

Ultrasound's ultimate truth leads doctors to quit doing abortions

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No military obstetrician or gynecologist in the European theater — and there are 44 of them — will do abortions. Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., finds it "hard to believe that every single person working overseas has a personal conscientious objection to providing abortions." Elizabeth Symonds of the ACLU says she "fails to understand why the military can't accommodate those objections and provide the services needed."

But the fact adds to the mounting evidence that more doctors are rejecting the abortion business voluntarily, because of conscience, rather than by anti-abortionist threats.

Here are a few other examples. Dr. Anthony Levatino provided abortions for his patients in Albany, N.Y., for eight years. He now is in private practice in obstetrics and gynecology and says, "I want the general public to know what the doctors know, that this is a person, this is a baby, that this is not some kind of blob of tissue."

Dr. Beverly McMillan opened the first abortion clinic in Mississippi. As a radical feminist, she believed in making abortion available to women. Now

she practices obstetrics and speaks publicly against abortion.

Carol Everett was an abortion provider in four clinics in Dallas, Texas — she was part-owner of two of them. She fired an employee for permitting pregnant women to see by ultrasound what they were about to abort. Everett has now renounced and denounced the industry in her autobiography, "The Scarlet Lady" (Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1991).

Ultrasound, not outside pressure, is convincing many abortionists to get out of the business. The first and most famous physician to give up doing abortions was Bernard Nathanson, who had helped make abortions legal.

After his defection from the pro-choice ranks, Nathanson persuaded a doctor who still performed them to let him photograph the procedure, using ultrasound.

Nathanson filmed the abortion of an 8-week-old fetus and then showed the film to the man who had performed it. The doctor watched the fetus pull away from his probing suction device and begin thrashing in agitation as he pierced the amniotic sac. His heartbeat

went from 140 to over 200 beats per minute.

Incidentally, this sonogram, which became the video, "A Silent Scream," was roundly criticized by leading pro-abortionists who said the fetus only moved because the instrument moved — "like stirring tea leaves in a cup."

The doctor who performed that abortion, however, and who was medically qualified to know what he was looking at, apparently didn't agree. After viewing it, without a word, he walked out of the room and out of the hospital. He never performed another abortion.

Dr. Joseph Randall estimates he did 32,000 abortions at the Atlanta Center for Reproductive Health over a 10-year period. He now practices obstetrics and assists at a crisis pregnancy center in Atlanta. He says: "The picture of the baby on the ultrasound bothered me more than anything else. The staff couldn't take it."

Shari Richard is a radiologic technician and registered diagnostic sonographer in Michigan. She was instructed to use ultrasound to determine the size of a fetus — but to turn the screen

away from any woman who would be having an abortion so it wouldn't upset her. (This is standard practice wherever abortions are done.) Richard, who had had two abortions herself, started wondering why women weren't allowed the information which would enable them to have a genuine choice.

Since then, she has produced a video, "Ultrasound: A Window to the Womb," showing recognizable babies stretching, kicking, turning over and sucking their thumbs in utero and has testified before House and Senate subcommittees on the fact of life within the womb.

"Ultrasound has disproven the 'blob of tissue theory,' she tells audiences. "Our technology just wasn't sophisticated enough to see those teeny fingers and toes before."

Even those who are actively pro-choice agree. At a National Abortion Rights Action League workshop in October 1989, "Framing and Selling the Pro-Choice Message," Harrison Hickman said, "Probably nothing has been as damaging to our cause as the advances in technology which have allowed pictures of the developing

fetus."

Dr. Warren Herr, director of the Boulder (Colo.) Abortion Clinic says of ultrasound: "We have reached a point in this particular technology where there is no possibility of denial of an act of destruction by the operator. It is before one's eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the forceps like an electric current."

One military doctor who used to perform abortions, David Brewer, now says, "My heart got callous against the fact that I was a murderer, but that baby lying in a cold bowl educated me to what abortion really was."

Who would do the procedure — who would have the procedure — once he or she understood that as early as the 28th day of pregnancy, the tiny heart is beating? Who would not distance him/herself from surgery that involves dismembering a small human being?

But Pat Schroeder finds it hard to believe doctors would say no. And Elizabeth Symonds fails to understand why. Pat and Elizabeth, what part of that "no" don't you understand? Jessica Shaver Long Beach