"Kelly" (a pseudonym) was a medical technician working for a firm that trafficked in baby body parts. This is not a bad joke. Nor is it the hysterical propaganda of an interest group. It was reported in The American Enterprise magazine -- the intelligent, thought-provoking and utterly trustworthy publication of the American Enterprise Institute.

The firm Kelly worked for collected fetuses from clinics that performed late-term abortions. She would dissect the aborted fetuses in order to obtain "high-quality" parts for sale. They were interested in blood, eyes, livers, brains and thymuses, among other things.

"What we did was to have a contract with an abortion clinic that would allow us to go there on certain days. We would get a generated list each day to tell us what tissue researchers, pharmaceutical companies and universities were looking for. Then we would examine the patient charts.

We only wanted the most perfect specimens." That didn't turn out to be difficult. Of the hundreds of late-term fetuses Kelly saw on a weekly basis, only about 2 percent had abnormalities. About 30 to 40 babies per week were around 30 weeks old -- well past the point of viability.

Is this legal? Federal law makes it illegal to buy and sell human body parts. But there are loopholes in the law. Here's how one body parts company -- Opening Lines Inc. -- disguised the trade in a brochure for abortionists: "Turn your patient's decision into something wonderful."

For its buyers, Opening Lines offers "the highest quality, most affordable, freshest tissue prepared to your specifications and delivered in the quantities you need, when you need it."

Eyes and ears go for $75, and brains for $999. An "intact trunk" fetches $500, a whole liver $150. To evade the law's prohibition, body-parts dealers like Opening Lines offer to lease space in the abortion clinic to "perform the harvesting," as well as to "offset [the] clinic's overhead."

Opening Lines further boasted, "Our daily average case volume exceeds 1500 and we serve clinics across the United States."

Kelly kept at her grisly task until something made her reconsider. One day, "a set of twins at 24 weeks gestation was brought to us in a pan. They were both alive. The doctor came back and said, 'Got you some good specimens -- twins.'

I looked at him and said: 'There's something wrong here. They are moving. I can't do this. This is not in my contract.' I told him I would not be part of taking their lives. So he took a bottle of sterile water and poured it in the pan until the fluid came up over their mouths and noses, letting them drown. I left the room because I could not watch this."
But she did go back and dissect them later. The twins were only the beginning. "It happened again and again. At 16 weeks, all the way up to sometimes even 30 weeks, we had live births come back to us. Then the doctor would either break the neck or take a pair of tongs and beat the fetus until it was dead."

American Enterprise asked Kelly if abortion procedures were ever altered to provide specific body parts. "Yes. Before the procedures they would want to see the list of what we wanted to procure.

The (abortionist) would get us the most complete, intact specimens that he could. They would be delivered to us completely intact. Sometimes the fetus appeared to be dead, but when we opened up the chest cavity, the heart was still beating."

The magazine pressed Kelly again: Was the type of abortion ever altered to provide an intact specimen, even if it meant producing a live baby? "Yes, that was so we could sell better tissue. At the end of the year, they would give the clinic back more money because we got good specimens."

Some practical souls will probably swallow hard and insist that, well, if these babies are going to be aborted anyway, isn't it better that medical research should benefit? No. This isn't like voluntary organ donation.

This reduces human beings to the level of commodities. And it creates of doctors who swore an oath never to kill the kind of people who can beat a breathing child to death with tongs.

Fetal tissue wholesalers are companies which place employees in abortion clinics to harvest tissue, limbs, organs, etc. from aborted babies. This material is then shipped to researchers working for universities, pharmaceutical companies and government agencies. Although it is against federal law to sell human tissue or body parts, these organizations have devised a system to circumvent this restriction. Technically, all fetal material they harvest is "donated" to them by the clinics. However, they do pay a "site fee" to the clinics for the right to access the tissue. The tissue is then "donated" to the researchers who in turn pay the wholesalers for the cost of retrieval. Profit is realized by the wholesalers' ability to set their own retrieval fees.
The Selling of Baby Parts

The availability of abortion has spawned another business. Mainly, the selling of organs and body parts of aborted babies to research labs.

Technically, it is against the law for any clinic to sell fetal remains for money. The NIH Revitalization Act of 1993 saw to this. The act makes it unlawful "to knowingly acquire, receive, or otherwise transfer any human fetal tissue for valuable consideration if the transfer affects interstate commerce."

However, many abortion clinics are able to get around this law. In the paper "Arguments Against Fetal Tissue Trafficking" the author explains how clinics circumvent the law.

"...The research institutes and the abortion clinics have joined with a third party, the fetal tissue wholesaler. The fetal tissue wholesaler pays the abortion clinics a "site fee" to place employees, known as "procurement agents," who collect various body parts of the aborted fetuses as soon as the abortion process is finished and ship them to various research institutes. By having free access to all the desirable fetal tissue, these agents take the body parts that are requested to various research laboratories and government agencies.

The wholesaler is technically renting the space to harvest the body parts rather than paying for the tissue itself. The abortionist then "donates" the tissues to the wholesalers. At the other end of the transaction, the wholesaler will "donate" the fetal material to researchers but bill them for the cost of retrieval. Thus the business deal is complete."

