OFFICE OF IMPROBABLE JURISDICTION

EXPERIMENTAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTONOMOUS PERSONS REVIEW BOARD

NIMH-ERB-007

THE EXTRAORDINARY AMULET

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

An Institutional Inquiry into the Possession, Transfer, Activation, and Ethical Use of an Object Exhibiting Extraordinary Properties, with Particular Attention to Emergency Rescue, Individual Agency, and the Presumption That Power Confers Legitimacy

Issuing Authority: Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
Reviewing Body: Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board
Docket: NIMH-ERB-007
Related Proceedings: NIMH-ERB-001 through NIMH-ERB-006
Principal Artifact: Red Jeweled Amulet
Persons of Interest: Nicodemus, Jonathan Brisby, Mrs. Brisby, Justin, Jenner, and members of the autonomous rat community
Evidentiary Record: Don Bluth, *The Secret of NIMH* (1982)
Classification: Extraordinary Artifacts, Supernatural Intervention, Emergency Authority, Custodial Responsibility, Nontechnological Power, Personal Agency, and Protective Use of Unverified Capabilities
Date: October 28, 2026
Status: Substantive Ethical Findings Entered; Origin, Mechanism, and Continuing Custody Requirements Unresolved

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

This proceeding concerns the extraordinary amulet depicted in Don Bluth's *The Secret of NIMH* (1982).

The artifact does not appear in equivalent form in Robert C. O'Brien's *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (1971).

The Office therefore recognizes the cinematic record as the controlling fictional evidence concerning the amulet.

No finding concerning the novel shall be inferred from the artifact's cinematic existence.

The Office claims no actual regulatory, judicial, scientific, or supernatural authority.

I. NOTICE OF CONTINUED INVESTIGATION

The Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board hereby opens an inquiry into the extraordinary object transferred by Nicodemus to Mrs. Brisby during the events depicted in the cinematic record.

The object consists of an amulet containing a red gemstone.

The cinematic narrative attributes unusual properties to the object.

These properties include illumination under certain circumstances, apparent responsiveness to courage, and the manifestation of power sufficient to relocate a residential structure.

The Board recognizes that the mechanism through which these effects occur is not established.

The artifact's origin remains incompletely documented.

Its relationship to the scientific experiments conducted at NIMH is not established.

Its capacity for repeated operation has not been demonstrated.

Its complete range of effects remains unknown.

Nevertheless, the cinematic record depicts an intervention of substantial practical consequence.

During an emergency, the home of Mrs. Brisby and her children becomes submerged in mud.

Conventional rescue efforts fail.

The amulet manifests extraordinary power.

Mrs. Brisby employs that power to raise the structure and move it to safety.

The Board recognizes that the occupants survive.

It further recognizes that successful emergency intervention does not eliminate every question concerning the use of extraordinary power.

The central issue is therefore stated:

When an individual acquires the capacity to produce consequences beyond ordinary technological or institutional means, what ethical obligations govern the exercise of that capacity?

A related question arises.

Does the manifestation of extraordinary power establish that the person exercising it possesses legitimate authority over others?

The Board considers these questions distinct.

The inquiry proceeds.

II. QUESTIONS PRESENTED

The Board identifies twelve principal questions.

First: What is established concerning the amulet's origin, prior possession, and transfer to Mrs. Brisby?

Second: What evidence supports the assertion that the artifact responds to courage?

Third: Does the manifestation of an extraordinary ability establish that its possessor is morally virtuous?

Fourth: Can an artifact's apparent recognition of a personal quality be treated as a legitimate determination of political authority?

Fifth: What responsibilities arise when a custodian possesses an object capable of producing substantial physical effects?

Sixth: Did Nicodemus possess sufficient knowledge of the artifact's properties to provide meaningful guidance concerning its use?

Seventh: What significance attaches to the concealment of the artifact from Jenner?

Eighth: Was Mrs. Brisby's emergency use of the artifact ethically justified?

Ninth: Did the use of extraordinary power introduce risks requiring independent consideration?

Tenth: Does the eventual success of a supernatural rescue eliminate responsibility for the earlier failure of conventional protective systems?

Eleventh: What obligations arise when an artifact capable of extraordinary intervention is transferred to a new custodian?

Twelfth: What distinguishes courage exercised in the protection of others from power exercised for the purpose of controlling them?

The Board considers the final question fundamental.

The existence of power does not establish the legitimacy of every purpose toward which it may be directed.

Nor does the possession of courage eliminate the need for judgment.

The distinction is entered.

III. THE ARTIFACT'S APPEARANCE IN THE CINEMATIC RECORD

The Office first examines the circumstances in which the amulet is introduced.

Early in the film, Nicodemus is depicted maintaining a record of events concerning the rat community and the death of Jonathan Brisby.

The amulet appears in his possession.

He places it within a box.

The object is subsequently associated with Jonathan's history and the obligations Nicodemus feels toward Jonathan's widow.

The Board recognizes that Nicodemus possessed knowledge concerning the artifact.

He understood that it was extraordinary.

He also understood that it might become an object of interest to Jenner.

The record depicts Nicodemus maintaining its concealment.

Later, Mrs. Brisby reaches Nicodemus and learns of her husband's connection to the experimental rats.

During that meeting, Nicodemus transfers the amulet to her.

He explains that the stone possesses power associated with courage.

The Office considers these events sufficient to establish a sequence of custody.

They do not establish a complete history of ownership.

The distinction is significant.

Possession establishes physical control.

Custody may establish a responsibility to safeguard.

Ownership may involve additional rights.

An individual may transfer possession without establishing an unrestricted entitlement to the object.

The Office therefore declines to treat the transfer as a complete legal conveyance under an unidentified property system.

No applicable rat artifact statute has been produced.

Nor has the Board received a complete account of the artifact's acquisition by Jonathan Brisby.

The available evidence establishes an important relationship among Jonathan, Nicodemus, and Mrs. Brisby.

It does not establish the original creation of the gemstone.

The matter remains open.

IV. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC ENHANCEMENT AND SUPERNATURAL POWER

The Office next considers whether the amulet should be classified as a product of the experimental program at NIMH.

The cinematic record establishes that experimental intervention enhanced the cognitive capacities of rats and mice.

The enhanced animals acquired extraordinary intelligence.

They became capable of complex communication, technological innovation, and organized self-government.

These developments are attributed to scientific experimentation within the fictional narrative.

The amulet presents a different evidentiary problem.

Its operation is not explained through the enhancement procedure.

The record does not establish that the laboratory manufactured it.

The record does not establish that its properties originated in experimental injections.

