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Carnage in the Womb: An Abortion Scandal Rocks Britain

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Britain has been dealing with renewed controversy over abortion in recent months, first prompted by newspaper reports providing details of new imaging technologies that provide spectacularly accurate images of the developing baby in the womb. The technologies, based in a 4-D scanning procedure pioneered by Professor Stuart Campbell of King's College Hospital, have forced changes in the way fetal development is understood. Professor Campbell's images of developing fetuses, first released to the public this past summer, show babies appearing to practice walking in the womb as early as 12 weeks into development, and opening their eyes as early as 18 weeks. The images—widely published in the British press—also showed the developing babies smiling, yawning, crying, blinking, and rubbing their eyes while moving within the womb. The images and the public furor prompted by their publication led British Prime Minister Tony Blair to announce his intention to lead the British government to rethink the nation's abortion law. At present, British abortion providers can perform abortions up to 24 weeks into a pregnancy. Several leading members of the British Parliament want to push that limit down to 12 weeks, taking into account modern technological advances, improved neonatal procedures, and the lower age of fetal viability.

Thus, Britons were shocked and scandalized when one of the nation's most influential newspapers, The Telegraph, published a series of investigative reports linking an officially-recognized British abortion provider with illegal late-term abortions performed in Spain.

The newspaper's work is a landmark achievement in investigative journalism. Reporters Daniel Foggo and Charlotte Edwardes spent months working on the series, focusing on the British Pregnancy Advisory Service [BPAS], a charity that serves as one of Britain's largest abortion providers, funded by the nation's National Health Service.

After hearing reports that BPAS had been sending British women to Barcelona for illegal abortions, the two reporters set about their task. Their investigation had an unusual twist—Charlotte Edwardes was over 20 weeks pregnant when the investigation reached its critical stage. Posing as a woman seeking a late-term abortion, she and her much-wanted baby became the newspaper's entry point into the investigation.

The unfolding story is both grotesque and illuminating. Foggo and Edwardes have blown the cover on a massive abortion scandal that reaches to the highest elites of the British medical establishment and its network of abortion providers.

As the reporters summarized their findings, "Covert video and audio recordings exposed a horrific underground industry in which women carrying healthy fetuses beyond the 24-week legal cutoff and who want to end their pregnancies for 'social' reasons, travel to an abortion clinic in Spain on the recommendation of BPAS. The organization refers them there as a matter of 'policy.'"

As Charlotte Edwardes revealed, she had contacted the British Pregnancy Advisory Service in London, posing as a

21-week pregnant woman looking for an abortion. She was referred to the Ginemedex Clinic in Barcelona, and she followed the trail all the way from Britain to Barcelona in order to uncover the truth behind the scandal.

Using recorded telephone conversations, hidden cameras, and first-person reporting, Edwardes documented her experience from her first contact with BPAS to the moment she fled from the Barcelona clinic.

The Telegraph published extensive transcripts of the recordings. In a phone call placed by Charlotte Edwardes to BPAS on September 9, 2004, the agency's receptionist, upon hearing that Edwardes was 21 weeks pregnant, referred her to the Barcelona clinic. When she called the Ginemedex Clinic on September 21, 2004, she told the receptionist, named "Jimena" that she would be 25 weeks pregnant when she could get to the clinic. When Edwardes asked for the upper limit of abortions performed at the center, Jimena responded: "Under the law it's up to 24 weeks. It's completely legal but don't worry about being 25 or more because there is a loophole, like a gap of information in the law which only infers that for 24 weeks to more we can only make [inaudible]. Well, what we do here is we make determination when there's a malformation or when the life of the mother or the baby is in danger, okay? So if you have a normal pregnancy but still you want to do it, what we do is to put on the paper that there was a gynecological emergency and that is under the law. So you have to know this. If they say that you came to the clinic because you had a bleeding or anything, because it was an emergency then you won't have a problem with the law. Okay? Because you are more than 24 weeks."

In other words, Jimena assured Edwardes that she would be able to obtain the abortion, even at a point past 25 weeks of fetal development. Of course, Jimena also explained that the abortion would be more expensive as the pregnancy progressed. An abortion at 25 weeks would cost approximately four thousand dollars, but an abortion at 26 or 27 weeks of development would be about six thousand dollars. Such is the perverse and murderous logic of the Culture of Death. Even as the baby grows into unquestioned viability, the clinic charges even more money for killing the baby.

When Edwardes arrived at the Barcelona clinic on October 6, 2004, "Victoria," a nurse at the Ginemedex Clinic, explained it is a nice, private clean clinic that kills babies.

