

F: ECT

June 25, 1975

Mrs. Jan Boppe  
2957 Kalakana Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

Dear Mrs. Boppe,

It was kind of you to write after seeing the film on depression, to tell me of the tribulations in your family. Unfortunately, the story that you tell is all too common, and all the sadder since, as you note, more could be done for many of the mentally ill of America, were the press, the professions, and particularly the law willing to exercise restraint and good judgement. The press is guilty for expanding on the mysteries of our treatments, and for equating all biological treatments as shock treatments. The very language is forbidding. The professions (medical and psychological) are at fault for not insisting that all treatments that are useful are equally to be available and to be used, insisting that some are not 'cleaner' than others. And the law, for daring (as they usually do) to interfere in the relationships of patient and physician.

The results are often the tragedy that you recorded all too eloquently.

My associates and I continue to study the convulsive therapy process. I believe we have learned much and are now planning yet another series of studies to improve the treatment process; and another conference which may be useful to educate our peers.

Again, my thanks for writing and sharing your experience.

As a separate thought, should you be interested, there was a devastating article about ECT published in the New Yorker in the summer of 1974. The article was written by B. Rouche. He tells the story of one patient who received ECT inappropriately and complains persistingly about memory loss. His biased article has been quoted by many patients who wished not to have ECT. Should you get the article, you may wish to write to him and express your atory.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry  
Executive Director