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DEC 11 1981

CECILIA JASON DEDERICH

SYNANON

December 5, 1981

Dr. Carlton Turner
President's Office of
Policy Development
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr. Turner:

I recently spoke at some length with Ms. Ann Wrobleski, Special Projects Director for Nancy Reagan, about the organization I work for, live in and represent: Synanon. I am sure you are familiar with Synanon, which was founded by my father, Charles E. Dederich, in 1958. In those days, Synanon was the beginning of a totally new approach to dealing with the problem of drug addiction and alcoholism. In 23 years, Synanon has spawned the growth of the entire self-help movement here and abroad, including Phoenix House, Delancey Street and Daytop Lodge.

My name is Jady Dederich, and since my father formally retired in 1978, I have been the Chairman of the Board of Synanon. I have read recently about Mrs. Reagan's concern over our country's problem with drug abuse, particularly in young people, and I am convinced that Synanon should be a prime resource for her and for you in your respective work in this area. I have already extended an invitation to the First Lady to visit our facilities and talk firsthand with new people in Synanon, as well as people who have been working in our organization for many years helping other people to become productive citizens. Ms. Wrobleski informed me that Mrs. Reagan has no plans to visit California at this time and suggested that I contact you.

I want you to know that Synanon also stands ready to assist you and your offices in your work.

We wholeheartedly support the President's economic and social philosophies. His belief that the private

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sector must take responsibility for America's social problems is completely in tune with the way we have always operated.

My father insisted very early in our history that the key to our continued success -- even survival -- was remaining self-reliant. We have supported ourselves for 23 years through our own business ventures and tax-exempt contributions from the private sector, and have accepted virtually no government funding. From what I can gather, nearly all of our offshoots availed themselves of some of the millions of dollars which the Nixon Administration allocated for the drug problem in the early 1970's, and became dependent on funding which must now be cut back.

In the last four years, Synanon and my father have been the target of a barrage of libelous publicity generated by some irresponsible members of the news media. One of the many false stories told about Synanon by the press is that we no longer take care of people in trouble.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Our doors are open to people who need help, as they have always been, and we have in no way abandoned our original purposes. I am enclosing some literature about the work we do and the way we take care of people in trouble.

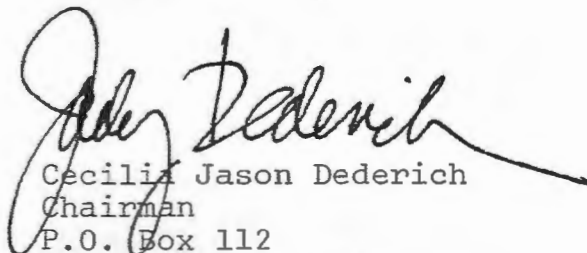
Another major charitable activity of Synanon started by my father is the Synanon Distribution Network. In the last five years, Synanon has channeled over \$35 million worth of surplus product -- product which is perfectly usable but is excess, mislabeled, or approaching code date -- from American business to charitable groups around the world. The Network is rapidly growing and, we believe, is another demonstration of the ability of the private sector

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to replace governments in providing assistance
to the needy.

I hope you will not think me too bold in calling
you in a few weeks to find out how we can be of
help. If you would like to talk with me, I can
be reached through my office at the Synanon Home
Place in Badger, California, (209) 337-2881. I
will look forward to talking with you and working
out a way for us to be of service to you and to
Mrs. Reagan.

Most sincerely,



Cecilia Jason Dederich
Chairman
P.O. Box 112
Badger, CA 93603

CJD/jsa

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Ann Wrobleski
Special Projects Director
to Nancy Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500



THE SYNANON STORY

Volume 8, Issue 3

October 1980



Wendy & Jennifer
ADGAP's Dynamic Duo



Wendy & Jennifer, ADGAP's Dynamic Duo



Wendy and Jennifer plot their sales territory from California to Texas.

Wendy Millstein and Jennifer Norton are two young women with very special skills. They are both representatives of Synanon's Advertising Gifts and Premiums business (ADGAP), an organization that, in Wendy's words, "is different from any other sales force in America."

Wendy describes ADGAP this way: "First and foremost it's a way for our people to learn good work habits and specific job skills. It also provides most of the money and goods to run Synanon. The other thing it

At the ripe old age of 27, Wendy is one of two national sales managers.

does is sell our services. It's our P.R. force for making available the Synanon People Business program — helping drug addicts, alcoholics and other people in trouble. One unique aspect of ADGAP is that we offer the same people we sell ad specialties to the services of the Synanon Distribution Network." The Synanon Distribution Network secures donations of surplus food,

clothing and building materials from businessmen and agribusinessmen throughout the country and redistributes them directly

... a boyfriend at the State University of New York turned out to be a heroin addict.

to charitable groups. Since 1977, the Network has distributed more than \$20 million estimated retail value worth of surplus goods all over the world.

As ADGAP's West Coast Marketing Manager, Wendy's job is to acquaint people ranging from California to Texas with these aspects of Synanon and to manage and help train representatives like Jennifer; nearly a thousand people have been trained in the fifteen years of ADGAP's existence. At the ripe old age of 27, Wendy is one of two national sales managers who are responsible for producing sales figures that represent more than 50% of Synanon's cash flow.

Wendy's involvement with Synanon began in 1972 when a boyfriend at

the State University of New York turned out to be a heroin addict. Wendy, who was a cheerleader and class president at her Philadelphia high school, thought she could cure his habit herself. When that didn't work, she talked him into going out

Jennifer came into Synanon four years ago weighing 84 pounds.

to Synanon's facility in Santa Monica, California, where she had visited the summer before. "I was on a cross country trip, and the one night I spent at a Synanon Saturday Night Party was a more remarkable experience for me than seeing the Rockies. All I talked about when I got home was how friendly and unique the Synanon environment was." Shortly after that Wendy worked out a way to spend one semester of her junior year of college doing independent study in sociology and psychology at Synanon,



In her free time, Jennifer rides horses at Synanon's ranch in Northern California.

something that had never been done before at SUNY. She became part of the Synanon process during her six months of study, living and working with people who had come to Synanon to kick a habit and change their lives entirely. Her professors were so impressed not only by her research work but by the other qualities that

Wendy & Jennifer, cont'd



Wendy's favorite activity as ADGAP's West Coast Marketing Manager is teaching.

she had gained that they gave her glowing letters of recommendation. "They said they couldn't get over how I had changed and matured, and how much more enthusiastic



Jennifer on the phone, checking her sales.

and aggressive I was at the end of that semester. Everyone noticed it." At that point Wendy considered moving into Synanon as a permanent resident, but she felt a responsibility to return to SUNY to lecture and finish her project so other students would have the same work/study opportunity that she had pioneered. As soon as she graduated in 1974 she returned to Synanon

and, not long after, became an ADGAP trainee.

