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Mental Health in M*A*S*H

An Analysis of the Changing Portrayal of Mental
Health Topics in the 1970s and Early 1980s

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HIST 485

Dr. McClurken

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Abstract: This paper studies all eleven seasons of the hit television show *M*A*S*H* (1972-1973) and examines how the portrayal of mental health changed in the show's plotlines in response to changing guidelines and mental health policy in the 1970s and early 1980s. This study focuses on the association of mental illness with homosexuality, the changes made to the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in the 1970s and early 1980s, the rise and fall of mental health policies from the Kennedy Administration to the Reagan Administration, and the portrayal of several pertinent mental conditions, such as combat-related trauma, PTSD, repressed memories, phobias, and stress-induced drug use.

In 2016, *M*A*S*H* (1972-1973) was ranked #16 by Rolling Stone magazine on their list of the 100 Greatest TV Shows of All Time.¹ *M*A*S*H* is most famously known for being a Korean War situational comedy drama that paralleled the Vietnam War, however the show came to have a much deeper meaning by exploring contemporary issues of race, gender, sexuality, war, and much more. Despite originating from Richard Hornberger's *MASH: A Novel About Three Army Doctors* (1968), which itself was adapted into a critically acclaimed movie in 1970, the television series only loosely follows the novel's original plot in favor of a more serious commentary that is broken up by comedic undertones. One of the most serious topics undertaken by *M*A*S*H* is that of mental health. While not obvious in the first few seasons, where mental health is treated more as a joke, the later seasons of *M*A*S*H* proved to be a turning point where mental health and its related topics were approached much more seriously and gained more screen time. Given *M*A*S*H*'s reputation as a comedic commentary on contemporary issues, it should come as no surprise that the changing political, social, and cultural movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s were reflected in the show's plotlines. Mental health is one of the most controversial and relevant topics that the show writers' stances changed on over the course of the show's ten-and-a-half-year run, which can further be backed by the growing mental health movement of the time.

At the time of its inception, *M*A*S*H* was essentially a comedic take on the everyday lives of doctors and nurses working near the frontlines of an active warzone. The idea for the series came about after the box office success of Robert Altman's 1970 film adaptation of

¹ Rob Sheffield, "100 Greatest TV Shows of All Time," Rolling Stone, September 21, 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-lists/100-greatest-tv-shows-of-all-time-105998/freaks-and-geeks-102385/>.

Richard Hornberger's original novel, *MASH* (1968).² The book and the film share a common incoherent plot that is more similar to a slice of life series than an actual story. According to James H. Wittebols, "the humor in the novel focuses on sex and making fun of religion and those who are religious," and that these two elements of the book's plot are "primary vehicles for humor in the film."³ Unlike the film and series, Hornberger's original novel never intended to deal with politics, war, or any other social or cultural issue. Instead, the book was merely a series of short stories based on Hornberger's own experiences while stationed at the real-life 8055th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) during the Korean War (1950-1953). It took Hornberger roughly a decade to finish his book, and several more years to find a company willing to publish his seemingly provocative narrative about military life. Despite its rocky start, the novel impressed the appropriate producers and screenwriters in Hollywood and was adapted into a movie just two years after the novel's release.

The film was widely successful, receiving critical acclaim and commercial success that far exceeded its \$3.5 million budget.⁴ This popularity prompted the head of 20th Century Fox Television, William Self, to recruit Gene Reynolds to produce a pilot episode for a series along

² Richard Hooker, *MASH: A Novel About Three Army Doctors* (New York: William Morrow & Co. Inc., 1968); *MASH: A Novel About Three Army Doctors*, which is often shortened to just *MASH*, is the title of Richard Hornberger's original novel. The movie and television show share their titles, *M*A*S*H*, which is the more commonly used form. I used *M*A*S*H* when talking about the show since it is the focus of this analysis and use *MASH* (not italicized) when discussing the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit.

³ James H. Wittebols, *Watching M*A*S*H, Watching America: A Social History of the 1972–1983 Television Series* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1998), 12.

⁴ Wittebols, *Watching M*A*S*H, Watching America*, 15.

the same lines.⁵ Reynolds then persuaded Larry Gelbart, a longtime comedy writer, to sign on as a writer and producer for the show.⁶ Gelbart wrote the pilot for *M*A*S*H* in two days, intending for the show to step away from the usual sitcom formula by slowly introducing more serious topics in later episodes.⁷ The idea was to try to remain faithful to the seriousness of the film and, according to Gelbart, “not convert it into a more or less service-gang routine comedy or a high jinx war.”⁸

Due to its setting and the time of release, *M*A*S*H* is often considered by scholars to be a commentary on the Vietnam War. However, Hal Himmelstein claims “comedy is grounded in both time and place—it addresses the immediate life conditions of the society in which it is produced.”⁹ There is no mistaking the influence of the Vietnam War on *M*A*S*H*, however as time went on and American troops withdrew from Vietnam, the show came to be about so much more than war. One of the most powerful messages intended by the series creators was the consideration of the mental state of people undergoing extreme stress in times of conflict. According to Larry Gelbart,

We wanted to say that war was futile, to represent that it was a failure on everybody’s part that people had to kill each other to make a point. We wanted to say that when you take people from home they do things they would never do. They drink. They whore. They steal. They become venal. They become asinine, in terms of power. They get the clap. They become alcoholics. They become rude. They become sweet. They become loving. They become tender. We wanted to make war the enemy without really saying who was fighting.

⁵ Wittebols, 16; Larry Gelbart, *Laughing Matters: On Writing M*A*S*H, Tootsie, Oh, God! And a Few Other Funny Things* (New York: Random House, 1998), 30.

⁶ Wittebols, 16.

⁷ Wittebols, 23.

⁸ Gelbart, *Laughing Matters*, 30.

⁹ Hal Himmelstein, *Television Myth and the American Mind* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 113.

...routinizing an acceptance of war, year in and year out...essentially defeats the original purpose of the series. I would almost hope that there would be a way to be even blacker about what war does to people, rather than just to say—and I'm afraid it always did, in the tenth year much more than the first—that listen: Given the right buddies, and the right CO, and the right kind of sense of humor, you can muddle through.¹⁰

While Gelbart claims war is the true enemy in the series, it can easily be deduced that he intended for the show to provide a representation of the mental toll war has on individuals. This message appears to constantly be overlooked by scholars in favor of analyzing the representation and portrayal of war in general. This is understandable due to the influence of both the Vietnam War and the Korean War in the show's setting. That being said, *M*A*S*H* is very much a product of the 1970s. There are clear influences of not just Vietnam, but also women's rights, gay rights, the environmental movement, mistrust in government action, and more. While previous scholars of *M*A*S*H*, such as James H. Wittebols and David Scott Diffrient, have included reference to these events in their studies, their analyses fail to address the topic of mental health.¹¹

The mental health movement of the 1970s is perhaps one of the most forgotten about movements in modern American history. This is mainly due to the constant changes in mental health policy, as well as the short-lived programs that sought to improve conditions for patients after nearly a decade of resources being cut in the wake of deinstitutionalization. *M*A*S*H* appears to be one of the few shows that took a stance on the changes in mental health advocacy in the 1970s and 1980s. During its early years,

¹⁰ Wittebols, 18.

¹¹ James H. Wittebols' *Watching Mash, Watching America* (1998) and David Scott Diffrient's *M*A*S*H* (2008) are the only two in-depth scholarly works to examine the television show through a critical, academic lens. Neither of these works explore the topic of mental health in-depth.

*M*A*S*H* treated mental health as a gimmick, as it did with most other issues, before completely changing this stance in later seasons. *M*A*S*H* even has several episodes dedicated to the portrayal of specific mental health issues, both common and uncommon among people undergoing the type of stress the characters face in the show. For this reason, this paper seeks to examine the portrayal of mental health in *M*A*S*H* by looking at how the show approached the topic of mental health, how that portrayal changed over the course of the show's ten-and-a-half-year run, the factors that contributed to that change, and the historical context surrounding the representations of mental health in the show.

The Early Years and the War on Homosexuality

*M*A*S*H* first premiered on September 17, 1972, with a pilot episode full of humorous hijinks that were not that dissimilar from those featured in the film. The pilot established the regular cast and crew found at the 4077 MASH. The show even brought in many of the characters featured from the film, including the wisecracking surgeons Captains Benjamin Franklin “Hawkeye” Pierce (played by Alan Alda) and “Trapper” John McIntyre (played by Wayne Rogers), the more straightlaced Majors Frank Burns (played by Larry Linville) and Margaret “Hot Lips” Houlihan (played by Loretta Swit), as well as the seemingly psychic company clerk Walter “Radar” O’Reilly (played by Gary Burghoff), the unassuming Lieutenant Colonel Henry Blake (played by McLean Stevenson), and the benevolent Reverend Francis John Patrick “Father” Mulcahy (played by William Christopher).¹² Much like the movie, *M*A*S*H* was a show that was self-

¹² Gary Burghoff is the only actor in the television show who also starred in the movie. He played Radar in both iterations. William Christopher did not appear as Father Mulcahy in “The Pilot.” Father Mulcahy was portrayed by George Morgan in the first episode, but William Christopher appeared in the role every episode thereafter.

aware. Stress, depression, and anxiety born from war and the constant influx of wounded soldiers was something to which the characters were no strangers. While the series portrayed a group of fun-loving doctors, it also established one very important detail about the doctors and nurses at the 4077 MASH: they took their jobs seriously but were not afraid to try anything to make light of the dismal situation in which they found themselves.

