

FROM DANGER TO DIGNITY: THE FIGHT FOR SAFE ABORTION

FILM 2 OF THE TRILOGY "CHOICE THEN AND NOW"

Time Code	Speaker	Dialog
0:00:20	NARRATOR	It was 1962. I was 22 years old. I was rushed to the emergency room with a fever of 105 and blood poisoning. I had had an illegal abortion.
0:00:37	NARRATOR	Blindfolded, without anesthetic, I never saw the face of the abortionist. My own doctor, who refused to provide a safe abortion, would now try to save my life.
0:00:56	NARRATOR	Because I had good medical care, I survived. Many women died.
0:00:59	JODY	There, there was no phrase "reproductive choice"; there was no concept of "reproductive choice." If you needed an abortion, you couldn't look in the phone book for a clinic.
0:01:13	REV. MOODY	This is a time in which it is illegal to counsel a woman about abortion. A \$1,000 fine and a year in jail.
0:01:25	LANA PHELAN	I didn't want to be arrested, nobody wants to be arrested. But if you see something that is so wrong socially, and you have a chance and you don't do anything about it, it's hard to sleep with yourself at night.
0:01:43	NARRATOR	From 1961 until 1973, the struggle for abortion rights became one of the fastest growing social movements in the history of the United States. On the front lines were people willing to challenge the law, and if necessary, break the law.
0:02:20	NARRATOR	Abortion first became a crime in the United States in the mid-1800's. Historians estimate that for more than a century, at least 500,000 clandestine, illegal abortions were taking place each year. Some women found safe operations, but most faced the back alleys. Every day, hospitals admitted women infected and bleeding.

0:02:24	MARY	One I can think of was a classmate of mine who had an abortion that was done actually by her mom. And she started to hemorrhage and the mother could not stop her from bleeding, she brought her in here -- and she died. I called the daddy and uh, when he arrived at the hospital, he said to her immediately "I want to know who did it." And in every way she tells me that, he made her feel guilty, and called her a killer, the death of their daughter. I thought, "there must be another way, it's got to be another way."
0:03:39	NARRATOR	Abortions were reported simply as criminal acts. The human costs behind the headlines were suppressed. This 1913 film, which dramatized an illegal abortion, escaped the censors. It dared to criticize the law at a time when even information about contraception was illegal. When journalist Lawrence Lader was researching reproductive rights in the 1950s, he found that almost nothing had been written on abortion.
0:04:29	LAWRENCE LADER	It was a dirty subject here; you didn't discuss it at the dinner table. The only thing in the newspapers was a little item, "Dr. X arrested for performing illegal abortion." You had no way to get at facts or the real story. There was nothing.
0:04:47	NARRATOR	Abortion was a taboo subject, surrounded by secrecy and shame. In 1962, one woman's story broke the silence. Sherri Finkbine was the host of television's "Romper Room." She was pregnant with her fifth child when she discovered that the drug she'd been taking for morning sickness -- thalidomide -- could cause severe birth defects, including babies born with no limbs. Arizona law allowed abortions only if a woman's life was in danger. Sherri's doctor diagnosed her as a potential suicide so he could arrange a hospital abortion.
0:05:28	SHERRI	Everything -- would have been fine, if on Sunday I didn't have this fantastic feeling that I had to warn other people about this horrendous drug.
0:05:41	NARRATOR	Sherri called the local newspaper several days before the scheduled operation. She asked that her name not be used. The next day, her doctor

		called to say that the abortion had been cancelled.
0:05:54	SHERRI	I said, how could they cancel it? They don't even know who I am. And they said the news went out on the Associated Press, and we're getting calls from all over the world. Somebody went into the county attorney's office and said they'd like to make a citizen's arrest on the hospital and on the woman who is going to have that termination.
0:06:16	NARRATOR	When Sherri tried to challenge the hospital's decision, reporters tracked her down. The whole world watched as Sherri and her husband searched for a doctor who would help. Finally, they went to Sweden where abortion was legal.
0:06:34	SHERRI	I don't want to get back at anybody. I don't feel bitter towards anyone. I don't feel bitter towards people who oppose this religiously. I only hope, that they know, can feel that we're doing what's best in our case and could feel some of what's in my heart in trying to prevent a tragedy from happening. When we came back from Sweden -- then we heard -- that somebody else was now doing Romper Room -- and they would keep her on doing it. I was told -- and I remember the words exactly -- that they felt I was unfit to handle children. We had received so many death threats that the FBI was called. They came because we had two children who went to school; it was only about a half a block away, but, there were these big FBI agents who would take these little kids and walk them to school because people threatened to cut off the arms and legs of my existing children.
0:07:32	Interviewer	Mrs. Finkbine, now that it's all over, do you still think that you've done the right thing?
0:07:37	SHERRI	More than ever. You know, we could have given up a long time ago, but something within me -- I don't know if it was womanly intuition or the God inside of me that said, 'Don't have this baby.' And I didn't, and now I know it was the right decision.
0:07:59	NARRATOR	Sherri's case made headlines, but when the story quieted down, for most women, nothing had changed.

