

Command Hallucinations and Violence

One of the causes of assaultiveness in psychosis is visual hallucinations. A person who is in a psychotic state of consciousness can see horrific, terrifying images in the mind's eye in place of the real imagery in the visual field. For example, a family member can appear to be a grotesque, monstrous image.

Another cause is command hallucinations - which are misunderstood by the general public. People often wonder why the afflicted person does not ignore the command, believing that compliance is a conscious, reasoned choice. A person with a healthy brain would not obey a voice that ordered them to harm themselves or others. A command hallucination is a neurological phenomenon that cannot be compared to the experience of you or I hearing a commanding voice. This is an example of why the behaviors of a person with psychosis cannot be interpreted through common sense reasoning of jurors and judges. This is why M'Naghten's Rule is the instrument by which so many people are unjustly convicted.