



Narcissistic and Antisocial Personality Profiles of the Person(s) of Interest in the Murder of Vincent van Gogh

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Abstract

On May 20, 1890, Vincent arrived in Auvers-sur-Oise, near Paris after his asylum discharge "cured." Auvers was recommended by his brother Theo so he could be watched by Dr. Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, a homeopathic doctor and friend to many of the new artists. Vincent was described as happy and very productive in his new life. Sadly, Vincent was shot in the belly and was reported as a suicide by his doctor and friend. Recent forensic studies provide an alternative narrative. It was not possible for Vincent to shoot himself in the belly without the telltale black powder burn ring around his entry wound description. Dr. Gachet and his son, Paul, Jr, have been implicated as the primary persons of interest in the murder of Vincent van Gogh. This article offers a retrospective assessment of Dr. Gachet as a medical practitioner, his personality traits and associated behaviors that transformed an initially favorable and optimistic relationship with Vincent into a dark and tragic situation resulting in Vincent's death. Paul Jr., likewise exhibited his father's self-serving personality profile. They both manifested characteristics of Antisocial and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. Would these personality disorders be sufficient for them to commit murder? The answer is clearly a solid YES! There are several significant motives: an opportunity, a weapon, and proximity to each other on the day Vincent was shot. This proximity was confirmed when Paul, Jr. and his sister, Marguerite, were interviewed years later by a well-known Van Gogh expert. Doing this detailed personality profile for criminal behavior and intent checks all the boxes of these primary persons of interest and further strengthens the case for murder, not suicide, as this personality profile comfortably brings together all the missing pieces and finally connects all the dots and even dots the "i's" and crosses the "t's." The Doctor Did Do It!!!

Keywords: Dr. Paul Gachet; Paul Jr; Homeopathic; Antisocial and Narcissistic Personality Disorders; Professional vs Personal Relationship; Killing Vincent Project (KVP)

Please refer to Killing Vincent Project publications establishing that Vincent van Gogh did not commit suicide but was murdered. <https://killingvincent.com/publications/>

Abbreviations

KVP: Killing Vincent Project; ASPD: Antisocial Personality Disorder; NPD: Narcissistic Personality Disorder; DSM-5-TR: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Edition 5- Text Revision.

Dr Paul-Ferdinand Gachet (1828 – 1909): Personal Story

Dr. Gachet was born to a well to do manufacturing family in Lille, France in 1828. He became very interested in art and painting as a teenager but went on to study medicine in Paris at his father's urging.

This career path was not his first choice. He really wanted to be and fancied himself a great painter. In addition to earning his medical degree in Paris (his thesis was a study of "melancholia"), he became friends with some of the more revolutionary minds in Paris and became an advocate of free love. His liberal friends acquainted him with the modern art scene brewing in the city, and he loved being a part of it. He was hooked on that mesmerizing aspect of the new Parisian art as he fell into that group in its infancy and grew with it.

As he developed his coterie of artist friends (and his art collection), Gachet also married Blanche Castets in 1868. After a brief stint as a front-line doctor during the Prussian siege of Paris in 1870, when it became clear to him that he had a profound aversion to blood and treating injured soldiers, he ended up a homeopathic doctor treating patients with herbs, potions, nostrums, and elixirs that he grew and concocted along with his medicinal "Waters." After the Franco-Prussian War, his preference and alleged expertise was now focused on "melancholia" (depression) and homeopathy concepts in general.

Gachet moved his children, Marguerite and Paul, Jr., and ailing wife to Auvers-sur-Oise, on the outskirts of Paris, where he became friends with Pissarro, Cezanne and Guillaumin. He was really into the art world and its new group of artists.

His wife died in 1875 of consumption, while the good doctor was having a major affair with his housekeeper, Mme. Louise Chevalier, even after his wedding. This illegitimate relationship, more than just a mistress, resulted in the birth of Louise-Josephine Chevalier (Gachet), 3 years Marguerite's senior [1].

