

## Chapter 27 Klandestine

The Ku Klux Klan was not very active in the Delta, some Mississippians will argue. Planters, after all, needed African Americans to manage their agriculture and did not want them scared away.

But the truth is that Klan membership ran across all social and economic levels around the entire state including Delta. Besides African Americans, the Klan's enemies included Catholics and Jews, those who helped blacks, drug dealers, homosexuals, and civil rights workers, both black and white. Klan targets were often scapegoats used to explain the lack of economic success among Klansmen, according to the Anti-Defamation League.<sup>i</sup>

Most Klansmen operated under a sense of victimization, believing they were "under attack" and must protect their way of life, thus justifying acts of intimidation, murder, torture, and terrorism as "self defense."

Klansmen responded that their organization never attacked innocent victims; Klan members were simply responding to a breach of the God-given rights of whites.<sup>ii</sup> After World War II, many white Southern veterans considered that they fought the war to keep their rights or their "way of life" intact, including the right of segregation, a surprise to black veterans who believed they were fighting for true democracy that included their civil rights.

When the Klan was re-established throughout the South in 1915, its numbers grew, as did the number and intensity of violent acts committed by members. But as numerous scandals erupted, the rank-and-file became alienated by the sexual and alcoholic exploits of its leaders and by the time of the Great Depression in 1929, the Klan had already broken up into dozens of independent groups and national membership dropped. The last of the universally recognized Imperial Wizards, Dr. Samuel Green, died in 1949.<sup>iii</sup>

Although Delta planter Sen. Leroy Percy in the early 1920s is attributed for routing the Klan from Washington County, fearing they would drive off black plantation laborers, Klansmen remained in the region according to various historical accounts, included among them a letter written by Florence Sillers Ogden in which she "suspected" her well-known Bolivar planter husband, Harry, to be a Klansman.

A "message" from the K.K.K.

"To the Negroes of Chickasaw and Calhoun Counties."

We are going to kill the parents of the negro children now attending white schools. Time is no problem we have plenty of it, they do not.

We want the negroes out of the white schools at once. This is just a sample. It is now up to the innocent ones to get them out, or the trouble will not stop.

Some of the teachers in Chickasaw County are telling the white children to play with the negro children. They may soon need replacing. There is also a County Board Member who will not be here long.

There have been some white people (often referred to as white niggers) in Calhoun County, teaching in negro schools. We want them out of the county.

We want the white non-K.K.K. members to support us. It will be a long hard fight with the government, but we will win. Above all do not give up. There is nothing they can do or they would already have done it.

There is no way an evil force of government can stop a God fearing man. It is time to do something about the negroes and low class whites.<sup>iv</sup>

Responding to labor problems, she wrote to a friend, he had “not only gotten to be a typical Southern planter, but I strongly suspect him of being a Cyclops in the KKK, and if the exodus of negroes continues, he will fire on Ft. Sumpter and secede from the union.”<sup>v</sup>

Klan activity grew extensively in the Delta, as blacks were demanding better education, housing, and fair treatment by the courts and police.<sup>vi</sup> More African Americans had insisted on the right to vote by 1942, and were now challenging Jim Crow laws directly in public facilities and in the military, provoking Klansmen to attack. Many Delta blacks now reacted to Klan violence through lawsuits supported by the NAACP, boycotts, and open defiance of segregation

#### *Greenville man remembers Klansmen*

Charles Felder Sudduth Jr. said he witnessed Klan activity near Greenville in 1957. As an eleven-year-old who lived “about a hundred yards from the pretty little stream called Deer Creek,” Sudduth reported seeing a triple lynching take place in 1957 by Klan members. Traveling the narrow concrete highway 61 until he came to the little village of Arcola, Mississippi, about 7 miles from his home, Sudduth recalled the scene:

[In] the middle of the town there was a crossroad (state highway 438) that intersected the main road and also spanned the creek. I remember that there were buildings on both sides of the road and there was a cotton gin on the other side of the creek. There were two or three pickup trucks parked on the side of the road. There were several men leaning against the trucks.

