

Shell Shock

By Anika K.R. Hofmann

It started in the First World War, like a plague with unpredictable symptoms that was contracted via violence and fear.



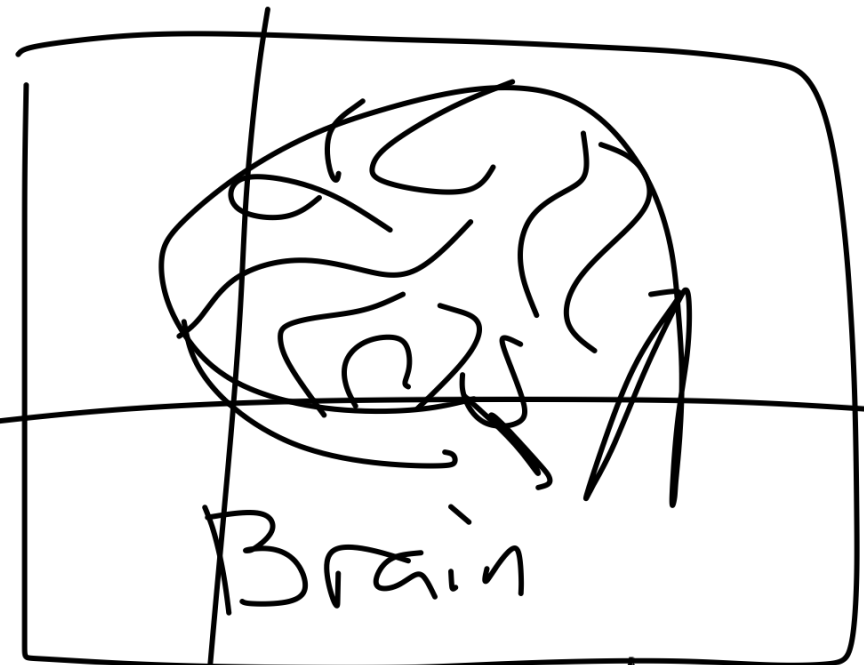
it seemed unavoidable to most soldiers watching the wake of destruction take its toll.



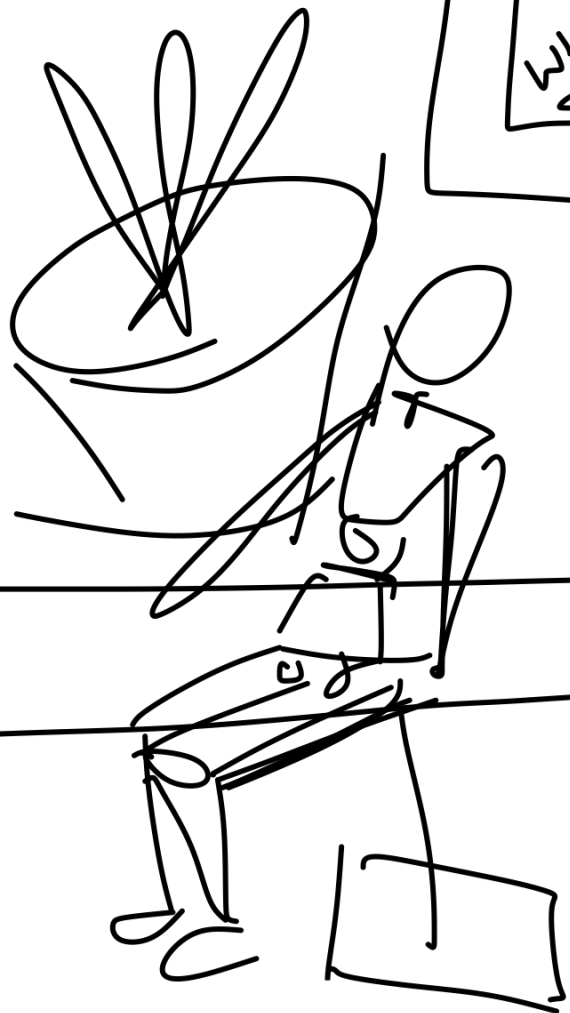
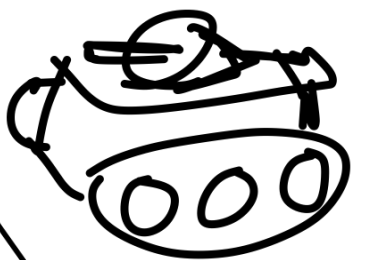
This is shell shock.



Shell Shock



Printer



WW1 was generally caused by decades of hatred and biases building up between countries in Europe. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and large countries like Germany and France had pre-existing alliances with each other. Other countries formed alliances and soon the whole of Europe was at war.

Map
WWI Europe

The war you and I know of with tanks and machine guns didn't exist before WW1.



