

Gosnell Lawyer Accuses Prosecutors of Hying Trial

The attorney for a Philadelphia doctor accused of killing four infants during **late-term abortions** wrapped up his defense on Monday, arguing that prosecutors hyped the case for publicity and denying his client's clinic was a "house of horrors."

Dr. **Kermit Gosnell**, 72, who ran the now-shuttered Women's Medical Society Clinic, is accused of killing a patient and four infants during **late-term abortions**.

The case focuses on whether or not the infants were born alive and then killed. Gosnell could face the death penalty if convicted at his jury trial in Common Pleas Court in Philadelphia.

He is charged with first-degree murder for delivering live babies during late-term abortions and then deliberately severing their spinal cords, prosecutors said. His defense contends there is no evidence the babies were alive when they were expelled.

Defense attorney Jack McMahon, in his closing statement on Monday, cited testimony by Medical Examiner Sam Gulino that, of 47 bodies tested randomly from the West Philadelphia clinic, none had been born alive.

"These babies were not alive," McMahon said. "You may not like that evidence, but it is the evidence."

The clinic that prosecutors call a "house of horrors" has been cited as powerful evidence by both abortion and anti-abortion rights groups.

Rev. Frank Pavone, director of the **anti-abortion** group Priests for Life, said the often gory trial testimony "will change the

conversation ... It'll help people engage and make them realize they're not just talking about a theoretical idea."

Abortion-rights activists said Gosnell is an outlier among predominantly safe and legal abortion providers.

"Gosnell ran a criminal enterprise, not a healthcare facility, and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law," said Eric Ferrero, a spokesman for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Gosnell's defense attorney disputed the prosecution's characterization of the clinic, blaming Assistant District Attorney Joanne Pescatore for using the phrase at trial.

"It makes good press, makes good headlines," McMahon said. "It is the most extreme hype in the history of the criminal justice system. They want these crimes to be a house of horrors."

Testimony has depicted a filthy, squalid clinic serving mostly low-income women in the largely black community. McMahon said Gosnell was a physician who wanted to help his community.

"Dr. Gosnell never turned down a desperate and troubled young lady because they didn't have any money," he said.

Gosnell is also charged with murdering Karnamaya Mongar, 41, of Virginia, who died from a drug overdose after going to him for an abortion, prosecutors said.

The defense attorney said Mongar was given guideline amounts of the drug, Demerol, as an anesthesia during the abortion, as had hundreds of other women at the clinic.

The trial is now in its sixth week before Judge Jeffrey Minehart.

The charges against Gosnell and nine of his employees have added more fuel to the debate in the United States about late-

term abortions.

It is legal in Pennsylvania to abort a fetus up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. It becomes murder if the infant is fully expelled from the mother alive and then killed, according to a lawyer familiar with Pennsylvania law, who declined to be named given the volatility of the case.

Gosnell, who has been in jail since his January 2011 arrest, is being tried along with Eileen O'Neill, a medical graduate student accused of billing patients and insurance companies as if she had been a licensed doctor. Eight other defendants have pleaded guilty to a variety of charges and are awaiting sentencing.