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Barbecue Nations

Aryanfest was hardly the badass event it billed itself. Shaved-headed men hugged each other like they were at a gay pride picnic.

BY SUSY BUCHANAN AND DAVID HOLTHOUSE

Have you heard the one about the brown-skinned kid who showed up at the Nazi rally wearing a "WHITE POWER" tee shirt?

This was no joke at Aryanfest 2004, an "international" gathering of Nazi skinheads, Ku Klux Klan members and other white supremacists that took place inside McDowell Regional Mountain Park just north of Fountain Hills a couple of weekends ago.

Aryanfest's gates opened at noon, and about an hour later, the gathering assemblage gradually hushed as all eyes turned upon the young man who had just paid his entrance fee and was casually perusing the hate-rock compact discs, swastika flags and white power watch caps at Panzerfaust Records' merchandise booth.

He was in his late teens or early 20s, had a shaved head and sported Nazi and white power tattoos on both arms, in addition to wearing the white tee shirt with bold, black script.

He would have fit in just fine, except for one thing: He wasn't white. Not even close. There was at least half a cup of Kahlúa in his cream.

Seemingly oblivious to the increasingly hostile stares and menacing murmurs generated by his mere presence, this poor fellow, who seemed on the verge of getting lynched from the nearest sturdy saguaro cactus, was accompanied by three white kids who looked as if their primary aspiration in life was to load amplifiers for Marilyn Manson. They were outfitted in gothic black. Two had long, dirty blond hair, the other an unruly dark brown mop that danced wildly in the cold wind.

About five minutes after arriving, the group of four was approached by a cadre of skinhead security guards. These storm troopers were painfully polite as they informed the brown kid he wasn't welcome. "We're sorry, but we've been asked by the managers of this event to tell you that you have to leave. We're going to escort you out," said one.

"Why?" asked the kid.

The skinheads looked at him incredulously, and not without a degree of sympathy. It was obvious that he actually thought he belonged there, amongst white power kinfolk. "Well, you haven't broken any of the festival's rules," began another skinhead, employing the sort of "I hate to break it to you" tone of voice of a father explaining to his 5-year-old son why a bed sheet tied around his neck doesn't mean he can fly. "The thing is, you're not white."

Crestfallen, the kid stood silent for a few beats, then responded, "Okay, okay. I understand. I respect that. I just hope you know I didn't mean any disrespect by being here. I just wanted to come out and show my respect for the white race and support the cause."

"We respect that, and we appreciate your attitude, you not giving us any trouble," said a skinhead, gently guiding him toward the exit. "It's just we don't allow any non-whites here, and, you know, a judgment call was made and that call was that you're not white. We'll be happy to refund your money. Your friends can stay if they like, and if not, we'll give them their money back as well. "

The four interlopers each retrieved their \$30 cover charge, then made hastily for their car. Watching them go, celebrity racist Tom Metzger cackled and said, loudly but to no one in particular, "Well, what in the hell do you suppose that spic was thinking?"

Metzger -- dressed in black jeans, bomber jacket, cowboy boots, cowboy hat (with silver band) and tee shirt bearing the message "Some People Are Alive Simply Because It's Illegal to Kill Them" -- was one of several special guest speakers at this two-day Nazipalooza. But politics alone wouldn't draw many participants, so besides the political speeches, Aryanfest included a lineup of leading white power bands such as Max Resist and the Hooligans, Valhalla's Patriots, and Youngland, whose tune "Thank God I'm a White Boy" is a particular favorite of Metzger's. Though organizers were promising that 1,000 people would attend the event and only *maybe* 350 showed up, law enforcement sources still say it was the biggest white power event ever in Arizona.

Aryanfest's organizers kept its location, a group campground area inside the state park, a closely guarded secret until the day it began. A Web site directed attendees to a security checkpoint at a scenic overlook just outside Fountain Hills, where Nazi skinheads queried strangers, trying to sniff out law enforcement officers and other "race traitors," and then offered a printed sheet of directions to anyone who passed inspection. The directions led to the mountain park. Aryanfest attendees were instructed to tell the rangers at the gate they were there for the "Taylor-Martin wedding."