. New technology brought a new set of horrors to war that didn't exist before.



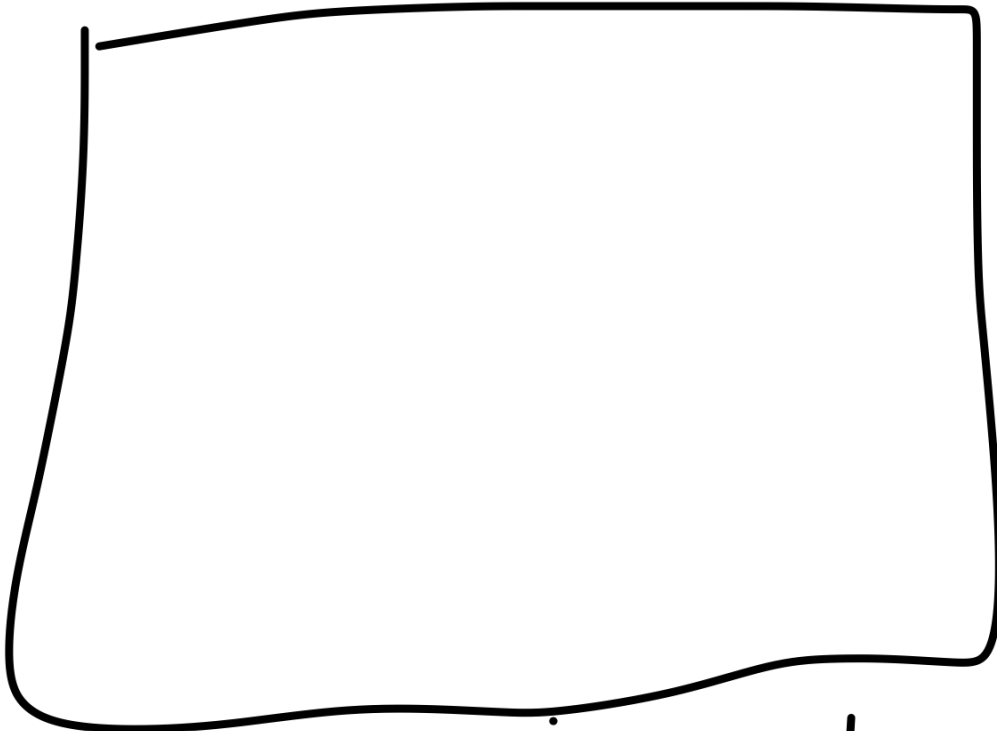
“Shell Shock is any psychological or physiological symptom of war that the cause of which is or was at the time unknown”



Back in 1915 they didn't have all the medical technology Or knowledge that we have today.

