

TATTERED ROBES

THE STATE OF THE KU KLUX
KLAN IN THE UNITED STATES

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Marvin D. Nathan
National Chair

Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO & National Director

Kenneth Jacobson
Deputy National Director

Deborah M. Lauter
Senior Vice President, Policy and Programs

Steven M. Freeman
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs

Glen S. Lewy
President, Anti-Defamation League Foundation

CENTER ON EXTREMISM

David Friedman
*Vice President, Law Enforcement,
Extremism and Community Security*

Oren Segal
Director, Center on Extremism

Mark Pitcavage
Senior Research Fellow

Carla Hill
Investigative Researcher

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Anti-Defamation League
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158-3560
www.adl.org

Despite a persistent ability to attract media attention, organized Ku Klux Klan groups are actually continuing a long-term trend of decline. They remain a collection of mostly small, disjointed groups that continually change in name and leadership. Down slightly from a year ago, there are currently just over thirty active Klan groups in the United States, most of them very small. However, the association of Klan members with criminal activity has remained consistent.

Current Trends

The long-term decline of Ku Klux Klan groups is due to several factors, including increasing societal rejection of what the Klan stands for; a growing perception by white supremacists that Klan groups are outdated; and competition with other white supremacist movements, from racist skinheads to white supremacist prison gangs, over the small pool of potential recruits.

In recent years, one of the clearest signs of the declining state of Ku Klux Klan groups has been in their complete inability to maintain anything resembling stability. More than half of the currently active Klan groups were formed only in the last five years. This is not, as it may first seem, a sign of growth, but rather illustrates how short-lived today's Ku Klux Klan groups actually tend to be. Just some of the recently disbanded Klan groups include the Aryan Nations Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Eastern White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and the United Dixie White Knights.

While a few longstanding Klan groups still exist, they continue to fade away. Just a decade ago, Klan groups such as the White Camelia Knights, the Mississippi White Knights, and the Church of the National Knights exhibited consistent activity. Today, all three are mere shadows of their former selves.

Despite their diminishing numbers, there are still approximately 3,000 Klan members nationwide, as well an additional but unknown number of associates and supporters. Even with relatively small numbers, groups like the North Carolina-based Loyal White Knights (LWK), perhaps the most active Klan group in the United States today, have a fairly expansive geographical reach. In 2015, with just 150-200 members, they were able to draw attention to themselves in 15 different states (mostly in the south and east), typically through fliering, which requires only a single participant.

Other Klan groups are smaller still—often considerably smaller. For example, the Kentucky-based Elders Blood-N-Blood Out Knights (EBBOK) consists of just a handful of members. Formed in 2015 by disgruntled members of the LWK who believe the LWK leader, Christopher Barker, had been a federal informant against another Klansman, EBBOK also serves as an example of the fractious and unstable nature of Ku Klux Klan groups.

Many of the newer Klan groups promote a traditional Klan ideology infused with neo-Nazi beliefs, continuing a trend from the early 2000s. EBBOK itself is one of these, its website explaining, "We are a Christian hate group. We are a group unlike other groups. We accept all Nazis and skin heads (sic) cause we have the same beliefs." Two such Klan groups have already formed in 2016: the Great Lake Knights, based in Alpena, Michigan, and the Pacific Coast Knights of Spokane, Washington.



For some Klan groups, embracing neo-Nazi tenets has resulted in symbiotic relationships with neo-Nazi groups. For example, in 2015, Bradley Jenkins, leader of the Alabama-based United Klans of America (UKA), formed an alliance with Dennis McGiffen's Sadistic Souls, an Illinois-based faction of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations. This alliance, referred to by members as the "Black & Silver Solution," also includes James Logsdon's small faction of the Creativity Movement and Missouri members of the Right-Wing Resistance, a neo-Nazi group that originated in New Zealand. Since joining the alliance, UKA has held private events in Alabama and Tennessee; typically drawing around 50 people. During the week of Hitler's birthday, the UKA welcomed their "Black and Silver brothers" to their April rally in Alabama that included a cross burning and several Klan weddings.

