

Louis Beam

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INTRODUCTION

For more than three decades, Louis Beam has been on a crusade against a government he views as tyrannical and controlled by Jewish conspirators. Beam first became active on the far right as a paramilitary Klansman, later as a neo-Nazi with Identity ties. In each incarnation he has been a powerful voice of anti-government hatred and white supremacy, one of the most influential and incendiary figures on the far right. Generally considered the first important proponent of the "lone wolf" or "leaderless resistance" model of activism, Beam has encouraged anti-government and racist terrorism by means of small underground cells that cohere through ideology rather than formal organizations. Once considered Richard Butler's likely successor at Aryan Nations, Beam was passed over in the mid-1990s. During the past five years, he has significantly lowered his public profile and has limited his activity primarily to postings on his Web site.

Quick Profile

Year of birth: 1946

Home: Texas and Idaho

Background: Started as a Klansman, then became active with Aryan Nations in the early 1980s

Publications: Essays on topics like "government terror," sedition, "the Holocaust as a means of suppressing the truth" and the American "police state"

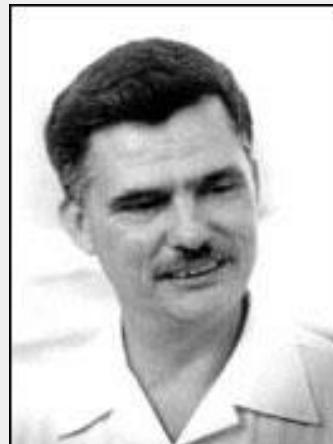
Works: Essays of a Klansman

Ideology: White supremacy, neo-Nazi

Connections: Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Tom Metzger

Strategy: The "lone wolf" or "leaderless resistance" theory of activism

Recent: Beam has maintained a significantly lower profile in recent years.



EARLY START

Born in 1946, Louis Beam, a child of the post-World War II segregationist south, grew up in the 1950s in Lake Jackson, Texas, south of Houston. He played Little League baseball and attended an all-white school where he was, according to a childhood friend, "very much against blacks." After an 18-month tour of duty with the United States Armed Forces in Vietnam, he returned home in 1968 and joined the Texas branch of

Robert Shelton's Alabama based United Klans of America (UKA), under the leadership of Texas Grand Dragon Frank Converse.

In 1976, Beam apparently shifted his Klan allegiance from the UKA to David Duke's fledgling Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK) and later became a Grand Titan (district leader) of the KKKK in Texas. In both Klan groups, Beam's chief responsibility was to instruct members in guerrilla warfare. He graduated from the University of Houston in 1977 with his extremist career already in full gear.

Beam hoped to invigorate a white supremacist movement that had entered the 1970s beset by dwindling membership rolls, federal investigations and the imprisonment of some of its national leaders. During 1978 and 1979, he spearheaded the Klan's efforts to recruit members among United States Army personnel at Fort Hood in Texas. In fact, when Beam and Duke addressed a summer 1979 Klan rally in Euless, Texas, they were escorted by several newly recruited Klansmen from Fort Hood who were wearing military fatigues and were armed with rifles, pistols and bayonets [1](#)

By the end of the decade, Duke had promoted Beam to Grand Dragon of the Texas KKKK. Beam continued to instruct fellow Klansmen in guerrilla warfare at Anhuac, one of several Klan military encampments in rural East Texas. At the same time, Beam became active in the paramilitary arm of the Texas Klan, known as the Texas Emergency Reserve; included in its ranks were members of the KKKK as well as another small group, the Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Beam also exploited local tensions to the Klan's advantage, orchestrating a 1981 confrontation between refugee Vietnamese shrimp fishermen and native fishermen sharing the Gulf Coast waters in the Galveston Bay area of Texas. Beam presided over a Klan rally near Santa Fe, Texas, in support of the Texas fishermen and, along with other armed Klansmen, set fire to a cross. He then raised his hand in a Nazi salute and shouted, "White Power! We will fight." Weeks later, a local Houston radio station reported that Beam had invited some 50 local white fishermen to participate in military training exercises with Klansmen. The Texas Klan also harassed Vietnamese families residing in the area.

