

Controversial late-term abortionist under fire for allowing parents to nurse and take 'photos and footprints' of their dead baby for a 'memory box'

- **Doctor says public are misinformed about the importance of late-term abortion**
- **Procedures illegal in all-but nine US states**
- **Colleagues of murdered Dr George Tiller speak out in emotional new documentary**

By [Joel Christie](#)

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One of only four American doctors who perform third-trimester abortions has added to the increasing controversy of her procedures by speaking out to defend the practice and revealing she encourages mothers to 'hold' their babies after the operation and create a 'memory box' of photos and footprints.

Late-term abortionist Dr. Susan Robinson - who is at the forefront of new documentary *After Tiller*, about the small group of professionals who fight to keep late abortion available - has defended her practices, saying that 'honoring' the baby can be a necessary part for the parents accepting their decision.

'With a fetal indications patient—if she refers to it as her baby, I'll refer to it as her baby. If she's named the baby, I'll use the baby's name too,' Dr Robinson said in an interview with [The Hairpin](#).



Dr. Susan Robinson, who is at the center of new late-term abortion documentary *After Tiller*, has defended the controversial practice of inviting mothers to hold their babies and create a 'memory box' of photos and footprints, saying it is important for parents to find closure. Many of the procedures are undertaken because of fetal abnormalities that are only detected in the latter stages of pregnancy

'I would say that most of these patients do decide to see and hold their baby, although many of them have a hard time dealing with the idea at first.

'We'll take remembrance photographs, we'll give them a teddy bear, the footprints. I mean, imagine being six months pregnant and finding out your baby's missing half its brain, and you've got this nursery you've painted at home, you're so ready - I don't want them to go home from the procedure with absolutely nothing to remember and honor the baby, and its birth.'

Dr Robinson and the three other doctors who perform late-term abortions - which take place after the 20th week of gestation - face incredible danger and scrutiny for the work they do, especially following the assassination of their

colleague Dr George Tiller, who was shot by an anti-abortion activist as he attended church in May 2009.





Dr George Tiller was shot through the head and killed in May 2009 by anti-abortionist Scott Roeder as he attended church in Kansas. A new documentary, *After Tiller*, which opened in New York last week, follows the fight of the four remaining doctors in the United States to carry on Tiller's work and perform late term abortions, or abortions performed after the 20th week of gestation. Tiller was also shot in 1993 in Wichita but survived (pictured left)

Late-term abortions are illegal in all-but nine US states and fewer than 1 per cent of abortions are performed in the third trimester.

The procedure itself, according to Dr Robinson, can take up to four days and is 'very disagreeable' with the body.

A 2011 Gallup poll found only 10 per cent of Americans are in favor of the practice, with many believing it is murder and 'infanticide'.

Some 79 per cent of pro choice advocates said abortions in the third trimester should be illegal.

However Dr Robinson, who has been performing abortions exclusively for 13 years, said such beliefs were steeped in misconception and misinformation.

'I think that the public perceives first of all that late abortion could be completely eliminated if people would only get their act together and have their abortions earlier, which is completely untrue,' she told The Hairpin.



Last of their kind: Doctors LeRoy Carhart, Warren Hern, Susan Robinson and Shelley Sella at the premier of After Tiller at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. They are the only doctors in America who perform late-term abortions and are forced to deal with endless protests, threats of violence, shot-out windows, and efforts to pass laws making it impossible for them to do their jobs

'I also think that people assume that women do this casually—that they've known they were pregnant for thirty weeks and then were on their way down to the hair salon and they saw the abortion clinic and they decided to just walk in to avoid the inconveniences of motherhood.

'That also is completely untrue. No matter how available birth control and first-trimester and second-trimester abortion is, you are always going to have the need for later abortions. A woman would never do this casually. The procedure lasts three or four days, and is fairly disagreeable.'

Dr Robinson said the time in which the operation can be performed depends on the mother and the health of her baby.



Coming out: Dr Shelley Sella was initially reluctant to participate in any interview because Dr Tiller never gave any, saying his reason was that it was about the patient and not him

'If someone finds out about a significant fetal anomaly that's bad enough that they want to terminate the pregnancy, then I believe that's their discretion,' she told *The Hairpin*.

'Some feel like, "Sure, I can take care of a kid with Down's no problem", and then two months later they're told that the baby also has an irreparable cardiac defect.

'They're told that the baby will have to have a dozen surgeries in its first year, with a very small chance that it will live past a certain age. And in those cases I see it as the parents' discretion, if they think their child's life will be filled with too much pain and suffering.

'There's a disabled-rights side to this ... When parents are saying "We do not feel we can adequately cope with that issue", I believe them, and I don't think they'd have an easy time putting a child with severe disabilities up for adoption successfully."

Dr Robinson also maintained a late-term abortion is no more dangerous than child birth.

'Not often, but things go wrong when you do abortions,' she said.

'They don't usually go seriously wrong, but it's a complex procedure. Still, if you compare abortion at any gestational age to childbirth, childbirth is significantly more likely to kill the mother than abortion, which is something that no OB-GYN (doctor) will ever tell you.'

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2436548/Controversial-late-term-abortionist-allowing-parents-nurse-footprints-dead-baby.html#ixzz41rqnQetw>

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