0:08:13	DIANA	When I became pregnant, I was totally desperate. At that time, poor women, many of whom were women of color, did not have the connections and access to safe abortions. At the time I was living with an aunt, and I knew I was pregnant. Um, one day I was just sitting in the bedroom on the bed, trying to figure out what I should do, and she, she had these plastic flowers sitting all around, and um, I thought, well you know, I could probably use this, you know, 'cause it had a long piece of wire, and, that's what I did. I ended up having to go into the hospital emergency because I was hemorrhaging, and it wouldn't stop.
0:09:06	NARRATOR	Experiences like Diana's were happening every day. California Assemblyman John Knox heard about a woman who was raped and forced by law to bear the child. In 1961, he introduced a Bill for Reform to the State Legislature. It drew little attention and died in committee but it inspired one of the nation's first abortion rights activists.
0:09:30	PATRICIA MAGINNIS	I saw it on page 90,000 of the newspaper, a tiny little article about this bill. And I took it and I drew up my own little petition for modified abortion laws. And I went then to the public one at a time, to find anyone who would talk about it.
0:10:00	NARRATOR	Pat was an early advocate of women's rights. She became a medical technologist in a San Francisco hospital where she saw hundreds of women admitted with complications from back-alley abortions.
0:10:11	Reporter	Do you approve of abortions for any reason whatsoever?
0:10:16	PATRICIA MAGINNIS	Some hundred thousand women every year, this is California women alone, subject themselves to improperly or illegal abortions. I think that in itself is a rather staggering figure. And I feel great indignation as a woman to think that women have to subject themselves to second-rate medical care for a safe surgical procedure.
0:10:37	NARRATOR	Information about the medical consequences of illegal abortions began to reach more legislators, and a second California Assemblyman considered

		proposing reform.
0:10:44	BEILENSON	As I traveled up and down the state, women would come up to me after my talks and tell me about their own personal involvement in abortion, that either they themselves had one at one time or another -- always of course an illegal one -- or their sister had, or their mother had, or their grandmother had, or their college roommate had, but everyone knew of some other woman, if not herself, who had suffered through an illegal abortion. Which meant that of the many hundreds of thousands, perhaps so many as a million American women who were each year having abortions, every single one of them was a criminal. Every single one of them was a potential felon. It was this immense issue out there waiting to be resolved in some better way than we'd succeeded up to that time in doing it. But until that time, people hadn't even been talking about it.
0:11:33	NARRATOR	In 1963, Congressman Anthony Beilenson took a political risk by introducing a bill that would make abortion legal in cases of rape, incest, and danger to a woman's life. The proposal failed, but interest was beginning to grow. Meanwhile Pat Maginnis' grass roots efforts continued. She was distributing flyers to attendees of a California medical conference when Lana Phelan passed by.
0:12:16	LANA	It was raining, and so I ran across the street to get to my car, and there was a woman standing on the center aisle. And as I passed, she gave me a leaflet. It said, "Repeal Abortion Laws." I looked at that and said to my husband, "My God, the only person there with a dap of sense was standing outside in the rain."
0:12:35	NARRATOR	Lana was a young housewife and mother concerned about women's health issues. She called the number on the flyer to see if she could help.
0:12:43	LANA	So one day not too long after that she called me and asked me if I would go to the college and give a speech for them. They needed a speaker, and I said, "What will I say?" and she said, "You'll think of something," and I did.
0:12:53	NARRATOR	Lana talked about the trauma of her own illegal abortion at 17. She joined

