

your INTERVIEW

ANDY STEPHENSON
Anti-abortion group
ABORT67

In weekly feature *your Interview*, we give you, our readers, the chance to ask key figures the questions you want answered. This week, **ANDY STEPHENSON** of Anti-abortion group **Abort67** answers your questions.

JESS OWEN VIA EMAIL: I'd like to know just who the hell you think you are? What on earth gives you the right to harass women facing a choice that will never confront you in your life? If your God really wants you to behave like that I would want nothing to do with your God.

ANDY STEPHENSON (AS): How can it be wrong to show what BPAS (abortion Clinic) do? It is they who are damaging women. Harass is a legally loaded word. If we were harassing women then why would we invite the police to everything we do publicly? If the police saw us harassing women they would arrest us immediately.

All the bogus allegations of harassment and intimidation were proven false when it came to our court case and not one single witness could be produced who claimed we were harassing them. If people are harassed it is because the simple truth of abortion is harassing. If it is harassing to see, then why do we allow it to happen?

We don't do what we do to "get at" women; we do it to empower them.

Many women have told us that nothing less shocking than the pictures persuaded them to keep their baby.

We are doing this because we are driven by compassion for the unborn child and their mother.

If we were being cruel or obstreperous then the post abortive women who stand with us would not feel comfortable doing so.

AMBOGUY ONLINE: Andy, are you a religious man? I ask this as it seems that many pro-life protesters seem to base their anti-abortion beliefs on what they are taught in their religion.

AS: I'm not really sure what that has to do with it, Amboguy. We are against abortion because we think it is wrong to kill human beings.

In the same way I think it morally wrong for someone to kill a two year old I think it morally wrong for someone to kill a child in the womb. Many pro-lifers are "religious" but I am afraid that doesn't make their arguments invalid.

They are precisely the same arguments that secular pro-lifers make.

JOHN ALLMAN ONLINE: Abort 67's website doesn't have any religious content, and uses only human rights arguments against abortion. Yet I keep reading allegations that Abort 67 is some sort of "religious" group. What is the truth?

AS: Abort67 is supported by people of faith and no faith.

Most however are Christian. Our case that the pre-born are human and alive from conception (therefore abortion ends the life of an innocent human person) is made using scientific evidence. Our argument can be used by religious and non-religious persons.

Is the only way for pro-aborts to defend their position to accuse us of being "just religious", by ad hominem attacks?

It is ironic that they accuse us of being religious when we rely fundamentally on a scientific case, but those who support abortion end up relying solely on metaphysics.

BRIGHTONBATFINK ONLINE: What led you to found Abort 67? Is it based on your belief system, or a personal experience?

(AS): I founded Abort67 to drive a spoke into the wheel of the abortion industry. Yes it is based on my belief system; the belief system that it is wrong to kill human beings. I was stirred to do it shortly after seeing our daughter flailing around on an ultrasound screen at 12 weeks into the pregnancy. Shortly afterwards I saw a picture of an aborted child of the same age.

I couldn't get the picture out of my head and that was the start of it all.

I am naturally conflict averse so this wasn't a move I anticipated happening.

THEVOICEOFTRUTH ONLINE: As there are already hundreds of thousands of children in the care system, many of whom are unable to even find foster parents, why would you want to bring more unwanted children into the world? Would you like to see a return to back-street abortions and children being abandoned at birth? Or worse, murdered, as happened in the old days where there were many instances of infanticide due to a lack of birth control.

AS: If a woman is pregnant then her child is already in the world. If unwantedness is justification for killing people then we are all at danger at some point in our life.

Regarding the "unwanted" children in the care system; are you saying that it would be okay for them to be killed? I imagine you'll claim "that is different, those are human beings".

But that is our point.

You are assuming the truth of something for which you have the burden to prove; that the unborn, who is brutally killed by Wistons clinic in Brighton, is not also a human being. Even the executive Director of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas), Ann Furedi admits that the early embryo is a human life.

TEKNOTICE ONLINE: Andy when I used the clinic you picket outside of (seven years and I still don't regret the decision to abort, I'm sure my daughter is also grateful seeing as I faced death if I went through with my second pregnancy) I saw girls as young as 13 in there. Do you think it is right that your group targets children who are facing a very stressful event? Or women like myself who put the life of the child they already had before the one they are carrying?

AS: We don't target people; we aren't commenting on abortion.

We aren't even protesting against abortion; we are exposing it.

There is plenty on our website about the concern that women need legal abortion to save their life.

For instance a woman could have an abortion pre 1967 if they were going to die but it is not true that what we have now is anything about saving women's lives.

