

Details now emerging on Chuck Foster's past

By David Holthouse
Special to Sentinel-Voice
(NNPA) — Raymond "Chuck" Foster, the Ku Klux Klan leader who was arrested Nov. 11 for killing a woman following a backwoods Klan initiation ritual, has a history of Klan activity dating back at least to January 2001.

Foster, 44, was the founding Imperial Wizard, or national leader, of the Southern White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a Klan faction that formed on January 1, 2001, in Watson, La.

During the next three years, the group developed chapters in three other states while maintaining a low profile with the exception of a single incident in 2003 when a White Knights official in Ohio, Jeremy Parker, drew attention by posting instructions for making a pipe bomb on the Internet in response to a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration.

"Sure would hate to see anything happen," he wrote.

In 2004, the Southern White Knights had active chapters in Savannah, Ga., Homosassa Springs, Fla., and Marion, Ohio, as well as the founding chapter, which by that time had relocated to Denham Springs, La.

The Southern White Knights disbanded in early 2005. Most of its members — not including Foster — resurfaced later that year as the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a relatively large Klan group that currently has nine active chapters in eight states, none of them in Louisiana.

The woman Foster allegedly murdered, identified by police as 43-year-old Cynthia C. Lynch, was apparently recruited over the Internet to join Foster's latest Klan group. Media accounts of the rapidly developing story have variously identified that group as the Dixie Brotherhood and/or the Sons of Dixie.

Hatewatch is unaware of any Klan group by either of those names operating anywhere in the country.

However, last year a new Klan group calling itself the Dixie Rangers Knights of the Ku Klux Klan formed in Walker, La., about 80 miles from the rural scene of the alleged murder.

It's unclear at this point if the Dixie Rangers and the Dixie Brotherhood/Sons of



The Ku Klux Klan has returned to the spotlight in the wake of the killing of a woman allegedly involved in a Klan plot.

Dixie are one and the same.

Law enforcement officials said that Lynch took a bus from her home near Tulsa, Okla., to Slidell, La., where two members of the "Dixie" Klan group picked her up on Friday, Nov. 7, and transported her to a campground near the Pearl River. At least eight members of the Klan group were present, including Foster.

After a series of rites including the shaving of her head, the Klan members took Lynch to a camp on a sandbar that was accessible only by boat. There the initiation continued. St. Tammany Sheriff Jack Strain told the *Times-Picayune* the rituals on the sandbar consisted of lighting torches and "running around in the woods."

By Sunday night, Lynch had reportedly changed her mind about joining the Klan and wanted to leave the camp. This sparked an argument with Foster, who allegedly pushed her down and killed her with a single shot from a .40 caliber handgun.

According to Strain, Foster tried to dig the bullet out of Lynch's body with a knife before ordering his followers to set fire to her belongings and get rid of her body.

The next morning, Foster's son, Shane Foster, 20, and another member of the Klan group, Frank Stafford, 21, asked a convenience store clerk in nearby Bogalusa if he knew how to remove bloodstains from clothes. The clerk, who recognized the men, alerted the local sheriff's office.

Following a rapid investigation, St. Tammany Parish deputies raided the campsite, arresting five Klan members who had fled into the woods.

The elder Foster, who initially escaped, turned himself in later that day.

At the campsite, investigators found weapons, Confederate battle flags, KKK banners, five rank-and-file White Klan robes, and one Black Imperial Wizard robe. They found Lynch's corpse in a weedy ditch about a half-mile from the sandbar.

Chuck Foster has been charged with second-degree murder. His son, along with Stafford and five other Klan members — Random Hines, 27; Danielle Jones, 23; Alicia Watkins, 23; Timothy Michael Watkins, 30; and Andrew Yates, 20 — were charged with obstruction of justice.

Although the alleged murder of the Oklahoma woman is the first reported murder of a prospective Klan member during an initiation ceremony, it's not the first reported shooting or other serious injury. Klansmen, flames, guns and alcohol is a volatile mixture.

For example, on Nov. 23, 2004, a member of America's Invisible Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was accidentally shot in the head during an initiation ritual that involved a prospective member being strung from a tree with a noose around his neck, standing on his tiptoes, while Klansmen shot him with paintball guns.

The accidental shooting occurred when one of them decided to scare the initiate (who survived) by firing a real gun in his direction and a wayward paintball altered the shooter's aim.

David Holthouse is a staff writer for the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center's *Intelligence Report*.

White supremacy up after Obama election

By Jamisha Purdy
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Since Barack Obama's historic win as America's first Black president, there has been a membership hike in White supremacist groups, according to the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks and monitors hate groups across the nation.

SPLC Director Mark Potock says groups, including the Council of Conservative Citizens — which supports White nationalism and White separatism — claim that its membership has dramatically increased since Election Day.

"Wednesdays and Thursday were both record breaking days for [this group]. On both days we shattered all records for Web traffic without the Council of Conservative Citizens being the national news," reported a news bulletin on the Council's website.

Although Potok says, "These groups routinely exaggerate these types of claims," he adds that the rising interest is real.

"There's no doubt that there's been a real reaction," Potock said.

"One of the first things we saw was a surge in these groups."

This expanding curiosity doesn't surprise Potock, who has monitored hate groups for 11 years.

"It was pretty predictable," he said. "We are likely to see an even further growth in the coming months."

Before the election an outbreak in these groups spread across the nation. According to Potock, the number of White supremacist groups spiraled from 602 in 2000 to 888 last year.

Other than anger fueled by the possibility of a Black president, Potock said that rising non-White immigration, the failing economy and the "U.S. Census Bureau's prediction that Whites will lose their majority" around 2040, has stimulated this increase.

Potock also predicts that "Obama's win will help race relations in the long haul." But the short term response will likely mimic the developing backlash among these groups' members in the coming months.

"It's likely to get worse before it gets better," he said. "I have no doubt that the groups will grow and the hate crimes will follow. A surge in these groups may mean more anti-Black propaganda that gets in the mainstream."

The best defense, Potock said, is awareness.

"Make the public aware," Potock said. "That's the best we can do."

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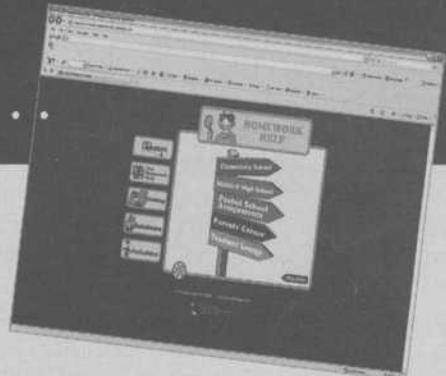
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