

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE 48th DISTRICT COURT
IN BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, MI

TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD,
Plaintiff,

Case Nos. 17WB02957,
17WB02958, 7WB02959,
17WB02960 & 17WB02961

vs.

Hon. Marc Barron

MATTHEW CONNOLLY, WILLIAM GOODMAN,
ROBERT KOVALY, MONICA MILLER, and
PATRICE WOODWORTH-CRANDALL

Defendants.

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DEFENDANTS' SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

NOW COMES Defendants Matthew Connolly, William Goodman, Robert Kovaly, Dr. Monica Miller, and Patrice Woodworth-Crandall ("Defendants"), who ask this Court to consider the following when imposing a sentence in this case.

BACKGROUND

Defendants, who are defenders of the most defenseless in our society—the innocent unborn children who lose their lives to abortion—pray daily for an end to abortion, and, yes, they pray daily that God have mercy on those who support and defend the abortion industry. Similarly,

Defendants pray that this Court have mercy on them for their actions—actions which were not done with an evil or criminal intent, but with compassion and love for the mothers and their unborn babies.

Defendants did not engage in any act of violence, they abhor violence, including the violence of abortion. Defendants committed a property crime (trespass) in an effort to provide women with resources to choose life for their unborn children. The only real victims in this case are the voiceless unborn babies who lost their lives at the Western Women’s Center shortly after the police removed Defendants from the abortion center.

Unfortunately, our society has become too accustomed to violence. And make no mistake, abortion is violence—it is an intentional act that results in the death of an innocent human life. We all recently witnessed in horror as a shooter killed 17 innocent children at a high school in Florida. The sheriffs who stood idly by and did not enter the school to stop the killing were labelled cowards.

Abortion kills thousands of innocent lives each day, yet there is no public outrage because the killing is kept out of the public view and hidden beneath the veneer of “legal” protection. Defendants peacefully entered the Western Women’s Center to save lives. But instead, they were handcuffed, hauled off by police, and convicted. Defendants are not criminals.

In defense counsel’s closing argument, he likened this case to the cases against Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. The comparison is appropriate. Ms. Parks and Dr. King violated the “law” because it was the *just* thing to do. They may have been convicted by the “law,” but they have been acquitted by history.

In his famous 1963 letter from the Birmingham jail, Dr. King wrote, in relevant part, the following:

[T]here are just laws, and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that “An unjust law is no law at all.”

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality . . .

We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was “legal” and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was “illegal.” It was “illegal” to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler’s Germany. But I am sure that if I had lived in Germany during that time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal. If I lived in a Communist country today where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I believe I would openly advocate disobeying these anti-religious laws . . .

This letter could have been written about abortion today as much as it was written about racial segregation during the early 1960’s. The prosecutor, in his rebuttal argument, sought to distinguish the efforts of Dr. King with those of Defendants based on a claim that segregation in the South was unconstitutional at the time, whereas abortion today is constitutional as a result of *Roe v. Wade*. The prosecutor is wrong. The laws violated by Dr. King and Rosa Parks were “legal,” just as abortion is “legal” today. As one may recall, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537 (1896), the U.S. Supreme Court upheld against a challenge under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments a Louisiana law which provided for separate railway carriages for whites and blacks. “Separate but equal” was the law of the land until the civil rights movement affected the change.¹

¹ In *Brown v Board of Education*, 347 US 483, 495 (1954), the Court “conclude[d] that in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” It wasn’t until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, that the process of desegregation began in earnest.

The prosecutor also took issue with defense counsel's comparison of the Holocaust with abortion. Defendants stand by the comparison, which was also made by Dr. King in his famous letter quoted above. The prosecutor, however, is correct in this regard: an estimated 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust at the various "killing centers,"² whereas it is estimated that over 50 million unborn children have been killed at "abortion centers" since *Roe v. Wade*.³

The basic facts of this case are familiar. On December 2, 2017, Defendants entered the public waiting room of the Western Women's Center, an abortion center located in the Township of West Bloomfield, Michigan. As publicly stated in its own advertisements, the Western Women's Center performs abortions up to 24 weeks, which is beyond the gestational age at which an unborn child can survive outside the womb.

Police officers arrived and directed Defendants to leave the waiting room area. Defendants refused. As Defendant Goodman told the officers at the scene, he and the other pro-lifers were "going to stay at the facility because there were 'lives at stake.'" Defendants were handcuffed, transported to the police station, booked, and charged with trespass and interfering with police authority.

On February 21, 2018, a jury returned a verdict of guilty for both counts. Defendants now await this Court's judgment in terms of the sentence it will impose on them for their courageous acts of love. The Court's discretion is broad. Thus, in light of the nature of this case, and in light of the additional information provided below, Defendants would request that the Court exercise its discretion and for the sake of justice render a sentence of no further punishment. Defendants

² See <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10008193>. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum refers to the places where Jews were killed as "Killing Centers." <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007327>.

³ See <http://www.politifact.com/new-jersey/statements/2012/mar/18/chris-smith/chris-smith-says-more-54-million-abortions-have-be/>.

were arrested and held in the Township's detention center the day of the arrest. They were under bond conditions since their arraignment, and they have complied with those conditions. In short, they have been punished.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

Based on the prosecutor's statement following the close of the trial, it is expected that the Western Women's Center will be submitting one or more "victim impact" statements. However, this was a property crime (trespass). There are no victims of this crime, *per se*. Indeed, Defendants contend that the only "victims" are the unborn children who suffered death that day by abortion, and their mothers, whose lives will forever be changed, and not in a positive way.

This Court would not permit Defendants to present the expert testimony of Paul M. Byrne, M.D., a neonatologist and pediatrician. Dr. Byrne's testimony would have established, *inter alia*, the gestational development of an unborn child; the gestational age at which an unborn child is a unique and distinct human life; the gestational age at which an unborn child is viable; the gestational age at which an unborn child has a detectable heartbeat; and the gestational age at which an unborn child can feel and experience pain. His testimony would have been based upon scientific fact and not religious opinion. Per Dr. Byrne, at the moment of conception a new, unique, and distinct human life is formed. This new life has its own DNA and chromosomes that are separate and distinct from his or her mother and father. At approximately 18 to 21 days after conception, the heartbeat of this new life can be detected. Brain waves can be detected at 40 days. At 11 weeks, we can observe this unborn child engaging in breathing movements—movements of the chest. At 20 weeks, the unborn child's thalamus is fully intact, which means that the child can detect and feel pain—similar to how we detect and feel pain. Consequently, the unborn child who is torn to pieces in the womb by the abortionist's surgical instruments can feel and experience the

pain similar to how we would feel and experience such pain. No anesthesia is provided for the child. In fact, at just 12 weeks, the unborn child will start responding to physical stimuli by reacting to it and avoiding it. And at 22 weeks, an unborn child can survive outside of his or her mother's womb. Attached to this memorandum as Exhibit A are images that Dr. Byrne would have used to assist his testimony. The first image is a true and accurate photograph of a 10 week old preborn child. The second image is a true and accurate photograph of an 18week old preborn child. The third and fourth images are true and accurate photographs of 20 week old preborn children. And the fifth image is a true and accurate picture of a 24week old preborn child.

In addition to the many unborn lives destroyed at the Western Women's Center, there is always a second victim when abortion is involved. And that victim is the mother. Attached to this memorandum as Exhibit B are various testimonies of post-abortive women that were submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court via an *amicus curiae* brief filed by Priests for Life in *Whole Woman's Health v Hellerstedt*, 136 S Ct 2292 (2016). These are actual testimonies from the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, which seeks to expose and heal the secrecy and silence surrounding the emotional and physical pain of abortion.

In addition to understanding the background motivations for their collective actions, Defendants want this Court to understand a little bit more about each of them personally.

DEFENDANTS' BACKGROUND AND MOTIVES

Dr. Monica Miller

Dr. Miller resides in South Lyon, Michigan. She and her husband of over 25 years have lived there since 2002. They have three adult children, one of whom (the 22-year-old) currently resides with them.

