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In 1990s, pro-life pressure against abortion clinic intensifies (II)



David Tulis

January 5, 2013

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Chattanooga Women’s Clinic opened in Chattanooga in 1975 and is reported to have destroyed nearly 35,000 boys and girls. The operators of the clinic ran a rough shop, with numerous injured women, numerous lawsuits for negligence, protests by Christians until three blockade protests of the clinic in 1989 under the theme of Operation Rescue. As clinic owner Susie Crawley was dying of cancer, her familiars across the picket line sought to visit her in the hospital, and she filed suit alleging harassment. Illegal abortions at the clinic brought dismissal against civil claims against protesters.

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SIMPLE CLAIMS Two elderly women join 2,500 other right-to-life demonstrators in a "life chain" Jan. 20, 1991.

1990s, pro-life activism against the destruction of boys and girls continued among Christians continued to have greater effect as the operation at the clinic seemed to weaken. [Here is Part I of the story.](#)

Showing Gumption; Woman Defended

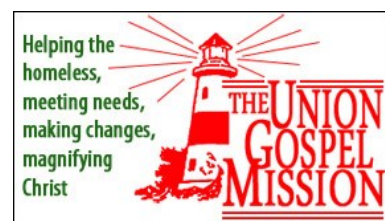
The legal front at the start of the 1990s remained quiet for only a short time. A group of 16 local attorneys sued the following month seeking to get a Hamilton County judge to enforce the state law requiring clinics to have malpractice insurance, obtain informed consent from the women & follow the rules.

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District Attorney General Gerbitz joined in the suit seeking a declaratory judgment.

It was filed on behalf of a woman named **RHONDA BRADFORD** who required 6 days in the hospital after getting “serious, painful, debilitating & permanent injuries,” forcing her to seek a 2nd doctor to get hospital admission since the abortionists did not have local hospital privileges (Times, Oct10/90).

Four & a half months later she & her husband, Carl, filed a lawsuit in Circuit Court demanding F\$! million.

According to a News-Free Press report of the suit, “the plaintiff said she was told it would be a simple procedure, but that she “screamed in pain” when it began. It was later learned her uterus had been perforated & her intestines lacerated, the suit says.” (Feb25/91). The suit said the abortion circuit-rider physician — **RALPH ROBINSON**, possibly as old as 75 — lived outside the state, was “unqualified” when the abortion was done, & was, according to the plaintiff, “judgment proof” because he had no assets in his name.

“Mrs. Bradford *** was told *** not to scream from the intense pain she was suffering because it might upset the doctor & other patients awaiting their abortions,” the filing said.

The baby slain was well into the 2nd trimester of maturity — the clinic having destroyed the child illegally left its tiny head in the lacerated womb. Surgeons at Erlanger extracted & pitched it. Robinson’s age had been noted earlier by a state licensing examiner who said his hands & face constantly trembled.

National Guardsman Commits Abortions

The litigation scared Robinson away in October. The clinic hired another circuit rider abortionist, **EDGAR PERRY**, a national guard major in his late 50s from Elizabethton, Tenn.

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Many area churches ignored the abortion industry & its violent effect upon the city. If abortion was at all mentioned negatively from the pulpit, few churchgoers heard encouragement to join in the fray to protect human life. Others making no public profession of Christian faith also walked both sides of the fence. The Community Foundation, listing F\$13.2 million assets in 1989, gave money to pro-abortion Planned Parenthood, which makes referrals to abortionists like those at the clinic. It covered its bases by giving cash also to Bethel Bible Village & Teen Challenge (N-FP, Sept24/90).

Vast Demonstrations Begin

A “life chain” of demonstrators Jan. 20, 1991, drew at least 2,500 area residents who lined Vance Road & Lee Highway in both directions. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday marked the federal supreme court’s Roe vs. Wade ruling of 1973.



POPULOUS WYSONGS Right-to-life activist Charles Wysong and his wife, Brenda, are richly blessed with children. To date the couple have 15.

