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## Jeff Moyer short interview for the Lest We Forget Collection of Oral Histories

Jeff Moyer

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**WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Lest We Forget Oral History Project**

Interview date: May 22, 2003

Interviewer: “Jo” (Production Assistant)

Interviewee: Jeff Moyer

**Jo:** Okay, oral history by Jeff – Okay, toenails, toilets, man on the floor, left leg, nine abscessed teeth although you have mentioned his teeth-

**Jeff Moyer:** That’s a different point I am going to make.

**Jo:** -Mark’s euthanasia, oh, smoking used as reinforcement and bribing.

**Jeff Moyer:** That’s it? Okay, alright. I am going to make points, short points [recording skips] –goes so fast, that when you hit the fast forward/rewind it rips through the tape. If you are wanting move increments it’s better to use-

**Jo:** I want to move a little faster than I was moving

**JM:** Okay.

**Videographer:** Anytime, Jeff

**JM:** are you ready, Jo?

**Jo:** No. [a short pause] Okay-

**JM:** When my brother was born, my parents were told that he, that living was optional that they the hospital would keep him comfortable, but deny him nourishment and that they basically would euthanize him.

I remember the facilities that there were, the toilet areas in the, on the wards had a row of commodes without seats and opposite another wall-open showers so it was an open room with no doors and absolutely no privacy whatsoever. Once I saw a man lying on the floor, unconscious, drugged, and every time the door was opened it was a heavy institutional door, it hit him. And he would jump, his body would spasm and I told the attendant about it, and I said, “Look, the gentleman is on the floor over there, could we pull him out of the way?” He said, “He doesn’t even know what is happening to him”, and of course he refused to move him.

**Videographer:** Excuse me, Jeff

**JM:** I'm facing the wrong way?

**Videographer:** No, you're facing fine. I think you want to say he was drugged. It sounds like you said he was drunk.

**JM:** Oh, okay. [Begins again] Once I saw a man lying on the floor, drugged, unconscious, and he was lying next to a wall but in the lines of a door and every time the door was opened it hit him. And he would jump, almost to a spasm and I asked the attendant if we couldn't pull him out of the way, that clearly that is was a terrible place for a human being to be. And He said he said no, that there was no need to move him. He didn't even know what was happening to him.

My brother had quote behaviors, he would act out in a negative and aggressive way and he complained about his tooth hurting and in October, this was in October I began to seek medical attention to get his tooth looked at and because of the bureaucracies and this is living in the community just a few years ago but because of the bureaucracies and the difficulties in getting Mark into a clinic where he could get his needs met, it was March before he was finally seen. And when he was seen, he had nine abscessed teeth. All of which had to be pulled, but he lived for all those months in that pain. And I often thought how, what a terrible situation that he had to wait so long for medical care and no wonder he was acting out in during that time when he was must have been in terrific pain from nine abscessed teeth.

Mark began smoking when he was about 12. They used cigarettes as reinforcers, as a systems of rewards. So I remember when we were taking him out. And he asked my mother for a cigarette and she was stunned that he was smoking and in fact he wanted the cigarette and I think she eventually she gave it to him, he knew what to do with it and he smoked heavily ever since.

What are the other points Jo?

**Jo:** Left Leg, toenails

**JM:** Mark was thrown down a fire escape and severely damaged his leg and got no or very poor medical care that led to a life threatening problem, today he has a very swollen lower left leg as a result of those injuries and the very poor treatment which has caused life threatening systemic infections more than once.

What was the other one?

**Jo:** Toenails

**JM:** When Mark was living on the ward in the institution whenever we would go see him my mother and grandmother would cut his toenails and fingernails and they were always so angry that they weren't taken care of but then they would rationalize well, there are only 2 attendants and 50 people. Today he has one on one or two on three care. I mean he's got very good care but I still have to jump up and down to take care of his toenails and his fingernails. So often it's the little things that create quality of life. It's attending to the matters of consequence making sure people have their glasses, and their dentures that they are getting proper care. Ironically, with the state cutbacks they are talking about cutting out podiatric care for toenails and feet care, and

dental care, and optometric care as areas that are expendable for people with severe cognitive disabilities.

How would any of us want to make those choices to live without medical care, optometric care, or care of our feet? That's it I think, good summary any thoughts on any or for anyone about that of those points. That's it!