

taken aback by his exaggerated negative reaction to the news of my pregnancy. I had not said anything to any of the patients until I was showing so much that it was clearly evident. I was pretty lucky not to show much until my seventh month of pregnancy with this first of my two sons.

I expected Patrick to gush with affection and clumsily open all doors with flair and hold my chair and assist me to stand and sit. This would have been totally in character for him. Instead, Patrick was petrified. He cried, he got mad, he wanted me fired; he was afraid I would die and wanted me in the hospital. Patrick even had to be sedated at one point and the doctor, psychologist, and behavior clinician were consulted on the effects of my pregnancy on Patrick. I was shocked by his reaction. There seemed to be nothing that would persuade him that I would be okay.

I continued to work up until about two weeks before my son was born but a coworker, Hattie, worked with Patrick.

Patrick remained upset and anxious. After the baby was born I came to visit and to show the baby off. At first Patrick was reluctant to even get near us. Hattie stayed very close to him to comfort and encouraged him to enjoy meeting his new little friend. Patrick wanted to see the baby, but was very frightened. Eventually he inched his way over and saw the baby clearly. When Patrick's oversized head got close enough for the baby to focus on, the baby cooed and smiled at Patrick. Patrick's face lit up like a sudden sunrise. He got closer and closer until the baby grabbed his big nose.

Patrick froze in the spot. His eyes were even larger than usual and his face full of wonder. The baby spastically raised his other tiny hand and grabbed Patrick's lower lip. A lopsided grin cracked Patrick's awestruck face. My heart could have sprouted wings

and I hoped nobody could see the tears gathering in my eyes. Patrick's face was magnificent, it rivaled my own first look at my newborn. As I watched I saw his expression change to one of query.

"His head doesn't look funny like mine!" he exclaimed in genuine surprise.

"How come you didn't die like my mom?"

Mystery solved! We could now help Patrick see childbirth in a less frightening light.

As my son grew, he came to love the patients as I did.

King Krusher Visit

My preteen boys came to CSH to help with a party being thrown for the patients in the grove. Staff at CSH would frequently put on family type activities for the patients. The staff bringing their own families to these events fostered the family atmosphere, set a role modeling and normalization process, and gave the staff extra hands for set up and serving.

There was a local band playing tonight. They would be on a wooden platform that maintenance had set up about 10 inches off the concrete slab in front of the basketball goal in the grove. The band was to play familiar pop music for the night's dance and anyone not restricted to the ward for some reason would be in attendance. Some of the ward staff would bring others under escort.

There was usually a guest celebrity. The celebrity was required to have hospital staff with them at all times in case one of the patients got a little too excited, and tonight was my turn to be the guest's escort. My boys called me the bodyguard. Legal liability

from possible danger to a guest or the possibility of a journalist from the newspaper running around loose looking to create scandal was not to happen.

Since it was my turn, I had gone in early and my boys were helping me set up chairs and refreshment stands. We left a small dance floor area set up in front of the band platform free of chairs, then placed chairs in rows behind the open space for listening to the guest speaker when he arrived. All of this was in preparation for the patients off locked wards to be brought down by the ward staff. We addressed as many of the safety concerns as was possible in the physical arrangement of the furnishings to divide areas and be able to isolate problems if we needed to do so.

My boss left the details of the evening's events in an envelope on my desk and I had not yet opened it. I knew the general set up routine and just got busy with that first. I didn't care who it was. I had already worked my usual 8-hour shift and now was back for the special event. To be honest, I was ready to have it over and go home. Not the proper attitude, but it was mine and I will own up to it. I would never let the patients see it and it would all be over in a few short hours. I prayed for time to fly and then the call came from the gate that there was a visitor, I went to escort our mystery guest.

The boys and I drove up to the guard shack with all three of us in the front seat of my car. I got out to greet whoever it was and would be their bosom buddy for the rest of the evening. As I rounded the side of the shack I saw the most famous television wrestler of several decades getting out of a white limousine. I'll use the name King Krusher just as a description of his wrestling reputation. Not surprisingly, he was much shorter and a lot older than I had envisioned out of my memory of 15 years prior when he was in his prime.

My boys loved him! They never missed a match when he was wrestling. Truth be known, I never missed a match when I was a kid watching him on Saturday afternoons either.

I could tell just how old he had gotten as he got out of the limousine. He could put on that macho tough guy routine with the muscular arms and gravelly voice just fine as long as he was on his feet. I felt strangely let down and a pang of pity. Our idols are never supposed to let us catch them aging.

My sons didn't notice his age, they were awe struck and speechless as we got to my car. Krusher was a gracious man accustomed to dumbfounded adoration from any age group and got into my beat-up old Ford without hesitation.

While I got the envelope to see what else I had foolishly omitted finding out until now, he talked with my sons as if he were a long lost uncle taking an interest in their little league ball games and their grades at school. He talked to John, my oldest, with pride as John told him about holding the school record for weight lifts with his legs. He talked with Chris, four years John's junior, about how to slide into second on a steal. The boys were in heaven.

My problem was how to keep problems down with patients. Krusher was a professional fighter and could be in big trouble if just fending off a blow bruised a patient.

Most of the evening went as expected. The only tense moment came when a young man off the drug addictions unit got in Krusher's face and insisted on showing Krusher that he was "too old to cut the mustard anymore."

The young man was a dirty faced dark-haired man in his 20s, I'd say. He was a not-so-tall 5'10" or 11" and lanky, with pasty skin that hid a light beard growth. I did not know him or what he might do so I stayed near him and made sure Krusher had a wide personal space with me always between the two. I knew he couldn't hurt Krusher, but I couldn't let the patient get hurt either, even if he was acting like he had no sense. I thought we were about to end the young man's siege when he thrust himself in a lunge, stuck his chest out, and impolitely bounced me backward out of his way. In the last few years I had learned to bounce well and was back in place quickly, but I wasn't thrilled about it.

Krusher saw what had happened and began talking loudly and laughing with bravado like he always did in the ring to intimidate opponents. It surprised the young man and he stopped and stared at Krusher. When Krusher had captured everyone's attention he told of his daughter in a similar facility out of state. He tearfully related how he couldn't keep her in Indianapolis for treatment because she kept running away to come home at night and kept getting hurt. He told how much he loved her. The man was being sincere and had quite a charm. I could picture the events he relayed with such clarity and genuine caring that I was surprised he told about it.

Krusher went over to the young man and took on the persona of a comrade. He put his arm around the boy's shoulder and said that the one thing he could do was come and do for others what he couldn't do for his daughter. It defused the boy with no effort at all. Krusher took questions and acted like he really cared what patients said even if what they said was incomprehensible. My respect for the man behind the wrestler grew a great deal.

At the end of the evening his limousine returned and I found that I was not as tired as I had anticipated. I took the boys for ice cream on the way home and went over the more exciting elements of the evening. The girl at the counter was trying to take our order but the boys were talking a mile a minute and she couldn't. Finally I just whistled loudly and that got their attention. It was a good thing the place was empty.

Chris blushed and ordered a chocolate sundae. He leaned in toward a teenage boy at the counter and announced, "My mom was the bodyguard for King Krusher tonight."

Behind the counter got very quiet and the kids all stared at me. I could have killed my son. It is a wonder he has lived so long!

The State Fair

The OT department was taking the patients on a field trip again. This time we were going to the State Fair. I had five male patients to keep up with and each had \$10 dollars on them. Remember that I was doing this when I was young, energetic and foolish, that was my only excuse.

Ronald was the shortest of the group and hardest to see in a crowd. His face was the color of rich coffee, which made the bright white teeth and pink gums of his wide smile stand out. His hair was cropped short to match his temper and his usual look sported a smile so I never knew what he was thinking until it was too late. When he got angry, he was extremely strong and I knew there would be no reasoning with him; he could not be out of my sight or reach for long.

Patrick, on the other hand, stuck out in any crowd with his square shaped head with the bulge on the side and. Patrick has a sweet disposition, but we needed to walk slowly for him to keep up comfortably.

Ardell was Ezel's brother. He was the oldest and much higher functioning. Ardell was deaf and used his hands to communicate. His skin was very dark, almost blue-black with the small, close, tight facial features of a prizefighter with long dreadlocks. Those were the days when I could sign fairly well. I sometimes worked with as many as eight people who were deaf.

There was also a feisty, wiry little guy I didn't know much about. I really hated having someone in any group that I didn't know well, but especially not in public on my own. Sometimes it was an oversight, but sometimes it was to keep a staff member from refusing to take someone that had a violent history. I think they figured ignorance was bliss. I hoped they were right because my options were limited today. He had been dropped off to me and they left too quickly to ask many questions.

Mitch Wasserman had Cerebral Palsy. The impairment was minimal in his extremities although he walked and moved his arms with a slightly jagged, gawky motion. His small muscles were sinewy and well defined all over his body as if there was no wasted body fat anywhere on him. He wore glasses, but his perceptual skills still seemed to be a little off and he kept walking into things. That could have been because he didn't move except at full speed and didn't really look in the direction he was moving.

He had sandy-colored hair that had a cowlick in the front on the right side and another cowlick on the left at the crown. His hair always looked like it needed combed down in those places. I confess that I wanted to lick my hand and be of service in this area more than once. He reminded me of Alfalfa from the *Little Rascals*.

Mitch's eyes were full of life. He was just smart enough to know what he liked and wanted to live with gusto.

As soon as we got off the bus and into the fair's Midway, Mitch stopped to buy an elephant ear with his \$10 dollars at the first stand he saw. He said he'd waited all year for this. The proprietor gave him the biggest one he had. Mitch's eyes couldn't have gotten any bigger, nor his mouth with that first bite. He didn't even wait for his change. Mitch

was determined to try to fit all he could in his mouth at once no matter what I said. About the same time he took that big long-awaited bite a bumblebee landed on his elephant ear.

He got stung on the inside of his lip. Mitch screamed, grabbed a chair he was next to, threw it straight up in the air over our heads. Then he took off running into the crowd screaming at the top of his lungs. I'm not sure if he thought he could outrun the pain or what. We luckily dodged the lightweight chair's landing. I signed to Ardell to stay near Ronald, gathered Ezel and Patrick, and ran after Mitch. I hadn't thought of how this string of guys trying to run with me looked to passersby. Ardell was signing excitedly to Ronald as he brought up the rear behind Ronald's midget steps. Patrick hurried his tall frame as much as he could, dragging his impaired foot. Ezel's long legs kept up with me in his lumbering gait, his hand firmly attached to mine.

Someone in the crowd yelled, "Leave the little guy alone!" We must have looked like a predatory mob. No one really interfered and eventually I caught up to him, huffing' and puffin,' and checked his mouth.

Thankfully the bee got Mitch just inside his lip and I quickly found the stinger and pulled it out. Mitch was still running but now he only ran in place like a pugilist in training for a fight. He shook his hands out to the side as if they were wet and he was trying to dry them. We were drawing some unwanted attention.

Once I had talked a food vendor out of some ice and cooled the lip, Mitch calmed down. He was a real trooper and had pretty good reasoning skills so I could talk him down easily. The remains of his elephant ear were wadded up in his right hand and he promptly stuffed it into his mouth. I hoped the bee wasn't still in it but it was too late now anyway. A few seconds later Mitch gulped and swallowed the last bite and I checked his mouth again. The swelling was minimal and miraculously no one had wandered off during the chase. Given the option of staying or returning to a nurse, Mitch chose to stay. I knew he was not allergic to stings from the initial information I did get and I checked his mouth occasionally. The initial swelling didn't get any worse. I breathed a sign of

relief.

Ardell was impatient and wanted to get on with the day out as if nothing had happened and signed to me that he wanted to go to the dairy barn. I asked Mitch if he wanted some ice cream. I thought something cold feel good on his lip. Suddenly everyone wanted ice cream and we were off again with an excited Ardell in the lead of my merry men, his braids flowing in his wake. Ardell was very independent; he got to the dairy barn first and gave the sign for milk in sign language.

His left arm was raised and his left hand was held fingers down and spread out. With his right hand he squeezed his left fingers as if milking a cow. Ardell repeated his order for milk and licked an imaginary ice cream cone to signal that he wanted ice cream, too. Made sense to me.

The girl behind the counter screamed like a wild woman! I was still with the slow end of the group walking toward the dairy barn. Then I saw a police officer move in and try to grab Ardell. As I looked around more cops showed up. Ardell was pretty quick, but he was out numbered. Police officers were surrounding my group. Now I know how Bonnie and Clyde felt.

When all the mess was over and I'd gotten the cop to turn Ardell loose, we found out that the girl misinterpreted Ardell's sign for milk as an obscene gesture and was offended. I was pretty angry. I talked to the officers and explained this unusual grouping of people. Some of the officers had acted before they thought and remained defensive, without remorse or apology. They had been pretty rough on Ardell.

One of the more sensitive officers took me aside and away from the group to try to assure me that they hadn't meant to manhandle Ardell so roughly. I reminded him that Ardell hadn't shown any signs of resistance so I felt that bringing in what seemed like half the police force seemed a bit unwarranted. He said they were playing it by the book and that the worst call an officer could ever get was a *mental male*. We discussed the fact that my father was a sergeant with IPD and he did not treat people that way.

I ardently pointed out that Ardell didn't look different than other men. He was clean and shaved and appropriately dressed and had been polite. I stressed that these were just people like everybody else wanting to have a good time at the fair, and they had rights too. I was youthfully indignant in my defense of Ardell and the others. The officer patronizingly took my shoulder and slowly turned me around toward the group of people "like everybody else" that I was in charge of keeping track of.

There stood Ardell very animatedly arguing with the flagpole in sign language to dispel his anger. Mitch stood awkwardly staggering with half his face still in a large cup with ice in it. Ronald was absent-mindedly standing in a water puddle with a Mona Lisa smile and his hair at attention. Ezel stood just grinning with his teeth filling about 80 percent of his face. Patrick's misshapen head stood tall above the crowd swaying from side to side like Stevie Wonder in concert. I couldn't help but see the officer's point. I flashed my meekest smile at the officer as I gathered my little group of individualists and moved on. I was so tired I was getting close to numb.

Chapter 5

Cognitive Distortions

“Overestimating and catastrophizing, along with underestimating your ability to cope, are the most common types of distortions in thinking.” Bourne, Edmond J., The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook, Second Edition, New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 1996

Numb Isn't So Bad

I was just coming in the door. I saw her first from the back. I got a glimpse of her face as she moved. The haunted gray eyes stood out across the room. Her hair was well cut and laid softly on her shoulders. It was washed clean and had a shine in the creamy color of light walnut furniture freshly polished.

As she moved I saw that her figure was shapely and she walked like she knew it. She was thin and tall. She probably had not been drinking really hard for too long; she was still an attractive woman, but not a real beauty. Her name was Marlene and she was in remarkably good physical shape compared to the usual patient from the alcoholic unit. Her chart said that she had once been an athlete. As she talked to the group I could see her face a little better. She was middle 20s with a very sweet, but phony looking smile. She looked like she was flirting and being coy with the men in the group, but didn't really mean it.

I've often wondered if she wasn't so nice looking if she could have coped better with her illness. It seemed that she had survived all her life on her looks. I'm not speaking of the alcoholism. That was merely a coping technique for her. As I become more familiar with her chart, I still didn't understand all the aspects of her additional physical illnesses beyond the alcoholism. The chart was very technical and confusing.

My meager understanding of what her illness amounted to was gangrene eating her body up, and not so slowly. According to the reports from the specialists and her family doctors, the spread of the infection or cancer or whatever it was could not be

stopped, only slowed. She'd been sent to the OT department to divert her from thoughts of her death and to work on repressed anger from her illness.

She was friendly and fairly open, but she said words without feeling. She explained to me that the illness had begun in her finger from a small cut that had gotten infected. She'd treated the cut with Band-Aids and creams, and hadn't really thought much about the wound not healing. By the time a red streak was running up her arm the poison had spread very rapidly through her right hand. Her hand had to be amputated when it wouldn't respond to treatment with medications.

She spoke in monotones, very calmly, as if she were talking about these things happening to someone else. She effectively kept emotional pain at bay this way. She'd had intense pain before the amputation. The pain medication seemed to do little to help. Then she started having phantom pain in the fingers that were no longer there. The doctor said this kind of pain was not unusual, but that knowledge didn't help Marlene's pain.

I sensed the underlying bitterness she kept so tightly controlled. She said the pain had gotten so bad that she couldn't even sleep anymore. So she began her alcoholic journey with a few shots of Jack Daniel's at night. The alcohol allowed her a few hours of peace.

