RESISTANCE

Rescuers' blitz in D.C. despite pro-death president

by Cathy Ramey

Washington, D.C. — Heeding a call to "join the resistance," over 500 Christian activists from around the nation joined with Operation Rescue National and the Christian Defense Coalition in an effort to clamp down on abortion profiteers in the nation's capital. Along with prayer conducted outside area abortuaries and evening rallies, rescuers targeted D.C. mills by blocking access.

Only one day before the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, members of the Youth For America rescue team ignored a federal injunction and delayed the killing at Southeast Washington's Hillcrest abortuary. Nine rescuers were eventually arrested after repeated attempts to prevent women from entering for abortions.

Rescue efforts were hampered in part by radical Refuse & Resist, and Washington Clinic Defense Coalition members who assaulted rescuers in an effort to keep a corridor open through the back door. Prior to the arrival of police, deathscorts shoved at least one rescuer to the ground and had to be ordered to move away from a juvenile rescuer pinned underneath them. Another rescuer was hit in the face after refusing to back away from the line of pro- aborts, and one abortuary defender criticized the use of police stating, "We can take care of them ourselves," referring to the use of violence to deter rescue efforts.

Eight of those arrested were charged with "incommoding," and one adult was charged with unlawful entry. Six of the arrestees were juveniles from four different states, and two of the adults were from nearby Virginia.

On Saturday, January 23, one day after President Clinton directed that limitations be lifted that had prevented federal funding of abortion through various programs, collegians joined Operation Rescue in a city-wide blitz against killing facilities. As early as 5:30 in the morning alarmed deathscort leader Sarah Starrett stated, "They've hit all of the clinics." In all, four mills were shut down.

One D.C. abortuary was unable to open after an unknown person placed glue into the door locks. Neither of the organizations sponsoring the rescues were aware of who utilized the glue to assist with the efforts to keep facilities closed.

Meanwhile, three downtown mills were blocked in typical Operation Rescue fashion with hundreds of Christians standing at doors to make entry impossible (see related article). Hundreds of abortophiles helped to keep mills inaccessible by linking arms, chanting, and providing a loud presence for the public. Indiana rescuer Lynne Koch stated, "As a woman, I would never consider going through those people for any kind of appointment. They're an asset to us because of that."

At the Hillcrest abortuary, targeted earlier in the week, rescuers arrived at 4:30 a.m. with cars, chunks of concrete, welded railroad ties, and locks. Approximately 45 persons manned the three-door facility for four hours before police were able to clear an entrance.

Nearly half a dozen rescuers were eventually removed from what turned out to be a gutted-out Subaru station wagon. All tires on the car had been flattened and the vehicle was propped on a concrete block under the front bumper and a wooden beam in back. Holes had been cut into the floorboard of the car allowing three rescuers to sit with legs extended underneath the vehicle.

After a painstaking process to remove one rescuer, and part-way through the removal of the second one, police were frustrated at discovering a third pair of legs still under the car. Rescuers were lying under several wool blankets, making it difficult for police to immediately assess numbers. Another three rescuers had been sitting inside, and several more were tucked in between the car and the door of the building requiring that police even drag bodies over the top of the vehicle in order to make arrests.

A second car, with similar numbers guarding it, had been driven into the small space behind the Hillcrest mill's back door. Again, tires were flat and rescuers were both inside and outside of the vehicle making arrests difficult and towing impossible.

Half-way through the rescue efforts police were further delayed when one rescuer apparently complained of severe chest pains. Emergency medical personnel were called to the scene, and after ascertaining that the rescuer was not in imminent danger arrests proceeded as police officers joined abortuary officials in the goal of resuming scheduled killings.

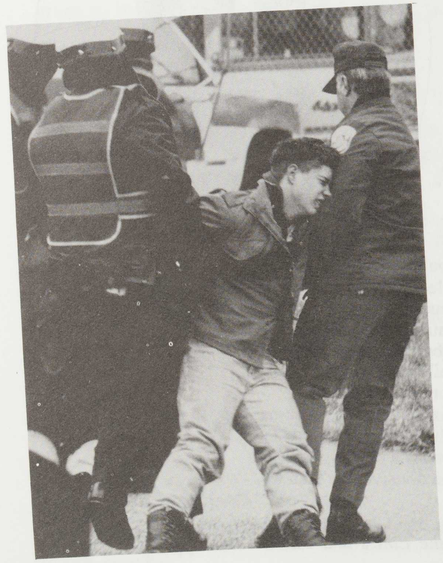
Abortuary employees and Georgetown University law student and deathscort, Sarah Starrett, repeatedly challenged police to speed up opening the mill. At 7 a.m. the first patients began to arrive, and mill personnel became increasingly concerned. Starrett was eventually ordered off of the property after harassing police with continual reminders that abortions were being delayed. One officer responded to complaints by stating, "This is our operation. We can't tell you how long it'll take to arrest them. We just don't know."

