

# SPLC REPORT

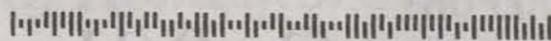
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## Skinhead rejects racism, seeks redemption, with help from SPLC

For years, Bryon Widner thrived on hate as a violent skinhead — a razor-carrying “enforcer” who helped organize other racist gangs around the country. His hate was etched on his face in the form of tattoos with racist and violent themes.

But with the help of the SPLC, Widner left the white power movement and endured nearly two years of excruciating laser treatments to remove the tell-tale tattoos so that he could start a new life with his wife and children.

MSNBC told Widner’s story this summer in *Erasing Hate*.

The one-hour documentary recounts Widner’s life within the white power movement, the decision that led him and his wife to leave it, and the procedures he received. The documentary can currently be streamed online at Amazon.com for \$1.99. Select clips

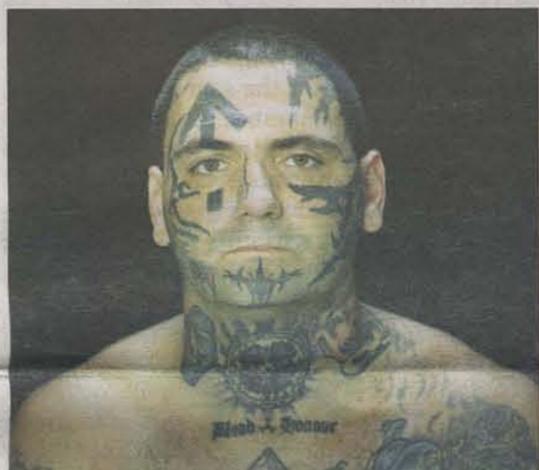
from the documentary can be viewed on MSNBC.com.

### ‘Powerful story of redemption’

“This is a powerful story of human redemption,” said Joe Roy, the SPLC’s chief investigator, whose meeting with Widner led to the removal of his tattoos and, ultimately, the documentary. “Bryon, by his own admission, did horrible things in his life. But he made the decision to reject racism and leave behind his life of hate and violence. We see so many people in our work who have gotten caught up in the hate movement, usually when they’re young. What we hope is that Bryon’s story will inspire others to change.”

During his 16 years as a skinhead, Widner became known

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Before and after: Bryon Widner displays the racist tattoos that covered most of his body. Now, the tattoos on his head and neck are gone. With the SPLC’s help, he underwent more than a year of painful laser treatment at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

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### FIGHTING FOR WORKERS’ RIGHTS

## SPLC wins major victory for cheated farmworkers

FORT SMITH, Ark. — One of the Southeast’s largest employers of foreign guestworkers and its owners will be held accountable for routinely cheating workers out of their wages under a federal court ruling in a suit brought by the SPLC. Some 1,500 guestworkers could recover more than \$2 million.

The ruling against Candy Brand LLC, an Arkansas company, and its owners sets a precedent that will make it more difficult for companies and their owners to skirt their responsibilities to workers. A trial is planned for January to determine the exact amount of damages owed to the workers.

“This decision sends a message that despite all the complex corporate maneuvering, individuals responsible for failing to pay their employees will be held accountable,” said Jim Knoepp, the SPLC’s lead attorney on the case.

The workers harvested and packed tomatoes and performed other agricultural work for Candy Brand in Bradley County, Ark.,

from 2003 to 2007. The 2007 lawsuit alleges that the company failed to pay federally mandated overtime wages for work in its packing sheds and the prevailing wage for work in the fields. The company also refused to reimburse workers for the exorbitant travel, visa and other fees they paid to obtain the jobs — a problem commonly faced by guestworkers who are recruited from other countries.

Candy Brand’s refusal to reimburse its guestworkers in their first week of work violated the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), resulting in workers earning substantially less than the minimum wage. The failure to pay overtime wages and reimburse expenses was also a breach of the workers’ contracts, U.S. District Judge Robert T. Dawson ruled on May 20 in an Arkansas federal court.

The lawsuit seeks restitution of unpaid wages, an award of money damages and a court order requiring the defendants to comply with federal regulations governing the H-2A guestworker program.

## SPLC challenges Ala. anti-immigrant law

### New statute criminalizes father, Good Samaritans

When Matthew Webster provides food and shelter to his adopted sons in the coming months, he could be breaking Alabama law.

The Alabama native is adopting two young boys — both undocumented immigrants — and it will take two years for them to obtain lawful status. In the meantime, Alabama’s recently passed anti-immigrant law would criminalize Webster for doing the normal things that fathers do.

### Father would be considered criminal

“I will be considered a criminal for harboring, encouraging and transporting my own sons,” Webster said. “I am furious that our state representatives have wasted, and will continue to waste, taxpayer money with this law. I am a Republican and probably agree with many of our Republican legislators on most issues. On this one, however, I do not.”

At press time, the law was set to take effect on Sept. 1. But, with Webster as one of the

plaintiffs, the SPLC filed a federal lawsuit against the state and has asked a federal court to block the law pending the outcome of the case.

The law, the harshest anti-immigrant measure passed by any state, authorizes police to demand papers demonstrating citizenship or immigration status during traffic stops; requires school officials to verify the

immigration status of children and their parents; and criminalizes Alabamians for everyday interactions with undocumented immigrants, such as providing a car ride.

“Alabama’s mean-spirited immigration law is blatantly unconstitutional,” said SPLC Legal Director Mary Bauer.

