# The Big Sleep

Kevorkian-wannabe convicted

May 1, 1998 By Scott Hess

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A Canadian AIDS physician earned his place in history as the first doctor convicted of helping a patient take his life. Dr. Maurice Genereux pleaded guilty in a Toronto court last winter to two counts of assisting suicide, a crime with a maximum sentence of 14 years. He fessed up to doling out megadoses of the sleeping pill Seconal to two HIV positive men, Aaron McGinn and Mark Jewitt, knowing that they intended to pop the pills and call it quits.

Both men were depressed, though neither had full-blown AIDS. McGinn, 31, died from his Seconal overdose in 1996, but Jewitt lived to tell about his suicide attempt. “It’s horrible, waking up with a tube in your throat,” said Jewitt, who was found after swallowing 50 Seconals in 1995 and taken to a hospital, where he spent days in a coma. “I’d never do it again, and I don’t suggest anyone else do it.” He testified against Genereux at the preliminary inquiry. “Maurice was a Pez dispenser for drugs. I’d go in with a list, and he’d fill it,” he said. But Genereux was generous with more than just ’scrips. In 1994, his license was suspended for two years after the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario convicted him on six counts of sexual misconduct; because of a shortage of AIDS docs in Toronto, he was allowed to practice again after nine months as long as a third party was present for all physicals.

Across the border, the high-profile Dr. Jack Kevorkian -- along with Dr. Georges Reding, a Kalamazoo psychiatrist completing a “fellowship” in assisted dying -- recently presided over the suicide of a transsexual woman with HIV. Carrie Hunter, 35, who had advanced AIDS at the time of her death, was found in a Pontiac, Michigan motel by police. Kevorkian, 69, has attended between 80 and 100 suicides in Michigan since 1990, and despite state laws against the practice, he has never been convicted.

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