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Fetal parts

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er. Kelly will identify herself publicly and name the clinic she worked for during ABC's "20/20" news program Feb. 9.

Lethal. Legal?

Kelly's recollection about her experiences put a human face on Life Dynamics' extensive documentation on the demand for aborted fetal parts. The group claims that this demand is being met in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of federal law. In 1993, President Bill Clinton lifted the federal ban on using tissues and body parts from abortions for research. However, the guidelines covering such research strictly stipulate that such fetal tissue cannot be sold or bought, only donated.

But Life Dynamics has charged that certain companies are circumventing the law by paying abortion clinics "site fees" for the right of access to aborted babies' bodies. These parts are then "donated" by the companies to researchers and others who, in turn, pay the companies for the cost of retrieval. Profit is realized by the companies' ability to set their own retrieval fees, Life Dynamics charges.

Life Dynamics also published a booklet containing numerous documents from researchers requesting fetal parts from Planned Parenthood clinics to be used for research on such diseases as Parkinson's, AIDS, and leukemia and other cancers. The researchers also ordered parts for use in organ transplantation research. Crutcher said that no one has challenged any of his documentation.

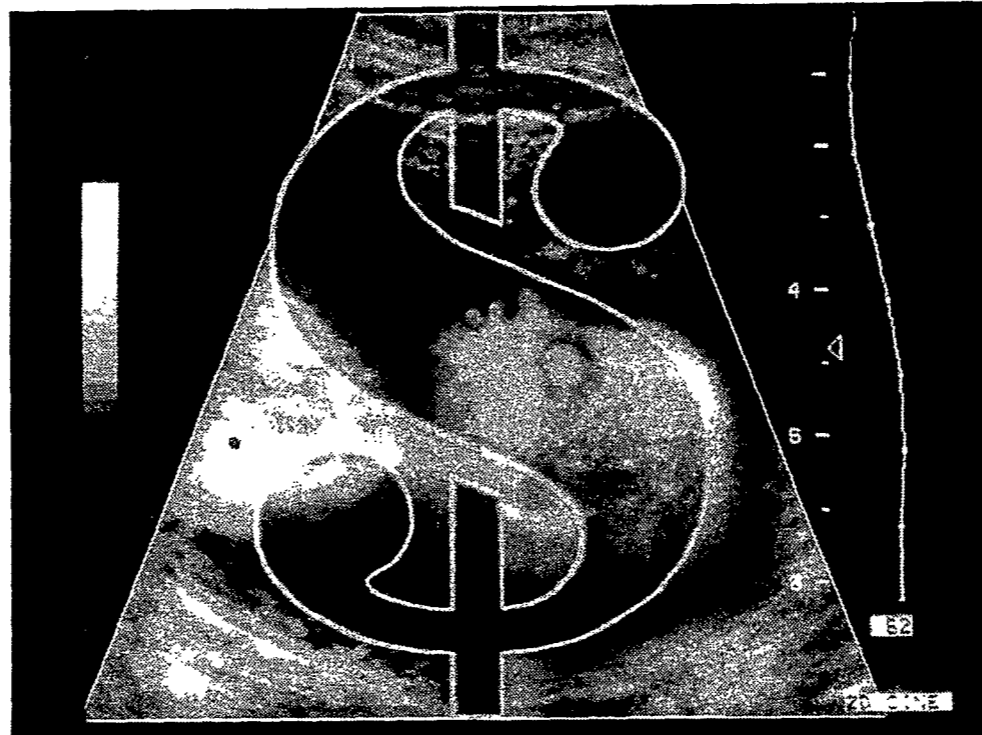
"Dissect lungs intact from 17 to 24 week fetal cadaver," read one photocopy of an order, which added: "Need 3 donors per week." A donor is the mother aborting, according to Life Dynamics information.

The booklet also provides a "price list" from one company that harvests fetal parts. Depending on its gestational age and other factors, an aborted fetus or "specimen" as the list calls it, can cost \$90 to \$260.

For the record, Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region, which provides abortions in both cities, does not donate fetal tissue for research, according to Carol Love, chief executive officer.

Life Dynamics' literature also claims that when an order calls for parts to be retrieved "within 10 minutes of the baby's death, this is one of those instances where a live birth is highly likely. It is also an indicator that the purchaser may be suggesting that the abortionist alter his procedure in order to meet the purchaser's specifications." In the case of federally funded research projects, project researchers who obtain tissue from abortions altered in such a manner would be violating federal law, according to a statement from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The group's literature also names two companies as key players in what Life Dynamics calls the "wholesaling of baby parts": Opening Lines/ Professional Arts Lab, a Division of Consultative and Diagnostic Pathology Inc., in West Frankfort,



Ill., and Anatomic Gift Foundation of Baltimore, Md., the source of the price list in the booklet.

The *Catholic Courier* attempted to contact Opening Lines for comment by phone, but found its number had been disconnected and that no new number was listed. Attempts to contact Anatomic Gift Foundation were also unsuccessful. However, AGF staff members were quoted in the November 1999 issue of *Life Insight*, published by the National Catholic Conference of Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, as saying that fetal tissue retrieval was a "break-even proposition at best," and that such business constitutes only 10 percent of the foundation's overall business, the balance being in adult organ donation.

Opening Lines and AGF aren't the only players in the fetal-collection game. For example, the University of Washington in Seattle has an Internet Web site that notes that the school's Laboratory for Human Embryology — funded by the National Institutes of Health — supplies fetal tissue.

"The laboratory ... can supply tissue from normal and abnormal embryos and fetuses of desired gestational ages between 40 days and term," the Web site states. However, a laboratory official told *Life Insight* that he only distributes to not-for-profit centers, not to for-profit companies.

