



Intelligence Report

LAW ENFORCEMENT SPECIAL REPORT



SKINHEADS IN AMERICA

RACISTS ON THE RAMPAGE

**Racist Skinhead Movement History • Timeline • Glossary
Portraits • Symbols • Recent Developments**

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER



SKINHEADS IN AMERICA

Racist skinheads are one of the potentially most dangerous radical-right threats facing law enforcement today. The products of a frequently violent and criminal subculture, these men and women, typically imbued with neo-Nazi beliefs about Jews, blacks, homosexuals and others, are also notoriously difficult to track. Organized into small, mobile “crews” or acting individually, skinheads tend to move around frequently and often without warning, even as they network and organize across regions. For law enforcement, this poses a particular problem – responding to crimes and even conspiracies crossing multiple jurisdictions. As these extremists extend their reach across the country, it is vital that law enforcement officers who deal with them become familiar with the activities of skinheads nationwide.

What follows is a general essay on the history and nature of the skinhead movement, prepared with the needs of law enforcement officers in mind. After that, we reprint recent reports on the contemporary skinhead movement in America, including an overview of the latest developments, portraits of 10 particularly frightening leaders, and a gallery of insignias and tattoos commonly used by racist skinheads.

This booklet was prepared by the staff of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Project, which tracks the American radical right and also publishes the investigative magazine *Intelligence Report*. Contributors included Susy Buchanan, Anthony Griggs, David Holthouse, Brentin Mock, Laurie Wood and Alexander Zaitchik. It was edited by Holthouse and Intelligence Project Director Mark Potok.



SKINHEADS



IN AMERICA

I. INTRODUCTION

The racist skinhead movement in the United States has entered its third decade. Since the first skinhead gangs surfaced in Texas and the Midwest in the early 1980s, this racist and violent subculture has established itself in dozens of states from coast to coast and has authored some of the country's most vicious hate crimes in memory, from arson to assault to murder. The racist skinheads' trademark style — shaved head, combat boots, bomber jacket, neo-Nazi and white power tattoos — has become a fixture in American culture.

The scowling skinhead has joined the hooded Klansman as an immediately recognizable icon of hate.

Unlike the Klan, racist skinhead culture is not native to the United States. And unlike the Klan, it is a truly global phenomenon, with skinhead gangs haunting major cities and towns in just about every white-majority country on earth. From Austria to Australia and Argentina to America, working-class youths can be found dressed in some local variation on the skinhead theme, espousing a crude worldview that is viciously anti-foreigner, anti-black, anti-gay, and anti-Semitic. In recent years, the Internet and cheap international airfares have allowed skinhead groups across the planet to communicate and organize in ways that would have shocked the original skinheads of the 1960s and '70s, whose vision and turf was limited to the East London neighborhoods in which they grew up and lived.

The growth of the racist skinhead movement has mirrored the rise in non-white immigration to the West. As the skin hues of Europe and North

America have darkened with steady post-World War II immigration from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, a nativist backlash has appeared in both mainstream and extremist forms. The skinhead movement is the most violent and ideologically crude form of this backlash. Depending on the country, racist skinheads may have shadowy ties to radical parties participating in electoral politics. Skinhead groups in the U.S. lack such connections, but for those unlucky enough to encounter them on a darkened street, this does not make them any less fearsome.

II. ORIGINS

The first skinheads emerged in the late 1960s as just one of the many distinct youth cultures that flowered in post-war Britain. Taking elements of English "mod" and Jamaican immigrant fashion, these working-class London youths crafted an identity in self-conscious opposition to the middle-class "longhairs." At various points in their early development, English skinheads positioned themselves as tough work-

ing-class counterpoints to foppish mods, long-haired hippies, mohawked punks and made-up goths.

The skinhead style first emerged as part of a non-racist and multiracial scene. White skinheads took on a persona that reflected admiration for and kinship with a new generation of working-class West Indian immigrants into the United Kingdom. Like the Jamaican immigrants of the time, the first skinheads were clean-cut, neat, and sharp-looking compared to the shaggier youth styles of the period. (White skinheads eventually lost their affinity for Jamaica as Rastafarian fashions became ascendant, with their overtones of black pride and pan-Africanism.)

Many early white skinheads were vaguely nationalistic and "proud to be British," but their deepest loyalties lay with their childhood chums and the local soccer team, not the "white race," as professed by today's racist skinheads. While known for their youthful aggression, petty criminality, and soccer stadium violence, this activity was seen as borne out of economic hardship and a general spirit of bully-boy rebellion — not blind race hatred. Indeed, the first skinhead music was reggae and ska, both black musical forms; the earliest targets of white skinheads' anger and homemade weapons were each other and rival soccer fans.

But a split between racist and non-racist skinheads was apparent and began deepening soon after the style was born. By the early '70s, skinhead attacks on South Asian immigrants in London — the infamous sport of "Paki

bashing” — had become an international news story. These violent skinheads had not yet acquired the trappings of neo-Nazi costumes and ideology, but they were already acting like Hitler’s goon squads, the brown shirts. One skinhead explained a typical “Paki bash” to a *Time* magazine journalist in 1970: “You go up to them and bump into them, and then you nut [forehead bash] them right, and then you hit them, and as they go down you give them a kicking, bash them with an iron bar, and take their watches and rings and things like that.”

More than 50 such attacks were reported within a span of weeks in 1970, triggering street protests by British South Asians. A definitive break between racist and non-racist skins had occurred.

During the early to mid-’70s, England’s skinheads went into temporary decline. They experienced a revival in 1976, when a new generation of skinheads started earning a fresh reputation for violence through attacks on punks, homosexuals, and immigrants.

Fueling these attacks and cementing the new racist skinhead identity was increasing association with two neofascist political parties, the National Front and the British Movement. The latter, founded by long-time neo-Nazi Colin Jordan in 1968, did the most to stamp a swastika on the racist sector of the skinhead movement. The British Movement ran candidates in the 1974 U.K. general elections who espoused neo-Nazi ideas and wore swastikas while handing out party literature featuring the image and words of Adolf Hitler. In 1975, the British Movement gained a charismatic leader in the form of Michael McLaughlin, who reached out to the racist skinheads and appealed to their sensibilities and skills by emphasizing violence and street-level hate.

Between the arrival of Michael McLaughlin in 1975 and the election of Margaret Thatcher as British prime minister in 1979, the first hardcore neo-Nazi skinheads were born.

III. SKINHEADS IN THE U.S.

The neo-Nazi skinhead phenomenon spread quickly to the United States. By the early 1980s, skinhead activity was reported in Texas and the Midwest, among other places. But the movement only started gaining national attention during the last third of the decade. It was then that skinhead gangs like the Dallas Hammerskins made a splash with violent racist attacks on immigrants and blacks.

The most important skinhead gang in raising the American movement’s early profile was Chicago’s CASH (Chicago Area Skin Heads), which made national headlines with a brutal 1987 crime spree that involved assaults on six Hispanic women, swastikas painted on three synagogues, and numerous incidents of vandalism to Jewish-owned business. The leader of CASH was an ex-con and former member of the American Nazi Party named Clark Martell.

In the mid-1980s, Martell played the role of a skinhead Johnny Appleseed, performing around Chicago with his punk band Romantic Violence and passing out American Nazi Party newsletters and copies of National Socialist Skinhead magazine between his band’s sets. Martell’s neo-Nazi recruiting drive caught the attention of Chicago’s numerous “traditional,” or non-racist, skinheads, including a number of African Americans. (According to Chicago punk lore, the city’s skinhead scene was founded by black, non-racist skins). Enjoying the advantage of vastly superior numbers, anti-racist crews such as Skinheads of Chicago (SHOC) routinely ganged up on CASH skins at shows and in the streets. “They grew out of what we are — the punk scene — so it’s up to us to combat them,” a member of the Chicago Anti-Racist Action (ARA) skinhead crew told the *Chicago Tribune*.

By the time Martell and the other five CASH skins were arrested for a gruesome 1987 attack on a former member, CASH had been more or less beaten into submission by anti-racist skins.

But Martell had merely proven he was ahead of his time, and his defeat was local. When he first started recruiting for CASH, there were likely fewer than 200 racist skinheads in the United States. By 1989, when he was convicted of home invasion, aggravated battery, and robbery and sentenced to 11 years in prison, there were an estimated 3,000.

A major force behind this national growth spurt was Tom Metzger, a Fallbrook, Calif.-based former Klansman and longtime leader of the neo-Nazi group White Aryan Resistance (WAR). Around 1986, Metzger formed WAR Youth and launched an organized skinhead outreach campaign. Together with his teenage son, John, Metzger sought to ground the dispersed movement in ideology and direct its wild and chaotic youthful energy into building smart, well-trained, and obedient street cells around the country. In 1988, Tom Metzger organized the first major hate rock festival in the U.S., Aryan Fest, in Oklahoma. (The annual festival, now under the management of Volksfront, a skinhead group based in Oregon, remains a main event on the annual skinhead social calendar.)

It was also in 1988 that Metzger’s efforts bore their most bitter fruit. In November, WAR Youth representative Dave Mazella visited Portland, Ore., to train and guide members of a local skinhead crew, East Side White Pride. During this visit, a group of Portland skins under Mazella’s tutelage attacked a group of Ethiopian immigrants in the middle of a street with steel-toed boots and a baseball bat. One of them, graduate student Mulugeta Seraw, died from his wounds. Although Metzger would later lose a bruising \$12.5 million lawsuit brought against his organization by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League — a suit that effectively wrecked WAR as an organization capable of putting skinheads into the street — he continues propaganda efforts to this day from a new base in Indiana. But Metzger’s

current operation is limited to a newspaper, an “Aryan update” telephone hotline, and a website (resist.com) that is largely devoted to racist and anti-Semitic “humor.”

The murder of Mulugeta Seraw was hardly unique during the American skinhead movement’s growth years. Indeed, there were scores of brutal skinhead assaults around the country during the late ’80s and early ’90s, including the cold-blooded murders of black men in Birmingham, Ala., and Arlington, Texas.

Those responsible for these murders included members of the dreaded Confederate Hammerskins, a confed-

eration of skinheads founded in Dallas in 1987. After spreading throughout the South, Hammerskin-affiliated gangs began appearing on the east and west coasts in the early 1990s.

movement continued to grow and was responsible for hundreds of racially motivated crimes around the country. It was also during this period, in 1997, that Denver police officer Bruce Vander Jagt became the first American police officer killed in the line of duty by a racist skinhead.

Hammerskin dominance failed to outlast the decade, however. As early as 1999, Hammerskins around the country were complaining in private and on message boards about the heavy-handed and “elitist” leadership style of the organization’s top officers. The number of HSN chapters dropped off, with new regional groups rising

announcing that the group was separating itself “from the racist movement.” The announcement explained: “We do not see anything positive being accomplished, for our nation or our people, by participating in the white racialist movement as it stands. We have attempted to change this movement from within and have not succeeded. It is our opinion that a large number of the people involved in the greater movement are paid informants, social outcasts, and general losers in life.”

The third decade of skinheads in America thus finds skinhead groups in disarray but hardly in decline. The number of skinhead groups has trebled in the last four years, totaling some 60 by early 2007. These new groups are defined by a violent gangster ethos that is only partly informed by racist and neo-Nazi ideology.

The scowling skinhead has joined the hooded Klansman as an immediately recognizable icon of hate.

eration of skinheads founded in Dallas in 1987. After spreading throughout the South, Hammerskin-affiliated gangs began appearing on the east and west coasts in the early 1990s.

It was out of these geographically disparate Hammerskin gangs that Hammerskin Nation (HSN) was formed in 1994. The idea was to unite all of the regional Hammerskin groups into a national and even international force, with affiliated chapters in Europe. And for a while, the plan worked. Hammerskin Nation established itself as the most powerful skinhead organization in the country during the mid- and late ’90s. At its peak, HSN directed nearly 30 chapters and ran a successful record label, publishing house, and website. The HSN symbol of two crossed hammers swept the skinhead scene. And an annual meeting and concert, Hammerfest, was launched in 1999, allowing HSN members from around the world to meet and organize. Throughout this period of Hammer-skin ascendancy, the racist skinhead

up and loudly asserting their independence. Chief among these renegade skinhead groups were, first, the Outlaw Hammerskins, and then the Hoosier State Skinheads in Indiana and the Ohio State Skinheads, which in 2004 merged to form the Vinlander Social Club, a.k.a. the Vinlanders. In 2005, the Vinlanders hosted the first Blood & Honour USA Council, a unity meeting of regional skinhead crews also known as the Council of 28 (because B is the second letter of the alphabet and H the eighth), in Ohio. It is at this annual gathering that skins would, according to the Vinlander web site, “meet yearly with other crews and exchange ideas and debate direction and tactics.” And drink lakes of beer, of course.