The atmosphere inside Aryanfest was that of a Renaissance Fair gone over to the dark side, with "Heils" in place of "Huzzahs." Costumed attendees wore Iron Cross medallions and black bomber jackets emblazoned with swastika patches instead of studded leather armor and princess dresses. A Nazi memorabilia dealer hawked SS patches and framed photographs of Hitler, Joseph Goebbels and Rudolph Hess in the parking lot. Next to the stage was a picnic pagoda, serving as the Aryanfest day-care center, where little white children in skinhead clothes colored in white power coloring books. Directly next door to the pagoda was a tattoo booth, where the incessant high-pitched buzz of a tattoo gun sounded from behind a blue tarp curtain. Beside the Panzerfaust merchandise stand was the Women for Aryan Unity booth, which sold child-rearing guides and *White Nationalist Baby* magazines, including one containing a simplified biography of Hitler suitable for bedtime stories: "He was a lifelong lover of animals and children . . . He is invincible and victory shall one day be his."

At a hillside campsite just north of the group campground, a dozen or so law enforcement officers from various agencies were close enough to smell the smoke from the white supremacists' barbecue grills. Disguised in baseball caps, they passed around binoculars and took down license plate numbers, 85 of them before one night was through. Among the cops was Mesa Police Department Detective Matt Browning, who's been on loan to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force, and has worked undercover

as a Nazi skinhead for two years. Since not all of the few hundred people who attended the event were paying customers, Browning estimates that Aryanfest took in no more than \$10,000 -- barely enough to cover expenses -- from its \$30-a-head entrance fee and from the alcohol sold at the site.

The police were happy that white-separatist group Volksfront's prediction of 1,000 people attending did not come true. But Browning said with a wry smile, "That's still a good-sized crowd. Come on, 300-plus racists in one place without a fight?"

No arrests were made at the event, not even a DUI, and swashbuckling predictions of violence that had been roiling about white power Internet sites proved unfounded. Not that there hasn't been violence among participants at such rallies in the past. Even disputes over girlfriends, Browning says, can result in "violence and people grabbing guns and bombs."

Nazis had bragged, Browning said, that the skinhead gang "Public Enemy Number One" was coming over from California to kick some ass. We had word that the Eastern Hammerskins were coming to kick some ass, that the Nazi Lowriders were coming to kick some ass. That didn't happen."

Instead, smatterings of Volksfront, Aryan Nations and Klan members moshed peacefully with skinheads. Except for the occasional *zeig heils*, the festivities were reminiscent of a gay pride picnic, with shaved-headed men merrily romping about with arms around each other.

It was that spirit of community and brotherhood that Billy Joe Roper hoped he could tap into.

Of all the speakers scheduled for Aryanfest, it was young Roper's moment to shine, to attempt to garner support for his fledgling White Revolution. (He says the group will unify the fragmented white power movement.)

Roper is no longer a skinhead (or "featherless biped," in his own geek speak), and you couldn't tell he had ever been one by looking at him. Clad in a white shirt and green windbreaker with a scarf draped around his neck, Roper looked more like a member of the Audubon Society, or the history teacher he once was, than a white power crusader against his hated "mud people." Overweight with a bland face and glasses, Roper's the kind of guy the Internet was made for.

The 31-year-old son of a Klansman was membership coordinator for National Alliance, the largest and best-organized of the nation's white power groups. Roper was fired "for tactical differences" in late 2002, and subsequently declared himself chairman of White Revolution. He estimates that his group has a membership of more than 100 and supporters totaling at least 1,000.

Apparently, not many of them are in Arizona.

Two nights before Aryanfest started, Roper held a summit meeting, inviting all his Arizona supporters to dine with him at an East Valley Denny's. Six people showed up.

