

# DEPTH INTERVIEW

by gary constantine

the decision on a basis considering it a living thing so I considered to myself that it "problem", and if the living thing into my mind at all it was - what for it? And I believe I made the decision.

BRUNS: You finally arranged and the operation about to begin, what were you thinking?

DORIS: Well I into the waiting room. There were abortions performed the same waiting room. I didn't realize there were all there for as very nervous and very scared. I completely at ease. It was sort of a place, more than anything else I could describe it. The typical doctors were offering coffee, tea and smiling at everyone you had an interview with the first, who explained to you what was going on, what

**"Don't move, the harm I'll do you if you move could be fatal."**

would be happening you talked about finances, etc with him, and then you had to sign the form for the anesthetic. I was signing the form, because I didn't know how it was going to come back. I didn't really have to worry about signature anyway because I was so bad it was illegible. The anesthetic that I had was only a local anesthetic I was totally conscious throughout the operation and when the operation was on the wall directly in front of me and the operation took twelve and forty-five seconds.

BRUNS: Now tell us about the operation itself into as much detail as you figure necessary.

several muscles stretched - obviously, and this was the cause of the pain. The pain was similar to very bad menstrual cramps and all across your abdomen. He had two nurses assisting him and then the social director, I guess that is what you would call the receptionist was holding your hand, and she would say to you, "It hurts right across here doesn't it?, well don't worry about it, it will soon be over", and she talked to you the whole time trying to make you relax. The doctor himself was fairly gruff and he said "Don't move, don't move, the harm I'll do to you if you move could be fatal", which made you shake with nerves. After the operation it was again rather embarrassing you were given a sort of diaper like thing to put on, only it was large; larger than a diaper and more cumbersome and bulky, and he had given you a needle before the operation which totally relaxed you, and you couldn't really walk it was like you had just woken up without ever having gone to sleep. You had to walk back to a large room and be put back to bed and in that room were the nine other girls, four of which had already had the abortion and the others were waiting for theirs, and they could see you come in this was the fairly embarrassing part.

"Traditionally abortion has been considered legally, morally and socially unacceptable. Only recently has this position been questioned by some segments of society. I feel we today should keep an open mind to both sides of this debate. After the emotionalism of today's discussion has passed we will have to come to a mature decision on this subject within the context of our own societies traditional respect for the value of human life."  
Father DeCourvoisier  
St. Dunstons

BRUNS: The abortionist was an MD then? He was a medical doctor.

DORIS: Yes he was a surgeon.

BRUNS: I take it that this was an illegal abortion was it? It wasn't legal as such.

DORIS: No it wasn't legal. Puerto Rico has abortion laws similar to ours, except that they are not particularly enforced the same way that a child here under sixteen cannot buy cigarettes but everyone does. Puerto Rico is overpopulated and a poor country so there is nothing really done about it. The people that I was there, none of them were Puerto Rican. The majority were from New York city, and they were all wealthy. It was no poor butcher shop job.

BRUNS: How did the MD seem to treat the operation?

DORIS: Very seriously and he didn't speak hardly at all to me, except to warn me not to move. He mostly talked to the other nurses and seemed very efficient and he had already talked to each individual previously to explain the procedure of the operation.

BRUNS: Were you treated like a young girl in trouble or did you get the impression that you were just another broad whowas, "up the stump"?

"Speaking as a Christian clergyman I can foresee no circumstances under which the practice of abortion on demand can be justified."  
I do favor abortion in certain limited and clearly defined situations such as pregnancy through rape or incest. In my view the fetus is a potential human life whose right to life should not be tampered with in an indiscriminate manner.  
Abortion on demand frequently stems out of an attitude of personal sexual atonomy which is incompatible with the Christian teaching of freedom with responsibility. The clammer for abortion on demand points strongly in the direction of the need for prevention of unwanted pregnancy through responsible family planning".  
Rev. Mike Steeves  
Brunswick St. Baptist Church

DORIS: I was treated not particularly like a young girl in trouble, because I was twenty-three. I wasn't a fourteen year old. But I was treated very high class, and it wasn't, like I said before, a poor job. You were treated like you had made a mistake and you had gotten in trouble and he was going to end that trouble.

BRUNS: Now you've told us that this doctor did give abortions regularly. Was this his sole means of support as far as you know? Is that all he did?

DORIS: No he was a surgeon in a hospital, I'm not sure just which one, in Puerto Rico and he did abortions on Saturday. (laughter) His day off I guess, (laughter) He did about fifteen each Saturday.

BRUNS: Once you had the abortion, what kind of post-operative care did you receive.

DORIS: A nurse kept coming in. You

**As the plane was going down the runway I cursed the lights of San Juan for killing my baby.**

went to sleep after the operation because the needle they had given you before took effect and you immediately went to sleep. I was aware or at least semi-conscious that the doctor kept coming in himself and he would check for hemorrhaging and the nurse would come and ask if you wanted anything, and you were given coffee and you slept for about an hour and a half and after that the doctor would come and he talked to us as a group about things not to do; like not to carry baggage, not to walk, not to go out in the sun, not to swim, to relax for at least two days, and what to do if bleeding did start, and he gave us his home phone number and said that he would be there at all times and could be reached.

BRUNS: How long did you stay in Puerto Rico after the operation?

DORIS: I had the abortion on Saturday morning and I left Puerto Rico Monday night. Leaving the airport was the only time I had any regrets. As the plane was going down the runway I cursed the lights of San Juan for killing my baby. I cried for about five minutes and then substituted rational for emotion and have never regretted my decision since. Any existing regret has taken the form of hating Puerto Rico and a vow never to return.

BRUNS: Did you develop any complications at all?

DORIS: Well I had a fairly long trip back, changing flights in New York and again in Montreal, and going through customs, and when I did arrive back in Fredericton and told him that "mission impossible" was completed and could I phone him if necessary because I was starting to hemorrhage a bit, but not that much, and I was so weak, and he told me that I could call him at any time which made me relax a bit more and I felt much better, but I stayed in bed for about five days.

**I don't want to have to go through it again.**

BRUNS: This doctor in Fredericton that you phoned after you got back, was he committing anything illegal by giving aftercare?

DORIS: As far as I know-no. There would be no way of proving I suppose that he didn't perform the abortion, except that I would say he didn't. I'm not sure if they could tell by the method of the operation whether he had or not, but by giving me care afterwards he was in no way responsible.

BRUNS: Do you have any regrets to this day about what you did?

DORIS: No, definitely not.

BRUNS: Now this whole thing now has been over for a long time, ah, what kind of a sex life have you had since then? Do you have more sex, less sex or no sex at all?

DORIS: For a long time following the abortion I had no sex at all, and then very gradually; it was about sixteen months later that I began having sex again, but I think I can say that it is still less than before (the abortion). Though I'm not really bothered I do have a constant fear of pregnancy again even though I am taking birth control pills. I don't want to have to go through it again.

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"I think that it is wrong unless the mother or the child... considered old fashioned... can't see where one can... question of abortions has... before the National... knowledge, but at... in London the Council... planned parenthood, and... of the Council... number of children... was... the conscience of the... and that God alone had... to decide who should... ever the question of ab... such did not arise and... how it has never been raised... National Senat...  
The Most Rev. O'Neill

DORIS: To say the operation was embarrassing, similar to an internal examination had to lay on the table with your feet in the braces. It was painful. The several ways of performing an abortion and the way that this doctor used to pull the womb out and clean so there were