


DARK
SOUL
OF THE
SOUTH



**The Life and Crimes of Racist
Killer Joseph Paul Franklin**

Mel Ayton



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The first full, factual account of America's most prolific racist killer

Dark Soul of the South

The Life and Crimes of Racist Killer Joseph Paul Franklin

BY MEL AYTON

Believing himself to be on a “God-given mission,” Joseph Paul Franklin was the only racially motivated serial killer ever pursued by the Justice Department. Mel Ayton examines his life, from his youth in a backward Mobile, Alabama, suburb to his indoctrination by militant Nazis and southern racists to his eventual capture by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Ayton’s exhaustive report uncovers the truth behind Franklin’s three-year undertaking to murder Jews and African Americans.

White supremacist Franklin was, by his own admission, an outlaw, a racist, and weird. As a Nazi and Ku Klux Klansman, he violently enforced his views by embarking on a “lone hunter” mission to kill. He saw African Americans and Jews as subhuman and knew no moral obstacle to racial violence, invoking the Bible to support his criminal acts. As Franklin’s 1977–80 killing spree was contemporaneous with other racially charged incidents Klansmen and neo-Nazis wrought throughout the United States, his story also exposes how hate organizations have made killers out of disaffected and bitter young men.

In this first full-length book about Franklin, Ayton reveals the shocking and unsavory underbelly of American culture.

Mel Ayton has written numerous books and articles including *A Racial Crime*, the story of Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassin, and *The Forgotten Terrorist: Sirhan Sirhan and the Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy* (Potomac Books, Inc., 2007). Ayton has appeared in documentaries produced by the National Geographic Channel (*CIA Secret Experiments*, 2008) and the Discovery Channel (*CIA—Mind Control*, 2006; *Conspiracy Test: The Robert Kennedy Assassination*, 2008) and has worked as a historical consultant for the BBC. Ayton lives in County Durham, England.

The author is available for interviews. If interested, please contact Potomac Books at 703-661-1548.

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About the Author

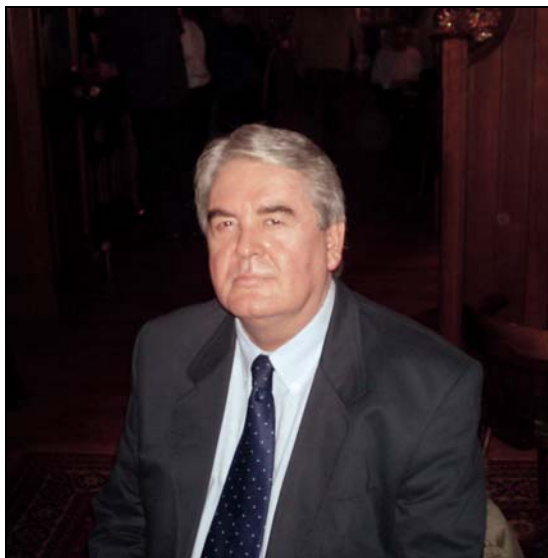


Photo courtesy of Tim Ayton

Mel Ayton

Mel Ayton is the author of many highly acclaimed books, including *A Racial Crime*, the story of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassin, and *The Forgotten Terrorist: Sirhan Sirhan and the Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy* (Potomac Books, 2007). Ayton has a master's degree in history from Durham University and is a former Fulbright teacher, deputy principal, and college lecturer. Ayton has appeared in documentaries produced by NBC News, the National Geographic Channel, and the Discovery Channel, and has worked as a historical consultant for the BBC. Ayton is also the author of numerous articles for various print and online publications, including *History Ireland*, *Crime Magazine*, David Horowitz's *FrontPage magazine*, *Washington Decoded*, and George Mason University's *History News Network*. He lives in County Durham, England.



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Advance Praise for *Dark Soul of the South*

"In this chilling but important book, Mel Ayton examines the case of a man who—despite being a murderer, would-be assassin of public figures, and white supremacist—remains a hero to many Americans, and that's probably the most shocking fact of all."

— **Paul Donnelley, author of *501 Most Notorious Crimes and Assassins and Assassinations in World History***

"Mel Ayton, who has written extensively on political assassinations in the United States, now has ventured where no other writer has. With his latest book, *Dark Soul of the South*, he delves into the world of a racial serial killer and attempted assassin of *Hustler* magazine's Larry Flynt and civil rights leader Vernon Jordan. While many believe that the ugly precepts of racism expired with the successes of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Ayton's in-depth study of the activities of those such as Franklin is a reminder that the demise of racism was, and still is, somewhat premature."

— **Larry A. Sneed, author of *No More Silence: An Oral History of the Assassination of President Kennedy***

"With his latest well-written book, about the racist killer John Paul Franklin—along with his other works, particularly his important book about the 1968 murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy—Mel Ayton has staked his claim as one of the finest true-crime writers in the business. His portrayal of right-wing fanatic Franklin is both chilling and enlightening, as it chronicles the murderer's past crimes while seeming to give warning about other individuals, also motivated by their sick views of American politics, who might follow in his wake. Ayton's disciplined attention to detail in his story is investigative journalism at its very best."

— **Dan E. Moldea, author of *The Hoffa Wars***

"Mel Ayton's books on the Kennedy and King assassinations exhibited a great clarity of mind and scrupulous regard for the facts. He now brings these all-too-rare tools to a grim story about the underside of American society."

— **Max Holland, author of *The Kennedy Assassination Tapes***



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Sample Interview Questions and Discussion Points

- What prompted you to write about Joseph Franklin?
- What was the most important thing you discovered about Franklin's crimes that would be pertinent to understanding racism in the United States today?
- What effect did Franklin's crimes have on the American communities in which he committed his crimes?
- In your books about American assassins did you discover any common traits that would be useful for law enforcement agencies?
- What can we learn from Franklin's crimes that would address the issue of race relations in the United States?
- How is Franklin coping in his time on Death Row?
- Is it true Franklin had been stalking President Carter and intended to assassinate him?
- Do you have any plans for future works about assassins or racial killers?
- Do you have any views on the death penalty and do you believe Franklin should be executed for his crimes?
- What lessons can be learned from your study of Franklin that would benefit American youth?