Incredibly violent, full of swagger, and loathe to take orders from anyone, the Vinlanders were thought to represent the future in a more decentralized skinhead scene. But in the first weeks of 2007, Vinlander founder Brien James, a particularly violent racist, posted a notice on the group’s website

IV. MUSIC & CULTURE

Along with exposure to extremist political parties and hate literature, music has always been a key element in the growth of the racist skinhead subculture. This is appropriate, as the original skinhead scene was based around clubs playing ska and reggae. The hard-driving rock-and-roll favored by today’s racist skinheads both exploits and channels the youthful energy of members and potential teenage recruits.

The importance of music in building the racist skinhead scene was apparent by the late ’70s, when a hate-rock scene exploded alongside the punk rock movement, spreading lyrics that were anti-immigrant, anti-black, and anti-Semitic. Groups such as Skrewdriver, Skullhead, and No Remorse forged a common skinhead culture in sweaty, beer-soaked, makeshift concert halls, with lyrics professing brotherhood among whites and violent, uncompromising antagonism to outsiders of all kinds. The early hate-rock skinhead scene in Britain coalesced around what were known as the “Rock Against Communism” (RAC) concerts, the first of which was held in Leeds in

1978. RAC shows were organized in opposition to the earlier “Rock Against Racism” concerts, a series of musical events meant to counter growing racist currents in English culture. A sub-genre of punk that often veered toward racism was known as Oi!, which soon became global (if not completely accurate) shorthand for skinhead music.

By the mid-1980s, a racist skinhead culture defined by loud hate-rock, cases of cheap beer, bloody “boot parties” directed against immigrants and others, and the flagrant display of neo-Nazi iconography and paraphernalia had spread to Western Europe and North America. Although focused on a skinhead gang in Melbourne, Australia, the 1992 Russell Crowe film “Romper Stomper” paints a particularly vivid and well-researched picture of the day-to-day life of skinheads immersed in this culture. (A later film that explored the racist skinhead culture, this one set in California, was 1998’s “American History X,” starring Edward Norton.)

The importance of music in growing the worldwide skinhead movement cannot be overstated. William Pierce, leader of the neo-Nazi National Alliance until his death in 2002, understood well the potential impact of hate-rock. “Music speaks to us at a deeper level than books or political rhetoric: music speaks directly to the soul,” said Pierce, author of the seminal hate-lit novel, *The Turner Diaries*.

Putting this insight into practice, Pierce purchased the ailing hate-rock label and distributor Resistance Records in 1999 and built the company into a major force in the world skinhead movement. Resistance Records had been originally founded in 1993 by George Burdi, a young Canadian skinhead who also started the band RAHOWA (an acronym for Racial Holy War), which was one of the most popular and influential hate-rock bands of the period. Bernie Farber of the Canadian Jewish Congress has described Burdi as one of the most effective

recruiters for the movement in history. (Burdi has since renounced hate and embraced Eastern mysticism.)

The first label to seriously challenge the dominance of Resistance Records was Minnesota-based Panzerfaust, named after a Nazi-era German anti-tank weapon. Before imploding amid a scandal involving the non-Aryan heritage of its founder, Anthony Pierpont, Panzerfaust was best known for a failed 2005 plan to distribute 100,000 hate-rock sampler CDs in schoolyards across the nation.

The impact of U.S. hate rock is not limited to the United States. Since the production, performance, and distribution of such music is illegal in many countries in Western Europe, the U.S., with its First Amendment guarantees of free speech, has become a main provider of music to skinheads internationally (just as U.S. computer servers host most European hate sites in order to keep their owners clear of European anti-hate legislation). This relationship was built in part by the outreach programs of Resistance Records under George Burdi, who used to offer Eastern Europeans CDs at 90% discounts, as well as free license to reproduce the music.

The center of gravity for hate-rock today is probably “RadioWhite,” an online white power music Internet radio station that maintains multiple 24-hour music feeds. Other new media platforms — including social networking sites like MySpace and video file-sharing sites like YouTube — are being used by racist skinhead groups to recruit and expose others to their views.

V. THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

The connections between racist skinheads in the U.S. and Europe are not limited to hate-rock catalogs. With the rise of the Internet, groups scattered across the globe have been able to communicate and link up as never before, transforming the skinhead movement from an exclusively neighborhood-based phenomenon into a global culture with common points of

reference and even annual events. The ease with which interested parties can access hate literature and music online has also given rise to the phenomenon of the “internet Nazi” — young fellow travelers who are not part of organized skinhead gangs but who profess allegiance to the movement’s code and support purveyors of skinhead paraphernalia with online orders.

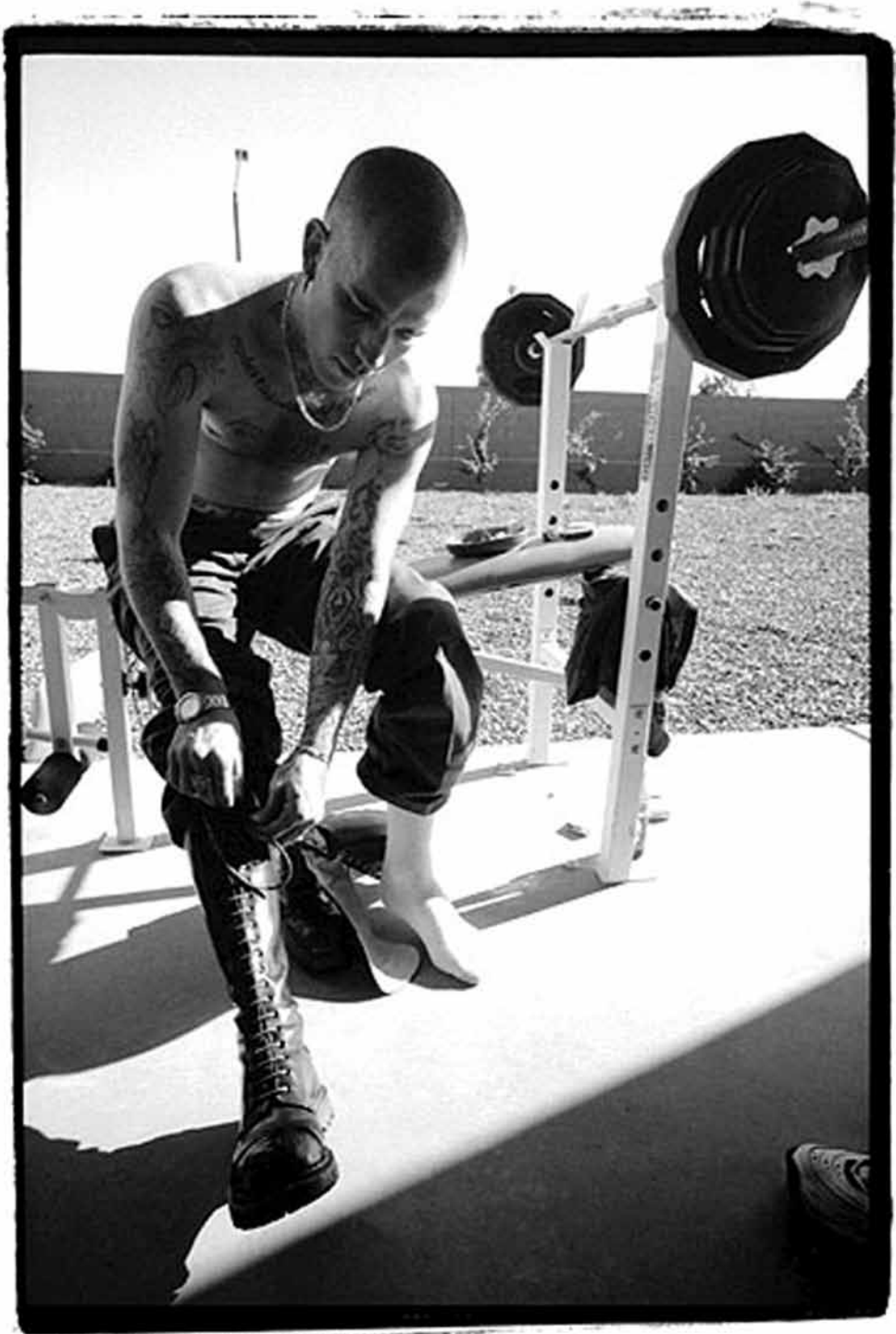
The country with the worst skinhead problem today is Russia, where it is estimated there are tens of thousands of active neo-Nazi skinheads, including thousands in the capital alone. In recent years, immigrants, students and even senior embassy staff from Asian and African nations have been the victims of assaults and murders on the streets of Moscow.

As in Western European countries, Russian skinhead violence often dovetails with soccer hooliganism. A 2002 report in *The Nation* described the trend:

“In the past few years a curious synthesis of the soccer hooligan and skinhead movements has been observed steadily gaining strength in the city. It’s no longer uncommon in Moscow to see crowds of 300-400 soccer fans — dressed in the black bomber jackets and black boots popularized by German skinheads — loitering on the streets in the city’s outer regions, and not always on the same nights as soccer matches.”

Some of these skinheads, the article notes, have been seen wearing the armbands of the neo-Nazi Russian National Unity party, suggesting links between street hate and organized political parties. Such links are suspected to be common in many Western European countries, where radical parties participate in electoral politics, in recent years with sobering success.

Across Europe, radical parties are on the rise, exploiting fears over immigration. In several of these countries, associations have been traced between skinhead gangs and parties with representatives in regional and national bodies. ▲



KEVIN SCHULIN



AS THE POWER OF THE CENTRALIZED HAMMERSKIN NATION DECLINES, A RISE IN INDEPENDENT SKIN CREWS MAY BRING A NEW ERA OF VIOLENCE

MOTLEY CREWS



Last Memorial Day weekend, three racist skinheads stood side-by-side to pose for a photo at the Imperial Klans of America compound near Dawson Springs, Ky., where the IKA hosts the annual white power gathering Nordic Fest. Two of them — Eric Fairburn and Brien James, both founders of the Hoosier State Skinheads — flipped off the camera while holding a red, white, and black flag upside down. The flag displayed the marching hammers symbol of Hammerskin Nation, a coalition of regional skinhead groups that dominated the United States skinhead scene for almost a decade. By posing with the flag upside down, Fairburn, James, and their accomplice declared the reign of Hammerskin Nation finished. Lest there be any mistaking their intent, the skinhead in the middle, a member of the Keystone State Skinheads, held his arms downward, fists closed, a deliberate inversion of the Hammerskin Nation signal of crossed arms up.

The photo is a remarkable symbol of the rapid and treacherous balkanization under way among organized skinheads in America, as well as a telling indicator of how the skinhead scene in this country, now more than ever, is less the revolutionary political movement its adherents claim than a disjointed criminal subculture. The skins in the photo are behaving like gangbangers, not race warriors. They're "dissing" the Hammerskins, their fellow Aryans, right down to the gang signs.

