OFFICE OF IMPROBABLE JURISDICTION

EXPERIMENTAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTONOMOUS PERSONS REVIEW BOARD

NIMH-ERB-006

THE CINEMATIC JENNER

On Conspiracy, Sabotage, the Death of Nicodemus, and the Misappropriation of Collective Authority

An Institutional Inquiry into Political Violence, Coerced Participation, the Deliberate Compromise of Essential Machinery, and the Use of Emergency Conditions to Secure Control over an Autonomous Community

Issuing Authority: Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
Reviewing Body: Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board
Docket: NIMH-ERB-006
Related Proceedings: NIMH-ERB-001 through NIMH-ERB-005
Principal Respondent: Jenner-B
Additional Persons of Interest: Sullivan, Justin, Nicodemus, Mrs. Brisby, and members of the rat community
Evidentiary Record: Don Bluth, *The Secret of NIMH* (1982)
Classification: Institutional Governance, Political Conspiracy, Sabotage, Homicide, Coercion, Emergency Operations, Protection of Vulnerable Persons, and Abuse of Collective Authority
Date: October 28, 2026
Status: Substantive Ethical Findings Entered; Principal Respondent Deceased

Nature of Proceeding: Fictional regulatory satire and literary ethics review.

This proceeding concerns the cinematic adaptation of Robert C. O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*.

The findings concern events depicted in Don Bluth's *The Secret of NIMH* (1982).

The literary and cinematic narratives constitute separate evidentiary records.

No allegation concerning actual scientific institutions or real-world misconduct is made.

The Office claims no actual judicial, municipal, regulatory, or prosecutorial authority.

I. NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATION

The Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board hereby opens a separate inquiry into the conduct of Jenner as depicted in the 1982 cinematic record.

The investigation arises from the death of Nicodemus during an operation undertaken to relocate the home of Mrs. Brisby and her children.

The operation required the use of substantial mechanical equipment.

The rat community had agreed to assist the Brisby family because their home was threatened by impending agricultural activity and could not safely be moved through ordinary means while Timothy remained seriously ill.

The rats possessed the technological capabilities necessary to attempt the relocation.

The undertaking was therefore a practical expression of the autonomy and intelligence examined in preceding proceedings.

However, the operation was compromised.

Jenner deliberately interfered with the lifting apparatus.

The resulting mechanical failure caused Nicodemus's death.

Subsequent events revealed that the sabotage was connected to Jenner's opposition to the proposed relocation of the rat community to Thorn Valley.

The Office recognizes that political disagreement concerning the Plan was legitimate.

It further recognizes that the Plan involved substantial sacrifices and that its opponents possessed interests requiring consideration.

Those propositions were established in NIMH-ERB-004.

They remain controlling.

The present proceeding concerns conduct extending beyond disagreement.

Jenner did not merely oppose Nicodemus.

He sought to remove him.

He did not merely question the relocation.

He deliberately compromised machinery being used to protect a vulnerable family.

He did not merely attempt to persuade the community.

He employed coercion, deception, and violence.

The Office therefore identifies a fundamental distinction.

A member of an autonomous community may challenge its leadership.

That entitlement does not establish a corresponding right to arrange the leader's death.

The investigation proceeds.

II. QUESTIONS PRESENTED

The Board identifies eleven principal questions.

First: What legitimate political interests did Jenner possess before undertaking the acts under investigation?

Second: At what point did his opposition to the Plan become a conspiracy directed toward coercive interference with community leadership?

Third: What evidence establishes that the mechanical failure resulting in Nicodemus's death was deliberate?

Fourth: What ethical responsibilities arise when an individual knowingly compromises equipment being used to protect vulnerable persons?

Fifth: What degree of responsibility should attach to Sullivan, whose participation was sought through intimidation and whose subsequent conduct included resistance to Jenner?

Sixth: Did Jenner's conduct constitute an attempt to obtain political authority through the removal of an existing leader?

Seventh: What significance attaches to his subsequent treatment of Mrs. Brisby and her warning concerning the impending arrival of NIMH personnel?

Eighth: How should Justin's use of force and Sullivan's final intervention be evaluated?

Ninth: What institutional responsibilities arise when an internal political conflict threatens individuals who are not parties to that conflict?

Tenth: What limitations should govern the recognition of new leadership following the violent removal of an established leader?

Eleventh: Does the existence of a morally defensible political objective ever permit its opponents to be deprived of ordinary protections against violence?

The Board considers the eleventh question capable of a direct answer.

The moral strength of a political objective does not make its opponents immune from scrutiny.

Neither does opposition to that objective create permission to kill its advocates.

The distinction is entered.

III. SEPARATION OF THE TWO JENNERS

Before examining the cinematic evidence, the Office reiterates the evidentiary distinction established in the preceding docket.

Jenner-A, the literary character, opposed the Plan and departed with six followers.

The literary record does not establish that he arranged Nicodemus's death.

Indeed, the events involving Nicodemus and Jenner differ materially between the two narratives.

Jenner-B, the cinematic character, participated in a deliberate conspiracy to eliminate Nicodemus.

His actions resulted in lethal harm.

The characters therefore present fundamentally different questions.

Jenner-A requires examination of dissent, departure, and the limits of collective authority.

Jenner-B requires examination of conspiracy, sabotage, violence, and attempted political control.

The Office recognizes that both possess the same name.

It recognizes that both are members of the enhanced rat population.

It recognizes that both oppose relocation to Thorn Valley.

Nevertheless, the existence of shared characteristics does not justify consolidating their actions.

The Board therefore directs that no finding concerning Jenner-B be transferred to Jenner-A without independent evidence from the literary record.

Adaptation is not retroactive culpability.

The distinction is sustained.

IV. THE LEGITIMATE ORIGIN OF THE DISAGREEMENT

The Office first considers Jenner's political position before the conspiracy.

The rat community had developed a sophisticated settlement beneath the Fitzgibbon rosebush.

Its inhabitants possessed electricity, machinery, organized facilities, and an established standard of living.

The Plan contemplated abandoning these arrangements and relocating to Thorn Valley.

The proposed transformation was motivated partly by the desire to cease depending upon resources obtained from humans.

Nicodemus supported the Plan.

Jenner opposed it.

The Board recognizes that Jenner's opposition was not inherently impermissible.

Relocation posed legitimate practical questions.

The community would need to establish new infrastructure.

Its members would need to produce more of their necessities.

They would face uncertainty.

They would relinquish established comforts.

A member could reasonably question the feasibility of such a transition.

The Board further recognizes that individuals may possess different preferences concerning collective risk.

Some may favor independence despite uncertainty.