Dr. Miller is a full-time Associate Professor at Madonna University in Livonia, having also taught as a lecturer and adjunct professor at Marquette University; the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois; Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois; and St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake, Michigan. She is also the president of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society ("CPLS"), a pro-life group she founded in 1985. CPLS is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Dr. Miller is a published author, having published the following books: *Sexuality and Authority in the Catholic Church*, *The Authority of Women in the Catholic Church*, *The Theology of the Passion of the Christ*, and *Abandoned—The Untold Story of the Abortion Wars*. Dr. Miller is the editor of *I Was a Stranger—Reflections on the Unborn Lost to Abortion*. Dr. Miller has written numerous articles which have appeared in a number of publications, including: *The National Catholic Register*, *New Oxford Review*, *Crisis Magazine*, *First Things*, *This Rock Magazine*, *Fidelity Magazine*, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, and the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. These articles have addressed a wide range of theological topics, including liturgy, marriage, Catholic sexual ethics, Catholic Feminism, the role of women in the Church, the Catholic priesthood, abortion, and bioethics.

Dr. Miller is pro-life, meaning that she opposes in all its forms the unjust killing of innocent human life from the moment of its existence to natural death. Dr. Miller firmly believes that all human life is sacred, and thus the God-given rights of all human beings must be respected. Her beliefs are not only informed by her Catholic faith, but are rooted in a natural law ethic, discernible by reason. She considers the "laws" protecting abortion to be a gross injustice in which an entire, completely vulnerable people-group are oppressed to the extent that their very lives are deemed of no consequence and are in fact treated by their own parents, the abortion industry, and the judicial system as nothing more than trash.

Early on, when she was 23 years old, Dr. Miller began to educate herself on the humanity of the unborn and read books on fetal development. She came to realize that the unborn are human beings just as anyone else—that in the unborn we are dealing with a personal *someone*. She was deeply influenced by the 1972 Hilgers and Horan book, *Abortion and Social Justice*. Her pro-life work has taken her into the dark places where the broken, crushed bodies of the aborted unborn have literally been tossed away as trash. She has taken thousands of bodies of aborted babies out of trash dumpsters and garbage containers and seen up close the violence and horror of abortion. Dr. Miller has witnessed firsthand the reality that abortion is a national slaughter, and her conscience is so stirred that she cannot simply sit back and be passive and apathetic, knowing that our nation allows such violence to continue.

Dr. Miller firmly believes that if we are going to ever end war, the senseless violence we see nearly every day, such as school shootings and terrorist acts, there must first be peace in the womb. Dr. Miller is also pro-life because abortion hurts women—it feeds off of their desperation and is a violation of their rights and dignity as women. Dr. Miller also believes that abortion is an attack on the basic human communion that ought to exist between a man and a woman when they create life. Abortion is the dissolution of the moral order founded on the human dignity of men and women, husbands and wives—the very moral order upon which a just society and culture is built and achieves its ethical order and moral foundation.

Dr. Miller went to the Western Women's Center on December 2, 2017, to offer women scheduled for abortions material help, emotional support, and encouragement to persuade them to leave the abortion center and give life to their unborn children. She knew that her voice and the voices of her companions would be the last voices the women would hear by which they could make a decision to choose life. And because there were unborn babies about to be put to death,

her goal was to stay in the abortion center as long as possible to be a witness to the sanctity of life, to be one with the victims of abortion, and to abide with them in solidarity. Dr. Miller believed that as long as the pro-lifers were in the abortion center as a peaceful presence, no abortions would occur, thus providing a practical act of defense for the unborn and their mothers.

William Goodman

William is a full-time human rights advocate and abortion abolitionist. His work encompasses writing, speaking, educating, consulting, organizing, helping people in need or in danger within the community (outreach, personal assistance, sidewalk counseling and rescue), praying, and lobbying on issues pertaining to respect for human life from the natural beginning until the natural end of life. He has spent 22 years as a local, regional, national and international public speaker. William has spent countless hours helping pregnant mothers in crisis through sidewalk counseling. Through such coordinated efforts working with many different pro-life organizations, numerous human lives have been saved from slaughter and countless individuals have been provided with material and moral assistance. His work educating various audiences offers an emphasis on the historical origins of human rights, the power of non-violence, the theology of solidarity, and philosophical personalism. William believes the most important work in building and shaping a culture of life is through prayer, love for all people—especially the most vulnerable—non-violent direct action, respectful dialogue, and education.

In this work, William utilizes his B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Illinois (with an Honors thesis in medical ethics) and his Masters of Theological Studies from Ave Maria University. William also provides care for an elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease, working part-time as a temporary live-in aid (driving, cooking, cleaning, assisting with errands, etc.). He has also worked as an advocate for individuals with disabilities and as a patient advocate for

preborn people. William also has a Certification in Bioethics (and 1 year remaining to complete a Master's Degree in Bioethics) and thus occasionally offers consulting on a range of relevant issues for individuals and organizations. He does not ask for any financial compensation for any of his advocacy, education, or personal aid work.

William believes that being pro-life means respecting and protecting the God-given dignity of every human person and their individual and intrinsic right to life. He believes that it is indeed a “self-evident truth that all men are endowed by their Creator with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” For William, to be pro-life is to care for each person, without exception, and defend their right to life and the right to be free from violence and coercion. The pro-life commitment relates to action which says that every human life matters regardless of age, race, beliefs, ethnicity, size, or any other factor. All authentic pro-life actions are respectful, peaceful, just, and compassionate. Pro-life efforts are directed to help the personal good of each individual as well as seeking the common good of society through a respect for human rights, most especially the right to life—a fundamental right which comes from God and must be protected by civil government and society. Christian pro-life work essentially means loving every human person as Jesus Christ loves them—with mercy, justice, truth, and selfless sacrifice.

On December 2, 2017, William went to the Western Women's Center because he had firm reasons to believe that this particular abortion center would be killing preborn persons in the womb on this day. He went to this location sincerely believing that a personal witness of peace, demonstrated through the concrete offering of a rose as an act of kindness and a card with non-violent solutions to mothers and fathers in a crisis pregnancy, was necessary on this day since innocent human life would be in immediate mortal danger. He went to the abortion center to communicate in a friendly respectful manner with all of those seeking to take an innocent

defenseless human life, and to let them know that love and support, instead of violence, are the appropriate responses to a tiny child. He also wanted them to know that he would personally help the parents or be a liaison for free pregnancy and medical assistance. And if such assistance was not accepted by the parents, he would at least stay at the abortion center to remain in loving solidarity with the preborn children that they may not be destroyed while he was present. However, William had no desire to stay inside the abortion center. Rather, he wished to leave based on the condition that no small human beings would be put to a painful death and no mothers would be coerced into killing their children to provide money to the abortion industry. To this end, he offered roses to those who work in the abortion center and engaged them in peaceful and respectful dialogue, seeking to encourage them not to kill children in the womb. These combined actions are part of a comprehensive effort of non-violence to give witness to the truth that abortion kills babies, hurts women and men, and harms society.

Mathew Connolly

Matthew was born in 1981, months after the Queen of Peace began appearing in Medjugorje to urge her Son's brothers and sisters to participate in a world-wide conversion movement. He was happy to learn that many communities were slated for outgrowth from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal around this time, including the Franciscan brothers of peace. Before they became an official order, the brothers founded Pro-Life Action Ministries. Matthew found a calling to the Lord's invitation to be a priest in service to the poor, leading him to the diocesan seminary in Winona, Minnesota, where he earned a double major in Philosophy and Environmental Biology at St. Mary's University. He was next led to spend nearly 8 years with the Brothers of Peace in religious life. He is currently attending a two-year certification course at the Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Catechetical Institute.

These seasons in his life were providential, and they were coupled with hands-on service to those Matthew considers the least of Christ's brethren. Matthew questions, "Who are the poorest of the poor?" For Matthew, they are surely in our day and time the unborn slated for abortion, as Saint Mother Teresa observed. Since college, he has had a heart to serve these little ones in prayer and works of charity and has spent countless hours in front of abortion centers, in adoration chapels, and in silent prayer. Matthew sees abortion as an unthinkable tragedy—but with Mother Mary as his witness, he seeks to be a builder of a culture of life in the new City of God. Matthew has for the past 6 months accepted a life of national indigency following up his Franciscan Brothers' suggestion that he become a "pro-life mendicant pilgrim." Not only is this life providentially fulfilling, but he is finding truth in the wisdom of Mother Teresa, whose theory was that those who have less, give more. In a year or so, he plans to assist the elders of the Pro-Life Ministries of Duluth to end abortion in his hometown. As Matthew has observed, the death toll of 300-600 unborn children by abortion and the rejection of what St. John Paul II described as the "culture of life" have resulted in the closing of his high school (once located near a current Planned Parenthood satellite), and other inner-city schools have been forced to close due to the decline in the number of children in the town. Mathew firmly believes that conscientious objection to abortion ought to be the norm, and pro-life work is the key. Per Matthew, "Pro-life exaggeration on the part of some is often necessary to repair the neglect of many, to say something akin to Chesterton."