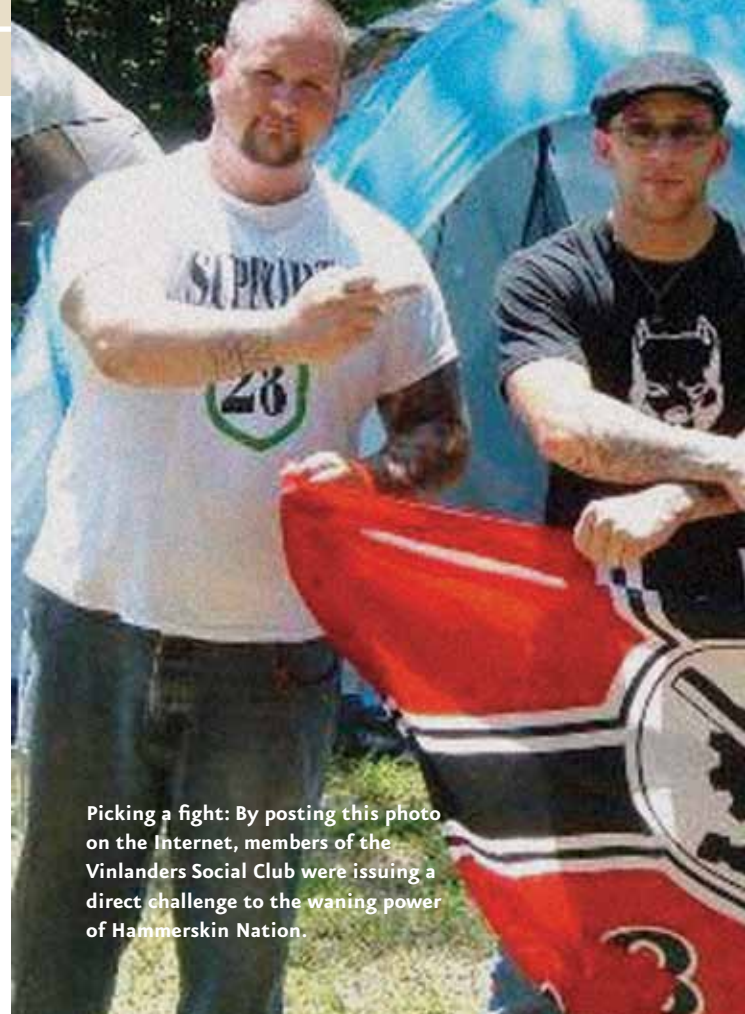
These trends parallel an alarming resurgence in skinhead activity nationwide, which continues to intensify. At the beginning of 2002, there were 18 skinhead crews active in the United States, most of them under the control of Hammerskin Nation. That count has now more than tripled to 59 active crews, only six of which belong to Hammerskin Nation.

As the power of the Hammerskins has waned, the skinhead scene has entered a free-for-all phase, with new and unaffiliated local, state, and regional crews proliferating rapidly. More and more of these newcomers subscribe to the ultra-violent ethos and disorganized crime profiteering of a chaotic band of Midwest-based gangster skins known as the Vinlanders.

While there's no skinhead census, and no official statistics on skinhead-specific crime, cops on the street that specialize in tracking skins say the facts are clear. "Skinhead activity has easily doubled in the last couple of years, and the Vinlander influence is huge," says Matt Browning, a detective with the Mesa, Ariz., police department who has investigated white power gangs in his region and their nationwide connections for 10 years, including two years undercover. "They're more violent, they're more technically savvy than before in terms of using the Internet to organize, and, while they're still motivated by race and politics, it's also about money now."

Bloodshed and Retaliation

The ongoing devolution of the skinhead scene began with what will live in infamy in skinhead lore as "the pool cue and blowtorch incident." It happened in mid-1999, when Hammerskin Nation's power was peaking, with about 600 Hammerskins distributed across five regional divisions. To become a Hammerskin, a skinhead who wanted to join had to



Picking a fight: By posting this photo on the Internet, members of the Vinlanders Social Club were issuing a direct challenge to the waning power of Hammerskin Nation.

be a "prospect" for one year, then a "probate" for six months. All this time, and forever after, they were required to pay \$10 a month in dues to their local chapter, and \$10 a month to Hammerskin national leaders in Dallas, who asserted dominion over skinheads nationwide, portrayed Hammerskin

RACIST SKINHEADS

A TIMELINE OF THE MOVEMENT

CIRCA 1969

The original skinhead subculture explodes among urban, working-class youths in Britain, combining style elements drawn from white "Mods" and West Indian "Rudeboys." Though tinged with soccer hooliganism, traditional skinhead culture is not racist (to this day, there are black "trad" skins).

EARLY 1980s

British skinhead scene factionalizes. White power skinheads develop a separate subculture based on the white nationalist music of "Rock Against Communism" bands like Skrewdriver, Skullhead, and No Remorse who opposed the "Rock Against Racism" concerts of anti-racist skins.



CORBIS/BETTMAN

CIRCA 1982

Racist skinheads begin to appear in U.S. in significant numbers.

CIRCA 1986

Romantic Violence, also known as CASH (Chicago Area Skinheads), takes form as one of the first true racist skinhead gangs in the United States, followed in short order by the Confederate Hammerskins in Dallas.



Former California Klan leader Tom Metzger forms the Aryan Youth Movement, a skinhead division of his white supremacist group White Aryan Resistance (WAR).



Nation as elite, and enforced strict codes of conduct.

Early that summer, these leaders issued a direct order to the members and two probates of the Indiana chapter of the Northern Hammerskins that set in motion a cycle of bloodshed, retaliation, and dissent that continues to shape the

level and nature of skinhead criminal activity in this country and abroad.

The order was simple: Hammerskin leaders had determined that a certain Hammerskin was no longer worthy of membership due to his persistent sexual propositioning of a fellow member's wife. They directed the Indiana Hammerskins to seek out this offender, inform him of their decision, and then "remove" his Hammerskin "colors," meaning any patches, pins or other markers indicating his affiliation.

Looking back, the Dallas shot callers may wish they'd been more specific on the meaning of "remove." When a pack of five Indiana Hammerskins tracked down the offender, they not only roughed him up and tore off his colors, they held him down, burned off his Hammerskin tattoos with a blowtorch, and then shoved a pool cue up his rectum.

The Hammerskin leaders were outraged and banished the attackers for exceeding their orders. Basically, the five Indiana skinheads were punished for being too violent. Eight of the other Indiana Hammerskins turned in their patches in protest of the punishment and together, the 13 former Hammerskins formed a new, rogue crew they called Outlaw Hammerskins, which represented the first serious challenge to Hammerskin Nation authority.

From their very beginning, the Outlaw Hammerskins represented a new breed of racist skinhead. They avowed white power, yet listened to black gangsta rap. They had neo-Nazi tattoos, yet dripped with gold chains. They wore Doc Martens, but also gold teeth. They formed close ties with the Hell's Angels, working security at the outlaw biker gang's events (the father of Jeremy Maske, one of the founding Outlaw skinheads, was the president of the Indiana chapter of the Hell's Angels at the time).

Within a few months, the Outlaw Hammerskins had

1988

Skinhead violence erupts across the United States, with scores of violent attacks and murders recorded over the next four years.

Tom Metzger and son John organize the first hate rock festival, Aryan Fest, which is held in Oklahoma.



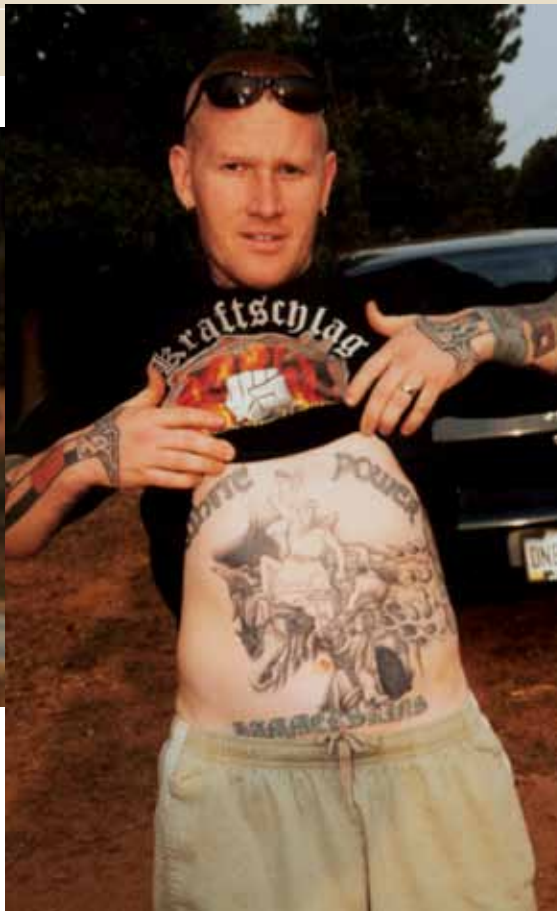
A flying chair breaks the nose of television talk show host Geraldo Rivera during a brawl between skinhead gang leaders and African-American activists on the set of "The Geraldo Rivera Show."



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

Members of the Confederate Hammerskins patrol Robert E. Lee Park in Dallas, beating any non-white they come across. The gang is ultimately linked to 40 crimes, including the vandalism of a Dallas synagogue. Police foil a plot by armed Hammerskins to destroy Jewish businesses on Nov. 9, the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Nazi pogrom also known as the "Night of Broken Glass."

Ethiopian immigrant Mulugeta Seraw is beaten to death by members of East Side White Pride, a Portland, Ore., gang with close ties to WAR.



chapters across Indiana and Wisconsin. Their creed was “take it to the extreme.” If another skinhead crew mocked them for being “whiggers” (white “niggers”), Outlaw Hammerskins would beat them down. If attacked with fists and feet, Outlaw Hammerskins would retaliate with bats and knives. If a rival pulled a knife, an Outlaw Hammerskin pulled a gun.

“We do remain open and hospitable to other racials who pass through our cities and states. However, we do not tolerate disrespect,” they announced on their website. “Meaning we don’t talk shit. There is no ‘next time.’ We’ll light you up on the fucking spot.”

Eastern Hammerskins member Bob Himes, who runs a Pennsylvania tattoo shop, displays a body covered in skinhead iconography, including the crossed hammers (right) that symbolize Hammer-skin Nation.

Falling Hammers

On Memorial Day weekend 2000, less than a year after the Outlaw Hammerskins formed, three vanloads of Outlaw Hammerskin hooligans showed up at the Imperial Klans of America compound, looking to start trouble at Nordic Fest, which at that time was heavily attended by Hammerskin Nation skinheads. The Outlaw Hammerskins skins were heavily armed, and when IKA security refused to allow them into

1991

In June, more than 60 Aryan National Front (ANF) skinheads and Klansmen march through downtown Birmingham in a dramatic show of force.

1994

Regional Hammerskin factions unite under the common banner of Hammer-skin Nation (HSN).



Skinhead gang leader Randall Lee Krager (left) forms Volksfront in Oregon.

1992

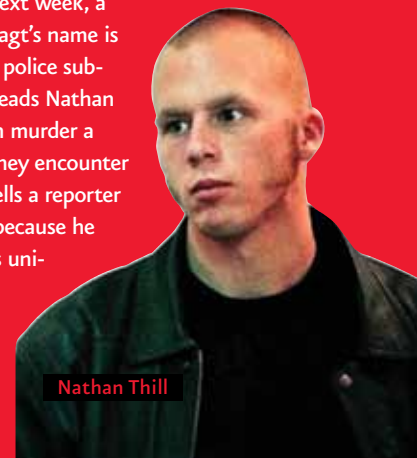
In April, members of the skinhead gang ANF murder a homeless black man in Birmingham, Ala., after attending a Hitler birthday party.

1995

Southern California skinhead Randall Rojas beats a homeless black man to death behind a fast-food restaurant.

1997

Bruce Vander Jagt becomes the first American police officer killed in the line of duty by a racist skinhead when he’s gunned down in Denver by 25-year-old racist Matthaus Jaehnig after a high-speed chase. The next week, a dead pig bearing Vander Jagt’s name is dumped outside a Denver police sub-station, and Denver skinheads Nathan Thill and Jeremiah Barnum murder a West African immigrant they encounter at a bus stop. Thill later tells a reporter that he killed Oumar Dia because he was “wearing the enemy’s uniform” — his black skin.



Nathan Thill

the festival, they fired a volley of shots into the air, putting Hammerskin Nation on notice.

The following year, Outlaw Hammerskins showed up in force at Nordic Fest, making it clear the event was no longer Hammerskin Nation's exclusive skinhead stomping ground. In part because of this loss of face, Hammerskin Nation membership numbers began to wither. Today, Hammerskin Nation is more like Hammerskin Hamlet. It's down to about 150 members. "Hammers have been dropping their patches all over the place," says Detective Browning. The decline of the Hammerskin Nation has been fueled by the insurrection of the Outlaw Hammerskins, lawsuits filed by hate crime victims, and widespread discontent with Hammerskin Nation's elitism among working-class, anti-authoritarian racist youths.

