

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

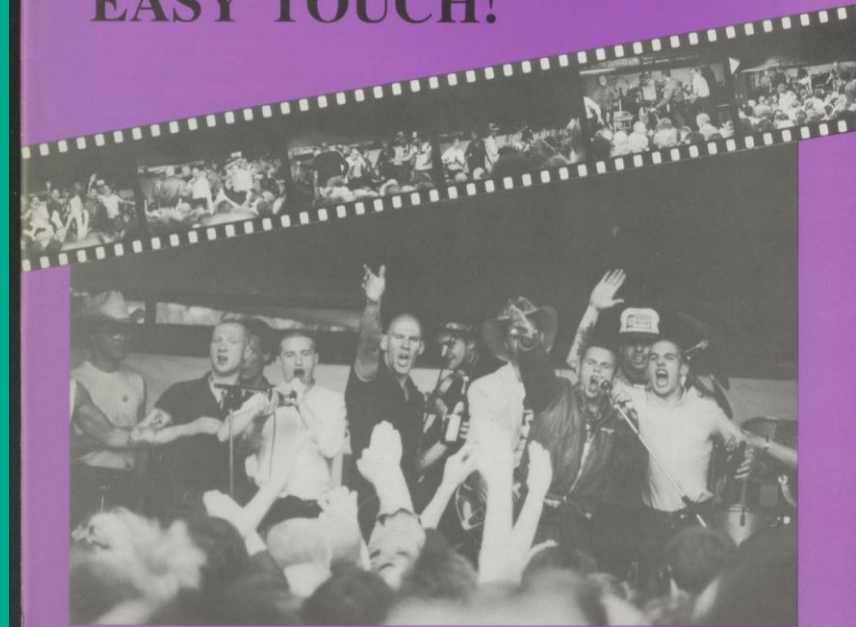
Political Extremism & Radicalism: Far-Right and Left Political Groups in US, Europe and Australia

Nicky Crane | Searchlight case study

SEARCHLIGHT

THE ANTI-FASCIST MONTHLY INCORPORATING CARF
SEPTEMBER 1986 No.135 70p

EASY TOUCH!



Nazi skinheads who attacked this GLC festival are now being used as minders by labour and gay movements . . .

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Nicky Crane | Searchlight case study

Nicky Crane, was a member (and organiser of the Kent branch) of the extreme far-right group the British Movement (BM) throughout the '70s and '80s.

A feared skinhead with Nazi tattoos and a propensity towards racist violence (attacking black filmgoers outside an Odeon in 1980 for example) he was also gay.

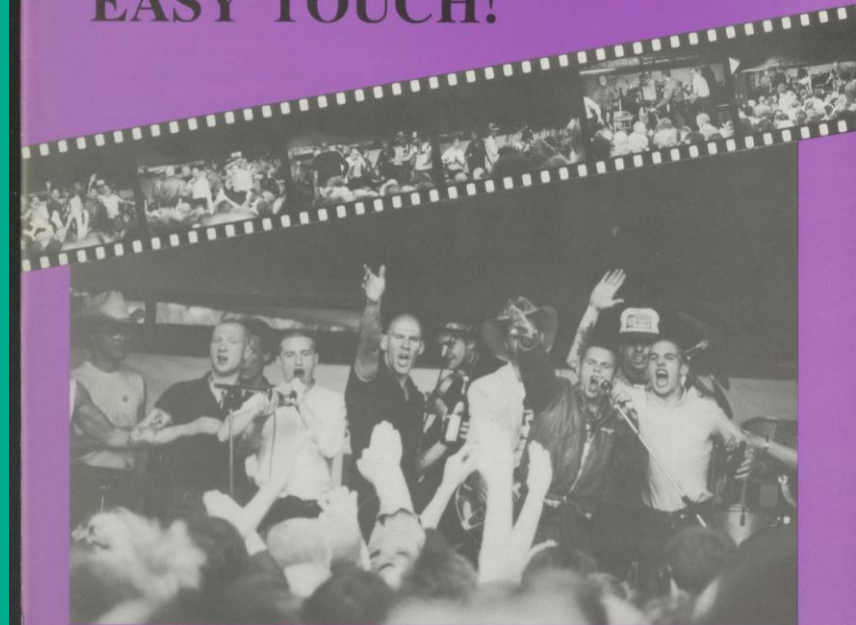
He kept these two worlds entirely separate until appearing in a Channel 4 documentary where he openly talked about being gay for the first time in 1992. He died in 1993.