Jennifer Norton, 20, is another top-ranking Synanon sales representative, but her story is a sharp contrast to Wendy's. Jennifer came to Synanon four years ago weighing 84 pounds, a teenage alcoholic and drug addict. Both her parents were Sunday School teachers in her home town of Kendell Park, New Jersey, and she herself was a Pioneer Girl. But by the age of 13 Jennifer was smoking pot and getting drunk on vodka. By the time she was 16 she had been in and out of mental hospitals and reformatories, had been arrested for car theft, and had overdosed on drugs. In desperation, her mother brought her to Synanon.

ADGAP is comprised largely of couples, and both Wendy's and Jennifer's husbands are members.

When she first arrived in 1976, Jennifer says, "I was too scared to leave ... and deep down inside I think I knew that I needed to stay for

awhile. I kept making excuses to leave and then finding reasons to stay." After about a year she went on a sales trip to Atlanta and was so excited by the opportunity to meet people and talk about Synanon that she asked to join the team. Like Wendy, she has been among the top ten salesmen since her second year in ADGAP.

ADGAP is comprised largely of couples, and both Wendy's and Jennifer's husbands are sales representatives, too. Josh Millstein is ADGAP's top ranked salesman. Jennifer's husband, Bill Melley, joined the team the same day she did three and a half years ago. Because they spend as much as six months every year travelling, they try to take a microcosm of a Synanon environment on the road with them.

Jennifer's ambition for the future is to take Wendy's job.

A typical day on the road for Wendy and Jennifer might begin with a couple of sales calls in the morning and then, at lunchtime, a speaking engagement at a local Kiwanis Club to offer Synanon's services for people in trouble. At an afternoon appointment they might get a commitment from a businessman to donate some goods to the Distribution Network and, after another sales call, they'll go home to finish their paperwork, sit down to dinner and frequently, a Game, Synanon's unique group interaction, with the other members of their mobile Synanon family.

It's not uncommon for Wendy, Jennifer or one of the other members of the Synanon team to get a phone call at night from someone they've done business with that day, saying, "Look, I have someone in trouble. Will you interview them?" Sometimes that means interviewing a kid and sending him out to California that night. Or it could be a situation like that of one prominent Houston businessman and ADGAP account whose 23-year-old son was using



Jennifer and husband Bill spend six months per year travelling.

It's not uncommon for them to get a phone call at night from one of the people they've sold saying, "Look, I have someone in trouble. Will you interview them?"



Wendy and Josh Millstein examine new ADGAP products.

drugs and in jail. He got in touch with Wendy, and the result was that two Synanon representatives went to court with the boy, met with his lawyer, and convinced the judge to place him in Synanon on probation, where he's been for nearly a year now.

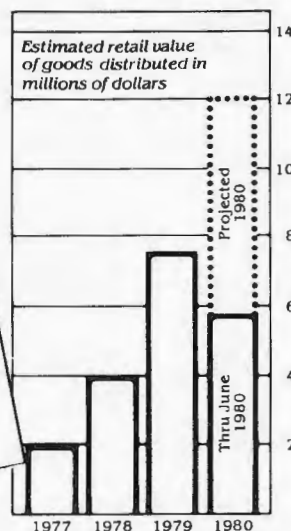
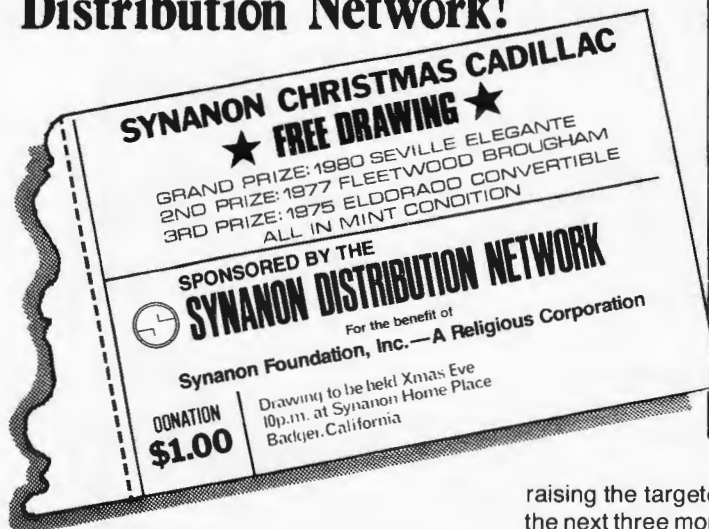
When they're not working, Jennifer and Bill like to ride horses and spend time with newer Synanon residents. "I just like to help these kids who came in pretty much the way I did, and need somebody to look up to, a role model," says Jennifer. Her ambition for the future? To take Wendy's job.



Racquetball is a favorite on-the-road sport.

One of Wendy's great loves is playing racquetball with Josh, Jennifer and Bill. She also entertains frequently when she's at home, and spends as much time as she can with the young children at Synanon's ranch in Marin County, California. But, she says, "It's hard for me to talk about the things I enjoy without talking about my work, because it's so integrated. I love to teach, and some of the things I do when I'm home is to carry on teaching, both on the job and outside it. That's why being involved with the kids is such a big part of my time off; I see myself maybe teaching them one day. I think that's the beauty of living in Synanon. I can learn how to manage and teach through this job in ADGAP, and then at some point I'll be able to move over and take someone else's job—when Jennifer takes mine."

\$1,000,000 Fund-Raising Drive Launched by the Synanon Distribution Network!



