

ABORTION IN AMERICA: LEGAL OR ILLEGAL. THE TRUTH.

SARAH PALIN HAS STATED THAT SHE WOULD OPPOSE ABORTION EVEN IF HER OWN DAUGHTER WAS RAPED. HER EXCEPTION WOULD BE TO GRANT ABORTIONS ONLY TO MOTHER'S WHOSE LIFE WAS IN DANGER. PALIN SAID THAT WHEN IT CAME TO HER DAUGHTER, "I WOULD CHOOSE LIFE". I AGREE WITH HER THAT THE CHOICE SHOULD BE LIFE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A POTENTIAL HUMAN LIFE IN THE WOMB, OR ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE WOMAN THAT IS CARRYING A UNWANTED PREGNANCY FOR WHATEVER REASON AND SHE CHOOSES TO ABORT. THE TRUTH IS, IF A WANTED DOES NOT WISH TO CARRY A PREGNANCY TO FULL TERM, SHE WILL FIND A WAY WHETHER ABORTION IS LEGAL OR ILLEGAL IN THIS COUNTRY TO HAVE IT PERFORMED. TO HAVE IT PERFORMED LEGALLY, MEANS THAT IN THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CASES, THE ABORTION WILL BE PERFORMED IN A SAFE MANNER WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ABORTIONS ARE ONCE AGAIN MADE ILLEGAL, THE MATERNAL MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY ASSOCIATED WITH ABORTION WILL INCREASE EXPONENTIALLY.

IN ORDER TO BACK UP MY LAST STATEMENT, ALL ONE HAS TO DO IS LOOK AT WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE FOR WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE DAYS BEFORE ROE V WADE. IN PATRICIA G MILLER'S BOOK, "THE WORST OF TIMES" WANTED HER READERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT "THE REAL PUBLIC POLICY QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER WE WILL HAVE ABORTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY, BUT WHAT KIND OF ABORTIONS WE WILL HAVE." SHE ESTIMATES IN THE 1960'S THAT ILLEGAL ABORTION WAS ESTIMATED TO BE THE THIRD LARGEST MONEY MAKER FOR ORGANIZED CRIME, EXCEEDED ONLY BY NARCOTICS AND GAMBLING. IN HER BOOK, SHE INTERVIEWED 50 PEOPLE WHO HAD FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE OF ILLEGAL ABORTIONS-INCLUDING WOMEN WHO HAD THEM PERFORMED, MIDWIVES, PHYSICIANS WHO OBSERVED THE RESULTS OF BOTCHED ABORTIONS IN HOSPITALS AND THE CHILDREN OF WOMEN WHO DIED FROM THEM FROM THE TIME SPAN OF 1920 TO 1970. FOR A LOT OF THE CHILDREN WHO GREW UP WITHOUT THEIR MOTHER, THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW OR WHY SHE HAD LOST HER LIFE UNTIL THEY BECAME OF ADULT AGE.

THERE ARE NO FIRM DATA ON THE DEATH RATE FROM ILLEGAL ABORTIONS OR LIFE -THREATENING INFECTIONS FROM ABORTIONS PERFORMED UNDER NONSTERIILE CONDITIONS WHICH WERE COMMON BEFORE ROE V WADE. THE MAJORITY OF LARGE PUBLIC HOSPITALS HAD SEPTIC ABORTIONS WARDS. THESE PLACES ALWAYS REAPED OF THE SMELL OF DEATH DUE TO THE WOMEN BEING EXTREMELY ILL DUE TO EITHER BOTCHED ABORTIONS OR SELF INDUCED ABORTIONS. THIS IS WHERE PHYSICIANS SAW SOME OF THE SICKEST WOMEN THAT THEY HAVE EVER SEEN IN THEIR LIFE.

THE FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE OF THE SEPTIC WARD MOTIVATED SOME PHYSICIANS TO RISK THEIR LICENSES BY PERFORMING ILLEGAL ABORTIONS ON THEIR PRIVATE PATIENTS. THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN HAD TO PLACE THEMSELVES IN THE HANDS OF STRANGERS WHO WERE AT TIMES BLINDFOLDED AND TAKEN INTO UNKNOWN DARK PLACES WHERE THE ABORTION PROCEDURE WAS PERFORMED. THEY WERE TOLD NOT TO GO TO

HOSPITALS FOR ANY REASON AND THUS THE REASON THAT A LOT OF WOMEN DIED AT HOME OR ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL VERY LATE AFTER HAVING A BOTCHED ABORTION AND DIED.