Robert Kovaly

Robert has a B.S. in Education from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He is currently employed by the U.S. Postal Service. He works as an in-house "operations closer." Robert is divorced and has five children, two of whom are deceased. His living children and their

families reside in the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo areas. Robert is active in the Church and with community activities. He spent 13 years of his life caring for his father, aunt, and brother prior to their deaths. He has two brothers with traumatic brain injuries and a sister with emotional issues who have required his time and support over the last 30 years.

Robert is a Roman Catholic. Faith and morals mean a great deal to him. Robert attributes his pro-life views to this foundation and to his remarkable parents and relatives who instilled in him a desire to stand up for the weak and vulnerable in our society. The way our society treated persons of color prior to the civil rights movement as something less than fully human made Robert promise that he would never ignore such an injustice. For Robert, abortion is an injustice that has no equal. For as bad as racial segregation was (and it was horrible), the killing of innocent human life in the womb is still worse. Consequently, Robert has been involved in the pro-life movement for nearly 35 years.

As a matter of conscience, Robert peacefully entered the Western Women's Center on December 2, 2017, to offer the women in the waiting room financial and spiritual support, hoping that they would chose life for their babies and not abortion.

Patrice Woodworth-Crandall

Patrice lives in Winona, Minnesota. She is trained as a teacher with a B.S. in Elementary Education and English from the University of Wisconsin—La Crosse (“UW-La Crosse”). She attended graduate school at UW-La Crosse and at Winona State University for a 317 Reading Certification. She has taught on and off for the last 25 years (minus the past 6 years), mostly as a substitute teacher so that she could give more attention to her home and family. She has three living children, all daughters. Her oldest child has given her a beautiful grandson. She loves being both a mother and a grandmother.

The most meaningful pre-collegiate job that Patrice had was working with the multi- and severely-handicapped youth as a weekend therapist at Chileda Rehabilitation Institute in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She would often substitute in the summer for therapists while they vacationed.

This work has had a tremendous impact on her formation and outlook on life. She has come to know how important and truly meaningful it is to provide care to the defenseless and to those in need of care. She believes that to care for others is a great need that should concern all people.

Patrice also taught 6 years of Bible studies and Confirmation classes and has since become involved as a St. Paul Street Evangelist. Patrice has firmly held convictions that affect how she interacts with all others on a daily basis. She volunteers at the Winona Health & Hospital, serving holiday meals and caring for the elderly with in-home visits through Catholic Charities. She was also recently asked to help in the Birch and Family Center, holding and rocking the new born babies.

For the past 27 years, Patrice has become more actively involved in pro-life activities. She is pro-life because she believes in the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, and that, unfortunately, when she was much younger, like many others now, she did not know that we are all created in the image and likeness of God, and that it is an intrinsic evil to kill the unborn. This has caused her to want to others to know the truth about the sanctity of life: that life is sacred and needs to be prioritized as such.

As part of her pro-life activities, Patrice has directed the 40 Days for Life in Winona. She prays a weekly vigil at a local Planned Parenthood affiliate. She attends pro-life conferences, marches, rallies, talks, and events. She prays constantly for others to respect their bodies and the bodies of those yet to be born.

Sadly, for Patrice, she too is a victim of abortion. She became pregnant at the age of 14. When she was 5 months into her pregnancy, she told her parents. Unbeknownst to her, her parents quickly made an appointment for Patrice for a 2-day “procedure.” She was ushered through the process with no way out. Her baby was aborted. Patrice knows firsthand of the emotional scars caused by abortion and works to help women avoid the same pain.

Patrice went into the abortion center in West Bloomfield to show love and to give a message of love to women and men who are about to make that dreadful decision in the hope that they will respond to the love that is being offered them. Patrice wishes that someone would have been there in that abortion center when she was 14 to offer her a message of love and an alternative other than abortion, which has only provided her with pain and a lifetime of regret. She imagines that the child she lost to abortion was the son she never had. She wishes that someone would have been there to offer her a message of love on the stem of a red rose that dreadful day.

CONCLUSION

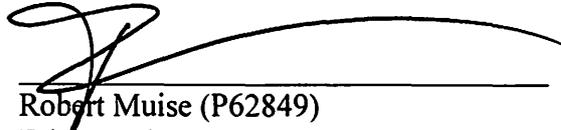
Equality for all human life—that is, protecting the unborn and mothers from the harm of abortion—is the civil rights issue of today. The right to life is the most basic and fundamental right because death forecloses all rights. Unlike the civil rights movement for racial equality, the national media does not support the pro-life movement. But even with the support of the media, Rosa Parks and Dr. King took direct action because, while technically “unlawful,” it was the *just* thing to do. The same is true here.

While Defendants understand that the Court felt bound as a trial court judge to exclude the defense of necessity from this trial, the Court is not so bound when it comes to sentencing. The Court’s discretion is broad. Accordingly, in light of the facts and circumstances of this unique case, Defendants, who already suffered a deprivation of liberty as a result of their arrests, detention,

and being on bond for the past several months, believe that they have been punished sufficiently for engaging in peaceful acts compelled by their consciences. They request mercy and a judgment of no further punishment.

Respectfully submitted,

AMERICAN FREEDOM LAW CENTER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RM', is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Muise (P62849)

Erin Mersino (P70886)

Counsel for Defendants

PROOF OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I served a copy of the foregoing on the counsel of record via electronic mail. I declare that the statements above are true to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.

Date: March 8, 2018.

AMERICAN FREEDOM LAW CENTER

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves slightly upwards at the end.

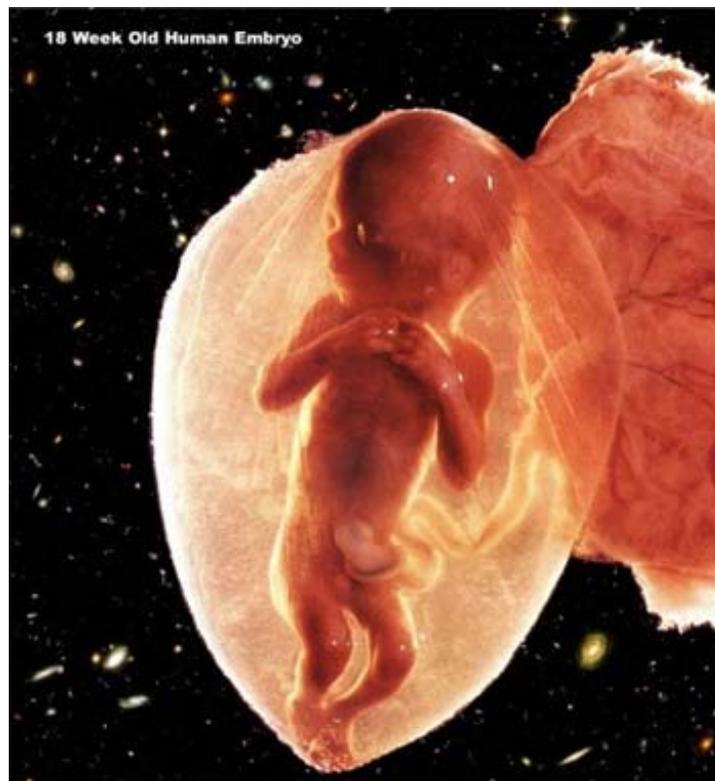
Robert Muise (P62849)
Counsel for Defendants

EXHIBIT A

10 Week Old Preborn Child



18 Week Old Preborn Child



20 Week Old Preborn Children



24 Week Old Preborn Child



EXHIBIT B

APPENDIX

SILENT NO MORE TESTIMONIES

Doreen
New York, United States

I was sitting in Planned Parenthood on the table right after I felt the warmth, comfort, and love of my baby's life trickle from my body and completely leave me. I felt my baby leave my body just as I had felt it come into my body. I felt so indescribably alone. The doctor just ducked out of the room and left me sitting there. I was clutching myself in deep spiritual and emotional pain rocking back and forth with my head raised to the ceiling chanting to myself, "Oh, God, what have I done? My Lord, my God what have I just done?" I felt myself dying inside and instantly knew why. I knew my choice was categorically wrong and I was the loser. At that moment I was terror stricken, filled with the deepest regret possible, and experiencing the reality of abortion. I had just betrayed the love of my Lord, my spirit and denied my baby life. I had really truly just killed my baby. All I wanted and wished for was to undo what I had just done. To take it all back and have a do over. Impossible! This was my choice. And now I have to live with it. I was so terrified, ashamed and angry. I felt there was no hope for me. No help for me.

