

No. 19-1392

In the
Supreme Court of the United States

THOMAS E. DOBBS, STATE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, *et al.*,
Petitioners,

v.

JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION, *et al.*,
Respondents.

**On Writ of Certiorari to the United States
Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit**

**BRIEF OF *AMICUS CURIAE*
PRIESTS FOR LIFE
SUPPORTING PETITIONERS**

DAVID YERUSHALMI
American Freedom Law Center
2020 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 189
Washington, D.C. 20006
(646) 262-0500

ROBERT JOSEPH MUISE
Counsel of Record
American Freedom Law Center
P.O. Box 131098
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113
(734) 635-3756
rmuise@americanfreedomlawcenter.org

Counsel for Amicus Curiae

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**STATEMENT OF IDENTITY AND INTEREST
OF *AMICUS CURIAE* PRIESTS FOR LIFE**

Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 37, *Amicus Curiae* Priests for Life respectfully submits this brief in support of petitioners, urging the Court to resolve the question presented so as to protect human life.¹

Priests for Life is a pro-life organization created to identify, educate, network, encourage, and mobilize Catholic and other Christian clergy and lay people to advance the protection of unborn children from abortion through prayer, education, preaching, teaching, publishing, and other religious methodologies.

To promote its mission, Priests for Life, along with Anglicans for Life, have developed the Silent No More Awareness Campaign (“Silent No More”).

Silent No More is a joint project whereby Christians make the public aware of the devastation abortion brings to women and men. The campaign seeks to expose and heal the secrecy and silence surrounding the emotional and physical pain of abortion.

¹ All parties have consented to the filing of this brief. Correspondence evidencing such consent has been filed with the Clerk of the Court. Priests for Life further states that no counsel for any party authored this brief in whole or in part, and no counsel or party made a monetary contribution intended to fund the preparation or submission of this brief. No person other than Priests for Life, its members, or its counsel made a monetary contribution to the preparation or submission of this brief.

The specific goals of Silent No More are as follows:

- To reach out to people hurt after abortion, encouraging them to attend abortion after-care programs.
- To invite those who are ready to break the silence by speaking the truth about abortion's negative consequences and the path to healing.
- To educate the public that abortion is harmful emotionally, physically, and spiritually to women, men, and families, so that it becomes unacceptable for anyone to recommend abortion as a "fix" for a problem pregnancy.
- To share the personal testimonies of hurt and healing to help others avoid the injury and pain caused by abortion.

It is through this Brandeis-style brief that Priests for Life presents to this Court the compelling testimonies of individuals who have been harmed by the adverse effects of abortion.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

Abortion is a violent act that results in the death of an innocent human life and that substantially harms women. Mississippi has a compelling interest to mitigate or even prevent this harm.

The question presented is "[w]hether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional." Priests for Life urges the Court to answer the question in the negative, thereby

permitting states such as Mississippi to regulate or prohibit pre-viability abortions.

Indeed, Priests for Life urges the Court to use this opportunity to end the charade that *Roe v. Wade* was correctly decided. This fateful decision has no legitimate foundation in law, it continues to tear at the fabric of our nation, and it has corrupted our judicial system. It is time for it to go.

Nonetheless, Mississippi has a compelling interest to regulate or prohibit pre-viability elective abortions. While all states have this compelling interest, not every state may choose to enact laws to protect this interest. However, if Mississippi and its people, through the exercise of the state's police powers, decide to do so, they should be permitted.

Abortion is not an innocent act. Not only does it result in the death of a distinct, unique, and innocent human life (the very purpose of abortion), but it also causes substantial harm to women, as evidenced by the testimonies of women harmed by abortion attached to this brief.

ARGUMENT

I. *Roe v. Wade* Was Wrongly Decided, and It Continues to Tear at the Fabric of Our Nation and Corrupt Our Judicial System.

As Justice Thomas recently and quite appropriately noted, this Court

created the right to abortion out of whole cloth, without a shred of support from the

Constitution's text. Our abortion precedents are grievously wrong and should be overruled.

* * *

[T]he idea that the Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment understood the Due Process Clause to protect a right to abortion is farcical. *See Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. [113], at 174-175 [1973] (Rehnquist, J., dissenting). In 1868, when the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, a majority of the States and numerous Territories had laws on the books that limited (and in many cases nearly prohibited) abortion. *See id.*, at 175, n.1. It would no doubt shock the public at that time to learn that one of the new constitutional Amendments contained hidden within the interstices of its text a right to abortion. The fact that it took this Court over a century to find that right all but proves that it was more than hidden—it simply was not (and is not) there.

June Med. Servs. L.L.C. v. Russo, 140 S. Ct. 2103, 2142, 2151 (2020) (Thomas, J., dissenting).

When deciding *Roe v. Wade*, this Court infamously stated:

We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer.

Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113, 159 (1973). Consistent with this veiled philosophical pronouncement—a pronouncement grounded in secular positivism—a majority of the justices concluded that the U.S. Constitution “does not define ‘person,’” leading the Court to ultimately conclude that “the word ‘person,’ as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, does not include the unborn.” *Id.* at 158.

Remarkably, the Court dismissed the life of the unborn based on its conclusion that there is no direct textual support to conclude that this “person” is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. Yet, this same Court created a right to abortion “out of whole cloth, without a shred of support from the Constitution’s text.”

The Court’s ruling in *Roe v. Wade* is similar to how the Court had previously concluded in the infamous *Dred Scott* decision (*Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 US 393 (1857)) that people of color were not legal “persons” as a matter of federal constitutional law. Unfortunately, it took a civil war to correct this injustice.

The origins of the Court’s abortion jurisprudence illustrate how the Court manipulated the Constitution to create a “right to privacy” and then distorted this “right” to include the right to abortion.

In 1965, this Court decided that a Connecticut law forbidding the use of contraceptives by married persons was unconstitutional. In *Griswold v. State of Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), the Court held that this Connecticut law unconstitutionally intrudes upon the right of marital privacy. In doing so, the Court

found a constitutional right to privacy within the “penumbras, formed by emanations” from the Bill of Rights. *Id.* at 484. There was no clear textual basis for this new found right. However, when creating it, the Court did manage to highlight something genuine, namely the sanctity of the marital relationship which grounded this newly-minted “right to privacy.” This is what the *Griswold* Court had to say about marriage:

We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights—older than our political parties, older than our school system. Marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred. It is an association that promotes a way of life, not causes; a harmony in living, not political faiths; a bilateral loyalty, not commercial or social projects. Yet it is an association for as noble a purpose as any involved in our prior decisions.

Id. at 486.

Thus, the constitutional “right to privacy” emanated from the “sacred” and “noble” institution of marriage—a union between a husband and wife. The Court would soon cut this new found “right to privacy” from its original mooring, the sacred institution of marriage, and at a later date use it as the basis for its abortion jurisprudence.

In 1972, Justice Brennan, writing for the Court in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972), struck down a Massachusetts law that permitted married persons to obtain contraceptives but prohibited distributing

contraceptives to single persons. The Court relied on *Griswold's* right to privacy to hold that the Massachusetts law violated equal protection. This is what the Court said:

If under *Griswold* the distribution of contraceptives to married persons cannot be prohibited, a ban on distribution to unmarried persons would be equally impermissible. It is true that in *Griswold* the right of privacy in question inhered in the marital relationship. *Yet the married couple is not an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but an association of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional makeup.* If the right to privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as *the decision whether to bear or beget a child.*

Id. at 453 (emphasis added).

It should come as no surprise that *Roe v. Wade* was decided a year later.

The *Griswold* decision permitted married couples to use artificial contraception, supporting its decision on the basis that the state ought not to intrude into the bedrooms of married people. The Court was at least recognizing the fact that the conjugal act is implicit in the sacred institution of marriage. At the heart of the Court's concern—the foundation of its decision—was the protection of marriage from governmental intrusion.

With the stroke of a pen, the foundation of *Griswold* was undermined by the Court in *Eisenstadt*. It was no longer the formerly alleged sacred institution of marriage that mattered most; it was now the bold freedom of individuals to engage in contracepted sexual intercourse—whether married or not. The foundation of *Eisenstadt* was the freedom to have sex without commitment or responsibility. What's more, in order to ensure that our society could continue to have sex without commitment, it would be necessary to have a sure-fire backup for contraception. A year later, the Court decided *Roe v. Wade*.

Through its abortion jurisprudence, the Court abdicated its role as the guardian of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and took on the role as the enabler of sexual freedom by forcing every state in the Union to accept its view on morality. This is not justice; it is judicial tyranny.

Many thought that once the Court decided *Roe v. Wade* the abortion controversy would abate because the issue had been settled—the secular magisterium in the form of the high court had spoken. But the opposite is true. By ingraining this controversial procedure in the U.S. Constitution, the Court removed it from the democratic processes and thus managed to further fuel the controversy. As just one example, each January, hundreds of thousands of peaceful pro-life advocates march in Washington, D.C., praying for an end to the scourge of abortion. The national tragedy of abortion will continue to tear at the fabric of our nation so long as the Court continues the charade that *Roe v. Wade* has any legitimacy under our Constitution.

In many states, including Mississippi, the law has to engage in a form of legal gymnastics where the state recognizes the human life within the womb and affords it civil and criminal protection against harm (including homicide),² but yet has to carve out an exception if that same harm is caused by abortion. It is as if this human life no longer exists when abortion is involved. This is a tragic absurdity. Even a young child knows that when her mom is pregnant she is having a baby—a unique and distinct human life. Yet, the Court in *Roe v. Wade* had to reject this fundamental and objective reality, pretending that its rejection was based on a thorough canvassing of “those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology.” The Court should have asked the young child—her wisdom is far greater.

Unfortunately, *Roe v. Wade* has become the litmus test for one major party as to whether a person is qualified to sit on the bench as a federal judge, and at times turning the confirmation process into a “lynching” if the highly qualified candidate has a dim view of *Roe v. Wade*. CNN, *Flashback: Clarence Thomas responds to Anita Hill*, YouTube (April 13, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZURHD5BU1o8> (last visited July 9, 2021). Certain members in the U.S. Senate didn’t want to confirm Justice Thomas’s appointment to this Court because of his views on *Roe v. Wade*. It’s not a secret, and this type of

² See, e.g., Miss. Code Ann. § 11-7-13 (permitting an action for wrongful death “of any person or of any unborn quick child”); Miss. Code Ann. § 97-3-37 (proscribing homicide of an “unborn child at every stage of gestation from conception until live birth”).

“lynching”—attempts to disqualify otherwise qualified candidates for the federal bench based on the candidate’s view of abortion—routinely occurs at every level of federal judicial appointments, thereby negatively influencing our entire judicial process.

In sum, the corrupting influence of *Roe v. Wade* is far and wide. It is time for this decision to be overruled.

II. Mississippi Has a Compelling Interest to Proscribe Pre-Viability Abortions.

In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992), this Court created the “undue burden” standard to allegedly balance the competing interests at stake in the abortion context. Under that standard, a law violates the Constitution “if its purpose or effect is to place a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion before the fetus attains viability.” *Id.* at 878. The Court observed that “not all regulations must be deemed unwarranted,” *id.* at 876, and further recognized that states have a “legitimate goal of protecting the life of the unborn,” *id.* at 883. It should go without saying that a state also has a “legitimate goal” of protecting women from the harm of abortion.

The “viability rule,” however, prevents states from adequately defending maternal health and potential life. This case provides a valuable opportunity for the Court to reconsider, and potentially alter, the viability rule to allow greater protections for mothers and their developing babies.

There are significant psychological and financial burdens imposed upon individuals and families following abortion. Those who procure abortions can suffer well documented adverse consequences creating mental health risks such as anxiety disorders, depression, PTSD, suicide, and numerous addictions.

States have a compelling interest to consider the facts, especially in light of emerging evidence of the potential damage caused by abortion to a woman's future reproductive health. Indeed, immediate health risks include uterine perforation, cervical lacerations, pelvic inflammatory disease, endometritis, and death.

Rachel's Vineyard, a project of Priests for Life, is a ministry for healing after abortion. Its founders have witnessed the loss and tragedy suffered by women and men whose lives had been profoundly changed in horrific ways because of abortion. The emotional and spiritual healing program for abortion loss has spread throughout the United States and to over 80 countries. Rachel's Vineyard is facilitated in over 30 languages on every continent to help women and men process their grief and complicated emotions after abortion.

Those who help spread this program want to give others the experience of sharing the truth of what they suffered in a sacred process for grieving, reconciling, and recovery. Many were shocked once they learned they were not the only ones suffering silently from abortion. Many describe the repercussions and lifetime impact as cruel and degrading. There is grief, sadness, enormous regret, and pain. They have learned to numb themselves with alcohol and drugs. Some reenact their trauma through promiscuity and repeat abortions,

trapped in traumatic cycles of abandonment, rejection, abuse, and a sense of helplessness. Others mask their feelings through eating disorders or workaholic lifestyles as they combat depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. Others have suffered permanent physical and reproductive damage from abortion, which rendered them unable to have children in the future.

After nearly 50 years of abortion on demand, there is now a mounting body of evidence of the harm caused by abortion. The steady flow of new pro-life bills and laws indicates that the American people continue to reject the radical and extreme terms of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Many individual states, including Mississippi, have taken pivotal measures to protect human life and provide more assistance for mothers at the state level. Safe Haven laws now exist, where mothers can relinquish all responsibilities if the child is unwanted or if they are unable to raise their baby for any reason. In addition, there are scores of crisis pregnancy centers which assist pregnant woman with housing, parenting classes, baby items, and support.

Abortion can and does have a devastating impact on women and their families, in addition to ending the life of an unborn child. States like Mississippi have a compelling interest to prevent such devastating effects. However, the “viability rule” imposed by this Court prevents them from doing so. It is time for that to change.

In further support of a state’s paramount right and compelling interest to regulate or even proscribe pre-viability abortions, included in the appendix to this

brief is a sampling of the numerous testimonies of abortion victims from across the country—persons who have been harmed in a profound way by this deadly procedure.³ Priests for Life believes it is imperative that this Court hear their voices because these testimonies demonstrate that abortion is not only fatal to the unborn, it is exceedingly harmful to women. The collective voice of these victims cries out to this Court to take bold action to permit states to mitigate if not halt altogether the devastating harm caused by abortion.

