

The Specimen Hour

Anonymous

Transcript of Hour 5

This is the verbatim transcript of the fifth hour of the tape-recorded psychoanalysis of a 28-year old married woman. The transcript was carefully prepared and punctuated to reflect the disfluencies and fragmentation that are characteristic of much of spoken language. In this session the analysand spoke 5244 words and the analyst 247. Substitute proper names have been used, e.g. David is the woman's husband.

The complete set of rules used for transcribing can be found in: Dahl, H. (1979) *Word Frequencies of Spoken American English*. Essex CT: Verbatim, pp x-xii). Among these are the following: The analyst's speech is enclosed within a pair of slashes; the transcriber's descriptive comments are enclosed within parentheses; all the rest is the analysand's speech. A letter followed by an underline (w_) or hyphen (w-) indicates a stammer or false start. A pause is a period from 15 seconds to 1 minute; a silence is greater than 1 but less than 2 minutes; longer silences are timed to the nearest minute. In this hour the patient's chuckles are always slightly nervous chuckles.

The paragraphs are numbered with a # sign: references in several chapters use this # sign to identify paragraphs in this transcript.

(3-minute silence, occasional stomach rumbles)

#1

Something that's been on my mind today is the relationship I have with the girl who is my assistant this year and was last year. And (sigh) well, it took me quite a while to get used to her last year and I imagine it was a variety of reasons. But at the beginning of this year things were going quite nicely and I was quite pleased with the kind of things she can do and not feeling at all annoyed by her, which was part of the trouble I had last year, although at times she's a, a type of person that I don't feel completely sympathetic with, I guess. And uhm, because of the other assistant having left, she's having to fulfill both of the functions to an extent and, and both of the teachers, myself and the other teacher, are to make adjustments too, so that she can help us both out.

#2

And today was the first day when she was really officially working for both of us. And I, I found all over again I was beginning to react to her the way I had last year which upset me very much because I know that some of it's, is the way she is and, and maybe I am annoyed by that kind of a person, but some of it's got nothing to do with her. And I think it had something to do with just sharing her and, and the fear that she might prefer working with the other girl or being in the other room. And, I think it also, when I'm faced with the aspect of sharing her, I, I also have to face that perhaps sometimes I'm not treating her quite the way I should be. And, and this is another reason why I become almost jealous of who she works with. (Sniff) And then I think well, I will try to be fairer to her since it is something within me. It has nothing to do with her, but I still can't seem to maintain that. I still seem to treat her the same way I used to. And, I think I'm, well, I don't really know how she sees it. I don't know whether she thinks there's anything wrong with the way I treat her at all.

#3

I think what I do to control her is to uhm, through controlling what she does with the children in the classroom. And I know I want to be the, the definite one in control in the classroom. And, and I know that I want to have a response from the boys that, as long as I have it, then it's all right for her to have it too. But I, I know I respond very much to any time that she has a very warm response and, and I don't – (pause)

#4

But she's also a type of person that bothers me and, and I don't know quite why it is. She's very boisterous and kind of (sniff), well,

coarse is too strong a word, but, well, just loud and, I think in a way unfeeling, although she can be very kind and with the boys she's quite sensitive to them and, and I think has a real sense of them as individuals and, and people and, and I think she has a sense of people in general as being worthwhile. But, on the other hand, somehow there is something insensitive about her.

#5

For instance, she never really thought about this other girl at all. Now, I can't, I can't pretend that I had any idea at all that this girl had anything as serious in her problems in her life as she did, but I reacted to her as a person and thought some things were strange about it, but Betty, the girl who's my assistant, didn't even have any reaction to her as anything being strange about her. Or, I don't know, it just, it could have been anybody there at that time and she'd relate to them all exactly the same way. And I guess this bothers me that, uhm – Gee I don't know exactly what about it bothers me (chuckle), but it does. And uh, in being kind of noisy and loud she's the kind of person that just sort of – she will enter a room or a conversation or anything and just throw herself right in without kind of feeling her way or listening to what's happened before or feeling the atmosphere or any of these things. And again, this annoys me. And I don't know exactly why it is. I think perhaps part of it is because then, if I'm involved, she'll kind of jump right in and take over and, and she doesn't sort of defer to me, which I'm sure is part of why it annoys me.

