

“DISCLAIMER: The events described in this story were either witnessed by me directly, or told to me by persons with direct knowledge of the events. I believe that the facts as told in the story are fully truthful and factual to the best of my knowledge.”



REGRETS

No Mr. President, none that I can think of.



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...Is America Capable of Love
“Wed To A Disquieting Soul”

(The Unpardonable Truth Behind the Togus Gate Lodge)
835 Eastern Avenue
Augusta, Maine

ALL GAVE SOME
SOME GAVE ALL

Written by:
Allen Francis Foley

...Is America Capable of Love
“Wed To A Disquieting Soul”

Part 1

ALL GAVE SOME
SOME GAVE ALL

“If little faults, proceeding on distemper
Shall not be wink’d at, how shall we stretch our eye
When capital crimes, chew’d, shallow’d, and digested,
Appear before us?”

William Shakespeare, Henry V

The soul selects his or hers own company, and then shuts the door. He is, I am, they are – a bequest of asylum in the distant rain – writing into the wait! It’s possible, when all is said and done, that we will learn our dreams are well rehearsed, blinded by darkness, and none too perfect, hidden (by the dishonesty of our thoughts and deeds) in secret arrangements, sin and confession. There is no innocence – henceforth, as the daylight grows, he or she (the poet) can see the darkness already forming inside it, unfaithful by nature, the Sorceress; by mist and fog of night: a thing in the landscape; augur, thread, thirst, secretly allied. At twilight is the unfinished part of this story, where there’s a voice within him, saying to himself: “Keep on giving...go on living...don’t ever walk away when nothing is today trivial to my hunger.”

What is truth, asked Pontius Pilot, and would not stay for an answer.

Among time’s images, there is not one of this present held with lanterns, like celestial ancientness. Something occasionally speaks and something of deaths poverty is heard. This should be tragedy’s

most moving face, Therefore, I must be honest with you, and admit that I have come to the consideration of already knowing that what I have written here is strongly biased against me. The story you are about to read is the nightmare from which I still awake, retelling in Orwellian verbiage, and creative argument about a place where American veterans were beaten and robbed. Included in this quest for caption is a story about myself, and what happened to me over the past 40 years of my life after returning home from Vietnam. It may be just another story, but it is also retold in many different ways by thousands of men and women all over America.

You'll also learn about how Maine Homeless Veterans deserve better, and how one man took advantage of them for his own benefit. This story is not for the weak of heart, nor for those who are prejudice against those who struggle to live their lives. My writing style creates both a colorful and poetic expose of real life events. Here is the location where without my 1st Amendment Rights I am powerless. Here it is scattering like mustard seeds blowing in the wind. Composed, and articulate to the end, I cannot fight this battle, this "twisted fate" of unbridled abuse all alone.

In a very tense and dramatic time, the final Marines were evacuated by helicopter from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam on April 30, 1975. It is an artificial event that exists, in its own seeming, forgotten by many, and yet still, plainly visible. When I say I have written this story 100 times, it is not an exaggeration. I have taken a position that requires truth, a sustained appraisal or scrutiny of issues, ideas, people, texts, or situations. It's the kind of writing that replicates the kind of thought needed to uncover, as much as possible, The Truth. I must also say, my contribution here as a published poet is from a "discourse environment." In other words, I write within an environment of poetic colors and phrases to explain a "we-discourse" that should make the reader "mad-as-hell," catch them off-guard, and open their minds to some terrible events they may not be aware of. This

story is about a gaze unreliable looking down upon a tired church gate hung from a single chain – no real tears, a mask without a face, and a soul aroused by vacancy.

“Someone told me long ago there’s a calm before the storm, I know; it’s been coming for some time. When it’s over, so they say, it’ll rain a sunny day, I know; Shining down like water. I want to know, have you ever seen the rain? I want to know, Have you ever seen the rain, Coming down on a sunny day?”

“Yesterday, and days before, Sun is cold and rain is hard, I know; Been that way for all my time. ‘Till forever, on it goes, ‘Through the circle, fast and slow, I know; It can’t stop, I wonder. I want to know, Have you ever seen the rain, Coming down on a sunny day?”

Creedence Clearwater

There’s a story in Bob Dylan’s lyrics, “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall, written in 1963. American’s are tried of the lessons learned in Vietnam, of course. But would you believe me if I told you many Vietnam Veterans have stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains, many Vietnam Veterans have walked and crawled on six crooked highways, stepped in the middle of seven sad forests, been out in front of a dozen dead oceans, and traveled ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard? The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that 154,000 veterans are homeless in the U. S. on any given night. They also estimate that a majority of these same veterans is older than age 50. Now lets be realistic here. 10% of the U.S. population is veterans. 23% of the homeless population in the U.S. is veterans. I sincerely doubt if what the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates is true, and I would be more apt to believe it is greatly understated. But then again, if we’ve heard ten thousand whisperin’ and nobody hearin’, heard one person starve, and heard many people laughin, it’s easy to become defensive to

those American's who are tired of the lessons learned in Vietnam. The Truth? Whatever rises is a fort in the middle of a U-turn where we will meet another man who is wounded with hatred. Whatever spreads is a battlefield better versed in topography, where the executioner's face is always well hidden. Take Ho Chi Minh and give us Abraham Lincoln. It distinguishes between an "I" and an "Identity," the "Fight for Freedom" and an "Eternity." God save America, My home sweet home!

Everything has a predestined place, a presence that nourishes itself on bread and water from the steps of time, a mantle and a slumbering in its shifting shadow. Hello, Liz Cheney. Lets you and I sit down over a gin and tonic. I would love to ask you why your father Dick got several deferments so he wouldn't have to serve his country in and during the Vietnam War. Oh yeah, what about the trillion dollars we have already spent on two wars over the past nine years? Don't be coy! Don't be bashful! Your father lives in the mountainous character of his speech, and nowhere else. Tomorrow will still look like today in illustrious intimations – and to you, I will be just another poor and wretched nobody!

Here within a Marine Corps Sergeants' story lies the portrayal of the both lost and found. The pick-me-ups of a fragile loneliness, which leads him to always, ask why? His thoughts long provoked, spread thin by grains of sugar to sweeten the aftertaste of times long gone bye. Colors fade, answers spoken, both asterisk and etcetera underlined by a poet's pen in an act of both courage and defiance. In this story, he has openly returned home from Vietnam as a rebel, still carrying with him the most lethal firearm of all – his heart. He didn't surrender it!

I am going back, all the way back to November 5, 1970 'fore the rain starts a-fallin', where the people are many and their hands are all empty. November 5, 1970 is where my journey began. It is also a huge part of the "discourse environment" that uncovers ten

thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken. The men whisperin', with nobody listenin', is the "we discourse" that matters the most. It's about panic on the face of the moon, to see what one sees through our indifferent crises, it is a declaration, a well-rehearsed thievery, in un-Truth's favored by a corrupt soul sonorously exhibited.

This is also a story of acute audacity (the kind that makes us want to shout and cry) that is profound and overwhelming in all of its internal depth and riveting emotions. It will touch upon every aspect of inequality, humility, the telling of devious lies, rape, degradation, depravity, willful blindness, civil rights violations, hate crimes, cover-ups, ostracism, and more, hidden within the moral fabrication of (don't ask, don't tell) for far too long in the depths of human despair, held hostage, don't ask, don't tell, from a community (which included the Veteran's Administration and Law Enforcement) who just didn't know, or didn't seem to care. It should also be said, that added to all the grammar and decipherable patterns there's the endless complexity of "arrogance," and the erosion of fault lines (something amiss) from all sides concerned.

In the end, every scream pours like a river into a stream of silence. I wonder Joe, what it's like to be up there all alone in the sky with the drifting clouds, what's it like to be pointing your finger, judging, and looking down on the mutability of people and things?

No one Joe, absolutely no one, takes you to be his or her god! What's a game for a cat is death for a mouse. In the next few paragraphs, meet Joseph L. Spence. Contempt for a man so shallow and ruthless is a well-recognized defensive reaction. This is not a game. I am not a mouse.

Nature will not pity, nor God lend an ear except in our dreams of light and noise. So out of fear for myself on the horizon, I must

say now, and for the record that I was asked by both a detective from the Augusta, Maine Police Department, and an investigator from the State's Attorney General's Office not to publish anything concerning what I feel the public needs to know.

Joseph L. Spence has cowardly escaped, in my opinion, judicial disclosure, the negative cause and effect of his actions, and the due process of the law he has offended for more than one year passing. Too heavy on my mind, it's time I feel that someone comes forward to speak out about the background of what has happened, and why it was allowed to happen, pursuing the many facts, issues, and flashpoints, which not only makes this a horrific story, but it also shows how one hate filled man betrayed the constitutional rights of those under his care, made some of the occupants feel like they were under house arrest, while penalizing the other tenants with an uncivilized style of gruff managerial leadership. I will, for better or worse, no doubt, be considered the "whistle blower" who exposed a criminal enterprise, and/or worse, the mistreatment of many men and women over a period, I allege, of 17 years. There was a rumor I heard circulating within the Augusta Police Department that they had been trying to get this guy off the street for a long time, but no one would come forward, and when they did, they either disappeared, or refused to testify after the fact. This to me is an example of "willful blindness." Considered, I would think, a serious consequence to those who suffered under Joe's Nazi like existence and offensive regime. Go figure, he was a fan of Glen Beck!

Yes, verily, verily I say unto you, the spirits of the offended have, for whatever reasons, called upon me to be their observer, to be their witness, and to be their savior. The stars will not listen, and the heavens will no longer defend Mr. Spence. Conclusion? My research, my eye witness account of the events I will disclose, have determined many conceptual proclivities, inclinations, beliefs, and ideas, none of which are far fetched, or without

justification – which will, in my opinion, all allow the considerable allegiance of law enforcement, and the criminal substance needed to prosecute, Joseph L. Spence, in a Federal Court of Law.

Judicial imperatives cannot speak, and the law can only impose what it cannot give. I will therefore not embrace the freedom of an outlaw whose backbone is that of a coward or forever like a pillar of frozen fog who treats others as if they were his faithful dogs. Therefore my fate, my overture to right versus wrong, and my conscience had to somehow be evoked and reawakened. I cannot detach myself, nor can I stand still and not tell, or not say that what I write has never existed, or could ever exist again. The cross I must carry is heavy, heavy in the sense that I must tell this story while not being afraid of the empty. Whereof, I must in the eternity of its own constellation (predicated on terror and inquisition) make sure you hear me, hoping of course, that a true beyond engulfs a sign of change. While believing too, that our society can see the tug and pull, and the show and tell of a Veteran's fated, if not grieving eccentricity, never doubting how this tenacious psyche of fighting men and women has kept our country free.