CONCLUSION

The Court should reverse *Roe v. Wade*. In the alternative, the Court should end the “viability rule” and permit states, such as Mississippi, to regulate or restrict pre-viability abortions.

³ Additional testimonies of those harmed by abortion can be found at <http://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/index.aspx>.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT JOSEPH MUISE

Counsel of Record

American Freedom Law Center

P.O. Box 131098

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113

(734) 635-3756

rmuise@americanfreedomlawcenter.org

DAVID YERUSHALMI

American Freedom Law Center

2020 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Suite 189

Washington, D.C. 20006

(646) 262-0500

Counsel for Amicus Curiae

Priests for Life

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SILENT NO MORE TESTIMONIES

Laura

My counselor said that my parents never needed to know. That was the extent of the “counseling” I received. I was seventeen in 1983, the summer before I was to head off for college. My boyfriend drove me to the “hood” where the Planned Parenthood clinic always is. It was many years before I realized that I’d been lied to and that what I aborted was my child NOT just a clump of cells. I was reckless, I got pregnant and I murdered my child so as to not affect my future. I am now 55 years old and I have mourned that decision for nearly 30 years. The feelings of guilt and pain have lessened over time but occasionally they boil over. I just hope one day I will meet my child face to face and be able to apologize, to ask for forgiveness.

May God forgive me and all those who mourn, and have mourned for decades over the loss of their child because of the lies of the abortion industry.

Shelly

In the past several months, I had noticed that it didn’t matter where I went or what I did, everything hurt so much! So I started praying about it. Lo and behold, it wasn’t very long before the door opened, after 34 years of me trying to cover my shame of my abortion with self-righteousness. I was made aware of a counseling program that was stated to bring healing from having an abortion.

Just to catch you up a little. When I was around 17, I made some horrible choices, which involved fornication,

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and I ended up getting pregnant. I really wanted to finish college. I was so embarrassed that it happened to me. So I lied to get the money for the abortion, I found someone who would take me, I ate ramen noodles for probably a month, and I had an abortion. I thought it was a choice, that it was okay. I thought then that I had the right to make that choice. I didn't fully understand that there was actually a baby.

The experience at the abortion clinic was very cold. They immediately put me on birth control before the abortion, which I was not comfortable with. They told me it would be quick and if there were any complications it would cost more money which I had brought. I remember them doing the procedure, and it started hurting horribly. They knocked me out with something and then I remember waking up and them telling me it didn't go as expected, or something like that. I felt horrible; I was so empty and all I wanted to do was cry. And I didn't want to talk to the person that had brought me. I just wanted to go back to my dorm room and be alone. I know that at some point after that I did ask Jesus to forgive me for my sin of abortion along with all my other sins. I rededicated my life to Christ just months later.

It took me awhile to get away from the life of promiscuity. But I got back into a church, hung with Christian people, and started growing in my Christian walk again. I asked a Christian sister to pray with me for a Christian husband. And so we prayed in the park. God brought me a Christian husband. I asked for a Christian man who wore blue jeans and t-shirts, because I lived in the city and was around men in suits

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and strong-smelling cologne. Anyway, in God's grace, I have a Christian husband and three grown children who love the Lord. But it's not as easy as all of that. Along the path of these 34 years, I have struggled with panic attacks, anxiety attacks, being obsessive over certain areas of my life, and addictions to exercise. I had a huge tumor removed from my abdomen (thankfully not cancerous) and have had trouble eating a variety of foods. I have had nightmares and hardly any people in my life. I quit 30 jobs and left many churches.

I found help and forgiveness through Healing Hearts Ministry. It was not an easy process to walk through. In the beginning, when I found I was hurting no matter what I did, I didn't know it was because of my abortion. But God showed me what I had done, that I had killed my baby, and that I had to take ownership of doing that myself and quit blaming everyone else. That's what I had done—blamed everyone else and everything else. I've tried really hard not to do that in my testimony, because I know that is the beginning of my healing. I lied for the money, I called the abortion clinic, and I found the person to take me even though it was more than two hours away. I walked through the doors at the abortion clinic, I climbed up on that table, and I allowed them to kill my baby. God showed me in His Word that what I had done was an abomination to Him. One of the seven things God hates is shedding of innocent blood. One of the biggest things I learned is that my baby deserved to be protected, and I failed to do that, and I failed God miserably in this also. I had the opportunity to wail, cry, and lament the loss and death of my baby. I

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learned that, in my heart, I knew that my baby had died, and I was so sad. I had the chance to grieve my baby's death.

Then, God showed me that this is why He had the amazing plan to send His Son to die on the cross, that horribly agonizing death, for me, for my sins of abortion, fornication, lying, and all the rest. But by faith I had to confess my sin of abortion, fornication, lying and all the rest and also to accept His forgiveness for my sins. Jesus has forgiven me and has also covered my shame with His blood. In the first place I had no idea what I had done when I had my abortion, that I killed my baby and that I had grieved God so much! I believe God wanted me to go deeper with Him on this because all I had been saying all these years was, "Dear Jesus, forgive me for all my sins. In Jesus' Precious Name I Pray, Amen—not realizing I had killed a human being and grieved my Heavenly Father in the greatest imaginable way. At every point in this counseling process, I have cried out to My God and said, if it were possible, I would go back and do it different, God. I would go back and, after I knew I was pregnant, I would cry out to God and say, "Dear God, I am pregnant, and I don't know what to do. Please help me? Please show me what to do to keep my baby." Now, I know God would have provided a way. But I can't go back. I can only go forward.

Then in the counseling, I have had the opportunity to name the people, list the offense, and forgive all those people who played a part in my life during before and after the abortion. I've also had the opportunity to go to those people who I have offended and ask them to

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forgive me. This was huge, and it was possibly the hardest part. I went around this step for a few weeks and then went back and did it right and so glad that I did. The love that God could flow through both sides, and when I asked for forgiveness, it was awesome. I asked for forgiveness knowing that I might not get the same response from them. That wasn't what mattered. What mattered was my obedience to God. God asks me to forgive others in the same way that He has forgiven me and solely because He has forgiven me. They don't deserve it, and it doesn't let them off the hook with God. It clears up my relationship with my God. I learned how to pray for my enemies on a daily basis and am continuing to do so. I learned that I had had so much bitterness and how to take it to God and let it go. And I've learned that when I get upset or angry, on the same day, to take it to God, to not let the sun go down on my wrath so that the root of bitterness cannot take hold. I learned not to beg people to be in my life. I am worth more than that.

God has opened up a door for me to have a job where I can minister to others. It doesn't pay much, and it's a difficult job. I believe it's His will for me. In the past I have quit every job I have started usually within six months. I am praying that Jesus will give me the strength now to do this job until I can no longer work anymore.

God has shown me that I have no place in judging others anymore. There are hardly any people who have done something as bad as I have. I've been forgiven, but there isn't any one worse than me. I deserve nothing and need to be thankful for everything. I have

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tons of anxiety, and Jesus is teaching me to bring that to Him, to cling to Him, and He reminds me often that He is holding my right hand.

Now, whenever I have the opportunity to say to someone or to protect a little one, I speak out no matter what the cost, and say, "Protect that child." They have a right to be protected. I have been instructed to pick up my cross daily and follow Him. That is what I am trying to do in Jesus's strength. I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. I also have been taught to resist the devil, and he will flee from me and to use scripture against the devil. I need to stay in God's Word daily in order to grow in Jesus and be used by Him. And as I have gone through this counseling and have been obedient, the devil isn't happy and has bothered me more than usual. So happy to have this tool and be reminded of it. I also told the Lord many, many years ago, that I would use this part of my life for His glory and that's why I am silent no more!

Linda

I had my abortion during my 2nd or 3rd year of college (the year escapes me but the late 1970's). Partly spurred on by fear and partly spurred on by the baby's father. At the time it seemed like no big deal or so I was told. You see, it was the very early years of Roe v Wade and Planned Parenthood was gearing up into full-swing mode. That facility is still in the same general area today that was 45 years ago.

What came afterwards though – the guilt of what I had done has stayed with me ever since. Almost 45 years later and it still haunts me and still niggles in my

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brain. It never goes away. It might be buried in the recesses of my brain but it comes out at interesting times and then I wonder “what if”. Was that little one a boy or a girl? What would they be like today? Outgoing? Quiet? A doctor? A lawyer? A mom or dad? I’ll never know and never will the rest of society.

While I may not be that “angry” person who had an abortion when they were young, I do firmly believe that it has affected all areas of my life. I am very Pro-Life all these years later. BUT – I think the insecurities that I have felt my entire adult life would be different today. Would I still have some insecurities? Don’t we all? BUT – I firmly believe that they wouldn’t be as prevalent in my life.

I ROBBED that little human of its life. I MURDERED that little one with the help of Roe v Wade and Planned Parenthood. That will haunt me until the day that I die. I don’t know that I will ever forgive myself.

Lisa

I am a 53-year-old childless woman.

I was raised and spent all my adolescence (into my 30s) as “pro-choice”. I mistakenly believed the Planned Parenthood propaganda that an unborn child was just a “clump of cells” and that abortion in the early stages was the equivalent of using birth control.

I had three abortions decades ago – not once was I offered to see the ultrasound – and I can say unequivocally that they destroyed my life. After the abortions, I developed severe bipolar disorder and I have had 14 psychiatric hospitalizations as a result.

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Due to my mental instability, I have never been able to have children. I believe there is a direct link between my unresolved abortion anguish and my mental illness.

In the last few years, I discovered several abortion recovery programs which have helped me to make peace with myself after the residual trauma of the abortions.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGAL.

Lynne

In 1976, at 26 years old after years of indiscriminate sexual activity I found myself pregnant. I was one month from graduating from college, had just signed my first teaching contract and was an angry and independent feminist who would not be told what to do with my body. There was no question that I would be terminating the pregnancy.

Two weeks after I found out I was pregnant, I walked into a Planned Parenthood clinic in downtown Chicago and was told that it was a “clump of cells” that I had in my body and that they could offer me complete relief and a solution to my “problem”. I was raised by a woman who was a fierce feminist, had had three illegal abortions and wore them as a badge of honor. That and the fact that it was legal gave me complete confidence that I was making the right choice. I walked indignantly past several prolife sidewalk counselors who offered to talk with me about my choice but of course I refused to do that.

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I walked into the clinic, where I was never counseled, asked my reasons for choosing to end my pregnancy and signed a form saying I was having an abortion of my own volition. And the “clump of cells” was swept out of my body by an abortionist who patted me on the knee afterwards and told me I was “good to go”.

The guilt and horror of what I had done filled me almost immediately. I became depressed and began to abuse drugs and continue to be sexually promiscuous. In an effort to justify my choice, I became a militant pro-choice advocate. Inside I hated myself for what I had done and watched as that self loathing began to poison every part of my life. The next 5 years were a cycle of depression, grief which I felt I had no right to feel, anxiety and difficulties with relationships and intimacy.

When I became pregnant 8 years later, after having been married for two years and choosing to become pregnant, I came face to face not only with what I had done but also with the desperate need for me to deal with the emotional devastation of my abortion. After looking at an inter-uterine picture of a fetus at six weeks old – the age of the baby I aborted – the truth of what I had done was no longer possible to deny.

For the next 30 years, I embarked on a long, arduous, and painful journey of healing through a number of Bible studies, counseling and encounters with others who have healed from this devastating choice. I am forgiven and set free from the guilt of my choice to abort my child now. My passion now is to help other women – there are millions of us – who are silently and secretly dealing with the unimaginable aftermath of an

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abortion. No one told us, no one warned us, no one cared. There are millions of American women and men who have been devastated by the choice to end a life through abortion. And it is time to give them a face and a voice. These lost children were American citizens and precious creations of God, who were denied a first breath even though they were very much alive in their mothers' wombs and many would have been viable outside of the womb.

Abortion doesn't just destroy the life of a child. It destroys the lives of the women who are lied to by a culture that holds life in low esteem and is willing to sacrifice unwanted, unplanned children on the altar of convenience.

My testimony is a way that my child's life can be redeemed. And I am grateful to be able to share it, in hopes that it may help save the lives of babies . . . and that of their mothers as well.

Joi

Below is my post-abortive testimony. After suffering with low self-esteem/worth for many years, the Lord has blessed me to achieve my Doctorate degree in Christian Counseling on May 27, 2021 and now I am Dr. Joi.

I have been forgiven from what I thought was unforgivable:

At age 22, I had an abortion. I am the fifth of six children, and my parents raised us as Christians. Crushed at an early age from sexual abuse by relatives and a family friend, I felt worthless and looked for

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validation from others. At the age of 20, I met a young man who seemed to be a good person but wasn't following God. After all I had been through, I was desperate for love and affection. I became promiscuous and was soon pregnant.

I was scared to disappoint my parents, and he was adamant about aborting our child because he wanted to finish college and begin his career. A baby just didn't fit in. To please him, I let him take me to have the abortion. There was no concern for me—he just wanted it over with. Waking up after the abortion, I was crushed all over again; my heart and soul were torn to pieces. I was in shock over what I had allowed.

I received no empathy or comfort from anyone—not even my boyfriend. No hug, no nothing! I was confused, angry, and lonely. I felt low-down, and I couldn't tell anyone. I asked God to forgive me, but I couldn't forgive myself because, to me, it was unforgivable. I had suicidal thoughts and battled depression. Being raised a Christian and hearing the Scriptures from my childhood kept me from committing suicide.

By humbling myself, submitting my hurt, guilt, shame, and self-condemnation to God, receiving Biblical counseling, I can stand here today and say that God has forgiven me! God has delivered me! God has set me free! God can now use my testimony of His great healing and restoration to help others in need, as Luke 4:18 says, “. . . to heal the brokenhearted and to set the captives free . . .”.

