

Rachelle “Shelley” Shannon, an anti-abortion extremist convicted of clinic blockades, arsons, butyric acid attacks, aggravated assault with a gun, and the attempted murder of Dr. George Tiller has been released after nearly 30 years in prison.

Below is a timeline of some of Shannon’s criminal activities and additional background information on Shannon.

1988	Shannon attended her first Right to Life meeting and began being arrested for blockading abortion clinics.
June 29, 1988	Shannon was sentenced to 24 hours community service for an arrest in Portland, OR.
October 23, 1988	Shannon was sentenced to 30 days in jail for blockading a clinic in Atlanta.
April 7, 1989	Shannon was sentenced to community service and fined \$50 after an arrest in Seattle, WA.
March 1989	Shannon was arrested for trespassing.
May 1989	Shannon was arrested for trespassing.
March 29, 1991	Shannon was arrested for trespassing. A warrant was issued and her bail was set at \$10,000, but Shannon never returned.
July 1991	Shannon participated in Operation Rescue’s “Summer of Mercy,” 2657 people were arrested for blockading the doors to Dr. George Tiller’s abortion clinic.
January 1992	Shannon tried breaking into the offices of Dr. William Brown in Ashland, OR.
April 11, 1992	Shannon committed arson at Catalina Medical Clinic and the offices of Dr. Willard L. Brown in Ashland, OR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a pseudonym, Shannon wrote a detailed description of the arson with additional tips for the Army of God, a group of anti-abortion extremists: “Join the Army, or How to Destroy a Killing Center if You're Just an Old Grandma Who Can't Even Get the Fire Started In Her Fireplace.” <i>“I went out that night and totally destroyed the Ashland mill. The abortionist couldn’t get his insurance renewed and claimed that a white male called him saying if he re-opened, he would kill him. He decided to retire.</i>
June 6, 1992	Shannon allegedly committed arson at Feminist Women’s Health Center in Redding, CA resulting in at least \$70,000 in property damage.
August 1, 1992	Shannon committed arson at Lovejoy Surgicenter in Portland, OR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Was reading my Bible, and God clearly said, ‘I’m going to require a little more of you, Shelley,’ ” she wrote. “And the Scripture I read just then was ‘The way of the righteous is made plain’ in Proverbs 15:19, and an idea came to me of tossing jugs of gas on the roof of Lovejoy and lighting it with a</i>



