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## Thrown Over the Fence — Infanticide, Canadian Style

*If we will not defend life in the womb, eventually the dignity of every single human life is thrown over the fence.*



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Mark Steyn hit the nail on the head when he accused a Canadian appeals court of allowing for a “fourth-trimester abortion” — that’s right, the killing of a baby that is already born.



The case emerged from the Court of Queen’s Bench in Alberta, where a judge faced the fact that a woman had been convicted of strangling her newborn son and then throwing the baby’s body over the fence into her neighbor’s yard.

As CBC News reported, the woman was given a three-year suspended sentence and will spend no time in jail for the killing of her baby. Katrina Efferts “will have to abide by conditions for the next three years but she won’t spend time behind bars for strangling her own son.”

Justice Joanne Veit, whose name should now go down in legal and moral infamy, tied this woman’s act of infanticide to Canada’s lack of legal restrictions on abortion. The judge’s decision stated that “while many Canadians undoubtedly view abortion as a less than ideal solution to unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy, they generally understand, accept and

sympathize with the onerous demands pregnancy and childbirth exact from mothers, especially mothers without support.”

She continued: “Naturally, Canadians are grieved by an infant’s death, especially at the hands of the infant’s mother, but Canadians also grieve for the mother.” She also stated that the Canadian approach is a “fair compromise of all the interests involved.”

Two juries had found Effert guilty of second-degree murder, but an appeals court had reduced her conviction to infanticide.

Mark Steyn got right to the point:

*So a superior court judge in a relatively civilized jurisdiction is happy to extend the principles underlying legalized abortion in order to mitigate the killing of a legal person — that’s to say, someone who has managed to make it to the post-fetus stage. How long do those mitigating factors apply? I mean, “onerous demands”-wise, the first month of a newborn’s life is no picnic for the mother. How about six months in? The terrible twos?*

That is exactly the point. Judge Veit did indeed “extend the principles underlying legalized abortion in order to mitigate the killing of a living person.” The only problem with that statement is that this baby was “a living person” *before* his birth. The issue of birth is artificial and deadly. The willingness to kill within the womb leads logically to a willingness to kill outside the womb. The horrifying illogic of abortion, even in the United States, means that this mother could have aborted her baby in the hours prior to his birth with no legal consequence. This woman was convicted by juries of killing her son just after his birth. The appeals court reduced the crime, and then Judge Veit suspended the sentence.

The moral dishonesty of the entire tragedy comes down to the fact that, in legalizing abortion, liberal societies claimed to be making a bargain. We will not protect unborn life, but we will defend all those who make it to birth. Of course, the dividing line was always dishonest. Are we seriously to believe that human personhood is a matter of mere location, inside or outside the womb?

Now, this judge has simply extended the logic of abortion, and catastrophically so. If the “onerous demands” of parenthood justify killing one’s own child, there is no logical reason to confine permissive infanticide to newborns, or even to younger children.

We have seen this coming. As far back as 1993, ethicist Peter Singer was arguing openly that babies “are not born self-aware, or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons.” He went on to argue that “the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee.” Singer, to our shame, now holds an honored

chair in ethics at Princeton University.

Other ethical philosophers, such as Michael Tooley and Jeffrey Reiman, had argued similarly. Tooley asserted that human infants do not qualify for personhood and Reiman argued that infants do not “possess in their own right a property that makes it wrong to kill them.”

Enter, Judge Veit. The philosophical foundations for the acceptance of infanticide were laid long ago. Now, an appeals court in Canada has applied them to law.

Add to this the moral inversion of motherhood in the eyes of this court. What kind of twisted logic produced this sentence from Judge Veit’s decision? “Naturally, Canadians are grieved by an infant’s death, especially at the hands of the infant’s mother, but Canadians also grieve for the mother.”

Just imagine saying that out loud. A society is naturally to grieve an infant’s death, “especially at the hands of the infant’s mother,” but the society is also to grieve for the mother?

Adding insult to injury, the CBC report reveals that Katrina Effert just might actually spend time behind bars — not for killing her son but for throwing the boy’s body over the fence. For that infraction, she might serve 16 days in jail.

Mark this well — the horrific logic of this judge’s decision will not remain in Canada. Indeed, it did not even start in Canada. Those arguments are already in place in the United States. If we will not defend life in the womb, eventually the dignity of every single human life is thrown over the fence.

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“Infanticide Conviction Nets Alberta Woman Suspended Sentence,” CBC News, Friday, September 9, 2011.

Mark Steyn, “Fourth-Trimester Abortion,” *National Review Online*, Tuesday, September 13, 2011.

