

There have been claims and counter claims in what has been described as a "Right to Die" or a "Right to Live" case. Michael Schiavo and Judge Greer has been accused of murder, abuse and all sorts of other things. All of these claims appear to be being made without any evidence. But what are the real facts? Let's try and review the information that is present in the public domain. I have not seen any of the court records and can only rely on what has been found on the web and reported on the various news channels such as CNN, FOX and MSNBC.

Some people who read this will say "why are you qualified?" or "you can not know?" or some other related type of statement. The qualifications are actually quite simple. I can read. I keep up on medical science and science things in general. I also have a decent education and am able to think and reason. I am also able to set aside my prejudices and look at the events. But the simplest is I can think and reason as most people are able to do if they take the time. Now if you have gotten over your anger continue reading.

We know that Terri Schiavo has a heart attack in 1990. The reports indicate that her heart stop for 5 minutes. The examination of her is reported to indicate that her potassium level was extremely low. And as a result of the heart stoppage her brain was deprived of oxygen for 5 minutes. As a result her brain was damaged. Now under certain circumstances a person can survive this type of event without brain damage. The only times I have heard of this happening is people who are "drowned" in extremely cold water or other extremely cold weather. In Terri Schiavo case the heart attack occurred at room temperature.

So what do we know at this point? Terri Schiavo had a heart attack that was caused by low potassium levels and resulted in brain damage. But what caused the low potassium levels? From all indications Terri Schiavo ate properly. There have been no reports of any medical reason for her potassium levels to be low. So what are the possible causes? There are two possible causes I can think of - anorexia and bulimia. Since Terri Schiavo does not appear to have been "skin and bones" as most people who suffer from anorexia generally become the only other reasonable possibility appears to be bulimia.

So what is bulimia and what might occur if someone is suffering from this condition? Bulimia is an eating disorder that involves a person who eats food and then forces themselves to vomit up the food just eaten - i.e. Binge and purge. But what are some of the consequences of this eating disorder? We know that stomach fluid is acidic. In fact, stomach fluid contains hydrochloric acid and a variety of other acids. So what is the consequence of forcing yourself to vomit? The throat will be burned by the acid, damage is known to happen to the teeth and mouth. As any one who has thrown up can relate the chest, neck and other muscles tend to get strained. Every time I have had the dry heaves or thrown up my whole body has hurt. So the throat and esophagus get burned and the mouth gets damaged as well.

But are there any other consequences? Stomach acid also contains potassium as well. So a person who is bulimic is also going to lose potassium. Under normal circumstances the body recycles bile and other stomach fluids. Terri Schiavo has also been reported to be concerned about her weight. There have been reports that she lost around 100 pounds over a very short amount of time.

So what can we conclude from this? Just that she may have been suffering from bulimia. Are there any other consequences to the low potassium level? The answer to the question is YES.

Most people are aware that calcium is needed for strong and healthy bones. But and this is a big but you also need potassium. Both calcium and potassium are needed for healthy bones. The human body also does something else that can damage bones. When it needs minerals for other parts of the body it will take them from the bones. Many woman who might be reading this missive are going to be thinking of a medical condition that primarily effects women. The medical condition is osteoporosis or "brittle bone disease". So what other problem would we expect Terri Schiavo to be in danger of? Yes - osteoporosis. There is also at least one other side effects to be bed-ridden as well. When people are sedentary bones also weaken. When a person walks the bones are strengthened by the generation of small electrical currents in the bones. So as a result when a person is bed-ridden this electrical current is no longer generated to strengthen the bones. This effect is also seen in astronauts who have been in outer space for long periods of time.

Some of you who are taking the time to think about what has been written so far are going to realize a few things related to all of the accusation that are being "spewed". But so far we have only discussed some of the problems related to the potassium levels as relates to the heart and bones. Potassium is used in many parts of the body and not having enough in the body is bad. This also includes the brain itself.

Let's consider the brain damage. Terri Schiavo's brain was deprived of oxygen for at least 5 minutes according to the reports. So we have a problem of brain cells dying. There is also a process called necrosis that occurs in the body. When cells in a part of the body start to die they often release chemicals that cause other cells to die. Most people I suspect are familiar with another similar condition called gangrene. I suspect most people associate gangrene with arms and legs and the amputation of arms and legs. But it can occur anywhere in the body. Consider the brain now. It is very difficult to get medications and other items through what is called the "brain blood barrier". This barrier is designed to protect the brain. It also means that the toxins produced by necrosis and gangrene are not going to leave the area of the brain and will tend to poison other parts of the brain. How many of you have thrown away rotten food? Rotted food is just like gangrene.

Now lets consider some of the claims of abuse. People have talked about neck injuries and bone scans showing damage. Each of these things can be associated with and caused by bulimia. In fact based upon the potassium levels I would be surprised if Terri Schiavo did not have multiple bone fractures. She may not have had broken bones but lots of little fractures which are also the hardest type of bone injury to heal. For the record I have broken my lower left leg three times, the left femur once, my wrist once and my back. I have a lot of experience with bones. Also, would not Terri Schiavo's parents been aware of any abuse? After all Michael and Terri lived with her parents for a period of time.

If I have not lost you consider this possibility as well. Some of the injuries may have been inadvertently caused by Terri's parents. Remember, according to the reports that her parents had brought her home from the hospital and they were taking care of her after the heart attack at their home for around 30 days before putting her back in the hospital. They would have been doing doctor proscribed physical therapy. For those of you who are cursing me and accusing me of being lower than a bug stop and consider what has been written. How many times have you tried to do some good and ended up making things worse! And how many times have you wanted to or have you hidden it? Could we be looking at a guilt response in the parents as well? Could they have tried to do some good but did inadvertent harm instead?

