

Copyright 2001 National Public Radio (R)
All Rights Reserved
National Public Radio (NPR)
SHOW: MORNING EDITION (10:00 AM ET)
March 30, 2001, Friday
LENGTH: 1116 words

HEADLINE: HBO'S "SOLDIERS IN THE **ARMY OF GOD**"

ANCHORS: RENEE MONTAGNE

BODY:

RENEE MONTAGNE, host:

One of the FBI's most wanted fugitives was arrested yesterday in France. James Kopp was wanted in the murder of a Buffalo, New York, doctor who performed abortions. In the fall of 1998, Dr. Barnett Slepian was home with his family, in the kitchen warming soup, when a sniper's bullet tore through the window and killed him. In addition to that killing, James Kopp is wanted by Canadian authorities for the shooting of a doctor there.

James Kopp has a long arrest record for abortion protests. He is a hero of the violent fringe of the anti-abortion rights movement. At least seven abortion providers have been killed in recent years.

This weekend HBO will begin airing a new documentary called "Soldiers in the **Army of God.**" Followers and admirers of the **Army of God** believe abortion providers are murderers. I spoke with the film's producers: Marc **Levin**, Daphne Pinkerson and Daniel Voll. Voll says the film mainly focuses on three men who are part of the violent fringe.

Mr. DANIEL VOLL ("Soldiers in the Army of God"): These are the guys on the ground who are--whatever the words that politicians and other leaders of these cultural wars can put out there, these are the men who hear them and feel emboldened by them, who feel encouraged by each other, and they are every day praying for God's will in their life.

(Soundbite from documentary)

Unidentified Man #1: There are people in this world right now who are looking for directions on what do we do. Well, we end abortion on demand by the most direct means available to us. So stop the abortion

with a bullet, if that's what it takes. Stop it with a bomb, if that's what it takes. You stop abortion on demand. Don't let it go any farther.

MONTAGNE: Sketch out for me the three characters, you know, who they are and what their positions are.

Ms. DAPHNE PINKERSON ("Soldiers in the Army of God"): Jonathan O'Toole, who was 19 years old at the time, was outraged about abortion and wanted to figure out what his response was going to be. So he got on the Internet, and he put in two words, 'murder' and 'abortion,' and came up with Neil Horsley's name. Neil Horsley has a Web site called The Nuremburg Files, which lists the names of doctors who perform abortions.

So he got in touch with Neil Horsley and became his assistant and met a friend of theirs, Bob Lokey, who has a Web site called Save The Babies.

(Soundbite from documentary)

Unidentified Man #2: Anybody who raises a weapon up against these people who are slaughtering these babies, before God and the entire world, right now I say you are doing God's own work. And may the power of God be with you as you aim that rifle. You're squeezing that trigger for Almighty God.

MONTAGNE: How did you get access to them? How did you get them to let you film them?

Mr. MARC LEVIN ("Soldiers in the Army of God"): It takes a lot of legwork, really, in developing relationships. I don't think we ever hid who we are and what our perspective is, meaning that we disagree totally with their point of view that it's justifiable homicide to kill doctors that perform abortions. But it is amazing to me, even looking at it now, how open they became and especially given that Neil Horsley and Bob Lokey kind of have their perspectives down. But you've got a young guy here, Jonathan, who is really searching for his role in the anti-abortion movement. Is he going to be a political activist, or is he going to be a warrior? Is he going to be the next shooter?

(Soundbite from documentary)

Mr. JONATHAN O'TOOLE: It just hit me one day. I was sitting down on

my bed, and it just hit me. A year ago it hit me that little babies, really, were being killed, I mean, and I never really had thought about it before; that there really were little babies, that they really were dying, that they were--there was no one to protect them. There's a certain point where your emotions can only take so much; you can only punch your pillow so many times. And so it's like living in Nazi Germany. It's like you've got concentration camps around you. A lot of them didn't know what they were, but imagine that you did. Imagine that you had found out what was going on. What would be the right response?

MONTAGNE: If you believe that the unborn are babies, their position is consistent; that is to say the unborn are human beings, they are being killed en masse. That's the logic.

Mr. LEVIN: There is something attractive about people who see life heroically at a time when there are very few people that do, and there's a part of their critique, not only about the value of life, but the materialism of our culture, the devaluation of humanity and the human spirit. There's a certain part of what they believe that does ring true, and it is something to see people who are willing to sacrifice and commit themselves to trying to do something about it.

(Soundbite from documentary)

Unidentified Man #3: ...standing there. I quit smoking, quit drinking, quit meat. I've circumcised myself. I mean...

Unidentified Man #4: You're the only man I know that ever circumcised himself. You know that.

Mr. LEVIN: There's a scene in the movie where Bob Lokey and Neil Horsley are talking in the kitchen, talking about women. I found that scene rather illuminating because I think that the movement may be fighting for more than just overturning legal abortion in the United States. They see that as the catalyst of a whole array of issues that really have turned the classic male-female relationships of 10,000 years of human history on its head. I mean, if you think that, 'Hey, the man ruled, and women did what they were told and had babies,' and all of a sudden that's all been turned upside down within, you know, 30 years, you can see how fundamental this is.

(Soundbite from documentary)

Unidentified Man #5: Go on, buddy, because there's no doubt about that.

Unidentified Man #6: I mean, that's why, you know, the nation is so confused. Because, on the one hand, we all want to protect women, but on the other hand, when a woman asks for a right to do something that destroys the will of God, then it's at that point that the woman can no longer be served, but has to, in fact, be resisted. And that's, you know, what happens. Men are afraid to stand up.

(Soundbite of music)

MONTAGNE: Have your three protagonists, Bob Lokey, Neil Horsley and the younger Jonathan O'Toole, seen the film?

Ms. PINKERSON: They have not seen the film yet. Well, I guess Jonathan did see some of it. And we've had conversations with them. They know what's going to be in it.

Mr. VOLL: Well, I think the bottom line is that the HBO America Undercover series doesn't tend to have narrators, so it means that there's not a narrative voice interpreting the words of these three men. Yes, there is editing. Yes, you know, we did follow these men for more than a year. But the fact is that these are their words. When they speak to the conflict in their heart, especially Jonathan, who was 19 when we first began filming him, there is both rage within him and compassion, and it's something that just feels utterly American; that he wants to be a part of a cause that's greater than himself. I think they will see themselves reflected in their totality in the film.

MONTAGNE: Daniel Voll, Marc Levin and Daphne Pinkerson, thanks very much for joining us.

Mr. LEVIN: Thank you.

Mr. VOLL: Thank you.

Ms. PINKERSON: Thank you.

MONTAGNE: Pinkerson, Voll and Levin are producers of "Soldiers in the Army of God." The documentary airs this Sunday on HBO.

The time is 29 minutes past the hour.

LOAD-DATE: May 9, 2001