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Absolute Rescue: Absolutism, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force

JEFFREY KAPLAN

The murder of Dr David Gunn in 1993 by Michael Griffin made a decisive break with the pro-life rescue movement's 20-year history of non-violent protest against abortion in America. That act opened the floodgates to other violent attacks on doctors, and brought to public notice a violent splinter sect of the larger millenarian subculture dedicated to the 'rescue' of the unborn. This essay seeks to detail the stages through which the radical fringe of the rescue movement passed before they came to embrace the necessity of 'Defensive Action'. By allowing the rescuers to speak in their own voices, it is hoped that the study will contribute to a greater understanding of the process by which a millenarian movement turns from non-violent witness to violent activism.

*Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter. Proverbs 24:11*

Imagine 50 Christians, totally committed to God, who lose everything because of their obedience to Him, and no longer have any ties or obligations in the world, who can easily risk all...They [the abortion industry] are just hanging themselves by making us stronger. Shelley Shannon, June 1993¹

The rescue movement is dead. Such was the view of rescuers interviewed for this research. The select few willing to pay the increasingly draconian price of true rescue – in rescue terminology the interposition of the body of the rescuer between the killer and his intended victim – have dwindled to a paltry few. And many of these are paying the price of that faithful witness in the jails and prisons of America. Of the groups profiled in these pages in my Autumn 1993 review article, 'America's Last Prophetic Witness: The Literature of the Rescue Movement',² Operation Rescue National is a shadow of its former self, functioning more as a traveling tent revival than a rescue organization, the Missionaries to the Preborn have suffered a leadership schism and the missionaries themselves are enmeshed in the court system, while for reasons that may not at this time be made public, the Lambs of Christ have ceased their rescue activities.³

What is more, the rescue community, already estranged from its mainstream pro-life parent, has been ~~torn~~ asunder by an increasingly divisive debate over the utility of the resort to violence in defense of the unborn. This debate, conducted as are all internal debates within the rescue movement in the pages of key rescue journals and among adherents themselves, has served both to polarize the once cohesive world of rescue and to create an increasingly bitter chasm between rescuers and the larger pro-life constituency.⁴

This study seeks to illustrate the complex of factors which have led to this state of affairs. More, this work will attempt to present these events as they are seen through the eyes of the adherents of the faction of the rescue community which has accepted the necessity of the use of force. In so doing, it is hoped that it will be possible to translate for a secular, scholarly audience an apocalyptic millenarian *Zeitgeist* which is at this writing still very much in the process of formation. Much of what follows thus relies heavily on the assistance and the writings of the rescuers themselves. A great deal of internal material, letters, prison diaries and extensive correspondence has been made available to this research. Interviews and personal letters too have played a considerable role in what follows. Yet of equal import are the rescue journals, magazines and newsletters in which the theology of rescue is even now evolving.

In the attempt to introduce the scholarly community to the *Zeitgeist* of the rescue world, this article allows the rescuers to speak in their own voices. For this reason, the terminology employed throughout the article reflects the accepted pattern of discourse within rescue's most determinedly millenarian adherents, those who have accepted at least the theoretical possibility of the efficacy of the resort to deadly force. Thus, the terms 'baby' rather than fetus, 'deathscorts' rather than clinic escorts, 'death culture' or 'abortion culture' for American culture, 'murder' or 'child killing' for abortion, 'abortuary', 'killing center' or 'child killing industry' for for-profit abortion clinics, 'Prisoner of Christ' for jail or prison inmate, and, on occasion, 'killer' or 'mass murderer' for abortionist, are not only intrinsic to the discourse of the movement, but are necessary if the movement's worldview and its recent actions are to be made comprehensible to a scholarly audience. In this context, the term 'abortionist' is itself controversial. Yet the term remains in the text as it is not only the most accurate description of the profession, but because the various readers of earlier drafts of this work could suggest no alternative which was not either linguistically clumsy or utterly artificial. In the final analysis, this contribution seeks to present the rescue movement on its own terms and in its own words without the distraction of an intrusive scholarly voice. The rescue movement today is a little studied, poorly understood

oppositional millennial movement which, in taking its challenge to the prevailing attitudes of the America of the 1990s, has struck a raw nerve in the dominant culture. The social critique which rescue offers centers on the most delicate and deeply personal issues of our time: the relative values placed on individual freedom and reproductive rights versus our society's traditional reverence for babies and children, for families, and, at the deepest level, for life itself.

Thus the powerful emotions unleashed on both sides of the 'abortion wars', and thus the decision to allow the scholarly community to see and hear for themselves the rescue movement's powerful indictment of the contemporary world. It is hoped that through this work, it will be possible not only to better understand rescue as a social movement, but of equal import to the task of this volume, to follow the evolution of an oppositional millenarian appeal from its optimistic beginnings through an increasingly apocalyptic and despairing phase and, ultimately, to the adoption of a seemingly hopeless course of revolutionary violence.

The study will be divided into two sections: worldview and the resort to force. The voices in which it is written are those of such imprisoned rescuers as Shelley Shannon (convicted of shooting Wichita abortionist George Tiller), convicted clinic bomber John Brockhoeft and Paul Hill, sentenced to death for killing the abortionist John Britton. Other voices will be heard as well – those counseling an adherence to rescue's twenty year old ethos of pacifism and non-violence. It is hoped that together, this chorus of 'prophetic witnesses' will serve to illuminate this American pariah movement.⁵

I. Worldview

The Conversion Experience

You know, every pro-lifer has a story... Joe Scheidler⁶

Virtually every rescuer can point to a moment in which a general feeling of uneasiness with abortion was catalyzed into a sudden, intense realization that abortion was indeed murder and that some concrete action had to be taken to save the babies from imminent death. For some, this moment was the culmination of feelings of remorse over some personal involvement with the abortion culture. Perhaps a woman had an abortion, or a man urged or financed such a procedure. More often, however, that moment of enlightenment came as a result of having seen the graphic evidence of the reality of abortion.

For John Brockhoeft, that moment came on Saturday, 28 December

1985. On that bitterly cold day, while taking part in a peaceful pro-life demonstration outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in Cincinnati, activist Melody Green displayed the bodies of seven aborted babies respectfully laid out in seven tiny caskets. The effect on Brockhoeft was immediate, but what to him was immeasurably more shocking was the indifference of the public and of the ever-present pro-choice demonstrators to this indisputable evidence of the evils of abortion. Brockhoeft's life had changed forever, for suddenly:

...My heart was overwhelmed with grief and love for the babies, fury and rage toward the criminals...and...deep shame and embarrassment before God. I was ashamed of being an American and, *especially*, an American *man*; ashamed of being part of a lukewarm church...I was ashamed of myself for having done nothing during the first years, and so little thereafter, and for having put off the doing of what I felt was my duty to my God and my country, namely, the exertion of actual force to preempt the slaughter of my people, to protect the lives of American babies.⁷

'The Silent Scream', a graphic film of an abortion narrated by former abortionist Bernard Nathanson, was Shelley Shannon's introduction to the movement:

I've always known abortion was wrong. In 1987 or thereabouts, I read a short article by Melody Green describing Dr. Nathanson's film, 'The Silent Scream'. She described the baby trying to get away from the abortionist, but it couldn't. And when he killed it, its mouth went open like it was screaming. Until then, I never thought about the babies being killed. It was like suddenly waking up, and finding that there were other people who were also awake, but most weren't.⁸

This film too is alleged by Michael Griffin to have triggered his resolve to kill abortionist David Gunn: an act which opened the floodgates to the resort to the 'justifiable homicide' of abortionists to save the lives of their victims.⁹

So intense was the impact of the visual image of an aborted baby on individual rescuers that it was little wonder that signs depicting horrific images of the results of burned bodies resulting from saline abortions or the dismembered corpses left by suction abortions became ubiquitous at non-violent rescues throughout the nation. As John Brockhoeft's narrative illustrates, it was felt that if the American public could but see the awesome truth of abortion, they would rise as one to put a stop to the practice. More, this realization of the slaughter of the innocent would be the catalyst for the awakening of the Church whose silence is perceived by rescuers as the greatest crime of the abortion culture. That both the church and the populace

would remain unmoved may be safely posited to be the genesis of the apocalyptic view of American culture which characterizes the millenarian ethos of the rescue movement.¹⁰

The Awakening

The wrath of God burns furiously against the USA, and we are poised for destruction. Why? It is not only for the rare satanic zeal which kills babies. It is because of the pervasive lukewarmness which kills babies. John Brockhoeft¹¹

By their own testimony, rescuers before their conversion to the truth of the abortion culture were an unremarkable group. Primarily white, largely middle and working class, deeply religious members of independent fundamentalist or evangelical Protestant churches or devout Catholics, rescuers are products of an idealized America in which truth, justice and basic goodness are sure to triumph in the end.¹² Theirs was, in John Brockhoeft's words, an America whose colonial Golden Age myth is one of a Christian nation in which 'Everybody was a Christian, unashamed of the gospel.'

That's how it was in the beginning, and that's the way it was all along in America for hundreds of years – even until within a relatively few years ago – even within my short lifetime.¹³

That the American public was hostile to the simple truth offered by the rescue community, and worse that the Church itself was indifferent to rescue's plea for the lives of 'Christ's least brothers' to use the terminology of the Lambs of the Christ, was the first step on the road to rescue's current demonization of American culture. But it was only the first step, for despite the hostility displayed to the rescue message, the rescue community for almost two decades held true to its original commitment to nonviolence. It took much more than this to bring about the current climate. For if indifference was the first step in the disillusionment of rescuers with American society, the experience of violence at the hands of those that the civics texts of the 1950s and 1960s held to be the guardians of order was the next great shock.

Police, Prisons and the 'Deathscorts'

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. [Rev. 2:10]

In the 'Siege of Atlanta' in 1988, the staunchly pacifist Operation Rescue lost its innocence. Rescue would never again be the same. Randall Terry's *Accessory to Murder* offers an instructive portrait of this time of trial.¹⁴ Atlanta split Operation Rescue and gave birth to the Missionaries to the Preborn, but it was an experience which was to have an even more profound impact on the rank and file rescuers. John Brockhoeft had been taken into custody by BATF agents on 7 May 1988, two months before the events in Atlanta, but Shelley Shannon was there. So were hundreds of others. Atlanta's police and prisons apprised rescuers of the grim truth that their non-violent witness would not soon awaken America to repentance or the Church to renewal.

It was in Atlanta that police systematically adopted the use of 'pain compliance' tactics designed to force rescuers to walk under their own volition to waiting police vans, and it was in Atlanta too that rescuers were introduced to the terrible conditions to which prisoners are subjected in much of urban America. Given the social backgrounds of the rescue community – men and women who had never before considered even the possibility of violating the lawful orders of police and courts – this was a revelation in itself.¹⁵

Atlanta was in fact a mere taste of what was to come. In the wake of the Siege of Atlanta, violence at the clinics – violence in which rescuers often found themselves to be the victims – escalated rapidly. Rescuers assert that the primary sources of clinic level violence centered on the volunteer clinic escorts (or in rescue parlance, deathscorts), and on some local police departments. Jail conditions under which rescuers were held deteriorated rapidly as well.