My own, not just mine alone, to tyre, to fault, to pardon, nor vain, but most resounding lifetime cry for help began for me on November 5, 1970. The notice sent to my wife delivered to her by Marines in uniform read: "Your husband SGT Allen Francis Foley has been injured in the Gia Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam. He is unconscious and in serious condition with what appears to be a life threatening head injury from being struck by a blow to the head." And to make matters worse, both she and his father were told he was also listed as missing in action.

Isn't it ironic, ironic when everyone comes together in resurrection when the government tells a white lie, and he holds a dark truth (then and thereafter, till now) in sentence'd incisions?

After being medevac'd to the United States Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan, I called my wife to let her know I was alive and doing as well as it could be expected? As I remember, she dropped the phone when she heard my voice, started crying, picked the phone back-up again, and said: "Oh my God Allen, I thought you were dead!"

"Like this, like this," may have said Plato before he wrote: "The life which is unexamined is not worth living." Will I find my answer tomorrow? I was in and out of the hospital over the next six or seven months, and eventually put on a temporary disability retirement list receiving 100% for my disability, which we now know with certainty was misdiagnosed. Like this. Like this. It is greatly unwise to talk about our past hours.

In December 1975 I received orders from the Department of the Navy to report to the Womack Army Hospital located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina for a TDRL Evaluation. The following is the recommendation written by MAJ Donald Saidel, saying: "The patient (SGT Allen Francis Foley) should be continued on TDRL status. He should continue to be reviewed. The patient should not be retired, as he has not been treated appropriately for his illness." He goes on to say, "The treatment is not available through VA facilities."

I was however permanently retired a month or two later, and my disability dropped from 100% to 30%. There's a stranger inside me, and a malicious delinquency that often asks: "Has anything since Vietnam made my life better?" Since 1972 when I first went to a VA Hospital seeking help for my depression and traumatic migraine headaches up to and until the year 2007, I was told: "There is nothing we can do for you!" The symptoms however, no matter how miscalculated continued to get worse. When finally, wanting my life over again because I could not

withstand the long term continuation of extreme migraine headaches, blackouts, the dizziness, temporary loss of sight, the stress, tension and irritation, or the confusion I was feeling because of this pain, I went to a VA center at the Cary Medical Center in Caribou, Maine just before Christmas in the year 2007. It was there I met Dr. Shaw.

As we began to talk, Dr. Shaw asked me a lot of questions. At first between gasps of breath and with tears running down my cheeks, I was slow in answering. My God I thought I am so embarrassed. He seemed to understand though; as if I wasn't the first or only veteran he had seen feeling the affects of depression and loss, the disastrous consequences of a war, with injuries unresolved. The unresolved for me was having these traumatic relapses a couple of times or more every year. I didn't understand them, or the reasons why my stated symptoms continued to occur, and one way or the other I wanted it over.

Dr. Shaw, after looking at my medical records, made some appointments for me at the Togus VA Hospital, getting me in front of some people who might eventually help me. As it happened, I found myself on a suspicious road to finding out what was wrong with me, and to where maybe, just maybe I would begin to receive the proper care and medical attention that (in my bitter opinion) had been denied to me for over a period of 31 years. It would not be an easy transition for me. 1) I had to believe in myself again, I had to believe in the system again, and 2) I would have to fight for everything and anything worth having, or for what I felt had been taken away from me so long ago!

Dr. Shaw also recommended I go to see a counselor at the Caribou Vet Center named Joy Backel. I was skeptical at first, but decided to follow his advice. Joy, after I began feeling I could trust her, got me to open up with her, and we began to talk openly and honestly!

After about six months of seeing Ms. Backel, she looked at me from across the room during a counseling session, and quite thoughtfully said she believed I had been diagnosed wrongly in 1971 and throughout the subsequent years. She went on to say she believed that I had sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury, and over the years had learned how to live with it! Soon thereafter, an MRI was performed and further tests (both psychological and medical) were done to prove what she had observed was true.

She had heard enough no doubt to know that I was a loner, learning for myself by painful trial and shameful error, never resting long enough on any triumph, but soon thereafter proceeding to risk total defeat on some fresh and more difficult task, always leaving behind friendships, relationships, love, jobs, creative endeavors, and whatever was worth keeping it became lost in some distant past.

Joy was right. The injury I had sustained was in the part of my brain known as the frontal lobe, which plays an essential role in drive, mood, judgment, interpersonal behavior, attention, foresight, and inhibition of inappropriate behavior. Diagnosing is imprecise – damage rarely shows up on CAT scans or other tests.

Case in point, In January 1997, I believe, a CAT scan was performed on my brain at the Togus VA. Nothing was discovered, and I was told there was nothing that could be done for me. Fast forward to May 2007 when I demanded an MRI, the first ever done on my brain. The MRI showed encephalomalacia and cerebral softening from a long-standing blow to the head. One neurologist told me he was surprised I wasn't dead. According to him my brain after initial contact (severe blow to the head) must have swelled to the size of a small watermelon. TBI is a silent epidemic that has consumed my life unrecognized and untreated – to all that is left aloud, in inquiries, whether...? Tolls were left unpaid, a

measured silence, and then to cry – suffer, my life, has it all been a lie?

In December 2007 my percentage of disability was raised from 30% to 70%. I appealed this decision! In the meantime I went to Canada, became involved in a dysfunctional relationship, and returned back to the State of Maine in October 2008. I then applied for unemployability through the VA and was denied because I had filled out the application wrong, not once, but twice. And now fighting mad, and fighting for my life, I wrote a 2-page letter to Congressman Michael Michaud, and Senator Susan Collins.

But before sharing with you the last paragraph of the letter aforementioned I wrote to Michael Michaud, and Susan Collins, lets count the years of maddening hypocrisy.

My disability payments were dropped from 100% to 30% in January or February of 1976, until the VA raised it from 30% to 70% in December of 2007, 100% in July 2009. Unless I am missing something here I count 31 years of stolen time.

This also does not explain how in early 1976, the manner in which I was permanently retired from the United States Marine Corps, and taken off the Temporary Retirement Disability list soon thereafter (notwithstanding the medical advice) of a medical doctor from the Womack Army Hospital, who wrote: “The patient (SGT Allen Francis Foley) should be continued on TDRL status. He should continue to be reviewed. The patient should not be retired, as he has not been treated appropriately for his illness.” He goes on to say, “The treatment is not available through VA facilities.”

Let me share with you now a saved copy of the last paragraph found in a letter I wrote to Michael Michaud and Susan Collins in January 2009. “ I desperately, desperately need your help here. I

am tired, so tired of living this way – going from one friend’s house to another, or staying in shitty, filthy rundown motel rooms when it’s affordable. How would you feel if you had to sleep in your jeep for a week with a ¼ tank full of gas, with about \$20.00 in change for food at a temperature of minus 5 degrees below zero? I have! I do!”

“A can of cold beans is oftentimes my supper! I have no cell phone. Parked in the Maine woods, off a main road, my soul dwells in a house built on the dreams of tomorrow, one I cannot visit, or even dare to imagine. I am wet and cold, and I smell from having not taken a shower for weeks. What judgment do you pronounce upon me? What penalty do you lay upon me for serving my country when it is I who is aggrieved and outraged at my vulnerable punishment unresolved? And yet while all this is going on, the VA tells you months later an application was filled out wrong! Or a computer is down, or it may take 6 months to a year for the VA to give you a definitive answer, yes or no! My pain may lie in the breaking of the bureaucratic shell that encloses your understanding. Help me please!”

What did I not say that should have been said? Would I have stayed with my first wife while watching our two daughters grow-up, go to college, get married, and have grand babies if I had gotten the proper treatment? Would I have fulfilled my dream of going to law school and becoming a lawyer if someone from vocational rehabilitation had guided me through the process with professional advice and counseling? And rather than being sometimes homeless, and sometimes not, sometimes penniless, and sometimes not, would I have found a career where I might have a 401K, a house that was paid for, looking forward to retirement? The robbed is not blameless for being robbed. And yes, the guilty is oftentimes the victim of the injured. But little did I know, that on November 5, 1970, in the Gia Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam, hope, faith, love, and the pursuit of happiness (at least in

a large part) would be taken away from me for the better part of my life. A riddle cannot forgive a consequence. For they stand together before the face of the sun even as the black thread and the white thread are woven together.

How did I not know then, how could I have known, when all you remember, all you hear are the voices that say, “There is nothing we can do for you, Mr. Foley!” A “diadem’s outlaw” methinks, walking away upon life’s veriest steeping stone unsure, tempting, always tempting an illusion in blindfold hesitation.

These within are the fluctuations, and the change of degrees to our perception, all alone, consumed by a Sunday’s violent idleness! There’s something wrong! You hide your shame! And then your pride takes over until it becomes too late! Is that anyway to live your life? Has anything since Vietnam made my life better?

Here’s the picture: white hair on my face and head, the eyes weary and heavy, and the brows above my eyes black, like sooty window-frames of a burned down house, the years of my life passing. There, there. No, at the second corner on the second floor, Bill Rocque waved his hand at me. Still looking for a place to stay, he asked? There, there, no, not this there, that there, like a primal ritual. This, too, was a new religion. I wholly believed this right at that moment. Yes Bill, yes, where is there? There’s blood on the streets, so many dying and the dead, and the homeless, that the dark grained newspaper clips in red failed to report, report about the endless and cruel destiny of the Vietnam Veteran; and no, not yet, don’t forget the suicides, where knives kiss with the same silence where they enter. Yes Bill, yes, where is there?

The winds were howling through another winter night. It was on a January night in the year 2009. In a place where noisy recollections reverberate through our lives, filled with memories of boisterous strides, the mournful, and muffled footsteps were going

nowhere as I heard Bill's voice fading in and out as if in a dream. Pride is a structure crowded with so many rooms and endless staircases, filled with a multitude of guardian angels standing at its doors. And then I met Joe, a thoughtless man, the worst side of pride, perhaps, I didn't know, barren of heart and soul, his fate of lies concealed – ephemeral and so transparent.

What will be described and written about in the following pages is about trepidation unharnessed, and predatory behavior (terrorism) against America's wounded warrior's, all brothers and sisters of our American Armed Forces. My life in telling this story is chained to a page, which defines "predator" as one who victimizes, plunders, or destroys, especially for ones own gain. I write with trembling fingers, bringing exposure upon myself, waiting for an inevitable tsunami wave that will cast me up upon that final shore of death, tied to a stone. Joseph L. Spence, after all, has threatened to kill me!

