‘Twas Forced to Let My Baby Die Inside Me’

Ireland’s restrictive abortion laws pushed Claire Cullen-Delsol through every mother’s worst nightmare. She opens up to Hannah Tomes about losing her daughter, the healing process, and life after Repeal the 8th.

When her baby was diagnosed with a fatal birth defect, Claire Cullen-Delsol was told by her doctor that if she could afford to travel to the UK, she might be able to terminate her pregnancy. But, as Claire later learned, Ireland’s strict abortion laws meant that she wasn’t going to be able to do this.

‘I couldn’t afford to go to the UK and there was no medical reason to keep my pregnancy,’ says Claire. ‘So, I just had to live with the fact that I was going to lose my baby and that there was nothing I could do about it.’

The death of her daughter, Alex, at 23 weeks of pregnancy, upended Claire’s life. ‘I had to give up my job, I had to give up my house and I had to give up my daughter,’ says Claire. ‘I was just left with the pain of losing her.’

Claire says she spent the next three years in a state of deep depression. ‘I couldn’t even go to the grocery store without crying. I couldn’t even look at my daughter’s pictures without crying. I couldn’t even talk about her without crying,’ says Claire.

‘My daughter deserves better than this’

‘My daughter deserves better than this,’ says Claire. ‘She deserves better than this. She deserves to be acknowledged and respected for who she was. She deserves to be remembered. She deserves to be loved.’

Claire continued her fight for reproductive rights in Ireland, and her story became an important part of the ‘Yes’ campaign in the referendum on the 8th amendment of the Irish constitution.

She says she found ‘healing’ in the process of campaigning. ‘She channelled her frustration into making sure that this isn’t going to happen to anyone else. She dedicated her life to making Ireland a better place for her children, something which she says she found “healing”.’

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people’

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people,’ says Claire. ‘We have a responsibility to ensure that every woman has access to safe, legal abortion.’

‘The referendum gave some respite to many women who had felt compelled into ending their pregnancies, but the battle is far from over,’ says Claire. ‘We have a long way to go. We need to continue to fight for reproductive rights in Ireland.’

Claire’s story is an important part of the fight for reproductive rights in Ireland, and her experience serves as a reminder of the importance of access to safe, legal abortion for all women.

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people’

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people,’ says Claire. ‘We have a responsibility to ensure that every woman has access to safe, legal abortion.’

‘The referendum gave some respite to many women who had felt compelled into ending their pregnancies, but the battle is far from over,’ says Claire. ‘We have a long way to go. We need to continue to fight for reproductive rights in Ireland.’

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people’

‘We can’t be a country which does this to people,’ says Claire. ‘We have a responsibility to ensure that every woman has access to safe, legal abortion.’

‘The referendum gave some respite to many women who had felt compelled into ending their pregnancies, but the battle is far from over,’ says Claire. ‘We have a long way to go. We need to continue to fight for reproductive rights in Ireland.’

Claire’s story is an important part of the fight for reproductive rights in Ireland, and her experience serves as a reminder of the importance of access to safe, legal abortion for all women.
Diane Munday is like any other 78-year-old. She chats happily about her grandchildren, her work as a psychiatric nurse, and not being able to get Skys to work on her computer.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life—she has left an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy in Britain.

The first time she heard the word ‘abortion’ was as a young woman in the 1950s, at a time when it was a completely taboo—just to mention, illegal—subject. A young woman she knew had died after a backstreet abortion that had gone wrong, and she couldn’t help but notice their similarities: they were both young and married, with three young children already.

Although abortion was illegal in 1950, the sermons of a good doctor could be bought if the price was right—and for those who could afford it, abortion was the less expensive alternative when finances were tight to raise another child.

When Diane found out she was expecting her fourth child, she decided that she couldn’t face the pregnancy. She talked it through with her husband—she had three children under the age of four—and they knew they couldn’t afford another.

Coming around from the anesthetic after her abortion, Diane said she couldn’t stop thinking about the woman she knew who had died trying to terminate her pregnancy. In that moment, she knew she would dedicate her life to the fight for improving abortion access in the UK.

“Maybe I was befuddled by anesthesia, or maybe it had just brought my campaigning nature to the fore,” she said. “That she had died trying to terminate her pregnancy was an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy.”

Diane agree; part of the reason she still receives hate mail for 50 years after is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life; one that has left an impact of a life’s work.

DianeMundayinhercampaignheadquartersinthe1970s

THE VILLAGE SHOP REFUSED TO SERVE ME

That still resonates hate mail for legislation was instrumental in paving 50 years ago. For example, the abortion legislation in Northern Ireland is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

Abortion, in my mind, is an extension of the maternal instinct.

Warily, he says he hopes Theresa May’s reliance on the DUP won’t cloud her judgment on pushing for change in Northern Ireland, but he hopes the worst.

A commonly held view among those pro-choice campaigners is that the biggest barrier to change is the stigma that is associated with abortion.