This is part of his 'story', told via searching through the *Political Extremism and Radicalism: Far-Right and Left Political Groups in US, Europe and Australia* archive.

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Nicky Crane | April 1985

With a headline more akin to reporting a potential dog attack, *Searchlight* reports that Nicky Crane has just been released from a 6 month prison sentence and believes it likely he will 'return to battle' as he did after previous prison releases.

They advise that the police should charge him following a postcard they received from Nicky Crane at Christmas stating that he followed the British Movement and admitting his part in an attack on the Hank Wangford band at the Southbank GLC event in the summer of 1984.

The 6 months he spent in custody were not 'peaceful' and he lost 3 days remission.

Rabies scare: Crane on the loose

Nicky Crane is on the loose again. The admitted leader of a violent attack on the Hank Wangford band during a Greater London Council sponsored day for London's young unemployed last summer has just been released after a six month prison sentence, following a fracas on a London underground train in which he was arrested in possession of an offensive weapon.

Last time he came out of prison he lost no time in returning to battle. After serving a sentence for a serious assault on police officers during a British Movement riot against black people in south London, he was soon to be seen leading various violent actions in the company of the boot boys of the National Front's Instant Response Unit.

Despite clear photographic and eyewitness evidence of Crane's role in the South Bank GLC day disturbances, no

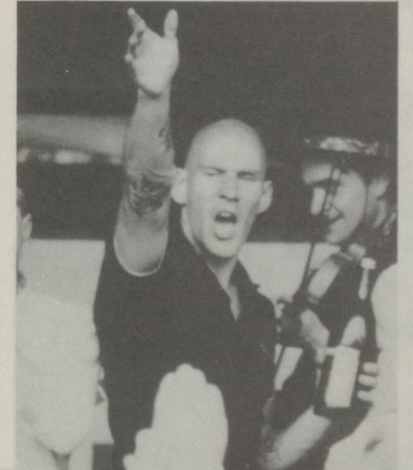
police action was forthcoming. The offensive weapon charge arose out of a different activity.

Last Christmas *Searchlight* received a card from Crane, then a prisoner on the Isle of Wight. Although he got only six months the authorities chose to send him to one of the most secure prisons in the country — a clear indication of Crane's violent nature. In his card he explained in graphic detail that he was not a member of the National Front but followed in the British Movement tradition, i.e. violence against just about everything. He also laid claim to his part in the attack of last summer.

Searchlight believes that the GLC and the people who were attacked should demand that the police charge Crane for these assaults in which people were badly injured.

Since arriving home from the Isle of Wight Crane has returned to his old stamping ground of south and east London. On Thursday nights he can be found at the Heaven disco at Charing Cross.

His best friend Matt Morgan, who was sent to prison with Crane over the police assault case, had a wasted journey to the Isle of Wight with some nazi friends who wanted to welcome him home. When they got there they found that Crane had been in trouble and lost three days' remission.



"Rabies Scare: Crane on the Loose." *Searchlight* Magazine, Apr. 1985. Political Extremism & Radicalism, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gLhK7>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | September 1986

Eyewitnesses report that Crane has been seen stewarding at various London events including anti-apartheid and gay events, with the knowledge of the Labour Party and gay movements.

He also attends a Gay Pride march under the banner 'gay skins' and claims to be gay. A claim defended by others but disputed by *Searchlight*.

He is employed cash in hand by a friend (Mick Mac) who is also known to *Searchlight* as once organising a 'reign of terror'. His presence at these events and his employment indicate his 'clear evidence of his continuing Nazi associations'

They summarise: "the Labour and Gay movements have allowed a very large Trojan horse into their midst which may well turn out to be a tiger that will devour them"



Nicky Crane (above) and his thugs beating an Asian (below). Photographs: Stern.

Not so gentle but certainly touched

A GANG of nazis who infiltrated peace and labour movement organisations has been exposed by *Searchlight*. The nazi skinheads have been acting as stewards through a company which was on the approved list of the Greater London Council.

Soon after the annual CND festival at Glastonbury, *Searchlight* started receiving claims from eye-witnesses that Nicky Crane, one of the foulest and most violent nazi thugs, had been involved in stewarding the event. At first we were sceptical, thinking that they must have mistaken another skinhead for him.

But then, people on a recent mass anti-apartheid march in London told us that when they arrived at Brockwell Park in South London, they had seen Crane stewarding the concert.