Still another big factor was the collapse of Panzerfaust Records, a hate rock music company that distributed popular Hammerskin Nation-affiliated bands like Max Resist, Bound for Glory, and the Mid-Town Boot Boys. Panzerfaust's owner, Anthony Pierpont, poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into Hammerskin Nation festivals and legal battles after he founded the label in 1998, but had to scuttle the company last year after the *Intelligence Report* revealed he's of Mexican descent. (Despite being a "mud person," Pierpont is still active in the business side of organized hate. His most recent venture is manufacturing T-shirts for National Socialist Movement commander Jeff Schoep and National Alliance chairman Erich Gliebe; see related story, p. 11).

Rise of the Regional Crews

Infighting caused the Outlaw Hammerskins to implode in 2002, but by then they'd made an indelible mark on skinhead culture. Instead of leading to a return to power for Hammerskin Nation, the demise of the Outlaw Hammerskins sparked the still-ongoing surge of independent, regional crews that

have continued the Outlaw Hammerskin tradition of openly challenging and disrespecting Hammerskin Nation and its only ally, the Portland, Ore.-based regional crew Volksfront.

Two of these new, unruly crews, the Hoosier State Skinheads and the Ohio State Skinheads, rose directly from the ashes of the Outlaw Hammerskins. The Hoosier State Skinheads were co-founded by former Outlaw Hammerskins Brien James and Eric Fairburn (see profiles, p. 50 and p. 49). James and Fairburn also attended the first meeting in Central Ohio in 2003 of the Ohio State Skinheads, whose founders include other former Outlaw Hammerskins. (Ohio State Skinheads now has three local chapters in Ohio).

The largest statewide crew now active is the Keystone State Skinheads, which formed in September 2001 in Harrisburg, Pa. (One of its five founders, Steven Smith, is a former Aryan Nations member who was recruited into the neo-Nazi movement while an Army soldier stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.) The Keystone State Skinheads now has nine chapters across Pennsylvania and sponsors regular concerts and "white power picnics." Its logo is a pit bull or bulldog in a circle made of chain against a red, black, and white background (see logos chart, p. 56).

The Ohio State Skinheads, Hoosier State Skinheads, and Keystone State Skinheads are all also part of the Vinlander Social Club, a.k.a. the Vinlanders, a skinhead "warrior clan" devoted to drinking, fighting, and a racist variant of Odinism, a form of ancient paganism once practiced by Vikings. Fairburn, James, and other Hoosier State and Ohio State Skinheads founded the Vinlanders in 2004; today, that group has about 200 full members. Unlike Hammerskin Nation, which requires even probationary members to renounce their allegiance to any other skinhead crew, the Vinlanders allow and even encourage dual membership. A Vinlander can be an Ohio State or Hoosier State Skinhead, and vice-versa.

1998

Independent Nazi Skins gang leader John "Polar Bear" Butler ambushes and kills two Anti-Racist Action members in the desert outside Las Vegas on the Fourth of July.

1999

Florida skinheads attack interracial couples, killing a woman and a child in two separate incidents.

Five ousted members of the Northern Region of Hammerskin Nation form a renegade outfit they call Outlaw Hammerskins.

Hammerskin Nation reorganizes and throws its first Hammerfest, the group's signature hate rock festival, in rural Bremen, Ga. More than 600 skinheads from across the country attend.



Shane McCormick

2001

Midland Hammerskin Shane McCormick (above) stabs a black man in a Missouri restaurant.

2000

While Hammerskin Nation remains the nation's largest skinhead organization, the number of HSN chapters drops from 27 to 19.

Hammerfest attendance drops to 220 as HSN's elitist posturing and relentless attempts to dictate the rules of skinhead culture in the U.S. breed widespread resentment.

“Everyone [in Arizona] wants to be Vinlander now,” says Detective Browning. “The Vinlanders have very quickly gone from a little skinhead group in the Midwest to a national force with a great web presence. The bigger they become, the more power they have, and they’re getting bigger.”

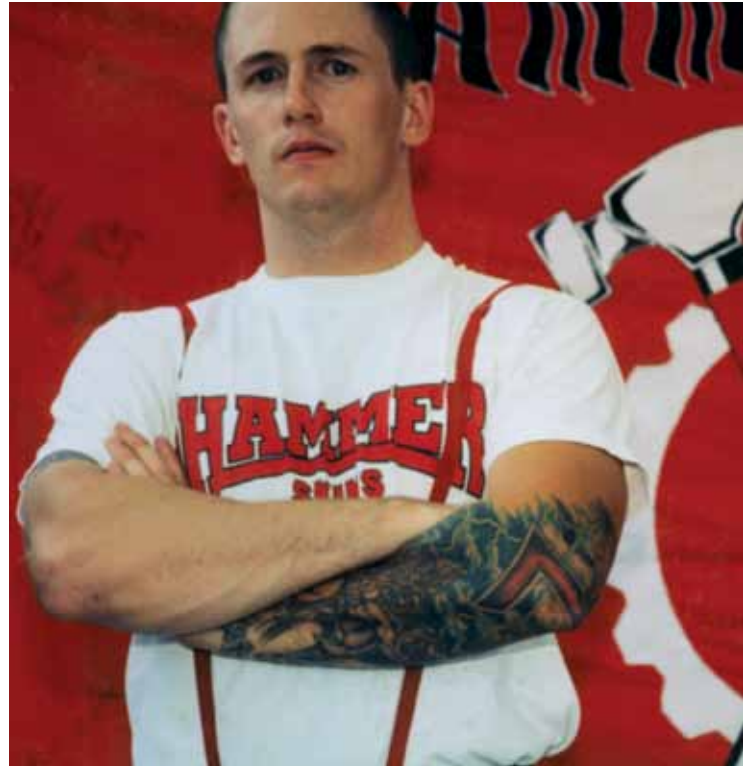
On Oct. 22, 2005, on the Logan, Ohio, property of Ohio State Skinheads member Kevin Kislingbury, the Vinlander Social Club hosted the first official Blood and Honour council, a unity meeting of regional skinhead crews also known as the Council of 28. The meeting was attended by at least 60 representatives of more than a dozen skinhead crews, including Hoosier and Ohio State Skinheads, Keystone State Skinheads, the New Jersey Skins, the Canyon State Skins (Arizona), and the Maryland Skins (one of the fastest growing state crews), as well as the Imperial Klans of America and the National Alliance.

Conspicuously absent at the Blood and Honour council was anyone representing Hammerskin Nation or Volksfront.

Recruitment Commerce

According to the minutes of the meeting, the council members decided they would meet once a year in the future, and that any group “meeting the council criteria” would send two representatives. They also established a “uniform code of appearance and conduct” for “large scale public actions,” and designated the neo-Nazi National Alliance as their official “political outlet.”

The former Outlaw Hammerskins also reversed themselves on the issue of hate rock, according to the minutes, deciding by majority vote to “explore the option of holding events for the general public for profit.” This was a major shift. Hammerskin Nation and Volksfront have a long history of organizing hate rock festivals to raise money and also of channeling hate rock CDs and neo-Nazi flags, shirts, pins,



patches, and other paraphernalia to countries where such items are banned. But when the Outlaw Hammerskins broke away, they announced they would have nothing to do with the shady business of hate rock or recruitment commerce. With the exception of the Keystone State Skinheads, the council crews had all followed suit.

So what changed their minds?

Perhaps the hate rock company representatives who also

2002

Skinhead Kevin A. Johnson beats a man to death outside the Courtesy Diner in St. Louis while spewing anti-Semitic epithets, although his victim is not Jewish.

The Outlaw Hammerskins implode due to infighting.

HSN's power continues to wane.

Hammerfest attendance dwindles to 150.

2003

The number of skinhead chapters nationwide more than doubles, due mostly to the rapidly increasing strength of independent, regional skinhead crews, most notably the Hoosier State Skins (Indiana and Illinois), the Ohio State Skinheads, and the Pennsylvania-based Keystone State Skinheads.

Kurtis William Monschke, head of the Washington state chapter of Volksfront, helps three other racist skinheads use baseball bats and rocks to beat to death a homeless white man in Tacoma.



Kurtis Monschke



RACIST SKINHEAD GLOSSARY

14/88: Common white supremacist code. 14 stands for the “14 words” slogan coined by David Lane, who is serving a 190-year sentence for his part in the assassination of a Jewish talk show host: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” 88 means “Heil Hitler,” as H is the eighth letter of the alphabet.

28: Shorthand for Blood and Honour, a skinhead group.

38: Confederate Hammerskins, the southern faction of Hammerskin Nation (see below).

Boot party: Beating a victim to the ground then stomping and kicking him or her with steel-toed boots.

Braces: Suspenders.

Crew: Skinhead gang or faction.

Colors: Marks identifying affiliation; can be tattoos, patches on jackets, etc.

Curbing, curb job: Breaking a victim’s jaw or neck by forcing his or her face against a street curb and kicking the back the of the victim’s head; popularized in the 1998 cult movie, “American History X.”

Dr. Martens (a.k.a. Doc Martens): Brand of durable boots popular with skinheads as well as young people in all walks of life, though skins lace the boots differently (see “straight-laced”) and wear either red or white laces (see below).

Honey sock: Pool ball in a sock wrapped in tape so it doesn’t split open when used as a weapon.

Featherwood: Female skinhead.

Five words: “I have nothing to say.” Skinheads are exhorted to give this standard response to any and all media and law enforcement inquiries.

Fred Perry: Brand of polo shirt favored by skinheads.

Fresh cut: A newly indoctrinated skinhead whose head has recently been shaved for the first time.

Hammerskins: A nationwide skinhead syndicate, also known as Hammerskin Nation, with regional factions and chapters that once dominated skin subculture nationwide.

HSN: Hammerskin Nation.

HHFH: “Hammerskin Forever Forever Hammerskin.”

Hang-around: A young person who associates with skinheads but is not yet a probate (see below), akin to a gang-banger “wannabe.”

Probate: A “member in waiting” who is on probation for a set amount of time before he or she becomes a full-fledged member of a skinhead crew.

RAHOWA: Short for “Racial Holy War,” a slogan that originally came out of the neo-Nazi Church of the Creator; also the name of a defunct band.

Red laces: Bootlace color indicating the wearer has shed blood for the skinhead movement. Racist skinheads will often randomly attack non-whites to “earn” their red laces.

Spider web tattoo: Racist skinhead “badge of honor,” often worn on the elbow, indicating wearer has committed murder for the skinhead movement.

SHARP: Short for Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice, commonly known as SHARP skins, who often battle racist skins.

Skinbyrd: Female skinhead.

Straight-laced: A complex boot-lacing system favored by racist skins who lace their boots in horizontal, straight lines rather than X or cross patterns.

White laces: Bootlace color identifying a skinhead as being “white power,” as opposed to a non-racist (“traditional”) or anti-racist skin.

ZOG: Shorthand for “Zionist Occupation [or Occupied] Government,” reflecting the neo-Nazi conspiracy theory that the American government is secretly controlled by a powerful Jewish cabal.

attended the Council of 28 convinced the skinhead leaders there that if they would just put down their mead drinking horns and pick up their thinking caps, they could make serious money. “The Vinlanders have the backing of the hate rock record labels now, the labels are bringing money to the table,”

2004

Non-Hammerskin crews continue to evolve and unify.

Members of the Hoosier State Skins and Ohio State Skinheads — including several former Outlaw Hammerskins — form the Vinlander Social Club, also known as the Vinlanders, a skinhead “warrior clan” devoted to drinking, fighting, and a racist form of Odinism, a pagan religion once practiced by Norse Vikings.



Billy Roper (right), a former National Alliance official who now heads White Revolution, has repeatedly tried to bring racist skinheads into the mainstream of the radical right.

entirely of Polish-speaking immigrants).

Skinhead criminal activity in the United States is still far less severe than in Moscow or, for that matter, Prague or Paris. But as independent crews continue to proliferate, and the ultra-violent skins of the Vinlanders and similar groups vie with the leftovers of Hammerskin Nation, it seems likely that skinhead activity here will grow, as it has recently after about a decade in remission.

So far, most of the serious violence has been contained within the white power world (for example, the vicious

says Detective Browning.