More often then not there is symbolism in a name. The name "Togus" comes from the Native American name Worromongtogus, which means "mineral water." In 1865 as the Civil War was drawing to a close; President Abraham Lincoln signed an act establishing the National Asylum (later changed to Home) for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. The first Veteran was admitted to Togus on November 10, 1866. And Togus became a Veteran's Administration facility following the Consolidation Act of July 1930, which joined all agencies administering benefits to veterans and their dependents.

So why would a rooming house on 835 Eastern Avenue, located directly across from the Veteran's Administration entrance cause concern without rejecting some unforeseen living arrangements that defies every prayer of human history. The Togus Gate Lodge one would think would have, should have a forged alliance with the Togus VA Hospital, walking along those same narrow lanes,

celebrating the same holidays, and forever repeating the same story and laments. One would more precisely think that using the VA's innovative ideas, professional staff, and up-to-date medical technology and procedures, would be a beneficial advantage to those who stayed at the Togus Gate Lodge as the Togus VA Healthcare System continued its tradition of serving those who have served.

When I first walked through the door of this place called the Togus Gate Lodge, Bill had already paid the deposit for me, and one weeks rent. He would later give me another \$200.00 for food and other incidentals. Joe, starring at the fateful events I was about to witness, written into his coffee grounds, I assume, his coffee cup filled with rum in hand, appeared to be a very angry man. Looking at the bulging veins in his arms and hands, the chariot of my imagination carried me to passageways lit with glimmers of insight. Hope you don't mind the smell of "shit" said Joe. Why, I asked? And in graphic, no-nonsense words, I was abruptly told to go see for myself.

The man in the next room was a paraplegic and a diabetic. He had bowel movements three or four times a day, and could not go to the bathroom by himself. The stink was everywhere! There was a puddle of piss on the floor as Larry sat in his chair watching TV with the lower half of his body naked. Holy Christ, I thought, what have I gotten myself into? It did not appear to me that Larry belonged in this unsanitary or seemingly (not yet known) venomous place of existence, nor did Joe make any apologies for this for what appeared to be his proudest moment. Larry (in my opinion) belonged in a nursing home or a Veteran's Facility where he would get proper care and attention.

During my first night there, the air was filled with obnoxious screams. Around 11:00 PM Larry had gone to the bathroom all over his bed. You could hear the slaps to Larry's head, and how he

was forcefully dragged into the shower. “Wash your ass,” Joe yelled at Larry, “Wash your ass!” Larry it seemed was unjustly accused as if predestination overruled his mind where foreknowledge had no influence on his fault or his fate. Joe was nothing more than the trespasser! Boom came a sound from the bathroom, as a loud noise followed. I would find out later Larry fell down a lot when in the shower. He had no strength in his legs. “Get up,” Joe screamed, “Get up and wash your fucken ass!”

Was Joe’s revenge accomplished, his proud and immature malice corrupted, self-tempted, and self-depraved? Reason is a choice, sometimes useless, sometimes vain. Nevertheless, I knew there was more, much more behind this unsung chorus of screams in the night. What would I find, and would I be blinded by my own impulse to discover inescapable conclusions? Inescapable conclusions explaining the dire consequences of my own life reexamined. Do you hear God’s laughter? It is said God envies us because we are mortal. Apparently Joe had never read the words found in “Aphorisms,” by Franz Kafka “One must cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph.”

I, Allen Francis Foley, quickly became too aware, too awake, too conscious of the absurdity and evil of such wishes to enjoy seeing them inflicted in parallel pain upon another human being considering the circumstances. I was not the one who would cower to this corner of imprisonment, grief, failure or regret – for as the dusk settled, eyes have wept watching me, watching for me to come.

In late January 2009 a man came to visit Larry from DHHS, Department of Health & Human Services. Joe stopped the man at the front door before he could find Larry’s room, and told him Larry wasn’t there. Needless to say, Joe for the next 24 hours prepped Larry on what to say should the man return the next day.

And yet somehow, and playing Mr. Nice guy, Joe convinced Larry through his lies and innuendoes why Larry should remain at the Togus Gate Lodge instead of being put in a nursing home. I witnessed this. I heard the conversations and the continual banter. Was this about the naked girly magazines Joe supplied to Larry? Was it the blowjob Larry was to receive when Joe promised him a hooker? Or was it about the money Joe received for taking care of Larry?

Held hostage, home for Larry became his own exile, cages and chains, small windows made tinier by thin walls, and by evening his web would be heavy, his Living Will defiled by one breathless monster, and after going to the bathroom on his bed night after night after night, an endless shower of cold surrender!

The story told by the other tenants of the Togus Gate Lodge was that Larry had rented a room there (alleged) approximately 5 years ago, or in the year 2004. It was also said that Larry could walk when he first moved in. When asked about how Larry paid for his lodging no one knew. And then it was learned from other sources (alleged) that Joe told Larry's sister he was having problems with the VA concerning Larry's finances. He then proceeded in a very convincing manner to ask Larry's sister for Larry's social security number, and Larry's birth certificate. Not knowing any better, Larry's sister gave Joe all the information he had requested.

It is then alleged that Joe opened up a checking account in his and Larry's name using said information from Larry's sister. It is then alleged that Joe deposited \$2500.00 a month, the sum total of what Larry received each month from VA Disability and social security income, which was then put by Joe in the fraudulent checking account that he had opened. Larry would see none of this money, and Joe would (allegedly) and (illegally) withdraw all but \$25.00 from said account each and every month. So other than

Larry's rent, and the unhealthy food Joe bought for him at Wal-Mart not fit for a diabetic, the leftover monies, including TV and cable rental, went directly into Joe's pocket. These, the leftovers (pride and prejudice) and (illicit amours) became the imperfect consequence to subordinate Joe's own self interest at a profit to Joe of approximately \$2000.00 per month.

Joe paid out of his pocket approximately \$125.00 per month for satellite TV (cable). If he rented 10 rooms a month, charging each tenant \$70.00 per month for cable that is \$700.00. His profit? \$575.00! Usually the occupancy of the Togus Gate Lodge stood at 10 rooms per month. This is why I have said the TV and Cable Rental went directly into Joe's pocket. The tenant's hated paying for TV and cable, as they felt this fee should come with the rental price of the room. Nevertheless, everyone knew that this was just another scam neither fictitious nor subordinate to anyone else but Joe himself. And oh no, for heaven sake don't ever argue with Joe. The owner made him do this! Or he'd come up with some other excuse fiercely defending his words. When did imaginative argument (unless you're a lawyer) and thievery (for one's own gain) become one in the same?

What legal reciprocities does this imply, and what presumptions does this, could this, create? Figure it out for yourself; Joe made for himself (alleged) a minimum income of \$24,000.00 per year tax free, using theft by deception on Larry's situation alone. And 2) after all this is said and done, we cannot fathom how many times Larry was beaten, or caused serious and permanent mental and physical dysfunction.

It's has been alleged that Joe made an incredible amount of money ripping off the disadvantaged, (simply put he made (alleged) for himself a minimum income of \$6000.00 per year tax free off TV and Cable Rental). Worst still, if a veteran isn't coerced into getting up, going for a walk, or working out, sitting

around watching TV all day becomes a need. A need Joe took advantage of by using an array of bully tactics, inefficient and negative reinforcement to problem solving, and an end to justify a means (his own) to keep and maintain control.

What about proper accounting? Joe refused to use registration cards for the people who stayed there so they could sign in and out. He would refuse to give out or offer receipts for payments made to him creating (alleged) an underground economics of no paper trail. And if you paid a deposit, forget it, you were not getting it back.

Other allegations included throwing veterans out on the street if Joe didn't like them, or if he felt they might go to the authorities with a serious complaint made against him. It was told, alleged, that Joe beat up on people quite often. He used a taser gun on some, and had a pistol in his safe, which he would show off when threatening people, his thinking I suppose (even when it came to the law) no one could touch him. Only a warrant issued to search the place would have sufficed. But if no one filed a serious complaint, the emperor would remain invincible.

It is however only logical to ask, as the allegations against Joe continue to mount, how many men and women were abused and terrorized over his 17-year tenure as the manager/innkeeper of the Togus Gate Lodge?

Joe had no trespass signs all over the property. I and many others saw him on many occasions go out in the driveway and yell at people who might stop for a moment to read a map, or get directions. He would threaten them, wave his taser gun at them, cuss at them, and then get their licence plate number and call the police.

How did this man get away with representing his community both public and private when the VA was right across the street,

there was an absentee owner retired from the United States Air Force who should have cared about veteran's rights and issues, and then there was, after all, no one, absolutely no one I talked to in the Capital City of Augusta who had a good word to say about Joseph L. Spence? This makes no sense to me unless we dwell in the fixed pains of hell that misery might be stayed:

“The ephemerals have no help to give. Behold them;
They are deedless and cripple, like to
A dream. The kind of mortals
Is bound with a chain and their eyes are in darkness.”

Aeschylus

Diabetes is a slow killer! Don't pretend, we say, not to know what we mean. Larry was not on a regular meal schedule. Larry would lie in feces for hours at a time. Larry's blood sugar was never tested. Larry's backside was infested with scrapes and scars. Joe would often punished Larry for shitting or pissing himself by not feeding him or taking away his TV privileges, by slapping him around, or dragging him roughly by his arms and legs into the bathroom and/or shower, which by-the-way was not set up for a paraplegic.

Here's my question! It's alleged that Joe became the recipient of several wills signed over to him as the next of kin, or receiver of death benefits (money) by veterans who died on his watch, or while staying at the Togus Gate Lodge. Don't pretend, I say, not to know what I mean. Part of our knowledge of reality comes to us automatically through unavoidable personal contacts, the rest through the use of our intellect. With this said, I believe it is safe to say, that Joe could have cared less if Larry was fooled in his sleep and perished, and this, I am reminded, is a constant nightmare I have from which I am always awake. What hath thou profited Joe?

Joe was also the robber baron banker. If a tenant needed to borrow money to survive, Joe would loan them \$100.00, and charge them \$50.00 interest. He bought cheap cigarettes online from \$7.00 to \$14.00 a carton, and then sold them back to the tenants for \$50.00 a carton. He charged for sheets, blankets, towels, pillows, and pillowcases, most of them stained, and used over and over, again and again. He charged \$20.00 a month for the use of a TV, and another \$70.00 a month for satellite programming. If 10 rooms are rented that is a total of \$700.00 per month. The TV's are old and outdated, and the most he pays for cable is \$129.00 per month. Who pockets this excess money? The owner says, "not me!"

My critic's may suffer from a moral delinquency but discloser must ask, did Joseph L. Spence hoodwink the VA, or is their part in this desperate situation and/or delusion just as damning? It is to late to make excuses, when all our woe is washed into them, and to those who seriously profit, or not profit, just don't ask, don't tell.

