

Tell the truth about Kevorkian, says assisted suicide expert

by Anika Smith

"Jack Kevorkian's decade-long assisted suicide campaign was never about compassion," says bioethicist and assisted suicide expert Wesley J. Smith. "It was about Kevorkian's obsession to engage in human vivisection."

Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and attorney for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, urges the media to report the story of Jack Kevorkian's release from prison accurately and not promote the false myth of "Jack the Martyr."

Kevorkian admitted in his 1991 book *Prescription Medicine* that assisted suicide was merely a means to achieve his desired end of conducting experiments on living people being euthanized. On page 214, he wrote:

"I feel it is only decent and fair to explain my ultimate aim ... It is not simply to help suffering and doomed persons kill themselves ... [W]hat I find most satisfying is the prospect of making possible the performance of invaluable experiments or other beneficial medical acts under conditions that this first unpleasant step can help establish."

"Kevorkian's macabre goals were rarely reported in the media," Smith says. "As a result, he became, for a time, the world's most famous doctor."

While Kevorkian's motives may have been bizarre, his actual practice of assisted suicide was little different from those being practiced in Oregon, Smith notes.

"People went to Kevorkian for death and not for treatment. In fact, he barely knew most of the people he helped kill," Smith says.

"According to Oregon's published statistics, some doctors who write lethal prescriptions have never treated the patients they assist in suicides and only met the patients a week or two before the patient died from a prescribed drug overdose," Smith explains.

"Assisted suicide is one of the most important issues facing the country, and yet the full truth about its practice and context often goes unreported," Smith adds. "People need and deserve the facts about assisted suicide, not romanticized puff stories. The truth about Jack Kevorkian proves that legalizing assisted suicide

would be bad medicine and even worse public policy."

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