Defense attorney Geoffrey Feiger appears upset by some of the prosecution's closing arguments.

Kevorkian trial returns a jury nullification

Detroit, MI — It wasn't because he didn't break the law that suicide assistant Jack Kevorkian was acquitted on May 2, it was jury nullification.

Kevorkian, on trial for assisting the suicide of Thomas Hyde, 30, of Novi, Michigan on August 4 1993, was clearly guilty of the charge. Some of the jurors, however, determined that the man called "Dr. Death" had commitied no crime because he was motivated by "compassion."

Only one of the 12 jurors thought Kevorkian was guilty.

Those who thought the state had not proven its case cited the ambiguity of the statute.

Geoffery Feiger, Kevorkian's attorney, urged jurors to acquit "in the name of human rights." He argued that the death did not take place in Wayne County where the trial was being held and that Kevorkian only wanted to "relieve suffering" for Hyde and not to kill him.

Proseutors presented a videotaped news segment where Kevorkian, 65, admitted helping Hyde commit suicide and virtually begged for the state to prosecute him.

Also in evidence was a written request by Hyde, a sufferer of Lou Gehrig's disease, for Kevorkian to help him kill himself.

Prosecutor Timothy Kenny demonstrated that Hyde had been killed in Wayne County rather than Oakland County as Feiger claimed, so that the court did indeed have jurisdiction. After the verdict, however, Kenny acknowledged how difficult it was to apply the law against the "powerful emotional dynamic" of the issue at hand.

According to court sources, the decision will not affect ongoing state Court of Appeals case on the constitutionality of the law.

The acquittal also does not provide a clear picture of the ethical concerns over the future of euthanasia either.

"I think it's the start of the debate," said Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania. "They got things so tied up in technicalities and legal loopholes that even the jury couldn't figure out why they acquitted him."

Kevorkian first acquired the name "Dr. Death" back in the 1950s when he used to peer into the eyes of dying people trying to determine the exact moment of death. ■

Jack Kevorkian gets a hug from his sister, Margo Janus, after his acquittal. He was found not guilty in a Detroit courtroom of assisting in the suicide last August 3 of Thomas Hyde.

Heidi Fernandez smiles as she holds hands with Kelvin Thurman as a Detroit jury acquits Jack Kevorkian of an assisted-suicide charge. Kevorkian was charged with assisting in the Aug. 4, 1993, suicide of Fernandez's fiance, Thomas Hyde.

Detroit doctor under investigation in "mercy" killing

Detroit, MI — An unnamed 28-year-old doctor at the Oakland General Hospital in Detroit is being investigated in the death of a patient.

The news broke while the jury deliberated over the assisted suicide charges against Jack Kevorkian.

Dr. Robert Aranosian announced the investigation on April 28 at a news conference. He told the press that a Detroit woman, Ernestine DeLoof, died from an injection of potassium chloride on April 16 and that several witnesses saw the doctor by the woman behaving suspiciously.

The investigation began when several of the witnesses reported what hey had seen.

Kanu Virani, Oakland County's deputy medical examiner, acknowledged that the woman died of an injection of potassium chloride and ruled the death a homicide. Virani said the injection was not accidental.■

Aranosian

Chronology of Kevorkian

1990

June 4—Alzheimer's patient Janet Adkins, 54, of Portland, Ore., dies using Kevorkian suicide machine.

Dec. 13—Judge dismisses murder charge, saying Michigan law doesn't prohibit assisted suicide.

1991

Oct. 23—Deaths of Sherry Miller, 43, of Roseville, Mich., with multiple sclerosis; and Marjorie Wantz, 58, of Sodus, Mich., with severe pelvic pain.

1992

May 15—Death of multiple sclerosis patient Susan Williams, 52, of Clawson, Mich.

July 21—Judge dismisses murder charges in cases related to Miller and Wantz.

Sept. 26—Death of cancer patient Lois F. Hawes, 52, of Warren, Mich.

Nov. 23—Death of cancer patient Catherine A. Andreyev, 45, of Moon Township, Pa.

Dec. 15—Deaths of Marguerite Tate, 70, of Auburn Hills, Mich., with Lou Gehrig's disease, and Marcella Lawrence, 67, of Mount Clemens, Mich., with heart disease, emphysema and arthritis.

