

K 1.61

67/14
C

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
GILA RIVER PROJECT
RIVERS, ARIZONA

EVACUEE REACTIONS TO THE SHOOTING INCIDENT
AT GILA RIVER PROJECT

This report is made primarily to state and analyse the community reactions to the shooting and wounding of Elmer Satoshi Kira on December 1. In order to make it self-contained the facts are briefly reviewed, although they are well-known. The last part deals with the mental condition of the victim, although it has probably been reported by others.

I. THE INCIDENT

On December 1st at 5:20 P.M., a young evacuee, Elmer Satoshi Kira, 22, attempted to pass the north Chandler entrance to the Gila River Project. He did not stop at the command of the sentry. He said "I don't need to pay attention to any sentry, I'm the President." The sentry gave him two warnings, firing a shot at each warning. Kira did not halt. The sentry then aimed at him and shot him in the left side. He was immediately taken to the Butte Hospital, where Dr. Hata extracted the bullet, and declared the injury not dangerous. Physically he improved continuously and was transferred to the Arizona State Hospital on December 10.

II. EVACUEE REACTIONS

Early next morning the personnel of the section of Community Analysis began questioning people about the incident. The following is a summary of information so gleaned.

(1) Rumors. The significant fact is that the number of rumors was relatively small. Of the people interviewed the day following the incident, over 80% had the facts correctly and without distortion. Most had learned the facts correctly and objectively from the "Arizona Republic;" the Project Director had given a concise statement to the papers the evening of the incident. The false rumors were mostly dissipated by the evening of December 2, or by the morning of the following day.

Sample rumors during the first day were as follows:

"The boy is dying." This was said by very few, and disappeared by evening.

"It was an old man, slightly off." This is half true.

"I heard he was riding a truck which was leaving the center."

"I heard that some guy from Canal was shot trying to leave the center yesterday morning." The victim was from Butte.

"I heard he was injured critically."

"I heard he was coming home from a trip into Phoenix and was drunk at the time of his arrival at the Military Police station."

It is noteworthy that these rumors are not, in general, violent distortions of the truth; the rumor that the shot was fatal was transmitted by few.

One rumor which persisted in varying forms was to the effect that on the following days, further shots were fired at evacuees attempting to cross the boundary, or on the banks of the canal. These were believed by many. The last such rumor of which we have any record was on December 6; but it was originated by a somewhat intoxicated mess-hall employee at Butte, and he claimed he was the target.

Internal Security investigated all these reports and found that none were based on fact.

Summing up in time, the course of rumor might be given thus:

December 2: Most people had the facts correct, a few were believing and transmitting rumors; and appreciable minority had not yet heard the news.

December 3: Some rumors persisting but decreasing in volume. First rumors of subsequent shootings.

December 4. and 6. Gradual subsidence of all rumors, that of subsequent shootings dying last.

(2) Evacuee Attitudes

The majority, possibly 75 percent of the evacuees exhibited no great reaction, expressing neither resentment nor concern. This is a more significant fact than the resentments of the minority.

Of the minority who expressed, in some degree, resentment or concern, the following are typical.

"The sentry should have known he was crazy." This was expressed by only three people.

"The sentry should not have shot an unarmed man." This was expressed the more extreme Japanese section.

"It was unnecessary to shoot." This was expressed by only one man.

"The conditions should be more carefully explained to the people."

Extracts from remark made by an extremely anti-administration woman:

"There are some people around here who wanted to show them-----. But I told them 'Don't you do it. You wouldn't have a chance. They're just looking for a chance to mow you down.' Their chance will come."

"They think they can break us. But they're wrong. Our minds are getting harder and harder."

There were a few who expressed resentment, but did not specify any object of resentment.

The objects of resentment are thus vague and of a general nature. Except for the few quoted, there was no criticism of the sentry and the vast majority realized he was only following orders. The Military Police as such were not blamed; neither was the WRA; but presumably both were included in resentment against a system; One informant believed that, if resentments had been more extreme, the WRA would have been the object; the WRA is the nearest target in any retaliation against the system.

One informant expressed the opinion that resentment was less than it might have been because the victim was Nisei

(he is actually Sansei.) As Nisei, he knew English and was a citizen. This explanation applies only to the more Japanese group. The same informant expressed the obvious opinion that resentment would have been greater if the victim had died.

In general, resentment or concern was expressed chiefly by the more Anti-Administration segments of the population; and even their reactions were not very violent.

