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EXTREMISM IN FLORIDA

The Dark Side of the Sunshine State





Extremism in Florida: The Dark Side of the Sunshine State

3rd Edition, 2011



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Introduction

Florida is known for hospitality and friendliness, but within its borders lurk some who have more sinister intentions. With its large population, Florida possesses a significant extremist fringe that frequently poses threats to its citizens, public officials, and law enforcement officers.

In the 1990s, white supremacists and anti-government extremists regularly made headlines in Florida. Two anti-government extremists from Florida murdered a police officer in Alabama, while an Orlando neo-Nazi plotted armed robberies and bomb attacks. A group of anti-government extremists and white supremacists operated a \$500-million pyramid scheme from Tampa and, as the century drew to a close, the leader of a Florida militia group plotted to blow up power plants in Florida and Georgia.

The dawn of a new century has not stilled the anger and hatred in Florida's extremist fringe. In 2011, hate groups and anti-government extremist groups can be found in every section of Florida, from the Panhandle to Key West. Some engage in criminal activity, while others are more active in propaganda distribution, spreading hatred and intolerance among Florida's citizens, including its children.

This report surveys recent extremist activity in Florida, of a variety of types, highlighting the groups and individuals most active in Florida, as well as prominent groups from elsewhere that have targeted the state.

White Supremacy

Though most Floridians have embraced the diverse and multi-cultural nature that gives Florida its unique character, the state still contains a number of residents for whom hate is a powerful motivator. Organized white supremacist activity has existed in Florida since the founding of the original Ku Klux Klan in the 1860s. Today, white supremacy still poses Florida's most significant extremist-related problem, with adherents engaging in criminal acts ranging from hate crimes to killing police to terrorist conspiracies. All five of the major white supremacist movements (neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, "traditional" white supremacists, Christian Identity adherents and racist prison gangs) are present to a greater or lesser degree in Florida.

Neo-Nazis

Neo-Nazis are among the most devoted and hardcore of white supremacists, and also traditionally among the most violent. Neo-Nazi ideology today is dominated by the concept of the so-called “Fourteen Words” slogan (“we must secure the existence of our race and a future for white children”), and has evolved into a desperate and dangerous ideology predicated on the notion that the white race is being threatened with extinction by a “rising tide of color,” controlled and manipulated by Jews.

For many years, the neo-Nazi scene in Florida was dominated by the National Alliance, at one time the largest neo-Nazi group in the United States. The death of its founder, William Pierce, in 2002 caused the National Alliance to fragment into a number of factions, some of which themselves subsequently fell apart. In Florida, for example, most National Alliance members left for a new group started by disaffected members, the National Vanguard. By 2006, the National Vanguard itself disintegrated after its leader was convicted on child pornography charges. Even before its disintegration, many Florida members had left to form yet another neo-Nazi group, the Nationalist Coalition. Today, the neo-Nazi scene in Florida is dominated by the Nationalist Coalition, as well as by groups such as the National Socialist Movement and Volksfront, who helped fill in the vacuum left by the collapse of the National Alliance and the National Vanguard.

There are also many “independent” or unaffiliated neo-Nazis in Florida who adhere to the ideology and belong to the subculture, but are not card-carrying members of any specific group.

Nationalist Coalition

In May 2006, Florida’s National Vanguard members, primarily from the St. Petersburg-Tampa-Orlando corridor and led by Todd Weingart, joined similarly disaffected Colorado members to form a new neo-Nazi group, the Nationalist Coalition. Since 2006, the Nationalist Coalition has been the most active neo-Nazi group in Florida, especially central Florida.

As of 2011, Todd Weingart continues to lead the Coalition’s Florida contingent, along with John Ubele, the group’s Operations Manager. Acting from St Petersburg, the Coalition operates a Web site promoting their white supremacist agenda and a small online store that carries racist books and DVDs.

The Nationalist Coalition specializes in publicity and attention seeking activities. For example; in July 2009, Ubele sent a copy of the Nazi-era anti-Semitic propaganda film *Jud Suss* to Governor Charles Christ's office. When the Governor's office mistakenly sent a generic letter thanking Ubele for the DVD, the Nationalist Coalition posted the letter on their Web site. Considering the effort a "success," the Coalition followed up by mailing the DVD to governors in the southwestern states, receiving another "thank you" letter from Governor Bill Richards of New Mexico.

Political activism is another way in which members of the National Coalition have sought publicity. A proponent of political activism, Ubele himself has made two unsuccessful bids for public office; first for the Pasco Mosquito Board in 2006 and then, more ambitiously, for a Florida state representative seat in 2008. Despite his failed attempts at politics, Ubele continues to see himself as knowledgeable on the subject. He has written pamphlets which outline strategies for extremists to obtain elected office, including "The 2008 Elections: Middle America, Take a Stand!" and "The 2006 Elections: A Call to Action." Similarly, in February 2010, Ubele gave a speech, titled *How to be a More Effective Activist* in Crystal River, Florida. The meeting was hosted by the Council of Conservative Citizens, another white supremacist group with a presence in Florida (see below).

Since 2006, the Nationalist Coalition has organized a more-or-less annual festival which typically includes white power music and speakers. Held in the Tampa area, past guests have included NV leader Kevin Strom, a former teen neo-Nazi singing duo dubbed "Prussian Blue," and anti-Semitic attorney Edgar Steele of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, who is currently accused of hiring a hit man to kill his wife. However, recent Coalition events have been relatively unsuccessful; their December 2009 "Yule Festival", for example, held in Tampa, was poorly attended.

The Nationalist Coalition has notable ties to Florida's most prominent racist skinhead group, the Confederate Hammerskins (see below). Hammerskins often attend Coalition events and vice versa. For example, Hammerskins attended a December 2007 Coalition event held in Tampa while Coalition members Bobby Ammon, Todd Weingart, and David Daugherty attended a Hammerskin-sponsored event in 2005 near Atlanta, Georgia. Additionally, Coalition member Bobby Ammon is a member of a racist band, *Caucazioids*, which played at a Hammerskin white power music conference in Florida in 2009. Other members of the Lakeland-based band include Confederate Hammerskins Coby Stonecypher and Jay Draper.

National Socialist Movement (NSM)

The Detroit-headquartered National Socialist Movement (NSM) is a neo-Nazi group of long standing, created by remnants of the American Nazi Party in 1974. For decades, it operated in the shadows of more prominent neo-Nazi groups such as Aryan Nations and the National Alliance. However, due primarily to setbacks experienced by other major neo-Nazi groups in the early to mid-2000s, the NSM, though having fewer than 400 members nationwide, is currently the largest neo-Nazi group in the country.

Led by Jeff Schoep, the NSM uses contact points throughout the United States to lead small pockets of localized and publicity-seeking activities. Typical activities include distributing ideological leaflets and holding public rallies where anti-immigration sentiments are often expressed. Other publicity-seeking tactics include trying to join local community projects such as disaster relief and highway cleanups.

Another strategy by the NSM has been to use the Internet in new ways to help spread its virulently anti-Semitic and racist message. In spring 2007, the NSM purchased a white supremacist social networking Web site called "New Saxon." The Web site was originally developed as "an online community for whites by whites" by Florida-based white supremacist Todd Findley. However, in March 2007, Findley was arrested and convicted of three counts of grand theft after organizing a scheme to defraud investors in a "whites only" housing development project that never materialized. He claims to have sold New Saxon to NSM in order to raise money for his defense. New Saxon has quickly become popular among white supremacists frustrated by the restrictions on hate speech at most mainstream social networking sites.

The NSM has had a Florida presence for some time. As is typical with NSM units around the country, Florida units in recent years have been small and short lived. NSM reached its peak in Florida near the end of 2006 with three active units, but this did not last. In 2007, several incidents combined to weaken the group's presence in Florida.

One incident occurred when West Palm Beach unit leader Paul Skinner disappeared from the movement shortly after an investigation by Florida's Office of the Inspector General, based on information provided by the Anti-Defamation League, led to him being fired from a job with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Skinner's white supremacist ideology was revealed after he created a New Saxon profile which boasted of both his leadership in the NSM and his employment with the state of Florida.

Another damaging incident occurred when testimony in a Florida court trial revealed

that NSM Florida unit leader David Gletty was an FBI informant. According to the testimony, Gletty's cooperation with the FBI led to the arrest (and later conviction) of two white supremacists, Tom Martin and John Rock, after Gletty wore a wire to a meeting and agreed to help them rob a drug dealer. Both Martin and John Rock are affiliated with the Confederate Hammerskins.

The loss of Skinner and the paranoia created by the disclosure of Gletty's betrayal proved a substantial blow to Florida's NSM and membership dwindled in 2008 and 2009. However, in 2010-11, the current state leader, Tom Lokay of New Port Richey, cultivated small pockets of membership in West Central Florida (in the Spring Hill area) and in South East Florida (around Lake Worth and Plantation).

