

Elian's grandmothers return to Cuba after failing to meet with him

MIAMI (AP) — Elian Gonzalez's grandmothers flew to Miami on Monday in hopes of meeting with their 6-year-old grandson before they return to Cuba, but the women left town without seeing the boy because of a dispute over the site of the get-together.

The boy's maternal grandmother, Raquel Rodriguez, and paternal grandmother, Mariela Quintana, shunned an invitation to have dinner Monday night at the home of Elian's relatives in Miami, who insisted the meeting take place there.

The grandmothers wanted to meet privately with Elian at a neutral site. After flying in from New York, they spent about five hours at the airport before departing for Washington.

Some of Elian's Miami relatives were planning to travel to Washington as well.

The grandmothers left Miami while a group including Elian's two great-uncles and Rodriguez's sister were heading to meet the women at the airport. They did not bring Elian along, and Spencer Eig, an attorney for the Miami relatives, said they were told the grandmothers had no interest in meeting with the great-uncles.

"Elian is disappointed," Eig said. "I know the grandmothers are disappointed. The situation is heartbreaking for the Gonzalezes."

The Rev. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, who sponsored the women's trip, said the grandmothers were scared to come to Miami because of protests by

Cuban-Americans who want Elian to stay in the United States.

"They were frightened. They see the thousands of people here in Miami marching and protesting and you can imagine as very simple, loving, caring grandparents that they would be frightened to come," Edgar said.

Edgar said the women were willing to return to Miami, or go anywhere else, to meet with Elian as long as there is agreement on a neutral location for a visit.

The Miami relatives have been caring for Elian since he was found clinging to an inner tube off the Florida coast on Nov. 25. His mother and 10 other Cubans died in their ill-fated attempt to reach the United States.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has ruled that Elian must be sent back to Cuba to live with his father, but the Miami family is suing in federal court to block the boy's return.

In a letter to the INS, an attorney for the Miami family said a dinner at the home of Lazaro Gonzalez — Quintana's brother-in-law and Elian's great-uncle — would let the grandmothers "see and feel for themselves how well Elian is doing and how much he wishes to remain in the United States."

Elian had spoken by telephone with his father in Cuba and was excited as he prepared for his grandmothers' arrival, family spokesperson Armando Gutierrez said. The family had bought cameras so Elian could take pictures of his grandmothers, the spokesperson said.

Gutierrez said the family would only allow the meeting to take place at the home.

"This is where they live. This is where Elian lives," Gutierrez said. "No budging on that."



GONZALEZ

Father banned at son's school

ALLEGAN, Mich. (AP) — A father who went nose-to-nose with his son's high school basketball coach in a dispute over his shouting directions from the bleachers has been banned from school grounds and road games.

The school board decision Monday to discipline Sam Grigg has split the Allegan High School team. Some players are writing Grigg's initials on their shoes, while others are writing those of the coach, Marty Martins.

According to witnesses, Grigg was shouting encouragement and direction to his son, Shawn, during a Jan. 7 road game when Martins told Shawn to stop looking into the stands or risk being benched.

After the game, Grigg approached Martins and an argument broke out. Martins, a 6-foot-4 former football player, pointed his finger close to the 5-foot-5 Grigg, who pushed the coach's hand away. The Grand Rapids Press reported Tuesday. Superintendent John Van Nieuwenhuizen said Grigg gave them no choice.

"I felt that there was no action on the part of the coach that required physical confrontation. It's totally impermissible," he said.

Grigg said Monday: "I feel sorry that I did it. I know it was wrong. I'd love to see me and Mr. Martins shake hands and get things like they were before. I want to see my son play ball."

Mental patients less prone to severe heart surgeries

CHICAGO (AP) — A study of 113,000 heart attack victims found that people with mental illnesses are much less likely to receive a bypass, angioplasty or other common, aggressive treatments.

Previous research has found similar disparities in cardiac treatment for women and blacks. The researchers in the new study suggested that for the men-

diated by mental illness, bias among doctors is at play.

The study was published in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

The authors reviewed data on Medicare recipients nationwide ages 65 and older who were hospitalized for heart attacks in 1994 and 1995. Of those, 5,365 had been diagnosed with men-

tal disorders such as schizophrenia, depression and substance abuse.

The researchers examined what procedures the patients received, including cardiac catheterization — the "gold standard" diagnostic test for heart disease. It involves squirting dye into cardiac arter-

ies and X-raying them to locate blockages and determine whether treatments such as angioplasty or bypass surgery should follow.

Mental patients were 28 percent less likely to undergo catheterization, 25 percent less likely to undergo angioplasty — in which a tiny balloon is inflated inside an artery to clear away fatty buildup — and 32 percent less likely to have by-

pass surgery.

There were no significant differences in the death rates for both groups within 30 days of hospital admission. However, Druss said that finding is not as important as possible differences in the long-term outcome. The study did not look beyond 30 days.

The researchers said possible reasons for the treatment disparities include the attitudes of mental patients and the doctors who treat them.

Dr. Roy Ziegelstein, a cardiologist at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore, said the study "raises an incredibly important issue, and that is, are people treated differently medically as a result of something other than the medical disorder?"

"... are people treated differently medically as a result of something other than the medical disorder?"

— Dr. Roy Ziegelstein
Johns Hopkins cardiologist



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