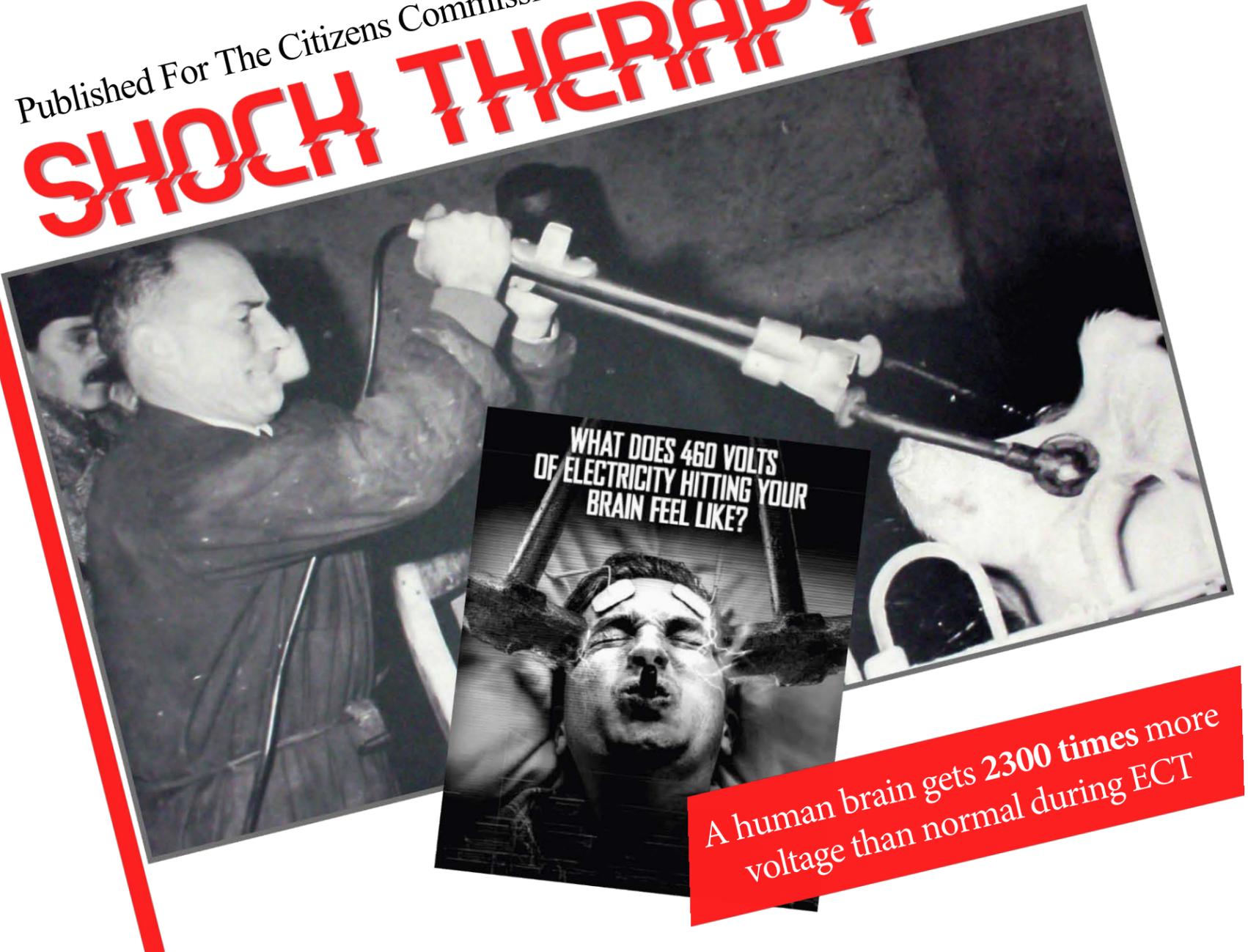


Published For The Citizens Commission on Human Rights

SHOCK THERAPY



From pigs to people ~ The brutal origin of Electroconvulsive Therapy

In 1938 psychiatrist Ugo Cerletti was still trying to perfect his idea of inducing seizures in his patients to cure their schizophrenia... a dubious idea at best.

He had gotten into his mind that a strong jolt of electricity would be a great way to induce therapeutic convulsions in schizophrenics to reduce their "tension and hostility." Of course, most physicians on the planet were trying their best to prevent patients from having seizures.

Cerletti started off by electrocuting dogs with 120 volts of electricity run through electrodes placed on the head and anus. Yes, he was able to invoke a seizure in half the dogs, but the other half died from the voltage. Hardly surprising ... to a sane person.