Ironic, isn't it, there is or was no cure in effect for a man who rips-off the most fragile of men and women. And furthermore, why in fact was there no observation from local or state law enforcement, DHHS, the Veteran's Administration, and the owners of said property, etc., when over the years it was alleged that many complaints were filed against Joseph L. Spence. How is a man charged with raping his own 14-year-old daughter put in such a position of authority, and allowed to stay there for so long? Was he checking his alibis for tiny flaws with the careless hurry that everyone else had missed? Or could it be said that somehow, and quite mistakenly, he accepted help from innocent people for the sake of his own maximum indifference so he wouldn't be found out?

What should have been a living room, recreational area for Veteran's at (the Togus Gate Lodge) reserved for men and women to chill, tell stories, have coffee, or play cards was filled with weights and exercise equipment owned by Joe. 4 or 5 times a week (sometimes more often) Joe selfishly worked out in this area wearing sweaty headphones so he couldn't be bothered with questions or things that might have come up in the course of a day considered important. According to Joe he received a monthly check from the Social Security Administration for a bad back. Really? Hmm, he works out on exercise equipment for approximately 4 to 5 hours a day? Is this what we call a con man? How many negative excesses has he contributed too which would mute the most extreme difficulties that any man or woman would have to face.

Joe with a human conscience inadequate, has preyed, for far too long on those suffering who should be part of a protective system (The Veteran's Administration), (the owner of said property), (unless the owner is privy to Joe's style of management and road to riches), (Social Service Agencies), (The Fire Marshall, Building Enforcement Codes, and those who license the building for occupancy, etc.), (Law Enforcement), (The IRS, and Maine State Tax Revenue Services) who obviously don't ask, don't tell! Consequently, and for the sake of disclosure, we will be the lost until one of us speaks out, no matter whom it pisses off, especially when the allotment to our service of country (our combat wounds) (our wounded soul's) should be space common to all concerned, without retaliation and brief deliberation, saying loud and clear, arrest the bastard, what more evidence do you need? Who is obstructing justice now? Say it, damn it, say it, enough is enough!

There was another man staying at the Togus Gate Lodge whose name is Russell. He has a long history of being angry with the VA because he felt they (the government) have taken his money away from him and left him destitute. Russell did however, in fact, have

a legal custodian who was supposed to look out for him and take care of his money. It had also been said (alleged) that Russell, according to many sources was worth well over \$200,000.00, all monies held in trust.

In February 2009, it was alleged that Russell lit a cigarette while standing in the front lobby of the VA Hospital. When he was asked to put his cigarette out he became belligerent, and began fighting with VA police officers. He was arrested, and subsequently taken to the Kennebec County Jail where he was booked for trespassing, and resisting arrest. While in jail he figuratively informed everyone there, (jailors and inmates) of his Vietnam War heroism, and why he was mad at the Federal Government. This I believe became the cause and effect of a hearing to be scheduled during this time mentioned on Russell's competence.

Emily Dickenson once wrote:

“You cannot fold a Flood –
And put it in a Drawer –
Because the Winds would find it out –
And tell your Cedar Floor”

The strong corruption that inhabited Joe's conscience may explain his addiction to alcohol, he drank rum from the time he got up in the morning until he went to bed, the illegal drugs he took, bought, and sold (alleged) no doubt does not explain in peripheral damage a legal transaction, which was not his to consider or share. After Russell served so many days in jail, Russell's attorney called Joe to ask him what he wanted to do about Russell! Joe wanted Russell back at the Togus Gate Lodge under his supervision. But here is the inference that more than explains the consequence of Joe's thinking: “You cannot fold a Flood – And put it in Drawer,”

something Russell would eventually find out for himself, “Because the Winds would find it out – And tell the Cedar Floor.”

At the end of March 2009 Joe received 2 checks in the mail from Russell’s legal custodian. One check was made out to Russell for \$875.00, and the other was made out to Joe for \$1120.00. Think of this as if prayers fell like thick paint upon the asphalt only to splatter into an unseen crack or void. Who signed and cashed the checks made out to Russell? Rent is \$360.00 per month. Use of TV and cable was another \$90.00 per month, which has already been established as going into Joe’s pocket. Plus, Joe may have spent another \$200.00 per month on Russell for food, beer, and cigarettes, which are highly doubtful, suspect and significantly unaccounted for. If there is sunlight shining down on a specific subject, clamor will not put out the voice of a claimant’s reason, not can Joe claim to disprove or invalidate these more than subtle allegations.

Joe is not the bride of a cunning Christ? And as the infractions mount the noose is tightening.

It was also alleged with briefcase in hand; Russell’s attorney (his legal custodian) came to visit him one day. And I have to believe that this visit was not initiated or requested by Russell alone, but rather through arrangements made between Joe and Russell’s attorney. Delivered that day was a “Living Will” that had been written for Russell to sign making Joe the beneficiary of Russell’s estate. It was alleged however that when Russell refused to sign said papers Joe became extremely irate, furious, and fighting mad. It was said the air was pierced by Joe’s angry default of gravity’s most difficult refrain.

Rumors also surfaced that veterans had disappeared from the Togus Gate Lodge after coming into money! Russell, a case in fragility, considering his severe mental illness, his heart problems,

and drinking habits, and his depression made him an ideal candidate for this kind of subterfuge. Who among us can fathom this language of deception when the meaning of potential death is inescapable, and perhaps out of greed unavoidable should it exist? It was however apparent that Russell had no family to speak of, no winter's ray of hope, no crucifix, no rosary beads, any bible, and perhaps sadder, still a warning that writhes poetically in tearful prayer.

Another significant piece of information here is the fact that Joseph L. Spence, once a month, called the Togus VA, and ordered prescription drugs through the VA Pharmacy authorized for Russell and others to be sent to the Togus Gate Lodge Address. This in itself creates an interesting summation. Joe it appears had the responsibility for dispensing said drugs. If Joe was not hired as a Med Tech or a CRMA, it's alleged that this is against the law. It also means people like Larry should not have even lived there. This piece of information is also important because on April 10, 2009 when Russell was removed from the Togus Gate Lodge, a minimum of 20 pills he had not taken were found under his pillow. Was this meant to be a silent farewell to yesterdays, locking in the seasonal path to decay, pointing to rebirth? Is this also an ever widening net at the nexus of dots and lines, connections and curves? I have yet to find a reason as to why responsible people from the Togus VA did not know what was going on at the Togus Gate Lodge. I want to know, have you ever seen the rain coming down on a sunny day. Someone's crying Lord, Kumbaya!

“Beware how you take away hope from another human being.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Russell still relived the nightmares of Vietnam, and for him, tomorrow, although not forgotten, may be gone; he had come to die at the edge of a government's false eternity. The most

troubling part of this story is the fact that Russell didn't care. So imagine what might have happened if Russell had signed off on his proposed Living Will? With all of Russell's medications, Joe could have easily slipped him a pill or something lethal. It would have been ruled a suicide, preserved in the phemaldehyde filled with the evil spirits of Joe's drowning guilt. Or else, he is that poor clown over there, the one they call treason, stranded with over a hundred dirty bags of tricks, tripped over, roped off, emptied out in ways only our names could stand.

The POSTMARK LOST is 40 years after the fact, betrayed vociferously, and perhaps fluted with plaintive WOE, is summoned by the VOICES OF VIETNAM! I, WE, THEM, ALL OF US WHO SERVED, are to often SIMULTANEOUSLY forgotten and FUGITIVES to a system that weeps and begs for the Vietnam Veteran to go away! And while Russell appears adrift on some tired lettered font, no one dares to ask what part of his life did he give up for his country so YOU and I could be FREE! Russell is a United States Marine! "Once a Marine, always a Marine," is not just words, but a tattoo burned into "a Band of Brothers" minds, hearts, and souls!

Furthermore, it's important to ask, what in traumatic disguise do men like Joe know about Honor, about Pride, and what it is, what it takes to be "Always Faithful," to the country he supposedly served while in the United States Navy – To be faithful to an Oath of Allegiance, an oath of Moral Integrity, to the good of Human Destiny. All gave some – some gave All – so perhaps while reading this story you will ask yourself, what exactly did Joe give back to his country except in exit loss of the Homeplace, and Defilement of Human Beings? He had the dark need, I allege, the yearning, that want, in the same way the blind man knows the inside of his old house.

How much did Joe hate serving his country for the principle of American freedom and democracy? He emulated Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly, practicing his demagoguery in an era of widespread fear of an existential threat. His meanness had a dark view of the world, he did not believe in diplomacy, and his autocratic sense of authority made him (in my opinion) a very dangerous man. True patriots do not attack American values, nor shamefully assault nor intimidate the "wounded warriors" under their care. Dirt, where are you now? When only the spirit of things has a true name.

"We few, we precious few. We who have shed our blood and tears together, shall forever be..." Divided in his loyalties, or having a bad day, the male psychiatrist on the Mental Health Ward at the Togus VA says (alleged) to a Korean War Veteran who before falling on hard times was a successful businessman, "Oh, you're not one of them..." Little by little, the poverty of autumnal space becomes a look, and a few words spoken. Each person completely touches us with what he is and as he is, in the stale grandeur of illusion. "Oh, you're not one of them..." Is human what we really mean, this story, that road of pain, I'd, we, have again?

Thus, in mournful sorrow I have become very angry as past and future I have passed through my not so fateful existence since Vietnam, no more, no less, except to learn that human existence is merely an uninterrupted past tense, a thing that lives by denying or consuming itself, and by certainly opposing itself. But that doesn't mean I do not often cry, or yearn to correct my many mistakes.

Where are you my heroes, I often ask? Where are you, my children? Where are my beloved ones, the uncomprehending, the originals? Thus far...had only I had known, my brain injury had no discernable end! Forgive me! It's no excuse, I know. Perhaps

it had to be this way! The difficulty of the invisible is the cry of its occasion –

All gave some! Some gave all!

“Few folks even knew his name
But a hero yes was he
He left a boy, came back a man
Still many just don’t understand
About the reasons we are free
I can’t forget the look in his eyes
Or the tears he cried
As he said these words to me

All gave some
Some gave all

Some stood through for the red, white, and blue
And if you ever think of me
Think of all your liberties and recall
Some gave all!”

Another man named Henry would often forget to take his medicine. When this happened he would walk the hallway above Joe’s room all night long. Getting annoyed and upset, Joe would run up the stairs, grab Henry by the throat, pushing him back into his room, yelling at him, “Take your goddamn drugs, and go to bed.” Joe was trigger-happy with his fists when it came to men half his size, men older or frail, or men who did not have the courage or the physical stamina to stand-up to him. It became no coincident how every man and woman who lived at the Togus Gate Lodge knew about Joe’s ugly mood swings, or worse, or when the jarring consummation of his foolish ranting would start, forming two hemispheres, do this, or do that, or else, always on

redundant display, day after day, night after night, and hardly ever accidental despite what s/he would say.