III. THE VICTIM

The victim of the incident was Elmer Satoshi Kira. The following notes upon him were collected as follows: (1) a discussion of the event by Mr. John Fukushima of the Community Council; Mr. Fukushima and a social case worker had gone through Kira's letters and found much clinical material; (2) interviews with the family and friends of the victim by Tek Sakurai, of the Community Analysis staff; (3) a joint interview by Miss Hankey and the community analyst with Dr. Hata of the hospital; and (4) an interview by Mr. Wolter and the community analyst with Mr. Kira, father of the victim.

Kira was a premature child. He had an excellent record in grade school, and a good, though not outstanding record at high school. At the time of evacuation, he was 20 years old, and was majoring in commercial art at Junior College.

At the Project, he lived in Butte and was employed on the Gila News-Courier until June 1943, as artist. He went to work again in August, 1943, but did not stay long.

On the army questionnaire he answered in an unusual manner: "Yes to question 27 and "no" to question 28. He later applied to change his answer on question 28 to "yes". He was up for leave clearance hearing on September 14, 1943.

During the period when he worked for the "News-Courier", he kept rather aloof from the other members of the staff. People in the same block also noted that he did not readily join in with others in social events. He had one close friend with whom he was on easy terms, but this friend relocated in June, 1943. Between that time and the day of his leave clearance hearing, he seems to have become aloof although the change in behavior was not great.

After the leave clearance hearing, he came home and complained he was very tired mentally and physically. He

lay down and rested. He said that the questioning had been severe. An examination of the hearing transcript shows that some searching questions were asked him and that on one or two occasions he and his questioners had sharp exchange of words. He also let out the revealing remark that he would take a job when he found one good enough for him.

No marked outward change was noted until about the beginning of November, though entries in his note-books show signs of increasing abnormality. His father was scheduled to relocate on November 4, but was delayed for one week. On November 4, originally set for the father's departure, young Kira came to the bus with suit-case packed, dressed for the trip. He was not permitted to proceed.

From that time on he withdrew more to himself. His records state that he was the Project Director and that he was immensely wealthy. During this latter period, also, he quarrelled violently with his mother and sisters. On one occasion he poured out all the sugar, stating that it was poison and that he was the intended victim. There is evidence that he once struck his sister. Sometimes the family slept in another house, so that male friends could look after him. On the day his father relocated he had told his sister that he was going to kill his father and mother. He thought he was President of U.S., drawing a salary of \$200,000 per week, making him the richest man in the world. He believed he has an I.Q. of 700.

Finally, on December 1, he attempted to leave camp. He afterwards told Dr. Hata that some irresistible influence was drawing him out. When asked if he heard the sentry's challenge, he said he did, but the magnetic influence kept pulling him on. Then he was shot.

After extraction of the bullet he was normal for a period, and, when asked, specifically said he was not President of the U.S. But after 24 hours he again began to have delusions. Asked if his I.Q. was 700, he said it was down to 500. He again believed himself President of the U.S., also project director. He bore no grudge for the injury. He remained in much the same condition until he was transferred to the Phoenix State Hospital on December 10.

It is believed by his family that the exciting cause of Kira's mental condition was the leave clearance interview and they, and Kira himself, blame the hearing board for what happened. Family and friends state as an opinion that the strain of waiting for leave clearance, plus the relocation of his father, worked on his mind until he became completely unbalanced.

Dr. Hata's diagnosis is schizophrenia and incipient dementia precox. His prognosis is: Physically, good; mentally the patient has a better than fifty-fifty chance of recovery, but that he should not return to the Project.

Dr. Hata further gave it as his opinion that feelings of injury, of injustice and of martyrdom will cause an increase of such cases. He sees incipient signs of it in the type of cases coming to the clinic. There will likely be more such cases among the Nisei than among the Issei, and more dementia precox than senile dementia.

IV. GENERAL REMARKS

The reactions of the people to the shooting incident indicate that the Community is probably much quieter and much more balanced than it had been two months previous to the event. While no comparable incident occurred then, other incidents had given rise to wild rumor, to uneasiness and to unrest. In this case, while there was a small minority which reacted extremely, there was no real threat of violence, rumors were relatively few and what rumors there were died quickly.

This relative quiet is probably the result of two factors. First, a large proportion of the disturbing elements have been segregated. Secondly, there is less distrust of the Administration than previously existed. This lack of distrust is *not* complete; the whole incident simply suggests improving relationships between administration and evacuees.

Concerning Dr. Hata's opinion the schizophrenic indications are increasing, there is some sociological evidence to support it. This will be included in a future report. In the meantime, it is sufficient to note that there are some hundreds of people here who have had leave clearance hearings two, three or four months ago, and who are still unaware of the final decision. Many of them are full of anxiety and are increasingly resentful of what appears to them to be an unpardonable delay in letting them know what is to become of them.

