



N.O.W. NEWS

March 1986

BAY AREA CHAPTER
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN



WARNING:
ALL WOMEN IN
DANGER OF LOSING
ALL REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS...

CALENDAR

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| March 6 | Bay Area NOW meeting El Camino & Reseda
7:30 p.m. A Uniting Church |
| March 7-8 | Political Training Workshop - San Antonio
\$125 includes registration, 2 meals |
| March 9 | MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES - Washington, D.C. |
| March 16 | MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES - Los Angeles, CA |
| March 21-23 | Rape & Suicide Crisis of Southeast TX, Inc.
Conference: "Kids: Love 'em, Protect 'em" |
| March 25 | Hearings on Pornography - NOW members only!
Contact Anita Marcos or Phyllis Tucker for details |

ROSIE JANE

*This song is addressed to my sisters,
Any man who is present may listen,
Any priest, any public official, any physician.
But it gives him no license to touch us,
We make the decision,
Me and Lydia, Rosie and Josie and Eve,
We handle these matters ourselves,
You'd better believe,
Or you'd better leave.*

Cho: *Rosie Jane,
Are you pregnant again?
Rosie Jane,
You can hardly take care of the four
You had before.
What in heaven's name
Were you thinking of,
Rosie Jane, was it love?*

*I had an extra shot
On top of what I'd got,
In a word, I was drunk,
So was Bill.
At least I think it was Bill,
And I forgot to take my pill.
I guess it was God's will.*

Chorus

*When that baby is a child,
It will suffer from neglect,
Be picked upon and pecked,
And run over and wrecked,
And its head will be crowned with the thorn,
But while it's inside her it must remain intact,
And it cannot be murdered till it's born.*

Lyrics by Malvina Reynolds

**GOOD NEWS! WE'RE SENDING TWO MEMBERS TO THE
"MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES!"**

We'll all be marching in Washington on March 9 along with Phyllis Tucker and Donna Berend (in our thoughts).

It didn't take us long to raise the money, what with a hastily organized garage sale plus contributions from friends of NOW.

This is all in line with the results of the survey printed in the February newsletter which clearly showed that most Bay Area members, although interested in many issues, consider Reproductive Rights to be the number one issue of importance for this year.

Judy and Joe Snyder generously offered their garage as the site for the garage sale and assisted in many ways.

Others who helped with the sale were Phyllis Tucker (she picked up two truckloads of items left over from the HouNOW garage sale and also helped with the sale), Dorothy Howard, Anita Marcos, Donna Berend, Rusty Richards, Carolyn Perez, and Nancy Whitecotton.

Thanks to our "check-book" members, also. There are a number of members who simply cannot spare time and energy but you are, nevertheless, vital to our continued success. We need all of you!

Thanks to Colette Roberts for a powerful cover reflecting her deep concerns.

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A note from Phoenix Wheeler: "During '84 and '85 I traveled and tried to locate other women interested in living in intentional communities. My Webster P.O. Box was listed in dozens of women's publications, posted on bulletin boards, and put into countless address books. The P.O. will not forward mail after 6 months, so I urgently need someone to check my box (weekly is fine) and forward the first class stuff. Fine for you to use the address for your mail, also. Phoenix Wheeler, P.O. Box 924, Norman, OK 73070. Telephone: 405-360-2585"

WE'RE IN LUCK! Lillian Johnson has agreed to take charge of the Telephone Tree, and this helps us maintain vital links between one another. Those assisting her are Marsha McDonald, Madelyn Megallion, Rusty Richards, and Phyllis Tucker. More volunteers are needed. Can you help? Call Lillian at 488-1896.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Dorothy Howard has volunteered to head a Membership Committee. She needs some volunteers to assist. Does this appeal to you? Call 486-0752.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

At the February meeting, members voted to change the meeting date from the first Thursday of the month to the third Thursday of the month. It seems that many more can attend on this Thursday. Therefore, the April meeting will be on April 17. Please mark your calendar NOW.

Because of volume of mail received, Parade regrets it cannot answer queries.

