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How to Handle an Anthropologist:

Russell Shuttleworth, PhD interviews shaman/performance artist Frank Moore

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The Uncomfortable Zones of Fun: The Temescal Period 2009-2013

What A Life:

An (auto)Biography of Shaman/Performance Artist Frank Moore

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Frank Moore at Poetry Bash, Fort Mason, San Francisco, 1988. Photo by Linda Mac.

Back cover photo: Frank Moore, Mabuhay Gardens, San Francisco, late 1970s. Photo by Dave Patrick.

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What A Life

**THE (auto)BIOGRAPHY OF SHAMAN/PERFORMANCE ARTIST
FRANK MOORE**

by
Frank Moore
with
Russell Shuttleworth

PREFACE

Over the years, Frank Moore had attempted to find some one to write his biography but it never worked out. In 2010, he decided to start working on it himself.

This book is the working document Frank created that he was working on, when he had time, up until his death in 2013. It covers his life up until around 1989.

Frank constructed it primarily with the conversations he had with anthropologist Russell Shuttleworth from 1997 through 2009. The complete transcripts of those interviews are available in the book *How to Handle an Anthropologist* published in 2019 by Inter-Relations. He also used excerpts from his mother, Constance (Connie) Moore's autobiography, excerpts from his own writing, in particular from "Art of a Shaman," and an interview by Sheri Falco for a film, "Sex and Spirituality," that never was made.

No attempt has been made to organize this material. It is presented in its raw form, as Frank left it, in the hope it will be valuable for future researchers interested in Moore's life.

WHAT A LIFE

By
 Frank Moore
 With
 Russell Shuttleworth

8/19/2008

I wrote Tortures because a dance company, Breathe, hired me to do a workshop for them and in my pre-interview with them I found they tended to whine about their past. So I figured I would beat them to it. I would out victim them. This was in '94. They were two gay guys...one black, one white...and two women. The guys started the company to do anti-sexist/anti-racist work. So the guys needed some babes in the company! I had an individual meeting with each of the four the week before the 24-hour workshop. A lot was revealed in those meetings which I then used in the workshop...sexism and racism among them. It turned out all four of them had wanted individually to work with me. But they were scared of me! So they somehow thought it would be "safer" for all of them to work with me together. I disproved that theory! Anyway, they all whined about their childhoods, etc.! I wasn't about to spend 24 hours listening to them whine! So I wrote Tortures, putting everything "bad", and what could seem bad, in my life and read it at the beginning of the workshop. It worked and they did not whine. It was an extremely intense workshop! But afterward they invited me to their dance show, which they dedicated to me. It was at 848 Community Space which became my performance home for the next couple of years! It turned out that 848 was founded on my work! This was the first time I heard that!

TORTURES

Frank Moore

May 18, 1994

events are real,
 but victim's reality

ain't mine.

loud doctor

judge

voices kept pronouncing

no intelligence,
 no future,
 no spark,

ust a black hole drain...

put him

forgotten
 memories
 nstitution.

family screaming voices

over thanksgiving

and christmas table
accused
he mother's sins taken out
on the son...
the son
there
listening
crying
for 13 years.
ugly doll.
kids were pulled away...
maybe it's contagious.
kids were slapped away
for looking
at the slobbering
doll.
adults,
keeping
the doll
for awhile
to give
the poor woman
a break
saying
over coffee,
why does she keep him,
no future,
can never do anything...
sure, he understands...
but more the pity...
understanding doom...
look at him
listening to us
in the chair...
4 years old
and doomed
to can not.
abandoned at 5...
hospital,
their excuse,
a baby brother being born,
then me
with chickenpox...
but i knew it

was because i shit
too much,
pissed
too much...
so i held it in
until i couldn't
anymore...
and then sat in it
because i needed
too many baths.
sat in it
until after college...
it was the least
a burden
such as i
could do!

