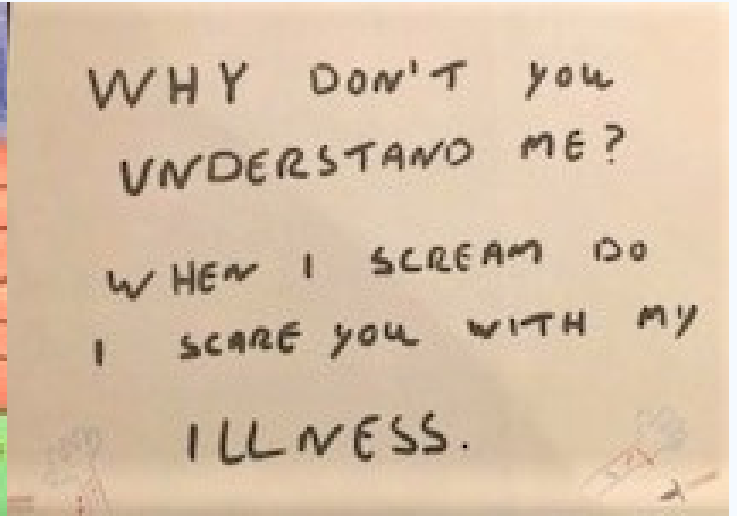


CRIME IN MIND

The New Year Issue



Crime in Mind is a Charity set up to fund research into forensic mental health services and the users of those services: Its focus is on the nature, causes, prevention and management of people who suffer from mental disorders.

More effective prevention is the ideal, when this is not possible, we need more effective, evidenced interventions for recovery and restoration of safety. Our newsletter brings to you some of the most recent updates of what we have been doing and highlights some of the recent research and topical areas in forensic psychiatry.



IN THIS ISSUE

UPDATES FROM CRIME IN MIND - PAGE 2

OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS - PAGE 3

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST: A JOINT THEMATIC INSPECTION OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE JOURNEY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AND DISORDERS - PAGE 4

REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS DETAINED IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS - PAGE 4

THE PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND UNMET NEEDS OF POLICE CUSTODY DETAINEES - PAGE 5

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF CONJUGAL VISITS IN PRISON: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW - PAGE 5

SENTENCING OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL DISORDERS, DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS OR NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS: WHAT DOES THE NEW SENTENCING COUNCIL GUIDELINE MEAN FOR PSYCHIATRISTS? - PAGE 5

OUR SEMINARS - PAGE 6

EDITOR'S COLUMN - PAGE 6



Updates from the Chairman, Professor John Gunn

Covid 19 has completely changed our lives. I'm pleased to say, however, that, despite being unable to meet physically, the executive committee has continued to operate with virtual meetings. Unsatisfactory though it is, Zoom has also meant that contacts were maintained between mental health staff, prisoners and prison staff, a lockdown which for most of them has never been lifted. There are even a few advantages for virtual meetings. Travelling is minimised, thus saving time and money. With our webinars, we can reach a wider audience and include participants from all parts of the UK more easily. Perhaps the biggest danger of the Zoom culture is that we may come to believe that it is a satisfactory way of conducting much of our work. Five of us have written an editorial in *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* tentatively welcoming the use of telemedicine to communicate with prisoners but warning that psychiatrists should not be seduced into thinking that, convenient though they might be, virtual meetings via computers are no real substitute for face-to-face meetings where mental illness and distress is concerned (CBMH; doi: 10.1002/cbm.2160). As our primary care colleagues are discovering there is no full substitute for face to face consultations.

Our webinars have been very successful. Alexis Theodorou, who was awarded a small grant from Crime in Mind, completed a systematic review of the literature concerning multiple homicide followed by suicide. He has just presented the main findings to a members and invitation only seminar described elsewhere in the newsletter and will publish the work in due course. We have been impressed that such a small amount of money £1000 has been so productive of excellent work in his hands. We intend to offer other opportunities like this. We would welcome suggestions for other small-scale research projects that could be undertaken with a small grant of this kind and we will be advertising opportunities shortly. Do watch the Crime in Mind website and at the least sign up for notifications.