The record does not establish that the rats' enhanced intelligence permits them to reproduce its effects through conventional scientific methods.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that the artifact must be classified as laboratory equipment merely because it appears within the same narrative as laboratory-created intelligence.

The distinction is essential.

An object may possess extraordinary properties without those properties being attributable to every extraordinary event occurring nearby.

The Office further observes that the rats' ability to understand electricity does not establish that they understand the mechanism of the amulet.

Their technological achievements are substantial.

The gemstone's operation remains unexplained.

The Board therefore directs that scientific enhancement and supernatural intervention be treated as separate categories of evidence.

The existence of one extraordinary phenomenon does not establish the mechanism of another.

The Office recognizes that both phenomena occur within the cinematic narrative.

It does not recognize narrative proximity as a scientific explanation.

V. ON THE NATURE OF COURAGE

The Board now considers the principle associated with the amulet's power.

Nicodemus explains that the stone responds to courage.

The cinematic record subsequently depicts the artifact manifesting power when Mrs. Brisby confronts the possible loss of her children.

The Board recognizes the thematic significance.

Courage is not presented merely as physical strength.

Nor is it presented as the absence of fear.

Mrs. Brisby experiences fear repeatedly.

She is frightened by predators.

She is frightened by the dangers confronting her children.

She is frightened by the extraordinary beings and circumstances she encounters.

She is frightened by the possibility that her efforts may fail.

Nevertheless, she continues.

Her actions demonstrate the ability to pursue protective objectives despite fear.

The Office considers this distinction important.

Fear and courage are not necessarily mutually exclusive conditions.

Indeed, an action may be courageous precisely because the person undertaking it understands the danger.

The Board therefore declines to define courage as an inability to experience fear.

Such a definition would exclude much of the conduct demonstrated by Mrs. Brisby.

It would also confuse courage with emotional incapacity.

The Office recognizes that a being incapable of understanding danger might undertake hazardous action.

Such conduct would not necessarily establish the same quality of courage demonstrated by an individual who understands the danger and proceeds for a considered purpose.

Mrs. Brisby's conduct is therefore significant.

She is afraid.

She understands that her children are in danger.

She acts.

The Board considers this evidence of courage independently of the amulet's subsequent operation.

VI. WHETHER COURAGE MUST PRECEDE THE POWER

The Office identifies an important chronological distinction.

Mrs. Brisby demonstrates courage before the amulet produces its decisive intervention.

She seeks medical assistance for Timothy.

She attempts to prevent the destruction of her home.

She approaches dangerous animals.

She seeks help from the Great Owl.

She enters the rosebush.

She confronts circumstances she does not fully understand.

She places herself at risk to obtain assistance.

These actions occur before the final rescue.

The Board considers the sequence significant.

The artifact does not create the entirety of Mrs. Brisby's courage.

Her courage is already evident.

The gemstone's power subsequently becomes available during a moment of extraordinary need.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that Mrs. Brisby becomes courageous only when the artifact recognizes her.

The recognition follows conduct that already possesses moral significance.

The Board further observes that this distinction prevents a serious interpretive error.

If courage were established solely by the manifestation of supernatural power, then beings lacking access to such power could never conclusively demonstrate courage.

That conclusion would be unreasonable.

Individuals routinely undertake difficult and dangerous actions without producing supernatural effects.

Their courage does not become ethically insignificant because no gemstone illuminates in response.

The Board therefore determines:

The manifestation of the amulet may be evidence of its response to courage within the cinematic narrative.

It is not the exclusive means by which courage may be recognized.

The distinction is sustained.

VII. THE PROBLEM OF ARTIFACT-BASED MORAL CERTIFICATION

The Office now considers whether the amulet's response can be treated as proof of moral virtue.

The Board recognizes that the gemstone is associated with courage.

It does not follow that courage encompasses every moral quality.

An individual may be courageous and mistaken.

An individual may be courageous in pursuit of an improper objective.

An individual may possess the willingness to face danger without possessing sound judgment concerning the consequences.

Courage is therefore ethically significant but not morally exhaustive.

The Board further observes that the artifact's complete operating conditions are unknown.

The cinematic record does not establish whether the stone responds to every courageous act.

It does not establish whether the response varies according to the possessor.

It does not establish whether the artifact distinguishes courage from desperation, conviction, or other related conditions.

Nor does it establish that every activation proves the complete moral innocence of the user.

The Board therefore rejects the following inference:

Because the gemstone responds to an individual, the individual's actions are necessarily justified.

The proposition exceeds the evidence.

A mechanism that recognizes one quality does not necessarily evaluate every other quality.

The Office considers this distinction especially important where extraordinary power might be used to support claims of leadership.

The possession of courage does not establish a universal entitlement to obedience.

The Board recognizes that a courageous leader may be admirable.

It does not recognize courage as a complete constitutional procedure.

No finding of political legitimacy shall be entered solely upon illumination of the gemstone.

VIII. THE CUSTODIAL JUDGMENT OF NICODEMUS

The Board next examines Nicodemus's decision to transfer the artifact.

Nicodemus had maintained custody of the amulet.

He understood its significance.

He had concealed it from Jenner.

He subsequently gave it to Mrs. Brisby.

The Office recognizes that this decision involved judgment.

Nicodemus did not simply distribute the object without regard for the circumstances.

He knew that Mrs. Brisby was Jonathan's widow.

He knew that she was seeking assistance.

He knew that Jenner might seek power for improper purposes.

He also recognized qualities in Mrs. Brisby relevant to the artifact's operation.

The Board therefore considers the transfer understandable.

Nevertheless, the existence of a defensible purpose does not resolve every custodial question.

The Office asks:

What did Nicodemus know concerning the artifact's origin?

Had he personally observed its extraordinary effects?

Did he know whether activation could injure the user?

Did he know whether the object could operate repeatedly?

Did he know whether it could be used for harmful purposes?

Did he know whether custody could safely be transferred?

The cinematic record does not establish complete answers.

The Board therefore enters no finding that Nicodemus possessed comprehensive technical knowledge.

Nor does it conclude that the transfer was improper merely because such knowledge is not fully documented.

The circumstances were unusual.

Mrs. Brisby faced serious danger.

The artifact had a connection to her husband.

Nicodemus possessed reason to believe that its power might become relevant.

The Board therefore recognizes the ethical significance of the transfer while reserving questions concerning the adequacy of disclosure.

An act of trust may be justified without establishing that every consequence of the trust was understood.

The distinction is entered.

IX. THE CONCEALMENT FROM JENNER

The Office considers the decision to keep the artifact hidden from Jenner.

