



## **Propagate This: What the U.S. Public Still Needs to Understand About Pregnancy, Drugs, and Harm**

Jeanne Flavin, Professor of Sociology

Fordham University

New York City, NY USA





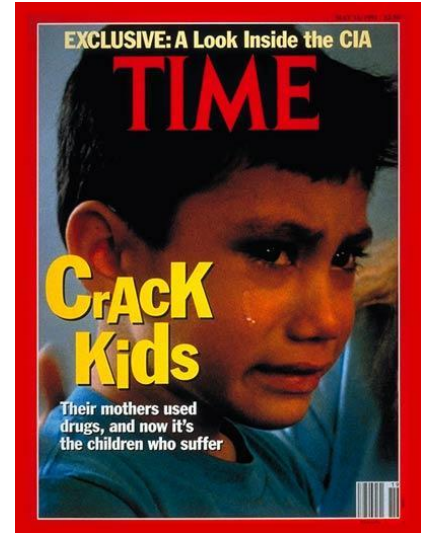


# The Myth of the “Crack Baby.”

*“Many recall that ‘crack babies,’ or babies born to mothers who used crack cocaine while pregnant, were at one time written off by many as a lost generation . . . . **It was later found that this was a gross exaggeration.**”*

-Nat’l Institute on Drug Abuse, Research Report, Cocaine: Abuse and Addiction 6 (May 2009)

“Muchos recuerdan que los bebés nacidos de madres que consumieron crack durante el embarazo fueron considerados una generación perdida... Más tarde se descubrió que esto era una gran exageración.”



EL PASADO NUNCA MUERE.  
NO ES NI SIQUIERA PASADO

The past is never dead. It's not even past

CARLOS CASTRO ARIAS



**CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS AGAINST  
PREGNANT WOMEN**

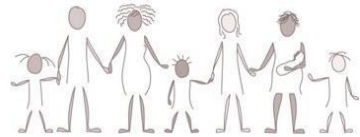
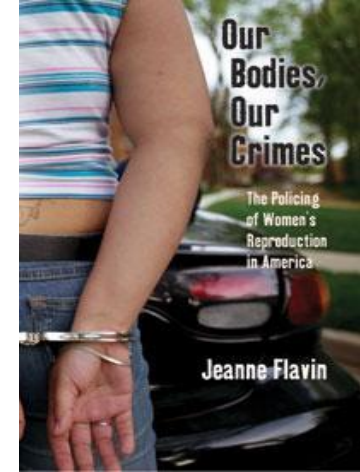
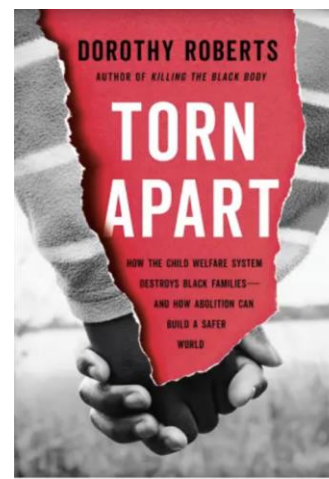
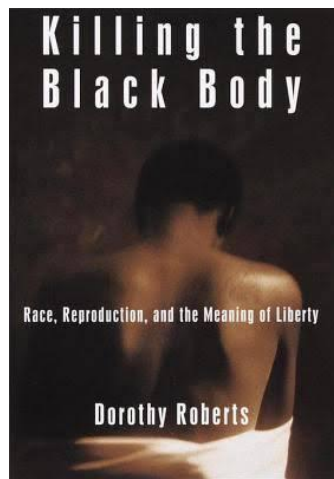
**NATIONAL UPDATE AND OVERVIEW  
APRIL 1992**

Compiled and Written by  
**LYNN M. PALTROW**

with the assistance of Hillary Fox, Julie Petrow, Suzanne Shende, Teresa Scott,  
Charlotte Levine, Laura Solinger, Jo Ann Citron, and Kathryn McGowan.

**REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM PROJECT  
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION**

Cover by Ron Cianfaglione



**National Advocates  
for Pregnant Women**

**N A P W**

**The Policy and Politics of Reproductive Health  
Arrests of and Forced Interventions on  
Pregnant Women in the United States,  
1973–2005: Implications for Women's  
Legal Status and Public Health**

**Lynn M. Paltrow**  
National Advocates for Pregnant Women

**Jeanne Flavin**  
Fordham University



**Pregnancy As  
a Crime:**

**A Preliminary Report on the  
First Year After *Dobbs***

<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-some-alabama-hospitals-drug-test-new-mothers-without-their-consent>



#### Sex and Gender

## How Some Alabama Hospitals Quietly Drug Test New Mothers – Without Their Consent

As hundreds of Alabama women face child endangerment charges, hospitals are mostly mum on their testing policies – even with the patients.

by Nina Martin, ProPublica, and Amy Yurkovic, AL.com, Sep. 30, 2015, 11 a.m.

32 Comments Print



This is part of an ongoing investigation

#### Sex and Gender

ProPublica's Nina Martin reporting on American systems and institutions that fail or mistreat people on the basis of their gender or sexuality.



# URINE DRUG TESTING

What does pee tell you? Not a lot.

Know the limits of the screening tool and how results should be interpreted. Before doing a test, ask why you're doing it.

- Will the results change the course of treatment?
- What information will it give you that a thorough patient history won't?
- After thorough discussion, have I been given informed consent?

#### What the test detects:

A urine drug test doesn't detect psychoactive substances directly. It looks for its metabolites. False positive and negative results are common. If it is positive, confirmatory tests must be done.

#### What the test doesn't tell you:

- The source of the metabolites.
- If the substance was taken therapeutically.
- The dose = How much was taken.
- The timing = How long ago it was taken.
- If someone is under the influence.
- If someone has a substance use disorder (SUD).
- What kind of parent they are - and will be.



Academy of Perinatal  
Harm Reduction

Do No Harm  
[perinatalharmreduction.org](http://perinatalharmreduction.org)

[Academy of Perinatal Harm Reduction](http://perinatalharmreduction.org)

# The societal womb.

- **Health is shaped by social environments** — where we grow up, eat, breathe, live.
- **Social conditions** — like housing insecurity, chronic stress, trauma, access to healthcare, and structural violence — are major drivers of health.
- **Most direct and indirect threats to maternal health** (e.g., blood loss, infection, hypertension, unsafe abortion, and obstructed labour, as well as indirect causes such as anemia, malaria, and heart disease) are medical and **preventable** with skilled and compassionate care.
  - a. Even under optimum conditions, **nobody can guarantee the biologically impossible, i.e., that every pregnancy will result in a healthy baby.**
- **Compassionate care saves lives.** Care, dignity, and support are essential for healthy reproduction. Punishment and criminalization (like all forms of state violence) are incompatible with health.

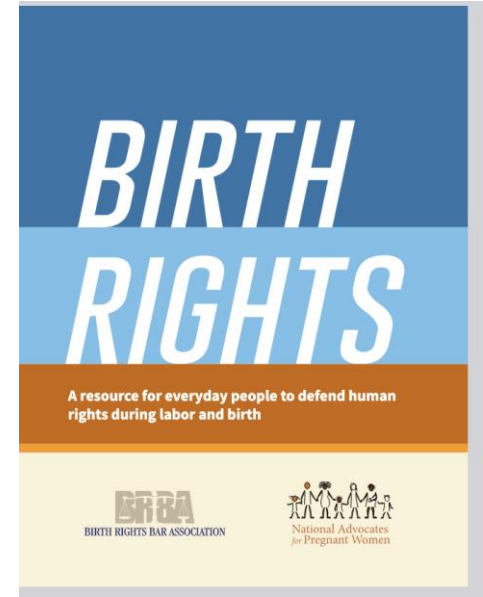




# People power. (Protest, resistance yes, and...)



## Tactics for Transformation in Birth Justice — Elephant Circle





Thank you.