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Philadelphia Abortion Doctor Accused of Killing Babies With Scissors, Charged With 8 Murders

- By Linsey Davis
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WATCH DA: Philadelphia Doctor Accused of Killing Babies

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An [abortion](#) doctor in Philadelphia has been [charged with eight murders](#), including seven babies who prosecutors say were born alive then killed with scissors.

[Dr. Kermit Gosnell](#), 69, and nine employees from his West Philadelphia Women's Medical Society were arrested Wednesday. He and his staff also are charged with killing a woman who was given a lethal dose of Demerol.

Gosnell catered to minorities, immigrants and poor women, and made millions of dollars over 30 years performing illegal and late-term abortions in squalid and barbaric conditions, prosecutors said.

"There were bags, and bottles holding aborted fetuses were scattered throughout the building," said Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams. "There were jars lining shelves with severed feet that he kept for no medical purpose."

According to the [grand jury report](#), Gosnell catered to women who were too late in their pregnancies to get legal abortions elsewhere. Most doctors refuse to perform abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy because of the risks involved.

Abortions after the 24th week are illegal. However, Gosnell allegedly aborted and killed babies in the sixth and seventh months of pregnancy and charged more for bigger babies.

The abortions of the biggest babies allegedly were scheduled for Sundays, when the clinic was closed. The only person allowed to assist with such cases was Gosnell's wife, Williams said. Gosnell allegedly took home the files for those patients and disposed of them.

Attempts to reach Gosnell by phone were unsuccessful. But his attorney, William J. Brennan, cited Gosnell's long record of service to a low-income neighborhood.

"It's important that Dr. Gosnell enjoys the presumption of innocence, as do all defendants charged," Brennan said. "The grand jury presentation is lengthy, and Dr. Gosnell should be given the opportunity to review these documents accordingly."

According to Brennan, state and federal authorities raided and searched Gosnell's home and medical practice a year ago and launched an investigation. Gosnell offered to surrender numerous times if charges were ever filed, he said, but never expected to be arrested.

"The man has been in practice for 40 years," Brennan added. "If a complaint was made in the last year, what about the other 39?"

But according to Williams, state regulators ignored numerous complaints about Gosnell's clinic and his office hadn't been inspected since 1993. One doctor advised the department that numerous patients he had referred for abortions came back from Gosnell with the same venereal disease, Williams added.

Even after the death of Karnamaya Mongar, 41, on Nov. 20, 2009 of an alleged overdose of anesthetics prescribed by Gosnell, Williams said, the Department of Health did not act.

In fact, he said, Gosnell was caught by accident.

Dr. Kermit Gosnell's Clinic: Police Find 'House of Horrors'

Police officers went to investigate complaints about illegal prescription selling at the clinic last year and stumbled upon what the prosecutor called a "house of horrors."

Gosnell "induced labor, forced the live birth of viable babies in the sixth, seventh, eighth month of pregnancy and then killed those babies by cutting into the back of the neck with scissors and severing their spinal cord," Williams said.

The clinic was shut down and Gosnell's medical license was suspended after the raid.

Some of his employees also were charged with murder, including a high-school student who performed anesthesia with potentially lethal narcotics. The grand jury report asserted the people who ran this medical practice did not include any nurses and or other doctors besides Gosnell himself.

Gosnell's clinic was a prescription mill by day, Williams said, and by night was an abortion mill.

Gosnell didn't see "patients" or show up at the office during the day, he added, but left behind blank, pre-signed prescription pads and had his unauthorized workers administer drugs to induce labor and sedate patients.

Gosnell allegedly prepared a list of preset dosage levels to be administered in his absence. But no allowances were made for individual patient variations or for any monitoring of vital signs.

Gosnell has been named in at least 10 malpractice suits, including one over the death of a woman who died of sepsis and a perforated uterus. In that case, a civil suit against Gosnell was settled for almost \$1 million.

Gosnell also is the target of a federal grand jury investigation into illegally prescribing prescription drugs.

Investigators say during a search of his home, they found \$240,000 in cash.

Aborted Fetuses in Jars in Philadelphia Doctor's Office

- By MARY KATHRYN BURKE

Feb. 24, 2010

A Philadelphia abortion doctor had his license temporarily suspended after a patient died in an allegedly botched abortion and a raid on his office turned up what the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine said was "blood on the floor and parts of aborted fetuses displayed in jars."

"The conditions were horrific, uncleanly, just abysmal," board spokeswoman Leslie Amoros told the ABC News Law & Justice Unit, referring to Dr. Kermit B. Gosnell's "Family Medical Society."

"People were practicing without a license," she said. "A non-licensed person was administering drugs. We were present at the raid and our investigators gleaned there was enough evidence for a petition to suspend. We immediately issued a temporary suspension."

Amoros could not confirm or deny reports of fetuses also found in an office freezer, some reportedly dating back decades.

'Immediate and Clear Danger'

The State Board of Medicine's petition, filed Monday, alleged that Gosnell "is the only licensed medical professional that works in the clinic" and that "the clinic is open during the day, however, [Gosnell] does not arrive to the clinic until sometime between 6-9 p.m." The petition said that the "pre op/recovery area consisted of several 'Lazy Boy' recliners grouped together," and that at around 9 p.m. last Thursday, at the time of the raid, the clinic was "full of patients," and that an unlicensed employee "admitted that she administers drugs to patients, namely diazepam, tamazepam, and Cytotec (both orally and vaginally)" under Gosnell's direction.

Gosnell is an "immediate and clear danger to the public health and safety," the petition claimed.

The petition added that the patient who died was being anesthetized by unlicensed personnel when Gosnell arrived at the clinic to perform the abortion.

Afterwards, according to the board, the patient "started to have an arrhythmia," and was then "transported to the hospital where she was eventually pronounced dead."

'A Multiagency Investigation'

Authorities involved in the raid did not comment, but the Federal Bureau of Investigation appeared to be taking the helm.

"This is a multiagency investigation -- an ongoing federal investigation -- and that's all we can say at this time," a Pennsylvania Department of Health official told ABC News.

The U.S. Attorney's office said, "We do not confirm or deny the existence or non-existence of investigations."

"We were out there last week conducting investigative activities," Agent J.J. Klaver of the Philadelphia FBI Field Office told the Law & Justice Unit. "Other than that I cannot discuss what our involvement is."

A preliminary hearing is expected to be scheduled within a month.

Dr. Gosnell could not be reached for comment.