All of them were looking at the bridge that spanned the creek so I too looked at the bridge and saw what appeared to be three bundles of dirty tattered rags suspended above the water in the creek.... Staring upon the scene, I realized ... there were three dead black men hanging from the bridge. It was astounding to see that any persons could appear to be so restful and relaxed. Too little to realize what I was seeing at the time, a few years later the memory came back to haunt me in a recurring nightmare that afflicted me for over 20 years and still occasionally returns.<sup>vii</sup>

Rural Mississippi youngsters knew about the Klan and about the lynching that went on, particularly since Klan members gave regular talks in some public schools, Sudduth asserts. "Mr. A." and his wife often lectured at Sudduth's school, "relating to the entire student body ... their histories of lynching black people and to exhort the school children to follow in the footsteps of the Ku Klux Klan/Baptist church." Sudduth said the last time he heard the couple speak to schoolchildren was in 1961, when he was fourteen:<sup>xiii</sup>

When we quieted down, the lights were dimmed and slowly the purple curtains were drawn open to reveal Mr. and Mrs. A. on the stage. Mrs. A. would take the podium first to relate how they captured a black man, allegedly having stolen a necklace from a store in town. She also said that it was quickly determined (without the benefit of trial or arraignment of course) that the man's wife had taken part in the crime by distracting the storekeeper's attention.

Mrs. A. said that a cage was constructed on the outskirts of town into which the man and his wife were placed. She said that white people came by for three days to torture the couple, burning them with faggots and jabbing them with sticks. She said that at the end of the third day, the cage was doused with coal oil then ignited and the couple was burned alive.... With the mention of each atrocity, Mr. A. who was sitting on a stool beside her, would swell up his chest a little more or raise his head a little higher. He was saying, not in words, but in body language that he took part.<sup>x</sup>

Years later, [Klansman] Byron de la Beckwith "used the same tactic in bragging all over the state of having murdered Medgar Evers; he boasted endlessly how he shot Medgar in the back but was always careful ... not to put his admission in direct words." Sudduth said.

#### *Mississippi's W. K. of the K.K.K.*

Southern civil-rights activities during the 1950s and 1960s provided new momentum to the Klan, resulting in revivals of scattered Klan organizations. The most notable was Mississippi's White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan established in 1963 by Sam Bowers, imperial wizard, and considered the most violent Klan group operating in the United States.<sup>x</sup>

The White Knights first organized in Mississippi four months after Meredith was admitted to the University of Mississippi in 1962 as a branch of the Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan located in Louisiana. Klan organizers crossed the Mississippi line and began helping Mississippians build a chapter in Natchez.

The Mississippi chapter, bickering over handling of the money, splintered from the Louisiana group, forming their own organization separate from Louisiana as the White Knights of Mississippi. In early 1964, the White Knights' leader, Sam Holloway Bowers, Jr., 39, drafted the new organization's constitution and was either elected or decided he would become imperial wizard. Bowers concentrated his recruiting in Laurel and the larger city to his Northeast, Meridian.

White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi held its founding meeting on February 15, 1964. Within a week, the FBI began monitoring the group and sending reports to John Doar's office. On April 24,

the FBI reported a simultaneous burning of crosses in sixty-one locations across Mississippi. By early June, Klaverns were identified in twenty-one counties, including Lauderdale and Neshoba.

“Because the Klan was largely being revived for the holy cause of repulsing the invasion of civil rights workers during the summer, recruitment of new members was emphasized. By Memorial Day, 1964, when the state’s Klavern leaders met to finalize their strategy and receive Sam Bowers’ benediction, statewide membership was estimated at a phenomenal ten thousand men.”<sup>xi</sup>

A statistical chart prepared by the Jackson FBI field office indicated that while there were 175 acts of violence (civil rights-connected shootings, beatings, bombings and burnings) in Mississippi in the last seven months of 1964, the number almost doubled by the end of July 1966.<sup>xii</sup>

Law professor Doug Linder, who studies famous trials, said he has worked to get into Bowers’ head, describing the small town businessman as “typical of the semi-worldly, semi-literate men who occupied leadership positions within the Klan.”

Bowers, of Laurel, was a Navy veteran who briefly attended college, then became a partner in Sambo Amusements, a jukebox and vending machine business. Paradoxically, Bowers employees were all black.<sup>xiii</sup> Bowers was known for his white supremacy, anti-Supreme Court views, a passion for guns and explosives, and “a swastika fetish.”<sup>xiv</sup>

Ultimately, the Klan leader ended up in the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl for ordering the 1966 murder of Hattiesburg civil rights activist Vernon Dahmer. After four previous trials ending in deadlocks, Bowers was convicted in August 1998 by a jury of six blacks, one Asian American, and five whites and was sentenced to life in prison.