NEWSPAPER

1915

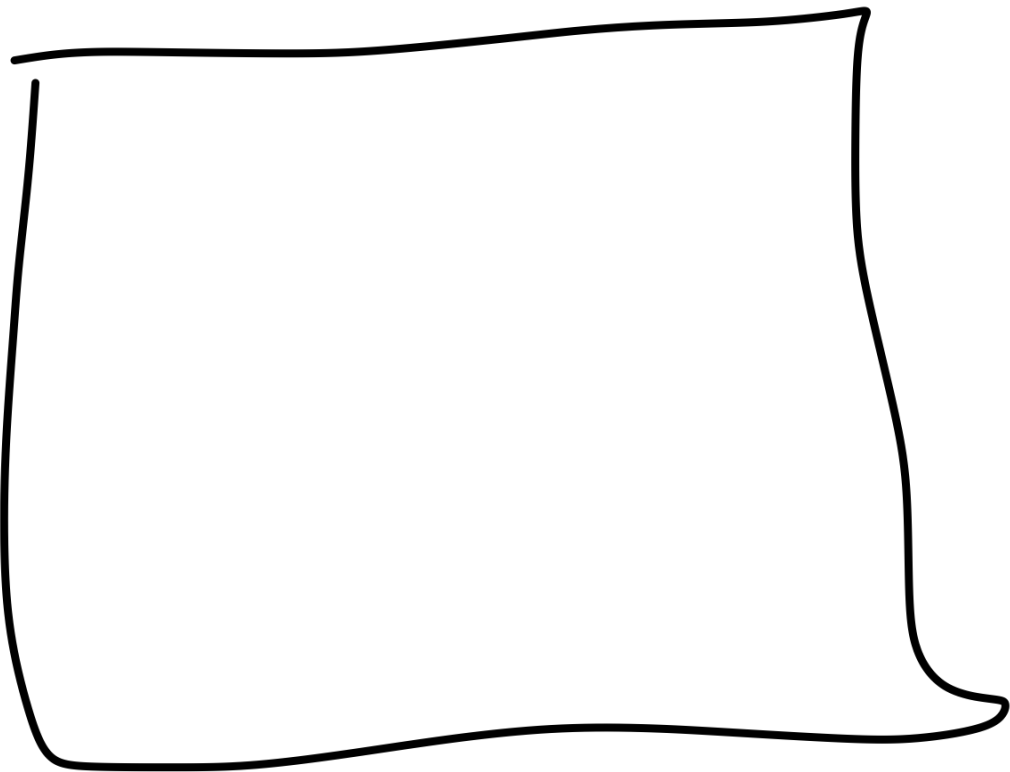


Medical
Stuff

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medical
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So when I say an unknown cause that could mean a lot more than it does now.



Shell shock could be something like (post dramatic stress disorder) PTSD which is common among the soldiers of today's war



, this could be with hallucinations or “night terrors” (nightmares), or flashbacks.



However shell Shock wasn't always psychological, it could also be something more physiological, like heart attacks with unknown causes, chronic headaches, loss of vision.



Things like this really baffled scientists and doctors as they couldn't say that these symptoms were that of cowardice or weakness. These physiological symptoms were the first noticed, and were thought to have been because of concussions from shells exploding beside a soldier



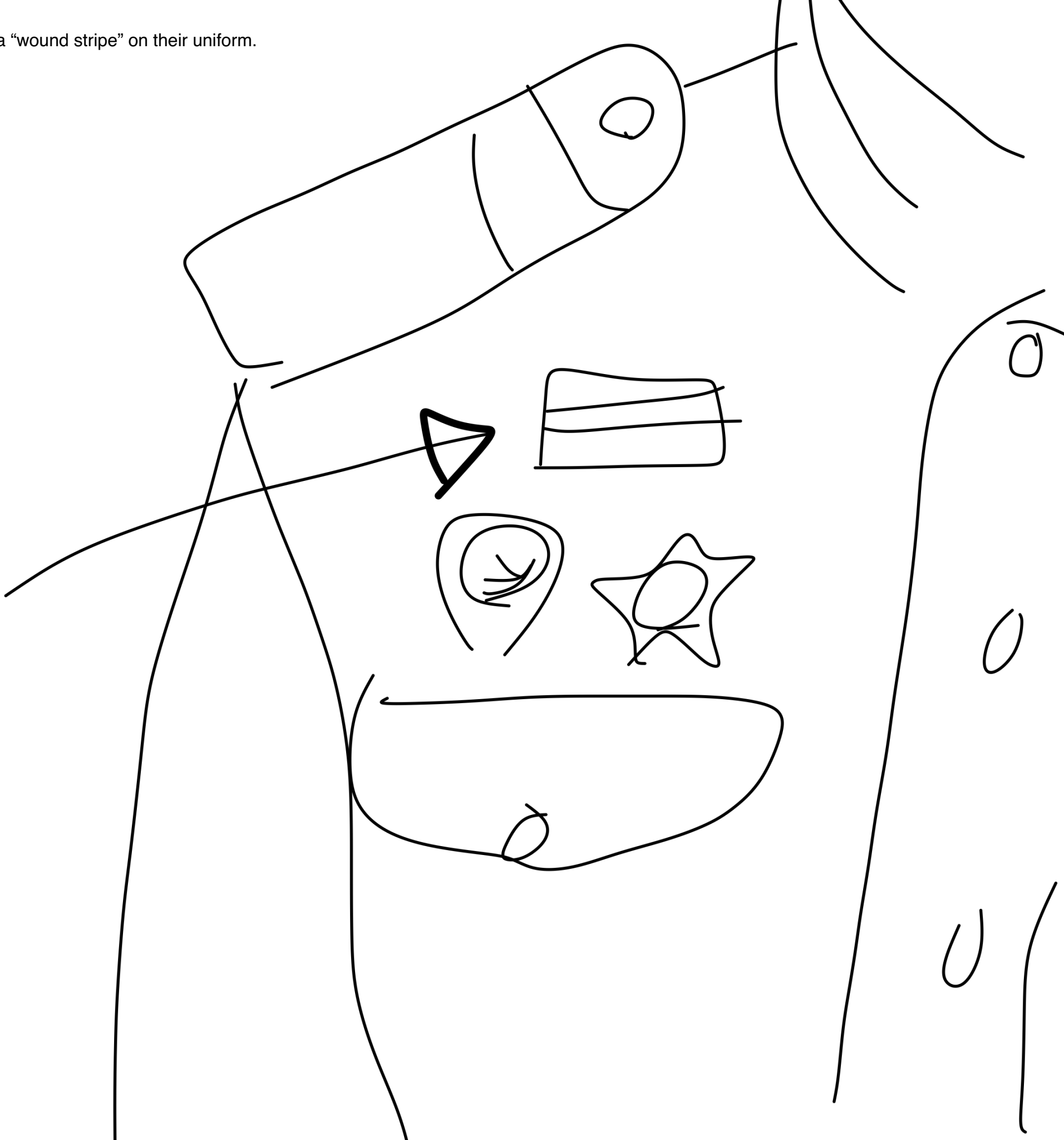
and the brain being bruised or shocked from hitting the skull.