This new iteration of Florida's NSM presence has sporadically engaged in activities. In December 2010, Lokay organized a small anti-immigration rally in Brooksville, Florida. In August 2010, some of the new Florida members attended a march against immigration in Knoxville, Tennessee. Previous activity by Florida NSM members dates back to February 2009 when Lokay held a meet and greet at the Highlands Hammock State Park in Sebring, Florida. Michael McQueeney, a long time neo-Nazi and Klan member from Wisconsin, was a guest speaker at the meeting.

Aryan Nations

Aryan Nations, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, was once the United States' most infamous neo-Nazi group, although it fell on hard times after the illness and death of its founder, Richard Butler, in 2004. Even before Butler died, Aryan Nations experienced factional fighting and splits due to dissatisfaction with his leadership.

In the years since Butler's death, a handful of different Aryan Nations factions have fought each other to claim his legacy, with some factions falling apart only to be replaced by a new squabbling faction. Some emphasize Butler's neo-Nazi ideology while others have focused more on his adherence to the racist and anti-Semitic religious sect called Christian Identity. In recent years, Florida has seen activity from two factions.

The Aryan Nations faction led by long-time member August Kreis has had ties to Florida dating back to 2003-2005, when Kreis lived in Sebring. Kreis, currently living in Fulton, Tennessee, is a follower of Christian Identity and serves as "High Counsel" for his Aryan Nations faction.

In early 2008, Kreis created a biker subgroup that he dubbed the 1st Kavallerie Brigade of Aryan Nations (it has also used the term Aryan Nations Motorcycle Riders Division). The faction described the subgroup as a “brigade of bikers who are also Aryan Nations,” and suggested the group could provide an “outlet for racially aware bikers.” In June 2008, 11 members and associates of the group had to be taken to the hospital after its motorcycle procession was struck by a car going the wrong way in Osceola County, Florida. Despite this setback, by November 2008 the group claimed three units in Florida and one unit in Tennessee.

The Florida Kavallerie Brigade has close ties to the Florida Chapter of the Outlaws Motorcycle Club. A number of Outlaw MC members wear the Kavallerie Brigade flash on their colors or berets. The Kavallerie flash resembles the 5th Army Special Forces Group flash, depicting a silver totenkopf or “deaths head” (a Nazi Symbol) wearing motorcycle goggles.

The founder of the Brigade is Robert “Doc” Fenaughty of Saint Cloud, Florida, who rides with the Outlaws MC and describes himself as the Florida Affiliate Coordinator for Aryan Nations. He also used slogans such as “Support your local Aryan Nations Cavalry Brigade, defending your right to be white.” On the white supremacist forum Stormfront (see below), Fenaughty wrote, “I live in Central Florida just south of Orlando so I’m on one of the main battlefronts of the illegal immigrant invasion. Our concerns, my concerns, are centered on Racial Purity and [sic] seperation. I am very concerned with the muddying of White culture.”

Another offshoot of Aryan Nations with a presence in Florida was started in 2008 by Paul Mullet, who has recently been based in Ohio and Idaho. Mullet originally struggled to find support for his group. In 2010, however, Mullet and followers held several small rallies and grew in number after absorbing several smaller white supremacist groups, including the National Socialist American Labor Party (NSALP), a small splinter group which broke away from the National Socialist Movement in 2007.

The merger with NSALP was key in bringing a Florida membership to Mullet’s group. Through NSALP, Mullet found a state leader in Sean Michael Woodcock of Bonita Springs. Not long after, on August 22, 2010, Bonita Springs was dusted with hundreds of anti-Semitic fliers promoting Aryan Nations

By October 2010, however, yet another round of Aryan Nations factional infighting caused Mullet to be ousted from the group. Taking some of his former Aryan Nations members with him, including Woodcock, he formed a new neo-Nazi group, the American National Socialist Party (ANSP).

Volksfront

Another national neo-Nazi group with a Florida presence is Volksfront, a longstanding racist and anti-Semitic group that originated in Portland, Oregon. It currently maintains close alliances with American Front and White Revolution, a small neo-Nazi group (see relevant sections, below). Volksfront holds hate rock concerts, produces a white power radio show on the Internet, and publishes hate literature through ROA (“Race Over All”), its publication arm. The core leadership of Volksfront has primarily been located in Oregon, but in recent years there has been an “exodus” of sorts, which has helped Volksfront establish itself in other parts of the country, including Florida.

The Florida chapter of Volksfront has been around for several years, peaking when long-time Hammerskin and Christian Identity adherent Michael Lawrence “patched over” to Volksfront. During this time, Lawrence led the now defunct Lakeland-based Christian Guard and hosted white supremacist events such as a February 2009 barbecue and “Activism Think Tank” gathering in Polk County, Florida.

Lawrence has since moved to Gulfport, Mississippi, but continues to make appearances at Florida events. For example, in December 2009 he attended a “Martyr’s Day” event organized by Volksfront in the Pensacola, Florida, area. White supremacists hold “Martyr’s Day” events to celebrate the fallen “heroes” of the white supremacist movement, such as notorious white supremacist terrorist Robert Jay Mathews, who died in a shootout with the FBI on December 8, 1984.

Since its founding, a number of members of Volksfront have been arrested for crimes ranging from violent murder to vandalism, including a number of hate crimes. For example, on July 9, 2009, a Florida Volksfront member, John Grogan, who had recently moved to Waynesboro, Virginia, was arrested for vandalizing a synagogue and charged with two counts of injuries to a church with the intent to instill fear or intimidation because of religion and/or ethnic origin, as well as two charges of conspiring to commit a felony. Grogan and several other suspects from Florida (see American Front, below) were captured on video surveillance during an April 2009 crime spree in Norfolk, Virginia. During the spree, several synagogues were vandalized with more than 60 stickers containing anti-Semitic, anti-gay and racial slurs. On May 14, 2010, after pleading guilty, Grogan received a five-year prison sentence, to be followed by 25 years of supervised probation. A condition of his probation includes Grogan being prohibited from associating with anyone involved with Volksfront.

White Revolution (WR)

The Arkansas-based White Revolution was founded by former National Alliance member Billy Roper in 2002. Essentially inactive as a group, White Revolution is more akin to a support group for Roper. Known for promoting unity and cooperation between white supremacist organizations, Roper often co-hosts or coordinates events with Blood and Honour America and Volksfront, his closest allies. Using a platform against illegal immigration, abortion, and gay marriage, Roper campaigned as a write-in candidate for governor of Arkansas in 2010. He received only two votes.

White Revolution has little physical presence in Florida recently beyond its 23-year-old state contact, Jessica Nachtman (also known as Jessica Dietrich) of Loxahatchee. In 2007 and 2008, Nachtman, also a member of the Volksfront-affiliated Folkish Women's Front, hosted White Revolution meetings at her home and organized white supremacist get-togethers in Palm Beach County.

In late 2009, Nachtman informed the Southern Poverty Law Center in a letter that she had quit White Revolution; however, as Jessica Dietrich she is still listed as the Florida contact for that group, so her actual status is unclear.

Racist Skinheads

Racist or “white power” skinheads represent a large and violent segment of America’s skinhead subculture (there are other types of skinheads who are not racist). Racist skinheads are particularly prominent along the United States’ West and East Coasts, including Florida, which a number of racist skinhead groups call home. In addition to organized groups, there are larger numbers of unaffiliated or “independent” racist skinheads who are not formally members of any groups. Some racist skinheads have committed major crimes in recent years, including murder.

Hammerskins

The Hammerskins (sometimes called the Hammerskin Nation) are one of the oldest and also one of the largest hard-core racist skinhead groups in the country. It is not a hierarchical group, but rather an umbrella group for a number of local and regional Hammerskin groups. Each major region has its own identifying patch, which depicts crossed hammers on varied backgrounds. The regional group which encompasses Florida and other southern states is the Confederate Hammerskins (CHS).

The Confederate Hammerskins are comprised of members and associates primarily from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. In Florida, the Hammerskins are led by Richard “Richie” Myers of Orlando. Scores of members and supporters live in Florida, which has the largest CHS concentration of any state. CHS activity in Florida is predominantly in the central part of the state (Tampa, Orlando, and Ocala), but there is also a pocket of members along the southeastern coast of the state between Port St Lucie and Pompano Beach.

Recently the Hammerskins have grown with the creation of a new affiliated group, Crew 38 (“38” is code for “Crossed Hammers”). Originally merely a reference to a Hammerskins Internet message forum, Crew 38 evolved into a Hammerskins support group, including a number of people wishing to “probate” with the Hammerskins. As of 2011, Crew 38 members include some of the most active Hammerskins associates, organizing and hosting events, as well as providing a presence in a number of geographic areas where the Hammerskins did not previously exist.

Eschewing most “political” activity, the Hammerkins concentrate much of their energy on white power music. Many of the most popular racist rock bands are Hammerskin-affiliated, and the group also regularly sponsors hate music concerts.