Your last statement again reveals the need for the work we do. Our pictures prove that abortion is not the "gentle



suction to remove the pregnancy" as Bpas advertise on their website and literature, but the violent killing of a child already here in this world.

We announced on the BBC's Big Question last year that there is a way to stop us.

Merely prove to us that the embryo or foetus is not a human being. The offer remains open to anyone. We will take down our website, hand over our banners and never return.

We also told Bpas directly (and I am happy to make the email exchange public) that we would never return to any one of their clinics if they just offered to show their customers what their "pregnancy" looks like before and after abortion.

In other words, if they fulfilled the NHS guidelines on informed consent. Again, you can guess the response. These people are not interested in women's wellbeing by any stretch of the imagination.

MIMSEYCAL ONLINE: BPAS, who run the Wiston Clinic after your trial which collapsed after the judge ruled there was insufficient evidence to proceed stated that "The number of women undergoing abortion treatment at our Brighton clinic has not changed since the protesters first arrived two years ago, but the proportion of abortions taking place at later gestations has increased. We know there are some

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women who simply feel unable to make their way past the line of protesters on the days they are there – these women do not decide against abortion, they simply come back at a later date for treatment at a later gestation." "That being the case, your campaigning has resulted not in decreasing the number of abortions. Can you show any proof that your harassment of people seeking to undergo a legitimate medical procedure has had any effect other than feeding your own self righteousness?

AS: Our trial didn't collapse, it concluded with the judge saying we were "not guilty".

Of course your version makes for a better liberal news story but it just isn't the case.

We could have cut a day and a half off the trial that was spent by the prosecution convincing the judge that people were upset by our pictures.

Far from there being insufficient evidence, we told the judge we knew that people were likely to be upset by our pictures because abortion is upsetting. The decision of the judge could not have been any clearer. These images are not abusive, threatening or insulting.

They are purely accurate depictions of legal abortion that is more often than not paid for by taxpayer's money.

We do not embellish the pictures with invective about those who obtain or even support abortion. The decision of the judge has been a huge victory for free speech. These pictures are legal to show.

ARTIFICIAL ONLINE: Are you anti-contraception? If you are why do you oppose giving people control over their fertility to prevent unwanted pregnancies?

AS: We are not anti-contraception or preventing unwanted pregnancies; we are anti ending pregnancy by killing the unborn child at any stage of development.

Barrier methods like the condom do not possess the potential to kill embryos but the IUD for instance does. These are not contraceptives but birth control devices with "abortifacient" qualities.

KWEETA ONLINE: Andy, since your goal is to end abortion I assume you help mothers to go through with their pregnancy and then support their child throughout the entirety of its dependency? It wouldn't be a very Christian thing to do if you just, you know, guilt tripped them into keeping a child which they felt they couldn't care for properly or weren't ready for, and then left them to deal with the fallout.

AS: We do as much as we can but our willingness to do so is not what makes abortion wrong.

In the same way slavery was not deemed right or wrong on the basis of the willingness of the abolitionists to hire ex-slaves but because it was intrinsically wrong.

Of course people don't like the slavery analogy. They don't want to be compared to those who treated human beings as property and subhuman in order to overpower and exploit them.

I am not saying that women who have abortions are like slave owners but the industry itself is.

Neither am I saying the two are identical, but suitably analogous. Suitable because the unborn child from conception is a complete, unique, living, whole and growing human being.

Even recently on our Facebook page, abortion supporters have said that they would still support abortion even if they knew that the embryo was a human being. And we're the ones who are morally wrong?

There are hundreds of crisis pregnancy centres working at great cost to themselves offering help. Those who provide abortion however do little or nothing to make other choices feasible. We have met scores of women who tell us they have "no choice".

When a woman is pregnant she already has a child. Just as it would be morally wrong for her to kill her born child it is morally wrong for Bpas to kill her unborn child.

Q10 006 AND A THIRD ONLINE - Should women have the right to choose when mass rapes are being widely used as a weapon for ethnic cleansing around the world?

AS: A society that commits one evil to mitigate another is far from civilised. Rape victims need care, love and support. Abortion adds further injury and damage to women and kills the other innocent victim in the picture. The answer to the problem you suggest is to deal with the rapists.

For those who bring up rape as a justification for legalised abortion I have to ask - if it was conceded that abortion should be permitted in the case of rape, would you join us in ending abortion for all other reasons? Usually they say no, so why do they bring it up?

Would we permit the killing of other innocent people who remind us of a traumatic event? If we wouldn't allow that then why do we allow the killing of the unborn for the same reason? The issue then isn't rape, but is the unborn an innocent human being?

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