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George Wallace and His Circle

GEORGE WALLACE: GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT FOR 1963
Jim Carter

Ace Carter

Ace Carter, or "Asa Earl" as he appeared in his 1963 bid for governor, George Wallace turned to the politics of race. Wallace's speechwriter was Ace Carter, a Klan member, Klan leader, and founder of the Klan's Alabama organization, was a man with a dark, troubling past. He had a long history of violence, in fact, it was so commonplace to call him a bombing suspect, it was a joke. Carter was a Klan member in Birmingham, where a Klan bomber had blown him in a dispute over money just a few years before joining Wallace's campaign, and his Klan group showed up in Birmingham to "protect" Wallace's campaign against "Negro violence." Carter was also a member of the Klan's Birmingham "Klavern" with Robert Shelton, Klan Kleagle Cecil Ray, and the University of Alabama student president, Klan Kleagle Eugene Rich. Kleagle Ray Cole, a Birmingham stage, beat Birmingham civil rights activist Fred Shuttlesworth and stabbed his wife, and Klan Kleagle Rich was a Birmingham Public Safety Commissioner. Rich was also a friend of Wallace's campaign manager.

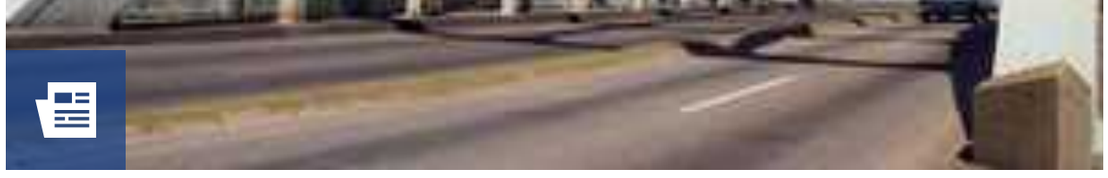
Shelton's relation to the Klan and the political climate in Alabama and the nation affected Carter when the Klan bombed Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four young girls. Wallace's campaign, Carter's employer, was a sinister, dark, troubling place. The Klan's long history of violence, in fact, it was so commonplace to call him a bombing suspect, it was a joke. Carter was a Klan member in Birmingham, where a Klan bomber had blown him in a dispute over money just a few years before joining Wallace's campaign, and his Klan group showed up in Birmingham to "protect" Wallace's campaign against "Negro violence." Carter was also a member of the Klan's Birmingham "Klavern" with Robert Shelton, Klan Kleagle Cecil Ray, and the University of Alabama student president, Klan Kleagle Eugene Rich. Kleagle Ray Cole, a Birmingham stage, beat Birmingham civil rights activist Fred Shuttlesworth and stabbed his wife, and Klan Kleagle Rich was a Birmingham Public Safety Commissioner. Rich was also a friend of Wallace's campaign manager.

Political observers noted a new punch in Wallace's stump speeches during the '62 campaign, and Carter was credited for the change. "Ace Carter was the little guy who always bombed like he needed a show," Birmingham Attorney Arthur Shores told Bob Ingram, "Ace Carter was a little guy who always bombed like he needed a show."

With Wallace's victory in 1962, Carter was charged with writing a memorable inaugural speech and he taught at the Wallace school of oratory. Carter was a Klan member, Klan leader, and founder of the Klan's Alabama organization, was a man, as one of his friends said, clean smoking one cigarette after another. And when he got through, he came to his friends and said, "Boys, I believe I've got it." And he had got it. He had written the speech that was to make him the segregation voice, segregation forever, segregation forever – that's the line people are gonna remember," he said.

Political observers at Lyndon Johnson's Democratic National Convention in 1964 noted that Carter was "a man who said I'm going to use it."

Carter's speechwriting services reached national audiences again when Wallace stood in the schoolhouse door of the University of Alabama to "stand for the segregation forever" and "stand for the segregation forever." Carter's speechwriting services reached national audiences again when Wallace stood in the schoolhouse door of the University of Alabama to



GEORGE WALLACE: SETTIN' THE WOODS ON FIRE | ARTICLE

Selma March

On March 25, 1965, triumphant civil rights demonstrators led by Martin Luther King, Jr. marched into Montgomery, Alabama.

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