Finally, we received many calls after the London 'gay pride' march. On this occasion Crane and a number of other nazis marched under a 'gay skins' banner and then attempted to steward the subsequent concert. This time he was challenged and in response claimed to be gay and to have as much right as any other gay to participate.

Some gays at the event defended Crane's claim right, and Crane went on not only to act as a steward but also to organise other stewards. Many eye-witnesses who contacted us did not know what to make of the fact that at least two men of Afro-Caribbean appearance were on Crane's team.

Searchlight investigated and with the help of people in the labour and gay movements we found a trail that led to a company with the inapposite name Gentle Touch which specialises in providing stewards and bouncers. We discovered that the company gets contracts to supply protection for the bandstand, stage or beer tent at all kinds of festivals and meetings ranging from Tory party gigs to socialist concerts such as Red Wedge events.

The man we found in charge of Gentle Touch is well known to *Searchlight* and to the Asian community in South East London where he once organised a reign of terror with Nicky Crane, Tony Lawrence, Mad Mattie Morgan and other members of British Movement. In those days he was commonly known as Mick Mac. A regular donor to British Movement funds, he was never seen on the streets without his catapult and ball bearings to hand.

Today he is using two names, Michael McAndrew and Michael King. A contract with the Wandsworth Beer Company, a workers' co-operative, to guard a beer tent at the Haringey anti-racist festival in July was signed in the name of Michael King. Much to its credit the co-operative dumped Gentle Touch on the eve of the event.

Gentle Touch appears to run a cash in hand business, as some of its employees like Crane are drawing social security benefits while working for McAndrew.

Crane's presence in the nest of nazis at 35 Avenell Road, Islington, is clear evidence of his continuing nazi associations. Claims by some gays that he must be alright because he was seen kissing an Afro-Caribbean at a gay function lose their force when contrasted with an article in the German magazine *Stern* in June which reported how Crane and his friends insult and physically attack young Asians.

The complacency of many progressive organisations towards this nazi infiltration has caused concern among anti-racists. Nazi participation in gay organisations is now reaching unprecedented proportions. The 'gay skins' are running their own broadsheet under the slogan "British first, gay second".

By their lack of political and moral sense some gays have allowed a very large Trojan horse into their midst which may well turn out to be a tiger that will devour them.

Labour and gay movements use nazi skinheads as minders . . .



"Not so Gentle but Certainly Touched." *Searchlight* Magazine, Sept. 1986, p. 6+. Political Extremism & Radicalism, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gBQD9>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | January 1988

Researching Column 88 (a neo Nazi paramilitary organisation) *Searchlight* uncovers links to this group and the armed forces.

They report their concern regarding the recruitment of soldiers to this group, the territorial army and the National Front and show how the National Front are working with Nicky Crane and other members of the notorious skinhead British Movement to establish a 'street fighting force'.

We also learn that Crane and a colleague Ian Stuart Donaldson leave the NF to create "Blood and Honour, an even more violent street orientated skin movement" and subsequently a glossy neo nazi music magazine

STREET-FIGHTING MEN The paramilitary right and the skinhead revival

It was the bloodbath at Hungerford last year that brought the British public's attention to the ease with which people can arm themselves in this country legally or illegally.

When in the early 1970's *Searchlight* investigated Column 88 and exposed their infiltration of the armed forces, the Ministry of Defence seemed to take this problem very seriously and set about purging nazi elements from their ranks. It was men like former special forces officer Major Ian Souter Clarence who trained dozens of Column 88 members as fighting troops in the post war period, and when McLaughlin took over British Movement, he was keen to have the same training extended to his leader guard headed by Albert Chambers of East London and Richard Middleton, a civil servant from Essex.

In the early 1980s a number of BM activists based around Birmingham were sent to prison for possession of a huge stockpile of modern weapons and ammunition. In 1981 *World In Action* with *Searchlight's* co-operation exposed a trade in modern weapons that linked members of the Column to members of the now defunct British Democratic Party, the BNP and the League of St George.

The nazis' key publishers, the Hancock family, were importing bomb making manuals from the USA. These appeared in their sales lists and the League sold them at its film shows and private meetings.

When McLaughlin decided to give up BM for a career in survivalism and militia, some of his supporters went under cover. In the last two years Albert Chambers has been actively engaged in putting together a private army based in the main upon old BM activists. A number of the NF's key young activists are former regular soldiers or still serving and the far right is again trying to infiltrate the territorials.