EVEN THOUGH THE COAT HANGER IS THE SYMBOL THAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT IN PERFORMING ILLEGAL ABORTIONS, THERE ARE MANY MATERIALS AND METHODS USED TO PERFORM THE PROCEDURE. HERBS, ROOTS, TOXIC POISONS, LARGE NEEDLES, CROCHET HOOKS, SODA BOTTLES, AND DIFFERENT LIQUIDS, AND SEAWEED THAT WAS PLACED IN THE CERVIX OR INJECTED INSIDE THE UTERUS DIRECTLY. ALL OF THESE PROCEDURES CAUSED MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN MANY WOMEN. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 15,000 WOMEN DIED A YEAR IN THE 1920'S DUE TO THESE TYPE OF UNSAFE ABORTION.

WHILE IN MEDICAL SCHOOL, I TOO WAS ABLE TO GO ON THE ABORTION WARDS AND SEE THESE VERY ILL CLOSE TO DEATH PATIENTS. THEY ALL HAD THEIR REASONS FOR UNDERGOING A ILLEGAL ABORTION. EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE STATES WHERE ABORTION COULD BE PERFORMED LEGALLY, THESE POOR INDIGENT WOMEN WERE ABLE TO GET TO THOSE PARTICULAR PLACES, THUS FELT THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO UNDERGO AN ILLEGAL ABORTION OR EVEN MUCH WORSE, ATTEMPT TO SELF INDUCE HER OWN ABORTION. GENERALLY WITH A COAT HANGER OR INGESTION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF POISONS IS HOW THEY INDUCED THEIR OWN ABORTION. THIS WAS A RUDE AWAKENING FOR ME. A SITUATION THAT A WOMAN FOUND HERSELF TO BE IN (UNWANTED PREGNANCY) AND WOULD DO WHATEVER NECESSARY TO ATTEMPT TERMINATION OF THE PREGNANCY. INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY AND HIGH PROBABILITY OF THE LOSS OF HER LIFE.

THIS IS WHAT CAUSED ME TO CHANGE MY STANCE ON A WOMAN'S CHOICE. THE FACT THAT WHETHER ABORTION IS LEGAL OR ILLEGAL, THE NUMBER OF ABORTIONS WILL BE THE SAME. THE DIFFERENCE IS THE DECREASE IN MATERNAL MORTALITY. THE YEAR AFTER ABORTION WAS LEGALIZED IN NEW YORK STATE, THE MATERNAL-MORTALITY RATE THERE DROPPED BY 45-PERCENT-ONE REASON WHY LEGALIZATION CAN BE SEEN AS "A PUBLIC HEALTH TRIUMPH." TO OVERTURN ROE V WADE AND LEAVE IT UP TO THE STATES TO DECRIMINALIZE ABORTION, WILL ALLOW THOUSANDS OF WELL-OFF WOMEN TO START TRAVELING TO OBTAIN SAFE ABORTIONS WHILE THE POOR WOMEN WILL CONTINUE TO RISK DEATH IN THEIR HOME STATES WHERE ABORTION IS A CRIME. ROE V WADE DID NOT MEAN THAT ABORTIONS COULD BE PERFORMED. THEY HAVE BEEN DONE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO. WHAT ROE DID WAS TO ALLOW ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTION FOR ALL WOMEN, IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

MOST OF THE 15000 MATERNAL DEATHS A YEAR FROM BOTCHED ABORTIONS WHEN ABORTIONS WERE ILLEGAL IN THIS COUNTRY ARE MOSTLY BLACK AND HISPANIC POOR WOMEN. I AM CERTAINLY A PERSON THAT CHOOSES LIFE. I CHOOSE THE WOMAN TO HAVE A LEGAL AND SAFE ABORTION AVAILABLE FOR HER TO LIVE.

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