Much of the medical knowledge and expertise seen in *M*A*S*H* comes from extensive research the show writers conducted to get the feel of a 1950s Korean War MASH unit, while the zeitgeist of the show is heavily reminiscent of its 1970s roots.¹³ While the show always contained various blanket issues associated with mental health, such as alcoholism, depression, and stress, it did not truly start to portray mental health with the same seriousness as topics like war, racism, and feminism until much later in the series. This is partly due to lack of awareness as well as the stigmatization of mental health coming out of the 1960s. The foundation on which much of the United States' mental health care system is based can be found in the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA) of 1963, which was passed as part of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier, leading to a boom in healthcare facilities.¹⁴ The goal was to create a system of community healthcare services and diminish the reliance upon mental institutions.¹⁵ Kennedy would not live to see any of the changes brought about by his advocacy on the subject; however,

¹³ *M*A*S*H 30th Anniversary Reunion Special*, produced by Chris Cowan, Charles A. Duncombe Jr., Mike Farrell, David Goldschmid, Ted Haimes, Korelan Matteson, Burt Metcalfe, Jean-Michel Michenaud, Stephen Pockock, Gene Reynolds, and Monica Stock, aired May 17, 2002 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006) DVD.

¹⁴ Gerald N. Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 239.

¹⁵ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 239.

Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society did enact a series of laws that historian Gerald Grob states were designed to "diminish economic inequalities, address racial issues, and ensure that all Americans would have access to quality medical care."¹⁶

Mental health appeared to be overshadowed by other issues on the healthcare agenda in the late 1960s before being completely overshadowed by the Vietnam War.¹⁷ A growing trend during this time was the popularization of community psychiatry, which is described by Grob as the "principle of distracting" because it was concerned "with optimizing the adaptive potential and psychosocial life skills, as well as lessening the amount of pathology, in population groups (communities, functional groups, etc.) by population-wide programs of prevention, case finding, care, treatment and rehabilitation."¹⁸ By 1967 the National Institute for Mental Health reported that it had funded roughly 286 facilities with the goal of mental health care for communities, however, concerns rose over whether or not communities could support these centers.¹⁹ The growing shortage of professional personnel in many of these areas was also an issue but was soon forgotten as Vietnam became the main focus of Congress and the American public.²⁰ Construction and funding of these facilities stagnated as resources were turned towards the war, resulting in serious financial problems that made the facilities less and less effective.²¹ According to historian Lucas Richert, "deinstitutionalization was

¹⁶ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 240.

¹⁷ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 240.

¹⁸ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 241.

¹⁹ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 249.

²⁰ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 250.

²¹ Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 250.

predicted on improving patients' health through more interaction with the community and greater reliance on anti-psychotic drugs, though ultimately it was meant to transfer mental health care costs to the federal government."²² Without the appropriate funding from Congress, Kennedy's dream of community healthcare almost completely lost traction. This made mental health a highly controversial topic, prompting a rise in "anti-psychiatry" as well as "radical psychiatry."²³ These conflicting opinions would war back and forth while CMHA languished throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. All of these factors resulted in a negative perception of mental health in the early 1970s, resulting in a backlash. *M*A*S*H's* approach to mental health in its early years can be attributed to the culmination of mistrust, stigmatization, lack of funding, and general ineffectiveness of community healthcare brought on by deinstitutionalization. This led to a negative portrayal of the subject in the show's early years as it tried to embody the mess associated with understanding mental health up to that point.

On June 28, 1969, police in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan, New York City, raided the popular gay bar known as the Stonewall Inn. When the raid took a violent turn, members of the LGBTQ community fought back. The event, now popularly known as the Stonewall riots, is one of the most crucial moments in recent history since it is now widely considered to be the moment the gay liberation movement was transformed into the fight for LGBTQ rights in the United States. Coming out of the 1960s, this movement sought to normalize the right for people to openly express their sexual orientation without fear of being oppressed or arrested. This included

²² Lucas Richert, *Break on Through: Radical Psychiatry and the American Counterculture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 57.

²³ Richert, *Break on Through*, 62-65.

the right to not be stigmatized for their sexual preferences, such as being diagnosed with a psychological condition simply because members of the LGBTQ community did not fit into the heterosexual cultural milieu that the United States was known for.

Given that *M*A*S*H* is a product of the rapidly changing and often radical social movements of the 1970s, it should be of no surprise that the show addressed the popularized notion that a difference in sexual orientation equated to mental illness. The American Psychological Association (APA) had a history of ostracizing members of the LGBTQ community, so much so that the APA had recorded diagnostic criteria for many different forms of “sexual deviants” in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM). By the time *M*A*S*H* was in its infancy, the APA had already had the second edition of their diagnostic manual, the DSM-II, in circulation since 1968. However, the prevailing mode of thought towards the LGBTQ community can be traced back to the first edition of the DSM in 1952. According to the DSM-I, “homosexuality” is defined as a “sexual deviation” alongside transvestism, pedophilia, fetishism, and sexual sadism like rape, sexual assault, and mutilation.²⁴ Sexual deviation was part of the larger “sociopathic personality disturbance” category, with the DSM-I referring to individuals placed in this category as being “ill primarily in terms of society and of conformity with the prevailing cultural milieu, and not only in terms of personal discomfort and relations with other individuals.”²⁵ However the 1968 edition of the DSM-II expanded the definition of sexual deviation, which was made a part of the much larger “personality disorders and certain other non-psychotic mental disorders”

²⁴ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1952), 38-39.

²⁵ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders*, 38-39.

category.²⁶ Sexual deviation was redefined into ten subcategories with their own diagnostic codes: homosexuality, fetishism, pedophilia, transvestism, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sadism, masochism, other sexual deviation, and unspecified sexual deviation.²⁷ This continual use of anti-gay language targeted members of the LGBTQ community, classifying their sexual orientation in the same category as more heinous acts. This stance on homosexuality would be what the series creators of *M*A*S*H* were most familiar with during the show's early years, and this negative stance is one that can be observed throughout the first and most of the second season.

Some of *M*A*S*H*'s earliest episodes that address topics related to mental health contain themes that are inherently anti-LGBTQ. In fact, season one episodes like "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts" and "The Ringbanger" have plotlines that exploit mental illness to achieve a result. "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts" features Hawkeye and Trapper's attempts to have Frank approve an R&R request after Henry leaves for a few days. Their plan involves Hawkeye acting insane to garner sympathy, however it backfires when Margaret suggests Frank call in a military psychiatrist with whom she is acquainted. This episode features many gags that can be considered insensitive, including Hawkeye pretending to eat a deceased enemy soldier's liver while dressed in surgical garb as well as a scene where the psychologist attempts to rape Margaret.²⁸ Despite these scenes being problematic on their own, there is also a scene where Hawkeye weaponizes

²⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1968), 44.

²⁷ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 2nd ed., 44.

²⁸ "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts," *M*A*S*H*, season 1, episode 7, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired November 8, 1972 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

homosexuality and sexual deviance, resulting in the psychologist enforcing a diagnosis on the belligerent captain. Hawkeye leaves nothing to the imagination in this scene either, expressing admiration and love for Frank Burns, even showing he has the other man's shaving brush under his pillow.²⁹ The joke here is intended for the audience, who knows Hawkeye detests Burns and thinks he is an incompetent surgeon. However, the psychologist is at first unknowing of this, and it is clear by his reaction to Hawkeye expressing any sort of affection for another man that he also considers homosexuality to be something heinous and uncouth.³⁰

Similar to "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts" use of homosexual themes and situations to sow discord, "The Ringbanger" involves Hawkeye and Trapper convincing a colonel with a high casualty record that he is insane so that he can be sent back stateside. Just like in the previous episode, Frank is the victim of one of their jests. This episode features the two surgeons conspiring to be the only ones the colonel can trust by implying Frank is a homosexual, Henry is an alcoholic, and that Margaret is a promiscuous woman having a sordid affair with Henry. Ultimately the colonel is convinced he is insane, and Hawkeye and Trapper are able to write it off as a job well done. However, the way the two surgeons go about convincing the colonel, as well as his reaction to Frank, is what is most telling about this episode.³¹ The gag even goes so far as to having the colonel refuse a medical examination by Frank because he assumes he has some nefarious purpose in

²⁹ "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts," *M*A*S*H*, season 1, episode 7.

³⁰ "Bananas, Crackers and Nuts."

³¹ "The Ringbanger," *M*A*S*H*, season 1, episode 16, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired January 21, 1973 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

mind.³² Such implications combined with the enforced notion of the colonel's insanity only contributed to a negative view of mental health and homosexuality.

