

# MD: No Klan Meet; Police Role Denied

By ROBERT SHERBORNE

Birmingham physician Frank Abernathy says a meeting at his home where Klan leader Don Black delivered a fiery speech, witnessed by Tennessean reporter Jerry Thompson, was not a Klan meeting "per se."

And Jim Hulslander, who attempted to join Black's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan with Thompson, insists he was not an undercover policeman.

"I DON'T even know who is a Klan member," Abernathy, 46, told United Press International, but added:

"I did know Don Black was a Klansman."

Abernathy, a family practitioner who says he is not a member of the Klan, said the meeting Thompson attended was one of about six "informative meetings" he held in his home on a variety of subjects.

THOMPSON, in describing that meeting, says Abernathy introduced Black to about 60 guests in

his comfortably furnished den with these words:

"He is a courageous man who doesn't believe that outside agitators ought to come in and stir up trouble with the police."

Thompson also reported a corner table was filled with Klan literature and Klan membership applications.

NONETHELESS, Abernathy says the Feb. 23 meeting was not a Klan gathering.

"I have held a number of meetings in my home," he said, "including meetings of just about every group you can speak of. There was never a Klan meeting per se. There were meetings in my home that anyone interested in speaking out about a subject could. They were open and advertised to the public."

The physician said speakers at his home meetings included Republican and Democratic congressional candidates, and a member of the John Birch Society.

"WE ONCE had a Jewish toastmaster to speak out on patriot-

ism," added Abernathy, saying:

"I believe in individual rights. If someone wants to join the Klan, let them. I don't know anyone who is planning on joining the Klan."

Meanwhile, Jim Hulslander of Birmingham, who Black felt might have been an undercover agent trying to infiltrate his Klan organization, says this is not true.

CONTACTED AT Fort Knox, Ky., where he is engaged in National Guard training, Hulslander said he could not remember Thompson. "I'm very bad at names," he said.

Nor, Hulslander claimed, could he remember the aborted "naturalization" ceremony after which Black told Thompson he believed Hulslander was a "spy."

HULSLANDER said he had thought of joining Black's organization and that he knew Black suspected him because his father was a policeman.

So, losing interest in Black, Hulslander said he moved to the ri-

val organization of Bill Wilkinson, wizard of the Invisible Empire of the Klan. He paid his dues, and worked on a few roadblocks, but he said he had never been an undercover agent.

And, he added, he has since disassociated himself from both Klan factions.

ABERNATHY, on the other hand, says he never had any interest in joining.

"I don't know of any reason for me to join the Klan, but I think I ought to know what's going on," he said.

"I don't intend to join the Communist Party, but I feel I need to know what it's about.

"This country is looking at things in black and white, instead of right and wrong," he added. "Whether you are black or white, if you commit a vicious crime you should be punished. Blacks shouldn't be promoted to jobs just because of their color. And I don't think this has anything to do with the Klan."