Three lucky Free Drawing winners will find Cadillacs in their Christmas stockings—and Synanon expects to have \$1,000,000 in its general fund to support its many good works—when the dust settles on the Foundation's first national fund-raising drive since 1969.

The Synanon Distribution Network, which is sponsoring the drive, believes in giving people a hand instead of a hand-out. The fund-raising campaign is an excellent way for the hundreds of charitable organizations throughout the country who are on the receiving end of the Distribution pipeline to do their part in supporting the Network's remarkable four year growth (see graph) by

raising the targeted goal of \$1,000,000. For the next three months, members of Distribution recipient organizations will be giving away one million drawing tickets, telling people how the Synanon Distribution Network is helping in their areas and asking for donations.

Jon Kaufman, the 25-year old Synanon resident who is coordinating the drive, acknowledges that it's the most challenging job he's ever had, but predicts that, "we will be over \$1,000,000 before Donner, Blitzen and the rest are cleared for take-off." Anyone who wants more information about the Free Drawing or who wants to help in the campaign is invited to write or call Jon Kaufman at Box 786, Marshall, CA 94940, (415) 663-8111.

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SYNANON
THE PEOPLE
BUSINESS®



THE
MIRACLE
ON THE
BEACH

BY BOB LEES

Editor's Note

Richard Lees moved out of Synanon in 1976 and used his electronic know-how to obtain the highly responsible position of Assistant Supervisor of Electronic News Gathering Engineering for CBS-TV in Los Angeles.



Richard says, "The world is full of 'concerned' people who are unable to do anything for anyone else because they are not social and they are not useful. I was a 'concerned' person when I got to Synanon, but I was in a shell. In an atmosphere that encourages change, Synanon taught me to survive, learn, prosper and function successfully. I was able to learn a skill and was taught to put in a day's work for a day's pay."

THE MIRACLE ON THE BEACH

A collect phone call from New York woke us out of a sound sleep. A girl, whose voice I did not recognize, informed me that our son, Richard, wanted to come home — that he needed help.

Rick must have lacked the courage to place the call himself and persuaded the girl to do it for him. My initial alarm gave way to irritation. I insisted on speaking to him. When Richard came on, his voice was barely audible. "I just haven't made it here, Dad," he said. "I saw a doctor. He says I need therapy. I guess I do . . ."

"We'll send the bus fare," I said. "Just let us know when you're coming."

I looked over at my wife. Neither of us could sleep.

From the time Richard's obsession with the guitar had caused him to drop out of college, I'd had the feeling that he would turn out to be a black sheep like my older brother, Maury. Now it was coming true.

Like Maury, Rick had failed to live up to the promise of his musical talent and would have to be bailed out and supported, just as my father, and then my brother and I, had to cover for Maury's failures for most of his adult life.

Even though Richard was physically far more prepossessing than Maury, and had been a good student before his infatuation with the guitar, I was haunted by the thought that out of my fear and distrust I had turned him into my brother's mirror image.

Richard had left school, he said, because he wanted the money we had set aside for his education to study Flamenco in Spain. He had to go now, he insisted, while he was still young enough to perfect his technique. He'd make the money last as long as possible.

Though I considered the idea preposterous, those of our friends who had always admired Rick, accused me of not appreciating his talent. They felt it wrong for me to deny him this opportunity. In fact, most of them wished that their kids had Rick's purpose and dedication. My wife tended to agree with them.

I gave in. But I warned Rick that once the money was gone he couldn't count on us for any further support. He knew it was no idle threat. The Hollywood Blacklist during the McCarthy period had about wiped us out economically. Our earnings were just sufficient to keep the household going and his sister, Kathy, in school. I made it quite clear that if his decision turned out to be a mistake he would have to live with it.

Two years later the money was gone. Rick came home from Spain. If he had any misgivings he certainly didn't show them. He gave a recital for our family and friends just before he left to seek work in New York. Although his performance was impressive, actually none of us were capable of judging whether he had attained a level of competence that could bring him success in such a limited and competitive field.

The collect phone call which came just three months later gave us the answer.

I picked him up at the Greyhound depot. He carried no luggage. His precious guitar had been sold to pay New York expenses. He couldn't look me in the eye. His shoulders sagged. I wanted to tell him how sorry I was — but I couldn't. Anymore than I could say that if he had only listened to me in the first place none of this would have happened — because somehow my son's failure had turned out to be my own.

The therapist who took charge of Rick emphasized that it would be advisable for Richard to earn money to help pay for his therapy. Furthermore, a job, by structuring his time, might serve to keep his growing anxiety under control.

He went to work as a shipping clerk in a friend's factory. Unfortunately, there was little if any routine at home. My wife's time was spent running her boutique. Between writing assignments, I helped at the shop. Our own problems left us little time for Rick's.

Finally, things came to a head. It may have been Richard's increasing paranoia that led him to feel his fellow workers

resented the way he had been hired, but for whatever the reason, he couldn't cope with their "hostility." He had to quit.

After one or two half-hearted attempts to find work, he gave up. He cut himself off from the few friends he still had, and spent most of his days stretched out on a couch listening to endless numbers of records. He rarely spoke.

One day, in a panic, he asked us to explain what he was hearing and seeing when he turned on the television set. The images and voices that he described were obviously hallucinations.

"Paranoid schizophrenic," was the diagnosis of the psychiatrist who tested Rick. He recommended that Richard be hospitalized even though he realized it had been a struggle for us to pay for the two therapy sessions a week.

Our friends and relatives must have been aware of my son's condition but apparently they felt it wiser to say nothing. However, one of my closest friends, Guy Endore, a fellow writer who had known Rick from the day that he was born, one day asked flat out what we were doing for him. "The best we can," was about all I could say.

"Why haven't you thought about taking him to Synanon?" Guy demanded.

For a moment I wondered if Guy was serious. I thought Synanon was a place for "dope fiends." At least, that was the way the residents of Synanon had referred to themselves when Jean and I had gone with the Endores to visit the old armory on the beach in Santa Monica. "Synanon's a place for dope fiends," I said to Guy.

"Synanon takes care of 'character disorders,'" said Guy. "Why do you think addicts resort to dope in the first place?"