Dr. Gachet: Artist (Paul Van Ryssel)

Dr. Gachet was more than a mediocre doctor; he fancied himself an artist and engraver in his own mind. He practiced his art under the nom de peintre, Paul van Ryssel. He never created any noteworthy art and being an artist was more a hobby than a profession. His only famous work is a sketch of Van Gogh on his deathbed. Dr. Gachet allowed Vincent to experiment with his press and copper etching plates; Vincent did just one work, a portrait of Dr. Gachet, and realized this mode of art was too confining for him. No doubt he both

admired and envied Vincent and thus there was a love-hate dynamic between them.

Dr. Gachet & Vincent Van Gogh

The relationship was first and foremost professional. Vincent needed support, guidance, and intervention given his release from Saint Remy Asylum on May 16, 1890, but the boundaries quickly began to blur. As a homeopathic physician, did Dr. Gachet prescribe and administer any of his potions to Vincent?

There is indirect evidence that this is a possibility based upon a letter from Theo to Vincent, July 22, 1890, addressing how Vincent may have been depressed or disturbed:

I hope, my dear Vincent, that your health is good, and as you said that you're writing with difficulty and don't speak to me about your work, I'm a little afraid that there's something that's bothering you or that isn't going right. In that case, do go and see Dr. Gachet, he'll perhaps give you something that will buck you up again. Give me news of you as soon as possible [2].

Nonetheless, it cannot be determined whether such potions were actually given to Vincent, but what is known is how Vincent felt about Dr. Gachet's own mental and physical status:

Also, in the May 20, 1890 letter to Theo and Jo, Vincent wrote: I've seen Dr. Gachet, who gave me the impression of being rather eccentric, but his doctor's experience must keep him balanced himself while combating the nervous ailment from which it seems to me he's certainly suffering at least as seriously as I am.

His own house is full of old things, dark, dark, dark, with the exception of a few sketches by Impressionists I mentioned. Despite the fact that he's an odd fellow, the impression he made on me isn't unfavourable.

Chatting of Belgium and the days of the old painters, his grief-stiffened face took on a smile again, and I really think that I'll stay friends with him and that I'll do his portrait. Then he tells me that I must work a great deal, boldly, and not think at all about what I've had [3].

This analysis of Dr. Gachet was reiterated in his letter to Theo on May 24, 1890:

I think that we must in no way count on Dr. Gachet. In the first place he's iller than I am, it seemed to me, or let's say just as much, there you have it. Now when one blind man leads another blind man, do they not both fall into the ditch [4]?

The relationship with Dr. Gachet was rather ambiguous right from the beginning. Was Vincent skeptical of Dr. Gachet's medical competence and ability to provide "treatment" for him?

What else could the relationship offer to Vincent?

Initially, "friendship" seemed to be a key element of the "treatment plan."

It certainly was what Theo wished for Vincent when he wrote to Vincent on June 2, 1890: What you write about Doctor Gachet interests me a great deal, I hope that you'll become good friends with him. I'd very much like to have a friend who was a doctor, for at every turn one would like to know, especially for the little one, where illnesses come from [5].

The relationship may have moved in the direction of friendship, although the nature of this relationship, namely, mutuality, respect, affection leaves much in question and thus the term "friendship" deserves to be in quotes. However, early on the relationship was going well... at least from Vincent's perspective.

On May 21, 1890, Vincent wrote his favorite sister, Willemien: Then I've found in Dr. Gachet a ready-made friend and something like a new brother would be – so much do we resemble each other physically, and morally too. He's very nervous and very bizarre himself and has rendered much friendship and many services to the artists of the new school, as much as was in his power. I did his portrait the other day and am also going to paint that of his daughter who is 19. He lost his wife a few years ago, which has greatly contributed to breaking him. We were friends, so to speak, immediately, and I'll go and spend one or two days a week at his house working in his garden, of which I've already painted two studies, one with plants from the south, aloes, cypresses, marigolds, the other with white roses, vines and a figure [6].

