

Dangerous?



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The squirrel feels that the cold will soon be coming, for this reason it collects nuts to feed on during the winter.

■ Prognosis is important as a strategy in life ;

It can mean the difference between living or dying



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**grumble**

# Just as predicted, the cold came and there were no more nuts to be seen.

- No one knows the future, so theoretically it's not possible to be wrong when predicting. At the moment a prediction turns out to be wrong, it is no longer a prediction.
- Predictions fulfill or do not fulfill.
- Using our experience in place of mere guessing, we can increase the likelihood



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But Winter had only come for all the other squirrels, because the squirrel you saw gathering nuts had overlooked another the danger nearby.

- Life is full of risks; it actually consists of risks
- And with every risk we dodge we may be creating a new one





*Cute guy from the title page*



**Dangerous !!!**

# And where there's danger, there is demand for protection

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But no one is dangerous at all times...



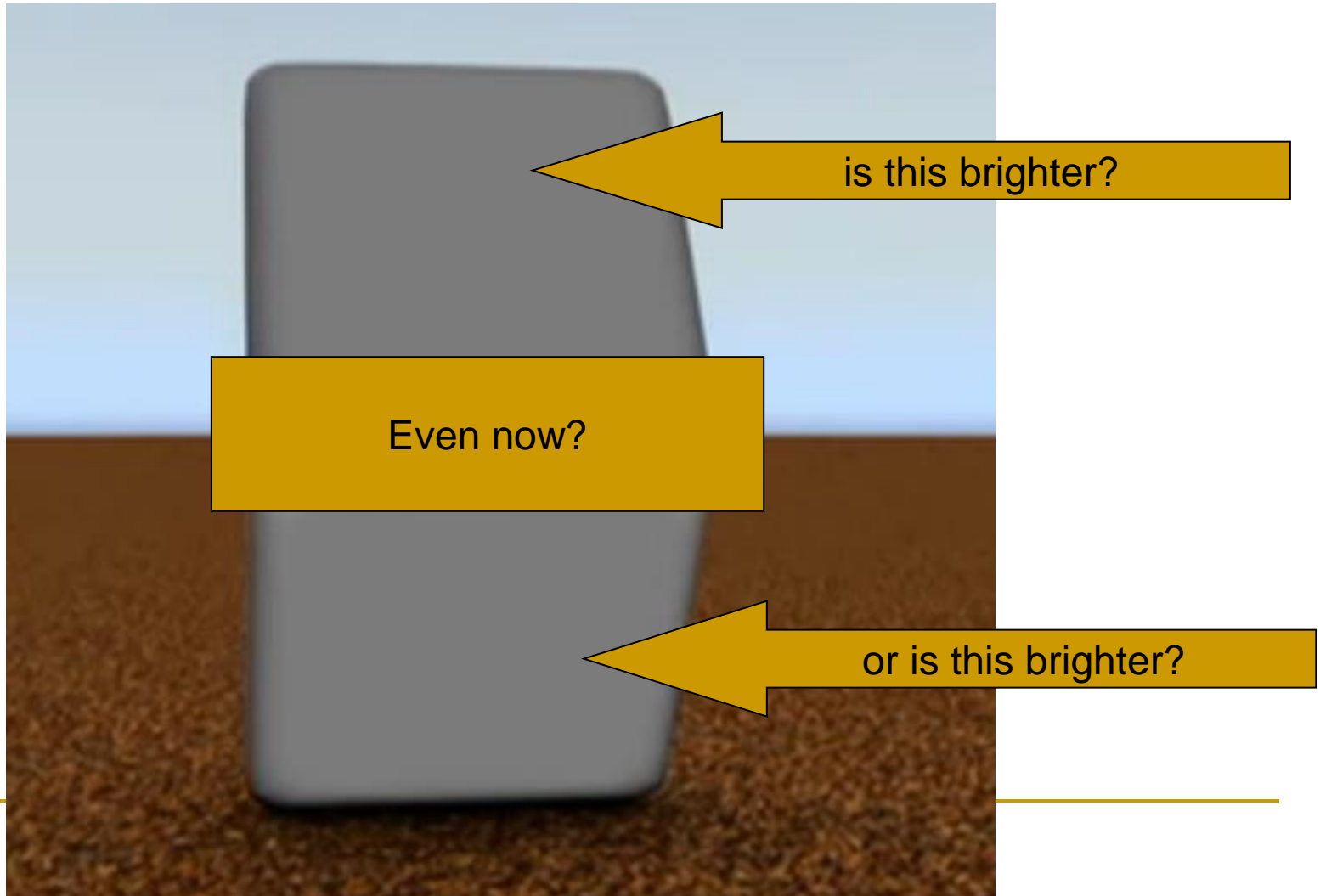
Some may just need a home  
Others some love  
Or even just a coffee

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Never forget, things are not always as they seem.

