounds went off, Burl and several others ran away while their officers pompously shouted, "Rock steady men - rock steady!"

Unconvinced by their supercilious manner, Specialist Burl bolted down a dark road some 10-15 meters past Kreutzer's firing position and recalls:

"I actually thought I was looking down along my grave. I ran about 150 meters to the street and threw myself in the gutter down alongside the curb. Looking up I heard the firing change to an M-16 and saw streams of tracers cracking over the heads of the scattering formation. It was obvious that the sniper had decided not to aim to shoot anyone at

that point. It was all over in what seemed like 90 seconds. As I lay there I recalled a discussion I had with Bill some three weeks before about how we would assault a sniper, in a stadium ambush, like the scenario in the movie Black Sunday. We agreed that a sniper's best chance at achieving surprise would be to use a silenced or sub-sonic weapon with CCI stingers. Bill later told me that he was sorry he had shot Captain Badger, but that Badger had come from nowhere and surprised him, and it was an un-aimed, close-range, reflex shot. Bill said that, 'I could ask him anything' and he told me, 'I was tired of them fucking with us, with our squad...I did it for my soldiers Burl!'"

As he paused from talking the undulations of his sorrow washed over both of us. I recalled Kreutzer's Surratsville High school Yearbook; on page 36 was a portrait from a contemporary motion picture. The program postulated human relationships and rights ten years after a hypothetical Soviet takeover of the American government. The caption read:

AMERIKA
The world is different.
The dream is the same.
Let freedom ring.

Patiently, I asked trooper Mays what he thought might have been the triggering incident, to which he had little doubt and a ready answer that coincided with my own best guess:

"Sometime after the incident I went out to dinner with Staff Sergeant Ephraim Zavala of the Third Platoon and our wives. Zavala asked me what I thought put Sgt. Kreutzer over the edge and I told him it was the Halloween Party. He said, 'Yeah, I really did fuck him over on that. I put that on Kreutzer, I fucked him over!'"

It turns out that SSGT Zavala, was the Acting Platoon Sergeant from another (read as competing) Platoon; Zavala had with malicious intent also put the Lock and Keys security problem on Kreutzer, through the offices of First Sergeant Lindsey, when the NCO responsible was injured in a Para-drop. Lindsey was not unsuspecting because he refused to honor Kreutzer's request to be relieved of the family support group's Halloween party duty; which appears to have been a malevolent attempt to make him look and feel ridiculous. Compounding this internecine and unethical warfare, Kreutzer's assigned Platoon Sergeant was a British exchange NCO who was temporarily absent. Although the American troopers respected and

liked him, predictably the professional and mature Brit often confused and confounded the platoon with his Victorian style of English conduct, while his frank assessments of the lack of honor and integrity at Fort Bragg were disquieting. It would be hard to conclude that this circumstance alone had not contributed significantly to the estrangement of Kreutzer's platoon and squad within the company as a whole.

Mays continued to pour out his soul's torment:

*"Both Zavala and the First Sergeant were feeling me out about why it happened and the First Sergeant had even tried to get me to change my recollection of events on the morning of the shooting, and prior to my testimony to the CID. It seems crazy, but after we ran away from the field, the First Sergeant, ordered me to guard the door to the orderly room with the unit Guido even before we knew that Bill had been caught. Instead, at 0647, I called my wife and then I just broke down. The First Sergeant was afraid that Kreutzer would come back for him, and then he called me into the orderly room...he wanted me to agree that I had not told him about Bill's threats that day. He was trying hard to script me and to cut himself out of responsibility for what happened. He even tried several versions hoping to erase my warnings to everyone beforehand, and his comments during the Brigade formation. The next day Captain Balkavitch told the whole company that I was personally responsible for the incident. Because of the crushing guilt and duress dumped on me, I went to the mental health clinic and they just turned me away because I wasn't suicidal and didn't have an appointment. They threw me out, basically. Threw me back to the wolves! After that, the company denied me enrollment at PLDC (Primary Leadership Development Course) because I wasn't a team-player, so I couldn't ever become an NCO. I was ordered not to talk to anyone, and was basically segregated from the Army at that point. They let me know I was special then, that I was done, they let me know it. When I first arrived at Bragg, during my first jump with the 82nd I had a total parachute malfunction and had to cut my main away and ride in on my reserve. They brought me into the Battalion commander's office for a verbal commendation, an atta-boy...we call it a HOOHAH-thing now. But, in the end, they really treated me like shit. Many of us had talked about death at Bragg on a daily basis. In fact, **I had premonitions that someone would die in the Company before I left, I thought it might be my squad leader, but never in my wildest dreams did I think it would be the Brigade staff at the hands of my squad leader, NEVER! Since***