The cinematic record establishes Nicodemus's concern that Jenner might obtain the amulet.

That concern is relevant in light of the conduct examined in NIMH-ERB-006.

Jenner sought political control.

He opposed the Plan.

He arranged the sabotage that caused Nicodemus's death.

He subsequently attacked Mrs. Brisby and attempted to seize the amulet.

The Board therefore finds substantial grounds for considering his possession of the artifact dangerous.

Nevertheless, the Office distinguishes between an individual's political views and demonstrated conduct.

Jenner's opposition to Thorn Valley did not, by itself, establish that he was unfit to possess every object associated with the community.

His conspiracy, violence, and attempted seizure of the amulet provide a substantially different basis for concern.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that artifacts may be withheld merely because a person disagrees with leadership.

Protective restrictions require consideration of actual risks.

The cinematic record supplies such risks.

Jenner's willingness to employ violence to secure his objectives is material.

The possibility that he might obtain extraordinary power therefore presented a legitimate concern.

The Board further recognizes that the possession of an unusually powerful artifact could magnify the consequences of improper conduct.

A person willing to sabotage machinery in pursuit of political control may present substantial danger if given access to an object capable of manipulating structures without ordinary machinery.

The Office declines to speculate concerning every possible use Jenner might have attempted.

No such use is demonstrated.

Nevertheless, the danger of unrestricted possession was credible.

The protective concealment is therefore not found inherently improper.

X. THE EMERGENCY CONFRONTING MRS. BRISBY

The Board now turns to the circumstances of the artifact's decisive activation.

Mrs. Brisby is a widowed mother.

Her son Timothy is seriously ill.

The family home stands in an area endangered by agricultural activity.

Ordinary relocation is complicated by Timothy's medical condition.

The rats attempt to move the home.

Their operation is compromised by Jenner's sabotage.

Nicodemus dies.

Subsequent events create additional danger.

The house begins to sink into the mud.

The children remain inside.

The rats attempt to rescue the structure.

Their efforts fail.

The Office recognizes the seriousness of the emergency.

The threatened harm is immediate.

The occupants cannot safely remain where they are.

Conventional mechanical intervention has not succeeded.

The available alternatives are severely limited.

Mrs. Brisby confronts the possibility that her children will die.

The Board therefore considers the circumstances sufficient to justify extraordinary protective action, subject to the limitations of what could reasonably be known at the time.

The availability of the artifact creates an unusual opportunity.

The opportunity is not accompanied by a complete operating manual.

The Board recognizes that such uncertainty would ordinarily warrant caution.

However, the absence of complete information does not necessarily prohibit action where inaction presents a substantial and immediate threat to life.

The relevant question is whether the proposed intervention is reasonably directed toward preventing the threatened harm.

Mrs. Brisby's purpose is clear.

She seeks to save her children.

She does not seek political office.

She does not seek ownership of the rat community.

She does not seek control over Thorn Valley.

She seeks to move a house.

The Office considers the distinction material.

XI. THE MANIFESTATION OF POWER

The cinematic record depicts the amulet becoming active during the emergency.

The object has been displaced amid the disorder surrounding the house.

It subsequently rises and manifests extraordinary illumination.

An image or apparition associated with Nicodemus appears and reminds Mrs. Brisby of the stone's power.

Mrs. Brisby reaches toward the artifact.

The gemstone emits intense light and heat.

The surrounding scene becomes suffused with golden illumination.

The house rises from the mud.

It moves through the air.

It is placed in a safer location beside the stone.

The Board recognizes that these events are extraordinary.

It further recognizes that the mechanism remains unexplained.

No conventional energy source is identified.

No ordinary lifting apparatus accounts for the final movement.

No electrical connection is established as the source of the intervention.

The Board therefore declines to classify the event as a successful operation of previously undocumented rat machinery.

The cinematic record presents the intervention as supernatural.

The Office accepts the event as depicted within that fictional record.

It does not claim that equivalent phenomena occur in the actual physical world.

The distinction is entered.

XII. THE QUESTION OF POSTHUMOUS GUIDANCE

The Board separately considers the manifestation associated with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus has died before the final rescue.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Brisby encounters an image or communication recalling his instruction concerning the amulet.

The Board recognizes that this event may be interpreted within the film's supernatural framework.

However, the exact nature of the manifestation is not conclusively explained.

The record does not establish whether it represents a surviving consciousness, a vision, a memory given extraordinary form, or another phenomenon associated with the artifact.

The Office therefore declines to adopt a definitive metaphysical classification.

The distinction matters.

A manifestation resembling a deceased individual does not, standing alone, establish the complete nature of the individual's continued existence.

Nor does it necessarily establish that the manifestation possesses unlimited authority.

The Board recognizes that the guidance assists Mrs. Brisby.

It further recognizes that the guidance is consistent with information Nicodemus provided while alive.

Nevertheless, the successful communication does not resolve every question concerning its origin.

The Office therefore enters no finding that Nicodemus has acquired permanent posthumous regulatory authority.

It also declines to classify the apparition as a formal successor to the rat council.

The Board recognizes that supernatural communication may be useful.

It does not recognize such communication as an automatic substitute for established institutional procedures.

XIII. ON THE PHYSICAL COST OF THE RESCUE

The Office next considers the consequences of activation for Mrs. Brisby.

The cinematic record depicts the amulet producing intense heat or energy during its use.

Mrs. Brisby experiences physical injury associated with that contact.

Her hands are subsequently shown receiving care.

She also experiences exhaustion following the rescue.

The Board considers these consequences significant.

The success of the intervention does not establish that the intervention was without cost.

Nor does the extraordinary nature of the power eliminate the user's bodily vulnerability.

Mrs. Brisby remains a mouse.

She remains physically small.

She remains capable of injury.

Her courage does not render her immune to harm.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that supernatural empowerment necessarily removes ordinary biological limitations.

It further rejects the assumption that an individual must be unharmed for an intervention to be successful.

The relevant question concerns the relationship between the harm experienced and the harm prevented.

The endangered children faced a credible threat to life.

Mrs. Brisby's intervention prevented that threat.

The physical cost to her was serious enough to warrant recognition.

The Board does not find that the injury rendered the intervention unjustified.

It does find that the injury should not be erased from the account merely because the outcome was favorable.

The survival of those rescued does not make the rescuer's suffering irrelevant.

The distinction is entered.

XIV. THE PROBLEM OF POWER WITHOUT TRAINING

The Office now considers whether Mrs. Brisby's lack of formal training should have prevented her from using the artifact.

The cinematic record does not establish that she possessed specialized instruction in supernatural operations.

She did not complete a documented course of artifact handling.