A sore about the size of a dime developed on the inside of her forearm. Within a few weeks her arm was amputated at the elbow. The speed at which she had lost parts of herself was overwhelming. Before she'd been able to process what was happening with the sore on her arm, another sore developed on her right foot. She lost the foot within a month.

The more of her body that was taken from her, the more she drank. When she was sober she was suicidal, and withdrawn. Here, under forced sobriety, she was "just numb," she said. But she didn't remain that way. One day she got fed up with people encouraging her and smiling and trying to "get her into a better mood," and she blew up.

She ranted and raved and cussed until she backed everyone off. This rage was probably beneficial because it was the most genuine feeling she'd expressed and it released a lot of what she'd kept pinned in. When her energy drained and she was exhausted she sat quiet again. She looked haggard now.

When I sat next to her and laid my hand on her back I could feel the quiet sobs of her heartbreak. She raised her head slowly and looked up at me with red, wet eyes filled with pain and fear. Those eyes pleaded with me to understand the strength of her need to hide in a drunken haze. Everyday she intentionally collected the image of the doctors, absent family and anyone whose face reminded her that she was dying and securely locked them into empty whiskey bottles.

"They insist I be strong when I'm not," she said.

I didn't understand the full scope of what she meant, but she did, and she continued.

"They write books about people who face things like this and carry on bravely and fight and adapt and go out with style. They talk about how brave people were before the end, how they never gave up. Ever notice it's always post term?" she sniffed, blew her nose, then went on. "They use a dying person's stories as inspiration and they shake their heads and forget about the death as if it can't happen to them. Then they go on with their lives and complain about the weather or the crab grass in their lawn." She looked me in the eye and demanded, "Why?" She continued without taking a breath for me to respond. "It's bull; its because they are petrified. Because they are not sure that they could be that so-called brave, but they sure as hell expect me to be."

By this time she was no longer crying. She was taking strength from what she was saying. "Well, I know I can't be that way. I don't *want* to be that way. I'm *not* brave about what's happening to me. I'm *not* going to *pretend* that I am to make it *easier* on others either. I am the one slowly and very painfully dying!"

Over the next few months we discussed death – how some people who are healthy

have a death wish. We looked at issues such as suicide, euthanasia, and what constituted living. Family had all but disappeared and friends were now uncomfortable and no longer knew where to divert their eyes. She was feeling very much alone and, in fact, was alone now.

Marlene came to therapy as long as she could physically get there. It wasn't long after she quit coming that the staff doctor put Marlene on a suicide watch to continue her life as she watched them continue to take parts of her body away until she could barely do anything for herself. I got to the ward as often as they would let me, but the pain was her only steady companion. Mercifully, she didn't have to hang on for long, and she told me that she was at peace near the end. She genuinely had hope for an afterlife better than what she had here and said that she was looking forward to it.

I don't see Marlene's life or death as a dirge. She lived it as best she could at the time, as we all do. Times of laughter and times of pain are not always our choice so it is most important to make all situations as good as they can be and find something in each to enrich and nourish.

Wrapped in Rugs

Don't get the wrong idea about these stories; these are accounts of incidents that have taken place over a career spanning over 40 years. The adrenaline didn't rush full force everyday, but if I tell of all the boring days spent with the patients, there would be no need to write their stories. Everyone I talk to wants to hear about the more colorful people who nourished in unorthodox ways and build strong, lasting memories, like Montgomery Harold Hawkins.

On any soap opera Montgomery Harold Hawkins would have been the dirty old man that women loved to hate. He was arrogant, disrespectful, vulgar, and always had an

air about him of being unclean even if he had just bathed. He kept a gray stubble of at least two days growth on his face and on both of his double chins. He sported the growth not because he objected to shaving, but because he refused to shave himself and no woman on staff who could shave him wanted to get that close any more often than the rules of care required. Monty's hair always needed combed and looked greasy even freshly washed. He wore loose fitting clothing over his pudgy, short frame, and he always had his hands in his pants or on us in places where they were not supposed to be. He was a man in a constant state of sexual arousal with little or no impulse control.

I decided I'd try to shave him one day. Really, I was shamed into it by the older women in the department and I was too embarrassed to decline again. I knew Monty was the king of dirty old men. Not even the other patients liked being around him. It didn't take long before he caught me off guard.

"Here, hold this!" he said with a grin. I looked down to find that he had laid himself in my hand. "Its too heavy for me," he continued. I was so shocked that he would even try it that I couldn't move. I wanted to shrink inside myself. I stood there frozen with my mouth open like a fool until his arrogance started making me angry. I'd be a target from now on if he got away with this.

I gritted my teeth and made sure that his most tender skin scrapped across the zipper of his pants as hard as I could before I let go. He wanted a reaction; I wasn't about to give him one he would want to repeat.

Even after more than 20 years, I am still convinced that he enjoyed every minute of the discomfort he could force on women around him. There is a difference between the

symptoms of mental illness and evil, and it shows. He could be relentless. He really enjoyed torturing the young, pretty, unsuspecting O.T. students.

The students were doing part of their on-the-job training from Indiana University during the summers at CSH. These students were usually rural girls not long off the farms or out of their small town communities and family protection, without a clue as to how dastardly a man with no inhibitions or remorse could get. I understood that at least a part of Monty's sexual fetish was a symptom of his illness, but knowing it and dealing with the effects of it everyday were two different things.

My boss, Mrs. Yarnell, was the students' supervisor, but they worked the front room floor with Adele, Hattie, and me. The students had been brought in with little or no orientation that I witnessed. They didn't seem to know to leave running room in the initial positioning of a work station in case things got out of hand or any of the self preservation things they would need. Several times they got themselves in corners totally unaware how trapped they could be. It didn't take long to see that they would be learning the hard way. I wasn't sure what they were teaching them in school, but it wasn't how to survive in places like Central State.

To be honest, I didn't like most of these girls, and I was a bit impatient with their naiveté. They seemed to think they knew all they needed to know and weren't interested in the clients as people. Many were snooty like the girls I met in high school that formed clicks and tried to make anyone who wasn't a cheerleader feel inferior by making fun of them in some way. I would like to think that a lot of their bravado and lack of caring was a cover for insecurity but I'm not taking bets.

Some of the summer students we got were so arrogant that they thought they actually knew what they were doing and wanted to show us how the professors in the colleges said things should be done. Someone like that you can't do anything with until they have their egos cut down to size, so you just pray a lot, leave them alone, and let them grow up.

Mona was the exception in this student threesome; she wasn't like the others. She had common sense and knew she was out of her experience range. She stayed with a staff member until she learned whom to watch out for and who was fairly safe. Mona was smart. I guess that is why she was assigned to work with Monty.

I could see Monty watching her. He liked her; I could tell by where his eyes roamed and the way he drank in the sight of her. He liked her pear-shaped form. He liked her narrow shoulders and her long neck. His eyes sparkled with lust when he looked at her, and he didn't miss an inch. She noticed too and knew she was going to have trouble with him.

Mona was in her early 20s, like me. Unlike me, she had pretty shoulder-length black hair with enough natural curl in it to bounce nicely when she walked. My mousy brown natural curl only frizzed when it got humid or rained. We hit it off right away and eventually she stayed with my group of men most of the time.

We went to lunch together about noon one day and she asked me to help her keep Monty from hurting her. She said she wasn't really so afraid of what he would do with so much help nearby, but her mom had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and had recently hurt Mona's shoulder restricting her ability to protect herself. She could see that Monty

could easily overpower her and if he knew she was already hurt he would take advantage for sure.

Mona had been trying to help her mom shower when she had become delusional and. Mona was afraid she wouldn't be able to help her mom if she injured the shoulder again. Mona was considering quitting school to stay home because there was no one else who could care for her mother. That is what her dad wanted her to do, but she was struggling with the decision.

I showed her what I knew of what not to do first. I had made those mistakes myself not so long ago and they were still fresh in my mind.

“Stay out of corners at all times,” I instructed. “You can't afford to get blocked in. Keep a good arm's length to six feet away so he will have a harder time grabbing and hanging on. Keep a table or chair or something you can grab and move between you.”

She drank in every word but I knew it wouldn't be enough to keep her safe. Only time and your own mistakes teach you some things. I just wondered how some of the other students, the blonde, cheerleader types, would handle what Monty could do when we heard Adele yell, “HEEELP!”

Adele was standing among the tall rug looms. I could see her dark brown arms flailing in and out trying to get a grip to move one of the looms. These looms were rectangular wooden frames and built of solid two by twos standing about six feet tall and two feet wide. They were strung from top to bottom with heavy cotton, off-white string so cloth strips of material or yarn could be woven with a shuttle under and over each string to create a barrier between warm feet and a cold floor by a patient's bed. Some would also be made into wall hangings for a family gift or a bath mat.

Monty had caught Adele between a triangle of two different looms and a heavy tall workbench effectively trapping her like a fly in a spider's web. Mona and I were closest to her. As we ran toward her, I saw her white uniform skirt go up over her head trapping her arms in its folds and both hands wildly clawing the air above her.

Adele was going wild in response to Monty's attack. Her colorful expletives rang out loud and clear with various cultural connotations in the use of the English language. She also found it necessary to list several options that Monty could do with certain parts of his body and she added a few comments about questionable parentage.

Gill ran in from the carpenter shop in the back, Mrs. Starks ran over from the sewing section, Mrs. Yarnell from the office, and Hattie came in from where she was working in the ADL training kitchen.

I grabbed at one side of the loom nearest me and gave a hard jerk. He had expected my efforts and I only succeeded in pinching my finger. On the opposite side, Mona grabbed on the other loom at the same time and had more luck. The loom Mona grabbed wobbled and then careened awkwardly to the floor. While Mona and Monty continued to wrestle over the fallen loom I grabbed what I judged to be Adele's waist and jammed my knee between the exposed front of Monty and whatever I had of Adele within my arm.

I knew I wasn't strong enough to pull Monty off of anybody; neither was Mona. Trying that would only give him two victims in one trap. He'd like that! His pants were almost to his knees so I knew he couldn't move well. I just needed to buy Adele a few precious seconds to get free of his grasp. Help would be here any minute. I pushed that knee and pushed hard, I felt his grip on Adele break loose. Monty wasn't more than 5'9"

or 10' but he was solidly built. My body was going in between them, not what I had in mind!

I ended up a sandwich just as trapped as Adele had been. I was calling myself various synonyms for stupid about then. I wasn't trying to be a heroine, just reacting automatically. I have seriously considered seeing if they can remove part of that sympathetic *automatic* response thing; it gets me in such trouble sometimes.

I really was embarrassed, I was supposed to be showing these girls how to handle themselves in situations like this. Oh well, showing them what not to do would have to work as well.

The incident ended quickly when Gill and the others got there and we all went back to work. Adele was still shaky and fuming so she went to the Brass Rail (our on grounds snack shop and employee dining hall) to get a drink and put all the major events of her life back in perspective where they belonged.

I was only ruffled a little so I used my hand as an iron on my uniform front. I turned back to my little group of patients and three of the students were standing there white faced and thankful that they were not in the fray. One of the girls was standing large eyed with her mouth open, and another was an animated statue gasping breaths and struggling to hold back tears. The third, Mona, was writing frantically in her little notebook. One smart one out of the three wasn't bad. Oh, for the quiet, peaceful days with boring people.

Lundy

There were several people in my OT work groups that were the stable foundation of my day. They were really no trouble; they were just always there, like Mr. Humbole and Lundy. These folks never took an active part in the daily chaos and would have been practically invisible as a backdrop to the more strikingly colorful personalities if they had not been so special in some way on their own. Some people, now gone from us, leave behind them more personality than they exhibited when they were alive.

J.K. Lundy was non-verbal. Well, mostly non-verbal. He did make one sound, but he didn't really talk. We called him by his last name because it was a soft lyrical sound that fit him better than the more harsh J.K. sounds. The name fit because Lundy was soft and sensitive. In many ways he reminded me of a little boy. He had a smile that was pure innocence, although I knew he was well acquainted with things associated with institutional living that destroyed innocence. He was frequently a target of more aggressive people. Lundy always sounded like a kid playing cowboy and shooting the bad guys with his imaginary finger pistol.

"Pwhew! Pwhew!" This is the sound that was and will always be Lundy's trademark. As staff working with him, we were told that he had full speech capabilities, but due to something traumatic that had happened he just withdrew from life and wouldn't speak now.

This unique "pwhew" sound was only made when he bent his elbow on his left arm and cupped his left hand over his ear as if he was a 1940's radio announcer with a deep voice listening for the resonance of his echo. If he could not echo the sound, there seemed to be no reason to make it. Other than this unusual ritual, he did not make much noise.

Lundy was zipper thin, an average 5'9" and had thinning very fine, straw-colored hair and a pasty complexion. I think he was probably a toe head (as my aunt used to call children with almost white hair) when he was a child. He was only in his early 20s so I did not know if the thinning hair was hereditary or a medication side effect. He was very quick to catch on when I modeled behaviors, showed him what to do on a craft project, or gave him simple verbal commands. He was easily invisible because on most work tasks he was an efficient and neat worker and needed no attention to remain on task. He often worked totally independently or with minimal supervision on simple one-step tasks.

What initially drew attention to Lundy in a crowd was the "pwhew" sound, but what endeared him was his gentleness. His soft, mesmerizing gaze was restful in a hectic day of wild eyes. He was always where he was supposed to be and never required vigilant monitoring for violence like so many others. Lundy's was a lounge-chair-shaped soul where a person could relax and regroup for a minute or two instead of the usual instant alert status that walked through the door with others. My heart smiled when he walked through the door. He always brought a sense of peace wherever he went.

When I learned that the sound he made was in fact the echo of a bullet that had hit him in the head I felt guilty and wondered how anyone could shoot this kind and gentle man. A failed robbery attempt is what was rumored. We never found out how or why he was shot, but we knew that he was a gift of peace wherever he went now. Unfortunately, that gift of peace to others cost Lundy an extremely high price. Now he and his friend Mr. Humbole just walked together, each within their own version of what seemed to be a contented life.

Mr. Timothy Humbole

Not all of the guys from the men's cottages were extroverts. Mr. Humbole was as mild mannered as his name every time I had occasion to work with him. He had a milk chocolate complexion that was smooth as silk all the way up over his naturally bald head. There were no dimples, moles, scars or holes of any kind to mar his face, head or neck. That in itself was unusual around CSH because it was, by nature, a place prone with a multitude of ways to obtain a scar.

I had heard stories of major fights on the ward involving Mr. Humbole, but I never had personal occasion to cross his mean streak; nor he mine. Mr. Humbole had kind and gentle soft brown eyes that could sometimes be unnerving. I never saw him angry or aggressive or even upset. He was not a big man at about 5'7" and he was very well mannered. I have no clue how old he was, and I don't believe that I ever heard him speak, but he heard and understood what I said just fine and complied with requests amiably.

I am definitely not a game person but one of the most enjoyable games I've ever played was with Mr. Humbole. He loved to play chess. At break time from his leather craft project we would play a little chess together. Our games never took very long. The rules of our chess games changed for Mr. Humbole each time it was his turn. At this seemingly *magical* time any piece could move any place on the board. That did not, however, work for his opponent.

With rules like these I would have thought that he would win every game and quickly, but Mr. Humbole just liked the challenge of winning without rules. He wasn't

greedy. He really savored and enjoyed every minute of just doing what he wanted to do, how and when he wanted to do it. There really was no winner or loser in our games although he always seemed to think he won. We just quit when we ran out of pieces. No-brainer chess, what a concept!

Mr. Humbole was on the extreme quiet end of things, while others were eager to be heard.

Kevin's Heaven

Kevin was physically handicapped as well as mentally ill. Though he didn't really seem to be as mentally challenged as many of the other patients on his ward. Kevin was, however, very vocal and forcefully gave his opinion. He reminded me of a politician on the day before Election Day giving speeches to the masses that should adore him. He was functional enough to not only have very definite opinions, but to be able to express them. He had a questioning mind and some fairly logical reasoning skills most of the time. His mental illness, however, would not allow this to be consistently true or dependable.

Kevin was into the political scene and dressed the part, but poorly. When a politician was on television and was attempting to side step an issue or question in his speech, Kevin's thin, bristly, auburn hair stood up even higher than it normally did in outrage. He'd run his hands up the sides of his head as if he were getting a handful of hair and pulling it out by pulling straight up. He didn't have a lot of it left.

"That lying sack of sorry shit," he said, and then would qualify his statement to alleviate his guilt over cursing with, "as my daddy used to say." Kevin would then point

out why the speaker had lied and how he, Kevin, knew it. He was a clever man and probably would have made a talented politician. It was difficult to catch him in a lie even when I knew without a doubt that he was lying.

