

## **STOP SHOCKING AND TORTURING WOMEN, MY SISTERS**

( Excerpts delivered in speech at “Stop Shocking Our Mothers and Grandmothers” rally-protest in Toronto on May 11, 2019)

by Don Weitz

This year over 10,000 women will be electroshocked in Canada, at least 50% are women in their 60s and older. As Professor, antipsychiatry activist and feminist Bonnie Burstow has frequently pointed out, 2-3 times more women than men are shocked in Canada as well as the United States, and other countries. This is a national and violent assault on women, an assault triggered by sexism, ageism, psychiatric lies, and misogyny, with the complicity of the Canadian and American Psychiatric Associations, the transnational drug companies/Big Pharma, and provincial and state governments. Yes, there is collusion in government, psychiatry, government, and the corporate media. A national and international crime and shame.

As an insulin shock survivor, antipsychiatrist and social justice activist, I am speaking out and protesting today to demand the psychiatrists stop electroshocking my sisters, women including vulnerable elderly and disabled women. For over 75 years since the 1940s, Canadian and American shock doctors have targeted and permanently harmed hundreds of thousands of young and old people, especially women suffering the normal postpartum depression, like Connie Neil, after giving birth, to women they male psychiatrists have fraudulently diagnosed as “mentally ill” - bipolar, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenic, women who have been forcibly shocked, traumatized them and lied to, women whose memories, creativity, life skills, careers and lives destroyed by psychiatrists and their shock machines.

And then shock doctors and their fascist organizations unethically minimize or flatly deny the criticisms of permanent memory loss, brain damage, and trauma caused by their “safe and effective”

shock machines. Try telling how safe and effective shock is to survivor and hunger striker Connie Neil who suffers from memory loss after 30 some shock treatments; try telling how safe and effective ECT is to Wendy Funk who has no memory of growing up with her children, 30 years after being shocked; try telling how safe and effective shock is to the great lawyer, shock survivor and my lifelong friend Carla McKague who after undergoing 18 shock treatment was unable to memorize and play a favourite Beethoven sonata and confided “I’m not as smart as I used to be”, despite having earned a Master Degree in Mathematics years before shock.

This violent psychiatric assault on women is not only continuing but also increasing, ignored by the media and public. I call psychiatry’s war against women’s brains FEMICIDE and MENTICIDE, psychiatry’s intentional and criminal assault on women’s brains and minds. Electroshocking women and elderly is not new but it’s getting more dangerous and outrageous every year, given the fact that today higher doses of electricity in the range of 200-400 volts are necessary to trigger the epileptic seizure (threshold raised by the ECT drugs) that occurs during every shock session 3 times a week by misogynist and sadistic male psychiatrists - with the blessing and self-serving lies of fascist organizations like the Canadian Psychiatric Association, American Psychiatric Association, and World Psychiatric Association. All health organizations, including Canada’s Neurological Association deny or greatly minimize the common and permanent memory loss and brain damage suffered by thousands of young and elderly women shock survivors and others in Canada, the United States and other so-called free and democratic or humane countries. The silence of Canadian neurologists, obviously more expert about brain structure and function than the psychiatrists, is inexcusable and unethical.

In Toronto, ECT patient consent forms of CAMH and probably most other mental health centres and psychiatric facilities is unethical and illegal. Why? Because they seriously violate the patient's ethical-legal right to informed consent. Informed consent in psychiatry is a myth and lie, a cruel joke. Shock doctors routinely violate this ethical principle and moral imperative every day every hour in every psychiatry facility in Canada. For example, CAMH's ECT consent form conspicuously fails to mention, never mind explain, the common risks and adverse effects of permanent memory loss, brain damage, physical and psychological trauma. These and other major health risks are listed in other ECT consent forms such as the detailed consent forms in Texas, California, and Colorado that specifically include permanent memory loss and brain damage as common risks.

In Canada, provincial and federal health ministers, newspaper and television editors and producers have willfully and shamefully ignored the current increase of electroshock on women and the elderly, our senior sisters. During the last several years, they never mention the vulnerability of women, the elderly and children and the devastating impacts electroshock has had and continues to have on their health and lives. The media also never mention or criticize the well-known collusion of Big Pharma (transnational drug companies) including its sedative ("tranquilizer") and paralyzing drugs (e.g. succinylcholine) paralyze the lungs, during every ECT shock patients can't breathe, they need medically-assisted oxygen during every procedure. Both biological psychiatry and Big Pharma also collude in promoting electroshock (ECT), spreading lies like how "safe and effective" shock is and that it "prevents suicide, despite the overwhelming lack of scientific evidence to support their claims. Cui bono? Who benefits? Big Pharma CEOs and the shock psychiatrists who make (not earn) hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual fees – certainly not the patients.

As if brainwashed, the media repeat these false claims or lies as scientific facts. According to the vast majority of shock survivors and professional critics including dissident health professionals, electroshock is not just trauma but torture, at the very least electroshock is cruel and degrading punishment. A similar concern and conclusion has been expressed by United Nations' Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez in his 2008 and 2011 reports to the Committee Against Torture. Yes, electroshock is torture, it's time all activists and investigative reporters and editors admitted this grim fact. It's time the media started admitting this grim fact, I don't expect this honesty from lying and self-serving psychiatrists. Electroshock has never been proved "safe and effective" since it was first introduced as a therapeutic treatment for depression and a deterrent to suicide in the early 1940s. Electroshock is based on psychiatry's self-serving myths, lies, and power. greed. and sexism – not safety, scientific effectiveness or medical ethics..

