

Sharon Hampton

First, a little background.

In one session of a [National Abortion Federation](#) Risk Management Seminar, a participant indicated that when he pulled bowel (extracted part of a patient's bowel through a perforation in her uterus), his preferred method of treatment (if you can call it that) was to stuff the bowel back through the perforation, administer medications to make the uterus contract and control bleeding, monitor the woman more carefully in recovery, and if she seemed okay, send her home none the wiser.

The moderator was appalled. He pointed out that even if there was no obvious injury to the bowel, it might be bruised and damaged. The recommended procedure is to admit the patient to the hospital and examine her bowel, and observe her for signs of further injury. The moderator then asked how many of the other participants followed this method of stuffing the bowel back in and hoping for the best. Six participants raised their hands to be counted.

I knew it was only a matter of time before one of these bowel-stuffing abortionists killed somebody. That's where the unwitting Sharon Hampton stepped into the picture. She went to Bruce Steir at A Lady's Choice Women's Medical Center for a [safe, legal abortion](#) on December 13, 1996. She was 20 weeks pregnant.

Steir remained at the facility for about an hour after Sharon's abortion. She was still in the recovery room when he left.



Excerpts from Doris's statement to the medical board can be found at [...And So I Could Hold You and You Could Go to Sleep](#). Here are some excerpts:

Maybe around 3:00 pm I took Curtis inside to use the bathroom. I saw a grey haired man dressed in green surgical clothes sitting at a desk. He said, "You know she is far

along." I said, "No. I didn't know because she didn't tell me." Then I saw Sharon in the recovery room about 3:30 or 4:00 pm. She looked so bad that I felt scared. She was laying on a lazyboy style chair with an IV in her left arm and a blood pressure cuff on the other. She looked very pale. Her eyes were partially open and I could see only the whites of her eyes as if she were in shock. She was not speaking and her whole body was shaking real hard in big shivers. Her legs were especially bad. The doctor said, "She doesn't react to drugs well." A woman came in and said that Sharon didn't need the blankets that were on her already and pulled the blankets off. Other girls in the recovery room were vomiting and the attendant woman told the girls to keep vomiting, that vomiting was good for them at this time. I went back to the waiting room and a Spanish lady came out and said that Sharon would be ready in a few minutes as soon as the IV finished.

Sharon was in the recovery for only about 45 minutes, because at 5:00 pm they came out and said she was ready to leave. I heard someone say that the doctor was real busy and he had to rush out like he was going to the airport, something about him having to go to Sacramento or San Francisco. I saw two women struggling to place Sharon in a wheelchair. Sharon could not walk at all and she was not speaking. She looked very, very pale now.

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On the way home to Barstow, I stopped at Wendy's to get a sandwich for little Curtis. I tried to wake Sharon but all she said was "Huh, Huh." Then Curtis said, "Mamma, I love you. Do you need anything? Are you okay?" And Sharon said, "Okay. I'll take a drink." Sharon was lying in the backseat of the car and said to Curtis, "Come on back with me Curtis. I love you and so I could hold you and you could go to sleep." She was silent for about one hour. Near Victorville, she said, "I'm so hot. Please let the window down." I opened the window a bit. After that, Sharon was silent forever.

We got home to Barstow and I saw that Sharon, still laying in the back seat was naked from the waist up, having removed her shirt, shoes and socks. I started yelling, "Sharon. Sharon. Wake up," but she didn't and my husband, Ben Hampton, said, "Call 911."

According to Nancy Myles, an ultrasound technician who was assisting Steir during Sharon's abortion, Steir was having trouble locating and extracting the fetal skull. She said that he looked at her strangely and said, "I think I pulled bowel."

Steir was already on probation with the medical board at the time of Sharon's abortion; he had a history of botching abortions, including causing uterine perforations. He'd been found negligent in six abortion cases, including three in which

the woman had to undergo a hysterectomy. One woman had to have a fetal skull removed from a tear in her uterus. Steir surrendered his licence in 1997, in the wake of the fallout surrounding Sharon's death.

Pro-choice organizations, including the national leadership of NOW, and the National Abortion Federation and the California Abortion and Reproduction Rights League, rallied around Steir. One supporter stood outside the courthouse with a sign reading, "Abortion doctors are heroes, defend Dr. Bruce Steir." The Feminist Women's Health Center in Chico, with whom he once was affiliated, set up a "defense committee" and raised funds for his legal expenses.

Joseph Durante, who owned the facility, was also on probation with the medical board at the time of Sharon's fatal abortion. He had attempted a late abortion which resulted in the birth of a live but injured infant.

Sharon was a single mother who worked part-time at Burger King while attending community college. Sharon's mother said that she wanted to go off welfare and become a nurse. California taxpayers funded the fatal abortion through Medi-Cal.

Steir eventually plea bargained. He was sentenced to a year in prison, with six months of the sentence suspended in lieu of community service. He was also given five years' probation. At the sentencing hearing, four years after Sharon's death, Sharon's father said he still often pulled his car to the side of the road, looked at his daughter's picture, and wept.

Steir was released after serving only four months of his sentence.

Again, from Doris Hamplton's statement:

I don't know how she heard about Dr. Durante's offices. I think he was recommended by the people at San Bernardino County Social Services or by Dr. Krider. Sharon was on Medi-Cal and had Pacific Care as the Medi-Cal managed care agent. I understand that because Dr. Durante and Dr. Steir were on probation they were not entitled to Medi-Cal payment, but they got it anyway. I understand that their office was not accredited as an ambulatory surgical office, and that it was supposed to be accredited to comply with the law. I had no idea that Dr. Durante and Dr. Steir were on probation with the Medical Board for incompetence and negligence against women patients. I am sure that Sharon did not know either. If I had known, I would never have taken Sharon to such a bad place with such bad doctors. I learned about their records in the newspaper articles.

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I cry every day for the terrible loss of my daughter, and I am overwhelmed that 3 year old Curtis had his mother taken away forever. My husband, Ben Hampton, (father of Sharon), is sick with grief, has terrible head pain, is under the care of a doctor for this and has been taking strong pain medicine since Sharon's death. My prayer is that these doctors be stopped immediately so that no other girl will be killed and that no other family will have to suffer as we have.