Henry also had a legal custodian who was supposed to look after him and take care of his money. But as soon as Henry would receive the money his attorney had sent to him, Henry would go out and spend it as quickly as he got it. Soon after the fact, he would then go to Joe for a loan. These so-called legal custodians (in my opinion) were inactive in their singular and/or mutual respect for their clients. They talked to Joe more than they did the men they were supposed to represent. A difficulty I might add that Joe predicated without any truth or essential integrity.

Now just imagine if you borrowed \$100.00 from Joe, you had to pay him back \$150.00, and possibly more if you were late on a payment. If you didn't pay it back as Joe required, you might get your head slammed against the wall, or worse, it depended on his mood. Henry was a heavy smoker. So for him alone factor in how much it cost him to buy a carton of cigarettes from Joe at \$50.00 a carton. Henry bought from Joe, I allege, 6 to 8 cartons of cigarettes each month. In interest and penalties alone, the cost of a carton of cigarettes and more, I suspect Henry was paying Joe 7 to 8 hundred dollars a month above what it cost Henry for rent, TV and cable.

My God, where were the checks and balances. Henry was a 60-year-old man of slight build weighing on the light side of 140 lbs. He could not defend himself against a man like Joe. Even so, Henry called Joe his Father! My God! This story moves like a self-winding clock but shows neither minute nor hour.

How many fathers would grab their sons by the throat and get away with it? They wouldn't, they would go to jail. And how many surrogate attorneys (legal custodians, if you will) would have allowed this to happen if they knew the true story behind what was

happening at the Togus Gate Lodge. Did they ask? Did they know Joseph L. Spence had raped his 14-year-old daughter, and had been convicted (I allege) of criminal assault? Did they listen to their clients? This may become a relentless debate, a sketch of ethical symbols when everyone knows that poverty leads to desperation. Shit man! They've heard ten thousand whisperin', and nobody listenin', they've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests, and walked and crawled on six crooked highways, where the hell were you?

Were Joe's venerable masks, and his faked charisma so high up on the scale of 1 to 10 that he had everyone fooled? He bragged about how he had the VA in his back pocket and how the Togus VA sent veterans to the Lodge who needed a place to stay both short and long term. Joe is a convicted sex offender for Christ's sake! Joe's it's alleged has a record for criminal assault. No one knew this. No one had a clue. Why? Larry spent his time naked in a room filled with girly magazines. Larry's blood sugar was never tested. Larry never wore diapers. It's my belief this poor man was slowly dying. My God. What does this tell us? Is there more we don't know? We've been where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten. It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

It should also be stated for the record that the owner's daughter and son-in-law both worked at the VA. What legal, and most profound disposition does this imply? There is also fault here. I'm just not sure what it's called.

Personally, I wish I could have done more for Henry. He was one of those men you meet in life who went into the Marine Corps when he was only 16 years old. When he entered the Corps he only weighed 125 lbs, and he spent, according to him, about 8 months to a year in boot camp. He was neither mentally or physically, nor was he able to meet the requirements the Corps expects of its young recruits. In Marine Corps Boot Camp the

youth becomes the vital Son of a Nation, the heroic power, a rock that cannot be broken, the audible, the brilliant mercy of a sure repose, things certain sustaining us in certainty, stripped of remembrance, its display in its strength. But more than anything being a Marine was what Henry wanted, and he wanted to say deep down in his heart and soul that he had fought for his country as a United States Marine during the war in Vietnam. I could see this in his eyes of sadness. I could also hear this in his words spoken, and in his muffled voice about how he felt about missing out on something greater than himself. He wanted to be like the rest of us! And it would always be his loss revisited.

Henry, if you are reading this, you are to me a Marine through and through. You have paid your dues! If there's a Marine Corps heaven, we'll meet again, I am sure. "Semper Fi," my man, wherever you are! May God keep you safe and bless your soul.

A Korean War Veteran named Tony had been in and out of the Togus Gate Lodge over a period of months. He walked with a cane, and had serious vision impairment. One night Tony tripped over some boxes Joe had left out in an unlighted hallway on his way to his room. Joe, drunk as usual, sitting at his desk in an open doorway, the entrance to his room, saw Tony fall, Joe yelled at Tony saying, "Go buy yourself a goddamn flashlight!"

One would be hard of hearing if he or she did not hear the tenants' voice, the tenants' cry, or the tenants' silence, defeated and more or less indignant in their delirium expression by being rebuffed, bullied, and uninspired, with the redoubtable influence and juvenility of Joseph L. Spence. Seemingly, and not too difficult to assume, if we were to follow the passionate pathos and cruelty forthwith of Joe's alleged criminal activities over the past 17 years, while overseeing the Togus Gate Lodge, and (juxtaposition) by comparison or contrast, we would most likely find evidence (a tumultuous amount of evidence) that is both concise and clear, of a

calculated and unmerciful human scandal, and an “ungodly reverence for life.”

Tony became friends with Larry and hated the unsanitary conditions of Larry’s room. So both Tony and I would wash down Larry’s bed, clean his floor, and try to make his living conditions more acceptable when Joe was working out on his expensive exercise equipment unconcerned, and in a world of his own. Until one morning Tony came to me and said, “Allen, we need to get Larry out of here, I think he is going into a diabetic coma.” Tony had told me days earlier he was a diabetic himself and he knew a lot about these things. It was on the very day I started putting into motion the plans to close the Togus Gate Lodge. But I had to know my song well before I started singin’. If you’re reading this Tony, I love you man. Thank you and God Bless!

He had the look of bewilderment and suspense, waiting for those who would appear from behind a closed door, to second, or oppose his heaven and earth warring, pondering some dreadful voyage of life’s cruel dismay. My God, I think now, I didn’t even know his name.

The “lost one,” I recall, had two artificial legs, and not unlike those we’ve read about, or seen in books, he had the shaved head look of a man who had just survived a Nazi death camp. Frail, and always smoking a cigarette, or so it seemed, he stared off into a deep and empty space. “How old are you,” I asked him? At first he said he was 61 years old, and then he said he was 64, until he finally he said in a whisper, “I don’t know!”

“Where are you from,” I asked?” Several moments had passed. He seemed to be thinking out loud I suppose. His eyes got big, and a slight grin crossed his face, “Minnesota,” he said, “that’s it, Minnesota.” He went on to say he had come to the Togus Gate Lodge from a homeless shelter located in Portland.

The madmen never forsake their endless cursing, the poet declares, the clouds caught on minarets were drunk. Why is it no one questions how we live, part myth, part mortal, but all the same. I went inside to my room, I closed the door, and I wept.

I found out later the “lost one” was born and raised in the farmlands of Wisconsin. However, if we were to write a story about this man’s life, we would discover that he had been homeless most of his life since serving in the United States Navy. He lived on social security, but had traveled around so much he said that he had not received a check for several months. He asked me if I would drive him to the Social Security Office in Augusta, Maine so he could change his address, and recoup his money. I don’t really know how the “lost one” ended up staying at the Togus Gate Lodge. It was implied however (alleged) that the VA had sent him there. Can slain men show the miracle of being alive? You pull the trigger, and I’ll die inside his words.

There seemed to be a DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL policy that went into effect every time something like this happened. And I predict it had become over the years a crude conception, found and mingled, with the subtle art of deception. Here was a man, the “lost one,” who needed a place to stay. Whereof, he was about to have a sum of money being sent or wired to him from the Social Security Administration; now enter the devilish machination of Joseph L. Spence, again, and again, and again, to hide the fraud. The “lost one” was immediately given credit for two cartons of cheap cigarettes at a cost of \$100.00. The “lost one” was given a \$200.00 loan so he could take a cab into town to buy groceries at a cost with interest of \$300.00. Oh my God, how weak if thou resist? Confess. You beg not to answer!

Each and every week Joe would assign to each one of his tenants a chore. Sometimes this would include cleaning the

bathroom toilets, sweeping and mopping floors, painting, wiping down mirrors, and overall general cleaning assignments that needed to be done to keep the Lodge clean. Sometimes this was forced cognizance, sometimes not!

It was a Wednesday morning when Joe made the “lost one” sweep and clean the back stairway from top to bottom. The “lost one” had artificial legs 1) he could hardly climb those stairs, and 2) he had a hard time walking anywhere, which included short distances. The next thing we know, Joe is yelling and screaming at this poor old man about not cleaning the stairway correctly, Joe slaps him across the face, and the “lost one” falls halfway down the stairs. And no, I am not making this up! Don’t ask. Don’t tell, or you’d put your life in serious jeopardy!

If you didn’t do your chores, you were penalized and required to pay Joe \$50.00. If you didn’t pay it you were asked without any political correctness or notice to leave the premises immediately.

The next day the “lost one” was gone. Where he went, was he okay, nobody knew. Henceforth, and while Joe was on vacation, a check did come from the Social Security Administration in the “lost one’s” name. DHHS and a detective from the Augusta Police Department knew this even though the check was left behind for Joe to have access too... fouling his nourishment “(Wilt thou yet change, as though God were a god?)” Was this a set-up? Were they hoping Joe would cash said check? I wouldn’t put it past him. But why was the check not confiscated and returned to its rightful owner? This I do not know.

There was also Stephen who checked himself into the VA Hospital because of Joe’s maddening outbursts of anger, and because of petty arguments over loans he could not repay. And Stephan, whose fear of Joe was never a contradiction to Joe’s resentful hostility, or making people feel inferior to him,

instinctive to Joe's style of humiliation. It was alleged that to get and maintain Stephan's allegiance to him (to silence him), Joe showed him a gun one day, threatening him by asking him if he'd like to be the one at the other end of the barrel. Apparently Stephan had been a witness to something that had happened – Don't ask, don't tell – scare the shit out of someone, a personal debate, a political device!

Over time, I began to realize that any reference too, or what we characterize as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," is subjunctive, its meaning hypothetical and doubtful, and contrary to the facts. How is it the Augusta Police Department, over many years, had several complaints about Joseph L. Spence concerning his activities at the Togus Gate Lodge, and yet they were never able to make an arrest. It has been said (alleged) that the persons who filed those complaints either withdrew them or disappeared when it came time for them to appear in court.

Take the case of my counselor at the Mental Health Unit of the VA. Leading to the closure of Togus Gate Lodge, helping to save the tenants from more harassment and harm, and more specifically getting them the hell out of there, a very dear friend of mine took it upon herself to take what I had been telling her as a very serious problem. Consequently she began to distribute a letter of complaint I had written: "To Whomever It May Concern" to secure the safety of the men staying at the Togus Gate Lodge. My friend sent this letter of complaint, citing her own concerns to the Governor's Office, the State Attorney's Office, the Attorney General's Office, DHHS, the District Attorney's Office, State and Senate Representatives, the Veterans Administration, and others. She also made some phone calls, and urged me to stand up for what I believed in.