Others may value established security.

These differences do not automatically demonstrate defective judgment or illegitimate motives.

However, the cinematic record depicts Jenner's opposition developing beyond ordinary political deliberation.

He does not merely argue that Thorn Valley is unsuitable.

He comes to regard Nicodemus's continued leadership as an obstacle to the preservation of his preferred arrangements.

The Board identifies this development as significant.

An individual may conclude that a leader's policy is wrong.

That conclusion does not establish that the leader's existence is wrongful.

The Office therefore distinguishes political opposition from the subsequent decision to remove the political opponent through violence.

Disagreement concerns the legitimacy of a decision.

Assassination concerns the continued existence of the decision-maker.

The two activities are not interchangeable.

V. THE CONSPIRATORIAL PURPOSE

The cinematic record establishes that Jenner sought Nicodemus's death.

His objective was connected to the struggle over the Plan.

Nicodemus represented the community's proposed departure from the rosebush.

Jenner sought to preserve the existing settlement and its advantages.

The Board recognizes that a leader may be removed from authority through legitimate collective procedures.

A community may reconsider its policies.

It may select new representatives.

It may limit executive power.

It may permit members to depart.

It may establish procedures for replacing leaders who no longer possess the confidence of those governed.

The available cinematic record does not establish a complete constitutional framework for the rats.

The Office therefore declines to invent particular impeachment, recall, or electoral procedures.

Nevertheless, the absence of a documented constitutional mechanism does not establish that assassination becomes an acceptable alternative.

The Board considers the distinction elementary.

Jenner's conduct was not directed toward persuading the community to reconsider the Plan through ordinary deliberation.

He sought to remove Nicodemus from the decision-making process by causing his death.

The intended elimination of a political opponent is not merely an unusually forceful form of disagreement.

It is an effort to alter the distribution of authority by depriving another individual of life.

The Board therefore finds that Jenner's objective was incompatible with the principles of autonomous self-government established in preceding proceedings.

The rats had escaped an institution that exercised substantial control over them.

Their subsequent political development required recognition of the independent agency of community members.

Jenner's conspiracy rejected that principle.

He sought to determine the community's future by eliminating a person whose judgment differed from his own.

The Office therefore enters the following finding:

The desire to preserve a community's established arrangements does not establish authority to kill those who propose changing them.

The finding is sustained.

VI. THE RECRUITMENT OF SULLIVAN

The Board next considers Sullivan.

Sullivan appears as Jenner's subordinate or associate within the cinematic record.

Jenner involves him in the plan to sabotage the house-moving operation.

The film establishes that Sullivan becomes aware of the intended act and its purpose.

However, the record also depicts hesitation and reluctance.

During the operation, Jenner directs Sullivan to cut the relevant line.

Sullivan resists.

Jenner responds with intimidation.

The Office considers these circumstances material.

Participation in a conspiracy may involve individuals possessing different degrees of authority, knowledge, and freedom of action.

A person who originates a plan occupies a different position from someone recruited into it.

A person acting voluntarily may occupy a different position from someone threatened into cooperation.

These distinctions do not automatically eliminate responsibility.

They do require examination.

The Board therefore rejects two conclusions.

First, that Sullivan possessed no morally relevant agency merely because Jenner exercised influence over him.

Second, that Sullivan's presence established the same degree of responsibility as Jenner's deliberate initiation and execution of the sabotage.

The cinematic record supports a more differentiated assessment.

Sullivan was exposed to the proposed wrongdoing.

He was pressured to participate.

He hesitated.

And, at the decisive moment, he did not carry out Jenner's instruction to cut the line.

The Office regards this refusal as significant.

It does not erase every earlier question concerning Sullivan's participation.

Nevertheless, it establishes that the final act of sabotage cannot properly be attributed to him merely because Jenner ordered him to perform it.

The person who directs an unlawful act and the person who refuses to complete it have not performed identical conduct.

The distinction is entered.

VII. THE HOUSE-MOVING OPERATION

The Board now examines the circumstances in which the sabotage occurred.

Mrs. Brisby sought assistance because her family's home faced danger from impending plowing.

Her son Timothy was seriously ill.

Moving him through ordinary means presented a substantial medical risk.

Remaining in the existing location also posed danger.

The rat community therefore agreed to employ its mechanical capabilities to move the family home to a safer position near the stone.

The operation involved the manipulation of a heavy cinderblock residence.

A system of ropes, pulleys, and mechanical equipment was assembled.

Nicodemus participated in directing or overseeing the undertaking.

Other rats contributed labor and technical expertise.

The Office recognizes that the operation was inherently hazardous.

A heavy structure was being lifted and moved.

Its occupants included children.

The equipment was operating under difficult environmental conditions.

The consequences of mechanical failure could be severe.

The Board therefore distinguishes ordinary operational risk from deliberately introduced risk.

An institution may undertake a hazardous operation for legitimate protective purposes.

Such an undertaking does not automatically establish negligence.

The relevant considerations include necessity, available alternatives, preparation, equipment, and reasonable precautions.

However, the deliberate compromise of essential equipment introduces a different ethical problem.

The persons conducting the operation were entitled to rely upon the absence of intentional sabotage by members of their own community.

The Board therefore identifies a fundamental responsibility.

An individual who knowingly interferes with machinery supporting a vulnerable population assumes responsibility for the foreseeable dangers introduced by that interference.

The fact that the machinery was already operating under difficult conditions does not eliminate the significance of deliberate sabotage.

The Office recognizes that storm conditions may have complicated the operation.

It does not recognize adverse weather as an authorization to sever load-bearing connections.

VIII. THE SABOTAGE

The cinematic record depicts Jenner deliberately cutting components of the lifting apparatus.

Sullivan's hesitation precedes the act.

Jenner executes the interference himself.

The resulting mechanical failure causes equipment associated with the operation to collapse.

Nicodemus is killed.

The Board considers the evidence of deliberate action substantial.

The failure is not presented merely as an unexplained mechanical accident.

It follows the conspiratorial preparation.

It occurs after Jenner has identified Nicodemus as an intended victim.

It results from Jenner's purposeful interference.

The record therefore supports a finding of intentional sabotage.

The Office distinguishes this finding from a determination concerning a particular real-world criminal offense.

The present proceeding applies ethical analysis to a fictional narrative.

No actual penal code is invoked.

Nevertheless, the conduct is sufficiently established to support substantive moral judgment.

Jenner knowingly compromised a mechanical operation involving foreseeable danger to others.

He did so to advance a political objective.

His interference resulted in Nicodemus's death.

The Board therefore finds that the conduct cannot be excused as an ordinary operational failure.

