

ABORTION: AN

Doris (not her real name), is a graduate of UNB. When she was twenty-three and in her third year Doris became pregnant. After much contemplation and discussion with the father she decided upon an abortion. This is her story word for word. Nothing has been censored from the original tape. Names of the people involved were not used in order to protect Doris and the people who helped her.

BRUNS: Doris, how old were you when you had your first sexual experience?

DORIS: I was twenty-one.

BRUNS: We'll take it for granted that after your first sexual experience, you had many more. How many men did you have before you found yourself pregnant?

DORIS: Before I was pregnant there were three or four, I don't know for sure.

BRUNS: Now eventually, with one individual you did get pregnant. How long did you go with this individual?

DORIS: Before I got pregnant I had been going with him for eighteen months at least.

BRUNS: How long did you go with him before you got pregnant, or how long did you go with him, before, we'll say, you did have sexual intercourse?

DORIS: Oh, at least six months.

BRUNS: Okay now, you did get pregnant, but what was your initial reaction when you knew you were pregnant?

DORIS: My initial concern was for the child, and I felt mostly fear.

BRUNS: Now, there were a number of avenues open to you, did you consider marrying him? Or, just having the child and putting it up for adoption, or was abortion the first thing that came into your mind?

"... The unborn child is a human being in the same degree and by the same title as its mother. Moreover, every human being, even the child in its mother's womb, receives its right to life directly from God, not from its parents, nor from any human society or authority... Innocent human life in whatsoever condition it is found, is immune, from the very moment of its existence to any direct deliberate attack... The life of an innocent human being is inviolable, and any direct assault or aggression on it violates one of those fundamental laws without which it is impossible for human beings to live safely in society".

Pope Pius XII

DORIS: The first thing that came into my mind was having the child and keeping it myself. I didn't ever consider marrying him because I became pregnant on the night we broke up. I was in the pro-

cess of breaking up with him, and events followed and I became pregnant.

BRUNS: Now, did you love him at all?

DORIS: I at least thought I did, but does anyone ever know they're in love?

BRUNS: Now, did the father know at any time that you were carrying his child?

DORIS: I told him after I had known about three weeks.

BRUNS: Did he offer to marry you or give financial assistance or help of any form what so ever?

DORIS: Yes, both. Neither one of us mentioned abortion. He offered to marry me and then, when I said I didn't want to marry him he offered me financial support, and I was the one who brought up the topic of abortion.

BRUNS: How did you come to decide upon an abortion?

Marriage just wouldn't have worked.

DORIS: Mostly out of consideration for the child. Marriage just wouldn't have worked, it would have ruined three lives. I was not capable on my own at least, of bringing up a child. Without a university degree, there was no way I could financially support a child, alone. I couldn't give it up for adoption, (means adoption). I just didn't feel that I could carry a child for nine months and give it to someone else to carry on from there. In the future every child I would meet I would wonder if it was mine. By having the abortion there is no one to haunt me except me.

BRUNS: This tells us also why you had the abortion then? Now, this is where it gets kind of sticky; you can, stop any where you want. I prefer you don't use names at all, because this could get a lot of people in a lot of trouble. Now what kind of a procedure did you have to go through to set up the abortion? We'll say from the time you decided that you wanted to have an abortion, what did you do from there on?

DORIS: First of all I went to a doctor here in Fredericton who I knew had performed them previously, and he examined me and did determine that I was definitely pregnant: told me that he would not perform abortions, and so I told him sort of semi-blackmailed him. I knew that he had performed them before, and I wanted him to perform one on me, and as a result of his examination he said that the only way I could have an abortion was to go to a surgeon where I would get proper medical care, because I was built very small, and there was no names he could give me. He couldn't direct me in any way. So I started talking to various friends of mine who had a previous experience in Montreal. And, I couldn't arrange anything that I could afford, or didn't feel that I could afford it. So

eventually I did find someone, (laughter) this is a difficult not using names. I did find someone who knew a doctor in New York, and so I called the doctor in New York who made the appointment

"According to Halacha (Jewish Law), based on the bible, Talmud and Responsa, it would appear that abortion is not only permitted, but is mandatory when there is a threat to the mother's life.

There is also, "room for leniency", when the mental or physical health of the mother may deteriorate by continuation of pregnancy.

At what point does life begin? Does the unborn fetus receive any status or is it regarded as an organic limb of the mother?

If the Jewish Law prohibits birth control can there be a question of intentional abortion under normal conditions?

Rabbi Spiro, Fredericton, N.B.

for me in Puerto Rico. When I arrived in Puerto Rico I was to call the doctors office. The receptionist told me to the day and time to come, but warned me not to take a cab, and if I did to get out about a block away.

BRUNS: So all together you had to go through about three contacts before you found out that you could get an abortion in Puerto Rico. Now you were a student and chances are you didn't have all that much money. How did you get to Puerto Rico?

"I am opposed to abortion on the principle that it is taking a human life. I can't speak for the church since the church has never taken an official stand on the subject. This is a fairly new development and so the church council has had no reason to bring up the subject but I feel that in all probability that the church would be opposed to abortion".

Rev. B.C. Cochrane
Wesleyan Methodist Church
Moncton, N.B.

DORIS: I borrowed the money. All together the operation and the plane fare altogether came to 1500 dollars, which I borrowed from friends and have paid back. The doctor's fee itself was \$900. (100 per week of pregnancy.)

BRUNS: You told us how you got there. Now, did you have any religious or moral qualms about having the abortion?

DORIS: No, I didn't actually have any particular religious feelings at all, the only problem that I had was with morals and my own conscience and I at least rationalized and I now believe that I did the right thing. Right and wrong are dependent and relative.

BRUNS: Of course here is the classic question. Did the question of whether the fetus in your womb should be considered a living thing ever enter into your mind?

DORIS: It entered into my mind, but I rejected it. I couldn't, I couldn't make

the decision on... ing it a living thing... to myself that it... if the living thing... all it was - what... I believe I made the... decision.

BRUNS: You... when the abortion... and the operation... what were you thi...

DORIS: Well I... room. There were... formed the same... were nine couples... I didn't realize... abortions until late... and very scared. I... ease. It was sort... than anything else... scribe it. The rece... typical doctors re... fering coffee, tea... smiling at everyo... interview with the... plained to you wh...

"Don't move the harm I'll move could..."

would be happen... about finances, et... then you had to... esthetic. I was al... because I didn't... going to come ba... have to worry abo... way because I wa... illegible. The ane... only a local anes... conscious throug... when the operati... directly in front o... I watched the wh... tion took twelve... seconds.

BRUNS: Now... the operation its... detail as you figur...

"I think... wrong unless... that there is... the mother... or the child... old fashioned... where one can... it comes to ab... question of ab... the before... the National... ledge, but at... in London... the Council... parenthood, an... the Council wa... number of... children... was... science of the... God alone had... who should... ever the... question of ab... such did... not arise and... never been rais... National... O'Neill

DORIS: To say... the ope... was embarrassing... similar... internal examinatio... had to... the table with yo... in the b... several w... It was painful. Th... and the... performing an ab... as to pu... that this doctor... womb out and cle... so ther...