

Introduction

Trent Franks came of political age wearing a fetus on his lapel. The story of how the pin got there began in the shadow of the Cold War West, in a small uranium mining town in southwestern Colorado. Franks's 1950s hometown, Uravan, was a typical "yellowcake" town, complete with company dominance and high levels of cancer.¹ By the 1970s he was working in another classically western endeavor: oil drilling. But Franks began to chart a new career trajectory in Utah, where he took a course at the National Center for Constitutional Studies—formerly the Freeman Institute. The Freeman Institute was a religiously inspired right wing, free market group with links to the ultraconservative John Birch Society, and Franks named this one of his most important educational experiences. A short time later, he had his political epiphany. It came in the form of a pro-life film. "It showed a child in the throes of dying from a saline abortion," he recalled. It "made an indelible imprint on my heart forever." Franks soon became, according to the *National Review*, a "pro-life warrior."² One of the emblems of this war could be found on his jacket, near his heart, where he wore "a tie tack in the shape of the feet of a fetus, as a constant reminder of his anti-abortion-rights views."³

Franks' anti-abortion convictions drove his subsequent life choices. Once he moved to Arizona, he joined the local Right to Life group, picketed clinics, and helped found a Tempe crisis pregnancy center.⁴ Elected to the Arizona legislature in 1984, Franks made abortion his singular focus while in office. He lost his seat in the 1986 election, but he continued to work on socially conservative issues. In 1992, he led an effort to put a constitutional amendment banning most abortions on Arizona's ballot (the amendment lost).⁵ Once he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2003, he made national news for suggesting that African Americans were better off

under slavery than in twenty-first-century America. “Half of all black children are aborted,” Franks claimed. “Far more of the African-American community is being devastated by the policies of today than were being devastated by policies of slavery.” He argued the anti-abortion movement was “the civil rights struggle that will define our generation.”⁶ In fact, 50 percent of *unintended* pregnancies for black women ended in abortion, yet unintended pregnancies were only 7.9 percent of all of black women’s pregnancies.⁷ Such statements led many members of the press to label Franks an ultra-conservative crackpot, akin to a “nutty relative who lives in the attic.” Dismissing Franks as an anomaly, however, obscures the very real ways that he was a product—and a vaunted spokesperson—of a powerful movement that arose in the final decades of the twentieth century.⁸

Trent Franks came from a movement that aimed to meet people in the intimate spaces of their ordinary lives. He, like so many others, was touched by the pro-life movement’s cultural campaign to change hearts and minds. Franks’s own political awakening was owed to a film, which he probably viewed in his evangelical church. Like many pro-life films, that one surely spoke in the language of biology—heartbeats, chromosomes, and brainwaves—but the setting reassured viewers abortion was a religious issue too. In spaces like these and with tools like these, anti-abortion activists politicized a host of white people, who then in turn committed themselves to end legal abortion. The white pro-life activists who surrounded Franks regularly compared abortion to slavery and genocide, often with graphic photos hovering in the background as evidence. They passed around pins of fetal feet and asked Americans to think of their relationship to fetuses, humanity, life, and murder. In these political and cultural conversions, pro-life activists changed the way people thought not only about abortion but also about themselves. Trent Franks told the Eagle Forum in 2014, “If I die and *Roe v. Wade* still stands . . . I will die a failure.”⁹

This book argues that anti-abortion activists made the political personal to many white Americans like Trent Franks. Activists brought fetal imagery and its attendant politics into crisis pregnancy centers, onto public thoroughfares, and to schools, churches, and homes. They inserted fetal politics into profoundly intimate relationships: between husband and wife, child and parent, people and their God, to name a few. Those politics invited white people to think of themselves as abolitionists and the nation’s saviors. In the process, activists developed and fostered a constituency of white Americans for whom anti-abortion politics became essential to their sense of self. Turning a core

feminist principle on its head, activists made a political abstraction—fetal life—into a facet of everyday life. Yet unlike second-wave feminists, pro-life activists usually did not take personal experiences and give them political meaning.¹⁰ Because so few of these activists had themselves had an abortion, their work became not to make the personal political, but to make the political personal.¹¹ They transformed their political beliefs—that fetuses were babies and abortion was murder—into a lived reality for many Americans who had never been touched by abortion. When these personal politics were successful, activists helped their audience identify with and see themselves in the fetus. They helped many individuals think of a fetus as a “tiny you.”¹²