		with Pat and another woman, Rowena Gurner, to speak out about the laws. Working out of a tiny San Francisco apartment, they launched their fledgling organization, the Society for Humane Abortion.
0:13:22	NARRATOR	1963 was a year when new dreams were born, and others died. But the vision of a more humane America continued and inspired social action across the country. Pastor James Lawson, a colleague of Martin Luther King, recalls those times.
0:13:52	LAWSON	One of the mistaken notions about the 60's, I think, is the notion that we were primarily a civil rights movement. The better term for what we talked about and said, would have been Human Rights. Because, we talked all the time about dignity and freedom and justice.
0:14:24	NARRATOR	In the early 1960's people began to examine the morality of many issues, including abortion. Between 1963 and 1965, an epidemic of German measles accounted for a significant rise in serious birth defects. This situation led to a greater public acceptance for abortions. But the most compelling motivation for someone to act was still a personal experience.
0:14:59	SUTTON	I had seen someone die in the military -- the wife of a pilot that I was very close to; he'd come back home after World War II, only to have, within the first year of his return, his wife die as a result of a botched abortion. This background demanded that I take some action when I had the opportunity.
0:15:23	NARRATOR	In spring of 1965, despite opposition in his district, Sutton introduced the first proposal for abortion reform in the state of New York.
0:15:35	SUTTON	A number of ministers who supported me on all other things, opposed me on the issue of abortion reform. As a matter of fact, there were some who threatened me that they would work against my next election, if I pursued the issue of abortion. That's just reform!
0:15:51	NARRATOR	The bill was defeated, but early legislative efforts encouraged others around the country to speak out. In Minnesota, a respected gynecologist

		was appalled by the number of women she saw admitted to the hospital following botched abortions.
0:16:05	JANE ELIZABETH HODGSON	I gradually began to think well this is horrible medicine that we're practicing. This isn't the way I was taught in Public Health classes in medical school and we should be able to do something about this.
0:16:18	NARRATOR	Dr. Hodgson testified before legislative committees, and also spoke at conferences in an attempt to reach other doctors.
0:16:26	HODGSON	The real moral and medical question is whether women should have abortions humanely and safely in our hospitals or whether we should continue our degrading system of unwanted pregnancies and criminal abortions. I'm tired of having half the world telling the other half what they should do with their own bodies.
0:16:42	HODGSON	The hypocrisy got to me. Well-to-do women always could have them; they would go to England or Canada or wherever -- they could arrange it, but it was absolutely impossible for the young and the poor.
0:16:58	NARRATOR	Dr. Hodgson's testimony failed to sway the Minnesota legislature, but she was not deterred. Several years later, she would openly defy the law. Early in 1967, a second reform bill was proposed in New York. A group of ministers and rabbis organized by Reverend Howard Moody were closely watching its progress.
0:17:22	HOWARD MOODY	They didn't change that law in '67. We were meeting at the time, and beginning to see, what are we going to do as a result. And some of us felt very strongly and said "I think we ought to break the law, I think we ought to counsel women and help women get abortions. Even if it's against the law."
0:17:47	NARRATOR	With a group of 21 clergy, Rev. Moody organized a free referral network to provide counsel for any woman with an unintended pregnancy.

0:18:00	MOODY	I felt that I could make a case to be there for her, whatever her decision was, not just if it were for abortion, but if it were for having the child and giving it up or if it were for having the child and not giving it up, and keeping it. Whatever it was, we would try to help her find the way to do that. And that as religious people, as people who cared about people's spirits, there was no way that you could do that without caring about their bodies.
0:18:51	NARRATOR	The clergy leadership was outspoken with their plans, but they operated covertly to avoid arrest.
0:18:58	NARRATOR	Arlene Carmen worked with Rev. Moody to coordinate the overall effort.
0:19:07	ARLENE CARMEN	The way in which the clergy service was set up was a very protective one. I was the only person who had contact with the abortionists. The clergy never did. Someone had to go and pretend to be pregnant and go through everything but the abortion to see how the doctor treated women, because there were so many terrible stories that we heard from women about their illegal abortions.
0:19:32	NARRATOR	Hospitals sometimes permitted abortions for extreme cases. In practice, these so called "therapeutic abortions" were often available only to the wealthy. Arlene remembers a welfare mother whose eleven-year-old daughter had been raped by a babysitter.
0:19:48	ARLENE CARMEN	Everywhere she turned, she was refused. But what had enraged her the most is that, in one of the interviews, her daughter was asked why she didn't want to be a mother. You're talking to a 10 or 11 year old kid. What we did, in working with a couple of sympathetic doctors was we would save our ability to get a therapeutic abortion for a situation like that.
0:20:11	NARRATOR	The doctors who took referrals from the clergy could face criminal charges and lose their medical licenses. In spite of these risks, some doctors were moved to act by what they'd seen.