White power music, after all, is a more lucrative underground trade in Europe than dealing in hashish, according to Interpol. The demand for American skinhead music is tremendous there both because there are far more skinheads and because it's illegal for hate rock bands to perform, record, or even rehearse in most European countries. So while skinheads in Europe for the most part consider their American counterparts to be drunken buffoons — and with good reason — they are dependent upon the disorganized crime of U.S. skinheads

to supply them with merchandise they otherwise couldn't have.

For these reasons, U.S. skinheads wield huge influence overseas, especially in Germany and the former Soviet Union, where there are 30,000-50,000 skinheads in Moscow alone, according to Russian police. They terrorize and kill non-whites and Jews at a rate unimaginable in this country. In Russia, skinhead culture, much of it exported from the U.S., has brought death and destruction for a generation. (There is also some European influence on U.S. skinheads. For example, the Burnden County Hooligans, a New Jersey crew, consists

beating the Vinlanders gave a National Socialist Movement speaker and two of his comrades at this year's Nordic Fest). But as any gang cop knows, the most dangerous member of a street gang is not the "O.G." ("Original Gangster") with a well-established street reputation, but the newbie looking to do whatever it takes to make a name for himself and his gang. The skinhead scene in this country has become a land of the white power up-and-comers, each of them a human hand grenade, just looking for an excuse to pull their own pin. ▲



2005

The Vinlanders host the first official Blood and Honour Council, a unity meeting of regional skinhead crews also known as the Council of 28 (B is the second letter of the alphabet, H is the eighth; hence, 28 stands for Blood and Honour). The council is attended by at least 60 members of more than a dozen white supremacist groups.

2006

Skinhead resurgence parallels rise in skinhead-related criminal activity.

THE GODFATHERS

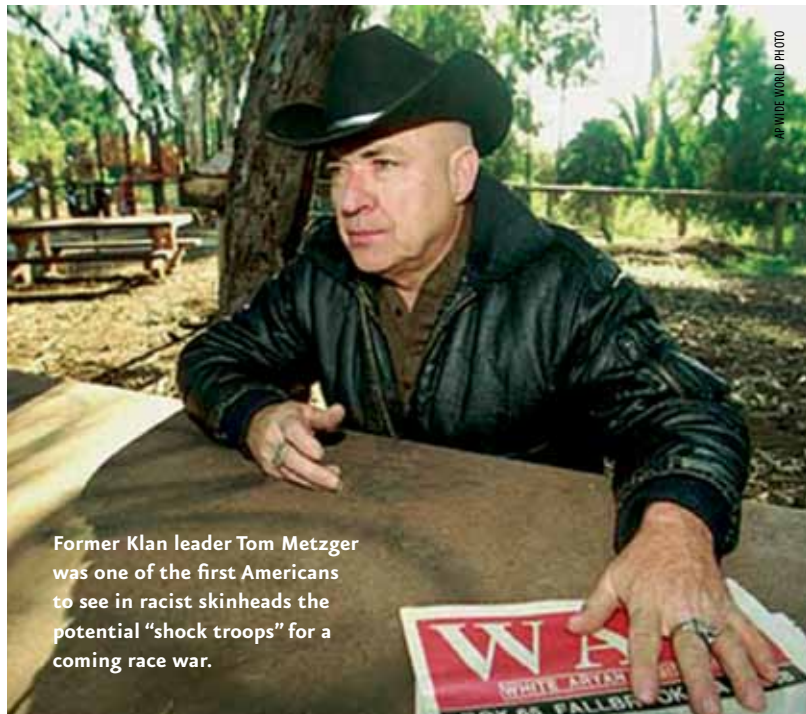
ONCE, RACIST SKINHEADS WERE REGARDED AS TOO EXPLOSIVELY VIOLENT TO BE POLITICIZED. TWO FORMER KLANSMEN CHANGED ALL THAT FOR GOOD

When young racists across the United States began emulating white-power British skinheads in the 1980s, it soon became apparent they had neither the discipline nor the charismatic leadership of the Nazi SS soldiers they idolized. They were loose cadres of ultra-violent outcasts, prone to poorly planned bursts of vicious, high-profile criminality, who found themselves as shunned by the leaders of established white supremacist organizations as they were by mainstream society.

That began to change after two Klansmen-turned-neo-Nazi leaders — Tom Metzger in the mid-to-late 1980s, followed by Bill Riccio in the early 1990s — showed that it's possible, at least for a while, to harness skinhead rage in the service of a larger racist cause. Where other hate group leaders saw drunken, unmanageable miscreants, Metzger and later Riccio saw disaffected but malleable foot soldiers in need of a father figure — potential “shock troops” in the coming race war.

Like drug kingpins who use gangbangers to sling crack, these two merchants of hate enlisted and organized racist skinheads to do the dirty work of the white power movement. By doing so, they shifted the way racist skins are viewed by adult hate group leaders. While skinheads are still as likely as they ever were to get drunk and beat each other up or spontaneously commit a random murder, it's become the standard for neo-Nazi organizations like the National Socialist Movement and the Creativity Movement to seek out and recruit skinheads.

Metzger and Riccio showed the potential value racist skins hold for the white power movement in terms of generating publicity, fundraising, recruiting, and, when



Former Klan leader Tom Metzger was one of the first Americans to see in racist skinheads the potential “shock troops” for a coming race war.

deemed necessary, brute force and intimidation. But these two self-appointed guidance counselors for neo-Nazi youth also unwittingly demonstrated the collateral damage skinheads cause their handlers when they learn their lessons all too well.

TOM METZGER

With his black cowboy hat and brash swagger, Thomas Linton Metzger has carefully cultivated an outlaw image over his 30-year-career as a racist. The tough-talking television repairman and former California grand dragon

of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was the first major racist leader in the United States to invite skinheads into the organized white supremacist fold.

Metzger's youth outreach efforts even predated the arrival of racist skinhead culture in the U.S. in the early 1980s.

In 1979, when teenager Greg Withrow created a furor by starting a "White Students Union" at his northern California high school, Metzger took Withrow under his wing, ultimately transforming Withrow's fledgling organization into the Aryan Youth Movement (AYM), a junior-varsity version of Metzger's own organization, White Aryan Resistance (WAR). Metzger then began inserting AYM's teen newsletter into WAR newspapers.

When the first domestic crop of racist skinheads began sprouting in the early-to-mid 1980s, White Aryan Resistance and the Aryan Youth Movement quickly moved to become the first hate groups where skinhead culture and exploits were celebrated rather than shunned. "I was the first in the country to recognize skinheads and befriend them" Metzger told a reporter in 2004.

Metzger tailored his pitch to suit the skins' affinity for rebellion, portraying his group as anti-authoritarian and pro-working class. "WAR wears no uniform, carries no membership card, takes no secret oath," he said.

Metzger and a handful of skinhead protégés made the rounds of television talk shows, defining skinhead culture for the shocked audiences of Oprah Winfrey, Geraldo Rivera and Phil Donahue. He established a 24-hour WAR telephone hotline, with outgoing racist messages scripted for skinheads, and supplied early skinhead crews with free bundles of WAR and AYM publications to distribute on their own turf. These tactical moves were intended to make all racist skinheads and potential skinheads feel part of a growing national phenomenon.

While he formed a particularly close

alliance with American Front (one of the first skinhead crews to develop chapters in multiple states), Metzger wasn't choosy. In 1988, he and his son John threw the first-ever hate rock festival, Aryan Fest, which was open to all skinheads. Skins from all over the country traveled to the festival in Oklahoma. From that point on, Metzger was a sought-after speaker at rallies and concerts sponsored by a variety of crews.

One of Metzger's most devoted followers was Dave Mazella, a California skinhead who took part in the traveling skinhead circus Metzger put together

"Operate like a Nazi submarine! Use your periscope! We have to infiltrate! Infiltrate the military! Infiltrate your local governments! Infiltrate your school board! Infiltrate law enforcement!"

for the talk shows. "Tom Metzger was like a father to me," Mazella later said. After their nationally televised appearances, Metzger promoted Mazella to vice president of AYM, where he reported directly to John Metzger.

When word reached WAR's Fallbrook, Calif., headquarters that independent skinhead gangs in the Pacific Northwest were rapidly gaining strength, Metzger dispatched Mazella to Portland, where the WAR emissary used videotapes of his talk show shenanigans to get in with the members of East Side White Pride. John Metzger also sent ESWP a letter of introduction that read in part, "You'll get a feel of how we work when you meet Dave Mazella."

In Portland, Mazella arranged for ESWP members to talk to Tom Metzger directly on the phone, and drove the Portland skins around in his van to local high schools, where they distributed AYM papers. He led them in violent attacks to prove his bona fides.

On Nov. 12, 1988, three weeks after WAR's emissary arrived in Portland, ESWP skinhead Ken Mieske beat to death an Ethiopian immigrant. The first person Mieske called after the murder was John Metzger. After Mieske and

two other ESWP skins pleaded guilty to murder, the Southern Poverty Law Center sued both Metzgers on behalf of the victim's family and won a \$12.5 million wrongful death verdict that ruined the Metzgers financially.

While the money trouble and public scrutiny forced Metzger to stop networking directly with skinheads, he maintained the WAR hotline and kept publishing white supremacist pamphlets.

In 1993, then 17-year-old Richard Campos was arrested for a series of firebombings in Sacramento, Calif. His targets included the house of a Sacramento city councilman, an NAACP office, the office of the Japanese American Citizens League, a synagogue, and a state anti-discrimination office. Investigators found that Campos had called the WAR hotline to listen to Metzger's messages

34 times in a single month just before he carried out the bombings, which Campos had credited to the "Aryan Liberation Front," a domestic terrorist organization of which he was the only member. Campos told police he'd become "racially aware" after reading a White Aryan Resistance flier. Campos was tried as an adult, convicted, and sentenced to 17 years in prison.

Since the civil judgment against him, Metzger has advocated "lone wolf" white supremacist activism, which is leaderless and covert. A lone wolf, according to Metzger, "gathers intelligence and carefully digests and develops this information into thoughts and suggestions." Then he acts.

Metzger, who recently moved to Warsaw, Ind., continues to speak at skinhead rallies, although his organization is now little more than a publisher. In January 2004, he addressed a crowd of about 100 skinheads at a hate rock festival outside Phoenix that was organized by the Portland, Ore.-based skinhead crew Volksfront. "Don't operate like a battleship," he shouted. "Operate like a Nazi submarine! Use your periscope! We have to infiltrate! Infiltrate the military! Infiltrate your local gov-

ernments! Infiltrate your school board! Infiltrate law enforcement!”

And remember, he said, “You are not domestic terrorists. You are freedom fighters.”

BILL RICCIO

“Send us your broken toys, and we’ll fix them,” Bill Riccio said to the camera.

It was 1992 and Riccio, then 35, was starring in the HBO documentary “Skinheads, U.S.A.” that detailed life inside the Aryan Youth Front, a skinhead crew organized by Riccio and based in Birmingham, Ala. Though he was not connected to Metzger, Riccio had originally called his loyal band of racist misfits White Aryan Resistance. He changed the name to avoid confusion, but kept calling the backwoods shack he rented “the WAR House.”

The WAR House was equal parts skinhead recruiting station, clubhouse, and crash pad. It was where Riccio, a former Klan chaplain, kept his toy soldiers, who were white teenaged boys, many of them runaways. He plied them with beer, and systemically indoctrinated them in racial hatred and his own special brand of neo-Confederate Hitler worship.

As Riccio explained in the documentary, his ultimate goal was to reclaim the South for pure Aryans. “Those nigger-loving race traitors can go move to San Francisco or somewhere else where they might feel more welcome among its large gay population,” he said.

Though based in Birmingham, at the height of his influence, in mid-1992, Riccio was the de facto Nazi youth troop leader of a network of at least 70 skinheads in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. (Riccio worked closely with the Confederate Hammerskins.) Skinheads from as far away as York, Pa., made pilgrimages to the WAR House. By that time, Riccio had been convict-

ed in 1979 of possessing a sawed-off shotgun, in 1981 of violating probation by illegally possessing a firearm, and in 1985, again, for illegal possession of a firearm, as well as marijuana.

While Metzger benefited from the media attention and the revenue generated by his skinhead outreach, Riccio seemed to simply adore being adored.



He didn’t profit from his skinhead followers — the WAR House was funded by his small auto-parts business — but he did enjoy their unconditional loyalty.

