

January 31, 1967

Dr. Nathan S. Kline, President
American College of Neuropsychopharmacology
Rockland State Hospital
Orangeburg, New York

Dear Nate,

During the past few months, I participated in the defense of a criminal convicted of a capital crime, and have been faced with issues and questions that seem to go beyond the immediate instance. The important question is whether the administration of psychoactive drugs during imprisonment prior to trial can alter the evaluation of a psychiatrist so that a prisoner can appear to be sane when he may not be; and, whether the effects of these drugs if given just prior to the trial may alter his memory so that his performance in court may give an untrue appearance and so deprive him of his best defense.

I am writing to enlist your opinion as to whether such a problem is proper to bring before the College, especially in eliciting the opinion of other members as to the general issues involved. If the questions appear as significant to others as it appears to me, perhaps the writing of a report in the Journal reflecting our opinions may be of help in other similar instances.

For your information, I am enclosing a short outline of the case record.

Because of the general nature of this problem, I am sending a copy of this letter to Jonathan.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

MF:kp

cc: Dr. Cole