It was also Bowers who authorized “the elimination” of “Goatee,” the Klan’s name for Michael Schwerner, who headed the CORE office in Meridian starting in January of 1964 until his death later that year.

#### *Need for Federal Oversight*

By the summer of 1964, there was concern by some federal government officials over the impending law-enforcement crisis in Mississippi. A presidential aide to President Johnson, Lee White, sent Johnson a memo reporting the details of a conversation he had with Charles Evers:

Just about all the people concerned with this program visualize trouble. According to Evers, county law enforcement officers are securing high-powered rifles, every Negro home in Mississippi probably has at least one weapon, and state legislation has been enacted to facilitate the deputizing of private citizens. There is, however, tremendous respect for U. S. Marshals and other Justice Department personnel, so much so that it might be useful if we try to find a basis for locating Marshals or other Justice Department people in each of the communities as a stabilizing influence.”<sup>xv</sup>

White suggested that President Johnson contact Mississippi’s governor “to determine if there is some way the registration drive can be conducted without violence and bloodshed.” In covering this era of the Civil

Rights Movement, authors Seth Cagin and Philip Dray found evidence of wide discussion over the potential likelihood of a major civil rights crisis in the summer of 1964 – including communication between presidential aide McGeorge Bundy, the President, the attorney general, and John Doar:

President Johnson followed Kennedy's recommendations. In early June 1964 Al Rosen, assistant director in charge of the FBI's Criminal Division, sent Joseph Sullivan, one of his top inspectors, to assess whether the bureau was prepared to deal with a possible explosion of Klan violence. There was no FBI office in Mississippi, only a handful of 'resident agents' such as John Proctor in Meridian, who worked out of their homes or manned desks in post offices or federal office buildings. The duties of the eight FBI agents stationed in and around Jackson mostly involved tracing stolen cars.<sup>xvi</sup>

After conferring with those agents, Joseph Sullivan concluded that the civil rights caseload in Southern Mississippi was manageable. "Moreover, Sullivan was assured that the New Orleans-based agents were well aware of a potential problem – their district included Klan-ridden Amite, Pike, and Wilkinson counties – and were prepared to deal with it should it arise.

"When Sullivan visited the Memphis office, responsible for the Northern half of Mississippi, the story was different. The agents there – many of whom were native Mississippians who lived and worked in small Mississippi towns – insisted they anticipated no problem at all."

Sullivan was not convinced and waited in Memphis for the start of the Northern students "invasion." The bureau had watched the White Knights, but Sullivan was not enthusiastic about the quality of the intelligence that was gathered – the bureau had not even cultivated quality informants.<sup>xvii</sup>

His instincts proved true, as Sullivan was informed June 22 of the disappearance of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney. He was ordered to go to Meridian where he would stay for the next nine months.

#### The "MBI"

Mississippi had and still has its own local FBI type of agency. Nearly twenty years before the Philadelphia murders, the Mississippi Association of Judges, working through Hinds County Judge Luther Manship, began looking into establishing a Mississippi State Bureau of Investigation to augment services provided by the FBI.<sup>xviii</sup>

Judge Manship contacted the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Jackson, asking for help in determining whether such a state Bureau was needed. FBI facilities were available to local law enforcement at no cost, but Manship was concerned the Bureau could not assign its own agents to assist Mississippi officers in investigating serious crimes of a local nature – something a state bureau could provide with its own "highly trained investigators."<sup>xix</sup>

Manship wrote to J. Edgar Hoover at the same time, requesting information that would help determine need for a Mississippi Bureau that would assist in the detection and punishment of

crime, since “at present Mississippi has no state-wide law enforcement agency, except the highway patrol, which operates under limitations.”<sup>xx</sup>

Mississippi Governor Fielding L. Wright was also concerned over need for a state Bureau of Investigation and called the state legislature into special session in November of 1947 “to provide laws and investigative personnel to handle cases of violence growing out of the Southern Trailways Bus strike in Mississippi.”