0:20:24	DR. BOYD	The hospitals then would be, would be you know, beds after bed of women with abortion complications. And we were supposed to report these. And I had one that I did report. The police came, they harassed the woman, they threatened her, told her she was going to die, um, frightened her into telling who had done the abortion. It was a very bad experience for her. I made the decision then that I would never report that again.
0:21:02	NARRATOR	Women from all over the country came to Dr. Boyd's office in a small Texas town, after he joined the clergy abortion service.
0:21:12	DR. BOYD	To have the service available, safe and to have it done with respect and with dignity and to know that your work is needed, is appreciated, and to get that reaffirmation every day from patients who, you know, you may have never met before ...to have a patient look up and say "Thank you, Doctor, I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't been here", just a simple "thank you".
0:21:48	NARRATOR	Women who could not find a safe abortion in the United States and were able to leave the country, had to take their chances. In Mexico, for example, illegal abortion was a thriving industry with no controls.
0:22:00	OLGA	Of course there were two levels of abortion providers. There were the ones that were in a very sanitized office. And so the pretty wealthy women, and they were usually the white women, would go and have an abortion that was done very well -- it was -- you know -- sanitary... it was -- the doctor was trained, she felt no discomfort. On the other hand, you might have a woman that would be Latina, or maybe not as wealthy, white American woman that would go to Mexico, and she would have to take what she could get.
0:22:38	NARRATOR	The leaders of the Society for Humane Abortion went to Mexico to investigate the possibilities.
0:22:44	LANA	The dangers were terrible. A young woman could be intercepted at the airport. Cab drivers knew why they were there. And they would say, "I

		want to go to so and so" and he would take them elsewhere where he would be getting a kickback or a rake-off.
0:22:58	PAT	Telephone operators in the border towns would switch calls to entrepreneurs that didn't know what they were doing. The women didn't know really who they were going to.
0:23:09	NARRATOR	Pat, Lana and Rowena compiled a list of reputable doctors, with explicit instructions on how to navigate the underground. They would visit the doctors, and check their facilities and help the women negotiate fair prices.
0:23:26	LANA	When the woman came back, if we had a single bad report, a single one -- that they had mistreated or had done poor surgery or that they had in any manner abused this woman -- their name went right off that list. It was hard, but it was better than picking them up dead in garbage cans in Tijuana, which is what had been happening to them.
0:23:48	NARRATOR	Although few doctors in the United States were willing to perform abortions, some would risk seeing the patients after the operation. Dr. Cheek helped Lana and Pat by treating women with complications after they returned from Mexico.
0:24:08	DR. CHEEK	The only way I could find of handling somebody who had had an abortion, and who was sick or in pain or running a temperature, was to go and see them. And I felt this was an extension of what I really owed myself to do. At that time I did not have the courage to do abortions myself, so much hung in the balance of losing one's license, of going to jail, and I had a family. This was the trap that all of us were sort of caught in. Abortion was something that really needed to be changed in America, that this was criminal.
0:24:48	NARRATOR	In 1967, the state of Colorado and then North Carolina passed the first reform laws in the country. In California, assemblyman Beilenson reintroduced his bill.

0:25:04	BEILENSEN	Everywhere I went, no matter what kind of group it was, no matter how politically conservative it might be people would start nodding and realizing "Yes, of course"...for the first time really, in their lives, many of them, it was presented to them as a potential political issue, as a legislative issue, as something where clearly, the law ought to be changed.
0:25:27	NARRATOR	In June of 1967, Beilenson's bill finally passed. But the new law had many bureaucratic restrictions and, as a result, few women were able to get abortions. Reverend Huw Anwyl was among those who had lobbied for the bill.
0:25:46	HUW ANWYL	I found myself in the position of being asked to establish some kind of information service that would help women learn about this new law. And to my absolute dismay we had 293 calls from women who wanted help. And once we climbed from under that, we found that, of that number, only three qualified under the law as then it was interpreted in California. So then the next question was, "What now?" It soon became clear that I was in something that, in my own case, it totally changed my life, because you don't meet that kind of human need and then say, well, it doesn't concern me anymore.
0:26:48	CORNISH ROGERS	Huw Anwyl contacted me and asked me if I would be a counselor representing the South Central area, which is largely the black area of Los Angeles. And in a community that has so many persons who are poor, it just seemed to me that those persons who did want to take a step to determine their own future, ought to be, ought to be helped, without what I would consider violating the laws of God.
0:27:17	NARRATOR	Peg Beissert was still in training for the ministry when she was approached by her pastor.
0:27:21	PEG BEISSERT	He asked if I would want to do abortion counseling, when I was ordained. And I said "Yes, I would". However, I didn't quite realize that it was going to be so fast. I was ordained on a Sunday afternoon, and on Monday morning, we were at a very large meeting in Royway, New Jersey, of the clergy counseling group. There must have been at least a hundred men there. Uh, when I came in with the pastor of the church there, um, he announced, "A woman." And, uh, there was applause and everyone

