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Derek Humphry
**LIBERI DI MORIRE**
le ragioni dell'eutanasia
traduzione di Giacomo Paleardi
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Contiene materiali e approfondimenti presenti nell’edizione originale (The Good Eutanasia Guide, Norris Lane Press / ERGO, Junction City, OR, USA, 2006²):

− Contatti delle organizzazioni per l’eutanasia nel mondo
− Cronologia storica del movimento per la libertà di morire

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A GUIDE TO RIGHT-TO-DIE GROUPS IN THE WORLD

Membership fees for the organizations are omitted. Some groups are not membership organizations but rely on donations and legacies. Generally, the membership fee is around $40 US for a couple and $30 for an individual. Most groups also allow discounts for the needy and for seniors.

Australia

EXIT International
(formerly EXIT Australia/New Zealand)
PO Box 37781
Winnellie
Northern Territory 0821

Phone: 0500-83-1929
Fax: 08-8983-2949
Email: exit@euthanasia.net
Web: www.exitinternational.net

Founded: 1998. The most progressive group in the southern hemisphere and perhaps the world. Its chief, Dr. Philip Nitschke, believes everybody who wishes to end their life should have the opportunity to do so. The group gives ‘euthanasia workshops’ throughout the country. It is ceaselessly working for new ways in which dying people can self-deliver without a doctor and without breaking the law.
Northern Territory Voluntary Euthanasia Society  
GPO Box 2734  
Darwin  
Northern Territory 0801

Phone: +61 8-8927-2294  
Fax: +61 8-8927-2294  
Email: ntves@bigpond.com.au


South Australia Voluntary Euthanasia Society  
PO Box 2151  
Kent Town  
South Australia 5071

Phone: 8-8265-3548  
Fax: 8-8265-2287  
Email: info@saves.asn.au


Voluntary Euthanasia Society of New South Wales, Inc.  
PO Box 25  
Broadway  
New South Wales 2007

Email: mail@vesnsw.org.au  
Web: www.vesnsw.org.au
Founded 1983. The aim of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society of NSW is to promote legislation which, with the proper safeguards, entitles any person suffering severe pain or distress, with no reasonable prospect of recovery, to a painless, medically assisted and dignified death in accordance with his or her expressed direction.

**Voluntary Euthanasia Society of Queensland**  
16 Howard Street  
Rosalie  
Queensland 4064  
Phone: 61-500-858-500  
Email: raysan@optusnet.com.au  
Web: www.connectqld.org.au/vesq

**Dying With Dignity Tasmania Inc**  
PO Box 1022  
Sandy Bay  
Tasmania 7006  
Phone: +61 03 62341425  
+61 03 62484103  
Email: hcutts@netspace.net.au  
Web: www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/vest

Promotes legislation that gives effect to freedom of choice and individual human rights, so that any person suffering, through illness or disability, severe pain or distress for which no remedy is available that is acceptable to the person, should be entitled by law to a painless and dignified death
in accordance with his or her express direction. Provides individual counselling. To pursue actively a continuing public education policy to achieve such legislation.

**Dying With Dignity, Victoria**  
3/98 Salisbury Avenue  
Blackburn, Victoria 3130

Phone: 61-3-987-7677  
Email: vesv@vesv.org.au  
Web: www.vesv.org.au

Founded 1974. Mission: Promoting legislation to enable incurably ill people to choose a painless and dignified death. Dying with Dignity (formerly VESV) is not able to help people end their lives.

**Voluntary Euthanasia Society of West Australia**  
PO Box 7243  
Cloisters Square  
Perth  
West Australia 6850

Phone: 9276-9144  
Fax: 9381-1893  
Email: info@waves.org.au  
Web: www.waves.org.au

Founded 1980. Mission: “To bring about such changes to Western Australian Statute Law and to medical ethics as will allow a person, suffering severe pain or distress with no reasonable prospect of recovery, to receive, with the proper safeguards,
a painless medically assisted and dignified death in accordance with his or her expressed wishes.”

Belgium

Recht op Waardig Sterven
(Flemish-speaking. Known as RWS)
Constitutiestraat 33,
B-2060 Antwerpen

Phone: 32-3-272-5163
Fax: 32-3-272-5163
Email: info@rws.be
Web: www.rws.be

Founded 1983.

Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite
(French speaking, Known as ADMD)
55 Rue du Président
B-1050 Bruxelles

Phone: 32-2-502-0485
Fax: 32-2-502-6150
Email: info@admd.be
Web: http://perso.infonie.be/admd

Founded 1981.
Britain (United Kingdom)

**Friends at the End (FATE)**
11 Westbourne Gardens
Glasgow G12 9XD

Phone: +0141-334-3287  
Fax: +0141-334-3287  
Email: info@friends-at-the-end.org.uk  
Web: www.friends-at-the-end.org.uk

A break-away from Scottish EXIT in 1995, it is willing to give cautious advice and literature on hastened death of the terminally ill.

**EXIT Scotland**
17 Hart Street
Edinburgh EH1 3RN

Phone: +131-556-4404  
Email: exit@euthanasia.cc  
Web: www.euthanasia.cc

Founded in 1980 by the late Sheila Little, EXIT has gone through many changes and downsizing. It published the first ‘how-to’ booklet in 1981. EXIT supports both self-deliverance and assisted suicide. It works within the law, but by treading a fine line on providing effective information on self-deliverance to members they are able to help people without risking the small organisation’s existence by breaking the law.
Dignity in Dying
13 Prince of Wales Terrace
Kensington
London W8 5PG

Phone: 2079-377-770
Fax: 2073-762-648
Email: info@dignityindying.org.uk
Web: www.dignityindying.org.uk

The London group is the oldest of its type in the world (1935) and has fluctuated in its mission. Currently, it concentrates on parliamentary law reform for physician-assisted suicide and promoting Advance Directives. It declines to give any help or advice on hastened death. But it does campaign for people with terminal illnesses to be allowed to ask for medical help to die at a time of their choosing, within proper legal safeguards. It wants to make back-street suicides and ‘mercy killings’ a thing of the past.

The Voluntary Euthanasia Society of England and Wales officially changed its name in 2005 to “Dignity in Dying.” There was a 79% support for this alteration which, by removal of the word ‘euthanasia’, is hoped to improve its public image.
Canada

Dying With Dignity
55 Eglintone Avenue East, Suite 802
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1G8

Phone: 1-800-495-6156
        416-486-3998
Fax: 416-486-5562
Email: info@dyingwithdignity.ca
Web: www.dyingwithdignity.ca

Founded 1980 by the late Marilyn Seguin, DWD is developing into a progressive and strong force for the right-to-die in Canada. Helps members whatever way is possible within the law. Dying With Dignity is a registered charitable society whose mission it is to improve the quality of dying for all Canadians in accordance with their own wishes, values, and beliefs.
Right to Die Society of Canada
145 Macdonell Ave
Toronto, Ontario M6R 2A4

Phone: 416-535-0690
Email: ruth@righttodie.ca
Web: www.righttodie.ca

As it does not have charitable status, the Society is able to be active politically. It canvases Members of Parliament for their support on law reform, which is its focus for the future. In addition, it works with people for whom law reform will come too late. It gives them information and support that will let them come as close as possible to dying on their own terms. It hopes that before long it will be able to provide companionship at the time of self-deliverance, for people who choose this option and who have been able to set up an arrangement by which the authorities can satisfy themselves that no law has been broken and no charges need to be laid.

Denmark

EVD (En Vaerdig Dod)
Peters Fabers Vej 37 st th
8210 Arhus V
Denmark

Web: www.e-v-d.dk

Founded 2000. 300 members. Will host the 2007 Right-to-Die Europe conference in Aarhus.
Colombia

Fundacion Pro Derecho a Morir Dignamente
Carrera 11 No. 73 - 44 officina 508
Bogota, Colombia

Phone: +57-1-345-40-65
Fax: +57-1-313-16-07
Email: info@dmd.org.co
Web: www.dmd.org.co


Finland

Exitus Ry
Post Box 130
FI-00141 Helsinki
Finland

Email: maria.marjukka.lehtinen@saunalahi.fi

Advocates Advance Directives now, and seeks to have a law passed allowing active voluntary euthanasia.