Later at Aryanfest, Roper hoped to convince those gathered that his White Revolution is the only answer. The way he sees it, the Balkanization of America has already begun. Mexicans are poised to take the Southwest, blacks the Southeast; it's a bleak future for white America.

"I fear the worst. America was born in bloody revolution, and it may well die that way," he told *New Times*. "It might be nice to think that the world is some nice soft pink-and-blue day-care center where everyone can get along and sing 'Kumbaya' together, but that's not how nature works, and that's not what got our ancestors standing upright and using tools to create technology and civilizations."

He says he's prepared to die or go to prison if need be to stop what he calls the amalgamation of America. In his opinion, mass genocide is preferable to race mixing. He's been the subject of assassination attempts for his views, he claims, and been beaten bloody with a tire iron at a demonstration. He says he's even had condoms full of HIV-positive urine thrown at him. But he'd rather be a martyr than a spectator. "That I accept as the price I pay for the life I choose to live."

Perhaps the piss-filled rubbers came in reaction to Roper's violent sense of humor. In a recent press release regarding a protest of Martin Luther King Day, he suggested, "after four more such as him are shot, we can take the whole week off."

While Roper may seem fearsome over the Internet -- where he spews most of his venom - he's nowhere near a badass in person. In fact, on stage at Aryanfest he came across as the ultimate computer nerd, a virtual hate-mongering Bill Gates.

Shedding his windbreaker to reveal a white button-down shirt, Roper, gripping the microphone tightly, tried and failed to whip the meager crowd into a frenzy.

"There have been suggestions that we should locate in some part of the country and all move there and try to establish a self-sufficient white homeland, either a state or a community, of our own. There have been suggestions that we should form our own political party, or infiltrate and take over another political party, and try to win through the democratic process. Some say that we should enter the next phase of the revolution immediately, and start taking direct action. Hell, I've even had people suggest to me that we should haul dirt out into the Atlantic Ocean and build our own island.

"Friends, I don't have the answer. If I knew how to do it, no white child would ever be bullied or harassed or raped or robbed by any niggers or spics, ever again. If I knew how to do it, no white man would ever have to pay a third of his hard-earned pay or more to the greedy Jews. If I knew how, we wouldn't have just our own community or even our own state, this whole planet would be ours, as it should be. But I don't know how to do it, yet. I don't have the answer."

And then, in a bizarre postscript, Roper turned his attention to Anthony Pierpont, one of the owners of Panzerfaust records, which co-sponsored the event.

Panzerfaust is a white power label that is fast becoming a serious rival to Resistance records, the National Alliance subsidiary that has dominated the hate-rock music scene. Panzerfaust and Resistance are feuding, and one of Resistance's main talking points is that Pierpont isn't white. Pierpont, in fact, *is* several shades darker than the Mexican dude Aryanfest security 86ed earlier in the shindig.

But for Roper, any enemy of National Alliance (the group that kicked him out) is a friend of his, and from the stage Roper pointed toward Pierpont and bellowed into the microphone: "I'm here to say *that's* a white man!"

A few obedient souls turned in Pierpont's direction and zeig heiled.

Dennis Mahon has a different answer to preserving a future for white children than building a whites-only island in the ocean or working toward putting a Nazi in the White House:

Nuke D.C.

It was during the downing of his self-proclaimed ninth Pabst Blue Ribbon of the day that Phoenix-based Nazi skinhead Poindexter ("just Poindexter," thank you very much!) found himself plotting with Mahon to storm a nuclear missile site outside of Tucson and launch a rocket on Washington, D.C.

"That's a great fucking idea!" he said. "I'm in."

Poindexter and a group of other Phoenix skins were shooting the shit with Mahon, a former Klan wizard from Oklahoma whose résumé boasts stints as an employee of the Iraqi government. Mahon says he held rallies for Saddam Hussein during the first Gulf War, and claims he attempted to overthrow the governments of both Canada and Germany. A law enforcement source well-acquainted with his claims dismisses Mahon as "a drunken fool."

