

SPECIAL ISSUE

Intelligence

Report

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THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

ROLL CALL VIDEO ON
'SOVEREIGN CITIZEN' THREAT



'SOVEREIGN' CITIZENS

THE CONSPIRATORIAL IDEOLOGY BEHIND A DOUBLE COP-KILLER IS SPREADING RAPIDLY

PLUS

'SOVEREIGN' LEADERSHIP
Profiles of top activists

TIPS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT
Sovereign danger signs

'SOVEREIGN' DICTIONARY
Decoding the bizarre

Understanding the Threat: ‘Sovereign’ Citizens & the Law

BY MARK POTOK



LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FACE a myriad of potential threats every day they are on the streets. Do they now need to know about a bizarre extreme-right movement whose members believe they don’t have to pay taxes, obey federal laws, or have driver’s licenses and vehicle registrations?

The answer is most definitely yes. As was demonstrated tragically on May 20, 2010, in West Memphis, Ark. — where a father-and-son team of self-described “sovereign citizens” murdered two police officers during a traffic stop and badly wounded two others before being shot to death themselves — advance knowledge in such situations can make the difference between life and death. “My men didn’t realize who or what they were dealing with,” West Memphis Chief Bob Paudert told the *Intelligence Report*. “Maybe if they had, they’d be alive today. One of those officers was my son.”

Jerry and Joseph Kane, the killers of Brandon Paudert and Bill Evans, were true believers in the nonsensical theories of the sovereign citizens. Though it is tempting to dismiss the violence they initiated in West Memphis as an isolated event unrelated to political ideology — an unstable father and son who exploded in a moment of savage but unexplainable fury — the truth is more frightening. The Kanes, in fact, were products of the sovereign citizens movement who crisscrossed the country giving seminars on fraudulent methods of escaping debts and foreclosures. In one of them, captured on videotape, Jerry Kane can be heard saying that he was tired of authorities who “keep messing with me,” adding that he might have to kill one. “And if I have to kill one, then I’m not going to be able to stop,” Kane said.

The fact is that the sovereign citizens movement is growing fast. And while most adherents are certainly not violent, experience has shown time and again that when cornered, some will lash out in rage, frustration and, in the most extreme cases, acts of deadly violence. The double murder in West Memphis was not the only sovereign-officer conflict to have ended in death.

This special edition of the *Intelligence Report* — a slightly edited reprint of the Fall 2010 cover story in the magazine — describes the beliefs of the sovereign citizens movement, provides profiles of its principal leaders and offers tips to help

law enforcement officers spot sovereigns. Bound into the issue is a copy of the officer-safety roll-call video — “Sovereign Citizens’ and Law Enforcement: Understanding the Threat” — that we subsequently produced and distributed to thousands of law enforcement officers. (The video is narrated by West Memphis Chief Paudert and Jim Cavanaugh, a retired special agent in charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives with extensive experience of the radical right.) Our hope is that these materials will help save lives of our men and women in blue.

Officers around the country have been reporting increased contact with sovereign citizens since the West Memphis slayings, and many are understandably baffled by the fake driver’s licenses and vehicle registrations that sovereigns often present. Many have been served bizarre documents, some fingerprinted in red ink, entitled “Truth Affidavits” or “Certificate of Standing & Capacity.” Other officers, along with many judicial officials, have had illegal liens placed against their personal property by sovereigns seeking revenge.

It is difficult to say precisely how many sovereigns there are in the United States today, in part because there is no central leadership and few organized groups that adherents can join. Instead, there is an array of local leaders with individualized and often differing takes on sovereign citizen ideology and techniques. Some of those attracted to the movement merely dabble in the ideology’s techniques, while others take the IRS on directly as tax protesters. But tax expert J.J. MacNab, the author of the report that follows, estimates there are about 100,000 hard-core sovereigns today, with another 200,000 essentially testing out sovereign techniques for resisting everything from speeding tickets to drug charges. As sovereign theories go viral throughout the nation’s prison systems and among people who are unemployed and desperate in a punishing recession, that number is likely to grow.

The problem is serious enough that the U.S. Department of Justice introduced the National Tax Defier Initiative in 2008 to target movement leaders. In February 2009, the FBI launched its own national operation targeting “militia/sovereign citizen extremist groups,” as well as other types of radical organizations, after noting a major upsurge in such groups.

Jerry Kane and his young son were active participants in this sprawling subculture, and when they came into contact with police officers during a routine traffic stop, they chose to open fire without provocation. We hope that this special issue will help prevent similar tragedies in the future. ▲



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Intelligence Report

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Cop-killers Jerry and Joe Kane were members of a rapidly growing radical-right movement that may now be 300,000 strong

‘Sovereign’ Citizen Kane

BY J.J. MACNAB

The moment of truth: 16-year-old Joe Kane as he opens fire on two Arkansas police officers.

It had been one of those mornings for West Memphis, Ark., police officers Brandon Paudert and Bill Evans. By 11:00 on May 20, 2010 they'd already spent three hours monitoring a suspicious rental truck and vehicle with Arizona license plates parked at a local motel, trying to determine whether the truck contained a shipment of illegal drugs. As members of the West Memphis Police Department's drug interdiction team, their job was to stop the seemingly endless flow of narcotics that passed through their town on busy Interstate 40. Officer Paudert called it in, and the West Memphis chief of police arrived at the scene to assess the situation.

When it was discovered that the truck and car was nothing more sinister than a grandmother moving her family, the good-natured ribbing began. After all, the chief of police was not just the officers' boss; he was Brandon Paudert's father.

"I told them to get off their butts and get back on the interstate," Chief Bob Paudert recounted later. "They were really laughing."

Chagrined, Paudert and Evans returned to I-40, watching for signs of drugs on the move through their jurisdiction. When Evans spied a white minivan with unusual Ohio license plates, he pulled the van over at the exit near Mile Marker 275, and called his partner for backup. Safety came first, and in the dangerous world of drug trafficking, there is no such thing as a routine stop.

Inside the white minivan, a 16-year-old boy named Joseph Kane remained in the passenger seat, while his father, Jerry, age 45, stood in front of the police SUV and argued with the offi-



End of watch: Police officers Brandon Paudert (left) and Bill Evans, seen here during an April 2010 drug bust, had worked together frequently. On May 20, 2010 at the hands of a father-son pair of "sovereign citizens," they died together.

cers. There was a tussle, and Jerry Kane pushed Officer Evans into a roadside ditch. The boy quickly emerged from the minivan with a loaded AK-47 and aimed at Evans. The officer put one hand on his pistol, and held the other up to the boy as if to signal "Stop." The boy shot Evans several times and turned his attention to Paudert, who took cover behind the police vehicle.