Pro Gratia of Helsinki
Laajasalonkaari 15 a
FIN-00840 Helsinki

Phone: +358 9 698-4415
Fax: +358-9491-292
RIGHT TO DIE GROUPS IN THE WORLD

France

Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite (ADMD)
50 rue de Chabrol
75010 Paris

Phone: 48-00-04-16
Fax: 01-48-00-05-72
Email: info@admd.net
Web: www.admd.net


Germany

Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur Humanes Sterben e.V (DGHS)
Lange Gasse 2-4
Postfach 11 05 29
Augsburg 86030

Phone: 49-821-502-350
Fax: 49-821-502-3555
Email: info@dghs.de
   dghsaugsb@aol.com
Web: www.dghs.de

India

**Society for the Right to Die with Dignity**
Nanvarati Hospital
SV Road, Vile Parle (w)
Mumbai 400 058

Phone: 91-22-618-255
Fax: 91-22-611-9363
Email: nagraj@giadbms1.vsnl.net.in

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Israel

**LILACH, The Israel Society for the Right to Live and Die With Dignity**
PO Box 14409
Tel Aviv 61143

Phone: 972-3-673-0577
Email: lilach19@zahav.net.il
Web: www.lilach.org.il

Italy

EXIT—Italia
Associazione Italiana per il Diritto ad una Morte Dignitosa
Corso Monte Cucco 144
10141 Torino

Phone: +39 11-770 7126
Fax: +39 11-770 7126
Email: exit-italia@libero.it
Web: www.exit-italia.it

Seeking law reform on hastened death.

Libera Uscita
Via Genova 24
00184 Rome

Phone: +39-0637823807
Fax: +39-0648931008
Email: info@liberauscita.it
associazioneliberauscita@hotmail.com
Web: www.liberauscita.it

Libera Uscita is a non-political association founded in Rome with organizational basis all over Italy. Founded in 2000. The aim of the association is to develop the debate on bioethical themes, starting with euthanasia and the right to choose consciously a therapeutical treatment as far as its withhold or withdraw. The association has two draft bills—one on euthanasia, the other on Living Wills—which were recently presented to the Chamber of Deputies and to the Senate.
Japan

**Japan Society for Dying With Dignity**  
Watanabe Building 202, 2-29-1 Hongou  
Bunkyo-Ku, Tokyo 113  

Phone: 81-3-3818-6563  
Fax: 81-3-3818-6562  
Email: info@songenshi-kyokai.com  
Web: www.songenshi-kyokai.com


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Luxembourg

**Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite (ADMDL)**  
37 Route de Longwy  
L-4750 Petange  
Luxembourg

Phone: 352-594-505  
Fax: 352-2659-0482  
Email: admdl@pt.lu  
Web: admdl.lu

Founded 1988. Came close in 2003 to achieving law reform on euthanasia, losing by a narrow vote.
The Netherlands

**Right to Die – NL (formerly NVVE)**
Postbus 75331
Leidsegracht 103
1070 AH Amsterdam

Phone: +31 20-620-0690
Fax: +31 20-420-7216
Email: euthanasie@nvve.nl
Web: www.nvve.nl

Founded in 1973 and spent 30 years educating and driving for law reform, which succeeded in 2002 legalizing voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide under strict guidelines. Changed its name in 2003 from NVVE. Has approx. 100,000 members.

New Zealand

**Voluntary Euthanasia Society of New Zealand**
PO Box 26095
Epsom Auckland 3

Phone: 64-9-630 7035
Fax: 64-9-630 7035
Email: ves@clear.net.nz
Web: www.ves.org.nz

In 1978 euthanasia groups were formed in the north and south islands with the aim of changing the law to allow assisted suicide. Following a narrow defeat in Parliament in 2004, the two societies decided to
merge to achieve greater political strength.

Norway

**Foreningen Retten til en Verdig Død**
Storgaten 27
1440 Drobak
Norway

Phone: 47 64 935333
Email: l-livste@online.no
Web: www.livstestament.org

South Africa

**South African Voluntary Euthanasia Society (SAVES)**
PO Box 1460
Wandsbeck 3631
KwaZulu, Natal

Phone: 141-334-3287
Fax: 141-334-3287
Email: livingwill@3ico.za
Web: www.Livingwill.co.za

Spain

**Derecho a Morir Dignamente (DMD)**
Avda.Portal del Angel 7-4 atico B
08002 Barcelona

Phone: 343-412-3203
Email: admd@admd.e.telephonica.net
Web: www.eutanasia.ws

Founded 1984. It is now the umbrella group for four divisions around Spain.

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Sweden

**Rätten Til Var Död**
Höganäsgaten 2 C
735-30 Upsala

Phone: +46 18-104140
Fax: +46 40-964498
Email: appelcomp@tella.com

Switzerland

**DIGNITAS**
Postfach 9
CH 8127 Forch

Phone: +980-44-59
Fax: +980-14-21
Email: dignitas@dignitas.ch
Web: www.dignitas.ch

DIGNITAS is a tiny organization near Zurich that will help terminally ill, chronically ill and sometimes very seriously mentally ill people. Following worldwide publicity in 2003 it virtually had to shut down because of overwhelming work and lack of finance. It resumed operating in 2004.

**Exit/ADMD Suisse Romande**
C.P. 110
CH 1211 Geneva 17

Phone: +22 735-77-60
Fax: +22 735-77-65
Email: info@exit-geneve.ch
Web: www.exit-geneve.ch

Founded 1982. Will find help for its own members who justifiably wish to die, according to Swiss law.
EXIT/Vereinigung für humanes Sterben
(German-speaking)
Mühlezelgstrasse 45
Postfach 476
CH 8047 Zurich

Phone: +41 43-388-3838
Fax: +41 43-343-3839
Email: info@exit.ch
Web: www.exit.ch

Founded 1982. Will find help for its own members who justifiably wish to die under the provisions of the Swiss assisted suicide law. Had 58,000 members in 2005.

EX-International
C/o Peter Widmer
Postfach 605
CH 3000 Bern 9

Phone: 313-012157
Fax: 313-55561

Will help German-speaking people in Europe. (Note: The name ‘EX-International’ is short for EXIT and does not mean ‘formerly’ as in English.)
United States Of America

Compassion & Choices (C&C)

1. Compassion in Dying
6312 SW Capitol Hwy, Suite 415
Portland, OR 97201

Phone: 503-221-9556
Fax: 503-228-9160
Email: info@compassionandchoices.org
Web: www.compassionandchoices.org

Formed in 2004 by an amalgamation of End-of-Life Choices (formerly Hemlock) and Compassion in Dying, C&C operates out of Denver, Colorado, and Portland, Oregon. The Denver office deals with membership, legislative and political advocacy, and local groups (chapters). Portland handles legal advocacy, services, public education, and fundraising. Offices in both cities handle Client Services.

Compassion and Choices of Oregon (State)
PO Box 6404
Portland, OR 97228

Phone: 503-525-1956
Fax: 503-228-9160
Email: or@compassionandchoices.org
Web: www.compassionandchoices.org/or

This group is the public steward of the Oregon Death With Dignity Act which permits physician-assisted suicide for a competent adult who is in advanced terminal illness. Residents of the state
only (tax-payer or voter or home-owner or renter). In its first seven years it guided more than 180 dying Oregonians through the aid-in-dying process under the law.

Compassion and Choices of Washington (State)
PO Box 61369
Seattle, WA 98141

Phone: +206-256-1636
Email: wa@compassionandchoices.org
Web: www.compassionandchoices.org/wa

Death With Dignity National Center
520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1030
Portland, OR 97204

Phone: 503-228-4415
Email: info@deathwithdignity.org
Web: www.deathwithdignity.org

DDNC works with leaders in other states considering Oregon-style laws, as legislatures, medical communities and the public come to understand the law’s benefits as well as the choice, control and comfort that the law affords. It is the principal legal defender of the 1994 Oregon Death With Dignity Act before the courts, representing a doctor and a pharmacist against the repeated attempts by the US Attorney-General to repeal the law.
Euthanasia Research & Guidance Organization (ERGO)
24829 Norris Lane
Junction City, OR 97448-9552

Phone: 541-998-1873
Fax: 541-998-1873
Email: ergo@efn.org
Web: www.finalexit.org

ERGO (founded 1993) specializes in informative literature about choices in dying. It updates and sells ‘Final Exit’ amongst other books and pamphlets. Willing to talk by internet or telephone to persons or families about their right-to-die problems. Provides student literature and media briefings.

