



- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

## 10 Real-Life Mad Scientists

Posted by admin in [Interesting Facts](#) on 03 30th, 2009 | [no responses](#)



Science, we are informed by conscientious historians of the discipline, is something that comes to us without anything we might call a “moral imperative” as to what we should or should not be doing with the knowledge. In fact, science has often been described as an “amoral” enterprise, which can be put to evil uses just as easily as good ones. Scientists themselves bear no responsibility to ensure how their discoveries are used by others.

But what if the scientist himself is a diabolical mad man?

Thank the FSM it doesn't happen often, but here's a list of ten people throughout history who fit the description of “Mad Scientist” because they used diabolical methods for their experiments. We can be thankful that this sort of research is not applauded today, nor are science students encouraged in these directions. But, they surely are interesting as historical footnotes.

### **1. Johann Conrad Dippel [1673-1734]**

The first and most prophetic fact about [Doctor Dippel](#) is that he was born at Castle Frankenstein near Darmstadt, Germany. He studied theology, philosophy and alchemy at the University of Giessen, and promptly found himself in trouble for his theological opinions. In his search for the philosopher's stone of alchemy, he became interested in creating artificial life.

It is on that score that Dippel gained a reputation for grave robbery, and performing gruesome experiments on cadavers in an attempt to do a "soul transplant." There were rumors of him being driven out of town by angered townsfolk after blowing up a tower at Castle Frankenstein with nitroglycerine, but careful historical research fails to make a firm connection between Dippel and this substance (not discovered until after his time), or between Dippel and Mary Shelley's immortalized mad doctor Frankenstein. What Dippel did manage to do with his alchemical experiments was develop "Prussian blue" dye which became a spectacular commercial success.

## 2. Giovanni Aldini [1762-1834]

The nephew of the man who developed the theory of muscular electricity, [Giovanni](#) centered his scientific career around working with galvanism - electricity. He examined medical uses, ways to illuminate lighthouses, and did experiments using electricity for preservation.

Aldini became most famous - or infamous - for his traveling horror show, touring all across Europe electrifying human and animal bodies for the delight of the public. But it was his performance at the Royal College of Surgeons in London in 1803 that earned him his place in Mad Scientist history. He used his conducting rods on the body of a hanged criminal named George Foster, causing muscles to contract and distort and frightening some people badly. For his efforts as well as his showmanship, Aldini was made a knight by the emperor of Austria and a councilor of state at Milan.

## 3. Ilya Ivanovich Ivanov [1870-1932?]

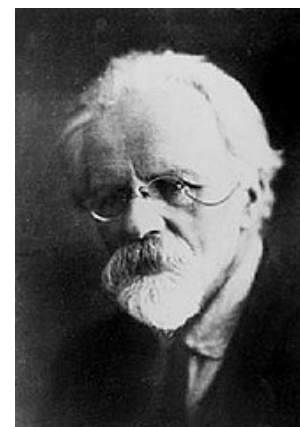
Yet another Stalinist era Russian scientist made his name doing bizarre and arguably unethical experiments on animals. [Ivanov](#) perfected the art of artificial insemination to aid his work, and went on to produce hybrids like Zeedonks (zebra and donkey), Zubrons (wisent and cow), an antelope-cow, a mouse-rat, a mouse-guinea pig, and a guinea pig-rabbit.

Ivanov veered off the merely interesting track with his human-ape hybrid experiments. Seems Stalin had high hopes for an army of man-apes that would be invincible, insensitive to pain and wouldn't care about the quality of their food or treatment. At an experimental station in French Guinea he inseminated female chimpanzees with human sperm, but could not manage to produce a pregnancy. The French colonial government objected when he proposed inseminating human females with sperm from an orangutan. His contribution was primarily to establish the limits of interfertility, which modern scientists now get around with direct genetic manipulation and cloning.

## 4. Sergei Brukhonenko [1890-1960]

This Russian scientist of the Stalinist era contributed important research toward the development of open heart surgery, and invented a primitive heart-lung machine he called the "autojektor." [Sergei Brukhonenko's experiments](#) in how to keep a body (or some part of a body) alive led to some exhibitions that offended the ethical sensibilities of many.

The most famous of those were his experiments with the severed heads of dogs. One of which was able to eat a piece of cheese for the audience, which was then horrified when the chewed cheese exited the truncated esophagus at the other end. He did dog head transplants too, and brought executed dogs back to life. It was primarily experimentation using humans, human bodies and animals that first dictated the regulation of scientific experimentation, and grisly stories on that score helped to make the 'Evil Scientist' a stock character in fiction and entertainment.



## 5. Vladimir Demikhov [1916-1998]

Another organ transplant pioneer from the days of Stalin, [Demikhov](#) was famous for transplanting whole portions of live puppies onto the bodies of adult dogs. He also transplanted various organs around. There are videos of some of the most gruesome experiments of Demikhov and his contemporary Brukhonenko, which we'll not link here. After inviting journalists to his lab to show off his work, a reporter from the *Daily Mail* wrote:

*"Blinking unhappily in the daylight as Demikhov paraded it on its lead, this unfortunate beast had been created by grafting the head and upper body of a small puppy on the head and body of a fully-grown mastiff, to form one grotesque creature with two heads. The visitors watched in horror and fascination as both of the beast's mouths lapped greedily at a bowl of milk proffered by Demikhov's assistants."* The article did not say whether any of the assistants were named Igor.