Some of these bands operate from Florida. For example, Forrest Fogarty's Tampa-based band *Attack* routinely plays what he refers to as "combat metal" locally, nationally, and even abroad. Other examples of Hammerskin-affiliated bands with Florida connections include *13 Knots*, *The Caucazoids*, *Forward Area*, and *White Lightning Sounds*.

Hammerfest is an annual white power musical festival hosted by Hammerskins. Regional branches of the Hammerskin Nation take turns hosting this event, which includes peripheral events such as a "strongest skinhead" contest and white supremacist speeches, and attracts racist skinheads from all over the country. In 2009, Florida was home to Hammerfest; it previously hosted the event in 2002. Attendance for this event ranges from 100 to 150 and, when held in Florida, it is also attended by some members of various outlaw biker gangs.

The Florida CHS organizes several regional white power music events every year, attracting bands and racist skinheads from around the Southeast. For example, on July 3, 2010, the Confederate Hammerskins and Crew 38 hosted a "Fourth Fest" in central Florida.

CHS has organized other events and activities in Florida as well. In December 2009, for example, a fish fry "meet and greet" was held in Ocala. Approximately 40 racist skinheads attended a July 4, 2009, gathering in Jupiter. On April 18, 2009, approximately 60 white supremacists gathered on private property in New Port Richey to attend a "Hitler Birthday Bash" to commemorate the April 20 birthday of Adolf Hitler. And in March of 2009, they held their annual Saint Patrick's Day celebration in Orlando. The event featured white power bands *Code 13*, *Attack*, *Kill or Be Killed*, *The Caucazoids*, *Blood Shot* and *Flak 88*.

American Front

Founded in 1987, American Front (AF) is one of the oldest racist skinhead groups in the United States. Led from California by Sacramento's David Lynch, a racist skinhead formerly from Port St. Lucie, AF reemerged from a period of dormancy in 2005. Female members are part of the Valkyrie Corps and supporters or potential "probates" can join the American Patriot Brigade, a subgroup created in November 2009.

American Front's comparatively small membership has for the most part been limited to Florida and California; more recently, they have gained several members in the Midwest and Northeast. In Florida, the group's presence is centered in Orlando, with

members in such nearby towns as Cocoa, Winter Park, Satsuma, and St. Cloud. The Florida AF contingent has ties to the Confederate Hammerskins' Richie Myers, a former AF member.

In the past few years, arrests have plagued members of the group. A recent example is the arrest of Christopher Brooks of St. Cloud, who in May 2010 reached a plea deal for his role in an April 2009 synagogue vandalism spree in Norfolk, Virginia (see Volksfront section, above). Brooks pleaded guilty to one charge of felony injury to a religious institute, receiving a sentence of five years in prison with all but time served suspended. Brooks' close friend and fellow AFer Richard Adam Stockdale of St. Cloud served time in 2010 for battery charges.

An additional Florida arrest was that of Kent McLellan of Crescent City. In March 2010, McLellan was sentenced to one year and one day in prison after being convicted of a September 2008 vandalism of a restaurant and church. McLellan claimed he spray painted swastikas, "white power," and "RAHOWA" (which signifies "Racial Holy War," a battle cry used by white supremacists) on the buildings because the church allegedly tried to convert him and because patrons of the restaurant allegedly mocked his skinhead attire.

As is true for many racist skinhead groups, American Front members are also involved in the white power music scene.

The Vinlanders Social Club (VSC)

The Vinlanders Social Club (VSC), also referred to simply as the Vinlanders, is a hardcore racist skinhead organization based primarily in the Midwestern and Northeastern United States. Headquartered in central Indiana, it has a core membership, but also attracts members of other racist skinhead crews as a kind of umbrella group as well.

The Vinlanders have several members in Florida, as well as supporters in nearby Georgia. Originally, the small Florida contingent was led by long-time racist skinhead Robert Smith, formerly of Jacksonville. However, Smith's departure for Virginia, along with the loss of several other members in the state, has caused organized Florida activity to become limited. However, roughly 20 members and supporters of the VSC gathered in the Jacksonville area on March 17, 2007, for a St. Patrick's Day celebration. Vinlanders from as far away as Indiana traveled to be at the gathering.

To buoy support, the Vinlanders created a support group in 2009 dubbed FIRM 22

(“22” representing “V” for Vinlanders). FIRM 22 support groups exist in most states that have a substantial VSC membership, as well as a few that do not. Many of those who have joined FIRM 22 are female supporters (women are not allowed to be members of the VSC itself); others are males in the early stages of the probation process. FIRM 22 Florida has recently become inactive and may be defunct. However, the Vinlanders still have active members in the state.

Because Florida does have a Vinlanders presence, even if not a large one, there is always a risk of violence. Vinlanders and their associates have been arrested across the country for crimes ranging from drug possession and misconduct involving firearms to aggravated assault and murder. Indeed, two Florida “cold case” murders solved in 2007 were linked to racist skinheads who later joined VSC, illustrating the violent nature of the people the group attracts. The incident is worth recounting. In 1998, Charles Marovskis, Kenneth Hoover, and other members of the racist skinhead crew Tampa Blood and Honour committed murders of homeless men to increase their status within the group. The body of one victim, a 62-year-old man, was discovered under a highway overpass after being beaten and stabbed in the eye with a tire iron. The second victim, a 44-year-old man, was killed with an ax, his body later found in the woods. Both Marovskis and Hoover moved to northeastern Pennsylvania in the years after the murders, but were arrested and extradited back to Florida in 2007 to face trial. While living in Pennsylvania, the men became involved with the Vinlanders Social Club as well as the Keystone State Skinheads, a Pennsylvania racist skinhead group. Hoover pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and racketeering charges in April 2007. Marvoskis pleaded guilty on May 23, 2008, to two federal charges of second-degree murder.

Supreme White Alliance

The Supreme White Alliance is a racist skinhead group formed in 2007 in the Midwest by younger members and associates of a faltering Kentucky-based Ku Klux Klan group. The group started small but has been growing, with dozens of active members in states such as Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas and Florida. SWA membership is limited to men; most members are between the ages of 27 and 35. Many of them are adherents of Christian Identity.

SWA has struggled to find leadership in Florida. When the group first formed, Richard Kidd, one of the group’s founders, recruited David Bedford of Winter Haven, Florida. Bedford a young racist skinhead originally from Cincinnati, became the Florida state leader, but moved back to Ohio in early 2009. Bedford’s successor was Ralph A. Viola, Jr., of Inverness, a former leader of the Empire Knights of the

Ku Klux Klan. In the past, Viola hosted a number of white supremacist Web sites such as KlanNet, KKKRadio and the Aryan-Front forum. He also has a criminal history. Viola was arrested in 2007 for discharging a firearm from a vehicle. In 2008, Viola violated his probation by possessing a weapon, a large knife with a swastika on the handle, and by consuming alcohol. Earlier, Viola ran for a local county commissioner position in 2000 but dropped out of the race after being arrested for felony driving with a suspended license (a felony due to two prior convictions for same offense). He was also arrested for breaking a woman's arm during an argument. He was found guilty of battery in January 2001.

SWA's presence in Florida remains lackluster. As of 2011, Viola has become inactive and Tyler Henneke, who began probating with SWA in July 2010, is ostensibly the new state leader. Henneke is a tattoo artist in Winter Park who previously associated with the Confederate Hammerskins and American Front. In January 2011, Henneke, using the screen name Arischerkrieger ("Aryan Warrior"), posted on an SWA Internet forum that Florida would have a SWA chapter soon and that he was "looking for good strong minded people, loyal, and dedicated to SWA."

American Nazis

The American Nazis were a long-standing (and fairly large) but low-profile white supremacist group based in New Port Richey. The group drew attention following a standoff with Pasco County deputies the night after a woman and a friend of her son were attacked with a knife in their home near the American Nazis' hangout on March 23, 2006. John A. Ditullio was arrested wearing a red "American Nazis" T-shirt the morning after the attack and was indicted in Pasco County in October 2006 on first-degree murder and first-degree attempted murder charges for allegedly stabbing the woman and fatally stabbing the teenaged friend of her son. In December 2010, a New Port Richey jury found Ditullio guilty of both the murder and assault and he was later sentenced to life in prison.

Brian "Zero" Buckley, 44, the alleged leader of the American Nazis, was convicted on October 12, 2006, of burglarizing the same home in March 2006. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Buckley sports a racist tattoo on his forehead, "ANFFAN," an acronym standing for "American Nazi Forever, Forever American Nazi."

Ku Klux Klan Groups and “Traditional” White Supremacist Groups

Ku Klux Klan Groups

Today there is no single Ku Klux Klan, but rather 40+ different Klan groups of various sizes, most only local or regional in nature. Strongest in the Midwest and in the South, the Klan remains the most common type of hate group in America in terms of the number of groups. In recent years, Klan groups have committed crimes ranging from hate crimes to planned acts of terrorism.

