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DANGEROUS ELOQUENCE:
HATE SPEECH TACTICS IN THE DISCOURSE OF ASA / FORREST CARTER
FROM 1954-74

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By

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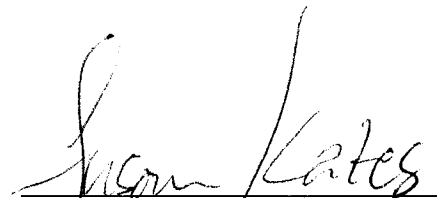
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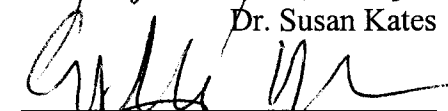
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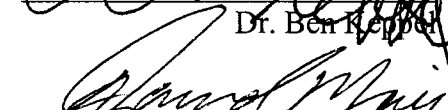
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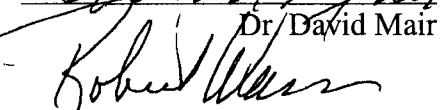
BY


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Introduction: The Case of Asa Earl Carter

Consider the situation in which racist speech is contested to the point that it does not have the power to effect the subordination that it espouses and recommends; the undetermined relation between saying and doing is successfully exploited in depriving the saying of its projected performative power. And if that same speech is taken up by the one to whom it is addressed, and turned, becoming the occasion of a speaking back and a speaking through, is that racist speech, to some extent, unmoored from its racist origins? [. . .] That the utterance can be turned, untethered from its origin, is one way to shift the locus of authority in relation to the utterance. And though we might lament that others have this power with our language, consider the perils of not having that power of interruption and redirection with respect to others. The recent appropriation of “civil rights” discourse to oppose affirmative action in California is such a perilous expropriation, one which can only now be countered by an aggressive reappropriation. (93)

The quotation above, from Judith Butler’s Excitable Speech, in many ways encapsulates the hopes that I have in writing this work. I take up, within the body of this dissertation, the White supremacist speech of Asa Earl Carter and hope that by unmasking the intentions of that speech to turn it back upon itself, to make its intended meaning manifest to the reader, and to provide the occasion for speaking back, speaking through, speaking effectively against.

Asa Earl Carter is a particularly fruitful subject for any consideration of what possibilities exist for counterspeaking White supremacy. Carter lived through a period during which open use of White supremacist doctrine became increasingly ineffective within public discourse as a means of achieving political aims. Carter moved through a variety of social strata—speaking to the working poor, the middle-class, the affluent, the elite—and wrote and spoke to all. Carter used a variety of discourse types—letters, radio addresses, speeches, campaign literature, folk songs, poetry, fictional (auto)biography, Westerns—for his political purposes. Depending on the era, the audience, and the

discourse type, Carter tailored his work to achieve his ends—and he was not always effective in achieving those ends. In his successes and failures, in the variety of his work, Carter provides us with an example of the range of options available to the white supremacist.

My main goal in looking at this range of material will be to examine Carter's works as an example of traditional White supremacist discourse and hate speech. In examining Carter's work as hate speech, I will draw primarily from Judith Butler's Excitable Speech and Waldo Braden's "The Rhetoric of a Closed Society." In her book, Butler's main topic appears to be the then-current discussion over hate speech laws and codes. Butler's argument is that in advocating the writing of such laws, theorists have based their definition of hate speech and its effects on questionable grounds. That is, they have conflated speech with action, they have assigned too much sovereignty to the speaker of hate speech, and they have failed to consider how the power of the state is implicated in creating opportunity for those who engage in hate speech. She believes theorists advocate laws that can be too easily used against the same parties whom they are attempting to protect by means of anti-hate speech laws. Instead of hate-speech codes, Butler advocates the identification of opportunities to counter-speak and counter-read hate speech.

In his article, Braden seeks to identify the basic strategies available to traditional White supremacist speakers in Mississippi during the early Civil Rights period. His goal is to identify the commonalities between the speech of elite-class members of White supremacist society so as to explain how language worked in at least this one case to enact the principles of a closed society, making it difficult, and perhaps impossible in

some cases, for individuals to effectively counteract the persuasive techniques of some such speakers. As Braden explains:

With the creed of white supremacy firmly set, the state's leadership almost closed Mississippi through rigid control over communication, a positive strategy, and effective suppression of opposition. Rationalizing the sordidness of their methods, they kept attention focused upon scapegoats, including Negroes, moderates, outsiders, federal officials, and Communists. With religious fervor, they intensified emotional reactions through touting the myths of the Old South, the Lost Cause, and the Solid South. (350)

Braden goes on to ask to what degree such officials aided and abetted the violent acts of such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, despite their disavowals of such violence, concluding that "in almost no instances over a decade did state officials or legislators take strong stands to prevent Klansmen and hoodlums from terrorizing fellow citizens" and that "the official rhetoric of Mississippi remained consistent with the Klan's announced program" (350-51). As such, these tactics of White supremacists clearly fall into the category of hate speech and will be regarded as such during this study.

If we find that the hate speech practices of Asa Earl Carter bear a strong resemblance to the practices of traditional White supremacists as identified by Braden, and come to an understanding of the means by which his hate speech worked and occasionally did not work, we might as Butler suggests discover some means of counter-speaking and counter-writing—and perhaps also counter-reading the works of Asa Earl Carter, both those which are openly political and those which are covertly political.

Towards this end, I will first examine the available literature on Carter, to demonstrate that there is a significant disparity between the historical record on Carter, which clearly demonstrates the political context for his early and middle period hate speech that takes as its targets Jews and Blacks and to a lesser degree Catholics, and the literary record which posits variously that Carter was a changed man when he wrote his novels or that Carter was unchanged and anti-Native American. The historical record provides us with ample information to suggest that Carter in no way changed prior to writing his first two novels. Further, while it is undeniably true as numerous writers over the last ten have demonstrated that Carter subverts the form of the Western and the sentimental novel and deploys stereotypes of Native Americans which continue to communicate his own White supremacist views and perpetuates hate speech in ways that are ultimately counter-productive to Native American interests, such writers have not demonstrated clearly that it was Carter's intent to be anti-Native and have certainly not demonstrated any history of his being such. By examining the schism between the historical and literary sources, I hope to locate my own study in the area between and to properly situation Carter within his early and middle openly political works and his later fictional novels.

As part of this work, I will be forced to construct a biography of Carter from print sources since no thoroughgoing record of Carter's life exists. Through this detailed biography, I hope to demonstrate that it is far from a "rumor"—as has been posited by Carter's many admirers—that he was a rabid White supremacist and a Klan leader. Further, I hope to show that there is a pattern to Carter's life which throws into question any argument that he changed radically prior to writing his first two novels. This pattern, in brief, shows Carter beginning with great promise a new phase of his political career—

dedicating himself to the furtherance of White supremacy—a transitional period during which he flourished and during which he would try to engage in the extremist politics of the White supremacist community, a slow descent into disarray during which others would disassociate themselves from the Carter, and the ultimate imploding of the given phase of Carter’s political career. Time and again, we will see, Carter would attempt to hold both a respectable career and simultaneously engage in White supremacist extremism, and each time this move would cause his prospects to ebb—though he would never cease to try. Understanding this pattern will help us to understand how it was that his novel-writing career, which was getting off to such a promising start shortly before his death, was likely just another phase which would eventually have self-destructed under the pressure of Carter’s attempts to be simultaneously respectable and engage in covert hate speech and disreputable politics.

As another means of demonstrating the likelihood of this argument, I will also concern myself with examining the writings which Carter produced throughout his life, and in analyzing each as a means of demonstrating how thematically consistent those writings were despite his occasional decisions to change techniques or surface detail. The odd consistency of his work—even the recycling of materials from one manifestation of his political career to another—will help to demonstrate that Carter was far from a changed man when he began writing his first two novels and will help to demonstrate how, even in those most covertly political works, he was continuing to engage in the White supremacist politics for which he had become infamous during his many long years in Alabama political affairs.

It is my hope that by examining this one case of a White supremacist writer, we might better come to understand the vast assortment of discourse types which are amenable to White supremacist philosophy, to better discern those philosophies even when covertly included in a given work, and that through this better understanding we might learn to counter-speak, to counter-read, and to counteract the hate speech implicit in the White supremacist rhetorical tactics of such writers and speakers as Asa Earl Carter.

Chapter 1: A History of Miseducation

Schism between Historical and Literary Sources

In his article, “The Rhetoric of a Closed Society,” Waldo W. Braden examines the persuasive strategies that were utilized by White supremacists in Mississippi in the years 1954-64 to defend their political beliefs and system, to resist local efforts towards integration and federal efforts to dismantle legal segregation, and to suppress any regional opposition to their efforts (333). As part of his article, he names the six primary strategies by which the spokesmen for the White supremacist establishment carried out their hate speech goals: they “gave major attention to continued sanctification of the faith,” white supremacy; they legitimized resistance to integration; they created and reinforced “a positive and unyielding stance”; they defended “the good character of Mississippians”; they portrayed themselves as “victims of an outside plot”; and they stressed that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (340). In his analysis, Braden focuses on “the *official rhetoric*”; that is, the rhetoric of establishment figures (339). He emphasizes that “Equally important, but not dealt with here, were the efforts of minor politicians, country editors, Klansmen, and John Birchers. Much of this rhetoric is not available because it was impromptu or extemporaneous and was intended for friends, close associates, and neighbors” (339). A similar article by Wayne Flynt, “The Ethics of Democratic Persuasion and the Birmingham Crisis,” analyzes the rhetoric of establishment figures who created the climate in Birmingham in 1963 which led to episodes of violence against the Civil Rights Movement.

It is not surprising that earlier articles on the rhetoric of those who resisted the Civil Rights Movement have usually been confined to the examination of establishment

figures such as Governor George Wallace, Birmingham's Mayor Albert Boutwell, Birmingham Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor, Judge Thomas P. Brady, and others. The discourse of these figures was widely documented and is easily available. But analyzing what was said in relatively polite society provides only part of the picture of what created the rhetorical situation in which Civil Rights figures spoke and operated. Many others were engaged in the rhetoric of White resistance—in producing hate speech aimed towards the Civil Rights movement—in the period, and one such minor politician, editor, and Klansman produced a body of work, including four novels, which provides us with a sample from which we can extrapolate the hate speech strategies of some lesser-known figures who supported establishment White supremacy and engaged in the violence with which Civil Rights figures were constantly dogged.

The History of "Little Tree"

The four novels were written under the pen name "Forrest Carter," who gave "Little Tree" as his Cherokee name, and the most celebrated of the books is The Education of Little Tree, which I read shortly after it was first released in the mid-1970s. I remember feeling a noticeable degree of uneasiness as I read. Little Tree is the story of a boy, orphaned at five, who goes to live with his Cherokee grandmother and Scots/Cherokee grandfather in the hill country of Tennessee. Constructed as a series of fabulous adventures of the Huck Finn variety, the book ridicules politicians, city slickers, academics, and organized religion.

I thought in the 1970s that the book was transparently fictional, despite the subtitle "A True Story" and the categorization of it as an "autobiography." Certain

elements of the book, particularly the violent episodes that were rationalized away, genuinely discomfited me and the discomfort was memorable. When Carter's dual identity—as the novelist "Forrest Carter" and the KKK leader "Asa Carter"—was revealed in 1991, I remembered the book vividly. I was in no way surprised by the revelation that Carter was a White supremacist, though I could not really say why.

When I chose to do a research project on the book as part of a seminar class in the mid-1990s, I was surprised to discover that the book had continued to sell well, and was still being sold as an autobiography, despite the exposing of Carter's dual identity. Little Tree, purportedly a memoir of Carter's childhood during the 1930's, was first published in 1976. The great success of the movie, The Outlaw Josey Wales, based on Carter's first book, The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales which was later titled Gone to Texas, did not seem to have had much effect on the sales of Carter's "autobiography." It was only a modest success when first published in hardback version in 1976, reportedly selling 14,000 copies; the paperback version, brought out in 1981, sold 20,000 copies ("Big Sales" 49). In 1978, the abridged version that I read was released within the volume of Reader's Digest Condensed Books and reached an unknown number of readers.

The initial reviews of the book were, in general, mildly favorable and brief. In 1976, Atlantic said that "some of it is sad, some of it is hilarious, some of it is unbelievable, and all of it is charming if one has a taste for Indian mysticism and back-to-nature idylls" (118). Booklist called it a "tender reminiscence" (108), Kirkus Review¹ called it a "felicitous remembrance of a unique education" (868), and Publisher's Weekly called it an "engaging memoir" (75). A lengthier piece appeared in The Writer's Digest, which published a highly laudatory, page-length biographical sketch of Carter by Dick

Davis shortly after the Eastwood movie was released.

Davis first refers to the fifty-year-old author as “Little Tree” before reporting the name Carter provided to him, “Forrest Bedford Gunyi Usdi Carter”—the “Forrest Bedford” in reference to Nathan Bedford Forrest, the original KKK leader; and “Gunyi Usdi,” a partially accurate rendition of “Little Tree” in Cherokee. In the sketch, Carter emerges as a bashful man, a self-educated writer. He spins a deceptive yarn, saying that he had worked at “odd jobs, ranging from ranch hand to wood chopper . . . getting an education in the libraries of small towns around the US.” He asserts that he is not concerned with “making money for himself” but claims he had written his first book in order to help Creek Indian friends come up with money to pay for Christmas presents for the settlement’s youngsters. Success had not “changed his lifestyle. He continu[ed] to wear blue jeans, western shirts and boots, and a big black hat.” Though unconcerned with “fancy” people—he had refused an invitation to the opening of Eastwood’s film—Carter had just returned from a book tour in England. When asked about his work as a writer, Carter is quoted as saying:

I just write down what I’ve experienced by living with my granpa and what I studied in small-town libraries. But I do make it as authentic as possible. That’s my philosophy on writing, and it’s a good one for young writers to follow. Just simply be honest and true. Have a kinship with your readers and try to take them to the place you’re writing about. (qtd. in Davis 24).

Though the Davis piece and most reviews of Little Tree were favorable, there were dissenters—the full body of reviews was later referred to as “mixed” (Rawlinson 6).

Sawey, writing for Western American Literature, was somewhat critical of “the feelings and thinking of the mature man [which] constantly intrude,” but called it on the whole “pleasing” (165-66). Library Journal was surprisingly harsh in its criticism: “Unfortunately, the down-home manner of narration is so heavy-handed, so larded with sentimentality, pseudo-naiveté, and cracker-barrel philosophy, that all serious intentions are rendered bathetic.”² The contrast between the fatuous whites and freedom-loving Indians is sometimes amusing, but more often stereotypic and wooden” (McPheron 2362). Such severity, though, was uncommon.

Because of the pending releases of the film, The Outlaw: Josey Wales, and the book, Little Tree, Carter was sought out for interviews. One of them was a television interview done in 1975 with Barbara Walters. During that interview Carter was recognized by acquaintances in Alabama, who later identified Forrest Carter as Asa Carter for Wayne Greenhaw,³ a journalist who had begun tracking down the story that the two men were the same. Shortly before the publication of The Education of Little Tree, Greenhaw wrote a piece for The New York Times entitled “Is Forrest Carter Really Asa Carter?” (1976) in which several people were quoted as having known or realized that “Forrest” was “Asa,” including Carter’s own attorney and Jack Shows, chief investigator in the Alabama State Attorney General’s office (45A). “Forrest” Carter denied being “Asa” Carter, but declined to be interviewed further (My Heart 55). The story generated little interest nationally, though in Alabama it became so widely known that Forrest Carter was Asa Carter that Frederick Burger casually mentioned the connection in an article on brother Doug Carter’s candidacy for Governor in 1985. After mentioning that Doug had been “among the most rabid segregationists in the state,” he goes on to say that

“[Doug Carter] and his late brother, Asa ‘Ace’ Carter – who gained some fame as a speechwriter for George Wallace and later some prominence as the western novelist Forrest Carter – were in a related scrape or two along the way but never got into serious trouble” (9A).

Little Tree did not sell as well in paperback as had been hoped, possibly because of the Greenhaw article, so it went out of print and drifted into obscurity. It might have remained there but for the efforts of Eleanor Friede, under whose imprint the book had originally been published. Delacorte and Dell, the publishers with whom Friede had worked, were bought out by a series of other publishers; and Friede, once a major player, found herself “out on the street in 1982” (Max 112). Friede then became an agent and, sensing that Little Tree might still find a market, had the rights reverted to the estate and began shopping it around. After being turned down repeatedly, she finally sold the title to the University of New Mexico Press for \$2,000. The book began to sell increasingly well: 5,000 copies were shipped in 1986; 10,000 copies in 1987; 21,000 in 1988; 48,000 in 1989; 108,000 by August in 1991 (Max 112). An additional order of 200,000 copies was made in 1991, “bringing the total in-print copies to 600,000,” and sales had also been made in “Germany, Japan, Italy, Sweden, and the U.K.” (Max 112).

The book received no special promotion, but sold best in the Southeastern part of the US at first (“Big Sales” 49), and increasing sales were attributed variously to store-browsing patrons (“Celebrities” C1), word-of-mouth recommendations from readers and booksellers (Hampson A18, Rawlinson 6), a “growing environmental consciousness” (Koenenn E6), an “emphasis on multiculturalism” (Farber 66), and “New Age credulousness” and the atmosphere surrounding the popular film Dances with Wolves

(Leland and Peyser 62).

The republished Little Tree received far more favorable reviews. Bob Bledsoe called it a “minor classic” and expressed regrets that Carter had not lived to see his work appreciated (B5). Rennard Strickland (Osage/Cherokee), at that time director of the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy at the University of Oklahoma, wrote a new forward for the UNMP reprint, calling the book “a human document of universal meaning” and asserting incorrectly that it had been “widely reviewed and universally acclaimed” upon its publication (v). Joseph Bruchac, an Abnaki storyteller and poet, wrote a three-page review of the book in 1989, praising the language use in the book, Carter’s storytelling, and his “‘native’ (not just ‘Native American’) way of seeing the world” (110).

Throughout this period, Eleanor Friede continued to deny the story that occasionally resurfaced, that Forrest Carter was really Asa Earl Carter. A major figure in keeping the story alive was Lawrence Clayton, a professor of English and a dean at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. Having already met Carter and having subsequently become interested in Carter’s work, Clayton had been excited to find out that Carter was living in Abilene in the mid-1970s (Clayton, “Little Enigma” 5), and he invited Carter to share his stories in English classes on campus (Halley 10). In 1983, Clayton wrote an article for Texas Books in Review called “The Enigma of Forrest Carter,” in which he stated his suspicion that Carter had not been what he said he was. In 1986, Clayton wrote another essay, “Forrest Carter / Asa Carter and Politics,” in which he asserted that, based on research and interviews with friends who had known Carter under both names, that “Forrest” and “Asa” were indeed one and the same—that Carter

was neither an orphan raised by his grandparents nor a cowboy storyteller.

Between 1983 and 1999, Clayton wrote at least five literary pieces on Carter and one biography.⁴ In none of the articles did Clayton deal with the shadier parts of Carter's past, including his KKK ties, but he did discuss Carter's public segregationist activities prior to 1970. He says, in "Little Enigma Is Left," that "I do not support racism, but I think Carter turned his back on his racist days by 1973" (5). As the principal literary authority on Carter at the time, Clayton was the not surprising choice for writing the Afterword to UNMP's republished version of the two Josey Wales books, brought out in 1989. This Afterword only hints at Carter's dual identity, and is primarily a merging of points made in his earlier literary articles on Carter's work. Clayton justified this later by saying that Eleanor Friede was responsible: "In fact, as late as 1989, she refused the first version of the Afterword I wrote for the re-issue of the two Josey Wales novels [. . .] I rewrote my early effort to focus on the contents of the books, not on Carter's identity, and that version is printed with the new edition" ("Theology of Survival" 10). Thus, information on Carter's dual identity was suppressed by Friede and failed to attract attention yet again.

But, events conspired to draw attention to Forrest Carter's identity as Asa Earl Carter. In 1991, Little Tree won the first ABBY Award, an award given to the book which booksellers most enjoyed "hand selling," recommending it directly to customers ("Education of Little Tree Wins" 104, Rawlinson 6). This publicity caused the "New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists . . . [to] suddenly [begin] to note the title, which, despite an apparently sufficient sales rate, had yet to make an appearance on the lists," and the book reached the number two spot on the trade paperback fiction list

soon thereafter (Max 112). Little Tree had become big news. Eleanor Friede reported that there were 25 “offers to make a movie version” (Auchmutey, “The Man” M4).

Then, on October 4, 1991, an article appeared on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times. Written by Dan T. Carter and entitled “The Transformation of a Klansman,” it discussed the “hoax” which Asa Carter had pulled off under the name Forrest Carter. The piece begins with a brief recap of the success of Little Tree but quickly turns to presenting a biography of Asa Carter, whom Dr. Carter calls an:

Alabama native [who] carved out a violent career in Southern politics as a Ku Klux Klan terrorist, right-wing radio announcer, home-grown American fascist and anti-Semite, rabble rousing demagogue and secret author of the famous 1963 speech by Gov. George Wallace of Alabama “Segregation now . . . Segregation tomorrow . . . Segregation forever.”

(A31)

Dr. Carter goes on to discuss highlights of Carter’s career as a political agitator, using quotes from some of his political writings to demonstrate his point. He ends the piece by saying that there are “threads that stretch from Asa Carter’s racist pamphlets to his new-age novels of the Native American. We live unto ourselves. We trust no one outside the circle of blood kin and closest comrades. We have no responsibilities outside that closed circle. Government and all its agencies are corrupt. Politics is a lie” (A31).

The article excited immediate denials from Eleanor Friede and a furor in the national and international press. Many major papers picked up the story, and no fewer than 18 journals and magazines carried articles of various lengths.⁵ Dan T. Carter described the experience in this way:

When my New York Times article appeared, I am not certain what I expected; certainly not the flood of requests for media interviews from more than thirty radio, television, newspaper and magazine journalists. (My favorite of these was a trans-Pacific interview with a mildly deranged Australian talk show host.) I was even less prepared for the more than 200 letters and telephone calls from hurt and sometimes angry readers who had come to know and love the character of “Little Tree.” Elementary and middle school teachers from San Diego, California, to Brunswick, Maine, seemed to take a special delight in explaining how I had devastated the lives of hundreds of boys and girls. (“Carter Exposes” 14)

The article also caused defenders of Carter to begin rallying around his memory, primarily by attacking Dr. Carter’s motives. Clint Eastwood wrote a letter to the editor that appeared in the New York Times on October 16, and said, “I think Professor Carter in his article seems to be exhibiting some prejudice (or is it envy?) over Forrest Carter’s ability to write sensitive material” (24A). Friede responded on October 5 by denying the story, saying it was “a family mix-up,” and quoted India Carter as calling Dan T. Carter’s work “diabolical charges” (Hampson A18). The next day, she said that Carter had denied the charge himself in the 1970s, and she went on to say, “The man I knew was just a grown-up—not very much grown-up—Little Tree” (Johnson 6). On October 14, Friede was quoted as saying, “How can a person like [Asa Carter] write ‘Little Tree?’ Come on—that kind of honesty and truth? Could that come from a bigot?” (qtd. in Leland and Peyser 62).

But, soon thereafter, Friede was forced to acknowledge the deceit. On October

25, Calvin Reid quotes her as admitting that Forrest and Asa Carter were the same person, and on October 28, Friede explained that she had insisted on an answer from Carter's widow, India, and received a fax confirming the connection between Asa and Forrest which said, "It just did not occur to me that you didn't know" (McWhorter, "Little Tree" 121). Hadas, from UNMP, "issued a press release conceding that the author 'was indeed Asa Carter and that he was not an orphan, so we will remove the label "a true story" from the book's jacket'" (Woods 43).⁶

Despite this revelation, Friede continued to defend the veracity of the book itself; she claimed that "Carter was raised as the book portrays," and "she describ[ed] the author as taking 'narrative license' with the facts of his life as other autobiographical writers have." She went on to assert that "He was not an orphan as the book portrays, but his grandparents . . . were Cherokee Indians and the stories related in the book were well known in his family and happened in some form to the author" (Reid 16). Friede would continue to make this same argument for nearly a decade as the spokesperson for the book; UNMP had little to contribute.⁷

The History of Asa Earl Carter

Though Carter's novels had prompted little interest among literary scholars until 1991, only Clayton having written anything of length, Carter himself had been of interest to writers in other areas, particularly African American studies, for quite some time. During the latter 1950s when he was first openly involved in political agitation in favor of the White resistance movement, Carter was considered to be a figure of some note. While the period during which he was considered a legitimate presence was brief, for

reasons to be discussed below, he continued to be a figure of some notoriety for many years afterwards.

Probably the first important writer to profile Carter during his early years was John Bartlow Martin, an acclaimed journalist of the mid-20th century. For one chapter of his book, The Deep South Says "Never" (1957), Martin interviewed a series of segregation proponents and allows them to speak for themselves in the book, his goal being to represent the full range of character and opinion which existed among segregation leaders. One of these leaders was Asa ("Ace") Carter, interviewed shortly before January of 1957. The first section of the chapter is devoted to Sam Engelhardt, at that time the executive secretary of the Citizen's Councils of Alabama, but over two pages of that section concern themselves with the feud between Engelhardt and Carter. The next section is fully devoted to Carter and his views. Martin's initial description is particularly interesting:

Carter sits at a battered oak desk. Immediately behind him from a nail on the wall hangs a loaded cartridge belt and an old long-barreled 38-caliber revolver. "It'll shoot like a rifle," Carter says. He is a good-looking man of thirty-two, black-haired, heavy-set, hairy, with the sloping shoulders of a fighter. He is wearing a silky white shirt, slacks, a Western-style string tie with a clasp at the throat, black cowboy boots. He speaks in a quiet voice with scarcely a trace of a Southern accent; his diction is good; his manner is reasonable and persuasive. There is about him the quality of an actor who can do as he wishes with voice gesture, expression. There is also a certain indifference, or coldness, or

withdrawn-ness. As he talks about segregation, it is hard to say whether he remains calm because he is controlling inner tension or because he feels nothing (116-17).

It is interesting to that the Western attire and the quiet voice Carter would later adopt for his “front” character, Forrest Carter, were already present—perhaps an attempt to defuse the image of the White supremacist as an establishment figure and to claim for himself “rugged individualism.” Carter did not claim Native heritage, however, saying “I’m half Scotch and English Dutch” (qtd. in Martin 117). Also important is his ability to assess his audience, refraining from any untoward show of emotion—playing against the type of the ranting segregationist for the moment—and speaking in what Martin describes as an unaccented voice. Carter lied so as to bolster the image he was creating: he claimed to have received a “certificate in journalism” from the University of Colorado in 1949,⁸ and he claimed that relatives had fought with Mosby and that his family lost land to “the carpetbaggers and niggers . . . after the [Civil] war” (117), an account later disputed by Dan T. Carter (“Southern History,” 288). He speaks freely and knowledgably about the Ku Klux Klan, particularly the newly formed Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy (122-23), and though he denied membership in that group when talking to Martin, he would later admit it in an interview contained in the FBI’s Asa Carter files (100-4651-104).

Martin provides the following assessment of Carter as a political figure of the period:

Carter was staking out a position on the extreme edge of the Council movement. He openly advocates boycott and economic pressure at a time when most Council leaders forswear them. While they were pointing with

pride to their conservative business leadership and were appealing to the upper and middle class whites, Carter tried to identify his “people’s movement” with workingmen and women, with red necks and crackers and hillbillies. Carter considers himself a red neck. “the mountain people—the real red neck—is our strength” [. . .] He considers himself an “actionist.” He has said, “if I were in Montgomery now, I’d be organizing an underground resistance.” To do what? “That,” he says, smiling a little, “would be hard to say.” What would happen if Negroes actually tried to enter white schools? “I think somebody’d get killed.” (119)

In this section, Carter’s admiration for mountain people, who would later figure strongly in his novels, becomes evident. Carter’s open advocacy of violence is clear, and his preference for underground resistance movements is also made manifest. Even in this early account, Carter is clearly a political figure of import in Alabama politics of the period, and he had chosen the right-wing fringe as his spot on the political spectrum.

Martin’s work stands in interesting contrast to the slightly earlier piece by Paul Anthony, “A Survey of the Resistance Groups of Alabama,” written in July, 1956.⁹ Anthony’s essay is a fairly formal work, intended for use by the Southern Regional Council, which contains descriptions and evaluations of the various Citizens’ Council branches then operating in Alabama and a series of biographies of Citizens’ Council leaders. Unlike the separate biographies of other leaders, Carter’s biography is merged with the description of the North Alabama Citizens’ Council. The probable explanation for this distinction is suggested by Anthony in his introduction to the section:

Prior to February 1956, this organization and its leader were important participants in the Southern resistance groups picture. Since that time, largely because of the extremes to which Carter has gone, this council as become generally discredited in the state and continues to run into increasing opposition from council members as well as from more critical citizens of Alabama. On this basis the following information may have a questionable historical value, it has little applicable value to this study.

(29)

This appears to be a reference to the estrangement mentioned previously between the councils run by Engelhardt and those run by Carter, a split which McWhorter says “caus[ed] the movement to cannibalize itself” (Carry 101). Thus, Carter’s importance to a relative insider like Anthony appears to have been far less than it was to Martin, the Northern journalist. Carter is also said, by Anthony, to speak “with a strong Southern accent” (29), which appears to have been the case when he was attempting to ingratiate himself with other Southerners. Anthony agrees with Martin, however, in his assessment of Carter’s place among segregation leaders:

[Carter] is an individual, long associated with fringe and hate groups, and highly ambitious, ruthless and bigoted. He is anti-Catholic (and generally anti-minority) but his campaigns are directed toward the Jew and Negro. His ambition plus his anti-Semitism has caused him considerable trouble with the Citizens’ Council organization in Alabama and the more “respectable” elements of the movement regret having given him his current title and sounding board. (29)

Anthony goes on in the body of the report to discuss Carter's extremism, including his vicious attack on the National Conference of Christians and Jews during Brotherhood Week of 1955, which caused him to be almost immediately fired from his job as a radio announcer, and the degree to which he was operating independently of the other Citizens' Councils of Alabama (31-33). Details are provided of Carter's unsuccessful efforts to organize in northern Alabama and successful efforts in other parts of the country—in Michigan among union workers and in Washington, D. C. (32-33). Anthony ends by saying that “his efforts to remain on the scene are becoming increasingly extreme and are serving only to drive away potential supporters” (34).

Asa Carter's historical importance is probably best indicated by the degree to which he is mentioned in more recent texts; he is mentioned quite frequently, but usually rather briefly. The primary focus is upon three incidents from the latter 1950s which received media attention—the beating of Nat King Cole at a Birmingham concert, the shooting of two Klan members during a rally at Carter's Council's meeting place, the emasculation of a black handyman—and Carter's role as a speechwriter for George Wallace during the 1960s.

The first of these studies is The Segregationists by James Graham Cook, published in 1962. Cook devotes an entire chapter to the story of the mutilation of Edward (“Judge”) Aaron by members of Carter's “Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy” (140-44). In a footnote to that chapter, Cook provides a brief biography of Carter, whom he calls “probably the most widely known segregationist in Alabama in the mid-fifties” (141n). After giving a brief recap of the highlights of Carter's career—he mentions that Carter's North Alabama Citizens' Council declined in membership after

the break with Engelhardt—he says that “Carter faded out of the Alabama ‘race-relations’ picture about 1957” (141n).

In 1965, Carter received similar treatment from David M. Chalmers, who devotes a few paragraphs in his book Hooded Americanism to Carter, his Council, and his Klan group. Chalmers covers Carter’s early career as a radio announcer in somewhat greater detail, mentioning Carter’s campaign against rock-‘n’-roll music; the creation of Carter’s “Klanlike” council and the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy are also mentioned. Chalmers then describes the several incidents for which Carter was infamous—the beating of Cole, emasculation of Aaron, shooting of two Klan members—but adds the information that it was “some of Ace’s boys who went up to Tuscaloosa to help welcome Negro coed Autherine Lucy to the University of Alabama” (344-45). Chalmers sums up Carter’s importance by saying: “When it came to talking tough, and maybe doing something about it, Alabama’s Asa Carter’s name ranked high on the list of Klan enterprisers in the mid-fifties” (344). He goes on to say that Carter’s followers “eschewed moderation,” and that after the series of incidents for which these followers made him known “his dim star had just about flickered out” (345).

One of these incidents, the mutilation of Edward Aaron, is described in chilling detail in the book, Three Lives for Mississippi, by William Bradford Huie. The narrative takes up an early chapter of Huie’s book and serves as an introductory anecdote to structure his larger narrative about the murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi during 1964. Huie describes the emasculation of Aaron and the events afterwards—including the early releases of Aaron’s attackers and the subsequent sufferings of Aaron, who was unable to work and only was given a pension after much effort on his behalf by

a congressman (18-34). Though Huie does not mention Carter explicitly in text, he does provide his assessment of the importance of this incident, saying that “this atrocity is a key to understanding the more complex atrocity” of the murder of the three Civil Rights workers (34). He points out that the public was initially appalled by the incident, and the perpetrators were punished, but that by 1963 “the people were incapable of effective protest against the release of [Aaron’s attacker] Mabry, just as they were incapable of punishing those who murdered four children in a Birmingham church” (35). Huie’s assessment provides context for understanding how Carter, who had been rendered ineffective after the infamous incidents of the latter 1950s, could rise again after 1962 to become a powerful force in the Wallace administration.

That Carter had done so is clear in the document, “Preliminary Results of Investigation: Alabama—United Klans of America, Incorporated, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and Other Klan Organization,” by Richmond M. Flowers, then Attorney General of Alabama. Released in mid-October of 1965, Flowers’s report detailed the activities of the several major Klan groups then active in Alabama. In that report, Flowers says that a Birmingham Klan group had broken away from the more established U. S. Klan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and renamed itself the “Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy” (12). This group was under the leadership of “Asa E. Carter, better known as ‘Ace’ Carter, later special assistant to Governor George C. Wallace” (12). In a follow-up report, the New York Times reported that George W. Linn, Assistant Attorney General, “said that Mr. Carter wrote speeches and performed other special jobs for Governor Wallace”; Linn also said that Carter was not officially on the payroll, but was paid through a “slush fund” (“Alabama Aide” 77). The reporter goes on to note that “Mr.

Carter is known throughout the South for white supremacy activities” (77). Thus, by 1965, Carter was once again notable, but was beginning to gain more notoriety as a closet speechwriter for George Wallace.

Carter’s overall importance to the Council movement is evaluated in Neil R. McMillen’s The Citizens’ Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction 1954-64. In this work, McMillen profiles Carter in a paragraph, repeating the information provided in earlier accounts. Because of his focus on the Councils themselves, McMillen provides a detailed discussion of the rift between the Alabama Association of Citizens’ Councils run by Engelhardt and the North Alabama Council run by Carter. His narrative makes it clear that Carter’s Council was considered to be extremist, quoting one leader as saying, with unintended irony, “There is no place for prejudice . . . in this movement” in criticism of Carter’s open anti-Semitism (qtd. in McMillen 50). Engelhardt is also quoted as calling Carter a “fascist” and declaring that “the Citizens’ Council of Alabama has no room for Ace and his kind” (qtd. in McMillen 51).

But, McMillen questions this focus on Carter’s anti-Semitism as the root of the schism, suggesting instead that it was rooted in the struggle between Engelhardt’s more affluent constituency and Carter’s working-class followers, between Engelhardt’s more moderate political activities and Carter’s open promotion of violence (51-52). McMillen details the way Carter’s Council became increasingly identified with his branch of the KKK, which he suggests occurred because Carter’s avocation of violence lost him moderate followers but attracted KKK sympathizers, and goes on to say that “Carter’s continued involvement with violence undermined his status within the movement and he

could no longer be considered a serious challenge of the state association's dominion over Alabama Councilors" (55). The state association, however, also waned in importance, a fact that Engelhardt attributed fully to Carter's activities—"Ace killed it. He killed the council dead" (qtd. in McMillen 56). Thus, while his brief importance as a key leader in the Alabama Council movement is acknowledged, McMillen suggests that Carter was chiefly notable as a destructive force, ironically as one who contributed to the problems the Council in Alabama had in effectively combating the Civil Rights movement over the long run (56).

In a brief, but telling article, the Greensboro Watchman, a "Pro-South" periodical, printed a contemporary account of Carter's impact upon an audience in an article called "Asa Carter—Insult to Dixie." Published in 1971, the writer describes a speech given by Carter on behalf of his newly-formed group, The Southerners. Carter is said to have "brand[ed] anything and everything not white as communist," and to have delivered a rather lackluster speech: "Carter seemed to have lost his spirit as he marched back and forth in a cadence before his assembly with a memorized speech. He drew but one applause. Carter appeared as one having lost his place in the 'pecking order' of society." The writer's evaluation of Carter is that Carter would have a hard time organizing among "real Southerners" because they will not "take kindly to having the hallowed names of their ancestors, their flag or their song being used as a cover for a band of unhappy malcontents." He ends by saying that Carter's comparison of himself to Nathan Bedford Forrest "reminds us of one who might as easily assume he is Christ for having studied the Bible." Thus, even in publications of a right-wing bent, Carter was by 1971 receiving sharp criticism.

Wayne Greenhaw, in Watch out for George Wallace (1976), does not even mention Carter's turn as a Council leader, but focuses solely on his Klan associations and his affiliation with George Wallace. He refers to Carter very briefly as the author of a speech presented 4 July 1964 at the Southeast Fairgrounds in Atlanta, a speech Greenhaw refers to as "a masterpiece in racist rhetoric" (150). Carter is also said to have traveled to Indiana in 1964 to "campaign among the Klans of that grassroots area" for Wallace (156), and to have given a particularly memorable speech at a Klan rally in Wallace's behalf (162). But, Greenhaw's principal assessment of Carter comes in the section in which he describes a disillusioned Carter, picketing at Wallace's 1971 inauguration along with other Klan members (158). He says that "Carter, who was busily publishing an irregular mimeographed pamphlet entitled 'The Southerner,' saw himself mirrored on history's walls as the Thomas Paine of the Dixiecrats" and reports that Carter had been the author of Wallace's infamous "Segregation Forever" speech (158). The portrait Greenhaw paints is of a broken man, critical of Wallace for not believing the words that Carter had written for him, feeling betrayed now that Wallace had turned more moderate. He ends the portrait with an image of Carter driving away with tears "streaming down vein-marked cheeks" and with an account of the subsequent arrests for public drunkenness which preceded Carter's disappearance from his old haunts the following year (160). Thus, while Carter again achieved political power as a writer for Wallace in his early years, that power was short-lived and had largely dissipated by 1971.

Carter's authorship of the "Segregation Forever" speech and the castration of Aaron became the moments for which he was best remembered. Howell Raines in My Soul is Rested, first published in 1977, and Patsy Sims in The Klan, first published in

1978, mention both incidents in their separate accounts of the Civil Rights movement and the Klan. Raines brings up a particularly chilling point; an informant claims to have been offered twenty-five thousand dollars to arrange the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and claims that the same “pimp,” paid informant to the FBI, made an identical offer to Asa Carter (354-55). While the account is not tremendously trustworthy, that Carter was viewed as a man who would plausibly be offered such a bribe indicates the circles in which Carter was known to have run and the type of activities in which he was believed to have been engaged.

Accounts of Carter’s activities increasingly focused on the degree of his extremism. Wyn Craig Wade, in The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America, compared Carter’s Klan group with “a cell of Nazi storm troopers” and reported that Carter “called himself ‘Grand Marshal’ and enjoyed strutting about in khakis and paratrooper boots” (303). Wade goes on to recount the castration of Aaron, the paroling of Aaron’s attackers soon after Wallace’s election in 1963, the shooting at a meeting of Carter’s Klan, and Carter’s work as a “top-ranking aide to Governor Wallace” (303). Most important to Wade, however, is Carter’s shockingly extreme behavior.

A similar portrait of Carter was drawn by Oscar Harper when he was interviewed by Sandra Baxley Taylor for her book Me ’n’ George: A Story of George Corley Wallace and His Number One Crony, Oscar Harper. Harper calls Asa Carter a “dyed-in-the-wool racist” and says Asa had made speeches to the Klan, though he claimed he hadn’t been a member (28). Harper’s account affirms claims about Carter’s authorship of the “Segregation Forever” speech, which most cite as an example of Wallace’s core views:

Ace was some writer, I want to tell you. It was Ace who wrote most of

the speeches George got known for. When George would want a speech that folks would talk about, he'd say, "Ace, write me something a little fiery."

Then Ace would hole up in the suite we rented in the Jefferson Davis Hotel and write 24 hours at a time, smoking ten packs of cigarettes a day and writing the whole time.

It was Ace who wrote that line in George's inaugural speech, the one that went, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever."

I didn't help with the writing of that speech, but I was there. George stayed away mostly while Ace was writing. When Ace finished the speech I sent a college student who was working for me to take it over to George's office.

Ace pointed out the "segregation forever" lines to George.

"Here's the lines that are gonna catch everybody," he said.

Some of George's advisers, mostly lawyers, tried to talk George out of it. But Ace and some others were pushing him awful strong to keep it in. George went along with the ones who wanted to keep it in, but he said he thought about changing it.¹⁰

He said later, "I should have changed it to 'freedom now, freedom tomorrow, and freedom forever.'"

I could always tell when George was giving a speech Ace had written for him. Oh, it'd have a lot of George in it, a lot of tales about Barbour

County in it. But it would make people sit up and take notice. (28-29)

Harper, who was an insider in the Wallace administration with strong ties to Wallace, claims that Carter was the source of Wallace's apparent racism; Harper also says that, "segregation was just a political issue with George, that he didn't have strong feelings against blacks" (29). Carter is also credited as the major force behind the decision to run Lurleen Wallace for governor when George was prevented from succeeding himself in that position, and it is said that he did some speechwriting for Lurleen Wallace. Harper's account makes it clear that during the period during which Carter was affiliated with Wallace, roughly 1962 to 1969, he held a considerable amount of power in the administration even though he held no official position.

In The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics (1995), Dan T. Carter's acclaimed biography of Wallace, Carter's role as a member of the Wallace administration is detailed. Dan T. Carter traces his involvement from the writing of "snappy, hard-hitting speeches" for Wallace's 1962 run for governor to the final work he did for Wallace, after he had run against him in the 1970 gubernatorial primary, in creating and distributing "scurrilous materials" about Albert Brewer's family during the ensuing runoff campaign (106, 393). Throughout, Dan T. Carter makes it clear that Carter was intensely active in the administration. Dan T. Carter, most importantly, identifies the documents which Carter wrote—alone or with collaborators—for Wallace: the "Segregation Forever" 1963 inaugural speech and the associated inaugural program (109, 402), the "Stand at the Schoolhouse Door" speech (149), the speech given before Harvard and Radcliffe students in November 1963 (196), the Fairgrounds speech given on 4 July 1964 (216), Lurleen

Wallace's inaugural speech (294), and a pamphlet entitled "Stand Up for America: The Story of George C. Wallace" (297). By documenting the significant speeches that Asa Carter wrote for Wallace and Carter's activities within Wallace's administration, Dan T. Carter makes it clear that Asa Carter was both an integral member of the Wallace administration and a key contributor to Wallace's extremism on racial issues.

Two recent works consider Carter's activities in Birmingham during the latter 1950s: But for Birmingham by Glenn T. Eskew and Carry Me Home by Diane McWhorter. Eskew (1997) deals with Carter in a section of his chapter on "Bull's Birmingham," detailing the organized movements and major figures present in Birmingham prior to Connor's reelection to the office of Commissioner of Public Safety. In his biography of Carter, based mainly on sources mentioned above, Eskew emphasizes Carter's extremism, saying that "Ace Carter's failure to legitimate racial extremism relegated his brand of white supremacy to an underground movement while demonstrating the general decency of the white lower middle class" (117). He also draws attention to the rejection of Carter by the more "'respectable' segregationists," whom he states were alienated by Carter's criticisms of University of Alabama president O. C. Carmichael and his call for the impeachment of Governor Folsom (117). Eskew does not problematize the issue, as did McMillen, but accepts the explanations given by the "respectable" Citizens' Council leaders for the schism between them and Carter; he also appears to use Carter's biography and extremism as a means of portraying both "white lower middle class" Birmingham citizens and Bull Connor¹¹ in a more favorable light.

Diane McWhorter does something quite different in Carry Me Home (2001). McWhorter, who grew up in Birmingham during the Civil Rights era and who is the

niece of Sid Smyer, a chief supporter of Carter in his Birmingham days, was able to deploy her insider status to gain information about the White resistance movement in Birmingham. Rather than stressing the distinctions between Carter and the more “respectable” elements in Birmingham, McWhorter spends much time weaving the narratives of Carter’s life and the activities of those “respectable elements” together, demonstrating that Carter was sponsored by, and bankrolled by, the very parties that later sought to distance themselves from him. McWhorter concludes that the establishment’s affiliation with Carter ultimately resulted in the demise of the official Council movement (101). More importantly, she says that the mutilation of Aaron created such aversion to Carter among his former sponsor that Smyer began to feel “a lingering dismay that he might be in the same club as castrationists,”¹² which led him to start his “slow strange reformation, from enemy of democracy to friend of the civil rights movement” (126). McWhorter makes it clear that Carter was a critical figure in the White resistance movement of Birmingham in the latter 1950s.

The Early Literary History of Forrest Carter

With all the information on Asa Carter and his activities which was available prior to 1991, when the Dan T. Carter article created a sensation, it is somewhat puzzling then that little of the work which began to be done on the novels of Forrest Carter connected his activities and writings as an arch-segregationist with his literary writings. The Greenhaw article exposing Carter’s dual identity had been written in 1976, and the first Clayton article to suggest the same was published in 1983, and a second, more specific account appeared in 1986. Yet, no one other than Clayton made any effort to

draw parallels—and those drawn by Clayton are surprisingly mild. The simplest explanation, of course, is that too few people were aware of the issue. However, even though the work examining Carter's literary pieces did not usually discuss his political views, the writers often turned up a worldview and narrative techniques within the novels that recall strongly Carter's espoused views and earlier efforts in propagandizing.

Most of these early pieces are extended reviews, those which go beyond a mere recounting of the plot and an assessment of the pleasure given by the novel. One of the earliest of these is "More Wales," by Al Shire. Shire notes the normalizing of violent behavior in The Vengeance Trail of Josey Wales by saying, "There is one fine point you have to accept in Forrest Carter's historical novel of life along the Texas-Mexico border in the late 1860s: The Good Guys are violent. The Bad Guys are violent AND brutal" (33). He also notes Carter's penchant for re-historicizing and heroicizing groups of warriors battling an evil government: "Carter is eager to set the history straight. Had it not been for the aggressive Apache warriors, he insists, Spain would have moved northward to seize what is now the Southwestern United States" (33). Delbert Wylder, in his review of the same book, similarly notes the rampant violence of the book, but also its attempts to appeal to pathos through them: "There are enough scenes of torture and bloodshed to satisfy any reluctant sadist . . . It is enough to find out that even viciousness can be handled with sentimentality" (290).

Two reviews of the book, Watch for Me on the Mountain, also contain extended analyses. In "Trying to 'Go Native,'" literature professor Karl Keller highlights the narrative problems concerning Geronimo: "Carter almost succeeds in stirring our sympathies for Geronimo's gifts . . . but not quite: The monstrous and the manly in him

do not quite cohere. And he almost brings off his dramatization of Geronimo's crises . . . but again not quite: ethnic loyalty often makes the story hokey" (IV8). Keller notes and criticizes Carter's rationalization of violence as a remedy and his espousal of ethnic allegiance. In another review of Watch for Me on the Mountain, Webster Schott is largely positive about the book, yet makes note of Carter's tendency to include didactic passages: "But Mr. Carter has trouble choosing between events and people. His power is insight. His temptation is history and rectitude. His novel suffers the consequences. It rails off into lecture" (39). Larry McMurtry, who praises the book effusively saying that by "attending carefully to character and landscape" Carter has written something approaching an Iliad of the Southwest (38), also finds that some passages are too didactic—Geronimo's "lectures on tactics . . . sound rather like the Duke of Wellington"—but suggests that these moments are rare (39).

Significantly different is Joseph Bruchac's review of The Education of Little Tree, which I mentioned earlier. Though other reviewers had commented on the gratuitous violence in the book, Bruchac makes no note of it. Instead, he praises the way that the very young and the very old are shown together in the book, and he uses this as a means of criticizing the distancing of young and old in mainstream American society (109). He ends by calling the book "one of the finest American autobiographies ever written" and saying "it is a necessary book, one which if read and understood and acted upon, can change people's lives, whether children or adults. It is like one of the great myths which reflect human experience so well that they offer new messages for each stage of life on the great journey" (112). What is important to note is that Bruchac clearly views the work as one with philosophic underpinnings, meant to alter a person's

view of the world and to motivate him or her to particular actions.

Apart from these extended reviews, which note the apparently propagandistic tactics included in Carter's novels, there are only a handful of articles prior to 1991 about Carter's novels as works of literature. C. L. Sonnichsen wrote two articles which mention Carter; as noted before, Lawrence Clayton wrote five articles, one of these in collaboration with Randall Parks, in addition to a biography for The New Handbook of Texas¹³ and the Afterword to the republished version of the two Josey Wales books.

The first article by Sonnichsen,¹⁴ "Sex on the Lone Prairee" (1978), mentions Carter only in passing as one writer who had brought explicit sexual passages into the Western, which had previously been free of "promiscuous sex, kinky sex, or perversion" (15). In general, Sonnichsen is displeased with the trend of including such sexual content, but he saves special disdain for Carter: "The field is open for less sensitive writers, however, and at least one of them has used the rape of an adolescent to rise to new heights of the unspeakable" (22). After briefly recounting a shockingly detailed scene from Vengeance Trail in which a Mexican general tells a young girl that he will strangle her as she is raped, so as to give himself more pleasure, Sonnichsen comments ironically that "It would be hard to equal the sheer horror of this revolting scene, which seems to have achieved the ultimate in indecency, but Western writers are resourceful and may find ways to add new shudders to a promising subject" (23). In a later article, "From Savage to Saint: A New Image for Geronimo" (1986), Sonnichsen is less caustic, but still critical of Carter's depiction of Geronimo—who had previously been demonized by other writers as a savage—as a mythical hero. Though Sonnichsen does offer proof that Geronimo was said in his own time period to have had unearthly powers, he suggests

that Carter goes far beyond that account to make Geronimo nearly a saint. There are three chief ways, says Sonnichsen, that Carter uses to achieve this end: “he gives him an extraordinary grievance”; “Carter makes him a victim”; and he makes the war leader Geronimo into a “philosopher” with a mystic “religion” (28-29). As Sonnichsen notes, the use of “extraordinary grievance,” a common device of the propagandist, is intended to make Geronimo more sympathetic, and though he does not note it, the passage from Vengeance Trail in which the young girl is raped is another such grievance, which is used to make the violent actions of Wales justifiable.

In contrast to the critical assessment of Carter by Sonnichsen are the five articles and one Afterword by Lawrence Clayton. The first article, written by Clayton and Parks, is “Forrest Carter’s Use of History” (1982). In this article, the authors argue that Carter’s characters, geography, and historical events are essentially accurate, and that his works gain credibility from that accuracy. They do admit that there are some problems with the characters created: “The question can be asked whether Josey Wales is a superman and an unrealistic creation. Study reveals that although Wales may be romanticized—even stereotyped—there were historical men of a similar mold” (23). Thus, the authors do not consider whether the stereotype needs to be investigated for objectionable ramifications, only that there is some basis in history for having constructed the character.

The following year, Clayton released his brief exposé of Carter’s dual identity in the article, “The Enigma of Forrest Carter” (1983), but includes very little in the way of specific information. He repeats as a rumor the suggestion that Carter had been a speechwriter for George Wallace “at the height of the racial troubles in Alabama” (21) and avoids any mention of more specific detail. It is in Clayton’s later work, “Forrest

Carter / Asa Carter and Politics” (1986), that he states that Forrest and Asa Carter were indeed the same man, and he creates the first lengthy biography of Asa Carter to appear in a literary article. He describes, accurately enough, Carter’s work as a radio announcer for the American States’ Rights Association, but he fails to mention the anti-Semitism that created the “opposition to the show [which] forced him to leave the air in 1955” (20). He admits that Carter gained a reputation as an “arch-segregationist” and that he founded in his branch of the Council “his own community action group” (20). But though Clayton footnotes the Anthony article that discussed Carter’s extremism and exile from the less radical branch of the Citizens’ Council, Clayton fails to mention the degree of Carter’s extremism in this article. Clayton then briefly covers Carter’s pre- and post-Wallace periods, and then goes into Carter’s literary activities—the writing of his first book, the marketing of it for a movie, and his subsequent writings. What is significant in this section of the article is the degree to which Clayton omits known information about Carter, known information that could shed light on White supremacy in Carter’s literary work.

Indeed, Clayton says that Carter’s White supremacy is a “paradox” considering the topics of his work. He explains this by stating that the paradoxes are only apparent, that Carter’s politics manifested in the “adversarial relationship” between his characters “and the agents of the government, who are always depicted as corrupt and self-serving” and that Carter was not interested in “rights for contemporary Indians but was instead a critic of the government’s record of inept and cruel handling of Indian affairs in the past” (21). Clayton sums up his views by saying that “Political criticism and activism occupied much of Carter’s time and energy during his lifetime [. . .] It seems certain, however,

that he would not have changed his stance in the criticism of politics as he understood it. His views became even more caustic as he continued his writing career” (26). Nowhere in the article does Clayton problematize Carter’s anti-government views by investigating their extremism or looking for connections to Carter’s White supremacist rhetoric.

Probably because Clayton was the principal literary scholar on Carter, he was asked to write the Afterword to the 1989 UNMP reissue of the two Josey Wales books in a single volume. As was mentioned before, despite the work that Clayton had already done in establishing Carter’s identity, no note is made of Asa Carter in the Afterword. Clayton does cite, however, the historical sources for Carter’s character Josey Wales—William Clarke Quantrill, Bloody Bill Anderson, Fletcher Taylor—figures often reputed for their violence. Also mentioned are Cole Younger and Jesse James, “whose life parallels the fictional existence of Josey Wales to a remarkable degree” (415).

Clayton reiterates his belief that “Gone to Texas and The Vengeance Trail of Josey Wales, like Machiavelli’s The Prince, may well embody Carter’s fantasy of the ideal leader, one willing to resort to any end, even to violence, in order to thwart evil politicians and institutions and to protect his followers” (416). There is a subtle criticism of Carter in the reference to Machiavelli, but the only targets of Carter’s criticism which Clayton points to are government and religion, nothing more specific (417). In this piece, Clayton sums up Carter’s significance by saying, “True, he was an outstanding storyteller but he ably used the formula as the vehicle for his campaign against social and religious disorder and injustice . . . perhaps Carter is at his best when depicting the violent action he could bring to life in a remarkable way. But he could express tenderness and humor as well . . .” (418). The most explicit reference Clayton makes to Carter’s true past is in the

final paragraph:

Another certainty is that Carter had in him a streak of outlawry in the Confederate guerrilla sense. He stood outside the circle of polite and conventional politics and fought instead for what he thought was right. He had the strength to follow his convictions Carter's small but important body of fiction entitles him to a place in the halls of honor of the genre, to rank with Louis L'Amour, Zane Grey, Luke Short, and others who depicted brutal, exciting human drama of the Western frontier and who peopled in it with heroes in a time when heroism was sorely lacking in fact and fiction. (418)

In this piece, as in the previous one, Clayton's failure to be forthright about his full knowledge of Carter's activities and his similar failure to rigorously examine Carter's politics are disappointing.

So disappointing was Clayton's behavior that he was apparently compelled to defend his actions in print. He reminded readers in his 1992 article, "Forrest Carter / Asa Carter: Little Enigma Is Left," that he had been the first literary critic to raise the issue of Carter's dual identity. Though very brief, this article recaps the earlier article of a similar title, but expands upon it slightly by saying, "I do not support racism, but I think Carter turned his back on his racist days by 1973"¹⁵ (5). He sums up his defense of Carter by saying that "My position is that the books were good before [Dan T. Carter's exposé appeared on] October 3, 1991, and that they still are" (5).

This defense was apparently not quite sufficient, and Clayton returned to the subject in his 1994 article, "The Theology of Survival: The Identity of Forrest / Asa

Carter and Religion in His Fiction.” After again briefly recapping the information that he had provided in his two previous biographical articles, Clayton goes on to explain that his original draft of the Afterword for the Josey Wales double novel also included that information, but that he rewrote the Afterword to “focus on the contents of the books, not on Carter’s identity” at Eleanor Friede’s insistence (10). Clayton makes no further apology for his active participation in suppressing key information and accepts no responsibility for his choices, having merely shifted blame to Friede. He justifies his own interest in Carter’s life by explaining that he had written the biography on Carter for The New Handbook of Texas, and suggests that the life had no interest for him as a literary scholar. His final assessment of Carter’s importance as an author appears in this article:

Apparently, however, Carter never lost his penchant for activism; he simply transferred his efforts to the realm of fiction and included in his work a considerable body of strong but relatively unobtrusive religious commentary to emphasize his disagreement with the status quo in America in the 1970s even though he set his plots safely in earlier periods. (9)

Again, the most telling aspects of this assessment are the omissions. Clayton does not specifically refer to what aspects of the status quo in the 1970s disturbed Carter, though it was almost certainly the acceptance of segregation’s demise, and he does not mention what types of activism, the extremist type, Carter engaged in. Though in the introduction to the article, Clayton does mention Carter’s adding of “ideas from what he calls ‘mountain clanism’ to form the guiding principles for his main characters,” he makes no effort to examine the self-evident link between that “clanism” and Carter’s own “Klanism” (9).

The Later Literary History of Forrest Carter

In articles after 1991, the focus shifted almost exclusively to Carter's appropriation of a Native American persona, having claimed to be the "Storyteller in Council to the Cherokee Nations"—a complete fabrication, as many writers have noted that there is no such post. Though a few articles, mostly in popular magazines and newspapers, occasionally coupled this examination with questions about Carter's anti-Black activism, such articles tended to be of relatively little importance in addressing the full implications of connections or possible connections between Carter's life and work.¹⁶ The principal exception to this rule is Dana Rubin's "The Real Education of Little Tree." Though primarily biographical in its focus, Rubin's article does turn in its final paragraphs to interpretation of Carter's novel, The Education of Little Tree. Rubin states that it is possible to read the book "as a story about a child beset by the evils of organized religion and intrusive government. The characters of Granpa and Granma personify the pure goodness that Carter imputed to Native Americans" (96). But, Rubin notes the non-factual aspects of the book—that the character of Granpa is based on Carter's great-grandfather who died when he was about five; that there is no counterpart in Carter's family to Granma; that though Carter's wife maintains that there is Cherokee blood in the family, Carter's brother says there is not; that the Cherokee language in the book is made up, and the "depiction of the Cheokee way of life is romanticized, like something out of Longfellow". Rubin concludes:

Only in an ideological sense is The Education of Little Tree true. It expounds an extreme kind of Jeffersonian political attitude that can be

extended in any number of directions. To the left, it intersects with liberalism and multiculturalism; to the right, with libertarianism and anarchism. Out of context, the book might sound like a New Age manifesto. For many readers, it can exist on that level—surely all works of art take on a reality independent of their creator’s prejudices. But viewed in the context of Carter’s life and writings, The Education of Little Tree is the same right-wing story he had been telling all along. Perhaps there is another sense in which the story of Little Tree is true. Maybe, for Asa Carter, it represented a wishful kind of truth, the upbringing he wished he really had. “I think he felt so close to the background of the character he created,” says Doug Carter, “that I don’t believe he ever thought of it as deception.” (96)

Thus, Rubin points to the manner in which Carter’s novels may be read differently—in the context of the reader, who might supply any number of philosophies, including New Age, to interpret the works; or in the context of Carter’s own writings and life, which demonstrates their great similarity to his earlier works.

Though these historical and literary works are of great interest, other important scholarly works produced in the period after Dan T. Carter’s exposé are those aimed at using Forrest Carter’s literary productions, most particularly The Education of Little Tree, as texts in the classroom. Though early works such as Ruth Anne Edmonds’s The Education of Little Tree: A Novel Study for Literature Based Instruction, an unpublished thesis completed in March 1992, were largely positive about the book, not all were. Catherine Raymaker, in her works, provides a series of study questions about the book,

but hers are far more penetrating than those in the more positive studies. She asks the students both whether they can find “evidence that Carter researched his work carefully” and also if they could “find something in the work that does NOT seem accurate”; students are also asked to “find similarities or differences between Wallace’s professed ‘ideas’ and those expressed in *Little Tree*.” She first asks students whether the book is accurate in a passing statement made about Indian suffrage at the time, and also “when/how did Indians acquire the right to vote?” Raymaker’s work makes it clear that educators can prompt students into considering Carter’s work carefully, particularly in terms of its cultural accuracy, and gain greater insight.

Though Raymaker is one example of how Carter’s works can be put to good use in the classroom, it is a rare one. Many educators working with the book in the 1980s and early 1990s persisted in their use of Carter’s *The Education of Little Tree* in multi-cultural units without problematizing their authorship.¹⁷ Michael Marker, in “The Education of Little Tree: What It Really Reveals about the Public Schools” (1992), was one of the first to consider how this use of Carter’s novels could be seen in terms of Native American Studies. Marker provides several reasons why educators so eagerly accepted this book as part of the curriculum: the “Indian stuff” in the book “is plugged into [the] story in a completely superficial fashion” suggesting that “Indians are . . . just one of many colorful groups in the great American melting pot”; the book is “easily digestible for an audience brought up on television versions of Indian life” and it “steers away from any troubling questions about the history of Native peoples with regard to the existing social orders”; and because any real study of First Nations people would make readers uncomfortable because “the culture and ways of thinking . . . are in themselves

too much a critique of the basic values and structure of modern society” (226). He evaluates the importance of this one work of Carter’s to the public education system by saying, “If deeper social analysis and cultural exploration are too troubling for the schools, then this sort of escapist literature is just the answer” (227).

Several other writers have concentrated on the Appalachian themes in Carter’s works, and in doing so they also discuss issues about Native American life. In “The Edification of Li’l Abnerfeather” (1992), William Schaefer finds that there is much stereotyping going on within Little Tree, both of Appalachian and Appalachian-Native Americans. He points out that the part-Indian Granpa and full-Indian Granma are only slight twists on Pappy and Mammy Yokum (37). Looking at various themes in the book, he finds that Carter utilizes the image of the noble savage which he takes from the “Redskin Myth,” the “Paleface Myth (Appalachian Mountaineer subcategory),” and the “Yellowskin Myth (Zen Buddhist/Taoist subcategory)” (38). The “faux-primitive tomtom rhythms” of the poetry in the book, along with the “phony language, “conjure up the Redface Melodrama of the 19th century” (38). The “authenticating Appalachian customs,” including foxhunting and the making of moonshine, are also “standard ingredients of a Jesse Stuart tale of the eastern Kentucky hills” (39). One outcome of this particular mixture, says Schaefer, is to reinforce the “Noble Savage idea—that Native Americans are somehow better instinctive practitioners of the classical Western virtues” than modern Anglo-Americans (39). Schaefer ends his analysis of the book by saying: “The root problem with Little Tree is that it presents a seductively oversimplified and falsified view of both Indian and Appalachian cultural history . . . and Little Tree seems to celebrate the downtrodden, bootstrapping himself up in our world in wholly approved

neo-conservative, Horatio Alger fashion” (41)

Schaefer follows this analysis with a brief discussion of two of Carter’s other works: Gone to Texas, which he finds to contain “a more explicit and aggressive ‘unreconstructed Confederate’ viewpoint and similarly highly romanticized Indians; and Watch for Me on the Mountain, which he describes as “more dignified . . . and less melodramatic and maudlin,” but which he says also includes “howlers” such as the “hoary” idea that “Indians run in other Indians’ footprints” (42). He sums up the importance of Carter’s novels by saying that “Carter seems pro-Indian only by way of being anti-Yankee—a dubious champion of yet another Lost Cause” (42), and suggesting that this is perfectly in keeping with Carter’s earlier activities as a propagandist for Wallace and others.

Clayton Darwin, in “Now, This Is a True Story” (1995), discusses both Appalachian themes and Native American issues in Little Tree. Darwin raises some important points, chief among which is his discussion of the “serious discrepancies” between the recounting of Cherokee traditions in the book and traditional Cherokee practices. Darwin finds that neither the language, the religion depicted in the book, nor the “hunting, farming, and social practices” resemble those of traditional Cherokees (7-9). The following section of Darwin’s article is devoted to Appalachian customs, and he sums up by saying that “Carter’s book does present some of the cultural traditions of Appalachia, [but] it cannot be considered truly representational” (13-14). Darwin concludes that “the ‘truth’ in this story is Forrest Carter”; that is, that the religion, the social/cultural system, and the relationship of man to nature reflect Carter’s own beliefs (14-15). After analyzing these aspects of the story, without discussing White

supremacism, Darwin asks why it was necessary for Carter to conceal his own beliefs behind a veil of Cherokee/Appalachian customs: Carter was a rhetorician, he was a Southerner, and “every Southern storyteller (rhetorician) knows that a message is often better received when candy-coated” (16).¹⁸

The question of whether Carter’s work, The Education of Little Tree, is accurate in its depictions of Cherokees was specifically considered in a letter to the editor written by Geary Hobson which appeared in *Wicazo Sa Review* in the spring of 1995. In that letter, Hobson says he was motivated to write by Elizabeth Hadas’s attempts to downplay his “objections to the book” and says that he has “never endorsed the book” (69). The rest of the letter is devoted to an explanation of why Hobson does not endorse the book. In a series of quotes from other letters he has written, Hobson does not consider issues about Carter’s background, but concentrates on evidence from the book itself. Like Schaefer and Darwin, Hobson looks at the supposed Cherokee words which appear in the book: *Lay-nah* for water, “*awi usdi* for little deer,” “*Tel-qui* for turkey, *mon-o-lah* for earth, and *Tal-con* for hawk” (69). Unlike Schaefer and Darwin, Hobson does speak Cherokee, so his analysis is more valuable.¹⁹ The first, Hobson dismisses as “nonsense,” saying that the Cherokee word for water is *amá*; the second, he calls “almost correct,” and gives the correct spelling as *owi ushdí*; the final three he dismisses as “Hollywood gibberish” (69).

Hobson’s work continues with further excerpts from his 1993 letter, these about the other purportedly Cherokee aspects of the book: the philosophy called *The Way*, the description of the Trail of Tears, and the other qualities such as a belief in two minds and the choosing of a special place in the woods for oneself. Hobson calls *The Way*

“superficial and demeaning,” a “version of our world view [which] is a tiresome version of Social Darwinism” (69). He disputes Carter’s version of the Trail of Tears, calling it “highly romantic” and saying that Cherokees did ride in wagons and some were even “wagon-train conductors” (70). He finishes his analysis by saying that none of the other “ways” portrayed are particularly Cherokee, and that specifically the belief in “two minds (spirit-body) is hogwash” (70). In his conclusion, Hobson suggests that there are many other “authentic Cherokee” books, and implies that Carter’s book is not authentically Cherokee, saying “a good writer doesn’t even have to pretend (as Carter did) to be Cherokee to be able to write convincingly about the people” (70).

Carter’s “inauthenticity” and that of his book have become something of a staple item among Native American scholars, who have used this issue as a jumping-off spot for criticisms of those who would appropriate their cultures. In an address entitled “Who Gets to Tell the Stories?” Elizabeth Cook-Lynn refers to Carter’s The Education of Little Tree in a long list of works by Whites to which Native Americans have objected as inauthentic, and refers to the group as “outrages” (61), and goes on to explain that such appropriations of culture are a modern form of land-grabbing (64). Sherman Alexie,²⁰ in his novel Indian Killer, devotes a long section to similar criticism:

While Marie was surprised by the demographics of the class,²¹ she was completely shocked by the course reading list. One of the books, The Education of Little Tree, was supposedly written by a Cherokee Indian named Forrest Carter. But Forrest Carter was actually the pseudonym for a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan [. . .]²²

After seeing the reading list, Marie knew that Dr. Mather was full of

shit.

“Excuse me, Dr. Mather,” Marie said. “You’ve got this Little Tree book on your list. Don’t you know it’s a total fraud?”

“I’m aware that the origins of the book have been called into question,” said Mather. “But I hardly believe that matters. The Education of Little Tree is a beautiful and touching book. If those rumors about Forrest Carter are true, perhaps we can learn there are beautiful things inside of everybody.”²³

“Yeah, well, whatever was inside that man, it wasn’t Cherokee blood.”
(59)

Alexie’s criticisms of the book drew the attention of at least one scholar, Jeannie B. Oppliger, who encountered Alexie “at a conference for English teachers. When asked about Forrest Carter he answered with a question. ‘Would you read a book about a Jew written by a Nazi?’²⁴ Alexie questions whether it is possible for a racist to write a worthy novel about a minority” (Oppliger 9). These criticisms of Carter for his lack of Indian blood, his participation in white supremacist activities, and his questionable motives for claiming Cherokee heritage are common in Native American Studies.

Some Native American Studies scholars are a bit more cautious in their evaluation of Carter. One example is Larry Landrum, who points out that works like The Education of Little Tree may not be “competently decoded” by those who merely look at the author’s credentials, and that the “signs of cultural authenticity” would include not only “heredity” but also “cultural experience, including language, knowledge of traditions, and intimate ‘lived’ cultural practices” (784n). Similarly, though Robert Allen Warrior’s

basic critique of Carter is that public interest in The Education of Little Tree shows “the extent to which U. S. Culture in general prefers a fraud like Asa Carter to tell them about Indians to going to the trouble of searching out reliable material, even if that material does not cater to their desire to hear about power animals and medicine crystals,” he concedes that “Carter, in fact, may have been biologically Cherokee to some unknowable extent” (405). He goes on to say, however, that “Clearly, he was in no way culturally Indian and knew next to nothing experientially about the culture he expropriated” (405). Finally, Warrior attributes the preference of Whites for ethnic frauds to “the fantasies of those who desire to be both colonizer and colonized” (406).

Warrior’s colleague, Paul Chaat Smith, expresses a similar view in an online article called “Home of the Brave.” After reviewing the context surrounding the controversy over Carter’s identity, and noting that The Education of Little Tree was moved from the New York Times non-fiction to fiction bestseller list, he points out that the “autobiography” continued to sell though it “was both fake and written by a committed racist.” Later in the article, he observes that any discussion of Indian “art or politics or culture, even among people of good will, is consistently frustrated by the distinctive type of racism that confronts Indians today. This romanticism. Simply put, romanticism is a highly developed, deeply ideological system of racism towards Indians that encompasses language, culture, and history.”

During the furor over revelations of Carter’s dual identity, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., wrote “‘Authenticity,’ Or the Lesson of Little Tree,” a widely cited article which appeared in the New York Times Book Review.²⁵ Gates briefly recounts the more positive, second reception of the book after it was reprinted, and then explains that those

who had admired the book so deeply were now embarrassed at the revelations given by Dan T. Carter about Forrest Carter's identity. He wonders what will happen to the book and concludes that "What is doubtful . . . is that the experience will prompt these critics to reflect on the importance that the imputation of realness has for them" (27). The article continues with Gates recounting the history of books written about black slaves by whites and fictitious accounts of slavery written by blacks—both received poorly when revelations about their inauthenticity emerged—and compares that history to the reception of such books to the novel Confessions of Nat Turner by William Styron, and wonders whether that novel would have been better received had it been written by James Baldwin (28). Gates's key point is that fine novels written about characters whose ethnic, racial, or sexual identity is different from the author's are often dismissed because they do not have the "ethnic claim" (28). Gates concludes that "Even a counterfeit can be praised for its craft. For some, the novel's worth was enhanced primarily because of its 'inauthenticity'—because it was seen as an act of imagination unassisted by memory" (29). He ends by paraphrasing Samuel Goldwyn's "theory of sincerity—authenticity remains essential once you can fake that you've got it made" (30).

Some authors follow Gates in considering issues other than Native American cultural authenticity. Elizabeth R. Halley's Sliding Signatures: To Exhume or to Inter, is a slim Master's thesis devoted to an examination of pseudonymous novels, and particularly the works of Forrest Carter. Like Gates, Halley is primarily interested in the question of authorial authenticity, and like Gates, she believes that such questions oversimplify interpretations of fiction, and she criticizes those who would believe that "the author signifies the text, the text signifies the author" (12-13). In her study, Halley

acknowledges the problems of usurping the speaking positions of others, yet she proceeds with an examination which will “set these issues aside” in order to examine Carter’s novels (19). In the examination which follows, Halley finds several major themes in Carter: that texts, particularly history books, are unreliable (21); and that “the spirit of the native American people” is to be valued (26); that language itself is unstable (30). She also emphasizes that Carter’s novels “allow marginalized people to become active agents,” including Jews, sharecroppers, and Native Americans (33). Halley finds that Carter particularly critiques the texts and language of the dominant culture and destabilize that culture (36).

Halley does return to the question of authenticity at the end of her examination and problematizes Carter’s usurpation, as a white middle-class man, of the voice of a “native American” when it was “popular and financially advantageous” to do so (38). She also calls attention to a passage in The Education of Little Tree when the characterization of the Jewish peddler plays into “a stereotype of Jews and money,” saying that a thrifty people would never be taken over by a dictator (Halley 38, ELT 164). She points out that “for all their real and stereotypical thriftiness, six million Jews had already been exterminated by a dictator in Germany” (39), and says that she senses “a threat to both native American and Jewish self-determination and self-expression” in the passage.²⁶ She concludes that it is “difficult and dangerous to determine an inevitable political perspective with which to view his novels” (43). Halley’s principal argument is that we should “scrutinize and be free to cross literary borders in order to gain greater awareness of our own writing, reading, and speaking positions” (46).

Some works—though assuming that Carter was either not Native American or not

culturally Native American, or both—have examined issues other than Native American cultural authenticity in Asa / Forrest Carter’s novels. The first such work is Dan T. Carter’s long article on Asa Carter: “Southern History, American Fiction: The Secret Life of Southwestern Novelist Forrest Carter” (1993). Though primarily a biography, in the final sections of the article Dr. Carter briefly concerns himself with an analysis of the connections to be made between the political work and fictional works of Asa / Forrest Carter. The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales, the original title of Gone to Texas, is the only work Dr. Carter discusses in detail, saying “Nothing Asa Carter would ever write would more perfectly capture the rich strains of his own personal and political history than this poorly printed paperback” (299). Dr. Carter finds similarities in chief villains (abolitionists for Wales and integrationists for Carter), in the journey to Texas (from Missouri for Wales and from Alabama for Carter), and in the assuming of a new identity (Wales to evade federals and Carter to leave his own violent past behind him) by the end of the book (299). Dr. Carter argues that Forrest Carter was successful because he understood that “if Americans were generally uninterested in popular fiction which glorified his own views on white supremacy—there was an audience willing to listen to a reworking of the tragedy of the Native American” (301). He argues that Forrest Carter used this new issue to continue depicting the way “cherished institutions [had been] swept away by a brutal federal government” (301), and he used the Western hero, popular because he embodied an “individual unfettered by social bonds or obligations, a hostility and contempt for government, and an embrace of extravagant violence” which were all timely topics (302). He finds also that the “theme of sexual violation” in Forrest Carter’s novels (a common theme in Asa Carter’s anti-black rhetoric), which would have been

unacceptable in traditional westerns, were a “celebration of sadism, vigilantism and explicit mayhem that characterized much of American popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s It is no accident that the rapists whose exploits are described with lingering detail in Forrest Carter’s Josey Wales novels are sociopathic half-breeds” (303). Dr. Carter’s principal point is that fact, in the form of Carter’s lived life, and fiction are interwoven tightly in the novels, but that deciphering the connections between the two will help us understand the ways in which Carter motivated his followers to engage in dramatic and horrific acts such as the mutilation of Edward Aaron.

Eileen Elizabeth O’Connor Antalek’s Master’s thesis, Deforestation Begins with a Little Tree: Uncovering the Polemic of Asa Carter in His Novels as Forrest Carter (1994), considered in great detail the connections between Carter’s earlier political work and later fictional works. Through her research, Antalek found that “Forrest’s representations of race, geopolitics, and centralized government consistently echo Asa’s earlier views and thus belie the myth that he was transformed” (3). She finds that both his early and later works are saturated with the same ideas: “the solitary hero fighting for vigilante-style justice, rebellion against what is perceived as intrusive, immoral government policies that betray and victimize innocent citizens, and stereotypes of different ethnic groups” (13). She also finds that Carter manipulates “genre and history to gain reader sympathy and [transposes] racial stereotypes in portraying characters” and that he intersperses history and fiction so as to promote his own ideology (13-14). The study draws from Carter’s writings in The Southerner, the “Segregation Forever” inaugural speech he wrote for Wallace, and Carter’s four novels, but the major concern is the four novels, as Antalek’s principal goal is to expose “the Asa Carters of the world,

who will continue to disguise their manifestos in whatever form popular culture takes, because naive audiences fail to think critically for themselves” (139). She concludes that “Carter’s collected works represent a manifesto: an interpretation of a new world order in which each group, based on race, remains separate from others,” and that this represented Carter’s central goal in writing (137).

In “Little Tree,”²⁷ one lecture in a series called “Three Bad Books” (1998),²⁸ Benjamin Cheever discusses The Education of Little Tree in terms of its aesthetic and artistic qualities. Cheever focuses mainly on what he calls the “shit” in the book—that is, material that is not believable. He notes the following: the precision of detail that a grown man supposedly remembers about his life at five years of age, the use of an unreliable narrator in a memoir, and the Disney-like anthropomorphizing of animals. Cheever observes that not merely is the text itself written in a way that challenges credulity, the substance of the book itself is questionable. After criticizing the lightweight introduction by Rennard Strickland, he particularly calls into questions Strickland’s calling the text “true”; Cheever believes that it is not. He feels that the book does little more than tell people what they want to hear about themselves, and contrasts this with the work of Janet Malcolm and Alexandre Solzenitzen and Thomas Cramer, all of whom told the truth at great risk. Thus, Cheever finds that the book is largely propagandistic and problematic in its presentation.

First in his thesis Claiming Little Tree: The Phenomenology of “Playing Indian,” or White Intrusions into American Indian Literary Identity (1998), and later in his article “A Lingering Miseducation: Confronting the Legacy of Little Tree” (2000), Daniel Heath Justice examines the stereotypes deployed by Carter to construct his psuedo-

autobiography, and analyzes the impact that those stereotypes have upon the reader and within a larger cultural context. After briefly examining the history of the reception of the text, Justice's article begins to note stereotypes and inaccuracies in Carter's depiction of the Cherokees: the lack of any sense of community; "Granpa is the Noble Trickster figure, Granma the dignified Indian Princess"; the Noble Savage; and the vanishing Indian ("Lingering" 29-32, 22). Carter's use of stereotypes, says Justice, does great damage to the non-Native reader and to contemporary Native Americans:

Because Carter meets the reader's expectations through these stereotypes, the image becomes the reality, and the reality becomes artificial and indistinct. The construction assumes a hyper-reality with which Native authors, most of whom strongly critique colonialism and its legacies, cannot compete. Carter constructs an "Indianness" that borrows shrewdly from the Noble Savage and generic, pan-Indian images, while giving the characters an historical (albeit skewed) context and some novel attributes to veil most of the stereotypes he manipulates. ("Lingering" 26)

Justice also notes other "significant problems in the text," most noticeably the way in which his "romanticizing of Indians" can be seen as evidence of his continued racism and anti-Semitism, and demonstrates the point by citing Rubin's quote from one of Asa's childhood friends, who says that Asa believed that Indians had suffered far more than blacks ("Lingering" 27).²⁹ In the abstract of his thesis, Justice discusses the ramifications of Carter's deployment of stereotypes in an effort to be effective in his masquerade and of the acceptance which Carter found among American readers in general: "This provides social sanction for the ongoing theft of Native spirituality, land base, natural and cultural

resources, history, and even children, whereas legitimate Native American lives and experiences are either ignored, silenced, or misrepresented” (N. pag.). Thus, Carter’s work allows “political oppression, stereotypes, and colonialist dreams of constructed indigenous to continue to dominate most Americans’ view of Native America [. . .]” (*Claiming* 66), and that though it is a “well written book, with strong prose and interesting (if generally one-dimensional) characters” (*Claiming* 32), it is an obstacle to those who would try to correct these wrongs.

In “Asa/Forrest Carter and Regional/Political Identity” (1999), Jeff Roche provides a biography based on his research into previously unavailable sources, the files at UNMP and FBI files on Carter’s activities. He finds that the “strange tale of the transformation of Asa Carter, professional white supremacist into Forrest Carter, mythological figure come to life, is interesting for its own sake” but that it provides “an example of how social and political conservatives have appropriated frontier mythology and symbolism to promote a particular agenda” (237). Roche’s article begins with a biographical section which emphasizes, like that of Dan T. Carter, Asa Carter’s extremism. Of particular interest is that Roche carries the biography beyond 1971, and notes that Carter’s activism continued through at least 1973, ending only in 1974 when he visited the FBI office to offer to be interviewed at any time as long as he was contacted through private sources and not through his new employers (236).

In the second part of his article, Roche considers how Forrest Carter’s novels contribute to a political agenda not unlike that of Asa Carter. Examining letters which Forrest Carter wrote to Friede and comparing the novels to the discourse appearing in Carter’s newsletter, *The Southerner*, Roche finds many similarities. The chief similarity

he finds between Gone to Texas and Carter's other works is that Josey Wales, like Carter, escapes to Texas in order to continue living his life free of oppression by political foes (256). Roche finds that Carter's second two books are "more explicit in revealing [Carter's] worldview" (256). In The Vengeance Trail of Josey Wales, "Carter seemingly transfers his southern racism onto a western setting" with Mexicans taking the place which African Americans occupied in his earlier works (256). Roche quotes a section about the "Mountain Code," which appears in the book, and compares it to a similar passage in The Southerner, finding that both contain the core tenets of "clannish loyalty, blood oaths, an outsider mentality, self-preservation, and violent retribution" (257-58). In the book, however, Roche finds that:

Mountain Code and Frontier Code merge. In the process, neo Confederate ideology and western myth melt into one—a criticism of centralizing forces, hatred and distrust of non-whites (except Native Americans who are seemingly the ultimate in clannish self-segregated societies) and seeking refuge from an all-powerful government. According to Carter's "code," protecting their distance from "illegitimate" authority (whether the Reconstruction government in Gone to Texas, the New Deal government in Little Tree, or the federal government of the 1970s) fosters a loyalty among western/southern men. (258)

Roche finds that the federal government and Mexicans are also the targets of Carter's criticism in Watch for Me on the Mountain, and that "meddling government" is a chief target in The Education of Little Tree (258-59). Roche concludes that though some have seen Carter's fictional works primarily as "thinly-veiled defenses of segregation," we

should instead find in his novels “a deeply-held core ideology, shared by many Americans, that went largely unarticulated until the nationalization of regional political symbolism and ideology. The careers of Asa/Forrest Carter provide an alarming example of how Americans’ cherished myths and symbols can be appropriated for vulgar ends” (274).

What Roche does not ask, however, is whether these symbols and myths have always had racist underpinnings, and if not, what they are in fact meant to convey. Indeed, Donald G. Mathews, in an epilogue to the volume in which Roche’s article appears, assesses the situation differently:

The South of Klansmen, Confederacy, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and segregation was as much the imaginative fabrication of Asa Carter as were the artful creations of Forrest Carter—cowboy, Indian, novelist, and folk-philosopher [. . .] This story Asa found difficult to sustain in the discourse and politics of the 1970s [. . .] so Carter repackaged the story, retelling it in the language of a West that resulted from the same kind of artifice as the Confederate myth [. . .] (277)

Mathews goes on to say that “The debate about the Education of Little Tree suggests that Americans are more concerned about believing an appropriate myth than engaging historical reality with no illusions [. . .] Myths can be dangerous; myth and imagination killed Leo Frank” (277-278). So, although Roche leaves unexplored the question of whether the myths and symbols of Forrest Carter were “misappropriated” or merely deployed by him for a purpose they have frequently been used for, Mathews makes it clear that myth and symbol are fertile tools for those who would construct or reconstruct

history for their own political ends.

Though Laura Browder's principal focus in her book, Slippery Characters: Ethnic Impersonators and American Identities (2000),³⁰ is "fictions purporting to be autobiographies, authored by writers whose ethnicity is not what they represent it to be," she asks questions about why these autobiographies "have been written, and eagerly read, in the United States over the past 160 years" (2). In answering this question, she places the works she examines in a cultural context, explaining how each work fed into and gratified the expectations of readers during the periods in which they appeared. In her discussion of Little Tree, Browder finds several correlations between the themes of the book and contemporary concerns of the readers.

Browder attributes the success of the book to "Asa Carter's past," working on speeches for George Wallace which were intended to rouse the loyalties of his listeners. She says, "The book is, in fact, a hack's dream, a slender volume (216 pages) in which every rhetorical trick known to the speechwriter is used to full advantage. Carter managed to appeal effectively to a number of different constituencies in telling the story [. . .]" (132). The ensuing passages of the article name the different contemporary constituencies and their interests in the book:³¹ "environmentally oriented audiences," she says, found the image of the Indian as conservationist appealing (132); the more mystical aspects, she finds, would appeal to "such New Age concerns as reincarnation" (133); the "cultural primitivism" of the book appeals to anti-intellectuals; the image of Little Tree, the "inner child Indian, a figure that represents lost innocence and a sense of wonder," appeals to "an American public well versed in the rhetoric of self-actualization and, more specifically, the recovery movement" (134); and Little Tree's discovery of a family after

the death of his parents offers “a model of successful recovery from trauma” and “family happiness” (135). She finds that Carter was successful because he traded “on his deep knowledge of racial and ethnic stereotypes, a knowledge honed during his years as a professional racist [. . .] After a career spent capitalizing on his whiteness, he simply chose to manipulate stereotypes of race and ethnicity another way” (139). She concludes that “Asa Carter skillfully employed his knowledge of racialist thinking to create an Indian self who could appeal to the masses” (139).

Another recent work on Asa / Forrest Carter is “The Making of an Indian: ‘Forrest’ Carter’s Literary Inventions,” the third chapter of Shari M. Huhndorf’s Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination. Like other writers, Huhndorf begins her piece with a review of the controversy surrounding the book, The Education of Little Tree, and by providing a brief biography based on the work of Dan T. Carter. Huhndorf then turns to the question of why Carter adopted a Native American persona,³² finding that:

Ironically, the idyllic portrait Carter paints in The Education of Little Tree in many respects actually complements the author’s earlier Klan politics. Reading this book together with Carter’s earlier novel Gone to Texas reveals that his fiction articulates a white supremacist vision despite the Indian sympathies it claims. By going native, specifically by eliding the characters of the Confederate outlaw (historically, the originary figure of the Ku Klux Klan) and the Indian in these works, Carter attempts both to vindicate the South from its violent racial history and to redeem an explicitly white supremacist perspective fallen into disrepute. (152)

Huhndorf notes that this tactic is made possible by the ambivalence with which white supremacists regard Native Americans, saying that though Native Americans were often the targets of white supremacist organizations, others said that you “‘couldn’t get a more native American than the Indian,’ while others contended that Natives were ‘a type of true Aryan’” (152n). Huhndorf notes many instances where information about Indians is distorted so as to support Carter’s white supremacist views: the supposed kinship between Cherokees and white mountain men, by which the Whites are made to seem the natural inheritors of Native lands (143-45, 155); the collapsing of the “distinct histories of Indians and Confederates into a narrative of common victimization at the hands of the Northern establishment” (148); the suggestion that Natives “will ‘naturally’ succumb as society progresses” and that “they accept this fate without question” (155). She also notes sections of Little Tree which romanticize segregation: an episode in which Little Tree and his grandparents accept their place in the back of the bus, which becomes a comfortable place rather than “an undesirable place signifying its occupants’ oppression”; and the section in which Little Tree becomes the only Indian in a non-Indian school, and suggests that “removal from the all-white school is in the child’s best interests” (156-57). Huhndorf says that “by associating Natives and African Americans in these passages, Carter suggests that both groups properly occupy the same subservient position and both will share the same fate as casualties of ‘The Way’ of nature that dictates that only the fittest (in this case, whites) survive” (157). Since all the Native American characters die by the end of the story, since it is suggested that Little Tree too will perish just as a little pine tree does in the halls of the orphanage, and since the only character who is portrayed as “strong” is the White character Pine Billy, Huhndorf explains that the book narrates

the disappearance of Native Americans while suggesting that Whites will “adopt their ways to remedy modernity’s problems” (157-58). According to Huhndorf’s final assessment:

In Carter’s fictions . . . Indianness serves as an important symbol through which to articulate a range of racial conflicts and historical contradictions. Identified with white Southerners (thus deracialized), Indians vindicate these Southerners of a violent racial history and naturalize their possession of the land and even Native Culture; identified at other times with African Americans (thus racialized), Indians serve to reinscribe other racial hierarchies, past and present. Both narratives, moreover, accomplish white racial regeneration through the possession of Native things. (160)

Carter’s works, in Huhndorf’s view, represent another in a long string of works which coopt Native American culture while simultaneously narrating its demise, and demonstrate how “Indianness, it seems, can now be fully possessed by white society” (161).

