

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD  
Before Administrative Judges  
Louis J. Carter, Chair  
Frederick J. Shon  
Dr. Oscar H. Paris

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In the Matter of: : Docket Nos.  
CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY OF NEW YORK : 50-247 SP  
Inc. (Indian Point, Unit No. 2), : 50-286 SP  
:   
POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK : July 23, 1982  
(Indian Point, Unit No. 3) :  
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Testimony Submitted on Behalf of  
"New York City Council" Intervenors

By

KIM HOPPER

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Problems with Evacuation of the Homeless in  
the Event of a Nuclear Accident

My name is Kim Hopper and I am a research associate with the Community Service Society. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Coalition for the Homeless. For the past three years, I have been engaged in research and advocacy efforts on behalf of the homeless poor in New York City. I am co-author of three reports and three published articles on the difficulties (social and clinical) of the homeless, and I have testified as an expert witness in two court cases regarding the welfare of homeless men in New York (Callahan v. Carey; Seide v. Prevost).

I am here today to review some of the problems one could expect to encounter in evacuating this population in the event of a nuclear emergency.

The first thing I would like to say is that this is not the traditional problem of removing a derelict population of aged winos.

In the past 15 years or so, traditional skid rows in this country--and New York is no exception--have undergone a change of a magnitude and complexity not seen since the days of the Great Depression. No longer can skid row be dismissed as a sort of seedy retirement community for the aged and decrepit; no longer can its inhabitants be discounted as besotted moral wrecks.

In our time, skid row has become a very different kind of place. It is no longer geographically confined to the "tenderloin" sections of large cities. The subways, train and bus depots, doorways and abandoned buildings, public parks and loading docks, alleys and sidewalks--these are home for thousands of New Yorkers each night.

Not only its location, but its character has changed, and it has changed dramatically. What we still call skid row has become an option of desperation for many otherwise ordinary--if wretchedly poor--citizens. They are people with whom one has no trouble identifying; people whose former lives, at any rate, sound like very familiar stories, stories that would not sound out of place within the confines of one's own family. Many of them have worked much of their lives, raised families, paid taxes; many others are too young to have done anything but barely started. Men and women, the young and old, the healthy and the not-so-healthy, single persons and families: skid row has become a very democratic sort of place, indeed.

I can put it simply: At no time since the Depression have the homeless poor represented so broad a cross-section of American society as they do today.

Nobody knows the exact dimensions of their ranks; nobody knows how many people on any given night are homeless. But we do have some indication of the recent growth in their numbers. In New York City, at peak occupancy this spring, nearly 4100 men and women were quartered in the public shelter system--a threefold increase took place in city-based beds in the last 2½ years alone. To be sure, much of this increase was due to court orders directing the city to expand capacity to meet an already existing need. But there is evidence to suggest that the need has been expanding at a rate far in excess of the supply of emergency beds.

- (1) from July '79, an outreach project on the Upper West Side made contact with an estimated 4000 different homeless people.
- (2) in three months this spring the city-operated subway outreach program made nearly 3000 contacts, 82% of whom were different individuals. Of those removed from the trains, nearly 90% had never been in a city shelter.
- (3) in the last year and a half, a drop-in center in Midtown saw 750 different women; 95% of these will not use the public shelters. Another center on the East Side estimates that they come into contact with 1600 different men and women each year.
- (4) hundreds of homeless men and women have been approached by another outreach team operating in the Midtown area.
- (5) three churches in upper Manhattan have reported that they were asked for assistance by 275 persons in the past year alone.

Nor is the evidence restricted to public programs or churches alone. When one walks today the same streets, parks, bus and train stations, that my co-worker Ellen Baxter and I did in 1979-1981 for our first research project, one notes with mounting dismay that there are still large numbers of people sleeping out-of-doors. Where haven can be found, it is being exploited. Men and women still sleep in railyards, in transportation depots, in public parks, in the subways, in loading docks, or rooftops and in cardboard boxes. The shadow market in makeshift shelter in New York remains a thriving one.

One conclusion seems inescapable: at the same time that homeless people are making use of the city shelters in numbers unmatched since the Depression, more and more people are joining their ranks. Both need and demand are on the rise and a gap between the two still exists.