She did not demonstrate proficiency under controlled conditions.

She did not possess a technical explanation of the stone's mechanism.

Nevertheless, she successfully employed it.

The Board recognizes that this outcome presents a challenge to ordinary assumptions concerning competence.

However, it rejects the proposition that one successful emergency intervention establishes that training is never useful.

The absence of training may be reasonable under exceptional circumstances.

It does not become a universal operating standard.

The Board therefore distinguishes between emergency action and routine use.

An individual facing imminent danger may reasonably attempt an intervention that would not be appropriate under ordinary conditions.

Such action may be justified by necessity.

It does not establish that all future users should operate extraordinary artifacts without information, preparation, or safeguards.

The Office recognizes that an object whose effects are activated through courage may not permit conventional training procedures.

This uncertainty warrants investigation.

It does not establish that preparation is meaningless.

The Board therefore requests clarification concerning whether the artifact's operation can be studied without exposing subjects to unnecessary danger.

No compulsory testing is authorized.

The Office considers involuntary experimentation especially inappropriate in a matter arising from the history of the Rats of NIMH.

The irony is acknowledged.

The principle is sustained.

XV. WHETHER THE ARTIFACT CONFERS AUTHORITY

The Board turns to the central philosophical question.

Does Mrs. Brisby's successful use of the amulet establish that she is entitled to govern the rats?

The Board answers in the negative.

Mrs. Brisby demonstrates extraordinary courage.

She successfully employs the artifact.

She protects her children.

Her actions merit recognition.

However, the legitimacy of political authority involves considerations beyond the possession of personal virtue.

A community possesses members with independent interests.

It requires procedures for collective decisions.

It must establish responsibilities.

It must permit meaningful participation.

It must address disagreement.

The successful activation of a supernatural object does not resolve these questions.

Nor does it establish that the artifact's user has consented to assume political office.

Mrs. Brisby sought assistance.

She did not seek a mandate.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that possession of the amulet constitutes election to leadership.

It further rejects the proposition that successful use of the amulet establishes an unrestricted entitlement to issue commands.

The Board recognizes that individuals may be inspired by courage.

They may voluntarily follow courageous leaders.

They may regard extraordinary deeds as evidence of character.

These considerations may possess political relevance.

They do not eliminate the need for legitimate authority.

The ability to move a house does not establish the right to govern its occupants.

Nor does the ability to move a civilization establish the right to determine its future without consent.

The distinction is entered.

XVI. COURAGE AND THE TEMPTATION TO DOMINATE

The Board considers the contrast between Mrs. Brisby and Jenner.

Both confront circumstances in which they desire an outcome.

Both act decisively.

Both are willing to incur risk.

Both possess strong commitments concerning what should happen.

However, the purposes and methods of their conduct differ substantially.

Jenner attempts to preserve an established political arrangement through conspiracy and violence.

He seeks to eliminate a leader whose judgment differs from his own.

He compromises machinery intended to protect vulnerable persons.

He attempts to seize the amulet.

Mrs. Brisby seeks to protect her children.

She asks for assistance.

She accepts help.

She risks herself.

She employs extraordinary power when ordinary measures fail.

Her objective is not to control the rat community.

It is to preserve lives.

The Board therefore identifies a distinction between determination and ethical courage.

An individual may be determined to achieve a goal without that goal being defensible.

An individual may demonstrate personal fearlessness while acting unjustly.

The willingness to incur risk does not independently establish moral legitimacy.

The relevant inquiry must include the purpose of the action and its consequences for others.

The Board therefore rejects the suggestion that courage should be measured solely by intensity of conviction.

Jenner possessed conviction.

Mrs. Brisby possessed conviction.

The ethical significance of their actions cannot be determined through conviction alone.

The strength of an individual's determination does not establish the justice of the objective pursued.

The distinction is entered.

XVII. THE COURAGE OF AN UNENHANCED MOUSE

The Office now considers a circumstance of particular importance.

Mrs. Brisby is not depicted as having received the experimental enhancement that transformed the rats.

Her husband Jonathan possessed extraordinary abilities arising from the experimental program.

Mrs. Brisby did not share that history.

She remained outside the laboratory's enhanced population.

She did not possess the rats' advanced technological knowledge.

She did not possess their engineering resources.

She did not command their machinery.

She did not occupy their positions of political authority.

Nevertheless, she accomplished an extraordinary rescue.

The Board considers this development relevant to the relationship between intelligence and moral worth.

The preceding proceedings examined the ethical significance of enhanced cognition.

They established that the rats' extraordinary capacities warranted reconsideration of the authority exercised over them.

However, the Office did not determine that intelligence was the sole foundation of dignity.

The present proceeding reinforces that distinction.

Mrs. Brisby's lack of enhancement does not diminish her morally relevant interests.

Nor does it prevent her from demonstrating extraordinary courage.

The Board therefore rejects the proposition that scientific enhancement is a prerequisite for ethically significant agency.

The rats possessed capacities that enabled them to build a technologically sophisticated civilization.

Mrs. Brisby possessed capacities sufficient to recognize danger, seek assistance, make decisions, and act for the protection of others.

Her conduct was significant before the amulet's intervention.

It remained significant afterward.

The fact that a being possesses less technical knowledge does not establish that the being possesses less moral worth.

The Office further observes that technical sophistication may expand the range of actions available to an individual.

It does not automatically determine the ethical quality of the actions selected.

The distinction is sustained.

XVIII. WHETHER THE RESCUE EXONERATES THE MACHINERY

The Office returns to the preceding investigation.

NIMH-ERB-006 established that Jenner deliberately sabotaged the equipment employed during the house-moving operation.

The Board also recognized that the later sinking of the Brisby home involved circumstances requiring separate causal consideration.

The present record establishes that supernatural intervention ultimately succeeded where ordinary mechanical efforts had failed.

The Board therefore considers whether that success eliminates responsibility for the earlier failures.

It does not.

An extraordinary rescue does not transform a deliberate act of sabotage into an acceptable operating condition.

Nor does the successful prevention of death establish that the earlier danger was negligible.

The Board further recognizes that rescue operations may legitimately involve risk.

The rats' initial effort to move the home was a serious undertaking directed toward protecting vulnerable persons.

The failure of equipment under difficult conditions would require evaluation according to the circumstances.

Deliberate sabotage presents a separate issue.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the amulet's eventual success renders the investigation into the lifting apparatus unnecessary.

The Board also rejects the proposition that magical intervention should be presumed available during every future emergency.

No evidence establishes that the artifact can be activated reliably upon demand.

No repeatability data has been produced.