In *Watching M*A*S*H, Watching America*, James H. Wittebols cites both “Bananas, Crackers and Nuts” and “The Ringerbanger” as some examples of the show's negative treatment of homosexuality in its early years.³³ In fact, many of the episodes from *M*A*S*H*'s first season appear to correlate homosexuality with mental illness. The DSM-II was the working edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* that was in circulation when *M*A*S*H* first aired in 1972, so the diagnostic criteria found in that book would be what writers of the show were most familiar with when exploring medical conditions related to mental health. This mindset carried over into *M*A*S*H*'s second season, with one of the most notable examples featuring Corporal Maxwell Klinger (played by Jamie Farr). Klinger is a notable character in *M*A*S*H* for being associated with mental health, simply because he is a disgruntled draftee who is willing to do anything to obtain a Section 8 psychological discharge from the military, including crossdressing and taking part in potentially dangerous and often ridiculous stunts to prove how “crazy” he is. Klinger was first introduced in the season one episode “Chief Surgeon Who?” where he is seen wearing a dress while on guard duty.³⁴ Klinger would return in the season two episode “Radar's Report,” where he is examined by Major Sidney Freedman (played by Allan Arbus) in his first appearance at

³² “The Ringbanger,” *M*A*S*H*, season 1, episode 16.

³³ Wittebols, 28.

³⁴ “Chief Surgeon Who?,” *M*A*S*H*, season 1, episode 4, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired October 1, 1972 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

the 4077 MASH as a recurring psychologist.³⁵ After his examination, Sidney tells Klinger that if he wants to be discharged that he can do so, but he will be permanently labeled “a transvestite and a homosexual” and that he will from then on “go through life on high heels.”³⁶ Klinger is appalled by the idea and refuses to sign the papers to be discharged, maintaining that he is “just crazy” and not a sexual deviant of any kind.³⁷ Klinger would go on to be the subject of jokes related to mental health, but any notions of him being a homosexual disappear in later seasons. Klinger would continue to crossdress for many more seasons, where he came to be in on the joking nature of his appearances rather than an object of derision. In fact, Klinger’s character became more about breaking tension or highlighting other jokes. His crossdressing, which was viewed negatively in the first few seasons, became a positive influence as Klinger became a central character for comic relief alongside other characters like Hawkeye. Klinger eventually did stop crossdressing between seasons seven and eight, during which time he was promoted and took over as the 4077’s company clerk following Radar’s departure. The decision to give up the crossdressing gag was made in response to Klinger accepting more responsibility in the show, a role he fell into that complimented instead of replacing Radar’s role in the series.³⁸

³⁵ “Radar’s Report,” *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 3, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired September 29, 1973 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

³⁶ “Radar’s Report,” *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 3.

³⁷ “Radar’s Report.”

³⁸ Suzy Kalter, *The Complete Book of M*A*S*H*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 84. Kalter quotes Jamie Farr on Klinger replacing Radar and giving up the usual crossdressing routine: “When Radar left, in a sense, I replaced him. I always said the two characters that couldn’t be replaced were Klinger and Radar because they were so unique, so special; they had their own stories going. You could replace command characters but not the two enlisted men. They never considered bringing in another actor—nothing they created could come close to what they had. Of course, it frightened me to get out of the dress and stop the scheming. The audience loved

This stigmatization of homosexuality as a mental condition contrast greatly with the episode “George” from later in the second season. “George” featured a young private who confides in Hawkeye that he is gay and was beaten up by members of his unit after they found out.³⁹ This episode does not target homosexuality in the same manner previous episodes did. In fact, “George” hardly references homosexuality as being a mental condition at all, marking an abrupt change mid-way through the second season. Perhaps coincidentally, this change coincides with changes that occurred to the DSM-II in 1973, where the seventh printing changed the classification of homosexuality in the DSM.⁴⁰ After a series of protests by gay activist groups against the American Psychological Association that dated back to 1970, homosexuality was redefined as a “sexual orientation disturbance.”⁴¹ While this change was approved in December of 1973, no changes actually occurred until the following year. The change was accompanied by a revised definition which stated the new category was for “individuals whose sexual interests are directed toward people of the same sex and who are either disturbed by, in conflict with, or wish to change their sexual orientation.”⁴² While the change did not outright remove homosexuality from the DSM, the APA did state that

it. Much to my delight, I gained even more favor when I went straight, and no one resented my being company clerk.”

³⁹ “George,” *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 22, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired February 16, 1974 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁴⁰ American Psychiatric Association, *Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation Disturbance: Proposed Change in DSM-II, 6th Printing, Page 44* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1973), 1.

⁴¹ American Psychiatric Association, *Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation Disturbance: Proposed Change in DSM-II*, 1.

⁴² American Psychiatric Association, *Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation Disturbance: Proposed Change in DSM-II*, 1.

homosexuality “itself does not constitute a psychiatric disorder” but included a notice that the organization itself did not ally itself with any of the activist groups that had advocated for the change.⁴³ Regardless of their scathing response, the changes brought about by activists is evident in the stance taken by the creators of *M*A*S*H*. Homosexuality was no longer associated with mental health the way it had been in previous episodes, marking a remarkable change from the seemingly anti-LGBTQ stance taken by its characters in the first season. While classifications associated with sexual orientation continued to appear in the follow-up editions of the DSM, the most current edition of the DSM-V from 2013 excludes any mention of sexual orientation.⁴⁴ While it can be argued that *M*A*S*H* has a legacy of conflating homosexuality with mental illness, it can also be argued that the creators of *M*A*S*H* demonstrated an early example of tolerance in favor of the LGBTQ community by doing away with harmful diagnosis in response to community outcry, and not forty years later like the APA.

A New Approach to Portraying Mental Health

Despite constantly correlating mental health and sexual deviance in its early years, *M*A*S*H* did have its moments where the show advocated on behalf of mental health. The first episode of season two is unironically called “Divided We Stand” and features the hijinks of the 4077 after a psychiatrist is sent to the unit to determine whether it should be disbanded.⁴⁵ This episode flaunted the idiosyncrasies and craziness of the

⁴³ American Psychiatric Association, *Homosexuality and Sexual Orientation Disturbance: Proposed Change in DSM-II*, 1-3.

⁴⁴ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

⁴⁵ “Divided We Stand,” *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 1, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired March 25, 1973 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

MASH unit, before portraying a unified front in the operating room that belied their usual dysfunctional nature. Out of all the episodes from *M*A*S*H*'s early seasons addressing mental health, "Divided We Stand" is perhaps the first episode to truly portray the vision Larry Gelbarts had in mind for the show: that war can cause people to act in new and unusual ways, but a common sense of purpose and the right community to support them can allow those people to flourish under even the most difficult of circumstances.⁴⁶

Major Sidney Freedman, the psychiatrist originally called in to evaluate Klinger, returns in the season two episodes "Deal Me Out" and "O.R." In these appearances he acts more as a guiding hand in stressful situations, and it is revealed he has become a part of the regular crew who join the surgeons in the Swamp for poker on Thursday nights.⁴⁷ "Deal Me Out" mainly focuses on a dysfunctional poker game that is constantly interrupted by an Army intelligence officer, however Sidney is forced to step in when a highly agitated patient obtains a gun and threatens Frank for wanting to send him back to the front.⁴⁸ "O.R." is slightly different, because it was the first episode of *M*A*S*H* to not feature a laugh track in order to hone in on the seriousness of the surgeon's work.⁴⁹ Sidney's appearance in this episode is brief, where he arrives for their weekly poker game and is conscripted into helping out in the overcrowded operating room by the tired

⁴⁶ Wittebols 18; Gelbarts 30.

⁴⁷ "Deal Me Out," *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 13, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired December 8, 1973 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD. The Swamp is the name of the tent the surgeons reside in. It was named as such because the surgeons constantly left their quarters in a state of disarray.

⁴⁸ "Deal Me Out," *M*A*S*H*, season 2, episode 13.

⁴⁹ "O.R.," *M*A*S*H*, season 3, episode 5, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired October 8, 1974 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

doctors.⁵⁰ While Hawkeye is in the operating room, Radar tells them that a patient Hawkeye had to perform an open heart mass on earlier in the episode died. Hawkeye takes the news badly, but Sidney is able to snap him out of it fairly quickly by reminding him of all the other people he helps save on a daily basis. Sidney then humorously states “Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice: pull down your pants and slide on the ice!” to remind them all that they may be surrounded by war, pain, and discomfort, but retaining a sense of humor can make the best of a bad time.⁵¹

Starting in its third season, *M*A*S*H* introduced several characters shown to be suffering from mental illness. While there are not many episodes in season three to feature mental health, “The General Flipped at Dawn” and “Mad Dogs and Servicemen” do a particularly good job at stepping away from the stigma associated with mental health seen in the show’s first two seasons. “The General Flipped at Dawn” features a decorated general who starts making outrageous demands of the MASH units in the area. When the general comes to visit it becomes apparent that his reputation is likely what keeps him in command, because the general has lost his grip on reality. Everything from mistaking Klinger for a woman named Marjorie, insisting the MASH should move even closer to the frontlines, and singing and dancing as he attempts to have Hawkeye court-martialed for insubordination indicates the general should not be in command.⁵² Thankfully all of

⁵⁰ “O.R.,” *M*A*S*H*, season 3, episode 5.

⁵¹ “O.R.” Sidney’s phrase from this episode is quoted from the 1967 song “Turn Back the Clock” by Allan Sherman. Sidney would repeat this phrase in the *M*A*S*H* series finale “Goodbye, Farewell and Amen.”

⁵² “The General Flipped at Dawn,” *M*A*S*H*, season 3, episode 1, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired September 10, 1974 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD. Canonically, the 4077 MASH is stationed roughly three miles from the frontlines of the Korean War, in present day Uijeongbu, South Korea. The general in this episode (played by Harry Morgan) wanted to move the 4077 even closer to the frontlines. He has Henry and Frank accompany him when picking out a location that was heavily guarded by enemy snipers, resulting in them nearly being shot. Klinger’s appearance in this episode also appears to

the general's outrageous demands are never met, but this episode does provide perspective on the potential dangers of a person in power with unchecked mental illness.