I thought about it. I thought about Synanon's early days when its founder, Chuck Dederich, had been under constant attack by the Santa Monica establishment. The city's major newspapers had editorially stated that Synanon's program to help addicts kick their habit and stay clean constituted a threat to the entire beach community. In the ensuing struggle a number of people rallied to its defense. Many of our friends, old war horses where worthy causes were concerned, came down to show their support. But Guy had found more in Synanon than just another "cause." He never ceased to be fascinated by its dynamics and remained involved long after

the initial furor abated. He was at work on a book about Synanon which was eventually to become part of the Foundation's considerable literary heritage. At that time, Synanon was beginning to attract favorable attention. Senator Dodd, in a speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate, referred to it as "the miracle on the beach."

Through Guy, I had been kept abreast of Synanon's activities. Many of our evenings at the Endores' had been enlivened by tapes of the "Synanon Game" which Guy used as research for his book. The Synanon Game seemed to allow participants to indulge in uninhibited verbal crossfire. Anything went, except physical violence or the threat of it. These confrontations apparently encouraged hostile feelings and emotional hang-ups to be dumped like so much garbage. I understood that the Game was Synanon's major tool which, along with its communal environment, enabled social outcasts to become respectable citizens. As I recalled the friendliness of the place, and the warm way the residents related to each other during our initial visits to the old armory, I began to see that Guy's suggestion might be the answer to our problems. Certainly Synanon's life style could provide more of the structured, protective environment which the therapist had recommended, than the disorganization Richard faced at home. I felt sure that the longer he remained in his present state of isolation, the greater would be the disaster towards which he was heading.

I don't know how much Richard knew about Synanon when I told him of Guy's suggestion, but he agreed to go if we thought it best. Guy set up an interview for the following morning. I decided to get Rick's things together without delay.

As we started to pack, Richard asked me if I had discussed Synanon with his therapist. The idea hadn't even occurred to me, but I realized that I must tell the man of our decision. I went to see him the same day.

Yes — he knew about Synanon, the therapist acknowledged — a remarkable place. Perhaps, in a year or two if Rick were up to it, it would be worth considering. "However, at this time," he said firmly, "your son's ego structure is so tenuous that any adverse pressure may trigger a reaction that could cause him to be institutionalized for good." Furthermore, he said, the Synanon Game, from what he knew of it, created

exactly the kind of pressure to which he was referring. Therefore, under no circumstances would he consent to our sending Richard there.

In all the years that I had known Guy, he had rarely raised his voice or shown anger, but when he came over the following morning and I tried to explain what happened he was furious. "What did you think the man would say?" he fumed. "Why did you even bother to ask him?"

But I was paying the man for his professional advice, I stuttered — and since my son had asked . . .

Guy started for the door. He had said all he was going to say. I would have to make up my own mind where to place my trust.

I had the greatest respect for Guy. I knew that he was highly regarded in the psychiatric community for the caliber of his novels which often dealt in depth with such subjects. On one side of the scale I weighed my good friend's judgment against the advice of the professional to whom I had entrusted the care of my son and whose treatment seemed ineffectual.

I joined Guy at the door. "Let's go," I called to Rick.

As we drove toward the beach, Rick suddenly asked me what his therapist had said. For a moment I was speechless. I couldn't bring myself to tell him the truth nor did I have the guts to lie. I managed to double-talk an evasive answer that said nothing. It must have sufficed for he didn't say another word, not even a "goodbye" as he disappeared into the administrator's office.

For days my wife and I waited for the phone to ring. We lived in dread that we would be told that he had split or, worse, that the dire prediction of the therapist had come true and that we'd have to pick him up because the "pressure" had proved too great for him to handle.

My wife might have phoned each day except that we had been told that as long as Richard remained there he was Synanon's responsibility. Any interference on our part would only rock the boat. We would have to trust the process.

Guy was our pipeline. He reported that Rick's regimen was following the same course as most newcomers. First a stint on the clean up crew, then work on general maintenance, followed by a more permanent job in the kitchen. If, as Rick's therapist had said, involvement and a more structured routine would be

therapeutic, then at least this part of Synanon's program couldn't be faulted.

Several months after Rick moved in, Synanon moved out of the old armory and into the Del Mar Beach Club, which provided far more impressive and spacious quarters. This expansion was necessary because the hippie era had arrived, and with it the old cons and prostitutes who had been the classic addicts had to make room for an overwhelming influx of teeny-pill-poppers.

Until this time, parents had been considered *persona non grata* by Synanon because the handling of inter-family hang-ups had consistently proved to be impossible. But Chuck Dederich decided that now it might be a good idea for parents to benefit from some of the learning procedures and changes that their kids were experiencing — not just for the kids' sake, but for their own. In a bold stroke, based on a successful experiment with the Benjamin family, Chuck invited Mamas and Papas of residents to come down to the new club and play the Synanon Game. The "Mamas and Papas" was the name given to this new group of Game players.

My wife and I were invited to join.

Games in the Mamas and Papas almost invariably dealt with the way practically all Synanon parents and kids compulsively attempted to contact each other and renew their unhealthy relationships before either had gained the maturity to develop better ones.

My wife and I had no such problem. We rarely got so much as a glimpse of Richard in the next four years. He lived outside of the club at an apartment complex called the "Clump." He must have known we were always at the club for our Wednesday Game, and assiduously avoided being there that night.

If we came down at other times, he always managed to duck when he saw us coming. For whatever reason, he couldn't face us. There were times when someone standing next to me would say, "There's your son." "Where?" I'd ask. They'd point and then look surprised. "Well, he was there a second ago." It was strange and upsetting — like the times when you snap on a light and think you've seen something out of the corner of your eye only to have it vanish when you turn your head.

As a result, we never could be accused of meeting our kid on the sly and breaking the "ban" imposed on all parents and their kids. As an inadvertent role model, it was easy for me to write a pamphlet on Synanon's rules for parental behavior.