The very core of my being was shaking with pure terror. I was panicked. To have your entire being shaking at the core is pure terror. A horror that I pray no other woman has to endure. My spirit withdrew

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with my baby's. I was in shock and shaking with chills and numb once my baby's life dispersed from my body. The horror and terror I was feeling was completely inconceivable. Suddenly, there became no easy or quick fix to change the circumstances of my life. They had changed forever and were undeniably permanent and undeniably wrong. There was nothing to comfort me or change this now. I felt I didn't know about the consequences. I was infuriated with myself and couldn't fathom my ignorance and my denial of what an abortion actually was—the taking of my baby and God's precious gift of life. No one warned me of spiritual consequences, and I was so angry at Planned Parenthood and the right to abortion. I felt utterly deceived and lied to by Planned Parenthood for not informing me of the spiritual consequence of abortion. But I truly should have known and kept to my faith.

I was bleeding so heavily for days. It was like I was hemorrhaging. Bits and pieces of my baby's body were coming out in my underwear. I had chunks of my baby's remains in the toilet paper when I used the bathroom. Then during one shower my baby's arm came out and fell on the concrete floor of the shower. I became frozen with fear and the grim reality that my baby was dead. I couldn't bear picking it up. It was the tiniest little arm and I didn't know what to do. I couldn't even fathom picking it up to throw it away, but I just couldn't leave it there. This was one of the worst moments of my life. I felt so weak inside and repulsed at what I had done. I had taken my baby's life—a human life. I just killed my baby. I was in terror. I stood in the shower for what seemed like hours contemplating what to do. Not being able to pick up my baby's arm I finally removed the cover to the drain

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and used it to push my baby's arm down the drain. I was so traumatized by what I had done. I was sickened by my choice and its harsh reality. I was sickened by what I was capable of. Most of all I was sickened that my baby was dead and that it was final. There was no escaping what I had done.

By doing this I denied my faith and my God. I really truly should have known what I was doing. I felt I didn't know. I felt so dumb and stupid—just so very stupid. I didn't know how precious God's gift of life was and took it for granted, but I found out how precious life is and how much we need to protect and respect life.

Kristen
Illinois, United States

I went into Planned Parenthood in Effingham, IL for birth control. I had to take a pregnancy test that day then again in two weeks. I remember clearly hearing someone say outside my door, "Give it to her anyways." They never said anything to me about it. Just gave me the depo shot anyways.

About two months later I found out I was pregnant. I went to work detasseling corn, and my mom needed to know my last period date, so she had my sister call and find out. They wouldn't give it to her. But I called a little later that day and [they] told me that my last pregnancy test came back positive.

They ruined my life. If it had not been for their mistake I would have been able to keep my baby. Since then I was not able to conceive a child. I believe it is because of damage done by the abortion. During the procedure, I was awake. They put some medicine

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sticks in my cervix to open it, then used something that sounded like a vacuum and told me to hold still. Are you serious? It was the worst pain I have ever felt in my life. Not to mention the most traumatic. After the procedure I felt humiliated and hurt beyond belief. I always wanted kids. Not so young, but the abortion took that away. I have since gone through four cycles of invitro fertilization, three tubal pregnancies, and now a hysterectomy. I have found forgiveness from my family and that is why I am silent no more.

Sandi **New York, United States**

My boyfriend and a mutual friend accompanied me to the clinic. When we arrived, it was pouring rain. There was one man standing outside, a protestor, the enemy in my book. Ms. G said they would yell and shout at me; I was afraid and nauseous at the sight of this lone man standing in the rain. As we approached him he spoke, "Please," he said, "Please don't kill your baby." His tone was kind, sad and desperate. I kept walking. I heard him say the name Jesus, I think, but by that time we were in the clinic door and, thankfully, he was no longer a threat.

The first thing they asked for at the desk was the \$320 cash, which I handed over. I was glad that things were moving along and this would soon be over.

The wait was long. There were perhaps 5-7 other girls in the waiting area with me.

Finally, I was called back to a small office. There a woman had me fill out some papers, sign my name, and then she "counseled" me.

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She told me my mom could be a big help in times like this. I remember thinking if I hadn't told my mom up to this point, I was certainly not going to tell her after the fact. How could I? It would upset her so much, and I couldn't bear to see my mom sad. I thought these things but never spoke aloud. I just nodded my head. She told me there would be a bill sent to my home in my name. She said the bill was for testing of the tissue. I assumed they were going to see if the cells and tissue were healthy (indeed, three months later a bill showed up. I tossed it in the trash and never received another).

She calculated how far along I was and then she led me out of the room. As we walked down the hall she turned to me with a tone of disgust and said, "Why did you wait so long!?" I was stunned. What did she mean? Ms. G told me I was 12 weeks along. At 12 weeks it wasn't a baby, it was cells, wasn't it? I was amazed at her tone and, suddenly, I was ashamed. I said, "I don't know," and we continued walking.

She led me down a sloping corridor into a small room that was packed with people. I saw three cots on wheels directly in front of me. Behind that was a small row of chairs, to the left of the chairs a privacy screen, and in front of the screen, against the far left wall, was a small station with a few nurses. Through this room I was led into a very tiny room, just big enough to fit a gynecologic exam type table with stirrups, a few portable lights, and some type of machine apparatus.

I was instructed to lie on the table with my legs in the stirrups. I was then strapped into the stirrups. I was wondering why this was necessary, but the woman left the room before I had a chance to speak. I do not think

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that I would have spoken because I was too scared to ask questions.

I do not know if this tiny room had a door. If it did, they did not choose to use it. They left me there for some time, strapped to the table, my legs tied to the stirrups. Behind me, through the open door, was the room full of people I described earlier. At one point, a man who appeared to be a custodian walked into the little room I was in. I felt horrified and embarrassed to be seen by this stranger. My impression was that he was there to clean or pick up soiled linens. I felt my privacy had been violated. I also felt shame.

After some time, someone came into the room and set up an IV. She told me it was for the anesthetic. She then left the room.

I didn't know when the anesthesia would take effect. Looking back, I now know they hadn't started it, but they were just getting everything ready to go.

A few minutes later a group of people came into the room.

A nurse told me to count backwards from one hundred. I began counting. I got to 96 and began to feel myself losing consciousness. I heard a woman's voice say, "She's out," and then a man's voice say, "Let's get this one over with quickly. I want to go to lunch." I felt a panic rise in me, and I heard in my mind my own voice scream "NO!" I did not trust this man. Why was he treating me this way? I then heard a loud sound, like a rumbling of an engine or generator.

The next thing I remember was the sensation of hands under my arms and legs. I heard voices. I knew they

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were lifting me, and I was still trying to say “no,” but I was totally helpless. I could not speak or move, and it scared me.

I opened my eyes, and I was in that crowded room. There was a woman in a cot next to me. She asked me if I was okay. She motioned over to another girl on a cot who was shaking and still unconscious. “You were doing that a minute ago; it’s what happens before you wake up.”

“This time,” she continued, “I decided to just do the light anesthesia, so I was awake. I am sorry I did that. It was awful, I could hear the machine.” I had the impression she was a prostitute. We spoke for a few minutes. She seemed like a nice person, and it felt good to talk to someone.

The nurses had me sit up. They said when I was ready, I could move to one of the seats. I forced myself to be well enough to get to the seat.