By Lloyd Shearer ©1983



House-painter Norma McCorvey and Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun: Her rape and his ruling changed abortion laws and began decade of debate

This Woman and This Man Made History

One hot August night in 1969, a petite young woman of 21 who worked as a cashier in a traveling carnival was gang-raped by three men and a woman on a side road outside Augusta, Ga. Several weeks later, she discovered she was pregnant.

By then, she had moved to Dallas. Since she already had a 5-year-old daughter, was divorced and had little money, she sought an abortion.

"No legitimate doctor in Dallas would touch me," she remembers. "It was against the Texas law, which then permitted abortions only if the mother's life was at stake. Mine wasn't. I found one doctor who offered to abort me for \$500. Only he didn't have a license, and I was scared to turn my body over to him. So there I was—pregnant, unmarried, unemployed, alone and stuck.

"Of course, if I'd been rich, I could've flown to some state where abortion was legal or at least easier to get. But then, I guess, there wouldn't have been any *Roe v. Wade*."

Ten years ago, with Justice Harry Blackmun writing the majority opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down one of the most far-reaching and controversial decisions

in its history. By a vote of 7-2, it ruled in the case of *Roe v. Wade* that no state can pass a law interfering with the patient-physician decision for abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. The ruling legalized abortion, negated the Texas law and others like it in some 30 states, and thus spawned the highly disputatious and volatile pro-and anti-abortion movements in this country.

The woman who in a way started it all by serving as a legal guinea pig is Norma McCorvey, that gang-rape victim of 14 years ago. "Jane Roe" is the fictitious name that her attorneys, Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee, used to protect her privacy when they first sued in federal court to overturn the Texas abortion statutes.

McCorvey, now 35, is still unmarried and still cherishes her privacy. "It was just circumstances that got me involved," she explains. "When I was pregnant and found out that a legal abortion was impossible for me in Texas, I went to see a lawyer I knew, Henry McCloskey Jr. He's now dead. I believe he was stabbed in a parking lot. I told Henry I wanted to put the baby I was carrying up for adoption. He said he

would handle it for me. I was so angry at the fix I was in—pregnant and broke through no fault of mine—I said I wouldn't want that to happen to anyone. Henry asked me if I felt strongly enough about a raped woman's right to abortion to take the case to court. I said I did."

"He introduced me to Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee," she relates, "who were not long out of the University of Texas law school. I met with them, and I agreed to become a test legal case. It dragged on for about four years. During that time, I had the baby at the Dallas Osteopathic Hospital. It was taken away from me at birth, and I never even knew if it was a boy or a girl. Eventually I got a job as a waitress, then a barmaid, then I ran my own janitorial service.

"Sarah Weddington told me from time to time how we were making out in court. And I spoke at a Baptist meeting. But I wasn't anxious to sell myself as a woman who had been raped. Memories of that horror depressed me. I went about making a living for myself."

Norma McCorvey became a painting contractor in Dallas. For the next four years, as her case moved through the courts, she told relatively few people that Jane Roe and Norma McCorvey were the same person. "I never wanted," she says, "to make a career out of being Jane Roe."

A day after the Supreme Court decision was announced on Jan. 22, 1973, she read about it in *The Dallas Morning News*. "I was glad," she asserts, "that other women in this country wouldn't have to go through what I went through. I have a beautiful 17-year-old daughter who was raised by my parents. If she was ever gang-raped, I wouldn't want her to experience the agony and hell I experienced."

"It will be 13 years this May since I gave birth at Dallas Osteopathic," she recalls, "but I must tell you that almost every day, when I drive to the job and see kids in a playground or walking to school, I can't help wondering if maybe one of them isn't the one I gave away."

BORN AND TRASHED (All from The Houston Post)

12/30/85 Arizona - "CHILD FOUND BURIED ALIVE IN DESERT"
"There was no way she could have fallen in or have done that (got into the hole) by herself," Sheriff Elleson said, "She was literally buried alive underground."

3/26/85 Fidgeting but dry-eyed, a 6-year old girl told a jury Monday that her father raped her, then took her to another man's home so he could do the same.

12/28/85 Headline - "PEOPLE EAGER TO ADOPT NEWBORN FOUND IN TRASH BAG"

3/23/85 The grandmother of an infant allegedly sold by her mother said Friday she was happy just "watching the baby sleep" at her house after picking her up from a foster home earlier that day.