The Office further observes that the precise mechanical sequence does not alter the central finding.

Whether fatal injury resulted from falling equipment, associated machinery, or the compromised lifting assembly, the deliberate interference remains causally significant.

The Board does not require the invention of an engineering reconstruction beyond the cinematic evidence.

It requires recognition of the act depicted.

The apparatus failed because it was deliberately compromised.

The compromise was undertaken to remove Nicodemus.

Nicodemus died.

The finding is entered.

IX. THE DEATH OF NICODEMUS

The Office now considers the death itself.

Nicodemus was an established leader of the rat community.

His influence arose from knowledge, experience, and his role in the development of the colony.

He advocated relocation to Thorn Valley.

He also participated in an operation intended to protect Mrs. Brisby's family.

The Board recognizes that these roles were distinct.

Nicodemus's political position made him Jenner's opponent.

His participation in the house-moving operation placed him within the area affected by the sabotage.

Jenner exploited the second circumstance to accomplish an objective arising from the first.

The Board considers this significant.

Nicodemus was not killed in the course of an ordinary political disagreement.

He was killed during an undertaking whose legitimate purpose was the protection of vulnerable persons.

The operation itself was not an attempt to determine the community's political future by force.

It was an effort to move a family home.

The conspiracy transformed that protective operation into an instrument of lethal political interference.

The Office therefore identifies two wrongs.

The first concerns the deliberate killing of Nicodemus.

The second concerns the corruption of an operation undertaken for the benefit of others.

These wrongs overlap.

They are not identical.

The deliberate killing of a political opponent is ethically grave.

The use of essential protective infrastructure to accomplish that killing introduces additional danger and undermines the trust necessary for collective action.

The Board therefore enters the following determination:

Jenner's conduct constituted an intentional use of operational sabotage to cause the death of a political opponent.

The Board further finds that Nicodemus's support for the Plan did not diminish his entitlement to protection against violence.

The fact that Jenner considered his leadership undesirable does not establish that his life was expendable.

The distinction is entered.

X. THE DEATH PRESENTED AS AN ACCIDENT

Following the sabotage, the community initially encounters Nicodemus's death amid the apparent failure of a difficult operation.

The cinematic sequence permits Jenner to present himself publicly without immediately disclosing his responsibility.

He subsequently speaks of Nicodemus's death while maintaining his opposition to the Plan.

The Board considers this conduct relevant.

Where an individual deliberately creates a hazardous condition, subsequent concealment of that intervention may materially affect the community's understanding of events.

The death may be interpreted as an accident.

The equipment may be blamed.

The weather may be blamed.

The difficulty of the operation may be blamed.

The actual cause may remain concealed.

The Board recognizes that not every mechanical failure proves sabotage.

An institution must not automatically attribute unexplained accidents to malicious conduct.

But where deliberate interference is established, the omission of that interference from the public account becomes significant.

The community cannot properly evaluate its operational safety if the responsible individual conceals the cause of failure.

Nor can it properly consider its political circumstances if a leader's death is falsely presented as an event unrelated to a struggle over authority.

The Board therefore distinguishes between mourning and accountability.

A public expression of sorrow does not establish that the speaker is uninvolved in the death.

A tribute does not substitute for an accurate incident account.

An individual may speak respectfully of the deceased while possessing knowledge material to the circumstances of death.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that participation in public mourning constitutes evidence of innocence.

The ability to deliver a memorial statement does not establish that the speaker did not arrange the death being memorialized.

The distinction is entered.

XI. THE ARRIVAL OF MATERIAL NEW INFORMATION

The Board next considers Mrs. Brisby's return.

During her efforts to protect her children, Mrs. Brisby was captured and confined within the Fitzgibbon household.

While held there, she overheard information indicating that personnel associated with NIMH intended to search for the escaped rats and remove the rosebush the following morning.

She subsequently escaped.

Upon reaching the rats, she attempted to warn them.

The Office recognizes that her information was material.

The community's decision concerning Thorn Valley had previously involved ethical disagreement and competing assessments of risk.

The warning introduced an immediate question of survival.

If the anticipated operation occurred, the existing settlement could be discovered or destroyed.

The rats therefore had reason to reconsider the timing of their departure.

The Board distinguishes the original political debate from the emergency created by new information.

A member might reasonably oppose relocation under ordinary circumstances.

That member might nevertheless reconsider upon receiving credible evidence of imminent danger.

The capacity to revise a position in response to new facts is not evidence of weakness.

It is a component of responsible judgment.

Jenner, however, rejects Mrs. Brisby's warning.

His response must be considered in light of his prior conduct.

He has already attempted to eliminate Nicodemus to preserve the existing settlement.

The warning threatens the viability of the political outcome he sought.

The Board therefore identifies a serious conflict between Jenner's personal interest in preserving his position and the community's interest in accurately assessing danger.

The Office does not presume that every reported threat must automatically be accepted as true.

Verification may be appropriate.

However, the rejection of material evidence solely because the evidence undermines a preferred policy is not a satisfactory method of institutional decision-making.

A leader's investment in a conclusion does not reduce the significance of facts inconsistent with that conclusion.

The Board considers this principle central.

XII. THE ATTACK UPON MRS. BRISBY

The cinematic record depicts Jenner responding violently to Mrs. Brisby.

He attacks her.

He also attempts to seize the extraordinary amulet she possesses.

The Office considers both actions material.

Mrs. Brisby was not a member of the rat community's political leadership.

She had not participated in the dispute over the Plan.

She sought assistance in protecting her children.

Her warning concerned a potential danger to the rats.

The Board therefore finds that her position was distinct from that of Jenner's political opponents.

She was a vulnerable outsider attempting to communicate information relevant to the community's survival.

Jenner's violence against her cannot be justified merely by reference to the internal political disagreement.

The Office further recognizes that the amulet possessed extraordinary properties within the cinematic narrative.

Its origin, custody, and operation shall receive separate examination in NIMH-ERB-007.

For present purposes, however, its unusual nature does not eliminate Mrs. Brisby's interests.

The fact that an object possesses extraordinary power does not automatically establish that any politically influential individual may seize it.

Nor does suspicion concerning the object's significance authorize violence against its possessor.

The Board therefore identifies two distinct concerns.

First: Jenner sought to suppress or discredit information inconsistent with his political objective.

Second: He employed violence against the individual communicating that information.

Both are incompatible with responsible institutional leadership.

The Office further observes that a warning of danger does not become less worthy of consideration because it is delivered by a mouse.

The species of the messenger does not determine the truth of the message.

The distinction is entered.