I also believe, Larry would not be alive today if this had not been done.

I signed my complaint letter: “Written by a Concerned Vietnam Veteran!”

Arriving at one of my appointments in the Mental Health Ward at the Togus VA shortly thereafter, I go into my counselor’s office, and soon after sitting down, this counselor shows me a copy of my complaint letter. She says to me, “Did you write this letter?” But before I could respond, she began scolding me saying, “It looks like your style of writing, and if it is, you should have had the guts to sign your name. She went on to tell me how we need places like the Togus Gate Lodge as a home for Veteran’s who have no other place to stay. And to be quite honest I feel, she was very adamant about her feelings on this very curious subject. To me however this showed a very acute and unacceptable breakdown in the system. No one can tell me with a sane mind that those in power, or rather someone with managerial experience from the VA did not know about Joe’s temper tantrums, his alcohol abuse, his abuse of veterans, his abuse of pain pills, his criminal history, which included the rape of his 14 year old daughter, or his violent outbursts, which many times would hurt or punish innocent victims. There’s no goddamn excuse. None! All of this scrap could have, should have been prevented.

Why did no one ask where Joe got all his money to pay for expensive things? Why did no one question him when he refused to let counselors, social workers, or other medical professional into the building to check on the welfare of the patients who were staying there? What about the disabled veteran’s like Larry who indeed needed their help.

The owner himself had a responsibility to investigate how his property was being run. Yes, Joe was a bully, and a man who would want to start a fight at the drop of a dime. But the owner should have told Joe using caution: “Joe, you do not own this

place, and this is the way it is! You either work under my guidance, and the rules I have established, or you're gone!" So in retrospect, I believe negations are never final, and wherever the owner now sits, he sits there in bleak regard, his repetition no matter.

Another phase of the "Don't ask, don't tell," is an interesting "Conundrum," even though I may be moving ahead of myself. On April 10, 2009 DHHS and the Augusta Police Department removed from the premises all of the men living at the Togus Gate Lodge. Joe returned from his vacation on or about April 21, 2009. He was served with papers to vacate the property sometime in late May 2009 or early June 2009, I am not sure of the exact date. However, on the day he was served with court papers to vacate the property, he grabbed a hammer, and put that hammer through every TV screen on the property, destroying all of them except for one. He also banged-up and destroyed every piece of furniture on the property which included dressers, tables, TV stands, etc. He then took a knife and sliced through every mattress on the property so they too would all have to be replaced.

The owner seeing this refused to press charges. What gives here? Does this not lead us to ask more penetrating questions? It also defies any reason or logic! A bad ass little boy, not a man, has a temper tantrum that proves beyond any reasonable doubt what everyone has been saying about him. And on a whim it seems the owner doesn't give a damn about his property. What other story here is not being told? Never mind, don't ask, and don't tell!

Another similarity, which also leads to more serious allegations involving Joe and the owner, is the missing rent money for the month of April 2009. Joe told the owner that the man who looked over the property for him while he was on vacation had stolen the rent money. What Joe refused to say, in a blatant lie was that he had received for the month of April 2009 \$2500.00 from Larry,

\$1900.00 from Russell, \$550.00 from Henry, and no one can be sure what he collected from the other tenants before he left to go on vacation. The money for the three men listed above (Larry, Russell, and Henry) came from the individual's legal custodians, and was paid, sent through the mail before any of the men were vacated from the Togus Gate Lodge. But again, the owner treated this information as so what, and like he didn't care. I didn't believe the owner's false acknowledgement then about his loss of rent money, nor do I now! There is something very fishy about the relationship between Joe and the owner. Suffice it to say, two plus two (in this situation) does not equal four!

Too many people do not want to challenge the system and show where it is unfair, and insane. They have become complacent, self-satisfied – indolent with their relative success. They don't want to confront existing assumptions. Question then? If Mr. Spence was provided a room for supervising the Togus Gate Lodge is this not considered income? And if so, although superlative, the owner becomes the employer. Would this not explain the last three or four paragraphs? Perhaps neither Joe nor the owner wanted their arrangement reported to the IRS or the State Revenue Office.

More telling, I don't think the Jewish Counselor who scolded me would have herself been confined to a submissive environment ruled by one man's furious outbursts weighing heavy on past transgressions, including but not limited too, forced poverty, forced migration, inducement of fear, and negations we cannot even begin to imagine. And this is just a nibble of what may or may not have happened at the Togus Gate Lodge under the authoritarian rule of Joseph L. Spence. Yes, 17 years worth...? Going as far as it can go, disjunction – abate, disclosure, and unjust cause.

But don't ask, don't tell...nor is it aught but just, that he who in debate of Truth hath won!

Call him...Call him now...Jesus is on the line...

Rumors surfaced too that for every man and woman who had stayed at the Togus Gate Lodge over the years, Joe had their social security number. When I ran into Joe while shopping at Wal-Mart in Augusta on Memorial Day 2009, he bragged about having mine while threatening to kill me. I never gave it to him, so how did he get it! Simply put, it's been alleged by others that he would sneak into every tenant's room when they were away and gather information, albeit a DD-214, a bank account statement, or whatever he could get his hands on. Others have alleged he got this personal information through a threatening interrogation.

Rumors also surfaced this is how he stole money, and got access to tenant's ATM cards. In excerpts of deception (alleged) Joe owns a car worth \$40,000.00. The car is paid in full. Joe's weight lifting, exercise, and work out equipment is high-end and worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20,000.00. Is this a catch-22? Joe gets a disability check every month from the social security administration for a bad back! It's quite obvious they have never seen him work out!

Joe also had every credit card offered by top financial institutions, which includes Diner's Club and American Express. He says he owns 2 timeshares, one of them located in Hawaii. The wide Screen TV he owns cost a minimum of \$6000.00. His desktop computer is top of the line, and he has 2 laptops, spending \$2500.00 on one the week before he went on vacation. The tickets Joe bought for a three-week Caribbean Cruise cost him \$6000.00. If Joe's income does not surpass \$800.00 per month, what is wrong with this picture? He had an RV parked outside, a riding lawnmower stored in a makeshift garage filled with expensive tools, a safe filled with cash. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Ironic isn't it, the wrongdoer cannot do wrong without the hidden

will of others. And isn't that the problem here, who amongst us can muffle the drum, and who amongst us can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who shall command the skylark not to sing – hell, I shout, just don't ask, don't tell!

Has Joe's soul stained the pain of the innocent? I believe it has with unlawful, and premeditated havoc and cruel disdain for his fellow veterans, notwithstanding his fellow human beings.

On April 9, 2009 a nightmare filled with unknown things for the men of Togus Gate Lodge, and concern for their abandonment of ill health, and their woe of limitations was revealed. Larry was rescued by DHHS and taken to the hospital by ambulance. It was alleged, although not certain, that Larry may have been in, or was on the verge of being in a diabetic coma. The man responsible for blowing the whistle on this chaotic façade of cruel human dementia, looked at Larry with tears in his eyes, telling Larry not to worry, he was in good hands now. People would take care of him and he would be safe from anymore harm.

It has been alleged however that the VA knew where Larry lived, and whose care he was under, It is also alleged that the VA lurking in the shadows of hidden motives (don't ask, don't tell) and ruined lives never inspected said facility for safety concerns, code enforcement violations, medical malpractice, or other failings so succinct to the welfare of these veteran's it is unforgiveable.

The Federal Government has very specific rules and procedures when it comes to living arrangement recommendations and enforcement thereof. Why was it okay to send veterans to the Togus Gate Lodge then, but not now? Is there all of a sudden an unwritten mandate? Is the most troubling aspect of this story unforeseen in its demise if it becomes part of the public record? I fear this becomes a curious dilemma. Therefore trust the physician

(the Federal Government), and drink his remedy in silence and tranquility lest we be sarcastic.

I understand now, the place isn't safe, it is not up to code, the owner does not tell the truth, and all he cares about is renting rooms so he can pay his mortgage. I am also not engaging the VA, or asking if their eyes were closed to tragedy's most fast moving face. There is however a ponderable source searching for each imponderable. And if people believed that the Togus Gate Lodge was a safe haven for the men and women who needed a place to stay they were sorely and sadly mistaken.

It is however necessary to ask how Joe was capable of keeping VA counselors, other VA staff, and DHHS out of the facility so they couldn't see firsthand what was going on? I also think any organization that sends people somewhere to stay has a responsibility to do some follow-up. And lastly, how far off the edge of human comprehension and/or deception (sword and dagger) did Joe go to satisfy his financial well being, while remaining indifferent to his own moral compass, falsifying the good deeds he might have done (if any) by the immoral blasphemy of his own more suspicious human behavior?

Is there any wonder after 30, 40 years this Vietnam Veteran, not unlike many, and at the end of a government's false eternity says: "You could have done more when I tried to commit suicide in 1976 and 1983. Do you remember, or could it be you lost my records? Remember the drugs you gave me? Lithium did not cure the problem. It was raining; it was cold! It's clouds illusion I recall. I really don't know clouds at all. Oh God, Dear God, turn it off, turn off the pain. They did not believe me! They could not feel my pain! I have a traumatic Brain Injury. But at least, at least tonight, the moon still shines through the window – the thieves left that behind!" God save America, My home sweet home! I shed dewy tears each dawn for that lost fleeting moment, that hint of

freedom, in transit, between being lost in the woods again, or home.

It is the right of every veteran to question his or her treatment, and the reasons why after 30 or 40 years, only now are we receiving the proper medical care and treatment. Why is it when a veteran tries to commit suicide he or she is oftentimes sent back to the streets to survive on their own without any reference to added benefits, as it was in my case, or follow-up's to address a veteran's health issues, societal or social concerns. I think what happened is that to many things were taken for granted. This might also be where the problem existed concerning the Togus Gate Lodge. It might be considered in comparison the battered husband/wife syndrome. It happens when a man or woman feels their character has been crushed, their dreams smothered, their goals unreachable, especially when depressed and under foot (so to speak) someone is always saying, "You're no good! You can't do anything right!" And with a slap across the face, "Where would you be now if it were not for me? I dare you, oh God I dare you to tell anyone about this!"

A lot of veterans feel disgraced and manipulated. They feel misplaced in a society where they don't feel they belong. I came home from Vietnam being called a baby-killer, a drug addict. I was spit on, and on one occasion a little boy asked me if I had killed anyone. I couldn't find a job. I couldn't get along with people. I felt like I was hated for serving my country, and I didn't know why. Consequently, for me, and for many other veterans, we were more or less forced to leave the system behind that was supposed to take care of us. In an accord of repetitions who amongst us would have thought about being "homeless?"

