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“Celebrating Right-Wing Extremism” Brings Militia Sheriff Back to Montana: Follows Appearances by Anti-Semitic Tax Protestor and Anti-Healthcare Reform Activist

Richard Mack, a former county sheriff in Arizona and a hero to the militia movement, is scheduled to make his second visit to Hamilton this year on behalf of Hamilton’s Celebrating Conservatism. He is scheduled to speak at the Ravalli County Fairgrounds on Tuesday, November 3, 2009.

“Celebrating Conservatism really needs to change its name,” said Travis McAdam of the Montana Human Rights Network. “Their lineup of speakers continues to be a who’s who of the radical right. They truly are, and should change their name to, Celebrating Right-Wing Extremism. They are a prime example of the resurgence of the right wing that is happening in Montana.”

Mack became a rising star in the militia movement during the 1990s when he sued the federal government over the Brady Bill, a gun control measure. He began speaking on the anti-government, or “patriot,” circuit in the early 1990s and never stopped. During the 1990s, the “patriot” movement spawned the Montana Freemen and Oklahoma City bombing, among other things.

“For over a decade, Richard Mack has been the darling of the anti-government crowd,” said McAdam. “He’s made a career out of appearing at events with notorious tax protestors, hardcore militia activists, and a laundry list of dubious self-styled ‘patriots.’ Local communities should not be tricked into viewing him as some sort of national treasure.”

Celebrating Conservatism first brought Mack to Hamilton in July 2009. Since that time, they invited another militia favorite, [Jack McLamb](#); however, he canceled because of critical publicity leading up to his appearance. Celebrating Conservatism did feature anti-Semitic tax protestor Martin “Red” Beckman (for background, see below) at their September event. They will host Missoula’s Dr. Carter Beck of the Coalition for Patients’ Rights on Wednesday, October 28 for a discussion on healthcare reform.

“We wonder how Dr. Beck feels about following anti-Semitic tax protestors and anti-government militia members to the speaker’s podium at Celebrating Conservatism’s events,” said McAdam. “We hope the group doesn’t reflect the values of the Coalition for Patients Rights.”

In Arizona, Mack was elected Graham County Sheriff in 1992 with 57% of the vote. After filing his lawsuit, it was consolidated with a similar one by a sheriff in Montana, Ravalli County Sheriff Jay Printz. The US Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of the sheriffs who said it was unconstitutional for Congress to compel local law enforcement to conduct background checks on potential gun buyers. However, Mack’s lawsuit and speaking time on the “patriot”

circuit became central issues during his 1996 re-election bid, and he lost in the primary. After losing, he moved his family to Utah.¹

Mack promotes the supremacy of the county sheriff, which follows the tradition of the white supremacist Posse Comitatus. The Posse viewed the sheriff as the highest legitimate law officer in the land. It believed citizens were not subject to state or federal authorities. For the Posse, it was up to the sheriff to use force, if necessary, to prevent federal agencies from seizing property to pay taxes and to oppose any perceived encroachment by federal institutions.²

Mack's statements over the years reflect the Posse tradition. "The federal government doesn't have any jurisdiction to tell me what to do as sheriff," he told the press.³ While running for the US Senate in 2006, Mack stated he would "do everything in my power to abolish the income tax and its 'Gestapo' police, the IRS."⁴ In a 2009 interview, Mack said he "prayed for the day that a sheriff in this country will arrest an IRS agent" for enforcing tax law.⁵ For some additional information on Mack, please see below.

"Mack, McLamb and Beckman all sing from the same songbook," said McAdam. "They all hate the federal government, advocate not paying taxes, and support private paramilitary groups. Our communities need to understand the ideology these speakers are bringing to our towns."

