Jane's Ressentiment:
The Rotten Core of the Pro-Abortion Mindset

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The trouble began before the Supreme Court of the United States' (SCOTUS) decision on the now-famous Dobbs-v-Jackson case was even officially released. There were protests across the nation, including picketing and death threats aimed at six SCOTUS judges. These included the arrest of a would-be assassin at the home of Justice Brett Kavanaugh and similar threats to Justice Amy Coney Barrett, her church, and her children. Abortion supporters used vandalism and violence to make their point in dozens of locations in more than 30 different U. S. states. One group promised to burn down the Supreme Court and kill the justices who had voted to overturn *Roe-v-Wade*.

These stories didn't get much coverage from the legacy media. And the fact that federal law prohibits the intimidation of federal judges seemed lost on the Department of Justice. While the DOJ mainly remained ambivalent about the attacks, the vice president and Senate majority leader have in the past encouraged the mindset that leads to them.

All of this is a sad testament to the state of our culture. But its foul source lies well below any disagreement about the ethics of abortion or even crass political bickering. It's a dark reflection of a worldview in which human autonomy is the measure of all things.

Craving Revenge

One of the groups responsible for most of this mayhem is Jane's Revenge, an activist "progressive" cohort paying homage to Heather Boothe. Boothe, operating under the pseudonym, Jane, was the founder of the underground organization, the Jane Collective. The mission of her organization was to help women obtain illegal abortions in the pre-*Roe* world between 1969 and 1973.[1] Thus, the terrorist activities being perpetrated against pregnancy care centers today are a kind of kinetic memorial to a radical abortionist lawbreaker. And make no mistake, Jane's Revenge has no intention of arguing its case in a courtroom, at the ballot box, or in the public square. It made that fact clear in an open letter to pregnancy care centers across the nation that dared to continue offering their services to women contemplating abortion:

> We offered an honorable way out. You could've walked away. Now the leash is off. And we will make it as hard as possible for your campaign of oppression to continue. *We have demonstrated in the past month how*

> *easy and fun it is to attack*. We are versatile, we are mercurial, and *we answer to no one but ourselves*. … From here forward, any anti-choice group who closes their doors, and stops operating will no longer be a target. But until you do, it's open season, and we know where your operations are. The infrastructure of the enslavers will not survive. We will never stop, back down, slow down, or retreat (emphases mine).[2]

Please note the cognitive dissonance operating in the minds of someone who claims membership in Jane's Revenge. For decades they have not only proclaimed the supremacy of "a woman's right to choose," but have simultaneously accused pro-life advocates of demonstrating callous indifference to the plight of children after they leave the womb.

Today, these same people seek to terrorize women whose choices they oppose by firebombing pregnancy care centers – places that exist solely to care for those women and their children as they face difficult circumstances before, during, and after birth. They justify these activities on humanitarian grounds, as crusaders defending the cause of "bodily autonomy." But their humanitarianism is myopic, blind to the scientific fact that, by definition, the abortion debate implicates the bodies of two human beings.

This is beyond ironic. It's diabolical. And the rotten core of this kind of thinking is embedded in the worst aspects of our fallen human nature.

The Ugliness of *Ressentiment*

In his book, *Idols for Destruction*, Herbert Schlossberg identifies the basis for revenge or violence that operates under the cover of "humanitarianism."

> The twisted path from humanism's soaring tributes in honor of human divinity to the consequences of modern humanitarianism is best explained by the concept of *ressentiment*. When Nietzsche wrote his celebrated attack on Christianity, he transliterated this word from the French because he could find no German equivalent … "resentment" is too weak to convey the meaning he intended. *Ressentiment* begins with perceived injury … but more often is occasioned by envy for the possessions or the qualities possessed by another person … This phenomenon differs from mere resentment because it is not content to suffer quietly but *has a festering quality that seeks outlet in doing harm to its object* (emphasis mine).[3]

Ressentiment is the mother of revenge. It is the catalyst for rationalizing the use of terrorist tactics against anyone who would infringe on the "right" to dismember and destroy unborn human children. But it is more than that. At its

core, *ressentiment* carries with it the foul stench of the fall. It is personal autonomy on steroids, human nature screaming for control.

You can hear it in the shout of Jane's Revenge, "we answer to no one but ourselves." It's just the serpent's alluring enticement in a different dialect: "You will be like God." It appeals to all of us. But a Christian response to this must be grounded in justice and the rule of law. We certainly cannot allow ourselves to capitulate to our own form of *ressentiment* and retaliate in kind.

Being pro-life means loving unborn babies and their mothers. But it also means loving the fanatics of *Jane's Revenge*.

NOTES

[1] Jane Collective, *Wikipedia*, available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Collective

[2] "Radical Abortion Group 'Jane's Revenge' Threatens Domestic Terrorism," *Breitbart News*, June 15, 2022, available at: https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2022/06/15/radical-abortion-group-janes-revenge-threatens-domestic-terrorism/

[3] Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction* (Thomas Nelson, 1983), pp. 51-52.