Though not always in great numbers, the Klan has consistently had a presence in Florida. The Klan groups which currently have membership in the State have struggled and some have morphed as leadership changed. There are several Klan groups which have only a very minimal presence in Florida. For example, Thomas Robb’s Harrison, Arkansas-based Knights Party has several members in Davie, and the Ohio-based Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan claims a Florida chapter. There are, however, Klan groups that have a stronger connection to Florida.

Fraternal White Knights

The Fraternal White Knights (FWK), led by Doug Sadler, had been based in central Florida, but Sadler moved to Iowa in late 2005. In early 2010, Sadler stepped down from his leadership role and appointed William Jasper of Tennessee to succeed him. Jasper increased the group to a regional presence, picking up members in Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. In July 2010, Jasper announced that the FWK had banished Sadler and that the group would be undergoing a name change. Jasper and a large majority of the FWK, including the Florida members, began calling themselves the True Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, occasionally simplifying it as the “True Knights.” Sadler’s rump FWK is now left with a handful of members in and near Charles City, Iowa.

True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Jasper’s True Knights (see above) have become one of the larger and more active Klan groups in the southeast. In December 2010, the True Knights merged with the Traditionalist American Knights of the KKK (TAK). TAK, which already had several members in Florida, was a small regional Klan led by Frank Ancona of

Viburnum, Missouri. This growing regional Klan now calls itself the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

United Northern and Southern Knights of the KKK

Originally formed by Michigan Klansmen, the United Northern and Southern Knights quickly became a regional Klan. Part of their expansion was a 2007 merger with the National Aryan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan LLC (NAK) of Florida, a tiny Klan group. After the merger, the UNSK national office remained in Fraser, Michigan. However, former NAK leader Cole Thornton of Englewood, Florida, whose real name is Charles Denton, became the leader of the united groups. In April 2010, when Klan fliers were distributed in several neighborhoods in Palm Coast, Florida, Thornton announced to the media that the UNSK Florida was conducting a membership drive. The fliers contained 20 reasons to join the UNSK, as well as rants against illegal immigration, non-whites, and homosexuals.

Following police investigations, the UNSK affiliation of a corrections officer and a police officer became public. In December 2009, Wayne Kerschner, an Alachua County corrections officer, was fired after he admitted he was a member of the UNSK. Kerschner told investigators he and his wife were dues-paying members of the UNSK and that he had attended Klan events. In January of the same year, James Elkins, a Fruitland Park police officer, resigned after an investigation began regarding allegations he was a district Kleagle for the Englewood-based National Aryan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and subsequently [after the merger] a member of the United Northern and Southern Knights.

Confederate National Party of the KKK

The Confederate National Party of the KKK is a very small Klan group founded in 2005 in Saint Cloud and New Port Richey. In 2009, after a period of inactivity, they attempted to reform. Practicing an extremely crude version of Klan ideology; the current membership centers on the Bradenton, Ellenton, and Naples area.

“Traditional” Racist Groups

In addition to Ku Klux Klan groups, there are other white supremacist groups that have belief systems very similar to that of the Klan, but which find its robes and rituals, not to mention its reputation, unappealing. “Traditional” racist groups are typically more upscale and prefer business suits to Klan paraphernalia. Although some are significantly anti-Semitic, “traditional” racist groups are often primarily anti-black and anti-immigrant. Occasionally, such groups try to bill themselves as “white civil rights” organizations.

Council of Conservative Citizens (CofCC)

The St. Louis-based Council of Conservative Citizens (CofCC), despite its innocuous name, is a large racist organization that traces its roots directly to the racist White Citizens’ Councils that fought integration in the South in the 1950s and 1960s. With a membership that may number over a thousand, mostly in the South, the Council is one of the larger hate groups in the United States.

The Council has considerable support in Florida, where its main spokesperson is Nathan Hoss Rager of Clearwater. Rager, formerly a member of the group’s Central Alabama Council, is also an editor for *The Citizens Informer*, the CofCC’s newsletter.

The Florida West Coast chapter is led by Dennis Morris of Crystal River. Members of this chapter attended Tea Party events on September 12, 2009, in Crystal River and again on January 16, 2010 in Inverness. On both occasions, they passed out CofCC business cards and copies of *The Citizens Informer*. In February 2010, they held a “freedom rally” at Little Spring Park in Crystal River. Also in February, Morris was a guest on the Derek Black radio show (see below). Morris also organized a CofCC dinner in Homosassa in November 2009.

Florida CofCC members attended the national CofCC conferences held in 2010 (Nashville, Tennessee) and 2009 (Jackson, Mississippi). During the 2009 conference, Floridian Derek Black was among the recipients of the Council of Conservative Citizens Award. Long-time CofCC member Don Black also attended and spoke at the event.

Racist Prison Gangs

In a number of states, racist prison gangs constitute the largest organized white supremacist groups, either in prisons or on the streets. Such groups, both well-organized and very violent, engage in a variety of criminal activities. These relate primarily to organized crime, but also include hate crimes. Many racist prison gangs are heavily involved in methamphetamine trafficking.

In Florida, several gangs have a presence, but Florida has largely escaped the racist prison gang problems that have plagued a number of other states. Moreover, unlike a number of other states, the gangs that do operate in Florida tend not to have a strong “street” presence.

Florida racist prison gang members can be found in federal prisons located in Florida, in state prisons, and in some of the larger county jails.

Aryan Brotherhood

At the top of the racist prison gang hierarchy is the Aryan Brotherhood, the oldest and most infamous racist prison gang. It is present primarily in the Federal prison system and in California. A number of state level racist prison gangs use “Aryan Brotherhood” as part of their name (such as the “Mississippi Aryan Brotherhood”), but they are unrelated to the original group. While the Florida Department of Corrections has inmates who claim to be members of the Aryan Brotherhood, there is no significant organized presence in the state.

Several individuals claiming to be members of the Aryan Brotherhood have been convicted of crimes in Florida. In June 2009, Larry Gregory was sentenced to life in prison for the April 2008 sexual battery of a 17-year-old girl near Straub Park in downtown St. Petersburg. Gregory has the word "white" tattooed on one calf and the word “power” on the other. A jury in Washington County convicted another self-declared member, Johnny D. Reed, of first-degree murder on January 30, 2008. Reed was found guilty of strangling his 46-year-old African-American cellmate in the Washington Correction Institution on November 13, 2006, while the cellmate was sleeping. After choking the cellmate, and then attempting to hang him, Reed suffocated him. As a result, Reed received a sentence of life imprisonment without parole.

Unforgiven Gang

The most organized white supremacist gang in the Florida prison system is the Unforgiven gang. This low-profile group was established in the mid-1980's at the Apalachee Correctional Institution in Sneads. Membership is approximately 100 and members often have a "shield" tattoo (equivalent to a logo for the group) which includes a swastika interlaced with an iron cross with SS lightning bolts in the center. The secretive group also uses the numeric code 21 2 12 (21 = U for Unity, 2= B for Brotherhood, and 12 = L for Loyalty).

Other Florida White Supremacists and Anti-Semites

The majority of Florida's white supremacists are not "card-carrying" members of any particular group or movement and so often slip "under the radar." However, their number includes some who have achieved notoriety in one way or another, and, in the case of Don Black, one who has become one of the most significant white supremacists in the United States.

Don and Derek Black

One of the most prominent white supremacists in Florida—or, for that matter, the entire country—is Stephen Donald "Don" Black of West Palm Beach. A former Grand Dragon in the Ku Klux Klan and one-time disciple of David Duke, Black rose to greater prominence as the creator and maintainer of Stormfront, the oldest and largest white supremacist Web site on the Internet. Stormfront is the most popular on-line meeting place for white supremacists around the world. On an average day, the site, which uses the slogan "White Pride World Wide," attracts more than 50,000 visitors.

Black devotes most of his time to running Stormfront out of his home, but is also known for his appearances and speeches at racist and anti-Semitic gatherings. In July 2008, Don Black was a guest speaker at a meeting in Orlando, Florida, organized by the Confederate Hammerskins. He is a frequent attendee at American Renaissance conferences, which take place once every two years and attract racists and white supremacists from around the world.

In recent years, Black's son, Derek Black, has been coming into his own as a white supremacist activist and has garnered considerable notoriety in Florida. Derek got his start in the movement by creating "Stormfront for Kids;" by the time he was a teenager, he had already begun to take an active role in conferences attended by his father. In February 2006 and February 2008, Derek attended American Renaissance conferences. In 2006 and 2007, he appeared at Council of Conservative Citizens national conferences, where he entertained guests with his music. In 2005, he was listed as one of the attendees at another white supremacist conference hosted by David Duke in New Orleans. Hundreds of white supremacists, including neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers, attended that conference.

In 2008, Derek broadened his activities. He campaigned for and, in August of that

year, was elected as a Republican Party committeeman in Palm Beach. When Republican Party officials refused to recognize his election, Derek simply basked in the media spotlight that the whole episode generated.