Whereas "The General Flipped at Dawn" portrays a humorous situation where someone in a place of command has the potential to do serious damage thanks to their perception of reality, "Mad Dogs and Servicemen" presents a real psychological condition. At the start of the episode, Frank wants to send a patient who is paralyzed without any apparent injuries to Tokyo, claiming he has shell shock—which is merely one term used to describe the condition in this episode, alongside combat exhaustion and battle fatigue.⁵³ Unlike Frank, Hawkeye has the insight to contact their psychiatrist friend, Sidney Freedman, who tells Hawkeye to do what he can to force him to snap out of his paralysis. The patient, Travis, shows signs of experiencing flashbacks, before he opens up to Trapper about the guilt he feels for doing nothing as he witnessed tanks kill the others in his unit. Later, as Frank continues to insist he be sent to Tokyo, Travis surprises them all by walking into Henry's office with no signs of paralysis or fatigue.

"Mad Dogs and Servicemen" identifies the condition Travis is suffering from as several things. Shell shock, battle fatigue, combat exhaustion, and hysterical paralysis are all terms used to describe Travis's sudden loss of motion in his legs. While these terms are not found in the first or second editions of the DSM, they are popular umbrella terms for a condition that the U.S. Office of Veterans Affairs has observed in soldiers since the

provide a point of contrast between someone pretending to be mentally ill and someone who is actually suffering from mental illness.

⁵³ "Mad Dogs and Servicemen" *M*A*S*H*, season 3, episode 13, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired December 10, 1974 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

Civil War.⁵⁴ The APA identified the condition as “gross stress reaction” in 1952, a condition reserved for people who experienced “severe physical demands or extreme emotional stress, such as in combat or in civilian catastrophe” that is said to be temporary and will “clear rapidly” when “promptly and adequately treated.”⁵⁵ This diagnosis was purged from the DSM-II in 1968 and replaced with “adjustment reaction of adult life.”⁵⁶ According to the VA, the diagnosis found in the DSM-II was not adequate to properly treat trauma, because it was limited to unwanted pregnancy, fear of military combat, and a type of Gansner syndrome associated with death row patients.⁵⁷ Despite the lack of diagnostic criteria to support the growing number of combat stress and trauma incidents from the Vietnam War, the APA did not fully address the topic until 1980, when post-traumatic stress disorder appeared in the DSM-III.⁵⁸ It was only then, after extensive research, that a link between war and a return to civilian life was established. *M*A*S*H*, however, was able to take the accounts from former doctors, nurses, and soldiers to establish an understanding of the types of trauma people underwent while serving in an active warzone. This means that “Mad Dogs and Servicemen” was one of the earliest episodes in *M*A*S*H* that takes the study of psychiatry seriously. Even Frank, who appears to be a staunch opponent to psychiatry in the early seasons, admits at the end of

⁵⁴ Matthew Friedman, “History of PTSD in Veterans: Civil War to DSM-5,” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014, https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/what/history_ptsd.asp.

⁵⁵ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders*, 40.

⁵⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 2nd ed., 49.

⁵⁷ Friedman, “History of PTSD in Veterans: Civil War to DSM-5.” Gansner Syndrome is a dissociative disorder defined by nonsensical answers to questions.

⁵⁸ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1980).

the episode that the field has some merit after seeing Hawkeye was successful in treating Travis.

After the successful portrayal of combat-related trauma, the treatment of such cases became more and more common at the 4077 MASH. The doctors occasionally referenced the condition, even when episodes were not explicitly about mental health. The show also underwent changes towards the end of its third season, including a change in cast and characterization of recurring characters. While *M*A*S*H* had always been transparent about its relationship with death, the writers choosing to kill off a series regular was nevertheless shocking. Towards the end of the third season, McLean Stevenson chose to leave the show after three years, citing Twentieth Century Fox's total disregard for the *M*A*S*H* cast and crew.⁵⁹ Wayne Rogers also left the series after season three, claiming the role of Trapper had been reduced to an ancillary character and was not growing with the show like the other characters were.⁶⁰ The season three finale, "Abyssinia Henry," ended with the revelation that Henry's plane was shot down over the Sea of Japan, leaving no survivors.⁶¹ While the show would continue, Henry's death was

⁵⁹ David S Reiss, *M*A*S*H: The Exclusive, inside Story of TV's Most Popular Show*, 2nd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1983), 87-88. Reiss quotes Stevenson's frustrations with Twentieth Century Fox: "I could not understand Twentieth Century Fox. I wasn't demanding anything very odd. I was asking for a place to dress. I was asking for some kind of air to be pumped into the stage to combat the 110-degree heat we endured there during July and August. I was asking that we might have a place to sit when we were on location that wouldn't be 150 degrees inside. I wasn't asking for a place to park my car, I just wanted a place to go to the bathroom. We had to go all the way to the make-up department to use the bathroom. I couldn't understand why we even had to *ask* for these things."

⁶⁰ Kalter, *The Complete Book of M*A*S*H*, 52. Wayne Rogers recounted his reasons for leaving the show: "Despite the change in scripts, the character of Trapper didn't grow with the material. He started to be manipulated, like he was an ancillary character plastered onto the script. It didn't matter who was playing him, me or 'Chaim Kanipganop' —it could have been anyone. My creative talents weren't being used."

⁶¹ "Abyssinia Henry," *M*A*S*H*, season 3, episode 24, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired March 18, 1975 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

a constant reminder for both the audience and characters that war had consequences, both physical and mental.

The Show Must Go On: A Dynamic Shift in the Portrayal of Mental Health

*M*A*S*H*'s fourth season began with a change in cast that both complemented and contradicted previous roles seen in the show. The two-part special "Welcome to Korea" revealed that Trapper had received his discharge papers while Hawkeye was away for some much needed R&R.⁶² Instead of waiting to say goodbye to his supposed best friend, Trapper is revealed to have already left by the time Hawkeye returns. Upon discovering this, Hawkeye feels a mixture of happiness, jealousy, and betrayal—a string of emotions that would unknowingly haunt him for the remainder of the series. Upon making friends with Trapper's replacement, B.J. Hunnicutt (played by Mike Ferrell), all seems to fall back in place. However, the hole left in the 4077 MASH by Henry Blake's departure and subsequent death is soon filled by Colonel Sherman Potter (played by Harry Morgan), a seemingly no-nonsense career military surgeon.⁶³ At first it appears Potter's strict nature is going to disrupt the unit, but Potter proves to be an excellent surgeon with a sense of humor that compliments the doctors and nurses.

Alongside the change in cast, the show also experienced a change in tone. Episode plotlines, while still humorous, became more serious. Like in the previous

⁶² "Welcome to Korea: Part 1" *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 1, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired September 12, 1975 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁶³ "Change of Command," *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 3, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired September 19, 1975 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD. Harry Morgan previously played the visiting general from "The General Flipped at Dawn." His portrayal of Colonel Sherman Potter is different from the previous general, with Potter being noticeably more competent and respectful of others. Potter also appears to have respect for mental health, which is established in several of the show's plotlines in later seasons.

season, the show began to show more respect towards mental health by addressing soldier's traumatic responses to war. "Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler?" is remarkable because it portrays a case of combat stress reaction that does not miraculously get better by the end of the episode. A deluge of wounded into the compound brings an unknown soldier who claims he is Jesus Christ. While Frank and Margaret are outraged at his blasphemous claim, Hawkeye advises Colonel Potter to call in Sidney Freedman. Around the same time, the neurotic intelligence officer known as Colonel Flagg (played by Edward Dean Winter) makes an appearance in the camp. Flagg had previously appeared in several episodes as an agent of an unnamed army intelligence organization, where his cagey attitude was meant to be a representation of the lack of transparency put forth by the U.S. government in the 1970s.⁶⁴ Flagg reveals that the man claiming to be Jesus Christ is Captain Arnold Chandler, a highly successful bombardier pilot who flew over fifty-seven successful missions in the past two years. Flagg attempts to blackmail Sidney into releasing the pilot back into active service, but Sidney refuses, delivering a speech that puts the importance of mental health into perspective:

Some men lose an arm, or hand, or a leg. Chandler lost himself. He's not playing a game. He spent two years dropping bombs on people who never did anything to him, until finally something inside this kid from Idaho said, "Enough. You're Christ, you're not a killer. The next bomb you drop, you drop on yourself...I think that with a lot of the right kind of help we may be able to turn him back into Arnold Chandler. We'll never be able to turn him back into a fighting tool. And it's my professional advice that we don't try."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Wittebols, 44-45; David Scott Diffrient, *M*A*S*H* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 47.