Dressed in jeans, a Members Only-style jacket and a nondescript baseball cap, Mahon was a conspiratorial conversational butterfly at Aryanfest, flitting between bouquets of combat-booted Nazi skins -- hinting darkly to one and all that he'd been involved in the Oklahoma City bombing but had never been caught.

"I knew Timothy McVeigh quite well," he bragged. "In fact, I knew him back when he was named Timothy Tuttle [an alias McVeigh used in the months before the bombing], and he and I were involved in quite a few bom . . ." Here, Mahon dramatically cut himself off, as if he had just barely stopped himself from making a serious admission, and then he continued. ". . . Let's just say he and I did some serious business together. And after Oklahoma City, the feds came after me big-time, boy, but they never proved a thing."

At this point, Mahon raised his eyebrows and the corners of his mouth knowingly.

"But they've kept me from being able to have a good job. Well, that and they caught me pissing on Air Force One. [He didn't let on how he came to pee on the president's plane.] But I'll tell you what, as soon as my parents have left this world, I'm moving to the Ukraine, because it beats the hell out of living in a trailer. I've been shot twice, stabbed. Last year my appendix burst, and now I might even have cancer, and I'll tell you, I've had it with this cocksucking country."

Prior to expatriating, however, Mahon would like to see D.C. reduced to smoldering, irradiated ruins. "You nuke D.C., you're going to wipe out most of the politicians, plus a couple million crack-head niggers," he told Poindexter, who nodded in agreement, swaying on his feet like a prizefighter enduring a standing eight count.

"It's a win-win," Mahon continued. "And I think it's the only way, I really do. Terrorism works. We did a lot of terrorism in Tulsa in the 1980s. We put heads in the road, and people paid attention. You have to give it to the Iraqis, they're putting us to shame right now. I mean, I hate those cocksucking towel heads, but they're showing us how it's done."

At which juncture Poindexter related to Mahon that he remembered touring a Titan missile site when he was a Boy Scout, and wondered aloud whether a small group of well-armed elite shock troop skinheads might not be able to storm that site, take it over, and launch on the U.S. capital.

Growing visibly agitated with excitement at the prospect, Mahon advised Poindexter to survey his fellow Arizona skinheads to find out which others had toured the nuclear missile site as Boy Scouts, and then pool their recollections of the site's layout -- security towers, perimeter fences, location of launch control room, etc. "It could be done," Mahon said confidently.

Neither Poindexter nor Mahon appeared to consider that, even if their theoretical squadron of shaved-headed ninjas could get past armed military security, wouldn't it take incredible technical expertise (not to mention top-secret launch codes) to fire a Titan missile? After all, it's not as if there's a big green button on the control panel that says: "Nuke D.C."

Also, it occurred to at least one of the four sets of ears listening to the plan that the Titan site Poindexter recalled touring as a lad might, in fact, have been the Titan Missile Museum just outside of Tucson -- where the warheads are most definitely *not* still active.

Details, details.

"I can't be involved directly, but I like the way you think," Mahon said. "I like you skinheads. You guys do good work."

While Mahon and Poindexter plotted their attack on Washington, Hansi, a special guest from the fatherland, took the stage. In his late 20s, the German Nazi's glacial blue eyes, chiseled visage, short-cropped light hair and powerhouse musculature combined to make him appear more caricature than flesh. It was as if he'd leapt to the stage off the yellowing paper of a Third Reich propaganda poster for Proud Aryan Youth.

His accent was thicker than his forearms.

He began, "I am coming 3,560 miles vrom ze snow en Deutschland to ze desert en Ari-zoh-nah to tell you zat en Deutschland, ve are under ze pressure from ze nigger gangs and ze Turkish gangs and ze Zionism just like you."

A skinhead in the audience shot Hansi a zeig heil (natch) and cried out: "Deutschland Uber Alles!" (Germany Over All!)

Hansi shouted back, "Dank you!"

Then he pointed to the banners decorating the stage. "I like zese colors, ze black, ze red, and ze white, ja? In Deutschland, ve have our own famous black, red, and white flag, perhaps you know ze flag?"

