

I was diagnosed as having Puerperal Psychosis, a severe form of post-natal depression. In addition to the drugs, I was also given eight sessions of electric shock 'treatment', medically referred to as electro-convulsive 'therapy' (ECT). I had never heard of 'ECT' and knew nothing whatsoever about it. One of its effects is brain damage causing memory loss so that I don't remember many of the details of the actual 'treatment'. But from my subsequent reading on the issue, assuredly the following would also have happened to me. A 'consent' form would have been first of all required. In my drugged state, I don't know if I did or did not give it. Neither does Jim recall giving his consent, though perhaps he did. Maybe it was decided upon by the doctors as again being 'for my own good'. In any event, I would have been taken to the room where it was administered. I would have been given an anaesthetic and muscle relaxant. A gel would have been applied to my temples and two electrodes placed on either side. A rubber 'biscuit' would have been inserted in my mouth to prevent me from biting my tongue. An electric current of anything up to 400 volts would have been passed through my brain for approximately two seconds. In my comatose state, an observer would have noticed some twitching from my hands and feet, the tell-tale signs that what I was in reality experiencing was a 60 to 90 second grand mal epileptic seizure, disguised by the anaesthetic and muscle relaxant. When I regained consciousness, I would have experienced a severe headache and felt generally disorientated. I would have been given a cup of tea and returned to my ward. This procedure was administered to me on eight occasions. While I still remember some of the events of my stay in Sarsfield Court, I have absolutely no recall of many others. I have absolutely no recall of where I slept, where I ate or who, apart from Jim, came to visit me. To this day, I have absolutely no recall of Claire's birth or holding her for the first time. I was a young woman of 27 becoming a mother for the first time. It should have been the most fulfilling, rewarding and emotional moment of my life but the memory of it does not exist. It breaks my heart. Claire remained in St. Finbarr's for all of this time apart from a few short visits when Jim would bring her out to me but again, I have no recall of those visits. I was missing out on those vital early weeks of bonding with her which was outrageous. The nurses in St. Finbarr's were very good to her and did everything they could but the terrible reality was that she and I were parted.

The second time I received 'ECT', which I would rather refer to as electro shock, was in St Patrick's hospital, Dublin. I can remember this a little better. On the morning it was administered my position was changed to upside down in the bed. This was to enable the 'doctor' to have free access to my head. I remember counting backwards and again I was given a grand mal epileptic seizure. When I woke up I can remember the pounding headache and confusion. Another effect was the erasing of some good memories I had, such as a holiday Jim and I had together. Even though I was an honours maths student, I have difficulty in recalling my tables since. Our memories are part of who we are and to destroy those is a form of abuse. Many of us have been vulnerable women and I now see 'ECT' and other medical psychiatric 'treatments' as rape of the soul. Because of these serious human rights abuses in the name of 'help', Jim and I along with others, formed an affiliate of MindFreedom International called MindFreedom Ireland www.mindfreedomireland.com/. We are proud to be part of a non violent revolution in the 'mental health' system. Our mission is to unite with others to bring freedom, equality, truth and human rights to those in need especially those who have been destroyed by electro shock and psychiatric drugs.

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