A package delivery man, exiting the highway at Marker 275, stopped his truck to witness the horrific scene. He called 911, and the alert went out: "Officer down!"

While Paudert was able to fire his pistol seven times, he was outgunned and the police vehicle offered little protection from Joe Kane's assault rifle. The boy chased Paudert around the police SUV, shooting him several times in the back of the head before returning to Evans in the ditch. There, he fired again. The Kanes then rushed to the minivan and pulled away, while Joe continued to shoot at the downed officers.

Another alert went out: "Two officers down!"

J.J. MacNab is a nationally known tax and insurance expert who has testified before the U.S. Congress and in other important venues. The author of numerous articles, she is currently at work on a book about the sovereign citizens movement.

According to a preliminary investigation report, Brandon Paudert was struck 11 times and died at the scene; Evans was hit by 14 rounds and died at the hospital.

In the next 90 minutes, there was a frenzy of activity around West Memphis. The highways were closed, law enforcement from various agencies converged on the area looking for the white minivan with odd Ohio plates, and calls started coming in from alert citizens. The van was spotted at a local country club, a commercial truck terminal, and an apartment building. One witness claimed that Jerry Kane had asked for directions to the nearest Walmart. As seen in Walmart security videotapes of the parking lot, Joe Kane walked into the store and made a purchase, while his father removed the license plates from the vehicle.

The first to spot the van was an Arkansas wildlife officer who rammed into the Kanes' vehicle to prevent it from leaving. The Kanes fired more than a dozen rounds at the officer's truck, but he wasn't hit. As police converged on the scene, two more officers were wounded in a frenzied shootout before the Kanes were both killed. Crittenden County Sheriff Dick Busby was shot once in the shoulder, and W.A. Wren, West Memphis' chief of enforcement, was hit multiple times in the abdomen. Both men survived.

Over the next few days, West Memphis mourned the loss of its officers. At the same time, the department, other law enforcement officials, and the public at large began to question exactly what had provoked the violence.

Who are the 'Sovereigns'?

It would be tempting to dismiss the violence that took place that day as an isolated event — an unstable father and son who exploded in a moment of vicious, unexplained fury. The truth, however, is more frightening. Jerry Kane and his young son were active participants in the sprawling subculture of "sovereign citizens" in America: hundreds of thousands of far-right extremists who believe that they — not judges, juries, law enforcement or elected officials — get to decide which laws to obey and which to ignore, and who don't think they should have to pay taxes. While law enforcement officers may disagree on how to deal with or even label this extremist subculture, one thing is certain: it's trouble. The sovereign

DEATH ON THE INTERSTATE

A TRAFFIC STOP TURNS DEADLY



11:36 AM Officer Evans pulls over "sovereign citizen" Jerry Kane.



11:46 AM Kane argues with Evans at the rear of the vehicle.



11:48 AM Joe Kane exits the vehicle with an AK-47 and opens fire.



11:49 AM The Kanes flee the scene, leaving two dying officers behind.



12:41 PM The Kanes' vehicle enters a Walmart parking lot.



1:20 PM Officer Neal rams the Kanes' vehicle to prevent escape.



1:45 PM The Kanes are both killed in a shootout with police.

movement is growing fast, and its partisans are clogging up the courts with their indecipherable filings. When cornered, many of them lash out in rage, frustration and, in the most extreme cases, acts of deadly violence.

It is difficult to say precisely how many sovereigns there are in the United States today, in part because there is no central leadership and no organized group that members can join — instead, there are a variety of local leaders with individualized takes on sovereign citizen ideology and techniques (see leader profiles, p. 20). Those who are attracted to this bizarre subculture typically attend a seminar or two, or visit one of the thousands of websites and online videos on the subject, and then simply choose how to act on what they've learned. Some start by testing sovereign ideology with small offenses such as driving without a license, while others proceed directly to taking on the IRS as tax protesters.

In the mid-1990s, the IRS estimated that there were approximately 250,000 such tax protesters in the U.S., not all of whom were full-blown sovereign ideologues. Since the late 1990s, an abundance of evidence suggests that the sovereign citizen movement's growth has been explosive, although there have been no more recent IRS estimates because Congress in 1998 prohibited the agency from tracking or labeling those who file frivolous arguments in lieu of paying their taxes. But a conservative estimate of the number of all kinds of tax protesters today would be about 500,000.

In the 2008 criminal tax trial of actor Wesley Snipes, whose tax filings made clear that he was a sovereign tax protester, IRS senior technical adviser Shauna Henline testified that the agency receives between 20,000 and 30,000 frivolous returns each year, along with roughly 100,000 letters from tax protesters. Earlier, in 2001, the U.S. Senate's Finance Committee held hearings on the growing movement and, by 2008, the Department of Justice had decided to introduce the National Tax Defier Initiative in a bid to target key movement leaders. "Simply stated," then-Assistant Attorney General Nathan Hochman said in announcing the DOJ initiative, "we want to pull back the curtain and show the public that the promoters of these tax and bogus schemes are not some wizards that have revealed the tax-free

universe to America, but instead are nothing more than garden variety hucksters and modern day snake oil salesmen, peddling their bogus tax products.”

Not all tax protesters are sovereign citizens, and many newer recruits to the sovereign life did not start out as tax protesters. But based on the available evidence, a reasonable estimate of hard-core sovereign believers today would be 100,000, with another 200,000 just starting out by testing sovereign techniques for resisting everything from speeding tickets to drug charges, for a total of 300,000. As sovereign theories go viral throughout the nation’s prison systems and among people who are unemployed and desperate in a punishing recession, this number is likely to grow.

Redeeming the ‘Strawman’

While many sovereign citizens own guns, their weapon of choice is paper. A simple traffic violation or pet-licensing case can end up provoking dozens of court filings containing hundreds of pages of pseudo-legal nonsense. For example, Donna Lee Wray, Jerry Kane’s “common-law wife,” was recently involved in a protracted legal battle in a dog-licensing case. She filed 10 sovereign documents in court over a two-month period, then declared victory when the harried prosecutor decided to drop the case. A three-year dog license in Wray’s Pinellas County, Fla., costs \$20.

Tax cases are even worse — sovereign filings in such legal battles can quickly exceed a thousand pages. While a normal criminal case docket might have 60 or 70 entries, many involving sovereigns have as many as 1,200. The courts are struggling to keep up, and judges, prosecutors and public defenders are being swamped.

It isn’t just the number of pages that is causing courts to sag under the weight of these filings. The documents are written in a kind of special sovereign code language that judges, lawyers and other court staff simply don’t speak. Sovereigns believe that if they can find just the right combination of words, punctuation, paper, ink color and timing, they can have anything they want — freedom from taxes, unlimited wealth, and life without licenses, fees or laws, are all just a few strangely worded documents away. It’s the modern-day equivalent of “abracadabra.”

