

Just news

Roe vs. Wade still under seige

Advocates for Life has an "Action News" telephone recorded message with the latest organizational news, including the location of the next anti-abortion protest.

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

The cold wet ground was marked with white chalk to distinguish the lawful boundaries of the battle zone. The Portland Feminist Women's Health Center escorts were huddled together in front of the clinic door, trying to ignore the shouting of the desperate protesters. One male protester was standing on the white line shrieking as he clutched a nine-foot wooden cross, while 15 to 20 others holding signs with anti-abortion slogans and pictures shuffled around in circles.

That day, Jan. 22, 1988, marked the 15th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* ruling that restored to women the legal right to choose abortion. But it was just another day of protests at the Portland Feminist Women's Health Center.

"Being here is like being under siege," said Jude Hanzo, executive director of the PFWHC.

Hanzo is currently involved with a lawsuit filed by the PFWHC in April 1986 against Advocates for Life, Christians in Action (both anti-abortion groups), and 12 other individuals active in both groups. They were charged with conspiracy to deprive women of their constitutional right to choose abortion and interfering with the clinic's right to provide low-cost health care for women.

The clinic, including several staff members and clients, were seeking injunctive relief regulating the time, place and manner of the pro-

tests outside PFWHC, damages for interference with the delivery of health care, and violation of clients' constitutional rights.

In May 1986, U.S. District Court Magistrate William Dale ruled that injunctive relief should be granted regulating time, place and manner of the protests outside of the PFWHC. The ruling included an establishment of a no-picket corridor extending 25 feet directly in front of the clinic entrance and 12½ feet on either side.

"The 25-foot zone in front of the building is there to give some kind of buffer zone against the demonstrations and allows people to get in and out of the clinic. We are not seeking to stop them from saying what they want to say or carrying whatever signs or pictures, we are just trying to prevent it from getting really out of hand," explains Hanzo.

Since the ruling, the PFWHC has gone back to court twice for violations of the injunction, once in 1986 and again in July 1987. In court the second time, U.S. District Judge Helen Frye ruled that five anti-abortion demonstrators were in civil contempt for violations of the June 9, 1986, court-ordered injunction. Three of the five protesters, Priscilla Martin, Fred Richardson, and Shirley Barnard, are named defendants in the lawsuit filed in April 1986 by the PFWHC.

The lawsuit is the first of its kind to be filed in Oregon specifically addressing the clinic harassments. But harassment is nothing new to Portland clinics. In 1985 packaged bombs were sent to four Portland-area clinics, including the



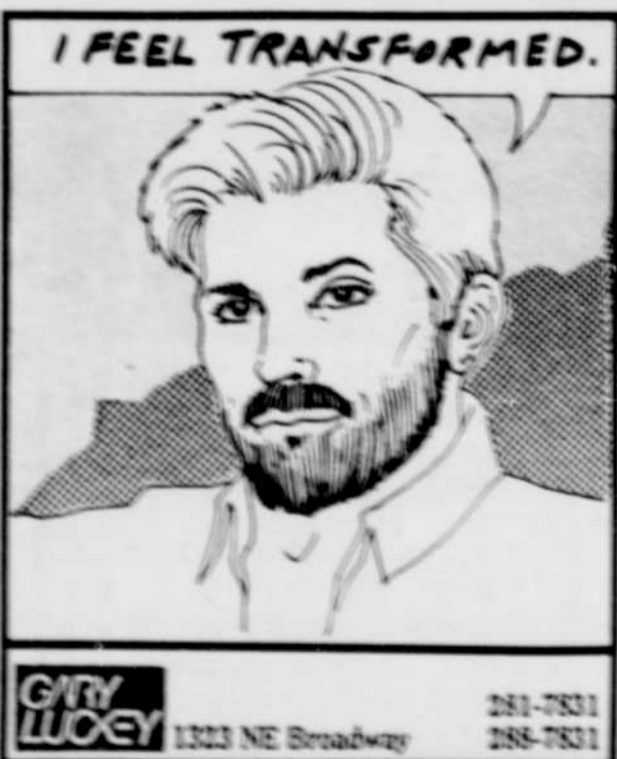
Priscilla Martin being interviewed at the protest by Steve Knight from KGW.

PFWHC. Though designed to maim or kill clinic workers and clients, the bombs were dismantled before anyone was hurt. Besides Portland, violence against abortion providers has occurred numerous times in Washington, California, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Ohio, New York, Georgia, Washington, D.C., Illinois and Minnesota.

One of the people who has had a strong influence in the anti-abortion fight is Joseph M. Scheidler, founder of the Chicago-based Pro Life Action League. According to Newsweek (Jan. 14, 1985), his techniques of

picketing, protesting and harassing abortion clinics have resulted in the closure of 18 abortion clinics. Scheidler's recent book, *CLOSED: 99 Ways to Shut Down the Abortion Industry*, recommends picketing the homes of doctors who perform abortions and using private detectives to dig up embarrassing information about them.

Joseph M. Scheidler's influence has gone beyond Chicago and entered Portland. Advocates for Life has an "Action News" telephone recorded message with the latest organizational news, including the location of the next anti-



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