This is where the word shell shock comes from



Patients would be given an honourable discharge and a “wound stripe” on their uniform.

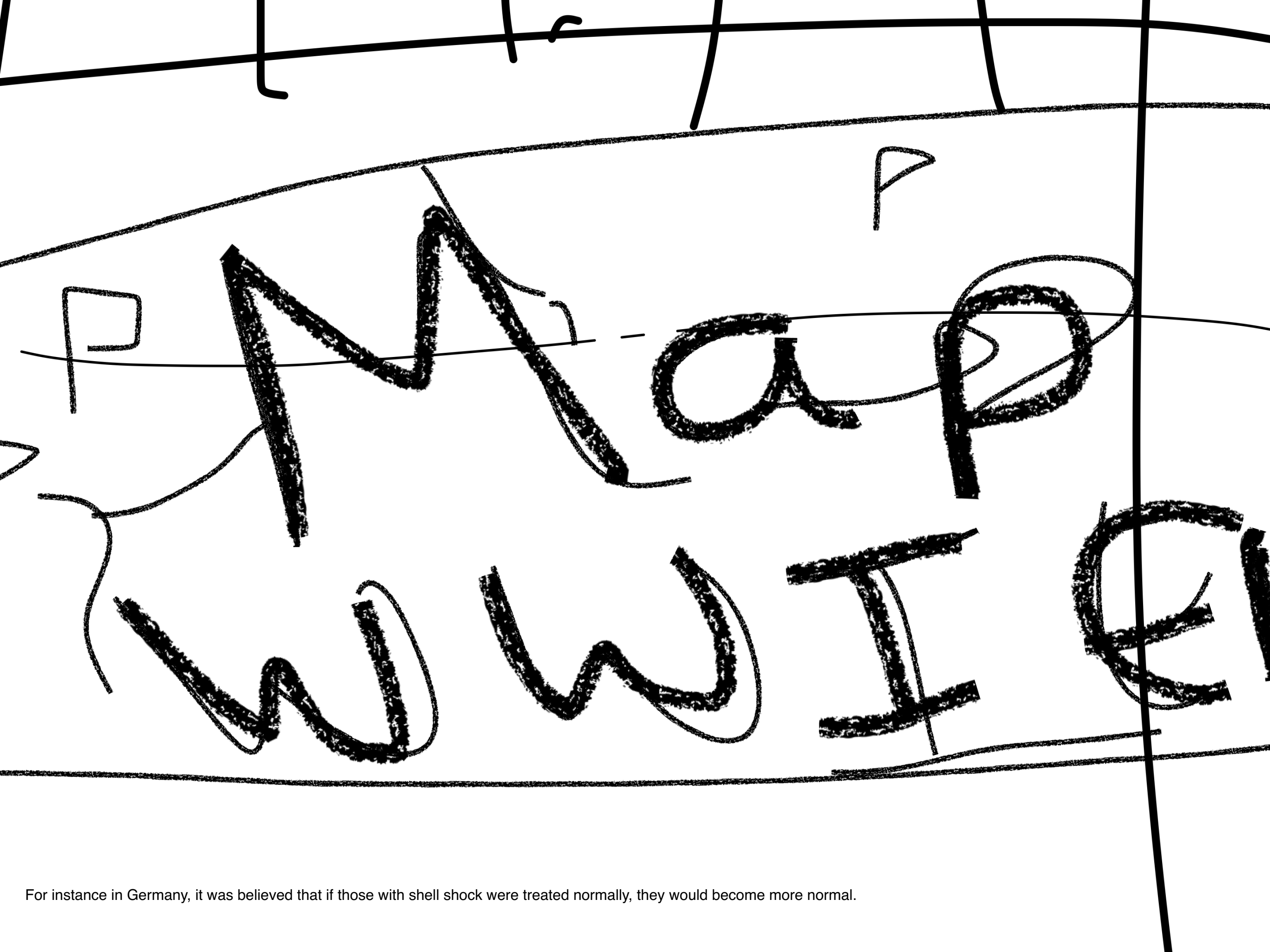


But when the psychological symptoms became known, he was put on trial for desertion and cowardice, and possibly executed via firing squad.