Dec. 15—Governor signs temporary ban on assisted suicide.

1993

Jan. 20—Death of bone-cancer patient Jack Elmer Miller, 53, of Huron Township, Mich.

Feb. AFLM uncovers Kevorkian's damning "final action" document on Hugh Gayle.

Feb. 4—Deaths of cancer patients Stanley Ball, 82, of Leland, Mich., and Mary Biernat, 73, of Crown Point, Ind.

Feb. 8—Death of multiple sclerosis patient Elaine Goldbaum, 47, of Southfield, Mich.

Feb. 15—Death of Hugh Gale, 70, of Boseville Mich., with emphysema and congestive heart disease.

Feb. 18—Deaths of Jonathon Grenz, 44, of Costa Mesa, Calif., with throat cancer, and Martha Ruwart, 41, of Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Calif., with duodenal and ovarian cancer.

May 16—Death of cancer patient Ron Mansur, 54, of southfield, Mich.

May 20—Judge rules ban unconstitutional.

June 22—Michigan Court of Appeals orders ban to remain in effect during appeal.

Aug. 4—Death of Lou Gehrig's disease patient Thomas Hyde, 30, of Novi, Mich.

Aug. 17—Kevorkian charged with assisting Hyde's suicide.

Sept. 9—Death of bone cancer patient Donald O'Keefe, 73, of Redford Township, Mich.

Sept 14—Kevorkian charged with aiding O'Keefe's suicide.

Oct. 22—Death of Lou Gehrigs disease patient Merian Fredrick, 72, of Ann Arbor, Mich.

Nov. 22—Death of Dr. Ali Khalili, 61, of Oak Brook, Ill., with bone cancer.

Dec. 14—Judge dismisses charge in O'Keefe's death, finds ban unconstitutional.

1994

Jan. 4—Charged with assisting in Khalili's suicide

Jan. 27—Judge dismisses charges in cases related to Khalili and Fredrick, saying ban unconstitutional.

April 19—Trial begins in Hyde death.

May 2—Kevorkian acquitted.

Operation Rescue takes a "vacation"

by Joanne Holden

Los Angeles, CA—Operation Rescue of California is planning a summer getaway.

"It's time for the pro-life movement to take a vacation," said Jeff White, Operation Rescue of California (ORC) Director.

ORC is inviting pro-lifers from around the nation to join them on a camping and baby-saving tour of California, June 25 - July 23. Pro-lifers will travel in cars, vans and motor homes all over California in a "Life Caravan," saving babies by day, and roasting marshmallows around campfires by night.

"It's a vacation for the whole family," said White. "There will be exciting pro-life activities that everyone in the family can participate in."

Wagon train style, ORC will lead the Life Caravan on a Tour of Shame, visiting abortionists in their home neighborhoods.

"Imagine an abortionist leaving his home and not seeing just two people asking him to repent, but seeing a mile of trailers bearing signs saying, 'Dr. Smith, stop killing babies.' It will be a mile of well earned shame," said white.

ORC is also calling this baby-saving tour the "Stop the Violence Caravan," emphasizing the need to stop the violence inside and outside the abortion mill.

"Operation Rescue has remained committed to peaceful non-violent intervention on behalf of the preborn, and we always will be," said White, "The answer is not shooting abortionists, it's laying down our lives for others. We're taking that message on the road."

Besides praying at abortion mills and distributing pro-life literature, ORC is also planning to challenge a local police department to a charity softball game.

"I believe we have a positive message that California needs to hear — 'We not only respect life, we love it, enjoy it, and so do our kids,'" White said.

Beginning in San Diego, the Caravan will move up California's coast with rallies scheduled for each weekend. Pro-lifers from around the nation are encouraged to join the Life Caravan for a day, a weekend, a week or the entire month. Newcomers can catch up to the caravan at rally sites.

"On Sundays," White said, "This roving congregation will be able to find pro-abortion 'churches' that need an attendance boost and we'll visit them."

National pro-life leaders Pat Mahoney and Joseph Foreman are coming with their families, and Randall Terry, Keith Tucci and Flip Benham have also been invited to come.

ORC's vacation planners are anticipating great times of fellowship: brainstorming new pro-life ideas, times of worship around campfires, beach parties, fishing, white water rafting and Christian concerts. ■