

Ex-KKK leader guilty in 1964 killings

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0506/050622-mississippi-e.html>

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22 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Ex-KKK leader guilty in 1964 killings

BNE: An 80-year-old man has been found guilty in the killing of three men 41 years ago. A jury in Mississippi decided Edgar Ray Killen organized the murder of three civil rights workers in June 1964. He escaped murder charges but may spend up to twenty years in prison for manslaughter. Killen was first arrested 41 years ago but was released because of too little evidence. Police found new information recently and the trial reopened. The former Ku Klux Klan leader sank his head as the verdict was read. The victims' relatives cheered outside the court. They said justice had finally been done.

Killen organized the gang that beat and shot to death Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, white New Yorkers, and James Chaney, a black man from Mississippi. All three were in their early twenties. Their bodies were found seven weeks after they were ambushed and attacked. They were on a campaign in Mississippi to tell black people to vote in elections. America's southern states were deeply segregated at that time. The terrible killings shocked America. They made the civil rights movement fight harder for equal rights. The story was made into a movie in 1988, called *Mississippi Burning*.

WARM-UPS

1. SKIN COLOR: In pairs / groups, talk about skin color - your own and your feelings about other colors. What kinds of racism are there towards other colors of skin in your country? Are you happy with your skin color? Has anything good or bad happened to you because of your skin color? What skin colors are there in the world? What words do you associate with each color?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Ku Klux Klan / murder / Mississippi / civil rights / white people / black people / segregation / racism / justice / skin color

3. KU KLUX KLAN: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the Ku Klux Klan. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. KKK TRIAL OPINIONS: To what degree do you agree or disagree with these opinions?

- a. An 80-year-old man in a wheelchair should not go to prison.
- b. Anyone guilty of any crime should always be brought to justice.
- c. Unsolved crimes committed more than 40 years ago should be forgotten.
- d. America's system of justice is great – Mr. Killen's conviction proves this.
- e. America shows how people from all races can live together peacefully.
- f. All racist groups and organizations should be banned.
- g. Mr. Killen should have been found guilty of murder 41 years ago.
- h. The three young men who were murdered should have a national holiday named after them.

5. STEREOTYPES: Talk about the images people in your country have of people who are different. Where do these images come from? How true are they?

Talk first about the people in your neighboring countries.

You could also talk about the following people:

- 'white' people, 'black' people, 'brown' people, 'yellow' people, etc.
- Muslims, Jews, Christians, etc.
- English people, French people, Italians, Egyptians, Arabs, Iranians, Indians, Thais, Chinese, North Koreans, Japanese, Americans, Brazilians, Australians, Israelis, Bosnians, Albanians, etc.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A man killed 1,964 people. | T / F |
| b. An 80-year-old man faces up to 20 years in prison for a 1964 crime. | T / F |
| c. The man was also arrested for the crime 41 years ago. | T / F |
| d. The victims' relatives were happy at seeing justice done. | T / F |
| e. The KKK leader personally killed three men. | T / F |
| f. Two of the three murdered men were white. | T / F |
| g. The murdered men were encouraging black people to fight. | T / F |
| h. The murders energized the civil rights movement in America. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| a. killing | arranged |
| b. decided | divided |
| c. organized | mob |
| d. released | horrible |
| e. evidence | murder |
| f. gang | corpses |
| g. bodies | let go |
| h. ambushed | judged |
| i. segregated | jumped |
| j. terrible | proof |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| a. found | twenty years in prison |
| b. civil | twenties |
| c. spend up to | guilty |
| d. the trial | rights |
| e. justice had finally | made into a movie |
| f. shot | been done |
| g. in their early | rights workers |
| h. deeply | reopened |
| i. equal | segregated |
| j. The story was | to death |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct space.

Ex-KKK leader guilty in 1964 killings

BNE: An 80-year-old man has been _____ guilty in the killing of three men 41 years ago. A _____ in Mississippi decided Edgar Ray Killen organized the murder of three _____ rights workers in June 1964. He escaped murder charges but may _____ up to twenty years in prison for manslaughter. Killen was first arrested 41 years ago but was _____ because of too little evidence. Police found new information recently and the trial _____. The former Ku Klux Klan leader sank his head as the _____ was read. The victims' relatives cheered outside the court. They said _____ had finally been done.

reopened
justice
civil
verdict
found
spend
released
jury

Killen organized the gang that _____ and shot to death Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, white New Yorkers, and James Chaney, a black man from Mississippi. All three were in their _____ twenties. Their bodies were found seven weeks after they were _____ and attacked. They were on a _____ in Mississippi to tell black people to _____ in elections. America's southern states were deeply _____ at that time. The terrible _____ shocked America. They made the civil rights movement fight harder for equal _____. The story was made into a movie in 1988, called *Mississippi Burning*.