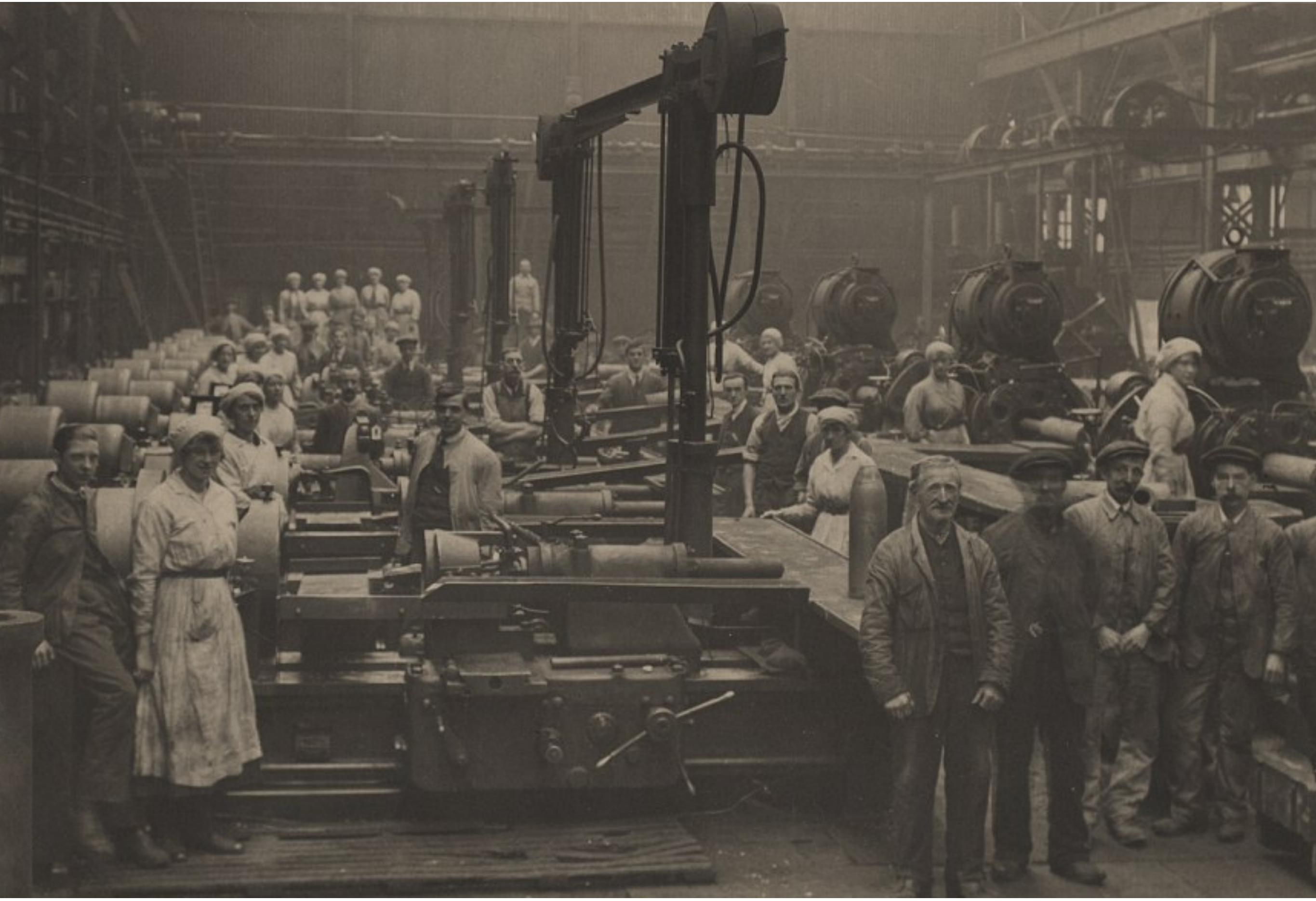
At this time, doctors were unsure of what to do. Some different countries took different paths.





For instance in Germany, it was believed that if those with shell shock were treated normally, they would become more normal.

They would be put to work in regular jobs while under medical supervision.



Russia very quickly realized the importance of the issue..



Entire hospitals, and research facilities were built just for the cause, but the Russian revolution stopped it all before there could be much advancement



Time passed, and people realized that shell shock was actually a medical disorder, and not a judgment of character. This allowed doctors and scientists to focus more on finding cures and therapies to solve the issue.



Medical and societal advancements from shell shock started a domino effect that caused doctors to learn things that allowed them to learn even more.



. Today we have brain mapping, and reasonably open minds about psychosomatic disorders and other mental illnesses.



In fact our knowledge of brains in general is quite impressive, for example we know exactly what happens in PTSD and where!