At its core, the current sovereign belief system is relatively simple and is based on a decades-old conspiracy theory. At some point in history, sovereigns believe, the American government set up by the founding fathers — with a legal system the sovereigns refer to as “common law” — was secretly replaced by a new government system based on admiralty law, the law of the sea and international commerce. Some sovereigns believe this perfidious change occurred during the Civil War, while others blame the events of 1933, when America abandoned the gold standard. Either way, they stake their lives and livelihood on the

“How much more routine can you get than a father and son in a church van? Your guard is down and you’re just not ready for a shootout. We need indicators that tell us what to look for.”

— CHIEF BOB PAUDERT, FATHER AND BOSS OF SLAIN OFFICER BRANDON PAUDERT

idea that judges around the country know all about this hidden government takeover but are denying the sovereigns’ motions and filings out of treasonous loyalty to hidden and malevolent government forces. Under common law, or so they believe, the sovereigns would be free men. Under admiralty law, they are slaves, and secret government forces have a vested interest in keeping them that way.

The next layer of the scheme is even more implausible. Since 1933, the U.S. dollar has been backed not by gold, but by the “full faith and credit” of the U.S. government. According to sovereign researchers, this means that the government has pledged its citizenry as collateral, by selling their future earning capabilities to foreign investors, effectively enslaving all Americans. This sale, they claim, takes place at birth.

When a baby is born in the U.S., a birth certificate is issued, and the hospital usually requires that the parents apply for a Social Security number at that time. Sovereigns say that the government then uses that certificate to set up a kind of corporate trust in the baby’s name — a secret Treasury account — which it funds with an amount ranging from \$600,000 to \$20 million, depending on the particular variant of the sovereign belief system. By setting up this account, every newborn’s rights are cleverly split between those held by the flesh-and-blood baby and the ones assigned to his or her corporate shell account.

The clues, many sovereigns believe, are found on the birth certificate itself. Since most certificates use all capital letters to spell out a baby’s name, JOHN DOE is the name of the corporate shell “strawman,” while John Doe is the baby’s “real,” flesh-and-blood name. As the child grows older, most of his legal documents will utilize capital letters, which means that his state-issued driver’s license, his marriage license, his car registration, his criminal court records, his cable TV bill, and correspondence from the IRS will all pertain to his corporate shell identity, not his real, sovereign identity.

The process sovereigns have devised to split the strawman from the flesh-and-blood man is called “redemption,” and its purpose is two-fold. Once separated from the corporate shell, the newly freed man is now outside of the jurisdiction of all admiralty laws. More importantly, by filing a series of complex, legal-sounding documents, the sovereign can tap into that secret Treasury account for his own purposes. Over the last 30 years, there have been hundreds of sovereign promoters packaging different combinations of forms and paperwork, attempting to perfect the process. While no one has ever succeeded, of course, they know with the religious certainty of a true cult believer that they’re close. All it will take is the right combination of words, say the promoters of the redemption scam.

Jerry Kane was one such promoter.

Why Do They Do it?

Newcomers drift into the movement in a variety of ways. Originally, the sovereign citizens movement mostly attracted white supremacists and anti-Semites, mainly because sovereign theories originated in groups who saw Jews as playing a behind-the-scenes role in manipulating financial institutions and controlling the government. Most early sovereigns, and some of those who are still on the scene, believed that being white was a prerequisite to becoming a sovereign citizen. They argued that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave blacks U.S. citizenship, also made black Americans permanently subject to federal and state governments, unlike themselves.

In recent years, however, most new recruits are people who have found themselves in a desperate situation and are searching for a quick fix. Others are intrigued by the notions of easy money and living a lawless life, free from any unpleasant consequences. (Moreover, many self-identified sovereigns today are black and apparently completely unaware of the racist origins of their ideology.) When they experience some small success at using redemption techniques to battle minor traffic

The aftermath: Police surround the Kanes’ vehicle after the final shootout in a Walmart parking lot. The body of Joe Kane lies in the foreground; his father’s hand can be seen behind the rear of the vehicle. The Kanes had removed their license plates less than half an hour earlier.



ALAN SPERAN/NYT/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

the battle, and they blame only the judges, lawyers, prosecutors and police when their gurus’ methods fail. While most have never achieved financial success in life, they take pride in engaging the government in battle, comparing themselves to the founding fathers during the American Revolution.

The movement has grown to the point where a group called the Guardians of the Free Republics is attempting to assemble its own common-law-based, alternative government on a national scale. Already, the group, which in 2010 demanded that the governors of all 50 states step down, claims to have set up a common-law court in every state and has signed up more than 1,000 jurors for these pseudo-legal judicial bodies.

Liens, Litigation and Murder

A litigation plan based solely on conspiracies and absurd legal theories is doomed to fail. When the inevitable happens, the sovereign has two choices: he can admit he was wrong and fell for an obvious scam, or he can blame the government. Considering that most sovereigns were already desperate when they joined the movement, spending years and many dollars on worthless redemption techniques can only have worsened their situation. Realistically, some angry outbursts are to be expected when the moment of truth arrives.

Sometimes, those outbursts are aimed at self or family. But far more often, the sovereign takes aim at his perceived enemies. The judge that dismisses his claim, the county recorder who refuses his filing, the reporter that calls him a deadbeat dad, and the sheriff who evicts him from his foreclosed home — all are possible targets of a sovereign’s rage (see tips for law enforcement officials, p. 24). Since most sovereigns favor paper over guns, this revenge most often takes the form of retaliatory property liens and tax forms that are designed to ruin an enemy’s credit rating and cause them to be audited by the IRS.

But in those cases where a sovereign feels particularly desperate, angry, battle-weary and cornered, his next government

Murdered Officers Part of Deadly Trend

When 16-year-old Joseph Kane shot and killed two Arkansas police officers in May 2010, it was only the latest in a disturbing trend of right-wing extremists murdering law enforcement officials. Kane shot West Memphis officers Bill Evans and Brandon Paudert a combined 25 times with an AK-47 after he and his father, Jerry Ralph Kane Jr., were pulled over in a traffic stop. The Kanes, who had traveled the country giving classes in “redemption foreclosure mortgage fraud,” went on to wound two other officers before being killed themselves.

In 2009, five law enforcement officers and a museum security guard were slain in three incidents in which the suspected shooters reportedly had each

expressed displeasure with the election of President Obama. That was the most since 1995, when six officers were murdered by right-wing extremists, five of them in the Oklahoma City bombing that also left 163 other people dead.