In November of the same year, Derek actually served as a keynote speaker for a conference sponsored by David Duke in Memphis, Tennessee. A number of white supremacists, including Derek's father, racist radio show host James Edwards, and Canadian white supremacist Paul Fromm also attended the conference.

In his speech at the conference, Derek made it clear that he was following in the footsteps of the racist leaders who came before him. He repeatedly referred to white supremacists David Duke, Don Black and others who had spoken at the same conference as "titans." He also claimed that "I have never lived in a country that I consider a white country... I've never enjoyed the good golden bag of privilege [that goes along with being white]."

Derek talked about "infiltrating" the Republican Party for the sake of representing his pro-white views: "We could infiltrate [the Republican Party]... by getting into it in our own positions... there are thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of white people who understand that they are losing representation." He also claimed that he successfully campaigned by going house to house and talking to voters about "immigration" and "affirmative action," hot button issues that white supremacists often exploit in order to appeal to a wider audience.

In February 2010, Derek debuted a new radio show airing on Lake Worth's WPBR-AM, where he discusses "white politics" and interviews the talking heads of the white supremacist movement, such as David Duke, Paul Fromm, and racist writer Sam Dickson. In 2010, Black also hosted Gordon Baum, leader of the Council of Conservative Citizens, and promoted Baum's June National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, at which Derek was a guest speaker.

League of the South

The League of the South is a "neo-Confederate" group that since 1996 has sought to create a South predicated on "Anglo-Celtic" cultural dominance, which is essentially the group's term for "white-dominated culture." It claims, however, not to be racist. The League is led by Michael Hill of Killen, Alabama. The group has declined from its heyday in the late 1990s, but Florida boasts chapters in Goldenrod, Tampa, Jacksonville, Pensacola, Polk and Monroe counties. As of early 2011, Steve Walker of Jacksonville, chair of the Northeast Florida chapter, was the state's most active leader.

David Irving

The most prominent Holocaust denier with Florida ties, David Irving is a British citizen who has a second residence in Key West. Originally a nonacademic historian with an interest in Nazi military history, Irving eventually emerged publicly as a Holocaust denier, attacking Holocaust-related subjects ranging from Auschwitz to Anne Frank.

Irving regularly travels around the United States, giving presentations to Holocaust deniers, who are now one of the main audiences for his books (as legitimate publishers will no longer accept them); these tours almost invariably include stops in Florida. In recent years, Irving has made a number of appearances in Florida, including Clearwater, Manalapan, Jacksonville, Melbourne, Tampa, and West Palm Beach.

Michael John Scott Williams

Michael John Scott Williams, of Tamarac, was arrested by officers in West Palm Beach and charged with four counts of possession of weapons or ammo by a convicted felon in August 2010. Williams is the Web designer and administrator for the racist eNationalist Web site and forum. Williams, who has a lengthy criminal history in Washington State, describes eNationalist as a “community for the European and the European descendant.”

Criminal Activity by Unaffiliated White Supremacists

In recent years, Florida has certainly seen its fair share of white supremacist related criminal activity. In addition to incidents referred to in connection with white supremacist groups mentioned above, a variety of incidents were also committed by white supremacists unaffiliated with any formal group. Some of the more prominent recent arrests are listed here.

- *James Lindsey Howze.* On September 2, 2010, James Lindsey Howze, of Lake City, and Lonnie Robert Munn, of Live Oak, were arrested at Whitewater State Park in St. Charles, Minnesota. The two, who had been on the run for a week, were charged with the August 26 execution-style murders of a man, his wife, and their nephew at their home in Suwannee County, Florida. A third man, Keith Allen Hughes, of O'Brien, was previously arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit armed robbery. Officials believe the murders were committed during a robbery and that Hughes, a former employee of one of the victims, may have told Howze and Munn about an allegedly significant amount of cash kept inside the home. Both Howze and Munn are convicted felons and allegedly affiliated with the "Black Pistons" motorcycle gang. Howze has a battleaxe/swastika tattoo common among white supremacists.
- *Craig Wall.* On February 17, 2010, Craig Wall of Clearwater, Florida, was arrested for fatally stabbing Laura Taft, his baby's mother. On February 25, Wall was indicted by a grand jury on charges of murdering Taft and the baby they had together. The couple's baby died two weeks earlier while in the care of Wall. Wall was arrested by Sumter County sheriff's deputies after they located him sitting unresponsive in his vehicle on the side of State Road 44. Wall has numerous white supremacist tattoos and a criminal record which includes armed robbery and grand theft auto.
- *Robert C. Mullenix.* On November 1, 2007, Robert C. Mullenix, 53, was arrested in Hillsborough County for making and selling pipe bombs. Mullenix pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of unregistered firearms and pipe bombs, and was sentenced to eighty-seven months in federal prison. Mullenix, who had a prior felony conviction, has numerous white supremacist tattoos covering his torso, arms and legs, including swastikas, the neo-Nazi Totenkopf, SS lightning bolts, the white supremacist version of the Celtic Cross, Confederate flags, the words "White Pride," the number 88 (which stands for "Heil Hitler") and an Iron Cross.

- *Michael Allen Phillips.* Hillsborough County Sheriff's Sergeant Ronald Harrison was killed in the early morning hours of August 15, 2007, in Brandon, Florida, by a lone white supremacist in what investigators called a random attack. The shooter, Michael Allen Phillips, 24, was shot and killed by SWAT members a few hours later, after a stand-off in which he fired numerous shots at officers surrounding his mother's house, where he lived. According to law enforcement, during negotiations Phillips made references to "8814," a numeric phrase that combines two white supremacist code phrases: "88" code for "Heil Hitler" and "14" code for an infamous white supremacist slogan. Officers later found a letter expressing what police called "extreme racism" at his residence. Phillips shot Harrison while the officer was driving home in his unmarked police car on his way from patrolling a DUI checkpoint. Witnesses heard gunshots and saw Harrison's car bump into another vehicle, then crash into a tree. Harrison, 55, had been shot twice in the upper torso and was pronounced dead at the hospital. The Sheriff's office believes that Harrison was ambushed by Phillips.
- *Christopher J. Riendeau.* In July 2007, Christopher J. Riendeau, of Naples, who was wanted for violating a \$100,000 bond for narcotics violations, was tracked down by bounty hunters who discovered that Riendeau's Valdosta, Georgia, storage unit contained explosives and white supremacist paraphernalia, including a Nazi armband, flag, and stamp. Between two storage units he rented in Valdosta and Naples, Riendeau had eight pipe bombs, several inactive grenades, bomb-making materials, and an arsenal of firearms that included machine guns. He was sentenced to a lengthy state prison term for the narcotics and explosives violations.

Anti-Government Extremist Movements

Beginning in late 2008, Americans witnessed a wave of anti-government sentiment sweeping the country, both in mainstream America as well as in more extreme circles. On the fringes of American society, the growth of anti-government sentiment has helped spawn a resurgence of extreme anti-government conspiracy theories and the resurgence of anti-government extremist groups and movements, most noticeably the militia movement, which has grown from 50 groups or so in 2008 to nearly 200 in 2011, and the sovereign citizen movement. The related tax protest movement has also seen some growth.

In recent decades, Florida has been one of the most fertile breeding grounds for such extreme anti-government movements, especially the sovereign citizen movement. The major band of sovereign citizen activity stretches from St. Petersburg through Orlando, but sovereign citizens can be found in northern and southern Florida, too, as well as the panhandle. Although some adherents may also be white supremacists, or have ties to such groups, the movements in general are characterized rather by their extreme anti-government attitudes and consequently even include African-American and Hispanic members. The latter, in Florida, are primarily Cuban-Americans in south Florida.

Sovereign Citizen Movement

The sovereign citizen movement is a widely dispersed and loosely organized collection of groups and individuals whose adherents believe that virtually all existing government in the United States is illegitimate and seek to “restore” an idealized, minimalist government that never actually existed. To this end, sovereign citizens wage war against the government and other forms of authority using “paper terrorism” harassment and intimidation tactics, and occasionally resorting to violence, including murder. Members of the sovereign citizen movement also frequently promote various frauds or scams, including mortgage fraud.

The sovereign citizen movement is not generally oriented around *groups*. Though sovereign citizen groups do form, the default structure of the sovereign citizen movement is that of a large mass of individuals, or loosely aligned and informal/ad hoc groups, led by a number of sovereign citizen “gurus” who provide leadership and inspiration as well as new ideas and tactics.

The most common guru activity is the seminar, often held in hotel meeting rooms. They can be attended by up to hundreds of people, from long-time sovereign citizens to potential recruits. For example, Bob Hurt, a Florida guru from Clearwater, offered a mortgage foreclosure defense seminar in May 2010 in that city that taught attendees how to “liberate yourself from debt, government oppression and corruption (such as the IRS or crooked courts), and prevail in your personal goals.” The seminar advertised that it would show how to stop mortgage foreclosures and protect one’s rights through “administrative process” (a set of sovereign citizen tactics).

