



Anti-abortion group releases new secretly recorded video

By Shannon Travis, CNN

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Story highlights

- Most recent video focuses on Phoenix family planning practice
- Part owner of the facility says clinic follows all applicable laws
- Live Action has been accused of pushing a hardline anti-abortion agenda
- Two other videos focused on clinics in New York and Washington

The anti-abortion group that recently revealed two videos from a secret investigation into abortion clinics released a third on Thursday.

The group, Live Action, previewed it first to CNN, providing what [appears to be full footage](#) and an [edited version](#).

The new, secretly recorded video focuses on the Family Planning Associates Medical Group in Phoenix.

Two other videos, released earlier this week, focused on the [Dr. Emily Women's Health Center in New York and the Washington-based Washington Surgi-Clinic](#).

With the new video, Live Action levels the same claim it did in the previous two: That abortion clinic workers admit or suggest they're willing to kill babies who are born alive after botched abortions.

"What we're alleging is there is a federal Born Alive Infants Protection Act. And there are numerous state laws that protect infants," Live Action founder and president Lila Rose told CNN in an exclusive interview. "So we're alleging that there is potentially illegal activity going on in these clinics."

Live Action has been accused of pushing a hardline anti-abortion agenda using dubious tactics, including secret recordings. They've also been accused of heavily editing videos to achieve a desired effect.

Rose dismissed the criticism.

"Our agenda is the truth here. The truth about the brutality of abortion. and the truth that we believe every person deserves human rights. And that women can do better than this. That's our agenda. I'm very clear about that."

The third release could prove potentially more controversial and helpful to the anti-abortion movement than the previous two productions.

Arizona is a far more conservative state on abortion than New York or Washington. Last year, Arizona attempted to pass what some called one of the [most restrictive abortion laws in the nation](#). It is on hold pending a legal challenge.

Live Action's chief told CNN the group plans to release three more videos in coming weeks.

The liberal-leaning media watchdog MediaMatters said on its website this week that the videos are timed to coincidewith the trial of Dr. Kermit Gosnell. He is accused of performing illegal late-term abortions in Philadelphia. Gosnell's lawyer says he's innocent. Jurors are currently deliberating.

In all of the Live Action videos, a pregnant woman meets with workers at an abortion clinic and pretends to want an abortion. In each case, the woman is actually working undercover for Live Action. And in each case, the pregnant woman secretly records her conversations with those workers -- who are unaware they are being recorded.

The video shot inside the Phoenix medical group features three workers.

The conversations on it do not prove any wrongdoing by any of FamilyPlanning's staff.

Dr. Paul Isaacson, part owner of the Phoenix facility, maintained that his clinic follows all applicable abortion laws.

"We have not had the opportunity to review the video or transcript of the video reportedly recorded in our office because it has not been provided to us," Isaacson said in a statement to CNN.

"However, the details of the video as described do not reflect the policies and procedures at Family Planning Associates Medical Group. Family Planning Associates Medical Group strictly adheres to all applicable state and federal laws regarding the delivery of abortion care," he added. CNN has reached out to the various local, state and federal health and law enforcement agencies to determine if any will investigate Live Action's claims against the Phoenix medical group. CNN has not yet received a response.

Congress passed and President Bush signed the "Born Alive Infant Protection Act" in 2002.

The law states that any infant born alive, including any in an abortion attempt, must receive legal protections. Doctors must also work to save their lives. The law does not explicitly state that it is illegal to discuss hypotheticals of what might happen in such matters.

In the recording from inside the Phoenix facility, one woman identifies herself as Dr. Laura Mercer , a chief resident.

The doctor carefully walks the pregnant woman through the abortion process, to which the woman rolls through a series of questions.

At one point, the woman asks if she could go into labor, at home, over the two-day process.

"That would be a lot less common, but theoretically it would be a possibility," the doctor said.

Moments later, the pregnant woman asks: what would happen if she went into labor and the fetus emerged alive.

"It won't," the doctor said.

"But if it, if it does survive, like what would you do, like?" the woman asks.

"Nothing," the doctor responds. "So at this gestational age, um, there's really not the possibility.

A fetus is not developed enough that it can survive outside of the uterus, at this point."

"So you wouldn't like resuscitate it, or like give it anything to help it survive?" the woman asks.

"No," the doctor says. "Even if you were pregnant at the same time with a very desired pregnancy, and you had the exact same thing happen, spontaneously on your own at 23 week two days in the hospital, we would still say, 'Do you want us to try to resuscitate? Our chances aren't good.' But it's kinda one of those things that if it makes the parents feel better, we'll give it a shot between 23 to 24 weeks."

Later on tape, another woman identified by Live Action as a counselor, makes similar comments. Rose said her group wants investigations.

"We're looking for prosecutions where there may be criminal acts going on. We're looking for the de-licensing of these so-called doctors and their clinics so they're no longer allowed to operate. And we're also looking for the de-funding of any federal or state or local taxpayer dollars that are going to these acts," she said.

CNN spoke with Mercer on Wednesday. She acknowledged previously doing a resident rotation at Family Planning but was not aware of the existence of the video or any role in it.

When informed about the video, Mercer responded, "That's interesting," adding that she'd need to go back and look over records of a conversation with the pregnant woman in question.

Mercer was familiar with laws that mandates a doctor must work to save a fetus that emerged alive during an abortion.

"You have to evaluate for the ability to do so. Absolutely," Mercer said.

Asked if she could recall ever saying otherwise, Mercer responded: "No. Not that I remember."

Mercer is a physician resident in training at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center. Bill Byron, vice president of public relations, spoke with CNN in a phone interview.

"The issue of what, let's say Dr. Mercer, would or wouldn't do, according to Live Action -- she's a resident. And a resident is not going to do anything without being supervised, obviously, in any decisionmaking from the perspective of the attending physician in the office," Byron said.

"The second thing is that, when you look at Arizona, some of our statutes ... is that, by law, if a fetus was deemed as viable or showed signs of viability, a second physician has to be in the room who's going to assume the care of that fetus."

Byron added that "nowhere do I see where she says that 'Hey, if your baby comes out alive, I'm ... going to let it die.'"