No alternative user has demonstrated comparable operation under controlled circumstances.

The Office therefore declines to recommend the amulet as a replacement for ordinary engineering safeguards.

An institution may accept extraordinary assistance when it becomes available.

It may not responsibly design its ordinary safety procedures around the assumption that extraordinary assistance will always arrive.

The distinction is entered.

XIX. THE QUESTION OF ACCESS

The Board considers whether the amulet's power creates obligations concerning access.

An artifact capable of preventing serious harm may possess substantial protective value.

Its continued concealment or restricted possession may therefore affect others.

The Office recognizes that unrestricted access could create danger.

An individual seeking to use the artifact for coercive purposes might produce substantial harm if the object responded.

The Board also recognizes that excessive restriction might prevent its use in legitimate emergencies.

These concerns require balancing.

The Office therefore identifies several considerations.

Custodial Security: Can the artifact be protected from persons whose conduct presents a credible risk of misuse?

Emergency Availability: Can individuals facing serious danger obtain assistance when reasonably necessary?

Operating Uncertainty: Is there sufficient knowledge concerning the artifact's effects to permit reliable use?

User Protection: Can potential users be informed of known physical risks?

Independent Oversight: Can custodial decisions be reviewed without exposing the artifact to unnecessary danger?

Continuity: Can safe custody be maintained following the death or departure of a custodian?

The Board does not propose that these considerations constitute an existing rat artifact statute.

No such statute has been established.

Nevertheless, the issues remain relevant.

The Office further observes that restricting access to an object of extraordinary power may create institutional incentives to preserve control.

Such incentives require scrutiny.

An individual entrusted with custody may begin to regard custody as ownership.

An institution entrusted with protection may begin to regard protection as a justification for unrestricted authority.

The Board therefore reiterates a principle established in NIMH-ERB-002.

Responsibility for safeguarding something does not automatically establish unrestricted entitlement to control everyone who might benefit from it.

The distinction is entered.

XX. THE RETURN OF THE ARTIFACT

The cinematic record indicates that Mrs. Brisby subsequently gives the amulet to Justin.

This transfer occurs after the rescue.

By that time, Nicodemus is dead.

Jenner is dead.

Sullivan is dead.

The rat community is preparing for its new existence in Thorn Valley.

Justin occupies a significant leadership role.

The Board recognizes that returning the artifact to a member of the rat community may have been an understandable decision.

The object was associated with Jonathan and Nicodemus.

It had been maintained within the rosebush settlement.

Its properties were known to at least some members of the community.

Nevertheless, the Office identifies unresolved custodial questions.

Did Mrs. Brisby regard the amulet as a temporary gift?

Did she understand herself to possess ownership?

Did Justin accept custody on behalf of the community?

Did he accept it personally?

Were other members informed?

Was any arrangement established for its future use?

The cinematic record does not provide complete answers.

The Board therefore declines to invent a formal agreement.

However, it recognizes the importance of the transfer.

The final possession of the artifact is materially different from its earlier possession by Mrs. Brisby.

Its subsequent custody may involve collective interests.

The Office therefore recommends that the fictional community distinguish personal possession from institutional stewardship.

The Board further observes that Justin's acquisition of the amulet does not establish that he possesses the same supernatural capacities demonstrated by Mrs. Brisby.

Nor does it establish that he is morally superior to all other members.

The transfer concerns possession.

The extent of his ability to activate the object remains unproven.

The distinction is entered.

XXI. FINDINGS

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

Finding 1 — Cinematic Scope

The extraordinary amulet is a feature of the 1982 cinematic adaptation and shall not be attributed to the 1971 literary record.

Finding 2 — Prior Custody

The artifact was maintained in Nicodemus's possession before its transfer to Mrs. Brisby.

Finding 3 — Association with Jonathan

The cinematic record associates the amulet with Jonathan Brisby.

Finding 4 — Origin Unresolved

The artifact's original creation, mechanism, and complete history are not established.

Finding 5 — Scientific Origin Not Established

No evidence establishes that the amulet's supernatural properties originated from the fictional NIMH enhancement program.

Finding 6 — Connection to Courage

The artifact is described as possessing power associated with courage, and the cinematic record depicts extraordinary activation during Mrs. Brisby's rescue.

Finding 7 — Independent Evidence of Courage

Mrs. Brisby demonstrates courage before the decisive manifestation of the artifact's power.

Finding 8 — No Universal Moral Certification

The artifact's response does not establish the complete moral virtue of every potential user.

Finding 9 — Custodial Judgment

Nicodemus's decision to conceal the artifact from Jenner was supported by credible concerns concerning misuse.

Finding 10 — Transfer to Mrs. Brisby

Nicodemus transferred possession of the artifact to Mrs. Brisby.

Finding 11 — Emergency Necessity

The circumstances surrounding the sinking of the Brisby home presented an immediate and serious threat to the occupants.

Finding 12 — Extraordinary Intervention

The amulet manifested power sufficient to raise and relocate the house.

Finding 13 — Successful Protective Outcome

The intervention prevented the loss of the Brisby children.

Finding 14 — Physical Consequences

The activation was associated with physical injury and exhaustion experienced by Mrs. Brisby.

Finding 15 — No Automatic Political Authority

Successful activation of the amulet does not establish entitlement to govern the rat community.

Finding 16 — No Automatic Technical Competence

The possession of extraordinary power does not establish mastery of its underlying mechanism.

Finding 17 — Posthumous Manifestation

The cinematic record depicts guidance associated with Nicodemus following his death; the precise metaphysical nature of that manifestation remains unresolved.

Finding 18 — No Retroactive Exoneration

The successful rescue does not eliminate responsibility for earlier sabotage or failures requiring separate examination.

Finding 19 — Continuing Safety Obligations

Any future use of the artifact should account for known risks and the limitations of available knowledge.

Finding 20 — Subsequent Transfer

Mrs. Brisby subsequently transferred the artifact to Justin.

Finding 21 — Continuing Custody Unresolved

The cinematic record does not establish comprehensive procedures governing the artifact's subsequent possession or use.

Finding 22 — Moral Agency Independent of Enhancement

Mrs. Brisby's actions demonstrate morally significant agency without the experimental cognitive enhancement possessed by the rats.

Finding 23 — Courage Distinguished from Domination

The willingness to exercise power for the protection of others must be distinguished from the willingness to exercise power to control others.

Finding 24 — Ethical Significance of Restraint

The possession of extraordinary capabilities does not remove the obligation to consider whether their exercise is justified.

XXII. THE BOARD'S DETERMINATION

The Board returns to its central question.

Does extraordinary power confer legitimate authority?