The crowd cheered and the five or six skinheads closest to the stage yanked up their shirts to reveal gigantic black swastikas tattooed on their chests and backs. Gripping the microphone nervously with both hands, Hansi rushed into the climax of his remarks.

"I am coming here to say to you zis flag shall rise again, in Deutschland, and in America, and in all ze lands of ze Aryan people! Hail ze new dawn! Hail ze new dawn! Hail ze new dawn!"

A barrage of right arms shot skyward with every "Hail," and from the adoring squeals and lustful glances directed toward the handsome Hansi from the Women for Aryan Unity booth as he left the stage, it was obvious that this member of the Master Race would (if girls are his thing) have little trouble boning an Amerikaner Gretel that evening.

But it was California's Tom Metzger rather than hunky Hansi who proved to be the biggest celebrity at Aryanfest. At 65, Metzger retains the notorious swagger that has made him a skinhead legend over the past three decades. His rasping voice rat-a-tat-tats racist rhetoric like a machine gun that need not be paused for reloading.

Metzger clearly delights in his bad self, and makes no attempts to soften his message for the media, which has followed him from a civil trial in Portland, Oregon, in 1990 to violent appearances on *Geraldo* to Hollywood. In the late '90s, Metzger says he was the inspiration for the character played by Stacy Keach in *American History X*. Metzger says he worked with the filmmakers, helped train the actors and furnished skinhead extras. There are points in the film, Metzger says, that accurately depict reality ("Strong points that are good for our side"), like when Edward Norton's character, who, after discovering two black men breaking into his car, makes one of them bite the concrete curb and then stomps his head into mush. Metzger calls the curby a "normal reaction."

This kind of tough talk is what made Metzger such a hero for Aryanfest attendees.

At this point in his career, Tom Metzger has no need to prepare any speeches. "I'm going to wing it," he said before he went on stage. He wound up talking about his opposition to the Iraq war, and why he backs Reverend Al Sharpton for president: "Sharpton's the only one to mention race, the only one to recognize there is a white race."

Metzger calls himself a white exterminist, rather than a white separatist. He favors the "lone wolf" or "covert cell" approach to winning the race war. Metzger sees himself as an ideologue and a public figure who influences others but does not control them -- which is key to avoiding litigation should his "associates" act on his suggestions.

Metzger said he's been courting skins since they first arrived in this country from England in the '80s. "I was the first in the country to recognize skinheads and befriend them," he claimed. At a time when the rest of the right wing in America abhorred them -- used skinheads solely as event security staff -- Metzger saw great potential.

But the more visible skinheads, like those at Aryanfest, Metzger said, "are not as effective. They are too easily identified as to their political position." The cause is best served, he said, by going underground. "The government is becoming more oppressive. Our opponents are quite powerful." Covert, devious action is what he supports. Is violence necessary? "If need be," Metzger answered quickly.

Metzger is 15 years into paying off his \$3 million portion of a \$12 million judgment leveled against him, his organization and his son for their involvement in the murder of an Ethiopian man in Portland in 1988.

The judgment, which he's paying off in monthly installments, has cost Metzger his home, shop and tools. He supports himself these days by fixing TVs in the sleepy farm town of Fallbrook north of San Diego.

When he addressed the crowd at Aryanfest, the television repairman became a rear admiral, full of advice for those he sees, like himself, not as domestic terrorists but as "freedom fighters."

And they listened, mesmerized -- like the skinheads in Portland did 16 years ago.

"Don't stockpile firearms," he told the crowd. "How many guns can you shoot at once, guys? Besides, I could brew up bigger weapons than guns in my kitchen."

Metzger urged his fans to direct their energies toward political targets rather than pointless street violence. "Don't operate like a battleship," he barked. "Operate like a Nazi submarine! Use your periscope! We have to infiltrate!

"Infiltrate the military! Infiltrate your local governments! Infiltrate your school board! Infiltrate law enforcement."

