Supreme Court ponders Florida "protest zone"

Staver

Washington, D.C. — On April 28, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on the constitutionality of a Florida "buffer" zone around a Melbourne abortuary.

The state court ordered that a 36-foot zone around the clinic property be free from all protesters and that clinic customers not be approached by pro-lifers within 300 feet of the clinic.

Two sidewalk counselors have sued the clinic to challenge the injunction.

"Speech about abortion lies at the core of the First Amendment," said Matthew Staver. "Rather than a surgeon's scalpel, this injunction cuts like a butcher knife."

Talbot D'Alemberte, arguing for the abortuary, said there was a "strong health-care interest" in preserving the injunction zone.

Solicitor General Drew Davis, representing the Clinton Administration described the injunction as "properly confined."

But several justices — including ACLU centerfold, Ruth Bader Ginsburg — voiced concern that giving judges unbridled power could infringe on free speech rights of other kinds of protesters.

Abortion rights activists Patricia Baird Windle (center) and Eleanor Smeal (left) said arguments failed to address the 'climate of violence.'

"Isn't it a concern where free speech is involved?" asked Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Ginsburg, a pro-abort, cited the 1977 march of Nazis in Skokie, Illinois as an example of an upsetting protest that nevertheless should be allowed.

D'Alemberte argued, "Demonstrations in other circumstances that upset listeners cannot be banned just because people are upset. But this is a health care facility. You would not tolerate this around a hospital."

After the hearing, clinic founder, Patricia Baird Windle worried that during the arguments, "the tenor of the climate of violence was not directly addressed.

"Without the right to access, the right to chose abortion means nothing," said Feminist Majority Foundation head, Eleanor Smeal.

Pro-life attorneys expressed confidence that they would win the case. A ruling is due in late June.

Pro-life priest in Puerto Rico silenced by superior

by Arthur J. Brew

San Juan, PUERTO RICO — Don Treshman, the controversial director of the Houston-based anti-abortion group, Rescue America, recently made a blistering denouncement of the silencing of Redemptorist priest, Father Patrick Welch, by his provincial superior in Puerto Rico. Welch, a well known pro-life leader in Puerto Rico, and a regional director of Rescue America, is now studying Canon Law in Rome. The priest had returned to the island in March to announce a future campaign "to put a stop to all abortions in Puerto Rico."

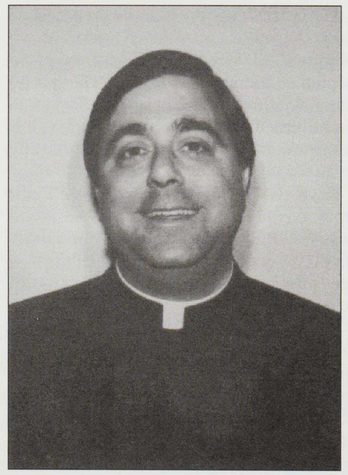
Father Welch was arrested along with Treshman and others last year as a result of blocking access to a San Juan abortion clinic. They and several other leaders, including officials with the Roman Catholic Church, are the subjects of an ongoing federal RICO (racketeering) lawsuit filed in January 1993 in San Juan.

According to Treshman, Welch traveled to Puerto Rico in March "to lay the ground work for our campaign to save lives'. The popular priest was greeted by a crowd of reporters and pro- and anti-abortionists at the airport.

Shortly after his arrival, Welch was informed by his provincial superior Rev. Kevin Moley, to cease all pro-life activities and comments. Welch has complied, and decided to return to Italy immediately.

Treshman said that Welch departed for Rome the next day. He added that Father Welch is refusing to give any comment, saying only that he has been forbidden from any involvement in any pro-life activities, and that he will obey all lawful orders from his superiors.

Treshman added, "We can only hope and pray that fear of lawsuits hasn't guided Fr. Welch's superiors away from doing what we as Christians must all be involved with, namely the fight to stop the worst holocaust the world has ever witnessed." ■



Welch

Pro-abortion group breaks into college newspaper offices to destroy pro-life advertising