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTERNAL SECURITY COMMISSION

I. Purpose

- A. To determine whether Internal Security is an adequate and efficiently functioning body.
- B. To bring to the attention of the proper officials both the weak and the strong points.
- C. To investigate rumors in regard to the authenticity of the actions upon which they are reported to be based.

II. Analysis

A. Physical equipment of the Internal Security Section

1. Office

a. Are they adequate?

- 1. On the Gila River Project there are two police stations set up and entire barracks are allotted to each station. The Canal Police Station is located in Barrack #13 in Block 16, and the Butte Station is located in Block #64 Recreation Hall. The space is adequate but the appearance could be improved in both stations by laying linoleum on the floors, and equipping the offices with decent office furniture. The furniture now allotted to these police stations are improvised home-made tables, desks, chairs and filing cabinets. The Main Office designated as the Internal Security Office is located in Administration Building in Butte, and this space is considered inadequate. A little more room could be used to a great advantage. This office is occupied by the Chief of Internal Security, his secretary and a clerk timekeeper. It is recommended that the Assistant Chief, now in charge of the Butte Police Station, be moved to the Administration Building if and when additional space is available. The same is true in Canal, the Assistant Chief in charge there will be moved to the Administration Building just as soon as office space is available.

2. Cars

a. Are they adequate?

- 1. At the present time, five (5) cars are assigned to the Internal Security Section which is, under the present conditions, considered adequate; however, the cars assigned to Internal Security are in bad repair and should be replaced by better vehicles. Each police station is assigned two cars, and one car is assigned to the Internal Security Main Office for use of appointed personnel and necessary outside trips.

3. Horses

a. Are they adequate?

1. Fourteen horses have been purchased and assigned to Internal Security and heretofore been used for boundary and farm patrols, and it is contemplated that these horses will again be assigned to the same duties. At the present time, shortages of hay has made it mandatory that all of the horses be placed in the pastures until hay is again available.

4. Traffic Control Stations

a. Are they adequate?

1. Sentry Posts are set up at the West entrance of Canal Community and at the East entrance of Butte community to record all traffic in and out of both communities. License numbers of the vehicles and the operators' license numbers are recorded for each vehicle passing through the gate. The respective divisions to which these vehicles are assigned are furnished a copy of the daily record for their information that they may determine whether or not vehicles assigned to them are officially or unofficially making inter-camp trips. The police at the Sentry Posts alternate every two hours. In the past it has been necessary on a very few occasions to hold up or stop traffic between camps. These Sentry Posts have been very valuable in this respect on those necessary occasions.

5. Personal Equipment

a. Are They adequate?

1. Police Officers are at all times before the public. They are the first ones called upon for information from visitors. Their appearance or the importance of their appearance is second only to the manner in which they conduct themselves. The policemen should be neatly and uniformly dressed. Present uniforms are over a year old and badly in need of replacement. War Relocation Authority Regulations will not permit the purchase of new uniforms, so if the policemen are to have uniforms at all, other sources will have to be found to furnish them. At the present time, the police are equipped with the old worn washable khaki uniforms, coats, caps and badges. Requisitions have been filed by the Internal Security office and are now pending for night sticks and new police caps.

B. The Job

1. Patrol Work

a. Are they adequate?

1. Patrol work of the police at Butte Community is badly in need of qualified manpower. Due to the present lack of manpower, most of the patrol work is accomplished with police patrol cars. The patrol is made at least once every hour, 24 hours a day, and an emergency squad is always present at the police station to answer any emergency that may arise. This emergency squad alternates with the car patrol and the Sentry Posts. In addition to patrol work and traffic control a 24 hour guard is maintained at the Central Warehouse. Ten police are assigned to this guard duty, and it is felt that the guarding of supplies issued to the community is one of the most important duties of Internal Security. Police patrol, in addition to its many other duties, furnishes full coverage of all public events such as dances, shows and rallies. A traffic lieutenant is assigned to head the traffic enforcement department, recommend new enforcement procedures, and to handle traffic complaints made by community residents.

2. Investigations

- a. Investigations involving violators of community regulations are, as a rule, assigned to the lieutenant in charge of the special detail. This detail consists of a lieutenant with an assistant who are the best fitted and trained for this particular line of work. In many instances, the police captain and members of the appointed personnel are called upon for assistance. Where a serious violation occurs or where state and federal laws are involved, the investigation is conducted by a member of the appointed personnel with the assistance of the resident police.