The new survival schools and practical shotgun courses have also had a big attraction for the far right. Timothy



Above: Albert Chambers. Below, left to right: Michael McLaughlin, Major Ian Souter Clarence, Ian Stuart Donaldson, Nicky Crane.

Danvers' Soldier Of Fortune shops in London and Brighton have stocked everything from dangerous weapons like spring loaded coshes and deadly knives to nazi music and bomb manuals. Michael McLaughlin with his Rucksack 'n Rifle shop in Wrexham, North Wales has become a key figure in the new wave paramilitarism. And the Hancocks, in conjunction with key Norwegian nazi Eric Blucher, have set up a publishing outlet to produce magazines like *Hard Core Survival*.

Early 1987 saw a series of convictions of serving military personnel for stealing rocket launchers and other up to date weapons from the army for illicit sale to the far right who sold on the UDA.

In Glasgow and Liverpool NF members have stood in the dock alongside UDA activists on charges arising from the trade in illegal weapons. In one such case two NF members from Hackney, London, were sent to prison for trading heroin for guns. One might speculate about a link between the supply of hard drugs to trade for weapons and the NF's new connections in the Middle East.

In the last three years the new NF leadership have tried to create a street fighting force, something less than the UDA paramilitaries with whom they rub shoulders or those members trained by former mercenary Graham Gilmore, their military commander. To this end they targeted the former British Movement skinheads under the control of Nicky Crane, and the followers of Ian Stuart Donaldson's band "Skrewdriver". Their intention was to set up a group that appeared unconnected with the NF leadership but in reality could have its strings pulled by them. They would be used for street destabilisation, fighting at sports events and keeping up racial attacks — whilst the leadership preached a policy of co-operation with black militants.

But the plan was delayed because of Crane's and Donaldson's imprisonment. By the time they were both back in circulation Pearce had been imprisoned again for running *Bulldog*, the magazine that did so much to promote terror on the football terraces, ran hit lists of potential witnesses, and also gave space to "white noise bands".

Bulldog was superseded by *New Dawn* which was closely followed by *White Noise*. The White Noise club under Donaldson's control has been active in promoting international links for the bands and the young nazis, with the result that the skinhead international can bring together as many as nine hundred followers for gigs in this country whereas the NF groups can only turn out at best a few hundred on Remembrance Sunday.

This year there was to be no "White Christmas" gig as Donaldson and Crane have left the NF to form "Blood and Honour", an even more violent street orientated skin movement. Meanwhile back in the bunker the unlikely pair of "blues brothers" ever, Holland and Harrington, are grabbing everything going from the White Noise Club for the NF. Donaldson's associates claim hundreds of pounds are owed to the bands and thousands to their record company.



"Street-Fighting Men." *Searchlight* Magazine, Jan. 1988, p. 14. Political Extremism &

Radicalism, <http://tinyurl.com/tinyurl/6gBQa1>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | April 1991

In this article *Searchlight* publicise the imprisonment of 3 anti-fascists after a fight with Nicky Crane and invite their readers to write to them in prison.

Although they say they don't endorse the attack on Crane, they state; *"anyone removing this psychotic lump of trash from the streets deserves a medal not a prison sentence"*.

SEARCHLIGHT IN ACTION

Nearly 300 Londoners answered a call from East London Anti-Fascist Action and Searchlight to strip sales of anti-fascist material at Brick Lane in the heart of London's east end on 17 March.

After ascending at Whitechapel station the anti-fascists marched to a position facing the main paper sellers. Sales ended at once and it was the anti-fascists who were able to sell and distribute material exposing the riots and their activities to shopkeepers and passers by in one of London's busiest street markets.

Three main elements from the far right were present: the British National Party with two of its national officers, Richard Edmonds and John Mann; the National Front, led by convicted officer and law and order candidate Eddie Whicker; and a small number of hooligans. Half a dozen Union Defence Association activists stood with a gap between them and the march.

A constant stream of anti-fascist chants, and a running commentary on the criminal records of some of the march, drew out any chance of the march being heard, as they tried to put a brave face on their pathetic, nervous or less than all people.

To add insult to injury the march could not even go for a hour afterwards in their usual meeting hole as it was surrounded by anti-fascists.

We congratulate AFA on its initiative and pledge our support for any future activities of this nature. The CP and SNP have returned to a number of street pitches in south east London and these should be on the agenda for a visit as well.

