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CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

Bomb explodes near CA abortuary

San Raphael, CA — A pipe bomb exploded outside an abortion clinic, shattering a window on a building next door in mid-November. There were no injuries.

The bomb went off at night in a driveway between the Planned Parenthood clinic and a building that houses an architectural firm.

The clinic has been the target of anti-abortion demonstrations before, but not vandalism, said Sgt. Jim Kelly. There were no threats before the explosion, and officers who arrived at the scene about a minute after the blast found nobody, he said.

"The blast was horrendous," Kelly said. "Everybody heard it for blocks and blocks."

While it was the architecture firm's building that was damaged, Kelly said, "the guy had no enemies. ... There's no reason for that office to be hit." Police suspect the clinic was the intended target.

Last month, fires broke out within hours of each other at another Planned Parenthood clinic and an abortion clinic about 100 miles north of San Rafael. Officials in both towns said they believed the fires were arson, and that they were linked.■

NJ court slams new restrictions on pro-lifers

Trenton, NJ — "These are new terms, and they've gone off the deep end," said John Tomicki, executive director of the anti-abortion League of American Families regarding the New Jersey Supreme Court's new guidelines for pro-life picketing.

The New Jersey Supreme Court imposed new conditions on picketing at private homes in response to a challenge from anti-abortion groups about their protests outside an abortionist's residence.

The decision on so-called privacy zones has to do with a ruling earlier this year by the U.S. Supreme Court that held that the 300-foot zone within which picketing was barred was unconstitutionally broad.

In a unanimous opinion, the state court shrank the zone to 100 feet from 300 feet and limited the pickets to 10 at one time, to one hour every two weeks and required 24-hour notice to the police.

Anti-abortion groups are not satisfied with the revision and say the ruling will be appealed again to the U.S. Supreme Court, which had sent the case back to the state court for reconsideration.

The groups had challenged an injunction that limited their pickets outside the Westfield, N.J., residence of abortionist Elrick Murray, who performs abortions at a Plainfield, New Jersy clinic.■

Arena

Pro-lifer pleads guilty to stink attack

Syracuse, NY — John Arena, an anti-abortion activist, pleaded guilty on November 28 to paying a woman to spill a foul-smelling butyric acid in the bathrooms of two clinics.

One clinic was closed for five days and the other for two as a result of the butyric acid.

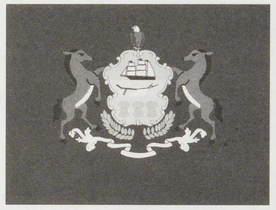
Planned Parenthood, one of the sites of the acid attacks, claims the 1993 attacks made about 40 people sick to their stomachs and caused nearly $50,000 in damage.

Arena, 73, had planned to argue that the butyric acid attacks were justified. He represented himself but had pro-life attorney John Broderick as an advisor.

"The judge made it clear he was not going to allow the defense of necessity. I couldn't bring up the fact that babies were being killed — and there goes the case," he said.

Arena, chairman of the Central New York Right to Life Federation, pleaded guilty to criminal mischief, conspiracy and violating public health laws.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 24.■



Gov. Casey calls for investigation of abortuary "counseling"

Pittsburgh, PA — Pennsylvania clinics are violating the law that requires doctors to personally inform women of the risks of abortion, State Attorney General Ernie Preate said in a letter to the governor.

"Enclosed are more than 250 complaints that I have received from citizens regarding alleged violations of Section 3205 of the Abortion Control Act by physicians who perform abortions," the letter said.

The letter, sent to Gov. Robert Casey, said doctors were informing women of the risks and alternatives to abortion through a tape-recorded telephone message and not in person.

The law as written requires doctors to "orally" inform a women at least 24 hours before the operation about its inherent risks and alternatives to the procedure.

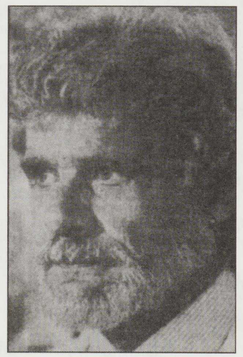
"These complaints allege that the physicians are failing to provide the required informed consent counselling," Preate said.

Casey said, in a written response to the letter, than an investigation into the accusations already had started. He said it was up to the State Board of Medicine to make a final determination and decide on disciplinary action.