The victims in 2009 included three Pittsburgh police officers allegedly shot and killed by Richard Poplawski, who a friend said feared that President Obama was going to restrict gun ownership. (Poplawski’s case is pending). In Okaloosa County, Fla., two sheriff’s deputies were shot and killed by U.S. Army Reservist Joshua Cartwright, who was then killed in a shootout. Cartwright’s wife told officials her husband had been “severely disturbed”

by Obama’s election, and local authorities said that he had been interested in joining an antigovernment militia. In Washington, D.C., neo-Nazi James von Brunn shot and killed a security guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Von Brunn, 88, who died later while in custody, wrote in a notebook that “Obama does what his Jew owners tell him to do,” according to a police affidavit.

Since 1990, law enforcement officers have comprised nearly 15% of the victims of far-right killings — 49 out of more than 400 fatalities — according to a report published this year by the University of Maryland. Local and state officers have accounted for more than 70% of these law enforcement deaths.



Stressed out: With their finances in shambles, Jerry Kane and his son Joe traveled the country giving sparsely attended seminars on avoiding foreclosure while clad in white suits. When Jerry Kane was arrested in New Mexico for driving without a license (booking photos above), he seemed to grow ever angrier than in the past. A month later, the Kanes, now cop-killers, were dead.



contact, no matter how minor, can be his final straw. The resulting rage can be lethal.

Jerry and Joe Kane were not the first sovereigns to lash out at a routine traffic stop and it’s unlikely they’ll be the last. In 1995 in Ohio, a sovereign named Michael Hill pulled a gun on an officer during a traffic stop. Hill was killed. In 1997, New Hampshire extremist Carl Drega shot dead two officers and two civilians, and wounded another three officers before being

killed himself. In that same year in Idaho, when brothers Doug and Craig Broderick were pulled over for failing to signal, they killed one officer and wounded another before being killed themselves in a violent gun battle.

And, in a 1993 case that bears an eerie similarity to the recent events in West Memphis, an Alabama officer approached a family’s car in a strip mall parking lot. A shopper there had told the officer that a boy in the back seat was asking for help. The officer walked to the car and asked to see the father’s driver’s license. There was an argument, and the father made some typical sovereign claims. Then, without warning, the father pulled out his gun and shot the officer. Badly wounded, the officer tried to run to his car, but instead met the wife of the sovereign, who pulled out her own weapon and shot him dead. The couple had warrants out for their arrest in Florida, and the car they were driving had unusual sovereign-style license plates. Sovereign citizens George Sibley and Linda Block were executed for the murder by the state of Alabama several years later.



Heart to heart: West Memphis, Ark., Detective Jimmy Evans (left), whose brother was murdered by Joe Kane, talks with Wildlife Officer Michael Neal. Neal rammed his truck into the fleeing Kanes’ vehicle, preventing their escape and drawing a hail of bullets from the fugitives.

Citizen Kane

May 2010 had been a stressful month for Jerry Kane. He’d been traveling around the country with his teenage son, giving seminars to financially strapped individuals and promising them the tools to avoid foreclosure. His seminar fee ranged from \$100 to \$300 “per man,” but a man was free to bring his wife and children for that price. If a follower were in really dire straits, Kane would let him attend free.

As a former long-haul trucker, Kane was used to long hours on the road with his son, but in one of his last online radio shows, he’d told his followers that he was frustrated with the seminar circuit and planned to cut his scheduled tour off early,

after one more date in Florida. A seminar in Denver had been a disaster — no one had shown up — and he’d just completed a two-day event in Las Vegas, traveling thousands of miles in his old Plymouth Voyager. Despite his efforts and time, only six people had attended.

To make matters worse, Kane knew that driving cross-country was risky. As a sovereign citizen and a member of the larger antigovernment “Patriot” movement — a free man who believed that the Constitution guaranteed his right to travel without restriction — he was breaking a number of laws. He didn’t have a driver’s license. His van was registered to an accommodating ministry in Ohio. There was a brick of marijuana in the car. And, most importantly, he had outstanding warrants for his arrest in two states. In Ohio, he faced charges of forgery and theft by deception. He’d also been arrested in New Mexico for driving without a license and concealing his identity. He’d been preparing a series of documents to file in New Mexico that were designed to punish the police officer who arrested him. Kane was determined to make the officer and his family pay.

On May 20, Jerry and Joe Kane were driving east on I-40 from Las Vegas to their last seminar and a new life in Florida. Kane had met a Floridian named Donna Lee Wray at one of his foreclosure seminars three months earlier, and they had fallen in love. Father and son were headed, they thought, to a bright new life. Instead, they left a trail of human wreckage and smashed-up hopes and dreams.

Today, even after learning many of the facts behind the sovereign citizens movement that helped lead the Kanes and others to murder, the late Officer Paudert’s boss and father, the West Memphis chief, struggles to make sense of what happened. Bob Paudert mourns his son and the other casualties of the collision of sovereign citizen ideology and law enforcement, and he worries that his personal tragedy could repeat itself with other police officers on roads around the nation.

“How much more routine can you get than a father and son in [what looked like] a church van?” he asked in an interview. “Your guard is down and you’re just not ready for a shootout. We need indicators that tell us what to look for.”

There are telltale signs of sovereign citizens — strange license plates, unusual comments about the Fed and other government agencies, and so on (see story, p. 14). But they are not always easy to spot. And while not all are violent — sovereign leaders around the country have had mixed views of the Arkansas shootout, from painting the Kanes as heroes to various wild-eyed conspiracy theories about them being “set up” by government forces — there is little to suggest that the killings have weakened the movement. Donna Lee Wray, for example, reacted to the death of her new family by firing off angry missives demanding, among other things, that she be paid \$1 million every time her “copyrighted” name is printed by those writing about the case. The number of sovereigns across America is clearly expanding, and with that growth comes an increasing level of danger.

Bob Paudert, in an emotional interview with the *Intelligence Report*, said he knows only too well what the cost can be. “It was the worst day of my life, ever,” the chief said. “I hope no parent has to go through what we’ve been through.” ▲

The Sovereigns

The leadership of the “sovereign citizens” movement is populated with men who market a variety of generally nonsensical, and often illegal, schemes to avoid taxes, eliminate debts and extract money from the government. Many of these leaders specialize in the so-called “redemption” scam (see story, p. 2), a bizarre technique that supposedly allows participants to tap into huge amounts of cash that the government is thought to keep in their name. What follows are short profiles of a dozen of these leaders. The leaders’ websites are listed under their names.

BARTON ALBERT BUHTZ, 70 Sunland, Calif.