Lori

I have never done this before so bear with me. I am a childless 54 yo married woman. I was living with a boyfriend, now ex, when I was 30 years old. We were on the verge of breaking up when I became pregnant. I was selfish, I felt as if I didn't want to be tied to him for the rest of my life and who would even want to date me when I had a child, plus how would I meet someone, having to stay home with the child all the time. I felt that I was young enough to have another child or two in the future. This never happened. I met someone when I was 40 and never used contraception and never became pregnant. I think often of the child that I killed. I cry all the time. I have never sought counseling for this, maybe it would help . . .? About a year after I was married, I found out that my husband had a child that he didn't tell me about. I opened a letter and it said he owed about 40K in back child support. I feel this is karma. But he has never met this child and never had a DNA test done. I was told back then (early 90s) that a mother could just name a father if he refused to step up, which is what my husband did. He said he listened to another girlfriend who told him do not go to court if it's not yours. So basically, he finally got a job above board and paid about \$220 a week for current and back support. Since I have found out, we have not been intimate, this was 9 years ago. I feel that I got what I deserved but my child didn't. The only way I can live with this is that I believe God lets the child be born to another family, one that wants and loves and cherishes them. I am just left to suffer. I feel as if he/she would have been a girl. I am all alone now for my parents have passed, my

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siblings have moved out of state and my friends have left me because they are all liberal and I am Conservative. My husband is an addict and does drugs now, I am depressed and anxious, I have been my whole life. I was so nonchalant about having an abortion, what was I thinking? I wasn't. I remember the doctor apologized when he did it. At the time, I thought to me but most likely it was meant to be to my baby. I wasn't given an ultrasound or given any alternative, well at 30 years old, I obviously knew my options and I chose wrong. But I feel even though someone is older, they may not have anyone to talk with or have any type of support system, I just wish I would have thought it out better. I regret it so much. The rest of my life kinda stinks but I would have done the right thing and maybe my life would be better. I never told my parents; they were devout Catholics and I was raised in this faith too. My parents were older, they had me when they were 39 and 40. I am not sure what else to say. I am still so very sad. I pray she knows that I love her.

Wendy

I had an abortion in August 1975 when I was 19 years old. I lived in a small town in Maine at home with my dad, who was verbally abusive and a heavy drinker. I was told by the clinician I could have an abortion, forget about it, and go on with my life like nothing happened. I was young and naive, so I believed her.

I was 12 weeks along, and although I had been told the baby inside me wasn't much more than a bunch of cells, deep down I knew that was untrue, and this was a little life that trusted me to protect it. It seemed easier

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not to dwell on what I thought was true, and it served my purposes to believe the clinician. However, during the abortion, with the truth ripping at my soul, I cried bitterly as I lay on the table. I believed my baby's soul was floating upward and away into the darkness of space without a mother's love and surrounded by the cold. In the days and years to come, the terrible emptiness of that thought took me to untold depths.

When the abortion was over, I asked the nurse if my baby was a boy or a girl. She answered harshly as she left the room, "How should I know? It came out in lots of little pieces." I was horrified! But the terrible deed was done, so I choked down my feelings, got up and tried to bury the truth.

I managed not to think about it some of the time, but a slow insidious grief took over. I became withdrawn. I allowed thoughts of suicide and condemnation to seep into my mind. Words like, "You don't deserve to live. You killed your own baby." The abusive words I continued to hear from my father rang truer than ever because now they validated the horrible person I had become. I hated myself. I apologized for my very existence and felt grateful that anyone would bother to house me. I thought I would be better off dead so the rest of the world would have one less burdensome mouth to feed.

Five years later I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed I gave birth to my lost baby. I was excited at the thought of seeing my baby, but before I could hold it or even see it, the doctor wrapped it up and took it away. In the dream I ran down the hall crying for my baby, but when I found it I was horrified to see the doctor

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chopping it up with a butcher knife. I awoke screaming at the doctor to stop killing my baby.

After the dream that night I lay there in the dark crying and bitterly hating the doctor. As I sorted out the memory of my dream, I was initially relieved that the nightmare was just a dream. I ached as I felt strong maternal instincts for my baby and dearly longed for it to be alive with me. But then the deep hidden truth crept in – this nightmare was a real story – the baby was real – the doctor was real. Then a powerful realization spoke directly to my soul, “The doctor didn’t kill my baby. I did.”

I cried for two days. I couldn’t get out of bed. I just cried. As I lay there alone thinking, I decided I should kill myself. If I stepped in front of a truck, I would die a messy death much like my baby did, and that’s what I deserved. Then I thought about Hell. Prior to this I didn’t think Hell existed, but now I realized there must be a Hell for people like me. If I killed myself, I would surely go there. I wanted to crawl out of my own skin and be someone or even something else. How could I run away from this? Then I thought about God. I didn’t know much about God, but I knew he was angry with me. I surely didn’t deserve anything else but death and Hell.

After the second day of crying, I mustered up enough self preservation to run away. I decided to run away from me and look for God. I hoped maybe I would be able to start a new life again somewhere where nobody knew me. Then maybe after twenty years or so God would forget what I did, and He would let me be His friend. So I grabbed a few clothes, my guitar, and

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drove away. I left what I knew behind and went looking for God.

My real mother lived five hundred miles away. Since age thirteen, I had been told by my dad that mom didn't want me. But when I got to my mother's house, she accepted me with open arms. I told her why I was there, and of my need to find God so I could find forgiveness and a reason to go on. All in all, my mother had found God several years before, and she lovingly explained the Gospel to me. Incredulous at the thought, but with great thankfulness, I accepted Jesus Christ's offer of forgiveness and salvation. Praise God!!

But the story doesn't end there. I continued to be haunted by images of what I had done to my baby. Quiet condemning thoughts crept back into my mind. I greatly feared people learning the truth. Basically, although forgiven by Jesus, I had a lot of trouble forgiving myself. I was a singer/songwriter, so people would come to hear me sing my songs about overcoming abuse and finding hope in Jesus. I would tell people the story of my life, but I could not speak to them about the abortion. I eventually put my music aside, went to school and became a nurse. As a nurse, I tried to make up for the life I took from my baby by "saving" the lives of others. But the more I tried to make up for my mistake, the more hopeless I became. The more I strived to do the right thing, the more I feared making a mistake that would undo all my striving. I lived in terror of someone finding out my secret, or a patient dying on my watch. Then I would be right back where I started. Guilty of causing death.

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Worthy of death. A killer. A murderer. Condemned. Worthless.

I had another breakdown in March 2010 at my nursing job. Once again, all I could do was cry, and I had to quit my job. The untold depths of worthlessness and shame had all come flooding back. I confided to a female Christian friend about my abortion which led me to Crossroads Pregnancy Care in Quakertown, PA. There they offered a small personal Bible study specifically for post-abortive women called “Forgiven and Set Free.” This study showed me with scripture that I truly am loved and forgiven by God – even for the abortion. But more so, it showed me in the Bible that I can be confident my baby is safe. My baby is no longer a soul floating out in cold, dark space with no love. My baby is in heaven in very warm and loving arms. My baby doesn’t hate me or condemn me. Neither does Jesus. Actually, I can now say, “I LOVE MY BABY!” I want to shout it from the rooftops that, “I LOVE MY BABY!” You see, I needed to finish the healing by understanding that my baby is ok too, and I’m allowed to love my baby. It is a natural mother’s response to love her baby. To kill my own baby and then ignore that I killed it was completely against every maternal instinct God had ever given me. I couldn’t be healed if I couldn’t reconcile the whole thing with not only myself and God, but also with my baby.

Now I understand Jesus indeed has taken away every bit of my condemnation and sin. Now I can say with confidence, I am healed and forgiven. Now I know my baby is safe and loved. It took thirty-five years of my life to reconcile that one foolish mistake. Remember

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the abortion lie that promised to help me “forget about my baby and go on with my life like nothing happened?” After thirty-five gut wrenching years, I can go on only because I found forgiveness and peace through Jesus Christ who helped me face the truth of what I did to my poor beautiful little baby – not the lie that pretends my baby was a nothing. Now I spend my time in prisons, rehabs, crisis pregnancy centers, churches and one-on-one counseling sessions working through the Bible helping other women heal from their abortions. I sing songs about healing, and I tell my whole story . . . including the abortion story. Because of God’s grace, and His grace alone, I am given the privilege to meet other women in their own struggle with abortion. Then I can show them the beautiful complete healing available to them through the love of Jesus Christ.

Diane

In 1975 when I found out I was pregnant, I was jubilant. I told my husband who is now deceased. He was most enthused as was our little boy who was 4 years old.

However, we were involved with a treacherous cult. Through threats and intimidation and all-night ego stripping sessions, they swayed my husband to turn against me. They forced their will on me and on April 14, 1975 I was brought to a PP facility.

My child was forcibly torn out of me. Lilly was 10 weeks in my womb. Because Roe v Wade made abortion legal, the cult was given free reign. I was a

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top fund raiser for the cult and they could not afford to allow my pregnancy.

If only one person had come forward to help me, I possibly could have had the courage to save Lilly.

Having been forced to abort my child I hope to be a compassionate voice to ask that woman "Have you taken the time to appreciate how this one decision will impact the rest of your life?"

Here now 46 years later I continue to grieve. What took 10 minutes has cost me a lifetime of tears. I have been treated for PTSD. But participating in a scripture-based post abortion healing program is what has allowed me to forgive myself. If God forgives me, I also must forgive.

Kim

I am 55 years old and still emotionally pained by the memory of abortion. I actually had 2.

At 19, having never had sex before, a boyfriend at the time tricked me into having sex. I was young, stupid and had no idea what happened. I was absolutely shocked to discover I was pregnant. I told no one but him. I found a facility, drove myself. I cried inconsolably. The nurse told me several times, I didn't have to go through with it I did. I still recall the music playing and cannot stand to hear it. . . Several years later I found myself pregnant again, but I had every intention of having the child. A family member found out and strongly suggested I abort. I conceded. I was 16 weeks, and it was a very painful procedure. Afterwards I went into a very deep depression, with

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guilt and shame that I found myself in this position. I still suffer from the emotional pain of the decision to abort 2 babies.

I was so clueless of the residual effects. The pain is still very present. I struggle with the guilt and shame . . . We have to talk to young adults about abstaining until marriage and the heavy petting should also be talked about and advised against.

Dora

Thank you for this opportunity to share my story in hopes the Lord uses it to help others. I'm not going to sugarcoat my abortion testimony, so that people can understand the true horror of abortion . . .

I made the worst decision of my life by having an abortion at 19 (12 years ago). I was pressured into it by my former bf and 3 of his buddies. Telling me the best Choice was to abort because we were so young and unable to raise a child. I fell for the pressure and fell for the lies. I remember being so scared and confused. I felt completely alone. My ex made an appointment and I went to planned parenthood by myself (he had to work). I took the first dose of pills there (first set of pills that stops the baby from growing, doesn't actually abort the baby yet) and I immediately regretted my decision. In tears, I asked the nurse if I could take back my decision. I told her I wasn't sure if I could go through with it. She encouraged me to continue with the abortion otherwise my baby could have severe damages and disabilities. I couldn't think I could live with myself to see my baby suffer because of my decision (looking back now I would have done whatever

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it took to save my baby) but once again my fear kicked in. Making me choose to continue.

I went back to my ex's apartment and waited for the time to take my second dose. The dose that actually causes the abortion. I remember sitting on the couch around my ex and his friends watching tv in complete numbness. Going over in my head the decision I had made and the depression that was already crippling my heart.

It was time for me to take the last dose. As I put the pills in my mouth and let them dissolve within 10 minutes, I started to feel intense cramps. When the cramps became unbearable, I made my way to the bathroom. I locked the door and experienced the most severe pain I had ever felt in my life. I sat on the toilet and bent over in pain. Full blown contractions which I was never warned or informed about by the nurses. I wanted to scream but my ex and his friends were right outside the door in the living room watching tv (it was a small apartment). I grabbed a towel to bite on, in order to keep from screaming and was nearly passing out. As I got up, I saw blood everywhere. I saw parts of my baby images I will never be able to erase. I fell to my knees in pain and was blacking out. Concerned that the guys would see all the blood and clumps, I got on my knees and cleaned it up. (If y'all ever saw the movie "Unplanned", that whole bathroom scene was so honest and real to what I experienced. It was not at all exaggerated.) As soon as I left the bathroom I was about to faint when my ex helped me to bed.

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The next two weeks was nothing but a blur. All I remember doing was laying in bed to sleep and cry. I didn't eat, I didn't shower. I didn't answer phone calls, I didn't go to school or work. I didn't want to leave bed. I wasn't even planning to go to my check up at planned parenthood, but my ex told me I should. I went by myself for the check up (once again he was working). They told me the abortion wasn't successful; that parts of my baby were still inside of me. The pill didn't expel everything. I had to have an emergency D&C. The nurse sent me immediately to a room for the procedure and all I could hear were women screaming from the hallways. It sounded like a torture house. I was so numb on all the drugs they gave me. I asked for a double dose of the anxiety pills and they gladly gave them to me.

As I walked into the room, I saw a table full of surgical instruments still full of blood. They had accidentally sent me to a room without cleaning up first. The head nurse seemed really upset that I saw it (I know now it is unethical for a patient to see that) but at that moment I was way too drugged to care.

As they performed the D&C I couldn't help but think my baby was a fighter. The guilt was crippling every fiber of my being and I was just waiting for the second to end it and go back home to lay in bed. Once the procedure was done, I called my ex to pick me up. When I left the clinic there were protestors outside. The only sign I was able to read was one that said "Abortion is murder. You're going to Hell". I felt so condemned. I felt like Hell was where I deserved to go.

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The next 6 months of my life was pure darkness. Pure depression. I started drinking heavily and smoking weed everyday to escape. I would often cut myself with razors to release the pain I had inside. I remember one night I wrote out my suicide letter. I wrote my goodbyes to all my loved ones. By the grace of God, as I wrote my mom my goodbye, I couldn't bear the thought of all the pain I'd put her through. So only because of that, I didn't go through with it. I accumulated so much debt during this time because I didn't work. I dropped out of nursing school. I hardly ate. I went down to 110 lbs. and I'm 5'9 in height. I didn't visit my family or see friends. All I did was consume myself in the bed and cling to my bf. The abortion caused several ovarian cysts and also resulted in endometriosis. Both of which I was diagnosed with and underwent surgeries for within 1-2 years of having an abortion. I was also diagnosed with anxiety and panic disorder within a year of my abortion. Dealing with daily panic attacks that had me feeling like I was going to die.

My ex and I inevitably broke up. And I spent many years living in self destruction because of my abortion. Until I found Christ. Christ truly healed me and restored me. Although I will have to forever live with my decision and mourn the loss of my baby, I know I am forgiven . . . and after 10 years I have learned to forgive myself.