Kevin had an injured left arm and leg. He wore a leg brace that hunched his body to the left making him look much smaller than he really was. I think he would have easily been six feet if he had not been injured, but was now shorter than me. Kevin had been in an auto accident with a drunk driver plowing into the driver's rear door where Kevin sat in his buddy's car enroute to a ball game with a bunch of friends. There was also brain damage, but that didn't stop Kevin from looking at some things as logically as *Star Trek's* Mr. Spock could.

The news was Kevin's favorite program. He would have loved CNN but unfortunately this was before cable television. Kevin was able to get channel four, six, eight, and thirteen news shows and read newspapers and magazines. He was religiously attentive to all media reports.

He wasn't just a passive participant in the world's daily events. Kevin would write letters to congressmen or representatives to advise them on how to get things done a better way, Kevin's way! Some of his suggestions seemed plausible given how things were really running in Washington during those Johnson years.

I got a call in the O.T. from the ward one day when Kevin was working in a ceramics class. Dr. Fisher said that there were visitors coming down to see Kevin and to talk to him. This was a big deal because it was unusual for even family to see a patient at the O.T. When I took the large key ring out of my pocket to open the door it jingled. I saw three men in suits and the tie men wore in those days.

My first impression was cops. My father was a policeman; I'd recognize the "Betsy Bulge" of a gun on anyone. Betsy is the name my father called his police revolver.

"Your weapons have been checked at the superintendent's office?" I asked. In unison they all held open their coats to exhibit empty shoulder holsters. I nodded and with trepidation let them in with an unsure smile.

"We are told that Kevin Beaman is down here," the short, stocky guy stated flatly.

"Wait here, please," I said, "I'll get my supervisor."

Kevin and the mystery men left together after seeing Mrs. Yarnell and I didn't hear anymore from them. Rumors began to filter down through the hospital grapevine.

Eventually we got the real deal and found out that Kevin had written the President of the United States again. The President and secret service people had objections to whatever Kevin had written this time. All we knew was that it included threats to the President and his family's physical health, and comments that questioned his children's parentage.

We knew Kevin hadn't been seen for a few days but leaves of absence were not uncommon for patients taken home by family. I knew Kevin had no family. We found out that the FBI and Secret Service people were questioning Kevin away from the hospital. When Kevin returned about four days later he looked like he had been on a Hawaiian vacation. The man was all smiles and full of stories that all ended with, "but I'm not at liberty to say." Of course he was found to be no national security risk but Kevin got his 15 minutes of fame (or four days worth) with the most powerful people in the nation listening to his every word. Kevin was in heaven! His mail was checked more carefully from then on.

The Sink

I ran the carpenter shop for the O.T. department for about four years. This honor was bestowed upon me not because I was good at it, or even interested in carpentry, but because I was the nearest available person willing to try it when our resident carpenter was forced to retire at 75 years old. We really needed the craft kits and supplies the carpenter shop produced.

Gill was the only male employee in the department at the time and he was not ready to retire; he was being retired. Gill felt that if he was being thrown out he was “gonna make for darn sure that somebody knows how to do what needs to be done, cause once I sit down it’s all over.”

Gill only had three fingers on his right hand. The only explanation he gave for the absence of thumb and pointer finger was that there are certain ways *not* to run a saw. He was a small man and wore a dirty tan-colored cap with a bill like a baseball cap. He reminded me of my Uncle Sam, who also became a carpenter when the coal mines in Tennessee closed. Uncle Sam, too, wore that kind of cap, but his was army drab-green. I had an instant affinity for Gill and his quiet, no-nonsense manner.

The O.T. Carpenter Shop was in a rectangular room that ran the full width of the back of the Chapel Building basement to the other. The doorway from the large O.T. room was opposite the door and stairway leading to the outside back door on the long sides of the rectangle. Along every wall were the saws and machines and cabinets holding the hardware. There were jigsaws, band saws, the old bicycle saw, a newer tilt

arbor saw, lathes, joiners, planers, and an assortment of tools, paints and hardware for the carpenter shop. I don't think Gill ever threw anything away that was still functional whether we needed it or not. He was the most organized pack rat I have ever seen.

Tool boards made up the decor for the left end of the long room from the entry door. The center of the room held the big tilt arbor saw and the lathe. The right end of the room is where the deep, industrial sink, work benches, and bicycle saw sat.

I really liked that bicycle saw. It fascinated me. The contraption worked similar to a regular bicycle. It had a bicycle seat and pedals to rotate with your feet. Attached to each side of the front wheel at opposing positions were rods that came up through a round table. The table portion of the saw sat just above my waist's height. Peddling made a saw blade go up and down as the foot pedals rotated. A piece of wood could be pushed through the blade as the pedals rotated and the wood was miraculously cut. I used it to provide exercise for a man with a bad leg to strengthen his leg muscles everyday. He cut out wooden trivets in the shape of a sycamore leaf to be carved out in the center. By using ceramic and mosaic tiles, the trivet was made into a hot plate for dining room tables or gifts for the patients' family.

The carpenter, whoever that was, helped to make many of the things that were used on the wards in the old Women's Building, the Men's Cottages, and the Infirmaries. Gill had made footlockers, bed frames, and ashtray stands as well as many repairs when chair or table legs got broken in fights. I kept up what I could of Gill's work, but I was certainly not the craftsman Gill was. Mostly I made makeshift repairs when needed and wooden craft kits to be used in behavior modification. I also had a group of about 10 guys to teach how to run the carpenter shop machines as a class. There were two classes daily,

each session three hours long, and I was all they had willing to try to teach it. Sometimes my sense of adventure was overactive. I may not have got it done just right, but I did get it done and no patients got hurt.

It had come time for me to move from where I lived and I took a couple of days off. I chose a Thursday and Friday to do the physical moving of my things. That way I would have time for arranging for a truck and getting it back before I got stuck with weekend rates and having to pay an extra day because they were closed. This timetable also gave me the weekend to get things arranged where I could find my toothbrush before Monday morning.

Mona, the O.T. student from Indiana University, had been working with me for a while as part of her practical experience for school. She was familiar with the group although she had never had them alone before. She worked with me several days and felt comfortable that she could take the group, so it was set for her to do so while I moved. I felt pretty safe in leaving for the few days since it had been an eventful week the week before and most of the patients that would have given her the most problems were restricted to the ward until Monday or still groggy from increased medications.

I left Wednesday feeling comfortable and without much concern for my moving absence. Thursday evening I was up to my ears in boxes in every room, had just enough of my belongings put away to survive on a minimal basis, and every muscle in my body was renaming me with four letter words. The knock at the door was a welcome escape from the recurring question of where to put everything I picked up.

“If you ever take off another day I will come and kill you myself!” There stood Mona in the doorway. From her face, this was not as big a joke as it should have been.

She looked very frazzled and had been crying. I sat her on a box and listened to her as she told me how the morning had gone. She related mostly the usual stuff, although hectic, it was nothing to cause this reaction.

“Then the ward called and said they would be sending Freddy because his restriction to the ward had been raised,” Mona stopped to take a deep breath and look down at her hands as she nervously picked at a hangnail.

“I’m really sorry,” I said and really meant it. I put a hand over hers and asked, “Are you going to be okay? Did he hurt you?”

Freddy was a sex offender who preyed on a woman’s fear. Him cornering me when I first came to work at CSH and ejaculating up my back jumped into my mind.

“No, just a bruise or two,” she said, “but they are sending him again tomorrow and he will know I’m scared. Mrs. Yarnell says we can’t restrict him again and she won’t replace me. She says if I am going to work with the guys...” her breath caught and she tried again. “I’d better...”

“....Learn to deal with it,” I finished for her, then went on and hoped it gave her time to gather herself. “I have had that sink-or-swim training, too. It’s the pits, isn’t it?”

Her words came rushing at me without pause for punctuation, “How do you keep him off of you? He had me in that sink and was on me before I knew it. He didn’t get time to do anything but rip clothes and jack off, but I don’t have 10 sets of eyes or hands and he was on me so quick. He’s so strong to be so little.” She blew out a breath and took another. She let her arms drop into her lap and her long legs stretched out as if getting all the words out was such a relief.

Mona's frustration came from the hospital rule that you couldn't do anything that would cause injury to a patient, no matter what. Even defensive moves that caused injury could result in fines and imprisonment. We signed a paper when we came to work there to that effect.

The multitude of newspaper headlines outlined abuses far and wide, but most of us were just trying to do the best we could for the people we came in contact with.

Mona was concerned about getting into trouble because the altercation was violent enough to get her bruised. If Freddy was bruised and said she beat him, then Mona could be brought up on charges. Once a patient said it, the state police had to be called in to check out the accusations. Careers could be ruined very early over this kind of thing. There were ways to handle it, but it had to be done carefully.

"This is the way I keep him off me, but it is not in any rule book as acceptable procedure," I began. "After he jumped me twice I was not about to let it happen again. Remember, this is not exactly policy," I finished by stressing the word policy cautiously as if it hurt to say it.

Mona was emphatic. "Not Freddy nor anyone is going to end my career before I even get it started. "I've already spent two years in school because I think I may be able to try to help some of the patients, and I think I *can* help." Getting her dander up seemed to be good for gathering her inner strength. I couldn't help but smile a little with satisfaction. "They don't teach this part at school," she continued. "Give me something to go back in there with."

"Okay," I said. "First, create a centrally located place for him to work where he can be seen from anywhere in the room, rather than have him off to the side. Then

position tables and chairs where he has to walk around them to be able to get very near you. It will give you only a second or two, but every little bit will decrease his advantage.” I looked into her eyes and could tell she was mentally rearranging the workstations to accommodate my suggestions.

“Freddy won’t jump you until he is so sexually worked up that he can’t hold back anymore. If you can cool his jets just before he reaches that point, it is all over and he’ll be back on the ward before he works himself up again.” I smiled at her. “ It works better than an ice cold shower. If you try to stop him too soon, he just works himself up all over again, and pretty quickly. Keep a broom close to where you are going to be. You have twenty brooms back there in the racks, place several brooms in different places all over the room so you can reach one instantly.”

“Okay, this is touchy and the timing is important. When he gets to the point where he can’t take his eyes off of you and it looks like it hurts him to breathe, that is when you gotta move. He will move slowly and inch his way toward you until he is suddenly close enough to be on top of you before you know he is there.” She nodded her head and I continued. “Grab your broom and put it over your shoulder like a baseball bat. Then tell him to come on if he wants to lose it. Give him the meanest look you can muster even if you are petrified.”

Mona weighed rules versus humiliation then began to laugh and practiced making mean faces. I didn’t see any that would work and I began to laugh with her. “He has been hit there before,” I said. “If your face means business it will trigger the memory of that and it takes all the starch out of him instantly.”

We laughed and talked a little more about her day and created an escape route for her if all else failed.

She called the next day to confirm. She had stopped Freddy in his tracks. She said Freddy cried and she almost felt sorry for him.

Mona quit school that year to work and financially help her aging parents. We got to keep her on in O.T. for another year or so, and I think the experience educated her as much as any school terms she missed would have done.

ABUSE, MALTREATMENT, NEGLECT OF THE MENTALLY ILL.

16-14-1-2 ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT OF PATIENT

Sec. 2. Any person who shall abuse, maltreat, or neglect any mentally ill person who is under the care of a psychiatric hospital shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months, or both.

Abuse and maltreatment shall include but not be limited to any rude, insolent or angry touching of a patient. (Formerly: Acts 1955, c.118, s.2).

35-29-8-1 OFFENSE; PENALTIES

Sec. 1. Any person who shall intentionally abuse, maltreat or neglect any mentally ill person who is under the care of a psychiatric hospital shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars (\$100), nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months, or both. (Formerly: Acts 1973, P.L.158, SEC.3).

35-29-8-2 REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS; INVESTIGATIONS

Sec. 2. Any person who possesses knowledge of alleged abuse, maltreatment or who witnesses abuse, maltreatment or neglect shall make a written report to the head of the hospital within twenty-four hours of the alleged offense. The head of the hospital shall cause an investigation to be made within twenty-four hours after receiving such a report and shall report the alleged offense to the prosecutor of the county where the hospital is located. (Formerly: Acts 1973, P.L.158, SEC.3).

35-29-8-3 FAILURE TO REPORT VIOLATIONS; PENALTIES

Sec. 3. Any person who fails to report alleged abuse, maltreatment or neglect of a patient shall be charged as an accessory after the fact and upon conviction shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars (\$100), nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months, or both. (Formerly: Acts 1973, P.L.158, SEC.3).

16-14-1-3 TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND PATIENTS; VIOLATIONS; PENALTIES

Sec. 3. It shall be unlawful for any employee of a psychiatric hospital to deal with, contract with, purchase from or purchase for any patient in such hospital any article of value or any service without permission of the superintendent. It shall be unlawful for any employee of any psychiatric hospital to lend to or borrow from any patient, money or any thing of value. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of misdemeanor and upon conviction subject to a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months. or both. (Formerly: Acts 1955, c.118, s.3).

16-14-1-4 ENTICING OR TAKING PATIENT AWAY; AIDING AND ABETTING ESCAPE; VIOLATIONS; PENALTIES

Sec. 4. It shall be unlawful for any person to entice or take away any patient from any administrator or superintendent to whom custody has been granted, or to aid, abet or encourage any such person to escape from any administrator or superintendent to whom custody has been granted. Any person who shall violate the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be subject to a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months, or both. (Formerly: Acts 1955, c.118, s.4).

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that I have read carefully the above statutes with respect to the treatment of patients and will abide by them during the term of my employment.

I promise to report in writing to my immediate superior, or to the superintendent any instance of mistreatment of patients, including a description of the circumstances and names of the offenders.

(Signed) _____

Date _____

Witness: _____

Chapter 6.

“Very often we waste time energy and readily available joy, because of our failure to acknowledge an error. We know that pencils have erasers. We know that computers allow us to cut and paste. We know that tests can be taken again, and that wrong sizes can be exchanged. Yet for some strange reason one of our greatest challenges is admitting to ourselves and others that we have made a mistake.” Iyanla Vanzant in *Until Today*, pg. April 23

Turkey Run

Mrs. Yarnell came through the OT department work sections asking that all staff gather in her office.

“We are looking for volunteers,” she said. “The recreation department took clients camping at Turkey Run State Park and we have an AWOL.” Those initials at mental hospitals and in the army meant absent without leave, we had a runaway.

“We need to do a sweep search utilizing every available body that we can find,” she continued. “They have already done all the searches of the trails once and have used the forestry helicopters and fire rescue units and they are now in the process of getting the inmates from the prison over at Rockville to redo those areas a second time.”

My initial reaction was to think, “Yes, yes, send me off into the woods instead of the Chapel Building basement!”

“The local garbage collector is donating all of their trucks and the city Department of Transportation is hosing them out.” She looked around at us before she spoke again, “They will be loading up at three o’clock to take anyone willing to go to Rockville to join the search.”

Usually when a patient went AWOL a cop picked them up pretty quickly, and it was a fairly routine occurrence. That was not the case now.

“Marsha Everton has been missing since yesterday before lunch,” she continued giving us more information. “She is a seizure patient and has not had meds since yesterday morning.”

Mrs. Yarnell swallowed and took a deep breath, “She has a timid and avoidant personality so she may hide if she hears you calling, so look in and under every bush.” From the tone of her voice, she did not hold out a lot of hope for Marsha because of the time that had already passed.

There were two of us young and agile enough to go sweep the more rugged trails at Turkey Run State Park a third time who agreed to go from the OT, Mona and me. I was pleased to have my more comfortable, spare clothes in the car and get any excuse to get out of this uniform dress. Mona was not so prepared. Those coworkers, who remained behind, Hattie, Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. Forester, agreed to cover our patients for us and we were off to Turkey Run about 60 miles away.

I never knew trash trucks were so big inside, I’ll bet the driver got 30 of us squeezed in there. The trucks had certainly been scrubbed out, but the odors lingered. Mona and I held our breath and tried to dispel visions of maggots, the big green jar flies, as we used to call them down home, we just swatted against the side of the truck hoping to kill them without having to squash them and hear them crunch. It was not a trip of comfort or enjoyment.

We covered all the trails in the park again for the third time and were down to the last of the really rugged ones. My body was telling me emphatically that it was reaching its limits.

Some women are clothing snobs and dressed like models and some are clothing slob. I was fortunate to be a clothing slob; with my more comfortable clothing I was dressed for climbing hills.