vote
early
killings
rights
ambushed
segregated
campaign
beat

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'civil' and 'right'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT RACISM SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about racism.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| • found | • gang |
| • decided | • twenties |
| • spend | • ambushed |
| • evidence | • vote |
| • sank | • terrible |
| • justice | • movement |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did you want to find out more about the headline?
- c. What did you know about this story before reading the article?
- d. What do you know about America in the 1960s?
- e. What do you think about the Ku Klux Klan?
- f. Do you think our skin color makes us different?
- g. What kind of racism exists in your country?
- h. Are you proud of your race or country?
- i. Does your race have anything to be ashamed of?
- j. Why do people hate each other because of skin color, religion, social standing or language?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about this story?
- c. Do you think an 80-year-old in a wheelchair needs to go to prison?
- d. Should society forget about crimes after 40 years?
- e. Does this trial prove American justice is good?
- f. Should Mr. Killen have been found guilty of murder too?
- g. Should the relatives of the three murdered men ask for the death penalty for Mr. Killen?
- h. Do you think racism will disappear in your country or in the world?
- i. What is the best thing we can do to help remove racism?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

RACISM: In pairs / groups, discuss whether situations similar to the following happen in your country. What penalties (if any) should be given? Add three more examples in the empty rows at the bottom of the table.

SITUATION	YOUR COUNTRY	PENALTY
A TV company only allows people of one skin color to read the news.		
Police officers arrest too many people from one race.		
A shop customer uses a racist word to a sales assistant of a different race.		
Parents reject their child for dating someone of a different color.		
Sports fans shout racist comments at players who belong to a different race.		
A bar / café refuses someone entry because of their color.		
A landlord prevents someone from renting an apartment because of their skin color.		
People wear badges or clothing with slogans that encourage racial hatred.		
A rock group produces a CD with songs full of racial hatred.		
A politician makes a suggestion that people from other countries are stupid.		

Change partners and compare the penalties you decided with your previous partner(s).

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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BNE: An 80-year-old man has _____ in the killing of three men 41 years ago. A jury in Mississippi decided Edgar Ray Killen _____ of three civil rights workers in June 1964. He _____ but may spend up to twenty years in prison _____. Killen was first arrested 41 years ago but was released because of _____. Police found new information recently and _____. The former Ku Klux Klan leader sank his head as _____ was read. The victims' relatives cheered outside the court. They said _____ been done.

Killen organized the gang that beat and _____ Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, _____, and James Chaney, a black man from Mississippi. All three were in _____. Their bodies were found seven weeks after they were _____. They were on a campaign in Mississippi to tell black people to _____. America's southern states were _____ at that time. The terrible killings shocked America. They made the _____ fight harder for equal rights. The story was _____ in 1988, called *Mississippi Burning*.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the Edgar Ray Killen case. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. REMOVE RACISM: Create an information poster outlining your ideas to remove racism in your country. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone have similar ideas?

4. BACKGROUND: Find out about the background to the 1964 Mississippi murders. What civil rights did black people have / not have? Who were the political and civil rights leaders? What were the turning points? Who were the heroes? Tell your classmates what you found out in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

(If it's too difficult to find information on America in the 1960s, choose a civil rights story from your own / another country.)

5. MISSISSIPPI BURNING: Watch the video / DVD of the movie.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| a. killing | murder |
| b. decided | judged |
| c. organized | arranged |
| d. released | let go |
| e. evidence | proof |
| f. gang | mob |
| g. bodies | corpses |
| h. ambushed | jumped |
| i. segregated | divided |
| j. terrible | horrible |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| a. found | guilty |
| b. civil | rights workers |
| c. spend up to | twenty years in prison |
| d. the trial | reopened |
| e. justice had finally | been done |
| f. shot | to death |
| g. in their early | twenties |
| h. deeply | segregated |
| i. equal | rights |
| j. The story was | made into a movie |

GAP FILL:

Ex-KKK leader guilty in 1964 killings

BNE: An 80-year-old man has been **found** guilty in the killing of three men 41 years ago. A **jury** in Mississippi decided Edgar Ray Killen organized the murder of three **civil** rights workers in June 1964. He escaped murder charges but may **spend** up to twenty years in prison for manslaughter. Killen was first arrested 41 years ago but was **released** because of too little evidence. Police found new information recently and the trial **reopened**. The former Ku Klux Klan leader sank his head as the **verdict** was read. The victims' relatives cheered outside the court. They said **justice** had finally been done.

Killen organized the gang that **beat** and shot to death Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, white New Yorkers, and James Chaney, a black man from Mississippi. All three were in their **early** twenties. Their bodies were found seven weeks after they were **ambushed** and attacked. They were on a **campaign** in Mississippi to tell black people to **vote** in elections. America's southern states were deeply **segregated** at that time. The terrible **killings** shocked America. They made the civil rights movement fight harder for equal **rights**. The story was made into a movie in 1988, called *Mississippi Burning*.