



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 4, 2010

“Agony Aunt” Supports Child Suffocation

On the British Broadcasting Channel’s Sunday Morning Live for October 3, British television pundit Virginia Ironside provoked outrage from the audience as she indicated that the act of abortion was a “kindness” and that [taking the life of a child] should continue even to fully grown “suffering” children by way of suffocation.

The focus of the program was whether abortions could be viewed as acts of kindness, as they may spare children from lives comprised of potential abuse or severe disabilities. Virginia Ironside, an advice columnist in England (where they are also dubbed “agony aunts”) as well as a mother and grandmother, appeared on the show and shared her view that “a loving mother” would in fact abort a baby if she believed the child would be born with severe disabilities. In fact, Ironside went as far as to label the act of abortion in such a case as “a moral and unselfish act.”

“Abortion can often be seen as something wicked and irresponsible, but in fact it can be a moral and unselfish act. Sometimes the decision of a good mother is not to have the child.”

Claiming to be aware that many disabled children are capable of living fulfilling and happy lives, Ironside continued, “To go ahead and have a baby, knowing that you can’t give it some kind of stable upbringing, seems to me to be cruel.”

Ironside then added, “If I were the mother of a suffering child — I mean a deeply suffering child — I would be the first to want to put a pillow over its face. If it was a child I really loved, who was in agony, I think any good mother would.”

Needless to say, such a comment incited both shock and anger from the television host Susanna Reid, *Sunday Morning Live*’s other guest Reverend Joanna Jepson, audience members, and BBC viewers. Reid responded to Ironside’s claims by saying, “That’s a pretty horrifying thing to say, that you would put a pillow over a suffering child.”

The Daily Mail British newspaper reports: “Shocked BBC viewers complained after [Ironside] said she would hold a pillow over the face of a child in pain. Commentators accused the controversial writer of advocating eugenics, and disability rights campaigners branded her views ‘despicable.’ ”

Clair Lewis, disability campaigner, contends that Ironside is merely relying upon the excuse of physical suffering to advocate eugenics.

Lewis explains, “The problems that disabled people face will not be fixed by killing off unborn children.” Christian groups have also reacted to Ironside’s wild recommendation. Dr. Peter Evans, of the Christian Medical Fellowship, said, “For us to make judgments that people are not worth life, not worth the





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opportunity to live, is a very dangerous thing.”

According to *The Daily Mail*, “Viewers left a series of complaints on the programme’s website message board, although some praised the writer’s outspoken comments.”

One viewer wrote, “How on earth has this woman been able to put such views, care of the BB[C], it is despicable? To put a view of murder on a TV program she should be arrested and charged with encouraging the act of murder on babies.”

Other viewers called Ironside’s comments “disgusting.”

Ironside has defended her views, asserting that terminating the life of a child is better than exposing the child to a life of emotional or physical suffering.

The “agony aunt” has put forth similarly controversial views in the past, such as asserting that doctors should not try to save the lives of “very premature babies.”

Reacting to Virginia Ironside, Conservative commentator Glenn Beck said, “We are entering times where the unthinkable is happening.”

Drawing connections to similar views supported by the Obama administration, Beck adds that Ironside’s comments are “part of the ‘complete lives’ kind of thinking out of this White House, [the notion that says], ‘hey they’re suffering, they’re a burden to others, they’ve had their shot,’ ” referring to comments made by Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, health adviser to President Barack Obama, better known as Obama’s “rationing czar.”

In a paper written by Emanuel in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2002, he claims, “In the next decade, every country will face very hard choices about how to allocate scarce medical resources. There is no consensus about what substantive principles should be used to establish priorities for allocations.”

Advocating principles of eugenics to adapt to the alleged scarcity of medical resources, Emanuel wrote in the Hastings Center Report in 1996, “Substantively, it suggests services that promote the continuation of the polity — those that ensure healthy future generations, ensure development of practical reasoning skills, and ensure full and active participation by citizens in public deliberations — are to be socially guaranteed as basic. Covering services provided to individuals who are irreversibly prevented from being or becoming participating citizens are not basic, and should not be guaranteed. An obvious example is not guaranteeing health services to patients with dementia.”

An agony aunt purporting such callous views on a morning talk show is one thing. When a doctor who finds himself in a position of power asserts similarly bizarre and horrific notions, that is when people should begin to be afraid.



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