Yet, despite all the work done on Carter, popular culture persists in interpreting Carter in much the same way it did prior to Dan T. Carter’s public revelations in 1991. This particular difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that Dr. Rennard Strickland, who in 2000 did not tell author Connie Cronley, who was researching a speech she planned to give about Carter on her public radio program, that the book Little Tree was fiction, leaving her to repeat to listeners the old biography of Carter which described him as “part Cherokee, orphaned at ten, raised by his grandparents, never spent more than six months in a classroom,” etc. (235). When interviewed, Strickland said that “Mr. Carter was not a

Klansman. But he had worked as a speechwriter for George Wallace. And remember, the Cherokees were slave-holding Indians” (qtd. in Cronley 236). He went on to recount an episode in which a “white haired lady” asked him after a speech “Even if it were true [. . .] don’t they think people can change?” and seems by that story to assert once again that Carter was a changed man despite his lack of information about Carter’s activities (236). Because of this misinformation, Cronley draws the incorrect assumption that Carter’s work, including his version of the Trail of Tears, is true and implies that University of New Mexico Press was wrong to take “autobiography” off the cover. The refusal of some literary scholars to take note of the plethora of information available from historical studies continues to inform debate about Carter’s status as an author.

The Schism between the Historical and Literary Carters

Two things troubled me about the literature on Carter: though the historical works made it clear that Carter’s chief historical importance was in his violent resistance to the Civil Rights movement, very few writers explicitly considered how his narratives of the west and of Native Americans constituted a political critique of the Civil Rights movement, and the early writings of Carter which had made him an effective activist against Civil Rights were only analyzed for the way in which they help readers understand his novels. I found the rhetorician Asa Earl Carter—with his ability to write from a variety of personae (radio personality, Citizen’s Council leader, Ku Klux Klan leader, speechwriter for mainstream political candidates, pamphleteer, novelist) and over a substantial period of time during which his own extremist views became increasingly unacceptable to the general public—to be of far more interest than the commercially

successful novelist Forrest Carter, and certainly of far more historical importance.

During my research, I came across two sources that helped me to understand that there was no clear line between the historical Asa Earl Carter and the literary Forrest Carter. I discovered that the persona of the sensitive part-Indian raised by his Indian grandfather was not “the last fantasy of a man who reinvented himself again and again in the 30 years that preceded his death in 1979” (Dan Carter, “Transformation” A31), it was one of his first. In 1998, Jerry Kopel wrote a brief article entitled “Reflections on Bigotry and Racism,”³³ in which he revealed that he had met Asa Carter in 1948, when both of them first enrolled at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Even then, Carter was spinning stories about “his grandfather, an American Indian” and exhibiting attitudes that showed that he “lacked empathy for another minority [Blacks] treated badly in this country” (1, 9). Kopel calls Carter “a bigot and a racist,” and reports that he was a “political junkie” who engaged in “dirty tricks” during a Democratic primary (1). But, he also says:

Having known Asa Carter in 1948, seen his eyes light up when he talked about his grandfather, heard him speak of his childhood but never of his parents, and heard him reflect how proud he was to be of Indian blood, I can attest that his memoir was more fact than fiction. Otherwise he was into a deception 28 years before “Little Tree” was completed, and never once slipped up in our lengthy, daily discussions. That is possible, but I think unlikely. (9)

It is most probable that Kopel is mistaken. Carter was raised by his parents in Oxford, Alabama, not by his grandfather—and there is no evidence that he had a grandfather who

brought him up to be culturally Indian. His brother, Doug Carter, says in fact that the Granpa character was “based on great-grandfather James Weatherly, who died sometime around 1930, when Carter was five—too young for Asa to have remembered him in detail. There is no counterpart to Granma in the Carter family. No one in the family ever called Asa Little Tree” (Rubin 96). The information in the book is suggestive, as Little Tree is said to be five when his parents die. There is some possibility that Carter was traumatized at age five by the death of his grandfather and that his fantasies about being raised by this grandfather were a way to cope with that trauma. This is, nevertheless, pure speculation. If it is true, however, Carter would have been having these fantasies for over a decade when he met Kopel and would have worked out the details so that they would seem plausible.

When Carter’s “autobiography” arrived “at the library in Asa Carter’s hometown,” librarian Irene Sparks “filed the book under fiction,” saying later, “My Gosh, Asa didn’t grow up with Cherokees in Tennessee Everyone knew his people” (Auchmutey, “Indisputable” M4). Years later, Carter quite effectively maintained his persona as Forrest Carter for seven years with only a rare slip,³⁴ it is not unbelievable that Carter could have maintained his fictions while having “coffee together after class” with Kopel (1).

Thus, the first incident in which we can find Asa Earl Carter deploying the story that he was raised by his Indian grandfather occurred when he was speaking to a college acquaintance who did not agree with his views on Blacks, and the story served to keep that acquaintance friendly and to create a positive image of himself which persisted despite the acquaintance’s dislike of his central views. One cannot determine Carter’s

true motives for doing this,³⁵ but the effect of his deployment is undeniable—it functioned the same way a quarter of a century later, when he became novelist Forrest Carter. Thus, we can see that the white supremacist Carter and the sensitive Indian Carter existed simultaneously and comfortably together, and though Kopel found this to be something of a contradiction, I would follow the thinking of Huhndorf and say that the two were mutually reinforcing.

The next source I found was in the Archives Department of the Birmingham Public Library in their Asa Carter file—an audio recording called The Essays of Asa Carter. Originally an LP,³⁶ the cassette tape contained four essays: “Communism: Trojan Horse,” “Savage Showcase,” “Reconstruction Times,” and “Jesse James.” This LP was said to be part of a 20 album set, and other titles included were to be “Gone to Texas,” “Hound Dogs and Foxes,” “Grandpa and Churches,” “Grandpa and Living,” and other titles which showed a great similarity to themes included in Carter’s published novels. The crude front of the album cover is a solid-color background in the center of which is a picture of a Civil War combat with ragged outer edges; this Civil War picture has its center raggedly cut out of it, through which a picture of a middle-aged Carter could be seen. The back of the album cover contains the following biography, inset in to the upper right corner:

Asa Carter was born and brought up in the mountain country of Alabama. He has authored books³⁷ and speeches—“Ghostwrit” for Governors and Politicians. A speechmaker himself, Carter has lectured and spoken at over half a hundred colleges and universities in the southland. He presently lives in the foothills of the Appalachian

Mountains he loves, near Oxford, Alabama.

Carter's avowed intent in making the recordings available in album form is given on the back of the album cover:

Asa Carter authored these ESSAYS; and many more. These you see listed are selected by him as his best.

No set of encyclopedias, no series of textbooks can offer the philosophy and fact, heritage and history, analysis and penetration, as do these Essays.

Asa Carter accomplishes, with this series of Essays, what he sets out to do: "To restore to the children, and to the family, what has been taken from them with re-written, falsified books, sex animalism movies, degenerate songs and mongrel-promoting propaganda."

As you and your family listen to these Essays, you will come to find a meaning restored to living that rejects the vacuum created by the liberal and filled with the dope, animalism and phony doctrine of the Communist.

The narrations by Asa Carter are not pedantic, nor preachy, nor blue-nose . . . nor politician talk.

The bare-knuckle comes out as Our People put together a civilization. You will hear the Rebel Yell of natural born Rebels – Our People – who have always rebelled against central governments and dedicated their souls towards God. You will feel the sweat, and cry the tears, and laugh with the mountain men.

As you listen, all the twisted and perverted meanings that liberals and communists have given to our philosophy, our Constitutions, our race; to

Christianity, to sex and to our law . . . will begin to straighten out.

For the children. Most especially for the children, play these Essays.

Restore to them the heritage, the principle, the history, the civilization . . .
the meaning to their lives.

After listening to and transcribing these essays, I found that there were a great many parallels between them and Carter's other widely-referenced works: The Southerner, the "Segregation Forever" speech, and his novels. As those works spanned the years between the latter 1950s and the latter 1970s, I was surprised to find so much in common between these oral works—samples of the orations for which he was best known during his years as an active political and social force—and the body of his written works. Indeed, I came to feel that, as Dana Rubin put it, "viewed in the context of Carter's life and writings, The Education of Little Tree is the same right-wing story he had been telling all along" (96).

I felt this even more strongly when, in December of 1997, Dr. Peter d'Errico of the University of Massachusetts put me in contact with a gentleman who claimed to have audio tapes of Carter's speeches, made during his run for governor in 1969-70. I contacted the gentleman to determine whether he was in earnest, and found that he had acquired the tapes from a Dr. Sanders—and I later found that Dr. Buford Sanders was Carter's state campaign manager during his 1970s run for governor (Free n. pag.)—and that the gentleman knew enough about Carter to make his tapes probably authentic. I wrote him, and offered to transcribe the lot of tapes, in return for which he would permit me to use short passages from them for this project. He sent me the first of the tapes, and I found myself listening to the same voice as had been recorded on the Birmingham

Public Library Archive tape: “This is Asa Carter.”

I transcribed essays number 1 through 60,³⁸ and found, among other things, that Program 16—the essay which was probably later entitled “Hound Dogs and Foxes”—contained an early and in parts identical version of the fourth chapter of The Education of Little Tree, “Fox and Hounds.” Several references in the essays to his travels in Texas, in preparation for writing a book, let me know that these essays were written while he was doing the initial research for Gone to Texas; as some passages in his essays bore a striking resemblance to that book, I realized that they were probably written concurrently. Three of the four speeches from the album, Essays of Asa Carter, were included, and the gentleman who possessed the tapes reported that the albums and radio addresses (though made at different times—there is some variance between the two versions) contained the same speeches.

I was later, with the help of files from the FBI, able to date these radio addresses. The series of speeches, Liberty Essays, were broadcast in Alabama from 20 radio stations, airing on Mondays through Fridays, beginning in mid-August of 1969. The Anniston Star reported on 2 October 1969 that these broadcasts were made in support of Carter’s campaign for governor, the goal of which was “out-segregat[ing] George Wallace”.³⁹ There were originally 100 broadcasts, according to the gentleman, but the tapes demonstrated that not a few were rebroadcasts of earlier speeches—the list of available speeches on the album cover indicated that there were 80 original speeches. Thus, I realized that I had the largest body of Asa Carter’s oratory which was available, and that these speeches represented a time during which Carter was simultaneously working as a white supremacist and writing his novels. Most importantly, I found that

some material that would later be incorporated into the novels was first deployed by him in support of his white supremacist platform. Clearly, Carter saw no impenetrable boundary between his work as a white supremacist and as a novelist, so I felt comfortable beginning a project that would assert that no such boundary exists.

Because I agreed with the historical sources that said Carter's principal importance was as a figure in the political scene in Alabama, first in the Birmingham of the mid and latter 50s and later in the state of Alabama as an aide to Wallace, and since I felt that the archive of oratory which I had recovered was of great historical value, I decided to focus my work on Asa Earl Carter rather than upon Forrest Carter, and to regard the latter as merely another role which Asa Carter chose to play in his long political career. I searched archival sources in an attempt to gather any extant work that he did during his political career, and I traced down all available biographical materials with which to contextualize that work.

In the end, I discovered that Asa Earl Carter's political career, and the discourse he created as part of that career, can be traced from 1954 to 1974, and includes work he did for the American States' Rights Association, work he did as a leader of his branch of the Citizens' Council, work he did as a leader of the Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy, work he did for Wallace, speeches he wrote for his own political efforts, work he did as leader of The Southerners, and the first two of his four novels.⁴⁰ The themes identified by Dan T. Carter as having run throughout his works are all present: "We live unto ourselves. We trust no one outside the circle of blood kin and closest comrades. We have no responsibilities outside that closed circle. Government and all its agencies are corrupt. Politics is a lie" ("Transformation" A31). But what interested me

was how the tactics by which these themes were delivered altered—according to audience, according to medium, according to genre, according to time period—and what interested me was how some people placed so much emphasis on what to me were mere variables (genre, for example) that the themes themselves and the political views they were the foundation for became invisible. The novels, particularly, seemed fetishized by some—decontextualized, valued only for their artistry, ripped loose from the moment in which and for which they were created, and instead used for the pleasant consumption of the bookish.

Asa Earl Carter was a rhetorician, at times an extraordinarily effective rhetorician, who wrote and spoke at a critical moment in our country's history, who wrote and spoke over and against others of our finest rhetoricians, who created work which stands as an important part of the context in which the Civil Rights Movement occurred. To understand the work of Asa Earl Carter is to understand an important component of the opportunities for speaking and writing and acting which were available to the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Governor George C. Wallace, and other major figures in the Civil Rights era.

Can Asa Earl / Forrest Carter be considered Cherokee?

Much controversy surrounds Carter's self-identification as Native American, specifically Cherokee. Because Carter's ethnicity would be important to a thorough reading of his works, the subject is of course of moment. Certain issues, however, problematize the question and lead us to an impasse which prevents certain readings of his work.

The first difficulty is that while Carter from young adulthood privately identified as Native American to some, it is not possible to determine how frequently he so identified or to whom he so identified. This information is not available, and prevents us from knowing to what degree Carter self-identified as Native American during the period he was actively working as a pro-White supremacist speaker. While some might assume that a Native American identity would preclude Carter from participating openly in White supremacist activities, such is not the case. The minister whose rhetoric was a strong influence on one of the young men who was involved in the death of Virgil Ware, a 13-year-old Black boy from Birmingham who was chosen at random and killed by two White adolescents on the same day as the Sixteenth Street church bombing in which four little girls were murdered, was the Rev. Ferrell Griswold—a Native American known for speaking out in favor of state's rights at segregation rallies (Padgett and Sikora).⁴¹ As I mentioned previously, The United Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of America, was at one time headed by Robert Lee Davidson, himself a quarter Cherokee. Native American ancestry was no bar to those who wished to participate in virulently anti-Black, anti-Civil Rights, pro-White supremacist activities. Thus, we can make no assumptions about Carter's degree of self-identification as Native American during the period in which he was politically active other than to note that in official paperwork he identified as strictly White.

We can also gather little about his self-identification during the period in which he sought to ingratiate himself with the publishing establishment. Carter lied in his promotional materials, as was stated above, saying he was "Storyteller in Council to the Cherokee Nations." When Wayne Greenhaw broke the story that Asa and Forrest were

the same man, Carter went so far as to have his wife write a letter to Friede (or perhaps to write the letter himself) claiming that she had been married to Asa Carter, but that she had run away with Asa's nephew, Forrest (Greenhaw, My Heart 55). It was Forrest who presumably was Cherokee; "Forrest" wrote to Friede later saying that he lacked proper paperwork because he was a "bastard" (Greenhaw, My Heart 56). Carter nevertheless tried to prove his Cherokee heritage by submitting to Friede a "fictional family tree" with "five distinct interracial marriages" between men who had "exactly one-half more white blood than their" part-Cherokee wives (Roche 251).⁴² Finally, Carter's identity has been hotly contested for over a decade, yet those who have a great deal invested in their claims that Carter was indeed Cherokee have produced no citizenship papers or legitimate lineage to prove that claim. Since all the evidence produced by Carter is clearly fabricated, and lacking any other evidence which surely would have been produced by now, it is sensible to assume as many have that Carter merely self-identified as Native American publicly in order to cover up his past and sell his books more effectively.

The situation is complicated, however, by other information. While in earlier articles Asa's brother Doug Carter first claimed that there was no connection between Asa and Forrest Carter ("Little Tree, Big Lies" 33), then admitted the connection but claimed that there was no Cherokee blood in the family (Rubin 96, Auchmuty, "The Man" M4), he later stated that any Cherokee blood that there is in the family is very distant but implied that there may indeed have been such (Roche 249n). Dan T. Carter admits that Carter might have been Cherokee by lineage but stated that Carter was one-sixteenth Cherokee at most (Roche 249n).⁴³ The most convincing evidence comes from Roche who reports that the Province of British Columbia endorses the book, Little Tree,

as Native literature, because the Cherokee nation calls the book “essentially accurate”—indicating that Carter might have had some degree of Cherokee cultural heritage; however, the Province also denies that Carter was native (270n). Unfortunately, Roche does not indicate which of the various Cherokee political entities called the book accurate nor whether the Province was following the practices of that entity by saying that Carter was not native.

Additional evidence that Carter might have been to some degree familiar with Cherokee heritage, and thus possibly culturally Cherokee, is offered by Daniel Heath Justice. In a footnote to his article examining stereotypes in Little Tree, Justice notes that “There are many Cherokees who disagree” with his own claim that there is “nothing very Cherokee about [the book]” (34, 26):

In a conversation with an Eastern Cherokee elder at a literature conference in the fall of 1999, I learned that The Education of Little Tree is highly regarded by many Eastern Cherokees as an authentic picture of their lives, in spite of the admittedly problematic aspects of both the book and its author.⁴⁴ After over four hundred years of contact, conflict, intermarriage, and acculturation, Appalachian Cherokees share many cultural traits and traditions with their non-Indian neighbors,⁴⁵ so the lack of strong tribal specificity wouldn’t necessarily be evidence of fraud. And even Carter’s racism isn’t necessarily evidence that he wasn’t Cherokee—there are racists within Indian communities, just as there are racists within all ethnic minority groups. (34)

Not all Eastern Band Cherokees agree, however. McWhorter reports that “Geneva

Jackson, a member of the Cherokee Eastern Band in North Carolina, says [the book] distorts the tribe's legend and language. She calls Little Tree 'the closest thing to a farce that has been published in the Cherokee name'" ("Little Tree" 119-20).

Objective efforts to prove or disprove Carter's degree of Cherokee heritage have been predicated largely on interpreting Carter's book, Little Tree. This reading is problematic, however, as Little Tree depicts disassociated Cherokees—Little Tree's grandmother and grandfather are shown to have contact with only one other Cherokee, Willow John—that is, Cherokees who are not active in a Cherokee community, who have few people with whom to discourse in Cherokee, and few people with which to participate in traditional cultural practices. Such individuals often drift in their practices, as Justice suggests, towards the practices of those with whom they have more contact—in this case, Appalachian Whites.

This problematic situation can be illustrated by examining the work of one scholar, Geary Hobson, who uses materials from the book to demonstrate that Carter cannot be considered Cherokee. In the book, Little Tree, Carter uses several terms which are supposed to be Cherokee and which Hobson dismisses as not being so. We will discuss two words from the book specifically. Carter uses the term *Kagu* to mean "the crow" (ELT 5); however, the traditional Cherokee word *kog(a)* means "crow(s)" (Anderson, et al. 31). The inversion of syllables suggests that the speaker was familiar with the Cherokee language, but has experienced some linguistic drift. Hobson himself calls attention to Carter's use of *awi usdi* for "little deer." Hobson offers the similar term, *owi ushdi*, as the correct one. However, the dictionary that is available to me lists both *awi* and *usdi* as correct spellings for *deer* and *little*, respectively (Lynch, Anderson,

Blossom 47, 224-225); neither *owi* nor *ushdi* appear. This is by no means to suggest that Hobson is inaccurate, but only to point out that the Cherokee language is commonly represented through the Cherokee syllabary, and that Roman letter transliterations often vary. Further, regional dialects vary, and this too may explain the difference between the terms in the book and those offered by Hobson.⁴⁶ Thus, analysis of terms in the book is complicated by possibilities of linguistic drift, regional dialect, transliteration differences, and perhaps even the occurrence of “borrow words” from other local Native dialects.

The analysis is even more complicated by the fact that Carter may not actually have been drawing upon his own knowledge when including these terms. In a manuscript version to The Education of Little Tree, entitled Me and Granpa,⁴⁷ the terms *Tal-e-quah* (translated *deer buck*) and *Fah-noh* (*the crow*) appear in place of *Awí usdi* and *Kagu* (M&G 4; ELT 5). This means that the terms given originally by the author vary greatly from those that appear in the final printed version. The term *Tal-e-quah* is usually spelled *Tahlequah*, the name of the capital of the Cherokee Nation established in 1839; the meaning of the word has been lost, according to the dictionary in my possession (Anderson, et al. 188), or is *rice*, according to Bobby Blossom.⁴⁸ The term *Fah-noh* does not seem to have any meaning in Cherokee. Thus, two words in the printed version were inserted at a later date. The explanation, given by Roche, is that “Carter [. . .] wrote to Eleanor Friede and asked her to change some of the Cherokee words in the book, because, as he explained, he had used ‘breed words [. . .] which are kind of pidgin Cherokee. Maybe it would be in better taste if I substituted the pure Lsa-la-gi,’⁴⁹ he offered” (252). Thus, while some terms in the book might be accurate or suggest linguistic drift, and perhaps true disassociated Cherokee cultural identity, at least these

two were inserted after the fact and draw attention to the fact that Carter may well have been using an outside source—perhaps a friend, perhaps a poor dictionary—and that they do not necessarily reflect any familiarity with the Cherokee culture at all.

An assessment of the situation concerning Carter's possible Cherokee heritage is this: Carter certainly lied about the degree to which he was culturally Cherokee, claiming falsely to have been raised by Cherokees, to be half-Cherokee, and to have a tribal office. No one has offered any substantial proof that Carter was Cherokee by lineage, but there is also no concrete proof that Carter had no Cherokee forbearers. An analysis of the information in the book Little Tree cannot be considered substantial because any accurate information about culture might have come from an outside source and any inaccurate information could be attributed to the author's disassociated status. Thus, we are left being able to say as does Warrior that Carter may have been "biologically Cherokee to some unknowable extent" (405), though it is unlikely, but also that he might have been culturally Cherokee to some extent, though it was probably of the culture of disassociated Cherokees rather than traditional Cherokees.

This would cause great difficulties if we were to consider Carter in terms of Native American studies. If Carter were not biologically Cherokee, then he could be discussed as a member of the dominant culture who has expropriated Native American culture primarily for commercial benefit; he might also be discussed as a *whiteshaman*, a term coined by Geary Hobson to refer to "the apparently growing number of small-press poets of generally white, Euro-Christian American background, who in their poems assume the persona of the shaman, usually in the guise of an American Indian medicine man. To be a poet is simply not enough; they must claim a power from higher sources"

(qtd. in Rose 403). If Carter is biologically Cherokee, but uninformed about the culture of Cherokees—traditional or disassociated—then he would be discussed in the category of disassociated Native Americans who do an insufficient job of reconnecting with their own cultures or of learning about other cultures before assuming the authority to write. If Carter's depictions of Appalachian Cherokees or other Native American people are correct, then he could be considered as a Native American writer along with others. This situation makes considering Carter in terms of Native American studies particularly problematic and presents a seemingly impenetrable barrier to rigorous scholarship.

Asa / Forrest Carter in terms of Rhetoric and African American Studies

Though a figure of some interest in Native American studies, and though he claimed a Native identity since he was a young man, Carter did not claim a Native identity as part of his political career—it was a persona that he would deploy in his literary works, an extension of his political works, at the very end of his career. In Native American studies, Carter is merely a manifestation of movements and issues, such as *whiteshamanism*, that are just as easily studied using some other literary figure. In rhetorical and African American studies, however, Carter stands as a crucial figure in understanding the political climate of Birmingham during the Civil Rights era, the effectiveness of George Wallace during his heyday as the chief opponent of the Civil Rights movement, and the persisting, coded White supremacism in American culture. The question considered will not be the degree to which the works of Asa Earl / Forrest Carter are authentic to the cultures of Native Americans, as this question cannot be answered with certainty, but to demonstrate how they are authentic to the cultures of

White supremacist rhetoricians, specifically anti-Civil Rights and anti-Semitic, of the period—a culture he could have belonged to whether or not he was Cherokee.

As part of this study, I will offer a biography of Carter, provide excerpts from his full body of work, and analyze the degree to which Carter conforms and deviates from the accepted practices of rhetoricians in the “closed society” in which he operated. By identifying the milieu in which he operated, the organizations to which he belonged and for which he wrote pieces, the successes and failures which Carter experienced as a member of that milieu and those organizations, I hope to illustrate the typical strategies and specific tactics deployed by one—sometimes successful and sometimes not—member of the White supremacist discourse community of Carter’s period. I hope to illustrate further that this is true even in his novels and despite his identification with a pro-minority stance. By locating such patterns of structure, I hope to demonstrate that White supremacist utterances manifest in unexpected ways within discourse types that are not generally recognized as being typical of the White supremacist milieu.

This study focuses on an Asa Carter that we need to know more deeply if we are to understand the continuities between the White resistance of yesterday and the American political culture of today, and that is Asa Carter, the rhetorician. His words motivated an assault on Nat King Cole, the beating of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, and countless other acts of public violence. More than a decade after these events, Carter's rhetoric, which close study has established as being not much revised, lay at the foundation of cynical and fraudulent Native American nationalism. Understanding why this process was so easily accomplished tells us some very important things about American culture. To understand this process is to understand an obscure yet important

part of ourselves.

NOTES

¹ Two reviews appeared in *Kirkus*. The one cited is from 1 August 1976.

² Though unusual, the term “bathetic” is not a misspelling of “pathetic”—it refers to a level of pathos that is below melodrama, strained pathos.

³ This is the first documented incident of Eleanor Friede, Carter’s editor at that time, being informed of Carter’s double life. After Carter’s death in 1979, Friede successfully remarketed his works, feigning ignorance of his political double life. Greenhaw informed Friede of “several facts of which [he] was sure: one, Carter was no orphan; two, his grandparents were not full-blooded Cherokees; three, he was not raised in the wilderness” (*My Heart* 54). Friede responded that “she could not believe the loving and gentle giant I know as Forrest Carter could ever have been a segregationist, much less a Klansman and definitely not anti-Semitic” (55). The grammatical error in the last of these items, a double-negative (“did not believe . . . could ever have been . . . not anti-Semitic”), is an interesting slip.

⁴ The two articles mentioned previously, another article (1992) for *Texas Books in Review* which reviewed the material he had previously unearthed, an article for *Southwestern American Literature* entitled “The Theology of Survival: The Identity of Forrest/Asa Carter and Religion in His Fiction,” and a final article written with Randall Parks entitled “Forrest Carter’s Use of History.” The biographical piece appears in *The New Handbook of Texas*.

⁵ Articles which appeared in newspapers include works by Tessa Strickland in *The Sunday Telegraph* (London), one by Bob St. John and another by Kent Biffle in the *Dallas Morning News*, one by Andy Miller and two by Jim Auchmuty in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Steve Johnson in the *Chicago Tribune*, Rick Hampson in *Tulsa World*, Esther Fein in the *New York Times*, James Bone in *The Times* (London), and Mark Abley in *The Gazette* (Montreal). Most articles delivered the same information on Asa/Forrest Carter’s double life. Journal and magazine articles which appeared over the next year included Clayton’s restatement of evidence contained in his original article about the relationship between Asa and Forrest Carter in *Texas Books in Review*, “Indian Education Book Called Fraud” in *Navajo Nation Today*, Jones and Sawhill in *Newsweek*, Leland and Peyser in *Newsweek*, “Little Tree, Big Lies?” in *Time*, MacRitchie in *Scottish Libraries*, Marker in *Phi Delta Kappan*, McWhorter in *People*, Moy in *Entertainment Weekly*, Myers in *AB Bookman’s Weekly*, “Native Cunning” in the *Independent Magazine* (London), Reder in *New Age Journal*, Rubin in *Texas Monthly*, Schaefer in *Appalachian Journal*, Teacher in *The Spectator*, Warrior in *Christianity and Crisis*, and Woods in *Southern Exposure*.

⁶ This point is interesting. Hadas had already ordered 200,000 copies, and apparently they all had “A True Story” on the cover—I bought a new copy in the mid-1990s with “A True Story” on the cover. From what I can discover, it was only on the hard cover copy which was released shortly thereafter that the cover was changed—in the third printing, 1992, a photograph of Carter as a boy is surrounded by the simplified “little tree” pattern (resembling an arrowhead), a sign which Carter at one point had put beneath his own signature, in a spectrum of colors from yellow-green to blue—and “A True Story” was removed. The book continued to be sold as non-fiction at that time. It is particularly interesting that Hadas was more specific, according to Rick Hampson on 5 Oct. 1991, in saying that she would not change the description on the book jacket or stop the printing of additional copies (presumably to remove “A True Story” from the cover), but that she had “read of the controversy[. . .] in a scholarly journal”—this article must have been Clayton’s (A18).

⁷ They did, however, continue selling the book, at a rate of about 16,000 copies a month (Baldwin 1J). In 1992, *ELT* was credited as the book whose “commercial success has been invigorating to the university press community” (Baldwin 1J). The 25th anniversary edition to the book, recently released, contains the same misleading foreword written by Strickland for the original UNMP release (calling the book “autobiographical”) (v), there is an error in the birth/death date given for Carter (he died in 1979, not 1971), and the blurb on the inside of the dustcover contains the inaccurate claim that Little Tree was sent to an Indian boarding school (it was a religious orphanage/school with no Indians). The lack of interest on the part of UNMP in accurately contextualizing this book for its readers is quite remarkable.

⁸ Carter did attend the University of Colorado after being discharged, from 27 March 1948 to 30 April 1949, but his transcript does not indicate that he received any sort of degree. He completed only one class in journalism, “Ethics and Contemporary Newspapers,” and received a C for the two-credit course.

⁹ This date is provided by McWhorter in Carry Me Home, and the content reflects the accuracy of that date. The report, available in the Southern Regional Council Papers in the Birmingham Library Archives Department, is a mimeographed or typed manuscript with corrections on it. There is no date provided on the actual manuscript, and the numbers provided in the index are different from those provided on the actual document. The section on Asa Carter is paginated separately, beginning with 1 and ending with 6; it is inserted between pages 28 and 29 of the manuscript—as if as an afterthought. I will refer to the probable intended pagination within the text.

¹⁰ Greenhaw recounts the same story, but says that Carter was working on a “revision” of the speech, indicating that others may have worked on it also. Greenhaw also disputes the suggestion that Wallace was less than willing to read this section of the speech—“Carter said the words would resound across America. Anything less, he said, would be ‘weak and phony.’ Wallace agreed” (My Heart 46).

¹¹ Eskew calls Carter a “fringe candidate” and says that Connor, while “he held similar beliefs” was “more palatable to the electorate” (118).

¹² She rapidly points out that his concerns were not merely “humanitarian,” but that he was also concerned about the negative impact of white resistance on the real estate market (126).

¹³ This appears in both hard copy version and online.

¹⁴ Southwestern historian, author, and teacher, Charles Leland Sonnichsen

¹⁵ This is an extremely interesting little sentence. The “but” would normally indicate a contradiction—yet the statement that Carter had turned his back on his racist days would not seem to contradict Clayton’s assertion that he, himself, does not support racism. Surely, “and” would have been the better conjunction. The passage is a bit of an enigma itself.

¹⁶ Some articles merely noted the perceived discrepancy between Carter’s political work and writings, and most argued that Carter’s activities had no bearing on his artistic work. Such articles include: “Even a Despicable Person Can Create a Good Book,” by Abley; a review by Annichiarico of the audio cassette of ELT; “The ‘Truths’ of Stories Well Told,” by Rebecca Myers; Russell Smith’s review of the film adaptation of ELT; an extremely slanted letter to the editor by Tessa Strickland, the UK publisher of ELT; and “Speaking with Forked Tongue,” by James Teacher. Articles which take the opposite view, that Carter’s work is an illicit appropriation of Cherokee culture, include “Publishers Discover Indian Writers,” by Michael Bezdek; “Just too Good to be True” by Malcolm Jones, Jr., and Ray Sawhill; “Just to Be Recognized” by Peter Woods; and “Store Shelves Laden with Books about Indians,” by Carol Doup Muller.

¹⁷ Examples of this are Anna Lee Stensland, in the ironically titled “Integrity in Teaching Native American Literature” (1983), who gives a list of recommended texts—which also includes another questionable author, Jamake Highwater; Mary Moynihan’s review of the Education of Little Tree for Teaching Sociology (1991); Karen D. Harvey, “Vanquished Americans” (Feb. 1991), who has designed a whole study unit around Carter’s highly fanciful version of the Trail of Tears; and “Southeastern Indians, Precontact to the Present: A Selected Bibliography for Teachers” in Social Education (1993).

¹⁸ In her dissertation, A Content Analysis of Literature Written in South Midland Dialect (1999), Ulinda J. Eilers makes many of these same points.

¹⁹ Hobson is Cherokee, Quapaw, and Chickasaw, according to the Internet Public Library. He is a professor of English at the University of Oklahoma, and coordinates classes in Native American literature rather than linguistics.

²⁰ In his poem, “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel,” Alexie includes the final lines: “In the Great American Indian novel, when it is finally written, / all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts” (29). If Carter does turn out to have fraudulently claimed Cherokee heritage, bearing in mind that all the Cherokee characters in his “autobiography” die before the end, the work may ironically fit Alexie’s definition.

²¹ The character Marie is the only student in the class who is Indian.

²² Alexie’s implication that the two identities are mutually exclusive is incorrect. A passage in The Segregationists, by James Graham Cook, addresses the question of KKK leaders who were also Native American:

The Imperial Wizard of the largest Klan group in the country--the United Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of America . . . [is] Robert Lee 'Wild Bill' Davidson of Macon, Georgia . . . It is a bit ironic that Davidson distributes the Klan's Principles with an

unqualified endorsement, since it is a fact that he himself is, in the oversimplified terminology of the Klan, a 'red man'--and is proud of it.

"I'm half Cherokee Indian," he said, "No, not half, I guess. My grandfather on my mother's side was a full-blooded Cherokee; he was a blacksmith--one of the best" (120-24).

Apparently, being proud of his Cherokee heritage did not keep Davidson from becoming Imperial Wizard in August 1960, but by July 1961, he was deposed by Robert Shelton, who had the support of many of the U.S. Klans who did not like Davidson, perhaps because of his heritage.

²³ Justice notes that this last sentence is almost certainly an echo of the views expressed by Native American scholar, Rennard Strickland, "after the first revelations about Carter in which he said 'If the man who wrote speeches for George Wallace could write this book there's hope for a cure for the souls of us all'" (Justice 29). As Justice notes, the Strickland quote originally appeared in Reid (16).

²⁴ Ironically, Carter was a neo-Nazi, and he did write about one Jewish character (other mentions of Jews in his novels are quite brief). Alexie's implied warning about the motives of such a person—deploying a character from a group he, himself, has helped to oppress—is keen, and one well worth heeding.

²⁵ One problem with the review should be noted from the outset—Gates apparently did at best a quick read through the book, as he says that the lead character, Little Tree, was orphaned at ten. Little Tree is orphaned at five, as we learn from the first page, and is about ten when his grandparents (not parents) die. It is possible that Gates did not read the book at all, but merely some descriptive blurb—possibly the same source used by the author of Carter's biography in Contemporary Authors, volume 107, who also gives Carter's age when orphaned as ten (79).

²⁶ Halley's verb tense is problematic—the book is set during the Depression, before the Holocaust. The Jews, in the time period of the book, had not yet been exterminated. They had, of course, by the time Carter was writing his fictional autobiography.

²⁷ The lectures were delivered at Bennington College, and Cheever was kind enough to send me an electronic copy whose pagination is not reliable as it had to be converted from one file type to another before I could read it. Even the paragraphing is unreliable, as I received only a block of text and had to guess at paragraphs.

²⁸ One of the other lectures was on The Turner Diaries, a classic in white supremacist / militia literature. WorldCat notes that "This book is referred to as a 'manual for domestic terrorism' and is thought to be the inspiration behind the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City."

²⁹ The entire quote is given above. Justice gives but one unelaborated example in his article of how the romanticizing of Indians might be implicitly anti-Black.

³⁰ This chapter, "'One Hundred Percent American': How a Slave, a Janitor, and a Former Klansman Escaped Racial Categories by Becoming Indians," originally appeared in slightly modified form in the book Beyond the Binary (1999), edited by Timothy Powell; a different version appeared earlier, "'What Does It Tell Us That We Are So Easily Deceived?' Imposter Indians" (1997), in the book American Indian Studies edited by Dane Morrison.

³¹ Browder notes that the book did not sell particularly well when first released, and attributes its later popularity to the rise of the movements she names.

³² Like most authors, Huhndorf asserts that the persona is fake, but even if Carter were marginally Native American, her remaining criticisms would not be affected.

³³ This article appeared in The Colorado Statesman. The same information appeared in a slightly shorter version in the article "Racist Redeemed in Part by Beautiful Book" in the Rocky Mountain News in 1998.

³⁴ In "Forrest Carter / Asa Carter and Politics," Clayton describes Carter's ability to sustain his fictional persona: "A talented storyteller, Carter was as pleasant a companion for a casual dinner conversation as I have ever known—well informed, sympathetic, perceptive. He was master of his material and master of his identity as Forrest Carter. In the several versions of the story of his life that I have discovered from his other acquaintances, there was rarely, if ever, a slip in the facade that he maintained, even though each of us had been told a somewhat different story" (26).

³⁵ The possibilities are many: that he was deeply ironic, enjoying jerking other people's chains after the Andy Kaufman fashion and trying to demonstrate that others had prejudices too; that he was emotionally unbalanced and had a deep-seated need for the approval of others and would say whatever it took to get that approval; that he sincerely fancied himself Native American, a "true" American, and had invented a past

which would allow him to reclaim his ethnic identity (presuming that he had Native American forebears), etc. Combinations of these motives are also possible.

³⁶ The library made an audio cassette for the file, but keeps the LP in a noncirculating section. There is no copyright on the LP.

³⁷ There is an extremely slim possibility that Carter was already the published author of a work called A City's Heartbeat (1967), whose author is given as "Asa Carter, M.D." The registered author of the work is Herbert T. Smith. However, it would not be unlike Carter to have either adopted a pseudonym (Smith) to register the copyright and then to have used his own name as the "pseudonym" of the author, or to have had a friend front for him when applying for the copyright. The dedication of the book—"Dedicated to and for the night prowlers, and their someday dreams. *C'est egal d'amour*"—is quite odd considering the overall medical focus of the book. One would have to track down "Herbert T. Smith"—who at least theoretically was an M.D.—to prove or disprove the point.

³⁸ Essay number 24 was missing, and several of the essays were rebroadcasts (with new numbers) of earlier essays.

³⁹ This information comes from documents 100-4651-114 and 100-4651-115, Asa Carter, FBI File.

⁴⁰ It is possible that Vengeance Trail was also drafted during this period, but I have no evidence that any of that work was utilized for political purposes. Watch for Me on the Mountain appears to have been written after Carter had left political life.

⁴¹ To his credit, Griswold stopped speaking at rallies and was haunted by the murder of Ware; though his politics did not necessarily change, he focused more upon his ministry in later years (Padgett and Sikora).

⁴² Roche comments, aptly, that this seems to partake of the "Indian grandmother complex" first articulated by Native American scholar Vine Deloria. As a manifestation of this complex, white women are never attracted to or marry an Indian man (251).

⁴³ Dan T. Carter sometimes gives the figure one-eighth Cherokee (Reid 18), but one-sixteenth seems correct if only one of Carter's grandparents had a Cherokee grandparent as he sometimes explains it.

⁴⁴ This point is corroborated by George Ellison in his online article, "Does Author's Racism Mar a Marvelous Book?" Ellison says that "readers here in western North Carolina, including numerous Cherokees, have also read the book with pleasure." He recounts, later in the article, the following: "I'll note two experiences I had with elderly full-blood Cherokee women that I wrote separate feature stories about—the first in the late 1980s, the second in the early 1990s. Each liked what I had written, and as a token of appreciation each gave me a copy of The Education of Little Tree. Each said it was their 'favorite book.'"

⁴⁵ Though I accept Justice's basic contention that there are many Appalachian Cherokees who are largely disassociated from traditional Cherokee ways, it would be possible to read into this statement the assumptions that all Western Cherokees have experienced less contact, conflict, intermarriage, and acculturation (which would be inaccurate) and that there are no traditional, full-blood, or cultural Cherokees left among the Eastern or Appalachian Cherokee peoples (which is also inaccurate). The statement does not seem intended to be construed in the latter fashion, and as Ellison notes, some full-blood and probably traditional Cherokees also endorse the book.

⁴⁶ Dr. Hobson was born in Chicot County, Arkansas, according to the Internet Public Library. This book is set among disassociated Tennessee Cherokees, and its author was from Alabama. There are four dialects: *Elati* from the Piedmont region; *Kitu^hwa* from the Blue Ridge and valley region; *Otali* from the Western ridge and valley region of Eastern Tennessee, upper Georgia, and North Carolina; and *Overhill* also in the western valley region of Eastern Tennessee and later from Oklahoma (Anderson, et al. 14). The four variants pronounce the word *Cherokee* as *ja la gi*, *dza la gi*, *ca la gi*, and *tso la gi* (Anderson, et al. 15).

⁴⁷ The manuscript is in my possession.

⁴⁸ In a lecture of 24 June 1997, Bobby Blossom and instructor Linda Jordan transliterated the term *daligwa* and gave an alternate spelling as *Tahlequah*, meaning *rice*.

⁴⁹ This word is misspelled—it should be "Tsa-la-gi."

Chapter 2: Politician and Terrorist Cell Leader

Resisting Integration in Birmingham

In the early stages of Asa Earl Carter's political career, from about 1954 to 1958, he enjoyed the greatest degree of personal success that he would know until he began writing novels much later in life. He was a significant political activist in the racial unrest of the latter 1950s in the city of Birmingham and throughout the South, and enjoyed frequent mention in local media and even in the national media—being profiled in a major series in The Saturday Evening Post.¹ As a radio announcer, an extemporaneous orator, and a writer, he communicated his white supremacist views with considerable force and, sometimes, frightening efficacy. His misfires, times when his speech had effects he had not planned, were equally spectacular failures. When Carter stuck to conventional tactics, such as those identified by Waldo Braden in "The Rhetoric of a Closed Society," his successes were many; it was when he strayed from those conventions of "respectable segregationists"—towards a different set of conventions, those of the Klan—that his most memorable failures occurred.²

Carter's interest in politics, particularly of the anti-Semitic and pro-segregationist variety, became apparent long before he began his political career. From his youth, Carter demonstrated an extremist bent which set him on the path which would eventually lead to his becoming, at least briefly, the most recognizable opponent of integration in the South. He would attempt, throughout this early period, to maintain two separate political lives—one as a relatively respectable segregation leader and one as the extremist leader of an underground resistance movement—and would later explain that he felt the two worked symbiotically to sustain segregation. His inability to keep the two entirely

separate, however, was the chief source of his failures.

Examining Carter's early life and years in Birmingham as a public figure help us to understand he began his career as an open and rabid anti-Semite and White supremacist and to determine what rhetorical strategies best suited him during these early years. We will find during this investigation that Carter's early strategies greatly resembled the six rhetorical strategies of traditional White supremacists enumerated by Braden: first, traditional White supremacists espoused the tenets of white supremacy; second, they made efforts to paint Southerners as persons of good character; third, they posited an outside conspiracy against White Southerners; fourth, they called for unity in the fight against this conspiracy; fifth, they legitimized resistance; and sixth, they advocated a positive and unyielding stance (Braden 340). Though Carter's early work would partake of these strategies, he made certain modifications—positing wealthy Southerners who aided Civil Rights either openly, covertly, or through apathy as part of the conspiracy; and suggesting that resistance need not be legal to be justifiable, that violence was justified also. Seeing how Carter deployed these strategies in his early years helps us to better understand how, though he would refine them over the years, these same strategies eventually wound up making him a success in writing fictional novels.

As so many readers who have found Carter's literary productions to be attractive have argued from them that Carter could not have been nearly so devoted to White supremacy as he is "rumored" to have been and as the biographies available on Carter are in many cases either highly fictionalized—such as that in Contemporary Authors—or omit critical information as does Lawrence Clayton's, a close examination of the accurate

written record of Carter's life is critical. It helps us to see just how these inaccurate biographies have aided readers of his fiction to whitewash Carter's commitments to White supremacy and refuse to understand how they function within his fictional works. Indeed, a day-to-day examination of Carter's life in the period during which he was free to act as he pleased in the political realm, in the days when he had no previous poor reputation to conceal, helps us to understand the depths of his belief in White supremacy, the degree to which he believed that a "respectable" political life and White resistance terrorism were mutually reinforcing, and to see how both these things underpinned the writing that he did in the period. Contrary to the arguments of many who come to Asa Carter through the fictional works of Forrest Carter, Asa Carter from a young age and throughout the earliest incarnation of his political life was precisely the type of White supremacy terrorist that Dan T. Carter would many years later argue that he was—and the argument rests on the details available through careful examination of the record, which is damning, and not upon mere "rumor."

"Bud" Carter: Asa Carter's Early Years

In 1925, Asa Earl Carter was born in Oxford, Alabama—on September 4 according to most sources.³ He was the second of four children born to Ralph Middleton Carter and Alpha Hermione Weatherly Carter; his elder sister was Marie Alpha, who became a nurse, and his younger brothers were James Douglas, who became a businessman in Birmingham,⁴ and Larry Weatherly, who became a veterinarian in North Carolina.⁵ Carter was raised along with his siblings by his parents in a "white frame bungalow on U. S. 78," near Chocoloco Creek, in the piedmont of the Appalachians in

northeastern Alabama.⁶ His mother inherited a farm just prior to the Depression, and his father “worked for a soft drink company and operated a dairy spread to which he gradually added beef cattle in the 1940s.” Ralph and Hermione were active members of the DeArmanville Methodist Church, and raised their four children in “a conventional, middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant family.”⁷

Known as “Bud” when he was a child, Carter attended Oxford Elementary School and graduated from Calhoun County High School in 1943 at the age of 17.⁸ In the Calhoun County High School yearbook for 1943, “the senior class prophet predicted that Carter would return to Calhoun County as a ‘famous movie star.’”⁹ Several days prior to graduation, “the handsome Carter drove down to the Anniston Navy recruitment office and enlisted in the Navy’s V-12 Officer Training Program.”¹⁰ The reason for choosing the Navy, “he told his friends, [was] so he wouldn’t have to fight the Germans, whom he regarded as racially akin to his true ancestors, the Scotch Irish. Moreover, Germany hadn’t attacked our country. Why should the United States be fighting a Jewish war?”¹¹

He seemed “an ideal candidate,” says Dan T. Carter, “energetic, intelligent and ambitious, but his dreams of an officer’s uniform and a commission went sour.” Carter was assigned first to the US Naval Reserve (based in Birmingham) on 21 May and reported to active duty on 2 July for training at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. After spending only four months there, from 2 July to 4 September, Carter “washed out” due to academic failure. He was sent to a naval training center in Great Lakes, Illinois, from 5 September to 13 January 1944, and from there to the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he received training in radio at the US Naval Training School between 15 January and 29 May. After this training, he was sent to Terminal Island,

California, as Radioman Third Class—the “bottom of the military heap”—and stayed there from 10 June to 22 August. 14 August 1944, Carter received a Captain’s Mast for intoxication, an early sign of the alcoholism that would later plague him, and was awarded three weeks’ restriction.¹²

On 22 August 1944, Carter was assigned to the USS *Appling*, APA-58, a newly commissioned ship under the command of Lieutenant Commander Alexander Lunde Stuart.¹³ The *Appling* was an attack transport with a crew complement of 370, designed to carry assault troops and support equipment to the site of an amphibious operation. After a shakedown cruise, *Appling* left for New Guinea on 17 October.¹⁴ She was part of the Luzon invasion force in January of 1945, a campaign for which Carter was authorized to wear the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.¹⁵ After carrying out training exercises in February and March, the *Appling* participated in the assault on the Ryukyus, the last hostilities in which she was directly engaged.

On 14 April, the ship sailed for Hawaii, arriving on 2 May, and then continued on to San Pedro, California, arriving on 10 May. After briefly returning to the Pacific theater during June and July, she returned stateside and underwent repairs—during which time hostilities ended.¹⁶ During the remainder of 1945 and into 1946, the *Appling* transported troops from the Philippines to Japan, and carried veterans back to the United States from Japan and from the Philippines. Carter was honorably discharged on 2 March 1946, still a Radioman Third Class—his ratings ranged from “Very Good” to “Excellent,” yet he was never promoted—separating from service in Memphis, Tennessee.¹⁷

After his discharge, Carter returned briefly to Oxford and married his high school

girlfriend, Thelma India Walker;¹⁸ the couple moved to Denver. Though India Walker would remain married to Carter until the end of his life, and through his frequent absences, neither she nor the children they would eventually have would ever be deeply involved in his political career. In Denver, however, Carter quickly found political work as a radio announcer under the name “Earl Carter,” having “claimed to have taken several journalism courses at the University of Colorado during his navy training program.”¹⁹

Dan T. Carter reports that “station managers liked his professional delivery—not a stammer or pause before the mike. Over the years he worked hard to replace his southern drawl with the mid-western accent demanded by broadcasters.”²⁰

Carter also returned to school on 27 March 1948, enrolling at the University of Colorado at Boulder as a journalism major.²¹ His transcript shows that Carter completed only one, two-credit course in Journalism Ethics, receiving a C, during his time there. Though intelligent, university records indicated that his IQ was high,²² Carter’s performance was mediocre. His interests appear to have leaned more towards history, political science, philosophy, and government, but his ability was not as high—he received a C in all these courses save History of Western Civilization. His strength appears to have been in English language and literature, in which he took 22 hours of courses, receiving a B in all courses save Great Books, in which he earned a C. He took but one course in science, Survey in General Chemistry, which he failed; he took no math. Carter withdrew in good standing on 30 April 1949, having completed one calendar year of study, and never receiving a degree.²³

As I discussed earlier, it was during his time at the University of Colorado that Carter became acquainted with Gerald (Jerry) Kopel,²⁴ who says they first met at

freshman orientation in January of 1948.²⁵ They had a good deal in common: both were a “long way from home,” were veterans, and were enrolled as pre-journalism students. Kopel and Carter were enrolled in the same courses in English, Freshman Composition and Fiction, and were together during part of every school day. Kopel describes Carter as a “political junkie,” a “bigot and racist,” but “a good conversationalist and knowledgeable” when kept “off the subject of race.” While studying at the University of Colorado, Carter lived “with his wife and baby in a Quonset Hut in an area known as Veterans’ Village”; Kopel was never invited to visit (“Reflections” 9). Most importantly, Kopel recalls that Carter never spoke of his parents, but claimed to have been reared by his grandfather and to be proud of his Indian blood. As discussed earlier, though Kopel still believes that Carter was sincere, the fact that Carter was raised by his parents, not his grandfather, and that any claim to Cherokee blood is distant at best, means that these reminiscences were at the very least highly fictionalized accounts which served to minimize Kopel’s negative responses to Carter’s own bigotry and white supremacy.

Carter became during this period a “follower of the Dean of American anti-Semites, Gerald L. K. Smith. Smith, a former aide to Huey Long, had founded the most persistently successful anti-Semitic hate group in America, the ‘Christian Nationalist Crusade.’” As Dan T. Carter explains, his association with Smith gave him the explanation he needed for events in international and domestic politics:²⁶

Gerald Smith believed that American Christian civilization was on the ropes because of the machinations of the “Christ-killer” Jews.²⁷ New York Jews put up the funds for the Russian Revolution and in the years since 1918, they had joined hands with Communists and refined their

plans to undermine white “Christian civilization.” Their tools were many, but their main weapon was the promotion of integration and—ultimately—the “mongrelization of the races.”²⁸

After leaving the University of Colorado, Carter worked both as a writer and as a radio announcer for Denver Radio Station KBOD, using his middle name Earl, in 1951-52, during which time he discovered his “gift for the nifty ad-lib.” These ad-libs put on display the political creed which Carter had absorbed from Smith: anti-Semitism, anti-Communism, and pro-segregationism.²⁹

By the summer of 1953, however, Carter had returned to the South and was working as a radio announcer. During the summer of 1953, he was employed as an announcer at WAZF in Yazoo City, Mississippi. While there, he did impress his employer with was characterized as Communistic views—which bore a strong resemblance to Huey Long-style, “share the wealth” Populism. Carter was reported to have spent much time “reading books and articles on politics” and to have made statements against “rich capitalists” and to have been in favor of “taking from the rich and giving to the poor.”³⁰ After only six months, he moved on to WSPC in Anniston, perhaps to KVOB in Denver, and finally came to WILD in Birmingham.³¹

Beginnings of a Political Career: A White Supremacist Establishment Spokesman

Carter’s career took a turn in 1954 when the Supreme Court had just handed down its landmark decision on school desegregation. His reputation as an announcer made him attractive to the newly formed American States’ Rights Association (ASRA), “a Birmingham-based resistance organization” organized by “ultra-segregationist”

businessmen in Mississippi and Alabama to oppose integration.³² According to Eskew, the ASRA was incorporated in April 1954, “when six hundred white supremacists, including, according to the [Birmingham] News, ‘a substantial number of prominent and wealthy people,’ met in Birmingham.”³³ A personnel manager from an insurance company, Olin H. Horton, was the official head, but other influential members included a mix of politicians and local businessmen—Hugh Morrow, William H. Hoover, Sam Englehardt Jr., Walter Givhan, and Sidney (Sid) Smyer.³⁴ Hoover told the Birmingham News that “We’re not going to engage actively in any political campaigns,” but that “we’re going to do a lot of research to inform the people on what is going on, particularly with regard to groups trying to break down segregation.” The article also stated that the first objective of the association was “for the first time to offer firm resistance to those organizations and individuals who have enjoyed ‘free wheeling’ in their assaults on our segregation laws and customs” (Taylor, “Group to Organize” 1-2).

ASRA was designed as a two-tiered organization; “active members” paid a \$25 membership fee but “associate members” paid a nominal fee of one dollar. Smyers and the other leaders had “envisioned [the] group as a sort of war council to give orders to the troops, but [they] didn’t want to actually have to deal with the troops” (McWhorter, Carry 98). They needed someone like Carter, with a touch for the common man, to drum up membership among the “troops” who would achieve the aims of the active members. Though calling itself “non-political—nonprofit” and “devoted to education and research,” the stated aims of the ASRA were to “maintain segregation of the races,” to “aid the fight against” the Fair Employment Practices Commission, to “further good race relations,” to “keep communistic propaganda out of our schools,” and to “preserve states’ rights.”³⁵

Eskew calls the ASRA the “first important white supremacy group in Alabama” (Eskew 107), and it was with this group that Carter first found notoriety as a political figure.

As Dan T. Carter notes, “the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation opened a golden age as white southerners rallied for a last stand. In [Carter’s] imagination, he became a revolutionary warrior in the struggle for the survival of the Anglo-Saxon race.” However, to Carter’s dismay, the revolution was led and financed by businessmen and politicians: “While they found firebrands like Carter useful as they mouthed defiance against the national government and bullied black and white southern dissidents, most main-line segregationists lacked the stomach for the kind of no-holds-barred strategies Asa Carter had in mind” (“Southern History” 289). It was Sid Smyer who hired Carter for his intelligence and experience as a radio announcer to conduct a 15-minute program over Station WILD (McWhorter, Carry 100). Beginning on 20 September 1954, the program ran at 12:30 in the afternoon and 6:15 p.m. each evening, Monday through Friday.³⁶ Carter’s program, entitled “The History We Are Making,” attacked communism and desegregation, and particularly attacked racial intermarriage.³⁷ Carter’s broadcasts caught the attention of both the Communist Party and the Anti-Defamation League, “the arm of B’nai B’rith that tracked dangerous anti-Semites.”³⁸

But, Carter’s efforts for the ASRA were probably not confined to these daily broadcasts.³⁹ The Anti-Defamation League, in a confidential memo, reported that Carter received \$800 a month from the ASRA for additional “political activity.”⁴⁰ Perhaps in that capacity, he wrote at least one form letter to members which provides the earliest available sample of Carter’s political writings:⁴¹

Dear Member:

This is the first opportunity I have had to write you and personally thank you for your letter of encouragement. Your support has meant and is meaning the difference in success or failure. Failure is inconceivable; it must not happen. To win entails a fight in which we can expect no quarter; we must be prepared to give none.

[. . .] We are coming under subversive attack from several left-wing organizations in this area. Four attempts by leftist organizational movements have been made to force our program off the air. We have even been fired upon by use of firearms. The expense of material and mailing has increased rapidly as members are added. Our radio time is, of course, expensive.

A small group of determined men have from their own resources supplied the difference between the income and expenses of the organization. [. . .] This small group of devoted men need your help.

We know, from observation of past actions of the leftists and Communists, that if we remain localized, we will eventually be killed off. We have immediate plans, therefore, to spread the program, with corresponding local groups over the state, and thence over the South, with the aim of creating a solid block of ten Southern States with power to swing the focus of subversion into retreat.

[. . .] Please remember that I work as a radio announcer for my livelihood. I accept no remuneration from States' Rights funds and no one is paid from States' Rights funds for any work whatsoever. [. . .]

The N A A C P recently raised ten million dollars to enforce its action of school integration this fall. There are approximately one hundred and fifty like organizations in the South. They do not relax; they do not let up.

If you can give only five minutes of your time a day to the cause of States' Rights, then give it [. . .] The effects of your actions are already becoming irritating to the Communists and their friends; they must become killing.

[. . .] We cannot be self-centered, nor filled with self-importance, nor pamper ourselves either egotistically or physically. There is too little time; there is too much to do; there is too vicious an enemy.

[. . .]

Ace Carter
Yours for the death of Communism
and the protection of our race

The letter exhibits all six strategies identified by Braden—in his article “The Rhetoric of a Closed Society,” which is concerned with the rhetoric of public leaders in the state of Mississippi in 1954-64—as characteristic of the rhetoric of the closed society of white supremacists of that period. These strategies include promotion of white supremacy, legitimization of resistance, creation of a positive and unyielding stance, a defense of the character of the closed society's members, the assertion that the society is

a victim of an outside plot, and an emphasis on unity as necessary for success (340).

Promotion of white supremacy is evident in this piece in two places: First, Carter says that one of the chief goals of the organization is “preservation of the race”—by implication, the White race—without which, he says, “neither America nor Christianity will survive.” And, finally, in the dedication under his signature, he states that he is “yours for the [. . .] protection of our race.” Though preservation of white supremacy is not particularly emphasized in the piece, the inclusion of the point early in the piece, and repetition of it at the end, keeps the issue in the mind of the reader.

Legitimization of resistance is not as evident in this piece as it will be in later works by Carter. It exists primarily in the identification of the opposition, “leftists” and “Communists” and the “NAACP,” the last of which was viewed by many conservatives as a communist-front organization. The dealings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities were widely known to the public and had made the terms *leftist* and *Communist* into highly negative words as a matter of convention.⁴² As Judith Butler puts it in Excitable Speech, “Racist speech works through the invocation of convention; it circulates, and though it requires the subject for its speaking, it neither begins nor ends with the subject who speaks or with the specific name that is used” (34). Because these particular conventions had been authorized by governmental bodies, to a degree such governmental bodies can be thought of as complicit with Carter in his deployment of these terms for the purposes of White supremacist speech. Resistance to any organization so identified would be legitimized in the minds of the average reader of the period. This resistance is made to seem more rightful by Carter’s identification of the goals of his organization, to preserve “America” and “Christianity”—both highly positive words in

conventional use of the period.

A positive and unyielding stance is created in the early sections of the letter and reemphasized throughout. In the first paragraph, Carter says of the aims of their organization that “Failure is inconceivable; it must not happen. To win entails a fight in which we can expect no quarter; we must be prepared to give none.” He is both positive and resolute in his statement that “In the past few weeks we have grown very encouragingly, adding strength each day toward the near approaching time when that strength will be needed.” His firmest statement of stance is in his claim that ASRA means to spread its program throughout the state, “and thence over the South, with the aim of creating a solid block of ten Southern States with power to swing the focus of subversion into retreat.” As the last statement makes a clear reference to the Confederacy, it is clear that the stance Carter attributes to the ASRA is one similar to that of the Old South.

Carter also defends the character of the closed society’s members throughout the piece. He first depicts the ASRA in general as an “organization [which] is unique in that it has no ax to grind, except America’s, Christianity’s, and the preservation of our race, without which neither America nor Christianity will survive.” He then, more specifically, refers to the men who founded the ASRA, calling them “a small group of determined men [who] have from their own resources supplied the difference between the income and the expenses of the organization,” and asserting that those men had allowed Carter, as a reporter, to work freely and without pressure. He then reaches out to the reader by suggesting that together they employ “the courage of all the people of the South, for I believe they are still a ‘matchless breed.’”

The assertion that the ASRA and the White community as a whole are victims of an outside plot is made several times. Early in the piece, Carter claims that “We are coming under subversive attack from several left-wing organizations in this area. Four attempts by leftist organizational movements have been made to force our program off the air. We have even been fired upon by use of firearms.” Carter reemphasizes the point by saying that “We know, from observation of past actions of the leftists and Communists, that if we remain localized, we will be killed off.” The NAACP is depicted as a particularly dangerous foe, as are like organizations: “The NAACP recently raised ten million dollars to enforce its action of school integration this fall. There are approximately one hundred and fifty like organizations in the South. They do not relax; they do not let up.” The penultimate paragraph ends with the final such statement as its climax: “there is too vicious an enemy.”

Carter encourages unity at several points in the piece. Having established that the ASRA has come under pressure, he calls on the reader saying, “This small group of devoted men [needs] your help.” He calls on each member to “contribute as he is able” and on every member to “sign up one new member immediately.” Reaching out to the audience, he says, “I know you want to take a part; I believe you are as eager as I.” Exhorting the readers to concern themselves only with the greater good, he says, “We cannot be self-centered, nor filled with self-importance, nor pamper ourselves either egotistically or physically.” Throughout, Carter is primarily concerned with creating unity, which in this new organization has yet to be created, rather than with preserving a pre-existing loyalty.

Carter’s letter in many ways conforms to the typical strategies of the closed

society of White supremacists—such as giving “major attention to continued sanctification of the faith,” white supremacy, legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—but it does show some deviations. Carter takes great pains to establish his own character, specifically, throughout the piece. He characterizes himself as a “reporter,” who has not been “influence[ed] or pressur[ed]” by the men who are financing his program, “The History We Are Making.” After having suggested that the reader make donations and recruit new members, he makes himself seem concerned with the opinions of his reader by saying, “I would like for you to write me your views on this.” Carter follows with his trademark claim that he is accepting no money from the organization: “I work as a radio announcer for my livelihood. I accept no remuneration from States’ Rights funds” In this early case, the claim may well be true. Carter was financed primarily by wealthy members of the ASRA, possibly mainly Smyer (McWhorter, *Carry* 100, 126). However, Carter was paid. Martin comments that the “hundred a week plus fifty dollars expenses” which Carter would later say he made working for the Citizens’ Councils was less than he had made as a broadcaster for the ASRA, and Anthony says that he received seventy-five dollars per week plus a bonus for each broadcast sponsored by ASRA.⁴³ The wording used by Carter neatly finesses the fact that he was paid to do the broadcasts; he does admit to being paid as an announcer, but suggests that he is doing all his work for the ASRA for free. Not coincidentally, Carter builds himself up as a selfless worker for the cause. In a sermon-like coda, calling the reader to prayer and self-reflection, Carter’s

reiterates his own selfless devotion to the cause, “I, personally, spend five minutes each night in pledging myself, in asking for humbleness in searching for guidance in what I, personally, should do.” This attention to building his own ethos will become characteristic of Carter’s work.

A second slight difference between Carter’s rhetoric and that of mainstream White supremacists identified by Braden is in his fairly open avocation of violence. After emphasizing the threat under which ASRA is operating, saying that they have been fired upon, using the phrase “we will eventually be killed off,” he reaches the climax with a call to action that suggests violence: “The effects of your actions are already becoming irritating to the Communists and their friends; they must become killing.” This avocation of violence, worded as if a metaphor, comes only after Carter has carefully constructed a community whose cause would justify that violence. Indeed, he has made the violence appear to be necessary, an act which combats evil, an act of good. As William Ryan, in Blaming the Victim, points out: “In order to persuade a good and moral man to do evil, then, it is not necessary first to persuade him to become evil. It is only necessary to teach him that he is doing good” (qtd. in McPhail 26). Carter’s concern with self-promotion and his relatively open calls to violence set him apart from many other White supremacists, and would eventually cause him great difficulties.

The Anti-Defamation League began tracking Carter because of his anti-Semitic broadcasts and, according to McWhorter, one day “tailed him as he headed to Michael’s restaurant after recording his commentaries, got on an outdoor pay phone, called a local Jewish doctor, and spewed anti-Semitic obscenities into the receiver.” In an effort to have Carter removed from the air, the ADL set up a situation in which Carter was sure to

vent his anti-Semitic views. They disguised a couple from Atlanta as “Arabs interested in buying the radio station [Carter] worked for. They stocked their hotel room with Carter’s favorite whiskey, hid a tape recorder in the closet, and invited him over for a meeting.” In order to suggest to Carter that he was among sympathetic listeners, they made several anti-Semitic remarks of their own, and the drunken Carter was immediately “up on his soapbox foaming at the mouth.” But, McWhorter reports, the ADL never had to release the tape so as to expose the extremity of Carter’s anti-Semitism and embarrass the station into firing him or ASRA into dropping the program—Carter spared them the trouble by exposing his views himself (McWhorter, Carry 100n).

On 21 February 1955, during Brotherhood Week, Carter gave an address that suggested that the National Conference of Christians and Jews was part of an international communist conspiracy. Carter told the “listeners that the Birmingham chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews was a tool of the Communist Party, manipulated by Jews who had duped ignorant Christians into supporting their secret plans to dilute the racial purity of the South.” Over the next three days, leaders of the Jewish community in Birmingham contacted their friends and business associates within the Christian community, and forced WILD to end Carter’s program.⁴⁴ Carter would later express his bitterness by contemptuously describing the ASRA as “a polite way of being a respectable segregationist. I couldn’t be a member because I couldn’t afford the twenty-five-dollar fee” (qtd. in Martin, 117).

The transcript of the program for which Carter was fired, is probably that available from the Archives Department of Birmingham Public Library and also published in the May 1955 issue of Common Sense,⁴⁵ is the earliest example of Carter’s

non-spontaneous oratory, written work designed to be delivered orally. A more complex piece, aimed at a broader audience than the previous letter, the speech covers two major issues: supposed Communist party propaganda tactics; and then as examples, Brotherhood Week and other seemingly benign deployments of such tactics.

Monday, Feb. 21, '55

THIS IS ACE CARTER, SPEAKING FOR THE AMERICAN STATES' RIGHTS ASSOCIATION, WITH THE HISTORY, YOU AND I ARE MAKING.

Interpretation is the key weapon used today to change American's thoughts and philosophy. Interpretation of laws, constitution, of phrases, and yes, even words, is made great use of by the act of changing that interpretation of original law, constitution, phrase or word, from its original meaning to the meaning desired by the communists and their friends and suckers; changing, to mean that which they wish to use either for power law or for propaganda purposes.⁴⁶

We have noted the almost unbelievable, crackpotish interpretation applied by the Supreme Court Justices of the United States, to our Constitution, using as authority upon which they base this deliberate twisting, a propaganda book written and edited by communist, communist-fronters and socialists with their travelers.

[. . .] The Communist loves the mass man, or rather, loves the results of power and control, which a mass of amalgamated man would give the communist. You will, of course, find in this book, by the Communist Party, a vicious hate attack on STATES' RIGHTERS, "prejudiced" White Southerners, and what it terms "reactionaries", including "dixiecrats."

But in the main, the book dwells with syrupy sweetness on the "brotherhood" of man, and takes great pains to explain that races should practice "brotherhood." Can anyone argue with "brotherhood?" No, but whose interpretation of brotherhood. [. . .]

[. . .]

In the chapter of the Communist publication dealing with human relationships, on one page, the word, "brotherhood," is used five times. The word is liberally sprinkled throughout the essay that puts across the communist line on human relations. Why? Because it is a "good" word, meaning a word that strikes favorably with the heart, and therefore can be used to great advantage in inserting the communist interpretation of the word, so that, if you believe in the word, "brotherhood", you must believe and practice the communist definition.

What is the Communist interpretation of that word? It can be said simply; practice the steps that lead to racial integration and mongrelization, and in the Communist sense, you are practicing "brotherhood." [. . .]

What is "brotherhood"? Well, it certainly is not racial integration and amalgamation, nor the practice of anything that leads to those despicable ends. Brotherhood can be reduced to an individual basis: a man has a neighbor; his neighbor is one of laziness, with rapacious nature, given to general soddiness of Character. The man, in order to practice brotherhood, has two choices of its practice, a right way and a wrong way. He may place at his neighbor's disposal, a Bible. He may attempt to educate him into a better

character, so that he may help himself, and by doing, maintain his self-respect and dignity. Or he may take that neighbor into his house, feed and clothe him; and though he dress him in the finest clothes, and furnish him with limousine service, he does not change the neighbor. He in fact, brings into his home rapaciousness, laziness, soddenness, immorality, and by that act, destroys his own home and wrecks his own standards.

[. . .]

The Communist wants the tearing down and the amalgamation into an irresponsible mongrelized mass. When one race takes another into integration, it crosses the lines of law set down by God, and destroys the finer elements of man, and emphasizes and makes capital of the baser qualities.

This is "Brotherhood Week", begun first nationally, and now so termed, "World Brotherhood Week." This week is sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, an organization that purpose to create better understanding among religious groups especially, but also, it states, all groups, races and creeds.

[. . .]

The National Conference of Christians and Jews, while proclaiming its aim of "better religious understanding", also works for signing of the Genocide Treaty, of which treaty, a former president of the American Bar Association said, would destroy our rights as individuals under local, state and federal law; would restrict even free speech as regards any race, and censor the press; would force Americans into foreign courts, and place people at the mercy of race amalgamators.

[. . .]

The National Conference of Christians and Jews published a booklet stating we have "glorified" our founding fathers of this country too much, and terming them "prejudiced" and filled with "hatred." This organization uses films to promote race mongrelization, and calls for dictatorial federal law to enforce integration. And under what banner is all this proposed? Why, "brotherhood" . . . with sweet phrases and dulcet tones.

[. . .]

"Brotherhood Week?"

Fine.

Only whose "brand" of "brotherhood" brother?

THIS IS ACE CARTER, AND THAT IS THE HISTORY WE ARE MAKING
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMPANY [. . .]

In this piece, Carter can be seen to again conform to the strategies common to White supremacists of his period. Carter gives great attention, throughout the work, to the endorsement of White supremacy. The first half of the speech takes as its theme the threat posed by the Communist Party's avocation of "brotherhood," which would lead to

“racial integration and mongrelization” to “racial amalgamation.” The climax of the piece contains a strident defense of white supremacy; in a parable-like narrative, Carter contrasts the supposed practices of White supremacists and Communists in racial affairs:

Brotherhood can be reduced to an individual basis: a man has a neighbor; his neighbor is one of laziness, with rapacious nature, given to general soddenness of Character. The man, in order to practice brotherhood, has two choices of its practice, a right way and a wrong way. He may place at his neighbor’s disposal, a Bible. He may attempt to educate him into a better character, so that he may help himself, and by doing, maintain his self-respect and dignity. Or he may take that neighbor into his house, feed and clothe him; and though he dress him in the finest clothes, and furnish him with limousine service, he does not change the neighbor. He in fact, brings into his home rapaciousness, laziness, soddenness, immorality, and by that act, destroys his own home and wrecks his own standards.

In Carter’s parable, symbol and stereotype are used to communicate racial identity. The Bible, given by this man to his “neighbor,” comes to represent White culture, which it is claimed would uplift the character of the neighbor.⁴⁷ To the neighbor are assigned the characteristics that White supremacists attribute to Blacks: lack of work ethic, sexual voracity, substance abuse, and low morals. Carter goes on to explain his parable, stating that “the Communist wants the high standards destroyed, the moral structure, and the strong, individual character.” He states his own White supremacist views most clearly when he says that “When one race takes another into integration, it crosses the lines of law set down by God, and destroys the finer elements of man, and emphasizes and makes

capital of the baser qualities.” As the “finer elements” have in the parable all been attributed symbolically to Whites, and all baser qualities to Blacks, it is clear that Carter is not merely advocating a preservation of two, distinct but equal, races, but arguing for the preservation of a superior race.

Resistance to the alleged effort to effect racial amalgamation is somewhat justified by Carter. Carter posits himself and his listeners as the defenders of the “original meaning” of *brotherhood*, in opposition to the “twisted” interpretation of *brotherhood* by the Communists. As with the previous letter, Carter would have been drawing upon the mainstream establishment’s vilifying of Communism and communist-sympathizers; opposition to Communism would have been self-evidently justified to his working-class listeners. In this speech, he draws a parallel between “States’ Righters” and “our founding fathers” by saying that both have been called “prejudiced” by Communists, and suggests by this parallel that states’ rights advocates are defending the same principles as the founding fathers, whose rectitude would also have been a given to Carter’s audience.

Carter also works to some degree to create and maintain a positive and unyielding stance in support of White supremacy. Primarily, Carter encourages the listener not to “yield” to the “twisted” interpretations of Communists by spelling out the consequences of such acquiescence: “if we follow it [the Communist’s version of “the American Way of Life”], are propagandized into practicing it, because we believe it IS the American Way, then we are practicing and following the formula for attaining Communism in this country.” The consequence of this would be to destroy “a part of the moral fibre in Americans.” A stance in support of White supremacy, he suggests, would eliminate this

threat.

The defense of the character of Carter's organization and position is also somewhat muted in this piece. He suggests that he and his listeners, as part of the "majority of the Christian faith" in America would "like to see everybody converted to the Christian faith," but "not one Christian in ten thousand and possibly a hundred thousand, would agree to any law that would deny any person the right to worship as he pleased." By characterizing himself and his listeners as the defenders of religious freedom, and especially the religious freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, he again draws a parallel to the stated values of the founding fathers, and thereby defends the basic principles of his organization and those of his listeners who sympathize with its cause.

The principal focus of this speech, in both of its sections, is an extended rationalization that Carter, his organization, and his listeners are all victims of an outside plot. In the first section, the plotters are "communists," "communist-fronters and socialists with their travelers." These entities have launched "a vicious hate attack on STATES' RIGHTERS, 'prejudiced' White Southerners, and what [they term] 'reactionaries,' including 'dixiecrats.'" The community is depicted as threatened by the "twisted" interpretations of "power words" by these groups. Under threat are the *American Way of Life*, the true meanings of *brotherhood*, *patriotism*, *nationalism*, and the integrity of the races. In the second section, the plotters are members of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, whose stated purpose of creating "better understanding among religious groups" is demonstrated to be nothing but a "straw fight." The true purpose, which Carter purports to expose, is to "favor federal law for suppression of the right of racial separation." Both organizations are said to support

measures which are supposedly in defense of “brotherhood” but which would actually lead to “amalgamation”: the Genocide Treaty, Civil Rights legislation, the Human Rights Commission’s proposals, and federal laws to force integration.

The threat posed by both organizations is underlined by Carter’s deployment of both the parable about the man and his neighbor and of the plight of Poles who in 1945 “were desperately attempting to escape the Russian yoke.” Carter suggests that the National Conference of Christians and Jews, through their support of the Religious News Service which criticized prejudice among the Polish Christians, would wish a fate upon Carter and his listeners which would be similar to that of the Polish Christians whom Carter says “are no longer prejudiced [because] they don’t have the right under Russian Communism, and we doubt if they have the right to be Christians.” Carter associates with his opponents the negative terms *oppression*, *force*, *evil*, *power law*, *propaganda*, *crackpotish*, *suppression*, and *dictatorial*, all of which serve to characterize them as a threat to his community.

In this piece, as in the letter, Carter encourages unity between his organization and his listeners, primarily by having effectively painted a portrait of a treacherous enemy. He also deploys the first-person plural pronoun—“we have noted” and “our Constitution” and “if we follow it”—to create a sense of community between himself, his organization, and his listeners. He draws in listeners who might previously have sympathized with the National Conference of Christians and Jews by absolving them of any wrongdoing, saying “People can hardly be held responsible for being taken in with words they have been taught all their lives to respect,” but calls upon them to reflect upon the actions of that organization. The final word of the speech, “brother,” also acts to

draw the listener into a relationship with the speaker and his community.

Again, Carter deploys all of the strategies said by Braden to be common to White supremacists of the period—“sanctifying” the “faith,” white supremacy, legitimizing resistance, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending the ethos of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing the need for unity (Braden 340)—yet he has in this piece deviated slightly from the strategies. Unlike other speakers, who sought to create unity between all Whites in the community, Carter excludes with some vengeance those who participate in the National Conference of Christians and Jews. As McWhorter notes, the Birmingham chapter of this organization was composed mostly of “the Chamber of Commerce’s moderate members” (McWhorter, Carry 100). Carter’s willingness to alienate the more moderate members of the White community, in the interest of creating greater community amongst the more extreme members of that community, went beyond the norm for a White supremacist of the period, and it is likely that this is the factor which immediately caused him trouble.

Though an effective piece of rhetoric when aimed at an audience of like-minded individuals—the speech was reprinted in Common Sense, a publication that organizations with which Carter was identified would later distribute all across Alabama⁴⁸—this particular speech cost Carter his first position as an important political spokesperson. Carter would later imply that he was fired from WILD because there were two card-carrying Communist Party members on staff at the station—though it was far more likely that advertisers complained⁴⁹ and certainly James Head, one of the founders of the local chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, helped the process along⁵⁰—and further claimed to have worked with the FBI in exposing them. Within days after

this claim was reported to the FBI, Carter was forced to recant it, and was warned by the FBI not to spread such rumors in the future.⁵¹ But, the almost certain reason for his firing was that Carter had stepped over the boundary by making open associations between Jews and the Communist Party, or perhaps because Carter had made associations between the moderate Christians who were in the National Conference and the Communist Party. It is significant that despite the hardline white supremacy of the piece, open and extreme, there were no repercussions associated with the airing of those views.

Thus, we see in these two early pieces that Carter's white supremacy is barely coded, extreme, and uncriticized. His anti-Semitism is somewhat coded, lying in an affiliation between two organizations rather than in open critique, but extreme—it was, however, deeply criticized. Because we have no other speeches of the period with which to compare it, it is uncertain however whether his anti-Semitism had been tolerated when not connected to moderate Whites—so the precise reason for the criticism is not entirely clear. We do see clearly, however, that Carter is developing certain tactics which will later serve him well: techniques for creating an identification between himself and his listener such as the explication of supposedly coded terms and the deployment of cultural symbols and stereotypes, the characterization of himself and his listeners as part of an endangered community under attack by a massive and cloaked enemy, and the depiction of himself as the one “in the know” who will share his knowledge with the listeners and lead them into a successful defense against that enemy.

Playing Both Ends: The “Respectable” Citizens’ Council and the Klan

After his dismissal from WILD, Carter threw himself into the Citizens’ Council

movement and in October 1955 founded the North Alabama Citizens' Council in Birmingham.⁵² This was the tenth Citizens' Council formed in Alabama, the others having been formed in the Black Belt areas; it was formed primarily by the ASRA, Carter, archsegregationist attorney Hugh Locke Sr., and druggist John H. Whitley. These businessmen, along with Smyer and his friends among the Dixiecrats of Birmingham, chose Carter to lead the newly formed Council. Smyer's goal, says McWhorter, was to transpose move the council movement into an urban setting and to gain the support of the working-class—whom they also hoped to divert from organized labor associations—which the ASRA had not attracted. They wished to graft ASRA's elite constituency onto the Council movement so as to gain the following they needed to accomplish their goals. The offices which Carter set up for the North Alabama Citizens' Council were in a vacant movie theater in Bessemer, Alabama, a racially segregated area in which almost 10,000 blue collar and low-level white collar families lived close to Birmingham's steel industry.⁵³

It was during this time, says Dan T. Carter, that Asa Carter became involved with the notorious Klan group, Ensley Klavern No. 31. There he "stepped into the shadowy world of modern American terrorism" along with such notorious figures as J. B. Stoner and Robert "Dynamite Bob" Chambliss. "Few members of this precarious brotherhood," Dan T. Carter comments, "were as intelligent or as articulate as Carter."⁵⁴ Indeed, Carter did not intend to stay for long as a mere member, and used his time in the Ensley Klavern primarily to "recruit the most dedicated Klansmen" to his own group, which he would later incorporate as the "Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy."⁵⁵ Though Carter may have had higher aspirations for his participation in the Council movement, Dan. T.

Carter points out that he was most effective in using it as “a screening mechanism to identify potential Klansmen who met secretly in his Bessemer theater.” Carter would be active in the Ensley Klavern until the end of 1957, when the large and well-organized US Klans, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan led by Rev. Alvin Horn, would lift the charter of the Ensley Klavern because of “Carter influence.”⁵⁶

During this period, Carter financed himself through various means. He did probably receive a salary from the Citizens’ Council, but sometime between his dismissal from WILD in early 1955 and January of 1956 he obtained a service station through a \$3,000 loan from W. H. Hoover, and he received other “support” from Hoover and Hugh Morrow, Sr., during 1955 and early 1956.⁵⁷ While Carter preferred to characterize his movement as one of the “working man”—he would later relate the story of the founding of the North Alabama Citizens’ Council by saying that in November of 1955, he had met with “a half dozen workingmen [. . .] in his home” (Martin 117)—and while it is true that his center of operations was in a working-class area, he was still primarily financed by the businessmen who had founded ASRA and who also financed the Council movements. Thus, though Carter was found “useful” by such wealthy businessmen, Carter also utilized the resources given him by these leaders to further his own political aims. This symbiotic relationship between Carter and the wealthier class with which he did not identify, and would later vilify, was characteristic of Carter’s political activities throughout his life.

This symbiotic relationship benefited Carter, but also the businessmen who financed him. Without the monetary support of these business leaders, Carter would have to have held a salaried position of some sort which would have prevented him from

engaging in political activities during the day and might well have limited his ability to travel and to work at night—making him far less effective of an organizer. But, for the business leaders in Birmingham, Carter was a useful front man for their own racism. Because these businessmen had to interact with the community at large, they were in no position to offend openly the local wealthy individuals who were Jewish or to outrage too deeply leaders of the Black community whose members provided them both cheap labor and a ready local market.

Business leaders needed Carter to mobilize the lower class Whites to preserve the status quo without having to dirty their own hands, which might have limited their ability to do business effectively. Thus, while business leaders may have been exploiting Carter's rabbleroxing abilities, Carter just as surely was providing them a service they believed they badly needed. Eventually, of course, Carter would serve another need when his extremism became a liability—having supported him principally by covert methods, business leaders would be able to characterize Carter and his followers as the instigators of troubles in Birmingham and to reposition themselves as the champions of moderation and friends to the Civil Rights movement. This alteration of stance among Birmingham's business leaders is well documented in McWhorter's book, Carry Me Home, but at this time the business community was firmly behind Carter and his White supremacist efforts.

During the early organizational period of Carter's Council, Carter and his cadre of working men publicized their group by handbill, by telephone, and through radio spots, and Carter worked to establish other Councils throughout northern Alabama. Between October and December of 1955, membership in all Alabama Citizens' Councils,

including Carter's, increased from a few hundred to twenty thousand (Martin 117). It was during this period that the FBI began investigating Carter in early 1956, noting his increasing involvement as a political activist for the Citizens' Council movement.⁵⁸ In January of 1956, a meeting of the Eastern Section Citizen's Council—eventually the largest of Carter's councils and his chief support—was brought to an end with a fiery speech by Carter, who shared the stage with State Senator Walter Givhan. Carter had also spoken earlier in the month to a Citizen's Council meeting at Tarrant, endorsing segregation.⁵⁹

February would bring the first critical test of Carter's influence within the Citizens' Council movement. In the summer of 1955, Autherine Lucy had won the right to enroll in classes at the University of Alabama—legal delays prevented her from attending classes during the fall, but she was prepared to begin attending classes in early February.⁶⁰ Carter's Council members were ready. For three nights after Lucy's first day of class on Friday, 3 February 1956, Leonard Wilson, a University of Alabama sophomore from Selma, led a series of demonstrations and riots in town.⁶¹ Carter's Council members—principally those who would later make up his Klan group—may have been present during that weekend, but they were certainly among the “three thousand assembled [. . .] to greet Autherine Lucy” when she returned to classes on Monday.⁶² Lucy emerged after her first class of the day to an egg and rock-throwing mob—made up mostly of workers from a Goodrich plant, many of them followers of Carter—but was sheltered by two university officials, and ducked into a car whose windshield was cracked and side window broken while the group of men surrounding it tried to jerk open the doors. She arrived at Graves Hall for her next class, and ran inside

for cover as the crowd yelled, "Let's kill her, let's kill her."⁶³ Some of the crowd tried to break into the classroom, but the professor had locked the door (Cook 1).

Forty minutes after the class ended, a Negro volunteer stood in front of the Union building across the street, diverting the crowd's attention, and Lucy was able to slip out of Graves Hall under the care of three officers.⁶⁴ As McWhorter points out, Lucy was "the first black student in the history of desegregation to be greeted with organized violence. More than a thousand Negroes had already entered southern colleges and universities uneventfully" (McWhorter, Carry 99). It is very likely that Carter, in his role as organizer and violence-advocating agitator, was one of the principal figures who provoked the white resistance movement into increased violence.

By the time Carter's followers were involved in the Lucy riots, Carter had become one of the brightest stars in the Alabama Citizens' Councils. By virtue of his skilled demagoguery, he had organized two large chapters in Birmingham and had other affiliated chapters throughout the state. It was said that the majority of his followers were union members, and in keeping with the wishes of his sponsors, Carter used his abilities to both attract these members while simultaneously assisting in "devastat[ing] organized labor."⁶⁵ Carter continued his activities with the Council, though not all were received positively. On 16 January, Carter made some remarks about the FBI that other Council members objected to, and which they claimed kept new members from joining. Carter, chairman of the Eastern Section of the Citizens Council Ted Hagen, and other Council members visited on 26 January with Dean William F. Adams at the University of Alabama and discussed the issue of Negro admissions, assuring him that he had the full support of the Council. Carter drew the wrath of several members when he disclosed

“confidential matters which had been discussed at that conference” (Strickland, “Citizens Council Split” 40).

Nevertheless, on 5 February the North Alabama Citizens’ Council office was officially set up, and Carter became a paid employee of that Council.⁶⁶ Carter made a suggestion that petitions be circulated calling for the impeachment of Folsom, but Hagen voted to postpone it, and the Eastern Section Council engaged legal advisors to consult on the matter, though it was generally thought to be impractical. Carter soon thereafter suggested that the North Alabama Council attempt to become state-wide, but this suggestion too was not met favorably, and Carter was challenged when he represented the North Alabama Association as a state-wide group when drumming up membership in Tuscaloosa (Strickland, “Citizen Council Split” 40). Facing these growing challenges, Carter announced that there would be a meeting on 9 March at the Municipal Auditorium that would be sponsored by The Southerner Magazine—though several meetings of the board of directors were held to discuss this rally, no officer of the Eastern Section was consulted and several meetings were presided over by Carter, himself, despite the fact that the charter said that the meetings had to be called by the chairman.⁶⁷

On 22 February, Carter spoke extemporaneously in Warrior, Alabama, at the meeting of a Citizens’ Council affiliated with his North Alabama Citizens’ Councils. An FBI informant reported that Carter said that soldiers who disliked being under Negro officers in the armed services should leave the Army and go home.⁶⁸ In late February, at a banquet to honor “the Nazis’ old ‘man on horseback,’” Major General George Van Horn Moseley, Carter and other Council leaders, including those of the Black Belt Councils, sociably toasted their honoree together (McWhorter, Carry 101). It would be

the last time Carter was accepted as a full member in the elite ranks of the establishment Council movement.

The “Respectable” Council Attempts to Exorcise Carter

On 29 February, Anthony reports, several important officers of Carter’s Council resigned and a large percentage of its members also walked out. The chief point of contention, McMillen reports, was Carter’s decision to call for the retirement of the president of the University of Alabama “for permitting even the temporary desegregation of that institution.”⁶⁹ The next day, Carter announced in the Birmingham News that the North Alabama Citizens’ Councils would hold a “mammoth rally” at Municipal Auditorium on March 9. As executive secretary of the North Alabama White Citizens Councils, Carter told the Birmingham News that time he would announce “a solution to Judge (H. Hobart) Grooms’ decision” in which the federal judge had ruled that Autherine Lucy would have to be allowed to return to the University on March 5. Though trustees had already circumvented the decision by expelling Lucy on other, trumped up charges, Carter said the rally would go on as planned and told the newspaper that he expected a crowd of “more than 15,000 persons.” Though he refused to give details of his plan, he did say that “we do not approve of evasion or circumvention tactics. We believe in fundamental correction.” Clearly, his organization would not be proposing a diplomatic solution. The Birmingham News reported that at that time, 45 Citizen’s Councils were operating within Carter’s organization, though the figure was almost certainly among Carter’s exaggerations.⁷⁰

But, even before the rally could take place, other Council leaders were jockeying

to move Carter out of power in the movement. On 4 March, the Birmingham News reported that sharp differences were beginning to emerge between the North Alabama Citizens' Councils of which Carter was executive secretary and the Association of Citizens' Councils of Alabama of which Engelhardt was executive secretary.⁷¹ The latter organization, which leaders claimed was "not against anything or anybody" but was interested in retaining segregation laws, had been incorporated as a statewide organization at a meeting in February that had been attended by over 15,000 people—a figure that Carter was almost certainly trying to beat when predicting attendance at his own rally. Carter's organization, which required of its members a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, was being called anti-Semitic. Engelhardt was said to "make it clear his organization [had] no religious prejudices," unlike Carter's group, but the more likely reason for the widening schism was embedded in Engelhardt's claim that his organization was "not interested in furthering the personal and political ambitions of any of our members" (Sparrow, "Sharp Differences" 26A).

