

CCBR: Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform

Making Abortion Unthinkable

August–September 2007

“Now on the CTV News at 6, the fight over abortion rolls down Calgary streets...”

Dear Friends,

On August 17th in *Slate*, William Saletan began his article entitled “Kicking Butt” (www.slate.com/id/2172230/) as follows:

I hate smoking. It kills hundreds of millions of people, including bystanders. [...] Cities, states, and countries all over the world are banning smoking in public and I couldn't be happier.

The problem with tobacco all along was that politicians and the public didn't recognize it as a drug. They called it a tradition, a “crop,” and a “legal product.” As though coca and marijuana weren't crops. As though a product's legality should decide its morality, instead of the other way around. When it came to smoking, culture overpowered reason.

Abortion also kills millions—46 million worldwide every year, according to the pro-abortion *Guttmacher Institute*. But few jurisdictions are banning it. Politicians and the public don't recognize the unborn as human beings deserving of rights of personhood. The unborn baby is nothing more than a “blob of cells” or a “clump of tissue” in the eyes of most, particularly in the first trimester, which is when most abortions are committed.

We intend to change all this. We intend to clarify in the public mind *who* this unborn child is and *what* abortion does to her. And therefore **we are happy to announce our latest development in the fight to make abortion unthinkable: the Reproductive “Choice” Campaign (RCC)**.

MAKING IGNORANCE IMPOSSIBLE

On August 8th, CCBR launched the RCC in Calgary, Alberta. **CTV News in Calgary** made the launch its top story on both the 6 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. evening news and **showed the truck without censoring the images**.

One interviewee said, “I've had nothing to do with it, personally, so you don't think seriously about it. But **looking at that, you can see the ‘murder’ aspect of it all.**”

When people with functioning consciences see what abortion does to an unborn child, they *do* begin to understand the “murder” aspect of it all.



▲ A cameraman records footage of the RCC. Inset: A young woman (left) admits to *CTV News*' Nujma Yaqzan, “That's reality, I guess—it's what happens when you have an abortion.”

But they will not see this without the concerted efforts of pro-lifers to make this aspect unavoidable. The pro-life movement *must* make it impossible for the general public to remain ignorant about what abortion really is: an act of violence which kills a baby.

DEFINING THE “CHOICE”

The pro-life movement began to lose this battle when we allowed the abortion industry to define abortion in the abstract terms of “choice.” “Choice” is a debate that we lose. No one wants their choices arbitrarily restricted, especially not in our culture which is almost obsessively centred on the self.



▲ A pedestrian gets a good look at the signs while waiting to cross the street. One blogger wrote, “...the images certainly obliterate the common myth that a young fetus is just a collection of cells.”

View more RCC media coverage on our website: www.unmaskingchoice.ca/rcc_media_coverage.html

Our focus as an organization is therefore to shift the debate over to the concrete terms of *what is being chosen*. Abortion advocates carefully craft their language to avoid talking about the unborn child in any way that would suggest that it is human or is deserving of any rights whatsoever. With the Reproductive “Choice” Campaign, we are putting pro-aborts on their heels and are forcing them to try to defend the one thing they don’t *want* to defend: the “choice” to kill a baby.



▲ Larger than life: each image on the truck contains a common size reference such as a coin or an adult hand to help viewers maintain perspective. Pro-abortion claims that the images are blown out of proportion are intellectually dishonest... unless they also order burgers at fast-food outlets expecting them to be several feet high!

Nigel Hannaford, in his “A message to remember” editorial in the August 11th edition of the *Calgary Herald* (www.canada.com/calgaryherald/news/story.html?id=d5b93901-4c0f-4652-8ca3-4b9f1d243afc), wrote about the images:

Displaying the bloody results is for [pro-lifers] a challenge to the other side to justify what they do.

To the best of my knowledge, that challenge has never been effectively met on its own terms by anybody representing the abortion industry.

And this challenge continues to be unmet. Instead, while abortion advocates are voicing their (predictable) displeasure over our truck, they haven’t come close to anything resembling a reasoned, factual refutation of the images thereon. The architect of the RCC, Gregg Cunningham, made the following observation after the 2001 launch of the RCC in the United States:

“One of the most reliable measures of any organization’s effectiveness is the reaction its tactics elicit from those who wish it ill. By that standard, [the] RCC can only be termed a resounding success.”