⁶⁵ "Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler?," *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 10, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired November 7, 1975 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

After this moving speech from Sidney, his appearance in the camp becomes almost synonymous with mental health. Nearly every episode that focuses on serious mental health topics after “Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler?” features him. Sidney would next appear in the season five episode “Dear Sigmund,” where he hopes to cure his own depression at the 4077 MASH, “where acting crazy keeps everyone sane.”⁶⁶ Sidney is feeling down because he missed the signs in a patient who heard voices telling him to kill himself, so he pens a letter to Sigmund Freud while staying at the 4077 to try and make sense of his depressive state.⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud is a household name where psychology is concerned due to his breakthrough contributions to the field in the early twentieth century. When the members of the 4077 are not making subtle wisecracks about mental health, Freudian language tends to appear in various episodes. While Freudian psychoanalysis and psychology has vastly fallen out of favor, the 1950s setting of *M*A*S*H*, alongside the 1970s air date, made perfect sense for Freud to be the focus of much of Sidney’s techniques. Community mental health centers in the 1970s preferred to empathize with Freud’s methods, specifically psychotherapy, as Grob notes, because it was “an intervention especially adapted to individuals with emotional and personal problems.”⁶⁸ Psychotherapy is, of course, based on Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis, which is the belief that everyone has unconscious thoughts, feelings, memories, and desires. It is believed that the practice of psychotherapy can help relieve any emotions or

⁶⁶ “Dear Sigmund,” *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 8, produced by Gene Reynolds, Allan Katz, Don Reo and Burt Metcalfe, aired November 9, 1976 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁶⁷ “Dear Sigmund,” *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 8.

⁶⁸ Gerald N. Grob, *The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America’s Mentally Ill*. (New York: Free Press, 1994), 263.

experiences that might have been repressed. Much of Sidney's methods in *M*A*S*H* use psychoanalytic theory to explore the trauma seen in soldiers, especially in cases of repressed memories.

A few episodes after "Dear Sigmund," the script is flipped when Hawkeye is the one in need of psychiatric treatment. In "Hawk's Nightmare" Hawkeye starts sleepwalking and having nightmares about two of his childhood friends dying. Hawkeye, fearful of what is happening to him, confides in B.J.: "It's one thing to live in a shooting gallery. Now I'm being attacked from inside...How do I defend myself from myself?"⁶⁹ Sidney, however, tells Hawkeye that his sleepwalking and nightmares are a result of his mind attempting to deal with the trauma he deals with, day in and day out, by regressing all the way back to his childhood in Crabapple Cove, Maine. The only issue is the war keeps intruding, resulting in the horrific scenarios his mind concocts. Sidney once again practices psychoanalytic therapy, allowing Hawkeye to address his repressed memories and deal with them appropriately. While this episode does a good job at addressing trauma and repressed memories, the speed of Hawkeye's recovery is not necessarily realistic. This flaw, however, can be overlooked due to the episodic nature of *M*A*S*H* and the time constraints of twenty-two minute episodes.

The Case of Frank Burns

In the backdrop of seasons four and five, Frank is undergoing his own mental health crisis. Throughout most of the series up to that point, Frank and Margaret were an item. The two were shown to constantly rely on one another, in both a professional and

⁶⁹ "Hawk's Nightmare," *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 14, produced by Gene Reynolds, Allan Katz, Don Reo and Burt Metcalfe, aired December 21, 1976 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

romantic sense. Frank was shown to be obsessed with her many times, promising her the world after the war. The only issue with that is Frank is married, and in the season four episode “Mail Call... Again” he discovers that his wife not only knows about his affair with Margaret, but also wants a divorce.⁷⁰ Margaret believes Frank will use the opportunity for them to be together, but Frank hurts her by calling her a “war horse” and an “army mule” before successfully begging his wife to stay.⁷¹ In a remarkable turn of events, Margaret ends their romantic relationship. Frank is devastated but believes she will come back to him at some point. His hopes are destroyed when Margaret comes back from Tokyo early in season five with exciting news: she is engaged to a career military man, Lieutenant Colonel Donald Penobscott.⁷² In her excitement, Margaret praises her fiancé constantly, something that makes Frank jealous and insecure. This culmination of events affects Frank for the remainder of the season, causing him to spiral.

Frank spends most of season five in a state of paranoia. He is shown to be afraid of change, as well as very controlling. In “Post Op” he hires two private investigators: one to spy on his wife to ensure she is not cheating on him, and the other to spy on the first private investigator to ensure he is not the one she may be cheating with.⁷³ He also becomes hysterical in “Dear Sigmund” when he finds out his wife went on a day trip to Indianapolis with her friends, has started to wear slacks, and is volunteering with the

⁷⁰ “Mail Call... Again,” *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 15, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired December 9, 1975 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁷¹ “Mail Call... Again,” *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 15.

⁷² “Margaret’s Engagement,” *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 3, produced by Gene Reynolds, Allan Katz, Don Reo and Burt Metcalfe, aired September 28, 1976 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁷³ “Post Op,” *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 24, produced by Gene Reynolds, Allan Katz, Don Reo and Burt Metcalfe, aired March 8, 1977 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

Republican party.⁷⁴ His obsession over his wife's monogamy is hypocritical given his history with Margaret, however she is not even the first woman he has cheated on his wife with. After Margaret announces her engagement, Frank claims to have his eye on a new red-haired nurse that is younger than Margaret because he thinks "youth might be nice for a change."⁷⁵ Hawkeye also brings up Frank's ongoing affair with his secretary in "The Novocaine Mutiny," which was happening before he even met Margaret.⁷⁶

Everything for Frank comes to a head when Margaret and Donald marry in the camp after an eight-month engagement. After the couple take off for their honeymoon, Hawkeye, B.J., and Colonel Potter arrange for Frank to have some R&R in Seoul. At the beginning of season six it is revealed that Frank got into some trouble while on leave. Apparently, Frank attempted to molest several blonde women he believed to be Margaret.⁷⁷ He evaded capture by the MPs before accosting a general and his wife in a steam bath. Frank is then held under psychiatric evaluation, before being sent back stateside. Afterwards Frank calls Hawkeye and boasts that when he returned home he was put in charge of a VA hospital and promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. While Hawkeye is outraged, the reliability of Frank's claim is suspect because he is prone to over-exaggeration and self-aggrandizement. He is known for contriving stories similar to the one in "The Novocaine Mutiny" where he tries to have Hawkeye court-martialed,

⁷⁴ "Dear Sigmund."

⁷⁵ "Margaret's Engagement," *M*A*S*H*, season 5, episode 3.

⁷⁶ "The Novocaine Mutiny," *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 21, produced by Gene Reynolds and Larry Gelbart, aired January 27, 1976 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁷⁷ "Fade Out, Fade In, Part 1," *M*A*S*H*, season 6, episode 1, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired September 20, 1977 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

claiming he was doing everything at the 4077 himself.⁷⁸ These events coincided with Larry Linville's departure from the series because he felt Frank had become a one-dimensional character.⁷⁹ Regardless of why, the fact that Frank left the unit because of psychological reasons is ironic due to his constant dismissal of mental health since the start of the series.

Changing Mental Health Policy and Perspective

Starting in 1977 there was an increase in the number of episodes portraying mental health in *M*A*S*H*, with many of these episodes demonstrating that mental health is not something that is taboo or hidden in everyday life. This was in part due to the growing influence of the actors on their respective characters, as well as the burgeoning mental health movement in the United States. The departure of Larry Linville from the show meant Frank's negative views of psychiatry were gone. However, outside the show a much bigger shift took place on the political spectrum. When Jimmy Carter assumed office in 1977, he became one of the first presidents since John F. Kennedy to try and do something about the growing mental health crisis in America. Since the deinstitutionalization of American mental institutions in the 1950s and 1960s, the care of individuals with mental health issues had declined and awareness stagnated. While Carter is not remembered as one of the most popular presidents in U.S. history, he did have a history with increasing awareness and supporting mental healthcare. While governor of

⁷⁸ "The Novocaine Mutiny," *M*A*S*H*, season 4, episode 21.

⁷⁹ Kalter, *The Complete Book of M*A*S*H*, 2nd ed., 115-116. Larry Linville talked about his final year on *M*A*S*H*, stating, "When Frank and Hot Lips were no longer a duet, I think there were structural problems. The writers were writing for her and writing for me, and the Katzenjammer kids were divided. After Gelbart left, it was easier to run Frank into a scene, dump on him, get a laugh, and run him out the door. I think Hot Lips and Frank's relationship was pivotal to the show. Once it was dissolved, there were a goodly number of problems... I didn't much want to come back for a good-bye show at the beginning of Year Six, so it was never seriously discussed."

Georgia, Carter established the Commission to Improve Services to the Mentally and Emotionally Retarded, where his wife, Rosalynn, was also a member of the commission.⁸⁰ The number of hospitalized patients fell by about thirty percent under the commission's leadership, a statistic that contrasted greatly with the increase seen elsewhere in the country.⁸¹ It was based on this success that Carter sought to increase mental health reform throughout the country in 1977.

On February 17, 1977, Carter issued an executive order creating the Presidential Commission on Mental Health (PCMH). While there was little to suggest an immediate change, the decision to use the term "mental health" instead of "mental illness" indicated a policy shift.⁸² Carter's PCMH took an even bigger step further by organizing a group of men and women as commissioners from diverse backgrounds, where "their interests revolved around the mental health of minorities and underserved groups rather than the specific needs of persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses."⁸³ The PCMH had a rocky start, receiving criticism because it failed to address pertinent issues and accurately represent the concerns of various ethnic groups.⁸⁴ Unfortunately the commission failed to direct the public's attention in its early years, mainly because mental health appeared to be less immediate a concern when compared to issues like "urban violence,

⁸⁰ Gerald N. Grob, "Public Policy and Mental Illnesses: Jimmy Carter's Presidential Commission on Mental Health," *The Milbank Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (September 2005): 428.

