**Eclipse of Reason (1987)** [1]

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_Eclipse of Reason_ is a 1987 anti-abortion [3] documentary film directed, filmed, and narrated by Bernard Nathanson, an obstetrician in the US. American Portrait Films released the film in 1987 featuring Nathanson’s commentary and footage of an abortion [6] of a four-month-old fetus [4]. The film also featured the testimony of women who had suffered following similar procedures. In _Eclipse of Reason_, Nathanson equates the fetus [4] to a person, likening abortion [3] procedures to murder and arguing for the illegalization of abortion [3]. This documentary was a sequel to Nathanson’s first documentary film, _The Silent Scream_ released in 1984. Both documentaries argued for illegalizing abortion [3], which had been decriminalized in 1973 in the United States. _Eclipse of Reason_ was one of the most influential films that garnered public attention to the abortion [3] debate in the US during the 1980s.

Before making the film, Nathanson specialized in gynecology and obstetrics, and he helped found and directed the National Abortion Rights Action League, then headquartered in New York City, NY, from 1970 to 1972. Nathanson self-reported performing 60,000 abortions, until later in the 1970s, when he began to argue against women’s rights to have access to the procedure. In 1984, Nathanson narrated a film titled _The Silent Scream_, in which he discussed an abortion [3] procedure as observed on a black and white ultrasound [5]. While _The Silent Scream_ focused on an abortion [3] in the first trimester [6] of pregnancy [7] when the fetus [6] was younger than thirteen weeks old, _Eclipse of Reason_ instead focused on abortion [3] procedures performed during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy [7].

_Eclipse of Reason_ begins with a brief narration by Charlton Heston, a Hollywood actor who opposed women’s rights to legal abortions. In the introduction Heston claims that there are ten times more performed abortions than open-heart surgeries, claiming that the media has failed to inform the public of the details of abortion [6]. Heston prefaces the rest of the film, warning the viewers that they will witness death, but says that viewing such material can benefit viewers by decreasing their ignorance about the procedure. He concludes by labeling aborted fetuses as victims.

After Heston's introduction, Nathanson specialized in gynecology and obstetrics, and he helped found and directed the National Abortion Rights Action League, then headquartered in New York City, NY, from 1970 to 1972. Nathanson self-reported performing 60,000 abortions, until later in the 1970s, when he began to argue against women’s rights to have access to the procedure. In 1984, Nathanson narrated a film titled _The Silent Scream_, in which he discussed an abortion [3] procedure as observed on a black and white ultrasound [5]. While _The Silent Scream_ focused on an abortion [3] in the first trimester [6] of pregnancy [7] when the fetus [6] was younger than thirteen weeks old, _Eclipse of Reason_ instead focused on abortion [3] procedures performed during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy [7].

The film then transitions to the testimonies of some doctors who ceased performing abortions because they said the procedure had negative moral implications. Next, an ultrasound [5] enabled him to see fetuses in utero [3]. He also discusses the 1973 US Supreme Court case _Roe v. Wade_ [6] that ruled that women have the right to have abortions through the right to privacy under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution. Another anonymous woman claims that after her abortion [6], she had uterine and intestinal damage. Another woman says she suffered psychologically as a result of seeing the remains of her aborted fetus [4] and considered suicide. Both women report feeling deceived by medical practitioners, as they did not anticipate those ramifications arising from their abortions.


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**Sources**

2. Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. (1868).

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illegalizing abortion, which had been decriminalized in 1973 in the United States. Eclipse of Reason was one of the most influential films that garnered public attention to the abortion debate in the US during the 1980s.

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