		standing, and it was quite a sight. But I realized what it meant to them when all these men had been counseling women about abortion, and there hadn't been a single woman pastor to do this. So I jumped in with two feet.
0:28:10	NARRATOR	The Clergy Service continued to grow, and eventually attracted several thousand members nationwide.
0:28:17	RABBI TICKTIN	I got involved because it felt like a matter of justice and fairness and there were victims and I was concerned about that. We decided to list ourselves and take a telephone number and that was a rather audacious step, especially when the Illinois legislators were really in the very heart of their argumentation and newspapers were editorializing on all sides. I recall the doctors' letters especially, because doctors were confessing that they had been doing abortions for years, and they said we really are sick and tired of having this considered clandestine and illegal.
0:29:07	NARRATOR	By the end of 1968, calls both for and against decriminalization were escalating. Those opposed to change wanted their message to be heard.
0:29:23	INTERVIEWER	Are you saying that you would let a woman die, when you know that an abortion could save her life?
0:29:32	PRO-LIFE DOCTOR	The answer first to that is that, uh, I think you start playing God when you decide one life is of more or less value than any other life. And the second answer is, that in my view, any abortion is little different than a murder and I do not approve of it under any circumstances whatsoever.
0:30:02	Pro-Life Priest	Abortion is, and has always been considered a serious violation of God's law. Moreover, in order to emphasize the special evil of abortion under church law, those who undergo or perform an abortion place themselves in a state of excommunication.
0:30:20	NARRATOR	While the Catholic Church staunchly opposed reform, other religious denominations were making public statements in support of change.

0:30:36	PASTOR JAMES LAWSON	For a woman not to be counted as a moral agent; for a woman not be counted as able to make up her own mind; for a woman not to be counted as being able to make adequate decisions...medical, spiritual, moral about herself, about her own well-being, about her family, of course is a denial of a woman's basic, uh, humanity, basic ability, basic god given, given rights.
0:31:12	NARRATOR	Even as the demand for abortion rights reached the streets, the tragedies continued.
0:31:20	LANA	Women were using Lysol, they would drink it, or they would douche with it...anything caustic. They would stick needles, anything that they would kind of poke in the general direction of their uterus in an effort to, to dislodge this pregnancy.
0:31:39	NARRATOR	The Society for Humane Abortion began offering classes on contraceptive techniques, and on safer methods of self-induced abortions.
0:31:47	PATRICIA MAGINNIS	We had people calling us, begging us for help, for the instructions on do-it-yourself abortion. A large part of it was warnings on what not to do.
0:32:03	LANA	In the meantime, we worked non-stop to change the law. And to change the law, we had to challenge it. We did challenge it openly. Our list was available to the police. Every time I gave a lecture on how to do your own abortion, a flyer was sent to the police. They were invited to come.
0:32:23	PATRICIA MAGINNIS	We were charged with violating 601 of the business and professions code -- a very respectable felony offense. 601 says "it is a felony offense to willfully write, compose or publish any means or method for inducing an abortion", and this applied to every institution, every school, every person, every health agency, across the board.
0:32:55	NARRATOR	Through a series of appeals, Pat and her colleague Rowena managed to stay out of jail. While out on bail, they continued to offer classes.