I left the Army, I had recurring dreams of someone shooting people in a grocery store...and now it has become my nightmare, of me going into a grocery store and shooting people."

Those observations from America's heart-land evidence anguish and authentic emotion. There speaks the soul of a young man walking the shadows between heaven and hell, puzzled as to when, indeed if ever, he will find the doorway back to the American Dream. A wonderful myth that he thought he was defending as part of the All-American Division; he is vexed that it may elude him evermore - having vanished irretrievably along with the BMNT mists and echoes of gunfire at Fort Bragg on October 27th, 1995,

"I was made to feel guilt, but I only tried to do the right thing?"

The truthfulness of Trooper Mays' testimony is more than corroborated by former Army Specialist Matthew Watson, now living and working in Virginia Beach and planning to go to College via the GI Bill:

"Bill Kreutzer was a tremendously GOOD Sergeant, he really cared for his troops more than anyone else. Not like the ass-kissing Boy-Scouts and ticket-punching officers in the 82nd. As squad leader he got all the responsibility... but none of the respect...he was denied the support he needed to do his job. He was put in circumstances where he was screwed no matter what he did. He was singled out. His squad was always split up, always put under supervision of other Sergeants, yet he never stopped trying to do the right thing, do his duty by his men. I remember that just before the incident he was given an additional 24-hour duty, and then again another 24-hour duty within days, and then an ORS (Operational Ready Status inspection), then they made him Lock and Keys NCO just before an inspection, and then the Halloween party...he was YOU KNOW set-up for failure."

Again, without any coaching or promise of personal benefit, the soft-spoken soldier from Virginia had confirmed my own assessment, as well as the sentiments of Kreutzer's hometown, his parents, his best friends, his Army buddy; Matt Watson thereby further refuted the Army characterization of Sergeant Kreutzer. Additionally, he also filled-in more of the missing elements with regard to the institutional cause factors:

"The shooting was the result of a long series of incidents.

Revenge against the Army was a big thing in the gripes common among the men in that particular platoon, not just Kreutzer. At first I thought it was because of the different style of leadership of (British) Color Sergeant Wakelin, but now I think it was because there are so many pussies in the Army who want to look good, give somebody an Article 15 or court-martial and move on...that drives serious soldiers out. Of all, I think it started in the (Sinai) Desert, when he gave an OPORD (Operations Order) on how he could kill his entire squad which we all had heard about and resulted in his being sent to PSYCH-EVAL. Then, one day at Bragg, the 2nd Platoon Sergeant started screaming at Bill and the rest of his squad in a very unprofessional manner. This encouraged all the other lower-ranking soldiers in the company to treat Sergeant Kreutzer in the same disrespectful manner, calling him Crazy Kreutzer or Silence of the Lambs. I realized then that Sergeant Kreutzer couldn't enforce his CODE as an NCO because the other Sergeants didn't support him. On occasion an NCO would defend Kreutzer, come up to his harassers and say 'you guys are going too far' - but, it just got worse. One of the most unfair things at Bragg was the three week RIP qualification (Ranger Indoctrination Program). About 160 troops would start and with only 12 or 13 left, they might be told that the Ranger Regiment didn't want any of them...they made it through the course but wouldn't get selected. I had to go through the course twice, and I think Bill went through and then didn't get selected. They would just say we don't want any of you. It was a real morale crusher."

