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steppin' out



editorial

New trouble

As recent violence derails the anti-abortion movement, its leaders are looking toward another target

by Ariel Waterwoman

Have you been following the news concerning the recent murders at the Pensacola, Fla., abortion clinic? As a woman and former health worker for an abortion provider, this violence touches me personally. Almost every weekend the clinic where I worked was surrounded by anti-abortion protesters who were screaming in the faces of women attempting to enter the building. We had to check the inner offices twice a day for bombs. After one came in the mail, we had to train office workers to identify letter bombs. Our staff meetings were often consumed with strategies on how to best protect ourselves from attack. Valuable time and energy were lost from the real work of providing abortions and supporting women through a potentially painful experience.

These murders may prove to be the last gasp for the anti-abortion movement. *The Oregonian* reported Aug. 10 that the leadership in the anti-abortion movement is moving on to bigger and better causes. Randall Terry, the co-founder of Operation Rescue, has named the next group to target, and it is us.

Terry is described in the article as being a "charismatic speaker with a well-documented taste for the limelight." He is moving on to attacking queer rights in an attempt to keep the donations and media coverage happening.

What this will mean to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender communities is a whole lot of trouble. Just thinking about Terry's ability to rally protesters makes my

blood turn cold. These are people who bring violence and divisiveness into every community they touch. Does this sound familiar? The "turf" wars between the newcomer hate groups and the established hate groups should be interesting.

It is appalling to think that the abortion protesters are now going to pool their resources and join with other hate groups to try to destroy our queer communities. Having been at it longer, they have much better communications and networking abilities than small potatoes like Lon Mabon.

Can organizations whose primary focus was targeting abortion clinics effectively make the switch to a new target group? When I think about Operation Rescue's typical tactics of barricading businesses, intimidation and threats of violence, I wonder how its strategies will change. Will the newly redesigned hate groups stick with direct confrontation and violence? Will they bring about more teen suicides by targeting children? Will they join the neo-Nazis who plan to blow up gay and lesbian bars? Where is the attack going to come from, and what will it consist of? More legislative attacks targeting our civil rights will be shot down in the courts.

The speculation is endless. Whatever these new forces decide to do, we need to face it head-on with all the ingenuity and resources available to us. The irony of "pro-life" groups targeting the well-being of human—queer—life should not be lost in this discussion.

I guess the burning question is: Would the "pro-lifers" support aborting lesbian or gay fetuses?

contents

VOL 11 NO. 20 AUGUST 19, 1994

FEATURES

Jesse Helms runs amok

The N.C. senator is adding discriminatory riders to a slew of new bills
(p. 9)

DEPARTMENTS

World news

Israeli Parliament lends unprecedented support to pride celebrations; queer life is booming in the Baltic States
(p. 4)

National news

Landmark ENDA hearings begin in the U.S. Senate; Olympics flee Cobb County, Ga.
(pp. 5-12)

Local news

Philanthropic groups invest in pride; attorney David Allen is investigated
(pp. 16-17)

COLUMNS

Out there

Self-defense course teaches women to stand up for themselves
(pp. 14-15)

ARTS

Cinema

The director and star of The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert talk about lip-synching and lycra
(p. 24)

Profile

Paul Monette talks about life with AIDS and his latest book, Last Watch of the Night
(pp. 26-27)

Aural gratification
An eclectic mix of CDs strokes the imagination
(p. 28)