	<i>firework (have lots of ground bloom flowers which throw out sparks but aren't too noisy). Practiced and found I can't throw whole gallons high enough."</i>
August 18, 1992	Shannon committed arson at the Feminist Women's Health Center that also damaged the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners next door.
September 16, 1992 approximately 2:00 AM PDT	Shannon allegedly committed arson at Feminist Women's Health Center in Eugene, OR.
September 16, 1992 approximately 1:00 PM PDT	Shannon posed as a patient and entered the West End Women's Health Group in Reno, NV in order to commit a butyric acid attack .
September 17, 1992	Shannon aided in a butyric acid attack on Feminist Womens' Health Center in Chico, CA.
November 28, 1992	Shannon, using napalm, firebombed the Pregnancy Consultation Center in Sacramento, CA, causing more than \$175,000 in damages and injuring a firefighter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Didn't even care if I made it back, or care so much about getting caught or killed, just wanted to close the place good. It was supposed to be a birthday present to Jesus, early for expediency, but I found it was He who gave me a gift. From Him and to Him and through Him. What could I do for Him or give Him? Trip was so good."</i>
January 1993	A Letter to the Editor by Shannon was published in <i>Life Advocate</i> : <i>I'm enjoying all the radical news and comments, and I agree with nearly all of it. However, is it fair to say, "Bombing or burning a death camp is a very serious tactic. To fall in line with our principles, it must be 100% safe (i.e. absolutely no chance whatsoever that anyone could get hurt)"? That's quite a yoke to put on someone! Many have been hurt blocking doors, bones have been broken, police officers have complained about their backs, and at least one preborn child was killed when the mother rescued. I'm sure the bombers are acting in the will of God, and doubt they would or should stop if a guilty bystander or innocent person is hurt. If they don't act, a lot of people will be killed. Let's pray no one gets hurt, but this is a war and we have to be realistic.</i>
May 27, 1993	Shannon allegedly committed arson at the Women's Health Care Center in Boise, ID.
July 30, 1993 and August 1, 1993	Shannon visited (and wrote more than 300 letters to) John Brockhoeft, a former U.S. Postal worker imprisoned for firebombing clinics and author of The Brockhoeft Report, which Shannon edited.
August 19, 1993	Shannon shot Dr. George Tiller in both arms as he left his clinic and pointed her gun at a clinic staff member. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a note to her daughter: <i>"I'm not denying I shot Tiller. But I deny that it was wrong. It was the most holy, most righteous thing I've ever done. I have no regrets."</i>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “When [Detective Mitch] Mervosh arrested her at the airport [in Oklahoma], she acknowledged that she had disposed of her gun and said, <i>“I shot Tiller. If ever there was a justifiable homicide, this is it.”</i>
August 20, 1993	Dr. Tiller returned to work at the clinic despite his injuries.
March 25, 1994	<p>Shannon was convicted of attempted first-degree murder for shooting Dr. Tiller, aggravated assault for pointing her gun at a staffer, and found in contempt for refusing to tell the court how she acquired the weapon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Let’s not get into whether I wanted to kill him, Jay [Shannon’s attorney]. It’s not relevant whether I wanted to kill him or not – it would have been right either way.”</i>• <i>“So while you were here in jail you wanted to get out and work on Dr. Tiller a little bit more?” [District Attorney Nola] Foulson asked [during the trial]. “Well, actually, I might have been thinking along those lines, but I had more in mind, of something else,” Shannon replied. “What else were you thinking?” “Um, uh, doing something else.” “What was the something else you were thinking of?” “Of closing the facility.” “What were you thinking about doing to that?” “Bombing it.”</i>
April 27, 1994	<p>Shannon was sentenced to nearly 11 years in prison for her attack on Dr. Tiller, the aggravated assault, and the contempt charge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “At her sentencing hearing, Mrs. Shannon, 38, of Grants Pass, Ore., told Judge Gregory Waller of Sedgwick County District Court that she had done no wrong. ‘You didn’t do wrong? You did wrong,’ Judge Waller said. ‘They said that about Jesus,’ Mrs. Shannon replied.”• “Mrs. Shannon agreed with the prosecutor’s assessment that she could not be rehabilitated, ‘because I hope that I’ll always be obedient to God no matter what it costs.’”
October 24, 1994	“Federal grand juries in Oregon and Eastern California today returned indictments totaling 30 counts against a former Oregon woman in connection with 10 arson and acid attacks at nine abortion clinics in Oregon, California, Nevada and Idaho during 1992 and 1993.”
September 9, 1995	<p>Shannon was sentenced to 20 years in prison for her firebomb attacks of abortion clinics in California, Nevada, and Oregon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Prosecutors contended that Mrs. Shannon, a member of a loosely organized anti-abortion group called the Army of God, continued to pose a threat even from prison. ‘The defendant has engaged in a long pattern of terrorist activity,’ said Stephen Peifer, an Assistant United

	<p>States Attorney. <i>‘Her purpose is not to destroy property but to instill fear in people.’</i>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge James Redden of Federal District Court (Shannon’s sentencing judge) said, <i>“Though I am loath to call anyone a terrorist, you are a terrorist.”</i> • Jude Hanzo, former Executive Director of Feminist Women’s Health Center in Eugene: <i>Shannon has damaged and endangered many people’s lives across the country and learned from convicted arsonists and murderers how to commit the same crimes. Her crimes have escalated over the years with absolute disregard of the law or the court orders. Her current activities continue while she remains under custody as she urges others to commit violent acts against abortion providers.</i>
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Shannon’s influence:

Angela “Angi” Shannon, Shelley’s daughter, participated in clinic blockades and clinic infiltrations and invasions with her mother and was [sentenced](#) to 46 months after being found guilty of one felony count of interfering with commerce by threatened physical violence for the death threat sent to Dr. Woodward.