Other successful webinars have been Janet Parrott hosting research issues around Older Offenders, Nicola Padfield and Gill McIvor leading a discussion on Parole research and Lindsay Thomson and her team talking about Recovery in forensic mental health services. All the webinars are available to members via the website. Adrian Grounds is planning a webinar on Miscarriages of Justice, and Andrew Forrester, Huw Stone and Pamela Taylor are planning another, on the delivery of mental health services to prisoners, for the new year. These mainstream webinars will remain free to participants, as we continue to struggle with lockdown, but some time during 2022 we will have to ask non-members to pay a modest registration fee – likely to be £25.00 per webinar. Just before the lockdown, Pamela Taylor and I went to the House of Lords to see Lord Keith Bradley. It was the very last day that was possible.

He is very interested in what we're doing, very supportive and offered to host a launch meeting. We are hoping to have that special meeting in late spring 2020 at the House of Lords when COVID risks are lower.

As the formal launch has had to be postponed, the committee decided that a membership scheme should be launched anyway. Membership of Crime in Mind will entitle the person to free attendance at all the events and use of a dedicated website containing a discussion forum, and a webinar archive. Membership for a year will cost £42 or £12 for students and other unwaged people. We hope you will join us. To do so there is a membership application form on the public website (crimeinmind.co.uk). By joining you will be making a contribution to developing research in our field.

Crime in Mind is growing slowly, and although our executive committee will not want me to tell you this, we are all getting a bit older. We need plenty of new blood to join the organisation, students will be particularly welcome as well all grades of trainee in the mental health and other relevant fields. Lawyers are also taking a strong interest in our work, and we hope to form a collaboration with the Association of Prison Lawyers. As with everything else in this life we depend, in part, on finance, the more money we can raise, the more we can do. Anyone interested in fundraising for us will be especially welcome.

John Gunn
Chairman

Our Research Projects

New Research Webinar: A systematic review of multiple homicide followed by suicide

Alexis Theodorou, with Helen Sinclair, Saima Ali, Seema Sukhwal, Christopher Bassett and Heidi Hales

On Tuesday 7th December, we launched a stream of webinars to highlight new research along our main research themes. These seminars are for members and invited guests only, and give researchers an opportunity to test out their new findings with world experts before moving on to publication.

Alexis Theodorou, a higher trainee in forensic psychiatry and medical psychotherapy, West London NHS Trust and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University, won seed corn funding from Crime in Mind, donated by St James' Place PLC, to review published literature on multiple homicide followed by suicide.

The experts were: **Adam Lankford** - Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Alabama and author of *The Myth Of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, And Other Self-Destructive Killers*.

Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino - Professor of Adolescent Psychiatry at Tampere University and clinical leader of the two Finnish National Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Units.

Sandra Flynn - Lecturer in Psychology and Mental Health at Manchester University and author of many papers on homicide

Frank Farnham - forensic psychiatrist and clinical lead for the National Stalking Clinic, The Counter Terrorism Vulnerability Hub and the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre, UK.

Alexis aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Are perpetrators of multiple homicide followed by suicide part of a homogeneous population? – or
2. Are there recognisable subgroups?
3. What measures have been attempted to evaluate the mental state of such individuals when alive or post-mortem?
4. Insofar as there are recognisable subgroups, what, if any, features are held in common and what distinguish them?

His review was conducted according to methods registered with Prospero:

https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?RecordID=134975

Of over 100 data-based papers identified that reported on evaluations of multiple homicides followed by suicide within 24 hours of the killings, about half had no psychiatric data.

Finally, sixty papers could be included in the review, between them focussing on those where other family members were the homicide victims, on mass shootings – often relating to school or workplace and on terrorist attacks as well as papers with more mixed coverage. Common, cross-cutting themes were of the perpetrator's mental illness and of sense of 'not fitting in'. A theme more specific to the mass shooters and terrorists was of ideology, however alien to many those principles might be, while trauma history seemed more explicit among the terrorist groups.

As might be expected, studies were limited by the nature of the data - by definition, researchers could not speak directly with the perpetrator. Further, among the most commonly studied group - family homicides - the person or people who would have known the killer best was also dead. While many perpetrators had previously seen a psychiatrist, that was often years previously; there was reluctance to explore mental state when no psychiatric data from prior consultations were available. Nevertheless, some rich descriptive accounts in individual cases were includable.