Final Exit Network
PO Box 965005
Marietta, GA 30066

Phone: 1-800-524-3948
Email: info@finalexitnetwork.org
Web: www.finalexitnetwork.org

Founded in 2004 by former Hemlock Society members who felt that the organization replacing it was insufficient and too restrictive about helping members to die. With its ‘Exit Guides’ across the country, the Network will help members who need not be diagnosed as terminal to achieve their own deaths. It also backs research into new methods of self-deliverance, promotes Advance Directives, and will advocate for people whose Advance Directives
(Living wills etc.) are not being honored.

End-of-Life Choices Florida (State)
PO Box 121093
West Melbourne, FL 32912-1093
Phone: 800-849-9349 (M–F, 9AM–5PM Eastern)
Email: eolcfl@aol.com

Venezuela
Asociacion Venezolana Derecho a Morir con Dignidad
(Venezuelan Association Right to Die With Dignity)
Calle A; Los Ditos, Urb. Moterrey, La Trinidad,
Baruta - 1080, Caracas
Ph & Fax: 58212 944 0472
Email: ragaso@cantv.net
Web: www.morircondignidad.org

Zimbabwe
Final Exit
PO Box MP 386
Mount Pleasant, Harare
Phone: +263-4-744258 or 308640
Email: frances@hms.co.zw

Founded in 1995, a small group of 617 members
operating under difficult political circumstances,
promoting Living Wills.
World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies

Almost all the groups listed in the foregoing pages are members of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies.

World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies
C/o NVVE
Postbus 75331
1070 AH Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Web: www.worldrtd.net

Founded 1980. An umbrella group, it represents 38 organizations in 23 countries all working to ensure better choices at the end of life. It is now an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) in the European Union. The Federation’s 16th biennial conference is scheduled for September 7-10, 2006 in Toronto. Conference contact: info@dyingwithdignity.ca.

Right to Die Europe (Rtd-E)
Postbus 75331
1070 AG Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Phone: (31) 20 5315916
FAX: (31) 20 4207216
Email: k.jager@nvve.nl

RtD-Europe is the umbrella organization of 17 right to die societies in Europe.
If you wish to add to, update, or correct any of the foregoing information for future editions, please immediately email Derek Humphry at ergo@efn.org

Updated August 2006

Note: Closed in 2004 were: The Hemlock Society USA, Partnership for Caring USA, Last Acts Partnership USA, and Last Rights Publications, Canada. Closed in 2006 was Choices in Dying (BC Canada.)
A TWENTIETH CENTURY CHRONOLOGY

APPENDIX A

A twentieth century chronology of voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

1906 First euthanasia bill drafted in Ohio. It does not succeed.


1938 The Euthanasia Society of America is founded by the Rev. Charles Potter in New York.

1954 Joseph Fletcher publishes Morals and Medicine, predicting the coming controversy over the right to die.

1957 Pope Pius XII issues Catholic doctrine distinguishing ordinary from extraordinary means for sustaining life.

1958 Oxford law professor Glanville Williams publishes The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal Law, proposing that voluntary euthanasia be allowed for competent, terminally ill patients.

1958 Lael Wertenbaker publishes Death of a Man describing how she helped her husband commit suicide. It is the first book of its genre.

1967 The first living will is written by attorney Louis Kutner and his arguments for it appear in the Indiana Law Journal.
1967 A right-to-die bill is introduced by Dr. Walter W. Sackett in Florida’s legislature. It arouses extensive debate but is unsuccessful.

1968 Doctors at Harvard Medical School propose redefining death to include brain death as well as heart-lung death. Gradually this definition is accepted.


1970 The Euthanasia Society (US) finishes distributing 60,000 living wills.

1973 American Hospital Association creates Patient Bill of Rights, which includes informed consent and the right to refuse treatment.

1973 Dr. Gertruida Postma, who gave her dying mother a lethal injection, receives light sentence in the Netherlands. The furore launches the euthanasia movement in that country (NVVE).

1974 The Euthanasia Society in New York renamed the Society for the Right to Die. The first hospice American hospice opens in New Haven, Conn.

1975 Deeply religious Van Dusens commit suicide. Henry P. Van Dusen, 77, and his wife, Elizabeth, 80, leaders of the Christian ecumenical movement, choose to die rather than
suffer from disabling conditions. Their note reads, “We still feel this is the best way and the right way to go.”

1975 Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society (NVVE) launches its Members’ Aid Service to give advice to the dying. Receives 25 requests for aid in the first year.

1976 The New Jersey Supreme Court allows Karen Ann Quinlan’s parents to disconnect the respirator that keeps her alive, saying it is affirming the choice Karen herself would have made. Quinlan case becomes a legal landmark. But she lives on for another eight years.

1976 California Natural Death Act is passed. The nation’s first aid in dying statute gives legal standing to living wills and protects physicians from being sued for failing to treat incurable illnesses.


1976 First international meeting of right-to-die groups. Six are represented in Tokyo.


1978 Whose Life Is It Anyway?, a play about a young artist who becomes quadriplegic, is staged in London and on Broadway, raising disturbing questions about the right to die. A film version appears in 1982. Jean’s Way is published in
England by Derek Humphry, describing how he helped his terminally ill wife to die.

1979 Artist Jo Roman, dying of cancer, commits suicide at a much-publicized gathering of friends that is later broadcast on public television and reported by the *New York Times*.

1979 Two right-to-die organizations split. The Society for the Right to Die separates from Concern for Dying, a companion group that grew out of the Society’s Euthanasia Education Council.

1980 Advice column “Dear Abby” publishes a letter from a reader agonizing over a dying loved one, generating 30,000 advance care directive requests at the Society for the Right to Die.

1980 Pope John Paul II issues *Declaration in Euthanasia* opposing mercy killing but permits the greater use of painkillers to ease pain and the right to refuse extraordinary means for sustaining life.

1980 Hemlock Society is founded in Santa Monica, California, by Derek Humphry. It advocates legal change and distributes how to die information. This launches the campaign for assisted dying in America. Hemlock’s national membership will grow to 50,000 within a decade. Right to die societies also formed the same year in Germany, France and Canada.


1983  Famous author (*Darkness at Noon* etc.) Arthur Koestler, terminally ill, commits suicide a year after publishing his reasons. His wife Cynthia, not dying, chooses to commit suicide with him.

1983  Elizabeth Bouvia, a quadriplegic suffering from cerebral palsy, sues a California hospital to let her die of self-starvation while receiving comfort care. She loses, and files an appeal.

1984  Advance care directives become recognized in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

1984  The Netherlands Supreme Court approves voluntary euthanasia under certain conditions.


1985  Betty Rollin publishes *Last Wish*, her account of helping her mother to die after a long losing battle with breast cancer. The book becomes a best-seller.

1986  Roswell Gilbert, 76, sentenced in Florida to 25 years without parole for shooting his terminally ill wife. Granted clemency five years later.
1986  Elizabeth Bouvia is granted the right to refuse force feeding by an appeals court. But she declines to take advantage of the permission and is still alive in 2004.

1986  Americans Against Human Suffering is founded in California, launching a campaign for what will become the 1992 California Death with Dignity Act.

1987  The California State Bar Conference passes Resolution #3-4-87 to become the first public body to approve of physician aid in dying.

1988  *Journal of the American Medical Association* prints “It’s Over, Debbie,” an unsigned article describing a resident doctor giving a lethal injection to a woman dying of ovarian cancer. The public prosecutor makes an intense, unsuccessful effort to identify the physician in the article.

1988  Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations passes a national resolution favoring aid in dying for the terminally ill, becoming the first religious body to affirm a right to die.

1990  Washington Initiative (119) is filed, the first state voter referendum on the issue of physician-assisted suicide.

1990  American Medical Association adopts the formal position that with informed consent, a physician can withhold or withdraw treatment from a patient who is close to death, and may also discontinue life support of a patient in a permanent coma.
1990  Dr. Jack Kevorkian assists in the death of Janet Adkins, a middle-aged woman with Alzheimer’s disease. Kevorkian subsequently flouts the Michigan legislature’s attempts to stop him from assisting in additional suicides.

1990  Supreme Court decides the *Cruzan* case, its first aid in dying ruling. The decision recognizes that competent adults have a constitutionally protected liberty interest that includes a right to refuse medical treatment; the court also allows a state to impose procedural safeguards to protect its interests.

