

Forget the hysteria about 'forced pregnancies.' What about forced abortions?

Blonde is a controversial recent film about Marilyn Monroe. It's a dark and queasy film about sexual exploitation – the story of how a stunningly beautiful woman was chewed up and spat out by Hollywood.

Even the positive reviews – and there aren't many of them – say that the graphic sex in *Blonde* makes it hard to watch. But it's not the sex which has sparked the controversy; it's the suspicion that *Blonde* is secretly a deeply pro-life and anti-abortion film.

In the film Monroe is forced into having two abortions; they were both horrific and scarred her for life. Thanks to CGI, the audience sees a foetus speaking to her mother: "You won't hurt me this time, will you?" the unborn child asks Monroe.

Planned Parenthood's senior director of Arts & Entertainment Engagement, [Caren Spruch](#), was scathing. "It is a shame that the creators of *Blonde* chose to contribute to anti-abortion propaganda and stigmatize people's health care decisions instead," she told [Hollywood Reporter](#).

Women aren't forced to have abortions, insisted Steph Herold, of the University of California, San Francisco's Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health research program. Abortion providers listen.

"No one will strap you down and force you have an abortion. They want you to consent," [she told Vice](#). She complained that *Blonde* "reinforced this horrible trope that abortion providers are unlike other providers and that they're cruel

and don't listen to their patients."

"Where abortion is safe and legal, no one is forced to have one," says [Human Rights Watch](#).

Is all this true? Do Planned Parenthood and its friends in the media have evidence to back this up?

Certainly no one in the media is investigating "forced abortions" at the moment. In the wake of the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, all the headlines are about "forced pregnancies". "Forcing unwanted pregnancies to continue is traumatic sexual abuse – it will destroy lives" is a typical comment from the on-line magazine [Salon](#).

What about forcing unwanted abortions?

Just published on [The New Bioethics](#) website is a revealing article by Australian researcher Greg Pike which analyses the issue. He claims that there are "legal requirements for coercion screening in some US states. Such laws have been met with strong resistance from prochoice advocates who see them as a hindrance to accessing abortion."

Little work has been done on the prevalence of forced abortion. This omission could be a bomb with a long fuse. Pike points out that the "problem" of an unwanted pregnancy used to be "solved" by adoption; nowadays it is normally "solved" by abortion.

"The accounts women gave of the way in which coerced adoption operated are similar to the way in which reproductive coercion, and coerced abortion in particular, currently operate. But it took many decades before policies changed or there was a cultural shift that protected women from coercion to adopt out a child."

In what settings do coerced abortions exist?

Pressure from partners: A “Scandinavian study found 20–25% of women experienced pressure to abort their pregnancies.”

A history of intimate partner violence: “women who report multiple abortions are more likely to have a history of IPV compared with those who have only had one.”

China and India: in these societies, coerced abortion has been relatively common – because of population control and because of a preference for male children. China also allegedly forces Uyghur women to have abortions as part of its control of the population.

Coercion from doctors: “the medical profession has at times been guilty of applying considerable pressure to women to abort a pregnancy where testing has revealed an anomaly or risk of one.”

Sex slavery and trafficking: “Forced abortion is an integral part of the trade so that women can be returned to the street as soon as possible.”

Abortion providers: Marie Stopes International and Planned Parenthood have both been accused of pressuring women into consenting to have an abortion after they arrive at a clinic.

Pike laments the fact that there is so little data on what he terms “reproductive coercion”. Up to now, researchers have dismissed this as minutia or a myth, possibly because the pro-abortion narrative is that women consent to a difficult choice after careful consideration. But he insists that it probably is a big problem.

How big? Earlier this year the BBC – which is by no means a patsy for the pro-life movement – [commissioned a poll of women of child-bearing age](#) in the UK. It found that 15 percent had experienced “Pressure to terminate a pregnancy when you did not want to”.

About 1 in 4 American women have had an abortion by age 45, according to the [Guttmacher Institute](#). If 15 percent of all American women also experienced pressure to abort a child, that suggests that as many as 60 percent of women who ended up having an abortion had felt pressured in some way. The idea that no one is ever forced to have an abortion is a self-serving myth peddled by the abortion industry.

Whatever the scale of the problem at the moment, it is massive and it going to get much worse with the abortion pill and consultations with doctors over Zoom. Pike notes that:

“This risk would likely be exacerbated by telemedicine abortions, where the absence of medical oversight enables perpetrators to act covertly. Easier access to abortion pills, even by those not intending to personally use them, will also increase the risk of secretly induced abortion – 6% of women in the UK ComRes poll who had experienced RC cited being given pills without their knowledge or consent.”

To return to *Blonde*. Whether or not the real Marilyn Monroe had abortions – and her biographer says that she didn’t – forced abortions seem to have been common and relatively easy to get in the early years of Hollywood. [An article in Vanity Fair](#) says that Jean Harlow, Tallulah Bankhead, Jeanette McDonald, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Ava Gardner, Judy Garland, Lana Turner, and Dorothy Dandridge are some of the famous names who were pressured to abort a child. “A child could wait; her career could not,” Jean Harlow’s mother explained.

Is the situation substantially different today? Maybe not.

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