XIII. THE RESPONSIBILITY OWED TO THE BRISBY CHILDREN

The Board returns to the family whose protection occasioned the operation.

Mrs. Brisby's children remained within the house during the attempted relocation.

Timothy's illness had made the family especially vulnerable.

The operation therefore required care.

The rats were not merely moving an unoccupied structure.

They were undertaking a rescue involving living occupants.

Jenner's sabotage introduced danger into that operation.

The Board recognizes that Nicodemus was the intended political victim.

Nevertheless, foreseeable danger was not limited to Nicodemus.

The collapse of the lifting system could have endangered workers.

It could have destabilized the house.

It could have harmed those inside.

It could have prevented completion of the rescue.

The Office therefore distinguishes intended harm from foreseeable collateral harm.

An individual may intend to injure one person while knowingly creating danger to others.

The absence of a specific desire to harm those others does not automatically eliminate responsibility for exposing them to risk.

The Board further recognizes that the subsequent sinking of the house into the mud occurs after additional events and under difficult conditions.

The available narrative does not establish that every later mechanical complication was directly caused by the original sabotage.

The Office therefore declines to merge all subsequent hazards into a single finding without examining causation.

Nevertheless, the initial sabotage was undertaken during an occupied-house relocation.

The occupants' vulnerability was apparent.

The danger was foreseeable.

The Board therefore concludes:

An individual who deliberately compromises a rescue operation cannot avoid scrutiny concerning the persons being rescued merely because those persons were not the intended targets.

The finding is sustained.

XIV. JUSTIN'S INTERVENTION

The Office now considers Justin.

Justin serves as captain of the rat Guard and participates in the community's protective operations.

During the confrontation following Mrs. Brisby's warning, he intervenes against Jenner.

The cinematic record depicts the conflict escalating into armed violence.

Justin and Jenner engage in a sword fight.

Jenner's responsibility for Nicodemus's death becomes explicit during the confrontation.

Justin wounds Jenner.

Jenner subsequently attempts to renew the attack.

The Board recognizes that these circumstances require distinguishing defensive force from retaliation.

The fact that Jenner committed a grave wrong does not establish that any subsequent use of force against him would necessarily be justified.

Force must be evaluated in relation to the danger present when it is used.

The Office therefore identifies the relevant considerations.

Was there an immediate threat?

Was the intervention directed toward preventing harm?

Were less harmful means realistically available?

Was the force used proportionate to the danger?

Did the danger continue after Jenner was wounded?

The cinematic record depicts an active armed confrontation.

Justin intervenes while Jenner is threatening others.

The Board therefore finds substantial grounds for treating Justin's initial intervention as protective rather than merely punitive.

Nevertheless, the Office declines to invent a comprehensive use-of-force policy for the rat Guard.

No such policy has been entered into the fictional record.

The Board also declines to presume that Justin acquired unrestricted authority merely because Jenner's wrongdoing had been revealed.

The legitimacy of defensive force and the legitimacy of subsequent political leadership remain distinct questions.

A person may be justified in stopping an attacker without thereby acquiring permanent authority to govern everyone the attacker threatened.

The distinction is entered.

XV. THE DEATH OF SULLIVAN

The Board returns to Sullivan.

During the final confrontation, Sullivan acts against Jenner.

He assists Justin.

Jenner responds with violence, inflicting a fatal wound upon Sullivan.

The Board considers this sequence especially significant because Sullivan's earlier participation had been compromised by intimidation.

The film depicts him moving from reluctance to resistance.

He had been pressured to assist the conspiracy.

He had refused to perform the decisive sabotage.

He subsequently acted to oppose Jenner.

His final intervention was undertaken while gravely wounded.

The Office recognizes that these actions bear upon the ethical assessment of his conduct.

However, the Board rejects the proposition that a final act of courage automatically erases every earlier decision.

Ethical evaluation requires attention to the entire record.

Sullivan possessed knowledge of the plan.

His prior association with Jenner raises questions concerning his opportunity to warn others.

His fear and exposure to coercion are also significant.

The Board therefore declines to characterize him either as an entirely innocent observer or as an individual possessing responsibility identical to Jenner's.

The record supports a more complicated conclusion.

Sullivan was subjected to pressure.

He hesitated.

He refused the decisive instruction.

He later intervened.

He suffered fatal violence.

The Office considers his ultimate resistance morally significant.

It does not require that significance to be established through the denial of every earlier difficulty.

The recognition of courage does not require the fabrication of a flawless past.

Nor does an earlier failure eliminate the possibility of later courage.

The distinction is entered.

XVI. THE FINAL INTERVENTION

The cinematic record depicts Jenner attempting to attack Justin after the immediate sword fight appears to have ended.

Sullivan, although mortally wounded, throws a dagger.

The dagger strikes Jenner.

Jenner dies.

The Board recognizes that this event differs from Jenner's killing of Nicodemus.

Jenner arranged Nicodemus's death to eliminate a political opponent.

Sullivan's final act occurs during an ongoing violent confrontation and is directed toward stopping Jenner's renewed attack upon Justin.

The relevant purposes differ.

The circumstances differ.

The immediacy of the threat differs.

The Board therefore rejects any assumption that all deliberate uses of lethal force possess identical ethical character.

A defensive intervention may be justified where necessary to prevent imminent serious harm.

Its legitimacy depends upon the circumstances.

The Office considers Sullivan's action in light of the immediate threat depicted.

Jenner had already inflicted fatal injury upon Sullivan.

He had fought Justin.

He attempted another attack.

Sullivan intervened to prevent further harm.

The Board therefore finds substantial grounds for viewing the final act as defensive.

This finding does not constitute a declaration that every use of lethal force against a wrongdoer is justified.

It concerns the particular danger depicted in the cinematic record.

The Office further recognizes that Sullivan died from the wound Jenner inflicted.

The resulting sequence therefore includes two deaths arising from Jenner's continued violence after Nicodemus's killing.

Jenner killed Sullivan.

Sullivan fatally wounded Jenner while intervening against a renewed attack.

The Board finds the distinction material.

The deliberate initiation of lethal political violence and the use of force to stop an immediate lethal threat are not ethically interchangeable.

The finding is entered.

XVII. ON THE ATTEMPTED ACQUISITION OF AUTHORITY

The Office next considers Jenner's effort to secure control over the community.

The conspiracy was not confined to a personal grievance.

Jenner's opposition to the Plan was connected to his desire to preserve the rosebush settlement.

Nicodemus's leadership obstructed that objective.

The sabotage removed Nicodemus.

Jenner subsequently attempted to influence the community's direction.