Metzger's call to action may have been too ambitious for the crowd he addressed, as the only entity these guardians of the white race seemed interested in infiltrating was the Aryanfest beer garden.

Glistening steel kegs of Pabst Blue Ribbon and Miller rested on ice behind the folding table turned makeshift bar in the cordoned-off drinking area inside Aryanfest. The cheap beers were selling briskly for two dollars per 16-ounce plastic cup. Jell-O shots, heavily spiked with cheap vodka, were a buck each. Some Nazis also carried ornately carved Viking drinking horns full of whiskey or home-brewed mead.

One of them was a blonde in her late 20s or early 30s, who had multiple face piercings, heavy makeup and wore her hair in a Chelsea cut (partially shaved on the top, tendrils of hair down the sides) -- a classic look for skinhead women. She had on maroon boots, and her black bomber jacket bore the militaristic red, white and black insignia of a Volksfront member. She was hammered by one in the afternoon and making a spectacle of herself, lurching about and repeatedly falling on her ass between swigs of bourbon from the drinking horn.

Then, Pastor Richard Butler arrived, and she snapped to.

"Ohh, ohh, ohh, ohh!" she exclaimed. "There's Pastor Butler! He's here! He's here!"

And there, indeed, was Richard Butler, who holds the distinction of being the oldest active white power leader in the country at 85. Butler, a former aeronautical engineer during World War II turned founder of Aryan Nations, tottered into Aryanfest led by one elbow. Trailing behind him was a phalanx of imposing Volksfront security guards. Butler's attendants guided the octogenarian into a folding chair to the left of the stage and covered his knees with a blanket. There Butler sat for about two hours, alternately dozing and

shaking hands with skinheads paying their respects to this living legend (who lost his Idaho campground in 2001 after he was bankrupted by a \$6.3 million civil judgment stemming from an attack on passing motorists by his front-gate security detail).

Notable in her absence was Butler's former companion, Wendy Iwanow, who spent last fall promoting Aryanfest and promising half-price tattoos at the event for all her racial brothers and sisters. Iwanow was arrested on forgery charges at an Idaho airport in November when she and Butler were attempting to board a plane for Phoenix, and was subsequently outed on the Internet.

Seems Iwanow enjoyed a lengthy film career as porn star Bianca Trump, billing herself not as the white power Russian American she does today but as the "Latin Princess." She had co-starred with women, black men, and even Ron Jeremy, a Jew. But rules are rules, even for the close personal friend of a near deity; sucking black dick gets a girl banned from Nazi parties.

When it came time for his keynote address, Butler, wearing a blue suit with Aryan Nations and confederate flag patches on its shoulders, slowly scaled the four steps to the stage. He kept his remarks necessarily brief.

"You are the select, elect people of God," he croaked. "You have been selected and elected by God to conquer this Earth. Our mission is to conquer this Earth, and conquer it we will. I look out upon these proud white faces and I see captains of [crews of] 10s, captains of 50s, captains of 100s, of 1,000s."

And then, mustering his limited strength, Butler tried to lead his audience in a series of battle cries. Needless to say, these were accompanied by zeig heils.

"White Power!" he wheezed once, and thrust his right arm out in a salute.

"White Power!" he whisper-shouted once more, again thrusting his right arm skyward.

"White . . . Powrrrrghh . . ."

Exhausted by the effort, he couldn't quite get the word out the third time, and when he attempted to zeig heil, the weight of his arm began to bend him over at the waist in small stuttering movements, like a wind-up toy soldier in dire need of one last crank.

Which might also be said about Aryanfest.

Though heralded at the outset as the ultimate white power happening, it wheezed and coughed like the ancient Butler must have done if he attempted to engage in sloppy seconds with his beloved Bianca Trump. If, in the future, the event retains its title as the largest white power gathering in Arizona ever, the "mud people" of our state, much less our national government, have little to worry about. Because based on the event near Fountain Hills, the white power movement should be called, "The Gang That Couldn't Shoot [A Rocket] Straight."

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