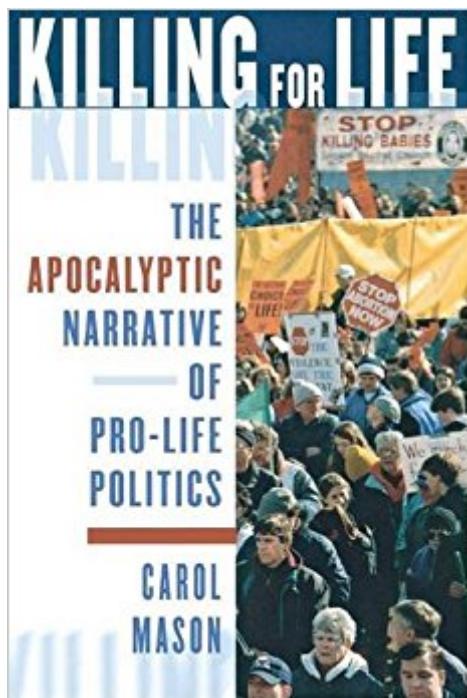


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# Killing For Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative Of Pro-Life Politics



## Synopsis

How can those who seek to protect the "right to life" defend assassination in the name of saving lives? Carol Mason investigates this seeming paradox by examining pro-life literature—both archival material and writings from the front lines of the conflict. Her analysis reveals the apocalyptic thread that is the ideological link between established anti-abortion organizations and the more shadowy pro-life terrorists who subject clinic workers to anthrax scares, bombs, and bullets. The portrayal of abortion as "America's Armageddon" began in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Mason says, Christian politics and the post-Vietnam paramilitary culture popularized the idea that legal abortion is a harbinger of apocalypse. By the 1990s, Mason asserts, even the movement's mainstream had taken up the call, narrating abortion as an apocalyptic battle between so-called Christian and anti-Christian forces. "Pro-life violence of the 1990s signaled a move away from protest and toward retribution," she writes. "Pro-life retribution is seen as a way to restore the order of God. In this light, the phenomenon of killing for 'life' is revealed not as an oxymoron, but as a logical consistency and a political manifestation of religious retribution." Mason's scrutiny of primary sources (direct mail, internal memoranda, personal letters, underground manuals, and pro-life films, magazines, and novels) draws attention to elements of pro-life millennialism. *Killing for Life* is a powerful indictment of pro-life ideology as a coherent, mass-produced narrative that does not merely condone violence, but anticipates it as part of "God's plan."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Carol Mason has given us something new and important—she can account which makes killing for life comprehensible, a logical outgrowth of millennialist ideology. She manages to do this in a way that treats millennialist thought and pro-life violence seriously and respectfully without romanticizing or justifying the perpetrators, and without falling into a simplistic clash of absolutes analysis."—Marlene Gerber Fried, Hampshire College "Not only does Carol Mason provide an intricate history of the pro-life movement, but, in a book that should be required reading for anyone concerned with national politics, she also shows how central that movement's intense grassroots organizing and worldview was to the contemporary consolidation of right-wing conservatism at a national level, where many of its members are now in powerful positions, both in and out of government. The book is a model of accessibility, in that it is a fascinating read, but the author also develops a technique of reflexivity, in which she traces theoretical concepts such as textuality, narrative, cultural logics, and the political unconscious, and then, by way of interviews and archival material, anchors them in meticulously rigorous and concrete historical descriptions and contexts."—Linda Kintz, University of Oregon "Killing for Life is a groundbreaking analysis of the narrative and rhetorical strategies used by the 'prolife' movement in the U.S. Far from simply pointing to the absurdity or revulsive nature of various highly publicized prolife strategies (from murder of abortion-providers to throwing blood and alleged fetus parts on bystanders), Mason shows how this branch of the new right has radically reshaped the entire framework of political debate about the body and its use and women's right to control the destiny of their own bodies. Unlike other writers, who view the new right as a fringe conspiracy, Mason shows the continuity between abortion foes and neo-liberal critics of the welfare state. This book is essential reading for those concerned with democratic processes and with the rights of women and minorities."—Cindy Patton, author of *Globalizing AIDS*

"Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro Life Politics" by Carol Mason. The main reason for buying this book was to try and understand the mindset and rational of the average pro lifer. The book was mentioned in another book I read about Eric Rudolph "Lone Wolf" by Maryanne Voller. It always seemed to me there was more going on in the pro life movement than just religious zealotry. There is, there is a large amount of racism involved in the movement (which I knew from my husband who read it somewhere years ago), as well as biblical apocalyptic beliefs, political extremism, extreme anti Semitic prejudice (Jewish), anti-government extremism, religious extremism running completely amok and a desire to control women in society. To make them subservient to men again in the biblical tradition, so they are no longer able to have control of their

own body...men and government will control them and their reproductive health care. That can be clearly read between the lines without any large amount of words actually being written. I read as much of this book as I could possibly stomach, but I read a large portion of the book before it was over, in short spurts at a time. As much as I could take at one time. At least enough, I got the whole meaning minus some of the more offensive parts. But, I found out most of what I originally wanted to know. Just enough to be convinced forever that the pro life movement is as sick and twisted as I originally thought they were. I have no doubts the author is telling it like it is. So I am sure she knows what she is talking about and the book was well researched. There are things I have read and heard elsewhere. She is an authority on the subject and the writing is excellent. That is the reason I gave it such a high rating. But, I will warn the reader, it's something that a lot of us find highly offensive and you may not want to read. But, it did answer a few of the questions I had. But, I have noticed one thing about all the pro life movement that is glaring and I am beginning to understand is not a innocent mistake. They always call a zygote that's no bigger than a thumb nail either 'Baby' or 'Child'. It's a deliberate misrepresentation to try and convey an false thought to the uninformed around them. To convince themselves their terrorism of other people engaged in a legal activity is somehow morally justified. I don't know if this comes from lack of education in human reproductive systems, zealotry of their part, it is a deliberate attempt at elevating a simple embryo to the status of personhood or they have convinced themselves of such nonsense in order to justify their terrible crimes in their twisted minds. But, at the point most abortions in this country are performed we are not talking about a living breathing 'baby' or 'child' either one. If that's what the average pro lifer wants to believe...that's fine with me..have at it. But, they are deliberately misleading everyone around them and I resent it being shoved down my throat as truth when it's anything but. There is still a lot about the pro life mindset that is a complete mystery to me and probably always will be. Where they imagine they have the right to dictate morality to every woman in this country. The same people who want every embryo conceived bought into this world, are also ones who want to get rid of every safety net society has to offer. They want to make drastic cuts to welfare, food stamps, any medical help for ones in poverty, schools and etc. And dump a lot of unwanted baby's on society for the taxpayer to take care of (that's who will be stuck with the bill in the end). The list is becoming endless, because they are too cheap and shallow to care about actual breathing human life. They don't seem to comprehend what all these added births are going to do to an already overcrowded planet. That is already dying from over population. But, that seems to be the last of their concerns. Our future generations are going to have live with the nightmare these zealots are creating. I am so offended by the idea these people have the audacity to call

themselves Christian, I find myself wondering what has happened to Christianity I used to know as a child? It's nothing at all like I remember. What I read are no Christian principles I was ever taught or read in the Bible. If you enjoy religious extremism at its absolute worst, this is probably the book for you, that's the final message to the story. But, I can't say I am sorry I read it, it's informative. But, let's face it, these people are terrorists plain and simple. That's the definition of the word, someone who deliberately intimidates, forces and coerces others to surrender their freedoms by means of terror, threats of death and murder regardless of the reasons. Who engage in acts of terror as a means to bring other's under their control. I cannot for the life of me find anything admirable about this type of person. I do not have any respect for them or their twisted beliefs. They are truly the dregs of society.

Carol Mason's book, provides example after example to explain her thesis on the apocalyptic nature of pro life politics. The was thoroughly researched and is consistently surprising in the amount of details present in the book. On a personal note, Dr. Mason has been my women's studies professor for a year and a half; never once has she ever pushed her agenda/political beliefs/personal opinions on her students. In fact, she never even mentions them, she always gives BOTH sides of what we are learning and we figure out what we believe through our own papers. Just thought I should mention that because of what the the other reviewer said.

On page 27 of this otherwise good book, there is a serious factual error. Referring to the 1996 bombings in Atlanta, Mason writes "The bombs killed no one but injured many." Actually, Ms. Alice Hawthorne of Augusta, Georgia, was murdered at Centennial Park when she was hit by shrapnel. She died in the presence of her teen-aged daughter. There was one other death, a Turkish photo journalist, Melih Uzonyol, who died of a heart attack in the same bombing.

In thirty years there have been 7 shootings/bombings at abortion clinics/abortion doctors in the US AND Canada that resulted in homicides. A tiny number of vandalism (maybe another 7). The fringe that does this (Army of God and ACLA) could fit in a booth at Dennys. And Carol Mason writes a book that claims that pro-life literature creates homicidal maniacs? Is Carol mason just desperate to make money or is she really this morally confused? Take a good look folks. This is who is teaching our kids in college. It is her ilk and people like Ward Churchill and those 9/11 truth scholars that have ruined our colleges and universities. Truly the closing of American Minds.

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