Working with the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Vietnamese Fishermen's Association sought an injunction preventing the Klan from continuing its harassment and from operating paramilitary training camps in Texas. The VFA alleged that Klansmen had set fire to boats owned by the Vietnamese and burned crosses at their docks and homes. In May 1981, a United States District Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and ordered Beam to cease engaging in unlawful acts of violence and intimidation. Beam is said to have originated a far-right catchphrase, "Where ballots fail, bullets will prevail," during this terror campaign against the fishermen.

In the summer of 1981, Beam resigned as Texas Grand Dragon of the KKKK, which was then led by Don Black (who currently runs the white supremacist Stormfront Web site). Beam hitched his star to Aryan Nations, the notorious neo-Nazi and paramilitary Identity group whose rural headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho, was perhaps the nation's best-known meeting place for far-right activists. Richard Butler, Aryan Nations' founder, named Beam an ambassador at large, and the group began selling tapes of his anti-Semitic radio broadcasts and speeches. Butler offered Beam lodging on his 20-acre compound while Beam faced pending federal charges of trespassing arising from a paramilitary training exercise in Fort Worth, Texas. (Although he was initially convicted of these charges, his conviction was reversed on appeal in 1982.)

While living at Hayden Lake, Beam established an elaborate Aryan Nations computer network, Aryan Nations Liberty Net - a precursor to the Web's current use in organizing, energizing and soliciting support. Beam's network provided a range of extremist services, including a national computer bulletin board that posted racist and anti-Semitic messages (to which he himself was a frequent contributor), a guide to "patriotic" Aryan groups and a "Know Your Enemy" listing that included addresses of the Anti-Defamation League's regional offices. Beam also featured an assassination "point system" that awarded scores to would-be assassins based on the importance of their victims: killing a president was worth a full point, a federal marshal merited one-tenth of a point, a national religious leader one-third of a point and so on.

As Butler's assistant, Beam pushed to expand Aryan Nations' prison outreach, writing in 1983 that "the ever increasing Prison Ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian has begun to be felt throughout the state prison system as a major force." This effort became an important aspect of the radical right agenda during the 1980s, given that many members of Aryan Nations and The Order were serving long prison sentences as a result of several major federal prosecutions between 1985 and 1987.

THE SEDITION TRIAL

On April 24, 1987, Beam and 13 others were indicted by a federal grand jury in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The charges filed by the Justice Department accused them of participating in "a seditious conspiracy between July 1983 and March 1985 to overthrow the government." Also indicted were Butler, the influential, now deceased organizer Robert Miles, and several members of The Order, the far-right terrorist group that had issued a "Declaration of War" against the United States in 1984. Specific crimes in the alleged conspiracy included the firebombing of a Jewish community center in Bloomington, Indiana; attempting to blow up a natural gas pipeline in Fulton, Arkansas; purchasing firearms and explosives in Missouri and Oklahoma; and stealing over \$4 million from banks and armored cars in Washington State.

Before the indictment was issued, however, Beam fled to Mexico, fearing possible F.B.I. surveillance. Using the code name "Lonestar," he spent five months on the F.B.I.'s Ten Most Wanted list, classified as "at large...the object of a nationwide manhunt." After a shootout with Mexican Federal Judicial Police in Guadalajara that left one officer critically wounded, Beam was captured and turned over to United States officials on November 6, 1987. At his bail hearing later that month, he told the federal judge, "What I'm charged with [seditious conspiracy] is an honor, sir."

Beam represented himself in court, with the assistance of Kirk Lyons, a lawyer who has described himself as an "active sympathizer" with his many radical-right clients.² On April 7, 1988, after seven weeks of testimony and 20 hours of deliberations, the jury acquitted Beam, Butler and their co-defendants on all charges - the first major setback following several successful prosecutions in the federal government's crackdown on the far right during the 1980s.

Beam celebrated at an impromptu rally moments after the acquittal. "To hell with the Federal government," he said. "I think ZOG [the Zionist Occupation Government] has suffered a terrible defeat here today. I think everyone saw through the charade and saw that I was simply being punished for being a vociferous and outspoken opponent of ZOG."