12/30/85 Headline - "MAYORS RAP REAGAN FOR FLIGHT OF HOMELESS"

12/21/85 The mother of Tameka Bailey (4) and her brother Demaury (3) had left her sleeping children alone to run to the store for a can of chile. The children awoke, and being cold they placed paper and clothes on an electric hot plate to produce more warmth. These children were saved from their burning wood frame home.

12/21/85 Headline - STATE SENDS PARENTS A HOLIDAY GREETING, "PAY YOUR CHILD SUPPORT"

3/31/85 Headline - WHEN ADOPTIONS FAIL"

3/31/85 The Invisible Children by Gitta Sereny (Book review by Barbara Liss)

Each year in the United States some one million children run away from home. A considerable number of them, both male and female, support themselves on the streets by selling the only thing they have to sell -- their bodies...and, with remarkably few exceptions, the authorities and the public are indifferent to the part children play in the world's oldest profession.



From: The Search, newsletter of an Ecumenical Church in Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin, June 7, 1973.

...it is each individual woman's problem. No abstract philosophy, no high legal phrases, no sanctimonious dogma or liberal jargon has anything to do with it. Every woman who ever considers terminating a pregnancy has her reason. It is her personal reason, it is her personal agony, and it should be her personal decision.

But since many men, and some few women, have arguments, let's look at some I've heard recently.

1. "You are destroying a human life." This fetus, which let's say has existed for twelve weeks or so, is not yet, biologically, "a life." Potential life, yes, "a life," no. It is still an extension of the mother, as much as a twig is an extension of the tree. Its blood comes from the mother's blood, its nourishment is the mother's food, its oxygen is the mother's life. If the mother dies, her fetus dies as surely as her hands and feet and womb die. No, biologically, this is not yet a separate "life."
2. "This is a sacred human soul." That is a matter of opinion. However, I've never (thank heaven) known anyone who wouldn't approve of abortion if his (or her) thirteen year old daughter was made pregnant by the forcible rape of a mental defective. That, it seems, is different. How so? Is this union of sperm and ovum a human soul if the female consented, but not human if she didn't? You are certainly entitled to your belief, and I want to respect it, but I can't respect a belief that isn't consistent.
3. "It's against God's will." Nowhere in my Bible have I found an injunction against abortion. Did God tell you personally, or are you entering into an agreement with God without consulting God?
4. "God said, 'Multiply, and populate the earth.' OK, God, we've done that. Now what?"
5. "All life is sacred. God said 'Thou shalt not kill.'" Some people think that means you can't swat a mosquito and some think you can't eat meat and some think you can't remove an oxygen tent and let a ninety-year-old man die in dignity. In Christian America it generally means thou shalt not kill thy fellow human except when temporarily insane, or when justified, or when you are an officer of the law, or a member of the court, or when in self-defense, or when the government has ordered you to do so. This is all politics, anyway, since as I said in (1), the fetus is not yet a fellow human. It's just that this argument makes me mad because it usually comes from men who think we ought to bomb the hell out of Cambodia, shoot protesters, and bring back capital punishment.
6. "Women will use abortion instead of better birth control." Not likely. You'd have all that morning sickness, and fatigue, and weight gain, and then there would be that terrible strain on the endocrine system, and besides, it hurts. Aside from that, most of us are practical souls. Any woman would know that abortion is mighty expensive birth control, and furthermore, she'd realize that by the time she called for her second monthly appointment, her doctor might have a two-year waiting list. Now honestly, do you really believe women are that brainless?
7. Here's a popular one: "It's against life." Now what the heck does that mean?
"Life." Beautiful. Sunshine and breezes and laughter. How could any decent person do anything against life?

Let me tell you some other things that are against life: Crying all night for nine months, or giving away your fully-formed, fully human little child to strangers, or getting married at sixteen to a boy you're not even sure you like any more, or having a nervous breakdown, or bringing another helpless child into the ghetto, or seeing your children always hungry, or feeling your marriage die because there are too many people and never enough money or room, or giving birth to a defective "menopause baby," or being so tired, tired, tired with childbearing and child rearing that you plod dully and apathetically through God's days, and never hear the birds or see the flowers.

Now, that's against life!

