

Case Study: Sparrow, Jack
by Bavand

(My sister is a psychologist and I've done transcription. After seeing AWE, we were speculating what would happen if Jack went in for psycho analysis...)

Society of Psychiatry, England
RE: Case study consultation.

Gentleman,

The following is a transcript of the session for your review. This is the case study I mentioned in my last correspondence and, quite frankly, has left me completely baffled as to a diagnosis, let alone a treatment plan.

Your input and evaluation of the Subject is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lee
Port Royal, Jamaica

Subject is male, approximately 40 and in reasonably good health. Personal hygiene is slightly below normal standards and possibly associated with his occupation, which he claims to be a pirate with the rank of Captain.

Father is alive and the Subject assumes he is well, "so long as no one questions the Code. Otherwise, well... he can be "unpleasant"." Claims mother is "gone".

It should be noted that Subject sashayed into office with no apparent care in the world, but when invited to sit down and make himself comfortable, his manner became guarded and he eyed me suspiciously.

S: You are a doctor, are you not?

X: Yes, of psychiatry.

S: [Subject's eyes scan the room nervously] And you don't have any boiling pots and potions and bones to shrink things?

X: Pots? Bones? Not at all, sir, why would you ask such a thing?

S: [Subject shakes head, trying to appear casual] Oh, no reason...

X: [Note: I pointed out my degrees and certificates on the wall.] As you can see, Mr S, I am certified in all areas of psychiatry and hold several honorary degrees.

[Note: Subject goes to wall and peers critically at my certificates. It occurred to me that the fellow was stalling and I did my best to reassure him.]

X: I assure you, Mr S, that I am amply qualified to help you and will do my best. Now please, do sit down and relax and tell me what brings you to my office.

[After another quick look around, the Subject reluctantly reposes on the couch.]

S: "Psychiatry", 'ay?

X: Yes, yes, now tell me, what brings you to my office?

S: I see dead people.

X: I see...

S: [Subject jumps up delighted] Oh, no worries then, mate! If you see them, well then—

X: No, no, Mr S, that is merely a figure of speech. Please take your sit and do continue.

[Dejected, guarded again, Subject stiffly sits back down. At this point it should be noted that there was a significant change in his voice characteristic of schizophrenia—possible diagnosis? Subject glanced down at his shoulders while talking.]

S: I told you this was not a good idea./Well we certainly can't go on like this./Will you please let me do the talking! [Subject smiles indulgently, unsure how to proceed].

X: You were saying... you see dead people?

S: Oh, right, that's it!

X: And what led you to this conclusion?

S: [Pauses, thinking] Not really sure about the others... but I do know I shot Barbossa in cold blood—in fact, those were his last words, "I feel cold." And since the curse had been lifted, he was no longer undead, but was really, really dead. Savvy?

X: Undead?

S: From the curse, mate! At the opportune moment, I tossed the coin with my blood on it to William and he dropped it in the chest along with his coin and his blood--which had really belonged to his father, Bill Turner—who was also undead on the *Flying Dutchman*. Bit of a gamble, that was... substituting the son for the father to the lift the curse, but it worked.

X: Curse? No, never mind, we'll come back to that later. Right now, for the sake of argument—

S: But I'm not arguing, mate, I'm trying to tell you what happened.

X: [Note: Sigh of exasperation is mine.] Yes, yes. Alright, you know he is dead—this Barbossa fellow—and that is the last time you saw this man?

S: [Snort of derision] Ha! Scoundrel is more like it, the *Pearl* is mine.

X: Pearl? No, never mind, let's try to stay on track, shall we? When did you see this, this person next when you thought he should be dead?

S: Of course... I could have been dead me-self. Not sure, now that I think about it.../Remember, you were undead once yourself./True... but that was different./Very different... Gibbs did say we were in Davy Jones locker, which makes sense. That big beastie of his swallowed me and the *Pearl* whole. Next thing I know I'm in this barren land—as far as the eyes could see—with the most incompetent crew I ever sailed with...

X: Ahh, you were not alone then, perhaps your crew had survived and only appeared to be dead?

S: No, no, it was just me. My crew all escaped except me—dear Elizabeth saw to that! Never underestimate that woman, never turn your back on her. And most importantly, always hide the rum, otherwise that wench—and I do mean that in the most unkind way—will burn it. She is clever... got to give her that... Speaking of rum, you wouldn't by chance have some on hand, mate? All this talking... [Subject coughs and clears throat].

X: Ah, no.

S: Pity.

X: [Note: I felt the twinge of tension behind my eyes and was unsure how to continue. I glanced down at my notes.] Let's review, shall we? You believe you were alone because your crew managed to escape before this "beastie" swallowed you and your ship whole?

[Subject nods]

X: And you found yourself in this barren land—on your ship—and you say your crew was incompetent?

S: Aye, that sounds about right.

X: Then I don't understand, what crew if you were alone?

S: Me, me-self! The whole lot of 'em. Mind you, at first I found it amusing—after all, I am one of the most interesting pirates you will ever meet and probably the most pleasant company to be marooned with—but it quickly grew tiresome as we were getting absolutely no where. At all. Well, after awhile, I finally gave up and washed my hands of the whole lot—that is a figure of speech, mate, no water about—and abandoned ship.

X: On dry land? You abandoned ship on dry land?