Although rumored to be heir apparent to the aging and ailing Richard Butler at Aryan Nations, Beam busied himself with launching and publishing a (now-defunct) quarterly journal, *The Seditionist*; the title mocked

the government's failure to convict him of sedition. In the journal's first issue, Beam announced that he was forming the "New Right," a movement that married Christian Identity to "the creation of a national state for the white man, an Aryan republic within the borders of the present occupied country."

Beam also promoted the New Right as forging "a new relationship of respect and admiration for other races who have conducted successful campaigns of liberation in their respective countries by throwing out Zionist Jews." Linking America's far right with the "liberation movements" of Syria, Libya, Iran and Palestine, Beam singled out Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as a particularly admirable figure: "We need more men like Arafat and fewer of the weaklings who have crumbled before the feds in the last three years."

While Beam's belief in Aryan superiority remained unshakable, his appreciation of Arabs demonstrated a newfound willingness to suspend or mute his bigotry toward groups that apparently shared his anti-Semitism. Beam proved ahead of his time in this regard, as he had often been: when Palestinian-Israeli violence worsened significantly in the autumn of 2000, others in the white supremacist movement took a similar tack in calling for alliances with the Palestinians against the Israelis.

RHETORICAL WARRIOR

Beam has long been known as one of the most unflinching and forceful spokesmen of the far right in his writing and appearances. In 1983, for example, as one of the main speakers at Aryan Nations' annual Aryan World Congress, he told an audience of more than 500 that the preservation of the white race required the willingness to act violently:

I didn't come here for your applause. I came here for your blood....The old period is over and a new period is going to begin....I'm here to tell you that if we can't have this country, as far as I'm concerned, no one gets it. The guns are cocked, the bullets are in the chamber....We're going to fight and live or we're going to die soon. If you don't help me kill the bastards, you're going to be required to beg for your child's life, and the answer will be 'No.'

Almost a decade later, at a January 1992 Klan rally in Pulaski, Tennessee - his first public appearance since the 1988 sedition trial - Beam demonstrated to an estimated 400 Klan members and neo-Nazi skinheads that he had not lost his fire. "I spit on you!" he said of government authorities. "You're dogs. You're scum! We're gonna dance on your graves." He added, "The enemy is on the hill of power in America....Their guns are in place. And they're waiting for you....Let's go get them! We're going to have to take America back....White victory!"

Beam's writings are equally raw and now available to anyone connected to the Web. In an essay from 1983 entitled "Understanding the Struggle, Or Why We Need to Kill the Bastards," he argued:

It is the obligation, even a sacred duty for those who believe in the ideas of our founding fathers and the now dead Constitution, to execute the enemies responsible for abolishing both. Those who have aided in the destruction and subversion of America must either be driven off the land or put under it.... Paradoxically, only by administering death to anti-Christ enemies can there be life for all that we hold dear. It is a matter of survival.

LEADERLESS RESISTANCE

In the February 1992 issue of *The Seditionist*, Beam called for an overhaul of the movement's tactics; he advocated the formation of small, autonomous underground groups driven by ideology rather than by the directions of leaders and membership organizations. Because those outside the cell would not be aware of planned attacks, Beam explained, leaks or infiltration became far less likely. He warned that this approach would be more grueling than the status quo; in tiny "phantom cells," in the absence of leadership figures, cell members would need to be self-sustaining and committed ideologues capable of independent judgment and activity. "Those who join organizations to play 'let's pretend' or who are 'groupies' will be quickly weeded out," he explained. "All individuals and groups operate independently of each other and never report to a central headquarters or single leader for direction or instruction....Participants in a program of Leaderless Resistance through phantom cell or individual action must know exactly what they are doing, and exactly how to do it."

The concept of "leaderless resistance," also known as the "lone wolf" theory, was not entirely new. Beam gave credit for its conception to Cold War anti-Communist Colonel Ulius Amoss, who, in the early 1960s, proposed the strategy as a defense against a Communist takeover of America. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 removed the threat of Soviet Communism, Beam wrote, "the purpose of Leaderless Resistance is [now] to defeat state tyranny....Like the fog which forms when conditions are right and disappears when they are not, so must the resistance to tyranny be."