Victoria also explained that most of the patients coming to the Barcelona clinic for abortions are British citizens. She assured Edwardes that the abortion would be fully possible up to 30 weeks of fetal development. Jimena, another nurse who joined the conversation, reexplained the procedure. "In the first part, you are completely asleep and then they give you an injection and they stop the fetus's heart," she assured. "So, in the second part, we do the termination itself which is really to get it out. It's dead."

Later, the clinic's head doctor, Dr. B. R. Tanda, performed an ultrasound examination of Charlotte Edwardes' baby. Edwardes described the scanner's progress: "It flickers, then slowly a shape comes into focus. The baby's head, two long legs, arms, feet and backbone—each vertebra sharply defined—are clearly visible. I feel the baby kick inside. On the monitor the doctor watches as it moves a tiny hand to its mouth and begins sucking its thumb. It is an image of innocence and contentment."

For Dr. Tanda, it's just another day of killing. As Edwardes remembered, "At least he played his role as a disinterested butcher with honesty. I wondered how utterly helpless I would feel in his hands if he was actually about to perform this operation on me." When Dr. Tanda announced his intention to begin an internal examination in order to prepare Charlotte Edwardes for the abortion, she fled the clinic.

The newspaper's publication of the spell-binding investigative reports has already prompted criminal or governmental investigations in both Great Britain and Spain. Spain's abortion law is even more restrictive than Britain's, with severe criminal penalties for doctors performing illegal abortions. The Telegraph's series caught both British and Spanish officials in a conspiracy to perform illegal late-term abortions while classifying healthy fetuses as "gynecological emergencies."

In publishing the transcripts and investigative reports, Foggo and Edwardes succeeded in showing both the horror of the abortion industry and the banality of the bureaucracy of death that represents the abortion culture. When Edwardes pressed a BPAS advisor whether such a late-term abortion would be legal in Spain, the advisor responded, "It's not unillegal." In other words, she admitted on tape that the procedure was fully illegal.

The newspaper also responded with a strongly-worded editorial. "Our disclosure today of the links between the

British Pregnancy Advisory Service [BPAS] and a Spanish clinic practicing illegal abortions arose from an investigation by this newspaper into the extent to which abortion on demand is available in this country for late-term pregnancies.” As the editorial continued, the evidence uncovered by the reporters “is a quite extraordinary arrangement that makes a mockery of BPAS’s claim to be a responsible charity worthy of NHS funding, and poses urgent questions for the Spanish authorities and the British Government.”

The paper described Ann Furedi, the chief executive of BPAS, as “shockingly dishonest.” Furthermore, the paper pointed directly at the financial profit that fuels the entire enterprise: “The more developed the fetus, the more you pay. It is hard to conceive of a more grotesque personification of callousness and indifference to the termination of a life in the image of Dr. B. R. Tanda, the clinic’s physician, which we publish today. We have moved from the seedy illegal abortionists of the 1950s to the impatient doctor-businessman, tapping his watch in surroundings that more closely resemble a Las Vegas nightclub than a medical institution.”

The newspaper’s editorial concludes with a poetic lament. “As for the unborn child, it is swallowed up in a tide of lies, deceit and—in Spain at least—easy money. How ironic that those who campaigned most vigorously against back-street abortions have conspired to create a new kind of glossier but no less sinister marketplace of death.”

The late-term abortion procedure, presented in these reports in all of its horror, is routinely available in the United States. Can anyone imagine a major American newspaper running a series of similar investigative reports, much less editorializing with such moral conviction?

Ann Furedi, the BPAS chief executive, has insisted that “abortions should be available as early as possible and as late as necessary.” Dominic Lawson, editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, explains that he once debated Dr. Ellie Lee, the co-coordinator of the ProChoice Forum and a lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Kent, on the issue of late-term abortion. Dr. Lee, a friend and associate closely related to Ann Furedi, similarly argued that “abortion should be available as early as possible and as late as necessary.” Lawson posed Dr. Lee a question: Suppose a mother gave birth to a baby at full term and decided at the last minute, just as the umbilical cord had been cut, that she did not want the baby. Should she be allowed to have the baby killed? Chillingly, Dr. Lee responded: “I think so, yes.”

Here we see the Culture of Death in all of its cruelty, all of its horror, in a rare but chilling moment of candor.

When Ann Furedi was confronted by the newspaper with its investigative reports and evidence, she responded, “So, what is your point exactly?”

The point, Ms. Furedi, is that the readers of these investigative reports—and all those who will learn of its findings—now know who you are, what you represent, and what your organization has been doing.

The Culture of Death can survive only in the dark. There may yet be enough moral sanity remaining in this world to deal with this issue honestly and recover a Culture of Life when the truth is made known. The people of Britain and Spain—and the people of the United States—must choose life over death and reverse the barbarism of our present age. That, Ms. Furedi, is the point . . . exactly.

