

Case 3

For six years, Charles Darwin Snelling cared for Adrienne, his wife of 61 years, after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. An essay Snelling had written about the richness of caring for Adrienne since her diagnosis was published online in the *New York Times Life Report* December 7, 2011. In the essay, Snelling stated that caring for his wife was not a sacrifice or a noble act: "What I am doing for her pales beside all that she has done for me for more than half a century."

In March 2012, Snelling killed Adrienne, and then took his own life.

According to the Washington Post (March 30, 2012), Adrienne Snelling wrote a letter to her children three years after her diagnosis. In that letter, she told her children that she and their father had decided that neither of them wanted to continue living after hope of the wonderful life they had shared with each other and their children was gone.

The day following their parents' death, the Snelling children released a statement that acknowledged their shock, despite knowing their parents' end of life wishes. They confirmed, however, their conviction that their father had acted out of deep love and devotion.

On April 2, the *New York Times* reported that public opinion was mixed but largely sympathetic to Snelling's despair. One reader called Alzheimer's "a slow horror show." Others criticized Snelling's actions, arguing that no one has the right to decide that another person's life is not worth living.