1991  Hemlock of Oregon introduces the Death With Dignity Act into the Oregon legislature, but it fails to get out of committee.

1990  Congress passes the Patient Self-Determination Act, requiring hospitals that receive federal funds to tell patients that they have a right to demand or refuse treatment. It takes effect the next year.

1991  Dr. Timothy Quill writes about “Diane” in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, describing his provision of lethal drugs to a leukemia patient who chose to die at home by her own hand rather than undergo therapy that offered a 25 percent chance of survival.

1991  Nationwide Gallup poll finds that 75 percent of Americans approve of living wills.

1991  Derek Humphry publishes *Final Exit*, a ‘how-to’ book on self-deliverance. Within 18 months the book sells 540,000 copies and
tops USA best-seller lists. It is translated into twelve other languages. Total sales exceed one million. www.FinalExit.org

1991 Choice in Dying is formed by the merger of two aid in dying organizations, Concern for Dying and Society for the Right to Die. The new organization becomes known for defending patients’ rights and promoting living wills, and will grow in five years to 150,000 members.

1991 Washington State voters reject Ballot Initiative 119, which would have legalized physician-aided suicide and aid in dying. The vote is 54–46 percent.

1992 Americans for Death with Dignity, formerly Americans Against Human Suffering, places the California Death with Dignity Act on the state ballot as Proposition 161.

1992 Health care becomes a major political issue as presidential candidates debate questions of access, rising costs, and the possible need for some form of rationing.

1992 California voters defeat Proposition 161, which would have allowed physicians to hasten death by actively administering or prescribing medications for self administration by suffering, terminally ill patients. The vote is 54–46 percent.

1992 The Euthanasia Research & Guidance Organization (ERGO) is founded. Incorporated 501(c)(3) tax deductible the
following year. [www.FinalExit.org](http://www.FinalExit.org)

**1993** Advance directive laws are achieved in 48 states, with passage imminent in the remaining two.

**1993** Compassion in Dying is founded in Washington state to counsel the terminally ill and provide information about how to die without suffering and “with personal assistance, if necessary, to intentionally hasten death.” The group sponsors suits challenging state laws against assisted suicide.

**1993** President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton publicly support advance directives and sign living wills, acting after the death of Hugh Rodham, Hillary’s father.

**1993** Oregon Right to Die, a political action committee, is founded to write and subsequently to pass the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.

**1993** European Federation of Right to Die Societies founded as a better means to tackle local problems.

**1994** The Death with Dignity Education Center is founded in California as a national nonprofit organization that works to promote a comprehensive, humane, responsive system of care for terminally ill patients. Later renamed ‘Death With Dignity National Center’ and moves to Washington DC.

**1994** More presidential living wills are revealed. After the deaths of former President
Richard Nixon and former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, it is reported that both had signed advance directives.

1994 The California Bar approves physician-assisted suicide. With an 85 percent majority and no active opposition, the Conference of Delegates says physicians should be allowed to prescribe medication to terminally ill, competent adults for self-administration in order to hasten death.

1994 All states and the District of Columbia now recognize some type of advance directive procedure.

1994 Washington State’s anti-suicide law is overturned. In Compassion v. Washington, a district court finds that a law outlawing assisted suicide violates the 14th Amendment. Judge Rothstein writes, “The court does not believe that a distinction can be drawn between refusing life-sustaining medical treatment and physician-assisted suicide by an uncoerced, mentally competent, terminally ill adult.”

1994 In New York State, the lawsuit Quill et. al. v. Koppell is filed to challenge the New York law prohibiting assisted suicide. Quill loses, and files an appeal.

1994 Oregon voters approve Measure 16, a Death With Dignity Act ballot initiative that would permit terminally ill patients, under proper safeguards, to obtain a physician’s prescrip-
tion to end life in a humane and dignified manner. The vote is 51–49 percent.

1994 U.S. District Court Judge Hogan issues a temporary restraining order against Oregon’s Measure 16, following that with an injunction barring the state from putting the law into effect.

1995 Oregon Death with Dignity Legal Defense and Education Center is founded. Its purpose is to defend Ballot Measure 16 legalizing physician-assisted suicide.

1995 Washington State’s Compassion ruling is overturned by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, reinstating the anti suicide law.

1995 U.S. District Judge Hogan rules that Oregon Measure 16, the Death with Dignity Act, is unconstitutional on grounds it violates the Equal Protection clause of the Constitution. His ruling is immediately appealed.

1995 Surveys find that doctors disregard most advance directives. *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that physicians were unaware of the directives of three-quarters of all elderly patients admitted to a New York hospital; the *California Medical Review* reports that three-quarters of all advance directives were missing from Medicare records in that state.

1995 Oral arguments in the appeal of *Quill v. Vacco* contest the legality of New York’s anti-suicide law before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.
1995  Compassion case is reconsidered in Washington state by a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals panel of eleven judges, the largest panel ever to hear a physician-assisted suicide case.


1996  The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reverses the Compassion finding in Washington state, holding that “a liberty interest exists in the choice of how and when one dies, and that the provision of the Washington statute banning assisted suicide, as applied to competent, terminally ill adults who wish to hasten their deaths by obtaining medication prescribed by their doctors, violates the Due Process Clause.” The ruling affects laws of nine western states. It is stayed pending appeal.

1996  A Michigan jury acquits Dr. Kevorkian of violating a state law banning assisted suicides.

1996  The Second Circuit Court of Appeals reverses the Quill finding, ruling that “The New York statutes criminalizing assisted suicide violate the Equal Protection Clause because, to the extent that they prohibit a physician from prescribing medications to be self-administered by a mentally competent, terminally ill person in the final stages of his terminal illness, they are not rationally related to any legitimate state interest.” The ruling affects
laws in New York, Vermont and Connecticut. (On 17 April the court stays enforcement of its ruling for 30 days pending an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.)

1996 The U.S. Supreme Court announces that it will review both cases sponsored by Compassion in Dying, known now as Washington v. Glucksberg and Quill v. Vacco.

1997 Oral arguments set for the New York and Washington cases on physician assisted dying. The cases were heard in tandem on 8 January but not combined. A ruling is expected in June.

1997 ACLU attorney Robert Rivas files an amended complaint challenging the 128 year-old Florida law banning assisted suicide. Charles E. Hall, who has AIDS asks court permission for a doctor to assist his suicide. The court refuses.

1997 On 13 May the Oregon House of Representatives votes 32–26 to return Measure 16 to the voters in November for repeal (HB 2954). On 10 June the Senate votes 20–10 to pass HB 2954 and return Measure 16 to the voters for repeal. No such attempt to overturn the will of the voters has been tried in Oregon since 1908.

1997 On 26 June the U.S. Supreme Court reverses the decisions of the Ninth and Second Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington v. Glucksberg and Quill v. Vacco, upholding as constitutional
state statutes which bar assisted suicide. However, the court also validated the concept of “double effect,” openly acknowledging that death hastened by increased palliative measures does not constitute prohibited conduct so long as the intent is the relief of pain and suffering. The majority opinion ended with the pronouncement that “Throughout the nation, Americans are engaged in an earnest and profound debate about the morality, legality and practicality of physician-assisted suicide. Our holding permits this debate to continue, as it should in a democratic society.”

1997 Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society (NVVE) reports its membership now more than 90,000, of whom 900 made requests for help in dying to its Members’ Aid Service.

1997 Britain’s Parliament rejects by 234 votes to 89 the seventh attempt in 60 years to change the law on assisted suicide despite polls showing 82 percent of British people want reform.

1997 On 4 November the people of Oregon vote by a margin of 60–40 percent against Measure 51, which would have repealed the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, 1994. The law officially takes effect (ORS 127.800-897) on 27 October 1997 when court challenges disposed of.

1998 Hemlock Foundation starts its “Caring Friends” program offering personal support and information to irreversibly ill Hemlock
members who are considering a hastened death within the law.

1998 Dr. Kevorkian assists the suicide of his 130th patient in eight years. His home state, Michigan, passes new law making such actions a crime.

1998 Oregon Health Services Commission decides that payment for physician-assisted suicide can come from state funds under the Oregon Health Plan so that the poor will not be discriminated against.

