

Hate Music Loved by Skinheads - Detroit becomes home to the neo-Nazi sound

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The city that created the Motown sound in the 1960s is quietly becoming a recording mecca for a disturbing new musical genre -- white supremacist hate music favored by neo-Nazi skinheads.

Detroit-based Resistance Records, which produces and distributes music by bands such as Aryan, Berserkr and Aggravated Assault, is building a following among America's estimated 4,000 skinheads and their counterparts in Europe, experts say.

"They're very significant," Richard Lobenthal, Michigan director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said of Resistance. "They sort of provide the groove. They galvanize the movement, move them and entertain them."

Resistance offers music with a thunderous heavy metal beat. Many lyrics are violently anti-African American and anti-Jewish.

"White people awake/Our future is at stake/Save the white race/Put you in your place," sings the band Centurion on "Fourteen Words." The narrator in Aryan's "Grandfather's Tale" asks his grandfather ". . . How it happened/How you overthrew the Jew/You sent the niggers running/I wanna hear that too."

It was at a Detroit concert organized by Resistance that teenage skinheads Bryan and David Freeman, who are accused of murdering their parents and younger brother last month in Pennsylvania, met Frank and August Hesse of Michigan.

Police said the brothers and their cousin, Nelson Birdwell III, fled to the Hesses' farm in Hope, Mich., after the killings and were arrested there. The Freemans, who have Nazi slogans tattooed on their foreheads, are awaiting trial in Pennsylvania.

#### QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Resistance also bills itself as a multimedia company and distributes a well-produced, 32-page quarterly magazine in which it has said it is setting up access to the Internet and is working on a "pro- white" motion picture.

The group is trying to organize American skinheads nationally for the first time, according to Klanwatch, an Alabama-based organization that monitors hate groups.

A Klanwatch report claims that U.S. skinheads have committed 35 homicides and "hundreds of brutal assaults" since 1988.

Experts say the two men behind Resistance are George Burdi, 24, of Toronto, and Mark Wilson, formerly of Milwaukee, who now lives in suburban Detroit.

Burdi, using the name George Eric Hawthorne, performs with a band called RaHoWa, short for "racial holy war." He wrote in Resistance magazine's winter issue that he hopes to boost its circulation to 65,000, from 12,000 currently.

"We must reach our people, concentrating on the youth, and convince them that we have the only plausible and real answer to the nightmare that multi-racialism has brought," he said.

Efforts to reach Burdi and Wilson were unsuccessful. A business address listed in Michigan is unoccupied.

`White Homeland'

Burdi, who faces an assault charge stemming from a 1993 brawl between skinheads and anti-racist activists in Ottawa, told the New York Times recently that ``we want a white homeland. We want to live separate from other races."

Don Black, a former Ku Klux Klan official who operates a white-supremacist computer bulletin board in West Palm Beach, Fla., said music is a good tool to attract young skinheads. ``Music is really important to any political and cultural movement, and Resistance has become the premier provider of that music," he said.

Mark Shearer, manager of Rock of Ages record store in suburban Garden City, Mich., said Resistance record sales picked up as a result of the Freeman killings.

``It's kind of an underground thing, and to be honest, I think a lot of people buy it out of curiosity more than anything else," Shearer said.

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