Anti-abortion political activism was cultural work, and its effects infiltrated the seemingly apolitical spaces of Americans’ lives. When activists took gory photos of aborted fetuses, fetus dolls, embalmed fetuses, videos of abortions, and symbolic funerals and cemeteries into private and public spaces, they waged a war for hearts and minds.¹³ The ongoing legislative battles that dominated many state governments were predicated on this more intimate activism. They were built upon ecumenical organizing in religious communities, where the devout recited prayers against abortion, heard pro-life sermons, read about local anti-abortion efforts, and watched anti-abortion films. They were built upon the activism done in crisis pregnancy centers, which beckoned pregnant women to their doors, implicitly offering abortion referrals but only providing pro-life counseling. They were built upon the “educational activism” anti-abortion activists did with young people in schools, churches, and homes. And they built upon a “family values” politics that activists employed in arenas large and small, from self-help groups to statehouses. This work ultimately trickled up into the halls of power and flowed onto the sidewalks outside of abortion clinics.

These cultural politics are a part of national story but, like Trent Franks, they are also a part of a regional one. The work of anti-abortion activists touched all parts of the United States but they affected some regions more than others. In places with large populations of white conservative Catholics, evangelicals, and Mormons, the movement made its largest impression, reshaping both everyday life and formal partisan politics. This book’s dramas play out in one of those regions: the Mountain West. *Tiny You* examines the movement in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, or the Four Corners states. There, anti-abortion activism was a product of Cold War migrations and transformations. Both new migrants and longstanding residents eventually remade the region’s conservatism, from the New Right

libertarian focus of the 1960s to a religious, social conservatism by the 1980s. This book tells the story of this everyday activism that transformed a region and a nation.

THE RIGHTS OF FETUSES

It was not just feminists from whom conservatives borrowed. In rhetoric as well as strategy, anti-abortion activists appropriated liberal tools writ large. Pro-life activists developed a discourse that envisioned abortion as evidence of the perversion of modern science, a genocide akin to the Holocaust, and a product of racist or otherwise hierarchical thinking that privileged some lives over others. In other words, they made the fetus into the victim of modern society and their campaign into a social justice movement by claiming that only through the protection of the fetus could Americans successfully protect the rights of all oppressed people. Conservative activists thus borrowed the rhetoric of civil rights—an ideology forged in the crucible of southern segregation and extended in campaigns for the rights of women, Latinx, Native Americans, LGBTQ people, and many others. Anti-abortion activists put that elastic but liberal rhetoric to conservative ends. While other social conservatives used the language of liberty, the pro-life movement wagered on the power of civil rights.¹⁴ Because of this, abortion was able to outlast other socially conservative issues that drifted in and out of focus over the years.

The activists who repurposed the language of civil rights in this movement were almost all white. They were drawn from similar demographics as other mid- to late-twentieth-century conservatives. But white conservatives of the late 1960s and 1970s faced new challenges. When in the 1970s Americans began to recast the civil rights movement as righteous, not riotous, southerners who resisted desegregation were left outside of history's moral arc. This transformation had repercussions beyond the South; it had the potential to damage the Republican Party of Barry Goldwater and states' rights, even in the minds of an increasing number of white Americans. The embrace of rights discourse was partially a response to the moral rupture of massive resistance. White conservatives had to rethink the moral and ideological basis of whiteness in the aftermath of a civil rights movement which made the defense of segregation and white supremacy publicly untenable.

Anti-abortion activists offered one way out of this conundrum by building a civil rights movement for fetuses. They constructed a narrative in which

white elites—from doctors to university professors, mainstream Democrats to radical feminists—were indoctrinating the American populace, leading them away from basic truths about humanity, gender, and life. Additionally, they suggested that many people of color—a group that activists fit into the old category of “the undeserving poor”—were destabilizing society from below. Because of the machinations of these two groups, abortion had become and stayed legal. Activists argued abortion threatened not just fetal lives but also Christianity, womanhood, the haven of childhood, and the “traditional family.” When white activists tied their own identities to fetal victimhood, white conservatives too became victims. Regular white Americans, meanwhile, became the “moral middle” under threat from both the top and the bottom.¹⁵

Through this civil rights movement for fetuses, regular white people could be both the victims of modernity and potential saviors. When social conservatives borrowed the new social currency of civil rights and put it to socially conservative ends, white religious people—southerners, northerners, and westerners alike—were able to represent themselves as abolitionists, not segregationists. This was no small task, not least because anti-abortion activists usually figured fetal victims as white. But they often implied they would rescue people of color as well. In this way people of color, especially black people, were implicated in the pro-life movement, as one-dimensional victims of a liberal, feminist, or “anti-life” society in need of a white conservative savior. They came on stage, so to speak, largely to prove the morality of the white protagonist.

