

RU 486/THE INTERVIEW

"What civilisation? Chemical abortion led me into a dreadful deception."

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Andrea
Zambrano



"Minister Speranza (Robert Speranza, Italy's Minister of Health), you've never had an abortion with that pill. I, on the other hand, can't forgive myself for killing my child. It's not true that the RU 486 is painless, that it's like a walk in the park. Instead it's horrible.

I've suffered tremendously and you need to know that."

Regarding that terrible day last July, Natasha B. has only one sweet memory which pops up in her head every now and then: "It's a photo I took just before going to the hospital to take the pill that killed my child. It was a photo of me and on top of my belly was my cat who was the only one who wanted to snuggle up with me back then. I look at it every day because it's the only memory I have of my baby. I'd like you to publish the photo."

From Turin, Natascia B. is a 38 year old model and personal trainer. She is beautiful, with jet black eyes and long draping hair covering the great pain in her heart. It is a heart-ache she wants to overcome because, as she says, "my story must help to open up girls' eyes." The *Nuova Bussola Quotidiana* interviewed her after hearing her recount her experience with RU 486 at the John XXIII Association (she appears [here](#) at minute 48:00 with interviewer Andrea Mazzi). The John XXIII Association was founded by Fr. Oreste Benzi to help women during difficult pregnancies and those suffering from untreated post-abortion syndrome after the [Italian Ministry of Health cleared the way](#) to legalise the DIY RU 486 abortion procedure.

Natasha, did you feel deceived?

Yes, but last July I suffered psychological and physical violence from my partner. The doctor who recommended the pill was not a nice person.

What did she tell you?

She was trying to minimize the pill's dangers. She said, "If you were my daughter, I'd recommend it."

Didn't you understand what was going to happen to you?

I thought it was something else. Sure, I was afraid. I had googled something about it. But the physician seemed very reassuring and a bit impatient with my questions. She kept repeating to me: "But no, you'll only experience some bellyache. It will be like menstruating, but only more abundant." I didn't know what I was getting into.

Really?

The doctor said that I would expel my baby in the bidet and that I would have to flush it down the toilet... (silence). Do you know they speak about RU 486 as safe and painless

enough to do it from home?

The Minister of Health spoke of the RU 486 pill as if we were taking "step forward in building up civilization"...

What Civilization? After my abortion I didn't know that I would have nightmares of children thrown in the toilet for months. I dreamed of opening the fridge, pouring myself some water and babies would come out. I didn't know I'd start suffering from panic attacks. Doesn't sound like a great civilization to me. And no one talks about post-abortion syndrome. I've seen with my own eyes, 18-year-old girls on their third abortion with RU 486. Now they talk about it as if they were going to the hairdresser.

Were you pro-abortion?

I had never asked myself that question, but I did say: "Everyone must feel free [to choose]." These are the kind of things you say when you've never gone through it. Back then I was very independent. I come from a good family. I studied. I'm an 'emancipated' woman, who they say should never have to get an abortion. All you have to do is take birth control. Then I had a health problem and I didn't have my period for six months. But the real problem was discovering I was pregnant at 37, with the wrong partner and a doctor who did nothing to dissuade me.

How so?

I'm sure if I had taken 7 days to think about it, as is recommended, I wouldn't have done it. Having more time to reflect would have helped. I would never have had a surgical abortion. But by then I was at eight weeks (the limit, before the new guidelines, was seven weeks. Now it is nine weeks). My doctor told me that I had to do it soon. I spent three days crying and trembling.

Where did it happen?

I went to Liguria, to a city where the doctor had her studio. My own gynaecologist is a conscientious objector. She would have never let me have an abortion. When I told her about everything, she cried: "Nati, why didn't you come to me? I would have helped you."

Why did you say you felt rushed?

Because, by law, she couldn't administer the pill in the 8th week. She wrote a medical evaluation saying I had psychological problems.

Didn't he tell you about the very high risks you'd face?

What risks? For the doctor, it was like taking aspirin. The more I asked her questions, the more she was like, "So, what do you do for a living? Ah... modelling? Well, of course, I understand. You have resolve this as soon as possible. Did I see you in some commercials? You are so beautiful..." What I am trying to say is that she was talking like this to distract me, so I would think about something else, while normalising the tragedy I was about to experience.

Do you feel used?