ABORTION ADVOCATES FLUSHED OUT, SCRAMBLING

Indeed, our opponents are demonstrating that the RCC hasn’t skipped a beat when it comes to effectiveness. The *Calgary Sun*’s August 9th article titled “Graphic

abortion images shock Calgarians” contained another typical pro-abortion attempt to change the subject:

“These tactics are the visual equivalent of being screamed at,” said Laura Wershler of the non-profit group Sexual Health Access Alberta, formerly Planned Parenthood Alberta. [Emphasis added.]

“I think most Calgarians are not going to appreciate being screamed at.”

Actually, **these pictures are the visual equivalent of being given a precise description of what abortion does to a baby.** We think most babies do not appreciate being aborted.

Joyce Arthur, spokesperson for the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, was also forced out of hiding. Montreal radio station *940 News* interviewed both Ms. Arthur and CCBR’s executive director, Stephanie Gray. The host first asked Stephanie to explain the RCC and the content of the pictures in particular. Then, given the opportunity to respond, the first words out of Ms. Arthur’s mouth were, “Really, this tactic promotes no meaningful debate whatsoever.”

Ms. Arthur pretends to want meaningful debate, but in 1999, when Stephanie was an undergraduate at the University of British Columbia, she invited Ms. Arthur to debate pro-life apologist Scott Klusendorf. Ms. Arthur declined and subsequently published an article titled “Why We Don’t Debate Anti-Choice Spokespersons” in which she wrote, “Would a Jew debate with a Nazi?”



▲ If we are to know something by its fruits, then this motorcyclist has seen the fruit of abortionists—fruit that is rotten to its very core.

The latest revision of this article online (www.prochoiceactionnetwork-canada.org/articles/debate.shtml) says, “[...] we do not engage in debates with the anti-choice—by which we mean public debates before an audience, or on radio or TV.” But a scant two days after the RCC launch, Ms. Arthur was on the air... with the “anti-choicest” of them all!

Towards the end of the programme, Ms. Arthur was asked if Canada might see a re-ignition of the debate of

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whether or not abortion should be legal. She stuttered in response, “Well, no, not with this particular tactic [...] this is not going to work to restart the debate.”

The lady doth protest too much, methinks. **Ms. Arthur is so unconcerned about the potential effectiveness of “this particular tactic” that she was compelled to abandon her long-standing zero-debate policy** and appear on-air with an “anti-choice spokesperson.” Nope, doesn’t seem like she’s worried at all.

HELPLESS TO DEFEND THE INDEFENSIBLE

Also two days after the RCC launch, the *National Abortion Federation (NAF)* weighed in on the discussion by issuing a press release, a portion of which follows:

“This is another example of an anti-abortion organization using graphic and misleading images in the hope of advancing their beliefs,” said Vicki Saporta, President and CEO of NAF. “These tactics often backfire and even those who oppose abortion often object to these images.”

“**Women deserve accurate information** when making decisions about an unintended pregnancy,” said Saporta. [Emphasis added.]

Women deserve accurate information? **We’re happy to oblige.** And perhaps what Ms. Saporta means by “misleading” is “leading women away from abortion clinics.”



▲ Commuters heading into Calgary’s downtown are presented with accurate information on a “medical procedure” which is performed over 100,000 times each year, according to Statistics Canada.

Dawn Fowler, Canadian director of *NAF*, also remained unruffled when she appeared after Stephanie on the August 15th broadcast of the *Nightline BC* show on Vancouver’s *CKNW 980* radio. After deriding the RCC as “rude, [...] offensive, and demeaning to women,” Ms. Fowler then stated, almost proudly, “**Abortion is now the most common medical procedure performed in this country.**”

ANOTHER MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The controversial nature of the RCC allowed CCBR to penetrate the media blackout that traditionally surrounds pro-life activities.

Based on media-provided audience size (see table below), CCBR estimates that we reached a minimum of 1.84 million¹ people through the media alone in the first eight days of running the project. This includes the publication and broadcast of uncensored abortion images to an audience of 1.23 million!

We couldn’t have paid for equivalent advertising even if we had wanted to, and the irony is that this prime-time coverage didn’t cost us a penny. We gladly expend the significant funds required to develop and operate the RCC in order to deliver the truth of abortion to the public where and when we choose. But we paid no money to the media and reached almost 2 million people—if that isn’t cost-effectiveness, we don’t know what is.

Media Outlet, Programme	Audience Size
Calgary Herald	554,700
CKNW 980, Nightline BC	58,400
CTV Calgary, CTV News at 5:30	264,000
CTV Calgary, CTV News at 6	325,000
CTV Calgary, CTV News at 11:30	106,000
National Post ²	536,800
Total	1,844,900

¹ CCBR was unable to obtain audience sizes for all the media outlets and programmes which covered the RCC.