they were going to leave me
again.....
the floppy
ugly
thick-lipped,
buck-tooth
dumbo-ear
no-future
me...
for 2 years...
i'd be 10
before i'd see them
again...
if then...
but my hives
put an end
to that!

frames steel and leather
pinched,
rub blisters,
rub raw red sores
from hips to ankles,
framing
imprisoning
chaining
this gross
abnormal beast
down into the sacred appearance of
normalcy,
that abstract state.

if the beast crossed his legs,
the illusion would crack...
so wedge a lead bar
between these frustrated legs
for 26 years...
never mind
it pinches his balls.
he will just watch tv
all his life.

me
lying on a hard table,
listening to the professionals
discussing my doomed fate.
me
only in underpants.
they want
always
to cut open
my body and brain.

i knew kids
who were twisted zombies
after doctors
cut them open.
doctors want
to give me drugs
to stop my slobbering
and to tranquilize
my body
into the american dream...
or in the ballpark. they settled
on daily physical torture.

dad
missed my ninth birthday party
for a bender....
babbling drunkenly later
about how he loved me.
teachers
bribing
one another
about who would get the freak.
one quit.

but the professionals
decided the schools weren't equipped
to handle such a creature.
sentenced
to isolation
with mother

in the towers...
with daily outings
to physical tortures.
bent fingers,
arms,
legs
so far into unnatural positions
that it took
three of them
to do it,
so far i screamed in pain,
screaming
i want to be normal.
i lied,
i never wanted that!
one time
i stuck my hand up
into their cunts.
they rubbed ice
all over my body,
then brushed me
hard
with a house paint brush.
i awoke
when i was 13
after an operation
to pull my balls
down,
i awoke
to hear one nurse
saying to another,
"why did they bother,
no woman
would make love
with him."
mom
once told
me,
"any girl
who would want you
must be crazy."
in the towers,
i lost my hearing.
the teenage "babysitter"
blindfolded
14-year old me
so i couldn't see her
and two girlfriends

dance sexually
 with one another.
 dad was pissed.
 he couldn't hit a crip.
 so every night
 at the dinertable
 he would scream
 at my brother,
 humiliated my brother,
 backhand slapped my brother,
 whipped my brother
 with a belt....
 and then exited to the local bar.
 i always cried.
 my high school teacher
 made me eat clorets
 because my breathe
 and body odor
 stank bad.
 college wouldn't take
 me
 because my slobbering
 would offend and distract
 other students.
 airlines
 used this logic
 to not let me
 on their planes.
 rubbing myself
 into climax
 in college,
 nothing came out
 like before.
 orgasms weren't messy
 like before...
 before that bladder operation.
 curious,
 i went to the college nurse,
 who checked with the doctor
 who didn't see any reason
 to tell
 a 27-year old virgin
 ugly
 rag doll
 about the side-effect

of the operation
of no-mess orgasm...
after all, rag dolls
don't have sex or kids...
we don't want to have more rag dolls!
my would-be mother-in-law
told my would-be wife
"marry somebody else...
and adopt frank!"
she said a lot
more choice things...
but time and space are limited.
but she did bribe
every justice of the peace
for miles around
to not marry us.
if you don't shut-up,
you spoiled brat...
living
with old drunk
male nurse
who kept rag dolls
in their place
by punching them out.
lived with him for 6-months...
until he pulled
a loaded gun on me.
then i screamed him to sleep.
a knife at the crashpad...
if i didn't stop laughing at him...
i wasn't laughing.
a paper dixie cup at the headshop...
if i didn't start talking,
he'd push it down my throat.
never mind the hitman.
never mind linda's mafia papa.
and i'm sure i've forgotten a lot.
my first french kiss
was from a guy
who then tried to rape me
putting his penis in my mouth.
i like french kissing.
but all in all,
life has been good!

