

Slain woman was part of KKK ritual, St. Tammany sheriff says

by Jeff Adelson, The Times-Picayune
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CHUCK COOK / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

St. Tammany Parish Sheriff Jack Strain, center, is flanked by Washington Parish sheriff's Deputy Brian Davidson, St. Tammany deputy Sgt. George Cox, Lt. Tom Anderson of the Washington Parish Sheriff's Office, and Lt. Joe Picone of the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office.

A woman found slain in rural St. Tammany Parish on Monday was shot to death by the head of a Ku Klux Klan chapter from Bogalusa after she tried to back out of an initiation ritual, St. Tammany Parish authorities announced Tuesday.

Investigators have not positively identified the woman yet, but believe she is from the Tulsa, Oklahoma, area, St. Tammany Parish Sheriff Jack Strain said. She apparently had come to Louisiana by bus after applying to join the organization over the Internet and had intended to start recruiting others in Oklahoma, he said.

The woman and eight members of the Klan were in the Sun area camping Sunday night when she apparently attempted to leave, sparking an argument with Raymond "Chuck" Foster, 44, of Bogalusa, who acted as the group's "imperial wizard," Strain said. Foster shot the woman during the argument with a .40-caliber handgun, he said.

All eight of the people at the campsite have been arrested, Strain said.

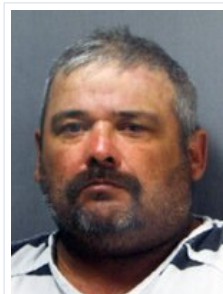
After the shooting, Foster and the other seven suspects attempted to hide the crime by digging the bullet out of her body, dumping her in the Pearl River Canal near Lock No. 3 Road and burning the campsite, located on a sandbar in the canal, Strain said.

The investigation started after two of the Klansmen, Frank Stafford and Shane Foster, showed up at a Circle K in Bogalusa early Monday morning and asked the clerk how to get bloodstains out of clothing, authorities said. Investigators were able to track down these suspects and eventually found the other six in the woods near Sun.

The woman's body was recovered Monday.

At the campsite, investigators found weapons, several flags and six Klan uniforms, five white and one black.

Raymond Foster was booked into St. Tammany Parish jail in Covington with second-degree murder. Deputies also booked Stafford and Shane Foster, Raymond Foster's son, with obstruction of justice along with Timothy Michael Watkins, Alicia M. Watkins, Andrew Yates, Random Hines and Random Hines, who all participated in the initiation ceremony, were each booked with obstruction of justice.



Raymond "Chuck" Foster