

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

28 February 2015

**Speakers:**

-Vanessa Cullins, MD, *Vice President for External Medical Affairs, Planned Parenthood Federation of America* (“PP”)

-Actor posing as Fetal Tissue Procurement Company (“Buyer”)

*frame counts are approximate*

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Buyer: Excuse me, Dr. Cullins?

PP: Mhm?

Buyer: I think we were in the elevator, I was going to call you Vanessa—[Name]. I'm with [Company], we do like fetal tissue collection for medical research.

PP: Oh do you?

Buyer: Yeah. So I just, I know that you are VP for External Medical Affairs.

PP: Right, not for Medical Affairs.

Buyer: So the reason I wanted to chat, just have a little talk with you about it, is because one of the themes that's been coming up as we talk to people

PP: Mhm.

Buyer: Is, basically, how, if at all, do we talk about this publicly? Ideally, probably, we don't, but--

PP: You mean, you're company, or us?

Buyer: Everybody. But primarily you guys.

PP: Okay. And so what's the message that you're trying to get out though?

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Buyer: We don't, well, I mean ideally I think, I don't think that anybody really wants to talk about fetal tissue procurement publicly, and that's probably wise.

PP: Yeah, not right now. But what we're working on now is abortion stigma, trying to reduce abortion stigma.

Buyer: Right.

PP: Once that gets underway, we see some movement in that, plus, we gotta see what happens in terms of stem cell research. Okay because you can't really talk about it unless there's some changes as it relates to stem cell research. And I don't think it bodes well for you or us, okay?

Buyer: Right.

PP: Because you've gotta have the population in those affiliates, you getting tissue from abortions, right?

Buyer: Right.

PP: Okay, so we have affiliates in our standards and guidelines, since I was VP of Medical Affairs, the ability for companies to come in and arrange to get consent and to obtain the tissue. So it's like, what more do you want right now? Until you are able to come up with some type of cure, or something, it's probably wise to keep it under the radar screen.

Buyer: Right.

PP: And also, until we can get rid of some of this abortion stigma, to talk more about abortion, which is a big project that the Federation is embarking upon. And actually, this year. And it'll be moving forward over time.

Buyer: Yeah.

PP: Yeah. It'll muddy the water.

Buyer: It'll what?

PP: Muddy the waters.

Buyer: Muddy the waters.

PP: Even more. And they're already black. [laughter]

Buyer: Oh, got it. Wait, so you think it's gonna get worse before it gets better, or what are we--?

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PP: No, I'm saying that if we tried to talk about fetal tissue, then that's gonna muddy the waters even more than it is now. So I know our organization is not gonna tackle this. Not now.

Buyer: Right, yeah. I mean, do you have any further thoughts on it? Because I know that there's gonna be, for example, we'll probably be exhibiting at the National Meeting next month as well. And Deborah--

PP: Wait, what's gonna happen, an exhibit?

Buyer: In March, at the National Conference, we'll be exhibiting there as well, and Deborah was telling me that there's gonna be a whole panel there on fetal tissue use and--

PP: Well I didn't know that.

Buyer: Yeah. I just, well anyway, so basically, what I've been hearing people talking about this weekend, is that a lot of affiliates are interested in figuring out how do we frame this publicly and how do we talk about this if we have to? And so that's--

PP: Why do you have to? That's what I don't understand.

Buyer: Right, that's kind of where I'm coming from, and I agree with you--

PP: And at this time period. Okay, I'm glad you told me about this, because I need to take this back to Communications. You got a card?

Buyer: My cards are actually over at the table, I'll go get them.

PP: I'm gonna give you my card, okay? No I think that's dangerous to start talking about fetal tissue acquisition and how it's acquired, at this time period.

Buyer: Yeah.

PP: I mean, there are a lot of steps in between. I think definitely we need to have a better take on stem cell research before, people need to be talking about abortion in a more open way without the stigma, and then you start bringing in the issues of tissue research.

Buyer: Will you be at the national meeting?

PP: Yes.

Buyer: Okay. Excellent.

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PP: Do you happen to know—I don't want you to feel like you're tattling—

Buyer: I know, I'm getting a little nervous, like maybe I shouldn't have--where's Deb Nucatola?

PP: No. This is important. This could destroy your company and us, if we don't time those conversations correctly. Which affiliates, do you know?

Buyer: Oh, which affiliates?

PP: Were saying they want to talk about this.

Buyer: Could you do me a favor and ask Deborah Nucatola that question?

PP: Okay. I will.

Buyer: Or Deb, the other Deborah who works at CAPS. I forget her last name now.

PP: Okay. Deb VanDerhei.

Buyer: Yeah, exactly. Because I do, now I'm starting to feel like I'm, like--

PP: [laughter]

Buyer: Maybe we're not supposed to--[laughter]. I just, I don't want to cause a fight in between--[laughter]

PP: It'll be okay. It'll be okay. But I do want your card. [laughter]

Buyer: Let me go get that. Let me go get that.

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Buyer: So. Here is my card, and then also my boss, [Name], she's the one who started it. We're very new, we're a start-up, just in the past year.

PP: Thank you. Now, well, we definitely don't want to lose you.

Buyer: No, I think--

PP: I'll ask, I'll ask Deb.

Buyer: Yeah. You and I are on the same page about it I think.

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PP: Okay good.

Buyer: Because as people have brought up the subject this weekend, and they say oh, what do you think about framing, messaging, like, No, you don't want to talk about it. This is something completely--

PP: Right. This is private. This is, you know, if you're--

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PP: Going to participate, then it's getting the consent form together, and approaching a woman one on one, and getting her consent.

Buyer: Yep, I'm exactly--same thing.

PP: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Buyer: Good to meet you. I hope that I didn't like--

PP: Good to meet you to. No no. You didn't. This will be approached diplomatically, but it needs to be approached, because it could just throw our messaging off.

Buyer: Well good. Yeah, I mean, we're all on the same team. So I think we'll just, we'll figure it out.

PP: And do not hesitate to contact me, if there are other issues or things you want to ask me.

Buyer: Definitely. Thanks. Have a good rest of the afternoon.