⁸¹ Grob, "Public Policy and Mental Illnesses," 429.

⁸² Grob, "Public Policy and Mental Illnesses," 429.

⁸³ Grob, "Public Policy and Mental Illnesses," 431.

⁸⁴ Grob, "Public Policy and Mental Illnesses," 437.

assassinations, and racial friction.”⁸⁵ Regardless of the public reception, the APA considered the commission “an important step toward forging a national policy and commitment for adequate care and treatment of the mentally disabled.”⁸⁶ In the following years Carter would aim to do just that, petitioning Congress in a manner reminiscent of Kennedy’s Community Mental Health Act.

Carter initially petitioned Congress in May 1979, however it took nearly a year and a half before the House of Representatives and the Senate could come to an agreement. The major issue was that there was no consensus on what could be considered mental health policy.⁸⁷ The rising criticism of deinstitutionalization combined with the lack of progress from the PCMH during its first year created controversy, with interest groups questioning the role of mental health professionals as well as patient rights.⁸⁸ After much deliberation, the Mental Health Systems Act was finally signed into law on October 7, 1980.⁸⁹

Unlike the Community Mental Health Act of 1963, the Mental Health Systems Act of 1980 provided federal provisions and grants for mental healthcare.

The provisions of the Mental Health Systems Act reflected the ambiguities and contradictions that had been characteristic of mental health policy during the preceding two decades. The act reaffirmed the priority for community mental health services, particularly for such underserved groups as individuals with chronic mental illnesses, children and youth, the elderly, ethnic and racial minorities, women, the poor, and

⁸⁵ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 444.

⁸⁶ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 444.

⁸⁷ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 445.

⁸⁸ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 445.

⁸⁹ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 447; United States Congress, “H.R.7299 - Mental Health Systems Act,” Congress.gov, August 22, 1980.

rural residents. It emphasized planning and accountability and mandated “performance contracts” as a condition for federal funding, the creation of new intergovernmental relationships, and closer links between the mental health and the general health care systems.⁹⁰

The legislation also prioritized cases involving chronic mental illness, adolescents, children, the elderly, and rape victims.⁹¹ This complexity of the document created contingencies meant there “was a little something to everyone,” yet this also brought into question the effectiveness of the legislation.⁹² This opposition was ultimately what led to the law’s downfall in January 1981. MHSA was only signed into law for roughly three months before nearly everything Carter and his PCMH had worked towards was repealed almost the minute he was out of office. The inauguration of Ronald Reagan brought about massive policy changes and reversals, including the repeal of the MHSA and CMHA. As historian Gerald Grob has noted, Carter attempted to centralize mental health, making the care and concern of such individuals a federal matter, whereas Reagan’s “decentralization of authority merely exacerbated the existing tensions, as federal support was reduced at precisely the same time that the states were faced with social and economic problems that increased their fiscal burdens.”⁹³

Despite the repeal of what could have been an early unifying bill for the concern and care of mental health, Carter’s administration did succeed in bringing awareness to the matter. During the end of Carter’s presidency, the APA made significant changes to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Whereas earlier editions of

⁹⁰ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 447.

⁹¹ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 448.

⁹² Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 448.

⁹³ Grob, “Public Policy and Mental Illnesses,” 449.

the DSM had defined certain mental conditions on rather ambiguous terms, the APA made improvements to their diagnostic handbook before releasing the DSM-III in 1980. The APA had been working to update the DSM since 1974 in an effort to make the diagnostic nomenclature more similar to what was found in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).⁹⁴ Compared to the DSM-II, the DSM-III “introduced a number of important innovations, including explicit diagnostic criteria, a multiaxial diagnostic assessment system, and an approach that attempted to be neutral with respect to the causes of mental disorders.”⁹⁵ More commonly known forms of mental health conditions started to emerge, especially since the DSM-III provided a much more in-depth list of diagnostic criteria that covered a wider range of mental conditions than what was previously seen. This led to mental health becoming a topic that was more seriously considered and talked about, especially in the later seasons of *M*A*S*H*.

With the departure of Frank Burns, there was a vacancy at the 4077 MASH. Frank’s position was filled by Charles Emerson Winchester III (played by David Ogden Stiers), a well-to-do surgeon whose cocky attitude crossed the wrong person, resulting in his permanent placement at the MASH full time. Unlike Frank, Charles was good at what he did, but his desire to leave was comparable to Klinger’s want of a Section 8. Hawkeye, B.J., and Charles had their moments when they did not get along, but their grievances with one another were more realistic than those they had had with Frank. Charles is from a very prosperous family and was slated to be the head of thoracic surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital. However, this does not remove Charles from the

⁹⁴ American Psychiatric Association, “DSM History,” American Psychiatric Association, 2023, <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/about-dsm/history-of-the-dsm>.

⁹⁵ American Psychiatric Association, “DSM History.”

stressors of the MASH unit. In fact, Charles is arguably the most out of place person, because his time at the 4077 is the first time he has had to deal with combat related injuries. It takes a toll on him, so much so that he even develops an addiction to amphetamines late into the sixth season to keep up with the constant deluge of incoming wounded and to cope with the reality of being in a warzone.⁹⁶

Interestingly enough, Charles's amphetamine addiction is not the only season six episode to address drug use. "Major Topper" addresses the use of placebos when the 4077 receives a bad batch of morphine. Charles himself is skeptical of placebos, believing they will not work since most of the patients at the MASH unit in need of the morphine suffer from compound fractures. Colonel Potter, however, believes "the body can do remarkable things if the mind will let it," and orders the surgeons to maintain a united front as they hand out "white lies" to the wounded who need them.⁹⁷ This episode demonstrates a possible real-life use of the placebo effect, which had been a widely accepted method since the 1960s.⁹⁸ This episode also features a sub-plot where Klinger must deal with a new corpsman who is a real candidate for a Section 8 psychological discharge, which only helps him put his own claims of being mentally ill into perspective.

The season six episode "War of Nerves" demonstrates how the stressors of war have begun to drive most of the camp "crazy." Morale is low and frustrations surface by everyone taking it out on everyone else. Thankfully Sidney Freedman rides in on a bus,

⁹⁶ "Dr. Winchester and Mr. Hyde," *M*A*S*H*, season 6, episode 24, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired February 27, 1978 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁹⁷ "Major Topper," *M*A*S*H*, season 6, episode 25, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired March 27, 1978 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

⁹⁸ Ted J. Kaptchuk, "Intentional Ignorance: A History of Blind Assessment and Placebo Controls in Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 72, no. 3 (1998): 389–433, <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.1998.0159>.

but as a casualty instead of a visitor, alongside his last patient who he had been helping in a foxhole. Things come to a head when pandemonium breaks out in the mess tent, so Colonel Potter asks that Sidney see “some of the loonier ones” on a one-to-one basis.⁹⁹ Troubles include Margaret and Charles feuding with one another over petty matters but insisting neither is bothered, Klinger thinking he really is going mad because his penchant for crossdressing has him more interested in fashion than the women usually seen wearing the clothes, Radar wondering if he is too old to still be carrying around a teddy bear to cope with the war, and Sidney’s own patient, a young man named Tom, blaming Sidney for sending him back to the front after he witnessed three other men get killed only to later get badly injured himself. Tensions continue to rise throughout the episode and the despondent Sidney begins to feel overwhelmed himself when members of the 4077 decide to build a bonfire to release stress. Sidney thinks their solution is ingenious, calling it a “pretty controlled response” to all the stress they deal with on a day-to-day basis.¹⁰⁰ Sidney even gets in on the activities himself, stripping off his army uniform and burning it while everyone else cheers.

A similar episode to “War of Nerves” appeared in the tenth season. “Pressure Points” once again welcomes the return of Sidney Freedman; however, Colonel Potter is the one to call this time. Apparently, stress is getting to Potter, who feels he has been performing “a lot less perfect than I [Potter] can accept.”¹⁰¹ However, Potter is not the

⁹⁹ “War of Nerves,” *M*A*S*H*, season 6, episode 5, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired October 11, 1977 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

¹⁰⁰ “War of Nerves,” *M*A*S*H*, season 6, episode 5.

¹⁰¹ “Pressure Points,” *M*A*S*H*, season 10, episode 16, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired February 15, 1982 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

only one dealing with stress in the camp. Hawkeye and B.J. are feuding with Charles over their cleanliness habits. As tensions boil over, the surgeons find themselves destroying the Swamp in a silent fit of rage that attracts the attention of everyone in the camp. Potter catches wind, but instead of getting mad he appears to understand the stress they are under and humorously gives them advice for their “spring cleaning.”¹⁰² Potter reveals that Korea is the third war he has been in, making him feel like everything is outside of his control. Sidney, however, ends up giving Potter the pep talk he needed, encouraging to let go of the things he cannot control and continue to do the best he can.

While it might not seem like it on the surface, “War of Nerves” and “Pressure Points” are very profound episodes because they keep with the theme of demonstrating that mental health is a very complicated thing that does not always have a clear avenue of treatment. Whereas “Pressure Points” seems to focus solely on stress, “War of Nerves” also covers a case of combat trauma response. The only other episode in later seasons to address a similar trauma response is the season eleven episode “Trick or Treatment.” This episode briefly explores a soldier who had stopped eating because some members of his unit died in a foxhole while he was getting seconds of a celebratory meal.¹⁰³ Hawkeye reasons with him and recommends him to Sidney, though the results of his trauma and grief is unknown. While there are not any explicit mental conditions diagnosed or referenced in these episodes, they do show that the war is taking its toll on everyone, causing them to find their own release in such a stressful situation.

