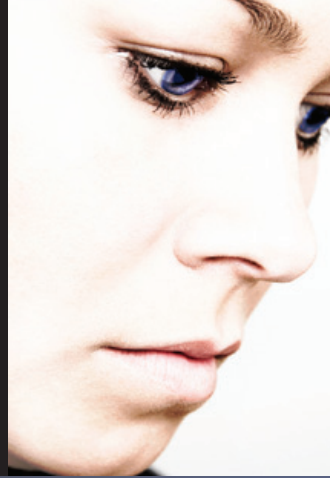


CONCEIVED IN RAPE



A STORY OF HOPE

Having been adopted as a baby, I knew almost nothing about my birth mother. At age 18, I requested my mother's "non-identifying information" and learned that a serial rapist had brutally raped her at knifepoint. This was how I was conceived. I remember feeling ugly and unwanted, and wondered, "Who would ever love me?"

Growing up, I never really thought abortion applied to my life, but then in one moment, it had to do with my very existence. I heard the echoes of all those people who would say: "Well, except in cases of rape..." or "Especially in cases of rape!" I realized they were talking about me – about my life. I felt as if I was going to have to justify my own existence and prove to the world that I shouldn't have been aborted and that I was worthy of living.

I thought of my birth mother and realized: "She must hate me. She's never going to want to meet me. She probably wanted to abort me." But somehow I determined that, if I could just meet her and hear that she didn't want to abort me, then I could feel good about myself. I could feel safe, and I wouldn't have to feel as if I was still a target. At 19, after a judge appointed a confidential intermediary, I finally heard from my birth mother. She was thrilled at the prospect of meeting me, writing me this letter:

*My Dearest Rebecca,
Hoping by now that the shock of finding out all the details of your birth is forgotten. For that was not reason enough to give something up as beautiful as you were - nothing as precious as a baby! Mostly when you carry one nine months and you go through the birth feeling no one loves you, but you were so perfect and pretty. All these years I had nothing of you, no picture, nothing even saying you were part of me. Just the memory of carrying a baby that I hoped one day would try to find her real mother as I wanted to know my baby. I always loved you in my heart. You were always with me in my thoughts, mostly in July...It seems like a lifetime, I know. When I was sick two years ago I thought I would never get to know my little girl....It's been a long three weeks. Looking forward to our meeting. IT'S SO GREAT - BIG BEAUTIFUL - IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY DREAM. I AM SO HAPPY, I AM CRYING! A love that ate at me for nineteen years, my daughter at last.*

*With love, your Mom
Joann*

I felt so affirmed -- until we discussed abortion. Imagine my horror to hear she would have aborted me had it been legal when I was conceived in October, 1968. But it wasn't legal, and she didn't abort me. She was able to change her mind about abortion some years later because it wasn't too late – for her or for me. She later revealed she had actually gone to two back-alley abortionists, and that I was almost aborted. Like most other women back then, she backed out of the first abortion because of the unsanitary "back-alley" conditions and the fact that it was illegal.

Her rape counselor who was recommended by the police arranged for her to meet the second abortionist at night near the Detroit Institute of Art. Someone would approach her, say her name, blindfold her, put her in the back seat of a car, take her to the abortionist and have me aborted. Then she would be blindfolded again and returned to the art museum. She was still afraid for her own safety, but she was prepared to go through with it. The day she was to abort me, my aunt was going to drive her to the pickup point. That morning, one of the worst snowstorms of the century in the Detroit area began. It snowed for days and days and the roads were blocked. That was it. By then she was into her second trimester and couldn't go through with the abortion.



"My value is not based on how I was conceived, who raised me, what other people think of my life, or even what I do with my life. I'm not a product of rape, but a child of God."

Upon hearing these circumstances, some people would say to me, "It's just so awful that your birth mother had to go through that in order to have been able to abort you!" Like that's compassionate? It seems pretty cold-hearted from where I stand!

I just barely made it. The trial date in Roe v. Wade was on my first birth date, and the U. S. Supreme Court decision was exactly three and a half years after my birth date (July 22, 1969/January 22, 1973).

As a family law attorney, I gladly represented women for free who were being coerced into aborting, and I even had four abortion-related cases which made national news. Today, I am a full-time mom to four children – two adopted and two biological. I'm honored that God has used my life in such ways, but I've learned that my value is not based on how I was conceived, who raised me, what other people think of my life, or even what I do with my life. I'm not a product of rape, but a child of God, and I have value because God created me for a purpose and paid an infinite price for my life.

If you ask my birth mother today, she will say that I am a blessing to her. If only everyone would realize the truth that every child is a gift! Then when they hear of a situation such as mine, instead of saying, "Oh how awful! You mean to tell me this woman was raped and was actually forced to carry that baby?" – people could say, "You mean to tell me that God rewarded this woman with the gift of this child's life, giving her beauty for ashes?" And isn't that what God is famous for?



Rebecca Kiessling, is a well known pro-life speaker and attorney. She travels across North America sharing her story of hope. If you would like to have Rebecca speak to your church, banquet, rally or school, e-mail her at rebecca@rebeccakiessling.com, or go to her web site for more information: www.rebeccakiessling.com.

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