



U.S. Department of Justice

103-2

Civil Rights Division

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

March 16, 1982

To: John Roberts

From: Wm. Bradford Reynolds *WBR*

With respect to the attached request for a meeting with the Attorney General, my recommendation would be that the Attorney General not meet with this group but that he refer Ms. Wells to me for a meeting on April 19. In the event that we might want to portray higher visibility with respect to the Department's policy in the area discussed in the attached letter, it might be advisable to have this group meet with Rudy (either with or without me, as deemed appropriate) to voice their referenced concerns.

Attachment

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



3/16/82

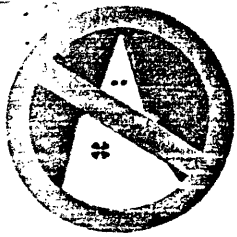
TO: Wm. Bradford Reynolds
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

FROM: John Roberts

What do you recommend that the Attorney General do in response to this request? They ask for an immediate reply from him.

URGENT

Folder: Civil Rights Division, anti-Klan
Meeting
Series: Assistant Attorney General Files
Acc. #60-89-0173 Box 1
RG 60 Department of Justice



National Anti-Klan Network

P. O. Box 10500 • Atlanta, Ga. 30310 • (404) 221-0025

March 10, 1982

Attorney General William French Smith
Department of Justice
Washington, DC 10530

Dear Mr. Smith,

On behalf of the initial signers of the Womens' Appeal for Justice In Chattanooga, I have been asked to seek an appointment with you and with certain of your associates on April 19, 1982.

We seek this opportunity to meet with you to discuss the case of five elderly Black women who were wounded during a 1980 Ku Klux Klan shooting spree in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Additionally, we seek to exchange views regarding Justice Department policy in cases of Ku Klux Klan, Nazi and related hate-violence which is enjoying a dramatic rise in our country.

The initial signers of the Womens' Appeal, which I have enclosed, represent hundreds of thousands of women from all walks of life. All are gravely concerned that the KKK assailants still walk the streets of Chattanooga. As women, we are deeply troubled about the current atmosphere in our nation and the toll this takes on the next generation.

April 19th is the second anniversary of the shootings in Chattanooga and women from across the country have chosen that time to come to Washington to share our concerns with governmental officials. We would like to meet with you and with members of both the Criminal and Civil Rights Divisions of your Department.

Please let us know immediately of your availability for a meeting on April 19 with representatives of the signers of our Womens' Appeal.

Sincerely,

Lyn Wells
Lyn Wells
Director

LW/ss
encl

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WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR JUSTICE IN CHATTANOOGA

In April, 1980, four elderly Black women were gunned down on the streets of Chattanooga, Tennessee. They were injured when shots were fired from a car carrying three members of the "Justice Knights" of the Ku Klux Klan.

Viola Ellison, Lela Evans, Opal Jackson and Katherine Johnson were all wounded by the shotgun blasts. A fifth woman, Fannie Crumsey, was injured by flying glass during the unprovoked attack.

Three months later, an all-white jury declared that two of the Klansmen were innocent. A third, Marshall Thrash, was sentenced to nine months in jail and served three months on a minor assault charge.

This was the outcome of a state court prosecution despite the fact that it was undeniable that the trio attended a Klan meeting together, picked up cross-burning materials, went to the home of one of them and picked up two shotguns, drove into the heart of Chattanooga's Black community, set a cross afire, drove around and returned, at which point these shots were fired from their car. At the trial, one of them admitted to firing the shots.

As WOMEN, we refuse to countenance terrorists who, purporting to "protect white womanhood," shoot down Black women, assault Black life and target those others who stand for social justice.

As MOTHERS, we pledge to educate our children to stand up against the vicious racism that the Klan represents.

As CITIZENS, we support these courageous women and their civil suit to win judgement against the Klan. And most urgently, we DEMAND that the U.S. Justice Department immediately begin federal criminal prosecutions of those responsible for these and other violent Klan actions under existing Civil Rights and Anti-Klan statutes.

We urge you to add your name to the roll call of women who oppose these assaults, scare tactics and racism of the Ku Klux Klan and similar hate groups.

Lauren Anderson
National Conference of Black Lawyers

Ella J. Baker

Beryle Banfield
President, Council on Interracial
Books for Children

Unita Blackwell-Watson
Mayor, Mayersville, Mississippi

Anne Braden
Co-Chair, Southern Organizing Committee
for Social & Economic Justice

Professor Denise S. Cary-Bennia
Northeastern University School of Law

Judy Claude
National Ministries,
American Baptist Churches

Ruby Dee
Actress and Writer

Barbara Deming
Writer and Poet

Jan Douglass
Executive Director,
Community Relations Commission
City of Atlanta

Carol Downer
Feminist Women's Health Center
Los Angeles

Janice Fine
Chair, United States Student Association

Marjorie Fine
Coordinator, Reproductive Rights National Network

Dorothy Height
President, National Council of Negro Women

Coretta Scott King

Jacqueline Levine
Chair, Governing Council
American Jewish Congress

Evelyn Lowery
President, SCLC WOMEN

Hilda Mason
Councilwoman, District of Columbia

Joyce Miller
President, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Vivian Jenkins Nelsen
American Lutheran Church

Karen Nussbaum
President, WORKING WOMEN

Consuelo U. Packer
Women's Division, United Methodist Church

Bernice Johnson Reagon
Cultural Worker, Singer, Historian

Patsy Sims
Author, THE KLAN

Eleanor Smeal
President, National Organization of Women

Addie L. Wyatt

*All organizations listed for identification only.