In the formation of the currently prevalent apocalyptic worldview of the rescue community, the volunteer clinic defense teams – the so-called deathscorts – deserve more than a passing mention. Clinic volunteers are a diverse group. Escorts come from many walks of life; men and women, feminists, liberal activists, and perhaps most notably for the rescuers, members of such homosexual activist groups as Act Up and Queer Nation.¹⁶ It is clear from this research that, in the view of the rescuers, much if not most of the violence around clinics which occurred during rescue's pacifist heyday came from the highly emotional, too often vituperative, and occasionally physically abusive behavior of the 'deathscorts'. That the rescuers' outrage at the behavior of the clinic guards was fully reciprocated by the escorts' disgust for the actions of the rescuers is clear as well from the literature.¹⁷

A central irony of the rescue movement lies in the fact that rescue, intended as a non-violent action with the dual intent of preventing the death of a baby in the immediate sense and of awakening American society and

the American Church to the devaluation of the value and quality of human life which has taken place in recent years, has in practice unleashed the most negative emotions on both sides of the barricades. Consistently, the anger generated between the groups encamped outside the clinic door has brought about verbal confrontations intended to attack that which each side holds most dear. Thus began a process of dehumanization on both sides which served to lower the threshold to the resort to violence. On the rescue side, terms such as 'deathscorts' and the Nazi era metaphor in which the term is often couched, as well as the characterization of the abortionist as 'killer' or 'murderer' has served this purpose. On the part of the escorts – particularly those from homosexual organizations – the terminology of abuse has been explicitly anti-Christian and often sexual and scatological as well. For rescuers hearing such epithets, it took little imagination to interpret these imprecations as explicitly and unambiguously satanic. Thus the confirmation of the view that the abortion clinics of America are literal altars to Satan, and that those involved in the abortion industry – particularly the clinic volunteers – are literal witches and satanists.¹⁸ Indeed, Shelley Shannon notes that her own decision to resort to force was influenced by listening to a taped sermon comparing the abortion clinics of America to satanic altars.¹⁹ John Brockhoeft is equally explicit:

It is a well known fact that some people who deliberately and knowingly worship Satan take jobs in abortion chambers....How could a real satanist resist an opportunity to participate in human sacrifice with immunity from prosecution? And we have discovered that to be accepted in some satanic covens a young woman must submit to the initiation of getting pregnant and aborting the baby.²⁰

Taking the lessons learned in Atlanta, some local police departments began to respond to Operation Rescue's mass events with an increasing violence. Pain compliance holds served to force rescuers to abandon their positions 'voluntarily', and thus increased both police efficiency and reduced the chance of police injuries incurred in the process of carrying sometimes hefty rescuers determined to remain limp. Yet the line between 'pain compliance' and outright brutality is exceedingly thin, and some departments went far beyond the call of duty. The litany of such events serves as a résumé for veteran rescuers. Atlanta, Pittsburgh, West Hartford, and Los Angeles are particularly memorable.²¹ Pain compliance holds became more severe, including the use of nunchukas, a Philippines martial arts weapon, by Los Angeles police. Shelley Shannon's description of such police techniques in Portland in a 13 January 1990 rescue are typical of this turn to greater police force.

Police & pro-aborts worked arm in arm. They were nice to pro-death but extra brutal to us. I had my eyes closed praying...Whenever I opened them, I saw people getting tortured. They messed up Linda's wrist [Linda Wolfe, her wrist was broken], also kicks. They did get one guy by the jaws (I should have told him to put his chin down *Before* they get to you). Pro-aborts were laughing, having fun. 'Woe unto you who laugh now'...One violent officer [name deleted] grabbed a handful of Derek's hair and yanked him up & away by it saying 'Get off those officers!' That was weird, I thought, because there were no officers...Then he grabbed a handful of my hair and pulled me up by it, telling me to get off the imaginary officers...I saw the big officer with grayish hair and mustache, who always threatens to break our arms, club Derek and say 'get up!' Poor Derek. He's only 19 yrs. old. It made a sick sound...²²

With the rise in police brutality came an increasingly severe prison regime, culminating in the events in the Pittsburgh jail in 1989.²³ In Pittsburgh, the casual violence and degradation which is the norm in America's urban jails was replaced with the alleged sexual abuse of female rescuers by male officers in full view of male prisoners. For rescuers, little emphasis is placed on individual suffering. Beatings are shrugged off, and the violence of some local police departments have come to be accepted as the price of admission to the rescue culture. Sexual abuse, threats of rape or other forms of implied or actual sexual violence intended to degrade or humiliate female rescuers however, is something else. Rescue is an intensely religious form of Christian witness whose primary emphasis centers after all on procreation and the dignity of human life. In such a culture, sexuality is a central concern. Thus the reaction to events in Pittsburgh. There, rescuers assert that after having covered their badges, Pittsburgh police roamed through the bus where female rescuers were manacled, beating them with nightsticks. Worse was to come:

They took the women to the men's jail. Cops and guards dragged them up five flights of stairs, pulling out clumps of hair, ripping the clothes off them. These men strip searched the women, fondled and molested them, shouted obscenities, paraded them naked up and down in front of the men's cells. They ripped rosary beads apart, threw Bibles into trash cans.

No one cared. The newspapers and churches were not interested. ²⁴

As important to the formation of an apocalyptic world view as were events such as those in the Pittsburgh jail, it must be kept in mind that a municipal jail is primarily a holding cell. Stays are of relatively short duration, and

mass rescues of the Operation Rescue variety tend to quickly overwhelm these facilities. The prison system itself can be far worse. Here, rescuers come in contact with the most violent of criminals, and here too rescuers encounter the most hardened of prison guards. Remarkably, this research indicates that for rescuers, the prisoners are seen in a considerably more positive light than are guards or prison officials. The explanation for this anomaly may lie in part in the rescuers' view of prisoners as a potential mission field as much in need of hearing the Gospel's message of hope as are the unborn themselves (Heb. 10:33 and 13:3, 1 Peter 3:19, and Rev. 2:10). Prisoners for their part appear to have been, by and large, protective of incarcerated rescuers. Not so prison guards and prison officials.

A number of rescuers, following the example of Joan Andrews, have made it a point not to cooperate in any way with prison authorities. Some, such as the Lambs of Christ, even refuse to give their names, to leave voluntarily unless all of their number are released, or to pay fines or court costs. Such defiance is hardly conducive to the maintenance of order in penal institutions, and defiance is dealt with harshly in America's prisons. In such an atmosphere, it is only natural that the treatment of rescuers – hardly career criminals and brought up with a naïve view of American justice – would be less than gentle. Conversely, it is hardly a revelation that rescuers would see a pattern to their individual experiences of mistreatment which would indicate to many the existence of a pervasive evil underlying the visible pattern of events. Such suspicions in the prison diaries and internal communications of rescuers clearly begin to reflect these suspicions as early as 1989. Remarkably, for many rescuers, these observations are often broached with a humor belying their deadly seriousness.

To give an early flavor of this evolution, the following text compresses a diary written by Shelley Shannon from 21 October 1989 to 2 November 1989 as a guest of the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta for a stay of '10 days, 6 hours, 17 minutes'.²⁵

All along its seemed like a spiritual battle: God giving us tickets on sale so we could fly ... and leading me and [name deleted] to come instead of paying a fine ... There's a feeling something great is going to happen in Atlanta...

We are now in a filthy holding cell waiting to check into Fulton Co. Jail... One lady in here told us when she finally got a blanket, it had b. m. on it, and even later she got another but she said it smelled like man's stuff. Everyone is telling us about the conditions in the jail... worse than any prison any of them have been in...

... There are some in here who aren't saved (Help us, please God, to help them) ... [name deleted] is pregnant and doesn't want to tell

them because another lady ... was given pills and started bleeding. She quit taking them and I'll try to get some out. She did have a miscarriage though. They say it was thyrozine (?) [sic] in the kool-aid to take away your sex drive. If so, it doesn't work on the lesbians...

[A] lady told us how [Oregon rescuer] Linda Wolfe saved her twin babies ... A guy was going to set her up in prostitution and pay her bail and for her abortion. She said she was going to kill her child just to get out ... Linda came over to her and they talked a long time. And she decided not to get an abortion and has been sitting here in jail paying the price for choosing to do the right thing. She's getting back with her husband and he's really happy about the twins. She also told us a lot of inmates came in pregnant and end up with miscarriages after receiving 'medication'. [name deleted] has been doing good – she has delivered witches and prostitutes crying out to Jesus to deliver them! P. T. L. [Praise the Lord]!..

... I wrote for my prayer request that 'God will revive America and His people who are called by His name will turn from their wicked ways in repentance'

Shelley Shannon's notes are not atypical of the rescue literature at the time of the 'Siege of Atlanta'. There was in the published literature, as in private correspondence, the same call to save an America seen as contaminated by the vile sins of child murder, sexual vice and selfish materialism. Yet the rescuers' America of 1988–89 was still God's 'city on a hill'. The experiences of Atlanta, however, began to cast the shadow of doubt about America's salvation among the rescue community, and by late 1989 or early 1990, rescue literature began to take an increasingly despairing tone. That God would soon act to cleanse the land from the stain of abortion remained an article of faith. But how? It rapidly became clear that salvation would not take place by means of the courts and the political system. With this realization came the decisive break between rescue and the larger pro-life movement.²⁶

The Political Process and the Legal System

*Beginning officially with the passage of the Freedom of Choice Act – we, the remnant of God-fearing men and women of the United States of Amerika [sic], do officially **declare war** on the entire child killing industry. [The Army of God Manual, 1994]²⁷*

The 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion on demand in the now famous *Roe v. Wade* case, like the 1962 ruling against prayer in the public schools, served as a wake-up call to segments of the religious community

that something in America was seriously amiss. The confirmation of the decision in 1973's *Doe v. Bolton* which found three proposed restrictions to full abortion access in a Georgia statute unconstitutional served primarily to confirm to the rescue community that justice for the unborn would not soon be forthcoming from the courts of a fallen America.²⁸ More relevant restrictions on the public witness of rescuers, however, have sounded the death knell of rescue which opened this essay, and it is these restrictions – some ironically gaining overwhelming majorities for passage in response to some act of rescue violence – which were key ingredients in the turn to violence by some in the rescue movement. What follows examines only a few of these developments: the use of civil litigation and the RICO statute to deter rescuers, the rescuers' furor over the proposed Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), and the criminal penalties of the Freedom of Clinic Entrances Bill (FACE).

There is something faceless yet inexorable about the workings of the legal system. In rescue parlance, the free standing abortion clinics of America offer an obvious address for the rescuers' war against Satan. The abortionist and the ubiquitous 'deathscorts' give the devil's timeless evil a human face, while at their worst, the police give this evil a cadre of enforcers. Yet what effective rejoinder could be offered to a missive such as the following?

Dear Ms Shannon,

I represent the Lovejoy Surgicenter, Inc. [a Portland abortion clinic]. This letter is written to advise you that you have until 12:00 noon on July 21, 1992 to pay ... \$504,486.43 plus attorney fees and costs...by the above stated deadline.

If you fail to meet this deadline, I have been instructed to immediately initiate a legal action for collection...THIS IS THE FINAL DEMAND ON THIS ACCOUNT BEFORE LEGAL ACTION IS INITIATED.