Cerletti then heard that pigs were being given an electrical shock to render them too apathetic to struggle against having their throats slit, the conventional method then of slaughtering the animals. The chief veterinarian at a local slaughter house invited Cerletti to perform his own experiments on the pigs.

Cerletti was able to induce seizures in the animals, and they did not die from the voltage. Perfect. He could

now start experimenting on humans.

The "good doctor" arranged for the police to bring in a poor soul they had found wandering around aimlessly in the streets of Rome. He had no known family or relatives, and he could be "diagnosed" as schizophrenic.

Cerletti and his colleagues hid themselves in a basement room of the hospital and posted a guard outside to avoid detection. They lay the man on a bed, shaved his head, and stuck a plastic tube in his mouth so he didn't crush his teeth with the ferocious biting they'd seen in animals as a result of the high voltage running through their bodies. They attached two electrodes to the sides of his head and flipped a switch.

Eighty volts of electricity shot through his brain for a tenth of a second. His body contracted into a horrid spasm. Then it relaxed. No seizure. Cerletti's assistant held his stethoscope over the man's heart.

He was still alive. The group breathed a sigh of relief.

"We need to increase the current," Cerletti announced.



"Up to 460 volts of electricity are sent coursing through the brain.

One ECT session shocks the brain with 2300 times more electricity than it needs to function, leading to severe trauma."

The second shock was 90 volts. The man's body underwent a longer spasm, he turned pale for a second, and then his body relaxed and he took a deep breath.

Again, no seizure.

Suddenly the man sat up and said to the group around him, "Be careful! The first one was a nuisance. The second one was deadly."

"This dose still is not sufficient to induce a seizure," Cerletti said. "Shall we try again?"

A third shock was given at maximum voltage. The patient's body went into a spasm, but this time it did not relax. Instead, a wave of spasms began and the man stopped breathing.

The stethoscope was held to his chest as his heart began beating faster and faster. His face turned purple. His spasms continued for forty-eight seconds and he then took one enormous breath and sighed.

"I can now assume that an electric current can induce a seizure in a man without risk," Cerletti said. Another dubious conclusion

On April 11, 1938 electroconvulsive therapy had begun its path of destroying lives.

ECT Today: BRUTALITY Disguised

By the 1940's the destructive voltage of ECT was being used by Doctor Josef Mengele on women prisoners at Auschwitz.

Many of them died during treatment or were put into permanent comas. By the 1950's the CIA turned unwitting victims into "vegetables" with their ECT experiments, per the San Francisco Examiner.

One review of every ECT related brain scan and EEG study that had been done between 1938 and 2013 showed that electro-convulsive shock causes significant and extensive brain trauma.

Damage from the horrific voltage extended from the frontal lobes down to the deep

brain structures.

Today psychiatrists continue to use ECT on both consenting and non-consenting patients. As Lee Coleman, a Berkeley psychiatrist, noted: "You could do the same thing with a two by four, but that doesn't look very doctorly."

Ugo Cerletti finally realized the horror of his treatment. He wrote, "When I saw the (first) patient's reaction, I thought to myself 'This ought to be abolished.' Ever since I have looked forward to the time when another treatment would replace electroshock."

Unfortunately, nothing has.

Today ECT patients are drugged unconscious beforehand. They

Today ECT patients are drugged first, to hide the brutality of the electroshock



are then given the same muscle "relaxant" given to death row inmates before electrocution. This paralyzes the body, including the respiratory system, and the gruesome effects of the voltage is thereby outwardly masked. However, that severe drugging of the patient requires an even higher voltage of up to 460 volts to be applied to a person to induce the grand mal seizure or convulsion the psychiatrist seeks.

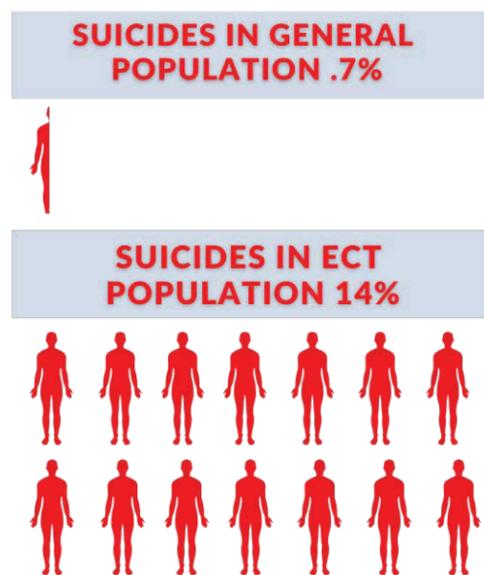
ECT treatments may therefore seem less violent than that iconic Jack Nicholson scene in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, but the savage inhumanity of ECT voltage is much worse than the only other application of electricity to a person: human torture.