The Board therefore finds that the acts of violence were materially connected to a struggle over collective authority.

This distinguishes the event from an isolated personal assault unrelated to governance.

The Board recognizes that a community may replace its leaders.

Such replacement may occur through processes appropriate to the institutions involved.

The cinematic record does not establish a complete constitutional framework.

Nevertheless, the absence of an explicit written constitution does not render every method of succession legitimate.

The deliberate killing of a leader for the purpose of altering collective policy is incompatible with meaningful political self-determination.

It deprives the community of an opportunity to decide the matter through deliberation.

It substitutes the perpetrator's preference for the independent judgment of other members.

The Board therefore enters the following principle:

Political authority obtained through the deliberate destruction of those who oppose its acquisition lacks the legitimacy that would arise from the community's free and informed choice.

The Office further observes that the effectiveness of a violent act does not establish its legitimacy.

A successful assassination may remove a leader.

It does not prove that the assassin was entitled to govern.

The distinction is entered.

XVIII. THE FAILURE OF THE CONSPIRACY

Jenner's actions do not secure the political future he intended.

Nicodemus dies.

But the Plan survives.

Mrs. Brisby communicates the impending danger.

Justin intervenes.

The confrontation exposes Jenner's wrongdoing.

The community ultimately proceeds toward Thorn Valley.

The Board recognizes that this outcome is significant.

However, it rejects the proposition that the failure of a conspiracy eliminates its ethical seriousness.

A failed attempt to secure control through violence remains an attempt to secure control through violence.

Likewise, the survival of the community's preferred policy does not erase the consequences of the attack.

Nicodemus is dead.

Sullivan is dead.

Jenner is dead.

Mrs. Brisby has been assaulted.

A protective operation has been compromised.

The community has experienced the violent interruption of its leadership.

The Office therefore declines to treat the eventual continuation of the Plan as a complete remedy.

The community's survival is important.

The victims' deaths remain important.

Both propositions must be preserved.

An institution's recovery from violence does not make the violence administratively inconsequential.

The Board considers this finding essential.

XIX. THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION

Following Jenner's death, Justin assumes a prominent role in directing the community.

The cinematic record indicates that the rats proceed toward Thorn Valley under his leadership.

The Board recognizes his protective conduct during the crisis.

His actions contributed to preventing further violence.

He also responded to information concerning the impending danger from NIMH.

These circumstances support recognition of his practical leadership during an emergency.

However, the Board distinguishes emergency command from permanent political authority.

The available record does not establish every procedure through which Justin's subsequent leadership was confirmed.

It does not establish a complete election.

It does not establish a written succession provision.

Nor does it establish that the absence of such details renders his authority illegitimate.

The Office therefore declines to invent either a constitutional defect or a constitutional certification.

Instead, it identifies an institutional obligation.

Where violence interrupts ordinary leadership, the surviving community should preserve the possibility of determining its future through procedures that do not depend solely upon the outcome of the confrontation.

The Board recognizes that urgent action may be required.

The colony faced an imminent threat.

Immediate evacuation could not necessarily await elaborate political proceedings.

Nevertheless, the emergency did not establish that all future decisions must remain beyond review.

The Office therefore enters the following principle:

Authority necessary to preserve a community during an emergency should not automatically become authority immune from examination after the emergency has passed.

The distinction is entered.

XX. THE INDEPENDENT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMULET

The Office briefly considers the extraordinary intervention that permits Mrs. Brisby to save her family.

Following the failure of ordinary mechanical efforts, the house sinks into the mud.

The amulet manifests supernatural power.

Mrs. Brisby employs that power to lift the home and move it to safety.

The Board recognizes that the cinematic record establishes this intervention.

It further recognizes that the intervention is extraordinary.

However, its ethical significance must not be confused with the earlier sabotage.

The fact that the family ultimately survives does not eliminate the danger to which it was exposed.

The fact that supernatural assistance becomes available does not establish that ordinary mechanical precautions were unnecessary.

The fact that the rescue succeeds does not retroactively authorize an attempt to cause death through sabotage.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the amulet's intervention cures every preceding wrong.

The existence of an extraordinary remedy does not erase the responsibility associated with creating a foreseeable hazard.

The Board also declines to attribute the amulet's power to the rat community's electrical infrastructure.

The cinematic record does not establish that the artifact functions through ordinary technological mechanisms.

Its nature, custody, and operation are reserved for NIMH-ERB-007.

The Office therefore enters no conclusion concerning magical utility service.

The distinction is entered.

XXI. FINDINGS

Following review of the cinematic record, the Board enters the following findings.

Finding 1 — Separate Cinematic Identity

Jenner-B is the character depicted in Don Bluth's 1982 film and shall not be consolidated with Jenner-A.

Finding 2 — Legitimate Initial Political Disagreement

Jenner possessed a legitimate interest in expressing opposition to the proposed relocation to Thorn Valley.

Finding 3 — Deliberate Conspiratorial Purpose

Jenner sought Nicodemus's death as a means of removing opposition to the preservation of the rosebush settlement.

Finding 4 — Recruitment of Sullivan

Jenner involved Sullivan in the planned sabotage and employed intimidation when Sullivan hesitated.

Finding 5 — Sullivan's Refusal

The cinematic record depicts Sullivan resisting the instruction to carry out the decisive sabotage.

Finding 6 — Intentional Mechanical Interference

Jenner personally compromised the lifting apparatus during the Brisby house-moving operation.

Finding 7 — Death of Nicodemus

The resulting mechanical failure caused Nicodemus's death.

Finding 8 — Political Motive

The sabotage was materially connected to the dispute concerning the Plan and the authority of Nicodemus.

Finding 9 — Endangerment of Nonparticipants

The sabotage introduced foreseeable danger into an operation involving Mrs. Brisby's children and other participants.

Finding 10 — Concealment of Responsibility

Jenner did not initially disclose his intentional interference as the cause of Nicodemus's death.

Finding 11 — Material Warning

Mrs. Brisby supplied information concerning the expected arrival of NIMH personnel and the danger to the settlement.

Finding 12 — Violent Response to the Messenger

Jenner attacked Mrs. Brisby and attempted to seize the amulet she possessed.

Finding 13 — Protective Intervention

Justin intervened during the resulting violent confrontation.

Finding 14 — Responsibility for Sullivan's Death

Jenner inflicted the fatal wound suffered by Sullivan.

Finding 15 — Sullivan's Final Defensive Act

Sullivan fatally wounded Jenner while intervening against a renewed attack upon Justin.

Finding 16 — Political Violence Distinguished from Defensive Force

The circumstances surrounding Nicodemus's death differ materially from those surrounding Jenner's death.

