

# How It Feels to Be on Anti-Abortion Hit List

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To the Editor:

While I feel ambivalent about your decision not to report the American Coalition of Life Activists' hit list of a dozen doctors it wants eliminated, I am grateful for your "The Escalating War on Legal Abortion," your Jan. 28 editorial criticizing this announcement. Not a bullet has been fired at any of us since then, as far as I know. But speaking as one of those physicians, I can testify that such an announcement goes a long way toward destroying one's life. That, of course, is the intended effect.

I am grateful also for the protection of Federal marshals, who were assigned to me and my colleagues after this announcement. But why should it be necessary for doctors who help women to be protected by armed guards?

What is more at stake than the lives of a few doctors is the issue of whether Americans now accept the level of violence and terrorism embraced by the anti-abortion movement as a means of political expression. When the anti-abortion movement gets through with us, who's next? People who write books?

We must surely ask whether it is beyond the limits of free speech that a group operating under the laws of the United States can stand up at a press conference, identify targets among people who belong to a category already marked for assassination by ideological colleagues of the announcing group, and then sit back and wait for the inevitable results.

In a society awash in the glorification of violence, notorious for unlimited access to lethal military weapons and diffused with people suffering from untreated severe mental illness, the probabilities are excellent that one or more of us will be assassinated. It is a new form of electronic fascism. Assassination has been a tool of tyrants for thousands of years. The technology and the degree of "plausible deniability" have improved over time.

Neither the American Coalition of Life Activists nor those it hopes to inspire care about me as a person, or about the women whose lives I save as a physician. What they care about is power. So does the Republican Party, which has been the chief beneficiary of 20 years of anti-abortion rhetoric leading to this terrorism.

How many more doctors, receptionists and other abortion clinic workers have to be killed before the American people and their Government step in and stop this insanity? When will Americans see that the anti-abortion ideology is a collective psychosis masquerading as religion, which has become a political force threatening democratic society?

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