Other activities in the last month include Searchlight speakers at a trade union AGM in London, Sheffield University, the University of Wales, in Cardiff and Liverpool.

The European Editor has spoken in Berlin and has just ended a tour of Sweden and Denmark.

Our tour of Scotland in the subject of a separate report elsewhere in this issue.

Anti-fascist prisoners

Three anti-fascist activists are serving long terms of imprisonment after a street battle with the notorious nazi thug Nicky Crane. Whilst not condoning violence, we believe anyone removing this psychotic lump of trash from the streets deserves a medal not a prison sentence.

The three are: Tony David, NT 1338, Blundeston Prison, Lowestoft, Suffolk (birthday 13 April); David Phelan, NT 1337, Bisley Prison, Woking, Surrey, GU24 9EX (birthday 28 January); and Mark Malin, NT 1335, The Verne Prison, Portland, Dorset, DT5 1EQ (birthday 7 December).

Letters from anti-fascists would be very welcome.



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Letters from anti-fascists would be very welcome.

"Anti-Fascist Prisoners." Searchlight Magazine, Apr. 1991, p. 20. Political Extremism & Radicalism,

<http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gBQZ3>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | September 1992

Searchlight reports that Nicky Crane was interviewed for the Channel 4 programme *Out* admitting that he was actively homosexual and had abandoned his extreme right-wing views.

The author is sceptical about his abandonment of his political associations and violence.

We learn more about his violent past, his convictions for racist attacks, his involvement in gang attacks and his role as security for the neo-nazi band Skrewdriver.

Nicky Crane comes out of the closet

Nicky Crane, 34, the psychopathic racist thug, involved in many violent attacks on black people, left-wingers, Jews and gays, has admitted on television that he is an active homosexual.

Interviewed on the Channel 4 programme *Out*, Crane said that since coming to terms with his sexual identity he has abandoned all right-wing affiliations and is now apolitical.

Crane was previously the Kent organiser of the British Movement and served three prison sentences, including four years for an attempted ambush of a train carrying black people.

He was a minder of the fascist band Skrewdriver and admitted jumping on

the head of a comatose left-winger in a gang attack.

How far Crane has abandoned his earlier beliefs remains to be seen. The young man interviewed with him clearly expressed anti-black views.

Crane's coming out points to two things. In the first place it is a



confirmation of the truth that many "queer bashers" are repressed homosexuals themselves. In the second place it indicates the adoption of the

gay community.

"Nicky Crane Comes out of the Closet." *Searchlight Magazine*, Sept. 1992, p. 8-9. Political Extremism & Radicalism, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gBQk9>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | Death 1993

As far as my search goes Nicky Crane's death was *not* reported in *Searchlight*. If it had been it would probably have had similar coverage to the death of Ian Stuart Donaldson with the headline '[Dead but not Forgiven](#)'

The only newspaper to report it is *Capital Gay* in December 1993, in *Archives of Sexuality & Gender*, with the headline 'Former fascist organizer dies'.

We learn that he died of an AIDS-related illness and that his friends say he had '*renounced his former political views.*'

Former fascist organizer dies

NICKY Crane, a senior organizer in the fascist British Movement in the 1970s, has died. Thirty-two-year-old Crane died in St Mary's Hospital, Paddington on Tuesday, of an AIDS-related illness.

Crane was an influential member of the far-right Blood and Honour movement in the early 1980s and ran the security team for the neo-Nazi band Screw-

driver. He was disowned by other far-right leaders when they discovered he was gay, and last year he openly distanced himself from neo-fascist politics on the Channel Four programme *Out*.

Crane worked as a doorman in various gay venues, including FF and the Golden Lion. Friends said on Tuesday he had completely renounced his former political views.

"Former Fascist Organizer Dies," Capital Gay, 10 Dec. 1993, p. 3, Archives of Sexuality & Gender

<http://tinyurl.galegroup>

<http://tinyurl.com/16116>

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | Posthumous 1998

White Noise, a book written by 2 Searchlight editors, is a book examining the international Nazi skinhead scene.