Finding 17 — No Automatic Exoneration Through Successful Rescue

The eventual survival of Mrs. Brisby's family does not eliminate the ethical significance of the earlier sabotage.

Finding 18 — No Complete Mechanical Attribution

The record does not justify attributing every later difficulty involving the Brisby home to the original sabotage without additional causal analysis.

Finding 19 — Attempted Political Control

Jenner's actions constituted a coercive attempt to alter the community's political direction through the elimination of a leader.

Finding 20 — Limits of Emergency Leadership

The necessity of immediate command following the confrontation does not automatically settle every question concerning subsequent governance.

Finding 21 — Institutional Responsibility

The community's experience demonstrates the need to distinguish legitimate political disagreement from violence intended to prevent collective decision-making.

Finding 22 — Continuing Individual Dignity

Jenner's wrongdoing does not eliminate the obligation to describe his actions accurately or to distinguish established conduct from unsupported accusations.

Finding 23 — No Transfer to the Literary Record

No finding of conspiracy, homicide, or sabotage shall be attributed to Jenner-A merely because the characters share a name.

XXII. THE BOARD'S DETERMINATION

The Board returns to the principal question.

At what point did Jenner's opposition cease to constitute legitimate political dissent?

The answer does not depend upon whether his preferred policy was wise.

The Plan for Thorn Valley was defensible.

Its underlying concerns were substantial.

Its advocates sought a more independent and ethically responsible community.

Nevertheless, opposition to the Plan remained within the legitimate scope of political disagreement.

Jenner was entitled to question Nicodemus.

He was entitled to argue against relocation.

He was entitled to identify perceived weaknesses in the Plan.

He was entitled to seek support for a different course.

These protections did not depend upon the correctness of his conclusions.

They arose from the community's own commitment to recognizing autonomous agency.

However, Jenner's subsequent conduct crossed a fundamental boundary.

He sought to eliminate a political opponent.

He recruited another member into the scheme.

He employed intimidation.

He deliberately compromised machinery being used to protect a vulnerable family.

His actions caused Nicodemus's death.

He concealed responsibility.

He responded violently when Mrs. Brisby presented information threatening his preferred outcome.

He inflicted fatal injury upon Sullivan.

The Board therefore determines that Jenner's conduct cannot be justified as ordinary dissent.

Nor can it be excused as a legitimate attempt to preserve the community.

The community's interests were not identical to Jenner's preferences.

Its members possessed independent agency.

Its future was properly subject to collective deliberation.

Jenner sought to replace that deliberation with the consequences of violence.

The Board considers this incompatible with the principles established in earlier proceedings.

The rats had escaped a laboratory that exercised control over their lives.

They had constructed a community whose political legitimacy depended upon recognizing the interests of its members.

Jenner's conspiracy attempted to establish personal authority through the destruction of another member's capacity to act.

The contradiction is substantial.

A community does not become free merely because the person exercising control over it is one of its own members.

The Board further recognizes that Jenner's death does not eliminate the need for careful evaluation.

His final actions may have created an immediate lethal threat.

Sullivan's intervention must be assessed according to that threat.

The Office does not regard Jenner's prior wrongdoing as an unlimited authorization for violence against him.

It regards the circumstances of the final confrontation as materially relevant.

The Board therefore enters the following determination:

Jenner's political opposition was legitimate in principle.

His conspiracy was not.

His deliberate sabotage constituted a grave violation of the responsibilities owed to the community and to those depending upon its protective operations.

His killing of Nicodemus was not justified by the moral or practical disagreements surrounding the Plan.

His subsequent violence created additional responsibility for the death of Sullivan.

The Board further determines that the eventual survival of Mrs. Brisby's family does not erase the risks Jenner introduced.

Nor does the community's eventual departure to Thorn Valley convert the conspiracy into a harmless political failure.

The deaths remain.

The conduct remains.

The distinctions remain.

The matter is sustained.

XXIII. DISPOSITION

NIMH-ERB-006 is hereby concluded as to its principal ethical findings.

The Board finds substantial evidence that Jenner-B deliberately conspired to eliminate Nicodemus.

It finds that Jenner personally sabotaged the equipment employed in the Brisby house-moving operation.

It finds that the resulting mechanical failure caused Nicodemus's death.

It finds that Jenner subsequently employed violence against Mrs. Brisby.

It finds that Jenner fatally wounded Sullivan.

It recognizes that Sullivan's final intervention occurred during a renewed attack against Justin.

The Board enters no binding real-world criminal judgment.

It imposes no fictional sentence upon a deceased respondent.

It enters no finding that all possible questions concerning the community's leadership succession have been resolved.

It further declines to attribute these actions to the literary Jenner.

The Board concludes that the cinematic record presents an established ethical distinction between the exercise of political disagreement and the use of violence to prevent others from exercising political agency.

The Office therefore closes the individual proceeding.

The broader institutional inquiry remains open.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM A

Regarding the Proposed Classification of Nicodemus's Death as a Workplace Accident

The Office of Records has received a proposed classification identifying the death of Nicodemus as an accident occurring during a hazardous mechanical operation.

The Board acknowledges that the operation involved substantial equipment.

It acknowledges that the operation was conducted under difficult environmental conditions.

It acknowledges that mechanical failure occurred.

However, the cinematic record establishes that Jenner deliberately compromised the relevant equipment.

The resulting failure was not merely an unexplained malfunction.

The proposed classification therefore omits a material cause.

The Board recognizes that an event may resemble an accident to observers unaware of intentional interference.

Such appearance does not establish that the underlying event was accidental.

The Office therefore directs that the record distinguish between:

The apparent mechanical failure observed by the community.

And:

The deliberate sabotage established by the cinematic narrative.

The proposed classification is returned for revision.

The Office further observes that the presence of ropes, pulleys, and dangerous weather does not relieve the investigator of the responsibility to consider whether a participant intentionally cut the ropes.

The distinction is entered.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM B

Regarding the Contention That Jenner Was Merely Attempting to Preserve the Community

The Board has considered the proposition that Jenner's actions were justified by his desire to preserve the established rosebush settlement.

The Office acknowledges that Jenner opposed relocation.

It further acknowledges that the Plan required substantial sacrifice.

However, the Board rejects the inference that preservation of existing arrangements authorized the deliberate killing of their principal critic.

A community's continued existence is not identical to the continued authority of one individual.

Nor is preservation of a particular settlement identical to preservation of the community itself.

The rats remained capable of pursuing collective decisions.

Jenner sought to prevent those decisions from resulting in an outcome he opposed.