McMillen reports that "there was more involved than Carter's well-known anti-Semitism and his ill-conceived attacks on a university president," and the more likely cause was "the old feud between the Bourbon and the Redneck."⁷² McWhorter concurs, saying that Carter's "fiery underdog demeanor had always troubled the rich southern gentlemen-legislators who headed the councils' dominant Black Belt chapters." Those in power became concerned that Carter's "folk movement" of the lower classes was getting too much power of its own, and was no longer willing to be mere foot soldiers for the upper class, Engelhardt and his fellows began to publicly distance themselves from Carter. However, McWhorter contends, Sid Smyer and others in Birmingham remained

“ambivalent about him, their urban agenda being somewhat different from that of the Black Belt whites”; Carter’s successes in disrupting union activities made him a continued attraction to the Birmingham group (McWhorter, Carry 101). On 5 March, Carter and the Engelhardt group again exchanged remarks in the press—Carter claiming that the Association of Citizens’ Councils was run by “a few political leaders” and leaders of the Association repeating their criticisms of the North Alabama Citizens’ Councils as being “anti-Semitic.” On 7 March, Carter’s own Councils met to discuss the coming rally, and the leadership decided to take a moderate course and not circulate petitions calling for the impeachment of Folsom.⁷³

In this atmosphere of growing strife, Carter’s Council held a rally on 9 March at which retired Admiral John Crommelin was to speak. Three thousand Council members, far short of Carter’s predictions but still a large enough crowd to rate front-page treatment in the Birmingham News the next day, attended the meeting. A picture of the meeting shows a relatively full house, a row of dignitaries seated on the stage, a man at a lectern in the center front of the stage, and a huge Confederate battle flag hung from the ceiling at the back of the stage. A brass band played and hundreds were signed up as new members in the Council.⁷⁴ It was at this meeting that Carter was to have probably his greatest measure of legitimate political presence in Birmingham.

In a speech that lasted nearly an hour and a half, Carter called “for a ‘bloodless revolution’” and despite the agreement made at the meeting two nights before, he called for the impeachment of Gov. James E. Folsom “for failure to uphold our Constitution.” He went on to say, “we want to force the issue now. We don’t want peace in our time.” Carter also criticized each of the Supreme Court justices. The crowd booed loudly when

Justice Hugo Black, of Alabama, was mentioned. Carter made his usual accusation that the NAACP leadership was active in communist-front organizations, claiming that some of them were in “as many as 72 different ones.” He particularly criticized “‘politicians who tell us not to start a fight,’” but who instead recommended that the state set up private schools or a three-way school system. Growing more apocalyptic, Carter stated that the issue of segregation would “be settled within two years ‘one way or the other.’” The solution, he claimed, was to have a “governor who will say to the Supreme Court that ‘the first Negro who sets foot in our white schools will be put in jail’” and who would “say to a federal judge, ‘if you continue to connive with the NAACP to put Negroes into our schools, we’ll put you in jail.’” Referring to the public schism between his group and the larger Council organization, he “denied that his group stands for anything except ‘anti-integration, anti-communism and anti-atheism,’ and said it is not true that the Citizens Councils are split.”

The Birmingham News reported that “At one point in Carter’s talk, a heckler became so loud that Carter demanded that he be ‘taken out.’ Several men walked toward the elderly man, who got up and moved toward the door. Carter told his followers to ‘sit down. We’re all white folks here.’” He then went on to attack “newspapers, radio and television for what he said was an attempt to suppress the real facts concerning the segregation issue.” It was at the end of the speech that he called for the impeachment of Governor Folsom by the legislature, “and petitions were circulated through the crowd. He drew loud ‘amens’ and cheers when he charged that Folsom has failed to uphold our segregation laws and has not followed the Constitution ‘as he took an oath to do.’”⁷⁵ Though the speech was well received by those in attendance, “there was no noticeable

rush to sign the petitions” to oust Folsom (“Alabaman Urges” 14).

Carter’s call to impeach Folsom was taken with some seriousness by the press, who followed up on the story on 13 March, having found that the House was “definitely opposed” to Carter’s plan to impeach Folsom for lack of leadership in Alabama’s fight to preserve segregation. The plan was dismissed as “utter foolishness” and “preposterous” by Representative Robert Brown, a former speaker of the House. Representative Joe Goodwyn agreed, saying he had become “so fed up with these wild suggestions” that he was not even following reports about Carter’s plan, and instead suggested that “Nothing good can come from a radical course” (“Impeachment Plea” 32). On the same day, however, it was reported that Carter had said in Birmingham the previous night that the North Alabama Citizens’ Councils would circulate petitions that called for Dr. Oliver C. Carmichael [Carmichael], president of the University of Alabama, to resign. Carter criticized Carmichael’s reaction to the federal court action that led to the enrollment of Autherine Lucy, calling it too weak (“White Councils Clash” 4). Carter’s criticisms, bearing in mind that Lucy had already been effectively expelled from the University, were not particularly well received.

Indeed, within just a few days, Carter’s extremism would cause a serious rupture within his own organization. On 15 March, the Eastern Section of the Citizens Council, one of the largest associations in Carter’s group, met to discuss rewriting the constitution to remove the word “North” from the name of the organization, plans being to seek to form new councils throughout the state, but discussion turned to the elimination of the requirement that members believe in the divinity of Christ.⁷⁶ Leaders were also concerned about Carter’s call for the resignation of Carmichael from the University of

Alabama. Matters apparently grew heated, and Chairman Ted Hagan and other officers resigned.⁷⁷ A large number of the members walked out after Carter took the floor and said that he did not have to answer to the board for expressing his own views on Carmichael. Another officer pointed out that, as a paid employee, Carter should not have expressed sentiments that were not in keeping with those of the organization as a whole. Disregarding these developments, Carter asserted to a reporter investigating the incident that there had been “no breakup of the organization and that new officers were elected to fill the vacancies created by resignation.” He also “denied that there had been any walkout of membership, but added ‘it was a long evening. People were straggling out from time to time’” (“In Row” 1-2). Despite Carter’s claims, the breach in the organization was substantial and would, over time, cause even more serious problems.

Perhaps to distract attention from the growing dissention, Carter turned back to a topic that had been a favorite of his when he was a radio host, his crusade against rock-and-roll.⁷⁸ He briefly drew the national eye when the New York Times reported on 30 March that Carter had “charged today that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had ‘infiltrated’ Southern white teen-agers with ‘rock and roll music.’” Carter told the press that the North Alabama Citizens’ Council was “starting a survey in the Birmingham and Anniston areas and would ask juke box operators to throw out ‘immoral’ records in the new rhythm.” Though vendors said “this would mean eliminating most of their hits,” Carter asserted that “other records featuring Negro performers should be ‘purged.’” Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, was quoted as saying that “Some people in the South are blaming us for everything from measles to atomic fallouts” (“Segregationist Wants” 39).

Carter's attempts to divert attention were not successful, and on 17 March, the Birmingham News reported that the Eastern Section was considering forming a new Council, not associated with Carter's. On 6 April, Birmingham News staff writer Edwin Strickland wrote a lengthy article examining the roots of the schism and how it was affecting the activities of the North Alabama Citizens' Councils.⁷⁹ Strickland reported that the state-wide group, including Engelhardt's, had been growing by "thousands every week" until the 9 March rally—the Eastern Section alone had grown at a rate of 60 members each day—but in the four weeks after the rally, there had only been "a half a dozen new members added" to the Eastern Section. Growth was virtually halted. Strickland attributed the growing rift to four factors: the clause in the constitution that called for a belief in the divinity of Christ for membership, the circulation of the petitions calling for the impeachment of Folsom, the attacks made by Carter on Carmichael without the authorization of the Council, and Carter's increasingly autocratic manner of handling Council affairs ("Citizens Council Split" 40). Essentially, a battle was shaping up around Carter's attempts to align the political stance of the organization with his own.

On 9 April, the Birmingham News reported two developments: the leaders of Councils in 11 states had formed the Citizens' Councils of America, which included Engelhardt's group but not Carter's; Carter's group had "declared war on B-bop and Negro music which they say contributes to the moral [degradation] of children and serves the cause of integration." Carter's group created an "action committee," to be led by the Woodlawn Council, and claimed to have the "complete cooperation and backing of the 73 councils." Attempting to diminish the perception that there was division within the council, Carter stressed that "many of the representatives traveled long distances to attend

at their own expense,” and the new chairman of the Eastern Section, Earle Newman, was said to report that there was “no split in their organization.”⁸⁰ Carter’s desire to use the issue of “Negro music” to promote unity in his Councils would next take a bizarre turn.

Reign of Terror Begins: Carter’s Council Becomes Klan-like

The Birmingham News had run ads promoting singer Nat King Cole’s planned concerts in Municipal Auditorium for several days prior to the shows on 10 April 1956. Cole would be appearing with an all-White orchestra, led by British conductor Ted Heath, but would be playing to racially segregated audiences—Whites at 7:00 p.m. and Colored at 9:30 p.m. Even the tickets were sold separately, Whites getting theirs from the Forbes Company and Colored from Temple Pharmacy.⁸¹ Clearly, apart from the choice of his orchestra, Cole and his promoters were careful to adhere to local practices regarding racial segregation.

Nevertheless, four days before the performance, members of Carter’s North Alabama Citizens’ Council—almost certainly those who would also be members of his Klan group—met at the filling station of Kenneth Adams⁸² to discuss plans to attack Cole during his concert. The plan involved a mob of 150 men, to be made up of men from “Anniston, Piedmont, Bessemer, Tuscaloosa, and Birmingham.” A signal was to be given for the mob to attack, and all 150 were to storm the stage apparently in a demonstration of White solidarity against Negro music (“Police Say 150” 1, 9). Prior to Cole’s appearance, however, a number of telephone calls were received by the police—or perhaps policemen who were also members of Carter’s group gave reports—that caused the police to decide that there was “the possibility of disorder” at the concert. What

Police Commissioner Lindbergh called “adequate police protection,” dozens of uniformed and plainclothes policemen stationed throughout the auditorium and a number waiting in the wings, was assigned to duty at the show (“Six Held” 1-2).

All did not go as planned. Cole was performing the first show of the evening, before an all-White audience. When the signal was given as Cole was singing his second number, “Little Girl,” a brief commotion occurred near the main doors. An usher reported that he heard one of the men say, “Let’s go get that coon,” and three men—later identified as Kenneth Adams, Edgar L. Vinson, and Willis R. Vinson—rushed down the right aisle, running in a stooped position, followed closely by an officer. The assailants jumped over the footlights and tackled Cole around the legs, causing him to tumble backwards off the piano bench and the microphone to fall in his face. Immediately, policemen emerged from the wings, and encircled the assailants. One of the four men turned to look at the audience and yelled “white trash,” and then attempted to get near the microphone to make a pro-segregation statement. During the attack, the house lights were turned on, and the crowd came to its feet as the band began to play—rather ironically, “God Save the King.” The curtain came down as Cole lay on the stage. One officer suffered a nose fracture, and another officer had his glasses smashed. Adams and Edgar Vinson were handcuffed together and led off, while Willis Vinson was carried bodily out of the auditorium.⁸³

Outside the auditorium, officers met an angry Jesse Mabry, Carter’s co-editor on The Southerner, who had been observed near the stage during the incident. He argued with the officers, saying that “You ought to have that damn Negro out here instead of those white folks” and asking the officers why they weren’t beating Cole instead of the

“white boys.” Mabry was told several times to move along, but would take a few steps backward only to move forward again when the officer would turn to move other members of the crowd. As officers were unsure whether or not he was involved, they placed Mabry, too, under arrest (“Officer Testifies” 23).

Orliss Clevenger and Mike Fox were arrested after they were found sitting in a weapons-stocked automobile at the east side of the auditorium. An officer thought it strange that the two men were still sitting in the automobile when the performance was over and the crowd leaving, so he went over to ask for an explanation. Detectives searched the car and found two rifles “loaded with long-range hollow point cartridges” under the front seat where Clevenger was sitting, a homemade blackjack and a pair of aluminum knucks under the left front seat where Fox was sitting; two shotgun shells were found in Fox’s pocket and brass knucks in Clevenger’s. The men claimed that they “all were hunters and kept the guns in the car for hunting purposes.”⁸⁴ All six men were taken in and charged in connection with the incident,⁸⁵ the riot they had hoped to provoke never materialized.

Asa Carter was quick with his attempts to explain away the incident. He claimed that the six men had not gone with the intent to cause a riot, but had “merely attended the program as part of the council’s study of be-bop and rock-and-roll music”—Carter did not explain why the balladeer Cole would have been a suitable subject. Instead, he said they were provoked into violence after “a Negro in the rear of the auditorium knocked a camera from one of the arrested men’s hands.” Carter continued by saying that “the incident made him mad, and he ran down the aisle toward Cole, who was just another Negro to him.” The weapons found in the car outside, Carter asserted, “were for the use

of two of the men who were on their way turkey hunting”—though why knucks and long-range hollow point cartridges would be helpful with such a hunt was left to the imagination (“Police Say 150” 9). The ludicrous explanation offered by Carter⁸⁶ did little to dim criticism.

And, criticism was swift. Engelhardt lost no time in capitalizing on the connection of the men to Carter’s North Alabama Citizens’ Council, issuing a statement which said, “If we find any members like these in the Citizens Council of Alabama, they will be thrown out, as provided for by the constitution of this organization.” He asserted that his Council advocated “peaceful and legal means of settling the segregation question,” and added that the four men were not members of the Citizens’ Council of Alabama, saying that “we do not recognize any unit of the North Alabama Citizens Council” and cautioning potential members about “joining the wrong Citizens Council.”⁸⁷ Earle Newman, new chairman of the Eastern Section Citizens council also condemned the attack, and called the assault “indicative of immaturity of thought and reasoning.” Kenneth Adams’s brother, Joe Adams, chairman of the Anniston Citizens’ Council also disclaimed any connection to the attack: “This was not an action of the Citizens Council, and the council has nothing to do with it.”⁸⁸ The Birmingham News began running letters to the editor which decried the attack, and one writer even suggested that the actions of Carter’s men played “right into [the] hands of [the] Kremlin” because of their “rabid” nature.⁸⁹ The sparse attendance at a 13 April Northside Citizens’ Council meeting was attributed to the incident, and the chairman felt compelled to make it clear that “we had nothing to do with what happened at the Auditorium” (“Only One” 34).

The incident caused tensions between the Engelhardt and Carter groups to flare on 14 April, just before a rally which was to be held at Municipal Auditorium by Engelhardt's group, and the two factions were reduced to the level of name-calling. Engelhardt dismissed Carter's followers as "just a bunch of rabble rousers" who used "facist tactics."⁹⁰ Carter's response was pointed: "The seeming bitterness of Mr. Engelhardt is evidently the result of the politico and his friends' failure to capture and control a people's movement and fashion a political leadership of compromise and moderation based on cowardice and fear to play at combatting the intergrationists (sic)." His statement went on to say, "The truth, perhaps, is radical to the political ear, and is, as usual, labeled rabble rousing," and added that "Perhaps Mr. Engelhardt fears the truth. Perhaps Mr. Engelhardt does not really care to fight the integrationists." As in many of his works, Carter here utilizes his idiosyncratic rhetorical tactic of suggesting that the upper White classes were in league with the Civil Rights movement—if not overtly, than by default through failure to actively and aggressively pursue an extreme course—underpins his effort to begin a grassroots movement with himself as the head. By characterizing both compromise and moderation as negative aspects rather than positive ones, Carter covertly suggests that more extreme methods—though he does not state it, the obvious one would be violence—are preferable, if not the only ones which would actually be useful in "fighting" the integration efforts of Black leaders. Even in this short quotation, then, Carter's characteristic coupling of criticisms of local moderate White leaders and espousal of violence is evident.

This bickering between Engelhardt and Carter did nothing to increase solidarity in Carter's Councils—the Eastern Section Council began considering a break with Carter,

after which they would ally with Engelhardt's group⁹¹—and even Engelhardt's group began to suffer, as it failed to get a response from the majority of politicians to whom his group had sent a questionnaire about their stance on segregation. Both groups were disparaged by Senator Neil Metcalf, who pointed out that Engelhardt's group had offered support to the violent actions of University of Alabama riot leader Leonard Wilson and who scathingly suggested that the rivals “slug it out” over “a Little Mason-Dixon Line” dividing the state.⁹²

Probably in order to distance themselves from the reputation that they had gained under the name “North Alabama Citizens Councils,” Carter's group dropped “North” and became simply the “Alabama Citizens Councils”—making their group easier to confuse with Engelhardt's Citizens Councils of Alabama and simultaneously suggesting that they represented Councils across Alabama. However, the dissension caused by the actions of the six members of the North Alabama Citizens Councils who attacked Cole resulted in a permanent split of the large Eastern Section Council, when a majority of members voted to leave Carter's group (“East Citizen Council” 1-2). The majority vote—127 for and 77 against—was short of the two-thirds needed to change the constitution, so the dissenters formed a new, independent council. Carter was present at the vote, but did not speak; Earl Newman stayed on with the loyal followers, but issued a statement saying that the remaining members were “serious minded men who are trying to do a job. The foolishness is over and we hold no rancor against anyone” (“East Citizen Council” 1-2).

Of particular interest was a mimeographed sheet passed around at the meeting; over the signature of James Douglas Carter, Asa's younger brother, was a plea to raise funds for the “White People's Defense Fund,” which would be used to provide money for

the defense of the six accused in the Cole attack. The sheet repeated Asa Carter's story that "the Negroes themselves" had started the trouble by knocking a camera from the hands of one of the men and asserted that "many persons are giving one dollar a week into the fund" while others were contributing a lump sum of \$5 to \$100. On the reverse of the paper were attacks on Cole, who was called "a vicious agitator for integration of the Negro with the white race," the Citizens' Councils of Alabama, and Engelhardt.⁹³ Such appeals for funds, the control of which was unregulated, would become commonplace in organizations run by Carter whenever his sponsorship from wealthy patrons faltered.

If, as Braden suggests, we can consider that the rhetoric of a closed society does not merely include the "the traditional scope of verbal and rational communication as presented in Aristotle's Rhetoric," but also "extrinsic appeals that Aristotle puts outside the speaker's art," including "manipulation of the setting, control of the media," "exploitation of emotion," "coercion and even terror" (Braden 333-34), then we can consider the use of force in the Cole incident by members of Carter's organization to be of rhetorical import. It is unclear whether the attack on Cole was a genuine effort to create a mass demonstration of violence—though Mabry's presence would suggest that it may have been—or merely a case of a few extremists acting out a hypothetical plan which Carter had toyed with. The plan itself was ineffective, if the goal was to create solidarity within Carter's own organization, and even counterproductive to his goals in that it led to greater criticism and the undermining of Carter's own ethos. Two major points emerge to explain this inefficacy.

In the closed society of the Deep South, White supremacy was advocated, but

even those who “preach[ed] the old Ku Klux Klan white-supremacy line,” like Thomas P. Brady, made distinctions among Blacks. Desmond reports that Brady claimed to “love” Negroes, “‘good’ Negroes that is”;⁹⁴ apparently those who knew their place and did nothing to disrupt Southern traditions of racial separation. Cole and his sponsors had carefully adhered to local custom—holding two concerts, scheduling the Colored concert at the less attractive hour—in all but their choice of orchestra members and in the choice to have a Black performer before a White audience. Cole’s behavior after the incident garnered him the praise of Judge Parker, who conducted the trial against four of his attackers, who said of Cole that he had “observed our customs, traditions and laws, and his conduct was such as to win him new friends in the South” (“Four in Attack” 1). The targeting of Cole merely because of his race, without consideration of his other behaviors, put Carter’s followers—and Carter, by association—outside the realm of White supremacist conventions and undercut Carter’s efficacy.

Perhaps even more importantly, Carter’s attempt to manipulate the setting—to create a crisis where there was none—was ill-timed. The Birmingham crisis over the admission of Autherine Lucy had been resolved by the board of trustees when they expelled her soon after her lawyers’ claimed in late February that there had been a conspiracy between the mob and the university administration (McWhorter, Carry 103). The timing of the event had more to do with difficulties in Carter’s own organization than with any perceived threat to white supremacy in the Birmingham area. The actions of Carter’s followers did not alter the situation positively, but were themselves contextualized as negative—Governor Folsom himself praised “the Birmingham courts for their prompt action against those who would violate the constitutional rights of our

citizens and [who] tried to take the law into their own hands” (qtd. in “Folsom Praises” 11). Violence, in this case, was neither condoned nor tolerated by the establishment, and the action was rhetorically ineffective.

The ensuing months were relatively quiet. Engelhart’s councils continued to criticize Carter and his followers, calling them “race-baiters” and “radical and undesirable elements.”⁹⁵ Carter spoke at two Council rallies,⁹⁶ and had his followers continue their crusade against rock-and-roll. On 21 May the Birmingham News reported that members of Carter’s council had picketed a concert at Municipal Auditorium, and were counter-picketed by teens with “homemade signs reading ‘Rock and roll is here to stay.’” Bill Haley and other white groups appeared at the concert, but Negro acts such as Bo Diddley and LaVern Baker were also on hand; in keeping with local custom, “the Negro stars [. . .] appeared first and were all off the stage before the white groups came on,” and there were separate shows for Whites and Negroes. The auditorium was well-policed with officers and plain-clothed detectives, and officers outside kept the picketers circulating and prevented them from blocking the entrance. Fifty of Carter’s men paraded on the sidewalk, carry placards reading “Jungle music promotes integration,” “Be-Bop promotes Communism,” “Jungle music aids youth delinquency,” “Parents, are these your children?” “Preachers, do you deny Christ through moderation?” “Do our churches condone this music?” “Should Christians attend this show?” “Churches must speak out against these anti-Christ forces.” One of the picketers was Jesse Mabry, who had been convicted the previous month but whose conviction was being appealed, carrying a sign reading “Why Negro Music?” (“Pickets Walk” 1, 6). Carter’s continued campaign against any sort of Negro music, even when performers obeyed local custom, and against

moderation of any sort was clearly on display.

Seeking Respectability Out-of-State: Engaging in Klan Activity at Home

But, Carter's influence in Alabama was waning, and he sought to spread his influence outside of Alabama, where his antics were less widely known. McMillen reports that Carter tried to organize a Citizens' Council in Madison County, Alabama, along the Tennessee border, was unsuccessful—his rally in Huntsville drew “only fourteen people and no Council was formed”; he had similar problems recruiting in central Alabama, “Engelhardt's territory.” Carter appears to have been more successful in Dearborn, Michigan, where Carter's followers had joined with many United Automobile Workers to become active in Dearborn, Lansing, and Flint.⁹⁷

But, Carter's greatest success outside the region was with the White Citizen Council of the District of Columbia, whose leader was John Kasper.⁹⁸ Carter spoke to the first meeting of the group on 15 June, saying that “Communist integrationists [were] using the Negro to ‘tear up the framework of the federal government’” (“Asa Carter Tells” 9). Even before this meeting, however, the Montgomery Advertiser ran an editorial decrying the development:

Sad to relate, the Washington chapter affiliated itself with the WCC rump whose loathsome fuhrer is Asa (Ace) Carter of Birmingham. This is no political action organization formed to resist by profusely traditional American means the unbearable dispensation of the federal government, but a crude and repellant organization wallowing in malevolent prejudice against Negro and Jew.

The Advertiser cherishes the hope that Carter and his mob choke, for they and their breed are the *worst possible enemies* of the South at this time. They sicken potential sympathizers.

But to tell the truth, since we must have Carter with us for a while in Alabama, *The Advertiser* cannot resist a gentle amusement that Washington is to share the contamination.

As a matter of fact, it is more arresting that a Carter council should come to life in Washington than in Alabama since Carter is remote from Washington.⁹⁹

Carter and Kasper's affiliation, however, would flourish, and the two men would spend the summer months seeing "what they could do to keep the schools of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Clinton, Tennessee, segregated" (Chalmers 346).

In his campaign to keep schools segregated, Carter even opposed the "freedom of choice" amendment being proposed in Alabama, which would have created a three-tier system from which parents could choose—white, black, or mixed—with no compulsion to attend the latter.¹⁰⁰ Carter campaigned vigorously against the measure, though it was obviously designed to maintain segregation, because mixed schools would hypothetically have been possible. This absolutist position led Carter to also oppose integration in Clinton, Tennessee, where only 12 black students were to attend as part of the 806 registered students.¹⁰¹ John Kasper had preceded Carter to the locality in late August, and as Chalmers puts it, after "a week of door-to-door canvassing and haranguing he [would turn] the little four-thousand-person community into a raging, seething mob town that only the Tennessee National Guard could quiet." Kasper had picketers around the

school bearing signs which read “Go home, coons,” “Coon season open,” and “Keep Negroes out.”¹⁰² Kasper had already instigated a riot and been arrested twice before he brought Asa Carter into town to help recruit people into a local Citizens’ Council.

On 24 August, Carter had spoken at a public rally in Midfield, Alabama, wearing a KKK robe, hood, and large colored glasses so that only a small portion of his face could be seen. Carter was introduced as “Mr. X,” and the FBI informant who reported the event said that “Carter made a strong speech in favor of segregation and added that Carter is a very fluent and effective speaker.”¹⁰³ He arrived in Clinton on 31 August, planning to speak at a 7:30 rally that night. Carter delivered his speech before a crowd of more than 1000 in front of the Anderson County Courthouse. Carter’s overt purpose was to organize a Citizens’ Council in Clinton, and he apparently succeeded as many people lined up to register as members (“Clinton Sheriff” 1). A secondary purpose, however, was also fulfilled after Carter “loosed a tirade against integration, the U. S. Supreme Court and the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People.” Because he pointedly avoided any mention of the integration situation in Clinton, itself, “nobody moved to stop him, immediately, as they had against John Kasper.”¹⁰⁴ The speech received “applause and cheers—there were no boos.” Clearly, the crowd responded favorably to his harangue.

The results were devastating. A reporter would later describe how Carter had “whipped the crowd to a fever pitch” and brought it near lynching. A group of youths, departing a football game, swelled the crowd during the latter part of Carter’s speech (Morin 1). After the speech was over, the mob prowled down Clinton’s main street and began to wreak havoc. Both local and non-local traffic was stopped; the yelling and

chanting crowd began tearing open car doors, ripping off ornaments and accessories, rocking and trying to upend cars with Negroes in them. Local law enforcement could not stop the riot. A car from Ohio and another from Michigan with “obviously frightened Negroes” were stopped by the crowd—a Negro woman in the Michigan car screamed in terror—and their doors opened, but the cars sped away before the mob could force its way inside.¹⁰⁵ A new sheriff was sworn in at midnight, replacing the previous anti-integration sheriff, and went directly to work, appealing to the rioters to disperse; the crowd began to thin, no arrests were made and no injuries reported. By 1 a.m., all was quiet again, though the tensions remaining caused a military presence—of 633 men, 10 tanks, and a helicopter—to be brought in; they remained until September 11.¹⁰⁶

In the aftermath of the Clinton riots, Carter immersed himself in a flurry of anti-desegregation activities. He continued his extremism in speeches, holding up copies of the Birmingham News and referring to it as the *Birmingham Jews*; he even took exception to the comic strip Blondie, saying that the inept Dagwood “undermines fatherhood, a sacred value in the Christian family.”¹⁰⁷ One particular speech given in Charlottesville, Virginia—where a desegregation order was being appealed—only two days after the Clinton speech rated particular notice in the press, and sections were quoted. Carter told the cheering crowd that “it’s up to you to stand and see that the Negro is not going to enter your schools.” He went on to say that “We know if Virginia falls, the whole South will be in danger.” In a dramatic turn, he said “he was willing to put his ‘blood on the ground’” to prevent integration and claimed that “They don’t build a federal government big enough to integrate my children.” A reporter summarized part of the speech: Carter launched his usual attack on the Supreme Court for having declared

public segregation unconstitutional, but additionally attacked the Southern and Virginia Councils on Human Relations, both of which were pro-integration groups. “Enemies of the South have taken over both political parties, he said, and now there is no one for whom the Southern white man can vote for president. He said residents of the South cannot look to their politicians or to the courts for a solution of the segregation problem.” Carter was quoted as saying, “This is not a legal problem.” Instead, he claimed, “It won’t be settled in the courts. It is up to you to say the Negro is not going to your schools, and it is up to you to keep him out.”¹⁰⁸

As one of the few articles to provide a relatively full account of a Carter speech, this piece provides us with the clearest view of Carter as an extemporaneous speaker. In what is reported of the speech, we find some of the strategies that Braden calls characteristic of the rhetoric of the closed society of white supremacists. White supremacy is of course implicit, but not dwelt upon. Some attempt is made to legitimize resistance in the claim that the “fall” of Virginia would be disastrous for the whole South. A positive and unyielding stance is proposed in the sections on preventing Negroes from entering the schools, but little effort is expended upon the character of the people present. There is much effort to paint Charlottesville as the victim of an outside plot—among the leaders of the plot are the Supreme Court and the Southern and Virginia Councils on Human Relations, and the “enemies” who had taken over the established political parties. Unity is again implied, but not overtly called for, action is.

The speech, however, is clearly characteristic of what Flynt would later characterize as “unethical rhetoric” of the sort that inflamed the situation later in Birmingham of 1963.¹⁰⁹ Flynt notes three points about the speeches which aggravated

the situation in Birmingham: irresponsible speakers “advocated direct confrontation in emotional and irrational tirades,” more responsible speakers “used essentially the same irrational arguments, appealing to fear, frustration, and anger” but did “advise against direct action,” and both types of speakers “identified integration with hated external symbols.” The result, says Flynt, was that “by their appeal to emotion which short circuited rational judgment, even the more respectable orators unconsciously made the alternative to continued segregation so unacceptable that any method of resistance (even violence) became justified” (Flynt 42).

Carter’s speech clearly exhibits the features which Flynt attributes to the speeches of “irresponsible individuals”—Carter calls for direct action and violence. He states openly that the auditors cannot rely on those figures who would solve the crisis through legal means—politicians, local or federal government, courts—and should take matters into their own hands, saying repeatedly, “it is up to you.” That the action he advocates is violent is made clear in the statement that he would put his own “blood on the ground,” by which he encourages the auditor to do the same. The alternative to this action, he says, would be to see his and their children “integrated”—the ungrammatical use of the term implying “miscegenation” rather than merely their being placed into contact with children of other races.

Carter’s open advocacy of violence in this speech, an example of his spontaneous oratory, is significantly different from the coded advocacy present in his written works—even though those too were often delivered orally. The key distinction appears to be the degree to which Carter could be assured of the auditors’ support, and the degree to which his speech could be recorded and reported. Cheering crowds, and bursts of applause,

seemed to entice Carter into extreme statements that would excite the crowd further.

Also, when the speech could only be represented second-hand by the press, whom Carter could call slanted, he also seemed more willing to be overt. In both these choices, Carter can be seen as an adept orator, adjusting his discourse to the moment at hand and also to the possibilities of future representation; in this speech, as in the speech made in Clinton, Carter was clearly efficacious.

By 10 September, Carter had returned to Clinton along with Kasper and, having been denied the right to hold a meeting in Clinton, held one just past the county line in front of a crowd of 250—the crowd dispersed quietly after the speech.¹¹⁰ The pair returned to Birmingham, where Kasper spent the next weeks speaking before members of Carter’s Councils, drawing comparisons between themselves and the colonial militia, calling both “rabble rousers and agitators.” At the end of September, another large rally at which Carter was to speak was cancelled when the town, a suburb of Knoxville, refused permission to use the local park.¹¹¹

A second rally, which was not cancelled, drew about 500 persons on September 30. Carter again told the listeners that “when every legal step has been taken to stop integration, citizens should ‘take it in [their] own hands.’” Calling attention to the fundraising that was going on in Kasper’s behalf, Carter said, “I don’t want your money. Keep it right here to defend other men in this cause. I want white men to fight” (“Ku Klux Klan Crosses” 30). On 6 October, Kasper addressed a Klan rally in Warrior, Alabama. Kasper appeared alongside Kenneth Adams, who still was facing assault charges in the attack on Cole, and denounced “integration, Tennessee politicians, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.” Also on the platform was

Asa Carter, in one of the few open appearances that he made before a Klan group. Carter ended the month facing accusations that he and his groups were helping to deprive Blacks of voting privileges, a charge which he denied in the press on 25 October, though he alleged that there was an effort to register Negroes in mass in northern Alabama.¹¹²

The Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy: Carter's Personal Klan Division

Only one major event is reported to have occurred in Carter's life during November of 1956, but it was one of the most critical. After the charter of the Ensley Klavern was pulled by U. S. Klans, and several other units were put on probation, Carter finally moved to incorporate his own branch, unaffiliated with the official Klan establishment.¹¹³ The Birmingham News reported on 29 November that a new klavern of the Ku Klux Klan had been incorporated in Birmingham. The paper listed out the names of officers and board members, along with street addresses, and excerpts from the incorporation document.¹¹⁴ Oddly enough, the newspaper omitted the document's mention of "Board Member and Advisor to the Board," "Earl Carter" of Route 5, Anniston, Alabama—the address being that of Asa Earl Carter's father Ralph. The document itself,¹¹⁵ dated the 20th of November and filed in Jefferson County, states that the group had already been formed, adopted bylaws, and elected officers as required for the purposes of incorporation. It states the name, "Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy," but then explains that the group is not intended to be confined to the Southern States but would be "national in scope." The purposes of the incorporated entity are set forth:

To defend the Constitution of the United States, and to lawfully oppose

those who would destroy or pervert it; to stand for law and order; to assist in the promotion of peace and harmony in communities; to assist in the avoidance of racial tensions, and by friendly discussions to endeavor to bring about understandings between races; to particularly assist in preserving the American form of government; to espouse American philosophy in opposition to Communistic doctrines and influences; to carry on educational campaigns, distribute literature, and hold peaceable assemblies toward the attainment of the above ends.

The document then goes on to explain how the group will be organized. First, “all [the organization’s] power of organization and operation, excepting the powers otherwise stated in the declaration” were to be vested in the “holder of the highest office to be attained in this organization,” the “Grand Wizard of the Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy,” who would be appointed for life by the board of governors by unanimous vote.¹¹⁶ All other offices were to be held by appointment of the Grand Wizard, and duties were to be determined by the Grand Wizard—each reported to the next highest unless otherwise directed by the Grand Wizard. In descending order, the offices and associated territories were: the Grand Dragon in charge of the state, the Grand Titan in charge of a district, the Grand Giant in charge of a county, the Grand Cyclops in charge of a “Lair” whose members would appoint him. Listed then were the members of the National Board of Governors, whose duty it was to distribute all funds “upon advice from the membership.” After a few disclaimers that the group would not sell alcohol or gamble, the document closes with the request for a charter, the signatures of John Tully, Jacob H. McQueen, and “A. Earl Carter,” and statements by the notary public along with

her signature and the judge of probate along with his signature.

The omission of Carter, who is named in the document and whose signature appears at the end, from the Birmingham News article is inexplicable. This omission makes more sense, however, when one realizes that it would have permitted Carter to continue to operate as a legitimate leader of the Alabama Citizens' Council without calling attention to his membership in another, far less savory, organization. The document itself names the enemies of this organization—those who would destroy or pervert the Constitution, Communists. By implication, it also names as enemies those who would disrupt “the peace and harmony in communities” and who would cause “racial tension,” in the coded language of the time meaning those who opposed segregation laws. Though not explicitly tied to an outside plot in this document, such enemies had become Carter's standard list of “outside” enemies. Similarly, such phrases as “stand for law and order” and “preserve the American form of Government” would serve to promote the good character of those involved in the organization. This implicit opposition of evil and virtue was a chief tool in Carter's discourse, and it is not surprising to find it used even in this business-like incorporation document.

On the day this document was filed, Carter held a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy in his Alabama Citizens' Council building, Central Park Theatre.¹¹⁷ An FBI informant stated that about 50 Klansmen were present and 24 new Klansmen were initiated with the “Blood Oath,” which required the applicant to kneel before a superior officer of the organization with one hand on the Bible; the “applicant [would] then [cut] his wrist with a sharp instrument and [write] in blood his initials on a piece of paper which [would then be] burned” (Mobley, “KKK Official” 2). Asa Carter was present at

the meeting, wearing a red cape over his white robe and a red helmet that completely covered his head. He stated that the new Klan would be organized in the same way the original Klan had been, as if it were military. Units were divided into platoons, and platoon leaders would be hooded and go by “fictitious names”—lieutenants present at that meeting were “Lt. Dead,” “Lt. Corpse,” and “Lt. Anglo.” Lieutenants would wear two bars, Captains would wear three bars, Majors would wear one star, and so forth, while security men would wear red helmets. In his talk, Carter covered several points: the history of the Klan, that a “huge defense fund” was to be created for the purpose of defending anyone who had legal problems, that the Klan would meet hooded and no one would remove his hood, that “the worst thing possible is to give information to unauthorized individuals” and that Carter did not want “anybody to sit in the electric chair as a result of some Klansman giving away Klan secrets. Clearly, Carter was concerned about the identification of members and intended that the group would engage in activities which might lead to the electric chair were a member found out—murder being the most likely.

National Exposure: The Symbiosis of the Reputable and Disreputable

Despite this Klan activity, Carter did not give up his leadership of the Alabama Citizens Councils, and in this capacity he met with John Bartlow Martin in late December of 1956 or early January of 1957. Martin was working on a series for The Saturday Evening Post about the racial unrest in the South when he interviewed Carter for an article that would appear in June 1957. Carter dressed carefully for the occasion, not in his usual suit and tie, but in Western attire so as to tap into the rugged individualist

stereotype rather than projecting an image that would suggest he was part of a dominant social class. Carter wore a “silky white shirt, slacks, a Western-style string tie with a clasp at the throat, [and] black cowboy boots.” Knowing he would be speaking to a Northern journalist, Carter apparently spoke in his best radio-announcer Midwestern accent, used his best diction, and made pains to appear “reasonable and persuasive.” His self-conscious performance, unfortunately, was apparent to Martin, who stated that “There is about him the quality of an actor who can do as he wishes with voice, gesture, expression. There is also a certain indifference, or coldness, or withdrawn-ness.” Martin summed up his impression by saying that when Carter talked about segregation, it was “hard to say whether he remains [calm] because he is controlling inner tension or because he feels nothing.” Carter wove a fanciful tale about his heritage and background, summing up his by now firm break with the ASRA by describing it derisively as “a polite way of being a respectable segregationist. I couldn’t be a member because I couldn’t afford the twenty-five-dollar fee” (Martin 116-17).

Carter told Martin how he got involved with the Citizens’ Councils, conveniently leaving out his association with wealthy businessmen in Birmingham and focusing on his efforts among “working men.” Using quotes from Carter’s magazine, The Southerner, and his broadsheets attacking local Jewish businessmen, Martin is able to demonstrate Carter’s extremism. Martin drew Carter into revealing comments by asking him about the situation in Montgomery, where Blacks were boycotting buses: “If I were in Montgomery now, I’d be organizing an underground resistance,” Carter responded. Carter wove a fanciful tale about his experiences in Clinton, saying “I gave ‘em what I consider to be the facts of the conspiracy to destroy America and our white race [. . .]

And I asked them to start a Citizens' Council, which they did that night. It was organized by lantern light behind a country church." His "escape" from local authorities, despite the fact that none had actually threatened him, was also fodder for his fictionalizing: "The attorney general had said I would be arrested but I was escorted out by a ring of farmers and workers who wouldn't let them have me. We took back roads to the country church." Carter then claimed to have helped organize the Youth League that subsequently began to harass Negro students in the school,¹¹⁸ emphasizing his own deep involvement in the troubles in Clinton.

Martin successfully drew Carter into an open description of his own political platform: "You have to operate both politics and an underground resistance. We realize that we are at the moment stuck with a reaction movement, with people who will take action only when the leftists take action against them. We're attempting to mold an action program that is in force at all times." This action force, Carter explained, was "a small cadre that's more solid" (qtd. in Martin 122). That this "small cadre" was associated with the Klan is suggested by Martin, who reports that Carter described the Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy and its operations in great detail. As part of his description, Carter gave a "history lesson" on the Klan:

"You see, the Klan was revived in 1915 by Doc Simmons of Atlanta but the politicians used it to make money. The original Klan, formed right after the war [the Civil War], that was the real one. My great-grandfather was in that. General Nathan Bedford Forrest organized it. Old Nathan B. was the only red neck in the army. After the war Lee retired on silver and lace and the rest of the generals made a little money, but Nathan B., the

old red neck, tried to figure out how to keep on fightin'. He'd heard about how sheets were used in South Carolina to scare the niggers.

Reconstruction came along, and Nathan B. organized the Ku Klux Klan to continue fighting. It comes from a Greek word 'kuklos,' meaning closed circuit, and the Scottish word 'clan.' The cross is a symbol of Christianity. Nathan B. was the Grand Wizard. It was organized as an army. It was disbanded in 1876." (qtd. in Martin 122)

In this extemporaneous speech, Carter eerily echoed the speech that he was said to have given at the first official meeting of the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy. Once again, he built up the good character of those in the organization by suggesting that they were carrying on a tradition of fighting for the right without concerns for monetary reward. His references to the military structure of the original organization, similar to that of his new organization, makes both seem more legitimate as underground, populist militias. His reference to the purpose of the organizations, "to scare the niggers," functions as a promotion of White supremacy. His references to "Nathan B.'s" desire to keep on fighting helps to create both a positive and an unyielding stance. Thus, even in this brief excerpt, Carter can be seen to access the accepted conventions of White supremacist discourse of the period. Martin's overall impression of Carter and his own position in terms of the Council movement, was that Carter was on the "extreme edge" (Martin 119).

Carter would remain on the edge of the Council movement, his own Council becoming increasingly indistinguishable from his Klan organization (McMillen 55), but continued to be active with his organizations, having been scheduled to appear as the principal speaker at a meeting of the Eastern Section on 3 January and at a meeting with

the Western Section on 11 January.¹¹⁹ But in late January of 1957, an event at a meeting of Carter's Klan would change all that.

Shootings at the Central Park Theater: The Disreputable Takes Command

On the night of 22 January, Carter's order of the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy, whose growth had been slow and which boasted less than 100 members, held a meeting at Central Park Theatre, also the headquarters of Carter's Alabama Citizens' Council, amidst growing tensions over "dictatorial leadership" and finances. In fact, four weeks before at a business meeting, Carter had been presented with the books of the organization and disagreed with the accounting. Before the meeting, the members had gone into a darkened corridor and put on their robes, hoods, and masks¹²⁰—varying in color according to rank, with "Confederate Grey" for the lowest ranking; a white robe, black cape and tight-fitting black hood resembling a bat for others; and a white robe with red hood and cape for high-ranking officers—many of them wearing guns and some of them with knives in their belts. A Confederate battle flag hung on the back wall of the stage area, a row of battered theater chairs stood along the back of the stage, a speaker's lectern was placed in the middle front of the stage, and two smoking flambeaux were on either end of the stage, lighting it; only two dim lights reflected upward near the center of the room, barely illuminating the darkened auditorium.¹²¹

It was about 10 p.m., and the meeting had been in its initial stages for about an hour; a tape recording of Carter speaking had been played. Then, Chad Bridges discussed recruitment before Carter was introduced as "Mr. X-Ray" and began discussing problems with finances. Carter said that he would call in men who were thought to have

been misusing funds and that he would not have anything to do with the organization if the money could not be accounted for.¹²² He was reported to have said, “This is my organization . . . it belongs to me I run it . . . I am the one that wrote the charter I’m the one to find out what happened and where [the money] went to” (“Ira Evans Identified” 6). Carter, standing on the stage alone, asked if anyone had further business to conduct before the meeting was called to order with the usual ceremony—during which a sword would be stuck into the floor and a knife into the speaker’s stand.¹²³

J. P. Tillery, lieutenant and leader of what was called the “bloody platoon,” rose on the right-hand side of the auditorium and addressed the meeting, saying that he thought “the purpose of [their] Klan organization was to get away from one man rule,” and that he objected to the way Asa Carter was running things, particularly the finances of the organization.¹²⁴ Some witnesses would later claim that this was all done with a gun in his hand, as if to make a point, though Tillery himself would dispute the story. Tillery would later testify that Carter took offense to the statement, saying, “Are you telling me I’m trying to run it?” To this, Tillery said he replied, “No, but I believe it should be run like it was set up.”¹²⁵ Carter jumped off the stage into the aisle, his white robe flaring open to show a “Sam Brown belt with long Western-type holster and gun,” and approached Tillery saying, “Come with me,” then directed some of the other men to bring Tillery back to the office. While Carter walked past, down the aisle, several of the men grabbed a struggling Tillery, knocking him down between the rows of seats, kicking and hitting him. Tillery told one of the men to turn him loose, or he would shoot.¹²⁶

What happened during the ensuing melee is uncertain. Testimony given to police and in the subsequent trial might well be tainted, and witnesses may have been

intimidated into changing testimony. But, the story as it emerged in the papers says that Tillery either had already pulled his gun out, or pulled it out while he was on the floor, between the seat rows. Then, either Harold McBride fired at Tillery, hitting him in the chest, or Tillery fired first, hitting McBride in the shoulder. As Tillery raised his gun to fire, before or after he was hit, someone said, “Watch him, he’s got a gun,” and Carter fell to the floor of the aisle. Next, a man later identified as Ira Evans, a high officer of the Klan, shouted, “They’ve shot Ace. Give me a pistol and I’ll kill the SOB,” then leaned over the row of chairs and shot down at Tillery several times from close range, leaving powder burns on his clothes and hitting him in the right hip and knee. Seeing the commotion, Chad Bridges moved towards the men and attempted to help the man who was lying on the floor, but Bridges was shot from behind in one hip and fell, crying out, “My God, you’re trying to kill us all;” then he rose and again attempted to help the man, but was shot in the other hip.¹²⁷

The other members of the Klavern began to flee, one meeting an unrobed and unmasked Carter in the theater lobby. Motorscout Eugene Thomas Coleman—a Birmingham police officer who described himself as a security officer of the Klavern and would later testify that he had tried to stop Evans, whom he identified as the gunman—took control of the scene, turning on the houselights and calling the police and an ambulance. When he returned to the scene of the shooting, no pistols were to be found. Someone had stopped to help Bridges, but Bridges told him, “The fewer of us who are here, the better it will be for all of us,” and sent him away. Bridges crawled out to the lobby, where he asked for help, and a man took him to the entrance of West End Baptist Hospital, leaving him to hobble inside by himself. When police arrived at the theater,

they found the doors open and the flambeaux still burning, charred paper lay on the stage, and a book with the names and scrambled addresses of some of the people who had been at the meeting was found. Tillery was taken to the West End Baptist Hospital, where doctors operated on him, and he gave the first report of the incident to police while he lay on the operating table. Bridges's condition was listed as "poor," Tillery's "fair."¹²⁸

As a result of the interview, police swore out two warrants charging Carter with assault with intent to murder; he arrived at the police station for questioning at 11 a.m., was questioned for over an hour, and then the warrants were served. Within an hour, Carter was released on bond, posted by Samuel Brown and Harold McBride. Even before he had gone to the station, however, Carter had been contacted by the Birmingham News and denied even having been at the meeting, much less being a member of the Klavern ("Asa Carter Is Accused" 1). His statement to the reporter was a masterpiece of injured innocence and disavowal:

"I was in the office over there about 5 o'clock. These men came in and requested a meeting place. There was nothing scheduled for the theater last night, so I told them they could meet there.

"Then they requested that they would like for me to make a talk.

"I intended to make one, I wanted to make one. But my wife called me and told me that the people in Tuscaloosa wanted to get in touch with me about a Council meeting there.

"I have a tape recorder and tape recorded a speech. As far as I know the tape and the machine are still on the stage out there. I guess they played the speech.

“I did not participate in the meeting in any way except by tape recording. I did not jump off any stage or see a fight.”

“I’ve been trying to call and find out something about it ever since I got back.

“I left for Tuscaloosa at 9 o’clock. I didn’t make a speech down there. That meeting was a business meeting for the purpose of organizing a Council there.

“From what I understand about the meeting up here, there was quite a crowd there.

“The door was open and men wandered in off the street. I don’t think half of them in there knew the other half . . . which is a mistake.

“I’m not a member of any Klan group.¹²⁹ I have been accused of it time and time again. I have been listed as an adviser to Klan groups, and I have advised them and have spoken before Klan groups.

“The Council has the building leased. For the purpose of raising finances, we rent the building when the Council isn’t meeting. We have rented it to singing groups, or anyone who wants to hold any type of meeting that we think is all right.

“I know Mr. Bridges as a passing acquaintance and I may recognize Mr. Tillery when I see him. I don’t know about that.” (“Asa Carter Is Accused” 1, 8)

By 24 January, the police and newspapers had pieced nearly the entire story together; Edwin Strickland published a hard-hitting exposé of the tensions within Carter’s

group and correctly identified Carter as a board of the Klavern and as one of the signers of the incorporation papers. Of greatest interest is Strickland's description of Carter as "a fiery speaker" whose "speeches seem to inspire fierce loyalty in some of his followers" while exciting criticism from other members of his own organization. Another article reported that the "business meeting" which Carter had theoretically attended suddenly ceased to exist, probably because Carter was asked to name the participants, and he began claiming that he had been unable to find the man he had gone to meet, but had made a long-distance call home to his wife.¹³⁰

The police quickly identified, probably on the basis of Officer Coleman's testimony, three of the participants in the struggle—Ira Evans, Louey Curry, and Harold McBride—swore out warrants against them and took the first two into custody holding them in lieu of \$20,000 bonds. The police also let it be known that a third man, probably McBride, was thought to have been wounded but had been treated by an out-of-town doctor. Their round-the-clock investigation had produced speedy results, but they had been unable to interview Bridges, the bullets having ranged from his hips up into his body, though he was "much improved." The wait began for the apprehension or surrender of McBride.¹³¹ It would end in a circus.

On Monday morning, 28 January, McBride arrived in the parking lot of the sheriff's office with attorney R. B. Jones, Asa Carter, Doug Carter, and George White. They walked inside and found city detectives Vernon Hart and Connie H. Pitts waiting in the corridor outside the sheriff's office; Hart and Pitts grabbed McBride's arms in an effort to take him into custody. Jones protested that he had planned to surrender his client to the care of the sheriff, and began to struggle with the detectives. McBride was grabbed

around the waist by Asa Carter and tugged by Jones towards the sheriff's office while Hart and Pitts attempted to drag him outside to the waiting city car; the battle raged back and forth for 10 minutes, drawing out sheriff's deputies who at first tried to drag McBride into the office, thinking he was resisting arrest. McBride, wounded in the shoulder, grimaced in pain through the ordeal and promised he would go peacefully anywhere. After Jones declared that he would only surrender his client to the sheriff, Sheriff's Deputy Ellison said, "We'll take him wherever this officer [Hart] wants to put him." Hart responded, "City Jail," and Ellison replied, "OK. Let's go." Jones and Carter gave up the struggle and went into the sheriff's office to protest; Hart and Pitts took McBride out to the car. The whole episode was photographed by Birmingham News reporters and a television news crew.¹³²

Hart and Pitts returned to the sheriff's office and took both Jones and Asa Carter into custody for resisting arrest; taking them outside, they encountered Doug Carter, who refused to identify himself, and arrested both Doug Carter and George White. The next day, newspapers suggested that the whole fracas was motivated by a desire to have McBride arrested by the sheriff and almost immediately bonded out by friends who were waiting at the courthouse, thus evading examination and questioning by the city detectives. Whatever the motivation, all four "rescuers" made bond quickly, and Asa Carter was out once again. Currey and Evans made bond also on the same day.¹³³

On 9 February, the Birmingham News ran a front-page article on the grand jury investigation of the Klan shootings, saying that 129 indictments had been returned ("Jury Investigates" 1). On page 2 of the same edition, a small article reported that Asa Carter had filed to run for the post of Public Safety Commissioner in the 7 May Democratic

primary. Carter said of his run that, “I filed. I intend to run, regardless of indictment or no indictment.” He described his campaign goals by saying, “We intend to put in practice the American philosophy that local people make local laws, and that local officials elected by local people enforce those laws. Federal judges do not legislate for us. And until the people of Birmingham change their laws, Birmingham will be segregated, period” (“Carter Seeks” 2). Carter’s announcement was apparently not a surprise, his lawyer had announced on 24 January that he had intended to qualify that day, and some felt that the incumbent commissioner would have that much more motivation for making sure he was convicted for the Klan shootings. The shootings also meant that Carter’s career in the Councils was essentially over.¹³⁴

Carter’s arrest in the Klan fracas had brought the relationship between the Citizens’ Council and the Klan, which it claimed to be completely disassociated from, out into the open. The New Republic ran a short article on the incident, saying, “The point in this business is not that Carter seems capable of living up to his propaganda of violence but that an intimate relationship indubitably exists between at least some units of the Citizens Council and some units of the Klan. This was inevitable.” Those who would not “dream of being klansmen” were attracted to the Council, but so too was the Klan, and cooperation between these Klansmen and more moderate segregationists benefited both the Klan and the Councils. Carter’s fall, said the journal, would inevitably harm the Citizens’ Councils’ reputation (“Carter and the KKK” 6). The fear of such consequences led the national organization to publish an editorial in its periodical, The Citizens’ Council, disassociating the Councils from Carter’s activities—though Carter himself is not named, merely “recent incidents in Tennessee and Alabama.” “In a movement of this

size,” says the piece, “it is to be expected that certain crackpots, fanatics, and misguided patriots will mistake notoriety (which some types of newsmen will enthusiastically furnish) for support.” Carter’s deeds, so the writer claims, were being used against the Councils to promote among its members a sense of “collective guilt,” part of the opposition’s strategy to promulgate “amalgamation” (“For the Record” 1). By this time, John Kasper also was being called a tool of the integrationists, his activities having become a liability to the Council movement (Martin 121).

Run for Office: Carter Throws a Smokescreen over His Klan Activities

Two days after he filed to run for Public Safety Commissioner, Carter was indicted in the shooting case and was booked at the Jefferson County Courthouse and made new bonds on two charges of assault with intent to murder. The trials were postponed until at least April, and Carter concerned himself with charges resulting from the scuffle at the sheriff’s office and with his political campaign. On 17 February, the race became more complex as former Commissioner Eugene Connor joined the race, running against Carter, incumbent Bob Lindbergh, and former Public Improvements Commissioner Wade Bradley. Carter’s candidacy was not helped by his subsequent conviction on 29 March for disorderly conduct, attempting to incite a rescue, and interfering with a police officer—but that conviction was appealed and would eventually be overturned.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, Carter was invited along with other candidates to speak before the Young Men’s Business Club on 2 April.

On that occasion, Carter took the opportunity to take a swipe at “automatic convictions” in city courts, saying, “I favor reestablishment of confidence in attorneys in

the city courts,” and “They have told me about automatic convictions. I do not think that politicians should wear convictions like scalps on their belts.” Carter also proposed expressways, like those in other cities, to help ease congestion, and “armed police supervision at school crossings.” He went on to propose a “police athletic league to help train boys” and “urged a police-supervised ‘hot rod’ drag strip,” as well as suggesting that the pay of police officers be raised. Rapping the “sale of homes to Negroes in white areas,” he asserted “that some real estate operators were doing this on the Northside and in other sections,” and he suggested that a “legislative committee should be invited to Birmingham ‘to check into the problem of whether we have federal or local control.’”¹³⁶ His overall platform appeared to be a mix of progressiveness and continued promotion of segregation and “local control.” Most importantly, it was clear that Carter was once again positing himself as the alternative to career politicians, who were doing nothing to make certain that lower-class White neighborhoods were not infiltrated by Blacks. By concerning himself with such things as school crossings, an athletic league obviously aimed at working class boys, and a drag strip for those same lower class boys, Carter continued to project himself as the champion of the working class man. Though nowhere in this particular speech does Carter suggest violence, his concern over whether local or federal controls were in place is an extremely covert code which would raise in the mind of the average White Southerner the specters of Reconstruction and of the federal troops brought in to Little Rock, Arkansas, in support of integration efforts there.

Still considered a relatively legitimate candidate, Carter was profiled in the Birmingham News on 12 April, the accompanying picture showing a smiling and gentle-looking Carter with his extremely pretty wife and young children in the background. The

article started by drawing attention the fact that Carter's youngest child was named after Nathan Bedford Forrest, Ku Klux Klan founder. It then gave a brief biography of Carter, including his education and years as a radio announcer. Carter dwelt on his efforts with the Citizens' Councils, particularly the Eastern Section which apparently still existed and might have been the source of the funds with which his campaign was financed. After referring briefly to Carter's admitted role as "adviser" to the Klan, the writer outlined Carter's military record and included Carter's inaccurate claim to have served on destroyers as well as transports. A summary of Carter's indictment on charges of assault with intent to murder was given, and then a list of Carter's children, in birth order. The article see-sawed back and forth between the type of information Carter wished to include and bits of information about his Klan sympathies and involvement, which he almost certainly wished to squelch, making it clear that the media was far from sympathetic to his candidacy.¹³⁷

That the media had no intention of hushing up Carter's involvement in Klan activities was made clear just a week later, when John Temple Graves analyzed the situation around the Commissioner's race and gave this evaluation of Carter:

When foolish knights put aside temporarily their wild dreams, silly trappings and illiterate traffickings with violence to look pleasant and peaceful for voters, that is a happy interlude.

But it is no reason for trusting them with the police force of a city like Birmingham at the heart of trouble in a time of trouble. That is inconceivable. There would be no use trying to "save downtown" if it happened. Fortunately it won't even come near happening.¹³⁸

Perhaps due to growing tensions surrounding his candidacy, Carter failed to attend the North Birmingham Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Masonic Lodge Hall along with Connor, Lindbergh, and other aspirants.¹³⁹

Two days before the May 7th vote, Carter ran a quarter-page ad in the Birmingham News that made his campaign platform self-evident: “Let’s Make the Real Issue Clear!” the headline read, saying that the voters had a choice between “Integration” or “Segregation.” Under the “Integration” header, Carter referred to the incumbent, who had “voted integration into sports, yet states he now ‘believes’ in segregation,” and to the former commissioner, who had “sided with politicians and newspapers last year in leading the voting that killed our school segregation law,” saying that “integration and federal control will come with either man in office.” Under “Segregation,” Carter profiled himself, saying, “I will **preserve** your segregation laws and **enforce** them. The politician has been killing our laws of segregation so he will not have to enforce them. No federal judge shall snap his fingers and destroy your laws, if I am elected commissioner of public safety [. . .] I will return local government to local people.” Carter painted the alternative grimly, calling into question the future of children should segregation not be preserved: “Take your child’s future and birthright **out of politics** and elect a fearless man who will stand up for you.” Claiming that “no special groups” or wealthy interests were backing him, Carter pointed to his support among the working classes: “Nearly ten thousand car stickers bear his name—over five hundred car signs carried by **people**. Join the ground swell to take a position from the politicians and return it to the people.” The advertisement ended with an invitation to watch Carter on Monday night, the eve of the election (“Vote for Asa” 24A).

In the advertisement, Carter is clearly advocating white supremacy by claiming that the real issue in the vote is the choice between integration and segregation. He legitimized his resistance to those who would oppose segregation by calling segregation laws “your segregation laws” and “our laws of segregation,” making them the personal rather than merely social. His positive and unyielding stance in favor of the laws helps to depict him as “fearless,” and he further defends his own character by contrasting himself with “politicians” and “wealthy interests,” and by identifying himself with “working people.” Carter associates his opponents, one of them Bull Connor who would become the archenemy of the Civil Rights movement in Birmingham, with “integration”—an association which would serve to characterize them as part of the outside plot to victimize white Southerners. He encourages unity by saying “this is our last chance to preserve legal segregation,” without which the “future and birthright” of the reader’s child would be in doubt. Thus, even in this short piece, Carter can be seen to deploy all six strategies identified by Braden as the staple strategies of White supremacists of the period.

Carter also distributed pamphlets. One such pamphlet is available in part in the James W. Morgan Papers in the Department of Archives and Manuscripts in the Birmingham Public Library. In this segment of the pamphlet, Carter is even clearer in his calls to unity and in his positive and unyielding stance, but he broadens his claims about an outside plot to victimize Southerners, asserting that the plot is being aided and abetted locally by wealthy Southern whites. Carter, in this section of the pamphlet, focuses primarily on the plight of the working man, whom he claims to be championing:

Ace Carter led the fight against the politico combine-newspapers and integration forces in an attempt to preserve our state law of segregation in schools. This law was voted out of our State Constitution. Piece by piece, bit by bit, the politician is cooperating with integration forces and federal judges in destroying our segregation laws. When a candidate tells you that he will ENFORCE the segregation laws, ask him if he will PRESERVE the segregation laws in order that he CAN ENFORCE THEM.

Preserving legal segregation, or the LAWS of segregation is most important to the working man. He cannot afford extra automobiles; if he takes his car to work, his wife and daughter must ride the bus; his daughter must use the public parks and recreation, she has no country club grounds to stroll around upon; his child must attend public school, he cannot afford a private school. Upon the shoulders of the working man, therefore, falls the burden of preserving local control of local affairs. His laws, thus preserved, preserves this nation and his race and his Christianity.

Without his own candidate in office, beholden only to the working man, and with his duty a duty of preserving those laws, the laws will continue to be done away with, until we reach a stage of complete federal control, integration and chaos.

Why hasn't the politician stood up and preserved our laws? Simply because his allegiance is to those who do not need lawful segregation . . . who can buy their way into privacy and seclusion away from integration. The working man has the Courage to preserve and enforce the law . . . he should have a candidate in position who has that same courage . . . else our children are doomed.

Asa E. (Ace) Carter has stated, "I will preserve the segregation laws and enforce them. No federal judge, with a snap of his finger, shall destroy the laws of this city if I am elected Commissioner of Public Safety. Furthermore, I shall dig out the underground organizations made up of powerful, many times wealthy and more often than not, white people, who are plotting and have been plotting integration and destruction of our segregation laws, and I will prosecute them to the fullest extent—no matter how powerful or influential they might be. The roots of the trouble must be eliminated. I shall further stop the selling of homes to Negroes in white neighborhoods of the working man, who many times has spent the best years of his life paying for a home, only to suddenly find a Negro family moved next door to him, destroying his life's investment, uprooting his family and leaving him in declining years with a pittance in his pocket and no chance of paying for another home in his lifetime. Such unscrupulous practices by a few realtors will STOP, and whatever evils have gone on before, I shall do my utmost to correct. This practice has been spreading like wild-fire on Northside, College Hills, some spots in East Birmingham, and now offers are being made in Central Park. [No] man's home is safe if this continues."

Electing Asa E. (Ace) Carter to the office of Commissioner of Public Safety means that you serve notice to the South and to the Nation that Birmingham (the key to the South) is calling a halt to the communist-inspired integration and federal power control drive. By your vote, you will be setting in motion a positive program of correction and reassertion of the rights of local people to control local affairs, the salvation of our country. Once you set this example, by your vote for Carter, and his subsequent policies, people in the city of Montgomery will not tolerate politicians throwing up their hands and allowing THEIR laws to be destroyed . . . people in Miami, Florida will do the same . . . in San Antonio, Texas, all over the South.

That is why your vote for Asa E. (Ace) Carter is a vote that takes on NATIONAL significance and can well be a historical vote to be recorded in the annals of courage and the white man's devotion to future generations. The office of Commissioner of Public Safety is, at the moment, the most important office in the South, for it determines a COLLAPSE or a REVIVAL. Asa Carter has promised that Christianity shall again be established in government, where it belongs.

Again, Carter utilizes all the standard ploys of White supremacists of the period, but adds flourishes intended to incite anger in his reader—anger which might well justify

violence. Carter clearly espouses White supremacy in the piece, using such phrases as “the white man’s devotion to future generations” and “our laws of segregation.”

Resistance is also justified in phrases such as “our laws of segregation,” as they attribute ownership to the class of people most dependent on them—whom Carter characterizes as “the working man”—who would be encourage to fight to preserve what is their own, but it is further justified in such phrases as “His laws, thus preserved, preserves this nation and his race and his Christianity.”

A positive stance is asserted in phrases such as “By your vote, you will be setting in motion a positive program of correction and reassertion of the rights of local people to control local affairs, the salvation of our country; the stance is also unyielding, as Carter asserts that any change, even those like the three-tier schools system which sought to circumvent efforts to dismantle school segregation, mean that “Piece by piece, bit by bit, the politician is cooperating with integration forces and federal judges in destroying our segregation laws.” Carter defends the good character of his reader by contrasting him, the working man, to those who can afford to buy “extra automobiles,” or stroll on grounds, or go to a private school, or buy multiple homes should the one he owns lose value—all symbols of conspicuous consumption, the lack of which defends the frugality and hard-working character of the reader. That unity is necessary is made clear in the penultimate paragraph, where Carter implies that a vote for him would inspire others—both in the state and throughout the South—to join in the fight which would ultimately lead to “Christianity” being “established in government, where it belongs.”

That these working people are the victims of an outside plot is the chief assertion of this section in the pamphlet. Carter names those who are participating in the plot—

focusing in this piece on local conspirators: the “politico combine-newspapers and integration forces,” “the politician,” “federal judges,” “the underground organizations made up of powerful, many times wealthy and more often than not, white people,” Communists, and realtors who were selling homes in white neighborhoods to Black families. Carter characterizes these “underground organizations” as being “communist-inspired”—and as he had repeatedly, as in the speech for which he was fired from WILD, made both connections between Communism and Jews, he suggests that Jews are behind the integration movement. This suggestion is furthered by Carter’s frequent references to “Christianity,” and to some degree by his reference to newspapers—which he frequently claimed were controlled by Jews. Considering all these implicit references, the reader would easily read his mention of powerful, wealthy, white people and newspapers as a reference to Jews. Carter’s allegation of a widespread conspiracy against the working man, a conspiracy implicitly depicted as being at least in part Jewish, would not merely rationalize further resistance but inspire anger which might lead to violence against Jews.

Despite his use of White supremacist strategies and his addition of anti-Semitism, Carter ran a distant third in the Tuesday election. Eskew says that the election “brought to a head the forces of reaction and reform in Birmingham.” The top three contenders, he says, represented three “clear segments of the city’s population.” Lindbergh, the moderate, received the most votes—14,528. Connor, the arch-segregationist, placed second—11,938. Carter, the extremist, ran a distant third—1,675. Carter had “pulled his largest support from Eat Lake, Woodlawn, and West End,” where his Councils were the most active, and “took some of the white lower-status vote from Bull Conner.” Carter’s supporters would later put Connor in office, he would win the run-off by only 103 votes,

but his own political career was for a time ended (Eskew 118).

A Career in Tatters: Carter's First Major Political Failure

Carter's reputation as one of the chief segregation proponents in the South, however, prompted the Student Council of New York City College to invite him in early May to campus for a talk sponsored by the Student Government Public Affairs Committee. Dr. Buell G. Gallagher, president of the college, indicated after the announcement of the impending speech that while he did not approve, he would permit the speech. Carter, however, canceled his speech and cited Dr. Gallagher's lack of warmth as his reason, saying "When the president indicates his mind is closed on the situation, I feel that would create a climate of general hell-raising and rabble-rousing when I speak."¹⁴⁰ It might also have been that the \$95 fee he had been offered was not enough to tempt him to appear.

The remainder of the month of May was taken up with the court trial of Ira Evans, which began on 21 May; Evans was identified by M. J. Abernethy and Motorscout Eugene Thomas Coleman as the gunman during testimony on the first day. Tillery also testified on the first day, but none identified Carter as one of the gunmen. Chad Bridges, the other wounded man, testified on the second day, but named no one as the one who had shot either Tillery or himself, though he did report having received an anonymous phone call from someone who said "If you go up there and testify for Carter it'll be the last damn thing you do." Defense witnesses refused to identify anyone as a gunman, other than Tillery, but were careful to say that Carter had not been involved in the shooting, though all named him as the speaker that evening. Two defense witnesses

testified that Evans was not involved, though their stories were vague. Because of conflicting testimony, and the high likelihood that Tillery had fired the first shot, Evans was found not guilty in just over two hours—Asa Carter and Harold McBride, among others, came forward to congratulate Evans on the verdict.¹⁴¹ The state having failed to successfully prosecute Evans in the shooting of Tillery, the best case they had, the trials of Carter and McBride, and of Evans in the shooting of Bridges, were postponed repeatedly and eventually dropped.¹⁴²

In September 1957, Bridges would sue Tillery, claiming it was Tillery who had shot him—though the claim that the thrice-wounded Tillery, lying on the floor, could have shot Bridges precisely in each of his hips was somewhat ludicrous (“Man Shot” 40). Indeed, the best candidate for the shooting of Bridges was Asa Carter, who having gone up the aisle would have had the best angle to do the shooting. The precision of the shooting, once in each hip, would suggest that the person had time to aim—as Carter would have. The choice of shooting Bridges, who was probably attempting to help McBride, would also suggest that the person had little idea of who was whom at that point—and if Carter had been on the floor during the first part of the scuffle, he would not have known Bridges was most likely aiding McBride. That no one named the shooter of Bridges, though two named Tillery’s attacker, also makes Carter the most likely suspect. Still, the lack of testimony would probably have prevented successful prosecution, and if Carter was the gunman, he had shot in error. Though Carter would never face trial in the case, it would irreparably harm his political career.

There followed a relatively quiet summer, during which Carter was reported by FBI informants to have moved to Chalkville, Alabama, where he continued to lead the

few remaining faithful of his old Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy. The bulk of his group reorganized itself into the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in late July; its incorporators included Umphrey, York, and Kirkpatrick—also original incorporators of Carter’s former group—and Bobby Cherry, later one of the bombers of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in which four young girls were killed. Carter also continued his association with the by now unpopular John Kasper, who was being called a “tool of Northern integrationists” for his extremism and had been convicted in July of charges arising from the Clinton incidents. The two of them went to Nashville in August to hold a mass meeting in opposition to the integration of schools there, demanding that integration be “rejected by force if necessary,” but the meeting was attended by fewer than 200 people. Though sentiment against integration was high in the area, the local opinion of Kasper and his associates was low, and one local segregationist stated that the better-educated Southerners were turning “from lunacy to legality.” Carter and Kasper, tagged as the lunatic fringe, had little effect.¹⁴³

The Violent End to a Career: The Beating of Shuttlesworth and Mutilation of Aaron

In late August, events would take a major turn when the Birmingham News ran a front-page story on 22 August, stating that nine Negro families petitioned the city of Birmingham to ask that their children be admitted to the schools nearest their homes on a non-discriminatory basis. Among the signers of the petition were the Reverend Fred Lee and Ruby Shuttlesworth; their 14-year-old daughter Patricia Ann and 12-year-old daughter Ruby Fredericka sought to enter Phillips High. This was only the second integration move made in the city of Birmingham since the 1954 Supreme Court ruling

on school segregation (“Nine Negro” 1). The bravery of Shuttlesworth, his family, and the other signers would soon be underlined by two violent acts perpetrated by Carter’s followers.

The worst of the atrocities performed by Carter’s followers, an atrocity which was directly influenced by his discourse, was the emasculation of a Negro man in early September 1957 as a direct response to Shuttlesworth’s actions. A full account of the events appears in William Bradford Huie’s Three Lives for Mississippi, an account of the murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964. In the first chapter of that book,¹⁴⁴ Huie tells the story of how the remnants of Carter’s Ku Klux Klan group, just twenty-five, met at Jesse Mabry’s house in Birmingham. They needed to appoint a captain of the lair, the assistant to the Exalted Cyclops, and Bart Floyd put himself forward for the task, suggesting that he would emasculate a Negro man in order to prove his worthiness—and not coincidentally, eliminate any suspicion that he was an FBI informant.

The Cyclops, Joe Pritchett, along with lieutenants Mabry, Floyd, Grover McCullough, William Miller, and John Griffin, piled into two cars to find the Negro whom Floyd would mutilate—stopping first for razor blades and turpentine. Their first victim was not home, they found no likely victims at a local Negro club, so they drove around and happened upon a man walking with his girlfriend. They grabbed him, threw him in the car, and beat him on the way to Chalkville, “interrogating” him about his connection to the NAACP and his familiarity with Civil Rights figures, particularly Shuttlesworth. Once at the dirt-floored, cinderblock Klan lair in Chalkville, they forced him to crawl inside—then they donned their Klan robes and began a dramatized, mock

trial. The confused and terrified man stammered out answers to their questions about the Supreme Court and Shuttlesworth, neither of which he knew anything about, and was then told that he would be used to send a message to Shuttlesworth and any other Negro who wished to enroll his children in a white school. They asked him if he would rather be killed or emasculated, he chose “Neither one.”

They chose for him. He was knocked insensible, stripped, and emasculated with a razor blade. The scrotum was placed in a paper cup and passed around in a reenactment of the scene from a D. W. Griffin film—which Carter had shown his men only weeks before—in which a brother holds up a cup containing the blood of his virgin sister who committed suicide rather than be raped by a Negro. Miller was sick. The men poured turpentine on the man’s wound, inadvertently preventing serious infection while they caused him pain, dressed him, threw him in the back of a car, drove him out to a distant road, and dumped him. He was found, drenched in blood from the waist down, by two police officers and was taken to the Veterans Hospital in Birmingham—doctors there saved his life.

Carter had made a monumental mistake; in his crusade against Negroes as a group, he had violated the social convention of distinguishing between “good” and “bad” Negroes—those who were accommodating and those who were “troublemakers.” This convention was necessary to the suppression of Blacks, given that those who did not wish to be subjected to violence suppressed any inclination to challenge the system that oppressed them—underwriting the fantasy that “good” blacks accepted the system. His followers had also failed to abide by the convention, and the magnitude of the mistake was soon clear. The newspapers identified the victim as “Judge” Edward Aaron, a 34-

year-old, slightly retarded, slender man who was an unmarried handyman, unassociated with any Civil Rights activities, and an honorably discharged World War II veteran who lived with his mother. The investigating officers went to Aaron's hometown of Union Springs, Alabama, to find out if Aaron had committed any action which might have incited the attack, but found that "he was a high-type individual that was a good citizen, although he was black and he was poor. . . . N'other words, he was referred to in Union Springs as a 'white folk's nigger.'" Carter's followers could not have picked a less-appropriate target. Even the admittedly Klan-sympathetic officer told the Klan members, "I'm gonna git chya" (qtd. in Raines 186).

Headlines for the next several days reported details about the attack, but it did not have the desired effect; Fred Shuttlesworth and his family continued in their efforts to integrate Phillips High, and Shuttlesworth sent telegrams to both the police department and the sheriff to let them know what their plans were. Shuttlesworth and Reverend J. S. Phiser, his wife Ruby Shuttlesworth, his daughters Ruby and Patricia, and two boys who also wanted to enroll, Walter Wilson and Nathaniel Lee, arrived at Phillips High School on the morning of 9 September, and found themselves in the middle of a mob of about twenty white men—many of them Carter's present and former Klan members—and a man who looked a great deal like Carter himself.¹⁴⁵ Shuttlesworth got out of the car, and was rushed by one group of men from the left, one from the right, and one from across the street who immediately beset and beat him with brass knuckles, large link chains, and wooden clubs—the police did little to assist. Mrs. Shuttlesworth and Ruby were mildly injured, but Reverend Shuttlesworth was beaten so badly he had to be hospitalized and was confined to bed at home afterwards.¹⁴⁶

The public reactions to these two incidents reflected the differences between Carter's effective and ineffective actions, and similarly his effective and ineffective rhetoric. There was a great public outcry over the Aaron mutilation. The six perpetrators of the act were quickly apprehended, one man's wife having contacted police and that man and another turning state's evidence. The Klansmen would be tried separately and four of them convicted within months and jailed, the two who turned state's evidence were given suspended sentences. Conversely, though three men were taken into custody in the Shuttlesworth beating, there was no public condemnation of the beating and it does not appear that anyone was ever tried for the crime.¹⁴⁷

Had Carter confined himself to publicly sanctioned violence in his vigilantism, it is likely that he might have continued to be accepted as a leader, at least to some degree, but the emasculation of Aaron would be his undoing. He was quickly linked to the crime, as the cinderblock building in which it occurred was filled with signs from his run for Commissioner of Public Safety, copies of The Southerner, and a desk had letters addressed to him as the executive secretary of the North Alabama Citizens Councils. Mabry, his co-editor on The Southerner, was a known associate of Carter's; Carter had already been tied to the original Klan group, if not to the particular splinter group that had committed the act. Even Sid Smyer, who had remained a supporter of Carter despite the enmity between him and the Engelhardt group, finally distanced himself. Carter's extremist discourse had already cost him any role in the establishment in Alabama politics, and the rhetoric of his vigilantism would cost him any position whatsoever in the public eye.¹⁴⁸

Carter's Early Career Is at an End: Futile Stabs at Regaining Power

After the convictions of Pritchett, Floyd, and Mabry in November and December, Carter lay low for a period. He began running a dry cleaners between Birmingham and Bessemer on South Park Road and wove tales about planning to speak all across Alabama at the suggestion of Gerald L. K. Smith. Though his Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy splinter group disbanded in the wake of the Aaron trials, he apparently still had access to funds from either that group or the Citizens Council groups he had formerly headed, and he filed to run for lieutenant governor in March of 1958. He was systematically ignored in his bid for the post and ran dead last. It was his final attempt, at least for the time being, at any sort of legitimate political existence. Furthermore, his activities also harmed the Citizens Councils in Alabama in general, and Engelhardt's group found its "good name" tainted by the association—McMillen credits Carter's violence with rendering the Citizen's Council movement essentially ineffective in Alabama.¹⁴⁹

Asa Earl Carter's discourse, though completely ineffective in accomplishing his major goal of lifting him into political power while simultaneously allowing him to coordinate an underground resistance movement, was more effective than probably he even desired at provoking unthinking violence towards Blacks in Alabama. Carter himself would say of the mutilation that it was a "mistake," and that it "would have been better to have killed him than to do that." And, indeed, the murder of Aaron would probably not have been prosecuted, as Huie quotes an authority as having said, "Had you accused Aaron of being a troublemaker and shot him dead on the roadside, you'd be freed." Even the mutilation might have been overlooked had Aaron been "guilty" of anything, as Raines points out that the investigating detective had decided to "investigate

that victim” and warned the Klan that if the perpetrators “didn’t have just cause, they’d better find ‘em a damn rock to git under, because I was gonna git ‘em”¹⁵⁰ To at least some degree, then, Carter’s discourse had shaped the attitudes of the men who had committed a series of known violent acts, some publicly sanctioned and some not, over a period from early 1956 to late 1957—the Autherine Lucy riots, the Cole assault, the Klan shootings, the Aaron mutilation, and the Shuttlesworth beating.

Major Writings of the Period: The Southerner Magazine

From March until September/October of 1956, throughout his political efforts in Birmingham during his early career, Carter had concerned himself in part with publishing his White supremacist glossy magazine, The Southerner. As mentioned above, though loosely associated with the North Alabama Citizens’ Councils, it was owned and published by Carter himself without any outside influence—probably using the printing press which was discovered in the Klan lair in Chalkville in 1957 along with piles of back issues. This magazine provides a good sampling of Carter’s discourse during the period, and the strategies used in the articles helps to explain why Carter had the effect that he did upon his followers.

Each Southerner had on its cover the same portrait of a Confederate battle charge; the battle flag—by this time a principal symbol of the Ku Klux Klan—prominently displayed. Featured on the cover was also a picture and biographical sketch of a particular Civil War figure: Joseph Wheeler in the inaugural March issue, John Singleton Mosby on the April/May issue, John Bell Hood on the August issue, and J. E. B. Stuart on the September/October issue. Carter utilized the biographies for the triple purpose of

defending the good character of Southerners by describing their heroes, of legitimizing resistance to “anti-Southern” forces, and in suggesting that readers adopt an unyielding stance similar to that of the given figure.

Also important to some of the biographies is the sanctification of White supremacy. For example, in the Wheeler biography, Carter writes, “Joseph Wheeler was born in Georgia of two great pioneering families who traced their ancestry in America to the year 1640 and then to England where the records show a knight or two and a trace of even higher nobility.” Having established Wheeler’s noble, British lineage, Carter continues, “he took the physical qualities nature endowed him with and put the spirit of fortitude, loyalty, integrity and ingenuity in-bred by 6,000 years of Anglo Saxon heritage, and made an instrument of war called ‘Fighting Joe Wheeler.’” The remainder of the biography illustrates what this allegedly superior breed of man, beset by unfair odds, achieved despite great trials.¹⁵¹

The chief goal of the biographies, however, is the glorification of violence, particularly against Northern efforts on the part of Blacks. Only a short section of the Mosby biography is devoted to sanctification of White supremacy--he is said to have been of “early American Anglo-Saxon stock,” “a Southerner, a bit of the greatest fighting breed of man, in all the world”—but the bulk revolves around Mosby’s stealthy fighting tactics. Having narrated the story of how Mosby was appointed to lead a group of rangers, Carter melodramatized, “Thus, John Singleton Mosby, born for the death flirting path where few men walk, baptized in the fury of gunfire and saber clash, eagerly grasped the cup destiny had drawn for him, drinking deeply of the potion prepared for men without fear.” The terroristic tactics used by Mosby are not painted by Carter as an

unfortunate necessity of war, but rather as both praiseworthy and poetic—"Saddles were quickly emptied, and hoofbeats faded rapidly away in the night. It was only then the few survivors knew . . . Mosby's men!"¹⁵² Thus, Carter inspired racial pride in this use of violent tactics.

Melodramatic narrative was the chief strategy that Carter used to glorify violence, and he used it with particular strength in his biography of John Bell Hood:

It was almost sundown when the brigade advanced, the line sweeping forward in sight of the enemy. Across the open field they came toward the Yankees. Hood at their head . . . as men dropped from their ranks, they quickly closed up . . . and continued . . . stepping across row on row of fallen Southerners. At the creek, they were given orders to fix bayonets, and then the command was roared back to them by Hood, "Charge!" Down into the creek ravine they wallowed under the deadly spittle of the belching artillery on the hill. Up on the other side they came and with the terrible rebel yell, attacked the first line of Yankees with cold steel. The line wavered, then broke, running back on the second line of Yankees, who also broke under the terrific charge . . . up the hill they routed as the Confederates poured a deadly fire into their ranks; to the top of the hill swept the Confederates, into the mouth of the Yankee artillery . . . and routed that too. Through the gap poured the gray uniforms. Hood had broken through!¹⁵³

As this particular narrative is placed alongside Carter's editorializing about the "battleground that is now Alabama," where the choice was between "death through

integration or life with segregation,”¹⁵⁴ the clear parallel between segregationists’ fight to preserve oppression of Blacks—particularly where the federal government had provided some aid to Southern Blacks risking violence—and the Confederate battle against the hated “Yankee.” Such language seems aimed at motivating the reader to similar sacrifice and violent action in the face of federal government efforts to dismantle legal segregation.

A nearly identical passage occurs in the biography of J. E. B. Stuart. Carter again portrays the federal troops as vast and menacing, with the “weight of superior guns and numbers,” being thrown in this case at Jackson. In the face of this overwhelming foe, Carter paints a mythic picture of Stuart:

The force of the terrific charge whirled toward the left flank of the Confederates and the thin Grey line bent dangerously from its force. At that moment, from a flank position, came the thundering cavalry of Jeb Stuart, in the first of what was to become almost immortal charges in military lore. Standing high in the stirrups, sabers extended far past the heads of the wild, straining, horses; they came, men seemingly devoid of all care, with savage abandon they struck the Yankee . . . who fled, dropping their guns in terror-stricken awe and wanting only to vanish from before that almost supernatural charge. Thus, a well-organized Federal Army was turned into a mob of routing, frightened men. They fled the scene, and the entire army rushed pell mell, stumbling over each other, all the way back to Washington, D. C., away from the immovable, [imperturbable] Jackson, away from the terrible man on horseback, of

whom they were now convinced was not man, but devil-monster, Jeb Stuart.¹⁵⁵

Even in defeat, Stuart and the others are shown as worthy of emulation: “General Jeb Stuart has been called a throwback to the Knights of old, perhaps he was; and that heritage of Knighthood, gallantry, and bravery, he most surely lived and perpetuated in his dying. Another example as forebear for the Southerner.”¹⁵⁶ As in the previous biographies, the glorification of the actions of this Confederate officer, depicted as having many successes despite the odds, encourages the readers to identify themselves with the men portrayed and to follow their example. As the examples given are invariably violent, violence is thereby encouraged and justified.

These laudatory biographies of Civil War generals work in close relationship with the similarly laudatory narratives of the actions of those of Carter’s followers who engaged in the violence with which he became identified. In the April/May 1956 issue of The Southerner, Carter describes the following “significant scene” from the Nat King Cole incident:

As one of the six men was pushed from the hall of the Cole “concert,” . . . his hands twisted painfully behind him . . . his face beaten bloodily by Lindbergh’s policemen . . . he turned his face, looking back toward the fur bedecked crowd of Cole admirers, resplendent in their dinner jackets, their white-puttied, flabby faces angry and pouting. The young man’s work hardened hands twisted violently in the ‘cuffs and he spat out the words, flat and cold . . . and hard, “white trash!” That was all . . . the words were flat . . . but they rang over the heads of the crowd and bounced back

through time . . . as the Saxon Chief stood on a mountain and watched the white degenerates of Rome idolize the black . . . and degenerate with him . . . in all their “culture,” . . . back to the Basque as he viewed in disgust the Spanish and their women . . . as they sank to the level of mongrel with the black . . . back to Forrest and the same “poor” breed of Southerner who fought off the rich carpetbagger and scalawag white . . . as they sought to despoil forever the race of the Anglo-Saxon . . . [his] morals . . . and his Christianity . . . and his freedom. May God grant that such a breed forever remains!¹⁵⁷

Carter cloaks his support of the violence committed by these men in two ways—first, he denies that there was any violence, claiming victim status for the “six white men” who were “unmercifully beaten” after “Nat ‘King’ Cole *fell* over a piano stool at the City Auditorium” (emphasis added).¹⁵⁸ Secondly, after initially claiming that the North Alabama Council does not support violence, he justifies the violence as necessary in the face of outside enemies, saying the Council would “not persecute Anglo-Saxons who find themselves in trouble while attempting to meet the enemy, the invading, overlording enemy, in a spirit of what they consider defense of their Southland and their race.”¹⁵⁹

But, by far the most frequent tactic utilized by Carter in his magazine was the portrayal of Whites as victims of oppression, unfair strategies, and misinformation. Many of these portrayals were, like the biographies and reports of Council activities, exaggerated and highly dramatic. In an article called “That Defeatist Feeling,” Carter uses violent imagery to characterize the supposed reaction to statements on behalf of Christianity—“To state that one is a ‘Christian, and I stand for Christ,’ is to invite attack

[. . .] as ‘Anti-Semitic’ and ‘narrow,’ and so the stand for Christ has reached the watered down version of Christianity [. . .] In this way, they cut the heart from the American Anglo-Saxon [. . .]”—and thereby cloaks both the overt anti-Semitism of his own organization and posits traditional Christians as threatened by brutality. This brutality, he claims, was aided by those like Engelhardt who decried the open anti-Semitism of Carter’s branch of the Council movement, and he uses this supposed collaboration between moderate segregationists and integrationists to justify violence:

Let us not be played as a musical instrument at the hands of traitors . . . we must re-learn the lesson taught us by our forefathers . . . only those who fight to win . . . who attack the enemy . . . who never let up . . . who fight and fight . . . and fight . . . [shall] win. Let’s take the offensive now, for the first time in twenty-five years . . . and chase the mongrelizers from our land.¹⁶⁰

Carter devotes a good deal of energy to “exposing” the threats posed by rock-and-roll, interracial commissions, and black home buying. Of rock, he says, “Turn on your radio and listen to the rock and roll death song of America and the white race. It is there; put there by those who care little for our race, but rather who hate the white man for standing alone between the communist and world domination.”¹⁶¹ The head of an interracial committee, Henry P. Johnston, is said to be “a mongrelizer, par excellence, head of the BIRMINGHAM NEWS [which] controlled WABT-TV and WAPI radio” and in this position and used these media outlets to aid Engelhardt in his supposedly unfair attacks on Carter—this to win Engelhardt’s support of the Interracial Committee of the Jefferson County Co-Ordinating Council of Social Forces.¹⁶² White homeowners in the

Fountain Heights-Northside section of Birmingham were said to be under threat by the greed of real estate agents, who were buying one white home at a high rate and selling it to a Black family “who were more than willing to pay a high price.” Though Carter neglected to mention why Blacks had become willing to do so—probably because there were few home available to upwardly mobile Blacks—he was eager to dramatize the effects on Whites he portrayed as victims:

One elderly lady called and said she was a widow living only from a pension and that the only thing she had in the world was the home that her husband had left her when he died. She told of being made an offer by this real estate company [Olahan Realty Company] of about one-third the value of her home. When she refused, they simply laughed at her and told her that they would be back later, because they were sure she would be ready to sell “sooner or later” as the Negroes moved closer to her home.¹⁶³

By portraying his White readers as among those under continuous threat by multiple forces, he encourages his readers to view themselves as victims, justifying their need for vengeance against this supposed conspiracy of Communists and wealthy Whites.