For years, Barton Buhtz, who styles himself “Barton Albert: Buhtz” in the peculiar punctuation of the sovereign citizens movement (see “name punctuation,” p. 15),

promoted a redemption scheme that taught clients how to print fraudulent U.S. Treasury checks to pay their taxes, purchase real estate, and pay credit card and other bills. This was a variation of a scheme attempted by members of the Montana Freemen, a sovereign citizens group that was active in the 1990s. Buhtz promised clients that the fake checks were a legal means of accessing a secret Treasury account that the government has set up based on every American’s future earnings.

While Buhtz claimed the phony checks can purchase anything, he personally only accepted cash as payment for his seminars and services. In 2007, Buhtz was convicted on multiple felony counts for helping clients pass a total of \$3.8 million in phony checks, and in 2009 he was sentenced to 36 months in federal prison. He is set to be released in 2012. A number of his former clients are currently either in prison or fighting criminal charges.

SAMUEL LYNN DAVIS, 55 Boise, Idaho

www.StatusIsFreedom.com
www.commercialredemption.com



Samuel Lynn Davis, who goes by the nickname “I am: Sam,” is one of the more popular redemption seminar hosts in the country, and dozens of his seminar videos have been uploaded to YouTube.com. In addition to the websites listed

above, Davis shares Web space with other key redemption gurus (including, until his death, Jerry Kane) at www.privateaudio.homestead.com. In his seminars, he boasts that he hasn’t filed a tax return since 1998 but doesn’t disclose that he currently has \$53,000 in outstanding state and federal tax liens. Davis has been listed as one of the elders in the Guardians of the Free Republics, a sovereign group that claims to have recently set up “common-law courts” in all 50 states. On March 3, 2009, Davis and his common-law court partner “Rabbi” Shawn Rice were indicted in federal court on 31 counts of bank fraud and money laundering. Rice remained a fugitive at press time. Despite his upcoming trial in Las Vegas, Davis has advised his clients that everything is going as planned.

RONALD DELORME, 64 Bismark, N.D.

www.officialpnlsbna.org



Ronald Delorme is the leader of one of the newest and most prolific sovereign schemes to hit the U.S., a phony Native American tribe called The Little Shell

Pembina Band of North America. Delorme claims that an enormous land parcel totaling 53 million acres (most of North Dakota plus portions of South Dakota, Montana, and Manitoba) belongs to the sovereign tribe, and anyone who pays the fee can become a member. In effect, the tribe offers one-stop-shopping for the modern sovereign — freedom from taxes, a tribal license plate, a phony law license, even fake malpractice and automobile insurance. The faux tribe also advises members on how to pass counterfeit checks and avoid falling into the jurisdiction of the American courts. “Rabbi” Shawn Rice, fugitive co-defendant of Samuel

Davis (see profile above), is a member of this tribe. In 2007, a Little Shell subsidiary called Gold-Quest was charged with running a \$27.9 million Ponzi scheme. The tribe responded by filing a \$1.7 trillion lawsuit against the SEC.

NATURE EL BEY, 33 TAJ TARIK BEY

Asbury Park, N.J.



“Lord Nobles” Taj Tarik Bey (real name and age unknown) and Nature El Bey (formerly known as Lee S. Crudup) are two of the leaders



of a rapidly growing black nationalist religious movement called Moorish Science Temple of America — part of the larger and expanding phenomenon of

black sovereign groups. The group considers itself sovereign in that it counsels followers to pay taxes to the temple, rather than to the IRS. Like other sovereigns, members do not carry state-issued driver’s licenses (but instead use temple identification cards) and, when charged with crimes, consider themselves to be outside the jurisdiction of any federal, state, or local court. The group markets itself primarily through booklets and videos posted on YouTube, and its sovereign schemes have been spreading rapidly in the last two or three years through the nation’s urban neighborhoods and prison system.

ROGER ELVICK, 71 Lakota, N.D.

In the 1980s, Roger Elvick was the first promoter to effectively distribute a redemption scheme to an eager and desperate audience of Midwest



farmers, and he is generally acknowledged as the founding father of the modern redemption movement. While phony Federal Reserve checks and similar programs had been used earlier by far-right promoters Tupper Saussy and Conrad LeBeau, Elvick and the late white supremacist leader William Potter Gale were the first to dress up the scam with the legalistic terminology that now characterizes the sovereign citizens movement and sovereign redemption techniques. As a result of issuing such checks, Elvick spent seven years in the 1990s in federal prison, where he further fleshed out his scheme. In 2003, he was arrested again by the state of Ohio and charged with forgery, extortion, and corruption. The judge found him mentally unfit to stand trial, and he spent several months in a psychiatric institution before pleading guilty to the state charges. Elvick was released from prison in September 2007.

KURT F. JOHNSON, 47

DALE SCOTT HEINEMAN, 50
Union City, Calif.
www.thedoreangroup.blogspot.com



In just a few short years, Kurt Johnson and Dale Scott Heineman grew a tiny redemption-based debt elimination practice into the largest mortgage-elimination firm in the country, the Dorean Group, with thousands of clients in at least 35 states. They promised followers who were about to lose their homes to foreclosure that they could own the home free and clear by simply transferring the

property to a trust controlled by the Dorean Group. Dorean would then file a fake grant deed with the county recorder and in the short time when it appeared in the record that the home was debt-free, the client would apply for a new loan and split the proceeds with promoters. Johnson, Heineman and four other salespeople in their thriving company were convicted on multiple felony counts in 2007. Johnson is currently serving a 25-year sentence in federal prison, while Heineman is serving 21 years.

DAVID WYNN MILLER, 61

Milwaukee, Wisc.
www.dwmlc.com



A former tool-and-die maker, the man who writes his name as “David-Wynn: Miller” — or, as he amusingly says it verbally, “David hyphen Wynn full colon Miller” — came up with his “truth language” scheme as a result of a frustrating court experience in 1988, when he was going through a divorce. In short, all truth language sentences used in court filings must begin with the preposition “for,” contain at least 13 words, and use more nouns than verbs to be effective (he has claimed that only nouns have legal authority). David Wynn Miller considers himself a “Plenipotentiary Judge” in the Unity States of the World, and has named himself as the King of Hawaii, a feat he claims he accomplished when he converted Hawaii into a verb. Needless to say, Full Colon Miller’s clients have fared poorly in both civil and criminal courts, and at least one client has been required to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. Miller is one of the few sovereign gurus that can say he has clients in four different countries currently serving prison sentences. Despite these failures, Miller’s exotic punctuation scheme is rapidly growing.