In 1997, as I was looking back for the first time on their infantry soldier observations and eye-witness testimony it was difficult not to believe these honorably discharged paratroopers - having spoken from the heart, they have absolutely nothing to gain or lose in this case except the truth. Although, they are now clearly wary and distrustful of the Regular Army, they both joined the National Guard in their home States, and assert that the Guard is a lot more hard-core and professional than the 82nd Airborne Division! They also recall that in the 82nd their line Infantry companies were manned by mostly White soldiers while the Division's administrative and logistics units were constituted mostly of Black troops. Yet, curiously, Black-White race issues did not appear to play any factor whatsoever in creating this case, unlike virtually every other public dispute in America today; curious because if Bill Kreutzer was so damned paranoid or so self-loving - why did he not express any racist fears, or hatred, or anger at non-whites? Could that anomaly indicate

that Sergeant Kreutzer was neither paranoid, nor narcissistic before he was subjected to the All-American's soul-killing leadership?

Some news reports and court documents revealed that Kreutzer had "contemplated suicide at age 16" which to me is irrelevant and meaningless; who at some time out of despair or curiosity has not "contemplated" his own life and death - for whatever that means. It was also reported that he had made threats or fantasized out loud about killing fellow soldiers after they teased him and played "practical" jokes on him. The many mean-spirited paratroopers described as his "fellow" soldiers were actually far from that - in reality they were his self-declared enemies. Some were veterans who had killed in combat and none were Boy scouts in Sunday school, one cannot have it both ways. Their so-called teasing was vicious physical hazing - and their own relentless threats in a Ninja-like culture directed at Kreutzer were the unlawful precursors, to his Ninja-like reaction. Witness the reality behind his reputed "suicidal tendencies" and "self-love" in his letters to me in April, which is more evidence of the elite-unit, killer culture an otherwise normal young man had been indoctrinated with AFTER he joined the Army:

"I seriously considered shooting myself. I always carried one live round of ammunition with me in the field for just such a reason. Because I was a decent hard-working soldier...the real sting came from being seen as incompetent by my fellow soldiers...I feel (actually I know) that people resented me because I made my rank quickly because of my college education...that I didn't properly earn my rank. Eventually I began to feel that way too. I began to feel unworthy."

Remarkably, although the troopers in his own squad felt betrayed by him they did not blame Sergeant Kreutzer; in fact they do not regard him as crazy - nor do they hold his name or his role as their Sergeant in contempt. Instead, they consciously and quite conscientiously blame their officers and other NCOs, they blame the 82nd Airborne, they blame the Army, and of course they blame "THE SYSTEM." Ominously each and every one of Bill Kreutzer's fellow soldiers closed my interviews with a uniform warning:

"There are a lot of them Sir...a lot of other Sergeant Kreutzer's...out there!"

That ominous reality is especially relevant because it echoed and reinforces Sgt. Kreutzer's written words to me in his letter of 11 April:

"First, I want to address the problem of soldiers attacking

their units. I feel that it will surely happen again in the future...at both Camp Lejuene and at Cumberland County Jail I met some soldiers jailed on minor charges. They all supported my actions and said they knew people who felt the same as I did but were afraid to act...for every one like me who did it, there's 100 out there that think about it. Something has to be done to stop it."

Subsequently - and interestingly as an obvious, immediate reaction to Kreutzer's evidentiary admissions and implications to me - on April 16, 1997, I received a worried phone call from Major Les Nepper of the Army Legal Services Agency in Falls Church Virginia. Major Nepper was at first duly concerned for his client's welfare and his continued communications with me (obviously government monitored) as someone "alleging" to be a Colonel. After I telefaxed him a copy of my official Officer Records Brief, Major Nepper gratefully expressed his eagerness to obtain any additional information or assistance with issues before the appellate courts.

We discussed my formulations with regard to the institutional circumstances that led to the crime and when I inquired as to Kreutzer's' chances to avoid the death penalty, I was told there were grounds for an appeal because his original lawyers were inexperienced and ineffective and they were not given access to experts and resources for a proper defense. Unfortunately, at the time the military community was moving to reinstate executions at Fort Leavenworth Disciplinary Barracks, where the last inmate was executed in 1961 by hanging. In response, I was succinctly warned:

"Although Kreutzer is technically last in line as number nine, on a death row of nine non-white prisoners, his is the only case in which RACE is NOT a factor."

