3 KLANSMEN HELD ON KIDNAP CHARGE

Mississippi Case Linked to '66 Civil Rights Murder

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PASCAGOULA, Miss., Nov. 10 — Three Ku Klux Klansmen who are under Federal charges in the firebomb slaying of a Negro civil rights leader in 1966 were jailed here today after being indicted by a county grand jury for kidnapping.

The three were held without bond for the kidnapping March 4 of Jack Watkins, a Pascagoula chemical company worker.

He had charged that he was taken to a lonely road by masked men, who said they would kill him unless he made a statement that would damage the Government's case in the death of the civil rights leader.

Twelve men have been indicted in the case, which resulted from the murder of Vernon Dahmer of Hattiesburg, Miss., a Negro.

The three arrested for kidnapping are Sam H. Bowers, 42 years old, Cecil Sessums, 31, and Deavours Nix, 44, all of Laurel, Miss.

All three, who have been identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as members of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, were indicted by the Jackson County grand jury here Thursday night.

Bowers has also been identified as an Imperial Wizard of the Klan.

The three were arrested early today in Jones County and brought to the Jackson County jail, where they were held tonight without bond.

The indictment of the three came after Billy Roy Pitts, 25, a former upholstery company worker in Laurel, entered a plea of guilty Thursday to a previous kidnap indictment.

Pitts had been indicted in April, along with Travis Buckley of Laurel, a lawyer, for kidnapping Mr. Watkins in an effort to force him to give a statement that Buckley planned to use in the Dahmer case.

Buckley is representing 11 of the men who were indicted for conspiracy after the slaying of Mr. Dahmer, a voting rights leader, who was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Buckley had been released on bond in April after his indictment. He had previously been charged in county court in Jackson County with a series of misdemeanors, including conspiracy to obstruct justice. In a trial in county court in March he was released after a jury failed to agree on a verdict.

The F.B.I. has called the White Knights of the Klan the most militant of all Klan organizations.

Authorities here said Mr. Watkins had nothing to do with the Klan or the Dahmer case and had been chosen at random by the Klansmen.