INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with five disorders and their relevant leadership styles. Each type of style is recognizable particularly in certain sectors. Thus paranoids do well in the security business and hysteric in show business. Next, it is important to remember two things: first, that these disorders can (and often do) co-occur giving each person a unique profile. Second, there is often a fine line between when these disorders may be considered healthily adaptive and when they can have a massive negative effect on leadership.

Certain jobs call for not only a very specific skill set but also a particular set of attitudes and beliefs. Some worlds attract and reward the agreeable, empathic, caring individual whilst others the opposite: skeptical, tough-minded, egocentric types. Some organizations have a corporate culture which perfectly fits individual preferences and values. In this sense, we select then get selected and socialized by organizations. Hence we have surprisingly homogenous groups, sectors and organizations. It is the thesis of this chapter that people with particular dark-side profiles are attracted to, and join, particular organizations where they may initially thrive. Certainly not all derail, depending on particular circumstances, though this also depends on the degree of their disorder.

PARANOID (ARGUMENTATIVE, VIGILANT)

Some jobs are all about secrets. People in R&D; those interested in national security; some finance organizations, and perhaps
pharmaceutical companies are rightly concerned with security. Many organizations employ security people at the highest level to oversee complex organizations like airports or manufacturing complexes.

People in security business have to be very vigilant. They often believe that potential spies are all around them. They are employed to make things safe and “brook no argument”. They pride themselves on their toughness and realism. Indeed, many ex-military people as well as “spies” find good employment in that sector. They believe it is very important and difficult to keep things totally safe. This is for them their number one priority.

Many rely on elaborate electrical devices to ensure safety. Cameras, electronic gates and the like are used. Paranoia becomes normalized. The more paranoid one is the better. Paranoid people rise to the top. Indeed, Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) noted that whole organizations can become paranoid. They argue that when power is highly centralized in a leader with paranoid tendencies, there will tend to be a great deal of vigilance caused by distrust of subordinates and competitors alike. This may lead to the development of many control and information systems and a conspirational fascination with gathering intelligence from inside and outside the firm. Paranoid thinking will also lead to a centralization of power as the top executive tries to control everything himself (no one can be completely trusted). The strategy is likely to emphasize “protection” and reducing dependency on particular consultants, sources of data, markets or customers. There is likely to be a good deal of diversification, with tight control over divisions and much analytical activity. A leader who is obsessed with fantasies concerning distrust can set a very distinctive tone for the strategy, structure and culture of an organization.

The characteristics of these organizations are suspiciousness and mistrust of others; hypersensitivity and hyper-alertness; readiness to combat perceived threats; excessive concern with hidden motives and special meanings; intense attention span; cold, rational, unemotional, interpersonal relations. The paranoid organization is defensive and hypervigilant. It is pervaded by an atmosphere of distrust.

It is thought that between 0.5% and 2.5% of the population have this disorder, which must not be confused with the paranoid delusions of schizophrenics or the behavior of refugees, and migrants whose personal history leads to widespread mistrust. Paranoids are super-vigilant: nothing escapes their notice. They seem tuned into mixed messages, hidden motives, and secret groups. They are particularly