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Matthew Webster, who is adopting two immigrant children, speaks to reporters following the announcement of the SPLC’s lawsuit challenging Alabama’s new anti-immigrant law.

## SPLC REPORT

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. The SPLC also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement.

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## A MESSAGE FROM SPLC PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

# On 9/11 anniversary, reject Muslim bashing

During the 10th anniversary of 9/11, we'll be transfixed by images of the planes ramming into the World Trade Center and the people, caught in the flames, leaping to their deaths. We'll see pictures of the burning Pentagon and hear stories of the heroic firefighters and police officers who sacrificed their lives trying to save others.

And we'll be reminded that, despite Osama bin Laden's death, violent jihadists are still a threat.

We'd be naive to think otherwise. What's more, the threat has morphed in recent years. While we've made progress in eroding Al Qaeda's capacity to launch attacks from overseas, we've seen an increase in plots hatched by "homegrown" jihadists — U.S. citizens or permanent residents inspired by extremist, Al Qaeda-like ideology. Indeed, half of the "homegrown" plots since 9/11 have occurred in the last two years.

There is yet another danger here — a danger not only

to our physical security but to our character as a people. It's a danger that President George W. Bush warned the country about in the days following 9/11, the danger of branding all Muslims as our enemies.

### Increase in hate crimes

Unfortunately, in recent years we've seen a revival of the Muslim-bashing that fueled a 1,600 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslims in 2001.

During the last presidential election, Barack Obama, a Christian, was portrayed as a Muslim and even a terrorist sympathizer.

Then, last year, anti-Muslim activists coalesced in opposition to the so-called "ground zero mosque," a proposal to build an Islamic center two blocks from the site of the former World Trade Center. Exploiting the memory of 9/11, a small cadre of extremists created a national

controversy over the project, one laden with bigotry and intolerance. They wanted nothing less than to deny American Muslims their rights under our Constitution.

The question now is whether the anniversary of 9/11 will spark not only another jihadist attack but a new round of Muslim-bashing from those



Richard Cohen

who want to divide, rather than unite, us — from those who forget there were many Muslims who died on that day and who would equate all Muslims with terrorists.

Their words — their depictions of Islam as a virulent

political movement rather than a religion — have consequences.

### We must remain vigilant

We saw it in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, when a Sikh man was fatally shot outside a gas station in Mesa, Ariz., by someone who mistook him for a Muslim.

We saw it in 2008, when three men burned down a mosque in Nashville.

And we saw it on July 22, when Anders Behring Breivik slaughtered 77 people, mostly teenagers, in Norway.

Breivik cast himself as a Christian knight dedicated to stemming the tide of Muslim immigration. He wanted to jolt his country into recognizing what he viewed as the threat of multiculturalism in Europe. In a 1,500-page manifesto, Breivik cited the words of U.S.-based Islamophobes dozens of times, making clear their influence on him.

So, as we mark this solemn anniversary, we must remain vigilant against the threat of terrorism by Islamists who preach an anti-Semitic ideology that is antithetical to our democratic values.

At the same time, we must remember that violent jihadists do not represent Islam any more than the Anders Breiviks of the world represent Christianity. Our democratic values require nothing less.

## MAILBOX

Seeing hatred, discrimination and violence against the "have nots" has always deeply disturbed me. That is why, when I found out about the fantastic work that SPLC does, I felt that I FINALLY found an organization that speaks to what my heart wants me to do with my discretionary dollars. Being a Friend of the Center [monthly donor] feels so right to me.

So thank you for doing the work that so many of us cannot do. I look forward to reading all of the materials you have sent. I love all of you for what you are doing!

K.A.  
Lewiston, New York

I am 80 years old, black and retired from 41 years of military and state service. I was born in Georgia in the Depression and endured the segregation, the inferior schools and the general degradation heaped on black folk during the period of my youth and beyond.

Fortunately for me, I decided to leave Georgia at age 14 and enter the workforce. At age 18, I joined the U.S. Air Force just as the Korean War was starting. I missed the civil rights struggles of the fifties and sixties, as the Air Force fought hard to promote and maintain equality and justice for its black servicemen.

I look at your organization, which I support, and reflect on how much further along we would be toward racial equality if you had been there when I was born. I support several other prominent civil rights organizations, but I have concluded recently that yours is the one doing the most to help us realize the dreams of the late Dr. Martin Luther King. Thank all of you for all you do!

M.M.  
Las Vegas, Nevada

I work for the court clerk in a very small community in western North Carolina. My husband is a sheriff's deputy. I appreciate the information that Chief Bob Paudert put out there on the "sovereign citizens" (*SPLC Report*, Summer 2011). Unfortunately, our community, nestled up here in the mountains, has been a place where recently they are making themselves known. It has put all of us on edge. I do not put anything past this "group." One was stopped for no tag, no registration, etc. This was all very new to me. They have tried numerous times to "file" paperwork in our judicial system.

Thank you, thank you for making people aware of sovereign citizens, as some of our officers were unaware of the

depths they go to. Your video, I am quite sure, will save many lives.

J.A.  
Warne, North Carolina

I am a retired law enforcement officer and considered a conservative person, but I must state that I am disgusted by the Alabama immigration law. I applaud your efforts at taking the lead on this issue. This law is unjust and unconstitutional. It offends the founding principles of this country and should offend all decent people. However, it came about from fears and misinformation. Seizing on those fears and under the whispered term of "those people," it is purposely aimed at Hispanics. Some politicians and so-called boastful Christians wish they could pass similar laws against African Americans, Jews and Catholics.