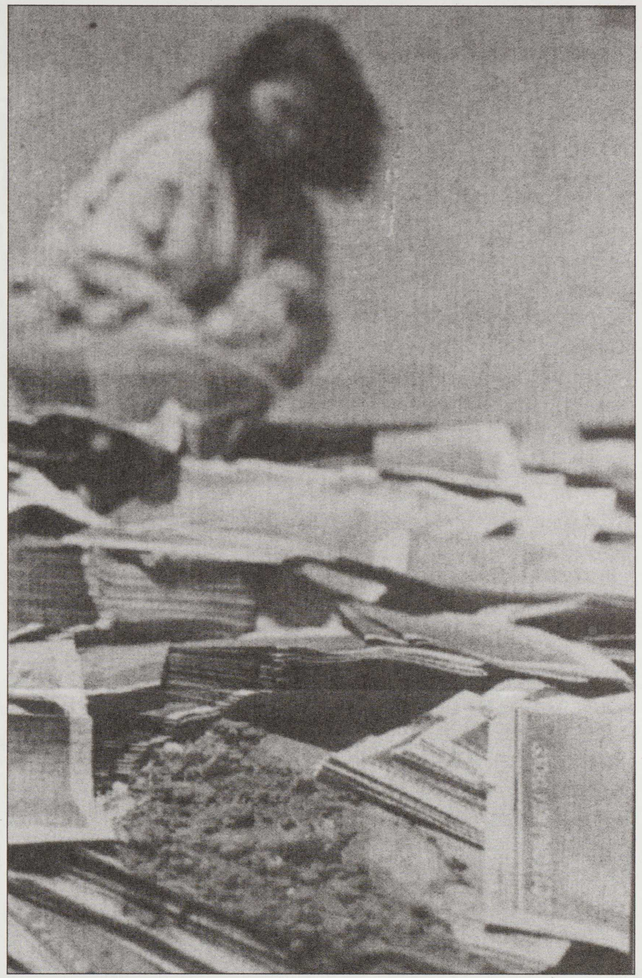
Miami, FL — A group of women who support unrestricted abortion broke into the editorial offices of the student newspaper at the University of Miami on March 28 and destroyed 10,000 copies of a pro-life advertising supplement scheduled to be distributed inside the newspaper the following week. Red dye or paint was poured on the copies.

A group calling itself P.O.W. — for "Pissed Off Women" — faxed a statement to the student newspaper, *The Hurricane,* taking responsibility for the break-in and vandalism. The faxed statement used as its letterhead the name and telephone number of the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Miami — a tactic which Catholic Church officials said the pro-abortion group has used before.

The Miami Police Department is currently investigating the break-in. The University of Miami is a private, non-sectarian college located in the Coral Gables district of Miami.

The destroyed newspaper supplement is a 12-page, full-color mini newspaper, entitled "She's a Child, Not a 'Choice,'" that has been placed in state and private college newspapers around the country. To date, more than 4 million copies of the advertising supplement have been distributed. The supplement, which includes information on fetal development and local pro-life and abortion-alternative groups, was designed and is printed by a pro-life organization, Human Life Alliance, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Local pro-life organizations order copies of the supplement from the Human Life Alliance, customized for each locality, and then raise money to pay for the insertion costs in the student newspapers.

According to Virginia Colonel, president of Broward County Right to Life, which helped pay for the placement of the inserts, Florida pro-lifers have procured another 10,000 copies and have vowed to have them inserted in the newspaper's April 5 issue. Pro-life observers will make sure that the inserts are not destroyed or stolen from the newspapers' distribution points. Colonel added that while pro-abortion groups and the media accuse pro-lifers of breaking the law, it is the abortion groups that actually destroy property and practice censorship. "Groups such as Planned Parenthood and the National Organization for Women are terrified that the truth about what abortion is will get out," said Colonel. "It is the abortion groups that spread the lies that abortion merely removes a 'clump of tissue,' while the photographs in our supplement prove that the unborn child is a baby. That's why you have never once seen footage of an abortion on television."



Lynette Malinger, editor-in-chief of The Miami Hurricane, *looks through destroyed copies of advertising supplements sponsored by pro-life organizations.*

Lynette Malinger, editor-in-chief of *The Hurricane,* agreed that Florida pro-lifers were victims of attempted censorship. "This is censorship," she said in *The Hurricane.* "[T]he first amendment assures that all information is available to everyone." *The Hurricane* agreed to pay for less than half of the cost of the damaged supplements.

According to Marlene Reid of the Human Life Alliance, the newspaper supplement has literally saved lives — by providing pregnant women with information about alternatives to abortion.

The following week the ad was again scheduled to be placed in *The Hurricane.* Pro-lifers guarded the office overnight and the ad was successfully placed.

After the ad ran, the national office of NOW contacted the school demanding that the newspaper's editorial staff be reprimanded for running the ad. ■