At approximately 8:30 a.m. police, still unable to move the cars away from the side and rear doors to the abortuary, focused their efforts to open the mill on those rescuers blocking the front door. Nearly ten rescuers in all were responsible for keeping the door closed.

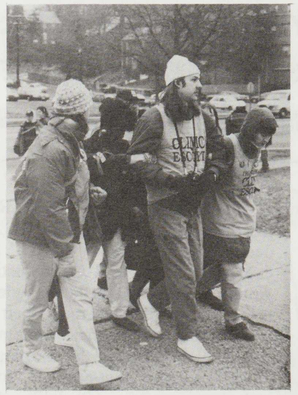
Four rescuers were connected with wire and duct tape to railroad ties with a cylinder welded to each side. Rescuers had jammed their arms inside of the cylinders and could not be pulled apart by police without first being moved, railroad tie and two rescuers at a time, by teams of abortuary police who lifted the bulky cargo up and over the mill's front railing. Officers then pulled rescuers by the legs to force them to remove themselves from the heavy metal contraption.

Throughout much of the final hour of the rescue, sidewalk counselors pleaded with what appeared to be the only client willing to wait out the rescue. Unable to speak directly to the woman, counselors called from behind a cyclone fence, "Kim, you may not feel like it, but you're already a mommy. Your baby is right under your heart, Kim. Please don't let them kill your baby."

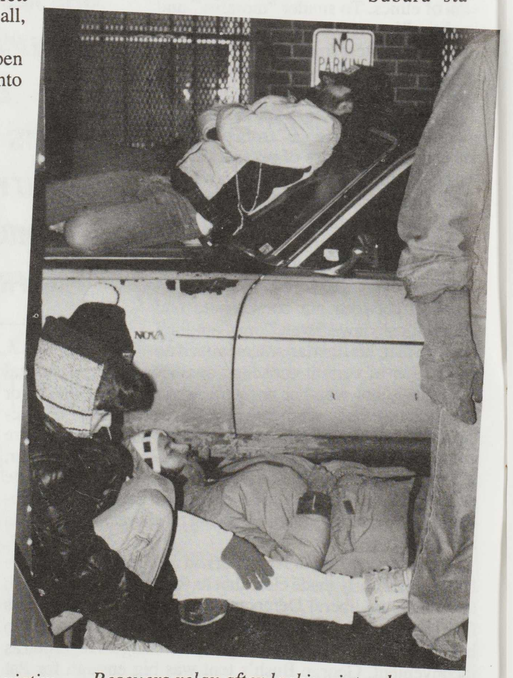
Police notified abortuary staff that cars would be pulled away from mill doors, but that the facility would be responsible for deciding how to dispose of the junked cars. All rescuers, including at least two juveniles, were taken into custody from the rescue site. Each rescuer was charged with "incommoding," a misdemeanor offense, taken before a judge and released with a $50.00 ticket.■



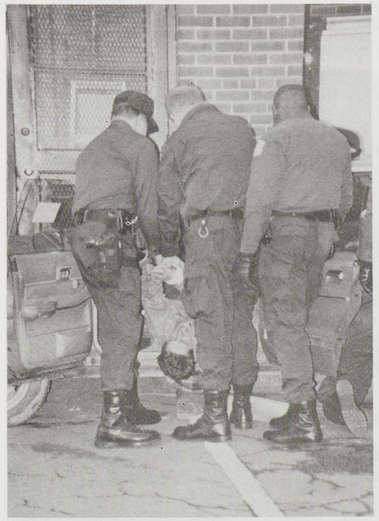
One of nine arrested one day after America's pro-death president takes office.



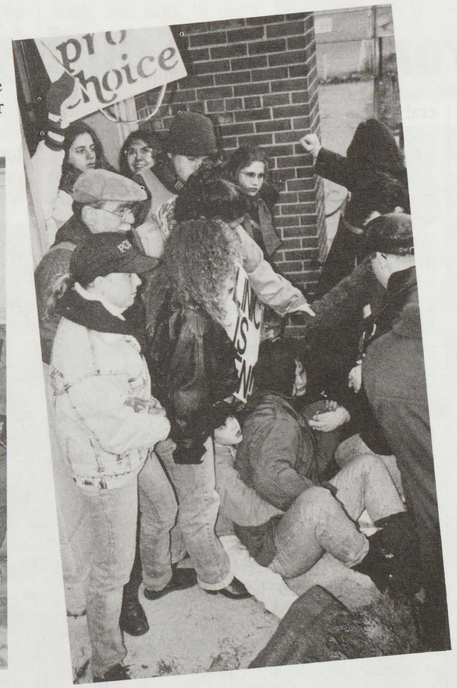
Deathscorts bring in mother and first victim after Youth rescuers are removed.



Rescuers relax after locking into place at 4:30 a.m.



Police remove a rescuer found sitting in a hole in the car's floorboard. Another pair of legs can still be seen under the vehicle.



Youth rescuers join deathscorts to be certain that "This Clinic Is Closed."

Just released from a railroad tie, this rescuer was one of the last to keep the mill closed.