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Abortion Doctor's Broken Clinic Stands as Reminder of Past "Horrors"

As the Gosnell murder trial begins, the clinic where the alleged crimes were committed sits vandalized

By [Vince Lattanzio](#)



Vince Lattanzio

March 18, 2013: Dr. Kermit Gosnell's medical building sits vacant and vandalized at the corner of 38th and Lancaster Avenue in Philadelphia.

Broken glass and graffiti dot the long facade of the Women's Medical Society building. The former clinic of Dr. Kermit Gosnell looms as a dark reminder, to people living and working nearby, of the alleged "horrors" committed inside.

Situated at a busy corner of 38th and Lancaster Streets in the city's Mantua section, the building served as a base of operations for Dr. Gosnell for more than 31 years. Gosnell is on trial, accused of murdering seven babies and a woman inside the clinic.

- **[Abortion Doctor Preyed on Women, Staff: Prosecutor](#)**

"It's been a sore thumb," Kat Reed said of the shuttered building. She and her husband George run Reed's Coffee and Tea across the street. The couple opened their cafe a year ago and have been eagerly waiting for the property to be transformed.

"I've been hoping and waiting that they'd tear it all down and build it back up new, with a great new kind of business there," says Kat Reed.

Women's Medical Society Stands Broken



A mixture of low-to-middle-class families and college students from nearby Drexel and Penn live around the former facility. Penn Presbyterian Medical Center sits a block to the south.

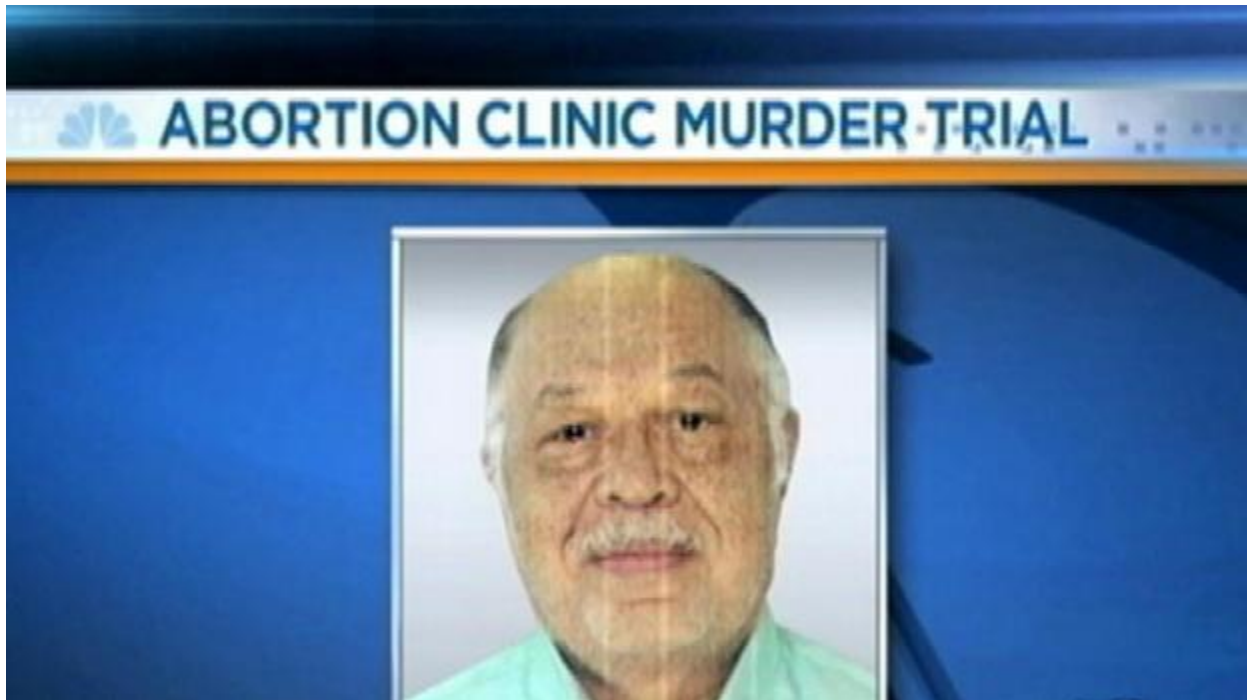
Gosnell first opened the clinic in 1979 with the intent, as told by his attorney Jack McMahon, to serve the poor living in West Philadelphia. McMahon described to jurors during opening statements Monday, how Gosnell bought the three-story building at 3801 Lancaster Avenue for \$22,000. He says Gosnell took out a small business loan to finance the purchase.

- **[Abortion Doctor's Trial a "Lynching"](#)**

McMahon says Gosnell eventually expanded the facility into the space next door -- which had been an art gallery -- treating men and women in a general practice. Thousands of abortions were performed by Gosnell inside the building over the decades.

Prosecutors say Gosnell performed illegal, late-term abortions and delivered premature babies inside the clinic, snipping their spinal cords to kill them. They also claim he stored fetal remains throughout the facility. Blood-stained rooms and equipment, dirty instruments and unlicensed, untrained staff were also uncovered inside by investigators, according to court documents. District Attorney Seth Williams called the clinic a “house of horrors” in a 2011 grand jury report.

Abortion Clinic Called "House of Horrors": Prosecutor



Kermit Gosnell, a West Philadelphia abortion clinic doctor, is charged with murdering seven babies and one woman, according to officials. The trial began Monday, and NBC10's Daralene Jones reports the details. (Published Tuesday, March 19, 2013)

Karnamaya Mongar, 41, died after allegedly being given a lethal dose of pain killers and anesthesia during a procedure in 2009.

McMahon says the babies were not alive when abortions were performed and that Gosnell never performed late-term abortions. He told jurors that Mongar was given the same dose of anesthesia as countless other patients.

- **[Daughter of Abortion Doctor Victim Speaks Out](#)**

“You would see the young women coming out of there at 12 in the morning after he had done the procedures,” said a man who refused to give his name.

Describing himself as a “community passerby” who’s lived in the neighborhood for 40 years, the man says he would see women bent over in pain as they walked from the building late at night.

“I don’t think this kind of procedure, this kind of outpatient procedure should be allowed in a neighborhood clinic. It should be done in a hospital.”

The man says he once visited the clinic to get a physical for a job. He went there, he says, because it was closest to his home. Gosnell performed the exam.

“There was an uncomfortable clammy feeling in there and, you know, it just didn’t sit right with me,” he said.

More than two years after authorities uncovered what prosecutors called macabre conditions inside, broken ceiling tiles are strewn throughout the clinic’s former waiting area and vestibule.

George Reed says broken pipes and squatters have left the building even more of a mess. Cracks spider through a large window facing Lancaster Avenue as lettering curls from the pane. Another window is left shattered on the building’s side.

“It’s just waiting for somebody to buy it and fix it up,” said George Reed.

Najla Dennis walks by the building on her way home from the trolley stop. She wants it razed.

“I want them to demolish the building,” Dennis says. “It’s sitting here on the corner, it’s here for no reason, why still have it sitting here?”

“Every time I go past, I just always think of the name Kermit Gosnell,” says Anwar Rasheed. The 35-year-old says he’d like to see a trendy restaurant open up.

“I think the building would be used for greater good,” he says.

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