



Written by [Troy Anderson](#) on April 8, 2019

Published in the April 8, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 07

The Power of Unplanned

From the print edition of *The New American*:

As much of America is still reeling from New York and other states moving to legalize abortion up until the time of birth, a powerful new film — *Unplanned* — tells the explosive story of former Planned Parenthood director-turned-pro-life-activist Abby Johnson.

Made by the writers and co-producers of *God's Not Dead* and *God's Not Dead 2* — Cary Solomon and Chuck Konzelman — *Unplanned* opens March 29. The trailer for the film, distributed by Pure Flix, reached the top spot on iTunes and garnered more than seven million views on Facebook.



Unplanned Movie Still

Speaking about one of the most polarizing topics of our day, the heartrending film is compelling and very well made, and will leave a deep impact on viewers long after it's over. Like *God's Not Dead*, which grossed over \$62 million, *Unplanned* features excellent acting, high-quality cinematography, and eye-opening revelations about the shocking reality of what really happens in an abortion.

"We are being told by people who watch it that they believe it's an incredibly important film for everyone to watch, no matter what side of this debate you're on," Johnson told *The New American*. "People need to know what they're supporting, and if you're going to support abortion, then we need to have a realistic view of what that is, and not hide away from the reality because it's shocking, or because it's more disturbing than we thought it might be."

The film was assigned an "R" rating by the Motion Picture Association of America for some "disturbing/bloody images" depicting the "abortion process." The "R" rating seems like overkill, given the amount of sex and violence in most Hollywood films with an "R" rating today.

The filmmakers say the MPAA's rating seems to ironically endorse the pro-life position that abortion is an act of violence.

Actress Ashley Bratcher, who plays Johnson in the movie, told *The New American* that she thought the "R" rating was "great because essentially to me that just means the MPAA agrees with us that abortion is a violent, disturbing act because they didn't give us the 'R' for nudity, not for sex, not for profanity, for none of those things; they only gave it to us for violence, so that means they agree with us."

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The movie, based off the best-selling book *Unplanned: The True Story of a Former Planned Parenthood Leader's Courageous Choice in Favor of Life*, tells the story of Johnson's journey from being a staunch abortion advocate to standing side-by-side with the people who prayed for her spiritual transformation



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as she faces a full, head-on attack by one of the most powerful corporations in the world.

In the movie, as well as in real life, Johnson was recruited as a volunteer by Planned Parenthood while a student at Texas A&M University, believing the organization's pitch that it provided safe, affordable contraception and healthcare for women.

Although she was a Christian, her volunteering turned into a job in 2001. While her parents and husband disagreed with her career choice, they loved and supported her regardless.

Later, she became a Planned Parenthood superstar, rising in just eight years from volunteer to one of the organization's youngest clinic directors.

Each day she eagerly drove to work, parked in the fenced parking lot, and walked past the gauntlet of pro-life activists outside the fence. Some protesters were overbearing, but volunteers for 40 Days for Life were the opposite — prayerful and respectful of both women seeking abortions and Planned Parenthood employees.

She became acquainted with 40 Days for Life leaders. She became a mother herself while leading the abortion clinic in College Station, Texas. Her husband was elated at her pregnancy, yet she continued working throughout it. She was made Planned Parenthood's employee of the year.

Then she assisted with an abortion for the first time. By way of a sonogram, she saw the baby in the womb fighting for its life during the procedure involving a suction tool. She watched the doctor vacuum the body parts up, joking, "Beam me up, Scotty."

"I think our society has really sanitized abortion," Johnson told *The New American*. "They have made it seem like it's a very easy, non-painful experience for women, but that couldn't be further from the truth. It's incredibly painful; it's often performed by people who are not trained to perform abortions on women — unlicensed staff is a common issue inside abortion clinics — and it's very bloody. There are certainly risks that are part of an abortion procedure."

Also, Johnson said, there is a lot of "deception in general that women can go back to life, living a normal life like it never happened."

"I don't think that's true for most women," Johnson says. "That's probably true for some, but I think for most women they feel like a part of them has been lost because it has been, but society tells them that abortion is normal so they feel like if they regret their decision that something is wrong with them, and so they don't talk about it, they don't talk about the regret, and they don't talk about the suffering and pain they feel. It's all supposed to be normal, and so hopefully one of the things that this film *Unplanned* will do is show just how incredibly abnormal abortion is, how it's not a safe option, and it's not this sanitized procedure that takes place without any effects."

After witnessing the baby's death, a life-changing moment, Johnson left the organization and sought help from the very people at 40 Days for Life who had maintained a prayerful presence for years outside the fenced parking lot.

When Planned Parenthood brought its full weight on her to keep her silent — slapping a gag order on her and taking her to court — Johnson learned who her true friends were. With the 40 Days for Life leaders by her side, she enlisted the help of a pro-life personal injury attorney willing to stand up to Planned Parenthood.



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In making the film, actress Bratcher learned something about her own life that she never knew. Her mother told her that she had an abortion when she was younger and “was going to abort you, but I chose not to.”

During a telephone call shortly after Bratcher decided to take the part, her mother became “really emotional.”

“What happened next I just had no idea would ever come out of her mouth,” Bratcher told *The New American*. “She said, ‘Ashley, I’m going to tell you something that I’ve never told you before. What you don’t know is that when I was 19, I was in the clinic for the second time. I had been called back and I was on the table being examined by a very pregnant nurse, and I got sick and I knew that I couldn’t go through with it, and I decided to get up and I walked out and decided to have you.’”

Bratcher says that was “pretty incredible given that I had never heard that story before.”

“I was really overwhelmed with emotion,” she says, adding she was in a salon getting her hair colored at the time and decided she should take some time to process the revelation and call her mother back later. She spoke to her mother again a couple of days later.

“More than anything there was this overwhelming feeling of, ‘Wow, that this life I’ve lived almost never happened.’ I was never once mad at my mom or anything like that; it was just more like, ‘Wow, I can’t believe that God would bring my story full circle, that he would use me like this.’”

At the time, Bratcher says, she was “kind of middle of the road” in terms of her views on abortion. But hearing Johnson’s testimony and playing her in the film “really got my attention and I had a firmer stance on abortion.”

“And then to come to find out on top of that that I was almost aborted myself. It was just mind-blowing to think that having never known that here I was speaking and performing as one of the greatest pro-life voices of our time. I don’t have words for how much I think that God loves us, that he would do something like that, that he would craft my story in that way.”

This article originally appeared in the April 8, 2019 print edition of The New American. The New American publishes a print magazine twice a month, covering issues such as politics, money, foreign policy, environment, culture, and technology. To subscribe, [click here](#).

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