#6

But even beyond that I think that kind of a person bothers me because uhm, even before I began to work with her when she applied, sh–, I was overwhelmed with all her enthusiasm and, and pleasure in everything. It just seems like it was practically everything. Now she's beginning to react. Some things are good and some things she doesn't enjoy which, you know, is only normal, but at first it just seemed like she just loved everything, and, and that also would make me feel (chuckle) as if I just wanted her to be quiet. (Sniff)

#7

And I don't, I don't really know how to handle it, both within myself how I feel, and, and how I should handle it in terms of our relationship in the job we have. Last year, uhm, this whole, the whole loudness of her personality bothered me anyway, just from the aspect of what we were trying to do within the room, because we have to keep a very quiet tone at this school. And uhm, I was trying to tone her down in

the room without just telling her that she h_ had to just completely change herself, because that's not fair either.

#8

And at one point my supervisor blamed me for her conduct, conduct within the whole school. And I became very defensive (chuckle) I think, at the time, partly because the conduct (sic), conduct she had was just the kind that I didn't like anyway. And I, I, I don't know, I guess I just didn't feel it was totally my responsibility. I mean, this other woman had hired her knowing she was that kind of a person. (Sniff, clears throat)

#9

And I think if – I think a lot of it's – my wanting to subdue her – is just so I'll be dominant. But some of it too, is for what's happening to the other boys who will become easily overexcited and out of control, for this school. I don't think for some schools they would, it would seem out of control. But for Lakehurst, uhm, very little will already become out of control. And so I have to watch that. And I just don't know, I, I don't know how to be honest with myself, and how much I want to subdue her for that good, and how much of it's just to control her, and then how much I have a right to even do anything. I mean, this is the kind of person she is. (Pause)

#10

I suppose it's also just wondering what the function of friendly advice is anyway. If you're a good friend of somebody, not that I'm saying this is the situation I'm in, but just makes me wonder, when you're a good friend of somebody, how much, from your point of view, you should advise your friend and how much you should keep quiet, because the person is what they are and, and your point of view is going to be different from theirs in any case. (Sniff, stomach rumble, pause)

#11

(Sniff) That's another funny thing too, because with all my problems in controlling my own life, feeling control over myself in the areas that I'd really want to, which I suppose is just knowing what I am and what I want to do and being happy about what I am doing and what I am being, but still I am very free with advice to other people when they ask me, and I feel as if I really know the answer. And sometimes I think my advice is pretty good (chuckle) but I can't seem to apply any of it to myself. (Clears throat, sniff, pause)

#12

In fact, regarding myself, I find decisions extremely hard. And, if I do make one, even if it's just a minor thing, like, for instance with my husband, what we're going to do for an evening if we want to go out, then I, if I do make that decision, then I have, then it has to be that way and it can't be any other way. And, I c—, I can't seem to adjust it if something makes a change in plans necessary. (Sniff) Or something that he used to do a lot, Dave used to do a lot, would be to, in talking about whether we'd go away for a weekend or not, he'd say, "Well, I can't be sure I can get away." And then we'd decide, well, we won't be going. And then on Thursday he'd say, "OK, we're going." And I would just find I — there was no reason I couldn't go — but I would just find that I practically could not get myself together and go away for a weekend, which involved little more than just packing a few clothes.

#13

Oh, it involved a lot more I guess, because it usually, when we made that kind of a s— decision, it would be to go to the house my parents have in Northwood, so it would mean calling them up on the telephone and I just couldn't bring myself to do that. So he'd always have to do that. (Pause)

#14

But even then, it, we'd have to go through a — he'd have to say, "Well, why don't you think you can go?" And then I'd give one reason. "All right, but can't you do this?" "OK," or "I can do that," and then, "Why else can't you go?" And then we'd go through a whole list of things that I would think up on why I couldn't go. And I'd have to have him help me answer every single one of them before I could make up my mind I could go. And then we'd usually have a fight too before I could decide that I could go. And my decision would be based more on the fact that I realized then I'd been unreasonable in fighting with him about it. (Sniff, clears throat, silence, occasional stomach rumbles)