Discussion touched on notable gaps, although Adam Lankford updated somewhat through his more recently completed studies; Riittakerttu Kaltiala emphasised the importance of learning about the adolescent's world and considering neuroatypical states; Sandra Flynn noted current work in her team on neurodevelopment and considered possibly unique characteristics of familial homicides – perhaps sense of loss of role and emergent isolation rather than primary alienation? Frank Farnham emphasised need for clinical focus – trying to map and formulate a mutually recognisable sense of the concerns of the person presenting with a sense of isolation and, particularly, grievance. Discussion more widely reflected on the quality of 'tipping points', need for clinician curiosity about a patient's internet life and emotional recognition and attachment problems. Finally, no such topic is complete without reflection on how pandemic-related conditions may have affected people who might be at risk of such tragic behaviour.

Publications of interest

Optimisation of pathways through the Criminal Justice System

Optimisation of pathways through the Criminal Justice System remains of key concern across the UK – as illustrated in part by independent body reports. For England and Wales, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales published an overview in November 2021: A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders.

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/cji/inspections/mentalhealth2021/>

At about the same time, in Northern Ireland, The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority published its Review of Services for Vulnerable Persons Detained in Northern Ireland Prisons.

<https://www.rqia.org.uk/RQIA/files/95/955cfa4a-5199-4be7-9f1a-801e1369ce84.pdf>

The former report builds on the 2009 Bradley Report that highlighted failures in the criminal justice system (CJS) to address the needs of people with mental health needs. Also in 2009 a joint criminal justice inspectorate report found similar findings.

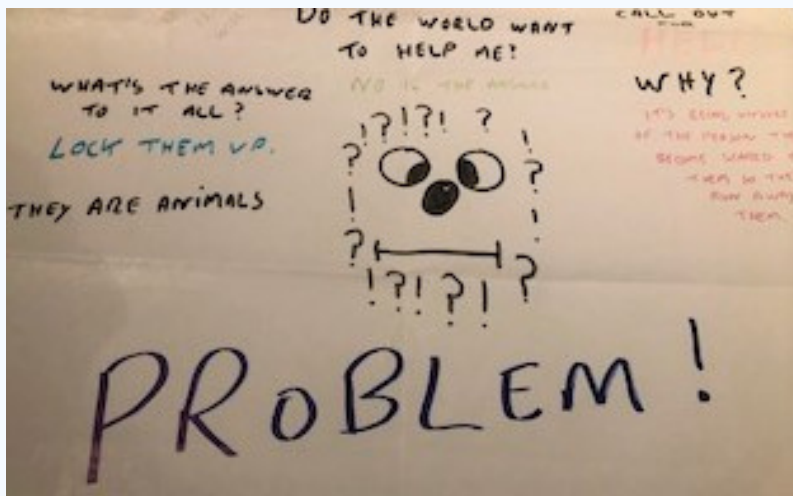
This new inspection therefore looked to see how much change had been made and followed a person's journey through the CJS from first contact with the police to prison. The report findings were that not enough change had been made with themes arising around poor communication between agencies, no common definition of mental health, poor systems used by probation to flag up concerns, misunderstandings between data protection meaning that important information is not shared.

It calls for an urgent Memorandum of Understanding on information-sharing needs to be agreed with all agencies who form part of the CJS journey.

We urgently need more data to inform optimal reforms. Some of our members have some steps to report:

The prevalence of mental illness and unmet needs of police custody detainees

Globally, there are high rates of mental disorder in detainees in police custody but little research exists on the unmet needs of police detainees in the UK. One of our CIM members, Professor Andrew Forrester, led on a research project examining this issue with particular focus on psychiatric morbidity in this group and the differences in need between morbidity categories.



A cross sectional study design was used to interview people coming into police custody in a South London police station over a two-week period. A variety of standardised measures were carried out to detect for any mental illness, general health and social care needs.

Of eligible participants (n=338), 40% consented to take part (n=134). 95% participants were men.

The results showed that 29% screened positive for a current mental illness (the largest group being depression); 21% screened positive for personality disorder; 8% for PTSD; 11% for ADHD. Over 60% of participants reported substance misuse with 26% reaching the threshold for harmful use of alcohol.

There was a large number of unmet needs found in the study group (432 needs across 22 domains) and the largest unmet needs was found to be housing issues followed by welfare benefits.

Those who identified as having the highest suicide risk also had the highest total number of unmet needs.

The authors concluded that prevalence of mental disorder in police detainees was in stark contrast rates seen in the general population and that the number of unmet needs were also greater in this group. Availability of psychiatric services in police stations is key alongside systems to address housing issues as such interventions will ultimately help to reduce reoffending.