“I wish Bill would have been my biological father,” one of the teenaged AYF skins says in the HBO documentary. “He *is* my father. He’s all these youths’ father, every single one of us.”

Riccio worked hand-in-hand with Alabama Klan leader Roger Handley. In November 1991, they co-hosted a huge skinhead and Klan gathering on Handley’s farm. The two co-organized a white power march by 150 skinheads and Klansmen through downtown

Birmingham the following June. (When Handley was later brought up on sodomy charges involving a teenaged boy, Riccio defended him, dismissing the accusations as false and obviously part of a law enforcement conspiracy to defame the Klan.)

The lessons Riccio taught were not child’s play. Skinheads under his sway committed at least two murders in Alabama. In one of those cases, three skins were arrested for beating and kicking a homeless man to death under a railroad trestle in April 1992, just hours after attending an Adolf Hitler birthday party at the WAR House. One of the killers, then 17-year-old Confederate Hammerskin Mark Lane, had written on his application that he wanted to join the movement “to benefit my race and help my brothers and sisters of the Aryan persuasion destroy all the scum and degenerates of our land.”

Four months later, in August 1992, the WAR House was raided as part of multi-state sweep of white supremacist groups. Police found guns and grenades on Riccio’s property, and arrested him again for illegal weapons possession.

After serving 15 months in federal prison on a conviction for that felony, Riccio moved back to the WAR House and renewed his devotion to the Klan, eventually becoming Imperial Kludd, or national chaplain, of the North Georgia White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Today, Riccio still occasionally shows up at Klan events with a detail of skinheads in tow, and some of the first generation of broken toys he wound up and turned loose, who are now in their mid-to-late 20s, remain active in the white supremacist movement.

As the judge who sentenced him in 1992 put it: “It is [Riccio’s] apparent ability to organize and mobilize disenfranchised young white males even to acts of violence that makes him dangerous.” ▲

Racist skinhead culture has long brimmed with violence and venom. But there are thugs, and then there are thugs' thugs

TEN WHO TERRIFY

The racist skinhead scene in America is typified by violence — over drugs, women, ideology, race, and just about anything else that could come up after a night of swilling beer. Since the first skinheads appeared in the United States in the early 1980s, they have periodically terrified mainly urban populations in places like Denver, Los Angeles, Portland, Salt Lake City and Boston, along with many smaller towns. But even within a world that is accustomed to violence, there have been a number of predators who are vastly more frightening than the rest. What follows are portraits of 10 of those individuals, including several who remain active and a number of others who are in prison or appear to have dropped out of the racist movement. Their stories are presented here as a cautionary tale, a graphic illustration of the kinds of people and criminal activity produced by the racist skinhead scene.

Gabriel Carafa, 25

THE HATED

Never one for discretion, Gabriel Carafa decided to advertise his racist skinhead ideology by having “RA-HOWA” (short for “Racial Holy War”) tattooed across his forehead in large gothic script. The skin of Carafa’s torso is riddled with crudely inked runes, swastikas, SS bolts, and the clear-cut phrases, “Race War” and “Kill Niggers.”

A former member of the Latin Kings whose gang name was “King Shaggy,”



this convicted drug dealer has been a “governor” (the highest ranking member in

New Jersey) in the neo-Nazi World Church of the Creator (now known as the Creativity Movement) and a member of The Hated, a skinhead crew active in New Jersey as well as Florida.

Carafa’s hate crime record includes convictions for bias intimidation and making terroristic threats. These stemmed from an October 2002 incident in which Carafa arrived at a 7-Eleven in Seaside Heights, N.J., to find the store closed. When the store’s Hindu manager refused to open the

locked door, Carafa punched through the store’s front window, then yelled threats and racial slurs, including “let’s run this nigger over!” He served three years in prison for his crimes.

Upon his release in 2005, Carafa moved in with former cellmate Craig Orler, a fellow member of The Hated who possessed a large cache of weapons, some of them stolen. Carafa agreed to help Orler find a buyer for the guns in exchange for a split of the profits. On April 25, 2005, Carafa sold

a Winchester rifle with the serial number removed for \$100 to a man he believed to be a fellow white supremacist, who in fact was a federal informant. Three weeks later, Carafa called the man and offered 11 more guns for sale, quoting a price of \$1,000 for seven shotguns, three rifles, and a handgun. The informant accepted.

Next, Carafa offered to sell him an M-16. Then he started talking bombs. Carafa eventually supplied the undercover operative with 60 pounds of urea, a type of chemical fertilizer that is high in nitrogen. When Carafa bragged about the urea he'd obtained being of higher quality than the fertilizer used by Timothy McVeigh, authorities decided to end the six-month undercover operation rather than run the risk of Carafa and Orlor actually detonating a fertilizer bomb. Both members of The Hated were arrested and later pleaded guilty to selling guns without a federal license and possessing firearms despite prior felony convictions (Orlor had past convictions for burglary and assault).

"We are pleased that this dangerous criminal is going to prison," said New Jersey Attorney General Zulima V. Farber. "This defendant's violent strain of racism and his access to firearms made him a grave threat to our communities."

Now back in prison for up to 15 years, Carafa's tattoos may prove to be a grave threat to his own safety.

Eric "The Butcher" Fairburn, 32

VINLANDER SOCIAL CLUB

Back in the 1990s, when he was also known as Eric Wolf, this tall and brawny skinhead, unmistakable for having "MURDER" tattooed in large letters across the front of his neck, was the rhythm guitarist for the Church of the Creator hate rock band RAHOWA. He also dallied in the business side of hate rock as marketing director for Resistance Records when the nation's leading racist music label was still based in Detroit.

After Michigan tax authorities raided Resistance's offices in 1997, Fairburn moved to Washington, D.C., where he went to work for Holocaust denier Willis Carto's extreme-right political advocacy organization, Liberty Lobby. He also edited the white supremacist E-mail newsletter "Wolfeign Update."

Fairburn has always exhibited what criminologists term "poor impulse control." During his tenure at Liberty Lobby, he went to the home of Willis Carto's business partner, Todd Blodgett, to collect a debt. Blodgett, who lived in a wealthy suburb in Virginia, wasn't home, so Fairburn broke into Blodgett's garage, stole a chainsaw that Blodgett had inherited from his grandfather, and cut down every single tree and shrub on Blodgett's heavily wooded property.

In 1999, the neo-Nazi

lumberjack moved to Florida, where he worked as a particularly scary repo man and whiled away his off hours with Dungeons & Dragons, the popular role-playing game. In 2000, he turned up in Indiana and began associating with the newly formed Outlaw Ham-



merskins (OHS). In 2002, he and OHS leader Brien James (see profile, below) founded the Hoosier State Skinheads.

That same year, after seeing the movie "Gangs of New York," Fairburn renamed himself the "Butcher" after the character in the film played by Daniel Day Lewis, William "Bill the Butcher" Cutting, a one-eyed crime lord and sadist who hates all non-whites and Irish immigrants. Fairburn also began carrying a large sledgehammer, and cultivating a reputation for unpredictable and abusive conduct,

especially toward women. In one instance, he tossed a female friend's dog out of a car window in heavy traffic during an argument.

"I threw her new dog out my car window at 70 mph on I-70 westbound," Fairburn boasted in an Internet posting. "It got really fucked up and died quickly as a truck behind me nailed it with its back tires after trying to avoid it. It exploded. Great stuff"

In 2003, Fairburn relocated to Springfield, Mo., and moved in with the ex-girlfriend of Midwestern Hammerskin leader Shane McCormick. When McCormick and another Hammerskins confronted Fairburn at the woman's home, Fairburn stabbed McCormick (he survived).

Animus had already been rising between Hammerskin Nation crews, including McCormick's, and independent, regional skinhead gangs like the Hoosier State Skinheads. Fallout from the stabbing brought a bitter feud that continues to verge on open warfare. In a post to a skinhead message board in late 2003, Fairburn wrote: "To the shit talking Hammerskins out there or their leaders who mislead the other hammers under them: ... I am ready for Valhalla or prison to do what is right. ... We are sick of the lies, tired of the BS, we are calling you out: either listen to the truth or fight for your lives for the lie. YOUR CHOICE."

In 2004, Fairburn and James formed the Vinlander Social Club (see timeline, p. 38). In 2005, the Vinlanders hosted representatives of independent skinhead crews from around the country at the first official Blood & Honour USA Council, which aims to create a united front to challenge the waning authority of Hammerskin Nation. At the council meeting, 15 skinheads, including Fairburn, stood in a circle and passed the “mead horn,” a ritual in the racist variant of the Odinist religion. Waiting his turn, Fairburn stood with a spare mead horn slung over his left shoulder, along with his trademark sledgehammer.

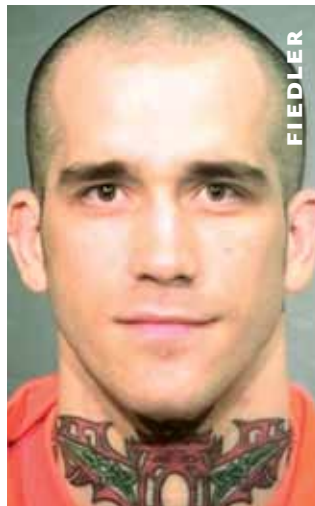
Joshua David Fiedler, 26 SS GUARDIANS/UNIT 88

Now serving a 21-year prison sentence for pulling a home invasion robbery, 28-year-old Josh Fiedler recently posted an online advertisement for prison pen pals. In it, Fiedler professes his love of comic books, animals, and poetry. He makes no mention of his blood-spattered past.

From 2001 until his most recent incarceration in 2005, Fiedler was the leader of a Phoenix skinhead crew, alternately called SS Guardians and Unit 88, whose members were involved in at least two murders, numerous brutal assaults, and other acts of violence and racial intimidation that brought skinhead criminal

activity in Phoenix to a level the city had not witnessed since Jimmy Miller’s crew goose-stepped down Central Avenue in 1990 (see Miller profile, below).

Fiedler shamelessly court-



ed the media, holding a press conference in March 2003 at a park located in a predominantly minority neighborhood where he instructed the skinheads under his command to pick up trash for the cameras and told television reporters, “We’re here for the community.”

The skinhead park clean-up was an attempt by Fiedler to counter the negative publicity generated by the murder of a young white man with a pacemaker who was kicked and stomped to death outside a pool hall by several of Fiedler’s followers in late 2002. “My son was so disfigured the bouncer [who found him] couldn’t tell what race he was. We couldn’t have an open casket,” said Cole Bai-

ley Sr., the victim’s father. “They kicked through bone and into temporal lobe.”

Appearing at the press conference alongside Fiedler was his second-in-command, Sean Gaines, the gang’s chief enforcer, who has a well-earned reputation for extreme violence. Gaines’ rap sheet includes arrests for beating a Latino man over the head with a two-foot long tree branch, car theft, and beating a Jewish boy into unconsciousness. Gaines is currently awaiting trial for capital murder after allegedly acting as the ringleader in the February 2002 mutilation and murder of a drug addict suspected of stealing money from Fiedler’s girlfriend. Another of Fiedler’s lieutenants, Jason Shakofsky, is now awaiting trial for attempted murder for allegedly stabbing and slitting the throat of his crewmate and ex-girlfriend.

Fiedler’s own criminal record stretches back to 1997, when he was arrested for possession of LSD and received probation. A short time later, he and a fellow skinhead fired more than 40 rounds from assault rifles into a fleeing car; Fiedler was convicted of felony endangerment and aggravated assault and served three years in prison. About six months after he was paroled in early 2001, Fiedler attended a bonfire where skinheads torched a Jewish star. He was arrested at the scene for violating the conditions of his

release when police officers found him in possession of two handguns and a 14-inch Bowie knife.

“Mr. Fiedler is a clear, viable threat to the community,” his probation officer wrote in a pre-sentencing report. “He was given counseling while in prison and also received his GED, yet he continues to violate the law.”

Fiedler was released from prison once again in January 2003. Around the time of the park clean-up media stunt, he described prison as a near perfect, racially segregated environment. “Blacks with blacks, whites with whites, Hispanics with Hispanics,” he told a reporter. “It’s an ideal society.”

Luckily for Fiedler — not to mention the rest of the world — he’ll be enjoying that ideal society until at least 2022.