J.C.  
Pike Road, Alabama

I am a mitigation specialist and have been involved in indigent capital defense for nearly 14 years. Recently, I read Morris Dees' book, *A Lawyer's Journey*, and found it so inspiring that I have decided to apply to law school!

I am simply writing to thank him for sharing his inspirational story of perseverance and

dedication to people like Mrs. Beulah Mae Donald, who are so deserving and would get little relief from the dual desolations of poverty and racism were it not for dedicated folks like Mr. Dees and those with whom he works at the SPLC. Blessings on you all!

S.F.  
Jacksonville, Florida

Thank you for suing Alabama (story, page 1). Your continuing fight against efforts to legalize hate is why I support SPLC as a small but sustaining [monthly] contributor. Just maybe actions such as yours will slow down my own less-than-loving state from doing equally hateful acts.

D.B.  
Dallas, Texas

I compliment the SPLC's work. As the adoptive father of two biracial girls, your work matters to me greatly. Make no mistake about it, your efforts are truly needed and do make a difference!

M.S.  
Bluffton, Ohio

Thanks for updating my mom's mailing address. Even at 84, she still holds firm to the values of the SPLC and appreciates receiving the newsletter.

E.H.  
Glendale, Wisconsin

## FIGHTING HATE

## 'Homegrown' Islamic extremists represent growing threat

Ten years after 9/11, jihadist attacks are increasingly being plotted by Muslims radicalized in the U.S. as opposed to Al Qaeda operatives and others based overseas, the SPLC reported in the Fall 2011 issue of its *Intelligence Report*.

The number of these conspiracies and lone-wolf attacks has increased dramatically over the past two years, in fact. "Homegrown" jihadists have been responsible for more than 30 terrorist plots in the U.S. since 9/11 — and about half of those have occurred since May 2009.

All but a few of the plots have been foiled by law enforcement officials, often with tips from the Muslim community, with the notable exception of the November 2009 attack at Fort Hood that

killed 13 and injured 43. Most of those arrested in the plots were influenced by English-language jihadist websites that encourage violence in pursuit of a global caliphate ruled by Islamic fundamentalists.

**Anti-Muslim extremism rising**  
The report, "Ten Years After," includes profiles of 10 homegrown jihadists who espouse a virulent anti-Semitic, anti-human rights ideology, as well as a timeline of Islamist plots since 9/11.

Anti-Muslim extremism is also rising, creating grave risks of its own — as shown by the horrific terrorist attacks in Norway that killed 77 people, mostly teenagers, on July 22. Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian mass murderer, cited the words

of U.S.-based anti-Muslim activists dozens of times in his 1,500-page manifesto.

"Homegrown Islamist extremists represent a real and significant threat to the country," said Mark Potok, editor of the *Intelligence Report*. "But we cannot allow the 10th anniversary of the 2001 attacks to become a platform to spread anti-Muslim rhetoric that encourages hate and violence. Islamist terrorists do not represent the millions of peaceful Muslims in the U.S."

The *Intelligence Report* also describes how several U.S. extremist groups that have in the past espoused anti-immigrant or anti-LGBT messages are now increasingly spreading anti-Muslim propaganda.

## Skinhead seeks redemption, with help from SPLC

From Page 1

as a vicious brawler who would fight at the slightest provocation. He helped create the hardcore Vinlander Social Club skinhead gang, one of the fastest growing skinhead groups at the time. Today, he says he's haunted by the things he saw and did.

"If I can prevent one other kid from making the same mistakes I did, if I can prevent one other family from having to go through the same crap that I put my family through, maybe I can redeem myself," Widner said.

### Widner was 'pit bull of movement'

Widner gained notoriety within the movement for the tattoos covering his face and body. Eventually, he caught the attention of SPLC officials, including Roy, a former police detective who has spent 25 years monitoring hate and extremist movements for the SPLC.

"He was the pit bull of the movement," Roy said. "He was an in-your-face type of guy. He had a reputation of being an enforcer."

In 2005, at a white power music festival in Kentucky called Nordic Fest, Widner met his future wife, Julie, who was also active in the white power movement. Together, they began to see the hypocrisy of the skinhead culture and realized it was no place to raise a family. Despite death threats and harassment, they left the movement.

As Widner attempted to get his life on track, the tattoos that made him an intimidating force in skinhead circles became a liability as he searched for a job to support his family. Since he couldn't afford to get his tattoos removed, it seemed his racist past would remain branded across his face.

Then he found an ally in a former enemy — the Southern Poverty Law Center. After SPLC officials learned of Widner's

struggle, Roy and Laurie Wood of the SPLC met with him.

"It was obvious he'd had a change of heart, but, unfortunately, most people would only see the tattoos," said Roy, who appears in the documentary. "They would only see his past. His outside didn't reflect the change that had taken place on the inside."

### SPLC's aid enabled removal

The SPLC provided financial aid that allowed Widner to get the tattoos removed from his face and hands at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. Each treatment left Widner's face badly blistered and swollen — a sort of penance for his violent past.

Earlier this year, Widner and his wife visited the SPLC along with the documentary film crew, to speak to the staff and thank the organization personally.

