Human Chop Shops Exposed

March 15, 2000

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Have you ever wanted to buy the brain of an eight-week-old baby? You can, for $999. Did you ever think you'd want a baby's eyes or liver or gonads? Yours, for $75, $150 or $550 respectively.

Does that seem like a sick joke posted on eBay? Sadly, it's not funny; it's the tip of the iceberg of a newly uncovered industry specializing in the trafficking of body parts and organs taken from aborted babies.

The U.S. House of Representatives held a hearing on March 9 about the sale and purchase of baby body parts. Life Dynamics Inc., a pro-life group based in Texas, exposed this body-parts industry as the result of undercover work by lab technicians.

In addition to a body-parts price list that can turn one's stomach, the undercover investigators turned up page after page of orders from prominent research universities and pharmaceutical companies. Even the federal government's own National Institutes of Health has been ordering baby body parts.

The order forms specify which body parts the researchers desire. Here are some direct quotes: "Whole Eyes, 13-20 wks," "Brain, 8-24 weeks," "whole intact Leg, include ENTIRE HIP JOINT, 22-23(-) weeks gest. ... Age of fetus must be determined and noted.***indicate foot pad measurement." "Note Age, Race, Sex."

Most order forms come with specific directions, e.g., "Dissect lungs intact from 17 to 24 week fetal cadaver." "Dissect by cutting through symphysis pubis and include WHOLE Ilium. To be removed from fetal cadaver within 10 minutes."

When an order calls for fetal tissue retrieval to be completed within 10 minutes, a live birth is highly

likely. When an order stipulates something like "no anomalies" or "no congenital abnormalities," those abortions are probably being done on healthy late-term babies.

The order forms also include specific shipping instructions. "Ship on fresh wet ice. Next day." "Ship on dry ice." "Ship next day. Federal Express."

The buyers and sellers of these parts obviously don't believe that aborted babies are just "blobs of tissue." We wonder if the mothers would go ahead with their abortions if they knew that others were cutting up and selling their babies.

One of Bill Clinton's first executive orders in 1993 lifted the ban on federal funding for so-called "fetal tissue research" that involved using the organs and tissue obtained from aborted babies. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) then codified this executive order by shepherding through the then-Democratic Congress the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act (Public Law 103-43), which Clinton signed on June 10, 1993.

This law specifically forbids any person to "knowingly acquire, receive, or otherwise transfer any human fetal tissue for valuable consideration if the transfer affects interstate commerce." But it left a big loophole: it allows "reasonable payments associated with the transportation, implantation, processing, preservation, quality control or storage of human fetal tissue."

That's the loophole which the body-parts harvesting industries have been exploiting. The brochure of one of these body-parts companies, called "Opening Lines," states that it "... was formed to maximize the utilization of fresh fetal tissue we process. Our daily average case volume exceeds 1500...."

Opening Lines weasels around the federal restrictions on buying human body parts by leasing space in abortion clinics "to perform the harvesting and distribution" and telling the clinic managers they can use the rent payments "to offset your clinic's overhead." Opening Lines advertises that it can "train your staff to harvest and process" the babies and, "based on your volume we will reimburse part or all of your employee's salary, thereby reducing your overhead."

Last October 21 and 22, Senator Bob Smith (R-NH) took to the Senate floor to tell Americans about these human chop shops in abortion clinics around the country. Although C-Span coverage resulted in hundreds of phone calls to the Capitol, the Senate voted 51 to 46 against Smith's amendment designed to monitor the legal loopholes currently used to circumvent the law.

On November 9, the House by voice vote passed H.Res. 350 calling on Congress to "exercise oversight responsibilities and conduct hearings and take appropriate steps if necessary concerning private companies that are involved in the trafficking of baby body parts for profit." The sponsors were Representatives Tom Tancredo (R-CO), Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Joseph Pitts (R-PA).

Thanks to Commerce Committee Chairman Tom Bliley (R-VA), the March 9 hearing should lay out the paper trail that documents this whole ghoulish business.