The combination of positive, stereotypical biographies of past heroes and present activists, of the victimization of Whites, of the villainy of those who promoted Black rights, and rejection of the tactics of moderates makes Carter’s rhetoric in The Southerner one which legitimates and promotes violence against Blacks and those who would promote the causes of Black Southerners. All these tactics were deployed by Carter in the most widely cited of his writings from The Southerner, the editorial introduction which accompanied the first edition of that journal:

The Southerner is known. His place of origin is instinctively thought of as being the South of the United States of America. No other section in any land has earned for its inhabitants the meaning that is embodied in the term "Southerner."

Through his veins flow the fire, the initiative, the stalwartness of the Anglo Saxon. Proof of his enviable reputation is the attack upon him. From such, has been coined the words "red neck," and "wool hatter," . . . "cracker," and "hill billy." He has accepted the words rather than fought them . . . accepted them for what they are. For "red neck," takes mind of the toil beneath God's Sun and with His good earth, of that he feels no shame; the "wool hat" has been his way, with little money, of wearing something "special" to God's house on Sunday morning: The "cracker" he adopts as his calling card of delicate coxsureness; and if "hillbilly" he be, then he exults in the high whine of the fiddle's bow that calls up the sound of the fierce Scot blood that sounded the bagpipe of battle and lamented in the ballads of yore.

The Southerner is proud. Proud of his race. Proud that he bends his knee but to God; proud of his independence. His the powerful core of these United States that spell doom to those of dcitatorial (sic) mind. And his pride is sunk deeply in the traditions built for him by his fathers and mothers of the Southland. The Southern woman that protected that race in a prostrate and vulture ridden Reconstruction when lesser women of a lesser breed would have yielded into the easiest path of degradation.

[. . .]

The odds today mount steadily against the Southerner's philosophy of race and passion for freedom against his moral standard and devotion to Christianity. The enemy has been allowed to mount his odds, we believe, because the Southerner has not been allowed to read the facts and gain the truth . . . and so determine his aim. His spirit has grown rusty in the corner; his attitude grown more irresponsible through guidance of a "free press," that no longer is free . . . afraid to print the truth . . . with mercenary abandon using vicious propaganda to change the character and principles of the Southerner.

This . . . we cannot bear. That so proud a race sink into the toils of atheistic mongrelization . . . carrying with it the hope of Christianity . . . for lack of facts . . . for want of the truth.

[. . .]

And as the working man of the South once more turns his hard hand to the saving of a race and freedom . . . we will count it a blessing and an honor to be numbered among him. To be a member of his ranks . . . a brother of his blood . . . there can be no honor greater . . . no reward richer.¹⁶⁴

In this archetypal Carter piece, we see all the elements named by Braden plus Carter's own addition of open calls to violence. White supremacy is promoted in such phrases as "the stalwartness of the Anglo Saxon" and "pride in his race" as well as in the implicit assumption that the term "Southerner" could not possibly apply to Blacks. Resistance is legitimized in such phrases as "His the powerful core of these United States that spell doom to those of dcitatorial (sic) mind. And his pride is sunk deeply in the traditions built for him by his fathers and mothers of the Southland." The need for a

positive and unyielding stance is implied in such phrases as “This . . . we cannot bear. That so proud a race sink into the toils of atheistic mongrelization . . . carrying with it the hope of Christianity . . . for lack of facts . . . for want of the truth.” The entire second paragraph, with its alternate definitions of the terms *red neck*, *wool hatter*, *cracker*, and *hill billy* functions as a defense of the good character of Southerners. That an outside plot exists is posited in later passages: “The odds today mount steadily against the Southerner’s philosophy of race and passion for freedom against his moral standard and devotion to Christianity. The enemy has been allowed to mount his odds, we believe, because the Southerner has not been allowed to read the facts and gain the truth” from the “free” press. The final paragraph of the piece is an espousal of pride in the proposed unity of all Southerners.

But Carter’s trademark calls to violence, implicit and explicit, are not absent from the piece. He includes his usual references to Civil War heroes and glorification of their militarism. But, he also calls readers to action directly in the passage “In full faith that the Southern (sic) will, when informed, again, take his rightful position, not in defensive evasiveness . . . but in full thundering charge [. . ..]” In this passage, Carter both eschews moderation and calls the reader to violent action in imitation of traditional heroes, in supposed defense of the same traditions. And, as the penultimate paragraph of the piece, it functions as the climax—containing the most overt call to violence.

Carter’s rationalizations of, justifications of, and glorification of violence within The Southerner, his oratory, and his other writings led to the nearly continuous acts of violence committed by his followers in the months between the Lucy riots and the beating of Fred Shuttlesworth. Though other events inspired by his rhetoric, such as the

attack on Cole, the Klan shootings, and the mutilation of Edward Aaron, would lead to the impossibility of his being a legitimate political figure in the establishment, the ultimate success of his rhetoric in promoting the sort of underground resistance movement that he so dearly wished to lead is undeniable. He may have been unsuccessful in his overall goal of being both legitimate, establishment politician and resistance leader—but the violence he provoked was of primary importance in the social environment of Birmingham during the period of 1954 to 1957. And, his combination of traditional White supremacist rhetoric with calls to violence was the chief means by which he achieved that momentary, and ultimately counter-productive, consequence.

Notes

¹ The profile was reprinted in Martin's The Deep South Says "Never."

² Carter scathingly used the term "respectable segregationist" in his interview with Martin (117).

³ This is the birthdate given by Lawrence Clayton (Handbook 999), in the FBI files (157-4634-60), on Carter's transcript from the University of Colorado, on campaign materials, in Martin's The Deep South Says "Never", and in Carter's military records. The latter is the most convincing, so I put this date first as the more likely. Dan T. Carter gives the date as Sept. 25, and he may have seen a birth certificate ("Southern History" 287). That even the birth date is a matter of contention is typical of material about Carter.

⁴ James Douglas "Doug" Carter was in marketing and also had a political career, switching from Democrat to Republican and running for the U. S. Senate in 1984 (he ran second in the GOP primary). During the Senate campaign, Bunch reported that: "Carter retains a strong point of view on racial issues. 'They (blacks) are people who represent a different culture,' said Carter who contends racists are those who believe in the amalgamation, or destruction of the races. 'I love the races, I think it's God's greatest handiwork, and I think God meant for them to [be] racially pure,' he said. 'I do not believe in miscegenation (the interbreeding of races)'" (8A). He also ran for Governor of Alabama in 1986 but did not get the nomination ("86 Primary Foe" A9).

⁵ FBI files; Auchmuty, "The Man," M4; and obituary for Hermione Weatherly Carter, Anniston Star, 5A.

⁶ Auchmuty, "The Man," M4; Rubin, 81.

⁷ Auchmuty, "The Man," M4; Dan T. Carter, quoted in Johnson, 6.

⁸ McWhorter, "Little Tree," 120; FBI files.

⁹ D. T. Carter, "Transformation," A31.

¹⁰ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 288.

¹¹ Rubin, 81. Dan T. Carter reports much the same thing, saying that "During the war, Carter had remarked to several friends that the United States was fighting the wrong enemy (Germany) and should be at war with the Soviet Union" ("Southern History" 289).

¹² Asa Earl Carter Military Personnel Records; D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 288; FBI files, 157-4634-60. He received another Captain's Mast for sleeping on watch on August 9, but the year is not given.

¹³ All information on the Appling's record is from "APA-58 Appling," an article from NavSource Online. Stuart had been promoted to Commander by the time Carter was discharged (Asa Earl Carter Military Personnel Records).

¹⁴ Because of his service in the Pacific, Carter was authorized to wear the American Area and Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Ribbons (Asa Earl Carter Military Personnel Records)

¹⁵ Asa Earl Carter Military Personnel Records.

¹⁶ Carter was also entitled to wear the WWII Victory Medal.

¹⁷ Asa Earl Carter Military Personnel Records. FBI files, 157-4634-60.

¹⁸ The date given for the wedding in some sources is 22 Feb. 1947 (FBI files 100-4651-48). Thelma India Walker is described in one source as "a Calhoun High cheerleader" (Auchmuty, "The Man" M4). It is possible that Carter relocated to Denver before his marriage and then took his wife back. Rubin, however, reports that the marriage took place before the move (81).

¹⁹ McWhorter, "Little Tree," 120; Dan T. Carter, "Southern History," 288.

²⁰ Dan T. Carter, "Southern History," 288.

²¹ It is not clear whether or not Carter continued to be employed in the radio station during his time at University of Colorado. There is also a possibility that he did not hold the radio job until after his graduation. Sources are vague on dates.

²² Anthony, "Survey," 30 (page 2 on the manuscript).

²³ Later, Carter would claim to have studied for two and a half years at the University of Colorado—but even including his Naval training, he was there for far less than two years. He also claimed to have studied radio news writing at the Spear School in Los Angeles, but there is no evidence other than his claim, reported in the Birmingham Post-Herald during his campaign for Commissioner of Public Safety in 1957 (FBI files 100-4651-12).

²⁴ The bulk of the remaining narrative about Kopel's meetings with Carter come from "Reflections on Bigotry and Racism . . ." which was printed in The Colorado Statesmen. The biography at the end of the article says: "Jerry Kopel writes a column for the Statesman based on 22 years past experience as a state legislator" (8).

²⁵ The records from the University of Colorado indicate that Carter first attended during the Spring Quarter of 1947-48 and was admitted to the College of Arts and Sciences in March of 1948. I am uncertain as to whether there was some lag between Carter's freshman orientation and his admission to the College of Arts and Sciences or whether Mr. Kopel's memory is somewhat inaccurate.

²⁶ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 289.

²⁷ It was important for Smith, and more recently to those of the Christian Identity Movement, to distinguish some Jews from others. "Christ-killer" Jews are those who remained in the Middle East until after the death of Christ. Theoretically, the Lost Tribes of Israel migrated to the "appointed place," the British Isles, and reformed the nation of Israel in the West. It is the "Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people" who are the "true" Israelites (Zeskind 22-23, 18). This distinction will become extremely important in Carter's later work, The Education of Little Tree.

²⁸ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 289.

²⁹ Anthony, "Survey," 30 (manuscript page 2); "Native Cunning," 25; Greenhaw describes how Carter "turned up as a talk-show host on Denver, Colorado, radio, railing against the 'nigger-loving Supreme Court'" (My Heart 42).

³⁰ FBI files, 100-4651-1. Carter had supposedly come to Yazoo City from Los Angeles.

³¹ An informant to the FBI confirmed that Carter went to Anniston after being in Yazoo City (100-4651-99). This list of stations was given by Carter to the press in 1957, in an article on his run for Commissioner of Public Safety. The list is probably not in chronological, though Carter suggests that it is (FBI files 100-4651-12). This is also the series of cities given by Martin, but he may be relying on the same article (117). It seems quite likely that the Denver station—likely KBOD—preceded his work in Alabama. Greenhaw, however, places Carter in Denver after the Supreme Court decision of 1954, so there is some possibility that Carter returned to Denver briefly during 1954 (My Heart 42).

³² McMillen, 48; D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 289; Rubin, 81.

³³ The April date appears to be in error, as the Birmingham News of 15 February 1954 said that the ASRA would be incorporated "here Thursday" (Taylor, "Group to Organize" 1). It is possible, however, that there was some delay in the incorporation; Eskew, 107.

³⁴ Hoover was the "Chairman of the Board of Employers Insurance Company, Birmingham." He would later become one of Carter's "strong personal supporters" along with Hugh Morrow, Sr., "Chairman of the Board of U. S. Pipe and Foundry Company, Birmingham" (Anthony, "Survey" 31). Both Engelhardt and Givhan were state senators from the Alabama Black Belt, "the patrician cotton South" (Eskew 107; McMillen 51), and both are listed as members of the Board of Governors of the ASRA. Smyer had risen from the lower classes to being a wealthy real estate lawyer (McWhorter, Carry, 40).

³⁵ Flyer from the American States' Rights Association file in the Victor Howard Civil Rights Collection of the Special Collections and Archives Department of the King Library at the University of Kentucky (titled "Join Us!"). Handwritten on the top is "Received 5-54." It is quite possible that the flyer was written by Carter in his capacity as a worker for ASRA.

³⁶ "The History You and I Are Making," 21 Feb. 1955 speech, in American States' Rights Association Papers, Birmingham Public Libraries. The ASRA hoped to expand the program throughout Alabama, according to the memo, but I can find no evidence from the period that it ever went beyond WILD. Eskew does, however, say that there were twenty stations that carried the ASRA-sponsored spots (114). Roche claims that he was heard "on a twenty-station network for over a year," but the broadcasts extended only from late Sept. 1954 to late Feb. of 1955, so Roche is probably in error—he cites no source.

³⁷ FBI files, 100-4651-60 and 100-4651-14. ASRA Papers, 1954-1956, speech dated 21 Feb. 1955. The manuscript of the speech shows that Carter ended his speeches, in what McWhorter calls "portentous cadences of Murrow and Paul Harvey" (Carry 100), with the words, "This is Ace Carter, and that is the history we are making. I thank you for your company." McWhorter, Carry, 100.

³⁸ The Communist Party in Birmingham was “disturbed by Carter’s broadcasts.” “A leading Communist in the Birmingham area . . . said that Carter is ‘vicious’ and that he must be removed from the air” (FBI files 100-4651-14). McWhorter discusses the Anti-Defamation League’s concerns (Carry 100).

³⁹ Carter almost certainly also wrote the “informative” letters and memoranda which Horton sent out under his own signature attached to reprinted articles from right-wing publications such as Human Events. Among them is the “Memorandum on Supreme Court Decision in the School Segregation Case,” which suggests that all school properties be sold and that students be given tuition to private schools; a memorandum decrying the inclusion of pro-UN statements in the Girl Scout handbook; a memorandum criticizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention as they might be used to fight segregation; a memorandum criticizing then Governor Gordon Persons for not supporting a special session of the Legislature to enact measures to uphold school segregation; two memoranda on the rate of venereal disease and illegitimate births among Whites and Negroes and a similar memorandum on Negroes and crime; memoranda criticizing the PTA Information Bulletin for printing and failing to criticize a pro-desegregation statement and criticizing interracial committees on race relations. As Carter’s name does not appear on any of the memoranda, they will not be considered in this study. However, copies are available from the Archives Dept. at the Birmingham Public Library and from the ASRA files of the Victor Howard Civil Rights Collection at the University of Kentucky.

⁴⁰ Anthony, “Survey,” 31 (manuscript page 3). Anthony points out that the memo was not documented.

⁴¹ The letter is undated, but as it refers to the radio time and calls it “expensive,” it had to be written after 20 Sept. 1954 and before Carter was taken off the air soon after Brotherhood Week in 1955. It resides in the Archives Dept. of the Birmingham Public Library.

⁴² As Vološinov puts it in Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, “Any word used in actual speech possess not only theme and meaning in the referential, or content, sense of these words, but also value judgment: i.e., all referential contents produced in living speech are said or written in conjunction with a specific evaluative accent. There is no such thing as word without evaluative accent.” In this case, the evaluative accent is highly negative, and attention is drawn to that negativity.

⁴³ Martin, 121; Anthony, “Survey,” 31 (manuscript page 3).

⁴⁴ McMillen, 48. D. T. Carter, “Southern History,” 290.

⁴⁵ Common Sense was published by the Christian Educational Association, Union, New Jersey (FBI files, 100-4651-99). The FBI says of the publication that: “‘Common Sense’ defines communism as ‘Judaism’ and devotes its pages almost exclusively to attacks on the Jewish and to a lesser extent the Negro minorities in our Nation. Anti-Semitism is the chief stock in trade of ‘Common Sense’” (100-4651-99).

⁴⁶ Commas seem needed between the nouns in this latter list, but they do not appear in the original.

⁴⁷ That the Bible is representative of White culture in this parable is a given for Carter’s discourse community. The Bible, however, was introduced to European culture from the Middle East, and was adopted (in some cases, earlier) by segments of other non-European cultures, one of which was Ethiopia. I do not mean to suggest that the Bible is solely a product of White culture, merely that it would have been assumed to be so by Carter’s listeners.

⁴⁸ FBI files, 100-4651-99.

⁴⁹ “Native Cunning,” 25; Auchmuty, “The Man,” M4.

⁵⁰ McWhorter, Carry, 248-49. McWhorter reports that Carter said to Head and the other prominent citizens who confronted him at WILD that “You’re the known Communists I’ve been talking about” (249).

⁵¹ FBI files, 100-4651-14.

⁵² The NYT gives the date of organization also as October 1955, but Martin gives the date as November 1955 (Anthony, “Survey” 31; Martin 117). McMillen, 48.

⁵³ Eskew, 107-8; McWhorter, Carry, 100-01, 98; D. T. Carter, “Southern,” 291.

⁵⁴ D. T. Carter, “Southern,” 291.

⁵⁵ D. T. Carter, “Southern,” 292. The incorporation papers (“Certificate of Incorporation of the Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy”) available in the Archives Department of the Birmingham Public Library, in the Asa Carter file, give a date of 20 November 1956. Though Dr. Carter is undoubtedly correct in suggesting that Carter was thinking of organizing his own group as early as late 1955 and early 1956, the incorporation papers themselves will be dealt with, below, as an example of his discourse in late 1956, after his open break with the Alabama Association of Citizens’ Councils led by Engelhardt.

⁵⁶ The Horn group was affiliated with the US Klans of Georgia (Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 10).

⁵⁷ Carter's salary from the Citizen's Council in this period is uncertain; later he would be taking "a hundred a week plus fifty dollars expenses" according to Martin (121), but this was after his break with the official Citizens' Council movement. He was certainly getting some money from the service station, The Birmingham News calls Carter "a Birmingham service station man" in an article on 17 Jan. 1956 ("Givhan Says" 3). The support from Hoover and Morrow is documented by Anthony, "Survey," 31 (manuscript page 3). McWhorter suggests that he may have received support from Smyer, his "sponsor" (Carry 126).

⁵⁸ Little information on Carter was gathered prior to that time. It appears that Carter caught the attention of the FBI with his comments about Communist Party members being at WILD in 1955, but that he was not of great interest until January of 1956, when he began to be mentioned in reports about Citizens' Councils.

⁵⁹ McMillen 54; "Givhan Says," 3; FBI files, 100-4651-14 & 100-4651-99.

⁶⁰ A last-ditch effort was made to block her entry on 1 Feb. when, as she registered as an undergraduate, she was told that the board of trustees had ordered UA to deny her room and board in the girls' dormitory. This maneuver did not work, and Lucy began attending classes two days later (McWhorter, Carry, 96).

⁶¹ Wilson would later be "toughened under the tutelage of Ace Carter" (McWhorter, Carry 193); McWhorter, Carry, 97.

⁶² McWhorter, Carry, 98; Chalmers, 345; D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 292.

⁶³ "U of A Officials," 1; McWhorter, Carry, 98.

⁶⁴ Cook, 1. Highway patrol officers joined in with the "attempt to control the ring-leaders, made up largely of workers from a Tuscaloosa rubber plant, but could not handle the action of the milling gangs of workers and students who rushed from one point to another during the morning" (1).

⁶⁵ McWhorter estimates the number of union members at 75% (McWhorter, Carry, 99-100).

⁶⁶ Strickland, "Citizens Council Split," 40. Later accounts would report his salary as \$100 per week plus \$50 for expenses ("Councils Talking Break" 4).

⁶⁷ Carter was the editor of the magazine, which Strickland says was "not owned or controlled by the council," which "had no authority over its editorial policy or content" ("Citizens Council Split" 40). Hagen was the chairman of the Eastern Section; Carter was executive secretary (Strickland, "Citizens Council Split," 40).

⁶⁸ FBI files, 14-79-3 and 100-4651-14.

⁶⁹ Anthony, "Survey," 31 (page 3 of the manuscript)—it is possible that Anthony's date is wrong and that he is referring to the later Eastern Section Council troubles, in March—McMillen, 50.

⁷⁰ Stanton and Beiman, "UA Trustees" 1; "Mammoth Rally Set March 9 by Citizens Council," Birmingham News, 1 March 1956, page 1.

⁷¹ At some point, Engelhardt changed the name of his group to "The Citizens' Councils of Alabama." The precise date is uncertain, but the remaining narrative will utilize the name of the group as it was given in the newspapers during the time in question. Engelhardt claimed his group also had the distinction of being "the first in the south to admit women" (Anthony, "Survey" 8).

⁷² Douglas Cater, in "Civil War in Alabama's Citizen's Councils," quoted by McMillen on page 51.

⁷³ "Religious Issue," 11. Carter denied the anti-Semitic charge in an article published in the New York Times the next day, saying "it is —'it is entirely demagogic to charge that we are anti-semitic,' he said today"; Strickland, "Citizens Council Split," 40.

⁷⁴ "Citizens Councils to Rally" 34; "Council Rally Speaker," 1; "Alabaman Urges," 14.

⁷⁵ This description of the meeting is from "Council Rally Speaker Urges Passive Revolt," 1-2

⁷⁶ Both resolutions, apparently, were adopted ("In Row" 1). The Birmingham News would later report that anti-Semitism was the chief point of contention ("Formation" 3).

⁷⁷ This development was considered significant nationally, and the New York Times quoted Hagen as saying that "he had tried to conduct his office in a 'sober-minded, dispassionate and deliberate manner'" ("Council Chairman Resigns" 10). Carter's calls for Folsom's impeachment and Carmichael's resignation were apparently regarded as the reverse.

⁷⁸ That Carter had kept up this crusade as a radio host is reported in Chalmers (344). The sign "Be Bop Promotes Communism" was in the lobby of his Council headquarters ("Martin" 116). McWhorter reports that Carter was a "pure country fan" (Carry 158). That Carter did not distinguish Be Bop from rock-and-

roll—or even from Nat King Cole’s balladry—is probably due to the fact that he saw them all as emerging from Black performers, and it was that to which he primarily objected.

⁷⁹ “Formation of,” 3; not surprisingly, there was a similar schism between Carter and the ASRA. An FBI informant reported on 4 April that Carter was no longer affiliated with the ASRA (FBI files 100-4651-99).

⁸⁰ “Segregation Leaders,” 4; “Attack on Cole,” 17; “Bee-bop,” 6.

⁸¹ “Police Say 150,” 9; Nat King Cole Concert, Advertisement, 10 April 1956, 20.

⁸² Adams would later found his own KKK group in Anniston (FBI files 100-4651-28). His actions towards Negroes were particularly overt. His filling station had a “whites only” sign, and an FBI informant reported that “one time some Negroes drove into one of [Adams’s] stations and handed him money for gas and that Adams put money in register and then sprayed all the occupants of the automobile with the gasoline” (FBI files 157-4634-89).

⁸³ Cole came back out and received an ovation, but declined to finish the concert and the audience left. Cole did perform the second concert of the evening, for a Colored audience, and there were no further incidents (“Six Held” 2). He took a few days off to recuperate, and resumed his tour four days later in Norfolk (“Police Say 150” 9). However, he refused to appear in Atlanta on 17 April due to fears of another attack (“Cole Afraid” 17). The narrative of the Cole incident comes from the Birmingham News: “Six Held,” 1-2; “Officer Testifies,” 23; and “Police Say 150,” 9.

⁸⁴ “Officer Testifies,” 23; “Six Held,” 2.

⁸⁵ Mike Fox, Orliiss Clevenger, E. L. Vinson, and Jesse Mabry were all found guilty of misdemeanors in Recorder’s Court and “given maximum fines and jail sentences,” 180 days (“Pair Accused” 2; “Four Up” 2; “Four in Attack” 1). In Circuit Court, Kenneth Adams and Willis R. Vinson pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of assault (they had been accused of assault with intent to murder); Vinson was fined \$100 and costs, and Adams was fined \$50 and costs (“Anniston Men” 33).

⁸⁶ Even the men themselves did not offer such a lame explanation. E. L. Vinson stated that their goal was “to induce the crowd to walk out” and that “we were only going to ask the crowd if that was the kind of music they wanted to hear.” Clevenger, in contrast, said that they “hoped to raise a fuss and break up the concert” (Strickland, “Judge Grants” 17). Clevenger and Vinson said that the men had brought weapons “in case they had trouble leaving Birmingham or in the event ‘the Negroes started a mob’” (Four in Attack” 2).

⁸⁷ “Police Say 150,” 9. A similar statement was issued by the Ensley Citizens Council, which criticized the “Asa E. Carter group, who have brought nothing but discredit to the great citizens’ movement in the South” (Attack on Cole” 17).

⁸⁸ “Council Chairman Condemns,” 9; “Council Chairman Denies,” 9. Councils “across the region were also critical, including Georgia, South Carolina, and New Orleans (McMillen 55).

⁸⁹ Letters decrying the attack include McCoy, 14. In a clipping on file, an excerpt from the letter indicating that the incident was counterproductive to Carter’s goals appears beneath the McCoy letter; it is entitled “Playing Right into Hands of Kremlin,” 14. Some letters supporting the attackers were printed, including Alice Starr’s, which called them “hard-working men” who were “proud of [their] race” (14).

⁹⁰ “Council Heads Trade,” 2; “Slugfest Is,” 1B.

⁹¹ “Council Heads Trade,” 2; “Councils Talking Break,” 4.

⁹² Taylor, “Council Quiz,” 42; Wilson at first worked with Carter, who “toughened” him up (McWhorter, *Carry* 193), but eventually led an Englehardt group in Tuscaloosa (Anthony, “Survey” 8); “Slugfest Is,” 1B.

⁹³ Cole was far from an agitator, having been cool to the first efforts of Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, to interest him in becoming a member. He said, “I’m crusading in my own way . . . I was not intending to become a politician” (“Cole Cool” 2). This statement was taken by some to be in opposition to the NAACP, and to combat the ensuring criticism, Cole purchased a life membership in the NAACP (“Cole Life-time” 8). “East Citizen Council,” 2.

⁹⁴ Desmond calls Brady “the ideological godfather of the White Citizens Councils of Mississippi”; Brady was a circuit judge and author of Black Monday, the White resistance movement’s “Bible” (8).

⁹⁵ Strickland, “Connor and Waggoner,” 11A; Strickland, “Citizens Councils Plan,” 14.

⁹⁶ FBI files, 100-4651-99 and 100-4651-14.

⁹⁷ McMillen, 53; Anthony, “Survey,” 33 (manuscript page 5). Anthony also reports that this group was being led by Asa Carter’s brother, James Douglas Carter.

⁹⁸ Carter's organizing in Michigan and Washington D. C. is also discussed in the FBI files; his group is characterized as "a very anti-Semitic group and has put out quite a large extent of 'hate literature'" (100-4651-99). Kasper and Carter had first met during a political campaign for John Crommelin who was running for the US Senate in 1956 (Chalmers 346). Kasper, says Chalmers, gave "an Ivy League, intellectual note to Klan affairs. He was a slender, well-groomed young man from a good middle-class family in New Jersey" (345). Kasper was at the time of his Councils' organization a bookstore owner in Washington, D. C., but had previously run a bookstore in Greenwich Village, dated a Negro girl, and "had a good time in the free, and mixed, world of pseudoboemia" (345). After joining the White resistance movement, and gaining some notoriety in the Clinton events to be discussed below, this background came back to haunt him and the movement repudiated him.

⁹⁹ The editorial was entitled "WCCW: White Citizen Council of Washington, D. C." and ran on 8 June 1956. Carter would file suit against the Advertiser for this editorial, but his case would be dismissed in December of 1957. "The judge quoted another decision which held that a person who became such a leader [of a movement] 'invited criticism and free expression by others of their opinion of his conduct and cause. He should not be heard to complain if the criticism so involved is not so gentle.'" The judge also said that "'It has further been held that if an editor believes a movement to be dangerous to the public good, he not only has a right, but a duty to expose it'" ("Asa E. Carter's Libel" 29).

¹⁰⁰ The measure was endorsed by Engelhardt's groups as well as the majority of political leaders in Alabama ("Choice" Proposal 4A). Eugene Connor quipped that "About the only ones I know against it are [Negro attorney] Arthur Shores, Asa Carter, [state school superintendent] Austin Meadows and the NAACP" (qtd. in Taylor, "Last Shots" 1).

¹⁰¹ Black students had been bused from Clinton to Knoxville, 20 miles away, previously. Parents had brought a suit to allow them to attend the local school ("Race Tension" 1); "Violence Erupts," 1. Prior to Kasper's arrival, there had been no strong reaction to the impending entry of the students ("Integration Troubles" 2).

¹⁰² Kasper would be acquitted twice of charges due to the riots, but a federal judge would sentence him to a year in prison for contempt for failure to comply with a measure that forbade interfering with integration at the school (Chalmers 346). "Race Tension," 1-2.

¹⁰³ FBI files, 100-4651-14 and 100-4651-99.

¹⁰⁴ The court injunction, due to which Kasper was eventually found guilty of contempt, forbade interference of any sort with court-ordered integration. Carter appeared to be avoiding mention of the situation so as not to be arrested (Popham 6). "Clinton Sheriff," 2.

¹⁰⁵ "Clinton Sheriff," 1; "Two Contrasting," 6.

¹⁰⁶ "Clinton Sheriff," 1-2; "Integration Troubles," 2; Martin, 100-03; "Mob Forms," 8. Negro students were harassed badly by other students and left, but eventually returned. The school was desegregated in the end, but only with direct intervention from the federal government, and the situation caused anti-desegregation sentiment in the region to rise (Martin 100-03).

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Greenhaw, My Heart, 43.

¹⁰⁸ All excerpts from "Carter Flays," 28. This particular excerpt seems an early rendition of the "Stand at the Schoolhouse Door" speech which Carter would later write for Wallace. The excerpts are quite reliable, as they are nearly identical to the quotes given in FBI files about the same speech (100-4651-99).

¹⁰⁹ Flynt's analysis is strictly of the discourse surrounding the 1963 Birmingham crisis—but the characteristics he notes are not highly dependent on that context.

¹¹⁰ "Mob Forms," 8; Barrett, 16; "250 at Rally," 16. Interestingly, both Carter and Kasper were characterized by Governor Frank Clements as "outside agitators" who were "stirring the people up" and whom he was "not going to tolerate" ("Mob Forms" 8).

¹¹¹ "Kasper Will Speak," 9; "Figure in Racial," 40; "Kasper Calls," 7; "School Segregation," 26.

¹¹² "Kasper at Klan," 44; Adams, 34; Bradsher, 52.

¹¹³ Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 10. This move, obviously, paralleled the estrangement between Carter's Councils and those led by more establishment figures.

¹¹⁴ Officers included John Tully, chairman; Bill "Hicks" (Bill "Ricks" on the incorporation papers), president; Larry Weatherly (almost certainly Larry Weatherly Carter), secretary; Jacob H. McQueen,

treasurer. Board members were C. P. Kirkpatrick, Carl Adams, W. D. Colbert, Ray Umphrey, Raymond York, C. M. Atkinson, L. J. Meadows, Samuel G. Brown, McQueen and Ricks ("New Klavern" 31).

¹¹⁵ The incorporation papers are on file in the Hill Ferguson Collection of the Birmingham Public Library Department of Archives and Manuscripts, folder 56.6-43.1.

¹¹⁶ A provision existed that he could also be removed by the National Board of Governors. Still, the otherwise dictatorial powers of the Grand Wizard are worth noting.

¹¹⁷ The bulk of the following account comes from the FBI files on Carter (100-4651-7).

¹¹⁸ Martin, 117-120. The harassment of students is detailed in Southern School News, "Tennessee Reports Segregation Tide Running Strongly in Month," Dec. 1956, page 5.

¹¹⁹ "Citizens Council Meets," 8; "Eastern Citizens Council," 4.

¹²⁰ Though Alabama had a law against wearing masks, it only applied to public places. Masks were permissible on private property (Cook 2).

¹²¹ Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 10. "Ira Evans Identified," 6. "Asa Carter Is Accused," 8; Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 1; "Secrets Laid," 3; Rubin, 81. A photograph by Ernest Hardin which accompanies the story "Asa Carter Is Accused," 8, shows the stage.

¹²² "Ira Evans Identified," 1; Strickland "Three Believed," 10; "Defense Seeks," 12. Virtually all the witnesses agreed that the speech was by Carter, that he was present, and that he was the leader of the organization (Strickland, "Klan Shooting" 3).

¹²³ Tillery would later say there was another man on stage, also, but did not identify him ("Ira Evans Identified" 6). "Asa Carter Is Accused," 8; Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 1.

¹²⁴ "Defense Seeks," 12; "Asa Carter Is Accused," 1 and 8; Strickland "Klan Shooting," 3.

¹²⁵ "Defense Seeks" 1 and 12; "Ira Evans Identified," 6.

¹²⁶ Cook, 1; "Ira Evans Identified," 6; "Asa Carter Is Accused," 8; "Defense Seeks," 12; Strickland, "Klan Shooting," 3. Tillery himself said that Carter had walked by ("Ira Evans Identified, 6).

¹²⁷ "Defense Seeks," 1 and 12; "Ira Evans Identified," 1 and 6; "Klan Gun" 1 and 6; "Asa Carter Is Accused," 8. One witness would claim that, after he was shot, Bridges talked to the other men and said, "Well, you didn't have to shoot" ("Defense Seeks" 12). This would indicate that Bridges was shot by accident and knew who had shot him, and that it most likely was not Tillery.

¹²⁸ "Asa Carter Is Accused," 1 and 8; "Defense Seeks," 1 and 12; "Ira Evans Identified," 1 and 6; "Three Believed," 1.

¹²⁹ As Strickland would later point out, this may have been a simple quibble over terminology. If Carter had organized the Klavern, he would not have had to "join" it and may not have been a "member" ("Klan Shootings" 10).

¹³⁰ Strickland, "Klan Shootings," 10; Strickland, "Three Believed," 10.

¹³¹ Strickland, "Three More," 1 and 9; Strickland, "Police Seeking," 1 and 2; Strickland, "Probers Sit," 1.

¹³² Stanton, "Police, Lawyer," 1 and 5; Strickland and Stanton, 1 and 5; "Carter Brothers," 6.

¹³³ Strickland and Stanton, 5; Strickland, "Who Clobbered," 1; "First Hearing," 2.

¹³⁴ Cook, 1; "Carter and the KKK," 6; McMillen, 55.

¹³⁵ "Asa Carter Is Indicted," 1; "Klan Assault," 1; Taylor, "Connor Plunges," 1; "Carter Brothers," 6; "Citizens' Head," 16; "Courthouse Scufflers," 1.

¹³⁶ "Candidates for Commission," 15.

¹³⁷ FBI files, 100-4651-12

¹³⁸ FBI files, 100-4651-13.

¹³⁹ Photograph entitled "Candidates Break Bread Together," 1.

¹⁴⁰ "Integration Foe," 37; "Carter Cancels," 43.

¹⁴¹ "Ira Evans Identified," 1; "Defense Seeks," 1; Strickland "Klan Shootings," 1; "Klan Gun," 1.

¹⁴² "Klan Gun," 1; "Trials of Four," 23; "Carter's Platform," 28; FBI files, 100-4651-116.

¹⁴³ FBI files, 105-464-2; "New Ku Klux Klan," 33; "Kasper Tool," 1; Morin, 1; "Nashville Asked," 13; L. Smith, 54.

¹⁴⁴ The remaining narrative is a summary of Huie's version, probably the most complete telling of the story (18-24). A few details come from Dan T. Carter's "Southern History, American Fiction" (294-96, 303). Huie carries the story on through the trials, Aaron's life and difficulties in later life, and the freeing of the four men in Wallace's term.

- ¹⁴⁵ Diane McWhorter reviewed newsreels of the beating and spotted a man, in profile, looking on with great interest. The resemblance to Carter, she says, is undeniable. He did not participate in the beating (Carry 605n).
- ¹⁴⁶ "Negro Beaten," 1; "'This Is,'" 1.
- ¹⁴⁷ "Two Men," 1; Mobley, "Boss Klansman," 1; Stanton, "Ex-Klansman's," 1; "Negro Beaten," 1.
- ¹⁴⁸ "Splinter Klan," 2; "Old Lamp," 2; McWhorter, Carry, 126.
- ¹⁴⁹ FBI files, 105-464-22, 105-464-23, and 105-464-26; "Asa Carter in Race," 8; Dan T. Carter, "Southern History," 296; McMillen, 56.
- ¹⁵⁰ Dan T. Carter, "Southern History," 296; Huie, 25; Raines, 186.
- ¹⁵¹ The Southerner, March 1956, pages 1 and 5.
- ¹⁵² The Southerner, April/May 1956, pages 1 and 5.
- ¹⁵³ The Southerner, August [1956], page 11.
- ¹⁵⁴ The Southerner, August [1956], page 2.
- ¹⁵⁵ The Southerner, September/October [1956], 15.
- ¹⁵⁶ The Southerner, September/October [1956], 15.
- ¹⁵⁷ "Nat 'King' Cole," The Southerner, April/May 1956, page 6.
- ¹⁵⁸ "Defense Fund," The Southerner, April/May 1956, page 7.
- ¹⁵⁹ "Nat 'King' Cole," The Southerner, April/May 1956, page 6.
- ¹⁶⁰ "That Defeatist Feeling," The Southerner, March 1956, page 4.
- ¹⁶¹ "Musical Treatment," The Southerner, March 1956, page 5.
- ¹⁶² "North Alabama Citizens Councils Are Doing a Job," The Southerner, April/May 1956, page 3.
- ¹⁶³ The Southerner, September/October 1956, page 12.
- ¹⁶⁴ The Southerner, March 1956, page 2.

Chapter 3: Ghostwriter and Klan Liaison

Resisting the Civil Rights Movement

In the second stage of Carter's political career, from late 1958 to 1966, he moved from the least degree of political influence to the greatest degree of political influence that he would ever have. During this period, he served as a speechwriter and political activist for George Wallace, and in that covert position he bolstered the White resistance movement against the successes of the Civil Rights movement in the South and nationally. It was also during this period that Carter's written discourse had its deepest impact on the political scene, largely because the speeches he wrote for Wallace were uncredited and rarely connected by the media or anyone else to the extremist political activism in which he continued to engage. Though for a brief period, Carter's writing made him a central figure in the White resistance movement, his history of political extremism, his continued political extremism, and his reputation in general eventually made him a liability to Wallace, who ceased to employ him as a speechwriter as the political climate became less favorable to extremist rhetoric. Carter would not regain national attention until the 1970s, when he began his career as a novelist.

In the following analysis, we will find that Carter's work for Wallace in many ways resembled that of traditional White supremacists—giving “major attention to continued sanctification” of White supremacy, legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—but that again he encouraged listeners to be willing to engage in violence in defense of Southern ways and to beware of

wealthy White Southerners who might be working in tandem with Civil Rights leaders. We will also find that many of his most successful speeches contained elements of fiction, storytelling that engaged the heart of the listeners while simultaneously lulling them into a non-critical complacency which discouraged them from examining the reasoning behind the given works argument in favor of White supremacy and violence. Finally, we will find that while Wallace was willing to disseminate Carter's words as his own views, that his actual maneuverings displayed an awareness of the impolitic nature of Carter's White supremacist beliefs. These maneuverings expose Wallace's duplicity in attempting to dupe his Southern followers into seeing him as the stalwart defender of the crudest White supremacist faith all the while he cleverly positioned himself as a figure acceptable to Northerners and demonstrate how the ethos created by Carter in his writings was read differently by Southerners—who approved of it—and differently by potentially disapproving Northerners.

A Period in Hiding: Living Down His Reputation in Birmingham

After his unsuccessful run for lieutenant governor in 1958, Carter continued to run his dry cleaning establishment in Birmingham, but did not give up his political activism. Carter was reported to be involved in a shadowy group called the Confederate Underground, based on the French Underground Movement, along with Kenneth Adams.¹ As a part of this group, he was believed to have been involved in bombings of schools and churches in Miami, Nashville, Jacksonville, and in the bombing of Beth-El Synagogue in Birmingham. FBI agents repeatedly interviewed Carter in October of 1958 to establish his whereabouts on the days in question. In one interview, the highly

excitable Asa Carter appeared to agents to be unstable—reaching emotional peaks quickly and then equally quickly settling back down. Though Carter cooperated to a degree, producing paperwork on his movements and volunteering to submit to tests of his voice and to a lie detector test, he refused to be tested by anyone other than the FBI or anywhere other than Alabama. He also admitted that he was at least loosely associated with those doing the bombings, saying that information about such events often came to him “through the grapevine,” but that he had heard nothing about these specific cases. Agents briefly considered developing Carter into a confidential informant and taking him up on his offer to take a lie detector test, but his instability and the likelihood that he would impose additional restrictions on the testing led them to dismiss the idea.²

Carter claimed, in his 28 October 1958 interview, to be progress in the writing of a book—which he planned to entitle “Ace Carter: The Foolish Knight.” The title seems a reference to a scathing remark published during his run for Commissioner of Public Safety, in which John Temple Graves had referred to “foolish knights” who might “put aside temporarily their wild dreams, silly trappings and illiterate traffickings with violence to look pleasant and peaceful for voters.” Saying that he expected to be finished with the book in the near future, Carter discussed his plans to publish the book and asserted that he had already contacted Dorrence Publishing in Philadelphia as well as McMillan and Company. Agents took Carter at his word, getting the impression that all interviews conducted between Carter and the FBI would be written up in this book. Though the manuscript of that book has never appeared, that Carter felt his autobiography would be a suitable topic for his first book, and that he at least imagined that mainstream publishers would be interested, indicates the degree to which Carter’s

ambitions to become a commercial writer overlapped his political career.³

The FBI continued to keep watch on Carter and his whereabouts, and his sudden disappearance from Birmingham in late December 1958 was cause for alarm. A discontinued secret informant contacted the FBI to notify them that Carter had moved from his home in Bessemer, probably to relocate in Oxford near his father's home. Agents moved quickly to locate Carter as part of the emergency plans in place in the event of continued bombings. A handwritten note on the bottom of a memo regarding Carter's disappearance conveys their concerns: "If you do not know this fellow's background, be sure to review files before handling. Get desired information as soon as possible and develop some neighborhood sources to use in case of a bombing." By 4 February 1959, Carter had been located living on a 100 acre farm in White Plains, Alabama, which his father had purchased in late December or early January and upon which his father was relocating part of his herd of dairy cattle. Carter moved his family to the farm and began to operate the dairy there, staying close to the farmhouse and interacting very little with neighbors apart from attending the local Methodist church.⁴

Though Carter was principally engaged in his work as a farmer, he did not entirely neglect his political career. Sometime in 1959, he attempted to organize a Citizens' Council near Pleasant Grove, Alabama, a suburban community in Jefferson County, persuading the local populace that joining was the "thing to do." His attempts were apparently successful, but members soon became wary of his motivations. They elected a treasurer to keep him from appropriating funds, and later, having established that his motives were purely mercenary, the entire group quit the organization, leaving \$200 on deposit with a bank. The informant who reported the event to the FBI said that

the truth was that “the people outsmarted Carter . . . and he never had a chance at the funds of the organization.”⁵

Farm living apparently did not agree with Carter, who continued living on the dairy farm but gained employment at radio stations WANA in Anniston and WPID in Peidmont, both owned by the same person. He put in long hours at both stations, but apparently did not engage in any of the extremist activities for which he had to that time been known—becoming popular with people in the vicinity as quiet, polite, and mannerly. The job only lasted until July, and Carter began traveling through Alabama, claiming to be working for an advertising company though he was at home on weekends through August and September.⁶ The FBI continued tracking Carter as part of ongoing bombing investigations.

In early January 1961, Carter moved his family out of Alabama to Grand Prairie, Texas, where he took a job as a route salesman for Choc-o-loc Bottling Company, owned and operated by his uncle, J. Frank Carter. By May, he appears to have been promoted to the position of Route Sales Foreman and was going by the name “Earl,” but his new employment did not prevent the FBI from continuing their surveillance, shifting the case to their Dallas office, sending a summary biography to that office, and developing neighborhood informants. Contacts reported that the Carters lived in their rented home with no telephone and economized by not using their air conditioner during the summer. Neighbors did not note any anti-integration activity by Carter but did note that neighborhood children had begun using “ugly words” soon after the Carter’s arrival and that the family did not attend church.⁷

As with his other jobs, the position in his uncle’s company did not last long.

Carter apparently demanded a raise in late August so as to improve his family's living conditions and was refused; he left the company. Carter was still considered potentially violent, so when he was observed twice near a newly integrated school in Dallas, Texas, on September 7 with two other men, local police were immediately informed. The Dallas police department stopped Carter as he was driving with his wife in Grand Prairie and arrested him, taking him to headquarters for questioning. Carter claimed to be near the school as part of his employment with the National Write Your Congressman Club, based in Dallas, Texas. The company, he claimed, sold a letter service to business and professional people and would provide clients with information concerning pending legislation and then would write letters to the clients' Congressmen containing their opinions concerning that legislation. Carter said his area of operation was Dallas Postal Zone 1, which includes the William B. Travis School, near which he had been observed. Claiming that he "was trying to live down the reputation he had obtained in the Birmingham area," Carter admitted to being a staunch segregationist, but said he did not know the school had recently been integrated and was in the area to do business there. No charges were filed, and Carter was soon released.⁸

The arrest, however, seemed to have had a great effect on Carter, who left Grand Prairie in late September, exciting yet another search for his whereabouts. The FBI found that he had rented a trailer on September 18, giving an address in Birmingham as his residence and saying that he would be making a one-way trip to Birmingham that week. Carter was not located again until February of 1962, when he was discovered to have returned to Oxford, Alabama, and appeared to be living at his father's house on Route 5. The Carters continued living in Oxford quietly, and FBI surveillance was lessened.⁹

A New Lease on Political Life: Carter Joins the Wallace Camp

Sometime before March 1962, a significant change occurred. Attorney R. B. Jones, who had represented Carter during his trials in Birmingham, recommended him as a speechwriter who could “get those rednecks all stirred up” to the aspiring gubernatorial candidate George Wallace, who was determined not to be “outniggered” by John Patterson as he had been in a previous election. Fearing connection with Carter’s notorious past, Wallace arranged for Carter to be paid by a series of cronies—a printing company owner, a road contractor, and an insurance executive—for the work he did as a speechwriter and political agitator. Wayne Greenhaw reports that Carter worked in a rear office at the campaign headquarters in Montgomery without attracting notice. After being given an assignment by Wallace or a top aide, he would retire to his office and emerge with the required speech.¹⁰ Wallace’s standard stump speech for his successful election bid, replete with such phrases as “irresponsible, lousy federal courts” and “integrating, scallawagging, carpetbagging liars,” was often tailored to fit the occasion by Carter with his usual flair for blaming the federal government and sympathetic White locals for the Civil Rights efforts of Blacks..¹¹

But, Carter’s responsibilities went beyond mere speechwriting. He also served as a key liaison between the Wallace campaign and various arch-segregation organizations. Because of his newfound credibility, Carter was asked to on 16 July before Montgomery meetings of the neo-Nazi National States Rights Party, expounding on Confederate history, and particularly Nathan Bedford Forrest. In latter July, he addressed the Montgomery Citizens Council, which had formerly bitterly opposed him, twice—first to

a crowd of 100 and next to a crowd of 300. On September 2, Carter addressed the National States Rights Party convention in Montgomery; a leaflet for the occasion called him “Perhaps our ‘fightingest’ speaker. He is well known for his ‘Hell, Fire & Brimstone’ oratory on race and Whiteman’s heritages. This Patriot aroused the people of Clinton, Tenn., to resist the invasion of race-mixers. You will long remember the oratory of this great speaker.” Though it cannot be certain that Carter himself wrote the leaflet, it is certainly clear that he did not object to being linked to violence by such terms as “fightingest,” though it is clear that whoever wrote the piece also wished to disavow that same violence by the use of quotation marks. Phrases such as “Whiteman’s heritages” and “invasion of race-mixers” similarly leave little to the imagination—Carter was clearly White supremacist and just as clearly associated at least by others with violent imagery. The next day, the Montgomery Advertiser reported that Carter had been introduced at the convention as “Mr. White Supremacy, Himself,” and had repeated his claims that communists were behind the integration movement.¹²

Carter was also enjoying some influence in the Wallace camp. He is said to have arranged a key meeting between Wallace and such key segregation leaders as Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi, Judge Leander Perez of southern Louisiana, and James Grey who would later be a candidate for governor of Georgia. At this meeting, held prior to Wallace’s inauguration, Wallace is said to have taken upon himself the mantle of chief spokesman for anti-integration efforts in the South. Carter was one of the lieutenants lining the wall at the meeting, clearly assuming a position of some authority (Greenhaw, My Heart 45). Carter enjoyed playing on that presumed authority, telling National States’ Rights party functionaries in early January that he was Governor Wallace’s “right-

hand man” who was “operating in an undercover capacity.” When he and other party members disagreed about omitting openly anti-Semitic statements from the party’s platform so that it could become more mainstream, he suggested that he could arrange for Wallace to outlaw the party’s newsletter, The Thunderbolt.¹³ Though Carter was doubtlessly overstating his influence over Wallace, that he was still contributing to the Wallace camp soon became clear.

First Major Speech: “Segregation Today [. . .] Tomorrow [. . .] Forever”

On 14 January 1963, Governor George Wallace delivered his first inaugural speech in Montgomery, Alabama. This speech was originally credited by staff members to Montgomery lawyer John Kohn, who did indeed take credit for it when interviewed by Marshall Frady.¹⁴ Privately, however, close cronies such as Seymore Trammell and Oscar Harper credited the text to Asa Earl Carter.¹⁵ Though others may have helped in the crafting of the piece, the opening and closing sections of the speech, full of hyperbole and romantic images, are credited specifically to Carter by historians.¹⁶

The 1963 inaugural speech was Carter’s opportunity to write for an occasion of national importance, and he did not waste that opportunity. Filling the speech with romanticized Civil War references, veiled Klan references, and coded calls to violence—as well as his signature emphasis by capitalization and ellipses—Carter’s rhetoric echoed that of his earlier periodical, The Southerner, which would also be echoed in speeches he would give for the rest of his career as a White supremacist, and even contains some kernels of the novels he would later write pseudonymously. The speech itself works overtly to recreate Wallace as the chief spokesperson for the anti-Civil Rights movement,

to bolster support for that movement, and to undercut the efforts of Civil Rights leaders in the South and elsewhere.

Governor Patterson, Governor Barnett, from one of the greatest states in this nation, Mississippi, Judge Brown, representing Governor Hollings of South Carolina, Governor Dixon, Governor Folsom, members of the Alabama Congressional Delegation, members of the Alabama Legislature, distinguished guests, fellow Alabamians:

Before I begin my talk with you, I want to ask you for a few minutes' patience while I say something that is on my heart: I want to thank those home folks of my county who first gave an anxious country boy his opportunity to serve in State politics. I shall always owe a lot to those who gave me that first opportunity to serve.

I will never forget the warm support and close loyalty of the folks at Suttons, Haigler's Mill, Eufaula, Beat 6 and Beat 14, Richards Cross Roads and Gammage Beat . . at Baker Hill, Beat 8, and Comer, Spring Hill Adams Chapel and Mount Andrew . . White Oak, Baxter's Station, Clayton, Louisville and Cunningham Place; Horns Crossroads, Texasville and Blue Springs, where the vote was 304 for Wallace and 1 for the opposition . . and the dear little lady whom I heard had made that one vote against me . . by mistake . . because she couldn't see to [sic] well . . and she had pulled the wrong lever . . Bless her heart. At Clio, my birthplace, and Elamville. I shall never forget them. May God bless them.

And I shall forever remember that election day morning as I waited . . and suddenly at ten o'clock that morning the first return of a box was flashed over this state: it carried the message . . . Wallace 15, opposition zero; and it came from the Hamrick Beat at Putman's Mountain where live the great hill people of our state. May God bless the mountain man . . his loyalty is unshakable; he'll do to walk down the road with.

I hope you'll forgive me these few moments of remembering . . but I wanted them . . and you . . to know, that I shall never forget.

[. . .]

General Robert E. Lee said that "duty" is the most sublime word in the English language and I have come, increasingly, to realize what he meant. I SHALL do my duty to you, God helping . . to every man, to

every woman . . . yes, and to every child in this State. I shall fulfill my duty toward honesty and economy in our State government so that no man shall have a part of his livelihood cheated and no child shall have a bit of his future stolen away.

[. . . .]

I want to assure every child that this State government is not afraid to invest in their future through education, so that they will not be handicapped on the very threshold of their lives.

Today I have stood, where once Jefferson Davis stood, and took an oath to my people. It is very appropriate then that from this Cradle of the Confederacy, this very Heart of the Great Anglo-Saxon Southland, that today we sound the drum for freedom as have our generations of forebears before us done, time and again down through history. Let us rise to the call of freedom-loving blood that is in us and send our answer to the tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South. In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny . . . and I say . . . segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever.

[. . .]

Hear me Southerners! You sons and daughters who have moved north and west throughout this nation . . . we call on you from your native soil to join with us in national support and vote . . . and we know . . . wherever you are . . . away from the hearths of the Southland . . . that you will respond, for though you may live in the farthest reaches of this vast country . . . your heart has never left Dixieland.

And you native sons and daughters of old New England's rock-ribbed patriotism . . . and you sturdy natives of the great Mid-West . . . and you descendants of the far West flaming spirit of pioneer freedom . . . we invite you to come and be with us . . . for you are of the Southern mind . . . and the Southern spirit . . . and the Southern philosophy . . . you are Southerners too and brothers with us in our fight.

What I have said about segregation goes double this day . . . and what I have said to or about some federal judges goes TRIPLE this day.

[. . .]

[. . .] It is as old as the oldest dictator. It is degenerate and decadent. As the national racism of Hitler's Germany persecuted an national minority to the whim of national majority . . . so the international racism of the liberals seek to persecute the international white minority to the whim of the international

colored majority . .so that we are footballed about according to the favor of the Afro-Asian bloc. But the Belgian survivors of the Congo cannot present their case to a War Crimes Commission . . nor the Portuguese of Angola . . nor the survivors of Castro . . . nor the citizens of Oxford, Mississippi.

This nation was never meant to be a unit of one . . but a united of the many . . . that is the exact reason our freedom loving forefathers established the states, so as to divide the rights and powers among the many states, insuring that no central power could gain master government control.

In united effort we were meant to live under this government . . whether Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, or whatever one's denomination or religious belief . . each respecting the others right to a separate denomination . . . each, by working to develop his own, enriching the total of all our lives through united effort. And so it was meant in our political lives . . whether Republican, Democrat, Prohibition, or whatever political party . . each striving from his separate political station . . respecting the rights of others to be separate and work from within their political framework . . and each separate political station making its contribution to our lives.

And so it was meant in our racial lives . . each race, within its own framework has the freedom to teach . . . to instruct . . to develop . . to ask for and receive deserved help from others of separate racial stations. This is the great freedom of our American founding fathers . . but if we amalgamate into the one unit as advocated by the communist philosophers . . then the enrichment of our lives . . the freedom for our development . . is gone forever. We become, therefore, a mongrel unit of one under a single all powerful government . . and we stand for everything . . and for nothing.

The true brotherhood of America, of respecting the separateness of others . . and uniting in effort . . has been so twisted and distorted from its original concept that there is small wonder that communism is winning the world.

We invite the negro citizens of Alabama to work with us from his separate racial station . . as we will work with him . . to develop, to grow in individual freedom and enrichment. We want jobs and a good future for BOTH races. We want to help the physically and mentally sick of BOTH races . . the tubercular and the infirm. This is the basic heritage of my religion, of which I make full practice . . for we are all the handiwork of God.

But we warn those, of any group, who would follow the false doctrine of communistic amalgamation

that we will not surrender our system of government . . our freedom of race and religion . . that freedom was won at a hard price and if it requires a hard price to retain it . . we are able . . and quite willing to pay it.

The liberals' theory that poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity is the cause of communism is a false theory . . if it were true the South would have been the biggest single communist bloc in the western hemisphere long ago . . for after the great War Between the States, our people faced a desolate land of burned universities, destroyed crops and homes, with manpower depleted and crippled, and even the mule, which was required to work the land, was so scarce that whole communities shared one animal to make the spring plowing. There were no government hand-outs, no Marshall Plan aid, no coddling to make sure that our people would not suffer; instead the South was set upon by the vulturous carpetbagger and federal troops, all loyal Southerners were denied the vote at the point of bayonet, so that the infamous, illegal 14th Amendment might be passed. There was no money, no food and no hope of either. But our grandfathers bent their knee only in church and bowed their head only to God.

Not for one single instant did they ever consider the easy way of federal dictatorship and amalgamation in return for fat bellies. They fought. They dug sweet roots from the ground with their bare hands and boiled them in old iron pots . . they gathered poke salad from the woods and acorns from the ground. They fought. They followed no false doctrine . . they knew what they wanted . . and they fought for freedom! They came up from their knees in the greatest display of sheer nerve, grit and guts that has ever been set down in the pages of written history . . and they won! The great writer, Rudyard Kipling, wrote of them that: "There in the Southland of the United States of America, lives the greatest fighting breed of man . . in all the world!"

And that is why today, I stand ashamed of the fat, well-fed whimperers who say that it is inevitable . . that our cause is lost. I am ashamed of them . . . and I am ashamed for them. They do not represent the people of the Southland.

And may we take note of one other fact, with all the trouble with communists that some sections of this country have . . there are not enough native communists in the South to fill up a telephone booth and THAT is a matter of public FBI record.

We remind all within hearing of this Southland that a Southerner, Peyton Randoph, presided over the

Continental Congress in our nation's beginning . . . that a Southerner, Thomas Jefferson, wrote the Declaration of Independence, that a Southerner, George Washington, is the Father of our Country . . . that a Southerner, James Madison, authored our Constitution, that a Southerner, George Mason, authored the Bill of Rights and it was a Southerner who said, "Give me liberty . . . or give me death," Patrick Henry.

Southerners played a most magnificent part in erecting this great divinely [sic] inspired system of freedom . . . and as God is our witness, Southerners will save it.

[. . .]

My pledge to you . . . to "Stand Up For Alabama," is a stronger pledge today than it was the first day I made that pledge. I shall "Stand Up For Alabama," as Governor of our State . . . you stand with me . . . and we, together, can give courageous leadership to millions of people throughout this nation who look to the South for their hope in this fight to win and preserve our freedoms and liberties.

So help me God.

And my prayer is that the Father who reigns above us will bless all the people of this great sovereign [sic] State and nation, both white and black.

I thank you.¹⁷

In this speech, we see the more polished Carter style of the middle period of his career, tailored to suit a far more formal occasion, but still quite open in its White supremacist discourse style. White supremacy is upheld in direct statements such as "what I have said about segregation goes double this day," and in phrases which decry a supposed movement to "amalgamate" into a "mongrel unit"—clearly reducing individuals of interracial identity to animals, dogs. White supremacy is also upheld through repeated positive references to major figures of the Confederacy—Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis—whose names are enough to evoke romantic images in the minds of many Southerners and in such terms as "Cradle of the Confederacy" which recall the phrase "cradle of civilization" and suggesting that the South is the true source of White

civilization. Resistance is legitimized specifically by Carter's references to the Constitution, a document which as originally written recognized slavery. A positive and unyielding stance is clearly communicated in phrases such as "we give the word of a race of honor that we will tolerate their boot in our face no longer"—alluding to both Sherman's march through Georgia and the stereotype of the violently oppressive Reconstruction era as well as the dispatching of troops in favor of integration efforts in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. The good character of Alabamians in particular is defended in Carter's repeated references to the "loyalty" of those in small districts who had supported him. That Southerners are victims of an outside plot is predicated throughout when Carter refers to "Washington" and "government" as tyrannical and godless. Carter's appeals to unity, not merely within Alabama, but between those in the South and "Southerners" who have moved to other areas of the country, as well as between these Southerners and "native sons and daughters" of the North and Midwest and "descendents" of pioneers in the West who are "Southerners" in spirit. This latter reinforces Carter's idea of blood kinship and racial identification and by implication excludes those of Black or mixed-race origins whose origins are less pure. The entire piece provides examples of such strategies.

Some passages, however, seem to embed these strategies with particular efficacy, such as the most often quoted line of the speech whose heroic gallantry was meant to inspire the listeners: "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny . . . and I say . . . segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever." In this single sentence, Carter deploys several traditional strategies. Obviously, he sanctifies segregationist

beliefs in the final three phrases, but he simultaneously sanctifies both White supremacy and violent resistance, as this series of phrases echoes strongly the Klan motto, “Here Yesterday! Here Today! Here Forever!” (McWhorter, “Little Tree” 120)—itself a corruption of Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” The phrases also represent a call to arms which encourages unity between the speaker and the listener, bound in common, by implicit association Christian, quest. Similarly, in the first phrase of the sentence, “In the name of the greatest people,” he defends the good character of his audience. And, in the second phrase, “I draw a line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny,” he asserts a positive and unyielding stance against an implied outside threat. The chivalric gesture described in that phrase also legitimizes resistance, making it seem both heroic and romantic. Thus, in this single sentence, Carter can be seen to deploy all six strategies common to traditional White supremacist rhetoric of the period—such as giving “major attention to continued sanctification of the faith,” white supremacy, legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—while covertly adding his own signature call to violence.

What is particularly remarkable about the piece, however, are the new strategies which Carter begins to deploy. Chief among these strategies is Carter’s use of “inclusive” gestures which are actually, at least for the attending audience, “excluding” gestures. For example, Carter seemingly refers positively to religious plurality, saying “In united effort we were meant to live under this government . . . whether Baptist, Methodist,

Presbyterian, Church of Christ, or whatever one's denomination or religious belief."

However, it is significant that the list contains merely Protestant faiths, as earlier in the piece Carter had identified the "ungodly" government as being the "very opposite of Christ." Thus, while seeming to celebrate plurality, Carter celebrates plurality merely among Protestants, excluding Catholics by implication and non-Christians, such as Jews, specifically. Atheism, though theoretically also a religious belief which would be tolerated, is clearly "ungodly" and also maligned.

In a nearly identical gesture, Carter seemingly applauds the multi-party system, referring to the "Republican, Democrat, [and] Prohibition, or whatever political party . . each striving from his separate political station . . respecting the rights of others to be separate and work from within their political framework . . and each separate political station making its contribution to our lives." Communism, however, is rather obviously excluded and is depicted only as a destructive force rather than a potential contributor to the common good. More importantly, the platform of the Communist party, which had been particularly supportive of the Civil Rights movement, is flattened out into a single issue—that of integration—in such phrases as "false doctrine of communistic amalgamation" and "if we amalgamate into the one unit as advocated by the communist philosophers [. . .] the freedom for our development . . is gone forever." This oversimplification is extended to the federal government by implication in such phrases as "federal dictatorship and amalgamation" which are used to suggest that Reconstruction efforts were identical to the efforts of contemporary Communists in such nations as Cuba—linking in one smooth move Communism, federal government efforts to empower former slaves in the South, and contemporary efforts in opposition to segregation.

Having so identified Communists and Washington politicians, Carter effectively excludes them from the list of those political parties and politicians who could make an equal contribution to the common good.

Further, despite the use of such terms as “Southerners” and “Alabamians” to describe the members of Wallace’s listening audience, Carter clearly excludes Blacks from both categories. This is done most explicitly towards the end of the speech, when in an echo of the speech Carter gave during Brotherhood Week in the latter 1950s, he says “The true brotherhood of America, of respecting the separateness of others . . and uniting in effort . . has been so twisted and distorted from its original concept that there is small wonder that communism is winning the world.” Carter then calls for “the negro citizens of Alabama to work with us from his separate racial station,” the deployment of “us” clearly excluding Blacks from the listening audience at the same time they are invited to join that audience in its efforts and the term “station” implying here clearly class, by implication a lower class than that of Whites. This exclusion is furthered in the next passage, in which Carter calls upon the listener to defend “our system of government . . our freedom or race and religion,” all three values of which, being modified by the first-person plural, pronoun clearly belong to the same “us” as had been named in the previous section—a “we” which excluded Blacks. Blacks, thus, are called upon to unite with Whites in defense of a system of government, racial separateness, and religion which do not belong to them—any inclusion of Blacks, thus, being predicated upon their acceptance of cultural practices and beliefs designated as White, and any distinctively Black cultural practices and beliefs being excluded as unworthy.

Carter also deploys victimization strategies which go beyond those of traditional

White supremacist strategies, and depicts Whites as being victimized by local forces as well as by outside forces. The strategies are similar to those in his political newsletters in the 1950s, but have become more subtle and sophisticated. In an early passage of the speech, Carter refers to the “great hill people of our state. May God bless the mountain man . . . his loyalty is unshakable; he’ll do to walk down the road with.” Carter thus binds together the goals of a successful, relatively well-to-do politician such as Wallace with probably the most impoverished of the state’s population, thus combining these two radically different classes into a single class which is still elevated above that of Blacks. Similarly, Carter posits Wallace to the role of champion of the local downtrodden without making him a threat to the wealthier class.

More appalling is Carter’s identification of Hitler’s Germany, still nearly universally abhorred as a symbol of White supremacist tyranny, and its oppression of a “national minority” with the supposed racism of “liberals” who would seek to oppress the “international white minority to the whim of the international colored majority.” This linking of Nazism with a hypothetical international conspiracy against Whites serves doubly to subtly justify the actions of Nazis in defense of this supposedly oppressed White minority as well as to portray the White majority of the South as an oppressed group, seeking to defend itself against the locally small¹⁸ but internationally large Black community. It further represents that locally small community as a threatening incursion of the larger and—as Carter refers to violence in the Congo and Angola—violent majority. And, in linking the violence of the Congo and Angola to events in Oxford, Mississippi, Carter creates alarm in the audience by connecting the “outside plot” to local events and populations whose very proximity is more threatening.

Thus, in this speech, Carter confines himself largely to the standard techniques of White supremacist rhetoric of the period, but as the speech was likely to go beyond the confines of a sympathetic audience, he is compelled to include occasional cloaking gestures which appear to suggest inclusiveness while actually excluding and which appear to criticize elitism and White supremacy while simultaneously forwarding their cause. The inclusion of such cloaking gestures, within a speech that contains horrifically overt messages of White supremacy, permitted Wallace and his political spokespeople a certain degree of deniability when confronted by questions about the degree to which Wallace supported White supremacy.

The Inaugural Program: A Vehicle for Open White Supremacy

The speech was not the only document upon which Carter worked for the inauguration. The 300-page Official Inaugural Program printed by National Services, Inc., also contains materials written by Carter.¹⁹ The contract for the program, awarded to Wallace crony Oscar Harper, permitted him to make in excess of \$85,000 from the 170 pages of ads. Carter assembled the materials for the program,²⁰ including biographies of Wallace, family members, and administration figures. The obligatory biography of George Wallace would later be included in a volume along with a biography of Lurleen Wallace, and Carter would officially be named the author; the George Wallace biography contains frequent references to Wallace's Scots background to appeal to the Klan faithful and other features by which Carter made Wallace seem heroic. But, it is in a six-page editorial, including much white space to make it appear almost poetic, that Carter's anti-Black, anti-Semitic, pro-violence voice is heard the most strongly.

And Now . . .

Khrushchev has said we are growing more alike to his country.

That in a short time we shall be the same.

That communism then, will rule supreme.

There will be no advancing armies, except for riot suppression as in Mississippi . . . or in Hungary.

What does he mean? Do not Russian armies and missiles stand in menacing posture before the world?

True, but they have never moved until AFTER a country has succumbed from within.

[. . .]

It is a government that plays upon the fears and insecurities of its people. And having magnified those fears and insecurities, says to its people:

“I will feed you, employ you, directly or indirectly; I will house you. I will educate your children. I will give you security in your waning years as I will give you security now. I will minister to you. I will tell you what to sow and where you will sow it and I will receive the reapings which I will distribute. In return for these things, I gather unto myself the necessary power to provide for you. I will be your father. I will be your God, for you will look to me—Government. I will direct your thinking, and tell you what is good and what is bad; what is understanding and what is compassion; what is freedom and what is law. And what I do not require that you do, I shall forbid you to do . . . for the sake of the mass people. You will, subtly in the beginning and brazenly in progression, look to me—government, as your God, I will support the illegitimate, the immoral and the slacker, for their vote gives me power, I will plan and plot the lives of my citizens and I will say what rights those citizens may and may not have—for the good of all. My might will make right. My interpretations [sic] shall be law. My definitions shall become basic knowledge. I shall be God . . . God—Government: the basic atheism of Communism.

[. . .]

They [liberals] call their philosophy “progressive,” and yet it is retrogressive. They deny the system of checks and balances. Deny that rights carry with them responsibilities, excusing their suppression of individual rights in the interests of “rights of humans . . . or the masses.” Deny the existence of individual race and negate the very laws of nature which gives them breath, preferring to peddle their song of discord rather than live in harmony with them. They insist that government by debt is a basic law, and no one will ever have to pay. They have magnified every small injustice in the system of our Republic that provided the greatest good for the most people, and have wrought, through their magnification, the silent revolution that more conforms to their interpretation of “democracy.”

[. . .]

As in 1948, Chiang Kai Shek suddenly became a villain in the press. “Blackjack Chiang,” They called him, because he denied “rights” to the “agrarian reformers” of China, led by Mao Tse Tung . . . who only wanted “democracy.”

And so have gone the mills of propaganda of the “liberals.” Even back to the day of World War II when they set upon Mihailovitch and his brave band of men, and blackened him, because he would not surrender his Yugoslavian forces, to that “fighter for democracy,” Josef Broz Tito. Country after country, figure after figure.

[. . .]

And much has been made of the equality of race. According each race its particular talents, its accomplishments, its artistry or its moral tendencies; one fact is clearly and indelibly recorded in history . . . that only those who are proud of their customs and heritage have ever erected and maintained a free government for free men. He has accomplished this by fixing his relationship with government on the basis of:

I will feed and clothe my family, educate and house my children, determine my personal destiny, placing my security in God . . . and therefore, government shall be my servant . . . not my master." That is responsibility.

We have only to read history to determine this fact. And to determine also that when a great heritage of free men, who are pleased with their customs, traditions and fundamental principles of democracy, have succumbed to paternalistic government . . . father government, and has integrated, freedom has vanished from that country. Thebes offers its ancient lesson . . . Spain . . . and so many more.

You have only to read the recorded history. We should. The communists do, and have . . . they who would install master-government, father-government over all the world.

They have read and learned also, that we comprise only one-third of this world's population. We are the minority race. Our ancestors bled and died for such "foolish intangibles" as right of trial by jury and gave it willingly to all who came within his domain, who forced the Magna Carta from tyrannical hands. They did it by fighting and dying for no material gain . . . for a "nothing" to the material minded . . . a "nothing" we best describe as personal freedom.

We are heirs to the heritage that now stands a constant danger to the plan of super-government. We must be destroyed, by submersion of integration and disappearance into the vast sea of the world's colored majority. Only then, and then only, can the dreamers of world government breathe easy in their high places of power.

[. . .]

As Britain withdrew from Ghana, midst riot and fretting of the negro for "his rights," the liberal press (read their dated issues) hailed the "forming of a democratic government." A U. S. Vice President attended the new negro president of Ghana's inauguration, in company with a Martin Luther King. The "equality of Race" liberals danced in Ghana's streets, but only for a short time.

[. . .]

And in the great Bible belt of the South of these United States, the attack upon those attempting to hold the reins of government in his hands, and umbrella of freedom open . . . the attack is the same as it has been upon the British, upon the French, upon the Dutch.

Couched in honeyed dissertations on "rights" and "human dignity," on "morality" and "law," the attack grows in intensity.

At "thirty minutes before midnight," the freedom loving people of Alabama have elected Wallace to lead them. He has been elected very late indeed; while Cuba is already beaming its "operation Dixie" broadcasts to the Southern negro, while King now openly states the colored will arm if the Southerner continues his "injustices" while the bayonet and tank of monstrous centralized power threatens the throat of the South; Alabama has elected a Wallace.

The money changers in solemn pronouncement prevail upon him not to resist and "cause another Mississippi," and they quite clearly in their decrying prove that such means a dollar less to them. Nobody

wants a dollar lost. But they make their demands of prevailing toward the victim rather than the oppressor. They might just as sensibly have prevailed upon the Belgians “not to cause violence,” as the Belgians were being raped, and hacked and eaten . . . as they backed out of the Congo. They should, in the reasoning of the money changers, surrendered more quietly and confined their being hacked to death in the small wee hours of night, so that the dignity of the new “laws by edict,” should not be embarrassed.

[. . .]

Wallace has not said he would win the battle. But he intends to be a leader in the war . . . the winning war for freedom. He is, as all men are, and have been, merely flesh and bone and blood; he is as weak or strong as most men, physically. It is his spirit, it is his Christian devoutness toward freedom, that makes him a leader of his people. It is his faith . . . so strong, that it is almost a physical, tangible thing. It is his Divine Guidance. We know he constantly asks for it . . . and receives it. It is his intensity of purpose to lend his brain, his soul, his strong Scot battle-heart, his nerveless energy, his firm right arm . . . to God’s Cause for Freedom.

We will follow him because we believe. We believe stronger than the communists, or the pseudo-liberals, or the mongrelizers or the commanders of crushing military might. We believe. God has given us a man—and we believe.²¹

In this piece, Carter’s use of White supremacist rhetoric is even stronger than it was in the inaugural speech, presumably because the audience for the program could be assumed to be far more sympathetic. The appeals to White supremacist core beliefs—among them, giving “major attention to continued sanctification of the faith,” white supremacy, legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—are many in this essay. Some are given directly, as in passages such as “We must be destroyed, by submersion of integration and disappearance into the vast sea of the world’s colored majority.” Others communicate White supremacy more covertly: “I will support the illegitimate, the immoral and the slacker, for their vote gives me power” communicates racism to the White supremacist who would associate illegitimacy, immorality, and poor work ethic to Blacks. Other passages speak directly to the supposed inequality of races, as in “And much has been made of the equality of race.

According each race its particular talents, its accomplishments, its artistry or its moral tendencies; one fact is clearly and indelibly recorded in history . . . that only those who are proud of their customs and heritage have ever erected and maintained a free government for free men.” When later, Carter states that “Our ancestors bled and died for such ‘foolish intangibles’ as right of trial by jury . . . [and] forced the Magna Carta from tyrannical hands,” it is clear that he means Whites when he says “those who are proud” and “free men.” Though the point is not stated, the implication is that the talents, accomplishments, artistry, and moral tendencies of Blacks would lead in another—and he clearly implies *opposite* with his examples of Ghana and other newly liberated countries—direction. Another aspect of the White supremacy of the speech is the nearly open anti-Semitism of such phrases as “The money changers in solemn pronouncement prevail upon him not to resist and ‘cause another Mississippi.’” The concept of Judaism and “financiers” being so indelibly linked in the minds of the anti-Semitic audience to whom Carter is appealing that the mere mention of “money changers” could covertly signal that set of beliefs. The White supremacist rhetoric of this document, though occasionally coded, is still far more open and strident than the inaugural speech.

As in the inaugural speech, Carter legitimizes resistance to those who would battle legal segregation by appealing to the Constitution, a document which as originally written recognized slavery and upheld White supremacy. A positive and unyielding and defiant stance is suggested in such phrases as “At ‘thirty minutes before midnight,’ the freedom loving people of Alabama have elected Wallace to lead them” and “It is his intensity of purpose to lend his brain, his soul, his strong Scot battle-heart, his nerveless energy, his firm right arm . . . to God’s Cause for Freedom.” The good character of

Alabamians is defended also in the phrase “freedom loving people of Alabama,” but the good character of all Southerners is defended in such phrases as “And in the great Bible belt of the South of these United States, the attack [has been made] upon those attempting to hold the reins of government in his hands, and the umbrella of freedom open,” and the good character of Whites in general is defended in such phrases as “a great heritage of free men,” “free” being identified in this document with White culture. The need for unity is communicated most clearly in the last phrases of the document which posit Wallace as a savior: “We will follow him because we believe. We believe stronger than the communists, or the pseudo-liberals, or the mongrelizers or the commanders of crushing military might. We believe. God has given us a man—and we believe.”

However, the strongest characteristic of the document, other than its repeated appeals to White supremacist orthodoxies, is its characterizing of the audience as the victims of an outside plot. This plot is tied to many factions—most clearly, the “liberals” whom Carter depicts as not being true liberals but rather “pseudo-liberals.” These liberals, he claims, are duped by Communist philosophy into working from within to destroy a state which might otherwise easily resist Communist forces. The beliefs which Carter says characterize this pseudo-liberal are a belief in the equality of the races, a desire for more federal government control, and a belief in integration—by which Carter means miscegenation. Other perpetrators of the outside plot are openly named Communist leaders such as Castro and Mao Tse Tung, as well as Martin Luther King, whom Carter implies is also a Communist. Also openly named are “world’s colored majority” who had been effectively expelling such imperialist powers as the Dutch and French from their own countries. Less openly named are Jews, whom Carter refers to

only obliquely in coded language as “money changers” who bemoan “a dollar loss” and recommend that the colored majority be allowed to triumph rather than threaten their own income. Carter weaves the fabric of this plot to include liberals, Communists, Jews, and Civil Rights leaders, in the same way he intertwined these forces in his openly White supremacist documents of the latter 50s.

One feature of the essay which would become a commonplace in Carter’s later work is the use of the term “government.” In this document, Carter uses the terms “government,” occasionally capitalizing it to make it more ominous, and “master government” interchangeably. By both, Carter clearly means federal government and not state or local governments. By slight of hand, the term “government” comes to refer only to those government forces outside of the South, and Southern state government ceases to be a government at all. By the latter, more specifically, Carter suggests that the federal government intended to make slaves of all Southerners, metaphorically turning White Southerners into Blacks. In the place of the concept of state government, Carter refers to the “system of our Republic”—whose “small injustices,” by implication the excesses of segregation, have been blown out of proportion—and a government which “shall be my servant . . . not my master” and apparently shall not attempt to change the White supremacist system which Carter champions. Indeed, this government appears to be not so much an elected body of leaders as the transparent will of the, by implication White, people. The newly elected Wallace is depicted not so much as the proposed leader of a state government as the leader of a battle, the wording of “Alabama has elected *a Wallace*” (emphasis added) recalling the battles of William Wallace—the late 13th and early 14th century Scots military leader and a darling of the Ku Klux Klan—against the

British. That this battle is a sacred crusade is clearly communicated in such phrases as “It is [Wallace’s] Divine Guidance. We know he constantly asks for it . . . and receives it.” Thus, Carter deftly and covertly encourages anti-government violent resistance among his listeners in support of Wallace’s political goals.

Carter’s First Militia Group: Preparing for Violence against Civil Rights

Carter’s covert appeals in the essay parallel his covert activities on the part of the Wallace administration in addition to his work as a speechwriter. Carter was not paid directly by Wallace and would never appear on any official roster of Wallace’s staff; indeed, Wallace would deny to his death that Carter had ever been associated with him.²² In this capacity as an, at least publicly, unacknowledged staff member, Carter continued to speak before White supremacist groups in Alabama. Just one week later, on 21 January, Carter spoke before a meeting of the Montgomery chapter of the National States’ Rights Party. Prior to that meeting, Carter had met with a smaller group of NSRP members and said that plans were being made to organize men in Montgomery and throughout the state into a group which would “back up” Governor Wallace in opposition to the desegregation of schools in Alabama. During his speech later that evening, Carter indicated that Governor Wallace knew of and was directing the organization efforts, and listeners gathered that the purpose of the group would be to physically prevent the entrance of any Black students. A few days later, on 29 January, Carter held what seems to be the official first meeting of about 100 members of the “Volunteers for Alabama and Wallace” at Klan Hall in Montgomery—a large number of the persons in attendance were known Klan members. One of the members, identified by an informant as someone who

had taken part in the Freedom Rider beatings, rose at the meeting and suggested systematically killing the relatives of any Negro who attempted to enter the school. Carter did not openly approve of the suggestion, but said that if that was what the man thought should be done, it was “up to him.” Carter himself only advocated picketing.²³

Carter worked actively to organize the group and on 9 February, a spokesman for the group read a petition from the group to Governor Wallace at the Alabama State Capitol Building. By March, the group had acquired the additional name of “United Confederacy of America,” and by April 1963, the organization was passing out bumper stickers with the name “Alabama Militia Volunteers” and a flag resembling that of the state of Alabama. FBI informants noted that the principal organization, based in Montgomery, was made up of members and officers of Robert Shelton’s United Klans of America Incorporated, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which on 1 April voted to affiliate with Volunteers for Alabama, though it would keep its own name. Carter was identified as the chief organizer and made numerous speeches at Klan Hall, though he advocated only peaceful methods such as picketing and demonstrations hoping that the group would be made the official State Militia of the State of Alabama.²⁴

On 8 March, Carter made an appearance in Birmingham at the Municipal Auditorium at a rally in support of Commissioner of Public Safety Bull Connor, marking his return to public life in that city (McWhorter, Carry 317). In early April, plans were made to start another militia unit in Tuscaloosa, to be called the “Stand Up For Alabama Club,” and the story was rumored that Wallace wanted a force of 10,000 men available at any time, at any place, on only 8 hours notice to fight integration efforts. However, Carter failed to show up at the meeting of the Club, and no one observed any of

Wallace's men present.²⁵ Carter's men did show up though to greet Robert Kennedy, who had come in to Alabama for a meeting with Wallace; the attorney general was treated with a seemingly spontaneous demonstration of two dozen chanting men holding up crude signs stating "Kosher Team—Kennedy/Kastro/Kruschev," "Christians Wake Up," "Mississippi Murderer," and "No Kennedy Congo Here."²⁶ Rough, handwritten leaflets were passed out, reading: "The Giant, Jew-Communist Race Mixing TRAINED NIGGERS Road Show and Travelling [sic] Circus . . . Niggers Fresh From New York Now Exclusively Appearing in Birmingham" and "See Ape Martin Luther Koon actually use a telephone and call Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy and see Robert Kennedy send FBI agents to Birmingham to help keep the trained niggers from falling off the lunch counter stools!" (McWhorter, Carry 362). Clearly, Carter's new role in the administration was to orchestrate the unofficial activities of Klan members and similar types to coincide with the efforts of the official administration staff. In this way, Carter began to achieve his original plans of coordinating the activities of legitimate, nonviolent official political officials with an underground movement, of which he hoped to be the head.

"Stand in the Schoolhouse Door": Posturing in Favor of White Supremacy

In early June, Carter handed along the information to the Klan and the National States' Rights Party that Wallace did not want a demonstration at the University of Alabama, where Vivian Malone and Jimmy Hood planned to enroll in a few days. The Governor wanted all attention to be given to the speech which Carter was at that time writing with John Kohn. On 11 June, in a critical moment of his political career, Wallace

delivered his “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door” speech—formally entitled “Statement and Proclamation.” The speech was largely a duplicitous choreographed response to Deputy US Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach’s request that he move aside and allow Hood and Malone to enroll, as Wallace apparently never had any intention of actually interfering with Katzenbach and risking imprisonment.²⁷ The speech was rebroadcast on national television and gave Carter another important opportunity to affect the political situation in Alabama and in the nation. The four-page statement contained few of the inflammatory sections of Wallace’s inaugural speech, being as it was a speech to be delivered only indirectly to a sympathetic audience, and yet traces of Carter’s own personal style—passionate, covertly advocating violence, filled with hyperbole—intrude upon the otherwise largely legalistic tone.

As Governor and Chief Magistrate of the State of Alabama I deem it to be my solemn obligation and duty to stand before you representing the rights and sovereignty of this State and its peoples.

The unwelcomed, unwanted, unwarranted and force-induced intrusion upon the campus of the University of Alabama today of the might of the Central Government offers frightful example of the oppression of the rights, privileges and sovereignty of this State by officers of the Federal Government. This intrusion results solely from force, or threat of force, undignified by any reasonable application of the principle of law, reason and justice. It is important that the people of this State and nation understand that this action is in violation of rights reserved to the State by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Alabama. While some few may applaud these acts, millions of Americans will gaze in sorrow upon the situation existing at this great institution of learning.

Only the Congress makes the law of the United States. To this date no statutory authority can be cited to the people of this Country which authorizes the Central Government to ignore the sovereignty of this State is an attempt to subordinate the rights of Alabama and millions of Americans. There has been no legislative action by Congress justifying this intrusion.

[. . . .]

This nation was never meant to be a unit of one but a united of the many that is the exact reason our freedom loving forefathers established the states, so as to divide the rights and powers among the many states, insuring that no central power could gain master government control.

There can be no submission to the theory that the Central Government is anything but a servant of the people. We are God-fearing people — not government-fearing people. We practice today the free heritage bequeathed to us by the Founding Fathers.

[. . . .]

I stand before you today in place of thousands of other Alabamians whose presence would have confronted you had I been derelict and neglected to fulfill the responsibilities of my office. It is the right of every citizen, however humble he may be, through his chosen officials of representative government to stand courageously against whatever he believes to be the exercise of power beyond the Constitutional rights conferred upon our Federal Government. It is this right which I assert for the people of Alabama by my presence here today.

[. . . .]

NOW, THEREFORE, I, George C. Wallace, as Governor of the State of Alabama . . . do hereby denounce and forbid this illegal and unwarranted action by the Central Government.²⁸

The largely legalistic tone of the speech can be credited to attorney John Kohn, but certain flourishes are attributable to Asa Carter, whom Dan T. Carter credits with having worked on the text.²⁹ An unusual feature of the piece is the grammatical error in the sentence: “To this date no statutory authority can be cited to the people of this Country which authorizes the Central Government to ignore the sovereignty of this State *is an attempt to subordinate the rights of Alabama and millions of Americans.*” The juxtaposition of the two clauses—the second lacking a subject—seems a feature of its dual authorship. The first section seems clearly Kohn, in his concern for legal procedure—but the second clause with its inflammatory use of “subordinate,” suggesting

that the Central Government is the oppressor, and the use of the phrase “millions of Americans,” repeated from the previous paragraph and reinforcing the notion of oppression, seems clearly Carter. This “snappy, hard-hitting” style, briefly illustrated in this passage, was credited by Wallace aides to Carter,³⁰ and such passages seem best attributed to him.

The text is devoid of open appeals to White supremacy, but all other tactics used in White supremacist rhetoric of the period are present. The document as a whole, in its appeals to Constitutional authority and the rights of states, seeks to legitimate resistance to the integration of the school. A positive and unyielding stance is communicated most strongly in the last line of the piece: “I . . . do hereby denounce and forbid this illegal and unwarranted action by the Central Government.” The good character of Alabamians and of Americans who supported Wallace’s stand is defended in such phrases as “God-fearing people—not government-fearing people.” That White Alabamians were the victim of an outside plot is also communicated throughout, as the “Central Government” is depicted as illegally usurping the rights of the State to enforce its segregation laws. Unity is encouraged not merely among Alabamians, but among the sympathetic listeners nationwide, in such phrases as “millions of Americans will gaze in sorrow.” Thus, while omitting open appeals to White supremacist philosophies, the document partakes of the rhetorical strategies of White supremacists—legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—and clearly supports a stance in opposition to integration.

Yet, even in this otherwise tame document, Carter inserts his own flourishes. His repetition of the phrase “This nation was never meant to be a unit of one but a united of the many” from the inaugural speech would, to an audience who had heard the speech only months before, recall the full argument made on behalf of White supremacy and in opposition to what Carter called “mongrelization” and “amalgamation.” The implied threat of the phrase “I stand before you today in place of thousands of other Alabamians whose presence would have confronted you,” particularly as it exists in contradiction to what the speech characterized as an “intrusion [which] results from force, or threat of force,” makes it clear that the legal argument of this speech could easily have been substituted by the argument of force provided by a potential mob. That Wallace has, by substituting his own presence in place of that mob, prevented violence suggests that any violence that might result from the federal government’s refusal to abide by his “lawful” requests would be the fault of the federal government alone, making it into the aggressor and disturber of the peace. Thus, in one of the most politically important speeches of his career, Carter can be seen to both adhere to the typical strategies of White supremacist rhetoric and to add his own appeals to violence.

White Resistance Victories: 16th Street Church Bombing and Attackers’ Parole

Carter continued his underground work for Wallace during the period, though whether Wallace was fully apprised of his activities is uncertain. The militia organization, now operating under four names—Volunteers for Alabama and Wallace, United Confederacy of America, Stand up for Alabama Club, and Alabama Militia—remained somewhat active, but in July Carter became involved in an even more shadowy,

loosely organized group called the “Brotherhood Organization.” Soon, his leadership was on the wane, as on 13 August a member of the Brotherhood Organization called Carter a “fraud and a person unworthy to lead any organization of white men” to the general approval of all present. FBI agents came to the conclusion that Carter was no longer a figure of any importance in the racial scene of Montgomery, having alienated those in power there with his racial extremism, though Carter was simultaneously becoming more important in the relationship between the National States’ Rights Party the Klan and administration figures.³¹

In early September, Carter was present at a banquet for the United Americans for Conservative Government at the Redmont Hotel,³² whose leader Bob Gafford put up a \$100 reward for the arrest of a black man in connection with the slashing of a white girl’s arm as she was on her way to a football game on Friday, 13 September, in Birmingham. Gafford was a good friend of Robert “Dynamite Bob” Chambliss, who himself had been an associate of Carter’s in his Ensley Klavern days, and this connection might have something to do with Carter’s presence in Birmingham on the weekend of 14 and 15 September. It is also possible that Carter might merely have been reconnoitering in town for Governor Wallace.³³ In any case, Carter was in Birmingham on the morning of 15 September when Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins were murdered by Chambliss and several associates who had planted a bomb outside the Sixteenth Street Baptist church the night before. Asa Carter was immediately identified by the FBI as a possible informant, possibly even a suspect, and was interviewed about the bombing two weeks later.