"We wouldn't be making this change in our life, because we would have never been able to afford it," Julie said. "We owe them so much. I'm so incredibly grateful."

*Erasing Hate* was written, directed and produced by Bill Brummel, who earlier produced two classroom documentaries for the SPLC's Teaching Tolerance project — *Viva la Causa* and *Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History*.

Brummel is submitting a feature-length version of the documentary to film festivals and is seeking theatrical distribution. More information about the feature-length version of *Erasing Hate* and screenings can be found at [erasinghatemovie.com](http://erasinghatemovie.com) or via e-mail at [info@erasinghatemovie.com](mailto:info@erasinghatemovie.com).

## INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

### White teens charged in racially motivated murder

JACKSON, Miss. — The horrifying, and apparently racially motivated, random killing of a black man here on June 26 gained national attention after CNN broadcast motel surveillance video of white teens running over the man with a large pickup truck.

Prosecutors have charged 18-year-old Deryl Dedmon with murder in the killing of James Craig Anderson, 49. John A. Rice, 18, is charged with simple assault.

Dedmon allegedly was the ringleader of two carloads of white teens who, after a night of drinking, drove from mostly white Rankin County to Jackson, 16 miles away, looking for a black person. They found Anderson, who worked at a local automobile plant, in a motel parking lot near the interstate.

Yelling "white power" and various racial slurs, the teens brutally beat Anderson. One group of teens left in an SUV, but another group, believed to be driven by Dedmon, got into a Ford F-250 pickup truck and ran over Anderson, killing him.

After the murder, Dedmon allegedly said in a cell phone call, "I ran that n----- over." Prosecutors say he laughed about it.

The Hinds County, Miss., district attorney said that Dedmon and his friends had a history of "harassing white teens that had black friends or gay teens."

### Skinhead in SPLC case dies in prison

SALEM, Ore. — Ken Mieske — who lived up to his heavy-metal-music moniker "Ken Death" by savagely beating an Ethiopian immigrant to death with a baseball bat in Portland in 1988 — died July 27 in a hospital here.

Mieske and two other members of the racist skinhead group East Side White Pride (ESWP), Kyle Brewster and Steve Strasser, subsequently pleaded guilty to murder, assault and racial intimidation in the attack on graduate student Mulugeta Seraw and another Ethiopian man. The case provided the basis for a landmark SPLC civil suit against White Aryan Resistance (WAR) founder Tom Metzger, one of most notorious and influential American white supremacists of the last 30 years.

Mieske, 45, had been imprisoned since his arrest. Prison officials did not give a cause of death, but according to *The Oregonian*, he had long suffered from hepatitis C.

Following the guilty pleas, the SPLC sued Metzger and WAR on behalf of Seraw's family. SPLC attorneys argued that Metzger should be found liable for intentionally inciting the skinheads to engage in violent confrontations with minorities. A jury agreed, returning a record \$12.5 million verdict against Metzger and WAR. Metzger made monthly payments to Seraw's estate for 20 years.

The verdict crippled WAR, which today is little more than a website Metzger uses to distribute his ideas and propaganda.

### Racist cult leader sentenced

SAN ANGELO, Texas — Warren Jeffs, the racist leader of a breakaway Mormon sect, was sentenced to life in prison Aug. 9 for raping a 12-year-old girl, taken as a bride in a "spiritual marriage." Jeffs, the president and prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), was also sentenced to 20 years for sexually assaulting a 15-year-old member of his cult.

Jeffs was already imprisoned for an earlier conviction.

The charges stemmed from a 2007 raid on the FLDS "Yearning for Zion" compound outside Eldorado, Texas. About 460 children were initially taken into custody during the FBI raid, triggered by an anonymous phone tip. Jeffs vigorously denied the charges, but prosecutors played audio tapes of him sexually assaulting the 12-year-old and produced DNA evidence proving Jeffs had a child with the 15-year-old.

As the SPLC has reported, Jeffs preached a virulent racism and hatred toward LGBT people to his 10,000 followers.

### Civil rights-era killer dies

JACKSON, Miss. — James Ford Seale, a Klansman imprisoned for his role in the segregation-era abduction and killing of two black men in rural Mississippi, died in federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind., on Aug. 2.

Seale had been serving three life sentences after being convicted in 2007 of two counts of kidnapping and one of conspiracy to commit kidnapping. He was 76.

Henry Hezekiah Dee and Charles Eddie Moore, both 19, were beaten by Klansmen and thrown into a muddy backwater of the Mississippi River. Their names are among the 40 martyrs inscribed on the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala.



SPLC Outreach Director Lecia Brooks (right) with Bryon and Julie Widner at the Civil Rights Memorial



AMY ECKERT

### Mix It Up at Lunch Day set for October 18

Students at Rahn Elementary School in Eagan, Minn., enjoy Mix It Up at Lunch Day last fall in their school's cafeteria. Thousands of schools, elementary through high school, are expected to take part in the event this year, scheduled for October 18. This fall marks the 10th anniversary of the Teaching Tolerance-sponsored event, which encourages students to tear down the social boundaries that divide them by sitting with someone new at lunch.

## Teaching Tolerance guidance sought after racial incident

SANDY, Utah — The SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program is working with a Utah school district to help create a more welcoming and inclusive school environment after a racially charged incident at a high school pep rally earlier this year.