Electroshock must be abolished now - not just in Ontario but across Canada, the United States, and the world. That has been the strong and consistent message of thousands, if not millions of survivors and antipsychiatry activists and allies for decades. In 2015, for example, many hundreds of shock survivors and supporters - mainly women - participated in and organized anti-shock rallies and protests and panels in 30 cities in 8 countries where survivors and other participants repeatedly urged a universal ban. I'm proud to say that protests were simultaneously held in several Canadian cities including Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary. As usual, the Canadian corporate media were brain dead, they totally ignored this historic global resistance just as they've ignored and failed to report CAPA's many protests including the current press conference and protest..

I urge you to stop for a moment of silence. [PAUSE]

Think of all those women, they could be your mother, your grandmother, your aunt, your niece, your wife, or your sister -- all who have undergone or will undergo electroshock and suffer severe losses in memory, intelligence, special skills, creativity, women too disabled by shock to pursue promising careers, or suddenly die after being shocked.

The late Carla McKague, my longtime friend, brilliant advocate-lawyer and shock survivor who once played and memorized a favourite Beethoven sonata but could not after undergoing 18 shock treatment in the early 1960s in Hamilton's Henderson Hospital. Carla once acknowledged that although she earned a Masters Degree in mathematics, years after shock she said, "I'm not as smart as I used to be." Or consider Wendy Funk, she underwent over 40 shocks in the late 1980s and lost 30 years of memory; today some 40 years after shock she still can't remember growing up with her children, shock also destroyed her hope of going to law school. Nevertheless and miraculously, Wendy virtually taught herself how to play the piano, today she is an accomplished classical pianist and active in her Whitehorse, Yukon community, one of my heroes.

Although I have not volunteered to be a hunger striker, I fully support Connie Neil and other hunger strikers. I very much hope their high-risk, courageous act of resistance against this psychiatric violence will attract the attention and recognition of Canadian media and public.

It's about time!

As final words, I want to assert a few charges against the shock perpetrators and their apologists who have consistently promoted self-serving myths and lies about electroshock.

- I charge the Ontario government, other provincial and federal governments, medical schools, and Big Pharma with complicity

and willful ignorance of electroshock including denial and lies about the many memory destroying, brain-damaging and traumatic effects of ECT, especially impacting women and the elderly.

- I charge the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) with intestinally misinforming and deceiving ECT patients and relatives by its failure to include or list common risks of electroshock in its ECT consent and information forms.

- I charge psychiatry and the media with willfully ignoring or dishonestly minimizing criticism of electroshock and its many devastating health effects, particularly permanent memory loss and brain damage, and their frequent demands to abolish or ban shock

- I charge politicians and health ministers with willful ignorance, silence, and inaction about the many destructive effects of electroshock, as well as safe and effective community alternatives, including healing houses and accessible 24/7 walkin crisis centres.

- I charge the corporate media with ignoring and failing to report local, provincial, and state rallies, public educational forums, and protests against electroshock, and the 2016 global protest and demand for abolition.

- I charge the media with willfully ignoring or censoring criticism of electroshock, particularly its many, scientifically documented health risks and adverse effects including deaths, and its refusal to invite and interview shock survivors and other critics on their “balanced” and “impartial” programs.

On a more positive note. I urge all health professionals to listen to shock survivor criticisms of abuses and human rights violations committed by shock doctors. So far, virtually no whistleblowers. However, I vividly recall reading about the firing of psychiatrist Jaime Paredes in Riverview Hospital, B.C. for daring to expose the

disproportionate shocking of elderly patients, And ;I remember the firing of nurse Stacie Neldaughter who lost her license by the Wisconsin Nurses Association after she protested about the disproportionate number of elderly women shocked in an Illinois hospital. An advocacy organization in Madison investigated and supported her complain, but it was too late. So much for whistleblowers against shock and psychiatry

I also urge mental health professionals, medical students, interns and residents, and nurses to read personal testimonies, articles, and books by shock survivors and dissident ;professionals such as psychiatrist Peter Breggin, psychologist-critic John Breeding, and feminist/trauma specialist/author/Professor Bonnie Burstow, but they won't. Most mainstream journalists, reporters, editors and producers have been brainwashed by biological psychiatry's discredited medical model; they're apparently incapable of critical and independent thought, all too many health professionals are in denial and involved in a massive cover-up, just like the shock doctors and their lobbyists. Every time a psychiatrist pushes the button on a shock machine sending hundreds of volts into a patient's brain, he/she violates the Hippocratic Oath that orders all doctors, "First Do No Harm."

It's time we had class action lawsuits in Canada that directly and powerfully exposes the destructive shock machines, similar to the historic California shock case and judgment last year, the judge criticized the shock machine manufacturers (Somatics, Mecta, et al) for causing permanent brain damage. It's time the shock doctors and the Canadian Psychiatric Association, shock mills like Toronto's CAMH and other "mental health" centres and psychiatric facilities were sued for promoting disinformation, myths and lies, for denying brain damage and permanent memory loss by electroshock, especially lies about ECT's alleged safety and effectiveness, lies of omission and misinformation on ECT consent forms.

It's time rise up and fight back, like the hunger strikers today.  
It's time for class action lawsuits asserting that electroshock is  
torture (not treatment), a human rights violation that always causes  
harm. Shock must be abolished. If not now, when?  
Thank you.

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