Mona, on the other hand, was a girly-girl and dressed like she was going on a date or something.

I envied Mona her ability to look stylish except for today. Mona's shoes were the worst she could have worn for our current task. They were slick flats and she wore no socks. Mona had really gotten an education since she had been around patients at CSH and would get another educational installment if we happened to be the ones to find Marsha.

By now I was betting that someone had picked up Marsha in a car. When we got a break to stop and rest for 10 minutes the Red Cross gave us lemonade and apple cider drinks. It was juice from the gods. We stood around holding Styrofoam cups of hot cider or coffee trying to catch the latest grapevine news from what information filtered down from those both in front of us and behind us in the search area. There was nothing good.

Gerald was a patient who had been Marsha's honor partner on a nature hike to get some exercise. The honor partner system had been set up for patients to buddy up with another patient because of problems with short staffing. There were never enough eyes or hands to watch everybody all the time. The legal patient to staff ratio could be 18 to one in the OT (according to Mrs. Yarnell's supervisor). I'd bet it was close to the same for Recreation Therapy as well. No way it was safe, but it was all we had to work with. The guidelines were set up considering fiscal and legal guidelines for patient safety and then set in policy. What that really means is that the money people and the treatment people

agreed that the ratios served well as the least amount of money spent for the maximum treatment.

To work within the guidelines, the patients were paired up together so at least the patients were watching each other. The staff really tried to pair disoriented patients with people who were more mentally alert, talkative, and hopefully had a little street smarts. Gerald was considered the latter. He was a very thin man about 6'9." I had to look up to talk to him if we were standing very close. He was in his late 20s and had a smile that revealed bridgework sporting a gold tooth in front.

I had known Gerald a long time. He lived in my neighborhood when I was growing up. I was a kid saving pennies I had found in sidewalk cracks, in couch cushions, and under parked cars along the street for penny candy at the corner drug store. Gerald often walked me from my house to the drugstore. The drug store was on the corner about three blocks down from where my aunt's two-story house stood and near a Phillips Sixty-Six service station/garage where a lot of men hung out and cussing and drinking beer, and working on their cars. My aunt was concerned about me going to the drugstore alone but I always felt okay with Gerald. Besides that, I could outrun about anybody.

Gerald was known in our neighborhood as very polite "harmlessly retarded" with a metal plate in his head. The plate was from being hit by a car when he was little. He lived with his mother and ran errands for neighbors and did yard work and odd jobs occasionally for cigarette money. He had come to Central State when his mom died.

As he aged beyond puberty, Gerald was losing more cognitive function. I'm not sure what age had to do with it, I just heard the adults say it. Gerald understood enough of

what was happening to him to be able to explain it to me as, "I don't think so good anymore." Gerald also had seizures now that he didn't have when he was younger.

Marsha, I did not know except for what Mrs. Yarnell had said in the briefing. I had seen her on grounds but she was not in any of my groups. Roberta Hatch and the other lady that had taken the group camping found out she was missing when they returned from a walk and took a head count. Instead of holding Marsha's hand, Gerald was only holding one of Marsha's shoes. He had been found very disoriented and said that he did not know what happened to her. I was not privy to any more information than that but my best guess was that Gerald had a seizure and whatever had happened to change Marsha's fate happened at that time.

Some people need a target to aim their insecurities toward when they get scared; they put forth the theory that Gerald had hurt Marsha and had hidden the body somewhere in the woods. The area where this could possibly have occurred was where they searched first without a sign of her. I could have told them that looking to Gerald as a predator was a pretty dumb concept, but what did I know?

Gerald and I talked a lot when I was younger. We would lay on the creek bank and talk waiting for a tadpole to swim by and see who could grab it the fastest.

Gerald had a shiny stopwatch his mom gave him but he couldn't read it. I read it for him. We talked a lot about his mom and how he needed to take care of her. He explained how when he had his accident, the damage wasn't just to him. His accident did something to her, too. He was smart enough to know that something inside his mother had changed. We talked about something inside me hurting when my mother died and wondered if the pain would ever go away.

Gerald and I collected bird feathers in the school yard for his mother. Sometimes she was so sickly she couldn't get out of bed all day and kept the feathers on her bed stand to look at the colors. Gerald said it made her smile.

I helped Gerald pick out a flower for her from Mrs. Hubbell's flower shop down by Daniel Webster grade school when we had 75 cents each saved up. Coleuses have pretty colored leaves that don't die off and go away like flowers with blooms, so they were the ones we got. I got one for my aunt's flower box on our porch. Gerald's mom put hers by her bed to look at when she didn't feel well and Gerald was convinced that they made her feel better. It looked that way to me, too.

Gerald was such a kind-hearted soul that he would drop bread crumbs on the sidewalk to feed ants that live in the cracks. Come to think of it, we spent a lot of time on our bellies during those years, looking at smaller worlds. Gerald loved to watch something so small carry pieces of breadcrumbs three times their size. He figured that those ants had to have muscles that were invisible. I had brought a magnifying glass one day, but he still couldn't find any muscles on those ants. We wanted to help the ant colony survive the winter so we collected creek pebbles and used Elmer's glue and built tiny little houses next to the ant hills to put the breadcrumbs in to stay dry when it rained. The Elmer's didn't hold up but we tried. The thought of this man hurting Marsha was ridiculous.

Mona's feet hurt. On one of our breaks from the search, Mona gave up and took her shoes off to assess the damage to her feet. She postponed this as long as possible because she was afraid she would have trouble getting the shoes back on again. Her feet had not only blistered but had cracked open and were bleeding. Mona always had the

option of going back and waiting on us, but I knew there was no way this girl would ever quit before we finished what we set out to do. We gathered fresh green leaves and padded where we could on her shoes. A lady in the group had some cream and we rubbed it into the leaves to soften them more and we were off again. Her feet stayed green a month or more.

We had covered almost every inch of the northern end of the park and were nearing the park border at a fire road. The fire road was just tire tracks that had worn down the grass over time to carve a trail. We walked hand in hand or no more than an arm length from one another to avoid missing Marsha.

We didn't miss even a bush. We looked in crevasses in the rocks, off the edge of shallow or steep banks, and even under large rock overhangs, no Marsha. We were taking turns calling to her now because our voices were giving out. The dogs were just ahead of us; I could hear their small barks of eager excitement. They had been given the scent to follow off Marsha's shoe.

We stepped up the pace in our search line. Excited anticipation mixed with dread and fear and both mounted higher with every breath. We had gone about another quarter mile when the word came down the line that they had found her. She hadn't been in the park borders at all. She was found across the highway we were coming up on at the edge of the park. She was dead. The grapevine let us know that her body had already stiffened and she lay face down in a creek. We took it from this information that she had probably slipped, fallen in and drowned, or maybe had a seizure.

A heavy quiet fell over us as we were returned to the hospital in our smelly trash truck. The news was a great sadness, another loss. We parted and each of us drove home, still in silence. I soaked a long time in the tub before bed.

As we returned numbly to the routine days that strung together to form weeks, information filtered down that the results of the autopsy showed no water had been found in Marsha's lungs. That made her being found face down in water take on more sinister connotations.

There was a heightened suspicion of Gerald's role, staff responsibility issues, and rumors of a mysterious kidnapper/murderer. There were thoughts of her death being a crime of opportunity for a stranger who happened to be passing by. Marsha had not been sexually molested and the scrapes and bruises were consistent with what would be there if she had convulsed from seizure activity.

We were never able to learn about a specific cause of death. Marsha was quickly, and unceremoniously, buried in a pauper's pine box grave at Jackson Cemetery across the road from CSH. The family didn't want a funeral. It seems they had buried Marsha in their hearts long before her body died. She had become invisible to them.

I was having trouble dealing with this and clumsily commented as much to another staff member. Gerald overheard me and came into the staff offices to hover over me with a gleam in his eye and a crooked gold toothed smile.

"She'll never go invisible as long as you and me remember her," he said looking at Mona. He turned to me, "That's what you told me about Mama, right?"

Once more, I learn profoundly from those who teach from the heart.

Um, Um, Good

Even though Ezel had once grabbed me and kissed me when I hadn't expected it, he was one of my favorite people on earth. Because of the symptoms of his hebephrenic type of schizophrenia, he just laughed so much no one around him could help but laugh with him. It was really sad, but somehow he just made us feel good.

All of the staff from OT were taking a group on a field trip to the Flower and Patio show at the state fairgrounds. I was assigned four people to escort and monitor. Ezel was one of them. He was excited and so was I. He loved going off the hospital grounds to see new things. He was like a child and wanted to hold my hand *for safety* he said.

My little band of merry men was walking through the exhibits of flora, fauna, and fountains and the excitement was high. Everyone was having a wonderful time, but I was wearing out quickly.

Patrick was also in my group of four. He asked questions constantly. With the visible mound on his head that showed the fluid that collected on his brain, he drew a lot of attention in a crowd, and I tried to distract him from astonished eyes. His feelings were easily hurt. He may have looked big and strong, but that was only an illusion covering a soft heart.

The third of my group of patients, Clint, had a problem keeping his hands off everybody in sight. He was a nice looking man in his 40s with coffee with cream colored skin and a close cropped afro hairstyle. Clint had a fetish for women's hips, about any woman's hips, but he seemed to be more pleased with the larger variety. He would come up behind some woman as if they were intimately dancing together and mentally measure the curve of her hips by cupping his hands and trying to physically feel what was bone and what was fat tissue in the curve of a woman's sides below the waist. This, unfortunately, created problems in public. For this trip he had been heavily counseled and

had promised that he would act appropriately if he could go.

Last, but not least, was Allan. Allan tended to wander down different paths than we did. He was an older man, stocky, with stooped shoulders and hair graying at his temples. His skin, too, was a shade of gray from medication. Allan was a little fellow that scampered from one place to another so quickly he reminded me of a mouse. I would see a trace of him in one place then he would be in another. He had Prater Willie traits and would eat anything he could lay his hands on out of all the trash cans. He was fine as long as I could keep him in sight. He wouldn't let me catch him eating anything except what we bought. I monitored him very closely. It took quite a bit to keep this group together because they were from locked wards and not accustomed to getting out much.

After about two hours the group was near the end of the trek through all the gardens and I knew we would soon be back on the bus. I was already dreaming of leaning back and closing my eyes and not having anyone to keep up with. There was just one more isle of exhibits. I was tired and the guys were giving out too. One wanted a drink, another was hungry, and another needed to keep his hands off of strange people and in his pockets!

This aisle was my favorite and that was why I had saved it for last. It was the day lilies and Stargazers. It was full of color and was the show's blue ribbon section this year. Growers stood by their beautiful accomplishments and told spectators about how they sweat out the dry weather, insects, and life's adverse conditions to finally and painstakingly produce a Royal Beauty Blue or Cordoba Yellow.

It sounded to me like the lady with the prized orchid had taken all credit for its growth and needed no help at all from the sun, the soil, or God. I was standing there acting interested when my peripheral vision picked up my buddy with the wandering hands about to test out what this lady's fur stole felt like as it dangled at hip level. I was like a projected rocket in a cartoon. The adrenaline pumped! He didn't get to touch even one hair of the fur or curve of the lady. I was proud of myself for heading off the

problem, but I should have known better than to gloat over a small victory.

The process of movement had placed Clint and me a little beyond the rest of the group. Meanwhile, Ezel had gotten hungry and ate the snooty lady's blue ribbon, first prize orchid. I was just completing the process of patting myself on the back when I heard the woman's scream. I turned and Ezel stood there chewing the last leaf off the orchid stem, moving those huge pink lips in a satisfied circular motion to savor the taste on every single taste bud individually. He was still smiling in delight when he looked at me.

True justice happened occasionally. It took every ounce of control I had to keep from laughing with Ezel when his laughter began. I quickly apologized to the lady, grabbed Ezel's arm, and herded my group through the rest of the isles that led to the door and right on the bus. We didn't stop; we didn't look at another flower, get a drink, or even breathe until that bus door was tightly closed.

On the bus I laughed so hard I had tears in my eyes. The patients thought I was crazy and we were all waiting on the cops to bust us. Luckily no one showed up after us. The way I see it, the lady is lucky Ezel's hallucinations were quiet or "mama" would have told him to kiss her, too. I wonder how she would have handled that!

Malcomb

The OT janitor was deaf. Because nobody could use sign language when he was assigned, I was sent to a class to learn. Anyone who knows me is aware that I am somewhat coordination challenged, but my boss hadn't known me long so I kept my mouth shut and went.

Ever get tongue-tied using your hands to talk? It was quite an entertaining experience for the recipient of my efforts, but a very embarrassing one for me. I was

lucky to have such great clients to work with and I ended up with eight that year. They helped me learn to erase my conversational blunders and eventually get my point across even if finesse was not in my signing vocabulary.

Malcomb was a patient in an on-grounds work training program creatively called Patient Payroll. In this program the patient was trained a few hours a day and paid minimum wage to perform a needed service on grounds for a restricted amount of hours. They could get a job in the laundry, dining room, kitchen, or housekeeping services.

Malcomb had come to us in the O.T. as a janitor. He was very bright for someone who was supposed to be on a lower functioning level. He was a capable worker with good quality skills. He could accomplish multi-step tasks with only minimal instruction and few errors. His chart revealed a history of violence at home that qualified him for commitment at CSH by his father. His father was some kind of big shot at a local business specializing in equipment for hearing impaired children.

My progress reports on Malcomb were very positive on his skills and abilities. He was a nice looking young man in his early 20s, always neat and clean and willing to do anything asked of him. He was short and stout with curly black hair. He had a quiet manner and unlike most deaf clients was actually very quiet. Most deaf clients are surprisingly noisy in a group. Malcomb's quiet manner was more than just quiet. It was the kind of uneasy stillness that came before a large storm.

His eyes rarely smiled and when they did it was mostly phony –to put up an expected front. On rare, odd occasions when we would discuss things that were not job task instructions, a little sly sense of humor would emerge. Instead of bucking his

powerful father's presence Malcomb would turn his anger inward and harbor suicidal thoughts when he got angry rather than fight back.

When many deaf people talk to themselves they also sign what they are thinking. This was Malcomb's habit as he worked. Occasionally he would sign the sign word for kill or dead. Those kinds of words always caught my attention in a place like this in case I was on the list. Much of my job was to get people to do things they did not want to do and that generally made patients angry.

My reports also included Malcomb's anger and suicidal thinking. I reported that I had picked up sign conversations to himself eluding that he was feeling pressured to "work harder, faster, and better," than expectations put on him from me as his supervisor. Signs, such as, "normal," and "father's son," were prevalent in many conversations that he was signing to himself. The facial expression that accompanied that conversation, however, was mocking, sarcastic, and angry.

When I heard that he was being discharged, I smiled. If anyone deserved to have a better life, Malcomb had worked hard for one. The discharge was at his father's insistence. He was being placed as a janitor at a mission downtown and got room and board for his work.

His last day at work at CSH was full of suicidal signs and self-punishment actions. I expected him to be nervous but this was really intense. I called the ward to warn them that he was very suicidal. The told me he would calm down and it was only attention seeking behavior in an effort to stop the inevitable because he was scared. He would be fine. I made sure they knew that I did not agree and asked that they reconsider the move at this time.

I had to try to talk to him if they would not listen, but he was beyond hope in his own mind and resigned to have to go. I did not hear anything for about two weeks about how he was doing. When I called to ask, my concerns were not well received.

The news anchor announced during dinner one night that Malcomb had jumped from the roof of the mission. Malcomb left only his shoes on the roof for his father.

Chapter 7.

What is work? 1989, New Expanded Webster's Dictionary "work, *werk*, n. Effort; labor; employment; a task; achievement; a literary or artistic performance; some extensive structure; establishment where labor of some kind is carried on; result of force acting. -vi. (pert. and pp. worked or wrought). To put forth effort; to labor; to take effect; to tend or conduce; to seethe; to ferment. -vt. To bestow labor upon; to bring about; to keep at work; to influence; to achieve; to fashion; to embroider; to cause to ferment."

CSH's sheltered workshop was a space designated to evaluate and train work skills of residents within the safety and security of the hospital setting. Utilizing daily cleaning tasks, small part assembly, or sorting like parts activities was contracted from local area companies afforded opportunity for this evaluation and training.

The companies providing work supplies were in need of getting cost intensive work done at reduced cost. That cost is a percentage of the prevailing rate earned by a worker making regular wages doing a similar job in the community.

The residents of the hospital that we served in the workshop, now known as "training service *clients* receiving employment training," made a little spending cash. That money was paid at a per-piece-rate and gauged by how fast the client worked compared to so-called normal workers. I used a running tally sheet that helped me tell them more accurately how much they had earned so far and encourage them to excel.