## 6. Harry Harlow [1905-1981]

[Harry Harlow](#) was a psychologist interested in the psychology of maternal-infant bonding, who contributed greatly to the burgeoning animal rights movement that grew out of the long history of scientific research cruelty to helpless animals. One does have to wonder about many of these researchers, as in how many of them tortured animals in childhood and were steered into science as a "healthy outlet" for this sort of behavior that in the wider society would have earned them some serious legal troubles.

Harlow's most infamous experiments were conducted with rhesus monkeys. He isolated infants from their mothers and offered them a choice of surrogate mother figures - a wire mesh construct or a terrycloth covered construct, one which provided milk and one that did not. He was quite open about his experimental apparatuses, giving them appropriate names such as "rape rack," "iron maiden" and an isolation chamber called the "pit of despair." For all the outrage at his cruelty to infant monkeys, Harlow did establish the importance of maternal-infant bonding for humans and his work led to ethics regulations of scientific research.



## 7. Shiro Ishii [1892-1959]

You may suspect that scientists who feel empowered to dream up tortures for animals might be willing to do the same sort of experiments on humans if the public sensibilities weren't so averse to such things. You would be right, and there are times in human history when the public is distracted by other things, allowing scientists to do their worst. We call it "war," and it's offered cover for things diabolical enough to make an atheist suspect Satan exists, even if God may not.

Making a name for himself in the Japanese military establishment between world wars, [Shiro Ishii](#) enjoyed the title "Father of Biological Warfare" for his exploits as chief of Japan's biological warfare program. Ishii supervised the deliberate infection of thousands of captives with deadly diseases, conducted grotesque surgeries, and performed as many as 3,000 'dissections' of live prisoners without anesthetic. A wealthy man never prosecuted for war crimes, Ishii died peacefully at his home in Japan at the age of 67.



## 8. Joseph Mengele [1911-1979]

His title is still “The Angel of Death,” which he earned the hard way as a German SS officer and physician at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps during the Holocaust.

[Mengele’s favorite subjects](#) for grotesque experiments were twins, and he experimented on at least 3,000 sets of them. 26 of whom survived. He injected chemicals into children’s eyes to see if he could change their color, sewed a pair of Roma twins together so they’d be cojoined, giving them gangrene. He performed most of his surgeries - including amputations - without anesthesia.

It is questionable that Mengele really thought he was doing science, as most historians simply believe he was mad with power. Despite being the most hunted at-large war criminal in the world for 34 years, he died in Bertioga, Brazil in 1979 and buried under the name of Wolfgang Gerhard. He never expressed regret or remorse for his horrible crimes. While the study of twins has contributed much to knowledge of genetics and the “nature vs. nurture” debates in biology, both the Eugenics movement of the early 20th century and the Holocaust are not spoken about with much reverence by modern researchers.



## 9. Sigmund Rascher [1909-1945]

World War II offered lots of opportunities for evil scientific experiments the governments involved apparently figured no one would ever care about, given the level of sheer inhuman violence abroad at the time. [Sigmund Rascher](#) became a captain in the German Luftwaffe, under whose auspices he began human experimentation for research on high altitude flight. He was a favorite of Heinrich Himmler, who gave him absolute power at the Dachau concentration camp to choose his victims.

Rascher killed scores of victims with his portable pressure chamber, more than a hundred with his “freezing experiments,” which actually did document best methods for warming someone suffering terminal hypothermia. While at Dauchau, Rascher also developed those ubiquitous cyanide capsules that have been so often lampooned as the suicide option of choice for spies and other assorted bad guys. Himmler caught Rascher and his wife lying about extending their fertility into their 50s (they’d bought or kidnapped the babies) and had them executed shortly before the end of the war.



## 10. Sidney Gottlieb [1918-1999]

The world’s horror at the atrocities committed by German and Japanese ‘doctors’ during WW-II didn’t stop the United States government from investing quite a bit in its own versions of blatantly unethical (and illegal) human experimental projects. Military psychiatrist and speech therapist [Sidney Gottlieb](#) was put in charge of the CIA’s MK-ULTRA project in 1953 to investigate “techniques that would crush the human psyche to the point that it would admit anything.”

In addition to coming up with some highly humorous assassination plots against Fidel Castro (always involving some kind of poison), Gottlieb graduated to dosing unsuspecting people with LSD, causing some serious death and mental destruction along the way. In 1973, just as the Congress was closing on on the project, records of MK-ULTRA were ordered destroyed by then DCIA Richard Helms. It is not known (because no one involved has bothered to say) if they ever found the “truth drug” they were searching for but it is known that the program experimented with heroin, morphine, temazepam, mescaline, psilocybin, scopolamine, marijuana, alcohol and sodium pentothal. What we got instead was a Drug War that is still claiming innocent lives today.



## No Comments »

No comments yet.

[RSS feed for comments on this post.](#) [TrackBack URL](#)

## Leave a comment