Brien James, 30 HOOSIER STATE SKINHEADS/ VINLANDER SOCIAL CLUB

Even in the violent world of racist skinhead subculture, there are thugs, and there are thugs. Brien James, co-founder of the Vinlander Social Club, is a thug’s thug. In the opinion of neo-Nazi activist and longtime James antagonist Bill White, the beefy tattoo shop owner from Indiana is “nuts and violent — a joke you want to keep away from you because you know he’s going to do so something to bring the cops over.”

Like punch and stomp a man to the brink of death at a party for refusing to

seig heil, as James did in Indianapolis in 2000. “I have been tried for attempted murder and multiple batteries and hate crimes,” James boasted years later. “My JTTF [Joint Terrorism Task Force] file is a mile long.”

James began his gang career young, when he and some childhood friends in Knightstown, Ind., formed a gang called the Knightstown Boys. In his late teens, James became involved with the Klan before helping to found



the Outlaw Hammerskins in 1999 in the first direct challenge to the authority of Hammerskin Nation.

Online, James uses the screen name “Hando2000,” an apparent reference to the character Hando, played by Russell Crowe in the 1992 cult film classic, “Romper Stomper.” In the movie, Hando is the leader of a racist skinhead gang in Australia. Like Hando, James has a reputation for trying

to exert total control over whatever skinhead crew he’s running with by acting as the “brains” behind the outfit, as well a good portion of the brawn. Invariably so far, the demands of his huge ego have led James to eventually split from his current crew to form a new gang, with himself as its self-appointed leader.

In 2002, James left the Outlaw Hammerskins to found the Hoosier State Skinheads along with Eric “The Butcher” Fairburn (see profile, above).

In October of 2005, James helped convene a “Blood & Honour” coalition of 17 white supremacist groups in yet another direct challenge to the de facto national leadership of the Hammerskins. This challenge was also reflected in the creation by James, Fairburn and others of the Vinlander Social Club, a coalition of regional skinhead crews — including the Hoosier State Skinheads, the Ohio State Skinheads, and the Keystone State Skinheads — that do not recognize the authority of Hammerskin Nation.

Tensions between the Vinlanders and other neo-Nazi groups exploded in Kentucky at last May’s hate-rock festival known as Nordic Fest. The violence was sparked by Missouri National Socialist Movement member Steven Boswell, who started a speech touting NSM accomplishments by telling his audience that the white supremacist move-

ment could not succeed “by belonging to a social club where all we do is drink and shoot the shit every Saturday night.”

James and fellow members of the Vinlander Social Club took the comment personally. They rushed Boswell immediately after his speech and beat him in front of his wife and young daughter. Other NSM members were attacked as well in the melee that ensued. NSM member Gary Robinson described his comrade Austin Ibarra’s face as looking “like hamburger covered in bootprints.”

Notch one more party wrecked by Brien James and company.

Randall Lee Krager, 32 VOLKSFRONT

At 6-foot, 2-inches and 240 pounds, with “FEAR” tattooed across the knuckles of his right hand and a large swastika stamped on his thick neck, Volksfront founder Randall Krager is



an imposing figure whose continuing, heavy influence on skinheads in the Pacific Northwest has deep roots.

Krager has been involved in the skinhead subculture since at least 1989. That year, when he was 15, Krager was arrested along with several other skinheads and charged with racial intimidation for allegedly assaulting three teenagers near a park in Portland, Ore. During the attack, assailants pummeled a Hispanic girl in the face while shouting, “Why aren’t you white?”

Krager was sent to a juvenile detention center.

The next year, he attended the civil trial of White Aryan Resistance leader Tom Metzger — who was being sued by the Southern Poverty Law Center for his role in encouraging the skinhead murder of a black man in Portland — and told a reporter that Metzger was a “cool guy ... one of the nicest guys you’d ever meet.”

By the time Krager turned 18, police had encountered him 28 times.

That year, 1992, Krager was sentenced to 27 months in prison for putting an African-American man into a coma with a single punch. During sentencing proceedings, Krager reportedly shouted “Fucking Jew pig!” at court officials.

Krager’s white supremacist beliefs were reinforced in prison. While inside, he networked with skinheads outside, laying the groundwork for his Volksfront neo-Nazi gang. Krager assumed

leadership of Volksfront immediately upon his release in October 1994.

But Krager didn't stay out of prison for long. Weeks after his release, he called a local anti-racist skinhead and threatened to kill him. Krager was arrested and pleaded guilty to first-degree intimidation. He served 14 months and was released in early 1995.

Led by Krager, Volksfront maintained a highly visible presence in Portland until 2001, when the gang essentially went underground, citing "police and governmental pressure" to explain its disappearance.

Volksfront resurfaced in 2001 and, to the amazement of many who knew Krager, officially renounced violence. "[K]icking in someone's head will not make them our political allies. ... We know that violence created by stupidity or machismo will and can destroy organizations," read a notice on Volksfront's website.

In a blatant and brutal violation of this supposed policy — a policy that appears to have been a public relations gambit more than anything else — Volksfront's Washington state chapter leader, Kurtis William Mon-schke, joined three other racist skinheads in 2003 in beating to death a homeless man in Tacoma using baseball bats and rocks. But this mindless violence hardly destroyed Volksfront. By 2004, Krager's gang has chapters in seven states.

That January at Aryan Fest, a white power festival in Arizona hosted and policed by Volksfront, representatives of Krager claimed to have purchased five acres of land in Oregon as the beginnings of a white homeland. Although Krager officially stepped down from his leadership position later in 2004, today he continues to control the group from the shadows.

Clark Martell, 44

CHICAGO AREA SKINHEADS

In April 1987, six members of the Chicago Area Skinheads (CASH), one of the first racist skinhead gangs formed in the United States, busted into the apartment of a 20-year-old woman who'd quit the gang, and who the CASH skinheads suspected of having black friends. Once inside, the racist skinheads, including CASH founder Clark Martell, who was then 26, pistol-whipped the former skinbyrd, sprayed mace in her eyes, and painted a swastika and "Race Traitor" on her wall with her blood.

That assault came in the midst of an 18-month crime spree by Martell and 15 to 20 followers that also included assaults on six Hispanic women, swastikas painted on three synagogues, and numerous incidents of vandalism to Jewish-owned business.

Martell, who hailed from Blue Island, Ill., about 20 miles south of Chicago, was a violent neo-Nazi years before he was a skinhead gang lead-

er. In 1979, when Martell was a member of the American Nazi Party, he was sentenced to four years in prison for attempting to firebomb the Cicero, Ill., home of a Hispanic couple and their five children. He served 30 months.

In the mid-1980s, Martell began performing around Chicago with his punk rock band Romantic Violence. Starting in 1985 or 1986, Martell passed out American Nazi Party newsletters between his band's sets, along with copies of *National Socialist Skinhead* magazine, for which Martell was a cartoonist. Martell corralled a following among young racist skins eager to copycat their British brethren, but his neo-Nazi recruiting drive also caught the attention of Chicago's numerous "traditional," non-racist skinheads, including a number of African Americans (according to Chicago punk lore, the city's skinhead scene was founded by black traditional skinheads).

Enjoying the advantage of vastly superior numbers, non-racist-turned-anti-racist crews such as Skinheads of Chicago (SHOC) routinely ganged up on CASH skins at shows and in the streets. "They grew out of what we are — the punk scene — so it's up to us to combat them," a member of the Chicago Anti-Racist Action (ARA) crew told the *Chicago Tribune*. "We have more responsibility than anybody else to bring them down."

By the time Martell and the other five CASH skins were arrested for the gruesome April 1987 attack on a

former member, CASH had been more or less beaten into submission by Chicago's anti-racist skins. But Martell had already proven he was ahead of his time. When he first started recruiting for CASH, there were likely fewer than 200 racist skinheads in the U.S. By 1989, when he was convicted of home invasion, aggravated battery, and robbery and sentenced to 11 years in prison, there were more than 3,000.

Martell was released in 1992 after an appellate court overturned a different, prior conviction on which his lengthy sentence was based. In 1997, new Martell cartoons appeared in the racist skinhead periodical *Right as Reina*. That was the last the skinhead world heard of Clark Martell, though he's been neither forgiven nor forgotten by anti-racist skins in Chicago and elsewhere. "I can clearly remember the fearless leader of CASH writing all sorts of letters to punk and alternative magazines sucking up to black people once he spent about six months in [prison]," a punk rocker using the screen name SeattleTroll posted to the online punk rock discussion forum finntroll.net earlier this year. "Of course, he still got his ass kicked by every Irish SHOC skin when he got out of jail."

Kenneth Mieske, 41

East Side White Pride

The first inkling of the fury that lurked inside Kenneth Mieske came when he was

not quite three. One day, when his adoptive mother sent the boy to time out in his bedroom after a minor incident, the diaper-clad tot took less than two minutes to strip the bed of sheets, tear down the curtains and upend a chest of drawers. The toddler's strength stunned her, as did the force of his anger. It was a rage, Mieske's mother told author Elinor Langer, that would only build with time.

As Mieske later wrote in his poem, "Senseless Violence": "Victims all around



me/I feel nothing but hate/
Bashing their brains in/Is
my only trade/Senseless
violence is the only thing I
know/Piles of corpses never
ending, watch them grow/
Kill my victims for pleasure
and for fun/Beat them
over the head. Shoot them
with my gun/Line them up
against a wall. Shoot them.

Watch them die/I love to
hear the agony, they vomit,
scream, and cry"

As a young adolescent in Portland, Ore., Mieske got into Satanism and began using drugs. A friend later said that roughhousing with Mieske was "like playing with a Doberman." In 1984, he began playing in local death metal bands. A fellow musician gave him the prophetic nickname "Ken Death."

In 1986, when he was 21, Mieske went to prison for burglary. Inside, he immersed himself in the hate-filled theology of Christian Identity. By the time he was released in fall of 1987, the skinhead scene in Portland (and the nation) was on the rise, with established gangs whose numbers were growing. Mieske joined East Side White Pride (ESWP), an affiliate of Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR). He also became lead vocalist of the death metal band, Machine. In September of that year, Metzger sent Dave Mazzella, vice president of WAR's youth arm, to Portland to spur ESWP on to commit brutal assaults, a tactic that culminated in the infamous November 1988 murder of Ethiopian immigrant Mulugeta Seraw.

Mieske and two other ESWP skinheads were drinking beer and party-hopping on a Saturday night when they turned onto a street they found partially blocked by another car. Seraw, a graduate

student, was being dropped off by two friends who were also Ethiopian immigrants. The skins begin yelling at the other car to move, flashing their headlights. When they realized the race of those blocking their path, the night took an irrevocable turn. The Ethiopians and the skins both got out of their cars. Mieske smashed the tail-lights and right rear window of the Ethiopians' car with a baseball bat. Then he brought the bat down on Seraw's head. Seraw crumpled to the ground, where Mieske hit him again, then again, splitting his skull and killing him.

All three of the ESWP skins — Mieske, Kyle Brewster (see blotter item, p. 9) and Steven Strasser — were arrested and later pleaded guilty to murder, assault, and racial intimidation. Mieske was sentenced to life in prison. In a subsequent civil suit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a jury returned a \$12.5 million verdict against Metzger and WAR for encouraging ESWP members to commit violence.

Mieske will be eligible for parole in 2018. Racist skinhead crews and neo-Nazi websites still honor him as a "Prisoner of War."

James Lee Miller, 33 Arizona Hammerskins

On Oct. 9, 1990, as 17-year-old Jimmy "Soda Pop" Miller awaited trial as an adult in Phoenix, Ariz., on

six counts of arson, robbery, and assault, a state-appointed psychologist petitioned the court on Miller's behalf.

"He did not impress me as a rabidly delinquent or antisocial individual," Kevin Buckley argued after meeting with Miller. "He certainly does not have the character of a leader."

That remarkable assessment might have amused Miller's minions in the Arizona Hammerskins, and no doubt would have surprised the targets of his violence. Superior Court Judge Gregory H. Martin didn't buy it, and when Miller was convicted, Judge Martin sentenced him to five years in prison. Thus ended the explosive first phase of Miller's career as a skinhead gang leader.