- The [death threat](#) Shannon and her daughter, Angi, wrote to Dr. George Woodward: *“If I hear you are still killing when I get to town I will haunt you and your wife day and night and give you no peace. If you continue, I will hunt you down like any other wild beast and kill you. You have until the 16th.”*
 - “The letter [included](#) specific information that enhanced the credibility of the threat, such as a description of the doctor’s car, a description of the building in which he worked, his home address, the fact that he sang in his church choir, and the fact that he had a *‘habit of stopping at McDonalds on Wisconsin Ave.’* before going to work.”
- “[Angi](#) says she believes firebombing clinics after people are gone is a reasonable way to stop what she sees as a national slaughter of the unborn. That raises another question. Is violence against a doctor who does abortions all right? ‘I can justify the life-taking of one guy,’ she answers, ‘if it saves a thousand.’”

Paul Hill [visited Shannon in prison](#) in Kansas before shooting and killing an abortion provider and his volunteer security escort and injuring the volunteer escort’s wife in 1994.

- Shannon [addressed](#) Hill as “Dear Brave Soldier & Child of the King” in a March 1995 letter to him and told him to be careful in discussing their relationship. Prosecutors said the letter suggested that she had a role in Hill’s crime.

“Whatever you do,” Shannon’s letter said in part, “don’t talk about how I influenced you to do what you did, especially any conversations beforehand, most especially the particulars (gun, etc.), unless of course you use our code words.”

- "Some Christians are publicly saying Paul Hill sinned in what he did, that he is a murderer, and even that he 'acted as satan's agent.' I'm totally [convinced](#) that God called Paul to do what he did, and he obeyed... Protecting babies, stopping the murders of the innocent, is right and just, even if it takes the use of force to do so. I certainly won't condemn Paul Hill. We correspond, and his letters are very encouraging and often quite humorous."

After receiving supportive mail from anti-abortion people herself while in jail in 1988 for a "rescue," Shannon began [writing](#) letters to a growing list of anti-abortion extremists in jail—including Michael Griffin, the first person to murder an abortion provider.

- [April 10](#) letter to Griffin: "I know you did the right thing. It was not murder. It was more like anti-murder. I believe in you and what you did, and really want to help if possible. I wish I could trade places with you,"
- "He didn't [shoot](#) Mother Teresa, he shot a mass murderer such as Saddam Hussien (sic) or Hitler. I don't even think it is accurately termed 'murder'. God is the only one who knows whether Gunn would ever have repented or if he would have killed another 5,000 babies and probably 3 or 4 more women who probably weren't Christians either."
- "I'm not convinced that God didn't require it of Michael to do this. It is possible. I'm [praying](#) God will push more of us 'off the deep end'..."

Scott Roeder, the person who shot and murdered Dr. Tiller at his church, [visited](#) Shelley Shannon in prison on a regular basis for two-three months before assassinating Dr. Tiller.

Shannon speaks:

On justifying her violence:

"As a Christian, I can't turn my back on the ones who need our help the most: little babies who are being cruelly murdered." She [adds](#): "If you want to love your neighbor as yourself, do what you would want someone to do if you were the one they were going to kill."

- "[All](#) you need to do is show people the truth about abortion, and they should be able to tell that real people are really being murdered by real mass murderers. Who in their right mind wouldn't try to stop them?"
- "I [did](#) a lot of blockades with Advocates For Life, Lambs of Christ, Operation Rescue, and other groups. I also did a lot of picketing and other pro-life activities. Sometimes I felt like a failure when I stood with a sign and didn't do everything I could to try to save babies lives. I let them kill the babies! I allowed it. When you stand and watch 20 or more babies being taken to their death, how is that more pro-life than making it so those babies cannot be killed?"
- "Claiming it's only pro-life to want all people alive, including the abortionist, is deception. If the abortionist remains alive, many babies die. Keeping Hitler alive as long as his men did was not pro-life, and neither is the death of thousands of innocent babies rather than one guilty murderer. That "choice" is

abortion. Those who killed abortionists chose life for all the innocent babies he would have killed, and did our country a great service.”