Mass

showings of public unrest over abortion was evidenced in March when 2,000 pro-lifers, many of whom had picketed Chattanooga Women’s Clinic for years, demonstrated in Nashville as pro-birth legislation was being pushed. “We want

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to position state law for the overturn of (Roe vs. Wade) so that the lives of 21,000 babies that are being destroyed in Tennessee each year will be protected,” said longtime Christian activist **BOBBIE PATRAY** of Eagle Forum. “We want to reinstate Tennessee’s commitment to the unborn.”

Abortion Clinic Weakens as Cancer Turns Deadly

One out of every 5 children conceived was aborted in Tennessee during the decade. Practitioners of abortion locally could not escape painful deaths of their own.

The prayers that God might judge Mrs. Crawley seemed in line with God’s plans for her. After a painful, bitter struggle with cancer, she died May 21, age 47. Her property was valued at F\$225,000, according to a suit filed against her estate by business colleague **FRAN MAZZUCO** late January 1992. At issue in the case: a condo. Mazzuco also came down with cancer & died abruptly nearly two years later on Feb. 13, 1993.

Writing supporters in June, life activist Wysong, father eventually of 15 children, praised God for the increasing decrepitude of the clinic. “They are now down to one half day a week, they have lost 3 doctors, & there is an abortion malpractice suit against the 4th doctor. *** I am reminded of II Samuel 3:1 ‘Now there was a war between the house of Saul & the house of David: but David waxed stronger & stronger, & the house of Saul waxed weaker & weaker.”

Wysong’s group, American Rights Coalition, publishing nationwide a toll-free 1-800 number, was directing abortion-injured women to attorneys willing to file lawsuits on their behalf. His success was growing.

Baby Rescuers Upheld

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In July pro-lifers rung up another victory against the clinic. District Attorney Gerbitz dropped all charges against 33 pro-lifers because the state's appeals court indirectly backed up Judge Meyer, who had ruled earlier in a different case that right-to-lifers could use the necessity defense against Operation Rescue prosecutions in light of illegal abortions at the clinic.

Gerbitz said the clinic's lawyer assured him they were "no longer performing such abortions," according to the Times.

But the Chattanooga abortion clinic was lying. The clinic charged F\$425 for abortions done after 12 weeks, long-time Chattanooga abortion clinic attorney **SELMA CASH PATY** told the N-FP (Sept1/92).

A Pre-Dawn Prowler

The clinic, facing constant pickets & streetside counselors, sought sympathy when it became a crime victim. Very early on the morning of Aug. 29, 1991, before light, someone clambered atop the roof of the clinic & threw off two air conditioning units & tore up many roof shingles. "**ABORTION CLINIC VANDALIZED**," screamed the N-FP headline the next day.

It was strongly suggested by editorialists, pro-abortionists & some pro-lifers that the act was done by foes of abortion. They denied it. No arrests were made, & no suspects named. As late as August 1992, the police captain looking into the case, **ROY DICKY**, said it was still open, & that both sides were being looked at with equal rigor.

In the fall, Christian enemies of Chattanooga Women's Clinic took part in a nationwide event Oct. 7 in a "Life Chain" in which 3,600 people participated locally. Many waved signs: "Abortion Kills Children."

CWC Patron Burned to Death

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The slaying of the unborn at the clinic affected thousands of women whose sometimes unsavory personal lives got public attention.

One whose patronage of Chattanooga Women's Clinic made the newspapers was involved in a stormy 6-year illicit relationship that ended in her slaying.

A grisly murder trial in March 1992 produced testimony about **TRACI CROZIER**, who had had 2 abortions at CWC in 1985. Ex-boyfriend Leroy Hall Jr., 25, was tried for murder & arson in torching her. [At the time the unstable Hall killed the woman, she was contemplating a 5th abortion, his lawyer said.](#)

Other local women experienced grief over their abortions, spurring them into pro-life action. Before "Ginger" became a counselor at AAA Women's Services, she nearly died from a botched abortion in Mississippi at a clinic which reportedly had injured 4 other women, all within several months time and all the focus of litigation (N-FP, Sept4/92).