I told them in terms they could understand. When money is earned in piece rate and the patient's abilities are minimal their pace and speed at earning money is very slow. Their ability of comprehending \$1.50 was limited. The concept of comprehending how much money it took to purchase a pack of smokes, a cup of coffee or a candy bar was indelibly etched within their minds. Survival skills are basic. Earning that \$1.50 was

equivalent to a pack of cigarettes and a cup of coffee or a coke and two candy bars in the hospital's token economy of that time.

We used the client paycheck incentives to encourage them to increase the skill levels that were thought to be assets and that would lead to getting jobs off-grounds. An off-grounds job meant more money and a chance to be released from the hospital. The system was also thought to discourage the more antisocial behaviors.

Within this very structured work setting we could figure out how to adapt the tasks to be done for the individual client so that even clients who were physically disabled could be productive. We could also address social issues, hygiene, problem-solving techniques, and attempt to instill motivation in those who had gotten comfortable with others making their decisions for them.

The routine of getting up and going to work also helped to add structure to the day. Appropriate social interaction and anger management could also be addressed in this controlled setting.

It sounded like a great strategy to help people to live in the world again. Only after several years did anyone figure out that many of those skills learned in a sheltered setting did not transfer over into community placement. At least, that's what we were told. I never saw any studies on it and I'm not sure from my personal experience that I believe it.

Nonetheless, in our efforts to try to teach skills to help people have a better life, we did find out that much of the aggressive, sexual and maladaptive behavior was institutionally induced. We found that as they were moved out of the institutional setting many of the same behaviors in different clients were being eliminated or reduced.

Between 1980 and 1994, the workshop where I helped in these training tasks, was moved from one building to another. It had been in the recreation building (that was a converted dining hall), the basement of the security building, the laundry, and even attempted on the ward. Usually anywhere they wanted someone else moved out is where they put us.

The turnover rate with the staff and frequent change of buildings was about the same. One thing remained consistent: No matter who was working, when there was trouble everyone showed up to help. In many cases your health and ability to earn a living for your family greatly depended on that fact. We learned an interdependence on each other that made us a family even if we didn't like each other. Together we all learned from the clients.

The Poet

One morning, Timmy came to work in the sheltered workshop located in the old dining hall looking very tired. A young man in his early 20s, he was only about 5'3" and had the underdeveloped pre-adolescent body of a boy of about 12 years old. He only weighed about 85 pounds. Timmy had the softest hands of anyone I had ever known. Shaking his hand was like putting your hand between layers of smooth silk.

There was an odor about him this morning that I couldn't quite put my finger on. Timmy usually looked crumpled like he had slept with his clothes on, and he usually had. Today was worse; he was wrinkled all over and his shirttail hung out. His hair was flattened with a severe case of bed head on one side and the other side of his head reminded me of the old joke that said someone's hair looked like it had joined the Navy,

the front cowlick stood up and *waved* at the back cowlick. Timmy liked that joke even though he was the object of its humor. He often hummed the Navy theme song he had heard in old WWII movies on TV.

Timmy was autistic and very little was known about autism in the early 1980s. The chart said Timmy was a math genius. He could always be calmed by giving him a pencil and a paper with math problems for him to work. He worked himself into a frenzy of calculations doing math problems, laughing frantically as if it were the most fun thing in the world to do. The laugh had a fiendish quality to it. I wish some of that love of mathematics could have come out in me during college.

He was as thin as a toothpick and his shoes were about three sizes bigger than his feet. Timmy was much more haggard today than his usual. I was growing concerned. He wouldn't respond to my inquiries, he just put his head down and bunched his eyebrows into a scowl when I attempted conversation.

As I watched him work I got the impression that this avoidance was the result of more than what usual ward events could account for. Timmy wouldn't laugh like he usually did. He wouldn't talk to those in his group or answer my questions from coworkers either. He just stood blankly and washed telephone cords like he had for the last week. Timmy usually liked the repetition of the work and acted like he was dancing with the work's required movement.

The local telephone company sent two types of used telephone cords for the clients to clean. After the washing process, the clients would check to be sure that the cord would carry a current on a board that would light up if the connection of wires was

still good. A drill on reverse would then be used to recoil the short hand set type coil cord. The long gray line cord would be wrapped with a twist tie and then repackaged.

Timmy usually liked washing phone cords. One end of the cord was attached to a rail he said looked like the kind cowboys used to tie their horses to in front of the saloon. I didn't see the resemblance. The rail itself was only a two by four that had slots cut into it for the cord to hook onto. Timmy would walk backwards holding the cord in one hand and a soapy wash cloth in the other and slide the cloth along the cord to clean it. He cleaned 20' and 50' cords.

When he got to the end he would repeat the process until the cord was free of dirt, grime, and greasy spots. He would then dry it and place it in a container where another client was testing for current.

After a couple of hours, fatigue began wearing him down. He was yawning as if he couldn't keep his eyes open. A time or two, he practically staggered on his feet. I sat him down, but he still would not respond to me. He didn't seem to be ill. He wasn't flushed or feverish.

I left him to sit and rest a minute while I went on to check the work of other clients in work area two and observed him covertly. I walked passed him several times in my duties and began to hear him hum and mumble. Each time I passed I picked up a word here and there. I heard words like, walls....halls....and another client's name. Eventually I heard even more. He sang in monotone,

“Malcomb Burlington wanders the halls.

Malcomb Burlington kicks holes in the walls.

Malcomb Burlington signed it was cold last night.

Malcomb Burlington gave me a fright.

Malcomb Burlington set fire to my bed.

Malcomb Burlington get outta my head.”

The Railroad Man

Billy Boatright didn't talk much. He was another of the quiet, gently shaped souls just there in body and usually caused no trouble. I asked him one day why he didn't talk to other people much and his response was merely, "I don't have nothing to tell them."

Personally, I think his delusions were so much better than the reality he was offered everyday that he just chose to keep one foot here enough to get by, then lived the rest of his life within his own creation ... and rather contentedly at that. He always told me, "I am a very happy man." I believed him.

At about 5'9" and 180 pounds, he was just another average size guy. His hair was a punk rocker style before punk rock was born. He was in his late 20s and that hair drove me nuts. It was just kind of a mousy brown and spiked every which way without gels or mousse. Combing didn't help. It took a few years before I quit trying to find a way to get that hair to change so Billy didn't look so much like the wild man of Borneo. All my efforts were wasted. Instead of changing him, the punk fad came into being and Billy ended up with a very stylish, up-to-date haircut. Thank God he didn't want it colored pink or green or something equally bizarre.

Mechanized objects always fascinated Billy. Movement of any kind drew his attention, but he truly loved trains. He didn't want to put trains together or play with them

or watch them running down the track. Billy wanted to be the railroad-crossing signal that stopped traffic for the trains!

Billy had kind eyes, but a scrunched-up face as if all of the features on it had to be squeezed within a small circled area. He had a heavy beard so the constantly dark, five o'clock shadow made him look like a lovable gangster ready at any moment to pull out a candy machine gun and offer me a bite. His round shoulders and the way he stood also gave evidence of his gentleness.

Billy's demure looks became even more pronounced after a seizure. He seemed to physically draw within himself as if all of his muscles contracted. He had some terribly violent seizures and he would usually lose bowel and bladder control and vomit as well. Getting something under him so he was even minimally protected on the concrete floor was difficult.

It was not at all unusual to hear the ding, ding of a railroad-crossing signal when I was busy with another resident at a worktable. Billy did a magnificent imitation of the sound. When I heard it I knew what it was immediately, or at least hoped I did – otherwise a train was coming through the building. I would turn to find Billy standing in the center of the room with his arms straight up over his head. He stood rigid with hands and fingers stiff and tightly pointing upward, elbows locked solid as iron. The arms would slowly arch their way straight down each side of his body until they were straight out to the side. At that point the elbows would bend slowly inward toward his chest until the middle fingers were close, but not touching. The positioning did actually look like the way railroad crossing arms were aligned.

Billy alternately closed first one eye and then the other to emulate the red lights alternately blinking and vocally “dinging” his warning with each blink. I think it must take the same coordination it takes to pat your head and rub your belly at the same time, like we did as kids, to accomplish this blinking ding, ding. Having no coordination, I could never do either for very long. Billy, on the other hand, was an expert. I knew better than to try to redirect him until the train had passed. Many had tried and failed, and that darned train had even run down a couple of people!

Pyromania

The very opposite of Billy’s internalizing of sensations was Doug, who wanted sensations that stimulated him to be bright and more external.

Doug Martin looked and acted like many teenagers except that Doug took things to extremes. He was gregarious and always projected an attitude like a used car salesman with an ego bigger than life. He was mischievous, incorrigible, and a downright pest most of the time. He would lie even if the truth served him better and he had more energy than anybody’s body had a right to have. Doug was just short of grown man size in height and build, but he was as hyperactive as a three-year-old with a sugar buzz.

Doug did not recognize when he was beyond the limits of socially appropriate behavior. On top of that, Doug had absolutely no impulse control and a personality trait that demanded immediate and severe revenge for any transgressions made against him. Doug’s memory was long and this made him very dangerous to those who made him

angry. It was really hard not to make Doug angry most of the time, but especially when we had to get him to do things he didn't want to do.

Doug's older sister made him angry once over cutting the grass when he was home on a weekend leave. His sister wanted him to mow the small yard but Doug wanted to spend his time on his bike. The family, and especially this sister, did not understand his illness well enough to realize that Doug could not be expected to do things the way another person would. They saw him as willful and thought he could just grow up.

Like many older sisters might have done to encourage cooperation, she took his bike from him and locked it up. With a chain, she attached the bike frame to the tool shed. She told him the bike would stay there until the grass was mowed and left him to make his decision to mow whenever he was ready. She left the house to be at work by three feeling that she had limited his ability to digress from her proposed task of grass mowing.

Doug had an advantage over what he saw as her flawed logic. He knew he would not be mowing that grass no matter what she did. According to Doug's logic, if he couldn't ride that bike, it was of no use to him. He sat and stewed with his chin in his palms and his elbows on his knees. The mower sitting there became a thorn in his side. The sight of it nagged at him. He stared at it for a long time, then he got the gas can and he filled the mower's gas tank. Doug was very neat, after filling, he wiped the top of the mower with a rag to remove excess gas and stuck a corner of the rag into his back jeans pocket as he pushed the mower from the shed.

Still very angry with his sister bossing him around and making him do things he didn't want to do, he fired up the mower and set the speed lever to the self propel

mechanism and let it go forward as he held on. The mower began cutting as he fussed about his sister.

Doug mowed a row all around the tool shed and then a row from the shed door toward the house out about 15 feet, he then turned and started back on a second row and stopped after a couple of feet. He got the rag from his pocket and uncapped the mower's gas tank. He stuck the rag down in the gas tank opening and once again engaged the self-propelling mechanism while holding the mower back.

He flicked his lighter and lit his homemade fuse, then allowed the mower to run up the shed ramp and right into the shed. He watched the fireworks from a vantage point across the street. He watched as his brother-in-law's motorcycle, also housed in the shed, blew into twisted and unusable motorcycle parts flying through the air. Mowing problem settled! Doug loved watching firemen. The ones who came to put out the shed fire fascinated him. Two big trucks and a rescue unit for one little shed fire, he thought was kind of overkill, but he liked the excitement. He liked the bright colors, the siren, the "large feeling" of a fire, he told me. He liked the oversized boots, the heavy coats, and the big hats.

It didn't take long before the firemen were looking for who could have started the fire. Doug figured if they were mad because he gave them work, then he was mad at them, too, and he left and walked himself back to the hospital.

His sister knew who had started the fire but didn't press formal charges. She reported what happened to the hospital staff and Doug was sent to a locked ward for a month or so before he got his grounds privileges back (to be off the ward and unescorted by staff anywhere on the hospital grounds).

Doug conformed to the rules, all the time complaining that he didn't understand what all the fuss was about. Eventually he said he wouldn't do it again and was able to come to the workshop unescorted. It was about three weeks later that Doug took an unauthorized walk off-grounds after work.

He jumped the fence on the northeast side where not too many people paid attention and went to a school playground near the hospital. Doug liked playgrounds; they reminded him of his own school days and it felt good to be there. He remembered when he got expelled. Not surprisingly, he had gotten expelled for pulling the fire alarm.

He now walked up to the door of this school and bashed its window glass with a rock. He climbed through and he again pulled the nearest fire alarm. He remembered that they always came really quickly for a school. He didn't waste any time and took up a position behind a dumpster where he could see the fire trucks come and awaited the sirens.

When the firemen arrived and ran into the school searching for a fire, Doug climbed into the biggest fire truck, lay down, and eased the door shut quietly. Inside the cab felt huge. The big dials on the dash with all the numbers were right in front of him and he put his hands around the steering wheel that, as he later described it, felt as big around as that of a Greyhound bus. Doug was awestruck with the sheer size of the inside of the fire truck and he liked listening to the radio calls, too. He wanted to pick up the microphone and join in, but knew he didn't have time.

The leather-like seat cover was soft and he bounced when he moved. He took an ink pen off the dash and stabbed at the seat down into its stuffing repeatedly in a frenzy. His breathing became faster and he began to giggle. He pulled and tore at the cover until

he had some stuffing pulled up and he reached into his pocket for the matches he had brought. He watched the fire quickly catch and begin to spread to the other side of the seat with flames quickly rising about a foot high in the cab.

Doug quietly slid down from the truck the way he had gotten in and walked back to the hospital with a content smile. He finished relating his version of the story to several of us at break time one day with, "I'll bet they learn now!"

Fishing Instructor

My two adolescent boys came to volunteer at the workshop occasionally when they were out of school. They would help count work production, and talk with the clients at break time, and encourage the clients while they were working. As an added treat to make the day special we would go fishing on lunch hour. We would return to work with either a big-one-that-got-away story or a five-gallon bucket holding our catch for the clients to oooh and aaah about.

The office secretary at the workshop was aware of my fondness for fishing. Kelly, was a tall, thin young woman of about 23 or 24 years old. Her hair was very long, thick, and worn kind of bushy with tiny waves in it. Her hair always reminded the clients of crinkle-cut french-fries that moved like a bouncing accordion when she walked.

Kelly was to be married to Dave, a Navy sailor returning within a month. Dave was tall and lanky and was ending his stint in the service and had a job arranged near where they were going to live. I had once met him when he came in on leave and surprised Kelly at work. Like me, he too, was an avid bank fisherman, neither of us liked boats.

Kelly wanted me to teach her to fish, and quick! I smiled at the thought.

Kelly was a girly girl. She was the type to pack a curling iron and make-up bag to go primitive camping. It did not take long, once she started pestering, for me to agree to teach her. The boys wanted to watch, too. They snickered and thought it would be a hoot! I took her with us thinking they were right.

I took her to a spot on the White River near the old baseball park, Victory Field. I figured if she fell in there, I might have a chance of getting her out. Since I cannot swim, that meant shallow water, or at least nothing over my head, and slow current. This area would do quite nicely because I knew where there was a school of small blue gill that stayed among the rocky edges of that part of the river and the boys could cast farther down and mid-stream for buffalo carp. I did not eat anything out of this river, but I loved the fight they put up and so did my boys.

I gave her a five-foot pole with a red and white, round bobber, a small round weight, a leader, and a hook attached to the leader. I pulled out the worms and saw the blood drain out of her face. This seemed to be the biggest hurdle to her previous fishing trips with her husband-to-be. She reasoned that there didn't seem to be any better time than now to get over her fear, and we let her get used to the slimy little critters slowly.

She played in the worm's dirt bed with her index finger a while then I showed her what to do to entangle the worm on the hook and left her to her task. I took up a position just a few yards away where I could watch her out of the corner of my eye. With my luck; she'd fall in.

I saw her wiggle her finger in the cold, black worm dirt to continue to acclimate herself to the feel of the worms. The faces she made were wonderful entertainment. I found it was very difficult for me to keep a straight face and that I frequently had to turn my head to avoid her seeing me laugh.

I saw her pull a long, fat nightcrawler from its cool dirt bed and attempt to stretch its wiggling body over a rock. She just sat and watched it wiggle for a minute, then she held it up in the air by one end. She pulled a small pair of scissors from the tackle box and neatly cut it in half. It took all the self-control I had to keep her from knowing I had seen this. She quickly dropped the half that still wiggled in her hand and began making faces again, as well as noises that made me lose all control and burst out laughing. The boys heard me and tactfully did not say or do anything.

