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WEEKEND**

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EXTREMES**

**Paul Hill hated abortion. So he killed
the doctor. His sentencing won't
stop the epidemic of hate gripping
the country. What can be done?**

BY MICHAEL GARTNER

HATE HEATS UP

Paul Hill, who killed an abortion doctor, is the latest example of anger escalating out of control. What's the cure for the new epidemic of hate?

BY MICHAEL GARTNER

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear
You've got to be taught from year to year
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear
You've got to be carefully taught.
You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made
And people whose skin is a different shade
You've got to be carefully taught.**

IF THAT'S THE CASE — if Rodgers and Hammerstein were right when they wrote that song for the musical *South Pacific* in 1949 — then there are some great teachers around these days.

For hate is all around us. The language of hate is everywhere. The symbols of hate are everywhere. The crimes of hate are everywhere. Homosexuals are murdered. Family-planning clinics are bombed and abortion clinic doctors are murdered. Synagogues are defaced. Blacks are attacked. Whites are beaten up. Asians are assailed.

There's hate on the right, hate on the left, hate in the middle.

You are "a stupid, ignorant, redskin S.O.B.," a *Newsweek* reader wrote to Tim Giago, a Lakota

Indian who had written about his dislike of Indian mascots. "You are a despicable bastard," a man wrote me after I wrote a column about hate.

People hate Bill and Hillary Clinton. People hate Rush Limbaugh. People hate the Kennedys. Some people who love animals hate some people who wear fur.

Hate has become a major industry. "There are no less than 250 hate groups and hate mills in the United States today," writes Milton Kleg, director of the Denver-based Center for the Study of Ethnic and Racial Violence. These organizations hold meetings on hate, spew out literature of hate and foment hate from coast to coast. Although their ideology ranges from far left to far right, "the most notorious groups tend to be on the right." And they will stop at nothing. One group — a group of neo-Nazis known as skinheads — has killed at least 24 people in the past four years. Victims have included gays in Oregon and Missouri and homeless men in Pennsylvania and Alabama.

Paul Hill hated so deeply, he killed John Britton this summer. Britton performed abortions. Hill hated the idea of abortion. So he killed. His sentencing was scheduled for this past week.

Hill's sentencing will not stop the epidemic of hate, but it *can* be stopped. Haters cower when people speak up. Haters hide when towns speak out. Haters flee when laws get tough. And, here and there, people are speaking up, towns are speaking out and laws are being toughened.

But not everywhere. No one is sure just how many hate crimes occur each year, but it's in the thousands, and most people agree that the number is rising. Though legislation now requires the government to report annually on the number of hate crimes, the statistics are sketchy. The best numbers probably are the Anti-Defamation League's tally on anti-Semitic incidents. In 1993, there were 1,867 anti-Semitic incidents against people and property (arson, cemetery desecrations, bombings), up 8 percent from the 1,730 incidents of the year before. The more personalized acts of hate (threats, assaults, harassment) jumped 23 percent, rising for the third year in a row. On college campuses, the number of anti-Semitic acts has more than doubled in the past six years. ("F--- the Jews" and a swastika were painted on a wall at Harvard; "Jews burn in hell" was scribbled on fraternity steps in Colorado.)

Why? Why is there all this hate in the United

States? Where is it coming from? Who is teaching our children to hate?

We are. Our media are. Our churches are. Our schools are. Our businesses are.

It comes from fear, and it starts at home. Jack McDevitt is the associate director of the Center for Applied Social Research at Northeastern University in Boston and an expert in hate crime. He says: "A father comes home from work, says over the kitchen table, 'They're hiring all those Asians, women, Jews, blacks. They're getting the promotions. I'm being held back.' Or, 'Did you see that some Latinos bought the house down the street? There go the property values.'" Then, says McDevitt, "a kid internalizes that, says, 'I could do something to these people.'" And he does.

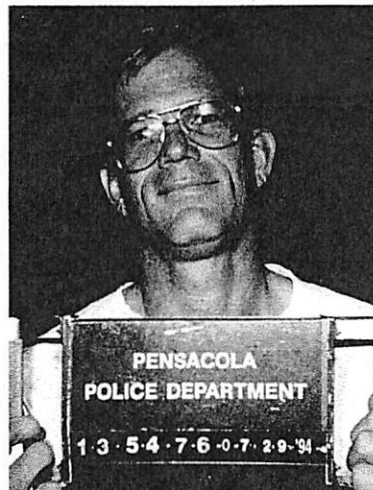
MOST HATE CRIMES are committed by young men between the ages of 15 and 25, but hate itself knows no demographic limits. Women write letters full of venom ("You are a lying, jerk-faced ass---," begins a letter from a woman in Richmond, Va.). Old people spew forth their prejudices. Toddlers scream "I hate you!" at their playmates.

Much of this is spawned by the media. Movies and TV tell us hate-filled violence is OK. Rap music preaches hate ("Violence is the way I was bred to be ... / Violence killed the Commies, violence killed the Jews / Violence killed the Japs, and it will sure as hell kill you"). Talk-show hosts thrive on it, and their listeners go one step further and disseminate their own hateful messages.