I think my life has been basically great. I have always been lusty. Lusty is love of living. It is the way of looking at life, living life, enjoying life...liking to look, to touch, admitting to your enjoyment, daring to do what you enjoy, daring things just because it is silly not to. This is where intellect finds its rightful place...grasping and playing with ideas but in an earthy way. Lusty automatically projects sexy. Lusty does what feels good. It breaks taboos, therefore discovers things...it risks being "bad". It is a rogue. It dares to look, to touch, to get turned-on. It looks down blouses and up dresses just to look.

My first stroke of good luck was I was born spastic, unable to walk or talk. Add to this good fortune the fact that my formative years were in the sixties -- my fate was assured!

CONNIE

by

Frank Moore

Connie completed the fading into death
this afternoon.

She has always lived in her young mind,
always was a black sheep,
raising black sheep,
always wanted to know,
always hungry for education,

NO MATTER WHAT!
WHATEVER IT TOOK!

Deaf to CAN'T,
to dumb rules!

No time for social frills,
no time for BS,
no time for limits.

Just time for deadpan joy of just everyday,
for no-nonsense love,
for pushing and demanding for
possibilities.

She bit,
or pretended not to hear,
just going for what's right
like a tank...
running you over.

You were a fool
if you believed
her mcgoo act!

Hero? Yes!
Always growing beyond
working in a doctor's office,
after getting a college education,
after the leaving of Jim,
threatened by his black sleep wife,
after pushing me onto THE REAL WORLD,
after raising Jerry and me,
after getting out of Utah as a free thinker!

Just taking Tums and aspirins,
Connie at 79 lived a very rich life...
always young in life...
now always
will be young!

Jerry and I are so lucky
to be in the black sheep family of
CONNIE!

My mom, Connie, was born to James (Matt) Madison, a farmer, and Cornelia Terry Chidester's already large family [all toll 11 kids] on the cold morning of November 20, 1920, at 3am, in the little town of Venice, nestled along the Sevier River in Sevier County, Utah. I never knew the first names of Grandpa and Grandma before now. Before Connie past, she wrote her 50-page autobiography. From it I have gotten a lot of info. Grandpa always was old, ancient...even to Connie growing up! My first actual memory was at 3 pushing around in my walker around the dinning room of their Salt Lake City home. Grandpa was in his rocker looking at the fire which was always burning in the fireplace...even in summertime. He was always there watching his fire in his overalls and plaid shirts, pocket watch, spit can, and black coffee in a deep plate from before dawn until late at night. Oh, he did go out to feed the chickens and sometimes sat in the rocker on the porch. But the fire was his thing. He was a happy Santa of a guy, but with a gross bloody red bag below his left eye. I liked his commitment to the fire. He was still there before the fire years later when my younger brother Jerry melted plastic toy soldiers on the hearth.

Mom's family was always poor, but happy.

Connie: "In November, 1929, we packed our belongings on a flat bed truck and, like "Grapes of Wrath", moved to the big city a full days travel north. My brother Glen had a coal business and my father was to join him in the business and give up farming.

"We were a very poor family all through my school years as most families we knew at that time. Dad's job with the coal company had dwindled to a few orders for kindling wood and sometimes delivering coal in his truck. As we grew older, it was harder and harder for Mother and Dad to buy school clothes and books. Consequently, we all dropped out of school to go to work, except Lois. Education had no value beyond junior high, certainly not high school. We were somewhat encouraged to think about career training in school, and I had an idea I would like to be a nurse or school teacher and went through my school years with that in mind. But I certainly did not expect anyone to support those ideas or be motivated to do it myself. There was no money. Times were hard. So, after my one year at Granite, I had to find a job to support my next year in school. I got a job in a laundry at the tremendous sum of \$8 a week. I didn't want to give that up to go back to school. I was underage and had to get a work permit from the Board of Education and thought my school days were over.

"I really don't know how Dad fed and clothed his large family. I know the older ones helped some. I remember Dad had chickens and he would go to the bakery for old bakery goods for the chickens. Some of the cakes and rolls were still edible and we used them for our lunches. He had a little wagon that he took to fruit markets and brought home fruits and vegetables that were too ripe to sell. We ate it. He had a vegetable garden for a while

across the tracks which helped. But I don't remember him getting much help from us kids when the harvest time came or any other time. That was below our dignity.