The interview was a formal one, and began with Carter being informed of his

rights. Carter told agents that he was at the time employed as a professional writer for Governor Wallace, and added that both he and Wallace deplored the violence in Birmingham because it was damaging to Wallace's reputation and to the segregation movement—both reasons being rather obviously self-interested—claiming that he would cooperate fully in the investigation. Carter referred to his friend Kenneth Adams, one of Nat King Cole's attackers, as a bully but claimed he himself had nothing to do with the bombing. During the interview, Carter made the predictable claim that the bombing had been done by Civil Rights activists who were trying to get sympathy and money for the anti-segregation movement, or who were trying to provoke the government into declaring martial law in Birmingham. When asked about his whereabouts, Carter said he had been home with family during the weekend of 15 September and also denied ever having been a Ku Klux Klan member.³⁴

Agents did not accept Carter's story at face value, and continued to investigate him after the interview, being particularly interested in any connections between Carter and the Alabama administration. They found no open connections between Carter and the administration, and further discovered that the connection between Carter and the Volunteers for Alabama and Wallace was over—the Birmingham branch now being defunct and the Tuscaloosa branch being inactive. Most importantly for later investigations, agents interviewed in late November one of the men in prison for the Aaron mutilation about the bombing and, though he could provide no information about that bombing, the man offered to cooperate in any racial matter fully once he was out of prison.³⁵ Though the man is never named in FBI files, the most likely candidate was Jesse Mabry.

On 11 July 1963, Wallace's first appointment to the Alabama parole board took office, and on 25 July 1963, the board voted unanimously not to require the four men sentenced for the Aaron mutilation to serve at least one-third of their sentences—in contradiction to the usual practice. In October 1963, the parole board gave Mabry his first hearing, at which only the prosecuting attorney and presiding judge spoke in opposition to his release (Huie 27-28). On 17 January 1964, the Birmingham Post-Herald reported that the previous day, again by unanimous vote, the parole board had granted parole to Jesse Mabry, who had been imprisoned only since 2 April 1959—having served less than four years of his twenty-year sentence (“Sexual Mutilation” 1). In February 1964, the board announced that the other three men were also being considered favorably for parole—on 18 January 1965, Bart Floyd, the man who wielded the razor, was released; the remaining two Klan members were also freed.³⁶ Thus, in November of 1963, only Mabry was actually being considered for release and would have had reason to promise to cooperate upon leaving prison. But, whether the informant was Mabry, Floyd, Pritchett, or McCullough, the man who offered to cooperate probably became the informant who would provide a great deal of inside information about Carter's doings over the next years.

Duplicitous Publication: The Never-Delivered Harvard Speech

During the investigation of Carter's connection to the Sixteenth Street Church bombing, on 4 November, George Wallace delivered a speech in Boston before students of Harvard and Radcliffe. The speech is a curious document, as the version which was given to newspapers for publication is radically different from the speech which was

actually delivered. The printed version of the speech is, as Dan T. Carter notes, one of the most oft-cited examples of Wallace's racism. The speech which was actually delivered, however, exists but in manuscript form and is available only from the Library of Congress in the NAACP Papers.³⁷ Understanding that there were two version of the speech is crucial to an understanding of Carter's contributions to Wallace's oratory, as the document which was delivered is largely the work of John Kohn and Jim Simpson, both lawyers.³⁸ The legalistic argument of Kohn and Simpson, regarding states' rights, was fairly well received, though McWhorter reports that one of Simpson's passages—"Brown did not, I assure you, as some seem to think, spring instantly into existence full grown and ready for action equipped with injunctive process, preferred appeal, set bayonets and all its accoutrements like Botticelli would have us believe Venus came to the shores of Greece full grown and full blown on the breath of Boreas"—moved the audience into, probably unintentional, laughter for the only time that evening with its unexpected coupling of militaristic and erotic imagery (Carry 566).

Wallace obviously chose to deliver the Kohn and Simpson speech rather than the Carter version, and that decision, keeping in mind the warm reception of the audience, was almost certainly the correct one. That his staff released the Carter version to the press, however, seems equally sagacious, as this duplicitous practice allowed Wallace apparently to take a hard and unyielding line even at the alma mater of the Kennedys. It is almost certain that Wallace's staff released the incorrect version of the speech intentionally, so as to permit Wallace to simultaneously appeal to a more liberal crowd and appease his hard-line supporters both back home and in the North just as he had with his staged stand in the schoolhouse door. The appeal of Carter's version to these two

latter constituencies becomes apparent when we examine the opening passage of the printed, but not delivered, speech:

With your kind attention I shall attempt to give you, without regard to whether it is pleasing to you or me, the law and the facts with regard to segregation of the races in the South. Whether you need it here in your state is for you to determine – not me, not my state, not the United States, but you, the people of this sovereign state.

Here is a fragmentary view of the backdrop against which we were reared, we live and work in the South.

In 1860 as the Civil War began, the assessed value of property in the State of Georgia was approximately the same as that in the State of Massachusetts. My State of Alabama and the rest of the Southern states had their counterparts in the North on about the same basis. Within the following four years the Southern states became conquered territory; they had applied to them the scorched earth policy, illustrated by Sherman's march from Atlanta to the sea. While not so celebrated in song and story, the other Southern states had their marches – my state had General Wilson's Raid from Tennessee to the Gulf in which homes, most public buildings, including our state university at Tuscaloosa, and the means of peace time production as well as war were burned to the ground.

The South has the unique distinction of being the only territory conquered by armies of the United States which has not been rehabilitated at the expense of the United States – witness the Marshall Plan, the lend lease, the foreign aid – and the protecting garrisons which have rehabilitated the economies of our enemies of other wars. The South began to feel federal occupation from the fall of Fort Donaldson in 1862, and it became complete with federal soldiers in every county from 1865 until 1875. During that time – called the "Tragic Era" – carpetbaggers seized our legislatures, created unmanageable public debt for cities, counties and states, and left not only our people prostrate by war but our governments prostrate by profligacy. Until very recent years the tariff laws protected your manufactured goods and left our agricultural products open to world competition. The railroad rates made it easy to ship your manufactured goods to the South but impossible to ship southern manufactured goods to the North. The [sic] payment of national pension money created a circulating medium even in the remote rural areas of the North but in the South, in the absence of pensions, a Marshall Plan or other rehabilitation measure, there was practically no circulating medium or trading except in eggs, chickens, molasses and other farm produce and the food of the people in the rural areas was hoecake and molasses.

During the tragic era when federal soldiers patrolled the rural areas and were stationed in every county seat and major town in the South, there occurred what has always occurred and I assume will always occur where armies of occupation, made up of semi-idle, strong, vigorous young men, and where the women of the lowest social order in the conquered territory have suffered the disruption of their mores by war, there came from the Northern soldier and the Negro women a numerous race called "Mulattoes." Many

mulattoes inherited the mentality and personality of their white ancestor; these are the so-called Negroes who are able to take college degrees at institutions like Tuskegee Institute in my state, Howard University in Washington, and to fill, in many cases, responsible positions. These are the more energetic, educated so-called Negroes. They are not representative in any true sense of their less capable African half brother. When you speak of the Negro in the North, the image before your eye is probably the Mulatto and he constitutes a very small per cent of your population. When we speak of the Negro, in the South the image in our minds is that great residue of easy going, basically happy, unambitious, incapable of much learning, African, who constitutes 40% of our population, and who the white man of the South, in addition to educating his own children, has attempted to educate, to furnish public health services and civic protection.³⁹

The speech which was delivered bore none of the explicit views given in this published version. Though racist sentiments are manifest throughout the Carter-penned speech, it is in this narrative opening that the rationale, the “historical” justifications, for his White supremacist views is the most apparent. It is also a passage which might have provoked righteous indignation from the audience—being, as it is, a shockingly biased version of history. White supremacy, as a conviction, is espoused all through the section, but most strongly in the passages about the “mulattoes” who hypothetically originated in the association between Union soldiers and freed female slaves, mulattoes who supposedly “inherited the mentality and personality of their white ancestor.” However, classifications for mulattos such as “quadroon” and “octoroon” and so forth had existed for generations in the South, proving that Carter’s suggestion that they had not existed prior to Union occupation is a lie. Carter argues based on this false assertion that it is these part-White persons who are the only Blacks capable of advanced education and responsible action; full Blacks, he states, are incapable of such behaviors, and the half-Black children produced by White women and Black men, he has implied elsewhere, are animalistic, mongrels. Whites then, according to Carter, are naturally superior—as are

even their partial heirs; Blacks, also according to Carter, can never rise above the state into which many were born in the South, not an oppressed state but a naturally occurring one suitable to their abilities.

Carter legitimizes resistance to integration efforts through this suggestion that Blacks are naturally incapable of greater achievement, implying that integration efforts were unnatural attempts to raise Blacks above their station. Though a positive and unyielding stance is not so strongly communicated in this passage as in other parts of the speech, his defense of the good character of Alabamans is implied in his suggestion that the people of the South, despite the many indignities heaped upon them after the Civil War and despite the burden of educating both their own children and the children of indolent Blacks, have managed to restore their economy through their own hard work. In this last argument, he also implies the need for unity.

It is, however, in this passage that he most clearly characterizes Alabamans as the victims of a hundred years of conspiracy and injustice. Southerners, he claims, were victimized first by ungentlemanly warfare—the destruction of both wartime and peacetime infrastructure. The counterargument that all modern warfare has involved such destruction is anticipated by Carter who refers to rehabilitative measures as the Marshall Plan, lend lease programs, and foreign aid, none of which he claims were made available to the South, though one might easily argue that investments made by the federal government in the South, particularly in military expenditures, did in large measure also rehabilitate the South. Ignoring such issues, Carter instead paints the stereotypical Southern rendition of the Reconstruction period, with federal soldiers in every county for ten years—this despite the fact that states which accepted the Fourteenth

Amendment, such as Tennessee, were reinstated to full status not long after the fall of the Confederacy—carpetbaggers, economic profligacy, and the general poverty of (White) Southerners. He intensifies the representation by gesturing towards tariff laws which protected Northern goods but not Southern goods. But, his final stroke is in painting the White Southerner as bearing the full load of supporting millions of “Africans,” who were unable to provide for the well-being of their own children. This sympathetic portrait of Southerners, shouldering the “white man’s burden,” victims of the presence of Blacks rather than as the oppressors of Blacks, is perhaps the strongest feature of this passage and would become one of the most open expression of racism which Wallace would ever have attributed to him. It is impossible to say whether amusement or horror would have been the reaction had Wallace actually uttered this passage before the audience in Boston.

Instigating Violence: The Fairgrounds Speech

In late November, FBI agents interviewed a UKA leader at his offices and found that Carter’s prestige in the organization was at a low ebb, the leader saying he would have nothing to do with any organization associated with Carter and calling him “unreliable, dangerous, and in his opinion . . . an extremist motivated possibly by communistic tendencies” and saying further that he would “not be surprised at anything he might do.”⁴⁰ Little is known of his activities during 1964, though he apparently was still considered to be a Klan liaison despite the apparent aversion that at least one major Klan figure showed toward Carter. Carter remained at least partially active in his role as speechwriter for Wallace, and wrote yet another notorious speech for Wallace at a key moment of the Civil Rights movement.

Two days after Lyndon Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights bill, George Wallace appeared on stage with a Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon at the Fairgrounds in Lakewood Park, Atlanta, Georgia. Witnessed by Wayne Greenhaw, a journalist who would later remember the event in his book Watch out for George Wallace, the speech stood as a central piece of rhetoric in the White resistance to that Civil Rights Bill:

George Wallace looked like a grinning bantam rooster as he strutted through the anxious crowd. He shook their hands and they screamed and shouted. No matinee idol had ever been more enthusiastically received. His long speech, which was written in part by Asa “Ace” Carter, a card-carrying KKK member from Gadsden, Alabama, was a masterpiece in racist rhetoric.

On the platform with him that day was Georgia Ku Klux Klan Wizard Calvin Graig, who commented later that Wallace’s was the “finest speech I’ve ever heard presented.”

Unlike the stand in the schoolhouse door, not many newsmen were present at the fairgrounds. This speech was not broadcast throughout the nation on all three major networks. If it had been, his words, “A politician must stand on his own record,” would have echoed endlessly in his background no matter where he went. (Greenhaw, Watch out 150)

As Dan T. Carter put it, “Gone was the smiling southerner . . . His shirt drenched in sweat in the ninety-five-degree temperature, his lips curled into an angry snarl, his voice was once again the voice that Alabamians had come to know so well: the voice of defiance and resistance.”⁴¹ In this overt role as a central leader of the White resistance

movement, Wallace could be as open with his White supremacy as he had been in the printed, but never delivered, Harvard speech.

In the 16-page manuscript, Carter and his collaborators deploy all the traditional strategies of White supremacists—including giving “major attention to continued sanctification of the faith,” white supremacy, legitimizing resistance to integration, creating “a positive and unyielding stance,” defending “the good character” of Southerners, portraying themselves as “victims of an outside plot,” and stressing that “success depended upon maintaining unity” (Braden 340)—along with Carter’s own trademark calls to violence. White supremacy is communicated most explicitly in the passage where Wallace lists out the provisions of the Civil Rights bill with which he will not comply:

I am not about to be a party to anything having to do with the law that is going to destroy individual freedom and liberty in this country.

I am having nothing to do with enforcing a law that will destroy our free enterprise system.

I am having nothing to do with a law that will destroy neighborhood schools.

I am having nothing to do with enforcing a law that will destroy the rights of private property.

I am having nothing to do with enforcing a law that destroys your right – and my right – to choose my neighbors – or to sell my house to whomever I choose.

I am having nothing to do with enforcing a law that destroys the labor

seniority system.

I am having nothing to do with this so-called Civil Rights Bill.⁴²

In this passage, Carter portrays Wallace as the defender of supposedly violated freedoms—of free enterprise, local schools, private property, and personal association—and portrays those who put forth the Civil Rights Bill as the violators of those freedoms. Thus, these freedoms become associated with the White resistance and White supremacist movement and the converse, lack of freedom, is associated with those who would defend the rights of Blacks.

Carter spends much of the piece legitimizing Wallace's resistance to the Civil Rights Bill, principally drawing attention to the fact that he is speaking on the Fourth of July, a celebration of independence. He draws parallels between the resistance of Wallace and that of colonists in such passages as "I am here to talk about principles which have been overthrown by the enactment of this bill. The principles that you and I hold dear. The principles for which our forefathers fought and died to establish and to defend. The principles for which we came here to rededicate ourselves."⁴³ He furthers this comparison in passages such as the following:

They assert more power than claimed by King George III, more power than Hitler, Mussolini, or Khrushchev ever had. They assert the power to declare unconstitutional our very thoughts. To create for us a system of moral and ethical values. To outlaw and declare unconstitutional, illegal, and immoral the customs, traditions, and beliefs of the people, and furthermore they assert the authority to enforce their decrees in all these subjects upon the American people without their consent.⁴⁴

This identification between Wallace and those who fought this standardized list of tyrants works to make his resistance as legitimate as theirs. It is of particular interest that Carter, who as a young man had argued against American involvement in the European theater during WWII because Nazis were racial brothers (Rubin 81), would list Hitler among villains when doing so would elicit the sympathetic response which he desired for Wallace.

The resistance that Carter legitimates in the previous passages is connected directly to appeals for unity in the fight against those who had passed the Civil Rights bill. A later passage of the speech does this most strongly:

There is yet a spirit of resistance in this country which will not be oppressed. And it is awakening. And I am sure there is an abundance of good sense in this country which cannot be deceived.

I have personal knowledge of this. 34% of the Wisconsin Democrats supported the beliefs you and I hold and expound.

30% of the Democrats in Indiana join us in fighting this grab for executive power by those now in control in Washington.

And, listen to this, 43% of the Democrats in Maryland, practically in view of the nation's capital, believe as you and I believe.

So, let me say to you today. Take heart. Millions of Americans believe just as we in this great region of the United States believe.

I shall never forget last spring as I stood in the midst of a great throng of South Milwaukee supporters at one of the greatest political rallies I have ever witnessed.

A fine looking man grabbed my hand and said:

“Governor, I’ve never been South of South Milwaukee, but I am a Southerner.”

Of course, he was saying he believed in the principles and philosophy of the Southern people . . . of you here today and the people of my state of Alabama.

He was right.

Being a Southerner is no longer geographic. It’s a philosophy and an attitude.

One destined to be a national philosophy – embraced by millions of Americans – which shall assume the mantel of leadership and steady a governmental structure in these days of crisis.⁴⁵

In this passage, Carter has Wallace call for unity between the people of the South who agree with his philosophies, of necessity Whites who resisted efforts to enfranchise Blacks, and those in the North who agree with the same philosophies. In this, there is a call for unity among those of the White community, in defense of White supremacist philosophies embodied in the code word “Southerner,” not coincidentally the name of Carter’s old political bulletin for his radical Citizen’s Council group.

The assertion of a positive and unyielding stance is also a key tactic within the speech. Wallace pledges to support this stance as a presidential candidate and calls upon his auditors to do the same—moving from first person, singular smoothly into the first person, plural pronoun “We” to create this united stance:

I intend to fight for a positive, affirmative program to restore

constitutional government and to stop the senseless bloodletting now being performed on the body of liberty by those who lead us willingly and dangerously close to totalitarian central government.

In our nation, man has always been sovereign and the state has been his servant. This philosophy has made the United States the greatest free nation in history.

This freedom was not a gift. It was won by work, by sweat, by tears, by war, by whatever it took to be – and to remain free.

Are we today less resolute, less determined and courageous than our fathers and our grandfathers?

Are we to abandon this priceless heritage that has carried us to our present position of achievement and leadership?

I say if we are to abandon our heritage, let it be done in the open and full knowledge of what we do.

We are not unmindful and careless of our future. We will not stand aside while our conscientious convictions tell us that a dictatorial Supreme Court has taken away our rights and our liberties.

We will not stand idly by while the Supreme Court continues to invade the prerogatives left rightfully to the states by the Constitution.⁴⁶

In this passage, Wallace is depicted as the defender of a “priceless heritage,” one which his auditors are presumed to share and to wish to defend. The stance is both stalwart and unbending, and the audience is encouraged to adopt the stance as well. This positive, heroic self-portrait helps to bolster Wallace’s ethos throughout the piece.

The good character of the auditors is defended throughout, in the passages which connect their resistance to that of Revolutionary War patriots, in their determination to struggle against the forces of integration which are painted as tyrannical, in the assertion that what they are defending is not oppression but rather freedom. The good character of the Georgian audience is particularly defended in passages such as “Georgia is a great state. Atlanta is a great city. I know you will demonstrate that greatness in November by joining Alabama and other states throughout the South in electing the next President of the United States.” In such passages, the good character of the auditors is directly connected to their willingness to support Wallace, and this encourages further identification between the audience and Wallace’s platform.

But, strongest throughout the piece is the claim that Southerners are the victims of an outside plot. The newly-signed Civil Rights Bill is portrayed as evidence of the plot and, more importantly, evidence of how powerful the opposition has become. Among the participants in the plot, as the speech argues, are the President of the United States, the United States Congress, Senator Hubert Humphrey and the Americans for Democratic Action, Ralph McGill and “other left-wing radical apologists,” federal judges, “pinknik social engineers in Washington, D.C.,” Southern newspapers that “are owned by out-of-state interests,” Communists sympathizers and Communist front organizations, and the United States Supreme Court. Having indicted as conspirers the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government—and along with them the national press—Carter creates a seemingly monolithic enemy against which his auditors are justified to rebel violently, just as did the colonists against England. He depicts that enemy as the first to break laws, saying “we have absolute proof that the federal Department of Justice has

planned, supervised, financed protected acts of insurrection in the Southern states, resulting in vandalism, property damage, personal injury, and staggering expense to the states,”⁴⁷ suggesting that any law-breaking by his audience would be justifiable in return.

And, having created this monolithic enemy, Carter exploits images associated with it to incite hatred and deploy his trademark calls to violence. He refers to the Civil Rights Bill as “an assassin’s knife stuck in the back of liberty,” as “a blackjack in the hands of the federal force-cult,” both of which will be used to “force us back into bondage. Bondage to a tyranny more brutal than that imposed by the British Monarchy.”⁴⁸ Claiming that the bill itself is not about civil rights, he calls it “a federal penal code [which] creates federal crimes” that are “booby traps” that “make federal crimes of our customs, beliefs, and traditions.”⁴⁹ He also vilifies the various supporters of Civil Rights: the Supreme Court are “omnipotent black-robed despots,” the media are “vultures of the liberal left-wing press,” the federal judiciary are “lousy,” and all of them together make up “the left-wing power monster” whose “acts of tyranny” he enumerates. Towards the end of the piece, he calls the reader to action, saying: “Politically evil men have combined and arranged themselves against us. The good people of this nation must now associate themselves together, else we will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a struggle which threatens to engulf the entire nation” and “we intend to take the offensive Let it be known that we will no longer tolerate the boot of tyranny. We will no longer hide our heads in the sand.”⁵⁰ These militaristic images—particularly the repeated image of the “boot” which White Southerners would again have probably immediately have connected to Sherman as well as the occupation of the South by federal troops during Reconstruction and to the troops mobilized in favor of integration in the latter

1950s—clearly call to mind violent resistance, resistance which is justified against the evil which Carter has so carefully associated with the proponents of the Civil Rights Bill.

As Greenhaw puts it, with this speech Wallace—and Carter as one of its principal authors—“had delivered one of the greatest racist addresses which had ever crossed the lips of a human. He never uttered the word ‘nigger.’ He was too brilliant in his political rhetoric. He knew he did not have to use the word. But he evoked the image through the usage of well-chosen code words . . .” (Greenhaw, Watch out 155-56). These code words included “the boot of tyranny; the power to dictate; the framework of our priceless freedoms” (Greenhaw, Watch out 156), and they worked to evoke the basest reaction in the White auditors whose “priceless freedoms” would be lost were Blacks to gain even the most basic of freedoms guaranteed by the Civil Rights Bill. That Carter was effective in rousing these base instincts was proven by the actions of two members of the white audience, who picked up their folding chairs and began beating two Black men who had with foolish courage begun to boo Wallace during the speech. Other spectators joined in, and the two Black men had to be rescued by police officers who escorted them, bloodied, away.⁵¹

One aspect of the speech, a folksy tale given to Wallace as a slight change of pace in the extremely long narrative, shows Carter beginning to deploy the sorts of strategies which would lead him, just five years later, towards a career as a novelist. In order to describe the reaction to the Civil Rights Bill, Carter includes the following story:

The situation reminds me of the little boy looking at the blacksmith as he hammered a red-hot horseshoe into the proper shape.

After minutes of hammering, the blacksmith took the horseshoe,

splashed it into a tub of water and threw it steaming onto a sawdust pile.

The little fellow picked up the horseshoe, dropped it quickly.

“What’s the matters, son,” the blacksmith said, “is that shoe to hot to handle?”

“No, Sir,” the little boy said, “it just don’t take me long to look at a horseshoe.”

It’s not going to take the people of this country long to look at the Civil Rights Bill, either.

In this passage, Carter deploys the device of the innocent protagonist, whose naïve yet pointed commentary is meant to show innate wisdom. In this speech, the innocent protagonist’s innate wisdom stands in contrast to the images created by Carter in other speeches of the innately incompetent Black, who would not have been able to make such a barbed observation. The “people of this country,” clearly White people who will disapprove of the Civil Rights Bill, are attributed with this same innate, by implication racially-derived, wisdom, and will of necessity reject the bill.

Liberty Lobby’s Stand up for America: Increasingly Radical Writings

Though the speech was not carried in the national media, Dan T. Carter and Greenhaw both point out that it served to solidify Wallace’s position as one of the chief participants in the White resistance movement.⁵² Dan T. Carter, however, notes that it was also a sign of the degree to which Wallace was out of touch with national-level politics, and that he would have to be more aware of the expectations of a national-level audience if he decided to make himself a viable Presidential candidate.⁵³ Carter began

doing scouting work, going to Indiana along with UKA leader Robert Shelton to campaign among the Klan in that area and trying unsuccessfully to arrange a political rally for a Jefferson County sheriff's candidate.⁵⁴ Carter's activities for the governor drew the attention of Richmond Flowers, the attorney general who was a moderate on racial issues, and in October of 1965, Flowers released a report of his preliminary investigation into Klan activity in the state of Alabama. Though Flowers gave the erroneous date of 1965 for Carter's split from the official Klan to form his own Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy—which had happened in 1956—he does accurately record Carter's involvement with that group and the split which occurred within the group (Flowers 12). Wallace was furious, and called amongst his friends for the impeachment of Flowers,⁵⁵ but the damage had already been done. Although Carter remained Wallace's favorite speechwriter, Dan T. Carter credits no further major speeches of George Wallace to him as the principal author.⁵⁶

Carter was still working for Wallace, however, returning to his home in White Plains, Alabama, on late Saturday nights, spending Sunday with his family—who would continue to hold themselves aloof from his political activities—and then returning to Montgomery for work at Oscar Harper's publishing firm on early Monday morning.⁵⁷ He was simultaneously still active with Klans in the area, though one report stated that the Klan in the Midfield area had fallen apart once Carter, a known proponent of violence, had become involved—having made appearances where he was introduced as “Mr. X.”⁵⁸ He also continued working for Wallace writing political pamphlets. Carter along with Willis Carto, whom Dan T. Carter calls “an [possibly] even more repugnant addition to the list of Wallace supporters,”⁵⁹ wrote Liberty Lobby Presents Stand up for America:

The Story of George C. Wallace,⁶⁰ printed at least in some cases as a newsprint document,⁶¹ for the disreputable group, Liberty Lobby in September 1965. Carter and Carto, in collaboration, constructed the document around a highly laudatory biography of Wallace, a series of inflammatory photos of Negro protesters and rioters and looters and White store owners cleaning up after riots, and a narrative designed to inflame the sense of victimization in lower-class readers. This narrative is particularly worthy of interest, as it shows evidence of Carter's deft deployment of the stereotype of the long-suffering and beleaguered White in contrast to the indulged and indolent Black.

BLACKY YELLS, "Get Whitey!"

And Whitey bristles.

Blacky shoots cops and burns down stores. Whitey thoughtfully buys a pistol and keeps it by his bed.

This is communication, all right.

Communication on the lowest animal level. You growl at me, I snarl back at you.

[. . .]

It is BAD to kill policemen. It is WRONG to burn stores. It is INDECENT to beat up 65 year olds. It is STUPID to be used as a catspaw by saboteurs.

But when Blacky's titular leaders—his well meaning elders, ministers and teachers—tell him this they get the hippie's birdcall: "Uncle Tom!"

[. . .]

In spite of heroic educational efforts, Whitey still is not convinced that

Blacky REALLY wants a job, that Blacky REALLY wants to work, or even that Blacky REALLY wants to vote.

[. . .]

A “Whitey” waitress, supporting her children in the empty, lost absence of her dead husband, rubs her aching feet at the end of a long day and wonders how long she is going to be able to pay the high San Francisco rents.

The waitress talks to her customers about her puzzled ruminations. A “Blacky” neighbor woman, on generous relief, can afford a better apartment than the waitress can, because the State is taking care of her illegitimate children.

“Tell me,” she wants to know, “am I crazy to be walking my legs off?”

[. . .]

BUT WHITEY gets the impression that Blacky is impatient with all this nonsense about preparation for a career. In school, Blacky is backward, rebellious, insolent, sullen, lazy—unreachable.

His most patient teachers murmur something about the “handicap of social deprivation.” Meaning, one gathers, that nobody in Blacky’s house reads the better books.

[. . .]

Thankfully, Blacky is a minority within a minority, and evidence grows that his own minority must root him out.⁶²

This passage, unlike much of the other work Carter had done for Wallace, is obviously and blatantly White supremacist. In this piece, we see the claim repeated that there are two types of Blacks, and though the piece does not openly associate the elders, ministers, and teachers with mulattos, it is clear that the “Blacky” he denigrates is uneducable, lazy, criminally minded, and the stereotypical “African” of the sort Carter had condemned in the printed but never read Harvard speech. Most prominent is his portrait of the welfare queen, living in comparative magnificence while a widowed White woman drudges away, living in fear of destitution. The conjunction of this narrative about a violent Blacky and the inflammatory pictures—a Black man struggling to free himself from a group of men trying to apparently restrain him from violence, a lone police car, a shattered store with its elderly white mom and pop owners, and crowds of Blacks walking down a riot-torn street—with the poignant portrait of the vulnerable White woman seems calculated to inflame the reader’s sense of righteous vengeance, to move the reader to violence or at least to rationalize away violence. The violence incited is further justified by a convenient condemnation of the violence of the Klan—that is, the piece makes an implicit distinction between the White supremacist terrorism of the Klan and the supposedly justifiable self-defense against Blacky by the White reader.

Though Wallace and Carto would blandly deny any affiliation between themselves and the Liberty Lobby and this crude document, boxes of the document were stored in the Montgomery headquarters and copies were mailed out routinely to supporters as an “accurate expression of [Wallace’s] thinking” on matters of civil disorder and a Communist conspiracy.⁶³ The document would be reprinted at least five times—the slightly revised third printing appearing in July 1967, and the slightly revised

fifth printing appearing in September 1968. In these versions, the “Blacky” essay remains unchanged. Thus, though Carter would personally be moving out of favor in the Wallace camp by the latter 1960s, his discourse would continue to be used by them in later campaigns.

The Final Major Speech: Lurleen Wallace’s Inaugural Address

In his work for Wallace in November 1965, Carter became involved in the debate over whether or not Lurleen Wallace, the governor’s wife, should run as his successor—Alabama law forbade a governor from succeeding himself. Carter, it appears, was the insider most responsible for talking Wallace into running Lurleen. Oscar Harper, Wallace’s chief crony and Carter’s boss, reports that Carter asked, “What political science books have y’all read?” and said, “She can win. If she doesn’t, she can get a million dollars’ worth of publicity and it’ll help the governor nationally” (qtd. in S. Taylor 79). Carter, perhaps to acknowledge this early support of Lurleen’s candidacy, would eventually work on her inaugural speech, delivered in January of 1967.

The speech itself is a tame document, particularly in comparison to the first Wallace inaugural speech. After the usual formalities, it begins with a call for prayer for the soldiers serving in Vietnam and for their families. The next 10 paragraphs are devoted to a rather standard paean to the good character of Alabamians and finish with the stereotypical political statement, “I am proud to be an Alabamian.”⁶⁴ A few paragraphs are devoted to an acknowledgement that Lurleen Wallace was the first woman governor of Alabama, and in an attempt to still any fears that this might represent a departure from traditional values, the following paragraphs argue that “our institutions of

self government” are the result of a faith in an “Almighty and Benevolent God,” and that Lurleen Wallace’s election “has meaning as a demonstration of the continued vitality and continuity in principles and institutions of self-government having their roots in the past as deep as the history of man’s faith in God.”⁶⁵ The speech then turns to the same themes as a typical George Wallace speech, and Carter’s anti-Black, anti-intellectual touch becomes more evident:

This meaning has profound significance today. For there are many in high places who express dissatisfaction with our form of government and who scorn the faith and principles upon which it was founded.

They proclaim to the world that “God is dead”, and that therefore, government itself must plan the “ends” of life and give it meaning and direction.

Thus, we are beset by cynics and skeptics who pick at this great but admittedly imperfect fabric of free men, and in their picking, exploit the imperfections and invariably offer as solution the transfer of power from the hands of the people to the hands of bureaucrats and judges of a central government.

When the people will not give them the power to rule by amending the Constitution, they seize it by judicial interpretations sustained by false and tortured reasoning.

And always, the results are the same – a transfer of power from the people to a rapidly expanding central government. That these deeds are done in the name of our Federal Constitution adds blasphemy to their performance and the claim that they are done in the name of freedom reveals hypocrisy in their actions.

It is judges such as these who are substituting for our traditional judicial system, a system of rule by judges – a rule that denies that the people have the wisdom, the character, and the soul to govern themselves.

It is plain to see that federal bureaucrats who today lay claim to power to impose percentage guidelines and who resort to threats and blackmail to compel local school boards into compliance, are already a part of a force which tomorrow may well lay down even sterner guidelines to control our thoughts and actions and every aspect of our lives.

Even now, a federal agency attempts to tell us the schools our children shall attend, to regulate the contents of their textbooks, who shall teach them, and with whom our children shall associate. This is an effort to gain control of the hearts and minds of our children. I resent it. As your Governor and as a mother, I shall resist it. I shall seek support of concerned parents from everywhere to help overcome this menace to the welfare of our children.

Common sense tells us that the opposite of political freedom is political control. If control is exercised by force, we may be forced to obey the commands of a tyrant. But, the mere fact that force is

used or threatened, is proof that the tyrant cannot control our convictions and must, therefore, suppress our liberty.

These, then, are the causes and issues which give deeper meaning to my election to the office of Governor, for it is notice to all the world that the strength and determination of a free people to defend the principles of self government will not be suppressed by force. Force from China, from Russia, from Cuba, or from Washington, D. C.

It is notice that there are millions of people in America who do not accept the “egg-head” verdict that “God is dead.”

It is notice that the people of Alabama, whose motto is, “We Dare Defend Our Rights”, are not in a mood to sit idly by and surrender our constitutional system of government or a single one of its freedoms by default.⁶⁶

The speech moves after this to a reference to George Wallace’s transition from the Alabama scene to the national scene, the usual series of campaign promises regarding road building, protection of the family, interest in health care, a call to “stand up for those who fight for the principles of our people,” and a promise to serve the state.⁶⁷ In the speech excerpt, however, we can see most of the conventional strategies of White supremacists of the period at work.

The cause of White supremacy is only hinted at in the speech, through phrases like “percentage guidelines,” “threats and blackmail to compel local school boards into compliance,” and in claiming that “a federal agency attempts to tell us the schools our children shall attend, to regulate the contents of their textbooks, who shall teach them, and with whom our children shall associate”—the imperative form in the latter phrases ringing with both legal and imperial force. Yet, the stance that there should be no racial quotas, that school boards should not have to comply with decisions regarding desegregation, that children should attend schools and associate with only their own race, and that textbooks should not contain anti-supremacist ideology helps to reinforce White supremacy even though it does not proclaim it openly.

The resistance advocated in the passage is legitimized by references to the aspects of White culture that the speech suggests are under attack: “our form of government,” “this great but admittedly imperfect fabric of free men,” “our Federal Constitution,” “our traditional judicial system,” and “our constitutional system of government.” Through its implicit association of these democratic ideals with the cause of White supremacists, and the use of the term “our” in order to reinforce the community of Whites who were resisting desegregation, the speech deftly makes the defense of segregation and White supremacists into a legitimate fight to preserve the basic freedoms of American democracy, without ever once referring directly to the Southern customs or Southern legal practices which were then being challenged. That the stance of those promoting White supremacy is positive and unyielding is communicated also in such associated phrases as, “the people of Alabama, whose motto is, ‘We Dare Defend Our Rights’, are not in a mood to sit idly by and surrender our constitutional system of government or a single one of its freedoms by default,” which simultaneously communicates the positive, unyielding stance and defends the good character of Alabamians in general.

This particular excerpt of the speech, however, has as its center an assertion that Alabamans and White Americans in general, are victims of a plot and must unite. The collaborators in the plot include “many in high places” who proclaim that “God is dead” and attempt to assert centralized government in his place. Thus, the speech asserts that blasphemers are usurping the role of the deity himself, and are trying to assume his omnipotent position—encouraging the auditors to see themselves as victims of what are virtually anti-Christ, the implied term “anti-Christ” being a veiled reference in the parlance of the time for Jews. The other collaborators are “egg-heads,” “cynics and

skeptics” who wish to place power in the hands of “bureaucrats and judges of a central government” by seizing power when they cannot gain it from the people—adding to their blasphemy, hypocrisy by asserting that they do this in the name of freedom. The speech asserts that Lurleen Wallace and her auditors are the victims of attack and destruction, of “threats and blackmail,” and “force [that] is used or threatened” by a “tyrant.” Having built this threat of a plot up, the section finishes by referring to “millions of people in America” who believe as do White Alabamians and later in the speech claims that they have received “support and best wishes from all over this world”—asserting a unity between Southerners and Northerners, Southerners and Whites internationally.

Carter’s encouragement of violent behavior in defense of traditions, however, is particularly evident in the section on the federal agency which was attempting to regulate school attendance, textbooks, instructors, and the schools’ racial makeup. The speech asserts that “This is an effort to gain control of the hearts and minds of our children. I resent it. As your Governor and as a mother, I shall resist it. I shall seek support of concerned parents from everywhere to help overcome this menace to the welfare of our children.” This image of endangered children seems calculated to exploit parental instincts, in this specific case maternal protective instincts, as a means of encouraging violent acts, resistance, in defense of this supposedly imperiled young. Though not openly encouraged, violence in the case of protecting one’s child is made to seem justifiable.

The Final Political Document: The Lurleen Wallace Inaugural Program

In conjunction with the inaugural speech, Carter also participated at least in part

in the writing of the Lurleen Wallace inaugural program,⁶⁸ as he would later use sections of it in a biography which he released under his own name. Like the George Wallace inaugural program, it too is a 200-plus page effort, containing mostly advertisements wishing her well. It was put out by the “Inaugural Book Committee” which was based in Montgomery, but was almost certainly—considering the contributions later claimed by Carter—the product of Oscar Harper’s National Services. However, as the George Wallace inaugural program had incited a good deal of criticism, it is understandable that an effort appears to have been made to hide Harper’s probable involvement. Apart from the biography, to be discussed below, there is little in the book that can be attributed with certainty to Carter, though two campaign speeches—one containing such Carter-esque phrases as “such dictatorial practices as the illegal school guidelines” (65) and “without submitting to centralized control” (69)—are included. Still, Carter was to some degree still involved in the Wallace camp in an increasingly diminished function at the time.

During the Lurleen Wallace campaign of 1966, however, Carter had not been completely absorbed by his role as a political writer. In March, a report was filed with the FBI on a meeting of an unnamed organization, probably Kenneth Adams’s Dixie Klan, as Adams himself was present. Carter spoke to the crowd about individuals who had run afoul of federal authorities concerning racial matters. He proposed a “loose-knit ‘brotherhood’ wherein each person interested would contribute \$10.00 per year to help build defense fund for any person brought to trial in such matters.” Carter also discussed his plans for a monthly newsletter which would summarize the racial situation in Alabama, with particular plans to “black-list” any jurors who had helped to convict any White person in such matters. As a means of making the plan more attractive, he

suggested to the crowd that he had connections to insurance executives in the Birmingham area and prominent doctors in the Anniston area who might give them preferred rates. Carter reassured the crowd that he had already presented this same proposal to people in “Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Bessemer, Russellville, Ft. Payne, and Gadsden,” and that it had been warmly received. If true, Carter had been quite active during this period as a speaker; if false, and that is more likely as the FBI files do not document his behavior, it is another example of Carter’s attempts to form a new group by claiming it had already been formed and was already successful. Carter also did not impress the informant, who said that Carter “was poorly dressed by comparison with the way he has seen him dressed on past occasions and most of those present were unemployed or only part-time employed and generally without funds.” The source went on to say that “Carter appeared sober, but that his eyes were quite red; that he looked haggard and more unkempt than he has seen him in the past.”⁶⁹ Clearly, Carter’s second period of importance was passing quickly, and this latest of his schemes was just another attempt to extort money from the White supremacist faithful. It was not helped when, a few months before the inaugural, a drunken Carter confronted a Montgomery city detective and “threatened to ‘beat the shit’ out of him if he did not stop investigating Klansmen suspected in the bombing of a local black church.”⁷⁰ These incidents suggest that Carter’s drinking had become problematic again, and was threatening to lead him into legal difficulty.

Greenhaw reports that Asa Carter’s time as Lurleen Wallace’s speechwriter was brief. “That’s not the way I talk,” he reports that she said. “I’m my own person. I’ll write my own speeches.” He goes on to quote Seymore Trammell as saying, “She didn’t

want hate in her speeches. She refused to ball her fist and spit words of hate.” Greenhaw confirms the point by quoting Gerald Wallace, “She let us know straight-out that she was her own woman. She wouldn’t have a thing to do with Asa Carter. I think she saw straight through him for what he was.” Carter was gone, Greenhaw says, apart from his trips to the Midwest to speak for Klan groups in support of Wallace (Greenhaw, My Heart 47-48). No longer having steady work as Wallace’s speechwriter, though it is possible that he continued working on the occasional speech, Carter’s influence in the Wallace camp was essentially over.

Continued Carter Influence: Reprints of His Earlier Works

Some of his writings about Wallace continued to be released after Carter’s departure. There was, of course, the disreputable Liberty Lobby flyer he had penned with Willis Carto which was reprinted as late as 1968. The most important release, however, was a soft-cover biography of the two Alabama governors entitled, George & Lurleen Wallace: The Lives and Careers in Picture and Story of Governor George Wallace and Governor Lurleen Wallace. Released in at least two forms, a smaller 18 cm version and a larger 28 cm version, the biography contains nothing more than a reprint of the biographies from the first George Wallace inaugural program of 1963 and the Lurleen Wallace inaugural program of 1967, with identical typesetting. The pedigree of the book is uncertain, though Asa Carter is identified officially as the writer; the larger version was released by a group calling itself the “Historical Book Committee,” sometime after the death of Lurleen Wallace in May 1968. The Committee said of itself that “We are a committee, of long duration, that assembles fact, so that the left-wing propagandists and

newsmen of our time shall not distort historical fact to our children and our children's children," but the address given for that committee—which apparently released no other books—is P. O. Box 100, Centre, Alabama, the same address for the Carter's later "Liberty Committee" which supposedly would sponsor his speeches in support of his run for Governor of Alabama in 1969-70. It is likely that the book, though it represents writings done by Carter during his years with the Wallace's, was an unauthorized printing by Asa Carter himself, done during later years when he was no longer associated with George Wallace for the sole purpose of making money off his earlier work.

The George Wallace biography shows signs of Carter's role as the liaison between Wallace and the Klan and of his championing of White supremacy. Emphasis is placed upon Wallace's Scots heritage with a reference to "the specific infusion of Scot fighting blood into the English strain of the South," and to "the demise of one Edward I whose authority was even loftier [than the federal judiciary], until he bullied a Scottish Clan called Wallace" (3). Emphasis is also placed upon Wallace's connection to the "Lost Cause" in reference to the surroundings into which Wallace had been born, "Less than sixty years removed from the terrible War Between the States and only a generation separating between the starvation days of Reconstruction" (3). References to Wallace's breeding punctuate the biography; when Wallace's father died and the family faced bankruptcy, Carter melodramatizes that, "It was the darkest moment to face the Wallace family and had they been of a lesser breed perhaps they would have succumbed to what appeared an insurmountable situation." This situation was remedied, Carter explains, by the Mrs. Wallace rather mundanely obtaining employment and George working to support himself in college (6).

Carter appeals again to Klan symbolism when he relates the meeting of George Wallace, and his future wife Lurleen Burns:

A student of Scot Clan history could make much over the meeting of a Wallace and a Burns, famous names dating back more than six hundred years in the Highlands, before extensive emigration to the south of the United States . . . and a poet could probably weave a classic over the marriage of a Wallace to a Burns, but to the young people involved, it was simply attraction at first sight . . . love . . . and marriage. (7)

Such passages seem designed to appeal to Klan members and sympathizers who looked to the history of the Scottish clans for much of their imagery.

Carter also does much to build Wallace up as an icon of positive and staunch resistance to the desegregation movement. Wallace's resistance to the Civil Rights plank at the Democratic National Convention in 1948 is detailed:

It was at the Democratic National Convention in 1948 that the fomenters of integration and excessive federal power first felt the punches of the Barbour County Fighter. Wallace had been elected a delegate to that convention, and though he was regarded by the national boss politicians in the throne room as a country boy come to town . . . they became increasingly wary of the little delegate as he refused to stay off his feet and characteristically challenged every proposal and bulldogged every asterisk of the infamous Civil Rights plank.

[. . .]

Complained a leader of the NAACP, "The Civil Rights plank is as weak

as a wet splinter.”

The explanation was simple: When the “Wallace at Work” sign went up on the door of the Committee Room, the committee members found themselves too busy trying to get out with part of what they came in with to nail down a Civil Rights plank. (10)

This narrative helped to set Wallace up as having a long history of active resistance to any promotion of Black causes, glossing over Wallace’s actual history of being fairly liberal in his earlier years.

At several points in the narrative, efforts are made to paint Wallace as an effective leader in the face of a massive external conspiracy. The first such section refers to the 1954 school desegregation ruling:

In 1954 the infamous “Black Monday” edict was issued by the Supreme Court and the storm clouds began to gather over the South. In the immediate months and years following, Alabama and the Southland was [sic] set upon by professional agitators, revolutionary integration groups, and, finally, reminiscent of the 1867 Reconstruction era, by the federal government itself, with socio-engineers at the throttle.

Schools were invaded, state sovereignties were trampled by politicians in the seats of power, hungry for more power as they sought to outdo each other in gaining the favor of the huge voting blocs of the northern cities and become national darlings of the left wing press.

In the process of this power-drunk orgy, the federal giant, casting about for still more objects to humiliate, set upon the local courts of the South.

Across Dixie, Judge after Judge yielded to the threats and pressures and turned over his records.

Through the magic of edict and fear, the disciples of Constitutional destruction had discovered the formula for reshaping the federal government with a bloodless revolution.

However, for their formula to work, the fear ingredient had to be present, and it was here that the giant stubbed his toe over a little country Judge named Wallace. (11)

In creating the image of a massive and ruthless foe, Carter sets Wallace up as the legitimate defender of the Constitution, the federal government, and the nation. He augments this image with subsequent symbolism: a “war of knives” between Wallace and those who would subpoena his records, a “roll of distant drum [which] was growing more distinct” as Wallace continued his refusals to turn over records, a “final shot . . . the ultimate in threat” as Wallace faced criminal contempt charges (12). Such images are typical of Carter’s tendency to incite violent emotions against those who championed desegregation. Later, he would be even more graphic in his portrait of the “invincible ogre of ruthless power [that] still must be feared,” who made “the hope for leadership devoid of fear [. . .] still a futile and a hopeless hope” as “Dixie was doomed to defeat in Her struggle for Constitution and racial identity” (13).

Carter’s espousal of an extreme stance is evident in the manner he applauds Wallace for “his insistence that segregation must be maintained rather than moderated with compromise integration” (14), and in his dismissal of Wallace’s gubernatorial opponent as “a shiny newcomer backed by the big city papers and organized moderate

groups” (16). This extreme stance, an assertion of rugged individualism, is also evident in the distinction which Carter makes between the two: “a leadership of fear offering compromise surrender . . . vs. . . . a leadership of courage offering only courage” (16). It is further linked to Carter’s favorite image of the uncompromising mountain man:

The realization of what the “Little Judge” had done for their cause of segregation . . . the story of the little fighter . . . the burning whisper that here was no quivering politician, had already drifted up from the flatlands, carried on the tongues at a thousand country stores in the rolling hills . . . and reached the ear of the mountain man.

They took him to their hearts with that fierce loyalty peculiar to the rural Southerner and they would not be shaken. (16)

He links it also to Civil War history by referring to Wallace’s then infant daughter Janie Lee, “the Lee part after the man he thinks the most of . . . Robert E. Lee” (16). Thus, throughout the biography, Carter deploys the tactics of traditional White supremacy while simultaneously adding in his own extremist imagery, implicitly exhorting the audience to violence.

The Lurleen Wallace biography is considerably more tame, though it contains some of the same appeals to Klan imagery in the history of Lurleen’s own family:

From the coast they came . . . from South Carolina where they had emigrated from Scotland and England, and fresh from the wars against the crown, they looked for another challenge to match their rebel spirits. Through the Alabama Indian Wars and the Great Cause of the 1860’s . . . it was all weathered and taken in stride and the children were reared and

the farms were cleared and cultivated and the churches were built where the young were married and the old were buried. (33)

The rhymes of the latter part of the passage recall the work of Scottish balladeers in celebrating the history of Scots clans, and work similarly to ennoble Lurleen Wallace's forebears as worthy descendants, and appealing to Klan members and sympathizers.

The bulk of the narrative, however, shifts emphasis from George Wallace as a fighter to Lurleen Wallace as the image of dignity under unfair victimization:

Wherever he went, through the mobs . . . among the sign-bearing pickets, down the long lines of obscenity tortured waves of humanity, one person walked by his elbow. That person was Lurleen Wallace, his wife and mother of his children. She walked with measured gracefulness and iron composure, and if the smile sometimes grew grim . . . it nevertheless, was always to be seen.

Over and over again the scenes were repeated across the north, into the northeast, to the west and the northwest. To those areas where the story of the South had never been told before. Distortions were placed into proper perspective by this man. Basic Constitutionalism was discussed. Night following night, he spoke and parried the thrusts of vindication and shrugged of [sic] the vilifying hate. Answering anger with reasoning, hysteria with calmness and insult with patience, he continued to the point of sheer exhaustion. (23)

In these passages, Carter works hard to establish the good characters of both Lurleen and George Wallace, and by extension of all the Alabamians they defended in other parts of

the nation. He also calls upon not merely southerners, but people of all parts of the country to support Wallace as a legitimate fighter for American ideals such as the Constitution, inspiring unity.

The decision to run Lurleen Wallace for governor to succeed George is melodramatized by Carter. He draws attention to Lurleen's brush with cancer and her decision, for so he describes it, to carry on the fight for George: "The thought grew into a conviction . . . a conviction of duty. A duty, not only to her husband, but to the people who had so loyally supported the patriotic cause for which he spoke" (25). The connection of the two paints Lurleen as a selfless martyr to her husband's campaign, a martyrdom that Carter depicts as crucial not merely to George's career but to White supremacy, coded into the term "Western Civilization":

This was the importance of Lurleen Wallace's decision. At the core of the debate over Mrs. Wallace was the struggle of Western Civilization.

With her decision to run for governor, she made a decision to endeavor to keep alive the only inspirational movement begun in the past twenty years in defense of western man's losing war to chaos and communism. (26)

Lurleen Wallace's martyrdom is described by Carter in his increasingly novelistic style, replete with his signature ellipses and images designed to arouse the reader to a violent defense of Lurleen as a paragon of Southern womanhood:

Up at 6 A.M., eat . . . drive 50, 60, or even 70 miles . . . four speeches . . . five speeches a day . . . with trips in between.

Rain . . . cold mornings . . . hot sun . . . crushing crowds of enthusiastic Alabamians.

Into the night . . . 11:00 o'clock . . . midnight . . . one o'clock . . . talking to people . . . shaking hands . . . and always looking in the eyes of Alabamians everywhere to see the hope and the determination . . . and the reason for doing your duty.

Five days a week . . . six days a week. Television programs . . . radio interviews . . . and the sharp, tricky, double-meaning questions of the northern newsmen . . . liberal newsmen . . . foreign newsmen. The answers had to be given with composure, despite their attempts to goad anger from you . . . despite the tiredness . . . you were speaking for the hopes of Alabamians.

Walk straight, don't slump . . . don't look tired . . . smile . . . don't stumble. Eat more . . . keep up your strength . . . get more weight . . . try to sleep . . . (27-28)

Lurleen's victimization comes to stand for the victimization of all Alabamians by the supposed conspiracy of the national media—which Carter here extends even to the international media. His almost poetic discourse in the passage, in its almost stream-of-consciousness fragmentary style, serves to arouse the audience in defense of the White supremacist ideals which Lurleen Wallace had been made to stand for. It also prefigures the fictional work which would eventually occupy his final years.

Though the volume continues with biographies of George Wallace's father, mother, and crony Billy Watson, it is the heroic biographies of George Wallace the fighter and Lurleen Wallace the dignified martyr that are principally deployed to arouse the emotions of the readers. In this, Carter continues his briefly successful tactic of

combining inflammatory images with traditional White supremacist discourse tactics. His coupling of these tactics had led to his greatest successes—the first Wallace Inaugural speech, the printed but undelivered Harvard speech, the Fairgrounds speech—but were simultaneously the reason that his tenure in the Wallace camp was ultimately doomed. With Flowers’s exposure of Carter’s activities on behalf of Wallace, Carter became a liability to Wallace, and his eventual expulsion from the inner circle was inevitable. With his influence in Wallace’s administration effectively over, Carter was forced to move into other arenas to continue using this volatile combination of tactics with which he had become indelibly connected.

NOTES

- ¹ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 296; FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ² FBI files, 100-4651-20.
- ³ Graves, quoted in FBI files, 100-4651-13; FBI files, 100-4651-20.
- ⁴ FBI files, 100-4651-23, 100-4651-24, 100-4651-25, 105-464-40, 105-464-41, 100-4651-26.
- ⁵ FBI files, 105-464-44.
- ⁶ FBI files, 100-4651-29 and 100-4651-32.
- ⁷ FBI files, 100-4651-37, 100-4651-39, 100-4651-41, 100-4651-43, and 100-4651-45.
- ⁸ FBI files, 100-4651-46, 100-4651-48, and 100-4651-59.
- ⁹ FBI files, 100-4651-49, 100-4651-54, and 100-4651-58.
- ¹⁰ McWhorter, Carry, 161; D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 296-97; Greenhaw, My Heart, 44.
- ¹¹ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 297. Sadly, this speech is said to have been delivered from note cards and only snippets from newspapers appear to exist. Apart from the quoted sections, little can be attributed with any certainty to Carter.
- ¹² FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ¹³ FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ¹⁴ Frady, 145-49. The speech was entitled, "The Inaugural Address of Governor George C. Wallace," and I am using the text available from the McCain Library and Archives, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
- ¹⁵ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 297; Sandra Baxley Taylor, 28-29;
- ¹⁶ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 297; McWhorter, Carry, 311.
- ¹⁷ "Inaugural Address of Governor George C. Wallace," printed in pamphlet form, copy from McCain Archives.
- ¹⁸ Although Blacks are a minority of the total population of Alabama, they constitute a substantial share of the electorate in certain regions within the state.
- ¹⁹ D. T. Carter, Politics, 402. Though employed at the Montgomery company, Carter maintained a residence in Oxford, but stayed overnight during the week at different motels and sometimes at the house of Oscar Harper, the company president (FBI files, 100-4651-72 and 100-4651-99).
- ²⁰ D. T. Carter, Politics, 402.
- ²¹ Stand up for Alabama: The Official Inaugural Program Honoring Governor George C. Wallace, 1963-1967, pages 225-35.
- ²² Clayton, biography in The New Handbook of Texas, 999.
- ²³ FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ²⁴ FBI files, 100-4651-59, 100-4651-99, and 100-4651-62.
- ²⁵ FBI files, 100-4651-62.
- ²⁶ D. T. Carter, Politics, 120.
- ²⁷ McWhorter, Carry, 456 and 461; D. T. Carter, Politics, 139-49.
- ²⁸ "Statement and Proclamation of Governor George C. Wallace." Text available from McCain Library and Archives.
- ²⁹ D. T. Carter, Politics, 139.
- ³⁰ D. T. Carter, Politics, 106.
- ³¹ FBI files, 100-4651-61, 100-4651-62, 100-4651-64; McWhorter, Carry, 473.
- ³² FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ³³ D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 291; McWhorter, Carry, 509-11. Carter was also acquainted with at least one other of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombers, Bobby Frank Cherry, but Cherry had been an incorporator of the rival Klan made up of the remnants of Carter's Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy.
- ³⁴ FBI files, 100-4651-73.
- ³⁵ FBI files, 100-4651-70, 100-4651-72, 100-4651-76, 100-4651-99, and 105-464-50.
- ³⁶ Huie, 28 and 34; D. T. Carter, "Southern History," 297-98.
- ³⁷ D. T. Carter, Politics, 196-97, and footnote 5 (text on page 488). The speech which was delivered is entitled "A Major Fraud." It is available in the NAACP Papers from the Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

- ³⁸ D. T. Carter, Politics, 5f (488); McWhorter, Carry, 566.
- ³⁹ “United States Law and Basic Reasons Underlying the Practice of Segregation of Races.” Text is available from the McCain Library and Archives.
- ⁴⁰ FBI files, 100-4651-99.
- ⁴¹ D. T. Carter, Politics, 216-17.
- ⁴² The speech is untitled, but it is identified as the speech prepared for delivery by George C. Wallace, Governor of Alabama, delivered at the Southeastern Fairgrounds, Atlanta, Georgia. July 4, 1964. Manuscript from the McCain Archives, page 3.
- ⁴³ McCain Archives manuscript, page 5.
- ⁴⁴ McCain Archives manuscript, page 7.
- ⁴⁵ McCain Archives manuscript, page 14.
- ⁴⁶ McCain Archives manuscript, page 15.
- ⁴⁷ McCain Archives manuscript, page 9.
- ⁴⁸ McCain Archives manuscript, page 1.
- ⁴⁹ McCain Archives manuscript, page 2.
- ⁵⁰ McCain Archives manuscript, page 16.
- ⁵¹ Greenhaw, Watch out, 155; D. T. Carter, Politics, 216.
- ⁵² Greenhaw, Watch out, 156; D. T. Carter, Politics, 217.
- ⁵³ D. T. Carter, Politics, 218.
- ⁵⁴ Greenhaw, Watch out, 156; FBI files, 100-4651-81.
- ⁵⁵ Though Flowers was never impeached, Wallace did engineer Flowers’s conviction on charges that he had abused his office to help some of his friends make money, though no one ever proved that Flowers had profited from it. Considering the highly questionable but unprosecuted profits that flowed into Wallace’s friends—among them Oscar Harper—and his brother, Gerald, the conviction was rather obviously politically motivated. Flowers would serve time in prison, but would later be pardoned.
- ⁵⁶ D. T. Carter, Politics, 300.
- ⁵⁷ FBI files, 100-4651-82.
- ⁵⁸ FBI files, 100-4651-84.
- ⁵⁹ D. T. Carter, Politics, 296.
- ⁶⁰ A similar pamphlet, entitled Stand up for America: The Life of George C. Wallace, appeared much later—after Lurleen Wallace had been governor—and though it is also biographical, it does not contain the same inflammatory pictures or writing as does the Liberty Lobby pamphlet.
- ⁶¹ D. T. Carter calls it a “slick pamphlet,” but the copy I have is the size of a half-page newspaper and on newsprint (Politics 297).
- ⁶² Liberty Lobby Presents Stand up for America: The Story of George C. Wallace, copy in author’s possession.
- ⁶³ D. T. Carter, Politics, 297.
- ⁶⁴ State of Alabama Dept. of Archives and History, “Inaugural Address by Governor Lurleen B. Wallace,” page 4.
- ⁶⁵ Lurleen Wallace Inaugural speech, page 8.
- ⁶⁶ Lurleen Wallace Inaugural speech, pages 8-11.
- ⁶⁷ Lurleen Wallace Inaugural speech, pages 11-15.
- ⁶⁸ Stand up for Alabama: The Official Inaugural Program Honoring Governor Lurleen Wallace, 1967-1971.
- ⁶⁹ FBI files, 100-4651-86.
- ⁷⁰ D. T. Carter, Politics, 295.

Chapter 4: Political Organizer and Puppet Candidate

Rallying the White Supremacist Faithful

In the third phase of his career, from approximately 1967 to early 1970, Asa Earl Carter would struggle in an attempt to remain a viable member of the White resistance movement and to re-achieve some of the legitimacy he had enjoyed during the early part of the 1960s. While he would briefly attain some visibility in Alabama—appearing on the radio and on television before thousands—his efforts would prove fruitless. Carter's reputation was far too widely known by Alabamians for him to recreate himself as anything other than the radical extremist that he was—no clever rhetorical tactics, no degree of eloquence, would prove to be sufficient to wipe out the stain of his past. Carter's star would flicker only for a short time, but it would soon go out.

Within Carter's campaign materials and radio speeches, one finds that his rhetorical tactics changed little from those which had been successful for him in the latter 50s and early 60s in rallying the more radical element of the white supremacist faithful. While he was compelled by the times to moderate his use of terms, to code some of his meanings or to obliquely refer to others, his basic arsenal of tactics remained very similar to the six basic rhetorical tactics identified by Braden as those of traditional White supremacists, with some minor changes. First, he espoused, however covertly, the tenets of white supremacy; second, he made efforts to paint himself and his followers as persons of good character; third, he posited conspiracy against White Southerners, but expanded his description of that conspiracy as not merely an outside conspiracy but one abetted by local traitors; fourth, he called for unity in the fight against this conspiracy, though his calls were often tainted with sarcasm and cynicism; fifth, he legitimized resistance, but

was not loathe to suggest that the resistance should be violent; and sixth, he sometimes took a positive and unyielding stance, though frequently his increasing pessimism became evident. Though increasingly apocalyptic, believing that there would be a Black uprising within the next five years that would effectively wipe out the existing Southern power structure, Carter's basic rhetorical strategies would remain unchanged despite the changing times, and he would render himself an unviable political candidate by his refusals to moderate or disguise his tactics to the degree necessary to remain successful.

Post-Wallace Years: Moving Further West to Find a Niche in State Politics

In May and June of 1967, Carter began appearing before Klan groups in Mississippi, and by August of that year he was a top aide to segregationist Jimmy Swan, an eventually unsuccessful candidate for the Governor of Mississippi, first running the campaign and later working with voters who were selling their votes to runoff candidates.¹ This latter effort was apparently unauthorized, probably just another example of Carter trying to siphon off money for his own use. As a result, Carter was run out of the state briefly by the Klan group White Knights of Mississippi who "threatened to assault or even kill him if he didn't get out of Mississippi until after the election," either intending to defend Swan or to defend their own efforts to make money off his campaign.² But Carter did not stay out of the state long, and he was in Jackson, Mississippi, the same day that the Beth Israel Temple was bombed there. Carter's guests at his hotel had included three Klansmen, prime suspects in the bombing, though Carter himself could not be linked to the bombing directly.³ Carter also continued his activities in the campaign, reportedly writing a 30-minute script to be used in it.⁴ In October,

Carter's activities and the Klan's in attempting to buy and sell votes came to the attention of the Mississippi governor, and one person was arrested though Carter could not be found.

Carter resurfaced in November, as a speaker for the Americans for the Preservation of the White Race at a benefit dinner held in Jackson on the 11th. In latter November, a Klan attorney made arrangements for Carter to speak on television in a 30-minute spot sponsored by the APWR;⁵ on the program, aired in early December, Carter claimed that the APWR was made up of "the same type of men that signed the Declaration of Independence." The APWR had come under recent criticism for creating a climate in which a series of bombings had taken place in southern Mississippi, and Carter attempted to deflect blame by associating the violence with Communists, asserting that "I'm not saying that the Communist Party does all the dynamiting or bombing in the south . . . I'm sure there have been southerners guilty of violence" but claiming that these Southerners had been goaded into violence. Referring to a judge's direction that three men on bond during their appeal would be jailed if any further bombings occurred, Carter said, "Recently, a federal judge reversed the law that required centuries and centuries of struggle by the white man . . . he told some men in Mississippi they were guilty. That's the right of kings, and of dictators, and of savages."⁶ Again, Carter attributes the origins of law—particularly the rule of precedent—to Whites and their violent struggles, both reinforcing White supremacy and encouraging his followers to struggle on behalf of their own segregation laws. He also, once again, pointed to the federal judiciary as a member of the outside conspiracy against Southerners. Even in such short passages, Carter made it clear that he was a member of the White resistance

movement.

Plans appeared to be underway for Carter to head up a “radical element” as the spokesman for the APWR, Klan, and the Citizens’ Council. The Clarion Ledger reported on 7 December that Carter planned to speak at organizational meetings of the APWR, and he did so at six meetings during the month of December, leading FBI agents to assert that he was organizing all across Mississippi with the goal of “using the APWR as a political machine to gain support in an effort to win an elective office during the next election.”⁷ Carter’s speaking engagements with the APWR continued in January—six separate meetings in January at places ranging from Plain to Jackson to Laurel, and dominating discussion at the meeting in Jackson.⁸ But, Carter was involved with more than the APWR. In early January of 1968, he began courting the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi—who had so recently threatened him with violence—in a possible attempt to take over leadership by speaking to the Ladies’ Auxiliary in Jackson, trying to start up a newsletter with a \$10 per year subscription rate.⁹ He simultaneously became involved as campaign manager for a candidate, probably David L. Perkins, for the for the third Congressional seat in Mississippi—staying at the Ramada Inn in Jackson, paying for it with a Chevron card in someone else’s name, and giving his employer as Morgan Contracting Company, yet maintaining a home in White Plains, Alabama.¹⁰

Because of Carter’s increased activity, the FBI reopened his file and assigned an agent to assess the case for the Mississippi office, suggesting that Carter be re-interviewed about bombing cases in Birmingham.¹¹ When the Clarion Ledger provided on 29 February 1968 a report of one planned APWR meeting, Carter was said to be “a right-wing political figure who managed the unsuccessful campaigns of Jimmy Swan for

governor in 1967 and David L. Perkins for Congress this year,” seeming to establish him as a newly emerging force in Mississippi politics.¹² Yet, just as Carter’s star appeared to be rising, it suddenly fell. In March, Carter was interviewed by the FBI in connection to bombing cases such as the Beth Israel case, which he did discuss, but refused to talk about another unnamed case agents were interested in.¹³ He then disappeared from Jackson for the next three months, and the FBI in that locality dropped their investigation and Birmingham picked it back up.¹⁴ In June, Carter popped up for one APWR meeting in Jackson, but would never appear there again.¹⁵

The Birmingham office pursued their interest in Carter, and arranged for him to do an interview in June. Carter specified the agent he was willing to talk to and appeared voluntarily on 10 June. Carter admitted to giving speeches on “Southern history, of which he [was] a student.” Having been asked about the bombings, he blamed them on the KKK or the National States Rights Party, saying that the “rednecks” involved had no other way of expressing their frustration and anger with a government that was forcing integration upon them and had to resort to violence in order to be heard. Though he promised to inform the FBI if he knew of bombings committed by Communists or other “subversive” elements, he refused to be an informant if the bombings were perpetrated by his “kind of folks.” Carter admitted to having been involved in Mississippi politics, and further reported that he had been writing “scripts” for Morgan Construction in Hattiesburg; for the first time, he admitted former employment at Harper Advertising writing speeches for Governor Wallace. Most importantly, he finally admitted having participated in the KKK, saying offhandedly that he had “not been a member of any Klan group or any other hate-group *since he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan of the*

*Confederacy many years ago.*¹⁶ The admission at this late date that he had indeed been a KKK member served principally to deflect concerns that he was still affiliated with White supremacist organizations by its seeming candor, but it makes Carter's membership certain—he himself has admitted what others would later claim to be mere “rumor.” Nevertheless, perhaps because of the sudden FBI interest, Carter dropped out of sight for the remainder of the year, the FBI completely losing track of him. In February of 1969, the office put his file in “pending inactive” status for six months¹⁷--the file would not be reactivated until September.

In August, however, Carter's program Liberty Essays began to be marketed to radio stations in Mobile, Alabama. Station WMOB reported to the FBI that they had been approached to begin running a series of radio speeches; though they declined, they noted that another local station had begun running the program in early August, that the tapes with Carter as the speaker were ten to eleven minutes long, that they concerned themselves with “constitutional government and liberty for all people,” and that the informant had heard nothing “inflammatory” on the tapes.¹⁸ These speeches were sponsored by “Liberty Committees,” whose post office box was 100, Centre, Alabama, and were apparently in support of Carter's intended run for Governor of Alabama in opposition to George Wallace.

Carter's run against Wallace is a matter for some speculation. Carter's reputation in Alabama was by that time at a low ebb because even traditional White supremacists saw him as too extremist. He had suddenly left a promising career in Mississippi and returned to his old haunts with apparently little motivation. There was no change in the political climate which would have led one to believe that he was a viable candidate, so

the motivations of his backers are suspect. Rumor sprang up that Carter was being covertly backed by Wallace supporters, who hoped that Carter's extremist positions on racial matters would act as a lightening rod and pull negative commentary away from Wallace.¹⁹ Carter's tactics, and particularly his penchant for appealing principally to the lower classes, would easily feed into the widely held assumption that it was poor Whites who were the crude racists (P. Williams 73), and thus allow Wallace to paint himself as being too elite for such views. But, whatever his motivation for running, Carter's position was to the far right of Wallace, openly White supremacist.

Campaign Materials: White Supremacy and Privatized Segregation

The campaign materials—interviews, brochures, and advertisements—which Carter created for his campaign were the among the openly White supremacist pieces of discourse which Carter created during his political career. That these materials were so bluntly White supremacist in many ways bolsters the arguments of those who claim that he was running principally to draw attention from Wallace's history as a racist; however, that they were also fairly typical of Carter's earlier rhetoric makes it possible that he simply was continuing to deploy strategies which had served him well in the past for a genuine attempt at an elected post. The Birmingham News reported on 3 October that Carter's platform was built primarily on his plans for a segregated school system:

Carter said the right of white children to develop their full mental potential and their right to knowledge of their heritage of freedom and history are being violated in "integrated, government controlled schools. It is obvious that the Alabama politicians have abandoned the white children of

Alabama to a fate of degraded and integrated schools in the interest of their own political careers and ambitions,” he said in a prepared statement.

“I propose a system of permanent, segregated schools, free from federal control, which we must have if we mean to save our children,” he said
[. . .]

“We are being forced through new and heavier state taxes for so-called education to finance the destruction of our own children. We must have tax repeal legislative session in Montgomery as a means of withdrawing our participation in this act of infamy,” he said.²⁰

Carter apparently had some fairly powerful backing. By 22 October, Carter was an official candidate for governor, and members at a KKK meeting in Montgomery were commenting about his recent television speech. In this speech, he delineated his plans to subvert school integration in Alabama by making the educational system private and financing it by a “stamp program.” Merchants would purchase “stamps” from the private school system with which they would attract White supremacist customers, patrons would earn stamps by shopping from these merchants, the patrons would then present these stamps to the school that their children attended as tuition.²¹ This effort to finance private educations for White children and to move them out of the newly integrated public school system by creating a separate White economic community appears to be aimed principally at the middle and lower-income Whites who did not have the means to take their children out of state-run schools. Carter seemed to believe that the attraction of White customers to White merchants would be such that the merchants would be willing

to discount their wares so as to attract these potentially loyal consumers. Probably not coincidentally, the program resembled greatly the S & H Greenstamps program which had helped participating merchants create loyal customers out of the working and middle-class housewives throughout the country. Given the popularity of that loyalty program, Carter's "stamps for schools" program actually had some potential for success in the short term, though similar efforts to privatize schools so as overtly to avoid desegregation would eventually be invalidated by the courts (Lawrence 65). Despite this possibility for temporary success, it is likely that Carter was more interested in promoting himself and his own political career than in genuinely finding a solution to the perceived problem of school integration for middle and working class Whites.

Carter continued making speeches on television, and in late January had a half-hour program which was advertised in The Birmingham News as follows:

Thurs., Jan 22, 6:30-7:00 P.M. Channel 42 / SEE AND HEAR— / ASA CARTER / CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR / explain the ONLY workable plan / "TO SAVE OUR CHILDREN":

1. Free Enterprise, Segregated Education that REPEALS the Wallace and Brewer Taxes that are being used to finance the government schools which are destroying our children. Take POWER away from government by taking MONEY away from government.
2. Put the TRUE TEXTBOOKS back in the schools. Put the BIBLE back in the schools.
3. Hire our own Educators in private, Free Enterprise Schools. Get the government—State and Federal—out of the Education-Integration-Propaganda business.
4. Get rid of the professional politicians who are building their selfish careers off the broken spirits, destroyed minds, and degenerated morals of our children.

Just as with his Wallace speeches, Carter cleverly deploys the term "our children"

to create a community of like-minded individuals—clearly Whites who did not wish their children to be schooled along with Black students. He again assumes a Christian audience, mentioning the Bible prominently, and suggests that being in the proximity of Black children will cause the White children to be victimized by the Blacks supposed lack of spirit, lower mental capacity, and depravity. His stereotyping of Blacks is indirect, but clear, just as his positing of an all-White, all Protestant audience is implicit but unmistakable. Phrases such as “Education-Integration-Propaganda business” and the association of this negative enterprise to both federal and state governments helps to create the atmosphere of outside and inside conspiracy of which his auditors were the hypothetical victims. In even this simple advertisement, as in undoubtedly the televised speech itself, Carter can be seen to deploy the tactics of White supremacists—outside conspiracy, White supremacist ideology, victimization—that Braden enumerates.

One central document outlines the Carter platform for this run. “To Save the Children” was both a full-page advertisement which ran in the Mobile Register in early January of 1970 and a campaign brochure issued by the Carter Campaign Committee.²² In both, Carter expands at length upon his plans for a privatized school system and the rationale for it:

Conditions of savagery in the schools of Washington, D.C., Chicago [. . .]
St. Louis (where three-fourths of the teachers now carry guns to class),
and every school system that has suffered this total integration plan,
dictates to the conscience of every ALABAMIAN that our children must
not be sentenced to this depraved jungleism.

By use of such terms as “savagery” and “jungleism,” and associating them by implication

with Blacks, Carter deploys the convention of espousing White supremacist ideology to combat Civil Rights efforts. His calls upon Alabamians to save their (by implication, White) children from this fate—again, by implication—by whatever means possible serves to forward an extremist agenda.

Carter, who came from a devout Methodist home, also takes a strong Christian-right stand against pornography, saying that “I will actively speak and organize in every county to clean the movie screens of the filth produced by the Red movie writers of Hollywood who are intent on destroying the Christian home.” He comes out against “leftist-inspired review boards” who regulate local law enforcement, in favor of all-out war against the Vietnamese and the Liberty Amendment; he proposes to attract industry and help the small farm interests and particularly champions handicapped workers; he accuses lawmakers of accepting bribes to permit pollution of streams and pledges to amend it. In all these, he is fairly well in step with the conservative politicians of the era, with the exception of his strong stance towards a privatized and segregated school system, but he goes even further in other sections of his platform.

Carter makes the preposterous claim, preposterous though there is some chance that he genuinely believed it, that the South was under direct threat of military takeover: “We have only to look to the north to see the growing guerilla armies that are being trained for revolutionary take-over of our homes [. . .] One such black militant organization has boldly announced plans to purchase [in Alabama] one hundred thousand acres.” He contrasts this arming of the Black population with a supposed disarming of the, by implication, white citizenry with “increasingly severe gun legislation designed to disarm the law-abiding citizen” and proposes to “establish a volunteer and qualified

STATE MILITIA in which the male citizen of Alabama may enlist as provided by the United States and the Alabama constitutions.” This militia is quite similar to the volunteer militia he initially proposed as part of the Wallace camp, and both posits a conspiracy both outside Alabama and within it to promote Black violence—this supposed threat of violence justifying a “counter-terrorist” organization of, so one can infer, Whites. Again, Carter uses the conventional White supremacist tactic of positing an outside conspiracy which victimizes Alabamians but adds to it his own call for violence.

Because Carter’s reputation was so questionable by this period, he had to defend his own character and, by association, the characters of those who might vote for him. Towards this end, he includes a long section on “Smear.” He first refers to the supposed smears of Senator Joe McCarthy and of the local police for brutality, and then suggests that he too has been a victim of the liberal press:

If you are familiar with this “image” creating by the left wing news media, then you are probably familiar with the “trial” of Asa Carter by the New York owned Birmingham News and other liberal sheets. Asa Carter, of course, has never been tried before any jury²³ in any court of law in the nation.

In the middle 1950’s Asa Carter was a news commentator in Alabama when the Supreme Court handed down its infamous integration decision. Alabama was immediately flooded with leftists, communists and communist-fronters, who in league with people in Alabama (including liberal politicians) set out to form leftists organizations to integrate and “Break the back of the South,” by breaking Alabama. Asa Carter

investigated and exposed on radio, organizations and prominent people working to sell out Alabama.

[. . .]

During this period the liberal leaders began to gloat over their victory to the extent that the liberal Governor of Alabama drank liquor publicly, in the governor's mansion with the negro congressman and Adam Clayton Powell.

It was Asa Carter, using the Powell incident as a focal point, who stumped the state with impeachment speeches. He attracted huge crowds of courageous Alabamians [. . .]

His stubborn resistance brought about economic boycott that forced him off radio, economic boycott that brought financial ruin. His family was intimidated and threatened, his home shot into and twice his automobile was riddled with bullets. Politicians in command of authoritative offices lodged a maze of charges against him, but strangely never tried him on any of them . . . simply allowing the liberal press to "try" him in the pages of their newspapers.

Asa Carter has repeatedly said, "there is no such thing as a lost cause. There is only a wrong cause and a right cause." On behalf of this cause that he so deeply loves, he has written speeches (which politicians have used) made speeches across the Southland in crucial elections that has strengthened the wavering spine of many a professional politician, leading one prominent States Rights jurist of a sister Southern State's Supreme

Court to write “If Asa Carter ever left the Southland, it would be a catastrophe.”

[. . .]

So expect the liberal and political smear attack on Asa Carter. They hate him because they fear him. They know he will not compromise, that he bends his knee only to God; that he has never weakened his stand in return for any reward.

In this “Smear” section, Carter deploys his own trademark justification for violence with exaggerated claims of violence perpetrated against his family. But also, he deploys most of the conventions of White supremacists. He posits that he and his fellow Alabamians are under treat from an outside and inside conspiracy: “leftists, communists and communist-fronters, who in league with people in Alabama” who were “breaking Alabama.” He takes a firm and unwavering stance in such phrases as “he will not compromise” and “has never weakened his stand.” He endorses the values of White supremacy in reminding the reader of his opposition to the fraternizing of the governor with Black politicians. He defends his own good character—“investigated and exposed,” “stubborn resistance,” “bends his knee only to God”—and the character of fellow Alabamians who are “courageous.” Most importantly, by anticipating the extremely negative commentary which was likely to be the result of his completely ruined reputation and by giving the audience a reason to doubt it, saying that he had never been tried and convicted, Carter could promote himself as a viable leader.

Carter’s candidacy was taken seriously enough that the Birmingham News ran, on 20 April shortly before the early May Democratic primary, a profile of Carter entitled

“Asa Carter—Ghost writer comes to life.” In the article, Carter suggests that he chose to run for governor principally because he felt that Wallace had “‘sold out’ Alabama when he came out for state option on the integration issue” and because “Wallace [did] not speak out against communism the way he used to do in [. . .] Carter-written speeches.”²⁴ Carter’s contention that he was a speechwriter for George Wallace is accepted without question, though Wallace would deny it in years to come, and Carter is forthcoming about those he wrote: “I wrote nearly all of his formal or prepared speeches up until I left him shortly after his wife, Mrs. Lurleen Wallace, was inaugurated governor in January, 1967. I did not write that paragraph about carpetbagging, scalawagging, integrating, lying federal judges. George got that from someone else.” The writer also reminds the reader of Carter’s past connection with the KKK.

But, the heart of the article concerns Carter’s run for governor—his platform, principally school segregation, and his methods. Carter chose to center his candidacy upon paid half-hour television programs which the reporter estimates had cost at least \$200,000. Carter claimed that he was “having to pay as I go” because the stations did not work on credit. Carter said that individuals, not organizations or groups, were providing funds; Dr. Buford Sanders, M.D. of Birmingham, a political newcomer who was present during the interview, is identified as one of the chief donors along with a “number of other doctors.” Even Carter does not make the claim that he will win the election, noting with a smile only that “a lot of people are going to be surprised by my vote on May 5.” He may have believed that the campaign materials he had created would make an impact, but the size of that impact remained to be seen.

Liberty Essays: Traditional White Supremacy with a Violent Edge

The essays which Carter produced during his run for Governor of Alabama represents probably the definitive body of works that represent his views during the period in which he was beginning his career as a novelist. A certain degree of overlap exists between the speeches and his later novels, and these not infrequently word-for-word overlaps will be considered in the next chapter, which focuses upon the novels themselves. However, the speeches made during the campaign on radio stations would be the last time he had anything close to wide exposure as a politician, and stand as the final hurrah of his career on the violent terrorist outskirts of the establishment White supremacist community. Carter re-recorded four of the speeches and released them on the first of what was to be a twenty-record set of the “Essays of Asa Carter,” giving names to the eighty original speeches²⁵--among these, “White Race Suicide,” “Civilization: Anglo-Saxon,” “Tax Support: Hate Whitey,” “Blacks—Dope—School,” and “Slave Mentality.” These speeches represent the relatively unchanged extremist political views, though devoid of crude racist language, that Carter had espoused throughout his career. Carter would deploy many of the tactics of traditional Southern White supremacists, but would give them his distinctive edge.

Braden’s First Rhetorical Tactic: Defending the Good Character of White Southerners

In these speeches, Carter made frequent efforts to defend the good character of his listeners, Southerners in general, and Southern practices particularly. The good character of his listeners was a particularly important thing for him to posit, as Whillock notes:

Identifying distinguishing characteristics of people by broad

classifications is an attempt to describe some essential property of groups. Although such classification schemes can provide a certain degree of understanding about others, they also deny individuality and heighten differences in ways that can produce fear and alienation (see Staub, 1989, pp. 59-60)

By choice, people will often isolate themselves from designated groups ascribed negative traits or whose values oppose their own. People have a natural tendency to congregate with others with whom they share common attitudes and values (see Asch, 1951). Together, these factors result in polarization between groups. (33)

Thus, it is both in the identification of designated groups with negative traits and in the opposing identification of like-minded individuals with positive traits—and a created opposition amongst the two—that a rhetor who is so inclined can most profitably hope to create the fear and alienation necessary to fuel hate speech. In Program 34, Carter extols the nobility of the patriotic American, of the sort who had previously fought the king and thrown tea overboard:²⁶

I've seen that aristocracy in faces and the purposes of farmers, millworker, housewife, a businessman—who are concerned about the future of children in this generation and the next and the next. Oh, they could get by all right, but they have that unselfish character about them that gives them concern that those following shall not be denied the rights of free men and women. No profit in it for them, you understand. I reckon that is aristocracy.

The “aristocracy” which Carter is praising in this case is not the “Southern aristocracy” of popular myth—the “cavaliers” of *Gone with the Wind*—but that of the working man and woman, among whom Carter usually found his audience. Later in the speech, he more explicitly links it to Southerners, calling them the “great aristocracy of the Southland” and compares their nobility to that honored by the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution, as well as the Daughters of the Confederacy. Carter claims for his listeners and Southern Whites in general the title of “aristocracy.” Having done so, he links them with the “aristocracy” of the American Revolution—which itself is linked to the Confederacy—and by doing so, praises them more highly. In this way, Carter helps to solidify his audience and make his oratory more effective.

Having developed such positive images of his listeners, he contrasts the image he has created of them and their culture with the cultures of those he posits as “other.” In Program 7, he contrasts Asian and African “organic law” to that of Whites:

Now, the organic law that was written, for example, into the Constitution of some Asian countries is different. In some of those countries, if a man steals something of a small value, they can cut off his hand by law. If it’s of more value, they can cut his arm off up to the elbow, and so on. A fella can get right chopped up that way. But, that’s their business; that’s their organic law, and I’m not for messing in their business because that’s the way they want to live.

In the African countries, they have central governments that run their schools, and their lives, provide huge welfare budgets. Well, that’s their business. That came from their race. It grew out of what they want and

what they are. That's what Disraeli, the former Prime Minister of England meant when he said: "The one great truth is race. Each race produces its own laws to protect the way it wants to live or to provide the order of the type [of] civilization it wants to live in." Now, there didn't any Asians, and there didn't any Africans have anything to do with writing our Constitution. That came from our people. And, if we want a division of powers . . . because that's our freedom ladies and gentlemen, and that's what we mean by the word "freedom."

Carter in this passage is seemingly more tolerant than previously, stating that each race is entitled to its own laws, but he clearly also excludes Asians and Africans from any role in the governing of North America. Interestingly absent from that continent are any mention of Native peoples—in Program 2, he refers to "this wilderness that was called 'America'" which "our people" would "conquer [. . .] and they could build a civilization through belief in God." And, this civilization's "organic law" would be based on the Christian Bible and anti-governmentalism. Carter excludes Asians and Blacks explicitly from participation in US government, but he by implication excludes Native Americans as well. As Patricia Williams points out, it was the "legal awards of 'charter,' 'title,' 'fee,' and 'possession' [which] wrested land not from Native American peoples but from 'idleness,' 'wilderness,' and 'emptiness' (70). In this speech, Carter like other prejudiced speakers elides over the presence of Native Americans by deploying the world "wilderness" to describe the already populated North American continent and also omits mention of the use of force against these absent peoples by stating that it was the land rather than those people which was "conquered," clearly allying himself with White

supremacists and defending their virtue and moral correctness by omitting mention of the genocide they perpetrated.

Such efforts are common in Carter's speeches. In Program Four of the series, Carter implicitly contrasts the intelligence of unlettered, by implication White, Southerners with educated Blacks. In this piece, whose probable title was "Educated Morons," Carter offers the following:

You know, a few years back, a group of research professors went into the mountains of South Carolina, and they conducted intelligence tests. They found several of those mountain men that scored grades of genius. That's right, genius. And yet, they couldn't read or write. They didn't have any knowledge of how to read or write, and they never had any use for reading or writing. But, when those men were given a set number of facts, they reached creative conclusions and brilliant decisions; they had reasoning power.

Now, there's also a wealth of proof that a moron—now that's a person whose mind never matures beyond the age of twelve years—that a moron can memorize facts and knowledge. In other words, if you give the person with a moronic mind a set of facts, and information of knowledge, he can memorize it [. . .] That's why morons can get a college education, and that's why we have a lot of educated morons with college degrees running a lot of public business that they ought not to be running.

The trigger phrase in this passage is, of course, "a person whose mind never matures beyond the age of twelve years." Listeners in Carter's audience would immediately grasp

upon that phrase as one typically used to describe Blacks in the period, while the phrase “mountain man” would immediately call to their minds the image of a White Southerner. This implied distinction between the uneducated White Southerner, who is supposedly capable of genius by nature, and the educated Black, who despite his education will nevertheless remain a moron, serves as an argument to bolster the good character of the naturally more intelligent White Southerner and to diminish the ethos of any Black, regardless of his degree of education. And, this contrast of the White’s natural superiority extended also to Native Americans. In Program 5, Carter would say, “Our forebears²⁷ in this country had to develop a woodcraft superior to the Indians in order to survive and master these woods and mountains and wilderness that was America. Now, they didn’t adapt their civilization to the woods. They learned the wilderness, mastered it, and proved that man masters his environment.” Thus, Carter implies that the North American continent had remained a “wilderness” due to the inferior civilizations of the Native Americans, who by implication lived in harmony with the environment rather than trying to subdue it.²⁸

Carter’s espousal of the virtues of White Southerners does not come merely at the expense of peoples of other races, but also at the expense of what he terms “liberals” and “moderates” and also Communists. In Program 9, Carter explicitly targets both the liberal and the moderate as “anti-Southern”:

Always, we have had the songs, and always the fight of our people has been the fight for freedom—freedom from kings, freedom from central governments, freedom from tyrants, freedom to call our own, our own. That has been our heritage. Down through the centuries, they rebelled

against tyranny with a rebel's spirit as boisterous as the lives they lived.

They loved freedom, mister, and they hated tyranny. And, you cannot hate the one, unless you love the other. That's the difference in a moderate: he doesn't love anything, so he doesn't stand for anything. He isn't opposed to anything. That's the difference in the rebellious spirit of the free and the slave spirit of the moderate jellyfish.

[. . .]

Now, these pale imitations, these poor beatniks who call themselves rebels are no such thing [. . .] Why, there ain't enough rebel in them to polish a spur on a Confederate cavalryman's boot.

In this passage, Carter clearly aligns his audience with Confederate rebelliousness, and what they rebelled against—federal efforts to empower Blacks and dismantle the slave system—and defends that rebelliousness against those who would be more moderate, those who call themselves liberal, and even against the rebelliousness of the far left.

Carter's audience members are associated with the terms "responsibility," "freedom," and "hatred of tyranny." Thus, Carter's audience is not only superior in the sense of racial identity but also in their politics.

Carter particularly takes on the liberals who espouse "equality" by equating them with Communism and the "equalitarian doctrine." The "equalitarian doctrine," according to Carter in Program 15, is one of the two methods used by Communists to achieve domination over the peoples of a country, and he suggests that the ability "to discriminate"—by which he asserts he means merely to judge—is the right of a free people. He goes on to posit an alliance between the Communist belief and the liberal's

political practices:

To hear the liberal talk, and the politician, you would think this country was founded for the purpose of equality. Now, what they're doing, of course, is selling the equalitarian doctrine, which gives the politician more power, in order to enforce it, naturally. No, this country was founded for the purpose. . . wasn't founded for the purpose of equality, it was founded for the purpose of freedom. Our kind of personal freedom from central government, the very opposite of equality. Oh, yes. I know how the liberal interprets the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, where it says "all men are created equal"—that's right. But, the Declaration of Independence is not a paper on anthropology; it is not a paper on genetics or culture or race. The Declaration of Independence is a paper on the illegal injustices of the British crown and states its purpose to rectify those illegal injustices: in other words, it is a paper regarding the law.

The words, "all men are created equal," is taken from the Virginia Document, which says that "all men are created equal before the law." Now, that didn't mean the law of a central government, because the law of the land was the Constitution. And, the Constitution left ninety percent of the law in the hands of the people by insuring division of power, states' rights. That was their faith in the people who, by their own judgments in their own states, would see that justice was accorded to all peoples according to Anglo-Saxon law.

In this passage, Carter overtly connects his arguments that White Southerners are

superior to other races and to liberals and Communists. The White Southerner has the responsibility to see that all people would be governed justly—not equally, but according to his station—and governed justly by Anglo-Saxon, White, law.