S: You looked confused... Did I not say that Davy Jone's locker was completely barren? I'm sure I did.../Yes, you did, I heard you./Thought so.

X: [Note: Throbbing temples aside, you can see what a challenge this case study is.] My mistake, let's see, you abandoned ship and that's when you saw this Barbossa fellow?

S: I don't understand why you persist in calling him "fellow", he is the worst pirate I've ever known... and yet he's on the *Black Pearl* and I'm here... hmm, maybe that's my problem? [Subject looks at me hopefully]

X: Perhaps, but let's not go far a field. Please just tell me when you saw this, this person.

S: Oh, right. No rum, 'ay? I am a bit parched telling you all this.

[Subject clears throat—holds up a finger to give him a moment. Subject reaches for compass hanging from belt, opens it and holds it up. I noticed the needle spun wildly instead of pointing north. Subject sighs in disappointment and snaps compass shut.] You're right, no rum.. Where was I?/The *Pearl*!/Oh, right... So there I am in this God forsaken barrenness when I notice this rock was following me.

X: A rock.

S: Yes, yes, I tossed it as far as could, turned me-back on it, turned around and it was right there again. Now, I don't exactly remember, mate, if this was before the rope came out of no where and I did try to haul the *Pearl* me-self, or after.

[Subject eyes me critically and perhaps notices that I am tiring] No matter, mate, eventually, the rock turned into crab—into a whole bunch of crabs—thousands, millions of them and the next thing I know, the *Pearl* is moving away from me! All these crabs were rolling it along towards the water.

X: Water? I thought you said it was barren?

S: Yes, well, you're right—I did say that. It was desperate hope on my part, that there must be water about, because I realized, the crabs must know what they were doing with my ship—and more importantly—where they were going. Saavy? So I just followed them and sure enough, we crested a dune, the *Pearl* went right into the water and, are you ready, mate?

[Subject pauses significantly then declares in triumph] There they were!

X: They...? Your crew?

S: [Subject is disappointed that I did not understand, but I do admit it was difficult to focus with the pounding headache I had developed] Barbossa! You've been asking about him!

X: Ah yes, Barbossa, your presenting problem, but you just said "they". So he was there with your crew?

S: Gibbs, yes. They were all there—William, Elizabeth—even Tia Dalma, strange, really... all lined up like a welcoming committee. And that's when Gibbs said I was in Davy Jones' locker, and I wasn't imagining things, so if you think about it, I must have been dead me-self, even though I don't remember the Beastie actually killing me. But if I was there, and they were there, they all had to be dead, but I wasn't sure, except for Barbossa. I knew I had shot him dead-to-rights.

X: I see...

S: It did seem odd he hadn't shown up to torment earlier—a lot had happened after I shot him. And the rest of 'em must have fallen to some ill-gotten fate to end up in the locker. I just do not know... however, had I been in command, it never would have happened to begin with and I'd still be on the *Pearl*, and Barbossa would have stayed dead. In fact, now that I really think about it, if the crew—at his command, mind you—had not mutinied and marooned me on that spit of land all those years ago—none of this would have happened. We would have all been rich, happy pirates with no worries—well, except for the curse of the Aztec gold—but I would have remedied that right away—which goes to show you, it's always smooth sailing when I'm in command of my ship!

[Subject jumps up excited and relieved and extends his hand to me.] Thank you, doctor, I feel better already! I don't care what they say, you don't "shrink" heads at all—not like my mother's head, least of ways—

X: Your mother's head? Are you saying your mother's head is shrunken?

S: Yes, yes, all shriveled up and hanging from my—from Captain Teague's belt. Ahh, never mind, let's not spoil this moment—I really do feel much better. No worries, mate.

[Final note: While the session was far from over, I must admit I was relieved he chose to end it at that time. And I did not mind when he left without paying his fee as I felt the need for a sedative.]

Signed,
K. Lee, Doctor of Psychiatry

Dr Lee
Port Royal, Jamaica

Dear Sir,

We are obliged to say that this is, indeed, a most intriguing, yet difficult case study. After much deliberation, we came to the conclusion that no single diagnosis satisfies the criteria for any one treatment plan. However, we offer the following observations as revealed in the transcript and recommend that you pick one or two and go from there.

Chemical dependency= Insistent need for rum.

Separation anxiety= Consistent and persistent longing for the *Pearl*.

Schizophrenia= Clear indication of more than one voice present in the Subject's thought process.

Psychotic= Not oriented to time and place as indicated by keeping a compass that does not point north.

Oedipus complex= Fixation with mother's shrunken head.

Necrophrenia= Unknowing/unable to understand the meaning of death and to distinguish the reality of who is dead and who is not.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder= Several extreme circumstances warrant individual attention: 1) mutiny followed by being marooned and 2) being swallowed by a "beastie" and ending up in Davy Jones' locker.

Good luck, and do keep us informed of your progress with this Subject. Let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

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[No couches, certificates or gentleman from the Society of Psychiatry were harmed during the production of this story. However, those that engage in the practice of shrinking heads were offended at being compared with psychiatry and have added this missive to their ongoing dispute (Cannibals Union Unlimited).

Captain Jack Sparrow and the world of Pirates of the Caribbean are the property of Disney. I'm just visiting for a little psycho analysis and not for profit, savvy? jk, writehearted@gmail.com 04/2009]