1998 First 15 people die by making use, in its first year, of the Oregon Death With Dignity Act, receiving physician-assisted suicide. In the first year of the law, some 50 other applicants are refused as unqualified, or die inside the waiting period.

1998 (November) Dr. Kevorkian performs voluntary euthanasia on Thomas Youk with ALS, and a video of his action is shown on CBS TV ‘60 Minutes’. Within two days Kevorkian is charged with murder, and using a controlled substance.

1999 Dr. Kevorkian found guilty of 2nd degree murder and unlawfully possessing and administering a controlled drug. Sentenced to 10–25 years on the murder count and 3–7 years on the drug count. Launches appeal from prison.
2000  International euthanasia conference in Boston jointly organized by the Hemlock Society and the World Federation of Right to Die Societies.

2000  Attempt by Hemlock in Maine to get electors to pass physician-assisted suicide law similar to Oregon's fails by 19,453 votes: 51.5 percent against, 48.5 for.

2001  Kevorkian's appeal decision reached after 2 years 7 months. Judges reject it. US Supreme Court declines to hear it.

2001  MS victim Diane Pretty asks UK court to allow her husband to help her commit suicide. The London High Court, the House of Lords, and the Court of Human Rights, in Strasbourg, all say no. She dies in hospice a few weeks later.

2002  Dutch law allowing voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide takes effect on 1 February. For 20 years previously it had been permitted under guidelines.

2002  Belgium passes similar law to the Dutch, allowing both voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

2003  US Attorney-General Ashcroft asks the 9th Circuit Court of Appeal to reverse the finding of a lower court judge that the Oregon Death With Dignity Act 1994 does not contravene federal powers. 129 dying people have used this law over the last five years to obtain legal physician-assisted suicide. The losers
of this case will almost certainly ask the US Supreme Court to rule.

2003 Recognizing that their goal of lawful euthanasia has been achieved, the Dutch Society for Voluntary Euthanasia (NVVE) changes its name to “Right-To-Die-NL”. It renames the so-called ‘Drion Pill’ as the ‘Lastwillpill’.

2003 For political correctness, Hemlock Society scraps its 23-year-old name and christens itself ‘End-of-Life Choices’ (EOLC). Discusses merger with Compassion in Dying.

2004 The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found in favor of the state of Oregon in its battle with US Attorney General John Ashcroft, ruling that a state had the right to decide itself which drugs could be used in medical practice. Ashcroft had claimed in a directive that physician-assisted suicide was not a legitimate medical practice, but he was rebuffed.

2004 World Euthanasia Conference in Tokyo discusses and dissects the Living Wills (Advance Directives) around the world.

2004 Hemlock Society USA is renamed End-of-Life Choices and within months is merged with Compassion in Dying to become Compassion & Choices (C&C). This causes the Final Exit Network to be formed from the ashes of Hemlock to develop a system of volunteer guides across America to help dying people who request assistance.
2004 Lesley Martin in New Zealand completes a seven-month prison sentence for the attempted murder by morphine overdose of her terminally ill mother. Vows to continue to work for lawful voluntary euthanasia.

2005 USA Supreme Court decides to take the Attorney-General’s case against the Oregon Death With Dignity law. Bush administration wants America’s only physician-assisted suicide law struck down on the grounds that states do not control lethal drugs.

2005 Dr. Philip Nitschke, leader of ExitInternational, holds workshops in Australia explaining how to make a ‘peaceful pill’.

2005 (March) Terri Shiavo, aged 41, who for over ten years was in a persistent vegetative state, finally allowed to die by removal of life support equipment after a huge national controversy involving the courts, Congress and the USA President.

2005 First hospital in Switzerland, in Lausanne, announced it would now permit right-to-die group EXIT to come into wards to help a terminally ill adult who wanted assisted suicide. Other Swiss hospitals may follow suit.
2006  (Jan.6) The Suicide Materials Offences Act takes effect in Australia, making it a crime to use a ‘carriage service’ to discuss end-of-life issues. Thus passing information about any form of euthanasia via telephone, internet, email and fax is a felony. Books, mail and personal meetings are not affected.

2006  US Supreme Court approved the validity of the Oregon Death With Dignity Act, 1994, under challenge from the federal attorney general (Gonzalez v. Oregon.)

Between 1998 (when the law took effect) and 2006, 246 dying Oregon citizens used the physician-assisted suicide law to end their lives.

2006  (Sept. 7-10) 16th biennial conference of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, Toronto, Hosted by Canada’s Dying With Dignity organization. info@dyingwithdignity.ca

2006  Applications for parole on the grounds of ill-health by Dr. Jack Kevorkian were turned down by the Michigan State. He has been in prison since 1999 for the second degree murder of a dying man. (See also pages 177-8.)

SOURCE: Euthanasia Research & Guidance Organization (ERGO)
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Seven years of physician-assisted suicide in Oregon.

The Death With Dignity Act was passed in Oregon by voter initiative 51–49 percent in 1994. Implementation was delayed by court actions until November 1997. The same month a second voter initiative calling for its repeal was defeated 60–40 percent. Essentially, the law became operative on the first day of 1998.

The Act permits a terminal patient with an estimated less than six months to live to ask the treating physician, first orally, then in writing, for a lethal overdose with which to end his/her life. If the physician is willing, a second physician must also examine the case and sign off on the prognosis. Should clinical depression be suspected, a mental health professional must be consulted and a lethal prescription cannot be written until or unless the patient is no longer depressed. The physician also has to seek alternatives, such as better palliative care and hospice, before proceeding. Full documentation must be kept. No health professional or worker need participate if ethically opposed to the procedure.

Residency in the state of Oregon is required. This is defined as being a property owner or renter, or having an Oregon driving license, or being on the voter’s rolls.

A 17-day waiting period is mandatory. Euthanasia (direct injection) is banned. All cases must be reported to the state health department, which, at the end of each year must publish the statistics but not reveal the patient’s identities. Death certificates—which are public documents—can reflect the cause as the underlying illness but not suicide.
Between 1998 to 2004, 208 patients used the law for assisted suicide out of a total of 67,706 recorded deaths in Oregon during that period. Only 13 did not die at home. In 2004 there were 37 hastened deaths — a slight drop over the previous year. Doctors were present at the bedside in six of that year's cases, and 40 had been present throughout the life of the law. In other cases mostly a trained volunteer would be present, although in 22 cases the patient ended their life without any experienced person present.

The time between ingestion of the prescribed lethal dose of either pentobarbital or secobarbital and death were a median of 25 minutes, with a range of four minutes to 48 hours.

The most likely reasons for choosing assisted suicide were, in order of importance:

1. Losing autonomy;
2. Decreasing participation in activities;
3. Losing control of bodily functions;
4. Burden on family, friends and caregivers;
5. Inadequate pain management;

The percentage of patients referred to a specialist for psychological evaluation beyond that done by a hospice team has declined over the past seven years, dropping from 31 percent in 1998 to 5 percent in 2004.

By sex, the number of patients was fairly even — 108 men to 100 women. The median age was 69. Of the total, five were Asian and none African-American.

During the seven years, 178 of the patients were enrolled in hospice at the time of their hastened deaths.

More detailed statistics are available at: www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/chs/pas/ar-index.cfm
APPENDIX C

Select bibliography of right-to-die books

There has been such a rash of books dealing with this subject in the past 20–30 years that it would be near impossible to list them all. Thus I have those I believe to be most significant, and separated into different categories for easier selection.