If you have PTSD and experience something that reminds your brain of something dangerous you experienced in a traumatic event,



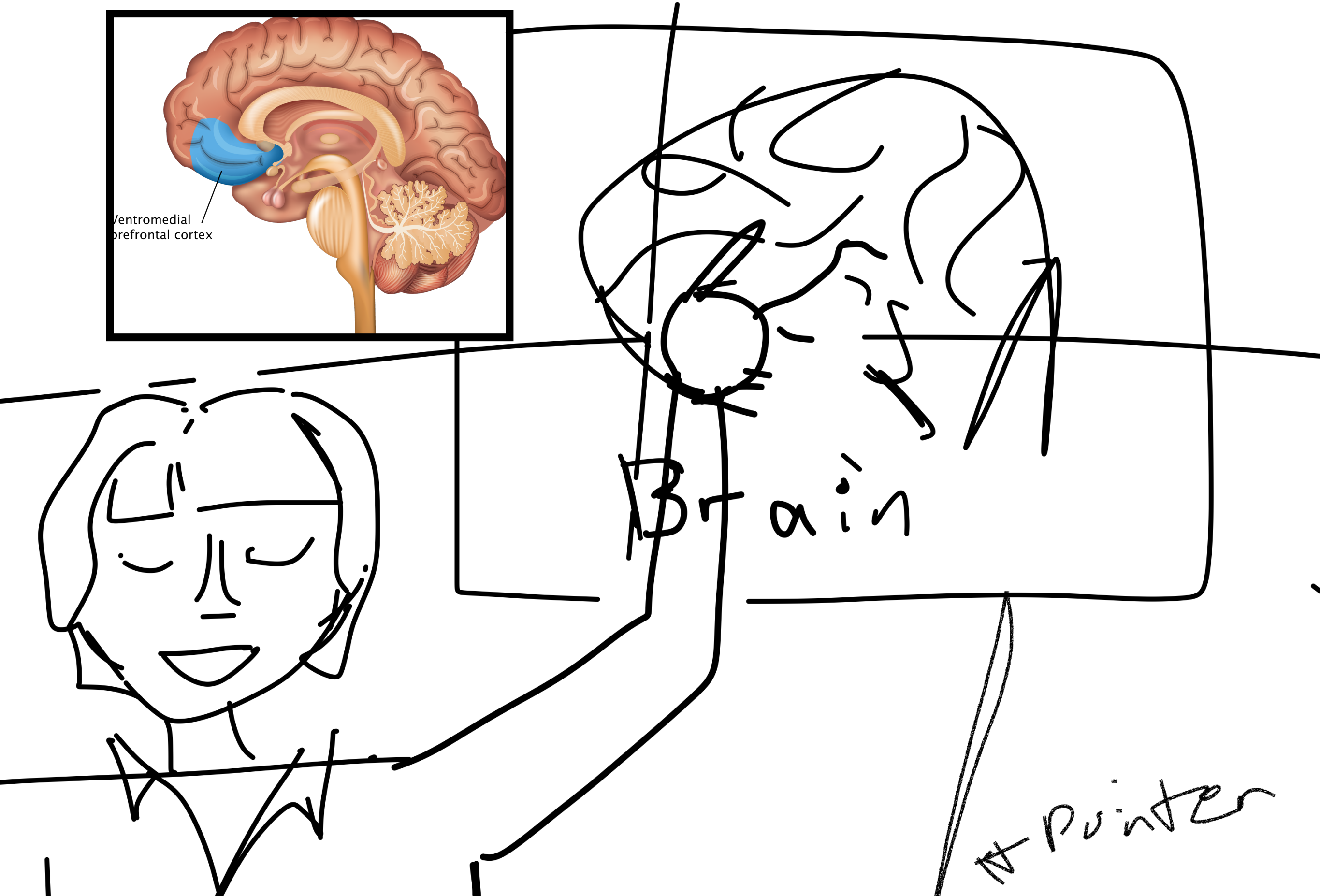
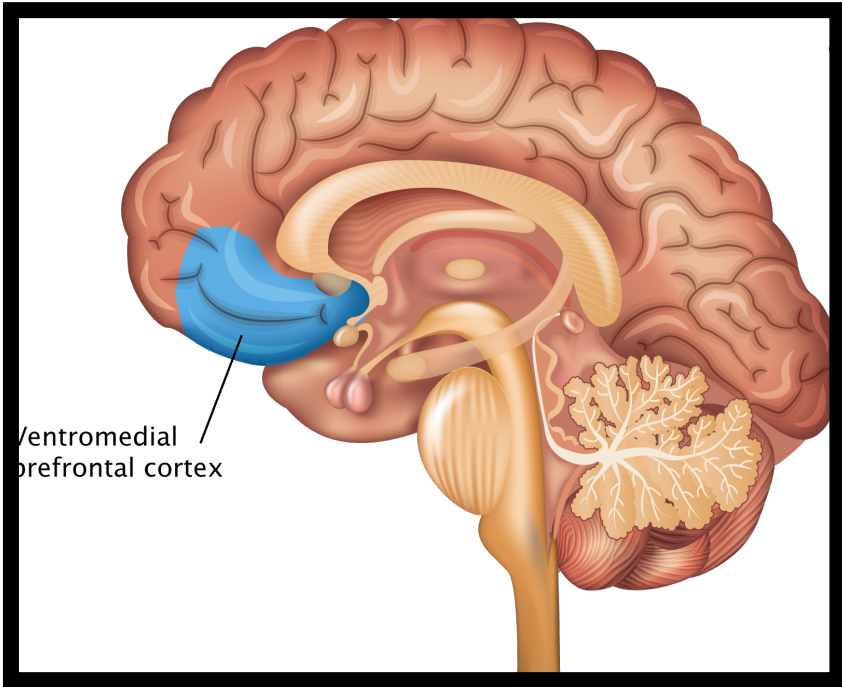
your hippocampus will connect the events and send warning to the rest of your brain,



