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Concord is a 50 year old charity releasing educational programmes on health, education and topics of social concern.

**A new programme on the vexed subject of assisted suicide**

**Endgame 68 minutes. 2017 DVD. £23.00 plus postage. You can order this DVD from our website [www.concordmedia.org.uk](http://www.concordmedia.org.uk)**

**Death is the biggest issue we will all have to deal with. In the UK, euthanasia and assisted suicide is illegal. However, recent landmark cases have highlighted the issues surrounding assisted suicide and may be shifting public opinion in the direction of greater freedom. Yet it is one of the most challenging and complex debates of our time, with varied viewpoints presenting society with difficult questions, for which there are no easy answers.**

**Maria has Crohn's Disease**

**Omid has Multiple System Atrophy**

**Colin has a rare form of Multiple Sclerosis**

**Alex is experiencing early stages of Alzheimer's**



**Winner Best Documentary Award at London Independent Film Festival and shown at many other festivals.**

#### **Director's Statement**

**Over the past year, I've been on a journey, and at its beginning, I had no idea where it was going to take me. I've met people making difficult decisions about their own deaths, and those who have supported their loved ones in choosing to die, which is deeply moving and at times has been difficult to hear. I'll also travelled to Switzerland with two people for whom assisted dying felt to be their only option.**

**In a world of idealised autonomy, legislation providing for assisted dying in the UK might, if ethically acceptable, not be risky. But we do not live in that world and there are wider implications to this most complex of issues.**

**The arguments, both for and against a change in the law are nothing if not complicated, but one thing is for sure, these legal challenges are not going to go away, and more people are taking advantage of Switzerland's rather coarsely coined 'suicide tourism.' Whatever you conclude, however these most recent legal challenges come nearly 20 years after the issue was first voted on in the House of Commons.**

**Omid's Story:** In his mid fifties, Iranian-born Omid, is seeking the right to a medically assisted death. Multiple System Atrophy is an incurable but non-terminal disease of the nervous system, and it's left him hardly able to move or speak, and he's in constant pain. But, whilst this means his quality of life is seriously degraded, Omid may have some years left to live. Medically speaking he is not 'terminally ill'. If successful, Omid's legal challenge could help to make assisted dying legal for anyone with an incurable disease, even if it is not terminal, so long as they are of sound mind, although legal challenges like this in our society are not easy, and there have been a number of high profile cases recently that have failed in the UK,

**Colin's Story:** With a rare form of Multiple Sclerosis, Colin had spent much of the winter last year in hospital, but had been advised there was little treatment available. In the Spring, having had to move back to his first floor apartment, Colin had decided to travel to Switzerland, anticipating another winter would be intolerable. Having met with Dr Erika Preisig at the Lifecircle organisation in Basle, he had been given a date for his assisted voluntary death; however when news about Colin's situation became public, someone in London offered him a ground floor accommodation and companionship which he accepted and withdrew his intention to go to Switzerland

**Alex's Story:** Alex is experiencing the early stages of Alzheimer's'. However, like Marie, Colin and Omid, Alex is not deemed terminally ill. A retired academic, University lecturer and wholly non-accidental agitator, Alex campaigns for autonomy, dignity and respect. Dementia and Alzheimer disease has replaced heart disease as the leading cause of death in the UK, and for Alex, choosing when to die is an incontrovertible human right. However, he is afraid he'll lose his mental competence, or mental capacity, before being able to take advantage of Assisted Voluntary Death at Lifecircle in Basle.

**Marie's Story: WARNING.** At the end of this sequence you see Marie peacefully die in a loving and caring atmosphere. At the age of 13 Marie was diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a crippling and incurable condition that attacks the digestive system. Now 54, although not medically defined as terminally ill, she had endured 49 operations, was in constant pain and had to visit the bathroom up to 30 times a day. She had had enough. Although having being born in Spain and educated in Switzerland, Marie had a successful career as a city analyst in London, and had lived in Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire for over 15 years. However, in 2008 she had to give up work, and although having paid over 40% in tax for many years, found herself the victim of council spending cuts. Living with her brother in Lausanne in Switzerland, she had told me she felt abandoned by the state, and has decided she can endure no more. She blames the UK Government cuts for her decision to die at Lifecircle in Basel. She was angry. Ken Loach, the filmmaker campaigning against benefit cuts, upon reading about Marie, has said she is a double victim – of "a debilitating illness and a brutal bureaucracy".

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EDUCATION THROUGH FILM

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