Right-to-Life Cause Grows Stronger

The time eventually came in mid-1992 that the existence of an abortion mill in Chattanooga had a clearcut negative consequence for politicians who tolerated the Chattanooga abortion clinic & other operators.

On Aug. 5, a day before primary elections, a pro-life group attacked a supposedly "neutral" candidate for the state House, Rep. **DAVID COPELAND**, a pro-income tax incumbent of 24 years who'd never lifted a finger to protect the unborn. The story made the front page of the News-Free Press. If that were not enough: On primary election day was an above-the-fold headline, "Physician Indicted On Abortion Count; To Still Work Here."

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Rep. Copeland lost the day in heavy turnout. Aides in his camp & that of winner Rep. Ken Meyer were said to have attributed the narrow victory to pro-life political work.

The doctor being criminally & civilly charged was Dr. Perry of Elizabethton. An abortion he had done on **TANISHA LYNETTE RODDY**, 15, of Clinton, Tenn., had been botched. Dr. Perry, 58, was charged with criminal abortion after performing a 2nd trimester abortion on the child at the Volunteer Medical Clinic in Knoxville. The indictment also accused him of failing to abide by the 2-day waiting-period law. He was arrested, held & freed on a F\$3,000 bond. A week before, the clinic had been indicted on the same charge. The case was thrown out Jan. 6, 1993, on grounds of the unenforceability of the statute (T-FP, Jan7/93).

According to a copy of the civil suit which demanded F\$I million, the girl's uterus was punctured & she had to be taken to another hospital in Knoxville where the abortion had to be finished.

In 1992 Perry came Thursdays to work afternoons at the Chattanooga abortion clinic, then punch through to Friday mornings with a slew of abortions.

Trauma in the Stirrups for Young Mother

If life wasn't already hard enough for the Chattanooga abortion clinic, surgery on a woman dubbed **JENNIFER DOE** on Feb. 27 came back to haunt in a civil damages case filed Sept. 30.

Doe went into the clinic, paid F\$300 cash, got an ultrasound of her baby but was not allowed to see the images. She was told to respond to the name "Lime 5" when called from a lineup of 20 women there to abort. Jennifer received no consent forms, was not told about possible medical difficulties, found no one to whom to direction questions and had an abortion procedure

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DR. ED PERRY

within hours of her arrival — despite a law requiring a 48-hour waiting period.

Amid the whine of the medical vacuum cleaner Perry poked into her womb, he loomed “with his shirt unbuttoned, with his chest hair exposed. [He] continued to use profanity & repeatedly used the word ‘fu _ _.’” the pleading said. “While performing the procedure, Ed Perry appeared to be fondling the nurse who was assisting, & made a

comment to the plaintiff that ‘nothing is better in life than sex and money.’”

On May 21, after four months of bleeding, Jennifer was examined by an obstetrician and found to be still with child. “In light of the degrading and humiliating manner in which she had been treated, & after having been given an opportunity for further reflection, plaintiff elected to not terminate the life of her unborn child.” The suit was filed by lawyers **MIKE JENNINGS & HOYT SAMPLES**.

And important Christian labor was conducted for many years in this period by **DOUG DAUGHERTY**, who pointed out at one

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public event that abortion is perhaps less something that God will judge, than the judgment itself.

Please read [Part III of "Rush, Rush, Rush!" Rise & Fall of Chattanooga Abortion Clinic](#)



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David Tulis hosts a talk show weekdays 1 to 3 p.m. on NoogaRadio 92.7 FM 95.3 FM HD4 (digital), covering local economy and free markets in Chattanooga and beyond. Nothing on this website should be construed as legal advice; all discussions about law and practices favoring a free people are opinion and educational; if you want legal advice consult a licensed attorney.

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