

ABORTION AT 7 MONTHS DEFIES COMMON SENSE

By **Kathleen Parker**

THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

SEPTEMBER 13, 1995

Dr. Herbert Schwarz, a besieged New York City abortionist, complains he's a pawn, the victim of a witch hunt, a sacrificial lamb.

All because he botched a seventh-month abortion.

Schwarz's dubious lament follows months of controversy about an abortion procedure he performed in March on a Long Beach, N.Y., woman.

Reportedly, Schwarz gave the woman medication to induce an abortion and sent her home.

She ended up in an emergency room, in shock and hemorrhaging. Doctors had to perform emergency surgery and delivered a stillborn, 7-month-old fetus.

Needless to say, the nonmother is upset. So are her attorneys. So are state health officials, who say Schwarz failed to measure the fetus, which would have alerted the doctor to the baby's advanced development. Officials also claim Schwarz mishandled 10 other abortions.

Schwarz, who estimates he has performed about 45,000 abortions during his career, is scheduled for a court hearing today to fight for his reputation, which he says is being "sacrificed because America is convulsing over this problem (abortion)."

Amid all the legal posturing, no one seems to be troubled by the absence of common sense, not to mention the death of a child.

We may be able to call a first trimester abortion a medical procedure, but by no stretch of rhetoric can we call the C-section delivery of a stillborn child anything but a death.

Interestingly, all the focus seems to be on whether the doctor should have performed the abortion. Or whether he performed it in a manner that is medically defensible.

The more disturbing issue to me is Mother X - who decided eight weeks before her delivery date that she wasn't up to motherhood. What, pray tell, was she thinking?

Any woman who, by the end of seven months, hasn't made up her mind whether to carry a child to term or have an abortion has forfeited her options. It's just too late. It's just that simple.

But for the sake of charity, let's give Mother X the benefit of the doubt. Let's assume she had a "good" reason for seeking an abortion after seven months, i.e. she was unwed, couldn't afford a child or was too young.

Let's say Mother X wasn't married to the father of the former fetus and, after seven months of trying unsuccessfully to form a family with him, she gave up and called Dr. Schwarz.

But how long does it take to realize you're too young, too poor, unwed or ill-prepared? Or to determine that the so-called "father" is a jerk. Surely not seven months!

Let's take another tack. Let's suppose Mother X didn't know she was pregnant until, say, the sixth month and needed four weeks to decide whether or not she was up to motherhood.

If a woman is six months pregnant without realizing it, she's either in a coma or she's so incredibly obtuse she's unlikely to turn to the Yellow Pages for an Upper East Side doc like Schwarz.

I can think of no debatable benefits of doubt for Mother X. There's just no excuse for seeking an abortion that late in pregnancy and there's no reason - absent a life-threatening medical complication - for a doctor to perform one. By all accounts, Mother X's case was not life-threatening.

Motivations and legal ramifications aside, Mother X's fetus raises a thorny question for us all. At seven months, that fetus was potentially viable outside its mother's womb, as are thousands of other babies born two months prematurely each year.

We aren't about to resolve the abortion issue this century as people like me continue to waffle between an anti-government, pro-choice stance for early abortions and revulsion at abuses such as this one.

But regardless of one's opinion about when life begins, common sense suggests that three months is ample time for post-conception family planning. Maybe that simple thought is where the next abortion debate should begin.

Copyright © 2020, Orlando Sentinel

This article is related to: [Medical Procedures](#)