

JIM REED SCRIPT

Music up and under

No way. I ain't going back there no more. I'll tell you that. I had enough of it.

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THIS IS "LIFE ON MY OWN: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FROM INSTITUTION TO THE COMMUNITY, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE MAINE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL.

JAMES REED WAS BORN IN 1942, IN FARMINGTON, MAINE, AND SPENT ABOUT TWO YEARS AT PINELAND HOSPITAL AND TRAINING CENTER, AN INSTITUTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED THAT MADE HEADLINES IN THE 1950'S, '60'S AND '70S FOR ITS POOR CONDITIONS. HE WAS RAISED BY HIS GRANDPARENTS ON A FARM IN OTISVILLE

My father ended up selling it. Nothing [you] could do about that because [the] chickens all died. I had chickens, but the fox got them. Then he came up to the house. (Inaudible). I didn't know if he was there or not, but he was underneath the truck. We moved the truck out of the garage. We was going somewhere one day, out of the garage. We was going somewhere one day.

BUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS GRANDFATHER WAS SOMEWHAT STRAINED

He swore awful! Arrgh! I couldn't stand him if I wanted to. Something wicked came out of his mouth, so I kind of didn't like that.

HIS PARENTS COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF HIM, AND HE RAN AWAY FROM ONE GROUP HOME BECAUSE HE WANTED TO GET AWAY FROM EVERYBODY, SO HE WAS SENT TO PINELAND.

Well, I'll tell you one thing. It wasn't very good in Pineland. I'll tell you that. The food was no good. That's for sure. They'd lock the door on me. I couldn't go out, so that's one thing I couldn't do... They just kind of cooked something and then shove it down my throat. I didn't like that either. They want to do that, too. And I got very sick from that stuff... Too much headaches, you know, and the food wasn't too good. They was going to pound the shit out of me. I didn't like that, either.

AND HE SAYS THERE WAS NO PRIVACY.

They had to have bodyguards when I take a shower and everything. Just for one minute they didn't leave the area. They had to have bodyguards there to watch out what you're doing. I didn't like that either. Privacy. That's not good. They had to ... That's not good.

PRIVACY WASTN'T THE ONLY THING LACKING. HE SLEPT IN A DORM WITH FEW COMFORTS.

There was no—no sheets and no nothing there. You couldn't cover up if you wanted to... I wanted to get out of there, just as quick as I can. I'll tell you. I didn't like that.

MUCH OF THE DAY AT PINELAND WAS SIMPLY BOREDOM. THERE WAS NO ACTIVITY AND LITTLE TO DO

You stay in the dorm all day. Nothing to do. So that wasn't funny either... No games or nothing. Couldn't do anything that hurts anybody. I couldn't do anything if I wanted to. They wouldn't let me.

HIS LIFE WAS DIRECTED ENTIRELY BY OTHERS AND JIM WAS ABLE TO MAKE FEW DECISIONS FOR HIMSELF.

I didn't make any decisions at all. That's one thing I didn't do.

REED WAS LATER RELEASED FROM PINELAND IMMEDIATELY STARTED CALLING ATTENTION TO THE DIFFICULTIES THERE.

When I come out of there, I wrote a letter to the Governor, telling [him] to close it down and I guess everybody else was glad to get out of there, too. They didn't like it.

PINELAND CLOSED IN 1996 AFTER DECADES OF CONTROVERSY AND PUBLIC OUTCRY. AFTER PINELAND, JIM STAYED IN A SERIES OF GROUP HOMES AGAIN. NOT ALL OF THEM WERE IDEAL. HE REMEMBERS THE BATHROOM IN ONE HOUSE.

I didn't dare to go in the bathroom, because the floor was going to cave in. I'd be down in the cellar. I didn't dare go ... be down in the cellar.

REED HAS BEEN ABLE TO WORK, HE WORKED AT GOODWILL AND HELPED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF DENTAL FLOSS AND TOOTHPASTE. HE LIVES IN A GROUP HOME AT LIMERICK, MAINE NOW, IN A RURAL SETTING WHERE HE KEEPS CHICKENS—RHODE ISLAND REDS

I was out there today cleaning out the chicken coop. I cleaned that out this morning, right after breakfast.

HE GOES BOWLING AND ENJOYS RIDING HORSES

I like brushing the horse, too. They stand still, you know. He might go sideways, but you get around him, he'll stand still. He likes that. You give him something that he likes, you know. I don't have anything to give him. I should give him an apple. I don't have one.

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HE HAS A GUARDIAN WHO HELPS HIM WITH MONEY AND OTHER DECISIONS. IT APPEARS HE HAS FOUND A HOME.

I like it here much better. You do things. You do things and you can get out, do things, do—like getting shavings, and I’m hoping to get more chickens.

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YOU’VE BEEN LISTENING TO “LIFE ON MY OWN: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FROM INSTITUTION TO THE COMMUNITY,” A PRODUCTION OF THE MAINE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ORAL HISTORY AND FOLKLIFE RESEARCH

Music up and out