I share this because abortion is so evil in its core. What it does to the innocent, and what it does to women is very real. Society can act like it's a compassionate decision and a woman's right all they

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want . . . but as soon as they convince you to abort, they leave you completely alone in your brokenness to figure it all out.

Abortion is NOT the easy way out. It is NOT a compassionate thing to do. It will forever leave a deep wound in your life.

If you have had an abortion, please know God forgives you! Jesus can heal you and restore you. He can turn your ashes to beauty and you can help save many lives and save many women from making the biggest mistake they'll ever make.

If you read my whole testimony, thank you so much. Praise Jesus for forgiveness He freely gives!! I am now clean and sober, married with two beautiful baby boys!

Karen

I grew up as an only child, very close to my mother. She was always there for me when I was young – when my alcoholic father would ignore me or be abusive, when kids at school would tease me for being shy and awkward . . . I could always count on her. I didn't realize the extent of her enabling my father or how severely dysfunctional our small family was, I just knew I loved her! I thought all the time she spent with me was so special; later I found out she was just trying to spend as little time as possible with my father.

The constant teasing in school made me skip classes when I got old enough to be able to do so. When I was 17, I met a boy who was a little older, already graduated from a different school. He didn't know that I was teased all the time, or that I didn't have many

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friends. After dating for awhile and falling in love, I became pregnant.

I was so excited at the thought of having a baby! Finally, I felt like I had a purpose in life- to be a mom! And I would have someone to love so much! I dreamed of being a wonderful mom like I believed my own mom was. Abortion never entered my mind. I went to the doctor myself, filled my prescription for prenatal vitamins, and bought maternity clothes. I couldn't wait to tell My boyfriend I was pregnant, but his reaction surprised me.

He was indifferent to the pregnancy- it didn't seem to affect him one way or the other. Telling my mother was a very different story.

I imagined she'd be disappointed because I knew being pregnant at 17 wasn't the ideal situation, but I never expected her to respond the way she did. The loving mother I thought I knew was gone. She just kept repeating, "you know what you have to do". There was no hugging or consoling. No understanding. She never asked how I felt or what I wanted. She turned cold and disconnected- and gave me an ultimatum.

"If you want to live in this house, you know what you have to do!" She couldn't even bring herself to say the word abortion- how could she expect me to HAVE one?

I told her no. I cried. I begged her. She would not change her mind. My dad overheard us in the kitchen. He swore, grabbed his keys, slammed the door, and left to go drinking. He never said a word to me about it again, ever.

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My boyfriend's parents did not want me to have the baby. They did not care that my mother was forcing an abortion. The few friends that I did have couldn't help. I had no other family to help me. No where to go. I felt trapped. I kept thinking my mother was just mad, that she'd come around and see that this could work out, that abortion wasn't the answer- but that never happened.

My abortion appointment was in 2 weeks. I thought for sure she would change her mind by then.

I talked to my baby every night, and told it that everything would be okay. I said I would find a way to make everything work out. I couldn't wait to be a mom and was so hopeful.

I just needed to make my own mom see that things could work out, but I couldn't convince her. No matter how much I begged her not to make me do it, she wouldn't change her mind.

The day of the abortion, I imagined she'd change her mind when we got to the clinic. She'd see that what she was doing was hurting me, and my baby- her grandchild! I thought she would say, "it's ok, you don't have to do this. Everything will be ok. I love you".

Instead, she drove me there and never did anything close to that. Even after I got into the room and put that gown on and got up on the table, I expected her to come into the room and say "stop!"

And take me home.

But she never did.

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Instead, it was me saying “stop!”

And crying, squeezing the nurse’s hand so hard I was probably breaking it, and hearing the doctor say “no, it’s too late we can’t stop, we’ve already started and once we start, we can’t stop. Hold still.” The doctor sounded cold, mean, and in a hurry to do his job.

I asked to be awake for the abortion because I was too afraid to be put to sleep. I thought for sure God would not let me wake up for what I had done.

My heart was ripped out by my own mother.

And my baby was ripped out of me by her too . . . and by the doctor (whoever he was) who was just trying to get through his “procedure”.

I instantly felt regret and shame. Could I have done more? Was there some other way I could have saved my baby? I wanted my baby. How could I ever love my mother again after doing this to me? How could she do this to us?

After the abortion, I ran away, began drinking, and engaged in dangerous behaviors. Hitchhiking, solicitation, associating with “the wrong crowd”. I moved from house to house, staying with whomever would let me live at their place. I hated myself. I didn’t care if I got hurt or even died. I just wanted to stop hurting and didn’t know how.

A year later, I met an older man and started to date him. It had been so long since I felt that someone cared for me. I felt hopeful, and began taking better care of myself. Shortly afterwards, I became pregnant again.

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He then told me he was married, and stopped seeing me.

I was so young and naive. How could this man who I trusted just disappear? We were going to have a baby! He didn't care. I had no real job, no stable place to live. No friends that could help me. All I knew was that I couldn't have another abortion. I felt like I had no choice but to go back home and ask my mother to help me. I thought she would have to understand that I couldn't do that again, that having the abortion hurt me so bad . . . she would see that this could be a chance to make things right . . . we used to be so close . . . we could make things work!

But again, I was wrong. "If you want to come home, you know what you have to do" was all I heard. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe I had to choose between my own mother loving me and my baby. But I was scared, and I picked my mother.

She drove me back to the same clinic, and I had the second abortion. This time I asked to be put to sleep because I didn't care if I woke up or not. I hated myself that much.

That was 36 years ago. The two abortions that I had robbed me of so many things-my mental health, the ability to be a happy, loving mother to the three children I would later be lucky enough to have, and a real, meaningful relationship with my mother. She is 83 now. At a time that we should be close, the memories of what happened continue to prevent me from being close to her.

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Some counselors have told me that she was manipulative and abusive, and that I probably could never have had the loving relationship that I imagined we once had.

Others said she was just doing what she thought was the best for me, and I should understand that.

Here's what I know – the relationship I have with my mother has been a “fake” one since 1984. Any expressions of happiness or love always felt forced and not genuine, because there was ALWAYS a feeling of resentment behind them. It's an all-consuming feeling, so heavy you can never escape it. Any moments of happiness that I did have felt “stolen”, like I didn't deserve them.

I wonder what I would have been like if I had never had the abortions. If I didn't have to “pretend” all the time. If every time I said “I love you” out loud to my mother, it wasn't followed by a voice in my head that said, “but I hate you for what you did to me.”

I'm still struggling to forgive her after all of these years. I'm not there yet. I miss my babies. EVERY. SINGLE. DAY.

My three children are all grown. The fact that I wasn't mentally healthy didn't escape them, but they don't know why. I've never told them about the siblings they could have had.

My advice to any mother who is thinking of forcing an abortion on their daughter- don't do it. You are not only sacrificing your own grandchild, but your relationship with your daughter as well. She will not forget it.

Sue

I WILL BE SILENT NO MORE.

Growing up, for me, was filled with uncertainty of who I was and why did God save me? I was born dead and six weeks early.

My life included verbal abuse, satanic rituals, abuse from the church, sexual and physical abuse, alcoholism, mental illness, an absent father, divorce, and abandonment. I longed for attention, approval, and love. Mostly love.

I moved from Washington to San Diego, met a guy who I believed was “Mr. Right”. He seemed so perfect. I believed we were truly in love. We had been dating for about a year, I became pregnant. I was thrilled! I could not wait to share this good news with him! We were going to have a child between the two of us, a child out of love.

He was furious with this news yelling at me “how could this have happened”? You told me you were on the pill. I felt it was all my fault. Take care of it, he said. He wrote me a check; I tore it up.

I shared this with a few close friends. All I heard was, “how can you have another child”? You are not married; how will you support two children? Your life will be so much better if you have an abortion. You are young and can always have children.

I wanted this baby, with all my heart. I was devastated by what I was hearing. I thought the father would change his mind, he did not. He stayed firm

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with his decision. I had no choice, I believed. I felt forced to have the abortion.

I looked up a doctor who performed abortions in the yellow pages. I had my first appointment with him. He was kind, seemed to care. He told me it was not really a baby; it was just tissue. I was 17 weeks pregnant. The day of the abortion, I was terrified. At 25, I went to the appointment alone. Once there I changed my mind. I told the nurse I did not want it done, she said I would be better off having the abortion. I was crying, asked her why she was not listening to me. I was taken to “the” room, put on their procedure table, legs strapped to stirrups. The doctor came in, asked what the problem was. The nurse told him I had changed my mind, I told him I changed my mind. He said it was too late. I was given the injection to put me out. The baby I wanted was taken from me . . .

Where was my choice, I was robbed of it. My baby was murdered with the doctor and nurse knowing full well I CHANGED MY MIND; I WANTED THIS BABY. Once in the doctor’s office/clinic, you lose all your rights. They snare you with their “feel good” lies.

Is this “Pro Choice”? They lie, making women believe they have choices. That their lives will be better for it. They hide the biggest secret, what it does to your body, to your soul, to your mind and heart.

We continued seeing each other. Shortly after my abortion, I became pregnant again, I was 26. I thought this was not possible. HOW CAN THIS BE? Birth control pills did not work. I had one abortion how could I have a second? This time I kept it to myself. I did not

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want to hear people telling me what to do. I did not want to hear how could I have let it happen again? I was forced to have the first one, I wanted to run, hide. I decided to have a D&C. No one explained the procedure, how the baby was removed.

I was filled with shame, sorrow, and sadness. My “Mr. Right”, turned into “Mr. Wrong”. How could I have done such a horrible thing, I still believed it was tissue. I believed all the lies I was told. I blocked the abortions from my mind. They were hidden deep in my soul. Never to be shared. It was bad enough to have one abortion but two . . . I was a monster.

I was reminded daily of my decisions to abort. I had a lot of problems with bleeding, cramping, and severe pain. I saw my doctor; they went for an exploratory surgery. When I woke up, my doctor informed me he had to do a COMPLETE HYSTERECTOMY. They took all the reproductive parts out of my body. I WAS 27!

The Holy Spirit was nudging me, I started searching about abortions, my soul wept, I wanted to crawl into a hole. I had learned it was more than tissue, they were formed, they were babies. All of what I was told was a lie. Procedures not explained, my choices taken away. ALL LIES.

My life was a mess. I worked 70+ hours a week. I drank until I was numb and had no memory of what I was doing. Slept with lots of guys, searching for love, and acceptance. I took drugs to keep me going and drugs to put me asleep. I tried to hide my pain, my emptiness. To cover up my inadequacy, hopelessness, and failure.

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The emptiness turned to hate. I hated me; I hated my life. I hated everything. I was an angry person. I wanted to escape the monster I believed I had become. I built a wall around me, no one was getting in.

This went on for 23 years. My silence almost destroyed me. I had become ill with mental illness, I tried to commit suicide 3 times. My body was sending all kinds of alarms. My mind shut down. My heart was empty, everything fell apart. I was in the pit of hell.

The Holy Spirit kept nudging at me I had not faced the decisions I had made years ago; the abortions were deep secrets in my mind. I was going to my grave with them.

I did not accept the forgiveness God had given me. I believed God was punishing me. I believed I was a monster.

How can God love me? How can I ever reveal what I had done? Not once, but twice? All I heard was I needed to forgive myself. NONE OF THEM KNEW MY SECRET. How can they ask me to forgive?

There are so many lies associated with abortion. It won't hurt your body; your body will be fine. It is not a baby, just tissue . . . it does not have a soul, it will not feel pain, it does not even look like a baby. If you had been born earlier abortion was illegal. You are fortunate, you have choices.

GOD kept at me; my darkness was brought to the light. The lies are gone. A lot of questions have been answered. I know where the anger came from. I know where the walls came from. I know where my inability

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to make decisions came from. I know where my inability to accept love came from. I know where my inability to give love came from. It all makes sense now.

These are lies from Satan. He wants you to believe all of it. He is on your side when you make the decision to have the abortion, making you believe you are making the right choice. But after you have the abortion, he destroys you with shame and guilt.

John 10:10 – The thief does not come except to steal, and kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

I have asked for forgiveness. I have received forgiveness. The empty hole has been filled with love. The walls came down. Jesus died on the cross so our sins would be forgiven. Jesus died on the cross so I would be forgiven, they were babies, they did have a soul, they were formed, they were life.

My babies are in heaven with Jesus. I will meet my babies one day. God has given me a special gift of seeing they are two girls, Sara Rachael and Rebecca Lynn.

I was robbed of spending time with them here on earth. They are in heaven. They do not hate me for the choices I made. I will spend eternity with them. God has that special gift for me.

I want women to know the truth. Expose all the lies. Abortion does hurt. You will not forget it. It kills. Not only the baby inside of you, but part of your soul. I

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want women to know that Satan will shame them, he will make them incapacitated with guilt.

I WILL BE SILENT NO MORE!

Psalm 30:2 Oh Lord my God, I cried out to You; and You healed me.

Carol

It is still a Vivid Memory.

1975 was the time of free love – sex and partying. I was about to graduate from college; my life finally turned around. And I was pregnant, again! I had to make a choice, and I chose to terminate the child who I thought could ruin my whole life. It was no time for a baby. The school nurse told me there was an easy solution, just go down the street to the local Planned Parenthood and have an abortion.

After 46 years it is still a vivid memory, lying on a cold table in a heartless room. A room where my child died as well as my inner self. My son Matthew was vacuumed from my womb and like a freshly cleaned carpet the footsteps of my sin were erased.

And for the outer Carol, the one that some came to know, the path that led me to murder my own child became a memory that only I shared, only I felt and only I hated. In my loneliness, in my forsaken world, I could only screech making alien noises like the born alive baby Kermit Gosnell murdered. Those who knew me at the time of my abortion forsook me – leaving me in an empty dorm room to cry for my child. The father of the baby paid his dues – taking me to dinner and

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acting like nothing had just transpired – that our child had become dust and mud in a vacuum bag to be discarded with the rest of today’s trash. After dinner, he brought me back to my dorm room and again I was forsaken, left alone with my misery. I never saw him again.

Night after night I saw the face of the nurse at Planned Parenthood who laughed at me when I started to sob upon being awakened after the abortion. She was laughing as I screamed “I want my baby back and to put it back inside me.” She even called another woman over to share in her cruel laughter. After days of crying, I decided to put this behind me and pretend like it never happened. But I secretly obsessed thinking about what this child would have been like – his personality, his looks. I wondered what, if allowed to breathe, my child would have become.

