

DOCTOR BENWAY, SURGEON GENERAL

from the transcript of the Senate Confirmation Hearing (after W.S. Burroughs)

MURRAY : Doctor William Seward Benway, would you please outline for the committee, and for the American people, the unique qualifications you would bring to the office of the Surgeon General. You have been described as a manipulator and coordinator of symbol systems, and an expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing and control.

BENWAY : The lady mugwump asks about my medical training and experience relevant to rôle of the Surgeon General in shaping American health policy. Doctoring was in my blood. I trained in one of the finest Caribbean diploma mills and polished my diagnostic and surgical skills in residency under the senior physicians and surgeons of the field hospital of the Jungle Sugar Corporation, with rotations in south Florida, Cuba (that was a choice posting before those fucks came along and disrupted the arrangement), and the Dominican Republic. Those men were zombies, and I was obliged to treat thousands of machete wounds until we established some guidelines for the selection and training of new recruits. Careful management and night shifts yielded surpluses from the plantations that the Jungle marketing department translated into a new plateau in the diabetes rate in Mexico. Very efficient work.

My next position was in cosmetic surgery, in the Morphogenetic Regeneration Clinic where we were pioneers in the use of fetal tissue in facial reconstruction. As this clinic was organized outside the jurisdiction of the American Medical Association and U.S. law, I will quote my esteemed compeer Dr. W.S. Wilson, who was cleared of any wrong-doing after hearings in these chambers. Wilson remarked that “Life is a field of opportunity, guiding the individual forward along paths created by the meshed forces of objective possibilities as they interweave with a person’s own potentialities.”

I was a consultant in Annexia, where, I am pleased to report, my first act was the abolition of concentration camps, mass arrest and, except under certain limited and special circumstances, the use of torture. I deplore brutality. It’s not efficient. On the other hand, prolonged mistreatment, short of physical violence, gives rise, when skilfully applied, to anxiety and a feeling of special guilt.

A few rules or rather guiding principles are to be borne in mind. The subject must not realize that the mistreatment is a deliberate attack of an anti-human enemy on his personal identity. . . . We're scientists, pure scientists.

PAUL : Dr. Benway, please describe for the members of the committee, and for the American people, the nature and outcome of your meetings with William Lee, a known drug addict and agent of Islam Inc. ?

BENWAY : Son, the exact objectives of Islam Inc. are obscure. Needless to say everyone involved has a different angle, and they all intend to cross each other up somewhere along the line. I never worked for Islam Inc., in the end. I never could tell where the policy or the pay-check were going to come from. Mr. Lee was a tragic and talented young man, victim of a less enlightened age whose traces are still with us. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done studying the complementary nature of methamphetamine and pseudo-opiate addictions. I look forward to a swift increase in numbers, after the policy of legalization is pursued across the board. Turn the clock back to 1913. [Chuckles and rubs his hands together]. We'll have the chance to study wild-fire epidemics in virgin populations. Prophylaxis. What an opportunity.

Other trends are not so promising. Soon we'll be operating by remote control on patients we never see. We'll be nothing but button-pushers. All the skill is going out of surgery. . . . All the know-how and make-do . . .

SANDERS : Dr. Benway, are you or have you ever been an agent of the Control Machine?

BENWAY : The control system of the ancient Mayans, exercised by one percent of the population, depended on their control of the calendar in a limited environment where control of the calendar meant control of the thoughts and feelings of an agricultural people living within the confines of seasonal necessities. The biocontrol apparatus is a prototype of one-way telepathic control. . . . There can only be one Sender at a time . . . one Sender could control the planet.

I usually have a little taste just about now. [Benway strokes the inside of his forearm. Reaching into his medical kit, he pulls out his works and shoots up.] Care to join me ?

. . . a disembodied voice that is sometimes loud and clear, sometimes barely audible like music down a windy street . . .