Officials from the Canyons School District contacted the SPLC for help after a student wore a white pillowcase with eyeholes — resembling a Klansman's hood — to a pep rally at Alta High School in March. When a biracial student yanked the pillowcase off the student's head, the student responded with a Nazi "siege" salute. Later, photos of a Klansman burning a cross were sent to the mobile phones of students.

District Superintendent David Doty was surprised to learn that few students at the high school understood why a white hood would be seen as hostile. Doty and other officials sought ways to build a more tolerant culture in his district in the Salt Lake City suburb of Sandy.

"Unfortunately, racial and hate incidents in schools are extremely common," said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. "News of similar incidents come across our desks here at least once a week. We are always willing to help schools struggling with these issues and were delighted to work with a school district dedicated to finding a long-term solution."

### Program is model for others

Teaching Tolerance's efforts have served as a pilot program to create methods that can be used by other districts.

In June, SPLC staffers conducted a two-day leadership camp for a diverse group of about 100 high school students. The students learned how to build trust and communication skills. They also explored identity — seeing how race, ethnicity, family,

education, religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender, class and other factors make each person unique. The exercises were designed to help students develop empathy and to raise their awareness of the different experiences that are part of an individual's personal history. The students also learned how to speak up and support classmates who might find themselves being bullied.

### Students are forever changed

"The students who worked with Teaching Tolerance showed great courage and commitment to creating a safe and inclusive community in their schools," said SPLC Outreach Director Lecia Brooks, who worked with them. "Students who participate in our leadership training are forever changed. They will create communities they can be proud of."

Teaching Tolerance staffers also met with Canyons officials to find ways to include more multicultural and social justice material in the curriculum. They provided instruction on cultural competence and how to have professional conversations about difficult topics like race, sexual orientation and religion. The educators also learned how the failure to stop small acts of intolerance and prejudice contributes to an environment where hate crimes can occur. Teaching Tolerance will continue to work closely with the district and will be present for its Mix It Up at Lunch Day on Oct. 18.

"We are very proud of the efforts made by the Canyons School District," Costello said. "It's tempting for educators to seek a quick fix in the wake of a bias incident at a school, but this school district — from the school board to the students — has demonstrated a serious commitment to ensuring their schools are welcoming, inclusive places. We are proud to be part of that effort."

## JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS

# SPLC wins access to youths in abusive detention facility

JACKSON, Miss. — SPLC advocates are interviewing imprisoned youths here after a federal judge ruled that officials cannot block access to lawyers and advocates.

The SPLC and Disability Rights Mississippi (DRMS) were denied access to children and teens at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center after filing a federal lawsuit detailing unconstitutional abuses at the juvenile detention facility, Mississippi's largest.

### Facilities cannot shield abuse

"This ruling not only ensures that children held at this abusive facility are able to access attorneys and advocates, it makes clear that juvenile detention fa-

cilities must operate with transparency and cannot shield child abuse," said Jody Owens, director of the SPLC's Mississippi office. "We hope the county will work with us to end the inhumane treatment of youths at the facility instead of continuing to spend taxpayer money in an effort to hide these abuses."

The lawsuit, filed in June, charges that officials violated the constitutional rights of children by subjecting them to prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation, denying them mental health services, and subjecting them to verbal abuse and threats of physical harm.

The SPLC and DRMS attempted to work with Hinds County officials to reinstate access to the

detention center, but the county repeatedly rejected or ignored the requests. The court ruling acknowledged the county's actions violated the rights of these children and their advocates.

### Advocates for civil rights

The SPLC and DRMS monitor conditions at juvenile detention centers throughout Mississippi and serve as advocates for children when their rights are violated. DRMS is a nonprofit agency with a federal mandate to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Under this mandate, its representatives have a right to enter the facility, interview children, assess the conditions and work with the county to address violations.

## Summer work at SPLC offers legal interns rich experience

Spending her summer working at the Southern Poverty Law Center gave Aisha Forte, a law student who will earn a degree from Wake Forest University next May, the opportunity "to see what it really means to fight hate and seek justice."

Like the other legal interns, Forte spent her weeks at the SPLC conducting legal and policy research.

"In addition to being able to hone my research and writing skills, I have been able to work with our clients and the larger community," Forte said. "By far the highlight of my summer has been working with really smart people and true professionals."

Most of the interns were involved in campaigns to secure the civil rights of children and teens who face overly harsh

disciplinary measures in school and abuses in the juvenile justice system. "Interviewing children being held pre-trial at the Birmingham City Jail was both heartbreaking and eye-opening," said Zachary Dembo, who will graduate from the University of Michigan Law School next year.

### First-hand view of conditions

Interns in the SPLC's Jackson, Miss., Miami and New Orleans offices had similar experiences. "I was lucky enough to get a firsthand view of the facilities we are working to improve and meet a few of the children affected by those institutions," said Jamie Knight, a student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. "I know I only caught a glimpse of the families' experiences, but my brief encounters emphasized how great an impact the SPLC's lawyers and community organizers can make, both inside the courthouse and on the ground."

In Atlanta, interns with the SPLC's Immigrant Justice Project interviewed farmworkers, in addition to their legal research. "I found the willingness of people to let us into their homes and openly share their stories to be courageous and inspiring," said Nicole Sykes of Georgia State University College of Law.

SPLC Legal Director Mary Bauer said the interns provide a valuable service. "They bring enthusiasm and a fresh insight into our day-to-day work," she said. "Their contributions are significant."