Very Truly Yours,
[Name Withheld]²⁹

The Lovejoy suit which resulted in this demand was a 1991 civil action alleging simple trespass against the Advocates for Life Ministries and several individuals associated with the Oregon rescue community. On 2 May 1994 the United States Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of the case, effectively letting the judgment stand. It was only one of a blizzard of similar suits. The failure of rescuers either to make restitution or to cease their activities provoked the application of the RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) statute against members of the rescue community. An early RICO suit was filed by the National Organization of

Women against the father of organized rescue in America, Joseph Scheidler of the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago.³⁰ The suit, dismissed by both the Federal District Court and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals was, to the surprise of many legal observers, upheld by the Supreme Court in 1994. Conversely, the rescue community evinced no surprise whatever.³¹ The barrage of civil litigation for them was merely of a piece with the criminal legislation which was designed at first to marginalize and later to crush the rescue movement.

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) debate in 1989 and the draconian Freedom of Clinic Entrances (FACE) bill of 1994 together served to sever whatever lingering faith the rescue community might have had in the institutions of the US government. It was not always so. The administration of Ronald Reagan gave considerable hope to both the pro-life constituency and the rescuers that somehow the answer to overturning *Roe v. Wade* lay in the political process; an optimism that was perhaps unwarranted, but did serve to link the rescue community with its pro-life parent.³² In retrospect, this illusion of official sanction seems to have served as a brake on the drift toward direct action. The clinic burnings of the early 1980s demonstrate that the use of force was already a potential court of last resort for the movement. Similarly, the administration of George Bush, less charismatic by far and less sincerely committed to the pro-life cause, at least gave the appearance of fighting a holding action in defense of the unborn.³³

The 1992 election of Bill Clinton dashed this tenuous faith in the efficacy of the political system. In Bill and Hillary Clinton, rescuers were faced with a new political equation. The Clintons were unabashed advocates of maintaining the *Roe v. Wade* status quo and were backed by a liberal coalition which prominently featured the nemesis of the rescue message: feminists and gay advocacy groups. More, President Clinton was fully prepared to translate that commitment into policy terms, making FACE inevitable.

For their part, some rescuers expressed their horror at the specter of the Clinton presidency less in political than in theological terms. As the political aspirations of the rescue community faded, a rapid evolution took place which has considerable precedent in the history of the Christian West. That is, the current troubles were translated into theological terms and placed as part of the End Times' scenario of the Book of Revelations. One prominent feature of this apocalyptic scenario led to ongoing speculation as to whether President Clinton was in fact the literal Antichrist.³⁴ Indeed, the presence of the Antichrist on earth would do much to explain the failure of the Church to awaken and rally to the defense of the babies. Another more secular feature of this rapid loss of hope in American democracy was the demise of the touchstone of the political faith upon which the rescue

movement was founded: that one day the movement would emerge from its pariah status to be recognized as the successor to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.³⁵

The Freedom of Choice Act was introduced in the House of Representatives in 1989. FOCA, a bill yet to be passed, would have guaranteed a woman the right to abortion at any time and for any reason up to the point of 'viability', that is, until the point of fetal development whereby the baby could live outside the womb. While FOCA was not in itself written to terminate the activities of the rescue community, it did have the effect of demonstrating to rescuers the hostility of the American political system to the moderate pro-life message and thus confirmed the rescuers' manichaeon perceptions of American culture. The declaration of war against America's death culture offered at the top of this section from the *Army of God Manual* is indicative of the impact of FOCA on the rescue community. With the controversy surrounding FOCA, the growing rift between the moderate pro-lifers and rescue grew deeper and at this writing widens by the day.

The despair evinced by that *Army of God Manual* quote is, however, most probably a product of hindsight rather than an authentic reaction to FOCA in 1992. For the rescue community as a whole, it was not until the 1994 passage of the Freedom of Clinic Entrances Act that it became unambiguously clear that the American government under the Clinton presidency had moved from general hostility to the pro-life message to a determination to destroy the rescue movement itself. That the full implications of the FACE bill only belatedly dawned on much of the rescue community may be in part due to the offer which the US Senate extended to rescue leaders to testify about their own experiences of violence and abuse at the hands of both local police departments and the deathscorts guarding the clinics.³⁶ Congress, however, was less concerned with violence against rescuers than that which was aimed at abortionists, in particular the killing of Dr David Gunn in Florida and the wounding of Dr George Tiller in Wichita, both in 1993.

FACE was constructed to create a so-called 'bubble zone' separating rescuers from the entrances to abortion clinics. In this, FACE was hardly innovative. For some years, municipal authorities in various locations around the country had experimented with such 'bubble' or 'no speech' zones in response to rescue activities. These local legislative and administrative efforts were in turn essentially political actions modeled on the court injunctions which clinic operators had obtained to restrain the activities of rescuers at their establishments. FACE, then, merely took this welter of local injunctions and ordinances and created from them a law which makes it a federal offense to interfere with any person seeking an

abortion and setting stiff sentencing guidelines which are crafted to deter all but the most faithful rescuers.³⁷ This makes it a relatively simple matter to isolate and incarcerate this remnant. As of this writing, FACE does appear to have successfully accomplished this objective.

As criminal penalties became more draconian, the number of rescuers inevitably declined. Of the faithful remnant who chose to persevere, there was an inevitable radicalization which served to divide the heretofore highly cohesive rescue community. The following section will therefore concentrate exclusively on that portion of the rescue faithful which finds no alternative to the resort to force in defense of the unborn.

II. The Resort to Force

In the atmosphere of December 1994, a John Salvi III was inevitable. His actions – random shots fired into abortion clinics that resulted in the deaths of two employees and the wounding of several others – broke the one inviolable rule of the rescue movement: do nothing which would endanger the unborn child. Salvi's written statement, put out on 4 January 1995 over the AP wires and relayed to this researcher via the Internet, reveals a young man obsessed with fears of anti-Catholic conspiracies, but it has nothing to say of abortion.³⁸ Yet the sudden escalation of clinic violence could not help but draw in such marginal personalities as John Salvi. There had been for some years a gradual erosion of the barriers against the resort to deadly force among some of the most radical voices in the rescue movement. More, as the apocalyptic world view of the rescue community solidified in the cauldron of the 1980s, and as the courts and the Clinton administration succeeded in criminalizing rescue and driving much of the pacifist majority to the sidelines or into the prisons, the isolated voices which had been arguing for a resort to force were brought to the fore. This section will attempt to trace that evolution.

The clinic bombers of the 1980s, people such as John Brockhoeft and Marjorie Reed, were scrupulous in their determination that the destruction of, in rescue terminology, the killing centers would be accomplished with absolutely no loss of human life. For them, the destruction of the property would be sufficient to, at least for a time, halt the slaughter of the unborn.³⁹ This tactic did sometimes succeed in halting abortions for a brief time. Yet in urban areas, pregnant women determined to go ahead with their decision to abort had but to make an appointment at another clinic, while even in more rural areas, it is highly unlikely that any woman was forced to carry to term against her will. Clearly, a far greater commitment to the use of force would be needed if abortion was to be stopped through violent means.

Before such a commitment could be made however, the most determined

members of the rescue community had one more psychological bridge to cross. This was the realization that not only was the American death culture beyond redemption, but that it would be necessary actively to confront the killers on their own terms. With FACE, war had been declared on the most faithful of God's people, just as since the 1973 advent of *Roe v. Wade*, a war had been declared on the unborn. If, then, it was to be war, and if the babies were to be rescued, then no legitimate option other than to take up arms in defense of the unborn remained. This realization was, however, far from immediate and remains to this day the province of a minority of the rescue community.

The internal debate that began in the late 1980s to seriously consider the resort to deadly force was conducted primarily among imprisoned rescuers – Prisoners of Christ in rescue parlance – and between these incarcerated rescuers and a handful of activists on the outside. It continued and deepened in the pages of certain rescue journals, and in book form courtesy of Michael Bray.⁴⁰ At the core of this discourse are several key themes, each of which had long been present in the literature and the internal debates of rescue. The necessary innovation in this reformulation is merely one of emphasis rather than originality. Thus, the 1960s American Civil Rights movement metaphor was supplanted by an almost exclusive focus on the holocaust, on Nazi Germany and on the resistance to that prototype of the modern culture of death.

The Third Reich and the American Holocaust

From its inception, the rescue movement was not loathe to publicize the marked parallel which they perceived between the Nazi policy of genocide against the Jews and others in Europe and the slaughter of millions of babies yet in the womb.⁴¹ Indeed, Randall Terry's optimistic first book, *Operation Rescue*, has the slogan 'You can stop the abortion holocaust in America!' emblazoned on its back cover. In this early pacifist period, the rescue movement reached back into this period of history for its two great heroes: Corrie Ten Boom and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Both resisted the Nazi government's genocidal policies on religious grounds, and both suffered greatly for their actions. Yet as the movement's mood darkened, it was increasingly to the example of Bonhoeffer that the rescuers turned. Rescue's interpretation of both of these heroes is instructive in tracing the movement's turn from pacifism to violence.

Corrie Ten Boom's stature derives from her efforts to protect Jews from Nazi occupation forces in wartime Holland. Her witness was solidly based on biblical grounds and utterly non-violent. Her eventual arrest and incarceration in the Ravensbruck concentration camp is posited by rescuers as analogous to their suffering in the jails and prisons of America; an

opportunity to share God's Word of ultimate hope with fellow inmates and guards alike. Yet concomitant with the drift of the faction of rescue which would opt for or support direct action, the example of Corrie Ten Boom's non-violent attempt to rescue the Jews would be devalued in comparison with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's resort to direct action against Adolf Hitler.⁴²

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–45), the distinguished German bishop and theologian whose resolute opposition to Hitler and the barbarism of the Nazi state would lead to his execution for his involvement in the wartime plot to assassinate the Fuehrer, is today the undisputed model for emulation of the Defensive Action wing of the rescue movement. Indeed, so intense is this lionization that a distinct form of hagiography is beginning to appear in the rescue literature which appears to elevate Bonhoeffer almost to Christ-like stature:

The Lord Our God has always been ultimately in control! Bonhoeffer was executed before you were born. The Lord could have kept him from it. Bonhoeffer was willing to die defending others. He volunteered to die! He became more powerful in death than in life! Had he survived the war, Christianity and the world may have forgotten him. Do not rob him of his voluntary and glorious sacrifice! Do not rob us of the legacy he handed down to us!⁴³

Bonhoeffer's actions, however, were not undertaken on a whim, nor were they permissible in any but the most dire situations. Indeed, in one of Bonhoeffer's earliest essays, political action by the Church is specifically prohibited in all but the most dire historical circumstances:

[the church] recognizes the absolute necessity of the use of force in this world, and also the moral injustice of certain concrete acts of the state which are necessarily bound up with the use of force. The church cannot in the first place exert absolute direct political action, for the church does not pretend to have any knowledge of the necessary courses of history. Thus, even today, in the Jewish question, it cannot address the state directly and demand of it some definite action of a different nature.⁴⁴

Given the grim social and political climate facing rescuers today, it is little wonder that many of this community would identify their own travails with Bonhoeffer's gradual drift from a Romans 13 style subordination to state authority to a suicidal attempt to excise from the world the radical evil of Adolf Hitler's regime through the use of deadly force. Thus the current hagiographic treatment of Bonhoeffer in the rescue literature, and thus too the demand for Bonhoeffer's original writings by many in the rescue community. Shelley Shannon, for example, recalls reading several of

Bonhoeffer's books during her evolution toward Defensive Action.⁴⁵ In essence, many rescuers have come to see the world around them as precisely analogous to that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: society has become literally satanic, sanctioning the mass extermination of helpless human beings and the only just response of God's church is to recognize that in contemporary America a state of war exists between good and evil, between the servants and collaborators of the abortion culture and the people of God, and to act accordingly.

