

October 11, 1986

Alexander Gralnick, M.D.
High Point Hospital
Port Chester, New York 10573

Dear Al,

Thank you for the fine old reprints. I very much enjoyed reading the article on meningioma, as this remains an active topic of research and argument.

Mark Altschule's recall of the milieu vs shock therapy controversy hinges on an assumption that he makes — that modern 'shock therapy' has as poor a clinical efficacy as the swing therapies of old. He is probably correct in his estimate of insulin coma, but incorrect in the modern use of convulsive therapy. With the introduction of psychotropic drugs, it was possible to develop a strategy of treating the severe mentally ill with the most effective intervention for their syndrome —and, as you well know, the efficacy of ECT in patients with severe depressions and catatonia remains unmatched by all other therapies, including milieu and psychotherapy.

I continue to look for old articles and books from the inception of the 'modern' shock therapy era, and I will be grateful for any other books or articles you may find in your archives or shelves.

My best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

P.S. I recently wanted to use Metrazol in a patient with a very high seizure threshold, only to find that it has been withdrawn from the market by the FDA. After some travail, I filed the appropriate papers and now have an IND for Metrazole research. In a trip to Hungary this summer, I found that Metrazol was still in use in their mental hospitals, precisely for the cases for which I wish to use it. (With anesthesia, however.)