I realized I had done something awful – after that I could do nothing right. I partied hard to forget, was promiscuous, used drugs and alcohol. I felt that those I loved had forsaken me in my time of need, that the world was forsaking me and that I could no longer do anything right. The self-loathing brought me to a world of darkness. A world where love was an obsolete word and hate was the name of the game. I deserved punishment and found someone to help me in this goal. My self worth had deteriorated. I gained weight, stopped wearing make-up and did not care what I wore. My husband abused me and I deserved his abuse.

Thirty years later, in church, I begged forgiveness for my sin – but did not feel forgiven. The priest I spoke to told me to ask forgiveness of my child. Over and over,

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I asked my child to forgive me. In a vision, I saw 3 babies playing in the clouds. One turned to me and said “Hi, Mommy.” It was at this moment I knew I had been forgiven. But still I kept my dark secret telling only my children and asking them to tell no one.

At a 40 Days for Life Vigil, I saw a woman carrying a sign that said “I regret my abortion.” I regretted my abortion and wanted to carry that sign. I was convicted. On the sidewalk, I knew I had a message. I had learned the healing power of forgiveness. I am Silent No More.

Robin

My abortion story started 52 years ago, in 1970, in California. I am 69 years old and I am still haunted by my abortion. That abortion not only killed my unborn child but also destroyed my life. It's not a quick fix it's something that stays with you forever.

First, they started out with the saline procedure because I was 16 weeks along. Left in the labor room all alone for hours with no instructions and when nothing happened, they proceeded to do a D&E.

Abortion destroys every part of who women are, their self worth, causes addictions, suicide, affects every relationship they have with men, women, even their own children. The lies we tell to keep it a secret so no one will know that we had an abortion. Abortion almost destroyed my life by food addiction, sex addiction and almost divorce, but by the grace of God He saved me from the lies of the enemy and I am now set free and can now help other women be free from the bondage of abortion.

Sue Ann

In today's world, abortion is almost romanticized. We are all about a woman's choice because after all, it is her body. If this is true, then why isn't suicide or heroin okay? Suicide and heroin destroy the body. Doesn't abortion do that as well?

Even though the tiny being she is carrying is within her body, that living being is completely separate from her. When a woman who has had an abortion comes to realize this, it hits her hard. There are times when she looks in the mirror and can't believe that she destroyed another human being. She looks in the mirror and honestly hates herself. I was that woman.

I didn't think I was doing anything wrong. I was young and, at that time, didn't even know what abortion was. I found I was pregnant, and a friend told me they could do a procedure to take care of it, so I said okay. I really didn't have a clue. This was back in the 70's when abortion wasn't as widely publicized as it is today. So, I got the procedure done and three days later I ended up in the hospital because it was a botched procedure. I don't remember how I even got to the hospital, but I remember waking up and the night nurse asked someone what I was there for. When they told her, she said we just should have let her die. That was the first indication that I had done something wrong.

So, I spent the next few years believing that I was worthless. I tried to commit suicide twice, went through several abusive relationships, and didn't feel like I deserved any better. I couldn't tell anyone what happened because I was so ashamed. Finally, it got to

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the point that I knew I had to do something or I was going to end up dead. I had read about Rachel's Vineyard and how it was supposed to help women like me so I signed up for a retreat. I didn't really feel like it was going to help because I was the only one that felt like this, I was the only one in the world that killed their child, I was the only one in the world that hated themselves so what could they possibly do for me.

When I got there, it was one of the bigger ones that they had. There were 9 other women there that had abortions and come to find out, they hated themselves as well. At the end of that weekend, I came to know that God did not hate me and that I could ask for forgiveness and receive it. And that started me on the road to recovery.

And after that I kept hearing about how great it was that a woman could choose to have an abortion and I thought, they are not telling us the truth. They are not telling us how this one act can completely destroy a soul and turn life in to a living hell. What we were being told was and is our choice. Well, I am telling you, you can choose. You can choose to end a life, or you can choose to give life. To give life is God's plan; to end life is the devil's. There are so many couples that are begging for children. Carrying a child for nine months and adopting that child out to a loving couple is choosing to give life and she never has to have it on her conscience that she chose to kill someone. Having an abortion will stay with her for the rest of her life.

There have been so many women that have come to a Retreat since I started volunteering on the team and it is hard to listen to the devastation that comes through

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their stories. Because they find it hard to live with themselves knowing what they have done. It's hard to look someone in the eye and tell them it's okay when they really don't believe that it is. But I have come to believe that Jesus, through me is giving them hope. That's the main reason I'm there, to give them hope. To let them know that there is forgiveness and they don't have to go through the rest of their lives believing they are unloved. All they have to do is ask for the forgiveness that God is so ready to give.

So, I hope when you hear that abortion is a woman's choice you remember that choice has consequences. And those consequences are devastating. Because of my abortion, I had to have a hysterectomy and was never able to have any more children. I had one child before the abortion, thank God, but I always wanted at least four.

So, keep in mind that yes, it is your choice, it is your body. Your body is a gift from God to be treated with respect. He never intended for our bodies to be treated with disrespect and in today's world, that's what we seem to do.

Treat your bodies with respect and if you do find yourself pregnant treat that body with respect. You deserve to be treated with respect and so does the unborn.

Tara

2021 Testimony of an abortive mother

I was 15 and I had an abortion. I was very early in my pregnancy, the clinic I went to in Gaithersburg, MD

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made me come back because “I came in before I missed my period”. I “just knew” I was pregnant. I was terrified to tell my parents, or let anybody see me in that state. I was not thinking that there was actually a person inside me. “It” was just a blob of cells, a clump of tissue, “a spec on a thumbnail” as reported to me by one of my friend’s parents who let us use her basement as a hangout. The group I was in was a lost sort. Addicted to drugs, school skippers, rebels. Not into trouble with the law of man, but certainly in trouble with the law of God. Did we know it? No. We just hid, lied, pretended. We looked so normal.

I don’t think I attended more than a week of school in 10th grade. Nobody EVER called home. After the abortion I dropped out of school. My shame found me, not the shame of being “fat” and “caught” for having sex, but the shame of murder.

They all lied to me. The parent of the place we hung out in, the Doctor and nurse at the clinic, the lady who sat across from me at the clinic as I was seated next to another grown woman seeking abortion. She was the “counselor” that said “there are options”. But she did not tell me what they were. She did not ask if my parents knew. She didn’t know I was running as fast as I could out of trouble, and the option to tell them was unacceptable to me. It would be admitting my actions. I had sex! I was so embarrassed. Was she going to help me escape my embarrassment or not? Wasn’t that her job? I was now about 5 or 6 weeks pregnant.

Oh yes, she did her job. I was shuffled into a room and then experienced a pain, a torture, something that

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Doctor did to me . . . something that I requested. It seemed all of a sudden . . . “wrong”. What was happening to me? What was going on inside of my tummy? I did not know. They all lied to me. I lied to them. I lied to myself.

But a mother knows. I never was the same after that. I tried to end my life. I was not successful. I never saw those friends again in the same way. I do not remember having much fun anymore after that. I don't remember, but the relationships ended . . . my boyfriend, who drove me to the clinic for an abortion also suffered. He said, “you killed my baby” as he threw me to the ground and wrestled me in the throes of unbearable pain himself shortly after the abortion. They lied to him too. All of the adults that said it is a choice, a medical choice, not a life, but a thing . . . to be done away with at the wrong time of life for teens, or for the right reasons.

So what is the right reason to murder your own baby? What is your life compared to another life? Are adults that made it outside of our mother's womb more worthy of life because she was finally at the right place at the right time in HER LIFE? The place where life was once most valued is now a place of death and torture for the little one that hasn't a clue. It should be punishable by man's law, not only God's. To kill that baby at any stage is murder. I KNOW. I WAS THERE! That is my testimony.

Decades later the Lord found me. He forgave my sins, He set me on a path. To trust Him alone. God does not lie. His Son does not lie. We are all sinners, and have done horrible things because that is who we are. He

died for my sins, all of them and God raised HIM TO LIFE. I will never perish because of what God has done for me in love. My eyes have been opened. I have believed in God. Received Him and His Spirit and I have forgiven them, all of them. I have confessed my sin and sorrow to my child and held a service of remembrance for his life lost. I have healed, confessed to my parents, cried and cried, and I now wait on God. "Timothy" will never come to me, but I will go to him. The Lord has saved me and will bring me home. He will wipe all the tears away, and for the ones that are still facing death, I speak up for them. They are a unique creation, loved by God, planted in a sacred place inside of mom. They deserve our protection. God did not send His Son to condemn the world but to save those which are lost. We must come to Him and call on His name, and turn from these wicked ways. Tell others the gospel, and rejoice in His salvation as we go and sin no more.

Ken

My name is Ken. I was 23 years old, and my girlfriend/fiancé at the time was 16 weeks pregnant with our child. His name is Jacob.

One day in 2006 she woke up and wanted to abort our son. I did everything that I could to be a voice for our son, to keep him alive. But his mother continued to want an abortion. There was no need to have an abortion, my girlfriend just wanted out of the pregnancy with our son.

A friend of hers drove her to Planned Parenthood in Albuquerque. The abortion of my son was completed

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against my will. I was hurting, feeling like I didn't do enough to save my child from going through the agonizing death of abortion. Our relationship ended that day.

I was angry with God. I could not understand why He would let this happen. I started drinking heavily, to the point where I was driving home drunk, not carrying who would get hurt by my carelessness. I tried to commit suicide because I couldn't come to terms that my son was gone.

A year and a half later the friend who drove her to Planned Parenthood unknowingly walked into my place of employment and said, "I am sorry for my part in driving her to her abortion appointment." I began to heal but in silence.

I met my wife Christina in 2009, and we married in 2010. We have two sons, Aeric and Alex. I was overjoyed that God was blessing me with more children, but I was missing Jacob a lot more because I felt that he should have been here with his younger brothers. My wife has said multiple times she has adopted Jacob as her own child.

In 2016, after years of pain, I went through a healing program at Surrendered Hearts. My family and I had a wonderful birthday candlelight vigil for Jacob's 10th birthday in November 2016 which gave me healing. In November of 2018 I have attended Rachel's Vineyard healing retreat, as well. It is because of my wife and sons that I am Silent No More.

Jenny

During my second trimester ultrasound, I looked for the few fetal landmarks I knew from my first pregnancy. The spine looked symmetrical and complete, I saw a hand above the baby's head complete with fingers too tiny to count, I saw the rhythmically beating heart, and I even recognized the black circle in the middle of the abdomen that I thought was likely a fluid filled stomach. The baby would be still for a few seconds, then bounce about. I could see the outline of a brain inside the cranium, and I focused my gaze on the nose to see if there was any resemblance to my husband or to my daughter's profile. I was so relieved that in my mind we had passed another major milestone and the second half of the pregnancy countdown could begin. I imagined what it would be like to tell our two-year old the exciting news when we got home. My thoughts were interrupted by the ultrasound tech silently wiping the gel off my swollen abdomen and handing me a clean white towel. She said she would be right back with the doctor, and I wondered why, but I tried to stay calm, turning to my husband who looked worried.

The ultrasound tech did not return, but soon we were joined by a radiologist in scrubs and a doctor in a white coat.

“So, from these pictures, it looks like you're having a boy.” Without words he gestured for me to lie down, and he began to neatly tuck the white towel under the band of my underwear.

“Did you hear that? He’s a boy. You’ve got your fishing buddy,” I narrated to my husband.

The radiologist went on. “Tracy called me in to verify a few things she was seeing on the ultrasound, so I wanted to come in and do my own exam if that’s okay?”

“Of course,” my husband and I replied together as if on cue.

I knew the radiologist would be an M.D., but I squinted to confirm the letters after his name on his badge. Satisfying myself with his credentials, I watched him intently viewing the screen as he deftly rolled the ultrasound wand around my belly, stopping and pressing, then spinning the wand around from other angles as if he was guiding a figure skater across my tight skin. I looked to find excitement in Ben’s eyes. I could see him starting to process how real our baby was, and he rubbed his hands across his face and then nervously through his hair.

“Is everything alright?” my husband asked, his voice cracking the stillness in the room.

The radiologist wiped off the gel from the wand and put it back in its rubber-lined holder next to the giant keyboard.

“I’m definitely seeing some congenital abnormalities in the fetus indicative of a ventricular septal defect, likely the complete absence of an atrial septum, and a very large cyst on the right kidney.”

“What are you saying?” I reached out for Ben’s hand, and he squeezed back with damp and clammy hands, quickly letting go to point to the ultrasound monitor.

Ben stood up from his chair to lean in closer to the doctors, who were already pressed into the exam room door. It was crowded and beginning to get stuffy.

“Certainly.” The previously mute, white-coated doctor stepped forward from the corner and began the explanation, as if hearing it from him would magically make what we heard understandable.

“A cyst on the kidney is fixable, right?” I asked in the most professional manner I could find, as hysteria began to fill my gut like a leaking hot water bottle.

“Let me show you on the screen. Hang in there with me, Mrs. Harper. We’ll get through this together.” The radiologist stood up and let the doctor in white take a seat on the universal black vinyl rolling stool.

“The cyst on the kidney is large enough that it alone would be cause for concern, but we are seriously concerned with the baby’s heart.” I pulled up my maternity leggings as far as I could, sitting up to attempt some manner of dignity.

The radiologist chimed in. “If Doctor Fleming drills down in these images which greatly magnify the heart structures, we can confirm what’s called a ventricular septal defect. It’s serious on its own, but . . .”

“There’s more?” I interrupted, not meaning to, but I was beginning to sweat and feel dizzy.

“There appears to be a defect in the atrial septum as well. In fact, there is no atrial septum. It has not developed. When we see more than one serious congenital anomaly like this, it’s likely to be a genetic disorder which links the developmental problems—in this case, the kidney and the two major heart defects. We would need to consider amniocentesis to rule out the strong possibility in this case of cerebral findings—in other words, a problem with development of the head and brain.”

“I don’t understand. You just came in here and told us we are having a little boy, and the pictures I see look no different than the ultrasound of my first baby, who is healthy. She’s two, and we’re telling her today that she’s going to be a big sister.” My voice stopped itself as I choked on congestion. I hadn’t heard myself crying as I spoke, but the doctors became blurry, as my eyes flooded and betrayed me with spilling tears. The radiologist reached for the box of tissue and handed me the whole box.