WINSTON SHROUT, 62

Santa Clara, Utah
www.wssic.com



Winston ShROUT offers a popular seven-part series of seminars and sells several books and DVDs through his website. His materials focus on the “commercial process,” instructing clients in the use of IRS Form 1099-OID to solve all of their tax and debt problems. Despite his alleged expertise, ShROUT currently has \$50,000 in outstanding tax liens, declared personal bankruptcy in 2001, and lost three federal civil cases in the last 10 years, including one in which a major bank sued both Winston and his sham “freeman” arbitration company.

JAMES TIMOTHY TURNER, 54

Skipperville, Ala.
www.americacanbefree.com



Tim Turner burst onto the redemption scene three years ago, offering a series of very popular seminars that promise attendees that they can pay off their mortgage, credit card debt, and income tax bills using the “power of negative averments.” He also claims to have cured leukemia in five days. Turner’s programs teach his clients to file dozens of meaningless court documents, and when the opposing parties don’t respond accordingly, to file absurdly large retaliatory property liens against them. For example, in one foreclosure case in which Turner was not even a party, he filed nine fraudulent liens totaling more than \$158 billion against the bank, its attorneys, the court trustee, and miscellaneous other participants. While Turner told his

followers that he won the case, he was actually sanctioned \$22,500 by the court. Most recently, Turner has taken over the leadership of the Guardians of the Free Republics, a group that in 2010 fruitlessly demanded that all 50 governors step down and now claims to have established common-law courts in all 50 states. According to his followers, Turner canceled his seminar schedule. In the past, Turner has worked as both a commercial fisherman and a FEMA employee.

DR. GLENN RICHARD UNGER, 59

Clifton Park, N.Y.
www.republicbroadcasting.org



The host of the popular online radio show “Take No Prisoners,” who uses the alias of “Dr. Sam Kennedy,” Dr. Glenn Unger is one of the more secretive redemption leaders. In addition to using a false name, Unger doesn’t keep a marketing website and doesn’t allow followers to videotape his speaking engagements. He markets his “Beneficiaries in Commerce” program as a cure-all for everything from tax bills and debt elimination to what he calls “prison extraction.” Unger was a founding member of the Guardians of the Free Republics and received some unwelcome publicity in 2010 when the FBI investigated the group for threatening state governors. In a coup by fellow sovereign Tim Turner in 2010, Unger was pushed out of the Guardians group. Despite his stealth, the IRS found Unger and hit him with a \$116,000 federal tax lien last September. Furthermore, at least three of Unger’s clients have gone to prison as a result of following his program; in a fourth case, the judge found the defendant mentally unfit to stand trial as a result of the nonsensical documents he filed with the court. ▲

‘SOVEREIGN’ IDIOTICON

A Dictionary of the Peculiar

Adherents of the “sovereign citizens” movement and of sovereign financial scams like “redemption” are known for their bizarre use of language and Byzantine belief system. What follows is a lexicon — or, more precisely, an idioticon, a dictionary of a peculiar dialect — meant to help court officials, law enforcement officers and the general public make their way through the sovereigns’ verbal fog.

14th Amendment citizen

Sovereign citizens describe 14th Amendment citizens as subject to federal and state governments, unlike themselves. Because the amendment gave citizenship to freed slaves, a racist variant of sovereign-citizen theory holds that blacks are subject to the government and that being white is a prerequisite to being a sovereign citizen. Others claim all state citizens were converted by the constitutional amendment to “Federal Citizens,” who can only be freed by a process known as “asseveration.”

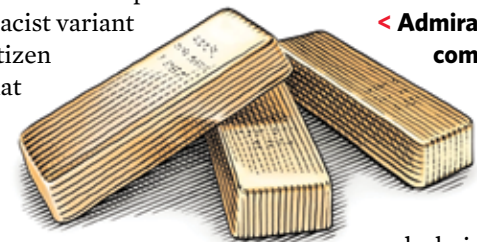
Accepted for value

When a sovereign receives a bill from the IRS, a bank, or even the cable company, under a twisted reading of the Uniform Commercial

Code, he believes he can simply write “Accepted for Value” on that bill and it will be paid by his secret Treasury Direct Account, set up by the government when he was born.

< Admiralty law/ common law

According to sovereign beliefs, there are two types of law: common law and admiralty law. Since the U.S. went off the gold standard in 1933, sovereigns say, no one has been able to pay a debt with “real” money, and therefore the country has been operating under commercial law, which sovereigns equate with admiralty law, the law of the seas. Thus, they argue, completely speciously, that Americans have been deprived of their original common law, under which the government can only impose regulations on citizens with their consent, since 1933.



Tips for Law Enforcement

Unfortunately for law enforcement, self-described “sovereign citizens” don’t come with a warning label. In the past, most sovereigns were white supremacists organized into small groups that typically all used the same “private” license plate instead of legal tags. Today, while that is sometimes still true, the ideology of the sovereign citizen movement has spread to the point where adherents hail from any race and are found throughout the nation. And they do not all necessarily carry fake license plates or bear other obvious markers. Still, there are common traits that law enforcement officers can and should be on the alert for. They include:



▲ **License plates with oddball names** like the “Kingdom of Heaven” and the “Little Shell Pembina Band,” which is a fake Indian tribe that runs a redemption scam. The FBI has a brochure available for all law enforcement agencies that includes pictures of a variety of sovereign plates.

Antigovernment bumper stickers.

Unusual use of outdated language.

A simple question like, “Where are you headed?” may get you a response along the lines of, **“I am a free man, traveling upon the land.”**

An arrogant or belligerent attitude.

Sovereigns believe that they have secret knowledge about a complex government conspiracy that most Americans, including law enforcement officials, are too stupid to comprehend.

Anti-Federal Reserve or banking comments, even though all you are discussing is a driver’s license, registration tags or traffic infractions. Anger towards other government agencies such as FEMA, the EPA, the U.S. Post Office and the Census Bureau is common.

Unsolicited anti-Semitic comments, either outright or veiled.

◀ **Odd punctuation of names**, typically involving colons and hyphens.

The absence of a zip code in adherents’ addresses (sometimes, the **zip code is present, but placed in brackets**).



▲ Bill of Exchange

A fake check used to access the funds in the secret Treasury account supposedly set up by the government to monetize the value of each citizen’s life at birth.

Birth certificate

This form establishes each person’s corporate shell, a kind of evil doppelgänger that is attached to every flesh-and-blood baby. That shell is then supposedly sold by the government as a security to foreign investors to enrich Federal Reserve bankers. The proof that the certificate has secret meaning is found in the use of all capital letters, bond paper and a seal and/or watermark — all of which are thought to reflect admiralty law.