Read the full article: Samele, C. McKinnon, I. Brown, P. Srivastava, S. Arnold, A. Hallett, N. Forrester, A. The prevalence of mental illness and unmet needs of police custody detainees. *Crim Behav Ment Health*. 2021; 31:80-95 doi:10.1002/cbm.2193

From October 2020, the first ever Guideline on Sentencing Offenders with Mental Disorder took effect. While welcome, it is of concern that there is little research quality information to inform it or build on it. See also: Sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders or neurological impairments: what does the new Sentencing Council Guideline mean for psychiatrists?

Taylor PJ, Eastman N, Latham R and Holloway J (2021) *B J Psychiatry* 218, 299–301. doi: 10.1192/bjp.2021.21

Imprisonment impacts on lives beyond the prisoner's. In particular, family and intimate relationships are affected. From a systematic literature review, we found that the balance of evidence about conjugal visiting is positive, but there is little of it. As stable family relationships have, elsewhere, been associated with desistance from crime, the contribution of conjugal visiting to these should be better researched.

Vladu A, Kalebic N, Audley J, Stevens A and Taylor PJ (2021) Benefits and risks of conjugal visits in prison: A systematic literature review. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* 31 (5) 313-361. DOI: 10.1002/cbm.2215.

Your Research?

We really want to hear from readers about their own research updates – do get in touch by email:

adminstrator@crimeinmind.co.uk, and we'll highlight any recent publications.

Our Seminars

Future Seminars:

Improving the health of prisoners: How can research help? - Tuesday 22nd February 2022 17.00-19.00

Andrew Forrester, Huw Stone and Pamela J Taylor.

Previous Seminars:

Seminar: Recovery in Forensic Mental Health: Reality and Reach

Recovery is an ongoing process of change through which individuals improve their health and well-being, optimise control of their lives and reach their full potential. On 12th October 2021 Professor Lindsay Thomson and colleagues from Edinburgh University and the Forensic Mental Health Managed Care Network in Scotland gave an overview of their research – findings are not always as one expects or hopes. The seminar remains available online for Crime in Mind members.

Seminar: Older age and Mental Disorder in the Criminal Justice System: some current themes.

Dr Janet Parrott, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, April 27th 2021

There are increasing numbers of older prisoners in the UK and the age profile of service users in secure mental health settings has also been rising. There is evidence from both research and clinical practice that this poses challenges for those providing services in these settings and that there is much variation and inequality especially in prison settings.

This seminar presented current research findings in this area with a view to both informing current practice and highlighting research priorities.

Key speakers: Katrina Forsyth, University of Manchester, Dr Renske Visser, University of Surrey Dr Rachel Daly, Oxleas NHSFT.

Seminars remain online for Crime in Mind members

Seminar: Mental Health Issues and Parole Boards

Professor Nicola Padfield and Professor Gill McIvor presented a seminar on research needs and delivery to date on mental health assessments and needs in relation to Parole Board hearings. Speakers with practical experience of parole board hearings included Dr John O'Grady, Dr Karen Richard and Dr Lynn Kelly while Dr Mia Strobe, Dr Harry Annison and Dr Christina Straub led on research.

Some of the parole themes covered and much more were brought together in a special themed issue of *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* in December 2020:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14712857/2020/30/6>

Editor's Column

To start the new Year I'd like to introduce a small editors section, where I will seek out interesting bodies of work, that are creative and make us think or discuss different aspects of Psychiatry, in particular forensic psychiatry.