Case histories
Death of a Man, by Lael Wertenbaker
(Random House 1975)

Jean’s Way, by Derek Humphry
(Horizon Press 1978, currently in paperback)

Last Wish, by Betty Rollin
(Warner 1987; currently in paperback)

A Chosen Death, by Lonny Shavelson MD
(Simon & Schuster 1995)

How To and Advisory
Final Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide, by Derek Humphry (Hemlock 1991, currently in paperback from Delta)

Suicide and Attempted Suicide: Methods and Consequences, by Geo Stone (Carrol & Graf 1999)

Angels of Death: Exploring the Euthanasia Underground, by Roger S. Magnusson (Yale 2002)

What Dying People Want: Practical Wisdom for the End of Life, by David Kuhl, MD (Public Affairs 2002)

Fixin’ to Die: A Compassionate Guide to Committing Suicide or Staying Alive, by David Lester (Baywood 2003)

History

The Right To Die: Understanding Euthanasia, by Derek Humphry and Ann Wicke (Harper & Row 1986)

Death By Choice, by Daniel C Maguire (Schoken Books 1975)

Deathright: Culture, Medicine, Politics, and the Right to Die, by James M. Hoepler (Westview Press 1994)

Freedom To Die: People, Politics and the Right to Die Movement, by Derek Humphry and Mary Clement. (St.Martin's Press 1998)

A Merciful End: The Euthanasia Movement in Modern America, by Ian Dowbiggin (Oxford 2003)

Dying Right: The Death With Dignity Movement, by Daniel Hillyard and John Dombrink (Routlege 2001)

Hospice or Hemlock? Searching for Heroic Compassion, by Constance E Putnam (Praeger 2002)
History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture, by Georges Minois (Johns Hopkins 1999)


Ethics

Morals and Medicine, by Joseph Fletcher (Beacon Press 1954)

The Savage God, by A. Alvarez (Bantam Books 1976)

Rethinking Life and Death, by Peter Singer (St. Martin’s Press 1995)

The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality, by James Rachels (Oxford 1986)

Matters of Life and Death: Making Moral Theory Work in Medical Ethics and the Law, by David Orentlicher (Princeton 2001)

Is There a Duty to Die? by John Hartwig et al (Routlege NY 2000)

The Right to Die With Dignity: An Argument in Ethics, Medicine and Law, by Raphael Cohen-Almagor (Rutgers 2001)

Writings on an Ethical Life, by Peter Singer (Ecco 2001)

A Time to Die: The Place for Physician Assistance, by Charles F. McKhann, MD (Yale 1999)
**SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RIGHT-TO-DIE BOOKS**

*Physician Assisted Suicide: Expanding the Debate,* edited by Margaret P. Battin, Rosamond Rhodes, and Anita Silvers (Routlege 1998)

*Can We Ever Kill? An Ethical Inquiry,* by Robert Crawford (Fount 1991)

**Culture**

*Leaving You: The Cultural Meaning of Suicide,* by Lisa Lieberman (Ivan R. Dee 2004)

*Last Rights: The Struggle Over the Right To Die,* by Sue Woodman (Perseus 2001)

*In the Arms of Others: A Cultural History of the Right-to-Die Movement in America,* by Peter G. Filene (Ivan R. Dee 1998)


*The Enigma of Suicide,* by George Howe Colt (Summit 1991)

**Law**

*Lethal Judgments: Assisted Suicide and American Law,* by Michael Urofsky (UP Kansas, 2000)


**Elder Suicide**

*Commonsense Suicide: The Final Right,* by Doris Portwood (Dodd Mead 1978)
Suicide in the Elderly, by Nancy J Osgood (Aspen 1985)

Suicide and the Older Adult, edited by Antoon A. Leenaars et al (Guilford 1992)

Suicide in Later Life, by Nancy J Osgood (Lexington 1992)

Religion
Euthanasia and Religion, by Gerald A Larue, (Hemlock Society 1985)

A Noble Death: Suicide & Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity, by Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor (HarperSanFrancisco 1992)

What Does the Bible Say About Suicide? by James T. Clemons (Fortress 1990)

Playing God: 50 Religions’ Views on Your Right to Die, by Gerald A Larue (Moyer Bell 1996)

Drama
Whose Life Is It Anyway? by Brian Clark (Avon 1980)

Is This The Day? by Vilma Hollingberry (Hemlock Society 1990)

Fiction
Moral Hazard, by Kate Jennings (Fourth Estate 2002)

Lethal Dose, by Stephen Snodgrass (ICAM 1996)

Critical Care, by Richard Dooling (Morrow 1992)
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RIGHT-TO-DIE BOOKS

*The Woman Said Yes*, by Jessamyn West  
(Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch 1976)

*In the Night Season*, by Christian Barnard  
(Prentice Hall 1978)

*One True Thing*, by Anna Quindlen  
(Random House 1994)

*A Stone Boat*, by Andrew Solomon  
(Faber and Faber 1994)

*Amsterdam*, by Ian McEwan (Vintage 1999)

*Stone Water*, by Barbara Snow Gilbert (Dell 1996)

*Mercy*, by Jodi Picoult (Pocket Books 1996)

**Burials and Ceremonies**  
*Dealing Creatively With Death: A manual of death education and simple burial*, by Ernest Morgan  
(Barclay House, many editions)
APPENDIX D

Films dealing with
dying and euthanasia

* Based On A True Story


On Borrowed Time (1939)—Lionel Barrymore, Cedric Hardwicke, Beulah Bondi (dir. Harold S. Bucque) Comedy about an old man who isn’t ready to die.

*Pride of the Yankees (1942)—Gary Cooper, Teresa Wright, Babe Ruth. (dir. Sam Wood) Classic account of life and dying of baseball star Lou Gehrig with ALS.


*Brian’s Song (1971)—James Caan, Billy Dee Williams (dir. Buzz Kulik) Story of Brian Piccolo, Chicago Bears footballer dying of cancer.


Sunshine (1973)—Brenda Vaccaro, Christina Raines, Cliff DeYoung (dir. Joseph Sargent)
Couple and their doctor debate the way the wife is dying.

Court room drama of mercy-killing.

*Babe (1975)—Susan Clark, Alex Karras (dir. Buzz Kulik)
Story of athlete Babe Didrikson Zaharias’s life and dying.

*Death Be Not Proud (1975)—John Savage, Patricia Neal, Claude Akins, Mark Hamill (dir. James Goldstone)
From John Gunther’s book about the dying of his 17 year old son from a brain tumor.

The Gathering (1977)—Edward Asner, Maureen Stapleton, Lawrence Pressman (dir. Randal Kleiser)
Father assembles dysfunctional family for last Christmas gathering before he dies.

*A Love Affair: The Eleanor and Lou Gehrig Story (1977)—Edward Herrmann, Blythe Danner (dir. Fielder Cook)
Story of the baseball star who gave his name to the disease ALS.
Betty Rollin’s fight with breast cancer.

*Llittle Mo* (1978)—Glynnis O’Connor, Michael Learned, Anne Baxter (dir. Daniel Haller)
Story of tennis star Maureen Connelly’s early death.

The End (1978)—Stars Burt Reynolds as a man who discovers that he has an incurable disease and decides to take his own life. The bulk of this darkly comedic film concerns his attempts to find a painless and foolproof way to kill himself aided by a mental patient played by Dom DeLuise.

Promises in the Dark (1979)—Kathleen Beller, Marsha Mason, Ned Beatty (dir. Jerome Hellman)
Young girl with cancer has compassionate doctor.

Man shoots crippled brother and is acquitted at trial.

The Shadow Box (1980)—Joanne Woodward, Christopher Plummer, James Broderick, Ben Masters, Melinda Dillon (dir. Paul Newman)
Three terminally ill patients spend a day in discussion at a rustic retreat.
*A Matter of Life and Death* (1981)—Linda Lavin, Tyne Daly, Salome Jens, Gail Strickland (dir. Russ Mayberry)
Story of Joy Ufema, crusading nurse who modernised ways of treating the terminally ill.

*On Golden Pond* (1981)—Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn, Jane Fonda, Doug McKeon (dir. Mark Rydell)
The psychological problems of terminal old age. Henry Fonda and Hepurn won Oscars for their performances.

Significant story of seriously injured artist fighting for disconnection from life-support equipment.

*Six Weeks* (1982)—Dudley Moore, Mary Tyler Moore, Katharine Healy (dir. Tony Bill)
Tearjerker about the dying of a six-year-old girl.

*Right of Way* (1983)—Bette Davis, James Stewart (dir. George Schaefer)
Elderly couple choose death by car exhaust.

*An Early Frost* (1985)—Gena Rowlands, Ben Gazzara, Aidan Quinn (dir. John Erman)
Emmy-award winning script about son who tells his parents that he is gay—and dying of AIDS.
Much-praised story of college professor with Alzheimer’s Disease.

**The Ultimate Solution of Grace Quigley** (1985)—Katharine Hepburn, Nick Nolte (dir. Anthony Harvey)
Black comedy of New York seniors employing a mafia hit man to kill them quickly.

**When The Time Comes** (1987)—ABC TV. Brad Davis, Bonnie Redelin (prod. Sherry Lansing)
Fictional but well-portrayed assisted suicide of dying woman.