#15

It's funny about the telephone too, because (sniff) I have a very funny reaction to it. I, I never like to make telephone calls, and I'll do anything to put off making them if I can. But then once I get on the telephone (chuckle) I find it very hard to terminate a conversation. (Sniff, pause, sniff) I don't know why I have this feeling. I can't believe it's from just something I saw my parents do in itself, but my father used to always hate to make telephone calls too and there — if he was supposed to call some friend of theirs about something, he would go through all

sorts of excuses why he couldn't or he'd argue with my mother about who should call and try to get her to call. And it was almost like she were treating a little boy, making him call this time. (Sniff, pause)

#16

In fact, unless it's business he's still fairly strange on the phone. It's only occasionally, when there's been some real topic that he can talk about that's right there on his mind, that he isn't ill-at-ease on the phone. And usually if I get him when I'm calling he'll practically gasp, "Well, here's your mother," or "I'll get your mother." And then, and then, once he's called her, if he's waiting for her to come, he'll talk to me, and then he can be fine. And, and (stomach rumble) it's just somehow he has to know that she's coming, so he's not stuck talking to me. (Sniff) But I also panic if I know sh—, when I call if suddenly I find out she's not there and I'm going to just have to talk to him. It seems a mutual kind of reaction at this point. (Sniff, pause, stomach rumble)

#17

Because that sort of typifies our whole relationship. I think we're always (chuckle) panic stricken when we find we're going to be alone together with each other. (Sniff) And I don't, I can't quite figure out why it is, except he has one characteristic which I think I must find annoying, (sniff) or I don't find I'm equal to it, because he's constantly, on anything that he's talking about, asking for reassurance that he's right or th_ that I agree. (Sniff) And if, if you don't agree, it just doesn't get you anywhere to say it, unless you can sort of have a general discussion about something but so often they don't stay on a general level. (Tch) And, I don't know, I just find I can't respond after a while to being asked constantly to support him. (Pause, stomach rumble) I suppose now I'm thinking consciously, when he asks me things either that I don't agree and I can't answer, "Yes, I agree," or "I don't think it's that important so why do you keep on asking me if I don't think the same thing?" I mean, it doesn't matter if I think the same thing or not. (Sniff)

#18

Because I, I (chuckle) was just thinking I probably do the same thing with David. Last night in particular, I was talking with him about — I don't know, I just seemed to be in a funny mood by the time he got home. He got home sort of late, and it wasn't that he was late, because I knew he would be. But I guess he didn't immediately respond to me in the way I wanted him to or — I don't know what it was, because I imagine that somehow I was already in some kind of a mood. And (sniff)

at one point I was talking to him, and I know I was talking to him wanting either confirmation that I'd done the right thing or a suggestion on what would be a right thing because I wasn't sure. I was upset about something I'd done and I didn't want him just to listen to me say it. I wanted him to actually react to it, and either suggest another course of action or, or approval that well, I guess that in the circumstances that wasn't that bad a thing to do. And, and he just didn't say anything, except sort of mutter under his breath. And so I got furious at him and (sniff) I imagine in a way it's the same kind of thing that my father always is doing. (Pause, stomach rumble)

#19

Because the thing I did that – it wasn't that important a thing I did that I was upset about, but it was indicative of something I'm doing all the time – was, uhm, the particular incident was, I have two boys in school who are constantly together. They were friends before. And it's disruptive to the class now because they're, whenever we're doing some kind of a group activity, they're so busy moving around inside the group, staying together and then changing places in the – if we're sitting on the f_ floor up in the front they'll be changing places where they're sitting – and so they sort of tunnel through the whole group and they're talking together and everything. And it really isn't good for them anyway, just in their cutting out other people so that they are only together within themselves. And I'm trying to encourage them to separate themselves from each other as much as possible. And once in a while if I'm really tired and worn-out and there they are disrupting the group again, I get a little annoyed at them on – again, though I know I shouldn't.