The news about Richard that filtered through to us in those first four years was far from encouraging. Though he got some respect because he was able to take a temperamental old restaurant-size dishwasher apart when it broke down, and put it back in working order, his attachment to the machine, much like his fixation on the guitar, allowed him to avoid contact with people. Socially his regression grew more and more serious. He couldn't look anyone in the eye, much less talk to them. He'd mumble and look at his shoes. He could not walk across the center of a room but scurried along the walls. Outside of an occasional roommate or a few people who worked closely with him on the job, everyone considered him something of a freak.

I'd be asked in Games how I felt about having a "brain damaged" son. Though I told myself it was only a Game ploy — like being asked when did you stop beating your wife — I never could let the question pass. The more I insisted that my son wasn't really a mental cripple, the crazier I knew I sounded to the others in the Game. But they had no knowledge of what Rick had been like before.

Whenever we were about to give up hope for Rick entirely we'd hear a bit of news that would give some encouragement.

Like the time a Puerto Rican resident had a problem which no one could straighten out until Rick surprisingly resorted to his fluent Spanish and acted as translator.

Or when Rick called Medical to inform them of an accident in the kitchen. Some idiot, he said, had dropped a box on himself. It cut his lip and chipped a tooth.

"Send him up right away," Medical advised. "What's his name?"

"Richard Lees," he reported.

Though Jean and I gradually became used to the give and take of the Game, it was a constant wonder to us how Rick managed to survive the kind of heat that must have come his way as his Games strove to affect a change in him.

We were all accused of being "character disorders" of one sort or another in our Games in the Mamas and Papas. And in

listening to our peers castigate themselves for creating "dope fiends" we learned to face up to our own subjective shame and guilt. It was heartening to realize that all the other mamas and papas had been suffering the same "mea culpa" that we had. As we gamed them and each other, we learned that only when we got our kids off our backs could we begin to examine our own life styles.

"You have a drinking problem," a Game player accused my wife in the heat of a Game. Jean indignantly denied it. A "social drinker" perhaps — but an "alcoholic?" Ridiculous!

"I was in a Game with your husband," another chimed in. "He said he hates it when you drink at parties."

"If he thinks I get drunk that's his problem," my wife defended.

"No!" yelled the Game. And went on to point out that her "problem" was her husband's attitude about her drinking regardless of whether it was or wasn't justified. "If you'd stop drinking," the Game advised, "you'll have a happier marriage."

She stopped drinking. Smoking, too. So did I.

We played an especially memorable Game one evening when our daughter, Kathy, who played in another tribe on a different night, requested a special Game with us. Jean and I knew that a large part of Kathy's involvement in Synanon was due to Rick's estrangement — which in excluding her had upset her greatly. She and her brother had been very close.

In the highly emotional Game that ensued, Kathy voiced deep-seated feelings about me that I could hardly believe she'd had. She revealed that neither she nor Richard had ever really known how I felt about them. No matter how warm I seemed, they still considered me distant. She said I was apt to treat their problems as jokes, and even though I could make them laugh about them, she thought I had done so because I wanted to avoid dealing with them. They had felt I looked at whatever took place as if it were something to write about — that because of my profession I was unable to relate to people as people — only as "characters."

My friends in the Game were quick to support her. That's how I played the Synanon Game, they accused. I was just like the doctor, they said, pointing at the man across from me, who only saw people in the Game as "patients." Or that

teacher sitting next to Jean who talked down to everyone as if they were students. Oh, I was great, they said, when it came to "intellectualizing" — but where were my feelings?

I tried to find them. I really did, but I couldn't. Not in this Game, or in any other.

The only time I experienced any kind of breakthrough occurred on a "Synanon Trip" which was a cherished award for helping to support Synanon's program. It is the name given to a special weekend devoted to the creation of an incomparable emotional experience for the benefit of some sixty participants. We were invited to come along on this "voyage of discovery" — a venture which required the combined efforts of many Synanon people in its planning and execution.

We all wore the same simple robes, and in between long, very intense Games, took walks on the beach at dawn, and joined in a kind of organized fun that helped to break down the barriers that normally separate people. By the end of those memorable forty-eight hours, the sixty of us had been welded into an intimate, loving family. As a part of the final ceremonies, Jean and I were remarried in a Synanon ritual that neither of us will ever forget.

Not long after, we were told that our son had also been scheduled to go on a "Trip." We hopefully waited to hear that it had been an equally rewarding experience for him.

But Guy Endore was the bearer of sad news. It seemed that in those last remarkable moments of the Trip when everybody is so full of love that it is almost an impossibility to remain locked within oneself, Rick's group had appealed to him to play the guitar. When they offered him the instrument, Rick wouldn't touch it. He withdrew in such a way that it caused considerable alarm.

Dr. Deissler, a Synanon Regent, who was visiting from San Francisco, was concerned enough that he decided to look into Rick's case personally. Apparently no one actually knew what had happened to Rick in Spain or New York. Brain damage could easily have resulted from the use of "speed" or an overdose. Dr. Deissler was amazed to learn that Richard had never undergone thorough physiological testing.

I was shocked. Not one of the highly recommended "professionals" who had examined Richard had ever suggested that he be tested for neurological damage. Synanon took care of

that oversight. Richard was sent immediately to UCLA Medical for a complete physical evaluation.

The results turned out to be negative.

Now, at least, when someone in the Game brought up the fact that my son could only talk to washing machines, I knew one thing for sure — Synanon had proved without a doubt that he wasn't "brain damaged."

Despite what had happened on Rick's "Trip," Guy remained optimistic. "I know how you feel," he said to me. "But you have to be patient. Sometimes these things take years. What you have to do is trust the process."

One of the things we learned about the process was that the only constant in Synanon is change. Rick might have been content to commune with his dishwasher forever, but the time came when Synanon decided he should do otherwise. The next objective was to get him out in the fresh air where he'd have to deal with people. He was assigned a job on the beach shack where he was given the task of scheduling time for play on the paddle tennis courts, ping-pong tables, use of deck chairs, beach equipment, and the like.

Unfortunately, the job was short-lived. We heard that Rick had twisted an ankle playing paddle tennis and had to be given another work assignment.

Jean and I felt sure that the "accident" was psychosomatic and worried that it indicated another regression, but Synanon was undeterred. His new assignment was to a group responsible for weekly film showings. Right back with people. I heard that he demonstrated the same sort of insight with the projector and sound equipment that he had with the washing machine — but he was out of the kitchen for good.