Suicide and Death Rates **SKYROCKET** for ECT Victims

Less than one percent of the general population commits suicide. ECT patients commit suicide at a documented rate twenty times higher, and that figure could be even greater.

The institutions and psychiatrists who perform ECT do not keep much in the way of records, or if they do, they are for the most part not published. No one wants to expose their own sins. Instead, they call ECT "help."

One 2011 British study tracked suicides among psychiatric patients and found that nearly half of those treated with ECT died by suicide within three



months of their discharge.

Another 2007 Danish study of all inpatient deaths at a psychiatric hospital over a twenty-five year period found that ECT patients had a twenty times higher risk of death by suicide.

The mortality rate of those who have received ECT is also much higher than the general population. One study shows one death for every ninety-one ECT treatments...when the patient dies during the procedure itself, not afterward because of suicide or complications.

The risk factor for death is even

greater from an ECT procedure for the elderly. The Kroessler and Fogel study spanning twelve years of ECT research from 1974-1986 showed that one of every four elderly patients died from an ECT treatment...worse odds than the pigs had in Cerletti's slaughterhouse.

A 2010 survey showed that ECT deaths were ten to a hundred times more frequent than what the American Psychiatric Association had been reporting. Not only were psychiatrists not exposing their sins, they were lying about them.

Who are the **VICTIMS** of ECT?

Today more than one hundred thousand Americans undergo ECT each year. Another quarter million people around the planet are subjected to its voltage...either with or without their own consent.

Records show that ECT's victims range in age from 102 years old to as young as three years old.

Women are the overwhelming target. Two thirds of all ECT treatments are given to women. The elderly are not far behind. They receive half of all ECT treatments. Not surprisingly, ECT is predominant with these two groups because they are each the most vulnerable and

can more easily be given ECT without their consent. A 2021 study of ECT patients in England, for instance, showed that one third of these received ECT treatments without their consent.

Male-dominated Victorian ideas about women are still prevalent in today's society, and those too contribute to the high percentage of women patients who are "helped" by ECT. One woman's ECT treatment, for instance, was said by her male doctor to have resulted in "marked improvement" because she no longer rejected her husband's desire for impregnating her.

1 of every 4 elderly patients dies during an ECT treatment

He said I needed shock treatment. Nineteen shock treatments later and I still didn't want to be cured of being a lesbian."

82% of women who have received ECT have persistent memory deficits

Another woman, Canadian Sheila Gilhooly, reported as late as 1985 that, "I told my shrink I didn't want to be cured of being a lesbian. He said that just proved how sick I was.

Victims of PSYCHIATRY



Ernest Hemingway

Renowned American author and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and the Nobel Prize in 1954, Ernest Hemingway committed suicide the day after his thirty-sixth ECT session in 1961. In the late 1950's he had become depressed and announced that the FBI were tailing him and tapping his phone. For a "cure," in 1960 he was prescribed the first of three dozen ECT treatments at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. At first he objected to his proposed stay at the Menninger Clinic.

"They'll say I'm losing my marbles," he said.

Finally he underwent his first battery of electro-shocks and was returned home, but after a few weeks his "symptoms" returned and he was sent back for more electro-shock. After more than one of these sessions, he could no longer remember his name.

"Well, what is the sense of ruining my head and erasing my memory, which is my capital, and putting me out of business?" Hemingway said. "It was a brilliant cure but we lost the patient..."

Hemingway's weight dropped from a robust 220 pounds to a frail 160 pounds during the course of these treatments, and per James Nagle, his biographer and President of the International Hemingway Society, Hemingway finally "would get on his knees and cry and beg his wife not to send him back for more shock treatments."

After returning from his thirty-sixth electro-shock treatment at the Mayo Clinic, Hemingway returned home, got out his favorite Scott 12 gauge shotgun

propped it against the linoleum kitchen floor, placed the business end in his mouth and fired both barrels.

Some time after the Freedom of Information Act had been passed in 1966, it was discovered that J. Edgar Hoover had, in fact, assigned an agent to watch Hemingway in the 1950's in Cuba and that Hemingway's phone had been tapped and FBI agent reports had continuously been filed all during his stay at St. Mary's hospital.