Kelly gave me a how-dare-you look and became very determined. She put the half worm on her hook with what she deemed the appropriate facial mannerisms accompanied by sound effects and proudly showed me her accomplishment. I had to give her credit, she was not a quitter. We practiced a little casting and when she could cast out about five feet, I turned to my reel and left her to fish.

I was daydreaming and enjoying the river sights and sounds when I heard a quiet, "Shoo, go away." I heard it whispered a couple more times. I looked over to see Kelly's bobber going under the water and bouncing back up.

I raised my eyes to see her motioning with her hand and still telling her bobber, "Shoo, go away."

I asked if she was aware that she was getting bites and she replied excitedly, "I know. They're eating your worm. How do I stop them?"

Almost immediately her bobber went under again and I yelled, "Pull back, hard!" followed by commands to, "reel fast." She was so stunned by my loud commands that she did exactly as I told her to do.

Up out of the murky water came a pretty little sunfish with its bright yellow-orange belly. It was all of about three inches long and flipping around wildly and fighting

with every inch of its little body. Kelly thought she had caught Mobey Dick. Her face alternated smiles and terror. The smile was from ear to ear and the girl glowed with sheer delight.

She had now caught her first fish and baited her own hook. She caught about ten of those little devils and threw them back. She then declared that she was now ready for her upcoming marriage. That evening, a letter was sent off to Dave telling him that she could fish and this time she felt it was the truth.

I could not resist buying matching rods and reels as a wedding gift.

Boredom is Dangerous

Every workshop I have experienced had one thing in common – temperature extremes. In the old dining hall workshop the winter furnace blowers often went out and we often worked in coats and gloves. I have seen the indoor temperature drop to 43 degrees. There was no way to keep the wind from coming into a big open building like this, but we did try. We put rags under the doors to close up the cracks and we put newspapers in the window cracks.

More than once I have moved tables to get a patient's work station in the little bit of sunlight getting in through a window. The building sometimes even looked like one of the old falling down cabins on the Falls Road on Cumberland Mountain.

The Falls Road ran between Corbin, and Williamsburg, in Kentucky. It was the old State Road 25 West that was a 14 hour drive to go down home. Interstate 75 was built parallel to State Road 25 West, so about all the businesses or homes on that road went the way of ghost towns. The only thing that remained was Cumberland Falls State Park and a few stalwart hill people who stayed with their out houses and coal burning stoves and just threw a television dish on the roof so they could get the 200 channels promised by the

television folks.

In the summertime, the dining hall skylight and unshrouded windows could bake in the afternoon heat. It would get up to 100 degrees. What few fans we had were used for the most severe seizure patients we had and those that got the most violent when uncomfortably hot.

When it felt like things were getting dangerous, I kept a pan of water under my desk and a spray bottle on the top right hand corner. Washed out Four-O-Nine brand kitchen cleaner bottles held enough water to spray down at least four people if the process was made fun for them. We often tried to use humor to get through those long, hot, Tennessee Williams type days.

One steamy, boring afternoon in the workshop it smelled strongly of musty bird feathers, rat droppings, and human perspiration. Everyone was drained of energy and the air was stifling. It was the end of the week, all the contract work was done, and we were down to our last hour before the clients could go back to the ward.

We used to do crafts to make things that made the clients feel that their time was useful, but that was deemed untherapeutic. Some even called it patient abuse if they did anything that could be interpreted as work without monetary compensation. To fill the billing time therapeutically, we were required to teach something, which meant teaching lectures. Everyone dreaded them but Daniel.

Daniel was going to give one of his infamous lectures on the benefits of routine setting, good hygiene, and learning new skills. I was so hot, putting my feet in the water didn't even help. I was too uncomfortable to be as generous as I should have been. Dan was still young and naïve enough to believe the same boring lecture three times a week gave such vital information to people of diminished capacity that they should fervently drink up every word and view him as a role model, with adoration bordering on idolatry. The clients were smarter than that and saw him as a preppy nerd.

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television folks.

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I felt sorry about all the bad comments about Dan. He came from an affluent,

sheltered background that didn't teach him how to survive real life. He was trying really hard not to drink himself to death.

We often ate lunch together at the employee dining hall. It was really named The Brass Rail, but we sarcastically christened it the "Four Star Diner." Their intentions were good but food cooked in institutional sized quantities was usually not at its peak in flavor.

Dan's intentions were good, too and he was a really a guy with a big heart but his life experience hadn't prepared him well for common sense situations. He was intellectually on a genius level, but his interpersonal skills were a little lacking.

It was interesting how each person who was intentionally listening no more than they had to, found something to keep from being terminally bored during the lectures. Staff, also bored, sat in chairs among the lecture group to be able to be handy when things got out of control. It would have been less stressful if I put six 10 year olds in the back seat of a hot car for a long drive and only handed out two lollipops.

Personally, I planned my next day's schedule from the middle of the back row. Some of the patients daydreamed, some actively hallucinated, some dozed, some whispered to each other, and some whispered to themselves. As the minutes dragged by much too slowly, the heat seemed more oppressive and fatigue set in because we were so still. Tolerance levels began to decrease and people were feeling anxiety from being so powerless to end the torment. Dan's incessant positive attitude could have easily incited a riot.

In defense of this terrible process during those years, if we had sent the clients back to the ward on inclement days, the workshop could not have survived financially. The clients would have had nothing to do, no chance to make more than their \$30 a month and no chance of getting to work their way out. The funding process, I will never understand. Near the end of the lecture, I moved to stand near the back of the seated group.

With the tension so thick in this captive group we kept an eye out for the aura

often associated with oncoming seizures. Some clients gave off a signal that precipitated the convulsion of a grand mal or trance-like state of a petit mal seizure. At least that is what they were called then.

I had my eye on three guys from the Evans building. They were feisty young men from the DD (developmentally disabled) units that were always teasers and had short attention spans. I figured that this is where the trouble would start if Dan didn't end this soon. These would be the ones to create something to combat the boredom that would get out of hand. The most I would be able to do was try to contain the problem to the group who started it and protect the more vulnerable in the group.

I was wrong. Sitting there in the group, I began smelling something that made my stomach growl. It was bubble gum. Elmer was in the front row and opened a piece of penny bubble gum he had bought at the Brass Rail at break time. He was unwrapping it slowly and in the heat the smell lofted and swirled around the group like an invitation to something delightful. It has been almost four hours since lunch and nothing started trouble like a basic instinct such as hunger. He smacked his lips as he gummed the gooey stuff showing through lips with no teeth.

It was more than little Bessie could stand. She grabbed for it and when he turned to get the pink chunk out of her reach she grabbed the fly swatter from under a chair and began hitting him with it. It wasn't long before the fly swatter was too bent out of shape to be very useful and she got him with her fists. Staff grabbed her arms and subdued her easily once they got to her.

The little group I was watching was so subdued that it bothered me. They were too quiet. Eddie, a youthful, fit, and trim dark-haired fellow was leaning back in his chair studiously clipping his fingernails.

Another chunky young man of Mexican ancestry, Charley, was biting his nails and cuticles and spitting the remnants into a coffee stained plastic cup he was sharing with Eddie.

Jack was the third of the trio. He had short brown hair and a distinctive protruding chin with a Cary Grant cleft in the center.

They looked like any three teenage boys at the mall watching the girls go by and whispering indecent comments about their favorite body parts. Unfortunately, they seriously lacked social graces, impulse control, and coping skills. Combine that with a richly creative and overactive imagination and it was easy to see why they kept ending up in jail.

They could be terrors when they were feeling empowered and victimized the less fortunate of the ward mercilessly. In the blink of an eye, they could intimidate a weaker client out of his money, clothes, or snacks and have it gone before staff could stop them. They could turn this predatory nature into a sweet, innocent smile that manipulated their families and new staff well until someone got hurt. The frightening part wasn't that the low IQ made functioning in society hard but that the street-smart bravado kept them from seeing a need to change.

While these self-indulgent thoughts flowed through my brain I glanced back at Jack. He sat with his chair also poised on only two legs, balanced precariously between Eddie and Charley. His head was back and his eyes closed dozing. My attention had been drawn by a soft snore. Jack had escaped the lecture. While I was thinking how lucky Jack was I saw Eddie pour his nail clippings into Charley's cup then Charley quickly pour the combined contents into Jack's open mouth. The deed was done, nothing I could do.

Jack went to draw in a deep breath during his slumber and choked on the foreign objects in his mouth. His tongue wiped the pasty sleep taste from his lips and he swallowed hard then resumed his snoring smacking his lips as he returned to sleep unaware of any problem. The ward doctor was notified and I left it alone from there.

Roach Dance

Ron, Brian, Kelly (three coworkers) and I were inspecting where some critter had cheated and begun eating our brown bag lunches before it was lunch time. Ron and Brian were floor supervisors, like me, and Kelly worked in the office. None of us liked mouse leftovers. You never could tell where those little feet had been before lunch.

We were at the worktable in Brian's work area because it had the best breeze on this humid day. His area was by the back door right next to mine. Ron opted for lunch out with his young wife today and Brian and I went to the Brass Rail for today's *Gross Beast Sprayed with Raid Special*. Kelly had brought her usual grapefruit.

Both Ron and his wife looked like kids on teen magazine covers. Young and energetic with sun bleached blonde hair, nice tans year round, and sparkling blue eyes. They were the type who could eat forever and never gain weight. I look at food and it jumps straight to my hips and stomach. I only stayed thin by playing softball, riding my bike about 25 miles a day and loading trucks and moving heavy skids working at CSH.

It was a long, busy morning and nobody was talking much. We were tired and drained of all energy. Occasionally we teased about taking turns napping on the seizure cot in the office and even progressed the teasing to include the possibility of all of us on the cot at once, but nobody had the energy left to move in that direction even if so inclined.

I think if I had laid down I would not have been able to get up again. Besides the fact that we were just goofing off, the thought of the roaches and other critters that we shared this old building with also had an impact on the decision. Some kind of critter lived in about every nook and cranny in the old place.

We had raccoons in the top level somewhere within the south eaves of the building, often heard but rarely seen. The clients would have freaked. We had pigeons

and morning doves near the skylight. There were bats under every dark place available in both levels to keep the mice company and even an old owl in the upper north end of the building that had been there since birth and was as old as dirt itself, or so they say. Come to think of it, that is also what they said about me after a few years.

Laying your body down to be vulnerable to the critters was not something you wanted to do if given a chance to get a little shut eye.

Ron was even more than tired. He was drained in spirit.

He was the one Jack went after with the screwdriver this morning. I don't think Ron had been able to shake off the feeling of knowing Jack had been standing behind him with a screwdriver within inches of his back. This kind of close call leaves a distinct impression. Jack's hand had been poised in the air to strike when Brian and I took him down. That kind of experience does something to the nervous system for a while.

Besides the fear of personal injury if that screwdriver went ripping through soft skin and into his neck, he began to wonder if he would survive such a blow and how he could feed his kids if he got hurt. He knew that the insurance here was just like the insurance for people who work in a safe office.

His mind wandered and he considered how his family would react, how much life insurance he had, how he would pay his bills, and what made him want to work in a place like this anyway. He wondered if God was really watching and how close, and when his luck would run out. Thoughts like that will drain a mind and soul if you can't get passed them, but they come naturally after a close call no matter what. Today Ron couldn't get settled in his skin again. We let him process what had happened for a while.

Ron hadn't worked in the workshop long. He was new to working with clients anywhere. From the looks of him that day, I didn't think he would be working with them

for much longer either. His face was drawn and his usually lively countenance blank. He risked a lot everyday and it looked like that fact had just hit home the hard way. He was a pleasant looking young man of about 24 years old. He was rather short at 5'4." He had an eager, vital personality and was somewhat of a jokester. He was kind and had an easy and light manner and laugh that he used generously.

Ron's easy manner came out of his philosophy that there were good guys and bad guys in this world and if you weren't one, you were automatically becoming the other. His attitude was one that insisted that life be lived proactively, and not by default. He said he felt that people needed to choose who they were and then be themselves no matter what.

I think his views were being somewhat amended as we watched him weigh and try to balance different parts of his life now. This process wasn't unusual around here. We each went through it about every three months. It was a quarterly burn out rite of passage here.

However, Ron had been silent long enough for Brian, Kelly and I not only to begin to worry, but also be affected by his depression. We didn't have to worry long.

Ron suddenly jumped out of his chair looking down and flailing his hands like his lap was on fire. He was stomping his feet and letting out little squeaks like a madman. We were speechless. This drastic change shocked us into immobility. We just stared at him like idiots and we couldn't help but laugh.

He stopped dancing as quickly as he began. He was now unbuttoning his jeans and apologizing saying, "I'm sorry, ladies!" At any rate, his blue eyes were huge. His eyes screamed panic. He quickly lowered his zipper, kicked his shoes off and stepped out of his pants. The three-inch wood roach that sat on his inner left thigh jumped off his leg

and onto the floor. He went to step on it and it jumped onto the wall near the doorway higher than we could reach to kill it.

We all stood there with our mouths open. Ron was still breathing hard. Ron's face was splotchy red in places and pale as a ghost in others. I could see his temples throbbing as he stood there still in his underwear, his pants still around his knees, just looking at us with big eyes and his mouth still agape.

He had a curl of dampened hair in the middle of his forehead and I couldn't help but think of the old nursery rhyme about a little girl with the same curl placement. We were suspended in time waiting on our blood pressures to return from the stratosphere.

Kelly was the first to burst out laughing. Ron retrieved his pants and none of us were worth anything the rest of the day.

Tobacco Beans

Ray was not a man easily identified as a patient until conversation was attempted. He was usually cooperative but I was cautiously aware that he could be unexpectedly volatile. Ray had wild eyes. I couldn't read them at all. The last time another client asked him for a cigarette, he had turned my poor filing cabinet into scrap metal. There was no reasoning with whatever rage overtook him, and it was hard to identify what would trigger him or when.

Fridays, Ray would get an off-grounds pass for home to visit his mother's house. An off-grounds pass meant the doctor had signed an order to allow the client to leave the hospital grounds. Without the pass the only way out was over the fence. He would catch the bus on the corner and ride downtown. He was fine as long as he was left alone. I pity

any mugger who might try to go after Ray. Occasionally I would give him a ride downtown and allow him to save his bus money for coffee or cigarettes.

Ray picked up his pass on Fridays at the Bahr Center patient accounting office cashier's window, dropped his green slip pass at the security shack, and walked right out the gate. He always walked down Washington Street to Dave's Short Stop, bought a loaf of Wonder Bread and a quart of chocolate milk, and sat on the curb enjoying them until his bus came or I drove by and offered him a ride.

Ray was a regular at Dave's and Dave knew his needs well for coffee and tobacco. When Ray couldn't get cigarettes he'd pick up butts from the ash trays or off the ground and tear them open to get the last bit of tobacco to put in his old corn cob pipe. The pipe was so old that the stem was burned off and Ray smoked direct from the nub that was left less than an inch from the bowl holding the fire.

One Friday Ray was out of cigarettes, money, and couldn't even find any tobacco in old cigarette butts. He wandered around the store looking at every item as if browsing. Dave saw Ray deftly poke his finger into the end of a small bag of coffee beans and allowing a handful of roasted beans to leak out into his palm before he squeezed the end of the coffee bag closed again. Dave smiled to himself, shook his head, and just let Ray walk out of the shop with the beans safely palmed into his pocket. Dave didn't think the loss was worth the problems possible from confronting such a steady customer. If Ray had asked, Dave would have given the beans to him anyway.

The more Dave thought about it the more he became curious about how Ray would use the coffee beans. After all, he had seen his ritual with the whole loaf of bread and milk. He also had concerns over Ray being a client at a mental institution and his

legal liabilities if Ray got those coffee beans stuck in his nose or ear or something. Small beads of sweat popped up on Ray's lip near the hot pipe bowl.

Dave went to the window where he could see Ray but Ray could not see him. He stood on tip toe behind a display of soft drink cases. He began to chuckle as he saw Ray desperately trying to light his short stem pipe. It was filled with sprigs of dead grass; a few of Dave's coffee beans were sitting right on top of the grass. Ray's jaws were depressed as he sucked in on the pipe. In and out they went drawing and expelling air. Small pieces of lit grass floated to the ground in their short life as sparks of fire. Ray's face was intent and contorted as he concentrated on the task at hand and was turning beet red from forehead to chin.

Then at last, victory! The entire pipe bowl blazed fire as the beans and Ray's eyebrows and lashes caught and Ray got strong, coffee flavored smoke I would imagine. He rubbed his face, calmly extinguishing the fires. His face cooled from the bright red and a look of satisfaction slowly covered it; the smile was evidence of the success he sought.

