

EDITORIAL

Kevorkian walks, jury's decision talks

On Aug. 4, 1993, Thomas Hyde, diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease committed suicide in the back of a van, but he wasn't alone.

Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a retired pathologist better known as Dr. Death, was by his side aiding with the suicide. Kevorkian was arrested in Michigan and charged with assisted suicide, a law made in Michigan in an attempt to stop Kevorkian.

Kevorkian's acquittal sends a message to society saying that, in some cases, physician assisted suicide is the right thing.

After days of deliberation the jury sided with the defendant and Kevorkian was acquitted and free to go. A key point in the case for the jury was Kevorkian's intent. Was his intention to relieve Hyde's suffering or was it death? The jury decided it was to relieve suffering.

Hyde was suffering, and he made the choice to take his life. Stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease, a degenerative nerve disorder, his ailment was not curable. Hyde was going to die. He was living a life of misery, evident in a video recording he taped a month before he died that expressed his interest in Kevorkian's assistance.

The problem and position society takes in physician assisted suicides is a tough one. One argument is the physician's role. Fundamentally, the physician's role has been to heal, and suicide, to some, is not healing but instead killing. In a sense the right to end suffering through suicide is a way to heal.

Living each day in pain, and knowing the disease at the root of the pain will never going away certainly encourages new alternatives to modern medicine extending life. Every day, every hour, the disease is there. Certainly some days are better than others. However death, in many cases, may be the only way to end the suffering.

Across the nation the issue of physician assisted suicide is gaining interest. About 73 percent of Americans believe physicians should be able to side with a terminally ill patient's wish to end their life. A recent survey in Lane County found 63 percent of doctors her in support of Oregon's "Death and Dignity" initiative.

Oregon's proposed initiative, the Death and Dignity Act, would allow terminally ill adults the legal right to a prescription drug capable of ending their life. The initiative protects physicians from civil or criminal liability as well.

Kevorkian's acquittal sends a message to society saying that, in some cases, physician assisted suicide is the right thing. Kevorkian was prosecuted, and by Michigan law he should have been, but he was not convicted. He was not convicted because what he was charged with was an act of compassion and his intentions did not induce the penalties the state of Michigan sought.

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DR KEVORKIAN'S CELLMATE

LETTERS

Stop the hate

A Howard University black student organization in Washington, D.C., presented a televised convention on C-SPAN April 22 on the "black holocaust" of the past and the present — the past being slavery and the present being alleged "mind games that the white man is playing to suppress the black man."

Spokesmen at this event, Dr. Leonard Jefferys and Khalid Muhammad, ranted and raved about atrocities that happened generations ago. They also had fits of jealousy over a monument dedicated to Jewish Holocaust victims of World War II because no monument has been erected for black people. The entire agenda of this tryst was to tell the black population of the United "Snakes" of America that they are not welcome here because "the white man will always lie" to them and "suppress" them.

If this is true, why is Leonard Jefferys a doctor? And why do they both choose America as their home? Slavery is history in this country because it is not tolerated today. It's unfortunate that Dr. Jefferys, Khalid and all their followers choose not to live in today because they are being lied to and suppressed by themselves. Let's just hope that their national televised connipation fit doesn't add any more people to their following. Aren't we the generation that is supposed to "stop the hate?"

John Eccleston
Student

R.I.P.

Being a columnist for the *Emerald* must be a great job. It seems all you have to do to get an article these days is wait until someone dies and spit your literary ink on their grave. I commend the honorable Mr. Reeves on his excellent commentary about the deceased former-President Richard Nixon. It must take genuine internal fortitude to call Mr. Nixon the "former First Crook of the United States" while he is lying in his coffin and his family and friends are mourning his death. You

showed the grace of a bird (*Literus vulterus*) in your compassionate farewell to the former president of the United States. I can only hope that you might, some glorious day, write an article so eloquent, so sensitive and so warm-hearted about a living human being. Or perhaps your forte is post-mortem mudslinging. At any rate, I hope you reach all your lofty goals! (Has *The National Enquirer* called back yet?)

Ben Stuart
Psychology

Clear head

I'm all for Craig Berkman, a Republican candidate for governor, and Rep. Michael Payne's "Three Strikes You're Out" crime initiative. Finally, someone is thinking with a clear head about who is to be punished: the criminals, not the victims of violent crimes.

I'm tired of reading about all of these criminals who only serve part of their sentence. This is just plain wrong, and the hard-working citizens of this state shouldn't have to put up with a criminal justice system that has failed them.

I think that "Three Strikes You're Out" is a great policy. This bill only affects the most violent criminals in the state — the barbarians who are convicted of murder, rape, assault, kidnapping and child pornography.

"Three Strikes You're Out" is one step closer to protecting communities, providing a deterrent for other crimes and restoring public trust in the criminal justice system.

John Bunce
Political Science

No imagination

As a fan of *Bob's Inferno*, I feel compelled to defend it against the attack (attributed to Robert L. Weiss, professor of psychology) published in the *Emerald* on April 27. Professor, if you are unable to understand *Bob's Inferno* this is more a sign of your lack of imagination than that of the strip. It is the most original idea in comic strips that I have ever seen.

Bob's Inferno is a serial strip. That means that a single day will seem exactly like four unrelated panels. If you wish to understand what's going on, walk down to the EMU and pick up the last week's worth of *Emeralds*. Follow the first panel for the whole week. Do the same for the other three panels. Do they make sense now?

Since its inception a few weeks ago, *Bob's Inferno* has replaced the page 2 editorial cartoon as the first thing I read in the *Emerald* each day. If you don't have the imagination or the patience to read it, professor, then don't. But please don't condemn something just because you don't understand it.

Aaron Curtis
Mathematics

Respect

My uncle was student body president of his high school when Nixon was in office and was invited to Portland for a special meeting with him. My uncle was a little hesitant to go, but then my grandfather said, "No matter how you feel about the man, he is the president of the United States and he deserves respect for the position he holds." My uncle went.

I will be the first to admit that I do not know much about the Watergate incident nor do I know a lot about Nixon's work before, during or after he was in office. I do know that Reeves' article (*ODE*, April 28) was offensive and degrading to the late president.

I am sure that with all the events going on around campus, Reeves could have found something more respectable to write than demeaning comments about a dead man. Richard Nixon took enough damage while he was alive. The least that could've been done was to leave the man to rest, now that he's gone.

My gripe is not about politics or opinion — it's about respect, and Robbie Reeves needs to learn all about that.

Tanya Vallad
Pre-Business Administration

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