² Excludes online-subscription readership.

Think about that for a moment: the most common “medical procedure” in our society is the brutal slaughter of a baby. **And people accuse us of being extreme?**

Page A6 of the Saturday, August 11th edition of the *National Post* featured the article “Activists drive home anti-abortion message.” Writer Kevin Libin interviewed yet another abortion advocate who griped, “I just think in Canadian society, **it’s really a rude, crude display. It shows a lack of manners.**” [Emphasis added.]

It’s difficult to not be shocked when someone whose line of work entails killing babies accuses you of “a lack of manners.” **We think that torturing babies to death is, at the very least, impolite.**

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

The above article also described CCBR’s determination to learn critical lessons from historically successful social-reform movements. Some of our readers will be familiar with the story of **Emmett Louis Till**, a 14-year-old black youth from Chicago who, in 1955, **was brutally tortured and murdered** by white racists in Mississippi. Filmmaker Keith A. Beauchamp, in his 1995

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documentary, *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*, interviewed Emmett's mother, Mamie Till-Mobley:

Sheriff Strider wanted an immediate burial because he knew that it wouldn't be good for the State of Mississippi for people to see what had happened to Emmett Till. And the only way you could stop people from seeing was to bury it, [...] to get it out of sight.

Mrs. Till-Mobley took decisive action and rallied Chicago officials to have her son's body brought back to her. She then proceeded to have an **open-casket funeral**, saying, "Let the people see what I've seen."

Mr. Beauchamp also sought Rev. Al Sharpton for his impressions on Mrs. Till-Mobley's selfless act:

The easiest thing would have been to say, "No, close the casket, I can't bear it," but she somewhere found the strength to say, "I'll bear my pain to save some other mother from having to go through this." And **because she put the picture of this young man's body on the conscience of America, she might have saved thousands of young black men and young black women's lives.**

Mrs. Till-Mobley showed great strength and wisdom in opening the casket on racial injustice. We are inspired by her courage as we seek to open the casket on the injustice of abortion.



▲ A bystander views the RCC truck from a bus shelter as CCBR staffer Jojo Ruba (inside vehicle) directs the project. Jojo has been instrumental in the planning and day-to-day operation of the RCC.

HEALING THE WOUNDED

One person e-mailed us a legitimate concern regarding our approach: "[...] **what about those who weren't educated and have already made the decision to abort**, and live with guilt and pain every day of their lives?" [Emphasis added.]

Nigel Hannaford's above-mentioned editorial was also submitted as an August 10th blog entry (<http://communities.canada.com/calgaryherald/blogs/hannaford/archive/2007/08/10/the-truck-with-the-heavy-load.aspx>) to which three post-abortive women posted comments, all of them supporting our approach. Barb Yagley's was one:



▲ With Calgary's ever-increasing population, commuters spend more time in traffic than ever before. With your help, we will take full advantage of this opportunity to educate them about abortion!

As a post-abortive woman myself, I can tell you the graphic pictures pain me ... **Confronting the evil that I have done was the first step towards healing.** I use a similar one as part of my prayer vigil in front of our neighborhood abortion clinic. It is a warning to all who enter the clinic of what they are about to do to their babies—so that they can avoid the mistake that I made. **People have told me that my picture saved lives. I will continue to use the picture.** [Emphasis added.]

[...] abortion is not a popularity contest and the pictures are an effective way of breaking through people's indifference.

SEND HELP

We thank all of the volunteer drivers and co-pilots who have and continue to wake up early (some at 3 a.m.), sacrificing income and leisure time, and letting their work pile up while they seek to give voice to the voiceless. **We thank those who have sacrificed to provide their legal, technical, mechanical, and other expertise.** **We thank all of you who have donated sacrificially** to put the RCC on the road, and **we give equal thanks and welcome to our newest donors** who have stepped forward after encountering CCBR via the wide media coverage which the RCC has generated.

But we can't stop here. Not now. We must carry forward and build on the momentum we have gained. However, serious, effective, long-term pro-life initiatives like the RCC come at a price. They take time, they take money, and they take manpower. **It's a common temptation to fear the cost of giving our all. What we *should* fear is the *greater* cost of holding back.**

Thank you for standing with us,

Brendan

Brendan Huang is CCBR's Chief of Operations. His responsibilities include network and office administration, donor relations, website maintenance, editing, and "other duties as assigned."

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