I watched the process going on in the room. The order was cot, seat, change into your street clothes, cookies and juice at the nurse’s station, and then out. There was a steady stream of girls in various stages of this process. I wanted out, so as soon as I could stand, I asked for my clothes.

The walls behind the privacy screen were splattered with blood. There were pools of blood on the floor in which I made sure not to step.

After I dressed, the nurses gave me my cookies and juice. They handed me some papers, some pills, and a prescription. I think the pills were to stop bleeding. I don’t remember what the script was for. They told me

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to see my doctor in two weeks. Feeling weak and dizzy, I left to go home.

My immediate feeling after my abortion was relief. I didn't have to worry anymore and life could go back to normal.

After the time prescribed I went to my gynecologist. I told him I had an abortion. He asked me why I didn't come to him for help. (At the time I did not know about patient confidentiality, and I was fearful he would tell my parents.) He asked me where I had the abortion. When I told him, he looked as though he was going to cry. I was shocked by his reaction and confused as to why Ms. G would recommend a place that horrified my doctor, a highly respected and well known gynecologist.

When he examined me, he told me I had significant scarring to my uterus. He said he was hopeful it would heal well enough for me to have children one day.

About a month after the abortion, I started having pain in my groin and a yellowish discharge. I went back to the doctor and was diagnosed with a vaginal infection. Thus began a ten year odyssey of serious, almost continuous reoccurring infections, swollen lymph nodes in my groin, and pain in my ovaries and uterus.

Jules California, United States

At 19 years old, I went into the abortion clinic to have the surgical procedure. From the consultation to the actual procedure, everyone was friendly and very informative. Lying on that table, I was having conversations about my future with the doctor and anesthesiologist. I trusted them.

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As soon as I left Planned Parenthood I immediately had the worst stomach pains of my life. Four days later, I went to the emergency room because of how much I was bleeding and clotting. It turns out I had an infection. They did an ultrasound and more than 3/4 of the baby was still inside of me. I had a full uterus. The doctor informed me that if I didn't go the very next morning to have another procedure to have it removed, I could die. Planned Parenthood was supposed to remove the baby, and instead they killed the baby, left the dead body inside me, and sent me home.

It's possible that the infection will affect me having kids in the future. It's possible that I'm infertile. I don't know yet, all I know is that I am left traumatized, damaged, and heart broken by the experience I went through. And that is why I am no longer silent.

**Jacquie,
Alabama, United States**

We walked in and there were women sitting there that were pregnant and some that were not. I couldn't quite figure that out, but it gave me some hope thinking, perhaps, that this maybe wasn't going to happen the way he said it would. As I was sweating to fill out my paperwork I get called back, which was another red flag to me, because I was the last one to arrive but the first one to go back. A woman who said she was a "nurse" wanted to determine how old the pregnancy was. We determined that it was eleven weeks, which means everything was formed. Even her teeth were starting to form.

Before the paperwork could get finished the doctor comes in and says. "Are we ready?" I said, "No," and

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she said, "Yes." I said, "But I need to finish my paperwork." He said, "Well we're ready."

So I was taken into the room and I thought, I have some hope. You have to examine what you plan to remove, correct? As I thought the examination was being done things [got] very, very painful and very intense. I kept asking him to stop. I begged him to stop. Then I finally rose up and screamed, "Please stop!" At that point the nurse pushed me down and she said, "Hold on just one more minute." The abortionist said, "Yes, just one more part."

At that point I would forget that for many, many years because as my sisters have said, you go into denial and you forget many things. It wasn't until someone said something to me about the different types and forms of abortion that I finally realized that my daughter had been dismembered piece by piece. I've learned later on that most abortuaries go back and they place the children back together, piece by piece, to account for everything, if you're lucky.

After the procedure there was no numbing of the patient. There was nothing to calm me down. Nothing. The doctor said to me, "If you have excessive bleeding you can go to the emergency room. If you have pain, you can take Tylenol, and release pain." I walked out into, what was the waiting room at that facility, my fiancé was gone, never to be seen again. I walked across the street, thinking there was a parking deck across the street, and I thought well maybe he had actually grown a conscious and maybe he's parked the car there. As I proceed to go across the street in Bethesda I collapse in the middle of the road and almost bled to death by the time the paramedics got

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me. What happened then was even worse. I was admitted to the hospital. I was living a lie. I had a wedding in three weeks. I couldn't call my parents. I couldn't tell anyone. It wasn't until, literally, half my life later that I would be able to tell my parents and then be able to seek the healing that I needed at Rachel's Vineyard.

Joyce, Maryland, United States

I made a decision to have an abortion and go into the Army. The impact of all of this is that I suffered a damaged kidney. I found out much later that half of my kidney was damaged because when I went into the military, I had this infection and the infection had gotten into the kidney, but it was the consequence of the abortion.

I did not do any follow-up from the abortion as I was told to do because I had to leave. This infection settled into my body, and into my kidney, and damaged half of my kidney. That was one of the impacts. The other impact was the thought of this abortion where it felt like a vacuum cleaner just cleaning you out. I wanted to jump off the table and they literally held me down onto the table until this thing was over. That was something I would never, ever forget.

Andrea Pennsylvania, United States

My mother's friend, who is a registered nurse, came with us to the clinic. The baby's father came with me to the first visit. The consultation was just a bunch of paper work. There was no asking me if this was what

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I wanted, or if I had second thoughts. It was just strictly how I would be paying.

I went back to see the doctor. It took me by surprise that he was a guy. They gave me an Rh shot, and he “examined” me. He told me that I was eight weeks pregnant. (The “cut off” time for abortions in their office was eight weeks. However, I knew he was lying to me because I had kept track. I didn’t speak up). He didn’t use a sonogram or anything to be sure; he felt inside of me and made up a number. He then made me go back out in the waiting room. I wanted to read the information in the office, but no one would allow me. They kept saying that at the age of fourteen, I was making the right “choice” and didn’t need to read anything that would be “upsetting.”

When I was called back, I started to cry my eyes out. I asked if my mom could come back with me, but they said that wasn’t allowed. I started losing it. They took me to the “procedure” room and told me to get undressed and lie down on the table. I did. They gave me no pain killers, and I was awake for the whole thing. To help me, a nurse held my hand. From the very second the pain began, I held back my screams. He told me that I couldn’t move or else I would never be able to have children again. Some screams exited my mouth from the amount of pain. The nurse put her hand over my mouth and told me to be quiet because I would scare the other patients. I squeezed the nurse’s hand so tight that it started turning purple. My body had a rush of heat go through me, and then I was freezing. As he was cutting through my cervix and scrapping my uterine walls, the sounds that I heard will never leave my memory. This took about fifteen

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minutes. After he was finished, I felt so sick like I had to vomit. I couldn't believe what I just had done. I wanted to stop it. God, how could I have listened to "the man I loved?"

They had me stand up, and I almost blacked out, catching myself on the stirrups. I looked down, there was my baby. The remains of my child were lying in a bucket right there for the entire world to see what I had done. It was like time stood still. That image was burned into my mind. I saw that the "clump of cells," my baby, was my son. They took me to the "recovery" room where there they gave me orange juice and stale cookies. Other women were in there as well lying down, some crying, and others just curled up in pain. After thirty minutes or so, they had me go change myself because of the blood. As I went to do so, blood just started gushing out of me. I tried to catch it with my hands, but the blood filled them up in seconds flat. It was pouring over my hands and down my legs, soaking my socks and onto the floor. I was frozen and in shock. A nurse knocked on the wall and asked if I need assistance. I said very faintly, "Oh my God, help me, please, help me, God, please help me." She came in to help me (there was only a privacy curtain), and she knocked the curtain off the wall. She let all the women there see me with my blood and my child's blood overflowing my hands. She helped clean me up, and I passed out from the loss of blood. They tried to stop the hemorrhaging, but it wouldn't let up. The nurse wrapped me in a blanket and told my mother to take me to a hospital. My mother started panicking, asking why an ambulance couldn't be called. The nurse replied, "For business purposes." We started leaving, and we were told we were not allowed to leave

through the front doors because of how I looked. We were shown the back door and left for the hospital immediately. When I arrived at the hospital, they informed me that the abortionist that I went to (Earl McLeod) had killed several women in the past for not getting them proper medical attention. They stopped the bleeding, gave me a transfusion, and discharged me. On the way home, the procedure felt like it was still going on with every bump or groove in the road that we went over. Little did I know that that pain was only the beginning.

