

Press Complaints Commission

From the Chairman

5th December 2005

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Jean Mark,

I am writing to draw your attention to the Guidance Note on the reporting of *Patients detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983* that the PCC published some years ago. I enclose a copy of our note for your information.

I am doing so because an article has come to my attention, published on 13th February 2005 (a copy of which is enclosed), with the headline "Broadmoor nuts take over the asylum". You will see from our note that the Commission has previously made clear its concern that editors should avoid the use of such epithets as 'nuts' or 'nutters', which may in some circumstances raise a breach of Clause 12 (Discrimination) of the Code.

Although a complaint we received about the article (rather than specifically the headline) from Mr John Leather was considered to have been lodged too long after publication for the Commission to investigate, I wanted to write to you in order to remind you of our stated position, and in order that any problem may be avoided in future.

I would be grateful if you could write back to me to confirm your acceptance of the terms of the note.

With kind regards.

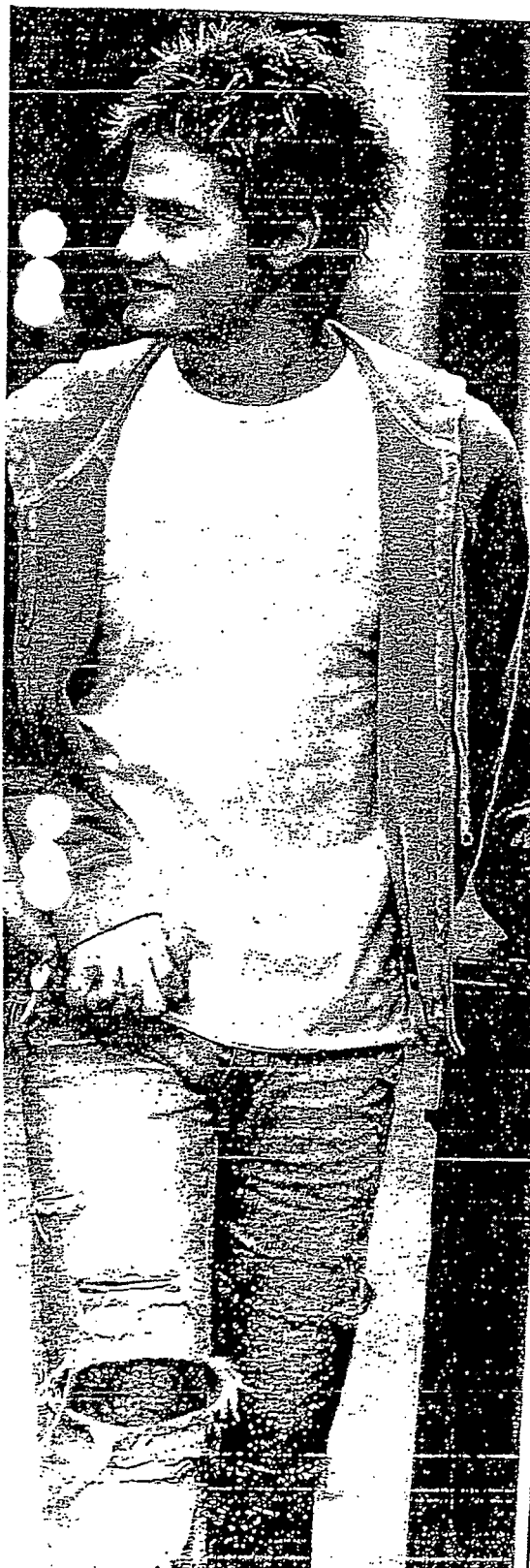
Yours ever,

[Redacted signature box]

pher Meyer



BROADMOOR OR NUTS OVER ASYLUM



Picture: EAMONN & JAMES CLARKE

Beasts on patients' council even want to help choose staff

EXCLUSIVE By TOM CARLIN

KILLERS, rapists and paedophiles are taking over at Broadmoor mental hospital, it was claimed last night.

Some of Britain's worst criminals are using a patients' "user group" to try to interfere in how the top-security asylum is run.

They meet regularly to discuss treatment, education, leisure facilities and patients' rights. But a source at the hospital - home to fiends like Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe and Stockwell Strangler Kenneth Erskine - said: "The patients have now got more say than staff and are constantly making new demands."

"The lunatics are literally taking over the asylum."



Problems

Paedophile John Leather, 47, is believed to be at the forefront at the troubled institution in Berkshire.

Leather, who caused outrage two years ago when he demanded condoms to have sex with patients, is said to be revelling in his role as self-appointed spokesman.

The insider said: "He is telling patients he can sort out any problems they have. He believes he has the power to affect major decisions and is not far off the mark."

Patients will eventually have a say in almost every decision affecting them -

INMATE: Ripper Sutcliffe even sitting in on interviews for new staff. But the initiative has backfired with patients, particularly Leather, trying to take advantage.

A Broadmoor spokeswoman said: "There is a patient user group but their voice is limited."

"The group is part of an NHS-wide scheme but the idea that patients are running the place is not the case. Their opinions are just a small part of the bigger picture."

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