*Murder or Mercy?* (1987)—NBC TV. Robert Young.
Story of Roswell Gilbert’s mercy-killing of his wife who had Alzheimers.

*The Right To Die* (1987)—NBC TV. Racquel Welch.
Woman with ALS wants disconnection from life support.

Moving and witty script by playwright Craig Lucas depicting the growth of AIDS among gay men in New York. Davison nominated for Oscar for Best Supporting Actor.
*A Woman’s Tale (1991)—Sheila Florance (dir. Paul Cox)
Australian drama about 78-year-old woman afflicted with cancer who is determined to have “a good death.” (Florance died from her cancer two days after winning Australian Academy Award.

A 28-year-old man dying of leukemia hires young woman who undertakes to teach him “the meaning of life” before he dies.

Betty Rollin’s story of assisting her mother’s suicide.

*The Switch*—Gary Cole as Larry McAfee, a man paralyzed and dependant on a ventilator. Angry and frustrated with a system that drained him of his insurance money and leaves him in one nursing home after another, he sues for the right to have a switch installed on his ventilator that will allow him to turn the machine off. He wins that “right”. This is an unusually complex (for TV) portrayal of the issues of disability and “quality of life”.

Dying man videotapes his last days.
New Age (1994)—Judy Davis, Peter Weller. Complex story of self-deliverance and assisted suicide between two thirty-something “yuppies”. Terminal illness is not the cause but rather their exhaustion of life’s illusions.

The Last Supper (1994)—Chris (Ken McDougall) is a dancer dying of AIDS. He has chosen euthanasia to end his suffering. With the assistance of his lover Val (Jack Nicholson) and his doctor (Daniel MacIvor), he surrounds himself in his last hours with everything that made his life special and creates his ultimate work of art by choreographing his own death.

The English Patient (1996)—This Oscar Best Picture film directed by Anthony Mingella is a magnificent movie of love and war, starring Ralph Fiennes, Kristin Scott Thomas.

Particularly interesting to supporters of choice in dying is that, when close to the end of the story, the nurse quietly administers euthanasia to this dying patient at his request.

It’s My Party (1996)—Directed and written by Randal Kleiser. Eric Roberts (Julia’s brother) plays a man who is dying of AIDS and calls all his friends to have a party on his last night alive. Fine drama and dialogue—and it refers in passing to the book ‘Final Exit’—but no one should expect to die so long after taking an overdose of drugs.
Igby Goes Down (2002)—Stars Kieran Culkin and Claire Danes, directed by Burr Steers. The main story is about a brilliant teenager who rebels and flunks out of everything. The opening and closing are remarkable scenes of two brothers helping their terminally ill mother (Susan Sarandon) to die with the aid of drugs and a plastic bag. Probably a first for showing this action in Hollywood. Rated R. 97 minutes.

The Hours (2002)—Directed by Stephen Daldry, screenplay by David Hare from the novel by Michael Cunningham. This excellent film has, as its undercurrent, the reasons for a suicide, an attempted suicide, and a rational suicide. It’s the story of three women who are profoundly affected by Virginia Wolf’s novel, ‘Mrs.Dalloway’. Nicole Kidman won an Oscar for her portrayal of Virginia Wolf who drowns herself to escape advancing madness. Julianne Moore is the city housewife, bored and confused, who nearly commits suicide. Ed Harris plays the over-the-hill New York poet with advanced AIDS who can no longer bear to live and allows himself to fall to his death out of a window. It helps to have read the Pulitzer Prize novel first.
**The Event** (2003)—Directed by Thom Fitzgerald. An intense relationship drama that takes the form of a mystery, The Event centers around a series of unexplained deaths that occur among the gay community in New York’s fashionable Chelsea district. Nick, a district attorney investigating the most recent case, a suspicious, apparent assisted suicide, and her interviews with friends and family of the deceased trigger extensive and intricately interwoven flashbacks that reveal surprising facts about the man’s life and death.

**Talk to Her** (2002)
Starring: Javier Camara, Rosario Flores (dir. Pedro Almodovar)
Synopsis: Emotionally charged drama about the intense friendship between a writer and a male nurse who are both caring for coma-stricken women. (Sony Pictures Classics)
Runtime: 116 minutes
Language: Spanish, with subtitles.

Drama and Comedy
1 hr. 52 min.
A revisiting, some 15 years later, of the principal characters of Denys Arcand’s 1986 comedy drama film, “The Decline of the American Empire.”

Rémy, now divorced and in his early fifties, is hospitalized. His ex-wife, Louise, asks their son
Sébastien to come home from London where he now lives. Sébastien hesitates; he and his father haven’t had much to say to one another for years now. He relents, however, and flies to Montreal to help his mother and support his father. As soon as he arrives, Sébastien moves heaven and earth, brings his contacts into play and disrupts the system in every way possible to ease the ordeal that awaits Rémy. 2004 Oscar for best foreign film. Language: French with sub-titles.

“The Barbarian Invasions is a film that effortlessly makes you laugh with delight, cringe with pain and weep for life’s inevitable end.”
—Chicago Tribune.

The film focuses on the death of Ramon Sampedro, a sailor who became a quadriplegic after injuries caused in a diving accident when he was 25. After 29 years, he asked for assisted suicide and when refused, he wrote a book about his suffering, appealed to the Spanish Parliament, took out a court case, all of which failed. “I’m just a head stuck to a body,” he stated. Eventually a group of euthanasia sympathizers successfully helped him with his suicide. In Spanish, with the title *Mar Adentro* and directed by Alejandro Amenabar, *The Sea Inside* won a special jury award at the Venice Film Festival, while the actor playing the lead role, Javier Bardem, won the best actor award. Opened in America in early 2005.
Million Dollar Baby (2004)
Directed by Clint Eastwood, who also acts. Highly acclaimed by the critics, who nevertheless ignore the ‘message’ aspect. Despite its inappropriate title and boxing ring background, the underlying theme of this film is assisted suicide and the soul-searching which precedes it. Fine acting all round.
Frequently asked questions—and the answers

Can I ask my physician for legal voluntary euthanasia (death by injection)?
No. It is against the law everywhere except the Netherlands and Belgium. And in these two nations there are strict guidelines.

Can I ask my physician for legal assisted suicide (prescribed lethal dose)?
Only in Oregon, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland. All have limitation rules and guidelines.

How ill do I have to be?
The usual criteria is that a person must be terminally ill, likely to die within six months, and competent.

What if I have a protracted degenerative disease, like ALS, MS or Alzheimer’s?
Doctors usually look at these case by case. The first two conditions, if advanced, are likely to get help; not so likely with Alzheimer’s because the person is not in physical pain and most likely is mentally incompetent.
What is competency?
That both you and your doctor understand each other fully. An incompetent patient could not comprehend medical details.

Can I travel to any of the four places named above to get a justifiable hastened death?
Only to Switzerland. The other three have residency limitations.

Whom do I contact in Switzerland to find out if they will help?
An organization named DIGNITAS. But first write to them, at the mailing address in the list at the front of this book, outlining your needs; they have criteria.

What is self-deliverance?
Planning and carrying out one’s own dying for a good personal reason. The term is a euphemism for rational suicide. ‘Final Exit’ is essential reading for the pitfalls and benefits of this drastic action.

Who will help me self-deliver?
Preferably your spouse or partner. Extremely rarely, your doctor. Sometimes a loyal and discreet friend.

Is suicide a crime, as some claim?
Not anymore. It never was in America but in Europe prior to the 20th century it was a crime, punishable by stripping the dead person’s family of everything they owned.
Is it a crime for someone to be present or to help at a suicide?
It is not a crime to be present at a suicide. But actually helping—if the police hear about it—may be the crime of assisted suicide. It is rarely prosecuted if the circumstances are compassionate, altruistic, and there is no publicity.

Is there a group that will assist mentally ill people to die?
DIGNITAS in Switzerland will sometimes help such a case if it is long lasting, severe, and untreatable. It happens very rarely in the Netherlands. Extremely taboo subject in North America.

When was the Hemlock Society started and by whom?
In 1980 by this author, who was executive director for its first twelve years.

What happened to the Hemlock Society?
It changed its name in 2003 to End-of-Life Choices because its main mission now is law reform via politics. In 2004 it merged with Compassion in Dying to become ‘Compassion and Choices.’