In short, in 1997 Kreutzer was the only condemned soldier most likely to be executed any time soon and that because of the color of his skin! More accurately because of the lack of color of his skin - because his fair Anglo-Saxon skin - was white and not black, he would be the first to die instead of the last in line! So the RACE issue would be a factor in this case after all - BUT AS A DELIBERATE FUNCTION OF REVERSE DISCRIMINATION - while at the very same time the Army Judge Advocate despite all his credentials in law could state in effect that race could NOT be a factor in a case - unless your skin was black!

I then learned to my utter chagrin some of the Army's most disturbing statistics: 135 people have been executed by the Army since 1916; the last military execution was held on the 13th of April 1961 when convicted U.S. Army Private John A. Bennett was hanged for the rape and attempted murder of a young girl; in 1983, the Armed Forces Court of Appeals ruled that military death sentencing procedures were

unconstitutional because they failed to require a finding of individualized aggravating circumstances; the death penalty was reinstated in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan in an Executive Order that specified detailed rules including a list of 11 aggravating factors that can qualify defendants for death sentences in Courts-Martial; for crimes that occurred after 1997, a sentence of life without the possibility of parole would be possible, previously convicts serving a life sentence were eligible for parole after serving only 10 years; the Uniform Code of Military Justice provides the death penalty for 15 offenses, in peace and wartime; only the President as Commander-In-Chief has the power to commute a death sentence and no soldier can be executed unless the President personally confirms the death penalty; finally and most disturbing, all the convicts on Fort Leavenworth's military Death Row were men convicted of premeditated murder or felony murder - and Kreutzer was the only white man!

At the end of the call, Major Nepper's anxiety changed to relief; he thanked me for my help and we agreed to communicate as required. The defense team appeared to be sincere, but, they would still need to actually requisition money for an appeal, and diligently stave off the pervasive and subtle command influences of senior and political officials. They of course disclaimed any hint of undue command influence, but unlike the civil system, military defense attorneys work for the same officers that supervise the prosecution attorneys, and they all work for the Chief of Staff of the Army. On a positive note, for me and for Kreutzer, the very next day I received a very encouraging letter dated April 16th, 1997 from Nepper's colleague Appellate Defense Counsel, Captain Mary J. Bradley of the USA Legal Services Agency stating:

"Presently, a team of three attorneys are actively working on SGT Kreutzer's appeal: Colonel John T. Phelps, Major Les Nepper, Captain Mary Bradley, and Michelle Washington...we are eager to investigate and discover any information that could lead to issues for the appellate courts. Any information that you can provide to us would be helpful."

I immediately forwarded the defense team my correspondence with Kreutzer, a draft of this chapter and a copy of a key Defense Intelligence Agency study that identified mobbing of individuals by groups as an institutional problem: The Gunsmoke Phenomenon. The DIA study had been published on videotape but was not widely disseminated - I discovered it to my amazement gathering dust in the DIA library. It therefore seemed worthwhile to attempt to discern how this incident might have been interpreted by the Army as an institution, and how it was perceived by troops not under the Fort Bragg "mafia" umbrella. Without fanfare, I queried several soldiers at Fort Myer, who by

happen-stance were my momentary racquetball partners on a Saturday work-out, and had no idea of who I was, beyond being a middle-aged, gray-bearded guy with access to the gym. In their initial estimate, maybe they considered me to be one of the post firemen or a civil-service employee, dependent, parent or retiree. They were all junior enlisted NONCOMS of the elite Third Infantry regiment, "The Old Guard" ceremonial unit, which guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and conducts burial details at Arlington cemetery; as well as providing the first military combat reaction force in event of a serious threat to the federal Seat-of-Government (SOG) or (USG).