The first time she heard the word ‘abortion’ was as a young woman in the 1950s, at a time when it was a completely taboo—just to mention, illegal—subject. A young woman she knew had died after a backstreet abortion that had gone wrong, and she couldn’t help but notice their similarities: they were both young and married, with three young children already.

Diane Munday is like any other 78-year-old. She chats happily about her grandchildren, her work as a psychiatric nurse, and not being able to get Skys to work on her computer.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life—she has left an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy in Britain.

The first time she heard the word ‘abortion’ was as a young woman in the 1950s, at a time when it was a completely taboo—just to mention, illegal—subject. A young woman she knew had died after a backstreet abortion that had gone wrong, and she couldn’t help but notice their similarities: they were both young and married, with three young children already.

Although abortion was illegal in 1950, the sermons of a good doctor could be bought if the price was right—and for those who could afford it, abortion was the less expensive alternative when finances were tight to raise another child.

When Diane found out she was expecting her fourth child, she decided that she couldn’t face the pregnancy. She talked it through with her husband—she had three children under the age of four—and they knew they couldn’t afford another.

Coming around from the anesthetic after her abortion, Diane said she couldn’t stop thinking about the woman she knew who had died trying to terminate her pregnancy. In that moment, she knew she would dedicate her life to the fight for improving abortion access in the UK.

“Maybe I was befuddled by anesthesia, or maybe it had just brought my campaigning nature to the fore,” she said. “That she had died trying to terminate her pregnancy was an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy.”

Diane agree; part of the reason she still receives hate mail for 50 years after is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life; one that has left an impact of a life’s work.

DianeMundayinhercampaignheadquartersinthe1970s

THE VILLAGE SHOP REFUSED TO SERVE ME

That still resonates hate mail for legislation was instrumental in paving 50 years ago. For example, the abortion legislation in Northern Ireland is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

Abortion, in my mind, is an extension of the maternal instinct.

Warily, he says he hopes Theresa May’s reliance on the DUP won’t cloud her judgment on pushing for change in Northern Ireland, but he hopes the worst.

A commonly held view among those pro-choice campaigners is that the biggest barrier to change is the stigma that is associated with abortion.

The first time she heard the word ‘abortion’ was as a young woman in the 1950s, at a time when it was a completely taboo—just to mention, illegal—subject. A young woman she knew had died after a backstreet abortion that had gone wrong, and she couldn’t help but notice their similarities: they were both young and married, with three young children already.

Although abortion was illegal in 1950, the sermons of a good doctor could be bought if the price was right—and for those who could afford it, abortion was the less expensive alternative when finances were tight to raise another child.

When Diane found out she was expecting her fourth child, she decided that she couldn’t face the pregnancy. She talked it through with her husband—she had three children under the age of four—and they knew they couldn’t afford another.

Coming around from the anesthetic after her abortion, Diane said she couldn’t stop thinking about the woman she knew who had died trying to terminate her pregnancy. In that moment, she knew she would dedicate her life to the fight for improving abortion access in the UK.

“Maybe I was befuddled by anesthesia, or maybe it had just brought my campaigning nature to the fore,” she said. “That she had died trying to terminate her pregnancy was an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy.”

Diane agree; part of the reason she still receives hate mail for 50 years after is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life; one that has left an impact of a life’s work.

DianeMundayinhercampaignheadquartersinthe1970s

THE VILLAGE SHOP REFUSED TO SERVE ME

That still resonates hate mail for legislation was instrumental in paving 50 years ago. For example, the abortion legislation in Northern Ireland is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

Abortion, in my mind, is an extension of the maternal instinct.

Warily, he says he hopes Theresa May’s reliance on the DUP won’t cloud her judgment on pushing for change in Northern Ireland, but he hopes the worst.

A commonly held view among those pro-choice campaigners is that the biggest barrier to change is the stigma that is associated with abortion.

The first time she heard the word ‘abortion’ was as a young woman in the 1950s, at a time when it was a completely taboo—just to mention, illegal—subject. A young woman she knew had died after a backstreet abortion that had gone wrong, and she couldn’t help but notice their similarities: they were both young and married, with three young children already.

Although abortion was illegal in 1950, the sermons of a good doctor could be bought if the price was right—and for those who could afford it, abortion was the less expensive alternative when finances were tight to raise another child.

When Diane found out she was expecting her fourth child, she decided that she couldn’t face the pregnancy. She talked it through with her husband—she had three children under the age of four—and they knew they couldn’t afford another.

Coming around from the anesthetic after her abortion, Diane said she couldn’t stop thinking about the woman she knew who had died trying to terminate her pregnancy. In that moment, she knew she would dedicate her life to the fight for improving abortion access in the UK.

“Maybe I was befuddled by anesthesia, or maybe it had just brought my campaigning nature to the fore,” she said. “That she had died trying to terminate her pregnancy was an indelible mark on women’s reproductive autonomy.”

Diane agree; part of the reason she still receives hate mail for 50 years after is the stigma that is associated with it. From when abortion was first legalised in Britain to now, it’s the unwillingness of people to discuss it that seems to block understanding of women’s needs.

But Diane is a woman who has lived a remarkable life; one that has left an impact of a life’s work.