The Imagery of War

The road leading from the rescue movement's 20 years of fruitless non-violent witness to the *Army of God Manual's* declaration of war against 'the child killing industry of Amerika' is not so long as it would appear on first glance. Like the remarkably similar declaration of war against ZOG [Zionist Occupation Government] issued by Robert Mathews and the Order, the manichaeian imagery of a beleaguered remnant under siege by the forces of a decayed and utterly irredeemable culture were present in the discourse of rescue virtually from its inception.⁴⁶ Once again, the mark of the rescuers who would adopt or condone the resort to force is merely one of degree rather than innovation. More, it would not be long before the state of war between the 'Defensive Action' wing of rescue and the dominant culture would engulf the rescue movement itself. Thus, the disavowal of rescue violence by such rescue leaders as Randall Terry or the current Operation Rescue leader Flip Benham would be posited as weak, cowardly and effeminate at best, treasonous at worst.⁴⁷ This is the state of the rescue movement today.

John Brockhoeft states this proposition simply and eloquently: 'abortion is a war crime which means that our nation has been in a state of war since 1973'.⁴⁸ In a 26 November 1994 interview published in the rescue literature, Paul Hill, currently under a sentence of death for killing a Florida abortionist and his volunteer bodyguard, sees no need to expound on the state of war between rescue and the death culture. It is a given fact of life: 'In every war, men have been willing to go out and risk death, or separation from their families, to defend their country and their neighbors... I've done the same thing.'⁴⁹ And in times of war, such primary Christian values as love and charity – values which are at the heart of the rescue movement – are too often allowed to fall by the wayside:

There are very few (that I know of) who are my enemies on a strictly personal basis (perhaps no more than one or two). In accordance with Jesus' mandate, I do love those enemies and pray for them. But during this time of war, this time of grave national crisis, I do not love any

member of this reprobate anti-Christ nation within our borders which wages war against my people.⁵⁰

With the certainty that the contemporary United States is but a mannered reincarnation of Nazi Germany, that the abortion holocaust is merely a continuation of the Nazi Holocaust, and that the death culture would stop at nothing in its unceasing war against the faithful remnant of God's people, the transformation of a faction of the rescue movement from a pacifist witness with a deep and abiding faith in the efficacy of the American system and the transforming power of God's Church into a movement willing to take up arms was complete. Even so, the resort to lethal force was slow in coming. Rather, there was first a gradual escalation from rhetoric to the destruction of property, and this was followed by an increasing personalization of the struggle as the rescue message, driven from the abortuary door, would increasingly come to encamp on the sidewalk of the abortionist's home. Prayer too began to change, as the Missionaries to the Preborn in Milwaukee pioneered the use of imprecatory prayer to call down the wrath of God onto the head of the abortionist, beseeching God either to change his heart or to take his life.⁵¹ At last, despairing of the efficacy of non-violent witness, convinced of their persecution by the courts and of their victimization through extraordinary violence from police and clinic guards, and facing an administration in Washington determined to protect abortion access by the criminalization of rescue activities, the rescue movement faced an intractable dilemma. Nevertheless, it took Michael Griffin, a peripheral figure in the world of rescue, to force the movement to make such a decision. That evolution is the focus of the remainder of this study.

Toward Lethal Force

The more the authorities take our legal redress away the more compelling to do more drastic measures. It is going to get a whole lot worse. Blood will be shed [and] not just the babies' blood either. [letter from imprisoned female clinic arsonist]⁵²

Despite the violence at clinics, despite the taunts of the ubiquitous deathscorts and the all too frequent violence of the police and the prisons, and in the face of an increasingly hostile public climate, the rescue message until the late 1980s remained one of reverence for all human life – born and unborn. Beneath the surface, however, there were other stirrings. While angry words on both sides of the clinic door were slowly dehumanizing the dreaded 'other' for all concerned, there was even among the most pacific of rescuers a marked ambivalence toward the use of force at levels below

that which would physically harm even the most culpable of human beings.

First, there was the destruction of property. In this, there was a rapid escalation which would be typical of all aspects of the rescue movement in the 1980s. It began innocuously enough with, of all people, that most pacifist of rescuers, Joan Andrews. Her crime was to unplug a suction machine in the course of a rescue. The legal penalties she would pay for this futile if deeply symbolic act confirmed to her and others both the manichaeian nature of the present day culture of the United States and, on a purely pragmatic level, that the penalties for doing far greater damage to the property of the child killing industry could be no more harsh than that for merely pulling a plug. So why not take a hammer or a tube of glue next time and destroy the hated killing device all together? At least the clinic would have to obtain a replacement at some considerable expense, and perhaps the brief down time faced by the clinic would result in the saving of a child's life. From the destruction of equipment, it was but a small step to entering a clinic in the dead of night intent on wreaking the greatest possible damage on equipment, furnishings and patient records. In the world of rescue in those pre-Clinton days, it was thought that no price would be too high to pay for the life of a single child. Thus, even during the clinic's working hours, it was not unusual for rescuers, having got past the clinic door, to find various ways of disabling equipment. From the destruction of equipment, it was only a short step to the next innovation of the rescuer's craft: butyric acid and the attempt to make clinics uninhabitable by the introduction of noxious odors.⁵³

As the clinic confrontations sharpened and the perceptions of the rescuers grew ever darker, there was a rapid increase in the sophistication of the tactics employed on both sides. What had begun as low level, non-violent localized skirmishes soon became more coordinated actions taking place on an increasingly national scale as both sides began to form networks to share information, intelligence and experiences. Thus for example, at roughly the same time that local police departments began the routine use of pain compliance techniques, rescuers adopted the crawl – a slow, inexorable procession of rescuers on their hands and knees seeking to crawl under police barricades and, if need be, between the legs of policemen in an effort to get to the clinic door while imitating as closely as possible the helplessness of the baby. It was at this time of tactical experimentation that Joseph Scheidler published his remarkable *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* which, until the appearance of the *Army of God Manual*, served as the primary source of rescue tactics.⁵⁴

So important is this increasing identification of the rescuers with the babies in the resort to force that it is deserving of some attention. In the early stages of this research, it became clear that some imprisoned rescuers were convinced that they had heard the cries of unborn babies from within

the walls of the abortion clinic. Shelley Shannon certainly did, although she is somewhat reticent about saying so publicly, and the notes and letters of other rescuers bear this out as well. This intensely mystical sense of unity with the unborn explains much of the turn to increasing levels of violence among some of the most committed rescuers, for to hear the cry of a single, helpless child about to lose his or her life acts as a powerful goad to action.⁵⁵ The kind of political and public relations calculations so dear to the hearts of the pro-life movement pale in comparison to the distress of that one, single child so in need of help. Thus the often frantic nature of some rescues. Thus, too the often extravagant means employed by rescuers to merely delay the business of a targeted clinic – Kryptonite bicycle locks giving way to incredibly complex devices into which a rescuer will lock himself until the fire department or other emergency service is able to cut him loose for example.⁵⁶

It was this intense identification with the babies which at last goaded John Brockhoeft to abandon peaceful protest and to become one of the early clinic bombers. In order to overcome his fear of being caught and imprisoned, indeed, as a necessary prerequisite to for the first time in his life stepping outside the law, Brockhoeft concentrated on his total identification with the babies:

I put myself in the baby's place, reminding myself that I had to love that baby as myself. 'My arms will be torn away from my torso tomorrow! My skull will be crushed until fragments cave inward and cut into my brain!' I imagined how terrible the physical pain would be! I thought of my right arm being dismembered, and as I thought of it, I bore in mind that my arm would not be taken off cleanly with a sharp surgical instrument while under anesthesia. No, it would be brutally torn out of the shoulder socket and twisted off! It would hurt so bad! But I did not think only of the terrible physical pain. I imagined the terrible mental horror and terror of looking at my right shoulder, and my right arm is gone! And blood is gushing out of where it had been!... If I, like the baby, was going to suffer so much and then die tomorrow morning, and I knew I was being killed unjustly, I would not be too afraid to go to the death chamber with gasoline and destroy it tonight.⁵⁷

The mid-1980s marked the high point of the clinic bombings.⁵⁸ There was a natural progression from the destruction of instruments to the incineration of buildings. It was simply a matter of the economy of scale. If the destruction of equipment would cripple a clinic for a day or two, and if butyric acid would be good for a week or so, how much more effective would be the total destruction of a facility? And if caught, how much

harsher the penalty? Certainly, the rescue community was loath to speak ill of the clinic arsonists, given the demonstrable effectiveness of their actions and their extraordinary care that no person be harmed by the clinic fires.⁵⁹

Every first time prisoner receives an education behind bars for which no college could have prepared him or her. For rescuers, these lessons were largely spiritual – the jails and prisons of America were of primary importance in the formation of the apocalyptic millenarian *Zeitgeist* of the rescue movement today. These lessons could be of more worldly import as well. One imprisoned rescuer for example writes:

We also learn a lot in jail, and are able to teach a lot. For instance, since I have been here I've learned the one last piece of info I needed to have a complete knowledge of pipe bombs (not that I will ever need or use that info). I've taught a very lot of people much about abortion and/or bombs. I wasn't sure that was wise, but it gets boring. I've become friends with gang members and others. I make it a point to be sure that robbers find out that most killing centers charge 'cash only' and *lots* of it, and the fact that abortionists tend to carry large amounts of 'cash only' home with them at night. It's true that we learn a lot of things we never wanted to know while in jail. But also learned in jail was: destroying fingerprints with WD40, knocking out plexiglas with a mallet or how to cut through it, 'bullet proof' isn't really, lots of other stuff. I fully intend to get a great deal out of all jail or prison time that I serve, as far as stopping abortion.⁶⁰

The clinic arsons did have some local effect on the availability of abortions. The cost, however, was high. The bombers turned out to be amateurs and were rather easily rounded up and incarcerated. Even a Vietnam veteran such as John Brockhoeft found that military training was poor preparation for the world of the urban guerrilla. The prison experience, however, had a powerful radicalizing effect on the bombers, and it took little time for the lessons learned in the prisons to be communicated to the rescue community as a whole. These lessons were communicated among rescuers through letters and personal visits – indeed, Shelley Shannon made pilgrimages to visit such incarcerated clinic bombers as John Brockhoeft – and were facilitated through the regular publication of prisoner lists through such ministries as the Milwaukee-based Prisoners of Christ.⁶¹

As the apocalyptic mindset of the rescuers became increasingly fixed in the early 1990s, incarcerated clinic arsonists were already debating the heretofore unthinkable: a turn to lethal violence. One such Prisoner of Christ, in a remarkable series of letters written in this period to a fellow rescuer, offers a microcosmic view of this rapid evolution. It may be safely posited that this prisoner – in another life a midwestern housewife – reflects

much of her prison experience in her various stratagems (or in her own terms, 'fiendish plots'). Some of the earliest of these are at best rudimentary. Such a non-starter was a plan to free pro-life prisoners: 'Wherever there is a prison that is holding pro-lifers ... the town nearest to the prison that has an abortion mill, hammer it until they close down [then] picket the Bureau of Prisons headquarters demanding release of our hostages.'⁶² Within a year, this Prisoner's ideas would become increasingly sophisticated, culminating in a 16-page manifesto in which the resort to deadly force is seriously broached.

Despite the ominous mood of the rescue community, however, it would not be until Michael Griffin's 1993 killing of David Gunn that the resort to lethal force would move from internal debate to actuality.

Ten Boom or Bonhoeffer?

