

# Whose Story?

## *The Bouvia Case in Perspective*

---



**Jon Stanger, MD, MDiv, MHS**

Ethics Consultant  
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center  
Associate Clinical Professor, UC Davis  
Associate Faculty, Graduate Theological  
Union, Berkeley

**CONTRA COSTA REGIONAL MEDICAL  
CENTER  
NOON CONFERENCE SERIES**

***DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST***

- Speaker has nothing to disclose

## Objectives

The case of Elizabeth Bouvia affords an opportunity to consider the complexity of ethical case analysis. Using this case as text, we will explore:

- ❖ The historical context of the case;
- ❖ Social constructs of suffering;
- ❖ Varied definitions of 'justice';
- ❖ The critical role for narrative analysis in ethical deliberation;
- ❖ The power of perspective in shaping our ethical judgments.

"Every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing."

-- Kenneth Burke

"Every style is a means of insisting on something."

-- Susan Sontag





1975

1990

1983 – 1986  
The Bouvia Case

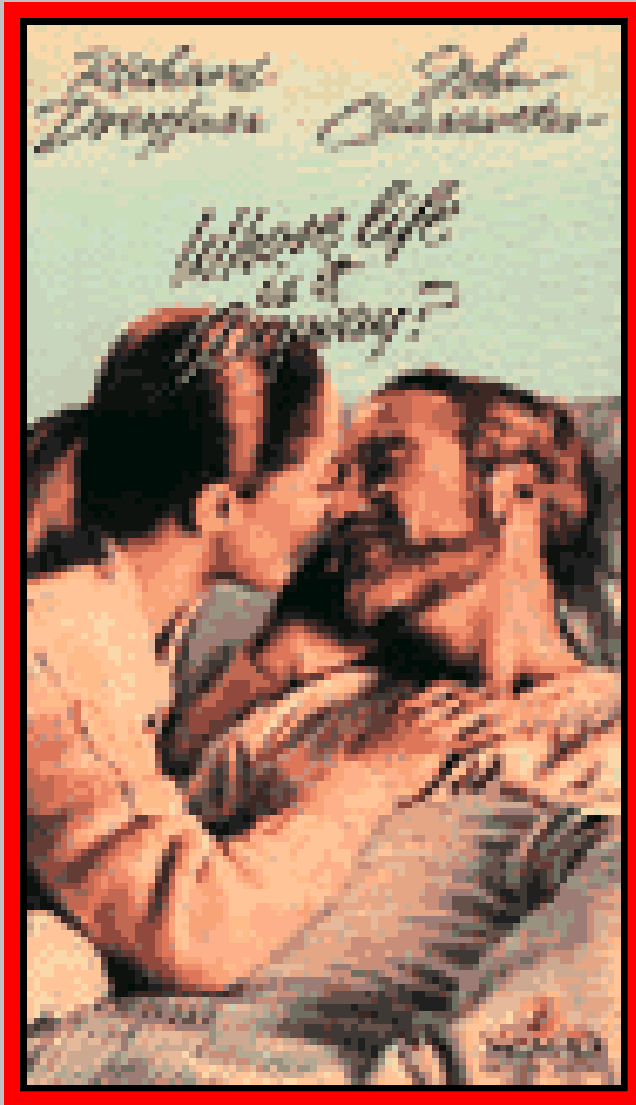
1983

Riverside General Hospital



1986

High Desert Hospital



1981

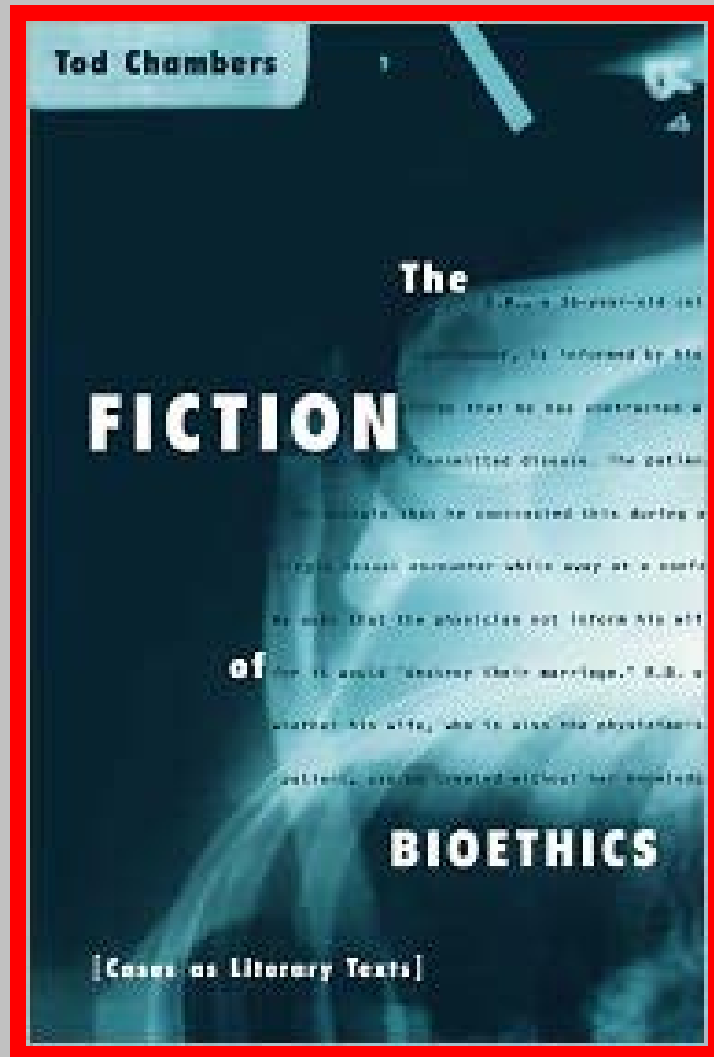


1982









Stories of moral dilemmas, like all narratives, are constructed from a specific point of view, which persuades us to see the events in a particular manner... Ethical analysis ought to concentrate as much on how one sees moral dilemmas as on deciding how one should act in response to them.

"Every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing."

-- Kenneth Burke

"Every style is a means of insisting on something."

-- Susan Sontag