The clincher, specifically for me was in 1972. I was attending college in Waterville, Maine. I was having blackouts that would last for hours, sometimes days at a time accompanied by severe

migraine headaches, where I could not even stand up. I wasn't going to class because I couldn't get out of bed in the morning, so forget being able to study. And the stress I was under, with a wife in Virginia, and 2 small daughters, phew, that was unbearable. I was not going to be a failure. Wow, guess again.

So what did I do? I went to the VA Hospital at Togus, Maine. No one there, I mean no one wanted to talk to me! It was like I was invisible. It was like I didn't exist! Never in my life had I been treated this way. Hey Mister, you, over there, what in hell do you think I have been doing with my life for the past 4 years? Help me please, I beg of you! He pretty much told me to "go fuck myself, he didn't give a damn how much pain I was in, and apparently I had served in the wrong war, wrong time, and there was a whole lot of other people to take care of before me. I wanted to slug that bastard, I really did! But I maintained my cool and asked when I might come back for a scheduled appointment. "Call us back in six months," he said. I can still remember those words. Who can help me I wondered? So now I thought, okay, I'll just go to see my vocational rehabilitation advisor; surely he could get me an appointment with a VA doctor, and unravel some of the problems I was having with my college education. What a surprise, and what in this insane world was I thinking! He was missing in action. He never answered his phone. He was never in his office. Until finally I just gave up trying to find him.

To this day I blame him and the system for my failing out of Colby College in Waterville, Maine. I had no support, no one to talk too, and no one to even advise me on what I should do. No one! Absolutely no one! I was left to my own demise...

Needless to say, I said to myself to hell with you, to hell with the system, I'd somehow get through this terrible time in my life on my own, not knowing of course the consequences of that decision. 4 month's later I failed out of school. 6 months later I

was divorced. Does this sound familiar to anyone? I know it does because I have heard similar stories told all over the United States of America. A lot of the Vietnam Era Veterans got cheated. Our members are many, and our hands are all empty, and I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it.

My life became a fresh wound accompanied by a revelation. Or was it a Marine's memory evoking how light becomes a distance? No one would hold me, or love me again in the same innocence of my wife's first virgin kiss. How does release from what you love become "unequivocal freedom?" Where are you, my children? Where are you my beloved ones, the uncomprehending, the originals? Thus far...had I only known, my brain injury had no discernable end!

Today, the Togus VA may at any given time be processing over 30 thousand disability claims. However, if you happen to be a Vietnam Veteran, your claim for disability goes to the bottom of the pile. The Iraqi, Afghanistan Veteran takes precedent. "Why didn't you come forward with your claim 30 to 35 years ago," you are asked. "I did," you say! "I came in the front door in 1972, you pushed me out the back door, and for all intent and purpose, I was told to live my life at my own peril." The lessons learned in Vietnam were spent on lies, and the lives Vietnam veteran. Don't tell me it's not worth fighting for, crying for, and dying for.

My story is just one of hundreds of thousands where no one admits blame, even when the result of such arguments is clear.

The paradox here is that everything has been said, but nothing has been understood. Tell me, muse, the name of the poor immortal singer who was deserted by his mortal listeners. Does this sound familiar? Don't ask, and don't tell!

Now comes to the forefront a man named Joseph L. Spence. Perhaps he was what most intelligent people would call a “low life,” foreshadowed by his criminal activities. Perhaps, in defining this unpopular script, he was a non-conforming son-of-a-bitch with a history of being a bully who mistakenly was put in charge of a facility dedicated to addressing the issues of male and female veterans. He had no medical background, no training in passing out prescription drugs, or giving diabetic’s insulin without measuring their blood sugar first, and it is also doubtful he knew anything about CPR, or how to perform medical assistance to those in need. He did not have the training of an EMS, nor was he a registered nurse. But he got away with it, and no one questioned him about what he was doing.

Think about it, as veteran’s and others used the Togus Gate Lodge as a home away from home, Joe became the equivalent to an emperor overseeing those who felt misplaced, manipulated, and disgraced, living in a society where they felt they didn’t belong. Joe used this to his advantage. No one would tell on him, or accuse him of anything; if they did he’d stop them by threatening them, or perhaps worse. Joe was like the abusive husband who frequently beats up on his wife. I would not be the least surprised if there were domestic violence issues when Joe was married. I also believe that after awhile the long-term veterans staying at the Togus Gate Lodge believed they deserved to be mistreated. They believed whatever he was yelling at them for was their fault. (Reread last paragraph page 34). Used and abused? Methinks perhaps, in more deceptive ways, been there, done that.

Think about it. Henry was a 60-year-old man who called Joe his father. Think of the situations and circumstances discussed in this story. How does a man steal money from people without those same people going to the police, and filing a complaint? These are disasters that destroy people and make people sleep with their eyes wide-open – and now you have robbed me, you have reduced me

to rubble, and no one cares! Who stands on the red desiccated desert of our future? (Reread pages 31, 32) (Don't ask, and don't tell).

I think it is conclusive enough that potency is not a sacerdotal figure in this revision acted out alone upon the Togus Gate Lodge (staid)? Joe condemned his occupants as if they were his own sheltered slaves, summoning in the larynx of an orphan to many disproportionate house rules and frivolous annunciations much like a husband beating up on his poor and frail, and faithful wife. Your character is essentially the sum of your habits; it is how you habitually act. Change the pronouns in the last sentence and add Joe's name. Yes, that's the mantra: trust those in authority, especially in times of duress; let them make the decisions that will affect our lives. Where were you when I needed you? What is this human inheritance that strangles my soul? Go ahead ask! Ask these questions according to your own preconceived ideas – you may not like the answer!

What is lost of our own making? I say: Quest without caption, a boat without a sail, this assumed enclosure in need of repair.

The truth will set you free, but first it may make you miserable!

Upon leaving on a stretcher from the Togus Gate Lodge “as tedious as go o'er” Larry gave a last minute nod to the man who had complained about these curses, these blasphemies, repeated by a thousand wounded warriors, and he smiled. Where, O' where, under a gloomy sky, a silent noise, like a muffled sigh of a bullet passing through this bone, this muscle, and this sinew – for it is in truth – he gave of his dignity. What was Larry thinking? Could the VA have done more rather than being married willy-nilly to a political climate crippled by censorship, annihilating tragedy by being politically correct?

On April 10, 2009, DHHS, accompanied this time by the Augusta Police Department came back to the Togus Gate Lodge for the purpose of interviewing and removing those tenant's left behind, sending them to places that would give them adequate shelter and proper medical care. Robert Johnson once wrote: "I have folded instead my sorrows like a winter garment – moth filled unwashed – I will no more wear." And yet, and yes, I will say it again: the care of the disabled Vietnam Veteran becomes (is) (has been) ill-calculated sketches mostly destined for an abandoned handbook. Many have died. Many have committed suicide. Many are still homeless. And so to declare an imperfection and submit to judgment is a character more telling.

Just before I drove away from the Togus Gate Lodge, Russell was sitting on the front porch between two police officers laughing and smoking a cigarette. He would be it was thought the most difficult to remove. An hour earlier he had thrown his cane against the wall, and said, "God damn it, the VA has won again!" "No they haven't," he was told. We all think that, everyone of us who has fought the system to get what we deserve. He sat down on his bed, put on his shoes, and walked with us out the door. Honor my friend, honor! We fought to keep you free! In my own subdued solitary world I am Russell, and so are untold thousands! Russell gave an ultimate sacrifice to his country and he has paid for it dearly. Russell is my hero! Honor my friend, honor! The VA has not won again!

We, the veteran, many of us, live below the poverty level, going from job to job, if in fact we can find work. We are like a small sail trembling on the horizon, indifferent to what it sees, and never a substitute to our own irremediable existence. This description makes for us our divinity – not grim reality but reality grimly seen.

Did the Mental Health Professional say to the Korean Veteran who before falling on hard times was a successful business, (page 12), “Oh, you’re not one of them?” Methinks he did!

Upon returning from his vacation Joe immediately lawyered-up! It’s what I define as the crumbs and the tidbits, and the leftovers of a man with no conscience. Intensely wealthy, sinfully confiscated off ill gotten monies, goods, and services, but still a man who has no conscience living the façade of a scattered universe, sinfully bound to himself, and hopefully alone and miserable like many of the men he so shamelessly punished. “Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want.” They are incapable of giving; they can only receive.

How many men and women, how many were mistreated over Joe’s 17-year tenure? Did anyone die, was anyone seriously injured or crippled, were there any disappearances unsolved on Joe’s watch? Did someone die on his watch who made him a beneficiary of his or her estate...did Joe receive a monetary settlement, and if he did, and someone died, was an autopsy done to establish a cause of death?

Who was Sully and what was his relationship to Joe. It’s been reported (alleged) that Sully was Joe’s accomplice, and when he stayed at the Togus Gate Lodge (for a period of 1 year or more it’s alleged) the beatings of individuals, the tasing of individuals, the throwing of Veteran’s out on the street with barely their clothes if they didn’t submit to cruel and unusual treatment was nothing short of scandalous. Where were the authorities? And why is all of this information coming forth after the fact when it becomes so easy to cover-up. Joe, like the pedophile he is, is a predator, and this is not about Darwin’s survival of the fittest or being mentally ill. What do tell is Sully’s story on this aggravated plain of further discovery and disclosure?

As I've said before, "Nature will not pity, nor God lend an ear except in our dreams of light and noise." I have written this story to be published on my website because I want straightforward answers: 1) about a man's 17-year tenure that perhaps ruptured an atmosphere that diminishes freedom and destroyed (both physically and mentally) many innocent lives, and 2) with your help, confront our interest in the truth, to uncover "what really happened," at the Togus Gate Lodge, and why the continual terrorizing of men and women was allowed to happen? Has our system, will our system of the law unfairly deny us access to the facts to those who lack the funds for legal discovery? Mr. Spence (I allege) supposedly hired one of the most expensive lawyers in the State of Maine on his \$800.00 per month income. Hiring an expensive attorney on an income below the poverty line (in Joe's situation more specifically) cannot happen unless someone has stolen his or her way into money! This only adds to the overall mechanism of our culture that grants the fake more value than the actual, and that demonstrates what matters is putting things over on an audience, engineering cons, or flat-out lying to get what you want.