¹⁰² “Pressure Points,” *M*A*S*H*, season 10, episode 16.

¹⁰³ “Trick or Treatment,” *M*A*S*H*, season 11, episode 2, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired November 1, 1982 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

Unlike previous episodes regarding mental health, “C*A*V*E” explores how something as simple as a phobia can be debilitating to the mind. This episode reveals Hawkeye suffered from claustrophobia from a young age when the 4077 is forced to temporarily evacuate to a nearby cave during an artillery barrage.¹⁰⁴ This episode also reveals Margaret suffers from phonophobia, an irrational fear of loud noises, which is only made worse by the loud noise from the shelling.¹⁰⁵ Throughout the episode Hawkeye can barely stay within the mouth of the cave, and the camera work does an excellent job at portraying the unsettling nature of being in such a confined space. When a patient they had to move prematurely starts to get worse, Hawkeye volunteers to go back to the camp to operate on him rather than stay in the cave. Margaret, while terrified of the shelling, refuses to let him go by himself. The two eventually get through the ordeal, but their respective fears leave them exhausted and they both collapse on beds next to their patient in the operating room.

The portrayal of phobias in “C*A*V*E” is fascinating because neither claustrophobia nor phonophobia were recorded as mental conditions in the DSM at the time of the episode’s release. “C*A*V*E” premiered in 1979, roughly a year before any descriptions of phobias were officially documented in the DSM-III (1980). The only mention of phobias in the DSM-II is under “phobia neurosis,” which is described as an “intense fear of an object or situation which the patient consciously recognizes as no real

¹⁰⁴ “C*A*V*E,” *M*A*S*H*, season 7, episode 21, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired February 5, 1979 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

¹⁰⁵ “C*A*V*E,” *M*A*S*H*, season 7, episode 21.

danger.”¹⁰⁶ A simple addendum that says “a wide range of phobias have been described,” and does not elaborate more.¹⁰⁷ The DSM-I did include a partial list of phobias under its “phobic reaction” category, but failed to describe the conditions and reactions of any of said phobias.¹⁰⁸ Having an episode where the unshakable characters of Hawkeye and Margaret nearly break down to seemingly normal situations helped normalize these phobias, especially with the other characters supporting them instead of disregarding their feelings on the matter.

Season seven’s “The Billfold Syndrome” once again features the return of Sidney Freedman, who is called in to deal with a battalion medic who forgot his identity. After a brief talk where it is revealed the medic cannot remember a thing, Sidney determines “something terrible happened to him out in the field and he decided to deal with it by not dealing with it.”¹⁰⁹ To make him remember, Sidney uses hypnosis while Hawkeye and B.J. try to recreate the situation so Sidney can get the complete picture. Apparently the medic’s battalion was attacked and he found the body of his younger brother, who was serving in another unit. The medic was devastated because he had promised his mother he would look after his brother, so when he found his brother’s body he simply forgot everything rather than deal with the trauma. Sidney would go on to use hypnosis again in “Goodbye Cruel World,” to discover why a decorated Chinese-American war hero attempted to commit suicide after learning he will be returning home. Sidney discovers

¹⁰⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 40.

¹⁰⁷ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 40.

¹⁰⁸ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders*, 120-121.

¹⁰⁹ “The Billfold Syndrome,” *M*A*S*H*, season 7, episode 6, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired October 16, 1978 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

the man had fought on the western front during World War II, so Korea was the first time he was engaged with enemies that looked as if they could be anyone from his family. Sidney then uses hypnosis to encourage the man to simply ball his hand into a fist whenever he has suicidal thoughts, rather than try and kill himself.¹¹⁰

While hypnosis never really played a big part in treating mental health in *M*A*S*H* outside of these two episodes, it is curious that the treatment appeared more than once. According to Lucas Richert, hypnotism gained popularity in the 1970s as an alternative to psychedelic substances like LSD.¹¹¹ While the practice was often misunderstood, American anesthesiologist and hypnotist Bertha Rodger claimed hypnosis “was well worth the time and effort entailed to use... as an adjunct to drug sedation or chemo-anesthesia, or as a hypno-analgesia or anesthesia to whatever degree circumstances permit.”¹¹² Hypnotism was able to significantly reduce the amount of medication, allowing for a “mastery of pain” that was based upon a patient’s physical and mental potential.¹¹³ Rodger explains that hypnosis relies on “psychological and physiological principles,” and is based on a relationship built on trust and confidence.¹¹⁴ How Richert and Rodgers describe hypnosis correlates with its use in the show. Sidney is shown to be very self-assured, confident that the hypnosis will work, while developing a comforting rapport with the patients undergoing the process. While hypnosis does not

¹¹⁰ “Goodbye, Cruel World,” *M*A*S*H*, season 8, episode 21, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired February 11, 1980 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

¹¹¹ Richert 119.

¹¹² Richert 119.

¹¹³ Richert 119.

¹¹⁴ Richert 119.

appear outside “The Billfold Syndrome” and “Goodbye, Cruel World,” the fact that it even made an appearance in the first place indicates the writers of *M*A*S*H* valued accuracy of treatment information when addressing mental health.

In “Bless You, Hawkeye,” Hawkeye is once again the one dealing with psychological trauma when he starts sneezing uncontrollably.¹¹⁵ Colonel Potter, B.J., Charles, Margaret, and Father Mulcahy try every cure they know before testing him for every allergy they have tests for. After ruling out physical causes, Sidney is called in to determine if anything psychological is happening. It turns out that the last batch of wounded had a soldier who fell in a ditch filled with moldy water, and Hawkeye was the one to operate on him. The smell of the mold and water reminded Hawkeye of a traumatic event from his childhood. When Hawkeye was seven, his cousin, Billy, pushed him out of the boat they were fishing in and he nearly drowned.¹¹⁶ Billy had apparently even convinced Hawkeye that it was his fault he had fallen in. Hawkeye had repressed the memory, misremembering the events so he only remembered Billy pulling him out of the water. Sidney tells Hawkeye his admiration for his cousin conflicted with the memory of how he nearly killed him, so he altered the events to forget.¹¹⁷ Repressed memories like these are something that are recorded as being one of the most common ways to deal with trauma. This episode would only be a prelude to Hawkeye’s trauma later on in the series finale, where something much more horrific than nightmares with false outcomes occurs.

¹¹⁵ “Bless You, Hawkeye,” *M*A*S*H*, season 9, episode 17, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired March 16, 1981 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

¹¹⁶ “Bless You, Hawkeye,” *M*A*S*H*, season 9, episode 17.

¹¹⁷ “Bless You, Hawkeye.”

“Goodbye, Farewell and Amen”

While many of *M*A*S*H*'s episodes are arguably excellent at portraying mental health to a wider audience, the series finale hones in on the topic more than what was seen in previous years. “Goodbye, Farewell and Amen” is the two-and-a-half-hour-long series finale to *M*A*S*H* that aired on February 23, 1983. It received critical acclaim and forty years later still holds the title of the most viewed series finale of all time.¹¹⁸ The only shows to come close to its record breaking 106 million viewers were *Cheers* and *The Fugitive*. In fact, this episode of *M*A*S*H* still holds the title of one of the most viewed televised programs in American history, reigning number one for twenty-seven years before being surpassed by Super Bowl XLIV in 2010.¹¹⁹ Despite its age, “Goodbye, Farewell and Amen” is considered a classic episode for its portrayal of trauma and loss before officially ending the “war” that had lasted nearly three times longer than the war that had inspired the show.

“Goodbye, Farewell and Amen” was written and directed by Alan Alda, who also gave one of the most powerful and haunting performances of someone undergoing a mental crisis. It is already a somewhat sad episode before delving into its contents. It is, after all, the end of a very prosperous series that lasted far longer than its original creators could have ever hoped for. The title also indicates a sort of finalness that was not present in any other episode of *M*A*S*H*. However, the sobering nature of the episode quickly takes hold when it fails to open with any of the signature pranks or jokes. Instead, the

¹¹⁸ Padraig Cotter, “Why MASH’s Finale Is Still the Most Watched TV Episode of All Time,” ScreenRant, September 24, 2022, <https://screenrant.com/mash-show-finale-most-viewed-tv-episode/>.

