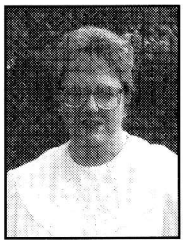

Lindy Pierce has interviewed over 200 men concerning their opinions of abortion and their personal experiences with abortion. While doing her research she spoke with numerous men who had never before shared their innermost thoughts about the emotional pain abortion had caused them. She saw the need for educational literature that would help minister to the hearts of these hurting men, one that would help bring these wounds to the surface where they might be healed. Mrs. Pierce is also a part-time interpreter for the deaf, substitute teacher, and childhood trauma therapist, while being a full-time wife/homemaker and mother of two adopted boys with special needs.

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Tennessee Right to Life
PO Box 5218
Knoxville, TN 37928-0218
(865) 689-1339
Tnright2life@ifriendly.com

Edited by Martha E. Schieber
Design and Illustration by Carla M. Steck

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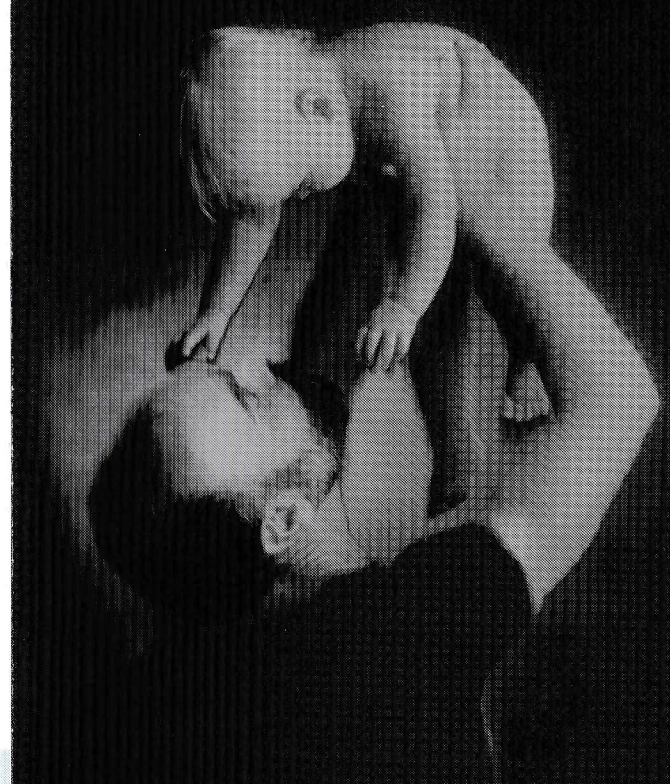
ITEM #151

HIDDEN TEARS



When a woman has an abortion she will experience the profound effects of this act for the rest of her life.

But did you know that fathers of aborted babies can suffer the same kinds of emotional stress? It is the father who often cries ...HIDDEN TEARS.

By Lindy Pierce

Fathers Tell
Their Stories

From the moment a man becomes aware of a pregnancy, an emotional bond begins to form with the fetus, a bond that will remain whether the pregnancy ends in miscarriage, induced abortion or a live birth. To say a man should not love, grieve for, or possess any legal rights to his own flesh and blood—a new human being whose genetic make-up is half his—is illogical. Men should have legal rights in abortion just as they do after birth, in adoption or child custody rulings.

The man's choice of parenthood is before the sex act. ...He has to be responsible for each act. Even if the pregnancy is unintended, it's his responsibility. It's like AIDS—everything has its consequences."[1]

"My life has changed dramatically from this experience... I have had nightmares, dreams that I could see the doctor coming up to her and ripping the fetus out of her. I used to wake up at night sweating... I just cried and mourned. The nightmares always come—they still come."

Bill Thomas, Age 26—Fireman

"She told me that people were coming up to her and asking her, 'What happened to Burt? He's changed.' Everybody knew that something profound had happened to me and that I wasn't talking about it."

Burt Mueller, Age 28—Musician

"...Not only is there a loss, but you are also a failure. Your primary function in life is to provide for and protect your family. And those [aborted] children are my family, and I failed. They're dead and I'm not..."

Bill Hitchings, Age 36—Cabinet Maker

Fathers' Rights Favored

PUBLIC OPINION

In interviews with 400 males at an abortion clinic, 70 percent of the relationships failed within one month after the abortion.[8]

A national poll conducted by the Boston Globe in March, 1989 found 72 percent believe abortion should be illegal if a mother wants an abortion but the father wants the baby.[9]

Among 1,050 men interviewed in a Los Angeles Times poll, seven percent acknowledged having been the father of an aborted child. Guilt was felt by almost two-thirds and regret by more than one-third.[10]

In a Gallup poll taken in 1991, 63 percent favor "a law requiring a pregnant woman to notify her husband if she decides to have an abortion."[11]

A Washington-based consulting firm, the Wirthlin Group, polled 753 people in 1992 and found that 74 percent support spousal notification.[12]

Clements Research revealed in a May, 1992 Parade Magazine article, that 62 percent would support a legal right for a father to prevent the abortion of his unborn child and that 76 percent favor requiring a woman to notify her husband before she has an abortion.[13]

Fathers Have Responsibilities
But No Rights

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court provided women the "right to abortion on demand, but specifically declined to consider interests of fathers at that time.[2]

Since *Roe v. Wade*, fathers have tried to have their rights realized in light of the Ninth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution that provide for the rights to privacy, due process and equal protection under the law.

