

CINTA LATINA RESEARCH LLC

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Deposition:

Alaska State Review Board
Anchorage, ALASKA

To: Alaska State Review Board

Re: Personal Testimony & Abortion-Breast Cancer Link Information: Eve Sanchez Silver

This is an expanded version of the testimony I provided to the Committee by phone.

Dear Committee members:

This is the first time that I have given public testimony regarding the fact of my abortions. It has taken me years to do so.

BACKGROUND: I am a medical research analyst and a published member of the American Medical Writers Association. My work provides support for translational research goals in the basic sciences. I have partnered with the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, The Department of Defense, The National Cancer Institute and other scientific institutions and organizations. As a researcher I have developed a non-surgical cosmetic tool for breast cancer survivors. I am a former charter member of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's National Hispanic Latina Advisory Council, informing the organization concerning best practices in addressing breast cancer disparities among Latina populations nation wide and served on their breast cancer tumor review board for two years. I lecture widely at universities and institutions across the country with a focus on the abortion-breast cancer information disparity. I lecture internationally on the physiological pathway of the abortion-breast cancer link (Australia and New Zealand 08/05).

Currently I am involved in several research projects focused on light at night and disruption of the circadian rhythm, sleep/wake cycle.

I am well informed, reasonable and approach the dialog on abortion and breast cancer from many directions, but wish to focus on my own personal experience with abortion and its devastating aftermath, breast cancer. I know without a doubt that breast cancer risk information and photos of the child within me would have decided for me against having any abortions.

TESTIMONY:

I was sixteen at the time of my first abortion. I missed my period and went to an OB/Gyn with excellent credentials for my pregnancy test. He showed me a period at the end of a sentence and told me that I was pregnant but that it was just a blob about the size of the period and that it would be a simple matter to have an abortion. I walked out with a vague sense of excitement at the thought of being a woman and pregnant. But I was resigned to abort. I was working with another OB/GYN at the time and did not fear or worry about my decision to abort. The day of the abortion arrived and I was taken in to be aborted. I have learned since then that I am unusually small internally. I was given no sedative or any pain medication in preparation. He first inserted what I now know to be a large speculum. He began to rapidly crank it open. Almost immediately I was pinched and torn and began to cry out in pain. The doctor and his nurse worked steadily and ignored me. I was thrashing about. He secured one of my legs, forcing the other open over and over with his gloved hand. I began to scream in a short time. I was hysterical with burning, searing pain. The doctor, who had seemed calm, threw something down with a bang and yelled, "I'll be back when you CALM DOWN," he called this out as he walked away and left the room. I was left there for some time with these instruments inside me, one leg tied and screaming until I was hoarse. When he returned he was very

abrupt and vicious. I was in a nightmare of pain and cramping. Soon I heard the gurgling sounds of a suction aspirator. When he was finished, he walked out tossing his gloves and cap at the basin.

There was a lot of blood where I had lain.

I was given post abortion instructions and told to fill a prescription for birth control pill. I was given some medication and left with the father of my dead child, who had paid for the abortion. I had recently read Desmond Morris's book, The Naked Ape. Although I was convinced that, as a higher order animal, I had the right to abort. I returned to my room and wept as if someone close to me had died. I was in excruciating pain for over 24 hours. My boyfriend was frightened. I just lay there and cried my heart out.

At age 21, I aborted the first child of my marriage. I did not believe I deserved a child. I had hardened my heart to all children and complained about them. I said that if I were re-incarnated I wanted to come back as a childhood disease. It was something I had read somewhere and fitted my tough perspective on children. I said I hated them. And I did.

During and after that abortion I felt incredible pain but I did not cry out. I felt completely soul-less and empty: I felt even emptier after the abortion. I felt I deserved the pain.

Those were the first two of eleven total pregnancies. I became a Christian and reveled in the forgiveness of Christ, I was relieved and desired to have children right away. I had a horribly incompetent cervix as a result of my awful abortions. My cervix appeared fine on the external surface but the internal surface was damaged, as if it had been pecked at by birds. My amniotic sack leaked through and hour-glassed, filling with fluid little by little until the full lower globe burst. I would lose the child: Again and again and again and again and again.

