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Campaign to ban drug is distorting information

By GIDEON GIL
Staff Writer

The man who committed mass murder two years ago at Standard Gravure has become the centerpiece of a nationwide campaign to discredit and ban Prozac, the world's leading drug for treating depression.

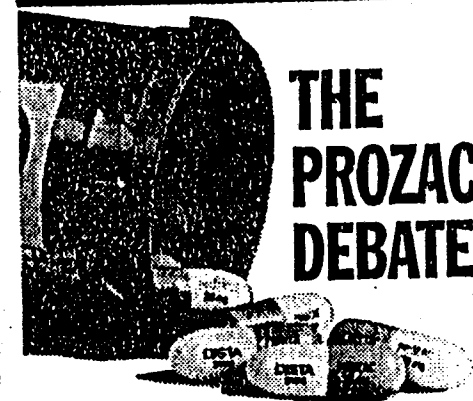
Joseph Wesbecker had taken Prozac during the five weeks before his shooting rampage inside the Louisville printing plant, and blood tests after his death found therapeutic levels of Prozac.

Those test results have prompted a California group affiliated with the Church of Scientology to launch a high-

profile, well-financed assault on Prozac. Ignoring substantial evidence to the contrary, the Citizens Commission on Human Rights portrays Wesbecker as a normal man turned suddenly violent by Prozac.

Using exaggeration, distortion and outright lies, the commission — which the Church of Scientology founded in 1969 to expose what it calls "psychiatric abuses of human rights" — has tried to sway the public away from the medical community's consensus that Prozac is a valuable — though probably overhyped and overused — antidepressant.

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THE PROZAC DEBATE

TOMORROW

Three and a half years after it hit the market, the scientific verdict on Prozac is favorable. Even authorities who believe there may be some link between Prozac and suicide find it a relatively safe, "life-saving medication."

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