The answer is no.

Power may enable action.

It may create opportunities.

It may prevent harm.

It may also create danger.

The existence of an ability does not independently determine the purposes for which that ability should be exercised.

The rats possessed extraordinary intelligence.

Their intelligence permitted them to develop technology.

Their technology permitted them to establish infrastructure.

Their infrastructure supported a community.

That community developed political authority.

The preceding investigations demonstrated that each development created new responsibilities.

The possession of intelligence did not establish ownership of others.

The construction of machinery did not establish entitlement to unauthorized resources.

The establishment of government did not establish unlimited authority over dissenters.

The exercise of leadership did not justify the elimination of political opponents.

The amulet presents the same underlying problem through a different form of power.

Its effects are extraordinary.

Its origin remains uncertain.

Its mechanism is unexplained.

Nevertheless, the ethical question remains recognizable.

What may a person legitimately do with power that others do not possess?

Mrs. Brisby's conduct provides one answer.

She uses the power to protect vulnerable lives.

She does not employ it to secure personal dominance.

She does not demand political authority.

She does not convert the rescue into a claim of ownership over those she saved.

Her actions demonstrate the possibility that extraordinary power may be exercised without becoming an instrument of domination.

The Board considers this significant.

However, it does not conclude that every use of the artifact would necessarily be justified.

The legitimacy of an intervention depends upon its circumstances.

The ends pursued matter.

The risks imposed matter.

The interests of affected beings matter.

The alternatives available matter.

The Board therefore distinguishes between three propositions.

First: The possession of power establishes the capacity to act.

Second: The circumstances of a particular emergency may justify the exercise of that power.

Third: The successful exercise of power does not establish unlimited authority to exercise it in the future.

The first proposition concerns capability.

The second concerns judgment.

The third concerns restraint.

The Board considers all three indispensable.

The Office therefore determines:

The amulet's extraordinary properties did not confer political authority upon Mrs. Brisby.

Her justified use of the artifact arose from the emergency confronting her family and the protective purpose of her intervention.

The success of that intervention did not eliminate the ethical importance of the means employed, the risks incurred, or the interests of others.

The Board further determines that courage should not be treated as a complete substitute for legitimate authority.

Mrs. Brisby's courage is admirable.

It does not establish that every courageous person is entitled to govern.

Nor does the artifact's apparent recognition of courage establish a universal procedure for determining moral worth.

The distinction is sustained.

XXIII. DISPOSITION

NIMH-ERB-007 is hereby concluded as to its principal ethical findings.

The Board recognizes the extraordinary operation of the amulet within the cinematic record.

It recognizes the courage demonstrated by Mrs. Brisby.

It recognizes the successful rescue of her children.

It recognizes the physical consequences associated with the intervention.

It recognizes the earlier custodial judgment exercised by Nicodemus.

It recognizes the subsequent transfer of the artifact to Justin.

However, the Board enters no finding concerning the artifact's original manufacture.

It enters no definitive explanation of its mechanism.

It enters no determination concerning the metaphysical status of Nicodemus's posthumous manifestation.

It enters no finding that possession of the artifact confers political authority.

It enters no finding that the amulet may be operated reliably by every future custodian.

It further declines to classify supernatural rescue as a complete replacement for ordinary engineering and protective planning.

The artifact's future use remains a matter requiring responsible stewardship.

The ethical inquiry is concluded.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM A

Regarding the Proposed Classification of the Amulet as Laboratory Equipment

The Office of Extraordinary Property Classification has reviewed the proposed designation.

The designation identifies the amulet as experimental apparatus associated with NIMH.

The Board acknowledges that the artifact appears within a narrative concerning experimental animals.

It further acknowledges that the rats possess exceptional scientific knowledge.

However, no evidence establishes that the amulet was produced through the experimental enhancement program.

No laboratory manufacturing record has been entered.

No description of the substance responsible for its effects has been provided.

No causal relationship between the rats' injections and the gemstone's supernatural operation has been demonstrated.

The Office therefore declines to classify the artifact as scientific equipment solely because it appears in the possession of an experimentally enhanced rat.

The Board further observes that an object does not acquire a scientific explanation merely by being stored near a microscope.

The proposed classification is rejected.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM B

Regarding the Proposed Use of Courage as a Licensing Requirement

The Office has received a hypothetical proposal to restrict artifact use to individuals who have demonstrated courage.

The Board recognizes the apparent relationship between courage and activation.

However, the proposed requirement contains several unresolved difficulties.

No standardized measure of courage has been established.

No reliable procedure exists for determining whether an applicant possesses the particular quality to which the artifact responds.

The record does not establish whether courage can be assessed independently of an immediate emergency.

Nor does it establish whether a failed activation necessarily indicates cowardice.

The Board therefore declines to authorize a licensing examination requiring applicants to activate the gemstone under controlled conditions.

The Office further recognizes that deliberate exposure to danger for the purpose of testing courage may itself create ethical problems.

The ability to survive a hazardous examination does not necessarily establish suitability for custodial responsibility.

The Board also observes that individuals who decline unnecessary danger may be exercising sound judgment rather than cowardice.

The distinction is entered.

No official courage certification shall be issued.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM C

Regarding the Proposed Registration of the Amulet as a Residential Lifting Device

The Office of Extraordinary Construction and Habitation has considered a proposed classification of the amulet as a residential lifting mechanism.

The Board acknowledges that the object successfully raised and relocated a house.

It recognizes that this outcome resembles the practical objective of conventional lifting equipment.

However, the artifact's operation differs materially from established mechanical systems.

No conventional load-bearing components are identified as the source of the final lift.

No hydraulic mechanism is demonstrated.

No ordinary electrical power supply is established.

No documented lifting capacity is available.

The Board therefore declines to assign the artifact a conventional equipment rating.

The Office further observes that successful relocation of one residential structure does not establish the maximum weight the object can safely lift.

Nor does it establish a reliable method of controlling the movement of future structures.

The Board therefore rejects the proposed designation as certified residential lifting equipment.

The Office recognizes that the house was moved.

It does not recognize that fact as sufficient documentation of compliance with a building-relocation standard.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM D

Regarding the Proposed Authorization of Jeremy as a Temporary Custodian

The Office has considered a hypothetical request to transfer the amulet to Jeremy.

The request appears to be motivated by the artifact's decorative appearance.

The Board recognizes that the gemstone possesses considerable visual appeal.

It further recognizes that Jeremy has demonstrated an interest in collecting attractive objects for purposes associated with courtship.

However, decorative suitability is not equivalent to custodial suitability.

The amulet has demonstrated the capacity to produce extraordinary physical effects.