An example of this is found in a book called "Lovejoy: A Year in the Life of an Abortion Clinic." It is not a pro-life book. Instead, it is intended as a balanced work of reference.

From Lovejoy: A Year in the Life of an Abortion Clinic (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996) by Peter Korn. (p 236-237) From the author's observation:

"Although the operation is over, the fetus is still a matter of concern. This patient, like most, has signed an extra consent form allowing the extracted material to be used for medical research. Rhonda, a medical assistant who also works for a biological supply company, takes the surgical tray in another room where she uses a plastic colander to strain out the blood, leaving only the separated parts of the fetus. These she places in a glass dish, taking a moment to measure one of the feet against a transparent plastic ruler to establish exact gestational age. Earlier in the day she received her regular fax detailing what body parts are needed by which researchers around the country. The researchers specify preferences for age and, in some cases, sex. Liver, spleen, pancreas, and brain are the organs most often requested..."

Planned Parenthood also has a reference to donating fetal tissue on their website. Under the heading of "Donating Fetal Tissue for Medical Treatment and Research."

"Decisions about donating human tissue are never taken lightly or made easily. Most agree that such decisions reflect generosity, courage, and the hope that some humanitarian good may come out of an unintended pregnancy."

Note that the word "donating" is used. The woman is "donating" the tissue. Planned Parenthood implies that no money will be involved in the "donating" of fetal organs and parts. Yet Planned Parenthood makes money due to the method listed above. This is possible because the NIH Revitalization Act exempts "reasonable payments associated with the transportation, implantation, processing, preservation quality control, or storage of human fetal tissue" allowing a loophole so that everyone can make money - except the woman involved.
One e-mail transmission, made public by American Life League, was intercepted and published:

"Human embryonic and fetal tissues are available from the Central Laboratory for Human Embryology at the University of Washington. The laboratory, which is supported by the National Institutes of Health, can supply tissue from normal of [sic] abnormal embryos and fetuses of desired gestational ages between 40 days and term.

Specimens are obtained within minutes of passage and tissues are aseptically identified, staged and immediately processed according to the requirements of individual investigators.

Presently, processing methods include immediate fixation, snap fixation, snap freezing in liquid nitrogen, and placement in balanced salt solutions or media designated and/or supplied by investigators. Specimens are shipped by overnight express, arriving the day following procurement. The laboratory can also supply serial sections of human embryos that have been preserved in methyl Carnoy’s fixative, embedded in paraffin and sectioned at 5 microns. Inquiries are directed to Alan G. Fantel, Ph.D., Department of Pediatrics RD-20, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195."

The former was a copy of e-mail transmission as printed out and mailed to A.L.L. J. Brown, Communique, May 13, 1994, p. 3

The following brochure was obtained from a fetal tissue wholesaler called Opening Lines is presented here.

This is a price list brochure of how much each piece of an aborted baby is worth. This is a real price list obtained directly from Opening Lines.
On an ironic note, many pro-choicers state that fetuses are not human beings or are merely blobs (or as one pro-choicer of my acquaintance said "A smear on a test tube.") So how is it that laboratories can market organs from aborted babies and experiment on them precisely because they are human? If a fetus is nothing, a product of conception, or cluster of cells, how can scientists obtain human organs from them?

Pro-lifers have also unearthed order forms sent to abortion clinics. One such form quoted British Columbia's Dr. Vanugram Venkatesh asking for an international Fed-Ex shipment of:

"16-24 week lungs (trachea not required)" to study "molecular mechanisms of fluid reabsorption in human fetal lung."

The order also said simply, "Bill our account."

Here is a copied order that one Planned Parenthood clinic received.
Here is an excerpt from an advertisement in the March 1994 NIH Guide. (The National Institutes for Health operate a Laboratory for Embryology at the University of Washington in Seattle that runs a 24-hour collection service at abortion clinics.)

"Department of Pediatrics, RD-20

"Seattle, WA 98195."

This is an opportunity to make a difference . . . and it can be beneficial to your clinic. . . .

"1) Consultative and Diagnostic Pathology will lease space from your facility to perform the harvesting and distribution of tissue. The revenue generated from the lease can be used to offset your clinic’s overhead.

"2) Consultative and Diagnostic Pathology can train your staff to harvest and process fetal tissue. Based on your volume we will reimburse part or all of your employee’s salary, thereby reducing your overhead."
The following incident was reported in "When Abortion Fails: The Unborn's Uncertain Destiny" by Nick Thimmesch (Life Cycle Books)

Dr. Sophie Perry, director of the Department of Pathology at the District of Columbia General Hospital revealed to the press that the staff employees of that department had collected more than $68,000 dollars from commercial firms for the organs of stillborns and dead premature babies, some from "late term elective abortions." A hospital official later admitted that the earnings were used to buy a television set for the lounge, to cover expenses for physicians attending conventions, and for soft drinks and cookies for visiting professors.

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With no change in the laws, no media coverage, and no public outcry, such practices go on today.