The legislature met his request, appropriating \$100,000 to create the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation under the direct supervision of Colonel T. B. Birdsong. The New Orleans SAC director informed Hoover: “Birdsong is an old Army man and formerly Chief of Police at Clarksdale.... and was also placed in charge of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol when that organization was established in 1938.”<sup>xxi</sup>

In June, Gov. Wright announced the state’s “dormant secret police force” would be called back into action “if the need arises.” His statement was made as news reports arrived of renewed strike violence against the Southern Trailways Bus Co. The governor said he wanted to “spike the idea that he would be powerless to use the secret force if necessary.”<sup>xxii</sup>

Yet less than a year later, Wright announced the “secret investigation unit was disbanded.” Wright said the unit had been set up the previous year “to cope with violence in a strike of bus drivers which spread over the State.” The Bureau, with power to arrest without warrants and agents operating out of uniforms, “. . . was dubbed a ‘Gestapo’ by opponents.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

Wright said he didn’t ask for “such a force” in the first place. “It has never been used. The violence responsible for its creation ceased when the force was organized.” It turned out, the act creating MBI provided that members would be known only to the Governor. Investigators were given authority in crimes of violence to make arrests without warrants. The right to make searches and seizures without warrant . . . was also provided. Wright asked for funding of a “non-secret bureau,” instead, “to replace the present force.”

In later years, Mississippi government was accused of making direct payments to the Klan during Civil Rights Movement years. James Dickerson in his book, *Dixie’s Dirty Secrets*, quoted retired FBI agent Joe Sullivan: “We probably made a mistake of not making a more intensive probe of the [Sovereignty] Commission. I think that was perhaps the key to a lot of the problems. I was aware they had money. I always suspected the White Knights were funded in some fashion by the Commission.

“In the years that followed, I wished we had done some probing in that area. We had nothing that would allow us to subpoena the documents,” Sullivan said. The agent was in charge of the FBI’s effort to track

down the killers of the three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The Sovereignty Commission in fact gave thousands of dollars to the Citizens Council through annual payments from state funds. Existing Commission records show that from July 1, 1960, through June 30, 1965, the state Sovereignty Commission paid \$169,500 to the private group.<sup>xxv</sup>

The FBI later claimed that one of its own special operations – COINTELPRO-White – focused on breaking up the Klan. Some historians and activists disagree, and suggest the agency’s monitoring focused instead on civil rights activists and perceived communists:

Journalist and researcher Benjamin Greenberg believes that to the contrary, “No serious efforts were made to explore the supplemental role of White Citizens' Councils, many of which were active Klan fronts, let alone investigate the obvious and widespread police complicity in racist violence. Bureau surveillance of the Klan was purely passive, hardly the directed aggression reserved for left-wing targets.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

Mississippi Klan events scheduled for 2004 included a Laurel rally on November 6 sponsored by the Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Knight Alliance. A rally was set in Star a week later sponsored by the White Knights, according to the Anti-Defamation League’s calendar of Klan events.

### *The roots of fear*

There is a deep-seated fear by many Southerners of African Americans and their culture, a fear that might help account for some of their worst lynching and Klan behavior. Some suspicions were, and maybe still are, based on a cultural practice Africans carried through the generations (and still practiced today) that some whites saw as “voodoo.”

The Delta’s antebellum planters and their families were often frightened of what they perceived as witchcraft activities practiced against them by those they enslaved or oppressed. Often, the most powerful and significant individual on the early plantation was the black conjurer whose identity was always kept secret.

Conjurers were traditionally involved with "maroons" or runaway slaves, and in the Caribbean Islands where these priests and priestesses practiced voodoo, there was sufficient power within their own communities to organize and execute revolts, with disastrous consequences for those slave-owners and their families. Early Delta planters often heard of these island rebellions, and this added to their own fears of such revolts occurring on their soil.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### *Two-headed Doctors*

Over the years in the Delta, a small number of black practitioners referred to as "two-headed doctors" (i.e., persons of “double wisdom”)<sup>xxviii</sup> have carried forward earlier African medicine and charm practices, along with more traditional folk medicine. One man in his small church outside of Drew in 2004 used skills learned from “Doc” Johnson, a well-known “two-headed doctor” of earlier years whose patients often lined the road to his country church, coming from as far away as Switzerland.