I can still hear the words, "wash your ass," in the middle of the night. I can still see the pills hidden under Russell's pillow, pain pills and heart pills saved by Russell, which Joe had given him without any supervision, waiting for that day of reckoning. I can still see the look in Larry's eyes when he tried to get to the toilet, had fallen out of his wheelchair, shit all over the place, while finding or bothering Joe was impossible. Joe couldn't be bothered because he was working out. I had to find someone who would help me pick Larry up, put him back in his wheelchair after cleaning it, and then cleaning up the mess he had left behind. The bathroom was not handicapped accessible. There were also in a corner storage area boxes of diapers supplied by the VA, which Joe refused to put on Larry creating a more dangerous unsanitary

condition for not only Larry, but for all the tenants of the Togus Gate Lodge. The testers, that were also I believe supplied by the VA were all broken.

I can still feel the fear Stephan must have felt, and I can still see the smile on his face as he walked away from the building on April 10, 2009 knowing he had been freed, and that maybe now his life might be headed in a positive direction. I can still hear Tony's laughter, and the stories he told us about growing-up in South Boston. Tony loved to cook but always made a mess in the kitchen because of his vision impairment. After he made dinner for himself, and was done cooking, I would always go behind him to clean up the kitchen so that Joe wouldn't scream at him.

I remember the night Henry came to me, and said, "Sarge, can I talk to you!" He had been sobbing, and he needed my advice and words of comfort. And there were times when I would purposely go upstairs to make sure Stephen had called his mother. And I did this when I realized that talking to his mother calmed him down, an elixir of sorts, and a good thing that gave this man hope, and a purpose to live. To live, yes to live, and hope! Wow! Imagine if you can what the men we're talking about must have gone through just to live, just to survive, and still have some hope, hope for a better tomorrow. Is this too much to ask for? Methinks not!

My preference was to forget for a while about my troubles, my problems, and remember in weary sadness this tragedy no less, and the cruel opposition faced by these men and women. How many more, how many more of them were there? Will we ever know their names? Will we ever hear them tell their stories? All gave some – some gave All! We owe them; the VA owes them, if only an apology!

No one veteran, his or her issues notwithstanding should ever have to be bullied or persecuted, used or mistreated, denied proper

care, or persuaded to live in a place that is not inspected for safety concerns. A police background check should also have been a requirement for anyone hired, or placed in a supervisory role of said facility. And rather than don't ask, don't tell, the VA (if in fact the occupancy of the Togus Gate Lodge was mostly veteran's) should have scheduled a once or twice a year walk through to find out what was going on! If there are Federal guidelines they should be followed. Yes, it's true; the Togus Gate Lodge was not, is not part of the VA. It is however important to note that they did send veteran's there for many, many years.

The abyss doesn't divide us,
The abyss surrounds us –
Here day, and there night
Here hope, and there despair
And with the other self

It flees...

Their money (the veteran's money) should have been theirs' to spend and keep, and not stolen through misrepresentation, lies, fraud, opening fictitious bank accounts, forgery, larceny, grand theft, and unlawful deception. "Take this purse, Beggar! You only whine, senile nursling of a stingy tit, to strain your death knell from it coin by coin. Bestow, O matter, forgetfulness of sin and the cruel ideal upon this martyr who comes to share the litter where this sad herd of men is made to kneel!" The sky, the sky is dead! And except for clouds driven by tempestuous winds, there is nothing circumstantial about the legal precedent established here not to proceed in securing an arrest warrant for Joseph L. Spence.

Call him... Call him now... Jesus is on the line...

What comes loose first? The "I" from "me?" Or the "thou" from "thee?" In asking these questions I am obligated to tell this story from across a vacant room, hoping everyone who reads it will

feel the same sadness, the same tears, and the same broken clues from afar as I do before if remembered be a task.

I am asking you to make phone calls, to write letters, and according to your conscience do the right thing so that the story told here never becomes a metaphor between right versus wrong, a memory of happenstance, or just a nothingness of evil and hateful circumstance that we forget about as we go on with our lives. Please take charge of making a difference! Our Veteran's deserve so much more! Joseph L. Spence is no hero, and he deserves to be punished. There is no pill, no prayer, or principle that will instantly undo the damage he has done over a period of many years.

Told to Judas told – his lies must now end. Let the sonata begin, so the dream (the veteran's dream) that goes unbroken can begin again, anew.

I have written Part 1 of this story (Part 2 to follow), and this testimony I present before you because I must never forget that I am an American first, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles of our founding fathers, which made this country free.

When did obsession with winning eclipse our interest in the truth? Even the arena that uses argument as a staple – namely, the law – is not interested in discovering the truth. Rather, it's interested in what a jury can be convinced of. So in appearance it would seem, Joseph L. Spence is still a free man because an investigation of his misdeeds may take years. Federal Appeals Court Judge Jerome Frank captures this idea when he writes: "Our present trial method is thus the equivalent of throwing pepper in the eyes of a surgeon when he is performing an operation."

What happens to me as the "whistle blower" in the meantime when logic, reason, and careful argument are only tiny fingers in

the dike whose entire structure is as susceptible to pancaking as were the twin towers. I think for the record, going all the way back to November 5, 1970, I have been punished enough.

My life has been threatened and who knows who else will come after me. This is however something I must do for my country, my community, and my friends who deserve so much more. “Once a Marine, always a Marine,” it’s the man in me, and they can’t take that away from me. Not even Joseph L. Spence.

All gave some – some gave All – some stood through for the red, white, and blue – And if you ever think of me – think of all your liberties and recall – some gave All!

There is not just one Joseph L. Spence in America. There is not just one Togus Gate Lodge. There is not just one owner of such a facility who was quite frankly either in bed with his manager, or just didn’t give a damn. I am hoping that this story posted to my website will open some eyes. We can’t save everyone, but we can sure as hell try.

“Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocre minds. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence.”

Albert Einstein

What is lost of our own making? I say: Quest without caption, a boat without a sail, this assumed enclosure in need of repair. The trial lawyer does not want the trial court to reach a sound educated guess, if it is likely to be contrary to his client’s interest. The lawyer aims at victory, at winning in the fight, not at aiding the court to discover the facts. Therefore I conclude, my 1st Amendment rights, and even my freedom will be severely tested.

Unless “I we’d” believe: If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody.” Galatians 6:3 Told Judas – told! Speak tick-tock time – speak! A parable awaits our brevity so entranced in advent from avarice, in dark from idyllic light.

“Under the spreading chestnut tree
I sold you and you sold me:
There lie they, and here lie we
Under the spreading chestnut tree.”

George Orwell’s 1984 (page 77)

“WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.”

George Orwell’s 1984 (page 104)

If you are following the discourse of this story you might ask yourself if this has become the “doublethink” of the American way of life. Following the recent Health Care debate it would not be difficult to describe our country’s leaders as nothing short of outrageous bullies. Our own age, saddled as much as Orwell’s with political chaos – what age has not been – differs, perhaps, from that of sixty years ago in the following manner: too many people don’t want to challenge the system and show where it is unfair, crazy. They have become complacent, self-satisfied – indolent with their own relative success. They don’t want to confront existing assumptions. And they certainly do not want to challenge those in power. Of course Orwell does not contend that political chaos caused decay of language, only that the two events are connected. Yet I think the two elements that cause each other are linked in an ever-downward-spiraling vortex. I believe for example, that to use logical fallacies is to damage the public

discourse, as it creates an atmosphere that diminishes freedom of thought.

Therefore, when a man such as myself comes forward with a serious message telling you all about a terrible public discourse, as Orwell wrote, we should be troubled with war, inhumanities, disease, poverty, and famine. All of which is told, in small or great segments of time within the flow and structure of my story. Will anyone of you come forth to be the arbiter of truth and justice? Will anyone of you ask, how was this tragic story of the Togus Gate Lodge allowed to happen? Which one of you will have the uncommon courage to stand beside me while setting an example to make sure what has happened over a period of 17 years does not happen again? What constitutional fabric of freedom was put in place here as inclement weather veiled the reality of a safety net for the Larry's, the Russell's, the Henry's, and others, considering as well, the men and women who stayed at the Togus Gate Lodge before them?

What constitutional fabric of freedom has been denied here when social responsibility became a dismal failure, and collective agencies of social protection, law and order were unreliably absent? Can we save our wounded brothers and sisters from this ideologue of impurities? Is the system corrupt? Is the system nothing more than an intangible process? We cannot fear this challenge to treat respect, and to protect with respect the men and women who have kept this country free. We must embrace it. God Bless the USA!

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH
DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

“What penalty lay you upon him slays in the flesh yet is himself slain in the spirit?” ...By controlling men’s minds he, Joseph L. Spence controls the truth in years lost – 1992 to 2009 while employed as the Manager/Supervisor of the Togus Gate Lodge.

(Displaced in April 2009 when his behavior became known!)

O’ despair...

What is lost of our own making? I say: Quest without caption, a boat without a sail, imposing as an assumed enclosure in need of repair.

The events, thoughts, and opinions addressed and expressed in Part 1 of this story, as described and witnessed here and within are true to the best of my knowledge.

This story, in (Part 1 at least) is a rewrite of a letter I submitted to DHHS, a detective from the Augusta Police Department, and passed-on (I assume) to other judicial authorities, both State and Federal, on or about the 26 day of April 2009. In summary, these same parties involved were also aware of Joe’s threats to my life. I have emails saved directing me, and/or advising me to go and get a restraining order against Joseph L. Spence. The owner of the Togus Gate Lodge was also aware of Joe’s threats to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness concerning others and myself. It is not known if he reported these and those to the proper authorities so they could be substantiated and used as material evidence for future investigations.

I’ve heard ten thousand whisperin’ and nobody listenin’, heard one person starve, I heard many people laughing, I’ve walked and I’ve crawled on six crooked highways. Where are you my heroes, I often ask? Where are you, my children? Where are my beloved ones, the uncomprehending, the originals? Thus far...had only I

had known, the brain injury I suffered in Vietnam had no discernable end! Forgive me! It's no excuse, I know. Perhaps it had to be this way! The difficulty of the invisible is the cry of its occasion.

You may have forgotten but my shadow is on your face. Can slain men show us the miracle of being alive? You pull the trigger on those ten thousand whisperin', and nobody listenin', and I'll die inside your words.

“Oo-oo child, things are gonna get easier
Oo-oo child, things'll get brighter
Oo-oo child, things are gonna get easier
Oo-oo child, things'll get brighter
Someday, yeah, we'll put it together and we'll get it done
Someday, when your head is much lighter
Someday, yeah, we'll walk in the rays of a beautiful sun
Someday, when the world is much brighter

You just wait and see how things are gonna be”

O-o-h Child
The Five Stairsteps

I dedicate Part 1 of this story to the brave men of the Togus Gate Lodge, which includes Larry, Russell, Henry, Tony, Stephen and Stefan, and so many others. You have taught me so much. I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it, and reflect it from the mountain so all souls can hear it. God bless you my friends, someone's praying Lord, kumbaya.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Socrates