"I had a couple of domestic jobs at this time, but I don't remember why I left one job and went to the next. I lived with a family near 8th South and 5th East who owned a grocery store on State Street and about 8th South. I helped the mother with a big family keep house. I had my own room and radio. Another place was on the avenues where I mostly took care of the kids and the house while the mother and father worked. She was a maid for the president of copper mine at Bingham, and he was their chauffeur. I was really low class: a servant to servants. I had a bed in the corner of the 2 boys' room. But I liked the family and was like one of them."

Connie went back to high school to get her diploma. To do that, she had to lie about her age and set up a fake address. This kind of willingness to do whatever it took to get an education was what she would apply to getting me educated, to getting me a future. Struggling was just a part of living for Connie.

But for fun she roller skated.

Connie: "As I was finishing my junior and senior year in high school preparing myself for a possible career in the business world, Private James F. Moore, AF6914381, was doing his basic training and was following the direction of his orders to Salt Lake and eventually, on his own, to Wooley's Roller Skating Rink where we were destined to meet. This event took place shortly before Christmas, 1940. I invited the lonely soldier to Christmas dinner and Aunt Lizzy was there. In her kidding way, she prophetically asked me to introduce my future husband. Jim was amused at my embarrassment.

"Jim, by this time Private 1st Class, was from Washington, Pennsylvania, which was part of his attraction. Pennsylvania was so far away from Utah, so much more sophisticated. I was awed. It was all so very romantic. I learned that he had graduated 5th in his class (and I was a drop-out returned) and that his sister Harriet was 1st. Nobody was that smart in my circles (I thought). I was falling in love. On one date the question of age came up. I had turned 20 on my last birthday. Jim was 19. There was a big 8 months difference in our age and I was horrified. He was just a kid and I couldn't handle it. I felt the whole relationship crumbling. It didn't take me much time to get used to the idea because cupid was at work. We started planning marriage. I suggested it as he was shy. But he was in the service and World War II was fast approaching. We didn't have time to play around with the idea long. Jim bought a Lincoln Mercury which kept him broke but offered us intimacy to cement our relationship. One night on his way to my house he had an accident out on State Street. After that he turned the car over to the insurance company and we carried on our romance by bus or borrowed car."

After 6 months of marriage, Jim left for war and Connie went to work at Remington Arms Plant that had opened as part of the war effort.

Connie: "Frank James Moore arrived pretty much on time on June 25, 1946. We had to drive to Columbus's Fort Hayes Hospital for delivery. He was not turning and was finally delivered breach. Somewhere in that delivery, Frank had some brain damage and they

couldn't get him to suckle. They finally took him, without telling me what was happening, to the Children's Hospital in Columbus. Jim went with them and they were gone so long. No one would talk to me and I was just sure that Frank had died. When they came back and told me, I was so relieved but I asked Jim never to do that to me again. I can deal with what I know, not what I don't know.

"We named him Frank after his paternal grandfather and James after my dad who had lots of grandchildren and some had his name. I went home from the hospital but Frank stayed at the Children's Hospital for a month until they could get him to take enough formula. Finally, I brought him home and we treated him like a preemie with feedings every 2 hours all around the clock. I would just get him back to sleep and it was time to eat again. I was the one to get up always. Jim had to work and needed his rest. I wasn't getting much either. Frank liked all those feedings and it was hard to stop when he didn't need it anymore. I finally had to let him cry it out. I didn't think I was ever going to get a full night's sleep again.

"As the months went by and Frank wasn't doing the normal things, we had to come to grips with the fact that he had motor damage. His pediatrician in Columbus thought he was mentally retarded and suggested we start making arrangements to put him into the State Hospital. Jim was ready to accept the prognosis, but I could see too much alertness to buy that. Grace and Dad agreed with me and we started looking around for help.