Chapter 8

“Planning and orchestrating the release of a person from the hospital back to life in the community is a major social work function. Contact, referral and follow-up with the Community Mental Health Center treatment providers and residential specialists is necessary to coordinate an appropriate and effective transition of the person from life in a hospital to that in the community. Once the placement is made the social worker continues to provide follow-up contact with the person until the treatment team is satisfied that an adequate transmission has been achieved.” Central State Annual Report, 1989-90, Evan Bayh, Governor, Josef Reum, Commissioner Department of Mental Health, Ruth Stanley, R.N., M.S., C.E.O., James Donahue, M.D., Medical Director, John Newsom, Assistant Superintendent, Administration.

Workshop MPD

Marilyn was a fairly new client off the admitting ward (which meant she was still pretty docile from being sedated). Sedated or not, new folks required closer monitoring. She was tall, about 5’9”, and had frizzy, naturally blonde hair. She weighed about 180 pounds. It had been nearly 15 minutes since she’d left my work area and gone into the restroom. In weeks I’d learned that 15 minutes was a lot longer than she was usually gone for restroom breaks. I liked short restroom trips because it was hard to keep watching in more than one area at a time.

My concern was minimal because Marilyn was the only one in there and not one of the clients that would regularly get into fights, have seizures, or quickie sexual encounters in the restroom. I didn’t expect major trouble. I expected her lengthy stay in the restroom was because of something like a broken bra strap, need for a Kotex pad, napping on the porcelain throne, or something just as benign. In any case, I needed to check on her.

I leisurely wandered from the back of the building where my work area was located. I took a deep breath and let it out slowly enjoying getting out of my usual work

space an extra minute or two. I called to Terri Blyson, who was a floor supervisor to the group next to mine, to watch my group a minute and went off to see what was keeping Marilyn.

I was up to the center of the building before I heard the loud conversation coming from the restroom. I heard an upset or excited female voice, Marilyn, arguing with a demanding male voice, both in the women's restroom on the left side of the foyer by the front door. I was instantly alert and confused.

The men's restroom was on the far right side of the foyer, but no one had asked to go in there. As far as I knew, everyone was accounted for and under supervision. Not another stranger from off grounds with drugs to sell, I prayed. That had happened once last year. It had been a stoned teenage relative of one of the clients. I immediately picked up my pace and ran full out. It was easy to slip on the age-worn tile flooring that had "1899" encased in its mosaic. I grabbed the ceiling support column holding up the foyer ceiling and let the momentum of my movement assist me with the left turn I had to make. I was doing pretty good for 30 plus.

I heard him yelling garbled words in a gravelly voice. Then I heard him spit out the last word "Bitch!" with pure hate as if he was on the attack. I heard glass break. As I entered, I was prepared for anything except what I found.

Marilyn stood there next to the broken window. There was blood on the broken pane still in the window frame and blood on her hand as well as the eight-inch long piece of glass she held. I could see no gushing wounds anywhere on her with just a cursory inspection. Marilyn raised her eyes slowly like it took great effort and looked at me with terror in her eyes.

I eased the piece of glass from her bleeding hand with no further injury. She allowed me to wrap paper towels around the deep scratch on her palm and hold it tight. Fortunately, the cut didn't look deep and was already starting to clot.

Marilyn let me lead her from the small bathroom one slow step at a time. I wanted her out into the larger, more controllable area where help would be accessible and there was maneuvering room for when the shock wore off. I called for help as soon as I got near the door opening where my voice would carry.

Marilyn caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. I saw her reflection glare back at her in disgust and turned to see Marilyn's face. It was a look of rapidly growing hatred. I heard the male voice and saw it was coming from Marilyn's own wet mouth. A raspy stream of profanities flew at her from the mirror's contorted image. I was trapped in stunned inaction. Marilyn screamed and ran out the restroom door toward the ward.

I geared up to run after Marilyn when I saw my call for help had thankfully been heard and Terri was already in pursuit. I got on the phone and arranged for help for Terri at the ward door.

I learned later that two ward attendants met Marilyn just inside the door to the ward. She was taken down immediately so the gash on her hand could be treated.

An explanation confirmed what I already knew. One of Marilyn's multiple personality alters had attacked her, a frequent occurrence, according to the attendant, when Marilyn was feeling guilty and felt that she needed punished.

I'm familiar with the concept of self-punishment, but this was a new one. Many of the clients exhibited self-punishing symptoms of self-mutilation. Some picked fights in

which they were assured a beating; others just give up on living because they believed themselves undeserving of a life with any happiness in it.

Marilyn's friend, Kathy, never gave up, though she coped in other ways.

Kathy

One patient that always challenged me was Kathy McKee. She wasn't mean or intentionally vulgar, she was just living on a very base level of need. She learned to cope with her illness using sex, food, and cigarettes as her body and soul's gratification and punishment. She used the only thing she had, her body, as a means of getting her needs met—a trick she learned at home with her father. Kathy turned the process into an art form. And in her vibrant early 20s, was she ever needy!

She was a little chunky, about five foot seven inches tall, with brown hair cut stylishly to her shoulders with what looked like a natural curl. Her face was usually just a little smudged with soot somehow and deceptively innocent. She had learned that she could effectively turn on a sweet smile and easily relate to men. The sexual abuse had taught her at a very young age to work it well.

Women, on the other hand, were absentee caretakers, cooks and monitors, or nothing at all to Kathy. No inner child covertly sought the comfort of a mama in this woman. Food was the only way she found to relate to women.

Many attendants would bring the clients cookies or food from home cooked meals. Kathy liked when they did this. She was unusually talented at satisfying her food cravings to the fullest extent. When someone brought her something to eat she would

swallow as much as she could physically hold then throw up right where she stood, only to frantically reach out and grab more food before someone stopped her. The food could come from any plate near her, even if that plate belonged to someone else. She looked like she had just come out of a garbage can when she finished eating, and no one wanted to eat near her. She didn't complain of stomach hunger much but she always had mouth hunger. She spawned sadness in me like no other every time I looked at her. She had to be constantly monitored when she was in the workshop. She was an expert at being sneaky.

From my place in the back of the big room I saw her come through the door, but then she remained out of sight for a few minutes behind a column. When her time out of sight became uncomfortable for me I headed toward the front of the room.

I began to make out another form behind the column. When I was able to see movement, I knew from the rhythm that Kathy was trading "a quickie" for a cigarette to be smoked at break time. By the time I reached them, she already had the cigarette and was straightening her clothing. Nothing to do now except get her to my work area and her assigned workstation so I could keep a better eye on her. Thank God she took birth control regularly. Sexual activity for favors was strictly forbidden at CSH.

I was always amazed (and secretly proud) of how many hiding places clients could find and how fast they could copulate in what had to be some of the most awkward positions possible. Privacy was rare or nonexistent so they did what they always did, they meet the challenge and adapted to create a livable life! Resilience rules every time.

Kathy was very creative. She could have sex right in front of attendants and they wouldn't always notice if they were busy. She had told me once that she either wore no

underwear or tore holes in her underwear to allow for quick entry. Mostly she wore dresses or skirts but this process even worked with slacks if the slacks also had her prized *access portal*.

Break time came during this workday and clients dispersed for their 15 minute break. Some hit the Brass Rail next door for pop and candy, some smoked, and some made cold coffee at the water fountain with their instant coffee in a Styrofoam cup.

A fight broke out at one end of the break area. Willie had a bag of M&Ms and Jessie wanted some. Jessie believed that was enough justification to whip Willie with a broken board from a work supply crate and take the small bag away from him. If truth be told, Willie probably teased Jessie till she couldn't stand it any longer. Both clients had to be physically removed from being near each other.

When we were able to calm down and take stock of everyone again Kathy was nowhere to be seen. I headed up toward the restrooms again suddenly feeling very tired. Some days were a month long it seemed, and today was one of them. I knew where to look for Kathy. As I approached the rest room I could see under the raised restroom wall. There were two sets of shoes facing each other. The woman's flats had dingy white panties lying on top of the shoes. The man's tennis shoes were mostly covered by blue jeans.

I called out to give them a warning and Kathy whirled around the entrance privacy wall pulling her panties up. She effectively ignored the fact that I was standing there and pushed passed me as she quickly tucked three cigarettes in her bra. (They must have been there longer than I thought for three cigarettes to have been earned.) She didn't

notice that her dress was tucked into the back of her panties. I couldn't help but laugh to myself as I watched her swing side to side as she walked away very satisfied with herself.

About then Matthew came out of the restroom zipping his pants and calling me everything he could think of other than the nice person I thought I was and stomped off.

I caught up with Kathy and pulled her dress out of her panties about the time she entered my work area, and she rewarded me with that sweet smile. Gotta give her credit; she knew there was nothing I could do and she had nothing to lose.

Nothing Left to Lose

I am a morning person so I was usually at work early. I liked getting in while the air was crisp and the workshop was quiet, cool and unhurried. I enjoy sunrises and new beginnings and being ready at the onset rather than play catch-up with the day later. We have usually put in about 10 hours worth of energy by noon so it was probably a good thing that I was born a true morning lark.

At the end of the day the building felt different, used up and drained of its energy. To me it felt every bit of its 100+ years -grubby, shabby, and tired. Perhaps it was just that the afternoon sun showed the unreachable dust and wear and tear. Perhaps places had a physical aura like some people claimed.

It was cool and still a little dark on this spring morning. I thought winter would never end. If I had my way, winter would end right after New Years Day, and green would take over everywhere in the world. I love the winter snow, but in the spring it melts into mud and stays muddy way too long.

I absent-mindedly put the key in the lock to the back door and stepped over the raised threshold as I went in. I felt my way carefully with the most minimal of fingertips, in case a night critter was still in residence, and flipped on the breakers in the power box behind the counter by the break room.

The fear of running my hand into a creepy-crawly faded as my eyes adjusted. I took the usual mandatory look around for bugs, bats, and small animals in and around where I was going to walk and sit and stomped on the ones closest to me before they got away. I slammed my desk drawers a time or two to signal any others still around that it was time for them to go and the place was mine for the next nine hours.

I hid my lunch from critters and clients and got my desk arranged with forms and the inevitable paperwork I would need to fill out for the day. I began with production counts of work completed, percentage rates of completion time compared to the prevailing wage percentage rate, and adjusted the pay scale to fit that percentage to see how much to pay the client. Piece rate was awful for someone doing his or her best but with severely limited ability.

I prepared the workstations with appropriate supplies and figured out where to put the clients who required the most help or behavior supervision so I would be nearest to them most of the time.

No, I am not obsessive-compulsive, but doing this let me get my guys working sooner and they made more money. I also had fewer conflicts as to who wanted to work where.

We'd had an increase in the amount of workshop fights lately. Like suicide attempts, one usually bred 10. The grapevine said that the wards were just as bad if not

worse. Spring had sprung and anxiety levels were high. Everyone was at his or her workstations. I called to locate the missing names on my attendance roster and was feeling pretty pleased with how things had gotten off to such a smooth start when the back door behind me burst open and bounced off the wall, its glass rattling. My adrenaline began to pump, but I really wasn't prepared to see Mike Ward running at me with that look on his face.

From his graying, once light brown hair, to the tips of his shoes he was covered in big splotches of fresh blood. I quickly surveyed his body but could see no gushing areas or gaping wounds. He grabbed my fingers with slick, red hands and sheer panic in his eyes. His face was ghostly white. Closer now, I could see that he was covered in cuts, some long, some short, some on his arms, some on his face. His shirt was torn and I suspected I could find cuts on his torso as well. He wordlessly stared into my eyes with a pleading look, then kind of grabbed me by my shoulders and tossed me aside. Heading to work at his workstation as if nothing was wrong.

I called his name and about that time two security guards ran in the door as Mike had. They spotted him right away and dragged him back out the door kicking, cursing, and struggling to get free.

After checking to see that everyone else was where they were supposed to be, I called the ward. Mike had done something drastic early that morning and the doctor had restricted him to the ward. No one told us what had happened, confidentiality ruled even here. His peers, on the other hand, said when it came time to go to work and he couldn't get out he had busted out a window and gone through it cutting himself in many places.

I heard they got him sewed up and sent to Bahr Center for a week. I think maybe we had achieved the routine-setting goal with Mike and maybe gone a little overboard. Of course, he was not the only one.

Chunk

Butch and Louis were two of the many floor supervisors who didn't last very long. The shortest employment I can recall was about three hours. I don't remember his name. He came in, talked to the director for a while, and was brought out on the work floor to work with us. About break time in the morning he said he was going to lunch and never came back.

Butch was short, but a stocky, muscular, football player type of guy and my adopted younger cousin's new husband. He needed a paycheck until the job he wanted with a trucking company came through. We needed help. At my aunt's request, I got him a job at CSH.

Louis was the last to be hired. Louis was a small guy, not even half my size. He had beautiful eyes, brilliantly white teeth, and an effeminately charming smile amidst his creamy chocolate complexion. Louis was blatantly gay and took no pains to hide it. I learned the term "royal flaming Nellie" from Louis describing himself. His own vision was of himself as a male Cleopatra awaiting his/her own string of admiring suitors to come sweep him/her off his/her feet.

Butch, Louis, and I were the only floor supervisors one day, Brian was off sick. We split up Brian's 13 people and absorbed them into our groups. We drew straws for Ralph Hollowell. I drew the short straw.

Ralph was short and stocky like Butch but more so. He was tightly muscled and as strong as 10 men when angry. I didn't really mind having Ralph. He'd come from a down home family, and I could usually relate to him on a level that, in his eyes, made us old buddies from Tennessee.

We were constantly teasing each other about who was going to get to go down home on vacation first. Ralph usually won. His mom went often and took him with her. I was raising kids. You didn't go on trips much with five kids to feed. We usually went camping instead.

I didn't have a problem with working shorthanded or with someone that was gay. I was raising five kids with another woman as my mate. I did have reason to question if he would be any help in a crisis or a victim we would need to protect. Louis had called in sick after a month because of a hangnail. He didn't have the bravado to even make up something. He actually had the nerve to say that a hangnail was a legitimate reason for not coming in. The next day I cut it off for him and he lived.

In spite of Louis being Louis, I liked the guy. I lovingly made fun of the starched collars on his designer shirts, the perfect crease ironed into his blue jeans, and the fact that he went berserk if a hair got out of place. I also had to laugh when he acted like he was melting from flirting with a good-looking guy that happened to pass in a restaurant at lunch time. Not even real girls are that girly-girly! At least not the ones I knew.

No matter what else, Louis was a sweet spirit and was very real with the clients. He had a charm that went passed everyone else and direct to the clients' hearts. He reminds me of the guy in the movie, "In the Garden of Good and Evil." The clients thought he was funny, but they also knew without a doubt that he was gentle and kind.

It was finally break time and Louis was in his work area in the back of the building on the south side. I was in the back. Butch was near the break area talking with Hale, our boss.

I left my area and was passing Louis' tables area when I noticed Ralph's eyes. He was growling a little as I passed and talking to himself in a low voice. This wasn't unusual for him, because he did make faces or growl before a seizure.

"Hey, barefoot hillbilly boy, you okay?" I asked.

He responded with an uneasy smile and, "all I need is a hillbilly girl." He smiled at me again and continued giggling as I passed.

I don't think I'd gone 20 feet and I heard Louis scream for help. You can't mistake that voice. When I got to Louis, both he and Ralph were on the floor, Ralph was on top of Louis with Ralph's face buried in Louis' upper chest.

As I reached for Ralph's arm I could see that his teeth were blood red and buried in Louis' chest somewhere just below the collarbone. Blood was oozing everywhere. Ralph was like a snapping turtle. Once those brown, jagged teeth went into something, he wouldn't let go. I saw Ralph's pudgy hand headed for Louis's face and grabbed it with both of mine. I wasn't strong enough to stop its forward momentum, but I was able to grab the wrist and divert the hand to land on Louis' shoulder instead of those fingers going into his eyes. I bent to put my foot on Ralph's back and pulled the wrist I had with all my might.

I saw Ralph tear out the chunk of flesh he had bitten into on Louis' chest and spit it onto the floor beside Louis' head. I saw the bloody mouth go for the meaty part of my arm just below the elbow. I was frozen; I saw it coming and I couldn't move.

Suddenly, Butch's arm came between Ralph's teeth and my arm just as Ralph bit down. Butch hadn't seen it coming. He screamed and grabbed Ralph's hair. I tried unsuccessfully to move anything I could to get Ralph off. It was like trying to bend steel,

Ralph tore the mouthful of flesh from Butch's arm and then he suddenly gets up. He flung us off and backed away, his shoulders heaving to catch his breath. Something had snapped and he knew what he had done. He was afraid of what he'd done. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and sleeve desperately trying to make his actions go away.

