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Seeking Justice for Long-Ago Klan Murders

Forthcoming Book Devils Walking Confronts a Series of Racial Crimes in 1960s Mississippi

Baton Rouge—Journalist and Pulitzer Prize finalist Stanley Nelson brings to life the chilling story of a series of Klan murders in 1960s Mississippi, in his book *Devils Walking*, to be published by LSU Press in October. In *Devils Walking: Klan Murders along the Mississippi in the 1960s*, Nelson details his investigation—alongside renewed FBI attention—into several Klan murders that terrorized residents of northeast Louisiana and Mississippi. In his work on these cold cases, Nelson uncovers the names of the Klan’s key members as well as systemized corruption and coordinated deception by those charged with protecting all citizens.

Devils Walking recounts the little-known facts and haunting stories that came to light from Nelson’s hundreds of interviews with both witnesses and suspects. His research points to the development of a particularly virulent local faction of the Klan who used terror and violence in pursuing their goals of stopping integration and ending the advancement of civil rights. Secretly led by the savage and cunning factory worker Red Glover, these Klansmen—a handpicked group that included local police officers and sheriff’s deputies—discarded Klan robes for civilian clothes and formed the underground Silver Dollar Group, carrying a silver dollar as a sign of unity. Their eight known victims, mostly African American men, ranged in age from nineteen to sixty-seven and included one Klansman seeking redemption for his past actions.

When, in 2007, the FBI announced its intention to re-open a number of unsolved civil rights–era cases, Stanley Nelson began researching those cases involving his hometown of Ferriday and nearby Natchez. Nelson’s subsequent articles in the *Concordia Sentinel* prompted the first grand jury hearing for these crimes, nearly fifty years after their occurrence. By unmasking those responsible for these atrocities and giving a voice to the victims’ families, *Devils Walking* demonstrates the importance of confronting and addressing the traumatic legacy of racism.

The investigative work of *Concordia Sentinel* editor **Stanley Nelson** made him a finalist for the 2011 Pulitzer Prize in Local Reporting and has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and on CNN and NPR. Winner of the Payne Award for Ethics in Journalism from the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication, among many other honors, Nelson was one of seven reporters featured in the *Columbia Journalism Review*’s 50th anniversary issue, “The Art of Great Reporting.”

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Civil Rights / Southern History

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