- “I [heard](#) about use of force in church sermons, in my personal devotional time alone with God, and from the most godly Christians I knew.”
- “Can we really stop murderers like Hitler, Saddam Hussien, or abortionists, by voting right? By educating people? I [pictured](#) Christians blocking access to an extermination facility in Hitler's Germany. Maybe they would save some lives, but they would soon be removed and dealt with, and the killing would continue. Now if someone were to bomb those gas chambers...”
- “I also wondered about the proper way to love the least of these, Christ's little brothers and sisters, as myself; how to really be a neighbor. Surely I would be willing to do more than block a door or stand around with a sign if they were about to kill me. They kept increasing the penalty for blocking the doors anyway. At five years of prison time, eight more times blocking doors would have been a [life sentence](#).”
- “In [church](#) the pastor once said, "What would you do if you knew you only had 3 days left to live?" I instantly thought of burning down killing centers, as many as possible, as fast as I could! We nice, civilized American Christians don't want to make waves or live in the danger zone, but risking your life is a good Christian thing. We aren't the kind to shrink back, compromise, or be cowardly or love our own lives above other people's. Anyway, I hope not. ‘Help us, God.’”
- “Every [argument](#) raised against the use of force falls before Scripture . . . It was right, not wrong, to use force to save the lives of pre-born babies. In fact, burning down an abortion mill actually saved a lot more lives than did blocking doors.”

On having no remorse:

- “But I [don't](#) regret anything I've done in defense of other people's very lives. Even if I spend the rest of my life in prison, it is OK. I made good use of the time before I got locked up. I did a good life's worth of work. I have no regrets.”
- “It would be [hypocritical](#) to pretend like I did something wrong when I didn't”

On her criminal activity:

- “Besides the things I'm charged with, I [confessed](#) to writing a death threat letter to Mr. George Woodward in Milwaukee, WI, plus two milder letters, a couple phone calls, taking a mill's trash, an attempted ‘burglary’ at the Ashland, OR, mill, and a small ‘vandalism’, most of which were mentioned in my diaries.”
- “I had kept detailed accounts of most of my pro-life activities. I also saved letters from other people. If anyone reads this who ever sent me anything, please assume the Feds have it. They are working on a lot of different puzzles. If they put together enough pieces, they will be able to see a [picture](#). I gave them too many pieces to too many puzzles, in a selfish effort to save my own life.”

- “I tried to "cooperate" [with law enforcement] by not telling them how much I know. It didn't work. I got myself in trouble for [lying](#).”

On her time in prison:

- “I've been [overwhelmed](#) by the amount of 'love mail.' I would never have expected so much support.”

On the events of 1994:

- "[Well](#), for the ARMY OF GOD 1994 was a pretty great year. Paul Hill performed a termination procedure on an abortionist and his accomplice, and may be put to death for his obedience to God, a most honorable way for a Christian to die. In Canada an abortionist was shot, and the culprits(s) are still free, as far as I know. There were quite a few fires and bombings at American death camps and no one was arrested in connection with them, that I know of."
- "The year ended with a bang thanks to John Salvi III. I have to admire his determination. Even after they knew who he was, he took his gun to another mill rather than hiding out and quitting. God, please help and bless him."

Violence against abortion providers:

The National Abortion Federation (NAF) has been compiling [statistics](#) on violence against abortion providers for 40 years. In that time, there have been 11 murders, 26 attempted murders, 42 bombings, 187 arsons, and thousands of incidents of criminal activities directed at abortion providers. Currently, NAF's data show a continued environment of hostility directed at abortion providers and an increase in obstructions, trespassing, blockades, and death threats/threats of harm.