#20

And yesterday – I had been thinking about calling the parents – and yesterday – just to let them know that, if the children were kind of upset at what I was doing, the reason for it would be this, and that they, if they wanted to support it, they could by explaining that there were lots of boys to be friends with at the school and that type of thing. And – but I hadn't called them and I saw one of the mothers at the dismissal when she came to pick up her boy. And I never like talking to parents then because it was just too confusing. But of course I just said something to her that was, you know, chatty. And then, and then I suddenly found myself starting to talk about this problem, which I hadn't intended to at all. And I, I was kind of surprised at myself when I was talking and, then I just couldn't keep quiet (chuckle). I couldn't stop it, or say well, we better talk about this another time or anything. And I just seemed to get in deeper and deeper and I'm always doing this.

#21

I always seem to talk before I think and say things I don't mean or give them a connotation I don't mean to give them or bring them up at a time that they just shouldn't be brought up at all. And I, I consciously try to do, to control this now, because it's terrible when you're dealing with mothers who are putting a great deal of pressure on their children anyway. They misconstrue everything you can say and, and there I went again.

#22

And I think I was upset too because it, it's almost like immediately hitting the parent with something negative rather than first indicating to them that on the whole things are very good, because they are. And, and again this is something I do and, and I had a lot of trouble with my student reports last year because I do this. I seem to kind of assume the positive and then put all my energies into pointing out the negative things.

#23

/ This happened yesterday then? /

#24

Yes.

#25

/ Before you left school? /

#26

Yes.

#27

/ You mentioned yesterday o_ or the day before that uh things would occur to you during the day – /

#28

Mm.

#29

/ – that you had looked forward, as a matter of fact, before you started the analysis to be able to come in and talk about them. What strikes me as you tell me this is that you went home after you left here and talked to David about it – /

#30

Mm.

#31

/ – wanting reassurance, but not here. /

#32

You mean not seeking reassurance here?

#33

/ I mean, yeah, it's one of the things that apparently didn't occur to you (chuckle) to mention here. (Stomach rumble) I don't know what to make of it, except to just – I, I, I take note of these (chuckle) – /

#34

Mm.

#35

/ – different things that you've said that you, ahead of time, wanted to be able to have a place to talk about, things like that, for example, that trouble you. /

#36

Mm. Now, well, I don't think I, well, that's not true. I do seek reassur_urance wherever I talk, (chuckle) even here, but I don't think that – I think if, if I bring something up here I, I already know that –

#37

/ You won't get it. /

#38

Uh, that's not the point. Yeah, and so even though I would like to get it –

#39

/ Could that be in – one of the reasons it didn't come up? (Chuckle) That's really what I'm getting – /

#40

(Interrupting) I can't remember whether it even, you know, did come into my mind yesterday. It may have, but uhm, you know, sometimes I, especially when I first come in, I find I am here and I just have a flood of things, but nothing's really, but yet there's nothing. I d–, it's hard to explain. You know, there are – perhaps I'm selecting now, I don't want to talk about that, no I can't about that, and you know, then I'm selecting what I can (chuckle) talk about or feel I can, but uhm, I don't, I don't even remember that – I'm, I'm not sure how, how long

after I spoke to the mother I even began to think I shouldn't have done it too. You know, how long it took me to react to what I'd said. Oh, I must have reacted right away, but perhaps that was one of the things that I pushed away from my mind and wouldn't face that I'd made a mistake on, because I will do that too.

#41

/ B_ but uh if it did occur to you and you mentioned it here, you would not expect reassurance now, from me? /

#42

I think not. I think now I –

#43

/ From David you want it and you're angry if you don't get it. /

#44

Yeah.

#45

/ Hmm. /

#46

Well, I thought – I can't say not here, although I think I'm becoming less apt to seek it here. I think I want to be reassured that (chuckle) you're listening, but uhm, because I feel very funny (chuckle) just talking aloud. But I don't know whether I seek reassurance beyond that. But with David I do beyond that. No, well, that's not true, because one thing I was, I did talk to him, and it does come to my mind now, uhm – and this affects things that I sometimes find I can't even bring up yet – is your reaction to some things I might say. So I suppose there again, it's your approving or disapproving. (Pause) And of course, what it boils down to is I'm sure you're going to (chuckle) disapprove, so I'm afraid of saying them. (Pause, stomach rumble)

#47

It's funny how we – I asked David about it too – and, and, I don't know, we, we've been debating how much we should talk about our experiences anyway, and I imagine that we really don't s_ speak much about it. In fact, I don't really talk to David about it at all now, except when a question comes up in regard to (sniff) his reaction to being analyzed. And uhm, I did ask him if he, when he's thinking about things, does think in terms of how his analyst would react and, and he used the word "shock." He's, I think at one point he said something to his – that

he was afraid he might shock him and this was what was keeping him – and I was just thinking it was interesting, the different way we use our reactions because I don't care whether I (chuckle) shock you or not. It's whether you disapprove. (Pause)

#48

And this makes me think of uhm, (stomach rumble) friendships I've had with other people and, something that I don't like to admit, because I don't approve of it (chuckle), so I can't imagine anybody else would, but I seem to have to find fault with just about everybody that I'm friendly with to some degree whether it's just a small degree or a larger degree. And, even though in a way I might feel inferior to them, and I imagine I feel inferior to a lot of people, I still have to find fault with them and maybe criticize them to David, I don't know. I always have to openly criticize them, but in any case I have to kind've done that and then I can go on to a re–, a, some kind of friendly relationship with them. And until I've done that I can't really accept them as somebody that I want to be at all close to in any way at all. And, and if I can't, if I find I can't be critical of them in some aspect, then I just can't seem to be around them at all. I, I, I don't know, it's more than sort of being, well, it's not being in awe of them. It's just feeling very uncomfortable, I guess, with them.

#49

/ So your thoughts turned from thinking about whether I would approve or disapprove of things you say to what you've just been talking about. /

#50

Mm.

#51

/ There any connection? Does it follow perhaps that uh you (stomach rumble) have some criticisms of me that have occurred to you? /

#52

(Pause) I think if I had, I would have (chuckle) suppressed them too much to admit them. (Clears throat, sniff, pause) Uh, perhaps one – I'm starting with one that's less (chuckle) personal, one that I'm sure still is occurring to me at times, although I don't think it functions as much in my thinking now as it might have – is uhm, sometimes wondering if all this really does get anywhere, and (sniff), you know, if it isn't some sort of a hoax. But that's partly because I was brought up to think of it as being something that really didn't do any good for anybody and just costs a lot of money. I don't think that occurs to me as much now.

#53

I found it, I think I found it hard to come in here and lie down on the couch, with just you, being a man, in the room. But then that's, that could be any man, I suppose. (Pause)

#54

I do suppose though, if, if uh, something occurred to me about you, even if it weren't a criticism, I don't know that I feel, I think I, I feel I can't talk about it, because it seems like kind of an intimate type of thing and, and I just am not, I don't know, I just never made personal remarks to anybody (chuckle) before I knew them for a long time.

#55

In fact, I was kind of horrified last night at myself. I had a course a_ after I left here and uhm, (sniff) it uhm, it's an art course for teachers (sniff) and we were working on rubbing things for texture. And at one point I noticed the professor's tie, which was a very nubby coarse woven one, and although it would have been too soft to rub, I just (chuckle) reached out and held it out and said, "Well, this has a wonderful texture," which it did. But I was horrified at myself, because I've just never done anything like that before. And then I was sure his reaction was horror too, that I had been so forward. I don't know what it was actually, but at the time I was sure it was just horror. (Pause)

#56

Because several things have occurred to me while I've just been talking, shall I get off the other subject (chuckle)? (Sniff) I can't decide whether to – well, maybe I'll come back to it. Uhm, well, one thing is just a variation on my talking too much. When, at this same course last night, uhm – I'm, I'm usually very quiet when I'm, am new in a course and, and I don't like to say anything. But once I stop feeling that, once I've said something, whatever it is, then I just go the opposite way completely, and I get extremely aggressive. And at the time I don't realize I'm taking over, but then afterwards, if I think about it, I can see that I really did kind of take over or ins–, keep pushing myself into the conversation to the point where others might just say, "Oh well, I'm not going to bother trying to talk." And I do this, I've noticed, sometimes in conversations too, that I'll either try to anticipate what somebody's going to say and then continue on with what I'm thinking, or keep talking when I should stop because they're about to say something and then they won't, then they'll never say it. And that way I control the conversation. But the conversation might not get anywhere, or certainly nowhere near where it could have if I had stopped talking when it was time to. (Sniff)