Risk Assessment is not something you can do at a single glance.

Risk assessment needs to be based on facts and experienced interpretation.





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# Risk Assessment as performed by the committee I chair in Switzerland

- The committee is an independent body
  - The committee is limited to recommendations and has no decision making authority
  - A chamber is interdisciplinary and consists of: Chair, Secretary, Forensic Psychiatrist, Public Prosecutor, Penal authority (penal administrator, Prison governor or probation officer)
  - Chamber members are equipped with full case dossiers at least four weeks before a meeting.
  - A meeting lasts from 08:30 to 13:00 and treats two or three cases.
  - The offender and or his legal council can demand to be heard in person
  - The chamber session itself takes place behind closed doors
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## Prognostic Instruments in forensic Psychiatry

- PCL-R und PCL-SV (Psychopathy Control List)
  - HCR20 (Historical Clinical Risk)
  - VRAG (Violence Risk Appraisal Guide)
  - SORAG (Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide)
  - SARA Spousal Assault Risk Assessment
  - VERA Violent Extremism Risk Assessment
  - Static 99 und Static 2002
  - LSI-R (Level of Service Inventory-Revised)
  - Fotres (Zürich Criteria Catalog)
  - Dittmann Criteria Catalog (structured professional judgement)
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# Working method

- Method: structured professional judgement
  - 12 criteria:
    - Analysis current offence
    - Criminal history
    - Personality, diagnosed disorder
    - Insight of disorder
    - Social competence
    - Behaviour of conflict (pattern)
    - Attitude concerning offence
    - Therapeutical treatment in general
    - Therapeutical treatment available
    - Willingness towards therapy
    - Social situation outside of prison (accommodation, work, relationships)
    - Development since offence(s) (new crime, conflicts, changes of attitude, behaviour etc.)
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# «dangerous» as a term

- dangerous = expectation of intentional use of violence causing serious physical or psychological harm to another human being
  - Dangerousness is meaningless if linked to an offender as a permanent label
  - Committee defines
    - Risk factors at time of current offence
    - Risk factors today
    - Which conditions are needed to counteract the risk factors
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# Risk assessment as an overviewable product

- Basic rule: Keep it short!
  - Method:
    - Short case summery; the assessment is only to be used by authorities who have full dossier access and knowledge.
    - Use a criteria catalogue that covers all relevant issues and helps stick to the main risk related elements
    - Limit the outcome to straight answers to why and where the detected risk factors limit rehabilitation (concoidering rehabilitation without recidivism as the main goal)
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# Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)3

- 1a. A dangerous offender is (...). = misleading definition
  - 2 – 9 = redundancies reminding, that general rules also apply to offenders who have committed serious crimes
  - 10 – 12 = Risk Assessment needs to be evidence based, evaluated and trained
  - 13 – 15 risk assessment can be done by anyone as far as it is done according to 10 – 22.
    - There is no definition of «expert»
    - Decisions based on the outcome must be taken by public authorities and be open to judicial review
    - All special safety measures must be required, to prevent the offender committing a further serious crime.
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# Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)3

- 23 – 25 apply to any offenders
  - 26 depth of the assessment = question of resources
  - 27 structured analysis
  - 28 more detailed redundancy to 10 and 11
  - 29 «least restrictive» bearing in mind public safety
  - 30 risk assessment must be periodically repeated – they can only be progressive where there is progress in the case itself
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# Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)3

- 31 opportunity to change of attitude and behaviour bearing in mind public safety and only where progress is visible
  - 32 offenders are involved in forensic psychiatric part and in judicial part is necessary
  - 33 risk assessment inside prison is mostly considered a prison matter
  - 34 – 39 risk management is inbedded in the whole planning process of possible resocialisation
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# Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)3

- 40 – 47 important, but redundancies
  - 48 – 52 best practice: staff, assessor, agencies, evaluators should be well trained and experienced.
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**Main message:**

***Please do not label offenders  
as dangerous.***

It can be considered unethical.

It does not reflect a constant reality.

It is not a professionally useful characteristic.

**Do professional risk assessment, detect risk factors and deal with them accordingly and adequately aiming to eliminate recidivism.**

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# The End

Disclaimer:

Please note that this presentation reflects the personal experience and opinion of the speaker.

Thank you for your attention.

All animal illustrations were fictional; any resemblance to persons or creatures living or dead are purely coincidental

That does it,  
wrap it up guys!



**STOP**  
HAMMER-TIME