

TIJUANNA ADETUNJI

The legality of abortions through Roe v. Wade made me think that having an abortion would not affect my future. I am sad that two of my children are not with us today. They would have been ages thirty-four and twenty-seven. However, I am thankful that the false sense of safety and demeaning of human life garnered by the 1973 decision of Roe v. Wade has ended.

In May of 1988, I was a senior in high school about to graduate and scheduled to attend Basic Training for the US Army Reserves. Since I was only seventeen, I could not join the Army without my Mother signing a waiver. I was her only child, and she was very protective. She talked to the Army Recruiter at length to ensure I would be okay. The following week I found out that I was pregnant. I had heard that some of my classmates had abortions at a local clinic, and all you needed was \$300, which my best friend and boyfriend helped to pay. On appointment day, the nurse told me not to worry; it was just a glob of tissue. So without my Mom's knowledge or permission, I had my first abortion. My friends helped me to the car afterward; there was no follow-up appointment; that was it. That would have been my firstborn child.

In 1995, at age 25, I became pregnant again and decided to have an abortion, but I was much further along than I was at age seventeen. I was still assured not to worry; it was just a glob of tissue. This time I walked out differently than I did at age seventeen. The pain was excruciating. The bleeding would not stop and it went on for six weeks. I was in so much pain. I felt ashamed, embarrassed, and guilty about my decision. I called the clinic, and they told me to return. They examined me and stated that they had left pieces of the baby inside me. With tears streaming down my face, looking up at the ceiling, I sobbed as I heard the familiar suction noise, and playing back what the doctor said in my head, "Pieces of the baby were left inside of you." What about the glob of tissue? It wasn't a glob of tissue. It was a living soul, my baby being crushed enough to go through a tube. What had I done? I had believed a lie.

For years I went through cycles of depression, mental anguish, and excessive grieving for the children I lost through abortion. Their lives should have mattered more, as well as the over 64 million others lost since the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973. My consolation is seeing children who were once destined to die have the opportunity to live and seeing women protected from the trauma of abortion.

Tijuanna Adetunji is an international speaker and author of *Dear Daughter: How to Choose Your Way to a Better Life* and *Answering the Call of God*. She has worked extensively to bring awareness of the sanctity of human life and has testified before the State of Alabama Legislator Health Committee for Pro-Life legislation. She has stood with Operation Outcry and The Justice Foundation in D.C and as Amici Curiae to petition the Supreme Court on behalf of women hurt by abortion. One of her greatest joys is to see children who were once destined die, are alive and well.