Seminars often teach so-called “paper terrorism” tactics, which are defined as the use of bogus legal filings or documents, or the misuse of legitimate ones, to intimidate, harass and retaliate against perceived enemies, especially government officials and law enforcement officers. Among the oldest paper terrorism tactics is the use of bogus or nuisance liens filed on the property of victims. This has the effect of clouding the title of homes or other property belonging to the victim, who must hire an attorney to clear the title, at considerable expense in time and money. In Florida, sovereign citizens have filed bogus liens against an array of public officials. For example, in 2008, sovereign citizens Joel and Donna Brinkle of Sanford allegedly filed liens on the property of four local officials, in addition to previous liens filed against people ranging from a tow truck company to former president Bill Clinton. More recently, in May 2010, a Brooksville sovereign citizen, Edgard Negron, allegedly filed \$322 billion worth of bogus liens against various officials.

In a similar vein, David Williams III, a Floridian who became a sovereign citizen while in federal prison, filed false liens and claims against the federal prosecutor and judge involved in his 2002 drug case. He was convicted on charges related to these retaliatory measures in a federal trial in Orlando in September 2007.

One sovereign citizen fad that has been sweeping the country in recent years is the notion of “diplomatic immunity,” in which sovereigns declare themselves “diplomats” and their homes as “embassies.” Once they have done so, they will create or procure their own “Diplomatic Agent” identity cards and attempt to use them in various circumstances, such as traffic stops. For example, sovereign citizen John McComb was pulled over by a Charlotte County sheriff’s deputy in June 2010. Instead of his license and registration, he allegedly gave the deputy a letter of Diplomatic Immunity and a bogus “registration” document from the fictitious sovereign citizen Indian tribe dubbed the Little Shell Pembina Band of North America.

Members of the sovereign citizen movement, in order to avoid authority and to escape the jurisdiction of a government they believe is illegal, frequently try to create their own fictitious governmental or quasi-governmental entities. The Little Shell Pembina Band of North America, created in 2003 in North Dakota, is one of the more successful such attempts. The group, which has adherents in Florida, pretends to be a Native American tribal organization, although Native blood is not a prerequisite for membership. Members typically claim it is independent of the United States or retains a special sovereignty.

One of the earliest activities of the Little Shell Band was to offer insurance under the guise of the "Little Shell Pembina Band of North America Assurance Company" (and other names). Despite lacking licenses and certificates of authority, the Little Shell Band offered applications for auto and homeowners "assurance" that would replace existing insurance policies, according to North Dakota officials. In June 2003, the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation ordered the group to stop marketing malpractice insurance.

This was not the only instance of a Little Shell-related fraud. During the period 2006-2008, a Little Shell member in Tamarac, Audie Watson, operated an immigration fraud in which he sold membership in the group to undocumented Haitian immigrants for \$2000 apiece, claiming it would grant them legal status. In 2009, Watson convicted of running an immigration fraud ring.

Sovereign citizens sometimes engage in more violent criminal acts. Threats and ultimatums, attempted “citizens arrests” and takeovers of government or other buildings, and acts of violence, especially during traffic stops and residence visits, are

common among the sovereign citizen movement, making them a serious officer safety threat as well as a potential threat to public officials and private citizens in the communities in which they operate.

On May 20, 2010, Jerry Kane, a sovereign citizen with Ohio and Florida connections, tragically demonstrated the affinity sovereign citizens have for violence. He was driving along I-40 in eastern Arkansas when he was pulled over by West Memphis, Arkansas, police officers running a drug interdiction operation. Kane, traveling with his 16-year-old son, Joseph, a dedicated disciple of his father's extreme theories, exited the mini-van and began talking to, then arguing with, the officers. Joseph Kane then jumped out of the mini-van with an AK-47, opening fire on the unsuspecting officers almost immediately, hitting one officer 11 times and the other 14 times, killing them both. Ninety minutes later, after authorities located the Kane's vehicle, a second shootout occurred, in which the Crittenden County sheriff and his chief deputy were both wounded, and the Kanes were killed.

Unfortunately, the Kane ambush is not the only example of the propensity for violence among anti-government extremists. In Florida, law enforcement officials have faced spontaneous sovereign citizen violence during traffic stops and visits to residences. In an April 2010 incident, for example, sovereign citizen Brody Whitaker allegedly shot five times at a Florida state trooper while fleeing from a traffic stop in Sumpter County. He was later arrested in Winsted, Connecticut, after an extensive search. In August, while investigating a homemade firing range in Pasco County, anti-government extremist Josiah Fornof allegedly told deputies that by being on his property they were trespassing and warned, "...if you come back, we may bear arms against you." Josiah was arrested for being a felon in possession of a firearm. His previous criminal history includes several felony convictions, among them aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, battery on a law enforcement officer and escape.

Tax Protest Movement

The sovereign citizen movement is an offshoot of the tax protest movement, an anti-government extremist movement whose adherents believe that there is a government conspiracy to keep them unaware of the “fact” that they do not have to pay income taxes. This movement, too, is active in Florida, and a number of Florida citizens have been convicted in recent years on tax fraud and tax evasion charges related to their activities in this movement.

In particular, Florida has had a number of tax protest gurus who have taught others various tax evasion strategies. A prominent group of this nature was the Mount Dora-based American Rights Litigators (ARL), founded by Eddie Ray Kahn. ARL sold fraudulent tax evasion strategies providing clients and associates—including actor Wesley Snipes, who in 2011 turned himself in to serve a three-year prison sentence for tax evasion—with ways to hide income and assets to avoid paying federal taxes, as well as how to obstruct IRS investigations. One of their tactics was the alleged use of counterfeit bills or checks to “pay” taxes with. Kahn himself was convicted in 2006 and again in 2008 of charges related to promoting tax evasion schemes. He is now serving a combined 30-year prison sentence.

Another Floridian, Carel A. Prater of Sarasota, operated the bogus New Found Freedom, a “tax escape service.” New Found Freedom sold services which Prater purportedly claimed would legally remove his customers from the federal tax system. Prater told customers that income earned in the United States is usually not taxable (a common tax protest movement argument) and, in exchange for fees, prepared fraudulent tax returns and bogus documents that were submitted to the Internal Revenue Service and recorded in public records. Prater also advised customers to conceal assets and income from the IRS through limited liability shell companies and unincorporated business trust organizations (a common tax protest movement tactic). In June 2010, Prater was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for corrupt interference with Internal Revenue Service laws, aiding and assisting in the filing of false tax returns, failure to file a tax return, criminal contempt, structuring transactions to avoid reporting requirements, and false declarations before a grand jury.

Another guru of sorts, Joseph Nelson Sweet of Bradenton, was found guilty of selling and promoting a tax scheme in which customers were told to avoid paying federal income tax by placing their money in bogus trusts. Sweet also instructed clients in the tax protest movement belief that filing federal income tax returns was voluntary and showed them how to submit obstructive paperwork in order to deceive the Internal

Revenue Service. A co-defendant in the case, Jack Lee Malone, of Largo, Florida was found guilty on similar charges. In October 2010, Sweet was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison.

The Militia Movement

The militia movement arose in the mid-1990s, devoted to its goal of stopping of a tyrannical “New World Order” conspiracy from taking over the United States. Over the years, many members of militia groups have been convicted on a variety of criminal charges ranging from possession of illegal weapons to acts of terrorism. The militia movement was originally particularly active in Florida, which had many militia groups active in its borders, but the militia movement declined in the late 1990s. In Florida, its decline was precipitous, especially after Florida militia leader Donald Beauregard, a store manager in St. Petersburg, was sentenced to five years in prison in July 2000 on a conspiracy conviction for plotting to steal explosives from a National Guard armory and blow up power plants.

Beginning in 2008, militia groups once more began to proliferate, and their expansion accelerated in 2009 following the inauguration of President Obama. Within the past three years, the movement has almost quadrupled in size, growing to more than 200 groups across the United States. It is also the most receptive audience for extreme anti-government conspiracy theories and their radicalizing potential. However, most of the new militia groups are fairly small, and the movement is still weaker than it was in the 1990s.

Florida currently has approximately a dozen militia groups. These groups are small; some are just a handful of friends. Some are essentially only Web-based, while others actively conduct paramilitary trainings. One of the most active groups is the Florida Free Militia in central Florida. They organized and promote a number of trainings in recent years, including an annual Militia Fest. In 2010, this event was held in Silver Springs and in 2009 in Ocala. The North Florida Survival Group, led by Jim Foster, is another active group. Foster held a December 2010 survival camp in Old Town and has several “field training exercises” scheduled for 2011.

