Francisco Duran, who occasionally claimed to be God, said he fired 29 shots through the White House fence to remove a pernicious “mist” that hung over the White House. The prosecutor called him a disturbed fame-seeker, angry at the government, who could have been faking a mental disorder. That case – and Duran’s 1995 conviction – provide the framework for this program on the evolution of the federal insanity defense.

The program will include a reenactment of the closing arguments on Duran’s insanity defense by the prosecutor and defense counsel who tried the case before District Judge Charles Richey. The reenactment will be followed by a panel discussion assessing the success or futility of Congressional changes in the rules governing the insanity defense after the John Hinckley trial. Panelists will also explore the developments in the handling of defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity.

Setting the Stage

Stephen J. Morse, Professor of Psychiatry and Law in Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania

Reenactment

For the United States, Eric Dubelier, now of Reed Smith LLP
For the defendant, A.J. Kramer, Federal Public Defender

Sitting as Judge, Kimberly Brown, Associate Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law and Law Clerk to Judge Richey

Panel Discussion

Patrick J. Canavan, Chief Executive Officer, St. Elizabeth’s Hospital
Eric Dubelier
A.J. Kramer
Stephen J. Morse