



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 19, 2013

Murder Trial Begins for “House of Horrors” Abortionist

The [trial of a Philadelphia abortionist](#) charged with murdering babies born alive began March 18, as the defense accused officials of pursuing “an elitist, racist prosecution” of the man who ran what has been termed a “house of horrors” abortion clinic.

Dr. Kermit Gosnell (shown, left), the 72-year-old physician who owned and operated the West Philadelphia clinic, is charged with killing seven babies who were born alive at the facility, as well as Karnamaya Mongar, a 41-year-old refugee from Bhutan who had gone to the facility for an abortion.

Prosecutors charge that Gosnell’s staff gave the 90-pound woman a lethal dose of anesthesia and painkillers during the 2009 procedure, and that he is responsible for the woman’s death.

According to investigators, Gosnell ignored Pennsylvania’s ban on late-term abortions and the 24-hour waiting period enforced before an abortion can go forward, allowing unqualified staff to administer anesthesia and perform risky late abortions on patients who were often poor and underage. The goal was money, said Assistant District Attorney Joanne Pescatore, with the clinic cranking out a high volume of substandard, risky abortions, while killing babies that were born alive.

“The standard practice here was to slay babies,” said Pescatore, “That’s what they did.” She told jurors that Gosnell and his staff used inferior drugs and primitive procedures, often forcing women to deliver babies who were born alive and then killed with scissors.

Pescatore laid out a scenario to jurors in which a staff nearly as desperate as the women who came in for abortions followed Gosnell’s procedure rather than make waves. She noted that the only other “doctors” on staff at the clinic were individuals who posed as medical professionals, but who were not licensed. She said that the woman administering anesthesia was a sixth-grade dropout who could barely read or write, and one of the operating room assistants was a 15-year-old high school student.

Eight co-defendants who were staff members at the clinic have already pleaded guilty — three of them to third-degree murder — and face jail sentences of 20 to 40 years. The only clinic staff member on trial is Eileen O’Neill, who prosecutors said posed falsely as a medical doctor.

In his opening statement to the jury, Gosnell’s defense attorney Jack McMahan (shown, right) accused the prosecution of unfairly targeting his client, whom he insisted was providing a needed service to the poor pregnant women living near the clinic in inner-city West Philadelphia.

“This is a targeted, elitist, and racist prosecution of a doctor who’s done nothing but give to the poor and the people of West Philadelphia,” McMahan told the mostly black jury. “It’s a prosecutorial lynching of Dr. Kermit Gosnell,” who is also black. He agreed that the case was an emotionally trying one “because we all love babies. It strikes a chord in us.”

As previously reported by [The New American](#), a grand jury report recalled that in February 2010





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federal agents raided Gosnell's clinic, discovering "such horrific conditions that they immediately closed down the facility and suspended the doctor's license." Nearly a year later Gosnell was charged with eight counts of murder in the deaths of the seven babies and the mother who died at his facility.

"In their raid on Gosnell's clinic, federal agents discovered, among other horrors, the remains of 45 infants dumped in milk jugs, juice cartons, and pet food containers — all stored in a refrigerator and freezer on the premises," reported *The New American*. "Agents also found jars containing the severed limbs of babies, and conditions they called 'by far, the worst' they had ever seen, with blood on the clinic floors, 'filthy and unsanitary' surgeries, broken and dirty medical instruments and equipment, along with a 'stench of urine' and even cat excrement."□

In its 260-page report the grand jury speculated that Gosnell and his staff had killed hundreds of babies outside the womb after they were delivered at the clinic, with Gosnell or one of his employees typically plunging scissors into the back of a baby's neck and severing the spinal cord. "Since Gosnell and his cohorts managed to destroy most of the clinic's files, state prosecutors were able to file murder charges in only seven of the babies' deaths, along with a charge of murder in the death of the 41-year-old female patient," said *The New American*.

The grand jury report said that killing babies who had been delivered alive by their mothers at the clinic "really had to be part of Gosnell's plan. His method for performing late-term abortions was to induce labor and delivery of intact fetuses, and he specialized in patients who were well beyond 24 weeks. The subsequent slitting of spinal cords, without any consideration for the babies' viability, was an integral part of what Gosnell's employees called his 'standard procedure.'"

Gosnell faces the death penalty if convicted in the deaths of the babies, and a life sentence on other charges. "I think it's obvious he will be found guilty," John Stanton of the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia told the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#). "It's pretty much an open-and-shut case that he violated laws in such a manner that he is guilty of the charges laid on him."

The [Christian News Network](#) reported that prosecutors in the case "accuse government officials of allowing Gosnell's operation to go undetected because the Health Department and other entities failed to perform inspections at the facility. State regulations were tightened after the matter, as all abortion facilities in the [state of] Pennsylvania must now conform to ambulatory surgical regulations."

Photos of Kermit Gosnell and Jack McMahon: AP Images



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