His actions therefore require examination as an attempt to control the community's future rather than merely protect its survival.

The Office further observes that the deliberate destruction of essential rescue equipment is an unusual method of demonstrating concern for communal safety.

The objection is rejected.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM C

Regarding the Assertion That Sullivan Was Equally Responsible Because He Was Present

The Office has considered the proposed attribution of responsibility to Sullivan on the basis of his presence during the sabotage.

The Board recognizes that Sullivan possessed knowledge of Jenner's plan.

It further recognizes that his earlier association with Jenner raises legitimate questions.

However, the cinematic record depicts Sullivan hesitating and refusing to perform the decisive act.

Jenner personally compromises the apparatus.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that physical presence establishes identical culpability.

The Board further recognizes that Sullivan later intervened against Jenner.

That intervention resulted in his receiving a fatal wound.

His final defensive action prevented Jenner's renewed attack upon Justin.

These circumstances are relevant.

They do not automatically eliminate every question concerning his earlier conduct.

But they preclude a simplistic classification equating him with the principal conspirator.

The Office therefore enters a differentiated finding.

Sullivan's conduct requires individual assessment.

Jenner's conduct remains Jenner's conduct.

The distinction is entered.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM D

Regarding the Proposed Argument That the Amulet Rendered the Sabotage Harmless

The Office has received a submission arguing that the eventual supernatural rescue of Mrs. Brisby's family eliminates the consequences of the earlier sabotage.

The Board rejects the submission.

The successful rescue of the family does not reverse Nicodemus's death.

It does not reverse Sullivan's death.

It does not establish that Jenner's interference created no danger.

Nor does the existence of extraordinary magical power establish that the power was reliably available at the time the sabotage occurred.

The Board recognizes the amulet's effectiveness within the cinematic narrative.

It does not recognize that effectiveness as a general exemption from ordinary responsibilities concerning machinery.

The Office further observes that an emergency rescue accomplished through supernatural intervention is not an adequate substitute for maintaining the integrity of load-bearing equipment.

The distinction is entered.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM E

Regarding the Proposed Consolidation of Jenner's Death with Nicodemus's Death

The Office of Records has reviewed a proposal to classify the deaths of Nicodemus and Jenner as equivalent instances of political violence.

The Board considers the designation insufficiently precise.

Nicodemus was killed through a planned act of sabotage undertaken to remove him as a political obstacle.

Jenner was killed during a subsequent armed confrontation, when Sullivan intervened against an immediate threat to Justin.

Both deaths arose within the broader political conflict.

Their immediate circumstances differed.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that the shared presence of lethal force eliminates the need to examine purpose, necessity, sequence, and threat.

The Office recognizes that fatal outcomes may be equally final.

It does not recognize that identical consequences establish identical ethical conduct.

The classification is returned for revision.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM F

Regarding the Suggestion That Nicodemus's Death Established Jenner as the Appropriate Successor

The Office has considered a proposed argument concerning leadership succession.

The argument states that Jenner became the logical successor to Nicodemus because Nicodemus was no longer alive to oppose his preferred policy.

The Board recognizes the factual premise that Nicodemus died.

It rejects the proposed consequence.

The elimination of a political opponent does not establish the assassin's entitlement to succeed that opponent.

The Office further recognizes that the rat community's precise constitutional arrangements have not been fully documented.

The absence of a written succession provision does not establish that authority may be acquired through intentional mechanical sabotage.

The Board therefore declines to recognize a procedure for selecting leadership based upon the successful destruction of machinery while the incumbent is standing nearby.

The proposed mechanism is rejected.

The Office recommends that future leadership disputes be resolved through deliberative arrangements that do not require the premature death of a candidate.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM G

Regarding the Proposed Finding That Jenner's Death Settled the Political Disagreement

The Office has considered a proposal stating that the death of Jenner conclusively resolved the dispute concerning Thorn Valley.

The Board recognizes that Jenner's death eliminated his ability to continue opposing the Plan.

It does not follow that every underlying political question ceased to exist.

The community still faced decisions concerning relocation.

It still faced material uncertainty.

It still possessed members whose interests required consideration.

It still needed leadership.

It still needed to establish sustainable arrangements in Thorn Valley.

The removal of a dissenter does not necessarily resolve the conditions that produced dissent.

Nor does the death of a conspirator establish the correctness of every policy adopted by those who survived him.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that political disagreement can be conclusively resolved through the disappearance of those expressing it.

The Office further observes that Jenner's conduct was reprehensible because he attempted to impose his preferred outcome through violence.

The surviving community should therefore exercise particular caution before adopting the proposition that the absence of opposition is sufficient proof of legitimate agreement.

The distinction is entered.

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

On the Difference Between Opposing Authority and Seeking to Possess It

The Office concludes this proceeding by returning to the origins of the enhanced rat community.

The rats were once experimental subjects.

Their lives were governed by an institution whose purposes they had not chosen.

They acquired extraordinary intelligence.

They became capable of independent judgment.

They escaped.

These events established the foundation of their autonomy.

The rats subsequently constructed a society.

They developed infrastructure.

They organized their labor.

They established leadership.

They developed the capacity to deliberate concerning collective obligations.

And eventually, they confronted a question familiar to institutions far larger than their own.

What should happen when members disagree about the future of the community?

The Plan for Thorn Valley presented one answer.

The rats could reconsider their dependence upon human resources.

They could relinquish established comforts.

They could undertake the difficult work of building a more independent existence.

Nicodemus advocated that course.

Jenner opposed it.

The disagreement was legitimate.

Its existence demonstrated that the community possessed members capable of forming different judgments.

The legitimacy of self-government required recognition of those differences.

But Jenner's subsequent conduct did not preserve that principle.

It rejected it.

He did not merely contend that Nicodemus was wrong.

He concluded that Nicodemus's continued existence obstructed his preferred political future.

He therefore arranged an act of sabotage intended to eliminate him.

The Board considers this distinction fundamental.

An institution may remove a leader through legitimate procedures.

It may reject a policy.

It may reconsider a decision.

It may permit dissent.

It may change direction.

But the deliberate killing of a person whose judgment differs from one's own is not an exercise of the victim's political agency.

It is an effort to extinguish that agency.

Jenner's conduct therefore contradicted the very autonomy from which the rat community derived its moral claim to independence.

The rats had escaped an institution that treated their lives as subject to external purposes.

Jenner attempted to make the lives of others subject to his own.

The Board recognizes that his objective was not identical to that of the laboratory.

The laboratory sought scientific knowledge.

Jenner sought preservation of an established community and its advantages.

Nevertheless, the methods raise a related question.