0:33:07	LANA	The classes got popular and other states invited us to come. We ran off our literature on our A.B. Dick mimeograph machine, packed 'em in pasteboard boxes and tied them up with string. And we climbed onto the plane with all we could possibly carry. And um when we got to the other end, the women would meet us -- invariably with a Volkswagen -- and if the men that wanted to stop us had known, all they had to do was take our Volkswagens away and the movement would have stopped! But we would get there and when we left we would leave a little group.
0:33:42	NARRATOR	Across the country, the women's liberation movement was taking root. In 1969, in Chicago, a group of women began discussing the connection between abortion and women's rights.
0:33:58	JODY	First of all, we met for months, talking about why abortion is a political issue, why it was important to have a service that provided abortions, why society put women in this bind of, that they should be sexy on the one hand, but if the natural consequences of being sexy happened, then why all of a sudden they were put in a shameful position.
0:34:27	NARRATOR	The women pooled their resources and formed an illegal counseling and referral service. Counselors used the code name JANE.
0:34:34	JODY	The first thing that we would say is - 'we can help you'.
0:34:38	RUTH	We never turned anyone away...
0:34:40	JODY	For lack of money.
0:34:41	RUTH	Never.
0:34:43	JODY	And then when the counselor -- Jane would say -- a counselor is going to call you, the counselor would meet with the person and would talk about

		just a whole range of things.
0:34:53	RUTH	If a woman was unsure about what she wanted to do, we helped her talk that through, so that women were able to change their mind if they wanted to, anywhere along the line. 'Cause, what we were about, was a woman being able to figure out what she wanted to do and make her choice about it.
0:35:14	NARRATOR	To insure a woman's comfort and safety, the members of Jane decided to become more involved during the abortion.
0:35:22	JODY	We'd counsel the woman, and we'd make the doctor contact, and then once the doctor took over, it was out of our hands. And we didn't hear another thing from the woman until the abortion was over.
0:35:35	RUTH	We wanted to be able to carry the counseling one step further by sitting with the woman while she was having her abortion, that this is not something that is being done to the woman, but really with the woman.
0:35:51	JODY	But the big step didn't come until after we discovered that these doctors that we'd been sending people to weren't doctors at all.
0:36:01	RUTH	And here was this ordinary person who was doing this abortion, and then we had to decide whether or not we were going to tell the women that this wasn't a doctor, and how we were going to, you know, what to do about that. And we decided that of course we would tell them, that we couldn't not tell them. And then the next step was..."If he could do it, we could do it!"
0:36:24	NARRATOR	The women of JANE learned the standard surgical procedure for terminating a pregnancy. They sterilized their instruments and used antibiotics to prevent infections. They went on to perform more than 11,000 safe abortions.

0:36:35	ALICE	I remember this ad, in the newspaper, that said: "Pregnant? Need help? Call Jane." So I called Jane. One by one we were taken into this room to have the abortion. And there was a woman sitting next to me. She was holding my hand through the whole thing. And she said, "You're fine, you're going to be fine." And I was cramping, I remember, but I was breathing through the whole thing and I thought, I am fine, I'm really fine. I can't believe it but I'm ok. It demystified the abortion. It made it accessible, understandable, real, ordinary, difficult. But it wasn't mysterious. It's revolutionary though, the idea that women, anyone, regular people can seize control of their lives.
0:37:53	NARRATOR	The women's movement took an increasingly active stand on abortion. Reforms had passed in some states, but in no state was there repeal. Complete decriminalization was the goal of feminists such as author Betty Friedan and attorney Flo Kennedy. In New York, a group of women contacted Constance Cook, a member of the NY Assembly, and urged her to join their cause.
0:38:26	HON. CONSTANCE COOK	They looked on me -- I know, I've heard later -- as being a little bit different. Because first of all, I was a Republican, and...but they just wanted to know how do you get a bill passed. And I told them how unhappy I was with the reform bills and thought they were very difficult. So they all looked at me and said, "Well, we don't like it either. What we really, really want is outright repeal." And I thought, well that's impossible, but I said, "Yeah, that would be a good idea."
0:38:58	FLO KENNEDY	I remember Constance Cook. She was not a radical by any means. But she became our staunch ally, and made it possible for us crazy radicals to come in. But she joined us, and it was a very thrilling development. We need to become more respectful of people from the other wings of the fight.
0:39:22	NARRATOR	In Spring of 1969 and again in 1970, Connie Cook introduced a bill for repeal with Franz Leichter. Though two amendments modified the bill, it would still be the most liberal abortion law in the country.
0:39:43	COOK	There are many who say, that this bill is abortion on demand. I submit that it is not. I submit that we have abortion on demand in the state of New York right now. Any woman that wants an abortion can get one. And the