I felt alone in my tears, but I looked at Ben, elbows resting on his lap as he rubbed his hands repetitively through his hair at the back of his neck. He was oddly silent.

“So, tell us how you are going to fix him. I mean, this whole building is full of neonatologists and people who do surgery on newborns, and they can even do some surgeries while the baby is still in the womb, right?”

“That’s true, both yes and no. The severity of the anomalies we’re seeing would result in multiple major

interventions and surgeries for this baby immediately in the first few hours and days of life.”

“Okay, but I’ve seen stories of babies who’ve overcome being severely premature in the NICU, and babies with stents and heart surgeries who have lived.”

“I know, and those are powerful stories. But in this case and similar cases, the outcome is almost always stillbirth or premature death typically within hours or days.”

I cried quietly. What I was hearing was too much to process, and my neck felt like it was being squeezed by an invisible boa constrictor. Ben was talking, but it sounded like he was underwater.

I’d taken to staring at the grey rubber door stop on the wall in front of me. It was as if my heartbeat just stopped. An incomprehensible freight train had collided with my family, with our dreams, with dreams for our second baby—our son. The comfort of numbness began to slide over me like an afternoon shadow, while three men discussed statistics around my abdomen, shielded by nothing but a scant paper blanket. Nothing they said registered in my mind until the doctor interrupted my shock with the words that would forever change my life.

“We recommend termination of the pregnancy, what we call therapeutic medical termination due to poor fetal prognosis.”

“I’m sorry, what are you saying?” I searched the eyes of both doctors who held my little family in the hands of their advanced degrees and clinical expertise.

“We know this is terrible to hear. I can’t imagine what you are feeling right now. This is the difficult part of our jobs. We see cases similar to this about 25% of the time, and in all cases with this combination of fetal malformations, we recommend termination. You are welcome to consult other members of our team, and we can put you in touch with a genetic counselor immediately. The best choice here is the compassionate choice.”

I looked to Ben for comfort, for anything I could hold on to. He looked lost, and the usual ruddiness had drained from his cheeks.

“We’ll give you some time, and someone will be back to check on you in a few minutes.”

The world had stopped, and we were the only two parents in it, in that room, in that Seattle skyscraper, in that moment. Two strangers had pulled the pin on a grenade over our lives.

“I need to go to the bathroom.” I gathered my belongings, handed Ben my jacket, took my purse, and closed the exam door behind me with such a slow and deliberate turn that it didn’t make a sound. Around the corner and halfway down the hall I spotted the restroom sign, and I discreetly entered, taking the same care to close the heavy door silently. I turned the sturdy steel lock, and as it clicked into place something broke inside my chest. I doubled over into the pedestal sink and sobbed in a way I never had, wishing I could throw up the lies these doctors were spewing that I couldn’t stomach as truth.

The following week we waited through the two-hour hospital pre-admit process, most of which I spent pacing or attempting to sit on one hip from the excruciating pain of the laminaria dilation process. When the pain of cramps finally arrived just an hour before surgery, it was a welcome relief because the pain was somewhat familiar from having experienced labor before. I closed my eyes there on the gurney and imagined what it should have been like— there at the same hospital where I was scheduled to deliver a healthy baby. Ben read a magazine and talked only if I drew him out, but I felt desperately alone, clutching Lily's picture I had brought to the hospital as my only comfort. In that interminable hour, I knew that collateral damage was happening to my life and to our marriage. I no longer felt like a young twenty-nine-year-old woman, and part of me wanted to close my eyes forever and just die. Holding on to the picture of my extraordinarily beautiful little girl was the only thing that kept me tethered to the earth.

A nurse finally called us to go the second stage waiting area, the last stop before the operating room, and we were shocked to be wheeled into one large room that resembled a hotel lobby. I looked around in horror to see that the anonymity of our first private room was now undeniably absent. They pushed my bed into the corner, but there were no curtains, no place to cry in secret. I hunched down in my gurney, hoping my private parts weren't on display, feeling like a wet and wounded baby bird. I tried to draw close to the angel inside of me whose life was coming to a close by our own choosing. I hurt physically and emotionally in places I didn't know could simultaneously exist. I

folded in on myself as tightly as I could against the hardness of my belly, while our son, who we had named Nathanael bounced frantically in my stomach, as if trying to tell me he was very much alive. I wanted him to keep moving, and I also wished he would stop. Finally, in desperation, I asked Ben to put his hand on my stomach.

“Make him stop kicking,” I said, as this had always worked with our first baby.

As expected, the baby stilled, but I felt I had made Ben uncomfortable. I wanted him to feel uncomfortable, to feel some piece of this visceral terror and to have some final contact with the baby, our baby. I whispered to the God to whom I’d been a stranger for so long, “Please, God. Help me.”

I tried to chat cheerfully with the nurse and anesthesiologist for distraction, but then I saw my OB-GYN in a blue scrub cap and a yellow paper gown, as his nurse helped him into extra-long surgical gloves. I knew he would never look the same to me, and I suddenly felt cold, as if looking at him was like staring down an angel of death. It took tremendous self-control to voluntarily stay on the operating table, knowing I would soon feel worse than I did before my submission to these strangers in scrubs. I started bawling, and I called out as if it would save my baby who would soon be forever out of my body and out of my protection, no longer sheltered in the safest place. In the final minutes, as panic took over, I wanted to get up and run, but there was nowhere else to be but here. The lights were so bright, but no matter how much my eyes hurt—like staring at the sun—I couldn’t look

away. It was the only pain less sharp than what I was facing.

Someone asked me for my left arm. I instinctively drew my arm back quickly, apologizing with a gentle, "I'm sorry," before surrendering my arm again. I knew once I was asleep there would be Velcro straps pinning my arm to a board, but for a few more seconds I was still free and within my legal rights to leave. It was the blue disposable shower cap pulled just over my hairline that put me over the edge, and I began to cry again, a stifled cry that turned to weeping until a stern male voice told me to stop crying or I would be too congested for the anesthesia.

"I'm sorry," I whispered again.

A nurse with kind eyes behind her mask wiped the corner of my eyes with a tissue that felt like industrial paper towels, as a disposable rubber mask that smelled like plastic cherries pressed down over my mouth and nose. Finally, the lights began to hurt less and less. The shot into the IV went directly to my primitive hindbrain where it began to hurt and sting. I cried out, "I want my baby," and then there was emptiness.

After three months of post-surgical uterine and kidney infections and intractable pain following my abortion, an ultrasound was finally ordered. In the same building where I'd faced our baby's devastating prenatal prognosis, I was told I had "POC," later explained as retained 'products of conception.' I sat stunned, staring at the white outline of my pear-shaped uterus on the ultrasound monitor, where to my horror I saw a small cluster of white lines and tiny

white dashes, and for a second, I was sure I saw vertebrae. I looked away, as I reached for the sink in the exam room to hold myself up.

“Is that it?” I asked the doctor who had overseen my ultrasound, motioning to the monitor behind her that seemed to glow in the darkened exam room. She spun around on her stool and deftly turned off the monitor button, leaving the machine to continue humming. We were both quiet. The fan was all that existed between us. I started to cry and wiped my eyes with the back of my t-shirt sleeve. She rolled toward me and handed me one, two, three tissues, jutting her hand out toward me.

I stood in stunned silence as she went on. “This is resolvable. It’s a simple D&E,” she cleared her throat realizing that she had not chosen her words well. “I mean, it is the same thing you went through before, but it will most definitely be done with guided ultrasound, and you’ll make a full recovery. You should be feeling better very soon.”

I restrained myself from sharing my internal voice with her. *Feel better? How can I feel better when I have an urn of my baby’s ashes at home that is so tiny a hummingbird would feel crowded in it? And now you’re telling me that they butchered our baby?*

My heart beat wildly out of control. She began to make her exit strategy from the room after referring to my baby as “calcified parts,” and she seemed to sense that her technical term had put her in deeper waters than her job description permitted. It was another blow, and I was sickened by the spiritual aspect of our baby not

being retrieved “whole,” of his body being further desecrated by having to be removed in two attempts. The ashes in my urn were not complete, and I knew they’d think me crazy if I asked for *the rest*. I steeled myself with the thought that I couldn’t be the only woman to endure this complication.

“I’m going to get our nurse who is good at explaining these things and can sit with you for a minute.” She stood up slowly, using her hands to press against the top of her thighs.

These things? These things actually happen enough to have a person who’s good at explaining them? I quietly wondered in my sarcastic inner voice.

“I wish I had the right thing to say, other than that you will feel better, and this will get better. Again, I’m so sorry for your loss.” She backed out of the dark room, turning up the lights on the dimmer switch, as if that might shock me back into composure.

Alone in the room I felt numb. I’d been in a room exactly like this in May when they’d told us we should end our baby’s life. *It’s the compassionate choice*, they had said. I’d spent much of my life in and out of medical centers, and for the first time I felt entitled to break the unspoken rules. I walked over to the ultrasound equipment that had been the bearer of the worst news of my life now twice. *They’re my medical records anyway*, I thought as I listened carefully for noise in the hallway in the hopes I wouldn’t be caught, and I pressed the red button on the computer monitor and paused as it changed to green.

Why are you doing this? I heard my mom whisper in my head. *Don't torture yourself.*

But I had to see it, to see what was left of him. *He was mine. He was not meant for medical waste.* I familiarized myself with the little pile of forgotten bones. I pressed my hand against the monitor over the cause of my ongoing pain and unresolved grief, now lit up in silence before me without any words needed from a medical provider.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, little one." The tears ran freely down my face, and I felt utterly alone in the world.

"God forgive me."

My body carried tremendous unresolved physical and emotional pain for two decades. Anti-inflammatories and time can heal a woman's reproductive system, but for some there is no length of time that proves an ample balm for the damage to the soul. For me, the trauma of the abortion of a wanted and loved child, drawn out by negligent medical care left indelible marks on my body, mind, and soul. These marks caused collateral damage that manifested itself in the form of a hypervigilant physical state that ultimately led to chronic insomnia, inflammation, pain, migraine, autoimmune disease, connective tissue disease, and ultimately, cancer. My behavioral health was deeply impacted by PTSD, shame, and anxiety.

This is my story—a story of a baby conceived within a marriage. A baby who would have made a two-year-old little girl a big sister. A baby onto whom hopes of saving a broken marriage were mistakenly pinned. A baby for whom a list of names was expectantly

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scribbled. A baby nourished by prenatal vitamins, preventive medical care, and good nutrition. A baby who was sung to, wanted, dreamed of, and loved. My situation may not fit society's poster story of a mother who has had an abortion, but I know I do not suffer post-abortion trauma alone.

Kathy

Scared, vulnerable, alone, and coerced by those I trusted, I chose to abort my two precious boys, Maximillian Joseph and Marcus Levi. I went to Planned Parenthood for a pregnancy test, and they sold me an abortion. The second one was just a form of birth control. Afterward, I spiraled out of control with drugs and alcohol, anything to numb the pain and reality of what I had done. The father was abusive and angry, but I still loved him, never really knowing what true love was and that it can only be found in God. I became very promiscuous, and I lost all dignity and self-respect. My soul was empty, and my spirit was gone.

I became pregnant a third time and proclaimed out loud, "It stops here." Today I have a beautiful daughter, the mother of my three awesome grandchildren. I never married the father, but I pray one day he receives the healing power of a merciful Father in heaven. I am today married 31 years to a wonderful man, although he had to endure the secondary effects of my abortions for many years. But in time God heals all wounds.

I've been to two healing retreats and have a very close relationship with Blessed Mother and God my Father.

I believe that I am to share His message of mercy and share my testimony often. I speak with my boys often, and I know I am completely forgiven. Today I live my Catholic faith to the fullest, and I thrive on the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and Daily mass and Holy Eucharist. My story continues as God reveals more. It's all in His time, and I trust in His will. I am sober 15 years from drugs, alcohol, and nicotine. I am grateful to God that I am set free from the bonds of sin. God bless!

Beverly

I want to thank God and you for the opportunity to be here today . . . to share my story, the pain, and the hope. The purpose of sharing is to let you know something about the women and men who go seek abortions . . . why we go into the doors across the street . . . what we think, what we feel and how our culture influences and misleads our thinking. I also want to share with you that hope and forgiveness are found in Christ and through a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat. The retreat is for all who are suffering from abortion.

Here's my story:

Thirty-one years ago, I was pretty sure I was pregnant. I was desperate, alone, and afraid. In my heart I didn't want an abortion, so first, I sought out another desperate means to get rid of my baby.

A friend of mine told me about a counter-culture bookstore on 15th street here in Tulsa where I could buy some herbs and get a massage that would give me a spontaneous miscarriage. When I got there, I was

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directed to a tiny upstairs room. It was totally empty with only a mattress on the floor covered by a sheet. The woman who was to massage me told me to strip from the waist down and she would be back shortly. What I went through in that room was horrifically painful. My abdomen was massaged with so much pressure, it was almost unbearable. The woman massaging me then told me which herbs to buy and I went home to take them. I was up most of the night but nothing happened.

The next day I made an appointment for a pregnancy test – this was before the at-home tests were invented – at Reproductive Services in Tulsa, which was then located at 51st and Delaware Place. When the nurse said my test was positive, I immediately asked for an appointment for an abortion before I even knew what I was saying. I was so desperate. I didn't have much money, barely enough to pay for the abortion, and no health insurance. I just didn't know how I could raise a baby then. I knew of no other options available to me.

But anyway, it was 1978, and abortion had been legal for five years. "It's my body, it's my choice!" filled the air. They said it was OK. It's legal. Do it. It's not a baby. It's just a few cells. You'll be in and out in no time. It'll all be over with and you'll have your life back.

A simple point should be made here. It's not rocket science. The Bible says Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, shortly after Jesus was conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth's child, who was to be John the Baptist, leapt in her womb for joy.

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Scripture tells us the babe leapt in her womb--the babe, not abstract fetal tissue. That doesn't leap for joy. The babe in her womb leapt for joy. Little boys and little girls leap for joy. It is a person, a human being. Not a "possible" human being--but a human being with possibilities. And if you don't think it's Biblical, there it is, right there, reality.