The first respondent was an athletic, very militaristic trooper with an Airborne buzz-cut, who disavowed his Infantry sweatshirt as a "communicator" (commo man). Not surprisingly, he propitiated the Army version, in effect saying Kreutzer was guilty without mitigation or mercy, fry the bastard because, "you can't shoot at the military." Automatic resentment - with no questions, and no doubts!

The second respondent was a public affairs specialist, with more intellect than athletic prowess who had learned the tactics and techniques of our six games of racquetball quicker than his more aggressive partner and sported longer hair and a college T-shirt. He knew most of the story including the salient elements of Richissin's version. He was inclined to formulate his judgment based on the open questions, of what could have compelled an American soldier to such actions? He was suspicious, if not irreverently so, of the lightening swift Court-Martial conviction.

When I gave the third soldier an opportunity to respond and offer his assessment, he first asked me who I was, which indicated an enhanced degree of consequent awareness. Predictably, when I informed them that I was reserve Colonel with a Special Forces military background of some three decades their body language and demeanor changed instantly. This third respondent, who had appeared as prepared to give a bearded and naive civilian a medically enlightened earful, quickly clammed up. The best he could stammer was that he was a medic, period. Eerily, he appeared to be the walking and talking, physical twin of Billy Kreutzer, the same shape, size, height, crew-cut and eyeglasses; plus the persona, a quiet manner of high-intellect, and deference to authority. Essentially, and provocatively, he appeared to be reluctant to communicate unofficially.

More interestingly, my final question to this representative sample of young soldiers drew an unsettling, but predictable, result; the Army had provided them with not one scintilla of information on the subject. No Command Information bulletins. No Court-Martial results. No medical or EEO information papers. No advice on how to effectively access the Army grievance, or counseling system, and no cautionary or ethical advisories, period. Nothing, nada, zilch! With regard to the most serious domestic armed killing spree in the Army's

history? In fact, it may have been the deadliest public incident of armed-assault by an American soldier against his comrades in history. Beyond military history, it was certainly one of the most devastating tolls inflicted by a single gunman on American soil, producing 19 casualties in less than a few minutes; it narrowly could have been much worse, had the shooter not had a change of heart. Yet, everything these elite troops (guarding the Seat of Government - the Military District of Washington) had learned they had picked-up in passing from the open-source, non-government media, principally television and the newspapers.

Hopefully, despite a virtual black-out on official responsibility, this case may yet lead to the beginning of the end with regard to the possibility of such friendly sniper-fire in America's Army derivative of the DIA Gunsmoke Phenomenon; if so, it might yet serve a just and noble cause. Accordingly, I whole-heartedly believe that Raleigh News and Observer reporter Todd Richissin's common sense perspective, rational investigation and methodical reporting will have served to at least crack the door a little wider to the bigger story of indiscipline, demoralization, murders, unresolved deaths, and suicides in the Army. That story, hidden behind the story, which the Army and the All-American Division were earnestly spinning in 1997, sublimates a dreadful butcher's bill of 6,046 troops during the period 1979-1995: ***Enough troops to man two combat brigades!***

The most frightful questions still remain almost a decade later. How many other Sergeant Kreutzer's are suffering silently out there - how many will strike back? Worse, how many more good and innocent soldiers like Major Badger will die, and how many more troops will be crippled emotionally or physically? How long before the cover-up of THE SYSTEM that produced this and numerous similar tragedies resulting in such a shameful death toll are unmasked? Additionally, does the Armed Forces Death-Row waiting list constituting almost 90% of African-American soldiers evidence the inordinate death sentencing and legal killing of black versus white soldier convicts by a primarily Caucasian General Officer and Advocate General Corps? And just when will the Army leadership be revamped as recommended by every Army professional development study conducted in the last thirty years? Every question raises more questions, and every investigated clue raises more disturbing clues - to more hidden problems.

Initially, it was the my concern about the suicide and murder epidemic in the Army, compounded by the horrific Sgt. Kreutzer sniper case that compelled me to initiate this work - in the intervening years those circumstances have become worse - the alarming and accelerating results of the ever-escalating Global War on Terror have further guided me to develop the lovingly hostile, critical perspective which follows in the succeeding chapters.