

## Claremont attorney on silver screen in 'Sicko' 5

By Redmond Carolipio  
Staff Writer

When more people file in to see Michael Moore's latest film, they're also going to see a story that has local ties.

"Sicko" is Moore's biting examination of the nation's health care system. The movie compares the U.S. system with that of other nations, such as Canada and France, and it's also rife with extreme examples of how HMOs and other elements of the U.S. system have failed their patients.

One such example is detailed by Scott Glovsky, an attorney who lives in Claremont and works for Arkin & Glovsky in Pasadena, specializing in health-care related litigation.

Glovsky sued the HMO of Maria Watanabe, an Eagle Rock woman who Glovsky said was prevented from seeing specialists and undergoing tests that would have revealed a brain tumor that she had.

"She had a family member die of a brain tumor, and she was worried about the same thing happening to her," Glovsky said. "She was having headaches, dizziness — she blacked out a few times. And the symptoms kept getting worse."

Watanabe went to her physician, who repeatedly attempted to get her an MRI and other tests to find out what was wrong — including a trip to an ophthalmologist. However, Watanabe's HMO shot down every attempt. Her physician even tried lying to the HMO in an effort to get the tests done.

Progress was made when Watanabe visited family in Japan. Horrified at her deteriorating condition, they took her to a hospital, where she was able to get an MRI. The tests confirmed the worst — Watanabe had a brain tumor.

While in Japan, she underwent surgery to remove the tumor, but the damage was done — permanent optic nerve damage.

"The sad thing is, after surgery, her physician recommended that she see an ophthalmologist, which is normal after you have brain surgery," Glovsky said. "And the HMO here back in the States denied her again. That's about the time she came to me."

The Watanabe case touched



Director Michael Moore and attorney Scott Glovsky bookend Glovsky's client Maria Watanabe.

on many of the systematic flaws of the health care system, which could explain why Glovsky and Watanabe were chosen to be interviewed for the movie.

"Yeah, they found ME, actually," Glovsky said. "I guess it might have been from my reputation in the community, but another lawyer directed them to me. To this day, I still don't know who."

Both of them were interviewed by the producers of the movie on two separate occasions, and both said the producers were content to just let them talk.

"They just wanted to know what I went through, everything that happened," Watanabe said. "Thinking about it now, it's very disturbing, very upsetting to know

that things like this happen to people. These companies need to know that they're dealing with precious lives."

Glovsky said he also got a lot out of enjoyment out of the interview process for the movie.

"They didn't try to direct us in any way. They just turned on the camera and asked general questions," he said. "And it was nice to see the kind of warmth and caring the producers showed — it was touching."

Both Watanabe and Glovsky had the opportunity to meet and talk with Michael Moore as well.

"That was interesting. He's a very polarizing character," Glovsky said. "But he was very humble, down-to-earth and friendly. We also got close with the producers that interviewed us — they got big hugs when we saw them at the premiere."

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