Richard Mack

- In 1995 following the Oklahoma City bombing, Mack said, "People get all upset when they hear about militias, but what's wrong with it? I wouldn't hesitate for a minute to call out my posse against the federal government if it gets out of hand."⁶
- In 2004, he edited a book by Randy Weaver. Weaver's standoff at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, was a seminal moment for the militia movement of the 1990s.⁷
- Earlier this year, Mack appeared on the radio show of "patriot" Alex Jones. He said, "There is one person who I believe can stop this New World Order. His name is your county sheriff... There is no question your sheriff has the responsibility to protect you from tyranny and international bankers...."⁸
- In 1996, Mack told the press, "What I support and what I see in most militias is the type of courage to stand for freedom as exemplified by the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square." This quote was in an article about the arrest of 12 members of the Arizona Viper Militia who were accused of plotting to blow up buildings. Most of the arrested members pleaded guilty to conspiring to make and possess illegal explosives.⁹
- He has been called "one of the chief contact points between the NRA and the militias."¹⁰
- In 2003, he told a "patriot" publication, "I'm into freedom, so I hate the IRS."¹¹

Martin "Red" Beckman

Red Beckman has achieved the status of a patriarch in the anti-government movement. He was a pioneer of the anti-tax movement who lost everything for refusing to pay his income taxes. He claims the income tax is voluntary. He not only spouts anti-Semitic views, but he also has spoken at events sponsored by anti-Semitic organizations. All of this has made him a favored speaker on the anti-government "patriot" circuit for decades.

Anti-Semitism

- In his book *The Church Deceived*, Beckman wrote: "They talk about the terrible holocaust of Hitler's Nazi Germany. Was that not a judgment upon a people who believe Satan is their god? It was judgment, not holocaust... The true and almighty God used the evil Nazi government to perform judgment upon the evil Anti-Christ religion of those who had crucified the Christ."¹²

- Pastor Pete Peters, of Scriptures for America, has featured Beckman as a speaker numerous times. In promotional materials for one event, he wrote that Beckman “discovered the Israel Identity message” years ago and “expertly explains its national importance.” Israel Identity is another name for Christian Identity, which is based on a racist interpretation of the Christian Bible teaching that Jewish people are the literal children of Satan, and people of color are sub-human “mud people.” Peters is an Identity preacher, and his organization is listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.¹³

Anti-Tax

- Beckman told a Montana radio talk show host that he has more respect for a terrorist “who might plant a bomb somewhere” than for the Internal Revenue Service. He called the IRS a “psycho-terrorist” that likes to mess with people’s heads.¹⁴
- In 1985, he co-wrote a book *The Law That Never Was* which claims that the 16th Amendment was not properly ratified and is a “monstrous fraud.” This is a common, but totally untrue, claim of the anti-tax movement.¹⁵
- In May 1994, Beckman was evicted from his property near Billings after a 20-year battle with the Internal Revenue Service for not paying his income taxes. Throughout the process, Beckman claimed the judicial system did not have jurisdiction over him. His personal property was sold at auction and his home was bulldozed to the ground.¹⁶
- In the lead up to his eviction, Beckman praised anti-government allies who threatened to kidnap the officials who were foreclosing on his farm. He told the press, “This [the eviction] isn’t going to go the way they [law enforcement] plan. There’s going to be enough guns here to make sure of that.”¹⁷
- He has called the Internal Revenue Service a “terrorist organization,” “a criminal organization” and compared it to the Mafia.¹⁸

Militia/Anti-Government

- Beckman has claimed the Central Intelligence Agency carried out the Oklahoma City bombing, which was actually perpetrated by a militia adherent Timothy McVeigh.¹⁹
- Beckman participated in a meeting convened by Identity Pastor Pete Peters that helped launched the militia movement of the 1990s. Held in 1992 in Colorado, the event brought together gun rights activists, white supremacists and others to discuss strategy.²⁰
- Beckman appeared at numerous events with the Militia of Montana during the 1990s advocating for the formation of militia groups.²¹
- Beckman told a Great Falls gathering: “Government is man’s worst enemy on the planet. It destroys more men and women than anything else.”²²

Fully Informed Jury Association

- Beckman is considered the “grandfather” of jury nullification and the Fully Informed Jury Association (FIJA). FIJA claims that a jury has the right to “judge both the law and the evidence in the case before it.” It says juries can render judgment based solely on their conscience, because they are the “**last safeguard against unjust law and tyranny** [emphasis in original].” According to FIJA, a jury acts as a “panel of twelve judges” and can ignore laws it doesn’t like.²³ In essence, FIJA allows juries to ignore laws and set defendants free regardless of evidence to the contrary, thereby undermining the entire judicial system.