PENNY WEAVER



JIM KNOEPP

Montgomery legal interns Anna Fuchs (top, from left), Zach Dembo, Aisha Forte, Michael Dreyfuss and Meredith Rose pose with one of the Oscars awarded to an SPLC documentary film. Interns in the SPLC's Immigrant Justice Project office in Atlanta were Elise McCaffrey (from left), Carly Stadum, Jay Singh, Nicole Sykes and David Morales.

Continued on Page 8

## A LOOK BACK

# Terrorized by Klan, Vietnamese fishermen win justice after SPLC lawsuit

In 1981, a terror campaign was waged against Vietnamese fishermen in Galveston Bay.

Armed Klansmen patrolled the waters off Texas.

Threats were made. Crosses were burned. Boats were destroyed.

A white fisherman, weary of growing competition from Vietnamese immigrants, had invited the Texas Knights of the Ku Klux Klan to Seabrook, Texas. With a new shrimping season on the horizon, the Vietnamese shrimpers and the Klan appeared to be on a collision course.

But 30 years ago, an SPLC lawsuit put a stop to the terror campaign when a judge issued a preliminary injunction that stopped the Klan's activities and led to a further order that shut down its paramilitary training bases. It was a significant victory for the SPLC — but more so for immigrants pursuing the American dream.

**Pursuing the American dream**  
“The hard-working Vietnamese fishermen came here looking for a better life after the Vietnam War, an opportunity to pursue the American dream like generations of immigrants who came before them,” said SPLC Founder Morris Dees. “And they were terrorized by white supremacists who objected to their presence.”

In the years following the lawsuit, the immigrant community grew and flourished. Vietnamese and Vietnamese-

Americans have pursued careers as business owners, doctors and athletes, and have become a vibrant part of the fabric of Texas. But their journey, as is often the case for recent immigrants, wasn't easy. They encountered violence, intimidation and xenophobia. The SPLC's lawsuit was a pivotal moment that demonstrated to these immigrants that the United States respects the rule of law and protects the rights of minorities and those who have no political power.

**Locals unhappy with competition**  
After the fall of Saigon ended the Vietnam War in 1975, tens of thousands of South Vietnamese fled to the United States to escape persecution. They were drawn to Texas towns along the Gulf of Mexico, such as Seabrook, which reminded them of Vietnam, a country with a large coastline.

The Vietnamese began fishing commercially, and the number of boats in the bay grew. The locals were unhappy about the competition. The Vietnamese were also unfamiliar with the laws and customs governing the bay, resulting in innocent mistakes. Tensions rose.

In nearby Seadrift, an American fisherman was shot and killed. Two Vietnamese fishermen were charged with murder but found innocent. Several Vietnamese boats were burned. The American and Vietnamese fishermen tried to resolve the problems in the bay, but two more Vietnamese boats were

burned. Eventually, an American fisherman invited the Texas Knights of the Ku Klux Klan to intervene.

At a rally, Klan Grand Dragon Louis Beam delivered a fierce speech about the problems in the bay.

“It's going to be a hell of a lot more violent than it was in Korea or Vietnam,” he said.



Armed Klansmen cruised Texas' Galveston Bay to intimidate Vietnamese immigrants who were entering the shrimp business.

Beam offered to train American fishermen at the Klan's paramilitary camps. “When you come out of there, you'll be ready for the Vietnamese.”

He concluded the speech by burning a boat with “USS Vietcong” painted on its hull.

In the weeks that followed, crosses were burned. A boat was destroyed. An American family that allowed a Vietnamese

fisherman to dock at its wharf received threats and Klan business cards.

On March 15, 1981, a group of American fishermen and 15 Klan members — some clad in robes, others in black Klan T-shirts or Army fatigues — boarded a boat. They carried shotguns and semiautomatic weapons. With a human effigy

hanging from the ship's rigging and a cannon aboard, they cruised the waters.

The boat pulled up to the home of Nguyen Van Nam, president of the Vietnamese Fishermen's Association. Nguyen's sister-in-law, who was babysitting his daughter, fled the house with the child. The boat continued its maneuvers, terrifying onlookers.

After Dees read about the incident in *The New York Times*, he and SPLC staffers traveled to Texas to stop the Klan.

The Klan's leader, Beam, was combative and volatile. Once, he brought what appeared to be an ivory-handled revolver to a deposition with Dees.

## Court order stops terror

Frightened by the threats and the Klan patrol, the fishermen wanted to drop the case, hoping the Klan would stop. Dees met with the leaders of the Vietnamese community and described how the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the black community kept fighting for their rights in the face of Klan terrorism. Dees told them that dropping the case wouldn't stop the Klan. They would be emboldened and target other Vietnamese-owned businesses.

The fishermen agreed to continue.

The federal court issued an injunction that stopped the terror campaign on July 15, 1981. The case also spurred a ruling that ended the Klan's paramilitary training activities.

Dees recently recalled attending the blessing of the Vietnamese fishermen's boats decades ago — a turning point for an immigrant community that would prosper in the ensuing years.

“As I looked around me, I could see the pride in the faces of these family members who found a place at America's table,” he said.

## Lawsuit filed after students shackled, handcuffed

JACKSON, Miss. — The SPLC has filed a federal class action lawsuit against the Jackson Public School District for allowing an alternative school to shackle and handcuff students for hours at a time as punishment for school uniform violations and other minor infractions.