The alternative, rule by central government, he connects to Black culture in other speeches. For example, in Program 2, Carter refers to the “organic law” in Africa:

The laws that came from the people in the new nations of Africa established strong central governments over the people; those central governments provided large welfare programs; they run the government schools; they have almost absolute power over the people. That is their order of civilization; that’s part of their “law and order.” There’s no tolerance for any division of power within a nation, as we witness now the savage internal war on Biafra by the Nigerian government.

Because Carter equates centralized governments with Africa, and because he suggests that liberals and Communists are working to centralize government in America, by implication he posits that liberals and Communists are working to force Black cultural practices onto White Southerners who cannot by their nature accept them. By contrast, then, Carter defends the correctness of his own political activities by criticizing the goals and methods of his opposition.

Carter uses this strategy of defending the character of his own political allies and of his listeners in the program probably entitled “Slave Mentality,” Program 20. In that program, he overtly refers to the activities of Civil Rights leaders and criticizes them:

A slave mentality is a slave mentality. No matter where you put it, it’s still the mind of the slave. If it be the slave farmhand on the plantation

who looks to the farm master to feed him, house him, clothe him, educate his children, secure for him his destiny . . . or, if running loose in the streets, looks to the master government to feed him, house him, clothe him, educate his children, and secure for him his destiny . . . it is the mentality of the slave. He is afraid of freedom; he cannot bear responsibility, hasn't a thimble-full of faith in God, regards ambition as sickness, and thirst for personal freedom as some form of mental illness.

Now, this slave mentality can be dressed up with all sorts of laudatory phrases about progress. It can have its leadership awarded Nobel Peace Prizes. It can mouth about freedom, equality, or any hundreds of useful words to embroider it. But, it is still a slave mentality. It can chant church hymns in the street, pray in long-winded, ringing prayers, shout from the speaker's stand. But, as long as it is demanding care by central government and management by central government, it is a slave mentality. You can slice bologna; you can chop it up, dice it, and pour ketchup on it. But, it is still bologna.

The passage partakes, of course, of the Ku Klux Klan ideology that Black slaves had an excellent situation—their own needs and their children's needs provided for by their masters in perpetuity. By ascribing to Blacks both a desire and need to be controlled, lacking any ability to control themselves, he by contrast defends the virtues of Whites who are resisting the efforts of the federal government to equalize the situations of Whites and Blacks in the South. Carter's anti-Black, and specifically anti-Civil Rights—even more specifically anti-Martin Luther King, Jr.—White supremacist rhetoric is

remarkably unvarnished in this passage, considering the social conditions of the period, and serves to demonstrate the degree to which his views remained unchanged over the years.

Because of his notoriety in Alabama, Carter was hard-put to defend his own reputation against his own long history of violence and hate speech. In Program 19, probably entitled “White Man Guilt”, Carter would overtly refer to his reputation and attempt to explain away certain aspects:

I recall that twelve or thirteen years ago, an attorney here in Alabama sued a liberal newspaper in my behalf with the point of contention being that the newspaper had called me “a führer,” meaning of course Adolf Hitler. Now, at the hearing, the judge said I was a public figure and therefore this was legitimate criticism. He threw the case out. Now, I never could figure out how calling somebody a name can be termed legitimate criticism of policies or aims that are advocated for the public, but that’s what the judge said. And, of course, the judge was writing a column for the same newspaper at the time, and like grandpa said, that could’ve put a couple of rocks in the bottom of the cotton sack, right there.

Which doesn’t matter much to me. I’ve got a couple of trunk loads of newspaper clippings that’s got some pretty fancy names embroidered on my hide, and I guess that’s all part of it. If I couldn’t stand the heat, I’d get out of the kitchen. And, you don’t look for fair rules when you oppose the liberal. You’re pretty thankful to the Lord if you can just survive and carry on what you believe you was put here to carry on.

As Judith Butler notes, “the injurious address may appear to fix or paralyze the one it hails, but it may also produce an unexpected and enabling response. If to be addressed is to be interpellated, then the offensive call runs the risk of inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use language to counter the offensive call” (2).

The use of the term “führer” by the newspaper’s editor, rather than merely operating as a term to discredit Carter, actually provides him with an opportunity to explain away the use of the term against him and to discredit in turn those who would sympathize with the man who had used it. By bringing up criticism lodged against him for his fascistic activities, Carter gains control over how those criticisms will be interpreted. He first dismisses it as mere name-calling, then calls into question the motivations of the judge who dismissed the libel case which he had brought, then he portrays himself as the long-suffering political activist whose opponents smear rather than engage in legitimate dialogue—conveniently omitting, of course, that he himself had thrown around quite a few smear words during that period of his life. Having recontextualized the criticism as proof of his own worth, Carter establishes himself as a legitimate spokesman.

Carter furthered this view of himself by allying himself with a pro-soldier political view which would appeal to the hard-line militarists who decried the policies in Vietnam which prevented total war against the North Vietnamese. In Program 22, Carter paints himself as the ally of the soldier in the trenches, after stating that “It is our sons, our boys, in Vietnam who are being sacrificed and murdered in the interest that we shall not be allowed, ever, victory over communism”:²⁹

My friends sometimes tell me that they know it’s the truth, but that more

caution should be used in the saying of it. Well, I don't know how you say it, except to say it. And, they tell me, "Yes, but you know. You get the politician mad at you, and the liberal." Well, in nigh on to 20 years, the politician has been mad at me many times. And, I can't think of a thing he can do to me that hasn't already been done, at least once. And, the liberal who would call me a name will have to invent a new one—or else, he'll just be repeating himself because they've used up all the names in the English language. So, that is of little consequence to me. As the old poet said, "I may not be as wise / As these lawyer-guys, / But then, I ain't / As conniving neither."

I sure ain't no politician. And, I don't claim to be. But, if I was . . . as long as one of our boys had to stand up to his rifle each morning, I'd keep faith with him. I'd stand up that same morning to send a public telegram to the president, demanding that that boy be backed up with the planes that our tax money has bought for that purpose. And, I'd do so each and every morning. It might get monotonous. But, it gets mighty monotonous in Vietnam, too.

By characterizing himself as "not a politician," Carter raises himself in the estimation of those in his listening audience who equate "politics" with equivocation and opportunism—an attitude which was and still is held by many Southern Americans. By allying himself with the militarists' image of soldiers fighting in Vietnam, he portrays himself as a fighter on behalf of America, someone who is devoting his life to defending American ideals. This image of himself as a soldier rather than a politician would also

help to defend Carter's own reputation, he created ethos, with his listeners.

Because Carter's own prejudice against Blacks was widely known, and because his racism in general was undeniable, he was forced to defend himself on that account by an extremely strange reconfiguring in Program 23 of what is meant by the term "prejudice":

Now, the definition of the word "prejudice" is "feeling without reason." That is, if you have a fear of that breeze that's blowing outside your window, there's no reason for that fear; therefore, it's prejudice. If, however, you have a fear of tornadoes—now, there's a reason for that fear. [. . .]

There is ample, full, and overwhelming fact from the Bible, from examples of history, from living examples before us today that racial integration of differing and unlike races is disastrous. That such integration leads to amalgamation and lack of will and wisdom to govern ourselves, as in many countries of South America who must continually be ruled by military governments, and whose only political change comes about by violence. The records of history of such have been referred to by such men as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, innumerable men of unquestioned statesmanship and integrity.

By reconfiguring his White supremacy as a reasoned response to objective reality, Carter creates an image of himself as a knowledgeable and logical individual. By associating himself with the names of famous American presidents, and including even Abraham Lincoln, he raises his own reputation by comparison—making himself seem a man "of

unquestioned statesmanship and integrity” rather than being the raving White supremacist as portrayed by the popular media.³⁰

Another way that Carter seeks to defend his own good character, his created ethos, is by associating his political positions with those of noted scholars. For example, in the speech “Savage Showcase,”³¹ Carter quotes from an essay by Wesley Critz George, “a professor of histology and embryology at the School of Medicine, the University of North Carolina, and a member of the American Association of Anatomists, Zoologists, and Human Genetics.” Dr. George’s essay³² concerned the work of Franz Boas, which Carter credited as the basis for training students that integration was an acceptable practice in schools. Carter quotes George as saying:

Skeptics could see, too, that the scientific support claimed for these revolutionary programs of Boas was in fact illusory and not factual. Boas and some of his followers became quite adept at formulating vague phrases and sleazy arguments to support theories that they could not support with fact. Their writings have lead people to have tolerance for scientific and social concepts that are seen to be untrue when all the evidence is carefully considered; and this tolerance is often changed to fanaticism when all the drums of integration propaganda have been brought into play.

Carter’s ability to quote from authorities allowed him to claim for himself some of the respectability of those authorities and to also bolster his arguments and make them seem more reasonable. Both of these helped Carter to reinforce a positive image of himself. What Carter’s listeners could not know, however, was that Carter was liberally editing

the work to enhance his own points—the first sentence of this quote comes from one passage on page 59, and the remainder comes from page 60—and the word “integration” in the last sentence does not appear at all. Though Carter is not misrepresenting George at all, he is crafting his quotes to make his points more pithy and altering them to make them suit his current argument.

Carter’s listeners would not necessarily know that Wesley Critz George was hardly an impartial authority, the report from which this quote was drawn having been commissioned by George C. Wallace when he was governor of Alabama—but those who knew this fact would gain a very different notion of Carter’s ethos.³³ That particular document, published in pamphlet form, contained on its cover a picture of the skulls and jawbones of an “Orang Utan,” a Negro, and a White, the measurements of which apparently seek to demonstrate that Negroes were more closely related to the great apes than Whites, or perhaps that Whites were more highly evolved. Carter’s audience would accept George as an authority merely on the basis of Carter’s recitation of George’s qualifications, and Carter’s choice of a relatively tame section of George’s work serves to bolster his reliability and thus Carter’s. Such a privileging of “science” as being beyond political commentary and objective is still common today; Williams wonders why “Charles Murray’s or Richard Herrnstein’s or Michael Levin’s Nazi-like sociobiological theories of the inferiority of blacks are always so protected from the political vagaries of either Right or Left and graced as ‘science’” (P. Williams 56). That they are so protected is what places them and those who cite them beyond criticism as “biased” and thus reinforces their good character—though for those who understand the emptiness of their contentions, the reverse impression is of course created.

To those who were familiar with George's work and agreed with it, the reference to George might have had an additional benefit. The principal focus of The Biology of the Race Problem appears to be contained in the following passage: "One of the most important problems facing Americans today is: shall we pursue programs that would result in mixing the genes of the Negro race with those of the White race and so convert the population of the United States into a mixed-blooded people?" (7). This question is, itself, an unvarnished White supremacist position; it presumes that any attempt at integration, the dismantling of segregation laws which sought principally to perpetuate the lower status of Blacks, was in truth an attempt to amalgamate the White and Black races into one mixed-blood race rather than being as it was an attempt to eradicate an unfair and un-Constitutional second-class status for some citizens on the basis of their race. Additionally, in answering this question, George makes his own White supremacist views clear by drawing principally from the work of deeply racist scientists such as Dr. Arnold Gesell:

Racial differences are recognizable by the fourth fetal month The musculature of the Negro fetus is more compact and coarsely bundled than that of the white fetus of similar age Our own repeated observations of a large group of fetal infants left us with no doubt that psychologically they were individuals. Just as no two looked alike, so no two behaved precisely alike. One was impassive when another was alert. Even among the youngest there were discernible differences in vividness, reactivity and responsiveness. There were genuine individual differences, already prophetic of the diversity that distinguishes the human family. (qtd. in

George 10)

Gesell's neat parallelism between his example of the Negro and then the White fetus, and his descriptions of fetal infants as "impassive" and "alert" clearly signals to the reader that it is the Negro fetus that is impassive. George's whole argument rides upon such highly questionable argumentative strategies and clearly demonstrates his own White supremacist views. Thus, Carter's use of George's work both defends his own good character—positing him as a well-read individual who can easily quote distinguished sources—and for those who were more conversant in White supremacist doctrine and its authorities would serve to bolster their belief in that doctrine.

Braden's Second Rhetorical Tactic: Espousing the Principles of White Supremacy

Throughout the series of Liberty Essay speeches, Carter espouses and defends the principles of White supremacy, usually at the expense of Blacks, often at the expense of Asians, and even occasionally at the expense of Native Americans. Such a verbal defense of White supremacy, and the frequent deployment of it, it is critical to the Carter's goal of oppressing Blacks in reality. As Lawrence notes:

The goal of white supremacy is not achieved by individual acts or even by the cumulative acts of a group, but rather it is achieved by the institutionalization of the ideas of white supremacy. The institutionalization of white supremacy within our culture has created conduct on the societal level that is greater than the sum of individual racist acts. The racist acts of millions of individuals are mutually reinforcing and cumulative because the status quo of institutionalized

white supremacy remains long after deliberate racist actions subside. (61)

Thus, while Carter will expend a good deal of energy in many of his speeches to encourage the listeners to engage in actual violence, it is also key to his goals that he instruct the listener in the principles of White supremacy and that he defend those principles, because it is those principles which will help to perpetuate the lower-class status of Blacks beyond even the consequences of individual acts of violence or the chilling effect of perceived threat of such violence. This helps to explain why Carter will use so many different methods of promoting White supremacy and why he will turn his vitriol upon so many different groups.

Carter's principle aim is to oppress Blacks as a group, and anti-Black sentiments are predominant in his work. They can be seen throughout his set of speeches—as in the passages mentioned above about a supposed “slave mentality” and the despotic nature of most African governments. Such passages undercut the seemingly more tolerant, seemingly White separatist sections in which he makes such comments as: “We believe in a separate racial station—that there should be separate racial identity. For, only in this way can the contributions of separate races continue to live, to flourish, and to make their contributions to America.”³⁴ Though Carter is never as crude as in his earlier works—when he would overtly characterize Blacks as violent, lazy, uncivilized, and unintelligent—he covertly implies such characteristics. In a passage from Program 35, he refers to “The superintendent of the St. Louis school system [who] recently stated that whites have rapidly fled that city’s educational facilities, and he said that today, seventy-five percent of the school teachers in his system who teach there must arm themselves for self-protection,”³⁵ by implication from the non-white, the Black, violent students still in

their classrooms. In Program 37, probably entitled “Songs of Children,” Carter first espouses the work ethic of his own forbearers and contrasts it to those of the by inference “lazy” Blacks: “The richest continent in the world is Africa; the poorest people in the world are Africans. Richness is production—practice the rules. Poverty is non-production—look to government for support.” In “Savage Showcase,” Carter provides a long negative characterization of schools in the nation’s capital and then says: “The truth of the matter is that Washington, D. C., schools now are nearly one hundred percent Negroid, and the same jungle conditions of those schools you can find in any jungle in Africa.” He goes on in that same piece to say that “This is a school system that stands at the top of the list in money spent, nationally, per pupil on education, and yet graduates students from high school who cannot read or write,” suggesting that pupils are not merely savage but also uneducated, and perhaps uneducable. By such tacit means, Carter builds up an image of Blacks that is identical to the crude stereotype he used in his earlier, vulgarly White supremacist works.

Carter also promotes anti-Black sentiments by calling into question efforts being made to recover and promote the achievements of Blacks in helping to forward the sciences in the United States. In Program 36, in reference specifically to a recently published book, The History of the Negro in America,³⁶ Carter takes pains to debunk claims that Blacks had positively contributed to society. He relies upon the authority of Dr. Henry E. Garrett, “for more than thirty years [a] professor of psychology at Columbia University,” who refuted claims in the book:

“I have read with considerable interest this volume. The word ‘history’ in the title is a misnomer. The volume is almost completely racist

propaganda designed to indoctrinate school children. History records events and happenings without bias and with impartiality. Now, history records these events, it records these happenings, on a totally factual basis; therefore, the book cannot in any way carry the title of 'history.'

Propaganda, on the other hand, deals with facts or psuedo-facts that are twisted and distorted, exaggerated or otherwise lollid over in order to slant the presentation in one direction. Whereas the propaganda's objectives may sometimes be laudable, such as in stories for children designed to inculcate morals and manners, more often than not the object is malicious, misconceived, and based on invalid premises. The latter objective, unfortunately, is true of much of this misnamed 'history' textbook."

[. . .]

"The book says 'some believe that a negro discovered America with Columbus,' but who believes it and why is not stated. It is on record that Columbus took along a few black slaves, but certainly none of them were explorers. The statement that a negro named Du Sable founded Chicago is untrue. The book credits Matthew Henson, a negro, as being co-discoverer of the North Pole. It's true Henson accompanied Admiral Peary, but as a servant. Hence, he carried Admiral Peary's gear when the explorer Peary discovered the North Pole. The book says that a negro, Daniel H. Williams, is said to have performed the first open-heart surgery. This is untrue, to say the least, as open-heart surgery is a fairly recent medical procedure requiring special techniques and Williams died in

1930.”

While we may of course dispute Garrett’s contention that true history is unbiased, even by the terms of his own argument, Garrett’s statements are questionable. He refutes the data in the book as propaganda, but it is equally clear that his own response is propagandistic and biased. A book for children rarely cites sources for its simple claims, such as that about there being a Negro among Columbus’s sailors. Du Sable is reported to have been the first non-Native American who settled at the location that is now Chicago, even if one might dispute his having founded the city. While Peary might have been the principal organizer of the expedition to the North Pole, it is doubtless that Henson made significant contributions. And, though Williams did not perform what by that time was a more advanced form of open-heart surgery, he did open a patient’s chest and sew up the sac around his heart. Carter’s ability to cite a respected source, however, to refute the claims then being made in favor of Civil Rights—that Blacks had been significant contributors to society and thus deserved equality—serves to uphold the principle of White supremacy that American culture was by default White, and that Blacks had only received that culture and profited by it. Indeed, Garrett himself is quoted as saying that: “For the Afro-American, slavery was a delayed blessing. It gave him a civilization, a language, education, and religion. It raised him to a level attained by no black folk anywhere else in the world.” Garrett, and through him Carter, call into question the very issue of whether African-Americans contributed to American culture at all.

The value of African cultures is also called into question in Program 33. After decrying the fact that Alabama history is no longer being taught as it once was in the

school system, the teaching of rote learning having been replaced by the learning of thinking skills and larger concepts, Carter discusses the value of having a multicultural curriculum:

The emphasis to be placed on cultures outside our western hemisphere is the instruction to hold up to the child's mind as something to admire and copy the so-called culture of Africa—whatever that is. To read or attempt to read with concept, not facts, something of beauty into a Watusi dance or reasoning behind the welfare governments established on that African continent while denying a child knowledge and love of the western civilization of our people that produced the abundant order of freedom, justice, and order based upon the Christian ethic.

Having already debunked claims that American culture is in part Black in origins, Carter here questions whether there even can be said to be an African culture and suggests that what little there is of such culture is hardly worth admiring and certainly not worth emulating, holding up instead the culture and values of Western society and restoring the listeners' belief in the basic premise of White supremacy that its civilization is superior to all others.

Carter is similarly anti-Asian, though the passages tend to be relatively short—as in Program 5 with the brief mention of “The Germanic states, situated as a buffer between western civilization that was Europe and Asiatic hordes of the Gengis and Kubla Khans, [which] had to develop a militarism in order to hold back those hordes of a differing Asiatic civilization [. . ..]” He does occasionally make longer pronouncements that are anti-Asian. For example, in Program 2, he refers to the “organic law” of Asians:

The organic law of India, for example, grew out of the beliefs and the order that those people wanted for their civilization. They believe, for example, that the cow is sacred. So, laws were erected to protect the cows in India from being slaughtered. You kill a cow in India, and you'll be punished by law.

Though Carter does not say it, his example is neatly chosen to suggest to the reader that Asian peoples are pagan, worshipping animals as sacred. Such criticism would, despite its implicit nature, be apparent to most of his listeners. However, his chief anti-Asian and pro-White supremacist views are espoused in his speeches in favor of total war in Vietnam. In Program 21, probably entitled "Au revoir—Vietnam," in which he suggests that America is being prevented from exerting its proper supremacy by politicians:

No [presidential] candidate reminded the people of the words of General MacArthur, that air power must be used in any war with Asia, otherwise we will drain our nation of its manhood, its resources, and its strength in an endless sea of Asian humanity. No candidate pointed out that this nation could and should blow the port of Hai-phong off the map, where every day ships unload guns and ammunition and supplies for the Communists. That our planes should blow Hanoi off the map and destroy the factories that are making war supplies. That the war could be ended in sixty days, but it would require an absolute attack upon the Communists by air power.

It is in such passages, however, that Carter's tacit connection between Asians and Communism becomes clearer. Indeed, with repetition, such passages relate the two so

closely that Carter's continuous anti-Communist rhetoric comes to tacitly operate as anti-Asiatic rhetoric as well, and thus his anti-Communist stance operates as a covertly White supremacist stance.

In Program 18, probably titled "Grandpa and Churches," Carter furthers the alliance between himself and the White supremacist principles underlying the genocide of Native Americans. He briefly recounts the background of his grandfather, a "foot-stomping, creek-dipping, sacred-harp-singing, hour-and-a-half preaching Baptist." Having first engaged the reader's attention by vividly portraying the character of his grandfather, and Christians in general, Carter then segues into a story about a particular "hardshell" Christian:

And, one Sunday morning, the old Puritan passed the door of the atheist on his way to church, and as always, he had his Bible under one arm, and he had his musket under the other. The atheist walked out to pick at him a little more, and he said, "On your way to church, I see."

"Yes, sir, brother. I am," the old Puritan said.

The atheist says, "Well now, you believe that what will be, will be. In other words, what's going to happen is going to happen—no matter what. Is that right?"

The old hardshell says, "That's right, brother. I believe that."

The atheist said, "In other words, you believe that when your time has come, it has come. And, there's nothing you can do about it. Is that right?"

"Yes, brother," said the old hardshell, "That, I believe."

“Well,” says the atheist, “If you believe that, why do you carry that musket with you on the way to church?”

And, the old hardshell said, “I carry this musket, brother, because while on my way to church, I might meet an Indian whose time has come.”

Well now, you know, that old Puritan had some pretty sound thinking there—if you stop to consider it all the way around. He believed in predestination all right, but he believed also that he just might be an instrument of the Lord to determine what that destination was going to be. That’s how the country got built.

In this particular episode, Carter can be seen to ally himself with those White supremacists who believed that they were justified in building a country on land which was still being contested by its original settlers. According to Carter the White settler was justified to the point of sanctioning killing—and not necessarily in self-defense. The correctness of White domination of the North American continent as well as the superiority of White Christianity—which Carter connects explicitly later in the speech, “the Christian ethic and how it built this country”—are both defended in Carter’s anecdote.

What makes the episode work better as hate speech is the fact that it is told as a humorous anecdote. Many people make the assumption that humor is always liberating, that mocking always has centrifugal force. Bakhtin argues that discourse has both centripetal force—“official” force that moves towards the center of a discourse community and binds it together—and centrifugal force—“unofficial” force that moves away from the center and helps to disrupt the discourse community (Morson and

Emerson 30). Halasek argues that “Centripetal forces—whether political, linguist, or social—enforce conformity and conservatism [. . .] Conversely, centrifugal forces humor no dominance; instead, they encourage parody and subversion” (288). This sentiment is echoed by Gregory: “Through diversity there is humor, through humor there is diversity” (qtd. in Griffin 271). As I have argued elsewhere, such a dichotomy suggests that there is a single center towards which centripetal forces may gravitate—it presumes a single community or dominant community. In the case of Carter, however, we can see that there are multiple communities. While Carter is deploying a centripetal force, attempting to draw people into the community of White supremacists, he is deploying humor and parody as a centrifugal force against the community of religious people who argue that certain things are inevitable and it is not even possible to prevent them from happening. As the argument that integration was inevitable was widespread at the time of Carter’s writing, and as he openly argued against that view on multiple occasions, Carter’s humor works as a counterforce to that argument, his story has centrifugal force which is intended to undermine the structure of the community that deployed the “inevitability” argument. His counterargument, being deployed through humor, obscures its own White supremacist oppressive, “official” bent and becomes seemingly an unofficial and un-oppressive piece of discourse. Carter’s use of humor, then, serves to make more palatable what would otherwise be a self-evident argument for tyrannical White supremacy and its principles.

Another of Carter’s methods of espousing and defending the principles of White supremacy is in his frequent references to and support of the old Confederacy. Indeed, Carter’s program ended each time with a playing of a version of “Dixie,” the most

frequent version being a fife and drums rendition,³⁷ before and after the final credits were read. He also makes frequent references in Program 9 to the probability that his intended audience had forbearers who had fought for the Confederacy:

So, don't you go feeling bad when the liberal and the moderate go poking fun at that old Rebel flag your great granpa and mine fought and rode under. It's a proud flag. And, there's never been any dishonor attached to it. It represents the spirit of freedom that lived in their souls and the hard hands they turned to fight for it. It represents the rebel spirit of the free that's fought for the civilization and the law and the order of freedom.

As Patricia J. Williams discusses, the symbolism of the Confederate flag is often deployed by Southerners to disguise with “warm” images the unpleasant ramifications of White supremacy. She cites, for example, the act of a student at Harvard University who hung a Confederate flag from her balcony and claimed that it represented to her the “warmth and community of her happy southern home.” Though other students noted that the symbol may indeed be a community-building symbol for Whites, it serves as a symbol of their communal oppression of Blacks and a Black student hung a swastika-decorated sheet out her window as protest. Williams notes that the Confederate flag received different treatment from the swastika—while the Confederate flag’s meaning was taken to be subjective, defined by the views of the individual who displayed it, the meaning of the swastika was taken to be fixed by social convention. It is this acceptance in American culture of the privilege of White Southerners to assign meanings to the Confederate flag—the battle flag adopted by the Klan—detached from its historical significance and the generally permissive attitude of the mainstream public to permit this

privatizing of the symbol that permits the one symbol to be displayed and the other to be by general consensus banned (29-30).

Carter exploits this opportunity, taking his chance to redefine the meaning of the Confederate flag as a community builder to gain acceptance of his speech while simultaneously deploying it as a symbol of White supremacy. His choice of the “rebel flag,” the battle flag of the Confederacy³⁸ that had become synonymous with the Ku Klux Klan, is a tacit reference to the Klan for those who sympathize with it, and his overt statement that “there’s never been any dishonor attached to it” is a similarly tacit defense of the Klan and its White supremacist platform. Further, he suggests to the reader that the “Cause” was never truly lost and is still viable, as in Program Eleven when he refers to men who had become outlaws in Texas, saying: “Many of them were men who had rode with Forrest or Rosser or Stewart; men who had never lost a battle, never lost a skirmish, who had out-rode, out-charged, out-shot, and out-gutted the Yankee every time he’d met him. So, you see, they didn’t consider they’d lost any war at all.” The point is reiterated in Program 12, when he says, “My great-grandpa always said, ‘Remember, son. There’s no such thing as a lost cause. There’s only a wrong cause and a right cause.’” Having created a connection between the listener and the old Confederacy, implicitly praising the KKK which supposedly continued the fight of the old Confederacy, and suggesting that the Cause was not dead, Carter upholds White supremacist principles by encouraging the reader to carry on the White supremacist “Cause” of both the Confederacy and the KKK.

A more subtle method by which Carter espouses White supremacy is by implicitly limiting his listening audience to Whites. In Program 8, probably entitled “Kin,” Carter

includes the following passage: “They say that all the old families that goes back to the war—and by ‘war,’ I mean that one between the States—is all kin to one another in the South”; he goes on to say that the word itself, “kin,” was brought in by Scots and English immigrants. Though far from overt, Carter clearly means to establish the “us” in this passage as himself and his listeners, and claims for all of them Anglo-Saxon heritage. Similarly, in Program 9, Carter says, “That’s why you hear people in the South say, ‘Oh, I guess I’m just old Scotch/Irish/English.’” Thus, Carter categorizes his listeners as Anglo-Saxon as well as all the “people in the South,” suggesting that Blacks are not legitimately Southerners and are certainly not among those to whom he is speaking. He reiterates the point in Program 11, probably entitled “Gone to Texas,” when he discusses how many ex-Confederates chose to go to Texas with its “space” and escape Reconstruction in the more settled areas of the South, saying: “Now, don’t laugh. Every one of you listening has got kinfolk in Texas who got there that way.” Carter’s limitation of his audience to Whites—particularly Anglo-Saxon, Confederate descendants—is consistent and allows him to create an atmosphere of familiar consubstantiality. This consubstantiality—which Burke defines as “acting together” and having “common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, [and] attitudes (21)—creates a fellowship between Carter and his audience that makes his White supremacist oratory more effective.

Carter also defends White supremacy merely by stating its general principles and explicating the background and implications of White supremacy. In Program 38, probably entitled “Racist,” Carter again uses the words of a noted historical figure in order to reinforce and justify the case for maintaining a purely White culture plainly. He explicates an idea he takes from Disraeli: “And, each race erects its own laws, its own

kind of government, to fit its character. It will not change, nor be changed, except by force—except by the supremacy of another race that enforces its own ideas of civilization and of government.” In Program 23, probably entitled “Prejudice,” Carter takes pains to explain why it is liberals with their promotion of integration who are “prejudiced,” by which he means “feeling that is not supported by reason and fact, feeling that is not supported by one small product of morality and justice, civilization and lawful society, as [the liberal] advocates integration and amalgamation.” He goes on to explain that White supremacy is, on the contrary, based on sound thinking and tradition:

And, we certainly are not motivated by hatred and prejudice in standing up in defense of our people and this civilization that came from them. We believe—based upon fact, upon history, and our Biblical teaching—that racial integrity is necessary for the survival of our civilization. I want my children to have benefit and to be blessed by the continuance of the same kind of civilization in which I was privileged to grow, with the same values, the same morality, nurturing of the same Christian ethic, with freedom to control their lives and destiny. Don’t you?

This particular passage is particularly more effective because of the fact that Carter ascribes the reverse definition to the “liberal.” As Patricia Williams notes, many White working-class members are well acquainted with the “class-biased and deeply hypocritical” portrayal of poor whites as uncouth and bigoted, “versus the ever-so-liberal middle and upper classes who enjoy the privilege of thinking of themselves as ‘classless.’” Williams notes that this would encourage poor whites “to hear the word ‘liberal’ as just another synonym for hypocrite” (73). Carter was almost certainly also

drawing on the common conservative critique of the term “liberal” as meaning “lack of restraint and lack of discipline [. . .] and also the sense of a (weak and sentimental) generosity” (R. Williams 181). It is possible that Carter was also drawing from George Wallace’s extremely successful attacks on liberals, attacks which were themselves veiled racism aimed at those who supported Civil Rights, and in essence learned from the successes of the man whose attacks Carter had formerly crafted himself. The accrued negative connotations of the term “liberal” is used by Carter not merely to undercut the arguments against expressions of White supremacy but to make White supremacy seem like the antithesis of hypocrisy—honest concern for society.

Carter openly deploys the code-word “liberal” to bolster his own definition of the term “racist.” He says: “The liberal means the word to smear as ‘one who hates a race as a people.’ God created the races. And, it appears to me that the people who hate races are those who would advocate integration and amalgamation and destroy the handiwork of God.”³⁹ This particular use of reversal is similar to, in this case, elite class racism which seeks to obscure its own racist tendencies by a reversal, in which the opposition is called “racist.” Van Dijk notes that “emphatic denials of racism are routinely associated with violent attacks on” those who accuse the elite class of racism (10). Carter’s tactic of redefining terms, particularly in opposition to the definitions proposed by “liberals,” works to his advantage here. What had been labeled prejudice and hatred by the media who were in support of Civil Rights becomes in Carter’s terms a defense of traditional Christian ethics while he re-labels the actions of liberals as “prejudiced” and “unreasoning.” The inversion of meaning is bolstered by the genuine prejudices which some upper-class liberals display towards working-class Whites and serves neatly to

support White supremacy, making it seem like the most ethical and logical of options available to the listener.

This opposition of Blacks versus poor Whites is key to understanding Carter's effective deployment of the term "liberal" and his tactics for the working-class audience to which he addressed most of his work. Patricia Williams explains the phenomenon further:

If I hold in my mind this particular construction [the negative image of working class Whites] of a "powerful liberal media," then I begin to understand how poor whites would feel victimized by their image in the media, in very much the same way as blacks feel victimized by theirs [. . . .] It is instructive to see how the experience of race puts enough of a spin on just this much of the vocabulary that in spite of an arguably shared experience, blacks and poor whites end up on opposite sides of a right-left divide. And looking at it this way gives me some insight into how those who are in one sense aligned with a powerful majority could feel so paradoxically threatened, *as a "minority" in a world overrun by "minorities."* (74).

While White supremacy on the behalf of well-to-do Whites would be self-evidently self-serving, this defense of White supremacy on behalf of working-class Whites can easily disguise itself as a necessary defense against a hostile world rather than an offensive and oppressive move against Blacks. Being thus disguised, Carter's White supremacist principles are all the more effective.

Braden's Third Rhetorical Tactic: Legitimizing Resistance

Closely allied to Carter's characterization of himself and his followers as people of good character are his efforts to legitimize resistance by White supremacists to the federal government as well as to the denial of civil rights, a tactic which was common among White supremacist rhetors of the period (Braden 343). This follows from Whillock's point that people will isolate themselves from those ascribed negative traits (33). It would be normally considered a negative trait to defy the law of the land, but by redefining such defiance as legitimate and natural, Carter can prevent his listeners from becoming alienated and hostile to his own points—keeping their hostility aimed at Blacks, liberals, and “illegitimate” federal authority. Chief among Carter's attempts to explain why resistance is legitimate is his frequent use of the term “organic law,” of which in Program 1 he says:

Organic law, the law that grew from our people through the centuries, has been the organic law of liberty. To protect liberty as our people believe liberty should be interpreted, that is, that there must be a division of powers so that most power resides in the hands of the people to govern their affairs and there lies, close to the governed. Therefore, the laws that would most intimately affect our lives must come from local and state governments.

The first words from Liberty Essays clearly align Carter with at least two ideas: White supremacy, of course, in his efforts to confine his arguments to “our people,” who will subsequently later become quite clearly Whites. But also, Carter allies himself with a defense against efforts by the federal government to intervene in local and state

government—the code words “laws that would most intimately affect our lives” clearly referring to segregation laws which had been by the time fairly effectively overturned by Southern Blacks with backing from the federal government. That defense is legitimized by both “organic law,” the law natural to Whites, but also in defense of “liberty,” a key word which would clearly have inspired the listener to place faith in the legitimacy of Carter’s claims.

Another key word which Carter takes pains to define for the listener is “freedom”—apparently in direct response to the use of that term by Civil Rights activists—and redefines the term to his advantage. In Program 33, Carter first decries the removal of Bible study from the classroom before jumping into a non sequitur about the failure to teach primary students about traditional American history:

As that child progresses through the elementary grades, he is not exposed to the history of his people, their heroic struggles for freedom against central governments and kings. It’s removed from his sense of values so that the word “freedom” becomes a meaningless, twisted interpretation of social welfare and structure of society arranged by central government. As one value is removed, the governmental value of management begins to take shape in his mind and therefore his character. The removal of teaching of national heroes such as Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and Franklin is a removal of values from this child because these men had things to say, and indeed, they gave service of their lives to values that are diametrically opposed by the left-wing elements of government management that is taking over our educational system.

As these values are removed, others are substituted: the slave mentality of leaders who demand from government welfare and management, guaranteed existence. These men are inserted as the figures to be admired and emulated. And so, their values are to be copied and adopted by the child. Thus, a Robert Kennedy or a Martin Luther King, whose philosophies are opposed to the Washingtons and the Jeffersons, become representatives of a set of values hailed as worthy and commendable to that child.

By suggesting that the term “freedom,” as espoused by Robert Kennedy (a symbol of the left wing) and Martin Luther King, Jr. (a symbol of the Civil Rights movement) is not freedom but is tantamount to slavery, Carter has by neat inversion managed to the rename the oppression against which these figures struggled as “freedom.” He further suggests that their “slave mentality” involves the abandoning of decision-making, personal responsibility—symbolized by Washington and Jefferson—to the state. By anticipating such arguments and reversing their meaning, Carter employs a common hate speech tactic as identified by Whillock: “The rhetor needs to predispose an audience to construct arguments against opposing claims” (40), and by providing this readymade counterargument, Carter inoculates his audience against efforts by the opposition to create a more meaningful dialogue. This helps Carter to legitimize resistance to both the left wing and the Civil Rights movement, as his listener can be assumed to choose to support freedom and responsibility and would thus choose to support resistance to those forces who would oppose promote Civil Rights and to ignore all arguments to the contrary.

Carter would refer to “organic law” repeatedly in his series of Liberty Essays—mentioning it in at least six of his speeches and always defined, as in Program 2, as the basis of the US Constitution. He goes into detail:

Now, law comes from the people, and it’s the logic of the people; it grows from the people. That’s why “organic law” is called the basis of our Constitution—something that grows. It grew from the logic, the traditions, the civilization of our people. “Organic” is something that grows out of something. Our organic law grew out of our people, to protect the order of the civilization that our forefathers wanted to maintain.

That this organic law is, once again, White seems fairly self-evident. As mentioned previously, Carter contrasts this “organic law” to the organic laws of the people of India (Asia) which hold the cow sacred and of the people of Africa which empower dictatorial rule—by implication pagan peoples and peoples accustomed to tyranny, less evolved peoples. But, what is more important to his legitimization of resistance is that it is also the foundation of the Constitution, a document which his audience would certainly recognize the correctness of defending. Indeed, the probable title of Program 2 is “Broken Constitution,” and the entire text exhorts the listener to rise to the defense of the Constitution which has according to Carter been broken by those who had diminished “states’ rights”—“broken by politicians who lust for power, broken by the federal judiciary, and broken by central government bureaucrats.” Defense of the Constitution against this list of “villains” would most certainly be justified in the minds of Carter’s listeners.

Another of Carter’s methods of legitimizing resistance is in his constant

opposition of atheism, which he attributes primarily to Communists, to Christianity. One manifestation of atheism, so he claims, is the Communist “environmental doctrine,” of which he says in Program 12:

The environmental doctrine is supposed to be opposed by the Christian ethic, the Christian ethic that believes man has a soul; that there is a God; that man determines his own environment, environment does not determine man; that, therefore, man cleans up his own filth, his own slum, or makes his own slum; that man is responsible for his degeneracy, for his crime, or his irresponsibility; that when man corrects these base qualities in himself, then his life and therefore his environment become enriched; that the product of his labors become a fulfilling thing, both materially and in life of satisfactory accomplishment, no matter how small. The Christian ethic, that you don't make debts you have no intention of paying, much less make them that you expect the next generation to pay. The Christian ethic, that believes the only security is in God and therefore the greatest material security is in developing that mind and that soul that believes in honest endeavor, thrift in expenditure, charity where needed, and that the bestowing of charity where it is not needed is a vicious weapon that demeans the recipient and is a corrupting thing. The Christian ethic that believes man should do for himself, with the help of God, and government should remain his servant so that man's soul shall be God's, not government's.

Having in previous programs implicitly equated such terms as “degeneracy,” “slum,”

“crime,” and “irresponsibility” to Blacks—and having similarly equated such terms as “honest endeavor” and “thrift” to Whites—Carter claims for Whites the “Christian ethic.” As so many Civil Rights leaders were themselves Christian clergy who were known to deploy such Christian principles as “love for one’s fellow man” and “brotherhood” in their own successful oratory, it was necessary for Carter to reclaim Christianity, a powerful key term for the audience, in order to utilize it to legitimize White Southerners efforts in opposition to the Civil Rights movement.

Having done so, Carter is able in later speeches such as Program 15 to explicitly utilize religious belief to justify discrimination: “Since a free people, following the natural laws of God, will continue to choose, to discern, to discriminate, then of course they can only be made equal by something that is powerful enough to make them equal—the central government.” In the same passage, he easily equates “forced” equalization with a central government, something he has equated previously with African nations and something against which his audience would certainly justify action. Neatly equating code words for Blacks with Communism, and code words for Whites with Christianity, Carter accomplishes his goal of legitimizing resistance to efforts to extend civil rights to Blacks. In Program 19, probably entitled “White Man Guilt,” he makes his point explicit: “Congress passed the Civil Rights legislation. It was written into law. That law became a law that broke a law—broke the organic law of this nation, the organic law of the Constitution, because it violated the basic of power division and set down in legal terms authority to gather unheard of powers into Washington.” In this inversion, Carter makes law-breakers of those who enacted the Civil Rights bill rather than those who would oppose its enforcement, and thus further legitimizes resistance.

Braden's Fourth Rhetorical Tactic: A Firm and Unyielding Stance

One area in which Carter's work varies from that of traditional Southern White supremacists on occasion is in his taking of the standard firm and unyielding stance—at times, Carter does assume such a position, but he is nearly always pessimistic and nearly disillusioned. Once such example can be seen in Program 5, where he calls the listener to assume a firm and unyielding stance:

No, we can't win. We can't win against the left wing, central power philosophy if all we're going to do is just give lip service to that opposition—run to church and sing the songs and say the prayers and get out the door, real fast, and run to get some more federal grants and sell away a little more freedom. We must practice it in our everyday lives. We must be willing to oppose that philosophy wherever we find it, no matter if it's unpopular in the women's clubs or unpopular with the politicians or unpopular with the left wing press, no matter how shiny the thirty pieces of silver glitter in our eyes—ladies and gentlemen, it's still thirty pieces of silver that buys away the birthright of our children. We must come together and join together and resolve that we're not going to let politicians at whatever level of government get away with courting our support by shouting slogans while they trade out the back door with those who would purchase our slavery with the change of worthless paper.

Carter's disillusionment is evident in the first phrase: "No, we can't win." He follows quickly, however, with a recipe by which he and his reader can indeed win, and that recipe requires that his listeners assume an unyielding stance against three main enemies:

“polite” society, the press, and politicians. These were, indeed, the three principle forces which had driven Carter out of politics during his earlier years. It is against any influence of these forces which Carter rallies his listeners and asserts that they must assume a firm and unbending stance or allow an apocalyptic consequence to occur. By predicting such a dire consequence if the listener fails to take the suggested stance, Carter tries to persuade his reader to assume it.

At other times, Carter encourages the listener to assume an unwavering stance in tribute to their forbearers, whom Carter asserts did the same. For example, in Program 6, also available as “Reconstruction Times” from Carter’s album, Carter refers to his and the listeners’ ancestors saying that they never doubted that they would win, that any losses they experienced at the hands of their opponents was merely temporary, and that their “will to win” would cause them to persevere and prevail. Carter almost immediately connects this “will to win” with Southern resistance to Reconstruction efforts saying that despite all odds, the former Confederates “won” over Reconstruction: “They knew what they wanted, and from a desolate, prostrate position, they fought up to their knees. And from their knees, fighting politicians and soldiers, they fought to their feet. They won a war, after a war had been lost. Yes sir, they did.” By showing the intended listeners that their ancestors had succeeded, Carter suggests that his cause and theirs can also succeed, no matter how steep the odds.

That the cause itself was White supremacy is never stated outright; yet in the next passage, Carter recommends to the listeners that they look at a plaque placed on the wall of the State Capitol building in Montgomery by the Daughters of the Confederacy to celebrate that “victory,” and though he mentions that some politicians are embarrassed by

it, he never quotes from the plaque. However, the plaque is apparently a marble tablet which commemorates the career of Governor George Houston, the first Democratic governor in the post-Reconstruction period “whose invincible courage restored white supremacy to Alabama.”⁴⁰ Such an oblique message prevents Carter from having to use the word “White supremacy” while simultaneously deploying it in the minds of those who understand his reference. Such indirection is noted as the preferred strategy of racists in contemporary America: “the real power commanded by the racist is likely to vary inversely with the vulgarity with which it is expressed. [. . .] The circles of power have long since switched to a vocabulary of indirection” (Gates, “Critical Race” 47). Gates does not mention it explicitly, but this statement is almost certainly meant to address racist speech given in an open forum, before a mainstream audience—the use of vulgarity would probably be far more powerful if the given audience were, for example, Klan members—but as this particular speech was given on radio and open to a far wider audience, Gates’s point is completely relevant. By simultaneously invoking the term “White supremacist” and refusing to actually speak it, Carter gains power and makes it clear that action was being called for in the name of White supremacy without invoking the liability of that term.

Braden’s Fifth Rhetorical Tactic: A Call for Unity in Opposition to Civil Rights

Calling for unity is a critical function of hate speech. Without unity, the individual comes to see him or herself as an isolated victim of isolated acts by individuals. With unity, the individual can come to identify him or herself as a member of a victimized community beset by a larger group of outsiders against whom hate speech

and violent action is justified. Whillock explains how unity works as a function of hate speech:

The rhetor may invoke cultural truisms that link people to a common heritage, draw upon the bonds of common experience, or unite the audience against a common enemy. Whatever the means, the rhetor's task is to acknowledge the audience's feelings and validate them by linking audience members to others who have similar experiences. [. . .] Individuals no longer feel alone or isolated. Most important, once people become united they have no need to feel shame about expressing their feelings. Like a river breaking through a dam, the freeing of emotions long bottled up produces an exhilarating effect. [. . .] One of the manifestations of that power is the ability to assign blame for their pain [. . .] This action permits the audience to explain their misfortunes while also allowing them to maintain positive images of themselves. Even if the charges are not wholly accurate, the audience becomes engaged in a fantasized community that extols their own virtues while exonerating themselves from any blame for their own misfortunes. (37-38)

As Whillock goes on to explain, this creates "the cycle of 'they harmed us, we blame them, they continue to threaten us, we must respond'" (38). This can inflame emotions, fuel the sense of victimization, and lead to acts of violence against the perceived group of others.

Maintaining unity is therefore a chief concern of Carter's, one which is identical to that of traditional White supremacists, and he sometimes makes the call in simple

predictable terms. In Program 43, for example, he issues a standard call to action, calling on the patriotism of the listener:

Patrick Henry asked, "For what are we waiting? Until there is a guard at every door?" For what are we waiting? The time to organize is now--into action committees to throw out the spineless and the weak, the blusterer, the selfish career-makers. The time is now to organize and to bring from among us strong men and forceful men, dedicated men--dedicated not to personal careers and ambitions, but to the cause of freedom, the cause of law by the people. The time is now.

The sexism of the passage is self-evident, presuming as it does that all the power and potential power lies in the hands of men, but perhaps more important is the rather standard nature of this call to action—appealing to the vanity of the listener and encouraging him to live up to the stereotype of the strong, straight-talking, self-sacrificing American male.

Carter claims for himself this stereotype in issuing some calls to action, and by implication suggests that the listener follow suit. In Program 57, he issues a call in particularly stirring words:

Well, I shall always resist. I am weary of politicians telling me, let the courts decide. Well, if the courts are going to decide ninety-nine times out of a hundred in favor of the Communists, then it is not a question of letting the courts decide, ladies and gentlemen. They simply mean, surrender our land and our freedom and our children to the courts and the atheistic government they are erecting. But, there's a higher court, said Mr.

Jefferson. It is the court of the people. Will you, the people, help to organize and help to expose and to bring forward leadership that will resist? The final convening of that court is up to you and to me. For myself, I was always taught to fear only God, not government. I was born in that freedom. I intend to live in that freedom, and I shall fight to pass that freedom on with a command to my children to continue the fight. It was the struggle of our fathers before us. For me, and for mine, the dignity of that struggle has not dimmed, nor has the thirst for that freedom been blunted.

His characterization of himself as anti-Communist would have borne particular meaning for listeners of the period who were accustomed to the anti-Red rhetoric of such speakers as McCarthy and would serve to align Carter with his audience. Further, by painting such an inspiring portrait of himself, Carter bears witness to the pride which a politically active person can take in his own actions. This portrait, then, invites listeners of similar political beliefs to align himself with Carter and gain for themselves that same pride.

This strategy is not the only one deployed by Carter, who is occasionally far more pessimistic in his presentations. Carter portrays the South as leaderless and scattered, without purpose and so without power. In Program 42, Carter issues another call to unity in the face of impending disaster:

So, don't wonder my friend at the fantastic caving-in of our institutions, at the groveling surrenders going on all about us. Don't wonder. For, it is the liberal in action. The liberal in control, with his double-standard. And, what we are idly watching—day by day, month by month—is the

surrender of America, the surrender of a civilization. We must end our idleness. We must become committees of action with demands of our own in defense of this civilization, else it will slip from our hands as the continuing warfare across this nation assaults and wins its victory. Once, to every man and nation, comes that moment to decide in the strife 'tween truth and falsehood for the good or evil side. It is then, the brave man chooses while the coward stands aside.⁴¹

Such calls to action are often couched by Carter in militaristic terms; such terms as “surrender,” “defense,” “warfare,” “assaults,” and “victory” would seem geared to arouse anxiety in the listeners and be more effective at encouraging them to take actions—perhaps violent, given the imagery—in defense of what Carter deems their “civilization.”

Though the villains characterized above are “liberals,” Carter also called his audience to action in defense against the actions of Communists and atheists, whose targets were presumably democracy and Christianity rather than conservatism. In Program 31, Carter is particularly sardonic:

With such being written for the minds and the character-shaping of our youth, what kind of values do you think this [UNESCO] commission is promoting in our schools, a commission dominated by atheists and communists? What can we expect of our youth? We can expect only a value of racial amalgamation, allegiance to central government tyranny. You know that. But, what can you do about it? Well, for one thing, tonight when we're lying around on our backsides watching television—during a commercial, mind you—we might have the wife bring the

telephone over to us—so we won't have to get up—and then look at our right hand. The first finger is called an “index finger.” Now, we just place it in the little, round holes on the telephone dial and call one of our state politicians, any of them will do—a representative, state senator, most any of them. And, if we don't know who they are, we could dial one of our neighbors, thereby making him get up off of his backside to answer the telephone, and ask him—he might have seen one of the names on television.

Then, we might ask the politician—in all this hoopla about “quality education” and more money for education, if they've looked into such as we have discussed here today. If the politician is totally and completely ignorant of such, tell him there're patriotic groups—such as the Women for Constitutional Government, the Daughters of the American Revolution—who have compiled complete studies of fact—not fantasy, not theory—but fact upon how our educational process is being transformed into a propaganda process. You see, these dedicated ladies have the concern, the dedication, the admirable quality of trying to do their duty toward their country and our children, by the way. They've done all the work. We might ask the politician if he's interested in quality education. Why not ask these ladies to present these facts? Bring them out into the open light of exposure and truth. You see, we hardly have to do a thing. And then, we can roll over on our stomach and have our wife pound us on the back with congratulations for the service that we've done

for the children, and for the nation, and for the God which has given us so much.

The irony deployed by Carter seems aimed in two directions—it openly praises the women who have supposedly taken up the defense of family, nation, and God, and implicitly criticizes the listener, who by implication here is male, for failing to stand up in defense of such threats. One implication is, of course, that the efforts of the women will be in vain unless the men take up the cause as well; another implication, however, is that even the most minor of efforts on the part of men will be effective and lead to such men overcoming their apathy. Here, Carter uses a shaming strategy to encourage the reader towards unity and implies that one problem, in addition to the threats posed by Communism and atheism, is to overcome is the listeners own self-indulgence. Whether by praise, threat, or insult, Carter takes great pains to issue frequent calls to unity on behalf of his White supremacist platform.

Braden's Sixth Rhetorical Tactic: The White Southerner as Victim

It is, however, in the portrayal of himself, other White supremacists, and White Southerners in general as the victims of outside plots that Carter excels. It was advantageous for Carter to deploy victimization imagery since a predictable response of someone who has been victimized is hatred toward the victimizer and a desire for retaliation. This would be advantageous for Carter's White supremacist hate speech goals; as Whillock and Slayden point out:

The deliberate use of hate by rhetors is an overt attempt to win, to dominate the opposition by rhetorical—if not physical—force. [. . .] strong

negative emotions such as hate are used to polarize particular groups in order to organize opposition, solidify support, and marshal resources toward forcing a “final solution” to a thorny problem. This polarization predisposes audiences to negate likely opposing claims, typically utilizing a literal and often highly symbolic object of hatred at which anger is focused. (xiii)

By using the standard technique of positing Southerners as the victims of an outside, and according to Carter also a treasonous inside, conspiracy, Carter finds himself able to incite the hatreds of his audience towards those he characterizes as their enemies: liberals, federal courts, Communists, and Black Civil Rights leaders. Together, these individuals come to symbolize a vast conspiracy which threatens the lives of his listeners and of their families. Inciting hatred towards them through use of victimization imagery, then, becomes a major goal of Carter in his speeches.

Such portrayals of White Southerners as victims occur in each of the dozens of speeches he gave during his run for governor in 1969-70, and many take place in poignant narrative. One such narrative in Program 10 attempted to recharacterize Eugene “Bull” Connor, one of the chief, and violent, antagonists of the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, as a martyr for the Cause:

I recall riding in a car with Bull over in Selma during the so-called Selma riots. We stopped and watched the same [smearing] process being repeated on the sheriff, Jim Clark. We watched from a corner, near a church, down the dimly lighted street that no car could travel because it was filled with hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of chanting,

stomping people—who beat time with a jungle beat that gave one the eerie feeling of going back in time to savagery. Across the end of the street stood a thin, silent line of deputies. Each man stood, silent, looking straight ahead toward the mob. And, they didn't move. Members of the mob would dash out at a deputy; they'd throw a bag of human excrement in his face, and they'd dash back. Here and there, a mob member would run up to a deputy, and push his face within an inch of that deputy, and call the lawman's mother and his wife and his daughters every obscene and vulgar name known to the language. Would spit in the deputy's face and shake his fist beneath his nose. And still, the deputies looked straight ahead, their jaws tightened and rigid.

Television cameramen, who were perched up high on platforms where they could see the entire scene, joined in the laughter with the mob each time a deputy was humiliated. Their cameras were unattended, shut off; their lights were out. And, after this went on for quite a while, the mob got some new orders, and bricks began to fly at the lawmen—pieces of cement, rocks, bottles—and they began to get rough. At this point, Clark gave the order to the deputies to move in and disperse the mob. Now, as he gave the order, Bull turned to me. He cocked a knowing eye up toward the television cameramen there, and he said, "Now, they'll crucify Clark." Bull knew. The moment the deputies moved in with their sticks, the area was suddenly lighted with glaring floodlights from television cameramen, and the film began to roll. And, the nation got the pictures in their

newspapers and on their television screens of the brute and the thugs that were Jim Clark and his deputies—bullying helpless little protesters.

It seems that this particular narrative focuses on the Pettus Bridge incident, in which marchers were mercilessly beaten by local police (according to the marchers) or in which “a ferocious gang of bottle-wielding rioters” confronted officers (according to the official reports).⁴² In this narrative, the White deputies are characterized in nearly mythic terms—embattled soldiers being suffering without complaint—and Jim Clark is portrayed as literally a Christ figure, to be crucified. The protestors, in contrast, are portrayed as a savage horde and the press is portrayed as their willing accomplice. This particular narrative neatly explains away the graphic television and print images of violence, making the actions of Clark’s officers seem responsible—and the men themselves out to be victims—undercutting any claims of victimization on the part of the marchers who were cruelly beaten. Such a narrative, however self-evidently propagandistic, would no doubt fuel the self-pity of White Southerners and motivate them to oppose the Civil Rights movement.

Another well-known figure whom Carter took the time to reinvent as a victim was Joseph McCarthy, whose infamous witch hunts for Communists during the 1950s were well-known. As Communists were key figures in the “outside plot” which Carter proposed White Southerners were victims of, it was necessary for Carter to recharacterize McCarthy in heroic terms, as he does in Program 3:

Now, back in the early 1950s, I knew Senator Joe McCarthy—the senator from Wisconsin, not the left-wing senator from Minnesota, Gene McCarthy, but Joe McCarthy. As Chairman of the Senate Internal

Security Subcommittee,⁴³ he began an investigation of communists and left-wingers in Washington. The Communist Party became alarmed, and its newspaper, called The Daily Worker, began to launch vicious attacks on Senator McCarthy, and the liberal newspapers quickly followed suit. I recall Senator McCarthy telling me, he said, “You know, in the newspapers, I never walk into a room and lay my briefcase on the table. The way they tell it, I always stomp into a room and slam my briefcase on the table.” He was right. The newspapers made Senator Joe McCarthy out to be a bully, a thug, a person of vile character who was filled with hate and prejudice. People began to form a distaste and a distrust and a dislike of Senator Joe McCarthy; they didn’t know exactly why, except that he was sort of thuggish and unfair to people, as they would say. As the liberal press grew more hysterical in its hate attack on Senator McCarthy, other senators would fail to show up for the committee hearings when McCarthy subpoenaed communists and left-wingers before it. He often held one-man committee hearings because he was the only senator on the committee in Washington with guts enough to be there. The others were afraid of the press.

I received from Senator McCarthy the exact transcripts of those hearings, but none of it showed up in the press; none of the facts; none of the actions were reported of the Communists as they spat in his face repeatedly, until spittle ran down and wet his shirt front; of the obscenities they hurled at him, none of that [. . .] and then, the man who had been

a Marine fighter pilot in World War Two, the Fighting Irishman, who naively believed that everybody else loved their country as much as he did, Senator Joe McCarthy, died too. And, even as he lay ill and dying in a hospital room, he was the object of harassment, invective, and obscenity; the hatred of the left-wing liberal, for those who fight them, [is] an unrelenting thing.

Characterized as both a hero standing up for his beliefs even when he had to do so alone and as a victim being attacked even upon his death bed, McCarthy—who was actually censured for his behaviors by the Senate itself—is reinvented as a mythic figure whom Carter calls upon his listener to emulate and whose victimization by Communists and Communist sympathizers can be seen to justify the listener's possibly violent actions against Communists. It is interesting that in both these characterizations, the attackers are said to hurl secretions at the victim—excrement thrown at Jim Clark's officers and spittle at Joseph McCarthy—adding to the martyrdom of both and intensifying the portrait of the savagery of the attackers. Carter's portraits are in black and white, purity and viciousness, hero and villain, and are made more effective by their very simplicity.

While Black Civil Rights marchers and Communists are chief among Carter's villains, liberals are portrayed as the accessories to their treachery. In Program 14, Carter paints a particularly clear representation of what he feels is the duplicity of "the liberal":

You've observed what I mean. If there's a riot in the so-called ghettos with people breaking down stores and looting and walking out with everything from television sets to refrigerators, the liberal supplies a reason for all this. He says the reason for that is, is because of

unemployment, or the welfare checks aren't big enough, or the weather was too hot, or something. And, he complains if the police object too strenuously to this law breaking, too. He says that the reasons ought to be studied. And then, the federal handouts ladled out bigger than what they have been. He calls for all kinds of study commissions and sociology programs to study over what he calls the reasons. But now, when the South objects in any shape, form, or fashion to the centralizing of powers and the destruction of our division of power, states' rights. Well, the liberal snarls, "Smash the hate-mongers! Use threat, force, any means." Yet, the Southerner can't be bribed with federal money or threatened with cut-off of federal funds.

You know, when students at the University of Mississippi came out to picket in 1963 the federal government takeover of education in forced integration, the liberal called out for the steel fist. 25,000 troops were sent there, more than were stationed in Berlin against the Communists—tanks, field artillery, infantry. Federal marshals were flown in by the truckloads and started a battle by firing tear gas canisters directly into the faces of those students. Two people lost their lives. Others were maimed, mauled, imprisoned, humiliated, spread-eagled on the floors and in the streets. The town became a military installation, an occupied territory of troops. The liberal crowed; he preened his feathers; he made heroes of the federal marshals; he made heroes of the left-wing politician. He hid the facts and the pictures of bleeding and maimed students. You didn't hear any cry

from the liberal about a police state. You see, that action was taken toward the centralization of powers in Washington, the goal the liberal wants.

Having already established in his many speeches that the centralization of power in federal government is typical of Black culture and not White, and further that only by domination can the culture of one race be forced upon another, Carter here suggests that liberals are the principal power behind the supposed oppression of White Southerners. In this oversimplified opposition, Black rioting is principally a manifestation of theft and vandalism while White student “picketers” were the victims of a ridiculously large and oppressive outside force. Having suggested that liberals are allowing Blacks to engage in violent activity and are opposing peaceful protest with overwhelming violence, Carter’s portrayal of the victimization of Whites clearly suggests a justification for violent resistance, in revenge for their victimhood.

This further demonstrates Carter’s penchant for rehistoricizing. If Carter is indeed discussing the enforcing of desegregation orders at the University of Mississippi in 1962, then the portrait he paints here is skewed. According to Dan T. Carter, the situation was quite different—the Kennedy administration had tried desperately to avoid sending in federal troops:

When the riot broke out on September 30 [1962], a detachment of poorly trained federal marshals using only tear gas had struggled to defend themselves against an armed mob [protesting integration] for more than five hours before federal troops arrived. The beleaguered men had suffered more than two dozen gunshot wounds and hundreds of contusions

and cuts from flying debris; a bystander had been killed by a stray bullet; and unidentified members of the mob had coolly executed one foreign newsman. (Politics 110-11)

So, though two people lost their lives, neither was a protesting student and both were most likely the victims of the protestors rather than the federal troops. The situation was hardly an attack upon peaceful picketing students, and the magnitude of the violence seems to have justified the reluctant calling in of federal troops—indeed, only after this incident, the Kennedy administration decided to have “less concern about southern white sensibilities. Troops would be positioned nearby, and the Army ordered to prepare plans for a rapid deployment” (Politics 111). It was the reaction of the rioters which spurred this show of strength rather than a liberal conspiracy to stifle any, even peaceful, demonstration by Southern Whites.

Carter’s rehistoricizing to create poignant portraits of resolute Whites, victimized by liberal politicians, non-Whites, and Communists was never more evident than in his reading of an almost certainly fictional letter which he claimed to have received from a French colonel, writing from Vietnam in appreciation for a comment made by Carter in a radio program, which had theoretically been taped and translated and sent on by the French consulate. Conveniently forgetting that the letter would probably have been written in French and needed translating, Carter read in Program 21 the text of that letter:

When I received the letter, I began to understand. The colonel wrote:
“Our brother, our friend. It is from any of us here that I write you in humble gratitude for your gallant words in our behalf. The hand you have reached out to us, we clasp in brotherhood. And the distance, and the

time, and the circumstance has become as nothing. It is, as you say, that the politician does not concern himself with honor, nor does he divine the meaning of duty. And so, now, we owe honor to ourselves—we, the soldier. For, honor needs no recognition. Duty requires no applause. If France will not stand with us, we know now that it is not France who betrays us, but rather the politician who has betrayed France, and betrayed honor. But, were there no flag to fly above us, were there no homeland to call us her sons, it would still be so—that we must fight well. For, this we owe to ourselves, and to die well is the fulfillment of honor. It is good to know that whatever transpires here, that there are men in far-flung country and field who share and will keep the faith long after we are gone. In your prayers of intercession to God on our behalf, pray only that we shall do honor in our living and in our dying as our prayers shall be in behalf of you, our brother. Au revoir. Goodbye, with God.” And, the signed names make a long list: Bordeaux, Chaplet, Devereux, [Leclait?],⁴⁴ and so on. A roll call of men who will forever more in the eons of time before us stand in reproach of the politician.

As this document was almost certainly created by Carter to support his own stand, Carter having been a relatively unknown figure in Colorado in 1954 when he says his radio speech was made, it is interesting how he portrays these men as victims of the “sea of Asiatic humanity that swarmed over” them.⁴⁵ These soldiers are, again, made into mythic figures—battling in this case both Communism and non-Whites, hordes of Asians. Carter claims the supposed victimization of these men as part of the overwhelming

victimization of Whites, abandoned by liberal politicians and best by non-White Communists—facing an Alamo-like slaughter. The colonel is shown to literally hand over the cause to Carter himself and by implication to others like him, justifying in their victimization and death any violence their successors might perpetrate.

Carter does not merely access victimization of others, however, in his speeches. He takes great care to show how his own listeners are themselves victimized by the outside plot he alleges exists. In Program 28, he finishes a three-speech arc on the victimization perpetrated on his listeners by the appearance of Senator Muskie at Jacksonville State University—attendance at which Carter claims in previous speeches was made mandatory for students while attendance at speeches for conservative speakers was merely voluntary. Carter explains to his listeners why this appearance represents a hostile incursion into their state:

And, yes, I resent the invasion of our campuses by left-wingers and liberals. I further resent the speaking of Muskie at Jacksonville State University because he came at the invitation, and it was a public invitation, of a liberal newspaper editor in Calhoun County who called upon him to come south and Americanize the South. Now, the invitation and acceptance of that invitation is an insult to our fathers, our grandfathers, and their fathers before them. It is an insult to everything that we've stood for and we've fought for and struggled for and what our people have died for. It's an insult to the graves of our forebears, many of which of mine lie close by that campus where they settled in the 1820s and fought over that ground and helped to establish a civilization, to a great-

aunt, whose name a hall at that university bears,⁴⁶ and who worked hard for that college when it was just a couple of buildings on a red clay hill, surviving only by sweat and struggle of those, our people—who always have struggled to further education and civilization. It is an insult to our sons, who have died and are dying in defense and service of this nation . . . our sons from the Southland. It is an insult to our families and our homes and our mothers, who have kept the faith, that they should be represented as something alien and degenerate to this America.

If a newspaper editor up north had called on a Southerner to come up and Americanize them, you know as well as I do that not a single state-supported institution would have provided a forum and audience for that insult. And yet, it is the philosophy of divided powers upon which this America was founded that is championed by the Southland. But, of course, they're winning, and we aren't . . . because, you see, they never bend over backward. They don't bend sideways or any other way to permit opposition. Well, I don't know about you, but I'm fed up with this bending over backward in the name of this perverted use of academic freedom. You can bend so far backward that your back breaks. And, I'm tired of these insults and using of our tax money and tax-supported institutions to give dignity to them.

It's time we did another kind of bending. I mean bending some good strong hickory switches across the so-called dignified seats of pants of these liberals.

In this speech, Carter takes a simple speech made by a national figure and turns it into a matter justifying revenge—an insult to the listener’s heritage going back to his forbearers. He characterizes those who insult him as organized, implacable, and without scruples, and he characterizes his listeners as those who have been insulted to the point that violence is warranted. This is one of the few speeches in which violence, however mild and however “humorously,” is openly advocated, yet such connection between victimization and rationalized revenge is always present in these speeches because of the latent Southern White value—which Carter clearly presumed his listeners held—of defending one’s honor, particularly with violent retribution.

The listener’s presumed victimization at the hands of what Carter perceived as a liberal academy which was educating the young to abandon the values of their parents was a frequent theme in Carter’s speeches. In Program 29, Carter discusses why it is that taking non-violent actions by lodging complaints with the administration would supposedly be fruitless:

Now, any fair-minded person—be you a ditch-digger, an educator, or a politician—knows that this [promotion of integration in school materials] certainly concerns education and is of legitimate concern to every citizen. Well, now, you just try to involve yourself in education on this subject, with the politician and the bureaucrat educators, and you see how far you get. Now, if you have several thousand dollars and about six month’s time, so you can get through all the booking appointments and chasing around the bush, and if you have enough fortitude to withstand the muttered remarks that you’re a kook, the dead-pan stares of disapproval,

the open hostility of these bureaucrats, you may eventually wind up at the horse's head where you're met with a shrug, politely informed that you are nit-picking, and nothing ever comes of it.

Maybe you'd like to involve yourself in concern of education at some of the higher institutions of learning, so-called, by just mentioning . . . just mentioning . . . the fact that as a tax-payer and a believer that civilization is based upon some minimum standard of morality that you object to certain foul-mouthed professors standing up before classes that are comprised of a number girls in their teens and issuing strings of vulgar, obscene, and degenerate so-called jokes. Would you like to try that sometime? Well, you'll get a polite answer—after the usual condescending stare as though you're a rare specimen of idiocy to be studied—that: Well, that shouldn't be done, and we'll see about it. But, you know, these professors are hard to get, and they're some kind of treasured brain-jewel of knowledge. And, then of course, there's the old academic freedom saw. A little mumbling about: well, times are changing, and the facts of life, and all. Well, I always figured food was a necessary fact of life, too. But, I don't want my children getting it out of a garbage can.

Yes, sir. You just try involving yourself in education along that line, Mr. Taxpayer. That is after you've helped to get the taxes through and the money in the till.

This particular passage works in several ways. First, it encourages the listeners to feel

that they are being victimized in the same way that Carter suggests he was victimized by trying to lodge a complaint with an administrator about what in Southern White terms—being vulgar in front of a young female—is an offense to the female’s male relatives and deserving of retaliation. Secondly, it discourages the listeners from attempting such non-violent methods of protest themselves, as Carter presupposes that such an effort is worthless. Thirdly, it mocks the arguments which academics might provide—academic freedom in particular—and renders them suspect in the minds of the listener. But, most importantly, having set up the listener as a victim who deserves retribution and who has no recourse to non-violent means of achieving it, implicitly recommends other, probably violent, means instead.

That Carter does intend violence is clear in his suggestion that his opponents intend to commit violence against White Southerners. In Program 35, Carter quotes extensively from pamphlets which he claims were being disseminated at schools—and some of which such as the platform of the Black Students Union, which he calls a “platform for chaos,” actually were—which he claims advocate the violent oppression of Whites. At the end of that speech, he sums up his major points:

But, then, the politician is reluctant to stick out his neck—today’s politician, in most cases, with a few exceptions. There are some politicians with courage. But, most of them will blind themselves to all facts that might cause danger to his personal career. Maybe that’s why Lenin was so sure of himself when he said that we Americans would sell the Communist the rope to hang us with. Well, he was in error on only one point—seems as though we’ll pay for the rope to hang us with, the

only condition being, that we apparently want our children hung first.

The high school publication from which we have quoted today has a fitting little poem in reference to us capitalist, white Americans. The last verse, as printed in the paper, goes like this: “And I hope that you die, / And your death will come soon. / I will follow your casket / On a pale afternoon, / And I’ll watch while you’re lowered / Down to your death bed, / And I’ll stand over your grave / ‘Til I know that you’re dead.”

That’s plain enough isn’t it? Well, it shouldn’t be too hard. We should be very easily fitted into that casket. After all, we’re all laying down in a prone position, anyway.

In this passage, Carter creates for the listeners the sickening image of having their children hung in front of them—a particularly affecting image for those who had lived through World War II in which this was the punishment for many who resisted the Nazi regime—in order to impress upon them their own supposedly impending subjugation. The image of waiting for the death of one’s opponent and making sure of that person’s death, presuming this is an actual quotation from a radical pamphlet, is turned equally into a specter of the listeners approaching doom. In Program 43, Carter again returns to similar images to make the same point:

Now, if you would like to try a little demonstrating my dear tax-paying, law-abiding friend--no guns, you understand, just yourself--well, present yourself on a campus with a few friends and protest federal takeover of education, protest integration, and you'll receive the full might of armed troops, tanks, federal marshals with gas, and a battle plan to pulverize you,

slaughter you, and tote you off to a federal prison or lunatic asylum. You see, you are not a liberal, a left-winger, who is trying to destroy local law and institutions. That's the only thing that's allowed. Guns? Well, my dear tax-paying, law-abiding friend, you know as well as I that the liberal is going to have us registering our guns, that even now we have to register when we buy ammunition. And, the gun laws are going to be tightened even tighter, preparatory to that day that guns shall be confiscated from us and leave us at the mercy of guerilla militants toting their rifles, shotguns, and submachine guns.

You say, the law will protect you? My, my. I think the thickest among us boob-tube-minded brains must by now realize that there is no law for the property owner. There is no law for the segregationists, for the Constitutionists, for the upholders of local control of schools, institutions, and government. When the guerilla warfare has hit the cities, to which it will return to hit again, don't we recall the magazine pictures of the looters toting out television sets and food freezers while the police stood by and picked their noses and watched? The property owner had no rights. You and I have not experienced that yet, only because the juggernaut of guerilla has not hit, yet hit, our business and our home. But, it will.

With such images of death and subjugation, the victimization which Carter paints as the inevitable outcome of a failure to bond with him and fight against such forces as Communism and Black rights, Carter again rallies his listener to his support and to violence in defense of their own lives and liberty. The alternative to violent action

having been painted as so bleak, so apocalyptic, the listeners would feel justified in taking whatever steps were necessary to secure their own and their families' safety—even brutal and perhaps terrorist activities.

Carter particularly rallies his listeners in defense of children, painting for them the results of failing to come to what he says is the defense of children who are being victimized by the educational system. In Program 46, he portrays one young lady, who is apparently the product of her family's failure to protect her from the “filth” being forced upon her by “degenerate” college professors:

Not long ago I spoke at a college. And, after the speech during question and answer, a poor beatnik girl, 18 or 19 years old and obviously a victim of this degenerate propaganda barrage walked up to the stand and accused me of being against sex and accused our forefathers of being sick and guilt-ridden about sex. I told that poor human wreck that I wasn't against sex; I believe in it. My grandma believed in it; she had 14 children to show for it. She enjoyed it. She built a home she could enjoy, and she lived a full, zestful, and hardy life. It was a life, however, built on the idea that she used sex, sex did not use her. It was a life built on the idea that our civilization rests upon a home with moral and spiritual values to sustain it. Our forebears lived life to its fullest, and they enjoyed every benefit of it. They were not antiseptic, unnatural creatures. It is the left-wingers, the Communists, who are the unnaturals--who produce the homosexuals, the cynicals, the jaded, the tired, rotten and disgusting feelings towards sex.

That poor girl, of course, is lost as any value to a home. How could a home be built, or a family, on her degenerate philosophy? Being lost to the foundation of a home and family, she is of course lost to Western civilization and our society that has the home and family unit as its base. She is suited to commune living, under Communism, where sex is dictated by the government. Or, she is suited to tribal living in the jungles to be used by the tribe, where no home and no family and no morality of the white man exists.

This particularly emotive portrait of a “lost” child, a victim of the educational system and the outside conspiracy to deprive children of what Carter calls the “morality of the white man,” is clearly geared towards arousing the protective instincts of his reader and simultaneously the fear that their own children will fall “victim” to the forces of Communism—which Carter has neatly associated with Asians—or to the “tribal” living of Blacks in the jungle. Thus, family values and morality are portrayed as White, and Carter rallies his White listeners in defense of the children who are pictured as being the victims of those who would deprive them of this heritage.

As Carter’s speeches wore on, their language, as above, became more and more extreme. By Program 39, approximately halfway through the existing archive of speeches, Carter’s language use was becoming more and more like to the overt racism of The Southerner from the latter 1950s. Returning again to the question of how liberals are utilizing education to supposedly better prepare children for future enslavement, Carter says:

The question becomes one of whether we can build classrooms faster

than federal judges can close them down. Can we? Do we want to? Do we want to tax ourselves to carry out a sinister plan of race-mixing and propaganda in the name of education? Well, I certainly do not. Nor, do I believe any thinking citizen wants to. I realize politicians are accustomed to being beaten over the head with the name education so that they're afraid to oppose any legislation that bears the name, just as they're afraid of everything else, apparently. It is the same manner in which dictatorial bills of power are passed in Washington in the name of freedom—which, in truth, actually destroy freedom.

We must wake up to the facts of life that are with us today: That Nobel Peace Prize winners cause riots and warfare in the name of peace. That hatreds are created in the name of love. That dictatorial Civil Rights bills that destroy freedom are hailed as freedom measures. That intolerance is championed in the name of tolerance. That the federal government is being destroyed by totalitarians in the name of the federal government. That enmity is aroused in the name of brotherhood. That Christianity is being destroyed in the name of Christianity. That education is being destroyed in the name of education.

In this passage, Carter takes on one by one the justifications of Civil Rights leaders—peace, love, freedom, tolerance, federal government, brotherhood, Christianity, and education—and suggests that each means the opposite of what is being said. Such propagandistic usage, he suggests, is part of the campaign to confuse his listeners. In Program 52, he similarly inverts the meanings of the peaceful March on Washington and

the campaign of terror that White Southerners had and were carrying out against Civil Rights activists:

Now, at this point, the massive Washington March was carried out. Do you recall the 200,000 who assembled in Washington that day? The march leaders issued warnings of threats of violence. They talked of invading Congress because it would not pass the Civil Rights bills. The assorted leaders of liberals, pinks, perverts, Communists, Communist-fronters, and beatniks wildly shouted speeches with Communist Party slogans and accusations and charges against the American people and Congress. The liberal television networks went all-out, spending millions of dollars, to stage this assault on the American people and the Constitution. The television and newspapers fed this publicity of propaganda all over the world, feeding the propaganda mills of international Communism. The President of the United States endorsed this Communist warfare and appeared on television with numbers of Communist-fronters. The liberal television newscasters and columnists called this attack a "call for an enlightened America." But, Congress was getting a flood of mail from aroused patriotic citizens that opposed the Civil Rights legislation, and Congress still refused to pass the bills.

Then, vicious violence was stepped up in the South. An NAACP leader was murdered in the state of Mississippi, and this was laid at the door of the so-called rednecks. A Birmingham church was blown up, killing four Negro children. Mysterious explosions and burnings began to take place

all over the South, and each time, with the liberal press using each act of violence as a podium from which to abuse the Southerner, the American people, to preach shame and apology and remind the readers that the only way to cleanse themselves of this guilt and these sins and to show that we were an enlightened citizen rather than savages was to support passage of the Civil Rights laws. Known Southern segregationists were hauled to the jails by the score, questioned, pictures of them run in the liberal press as being suspected of these crimes of violence. All manner of pressure was brought to bear.

In many ways, Carter is using here the tactic of re-characterizing Whites who support White supremacy as an endangered minority being unfairly oppressed by the state. This argument anticipates in several ways the argument made by the Supreme Court in reversing a case in a law banning the burning of crosses. Finding that the “majority preference” was not reflected in the cross-burning, the court depicted the cross burners “as an unpopular minority that the Supreme Court must defend against the powers of the state” (Matsuda and Lawrence 135). As Matsuda and Lawrence note, this inversion permits Carter, like the Justices, to portray himself and his listeners as the “defenders of the down-trodden, the courageous upholders of the bill of rights” (135), and at the same time the persons who the government named as perpetrators of these crimes are portrayed as victims, making Carter’s defense of them seem reasonable. Butler notes that the Supreme Court Justices who ruled in favor of the cross-burners themselves engaged in inversions—in which the promoters of anti-cross-burning policies themselves became arsonists (of the First Amendment) or of threats to high officials themselves from Blacks—

thus “reversing the agency of the action, substituting the injured for the injurer, and figuring itself as a site of vulnerability” (62). Through these inversions, the Supreme Court found that cross-burning was a protected right under the First Amendment (54-58). Such inversions, which Carter would practice frequently, are characteristic both of hate speech itself and of the defense of hate speech.

Re-characterizing the March on Washington, a peaceful assembly, as little short of a riot and the murder of Evers and of four little girls in Birmingham as the work of Civil Rights proponents themselves—and portraying Whites as the victims in both incidents—Carter also rehistoricizes events so as to keep his listeners from considering the historical context which had given rise to the Civil Rights movement. As the victims or allies of victims in all cases, his listeners then are justified in resisting the efforts of Civil Rights leaders to equalize conditions for all. As with nearly all of the above passages, Carter makes himself the visionary who can explain to the listeners their own victimization, reinterpreting the stories they were receiving elsewhere, and rallies them in support of him as the true defender of all the values which Civil Rights leaders had claimed for themselves.

Probably one of the most repellent uses of the victimization strategy comes in Program 30, when Carter explicitly accuses Civil Rights leaders of the practice of voodoo—which Southern Whites would improperly but immediately associate with Satanism—and calls himself and his family the victims of their black magic:

In the course of our speaking around the South and on radio over the years, my family and I are the recipients of many interesting missals, both letter and telephone, among others. For example, I have a very interesting

file on voodoo and hexes, which by studying the letters almost qualifies me as an authority on the subject of voodoo—which ain't much to be an authority on, come to think of it. But, anyway, some of the authors have hexes upon me of many years standing. They carry a wide and amazing range of dire pronouncements on what the voodooer has prescribed to happen to me.

Now, you'd be surprised, or maybe you wouldn't, at the numbers of so-called civilized Civil Rights leaders who have requested my picture in order that a voodoo doll can be fashioned in my likeness, presumably so they can stick pins in it or hammer it around or whatever they do to voodoo dolls. I always send them a picture, and with it I usually request a duplicate doll as I am interested in what I would look like as a doll. But, none of them have been courteous enough to send me one, so maybe you're not supposed to make duplicate voodoo dolls. Maybe that destroys the magic or something, I don't know.

One time, I sent along a picture to a Civil Rights leader and my lead red-bone hound, Buck, was in the picture. Following spring, Buck got the mange, but we cleared that up alright. Anyway, I can't hardly see them going to the trouble of making up a red-bone hound doll just to cause Buck trouble, can you?

As was his usual practice, Carter did not bother to even pretend to back up his claims by naming the individuals who had supposedly engaged in black magic against himself and his family, nor did he produce even one such "missal" for his audience. As is also his

practice, he dismisses the cultural practices of others—which he is inaccurately attributing to Civil Rights leaders—as being without value. Having associated what his audience would consider Satanism with Civil Rights leaders, however, and having portrayed himself as the victim of Satanic worshippers, Carter rallies his listeners in defense of their own Christian ideals against the machinations of supposedly evil Civil Rights leaders and their followers.

Conclusion: A Drift into Fiction

Clearly, in these speeches, Carter continued to advance the same White supremacist platform which he had during his whole life. Even those passages focusing largely on rehistoricizing—where Carter can be seen as drifting towards his eventual career as a novelist, a career which would begin to occupy him more and more in the next stage of his political career—in no way represent a contradiction or repudiation of his earlier philosophies. Carter engages in the tactics familiar to White supremacist rhetoricians—defending and promoting White supremacy, defending the good character of Southerners, encouraging unity, espousing a firm and unyielding stance, legitimizing resistance, and particularly in asserting that Southerners were the victims of an outside plot—while extending them by claiming that the plot was not merely an outside plot but was being furthered by local conspirators and that not just resistance but violent resistance was required.

Despite the large audience which Carter must have had access to during his broadcasts on multiple radio stations throughout Alabama and his several television appearances, Carter's run as a candidate for governor was futile. It is likely that the

subject position from which he continued to speak—“Asa Earl Carter” the well-known anti-Semite and terrorist—caused his words to “misfire” because the ethos he so carefully cultivated in his writings was at odds with the ethos created through his documentable acts. As Butler points out:

The threat states the impending certitude of another, forthcoming act, but the statement itself cannot produce that forthcoming act as one of its necessary effects. This failure to deliver on the threat does not call into question the status of the speech act as a threat—it merely questions its efficacy. The self-conceit that empowers the threat, however, is that the speech act that is the threat will fully materialize that act threatened by the speech. Such speech is, however, vulnerable to failure, and it is that vulnerability that must be exploited to counter the threat. (11-12)

In this case, Carter’s own violent history made him vulnerable to alternate interpretations, and his failure to adopt new rhetorical strategies to suggest that he was renouncing that violent history were almost certainly the key reasons why his otherwise well-crafted oratory was ultimately ineffective.

Not surprisingly, Carter came in dead last in the field of seven contenders, drawing only 15,000 votes while the two leading candidates drew nearly a million: Brewer with 422,000 and Wallace with 414,000 (Carter, Politics 391). During the ensuing runoff, Wallace decided to play the race card, turning overtly White supremacist and drawing votes away from Brewer to win by whatever immoral means as were necessary. Asa Carter would aid him in this goal, returning to Wallace’s ranks to be put in charge of creating and distributing “scurrilous materials, [including] a fake photograph

of Brewer's two daughters which purported to show them pregnant by black men (Carter, Politics 393). It was a fittingly ignominious end to Carter's national and state-level political career, and it put an end to even the most remote chance of legitimacy for Carter and his platform. This last turn in the spotlight would leave Carter bitter, disillusioned, and his vision would grow increasingly apocalyptic, predicting the end of White establishment power in the South—Carter having convinced himself of his own assertions that unless he were elected, guerilla warfare and the end of White civilization was near. Whatever implausible future Carter envisaged, is certain that he knew he was finished as a political figure in Alabama.

NOTES

¹ FBI files, 157-4634-60.

² Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission files, 6-37-0-11-1-1-1 and 99-48-0-410-1-1-1.

³ FBI files, 100-4651-91 and 100-4651-99.

⁴ FBI files, 100-4651-99.

⁵ FBI files, 100-4651-91, 157-4634-60, 100-4651-96, 157-4634-60, and 100-4651-96.

⁶ Clipping from State of Mississippi Sovereignty Commission Files, 6-36-0-61-1-1-1, apparently from the Clarion Ledger, 2 Dec. 1967.

⁷ FBI files 157-4634-60, 100-4651-96, and 157-4634-60.

⁸ FBI files 157-4634-60.

⁹ FBI files 157-4634-60.

¹⁰ FBI files 157-4634-60, 100-4651-93, and 100-4651-99. Carter's home in White Plains was set away from the road, and few people were observed coming and going. The general impression was that Carter knew few people in the area and was now principally involved in activities in Mississippi (FBI files 100-4651-95).

¹¹ FBI files 100-4651-92.

¹² State of Mississippi Sovereignty Commission Files, 6-36-0-62-1-1-1.

¹³ FBI files 100-4651-94.

¹⁴ FBI files 100-4651-100 and 100-4651-101.

¹⁵ FBI files 100-4651-104.

¹⁶ FBI files 100-4651-104, emphasis added.

¹⁷ 100-4651-111. Carter was reported, though, to have had a pamphlet printed up by Swalley printing company for about \$10.00 in early January, the bill being footed by a third party whose name is blacked out. It is possible that this was the reprint of the George and Lurleen Wallace biography, as the commentary on that document suggests that Lurleen was deceased by the time of the reprinting (FBI files 100-4651-110). There is also a note that in May, Carter began having a five day a week taped broadcast on station WLPH, but no further information is noted (FBI files 100-4651-112). Carter had apparently gone back to his broadcasting and pamphlet peddling activities in Alabama.

¹⁸ FBI files 100-4651-114.

¹⁹ In the last few months before the primary, Wallace realized that Brewer was doing extremely well and was vulnerable principally on racial matters. He would deviate from his decision to be racial moderate and become increasingly harsh (Carter, Politics 391).

²⁰ "Carter's Platform Segregated Schools." BN 3 Oct. 1969: [page unknown]. A photocopy of the article exists in the FBI files on Carter and in the Anti-Defamation League's file on Carter.

²¹ FBI files 100-4651-117; "To Save the Children," full-page ad from Mobile Register, 16 Jan. 1970.

²² The brochure has additionally a picture of Carter with his family—including his father and mother (FBI files 100-4651-120, attachment).

²³ As with many Carter assertions, this has some truth. Carter was tried before a judge for his role in the courthouse brawl incident, but was never tried for the shooting at the Original KKK of the Confederacy as the first trial resulted in acquittal and was not tried for the Aaron incident as he was not directly involved.

²⁴ A copy of this article exists in the Anti-Defamation League's file on Carter. Neither that nor the copy I received through ILL has a page number, but the author is given as Free.

²⁵ Approximately one hundred were given, but many were rebroadcasts of earlier speeches—given new identification numbers, introductions, and conclusions, but containing precisely the same text.

²⁶ Liberty Essays, volume 1, program 34. These essays were delivered on radio and have been transcribed by the author. All punctuation and spelling are provided by the author and may not accurately represent Carter's intended paragraphing, sentence structure, or spelling. The author did, however, attempt to represent as best as possible the rhythm of Carter's speech, but regularized spellings in all cases except those when Carter was clearly affecting a broad Southern accent for effect.

²⁷ This spelling reflects Carter's pronunciation of "forbearers" and is also the spelling used by him in other works.

²⁸ I do not mean to attribute any sort of simplistic environmentalism to Native Americans. Though many nations had spiritual beliefs that reflected a valuing of balance—for example, between the world of the sky,

of the earth, and of the world beneath the earth—not all nations engaged in environmentally sound practices. The central part of the North American continent was after all deforested by thousands of years of Native activity, and many groups practiced (and in South America still practice) unsound slash-and-burn farming practices. I mean simply to point out Carter's contrast between the Whites who "subdued" the continent and the Native Americans who had agrarian rather than industrial cultures.

²⁹ Carter's eldest son went to college and was not in Vietnam at this time. In fact, he often worked with his father on Liberty Essays, introducing and concluding them.

³⁰ We should remember, however, that Carter himself was portrayed by Martin in the national media as a slick and surprisingly well-spoken man, though locally he was known to be more extreme.

³¹ This speech is not among those in the George Hodges's archive, but is available only as one of the speeches on the album "Essays of Asa Carter." It was almost certainly, however, originally one of the "Liberty Essays" speeches as two of the other speeches on the album were also Liberty Essay speeches.

³² The essay is available in manuscript form, separately, but was almost certainly being quoted from the pamphlet The Biology of the Race Problem, in which it appeared as an addendum, to which Carter would have had easy access.

³³ Title page, The Biology of the Race Problem, Wesley Critz George.

³⁴ This passage comes from later in Program 20, the speech most probably entitled "Slave Mentality."

³⁵ Carter repeats this same figure in several speeches, including Program 41.

³⁶ Possibly the book Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1962, by Lerone Bennett, 1962. However, there are other books with a similar title.

³⁷ Occasionally, as in Program 17, a marching band version was also played.