**Sandra,
Virginia, United States**

At the age of 19, I became pregnant, and there was no talking about me keeping it. He told me that I had to have an abortion because I loved him and that it wasn't good for us to have it right now. He said that we couldn't afford it and that if I didn't go through with the abortion, he would leave me. I was devastated. So, in June of 1989, I went to the abortion clinic in the city and waited inside alone. He stayed out in the car and wouldn't come in with me. He said that I had to be a big girl, and to do this for US. When I walked in, the clinic felt cold and not very friendly at all. The nurses were all very nonchalant and cold. There didn't seem to be any love or concern in their attitudes. Everything felt like business. I was taken to a room upstairs where they did the procedures. I was put into a waiting room where another nurse came in and explained that this "thing" that was growing inside of me was nothing more than a "clump of cells" that had "no life" in it. From what they could tell, I was about 8 weeks along. She gave me a pill to take to help me

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relax and to help start dilation. She gave me a dressing gown and told me that I needed to change and prepare for the procedure. I was asked if I needed anything, and I said no. She left.

About 15 minutes later, I was in the room with the doctor and, I was put onto this table that had stirrups on it in which to place your feet. They hooked an IV up to me and gave me something in the IV to help me to relax again and not feel pain. I remember going in and out of consciousness, but I remember hearing something that sounded like a vacuum. I felt a lot of pressure in my abdomen and I remember hearing the doctor say, "It's too big. I'm going to have to crush it to get it to suction out." I had no idea what he was talking about, but all I remember was the pain that I suddenly felt. Then it was over. They took me into a recovery room and told me to lie down because I would still be very weak from the drugs, and they needed my bleeding to slow down before I could leave. They gave me some juice because I felt extremely dizzy. She came in to check on me and said that my bleeding hadn't slowed down enough to what they had liked, but if I had someone with me, they would send me home and I could recover there. So, I walked out of the clinic by myself. When I got into my boyfriend's car, we drove home without saying anything. He didn't even look at me the whole drive back to the apartment. When we got there, I went straight to bed, and he came in and told me that he had to go to work, and that I did the right thing for US. At that moment, I didn't feel like I had done the right thing. I grieved and felt such a loss for the next several days. I felt like something tremendous had been taken away from me. The bleeding that they said was supposed to stop never did.

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I ended up back in the hospital for a D and C. Apparently during my procedure, there were areas in my uterus that were bleeding from the instruments that had been used. The doctor said that if I hadn't come in, I could have bled to death. He asked me what I had done, and I told him that I had an abortion. He looked at me and just shook his head. In that moment I felt so much shame and guilt from the looks that he gave me. He gave me a prescription for pain and one to help fight infection and sent me home. There was no compassion there. After a day or so, the bleeding stopped and I was left feeling empty.

Debbie, Indiana, United States

I was 8 weeks pregnant. I was having morning sickness and gaining weight. My boyfriend took me to Planned Parenthood. They asked me a series of questions. At the end, they said since I was unmarried, my mom wouldn't help me, my boyfriend didn't want to marry me, and that I smoked cigarettes and marijuana and drank alcohol, my only option was an abortion. They said my baby would most likely be mentally retarded or deformed due to my partying. They also said that the baby wasn't formed yet and was just cells. When I told them I was scared, they said they could give me a laminaria.

They said it wouldn't hurt at all, but it would be more money. I went out to the car to ask my boyfriend what to do and he gave me the extra money for the laminaria. I felt trapped, but I thought that maybe if I did this he would stay with me.

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That night I started praying and decided to try to cancel the abortion. I called Planned Parenthood's emergency number and talked to a nurse who said that I would miscarry because of the laminaria, so I had to go through with it. Years later I found out from watching an ex-abortion doctor's video that they lied, and that I could have safely had the laminaria taken out and kept my baby.

My mom took me the day of the abortion. I couldn't quit shaking from the fear. The Planned Parenthood nurse gave me a valium but I was not put to sleep. I was awake and alert through the whole thing. I remember the pain like a knife in my stomach and the sounds of the machine, and I remember the doctor yelling at me not to move. The medical assistant came running in after they took the bottle holding the contents of my baby out of the room. I asked what happened and she said that the bottle had broken. She didn't know what to do because she couldn't piece the baby back together. I remember feeling shocked and I asked if she knew the sex of my baby! They took me to the recovery room and I remember all the girls there with glazed looks and crying. Immediately afterward I felt shock that it was over. I felt some relief but also a deep sadness and emptiness which I numbed out.

**Tonya,
Florida, United States**

I had an abortion in 2001. I was eighteen and heavily influenced by my mother. She took me to the clinic on 12th and Delaware in Fort Pierce, FL. We waited in the clinic together, but she knew I was very hesitant. We had to wait for a while for the abortionist to come. I don't think he even lived in the area. The nurse said

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he would be coming through the back door with a sheet over his head.

When he finally arrived, I was given something to calm me down. After taking something that made me feel a little “out there,” I realized that my Mother was nowhere in sight. I asked the nurse to get her but was told she left to get coffee and would be back when everything was over. She also told me that she was glad that I wasn’t talking about God and that there were no “Jesus freaks” here today. I had also been told earlier that my child was “not a baby yet,” and I was denied the right to see my ultrasound.

When I was taken to the room to have the procedure, I remember thinking, this does not look like a place anyone should be having surgery. Now as a Respiratory Therapist, I know there was absolutely no emergency medical equipment. Just a bed with stirrups and a suction machine for extracting my baby.

There was one very nice young nurse there that didn’t say much but held my hand during the death of my child. I remember thinking that I did not deserve such comfort. When I sat up, I saw bloody babies in a Tupperware bowl on the counter. Afterwards I was taken back to a little room with a recliner. I was shaking uncontrollably. My mother was not called until the shaking stopped, and I looked more presentable.

I had severe bleeding and a stabbing pain for weeks after. I notified the clinic of the symptoms, and they were not interested in hearing about it. They told me to go to the ER. The problem was, I did not know the

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exact procedure done to me and did not know how to tell the ER what I had done. I was ashamed.

**Jennifer,
Massachusetts, United States**

I had an abortion when I was 27, and my life has never been the same. I knew it was wrong, even though I was not religious at the time. I justified it, and my boyfriend (now husband) encouraged it. I was very sick with Lyme's disease at the time and could barely walk so I told myself that the baby would be sick with all the antibiotics. The day of the abortion I wanted someone to stop me. I felt like I was going to my execution. I couldn't stop crying and shaking and I couldn't look at my boyfriend. I went to a very "nice" looking doctor's office in San Francisco, but once I got into the procedure room I felt like they were treating me like a criminal. I told them the painkillers they had given me weren't working, but they proceeded anyway. I shook uncontrollably and cried the whole time. When I got home I lay on the couch and cried the rest of the day.

**Jenn,
Oregon, United States**

I'll never forget walking into the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Syracuse, NY. It was a huge, cold waiting room. My boyfriend had paid the \$300.00 fee and immediately left me there by myself. He told me to call him when it was done. I felt so alone and scared as I filled out the paperwork that they gave me. Keep in mind, I was 17 at the time and was not accompanied by my parents. It's the same today as back then . . . no questions asked, no matter the age. No parental consent need be given. After filling out the paperwork,

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I was taken into a room and made to watch a short video about what my abortion would be like. I can only describe this video as wishful thinking, because it bared little resemblance to the actual invasive procedure I was about to have.

I was let into a very cold, small room and told to undress and put on the paper gown they supplied me with. After a few minutes the “doctor” came in, sits at a chair at my feet and just starts. He did not say one word to me. The nurse that was there grabbed my arms and started holding me down. All of a sudden, I felt a hot, searing pain and I saw STARS! I gasped as the “doctor” shoved a needle into my cervix. He said to me “. . . stay still! It doesn’t hurt! It’s all in your head! Let me FINISH!” I remember that the nurse still had me pinned down and I just wanted to jump up and run out the door, but I could not move. The pain was indescribable, as was the feeling of helplessness I felt. No one was there to help me. All I remember after that was pressure and extreme pain. I know I was crying. The “doctor” just rolled his eyes at me afterward and said it was finished. I got dressed and was just numb as I walked out the door. No after procedure instructions were given. No follow up appointments made. They got their money and now would have nothing else to do with their patient.