I was floored one evening when one of the "mamas" in our tribe announced, "I saw your boy today — working on the film exchange. I didn't know you had such a handsome son."

I was about to say I didn't know how he looked because I hadn't seen him in over four years, but let it pass.

On his way home from a visit to Synanon's expanding facility at Tomales Bay, north of San Francisco, Guy Endore suffered a heart attack.

It now became my turn to relay information about Rick whenever I saw Guy in the weeks that he was confined to his home.

On one of those occasions it was Guy who had news for us. Rick had made an appearance at the Endore house the previous day. My wife and I looked at each other in amazement.

Guy laughed. No — it wasn't a social call. Synanon had sent him over to repair the T.V. set. Rick had been very quiet and had little or nothing to say while he was there, but when he left the T.V. was working perfectly.

Since when had Richard branched out into electronics, we wanted to know. This involved a lot more than the mechanical talent that he had always demonstrated previously. How had he managed to learn something that technical?

"Part of the process," Guy said. Anyone who possesses a special knowledge or technique in Synanon understands the importance of passing it on. "Giving it away," Synanon calls it. Rick was fortunate to have had some good people take an interest in him, Guy said. Some of them were Ph.D.s.

Although I was impressed and as happy as it made Jean, I still had the feeling that Guy was talking about a total stranger. He must have read my mind. "Just give it time," he insisted. "You'll see."

Tragically, it was Guy who ran out of time. Some months later he had a relapse. It was an aneurysm. He died on the operating table.

Synanon's first memorial was held in Santa Monica to commemorate Guy. Chuck Dederich, along with a number of Regents, came down from Tomales Bay to pay tribute to Synanon's "Honorary Dope Fiend." As sort of a representative of Guy's friends outside Synanon, I was asked to sit on the platform.

I scanned the faces of the hundreds of people present, looking for Rick. He must have been there to pay his respects, but if so, I never saw him.

All through 1971 and 1972, as we continued to play the Game and work around the club, it began to dawn on us that a phenomenon was occurring. Our son was slowly materializing, I was sure that I caught sight of the back of his head now and then. Twice my wife reported that she had actually seen his face. She thought he had put on weight. Once I saw him going upstairs to a meeting. He looked taller.

Then one night, after Games, as we went down the front steps, Rick was standing there. I can't remember if he actually

answered when I said, "Hello" — but my wife saw him, too. She said he smiled.

I resolved that I'd engage him in conversation at our very next encounter. He was still in charge of films. I had an old Chaplin classic in 16mm that I knew he'd remember. It would be a perfect gambit to break the ice. I even planned exactly what I'd say and how I'd say it.

About a week later, I caught him leaving the Club just as I was parking my car. I called to him, and he waited. As nonchalantly as possible I asked if he'd be interested in running the film.

I was totally unprepared for what happened. He broke into a soundless stutter. He stared at his shoes. His head bobbed rapidly as if he were saying "yes" while his lips were fixed in a forced grin. He shuffled like a spastic unable to decide which way to run.

I backed off hurriedly — sick at my terrible mistake. I waved a quick goodbye, and dashed upstairs certain I had seen the last of him, and that he'd fade into the wallpaper for good.

I reported what happened with "Richie," as Synanon called him, in my very next Game. I was dumbfounded by the lack of concern shown by those who knew him. "Oh, when he does that, we just tell him to knock it off," someone said. "We stopped letting him get away with that a long time ago," said another. "When he wants to talk, you can't stop him. He ran the history of the Viet Nam War for an hour and a half straight the other night." A third laughed. "He did better than that when he took off on the construction of the guitar." The Game shifted to more important things.

Guy had always hoped that Rick would someday be sent to Tomales Bay. It was the center of Synanon's activities. It was where Chuck, with the help and talent of Synanon's best, was developing the future of the Foundation. I heard that Rick might be going there to live. He had been recently elevated to "Synanon employee," an honor that meant Synanon considered him valuable enough to the environment to be paid for his work. He was studying to pass the F.C.C. requirements for a Radio Telephone First Class License.

It was great news, but it also meant we had no idea when Rick would return to Santa Monica — if ever. We missed

those occasional glimpses of him that we had enjoyed.

Then one night my friends in the Synanon Game began to ask me a completely different kind of question: "How does it feel," they inquired, "to have a genius in the family?"

How *did* it feel? Once again, just like the Games I had been in with my daughter, I was unable to answer. I had submerged my feelings so deeply and for so long a time that I could not bring them to the surface. I suppose to have done so would have been too painful. Jean had been able to talk about her feelings of Richard in her Games, but I had always managed to duck it with a flip answer. When I couldn't get away with that, I just told the Game anything I thought it had wanted to hear.

I realized now that through all those years when I had convinced myself that Richard was going to be a failure like my brother, Maury, I did my best to avoid thinking about it. Perhaps I had agreed to send Rick off to Spain for that very same reason. Maybe that's how I had felt about Synanon — that it would take my son off my hands and I would not have had to face his failure or my own.

By closing my eyes, I had blinded myself to the fact that Rick had changed and he wasn't like Maury — far from it. He had turned himself around and was standing on his own two feet without any help from me.

For the first time in over six years of Game playing, I found myself caught up in a surge of emotion I couldn't control. I tried to stop the tears, and then realized that I really didn't have to — that this was what the Game was all about.

One night, Jean and I were helping out in the dining room. I was working at the steam table. As I glanced down the line waiting to be served, I noticed an impressive looking man wearing a beard. For a moment I hadn't recognized him, but it was Rick. He looked tanned and rugged. It was hard to find the boy I remembered in such an adult disguise.

As he moved along the line, I could see that there was no way to avoid confrontation. I almost dropped his plate before I could hand it to him. He grinned and said, "Hello." I grinned, too. And then, to my astonishment, I heard myself say that Jean and I were planning to have dinner before our Game call-offs, and would he like to join us?

"Sure," he answered.