### School refused to respond

The SPLC filed the lawsuit in June after the school district refused to respond to a letter asking it to end the practice at the Capital City Alternative School. Students at the alternative school were regularly shackled for hours at a time to railings and poles for minor infractions, such as not wearing a belt or wearing mismatched shoelaces. They were left unsupervised and denied classroom instruction.

“At the highest level of the district, Jackson school officials have failed to protect students from a prison-like environment where children are chained to poles and railings for minor, non-criminal violations of school rules,” said Jody Owens, who leads the SPLC's Mississippi office. “Not only does this handcuffing policy violate the U.S. Constitution, it demonstrates a diseased school culture and a broken model of school discipline that focuses on criminalizing students at the expense of educating them.”

One 15-year-old girl was handcuffed to a railing for several hours after she was accused of greeting her friend too loudly in the school hallway. Another student was shackled to a railing for an en-

tire school day for not wearing a belt. The student was even forced to eat lunch while handcuffed. Another spent the entire school day handcuffed to a railing because he wore shoes that school officials deemed to be the wrong color.

### Deliberately pushing out 'undesirable' students

A 2009 American Civil Liberties Union report documented that the alternative school had an “especially punitive atmosphere,” enforcing “its zero tolerance policy ‘to the utmost degree’” and using the policy “to deliberately push out challenging and ‘undesirable’ students.” According to publicly available data, the Jackson Public School District suspends children at twice the rate of the national average.



## SPLC honored with Freedom Prize

SPLC founder Morris Dees (left) accepts on behalf of the SPLC the 2011 Andrew Goodman Freedom Prize. Given by the Walker County (Ala.) Honorary Committee, the presentation was made Aug. 3 by the Rev. David Lewis at the Civil Rights Memorial Center. Each year, the committee presents the award to an individual or organization that has made a valuable contribution to civil and human rights. Goodman is one of the 40 martyrs recognized on the Memorial.

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# SPLC Partners share goals with children

Over a span of 23 years, Catherine "Kitty" and Tim Hartnett made modest, steady gifts to SPLC. They weren't just writing checks, however. They were living, teaching and sharing SPLC goals with their children.

"They were passionate about civil rights and civic engagement," their executor and daughter, Cathie, said. "They read every mailing thoroughly, knew what you were doing and made sure we knew. They were often frustrated with how long it

When their children were grown, Tim and Kitty settled in Bayfield, Wis., on Lake Superior, where Tim taught sailing. Retirement opened travel opportunities, and they spent years in Europe and the Caribbean on their boat. Returning to Bayfield, they immersed themselves in building cultural organizations and supporting environmental projects while preserving historical heritage.

Both Tim and Kitty have passed away, but in 1998, they put a plan in place that would continue to help the causes they served in life. With an adviser's help, the Hartnetts designed a charitable remainder trust for their favorite charities, with the SPLC among them. At the same time, they created a life insurance

trust for their children. "They had three goals," Cathie said. "They wanted to support themselves, leave money to us and support organizations they believed were doing good work."

As always, the children were included in Tim and Kitty's planning. "I learned a lot from them as they described their beliefs and passions for your work," Cathie said.

Now, the Hartnetts' offspring take great comfort in the generous trust gifts they're seeing distributed in Tim and Kitty's names. "It was so terrific when they explained to all of us what they wanted done with their estate," Cathie said. "We considered it a gift then, and we are so proud of them now."



Catherine Hartnett



Tim Hartnett

takes society to change attitudes, but felt that SPLC knew how to fight for sustainable change."

Tim and Kitty's five children now have grandchildren and great-grandchildren to carry on their legacy.

Friends remember the Hartnett home as a place of warmth and welcome, with people from many cultures dropping by at all hours. Kitty was a preschool teacher, and Tim was with Corning glassworks. They always made time to work on community projects together.

The Hartnett children were encouraged to volunteer for social justice causes. "There was as much interest in what we children did for free as in what we did for a living," Cathie recalled.

# Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the SPLC in their wills or other planned gifts. The SPLC gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from July 1, 2010, through July 31, 2011.

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For information about the many planned giving opportunities available at the SPLC — with no obligation — please contact our planned giving department by calling toll-free 1-888-414-7752 or by mailing the form below. You can also visit us online at

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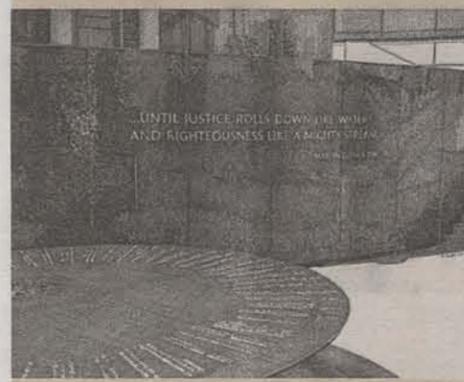
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Civil Rights Memorial

## SPLC challenges Alabama anti-immigrant law

From Page 1

"This law revisits the state's painful racial past and tramples the rights of all Alabama residents."

In June, the SPLC and allied organizations also sued the state of Georgia to stop a similar statute from taking effect. A federal court has temporarily blocked major portions of that law, including a provision allowing police to demand proof of citizenship.

The SPLC suit charges the Alabama law is unconstitutional

on multiple grounds. It will subject residents — including U.S. citizens and non-citizens with permission to be in the United States — to racial profiling as well as unlawful interrogations, searches, seizures and arrests in violation of the Fourth Amendment.