These proliferating victimhoods redeemed the Right at the expense of those from whom white conservative activists borrowed. Victimhood was always a hierarchy in the pro-life worldview, with the innocent fetus sitting at its apex. All others were tarnished by their potential corruption by liberal forces or by the fact that they were born. Born humans, after all, had a certain amount of personal responsibility for their circumstances in a way that fetuses could not have. Fetuses, and only fetuses, could be truly innocent. In a post-civil-rights era, white social conservatives asked that people of color and other marginalized groups fall into line with a civil rights movement for white people. This was one reason white anti-abortion activists never strayed into “other” civil rights issues; it was also why people of color, even conservative religious ones, rarely strayed into anti-abortion activism.

The pro-life rhetoric of fetal civil rights was supposed to distract from another group who could make a claim to “rights”: women. The anti-abortion

movement worked hard to hide the abortion-seeking woman, her civil rights, and her reasons for abortion. By focusing on the fetus, pro-life activists could sidestep the fraught issue of women's rights in an era when feminist values were infusing popular culture and politics. Pro-life activists were always deeply concerned with changing sexual mores and the status of women in society, but in the movement's infancy, activists realized that an anti-woman's rights platform would not help them win the day. Facing the rising tide of feminism, anti-abortion activists chose not to attack women directly but instead focus attention on the rights of the "unborn."

Although women who sought abortions might have been hidden, they were never fully gone. Recently, a handful of scholars have focused on the liberal origins of the anti-abortion movement, arguing that it was human rights, anti-poverty, or proto-feminist beliefs that motivated many early pro-life activists.¹⁶ There is some truth in this reassessment, but pro-lifers' beliefs in human rights or the power of the state to better people's lives were almost always paired with an overriding concern about the insidious power of women's excessive sexuality. Unplanned pregnancy was the physical manifestation of that sexuality, and abortion was its murderous cover-up. Indeed, errant sex and the women who enjoyed it continued to crop up in anti-abortion politics, despite many activists' best efforts. When these women did appear, activists figured them as irresponsible elite white women, dangerously sexual women of color, or simple dupes of a corrupt system.

While many anti-abortion activists, like Trent Franks, were white men, white women had an important role to play too in this "civil rights movement." They were essential to the claim that this movement was not "anti-woman." This book, however, is not a history of women in the anti-abortion movement. Others have written that story, and written it well.¹⁷ *Tiny You* is, rather, a history of the gendered political culture of an anti-feminist movement. In this book, women's activism is not much different from men's. Both men and women all used roughly the same arguments in defense of fetal lives, and took those arguments into intimate spaces. Let me be clear: These similarities should not suggest that the women of the movement were incidental to the direction and shape of pro-life political culture. In fact, they were likely responsible for it. Anti-abortion activists went to churches, homes, and schools; they politicized religious people, women, children, and families. These places and these groups of people, historically, were the province of women. The broad contours of this intimate activism were surely a product of a movement where white conservative women constituted the majority of

activists. Pro-life action was not limited to these spaces—public streets and legislatures were obviously central—but it was in the domain of women where activists laid their movement’s groundwork.

The white men and women of this movement claimed that theirs was a civil rights movement. Older visions of moral degradation transformed into more modern conceptions of rights abuses. Activists claimed that fetal rights derived from the Declaration of Independence, which secured Americans’ right to life; but they were really riding a much more modern political wave. They borrowed much more from the black civil rights movement and the international human rights movement when framing their story. But make no mistake: This language was always in service of denying others their rights. Women seeking abortions were a perpetual thorn in the side of the movement. Were they murderers, jezebels, dupes, or trauma survivors? The movement easily named the victims, but the transgressors were harder to pin down.