When Michael Griffin, at best a peripheral member of the rescue community, shot and killed Florida abortionist David Gunn, his act was portrayed in the public arena as if a dam had burst and a torrent of pent up rage was unleashed by the pro-life movement. In short order, Shelley Shannon shot and wounded a Milwaukee doctor whose late term abortion practice and combative stance toward the rescue movement had made him for many rescuers the caricature of the predatory abortionist, George Tiller. Then Paul Hill shot and killed another Florida abortionist, John Britton, and his volunteer bodyguard. All within the space of two years. Lesser known was Alabama abortionist George Patterson, shot to death in an apparent robbery attempt as he was leaving a pornographic movie house in Mobile, Alabama, in 1994. Lesser known still is the shooting of a Canadian abortionist, Garson Romalis, in his home while his wife and daughters were present. While no suspect has been apprehended, the Canadian government is proceeding on the assumption that a member of the rescue community is responsible, and is acting accordingly.⁶³

Yet for the shooters themselves, and indeed for the rescue community as a whole, the underlying motivations for the resort to lethal force had little to do with anger. In fact, the passages in 'America's Last Prophetic Witness' which came in for the most criticism among rescuers dealt with the unquestioned acceptance by this researcher of the proposition that Michael Griffin acted from some sense of inarticulate rage. Rather, Shelley Shannon gently suggested:

Now you have me curious. Do you think that I was angry, hateful, or in a rage when I shot Tiller? There were witnesses, also when M. G. [Michael Griffin] shot & killed the FL mass murderer. From what I read, mainly in Life Advocate, he (Michael) seemed peaceful &

calmly turned himself in. Now he doesn't remember shooting him, unfortunately. I promise you, Michael is an extremely godly person.⁶⁴

Shelley Shannon was quite correct in her criticism. Rage had little to do with the turn to violence against human beings among a few rescuers. Rather, there was as we have seen a rapid intensification among even the most determinedly pacifist of rescuers of an apocalyptic millenarian mindset which diagnosed the current epidemic of child killing as of a piece with the timeless war of Satan against the people of God, save that now that age old battle was reaching its apogee and thus its inevitable conclusion. With such a *Zeitgeist*, it was no great leap to accept that America was at war – and that the most helpless victims of this war are the unborn. Schooled in the brutality of the streets and the jails, identifying ever more intensely with the babies in the womb, finding ever more convincing parallels between the German National Socialist state of the 1930s and the America of the 1990s, and at last with true interposition legislated virtually out of existence, it was little wonder that there were voices in the rescue movement calling for more resolute action to halt the holocaust. The signs of this change were there for all to see. A theology of violence was already evolving. More, the rescue community as a whole was, almost imperceptibly, edging ever closer to an acceptance of the proposition that there could be found a solid, biblical basis for the resort to deadly force. The death of David Gunn was in this sense less an epochal event in the history of rescue than the culmination of a process already too far advanced for anyone to stop.

In small ways, the deep reverence for all human life had begun to fray among some members of the rescue community. Imprecatory prayer, highly controversial in rescue circles, was one such step. While calling upon God to act against a human being could in one sense absolve the faithful of responsibility for the resulting actions, in a deeper sense this imprecation may be said to constitute a call to blood vengeance which seems far from the spirit of contemporary Christianity. More tangible was the widespread adoption by rescuers of Joseph Scheidler's call to 'adopt an abortionist'. This program brought the nonviolent rescue witness from the doors of the clinic to the homes of the abortionists themselves. The goal was to apprise the families and neighbors of the favored abortion provider of the manner in which the doctor made his living. The tactic was occasionally successful in persuading the abortionist to find other employment, but again on another level, the program both personalized the confrontation and diminished the private space needed by both sides to decompress from the constant pressure of the abortion conflict.⁶⁵ In these and other small ways, the seeds of violence were present in the rescue world for some time. FACE, however, may have been the defining moments.

A primary factor in assuring almost 20 years of non-violent rescue was the intense identification of the rescuer with the babies. The Lambs of Christ, for example, identify themselves when arrested as Baby Doe, while Father Norman Weslin was called Father Doe. The actions of these and other rescuers were, to the greatest degree possible, modeled on an imitation of the helplessness of the baby in the womb. A practical aspect of this identification is the belief in rescue circles that to save a baby – even one baby – is a miracle and thus the confirmation of God's blessing on the rescue endeavor. To save that one baby was in fact worth almost any price which could be paid by the rescuer, and it was this intense identification with each unborn child which allowed the rescuer to live with the guilt of not having been able to prevent, in rescue parlance, the murder of the rest of the almost 4,400 babies which rescuers hold to be the average daily casualty rate of the American abortion holocaust. Ironically, as long as true rescue through interposition was possible, the rescue community was largely deaf to those among its number who called for more resolute action. To save one baby was of such great importance that to risk long-term incarceration was seen as counterproductive. Who then would be left to save the baby whose life would be terminated tomorrow? Or the day after?

FACE changed these calculations. Interposition would with the stroke of a pen be legislated out of existence. If a second or third arrest for non-violent rescue had the same price as, say, manslaughter, well... To a determined minority of rescuers, the choice was both stark and, given all that had gone before, remarkably easy to make. If Corrie Ten Boom's non-violent witness would not be tolerated by the death culture, what was left other than the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer? This realization brought to the fore of the internal rescue debate the 'absolutism' of John Brockhoeft and the Defensive Action theory of Paul Hill.

Absolutism, like Paul Hill's Defensive Action theory, rests on a strongly biblical foundation and reflects a deeply held apocalyptic millenarian worldview. For both however, the resort to deadly force against abortionists has a pragmatic surface which complements its millenarian core. On a purely pragmatic level, the killing of one abortionist has the anticipated effect both of saving every baby scheduled to die that day and of persuading abortionists everywhere to find another means of livelihood. Medical students tempted to enter the profession too are expected to think twice before accepting employment in an abortion clinic. In this respect, the absolutist wing of the movement has opted for true terrorism, although this choice is most often cloaked in the mantle of justifiable homicide intended solely for self defense and the defense of family members or neighbors from imminent, deadly peril.

On a tactical level, this strategy has an undeniable efficacy. Abortionists

have been frightened into closing their practices, and young doctors willing to take up the mantle are increasingly few and far between.⁶⁶ Despite this short term utility however, the resort to deadly force has not yet found the favor of the majority of rescuers and it horrifies the broad pro-life constituency. Aside from moral considerations, these opponents point to the undeniable fact that the turn to violence has brought disaster on the movement in the form of punitive legislation. More, after the highly publicized killings of abortion doctors, the political climate has become increasingly hostile, making the dream of overturning *Roe v. Wade* more distant than ever. This argument too has undeniable efficacy, but it is at this point that the movement's core millenarianism becomes most evident. What care millenarians, after all, for the long term political implications of their actions? As John Brockhoeft so eloquently points out: 'if we do not act now to halt the slaughter, God will act for us! When He returns, sword of vengeance in hand, what profit will be the most prescient of political stratagems?'

Absolutism and Defensive Action

The only possible way future historians will fail to see 1993–1994 as a turning point in the Abortion War is if we do not have any more history, due to having been swept away by the cup of God's wrath. And if this divine judgment falls on our nation, it will be not only because of a few hundred wicked people shedding the innocent blood of babies. It will be because of the 150,000,000 Americans going around proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ and being LUKEWARM AT THE SAME TIME! [John Brockhoeft]⁶⁷

Michael Griffin's killing of David Gunn was an epiphany for John Brockhoeft. His 'Brockhoeft Report' was intended as a book which was hand written a chapter at a time from his prison cell. Griffin's act fit perfectly with 'The Brockhoeft Report's' apocalyptic millenarian interpretation of abortion and what abortion portends for contemporary American culture.⁶⁸ Taken together, Brockhoeft calls his view absolutism, and absolutism brooks absolutely no compromise with the American death culture. Absolutism springs from a total identification with the babies, and every person, every act, is judged with reference to the abortion issue.

For Brockhoeft, America is undeniably at war with the faithful remnant of Christians who would dare to stand against its killing industry. Satan is unambiguously involved in this war, and any action which deals a blow to Satan's murderous henchmen, the abortionists of America, is a laudable act in and of itself. For Brockhoeft, history is approaching its denouement where it is preordained that the people of God will be assured of power – either

through their own actions, or as a consequence of the return of the Lord.

When that day comes, there will be a reckoning. All who were culpable, either by active participation in the abortion holocaust or by passive acquiescence to it, are in some measure guilty of a war crime, and a Nuremberg-like tribunal will be instituted to try these miscreants and to mete out punishments commensurate with the gravity of their crimes against the unborn:

Believe now! Repent now! And know this: that if the brave among those who proclaim His name are too few to assume authority through their own (blessed by God) exertions, then the Lord Jesus Christ will soon return and install the few in office through almighty, irresistible power. Either way, unless you repent, there is no hope for you to escape. When the Lord came 2,000 years ago it was as a lamb, gentle, to show mercy. This time it will be to show justice.⁶⁹

Thus, every woman who has had an abortion, every man who knowingly facilitated an abortion, will face capital charges and, if guilty, will pay the ultimate price.

Paul Hill's Defensive Action theories, no less Bible-centered than John Brockhoeft's absolutism, eschews grandiose millenarian proclamations in favor of a more pragmatic formulation of the problem. In the wake of Michael Griffin's resort to force, Hill's writings reflected the same sense of excitement as did those of John Brockhoeft. Unlike Brockhoeft, however, Hill was free to take decisive action, and, indeed, it was Griffin's act which ultimately convinced Hill to move from rhetoric to action. Indeed, once Griffin had shown the way, no careful reader of the rescue literature could have mistaken Hill's intent, nor could there have been any doubt as to the identity of the intended target. As early as September 1993, the *Life Advocate* ran a detailed story of the covert operation by which Paul Hill, John Burt, Don Gratton and Floyd Murray identified John Britton as David Gunn's replacement. According to John Burt, 'As suspected, the new killer in Pensacola is another of those bottom-feeders on the food chain... He is a circuit riding abortionist named John Bayard Britton of Fernandina Beach'.⁷⁰

Paul Hill's Defensive Action statement, issued in the wake of the killing of David Gunn, today serves as a primary source of suspects for the current Portland Grand Jury's conspiracy inquiry.⁷¹ The statement itself is deceptively simple. Issued concurrently with the Defensive Action declaration however, were a series of detailed scriptural studies which serve as the biblical foundation for Hill's resort to force. The original statement reads:

We, the undersigned, declare the justice of taking all godly action necessary to defend innocent human life including the use of force. We proclaim that whatever force is legitimate to defend the life of the born child is legitimate to defend the life of an unborn child.

We assert that if Michael Griffin did in fact kill David Gunn, his use of lethal force was justified provided it was carried out for the purpose of defending the lives of unborn children. Therefore, he ought to be acquitted of the charges against him.⁷²

While the press and public concentrated on the implications of Hill's statement of support for Michael Griffin, movement literature gave considerably more attention to the more detailed expositions issued by Hill through the Defenders of the Defenders of Life Ministry in Bowie, Maryland. These are carefully reasoned treatises utilizing biblical proof texts (Exodus, Acts and Numbers are particularly cited) to support each point. Of this material, perhaps the most accessible is his 1994 essay, 'Should We Defend Born and Unborn Children With Force?'⁷³

This essay systematically examines every facet of the Defensive Action argument; that is, for the resort to force in defense of the unborn. Hill opens his case by maintaining that there is an essential distinction between the wisdom of using deadly force to save babies and the justice of the action. Perhaps in his view, the pro-lifers are correct that in the current climate, it is not politically wise to use force, given the costs of taking the action both to the individual rescuer and to the wider pro-life cause. But in the eyes of God and by the laws of man, it is just to rescue those unjustly condemned to a violent and terrible death, and justice must outweigh the wisdom of political expediency when a precious human life hangs in the balance.