So, gentlemen, why don't you go off somewhere and figure out a way to stop wars and keep drunken drivers off the roads. Let each of us women make our own decisions on our own bodies and lives. We are far more able than you to understand the consequences, either way.

Houston gynecologist says legal terminations save lives

Houston Post-2/5/86

By JULIE GILBERT
Post Reporter

Dr. Robert Kaminsky has a busy gynecological practice in northwest Houston. The doctor gave up delivering babies years ago because, he says, he was tired of the hectic schedule, the constant emergencies.

Now Kaminsky has more regulated hours. He deals with menstrual disorders, contraceptive planning, infertility and hysterectomies. He, like some other Houston doctors, also performs abortions.

But Kaminsky doesn't call himself an abortion doctor, and he really doesn't like the term "abortion" at all. He prefers to call it "pregnancy termination."

Yet that doesn't mean he's ashamed of his work. During a time when there is so much conflict between abortionists and anti-abortionists, Kaminsky doesn't hide what he does, although he knows other gynecologists who quietly leave their offices to perform abortions at area clinics.

But not Kaminsky. On Tuesday afternoons and Friday and Saturday mornings, his practice is solely devoted to terminating pregnancies. He routinely performs 12 to 15 abortions in a three-hour period on patients aged 11 to 52.

Outside, across the street from his office, anti-abortionists picket with signs proclaiming, "Kaminsky Kills Unborn Babies," "Shut Down This Death Camp" and "Dr. Kaminsky Is a Murderer." They came out in full force last month to protest the 13th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision, which said that abortion with certain limitations was a right that could be exercised by women.

Pro-lifers have marched outside his building carrying a tiny white coffin covered in roses. But Kaminsky got angry only recently when the protesters picketed in front of his Woodlands home.

Kaminsky usually tries to ignore the picketers. He figures they believe in what they do just as much as he believes in what he does. Still, they can be irritating. Once Kaminsky took the elevator down from his fifth-floor office, walked across the street and asked the picketers if they wanted to watch an abortion to see what the process really is like.

He wanted them to see that a 12-week fetus is only an inch in size, completely dissimilar, he says, to the "signs of stillborns they carry around that look like horrible E.T.s, disgusting and which are blown up to 12-foot signs." The

Kaminsky never questions a person's decision to have an abortion. And he doesn't feel he's on an assembly line when he goes from room to room performing a dozen abortions in one morning. Instead, he equates his routine to an ear, nose and throat doctor who goes from operating room to operating room performing one tonsillectomy after another.

A 1962 graduate of Columbia University and a 1966 graduate of Albert Einstein College of Medicine (both in New York), the 45-year-old doctor has never had moral problems about performing abortions. "In my mind, I think someone has the right to get pregnant when she wants to, and I think she should have the same right to terminate the pregnancy when she wants to."

His abortion patients have included married women who got pregnant when they didn't think they could, teen-agers who didn't think it could happen to them and 11-year-old children who were incestuously raped.

Kaminsky first began performing abortions in the late 1960s during his residency at a busy New York City hospital that instituted a pilot program for outpatient abortions. He became a proponent of legal abortions when, as a resident, he performed life-saving procedures on women who almost died following illegal abortions. Kaminsky's experiences convinced him that women will get abortions regardless, so it's better to perform them in a medically safe environment. Fewer than one out of 1,000 people have complications arising out of legal abortions, Kaminsky says.

He moved to Key West, Fla., in 1971, was in the military for two years and then opened his own obstetrics-gynecology practice. By 1979, the Long Island native yearned for a big-city life and moved to Houston, where he is a member of the Harris County Medical Society, Texas Medical Association and Texas Abortion Rights Action League — just a few of his many professional affiliations.

Kaminsky advertises in the yellow pages directory and charges \$250 to perform an abortion in which the mother is not more than 12 weeks pregnant and doesn't have any unusual problems. That fee includes a pregnancy test, sonogram, pelvic examination, family-planning counseling, the abortion procedure and a follow-up visit.

Actually, Kaminsky would prefer to charge more than he does, but he's got to stay price-competitive to attract clients — most of whom are referred by friends or

patients. When abortions first became legal, Kaminsky could charge from \$500 to \$750 for a routine procedure. But now that more doctors are doing abortions, the cost is considerably lower.