In addition, it will deter the children of immigrants from enrolling in public schools and will bar many non-citizens lawfully within the country from attending public colleges or universities in Alabama. Other

provisions deny individuals access to the state's judicial system due to their immigration status, depriving them of due process guaranteed by the Constitution.

Officials from faith-based organizations fear they will be violating the law by knowingly helping undocumented immigrants.

### Law interferes with religion

"Our mission and the missions of many religious groups across Alabama have been made impossible," said Scott Douglas, executive director of Greater Birmingham Ministries, a plaintiff in the lawsuit. "This law interferes with the free exercise of religion. It violates core values of various faiths because it criminalizes acts of love and hospitality — commandments from our God of many names."

The economic damage from these laws is already evident in Alabama and Georgia, where crops are rotting in the fields — because, apparently, Latino farmworkers have already begun to abandon their jobs.

The lawsuit, *HICA et al. v Robert Bentley, Luther Strange, et al.*, was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama.



VALERIE DOWNES

SPLC Legal Director Mary Bauer answers questions at a press conference announcing the lawsuit challenging Alabama's harsh anti-immigrant legislation.

## College student raises funds to support SPLC's work

College students rarely have extra money, and when they do, they may not think of spending it on others. But Shira Rose Berk is an extraordinary young woman who is determined to make a difference in life.

When Berk, a former student at Hofstra University in Long Island, N.Y., found that her spray-painted T-shirts were in demand around campus, she chose not to spend the proceeds on herself.

### 'Shirt money' to SPLC

"After brainstorming where the 'shirt money' should go, I remembered my stack of *Intelligence Report* magazines in my room," she said. She decided to share her funds with the Southern Poverty Law Center, which publishes the quarterly investigative journal monitoring the radical right.

In 2008, Berk founded MERGE — a name she felt best represented her hopes of bringing together campus organizations with similar social justice goals. She and the student group raised money to support the SPLC and its fight against hate and bigotry.

"We wanted to engage anybody and everybody who is interested in human rights, and if you are not interested, we want to get you interested," Berk said. "Teaching tolerance is that important."

Her father supports the work of the SPLC, and he began sending her its publications as an introduction to the organization.

"They are reminders that there is hatred that makes the world unsafe, and that there are people who work tirelessly to counteract that hatred," she said. "I wanted to support these people."

The group was successful, donating hundreds of dollars to the SPLC over Berk's college career.



Shira Rose Berk (right) and Daria Perrone hold t-shirts they sold to raise funds for the SPLC.

"Our long-term goal, aside from raising as much money as possible, was to increase the number of regular SPLC donors," Berk said. "We created a formal letter asking our friends and colleagues to consider funding SPLC in their annual charitable donations."

"We know that the fight against racism and hatred can motivate large numbers of young people, and our goal at MERGE was to unite them with a thirst for tolerance," Berk wrote when she sent the group's first donation of \$600. "Your work is tireless and giving. We recognize this,

and out of our sincere respect for your dedication, we wish to support you as best we can."

Berk graduated this spring. She and her best friend, Daria Perrone — who was instrumental in MERGE fundraisers — moved to Brooklyn to look for work. One of their last college fundraising efforts raised \$700 for SPLC.



KATE SCHWARTZMANN

New Orleans interns Megan Dawson (from left), Kenneth Ford, Lindsey Menebroeker, Justina LaSalle and Erin Spears

## SPLC offers interns rich experience

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Summer legal interns consider working for the SPLC a privilege. "It has been such an honor to have worked for such a trailblazing organization that continues to do phenomenal work," said Keyla Bade, a student at American University Washington College of Law. "I leave feeling a deeper sense of conviction that will spur me to continue fighting for what I believe is right."

The 2011 summer interns and their schools were:

### Atlanta

Elise McCaffrey, *City University of New York School of Law*  
David Morales, *Columbia University School of Law*  
Jay Singh, *University of Washington School of Law*  
Carly Stadum, *Georgetown University Law Center*  
Nicole Sykes, *Georgia State University College of Law*

### Jackson

Samir Jaber, *University of Wisconsin Law School*  
Caitlin Mitchell, *Yale Law School*

### Miami

Keyla Bade, *American University Washington College of Law*  
Daniel Buigas, *Indiana University Maurer School of Law*  
Jamie Knight, *Loyola University Chicago School of Law*

### Montgomery

Zachary Dembo, *University of Michigan Law School*  
Michael Dreyfuss, *Vanderbilt University Law School*  
Aisha Forte, *Wake Forest University School of Law*  
Anna Fuchs, *University of Minnesota Law School*  
Meredith Rose, *University of North Carolina School of Law*

### New Orleans

Megan Dawson, *University of North Carolina School of Law*  
Kenneth Ford, *Thurgood Marshall School of Law*  
Justina LaSalle, *Loyola University New Orleans College of Law*  
Lindsey Menebroeker, *University of Wisconsin Law School*  
Amber Owens, *Southern University Law Center*  
Erin Spears, *Washington University in St. Louis*



PENNY WEAVER

### Donors visit SPLC

Judith Randall (left) of Staten Island, N.Y., and her daughter, Lily Grace, both SPLC supporters, pose with founder Morris Dees and Lisa Williamson during their April visit to Montgomery. Williamson, a writer and editor for SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program, and Randall are longtime friends.