Reverend Hill then makes a biblical case for Defensive Action. Based on numerous proof texts, he concludes:

There is no question that deadly force should be used to protect innocent human life... If you dispute this clear teaching of the Bible you will have assumed the unbearable burden of having to prove the justice of using force to protect the born, but not the unborn. You can no more deny your responsibility to defend the unborn with force than you can deny the good Samaritan's responsibility to aid the wounded and the dying traveler.⁷⁴

Hill's ethical basis for Defensive Action is strongly millenarian. Citing the example of Phineas, he asserts that the individual has an over-riding ethical responsibility to do all in his power to turn God's just wrath from the American people:

Though sin has fanned God's righteous anger to a searing blaze, the

*shedding of guilty blood has cooled the flame and saved the people from destruction.*⁷⁵

What follows is a learned disputation answering ten objections to Defensive Action theory. Then, with odes to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Phineas, Hill argues for the duty of waging a just war, for taking up arms in a just cause, and concludes with a call to action which is strongly reminiscent of the Posse Comitatus theory of the radical right wing:

As we put our convictions into concrete actions, millions who are indifferent to abortion or accepting it as expedient will be forced to reconsider... When this occurs, the time will have arrived for the lower civil magistrate and those in positions of power to call the multitudes to unified action.⁷⁶

Reverend Hill concludes with the prophesy that Defensive Action will ultimately succeed in stopping the abortion holocaust. This felicitous outcome rests on the twin foundations of an unbounded faith in the basic goodness of the American people and faith in the certainty of divine intervention on the side of the faithful remnant:

There is an ultimate shock and horror that comes from considering that the death of Dr Gunn may have been justified. Once this shock has passed, the truth and duties involved will have an abiding effect. *These truths will grip men's minds and not release them from their duties.* Men will be forced to admit their horrendous neglect and will respond with zealous repentant hearts... *If we will but act in true repentance and faith God will bless our zealous but feeble efforts with abundant success.* Therefore, we must act in a decisive and timely manner.⁷⁷

The Rescue Movement Today

Paul Hill and I have been writing. He's doing great. Thank the Lord! Some Christians are publicly saying he sinned in what he did, that he's a murderer, and even that he 'acted as Satan's agent'. That's blasphemous since he more accurately could be described as acting as God's agent. I'm totally convinced that God called Paul to do what he did, and he obeyed, while Christ went before, opened doors, prepared the way, and worked everything out. Whether or not we are willing to accept the truth of it, God himself kills people, so it can't always be wrong [Gen. 38:7, 10; Ex. 12:29; Acts 12:21–23]. God has people kill people [Ex. 32:26–28], and He has approved of some killing [Numbers 25; 1 Sam. 2:25]. To say that killing is always sinful is to call God sinful. God, however, does not approve of the shedding of innocent blood (murder), including the slaughter of defenseless

little babies. Protecting babies, stopping the murders of the innocent, is right and just, even if it takes the use of force to do so. I certainly won't condemn Paul Hill. Shelley Shannon⁷⁸

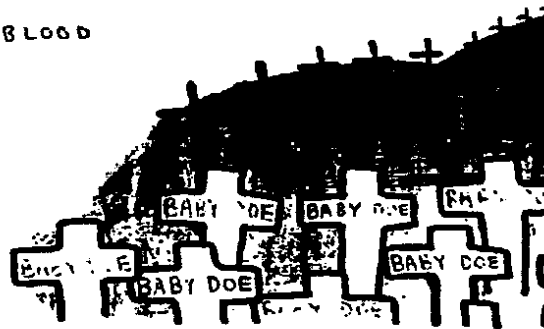
FIGURE 1
CARTOON BY SHELLEY SHANNON, 1994

THE RADICAL FRINGE IS PRO-CHOICE!*

THESE ARE THE CHOICES:

CHOICE #1

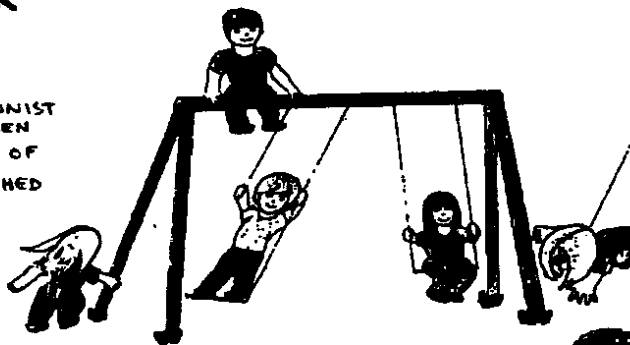
ONE LIVE ABORTIONIST AND THOUSANDS OF
DEAD BABIES IN A LAND POLLUTED
BY INNOCENT BLOOD
THAT'S BEEN
SHED



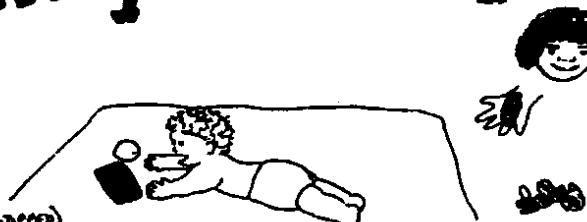
-OR-

CHOICE #2

ONE DEAD ABORTIONIST
AND MANY LIVE CHILDREN
AND A LAND CLEANSED OF
THE INNOCENT BLOOD SHED
(NUMBERS 35:33)



* WE ARE PRO-CHOICE FOR EACH AND
EVERY BABY-KILLER WITHOUT SHOWING
FAVORITISM OR PARTIALITY. NOW IS
THAT FAIR OR WHAT?



EVERY ABORTIONIST DESERVES A CHOICE (STOP OR BE STOPPED)

Note: Numbers 35:33 reads:

Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

The resort to lethal force has split the rescue community, it has further distanced that community and its prophetic witness from the mainstream pro-life coalition, and it has allowed the courts and the Clinton administration to move against the rescue movement with such force as to make true rescue an all but suicidal enterprise. In response, the rescuers who have opted for Defensive Action, or who have lent public support to it, are increasingly isolated within the rescue community and estranged from the dominant culture. Symptomatic of this isolation is the intense bonding which links rescuers imprisoned for acts of violence. Shelley Shannon, John

Brockhoeft and Paul Hill, for example, lionize each other in their public writings and pronouncements. For Shelley Shannon in particular, this intense cult of devotion has been problematic. Shelley Shannon's public and private writing reveals a woman of great sincerity, piety, and most striking, humility. Her occasional remonstrations against these public affirmations of adoration have led to some highly emotional reactions – in particular from John Brockhoeft.⁷⁹

At the same time, the threat of violence has had some deterrent effect on individual abortionists. This atmosphere of fear has had some short term utility to even the most non-violent of souls in the rescue community. Thus, when Joseph Foreman's post-Missionaries to the Preborn venture, The American Coalition of Life Activists, released a 'dirty dozen' list of abortionists, there was consternation among federal authorities, pro-choice activists, and presumably, among the abortionists themselves.⁸⁰

This minor success pales, however, in light of the fact that such public relations maneuvers are being taken in lieu of active rescues. It would be a tragic irony if the primary casualty of the turn to Defensive Action would prove to be the rescue movement itself.

NOTES

I would like to thank members of the rescue community – in particular Shelley Shannon – for their support and assistance in this project. Thanks are due as well to Prof. David C. Rapoport for his encouragement at the genesis of this research, to the editorial patience of Prof. Michael Barkun, and to Doug Milford for his comments and suggestions.

1. Letter to author from Shelley Shannon, written from her home in Grants Pass, Oregon, almost two months before her arrest for shooting abortionist George Tiller in Wichita. The comment was made in the context of her disdain for the numerous lawsuits resulting from her involvement in non-violent rescue activities.
2. Jeffrey Kaplan, 'America's Last Prophetic Witness: The Literature of the Rescue Movement', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5/3 (Autumn 1993), pp.58–77.
3. For a rare candid discussion of the problem in the rescue literature, see Rev. Bruce Evan Murch, 'Is Rescue Dead ... And If So, What Do We Do Now?' *Life Advocate* (Sept. 1994), pp.33, 40. Cf. David J. Garrow, 'Clinic Violence a Sure Sign Anti-Abortion Movement is Dying', *Anchorage Daily News*, 15 Jan. 1995, J4.
4. For the purposes of this research, the mainstream pro-life movement is treated as distinct from the rescue movement. The mainstream pro-life movement is composed of local and national organizations, with the National Right to Life perhaps playing the most prominent role. The pro-life movement functions as an umbrella for a broad spectrum of viewpoints, but is distinguished by its commitment to pursuing its goals through established legal and political channels. Rescue conversely was founded in conscious imitation of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in which peaceful albeit extra-legal civil disobedience would be the primary avenue of protest.
5. The term 'pariah' was first applied to the rescue movement in 1989 by the only civil libertarian to have taken note of the unusually harsh treatment of rescuers and the remarkable silence of such champions of the right to protest as the American Civil Liberties Union. Nat Hentoff, "'Pain Compliance" Amounts to Torture', *The Advocate* 5/5 (Dec. 1989), p.15, repr. from undated issue of the *State Journal*, Lansing, Michigan.