What may have been the strongest connection between Dr. Gachet and Vincent was that they both were artists. Dr. Gachet was well-informed about the contemporary art scene in Paris and could easily judge the talent that Vincent displayed. Why else would he allow Vincent to do his portrait and invite him to do a portrait of his beloved daughter, Marguerite, of whom he was very protective. As indicated, Dr. Gachet also allowed Vincent to use his press and copper etching plates. Initially, Vincent came frequently to Dr. Gachet's home to paint (and have meals) but when he discovered that Vincent was painting Marguerite in the garden, stress and tension developed. There was more going on here than just an artist and his subject. It must be assumed that Dr. Gachet was picking up the vibes, given Vincent's

history with women. Added to this increasingly complex relationship was Dr. Gachet's intermittent relationship with Theo. In his June 13, 1890 letter to his mother, Anna, Vincent mentions that on Sunday, Theo, Jo and their child had lunch at Dr. Gachet's home in Auvers-sur-Oise [7].

Vincent's relationship with Dr. Gachet is now a complex mixture of doctor-patient, friend-to-friend, fellow artists, even extended family, immersed directly and indirectly in the art world and the exploding Impressionists and Post-Impressionists movement.

Quite provocative is that Vincent's last direct reference to Dr. Gachet refers to him as "Mr. Gachet."

It's a real pity that at Mr Gachet's the house is so cluttered with all sorts of things. Otherwise, I think it would be a good plan to come and lodge here – at his house – with the little one, at least for a good month – I think that the country air has an enormous effect [8].

Dark Side of Dr. Gachet & Death of Vincent

The Killing Vincent Project has irrevocably established through forensic analysis that Vincent did not commit suicide. (cf. KVP website "Publications") Furthermore, it has provided critical analysis that Dr. Gachet (and his son, Paul, Jr.) were implicated, even culpable, in the death of Vincent via voluntary or involuntary manslaughter or premeditated murder due to Vincent's "compromised" relationship with Dr. Gachet's daughter, Marguerite [9]. The question that necessarily arises is how could this relationship, as described above, between Vincent and Dr. Gachet turn so tragically dark and result in Vincent's death.

Was there something in Dr. Gachet's personality profile that was a disposition for this tragedy to unfold?

Utilizing the DSM-5-TR and its criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) and Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) the following will present an argument why this dark, dark event may have unfolded.

DSM - 5 - TR

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) (Psychopathy, Sociopathy)
Pervasive Pattern of Disregard for and Violation of the Rights of Others (As Indicated by the Following):

Failure to conform to social norms concerning lawful behaviors, as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest.

Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for pleasure or personal profit. Impulsivity or failure to plan.

Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults.

Reckless disregard for the safety of self or others.

Consistent irresponsibility, failure to sustain consistent work behavior, or honor monetary obligations.

Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another person.

**Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)
Pervasive Pattern of Grandiosity (In Fantasy or Behavior),
Need for Admiration, and Lack of Empathy (as Indicated
by the Following):**

Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).

Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.

Believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).

Requires excessive admiration.

Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations).

Is interpersonally exploitative (i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends). Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.

Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her. Shows arrogant and haughty behaviors or attitudes.

Caution Utilizing the DSM-V-TR

Creating a psychological profile from limited available information and no patient-suspect contact or a direct interview has its obvious drawbacks in limiting its success. However, these profiling challenges still can be successfully concluded as the track record of FBI profilers can attest. This

is not perfect, but often it is the only information available as the usual cautions that any such profile must engage, namely, to avoid fitting a "person" into a "diagnostic pigeon-hole." The use of DSM categories offers guidance for obtaining insights into how an individual's emotions, attitude and behavior can be best understood. It is only a tool, not a definitive answer.

The following is a basic, yet modern psychological profile assessment of Dr. Paul-Ferdinand Gachet. There are certain characteristic personality traits we can readily glean from our research.