Sylvia Plath

American poet Sylvia Plath became a vanguard of the feminist movement through the uniquely vibrant and stark language of her confessional poetry. She received her first electro-shock treatments in 1953 at the age of twenty and described the experience later in her poem "The Hanging Man":

*"By the roots of my hair some god got hold of me
I sizzled in his blue volts like a desert prophet."*

Plath's treatments began in July of 1953 and by August of that year she had made her first suicide attempt. She was placed in McLean Hospital's mental institution and spent the next six months receiving more electroshock sessions as well as insulin "therapy," another horrific psychiatric procedure also designed to "reboot" the mind in order to treat schizophrenia. Patients were treated more as mechanical devices, not as living flesh and blood.

Plath wrote about getting ECT in her autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar*, "I wondered what terrible thing I had done" to get electro-shock therapy.

Her mother Aurelia's friend described those days. "Sylvia really hated to go... sometimes Aurelia [her mother] had to force her to go... after a treatment she was uncharacteristically lifeless... it was almost as if the life had been sucked out of her."

Plath later wrote of her life after ECT, "It is as if my life were magically run by two electric currents: joyous positive and despairing negative—whichever is running at the moment dominates my life, floods it."

On the morning of February 11, 1963 Plath got up, prepared milk, bread and butter for her two children so they'd have something to eat when they woke up. She put extra blankets along the door to their room, taped the edges, and placed towels, cloths and tape on the doors of the rooms between the kitchen and her sleeping children. She went into the kitchen and turned on the gas stove.

When the nurse arrived at nine that morning to help with the children, she found Sylvia with her head in the oven, dead.

Judy Garland

Iconic actress, Academy Award winner, and dynamic stage performer Judy Garland, whose fame was assured early in life by her role as Dorothy in the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*, suffered her first electro-shock treatments in 1949, at the age of 26.

Her first suicide attempts followed shortly thereafter and by the time she died, she had tried to end her life more than a dozen times. Even her final fatal overdose with barbiturates, at age forty-seven -- which was labeled accidental --

can be viewed as one final, successful suicide attempt after a life of troubled marriages and lost fortunes that followed her initial electroshock "therapy."

Her filming of the movie *Annie Get Your Gun* followed soon after her first electro-shock episodes, but by that time she was already taking amphetamines to get herself up and sleeping pills to bring herself down. She was often either late for work or absent altogether, and she was finally fired from the movie's production.

She was sent to Boston for further hospitalization and more electroshock treatments. Garland herself wrote at one point during the early filming of *Annie Get Your Gun*, "I couldn't learn anything. I couldn't retain anything; I was just up there making strange noises. Here I was in the middle of a million-dollar property, with a million-dollar wardrobe, with a million eyes on me, and I was in a complete daze. I knew it, and everyone around me knew it."

She never was able get her life back together again. She was married five times and she ended up owing hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes. Despite her cinema and stage success, she died with only \$40,000 in the bank.

Throughout her short life Garland continued her attempts to receive help from psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, but as her biographer Gerold Frank wrote, "She was abysmally discouraged; her years of analysis had not helped her... She had no respect for psychiatrists; she had seen more than a dozen of them and they had all failed her."

Their "help" only drove her to one suicide attempt after another after her countless electro-shock treatments.

Psychiatrists PROFIT Excessively from Easy ECT Prey

Electroconvulsive therapy treatments rake in \$5.4 billion in the United States every year.

The typical electroshock program for a single inpatient in the United States costs between \$50,000 and \$75,000. ECT can also be administered on an outpatient basis in a hospital or in a psychiatrist's office at \$1,500 to \$2,000 per shock with anywhere between half a dozen and a dozen separate shocks

normally given... to start with. The government or private insurance covers most, if not all, of the cost. ECT is a high profit industry. The cost of an ECT device is around \$20,000 to a psychiatrist even though its parts cost the manufacturer closer to \$1,000.

Eleven years of negligent indecision by the FDA allows the continued use of these devices by giving them "clearance" -- not approval --

SHOCKING PEOPLE FOR PROFIT

Mean yearly income disparity of psychiatrists who use ECT vs psychiatrists who do not use ECT



through a loophole that grandfathers their use into a pre-1976 provision. Nineteen states can therefore continue today to electroshock children. Seven states can shock children under the age of five.

Children, of course, are the easiest prey because they can legally be given ECT without their consent... but with great profit.



The Citizens Commission on Human Rights

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) is a nonprofit mental health watchdog, responsible for helping to enact more than 180 laws protecting individuals from abusive or coercive practices.

CCHR was founded in 1969 by the Church of Scientology and the internationally acclaimed author, Dr. Thomas Szasz, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at the State University of New York, Syracuse.

The Commission is an international organization with more than 250 chapters in 34 countries. Its board of advisors, called Commissioners, includes doctors, lawyers, educators, artists, businessmen and civil and human rights representatives.