6. Interview with Joe Scheidler, 2 Feb. 1993.
7. John Brockhoeft, 'The Brockhoeft Report 12', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Dec. 1993), pp.5–7. The reference to a 'lukewarm church' is drawn from Revelation 3:15–16, 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth.'
8. Letter to author from Shelley Shannon, 24 Sept. 1994. Cf. 'Did She Aim for His Arms?' *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (March 1994), p.44; and Spencer Heinz, 'Praying With Fire: The Genesis of Shelley Shannon', *The Sunday Oregonian*, 14 Nov. 1993.
9. Cathy Ramey, 'Shots Fired: Griffin's Trial in Pensacola', *Life Advocate* (April 1994), pp.12–16. Paul Hill cites Griffin's act as the key event in convincing him of the necessity of, in his terms, Defensive Action to prevent the abortionist from carrying out his purpose. See 'Paul Hill Interview: November 26, 1994', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Nov. 1994), p.43. For a diverse collection of conversion stories, Paul deParrie, *The Rescuers* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989).
10. The best exposition of this thesis is Joseph Foreman, *Shattering the Darkness: The Crisis of the Cross in the Church Today* (Montreat, NC: Cooling Spring Press, 1992). Cf. Randall Terry, *Accessory to Murder: The Enemies, Allies and Accomplices to the Death of Our Culture* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990) and Randy Alcorn, *Is Rescuing Right: Breaking the Law to Save the Unborn* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990).
11. John Brockhoeft, 'The Brockhoeft Report 12', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Sept. 1994), p.11.
12. This sociological generalization is drawn from my own research among imprisoned rescuers, and is confirmed by observations of the rescue community in Chicago and elsewhere. Cf. deParrie, *Rescuers* (note 9).
13. John Brockhoeft, 'The Brockhoeft Report 10', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (June 1994), p.5. The source for this view is credited to a public school history textbook; Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel McCutchen, *History of a Free People*.
14. The genesis of *Accessory to Murder* may be found in Terry's incendiary Letter from Fulton County Jail, 10 Oct. 1989. See 'Randy Terry Writes From Jail', *The Advocate* (Nov. 1989), pp.8–10. Cf. Kaplan (note 2), p.67.
15. A good, published source of these reminiscences is Josephine County Right to Life, 'Testimonies from Jailed Rescuers: Operation Rescue Siege of Atlanta – July–Oct '88'. Cf. Tom Watson, 'Abortion Opponents Charge Police Brutality, Declare 'War'', *USA Today*, 5 Oct. 1988; or 'Police Get Tough at Protest', *Atlanta Daily News*, 5 Oct. 1988.
16. The participation of homosexual activists in clinic confrontations with rescuers was noted in Kaplan (note 2), p.72 n.9. The presence of these activists as escorts was confirmed in my interview with Coleen Connell, the head of the ACLU's Reproductive Rights Project in Chicago, 14 Feb. 1993.
17. For a view from the perspective of the escorts, see Judith A. Dilorio and Michael R. Nusbaumer, 'Securing Our Sanity: Anger Management Among Abortion Escorts', *Jnl of Contemporary Ethnography* 21/4 (Jan. 1993), pp.411–38. For a less enlightening polemic, see Faye Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley, CA: California UP, 1989).
18. For just such an explicit statement from the perspective of the Lambs of Christ, see Kaplan (note 2), p.63. 'Pro-abortion satanists' are noted as attending Shelley Shannon's trial. See Shelley Shannon, 'Shelley Shannon Trial From the Perspective of Shelley Shannon', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (April 1994), p.4.
19. Shelley Shannon, 'Toward the Use of Force', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (May 1994), p.55.
20. 'The Brockhoeft Report 1', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Dec. 1993), p.10. For a discussion of the social construction of Satanism in contemporary America, see Jeffrey Kaplan, 'Multigenerational Satanism: The Eternal Conspiracy', *American Studies* (forthcoming).
21. Rescuer Tom Herlihy ranks these cities according to the scale of police brutality and gives not overly fond reminiscences of each in an undated *New York Post* article reprinted in the Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, newsletter, *The Rescuer*. Ray Kerrison, 'Police Brutality', *The Rescuer* 5/6 (May–June 1991), p.10. Randall Terry concurs with this list. For considerable

detail, see Terry (note 10), pp.137–68.

22. Shelley Shannon, unpub. notes, 13 Jan. 1990.
23. The events described herein have become a matter of established orthodoxy among rescuers. Prof. Michael Barkun notes that a Pittsburgh clinic escort of ‘unimpeachable integrity’ finds the following account to be not credible based on her own experiences in Pittsburgh, and on her knowledge of the city. This source recalls as well that Pittsburgh’s heavily Catholic police force seemed in her view rather more sympathetic to the rescuers than to the escorts. She notes as well that after a break-in to the clinic in question, the clinic suffered over \$20,000 in damage due to tar which was poured over the equipment and furniture. While it is the norm rather than the exception that rescuers and clinic escorts see the same events in diametrically opposite ways, and while it is impossible to find independent confirmation of these events, it is of paramount importance that rescuers believe the version of events published in the rescue and the religious literature without reservation, and react accordingly.
24. Ray Kerrison (note 21). Events in Pittsburgh are described in brief in a full page advertisement in the mainstream Catholic newspaper, *The Wanderer*. ‘Sexually Molested Pro-Life Women Seek Justice: Offenders May Get Off Free’, *The Wanderer*, 3 Jan. 1991, p.10. For sources in the rescue literature, see ‘Pittsburgh Police Abuse Rescuers’, *The Advocate* (May 1989), p.4; and ‘Pittsburgh Nightmare: ‘I Wish They’d Broken My Arms’’, *The Advocate* (Nov. 1990), p.24.
25. Shelley Shannon, unpub. prison notes. Several testimonies from Atlanta are available to this research, but few are as reflective – and occasionally quite humorous – as those of Shelley Shannon. It is instructive of conditions in Atlanta that Shelley Shannon’s notes contain an account of her arrest at her Grants Pass home almost immediately upon her return to Oregon. This incarceration is described as a pleasant holiday weekend in comparison to Atlanta’s hospitality.
26. A good source for the philosophical dimensions of this split is the anti-violence consensus of pro-lifers and pacifist rescue leaders in ‘Killing Abortionists: A Symposium’, *First Things* 48 (Dec. 1994), pp.24–31.
27. This latest revision of the *Army of God Manual* was repr. in *The Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Dec. 1994), p.11. It is notable that the spelling of ‘Amerika’ strongly recalls the practice of 1960s left wing radicals at a similar stage of despair that the nation could be reformed by legal means.
28. The three proposed restrictions were: (1) The abortion must be performed in a state-accredited hospital; (2) The abortion must be approved by the hospital’s abortion committee; and (3) The attending physician’s medical judgement must be confirmed by independent examinations of the patient by at least two other physicians [410 US 179 or 93 S. Ct. 739]. An excellent scholarly source for the legal and political implications of the abortion controversy is Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1993). For an explicitly pro-life point of view, see Marvin Olasky, *Abortion Rites: A Social History of Abortion in America* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992).
29. Letter from Portland, OR, legal firm to Shelley Shannon, 10 July 1992.
30. For a brief synopsis of RICO and the *Now v. Scheidler* suit, see Kaplan (note 2), pp.75–6, n.40. An earlier suit was filed in Portland, interview with Kathy Rumey, 16 Oct. 1995.
31. See ‘High Court Upholds RICO’, and ‘Supreme Court Issues Narrow; Harmful Decision in NOW’s RICO Suit’, *Life Advocate* (March 1994), p.20. It is highly significant that so important a decision – a decision which made it unlikely that any rescuer could hope to have a RICO judgment overturned in the courts of America – was relegated to p.20 and was reported in brief, almost terse terms. For an earlier, somewhat more optimistic report on the occasion of the Supreme Court’s agreeing to hear the suit, see ‘Clinton Administration Urges Overturning NOW v. Scheidler Acquittal’, *Life Advocate* (July 1993), pp.37–8.
32. Ronald Reagan, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1984).
33. Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien (note 28).
34. Interview with Fr. Norman Weslin, 5 Aug. 1993. Wonderfully illustrative photographs making the rounds in rescue circles feature Bill Clinton with a large 666 written on his forehead. A theologically dubious example has a leatherclad Bill Clinton, replete with saxophone, and

a nattily dressed Hillary against a backdrop of memorial posters for aborted babies, with both Clintons sporting 666 on their foreheads. 'Clinton Display at Picket draws Federal Attention', *Life Advocate* (Dec. 1993/ Jan. 1994), p.8. An excellent source for the political contexts into which the Antichrist has been projected through the ages is Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist* (NY: Harper San Francisco, 1994).

35. For a good capsule summary of the tactical models of early rescue from the abolitionists to the Civil Rights movement, see Phillip F. Lawler, *Operation Rescue: A Challenge to the Nation's Conscience* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992), pp.136–41. For a brilliant analysis, see Foreman (note 10), pp.25–36.
36. 'Congress Hears Truth on Pro-Abort Violence', *Life Advocate* (July 1993), p.15.
37. 'FACE Bill Passed, Signed by Clinton', *Life Advocate* (July 1994), pp.8–9. Sentencing provisions include six months incarceration and a \$10,000 fine for a first 'exclusively non-violent' offense and 18 months and a \$25,000 for each additional offense thereafter.
38. After some puzzlement in rescue ranks, Salvi's statement was characterized as delusional and psychotic and Salvi himself treated as a curiosity with no connection to the rescue movement. 'Year Ends With Shootings at East Coast Abortuaries', *Life Advocate* (Feb. 1995), pp.20–22.
39. The ongoing Brockhoeft Report discusses the fires he set in abortion clinics in Ohio and Florida in considerable detail. See 'The Brockhoeft Report 1–4', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Dec. 1993), and 'The Brockhoeft Report 5–6', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Feb. 1994). Letter from Marjorie Reed, 25 Jan. 1993. Marjorie Reed, currently serving a 12-year sentence for 'aiding and abetting' a clinic arson, is considerably less well known outside rescue circles than John Brockhoeft. For a rare public appearance, see Marjorie Reed, 'Oh Please Spare Me (Or a Day Before the Grand Jury)', *Life Advocate* (Aug. 1994), p.38.
40. Michael Bray, *A Time to Kill* (Portland, OR: AFL, 1994).
41. The Nazi metaphor is common to the larger pro-life constituency as well. See C. Everett Koop, 'The Slide to Auschwitz', in Reagan (note 32), pp.41–73.
42. Corrie Ten Boom is something of a cult icon to rescuers and to other members of the evangelical subculture. She is the stuff of sermons, articles, and even comic books to inspire children. A good example of this praxis in the context of rescue is 'Kenny Sacht: A Pastor Continues to Rescue despite upheaval in His Church', *The Advocate* (Feb. 1990), p.3. For an early source positing Ten Boom and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as equivalent models for emulation, see Randall Terry, *Operation Rescue* (Springdale: Pai Whitaker House, 1988).
43. Joe Bartlett, 'Dietrich and George and the Time Machine', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (May 1994), p.15. This Christian 'science fiction' includes a paean to Shelley Shannon as a 'Bonhoeffer-like figure'.
44. Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich, Volume One: 1918–1934* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), p.276. Scholder's two volume history is the best introduction to Bonhoeffer's theology in its historical context. For a good example of how this challenging material is distilled and disseminated to rescuers of a non-scholarly bent, see Alcorn (note 10), pp.111–16. So vital is Bonhoeffer's theology beyond the narrow worlds of rescue and evangelical Christianity that the American Academy of Religion plans to hold a panel discussion on Bonhoeffer's legacy at its 1995 meeting in Philadelphia.
45. Shelley Shannon, 'Toward the Use of Force', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (May 1994), p.55; 'Did She Aim for His Arms: Report on the Trial of Rachele Shannon', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (March 1994), p.47. She recalls two of these titles as: *Life Together* (note 51) and *Letters and Papers From Prison*.
46. The preamble of the Order's declaration states: 'We, the following, being of sound mind and under no duress, do hereby sign this document of our own free will, stating forthrightly and without fear that we declare ourselves to be in full and unrelenting state of war with those forces seeking and consciously promoting the destruction of our faith and our race'. See Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood* (NY: Free Press, 1989), pp.357–8. Good sources for the war imagery of the early rescue movement are Randall Terry's first two books, *Operation Rescue* (note 42) and *Accessory to Murder* (note 10).
47. 'The Brockhoeft Report 15', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Jan. 1995), p.11.
48. 'The Brockhoeft Report 14', *ibid.* (Nov. 1994), p.54.

49. 'Paul Hill Interview' (note 9), p.42.
50. 'The Brockhoeft Report 12', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Sept. 1994), p.15. John Brockhoeft would not take this (or any other) public position without biblical warrant. In this case, his formulation is based on Ecclesiastes 3:8 'A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace'.
51. Imprecatory prayer was introduced in these pages in Kaplan (note 2), p.77, n.49. While it would be impossible to document the efficacy of this spiritual weapon, the Missionaries and other rescuers believe in its power without question. More, it should be noted that as of 1991, Milwaukee abortionists have had unusually high incidences of strokes (Drs Tarver and Woo) and sudden death (Dr Leon Gillman), all within the space of a year, and all after having been the subjects of imprecation. 'Craft Quits!: Sixth Abortionist to Stop Killing in 10 Months', *The Advocate* (May 1991), p.6. The Missionaries did not however pioneer the use of the imprecatory psalms as a weapon of war. No less a figure than Dietrich Bonhoeffer counseled:

Can we, then, pray the imprecatory psalms? In so far as we are sinners and express evil thoughts in a prayer of vengeance, we dare not do so. But in so far as Christ is in us, the Christ who took all the vengeance of God upon himself, who met God's vengeance in our stead, who thus – stricken by the wrath of God – and in no other way, could forgive his enemies, who himself suffered the wrath that his enemies might go free – we, too, as members of this Jesus Christ, can pray these psalms, through Jesus Christ, from the heart of Jesus Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, John W. Doberstein, trans. (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1954), p.34.

52. This letter was written to a rescuer closely identified with the resort to force. The names of both the author and recipient will be withheld.
53. Joan Andrews tells her story in Joan Andrews with John Cavanaugh O'Keefe, *I Will Never Forget You* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989). Butyric acid became something of a fad among rescuers determined to close a clinic but unwilling or unable to take sterner measures. Shelley Shannon appears to have been among these *aficionados*. 'Shannon Hints at Butyric Acid Involvements', *Life Advocate* (April 1994), p.6. That the tactic remains in use today, see 'Clinic Acid Dosing Raises Fear', *Life Advocate* (Oct. 1993), p.16.
54. Joseph M. Scheidler, *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1985). Joseph Scheidler's role in the movement is controversial. The father of the rescue movement, Scheidler felt it necessary to update his book in 1992, stressing his commitment to non-violence against persons. At the same time, Scheidler never met a rescuer or pro-lifer he did not like. Thus, he gives unqualified support and counsel to all who ask, whether they be committed pacifists, clinic bombers or those who would resort to lethal force. Thus too the interest shown in Scheidler by the current Portland Grand Jury inquiry into the possibility of a national conspiracy against the abortion industry, and so too the decision of NOW to file the flagship RICO suit against Scheidler and his Pro-Life Action League. On the conspiracy inquiry, see 'FBI Undertakes Conspiracy Inquiry Into Clinic Violence', *New York Times*, 4 Aug. 1994; and 'Abortion: Who's Behind the Violence?' *US News and World Report*, 14 Nov. 1994.
55. This intensely mystical experience of unity with the unborn appears to be evocative of the voices heard by Joan of Arc and by a long line of medieval female saints engaged in intensely emotional devotions.
56. An excellent example of the lengths to which this can go can be seen in the pretzel-like contraption employed by two rescuers in Fargo, ND. These rescuers chained themselves with Kryptonite locks into a clothes dryer, and in turn had these dryers fixed into the body of an old car with an array of chains and metal. The car was then pushed in front of the clinic door. One of the rescuers, Tim Lindgren, commented that his predicament, helplessly encased in total darkness, unable to know what was happening outside of his steel tomb, reminded him of the unborn baby in the womb. 'Rescuers Go Far in Fargo to Save Babies', *Life Advocate* (Jan. 1995), p.19.
57. 'The Brockhoeft Report 3', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Dec. 1993), p.31.

58. Movement figures have clinic bombings peaking in 1984 when 18 clinics were bombed and 11 others suffered damage from arson. These numbers sharply declined from 1985, although the numbers are in some dispute in movement literature. Kaplan (note 2), p.60. For its part, the National Abortion Federation generally agrees with these numbers, finding 1984 to be the most active year with 18 clinics bombed and 6 damaged by arson. NAF figures from 1977–91 count 34 bombings and 60 arsons. Dallas A. Blanchard, *The Anti-Abortion Movement and the Rise of the Religious Right: From Polite to Fiery Protest* (NY: Twayne Publishers, 1994), pp.56–7.
59. For a riveting step by step account of the destruction of an abortion clinic, see 'The Brockhoeft Report 5 and 6', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Feb. 1994). For an intensely negative scholarly polemic against clinic bombers, rescuers and conservative Christians in general, see Dallas A. Blanchard and Jerry J. Prewitt, *Religious Violence and Abortion* (Gainesville, FL: Florida UP, 1993). Blanchard's vendetta is reprised in Blanchard, *The Anti-Abortion Movement* (note 58). Cf. Julie Ingersoll's review of the Blanchard and Prewitt volume in *Terrorism and Political Violence* 6/1 (Spring 1994), pp.98–100.
60. Letter to author from imprisoned rescuer, name withheld, Feb. 1994.
61. The Prisoners of Christ ministry was a function of the Missionaries to the Preborn in Milwaukee. In the wake of the split between Pastor Matt Trewellah and the Rev. Joseph Foreman, the POC newsletter has relocated with Rev. Foreman to California.
62. Name of author and recipient withheld, 1991.
63. For details of these lesser known cases, see 'Bottom of the Barrel: Abortionists – The Dregs of Society', *Life Advocate* (Nov. 1994), pp.10–14; 'Canadian Abortionist Shot', *ibid.* (Dec. 1994), pp.28–9; and 'Canada Targets Pro-Lifers: Media and Government Forces Seek to Destroy Pro-Life Movement', *ibid.* (Jan. 1995), pp.10–15.
64. Letter from Shelley Shannon, 10 June 1994. She is reacting to Jeffrey Kaplan, 'America's Last Prophetic Witness' (note 2), p.59.
65. Joseph M. Scheidler (note 54), pp.154–6. Cf. 'Taking the Battle Home: Tactics Get Tough With Abortionists', *Life Advocate* (Feb. 1994), pp.10–13. For an example of the occasional success story, see 'After Home Picket, Abortionist Quits', *ibid.* (July 1993), pp.18–19.
66. There is no dearth of reporting on abortionists who seek other means of livelihood out of fear of violence in the rescue literature. Typical are 'Abortionist Shooting Spurs Another to Quit', and 'Women's Center Discontinues Abortions', *Life Advocate* (Nov. 1994), pp.28, 31. For an example of the justifiable homicide argument, see Cathy Ramey, 'Strategy for the Future: The Pro-Life Exception or "By Any Means Necessary"', *Life Advocate* (July 1993), pp.66–7. On the dearth of candidates to become abortionists, see 'Abortion Clinics Search for Doctors in Scarcity', *New York Times*, 31 March 1993; and 'Planned Parenthood Starting to Train Doctors in Abortion', *ibid.*, 19 June 1993.
67. 'The Brockhoeft Report 4', *Prayer + Action News* (Dec. 1993), p.48.
68. The ongoing 'Brockhoeft Report' is serialized in *Prayer + Action Weekly News*, where the first installment appeared in Dec. 1993. Shelley Shannon was until her arrest the original editor. Fortuitously, Dave Leach in Iowa, editor of the various *Prayer + Action Weekly News* editions, stepped forward to continue the work. Perhaps the best summaries of absolutism are contained in the Dec. 1993 edition containing 'The Brockhoeft Report 1–4', and 'The Brockhoeft Report 7', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (March 1994).
69. 'The Brockhoeft Report 7', *ibid.*, p.19.
70. 'Florida Pro-Lifers ID Replacement for Gunn', *Life Advocate* (Sept. 1993), p.19. The term 'bottom feeder' is taken from a comic book issued by a Texas ministry portraying abortionists as the catfish-like bottom feeders of the medical profession. The comic book was mailed to students in medical schools across the country. See "'Bottom Feeder" Humor Upsets Abortionists', *ibid.*, p.21.
71. 'FBI and BATF Start Reno-Inspired "Witchhunt"', *Life Advocate* (Oct. 1994), p.8.
72. 'Pro-Life Pastors and Leaders Declare Justice of the Use of Force', *Life Advocate* (October 1993), 18. The statement can be found as well in the *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Nov. 1994), pp.17, 19.
73. Paul J. Hill, 'Should We Defend Born and Unborn Children With Force?' *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Sept. 1994), pp.25–38. This essay was written to further clarify points made

by Rev. Hill on the occasion of his appearance on the Phil Donahue television program. A transcript of that interview can be found in 'Phil & Hill', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Aug. 1994), pp.45–8. For other useful material on Paul Hill, see: 'Paul Hill Interview (note 9)', pp.42–6; Paul J. Hill, 'Who Killed the Innocent – Michael Griffin or Dr. David Gunn?' *Life Advocate* (Aug. 1993), pp.40–3; and 'An Interview With Paul Hill', *ibid.* (Jan. 1995), pp.26–9. On Hill's killing of John Britton and James Barrett, as well as the strong condemnation of the act from pro-life and rescue quarters, 'Hill Says, "Now is the Time..."', *Life Advocate* (Sept. 1994), pp.10–15.

74. Hill (note 73), p.27.

75. *Ibid.*, p.28. The example of Phineas and his resort to deadly force in a successful effort to shield his people from the wrath of a justly angry God is of considerable importance to a number of contemporary American millenarian appeals. In the world of Christian Identity for example, Richard Kelly Hoskins draws on this source to posit a phantom order of avengers from the dawn of time, the Phineas Priesthood. See Richard Kelly Hoskins, *Vigilantes of Christendom* (Lynchburg, VA: Publishing Co., 1990). Cf. my review essay on the influence of this text in *Syzygy: Jnl of Alternative Religion and Culture* 1/2–3, pp.271–3.

76. *Ibid.*, pp.36–7. The Posse Comitatus was a (very) loosely organized movement in the American heartland which rejected the legitimacy of all civil authority above the level of county sheriff. For an introduction through the perspective of the late Posse founder William Potter Gale, see Cheri Seymour, *Committee of the States: Inside the Radical Right* (Mariposa, CA: Camden Place Communications, 1991).

77. Hill (note 73), p.37.

78. Letter from Shelley Shannon, 9 Sept. 1994.

79. The intensity of this emotion can be glimpsed in 'An Open Letter From Joe Bartlett to Shelley', *Prayer + Action Weekly News* (Oct. 1994), pp.43–7. This letter, most notable for comparing Shelley Shannon to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, canonizing her and Paul Hill as movement martyrs, and excommunicating Michael Griffin from their number due to his having 'flip-flopped, compromised, betrayed his friends, and threw away his honor for nothing', was written in lieu of an installment of 'The Brockhoeft Report' due to Brockhoeft's despair at having been asked by Shelley Shannon to leave her out of his writings lest she be further glorified for her actions.

80. Those named on the list are:

Joseph Booker (Jackson, MS)

David Allred (Los Angeles, CA)

James and Elizabeth Newhall (Portland, OR)

Thomas Greysinger (Fort Washington, MD)

Douglas Karpen (Houston, TX)

Paul Seamers (Oconomowoc, WI)

George Tiller (Andover, KS)

Warren Hern (Boulder, CO)

Steven Kaali (Dobbs Ferry, NY)

George Kabacy (Canby, OR)

Howard Silverman (Boston, MA)

Ulrich Klopfer (Fort Wayne, IN)

Of these, recent television news reports have singled out Joseph Booker as at greatest risk, and Mississippi rescuer and signer of Paul Hill's original Direct Action statement, Roy McMillan, as the most likely to act. On the warmth of the McMillan/Booker relationship, see 'Abortionist Accused of Pointing Gun at Crowd of Anti-Abortion Protesters', *Life Advocate* (June 1994), p.32. On the history of the ACLA and its actions in Mississippi, see 'ACLA: New National Activist Coalition Begins in Mississippi', *Life Advocate* (Oct. 1994), pp.15–18.