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—AP WIREPHOTO.  
SAM H. BOWERS JR.  
Jailed in killing.

## Jail 11 in Miss. Negro Rights Leader Killing

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP)—State officers held 11 white men on murder and arson charges today based on state indictments in the 1966 firebomb killing of a Negro civil rights leader.

Ten of the men were arrested last night and the 11th was jailed today.

They included a Laurel civic leader recently honored by his hometown Jaycees, a state Ku Klux Klan chieftain and a lawyer who showed up to represent clients arrested earlier, then was jailed himself.

IN THE state indictments, issued secretly by the Forrest County Grand Jury, six men were charged with murder and arson and five others charged with arson. Arraignment is scheduled today.

The latest arrest came today when Lester Thornton, 42, of Laurel, turned himself in at the Forrest County jail. Court sources refused to say if this was the final arrest to be made.

The indictments are kept secret under state law until the arrest warrant is returned.

THE WHITE MEN were accused of the Jan. 10, 1966, attack with firebombs, tear gas and bullets on the home of Vernon F. Dahmer near Hattiesburg shortly before dawn.

Despite the flames, Dahmer

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shot back at his attackers, creating confusion that allowed his wife, daughter and two sons to escape. Dahmer died in a hospital of burns. He had been a leader in a Negro voter registration drive.

The five charged with arson included Sam H. Bowers Jr., 43, of Laurel, identified repeatedly as imperial wizard of the militant White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

BOWERS WAS FREE on bond in a conviction on a federal civil rights conspiracy charge in the 1964 murder of three civil rights workers near Philadelphia, Miss. No state charges were filed in that case.

Those charged with both murder and arson in the Dahmer slaying included Charles C. Wilson, given the Laurel Jaycee's Distinguished Service Award last Monday. A past president of the Laurel Jaycees, he has been active in civic, Boy Scout and Parent-Teacher Association activities.

NINE MEN, all from the Laurel or Ellisville area, had been jailed when Travis Buckley, 33, a Bay Springs, Miss., lawyer showed up to represent Bowers and others. He was shown an indictment charging him with arson, then jailed with the others.

Buckley faces state kidnap charges at Pascagoula, Miss., in a related case. He was accused of abducting an ex-convict in a vain attempt to extort a false statement from him for use by the defense in a federal case involving the Dahmer slaying.

THE OTHERS charged with both murder and arson included Charles R. Noble, 24; Cecil V. Sessum, 31; James F. Lyons, 35, and William T. Smith.

In addition to Buckley and Bowers, owner of a Laurel amusement company, those charged only with arson were Deavours Nix, 44; Howard T. Giles, 39, and Lawrence Byrd, 46.

Bowers, Giles, Nix, Noble and Sessum are awaiting trial in U.S. District Court on civil rights conspiracy charges in the Dahmer slaying. The FBI identified all as Klan members.

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## 12th Suspect Arrested in Rights Killing

HATTIESBURG (AP)—Twelve white men face charges of murder and arson brought by the state more than two years after a Negro leader's home was burned to the ground, leaving him seared and dying.

The 12th man was arrested yesterday and faces arraignment today.

Ten of the 11 others pleaded innocent. The 11th, Lawrence Byrd of Laurel, will learn today whether his plea to have the arson indictment against him suppressed has been successful.

Circuit Court Judge Stanton Hall set bond at \$10,000 for the five men accused of arson only. One of them—Laurel restaurant operator Deavours Nix—posted it and went free.

Seven other men, including the man arrested yesterday, Henry E. DeBoxtel of Laurel, were charged with murder and arson.

Persons charged with murder are not normally granted bond. The seven remained in jail.

Hall ordered six of the seven—all but DeBoxtel—sent to the Hinds County jail at Jackson because Hattiesburg facilities are "inadequate and unsafe." DeBoxtel remained for arraignment.

The 12 are accused of taking part in the Jan. 10, 1966, firebomb attack on the home near Hattiesburg of Vernon F. Dahmer Sr.