Dr. Gachet: ASPD & NPD

These traits overlap in Dr. Gachet's psychological profile and will be presented as such. Again, these diagnostic categories are tools for seeking an understanding of his personality and nefarious behavior.

Dr. Gachet had an affair while married and hid his mistress, Louise Chevalier, and their child, Louise-Josephine, in Paris until after his wife died. He had his mistress live with him in Auvers-sur-Oise as his "housekeeper" together with their illegitimate daughter. He forced this daughter to live in complete anonymity because of the fear of the social stigma that such awareness would bring to his social standing and self-image.

He often used his profession, his connections, and his professional standing for his own personal interests ("Me, Me, Me"). He used these connections to introduce himself into Parisian art and salon society for those critical invites to the new art showings, where access was "by invitation only."

Dr. Gachet obviously sought out contemporary artists and collected their works by exchanging medical treatment for one or more of their paintings. Furthermore, he avidly collected their art by whatever means possible. He was clever and dishonest in his dealings with these young artists and readily took advantage of them in his ongoing quest to enhance his art collection.

In his May 20, 1890 letter to Theo and Jo (Theo's wife), this ethically tarnished collection of artworks is reinforced by Vincent's description of the paintings Dr. Gachet had in his home:

You'll probably see Dr. Gachet this week - he has a very fine Pissarro, winter with red house in the snow, and two fine bouquets by Cezanne.

Also another Cezanne of the village. Myself, in my turn I'll gladly, very gladly give a stroke of the brush here [10].

This may explain his profound sense of entitlement when he took possession of 26 of Vincent's paintings at the time of Vincent's death as "payment" for the care provided to Vincent. This was done without negotiation or sensitivity to Theo, on the basis that he was "owed" such paintings because of his service to Vincent as his doctor.

However, the most disturbing sociopathic and narcissistic behavior was refusing to provide medical care to the wounded Vincent who had climbed a flight of stairs to his room, was communicative with Mr. Ravoux, the innkeeper, and even smoked. When Dr. Gachet arrived, his pronouncement was simply to say: "nothing can be done." This is inexcusable and blatant malpractice; furthermore, he made no effort to have Vincent transported to nearby Paris where surgery for abdominal puncture wounds was highly sophisticated for its time. If a physician cannot provide adequate and immediate care, referral to those who can is ethically compulsory.

As the years unfolded after Vincent's death, as thoroughly presented in *Love and Murder*, Dr. Gachet and his son, Paul, Jr. developed forgeries of Vincent's painting and lucratively profited from this business. With the help of Marguerite, Paul, Jr. finally "resolved" this questionable situation with donations to French museums, primarily the Louvre, between 1949 - 1954.

Paul Gachet, Jr. (1873 – 1962) (Louis Van Ryssel)

Paul, Jr. and his sister, Marguerite (1869 – 1949) lived very reclusive lives and never earned a living but lived off the money made from selling paintings in their father's collection. Paul, Jr. would not allow their collection to be photographed and rarely lent for exhibitions [11]. It was Paul, Jr. who called the shots, even selling his sister's cherished portrait of her at the piano done by Vincent.

What is enlightening is that Paul, Jr. was a 'carbon copy' of his father... something he highly honored. He was uninspired and had left school early. He was only planning to lead "the good life" as a painter, mimicking his father's behaviors, and believed himself to be exceptionally talented. His father catered to his whims. Junior desperately wanted only to be exactly like father (a "Mini-me"). He began to look like him, dress like him, utilize his name, display similar mannerisms and facial expressions as well as try to emulate his every move, including his voice, speech, and phrases.

He led a very relaxed, low stress lifestyle set up by his father who was still living off his dead wife's dowry.

Paul, Jr. dropped out of school to stay at home and become a country gentleman and painter like his father.

He disdained his sister Marguerite as well as his half-sister, Louise-Josephine. He treated them both like "servants" for his needs.