Each child I carried longer and longer, begging God to grant me Life. I had one perfect pregnancy. My son. I continued to lose babies farther along after his birth. I was kept in bed, my useless cervix sown shut to keep the child in. I went into excruciating transition labor before they could cut open the stitches that shut my cervix. I was in full labor, with my cervix, sewn shut, before they got me back on the table. I was told over and over that I should abort this child or that child, because my life was in danger. "How do you know?" I asked.

I had a miscarriage at 6.5 months and held a funeral for my little girl. Everyone left me alone but my son, who refused to leave my side.

BREAST CANCER

As a breast cancer survivor, I have come to realize that this disease is not something one should tackle alone. It is a destroyer of morale and a debilitator of the spirit. Breast cancer has fractured my femininity and hurt my relationships: One needs support and encouragement, and occasionally, someone to cry with and someone to witness your rage.

INITIAL DISCOVERY

I discovered the 3 cm tumor beneath my breast while standing in the shower. As a medical research analyst, I carefully considered my options and chose to have a lumpectomy with grossly wide margins.

Three years later, early in 2001, I was re-diagnosed. My cancer had returned. I took the aggressive path and had a bilateral mastectomy, with reconstruction and saline implants.

One breast was taken prophylactically: I considered the decision with dread, but made my decision with firm convictions: My paternal first cousin Shirley, whom I loved (and a year younger than I), and our grandmother, both died of breast cancer. My own mother a nine-year survivor now, was diagnosed with breast cancer seven years before me. I wanted it OUT. I was in New York City at Sloane Kettering Cancer Care Center recovering, until September 10, 2001, the day before the World Trade Towers fell.

ABORTION BREAST CANCER LINK

My strong family breast cancer history, according to Dr. Janet Daling's study of American Women (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Seattle, Washington) raised my breast cancer risk by at least 270%. I have lost both breasts, my Grandmother and dear cousin to the disease, and walked through the disease with my mother, and twice alone.

In the process of breast reconstruction I learned to my distress that I was not a good candidate for nipple reconstruction. I was not expecting the level of personal sadness, which accompanied this news. I realized that it mattered to no one else, but it did matter to me at a very personal and intimate level: My sensuality, my sexual experience are forever altered.

There are flashing signs in the center of my soul which say:

Caution:

ONGOING RECONSTRUCTION OF SPIRITUAL AND MENTAL ATTITUDES:
SELF-WORTH IN MIRROR MAY BE WORSE THAN IT APPEARS

The dark side of dealing with breast cancer makes everyone else uncomfortable too. No hand is dear in that dread dark. One enters alone and is engulfed by devastation, loss and grief. There are no easy words to describe the lingering shapes and shadows of anguish. I am a survivor, in every sense of that word. I feel that my life, my femininity and my self-image were fractured, then shattered, fragmented and reorganized. I know that is hard to hear; it is hard to write; but I believe it is important to say so.

The breast cancer survivor is often presented in public, well after her ordeal, when the reality of her pain has been dealt with and diminished. I am an ebullient, effervescent person by nature; it was unimaginable, as a woman of faith, to find myself so thoroughly depressed and disheartened. My support system was severely fragmented and attenuated.

When I got to see a linear accelerator up closer than I had ever expected to, it made me so sick. I lost layers of skin from my shoulder to my elbow and fought virulent infections. I developed a mild addiction to the painkillers that took me away from it all, just a little while. I was hospitalized for weeks at a time fighting to keep my breast implant. The expander, a device forced under my chest wall muscles to make room for the implant that they used for me, was much too large for my small frame. They made me claustrophobic and unable to sleep as they were filled with saline. It was a plastic bear-hug that made me fight for every breath.

Women deserve to know the fact that there is a breast cancer link, a physiological pathway between abortion and breast cancer, that leads to an empty legacy for women with a history of breast cancer in their families. Latina women and African American women have much more aggressive cancers and higher mortality rates. Someone said that emotion should not be a factor in these proceedings. He is not a woman, holding her first grandchild to her empty, salt-filled breast.

Respectfully submitted,

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