There we were — the three of us at the same table. We

talked about nothing and everything. It was as if six long years had never happened. He mentioned that he'd be coming to Santa Monica once a month for a while to do some work in the electronics shop. His mother asked if he'd like to have dinner at our place the next time he was down. Go to a concert, I suggested — or maybe a movie?

He found time on his very next trip. Several visits later, we phoned his sister, who had married and moved to Washington, D.C. The phone bill was astronomical.

On another occasion a group of family friends dropped by unexpectedly. I was tense, but Richie carried it off with aplomb. I was proud of his familiarity with what was going on in the world, and the way he expressed his opinions. I'm sure it must have surprised some of them who had assumed that he had been totally isolated in those years he had spent behind the "walls" of Synanon.

We were in for a surprise ourselves. Richard mentioned casually that he had already passed the Federal Communications Commission examination, and that he had received his first class license to operate transmitters for any major radio station in the country.

"But where did you go to school?" a friend asked him.

"In Synanon," Richard explained. Professionals in the field — some dope fiends, some "square" lifestylers, and some Game players — had advised him on the books to read, had answered all his questions. They shared their know-how and worked with him on the installation of Synanon's extensive electronic systems.

"You couldn't get that sort of one-to-one relationship in a regular college," someone observed. "In fact, I don't know where you could get that kind of an education — anywhere at all."

Last year, when Richard heard we were coming up to San Francisco to attend a family wedding, he invited us to visit him at Tomales Bay, and we were delighted to accept.

It turned out that there wasn't enough time in the two days that we stayed to encompass all there was to see. We hadn't been to Synanon's "Academy" in several years and fantastic changes had taken place since then. Our son, the host, had every moment planned. Each night we dined with old friends whom we hadn't seen in years. In between watching the

Infant Program where children from the ages of six months to two years were using and enjoying equipment that was sophisticated enough for four-year-olds and listening to banks of chattering computers in the data control center, we visited the School, the Ranch and the automotive department at Walker Creek. Richie marched us up and down hills inspecting the various towers and T.V. cables he was working on. He gave us an exhaustive tour of the power sources, supply shops, and his work area with its latest equipment and explained it all in technical terms that we pretended to understand.

We took an hour's respite to visit his "cave" — Synanon's term for sleeping quarters. As we relaxed in comfortable chairs and listened to classical music on his hi-fi, I looked around the neat, pleasant room with its crowded bookshelves. His table was stacked with periodicals, some of which he had eagerly scooped up on his last visit to us in Los Angeles. Out of his salary he was acquiring a new record collection. He had a chess set. On his walls were reproductions of paintings that he liked.

He had started taking life drawing classes and showed us some of his work. He was learning to play the piano. Now and then one of his friends passed by the door, would pause to say "Hi." He was hoping to teach science at Badger, which was then Synanon's high school in the Sierra Foothills near the Sequoia National Park. He wanted to give away some of the electric know-how that Synanon had given him.

While we waited outside the Ranch "Connect" for Richie to jitney over from Walker Creek to bid us goodbye, a jeep came down from the hills. Chuck Dederich was at the wheel, his wife, Betty, beside him. They had been watching some of the kids practicing hang-gliding.

A friend with whom I'd been chatting suggested that I go over to Chuck and say hello. I didn't think he'd remember me. It had been a long time since Guy's memorial. My friend practically shoved me in Chuck's direction. Betty had left for the moment, and Chuck was alone. I went up and said, "Hello."

I could tell from the look in his eye that he was trying to place me. Or maybe he was simply waiting to hear what I was going to say next. "I'm an old friend of Guy Endore's," I filled in. "I'm Bob Lees."

There was another pause.

“Richie Lees’ father,” I added.

“Oh — Richie!” Chuck said, breaking into a smile. “Sure, sure — he’s quite a boy!”

I grinned back. Being the father of “Richie” was a pretty good claim to fame at that.

Betty returned and got in beside Chuck. “You’ve heard of the ‘miracle on the beach’?” Chuck asked me as he started the motor.

I nodded.

“Well,” he concluded, “I’d say Richie Lees turned out to be that miracle.”

As they drove off, I stood for a moment, wondering exactly what it had taken to make the miracle occur. Of course, I knew what Guy Endore’s answer would have been. He would have said, “Trust in the process.”



Admission interviews are conducted at the following locations.
If possible, please call in advance.

East Coast

Synanon
338 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024
(212) 580-4999

Synanon
Route 2
P.O. Box 415
Kerhonkson, NY 12446
(914) 626-2600

Northern California

Synanon
2240 24th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 647-0440

Midwest

Synanon
1300 Lafayette East
Room 1807 & 1707
Detroit, MI 48207
(313) 963-0617 (7 AM–11 PM)
(313) 393-2610 (11 PM–7 AM)

Central California

Synanon Strip
P.O. Box 139
Badger, CA 93603
(209) 337-2885

Foundation Intake Office

Synanon Tomales Bay
6055 Marshall-Petaluma Road
Marshall, CA 94940
(415) 663-8111 Ext. 358



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The SYNANON STORY

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Glen Stoner, right, and Ted Haynish take a break from their jobs on Synanon's Northern California Ranch.

How the Synanon Process Works:

GLEN STONER

At an age when most kids are learning the rigors and pleasures of kindergarten, Glen Stoner was learning how to sniff glue and steal.

By the time he was 10, he had already been arrested and by 15, it was no surprise to his family (nor, in a strange way even to him) that he wound up on a New Year's Eve writhing in agony after having been stabbed with an ice pick.

If this was a TV scenario, Glen should by now have been safely locked up in a reformatory.

But Glen, now 16, is at Synanon, learning how to work with livestock and agriculture on a 3,300-acre ranch. More than that, the slightly built, blond-haired, blue-eyed young man is learning to live a healthy, normal life without recourse to the near-insane behavior that characterized his life virtually from birth.

The difference, he admits with a broad, characteristic grin, is Synanon.

Glen was born on February 10, 1960 in New York. One of seven children, his family life was a shambles, Glen remembers. By the time he was 5, he was hanging out with an older brother's friends and breaking into schools, breaking windows, stealing candy, stealing money from his parents, and sniffing glue. By the time he was in the second grade, he was thrown out of his grammar school and sent to a supposedly tougher school . . . where he learned to steal beer, break and enter houses, and take rides on garbage trucks for his after-school pleasures.