I put on a brave front as I entered the abortion center. I will never forget the sound of the machine the doctor used as she sucked the tiny life out of me. There was silence in the recovery room. As I looked around, there was no happiness, but tears and downcast eyes, belying any relief that was felt. It was my body and my decision . . . but I had no idea how much that decision would haunt me in years to come.

Through the years, I had a very successful career in television. I won several Emmy awards plus other distinguished honors. I was even recognized by two presidents in the oval office of the White House for my achievements in television.

But my personal life was another matter altogether. I became promiscuous, experimented with drugs and became addicted to cocaine. I suffered through two abusive marriages and subsequent divorces. I went through years of therapy for depression.

Eleven years after my abortion, I was married to my second husband and living in the Washington, D.C. area. Through my husband's work, he met Norma McCorvey – Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade – the famous court case legalizing abortion. She took refuge in our house in Rockville, Maryland right before the 1989 Pro-

Choice March on Washington. A drive-by shooting, by a radical fringe element, had sprayed her house in Texas with bullets. Norma was lucky to escape with her life.

I held Miss Norma's hand as we marched. There were thousands of us marching, from celebrities, like Whoopi Goldberg and Cybil Shepherd, or ordinary everyday men and women. There were Pro-Life people there too. They held their signs, smiling and compassionate on the sidelines as we marched by. I tried to block them from my mind. Deep down I knew they were right. Abortion hurts women. I hurt when I thought of my child and what he or she could have become. I hurt when the years passed measuring the landmarks in a child's life--the first words, the first day of school, a first date, the prom, high school graduation, college. But I buried those thoughts, the guilt, shame, and grief deep down, where they stayed for years. After all, I had gone along with the new era. I was Pro-Choice. I was caught up in the excitement of the moment. It was the nation's Capitol--and here I was with Norma McCorvey, the woman who helped make it all happen.

Through the years Miss Norma and I lost touch. Every once in a while, I'd hear or read about her, as we both went on with our lives. One day I heard on the news that Miss Norma had switched sides! She was Pro-Life! How could that be? Was this the same woman I knew? She had also converted to Catholicism. I felt abandoned, but curious. I had always been interested in the Catholic faith too, but didn't do much about it until the worst ice storm in a hundred years hit Tulsa in December of 2007. The priest from the parish across

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the street from my house knocked on my door during the power outage one Sunday night and invited me to spaghetti dinner. A generous person had donated a generator to the parish and they were spreading their good fortune to the surrounding neighbors.

To make a long story short, I was confirmed into the Catholic faith on May 25, 2008. But before my confirmation, I needed to dig up the grief, hurt and shame of my abortion. I received much needed hope and healing from the Rachel's Vineyard Ministry. At a weekend retreat, I was helped to realize that God had already forgiven me long ago. The wonderful team members at Rachel's Vineyard gave me shoulders to cry on, big hugs, and most of all the courage and grace to forgive myself.

When I get up each morning, I tell God that I'm His servant and to do with me what He wants. Who knew that through the pain of abortion and a thirty-one-year faith journey, I would be standing before you today.

Anna

My post abortion psychological trauma worsened over nearly 3 decades and adversely affected my mental, physical and spiritual health. I suffered with intrusive, torturous and unceasing thoughts perpetuated by self-unforgiveness. 50, 100, 300 times per day, I deeply lamented my child's killing, and in my mind, these and similar thoughts ruminated: "I consented to the killing of my own child", "I allowed a doctor to kill my child", "I had an abortion", "I am a murderer", "I am unforgivable", "I may go to hell". Each thought grew, brought overwhelming guilt, debilitating shame,

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extreme despair, clinical depression, hopelessness, inconsolable sorrow and perpetual torment. These thoughts infiltrated and significantly impaired every aspect of my life. Like certain medically incurable diseases which present as a singular, acute physical issue and then spread, becoming progressive, chronic, and eventually fatal, so was abortion, except for the intervening Hand of GOD.

Like an incurable systemic disease, abortion metastasized within my body and brain. Fully knowing that I could never be the same again, I travailed, becoming a mother, a nurse, a local government leader, a photographer; but, like any dying person, even amidst wonderful circumstances, I was not wonderful. I knew I was dying, an accomplice to murder. I was a murderer, and worse, I was separated from goodness, and separated from GOD.

Like an aggressive and advanced disease, my depressing thoughts were unstoppable. They grew and escalated, and if not for GOD's LOVE, would most likely have become fatal, particularly, as I faced additional life changes and challenges. These profoundly negative ideations were cognitive clinical symptoms that presented physically with clinical signs. I cried frequently and uncontrollably, feared dying, overworked myself, lost my hair, had heart palpitations and was often in a cold and profuse sweat. I was claustrophobic in even small crowds and continually hypervigilant. I had poor emotional boundaries and attached inappropriately to family, friends and acquaintances. When my sister died, I almost died too. I could not tell anyone. I could not overcome self-

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blame, nor post traumatic, selective mutism. The two friends that I acquired the courage to tell opposed abortion vehemently and withdrew from me.

Professionally, even then with almost 25 years of acute care nursing experience, I knew that my overall condition was deteriorating. I was unable to overcome neither self-blame nor traumatic, selective mutism, which in combination surely prevented me from disclosing the etiology of it all to anyone else. My abortion pain was too much, I was too far gone. In the medical field there are times when we know our patient's only hope is a miracle. There are also times that we see our dying patients given one! I was one of those dying patients and received one of those miracles, not self-help or medical care, but a real miracle from GOD! Almost healed now, most of my symptoms are decreasing; but the scarring remains for a lifetime.

On all professional accounts, I am certain that abortion is a discriminatory violation of both maternal and neonatal standards of care. When any person dies as a result of a practitioner's deliberate pharmaceutical, medical or surgical killing, the result is medical malpractice. I could never allow a patient in my care to undergo an abortion, nor permit a medical provider in my presence to perform an abortion. Morally and legally, I cannot allow anyone in my care to carry out self-harm, especially lethal self-harm, nor can I allow a practitioner to deliberately kill any of my patients, regardless of age. Abortion deliberately kills preborn persons and results in the mother's critical and permanent injury. Further, abortion is a discriminatory, ageist, medically practiced hate crime

warranting certain legal, punitive repercussions. Unchanging in medical practice is the triune constant protecting all persons right to life.

Rhiannon

I was 5 when I first saw hardcore pornography. I was playing alone in the woods near my home when I found it. I knew it was something to keep hidden but also something I wanted to keep. It permanently changed my childhood and perspective on life. I developed deep depression, suicidal ideation, and a sexualized view of nearly everything.

As a preteen, my parents divorced, I was provocative, and I was into witchcraft. As a teen, I was determined to get away with having sex and not get pregnant or get an STD. I first had the notion of only being with virgins, but as I got older, that criteria no longer needed to be met.

I was disrespectful of men; thought I was better than them and should control them. This especially applied to one boyfriend who I thought that I loved. But I really couldn't comprehend what love was.

In college, the issues I had progressed to partying and getting myself in dangerous circumstances. Until recently, I hesitated to call one particular circumstance rape. I knew what I was doing, but I didn't know what he would do and I didn't like where things headed. I was drunk and figured I put myself in that position so I had asked for it.

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Soon, I saw an ad in a local paper that a strip club was hiring. I knew that I could do that, so I took my boyfriend at the time and we checked the place out.

Shortly after that, I broke up with that boyfriend. I was also still deeply depressed. I began working at the strip club and loved it. I worked there six nights a week if I could. I drank heavily, tried drugs, and felt like I was being paid to party. My depression seemed to be gone. I still managed to keep decent grades in most of my courses, and eventually I met another guy. I moved in with him, quit college, and continued working as an exotic dancer.

My depression resurfaced, and I began romanticizing the idea of having a child. I thought having a baby would solve everything, and soon I became pregnant. Before long, I started to look more deeply at the situation I was in and realized that I didn't love my baby's father. I started despising being pregnant and looked into getting an abortion.

My mother took me to get that abortion. I was an empty shell of a person and couldn't shake the memory of the process – feeling like the life was being sucked out of me in some horrible way.

The months after my abortion, I deeply desired to die. I went back to work at the strip club and sometimes I would leave the dance floor to cry in a bed in their basement. I never thought about God until I had that abortion, the first time I remember praying I was in the basement of the strip club.

About three months later, I was pregnant again. Nothing had changed and I felt stuck in a bad

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relationship. I didn't know how to escape. I contemplated getting a second abortion, I even made the appointment. Something was different this time, and I canceled the abortion appointment. I stopped living with my boyfriend and moved in with one of the girls I had danced with.

Pregnancy was beautiful. I appreciated walking with this child within me. I tried to learn to knit but it didn't go very well. I really wanted McDonald's Happy Meals. I was also thinking that my baby would someday really want the toys from those happy meals. I was diligent about getting to doctor's appointments. One lady at the doctor's office was especially kind to me. She told me about places that could help and prayed for me and my baby. Her help and prayers made a huge impact on me.

Eventually, my friend's parents didn't want me living with her anymore and I was forced to move into my boyfriend's home again. My depression came back. I went into early labor and he took me to the hospital. My baby was born unable to cry but looked healthy. I knew something was wrong but the doctor didn't seem concerned. They kept giving her to me to be held, but I would say, 'Please take her and get her help, something is wrong.' Eventually another doctor came in and he had her moved to another hospital with a NICU. He later told me that she was turning blue by the time she got there and we were lucky she was alive. Her lungs hadn't fully developed.

I pumped milk for her and visited as often as I could. It was unbelievable the love that could be felt for that little person. Everything in my life started changing

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because of that little girl. She got to go home with me after several days. I eventually got my own apartment, I went to one of the Bible Studies the kind lady from the doctor's office invited me to, and I went back to college part time. I started going to church.

When my daughter was a toddler, I trusted in Jesus as my Savior. I wanted for her to know a different life than I had. About three months after I trusted in Christ, things started getting really bad. I ended up hospitalized for my mental illness. Some parts of my mental illness were intense fears that the child I had aborted had been condemned to a life of abuse and hell and that the nurses would gleefully try to remove my ovaries so I would never be able to be pregnant again. My recovery deeply affected my daughter, and at this time she is rarely in contact with me.

Even though we're not in touch often, I am always praying for her. I know that God can work in any situation. Jesus' love for me has helped me understand what love truly is. The walk isn't easy, but it's worth it.

Having my daughter not only taught me to value her life, but to value mine and the lives of those around me. I am so glad I chose life for her, and even though I have been far from perfect, I love her deeply.

Keasha

If only I knew then what I know now. I wish that I could rewind the hands of time to rewrite. I wish that I didn't have this lingering pain in my heart. My God, what have I done?

I can't believe that I didn't learn after the first abortion. I'm sure my file at the clinic is at least a couple inches thick. A reminder of all the lives that I chose to end. Not only my children but their children and their children. Generations of my blood shed on the operating room floor. The tiny beating hearts, the tiny fingers and toes, the tiny people that I once carried inside of me. Torn into pieces and sold for their parts.

It truly breaks my heart. Thankfully, I have been blessed to carry and birth four little boys. But I cannot lie, my heart still feels a sting at the sight of a mommy to be. Pregnant women still trigger a pain that I tried so hard to bury deep inside of me.

God is so full of mercy and He wants to heal my pain. And because of Him, I know that my babies did not die in vain. As they rest in His arms, He is preparing me to fight the fight of abolishing Roe v. Wade.

Michelle

At 22 years old I found myself pregnant and unmarried. I wanted so badly to have the baby and pictured a fairytale . . . unfortunately, the father had different ideas. He told me that he was not ready to have a baby, that if I had an abortion, we could have a baby "eventually". I gave in to his wishes and had the abortion. From that moment, I was destroyed. Four months after my abortion, I once again found myself pregnant by the same man. Not wanting to have another abortion and sure of the father's reaction to another unplanned pregnancy, I heard about an herbal tea that if ingested would cause a miscarriage, I elected to end another pregnancy. After the death of my

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second baby, I ended the relationship with their father. Unfortunately, trauma from these two decisions has left me damaged and I have spent the past 30 years grieving the losses. I have suffered emotional and relationship trauma; I have been unable to trust my husband or fully connect with him. I have kept myself guarded and blocked off emotionally, I have had flashbacks of the procedure, nightmares and sleep disturbances, emotional numbness, the inability to fully trust people, even my husband. In the past, I have turned to alcohol to numb the pain and had thoughts of suicide. I have suffered severe damage to my self esteem and think of myself as unworthy of love. I spent 28 years in denial and trying to “forget” but, my body never forgets . . . every year on the anniversary of the abortion AND on the due date, my trauma becomes overwhelming.

Deborah

Testimony one from Deborah

I had an abortion because I was nervous about being pregnant at 17, single, and because my boyfriend wanted me to have one. When I went to Planned Parenthood, the worker there told me that I wouldn't be aborting a baby, because it was nothing more than a blob of cells. She then told me that I would have to forget about school if I decided not to have an abortion. I scheduled the appointment. Because it was against the law in 1975 for a minor to get an abortion without parental consent, the woman from Planned Parenthood told me to bring a legal id from someone else, and not to tell my parents, which I did. A couple of years later,

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I was in the same situation, and had gotten another abortion.

As time went on after the abortions, I tried to hide my shame. There were physical aspects from the abortions that were bothersome, but nothing like the shame and guilt from having had the abortions, and the lies I had to tell to get the first one.

A few years later, a friend of mine brought me to the Lord, and I had accepted Christ as my Savior.

I began to see that abortion is murder, and the guilt and the shame were at its worst. Years later, images of those abortions kept coming back to me – over and over again. I realized that I had done the most awful thing I could ever do, and in the most inhumane way – I paid someone to kill my unborn baby. After that, I felt that I should suffer, and that it should hurt. I felt cheap, and unworthy – after all, I used sex for recreation; I used abortion for birth control.

Even though I didn't think that I was worthy of God's forgiveness for this, the pain was too much, and I decided to go to Him, anyway. God's love and forgiveness came, and eventually the images stopped.

A friend of mine told me about the post-abortive recovery program at Rachel's Vineyard, where I found healing. But the best was yet to come. When God forgave me, he turned the situation into something good by making me realize that I could help others who would have a choice to make, or those who have experienced the pain & suffering after an abortion as I have. That's why I am a Regional Coordinator with SNM. I became involved with pro-life groups,

participating in events such as rallies, marches, and protests that were in opposition to abortion. I realized that my shame and guilt were now gone.

