



# FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION

*Working for Women's Equality*

## **Timeline of Key Incidents re. EMW Women's Surgical Center: Operation Save America and Regional Demonstrators**

- November 10, 2016 Joseph Spurgeon, a frequent protester at EMW Women's Surgical Center and leader of a regional group known as P82, posts on Facebook, "...It may be time ... to challenge the FACE act by doing more civil disobedience at abortion clinics. Make a Republican president prosecute a Christian for chaining themselves to an abortion mill door."
- January 21, 2017 A member of P82 grabs an elderly clinic volunteer and knocks her to the ground. A formal complaint is filed with the County Attorney's office but ultimately no charges are filed.
- February 2–5, 2017 Operation Save America ("OSA"), a national anti-abortion organization, brings anti-abortion leaders to Louisville for a "leadership summit." Participants include Matthew Trewhella and Dave Daubenmire. Trewhella is a signatory of a petition advocating the use of lethal force against abortion providers in order to defend the preborn.<sup>1</sup> OSA holds disruptive protests at EMW and a local high school. They also distribute flyers targeting an EMW physician and University of Louisville Medical School OB-GYN faculty member that include a photo of the provider and inflammatory language.<sup>2</sup>
- March 3, 2017 OSA Director Rusty Thomas identifies P82 leader Joseph Spurgeon as OSA's Kentucky leader in social media post while discussing traveling to Louisville to plan OSA's national event scheduled for July 2017
- May 13, 2017 OSA Director Rusty Thomas leads a blockade of EMW Women's Surgical Center with ten other adherents. The group is arrested for trespassing after a lengthy period of time, and later released.
- July 18, 2017 The U.S. Department of Justice files a complaint against Rusty Thomas and nine other defendants for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act. The government wins a preliminary injunction creating a narrow buffer zone in front of EMW for two weeks before, during, and immediately after OSA's national event.
- July 22–29, 2017 OSA leads a week of demonstrations and other actions in Louisville. More than 200 OSA adherents arrived in Louisville from across the country; OSA welcomes several extremists to their ranks including advocates of the justifiable homicide of abortion providers and a convicted clinic arsonist and attempted clinic bomber. OSA's actions include disruptive protests targeting EMW (where US Marshals maintained access to EMW via the

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/signers>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.operationsaveamerica.org/2017/02/10/osa-leadership-meeting-report/>



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federally-created temporary buffer zone) and demonstrations targeting EMW physicians and clinic director at their family homes. OSA also partners with another national group to mail threatening WANTED-style post cards to the zip codes of neighborhoods of EMW physicians and its clinic director.

- July 27, 2017 OSA Director Rusty Thomas and Matthew Trehwella publish an “Open Letter to Government Officials and Citizens of the State of Kentucky,” which promoted defiance of federal law and courts regarding abortion, gay marriage, and other issues.<sup>3</sup>
- October 6, 2017 OSA adherents from Michigan who blockaded EMW in May, travel to Louisville and demonstrate at EMW with approximately 80 other protesters. They harass patients, staff, and escorts.
- December 8, 2017 OSA adherents from Michigan again agitate outside of EMW along with approximately 50 other demonstrators.
- Fall 2018 OSA Director Thomas publishes a pamphlet entitled “Interrogated by the Beast,” in which he discussed an earlier effort to pass a safety zone ordinance around reproductive health care clinics: “We received an unexpected ally that defeated that motion. It was the Louisville police. The very ones who arrested us at the Mother’s Day Rescue. May I add, they were clearly sympathetic to our just cause and did not want to arrest us . . . They reluctantly arrested us. It was these men that testified before the city council that their proposed ‘safety zone’ would not be necessary . . . We received the red-carpet treatment as we were booked into the jail. They only kept us for about 2 hours and released us . . . In all my years of doing Rescue, we never got released that way, especially, if we were out of state.”<sup>4</sup>
- April 12, 2019 An elderly demonstrator falls and is injured during an altercation with a patient or their companion. Charges are filed against an individual for an alleged assault but a grand jury declines to indict.
- May 11, 2019 On Mother’s Day weekend, Dave Daubenmire travels to Louisville where he and his followers target EMW with disruptive demonstrations.
- August 31, 2019 An unidentified man carrying a concealed weapon is seen outside EMW conferring with a local protester.
- November 30, 2019 Dave Daubenmire and his followers once again target EMW with disruptive demonstrations.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.operationsaveamerica.org/2017/08/07/osa-report-on-national-event/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.operationsaveamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Interrogated-by-the-Beast.pdf>