Citizen/citizen

In the 18th-century colonies, nouns were usually capitalized, although the practice was going out of style by the time of the Revolution. Based on that, sovereigns see secret meaning in the use or non-use of capitalized letters. For example, a “citizen” is a sovereign citizen imbued with all natural rights, whereas a “Citizen” is a 14th Amendment citizen subject to the rules and regulations of government.

Common-law court

Pseudo-legal courts set up to hear matters concerning sovereign citizens, sometimes also called “freemen.” They have been used to put enemies on trial for such offenses as treason, rule on matters of interest to sovereigns and, frequently, to formalize citizens’ declarations of sovereignty, a process often known as asseveration.

Flag fringe >

Based on the fact that Navy flags and many other military flags have gold fringe, sovereigns believe the presence of fringe on flags in federal courts isn’t just decorative, but rather proof that the nation is under admiralty law.

Form 1099-OID

Although the IRS uses this form for zero-coupon bonds and collateralized bonds, sovereigns believe that the 1099-OID gives them access to the money in the secret Treasury Direct Account that the government funded at their birth.

Name in all capital letters

JOHN ROBERT DOE, for instance, signifies the corporate shell of a person, as opposed to the flesh-and-blood person.

Name punctuation

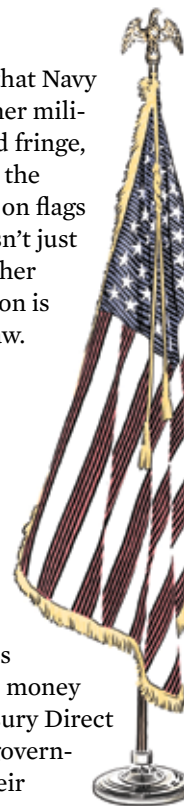
John-Robert: Doe signifies a flesh-and-blood person named John-Robert of the family Doe, as opposed to a punctuation-free name, JOHN ROBERT DOE, which refers to the corporate shell of a person.

Negative averment

The trick, used by many sovereigns, of twisting all statements into the form of a question in order to shift the burden of truth to the opponent.

Red ink >

In some states, bonds are canceled using red ink. Sovereigns therefore sign many legal documents and correspondence in red ink to signify that they are canceling the bond attached to their birth certificate



or corporate self. Others believe the color of the ink represents the blood of the flesh-and-blood person.

Redemption

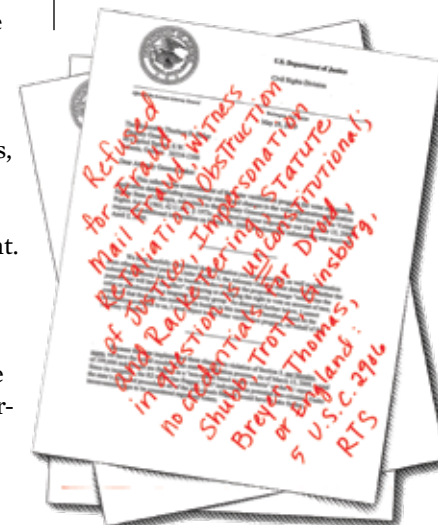
The phony legal process sovereigns use to separate a person’s flesh-and-blood body from their mythical corporate shell. Since only the corporate shell is subject to taxes, traffic laws and license requirements, the ability to separate the two is the key to liberating people from such requirements. An added bonus is that the newly freed sovereign can then write checks, or “bills of exchange,” on the account the government has set up to monetize the person’s life and earnings.

Strawman

The label assigned to the corporate shell in the redemption process. This corporate shell is attached to a baby at birth when a birth certificate is typed out using all capital letters and a Social Security number is applied for.

Sui juris

Many sovereigns add this Latin phrase, meaning “of one’s own right,” to their flesh-and-blood names on legal documents to signify that they are reserving all the rights to which a free man is entitled.



Treasury Direct Account ▼

When a baby is born, sovereigns believe that the government funds a secret Treasury account in that baby’s corporate shell name, based on that person’s future earnings. This account can be accessed by writing special checks to pay taxes, mortgage balances and other debts. Sovereigns variously believe the account’s value is between \$600,000 and \$20 million.



Truth language

A complex and bizarre set of language rules designed to mimic the secret language of the law. All sentences must start with the preposition “for,” have a minimum of 13 words, and use more nouns than verbs. Punctuation rules are just as complex.

UCC-1 Statement

When a sovereign successfully separates his flesh-and-blood body from his corporate shell in the redemption process, the flesh-and-blood body then can file a UCC-1 statement against their corporate self in order to preserve the value of that corporate self’s Treasury Direct Account for their own use. Since most jurisdictions are getting wise to sovereigns’ UCC games, sovereigns often must shop jurisdictions until they find one willing to file the statement without question. ▲

A Message from CHIEF BOB PAUDERT



ON MAY 20, 2010, JERRY KANE AND HIS SON OPENED fire on West Memphis, Ark., police officers Bill Evans and Brandon Paudert during a routine interstate traffic stop. In a harrowing series of events, the Kanes killed the officers and went on to wound a sheriff and his chief deputy before being killed themselves. Jerry and Joseph Kane were so-called “sovereign citizens,” members of a dangerous radical-right movement that is driven by conspiracy theories and a deep-seated hatred of the government and may include as many as 300,000 people. As it happened, Brandon Paudert was the son of West Memphis Police Chief Bob Paudert. Since his son and his partner’s murders, Chief Paudert has dedicated himself to educating his fellow law enforcement officers about the threat posed by sovereigns, speaking to law enforcement groups and also narrating part of the Southern Poverty Law Center officer-safety video, “Sovereign Citizens’ and Law Enforcement: Understanding the Threat,” that is included in this special issue of the *Intelligence Report*. He says his sincerest hope is that no law enforcement officer will ever again face the tragedy that befell his own family.

Chief, why is educating law enforcement about the potential threat posed by so-called sovereign citizens important?

When you look at what happened that day in May, it’s obvious that Brandon and Bill were not prepared for what was coming. Prior to May 20, 2010, when a law enforcement officer in a traffic stop asked for registration, they normally were handed a registration card from one of the 50 states. But not that day. You can see a look of confusion on Brandon and Bill’s faces as Jerry Kane produced his fake sovereign driver’s license. Brandon and Bill were on that traffic stop for nearly 15 minutes, and they were obviously confused by these bizarre documents. My officers just did not know what they were looking at, that they were facing dangerous believers in the sovereign citizens ideology. If they had known in advance what they were dealing with, Brandon and Bill would be alive today.

You’ve told us that you have heard from many police officers who have had dealings with sovereigns. Tell us a little more about that.