“Doc” Johnson’s practice continued well into the late 1970s until he died.<sup>xxix</sup> His son, part African, part Choctaw Indian and part white, took over the practice and uses a mix of beliefs, customs and botanical

knowledge from all three heritages – resulting in what folk researcher Catherine Yronwode calls *hoodoo*.<sup>xxx</sup> Other two-headed doctors practice throughout the Delta, as well.

Yronwode ties hoodoo to the Delta's blues, observing that some of the clearest descriptions of magical materials and their methods of employment can be found in acoustic blues of the period between the two World Wars. As example, she gives mention in some blues songs of *High John the Conqueror root* – a staple of African-American folk magic.

The name implies power and prosperity to many and refers to *John the Conqueror*, a black slave whose life inspired slaves to rebel behind their owners' backs. John was said to be the captured son of an African king who never became subservient. His cleverness at tricking his master supplied many stories with a pointed moral:

If he was a real being, he soon acquired some of the characteristics of mythical trickster figures like the Native American Coyote, the African-American Bre'r Rabbit, and the West African deity known variously as Elegua, Legba, and Eshu. He gave – only to take away. He bet – and never lost. He played dumb – but he was never outsmarted. The reputation of High John is so great that, as recorded by the folklorist Harry Middleton Hyatt in the 1930s, just reciting the words 'John over John' and 'John the Conqueror' is a powerful spell of magical protection against being hoodooed.<sup>xxxi</sup>

*My John the Conqueror Root*

My pistol may snap, my mojo<sup>xxxii</sup> is frail  
But i rub my root, my luck will never fail  
When i rub my root, my John the Conquer root  
Aww, you know there ain't nothin' she can do, Lord,  
I rub my John the Conquer root

I was accused of murder in the first degree  
The judge's wife cried, "Let the man go free!"  
I was rubbin' my root, my John the Conquer root  
Aww, you know there ain't nothin' she can do, Lord,  
I rub my John the Conquer root

*My John The Conquer Root* (Willie Dixon)

Muddy Waters, vocal; J.T. Brown, tenor sax; James Cotton, harmonica; Otis Spann, piano; Pee Wee Madison, guitar; Milton Rector, bass; S.P. Leary, drums.  
Recorded: Chicago, Ill., Oct 1964

<sup>i</sup> Anti-Defamation League website, 2004.

<sup>ii</sup> Anti-Defamation League.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> [Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission file\(s\) SCR ID # 6-53-0-34-1-1-1](#).

<sup>v</sup> Woodruff, 151. Cites letter from Sillers Ogden to George McLaurin, May 26, 1923, Florence Sillers Ogden Papers, box 1, Sillers Papers.

<sup>vi</sup> Woodruff, 187

<sup>vii</sup> Interview with Charles Felder Sudduth Jr., 2004, also from Sudduth's unpublished autobiography, "A History with Personal Memories."

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid. [Sudduth actually names the man and wife in his account.](#)

<sup>x</sup> John Drabble, Ph.D., "From Vigilante Violence to Revolutionary Terror: FBI Operations against the Ku Klux Klan, 1964-1971," 2003.

<sup>xi</sup> "We Are Not Afraid," 392.

<sup>xii</sup> Doug Linder. Biographical information on Sam Bowers and FBI statistics were compiled by Prof. Doug Linder of University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law (online).

<sup>xiii</sup> George Edward Miller, a native of Laurel, interviewed by Susan Klopfer in February 2005.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> "We Are Not Afraid," 393-394.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid., 396.

<sup>xvii</sup> Ibid., 396, 397.

<sup>xviii</sup> Office Memorandum to FBI director from SAC, Jackson, regarding "Establishment of Mississippi Bureau of Investigation," dated April 27, 1945. Acquired under the Freedom of Information Act.

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<sup>xix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xx</sup> Letter from Judge Luther Manship to J. Edgar Hoover, dated April 27, 1945. Acquired under the Freedom of Information Act.

<sup>xxi</sup> Office memo to FBI director from SAC, New Orleans, dated December 11, 1947, regarding "Mississippi Bureau of Investigation," Acquired under the Freedom of Information Act.

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<sup>xxii</sup> Associated Press, "Wright Says Secret Police May be Called Up Again," *Washington Star*, June 26, 1948, A-2. Acquired under the Freedom of Information Act.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Associated Press, "Secret Investigation Unit Disbanded in Mississippi," *Washington Star*, March 1, 1949, 1.

