

ELECTROSHOCK: Seton Shoal Creek Hospital's Shame

**ELECTROSHOCK ALWAYS DAMAGES THE BRAIN.
ELECTROSHOCK ALWAYS CAUSES MEMORY LOSS.
ELECTROSHOCK SOMETIMES KILLS.
ELECTROSHOCK IS NEVER NECESSARY.**

“Electroshock is a crime against the spirit!”

— Diann'a Loper, electroshock survivor and CAEST member

You may have thought that electroshock (aka shock therapy, electroconvulsive treatment or ECT) had been relegated to history's junkheap. WRONG! Since its introduction in 1938, more than 6,000,000 Americans have undergone electroshock, but even now more than 100,000 Americans are electroshocked every year. And it's happening right here in Austin, where 208 people were electroshocked in FY2003-2004. In the same year, at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, one of the largest electroshock centers in Texas, 163 people underwent this procedure, which has been called an “electrical lobotomy.”

The Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas is a local and international coalition of people deeply concerned about the grievous harm electroshock does to individuals. We believe that everyone is entitled to the intact brain they were born with, that everyone is entitled to the memories, thoughts, and beliefs they've acquired during their journey through life, and that no one has the right to tamper with these sacred possessions.

As a destroyer of healthy brain tissue and of memories, thoughts, and beliefs, electroshock is a direct, violent assault on the hallmarks of individual liberty: freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from cruel and unusual punishment. Electroshock has no place in a free society, and no society in which it is used can be free in any sense other than in name.

We have called this rally and protest demonstration to bring to the attention of Central Texans the fact that people are being electroshocked in our community and to insist that the administrators and psychiatrists at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital stop using this dehumanizing procedure.

Coalition for the Abolition of Electroshock in Texas (CAEST)
Our mission is to abolish electroshock in Texas, and we won't rest until we do.

Report of electroshock cases: call Jim Moore at 1-800-572-2905

Press contact: call John Breeding, PhD, at 512-799-3610

www.endofshock.com

Excerpts from *The Electroshock Quotationary*, posted on endofshock.com

1946 — Anyone who has gone through the electric shock... never again rises out of its darkness and his life has been lowered a notch.

ANTONIN ARTAUD (French electroshock survivor and playwright), 1946, *Artaud: Selected Writings*, 1973.

1948 — This brings us for a moment to a discussion of the brain damage produced by electroshock.... Is a certain amount of brain damage not necessary in this type of treatment? Frontal lobotomy indicates that improvement takes place by a definite damage of certain parts of the brain.

PAUL H. HOCH (Hungarian-born U.S. electroshock psychiatrist), "Discussion and Concluding Remarks," *Journal of Personality*, vol. 17, 1948.

1955 — Over the next eight months I underwent nineteen more electric shock treatments, a grand total, I think, of thirty-two. Pieces of my life just disappeared. A mental patient once said it must have been [like] what Eve felt, having been created full grown out of somebody's rib, born without a history. That is exactly how I felt.

GENE TIERNEY (U.S. electroshock survivor and actor), *Self-Portrait: Gene Tierney*, ch. 17, 1979.

1970? — The most terrible and damaging result of the [electroshock] treatment was that I lost all memories of the early childhood of my six children. I returned home and didn't even know them. I was no longer the same mother because my memories were gone.

JEANNE CLAYTOR (U.S. electroshock survivor), quoted in Mark Smith, "Nightmare from '60s Haunts Mental Patients of '90s," *Houston Chronicle*, 8 March 1992. Claytor said that because of the severe memory loss from ECT she had to relearn basic arithmetic and was unable to navigate her native Amarillo, Texas without a map.

1975 — Recent memory loss [caused by ECT] could be compared to erasing a tape recording.

ROBERT E. ARNOT (U.S. electroshock psychiatrist), "Observations on the Effects of Electric Convulsive Treatment in Man — Psychological," *Diseases of the Nervous System*, September 1975.

1978 — The principal complications of EST are death, brain damage, memory impairment, and spontaneous seizures. These complications are similar to those seen after head trauma, with which EST has been compared.

MAX FINK (Austrian-born U.S. electroshock psychiatrist, and currently the world's leading ECT proponent, "Efficacy and Safety of Induced Seizures (EST) in Man," *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, January-February 1978.

1983 — After a few sessions of ECT the symptoms are those of moderate cerebral contusion, and further enthusiastic use of ECT may result in the patient functioning at a subhuman level.... In all cases the ECT "response" is due to the concussion-type, or more serious, effect of ECT. The patient "forgets" his symptoms because the brain damage destroys memory traces in the brain, and the patient has to pay for this by a reduction in mental capacity of varying degree.

SIDNEY SAMENT (U.S. neurologist), letter to *Clinical Psychiatry News*, March 1983.

1993 — A vast medical literature provides strong evidence that electroconvulsive therapy causes permanent brain damage, including loss of memory and catastrophic deterioration of personality....

During my 20 years as a community psychiatrist I have treated many patients who have been subjected to shock therapy. My experience as a clinician corroborates the many empirical studies that conclude that electroconvulsive therapy is abusive and inhumane, and causes irreversible physical and emotional damage.

HUGH L. POLK (U.S. psychiatrist), letter to *New York Times*, 1 August 1993.

1995 — [Ocie] Shirk, a widow coping with recurring depression, already had one heart attack and suffered from atrial fibrillation, a condition that causes rapid heart quivers. On a Monday at 9:34 am, Oct. 10, 1994, she received shock therapy at Shoal Creek Hospital [now known as Seton Shoal Creek Hospital], a for-profit psychiatric hospital in Austin. She had a heart attack in the recovery room. Four days later, she died of heart failure.... In addition to Shirk, state records show two other patients died after shock therapy at Shoal Creek.

DENNIS CAUCHON (journalist), "Shock Therapy," *USA Today*, 6 December 1995.

1996 — That approximately 2 years of my life prior to the ECT had been erased. My retention of new information is also severely impaired. If anyone had told me that this could happen, even a remote chance, I never would have consented to ECT. I would much rather have lost a limb or 2 than to have lost my memory — my "self."

JACKIE MISHRA (U.S. electroshock survivor), quoted in Loren R. Mosher and David Cohen, "The Ethics of Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)," *Virtual Mentor*, October 2003.

2005 — The magnitude of the atrocity is too great to communicate. That's why it's the perfect crime.

RICH WINKEL (U.S. electroshock survivor and computer programmer), referring to electroshock, zapback@efn.org, 2 February 2005.