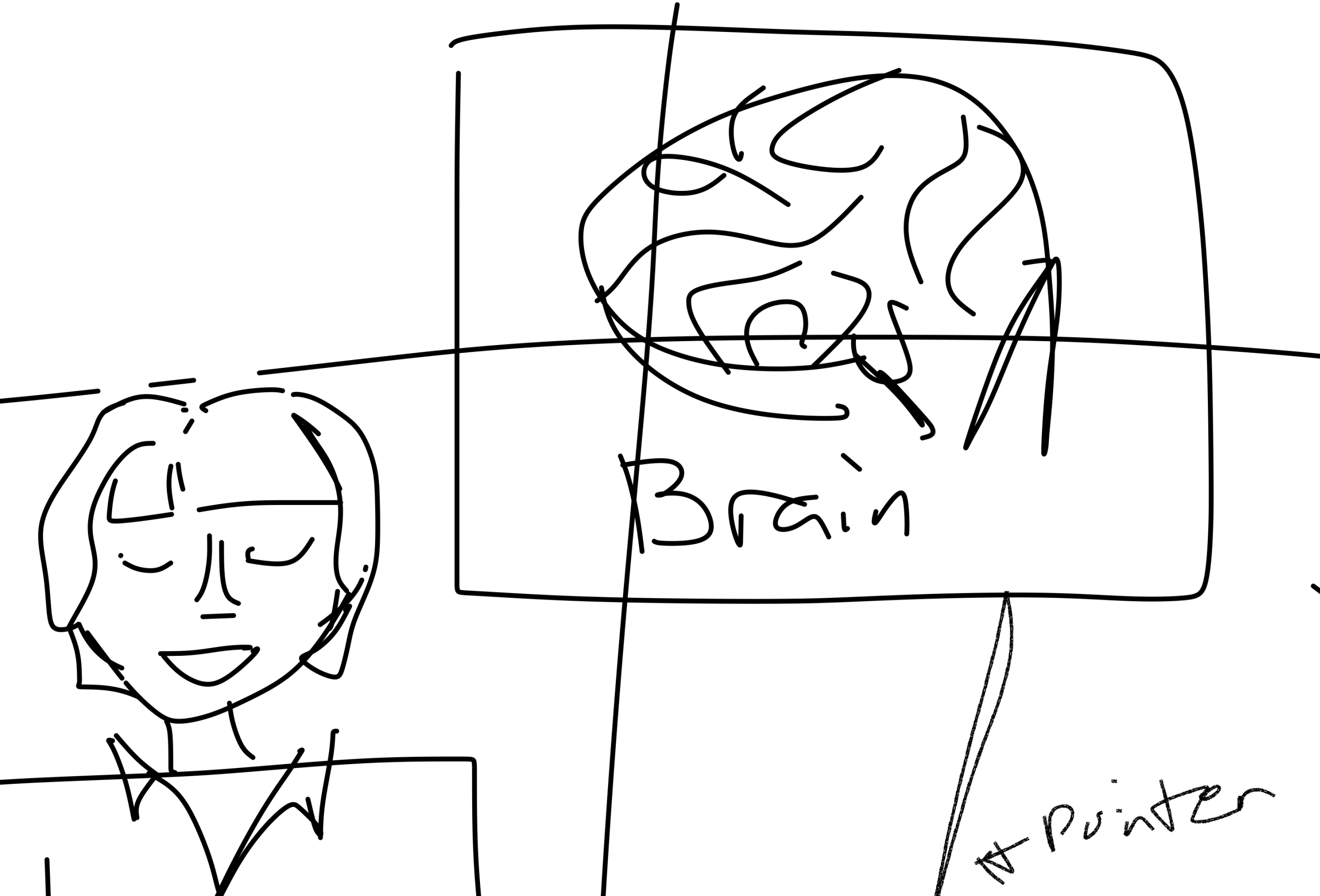
and the amygdala will send out warning hormones to get the body ready to protect its self.