ON BARRY GOLDWATER’S DOORSTEP

By the 1980s, the pro-life movement had reshaped conservatism and the Republican Party, even in the home of one of the most famous and influential New Right conservatives: Barry Goldwater. Goldwater, Arizona senator and 1964 Republican presidential nominee, embodied the libertarian, anti-tax, anti-federal government conservatism of the 1960s, a kind of politics that seemed quintessentially “western” both to his supporters in the 1960s and to historians ever since.¹⁸ Goldwater, however, did not oppose legal abortion. In fact, his wife Peggy Goldwater was a longtime and vocal supporter of Planned Parenthood in Arizona, and Barry Goldwater had helped his daughter secure an illegal abortion in 1956. Goldwater was struggling to retain his Senate seat in 1980. By then, Mr. Conservative needed social conservatives to win. So he assured Arizona Right to Life that he would tow the pro-life line and support the Human Life Amendment, proposed by Arizona’s other senator, Dennis DeConcini, the son of an early anti-abortion activist in the state. Because of this promise, Goldwater received the endorsement of Arizona Right to Life and other family values groups. Their support was critical. He won that election by only 9,000 votes.¹⁹ Live-and-let-live, anti-government conservatism could no longer secure an election in Arizona without anti-abortion support—even for Barry Goldwater.

Goldwater has loomed large in histories of modern conservatism, but his region—the Mountain West—generally has not. The Sunbelt has been the most important landscape for studies of the New Right, but these have most often focused on California or the South. The geography of anti-abortion histories has been slightly different. “Place” has played a minor role in case studies of early movements in California or New York, and in work on radicalism and the places Operation Rescue besieged in the late 1980s and 1990s. In both Sunbelt and anti-abortion historiographies, scholars have been drawn to origin stories, firsts, and moments of political explosion. Adding a place like the Mountain West to our stories of social conservatism changes how we think of the conservative revolution. It shows how the pro-life movement remade most of America but most especially the middle regions. It shows how widespread, fundamental, and intimate those transformations were.

This book’s events take place in the vibrant heart of the Mountain West, the Four Corners states—Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. Home to rapidly expanding suburban metropolises, these four states were each part of the massive political and economic realignment that created the Sunbelt in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁰ Military contractors as well as an assortment of other industries moved to the region during these years, all looking for cheap land, low taxes, and open spaces. Because of the resulting economic explosion, the Four Corners states subsequently drew scores of new migrants from the U.S. North, South, and Midwest in the 1950s and 1960s. This growth only accelerated as the century wore on. By the 1990s and 2000s, the population of these states was growing three times faster than the rest of the country.²¹ Sunbelt urbanization unified these states, which until then had only been linked by their interconnected landscapes and histories of settler colonialism. Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah all soon had heavily urbanized, multiracial populations, diverse economies, and strong residual rural identities.

This study does not claim that the pro-life movement was born in this region, nor that it was bigger, stronger, or more innovative there. It did, however, have a handful of “firsts,” perhaps most importantly that Colorado passed the country’s first abortion reform law in 1967, which mobilized one of the nation’s earliest grassroots anti-abortion groups. The pro-life movements in the Mountain West birthed national leaders—like Carolyn Gerster (president of National Right to Life from 1978 to 1980), John Jakubczyk (lawyer to the national group Pro-Life Action League), and Norman Weslin (founder of radical rescue group Lambs of Christ). But any region of the

country was home to some “firsts,” not to mention a handful of prominent activists. Like every other place, the movement in the Mountain West was staffed and maintained by hundreds of people who had little to do with national leadership. And like every other region, its activists innovated some political strategies but mostly mimicked others from around the country.

And yet, this study of anti-abortion activism in the Four Corner states helps us see a national movement through new eyes. It reveals how race worked for a largely white movement in a multiracial—as opposed to a biracial or monoracial—environment. It uncovers how religious coalitions operated in societies with large populations of Catholics, evangelicals, Mormons, and non-believers. It shows how a movement claiming the mantle of tradition operated in a very modern landscape, in states made over by postwar economic transformations, Sunbelt migrations, and racial justice movements. In the end, the Mountain West allows for a study of political culture on multiracial, religiously diverse ground. It illuminates why and for whom fetal politics mattered.

Religious people of all stripes made their home in the Mountain states, alongside nonbelievers and people dedicated to New Age spiritualities. Religious historians Mark Silk and Andrew Walsh describe this region as “sacred landscapes in tension.” New Mexico and Arizona were the “Catholic heartland,” Utah was a part of the “Mormon corridor,” an area culturally and politically dominated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), and Colorado had no dominant religious community but was home to people of Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jewish, and a variety of American Indian faiths.²² In the postwar period, Colorado and Arizona, especially, developed large southern evangelical populations. Thus, the region as a whole had a large number of the type of white Christians who supported and joined the pro-life movement in the waning decades of the twentieth century.