Its operation remains incompletely understood.

Its possession may create risks.

The Office therefore considers it inappropriate to approve unrestricted custody solely upon the ground that the object is shiny.

The Board further observes that the use of an extraordinary artifact as an inducement to romantic attachment would raise additional questions concerning informed consent, property, and foreseeable consequences.

No evidence establishes that the artifact is necessary for successful nest construction.

The proposed transfer is not approved.

The Office recognizes Jeremy's continuing interest in companionship.

It does not recognize that interest as sufficient grounds to place an unclassified supernatural object into general avian circulation.

The distinction is entered.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM E

Regarding the Proposed Conclusion That Mrs. Brisby Was Therefore the Proper Leader of the Rats

The Board has considered a proposed interpretation of the rescue.

The interpretation states that Mrs. Brisby's successful activation of the artifact establishes her superior moral authority and therefore entitles her to leadership of the rat community.

The Office recognizes the extraordinary nature of her actions.

It further recognizes her courage.

However, no evidence establishes that Mrs. Brisby sought political authority.

No evidence establishes that the rat community selected her as its leader.

No evidence establishes that the artifact possesses authority to determine political succession.

The Board therefore declines to treat supernatural intervention as an election.

The Office further observes that an individual may perform a heroic act without thereby acquiring an obligation to govern others.

The rescued children did not become Mrs. Brisby's political subjects by virtue of the rescue.

Nor did the rats become hers.

The proposed conclusion is rejected.

Heroism is not a deed of ownership.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM F

Regarding the Contention That the Amulet Should Have Been Used Earlier

The Office has received a hypothetical objection concerning Nicodemus's earlier custody.

The objection asks why the amulet was not employed to resolve the community's difficulties before the final emergency.

The Board recognizes the importance of the question.

An artifact possessing extraordinary protective capabilities might reasonably be expected to provide assistance in circumstances of serious danger.

However, the inquiry requires evidence concerning what Nicodemus knew and what the artifact could reliably accomplish.

The cinematic record does not establish that Nicodemus could activate the stone with the same effects later demonstrated by Mrs. Brisby.

It does not establish that the artifact would respond to every custodian.

It does not establish that its operation could be compelled at will.

It does not establish that earlier use would have prevented every subsequent tragedy.

The Office therefore declines to infer neglect solely from the fact that the artifact remained concealed.

The Board recognizes that withholding a resource capable of preventing harm may raise serious ethical questions.

It also recognizes that responsible custody may require caution where an object's operation and risks are unknown.

The existence of a successful later intervention does not prove that an identical earlier intervention was available.

The objection remains unresolved.

No adverse finding is entered.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM G

Regarding the Proposed Establishment of an Emergency Magic Department

The Office of Administrative Organization has considered a proposal to create a permanent department responsible for supernatural rescue.

The proposal identifies the amulet's successful intervention as evidence that extraordinary artifacts may be useful in emergencies.

The Board acknowledges the observation.

It further recognizes that future incidents may involve circumstances in which conventional technology proves insufficient.

However, the proposed department lacks an established operating framework.

No reliable activation procedure has been documented.

No confirmed inventory of comparable artifacts exists.

No appropriate qualification standards have been established.

No evidence demonstrates that supernatural assistance can be summoned according to an ordinary institutional schedule.

The Office therefore declines to recommend the establishment of a standing emergency service whose continued operation would depend upon the spontaneous manifestation of unexplained power.

The Board recognizes that unexpected assistance may be valuable.

It does not recognize unexpected assistance as a complete staffing plan.

The proposal is returned for further development.

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

On the Difference Between Possessing Power and Being Worthy of Its Exercise

The Office concludes this proceeding by returning to the history of the experimental rats.

The rats were taken into a laboratory.

They were subjected to intervention.

They acquired extraordinary intelligence.

They became capable of understanding their circumstances.

They escaped.

Their intelligence permitted them to construct a sophisticated community.

They developed machinery.

They acquired electricity.

They established systems of collective organization.

They learned to deliberate concerning their own future.

And they confronted the ethical consequences of the power they had acquired.

The preceding proceedings demonstrated that extraordinary capacity does not eliminate the need for moral judgment.

The rats possessed intelligence.

That intelligence did not establish unrestricted authority over others.

They possessed technology.

That technology did not justify every resource they acquired.

They possessed political organization.

That organization did not eliminate the rights of dissenting members.

Their leaders possessed influence.

That influence did not authorize assassination.

The amulet presents the same question through a different form of power.

Its capacity exceeds ordinary technology.

Its operation remains unexplained.

Its effects are extraordinary.

Nevertheless, the ethical obligations surrounding its use remain recognizable.

The artifact can accomplish something remarkable.

It cannot, merely through that accomplishment, determine what ought to be done.

The Board considers this distinction fundamental.

Power creates possibilities.

Judgment determines which possibilities should be pursued.

Responsibility requires consideration of the consequences.

Restraint establishes that the ability to act does not always create permission to act.

Mrs. Brisby demonstrates these distinctions.

She is not an enhanced rat.

She does not possess the technological sophistication of the colony.

She does not command its machinery.

She does not occupy its political offices.

She does not claim authority over its members.

She is a mother.

Her child is ill.

Her home is endangered.

Her efforts to obtain assistance place her repeatedly in danger.

She is frightened.

She continues.

She asks for help.

She accepts help.

She seeks to preserve her family.

When conventional rescue fails, the artifact manifests power.

She uses it.

The house rises.

Her children survive.

The Board recognizes that these events are extraordinary.

It also recognizes that the purpose of the intervention is extraordinarily ordinary.

A parent seeks to protect her children.

The importance of that purpose does not depend upon the unusual means through which it is eventually accomplished.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the moral significance of Mrs. Brisby's conduct originates entirely in the artifact.

Her courage precedes the intervention.

Her responsibility precedes the intervention.

Her love for her children precedes the intervention.

The gemstone does not create these obligations.

It becomes a means through which she fulfills them.

The distinction matters.

If the amulet had failed, Mrs. Brisby's courage would not thereby have become meaningless.

If the house had remained submerged, her efforts would not thereby have ceased to possess moral significance.

The value of her determination cannot be reduced entirely to the success of the supernatural rescue.

The Board therefore considers it important that the record recognize the person before the power.

Mrs. Brisby was already acting courageously.

She had already undertaken difficult obligations.

She had already demonstrated a willingness to confront danger for the sake of others.

The artifact made an extraordinary intervention possible.

It did not make her a person worthy of consideration.

She was one already.

The Board further recognizes an important contrast.