3. Judicial Commissions

- a. The Judicial Commissions are relatively new, but should be commended for the satisfactory manner in which they have begun. To improve the efficiency of the Judicial Commissions, the Community Councils should arrange to have a regular stenographer capable of taking testimony and court procedures and transcribing into a docket later. A competent interpreter should also be arranged for and assigned to the court and be available at any time. It is also recommended that the Community Councils arrange for a public defender, preferably some person with some law experience to defend any person who desires his services.

B. The Job (continued)

4. Difficulties

- a. The Police Department has been hard hit due to relocation. Many of its most efficient men have been relocated, and it has been impossible to recruit and train men to the same efficiency. It is difficult to interest the higher type individuals in police work, due to the thankless nature of the duties. They realize that every act will be criticized and that they will in the performance of their duties, gain new enemies. Many potential candidates to the police force, in addition to the foregoing, feel that the work is too dangerous for the compensation allotted a police officer.

C. Procedures

1. Arrests

- a. Police arrests are made only when an offense is committed in their presence or when a warrant has been issued for arrest by the Project Director or the Judicial Commission. Very few actual arrests have been made. As a rule, the suspected offender is invited to come to the office of the Chief or Assistant Chief of Internal Security for an interview. If further prosecution of the suspected is necessary, he is again merely notified to appear before the proper authorities, and the date and time set for his arraignment or trial.

2. Traffic

- a. Traffic violators for their first offense are cited to appear before the Chief or Assistant Chief of Internal Security for the particular violation with which he is charged. If the violator admits the charge, the Chief or Assistant Chief of Internal Security as a rule, will suspend his operator's license for a period of fifteen days. If the defendant denies his guilt, then his case is referred to the Project Director or the Judicial Commission for trial. Second offenders are always cited before the Project Director or the Judicial Commission.

3. Search

- a. Search of dwellings or other buildings are conducted within the community as they would be conducted legally in any other city. Upon information from substantial parties that stolen or contraband articles are stored within the dwellings of a resident, a search warrant is secured from the Project Director

before the search is made. It is also legal to search the dwelling without a warrant providing the officer is given permission by the resident whose dwelling they desire to search. A search warrant or permission is not necessary where the officer of his own knowledge has evidence that a violation is in progress within a dwelling or building

4. Fines and Handling

- a. In reference to the accounting of fines collected, it was found that a receipt was issued by police headquarters to the individual paying the fine and that such money so collected was turned over to the Agent Cashier who, in turn, issued receipt to the Internal Security for such amount. The commission has checked through this procedure to its satisfaction. The investigation disclosed however that a poor system of accounting for cash was employed. The collection of such fine was made by the appointed staff at headquarters who put this money in his pocket and during the day turned it over to the Agent Cashier. The establishment of a Community Clerk who will collect all fines, will eliminate possible misunderstanding resulting from this procedure.

5. Use of Florence Jail

- a. The Police have no control over sentencing a resident to the Florence Jail. Such a sentence is strictly up to the discretion of the Project Director or Judicial Commission. The War Relocation Authority has an agreement with the Sheriff of Pinal County that the Florence Jail will take care of all prisoners sentenced to that institution, and the Authority pays a fee of \$1.00 per day for residents of this community committed there.

6. Work with Intelligence Agencies and other government authority

- a. It is the policy of Internal Security to work very closely with other Government enforcement agencies. The local Internal Security has been commended by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and has been supplied with the much sought after F.B.I. educational moving pictures and a lecture by one of the agents. The local Internal Security is taking over many of the duties formerly conducted by outside agencies, not only as a matter of cooperation, but to save local residents possible embarrassment and to treat the cases with understanding and fairness.

D- Personnel

1. Appointed Staff

- a. The appointed staff of Internal Security consists of the Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, and four Internal Security Officers. The Chief of Internal Security, with an appointed secretary, is stationed in the Administration Building in Butte. One Assistant Chief is stationed in Butte while the other Assistant Chief is stationed in the Police Station at Canal.

2. Job description

- a. The Chief of Internal Security is in charge and held responsible for the proper functioning of the Internal Security Section. He sets up the policy and program to be carried out by his Assistants and the handling of all outside correspondence and dealings with other government enforcement agencies. The Assistant Chiefs are in charge of Butte and Canal Police Stations, and it is their duty to supervise and direct the activities of their respective stations as well as train their resident personnel in police technique and procedure. The four Internal Security Officers work in close conjunction with the resident staff and under the supervision of the Chief and Assistant Chiefs of Internal Security. One Officer is assigned to Canal Community, and the other three are headquartered in Butte Community. Two of the Officers, in addition to their police duties, act as Officer of the Day from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. the following morning. The third man relieves the other two on their days off and the balance of his time is supervised by the Chief of Internal Security. Every member of the appointed staff is a Civil Service appointee and has been referred to the War Relocation Authority by the Civil Service Commission.