Anglos, white ethnic people, African Americans, Asian Americans, Indigenous people, and Latinx all found homes in this mountainous landscape. In New Mexico, Anglos were one part of a polyglot society of Navajo, Apache, and Pueblo peoples, *hispanos*, and *mestizos*. While most *nuevomexicanos* struggled to preserve the lands and economies upon which they depended in the face of Anglo migration, some people of color—especially elite *hispanos*—maintained a modicum of power in the state.²³ Unlike New Mexico, Arizona was quickly dominated by Anglo Americans, though it too had a racially diverse population—including white Protestants and Mormons, Apache and the Akimel and Tohono O’odham peoples,

Mexican Americans, Mexican immigrants, and a small number of African Americans.²⁴ In Utah, white Mormons made up the overwhelming majority—LDS people did see the state as their promised land after all—but they lived alongside small numbers of Utes, Paiutes, and Shoshones, as well as small Greek, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese immigrant populations.²⁵ Colorado became a regional hub in the twentieth century, drawing laborers of many stripes, health seekers, and tourists to the state, leading to a diverse population of Native peoples, ethnic Mexicans, African Americans, Anglo Americans, Japanese Americans, and European immigrants.²⁶ The character of the region's population was a product of specific colonial histories, producing unique and complicated social hierarchies. In the late twentieth century, that population was also a cross section of America. This was a multiracial region in an increasingly multiracial nation.

Because the Four Corners states and the American West as a whole contained such a wide array of people—and such a large number of people of color—they were home to longstanding, intense disagreements about appropriate forms of reproduction. Women of color had long borne the brunt of public scrutiny about supposedly errant reproduction and its effects on the composition of the nation. This scrutiny took many forms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—from promoting white reproduction through better-baby contests to permanently ending women of color's reproductive capabilities through coercive sterilization. Western state governments enshrined their ideas about appropriate reproduction in both sterilization laws and anti-miscegenation laws that banned intermarriage between white people and others.²⁷ This meant that by the mid twentieth century, western people of color had already been implicated in national conversations about appropriate bodies, sexuality, pregnancy, and birth. Late twentieth-century social conservatives did not duplicate those older eugenicist conversations. They did, however, implicitly draw from and build upon these prior histories to make claims about the “right kind” of reproduction and its effects on the national body.

Social conservatives in the Four Corners states worked in a region that prided itself on being at the forefront of women's rights campaigns. Western states—and particularly those in the Mountain West—were the first to secure women's right to vote in the nineteenth century. Because of this, Margaret Sanger, the famous leader of the birth control movement, believed that the Mountain West states would be more hospitable to her movement in the 1920s and 1930s. She was mostly right. Colorado opened its first clinic in 1926, and Arizona and New Mexico followed within a decade.²⁸ Utah, the second state

to give women the right to vote, did not however welcome the movement to free women from their reproductive constraints; the LDS Church called the use of birth control “one of the most heinous crimes” and banned it until the mid-1990s.²⁹ At least rhetorically, the Mormon Church joined the Catholic Church in opposing efforts to increase women’s access to birth control. Half a century later, as women joined the feminist movement in the region and returned to the issue of reproductive rights, some of the same religious institutions would link arms to oppose them. Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, the Mountain West was home to a host of social conservatives and women’s rights activists, both with extensive roots in the region.

The demographics that made this region unique offer important insights about the pro-life movement. In a region with a large population of Mormons, LDS people played the same role as they did elsewhere. They joined Catholics and evangelicals in the movement but participated only in subsidiary ways. In a region with many Latinx and Native American Catholics, the anti-abortion movement was still mostly white, drawing largely on white Catholic traditions and culture. In a region with relatively few black people and Jews, the movement relied heavily on historical comparisons of African American slavery, the civil rights movement, and the Jewish Holocaust, as it did everywhere else in the nation. Place did not change the movement’s ideology, tactics, or reception. The unique demography of the Mountain West shows how uniform the movement was.