"Today, however, the courts are beginning to acknowledge that fathers' contentions may be valid. Fathers are asking for a 'balancing of their constitutional rights against those of the mother. They argue that the Supreme Court, in striking down an absolute veto power in *Danforth*, left open the possibility of determining case-by-case whether a father's rights outweigh the mother's and that a hearing should be granted to balance the rights involved."[3]

In a New York case in March, 1988, David Ostreicher charged that his wife "used her pregnancy as a bargaining chip, threatening to abort the fetus if he didn't destroy (a pre-nuptial) contract." He told a reporter, "The issue is whether she has the right to hold a fetus hostage. Can a woman say, 'Unless you buy me a Mercedes, I'm going to have an abortion'? Are her rights that supreme?"[4]

There are documented cases in which a father's desire to preserve the life of his child should have outweighed the mother's interest in having an abortion. For example, a trial judge in the April, 1988 case of *In re Unborn Baby H* discovered that the only reason for an abortion was the mother's desire to look good in a bathing suit.[5]

In 1989, the *Webster* case turned over much of the decision-making process to the states, where legal battles are going on in the realm of spousal notification rights, that is, that a woman must inform her husband of her intent to obtain an abortion.[6]

Fathers' rights took a blow in 1992 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the spousal notification law of Pennsylvania in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Justice Harry Blackmun concurring in part and dissenting in part, stated, "...it will operate as a substantial obstacle to a woman's choice to undergo an abortion."[7]

Symptoms Behind The Hidden Tears

"Psychiatrist Dr. Kyle D. Pruiet of Yale University says that many men have no idea how much they are hurting until afterward: 'Then, whammo, they feel very guilty.' Counselors recognize 'postabortion syndrome' that is felt by men as well as women: loss, sorrow, depression and anger, often lasting many years after the event."[14]

In fact, studies have shown that men are more likely than women to blame themselves for a pregnancy and more likely to feel guilty. Not only do men more often experience guilt, but they suffer a deeper guilt reaction than women. On top of that, it has been a cultural "taboo" for men to vent these thoughts and the myriad of emotions that go along with an abortion experience.[15]

According to psychiatrist Richard Epstein "a man may feel deeply rejected by the destruction of the most important thing he can give to the woman he loves and, if so, he may undergo a profound depression."[16]

Other symptoms include: anxiety, grief, shame, guilt, nervousness, anger, nightmares, feelings of helplessness and betrayal, rejection, confusion, regret, hatred, humiliation, self-hatred, failure,alienation and loss of trust in others. In addition, physical illnesses of a psychosomatic nature found in these men include high blood pressure, ulcers, migraine headaches, impotence, panic attacks, violent behavior, insomnia, substance abuse and relational instability. These repercussions often arise as a delayed reaction occurring about five years after the abortion.[17]

HELP for "Silent Sufferers"

Psychologist Vincent Rue, a director of the Institute for Abortion Recovery and Research, urges men to stop being "silent sufferers," pretending an abortion has not affected them. Dr. Rue suggests:

1. Acknowledge your feelings;
2. Allow yourself to grieve over the death of your child;
3. Talk with others to vent grief and guilt;
4. Forgive yourself and others.[18]

Counseling Sources

Dr. Ed Smith, TheoPhostic Counseling
Campbellsville, KY 42718 • (502)465-3757

Caring Pregnancy Center 350 Broadway • Boulder, CO 80303 • (303)494-3262

Silent Voices 191B Glover Ave., Chula Vista, CA 91910 • (619)422-0757

National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing, 3501 S. Lake Drive, P.O. Box 07477, Milwaukee, WI 53207 • (414)483-4141 • (800)593-2273

After Abortion Helpline 21 Violet Street Providence, RI 02908 • (401)941-3050

INTERNET SOURCES

Safehaven
http://204.96.11.210/wv/square/chapel/safehaven/formen.htm

Pregnancy Care Centers
http://trfn.clpgh.org/carecenter/postabtn.htm

Post Abortion Stress Test
Share your story with others, leave a memorial dedication for your lost children.
http;//www.mindspring.com/~ralph_miller/lorrisstress.htm

Heart to Heart
http;//www.web-light.com/htoh04.htm

FACT1
(Fathers of Aborted Children Together as 1)
A politically active pro-life/fathers' rights group
http://www.fact1.org

National Coalition of Free Men
P.O. Box 129, Manhasset, NY 11030 "Declaration of the Father's Fundamental Pre-Natal Rights"
http://www.ncfm.org/index.htm

For additional information
Contact your local Right to Life group.