

ACC 17/7108  
Submission No. 827  
(Inq into better support for carers)

23.6.08

Dear M/s

From the June issue of Focus I note that carers of people with 'mental illness' are invited to make submissions to a parliamentary inquiry into carer needs.

So the following is my submission.

My 55 year old son has been affected by some form of a delusional condition for 26 years. It took 15 years to get an adequate diagnosis which determined that his condition was a combination of schizophrenia and bi polar disorder. It took another five years to get a Community Treatment Order for his management.

Over those years he encountered the ramifications of a system which appears not to have a clue about what is involved in the management of people who because of impairment to the cognitive field of the brain can't know that they are affected by what in reality is a terminal illness unless properly managed.

Because of the inadequacy of the system my son has on a few occasions narrowly escaped becoming a statistic. As said it took years to get this order for treatment. Ignored altogether by the system is the reality of his condition. This Order requires that the carer be consenting to the order. Guess what that means to the person under the order who does not or cannot know that s/he needs the order.

That person sees the clinic, the doctor, the case manager etc. as Enemy No 1. Then the carer and all the family become Enemy No 2, and the affected person cuts off communication. Communication is a two-way street. My son sends me letters such as those enclosed these five I got today, other times we had 15 in one day, some stamped and some

unstamped, all delivered as stamped. However no way does he pay any attention to what I have to say. He does the same with other family members. One of his sisters cleans his unit and keeps an eye on him as there is no social service to see<sup>to</sup> that. The case manager looks after the medication and the St. Vincent de Paul (The Matthew Taabob Hostel) helps his social life, but his family is *persona non grata*.

That's the result of a system which is unable to see that when a person loses the ability to connect cognitively with people, an intermediary is needed, on two levels of consciousness are involved. The intermediary should connect the affected person with all agencies medical, legal, etc involved and with the family. The person should always remain connected with the family but not as being on a different level. The intermediary deals with the family without the knowledge of the client.

In my son's case on occasions when the police were involved it is not I but an officially designated intermediary to whom I could apply for help without my son knowing of my involvement would have prevented him from becoming antagonistic. Similarly where the medication is the problem,

As the system is geared, it only serves those who can help themselves, it does not cater for those who can't know that they need help.

Years ago I was a member of Prevention, a group under the guidance of \_\_\_\_\_, a psychiatric nurse who formed this group to try to help with the prevention of child abuse.

We used to attend seminars at the Prince of Wales Hospital. One of the professionals involved in giving insights was an American psychologist a Ph.D. in that discipline.

He told us that he once spent six months living in with a man affected by agoraphobia before he could get that man to leave the house. Something like that is

needed where professionals deal with people like my son.

I said as much to one of my granddaughters who has a degree in clinical psychology and is studying for a PhD. No way could she see the need - that would mean a hands on rather than a theoretical involvement - and that's "the Rub", as Shakespeare would say.

Another granddaughter now gainfully employed in her parents' business would have been living on the streets but for the fact that she had such good parents. She'd got involved with drugs. Which of those two young women has the better understanding of their uncle (my son)? Not the one with the degree.

In my part, I disagree with the term 'mental' being used for a condition which is obviously biological or it would not respond to medication. It's not the mind - which is in essence metaphysical - and knows right from wrong - but the mental, emotional, social etc fields of the brain. It's a psychiatric rather than a mental illness. The psyche is a biological element, only the mind is crossword puzzle. That my son knows right from wrong is evident from the letter received some time ago (enclosed).

Recently it was reported that John Haws told that he was manic depressive. Imagine seeing him as being "mentally ill". My son too has a very incisive mind about the things which are important to him. Until science sees the need to identify conditions as they are the system will remain effective for those who are able to know that they need the help on offer.

With kind regards and hoping that the C.F.O is reviewing as the last issue of Focus said that had been in hospital.

THE ONLY REASON  
I'M MAKING YOU  
PAY

THE ELECTRICITY BILL  
IS BECAUSE

IT'S YOUR  
PENANCE

FOR MAKING ME  
TAKE

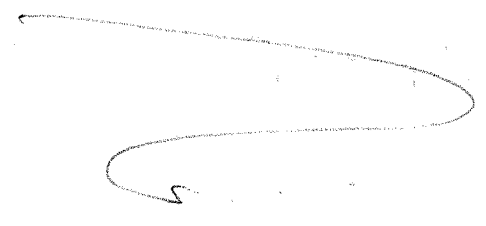
MEDICATION

T

THOSE DOCTORS  
KNOW  
THERE IS NOTHING  
WRONG  
WITH THEIR PATIENTS  
BUT  
THEY GO FOR IT  
FOR THE PRACTICE  
IN CASE  
SOMEONE  
IMPORTANT  
COMES ALONG

F

THEY  
ESPECIALLY  
LIKE WORKING  
ON  
PENSIONERS  
BECAUSE  
THEY'RE WORTHLESS



7

THEIR ARROGANCE  
AT FORCING ME  
TO TAKE MEDS  
IS

INSTIGATING ME  
TO WRITE  
ALL THESE LETTERS

SO, IN FACT  
THEY ARE  
FORMULATING

THEIR OWN  
DEMISE

4

THOSE DOCTORS  
DON'T BELIEVE  
IN GOD

SO THEY DON'T CARE  
WHAT

THEY DO TO YOU  
BECAUSE

THEY BELIEVE  
THERE IS NO

RECOMPENSE  
OR

LIABILITY ♪



I'VE GOT

SO MANY

IRONS

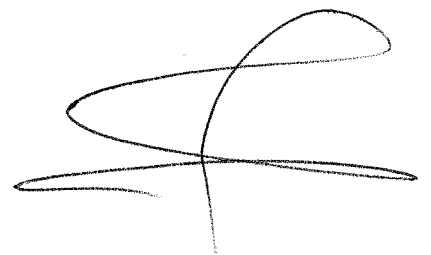
IN THE FIRE

AND

ALL THEY'VE GOT

IS THEIR

NEEDLES



IF THEY DON'T

CEASE

THE MEDICATION

○ I'm GOING TO

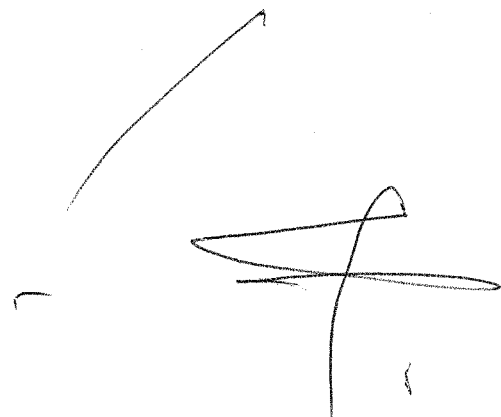
GO IT

ALONE

○ JUST

TO SPITE

YOU ALL

A large, stylized handwritten signature or scribble consisting of several overlapping lines, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

WHO NEEDS FRIENDS ?

ONE BLOKE IS NOT  
TALKING TO ME NOW  
BECAUSE I WOULDN'T  
DO HIM A FAVOUR

(FOR TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS)

THAT WOULD HAVE COST ME  
FOURTEEN YEAR IN JAIL

IF I GOT CAUGHT. —

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE ON  
THE PENSION — PEOPLE  
THINK YOU'RE STUPID



How DARE YOU

SEGREGATE ME

AS THOUGH I AM

THE ONLY

DISEASED

MEMBER

OF THE

FAMILY

P