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Men and Abortion

News & Views: (see article below) "*In Full Rationalization Mode*" written by Dave Andrusko, NRL News Editor.

CONFERENCE: There will be a conference entitled "Reclaiming Fatherhood: A Multifaceted Examination of Men Dealing with Abortion" which will be in San Francisco, November 28-29-2007.

Vicki Thorn, Executive Director of National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation & Healing, Inc writes, "The issue of men dealing with abortion losses has long been ignored in our society. If more than 40 million abortions have occurred, then millions of men have been impacted in some way. This conference seeks to examine the impact that an abortion may have on a man. This is clearly a hidden and disenfranchised loss.

The web site for the conference is: www.menandabortion.info. The site allows you to download and print the conference brochure, has all the information on the conference, topics and speakers and also the ability to register on line.

If you wish to speak to Vicki Thorn (conference organizer), call 414-483-4141.

In Full Rationalization Mode

Last week I received considerable e-mail responding to a TN&V I wrote about a speech a pro-abortion writer gave to the New York City chapter of NOW after having unobtrusively attended NRLC's national convention in Kansas City, Missouri. (http://www.nrlc.org/News_and_Views/September07/nv091907.html). Among other things I contrasted the deadly-dull account Eleanor Bader wrote for the September issue of *The Progressive* magazine with the "look-out-now-the-Huns-are-coming" talk she gave to her NOW audience.

However I did not delve in any depth into how much this particular assemblage hated pro-lifers. Not just vigorously and passionately disagreed with us, but loathed us. When Bader told them pro-lifers are smart, organized, funny, and articulate, loathing was mixed with fear.

The most revealing moments were when Bader talked about a workshop at the NRLC convention, which attempted to address the devastation, some men feel after their child is aborted. To even consider that such men exist, or that they have been emotionally devastated, was beyond the NOW audience's ability to fathom, let alone empathize. Ridicule and haughty laughter were the order of the day.

I thought of that mean-spiritedness when I read another example of what has become a fixture in the *New York Times*. "A Painful Reminder of My Ex" ran yesterday in what the *Times* quaintly calls its "Modern Love" column.

These are stories, usually written by women, which almost always revolve around an abortion the woman has had and the oft-times surprising response from a boyfriend when he first learns the woman is pregnant. This particular essay is, frankly, bizarre even by the *Times'* freewheeling standards.

I will not nauseate you with the details that form the overarching narrative in which the essay operates, but make just a couple of points that I think go beyond the particulars on display.

There is the anger, even hate, she feels toward the father of the baby she aborted. While she makes a nod in the direction of sympathy for someone whose life in the seven years since they broke up has come unglued, it's seems clear to me that she finds a perverse delight in the depths to which he has sunk. The question is why and what it tells us about the misery that abortion inflicts on everyone who is a party to the death of a helpless child.

We learn that before she even told him she was pregnant, she'd made an appointment at an abortion clinic. "When he said without hesitation that he wanted to keep the baby, I was shocked. Having come from an abusive family, he had long claimed that he never wanted children that he would never bring a child into this messed-up world. But when actually presented with the opportunity, he changed his mind.

"'Maybe this is exactly what we need,' he said. 'Exactly what we've been looking for. Maybe a child would give our lives meaning, a purpose. Maybe if we had a kid, we wouldn't feel so lost anymore.'"

In full rationalization mode, she tells the reader that they had not been mature enough to have a baby and, besides, neither one loved the other.

"In the end, I called him from the driver's seat of my mother's car, idling in the driveway of a friend's house in the suburbs where I'd been hiding out. 'I've made my decision,' I told him. 'My appointment is tomorrow.'

"He was so quiet I couldn't even hear him breathing. The phone felt too big in my hand; its glowing numbers warmed my cheek.

"'Hello?' I said.

"'You're dead to me,' he replied. Then he hung up."

In that self-contradictory pose that typically characterizes these essays, she tells us she has no regrets but "every now and then would be struck by the idea that I could have a 2-year-old child right now, a 4-year-old, and so on." She thinks about the man as well and what would have happened to them, if she had not aborted.

We're supposed to believe that out of idle curiosity, she looked him up on MySpace. There she learns the level of self-degradation to which he had sunk. She mocks horror, but basks in the knowledge just how much of a loser he has become. It is not a pleasant picture, either of him or her.

But then there is the ending, which will be interpreted differently by as many people as read it.

It could be read as just further piling on by the writer. Or it could be seen as an acknowledgement that the man's life went off the deep end when she aborted their child and that the only way he can deal with the pain and guilt and remorse is by hurting himself.

That, in fact, he is dead to himself.

No cosmic conclusion here, only a profound sorrow at the excruciatingly painful toil abortion takes on men, women, extended families, and the child herself.

If there is any lesson that I have learned in all my years of involvement it is that abortion has many, many secondary victims. It is a truth that is ever-so-gradually beginning to be acknowledged and which someday will completely reorient the debate over abortion.

Please send your comments to Dave Andrusko at daveandrusko@hotmail.com.