After getting back home, I just went to my room and cried myself to sleep. I was cramping very bad and it was the worst period I have ever had. I remember globs of tissue and blood pouring out. After a few days it subsided and I went about my life again. A few weeks later when my cycle did not come around again, I went to a clinic doctor and he informed me that I was

STILL PREGNANT! I was floored. I could not even comprehend what he was saying to me. This could not be happening . . . it just couldn't.

After that, I was unable to get another abortion . . . it was too late. I was relieved, but also knew I was not able to care for a child. I still had to finish high school, and then college. I had the baby . . . well, actually, BOTH babies. You see, I had been pregnant with TWINS. I lost one at birth, the other I gave up for adoption. She was beautiful. They BOTH were. That was the hardest thing I have ever done, giving her up, but I loved her so much I had to. I named the babies Jessica and Sarah. Jessica was adopted.

**Connie,
Wisconsin, United States**

The clinic was very cold and dreary. They did not tell me that this blob of tissue, as it was referred to, was a baby with a heart beat or explain the risks involved; the possibility of an infection or perhaps never being able to have another baby. The nurse who assisted the doctor never smiled or gave a comforting touch or word. The doctor briefly explained the procedure, telling me there would be a sucking sound like a vacuum cleaner. He said there would be no pain. It was over just like that, my baby was pulled from my body. I went home and lay on the couch in the dark wondering what had I done! A few days later my doctor told me I had an infection in my uterus as a result of the abortion.

**Sandy,
Wisconsin, United States**

In April, 1975 I had an abortion done at the university hospital in Madison, WI. The abortion was done

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against my will and heart's desire. I was 16 yrs. old at the time and my parents had been separated a year and going through a divorce. The abortion was done as my father was afraid if anyone else found out that I was pregnant, he would lose custody of my brother and me. We would then have to go to live with my mother. My mother conceived me before marriage and I was her reason she got married. Thus, she counseled me to get an abortion and not ruin my life. I felt so ashamed of myself, I felt panic, confusion, fear and after I bargained with God, and the disbelief settled; I got my courage up and shared the news with my boyfriend. He wanted to get married, but we both felt we were too young. We decided we would make a plan, to place the baby for adoption. We went to Planned Parenthood in Milwaukee, thinking they were there to help make plans for being a parent. We thought we could get more information on adoption. We were so surprised that the information we were looking for, Planned Parenthood didn't share with us but instead recommended abortion.

I left feeling very unsupported and wanting no part of what she was suggesting. We begged my dad for the longest time to reconsider. Finally the day came that he was driving me to the hospital. I remember going in for the procedure and lying on [a] table in this cold sterile metal furnished room. I remember the nurse telling me how they would pass a long needle into my abdomen to exchange the amniotic fluids with the saline solution. I remember the doctor inserting the needle and my leg jumped and hit a tray of instruments near the bottom of the table I laid on. It sent all their instruments flying. The doctor cursed me and told me not to move again or I could cause

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problems with my uterus. I told him that I didn't want to be here or have the abortion done! He told me that my parents brought me here for this to be done and so this is what they were going to do.

After it was finished, I remember going back out to where my boyfriend and parents were waiting. I broke down and sobbed. More than a medical procedure happened. I felt like I had died from the inside out. After the procedure we went back to my hospital room to wait till the solution caused me to go into labor and my baby to be aborted. I was instructed that when I felt pressure developing I was to bear down with my abdomen and not sit up but to ring for the nurse to come. I remember clinging to a little stuffed animal the whole time I went through the aborting labor, alone with no one else around.

Peggy, Tennessee, United States

I was prepped, drugged with valium and then felt a very long and horribly painful cramp as I heard a vacuum cleaner sound. I remember sobbing as I dozed off. Then I was awakened, got dressed, and my husband drove me home.

I lied about it, rationalized and justified it for twenty six years. But, the abortion not only killed my innocent baby, it damaged me physically, mentally and spiritually. Because of the physical damage done to my uterus from the suction curettage abortion, I had to have a hysterectomy three months later.

**Kelly,
Georgia, United States**

I am speaking to you today because abortion, in so many ways, changed my life forever. I had two abortions ten years ago because I was already a divorced single mom who didn't want her Christian parents to know she was sleeping with her boyfriend. I remember every sight, sound and smell in the clinic. I felt like a number . . . rushed in and out and treated with indifference. I suffered for months after the second abortion until doctors discovered I had an incomplete abortion and there were still parts of my child inside of me.

**Kim,
Mississippi, United States**

I never met the doctor. I was told by Planned Parenthood to bring loose fitting clothes. After the procedure, I was cautioned that I could hemorrhage and was explained the signs of infection.

I was in college. My boyfriend drove me from Starkville to Memphis; neither of us said very much on the way there, I just watched the trees as we drove. On the way back I was sick, frightened, cramping and in great emotional pain. I couldn't speak; I just stared out of the window as tears flooded down my face knowing that I had killed my child.

After a sedative and being strapped to the exam table I said, "I can't do this, let me up." After that, I was forcefully held down by two people and given another sedative this time and [an] injection in the vein in my hand. I put my legs together and heard the doctor tell his assistant to do something about that; they held my

legs apart and I begged and called for my boyfriend. Today, I know that he never heard my screams. The doctor started the procedure and I felt pain and could hear the suction noise. I felt sick and could feel the hot tears flowing down my face. I just wanted to die.

**Mary,
Florida, United States**

I had an abortion because I was in an abusive relationship. I had been beaten by my boyfriend and he threatened my life multiple times. He threatened to take our child away from me and send the child to Morocco with his family. I experienced verbal, physical, emotional, social and financial abuse in this relationship. I experienced going through a domestic violence victim's program. I had experienced abuse and abandonment in my family. My brother sexually abused me, as well as another family member. I was accustomed to being treated terribly and thought this was normal.

During the abortion experience, I felt as if the staff at the Orlando clinic was not concerned about my welfare. No one asked me if my life was in danger even though my boyfriend was cursing at me in the clinic. During the procedure I was extremely cold and uncomfortable. With the nurse and doctor, it was just business as usual. The nurse told me everything would be alright. The doctor didn't even talk to me or look at me. I was crying violently during the procedure as I felt my child being ripped out. I was told to be quiet and given extra pain medication to sleep.

**Terri,
Wisconsin, United States**

It was a day in late August 1980. At the clinic, they asked me why I was choosing abortion. I felt that I wasn't "choosing" abortion at all; I felt like I didn't have a choice. The room was cold and for a minute I think I convinced myself I was just going in for a pap. They told me I would have some cramps, I would hear the suction machine, and then it would all be over. I remember being scared out of my mind and wanting to leave, but I couldn't. I had to go through with this. I remember the nurse holding my hand as I started to cry and I realized that it wasn't my insides that were being sucked out of me, but my baby. I wanted it to stop. Not only did my baby die that day, but deep down inside, so did I.

In the waiting room afterwards, they gave me juice and cookies, like I had just given blood or something. I remember thinking, "I just killed my baby and I get juice and cookies for a reward." It made me sick inside. I couldn't get out of there fast enough. I just wanted to get drunk and stoned to kill the pain in my body and soul. I ended up on a street corner, screaming and crying out to God to forgive what I had done. But I knew God couldn't forgive this one—this was the unforgivable sin. At least that's what I thought.

I bled for two months afterwards, ending up in the hospital with a D&C. Sometimes an abortion is not complete and parts of the baby can be left inside, causing hemorrhaging. I know this is exactly what happened to me. A year later, I was diagnosed with endometriosis. With the realization that I may never

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have another child, I believed this was God's punishment for what I had done.

**Renee,
Illinois, United States**

Once inside, I gave the receptionist a fake name. I felt numb. I filled out paper work, talked to a counselor, talked to a nurse, and tried not to think about what I was doing. A nurse escorted me into the abortion room. She helped me get ready for the procedure and just asked me vague questions about the weather and if I was going to school. The abortionist came into the room and began my abortion. The nurse was leaning over me and staring into my eyes. After a little while, she asked the doctor, "Is something wrong?" He said, "It is trying to get away—I've tried three times!"