The increasing ties also result in more joint events—which can help mask the small numbers that individual white supremacist groups are able to generate. The LWK frequently employs this tactic in its few public rallies. In July 2015, the LWK used this approach when they organized a Columbia, South Carolina, rally to protest the decision by state legislators to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Statehouse grounds in Columbia, following the deadly mass shooting in Charleston by white supremacist Dylann Storm Roof. Approximately 125 white supremacists (the largest public white supremacist gathering in 2015) participated in the rally, including members of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM), the Nordic Order Knights, the Fraternal Order of the Cross, and the Trinity White Knights. Additionally, more than three dozen members of the LWK and several members of the Texas Rebel Knights (TRK) attended the recent April 2016 NSM rally in Rome, Georgia.

Similarly, last November, several members of the TRK rallied against immigration and alleged white genocide alongside the NSM and LWK at the Lee County Justice Center in Tupelo, Mississippi. In fact, only nine of the approximately 35 attendees were Klan members. Later the same month, TRK members attended an anti-Muslim protest outside an Irving, Texas, mosque. Rebuffed by the organizer of that event, they later planned their own protest of the mosque, now scheduled for May 2016.

The TRK are not the only Klan to recently express anti-Muslim sentiment in an attempt to exploit and take advantage of rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. In December 2015 and in January, and March 2016, Klan members distributed anti-Muslim flyers in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and West Virginia. The flyers found in Alabama and Georgia urged readers to join the LWK and "help fight the spread of Islam." The flyers found in Florida and West Virginia provided contact information for the West Virginia-based Original Knight Riders (OKR) and warned that Sharia law was being implemented in the United States. Additionally, the OKR also dedicated a portion of their website to a diatribe against Islam titled "The Enemy Within." This screed includes a section that lists "key red flags" that are supposed to help people "spot radical Islamists," but which actually describe common practices among observant Muslims.

In a similar vein, Paul LaMonica, the leader of the Tennessee-based Ku Klux Knights, has called for all of his members to start handgun training and to obtain concealed weapon permits. His website announcement warned, "This country is being attacked by Muslim Extremists who are out to destroy us! You will never go anywhere without being armed, you WILL know your enemy and where he congregates and with whom, you will learn how to act and react to the danger within."

Tactics and Activity

Klan groups continue to use attention-getting stunts to attract publicity to make up for their lack of numbers. In 2015, the International Keystone Knights made news for appealing an "adopt a highway" court ruling in Georgia, a common white supremacist publicity stunt, while the Arkansas-based Knights Party drew attention after sponsoring a racist billboard in their home state.



The most common Klan tactic, however, continues to be the spreading of fliers to broadcast their racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, and increasingly Islamophobic messages. Over the course of 2015, the Anti-Defamation League counted 86 separate incidents in which Klan fliers were left on doorsteps or driveways in neighborhoods around the country, an increase from the 73 incidents tallied in 2014.

These leafleting efforts take the place of public Klan rallies, once the most visible sign of Klan activity in many parts of the country, but which declining Klan group memberships make harder and harder to arrange. Klan rallies remain at an all-time low and are not well attended. For example, only six LWK members attempted a “white-lives matter” rally in Anaheim, California, in February. The short-lived rally ended in mayhem when the would-be-ralliers were attacked by counter-protesters.

There were only five public Klan rallies in 2015. The first occurred in March when approximately 20 Klan members participated in a racially charged counter-rally in response to Martin Luther King, Jr., Day commemorations in Montgomery, Alabama. The second was an April rally in St Louis, Missouri, when several members of the now-defunct Aryan Nations Knights joined approximately 20 other white supremacists to protest alleged “white genocide” and the ongoing federal incarceration of Gary Yarbrough, a former member of the 1980s white supremacist terrorist group known as The Order. Two of the five Klan rallies were the previously mentioned events held with neo-Nazis in South Carolina and Mississippi.