Most of Florida’s militia activity occurs in the North Central portion of the State, around the areas of Deltona, Silver Springs, Hawthorne, Ocala and Old Town. There is also, however, the Northwest Florida Militia based near Gulf Breeze, which holds monthly meetings and occasionally holds trainings. There is additionally a squad that trains in the Everglades and a new militia group, the so-called South Florida Special Tactics Regiment, organizing in Fort Lauderdale.

Some militia members from Florida, including several from the Southeast Constitutional Militia/Florida Charter Oaks Militia, traveled to Arizona to conduct

several vigilante border patrols there during 2010. They plan to do more such “operations” in 2011.

The Oath Keepers

One manifestation of recent anti-government anger and the growing notion of resisting the government was the creation of the Oath Keepers group in March 2009. Formed by Stewart Rhodes, a Nevada lawyer and sculptor, the Oath Keepers is a group that deliberately targets police officers and military personnel for recruitment into the extreme anti-government movement. Its basic pitch is to remind such people that they swore an oath to defend the Constitution “from all enemies, foreign and domestic,” and to suggest that now is the time to live up to that oath by resisting an allegedly tyrannical government.

The Florida chapter for the Oath Keepers is led by Chauncey Normandin, an Army veteran and former Massachusetts police captain who retired to Bonita Springs. Normandin is also the Oath Keepers regional leader for the eastern United States. Normandin has traveled around the country promoting the Oath Keepers and meeting with Tea Party organizations, from which the Oath Keepers also occasionally attempt to recruit. He was a speaker at a Tea Party event in Inverness on July 4, 2009. The group’s Web site boasts new Florida chapters in Lee County, Pembroke Pines, Lake Worth, Jacksonville and Ocala.

Islamic Extremism

In addition to older forms of extremism and terrorism, the United States must deal with new forms of radicalism and extremism that have crossed its borders in the 21st century. Of these, individuals motivated by radical interpretations of Islam have been the greatest concern since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Florida is no exception; in fact, 12 of the 9/11 hijackers carried Florida drivers' licenses or identification cards. Florida-related examples of Islamic extremism range from a fringe anti-Semitic Muslim organization that justifies terrorist attacks and other forms of violence against non-Muslims to Floridians who have been implicated in various bomb plots and conspiracies in the U.S. or for providing material support to Islamic terrorist groups abroad.

Domestic Muslim Extremist Connections in Florida

Revolution Muslim

One extreme domestic Muslim organization that had recent ties to Florida, albeit brief ones, is Revolution Muslim, an anti-Semitic organization that justifies violence against non-Muslims around the world. The group has a small real-world presence, based primarily in New York, with a larger on-line circle of supporters. In late 2009, after its founder announced his intention to leave the United States for Morocco, a new *amir* (leader) of Revolution Muslim emerged—Abdullah as-Sayf Jones, a convert to Islam from Florida.

Jones, who has described himself as a “revolutionary in pursuit of Allah's pleasure and [paradise],” was Revolution Muslim’s representative in Florida before assuming leadership of the organization. Videos on the group’s Web site show Jones distributing literature outside what appears to be a mosque in Florida in the summer of 2009.

In a three-part video titled “My Journey to Islam” posted on the group’s YouTube channel in August 2009, Jones informed viewers that he grew up in Brevard County in Florida and was known as David Scott Jones. Based on his account in the video, he became a Muslim when he was 16 and his main influences were Sayd Qutb, the late Muslim Brotherhood ideologue; Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born Muslim cleric living in Yemen who has been designated a “key leader” of Al Qaeda; Abu Hamza al-Masri, a radical Islamic cleric in Britain who is currently serving a seven-year sentence for incitement to murder; and Abdullah al-Faisal, the original founder of Revolution Muslim.

Upon becoming leader of Revolution Muslim, Jones left Florida for New York, but he did not stay with the group for long. In March 2010, Jones, who by then had adopted the name Abdullah al-Amin, resigned from the group over apparent disagreement over theological and other issues. With that, the group lost its primary connection to Florida.

Liberty City Five

In May 2009, a federal jury in Miami found five men guilty of multiple charges of trying to ally themselves with Al Qaeda to levy war against the U.S. and attack

American targets. The group—which met at a warehouse in Miami’s Liberty City neighborhood—plotted to attack the FBI field office in Miami Beach, as well as the federal courthouse complex, detention center and clerk's office in downtown Miami and the Sears Tower in Chicago.

According to the Department of Justice, members of the group asked a government informant posing as a member of Al Qaeda to provide them with machine guns, boots, uniforms and vehicles in order to wage jihad. The group, however, never developed the capability to launch any of the terrorist attacks they envisioned, authorities said.

In addition to Narseal Batiste, the group’s leader, four other defendants were convicted on terrorism charges, including Haitian national Patrick Abraham and American citizens Rothschild Augustin, Burson Augustin, and Stanley Grant Phanor. Two other defendants were acquitted of all charges against them.

International Terrorist Connections in Florida

Al Qaeda Operatives in Florida

Several people with ties to Al Qaeda over the past decade, some well known and others less so, have had Florida connections.

Perhaps the most important of these is Adnan El Shukrijumah, a one-time permanent U.S. resident from Saudi Arabia who lived in southern Florida for most of his 15 years in the U.S., was designated as one of the FBI's most wanted terrorists and was indicted in July 2010 for organizing a terrorist attack against the New York City subway system. He remains at large and is being sought by American authorities.

According to the indictment, El Shukrijumah and two other leaders of Al Qaeda's "external operations" program recruited and directed three New Yorkers to conduct a terrorist attack in the U.S. El Shukrijumah's recruits received "military-style" training from Al Qaeda in Pakistan in late 2008 and early 2009 and returned to the U.S. to detonate homemade explosives on New York City subway lines in September 2009. El Shukrijumah, who has completed advanced training at Al Qaeda camps, was identified by several detainees held in Guantanamo Bay as "one of the most likely individuals to be used by Al Qaeda for operations in the United States."

El Shukrijumah's ties to the U.S. date back to the early 1990s when his father worked at a Brooklyn-based mosque attended by several suspects of the first World Trade Center bombing. While in New York, El Shukrijumah's father also reportedly served as a translator for Omar Abdel Rahman, an Egyptian cleric and alleged leader of the terrorist group Gama'a al-Islamiyya who plotted to bomb five major landmarks in New York in 1993. El Shukrijumah moved to Florida with his family in 1995 and studied computer science at Broward Community College.

El Shukrijumah has been implicated in other Florida-related terror cases in the U.S., including:

- In 2001, he was under investigation for his relationship with Imran Mandhai and Shueyb Mossa Jokhan, two men from south Florida who have since been sentenced to five and 14 years in prison, respectively, for plotting to bomb Mount Rushmore and several targets in southern Florida, including Jewish-owned business and community centers, the Israeli Consulate, electrical power stations and the National Guard Armory. The men allegedly tried to recruit El

Shukrijumah to join their plot. Investigators have suggested that El Shukrijumah stayed away because he suspected that Mandhai and Jokhan's nascent Al Qaeda-inspired cell was infiltrated by the government, as was indeed the case.

- Hee has also been linked to Jose Padilla (see below), a U.S. citizen from Florida serving a 17-year prison sentence for providing material support to terrorists and other terror-related charges. Padilla and El Shukrijumah allegedly received explosives training together from Al Qaeda and were later assigned to work as partners to carry out an attack in the U.S. The men, however, reportedly did not get along and their plans were abandoned.

A more notorious, though less important, Floridian with Al Qaeda ties is Jose Padilla. An American convert to Islam, Padilla was sentenced in January 2008 to seven years and four months in prison for providing material support to Al Qaeda, attending an Al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan and plotting attacks overseas.

Padilla, arrested in May 2002 in Chicago while deplaning from a flight from Pakistan, was originally accused by the U.S. government of planning to set off a radioactive "dirty bomb" in the U.S. Padilla was held in U.S. custody as an "enemy combatant" for more than three years before he was indicted by a Miami federal court in November 2005 in an already established case against Kifah Wael Jayyousi, Adham Amin Hassoun, Mohamed Youssef and Kassem Daher. Authorities alleged that Jayyousi, Hassoun and Daher recruited fighters and set up non-profit charities—based in San Diego, California—to raise money for Al Qaeda-affiliated groups.

Padilla, born in Brooklyn, New York, reportedly became interested in Islam during or shortly after a stint in Broward County Jail in 1991 on charges of aggravated assault and discharging a firearm after a road-rage shooting incident. After his release from jail, Padilla worked at a Taco Bell in Davie whose manager, Muhammed Javed, was also the co-founder of the Broward School of Islamic Studies. Javed reportedly gave Padilla a Qur'an and invited him to a mosque in South Florida.

Padilla converted to Islam at Al-Iman mosque in Fort Lauderdale in 1994. Adhan Amin Hassoun and Mohamed Youssef, two of Padilla's co-conspirators, reportedly recruited him at the mosque to enroll him in an Al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, which he attended in the summer of 2000. There, Padilla reportedly received training in weaponry, explosives, and communication. Padilla also met with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed mastermind of the September 11 terror attacks, in March 2002 and discussed a "dirty bomb" plot targeting three high-

rise buildings in New York, Florida, and Washington, D.C.