In chapter 2 Crane's death is mentioned and his life summarised. His coming out as gay sent 'shockwaves through Britain's most violently homophobic movement'

CHAPTER 2



Blood and Honour 1987 – 1992 by Steve Silver

BLOOD AND HONOUR was formed in 1987 under the leadership of Ian Stuart Donaldson with the support of Nicky Crane and the hard core of Britain's nazi skinhead movement. Donaldson and Crane were two very different but key players in Britain's nazi skinhead movement. Born in 1958 in Poulton-Le-Fylde, near Blackpool in Lancashire, Donaldson was the lead singer of the now legendary Skrewdriver, a band that he formed with some friends from his grammar school in 1975 under the name Tumbling Dice. He was to change the name a couple of years later to Skrewdriver while he was the Young National Front organiser for Blackpool and Fylde. When Blood and Honour was formed Donaldson had only just come out of prison where he had served a sentence for attacking an elderly Nigerian man at London's King's Cross station, not far from where he then lived.

Nicola Vicenzio Crane was a psychopath whose physical appearance was that of the archetypal skinhead. Born in 1959, Crane came from Crayford in Kent and became active in the British Movement as a teenager in the 1970s. By 1980 he was the BM's Kent organiser and took part in a number of vicious racist attacks, for one of which he received a four-year prison sentence. On his release in 1984 Crane became a roadie for Skrewdriver and was quickly to serve another prison sentence for possession of an offensive weapon.

Less than a decade after founding Blood and Honour its two key protagonists were dead, Donaldson dying in a car crash in 1993 and Crane from an Aids related illness in 1994. Before he died Crane publicly came out as gay on

a television documentary, sending shockwaves through
"Chapter 2," Searchlight Magazine, 1998, p. 9+. Political

Extremism & Radicalism, <http://tinyurl.com/galegroup/tinyurl/6gBRNO>

<http://tinyurl.com/galegroup/tinyurl/6gBRNO>



Nicky Crane
Remembering Sunday

Gale Primary Sources

Start at the source.

Nicky Crane | Posthumous 1999

This 2 page article examines 'whether one can ever reconcile being gay and a Nazi.'

Crane is referred to as a now 'infamous gay nazi, [who] ...at over six foot tall and extremely violent...was the archetypal nazi skinhead...'

They go on to say that whilst involved with extreme violence including 'gay bashing' he was also involved with an older Jewish man.

They finally draw the conclusion that there is no logic to being a Nazi and homosexual, and that to be so is 'an incomprehensible position'.

The British National Party is awash with rumours that a leading member of the party is a closet bisexual. The thought of gay nazis may seem contradictory, but over the years several leading nazis have led secret, and not so secret, gay lives. Nick Lowles and Kate Taylor explore the apparent contradiction and ask whether one can ever reconcile being gay and a nazi?

Gay nazi

A contradiction in terms?

"After roll call on the evening of June 20, 1942, an order was suddenly given: 'All prisoners with the pink triangle will remain standing at attention!' We stood on the desolate, broad square, and from somewhere a warm breeze carried the sweet fragrance of resin and wood from the regions of freedom; but we couldn't taste it, because our throats were hot and dry from fear. Then the guardhouse door of the command tower opened, and an SS officer and some of his lackeys strode towards us. Our detail commander barked: 'Three hundred criminal deviants, present as ordered!' We were registered, and then it was revealed to us in accordance with an order from the Reichsführung SS, our category was to be isolated in an intensified-penalty company, and we would be transferred as a unit to the Klinker Brickworks the next morning. The Klinker factory! We shuddered, for the human death mill was more than feared."

L D Classen von Neudegg was one of the thousands of gay men rounded up by the Nazis before and during the Second World War. While he survived to tell his story, thousands of others were not so lucky.

Homosexuality was illegal under Hitler's Germany. With the introduction of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, in 1935, a kiss, an embrace and even homosexual fantasies were punishable. In 1937, "one man was successfully prosecuted on the grounds that he had observed a couple making love in a public place and watched only the man".

The homophobic laws of Nazi Germany remain a cornerstone of far-right politics.

Gay Nazi." Searchlight Magazine, Sept. 1999, p. 6+. Political Extremism & Radicalism,

<http://tinyurl.com/tinyurl/6gBRP9>



Nicky Crane |Searchlight case study

Other resources – 2 audio interviews recalling memories about Nicky Crane in the archive

- Searchlight Interview with Anonymous Subject 5, Part 2." *Searchlight Oral Histories Collection*, 17 Aug. 2015. *Political Extremism & Radicalism*, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gLEh8>
- Searchlight Interview with Anna Sullivan." *Searchlight Oral Histories Collection*, 17 Aug. 2015. *Political Extremism & Radicalism*, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/6gLEi6>