Yes. As all women are when they are told the RU 486 pill is no big deal. That it's safe, that there are no risks involved. I am very well educated, but at that time I was not thinking very clearly. I was very vulnerable. In such a state you really don't understand anything. All you can think of is finding someone to take care of you. But these doctors aren't [taking care of you], obviously. Everything happened so fast. I should have had taken seven days to think it over, yet I accelerated everything instead.

What happened?

After my doctor's visit, it was a Saturday. They were supposed to wait seven days by law. Instead she disguised it as an urgent matter and sent me to the hospital after just two days. On Tuesday, I was already in the hospital ward and I took the first pill (mifepristone, which kills the fetus).

Any problems?

None. But the moment you swallow the pill you're perfectly aware you're killing your baby.

What about the second pill (misoprostol, which expels the fetus causing contractions and bleeding)?

I took it on the following Thursday. Again I was in the hospital ward. After 15 minutes, I started feeling nauseous and then began vomiting profusely, so much so that I became completely dehydrated. My teeth started chattering, just as loud as when it was freezing cold outside. So I called the doctor.

So what did she say?

She stood there looking at me, raising up her arms, way, "Well... that's just the way it goes. I'm so sorry...". It was atrocious.

They didn't give you anything?

Just some Brufen (Iburprofen), but I threw it up right away. I was having terrible contractions, I found myself all huddled up in pain in bed and I fainted every time I went to the bathroom.

Meanwhile, what did the medical staff do?

Every once in a while they'd come check on me and ask, "So, did the expulsion occur?" And I kept saying, "no." "Then, you're going home tonight," they said. They kept me there for an hour while I had huge pains in my lower abdomen and the only pain-relief advice they gave me was to squat on the bidet and flush hot water on my private parts. It was then that... (silence).

...what happened?

that I expelled the fetal sac, I think that's what you call it. I looked like red organ inside of which was a beige-coloured fetus. It was my baby. I had to pick it up and flush it down the toilet.

...I'm sorry, I don't know how to go on talking to you about this.

I was crying desperately. I recognized it very well, because it's an image that is immediately clear what it is. It was my baby who just died. A nurse came to my side and wiped my tears. Then I got dressed and wen home with the whole burden in my heart.

The guilt and the physical pain...

Do you see why they now allow women to go home after taking the pill? So even the doctors and nurses in the hospital can't witness these things. It is clear to everyone what is happening. This was the "more abundant menstruation than usual" that the doctor was talking about and what doctors

describe "as a walk in the park."

What happened afterward?

It was an ordeal. I had cramps for weeks. After 10 days, the uterus hadn't cleaned itself out well. So I went to my gynaecologist in Turin. I told her everything, feeling absolutely ashamed. She received me in tears. Then she diagnosed me with a fibroma tumour and that my blood markers were often quite high.

Is that a consequence of have taken RU 486?

She was very suspicious. I certainly didn't have anything like this before.

Nataschia, this a very hard story to tell. But it has been worth it. Have you ever forgiven yourself?

No, I'll never forgive myself, because God wanted to give me this beautiful gift and I threw it away.

But you had the courage to speak...

I hope it saves other women or girls from the pain I am feeling.

Are you afraid of being stigmatised?

Yes, the whole world will criticise me. But those who take pot shots at me and say women must be free to choose have never had an abortion.

There are conversion stories of women who have aborted several times. Have you ever thought that the first one to forgive you is the baby boy or girl you were carrying in your womb?

Let me tell you something I've never told anyone.

Sure, go ahead...

My baby was supposed to be born in the first week of March. And from the first week of March I've stopped having nightmares. I started dreaming of a baby girl in my arms. I woke up happy. I felt better.

What do you feel like telling the doctors on the High Health Council, about the dangers of RU 486?

That they never used it. Simple as that.

What will you say if you run into that doctor again?

That there is so much talk about freedom, but never about health. That women are seen as an object, and this a terrible feeling. I didn't even know what post-abortion syndrome was and it's terrifying. It's not about forcing a woman to keep her baby. It's about helping her think. I didn't need financial help, but psychological assistance. Instead, this doctor didn't bother to understand the situation at all. All she cared about was that I took that pill because it was the quickest way to resolve the problem. Now I'm dealing with all this guilt.

You've gone through a trauma, but the fact that you are here to talk about it and report what's going on is part of your journey. Your life didn't finish in that hospital bathroom.

Maybe. I just can't help but tell the way things really are.

Your journey is one that started when you took that pill and but it isn't over yet

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I hope so. God only knows where it will lead me.