The fifth public rally occurred in October, when six members of the International Keystone Knights counter-protested a student-led assembly against the use of the Mississippi state flag on the University of Mississippi campus. The students were calling for the removal of the state flag from the campus because its design contains a Confederate flag.

Criminal Activity

Within the past year, individuals connected to the Klan movement have been convicted of a wide range of crimes from murder sprees to assault. They have attempted and conspired to commit murder, and committed assaults. They have been arrested for illegally possessing a variety of weapons, from brass knuckles to weapons of mass destruction.

It is worth observing that a number of these criminal incidents are independent of Klan or Klan-like activities. Those incidents do illustrate, though, how Klan groups often attract people with criminal histories or tendencies.

The following is a list of recent criminal activity that can be attributed to current and former members of Ku Klux Klan groups:

- **Dooley County, Georgia, April 2016:** Former Klan leader Joseph J. Harper died after a shootout with law enforcement officers who were at his home with a court order to collect property awarded to Harper’s ex-wife. Armed with several weapons, and wearing a gas mask and body armor, Harper allegedly pointed a shotgun at Dooley County deputies who were attempting to retrieve the property. During the lengthy standoff that followed, Harper moved in and out of the home firing rounds at the deputies and SWAT Team who returned fire at least once. After hearing a shotgun blast inside the home, the SWAT team fired canisters of gas and non-lethal deterrents in to the home. A short time later Harper was found dead from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot.
- **Bristol, Connecticut, January 2015:** On January 6, Bristol police arrested William E. Dodge, a former Grand Dragon of the now-defunct Unified Ku Klux Klan, on charges of assault on a police officer, operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Dodge was stopped by police after he allegedly failed to obey a stop sign and drove the wrong way on a one-way street. Dodge served time in prison in the 1990’s for buying a pipe bomb and handgun from an undercover federal agent.



- **Ozark, Alabama, February 2015:** On February 6, a federal judge sentenced Klan member Pamela Morris to 10 months in prison for lying to a federal grand jury investigating a cross-burning committed by her son, Steven Joshua Dinkle. During her guilty plea, Morris admitted that she had lied about her position as secretary of the Ozark Klan chapter for the International Keystone Knights and about her knowledge of her son's role in the cross burning.
- **Lake Butler, Florida, April 2015:** FBI agents arrested three members of the Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan on charges of plotting to murder a black inmate in retaliation for a prison fight. All three men, Thomas Jordan Driver, David Elliot Moran, and Charles Thomas Newcomb, were employed or previously employed by the Florida Department of Corrections.
- **Providence, New York, August 2015:** A federal jury in late August convicted a New York man involved in a bizarre plot to procure and use a radiation-emitting weapon. The jury found Glendon S. Crawford guilty of conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction and distributing information relating to weapons of mass destruction. To help finance the construction of the weapon, Crawford inexplicably approached two synagogues in New York (who contacted the authorities), as well as the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina, trying to get them to give him money for the purported device. Crawford himself claimed to be or to have been a member of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.
- **Hampton Bays, New York, September 2015:** Southampton police arrested Klan member Douglas Munker on September 9 outside of a local bar. Police reportedly found Munker, a member of the Loyal White Knights, to be in possession of a black powder antique pistol and brass knuckles. Having the pistol did not warrant any criminal charges, since it was an antique, but the brass knuckles were illegal. Police charged Munker with third-degree felony weapon possession.
- **Tuscaloosa, Alabama, September 2015:** In late September, a federal judge in Montgomery, Alabama, sentenced International Keystone Knights chapter leader Joshua Dinkle to 10 months in jail for violating his supervised release conditions. In July, Dinkle missed an appointment for a mental evaluation and left Dothan in August without informing his probation officer; Dinkle was required to receive permission to leave the middle district of Alabama. Dinkle was on supervised release after having served a two-year sentence for a 2009 cross-burning incident in Ozark.
- **Janesville, Wisconsin, October 2015:** When police in Janesville arrested Robert Landrum on October 8 on gun possession charges, they discovered he allegedly had plans to use one of his weapons to shoot and kill Nancy Welch, a former assistant district attorney who was part of the team that sent him to prison in 1993 on sex abuse charges. Landrum, a former Ku Klux Klan member who was active in Klan activities in the Janesville area in the early 1990s, spent six years in prison. This is not the first time Landrum had allegedly expressed murderous intentions towards Welch: in 1993, he was accused of plotting to kill the former Rock County prosecutor for being "vindictive." Landrum was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon.
- **Oxford, Mississippi, Oct 2015:** On October 19, University of Mississippi police officers arrested two Klan members for having a firearm in a school zone; the arrest led to federal weapons charges. During a protest against the removal of the Mississippi state flag from the University of Mississippi campus, Virgil Dennison and Kyler Campbell, members of the International Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, allegedly parked a truck with two loaded shotguns in it on the college campus.
- **Bronson, Florida, October 2015:** On October 26, a federal judge sentenced Jamie Vincent Ward, a grand dragon with the Traditionalist American Knights, to seven years in prison after he pleaded guilty to two counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm. In April, federal investigators conducted search and arrest warrants at Ward's home after determining that Ward, a convicted felon, had transferred a .22 caliber rifle to another person for conversion to a fully automatic weapon. During the search, an additional weapon, a 9mm pistol, was found in Ward's home.



