

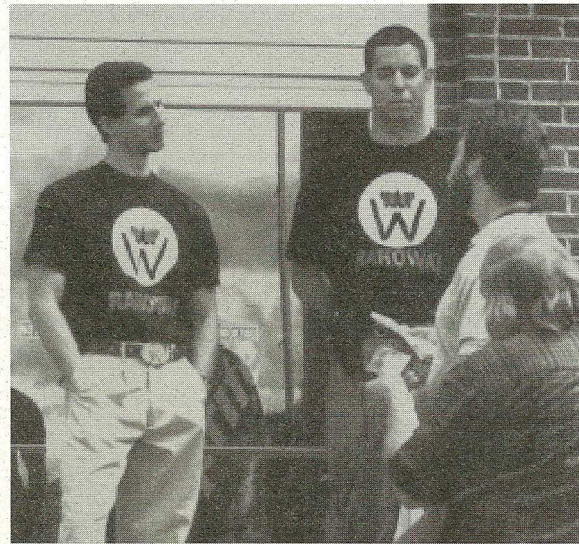
## CHURCH OF THE CREATOR LEADER INDICTED: MONTANA "REVEREND" LEAVES SPLINTER GROUP

The World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) has been called the fastest growing and most influential hate group in the country over the last few years. Any momentum the group had developed came crashing to a halt in early January when WCOTC's leader, Matt Hale, was indicted for trying to arrange to have a federal judge killed.

U.S. District Court Judge Joan Lefkow was presiding over a trademark infringement case involving WCOTC. In November 2002, Judge Lefkow ruled that Oregon's Te-Ta-Ma Truth Foundation had a trademark on the term "Church of the Creator." She ruled that the hate group could no longer use the term or acronyms like WCOTC and COTC. Part of her judgment included ordering WCOTC to turn over all printed materials bearing the terms. In response to the ruling, Hale moved the group's headquarters to Riverton, Wyoming, and was in the process of appealing the decision. Hale said Lefkow's ruling "places our Church in a state of war with this federal judge." According to authorities, this statement was not just rhetoric.

On January 8, 2003, the FBI arrested Hale as he entered an Illinois courthouse to attend a contempt hearing before Judge Lefkow. The indictment claims that, between November 29, 2002 and December 17, 2002, Hale tried to get someone to "forcibly assault and murder" Judge Lefkow. It is interesting to note that it was during this time that Hale moved the group's headquarters to Wyoming. Information leading to Hale's indictment was provided by Tony Evola, an FBI informant who was working as the head of WCOTC's White Berets, the group's security force. Prosecutors have referenced a recorded conversation between Hale and Evola discussing the need to "exterminate the rat [Lefkow]." It has also been reported that Hale ordered Evola to get physical addresses for Lefkow and attorneys representing the Te-Ta-Ma Foundation. The information released so far has not disclosed Hale giving a direct order to kill Lefkow.

WCOTC activists quickly responded by saying that Hale is being framed. Thomas Kroenke, the group's leader in Wyoming, has said that Hale is too intelligent to try to kill a judge. He called the charges "manufac-



*Matt Hale (left) and Dan Hassett (right) are pictured here at the Mineral County Courthouse in Superior, MT in 1999.*

tured" and a "monumental lie." Virginia's John King said the indictment against Hale was "as fictional as the ones jewish [sic] prosecutors presented at Nurnberg [sic] in 1946."

Communications sent out by WCOTC since Hale's arrest list him as a "Prisoner of War." There have been reports that Idaho attorney Edgar Steele is interested in helping with Hale's defense. Steele represented Aryan Nations in a lawsuit brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Aryan Nations was slapped with a \$6.3 million judgment in the 2000 verdict and was forced to sell off its Hayden Lake compound. WCOTC is seeking donations for Hale's defense fund, but all checks have to be sent to Hale's father, as the bank accounts for the group and Hale have been seized. Wyoming's Kroenke is trying to get a bank account started for the group in Wyoming, which is now going by the name "The Creativity Movement."

### Montana "Reverends" Form Splinter Group

Throughout the 1990s, Missoula's Dan Hassett and Superior's Slim Deardorff served as "Reverends" for  
*(COTC, continued on page 10)*