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- January 11, 2020 The unidentified armed man, previously seen in August 2019, joins demonstrations outside EMW and verbally threatens an escort and gestures to his gun. This incident and photographs of the armed demonstrator are shared with law enforcement.
- February 15, 2020 Shortly after another reproductive health care provider begins offering abortion care in Louisville, regional anti-abortion leaders announce an alliance to recruit more demonstrators and force EMW to close.
- April 12, 2020 EMW is notified about a firebomb threat made against the clinic that appeared on a social media account.
- May 9, 2020 During Mother's Day weekend, members of the Ohio-based Salt and Light Brigade and other local groups (OSA KY/P82) demonstrate at EMW.
- September 17, 2020 Michigan OSA adherents that blockaded EMW in 2017 travel to Louisville again and demonstrate outside of the clinic.
- November 7, 2020 In response to a social media post by an OSA KY/P82 member, OSA Director Rusty Thomas states, "Historically, when the ballot box has failed or been corrupted by tyranny, it was left to the cartridge box to remedy the situation. Obviously, no one wants to see it come to that, but the way things are going, it may be unavoidable. God help us!"
- November 21, 2020 Several OSA KY/P82 members wear orange vests that look like volunteer clinic escort vests outside EMW. They trespass repeatedly onto clinic property at the rear entrance to the parking lot while harassing clinic staff in the parking lot. One demonstrator tells a clinic escort, "No Quarter November," which is a slogan promoted by right-wing conservative Douglas Wilson. Based out of Idaho, Wilson and a founder of the League of the South co-authored a controversial pamphlet called "Southern Slavery, As It Was," which claims, "...slavery produced in the South a genuine affection between the races that we believe we can say has never existed in any nation before the War or since."
- December 2, 2020 LMPD advises EMW to stop calling non-emergency number to report blocking of the sidewalk, unreasonably loud amplified noise, prohibited activity on the roadway, covid violations, etc. EMW complies and stops calling LMPD to report this conduct for approximately three months.
- December 5, 2020 OSA Director Rusty Thomas is invited to meet with and make a presentation to OSA KY/P82 members. Thomas is still subject to a U.S. Department of Justice agreement barring him from being in front of EMW for three years. The conditions of Thomas' settlement agreement expire in September 2021.
- December 6, 2020 EMW is notified of a potential kidnapping threat made in right-wing internet channels against abortion providers in Kentucky.



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- December 13, 2020 Joseph Spurgeon tweets “Christian nationalism is a good thing. Don’t let any Marxist fool tell you otherwise.”
- January 6, 2021 OSA Associate Director Jason Storms leads a group of OSA adherents at the January 6 riots in Washington DC. Storms films himself climbing a scaffold and chanting about revolution. Dave Daubenmire leads dozens of members of the Salt and Light Brigade to the January 6 riots. He films them breaching a barricade and wall outside of the Capitol.
- January 18, 2021 Joseph Spurgeon tweets “1/3 To the left when they talk about white supremacy they just mean anyone who loves western civilization. And they hate western civilization because they hate Christianity . . . 2/3 This is why even those who are not white who appreciate and want to maintain tradition in the west are considered a part of the white supremacy. 3/3 Don’t fall for any of it. Don’t let them cause you to despise your heritage or what God has done in the west. Don’t let them get by with their defining everything as racial hatred. They are the ones full of hatred. #WhiteSupremacy.”
- February 20, 2021 An LMPD officer drives his patrol car with a passenger and parks in front of EMW to join an anti-abortion protest while wearing what appears to be his LMPD sidearm and uniform. He and his passenger demonstrate outside EMW carrying anti-abortion signs for about an hour.
- March 6, 2021 An agitated demonstrator seizes a patient about to enter EMW and forcibly moves her 15-20 feet away from the clinic entrance.