		real difference is how much money she has to spend. If she has 25 dollars, she has it done here, under the most abominable circumstances. If she has more money, she can go abroad. But the fact remains, that she can get it. We have abortion on demand, and if she doesn't have the twenty-five dollars, please don't forget that she can abort herself. And regretfully, regretfully, this is happening more often than you or I like to admit.
0:40:50	NARRATOR	Lawrence Lader had been coordinating repeal efforts throughout the nation. He now focused all of his attention on New York.
0:40:56	LAWRENCE LADER	The last few days before the vote was called on the abortion rights bill, in 1970, were frantic days. All of us were up in Albany lobbying. It looked very close down to the last minute.
0:41:16	TERRY	It is my hope that we will defeat this bill so inhumane and so unchristian. We have not had a day in this session of the legislature any more important than today, and it is my firm hope that we defeat this measure today.
0:41:37	KRUPSACK	I, as a woman, feel that I can speak with some feeling that perhaps only the other women in this chamber can, and that is the strong maternal drive that people have, and that it is only the anguish that leads them to these desperate situations, sir.
0:41:51	TERRY	You mentioned the question, Ms. Krupsack, of when does life begin. Can you answer that question?
0:41:55	KRUPSACK	Mr. Terry, for me life begins at the moment of conception, but I am here as a legislator, and I must represent and give...I have an obligation to give a hearing and recognition to the fact that is not the same view of all people under all circumstances.
0:42:14	BLUMENTHAL	In the last ten years, 367 young women in New York City were known to have died as a result of an abortion, or an attempted one...either self inflicted or performed by an unqualified person and under unsafe

		circumstances. Isn't that the ultimate morality? Could we have saved 367 young women from dying, if we had not imposed upon them our sense of morality and condemned them, and I insist on using the word condemned, to the butchery of the side streets of Harlem, or Riverside Drive in my district?
0:43:02	NARRATOR	Assemblyman George Michaels represented a predominately Roman Catholic district. His constituents expected him to vote against the bill, which he did. The final roll call showed a tie. As the Speaker of the House raised his gavel to announce the bill's defeat, George Michaels asked for the floor.
0:43:23	ASSEMBLYMAN GEORGE MICHAELS	Mr. Speaker.
0:43:24	SPEAKER	Mr. Michaels.
0:43:25	MICHAELS	Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that this would never come to pass. I fully appreciate that this is the termination of my political career, but Mr. Speaker, what's the use of getting elected, or reelected, if you don't stand for something? I cannot in good conscience stand here, and be the vote that defeats this bill. I therefore request you, Mr. Speaker, to change my negative vote to an affirmative vote.
0:44:03	NARRATOR	George Michaels' vote did end his political career. But for thousands of women who lived in New York, and for those who could afford to travel there, abortion was now legal. The day after the bill became law, New York's Planned Parenthood was ready to respond.
0:44:20	MARCIA LAWRENCE	Phones lined up on tables, it was like a telethon; every one of those phones had five lines on it, and every single button was lit. And we each went to our station, picked up the phone, and you couldn't listen, you know, without your heart aching for every single one. And just being so grateful, that you could say, for the first time in history, "Yes, now I'm going to give you a phone number to call, and we'll set up an

		appointment," and it was all going to be clean and safe.
0:45:11	NARRATOR	The New York law was an inspiration to Doctor Hodgson, who decided to take on her state's law once again.
0:45:28	DR. HODGSON	It seemed to me that I was naive, of course, but the only thing that was necessary to do was to find a perfect test case that the public could condone, and could see the reason why, and that Minnesota then would change their law. I thought it would be that easy.
0:45:37	NARRATOR	An opportunity to act came when a pregnant patient contracted German Measles. Knowing the risks of congenital deformity, she asked Dr. Hodgson to perform an abortion.
0:45:48	DR. HODGSON	I suggested sending her to Mexico, or referring her to the Clergy Counseling Service is what we were doing then and she said, "No, I want you to do it, and I think I have that right."
0:46:01	NEWS ANNOUNCER	Dr. Hodgson asked the courts to let her perform an abortion on Nancy Widmeyer. But they took too long. On April 29, Dr. Hodgson went ahead without them.
0:46:10	DR. HODGSON	The federal judges were not particularly sympathetic, so I was indicted and the trial and all followed.
0:46:20	NEWS ANNOUNCER	The first day of court the prosecution calls witnesses to show Dr. Hodgson performed the abortion. The defense doesn't dispute it. Instead, they begin to argue that the law interferes with individual privacy. It is Friday afternoon, and the end of this trial. Judge Jerome Plunkett finds Dr. Hodgson guilty, and refuses to submit the case to the Minnesota Supreme Court. The question is: when courts will agree abortion is something to be decided by a doctor and a patient.