The psychological profile today of Paul Jr. would readily corroborate the "like father-like son" analysis in spades! As the saying goes, "the apple did not fall far from the tree." The summary profile of the father above is virtually interchangeable with that for the son.

Paul, Jr. also became a devout art collector to enhance his painting career and his anticipated comfortable retirement. This art collector dimension makes perfect sense for someone who inherited many original works of art but with no discernible talent or skill, and notably no personal earned wealth. Like his father, Paul, Jr. dabbled in creating mediocre art. He even painted under a name similar to his father: Louis van Ryssel.

Personality Profiles & Death of Van Gogh

KVP research has established that on July 27, 1890, Vincent did not go out to paint as he usually did (no painting, no easel, no painting supplies were ever discovered in some supposedly last painting location) rather, he went to Dr. Gachet's home to address his relationship with Marguerite. During this visit, a confrontation occurred like that which Vincent described with the Rev. Stricker (1881), demanding to see his daughter, Kee Vos-Stricker; Vincent put his hand in the flame of a candle until his demand was met; Rev. Stricker blew out the candle [12]. Given such potential for emotional volatility on Vincent's part and the high reputational stakes for Dr. Gachet to prevent Marguerite from ever marrying Vincent or even having a romantic relationship with her, an explosive encounter occurred. Dr. Gachet did have a gun in his possession; there's no evidence that Vincent had possession of a gun. The confrontation between Dr. Gachet, Paul, Jr. and Vincent resulted in a violent and deadly encounter... albeit unintentional. Vincent was able to walk back to the Ravoux Inn and return to his room as described above.

Given that ASPD and NPD commonly co-exist and can create a synergistic dynamic, that ASPD has a very high risk (probability 35-75%) [13] of violence that both disorders manifest significant impairment (or complete lack) of "conscience," the possibility of a violent situation occurring between Team Gachet and Vincent is quite understandable. Any violent incident that occurred that fateful day at the Gachet home would most likely be covered up by Team Gachet. Lies, misrepresentation, and diversion from the circumstances of what occurred would be the prime modus operandi characteristic of these personality disorders. They

were able to achieve their goal of putting responsibility upon Vincent and make themselves look like heroes. Their banner read: Vincent committed suicide.

Conclusion

We have referred to Dr. Gachet and his son, Paul, Jr., as Team Gachet. The narcissistic-sociopathic behavior and personality disorders of Team Gachet noted by their pronounced bad behavior and their willingness to commit crimes, including murder and theft, and the clever coverup by designating Vincent's death as a suicide had the following consequences:

- Prevented Marguerite from any further romantic involvement or thoughts of marriage with Vincent.
- Halted the negative family image that was developing because of the well-known affair between Marguerite and Vincent.
- Enhanced, even created, an image of Vincent that has persisted to this day, namely, "mad artist," "martyr for his art," and above all, an artist who ultimately couldn't cope with his solitary life and who had no choice but to kill himself.
- Yes! They succeeded in creating the suicide narrative. They announced this suicide narrative to Theo, the Auvers-sur-Oise community, to his friends, especially Emile Bernard, who embellished this narrative and passed it onto the French journalist, Albert Aurier.
- Allowed Team Gachet to take possession of 26 Van Gogh paintings and to exploit those stolen paintings for their financial self-interest through sales and forgeries for years.
- Paul Jr. and Marguerite were able to donate the remaining Van Gogh paintings, along with the rest of the GACHET family's Impressionist art collection, to French Museums. (As can be seen in the 1999 exhibition's Catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum, Cezanne to Van Gogh: The Collection of Doctor GACHET). This was a quid pro quo deal negotiated by Marguerite to exonerate her brother and to get the rest of the GACHET Art Forgery Ring's criminal record expunged!
- The authors and KVP are intent upon not letting this

sociopathic and narcissistic duo escape history's judgment of the dark side of their lives as it touched the legend of Vincent van Gogh, directly implicated in bringing this artistic genius' life to a premature end.

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