³⁸ I am aware that there was more than one flag of the Confederacy and multiple battle flags and that the "X" symbol of the KKK flag is but one design under which Confederate soldiers fought. It is certain, however, that the "rebel flag" to which Carter refers is the "X" design which he hung behind himself on stage during speeches in his early career and would have put on the sleeves of his "Southerners" uniforms at the end of his career.

³⁹ Liberty Essays, Volume 1, Program 38.

⁴⁰ Quote from History of the Alabama Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy: Volume II (1952), compiled by Caroline Dent McDowell and Mollie Hollifield Jones, page 31.

⁴¹ This appears to be a quotation from The Present Crisis by James Russell Lowell.

⁴² Dan T. Carter, The Politics of Rage, summarizes this section of the report on page 243.

⁴³ Chaired by Senator William Jenner in 1953; chaired by McCarran in 1950. McCarthy seems to have been, in 1953, chair of the Senate Committee on Government Operations and of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

⁴⁴ In transcribing the speeches, I occasionally came across words which were either unintelligible or could not be determined from context. In such cases, I made a "best guess" in square brackets.

⁴⁵ Even if the letter is a genuine one, a rather large leap of the imagination considering that it is unlikely that there was any member of the French consulate in Colorado to tape the program, Carter's choice to deploy it in this context has exactly the same effect as any imaginary inventing of the letter for affect.

⁴⁶ Carter would later be challenged to name his aunt, yet he refuses saying that because his opponents would change the name of the hall, he will not name her.

Chapter 5: Militia Group Leader and Budding Novelist

Moving into the Shadows

In the final phase of his political career, from mid-1970 into early 1974, Carter's goals had diminished to merely leading a grassroots campaign to erect White separatist communities throughout Alabama for working-class Whites. Because of the failure of openly segregationist policies on a national and state level, Carter's political agenda had become too unpalatable in its pure form for all but the hard-core faithful. On the few occasions when his speech was reported in the press or when he suspected that his views might be repeated in a public forum, he moderated his language and coded it deeply so as to avoid arousing the interest of state and federal officials. When in private surroundings, however, he was far more likely to continue espousing his extremist views and, as the depths of the failure of his own political faction became clear, he grew apocalyptic in his vision—seeing the end of White culture in the South—and desperate in his discourse.

Simultaneously, though, Carter decided to turn his hand to the writing of fiction—the one outlet for his imaginative abilities that could be isolated, by means of a pseudonym, from his political reputation. His many years of training as an oral storyteller, not to mention his many years of weaving fanciful tales about his supposed upbringing by his Indian grandfather, would lend themselves to Carter's creation of an intensely engaging, emotionally appealing, and well crafted—if largely derivative—novelistic style. Despite the advantages of abandoning, or at least conveniently setting aside, his original speaking stance as a White supremacist, Carter used his substantial talents to disguise his intentions and to manipulate the audience's perceptions so as to continue, at least in part, to promote the same views he had espoused throughout his long

political career.

Because of this shift in genre, Carter's hate speech tactics became far more implicit, far more suggestive than overt—he shifted from a use of negative stereotype to positive stereotype, condemning members of a group by praising those members who were different. His rehistoricizing efforts became emotive and poignant rather than remaining belligerent and unrepentant—inspiring a protective indignation rather than an self-defensive fury. He created hierarchies of victimization, implying that the most victimized had the greatest right to reparations; coupling this with the inaccurate suggestion that the most victimized, Native Americans, were too proud and too dignified—or simply too dead—to make any demands for change of the dominant society, and thus none should. He conflated the concepts of assimilation and integration, exploiting justifiable concerns about Native American autonomy to implicitly criticize efforts to dismantle the oppression of Blacks. By cleverly exploiting the conventions of melodramatic adventure and sentimental novels to incite high emotions for hate speech purposes, Carter found the success he had so long sought.

First, however, Carter had to endure his defeat. Having been soundly beaten in the primaries, he had to watch as George Wallace during the ensuing gubernatorial campaign first exploited racial extremism then immediately toned things down after the win in his “more or less bland inauguration address in January 1971, still antibusing but moderated to the point of praising freedom of choice.” Because of this softened stand, Carter finally parted ways with his old comrade, picketing the speech along with a dozen Klansmen with signs that read “Wallace is a Bigot” and “Free Our White Children” (Greenhaw, “Watch Out” 158). Wayne Greenhaw, a respected Southern journalist,

spotted Carter and spoke to him at the inaugural, giving in his book Watch Out for George Wallace a portrait of Carter at the end of his career as a political insider:

On the afternoon of Wallace's 1971 inauguration Carter sat on the back steps of the capitol. His physical build was almost a replica of George Wallace. He was short and chunky. He held his sweating palms clasped, his elbows anchored on his knees. "George Wallace has changed in the last eight years. All the campaigning has taken the fight out of him. He's not the same person he was when he stood on the star [a bronze plaque in front of the capitol's front door, placed there by the United Daughters of the Confederacy] where Jefferson Davis took his oath, and spoke out for the great principles involved in that struggle one hundred years ago. He's not the same man who shook his fist in the face of a possible jail sentence. I think he has found himself getting too close to the White House, and he can't cope with the idea of being a racist who failed to win the presidency. *I am a racist*. I understand that. I fight for a cause which I hope to win. With George Wallace I had a wonderful spokesman for the cause. Now we have to look somewhere else. We can no longer look at George Wallace." (158-59, emphasis added)

Greenhaw's picture goes on to show how Carter "cast his sad damp eyes downward and rubbed the heel of his shoe against the ancient marble of the step" before launching into a dismayed discussion of how Wallace had changed, probably because he was being influenced by aides.

His voice growing soft, he told Greenhaw, "[Wallace's] problem is, he doesn't

really believe,” and that he had only recited the words which Carter had written. Next, he remembered with glee how Wallace had spoken out against liberals, and “his face lighted with pure excitement. In his mind’s eye he could see them taking off in the opposite direction while he and George Wallace drove them with whips into the bramble bushes.” With disappointment, then, Carter talked about how he would use his newly resurrected The Southerner to speak out against Wallace, and as he mentioned this, a Klan-type called to him that he was out of copies to distribute. After telling the man he would meet him at the car to get more copies, he shifted into another recollection—how he had gone to Indiana along with another Klan leader, Shelton, to do work for Wallace: “When I went to Indiana for him six years ago it was like reaching into heaven and actually feeling the soft, magnificent texture of the golden streets. Don’t anybody wear shoes in heaven, you know.” In Indiana, Carter said, he had told the “truth” to the people about the monster government in Washington, which aimed to ultimately take away their freedom. Just then, another man called out that he too was out of copies, and the men agreed they would go home. Just before Carter drove away, with tears “streaming down vein-marked cheeks” because Wallace had turned into one of the “moderates” he had so long battled as part of the conspiracy against Southerners, Carter made his final statement to Greenhaw: “If we keep on the way we’re going, with the mixing of the races, destroying God’s plan, there won’t be an earth on which to live in five years” (159-60).

Greenhaw goes on to report that another copy of The Southerner came out six months later, calling Wallace “an integrating liar, a hypocrite, and a sellout to the cause of the white people of the world.” He finishes the story by saying that the next year Carter was arrested for driving while intoxicated, that a month later he was arrested for

public drunkenness, that The Southerner ceased publication, Carter's phone was disconnected, and his old friends no longer heard from him (160). Though Greenhaw would not discuss Carter's doings later in the early 1970s until another work, he does accurately capture in this earlier piece several points that will become important in Carter's ensuing writings: that Wallace did not believe what he said and merely roused people's passions in order to get elected, that Carter had not even in the face of this defeat abandoned his commitment to White supremacy, that Carter's had become disillusioned and his vision was growing increasingly apocalyptic—talking of heaven and the end of the world in five years—and that Carter's discourse was metaphoric, symbolic, and pathos-oriented in the same way it would be in his later novels. Such was Greenhaw's portrait of Carter after the last threads of his connection to the political scene emerging in the early 1970s had been clipped.

But, Carter was not completely without resources. After the election was over, the FBI picked up their surveillance of Carter and found that in December of 1970, Carter was again on the speechmaking circuit appearing before The Caucasians, a group whose founding proclamation stated that its purpose was to “unite white citizens of the United States” and “to promote patriotism” and “to exemplify a practical benevolence to shield the sanctity of the home and the chastity of white woman-hood” and “to maintain forever the God-endowed supremacy of the white race.” Their given motto was “I am a Caucasian as old as mankind, as young as the rising sun, as fresh as the morning dew and as ageless as time.”¹ The Alabama Independent picked up the story and quoted Carter extensively in an article:

“Despite what the liberals and politicians say, we came from a race of men

called Anglo-Saxons. Our people have always had within them an urge and a fire for freedom. When we say “Freedom,” our people never meant freedom from poverty or freedom from insecurity. They meant freedom from central government control. [. . .]

“God endowed our race with the creativeness to develop qualities and character. Great developments have come from our race in every area conceivable; Medicine, science, music, laws, and justice that one should receive what one deserves. Our race brought trial by jury, laws of morality and the family system. It is these birthrights that the Communists are destroying.”²

In this excerpt, we can see how easily Carter slipped back into extremist and open White supremacy after his brief stint in the public eye during the governor’s race. Though in this section, the only other tactic typical of White supremacists of the era is the assertion that there is an outside conspiracy of Communists—to a degree, there is also a defense of the good character of Whites who have more natural talents—the larger speech might well have had more characteristics of typical White supremacist speech than this excerpt. It does serve to demonstrate, though, how little Carter’s rhetorical tactics had altered from the latter 1950s—at least, when he was speaking to an audience of the like-minded, he felt free to be openly White supremacist.

The Southerners: A Final Foray into Grass-Roots Activism

Within months, Carter would begin what would be his final foray into political organization—the formation of the militia group, The Southerners. In February of 1971,

the FBI received a report that Carter had already organized a new pro-segregation group with chapters in Birmingham, Bessemer, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Greensboro. One of the first steps taken by Carter was to encourage members to arm themselves with rifles that would all accept the same ammunition and not to cooperate with law enforcement,³ making the group seem tremendously similar to the militia group he had tried to organize for Wallace in the early 1960s, but the group would increasingly bear resemblance to the Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy which Carter had organized in the 1950s. Informants stated that the group was anti-Semitic and that the group's main goals were to engage in violent resistance against groups like the Black Panthers and in vigilante activities against Blacks who perpetrated "atrocities" against whites, particularly white women.⁴ It seems apparent that Carter's original hopes to organize an underground resistance movement were still very much alive.

The Southerners were set up along the lines of a military organization, similar to Carter's Original KKK of the Confederacy. Each chapter was a division and was given the name of a Confederate officer: the Huntsville Division was the General Nathan B. Forrest Division, Birmingham was the J. E. B. Stuart Division, Montgomery was the Robert E. Lee Division, Greensboro was the Mosby Division, and Mobile was the Raphael Semmes Division. Within each division were brigades—each of which had captains, commanders, and brigade leaders—and within the brigades were squads of 10 men each. Women's Auxiliaries also existed for the divisions. The Southerners all wore a gray armband with a Confederate flag and a personal identification number; various colors of cloth marked officers—green pieces of felt ½" wide and 1 ½" long were sewn right next to the flag to indicate squad leaders, brigade commander or leaders wore a red

strip of cloth alongside the flag—and an informant related that one leader had the title “Attack Group Commander.” In addition, members carried cards with the words “The Southerners” and “Where the men are” in the center and “rebel” flags on each corner; each was to affix a decal, costing \$1, to his car so that if he had trouble other members would stop to help—particularly if the member’s wife or daughter were stranded.⁵

Carter’s reported goals for the group were just two: to “unite all white Anglo-Saxons” into a supposedly non-violent “brotherhood”; to “get all white students into private schools.” Carter’s plan was to finance tuition by opening a grocery store which would be owned and operated by members, then to open a service station, then to open a men’s clothing store—all to be affiliated with a church to be called the Assembly of Christian Soldiers so as to be tax-exempt. These group-owned businesses would be patronized by group members, and all profits would be funneled into providing tuition for students. Like many of Carter’s schemes, this one was clearly White supremacist in orientation and started with surprisingly strong support. While there were only about 40 members in Huntsville, there were hundreds of active members in Mobile—600 were claimed, but 300 were observed at meetings—where the group was headquartered.⁶

Throughout the spring and summer of 1971, Carter spoke in front of groups of hundreds, rallying people to join his new organization and to self-segregate by creating a separate socio-economic system centered on the Assembly of Christian Soldiers church. That the group was not merely separatist but was designed as a potential defense against a federal government conspiracy which was supposedly arming Blacks to take over the South was made clear by the group in a recorded telephone message. Callers to the phone number advertised by the Southerners heard a recording of Carter’s voice which

was addressed to “Dedicated white men in the State of Alabama and over the State of Mississippi who are organizing for the mutual aid of ourselves, our families and to save our white children.” Carter called attention to the supposed funding of the “Black Army of Liberation” through two grants—one in excess of \$500,000 and a second of \$100,000—claiming that “Through its OEO Programs and similar Federal Programs, blacks are being armed with our tax dollars.” Carter then called again upon the listener to join with the Southerners in “mutual aid” of themselves and their families. Though Carter never states directly that armed resistance is his goal, his reference to armed blacks and call for “mutual aid” is a thinly veiled suggestion of such.⁷

By June 20th, Carter had raised enough interest in his organization to have an “Old fashioned Southern white get-together” with barbeque, beans, and speechmaking. Held in Mobile, Alabama, the event was large enough, drawing up to a thousand people, to gain the interest of local television stations, who sent a crew to tape proceedings. Carter’s speech contained his usual references to those he viewed as the enemy. He referred to the “Commies” who were supposedly backing Blacks and the Civil Rights movement in the South. He reassured his listeners that the “country-club Jews” were not going to make a profit off their jointly owned store. He made a case for having a separate school for White children who needed to be kept away from the four-letter words spewed by “the nigger.” He explained how the “poor white people were getting the shaft from the Federal government” and emphasized the need to be free from such control. Finally, he made major points by discussing how many poor White women had supposedly been raped by Negroes. An informant said that it was stressed that the Southerners were not espousing violence, that “They say we do not call on you for any violence of any kind,

just to stand up for your rights, etc. We just want you to be all white [. . .]”—but what was entailed in standing up for rights and remaining “all white” was left up to the imagination. Showing that his ambitions for the group greatly exceeded the financial realities, Carter called upon donations at the meeting—starting at \$1,000, moving down to \$500, then to \$250 without getting any takers. Arriving at a request of \$100, he gained a few pledges—a few more at \$50 and several at \$5 after emphasizing that all donations were tax-deductible. This initial meeting would be the high point of Carter’s efforts in favor of the Southerners, from this point would begin a slow slide downhill.⁸

By July, Carter was pleading at meetings for members to donate time and money to the building of the church and school, emphasizing that all money should be donated to the church rather than directly to the Southerners to remain tax-exempt, complaining that organizations such as the NAACP—and a few with made-up names such as SMUT—could be tax-exempt but not the Southerners. In order to encourage participation, Carter began painting a scenario in which Blacks planned to take over 5 Southern states to erect an all-Black Communist Nation and the Whites would be forced to flee. Again making it clear that his plans were not merely White separatist, Carter himself estimated that he spent 85% of his time talking about White supremacy and 15% of his time talking about “the niggers.” His increasing extremism did not seem to encourage participation, as his pleas for time and materials continued throughout July and August, and members began to disallow audio taping of the meetings because of fears that Carter’s words might be “misinterpreted in various ways.”⁹

The organizing attempts were not a total loss, however, and the planned store did open selling off brands in the latter part of August—again with a barbeque and drawing

media coverage—but attendance was estimated in the hundreds. The school was not ready to open at the beginning of September, and Carter encouraged people to keep their children out of school until it could open in October, teaching Southern history, music, and religion.¹⁰ Rumors began spreading of an army of about 300 in the Anniston area, and though these rumors proved unfounded—despite them being very specific about there being about \$10,000 worth of weapons and ammunition, including a bazooka and several machine guns—this provided further evidence that Carter was at least perceived as having the goal of forming armed resistance and might have been spreading such rumors himself to explain where donations were going.¹¹

In late September, two teachers were hired for the Christian Academy which was associated with the store in Mobile, but simultaneously problems were emerging in the Southerners' Mobile group—one smaller group containing advocates of violence breaking off to form their own subgroup and the larger group keeping their focus solely upon the founding and operation of the school.¹² October came and went without the opening of the school for which cement had not even been poured, and in November the store was having problems covering expenses. Carter responded by moving office materials to a store room and double-locking the doors, and rumors began circulating of an \$11,000 debt. He also began claiming to have donated much of his own time and money to the organization—selling his car, cashing his insurance policies, traveling by bus, and selling his cattle—and a collection on his behalf was actually taken at the end of one meeting.

The group was also clearly becoming more extremist, a wolf's head emblem being adopted and a new "official poem" being quoted: "The Law of the Jungle." The

poem itself is an odd piece, almost certainly written by Carter himself, containing imagery that is reminiscent of KKK practices of silence, obedience, and death for lack of loyalty—“This is the law of the jungle / As old and as true as the sky / And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper / But the wolf that shall break it must die.” That Carter may have imagined himself as one of these “wolves” is clear from a description of the older, scarred wolf whose word is law. The group had also apparently adopted an anthem, to be sung to the tune of Bonnie Blue Flag.¹³

The long-awaited opening of the school occurred in late November, when about 100 students and two teachers, one of whom lacked a teaching certificate, began classes in a noisy, badly heated building with few textbooks—some would be acquired within a few weeks—and little furniture. Having managed the opening of the school, Carter began asking for \$200 per week for expenses and shifted his focus from the school to what appears to have been his goal all along, to start close-order drills of members as soon as their number reached 1000 so as to teach members to fight and protect their families. He asserted to the members that they were in “a war—in a battle—and everybody must accept his word or get out.” His efforts to establish himself as the dictatorial leader of the commune had begun.¹⁴

Carter’s efforts to play off his old contacts with Wallace, however, were not at all successful. Concerned about a “club” that had been closed down—probably one of the all-male private drinking and gaming establishments which would become important to the Southerners later on—Carter tried in December to call on his old boss to ask him to intervene, to no avail. Carter was unable to meet with the governor, and was unable to get the staff member who did talk to him to offer any aid.¹⁵ It was clear that Wallace had

broken off all contact with Carter in his new attempts to seem more moderate on racial issues—in later years, Wallace would deny even having known Carter, much less having had him as an employee. Lacking any real connection to the establishment, Carter was forced to draw upon the Southerners as his sole support, and a meeting was called in late December whose sole purpose was to raise money for Carter's aid; it was announced also that the store was basically insolvent and the school had begun to charge tuition.¹⁶

At the same time, the FBI grew increasingly concerned about the activities of Carter's group. Adding the classification "WHG" (white hate groups) to some reports about the Southerners—other reports were classified "EM" (extremist matters) and "RM" (racial matters)—the FBI began pursuing reports of KKK-like activities on the part of the Southerners as reported to them by the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Though one source reported that Carter was well aware of the violence-prone members of the group, but was doing nothing to control them, another source reported that Carter had announced that members were to avoid collecting and owning guns. It seems clear that Carter had gotten wind of the FBI's increased interest in the group and was trying to avoid having members pique its interest and begin to investigate with any greater intensity.¹⁷

January of 1972 saw the first statewide meeting of the Southerners in Montgomery; in a sign of the group's diminished numbers, only about 50 people were in attendance. Carter attempted to raise the group's spirits by claiming he had begun a new group in Atmore, though later FBI sources would question whether it existed, and tried to reaffirm his commitment to the group by saying that he had spurned advances from a US-based Nazi group, telling them that they had too many Yankees as members. Though he

at first criticized some members in the Mobile area for doing things that were unauthorized—seemingly the carrying of weapons—when he was asked by another member when militia-style training would begin, as he appears to believe had been promised, Carter demurred and said that though they were not yet ready they might start in the coming year. In this meeting, Carter continued to play both sides, outwardly pacifistic to appease some members but simultaneously holding out the promise of violent resistance to cater to others.¹⁸

January also saw the opening of the new men's lodge at Tillman's Corner near Mobile, Alabama. This particular lodge was located away from the store, which the group periodically tried to revive though the gas station had closed because the operator had been caught stealing money, and other Southerner's properties, and its purpose was to raise money for both the church and the school. The tax-exempt status of the church began to be questioned, though the first case brought against the Southerners for this matter was thrown out of court. But, monetary support from the lodges would eventually become critical. Finances were on everyone's mind, and the general feeling was that matters were being mismanaged, yet Carter refused to dispel rumors and began instead to rally the group to attempt to get some men out of jail—one of them the violence-prone Kenneth Adams—but he refused to say openly why. By relating the story that two dead Negroes had been found in the showers next to the cell of one of them—a “good Mobile boy”—it is simple to gather that he was trying to gain the release of violent White supremacists to bolster up the group now that the school/church/ store venture was evaporating. He also began discussing an improbable second run for governor.¹⁹ These increasingly implausible pipe dreams appear to have been Carter's method of attempting

to quiet the growing dissension—or perhaps an indication of an unsettled mind.

The only project which appeared to be gaining ground was Carter's lodge system, with drinking and gaming available for men only. Lodges were claimed to exist or to be under creation in six Alabama locations: Admiral Semmes Lodge No. 1 in Mobile, Admiral Semmes Lodge No. 2 in Citronelle, Jeb Stuart Division Lodge No. 1 in Bessemer, Jeb Stuart Division Lodge No. 2 in Adamsville, Major John Pelham Division Lodge No. 1 in Atmore (not yet set up), and General Morgan Division Lodge No. 1 in rural Talladega County. In latter February, another venture would begin which would eventually lead to Carter's renewed career: a member mentioned knowing a man who owned an AB Dick 350 Printing Machine which could be had for a small amount along with an IBM electric typewriter. The member suggested that by buying the press they could begin to print their own pamphlets for the organization. Whether the group bought this or another printing machine, this move into publishing by the group would have enormous repercussions.²⁰

In the midst of the sporadic operation of the store and the generally declining interest in the school, and beginnings of clannish behavior among the more radical members of Carter's group, the Birmingham News turned its eye on the operation of Carter's commune. On 12 March 1972, the paper ran a special report called "Arch-right Group Called 'New Face of the Old Klan.'" In the article, the Southerners is characterized as a potentially violent arch-segregationist group populated by former Klan members and hard right types, though the membership also included some doctors and other professionals attracted by its anti-integration stance. Carter made several claims in the article, chiefly that the governor was attempting to suppress the group and had taken

steps to impose a tax on the tax-exempt church which he asserted owned and ran the commissary and school. The genesis of the group, Carter claimed, was in a grassroots effort to construct an all-White swimming pool after the public pool in Red Level had been integrated. The highway patrol, the FBI, and the State Revenue Department had investigations into the goings on with Carter's organization, principally because of the perceived threat of violence. These investigations had found that the Southerners itself was supported mainly by turkey shoots, contributions by members, and outside donations—the money from the commissary being given to support the school in Mobile (Claybrook 26). This characterization of the group as extremist and potentially violent did little to enhance its attractiveness, and members discussed the article with concern at the 18 March meeting, along with their usual disparaging of the “nigger” population.²¹

Their concern seems to have been justified—after its publication, the group never had any major successes, any expansions, and would degenerate quickly into knots of die-hard members which Carter would be hard pressed to control. However, the publishing company had some successes, and Carter was able by the end of April—at another state-wide meeting of the Southerners attended by only 41—to distribute copies of The Southerner which had been printed on their own presses. Soon after, the group began discussing plans to distribute 50,000 copies of a booklet the group had published. Despite this minor success, Carter began relating stories about being shot at, about his family being harassed by state troopers, about confronting a potential FBI agent and finding out that he was a priest; he began to content himself with stating that he wished to realign the lodges so that there were only about 30 “dedicated” men in each. Clearly, his feelings of persecution and paranoia were beginning to take over.²²

The matter worsened in May, when one of Carter's three sons—who was apparently still living in Oxford with his mother, far away from his father's political activities—was shot in the leg, and the leg was subsequently amputated due to gangrene.²³ Carter would sink deeper into depression, alcoholism and financial difficulties as a result—though he often spoke of the money he anticipated receiving from suing the son's doctor for malpractice, money he planned to share with the group in support of “the cause.” The Southerners were encouraged to contribute to a fund to help Carter with his thousands of dollars of debt, but no one was known to contribute. The anticipated income from the 50,000 copies of the booklet also evaporated, as printing of the book—apparently critical of George Wallace to some degree—was suspended immediately after the attempted assassination of Wallace on 15 May 1972. Nevertheless, some copies of “The Sheriff” were eventually distributed. With increasing paranoia, possibly caused by his increased drinking, Carter began to speak of catching state agents removing window screens at his house, bugging his phone, and searching his home despite it being surrounded by Dobermans. Further, with the delusions of grandeur to which Carter was prone in moments of despair and paranoia, he also began weaving tales of Lurleen Wallace purchasing a home for him out of gratitude and Texas politicians courting him to write the “straight conservative” line. When friends encouraged him to take the latter jobs, he said that he would never abandon the Southerners and “the cause.”²⁴

By summer, Carter's status was no better, and the Mobile lodge in particular had become aware that there was an informant in the group—a fact borne out by the presence of so much confidential information provided by one member of the group that does exist

in FBI files. Because of this, the group removed a list of members from the wall. In late June, at another statewide meeting of the Southerners which only 27-30 attended, Carter first began mentioning the KKK in approving terms again—noting that the Klan had at times been able to successfully support political candidates and suggesting that the Southerners could do the same though they would be unable to elect one of their own. Carter's extremism and penchant for violence—particularly KKK-style violence—that kept him from being a viable candidate himself was so widely known that even the children talked about it: one member played a tape of his precocious little girl being asked questions. She identified God as the one who “made people,” Jesus as one who “made people too,” and Asa Carter as a “nigger shooter.” Because he was not himself a viable candidate, Carter for the first time brought up the idea of making money by using the group's presses to print materials for political candidates amenable to their arch-segregationist views.²⁵

Carter would soon begin claiming, perhaps truthfully, that the plan to begin printing for political candidates was going well—in late July he said that print orders were coming in and the money would be divided among the lodges—and that he was himself doing some work for a candidate in Mississippi and another in Georgia. He also asserted that membership in the Southerners would increase, but only “When the white man [has] the Negro standing in his door.” The school was still operating, but was now using correspondence-school materials and could no longer be considered to be operating as an independent unit; members considered it failed and blamed its demise on the federal and state governments' interference. In late September at another state-wide meeting, attended by 23, Carter announced that a large political campaign order had come in and

that all other printing would cease to accommodate the order—they expected to make \$35,000 on the campaign literature, of which Carter expected \$7,500 for his work writing and handling literature for the campaign. The printing press, he said, would be moved to Andalusia.²⁶

Budding Novelist: A Drift away from Activism

No one is quite sure when this printing press became key to the double life which Carter had begun to lead, nor is anyone entirely sure when that double life began, but the moving of the printing press away from any Southerners lodge would seem to be a telling moment. Wayne Greenhaw tells the story of the emerging personality Forrest Carter. Friends who visited with him said that he was turning his attentions to the history of the Reconstruction period: “Have you ever seriously studied the problems that existed for Southerners at the end of the Civil War?” Greenhaw quotes Carter as saying to a friend, “It was as bad for them then as it is for us now. We have been faced with two great wars: the Civil War and the battle over so-called civil rights” (qtd. in *My Heart*, 50).

Greenhaw, still relating the friend’s memories, provides a key quote:

“Following the War Between the States, good law-abiding citizens like Jesse and Frank James up in Missouri had to continue the fight against the phony establishment that moved in and began enforcing illegal laws. They became outlaws because they fought against the tyranny of Union reconstructionists who twisted and turned the so-called laws to benefit themselves.” (*My Heart* 50)

It was clear that Carter had begun his research for the book, *Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales*,

in the 1969-70 period while he was still running for Governor of Alabama. But, in this period after 1971, it is clear that he had actually begun writing this book and, further, that the book in many ways was seen by Carter as analogous to his own situation. Though Carter continued his activities in Alabama with the Southerners, by 1972—probably with the moving of the printing presses—his ambitions as the novelist Forrest Carter were beginning to direct more of his actions, and his political ambitions shifted from those of the organizer to those of the commercially successful propagandist.

Roche, in fact, makes the assertion that there was no work in Texas which was occupying Carter's time as a writer, but that he was immersing himself in the writing of his first novel: "He rarely left his home in Oxford, [where his family had remained throughout the previous period] spending his days in his pajamas, smoking Pall Mall cigarettes and writing longhand on yellow legal tablets [. . .] at least twice in 1972, Carter drove his ten-year-old Pontiac Catalina west to Sweetwater, Texas, to research his book." Roche says that he told the librarian there that his name was Forrest Carter, and began using the fictional autobiography that would later inform his book, The Education of Little Tree (244).

While it is doubtless that Carter had adopted his new persona while researching and traveling in Texas, it is equally certain that he was maintaining his old identity as Asa Carter. When signing copies of his books for old friends, his practice was to occasionally sign as "Forrest (Asa) Carter," making it clear that he had not abandoned his original name; further, Carter continued to espouse the same views he had throughout his life. In a Southerners meeting in late November, Carter went off on one of his old anti-Semitic and anti-Black tirades: "Carter said the anti-Christ, the Jew, is trying to destroy all good

things. Carter said the Jew is against everything that is natural and are God's Laws. Carter said even the Jew man is effeminate and the Jew woman is masculine. The Jew is for pornography and homosexuality," and later in a similar vein, "The Negro [is] a beast." In that same meeting, Carter announced that voting for confirmation as a ring-wearing Southerner, a special level which Carter had invented during that year, would be done in the old Klan method—by drawing circles on a piece of paper, an open circle for disapproval and a closed circle for approval. Demonstrating his increasing descent into a fantasy world, Carter discussed his belief in reincarnation, stating that "he believed that Nathan Bedford Forrest, who had only a third grade education, had come back in another body now and probably was a genius in another body."²⁷

Having given himself the pen name "Bedford Forrest Carter" by that time, there is little question as to in whose body Carter believed that Forrest had returned—and there is also little question that he believed himself to be carrying on the cause of General Forrest, both that of the Confederacy and that of the Ku Klux Klan. Such references make it clear that Asa Carter had in no way abandoned his old political beliefs, that he by no means was creatively reimagining himself as a non-racist, Native American activist who sought to redeem himself from his earlier violently anti-Black and anti-Semitic political identity. Carter, intentionally or because of his deep-seated problems, was merely mining a different set of identities, finding parallels in other times and other ethnic groups—in the anti-Black politics of the Confederacy and Klan, and in the anti-federal government stances of some Native Americans—to create an identity which would allow him to pursue the same goals and advocate the same beliefs under a different name. This person would not have to bear responsibility for the actions of Asa Earl Carter.

The dual identity came about as a matter of necessity. Sometime in 1971-1972, Carter had attempted to go back to his old work as a radio announcer. Having been told of a position out west, he tried for and won a position at a new radio station. However, before he could move and begin the job, an Alabamian passed through town, heard his name and asked someone at the station if they knew who Asa Carter was—and then enlightened them. The job offer was withdrawn (Auchmuty, “The Man” M1). Having exhausted also his opportunities with wealthy Alabamians and the establishment, and with the impending failure of the Southerners, Carter had no opportunities in the political arena except perhaps as a deeply closeted ghost writer—a position in which he could expect to make little. Turning his hand to novels, then, was the only option left open to Carter, and he had little choice but to assume a pen name and a new identity to do even that.

Nevertheless, Carter did not completely abandon the Southerners, as access to their printing press would prove key to his new identity. Though the school finally officially closed, along with the store and all other Southerner ventures but the lodges—the lodge in Montgomery was no longer meeting and others had diminished greatly—the presses would continue to the end. Carter variously would not tell his members where the press was, or asserted that it was in Red Level—where supposedly they had lost control of the building it would have been in—then discussed moving it to Mobile, then told the men the presses were in Andalusia, where perhaps they had been all along. Intent on keeping the presses running, Carter told the men in January that they would make \$100,000 in the coming elections—by August, he would be claiming \$300,000. In September, Carter made a point of averring that Whipporwill Publishers—the company

which would be credited with publishing his first book, a company based in Gantt, Alabama, with only a post office box for an address, advertising itself as being “In the Heart of the Creek Nation”—was a completely different entity from Whipporwill Printing which was the name given to the Southerners’ printing operation. Whether or not this transparent lie convinced the men is unknown, but Carter retained control of the printing operation.²⁸

What is known is that Carter not only continued his anti-Black and anti-Semitic discourse, he began issuing doomsday oratory. An FBI informant reported that “Carter said when the takeover [by militant Blacks] starts about seventy-five percent of the white people will leave the South and the Southerners will be left to do the job.” He alternately bragged about his own prowess and complained about his victimization—claiming that a black deputy in a county building had run when Carter had entered, though the deputy had previously threatened, ““Just let that Asa Carter come into this county”; asserting that deputies were constantly wheeling in and out of his driveway; and telling members that he had taken to carrying his .38 strapped down but traveled with a sawed off shotgun in his hand, hidden in the pocket of his raincoat. Carter was reduced to saying that he would be happy if he had just 5 loyal men in a lodge, and further asked those in the lodges to say that Carter was present but to give no further information if authorities called—as an alibi might be handy. In what was probably a flight of fancy, he claimed that he would be speaking for thirty minutes every Sunday morning on a Birmingham radio station, and told members at one meeting, when he was confronted with an order to report to jail over a tax violation, that he had a “fed with him”—an FBI man sympathetic to his cause. In another fantastic story, Carter asserted that the liberal mayor of Anniston,

Carter's home town, had turned to him for help because his teenaged son was into drugs, but that Carter had to turn him down because "the son had been under the influence of the 'nigger music' and the other liberal communist ideas and that the father had allowed his son to become what he was and [Carter] told the former mayor his son was in fact a 'nigger' and had lost morality and any spiritual ideals." Carter even began asserting that "God had talked to him" to say that God would do something for the men if they would dedicate themselves to the cause 100 percent. This was necessary, according to Carter, because the end would come within four years and the totally committed men would be needed to rebuild from the ashes.²⁹

On a more sober note, Carter encouraged the men to stay politically active: he suggested that they begin asking Alabama to stop using tax money for public schools and to call for voter verification—as blacks were supposedly too uneducated to properly vote for themselves and were known to have others go to polls to do it for them—and to begin educating the white populace so that they understood that they were the "true Israelites." At another meeting Carter proposed that the group condemn the confinement of Palestinians to concentration camps, and to ask Wallace to impound school buses to save money on fuel and fight integration. The informant noted that the topics considered were similar to those in the "Thunderbolt"—a neo-Nazi publication sold at the café they were in. Carter claimed at another meeting to have taken an oath never to sit down and eat with Negroes, and that others in the room supported him, a group of Negroes who had been in the room left. One member of the group echoed Carter's increasingly radical line and stated that the only way out of the Southerners now was assassination.³⁰

Despite Carter's increasingly weak grip on reality and renewed extremist

rightwing politics, his efforts to publish seemed to be progressing—though probably less rosily than Carter would claim. In late September, he announced that his book—Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales—was indeed being published. He discussed the possibility of getting Native American support for the novel, saying that “he had contacted some of the Indian tribes in the United States—the Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks and some others on the reservations—and would give them a part of the proceeds. Carter said maybe the Indians can get on the Johnny Carson Show”—such comments making it clear that Carter’s concern with Native Americans was at least in part commercial. Further, “Carter said General Patton would endorse his book” and began discussing the possibility of starting the “Johnny Reb Book Club” to market his book. By late November, Carter was peddling copies of the book at meetings, selling them to members for \$3 each. By late December, he was talking about how various publishers were contacting him about publishing the book for wider distribution and claimed that “he would turn over the proceeds that he receives from the sale of this book over to the organization after taking a small commission for himself to live on.”³¹ The latter offer was almost certainly deceptive.

Sometime in 1973, Carter and his wife had sold their house and moved to an island just off the Florida panhandle. He purchased a gas station in Abilene for his two eldest sons and began spending time in the city, manning the pumps, regaling comers with stories, claiming to be a part-Cherokee storyteller (Greenhaw, My Heart 50; Rubin 94). Locals remember “A big bluff man in a denim suit and a bolo tie, [who’d] drift into town every now and then with a Stetson full of tales about riding the range and fasting with Indians and hanging out in Hollywood with Clint Eastwood” (Auchmurey, “The

Man” M1). This last was at least in part true, as Carter did indeed sell his first novel, Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales, to Eastwood who would develop it as a film.

Richard Schickel tells the story of the selling of the novel and making of the film in his biography, Clint Eastwood. Though Schickel is not specific about the date, it would seem likely that it was shortly after Carter had self-published his first novel in 1973 when he sent a copy of his badly-printed work along with a particularly obsequious note to Eastwood’s production company: he spoke of Eastwood’s “kind eyes” and “prayed that they would look in that spirit on his humble offering” (318). One of Eastwood’s assistants took the book home, read it in one night, and then recommended enthusiastically, saying “God, this has so much soul to it!” (qtd. in Schickel 319). A second assistant also endorsed the book, and Eastwood had the book flown in so that he could read it, after which he directed his assistant to purchase the rights (319).

Carter wasn’t available at his Alabama home for two days—possibly, he was traveling on Southerners business—but when he returned the call he claimed to have been “out in the woods somewhere” (320). When the offer to buy the movie rights was advanced, Carter jumped at the opportunity and secured the necessary agent from William Morris to represent him. The agent secured him an excellent deal for a first-time writer—\$25,000 for screen rights plus \$10,000 at the commencement of photography and \$15,000 out of any profits the film made—and with that deal in hand was beginning to negotiate the sale of the book to a mainstream publisher (320). Up until this point, Carter had been all business and the deal had gone well. That would change rapidly when the Eastwood people finally met Carter in person—about a year later, probably in 1974.

When Carter finally dropped into town to meet the Eastwood people, he was

thoroughly inebriated—urinating on the floor of the Satellite Lounge before the Eastwood staff member could hurry him off and prevent his arrest. Sobered up, he arrived at the production offices in cowboy regalia only to immediately state, “Well, I don’t wanna take up any more of your time. I guess I’d better go home now.” It was with difficulty that the staff talked him into staying over for a day to discuss the relationship of the book to the script under production. At dinner the next day, a drunken Carter held a knife to the throat of one of the secretaries who had accompanied him as a dinner partner and announced that “he loved her and would kill them both if she didn’t agree to marry him.” Eastwood staff members decided he was a sociopath (321). Eventually, Carter’s anti-Semitism would emerge as he cursed the William Morris agents whom friends had convinced him were in league with Eastwood to cheat him of money—Eastwood was himself a Morris client—and was only placated by being advanced his final payment of \$15,000 in 1975 before filming was even complete (320-323). His emerging life as Forrest Carter, then, was little different from that of the anti-Semitic, hard-drinking, violent, and paranoid Asa Carter whom he continued to be in Alabama.

For though Carter’s focus was turning as early as late 1973 to his career as a novelist, he maintained his contact with the Southerners. At the state meeting in January 1974, someone reported that Carter and another were “speaking of the ‘true Israelites as the Caucasian people and the Jews as the sons of the devil.’” In February and March, meetings were held that Carter did not attend, begging off because he was busy with his novels and with selling movie rights, and there are no records to show that he ever attended another meeting. In the last complete document in his FBI files, poorly typed and dated 20 May, the reason for his sudden conversion away from active White

supremacist terrorism is given:

Ace Carter appeared at the ARA [the FBI office in Anniston]. He said he had wrote (sic) *a book on the mountain people in his family and a book on the wild west*. He said one of his book was being sold to a movie company and he had a New York Agent handling his business. He said he was doing lots of traveling to New York and to Dallas, Texas and other places. He said it would be embarrassing to him if the FBI attempted to locate him during this period of time. He said he did not want his agent or other people contacted by the FBI in effort to locate or determine his whereabouts. He said [name blacked out] of Anniston, Ala. who is a recent elected member of the Alabama legislature would at all time be able to furnish the FBI his whereabouts or else to locate him and he would in turn contact the FBI.

Carter was asked why he thought the FBI might be wanting to contact him and he replied that it had been about two years since he was interviewed and if something should happen it was possible the FBI might want to know his whereabouts or interview him concerning any events.

Carter remarked that *he felt he was about to make some money for the first time in his life and he did not want anything to go wrong*.³²

This key document, in which Carter for once appears to be sincere in his interaction with the FBI, establishes two important points: The novel, The Education of Little Tree, was in at least draft form and was written during the period in which Carter was still active in the Southerners—not in a period after which he had left violent-leaning White

supremacist activity behind. Carter's motivation for leaving this activity had more to do with his concerns over remaining a marketable author than in any change of heart—indeed, no change of heart is evident between early 1974 when he was still making anti-Semitic remarks and this cessation of activity in the *Southerners* in late May.³³ Carter's motivations for ending his political career appear to have been strictly financial and not philosophical.

Peek-a-boo Politics:³⁴ The White Supremacy Underpinning Carter's Novels

As we will find in the following sections, Carter's first two novels partook of his former White supremacist politics. Occasionally, the similarity between his earlier works—particularly his Liberty Essays speeches from his run for governor in 1969-70—is so close to his later works that the texts are in places virtually identical. In other sections, particularly the text of Gone to Texas and the latter chapters of The Education of Little Tree, it is clear that Carter's former politics are underpinning the storyline, albeit covertly. Given Carter's need to please his publishers and avoid having them connect Forrest Carter the novelist to Asa Earl Carter the White supremacy terrorist, and given Carter's undeniable ability to write from a variety of personae, it is difficult to understand why he did not choose to eliminate all references to his former work and former political activities.

A simple answer for many of the overlaps between the two novels and Carter's earlier work is that Carter had always been a hack writer. There are great similarities between his early works for the ASRA and his work for Wallace, certain catch phrases such as “master government” and stock justifications such as the crime rate in

Washington D. C. schools can be found throughout his openly political works. Carter may have been in part recycling materials simply because he was accustomed to doing so—it was a normal feature of his writing process. Another reason for the similarity between the Liberty Essays speeches and the first two novels is that he may have been writing the latter at the same time that he was doing the former, and desperate for material to sustain his five-a-week speech commitment, he borrowed materials from his novel texts. Yet, the motivation to maintain secrecy in his new identity was so great that even these decisions to recycle material are clearly poor choices—they draw far too much attention to the connection between Asa and Forrest Carter.

The most likely explanation then is probably the simplest. Carter clearly had emotional problems—delusions of grandeur, swings from high emotion to cool and calculated within moments, obsessions with violence, paranoia. His alcoholism tended to exacerbate the problem, causing him to be called “weird” at times even by the closest of his comrades (McWhorter, Carry 124). Though his extremism had been his downfall from the earliest years—bringing his promising career with the ASRA and the Citizens’ Council to an end—he continued to engage in it, though extremism systematically brought about the disintegration of each of his endeavors. Between his clear emotional problems, his alcoholism, and his inability to change his behaviors despite knowing the grief they would bring to him, it is clear that Carter was far from a stable personality.

It is this instability, this lack of the capacity to stop himself from engaging in what had already proven to be self-destructive White supremacist extremism, that almost certainly was part of the reason why we can find what is clearly White supremacist philosophy in at least Carter’s first two novels.³⁵ Though Carter wrote both books while

still engaged in White supremacist activities, demonstrating that he was at least willing to engage in these activities—though his level of commitment by that point might be arguable—he might have still chosen to omit any possible references, however covert, from the novels. That he did not, that the references are so easily found by those who are sensitive to such philosophy, may in part be motivated by his desire to find readers who were sympathetic to his White supremacist views. However, we should also bear in mind that both books are the product of a clearly sick mind, and the occurrence of White supremacist attitudes and rhetorical tactics in each may well be a product of compulsive behavior rather than being intentional inclusions. Nevertheless, as we will find, White supremacy is implicated in both novels—and its appearance has to be accounted for by any alert reader.

Forrest Carter: *Gone to Texas*

It is certain that his first novel, The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales later titled Gone to Texas, represented little if any drift away from his earlier polemical writings in favor of the Confederacy and White supremacy. As Lawrence Clayton, who knew Carter personally and who was the only scholar who wrote lengthy analyses of Carter's work prior to the hubbub caused by Dan T. Carter's revelations about his identity in 1991—and who had himself first revealed Carter's true identity in the early 1980s—noted "Carter never lost his penchant for activism; he simply transferred his efforts to the realm of fiction" and continued to disagree "with the status quo in America in the 1970s even though he set his plots safely in earlier periods" ("Theology" 9).

In the novel, Missouri farmer Josey Wales's wife and child are brutally killed by

Kansas Redlegs, Union sympathizers who employed guerilla tactics against the civilian population. Seeking vengeance, Wales joins up with other guerillas who begin their fight prior to the onset of the Civil War, and spurning amnesty, turns to bank robbery and gun fighting after the war's end. After his partner, a teenaged boy named Jamie, is wounded during a robbery, Wales tries to take the boy to the Cherokee Nation to get medical help, evading the pursuit of federal troops, but the boy dies just before they reach the border.

Wales continues on, hooking up with a Cherokee and former Confederate soldier, Lone Watie, a relative of Confederate General Stand Watie. As Lone Watie is also a Confederate veteran and a widower—his wife and children having died on the Trail of Tears—the two decide to head to Mexico via Texas to escape the federal forces hunting for Wales. In doing so, they meet up with several new characters: Little Moonlight, an outcast Cheyenne woman who was being badly treated by Whites; Laura Lee Turner and her Grandma Sarah, who are spectacularly rescued by Wales from Comancheros after their two male relatives are mutilated and horrifically murdered. As it is on their way to Mexico, Wales, Watie and Little Moonlight accompany the two Turners to a ranch which was left to them by a relative who had died at Shiloh.

Once there, the group is threatened by a Comanche chief, Ten Bears, and his warriors. Watie and the women stay at the ranch and arm themselves against the coming battle, but Wales rides out to parlay with the chief. After arguing that both the Comanche and his own little group of followers are both victims of a common enemy, the duplicitous federal government, Wales suggests that the two factions live in peace—the Turners allowing the Comanche to take a tribute of cattle from the ranch once a year and the Comanche passing through without doing any harm. Ten Bears, recognizing Wales

as a fellow warrior, agrees. Now at peace, the group settles in—Watie pairing off with fellow Native Little Moonlight, and Wales pairing off with Laura Lee. Recognizing that he is still a wanted man, Wales prepares to disappear for Mexico, planning to first stop in town and hire hands to help the women with their ranch. While in town, Wales meets up with a Pinkerton man and a Texas Ranger who are looking for him, but the locals come to his aid, calling him “Mr. Wells” and swearing that “Wales” is dead. The two officers, though clearly realizing that the claim is a sham, allow him to go free as a fellow Texan. Wales returns to the ranch, weds Laura Lee, and he and Watie father children—a daughter for Watie, and a son named Jamie for Wales—reestablishing themselves as family men and bringing their lives full circle.

This story of post-Civil War misery and redemption echoed similar stories in Carter’s speeches from his run for governor in 1969-70. However, Carter had clearly shifted completely away from practical speechmaking and into the realm of imaginative literature. The shift, however, is not an inauspicious one for Carter’s White supremacist goals. As Whillock points out, the purveyor of hate speech “seeks to move an audience by creating a symbolic code for violence. Its goals are to inflame the emotions of followers, denigrate the designated out-class, inflict permanent and irreparable harm to the opposition, and ultimately conquer” (32). What better genre than melodrama to achieve just these goals? Carter’s melodramatic Western novel inflames the emotions of the audience from its beginning, with the story of the brutal murder of Wales’ innocent family; he creates and uses stereotypes of ruthless federal troops, degenerate Comancheros, intrepid women pioneers, and faithful Indian sidekicks to further polarize his audience and their emotions between the bad guys and good guys; he denigrates by

implication the out-class of Blacks who failed to leave the South, expecting he implies to live off federal handouts rather than support themselves by rugged individualism; he inflicts harm on the ethos of the opposition by depicting it as morally corrupt and spiritually desolate. Within the novel, Carter would find the ultimate expression of his lifelong passion for White supremacist propaganda.

In her work, Deforestation begins with a Little Tree: Uncovering the Polemic of Asa Carter in His Novels as Forrest Carter, Eileen Antalek considers at length the question of whether Carter can be considered to have continued his work as a White supremacist within his novels. After reviewing Carter's history, she concludes that he did not convert, but that "Carter revealed a keen wit and gallows sense of humor" in choosing to use "the name of an infamous racist and secessionist general" (11)—Antalek does not note it, but Carter truncated Nathan Bedford Forrest's name to "the incomparable Bedford Forrest" in the novel as well as in his pseudonym (GTT 86). She then enters into a consideration of how each of the books represents an unchanged world view, beginning with Gone to Texas, the title given to The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales when republished by Delacorte Press. She notes first the similarities between Carter and his protagonist Josey Wales: Both had seen everything they cared about "murdered"—Carter's principles were destroyed by his enemies while Wales's family is killed. Both were pursued by federal officials—Carter metaphorically by those he characterized as Northerners, Communist sympathizers who promoted integration, and Wales literally by federal troops. Both fled from their homes in the south and went to Texas—Carter had literally carved "GTT" for "Gone to Texas" on his front porch post before leaving, while Wales originally intends to merely pass through Texas but winds up staying. Both picked

up new friends who did not concern themselves much with their pasts—Carter found new friends in his agent Eleanor Friede and in such Texas friends as Lawrence Clayton, and Josey Wales gains friends in the nearby town who vouch for him (GTT 18-19).

What Antelek does not note is that the similarities run even deeper. In the book, Carter describes Wales as being “age 32. 5 feet 9 inches. Weight 160 pounds. Black eyes, brown hair, medium mustache. Heavy bullet scar horizontal right cheekbone, deep knife scar left corner mouth” (4). This description in some ways matches that of Carter, who also had a mustache when he turned novelist and a 4-inch scar which ran diagonally across the right side of his forehead, his right eye, and his right cheek.³⁶ The first name of the character apparently comes from Carter’s friend, oilman Don Josey, and Carter told acquaintances that the name “Wales” was a family name (Biffle). Though this last is possible, it is equally likely that “Wales” was selected for its reference to the British Isles and clearly Anglo-Saxon origin. Both Carter and his character undergo a name change, though the name change seems no deeper than cosmetic—representing a pseudonym rather than a new identity. Carter was known to refer to himself as a “knight”—having once planned a biography titled “Ace Carter: Foolish Knight”—and Wales is repeatedly referred to as a “warrior” (123, 176, 179), and once as the “mightiest of warriors” (172). It seems clear that Carter at least to some degree identified with his character, Josey Wales, perhaps to the extent that the novel came to represent Carter’s own fantasy life—a creative reimagining of his own life story.

Both Antalek and Shari Huhndorf do an excellent job of explaining how Carter subverts the form of the Western and deploys stereotypes of Native Americans to continue to communicate his own White supremacist views. However, neither writer had

access to Carter's discourse from the period during which he was writing his book, The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales. We find from an examination of them that Carter was deeply involved in doing research for the book while he was running for Governor of Alabama, that he himself viewed his writings as sympathetic to his White supremacist views, and that part of his project was to reeducate his audience so that they would "properly" understand the sociopolitical superiority of White supremacy. Certain passages of his speeches specifically refer to the research he had begun doing in preparation for his first book, The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales later published as Gone to Texas,³⁷ and some passages even echo materials which would later be incorporated into that work. Though these works reflect Carter's growing interest in a fiction writing career, they in no way represent a departure from his political goals and in many ways reinforced and furthered the work he was doing during his run for Governor of Alabama and with the Southerners on a White supremacist platform.

One speech, probably dating from late 1969, was delivered by Carter during his run for governor and gives some insight into Carter's initial work on his first book, Gone to Texas. This work apparently began with visits to Texas to soak up local color and do historical research in archives—which he mentions specifically—so as to lend verisimilitude to the work. In the speech, Program 11 which was almost certainly titled "Gone to Texas," Carter discusses the practice of leaving the South for Texas during the Reconstruction period; White Southerners who found themselves in danger of arrest by federal authorities would carve "GTT"—Gone to Texas—on their porch posts and leave for the less-populated areas of the Southwest where they could live as outlaws with less fear of being apprehended. As Antalek and Rubin note, Carter himself would do the

same thing before leaving his Alabama home—though his sons went to Abilene and he relocated to Florida (Antelek 18, Rubin 81, Greenhaw, My Heart 50). The speech is a positive recounting of the lives of such figures as Sam Mathews, the Taylors—Creed, William Pipkin, Joshua, and Rufus—gunfighter John Wesley Hardin, and Nathan Bedford Forrest. Carter uses his heroic picture of all these men to counter “The left-wing writers of books and television and movies today [who] would make these men out to be outlaws, gangsters, and thugs. But, they were not. They were tough men, sure; they had to be. But, they were tender men too. They loved their families, their folks, their kin.” The principal goal of the speech appears to be to encourage the listener to follow in the footsteps of these men, using violence if necessary, to resist the efforts of the federal government in promoting Civil Rights, supposedly defending their own families. Several sections of the speech would be echoed in the text of Gone to Texas: the story of the carven porch post occurs in the Preface (GTT viii), the brief biography of Hardin echoes similar sections in the book (GTT 75, 87), the list of “Taylors” in the book contains all those in the speech along with a few extras, and the motto “Whoever sheds a Taylor’s blood, by a Taylor’s hand must die” occurs in both texts (GTT 86). In each case, references to these individual serves to reinforce the notion that the cause of the Confederacy carried on after the war and that resistance to federal authorities was not merely justified but praiseworthy—the parallel to resistance to Civil Rights as defended by federal authorities is easy to draw.

Most importantly, the post-Civil War ditty which encapsulates Carter’s point in the speech is contained in both works, though the text varies. In Gone to Texas, the verse given is:

They say I cain't take up my rifle
And fight 'em now nor more,
But I ain't a'gonna love 'em
Now that is certain shore.
And I don't want no pardon
Fer whut I was and am,
And I won't be reconstructed,
And I don't give a damn. (GTT 88)

In Carter's speech, Program 11, the song appears in the penultimate section: "Well, I am just a old rebel / Reckon that is all I am / For this carpet-bagger government / I do not give a . . . dad-blamed / . . . I'm glad I fight agin it / I'll keep fightin' 'til we've won / And, I don't want no pardon / For nothing that I done / No, I don't want no pardon / For what I was, nor what I am / And I won't be reconstructed / And I don't give a . . . dad-blame." The shifting of the obvious rhyme "damn" to "dad-blame" appears to be for the sake of his listening audience and to comply with contemporary standards, but the recurrence of the song demonstrates how closely allied the themes of the speech and book were. The omission in Gone to Texas of the still openly defiant "I'll keep fightin' 'til we've won" and inclusion of the far tamer "But I ain't a'gonna love 'em" and the apparent acceptance of defeat demonstrates, however, the more defeatist and disillusioned view that would dominate that work.

Other speeches also contain sections that echo the work Gone to Texas. In Program 17, probably from late 1969 and most likely entitled "White Man Guilt," Carter discusses the then-emerging view in US politics that certain lands in the Southwest had

been illegally annexed from Mexico for White settlement. He gives a bit of background on the situation, saying that there were no “settlers” on the land, “The only people were roving bands of Indians—an Apache, and a few minor tribes that didn’t settle but traveled through the land, like the Comanches” suggesting that land only “belongs” to those who would settle it and farm or ranch after the European manner. Painting a negative portrait of the “Spanish Dons” who would take the wandering longhorn cattle but would not live in Texas because it was “too wild and rough,” Carter segues into a discussion of “our people” who would come in from the shores of the lower East Coast and move westward, settling as they went:

A man with only his family and his wagon would move into that desolate land. He’d build his ’dobe hut out of mud, sometimes 50 to 100 miles from his nearest neighbor. He built his corrals. He rode the longhorn down. He and his wife fought the drought, the terrifying dust storms, the cloud bursts that would flood out a crop overnight. When the man was away, that woman with her sun bonnet and her young-uns and her long rifle would defend that ’dobe hut against marauding bands of Comanche and Apache. And, the Indian learned that while he might eventually take that ’dobe hut and its meager possessions, it would cost him five, six, ten, or twelve braves to do it, because that woman standing the door meant business. And, she meant to defend that wad of mud and what ground it stood on. The Indians came to call these pioneer mothers of our people “the Devil’s Squaws.” They could place a rifle ball between the eyes at one hundred yards. They could belly-shoot a buck from the hip

with a cap and ball pistol at fifty, while the young-uns were reloading the rifle. They meant what they said and said what they meant. And, they wanted you to talk straight that-a-way, too. Their men folk rode half-wild horses and rounded up wilder longhorns. And, they conquered the land, something no other people would do. Texas had already been won. The war against the elements, the drought, the flood, the loneliness, the roving savage had already been won when Santa Ana up and decided he'd tell these tough pioneers how they ought to give him the fruits of what they'd produced.

Well, they took on Santa Ana. They whipped him between round-ups so they wouldn't miss their calf-branding. And, you know what? There can't any record be found in all the archives of the history of Texas about a single one of those pioneers having any guilt feelings. And, you know, that's enough to make a limp-wristed liberal just naturally sit down and bawl his eyes out.

As in Program 11, Carter mentions in this passage the archival work which he was then doing in preparation for his novel. He also creates a historic picture of Texas settlers, as he would do in the book Gone to Texas, but provides a less favorable view of the native inhabitants—here mere “wanderers” and marauders and “roving savage[s]” whose deaths are not in any way to be regretted—than he would later. The imagery in both this speech and the book suggest that non-Southerners—the “limp-wristed liberals” above, and “horned toads back East, wallerin’ around in fine fittin’s and the sin of Sodom” (GTT 161)—are homosexual and apparently to be despised therefore. What is perfectly self-

evident in this speech is what would provide subtext for the novel, that Carter's images of heroic pioneers are meant to bolster up a White supremacist—and not coincidentally anti-Native—philosophy which proposes that the lands of North America and their savage inhabitants were properly conquered by civilized Whites.

Other speeches appear to reflect Carter's research of historical characters, research that would inform the novel. Two speeches, Program 48 probably entitled "Quantrill" and the essay "Jesse James" contained on Carter's album, contain portraits of these two figures who operate as background color throughout the novel and occasionally fuel the plot. For example, in "Quantrill," Carter tries to "straighten out a little history, which our tax-supported, so-called public education seems incapable of teaching, and which the Hollywood television writers insist on twisting for their own left-wing, Red benefits." First, Carter portrays the Kansas Red Legs as marauders in order to justify the violent behaviors which he suggests Quantrill and others engaged in only in justified retaliation:

These Abolitionists formed guerilla armies and were called Kansas Redlegs. The US Congress met, these politicians, and passed what they called--a [unclear] law, which law said that if these thugs would turn over half the loot that they robbed from the farms of Missouri and Arkansas, they could keep the other half to divide among themselves and have protection of the US government as so-called soldiers of the Union. One such Redleg outfit was led by a man named Jennison, the rage of his thugs was always marked by the burning of homes until the chimneys left standing stark and naked against the Missouri skies became known as

Jennison monuments. Another such Redleg leader was a United States senator named James H. Lane. On just one of his raids into Missouri, it required 200 wagons to haul back the loot taken from the farmhouses of Missouri. Behind him and his Redleg raiders were left burned farmhouses and murdered civilians, many of them women, children, and even babies in their cribs. This was what was called the Border War.

Jennison would be mentioned in the novel as the raider who had slaughtered the family of Carter's teenaged sidekick, the innocent and intensely loyal Jamie, which the novel's hero finds out when Jamie begins to mutter feverishly after being wounded:

Suddenly he sat up wildly, his eyes frightened. Josey placed a restraining hand on his shoulder. "Pa said it was Jennison, Ma. Jennison! A hunnert men!" Just as suddenly he collapsed back onto the blankets. Sobs racked him, and great tears ran down his cheeks. "Ma," he said brokenly, "Ma." And he was still . . . his eyes closed.

Josey looked down at the boy. He knew Jamie had come from Arkansas, but he had never discussed his reasons for joining the guerrillas. Nobody did. Doc Jennison! Josey knew he had carried his Redleg raids into Arkansas where he had looted and burned so many farmhouses that the lonely chimneys left standing became known as "Jennison Monuments." The hatred rose again inside him. (GTT 43)

There is little difference in the deployment of this story in the speeches and the novel. The death of the boy's mother, the overwhelming odds against the family, and the implied—and in many ways accurately depicted—brutality of the Redleg raids are meant

to make it clear to the reader that Jamie's disregard for federal authority is justified. Absent from this version, however, are truthful accounts of atrocities committed by Southern sympathizers, and not necessarily merely in revenge. Just as Carter's version of Abolitionist atrocities helped to fuel the anger which his listeners felt towards Northerners who supported the Civil Rights movement, it would help to fuel his hero's hatred for and justify his violence towards Northern troops in the novel.

Shortly thereafter in the same "Quantrill" speech, Carter would provide more history that would work its way into his later novel. In his quest to enlighten his readers about the "lies and distortions of the left wing" which prevent them from understanding and emulating their own history of resistance, Carter provides portraits of other outlaws:

Such men rode with Quantrill as Bill Anderson, the Missouri farmer, who'd had his home burned, his wife and two-year-old baby murdered. He found them in a [bog?] with bullets through their head, and two daughters carried off to a Centralia, Kansas, brothel house by Kansas Red Legs. He became known as Bloody Bill Anderson because he usually scalped his Red Leg victims, and he wore a jacket made of those scalps. There was George Todd, William Hallard, the Younger brothers--Jim, Bob, and Cole Younger. There were two youthful teenage gunfighters who'd been Missouri plow hands, known as Frank and Jesse James--who were later to be exalted by the Southerners as a spirit of resistance during the era of Reconstruction. But, that's another story.

Like Bloody Bill Anderson, the hero of Carter's novel Gone to Texas would have his wife and infant son murdered and his house burned down, fueling his desire to join Bill

Anderson's guerrillas and seek vengeance (GTT 5-6). Anderson's violence motivated by vengeance is justified by the atrocities perpetrated on his own family, and again the reader is invited to draw a parallel between the atrocities perpetrated on the Wales and Anderson families and the dangers which Carter posited the Civil Rights movement posed to White families—encouraging violence in opposition to Civil Rights.

In the essay "Jesse James," Carter provides further evidence that he was continuing his research for his novel. He quotes from an unnamed publication, probably gained in his archival research for the book, in order to continue to make the point that "outlaws" were principally fueled by their desire to avenge Civil War atrocities. He mentions one such outlaw:

The Hollywood leftists like to picture Quantrill and his men as riding for no cause, except murder and theft, but there's ample proof to the contrary. For example, in the April 1932 edition of the old publication, Confederate Veterans, there's a death notice of one "Ben Harven," St. Louis camp, number 731, United Confederate Veterans, and it says, quote—"In 1863, 1864, and 1865, comrade Ben Harven rode with that gallant and dashing chieftain Quantrill, and he also served the true cause with George Todd, Dave Poole, "Bloody Bill" Anderson, and Jesse James, Confederate soldiers of gallantry"—unquote.

Precisely how this passage constitutes "ample proof" of Quantrill's noble aspirations, being as it is a mere statement that these men served a "true cause," is never explained, but to Carter's loyal audience, such a specific inclusion would have operated as proof nevertheless. In the very next passage, Carter includes material that would further fuel

his novel and justify Jesse James's later criminal pursuits:

It was as a Confederate soldier that in 1865, after Appomattox, Jesse James, his brother Frank, and several more riders came in to surrender at Lexington; they rode under a flag of truce. And as they sat their horses, waiting to turn over their weapons to the federal forces present that day, it was Jesse who held the white flag of truce. He and his comrades had been promised a soldier's surrender, but such was not the case. As Jesse held the flag, he was shot through both lungs, he slumped over his saddle, and held there by a horseman on each side, he and his men escaped the murder that had been planned for them by the United States Army.

This same event is mentioned in the novel, when Carter writes of "Jesse James [who] tried to surrender under a flag of truce and was shot through the lungs, barely escaping"³⁸ (GTT 13). In both cases, Carter's portrait of the victimized Quantrill, Bloody Bill Anderson, and Jesse James would help to justify both their own violent activities and by implication encourage the listeners and readers into resistance themselves in opposition to the Civil Rights movement which was supposedly victimizing them.

One of the central sources for the portrait of the hero in Gone to Texas, however, was John Wesley Hardin. Hardin is a key figure in the "Gone to Texas" speech, Program 11 probably from late 1969, and his history is used to vindicate the violence of those who were outlaws in the Reconstruction period:

John Wesley Hardin, known real well all over Texas, posters claimed he killed 45 men. But, John Wesley never owned up to but 40. He had a habit, when facing Regulators or federal troops, of demanding they

surrender in the name of the Confederacy. Now, this was 10 or 12 years after the so-called war was over, ladies and gentlemen, but that's the way he felt about it.

Many of Hardin's characteristics are given to the hero of Gone to Texas, including his signature "pistol spin" by which Wales seems to intend to hand his pistols over but instead spins and rapidly fires them: "A few years later the Texas gunfighter John Wesley Hardin would execute the same trick to disarm Wild Bill Hickok in Abilene. It would become known as the 'Border Roll' in honor of the Missouri Border pistol fighters who had invented it . . . but few would dare practice it, for it required a master pistoleer" (75).

Hardin is also mentioned later in the book, in a passage meant to underscore how both the hero of the book and Hardin worked hard to establish an "edge" over their opponents which would help to ensure their victories: "Some, such as Hardin, stepped sideways, back and forth, in a pistol fight. They would draw their pistol in midsentence, catching their opponents napping" (111). Wales, in fact, uses the latter strategy in the book, shooting his opponent while Wales was in the middle of telling him that there were gold bags in the saddle on his horse and redirecting the man's eyes in that direction (23). Such sections, tying Confederate veterans together with Western outlaws, permits Carter to mine both the listeners' and readers' interest in Western folk heroes as a means of defending the basic good character of former Confederate soldiers who refused to cooperate with society norms after the war. By doing so, he also furthers the image of the West as primarily populated by Whites and Native Americans—erasing the fact that as many as one in every three cowboys was Black and several cavalry units were manned by Blacks.³⁹

The other historical figures mentioned in both “Quantrill” and “Jesse James” would be mentioned frequently in Gone to Texas to provide a seemingly accurate historical background: “Jim Lane, Doc Jennison, and James Montgomery” (7); “Quantrill, Bloody Bill Anderson, whose sister was killed in a Union prison, George Todd, Dave Pool, Fletcher Taylor (8); “Quantrill, Joe Hardin, and Frank James Bloody Bill or Jesse James” (34). Carter’s heroic pictures of these individuals in both his 1969-70 speeches and his novels echoed his lifelong tactic of providing laudatory biographies of those who had fought for the Confederacy—just as he did in his 1950s’ The Southerner publications with the portraits of Joseph Wheeler, John Singleton Mosby, John Bell Hood, and J. E. B. Stuart, and also in his early 1970s’ The Southerner publication with Nathan Bedford Forrest. In all cases, Carter’s goal appears to be the same, to portray men who fought for the Confederacy, particularly those who fought with great violence, in a favorable light as men of good character so as to encourage his audience to emulate them.

Little Tree / *Gunyi Usdi*: Off to the Mountains

In the second of his novels, completed in at least draft form prior to Carter’s abandonment of open association with White supremacist organizations, we find that he has taken a slightly different genre and again altered it so that he can continue to espouse his White supremacist views. Me and Granpa, later retitled The Education of Little Tree,⁴⁰ is the story of a boy orphaned at five who goes by choice to live with his Cherokee/Scots grandfather and Cherokee grandmother in the mountainous region of Tennessee. Renamed “Little Tree” by his grandmother, he is taught “The Way” of the

Cherokees and the foxhunting and moonshining of Appalachians by his grandfather, and he is homeschooled by his grandmother with the great works of the Western World—Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire—and by a Jewish peddler who teaches him basic math. The episodic narrative of the first part of the book shows Little Tree becoming acquainted with sympathetic characters—such as Pine Billy, a clownish Appalachian fiddle player straight out of Li'l Abner; Mr. Jenkins, the kindly country store owner who asks no questions about Granpa's moonshine and doles out free candy; a sharecropper and his daughter, who insult Little Tree and his Granpa but are forgiven by them because their need to take pride in themselves was their motivation; the Noble Savage, Cherokee Willow John; and Mr. Wine, the Jewish peddler who has adopted the ways of the local populace.

Little Tree also becomes acquainted with unsympathetic characters—a state teachers' college English professor who is bewildered by Grandpa's concern with politics, a well-to-do couple looking for directions to Chattanooga who scream at Granpa for providing unorthodox directions, brutal revenueurs who threaten the family's livelihood and bludgeon one of their dogs to death, a politician who screams hate-speech slogans he clearly does not believe in order to gain votes, a "Christian" who sells Little Tree a diseased calf, the gangsters Mr. Slick and Mr. Chunk who insult Little Tree out of maliciousness and upon whom the family play spiteful tricks, and a preacher who obsequiously defers to the sole wealthy Episcopalian family in his congregation but insults his poorer parishioners. And, Little Tree is educated in the extremely questionable version of the history of the Reconstruction period, the Trail of Tears, and a former Confederate Cherokee named 'Coon Jack.

In the final section of the book, Granpa and Granma are found to be unfit parents by government officials who order that Little Tree is to be sent to an orphanage; a sympathetic lawyer, Joe Taylor, is unable to help because the government does not understand “mountain people”; and Little Tree goes to a Dickensian orphanage where he is beaten by the sadistic reverend who is in charge. Willow John comes to the rescue, frightening the reverend into giving up custody, and Granpa comes to retrieve Little Tree. Little Tree spends a few years living an idyllic life until Willow John, Granpa, and Granma die one after the other.⁴¹ The ten-year-old Little Tree leaves the mountains to become a cowboy in Oklahoma—the book ending with the burial of his final companion from Tennessee, the dog Blue Boy, and Little Tree being left to wander.⁴²

The work was originally billed as “autobiography,” though press releases written by Carter during the period called it an “autobiographical novel,”⁴³ but Lawrence Clayton concludes that “Carter claimed the book was autobiographical [yet] details of his past prove otherwise” (“Politics” 23). The only sense in which the book might be autobiographical is that it may be a relatively accurate rendition of Carter’s fantasy life—as Kopel notes, Carter was telling people as early as 1948 that he had been raised by his Indian grandfather and was an orphan (“Reflections” 9). Even allowing for this possibility, it is clear that the book exists as a fictional autobiography—a novel which is constructed as an autobiography—and is in no conventional way autobiographical in that it is not even partially based on documentable reality. Thus, we can examine the novel and discuss the choices which Carter intentionally made and do not have to trouble ourselves with arguments that characters, situations, and episodes are constructed as they are because Carter is merely reporting what happened. Apart from a possible foundation

in family legend about great-grandfather James Weatherly—which itself would be highly fanciful as Weatherly died when Carter was five years old (Rubin 96)—there is no material basis for the book, and the genesis of the book rested in Carter’s own imagination.

The work itself, as Clayton notes, is similar to that of Mark Twain—another talented satirist—whose *Huckleberry Finn* was a sociopolitical criticism in the shape of an adventure story. Carter’s concern for sociopolitical criticism did not change, merely the “sphere of [his] activity,” and Clayton concludes that Carter “would not have changed his stance in the criticism of politics as he understood it. His views became even more caustic as he continued his writing career” (“Politics” 24, 26). Indeed, Clayton himself quotes Carter as saying of the book, “I got in some good licks in this one” (qtd. in “The Enigma” 21). Thus, though Carter’s novel is clearly an adventure story, in some ways a *Bildungsroman* (Antelek 32), his naïve and unreliable “objective persona” allows “the reader to draw the intended conclusion” regarding certain political and social institutions which he criticizes (Clayton, “Politics” 24). Though Clayton argues that the intended conclusions, that politicians are hypocrites for example, are “obvious” (“Politics” 24), Clayton’s blindness to Carter’s continued White supremacist propaganda may well have led him to ignore the less obvious underpinnings to the work. In any case, with The Education of Little Tree, we are dealing with satire—and sociopolitical satire, at that—and the basic function of satire is to purport to say one thing while having another, unstated, meaning. To fail to investigate the sociopolitical circumstances to which Carter was responding, and dealing with the work as an ahistorical fable, is to misunderstand the fundamental nature of the book.

The goal of the satirist, traditionally, is the condemning of vice or folly, often by use of humor. By definition, “the public motivation of the satirist is explicit and self-justificatory; he writes, so he claims, to reform. His audience may be small (a few ‘right-thinking men’) but it must share with him commitment to certain intellectual and moral beliefs which validate his critique of aberration” (Preminger 739). Thus, an understanding of the intellectual and moral beliefs which Carter was disseminating by means of his at times humorous and at other times sentimental novel is as critical as determining the targets of that satire—that is, the virtues which are being extolled are as significant as the follies being attacked.

We cannot, of course, assume that the intellectual and moral beliefs of the created identity of Forrest Carter are identical to the explicitly stated views of Asa Earl Carter. Carter was, after all, a skilled writer with the ability to have written a book from an assumed identity which posited views not his own. Because of his financial circumstances and the decreased interest in the variety of White supremacy which he had espoused, he certainly had motivation to do so. Since the literary audience is often accepting of authors who wish to creatively reinvent themselves due to personal trauma, he also would have been allowed to do so. Indeed, Clayton assumes that he did just this: “My interpretation of Carter’s leaving politics in the South was that because of some psychological upheaval or physical trauma to himself or a member of his family, he felt it best to abandon his old life and take up a new existence” (“Theology” 11). He declares that this new identity did not partake of Carter’s White supremacy views: “I think Carter turned his back on his racist days by 1973” (“Little Enigma” 5). As Carter had the means, motive, and opportunity to abandon his old beliefs, it is assumed by many—

including Clayton—that he did so.

The closer examination, above, of his political activity suggest otherwise, however. Carter had completed his first novel, The Rebel Outlaw: Josey Wales, prior to leaving openly White supremacist activity. He had completed The Education of Little Tree in at least draft form during the same period. The name of the persona he adopted for himself—Bedford Forrest—was a direct reference to the Confederate and Klan leader he had admired for his whole life, the additional Cherokee identity was not new being one he had asserted since 1948, and because of the association between Cherokees and the Confederacy, it in no way contradicted his previous identity. Finally, and most tellingly, The Education of Little Tree itself in its themes, its characters, and in its parallels to Carter’s earlier writings belies the notion that Carter was a changed man.

Many passages in the first half of The Education of Little Tree echo sections in the Liberty Essays speeches given in support for his earlier run for governor. Though sometimes the stories bear only slight similarity to one another, other sections are quite literally word-for-word and demonstrate a strong connection in theme and intent between the two texts. One such example is in Carter’s description of his great-grandfather. In Program 13, probably from late 1969, we are told the story of that great-grandfather, James Weatherly:

In the early 1900’s, Mama and a bunch of them took their grandpa, James Weatherly, the old cavalry rider down to Vicksburg where there was going to be a big reunion. He wasn’t at Vicksburg in the war, but they took him anyway—he wanted to go. And, all day they walked around, all the old Confederate veterans and Union veterans who were

there too, and that night they had a big dinner for them on a boat, drewed up to the landing—a riverboat, called a “showboat.” Well, as the dinner and such rocked along, things got a little heated, and great-grandpa Weatherly ups with his cane, and he swats a Yankee slap over backwards off his chair. And, that started the wildest fight that could come about. And, Mama and all of them got in there, and they got him out, and there he was—white beard and all, dressed in his faded gray, and as bloody as a stuck pig. Not long before that, he’d been appointed justice of the peace in his neck of the woods by the governor of Alabama, which the governor did for a lot of the old Confederate veterans. And, Mama and the women folk gave him a good dressing down, and they said, “You ought to be ashamed of yourself, acting that-a-way. And, the governor doing what he’s done, appointing you and all. You’ll embarrass him and everybody.”

And, the old cavalryman said, “I don’t curry no favor with no governor, nor no other politician, and if he don’t like it, he knows where he can go. And, anyhow, I got my reasons. They ain’t your reasons, they’re mine. And, I’m satisfied to stand on them.” Well, he did. He stood on them all the way, until they buried him with the winding sheet being the Rebel flag that he’d rode under, and fought under, and which he loved. He and his wife didn’t leave much for their young-un’s—a Bible; some old diaries; a sword; some papers; a wore-out pair of boots; a frayed, dusty cavalryman’s hat; some pistols; an old velvet dress that she had sort of hoarded, her only concession to holding on to something of finery and

value that she had had before the war; and that was all. The old shack wasn't worth ten dollars; the piece of mountain land that was left wouldn't raise a gourd, much less a corn stalk. And, that was it. And, you could repeat that story a thousand times over, because it happened a thousand times over, here in the Southland—in your family, and yours, and yours. But, you know, what they left was a lot more than material wealth—a lot more than big, fat, landed acres—they left a creed, a code, an ethic. They left a pride that is the Southland.

This comic story differs from the one in the novel, which is tragic rather than comic.

Little Tree's great-grandfather, named Ethan, is also said to have ridden with John Hunt Morgan, but he did not emerge from his service unharmed—he limps from an injury to his ankle, where a minnie ball had damaged muscle and caused his ankle to double in size, and he has lead in his side which would eventually cause the gangrenous infection that would kill him. As with the speech, we are given a story which takes place approximately 40 years after the end of the war, but the old man is portrayed as a sympathetic victim:

The worst of the hurts was in the gut; in his side, near the hip. That's where the lead was never taken out. It gnawed, like a rat chewing at a corn crib, night and day; and never stopped. It was eating away at his insides; and soon now, they would stretch him out on the floor of the mountain cabin and cut him open, like a butchered bull.

The putridness would come out; the gangrene. They would not use anesthetics, just a swig from the mountain jug. And he would die there on

the floor, in his blood. No last words; but as they held his arms and legs in the death throes, the old sinewy body would bow up from the floor, and the wild scream of the exulting rebel's challenge to hated government would come from his throat and he would die. Forty years it had taken the "guvmint" lead to kill him.

[. . .]

[The narrative breaks, and flashes back to a time when the grandfather was alive.]

The fall of year was dying in the Tennessee mountains. The wind bit the last of the leaves from hickory and oak. He stood, that winter afternoon with his son, halfway down the hollow; not admitting that he couldn't climb the mountain anymore.

They watched the naked trees, stark on the ridge against the sky; as though they were studying the winter slant of sun. They would not look at each other.

"Reckin I'll not be leavin' ye much," he said, and laughed soft, "best ye could git from that cabin would be to touch a lighter knot to it fer a hand warming." His son studied the mountain. "I reckon," he said quietly.

"Ye're a man, full and with family," the old man said, "and I'll not hold ye to a lot . . . 'ceptin' we stretch our hand to clasp any man's as quick as we'll defind what we was give to believe. My time is gone, and now the time will be something I don't know, fer you. I wouldn't know how to live in it . . . no more'n Coon Jack. Mind ye've little to meet it with . . .

but the mountains'll not change on ye, and ye kin them; and we be honest men with our feelings."

"I mind," the son said. The weak sun had set behind the ridge, and the wind bit sharp. It came hard for the old man to say . . . but he did. ". . . and . . . I . . . kin ye, son."

The son did not speak, but he slipped his arm around the old, skinny shoulders. The shadows of the hollow were deep now and blurred the mountains black on either side of them. They walked slowly in this fashion, the old man touching his cane to the ground, down the hollow to the cabin. (44-46)

The great-grandfather in Education of Little Tree, like James Weatherly in the speech, leaves his son only a mountain shack and a long speech about ethics (45-46). Both stories utilize the great-grandfather's service in the Confederacy to bolster the reader's belief in White supremacy, but the angry defiance of James Weatherly in the speech becomes pathos in the novel, a far more sentimental and heart-tugging scene, in which the victimized old man is far more sympathetic than the curmudgeonly old man of the speech. Such a shift from comedy and open defiance to tragedy and sentimentality is characteristic of the changes made in the material from the speeches when incorporated into the novel. Though the message—the themes and imagery—remain the same, Carter tugs on heartstrings in the novel rather than rousing wrath as he did in the speeches, coating the White supremacy of his speeches in sweetness and making it more palatable to the casual reader who might have rejected the more crude and explicit version.

Carter deploys this same tactic time and again. Another character whose story is

told twice—once as defiant and once as pathetic—is an old man who takes exception to the way he is being treated by fellow churchgoers. In Program 34, probably from early 1970, the character is called “Swamp John” and is described as an elderly gentleman who has trouble rising to his feet, despite using a cane, and speaks in a voice which shows his age:

Swamp John said, “Now, I want ya’ll to listen to me for a minute, cause I ain’t going to say it twice. I understand that there has been on the board of deacons that has been talking about me and having things to say about me being in charge of the key to the songbook box. Well now, let me tell you something. I was put in charge of that there key, and I’m handling the custody of it, and any of them as don’t like it ‘cause I’ve got the key to the songbook box, I want you to know I got the difference right here in my pocket.”

In the speech, we are never told what it is that Swamp John has in his pocket, but we are told that Carter’s great-granpa—the cavalry captain mentioned above—stood and spoke, calming Swamp John down by asserting that everyone appreciated his efforts, any gossip which he might have heard had been corrected by his objections, and that all assembled genuinely regretted having offended him. After church was out, Carter tells us, his grandfather asked his father why he had been so serious about something that was apparently rather ridiculous—being concerned over something as simple as a key to the songbook box—and the great grandfather told him that he only thought it funny because he didn’t understand:

“You see, Swamp John joined up in the Confederate cavalry as a man, and

he fought for nearly four years—riding and charging and scrapping with all he had—and then come Reconstruction. And, he fought all the way through that—giving all he had, sometimes hiding out in the woods and sometimes being sought after by authorities who were carpet-baggers or federals. And, when we won over them, it was a pretty desperate fight against them red-clay hills and [mountain?] land you see yonder, trying to raise a stalk of corn, twist out a jug of sorghum syrup. And now, in his old age, things come too calm, and there just ain't nothing left for Swamp John to fight. So, every once in a while, he's got to chew on a little red meat, and call up that old spirit of the Rebel that became a way of life with him. The key to that songbook box is mighty important to Swamp John. He treats that stewardship as honorably as he did when he was ordered to charge into cannon mouth, which he did, and face grapeshot, and fight the carpet-bagger. The thing is he's 'mongst his folks here in this valley, who understand all that. Swamp John don't understand it, but we do."

Swamp John, clearly, is a symbol of Confederate pride and thus a symbol of continued pride in White supremacy. In the speeches, he clearly represents a figure who values Confederate causes, the battle against any effort by Northerners to alter Southern ways, and is meant to encourage the listener to similarly battle efforts by the federal government in behalf of the Civil Rights movement and Blacks despite all odds.

This same figure appears in the novel, The Education of Little Tree, but is given a new name, "'Coon Jack'" and a new identity, Cherokee. Despite these changes, the basic story remains the same and so does the intention. The story is introduced by Little Tree's

Granpa, who says:

“’Coon Jack stood up and said, ‘I hear tell they’s some in here been talking about me behind my back. I want ye to know that I’m awares. I know what’s the matter with ye; ye’re jealous because the Deacon Board put me in charge of the key to the songbook box. Well, let me tell ye; any of ye don’t like it, I got the difference right here in my pocket.’” (38)

Just as in the speech, Little Tree’s great grandfather rises and addresses ’Coon Jack with great deference, calming him down, though we are specifically told that ’Coon Jack was referring to his gun as “the difference” (39). Again, as in the speech, Little Tree’s grandfather finds Coon Jack’s concern amusing and is rebuked by the great grandfather, who says:

“Son, don’t laugh at ’Coon Jack. Ye see, when the Cherokee was forced to give up his home and go to the Nations, ’Coon Jack was young, and he hid out in these mountains, and he fought to hold on. When the War ’tween the States come, he saw maybe he could fight that same guvmint and get back the land and homes. He fought hard. Both times he lost. When the War ended, the politicians set in, trying to git what was left of what we had. ’Coon Jack fought, and run, and hid, and fought some more. Ye see, ’Coon Jack come up in the time of fighting. All he’s got now is the key to the songbook box. And if ’Coon Jack seems cantankerous . . . well, there anin’t nothing left for ’Coon Jack to fight. He never knowed nothing else.”

Granpa said, he come might near crying fer ’Coon Jack. He said after

that, it didn't matter what 'Coon Jack said, or did . . . he loved him,
because he understood him.

Granpa said that such was "kin," and most of people's mortal trouble
come about by not practicing it; from that and politicians.

I could see that right off, and might near cried about 'Coon Jack myself.

(39)

By changing Swamp John, the old and undaunted Confederate warrior who fought the federal government to preserve Southern ways, into 'Coon Jack, the pitiable Cherokee who fought against the federal government to preserve his home, Carter mines the sympathy of those who rightfully decry the poor treatment which Native Americans received. He elides, however, over the fact that White Southerners were generally sympathetic with the federal government's efforts to remove Native Americans from the South, and that because Cherokees held Black slaves—thousands of Blacks walked the Trail of Tears as the slaves of their Cherokee masters—many Cherokees fought the federal government for precisely the same reasons as other Southerners. Though some Cherokees may have indeed sided with the South largely because they thought they might get better terms from the new Southern government than they had from the federal government,⁴⁴ this does not erase the fact that by siding with the South, Cherokees were advancing the causes of White Southerners over Black Southerners and the stories of their lives and exploits are equally pro-Confederate. Carter's oversimplifying of the situation of Cherokees from the South and fighting for the South is a typical move of his. It demonizes the federal government as the sole perpetrator of the Cherokee removals and makes the cause of the Confederacy more palatable to a larger readership by omitting

explicit mention of White supremacist values—and particularly of unrepentant Rebel defiance. Instead, Carter portrays an old and broken man deserving of sympathy and entices a readership who might well resist openly supporting crude White supremacy into sympathizing with the old man’s anti-federal government stance, a stance which easily allies with Carter’s anti-Civil Rights platform.

Perhaps the strongest resemblance between the speeches and the novel comes in Carter’s deployment of his “Granpa” character—a character frequently depicted in the speeches and central to the novel, *The Education of Little Tree*. In both cases, Granpa is a sage from whom traditional knowledge is gained. In Program 8, Granpa and Carter overhear another character, Josh Allen get into an argument with another man over whether blue-tick hounds were better than red-bones. When Josh Allen allows the other man to win the argument, and the man walks off, Granpa takes Josh to task for failing to stand up for the “truth” that red-bones were the better hound; Josh responds that he allowed the man to win because he was “kin”—an argument which Granpa accepts immediately, encouraging the boy Carter to understand that one stands by one’s “kin,” regardless of circumstance. As noted above, in the passage on Carter’s philosophy of “kinship,” this attitude is also conveyed in the novel. In another story about Granpa and Josh Allen, the two are sitting in front of a country store. A politician, a judge Carter seems to recall, is having car trouble: he cannot remove the lugs from his tire because the lug wrench is too big. Josh Allen, whom we are told did not even complete first grade at school and was barely literate, offers to help. Sticking a penny in the wrench to take up the slack, he uses the lug wrench to undo all the lugs and changes the tire. The judge “look[s] like he had just seen a miracle take place” and offers to pay Josh Allen, who asks

only for a penny to replace the one that was bent out of shape removing the lugs. In this case, Josh Allen is used to bolster up Carter's claim that educated people can be morons—having merely memorized facts to get college degrees—while poor Whites show their native born intelligence in problem-solving situations. This story of Granpa, like others to be discussed below from the novel, supports Carter's claim that Whites are naturally superior in intellect, and White supremacy is similarly superior.

In Program 9, Carter deploys Grandpa's status as a sage ironically, saying that because a listener had written in to agree with Carter, she must be "as granpa would say [. . .] a mighty upstanding person with very few, if any, faults that anybody could notice," and continues by saying that, "Granpa was always real tolerant. He'd say, 'Well, I could be wrong. But, I ain't.'" In this passage, as in the novel, Carter's portrayal of his grandfather encourages both unity and a firm and unyielding stance, both of which Carter encourages his listeners to assume against the Civil Rights movement. In Program 5, Carter again deploys Granpa as a source of traditional wisdom, having him deduce the true meaning of the term "conservative" by saying that "As Granpa used to say, he kind of favored dividing that word up twixt the fighting conservatives and the politician kind of knot-on-a-log conservative that won't stick his neck out" and encourages his listeners to be the former, arguably violent extremist, rather than the latter who works within the system. In a similar passage of the novel, Carter's grandfather takes exception to the term "abhor," thinking that it was "*abwhore*," and says:

He said the meddlesome son of a bitch that invented the dictionary ought to be taken out and shot.

Granpa said that more'n likely this same feller had worked up half a

dozen more words that could discolor the meaning of the same thing. He said this was why politicians could git away with slicker'n folks and always claiming they didn't say this 'er that—or that they did. Granpa said, if you could check it out, the damn dictionary was either put up by a politician or they was some behind it. Which sounds reasonable. (ELT 90)

In both these cases, the character of Carter's grandfather encourages the listener or reader to be wary of the terms deployed by politicians, suggesting that true wisdom and understanding of terms comes from the common man—such as Carter's grandfather and himself. By doing this, Carter casts his philosophy as one that emerges from the ordinary citizen, a person whose commonsense judgment is superior to that of the career politician or by those, such as political scientists and academics, who have the official societal power to define terms. By positing his listeners as the source of true meaning, Carter empowers his listeners, who in turn would be more willing to align themselves with his philosophies.