His first "bust" came at 10 when he and a friend broke into a blanket factory, stole some blankets, and sold them on the street. The police let him go with a warning.

When he was 13, Glen had become an accomplished street-wise kid. He was involved in a street gang, taking LSD, methadrene, and sniffing glue, smoking pot, and playing hookey almost continually. He had even found an easy way to get around New York: hitching rides on the top of elevated trains. Spending money came from stealing.

It was not too long afterwards that Glen became a gang "warlord".

His teachers were distraught. Glen remembers with an ironic grin how they summed up his problem: "The program counselors said the problem wasn't me. Instead, they thought it was the people I hung out with. What they didn't know was that I was the leader of the pack!"

Glen was sent off to a day-care rehabilitation center. By day, he would be told how to live the good, moral life, and go home at night for more rounds of drugs and mayhem. The glue was finally getting to him, he recalls: "I was really spaced out. I thought I could read my friends' minds. I thought I was time-travelling. There were fire engines in my head. I thought the moon was crashing . . ."

On New Year's Eve, 1974, Glen attempted to help a friend who was in the middle of a fight. His reward was an ice pick in the leg. In pain, his leg tied with a primitive tourniquet, he staggered home to his mother, only to lie and say he had cut his leg on a piece of glass.

By April, 1975 Glen Stoner, age 15, was

in terrible shape. His skin was breaking out; his teeth were rotting; he had not showered in months. Life was measured in increments of tubes of glue. He was on three years' probation for having robbed a freight train. And then, one day he was arrested for beating up a newsboy with a cane. At the police station his mother demanded that he should be put away.

But Glen, through his rehabilitation center, had heard about Synanon from a former Synanon resident who was the director of the program, one of the estimated 1,200 programs to have begun based on Synanon's philosophies and developmental ideas, and sometimes staffed by Synanon-trained people. Glen's judge approved Synanon as an alternative to jail, and Glen came into Synanon.

From the beginning his life changed immediately. Gone was his mane of hair; instead, he had a short, cropped look. He began getting up early, working hard, and learning how to achieve some excellence in physical fitness. His new home was the Synanon ranch north of San Francisco, and Glen soon found himself accepted as part of the Synanon family.

Recently, his mother visited Glen in California and was amazed at the change in her son. But Glen is too busy and happy thinking about growing up to think back on his days as a victim and perpetrator of the kind of life that is all too frequently characteristic of young people in our society.



Ted Haynish helps Glen chase down an Angus cow for inspection, one of the many agricultural skills young men and women learn at our 3,300-acre community 55 miles north of San Francisco.



Gary Williams, left, shows newcomer Mike Loza around Synanon's Tomales Bay community. Gary, who came to Synanon for help five years ago, now works with newer residents in Synanon.

GARY WILLIAMS

Gary Williams may have been somewhat older than Glen Stoner when he entered Synanon (see previous story), but he was hardly in better shape.

Born and raised in Harlem, he was one of four children. His father worked for the New York Transit Authority. Gary went through high school and three years of college majoring in art education. He also worked at a variety of jobs, including construction and office, even working for a time in a brokerage office.

But there were large gaps in Gary's life—gaps he filled with drugs: heroin and marijuana, and committing burglaries to support his habit. Eventually, at 25, he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon and went

to jail for three months. As is the case for many "dope fiends", the path led straight down: within a short time Gary was living in the gutters of New York.

Desperate, Gary entered Synanon and found himself in a totally different society where people strive to change their lives by living according to a new set of values. Now, five years later, Gary's attention is not on what he has been, but on what he and others in the community are developing to improve the lives of newcomers to Synanon.

The current notion is to organize new people into groups of ten ("Ten Groups"), and to place them in the charge of community people who will work closely with them on a rotating basis. "The idea is to

share the development of the new people with the entire community, not just with a staff," says Gary. "A new person isn't just looked at by one or two pairs of eyes. This way, more people in the community can have their say about the way an individual is growing and changing, and about the way in which new people in Synanon are being handled in general. It assures a tremendous amount of information flow."

Community people, from managers to tradespeople, take on a Ten Group for varying lengths of time—playing the Synanon Game (Synanon's uninhibited conversation/learning tool) with them, as well as working and socializing with them. Adults show them how to work hard, to do it with excellence, and to have a good time at it. They also show them how to get along with and get close to other people.

"The idea is to maintain a small staff for some accountability," says Gary, "and to spread the responsibility for a newcomer's welfare as far into the community as possible."

"In this way, the 'people business' is really the *people's* business—and I'm referring to all the people of Synanon."

Information about what Synanon does for young people can be obtained by contacting any Synanon house.



An aerial photo of a portion of Synanon's land near Tomales Bay. In the foreground are the athletic field and corral, and beyond them, buildings used for administration, food service, bunkhouses and classrooms.

BILL DEDERICH
SYNANON

Dear Friends:

As the end of 1976 approaches, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the wonderful support that you have continued to give to Synanon during this bicentennial year.

This has been a year for innovations in our community. We have opened a house in Seattle; we have acquired a 1,800-acre ranch in Central California. We have made major advances toward making our community the healthiest community in the land through a careful exercise and diet revolution. (I've lost nearly 60 pounds myself.) We have initiated the notion of "Hobby Lobby," which is helping our people to learn something about using their hands and the physical world. We have restructured our newcomer procedures (see the previous story) to enable more people in the community to participate directly in "The People Business." Sales in our Resources Department have never been higher. Contributions from American industry continue to be a vital backbone of our efforts to feed, clothe, and house the people who come to us for help.

All this has been made possible by your continued interest in Synanon. We are proud that the backbone of our support comes from the private sector and not from governmental funds. We are proud to be supported by the American people; we are happy that you have seen fit to partake directly in our growth.

We wish you, your family, and friends the very best during the forthcoming holiday season, and we invite you to visit us sometime during the new year.

Sincerely,

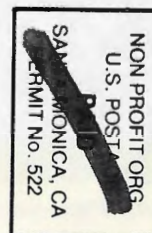
Bill

W.J. Dederich
Director
Synanon Resources

WJD/et

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