I didn't dare take my eyes off of him. I began talking to him, telling him to go back to the ward. Like a rigid zombie, he did. A mass of faceless people moved in with paper towels to Louis and Butch. They were both taken to the hospital as quickly as Hale could get them there. Life was a blur for the rest of the day.

We never found out why Ralph snapped on Louis. I'm still thankful to Butch every time I see him. Butch and Louis were both pillars of strength and they both came back to work the next day with bandages and pain pills. I think they came back so quickly because they knew I'd have the whole group alone if they didn't. I owe a lot of folks who put my welfare up there with or above their own.

Josephine Landefer

I need to be blunt here. I was in the hospital. I was in the hospital's stress center on 3-C. I had lost someone I deeply cared for after 10 years and I didn't handle it well. My brain and will to live went south. The clients at work were just told that I had surgery

for ulcers as I had once before. That scenario they could comprehend and so could I. In reality, I couldn't have felt worse if I had undergone very extensive surgery.

When I returned to work, people began to tell me that my illness had created unexpected problems with a client named Josephine. Rosie the Riveter would have been a more descriptive name for her. Josie was a stout, physically strong woman. She had coal blue/black skin and a football player's neck and upper arm structure. She also had a stubborn, strong-willed determination that rivaled the meanest pitbull. Her hair was always unruly and stood straight up, or at strange angles as if combed that way intentionally. She was a firm presence wherever she went.

On the ward her heavy footfalls echoed in the empty hallways. She didn't like shoes and walked down the hall by slapping the floor barefoot with each step to the restroom during a quiet night shift. She walked bowlegged like she'd been riding a horse all her life. Chairs didn't hold up long around Josie; she more or less just aimed her body at a seat then landed in it. I was smart enough to never get in her way if I could help it.

Even with all that force within her she had a gentle heart and a sweet and caring spirit. I had been told that Josephine had been on a surgical floor in Methodist Hospital at the same time I was in 3-C. She'd had a mastectomy and the biopsy showed malignant growth that was too far advanced to get it all. They sewed her up and let her heal enough to send back to CSH for treatment of symptoms. Somehow she found out that I was in the same hospital.

I never found out how she knew I was there, but when she found out she pulled out her IVs, swung those large legs out of the bed, and went foot slapping down the hallway hunting for me. This occurred repeatedly day after day. I was in intensive care 8

days and in the stress center seven weeks. They tried restraints but Josie taught them new tricks about their cloth restraints, she had been tied down by the best leather straps, and told them so. She was a lovable Sherman tank!

Eventually they wised up and put her IVs on a pole to keep her from pulling them out and tearing up her veins. Josie would then grab her IV pole and go hunting for me on every floor. Every time the nurses blinked she had escaped her room and wandered the hospital in her backless gown with her substantial derriere exposed as the gown tails flapped in the breeze. She became obsessed with finding me and her movements were a threat to her weakened condition. Calling my name up and down the floor didn't help either. She was like a bull that knows it is dying and runs frantically until it falls over.

Josephine had survived much to reach 50 years old by the sheer force of will. Everyone was concerned; they didn't want to have to try to restrain her again. The last attempt had been a bigger ordeal for the hospital staff than for Josephine, and their efforts had not been very successful. They were afraid to sedate her too much because her body was still really weak whether she acted it or not. There was also concern for me because of my mental state and I was restricted on visitors to reduce stress.

They didn't tell me what was happening. If they had, I could have seen her right away to give her some relief and she would have stopped hunting me.

Eventually, I began to recover and focus outward again. I was told about Josephine and was taken down to the coin café by staff to have a visit with her to assure her I was all right without her knowing where I was. She immediately calmed and let go

of the obsession. I thought her bear hug was going to dent both our bodies. And I'm sure the nurses on the surgical floor breathed a sigh of relief when Josephine returned to CSH.

Chapter 9

"The best service I can offer is ... a blessing. Bless difficult people! Those people who truly get on your nerves. Those who seem to be totally unaware that what they do has an impact on others. The people who have no qualms about demonstrating in word or deed that they do not want to be where they are, doing what they are doing... Take the high road, bless them!" Iyanla Vanzant, 2001, *Until Today!*, Fireside Book, Simon & Schuster, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Singapore 2001, November 2 entry.

Channel Cat

Channel Cat, or just Cat, was what Billy Riddle was called. This client was the hardest I had ever attempted to motivate to work. I failed miserably. I talked, encouraged, praised, rewarded, and even told parables. Nothing worked. The problem was that motivation must meet some need, and Cat's version of how to fill his needs made the most sense to him. He did not want anything more than what he had. I gave up trying and asked him one day how he got his unusual nickname.

He related that he was from a "drinking family, a drinking family, yes sir, a drinking family," and just giggled with glee. He had a habit of always repeating the last two to three words in every sentence he said. This repetitious pattern was followed by an infectious, high-pitched laugh. He was fun to be around. I don't recall ever seeing him sad. Mad yes, sad no.

He was about 50 years old, thin, and a little man in height, maybe five feet, if that. He reminded me of a race horse jockey with his bent shoulders. He had a beard of salt and pepper gray that matched his hair and wore a perpetual smile. The more I worked with Cat, the more he told me about himself. When I finally got the whole story, as he saw his life, it went something like this.

Channel Cat began drinking the moonshine his daddy made back in the Tennessee

hills when he was four and a half years old. He could drink more of any kind of liquor than just about any man alive by the time he was a teen. He told me this with distinct pride.

“Yesiree I can, I can, I can,” he chanted. He was such a happy fellow.

I knew a good deal of his happiness was in knowing where there was a gap in the hospital security fence. Being of slight stature, he had no trouble getting through, and he frequently patronized the local bars. This was a well-known fact by all staff. The patrons of these establishments he frequented saw Cat as funny and harmless and could verify his drinking ability from firsthand experience. They would gladly buy him drinks all night just to get him talking.

The more he drank, the funnier he got. Customers spent more money when they were having a good time with Cat. When the bars closed Cat would crawl back through the gap in the fence and go back to the ward feeling like Superman. The ward staff also enjoyed a smile at the mention of Cat, but only when memory of the most recent return from a drinking episode’s intensity softened.

The hospital grapevine gave Billy a reputation for violent, destructive behavior that came out in rages when he returned drunk. Subsequently, he would be restricted to the ward for a few days. This suited him just fine because it afforded him the rest that his body required to maintain the next drinking binge when he was free again. His restrictions to the ward usually only lasted a week.

As time went on, Cat told me of his parents when he was young. He spoke of a strong father with a loud booming voice that "even made dem nighttime crickets hush, crickets hush, crickets hush." He described a mother who was small-built like himself,

who was always busy working at cooking or cleaning or sewing, and a multitude of siblings at home.

He related how moonshining was so prevalent that all he could remember centered on the bootleg operations. It seemed to be a full time job just to produce enough for the family. He could dismantle a still and help move it and reassemble it in the next hollow within an hour when the revenuers raided. He could accomplish this miraculous feat by the time he was 10 years old.

Billy said he had gotten sick when he was a "youngun'." He could no longer haul mash, keep the fires stoked, or help at the still. He had trouble breathing sometimes and got weak in the knees. He was told he had "took da flu, da flu, da flu," and they had brought him to the doctors at this state hospital where he'd been ever since. When questioned about how he felt about that, he stated flatly, "They knows whets best, whets best, whets best."

He showed no signs of ever wanting to leave or change his circumstances. He related that his family lived somewhere in Texas now and said, "When they gets the flat tire fixed, tire fixed, tire fixed," they would come and get him? I asked how long it had been since he'd heard from anyone in his family and he responded, "Twenty year now, year now, year now."

I wondered how much he had hurt when he was younger. He seemed to have totally numbed himself now.

I tried to inform him of sights and sounds of things in the community that he might enjoy if he would take the opportunity to explore other possibilities than drinking. He explained to me that he was happy where he was. Even though it was not the best, he

knew this system and how to use it to his advantage. He had his gap in the fence, his drinking buddies, his girlfriend, free booze and a day off after a hard-drinking night. He had food, shelter, and did not have to work. He asked me, "How can you argue wit dat, argue wit dat, argue wit dat?"

I never figured out how.

A Broken Hearted Willie

Willie came to work through the front door wailing. His face was red, his eyes swollen, his nose running, and he gasped for every breath.

He passed four other work areas before he got to mine, glancing at each as he went to see who was noticing his pain. He looked to the other side of the hall to the offices and break area, and he announced his misery with deliberate volume. He liked putting on a good emotional exhibition and fully intended to do an excellent job.

He came slowly toward me with a staggered gait. You never knew with Willie just how real his pain was. He acted the same whether he had lost his toothpick or his best friend.

As he got nearer I could see the tears running off his face had stained his plaid shirt. Willie Wildman was short with reddish, thinning hair and coke bottle glasses that were usually so dirty you couldn't see through them. He wore dentures that slipped constantly and had an attitude that kept him the target of everyone's anger. Willie was a pest. He was a pot stirrer. He loved getting people riled up, then he'd sit back innocently and watch the fireworks. I didn't see any blood, so he probably wasn't crying because he'd gotten somebody so mad they had punched him again. He was walking for best

effect, but not as if he'd been kicked again. His clothes weren't torn or soiled and were on straight; he hadn't fallen again.

When he got to my work area he headed for the nearest table and banged his head down on it (not hard enough to hurt much) and billowed out his pain. He wrapped his arms around his head to hide. I gave him the obligatory, "What's wrong Willie," knowing he wouldn't end his performance so soon. The response was an even louder billow of agony. I patted him on the back to show I cared. "I'll be finishing my count and setting up your station," I said in a whisper near his ear. "When you think you can talk, you let me know what's wrong."

Then I walked away. Willie continued to wail and peek a look out here and there to check who was watching. Usually after about 10 minutes he'd see that everyone else in the group was okay and busy and come to make the customary apology, but not today. He remained at the table and softly continued to cry.

The show was over and Willie still hurt. This was serious and I went back to him. As I put my hand on his shoulder I could feel his sobs initiate tremors within his body. His eyes were hollow when he raised his head. He was beyond knowing how to deal with what was bothering him. He looked at me solemnly and struggled to speak. "Jessie is mad at me. She won't give me sex anymore!" He slammed his head on the table and wailed again while I felt like a bleeding-heart fool.

Colonel Blackman over Paris

Richard was assigned to work in my work area , work area #2. If he had a decent haircut, shave, and suit he would have passed for a middle-aged businessman. He was a

quiet man who usually existed in a reality of his own creation. He had outbursts of verbal aggression occasionally when his delusions flared his anger, but not often. Most of the time he was a, well-spoken man who believed that living within the bounds of reality was not conducive to happiness.

On this day, he stood at his work station, wearing a grin, a two-day beard growth, and an expression that told me he was on a head trip somewhere else. I have to admit to just a tinge of jealousy, he seemed to be having much more fun than I.

He was standing at a waist-high table putting slips of paper into plastic bags containing new shirts and taping the bags closed again. The catalog house paid workshop workers like Richard to put in correction slips when the material used, sleeve length, or fashion cut was different than what was advertised in the catalog.

As I observed his behavior, I noticed that he would stop occasionally and stand rigid with his hands and arms positioned as if he was holding imaginary bicycle handlebars. Then for a few seconds he would lean forward, back, and to the side and as if turning, then straighten back up. As he did so, he hummed softly to himself. I moved to get a better look, approaching him in a way that he could see me easily so he would not be startled.

About that time the six-foot florescent light bulb above Richard's head suddenly exploded in a shower of broken glass and white powder. Startled, I jumped backwards a good two feet. When my heart rate lowered I had a faint tinge of powder in my hair but most of the glass had missed me. Richard, on the other hand, looked like a ghost. I was sure he had to be cut on his head somewhere. Richard, however, was still in another

world, one without florescent powder clinging to him. I could see thin, glistening, curved slivers of glass sticking up in his hair.

"Richard, are you all right?" I asked as I stepped closer and checked for cuts or traces of blood. He had not heard or felt the florescent light bulb blow.

"You look like you're really enjoying what you are thinking about," I said calmly. He still was not in this realm. "Did you hear a crash?" still nothing. "You have glass and powder stuff all over you." No reaction. "Look, we gotta get all that glass off of you and get you back to the ward to see if that powder will hurt your skin." Still nothing and I leaned forward to look him in the eye. "Okay, it's been a very long bad day and I could really use some fun, too," I said, "Where ever you are, please let me go with you?"

"Nope," he replied, then returned to his contented humming.

"What are you doing?" I asked light-heartedly, knowing I was taking a chance. I had not had good experiences when I ask that question as a general rule, but the question slipped out.

"Flying over Paris," he replied matter of factly as he resumed the monotone hum. It dawned on me that he seemed to be making the engine sound of a plane. He was flying.

"I want to go too," I whined. "It's really been a bad day, Richard."

He turned to me and his face was quickly transformed and chiseled into angry granite. His eyes pierced mine and were menacingly on the attack. He spoke through clenched teeth, the veins in his neck protruding, his finger in my face almost touching my nose. I didn't move a hair. I stood my ground and prayed.

"Lady, I have to concentrate. The last time we flew over NY we got pushed out of the plane. I landed here at this damned table and you landed in the boss's chair." Now he

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"Lady, I have to concentrate. The last time we flew over NY we got pushed out of the plane. I landed here at this damned table and you landed in the boss's chair." Now he

was drawing himself up to his full height and speaking rather indignantly. "I intend to change that on this trip if you'll leave me alone."

I walked away and left him to his much needed escape. I called for backup from the ward staff to get him cleaned up and out of that glass, but we had to wait until he landed to get him to leave his place at the table and his airplane. Some things are truly better left alone. The Colonel wasn't evil but I think Shirley was and Shirley was not one you could leave alone.

Finger

I believe that Shirley was the second meanest person. Shirley was extremely selfish in personality and her illness made it worse. She was not just mean, but downright cruel to those around her who were vulnerable. She was arrogant, lazy, and freely admitted that she rarely felt remorse for her recurrent habit of creating pain for others. She actually seemed to take delight in the sorrows she inflicted.

Shirley was man crazy so she kept herself looking as nice as she could in case opportunity came knocking. She was a large, dark brown woman with a perpetual scowl.

In contrast to her usual demeanor, when she had a child with a patient from the Bolton Building, she often spoke with a glowing countenance and a falsely endearing manner. For me, that was even scarier. She told of the tiny feet and hands and her eyes lit up. Then with a cold steel smile she would wonder aloud how long it would take for her cooing son's small male member to grow large enough for her to be serviced by it. Being sick is one thing; being downright evil is something else. Try as I might, I found few redeeming qualities in this Shirley that I could warm to.

Shirley was not exceptionally tall but was built solid on a large-boned frame. Her hands and feet were larger than mine; her lips and eyes were large. She had lumpy and

knotted skin from a multitude of small sores she kept picking. Usually her, unevenly cut, hair stood up, dry and frayed, at odd intervals all over her head. This gave her an even wilder look.

Understanding Shirley's nature, I was prepared for her usual hostility in my attempts to teach her to use an industrial box stapler for a new job that had come in. I could have made it easier on myself and given it to someone less difficult, but Shirley needed the money as bad as anyone else, and I tried to be fair with everyone. Shirley did not like work of any kind, but when she ran out of money she victimized people even more.

This unusual contraption of a box stapler was in the shape of a giant square C as it would be written in a big box letter. It stood upright about 46 inches high and 36 inches long with the top and bottom prongs pointed away from Shirley as she used it. She reluctantly picked up the two-foot-wide cardboard box she was to staple into shape and folded it along all appropriate folds. She acted as if it was going to kill her.

She put it over the staple arm as she gave me a look through her eyebrows that told me she wanted to do dastardly things to me. Did I mention that she was the queen of dirty looks? I knew that look.

At one time it had been my unfortunate lot to have to try to stop this woman from leaving the workshop building in angry pursuit of another client. I stood near the door she was exiting to try to reason with her. In response, she kicked my knee into an unnatural position and while I was occupied, clasped her hands together, interlaced her fingers, and swung as if holding a baseball bat at my head.

She was surprisingly quick and I was no match for her. As for today's endeavor, the side of the box was against her chest as she held the cardboard by the end and lined it up to place the staple in the right place. She reluctantly lifted her foot to the pedal on the base and started to press. I had to stop her and remind her to leave the safety shield in the right place again and she didn't even give me much of an argument.