<sup>xxiv</sup> James Dickerson, *Dixie's Dirty Secrets*, 1998, 229.

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<sup>xxv</sup> Mississippi created the State Sovereignty Commission in March 1956 as its executive agency for the purpose of "protecting the sovereignty of the state of Mississippi, and her sister states, from encroachment thereon by the Federal Government." The agency functioned as the state's "segregation watchdog agency."

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Benjamin T. Greenberg, "Don't Thank COINTELPRO. Thank Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner," *Hungry Blues blog*, June 23, 2004, <<http://minorjive.typepad.com/hungryblues/>>. Greenberg was reacting to a 2004 article in *The New York Times* by David

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Cunningham that he found "particularly outrageous and hard to fathom." "Cunningham's article, presumably a precis of his recent book, compares FBI counter intelligence programs (known as COINTELPRO) against New Left political organizations and against

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the Ku Klux Klan. He states: While the FBI's campaign against antiwar subversives, was largely ineffective, a considerably less ardent campaign against the Ku Klux Klan and its allies proved devastating. In the late 60's and early 70's, membership in white hate groups

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dropped as much as 70 percent; paranoia over infiltration reached such heights that the national Klan leader, Robert Shelton, threatened to use polygraph tests and truth serum to gauge members' loyalty. While the FBI sought to dismantle the New Left, it

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merely hoped to control the white right. And yet its activities did far more damage to the racists than to the radicals." According to Greenberg, "Cunningham has some strange ideas about what made these programs effective, and about what constituted damage. It

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seems to be true that the FBI had a role in dissipating the membership and activities of the Klan. But the FBI was an abysmal failure

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in its duty to pursue Klan members who were responsible for vicious, violent crimes. In the case of the Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman murders, seven Klansmen were convicted for violating the civil rights of the three young men and sentenced to three to ten years in prison, none of them serving more than six years. No one has ever been charged with the murders of the three civil rights workers. There have been murder convictions in the earlier case of the 1963 murders of Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley and Carole Robertson, the four young girls who were killed in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama: in 1977 Klansman Robert Edward Chambliss was convicted of one count of murder in Carol McNair's death, and in 2001, Klansman Thomas Blanton was found guilty of four counts of first degree murder, and sentenced to life imprisonment. The woeful delay in these convictions was the clear fault of the FBI, which had all the evidence necessary for them but would not release it when prosecutors asked for the FBI documents pertaining to the case. There were also others implicated in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing who were never charged with any crime. In 1961, when Klansmen and other white supremacists ambushed and brutally beat Freedom Riders in Birmingham, it was on a tip from the FBI and with cooperation from the Birmingham Police. These are just three reasonably well known cases. The depth and breadth of FBI involvement in and support of the Klan's violent suppression of African-Americans and their allies requires a book length catalog. Suppression of African-American militancy was a shared goal of the FBI and the Klan. (In fact, stemming African-American militancy was a career-long objective of J. Edgar Hoover from as early as the 1920s.)”<sup>xxvii</sup> Quoted from a project completed under the direction of Dr. Leon Litvack for the MA degree in Modern Literary Studies at the Queen's University of Belfast. Cites John Blassingame, “The Slave Community,” (1972).

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<sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxix</sup> Interview [\(anonymous\) on](#) October 27, 2004.

<sup>xxx</sup> Catherine Yronwode, “Hoodoo, African American Magic,” writes that “hoodoo” is an American term, originating in the 19th century or earlier, for African-American folk magic: “Hoodoo consists of a large body of African folkloric practices and beliefs with a considerable admixture of American Indian botanical knowledge and European folklore. Although most of its adherents are black, contrary to popular opinion, it has always been practiced by both whites and blacks in America. Other regionally popular names for hoodoo in the black community include “conjuration,” “conjure,” “witchcraft,” “rootwork,” and “tricking.” The first three are simply English words; the fourth is a recognition of the pre-eminence that dried roots play. This tradition has no links to any specific theology; “teachings and rituals are handed down from a one practitioner to another, but there are no priests or priestesses and no division between initiates and laity.”

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<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxii</sup> [Pouch to hold an amulet](#)

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