#57

And the other thing I was thinking of when I was speaking of my reaction to psychoanalysis being, well, a questionable thing for all the money that it costs, is, uhm, just my reaction to money and handling it and saving it and all, which again has come up recently, because, uhm, the other day David and I were talking about, or I was talking (chuckle) about, having a budget, because this year is going to have a lot more expenses than we're (sic) ever had before. And, and I just don't feel I handle money very well anyway. I'll spend what's there and (sniff) if it's in the bank, I'll, and I can get my hands on it, I, it just sudden—, it just seems to disappear and I'm not really consciously spending it, or, I, in fact, I'm usually consciously being very miserly and, and ungenerous with my money (chuckle). But (sniff) somehow it seems to disappear — that I have no sense on where I can save and where it's stupid to save.

#58

And we had a, I guess a little bit of a fight (chuckle) about that too, because I, I have no reason to insist that somehow we make some savings if we can, but I was insisting that we should be able to make some savings and that no matter what, we should have some savings. And he would say, "Well, what are we saving for?" And I wouldn't know, except that I'd been brought up that you always made savings if you could, so somehow I just felt I had to have savings. But then when it came down to it, he said, "All right, well, you can put the savings aside with your money." And of course that wasn't (chuckle) what I had in mind. (Laughing) I guess what I really wanted was to have all the hardship with him and then I'd still be free to let money slip through my fingers. (Chuckle)

#59

(Sniff) But I do feel guilty sometimes too, if, uhm, for instance, if we use some money for our entertainment and then don't have very much for gifts or something like that, then I feel kind of guilty. (Stomach rumble) Well, I guess I look upon gifts as being more (sniff) — I'm not, well, I think I'm not too good at thinking of what somebody would want, and I'll try really hard and then, when I fail there, I think well, if you spend a lot of money it makes up for the fact that you couldn't think of anything (chuckle). (Sniff) Or else things I can think of always seem to cost a lot of (chuckle) money. I don't know which way it works.

#60

(Sniff) But then I'll have no sense about something like buying clothes. I'll absolutely buy nothing for a long time and then I'll suddenly

go out on a big splurge, not meaning to. I'll just go looking and then I'll start finding things and then I justify it, well, I don't look very often so when I do find something I should just get it. But then I, I'm getting better at this now, because I'm getting better at knowing what I want and don't want and controlling my choices, but even then I might spend quite a bit of money suddenly. And I used to be terrible about shoes. I just, I wouldn't know what I wanted so then I'd end up buying all sorts of things. Well, I suppose it's all part of making decisions and making choices.
(Pause)

#61

Because that (chuckle) is, well even this I find hard to say, and it's, it's silly, but just in thinking about clothes and wearing what you want, uhm, just in, in noticing what you've worn since I've started coming and the, the variety and the freedom that you seem to have and, and I think I've been sort of envious of that. (Sniff) I feel very embarrassed (chuckle) saying that.

#62

(Sniff) In fact I – just in thinking about people at school now who are very clothes conscious and they're always, if you come in with something they like, they'll compliment you on it. And even then I'm beginning to do this now and it's partly almost consciously because it's the way you have to do things at this school. But it's not just that, it's really sort of a gesture of friendship, I guess, to anybody, that if you like something somebody has on, acknowledging it. And I'm just, I, I just still find that hard. And it's almost like I notice it (sniff) but it doesn't register on my mind as something important to say to the person, even though I'm pleased if somebody will say it to me. I guess I'm just still so concerned with, with myself and what I'm thinking that I might register I like what they have, but I can't keep it as an important thing and, and feel it's important to tell them. (Sniff, stomach rumble) And I used to always justify this that, well, I'm not going to be one of these girls that just thinks about clothes all the time and that's all they talk about. But if I'm honest with myself I guess I think (chuckle) a lot about clothes.
(Pause, stomach rumble)

#63

/ Our time's up. /