- The Militia of Montana has sold videos that feature Beckman and describe him as a FIJA “expert.”²⁴
- Beckman also frequently talks about how the only legitimate courts are common-law courts, an assertion made infamously by the Montana Freemen.²⁵ On a Montana radio program, Beckman talked about judicial courts and justices wearing black robes. Beckman said, “it is basically Satanic.” He claimed courtrooms are “set up like a Satanic Church.” He said they even have altars.²⁶

¹ Daniel Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door* (2002), pp. 309-310; Associated Press, May 26, 1999.

² James Ridgeway, *Blood in the Face* (1991), pp. 109-141; Montana Human Rights Network and Coalition for Human Dignity, *Racist to the Roots: John Trochmann and the Militia of Montana*, 1995.

³ *Bismarck Tribune*, April 23, 1995.

⁴ Freedom’s Phoenix, www.freedomsphoenix.com, March 22, 2006.

⁵ Oath Keeper Sheriff Richard Mack, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blJgPuNAh60>, April 19, 2009.

⁶ Jack Anderson, *Inside the NRA* (1996), p. 84.

⁷ *Idaho Observer*, April 2004.

⁸ Alex Jones – Sheriff Richard Mack Pt1, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7IXhP20h6o>, Feb. 11, 2009.

⁹ Knight-Ridder News Service, July 3, 1996; Anti-Defamation League, “News About the Militia Movement,” March 5, 1997.

¹⁰ David Neiwert, *In God’s Country* (1999), p. 332.

¹¹ *Idaho Observer*, January 2003.

¹² Martin “Red” Beckman, *The Church Deceived* (1984), p.42.

¹³ Scriptures for America, “Who is True Israel and Who is Not,” May 10-12, 1996; Center for New Community, “Hate Agenda of Labor Day ‘Wisconsin Bible Camp,’” Aug. 20, 2001; Southern Poverty Law Center, map of hate groups, <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/map/hate.jsp>.

¹⁴ KGEZ Radio, “The Edge,” April 7, 2004.

¹⁵ *Great Falls Tribune*, May 1, 1988; For more background on the anti-tax movement, see the Anti-Defamation League’s “Tax Protest Movement,” http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/TPM.asp?LEARN_Cat=Extremism&LEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_America&xpicked=4&item=21.

¹⁶ *Billings Gazette*, March 3, 1994; *Billings Gazette*, Aug. 20, 1994.

¹⁷ *Great Falls Tribune*, March 23, 1994; *Independent Record*, Jan. 22, 1994; *Independent Record*, Jan. 31, 1994.

¹⁸ *The Salty Christian*, December 1996; KGEZ Radio, “The Edge,” April 7, 2004; *Great Falls Tribune*, May 1, 1988; *Billings Gazette*, Aug. 18, 1994.

¹⁹ *Independent Record*, April 22, 1995.

²⁰ Morris Dees, *Gathering Storm* (1996), pp. 49-52; *Billings Gazette*, Feb. 18, 1996; Lenny Zeskind, *Blood and Politics* (2009), pp. 310-319.

²¹ A few examples: *Montana Standard*, July 11, 1994; *Great Falls Tribune*, May 12, 1994; *Spokesman Review*, April 15, 1995;

²² *Great Falls Tribune*, May 1, 1988.

²³ Fully Informed Jury Association, *Juror’s Handbook*, <http://www.fija.org>, July 12, 2001.

²⁴ Militia of Montana, website, <http://www.militiaofmontana.com>, Sept. 13, 2002.

²⁵ For more on the common law court movement, see the Anti-Defamation League’s “Common Law and Uncommon Courts,” <http://www.adl.org/mwd/common.asp>.

²⁶ KGEZ Radio, “The Edge,” April 7, 2004.