

Al Pacino Stars in Docudrama “You Don’t Know Jack” Based on the Life of Dr. Jack Kevorkian

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Dr. Jack Kervokian

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In 1990, Janet Adkins of Oregon, suffering the life that is Alzheimer’s, was video taped begging, “I want to get out.” Jack Kevorkian taped all of his patients.

This week HBO presents a documentary film on the life of Dr.

Jack Kevorkian after recently airing the docudrama, “You Don’t Know Jack” starring Al Pacino.

Barry Levinson directed “You Don’t Know Jack”, which aired on April 24 and peered into the life of Jack Kevorkian; Dr. Death; defender of terminally ill patient’s rights. Pacino, having researched the man said, “When you see the image that was portrayed of Jack Kevorkian during his time, you get you get a sense of someone quite different than the personality that I got to know.”

“You Don’t Know Jack” showed how the death of his beloved sister Margo, played by Susan Serandon, and that of his good friend Neal Nicol, played by John Goodman, effected him. It revealed his feeling of responsibility and the challenge to be the voice of patient’s right to die with dignity. “Kevorkian” delves into his early years as well, and covers the deterioraton and eventual loss of his mother to bone cancer as the catalyst and inspiration to create the

“suicide machine”.

The documentary “Kevorkian” paints a portrait of a deep and committed man. After being acquitted in 5 different deaths, he was sentenced in 1998 for the death of Thomas Youk, which he, of coarse video taped and then aired on “60 Minutes”. This is believed by many to be his big mistake. Kevorkian makes no apologies and has no regrets. After serving as his own attorney, spending time in prison studying the Ninth Amendment, he was paroled. Realizing no one had taken up his cause, Kevorkian took on the goal of legalizing assisted suicide and ran for Congress in Michigan’s 9th District.

The film concentrates on Kevorkian after his parole in 2007, but also examines the events and details that shaped his life and his beliefs, and includes interviews with those close to him. Physician assisted suicide is now legal in 3 states and even anti-Kevorkian groups believe Dr. Death did a lot to push the right to die movement forward and bring attention and improvement to the quality of end of life care.

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