Congress investigates

Prompted, in part, by Life Dynamics' allegations, the U.S. House of Representatives last November voted for House Resolution 350, which called Congress to "exercise oversight responsibility to conduct hearings concerning private companies that are involved in the trafficking of baby body parts."

Currently, congressional staff members are gathering research and data on the issue, according to Christian Polking, press secretary for Rep. Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., a co-sponsor of the resolution. The hearings, which would most likely take place in the House's Commerce Committee, have not been scheduled yet, Polking

said.

Several Catholic and pro-life leaders have welcomed the call for hearings on trafficking in aborted babies' parts.

"If, in fact, this is going on, it is an outrageous abuse of human life, and there should be an immediate investigation to determine if it is occurring," said Suzanne Schnittman, life issues coordinator for the Diocese of Rochester.

Her point echoed that of Gail Quinn, executive director of the U.S. bishops' pro-life secretariat.

"This practice exploits vulnerable members of the human family contrary to human dignity and presents possible violations of federal law," Quinn said in November in a statement praising Congress for its approval of Resolution 350.

Quinn also asked this question: "Are abortion procedures being tailored to obtain the most useful tissue or parts, regardless of federal legal standards or the safety of the mother?"

In a phone interview, Crutcher stressed that while he cannot prove it, he believes abortion procedures are being changed for the sake of procuring the best possible fetal tissue. In particular, he said he believes the so-called partial-birth abortion tech-

nique is being used by some abortionists to ensure that the baby parts they provide are as intact as possible.

A partial-birth abortion, typically performed in the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy, involves the delivery of an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor then pierces the base of the baby's skull with surgical scissors, then inserts a catheter into the opening removes the brain by suction. The resulting collapse of the skull enables removal of the dead baby.

"Tell me another conclusion that makes more sense," Crutcher said of his belief that partial-birth abortions primarily benefit researchers needing intact body parts. He added that he also believes that the abortion method risks women's health because it involves manipulating a baby into a breech delivery position.

In an interview with *Baptist Press*, Susan Dudley, deputy director of the National Abortion Federation, labeled Crutcher's theory "an absurd charge." The federation represents 350 clinics.

"There are doctors who feel that that is a method that is safer for some women in some circumstances," Dudley said.

However, the American Medical Association has endorsed outlawing partial-birth abortions, except to save a mother's life. The last such proposed ban, put forth in the U.S. Senate in October 1999, fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to override an expected veto by President Clinton. The president had vetoed two previous bills passed by the House and Senate.

Road ahead

Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee Inc., the nation's largest pro-life group, said that the debate currently brewing over research on aborted fetal tissue was foreseen by its critics in the years before the federal government gave a green light to the research. Now is the time to look at the questions raised by the research and the trafficking it seemingly encourages, he said in a phone interview from Washington, D.C.

"We think it needs a lot more scrutiny from the law and the media, and hopefully, down the road, we'll have some legislation," he said.

Pro-lifers

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of the Jan. 22 U.S. Supreme Court decision in order to take place on a weekday.

Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore introduced Cardinals Francis E. George of Chicago, James A. Hickey of Washington and Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Philadelphia and 26 bishops, pointing out that Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York was unable to attend because of his health.

"I send special greetings to you from Cardinal O'Connor, who is with you in spirit and prayer. He says, and I echo, 'Don't give up.'"

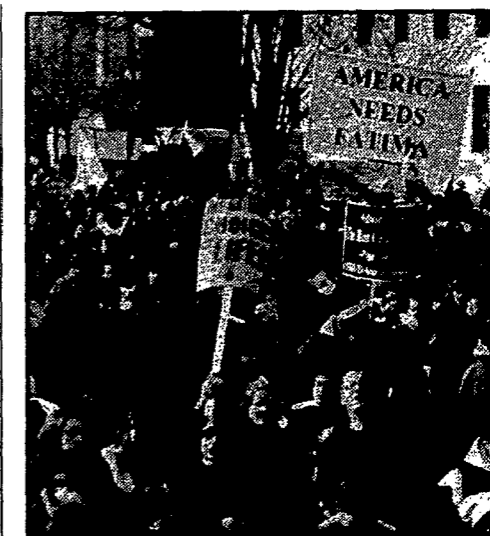
Cardinal Keeler told the crowd that the nation's bishops "stand with you to pray, march and lift our voices" until the day when "life is protected at every stage."

Nellie Gray, the organizer of the event, told participants, many of whom were standing on melting snow, that pro-life activists will continue to gather each year in Washington "until *Roe vs. Wade* is overturned."

Referring to the theme of the day's gathering, "My Neighbor is Each Human Being in Existence at Fertilization," she said: "Each unborn child is our neighbor too. We must constantly talk about life beginning at fertilization."

Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" from the *Roe vs. Wade* decision who became a Catholic two years ago, asked the crowd how many of them want to see the Supreme Court decision overturned.

The crowd, wearing parkas and holding placards bearing pro-life slogans, responded with cheers. She told them there



Martin Lueders/CNS

Tens of thousands of people from across the country gathered on Washington's Ellipse to rally Jan. 24.

were hundreds of ways to work at overturning the decision, including getting involved in sidewalk counseling.

But many in the crowd have long been involved in pro-life activism on a daily basis, which explained their presence on the Ellipse in the first place.

Jason Negri, director of alumni relations at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, told *Catholic News Service* that participating in the march "definitely gives a shot in the arm to people who work in the day-to-day aspect of the pro-life movement."

If nothing else, being in Washington with thousands of others committed to the pro-life cause shows him that it's "more than just a handful of people" who are pro-life, he said.

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