

I am saying, simply, it is not part of our medical tradition for doctors to make decisions for people without getting informed consent.

Who is so well-informed, so highly qualified, so distinguished an expert as to decide for someone else what values outweigh the hazards of preventable injury, illness, and death?

ALLEGED ABORTION OUTBREAK RESULTING FROM THE HEARINGS

The alleged unwanted pregnancy-abortion outbreak resulting from adverse pill publicity generated by the committee hearings is a charge that insults the intelligence of the educated person. The charge was first made in *Newsweek* (2/9) and repeated in a round-up story in the *New York Times* (2/15) of several Planned Parenthood physicians and others. In a later *New York Times* story (2/25) Dr. Elizabeth Connell was alleged to have stated in Washington that, "New York doctors were performing operations on women who have had undesired pregnancies since the subcommittee hearings started six weeks ago."

Two comments are in order:

(a) Any woman who, by virtue of discontinuing the pill on January 15 when the hearings started, had an abortion because of a subsequent pregnancy was operated on by a quack.

Senator DOLE. In other words, you are saying it is not possible, then?

Dr. RATNER. That is right.

No physician could have known this early with requisite certitude that the woman on whom he performed an abortion was actually pregnant. Furthermore, the woman couldn't have known she was pregnant.

Mr. DUFFY. You are quite certain about this?

Dr. RATNER. I am saying this publicly for the record. Let me make that clear to you.

Mr. DUFFY. There is no way you could be wrong?

Dr. RATNER. That the earliest possible time you can tell a woman is pregnant, a woman normally suspects she is pregnant when she misses a period 2 weeks after ovulation, and the earliest possible time you can have a test which can determine a pregnancy is 2 weeks later. So you already have 28 days there, so you have to assume it would be possible for the woman to become pregnant 2 hours after she discontinued the pill, which is highly improbable.

Mr. DUFFY. Doctor, would you just answer that question. Is there absolutely no way you could be wrong on these particular statements that you are making?

Dr. RATNER. Well, now, I am not infallible. I decide on the basis of my medical knowledge. I would not be making such a statement without having medical knowledge backing it up. And I would assume that every obstetrician would agree with me.

Now, Dr. Alcock^s was called up by one of my doctor friends. He first said he knew of three abortions—and I think you should look

^s See reference 8 of Bibliography.