How can we say and do such awful things? The process of hate works this way, says Northeastern University's McDevitt. "You dislike something about someone — color, religion, a particular stand on an issue — and then you demonize that person. Therefore, you can call them names, joke about them and, in the worst case, go out and attack them, because they are not even humans."

Who would preach that? Some religious groups — among others a handful of sects under the name of the Identity Church Movement — preach hatred: hatred of Jews and blacks, primarily, but hatred of many others, too. Even mainstream churches have cast some people, such as gays, as objects of scorn, unholy people who should be condemned.

That's the message some churchgoers and others perceive, at any rate, and that puts a stamp of approval on hating the outcasts. McDevitt explains



UNREPENTANT: Paul Hill offered no defense for the murders of a Florida abortion doctor and the doctor's escort.

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PROTESTS: EXTREME — AND PERSONAL

Vilifying opponents has become a common part of public life.

that a person says to himself, "If God thinks these people are bad, it's OK for me to go after them."

Sometimes the message isn't subtle. After Hill was accused of slaying the abortion-performing doctor in Pensacola and his escort, James Barrett, Roman Catholic priest David Trosch, who had been suspended for his radical beliefs, said that Hill "deserves a Medal of Honor."

Why do we tolerate such talk?

One problem is that these days we too often don't respond to demagogues. We just let them rant and rave, forgetting that they are shaping young minds, impressing the impressionable.

"The right of haters to express themselves is part of our society," says Alan Schwartz, Anti-Defamation League research director. "But the responsibility of those with other values — healthier values — to speak out and to allow younger people to hear another voice is just as important."

Indeed, you fight hate with speech, and that is happening in many towns and cities, in many churches and schools.

But not always.

"There are teachers who say that 'these people' shouldn't be in our schools, whoever 'these people' are — gays, blacks, Haitians, whatever group that community is at war with at the moment," McDevitt says. And that, of course, fosters hate.

If the teacher says it's OK, it must be OK.

And instead of fighting hate with speech, the hated — some minorities, such as the Black Muslims — increasingly seem to fight hate with hate.

Listen to Khalid Abdul Muhammad of the Nation of Islam. Or walk through Greenwich Village in New York and look at the graffiti: Messages spew hate at gays, but other messages spew hate from gays.

But there's more. Economic fears are a big part of today's hates. Jobs are scarce, and the once disenfranchised — women or blacks or Hispanics or gays or whoever — are gaining equal footing in the competition for employment. Kleg, of the Center for the Study of Ethnic and Racial Violence, says young people believe "somewhere down the road there may be an invisible sign reading: 'Whites need not apply.'"

Often, it's more than words in the workplace. Homicide is the third-leading cause of job-related deaths. These murders, at least two a month, almost always are associated with hate. They have become a bigger threat at work than electrocution or falls.

These so-called defensive crimes, crimes by people "defending" their job or neighborhood or campus, are one of three types of hate crimes described by the Center for Applied Social Research. Some crimes are committed by youths just seeking a thrill. But the third type, the least frequent but most frightening, are so-called "mission" crimes. Says McDevitt: A person says, "I don't like these people and don't want them in my community. I'm going



AGAINST FUR

Animal-rights activists in Manhattan wear 'blood'-spattered coats to equate the fur industry with murder.

AGAINST BLACKS AND JEWS

Members of the Ku Klux Klan rally in Pulaski, Tenn., where the organization was founded in 1866.



AGAINST CLINTON

AIDS activists angered by the president's policies evoke Pinocchio — a fabled liar — to personalize the issue.

AGAINST GAYS

Members of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., claim the Bible makes their case.

BEYOND PROTEST: HATE CRIMES

Since 1991, the FBI has collected statistics on crimes motivated by religious, ethnic, racial or sexual-orientation prejudice. Last year, 7,684 hate crimes were reported:

- Race — 4,168 (2,476 anti-black, 1,299 anti-white)
- Religion — 1,189 (1,054 anti-Jewish)
- Sexual orientation — 806 (582 anti-male homosexual)
- Ethnicity — 583 (329 anti-Hispanic)



to devote part of my life to getting rid of them." Haters in this category include the skinheads, Klan members and other racists.

And haters like Paul Hill.

WHAT CAN BE DONE done about all this hate? It's one thing to tolerate hateful speech. In a democracy, we must. It's quite another to condone it. And it's even worse, of course, to participate in it.

You fight speech with speech, using words to pull a community together while others try to rip it apart. That works: A year ago, someone threw a piece of cinder block through the window of a Billings, Mont., house decorated for Hanukkah. The city responded. Pictures of menorahs sprang up in windows across town. There were some phone threats ("You're next, Jew lover"), but the problem died down. "When you attack one member of this

community, you attack all members of this community," the police chief said. "No one stands alone." You fight crime with laws, making it clear, especially to youths between 15 and 25, that you go to prison for acting out your hate. Some 30 states have enacted "hate-crime statutes" that increase the penalty for crimes motivated by hate. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld these statutes.

And you teach tolerance — at an early age. "For every schoolchild and young adult that we can and do reach," Kleg writes, "we shall be influencing a world beyond our own."

*You've got to be taught before it's too late
Before you are six or seven or eight
To hate all the people your relatives hate
You've got to be carefully taught.* □

Gartner is an Iowa newspaperman, a columnist for USA TODAY and a former president of NBC News.