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Gosnell's "House of Horrors" Abortion Equipment Shown to Public

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office releases video of evidence used during Dr. Kermit Gosnell's murder trial

By [Vince Lattanzio](#)

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office released footage of the medical equipment taken from Dr. Kermit Gosnell's abortion clinic. The equipment was used in the murder trial of the former doctor. (Published Monday, June 3, 2013)

Prosecutors are giving the public its first glimpse at equipment taken from the clinic of former Philadelphia abortion doctor and convicted murder Kermit Gosnell.

The equipment includes an exam table, recliner and electronic monitoring machines. They were brought from Dr. Gosnell's West Philadelphia facility, the Women's Medical Society, to Courtroom 302 at the city's Criminal Justice Center for his capital murder trial.

Once there, the equipment sat in the center of the courtroom – just feet from the jury box -- for most of the two-month long trial.

Dr. Gosnell, 72, was convicted on May 13 of murdering three newborn babies during late-term abortion procedures. He was also found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in the 2009 overdose death of patient Karnamaya Mongar and for more than 200 abortion law violations. He is serving three consecutive life terms for the crimes.

Investigators who visited the facility at 3801 Lancaster Avenue described the clinic as filthy, wretched and macabre.

“The smells were just unbearable,” Philadelphia Police Crime Scene Investigator John Taggart

said following the trial. “You could tell there was death somewhere.”

The conditions found inside the facility led Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams to call the clinic a "house of horrors" in a 2011 grand jury report.

During the trial’s opening arguments on March 18, lead prosecutor Joanne Pescatore told the jury she wanted to bring the group to the clinic, but was not allowed. So she decided to recreate the clinic in court.

“We’re going bring the facility to you,” Pescatore said at the time. “You’re going to live it with us.”

In a video recorded by the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, several pieces of the equipment were put on display – with the largest item being one of the clinic’s examination tables.

Stained and tattered, the table still had sanitary paper and stirrups attached. Prosecutors said the table would regularly be used for abortion procedures and that former employees said dried blood would often be caked to the medical equipment.

A garbage disposal taken from the clinic’s break room was set on top of a storage drawer. Taggart said investigators learned the employees would dispose of fetal remains in the sink and use the disposal to move them down the drain. Human bones were found inside the appliance, prosecutors said.

“They were shoving body parts down the garbage disposal,” said Taggart. “To the point where they plunged it one day and an arm popped out on Lancaster Avenue.”

Filthy, corroded tubing -- stained over time by blood and dirt -- were left coiled on the floor. Some of the tubing that was used for suction during abortion procedures also doubled as a suction source for patient resuscitation, according to prosecutors.

A medical kit marked “For emergency tracheotomy” was brown in color and other procedure tools inside a bin underneath the kit had a yellow tint.

A large gray recliner was ripped in several places and had white stains on the seat. Prosecutors say the recliners were used by patients before and after abortion procedures.

Electronic monitoring equipment appeared old and dirty. One device had stickers peeling off of it and was discolored from dust. Another, an ultrasound machine sat in pieces on the floor.

The ultrasound equipment was also weathered and discolored. The transducer probe used to send ultrasonic waves into patient’s stomachs, was yellowed in parts and wires were darkly colored with what appeared to be dirt. The device’s keyboard had turned from a cream color to dark brown.

Dr. Gosnell allegedly told one employee, Ashley Baldwin, the device didn't really work, according to the grand jury report.

Prosecutors said Dr. Gosnell would regularly perform abortions on fetuses older than Pennsylvania's legal limit of 24 weeks. Former employees testified that the doctor would regularly redo sonograms using the ultrasound machine to cover up actual age of the fetuses.

Dr. Gosnell's defense attorney Jack McMahon said during the trial that his client was simply operating an inner-city clinic for the poor and disadvantaged. He told jurors city officials were applying "Mayo Clinic" standards on the clinic and asserted that was unfair.

"This is nothing more than an elitist, racist prosecution," McMahon said.

It's unclear what will now happen to the equipment.

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