

Dr. Chris Simopoulos: Arrests and convictions

In 1984, Virginia abortion doctor Chris Simopoulos of the American Women's (abortion) Clinic in Norfolk, Virginia appeared in court accused of scheduling dozens of women for abortions who were not pregnant.

According to a **September 24, 1984 Washington Post** article: *Simopoulos Sells Abortion Clinic Here; Doctor Faces Hearing Today in Norfolk Court*, his abortion clinic was listed more than a half-dozen times under various names in the Northern Virginia Yellow Pages, advertising "low cost abortions."

The article states that Simopoulos was charged with two felonies linked to his Norfolk abortion clinic. He first was arrested July 25 as he allegedly prepared to perform an abortion procedure on an undercover policewoman who police said had falsely been told by Simopoulos that she was pregnant. At least four policewomen had urine tests at the clinic, and three were told they were pregnant, said Capt. W.A. Williamson of the police vice and narcotics squad.

The Associated Press (AP), reported on July 27, 1984 that one of the policewomen returned to Simopoulos' abortion clinic for a physical examination and an abortion. They said that as Simopoulos prepared to perform the procedure, the officer stopped him, called another officer from the lobby and arrested the doctor, according to police.

AP also said that sixteen women from The National Organization for Women (NOW) and the newspapers got free pregnancy tests at the clinic, and 14 were told they were pregnant, although examinations elsewhere showed they were not. Among those told they were pregnant were a woman who was surgically sterilized two years ago and another who substituted a man's urine for her own in the pregnancy test. NOW told the AP that they became suspicious when the clinic sought to take out an advertisement in a newsletter last fall, but failed to satisfactorily answer questions, said spokeswoman Susan Fincke. The investigation was begun in May when the group heard repeated rumors of problems at the clinic, NOW said.

On Sept. 5, Simopoulos and Dr. Parviz Modaber, a Culpeper physician were charged with performing an illegal abortion. On **September 6, 1984, The Washington Post** reported in the article: *2 Va. Doctors Indicted In Illegal Abortion Case*, that Simopoulos was charged with performing an illegal abortion on a 28-year-old on Jan. 11, and Modaber, who also worked at the clinic, was charged with performing such an abortion on a 15-year-old on June 30, according to James O. Broccoletti, assistant commonwealth's attorney for Norfolk. The arrest followed an investigation during which more than a dozen women allegedly had been given false pregnancy tests at the clinic, authorities said.

Simopoulos was convicted four years prior in Fairfax Circuit Court of performing an illegal abortion on a 17-year-old Woodbridge girl, who was 5 1/2 months pregnant. The girl left the clinic and went into labor and aborted a male fetus in a Springfield motel room after a saline abortion by Simopoulos according to a **June 20, 1982 article in the Washington Post, *The Doctor, the Law And a Landmark Case.***

The girl, then left the aborted fetus in a trash can at the Motel. Fairfax County police tracked down the girl, who led them to Simopoulos. On a weekday morning in late November 1979, with several women patients looking on, police sealed off the two-story, red-brick American Women's Clinic on Broad Street and led Simopoulos away in handcuffs.

After his conviction, Simopoulos' license was revoked by state medical authorities. It was restored briefly during an appeal of the revocation, then revoked again, then restored again on condition he perform no abortions for two years.

Simopoulos received a two-year prison sentence for his 1980 conviction. All but 30 days of that sentence were suspended and his medical license was revoked. It later was restored along with privileges at several Northern Virginia hospitals. He fought the conviction all the way to the Supreme Court, which upheld his conviction.

At the time of the investigation, Simopoulos was licensed in the District of Columbia and Maine, and was rejected by Maryland because of his 1980 conviction.

Simopoulos was also named in a \$1 million malpractice suit filed in March of 1984 in Fairfax Circuit Court by a woman charging Simopoulos with negligence during two gynecological procedures in 1982 that allegedly left her infertile. The woman has filed a separate \$250,000 damage suit against Simopoulos, charging him with assault and battery for allegedly performing surgery on her against her will.

On July 28, 1984, The New York Times reported that an executive committee of the state Board of Medicine suspended the license of abortionist Chris Simopoulos.