The intimidation tactics of Planned Parenthood to get me to have an abortion, the abortion procedure, and the physical and emotional aftermath are too painful for any woman to have to deal with. An unborn baby is a human being, and deserves to be nurtured, and treated as such. I believe that Roe v. Wade is the worst U.S. Supreme Court decision since the Dred Scott decision. Our silence is paid for by the blood of the unborn. Silence equals acceptance. This is why I am silent no more.

Testimony Two from Deborah

I am a woman who had an abortion at a time when ultrasounds did not exist. All there was to rely on when making the decision as to whether or not to have an abortion was the information the staff of Planned Parenthood wanted to give me, as well as the information that was kept from me. I can honestly say that I wish I had been told all of the facts prior to making that decision. If I had been given a full disclosure of all the facts, I would not have suffered the emotional trauma of a decision that turned out not to be based on my own freedom of choice, but a choice based on what someone else wanted me to do.

I had an abortion because I was nervous about being pregnant at 17, single, and because my boyfriend wanted me to have one. When I went to Planned Parenthood, the worker there told me that I wouldn't be aborting a baby, because it was nothing more than

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a blob of cells with no shape or form. She then told me that it wasn't worth disappointing my parents over this because I would have to forget about school if I decided not to have an abortion. I decided at that moment to schedule an appointment for an abortion. I was told that since I was only 17 years old, I would need to bring a legal id from someone of legal age, and not to tell my parents, since at that time (1975) they could have stopped me. This was an illegal abortion. Although Planned Parenthood was aware of this, they still counseled me as they did.

During the abortion, I was numb, light-headed, and still conscious. I could hear what was going on. I heard the sound of the machine, which sounded like a vacuum cleaner, and some little cracking noises. I could also see some blood, and laid there wondering what the hell are they doing to me. Immediately after the abortion, I felt strange in that area, like that abortionist had just invaded and violated my innermost parts, and I was still bleeding.

As time went on after the abortion, I felt like I had to try and hide my shame over this. I kept hoping the bleeding and the pain would stop. I felt like there was a big hole in me, and that everything inside of me was just going to fall out. In addition to the shame, I experienced guilt for both the abortion, and the lies I had to tell in order to be able to get the abortion, physical and emotional pain.

Years later, I came across pictures of aborted babies. Thoughts of that day and procedure kept coming back to me – over and over again. I realized what the cracking noises were that I heard that day – they were

the sounds of my baby's limbs being broken and its skull being crushed. They lied when they told me that it was just a blob of cells with no shape. At that point, I realized that if I had known this back then, that I would not have, and could not have chosen abortion.

For years now, women's groups have been calling the right for a woman to have an abortion her right to freedom of choice – her right – no one else's. Anyone's right to make a decision based on their own freedom of choice has only as much validity as the representation or misrepresentation of the information presented to them. The facts were misrepresented to me when I was told by the staff at Planned Parenthood that I would not be aborting a baby, because at twelve weeks it was nothing more than a mere blob of cells with no shape or form. Although I did not know it at the time, this was not the case. The decision to have an abortion was not based on my right to freedom of choice, because my right to freedom of choice was violated by the misrepresentation of the facts that I received. Therefore, this decision was not mine, but the decision of the person giving me the information based on what was said, and how it was presented. If ultrasounds had been in existence back in 1975 and it was required that women first choose as to whether or not they wish to view it, then I would not have chosen to have the abortion. I would have been able to see, first hand, what I would be aborting. A woman considering abortion has questions, some that she is aware of, and some that she is not yet aware of. Being able to view an ultrasound would answer many of those questions for her, making the choice whether or not to have an

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abortion solely hers – which is what it should be, according to people who support abortion.

One thing is certain. That whether or not people are pro-choice or pro-abortion, the rights of the women in this situation should not be violated, and that the health of the woman should be a major consideration. How much consideration is being given to her right to freedom of choice if a woman is not allowed full disclosure prior to making her choice? How much consideration is given to her health, physically, or emotionally, when this is kept from her, only for her to experience emotional trauma years later when she discovers full disclosure years after the abortion, regretting her decision, and not being able to cope with it, or a woman who ends up having physical issues, including not being able to have more children in the event something goes wrong? All because people fear that a woman could possibly not choose abortion if this was made known to her

Lesli

I would give anything to go back in time and undo the abortion that I had back in 1990. I was too scared to tell my parents and face the wrath and judgment. I had no idea the guilt that would haunt me for over 20 years until I truly understood that I could be forgiven through Jesus Christ. I to this day regret not having that baby and at least making that baby available for adoption to a loving family who could have adopted him/her. An abortion was way too easy, but I never knew it would actually be much more difficult after the fact. I wish that I would have been able to have more

counseling or options along with courage in my situation.

Natalie

When I was 21 years old, I aborted my first child. At the time, I was homeless, living under a bridge with my baby's father. I was living in Washington State at the time, where I was able to obtain a free state-funded abortion from Planned Parenthood. I truly believe that if this service was not so easily accessible to me, I might have chosen differently. It was way too easy for me to just walk into the clinic, say that I was homeless, and be provided with an abortion, no questions asked. They never counseled me about my options at all. They never offered financial or emotional support in the event that I decided to keep my baby.

I was angry with the baby's father & didn't want to be tied to him for the rest of my life. But, nevertheless, he begged me not to kill his only child. I didn't care what he said. After all, it was "my body," so therefore it was "my choice," right? I was the woman, right? So therefore, I got the final say, right?

For years after that, I lived with the reality that I had murdered my own child. I started attending church again & I learned some of the Scriptures. The Bible says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6). I couldn't forgive myself. And I sure didn't believe that Jesus could forgive me.

Years later, I accepted Jesus' all-sufficient sacrifice on the Cross for my sins & was saved.

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But I will never, ever minimize the effects that my choice had on my life. The night before my abortion, I cried & cried, feeling like my soul was being ripped out of my body. And that is the perfect description of how it affected me. I was never the same. I was not the same person after that day. I was forever changed & forever scarred.

I had 2 children not too long after that, a daughter when I was 23 and a son when I was 27. And I really struggled. I felt like I wasn't fit to be a mother. I was very bonded & connected to my children, but something still felt "off." I knew that there was a part of me that would sometimes mentally detach from them because it hurt so much to feel the pain that my abortion caused. I loved my children, but I still thought of the baby I aborted. It still felt like someone was missing. My child was due on Christmas day in 2002. If he/she had been born, he/she would be 18 years old now. I wouldn't have my 2 other kids if I hadn't had the abortion, but I won't lie- I still feel the loss of that child.

The worst part was learning about my child's development in utero. My abortion took place at 8 weeks. My baby had all of his/her organs.

I will admit that, although I committed a grave sin and I knew I was ending a life, I didn't understand fetal development & Planned Parenthood never told me these things. I never saw an ultrasound. And maybe I still would have chosen abortion. But my guess is that I probably wouldn't have. And Planned Parenthood doesn't want this, of course. They don't

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want people to choose life because it screws up their business model.

It is a lie from the pits of Hell that children are a burden & must be sacrificed for our desires & ambitions. To the contrary, children bless our lives. My 2 living children have given me a reason to live, a purpose. And God is truly the ultimate Healer. As God's Word says, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Cindy

My "how I got there" is as old as time, tonight I want to share the "after" – the hope and forgiveness I found and continue to experience @ Rachel's Vineyard, a healing retreat and support group for all women and men grieving, including those who had the choice made for them, due to the aftermath of choosing abortion.

As of today, there have been 61 million baby souls that have been aborted. The startling truth: 1 in 3 women in the US have had abortions by the time they are 45 yrs old . . . that's one in three grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, cousins, friends and coworkers – I am one of those women who chose abortion over 35 years ago.

I was 23 years old – on my own, living the dream in an era when chants of "it's my body, my choice" were heard everywhere. "Roe vs Wade" had passed – no woman would ever be forced to have an unwanted baby. No one ever talked about what happened after abortion.

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We met at a party, we laughed and we left. I ignored that little voice inside telling me, “don’t do it”, which weeks later left me with a very real problem – I was pregnant and I needed help quick.

Leaving behind my Catholic faith, I took my friend’s advice and chose abortion. I defiantly rationalized I had an exciting life to live, one that did not include a baby. So, within days, with the words, “abortion, it’s the easy way out”, echoing in my mind, the procedure to remove “the clump of cells” was done and then, there was no more baby—only the hollow reality I had ended my own baby’s life.

I went home and immediately learned “what comes after”. Regret . . . Grief . . . Guilt . . . Emptiness . . . fantasies of “if onlys & what ifs” were my constant companions.

Years and more than a few broken relationships later, I moved to CA for a “new start”, an adventure, an escape. There I fell in love and had my second abortion. When I told him we were pregnant, like a bucket of ice water in my face, he said, “what are you trying to do, ruin my life?” I knew then, there would be no baby. I cried out to God for comfort and there was no answer.

Anniversaries of their “firsts”; smiles, steps, school years . . . all haunted me with endless regrets

It didn’t take long for me to realize the devastating truth of one of the biggest lies ever told – “Abortion, it’s the easy way out”, because abortion – is anything but easy.

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A few short years later, I moved home where I married my dear husband and gave birth to our beautiful daughter and for the first time, I felt content and forgiven, as if being a “real” mom had erased my past.

But reality slapped me in the face again as we had not one, but two miscarriages that threw me into a tailspin. I believed with every fiber of my being – “This was my punishment; God had not forgiven me. He was taking “2” from me as I had from Him.”

I could no longer cope. . . . I grieved for them all – babies aborted and now babies miscarried. I cried out to God, but again there was only silence. . . .

After over 30 years of sitting in church pews, confessing my sin to more priests than I count with no sense of being forgiven, finally, a dear friend confided in me the healing solace to be found at Rachel’s Vineyard.

I had no idea what to expect, I just knew I trusted this dear friend and if she thought I needed to go, that’s what I would do. So after years of grieving, in 2011, I attended my Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat.

There I learned God was willing to forgive me – all I had to do was ask Him What I feared the most, that God had condemned me with no hope of forgiveness was yet another lie. The wonderful women and men including a therapist experienced in this field were there to comfort me and show me the compassion I could not show myself. I was able to see God had forgiven me – it was I who had turned away from Him in shame, unable to forgive myself.

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Today, I choose to Be Silent No More because I want all who have suffered as I have believing the lies, to know and believe, forgiveness is waiting for you at Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

Many have asked, what can I do to help?

First – and always – PRAY – not just for the unborn baby souls who are lost, but for the mothers and fathers – who live with this very unnatural reality of ending the life of their own babies every day. The denial and guilt are buried deep. They need to know there is hope – healing is possible by seeking forgiveness and that is where they will find their peace.

There were many Christians praying as this movie was being filmed that continue as UNPLANNED is viewed by audiences everywhere – prayers for a conversion of heart as many see the stark truth of the abortion industry, some for the very first time.

2nd Please – BE WILLING TO SHARE – If someone you love is suffering because of abortion, please be willing to share information for Rachel's Vineyard with them as my dear friend did for me many years ago.

These are wonderful ways to be the heart and hands of Christ.

Thank you for your time and most of all your prayers.

RJ

I had an abortion in 1980. I was 19, unmarried, living with my parents and siblings, attending church, just graduated h.s. and attending the nursing program at the community college. My pregnancy was with a

young man I dated for three years in h.s. My parents encouraged the abortion. I was so mentally confused and distressed about all my relationships that I was unable to finish my schooling that year. I often considered suicide. The next year my parents sent me to a private college where I met friends who listened to my agony and patiently helped me find forgiveness for myself, my boyfriend, and parents and helped me see the truth about who I was to these ppl and who I was.

Although I stopped being suicidal my relationship with my parents continued to get worse. It divided their marriage and our relationships. Perhaps the abortion was only a symptom of wrong but it certainly tested our moral fiber and it tore us all apart.

After I graduated college, I married another man. We have four adult children today but I suffered three miscarriages before, became obese, and had pre-eclampsia or HELLP syndrome with all. All were born premature and the first was three months early. I know that my abortion caused a great deal of anxiety, obesity, and high blood pressure.

My relationship with my father seems to be permanently damaged.

My husband and I celebrate 36 years married this year. He has been a good, kind, patient and compassionate friend I have needed to work through the mental anguish and physical struggles I associate with my abortion.

Any and all parenting has its challenges. Parenting must never be based on a feeling of how the future MAY play out. Children, at any stage of life, MUST

NEVER be thought of as not as important as an endangered insect, at any stage of its life! We must be the generation that stops the insanity of legalized murder! It has killed not only generations of unborn children but it is killing the conscience of generations of men and women who by law have become morally decrepit. Who can judge murder in the streets when we have legalized murder of preborn infant humans?

Emily

I got an abortion when I was in college. I already had a child, age 4, and I wasn't doing very well even with that. I knew having another child would force me to quit school, and I frankly doubted my ability to be a good parent to either one of them, so I decided to have an abortion. After all, it's just a clump of cells, right?

At the abortion clinic, we had to sit through a group session and a training seminar. I was shocked to realize most of the people there, including the staff, had had multiple abortions. To them, it seemed just another form of birth control. I was led to believe it was rare and an absolute last-resort option, but I discovered this was not the case.

During the procedure, which was painful, I might add, I had a distinct spiritual impression that they were extinguishing the life of a soul, not just clearing out a clump of cells. I had never been very spiritual before that, never thought of visions or voices, and was not raised in a religious home. I'm a logical, mechanical kind of person. But I felt an actual voice cry out at that moment. I began crying uncontrollably, and the staff asked if I was in pain, but I was not (or at least, that

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was not the cause of my tears). Maybe many people will dismiss this experience as hysterics, but I was convinced in that moment that life began at conception, and I knew I'd made a terrible mistake.

I cried for a few days afterwards. The recovery took a couple of weeks and was not pleasant, but I healed up well. Still, for many years afterwards, I was legitimately concerned I'd offended God by killing a soul. I spoke with a pastor some years later, and he said that it was obvious I was repentant, and he felt God would forgive me over it, but I know that I will forever be haunted by the fact that I didn't know I was going to kill a soul.

Abortion is not quick, easy, nor cheap. The baby is not a clump of cells. Life begins at conception. Abortion is not "safe, legal, and rare." It is abused, propagandized, and sold on lies. Women do not understand what it really is, and if they did, they would not want it (and the ones who do should not have it!).