On a recent Friday, his abortion patients included a 19-year-old student; a 34-year-old married woman; a 25-year-old, single bank teller; a 26-year-old divorcee back for her second abortion in three years; and a 27-year-old single mother of one who was having her third abortion.

The pregnant women often arrive before 8 a.m. for 8:30 and 9 a.m. appointments. They're taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Most bring someone along — a friend, boyfriend, husband or parent who spends about three hours in the outside waiting room.

This will be the first time some patients have seen Kaminsky. Others have met him in a previous office visit when they discussed their unwanted pregnancy and the alternatives available. Kaminsky tells them about abortion and adoption and lets them make their own decisions. He avoids performing an abortion on someone who has only come in because a boyfriend or parent insists that it's the right thing to do.

The waiting patients have lab work done, watch a video on the abortion procedure and receive counseling about birth control.

Kaminsky gives each patient an anesthetic and proceeds with the suction abortion while a nurse stands at her side — often holding her hand to calm her — explaining the procedure. The actual abortion only takes a couple of minutes — five at the most — and the female is then wheeled to a recovery room where she receives crackers, candy and a soft drink to prevent nausea. A nurse or medical assistant counsels her about proper family planning before sending her home.

Most of Kaminsky's patients are in their late teens and less than 12 weeks pregnant, but he will perform abortions up to 20 weeks gestation — a personal limit since the state of Texas hasn't established legal limits. With advanced technology, Kaminsky figures it is possible, yet rare, that a premature baby delivered at 23 or 24 weeks can survive. So he felt 20 weeks was a reasonable cutoff in which he would not be jeopardizing a life that might survive if born on its own.

Kaminsky doesn't think abortion is taking a life. He doesn't discount the fact that a fertilized egg and sperm become living tissue, but he questions the rights some claim that tissue should have

(Amel)

"The question is when that tissue has personhood and when does that miniature person have as much or more rights than the mother who is carrying it," he says. Kaminsky, who is Jewish, says performing abortions does not conflict with his religious beliefs. He's served on the board of his temple and says the Jewish Reform and Conservative translation of the Bible is that life begins with the actual birth.

He occasionally gets hate mail from anti-abortionists, and his office has received a few false bomb threats. A few of his gynecological patients stopped seeing him when they found out he performed abortions in his office, some people at social gatherings have questioned what he does and some professionals in his building would prefer he practice somewhere else.

But, for the most part, Kaminsky's received good response from his patients, family, friends

and colleagues. When Kaminsky's house was picketed, anti-abortionists and church representatives called him to apologize for the infringement on his private life. Kaminsky was worried about the effect the issue might have on his daughter — the youngest of three children and a high school cheerleader. But most people at her school approached her the day after an article ran in the newspaper to express dismay that people would picket her house.

Kaminsky says most of his mail

is favorable and that patients thank him for playing such a significant role in their lives.

"People, I think, are just as grateful for the care you give them when they have a monumental problem like an unwanted pregnancy, and for me that's very gratifying," he says. "I think you are saving lives."

If a woman has decided to have her pregnancy terminated, he says, "then I am saving that person's life. Her life would never be the same after she had a baby."

The views and opinions expressed in the Bay Area newsletter are those of the individual authors and contributors and do not necessarily express those of any other NOW chapter, Texas NOW, or National NOW.



National Organization for Women

Mail to:
Phyllis Tucker
243 Empress
Houston, Texas 77034

WHO CARES ABOUT WOMEN? NOW CARES! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? Join NOW, now.

- I want to be a member of Bay Area NOW, Texas NOW and National NOW. (\$35.00)
- I want to be a member of Bay Area NOW, Texas NOW and National NOW and can afford dues of \$ _____. (Dues for NOW are on a sliding scale from \$15.00 - \$35.00)
- I am already a member of National NOW and want to join the Bay Area Chapter. (\$8.00)
- I am not a NOW member but want to receive the newsletter for one year. (\$10.00 per year)
- I am making a contribution of \$ _____ to NOW.
- I authorize my name and address to be printed on the NOW roster for members.

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HOUSTON TX
PM
7 MAR
1986