Leaderless resistance has been promoted by other key figures in the white supremacist movement - in particular, Tom Metzger of White Aryan Resistance and Alex Curtis, both of whom have vigorously criticized other extremists for adhering to traditional organizational models (though Curtis has been muted since being sentenced to a three-year prison term in April 2001 on civil rights violations). While dangerous and effective groups like World Church of the Creator and National Alliance continue to prosper, lone wolfism now permeates far-right activism.³

A LONE WOLF WITH PLENTY OF COMPANY

Beam appears to have taken his own advice in recent years, generally keeping a low profile and making few public appearances. In the first half of the 1990s, however, poised to assume leadership of Aryan Nations, he was one of the most recognizable figures in American extremism. He delivered a highly regarded speech at the 1993 Aryan World Congress and another in 1995; by the end of that year, especially after Richard Butler's wife died of cancer in December, he appeared a likely choice to succeed the ailing Butler. Along with Paul Hall, editor of the Identity newspaper *The Jubilee*, Beam purchased property in Sandpoint, Idaho, near Aryan Nations' Hayden Lake compound.

From "Leaderless Resistance"

It is clear, therefore, that it is time to rethink traditional strategy and tactics when it comes to opposing a modern police state. America is quickly moving into a long dark night of police state tyranny, where the rights now accepted by most as being inalienable will disappear. Let the coming night be filled with a thousand points of resistance. Like the fog which forms when conditions are right and disappears when they are not, so must the resistance to tyranny be.

Beam was a no-show at the following year's gathering. Despite his credentials, he seemed to have fallen out of favor with movement radicals at that time, allegedly because he had begun to subordinate his anti-Semitism, concentrating instead on the supposed evils of the federal government. He was also berated for making anti-Nazi remarks at the April 1996 *Jubilee*-sponsored Jubilation '96 conference in Lake Tahoe. In 1997, Butler named another successor, Neuman Britton, a longtime member also known for fiery oratory, who spoke at the 1996 gathering from which Beam was conspicuously absent. (Britton died of cancer in August 2001 at the age of 75; in September 2001, Aryan Nations announced that Butler had named Ray Redfearn of Ohio as his successor.)

While he was active in Aryan Nations, Beam also maintained ties with a range of far-right activists. For example, he joined Pete Peters, a leading propagandist and preacher of Identity, at an October 1992 meeting that Peters convened in Estes Park, Colorado. Richard Butler and Kirk Lyons were also among the 160 attendees who gathered to discuss the federal siege of Randy Weaver's mountain hideaway at Ruby Ridge, Idaho. They pledged, in Peters' words, "to confront the injustice and tyranny manifested in the killings of Vicki Weaver and her son Samuel," both of whom had been shot by federal agents in the standoff. The meeting has gained an inaccurate reputation as the birthplace of the militia movement; the consensus among those in attendance that perceived government despotism had to be met with paramilitary action was clearly significant, however, as was the recommendation to propound leaderless resistance and, specifically, Beam's essay about it.

Beam also served as a correspondent and frequent contributor to the California-based *Jubilee*, an Identity tabloid whose contributors have included many leading lights of white supremacy. Beam's pieces hammered away at anti-government themes - in particular, the idea that United States leaders have created a "police state" that increasingly exerts totalitarian control over its citizens. In April 1993, he covered the siege at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, labeling the tragedy "police state terrorism." Conflating Waco with Holocaust denial, he stated:

Raised in small town America, I learned from television while still but a child about the terrible gassing and executions alleged to have happened in Germany during World War II. I would be 34 years old before I researched the matter and found out that it was just wartime propaganda carried over to peace time by Jewish organizations like the ADL. The absence of the Jewish holocaust in my life over the last ten years has created a void that the federal government filled on April 19, 1993. A shattered Jewish fable has been replaced with a reality that I and 25 million other Americans were witness to.