I was shocked!! What he said hit me like a ton of bricks. It is trying to get away! I started to pray and ask God to stop all this from happening—to not let it work—to let it fail—to put His hand in the way of the vacuum. I couldn't believe what I was doing!! Seconds later, the abortionist said, "It's done." He put away his tools and left the room. From that moment on I have REGRETTED MY ABORTION! I just wanted to run, to die . . . I was ANGRY! After the nurse left the room, I started to cry. A part of me died in that room. I knew what I did was wrong. The "IT" he was referring to was MY BABY!

**Lilian,
Alabama, United States**

I made my appointment and went to my local Planned Parenthood for my abortion. I was in the waiting room where other girls were waiting for their appointments.

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The mood was solemn and sad. Everyone knew what they were about to do. For whatever reasons, all of us were there because we felt we were backed into a corner. Eventually, they took me to a room. After waiting in the room a while, I began to have second thoughts. Being brought up a Christian, I knew this was very wrong. I feared that if I had the baby, not only would my boyfriend be tied to me for life, but he may abuse the baby as well. How could I put a child through his abusive tirades?

I had to wait a long time in that sterile plain room to get ready for the abortion. The workers were very ineffectual and not very nice at all; they almost threw the paper gown at me. A nurse entered the room to prepare me for the abortion and I told her I was having second thoughts. She said, "OK, I will tell the doctor." When the doctor came and I told him I had second thoughts, he said nothing to me; he just pulled out a syringe filled with something from his lab coat pocket and injected me. I lost consciousness for a while, when I came to, the procedure was already underway.

I was numb and unable to move, but I kept repeating over and over again, "I changed my mind, I changed my mind."

The doctor had a devilish look of enjoyment on his face as he ripped my baby apart. As he worked, he said to me, "This is best for you and I need a new hot tub for my new home." I couldn't believe it when he said such a thing. My head was spinning and I went numb from the shock of what was happening to me. All I could think about was how I could ever atone for the murder of my child. I heard the sucking of the machine as he

worked. I swear I could hear my baby's soul crying as it was torn apart.

I finally woke up completely and when I said that I had changed my mind, they told me that I asked for a sedative which made me hallucinate. It was not a hallucination and I never asked for a sedative. Those awful people forced me to have an abortion against my will. The minute I expressed any doubts about my abortion, they took steps to make sure they got my money from me.

**Kathy,
Ohio, United States**

When I began to fear the worst, I went back to Planned Parenthood where the pregnancy test confirmed that I was indeed pregnant. The Planned Parenthood worker suggested I schedule an abortion the next day as the doctor still had an opening. I remember feeling trapped and panicky as I moved into a crisis mode. The PP worker assured me that I could talk to a "counselor" the next day about my concerns. It also quickly became clear that my relationship itself hung in the balance if I did not "choose" abortion. Again, the standard party line given by pro-choice advocates as to why women get abortions are not even close. In underscoring the dynamics of "choice" surrounding abortion, Frederica Mathewes-Green captured the truth: "Women don't want an abortion like they want an ice cream cone or a Porsche. They want an abortion like an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg to escape. Abortion is a tragic attempt to escape a desperate situation by an act of violence and self-loss." By the time I arrived at the clinic the next morning, I was paralyzed with fear. My "counselor"

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collected my \$200 cash, asked a few questions, and assured me everything would be fine. She reiterated that this was a good choice for me as an unmarried woman only six or seven weeks pregnant. My “counseling” session lasted less than five minutes. No one ever said a word to me that day about the baby and I quickly found myself in a room with a doctor I’d never met, who knew nothing about me (including my complete medical history, I might add), and who said nothing to me. It had barely been 24 hours between the time I found out I was pregnant and the time my first child was destroyed. I was numb.

However, I also felt a huge surge of relief that no one would find out I’d ever been pregnant. Yet just one week later, I was in the hospital for surgery to correct the complications from my “safe and legal” earlier abortion. No one ever told me about that risk.

Nine years later I ended up with a tubal pregnancy that was rupturing, which obviously not only ended that baby’s life, but also resulted in the removal of my fallopian tube and my ovary. No one ever told me about that risk either.

Mary, Virginia, United States

My sister took me to a clinic and dropped me off. I was so scared. I checked in and did as they asked. I filled out the paperwork and then sat there all alone. I was called into a treatment room and told to undress and get on the cold table. In a few minutes, a doctor came in to examine me. He was very rough. It was very uncomfortable due to the severity of the STD. As he jammed his hand into my vagina, I tightened up. He

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then meanly said to me, "You have a bad attitude. I'm here to help you." As he walked to the door he turned to me and said, "Do you want my help or not?" So I said, "Yes. I need your help." He completed the examination and I laid as still as I could without moving until he was done. He then just walked out the door and slammed it behind him.

I got up and put my clothes on. I was told to go sit in the hallway on a wooden bench. They informed me that I would be able to speak with a counselor, before I made the decision, in the event I wanted to change my mind. As I sat there, I was convinced that this was not what I wanted to do. I was going to tell the counselor just as soon as I could that this was NOT what I wanted to do. In what seemed to be an eternity, I was called by a nurse into an exam room. They put me on the table and began to start the procedure. I recall, that as I lay there, I could hear the nurses talking. One of them said, "Who is this?" And the other nurse said, "Mary J-s." She replied, "There must be two Mary J-s here." The other replied, "Oh well, just go ahead and do it while she's here."

Lena, Florida, United States

I remember feeling horrible immediately. The pain was in my lower body and it was very intense. A short while later, I was escorted to the back door which led to the parking lot. My mother waited for me there. As I rode in the passenger seat of my mother's car out of the driveway, I recall making eye contact with a person who was holding a sign and walking in front of the abortion mill. It was too late for me and for my child.

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One week later, I found myself in no better condition. I had been running a serious fever of nearly 105 degrees for almost the entire week. I was living at my boyfriend's parents' home at the time, and his mother took notice of my condition. Thanks to her persistence, I finally allowed her to take me to a walk-in clinic. She was sure there was something really wrong with me.

At the clinic, there was panic and I was immediately taken to the hospital.

Eight days after having my abortion, I was admitted to the hospital and put in the intensive care unit. During my first two days there, I worsened, despite broad spectrum IV antibiotics. My family was told that I could die.

My body was shutting down, due to major infection from septic abortion. I had acute pyelonephritis, sepsis, pneumonia and presumed congestive heart failure.

I was attached to a heart machine and I had a tube in my throat so I could breathe.

Because my condition was getting worse and worse, I had to have emergency surgery in the middle of the night. My body was so swollen, I was told that I looked like I was nine months pregnant. During my emergency surgery, 300 cc of bloody peritoneal fluid was removed from my body. How I survived this is truly a miracle.

**Billie,
California, United States**

My husband did not make any objections and in fact set the appointment up at Planned Parenthood. We went in the afternoon because it was more efficient for him to be able to work beforehand.

I will never forget how humiliated I felt and how the person (I assume she was a nurse) made me feel. When she was examining me she said, "You're not pregnant"! I just looked at her with disbelief. She was rough in her behavior and really lacked as a "professional." I remember saying that I was pregnant and she should have someone else check. She did and they concurred with me.

I was told to go into the other room and change my clothes and they gave me a pill to take. Vaguely, I remember going into another room and getting onto [a] table much like an exam table. The doctor made comment on my name and that it reminded him of a dancer. It was, I thought in poor taste especially since I was in the position that I was in. I remember very little from that point with the exception of what I thought was a dream.

**Diana,
Pennsylvania, United States**

The second abortion was in a clinic in Indianapolis and I was awake throughout. I can still hear that awful sucking machine and the doctor's voice saying, "I'm trying to get it all." IT? IT? I felt a deep agony overcome me. That "IT" was my baby.

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I was never more alone or scared in my life. All the women in the recovery area were very quiet, except one. The woman was crying loudly and I will remember her to my dying day. Many of the women refused to look at anyone. I was feeling numb and detached by now. I felt like I was watching a horror show.

My physical symptoms began at once; I couldn't stop vomiting or bleeding for a long time. I had infection after infection. I kept thinking why didn't someone tell me what would happen to me. I was not told that I would be so ill. It was ongoing vomiting and bleeding for a month. I felt like I was dying.

The months following the abortion were very traumatic. I had infection after infection in my womb. It was ongoing and never ending illness.