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Klan Is Blamed for Night Raid On Center at Delaware Campus

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NEWARK, Del., Dec. 14—A lightning nighttime raid by a commando-style vigilante group on a controversial, ecumenical student church center at the University of Delaware has left this community of 18,000 persons in fear and political turmoil.

The raid, which Police Chief William Brierley said his men had learned of through informants, was said by the police to have been planned by the Tri-State Ku Klux Klan, one of a number of Klan groups operating in this rural area where Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania meet. It hit the university's Phoenix Center with the precision of a special forces assault.

At 6:45 P.M. on Saturday, as recalled by Paul H. Knudson, a 26-year-old graduate student who escaped from the black-faced intruders by jumping out a window, three carloads of men—perhaps as many as nine raiders—crashed through the front door of the Phoenix Center by kicking and smashing in the lock.

Used as Coffee House

The building is a pleasant, light green clapboard bungalow. It is a converted residence near the center of the campus that has been used on and off as a student coffee house.

Mr. Knudson, a West Virginian, related in an interview today that he was in his rented room at the rear of the ground floor, watching television. He said he heard "a crash like someone had really taken a header and had a bad fall" in the living room.

Walking down a narrow hall-

way toward the kitchen, he said, he came face to face with a man wearing a shiny, yellow, rain-repellant jacket with a matching parka. The intruder's face, he said, was covered with burnt cork, black shoe polish or black grease paint, and the man was ripping the receiver from a pay telephone on the kitchen wall.

Furniture Smashed

"In that few seconds I was aware that other people were crashing around in the house," Mr. Knudson said. "There was at least one more in the kitchen, and I think he was raising the electric toaster over his head to smash it to the floor. From the sound of furniture being smashed in the living room there had to be several others up there.

"But all I had time to say was 'Hey!,' and then this guy, about 19 or 20 years old with a sandy-colored forelock showing under his hood, threw the telephone receiver at my head."

Mr. Knudson said he ducked as the receiver smashed into the wall. He said he ran back to his room, locked the door and climbed out a window.

"It was really a precision thing," he said. "In a total of three minutes they were in, they did their job, and then they were gone."

Outside, in the glare of a burning five-foot-high cross, Mr. Knudson said he saw three cars pulling away from the curb, and then went for the police.