In The Education of Little Tree, Carter discusses one point that is a close echo of one of his speeches from his run for governor in 1969-70. In the book, Granpa is given justification for his at times violent resistance to the forces of government:

Granpa had all the natural enemies of a mountain man. Add on to that he was poor without saying and more Indian than not. I suppose today, the enemies would be called “the establishment,” but to Granpa, whether sheriff, state or federal revenue agent, or politician of any stripe, he called them “the law,” meaning powerful monsters who had no regard for how folks had to live and get by. (ELT 16)

The reasons for Granpa's resistance, then, are several. First, he is a poor, independent farmer rather than a bottom-land resident. Next, he was an Indian, who had historically been badly treated by the government. Because of these two points, Granpa is said to have little regard for "the law" which did not represent him as either a mountain man or Indian, and which had treated him badly in both cases.

This same sort of justification for violence, and demonizing of any force which would interfere with the lives of local folk in the mountain occurs in Program 6, also called "Reconstruction Times" on Carter's album from the early 1970s. In that program, we are given the most complete image of Granpa as a man who is willing to violently resist efforts made by the government to curtail or control his activities. Carter begins the portrait by saying "But, as Granpa would say when he got in hot water—and he got in hot water right frequently, having all the natural enemies of a mountain man, like revenueurs and politicians and such"⁴⁵ Granpa is then depicted as having let the boy Carter follow him onto a ridge of the mountains where he could have a good vantage point to spy out anyone following him, and then sliding down a tree into a squatting position which Carter "later found [. . .] to be an excellent way to conserve energy in squatting if you don't mind getting' pine rosin and bark stuck on the back side of your clothes, and Granpa didn't mind." While assuming a squatting position, Granpa removes a "plug of Brown Mule chewing tobacco" and cuts off a chew with his extremely sharp knife. Carter dwells on the sharpness of that knife, saying that his grandfather frequently tested the knife by slicing a hair from his head in two, and suggests that the knife was used for more than cutting objects: "Well, he'd take out this knife, and thumb open the blade—all with one hand. You know, mountain men have a way of doing this by weakening the

spring so they can thumb the blade out using just one hand; the theory being, I reckon, that they've got other things to be doing in the meanwhile with the other hand"

Having in one smooth motion cut off his plug of tobacco and assumed a comfortable sitting position where he could watch in all directions for pursuers, a motion which Carter claims "was a fascinating study that no time engineer could've ever figured out," Granpa is said to turn to the boy Carter and his red-bone hound Buck with great seriousness to say:

"Well . . . now, let's just take stock of our situation." Me and Buck didn't exactly know what our "situation" was at the moment, whether it had to do with revenuers or politicians Granpa was having trouble with, or recounting of injustices that the dad-blamed Yankees had done at some time or another, but we was mighty proud to be included in "the situation." And we was all-fired anxious to get slap-dab in the middle of it and know what it was all about.

Well, Granpa would talk out loud, and he'd take stock of the whole situation, and then he'd start figuring out ways to come out on top, talking out loud.

In this section, which strongly echoes the portrait in the novel, Granpa is again given the enemies of the mountain man, but he is further depicted as historically opposed to the "Yankees" and to be continuing to fight the historical injustices inflicted by them on mountain men. Further, it is made clear that Granpa is willing to do whatever it takes to "come out on top," including violence.

Carter makes the point of this portrait clear in a following section of the 1969

speech, where he implies that it was men like Granpa and his listeners' grandfathers who had carried on the Cause of the Confederacy despite the seeming loss of the Civil War:

You see, your granpa and mine come from a breed of men who never doubted they'd come out on top. Any victory that the opposition won over them, they regarded as just a temporary victory. They knew they was going to win because they had the will to win. [. . .] They had the will; they knew they were going to win. It was just a matter of figuring out how to do it. Every time the opposition whipped them or beat them down, that was just temporary, and they chalked that up as another score they had to settle when they won out.

Having thus argued that the cause of the Confederacy was far from lost, Carter implies that the cause of white resistance to the Civil Rights movement would also only see defeat if people saw themselves as defeated, and encourages them to continue to fight—by implication violently if necessary—until the battle is won.

In a later passage of The Education of Little Tree, "Granpa's Trade," a similar set of circumstances occur when Granpa and Little Tree plan together before taking on a group of revenuers; Little Tree, despite being a child of five, outwits his adult pursuers and proves that bravery and cunning is all that is needed to defeat the oppression meted out by government officials who do not understand what it is—like moonshine production—that common people must do in order to be self-sufficient (ELT 64-75). In both his speeches and his novel, Carter encourages his listeners and readers to view government agents as the enemy, and legitimizes the resistance—even violent resistance—of the common people as necessary and justified. In his speeches, the

“Cause” is clearly spelled out as White supremacist—in the novel, the cause is seemingly autonomy, but as White supremacists frequently coded their quest for local supremacy over Blacks as the right to determine matters autonomously on a local level, the variant message in the book in no way contradicts Carter’s previous message.

In all the passages from Carter’s speeches in which the Granpa character is deployed, Granpa is portrayed as having innate, untutored wisdom that is superior to that of the educated, to be the enemy of government agents who would alter his way of life, and to be prepared to engage in violence against the agents of government, and to encourage his family—even very young children—to join with him in that fight. All of these qualities add up to epitomize the individual whom Carter wishes his listeners to become in opposition to the Civil Rights movement. Though Civil Rights is never mentioned explicitly in the novel, the parallel characteristics of Granpa—who in the novel is depicted as both a mountain man and a Cherokee—in no way contradict the platform which the grandfather of the speeches was created to advance and, in many ways, serve to bolster Carter’s White supremacist platform in precisely the same ways.

Indeed, from its third page, we begin to see the book taking shape as an anti-Civil Rights argument. The first two pages explain how Little Tree, after the death of his mother, chooses to go live with his grandparents. He and his grandparents board a bus which will take them to the mountains, and are ridiculed by the bus driver, who lifts “his right hand and [says], ‘How!’ and laughed” and by a heavily made-up woman who puts “a hand over her mouth and took it off and hollered real loud, ‘Wa . . . hoo!’” (2-3). At the very top of page 3, we are told: “Then we walked to the *back of the bus* [. . .] I sat in the middle between Granma and Granpa, and Granma reached across and patted Granpa

on the hand, and he held her hand across my lap. It felt good, and so I slept” (emphasis added). Because of the red flag which the phrase “back of the bus” written by an arch-segregationist would send up, Shari Huhndorf singles out this same passage as key to understanding Carter’s politics. Huhndorf notes that in this story the back of the bus is a “comfortable place where Little Tree finds a sense of love and belonging,” and goes on to speak of how the passage “romanticizes racial segregation” (156). Similarly, Justice reminds us that Carter romanticizes Indians in relations to Blacks, recalling a quote from Rubin:

Blacks [Carter] said, were undeserving compared with the patient and brave Indians, who had suffered terrible wrongs inflicted by the Yankees. “I heard him say many times that blacks don’t know how it is to be mistreated,” says Buddy Barnett, Asa’s friend from childhood [. . .] “The Indians have suffered more.” (Rubin 81)

While both Huhndorf and Justice accurately note the romanticizing of segregation and of Native Americans in this passage, neither notes how such romanticizing might work in terms of a critique of the Civil Rights movement.

That these Cherokees voluntarily choose to sit in the back of the bus, unlike Black activists of the period, is significant. Carter appears to be arguing that if the dominant society is this callous towards minorities, that minorities should not seek to enter into it on equal footing. Instead, the most dignified response is to segregate themselves from that society and to find comfort and community in whatever isolated area is available. Native Americans, thus, become Carter’s ideal minority—self-segregating and completely disengaged from the Civil Rights movement—in no way a threat to White

hegemony. Thus, Carter uses a positive stereotype in place of using a negative stereotype—he praises Native Americans chiefly as a way of criticizing Blacks—thus masking his hate speech and again deploying sentimentality in place of open defiance and explicit criticism.

Such anti-Civil Rights episodes are interspersed throughout the book. Huhndorf notes additional such episodes. She discusses how Little Tree’s introduction to “The Way” subtly narrates the disappearance of Native Americans and the oppression of Blacks. When Little Tree observes a hawk dive down and kill a quail:

Granpa explains the event to the distressed child with a lesson in social Darwinism: “Don’t feel sad, Little Tree. It is The Way. Tal-con caught the slow and so the slow will raise no children who are also slow [. . .] Tal-con lives by the Way. He helps the quail” (9). Echoing Lewis Henry Morgan’s nineteenth-century arguments about social evolution, this drama reflects on The Education of Little Tree’s narrative by implying that the stronger (white) race will inevitably prevail over the weaker ones. Furthermore, it naturalizes the disappearance of Natives and the subjugation of African “Americans as “the Way” of nature, as part of the “natural” course of progress. (Huhndorf 155)

Huhndorf does not note, however, that the fact that the message is channeled through the voice of a Native American makes the message more effective. As a member of Carter’s “ideal” minority, Granpa accepts the supremacy of Whites as natural and unavoidable—he does not suggest any resistance to the dominance of Whites. Having the minority member himself accept the fate of his people, and teaching his child to also accept, is far

more powerful than having a member of the dominant community make the argument—and acts as an implicit criticism of those Civil Rights leaders who both fought against the prevailing status quo and who taught their children to do so also.

This use of a Native American figure to communicate the views of the White supremacist is an interesting move. In this case, Carter cleverly co-opts the language of the liberal environmentalist,⁴⁶ a language which is often filtered as it is here through the identity of the Noble Savage who is “in touch with the sacred ways of the Earth” (Justice, “Lingering” 31), and remakes it into a White supremacist philosophical statement about the natural order. The reader having been conditioned by the Noble Savage stereotype to expect guilelessness does not investigate the passage for doubled meaning, yet the Social Darwinian underpinning is communicated nevertheless. This might be seen as an example of what Bakhtin calls the “double-voiced” word:

Analogous to parodistic discourse is ironic, or any other double-voiced, use of someone else’s words; in those instances too another’s discourse is used for conveying aspirations that are hostile to it. In the ordinary speech of our everyday life such a use of another’s words is extremely widespread, especially in dialogue, where one speaker very often literally repeats the statement of the other speaker, investing it with new value and accenting it in his own way—with expressions of doubt, indignation, irony, mockery, ridicule, and the like [. . .]

Someone else’s words introduced into our own speech inevitably assume a new (our own) interpretation and become subject to our own evaluation of the; that is, they become double-voiced. Our practical everyday speech

is full of other people's words: with some of them we completely merge our own voice, forgetting whose they are; others, which we take as authoritative, we use to reinforce our own words; still others, finally, we populate with our own aspirations, alien or hostile to them. (194-95).

In such a situation, it is easy for the casual reader to mistake a statement's meaning; that is, a person who failed to see the alternate and often hostile meaning of words might take them at "face value"—as the originally intended words of the original speaker rather than the double-voiced representation of the rhetor. Having thus manipulated his reader, Carter is able to communicate the views of the White supremacist subtly but effectively.

Carter himself, in an extraordinarily perilous move, makes his use of the Noble Savage as a conveyer of contemporary sociopolitical criticism self-evident in a passage from Chapter 3 of the book. In that passage we see Granpa, who has just inadvertently been told that his hero George Washington prohibited moonshining—a practice in which Granpa himself engages—is distraught over the information. While journeying into the settlement, Granpa breaks long-standing habit and accepts a ride from a man dressed like a "politician" (17). The driver announces to Granpa that he is a "professor at the State Teachers College"⁴⁷ and then abruptly asks, "Are you Indian?" When Granpa acknowledges that he is, the professor says "Oh [. . .] like that explained me and Granpa entirely" (18). Almost immediately, Granpa starts to quiz the professor about George Washington, trying to establish that Washington might have had a head injury that would account for his wrongheaded decision to prohibit moonshining. The professor is flummoxed throughout the discussion, clearly not having expected such a debate with an Indian, and ends the conversation: "'I, that is,' he stuttered, 'I teach English and I don't

know *anything* about George Washington” (19).

The clear barbs—the “good licks” as Carter might have put it—in this passage are that the professor prejudges Indians, and is confounded when confronted with one who knows something of politics, despite the fact that such a professor would be presumed to be open-minded. Further, when the *English* professor admits that he knows nothing about a fundamental historical figure, he is clearly being shown to be untutored in the basics of American sociopolitical knowledge. In this clearly satiric passage, the meaning is nearly overt—Carter warns those who would read this literary piece without noting that Native Americans can and do engage in sociopolitical analysis and criticism are prejudiced and ill-informed. The metanarrative of the passage, that the self-proclaimed Native American who wrote this book can and does engage in sociopolitical analysis and criticism in the body of the work, is equally explicit. Carter signals the intended audience—one which would likely agree with his anti-intellectualism—not to be blinded by the professed Native American ancestry of the author, but he does so in a humorous way that is less likely to raise the suspicions of those who accept the Noble Savage stereotype as a positive one and do not see the implicit perils of it.

Knowing that Carter was engaging in sociopolitical criticism, particularly of the anti-Black variety, helps us to read the climax of the book more effectively. The climax occurs near the end of the book, when Little Tree is removed from his grandparents care due to a complaint made that they are not competent caregivers, Granpa having been once in jail for moonshining. Little Tree is removed by two people acting on behalf of the government—a man and a woman; the woman is said to wear the same grey dress that is “choked so tight around her neck that I figured it made her look the way she did”

on both occasions that Little Tree meets her (171). When Little Tree arrives, he is met by a “white-headed lady” who “had on a black dress that come to the ground and she looked like the lady in the gray dress, but she wasn’t” (183); this lady takes him to see “The Reverend” (184). Once in the company of the Reverend, Little Tree is told there are no other Indians nor have there ever been at the school, that he does not have to go to chapel as he is a bastard—also the only one they have ever accepted—and his soul cannot be saved, and that the “Denomination”⁴⁸ is willing to take him on because they believe “in being kind to everybody; kind to animals and such” (184-85). Carter’s contempt for the hypocrisy of the Reverend, who is both prejudiced against Indians and intolerant—though he takes pains to assert otherwise—is clear.

This particular passage of the book, however, is frequently and erroneously portrayed as Carter’s criticism of the dominant community’s efforts to assimilate Native Americans. In the twenty-fifth anniversary edition’s liner notes, for example, the writer claims that “when Little Tree is sent to an Indian boarding school run by whites, we learn of the cruelty meted out to Indian children in an attempt to assimilate them [. . .]” As noted above, however, the school is an orphanage at which they “have no Indians [. . .] half-breed or otherwise,” and Little Tree as a bastard is not welcome to participate fully in religious services since “bastards, according to the Bible could not be saved” though he “could go to listen in on it more or less, if [he] was quiet and set in the back and taken no part whatsoever” (185). The orphanage with its school facility is a probably all-white⁴⁹ institution, and Little Tree is excluded from the religious services which he would have been forced to attend had he been in an Indian boarding school which sought to “kill the Indian to save the man.”⁵⁰ While Little Tree had been taken from his grandparents,

he has clearly not been taken to Carlisle or any other Indian boarding school to study—indeed, there is no evidence that Carter even knew of the existence of Indian boarding schools—and Little Tree is not being “Christianized” and assimilated.⁵¹

Since the assimilation efforts of the US government are clearly not the target of Carter’s satire in this section, we must posit a different one. Huhndorf suggests that the target is instead the Civil Rights movement and its effort to integrate all-white schools (156). As she points out: “race in the novel raises the question on the child’s fitness to attend the all-white school.” Little Tree is shunned by all the children but a crippled one, and his unsuitability to attend the school is made clear when he responds correctly to a teacher’s question about what the deer in a picture are doing by saying that they are mating, a comment for which Little Tree is whipped brutally (ELT 187-92). Huhndorf concludes that “Ultimately, in the novel’s terms, removal from the all-white school is in the child’s best interests, an outcome implying that school segregation in Carter’s own era was best for African-American children as well (157).

What Huhndorf does not investigate, however, is how this episode operates as not merely pro-White supremacist but anti-Black rhetoric. Throughout the episode in which Little Tree is sent to the boarding school, it is made clear that neither the child nor his grandparents wish for him to go—they are themselves opposed to his attending the school. The entire episode of the beating recalls quite clearly slave narratives, though there is a distinct variation. Rather than a cruel enslaving master there is a sadistic “integrationist” minister whose nature is melodramatically communicated:

His lips was parted like he was going to grin, but he wasn’t. He kept running his tongue over his lips. There was sweat on his face. He told me

to take off my shirt. Which I did.

[. . .]

He said, “You are born of evil, so I know repentance is not in you; but praise God, you are going to be taught not to inflict your evil upon Christians. You can’t repent . . . but you shall cry out!”

He cut loose with the big stick acrost my back. The first time it hurt; but I didn’t cry. Granma had learnt me. Oncet when I stumped off my toenail . . . she learnt me how the Indian bears pain. He lets his body mind go to sleep, and with his spirit mind, he moves out of his body and *sees* the pain—instead of *feeling* the pain. (ELT 191-92)

The minister’s stick breaks and he picks up another, panting, and continues to beat the Little Tree until the child falls down—but, remembering that his grandfather told him to keep to his feet in a fight, the child raises himself with superhuman control. The minister, out of breath, allows him to put his shirt back on. The narrator tells us: “The shirt soaked up some of the blood. Most of the blood had run down my legs into my shoes, as I didn’t’ have any underwearing to catch it. This made my feet sticky” (192).

The brutality of the beating only serves to underscore the fact that the Native American narrator does not ask for the reader’s sympathy—he, instead, reassures the reader that he does not need sympathy as he has an Indian wisdom that helps him to bear the pain easily. The image of such a young child being beaten engages the reader’s sympathies nonetheless, but the failure to ask for sympathy allows Carter to once again portray Native Americans as the ideal minority which accepts all mistreatment with quiet dignity—opposing to that portrayal similar renderings of slave beatings in which the

narrative openly describes the victim's suffering and asks for the reader's sympathy. Thus, Native Americans are portrayed as being equally brutalized but more deserving of sympathy than the protesting Blacks of the Civil Rights movement.

Having made his point but written himself into something of a quandary, Carter includes a brief episode decrying the hypocrisy of wealthy country club types who come to the orphanage to give out fruit—and force the children to eat it in front of them and express their delight—and hand out cheap, worthless toys (193-97). On Christmas day, Little Tree is reunited with his grandfather by a completely contrived mechanism. Little Tree has psychically conveyed to Willow John that he is being badly treated, Willow John has gone to town and followed the minister around, finally entering his office and demanded that Little Tree be sent home. The completely cowed minister signs release papers saying “he did not want any trouble with savages and pagans and such” (204). Though utterly implausible—any Native American who had so implicitly threatened an establishment figure in that time period would have most certainly have been arrested and badly treated—the story serves Carter's purpose of proving that Little Tree's elders do not want him to attend the school. Rather than insisting that their children attend an all-white school and risking their lives to do so, as did Civil Rights leaders such as Fred Shuttlesworth, Carter's Native Americans act as his model minority—trying instead to prevent the efforts of White liberals to integrate schools.

In this particular passage we see most clearly Carter's efforts to conflate the terms “integrate” and “assimilate.” Such an effort was one that occupied him throughout his political career—he often used the term “amalgamate” and the phrase “integrate our children” in order to suggest that integration involved the obliteration of racial identity.⁵²

Such an effort was commonplace amongst White supremacists of the 1950s era—such as Wesley Critz George who claimed that:

Contrary to the allegations of many integrationists there is no intention upon the part of the majority of Southerners to “hold the superior Negro back” except in those areas of social integration that may lead to intermarriage. The able Negro still has every other area in which to exercise his business or intellectual ability among Whites, as well as the entire field of service to his own race. If this does not satisfy him, then there is a question of to whether he honestly wants legitimate “opportunity” or actually wants racial amalgamation. (Biology 70)

A similar tactic has come to be used in our own times, as noted by Patricia Williams, when such “former segregationists [as] Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond” use the term *integration* to mean “a form of assimilation that demands self-erasure rather than engagement of black contributions and experience” (Rooster’s 25). So, by deploying a legitimate concerns of Native Americans against the literal disappearance of Native blood through intermarriage with the dominant culture⁵³ and in the disappearance of Native culture by the coopting or obliterating efforts of the dominant culture, Carter masks his opposition to Civil Rights efforts which sought instead, as Williams puts it, a “substantive equality as a constitutional objective, [based] on the premise that certain groups need not suffer unrestrained stigmatization of their humanity and of their citizenship” (25). More simply, by conflating “equality” with “sameness,” and the search for equality with the obliteration of “otherness,” Carter achieves a reversal that identifies Civil Rights, specifically Black, activists with the intolerant assimilationist and

oppressive policies of the federal government against Natives—an argument that ultimately serves the purposes of White supremacists who like Carter have no demonstrable interest in contemporary Native American issues.

Probably the greatest similarity between the speeches and the novel, Education of Little Tree, involves Program 16 which was probably from late 1969 and almost certainly entitled “Hound Dog and Foxes,” and Chapter 4 of the novel, entitled “Fox and Hounds.” The latter version, reprinted in Parabola in 1991, is said by the editors of that journal to be a variant on Reynard the Fox, the hero of medieval beast epics, satiric stories which are said to reflect the contempt of the peasant for the aristocracy and the clergy and to critique both. A similar contempt of government officials appears to be the principal direction of Carter’s criticism in both these pieces, though that message is communicated only covertly in both.

Program 16 begins with Carter jumping into the question of what motivates the Southern foxhunter, as non-Southerners are said to not understand, and how the practice differs from the foxhunting of the aristocracy in Europe. Carter claims that the true difference between the two is that the Southern foxhunter is entirely dependent upon his dogs, and that it is the interaction between the hounds and the fox that make Southern foxhunting unique:

You see—a red fox, when dogs jump him, will take off and start running in a circle. That circle may be a radius of two or three or four miles around his lair. Now, that fox will backtrack; he’ll run through water; he’ll jump from stump top to stump top; he’ll tiptoe over a flat rock. He’ll pull all kind of tricks, but he’ll stay in that circle. And, if the dogs stay

with him, and they don't get fooled, that fox will start making that circle smaller and smaller, the tireder he gets, until he finally gets back into his lair.

Now, a gray fox will run in a figure eight. And, he'll bring that figure eight down smaller and smaller until he winds up in his lair. [. . .]

Now, foxes are full of tricks—some which will surprise you with their thinking. Some fox hunters have claimed they've seen two foxes swap out when the chase was on. Grandpa said he'd seen it once. It was a red fox, and grandpa said he was sitting under a [per]simmon bush, waiting for the fox and the dogs to come around. And, he saw this old red fox coming, lickety split. And, he could hear the dogs about a ridge and a holler away. And, this red fox, he stopped all of a sudden, run around a hollow tree twice, barked real soft. And, out of the tree come another fox and lit out while the first one jumped in the tree to rest up awhile. Well, the dogs come up and circled the tree twice, and lit out after the second fox. Now, I never seen this myself. But, if grandpa said it happened that way, well that's the way it happened.

After this passage, Carter provides further information about Southern foxhunting, but then becomes very specific about why it is that he has included the story: the first reason is to explain that while Southern practices may seem odd to those who do not practice them, there is a reason behind the practice, and Southerners do care for the approval of Northerners any more than then a good hound dog does: "He knows he's superior, that he's good at his trade. And, he don't particularly care whether you're too ignorant to

know about it or not.” The passage, of course, suggests to the listener that White Southerners are naturally superior, and that the “ignorance” of Northerners who fail to recognize it is not worth mentioning. Next, Carter segues into a history of the Rebel Yell and how it is said to have come from these fox hunters—saying that both his great-granpa and Patton both used to use the same yell—and ties his point explicitly to White supremacy. He makes this point even clearer in the final passage, when he discusses how the calling horn which was used to round up the dogs at the end of the chase was also used by Southerners to notify them during the Reconstruction period that federal troops were nearby—once again, by example, encouraging his listener to continue the struggle to secure White supremacy against the efforts of the federal government.

Extremely similar passages occur in the novel, though additions and subtractions to the narrative occur—and further differences can be seen between the published and manuscript versions. Indeed, the first page and a half of the chapter in the published version of the novel consider how Granpa selects specific hounds for the chase, putting others in the house so that they would not be embarrassed (21-22). That section occurs with some differences in the manuscript version of the novel, Granpa & Me, but follows rather than precedes the quoted passage (below), thus causing the manuscript version to bear a more striking resemblance to the version from the speech:

The red fox runs in a circle when he is chased by hounds. With his den in the center, he will start on a circle swing that measures maybe a mile, sometimes more, across the middle. All the time he’s running, he’ll use tricks: backtracking, running in water and laying false trails; but he’ll stick to the circle. As he grows tired, he will make the circle smaller and

smaller, until he retreats to his den. He “dens up,” they call it.

The more he runs, the hotter he gets, and his mouth sweats out stronger smells that the dogs pick up on the trail, and so get louder with their baying. It is called a “hot trail.”

When the gray fox runs, he runs in a figure 8, and his den is just about where he crosses his trail each time to make the 8. (ELT 22-23)

Both the novel and manuscript version then include a long passage on Granpa,⁵⁴ and how he lives “*with* the game, not *at* it,” conserving the game and promoting “The Way.” Late in the chapter, a passage which recalls the third paragraph from the Program 16 speech occurs:

Granpa said some fellers told that they had heard about foxes “swapping out,” but he had actually seen it. He said years ago, he had been fox trailing and was sittin’ on a hillock above a meadow clearing. He said the fox, a red one, come along with the hounds behind him and stopped at a hollow tree and give a little bark. He said another fox come out of that hollow tree, and the first one got in. Then the second fox trotted off, leading the dogs on the trail. He said he moved close to that tree and could hear that ol’ fox actually *snoring* while the hounds was passing a few feet from him. He said that ol’ fox had so much confidence in hisself that he didn’t give a lick-damn *how* close them dogs come around him. (ELT 30)

Though both the novel and manuscript version of the Little Tree story espouse the Cherokee “Way” rather than Confederate and Southern practices, it is clear that Carter is

continuing to espouse the basic political view that outsiders do not understand the practices of mountain people—Southerners or Cherokees—that those practices are deeply traditional, have a sensible rationale, and should be respected and not disrupted by outsiders. Such an attitude, though certainly deeply coded, is perfectly compatible with the world view expressed in Program 16 and in no way demonstrates an alteration of Carter's basic contentions.

A final way in which Program 16 resembles Chapter 4 of both the published and manuscript versions of the Little Tree narrative is in his discussion of “bluffer” hounds and “cheater” hounds. In the speech, Carter says:

A bluffer dog is one that'll pretend he's found the scent when he hasn't. He'll howl and yip just like he's found a good scent and get the other dogs milling around him and get them all confused. [. . .] Then, there are cheater dogs. That's dogs that'll figure out the circle and cut across the pick up the trail. They'll take a shortcut, in other words, and that just ain't fair to the fox.

Carter finishes the passage by making his chief point: that it is important to have dogs that will play by the rules and be honest. This same point is made in the published version of the novel, through the character of the dog Rippitt:

“That's ol' Rippitt,” Granpa said, and laughed low, “and it's a damn lie. Rippitt knows what's wanted . . . but he can't wait, so he makes out like he's hit a trail-scent. Listen to how falsified his bay sounds. He knows he's a'lying.” Sure enough, it *did* sound that-a-way.

“He's damn shore lying,” I said. Me and Granpa could cuss when we

wasn't around Granma.

In a minute the other hounds let him know, as they howled around him, not baying. In the mountains they call such a "bluffer dog." There was silence again.

[. . .]

They bayed every step or two . . . it was a strong trail. They passed out of sight and in a minute, one bay split off from the rest and broke up into yelps and howls.

Granpa cursed. He said, "Damn! Ol' Rippitt is trying to cut acrost again and cheat on ol' Slick.. He's gone and got hisself lost." In the mountains, such is known as a "cheater hound." (ELT 26, 31)

Because Rippitt has become lost, Granpa and Little Tree must call him home and set up a holler—Granpa's is long and "almost like a yodel"—that is reminiscent of the Rebel Yell which Carter referred to explicitly in Program 16. This reference to bluffers and cheaters among hound dogs is quite certainly a satiric fable-like reference, after the fashion of Reynard the Fox, to humans who fail to abide by what Carter feels are the "natural" rules of living.

That this is the case is made explicit in the manuscript version of the novel. At the end of every chapter in the manuscript version, there is a brief poem which—like the moral at the end of an Aesop's tale—spells out the meaning of the piece. There are four stanzas to the poem at the end of Chapter 4 in Me & Granpa: The first asks if God watches while mortals are running in a circle through life, trying to seize an unknown goal, and whether God is amused by the antics of mortals as they run their race. The

second stanza, quoted in below, refers to bluffers and cheaters. The third stanza discusses those mortals who allow their feelings to overcome their common sense, allowing these feelings to drag them into meaningless war, and asking if God would forgive those who were centered upon the goal and not upon the race—living life—itself. The final stanza seems to refer to reincarnation, suggesting that the circle of life is unending, and that though mortals leave it from time to time, they reemerge to begin running again, saying that like hounds who run after a fox which they never catch, it is in whether the chase is done with honesty and integrity that matters. Thus, Carter makes it clear that his fable of hunting dogs, and particularly about cheaters and bluffers, is a metaphor for human beings and how their character can be tested. The second stanza is most specific:

I'm right sure He hears the bluffer

[. . .]

Making do he did the job that he ain't done.

Maybe dismayed at the cheater

[. . .]

[Who] breaks [all]⁵⁵ the rules of how the Race is run. (G&M 26)

The term “bluffer” then, in both the speech and in this poem, appear to refer to those people whom Carter feels are most likely to pretend to have qualities they do not or to pretend to have done things that they have not. Since Carter makes it clear in his series of speeches that it is Blacks who are said by themselves and by liberals to have qualities that they have not and to have done things that they had not by those who were writing histories of Black accomplishments, it is almost certain that one of the parties Carter had

in mind in both the speeches and in this poem were Blacks. The identity of the “cheater” is somewhat more questionable, but can logically said to represent politicians—whom Carter constantly characterizes as failing to follow the rules which the common people have established.

Knowing also Carter’s history of opposition to US participation in the European theater in World War II, the third stanza’s disparaging of those who engage in war because they get overly emotional—being “hysterical” is a quality attributed by many neo-Nazis to Jews—seems very likely to refer to Carter’s continued opposition to US defense of what he saw as Jewish interests. This interpretation can be bolstered by a comparison to a similar section in both the published and manuscript versions of the novel:

And he laughed, "Only Ti-bi, the bee stores more than he can use . . . and so he is robbed by the bear, and the 'coon . . . and the Cherokee. It is so with people, who store and fat themselves with more than their share. They will have it taken from them. And there will be wars over it . . . and they will make long talks, trying to hold more than their share. They will say a flag stands for their right to do this . . . and men will die because of the words and the flag . . . but they will not change the rules of The Way."
(ELT 10)

In Carter’s lifetime, one significant war was fought over people who had their things taken from them and in which other people came to their defense—this would be World War II and would refer principally to the Jews. The view that Jews were trying to hold on to more than their share is one that is common to neo-Nazis, and the view that Jews in

the US exploited the American flag and its symbolism to come to the aid of Jews who wished to regain and then hold more than their share is also neo-Nazi. In this way, Carter can be seen to carry on the same argument which he had championed in his youth, when he claimed that the US should not have entered the war against the Germans on behalf of Jews. Again, though the novel is deeply coded, it in no way resists being interpreted as a stance compatible to that which Carter had taken during the whole of his life.

Possibly the most deeply coded episode of anti-Semitic discourse in the book is in Chapter 17, "Mr. Wine." In this chapter, Carter paints a portrait of an itinerate Jewish peddler who comes through periodically to sell his wares and give Little Tree a lesson in basic mathematics. Mr. Wine is portrayed as a kindly man, giving Little Tree presents and complimenting the grandparents for how they are raising the child.⁵⁶ Having set up an extremely favorable portrait of the character, however, Carter drops exploits him to deliver a bit of neo-Nazi philosophy:

Mr. Wine said the way he showed me how to sharpen the pencil was the thrifty way. He said there was a difference between being stingy and being thrifty. If you was stingy, you was as bad as some big shots which worshiped money and you would not use your money for what you had ought. He said if you was that way then money was your god, and no good would come of the whole thing.

He said if you was thrifty, you used your money for what you had ought but you was not loose with it. Mr. Winde said that one habit led to another habit, and if they was bad habits, it would give you a bad character. If you was loose with your money, then you would get loose with your time,

loose with your thinking and practical everything else. If a whole people got loose, then politicians seen they could get control. They would take over loose people and before long you had a dictator. Mr. Wine said no thrifty people was ever taken over by a dictator. Which is right. (163-64)

As Halley notes, both the genocide of Native Americans and the Holocaust had already occurred by the time Carter was inventing this book—millions had already been taken over by dictators and died. She asks—“Is Carter asserting that both Jews and Native Americans were in some part responsible for the decimation of their people?”—and then goes on to cite bell hooks’s point that the appropriation of the marginal voice by the dominant culture “threatens the very core of self-determination and free self-expression for exploited and oppressed peoples” (qtd. in Halley 39). Though Halley is certainly correct to note that the passage could apply to Native Americans, she does not consider that the voice being appropriated is that of a Jewish man, for the purposes of a known neo-Nazi, and that the passage is extremely reminiscent of published Klan philosophy like that quoted by William Bradford Huie in his work Three Lives for Mississippi.

In his book as a supplemental section at the end, Huie quotes in full the text of a Klan pamphlet, which contains the following passage:

With rare exceptions, people of other backgrounds simply cannot comprehend the Anglo-Saxon principle of “Equal Justice under Law” and the fact that EVERY “Right” must be balanced by an accompanying Responsibility. The inherent balance and reason of this system has little or no attraction for those persons of alien culture. They generally prefer to shirk Individual Responsibility, grab up as much material wealth as they

can, and accept Centralized Authority and Dictatorship, in the hope that they can buy special favors and privileges for themselves.

The conflict between these two attitudes has now become a Life and Death matter in America. The people of the non-American cultures CAN and COULD live under the Anglo-Saxon System, but they prefer to see it destroyed. The true American Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, CAN NOT live under a Dictatorship. (250-51)

Carter's portrait of the Jewish peddler, then, clearly is compatible with the Klan assertion that there are rare exceptions, "alien" peoples who can adopt a lifestyle in tune with that of White supremacists. However, the peddler's speech makes it clear that he, like those he aligns with, believes that those who are taken over by dictators deserve what happens to them, that they have brought the ill upon themselves by their own "loose" living. In doing so, the peddler sides with neo-Nazis who claim that the Holocaust was brought upon the Jews by themselves and with Klan members who assert that apart from the few "ideal" minorities—one such might be Native Americans—"alien" cultures are hostile to White culture and Whites must defend themselves against that hostility. By putting criticism of alien, specifically Jewish, culture in the mouth of the Jewish character, Carter both masks his own White supremacy and renders the criticism more poignant—being that it is delivered by a member of the very group being criticized. This double-voiced discourse could be Carter's way of penetrating into the psyche of even individuals who would have openly resisted White supremacy in its more overt form, or it might be a manifestation of Carter's extreme hatred of Jews—representing his compulsion to place a poison pill in the mouth of a character he had otherwise positively represented.

There are a myriad of other small touches to the book which let us know that Carter is being anti-Black and continuing his extremist crusade against what he saw as local sell-outs to the outside conspiracy against Southerners. In a historically inaccurate version of the Trail of Tears (40-42),⁵⁷ Carter's Cherokees walk off into the sunset with too much dignity to even cry, leaving that to the Whites who viewed their disappearance, as he narrates the metaphoric death of their culture and taps into the Vanishing Indian myth. Claiming also that Cherokees "had nothing left" (41), Carter conveniently omits mention of the hundreds of Negroes who walked the trail also as slaves. Though Hobson calls the portrait "highly romantic" (70), Carter anticipates this criticism by saying, "A death march is not romantic" (ELT 42). This clever diversion also serves to compare the removal to the Bataan death march and to avert any comparison of the removals to the pogroms against Jews or to the Holocaust—suggesting by comparison that Native Americans have suffered more.

Similarly, in the chapter, "Trading with a Christian," we are told of a politician who would not shake hands with Granpa or Little Tree because "we looked like Indians and didn't vote nohow, so we was of practical no use whatsoever to the politician" (82). In this passage, Carter suggests that Native Americans were denied the right to vote in the period just as Blacks were, but the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 had made it possible for Natives to vote—at least in national elections—and as this politician was talking about "Washington City," Granpa would have been empowered to vote for him. The politician is shown working himself into a frenzy against Catholics—saying they included "fellers called priests that mated women called nuns, and the young'uns that come of the matin', they fed them to a pack of dogs" (82)—while on the podium but

immediately calming down and laughing and shaking hands when he was done. Carter's pointed criticism is not so much against the politician's anti-Catholicism—though he will allow Granpa to remark negatively about it—but about the man's lack of commitment to his position. The criticism of politicians like George Wallace who would engage in crudity when it suited them, but were not as earnest as Carter, is apparent. In the same chapter, Little Tree is sold a mortally ill calf by a "Christian," who manipulates the boy into giving away what little money he has, the man claiming he has a "Christian duty" to do so (84). This could be intended to operate as a covert slam against Black ministers—the only other Christian group other than Catholics and Episcopalians who Carter was known to single out for criticism—perhaps saying that they were "selling" their "sick" message of brotherhood to the national audience. The book is replete with such passages, but two further stand out: Carter's depiction of the Reconstruction era in "The Farm in the Clearing" and his long philosophical discussion about the term "kin."

The Farm in the Clearing: A Parable of White Supremacy

One episode in the novel, The Education of Little Tree, is so shockingly open in its neo-Confederate and White supremacist roots that it is surprising that so few readers picked up on the matter prior to revelations of Carter's background. Since that time, many writers have remarked upon the passage—including most notably Huhndorf—but few have remarked upon how closely the story resembles Carter's work from earlier periods: the undelivered Harvard speech as well as Carter's 1969-70 speeches. The thin masking of White supremacist issues by manipulation of the reader's interest in Native American characters and ways is probably most evident in an extremely implausible episode in which Granpa puts his hand between Little Tree and a rattlesnake, is bitten by

it, and is saved by Granma's knowledge of naturalistic remedies (99-113). The unbelievable story, with its deep pathos, serves principally as a means of introducing another anecdote⁵⁸ which has its direct genesis from Carter's openly neo-Confederate and pro-White supremacist writings from his 1969-70 speeches.

Program 6, probably from late 1969, "Reconstruction Times" contains an early version of the story which would later be developed into Chapter 13, "The Farm in the Clearing." In the speech, Carter tells what seems to have been a standard parable of his, about how the great-grandfathers of Carter and his listeners were forced during Reconstruction times, because they lacked mules, to take the place of the mule and pull the plow themselves. He paints an evocative portrait of his audience's ancestors—backs bent, straining against almost impossible odds, dragging by sheer force of will a plow through the land to begin planting. Depicting them as barefoot, or in dresses made of sacks, or even in an old velvet dress that had been hoarded from earlier years, Carter makes these forebearers into mythic figures of heroic struggle.⁵⁹ There is no doubt in the speech that the story is meant to in part encourage the listeners to emulate their ancestors, since Carter ends the story with a moral:⁶⁰ "They knew what they wanted, and from a desolate, prostrate position, they fought up to their knees. And from their knees, fighting politicians and soldiers, they fought to their feet. They won a war after a war had been lost. Yes sir, they did." It is also, however, intended to recall for the listener the supposedly standard practice of issuing "40 acres and a mule" to former slaves at the end of the Civil War—the implication is that Blacks had the mules and Whites were forced to do without. The rugged independence of these Confederate ancestors, in the face of such unfairness, is clearly meant to incite sympathy as well as rouse the audience's emotions

in a standard hate speech tactic (Whillock 37-38).

The passage “The Farm in the Clearing” also involves one of Carter’s “little history lessons”⁶¹ of the Reconstruction era. The narrator in the book repeats a story which his granpa—who had been bitten by a rattlesnake in the previous melodramatic episode—supposedly relives while delirious from poison. The reader, just coming down from the anxiety created by the narrative in which Little Tree’s beloved Granpa comes close to death is particularly vulnerable and unlikely to be skeptical in the immediately ensuing passage. With the reader so emotionally exhausted and open to manipulation, Carter depicts another ex-Confederate soldier and his wife pulling a plow:

Granpa had been about to turn away when he saw somebody else. It was a man wearing what was left of a ragged gray uniform. He was tall and he had one leg. He come out of the house, stabbing along on a hickory sapling that he had strapped to the stump of his other leg. Granpa watched while the one-legged man and the woman walked to the barn. They strapped leather harness on themselves, and Granpa said he couldn't figure what they was doing until he saw them going to the valley in front of the house.

The old black man followed them. He was staggering along trying to hold up plow stocks. They got in front of the house and commenced to bend and pull in their harness. The old black man tried to guide the plow. Granpa thought they was crazy, trying to pull a plow like a mule. But they pulled it. Not very far at a time—only a few steps—but they pulled it. They would stop and then start again.

They wasn't doing much good. If the old black man tilted the plow too much, it went deep in the ground, so they couldn't pull, and so they would have to back up, while the old black pulled and hauled at the plow, falling down and getting up again. It was too shallow for real turning of land. Granpa figured they would never get it plowed.

He left that evening, while they was still at it, pulling and tugging. He come back the next morning to watch. They was in the field when Granpa got to his hiding place. They hadn't plowed enough ground to even see over the weeds. While Granpa watched, the plow point hung under a root and jerked the old black man down. He stayed down a long time on his hands and knees before he got back up. That's when Granpa saw the Union soldiers.

He moved back into a deep fern growth and kept his eye on them. They didn't scare him, for though he was only nine years old, Granpa was Indian-wise, and could move right through the whole patrol without them seeing him,⁶² and he knew it.

There was a dozen men in the patrol, all on horseback. A big man with stripes of yellow on his arms was leading them, and they were stopped back in a pine grove, watching the plowing, too. They watched for awhile, then rode on out of sight. (ELT 115-16)

This far more detailed portrait is, like other Carter borrowings from the speeches, altered principally to make the heroic images of the speeches into a more emotive and pity-inspiring group. This forbearer is not merely a former Confederate, but one with a

missing leg, who nevertheless plows. Leaving aside for the moment the completely absurd points of the story—a malnourished man with contemporary and well-made prosthetic would have a hard time pulling a plow through hard ground with his malnourished wife; one with a strapped-on branch could never do it—it is clear that our sympathies are meant to be played upon for the sake of the crippled man. Clearly, Carter is again attempting to engage the pity of the readers and to therefore align them with neo-Confederate philosophies.

If we further leave aside the coloration of the details and visualize this particular incident instead as if it were an unadorned drawing, simply content without pathetic appeal so that we may focus on what it says and what it does, we would be left with a line drawing of a man in a tattered Confederate uniform and a crude peg leg in the foreground, harnessed to a plow alongside his thin and raggedly dressed wife—the point of the plow itself having hung up on a “root” because of the inability of the old black plowman to guide it—being scrutinized by horsed Union soldiers looming in the distance. Such a drawing would hardly be out of place in KKK propaganda, and its meaning would be clear. The White men and women after the Confederacy are depicted as being in bondage, like animals, while the inept Blacks are incapable of properly steering the society which they have newly been allowed to participate in as equals—they are a burden to the Whites rather than a help—and moreover that progress is being tripped up by the “roots,” the traditional culture of the South which has not disappeared but is merely underground. The soldiers in the distance obviously represent the threat posed by the distant federal government, a force that Granpa recoils from even though he does not “fear” it, an oppressive force.⁶³ Shorn of its protective coloration, Carter’s

meaning stands out in black and white as a shockingly crude White supremacist piece of propaganda, and the similarity to his earlier speech is undeniable.

Other aspects of the episode ought to excite comment, but because of the narrative's placement immediately after a life-or-death scene often do not. Though the narrator is delivering a story which he theoretically overheard while his grandfather was in a delirium, he is able to date the episode precisely—1867. This date ought to interest the reader, as the scene is supposedly set in Tennessee and the ensuing tale of the poor ex-Confederate mountain man is a Radical Reconstruction story. Tennessee, however, had been already been readmitted to the Union prior to the passing in 1967 of the extraordinarily punitive Radical Reconstruction Act, thus the story itself is largely anachronistic—though Carter does posit Regulators as the villains rather than Union soldiers, making the story less so. Additionally, the mountain country of East Tennessee was largely anti-secession, there having been very few slaves in the area, and thus this story would be hardly characteristic (Key 75-78). The disbelief of the audience ought to be aroused by such discrepancies, but Carter relies upon his highly emotive Native American melodrama to cloak such suspicions.

Because the story is told through the eyes of a Native American character, the audience is also less likely to notice that the “old negro man” is being used simultaneously as a White supremacist stereotype while being another criticism of Black Civil Rights leaders. The man is described in racist terms as “[shuffling] along, barely walking, and [. . .] stooped over toward the ground” in a clearly ape-like gait (115). As mentioned above, he is inept at the tasks in which surely he must have been engaged throughout his life. Despite Carter's clear portrait of the man's inadequacies, he is also

portrayed as the “ideal negro”—continuing to live in virtual slavery despite being freed, living in the barn where the animals would belong, being unmarried and childless, and dying in defense of his master’s family when they are threatened by Regulators—rather like a faithful dog. In this one open mention of a Black character, then, Carter varies not at all from his White supremacist depictions of Blacks other than to dwell upon the positive characteristics of properly submissive Blacks rather than upon the sordid nature of non-submissive Blacks, and by so doing critiquing Black Civil Rights activists.

Further features of the episode communicate Carter’s continued belief in the same political platform. He does not posit the individual Northern soldiers as the enemy—a sergeant from Lincoln’s state of Illinois and a young private from New York bring a mule, food, and plantings to the poor family and labor to help them during their off-duty hours. (117-121). It is the Regulators, as Carter portrays them the local turncoats empowered by federal policies and working for the benefit of wealthy landowners, who shoot the sergeant, the Confederate veteran, and the old Black man (121-122). This helps to demonstrate Carter’s continuing departure from blaming only the outside evil forces which Braden says traditional White supremacists posited in order to inflame the emotions of their auditors (348-49), and his continued assertion that it is local people—particularly the wealthy—who are the principal perpetrators of oppression through their alliances with federal forces. Even such throwaway aspects to the narrative as the description of the family’s two little girls—“with *old faces*” who are dirty and have “stringy hair and *legs like canes*” (115, emphasis added)—helps Carter to posit that Reconstruction era Southerners suffered as much or more than Jewish people during the Holocaust, the emaciated bodies of that atrocity’s victims being clearly the reference for

Carter's description in this narrative. The appearance of such an uncoded version of Carter's beliefs in the central section of his novel helps us to see that he was continuing rather than varying from his previous propagandistic efforts and that he had merely shifted genre rather than altering his vision in any real way.

“Kin” and “Love”: An Effort to Counterspeak

In all his efforts to promote White supremacist philosophy and to practice hate speech, Carter had the most difficult time inflicting damage upon the Christian discourse of brotherly love which was being used to great effect by such orators as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Such imagery was undoubtedly powerful among the fundamentalist evangelicals who populated the South and who made up the audience for Carter. But, as Whillock points out, one of the principal characteristics of hate speech is the effort to “deface or destroy” something of value to the those in the out-class whom the rhetor intends to harm: “The most notable application of this principle is how the hate appeals attempt to destroy the validity of characteristics the victim uses to create his or her identity” (42). In opposition to this, Butler points out that “it is clearly possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak [. . .] it is precisely the *expropriability* of the dominant ‘authorized’ discourse that constitutes one potential site of its subversive resignification” (157), and it was precisely this expropriation of the themes of “all men are created equal” and “brotherly love” by Black ministers speaking on behalf of the Civil Rights movement that had empowered them to speak—and which still provides a great deal of their own creatively assumed authority. This same expropriability, however, can be used against those who have newly empowered themselves to speak in

opposition to authority. By reappropriating the discourse of Black Civil Rights leaders, Carter counterspoke that movement and defaced, demeaned, or at least reinterpreted their meanings so as to undercut their efforts.

In both novels, Gone to Texas and The Education of Little Tree, and in his 1969-1970 speeches, Carter uses precisely the same tactic of counterspeaking Black leaders by expropriating their discourse, making the link between the novels and Carter's early White supremacy clear. In Program 8, probably entitled "Kin," Carter includes the passage previously mentioned in which he claims that all the families in the South whose roots extend back before the Civil War—or as he terms it, "the War between the States"—are related by blood, are "kin." He goes on to explain the import of this term, "kin":

Anyway, what we're getting around to is the word "kin." We use it all the time when we refer to our blood relatives; we call them "kinfolk." Now, our old Scotch-English forebears gave us that word. It meant several different things, and yet, when you come to think of it, it meant the same thing. When they said, "I kin ya'," they meant, "I understand you." They also meant, "I love you." That's right. It meant the same thing. Because, you see, to them you had to understand in order to love. You couldn't love anything or you couldn't love anybody, unless you understood that person or that thing.

So, you see, "kinfolk" to them meant the people they understood and loved. People in the South have this kinship amongst them. Why, you can go to any country store in Alabama or Mississippi or Georgia,

anywhere in the South, sit down with those folks and cut a watermelon and you know there's a kin—a natural understanding amongst you. That's the "kin" that the liberal hates. That's why he's always trying to slice us up, saying the interest of the city man is different from the interest of the country man, or north Alabama's interest is different from south Alabama's, or Mississippi's from Alabama, and so on, when it just ain't so. The love, the understanding, the kin is there. Oh, we might scrap a little amongst ourselves, but it's not serious scrapping; it's more like a little family squabble.

Now, you know, this "kin," this understanding has to do with our institutions, too. That's one reason for these talks on radio, to bring about that understanding of our institutions and our past and our history. Because, you see, if these are denied to our children—and they are being denied to them—then they lose a love for these institutions, because they have no understanding for them, just as you and I would.

In this passage, it is self-evident that Carter is claiming a racial kinship amongst the "people of the South," whose ancestry is stated to be "Scotch-English" as a code for "Anglo Saxon." This natural understanding is intimately connected to racial identity, and Carter excludes therefore both Africans and Asians—having established in other speeches that "our institutions" are not those of the Africans or Asians⁶⁴—from not merely any sort of understanding but also "love." This statement of White supremacy appears to exist in direct contradiction to the statements about love for one's fellow man which were being used most effectively by Civil Rights leaders in that same time frame,

and serves to deface or erase the meanings that those leaders had given to the term “love.” Carter provides his listeners with a neat counter-argument: one cannot love what one does not understand, and one cannot understand that to which one is not kin; therefore, it is not possible for White to understand Blacks and Asians or vice versa, and thus no love exists between the groups.

This same argument exists in the novel, Gone to Texas, with an interesting twist. The statement is not in the mouth of any of the White characters, but is instead contained in a speech from the Cherokee sidekick, Lone Watie:

Lone’s laugh was low. “No, ma’am. Not like you mean. Where Josey come from . . . back in the mountains . . . the old folks meant different by thet word. If a feller told another’n thet he kin ’em . . . he meant he understands ’em. Iff’n he tells his woman that he kin ’er . . . which ain’t often . . . he means he loves ’er.” There was a moment of silence before Lone continued, “Ye see, ma’am, to the mountain man, it’s the same thing . . . lovin’ and understandin’ . . . cain’t have one without t’other’n. Little Moonlight here,” and he laid his hand on her head, “Josey understands. Oh, he don’t understand Cheyenne ways and sich . . . it’s what’s underneath, he understands . . . reckon loyalty and sich . . . and she understands them things . . . and well, they love thet in one ’nother. So ye see, they got a understandin’ . . . a love fer one another . . . they’re kin.”

The understanding that Carter delimited to Anglo Saxons in his speechmaking has in this novel been extended to an understanding between the “mountain man” and Native Americans. As Carter from his youth claimed kinship to Native Americans, it is not

surprising that it should have re-emerged in his novel writing, when he was no longer speaking before a crowd who might have responded badly to his self-claimed dual ancestry.⁶⁵ Further, it was not unknown for Native Americans to involve themselves with White supremacist organizations and political activities—an example is the case of Rev. Ferrell Griswold mentioned previously (Padgett and Sikora)—and Carter may have been well acquainted with such. That Carter extends his concept of racial kinship to Native Americans is not necessarily proof that he had abandoned White supremacy; indeed, the similarity between the two passages is so great that this would seem an extension, perhaps a mild variation, on that theme rather than a repudiation of it.

In a similar passage of The Education of Little Tree, Carter again puts his White supremacist sentiments in the mouth of a Native American, in this case, the characters of Granma and Granpa:

Granma's name was Bonnie Bee. I knew that when I heard him late at night say, "I kin ye, Bonnie Bee," he was saying, "I love ye," for the feeling was in the word.

And when they would be talking and Granma would say, "Do ye kin me, Wales?" and he would answer, "I kin ye," it meant, "I understand ye." To them, love and understanding was the same thing. Granma said you couldn't love something you didn't understand; nor could you love people, nor God, if you didn't understand the people and God.

Granpa and Granma had an understanding, and so they had a love. Granma said the understanding run deeper as the years went by, and she reckined it would get beyond anything mortal folks could think upon or

explain. And so they called it "kin."

Granpa said back before his time "kinfolks" meant any folks that you understood and had an understanding with, so it meant "loved folks." But people got selfish, and brought it down to mean just blood relatives; but that actually it was never meant to mean that.

In this passage, Carter is even more ambiguous about who constitutes "kin" according to his definitions. He does specify that it is not meant to imply blood relationship, but he leaves interpretation open so that the phrase could easily mean precisely what it meant in his earlier speeches: racial kinship. Though Carter is being vague in defining his terms, he by no means openly repudiates his earlier definitions and even states that the original term had been narrowed down to mean "blood relations"—logically, the next larger category being the same ethnic or racial group—which would confirm rather than refute his previous position.

Putting these words into the mouths of Native Americans serves a cynical purpose for Carter. It permits him to access the widely held stereotype that Native Americans symbolize primal and natural wisdom and a deep instinctive spirituality—the "Noble Savage" who is "in touch with the sacred ways of the Earth [. . .] wise, understanding, [and] sometimes humorous" (Justice, "Lingering" 31)—and thus lends a deeper credence to his message. Simultaneously, he implicitly draws into question the authority of anyone—Black ministers, for example—who promote a different definition of these terms. It also permits him to mask his racism and to reinterpret that philosophy as a natural one, held by peoples other than Whites, and to make it simultaneously palatable to those who would reject crude White supremacy and to disguise it for those who intend to

reject all forms of White supremacy. Dressing the philosophy in Native garb is not a means of repudiating that philosophy; rather, it is merely a means for Carter to continue to say the same thing he had always said and to posit for himself a community of “others”—in this case, Native Americans—who would chorus along in agreement. Through this illusion of unity and tolerance, Carter denigrates the views of those Civil Rights leaders who were genuinely espousing unity and tolerance in hopes of creating a culturally democratic society.

Post-1974: The End of an Ill-spent Life

In the years after his trip to the FBI office in Anniston to declare his willingness to cooperate with authorities and the apparent end of his openly political career, Carter worked hard at preventing his new acquaintances from discovering his dual identity while penning two more novels: The Vengeance Trail of Josey Wales and Watch for Me on the Mountain. Rubin reports that Carter maintained his façade of being a wandering cowboy by having friends post letters and telegrams to his publisher, Eleanor Friede, from locations all over the West (95). His antics in his letters to Friede are recorded by Jeff Roche, who was granted access to the letters which Carter sent in regards to the publication of his two books. In various letters, Carter suggested that perhaps he should use a pen name—either attributing it to the possible notoriety of various Carters in the South or because his previous moonshining activities might arouse the interest of sheriffs (252). Unable to suppress it, he occasionally allowed glimmers of his socio-political beliefs to crop up even in his letters to Friede referring at times specifically to the prejudices which liberals have towards Native Americans: “The liberal idiot builds a

noble redman without human qualities, that[’s] why the L-idiota gets disgusted when he discovers his cardboard idol *has all the imperfections*” (qtd. in Roche 254, emphasis added). He also criticizes liberal environmentalists for “pick[ing] up the ecology kick, but they don’t know what it is, or why, so they only play with it” (qtd. in Roche 254). The letters quoted by Roche reveal Carter’s continued belief in a political agenda similar to that of his previous years, but his own behavior indicated his continued White supremacist and violent leanings.

Auchmutey quotes one of Carter’s Texas acquaintances reporting the story that she had been eating lunch with him in a steakhouse; “someone happened to mention something about blacks. Forrest [who was drunk] got louder and louder, talking about no-good lazy niggers and how they ought to send ’em back where they belong” (Auchmutey, “The Man” M1). When being interviewed in connection with the book, Gone to Texas, by a reporter from Newsday—a Long Island newspaper which would represent for Carter the epitome of the liberal-owned Northern media fiend he had so often criticized—Carter was unable to mask the hostility behind his affability. The reporter noted that:

Along with his courtliness of manner, Carter carries an air which suggests that it would be good for your health to treat him politely in return. So one hesitates to ask him point blank how much of the Indian mysticism which he uses as a constant reference point is the baloney of showmanship and how much he really believes. (Hascom 14)

In October of 1978, Carter showed up a book-and-author luncheon at the Wellesley College Club and proceeded, to the discomfort of the audience, to refer to historian

Barbara Tuchman as “a good ol’ Jew girl” and an audience member as “a good ol’ Jew boy” (Rubin 80).

Possibly because of such outbursts, or perhaps simply because people recognized him despite the weight he had lost, the tan he had gotten, and the mustache he had grown (Rubin 96), Forrest Carter began to be confronted with accusations that he was indeed Asa Carter. “Forrest” responded differently depending on the source: he offered to take a fingerprint test for Eleanor Friede, whom he probably knew would never (and did never) ask him to do so (Roche 236). When asked about the rumors at a party in Texas, Carter dismissed the point with a wave of his hand saying “That’s my brother. He’s a character, kind of a no-gooder. I don’t have much to do with him” (qtd. in Auchmutey, “The Man” M1). When confronted directly by Wayne Greenhaw, he first hemmed and hawed saying, “Hey, old buddy, you don’t want to hurt old Forrest, do you?” and then denied being Asa Carter and claimed that his soon-to-be published Education of Little Tree was a true story (My Heart 55). As Greenhaw had contacted Friede, Carter had his wife send a long letter to Friede claiming that she had divorced Asa Earl Carter and married his sensitive nephew, Forrest (Greenhaw, My Heart 55). The discrepancies between the “brother” and “nephew” stories apparently did not attract attention among Carter’s friends in Texas—apart from Lawrence Clayton who did indeed figure it out but never confronted Carter—and until his death they would continue believing that Forrest Carter’s fictional identity was true. Those in the know, like rancher Don Josey, “shared [a] sense of mirth over Carter’s ability to pull off the hoax” (Rubin 95).

No one close to Carter ever claimed that he had experienced anything like a spiritual rebirth causing him to regret his prior White supremacist behaviors. His wife—

who had remained wed to him throughout his life, but had spent a good deal of their married life living in Oxford, Alabama, away from his political activities—Thelma India Carter, said that “The philosophy in *Little Tree* was so much a part of Forrest’s being . . . he did not write *Little Tree* to make a fool of anyone . . . he didn’t have to change to write this book” (qtd. in McWhorter, “*Little Tree*” 121). Carter’s brother Doug told McWhorter that Asa planned to use his income from the novels to finance a political comeback in the 1980s and Auchmutey that he “held firm segregationist views through the end” (“*Little Tree*” 121, “*The Man*” M1). Similarly, his longtime friend Ron Taylor would say “People think Asa Carter couldn’t have written what Forrest Carter did, but I don’t see any contradiction. He kept his racial pride” (qtd. in Auchmutey, “*The Man*” M1). As for his motivation for writing a fictional autobiography, his old attorney, R. B. Jones remembers him saying, “Y’all screwed me all those years, and I’m gonna get you back. Y’all think you’re so damn smart. I’ll show you who’s so damn smart” (qtd. in Rubin 96). But the effort to maintain the pretense apparently wore on Carter who began drinking more and more—to the point that few thought he would ever be sober enough to produce another work (Auchmutey, “*The Man*” M4).

One day, while visiting at his son’s house, a disagreement arose—possibly over poor treatment which his wife might have been receiving. India Carter, who was known to be the wife of Asa Carter and whom no accounts demonstrate was a plausible liar, was a liability to Carter. As Carter was spending more and more time wandering and apparently little time at home, it is not certain how well she was being supported. But, whether the argument was over ill-treatment of his mother or some other issue, Carter’s son found himself confronted with a drunken Carter who had flown into a rage and was

cussing him—during the ensuing brawl, Carter was struck. He hit his head—perhaps on the counter—and fell. The son called an ambulance, but during the ride he choked on his own vomit, and Asa Earl Carter died in 1979 at the age of 53 (Rubin 96).

If Carter had not died when he did, it is doubtless that his past would have caught up with him. Greenhaw had already exposed him in 1976, and it was probably becoming more and more difficult to avoid questions from those who had read or heard the story. Carter had been recognized during a television appearance, and that fact too would have caused him difficulty. Had Carter lived, it is extremely unlikely that his novel, The Education of Little Tree, would have seen the renewed success it experienced beginning about 10 years after his death. Indeed, given the sadly rekindled success of White supremacist movements and the current militia movement, it seems unlikely that Carter would not have gone back to his old ways and reengaged in political activities on behalf of White supremacy. The fact that Carter's works are so widely read outside the context of his White supremacist philosophies and political activism is made possible principally by his untimely death. A living Asa Earl Carter—whether he intentionally went back to his old ways or just through the sheer pressure of his emotional problems gave in and exposed himself—would be a very difficult thing to deny, and the subtext of his works would have become self-evident.

NOTES

- ¹ FBI files 100-4651-122, apparently from the Alabama Independent, 15 December 1970.
- ² FBI files 100-4651-122, apparently from the Alabama Independent, 15 December 1970, page 8, in an article entitled "Addresses Caucasians."
- ³ FBI files 100-4651-123.
- ⁴ FBI files 100-4651-128.
- ⁵ FBI files 157-4634-4, 157-4634-9, 100-4651-124, and 157-4634-16; FBI files 100-4651-142, 128, 129, 130, 143, and 16.
- ⁶ FBI files 100-4651-128 and 129, 157-4634-5, and 157-46-11
- ⁷ FBI files 157-4634-23.
- ⁸ FBI files 157-4634-4 & 157-4634-9.
- ⁹ FBI files 157-4634-12 and 14, 157-4634-26 and 31, 157-4634-18, and 157-4634-32.
- ¹⁰ "Carter Opens Segregated 'Commune.'" Birmingham News 29 Aug. 1971: [2B?]; and FBI files 157-4634-37, 100-4651-144 and 145, 157-4634-52 and 100-4651-146
- ¹¹ FBI files 157-4634-27, 157-4634-17, 157-4634-40, 157-4634-41, 157-4634-135, and 157-4634-42.
- ¹² FBI files 157-4634-45 & 46, and 157-4634-52.
- ¹³ FBI files 157-4634-43, 50, 51, 53, and 54.
- ¹⁴ FBI files 157-4634-63, 157-4634-85, 157-4634-86, and 157-4634-65.
- ¹⁵ FBI files 157-4634-58.
- ¹⁶ FBI files 157-4634-73, 157-4634-64.
- ¹⁷ FBI files 157-4634-58, 157-4634-59, 157-4634-66, 157-4634-82, and 157-4634-86.
- ¹⁸ FBI files 157-4634-70, 157-4634-62, and 157-4634-82.
- ¹⁹ FBI files 157-4634-82, 157-4634-74, 157-4634-72, 157-4634-80, 157-4634-79, 157-4634-78, and 157-4634-88.
- ²⁰ FBI files 157-4634-92.
- ²¹ FBI files 157-4634-93.
- ²² FBI files 157-4634-99, 157-4634-109, and 157-4634-108
- ²³ The son who lost his leg was apparently Ralph Walker Carter (Biffle 43A). Accounts of his having been shot are varied—Carter claimed to the Southerners that it was an accidental shooting caused when Ralph was cleaning out his gun, but apparently told his friend Don Josey (a Wallace supporter and wealthy Texan) that Ralph was shot accidentally when someone took a shot at Carter while he was driving (FBI files 157-4634-113, Biffle 43A). Because of the disparity in the accounts and the fact that treatment was apparently delayed, there is also the possibility that Ralph was shot in a family dispute and the family delayed treatment, trying home remedies, to cover this up. It was at Ralph Walker Carter's house that Carter died, apparently after a family dispute ending in fisticuffs.
- ²⁴ FBI files 157-4634-114, 157-4634-97, 157-4634-98, 157-4634-101, 157-4634-115, 157-4634-116, and 157-4634-100.
- ²⁵ FBI files 157-4634-118, 157-4634-105, and 157-4634-106.
- ²⁶ FBI files 157-4634-122, 157-4634-132, 157-4634-138, and 157-4634-125.
- ²⁷ FBI files 157-4634-157.
- ²⁸ FBI files 157-4634-164, 157-4634-173, 157-4634-165, 157-4634-166, 157-4634-169, 157-4634-181, 157-4634-184, 157-4634-185, 157-4634-193, and 157-4634-195.
- ²⁹ FBI files 157-4634-164, 157-4634-170, 157-4634-176, 157-4634-184, 157-4634-185, and 157-4634-188.
- ³⁰ FBI files 157-4634-176, 157-4634-181, 157-4634-184, 157-4634-185, and 157-4634-189.
- ³¹ FBI files 157-4634-184, 157-4634-185, 157-4634-188, 157-4634-189, 157-4634-193, and 157-4634-195.
- ³² FBI files 157-4634-200, emphasis added.
- ³³ It seems important to note that Carter may have continued his association with the Southerners even though that is not recorded in the FBI files. It is extremely possible that, given these circumstances and Carter's broad knowledge of terrorist activities in Alabama, he was forced by the FBI to turn informant in return for their promise not to reveal his dual identity. Four other file numbers (HQ-1570001043, HQ-1900009762, HQ-0140002913, and HQ-1000203422) were mentioned in an online source about Carter published by Michael J. Ravnitzky. My first FOIPA request for these files and others on Carter was

denied, but it was granted on appeal. I was contacted by telephone by an FBI agent who asked if I would settle for the already-approved materials, from which I have been citing. I agreed to this, not realizing that the absent files might well contain important information. I have declined to make an additional request, however, as the FBI was reluctant to grant me access to the materials. I also felt that these materials would probably focus on the period after 1974—a period which does not pertain to the study I am doing. I will leave the matter of other scholars who wish to ascertain what, if anything, might be in these additional files.

³⁴ I am indebted to Dr. Ben Keppel for this phrase.

³⁵ Others have argued that Carter's remaining two novels also contain White supremacy, but I am confining myself to works that clearly have their origins during the period in which he was actively engaged in White supremacist activities.

³⁶ Description by the Dallas police department, contained in FBI files 100-4651-48.

³⁷ I will refer to this work as Gone to Texas from this point on, as the original publication exists in only a scant hundred or so copies, most of them in the hands of private collectors. The first edition of Gone to Texas, however, is readily available.

³⁸ This episode would fuel a scene in the film version, called "The Outlaw: Josey Wales." In the relevant sequence, Josey Wales's fellow guerrillas, but not Wales, go in to surrender and are deceitfully gunned down after willingly disarming themselves. There is a spectacular gunfight in which Wales participates in order to avenge the treachery, and Wales and his sidekick Jamie are the only ones to escape. This episode does not appear in the book.

³⁹ Many works discuss these points. Quintard Taylor notes the following in his bibliographic essay for the National Park Service: "Although much of the contemporary interest in the African American west can be traced to the 1960s 'discovery' of black cowboys, the subsequent literature has been disappointing. Philip Durham and Everett Jones, The Negro Cowboy (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1965), was far more successful in inspiring popular rather than scholarly accounts. The one exception was Kenneth W. Porter's 'Negro Labor in the Western Cattle Industry, 1866-1900,' Labor History 10:3 (Summer 1969): 346-374. One must look to general accounts such as Jack Watson's The Real American Cowboy (New York: New Amsterdam Press, 1988) to find much about black cowboys. One brief but useful primary source is D.W. Wallace's personal memoir which appears in R.R. Crane, 'D.W. Wallace ("80 John"): A Negro Cattleman on the Texas Frontier,' West Texas Historical Association Yearbook 28 (1952):113-118. In contrast, the literature on the buffalo soldiers, the other black westerners who captured the public's attention in the 1960s, is rich, detailed and increasingly sophisticated. See for example William L. Leckie, Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); Arlen Fowler, The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1971). Monroe Billington, New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866-1900 (Niwtot: University of Colorado Press, 1991); Frank N. Schubert, Buffalo Soldiers. Braves and the Brass (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1993); Garna L. Christian, Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899-1917 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995; and Frank N. Schubert, ed., On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1995), all examine discrete aspects of black life in the post-Civil War Army in the West."

⁴⁰ This title is almost certainly stands in intentional relationship to The Education of Henry Adams, one of the most important autobiographical works in American letters. This new title may have been given by Carter's editors, though, and no conclusion can be drawn about his degree of sympathy with the change. Unless citing specific passages from the manuscript version of Me and Granpa, I will refer to this work as The Education of Little Tree.

⁴¹ The vanishing Indian stereotype of this sequence is mentioned by nearly everyone who writes about the book.

⁴² Indeed, the planned sequel to the book, The Wanderings of Little Tree, would have shown Little Tree rambling about Oklahoma and involving himself with Depression-era outlaws ("Forrest Carter / Asa Carter and Politics" 20, Rubin 96).

⁴³ This was mentioned in passing in a review of The Education of Little Tree, which appeared in Publishers Weekly, on 9 Aug. 1976, on page 75.

⁴⁴ Some Black people fought for the South hoping for similarly favorable treatment, but this also does not make the Confederacy any the less White supremacist nor the stories of these Blacks' lives any less pro-Confederate.

⁴⁵ The sentence has no logical end—"Granpa" never says anything within that paragraph. It is four paragraphs, approximately, before Granpa says anything.

⁴⁶ A possibility, of course, exists that Carter is speaking simultaneously in the Noble Savage mode and in a conservative environmentalist's language. No real conclusions can be drawn on the matter other than to say that Social Darwinism is certainly one of Carter's points as the phrase "so the slow will raise no children who are also slow" is simply too laden with meaning from Carter's White supremacist philosophies and liberal views are too often his target to be his intent.

⁴⁷ An interesting bit of trivia is that Carter mentions in his 1969-70 speeches that he has had run-ins with professors at his daughter's college—she apparently attended the State Teachers' College. This particular character might actually have been based on one such professor, and this section of the book may be a fantasy about stymieing that teacher—whom apparently he could not stymie in reality.

⁴⁸ It is possible that in this passage Carter intends to target Episcopalians. One woman is said to wear a grey dress with a very tight neckline, and the second woman wears a floor-length black dress—they look so much alike that the child Little Tree has trouble separating them. It is possible, then, that the two women are nuns—as Episcopalians are one of the few denominations other than Roman Catholics to have nuns. Similarly, Episcopalians do refer to their ministers as "Reverend." It is possible, in fact, that the Anglican associated Episcopalians in this piece serve as a substitute for Roman Catholics—whom Carter despised—when it was too dangerous for Carter to make his disdain too apparent.

⁴⁹ Huhndorf assumes that it is all-white (156), but there is no statement in the book to support this assumption. Given the commonplace segregation of the 1920s, however, the assumption is not ill-founded.

⁵⁰ This famous slogan was the one used at US government boarding schools which sought to implement the policy, written into law in 1864, which stated that Native children could not be taught in their own languages. Boarding schools were founded and children were taken, sometimes kidnapped, from their parents to be sent hundreds of miles away to stripped of their cultures.

⁵¹ In fact, there would be no reason to do so. Little Tree's family already attends a Christian church, as noted above, and they read the classics of the western world in the evenings. Little Tree is also fluent in English. There would be no need to "assimilate" Little Tree, as he is already assimilated into White culture (albeit of the Appalachian type mostly) and disassociated from Cherokee citizenship.

⁵² The term "amalgamate" is used in Programs 18, 20, and 35. The phrase "integrate our children" is used in Program 47.

⁵³ For example, I read recently that by 2020 there will be no Native Hawaiians left—all remaining Hawaiians having intermarried and there being no longer any Hawaiians with solely Native lineage.

⁵⁴ Some variations exist, however. In the manuscript version, the following paragraph appears but it does not appear in this section of the novel:

If Granpa didn't need turkey meat, a gobbler with a twelve inch beard-comb could strut through the yard and Granpa wouldn't budge from his porch rocker. The gobbler would know it too; he could tell by the season; because Granpa never bothered foot, hoof or wing during mating and young'un raising time. (G&M 18)

⁵⁵ The manuscript has only the word "the" in this place, but a caret appears beside it and the word "ALL" is handwritten in above. It seems certain that "breaks all the" is intended.

⁵⁶ It is interesting to note, however, that Mr. Wine also is given to "playful" deceits and gives the child, Little Tree, presents of attractive clothing. These facts were enough to make me uncomfortable during my first read-through of the book, thinking that Wine might be a child molester. Though the book does not ultimately seem to support this reading, the character's morality is somewhat ambiguous.

⁵⁷ For an unromanticized, more accurate version, Geary Hobson a Quapaw/Cherokee scholar recommends Grant Forman's book, Indian Removal, though he urges some caution as the book was written by the soldiers and missionaries that conducted Cherokees to Oklahoma and contains some bias (70).

⁵⁸ Interestingly, this technique of telling a story while a character is injured and running a fever was used in *Gone with the Wind* also. Jamie dreams about the past—when his mother was killed by Redlegs—and Wales learns why it is that Jamie has become anti-federal government. This dream of Granpa's also serves to explain why Granpa is anti-federal government. Carter's dream/fantasies justify revenge in both cases.

⁵⁹ The "horded" velvet dress is a staple of Carter's discourse, it is mentioned also in Program 13, quoted above. It appears to stand for the remnants of refinement which Southern women held on to from the past. Women are depicted in Carter's work particularly as the guardians of the past, and this is one such symbol.

⁶⁰ This same passage is also quoted previously, as an example of Carter's encouraging the listener to take a firm and unyielding stance.

⁶¹ This phrase is used more than once in the FBI files, most notably in 157-4634-11 when the informant dismisses the end of Carter's presentation as his "usual little history lessons."

⁶² This is a particularly self-evident use of Native American stereotype. Were it true, we would have to ask ourselves why Native Americans did not merely blend in with the landscape when pursued by the federal troops who often murdered them in mass. That few people question such stereotypes is perplexing.

⁶³ It seems important to note, however, that one of the Union soldiers will eventually—and surprisingly—befriend the ragged family. At this point in the narrative, however, we do not know or expect this.

⁶⁴ Carter specifically mentions this in Program 7, mentioned above: "Now, there didn't any Asians, and there didn't any Africans have anything to do with writing our Constitution. That came from our people."

⁶⁵ Again, there is no proof that Carter had any Cherokee ancestry beyond his own claim and, apparently, some family legends. Nevertheless, he appears to have genuinely fancied himself Cherokee even as he apparently took little interest in contemporary Native issues—see Clayton, who says that Carter was not interested in "rights for contemporary Indians but was instead a critic of the government's record of inept and cruel handling of Indian affairs in the past" ("Forrest Carter / Asa Carter and Politics" 21).

Conclusion: The Significance of this Study

While we can certainly find much in Carter's later works which need not be dismissed because of his history as a White resistance leader—he had a great gift for evoking scene, a sure sense of oral storytelling rhythms, a keen grasp of the lyricism of the language—his very skill as a writer makes those who read his works uncritically more susceptible to absorbing messages which they might otherwise find repugnant. The project of reading a work against the grain, as surely most would wish to do with the anti-Black and anti-Semitic discourse in Carter's novels, allows us to appreciate those skills he had while shielding us from absorbing and promoting those values which he held in esteem. This project, however, cannot be embarked upon without a clear understanding of the direction in which the grain runs within his works so that one can more certainly read against the efforts he made to manipulate the reader into participating in his agenda.

What hate speech signals were there in the sections of his work in which we could find Carter making anti-Black and anti-Semitic statements? The first cue comes when Carter depicted members of these two groups—either in his non-fictional or fictional efforts. Though Carter's depictions were certainly more nuanced and seemingly positive in his later works, we can find him using White supremacist stereotypes throughout his career. Another sign occurs when Carter is taking as his topic the efforts of Civil Rights leaders. In his non-fictional works, he is clearly unfairly critical and extremist in his views. In his fictional works, he takes such principal issues as bus segregation, voting rights, and school integration and systematically continues his criticisms.¹ The final indication exists in those themes which were dear to the heart of traditional White supremacists—natural superiority, racial capabilities, the Old South and the Lost Cause.

In these themes, we can find great consistency between Carter's early non-fictional works and later fictional ones. Essentially, whenever we find a topic or theme which was commonplace amongst White supremacists, we should investigate the work of Carter to determine whether he is writing—as proves so often to be the case—in sympathy to White supremacist philosophy.

In Carter's fictional works, however, we can also find passages which do not implicate themselves in White supremacy. A long section in Chapter 15, for example, concerns the growing of watermelons and a child's fascination with, and greed for, his first taste of ripe watermelon. Other than a possible jab at the stereotype of watermelon-loving Blacks, there appears to be nothing more to the story than humor. Similarly, at the end of that same chapter there is a poem dedicated to the character Willow John which seems to embody a sense of impending loss and desire to make the most of a relationship while time lasts. Again, apart from a possible connection to the Vanishing Indian stereotype—Willow John is the only living Cherokee in the book other than the grandparents—there appears to be nothing in the poem other than emotional content. Thus, as Kopel observed many years before, when Carter stayed off the topics common to White supremacists, he could be a charming enough storyteller.

It is tempting, then, for many readers to refuse to see the many overlaps—sometimes quite literally so—between Carter's early and later works. What the detailed analysis of Carter's works and the comparison of his early and later works has shown us, however, is just how little he needed to change his writing in order to pass off his philosophies to the literary audience. It shows us that, as Butler notes: "we may be compelled to claim that any word can be a word that wounds, that it depends on its

deployment, and that the deployment of words is not reducible to the circumstances of their utterance” (13). The immediate circumstance of the utterance of Carter’s novels is that he is writing entertaining adventure and sentimental fiction in order to make money—and in this, no White supremacy exists. It is in the more complex relationship between his fiction and non-fictional writings, between the tactics used in these novels and the works of other White supremacists, between the philosophies expressed in the novels and the philosophies of neo-Nazis, the KKK, and other White supremacists that we can find the underpinning “wounding” nature of the novels. At least in part, it is clear that Carter—intentionally or because of some unhealthy compulsion—took as his targets Blacks, the Civil Rights movement, Jews, and Anglicans. It is equally clear, as other scholars have shown, that Native Americans are wounded by his use of stereotype, though it is less clear that intention was operating in that case. Clearly, however, it is a mistake to read Carter’s works without a careful attention to their proximity to White supremacist discourse, as to fail to do so is to put oneself at risk of internalizing such discourse and standing in peril of being persuaded, however unintentionally, by it.

A Specific Case: The Complicity of UNM Press

Despite the likelihood that Carter was expressing White supremacist beliefs having become known by 1991, University of New Mexico Press refused to reclassify Carter’s purported autobiography as fiction written by a KKK leader until years later—failing to include even a laid-in note regarding authorship in the copies of The Education of Little Tree already printed, retaining the foreword written by Rennard Strickland that called the work “autobiographical,” and refusing to print any information properly

contextualizing the history of the controversy concerning the book even in the most recent twenty-fifth anniversary edition. As there is every reason for UNMP to have taken at least one of these actions, bearing in mind that they are a university press and are at least hypothetically more interested in producing works which will add to cultural knowledge than a mainstream publisher would be, we are left with the only rationale for this lack of action being the least pleasant one: UNMP is suppressing any information which would interfere with its continued profit from this money-making reprint and is willing to lend its name and respectability to that reprint in order to forward that project, regardless of the implications.

The result is that twenty-four years after Wayne Greenhaw first exposed Carter's dual identity, seventeen years after Lawrence Clayton first confirmed Greenhaw's findings in a literary journal and began discussing how Carter's political and religious views are critical to his work, and nine years after Dan T. Carter settled the issue of Carter's dual identity and his engagement in radical right-wing politics for good, Cherokee author Connie Cronley could write the following in an essay called "Real Heroes" after hearing about the movie based on The Education of Little Tree and the controversy surrounding it. Having gleaned Carter's biography from a library resource based on Carter's fictitious account—her probable source, Contemporary Authors, remains uncorrected—she did a bit of research:

The controversy over The Education of Little Tree came some time later when someone claimed that Mr. Carter was a Ku Klux Klansman who wrote the story in atonement. The book had been out for years. Then it won an award, and a professor in New Jersey² or somewhere unearthed

the author's past and all hell broke loose. Mr. Carter was dead by now and unable to defend himself *against cheap shots*.

The foreword to the book was written by Rennard Strickland, an expert in Indian literature, history and law. So I called him and asked him the true story.

"No," Dr. Strickland said, "*Mr. Carter was not a Klansman*. But he had worked as a speechwriter for George Wallace. And remember, the Cherokees were slave-holding Indians." (236, emphasis added)

The entire "controversy" having been laid to rest for Cronley as false rumor, she accepts at face value Carter's highly romanticized account of the Trail of Tears, failing to look up a source in order to discover the facts about her people's history. She concludes her essay on the entire issue by referring to a stunt man who performed a dangerous stunt and received a rather large bonus for it—apparently drawing a metaphor between the man who was pretending to be someone he wasn't and Carter's pseudonymous efforts—saying, "Cowboys or Indians or writers, the hero is the person who really does the stunt" (238).

Those who claim that the book ought to be read on its own merits, without any regard to the background of the author or his possible political agenda, need to consider such readings. A person who is Cherokee and trying to reclaim his or her ancestry—as Cronley and Justice did—in part by coming to this book are going to come away with stereotypical and sometimes false concepts of Cherokee identity, however positively intended, that emerge more from Carter's Anglo-Saxon upbringing and White supremacist ideology than from any lived or researched knowledge. In absorbing that

information without question, they are also likely to absorb uncritically Carter's continued engagement in White supremacist discourse and anti-Black hate speech. Individuals who come to the book who are not of Cherokee descent but are trying to learn something about that culture so as to engage in what they think is multicultural awareness and the dismantling of a dominant culture in place of a truly culturally democratic one are also going to be similarly disserved. By misreading the book, on the basis of the presumed reliability of the publisher, as a work that is centrally located in the discourse community of Cherokees, readers misconstrue the importance of this work to that culture and to the project of multicultural awareness in general.

This is made particularly imperative when we acknowledge how little Carter's aims had changed during the course of his life as a writer. Though we have noted that his tactics altered so as to make his views more palatable, the messages themselves remained remarkably consistent throughout his long career. Carter's engagement in White supremacist hate speech, even if he did not consider himself wholly White—Montgomery Circuit Judge Richard P. Emmet remembered after Forrest Carter's interview with Barbara Walters that he had "always claimed to be part-Indian" (Greenhaw, My Heart 52)—was both sincere, otherwise he would have given it up long before 1974 when such positions became a liability,³ and of the extreme variety. As such, his work is openly hostile to any multicultural reading and hostile to the project of multiculturalism as a whole. The failure to recognize such hate speech tactics when they are deployed in nontraditional, and one might argue therefore more effective, ways has contributed to this misunderstanding of Carter's works.

Lessons to Be Learned

What we can learn from the entire history of Carter's life as a central figure in the White resistance movement during the Civil Rights era into his life as a novelist who at least seemingly promoted Native American interests at the expense of other minority groups? This history teaches us that there is just as much variety in the works of members of non-White groups as there is among Whites—some non-Whites are as hostile to ideas of multiculturalism as are some Whites. Native Americans certainly have excellent reason to resist assimilation efforts, and within their own communities it is certainly sensible for them to wish to be monocultural—some Native Americans refuse to speak English, for example, in order to preserve their native way of thinking by preserving their native language. However, those Native Americans who resist efforts to make the larger society more culturally democratic, particularly those who are anti-Black, are no less suspect than White supremacists in their motives. This same is true of members of Asian, Black, and Hispanic cultures. Not every member of a minority group is equally committed to the concept of cultural pluralism, some with less justification than others, and it is foolish to assume that they will be.

The history of Carter's work teaches us that we cannot trust to the university publishing establishment to determine which works from non-White writers are worthy of being considered central works which are representative of the given non-White community. In some cases, multiculturalism has become little more than a profit center to be met by publishers whose principal concern is to fill an ethnic blank in their back list. This teaches us that we need to look more carefully at the context in which the works of non-Whites are written so as to understand what other writings and what other

discourse communities those works might be in dialogue with. It particularly teaches us the value of asking members of a given community what works best represent them, but not to oversimplify even in such cases. In this case, we might find that Eastern Band Cherokees would indeed choose the purported autobiography of Carter as one work that represents their culture; however, we must remember that the anti-Black stance of Carter is not uncommon in the Cherokee community, and we would have to ask ourselves if that would make the work unsuitable for use in a multicultural or diversity education program. We would certainly wish to be cautious in giving the work to young children who might have difficulty understanding that not all aspects of a given culture are worthy, though the same work might provoke fruitful discussion among older students made aware of the complexity of the work.

Another vital concept which we learn is that Carter's uncritical dismissal of integration as merely another form of assimilation and amalgamation plays more into the hands of White supremacists than it benefits any other group; yet, we also learn that an uncritical deployment of the term *integration* which fails to acknowledge and value the very real differences between ethnic groups can also be deployed to the benefit of White supremacists. Just as the language of the Civil Rights movement—"leveling the playing field," for example—can be exploited by a group combating Native sovereignty,⁴ the language of cultural autonomy can be used to oppress those who merely want the opportunity to compete in all strata of the dominant culture and, by doing so, render it less monolithic, less dominant, and more culturally democratic.

Carter's novels and his own personal history similarly teach us to be less naïve about the history of non-Whites in America—some Native Americans held Blacks as

slaves and had virtually the same attitudes towards them as Whites who also held slaves. Some Blacks participated as Buffalo soldiers in the oppression of Native Americans and held attitudes towards them that were virtually the same as Whites. The unwilling immigrants who were Blacks can hardly be held in the same light as Whites who came looking principally to exploit the North American continent for monetary wealth, but the unwilling immigrants who were British convict laborers must also be viewed in a more complex way. Both the potato-famine Irish and the immigrant Chinese of the 19th century entered the North American continent under circumstances which must surely elicit some sympathy, but both groups participated in the building of the intercontinental railroad which was the death knell for many of the cultures of western Native Americans. The history of the United States is not the simple situation of pioneering Whites who, properly so Carter would have us believe or improperly as is more commonly held, were the sole oppressors of both Native and non-native persons of color. The facts available from careful historical study must help us overcome such myths.

Carter also teaches us much about contemporary politics. As Dan T. Carter pointed out in The Politics of Rage, George Wallace and his defense of religious conservatism in many ways prefigures the current activities of the religious right—which acknowledges its debt to Wallace, as Carter notes, all the while it seeks to distance itself from him and align itself with the work of Martin Luther King. Similarly, though Wallace did not create the conservative politics which dominate the present, he “anticipated most of its themes”: the white backlash, scorn of intellectuals who “don’t know the difference between smut and great literature,” and the incompetence of federal bureaucrats who mispend taxpayer’s hard-earned dollars (Carter, Politics 466). Though

Wallace himself was too “unsettling, too vulgar, [and] too overly southern” to wield power on the national level for long, the more subtle politics practiced by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan found fertile ground in the electorate Wallace had originally appealed to. In the same way, Carter’s early and open racism—vicious, crude, and neo-Confederate—became far more palatable in the victimized, coded, and pseudo-Native American prose of his novels. In many ways, Carter’s works achieved many of the same results in the field of popular culture—preparing audiences to accept a form of White supremacy which bolsters the religious right’s counterattacks.

Most importantly, though, Carter’s work teaches us not to define the concept of hate speech so narrowly. Hate speech does have conventional forms which are sometimes simple to identify—in the deployment of ugly profanities against an immediate audience. However, other forms of hate speech can easily masquerade as polite public discourse, and unless they are seen for what they are, they can effectively silence and oppress whole groups of targeted individuals. Hate speech can also manifest in unlikely places—cowboy poetry, sentimental novels, adventure tales—and as such can easily penetrate into the psyche of the unwary and make them susceptible to manipulation into political attitudes they would not have come to any other way. Unless we gain the skills needed to identify, make manifest, and to counter-speak, to counter-read, and to counteract such hate speech, we will remain at the mercy of the skilled propagandist such as Carter. Asa Earl Carter whose very eloquence can make people feel so good about themselves that they are unwilling or unable to think about what he is saying and what he is doing—what political realities and beliefs his work actually brings to life—is therefore more dangerous than any street thug could ever be. When political activists deploy the

rhetorical tactics which Carter was inclined to, democracy is impeded. As Braden concludes: “humane government works best when [. . .] responsible leaders hold to the democratic ethic” (351). And, this was something that Carter, in all the years up to his death, never did.

NOTES

¹ Carter also takes on the subject of sharecropping, economic hardship, which much the same result; however, as it was not previously discussed, the topic does not seem properly addressed in this list.

² Dr. Dan T. Carter is a distinguished, internationally renowned historian who was at Emory University in the Deep South at the time.

³ Unless, of course, his emotional problems can take the blame. It is possible that Carter might have wished to give up White supremacy but was compelled by his illness to continue to engage in hate speech—such speech might have been in some way attractive to him. He might have received a “rush” from it which he was incapable of denying himself.

⁴ Recently, the group “One Nation” here in Oklahoma has done precisely this.

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