0:46:49	NARRATOR	Arrests elsewhere throughout the country continued. In Chicago, Rabbi Ticktin discovered that one of the women who had come to him for an abortion referral was a plainclothes police officer.
0:47:03	RABBI TICKTIN	I called back home, and was told by Esther, my wife, that there was a warrant out for my arrest. I was really quite shocked by that, I didn't think it would ever come to that because everybody understood that sooner or later, the legislation would have to change.
0:47:25	NARRATOR	Chicago police were on alert. The JANES continued their work and in 1972, police raided one of the apartments where they were doing abortions.
0:47:36	RUTH	We believed that if a law was wrong, that we had some responsibility to stand up and say, this is a wrong law.
0:47:46	JODY	Not only was there the need, but there was a philosophical obligation on our part, on somebody's part, to disrespect a law that disrespected women.
0:48:00	NARRATOR	Around the country, the abortion controversy had escalated. New laws were being enacted, while others were being rescinded. In New York, opponents had tried to overturn the law, but failed. They were now trying to place restrictions on it. New York's District Attorney went to Reverend Moody to lay out his concerns.
0:48:24	MOODY	One of the things that he said to me was, "What we want to do is to write into the law a prerequisite that a woman has to go to a clergy for counseling, before they can have an abortion. A clergy, or social worker or combination thereof" and so forth and I said, "No way, Mr. District Attorney, are you going to get clergy to do that. You're not going to get this clergy to do it, I'll tell you now. A woman doesn't need to come to clergy. If a woman wants to come to clergy because she has a moral, or theological problem, she can do that, it's always open. But to force her to come to it, is to somehow impute to that women that she doesn't have the that either she is doing something immoral, that she doesn't have the ability to make her own decision, or whatever, and that would be wrong."

0:49:38	NARRATOR	Changing the laws state-by-state had been a long, slow process. The next step was to try to reach the Supreme Court. One of the most dedicated activists, Bill Baird, had fought restrictions on birth control at the Federal Level. Over the years, he had been arrested eight times for staging demonstrations. His victory in the Supreme Court, Baird vs. Eisenstadt, legalized contraception for un-married adults. The cumulative impact of this and other cases set the stage for Roe versus Wade.
0:50:25	SARAH WEDDINGTON	We saw it really as the Texas effort to simply add to the momentum to cases all over the country, hoping that one of them would get to the Supreme Court.
0:50:40	NARRATOR	Sarah Weddington was 26 years old and a recent law school graduate. She was still looking for a job at a legal firm when she decided to challenge the abortion law in Texas.
0:50:52	SARAH WEDDINGTON	Roe v. Wade was really a case that started here in Austin, basically because a group of women around the University community had been doing what we then called "problem pregnancy counseling." They asked me originally if I would just look into whether they could be prosecuted, and then as time went by and I did more research, and others joined to help me, and we talked about the issue, and we learned about the lawsuits pending in other places, our question then was well why don't we file a lawsuit? And as part of that process a young woman went to a male attorney in Dallas, said, "I'm pregnant, I don't want to be, I prefer an abortion." He said "I do know of two young women who are interested in working on this case. Why don't you go see them?" And she did. And so she became Jane Roe. I will never forget the night before oral argument because I was so nervous... I had done a few uncontested divorces, I had done wills for people with no money, and I had done one adoption. That was the entire sum of my legal experience. ... but I had spent three years almost getting ready to stand before the U.S. Supreme Court.
0:52:05	NARRATOR	The issue of abortion had personal meaning for Sarah Weddington. While she was in law school, she and her future husband had gone to Mexico for an abortion.

0:52:14	SARAH WEDDINGTON	I was in the courtroom, just before the judges come in there is a hush, and I had a flashback to that clinic in Mexico and to my feelings about it and then my determination, as time went by, that no woman should have to go through that and that I would do anything I could to see that that was not necessary.
0:52:40	SARAH WEDDINGTON	We are not here to advocate abortion. We do not ask this court to rule that abortion is good or desirable in any particular situation. We are here to advocate that the decision as to whether or not a particular woman will continue to carry or will terminate a pregnancy is a decision that should be made by that individual -- that in fact she has a constitutional right to make that decision for herself.
0:53:17	LANA	We had a revolution in this country, of women saying we're not going to do this anymore. We want doctors, we want care, we want wanted and loved children, when we want them and however many we want. And, uh, it was the first time that women had ever said, it was our right, our decision, for us to choose.