May the interests of an institution, or of a person seeking to control it, justify the elimination of an individual whose independent purposes have become inconvenient?

The Board answers in the negative.

Nicodemus was not required to surrender his life because Jenner opposed the Plan.

Mrs. Brisby was not required to surrender her safety because her warning threatened Jenner's political objective.

Sullivan was not required to surrender his life because he resisted Jenner's violence.

Justin was not required to accept a renewed armed attack merely because the attacker possessed a political grievance.

The Board recognizes the different circumstances of each individual.

It does not regard them as interchangeable.

But each possessed interests independent of Jenner's preferred outcome.

Those interests required recognition.

The Office further considers the significance of the rescue operation.

The rats' extraordinary intelligence had enabled them to construct machinery.

Their collective organization had enabled them to undertake tasks beyond the capabilities of ordinary animals.

Their freedom had enabled them to direct those capabilities toward protecting another family.

The house-moving operation therefore represented an important achievement.

The rats were not merely using intelligence for their own survival.

They were using it in service of others.

Jenner's sabotage corrupted that undertaking.

He transformed machinery assembled to protect vulnerable lives into a means of eliminating a political opponent.

The Board regards this as an especially serious violation.

The problem was not merely that the machinery failed.

The machinery was made to fail.

The problem was not merely that a leader died.

The leader was deliberately placed in danger because his continued influence was politically inconvenient.

The problem was not merely that the rescue became difficult.

The rescue was knowingly compromised by someone who had been entrusted with membership in the community undertaking it.

The Office therefore identifies a deeper institutional failure.

A community may possess considerable technical sophistication while remaining vulnerable to the misuse of authority by its own members.

Intelligence does not guarantee ethical conduct.

Engineering does not guarantee restraint.

Political organization does not guarantee legitimate government.

The ability to construct a machine does not establish the wisdom to decide when that machine should be used.

Nor does the ability to lead a community establish an entitlement to destroy those who would lead it differently.

The rats' history demonstrates these distinctions.

Their experimental enhancement gave them knowledge.

Their escape gave them freedom.

Their settlement gave them collective power.

Their ethical deliberations gave them an opportunity to examine the purposes toward which that power was directed.

Jenner's conduct demonstrated the danger that remains when power is exercised without regard for the independent lives of others.

The Board does not conclude that the rat community was therefore incapable of self-government.

On the contrary, the response to the conspiracy demonstrates that its members retained the capacity to resist coercive control.

Sullivan refused the decisive act of sabotage.

Justin intervened against violence.

Mrs. Brisby communicated a warning despite danger to herself.

The community ultimately continued toward Thorn Valley.

These actions did not erase the deaths.

They did demonstrate that Jenner's conduct did not exhaust the moral possibilities of the society.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that a community should be judged solely by the worst act committed by one of its members.

It also rejects the proposition that the community's survival eliminates the need to account for that act.

Both conclusions would be inadequate.

The first would deny the agency of those who resisted.

The second would deny the significance of those who died.

The Board therefore returns to its principal determination.

Political disagreement is not a defect in autonomous government.

The use of lethal violence to extinguish disagreement is.

A community may require collective decisions.

It may not substitute assassination for the procedures through which those decisions acquire legitimacy.

A leader may believe that the community's future depends upon his preferred policy.

That belief does not establish that the lives of his opponents are available for sacrifice.

The Office recognizes that Jenner was intelligent.

It recognizes that he understood machinery.

It recognizes that he possessed substantial knowledge of the community.

It recognizes that he was capable of political judgment.

These capacities made him a participant in the community's self-government.

They also made him capable of recognizing the consequences of his actions.

The Board does not regard his intelligence as evidence that every choice he made was reasonable.

Nor does it regard his political convictions as sufficient justification for violence.

The experimental program had produced beings capable of extraordinary thought.

But the ability to think is not identical to the willingness to act responsibly.

The distinction is central.

The Office therefore closes this proceeding with a final observation.

The laboratory sought to produce intelligence.

The rats used that intelligence to secure freedom.

Their community used freedom to establish government.

Jenner attempted to use government as a means of securing personal control.

The resulting conflict demonstrated that the possession of intelligence does not eliminate the need for ethical restraint.

Indeed, intelligence may increase the consequences of failing to exercise that restraint.

An ordinary rat may damage a rope through gnawing.

An enhanced rat may understand precisely when, where, and why a rope should be severed to cause a fatal mechanical failure.

The Office recognizes that distinction.

It considers the additional knowledge relevant to responsibility.

The Board further observes that the sabotage did not occur because the community lacked technological competence.

It occurred because one of its members deliberately employed that competence toward a destructive objective.

The failure was therefore not solely mechanical.

It was moral.

The machinery performed according to the consequences of its compromised condition.

The ethical failure preceded the collapse.

The Office concludes:

The danger to an autonomous society does not arise solely from institutions that seek to control it from outside.

It may also arise from those within the society who regard their own authority as more important than the lives and choices of others.

The distinction is entered.

The Office recognizes that Jenner was a rat.

It recognizes that Nicodemus was also a rat.

It recognizes that the events occurred beneath a rosebush.

It does not recognize any of those circumstances as sufficient grounds to dispense with the distinction between political disagreement and deliberate killing.

The matter is concluded.

So entered.

Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board
Division of Political Violence, Emergency Operations, and Unauthorized Leadership Succession

END OF NIMH-ERB-006

SOURCE RECORD

Primary Cinematic Record: Don Bluth, director, *The Secret of NIMH* (1982).

Particular attention is directed to Jenner's opposition to the Plan, his dealings with Sullivan, the sabotage of the Brisby house-moving operation, Nicodemus's death, Mrs. Brisby's warning, Jenner's attack upon her, Justin's intervention, and the final confrontation resulting in the deaths of Sullivan and Jenner.

Excluded Literary Record: Robert C. O'Brien, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (1971).

The literary Jenner's conduct and unresolved fate are examined separately in NIMH-ERB-005.

Foundational Proceeding: NIMH-ERB-001 — *Preliminary Investigation into the Rats of NIMH*.

Companion Proceedings: NIMH-ERB-002 through NIMH-ERB-005.

Next Proceeding:

NIMH-ERB-007 — THE EXTRAORDINARY AMULET

On Supernatural Intervention, Artifact Custody, and the Relationship Between Courage and Authority.

Additional Reserved Proceedings:

NIMH-ERB-MUN-001 — *The Fitzgibbon Farm*.

NIMH-ERB-MED-001 — *Timothy Frisby*.

Scope of Findings: Fictional literary and institutional ethics analysis. No actual legal liability or historical regulatory misconduct is determined.