- **Burlington, Vermont, October 2015:** On November 12, Burlington police charged Klansman William Schenk with two counts of aggravated disorderly conduct enhanced with a hate crime specification after he allegedly targeted two minority women by placing Klan recruitment fliers in their mail boxes. At the time of his arrest, Schenk was on probation for arson charges in North Carolina. According to police, Schenk is a member of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.
- **Lexington, South Carolina, November 2015:** On November 5, a circuit court judge in Columbia, South Carolina, sentenced white supremacist leader August Kreis III to 50 years in prison on charges of one count of criminal sexual conduct involving a minor child and two counts of committing lewd acts on a child. Kreis participated in a variety of Klan and neo-Nazi groups over the many years he spent as an active white supremacist.
- **Kansas, Missouri, November 2015:** On November 10, a Kansas judge sentenced white supremacist Frazier Glen Miller to death for his April 2014 shooting spree at Jewish institutions in Overland Park, Kansas, that left three dead. A longtime white supremacist and 1980s Ku Klux Klan member, Miller was convicted on a single count of capital murder for shooting and killing three people outside a Jewish Community Center and the Village Shalom care center.
- **Chillicothe, Illinois, December 2015:** On December 10, a Peoria County court sentenced self-described Klan member James R. Tankersley, Sr., to four years in prison after he pleaded guilty to aggravated discharge of a firearm. The charges stemmed from a May incident in which Tankersley shot at his wife and children during a domestic dispute.
- **Sterling, Virginia, December 2015:** On December 10, a Loudoun County Circuit court sentenced Dallas W. Brumback, Jr., to 10 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to one count of attempted first-degree murder, four counts of felony child abuse and neglect, and two drug charges. According to court documents, Brumback offered to pay an undercover officer \$5,000 to murder his ex-wife. Brumback also informed the undercover officer that he had been part of the white supremacist Christian Identity movement for several years and wanted to train other adherents in paramilitary tactics. Brumback also had Klan ties and, according to court records, discussed the possibility of marking the 150th anniversary of the Klan by placing a pipe bomb at an unspecified mosque.
- **Texarkana, Texas, March 2016:** Steven Joshua Dinkle, former chapter leader for the International Keystone Knights, was arraigned in federal court on charges of being a felon in possession of a firearm. On March 3, a federal grand jury returned a felony indictment against Dinkle, a convicted felon, charging him with possession of a .32-caliber pistol. At the time of his arraignment, Dinkle was serving a 10-month federal prison sentence. (See related entry above: *Tuscaloosa, Alabama, September 2015*.)



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New York, NY 10158-3560
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