

AGENT BARES REALM

Death and Terror Wear Klan Hood

By HOKE MAY

Jules Kimble is a young man who says he walked with confidence through the shadowy realm of the Kl Klux Klan.

He introduced me to that world last month. It is a twisted labyrinth where men hate and plot.

In one brief visit to the inside of that realm, I saw burlap-wrapped crosses fashioned on what their maker laughingly called an "assembly line."

Later, I stood beside a pasture gate near New Orleans and heard two Klansmen joke about how they could kill a visiting civil rights leader.

MY GUIDE on that expedition into human darkness is an intimate of the denizens of Louisiana's Invisible Empire. He was a high placed and trusted leader of the state Klan until yesterday.

Now he is in flight, and he told the States-Item he fears for his life because he was present when three Klansmen plotted the June bombing of Louisiana labor leader Victor Bussie's house at Baton Rouge.

He told me about the Bussie bombing and about many other acts of Klan violence when we met early in August. The story was withheld until now because Kimble was working the tricky role of a double agent.

BY HIS OWN word, he was serving the Louisiana Klan as its chief of intelligence and security and, at the same time, he was supplying information to the State Police.

"All of those bombings around Baton Rouge," he told me then, "were done by the Klan. There were 15 or 20 of them."

He complained bitterly because he said he had given the information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and nothing was done about it.

Kimble, a volatile, brooding, dark-haired 24-year-old came to the States-Item because he was angry with the state police. His ire grew out of a mixed-up narcotics raid in New Orleans.

He had instigated the raid and wound up being arrested

for carrying a concealed weapon and impersonating an officer.

A SHORT time later he patched up his differences with the state police, who need his information and testimony in the Baton Rouge bombing cases.

When I met him Aug. 1 at his neat, handsomely furnished home on Vicksburg st., Kimble was voluble with anger, and what he said about the Klan and its hold in New Orleans and Louisiana was shocking.

He estimated there are 600 to 800 Klan members in the New Orleans area, distributed among four klaverns in the parishes of Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard.

"IF THERE'S ever any racial violence here," he said, "these fellows don't think they'll need the National Guard. They've all got shotguns and rifles, and they say they're going to use them."

Kimble named and placed the klaverns for me and identified the men who head these chapters of the hooded order. Two of those he named are in Orleans, one in Jefferson and one in St. Bernard.

He described what he said was a Klan and American Nazi Party training ground near the city where hard core members practiced for guerrilla warfare.

As a measure of good faith, he offered to take me inside the home and headquarters of a klavern chief.

"It's all right," he assured me. "I'll introduce you as my cousin from Mobile. Take off your coat and tie and don't say much. Just listen."

"Isn't this dangerous for you?" I asked him.

KIMBLE LAUGHED. "Man, they trust me. I investigate all the new members. If anybody told them I was working for the police, they wouldn't believe it."

We drove out of the city into an adjoining parish. Homes and businesses thinned, and the countryside broadened into small farms.

On the way Kimble talked about the Klan in Louisiana and how the organization in this state is growing and consolidating power in this part of the nation.

"There are two big groups," he related, "the United Klans out of Tuscaloosa, Ala., and the Universal Klans of America—that's Jack Helm's group from Baton Rouge.

"THE UNITED KLAN lost a lot of power when Robert Shelton was convicted in that contempt of Congress case. The fellows lost faith, and Jack Helm has been able to pick up the membership."

In the last month the major Klan groups in Mississippi and Texas have voted to join forces under Helm's leadership. Helm, a onetime New Orleans home builder, now reigns as Imperial Dragon of the Universal Klans of America.

"The United Klan is through," Kimble said. "They just don't have it any more."

FIFTEEN miles out of the city, he swung his new compact sports car into a small, littered farm yard. Across the fence in the pasture was a tall, white cross embellished with Confederate flags.

A wiry, blond man in his late 20s or early 30s came across the yard to meet us.

"Fred, this is my cousin Clay from Mobile," Kimble said, and the man nodded without smiling or shaking hands. "We just stopped by to chew a little."

The blond man went back to a cluttered workbench in the barn, a rickety, unpainted old building crammed with an unbelievable assortment of oddments and junk.

ON A SHELF across from the workbench were several crosses, from three to six feet in height. They were wrapped carefully with burlap so they could be soaked with kerosene in a tank back of the barn.

"That's your assembly line," Kimble said.

"The assembly line, that's right," the man said, giggling.

The kitchen, where we went for a drink of water, was decorated with Klan posters and anti-Negro slogans. The young man apologized about it.

"This is where we're holding the meetings now," he said. "This is the klavern, so we've got a few things to show, but we want it better."

AMONG THE posters and hate material was a Christmas card which said, "Greetings from the National Socialist World." It was signed by George Lincoln Rockwell, the fuehrer of the American Nazi Party who was shot to death recently in Arlington, Va.

My host of that day must have mourned because his parlor was something of a Nazi shrine. There were slogans, swastika flags, but the

guns were gone, he said, because the FBI had been "bugging" him.

HE COMPLAINED to Kimble that federal agents had been parking along the highway in front of the house.

"I cut the limbs of that tree in that pasture back so they could see the cross better," he said.

Kimble told our host he was concerned about the house and its location.

"Right here on this curve," he said, "somebody could come by and throw a fire bomb, and this place would go up, whoof."

"That's all right," the blond man said, "I've still got my shotgun. I'll take some of them along."

ON THE WAY back to town, Kimble was pensive.

"They're strong," he said. "They were set to kill Stokely Carmichael when he came through here, but I told the FBI and there were too many cops around him."

But Kimble said there were other plans.