3. Attitude as expressed toward the community.

- a. From the Chief down, their responsibility is keenly felt and their pride in both communities is certainly no secret. All appointed members of Internal Security have a following of friends among the residents of the communities and their social relationship is on a par with any other division or section on the project. None of the appointed members of Internal Security has ever worked with or had any extensive experience with the Japanese People before entering

D. Personnel (Continued)

3. Attitude as expressed toward the community on their present duties. This fact has, to a large extent, retarded mutual understanding between the appointed staff and many residents of the community. At the present time, however, it is felt that the appointed staff is well on its way to a better understanding and knowledge of Japanese culture and customs.

b. The entire staff was deeply hurt over the action of the Community Council. They were, without warning, accused of inefficiency and were given no chance to remedy any fault or mistake with which they were charged. Instead, the charges were widely publicized in the paper and before the block managers. The Internal Security Staff, appointed and resident, feel that charges should be specifically substantiated or that the Council should publicly exonerate the Internal Security Section.

4. Evacuee Staff

a. The evacuee staff, which the commission prefer to describe as the resident staff, is composed of an Inspector who works directly under and is the representative of the Chief. The Police Captain is next in authority to the Inspector and is directly under the supervision of the Assistant Chief in charge of the Butte Police Station. Next in rank are the five Lieutenants, three of which are in charge of three platoons, each platoon is responsible for crime prevention and maintenance of law and order throughout their assigned eight hour shift. In addition to the platoon lieutenants, there is a lieutenant in charge of traffic control and another lieutenant in charge of special detail section. A sixth lieutenant is in charge of the Guard Station at the Central Warehouse.

b. Attitudes of evacuee staff toward appointed staff are somewhat complicated. First of all, their grievances lie in the compensation they receive in comparison with other work. It involves unpleasant nature of work, the hours they put in, the discipline they have to go through, the regulation they have to abide, and such.

c. Concerning the charges of improper conduct made against one of the appointed staff by one of the police, the commission finds a variation of opinion. Here it must be kept in mind that there is a great difference

D. Personnel (Continued)

- c. between kindness or friendliness, and familiarity, or conduct which is reprehensible. Many older residents would interpret a friendly action according to modern American standards as a reprehensible action according to Japanese standards. Under such circumstances, it is very easy for a person of tender or assumed tender sensibilities to be offended when no offense was meant or contemplated. It is also possible that any incident of this kind might be used by a subordinate to discredit a superior because of personal differences. The staff member is of high moral character, highly recommended by his previous employers and by the Civil Service Commission. It is suggested and recommended by the Committee that all members of Internal Security be ever conscious of the fact that they are and should be respected by every resident and that any action which might offend the moral sensibilities of the most critical person be avoided while on duty.
- d. The attitude of the appointed staff of Internal Security toward the resident staff is that of companionship and social equality. They feel that the higher ranking officers are just as efficient, capable, and valuable to the community as they are themselves. Of course, there are a few of the resident staff who have ignored instructions, forgotten their training, and have gone outside the Police Department to offer criticism of their brother officers. These very few are responsible for some ill-feeling among members of the resident staff. However, as a whole, this has not effected the attitude of the appointed staff toward the resident members of Internal Security to any extent.
- e. Attitude of the community, as a whole, toward appointed staff, Internal Security, may be described in a few words: "Just about the same as toward any other department". In other words, the people of the community as a whole are "indifferent" and neither completely satisfied nor particularly dissatisfied over the function of Internal Security.

It is also recognized by the committee that any department which has to do with limiting the actions of people or of apprehending people for violations will be criticized and that very often the criticism will be directed toward the person of the apprehending officer.

D. Personnel (Continued)

Although the commission has received a few documentary appeals, petitions and oral complaints presented by various evacuees against certain members of the appointed staff, the charges brought against them are extremely vague and in the opinions of this commission, do not deserve further consideration. Moreover, in the judgment of the commission, there is reasonable doubt in regard to the motives of the complainant and whether or not the motives were originated for purely personal reasons; the commission feels that it would be a waste of time to put much weight upon grievances.

The commission concludes therefore: That Internal Security has done a very good job in protecting the persons and property within the center; that Internal Security will be criticized by people who are affected by its actions and by others who are or may be interested in avoiding the law; that the task of a police officer is a thankless but very necessary one; that public support should be given Internal Security in the performance of their duties.