With PTSD the vmVPC (or the reasonable part of your brain) goes into an inactive phase and your brain is free to act on instinct.



This is what causes the flashbacks, lack of sleep, high blood pressure, and others things that PTSD is known for.



PTSD is the term for one of the major forms of shell shock

PTSD

Shell Shock

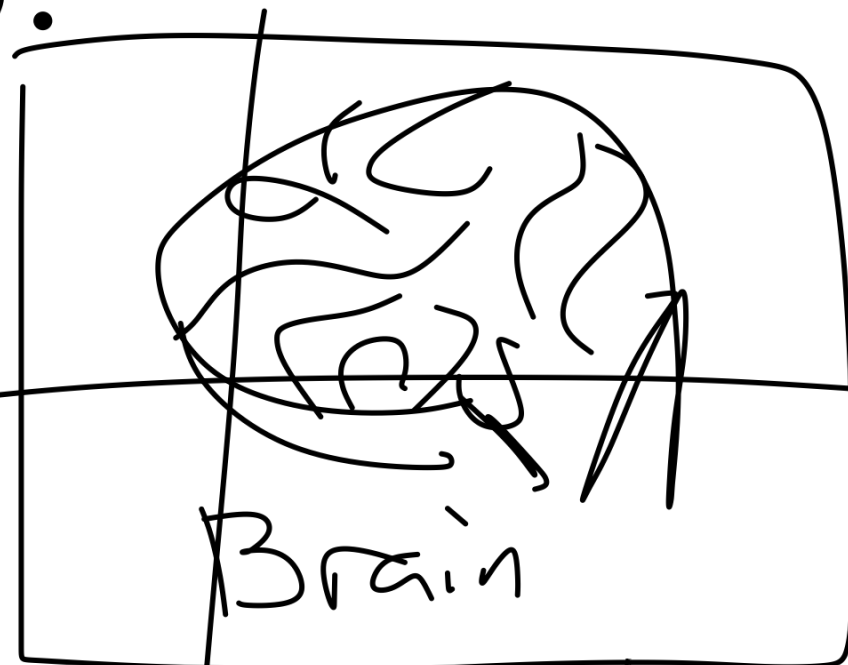
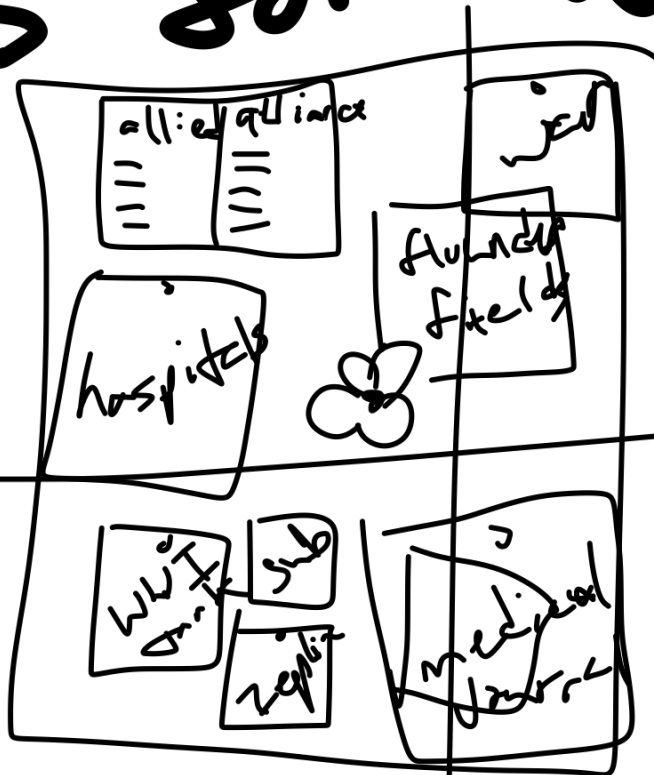
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ATSD

. Our wars have gotten more traumatic over the years, and people still to this day experience different forms of shell shock, though they are now called different things. Most of today's medical information was influenced by shell shock's domino effect on knowledge, with the results of shell shock unfolding with each medical breakthrough of today and with the medicine of tomorrow.



Thanks for Watching!



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