In the Mountain West and elsewhere, this relatively uniform anti-abortion movement remade the party of Barry Goldwater. According to much of the literature on the New Right, it was in the suburbs, especially those outside of Los Angeles, where white people ignored their own government handouts, made “meritocracy” and “free markets” into articles of faith, and began the conservative revolution.³⁰ If we look to the churches, schools, homes, and clinics in a region like the Mountain West, we can see why those conservative seeds bloomed at the end of the twentieth century. “Moral” conservatives altered many white Americans’ everyday lives and eventually their subjectivities. It was not “liberty” that motivated their particular political revolution, but “life.” Social conservatives did not simply extend a conservative revolution, they remade it.

In the 1980s, social conservatives took Goldwater’s place in representing the western and conservative wing of the Republican Party; one was Trent Franks. Franks was one part of the Republican ascendancy—with social conservatism at its heart—that transformed the region and the nation. By

the late 1970s, the Mountain West had become a Republican stronghold, with Republican majorities at all levels of government, which only grew as the century progressed. When political scientists Theresa Marchant-Shapiro and Kelly D. Patterson analyzed the motivations for the Republican wave in the Mountain West in the 1980s, they found that two issues compelled the region's voters: distrust of the federal government and abortion. They argued that in the 1980s "the region became much more pro-life" and this "account[ed] for the increased Republicanism in the region."³¹ Social conservatives—most especially pro-life activists and voters—are absolutely essential for understanding the region's and the nation's conservative turn in the last three decades of the century. Looking beyond movement pioneers, headline-grabbing personalities, or national organizations to the local activism in one region, we can learn how a relatively homogenized movement reshaped many Americans' sense of self, their definitions of conservatism, and ultimately the nation's politics.

THE SINGULARITY OF ABORTION

This book is the first history to truly reckon with the pro-life campaign for American hearts and minds. Because abortion stood as the pinnacle issue of social conservatism at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, it is an essential story to American political history as a whole. In the 1970s, the Equal Rights Amendment and the employment of gay teachers were socially conservative hobbyhorses; in the 1980s, the issues were AIDS, welfare, pornography, and anti-discrimination laws; in the 1990s, affirmative action, arts funding, popular music, and public funding for religious schools took center stage; and in the first decade of the new century gay marriage animated the cause. Each of these issues drew the ire of social conservatives for a period of time. None had the longevity of abortion. Recently a number of historians have surveyed the broad terrain of socially conservative activism at the end of the twentieth century, but few have taken account of legal abortion's singularity in the socially conservative movement. Perhaps most importantly, historian Andrew Hartmann has argued that the conservative culture wars ultimately failed. But did they? Perhaps some socially conservative causes floundered, but the fight against abortion did not and has not.³² As of 2019 anti-abortion activists have not overturned *Roe v. Wade*, but by all other metrics, they have won their war.

Tiny You joins a bevy of work done by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, journalists, and public intellectuals who have attempted to parse out and explain this divisive issue.³³ This book depends on the story these scholars have told, but adds a critical element that has been left under-explored: how abortion became the singular issue for so many conservative Americans.

The broad outline of the abortion story offered by various scholars typically culminates—and descends—into radicalism. Usually the story begins in the late 1960s, with provincial Catholic activists and officials who by 1973 had begun to turn the tide against abortion reform at the state level.³⁴ As the story goes, *Roe v. Wade* reversed pro-life gains, but also stalled the momentum of the pro-choice movement as many feminist activists believed their work was done. In the 1970s, anti-abortion groups focused much of their efforts on state and national legislatures, especially upon passing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (the Human Life Amendment) that would ban abortion. In the years that followed, activists debated among themselves whether to promote laws that would limit abortion or only those that would ban it outright. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, evangelicals joined pro-life coalitions. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, some of these new activists redirected the movement away from legislative change toward civil disobedience, especially clinic blockades. Certain elements of this radical movement went still further, embracing vandalism, arson, assault, and even the murder of abortion providers. Between the early 1980s and 2009, there were 153 assaults, 383 death threats, 3 kidnappings, 18 attempted murders, and 9 murders related to abortion providers. Eight of the murders happened between 1993 and 1998.³⁵ These acts were a part of a campaign of terror that touched every abortion provider in America.

