



# The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service

By Laura Kaplan

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"*The Story of Jane* is a piece of women's history in step with feminist theory demanding that women tell their own stories. It serves to remind people of an important and often overlooked moment in the women's rights movement."—*Seattle Weekly*

"Laura Kaplan's *The Story of Jane* is the first book to chronicle this controversial sliver of history, and it is a fascinating, if partisan, close-up of the group."—*Newsday*

"[Kaplan] draws on her personal recollections and interviews with Jane members and clients and the doctors who performed the abortions to provide a well-written, detailed history of this radical group."—*Publisher's Weekly*

"Weaving together the voices and memories of her former co-workers, Kaplan recounts how the group initially focused on counseling women and helping them find reliable, reasonably priced doctors....Kaplan's account of this remarkable story recaptures the political idealism of the early '70s...23 years after Roe vs. Wade, the issues and memories raised by the books are close and all too relevant."—K Kaufmann, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Laura Kaplan's *The Story of Jane* is the first book to chronicle this controversial sliver of history, and it is a fascinating, if partisan, close-up of the group....*The Story of Jane* succeeds on the steam of Kaplan's gripping subject and her moving belief in the power of small-scale change."—Cynthia Leive, *New York Newsday*

"During the four years before the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion in 1973, the 100 members of Jane helped some 11,000 women end their pregnancies....There is more in this remarkable book that will further raise eyebrows....Kaplan's engrossing tales of the quiet courage of the women who risked their reputations and freedom to help others may remind many readers of other kinds of outlaws who have resisted tyranny throughout history."—*Chicago Sun-Times*

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

From 1969 until January 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, a pioneering group of Chicago feminists who called themselves "Jane" provided illegal access to abortions for thousands of women. Kaplan, who is now a lay midwife, joined Jane in 1971 as a counselor. Here she draws on her personal recollections and interviews with Jane members and clients and the doctors who performed the abortions to provide a well-written, detailed history of this radical group. Initially Jane was a referral agency only, but as demand grew, members became involved in counseling and attended clients' abortions, and some eventually trained to perform the abortions. Jane volunteers were convinced that women were entitled to control over their bodies, and they acted on their principles, despite the consequences. Several members were arrested in 1972, but the suit was dropped. Jane disbanded after abortion clinics became legal. A dramatic and important piece of women's history.

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From Library Journal

From 1969 until the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling in 1973, a group of Chicago women formed a loose underground organization whose sole purpose was to aid women who needed abortions (then illegal, of course) in getting them as safely and inexpensively as possible. They called their referral service "Jane" and worked out a set of complicated procedures to keep both themselves and their clients out of jail. At first they handled referrals to willing doctors on a very limited basis—only three or four a week—but as word about Jane got around their business increased. Eventually the women were taught by an expert to do the abortions themselves, which enabled them to charge next to nothing to those in financial need. But the operations were not all they did; every one of the 11,000 women who came to Jane also received health education and counseling. As a study of this remarkable but little known phenomenon, this book will be of value to anyone interested in women's health, the women's movement, and women's reproductive health and rights, particularly now that those rights are coming under increasing attack.

*Audrey Eaglen, Cuyahoga Cty. P.L., Parma, Ohio*

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From [Booklist](#)

Spot and Dick play no role in Kaplan's vivid, thoughtful "collective memoir" of the Chicago women who formed Jane (officially, the Abortion Counseling Service of Women's Liberation), which gave 11,000 women access to safe but illegal abortions between 1969 and the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in January 1973. Herself a member of Jane, Kaplan describes stages in the service's brief life—from screening abortionists to referring clients to a particular practitioner to learning how to perform abortions themselves—and the issues of knowledge, power, responsibility, and respect, which had a key impact on interactions among participants as well as on Jane's relationships with clients, the medical establishment, and the criminal justice system. Because Jane kept limited records, Kaplan's reconstruction is based on interviews with some 40 percent of the 100 women who participated at one time or another; some Jane members are not prepared to be publicly identified, so Kaplan uses pseudonyms for all of them, including herself. This is lively, nuanced history that brings to life the hopes, terrors, and disappointments of a movement committed to giving women control over their own bodies. *Mary Carroll*

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#### **Kelly Livingston:**

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to know everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or goal; it means that book has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their time to read a book. These are reading whatever they take because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Consider the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you'll have this *The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service*.

#### **Robert Spann:**

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