We also have medical explanations for every one of the supposed abuse conditions that people keep claiming need to be investigated. Or at least all of the ones I have heard about. And in fact we have an explanation one of Terri's friends claimed about Michael Schiavo wanting to know everywhere Terri was. Was it possible he suspected she was suffering from bulimia or another medical problems? After all he was living with her.

The one item we have not considered is the continuing condition of Terri Schiavo's brain. Her parents claim and continue to claim that she was getting better. In fact I suspect that there was some initial improvement - at first. But remember she had potassium deficiency and parts of her brain had been starved of oxygen and would have died. As a result of the cell death toxins and other poisons would be present in the skull. In fact gangrene would have been occurring. As more sections of her brain died Terri would have continued to lose the ability to think, reason, perceive and react conscientiously to her external environment. Now let's also consider the CAT Scan that was done in 1998. According to the one doctor who examined the CAT Scan he indicated that 80% of Terri Schiavo's brain was gone. If 80% percent of her brain was gone by 1998 how much of her brain is gone now - 7 years later?

So ask yourself honestly - can Terri Schiavo communicate and is she even aware of what is going on around her. Are we only seeing autonomous reactions such as blinking and random movement. Are we dealing with parents who are unwilling to let go? Now after you have stopped ranting and raving at me consider this additional report as you read the rest of this missive. Terri's Grandmother is reported to have been forced onto a respirator against her wishes by the Schindler family.

So what is the difference between a Coma and a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS)? The following analogy may help. Picture a car in which the driver is tied up and the car is in gear and moving. The driver may be aware of what is happening around and in the car but the driver is unable to effect the car. After a while the driver may be able to recover control of the car. A person in a coma can and often do recover. PVS is a different case however. A person who is PVS is not able to recover. The critical areas of the brain that allow a person to perceive, reason and control action are often gone or completely non-functional - i.e. Dead. Autonomic functions are still running but that is all. Using the car analogy the car is in gear but there is no driver. As long as the car has fuel it will keep running but any place the car ends up is by chance.

Now we have established some background based on the reported medical conditions the root issue of this "Right to Die" case, which is what the case is. Again, I have only the publicly reported information to base this missive upon. We know from the reported events that the Schindler's have ignored at least one family member's wish to not be kept alive artificially. That was Terri's Grandmother. It has been reported that at the funeral Terri stated that she would not want to be kept alive artificially. One person reported that after watching a movie that involved a feeding tube that she stated she would never want to be kept alive as the person was in the movie. What we have being reported here is not hearsay as some people have claimed but direct statements. My understanding of hearsay is when

"Becky tells Diane that she heard Robin tell Stephanie ... "

Diane's statement to someone about Robin is hearsay. She is reporting what someone else told her. Becky's statement would be an eyewitness statement. She is

reporting first hand information or what she heard directly.

Now consider what the Judge Greer had to consider. Besides all of the medical evidence he has to balance the statements of all of the parties. In every statement I have heard from the parents and their supporters the statements consist of form of

“Terri would never say that” or “I do not believe “

What we have is a statement of opinion. But consider what Michael Schiavo and his supporters have said. Every statement I heard from this side consist of the form

“Terri said this at this event” or “Terri said this while doing this”

What we have are statements of fact. Which statements would you given more credence to if you were not looking at this specific case. If you are honest you are going to consider the “statements of fact”. Now add in the earlier event related to the Terri's Grandmother. This is what Judge Greer had to look at - statements of fact versus statements of opinion. Image that instead of the statements being related to this specific case the statements were related to someone who had planned to rob someone's house. Who would you believe? Would it be the people who made a statement of opinion or the people who made a statement of fact. Be honest with yourself. Most people are going to believe the people who made the statement of fact. After all, they are saying they heard the actual words.

Let's add the rest of the events that we know about. Until 1993 the Schlinder's and Michael Schiavo agreed with the treatment Terri was receiving. A break between the two parties occurred. One side indicates it was about money the other about treatment. We also appear to know that Terri's brain has continued to degrade - lets use the proper description - die. So it is reasonable to believe that by 1993 it would be possible that Michael Schiavo and her parents would realize that Terri was no longer recovering but getting worse. So as her husband he would have know certain attitudes she would have had - mostly likely much more than her parents. Reports indicate they married in 1984. So he decided to follow her prior stated wishes and allow her to die. The parents do not want to give up any hope no matter how slim - after all Terri's Grandmother was forced onto a ventilator.

So who should make the decision. The husband (or wife) or the parents. Judge Greer sided with Michael Schiavo since he is her husband and except under very exceptional circumstances it is always the spouse who normally has the final word when the husband or wife is incapable of making a decision. When we consider the current state of the brain (at least as of 1998 CAT Scan) Terri Schiavo is no longer even capable of being aware of her environment or making decision. It is not possible to grow a brain with our current knowledge. So barring divine intervention by God himself it does not appear to be possible that Terri Schiavo will be able to recover and will eventually die once her “reptile” brain and brain stem dies.

To put it another way the person who was Terri Schiavo is dead and her body has been kept alive through a feeding tube. Based upon the knowledge we know of Terri's medical condition would you want to be kept alive in this state or would you want your family to let go and move on with their life. Are we dealing with parents who are unwilling to accept reality who looking for non-existence evidence or do you think Terri Schiavo will wake up again and be Terri Schiavo. Before you decide take a look at the information that is available on Anorexia, and Bulimia and how they effect the body. Ask yourself this question as well - are we keeping a person alive or are we keeping a body alive?