Jimmy Miller's association with the Arizona Hammerskins had begun in the fall of 1989, around the time he dropped out of Scottsdale Alternative School. Within a year, he was second-in-command in the organization — the right-hand man of the skinhead leader and Tom Metzger protégé, Case Colcord.

Miller and Colcord reveled in organizing high-profile media stunts that doubled as recruiting tools. Together, they led demonstrations in which they displayed Nazi banners and chanted racist and anti-Semitic slurs. On Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the two marched down Central Avenue in Phoenix, chanting, "Nigger, nigger,

nigger! Out, out, out!” On Adolf Hitler’s birthday, they marched in front of a local synagogue brandishing Nazi insignia.

A month after the Martin Luther King march, Miller began the rampage that finally landed him in prison.

In February of 1990, Miller attempted to fire-bomb the home of Jason “Fishbone” Mosely, a teenage member of a rival, anti-racist skinhead group known as the SHARPs, for Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice. But Miller had the wrong condominium. Fortunately for the elderly couple inside, Miller’s homemade bomb bounced off the window screen. Prior to the bombing, Miller had called Mosley’s mother late at night and threatened to kill her and her “mongrel” son (Mosley was of mixed race).

Soon after that attack, Miller and a small group of Hammerskins visited Sean “Warbaby” Cooper at his grandparents’ home. As punishment for leaving the Hammerskins — and out of fear that he would start another group and challenge Hammerskin primacy — they beat Cooper and sliced away his crossed-hammer tattoo with an X-Acto knife. Six days after this brutal assault, Miller led a boot party against Kaipō Stant, another SHARP skin, and stole Stant’s Doc Martens boots.

In May, Miller attempted a second firebombing at

the home of anti-racist skinheads. This explosive successfully cleared the window of the Phoenix apartment, but the two targets escaped to safety.

Miller was arrested that September. During his trial he claimed to be reformed and said he was eager to have his tattoos surgically removed. (A SHARP skin who testified at his trial tauntingly suggested that Miller was afraid he’d become somebody’s prison “cupcake.”) Despite these promises and the appeals of psychologists like Kevin Buckley, Miller was tried as an adult and convicted.

After serving two years of his sentence, Miller was released on parole in April of 1993.

Against the rules of his parole, and despite the fact that he was living with his grandmother, the young ex-con soon resumed leadership of the Arizona Hammerskins. During the mid-1990s, he expanded his role to become a leader of the Hammerskin Nation, his group’s national organization. He also distributed a skinhead newsletter to juvenile detention facilities throughout the country.

By the turn of the millennium, Miller seemed to have faded from the skinhead scene. A 2004 posting on the message board at Skinheadz.com referred to Miller as “one time leader of the Arizona Hammerskins,” and grouped the once fearsome Miller with “other old time skins.”

Richard Myers, 32 American Front/ Confederate Hammerskins

In 1990, when he was only 17, Richard “Richie” Myers was named the Florida state leader of the American Front (AF), a nationwide white power skinhead gang that was started in the mid-1980s in San Francisco. The five founders included David Lynch, who later moved to Port St. Lucie, Fla., to become AF’s Eastern States Commander, and Bob Heick, aka “Nazi Bob,” one of the skinheads involved in the infamous brawl on the set of *The Geraldo Rivera Show* in November 1988.

Lynch and Myers were the driving force behind a thriving racist skinhead scene in Florida in 1990, as the American Front systematically absorbed local crews statewide and engaged in blood feuds with anti-racist skinheads.

When Myers discovered



in October 1990 that AF’s North Florida “director of regional operations” was secretly Jewish, he laid a trap at a skinhead party house in Daytona Beach rented by Fran Mercuri. (Mercuri was then Florida chairman for Tom Metzger’s neo-Nazi organization, White Aryan Resistance, which worked hand-in-glove with American Front.) Myers ordered the North Florida officer, John Daly, to attend a mandatory officers meeting at the beach house. After Daly arrived, Myers and six other AF skinheads pummeled and kicked him while one shouted, “Die, Jew boy, die!” They then attempted to drown him in the surf.

Daly’s attackers later testified that they watched Daly’s body begin to float out with the tide, then left, excitedly discussing plans to get their spider web tattoos, indicating they had killed an enemy of the skinhead movement. But Daly was not quite dead, and after they had gone, he dragged himself ashore and later drove to a hospital, where he reported the attack to police.

Myers was arrested and charged with attempted first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit aggravated battery, and aggravated battery under Florida’s then-new hate crimes law, which enhances sentences for violent crimes motivated by racial or religious bigotry.

During his trial, when Myers was asked to raise his right hand, he instead threw up a Hitler salute. Tried as

an adult, Myers was convicted in 1991 and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Not long after his release, Myers soon re-immersed himself in skinhead activity. He attended a St. Patrick's Day hate rock festival organized by the Confederate Hammerskins in March 2002, and now appears to be leading the Florida Hammerskins chapter. He is also once again associating with David Lynch, who crawled out of the woodwork last year, apparently to relaunch American Front. Earlier this year, two Salt Lake City skinheads in their early 20s pleaded guilty to randomly attacking a black man as part of an American Front initiation.

Jessica Nelson, 31

Unit 88

A dirty blonde with glacial eyes and an equally icy temperament, Jessica Nelson has a sweet smile that spreads across her face like Novocain.

Born in Huntington Beach, Calif., Nelson moved to Arizona when she was in the eighth grade. She enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school. After leaving the military, she had a son (who is now 13), developed an on-again, off-again methamphetamine addiction, and starting having trouble with the law, racking up a felony forgery conviction, a DUI, and misdemeanor charges for making false statements.

In May 2001, Nelson became romantically involved with Phoenix skinhead leader Joshua Fielder (see profile, above), who worked in a tattoo shop she frequented. When Fielder was sent back to prison for violating his probation in the fall of 2001, he arranged for Nelson and her son to stay, rent-free, at the home of two of his tattoo



KEVIN SCANLON

clients, Bruce and Marie Mathes, setting in motion the chain of events that would lead to one of the most brutal skinhead murders in recent memory.

Not long after Nelson moved into the home, Bruce's brother, Mark, a middle-aged drug addict and petty criminal who had fled to Arizona to dodge a warrant in Washington state, also joined the household.

Nelson worked as a security guard, saving money

in anticipation of Fielder's release. One morning in late February 2002, she discovered an envelope with \$600 in it had gone missing. Suspecting Mark Mathes — who was not home at the time — she called Sean Gaines, Fielder's second-in-command, who told her to call back as soon as Mathes returned, according to police reports and transcripts of Nelson's later accounts to homicide investigators.

That evening, sometime after 9 p.m., Mathes came in the back patio door while Nelson was outside smoking. She offered Mathes a beer, snuck inside to call Gaines, and then returned to the patio, where she petted a cat, made small talk, and waited.

Soon enough, Gaines and two other Unit 88 skinheads—longtime Fielder associate Patrick Bearup and “fresh cut” Jeremy Johnson — entered the yard swiftly, carrying a shotgun, a large knife, and a baseball bat, respectively.

According to police reports, Gaines pointed the shotgun at Mathes, shouting, “You fucked up!”

Under orders from Gaines, Johnson began beating Mathes about the legs and back with the baseball bat. After Mathes fell, Gaines allegedly bashed him in the head with the shotgun's butt, knocking him unconscious. The four skinheads dragged Mathes into an alley and lifted him into the trunk of a car.

They drove to a remote area about an hour north of Phoenix known as Swastika Mine.

“What are we going to do with him?” police say Gaines asked Nelson.

“You know what we have to do,” she replied.

Nelson and Bearup ripped Mathes' clothes from his body. Noticing a cheap ring on one of his fingers, Nelson tried to slip it off, but the finger was too swollen, so Bearup allegedly helped her cut off the finger using wire clippers while Mathes screamed. Gaines then allegedly smashed Mathes head with the shotgun butt, repeatedly, until he fell silent.

The four skinheads then dragged Mathes to the side of an embankment and threw him over a guardrail. Hoping to prevent identification through dental records, police say, Gaines pumped two shotgun blasts into Mathes' face.

Johnson was arrested on Sept. 10, 2003, and confessed. Nelson, Bearup and Gaines were arrested the following day. When police showed her Mark Mathes' ring during one interrogation session, Jessica Nelson sat back in her chair and cackled.

Nelson pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of kidnapping (as did Johnson) in exchange for her testimony against Gaines and Bearup, who remain jailed awaiting trial for capital murder. ▲

SKIN SYMBOLS

INSIGNIAS AND TATTOOS OF THE RACIST SKINHEAD UNDERGROUND



American Front



Volksfront



Blood and Honour, Klan, Odinist iconography



Ohio State Skinheads/
Vinlanders



Keystone State
Skinheads



Vinlanders probate patch



Old school
RAC logo



Skinhead merchandise
distributor



Hate rock label patch



United Kingdom
skinhead patch



Celtic Cross tattoo



American Thule
Society



Totenkopf tattoo
("My Honor is Loyalty")



Skinbyrd
patch



Norse runes
tattoo



White power fist w/ laurels



Independent skin tattoo



Hate rock band patch w/Thor's Hammer



Triskelion ("three sevens") tattoo



SS lightning bolts tattoo



Fenris Wolf Pagan/Odinist symbol tattoo



Thor's Hammer tattoo



Hammerskin Nation



Northwest Hammerskins



Skrewdriver life rune patch



Council of 28/Blood and Honour Council



88 boots tattoo



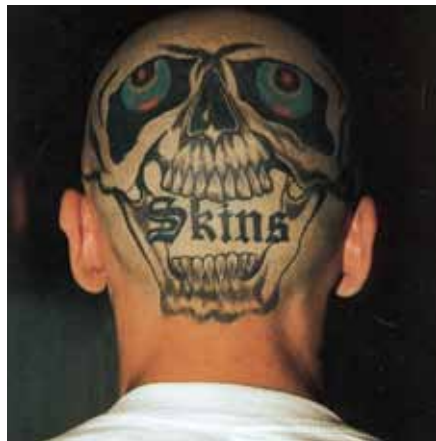
Confederate Hammerskins



Western Hammerskins



Skybird spinning swastika tattoo w/ 14/88



Skin skull tattoo



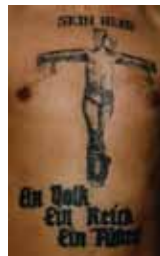
Eastern Hammerskins



Hammerskin prospect patch



Nazi skin iconography tattoo



Crucified skin tattoo ("One people, One Empire, "One Leader")



Totenkopf (death's head) patch w/ 14/88



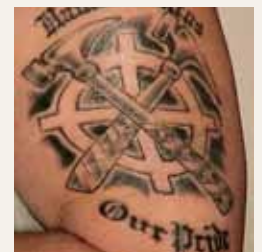
Midland Hammerskins



"Hammerskin Forever, Forever Hammerskin"



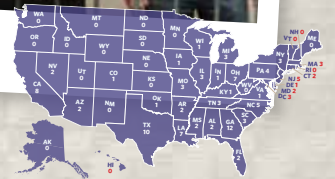
Northern Hammerskins



Hammerskin Celtic Cross tattoo

THE INTELLIGENCE PROJECT

We're More Than a Magazine...



INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

The Intelligence Project has been tracking hate groups and domestic extremists for 25 years. For **investigative support of cases involving extremism**, call us at (334) 956-8200. After hours, call our toll-free hotline at (866) 285-6413.

"[The Intelligence Project] has cracked cases even the FBI couldn't solve."

-- CBS News

"Your session was extremely informative and will genuinely aid law enforcement in working toward the goal of a sound and safer America."

-- Sergeant, Sheriff's Department, California

"Thank you for all the wonderful information you make available."

-- University security officer, Oregon

TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Intelligence Project conducts **FREE trainings** for local, state and federal law enforcement agencies by request. Our sessions ...

- Focus on the history, background, leaders and activities of far-right extremists in the U.S.;
- Typically last two to eight hours;
- Are tailored to the requesting agency's needs.

For more information, e-mail us at training@splcenter.org or call (334) 956-8200 — ask for the Law Enforcement Training Department.

WEBSITE

www.intelligenceproject.org

The Intelligence Project's website offers **FREE resources**, including ...

- A searchable map of active hate groups in the U.S.;
- Electronic versions of the *Intelligence Report*, 1998-present;
- Hatewatch: Weekly updates on hate group activity and hate crimes.