



## How Men Are Harmed by Abortion

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An important but often unacknowledged angle of the abortion debate involves the serious effects that legalized abortion has on men.

A few years back, the scandal surrounding John Edwards, former North Carolina Senator and U.S. presidential candidate, brought this issue into plain view. Mr. Edwards publicly acknowledged an extramarital affair with Rielle Hunter in the summer of 2008, a few months after pulling out of the presidential race. Yet he continued to deny that he was the father of Ms. Hunter's daughter, Quinn, until January of 2010.

A former aide to Mr. Edwards, who published a tell-all book in the wake of the scandal, described how Mr. Edwards had tried to coerce Ms. Hunter to get an abortion. Commentator Jill Stanek analyzed the situation this way:

"Fortunately, Hunter resisted this all too typical coercive attempt by a sexually exploitative and irresponsible man to abort his own baby. Of course Edwards is a pro-abortion, which as we see is incredibly self-serving for men. Edwards was ready to sacrifice his own baby for political and personal expediency."

Mr. Edwards' extramarital activities remind us how legalized abortion has the clear and pronounced effect of contributing to sexual infidelity, providing "cover" and encouraging men to become less responsible for their personal decisions and sexual choices.

Abortion hurts men in other, more direct ways as well. The fact that upwards of 3000 abortions occur each day in the U.S. implies the obvious corollary that about 3000 men lose a son or daughter each day to the procedure. Some of these men may have encouraged or pressured their partners to abort; others may have strongly resisted; still others may not have found out they were fathers until afterwards.

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As post-abortion healing ministries like Rachel's Vineyard have expanded in recent years, many women along with their husbands or male partners have come to seek help in dealing with

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the negative effects of their abortion. A growing number of men have found themselves regretting their involvement in an abortion, and various websites now include testimonies from men who have lost a child this way (cf. [rachelsvineyard.org](http://rachelsvineyard.org) or [priestsforlife.org](http://priestsforlife.org)).

Many of the testimonies are poignant, raw and searingly honest. Phil McCombs, a Washington Post Staff writer shared his own post-abortive struggles in a 1995 article in the Post:

I feel like a murderer, which isn't to say that I blame anyone else, or think anyone else is a murderer. It's just the way I feel and all the rationalizations in the world haven't changed this. I still grieve for little Thomas. It is an ocean of grief. From somewhere in the distant past I remember the phrase from Shakespeare, the multitudinous seas, "incarnadine." When I go up to the river on vacation this summer, he won't be going boating with me on the lovely old wooden runabout that I can't really afford to put in the water but can't bring myself to discard, either. He won't be lying on the

grass by the tent at night looking at the starry sky and saying, "What's that one called, Dad?" Because there was no room on the Earth for Thomas.

Another anonymous father wrote a letter, excerpted here, to his deceased son as part of his own journey towards healing and peace:

My Dear John Peter —  
This past weekend I did something I should have done a very long time ago. I confessed to your death by abortion. John, you would today be a young man of twenty, vibrant and alive... Tears come again John, as they did Saturday night... In the fall, John, when the leaves fall from the trees I shall think of you, for you too fell from life. In the cold of winter, John, the snow shall remind me of you: for like the snow you were and are white and pure. In the spring, John, I shall think of you: for the birth of spring shall remind me that you, too, should have been born into this world. John, I shall think of you in the summer: I shall imagine your laughter. I shall see you as you

might have been, a little boy running and playing, scraping your knees from a fall. I shall miss, John, all that I might have gained from your life. My Little One, John Peter, I can only now ask you to forgive me as Jesus and God have done. May you rest in the arms of God — Dad

The deep emotional scarring of both men and women that follows in the wake of legalized abortion should be a growing concern for all of us, and should challenge us to craft a more just society where every man, woman and child is unconditionally protected, respected, welcomed and loved.

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