A year later, in the May/June 1994 issue of *Jubilee*, Beam was more explicit, writing, "Guns are not just for hunting, target shooting and sport, they are for control of the government." Later that year, Beam appeared at a *Jubilee*-sponsored conference of states' rights and militia activists in Bakersfield, California, delivering a speech entitled "To Hell with the Federal Government." (Both Beam and Pete Peters have been regulars at the *Jubilee*'s annual Jubilation Celebration gatherings, appearing alongside various Identity figures and Holocaust deniers.) In April 1995, he attended a rally of the Idaho Citizens Awareness Network, an anti-government group co-founded by "Pastor" Dave Barley, leader of America's Promise Ministries/Lord's Covenant Church, an Identity organization in Sandpoint, Idaho, near the Aryan Nations homestead. As recently as the summer of 1999, Beam wrote in a letter to *The Jubilee* - using an anti-American figure of speech common to the Middle East - "Expect no justice from the United States Federal government...the

Great Satan still occupies us with tens of thousands of F.B.I., A.T.F., I.R.S. and other Police State agencies. We have lost control of our destiny."

MOST RECENTLY

In a letter to supporters in October 1996 that reads like a farewell to the movement, Beam provided a better indication of why he may have stepped out of the extremist spotlight. "It is now almost 10 years since my arrest, trial and subsequent release at Fort Smith, Arkansas, for sedition," he wrote.

I have given the folk another decade of my life at great expense to my family. Since 1969, I have been in the struggle....I intend to give my family the next years of my life. They need me and have borne so much on my account. Additionally, as a result of exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam, my health declines. I have concealed this for years but now find myself less than fit to continue as in days before. I have for 30 years given my all. I pray others will do the same.

Since then, Beam has focused largely on his Web site. He has vociferously opposed what he considers the latest outgrowth of ZOG: the "New World Order" as it has revealed itself in the globalization of the world's economies and governments. In November 1999, after protesters interrupted a meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Beam said on his Web site:

The new politics of America is liberty from the N.W.O. Police State and nothing more. While some in the so-called right-wing sit at home and talk about waiting for the Police State to 'come and get them,' some other really brave people have been out confronting the Police State. Instead of hoarding guns that will never be fired, these people were out bravely facing the guns of the New World Order....Mark my words, this is but the first confrontation, there will be many more such confrontations as intelligent, caring people begin to face off the Waco thugs of the New World Order here in the United States.

Pointing to an increasing convergence between the tactics of the right and left wings of extremist activity, Beam continued:

The New American Patriot will be neither left nor right, just a freeman fighting for liberty. New alliances will form between those who have in the past thought of themselves as 'right-wingers,' conservatives and patriots with many people who have thought of themselves as 'left-wingers,' progressives, or just 'liberal.'...Soon, there will be millions in this country of every political persuasion confronting the police state on streets throughout America....Wake up and smell the tear gas. Freedom is calling its sons and daughters.

¹Subsequently, the Defense Department issued a directive to field commanders granting them the authority to prevent military personnel from engaging in activities sponsored by racist groups.

²Beam was the best man at Lyons's wedding, which was held at the Aryan Nations compound.

³Although Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building on April 19, 1995, also appeared to follow the lone wolf model, no evidence has been found to link Beam to this crime. Beam did, however, publish an essay on the topic.

Report Update (2002)

9/11 AS U.S. GOVERNMENT CONSPIRACY

July 31, 2002

Joining the chorus of anti-government voices after September 11, Louis Beam theorized that the U.S. government knew of the attacks beforehand, but allowed them in order to create "a jump point for a global police state." In a December 12, 2001, diatribe posted on his Web site, Beam claimed that:

"in time, you will, despite your every intention not to, despite your fear of this terrible truth, come to believe - two, three or more years from now - that men in the government who had the power (but not the will) to stop the events of 09/11/01 allowed the "Attack On America," just as men in government did December 7, 1941.

Seizing on a range of other conspiracy theories surrounding "similar events,"

Beam instructed:

"Do not limit your thinking to that which you are told - by those responsible to some degree - for the murders at the world trade center [sic], murders just like those committed at Pearl Harbor, of John F. Kennedy, the shooting and burning at Waco, the clear complicity of government agents with the bombers of the Oklahoma Federal Building, of the first (1993) World Trade Center bombing and now the most horrific of all - the murderous destruction of human life in New York this year."

Beam also said he believed that "the government's long range objectives for a military-industrial police state were more important than any temporary 'black eye' they would receive from the bombing, that those in power believed gains for their political objectives would in short exceed any temporary appearance of weakness."