Those who offered abortions were outraged by Preate's letter.

"I have every confidence the abortion providers who we refer our clients to are handling the counselling situation in a very professional matter and are seeing to it that the women are fully educated before the procedure takes place," said Betsy Magley, vice president of communications for Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania.

She said women prefer the tape recorded message because it relieves them of having to travel twice to a clinic.■



Ragsdale

Child-porn charges against abortionist dropped

Rockford, IL — In an agreement with prosecutors where abortionist Richard Ragsdale and his wife, Deborah DeMars, acknowledge that "some individuals might find some of the photographs in question inappropriate," charges of child pornography were dropped against the pair.

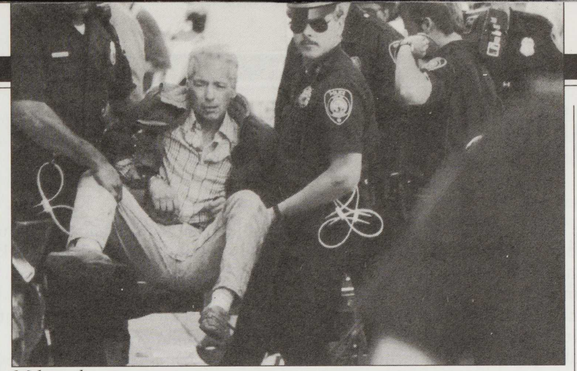
"Sexually graphic" photos of the couple's adopted child were reported to police by a photo developer in September and the 59-year-old abortionist and his 46-year-old wife were charged with child-pornography and contributing to the neglect of a child charges.

DeMars remains charged with contributing to the neglect of a child. But the court continued the case for one year and agreed to dismiss the charge if there are no more arrests or charges against her. She then will be entitled to have the arrest record expunged.

All other charges against Ragsdale and DeMars were dismissed.

The pair had alleged that pro-life activists were the source of the charges which, they said, would not have been brought against them had Ragsdale not been an abortionist.

"Actually," noted one pro-lifer, "it seems that the prosecutors have decided to go easy on him — probably because he's an abortionist."■



Milwaukee rescuer

Milwaukee six convicted on FACE

Milwaukee, WI — Six rescuers convicted of chaining themselves to cars and a concrete-filled drum to block access to a clinic face up to six months in prison and fines up to $10,000.

U.S. District Court Judge J.P. Stadtmueller convicted them of the misdemeanor.

The six were the first charged under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, signed into law in May.

They were among rescuers who closed down Affiliated Medical Health Services for about 90 minutes on June 4 before police and firefighters pried them loose.

"We knew children were scheduled to die that day," one defendant, 20-year-old Michael Suhy, said in his closing statement Tuesday. "If I wanted to protest abortion, I'd write to my senators and congressmen — I was there to save lives."

At least four of the six said they would appeal, arguing the law violates their First Amendment right to peaceful protest.

Sentencing was set for Feb. 13. A first offense is a misdemeanor carrying a maximum penalty of six months in prison and a fine up to $10,000. Subsequent offenses are felonies and provide tougher penalties for violent actions.

The six, and two other protesters from the same demonstration, face a lawsuit by the clinic, which wants $5,000 from each as well as punitive damages set by a jury. ■

Abortionist arrested in Iran

Tehran, IRAN—On November 7, Keyhan newspaper reported that a Jewish doctor has been arrested in Iran for performing illegal abortions.

It said the doctor, named only as Youssef, was detained after an undercover policewoman went to him for an abortion.

"During investigations the doctor said he was Jewish, has no relatives in Iran and has connections with Israel," the paper said.■

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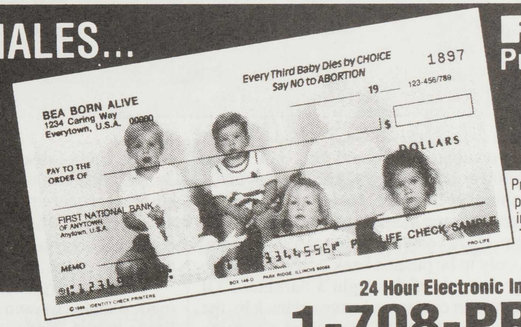

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