¹¹⁹ Cotter, “Why MASH’s Finale Is Still the Most Watched TV Episode of All Time.”

episode opens in an unfamiliar location where Hawkeye is heard talking to Sidney Freedman before loudly proclaiming he wishes to leave. From there the audience is able to grasp the visual and vocal cues: Hawkeye, the seemingly unbreakable rebel who has been with the audience since day one, is locked in the mental ward of an army hospital.¹²⁰ Hawkeye, whom the audience had come to love as the chief surgeon at the 4077 for both jokes and his skill with a scalpel, reportedly tried to operate on a patient without anesthesia because he was convinced the anesthesiologist was trying to smother him with the mask.¹²¹ While this incident was cause for concern, it was not until Hawkeye drove a Jeep through the Officer's Club that he was committed.¹²² Gradually, Sidney is able to get Hawkeye to recount the events leading up to his initial psychotic break. The story Hawkeye tells is dark, darker than anything featured on *M*A*S*H* before. What starts out as a fun day at the beach for the members of the 4077 soon turns deadly when their bus's return is delayed by Korean refugees. The bus soon pulls over when they receive a report of possible Chinese soldiers in the area. The goal was to shut off the engine and cease all noise until it was determined safe to continue. The noise of the bus is not all they had to worry about, because Hawkeye yells at one of the Korean refugees, a woman carrying a chicken, due to the noise her extra passenger is making. To silence it, she smothers it until it is dead. However, there is a discrepancy in the tale. Why would Hawkeye care so much about a chicken? This is the part of his story that makes the least amount of sense, which Sidney constantly presses on before Hawkeye finally breaks and the truth is

¹²⁰ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen," *M*A*S*H*, season 11, episode 16, produced by Burt Metcalfe, aired February 28, 1983 (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2008) DVD.

¹²¹ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen," *M*A*S*H*, season 11, episode 16.

¹²² "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

revealed: it was not a chicken the Korean woman had been holding, but her infant child.¹²³

Alan Alda's portrayal in this episode is both poignant and extremely meaningful because his portrayal of paranoia, grief, nightmares, and flashbacks are all reminiscent of post-traumatic stress disorder. Whereas episodes in earlier seasons had explored mental health in soldiers who came through the 4077, none had quite touched on what happens to them after they are discharged. Hawkeye was a different matter. He was the so-called star of the show, yet episodes leading up to the series finale established that everyone had their breaking point—including Hawkeye. When Hawkeye finally reveals what is happening on the bus, he breaks down crying before telling Sidney "I didn't mean for her to kill it! I just wanted it to be quiet!"¹²⁴ He further goes on to tell Sidney he resents him for making him remember the woman smothering her own child, but Sidney is adamant he "get it out in the open" so he can help Hawkeye through his ordeal.¹²⁵ It is at this point Hawkeye thinks he will be sent home; however, Sidney recommends he return to the 4077. Hawkeye is immediately thrust back into the fray, where he is forced to offload patients from a bus—one that is much too similar to the one he was on before being committed to a mental institution.

Despite returning to duty, Hawkeye is obviously not the same. His eyes are haunted, he is hesitant to perform surgery, and not long after returning decides to jump

¹²³ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

¹²⁴ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

¹²⁵ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

into a tank and drive it straight into the 4077's trash dump.¹²⁶ Sidney later reasons that his actions were quite reasonable, since the MASH was being mortared for having the tank parked in the compound. However, Hawkeye also shies away from the orphaned children who Father Mulcahy does so much to help. He tells Sidney,

Yesterday I spent a year in the operating room. I was up to my ankles in panic... I'm a little out of control, Sidney. Surgery used to be like falling off a log. Now it's more like falling off a cliff... I can't sleep... No. If I sleep, then I talk. If I don't talk, I think. I think too fast. If I could just slow down my thinking. I just think too fast, that's all. I mean, I don't think we have to make a big deal out of this, you know? So I think too fast and I'm afraid of children. That's— That's not— That's not terrible.¹²⁷

Hawkeye is later forced to work on a Korean child who was injured by mortar fire. Sidney's presence, however, is like a rock to him and he decides to face his fears and save her life. Sidney, satisfied that Hawkeye has made progress, leaves the 4077 for good. With peace on the horizon, Hawkeye decides to take it slow and return home to his small town of Crabapple Cove to hopefully deal with all the trauma he experienced so far from home.¹²⁸

While "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen" never outright states it, it can be inferred from Hawkeye's reactions as well as his hesitancy around certain people and situations that he suffers from PTSD. In 1983, PTSD was still a relatively new concept. It first appeared in the 1980 edition of the DSM-III, where it is described as "the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychologically traumatic event that is generally

¹²⁶ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

¹²⁷ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

¹²⁸ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

outside the range of usual human experience”¹²⁹ The DSM-III even accounts for different types of trauma leading to the development of PTSD, including rape, assault, military combat, natural and man-made disasters, and even damage to the central nervous system.¹³⁰ PTSD is described to be made worse “when the stressor is of human design.”¹³¹ Some of the side effects include difficulty falling asleep, recurrent nightmares of the traumatic event, impaired or repressed memories surrounding the event, difficulty concentrating, and survivor’s guilt. Hawkeye exhibits many of these symptoms in “Goodbye, Farewell and Amen,” and it appears the trauma he experienced as a wartime surgeon will be following him home.

In 1983, Congress requested the VA conduct a study, later known as The National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS), which was the first study of its kind to examine the prevalence of PTSD in Vietnam Veterans. The study found that roughly fifteen percent of Vietnam veterans suffered from PTSD, helping to bring greater attention to the issue. The study took place over a decade after the Vietnam War had finally ended. The results were not published until 1988, where it was found that “war zone stressor exposure is significantly related to PTSD among theater veterans even after the effect of potential predisposing factors has been controlled”¹³² Studies following NVVRS, including the National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (NVVLS)

¹²⁹ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1980), 236.

¹³⁰ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 236.

¹³¹ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 236.

¹³² Richard A. Kulka et al., “Contractual Report of Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study,” *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, November 7, 1988, https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/articles/article-pdf/nvvrs_vol1.pdf, F-20.

published in 2014, found that a significant number of those veterans continue to suffer from long term PTSD.¹³³ Many Vietnam veterans failed to receive the proper mental health care needed in the wake of Vietnam, however shows like *M*A*S*H* helped demonstrate that people suffering from such conditions needed proper help in order to fully reintegrate back into society. Even though the audience does not get to see characters like Hawkeye return home, the brief glimpse into Hawkeye's struggles following his discharge from the mental institution was just enough to indicate a larger issue to the world at large.

Despite it being one of the core themes of the episode, PTSD is not the only thing Hawkeye is suffering from. While he is locked away in a mental institution, B.J. received his discharge papers and is excited he finally gets to return home to his wife and daughter. While B.J. feels bad about it, he initially decides to leave without burdening Hawkeye with the knowledge that he will be leaving before Hawkeye, who had been stationed in Korea for much longer than B.J. While it is later revealed B.J.'s travel orders are rescinded, Hawkeye becomes bitter because B.J. is the second person to leave "without leaving me [Hawkeye] so much as a damn note."¹³⁴ It is in this moment that Hawkeye reveals how hurt he was by Trapper abandoning him, leading him to question if there was something about him that made people not want to be around him.¹³⁵ The way Hawkeye acts is reminiscent of someone with abandonment issues, which is

¹³³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "PTSD and Vietnam Veterans: A Lasting Issue 40 Years Later," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014, <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/agent-orange/agent-orange-summer-2015/nvvl.asp>; William E. Schlenger et al., "Design and Methods of the National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study," *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* 24, no. 3 (June 20, 2015): 186–203, <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1469>.

¹³⁴ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

¹³⁵ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

understandable since he is in a place where people come and go, alive or dead.

Abandonment issues are classified as a form of anxiety, but can also be a sign of a much larger personality disorder, such as dependent personality disorder (DPD).¹³⁶ Hawkeye, however, shows none of the other signs of DPD, such as allowing people to make decisions for him and the inability to do things without another's input.¹³⁷ It is likely Hawkeye just fears losing the camaraderie and "family" he has created for himself at the 4077, or it is perhaps another symptom of PTSD. More of this can be seen when B.J. is forced to return. Hawkeye silently walks up next to B.J., who is happy to see him, and apologizes for leaving without saying goodbye. Hawkeye makes a half-hearted joke about him not noticing B.J. was gone, and immediately B.J. can tell something is wrong. Later, after it is announced the peace treaty was signed and the fighting will end in twelve hours, Hawkeye tries to coerce B.J. into saying goodbye, which B.J. does not do until their final moments where it is revealed he arranged the stones positioned around the camp to say "GOODBYE" as Hawkeye's helicopter takes flight.¹³⁸

Conclusion

At the end of its ten-and-a-half-year television run, *M*A*S*H* continued to be a show that was beloved in the hearts of Americans. With its humorous hijinks and wisecracking surgeons, *M*A*S*H* easily could be mistaken for an ordinary comedy-drama with a wartime setting. Even with its easy-going humor, *M*A*S*H* had a darker

¹³⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 324-325.

¹³⁷ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed., 324-325.

¹³⁸ "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen."

side that sought to address various controversial issues in the 1970s and 1980s, chiefly among them the topic of mental health. While mental health was an ongoing and highly contentious topic for much of the show's run, the creators and writers for *M*A*S*H* managed to use the show as a platform to portray the growing tolerance and later advocacy on the subject. Like with many issues covered by the show, mental health started off as a negative subject matter that soon turned into some of the most important plot points throughout the series. Not only did *M*A*S*H* show a remarkable tolerance and advocacy for mental health; it ended its series on a sober yet fulfilling note, allowing its audience to better understand the struggles of individuals undergoing mental health crises. Even though shows since then have managed to address mental health in a much more transparent manner, there may never again be another show like *M*A*S*H*. The real-life events leading to the creation of the show, as well as the cast and crew who stuck with the show throughout the years, will never be replicated. *M*A*S*H* is truly a masterpiece of its time, demonstrating that one can always see the light even the darkest of times.

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Honor Pledge

I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sydney Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text of the honor pledge.