Jenner sought extraordinary power as a means of advancing his own interests.

He attempted to acquire the artifact during a struggle over political control.

Mrs. Brisby exercised extraordinary power to prevent the loss of vulnerable lives.

The difference does not rest solely upon the character of the individuals.

It rests upon the purposes toward which power was directed.

One sought control.

The other sought protection.

One attempted to remove obstacles to his preferred authority.

The other attempted to prevent the destruction of her family.

The Board considers these distinctions central to evaluating the ethical significance of extraordinary capabilities.

It further observes that neither intelligence nor courage guarantees moral perfection.

Intelligence may enable wrongdoing.

Courage may be employed in pursuit of improper objectives.

Technical competence may increase the reach of an individual's harmful actions.

Conviction may become a justification for refusing to examine consequences.

The possession of an admirable quality therefore does not eliminate the need for ethical scrutiny.

The Office recognizes that Mrs. Brisby's conduct was justified under the circumstances depicted.

The emergency was immediate.

The threatened harm was grave.

The intervention was directed toward preventing death.

The successful result is established within the cinematic record.

Nevertheless, the Board declines to convert this particular outcome into a universal authorization.

The power remains extraordinary.

Its mechanism remains unknown.

Its future use may present different circumstances.

Its possession may create new responsibilities.

The Office therefore returns to a principle established throughout the series.

The acquisition of extraordinary capability changes what an individual can do.

It does not automatically change what that individual is entitled to do.

The rats learned to build machines.

They became responsible for the consequences of those machines.

They learned to govern.

They became responsible for the consequences of their government.

They learned to exercise power.

They became responsible for the interests of those affected by that power.

Mrs. Brisby received an extraordinary artifact.

She became capable of accomplishing something beyond ordinary physical means.

The legitimacy of her action rested not upon the mere existence of the capacity, but upon the emergency in which the capacity was exercised and the lives she sought to protect.

The Office recognizes that the distinction may appear uncomplicated.

It considers the simplicity deceptive.

Institutions frequently confuse possession of authority with justification for its exercise.

Individuals may confuse the ability to compel an outcome with the right to demand it.

Communities may confuse technological progress with ethical improvement.

Leaders may confuse conviction with legitimacy.

The circumstances of the amulet expose these errors through an extraordinary contrast.

An entire civilization of enhanced rats possesses engineering capabilities beyond those of ordinary animals.

Its members construct elaborate machinery.

They operate electrical systems.

They organize complex collective projects.

And yet, when the machinery fails and a family faces imminent death, the final intervention comes through an unenhanced mouse whose defining quality is not superior intelligence.

It is courage.

The Board does not interpret this circumstance as a rejection of science.

The rats' machinery was valuable.

Their knowledge was valuable.

Their assistance was valuable.

Without their efforts, Mrs. Brisby's family might never have reached the circumstances in which rescue became possible.

The extraordinary intervention does not render those contributions meaningless.

Instead, the cinematic record illustrates that different capacities may serve different purposes.

Technical intelligence enables the construction of systems.

Political intelligence enables collective organization.

Moral judgment directs action toward defensible ends.

Courage permits action despite fear.

No single capacity eliminates the need for the others.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the amulet demonstrates the superiority of supernatural power over every form of ordinary responsibility.

The final rescue does not make engineering unnecessary.

It does not make political organization unnecessary.

It does not eliminate the need for medical care.

It does not excuse sabotage.

It does not reverse Nicodemus's death.

It does not reverse Sullivan's death.

It does not remove the obligation to examine the conditions that placed the family in danger.

The house was saved.

The children survived.

Those outcomes matter.

But the survival of the family does not erase the history of the emergency.

Nor does the extraordinary nature of the rescue justify treating its human and institutional causes as irrelevant.

The Board therefore enters its final determination.

Extraordinary power does not confer extraordinary moral exemption.

The possession of power creates responsibility for its exercise.

The legitimacy of that exercise depends upon its purpose, circumstances, and consequences.

Courage is ethically significant, but it is not a substitute for judgment.

And the successful use of power for the protection of others does not establish an unrestricted entitlement to control them.

The Office recognizes that Mrs. Brisby was small.

It recognizes that she was frightened.

It recognizes that she lacked the technological knowledge possessed by the rats.

It recognizes that she had no established political authority within their community.

It further recognizes that none of those circumstances prevented her from acting with extraordinary courage.

The Board does not regard her lack of institutional position as evidence of moral insufficiency.

Nor does it regard the artifact's power as the source of her worth.

The amulet responded to a courage already present.

The intervention made that courage visible through extraordinary means.

But its moral significance did not begin when the stone illuminated.

It began when a frightened mother determined that her children needed help and continued seeking it despite the dangers before her.

The Board therefore concludes:

The most extraordinary event in the cinematic record is the manifestation of supernatural power.

The most important ethical fact is the purpose for which that power was used.

The distinction is entered.

The Office recognizes that the artifact successfully relocated a residential structure.

It recognizes that the occupants survived.

It recognizes that the mechanism remains unexplained.

It does not recognize the unexplained mechanism as a reason to disregard the moral clarity of the intervention.

Nor does it recognize the moral clarity of the intervention as a reason to discontinue examination of the mechanism.

Both inquiries may proceed.

The matter is concluded.

So entered.

Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
Experimental Intelligence and Autonomous Persons Review Board
Division of Extraordinary Artifacts, Emergency Intervention, and Unverified Supernatural Mechanisms

END OF NIMH-ERB-007

SOURCE RECORD

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

Particular attention is directed to Nicodemus's custody of the amulet, its transfer to Mrs. Brisby, Jenner's attempted seizure, its activation during the sinking of the Brisby household, and its subsequent transfer to Justin.

Director's Interpretive Commentary: Don Bluth, interview with Adam McDaniel, *Remembering NIMH*. The director describes the amulet as symbolizing self-belief and courage.

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

The extraordinary amulet is not treated as evidence of an equivalent supernatural mechanism within the novel.

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

Companion Proceedings: NIMH-ERB-002 through NIMH-ERB-006.

Next Proceedings:

NIMH-ERB-MUN-001 — THE FITZGIBBON FARM

On Agricultural Operations, Unrecognized Occupancy, and the Foreseeability of Harm to an Enhanced Nonhuman Settlement.

NIMH-ERB-MED-001 — TIMOTHY FRISBY

On Pediatric Pneumonia, Emergency Relocation, and the Competing Duties of a Parent Confronting Multiple Foreseeable Hazards.

Scope of Findings: Fictional institutional and ethical analysis. No real-world legal liability, supernatural regulatory authority, or historical institutional misconduct is determined.