What is the Final Exit Network?
The Network, commenced in 2004, is building a network of ‘guides’ across America to come promptly to the assistance of the dying and hopelessly ill who request their support.
1-800-524-3948.
Should I sign a Living Will?
Yes, the one for your particular state or nation. USA Advance Directives (as they are known) can be obtained from Last Acts Partnership (see list at front). Advance Directives indicate whether or not you wish to be put on, or remain, with artificial life support systems if your condition is hopeless. Give copies to your doctor, lawyer and adult offspring.

Will my Advance Directive by obeyed by doctors?
While not legally enforceable, such documents are a significant indication to doctors of your end-of-life wishes. Give it to your own doctor well in advance and ask him or her directly if it will be taken into account. Any hesitation, change doctors.

If I deliberately bring my life to an end because of unbearable suffering, will my God condemn me?
If you are an evangelical Christian, then hastened death is a sin and therefore not an option. On the other hand, if you feel your God is one of love, charity, and tolerance, then He would understand your reasons. It all depends on one’s individual faith—or lack of it—plus personal ethics.
APPENDIX F

Medical doctors accused of euthanasia in the U.S.A.

Eleven doctors were charged in the 20th century with euthanasia or assisted suicide of patients. However, none has gone to prison except Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

1935 A general practitioner in Montevista, Colorado, Harold Blazer, was accused of the murder of his 30-year-old daughter, Hazel, a victim of cerebral spinal meningitis. Evidence was given that she had the mind of a baby and her limbs were the size of a 5-year-old. Dr. Blazer, together with his wife and another daughter, had taken care of Hazel for 30 years. One day he placed a handkerchief soaked in chloroform over her face and kept it in place until she died. At the trial, the doctor was acquitted.

1950 New Hampshire doctor Herman S. Sanders was charged with first degree murder of a terminally ill patient, Abbie Borroto. At the request of Borroto’s husband, Sanders injected Borroto with 44 cc’s of air and she died within ten minutes. When he logged the fatal injection into the hospital record, Sanders was reported to the authorities. At the close of a three-week trial, the jury deliberated for 70 minutes before returning
a verdict of not guilty.

**1972** Long Island doctor Vincent Montemarano, chief surgical resident at the Nassau County Medical Center, was indicted on a charge of wilful murder in the death of 59-year-old Eugene Bauer. Bauer, suffering from cancer of the throat, had been given two days to live. Bauer died within five minutes of Montemarano’s injection of potassium chloride. The defense argued that the state did not prove Bauer was alive prior to the injection. The jury deliberated for 55 minutes before returning a verdict of innocent.

**1981** California doctors Robert Nedjl and Neil Barber were charged with murder for discontinuing mechanical ventilation and intravenous fluids to Clarence Herbert, aged 55. The patient had a heart attack after surgery to correct an intestinal obstruction and was declared hopeless. Following the wishes of Herbert’s wife and eight children, he was taken off life-support systems but continued to breathe. Five days later the intravenous fluid was discontinued. Herbert died six days later. In October, 1983, a court of appeals dismissed the charges.

**1985** Dr. John Kraai, an old-time physician from a small town in New York state, was charged with second degree murder in the death of his patient and friend, Frederick Wagner,
81. Wagner had suffered from Alzheimer’s disease for five years and also had gangrene of the foot. On the morning of Wagner’s death, Kraai injected three large doses of insulin into Wagner’s chest. As Wagner’s condition worsened, a nurse called the State Department of Patient Abuse. Kraai was charged with murder. Three weeks after his arrest, Kraai killed himself with a lethal injection.

1986 New Jersey doctor Joseph Hassman was charged with murder in connection with the death of his mother-in-law, Esther Davis, aged 80, who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease. At the family’s request, Hassman injected Davis with a lethal dose of Demerol. During his trial, Hassman broke down several times in court. He was found guilty and sentenced to two years probation, fined $10,000, and ordered to perform 400 hours of community service.

1987 Fort Myers doctors Peter Rosier was acquitted of first degree murder in the death of his wife, Patricia. Pat had tried already to end her life with a dose of Seconal, but when the powerful barbiturate did not take hold, Rosier began injecting her with morphine. The morphine was not lethal. Rosier did not then know it, but Pat’s stepfather (who had been given immunity by the police) admitted to smothering her.
1989 Dr. Troy Caraccio, 33, of Troy, Michigan, was charged in Detroit with the murder of a 74-year-old woman hospital patient who was terminally ill and comatose. Dr. Caraccio gave the patient a lethal injection of potassium chloride in the presence of other medical staff. In court, the doctor said he did it to terminate her pain and suffering. Evidence was given that he was overworked and stressed by the recent lengthy and painful death of his father. Accepting Dr. Caraccio’s guilty plea, the judge imposed five years probation with community service.

1990 Dr. Richard Schaeffer, 69, was arrested under suspicion of having caused the death by injection at the home of a patient, Melvin Seifert, 75, of Redondo Beach, California, who was suffering from the effects of a stroke and other ailments. The dead man’s wife, Mary, 75, was also arrested. Both were released pending further investigation, and a year later it was announced that there would be no charges.

1990 Dr. Jack Kevorkian was charged in December with the first-degree murder of Hemlock Society member Janet Adkins who died on June 4. Suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, Mrs. Adkins flew from her home in Portland, Oregon, to Michigan, where Dr. Kevorkian connected her to his so-called "suicide machine." She chose the time to press a
button which resulted in lethal drugs entering her body. Ten days after being charged, a court dismissed the murder charge.

1992 Dr. Kevorkian was charged with two counts of murder and delivery of a controlled substance for the October 23, 1991, deaths of Marjorie Wantz, 58, and Sherry Miller, 43. Both women were chronically ill

Miller with Multiple Sclerosis and Wantz had chronic pelvic pain. Sherry Miller used the ‘suicide machine’ to commit suicide, while Marjorie Wantz inhaled carbon monoxide through a mask. The judge in the case dismissed the murder charges when the prosecution was unable to prove that Kevorkian tripped the devices that killed the women.

1999 Switching from his usual technique of assisted suicide via his machine, Dr. Kevorkian performed active voluntary euthanasia on Thomas Youk, who was in the advanced stages of MS. With the agreement of Youk and his family,

Kevorkian injected lethal substances into the wrist and Youk died quickly and peacefully. When the authorities made no move to prosecute him, Kevorkian arranged a broadcast of his actions on the television program “60 Minutes” and on air challenged the authorities to prosecute him. So they obliged and charged him with murder and with illegally
using drugs covered by the Controlled Substances Act. The video of the incident was shown in court and the jury, told by the judge that as the law stands today, euthanasia is murder, you cannot ask to be killed, he was found guilty of second-degree murder. The sentence was 10-25 years imprisonment and all appeals were turned down.
APPENDIX G

ERGO’s Credo

ERGO is a nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1993 to carry out research into the best and legal ways of self-deliverance (suicide) and assisted suicide, and wherever possible, publish these findings for its members and supporters.

We hold that choosing to end one’s life is a matter of personal responsibility; the reasons for so doing are in the very nature of humankind highly intimate and extremely complex. Therefore ERGO withholds judgments on people while at the same time asking that they not end their lives precipitately, thoughtlessly, and without consideration for others. Terminal and hopeless illnesses are the most justifiable reasons for a hastened death.

To this end, ERGO freely publishes throughout the English-speaking world a ‘how-to’ book called ‘Final Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying.’ In case some might think that this is a dark, underworld, cult book, we point out that the world’s largest publisher, Random House, has handled all three editions in the past 12 years.

Well over a million copies have been sold in English and ten other languages. Thousands have used it to bring their painful lives to a peaceful end, and to thousands more it has been a comfort to know they have an escape route if they needed it.
We wish to see modifications to the laws forbidding assistance in suicide to allow it be done for compassionate and altruistic reasons (suicide itself is no longer a crime). Additionally, we seek that homicide laws get an extra provision so that the accused person can at least plead justification and ask for mercy, something not at present permitted.

ERGO also has been the main backer of a small, unofficial group of concerned international health professionals and lay experts called New Technology in Self-Deliverance (NuTech) which seeks to find fresh ways by which adults may end their lives swiftly, painlessly and legally without a physician’s help. Their main achievement so far has been a technique to use inert gases, while the ultimate goal is to find the so-called ‘Peaceful Pill.’

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