Supporting Terrorism from Florida

In many cases, foreign terrorist organizations, especially those that primarily focus on Israel, do not typically target the United States for violence, but rather use it as a base for fund-raising, propaganda, or other roles. Florida has experienced several such cases in recent years.

For example, an indictment unsealed in February 2010 charged three Miami-based businessmen—Kaled T. Safadi, Ulises Talavera and Emilio Gonzalez-Neira—with smuggling electronics to a Hezbollah-operated shopping center in Paraguay that served as Hezbollah's headquarters in the tri-border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The Lebanon-based Hezbollah allegedly uses the tri-border region for raising and laundering money, drug trafficking, weapons and people smuggling, and document and currency fraud. Hezbollah's extensive operational presence in the region reportedly helps fund its terrorist activities in Lebanon and abroad.

The indictment alleged that Safadi distributed Sony electronics, including Playstation 2 consoles and digital cameras, to freight-forwarders Talavera and Gonzalez-Neira. They, in turn, shipped the products to a fourth suspect—Samer Mehdi, who remains at large—who owns an electronics business in the shopping center in Paraguay. The defendants reportedly attempted to conceal the destination of their prohibited shipments by creating fake invoices and by routing transferred payments to the U.S.-based distributors through various facilities to mask their origin.

Florida has seen similar incidents involving the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. In August 2008, American citizen Richard David Hupper was sentenced in a Miami federal court to more than three and a half years in prison for providing material support to Hamas. Several months earlier, Hupper admitted to donating \$20,000 to Hamas, despite knowing that it was illegal.

According to his sentencing memorandum, Hupper traveled to the Gaza Strip in 2004 and worked with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an anti-Israel organization that brings Western volunteers to the Palestinian territories to engage in such tactics as obstructing the activities of the Israeli Army. While he was working with ISM, Hupper donated money to Hamas before Israeli authorities expelled him from Israel for his work with ISM.

Upon his return to the U.S., Hupper attempted to obtain a passport in Florida using false information so that he could return to Gaza. He was arrested in July 2006 after

it was discovered that he was using someone else's name, social security number, and birthday in order to obtain a passport.

Another highly publicized case involved support for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist group. In April 2006, Sami al-Arian, a former University of South Florida professor and a prominent Muslim leader in Florida, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide services to PIJ.

The case against al-Arian and his co-defendants was based on evidence collected during a 14-year period, much of it from before January 1995, when the U.S. government first designated the PIJ as a terrorist entity. At that time, al-Arian's think tank, the World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE), was shut down by federal authorities and al-Arian and others were charged with using WISE and other educational and charitable entities to raise money for the PIJ.

Al-Arian was a prominent Muslim American activist and several community organizations continue to support him and see his case as an example of unfair treatment of Muslims and of a pro-Israel bias.

Other Incidents

Rafiq Sabir

Sabir, a Muslim convert and former New York doctor who moved to Boca Raton in 2002, was sentenced to 25 years in prison in November 2007 for agreeing to provide medical care to wounded terrorists overseas.

Authorities recorded numerous telephone conversations between Sabir and another man, Tarik Ibn Osman Shah, during the course of a two-year investigation which began when the two men met with an undercover agent posing as an Al Qaeda operative to discuss how they could help Al Qaeda.

According to the recorded conversations presented at the trial, Sabir wanted to provide medical assistance to terrorists in Saudi Arabia and he gave the undercover agent his phone number in code so that "brothers" in Saudi Arabia could get in touch with him. He was arrested in May 2005, a few days before he planned to return to Saudi Arabia.

Sabir reportedly grew up in a group home after his father left the family. He converted from his family's Catholic faith to Islam while in high school. After he

moved to Florida, Sabir joined the Islamic Center in Boca Raton, a mosque that was criticized in 2001 when its Web site linked to an anti-Semitic article that described Jews as “usurpers and aggressors.” The Islamic Center reportedly helped pay for Sabir’s legal counsel after he was indicted in 2005.

Shah and Sabir, both reportedly former members of the Nation of Islam, met when Sabir attended Columbia University's medical school. Sabir bought a building in Harlem in the 1990s, where he practiced medicine and Shah taught martial arts. They were kicked out of a Bronx mosque after they tried to teach urban warfare in the mosque, according to court documents.

Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohamed

A University of South Florida student, Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohamed was indicted on charges of transporting explosives across state lines after a traffic stop for speeding in August 2007 in Goose Creek, South Carolina, near a Navy base where high-profile terrorism suspects have been detained. Mohamed was arrested after several pipe bombs were found in the car. A second person in the car was similarly charged but later acquitted.

Mohamed, a U.S. permanent resident from Egypt who entered the U.S. on a student visa, has since been sentenced to 15 years in prison for making a YouTube video demonstrating how to convert a remote-control toy into a bomb detonator. In the video, Mohamed said – in Arabic – that he wanted to teach “martyrdoms” and “suicides” how to save themselves so they can continue to fight invaders, by which he meant U.S. soldiers.

New Black Panther Party

The vast majority of hate groups in the United States are white supremacist groups, but there are a few hate groups that are not, including one with a Florida presence, the New Black Panther Party.

The New Black Panther Party for Self Defense (NBPP) is the most prominent organized anti-Semitic and racist black militant group in America. The group is led by Malik Zulu Shabazz, a Washington, DC-based attorney who has been active with the NBPP since the mid-1990s.

By taking on racially-charged issues under the guise of championing civil rights, the NBPP has received national media attention for its efforts, garnered some support even from prominent members of the African-American community, and attracted followers. The group's demonstrations, conferences, and other events often blend inflammatory bigotry with calls for violence, tarnishing its efforts to promote black pride and consciousness.

There are two NBPP chapters in Florida; one in Jacksonville and another in Tampa. The Tampa chapter was created in 2010 by Clarence Jones, a Tampa disc jockey. Jones and his “chief-of-staff,” Michelle Williams, have had little success in recruiting, however. In September 2010, Jones staged a one-man protest outside the Tampa Police Department for alleged police brutality.

In a separate incident, Yusuf Shabazz, the national spokesman for NBPP, claimed Jacksonville police were trying to cover up a January 2, 2007, shooting by a Jacksonville Police Department undercover narcotics officer that resulted in the death of an African-American. “We believe in an eye for an eye and a life for a life,” he said. “We think black people should fight police in the street.” In February 2011, Mikhail Muhammad, the NBPP Jacksonville chapter leader and Florida chairman, brought Shabazz to Jacksonville to speak. The Jacksonville chapter has otherwise been quiet.

Animal Rights Extremism

Although Florida has largely been free from major criminal acts related to environmental and animal rights extremism, several radical groups have a presence in the Sunshine State.

One extreme animal rights group, Negotiation Is Over[,] Florida (NIOF), a grassroots group that aims to “create a network of militant activism across the state,” has a web site that promotes campaigns against individuals and institutions it perceives as responsible for the mistreatment of animals. The site features guidance on “researching” targets, details on upcoming protests, and personal information about designated human targets, including multiple University of Florida researchers who have experienced threats and home demonstrations in recent years. Shortly after moving from New York to Florida in 2008, NIOF organizer Camille Marino indicated that the University of Florida would be the target of a “long, grueling” and “personal” campaign by animal rights activists. On its Facebook page, NIOF repeats the mantra of its national umbrella organization: “The time for civil discourse, dialogue, or discussion of any kind has expired.”

Animal rights extremists also often target Florida corporations involved in the vivisection industry. Since 2008, companies like Primate Products, Inc., and Worldwide Primates, Inc., have been subject to break-ins, “liberation” of their animals, and, in one case, vandalism of an executive’s personal property. Responsibility for several of these acts was claimed by the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the most active extreme animal rights movement in the country.

The radical environmental movement has also long been active in Florida, though its actions are characterized primarily by sit-ins and demonstrations, rather than by the large-scale acts of property destruction carried out by radical environmentalists elsewhere. It is not uncommon for members of Everglades Earth First!, the local chapter of the national radical environmental group Earth First!, to be arrested for trespassing, unlawful assembly and resisting arrest during demonstrations against power plants and commercial developers they perceive as being responsible for urban sprawl and overdevelopment.

Florida is home to two magazines dedicated to promoting radical animal rights and environmental rights agendas. *Bite Back*, based in West Palm Beach, provides information about the criminal activities of radical animal liberation groups. The magazine has also featured threats of vandalism and violence against animal researchers, and, in 2007, settled a lawsuit in which the New York Stock Exchange

accused *Bite Back* of “encouraging or inciting... extremist and illegal activities.” *The Earth First! Journal*, which reports on the ideology and activities of what it describes as the “no compromise ecological movement,” announced in 2010 that it would be moving its operations to Lake Worth by early 2011.



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