"We had tried to get help for Frank in Columbus but his pediatrician's prognosis prevailed and we got nowhere. We took him to the Cleveland Clinic, renowned for its work. We went armed with his records and with Grace and Dad for support and drove up. They went through the usual evaluation, but here again, the other doctor's opinion got in the way. They were more interested in my eye span which was abnormally wide than Frank's problems and they wanted X-Rays of me for their studies. I acquiesced but Frank got nowhere. So we decided to leave the records behind and start fresh. We took him to the Barney Convalescent Hospital in Dayton where they had a clinic. They could see his potential right away and scheduled him for physical and occupational therapy and then speech. I started my trips of 30 miles three times a week. Thank goodness I had learned to drive by then. Frank did well and was well liked. He was cooperative and it was a joy to work with him which I did at home. Jim built an exercise table and parallel bars and "skis" to work with. He built him a standing table and a sandbox."

During the first year, it became more and more obvious that things weren't "normal." The doctors told my parents that I had no intelligence, that I had no future, that I would be best put into an institution and be forgotten. This was a powerful expectation with all the force of western science and medicine as well as social influences, behind it. It would have been easy for my parents to be swept up into this expectation. Then that expectation would have created my reality. I would have long ago died without any other possibilities.

Instead, my parents rejected this expectation for the possibility they saw in my eyes, for what for them should have been true. This rejection of the cultural expectation of reality could not be a one-time choice. They had to passionately live their choice everyday, every minute, or the cultural expectation would have sucked them and me into it. It fought them at every new

possibility they opened to me. Their passionate commitment to how they thought things should be attracted people to me who kept opening new possibilities for me.

Actually it was my mom, Connie, who insisted to ignore the doctors. Grace, Dad's step mother...my grandma...supported my mother in keeping me, in treating me as a normal kid. We lived in Dayton until I was 8 on the air force base. Granddad Frank and Grace lived in Mansfield...over 2 hours away. To give Mom breaks, they took me to their house for a week at a time.

Mom lost a pair of twins. Their names were going to be Jack and Jeff. I first wanted to call them "Ice" and "Cream." Then I wanted to name them "Mike" and "Ike." I never saw them. Mom never saw them even though it was a home birth. Dad buried them. So I named my left hand "Mike" and my right hand "Ike." They have different personalities from each other, move differently, etc. Mike is a smooth dude, somewhat sneaky, but in control if non-linear. Ike is very emotional, prone to outbursts, jerky....and shy. They have always had issues with each other...always the soap operas. Kids live in realities like this. I thought people who talked/thought in terms of "handicap" just didn't see Mike and Ike...and the other body characters...didn't understand their inner/inter logics!

In 1950 we moved. Connie: "Jim's group was moved to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio and we moved into our first base housing. It was a real come-down from our little house with 2 bedrooms in Highland. They were barrack-types, really thrown together. We were assigned a tiny 1 bedroom apartment at first. There wasn't much room for the equipment we were using for Frank."

"Frank was getting therapy regularly. He enjoyed working with the therapists and they liked him. So, when Jerry was due, we left Frank in the convalescent hospital as an in patient till I was able to take care of him again. They told us Frank felt we had given him up for the new baby. But the therapists took him to therapy every day and talked to him and he felt better. Jim went to see him often and I kept in touch. Then he got chicken pox from someone in the hospital and couldn't come home until he was over that.

"We gave Frank a brother, Jerry Neal, on March 14, 1951, born at the WPAFB Hospital."

"The Air Force life was very interesting but, as any life, it had its drawbacks. In some ways, all the moving was broadening and other ways it was a pain. I always lived in dread of Jim being sent overseas where we couldn't go or into a hazard area. We had been together since Christmas of '42, except for a few days TDY, which was bad enough. When he left, my life seemed to stop and wait for him to come home to continue. I did a lot of waiting. We were about to get a taste of the frustrations of family life in the military.

