

CORRESPONDENCE

THE DOUBLE DATES GAME

Sirs,

It is thought-provoking to learn that Terry Schiavo's place of burial is marked by a plaque recording two dates for her death, namely the day in 1990 when she first collapsed as well as the day she died of dehydration and is now "at peace". We are also told that it states "I kept my promise", courtesy of her husband.

It is interesting to compare her fate with that of another American woman, Nancy Cruzan, a victim of a road crash a dozen years before she too succumbed to legalised euthanasia. Her grave says that she "departed" in 1983 but was "at peace" as from 1990 when she also had her life ended by means of dehydration. Again, the stone mysteriously includes the comment "thank you".

Can a new trend in euthanasia be identified through all this? Will the future victims of such deliberate killing also have two dates of death applied to their own gravestones? Will the second date always have "at peace" or "thank you" or some other comment added? Will such legal game-playing eventually become socially acceptable?

After all, in Britain Tony Bland's death had been legally attributed to the injuries he had received when he was crushed during the Hillsborough Stadium disaster, not to his enforced dehydration some four years later.

Yours,

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