The problems with evacuating, in the event of an emergency, such a large, diversified, dispersed and (by dint of necessity) wary population are many. Let me touch on a few:

- (1) locating such people can be extremely difficult. Conditions in the public shelters remain frightening, degrading, overcrowded, and dirty to a large extent. They continue to deter large numbers of homeless people, who seek makeshift shelter elsewhere. Of course, when haven can be found, homeless people have a vested interest in protecting the location of such refuges. Many, upon approach, are reluctant to admit that they are homeless.
- (2) even if located, many homeless people--with good cause-- are extremely wary of public officials ordering them to alternative quarters "for their own good." It is my judgment that many such individuals would find the alleged cause of such an order--a nuclear accident somewhere up the Hudson--wholly implausible.
- (3) such suspiciousness can, of course, be intensified in persons afflicted with disorders that render them highly sensitive to the slightest trace of menace in their surroundings. Many homeless people -- estimates range from 1/3 to a 1/2 of the total popu-

lation -- are ex-patients from state psychiatric facilities and/or suffer from current impairments of a disabling sort. Many of the latter class have been denied admittance to state facilities under tightened entry criteria. Alternative provisions for their care and welfare have not, however, been made.

I repeat that these are not insignificant numbers we are concerned with. The vast majority of the men who are quartered in city-based public facilities leave the shelters every morning and cannot easily be found during the day. This is in addition to the thousands who are already on the streets.

These people have no constituency. Their ties with settled society are frayed--where they exist at all. But it would be immoral and heartless to consider these lives expendable. A civilized society owes them more than that.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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Date and Place of Birth: May 19, 1949, Fort Dix, New Jersey

### CURRENT POSITION

Project Director, Mental Health Advocacy in the Community: A Critical Study of Ideologies, Practices and Results. Community Service Society, New York.

### DEGREES

University of Virginia, B.A., 1971  
Columbia University, M.A., 1975

### EDUCATION

1967-1971	University of Virginia, B.A., major in Religious Studies
1972-1975	Columbia University, M.A., Dept, of Religion, concentration in Philosophy of Religion
1976-present	Columbia University, Division of Sociomedical Sciences, concentration in Medical Anthropology

### RESEARCH TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

1976-1979	Graduate Research Assistant, Sociomedical Sciences, Columbia University School of Public Health
1975-1976	Research Assistant, Brain Research Laboratories, New York Medical College
1975-1979	Seminar in Ethical Issues in Behavior Modification, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University
Summer 1976	Field work on acute inpatient unit, New York State Psychiatric Institute
Summer 1978	Seminar in Social Medicine, Maestría en Medicina Social, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Xochimilco, México

WORK EXPERIENCE

1979-1981	Senior Research Assistant, Study of Quality of Life of the Mentally Disabled in Community Settings. Community Service, New York
1979-present	Research Associate, Program in Ethics and Values in Health Care, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University

FELLOWSHIP .

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 1970-Fall 1971	Teaching Assistant, Dept. of Religion, University of Virginia
Fall 1975-present	Seminar Assistant, Ethical Issues in the Health Sciences, School of Continuing Education and College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University
Fall 1977-Spring 1978	Teaching Fellow, Division of Sociomedical Sciences, Columbia University

TEACHING INTERESTS

Medical Anthropology  
Medical Ethics  
Psychiatric Epidemiology/Anthropology  
Economy, Ecology and Disease

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1977-1979	American Public Health Association - Task Force on Latin American Health Workers
1977-present	New York City Area Association for Medical Association - Program Committee
1981	National Institute of Mental Health, Community Support Program National Policy Forum



MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Anthropological Association  
American Public Health Association  
Society for Medical Anthropology  
Society for the Study of Social Problems

PUBLICATIONS

- 1976 "Ethical Issues in Behavior Control: A Preliminary Examination," with Elizabeth Dalton, Man and Medicine 2:1-40.
- 1977 Essay Review of Andrew Scull, Decarceration: Community Treatment of the Deviant - A Radical View, in Health/PAC Bulletin 78:24-31.
- 1978 "Comment" on "The Managerial Revolution in Psychiatry," with Lennard Davis and David Leibow, Man and Medicine 3:171-176.
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- 1979 "Pathologies of Place and Disorders of Mind," with Ellen Baxter Health/PAC Bulletin 11:1-12, 21-22.
- 1980 Review of Richard Fox, So Far Disordered in Mind, in Medical Anthropology Newsletter 11:22-23.
- 1981 Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York City, with Ellen Baxter, New York: Community Service Society.
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1981 "A Critique of the President's Commission on Mental Health,"  
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Health/PAC Bulletin 12:20-30.

in press "Thinking About Alternatives," Catalyst.

in press "Society, Culture and Health," with Mervyn Susser and Judy  
Richman, in Handbook of Health and Health Services, edited  
by David Mechanic. New York: Free Press.

in press "Not Making it Crazy: Some Remarks on the Young Homeless  
Patient in New York City," with Ellen Baxter and Stuart Cox,  
New Directions for Mental Health Services.

in press "The New Mendicancy - Homeless in New York City. (With Some  
Proposals for Service Providers)," with Ellen Baxter, American  
Journal of Orthopsychiatry.

in preparation Sociology in Medicine. 3rd edition, with Mervyn Susser and  
William Watson. New York: Oxford.