I have received calls from all over the country, and considerable gratitude for

the [officer-safety] DVD and for sharing my story. But, shockingly, it’s the rare officer that I have talked to who knows about the sovereign citizens. I talked recently to a particular officer who is being harassed by people who share the Kanes’ beliefs. The officer is actually being sued by them. Nobody else has been in touch with him. He’s begging for help. He’s now in fear for his life. It’s people like this that just tear at your heart. I’ve decided I’m going to do all I can to help these officers. I’m going to respond to every call and every E-mail to make sure that they are getting the information that they need to be safe.

Do you worry about the threat posed to law enforcement officers by other types of extremists?

Any extremist group is a danger to officers, regardless of what ideology they have. If they go to the extreme with their beliefs and they are willing to die for their beliefs, they are dangerous to law enforcement. We need to know what the signs are that are associated with all types of extremists; we need to know what their tattoos mean and so forth. It’s clear there are indicators that

we should be on the lookout for. I know it is going to save lives when officers are armed with this knowledge. Training is essential. That’s the bottom line.

What are your future plans now?

My life changed forever on May 20, 2010. I don’t want this to ever happen to anyone again. I have a deep passion now to inform as many police officers as I can about the dangers presented by sovereigns and to teach them what to look for, so they can be prepared for this situation. I hope we can reach more police officers and tell them about the dangers we are facing. I hope to educate as many people as I can. I want to focus on officer safety issues, that’s what I want to dedicate my life to. ▲

West Memphis, Ark., Police Chief Bob Paudert has served in law enforcement for 45 years. He began his career as a jailer in Shelby County, Tenn., and served as head of narcotics for the Memphis Police Department before joining the West Memphis department in 1999. Officers who would like to talk with the chief are encouraged to contact him through his police department’s phone number, 870-735-1210.

IN MEMORIAM

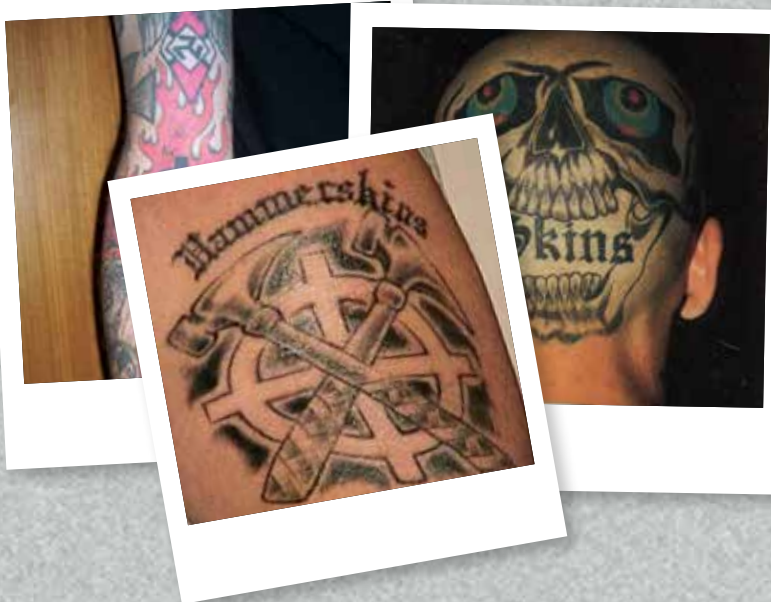
In the years since the Oklahoma City federal building was bombed in 1995, 32 law enforcement officers have been murdered by domestic right-wing political extremists.

Each of their deaths was a unique tragedy.

Leslie George Lord, 45 New Hampshire State Police (Colebrook) Aug. 19, 1997	John C. Bohach, 35 Reno, Nev., Police Department Aug. 22, 2001	Lee Stewart Newbill, 49 Moscow, Idaho, Police Department May 19, 2007	Stephen Mayhle, 29 Pittsburgh, Pa., Police Department April 4, 2009
Scott Edward Phillips, 32 New Hampshire State Police (Colebrook) Aug. 19, 1997	Eric Bradford Taylor, 31 Massillon, Ohio, Police Department Aug. 9, 2002	Stephen Anderson, 60 Salt Lake City, Utah, Department of Corrections June 25, 2007	Eric Kelly, 41 Pittsburgh, Pa., Police Department April 4, 2009
Bruce Vanderjagt, 47 Denver, Colo., Police Department Nov. 12, 1997	David Frank Mobilio, 31 Red Bluff, Calif., Police Department Nov. 19, 2002	John R. Smith, 40 Bastrop, La., Police Department Aug. 10, 2007	Burt Lopez, 45 Okaloosa County, Fla., Sheriff’s Office April 25, 2009
Robert “Sande” Sanderson, 34 Birmingham, Ala., Police Department Jan. 29, 1998	Kevin Michael Marshall, 33 Michigan State Police (Fremont) July 7, 2003	Charles D. Wilson, Jr., 34 Bastrop, La., Police Department Aug. 10, 2007	Warren “Ski” York, 45 Okaloosa County, Fla., Sheriff’s Office April 25, 2009
Dennis Warren Finch, 52 Traverse City, Mich., Police Department May 13, 1998	Donald McMurry Ouzts, 63 Abbeville County, S.C., Magistrate’s Office Dec. 8, 2003	Ronald Harrison, 56 Hillsboro County, Fla., Sheriff’s Office Aug. 15 2007	Stephen T. Johns, 39 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Security June 10, 2009
Dale Dewain Claxton, 45 Cortez, Colo., Police Department May 29, 1998	Danny Wilson, 37 Abbeville County, S.C., Sheriff’s Office Dec. 8, 2003	Thomas Paul Tennant, 51 Woodburn, Ore., Police Department Dec. 12, 2008	Shane Thomas Detwiler, 31 Chambers County, Texas, Sheriff’s Office July 13, 2009
James Arland Rowland, Jr., 30 Palmer, Alaska, Police Department May 15, 1999	Robert Walter Hedman, 49 Otero County, N.M., Sheriff’s Department Dec. 18, 2004	William Hakim, 51 Oregon State Police Dec. 12, 2008	Bill Evans, 38 West Memphis, Ark., Police Department May 20, 2010
Ricky Leon Kinchen, 35 Fulton County, Ga., Sheriff’s Department March 17, 2000	Henry “Hank” Nava, Jr., 39 Fort Worth, Texas, Police Department Dec. 1, 2005	Paul Sciuлло III, 37 Pittsburgh, Pa., Police Department April 4, 2009	Brandon Paudert, 39 West Memphis, Ark., Police Department May 20, 2010

The SPLC *Intelligence Report* Offers Online Investigative Resources

The *Intelligence Report* is offering **free online resources** to help law enforcement track extremist activity in their communities and conduct criminal investigations. Check out our website and see all that we have to offer. **www.intelligencereport.org**



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