

The Equalizer (2014): Psychological Profile of Robert McCall

By : Kyree I Bell Sr

Class: Psy-204-1370

Date: April 19th, 2025

Character Overview: Robert McCall

- Main protagonist in *The Equalizer* (2014)
- Former black-ops operative living in Boston
- Works at a hardware store; lives a quiet life
- Guided by a strong moral code: justice for the oppressed
- Male, African-American, mid-to-late 50s

Presenting Symptoms

- Insomnia and restlessness
- Highly regimented daily routine
- Hypervigilance in public settings
- Difficulty forming emotional connections
- Compulsive need to 'right wrongs' with violence

Examples from the Film

- Times events with stopwatch – suggests control obsession
- Sleeps little; spends nights reading or walking
- Seeks out and violently confronts abusers, traffickers
- Forms a protective bond with Teri, a trafficked teen
- Avoids discussing his past or emotions

Proposed Diagnosis: PTSD

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (F43.10)
- Met criteria based on DSM-5:
 - - Direct exposure to trauma
 - - Re-experiencing through memories or reactions
 - - Avoidance of emotional intimacy
 - - Increased arousal and startle response
 - - Negative beliefs about self and world

Sociocultural Context

- Veteran with elite military training
- African-American man operating under the radar
- Distrust in law enforcement systems
- Values self-reliance and justice outside traditional institutions

Best Practice Treatment Options

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Narrative Therapy to process moral conflict
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)

Individualized Treatment Plan

- Engage McCall in trauma therapy focused on military experiences
- Use narrative therapy to explore identity as protector
- Build trust and emotional expression in sessions
- Introduce structured journaling or storytelling
- Consider veteran peer support groups

Challenges in Treatment

- Reluctance to open up emotionally
- Sees violence as justified and necessary
- Mistrust of systems and institutions
- Fear of losing control or being vulnerable

References

- Corey, G. (2023). Theory and Practice of Group Counseling (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.).
- Bryant, R. A. (2019). PTSD: A state-of-the-art review. World Psychiatry.
- Shay, J. (2014). Moral injury and combat trauma. Journal of Traumatic Stress.

Conclusion

- Robert McCall displays classic signs of PTSD from combat trauma
- His vigilantism stems from moral injury and a desire to restore justice
- Treatment must be structured, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive