

ABORTION: WHO'S BEHIND THE VIOLENCE?

Abortion-rights advocates have alleged a conspiracy, but the jury is still out

Shelley Shannon hardly looks like a terrorist. Her hair hangs down in clumps. Big glasses obscure her face. At 38, Shannon, whose given name is Rachelle, might easily be mistaken for a schoolteacher, a dime store cashier or a clerk. Instead, according to a new federal indictment, Shelley Shannon was a one-woman crime wave. In just two years, federal investigators say, Shannon managed to torch or inject noxious acid into nine buildings in four states; she also found time to shoot a man.

**U.S. NEWS
INVESTIGATIVE
REPORT**

The crimes that have been charged to Shannon could be written off as just a few more violent acts in a randomly violent America, except for one thing: Shannon's targets were not chosen at random. Every building she is accused of damaging housed an abortion clinic. The man she shot performed abortions.

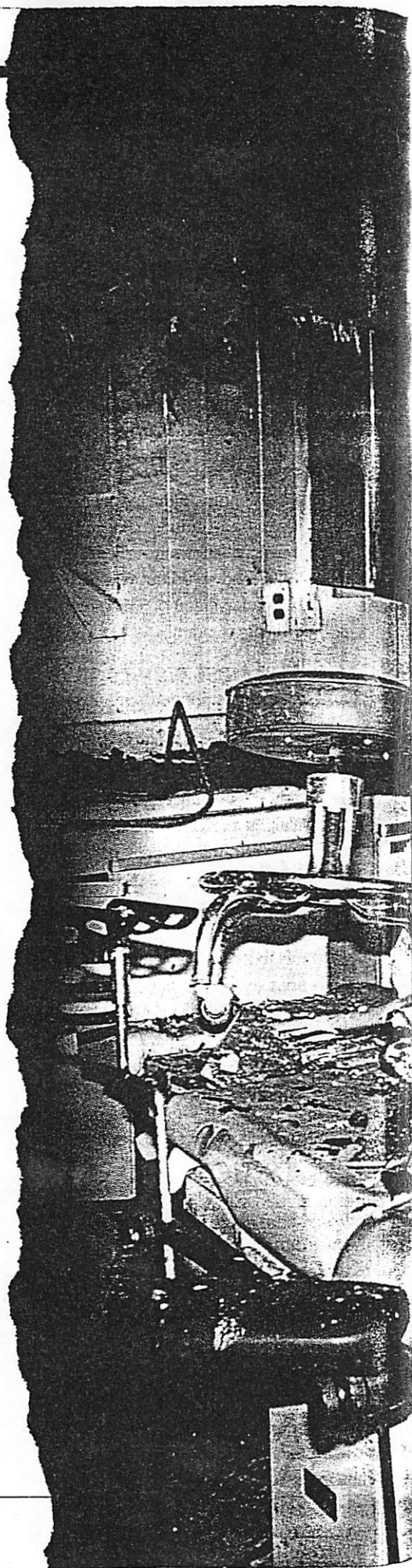
In the eyes of some Americans, violent acts of the type espoused by Shannon make her a hero. Her defenders say Shannon didn't just target buildings and try to take a man's life; she was trying to save the lives of unborn children.

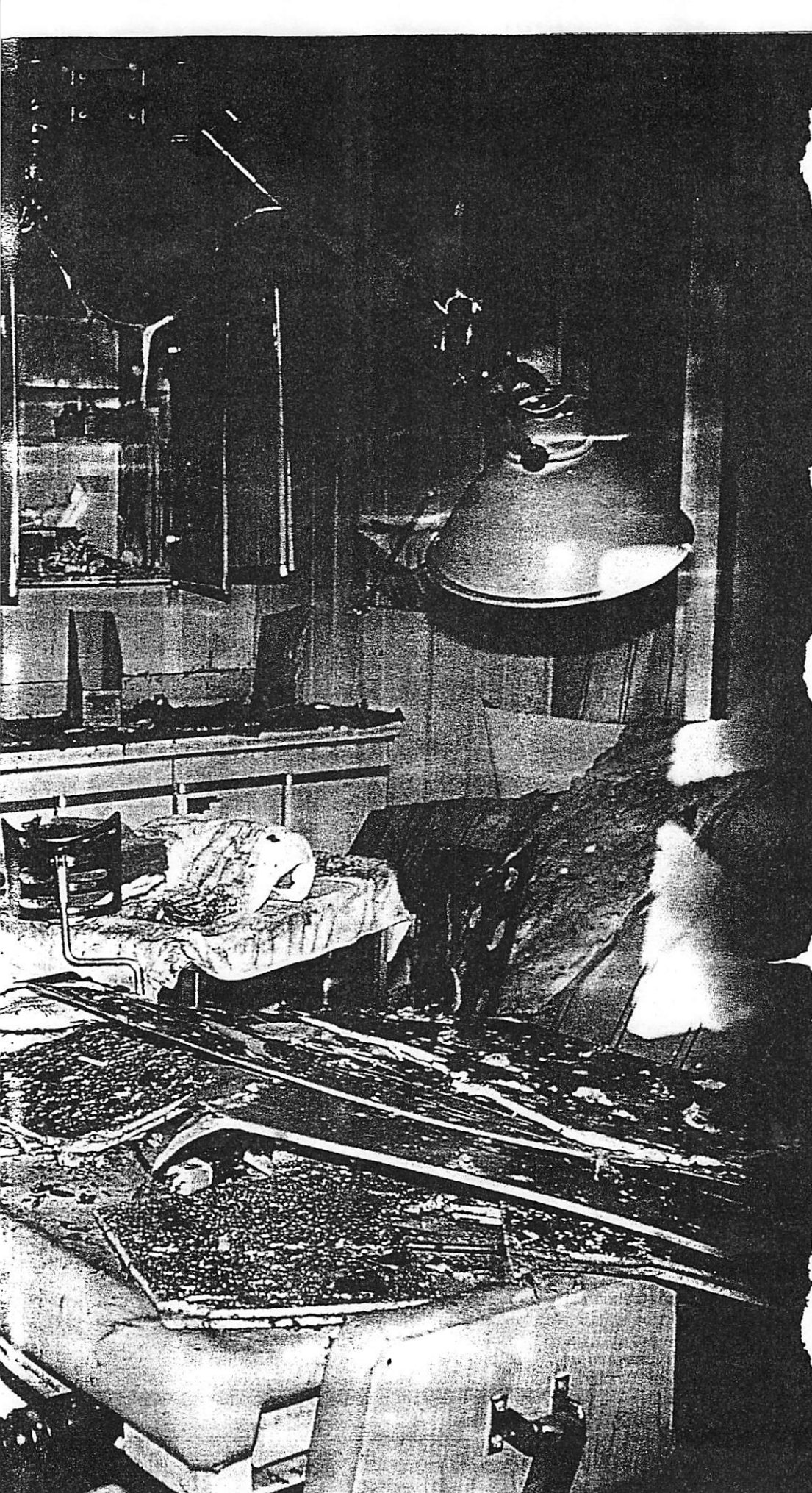
Shannon is not alone. When a jury took just 20 minutes last week to convict Paul Hill of the murders of a Florida abortionist and his aide, the verdict capped a wave of antiabortion violence

that includes 153 actual or attempted arsons and bombings over the past decade. The violence has taken a toll of nearly \$13 million. Beyond that, the radical antiabortion movement has engaged in dozens of illegal acts such as violent blockades, assaults on clinic workers, trespassing and destruction of property. Clinic workers have also been harassed at home and on the phone. One caller phoned the mother of a clinic doctor in the middle of the night and told her, falsely, that her son was dead. Wanted posters bearing doctors' names and photos have been plastered on street corners. In Minnesota, Ohio, California and Oregon, abortion clinics have been bombed or set ablaze repeatedly—some three or four times.

"Fringe people." Not all Americans who oppose abortion see people like Shelley Shannon and Paul Hill as heroes. "We are a pro-life organization, and we are concerned to protect life," says Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee, which has 3,000 chapters in all 50 states. "We are opposed to having our members engage in any kind of illegal activity. This is just one . . . peripheral issue that involves a very small proportion of fringe people who have nothing to do with the mainstream pro-life movement."

After years of neglect by the FBI and nearly every other federal law enforcement agency, the "fringe people" who practice violence against proponents of





THE 10 COSTLIEST ARSONS AND BOMBINGS

◀ **WOMEN'S CLINIC OF
MESQUITE INC.**
MESQUITE, TEXAS, 1985

ARSON,
***\$1.5 MILLION**
UNSOLVED

**FAMILY PLANNING
ASSOCIATES**
BAKERSFIELD, CALIF., 1993

ARSON,
***\$1.4 MILLION**
UNSOLVED

**PLANNED PARENTHOOD
CLINIC**
KALAMAZOO, MICH., 1986

ARSON,
\$750,000
UNSOLVED

**REPRODUCTIVE
SERVICES CLINIC INC.**
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, 1993

ARSON,
\$500,000-\$750,000
UNSOLVED

MEDICAL CARE CENTER
WOODBIDGE, N.J., 1991

ARSON,
\$500,000
UNSOLVED

**UNITED PROFESSIONAL
BUILDING**
JACKSONVILLE, FLA., 1993

ARSON,
\$500,000
UNSOLVED

**ALMEDA MEDICAL
SQUARE**
HOUSTON, 1984

ARSON, \$400,000
UNSOLVED

PLANNED PARENTHOOD
BRAINERD, MINN., 1994

ARSON, \$373,000
UNSOLVED

**BREAD AND ROSES
CLINIC**
CLEARWATER, FLA., 1982

ARSON,
\$340,000
CONVICTED:
DON ANDERSON AND
MATTHEW MOORE

**METRO MEDICAL AND
WOMEN'S CLINIC**
WHEATON, MD., 1984

BOMB,
\$300,000
CONVICTED: MICHAEL BRAY,
THOMAS SPINKS, KENNETH
SHIELDS
(CHARGED IN OTHERS ALSO)

USN&WR - Basic data: Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco and Firearms.

*Includes damage to adjacent buildings

SPECIAL REPORT

abortion are now the subject of a high-level government investigation. Attorney General Janet Reno has ordered FBI Director Louis Freeh to determine whether some antiabortion activists have engaged in a criminal conspiracy to shut down or block access to clinics and drive doctors who perform abortions out of business. That investigation, joined by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, is continuing.

An inquiry by *U.S. News* documented an extensive pattern of meetings and organizational links, which suggests that some acts of violence perpetrated against abortion clinics may not be the acts of loners. Some violent opponents of abortion appear to have been inspired, if not supported, by more "moderate" antiabortion activists. Records show that some prominent abortion opponents who denounce violence have a pattern of contacts and meetings with the very criminals they claim to reject. Still other records reveal movements of large amounts of money raised by antiabortion groups. In some cases, antiabortion activists who face huge government fines have been able to conceal their financial assets from law enforcement authorities acting to restrain their activities. The magazine found that many of the most violent opponents of abortion began as members of more moderate organizations before gravitating toward radical groups. Though the number of violent activists is small, their impact has been disproportionately large. Their activities suggest a higher level of coordination than had previously been thought.

"Heroes" and felons. The links among violent antiabortion activists appear significant. Not long before she shot Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kan., in August 1993, Shelley Shannon visited John Brockhoeft, a Kentucky man incarcerated for burning an abortion clinic in the Cincinnati area. Shannon also paid a call on Curtis Beseda, now in jail in New Mexico for setting fire to four abortion clinics in Washington State. Those visits occurred around the same time some of Shannon's alleged clinic attacks took place.

The meetings might be explained



A jury convicted Paul Hill last week of murdering Dr. John Britton and James Barrett. Barrett's widow, June, placed a wreath in his memory.



away as coincidence, but the ties between Shannon and other violent antiabortion activists go deeper. For a time, Shannon edited an antiabortion newsletter that Brockhoeft distributes from prison. Brockhoeft has ties to still other radical antiabortion activists. He says he spoke at length to Paul Hill several times from prison in the months before Hill shot and killed Dr. John Britton and his escort, James Barrett, a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel who had survived two wars. The shootings occurred in Pensacola, Fla., this July.


A recent book entitled *A Time To Kill* portrays Brockhoeft, Beseda and Don Benny Anderson, who kidnapped an abortion doctor and his wife and held them for eight days in 1984, as "heroes of recent memory." The book was written by Michael Bray, a Bowie, Md., preacher who did four years in prison for conspiring to bomb 10 abortion clin-

ics and related facilities in the Washington, D.C., area. The bombings caused more than \$1 million in damage to the facilities and nearby businesses. The book was published by Andrew Burnett, who puts out a monthly magazine, *Life Advocate*, which sympathizers regard as the voice of the militant antiabortion movement. Burnett also runs an organization called Advocates for Life Ministries Inc., a Portland, Ore., group with which Shelley Shannon participated in several clinic blockades. Burnett's *Life Advocate* magazine profiles doctors who perform abortions, lists the addresses of those in prison for bombing clinics and runs articles by opponents of abortion, including one by Paul Hill in the August 1993 issue defending the murder five months earlier of a Pensacola abortion doctor named David Gunn.

A month after the Paul Hill article appeared in *Life Advocate*, the magazine carried another article that described in dramatic detail how John Burt, a regional director of an antiabortion group called Rescue America, and Paul Hill tracked and identified Dr. Britton in Pensacola. Britton had replaced Gunn. An antiabortion activist named Michael Griffin was charged with Gunn's murder. At trial, Burt testified that he had shown Griffin gory videos of bloody fetuses and an effigy of Gunn with a noose around his neck. Burt, who was leading a demonstration at the clinic when Gunn was shot, denies any involvement in the murder and was not charged with any crime. He did not return phone calls from a

The company they keep

Some militant abortion opponents were once members of the Pro-Life Action League and Operation Rescue, but both groups say they oppose abortion violence. Some key activists have personal ties with others charged with or convicted of crimes, but no hard evidence of a conspiracy has been documented.

 **Convicted of violence**



Joseph Scheidler
Chicago
Pro-Life Action League
Considered the most influential of antiabortion activists. Wrote hallmark text, *Closed—99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, in 1985. Leader of Pro-Life Action League since 1980.



Don Treshman
Houston
Founder, Rescue America
Early student of Scheidler. Worked with Randall Terry briefly before splitting in the late 1980s. Issued a press release after Michael Griffin shot Dr. David Gunn, seeking funds for Griffin's family.



John Brockhoeft
Incarcerated: Ashland, Ky.
'The Brockhoeft Report'
Currently imprisoned for an arson in the Cincinnati area. Did time for a similar offense in Florida. Spoke often with Scheidler and Burt.



John Burt
Pensacola, Fla.
Regional Director, Rescue America
Militant abortion foe in Pensacola since 1984. Spotted with Brockhoeft in Pensacola shortly before Brockhoeft was arrested near a clinic with a car full of explosives.



Paul Hill
Incarcerated: Pensacola, Fla.
Defensive Action
Convicted last week of killing Dr. John Britton and James Barrett in Pensacola. Helped Burt track and identify Dr. Britton when Britton replaced Gunn after his murder in Pensacola.



Michael Griffin
Incarcerated: Pensacola, Fla.
Shot and killed Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola in March 1993. Dined with Burt the night before the shooting.



Randall Terry
Binghamton, N.Y.
Operation Rescue Founder
Formed Operation Rescue and brought it to national prominence during disturbances at the 1988 Democratic convention in Atlanta. Took the group "underground" in 1990 to make it a more elusive legal target.



Rev. Joseph Foreman
Milwaukee
American Coalition of Life Activists
Worked with Operation Rescue in its infancy. Formed ACLA earlier this year with Burnett, McMillan and others who felt Operation Rescue was wrong to condemn violence.



Roy McMillan
Jackson, Miss.
Christian Action Group, ACLA
Worked with Operation Rescue until a year ago. Longtime friend of Paul Hill and one of the most vocal supporters of justifiable homicide.



Andrew Burnett
Portland, Ore.
Advocates for Life Ministries Inc., ACLA
Worked with Operation Rescue until a year ago. Publishes *Life Advocate*, a magazine that provides news of rescues, blockades and clinic violence. Supports justifiable homicide.



Jayne Bray
Bowie, Md.
Unaffiliated
Board member of Operation Rescue during its earliest days. Plaintiff in U.S. Supreme Court case that determined clinics could not use anti-Ku Klux Klan laws to stop picketing.



Shelley Shannon
Portland, Ore.
Incarcerated: Wichita, Kan.
Shot and wounded Dr. George Tiller in August 1993. Recently indicted for arson and acid attacks at nine abortion clinics in the West. Participated in clinic blockades with Advocates for Life.



Michael Bray
Bowie, Md.
Married to Jayne Bray
Served four years in prison for abortion clinic bombings in the 1980s. Wrote *A Time to Kill*, published by Advocates for Life Publications.



Keith Tucci
Melbourne, Fla.
Operation Rescue National
Director of Operation Rescue National 1990-1994. Angered many followers when he demanded that they condemn violence in 1993.



Flip Benham
Dallas
Operation Rescue National
Became head of Operation Rescue National in February 1994. Continuing to distance ORN from antiabortion activists who endorse violence.



By the numbers. The money raised is all properly accounted for, Terry says.

BALANCE SHEET

Following the money

Randall Terry's notoriety as the founder of Operation Rescue has always had a predictable pattern: Followers praise him while opponents watch his every move. The latest flash point is a 119-acre farm in Upstate New York that Terry's wife bought for \$275,000 last April. How could the Terrys afford it? The question is relevant, critics say, because of the secrecy that shrouds Operation Rescue's finances.

The house deal is complicated. Real estate documents show that in July 1990 Cindy Terry bought a two-story colonial in Harpursville, N.Y., valued at \$90,000. She took out a \$50,000 mortgage on the house.

That loan was retired in January. But in March, Cindy Terry took a \$75,000 second mortgage on the house. One month later, she bought the farm in Windsor with that loan and a \$35,000 mortgage, held by the farm's previous owner.

Where did the rest of the money come from? "The money my wife used to buy this house," says Randall, "was her money." According to Randall, Cindy relies on three sources of income: \$1,000 monthly checks she gets for caring for three foster children; profits from the sale of some 2,000 shares of an unnamed stock after it vaulted from \$1 a share to \$9 a share; and thousands of dollars from supporters sympathetic to the stresses caused by Randall's work. The new farm is a beautiful spot, but Randall Terry won't be enjoying it for a while. This week, he begins a five-month jail term for a contempt-of-court violation.

reporter. Don Treshman, the head of Rescue America, issued a press release after the shooting that sought donations to aid Griffin's family.

Among this small group of activists, nearly all members express friendship or admiration for one another. Michael Bray, whose wife, Jayne, was once a board member of Randall Terry's Operation Rescue, named one of his daughters Beseda, after Curtis Beseda, the arsonist now imprisoned in New Mexico. Bray states the credo of himself and his fellow activists simply: "I defend the termination by private citizens

of practicing abortionists to defend innocent children." Other activists disavow violence but refuse to condemn it. Joseph Foreman, a former member of Operation Rescue, recently formed the American Coalition of Life Activists with other antiabortion activists who defend the use of violence.

Steakhouse meeting. Abortion has been at the center of American political life for more than two decades, since the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*. It was not until the mid-1980s, however, that the most zealous of the

abortion opponents began organizing in earnest. Two men, Joe Scheidler and Randall Terry, were the driving force. Scheidler and Terry began meeting to discuss ways to stop abortion in 1986. One of those meetings took place in a Pensacola steakhouse with about 40 other antiabortion activists. It was at this meeting, participants say, that Terry first laid out his plan for the organization that would become known as Operation Rescue.

Scheidler, many say, is the movement's true intellectual godfather. A former newspaper reporter from Chicago who later worked in public relations, Joe Scheidler is a large man whose trademarks are his beard, his hat and his bullhorn. Scheidler had formed something called the Pro-Life Action League in the early 1980s, when he came to a parting of the ways with the Illinois Right to Life Committee. Scheidler later formed a larger entity, the Pro-Life Action Network (PLAN). It included the leaders of several smaller antiabortion groups who preferred activism to the protest-and-march tactics of the larger, more moderate National Right to Life Committee. Both the Action League and PLAN are directed from offices on the north side of Chicago, where employees and volunteers mail literature, organize meetings and protests and train supporters in Scheidler's particular approach to halting abortions.

The Action League in particular has become Scheidler's livelihood. Since 1991, it has taken in more than \$1 million in contributions, according to its non-profit tax returns. Nearly three fourths of that, 73 percent, has gone to pay for staff salaries, office rental, benefits, travel and other overhead expenses. Scheidler has paid himself an average of \$52,066 a year. Since 1991, his wife, Ann, has earned about \$23,000 a year.

Scheidler has been an eloquent spokesman for the antiabortion movement—and he says he has spoken out clearly against violence. Chapter 81 in Scheidler's book, *Closed—99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, is entitled "Violence: why it will not work." "I see all of these acts of violence as an admission of defeat, that you can't do it through the proper channels," he says in an interview. "I just think it's wrong."

While Scheidler insists he does not condone violence, he has ties to many people who do. Scheidler has visited bombers Michael Bray, while Bray was out on bond, and Curtis Beseda in jail. He has also talked frequently with John Brockhoeft, the man imprisoned for setting fire to a Cincinnati-area clinic

and for a similar offense in Florida. Scheidler says, "I had no idea the guy was going to burn anything."

If Scheidler has argued against the use of violence, it has not always been clear from his writings. His correspondence, documented during the course of a 1986 lawsuit brought against him by the National Organization for Women, raises a number of questions. "Thanks so much for sending the photographs of our gang in front of the bombed-out abortuary—great scene," Scheidler wrote to a supporter in May 1985. "Appreciate your help. Keep up the good work." In 1986, Scheidler wrote an attorney representing kidnapper Don Benny Anderson, suggesting a "nationwide movement to seek his release." Scheidler told another supporter in 1984 that Anderson "has a lot to teach us." Citing this evidence, U.S. District Judge James Holderman ruled that Scheidler had maintained "links" to arsonists, noting that the letters in particular "reveal that Scheidler did nothing to discourage bombings of clinics, but rather encouraged the activity."

Scheidler rejects such conclusions. He knew nothing of the violent acts, he says, before they occurred. About his meetings with bombers, Scheidler responds: "Just because someone commits a crime



Considered the godfather of radical abortion opponents, Joe Scheidler says he disdains violence; however, a judge found that he "encouraged the activity."



doesn't mean they are a bad person."

Activist's start. Randall Terry came to the movement in a very different way. In the early 1980s, Terry was a frustrated rock musician turned Bible student turned car salesman who was drawn to the abortion issue. In 1984, he and his wife began protesting at an abortion

clinic in Binghamton, N.Y. In 1987, a year after the meeting in the Pensacola steakhouse, Terry led a large antiabortion rally in Cherry Hill, N.J., which he called "Operation Rescue." One year later Operation Rescue officially got underway.

Operation Rescue's unofficial slogan became, "If you think abortion is murder, act like it!" In 1988, Terry gained national notoriety when Operation Rescue staged the first of a string of clinic blockades in New York City. Later rallies were staged in more than a dozen cities, including protests at the 1988 Democratic convention in Atlanta and

WAGING WAR

Mayhem's manual

They call themselves "The Army of God." Law enforcement sources call them a cadre of radical antiabortion activists who have published a handbook on how to conduct violent protests. Highlights:

- Never make a bomb threat from anywhere but a pay phone.
- Put holes through clinic windows. The problem with

.22 [-caliber weapons] is the noise—the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve are great times for gunshots.

- Hot-wire a bulldozer at a construction site, drive it to a clinic, jump off and let the bulldozer crash through a clinic wall.

- Be sure to wrap duct tape around any tools you use; it will not hold fingerprints.

- Extract freon from the clinic's air-conditioning system. This repair is gonna cost major \$\$\$!

- Drop butyric acid

into dumpsters or boxes of trash when people are in the building.

- Dump a load of cow manure in front of the clinic.
- Block sewer pipes with concrete.

- Use a high-powered rifle to fire bullets into the engine block of a doctor's car.

- Make friends with the guard dogs at the clinic. They especially like medium-rare spareribs.

- Don't hesi-

tate to leave a spare hundred gallons of tar at the clinic door.

- Why get out of the way of an abortionist's car? The current lawsuit-crazy attitude can be used against baby-killers, and many awards have been received.

- Look up survivalist magazines such as *Soldier of Fortune* or *Survivalist*. Guaranteed that you will be amazed, if not shocked, by the materials available!

- If terminally ill, use your final months to torch clinics; by the time the authorities identify you . . . you will have gone to your reward.



■ SPECIAL REPORT

at both parties' conventions in 1992.

There is no evidence at all suggesting that Terry has ties to antiabortion groups that espouse violence, and Terry emphatically rejects such tactics. Where Terry's involvement in the movement has raised questions, however, is in the money he raises and spends—and how

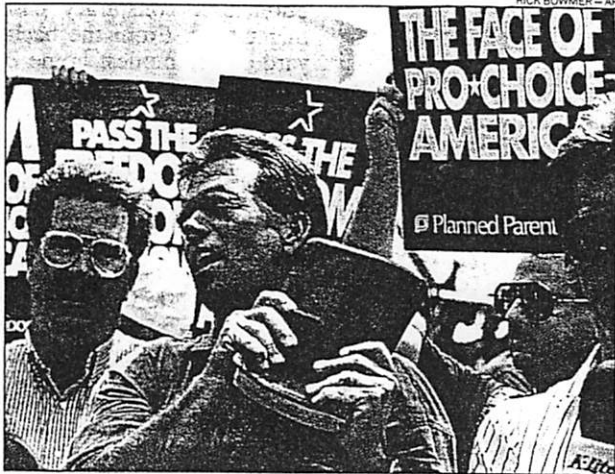
vising supporters to send their Operation Rescue donations to new entities, such as Operation Rescue Atlanta. Another Operation Rescue—christened Operation Rescue National—was started by Rev. Keith Tucci of South Carolina. Tucci's group claimed to have no legal ties to Terry. Terry says the same thing. "I resigned as director of Operation Rescue in the spring of 1990," he said in an interview.

Terry's role in the antiabortion movement does not seem to have diminished appreciably, however. He has appeared as a speaker at numerous Operation Rescue National rallies. Flip Benham, the current head of Operation Rescue National, says he still consults regularly with Terry. Benham calls Terry "Randy the prophet."

Moving money. Few if any people outside Operation Rescue or Operation Rescue National understand its finances, but they involve frequent and apparently sudden movements of money. There is no evidence that

Terry, Operation Rescue or Operation Rescue National has provided financial support to any violent antiabortion activists. Terry says emphatically that all money raised by him and his associates in Operation Rescue and Operation Rescue National goes to peaceful protests against abortion providers. All money, Terry says, is accounted for.

There are questions, however, about how some of the money is spent. A glimpse into the financial engine of Operation Rescue National was obtained from court records. In the spring of 1991, Operation Rescue National used Wichita's Central Christian Church to raise money for a nonviolent "rescue" operation at a local abortion clinic. Documents produced in a federal court action showed that Central Christian Church opened a "special project account" at Kansas State Bank & Trust of Wichita on April 24, 1991. The account's opening balance: \$53.19. The bank recorded no activity in the church account until July 24, when the "rescue" demonstration at the abortion clinic began. On that day, Operation Rescue National made two deposits into account No. 101100058. The depos-



Operation Rescue, now directed by Flip Benham (above), is the best known of the radical opposition groups. The organization has avoided thousands in court-imposed fines.



he conceals it from legal authorities that try to restrain his group's activities. In 1989 alone, according to a deposition obtained by *U.S. News*, Terry's followers contributed \$777,000 to Operation Rescue. Every penny was needed. Terry's habit of violating court orders against Operation Rescue protests at abortion clinics had resulted in fine after fine. To date, Terry may still be liable for \$170,000 in fines—a mere fraction of the approximately \$1 million assessed against him and Operation Rescue over the years.

Terry has consistently refused to pay. In October 1990, he sent a letter to supporters announcing that the "national office" of Operation Rescue would close by Dec. 15, 1993; all employees would be laid off. Terry was taking the Operation Rescue effort "underground," he told supporters, in order to avoid court fines and to carry on the fight against practitioners of abortion. "Being underground," Terry wrote in the letter, "makes for a very difficult target in these harassing lawsuits."

The shutdown announced by Terry didn't close the money pipeline. Associates of Terry's had already begun ad-

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SPECIAL REPORT

its totaled \$43,224.24. On August 8, Operation Rescue placed another \$26,332 into the church bank account. Bank records show that most of the money was raised by Operation Rescue from thousands of Central Christian Church members in Wichita, as well as from members of affiliate churches in Ohio and Minnesota.

But not all the money raised went to finance the Wichita protest operation. In fact, according to a bank balance sheet, \$28,891.35 went from the church bank account to Operation Rescue. Another \$9,864.50 went to Carol Kryzkowski, a Binghamton, N.Y., woman who was hired by Randall Terry in 1989 to be Operation Rescue's bookkeeper. And another \$8,000 went to a Cleveland minister named Phillip Vollman. In an interview, Vollman says he can't remember what the \$8,000 was for. One withdrawal from the church bank account was especially peculiar. A check in the amount of \$1,500 went to Bennet Luke, an Operation Rescue worker. On the bottom of the canceled check is a notation, "For R. Terry." Terry says the money was probably used to pay Luke for setting up a radio show Terry hosted during the Wichita events. After the Wichita protest was concluded, Operation Rescue National made a cash withdrawal from the church bank account of \$12,000. Terry says he knows nothing about where the money went. Benham, director of Operation Rescue National, says all the organization's finances are handled properly.

A federal case. The day after Paul Hill murdered Dr. John Britton and James Barrett, FBI Director Freeh sent instructions to every FBI field office: Agents were to look for evidence of a criminal conspiracy against abortion clinics. The teletyped message named a handful of suspects. The names appear to have been drawn primarily from a list of 30 antiabortion activists who had signed a "Defensive Action" statement distributed by Paul Hill after Dr. Gunn was murdered. The document said, in part, that murder was

justified "provided it was carried out for the purpose of defending the lives of unborn children."

Among the 30 signatories to the Hill document were Andrew Burnett, the publisher of *Life Advocate*, John Brockhoeft and Michael Bray, the Maryland preacher and convicted felon. Others on the list include Roy McMillan, the founder of Operation Rescue Mississippi and a longtime friend of Paul Hill's. It is not known to what extent, if any, the signers of the document may figure

in the FBI's investigation. The FBI will need more than just contacts and meetings among individual activists if it is to prove a criminal conspiracy case. The indictment of Shelley Shannon last month suggests the kinds of evidence law enforcement authorities are looking for—and the broad outlines a conspiracy case might take. From the backyard of her modest home in Grants Pass, Ore., agents of the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms recovered a personal diary and an operational manual distributed by a group calling itself the "Army of God." BATF agents had long suspected that the Army of God was nothing more than the product of the fertile brains of a few antiabortion zealots behind bars. But the manual found in Shannon's backyard went beyond zealotry; in almost professional detail, the manual lists 65 ways to destroy, damage or disrupt abortion clinics. It also tells how to block water and sewer lines with cement and how to use homemade plastic explosives. John Brockhoeft, who had long claimed to be a colonel in the Army of God, says now from prison that he made the claims "to throw the batfreaks [BATF agents] off the track."

Federal investigators may or may not believe that, but what they haven't yet explained is how someone like Shelley Shannon could single-handedly cause so much mayhem over such a relatively short period of time. Between August and November 1992, a federal indictment says, Shannon set fire to or injected acid into six clinics, including the one in Redding, Calif. At least twice, the criminal charges state, Shannon hit two clinics within 24 hours. On August 17 and 18 of 1992, she struck in Sacramento and Reno—133 miles apart; on September 16 and 17, she tried to burn down a clinic in Eugene, Ore., and injected butyric acid in another one in Chico, Calif., 300 miles away. The number of alleged targets and the distances between them



Michael Griffin (left)
is serving a life
sentence for killing
Dr. David Gunn.
Antiabortion activist
John Burt (above)
was not charged
in the
crime.



SPECIAL REPORT

have prompted speculation among some abortion-rights activists that Shannon wasn't acting alone. "The investigation continues into these incidents," says federal prosecutor Stephen Peifer, "and into a whole series [of other arsons and bombings] across the country."

To proponents of abortion rights, one heartening development is the increased federal attention being paid now to people and organizations espousing violence against clinics and doctors offering abortion services.

According to an internal memo, as recently as March 1993, then FBI Director William Sessions was instructing all agents across the country that "the FBI will not conduct its own investigations until directed to do so."

FBI Director Freeh has issued that



DAVID BURNETT — CONTACT FOR USN&WR

Reno ordered the FBI investigation.

directive, and the abortion-violence investigation now is a high priority, law enforcement officials say. The existence of the FBI inquiry has not stopped the violence, though. In recent months, fires have struck abortion clinics in California, Montana and Minnesota. There

have not been any more shootings. But if there is one person who activists on both sides of the abortion debate worry might take the law into his own hands, it is Roy McMillan. He has been keeping a close watch on Dr. Joseph Booker, Mississippi's only declared abortion provider. Booker now wears a bulletproof vest. "People keep saying I'll be next," McMillan acknowledges. "Paul Hill said that initially, too. I don't foresee any circumstances [under which I would use violence]. But I have told people this: Go read Lincoln's inaugural address of 1861. He made it very clear he didn't intend to free slaves. Two years later he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Who knows what the future holds?" ■

By STEPHEN J. HEDGES, DAVID BOWERMASTER AND SUSAN HEADDEN

RULE OF LAW

Taking the fight to court

Dona Wells remembers the case well: a pregnant 14-year-old, raped by a relative's boyfriend. The girl had come to Wells's EMW Women's Surgical Center in Louisville, Ky., escorted by her aunt. She had come to have an abortion. The staff followed standard protocol: They showed the girl a videotape, counseled her about risks and had her sign a statement that she understood the procedure. Then they performed the abortion, problem-free.

Years later, the girl's family sued the abortion clinic. The charge: medical malpractice. In court, the girl's lawyers argued that her aunt had forced her to have an abortion against her will, rendering her consent invalid. Claiming the girl had been traumatized by the experience, her lawyers sought unspecified damages. A judge dismissed the suit on a technicality—but not before the clinic had spent \$8,000 to defend itself.

Whatever its merits, this was no ordinary malpractice case. Filing the suit was Louisville's Theodore Amshoff

Jr., a lawyer with strong ties to the antiabortion movement. Amshoff once argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, pleading for the justices to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. He says his law practice is apolitical. Abortion-rights advocates disagree. Lawyers like Amshoff, they say, have one goal: to make it so expensive for abortionists to practice that they give up the business.

Dollars, not babies. That is clearly the goal of other antiabortion activ-

ists challenging clinic operators in court. In Texas, a nonprofit consulting firm called Life Dynamics keeps extensive files on abortion doctors and a list of experts willing to testify against them. Operated by a long-time activist named Mark Crutcher, Life Dynamics encourages lawyers to recruit clients through antiabortion organizations. A Life Dynamics TV ad, which lawyers can adapt at a bargain rate, tells prospective plaintiffs: "If you've been physically or emotionally injured by an abortion, talk to an aggressive attorney today." Crutcher makes no bones about his appeal to lawyers: "When we're talking to these guys," Crutcher wrote in a handbook for supporters, "we want them to visualize millions of dollars, not aborted babies."

These kinds of malpractice suits have put abortion-rights advocates in an uncomfortable spot. They can hardly object to a legal strategy that secures damages for injured women and makes bad doctors pay. Antiabortion groups see the obvious benefits in that strategy. Even some of their opponents concede it is one area where antiabortion forces may be gaining the upper hand.



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Wells. Paid \$8,000 to defend her case

By SUSAN HEADDEN