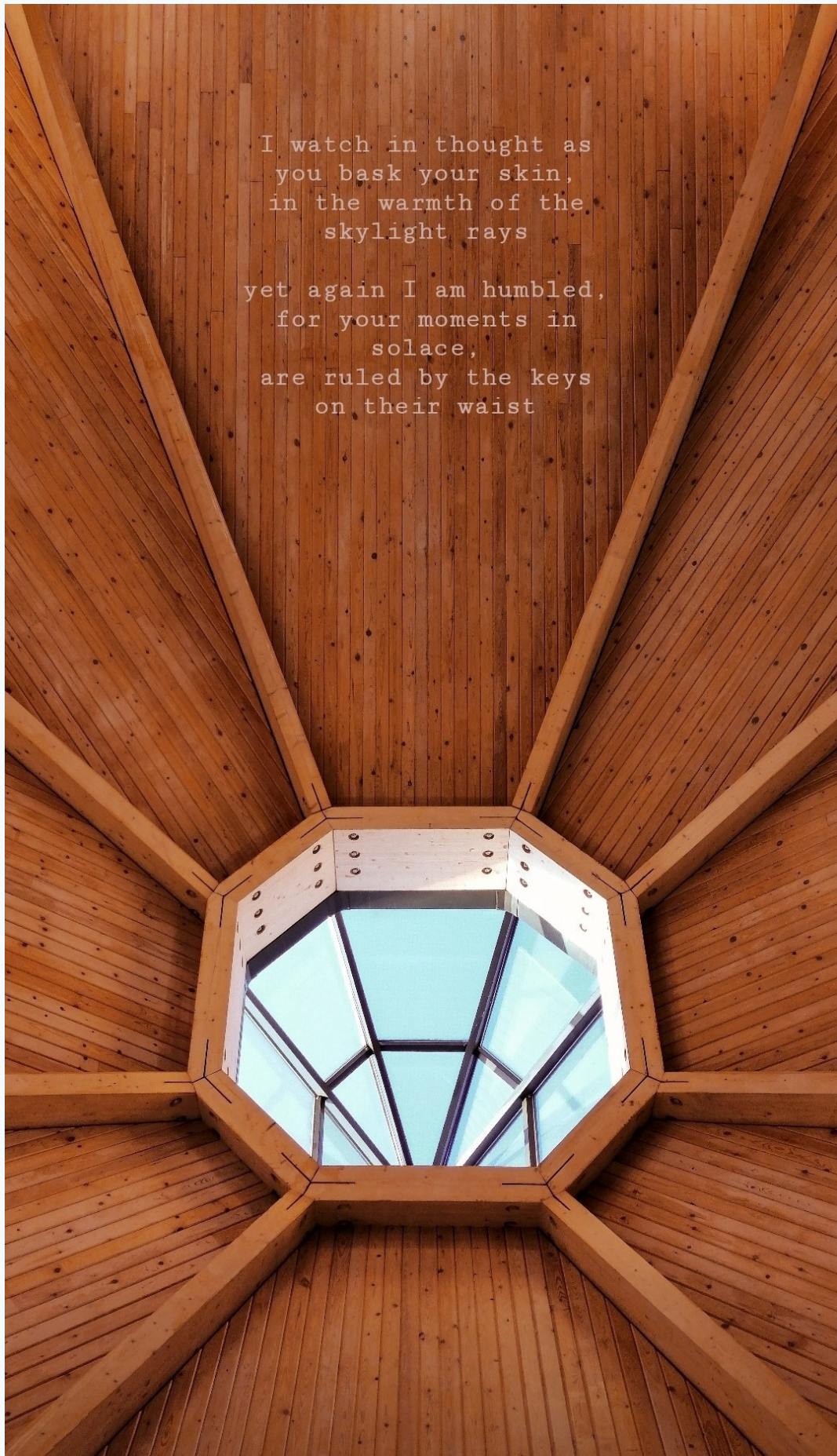
For this volume I have submitted my own piece of work to start us off. It is a photo I took as a medical student whilst on a placement at the John Howard Centre. Accompanying it, is a short poem that was inspired by what I saw that day during my placement.

For more information and to submit your own pieces to be featured, please email crimeinmindeditor@gmail.com

I look forward to seeing your submissions!

Here's to an exciting year ahead of us,

Faizaan Ahmad - Editor



I watch in thought as
you bask your skin,
in the warmth of the
skylight rays
yet again I am humbled,
for your moments in
solace,
are ruled by the keys
on their waist

How you can help?

Research can transform lives. We want to support discoveries about what helps people with mental disorder who have been victims of criminal behaviour, or perpetrators of criminal behaviour, and their families, and the clinicians and others who treat them and, indeed, the wider community when its members are in contact with these problems. More effective prevention is the ideal, when this is not possible, we need more effective, evidenced interventions for recovery and restoration of safety.

We are very grateful for any donations to assist us in this mission. Donations help us to fund research projects and educate policy makers and communities.

Donations can be made to the Charity via the link below and can be a one off or regular payment.

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CRIME IN MIND



<http://www.crimeinmind.co.uk/donations/4588369818>

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