CCHR has established itself as a human rights advocacy group, and its work aligns with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thousands of individuals contact CCHR each year to report psychiatric abuse and criminality, sexual abuse, false imprisonment, fraud, and inhumane treatment and conditions in psychiatric institutions. CCHR documents the abuse and helps the individual report the matter to the proper authorities.

For Further Information:

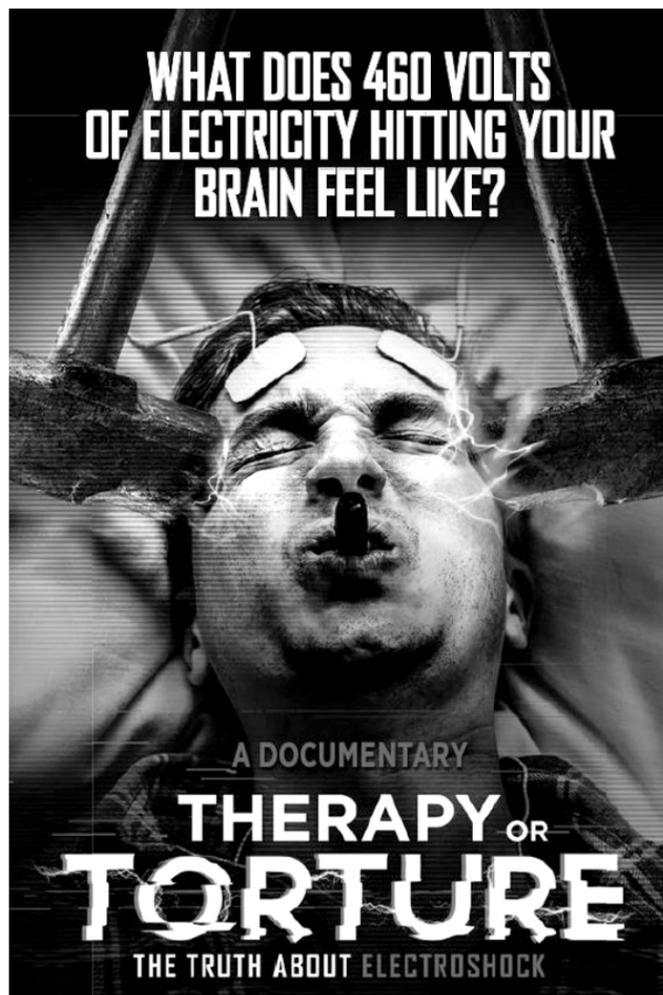
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What Should You Do to Help Stop the Horrors of ECT?

1. Educate yourself further on the brutality of ECT by watching the DVD noted below. More copies are available from CCHR, Northern CT Chapter, address below.
2. Inform your State Senators and Representatives of the need to abolish ECT and immediately end its use on children. Mail them this broadsheet.
3. Contact your state Attorney General with a copy of this broadsheet and a demand that insurance coverage of ECT be ended as insurance companies are thereby contributing to the inhumane practice of electroconvulsive "therapy."
4. Encourage anyone with apparent symptoms of "mental illness" to see a competent medical doctor or health professional for a full medical examination to see if there are nutritional deficiencies underlying their condition.
5. Report any cases of psychiatric ECT abuse, malpractice or crime to your state Attorney General or to the Los Angeles office of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights International.
6. Go to CCHR.org/documentaries to learn about other psychiatric abuse besides ECT.



**Free copies are available by request at
CCHR Northern CT Chapter
go to <http://www.cchr.org/documentaries>
to view or for a free download**

CCHR Northern Connecticut Chapter
20 Pendleton Road
Granby, CT 06035

Further Resources

ECT Justice Deborah Schwartzkopff



"Are they still doing that?" is the horrified first response from almost everyone Deborah tells about the widespread use of ECT today.

A victim of ECT herself, she founded ECT Justice to unite others into a community that now works to halt psychiatrists through litigation from continuing to destroy lives with ECT.
ectjustice.com

John Breeding, PhD



John Breeding is a practicing psychologist and an author who has been a pioneer in exposing the brutality of ECT. He documents the actual physical damage to the brain and to the individual which classifies the use of ECT as torture, per the Geneva Convention. His website is a portal to trustworthy data about the dangers of ECT and its too frequent use on individuals without their consent. His efforts in Texas have made that state one of four states that now ban the use of ECT on anyone sixteen or under.
johnbreedingpsychology.com

Dr. Peter Breggin



As a psychiatrist himself, Dr. Breggin has seen close up the horrors of ECT as practiced by unscrupulous and inhumane psychiatrists. His website is a valuable resource on psychiatric abuse through ECT as well as overzealous, harmful medication.
breggin.com