"Jim's first orders about November, 1952, sent him to San Antonio, Texas for a brief period before an overseas assignment. The housing rules were that after the sponsor left a base, the dependents could not live in housing. So we found a place to live until we could join Jim again. We moved into a nice 2 bedroom apartment at 27 Smithville Rd., in Dayton. One of the nicest places we had lived so far. Jim left us there and went on to San Antonio to school. From day to day, his letters reported frustration as he waited to be "picked" for interviews and then starting school without knowing how long it was going to be or where

he would be going. He came home and spent Christmas but we had to send him back to wait. By June, it didn't seem as though much was happening and he began processing orders for us to join him. Frank was in kindergarten at Gorman School for the physically handicapped in Dayton. They picked up our household goods the day he finished school. I got everything packed and ready for the movers and let them have at it. Jerry and I attended a party at Frank's school and then started for San Antonio. Frank was tired and lay in the back seat. Jerry, age 2, sat on a suit case and drove his little steering wheel. We stopped and picnicked along the way. We stopped that night at a motel. It was so hot and with the air conditioning was too noisy for me to sleep so about 3am, I packed the kids in the car asleep and started driving. Late that afternoon we were in Austin and I called Jim to tell him where I was. He met me on the outskirts of San Antonio and drove us to our new home. It was never really home as we were only to stay there 2 weeks. We didn't really get unpacked and we were on our way again.

"We knew some people from the Clinton County base and we had fun renewing our relationship, saw a little of San Antonio including the Alamo which was closed the day we went. Then we were off to Salt Lake.

"In June, 1953, Jim had his orders to go to Neusser, French Morocco which included a leave time for him to take us to Salt Lake to find a place before he reported to his embarkation point. We found an apartment on 6th East and 13th South and settled in and Jim left us for 8 months before we could join him. It was so lonely without him. Having the family around helped. I was close to Vera and Ben whose son Roger was the same age as Jerry, and Martha and Eldon whose son Russell was close to Frank. The boys enjoyed getting acquainted with their cousins. Martha had always been my special friend and confidant from the time Eldon brought her home as his new bride before I was married. But most of the time I was tied at home with the kids as it was difficult to get around a lot with Frank in a wheelchair. I spent a lot of time with Mother and Dad on Sunday afternoons. Frank started school at the University of Utah Medical Center at Fort Douglas where they had special classes. It was obvious by this time that he was not mentally retarded. He was learning to read and doing very well."

Frank Moore: I was always curious.

Russell Shuttleworth: How did you satisfy that curiosity as a young boy?

FM: We moved to Morocco.

RS: How long were you there?

FM: 2 years.

RS: What was that experience like?

FM: That was where a teacher quit because I was in her class.

RS: How did you experience that?

FM: Her problem.

RS: So again, never incorporated it as a reflection of yourself.

FM: I want to go to school.

RS: What do you mean by that? That you wanted to go to school? You didn't care what she did. So I guess they got another teacher?

FM: Who wanted me.

RS: So after that your experience was ok in Morocco?

FM: I did half days in school and half days homework.

RS: Were there any opportunities or situations that occurred that you can view as sexual in a way during that time in Morocco?

FM: The French changed on the beach.

RS: Oh, I see. So that was a sight for your eyes then.

FM: And changed my ideas on nudity.

RS: What were your ideas up to that point?

FM: Like '50's American.

RS: So that has impacted your work from reading your book.

FM: And nudity did not have sexual charge.

RS: It's sort of like when I go to Harmon. It has no sexual aspect at all. The whole context is different. Which doesn't mean you can't admire bodies.

FM: Somehow I got our Arab maid to show me her tits.

RS: You say somehow. I have a hard time believing you're as vague as you appear on the process. Or is it too long ago?

FM: Because I did not have any way to talk.

RS: You're saying one day she showed you her tits and you'd just thought about her showing you her tits?

FM: I don't know.

RS: Too long ago, probably.