Some scholars argue that specific individuals led the movement into increasingly radical action; national leaders Juli Loesch, Joan Andrews, John Kavanaugh O’Keefe, and Randall Terry have all been credited with directing the movement toward “by-any-means necessary” activism.³⁶ Others claim that apocalyptic narratives had dominated pro-life politics since the mid-1960s, inspiring activists to see themselves as God’s messengers and motivating more radical and violent action.³⁷ Whatever the case—as historians tell it—this tidal wave of radical action began to slow when, in the early 1990s, courts began to uphold Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) convictions against activists, and when Congress passed in 1994 the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which imposed stiffer criminal and civil penalties on those blocking access to abortion

clinics. RICO convictions and FACE did not stop anti-abortion protest, but they largely ended the massive civil disobedience that was the most public and contentious expression of the movement at the end of the century.³⁸

I do not take issue with this narrative. In fact, its contours anchor my own story in the pages that follow. But the spectacle of a national rescue movement has obscured the importance of quiet, everyday activism that sustained the movement from its beginnings to the present day. This book argues that anti-abortion sermons, viewings of pro-life films in schools, or a casual glance at a fetal pin were more transformative than seeing radical activists block clinic doors. Through such everyday activism, the movement changed almost every urban area (and many rural areas to boot) in the United States, not just Pensacola, Florida, or Wichita, Kansas, cities most known for radical anti-abortion violence.³⁹ It was this kind of intimate activism, not the movement's more divisive civil disobedience, that produced the uprising of many white Americans around the protection of all fetuses. Moving away from the radical action that looks deceptively like the national story, this book attends to political culture in order to understand the development of a broad, national pro-life public.

In this endeavor, *Tiny You* joins a group of interdisciplinary feminist studies that have assessed the ways in which obstetrical, embryological, legal, and cultural knowledge has produced the fetus as a human subject.⁴⁰ These scholars have shown how central it was to the anti-abortion movement to get people to see the fetus as separate from the pregnant woman. Recent historians, most especially Sara Dubow and Johanna Schoen, have shown how social constructions of fetuses shaped legal statutes and the provision of abortion in America.⁴¹ This book adds to this body of work by revealing how fetal politics remade conservative identities and how "life" became the primary political and moral concern for so many, over so many years. It shows how the fetus became essential to many, and why abortion became more important than tax policy to a host of conservatives, working-class and middle-class alike. Anti-abortion activists, I argue, not only made abortion a "bread and butter" issue; they made it *the* bread and butter issue.

Abortion, more so than any other issue, was social conservatism's political buoy. When other issues died—either at the polls, in the courts, or in the court of public opinion—social conservatives could cling to legal abortion as the unwavering evidence of moral decay. This issue continued to galvanize the broader movement, drawing new young activists and generating new political strategies. In a pinch, a conservative politician could always use the

dog whistle of “life” to clarify a basic, moral difference between the two major parties. In fact, the “immorality” of abortion allowed (and continues to allow) the Republican Party to paper over a host of other sins. For a good number of conservatives, no weakness—political, familial, or even sexual—could outweigh the importance of a candidate’s pro-life stance.

Some of the most passionate voices in this book come from twenty-eight oral histories I did with anti-abortion activists.⁴² They generously gave their time to this project, even just an hour or two, telling me about their personal and political life stories. Most did not think their actions were historically important. This book, above all things, should put that misconception to rest. They may disagree with some of the interpretations I offer here, but I hope they see that their stories, their political savvy, and their cultural power have been accurately recorded. While I disagree with them about most political issues, this book would not be what it is without them.

This book is divided into two halves. Part One traces the personal and organizational origins of the movement and early activism. Chapter 1 centers on the 1960s, when both white, longstanding residents and new migrants formed religious and political social worlds that would serve as the basis for their pro-life activism. Other socially conservative movements—anti-birth control and anti-pornography campaigns especially—offered political tools for these future activists. One of the most important lessons pro-life activists took from their forebears was the power of an object of disgust closely held. When reformers passed the first abortion reform law in Colorado in 1967, anti-abortion activism began in earnest. In the next decade, which is the subject of chapter 2, activists linked their evolving rights rhetoric to fetal imagery and ephemera that activists could take into every part of their lives. In this decade, anti-abortion activists set the ideological groundwork for the movement while developing a new type of white identity—one based on their claims to morality and common sense. Chapter 3 follows these activists into American churches, the first important places where this ideology and its objects took root. In the 1970s, activists integrated pro-life politics in rituals of faith for many white Americans. They politicized religious spaces and made the preservation of fetuses central to how many white people thought about being a Christian in these years.

The second half of the book focuses largely on the 1980s and 1990s, when white anti-abortion activists decided that fetuses—and Christians—were not victims enough. In these years, they used pro-life politics to remake the identities of women, children, and families. Chapter 4 assesses the growth of crisis