

# HELP!

Final Exit Network, the American group mentioned on pages 4 and 5 of *Free To Go* 10:3, is being viciously attacked by local authorities in Atlanta, Georgia. On February 25, 2009, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation arrested four Network volunteers – aged 62, 63, 76 and 81 – on dubious charges of “assisting in a suicide”. The GBI executed search warrants on the homes of the four arrested volunteers and several other volunteers across the country. Houses were invaded and trashed, computers and personal papers were seized. The Network’s bank accounts were frozen, and forfeiture proceedings started; the GBI had invoked RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act), claiming that the Network was an organization which existed for the purpose of committing crimes. The Network and the suspects vigorously deny performing any illegal actions in connection with any suicides – such actions are prohibited by the Network’s protocols and Exit Guide training.

## WHY has this happened?

The Network was founded by people who believed that the terminal-illness criterion was unfair, because it treated someone facing a short period of suffering better than someone facing a lengthy period. The founders also believed that people should not be considered as the property of their relatives, though of course they encouraged would-be exiters to help their family members become understanding and accepting.

Acting on these beliefs, the Network accepted Georgia resident John Celmer as suitable for Exit Guide services. Aged 58, he had cancer of the mouth and throat, a deteriorating hip, and arthritis. When he contacted the Network he was scheduled for a long list of operations, a prospect which he apparently did not relish.

Celmer exited on June 20 last year. His main Exit Guide and a consulting Senior Guide were with him, because one of the Network’s central goals has been to provide companionship at the time of death. No family members were present; although Celmer and his wife were not divorced, they were no longer living together, and Celmer had not discussed his decision with his wife.

When going through his papers, Celmer’s wife found references to the Network, and she contacted police. She felt that Celmer should have stayed alive because the cancer surgery (which he had already undergone by the time of his exit) had been successful – the oncologist said that the malignant tissue had been completely removed. Celmer had been horrified by the disfigurement resulting from the procedure, and may well have been confirmed in a belief that the good part of his life was all behind him, but the more conventional opinions of his wife and his oncologist carried great weight with the police.

A “sting” operation was designed, with a GBI agent claiming to have pancreatic cancer, and giving the Network false medical reports produced by a doctor in the service of the police. Because of his location, the agent was connected with the Exit Guide and Senior Guide who had worked with Celmer. Just before the agent was to have exited, his fellow officers moved in.

## WHAT can you do to help?

Americans were very generous when Evelyn Martens needed defending, from 2002 to 2004. Now we have a chance to return the favour.

Derek Humphry has started a defence fund. If you are “wired” you can contribute online, at

**[www.finalexitlibertyfund.org](http://www.finalexitlibertyfund.org)**

If you cannot contribute via computer, you can mail a cheque to

**Final Exit Liberty Fund  
24829 Norris Lane  
Junction City, Oregon  
USA 97448**